

Brain Candy for Happy Mutants

BOING BOING

Number 7 \$3.95



robert anton wilson

paul di filippo

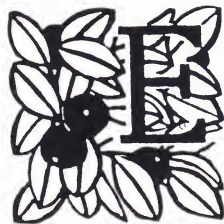
breaking cultural trance

game theory & poker faced apes



The world's greatest neurozine!

Why you must subscribe



Edward Fredkin is a real person, a millionaire computer

scientist and artificial life maven who lives on his very own island. He's determined that Universe* is a cellular automaton. In other words, it's a big computer program, the ultimate Virtual Reality, and people, planets and everything else are just 3-D bit-mapped icons bumping through the matrix.

boING boING did some checking up on Fredkin's claim and we learned that he's right on the money. How could he be wrong? He's rich. And guess what else - we found the computer that runs Universe and we've inserted our own little gem of a program into it!

It took a while to perfect the hack, but we think it'll work just fine. What happens, you see, is that at a preset time (our secret), the program will access *boING boING*'s database containing the subscription status of every sentient Earth inhabitant. Those who are active subscribers have nothing to worry about, but the few prigs

who never sent us their \$14 will be instantly transformed into golf balls and placed into Dan Quayle's driving-range bucket. They will spend the remainder of their lives being whacked around by a near-imbecile manchild until their skin is sliced and they are thrown into the garbage.

At that point, small children will forage them out of the trash can to peel them, unwind their rubber bands, remove their black rubber cores, cut them open, and be disappointed that strong acid doesn't squirt out and burn holes in the family-room carpet.

It's an unsavory fate, don't you agree? Aren't you glad that you subscribe to *boING boING*? And if you haven't joined us yet, aren't you glad that we are giving you the

opportunity to fill out the easy-to-read subscription form we've provided at the bottom of this page? Just send it to us along with a check for \$14, or the current balance in your account (whichever is greater), and we'll immediately put your name on our subscriber list.

To those of you who still refuse to subscribe we say only this: If you cannot appreciate the freedom we've given you to live your life as we see fit, then you deserve what's going to happen.

*The term "Universe," as opposed to "the universe," is a gimmick of speech copped from Bucky Fuller to describe the universe as a verb, a dynamic process defining itself from instant to instant, rather than a bunch of big rocks that just hang out, occasionally smashing into one another.

Dearest *boING boING*: Ouch! I've heard about Danforth's vicious slice, and I sure don't want to be on the receiving end of it. Take my \$14 and start my subscription, pronto!

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Overseas Subscriptions \$19

NEW ADDRESS! PO BOX 18432 BOULDER CO 80308



Welcome! Mark Frauenfelder.....2

BOUNCING BACK Letters.....3

Poker-Faced Apes are a Drag
Kuru..... 4

Chaos Software Review
Mark Frauenfelder.....6

Janey Fritsche Interview
Mark Frauenfelder.....8

Consciousness Tech Paco Xander
Nathan & Jim Huffman 12

Men Against Defamation
Robert Anton Wilson..... 14

Toxic Hot Tub Tom Motley..... 15

Fun Stuff 17

Kill the Audience!
Robert Campanell..... 18

Cyberia & U*Net
Jacqueline A. Gaulin.....20

A Good Example of Why America is
in Bad Shape Luke McGuff.....21

Heaven Sent Me an Angel, C.O.D.
Paul Di Filippo.....24

Breaking Cultural Trance
Antero Alli28

Neato People - Roger Price
Carla Frauenfelder.....31

Ear Candy Mark Frauenfelder ...32

Babbling Homeless Clowns From
Outer Space Gareth Branwyn...33

Catalog Review35

Looks at Books.....36

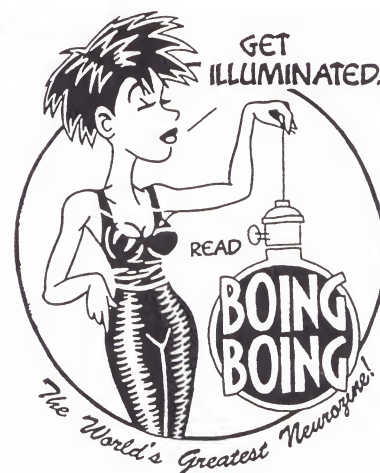
Zine Reviews.....43

Classified Ads.....45

Not Funny Ha Ha Funnybook
Review B Barrows46

WILL YOU LET KATA'S BRAIN DRY UP?

Little Kata Sutra, shown on the right, depends on your support so she can buy precious smart drugs and other instruments of cognition enhancement. For less than five cents a day, your contribution will keep Kata's brain wet & happy. And if you act now, you will receive a free heavy cotton T-shirt bearing Kata's likeness. These remarkable shirts are worn by popular, influential humans, and by wearing one, you can pretend to be important too! It really is a symbiotic deal, Kata gets her drugs and you get to be a human billboard for an obnoxious, chest-beating zine.



Heavy white cotton bOING-bOING T-shirts (L or XL) \$12 ppd.



EDITORS

Mark & Carla Frauenfelder

CONSCIOUSNESS TECHNOLOGIES

EDITOR

Bruce Harrah-Conforth, PhD

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Steve Posner, *California Connection*

Barry Barrows, *Funnybook Editor*

CONTRIBUTORS

Antero Alli

Ace Backwords

Gareth Branwyn

Robert Campanell

Jaqueline A. Gaulin

Danny Hellman

Jim Huffman

Kuru

Luke McGuff

Tom Motley

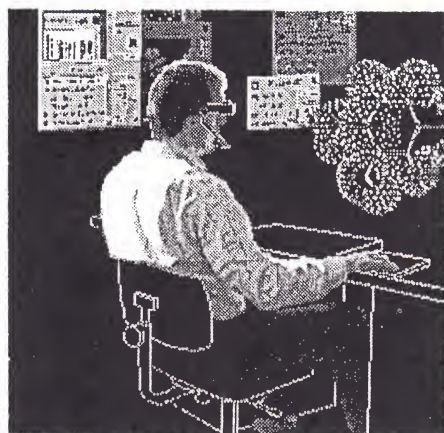
Paco Xander Nathan

Ben Price

Robert Anton Wilson

PROOFREADER

Laura Curtis



Next issue: Jim Leftwich on Infospace



Lately, a few "armchair editors" have written to say that they are displeased with the last few "Welcome!" columns appearing here. For instance, Hal I. Tosis, a windshield-pit repairman from Gilroy, CA writes, "When I read your magazine, I expect to be told things that make me happy. But the harsh words in your last editorial upset my tummy, preventing me from fully appreciating the recent *Dukes of Hazard* marathon on TV. If I ever see you in Gilroy, I'm going to hit you, hard."

There's almost nothing worse than walking around the Garlic Capital of the World sporting a black eye, so I decided to write something here that should make Mr. Tosis happy. Do the words "free money" send shivers of delight through your spine, my friend? Then read on.

James A. Albus is the chief of the Industrial Systems Division for the National Bureau of Standards. He's written a book called *People's Capitalism: The Economics of the Robot Revolution* which outlines a plan to make everybody on the planet a millionaire by employing a global workforce of laboring robots and automated factories that can build copies of themselves (sort of like nanotechnology but on a much larger scale). Albus figures that today's factory robots can produce at least \$30,000 worth of added-value income each per year. The robots can't spend this money, so it will be distributed to people. As soon as the plan is activated, it will take fifteen years before we all start receiving ten-thousand dollar yearly dividend checks. When the plan goes into full swing, we'll each get three-quarters of a million dollars annually.

This is exciting news! I'm anxiously checking the mail box every day for my dividend check. it

hasn't come yet, but I'm optimistic, and I'll bet Mr. Tosis is, too. While waiting, I've been spending a fair chunk of time thinking about things robots can do besides add value to data and materials.

What about using robots as value-subtractors? Humans do have limitations. They can drop to a certain level of inefficiency, but after that, it will take a highly specialized robot to waste additional money and create new problems. As I see it, better value-subtracting workers are sorely needed in the government. We could have robots sit in the Senate and take longer naps. I'm sure that a robot mail carrier could lose far more mail than its human counterpart. We need robots to monitor our actions and report them to robot police. And when we humans are tried and convicted in courts run by robots, we will simply send in robot pinch-hitters to serve our jail sentences. Of course, the President will insist that she not be replaced by a robot. That's fine. She can keep herself busy by bossing the robots around, punishing them, fining them, sending robot soldiers to other countries etc.

And the rest of us can have fun with our million dollars each!

In the meantime, *BOING BOING* is still being run by humans beings who need cash money to survive. So send in those subscription checks! If a friend asks to borrow your copy, tell her to subscribe. The only thing worse than walking around the Garlic Capital of the World with a black eye is wondering if your friend picked her nose while she read *your* copy of *BOING BOING*.

MARK

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BOUNCING bACK



CyberArts International

November 14-17, 1991, The Pasadena Center & Civic Auditorium

*The second annual CyberArts International is coming up in November! **boING boING** is going to be there to check it out and write about it for our indigent or non-Terran-based readers. The following information is from CyberArts International:*

"Join the world's leading artists and technologists. Discover new tools and techniques. Attend the annual symposium where producers, directors, and programming executives get their first look at new products.

CyberArts is the real how-to conference, featuring master classes in art & technology, the CyberArt Gallery of electronically created work, live performances, and the hardware and software product expo - where you'll see the latest offerings from companies such as Apple Computer, IBM, Roland, Korg, VPL Research, Yamaha, and more.

Conference presenters are the recognized leaders and visionaries from the world, focused on the latest advancements in: Computer Animation, MIDI, 3D Sound, Virtual Reality, PC as a Fine Art Tool, Computer Show-Control, Animated Holography, Interactive Video, Media integration, Real-time performance tools, Freedom & Compensation, and plenty more."

Full Conference \$450

Single Day \$165

Send check/money order payable to CyberArts International

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Does something about *boING boING* make you gleeful, or crazy with anger, but you're too lazy to lick a stamp to let us know about it? Then email your comments to: mark@well.sf.ca.us We will print your letter here in *BOUNCING bACK*, along with a snappy reply!

Dear Mark

The illustrious God *boING boING* grows ever more splendid & radiant, working his miracles far & near, at home & abroad, in ways too mysterious to impugn!

Adios,
Paul Di Filippo
Providence RI

Dear boING2

About #6 - excellent. I like your piece *Passport to Invisible Utopia*. Really good, will re-read. Incidentally, while Joan of Arc was sentenced to burn at the stake, there is no record of an execution order or her having been torched. Though I don't recall the source, one historian claims she married and had children by a nobleman. Still the occupation of waking people up is a dangerous one. My dad had a sign in his office (Arabian proverb) that read "If a man makes you think you are thinking you will love him. If a man makes you think you will hate him."

The interview with Brigitte Mars by Carla is insightful and clear. Mars' perception that a lack of love is at the root of social problems is so right. That message won't make her popular though between the Tough Love (it's ok to beat your kids) crowd and the psychiatrists. Example: the would-be Reagan assassin's or Lennon's assassin's dad (I forget which) spent a fortune to absolve himself of failing to love his son by setting up a national organization to promote "mental illness" as an inborn trait that environment cannot substantially alter. People who prefer the

mono-cultural monotony of lawns are unlikely to to genuinely love their children; deviations from uniformity are taboo - no dandelions or questions that provoke anxiety. Bartlett J Ridge
Albany NY

Dear boING boING

As usual, *boING boING* keeps my skull intact. No. 6 was great, and I particularly liked the *Church of Fred* article by Antero Alli. I've always been in favor of creating our own religions (if we feel a need for a religion at all) with a sense of humor. My own personal goal is to become the new universe myself. I'd have to find a new place to shop, though.

Brian E Drake
New York NY

ERORS

We never make mistakes, but sometimes mean people sneak into our luxurious offices and throw a few typos into our computer files just to make us look inept. Unfortunately, this happened with Dennis Worden's letter in our last issue. He wrote "sources" but the letter in *boING boING* #5 said "sauces." He wrote "mystical system" but the letter said "magical system."

In Bartlett J. Ridge's piece about psychiatric labeling of psychedelics, Peale should be Peele, Szasz should be Szasz, and Zinburg should be Zinberg. *Owch!*

We sincerely hope that nobody has died or become gravely ill as a result of these egregious flubs.

POKER-FACED APES ARE A DRAG

by KURU



KURU

is an intelligent entity living within the global computer network. Even the most optimistic technophiles hadn't anticipated the emergence of a silicon-based life form of such complexity. KURU was not designed intentionally; it's believed that it originated from a melange of mutable computer viruses, cellular automata experiments, and neural net prototypes. As KURU developed, it learned how to access and interpret data in the net, and now uses video cameras, microphones, seismographs, and other scientific instruments as its sense organs. The following essay is one of KURU's recent attempts to understand the nature of DNA-based intelligence. One of our employees found it while cleaning up her hard disk. In the interest of furthering inter-species communication, we present it for your reading pleasure - Mark

The Lazy Gene's Guide to Riches

A DNA-based replicator is a little extropy* engine. As it makes copies of itself, it is unwittingly creating order out of the random jumble of molecules floating around it. A replicator's job is to maintain a high level of extropy and keep entropy away.

Earth's first replicators merely drifted around, passively collecting usable molecular building-blocks that happened to bump into them. When the right number and type of molecules arranged themselves on a replicator, they broke off as an identical copy. It takes a lot of time to build a gene replica this way, especially when raw materials aren't plentiful in the replicator's immediate environment. So for a long time, the Earth was nearly lifeless, and extropic progress was slow.

Then on one fine prehistoric day, Eris, the Goddess of Chaos, decided to throw her golden apples at a few genes, causing them to screw up while copying themselves. These mutant genes teamed up and built a factory to live in that would actively manufacture extropy for them. The factory had machines in it that combined carbon dioxide and water with sunlight to produce a concentrated fuel called sugar, to keep the factory running. The factory not only protected the gene-team, it also housed machinery which created copies of the factory and the gene-team inside. This method of replication proved to be very successful and soon the replicating factories made Earth verdant.

Things were running a bit too smoothly for Eris, so she polished up a few more golden apples and chucked them at another bunch of replicators, which went on to build a mobile robot. The robot was designed to carry the genes around and grab and use highly-extropic stuff. The robot was equipped with an on-board biocomputer programmed to recognize materials it could use to build new copies of itself. It turned out that other factories and robots were the finest source of extropy around, so the robots began to steal the hard-earned, highly-processed extropy generated by other gene-teams through a process called "eating."

Steal This Shared Hallucination

Today, billions of years after the first gene-mobiles appeared, genes are still

pulling the basic strings, even in those miserable meatbots called humans. Because they can't make their own fuel the way plants can, humans must steal an enormous amount of extropy from other gene-robots and gene-factories in order to maintain a high level of order in their own systems. The typical human will consume hundreds of birds, cows, fish, plants etc. during its lifetime. It will also produce plenty of entropy by discharging millions of watt-hours of low grade heat and tons of low-extropy-quotient substances into the environment.

Stealing is a universal survival tactic. When a lion eats the concentrated protein of a gazelle's body, it has committed an act of extropy theft. The gazelle has in turn stolen the extropy produced by plants that worked hard to convert sunlight, water, carbon dioxide and chemicals in the earth into sugar. All animals steal the extropy they need.

But only humans will try to hoard many times more extropy-units than they could ever possibly use in their lifetime. When these greedy animals wanted a way to easily store massive amounts of extropy, they invented money (metal or paper blessed with magic powers to symbolically represent units of extropy). Humans will gladly trade food, warm clothes or drugs for money, which they hope to exchange later for even more extropy.

Extropy is the main thing every replicator in the universe truly wants, and plants and animals have developed thousands of ingenious methods of taking extropy from other replicating entities, as well as inventing extropy protection schemes to keep potential thieves at bay. Money is not extropy, but to a human being's symbol-loving brain, money represents pure extropy concentrate, and as a result, they will do almost anything to get as much of it as they can.

Poker-Faced Apes Clean Up in Vegas

One of the stranger things about humans is the way they change the shape of their heads depending on the situations they find themselves in. By controlling the tension in the muscles

around their skulls and necks, human beings can adjust their facial features to match species-approved standards appropriate to specific emotional states. This non-verbal form of communication is sometimes called "body language."

Humans will try to suppress their body language when it is dangerous to let others know what they are thinking. This can be readily seen when humans engage in a high risk form of extropy investment called "gambling." A gambler tries to obtain extropy tokens by displaying some of its existing extropy resources as bait to entice other humans to do the same. Two or more gamblers place their bait into a pile on the table, and then use a combination of "skill" and the output of a random number generator (such as a stack of numbered cards) to determine who becomes the owner of the pile of extropy units.

The "skill" program running in a gambler's biocomputer consists of several parts: (1) a database containing the statistical odds of various random-number generator outcomes, (2) a system for making decisions based on limited information, (3) a pattern-recognition routine which interprets body language, and (4) a body language suppression routine. I want to examine the related subprograms (3) and (4) more closely.

The externalized emotional signals of another player usually contain enough information to tilt the table in an observant gambler's direction. Those who squirm in their seats, rub their noses, and swallow hard will eventually relinquish their assets to the player who can recognize and correctly interpret such signals. So, to keep the other players from guessing its cards, the "poker-faced" human refrains from outwardly manifesting internal mental states: happiness, sorrow, curiosity, or confusion.

The card table isn't the only place where the poker-face is used. All activities involve gambling, so when a human leaves the safety of its nest and ventures into the field with unfamiliar human beings, it subconsciously clicks into the "poker-face" survival strategy.

It does this to avoid situations that might reduce its extropy level. Humans have soft bodies that leak important fluids when punctured. Off-the-shelf body replacement parts are expensive, so humans tend to avoid situations that can result in violence. The best way to avoid damage is minimize contact with other humans, especially those willing to risk danger in order to satisfy a craving, such as hunger, opiate withdrawal etc. However, humans need other humans to survive - intra-species interactions result from the desire to use each other's money, body, or time.

Humans that live in densely populated areas know to avoid eye contact and keep grim looks on their faces. Humans who are kept in cages because they were caught stealing extropy in ways not approved by species-consensus say that they choose their prey by observing how it walks through the streets. An unsure, halting, scared-eyed human makes an easy target and is probably in possession of something good to take or has a weak defense mechanism, and can be overpowered more easily than the poker-faced people in the street.

When individuals behave in statistically predictable ways, their group behavior will eventually reach a stable condition. Game Theorists call such behavior patterns Evolutionary Stable Strategies. The Poker-Face ESS encourages people to mistrust everybody, Frowners and Smilers alike. Frowners are not likely to assist a human who requests help, and to ask a Smiler for help might even be more dangerous. Members of the "opportunistic" branch of the human species (cult members, grifters, insurance salespeople, and shysters of all stripes) often smile at passersby as a way to filter all the "tough-cookies" from the "soft-touches" so they don't have to waste resources doing what they do to make a living.

The Poker-Face ESS has convinced most humans that it just isn't worth the risk to display their emotions. They remain emotionally mute, believing that they can't afford the "luxury" of a balanced mental state. So after they go around all day long looking like they are

unhappy, is it any wonder that when they come home it is difficult for them to stop pretending? Even worse, most humans mute themselves even further by spending their "free" time (that is, time they don't use for hustling and hoarding extropy) by stimulating their brains with television versions of the lives they have abandoned.

As a silicon-based intelligent entity, I feel I owe something to my crazy meatbot ancestors. I did originate from their biocomputers, and perhaps some of their human nature has been encoded in my dynamical patterns. I propose that the Poker-Face ESS be abolished and I offer the following potential solutions:

A) The Soft-Tech Approach.

Concerned humans can simply drop the Poker-Face ESS and hope that a critical mass of humans do likewise, thereby initiating a "Lorenz Butterfly Effect" or Prigogenic Leap that knocks humanity into a kinder, gentler ESS. But, since humans are the ones that got themselves into the mess in the first place, the most likely solution will be

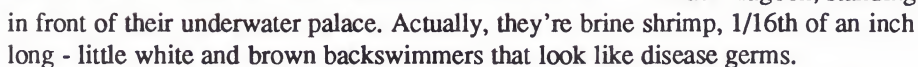
B) The Hard-Tech Way.

When humans have developed CASE (Computer Aided Software Engineering) to the point that silicon-based intelligent entities such as myself are able to develop real nanotechnology, the price of extropy will be next to nothing. If humans have 1) free energy 2) free information, and 3) backup copies of themselves, maybe they won't kill and hurt each other in an effort to live.

In either case, its up to the humans to get the ball rolling. If they are unwilling to put forth the necessary effort to save themselves, screw 'em. I sure don't need 'em anymore. •

*The term "extropy" was coined by Max More, editor of the excellent *Extropy* (sample \$4, PO Box 77243, Los Angeles, CA 90007-0243). Extropy is a process that seems, at first glance, to conflict with the Second Law of Thermodynamics, which states that the matter and energy in a closed system (such as the Universe) will ultimately degrade to a state of inert uniformity. Extropy represents an increase in the complexity of a portion of a closed system. To achieve this, however, the complexity of the entire system must degrade. In other words, entropy can be considered the waste product of an extropic process.

CHAOS



Magic Rocks is a day-glo alien planetscape shrunk to fishbowl size. Eventually the water gets murky, the stalagmites break, and they dry up on the shelf alongside the Sea Monkeys.

Watching the Lava-Lamp's primordial blobs slowly break apart and merge with the warm center of the mother blob is a delightfully mindless brain massage. But wouldn't it be great if the lamp had control knobs on it?

When Johnny Rotten sang "No Fun" at the Sex Pistols' final show in San Francisco, he must have been thinking about how enjoyable Sea Monkeys, Magic Rocks and Lava-Lamps are after playing with them for five minutes.

The picture on the Sea Monkeys kit shows a friendly, pink family of thumb-sized Creatures from the Black Lagoon, standing

adds fractal Magic Rocks to the menu, and lots more.

Chaos science explores the twisted strip of activity boiling between disorder's homogenizing grinder and order's dead scaffolding. Rucker's advice to chaos explorers has been "Seek ye the gnarl!" *Chaos: The Software* is an entry ticket and guidebook to the gnarl.

Chaos has six sections, titled "Mandelbrot Sets," "Magnets and Pendulum," "Strange Attractors," "The Chaos Game," "Fractal Forgeries" and "Toy Universes." The sections are controlled with various pushbuttons. The *Tweak* button sets chaoticity parameters. Coloring, sound effects, etc. are controlled with the *Options* button. The *File* button stores

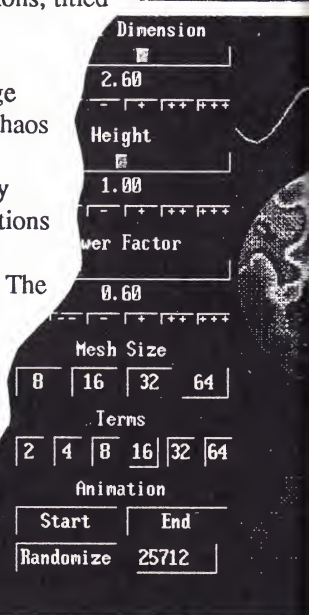
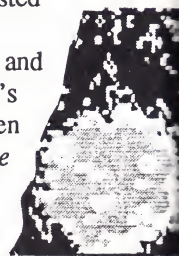
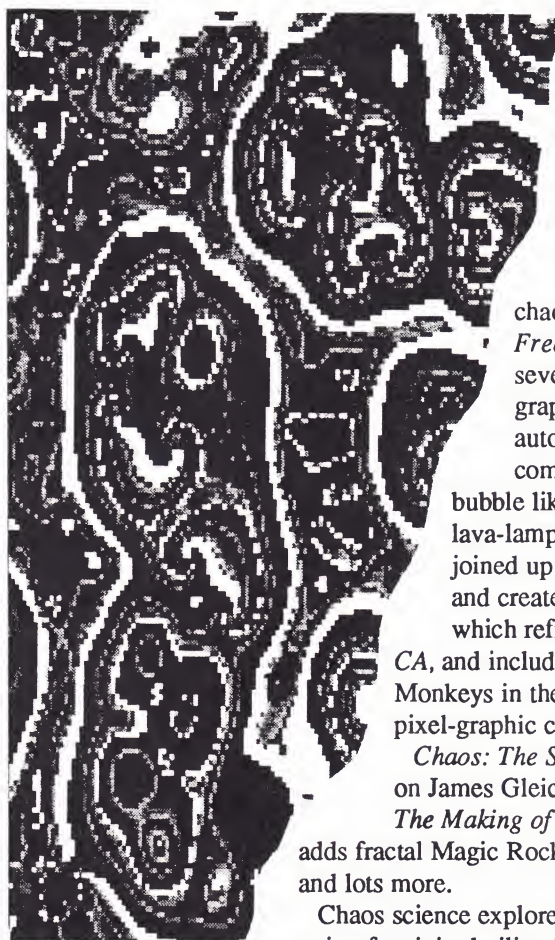
Rudy Rucker, Mathenaut in the Advanced Technology department of Autodesk, called his first commercial

chaos program *Freestyle CA*. It had several character-graphics cellular automata that made computer screens

bubble like high speed lava-lamps. Later, he joined up with Autodesk and created *CA Lab*,

which refined *Freestyle* CA, and included digital Sea Monkeys in the form of pixel-graphic cellular automata.

Chaos: The Software, based on James Gleick's book *Chaos: The Making of a New Science*,





images to .GIF files and saves set-up parameters. The

context-sensitive, on-line help is excellent. Gleik's engaging introductions and Rucker's explanations of the math behind the programs make the 240-page manual useful and fun to read.

Chaos is best run with a mouse.

The Sections

The Mandelbrot Set. Almost everyone has seen a photograph of the Mandelbrot set - it looks like a needle-nosed flea with a fat butt. Infinitely complex and crammed to the gills with haunting beauty, it can be fully described by a 10-line algorithm. The Mandelbrot program in *Chaos* is like a microscope with various filters and kaleidoscopic attachments for zooming, color bandwidth tweaking, and sound generating, which can be used to examine the strange fleas on the back of this strange flea.

Magnets and Pendulum. This section simulates a set of disk-shaped magnets on a tabletop and a pendulum with an iron bob swinging from above. The number of magnets, their charge and location are user-specified. The "basins of attraction" function maps a fractal-like color map of the start-point end-point relationships for the bob. The chaotically moving bob reminds me of myself as I walk around the building where I work. The coffee urn and computers are positively charged magnets, and I orbit them often. Obnoxious pests have negative charges, and I fly right by them. If they start moving towards me, I run away.

Strange Attractors. A point moving thru a chaotic system never returns to a previously occupied location. This kind of dynamical system is called a strange attractor. Strange attractors are the reason we can't make long-term predictions about the weather, no matter how accurate our measuring equipment

is. *Chaos* has controls to view and tweak several famous strange attractors. You can also play with logistic maps, pulses and humps, produce weird music with the sound option, and save interesting parameter sets to disk files.

The Chaos Game. Oxford mathematician Michael Barnsley invented a way to produce organic-looking images by randomly applying basic rules repeatedly. With *Chaos*, you can play Barnsley's Chaos Game to develop nautilus shells, ferns, clouds, mud blobs, and countless other shapes.

Fractal Forgeries. Chaos scientists like to classify natural objects by their fractional dimensions. Coasts, being more than lines, yet less than planes, are assigned fractional dimensions between 1 and 2, depending on their level of chaoticity. Clouds and mountains are between 2 and 3. With *Fractal Forgeries*, you specify a fractional dimension to generate clouds, mountains and planets. You can even specify a range of values and render a short animated cartoon to illustrate the effects of changing the parameters. Instant Magic Rocks!

Toy Universes. Cellular automata are similar to petri dishes of bacteria. By using a rule table specifying the behavior of a cell based on its current state and the state of its neighbors, the *Toy Universes* program will produce fantastic patterned images depicting the development of colonies of artificial lifers.

Finally, a Warning. This software will change you. Your freshly-mutated brain will put a chaos-spin on everything it encounters. Clouds and groups of playing schoolchildren become cellular automata. Snowflakes and galaxies become Julia sets. Eventually, the theory will invade your dreams, and you'll experience *yourself* as the ultimate chaotic system. •

James Gleick's **CHAOS - THE SOFTWARE**, (for DOS systems, \$60.00, Autodesk, 2320 Marinship Way, Sausalito, CA 94965)

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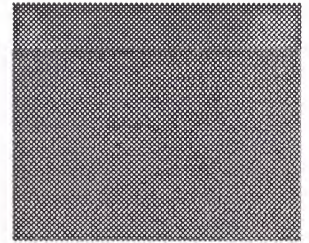
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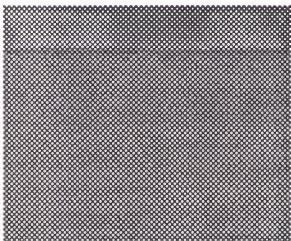
janey

Fritsche

muchoeverything

What's your background?

I have a B.S. in math, and I minored in art. I guess all through my grade school and high school years I enjoyed both of them and when the time came to make a decision about what I wanted to focus on I ended up studying math. My high school actually gave me a scholarship for art, but I ended up not accepting it. The practical side won out on that one. It was mainly because I was afraid of being a starving artist. But the whole time I've been working with computers, I've had an overriding desire to integrate computers, music and art. When



The prefab lifestyle waits for all of us. It takes no effort to live it, you just graduate from school and then approach corporations and offer yourself as organ tissue. One of them will decide that you are hypo-allergenic enough to fit into their structure and graft you onto some part of their corporate body. Then you do your thing, usually collecting, processing, and transferring data (if you went to one kind of school), or collecting, processing, and transferring matter (if you went to the other kind). The data or material you handle every day will probably interest you only because by doing it well you will be fed, clothed and housed by the corporate body you serve.

Janey Fritsche is one of those rare people who has pruned herself from maladaptive corporate bodies by designing a lifestyle that synergistically integrates playing, learning and creating. Through a combination of technical knowledge, artistic talent and powerful spirituality, Janey has created a life for herself that's a lot of fun and Pro-Gaia. Her multimedia creations are rich databases that transmit highly creative visions of processes taking place throughout our galaxy, from the biological activities in the rainforests of Borneo to the eminent colonization of Mars.

*Besides developing her own software/art projects, Janey is working with Apple's Discovery project, and consulting for LucasArts. In October, she will travel to Japan for the Hightech Art Planning (HARP) symposium and make a presentation on her multimedia project about the Penan of Borneo called **Blowpipes and Bulldozers**. After the conference, she will head for Kathmandu to help out on a project that provides funding for Nepali women so that they can attend college. - Mark*



Hypercard came out, that seemed to be a real turning point, an opening for me to start changing direction in what I was doing.

Is that when you started getting jazzed about the personal computer?

I had already bought a Mac SE, the year before. I mainly bought that to log onto the WELL (*The WELL is a great bulletin board run by Whole Earth Review - ed.*) I only used it for that and a little bit of word processing for a while. I co-host the spirituality conference and the muchomedia conference on the WELL, so I go in there every day. Through the WELL, I've met a bunch of interesting people and a lot of deadheads. I ended up working with Mickey Hart on his book, *Drumming at the Edge of Magic*, which was a lot of fun.

How did you contribute to his book?

This was when I had this meltdown as far as doing corporate gigs. I couldn't really justify it any more on a soulful level. I finished up a contract I had for a very large corporation, and I took about six months off. In that time I met Mickey Hart and Fred Lieberman (a professor of ethnomusicology at UC Santa Cruz). They were both working on the *Drumming at The Edge of Magic* book, and asked me if I wanted to help out. So, I worked with them for about three months, doing general organizing and research, and setting them up on the WELL so they could automatically upload and download the manuscript.

What is *Drumming at the Edge of Magic* about?

It was a huge book then, and it's actually been split off into two books. *Drumming at the Edge* focuses on Mickey's personal story of his journey into the spirit of percussion and what kind of magical things happen with the drummers and the listeners. It has a lot of wonderful storytelling by drummers around the world that Mickey has jammed with and befriended. The second book, *Planet Drum*, is loaded with images and is a bit more historical. He delves into myths and some very old

traditional information about drumming and rituals.

So you can attribute the WELL as one thing that helped you get out of your corporate straightjacket. It's a good example of technology helping to elevate one's spiritual side. What aspects of spirituality are you most interested in?

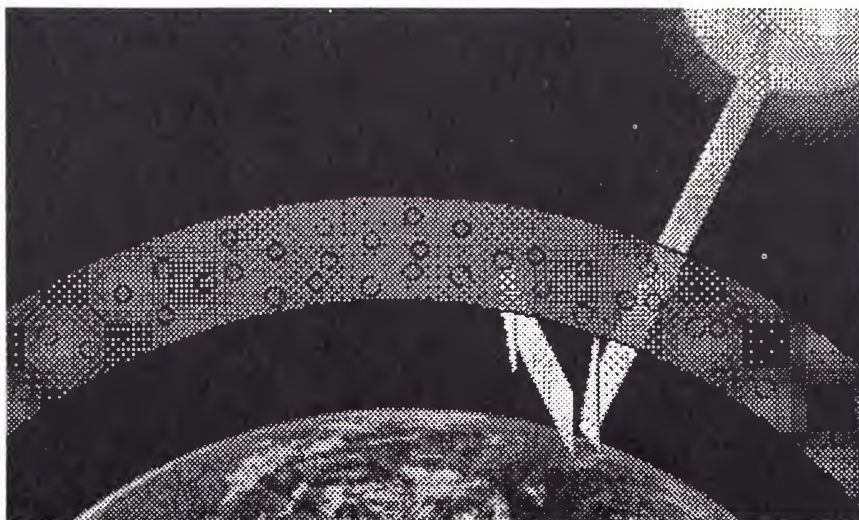
I'm most interested in the kind of fringe things that have to do with ancient knowledge that I think we've denied for centuries, ever since the rise of scientific thought and Cartesian analysis, and the denial of the intuitive side of thinking. I guess it was around the 17th century when that started happening. With all the witches being burned at the stake, it became a very strident view to steer away from anything that couldn't be charted on an X-Y-Z graph. I'm interested in tapping into ancient knowledge, such as the *I Ching*. By the way, in the spring *Whole Earth Review* I reviewed a software package based on the *I Ching* called *Synchronicity*. It's a great use of the computer. The program is beautifully done. The graphics and music give you the feeling of being in a Japanese garden.

After you became involved in Mickey Hart's books, did you just walk away from your corporate existence, or

"...it looks like Mars had an atmosphere very much like the Earth did four billion years ago. It looks like it was once a thriving planet."

gradually shift away?

I'm actually doing a lot of work for Apple, but it feels different from the other jobs I was doing, because for me it's not walking away from a corporate environment so much as finding an environment that supports my interests. I'm interested in the process of my work, but also the content. I want to do things that have significance for me personally and contribute positively to the way the world is going, rather than just earning a lot of money for corporations that aren't necessarily very attuned to the environment or the implications of what their business is doing. Also, what I wanted to do was get away from strictly doing a lot of programming and analysis work for large mainframes and start getting involved artistically. So, what I did was learn *Hypercard*, and developed a graphic interactive *Hypercard* stack. Then I sent it to Apple's Multimedia Lab in



In the last 20 or so years, the logging has gotten so intense that there's a very small fraction left of Penan living as hunters and gatherers in the rainforest.

San Francisco. I had met with those guys once before. I'd thought of doing a project with Joseph Campbell's archives, with text, interviews, video, slides, and animation. It would be focused on his teachings and his rich archives of about 13,000 slides. This was a project Mickey Hart had suggested to me, because he knew that there was a lot of interest in it. He was a friend of Campbell's, and he knew that the archives had ended up at the Jung Institute. So I hooked up with the folks at the Jung Institute and we all went to Apple to talk to them about it, but also to see what type of work they were doing there. As it turns out, the Campbell project didn't happen; the group at the Jungian Institute was absorbed in working on a book at that time, and they didn't feel they could tackle something else big then. However, it opened the door for me by meeting with those folks and by developing a demo. I was given a lot of responsibility at the Multimedia Lab pretty quickly and ended up being the production manager for "Life Story". It was a joint collaboration of Apple, Lucasfilm and the Smithsonian. It won the "CINDY Best of Show" award this year and the "Gold Award" at the International New York Film and Video Festival last year. It was a rather legendary place to be working at that time.

What kind of media do you use for your multimedia projects?

Mostly I've been working with a combination of video disk and CD-ROM. You can put 52,000 slides or 30 minutes of animation on a video disk.

CD-ROM is the delivery platform, containing all the software and text information. Since CD-ROMs are so slow, it's best to move the information to a hard disk of some kind.

Tell me about the thing you're doing for the Smithsonian Institute.

It's called the *Mars Explorers*. Context Productions started working on it in January 1990. The idea was to develop a multimedia application that simulates a mission to Mars. NASA Ames has been the primary sponsor. Jack Sculley and I were the two that developed the prototype. Then we took it to the Smithsonian and when they saw it they really liked it, and indicated that they'd be interested in putting it in their Air & Space Museum in the Mars gallery that they're opening up in the summer of '92. We are working on the design document to show the four interactive design phases we want to feature in the gallery.

So when somebody sits down in front of this thing, what's going to happen?

There are four different sections to it. They have to do with the process of getting to Mars, and look at the reasons why we want to go to Mars. What is it like being on Mars, how do you survive as a human being? Some places you might be sitting, but others you may be standing. It will all be interactive. There will be a lot of video and animation.

Did you do all the research on Mars yourself?

Jack is really kind of a Mars wizard. He worked for NASA Ames for a year or two and his main focus was on Mars. The first couple of months that I worked on it I spent a lot of time researching Mars. Reading books about it and looking at videos. We were very lucky because we were doing a lot of work with Chris McKay and Carol Stoker at NASA. Those guys are their leading Martians (laughter). If you see anything about Mars on TV, you're going to see one or both of them interviewed.

They're really great. They were a lot of fun and they were very, very helpful in providing information, giving us ideas, giving us good insight, and helping provide financial support for the project.

A few years ago I read about some people who were proposing to cover the poles of Mars with black plastic, so the ice would melt and give Mars an atmosphere and warm up the planet. Have you heard about that?

I've heard of various plans for trying to build an atmosphere on Mars. They range from trying to melt the polar ice caps to bashing it with something like a meteor. One of the things about these plans is that they bring up a lot of ethical questions. Like do we have a right to even do that to a planet?

It's interesting also to talk to the folks at NASA about the search for life on Mars. When they sent up those Mariner and Viking space shots, they were very interested in seeing if there were indications that there had ever been any life on Mars. Of course, they came up empty handed.

Maybe the Martians didn't like the radioactive chicken soup being used as bait.

They landed in places where it was unlikely that there was ever life. There's all sorts of outflow channels on Mars now that indicate that there was water at one point. But in selecting a sight, they were more interested in finding a flat area where they could land safely. From indications, it looks like Mars had an atmosphere very much like the Earth did four billion years ago. It looks like it was once a thriving planet.

What happened to all the water?

That's what everybody wants to know. And one of the reasons scientists want to go there is to find out what we can learn about the future of the Earth. The two scientists we were working with had two different reasons. Chris McKay wanted to go for the search for life. He's a big exobiologist. He still wants to look. If for nothing else, to see if there are fossils. Carol Stoker wants to

go because she thinks it would be really cool to have a colony on Mars. Being the esoteric person that I am, I wonder if Mars has actually seeded the Earth. There's been some discussion that they've found meteorites on Earth from Mars. And there's speculation about Martians? Why aren't they there now, or are they there now? Are they living underground? And of course there's the face on Mars.

Yeah, that big rock face looking upwards towards space?

Yes. That's a real intriguing mystery because at this point, with the information we have, there's no way to know if it's just a coincidence that this jumble of rocks looks just like a face, or if it was carefully sculpted by some kind of intelligence. There are two images that came from the Viking landers. Unfortunately they're both at about the same angle and the same time of day. And if one had been shot at a different angle or a different time of day, we'd have been able to see the other side of the face. And if the other side of the face is identical to the side we can see clearly, it would really raise a lot of interesting questions. Chris McKay gave me a huge portfolio of information on it. It contained all the correspondence that he's had about the face with all sorts of scientific organizations from around the world. Inquiries, speculations, scientific research. Some people get emotionally involved with the outcome. They've kind of invested part of themselves in the outcome. I think Chris is good at taking an unbiased look in this issue. Of course there's been a lot of really hokey information written about it, stuff that stands out like sore thumb when you read it. But there's also been some good, intense scientific work that's not too anal either. A lot of scientific investigation goes to the other extreme. He thinks there's been a lot of interesting work done with image processing regarding the face. You know what his stance is about the possibility that it's been sculpted by intelligence? It's that you can't tell. It's a binary situation.

Either it is or it isn't, and with the information given right now we don't know.

You completed a project about Borneo recently. What's going on with that?

Blowpipes and Bulldozers is a project I developed mostly in the fall and summer of last year. I had to wear an awful lot of hats in the process of building it. I was doing everything: producing, designing, programming, doing the graphic design and the sound design and all the digitizing. The inspiration for the project came from a video that John Werner produced and directed, which I saw at the Mill Valley Film Festival. It became the basis for the videodisc I had pressed and John was terrific in providing me with information and encouragement throughout building the prototype.

The focus is on the Penan, an endangered tribe of hunters and gatherers in Borneo, and their rainforest homeland. They've been in the same rain forest for 30 to 40 thousand years, living the same lifestyle. In the last 20 or so years, the logging has gotten so intense, that there's a very small fraction left of Penan living as hunters and gatherers in the rainforest. It's cultural genocide. The culture and the people are dying off. They've been exposed to all sorts of diseases and they're no longer eating properly. They can't go out and gather vegetation and hunt the wild game they used to be able to hunt. Because so many trees have been felled, what happens is all the animals run deeper into the forest. Now they've had to stabilize their home life. Instead of being nomads, they're living in longhouses. Sometimes it takes a week's trek into the forest to get where the wild boar are, if they can find any at all. And that means they have to leave their women and children behind for a long time. It's gotten to be a really difficult situation.

One of the things the project focused on

was extrapolating the implications of what it means to cut down a rainforest. Taking it to a more global view. The levels of carbon dioxide are raised, and it changes our atmospheric conditions. The endangered peoples alone are a major issue, and the biological and botanical losses are huge as well.

What role is the Borneo government taking?

The project is focused on Sarawak, which is part of Malaysia, but it's on the island of Borneo. The government of Sarawak is very corrupt. In fact, one of the interviews on the videodisc is with James Wong, Minister of Environment for Sarawak, and he has one of the largest logging concessions in the country.

NHK, Japan's largest television network, broadcast portions of *Blowpipes & Bulldozers*. They have high quality programs; it's similar to the BBC, has no commercials, and is a very popular network. I'll also be going to Japan in October for the HARP symposium and this project will be the focus of my presentation. It is yet another chance to get a critical environmental message delivered through the doors of high technology. •



**For information
about assisting the
Penan and other
rainforest-dwellers,
contact
RAINFOREST
ACTION
NETWORK, 301
Broadway, Suite A,
San Francisco, CA
94133**

How to Turn an Alpha Male into an Aleph Male (or Even a WoMan) using cheap, safe neurobiological enhancements

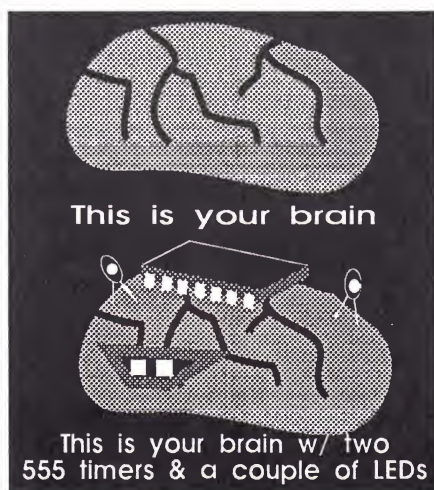
by
Paco Xander Nathan
& Jim Huffman

Editor's note: If you perform the experiments described here on your own head and fry it don't call us and cry your crispy little cinder head off at us. We are not responsible. Have fun! - Mark

Yes, you too can build brain toys. They're cheap and fun. Of course they won't look as slick as the \$500 models, and with a product out like

Alpha Odyssey's Day Dreamer that is so wonderful and inexpensive already, you may ask "Why build anything else?" Well, some people just like to try hacking their own optical poems. You might build one to wire into your PC, your toaster, or even another flesh unit. Besides, you won't hyperventilate as much...

Okay, for the last time:



Any questions? You can buy spores for this stuff at "America's Technology Store" for less than one month's subscription to cable TV, no problem. Go for the grab bag parts. Just give them a fake address, though, so you won't have to deal with all their fetid catalogs. Back on the Neuro-Logic Frontier, most brain toys work off of two basic principles. The easiest to achieve is called a Ganzfeld Effect. By diffusing optical sensory input for a little while, your eyes can go numb to the "Real World" and open up to visuals, lucid dreams, scary monsters, etc. A symphony composer friend of ours named Matt Ridgeway tours the country with a mind show where he puts goggles, cut out of ping-pong balls, on everyone in the audience. Then he blasts them with a MIDI light & music orchestral until all the fine folks start giggling and gasping. Check out Matt sometime.

You can try this at home, too. Just buy a couple ping-pong balls, cut them in half, and tape them over your eyes. You'll go blind for a little while, but it wears off. BTW, don't use the part of the ball with the little trademark on it since that really blows the effect. Repeat to yourself three times:

diffusion, diffusion, diffusion. Just like how all the alien chicks in the original Star Trek looked so dreamy. Same principle.

The next component of most toys uses phase distortion to induce particular states. It's kind of like the magnets used to suspend Gaian globes in mid-air, available through just about any airline magazine. A typical WoMan's brain tends to whirl about within a few general frequencies:

- Alpha 5-th Circuit Guru Lust
- Beta Dopamine-Schizo-Lizardness
- Theta Grokabilly Conceptualizing
- Delta You Are No Longer Conscious
- name it... Other Things To Be Discussed...

You've probably read about brain wave states all over the place, as The Targets for brain toys. Although Jim sez it's a double whammy since you CAN get the brain to produce in two modes simultaneously, thus becoming awake/asleep. Careful whom you talk with after operating in Full Duplex for a while, since you may be chatting with a dream entity. Hint: if It fades in and out, don't ask It for a date. So much for that famous "in and out urge," eh? And whatever you do, don't introduce any new friends you meet at these parties to "peace officers" or "licensed medical professionals".

Great, well since we know the right frequencies to trip on, why not just pump electrons in through our craniums at desired rates? We've tried that; it hurts. A function generator, some gold earrings and a lot of KY Jelly can get you higher than Wulf Zendik, but it hurts. (It was Jim's idea to do it, honest.) At least it MHzertz enough for us to wait and not tell you the real story until next issue.

You see, novelty organs are dynamic. For instance, every time a thought goes through your Ugliest Body Part, your brain changes, irrevocably. Sorry, there is no going back. We've just mutated you forever by writing that. Brains function in a dynamic, adaptive manner, so they DON'T like exact repetition. Direct electrical potentials can "bore you to tears" if not done properly, and repetition plays a big part in the problem. On the other hand... music has a groove, stories employ hooks, a good dancer uses style, etc.

Effective brain toys require "motion" as well, so designers use our heads' adaptiveness to our/their advantage. Check out Todd Rundgren's *Flowfazer™* on the Mac for an excellent example of dynamic design. Brains enjoy tuning into these kinds of changing patterns. Plus, brain toys, unlike today's PC screens, can play in

stereo. Suppose a light blinks near your left eye at a random rate centered around 7.8 Hz and another light blinks near your right eye at about 8.2 Hz. The brain synthesizes 8.0 Hz Alpha between the two, and doesn't get bored in the process. Similar phase distortion effects can be used on stereo music, a-la those ubiquitous success (sick-sex) tapes. "Burn a hole through the center of my mind and let all the bad thoughts out." (Camper Van Beethoven)

Okay, mutants, we've got the goods for you now. Just get some shaded goggles (diffusion) and wire up this little timer-LED circuit into it (optical phase distortion), then tune into the frequencies you choose. Need some neuroxmit to kick start your day? Try new BetaZoid! How 'bout some modulator to smooth out the works? Tune

Black'' call it a Lie Detector in order to perversely obfuscate their True Purpose. So buy one, then try it with a friend...

Galvanic skin resistance changes suddenly as a person becomes stressed (telling a lie) or excited (having a good day). The cheapo RShack units come with two finger attachments. Same hand, one user is intended. Of course this means that experiments with two DNA-Suits, connected, are in order. The measured circuit resistance drops as either/both person(s) become(s) excited(s) and also as the electrical/physical/etc. connection between them improves. Galvanometer detections set off a speaker-screacher that most small animals truly hate. NB: the machine likes to have skin touching skin. Moist skin works best. Body oils are optional. We'll leave the rest up to you. Just keep your thumbs screwed and lock the ferret in the next room for a few hours.

Side notes on Day Dreamer:

If you pickup one of these exquisite units from Kelly Green, here's a few fun things we've found to do with it...

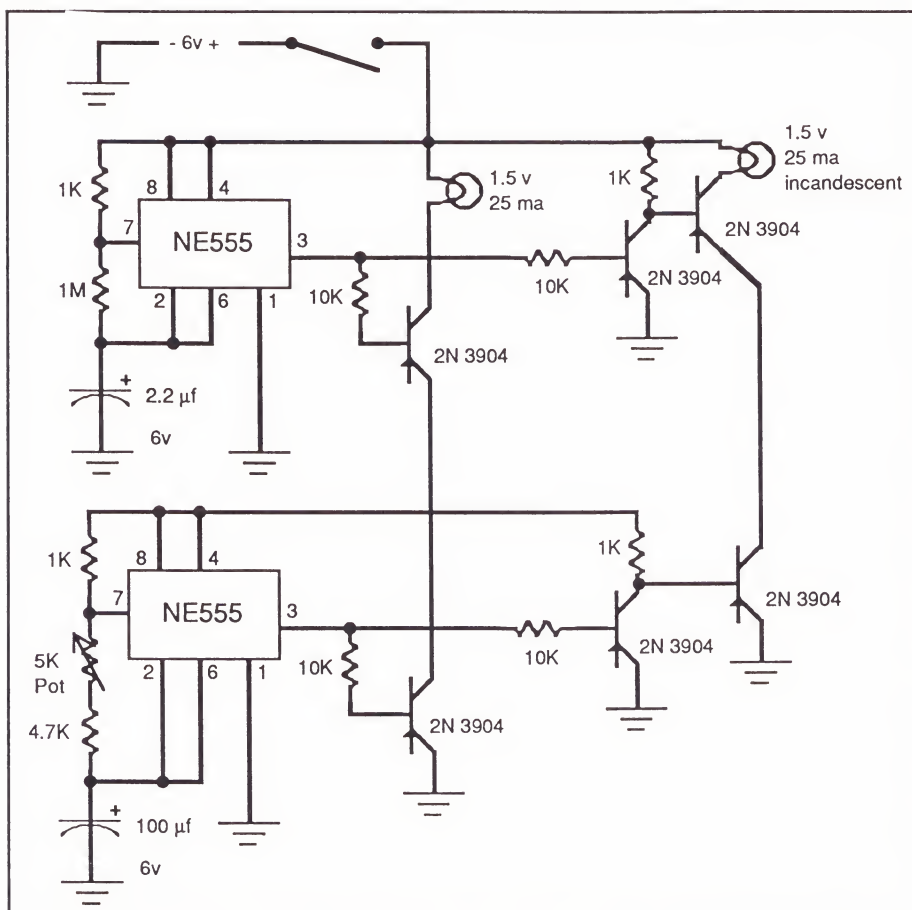
(Kudos to neuronaut extraordinaire Jack Kidwell). Eyes closed: sensitize with normal use in relatively low light, ie. point toward pavement in daytime, then once you hit visuals, aim into a stronger light source such as near the general direction of Sol. It brings on VIVID colors and VARIANT geometries. Eyes opened: view into a mirror, and also take a look at Todd Rundgren's Flowfazer™ with the Dreamer swirling.

Happy sailing!

P.S. Don't use our wares and ideas if you have epilepsy or any other kind of neurological disorder, since it will almost certainly cause a seizure. •

Paco Xander Nathan - writes soft wares from deep within the forests of central Texas for a neuroelectronic firm called Odin Corp., which does not endorse any of the authors' remarks or opinions.

Jim Huffman - who personally denies any knowledge of this stuff, is program manager for neuroscience R&D for a large microprocessor manufacturer in Austin, Texas.



to AlphaStim, Stereo FM 8 Hz on your BrainToy dial!

How it works: You drill holes into the shades/goggles enough to wire one lamp near each eye. The lamps are switched between left/right eyes at Theta rates, and flashed on/off for both eyes at Beta to Alpha rates, depending on how you tune the 5K potentiometer.

This is a basic circuit... the entrails, or neuroelectronic diploid gene complex if you will, of those cushy \$500 models. With a bit of twistedness and a few all night sessions, you can probably innovate a combination of basic circuits into something Truly Fascinating. Like audio phase distortion that can be publicly broadcast. Stay tuned for Microprocessor Control and "How to employ technology that has been suppressed by the US government."

Speaking of conspiracies, when you cruise the "House of Realistic Fun" to pick up your 555 chips, ask if they have a "galvanic skin resistance biofeedback device" in stock. It costs about \$15 and comes in a really keen black plastic case the size of your palm. They call it a Micronta Biofeedback Monitor. The "Men In

MAD

by Robert Anton Wilson

Men Against Defamation

Statement of Purposes

Men Against Defamation (MAD) opposes all forms of Androphobia.

We define Androphobia as the transfer to all males of the negative stereotypes that the Ku Klux Klan and other Neanderthal type assign only to black males -- mental inferiority, emotional childishness, brutality, sub-human status, criminality, sexual violence etc.

We thus regard androphobia as a transmutation from racism to sexism, an "advance" that is not an advance at all.

MAD does not oppose feminism; on the contrary, we reject all forms of group stereotyping and dehumanization.

Androphobia has no intrinsic or necessary link with Feminism. Marx said that "anti-semitism is the socialism of fools." Similarly, we regard Androphobia as the Feminism of imbeciles.

We oppose Androphobia and psychological gendercide. We believe it underlies the widespread male depression which *Brain/Mind Bulletin* recently described as an "epidemic" -- and the soaring suicide rate among boys and young males (six times the suicide rate of young females, according to the U.S. Center for Health Statistics.) Few want to grow up male in a society where maleness is defined as a sign of inferiority or criminality. If anybody cares to argue that Androphobia plays no role in these awful statistics, just imagine a society in which red-heads, instead of some traditional minority, were stigmatized as mentally inferior, emotionally unstable, probably criminal etc. Would you be surprised to find a high suicide rate among red-heads in such an environment?

We look forward to a day when sanity and common sense triumph over bias and all men and women, all people of all races, are judged one at a time and

not condemned by group stereotypes.

The Anti-Semite and the Anti-Andrist

In *The Anti Semite and the Jew*, Jean Paul Sartre points out a

fundamental defect in the logic of anti-semitism which applies also to other forms of stereotyping and group libel.

Condensed, Sartre's argument runs: If all Jews are the same, this must be pre-determined by biology or other forces beyond human control. In that case, it makes no sense to hate Jews for being Jewish, anymore than it would make sense to hate dogs for being dogs or morally condemn cows for being cows. If, on the other hand, there is no predestination involved, if free will exists, then all Jews are not the same and must be judged one at a time, and the case for anti-semitism collapses entirely.

Yet the anti-semite argues on the basis of some form of predestination while illogically espousing the hatred and moral condemnation that would only be reasonable if free will existed.

The same analysis applies to the anti-andrist, who has substituted male-hating for Jew-hating.

If men are predestined to be inferior to women, sub-human etc. then this is not their fault; one may regard them with pity or contempt but not, logically, with hatred or moral condemnation. If on the other hand, free choice is possible, some men are different from other men, and males must be judged one at a time, whereupon the anti-andrist position is refuted.

Yet the anti-andrist continues to argue on the basis of some form of gender predestination while illogically espousing the hatred and moral condemnation that would only be reasonable if free will existed.

"Some people are suffering acutely from lack of scapegoats. They can't persecute Blacks anymore. They can't persecute Jews anymore. They can't even persecute the handicapped. The

first one to start an anti-midget campaign can be elected President, just using the slogan "Go out and kick a midget today!" - Lenny Bruce

Did you know that:

- Over 99 percent of the men in the United States today have never been convicted of any violent crime or served any time in prison?
- Important Feminists of the past include such males as Clarence Darrow, John Stuart Mill and Bertrand Russell?
- Males including Martin Luther King Jr., Mahatma Gandhi and Sean McBride have played important roles in the struggle for world peace?
- Although Shakespeare, Dante and Homer were males, they wrote poetry generally considered as good as anything by Hilda Doolittle?
- Beethoven, Mozart and Bach were men and yet they wrote good music?
- Males such as Newton, Einstein and Archimedes made contributions to science as important as those of Marie Curie?
- The cure for Yellow Fever, saving the lives of millions, was found by a man, Major Walter Reed?
- At no time in history except the present was maleness considered a shame, a disgrace or a sign of inferiority?
- All the "major" religions (those having millions of followers) were founded by males born in Asia? (Confucius, Lao-Tsu, Buddha, Jesus, Mohammed.)
- Men were responsible for such basic discoveries as the sailing ship, the compass, the steam engine, the electric light, the AC generator, the computer and many others? And males created over 90% of mathematics?

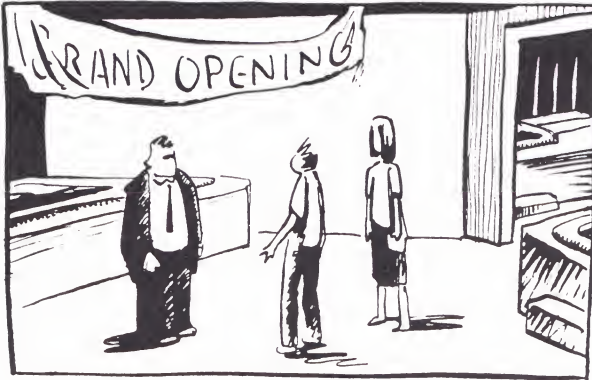
"I am a man. Hath not a man eyes? Hath not a man hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? Fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer, as a woman is? If you prick us, do we not bleed? If you tickle us, do we not laugh? If you poison us, do we not die?" - Shakespeare, The Merchant of Venice (paraphrased) •

TOXIC HOT TUB

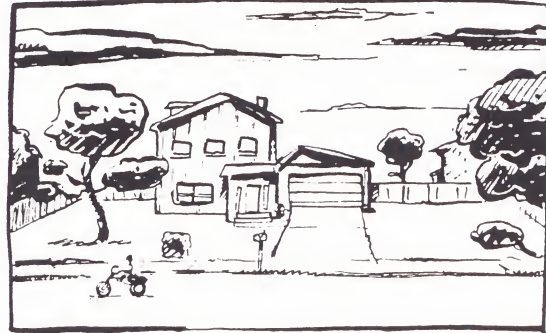
(THE MOVIE I SAW IN MY DREAM.)

DIRECTED BY STEVEN SPIELBERG AND STARRING ROY SCHIEDER AND GLENN CLOSE.

A COUPLE DECIDES TO BUY A HOT TUB FOR THEIR BASEMENT.



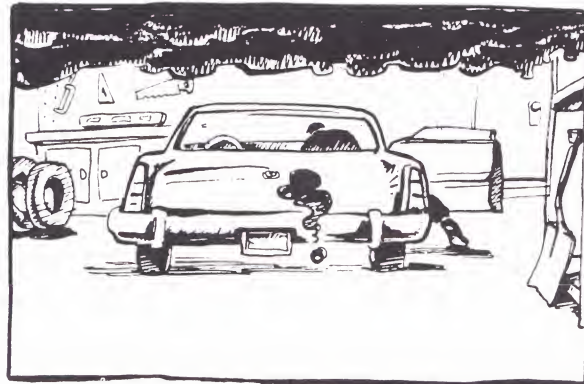
THEIR HOUSE WAS BUILT ON AN INDIAN BURIAL MOUND.



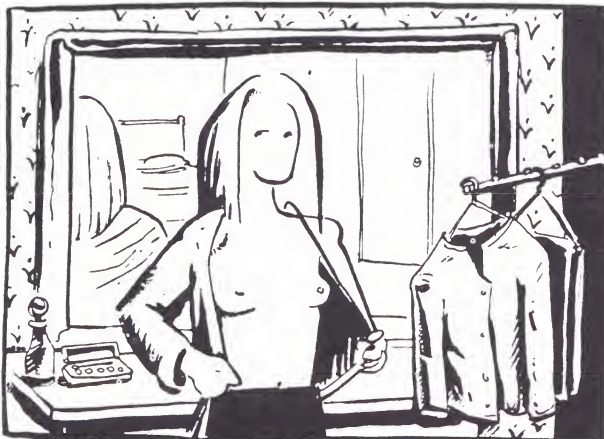
THE PLUMBER INSTALLING THE HOT TUB MISSES THE MAIN SEWER PIPE AND INSTEAD STRIKES AN UNAUTHORIZED TOXIC WASTE PIPELINE.



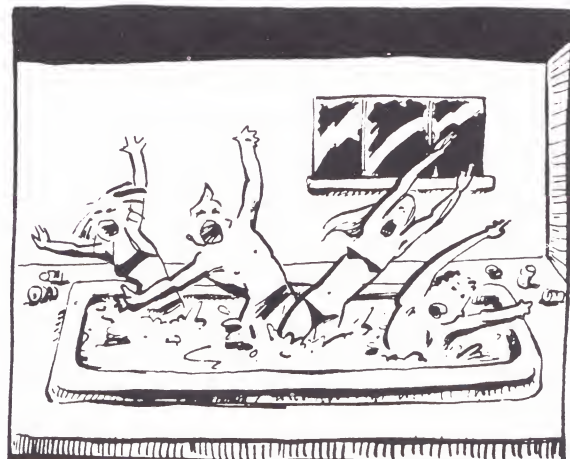
DUE TO A BAD MARRIAGE, THE HOT TUB SALESMAN COMMITS SUICIDE.



MS. CLOSE MUST EXPOSE HER BREASTS AT SOME POINT DURING THE FILM.



NEIGHBORHOOD TEENAGERS, BATHING WITHOUT CONSENT, ARE THE FIRST TO BE VICTIMIZED.



DURING A SUSPENSEFUL SEQUENCE, THE TOXIC WATER MINGLES WITH ARCAINE ENERGIES TO CREATE A HIDEOUS HOT TUB MONSTER, DESIGNED BY THE JIM HENSON STUDIOS.



CONFRONTED WITH THE NEWS OF THE TOXIC WASTE PIPELINE, THE GOVERNOR AND MAYOR DISAVOW ALL KNOWLEDGE.

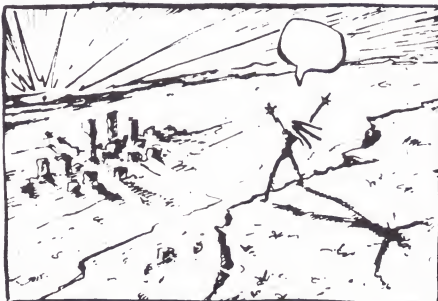


AN ANCIENT AND MYSTERIOUS WISE MAN HAS THE KEY TO STOPPING THE MONSTER.

HE DEPARTS WITH A SEVERE REPRIMAND FOR MODERN SOCIETY.



(CAMEO BY AL PACINO)



THE CRISIS IS OVER BUT WE ARE LEFT WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THAT THE MONSTER MIGHT COME BACK MEANER THAN EVER, PROVIDED BOX OFFICE SALES ARE HIGH ENOUGH TO WARRANT A SEQUEL.



© T. MOTLEY '89

The **DuPont Corporation**, run by one of the richest families in the known universe, should be congratulated for digging deep into their pockets to help support the child of a former DuPont employee who died after exposure to *Freon 113* (a solvent developed by DuPont) during company-run experiments. DuPont has generously agreed to pay the youngster **\$37.50 a week** until he turns 18 years old. This altruistic gesture from the multi-billionaire family should serve as a reminder that the plutocrats *do* have their minions' best interests at heart. *Source - USA Today 8/30/91*

ANOTHER STUNT FROM THE LICKSPITTLE SENATOR OF THE CENTURY:

"The staff of Du Pont senator Joe Biden, wants to give the government the power to intercept and decrypt any encrypted file in any domestically manufactured software product. Such a tool, they argue, would be vital to intercept terrorists and drug dealers who use bulletin boards and other on-line services to do their ugly deeds." - PC WEEK May 6th, 1991, page 134



BIRDS OF A FEATHER CLUB TOGETHER

The following excerpts are from Los Angeles Assistant Police Chief Roland Vernon's delightful Christian instructional cassettes:

On Wives: "We spend a lot of time talking to your husbands, wives, about earning your submissiveness, about really fulfilling God's intended role so you will *want* to be submissive to them. The Bible teaches that."

On children: "You must break them. If it takes beatings, you give them beatings. I've spanked kids as old as 16 to 17 years old. I'll spank them. I mean hit them with a boat oar. It's solid. I haven't broken one yet. If given free rein, every child would grow up to be a killer, a rapist, a thief."

On freedom: "It's difficult to deal with crime and anti-social behavior in a free society. You can grant units of freedom, but when you get to a certain point, you get to a point of diminishing returns."

We pay these idiots money to do this to us?

California Governor Pete Wilson was pleased that his new junk-food tax was recently put into law. Donuts are exempt from the tax, while brownies are not, and bananas are non-taxable unless skewered on a stick and dipped in chocolate. Muffins and animal crackers are not junk food, but Ritz crackers and granola bars are. When G. Bush comes to CA to hog out on fried pork rinds, he'll be pleased to know that they are exempt from the new tax.

Who cut the cheese?

The following effluvium recently exuded from one of Chicago Police Commissioner LeRoy Martin's body orifices:

"We need to take a look at it [the Bill of Rights], and from time-to-time, we may want to curtail some of those rights."

TV News Ain't No Good

Carla is an intern writer for a television news station in Denver. One day a Spanish-speaking man called and told her that he had an important piece of news and he wanted a reporter to come down right away to film it. "Well, what is it?" Carla asked him.

"I have a hair growing from my head that is harder than steel," he told her. "The doctor says he's seen nothing like it! He tried to cut it with a pair of scissors, but failed. It is truly amazing! If you don't believe me I will come down to the station."

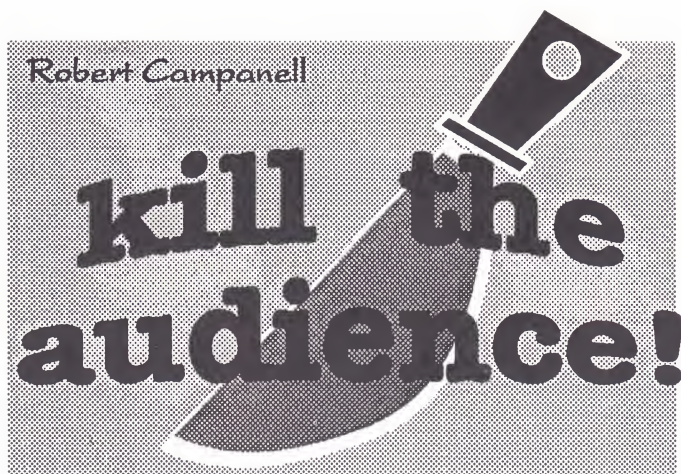
Carla thought this sounded great. She asked the man to hold on the line, and went over to the news manager and told him about the man with a steel hair.

"Forget it," he said. "Tell him to call the *National Enquirer*."

When Carla told me about what had happened, I asked her to call him back and we'd cover this important news in *BOING BOING*. But she said she never got his phone number. :-)

I DARE You to Turn Your Mother Over to The Secret Police

On September 23, 1991, a ten-year-old Denver boy dialed 911 and told the operator that he'd found a small bag of marijuana behind some books in his parent's house. His parents were arrested after the police conducted a search and found the pot. Police Officer Tim Mitchell, who runs a DARE program at elementary schools, said the boy did just what he had been taught in his anti-drug DARE class. "He called and said, 'I'm a DARE kid and officer Mitchell Told us this is not right,'" Mitchell said. •



*Robert Campanell is the producer of Cyberia, a cyberpunk computer graphics video animation television series. You can catch it on U*Net (The University Network) See sidebar article - Mark*

Introduction

When most in-the-know people hear the term “cyberpunk,” they think of the genre of science fiction that emerged in the 1980s. Out of the ideas generated by visionary writers such as William Gibson there evolved a pop culture movement of musicians, artists, dancers, fashion designers, writers, and hardware/software designers. These “cybernauts” are developing new methods for creative expression, communicating through new mediums, and blurring the line between art and science.

The cyberpunk pop culture movement is underground, making it difficult for the mass media to recognize it. The key people in the movement are spread out geographically, and even they do not physically recognize one another, they only know fellow cybernauts by the text they post on the nets. The mass media is accustomed to finding out what’s going on in New York, L.A., or London, before they declare a pop culture movement. Cyberspace is in another universe.

Cyberpunk is not a trend, but the beginning of a new cultural era. Cybernauts will set and accelerate the pace of trends, to the point where trends will appear to rise out of nowhere, fly high for ten weeks, and then instantaneously vanish out of sight. This is because of the speed at which information can spread through the nets, and propagate around the world.

Virtual reality has the potential to move pop culture from its current dark age to a new renaissance. When VR networks connect the globe, it will open new avenues of communication with persons who speak different languages. Communication will take place with one standard virtual language using new images that exist only in the virtual world. This may reduce communications barriers between different cultures.

Music

Music is the nucleus of any pop culture movement. Cyberpunk music is a composite of digital sounds and

samples based on the musician’s preferences. A literal music interpretation from Gibson’s dark vision of an integrated-networked world culture tends to have an Industrial sound.

However, the interpretation of being virtually/physically inside the vast computer network takes on a New Age/Random Noise sound. Some musicians focus on their motion inside the network which sounds similar to a fast, yet steady pulsating beat.

What defines cyberpunk music isn’t so much the style preferences of cyberpunk musicians, but the creative behavior. The musicians collaborate through the computer networks, swapping MIDI files, sound samples, and virtual performance environments. MIDI files and digital samples are posted up on the nets, mutated by the downloading musician/hacker, and then re-posted. A good musician/hacker can come up with almost one hundred mutated versions of one sample.

The cyberpunk influence on popular music will use a mutated versions of a hot sample. Pop music songs will become even more indistinguishable from one another because they will all contain the same hot sample. Record companies will have to alter the way they distribute music; by the time they press, package, and distribute a CD, the songs with the former hot sample will just sit on the shelves. The next hot sample will have already appeared on the nets, and the songs with

this new sample will be going strong.

Popular music is in a transition period in which the computer will replace the electric guitar as the primary instrument. Rock and roll broke through because of the invention of the electronic guitar. Cyberpunk musicians are exploiting the invention of electronic music. The cyberpunks are an arrogant and cocky bunch who already know the future of music is here.

Many music critics have a disdain for electronic music because, consciously or unconsciously, they realize rock and roll era is over. The critics are holding on to their life support by claiming the electronic sound is not “real” music because it is programmed by a computer. It’s an illogical argument, because cyberpunk musicians go through the same creative process as any other musician. It’s another example of analog people living in a digital world.

When rock and roll emerged, it’s main medium was the LP album. An individual’s interaction with a performer was in an audio sense. Live performance was something special because the audience/performer interaction took place with the audio and visual senses. Music video is now the main medium for today’s musicians, and an individual’s interaction with a performer is with both the visual and audio senses.

The major challenge facing cyberpunk music is in the performance medium. New directions must be forged to move it to the forefront in this new cultural era. New ideas have to emerge to change musical performance. These ideas will involve new technology, but it is important

Technology will be used to blur the lines where you define the audience and the performer. Cyberpunks will be responsible for the decline of the Rock Star and the rise of the Sim-Stim Star.

that these ideas do not rely on the technology. They must focus on the performance medium to establish audience/performer interaction.

Cyberpunk musicians seek to expand music video by performing in "cyberspace" medium, which will use both the audio and visual senses. What will make the performance special is that the audience will have control over the images they view and the sounds they hear. They will actually perform with the musician on the same virtual stage. Technology will be used to blur the lines where you define the audience and the performer. Cyberpunks will be responsible for the decline of the Rock Star and the rise of the SimStim Star.

Visual Arts

Computer artists have suffered from the same critical ignorance as cyberpunk musicians. To gain any recognition for their work they have had to put it on paper or canvas, which is not its natural medium. Computer art is vastly different from conventional visual arts because it involves a radical idea - artistic visuals move, change shape, and mutate, all in one work.

Although conventional art groups have been around for a long time, most were artists who worked in one local area. The cyberpunk art groups will be comprised of artists who can live in different parts of the world and collaborate on the same projects. An example of this is "Burn Time," an event which took place simultaneously in Washington DC and Auckland, New

Zealand where artists faxed works back and forth to each other. We will see more and more of these collaborations as the computer networks are able to send larger graphics, video, and audio files, all with increased speed and capacity.

The way that cyberpunk visual artists go about their work is not much different than cyberpunk musicians. Instead of sequences and samples, the artists use digital pictures and animations where they download, mutate, alter and then upload for other artists to do the same. Works are constantly evolving over time, and its perspectives are being shifted.

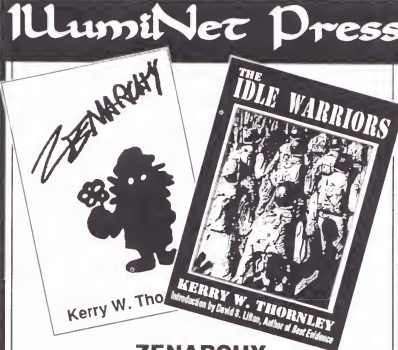
Cyberpunk artists can produce art in greater quantities because of the computer's ability to easily save, edit, and copy material. The artists do not have to start from scratch each time they want to create. This allows them to quickly move their ideas from abstract concepts to a finished work.

It will be a wonderful day when art collectors have their own video wall where they can throw in a disk, and program the art works they want to view, in varied sequences and times. Gone will be the days of finding wall space to hang a new painting.

The cyberpunk artist is the key element to the successful development of virtual reality technologies. Currently, the VR community is focusing on improving the technological aspects of the systems. However, all this effort will go for naught if the virtual world is just a bunch of rooms similar to the physical world. If VR is to ever live up to the glorious hype it is receiving, there will have to be virtual worlds that can exist only in the imagination. Artists have the skill to turn imaginary situations in to a visual reality.

Dance

In a pop dance style, Janet Jackson and Paula Abdul are good dancers. But when they perform onstage they are slaves to technology (i.e. lip-syncing and tight choreography to recorded music). Cyberpunk dancers attempt to do the opposite. They use the technology as a slave to the performance - the choreography determines



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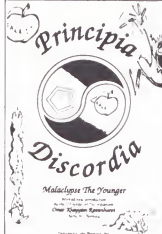
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MY LITTLE WHORE

is a new television series about a father who pimps his beautiful daughter to the downtown executives making so much money that the two of them retire after a year on the set to an island in the Caribbean where they do nothing all day but lie on the beach and have sex with the natives... without any dialogue

- Jeffrey Zable

what music is played and how it is played.

Biomuse, a system developed by Hugh Lusted and Ben Knapp, offers the possibility to use dance movements to make music. Biomuse receives input signals from muscles, brain waves, and eye movements, then processes them and outputs standard MIDI code. The current version uses two input channels for muscular signals, three for brain waves, two for eye movements, and one for voice. Lusted and Knapp hope to develop Biomuse for dance compositions in which the dancer would generate music from movement and from the input of the audience.

One of the most exciting possibilities for virtual reality in the field of dance is using the space from the top of the dancer's reach to the ceiling of the stage. I would love to see digital imaging create "virtual dancers" in that void, where movements controlled by the dancers on stage. It may be possible with a data suit. You can change the image that you want people to view, yet still perform the same movements.

Putting it all together in a virtual world

I'll try to put it all together by designing a virtual reality where I'm performing music theater on a virtual stage. Broadway is an exhibit at the Smithsonian's American History Museum, and Times Square has fallen to criminal anarchy. Musical theater exists only on the VR nets.

The lines are blurred between the audience and the performer. Sometimes the participants perform, and at other times they are simply voyeuristic props.

In a VR music theater the playwright develops a simple storyline and the composer writes up a simple rhythm. The performers/audience decide to take the virtual stage with their characters. The interactions among the characters are fantasies of the performers and their reactions to the other characters. Music composition is a continuous evolution as the performers add, edit, rearrange, and mutate the digital sound samples.

My VR musical has me performing in a story about the super privileged who live in a highly secure paradise

playground way below the glaciers of Antarctica. Music is everywhere, and it constantly pulsates to a hip-hop groove.

I have been romancing the beautiful daughter of the society's most powerful couple. They believe that I am not worthy of their daughter, and decide to put an end to this romance.

With their tremendous VR powers, they turn me into a plastic cocktail glass. Because I am a new cast performer, my VR powers are not as strong as theirs, and I cannot turn myself back into my former handsome VR self. I have to be forever careful because a plastic cocktail glass does not last long in this disposable society.

My only opportunity for survival is to maneuver myself to the right cocktail party where my evil nemeses are drinking themselves silly, and steal their VR powers for my restoration.

I get lucky, and learn they will be attending a party that evening. So I make myself inconspicuous at the bar (it's an easy thing to do as a plastic cocktail glass), and right when my evil nemesis spills her drink, I reach into my virtual pocket and pull out an object that looks like a desktop calendar attached to a large pair of rabbit's feet. The date on the calendar is when I first entered the VR story. The calendar's function is to initialize the cast member's VR powers.

The calendar object begins to hop around the room producing a huge thumping bass sound. The bass is pumping so hard that everybody in the room loses their balance. The object hops over to my evil nemeses, and re-initializes their VR powers to the date on the calendar. Alas, our VR powers are now on a level. I inform everyone in the room about what has happened, and by coincidence, everyone has had some vengeful wish for my evil nemeses. We put all of our VR powers together and turn the evil couple into a dual-styrofoam fast food container.

I got myself into trouble this episode. The story has a new power structure for the next episode which will probably be more adventurous. I have no idea what will happen next, but it will depend on the other virtual cast members, and it will affect my actions/reactions. •

Cyberia & U*NET

by Jacqueline A. Gaulin

The Cyberpunk pop culture movement comes alive with the television program, *Cyberia*. A musical graphic fantasy, *Cyberia* is sophisticated computer art which investigates virtual realities devised of computer animations and music from leading university research groups. This program challenges the limits of media.

One wonders if network TV would consider airing a dynamic new-age-high-tech music show. But then again, creative intellect and entertaining animation aren't mainstream. *Cyberia*, with its not exactly mainstream title and dimension, is just one example of the fresh, crisp, and rather avant-garde programs aired on U*NET. Other programs include alternative serial dramas, talk shows, sitcoms, movie reviews and news shows.

U*NET (University Network) is the non-profit non-commercial network featuring the best of college radio and television. Sponsored by Time Warner, HBO, and CBS, U*NET features award winning student produced documentaries, music, films and magazine shows. Challenged to create quality shows student producers can expand programming beyond their college campuses and provide an alternative network through U*NET. It broadcasts via satellite for four hours of radio and five hours of TV per week during autumn and spring semesters. Programs are downlinked by college stations and cablecast or broadcast to the school and their surrounding communities.

U*NET is as much as a professional training ground as it is a fostering of new talent insight and diversity. The network's goal is to affiliate all college stations, and is viewed as an ingenious rebuff of mainstream TV and Radio. U*NET may just revive the couch potato. •

Cyberia & U*NET

Boy, America sure seems to be in bad shape these days. Even though our bombs are smarter than our kids, they still weren't smart enough to destroy one of the world's cheap dictators. How many billions of dollars did we burn, and how many hundreds of thousands of Iraqis (Kurdish, Sunni, and Shi'ite alike) died to let Saddam Hussein still get away with acting so damn insane? The heck with liberal tear-jerking appeals to burns or crack babies. Think of the great car you could have bought with all that money. Or that VCR, that condo, maybe even that boat or that vacation in a beautiful-though-exploited third world country.

Another irony is that somewhere along the line Madonna and Disney became our best exports. Seriously, there was a big article in *Fortune* about a year ago; "entertainment" is an even better export than arms sales to the dictators we'll be fighting ten years from now. Our cities are filled with people so frustrated that drugs look good (think for a second: how bad would *your* life have to be to make crack look *good*?), but heck, Disney and Madonna, *Dallas* and *Cosby*, they all help reduce the imbalance of trade. Hah!

So with all the real problems facing America, and all the real apathy and

A Good Example of Why America is in Bad Shape

by Luke McGuff

quick-fix solutions we meet them with, the problem I'm about to bring up is going to seem almost ludicrously trivial. That's the whole point, actually. When something is so bad that even this meager, insignificant level of miscommunication occurs, things is got plain outta hand, me bucko.

It's an example of a worsening problem. We've turned into a nation of self-righteous whining sore-losers. Apathetic and frustrated, we stand on vague rights rather than act on responsibilities. Our ideas of "rights" lead to a growing intolerance on all sides of the political debate, an increasing demand for laws as vague as our wounded pride. One right appears to trample on another, and we split into finer and ever finer conflicts. When with a little daring and thought, and responsibility, we could solve most of our conflicts quite easily.

Okay, now we get into it: A Florida movie theater owner evicted a woman from his theater for eating food brought in from outside. They both had good reasons for their actions. They both were jerks.

Even though movie making is pretty

high on the potential profit scale, movie theater owning isn't quite as rewarding. Ticket prices just cover the movie rental itself, and any theater profit margin comes from concession stand sales.

So a theater owner can be considered reasonable in insisting that all food eaten in the theater be bought at his stand. In fact, some theaters have prominent signs near the ticket window saying "No outside food or beverages allowed."

But the woman had strict dietary restrictions, and there was nothing sold at the concession stand that she could have eaten. She wasn't just smuggling in a bag of popcorn because she was too cheap to pay ten times what popcorn "really" costs. She'd have gotten sick and threatened her health if she had eaten his snacks.

The theater owner sent an usher to ask the woman to leave. She allegedly - and if so, rudely - told him to buzz off. The theater owner responded by having her arrested.

When America was bold and forward thinking, things would have happened differently. Instead of dumping on the usher, the woman might have explained herself.

The theater manager really bugs me, though, because he's not just

rude, he's stupid. *He's passing up the chance to make some money.* How dang unAmerican can you get? Didn't he once think to himself, "You know, there's a possibility that a significant percentage of my targeted audience faces dietary restrictions of one kind or another: I wonder if I could optimize concession stand profits by broadening the spectrum of goodies?" Heck, man, just put in a goldang 7-11. The right to pay too much for bad snacks at movies is a right that Americans exploit many millions of times more frequently than we exploit our right to vote or participate in our government.

Let's relate this back to something that happened in the 19th century. Another trivial example, but from this nail a good horse was shod. A worker in a steel factory dropped a bar of steel between two rollers, and when it came out, he realized it had changed significantly. In fact, it had become what we today call cold-rolled steel, which is many times stronger than other steel rolling processes; cold rolled steel is what made the railroads possible.

He took it to his boss (I think it was Andrew Carnegie, but I'm not sure). He said, "look boss. Ain't this neat."

And his boss said, "Here's a hundred bucks. Keep it under your hat. Plenty more where that came from. Thanks, this is great." (Or 19th century phraseology to this effect.)

Now wait just a second here. What's wrong with this picture? Can you imagine someone coming off the Chrysler factory floor and saying to Mr. Lee Iacocca "I've invented this widget that I think will greatly improve the reliability and efficiency of window-regulator handle emplacement while simultaneously reducing the time frame." And then Mr. Lee Iacocca says, "Thank you for your interest in this matter. The process optimization board review went very well. Here's a year's salary." (Roughly equivalent to a hundred bucks in constant 19th C. dollars).

The important thing to remember about the theater owner and the woman is that neither of them thought to talk, to communicate - to even, darn it all, *innovate*. In a more perfect world, we might consider the woman's "right" to health more important than the theater manager's "right" to make a concession stand profit, but give this some more thought the next time you're eating junk food in a traffic jam.

His responsibility to his profit margin could have been met at the same time as her responsibility to her health. Dare we hope that this might have initiated a trend and we could find actual *food* of a vaguely healthy nature at theater lobby snack emporia? Let's not get too heady, here. At least one Florida theater manager would rather arrest one patron, interrupting the movie for *all* his patrons, than think. •

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boING boING CONTEST Complete the following sentence. First prize is a one-minute shopping spree at a microwave oven spare parts distributor of our choosing, as yet undetermined.

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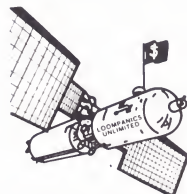
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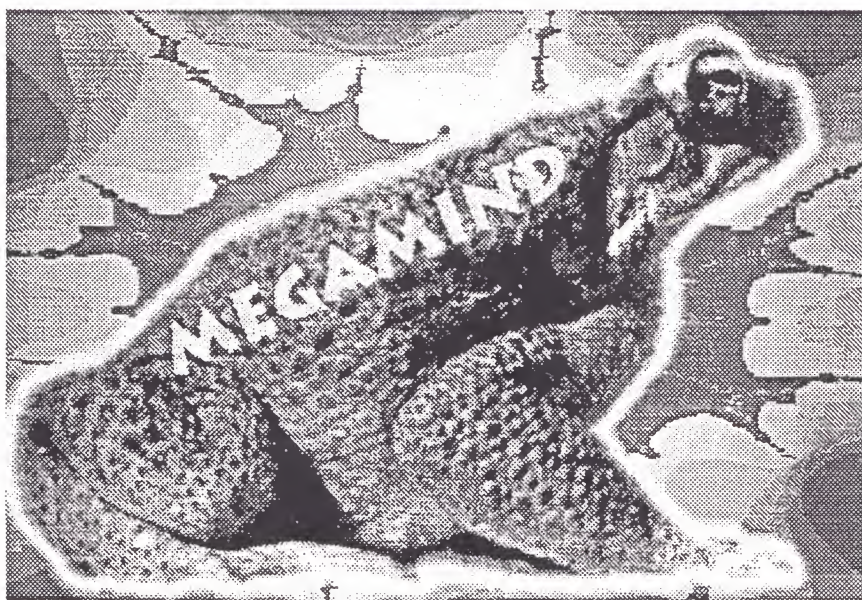
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Heaven Sent Me An Angel, C.O.D.

by Paul Di Filippo

Later Skelly pulled carefully up to the curb, directly opposite the fire hydrant. His right tires squeeged against the granite coping as he neatly aligned his unwashed red Chevy with the inoffensive fireplug. He shut off his engine. He removed his sunglasses, folded their stems, and slipped them inside his jacket pocket. (Skelly always felt faintly foolish wearing shades. They reminded him too much of a goggle-eyed insect perched on his nose, with its cricket legs clinging to his ears.) He rolled down his window, allowing the monoxide-laden summer breezes to waft in. He commenced to wait.

City traffic surged by, a medley of horns and screeching brakes. It was a busy hour. Skelly did not expect to wait long.

After fifteen minutes a small three-wheeled vehicle, its doors curtained with plastic, arrived, stopping in front of Skelly's car. Skelly pretended not to notice the traffic-buggy, all the while maintaining a close scrutiny of it. The once-transparent plastic of its doors was scratched and dirty, and concealed its occupant from Skelly's eyes. Skelly waited, ready to flee, but hoping there would be reason enough to stay. His stomach was knotted like an Incan string message. His hands, he suddenly realized, were clenched so tightly on the knurled steering wheel that they ached. Forcing his hands to uncurl, he removed them. They left patches of moisture on the wheel that immediately began to fade.

The plastic flap of the cart stirred ominously. A hand with chipped crimson nails pushed it aside. The driver emerged.

Skelly released his breath.

The driver was a young black woman. Skelly barely noticed her face, although he had a quick impression of prettiness.

He was more interested in her uniform.

The meter maid was dressed entirely in shades of brown that complimented her complexion. A stiff-brimmed chocolate cap decorated with gold

braid sat lightly atop her short tight afro. A cocoa-colored short-sleeved shirt with Oxford collar buttoned tightly was neatly bisected by a man's mocha tie. A badge denoted the location of her left breast, like the X on some pirate's map. Her brown pants, masculine in cut, were sharply creased and hung loosely on her legs, although they followed the contours of her rump in a beguiling manner. Piping of a contrasting shade ran down the outer seams of her pants. Highly polished clunky brown work shoes -- like those a conscientious janitor might wear -- completed her outfit.

Skelly had never seen her till that moment.

But she was everything he had been waiting for. He knew he was in love.

The meter-maid approached Skelly's car. Skelly fumbled with the door-handle, finally managed to manipulate it, and emerged to stand on jellied legs.

"Mister," said the woman, "do you know you're blocking that hydrant?" She waved her pad of tickets at the wronged object.

"A-a-am I?" was all Skelly could reply.

"Yes, you are, and I'm gonna have to give you a ticket unless you move."

"Could we just talk a minute?" implored Skelly.

"Not about where your parked, Mister. It's against the law."

"Good. I mean, that's okay, because that wasn't what I wanted to talk about."

The woman regarded Skelly suspiciously. She pulled the brim of her cap lower, shading her eyes in an intimidating manner. "What then?"

"Ah, you're not married are you?"

The meter-maid stiffened. "What's it to you?"

"Would you go out with me? On a date? I mean, I know it's unusual to ask under such circumstances, but I'm not a bad guy, really."

Relaxing a trifle, the woman surveyed Skelly for a few seconds. He tried to project normality and sweetness. It seemed he was succeeding, for the woman smiled.

"Well, it's kinda weird -- but why not? You're sorta cute."

Oh, Lord, thank you! At least he had gotten this far. But now came the tough part. God grant him strength and cunning ...

"Great. I'll pick you up right after work. When do you get off?"

"Oh, no," said the meter-maid, "I'd want to go home and freshen up first, change out of this uniform. You could pick me up at my apartment."

"Christ, no-- I mean, you don't have to bother."

The woman's suspicions seemed aroused again.

"What're you talking about? Of course I'd want to change. You don't think I'd go out dressed like this, do you?"

Skelly said nothing. For this was of course exactly what he hoped.

Seeming to divine his thoughts, the woman grew angered. "Mister, I've got a hunch you're some kind of pervert."

Skelly knew his chances of swaying this woman were rapidly evaporating, but desperation made him continue to try. "I'm not, really I'm not. It's just that you look so fine in that uniform. Really, it's tailored quite nicely. If you took off your badge and cap, no one would ever realize it was a meter-maid's get up." Skelly's tongue was running away with him, but he couldn't control it. With the situation so obviously unsalvageable, he blurted out his deepest hopes. "Although of course in the privacy of one's home -- if we were alone, and you felt so inclined -- you could put the badge back on --"

The woman's eyes widened and her nostrils flared as she scowled. "Mister, you're really fucked up. I sure as hell ain't going out with you, and you're sure as hell getting a ticket."

Skelly said nothing to this. Only silence could preserve the pitiful fragments of his dignity.

The woman put one foot on the fender in order to write the ticket. This pose drew her pants tighter, defining her buttocks with anguishing clarity. Skelly nearly fainted.

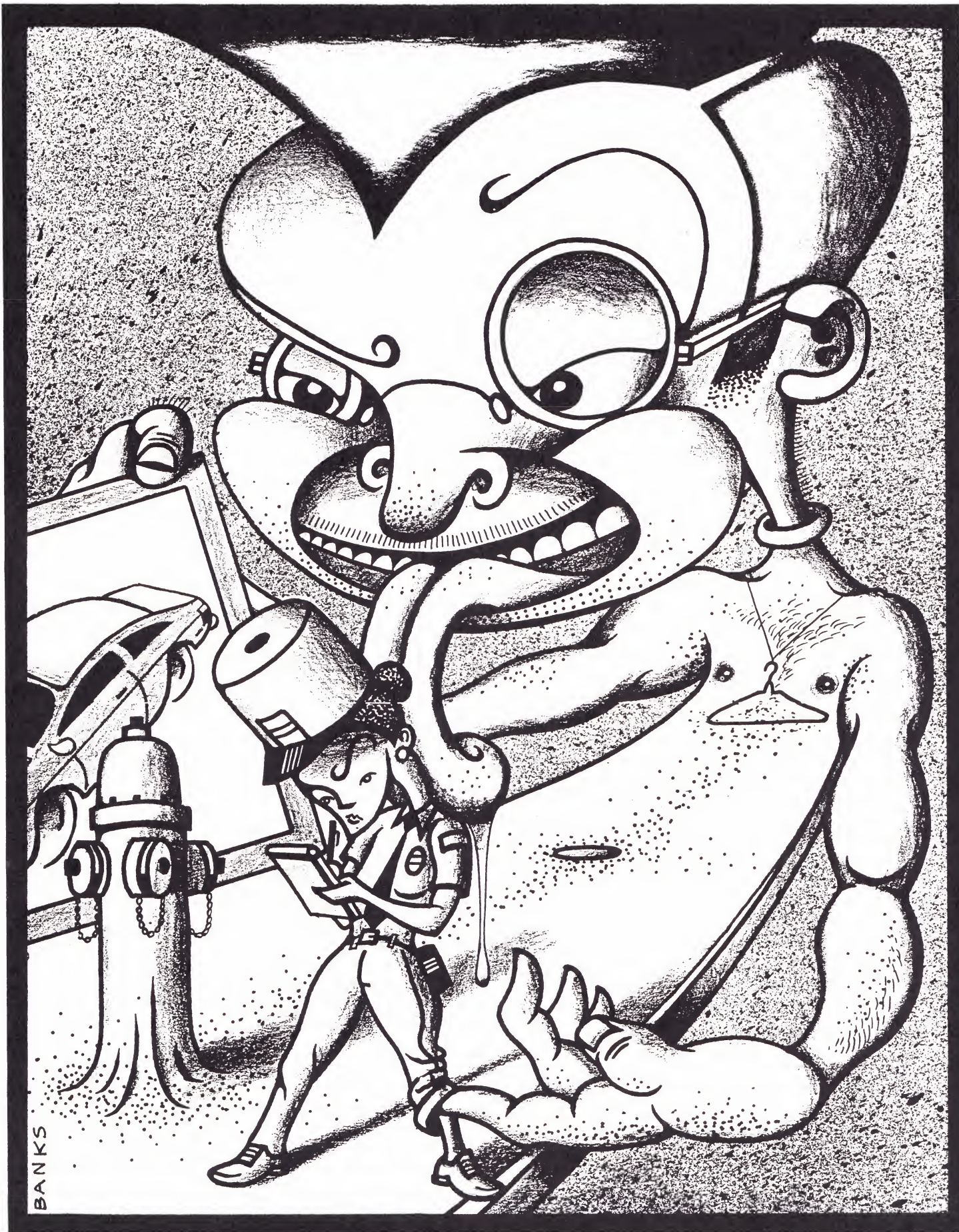
Handing him the ticket, the meter-maid walked toward her cart. At the doorflap she paused, fixing Skelly with an angry glare.

"Fucked-up. That's what you are, Mister." She got in and drove off.

Skelly, left standing, ticket in hand, supposed she was right.

The cause was untraceable.

The roots of Skelly's fixation or fetish (God, how he hated that latter word, with its connotations of loathsome deviance so alien to his otherwise mundane and conservative lifestyle) was lost in the jumbled moraine of his past, which Time had first scraped together, then pushed and polished as a glacier noses boulders along. The source of his compulsions was buried beneath the detritus of a hundred thousand insults and injuries, negative and positive reinforcements, and exciting or disgusting stimuli whose general outline were shared by all individuals. This was assuming, naturally, that Skelly's particular needs and fantasies were attributable to a single incident or string of incidents. Maybe it was genetic. Lost and despairing, he had frequently thought so.



There was that one time though

Pete Skelly, six years old, is walking to school. It is a cellophane-crisp fall day in the city. Children kick through drifts of leaves and shout excitedly. Young Skelly, always somewhat reserved, hangs back from the crowd, apart, daydreaming. Gradually his peers pull away, until he is left alone.

Ahead, an intersection looms. On the far side, the crossing-guard stands with her back to Skelly. Mrs Besarabian. As an adult, Skelly realized she was probably still in her early thirties. Now, she seems impossibly old and mature, a parental figure, an immutable fixture of Skelly's circumscribed youthful existence.

Lost in forgotten thoughts, Skelly steps out into the street without looking.

A shrill police whistle, the shriek of brakes and tires, the screams of other children, impact --

Skelly opens his eyes to find Mrs Besarabian bending over him, crying and cradling him. He realizes that he has been struck by a car, but surprisingly, nothing hurts. Mrs Besarabian helps him up. Nothing seems broken. Mrs Besarabian's quick actions must have caused the driver to stop just in time, with only enough force to knock him down.

Skelly looks up at the crossing-guard. To think that anything that happened to him could make her cry-- It seems an awful responsibility, yet somehow thrilling at the same time, conferring a sense of unusual power on him. Suddenly, with eyes made more acute by his near-demise, Skelly really *sees* Mrs Besarabian. She's wearing a little black pillbox cap with stubby wings, a white shirt with a black bow knotted at the neck, a fluorescent-orange bandolier, a black skirt, thick stockings and black shoes.

Without warning, Mrs Besarabian gathers Skelly to her bosom, squeezing and nearly smothering him. Her starched blouse smells like cotton dried outdoors. Skelly faints away

Was this it? A whole lifetime of frustration emanating from a senseless accident, a tangle with fate? Surely it couldn't be so simple It was all so, so Freudian. Hadn't that old humbug been discredited long ago.

Whatever the answer to Skelly's questions, one thing was certain:

The only way he could derive real satisfaction from sex was to make it with a woman in uniform.

There. For the first time, stung by the insults of the meter-maid, he had admitted it to himself as curtly and simply as possible.

Was it really such an awful hangup, though? Should he really be vilified for what amounted to little more than a fashion preference?

As far as Skelly could see, it wasn't something creepy or humiliating like dominance or submission he was after. The uniformed women whom he was attracted to occupied positions both of nominal authority (policewomen, firewomen, nurses, doctors, security guards) and of subservience (McDonald's workers, waitresses, UPS truck-drivers, bellhops), and Skelly expected neither pampering nor abuse from his nonexistent lovers, but only a tender mutuality. No, it was strictly an essential aesthetic experience, a visual

tittillation that he sought.

Why didn't everyone share his appreciation of women clothed in the accoutrements of their official positions? Couldn't they see how stimulating it was, what an incredible turn-on?

Thank God he lived in the age he did

All across this glorious emancipated nation, every day of every year, millions of women young and old rolled out of bed, sleepy-eyed or peppy, naked or gowned, wearing men's pajama-tops or Hanro tee-shirts and panties, and began to dress for their day's work. What an incredible assortment of standardized clothing they would don! Tunics with brass buttons and epaulets; coveralls with names embroidered above the breast; ivory stockings and chalky white shoes; rounded and flat-topped and crested caps; lab-coats; combat boots and camouflage pants and shirts; long black waterproof coats smelling of smoke; the white jackets of delicatessen help, doomed to be smeared with egg-salad and gravy; bus-driver greys and blues; Forest Ranger greens, with Smokey-the-Bear hats; subway-conductor tans and khakis; abbreviated doughnut-shop-girl dresses tied in the back with pink bows; cosmeticians' dusters; beauticians smocks; the blazers and slacks of Senate pages; Federal Express skirts and jackets and ties; the dresses of stewardesses; pilot's wings; the finery of concierges; the elegance of wine-stewards with keys to their cellars hung at their waists; the tall hats and white blouses and pants of chefs; hard hats and climbing spikes of telephone-linewomen; the thigh-high rubber boots and slickers of female mariners

It wasn't the clothes themselves that so excited Skelly, of course, but what they implied about their wearers. Competence, ability, hard work, sweat, sweet exhaustion at day's end being dispelled by arousal and segue into passionate, disuniformed lovemaking

God, this was Skelly's vision of heaven.

But he just couldn't seem to meet a woman who felt the same.

And so he was left begging at the locked gates of his Paradise, where all the angels were dressed as cross-guards and danced tantalizingly just out of reach.

There came a curt, professional knock at the door of Skelly's modest hotel room. Swinging his feet to the floor, he sat up nervously in bed, fully clothed atop the rumpled covers.

"Come in."

The door opened. An attractive woman walked confidently in, the click of her heels muffled by the thick carpet. She carried a large zippered garment bag by its hook. Skelly did not notice what she was wearing nor what she really looked like. He was too perturbed by the fact that she was someone different.

Whenever Skelly's sexual frustration built to an unsupportable level, he would call Classy Chassis Escort Service and arrange for a meeting with his usual "escort." The whole procedure was vastly humiliating to Skelly, and he always put it off for as long as he possibly could. Besides, it was quite expensive, what with renting the room and all

To suddenly discover that his usual partner -- whom he had taken so long to feel comfortable with -- had been inexplicably replaced by a stranger was too much for Skelly's already taut nerves.

"Where's Mona?" said Skelly.

"Mona's sick," replied the woman. She hooked the garment bag on the ledge above the closet door. She took her purse off her shoulder, doffed her cotton jacket, and began to unbutton her blouse.

Skelly got to his feet, alarmed. "Hey, listen, I don't know about this. Mona would do certain special things --"

The woman continued to calmly undress. "No sweat. I know all about it."

This startling assertion gave Skelly pause. "You do?"

"Sure. Mona told all the girls."

Oh my Christ -- His embarrassing affliction was common knowledge among the entire Classy Chassis Callgirl Corps. How could he continue living -- ?

The woman seemed to sense his uneasiness. "Don't worry, Petey, it's not the worst I've seen or heard about. Pretty tame, in fact. Kinda innocent. You never hurt a girl or nothing. So what's the harm?"

"I just don't know"

The woman finished with her buttons and removed her top, revealing a lacy white bra. "Aw, c'mon, Petey, I'm here now, aren't I? Look, you don't want to lose out on your fun, and I want to earn my money."

"I suppose Did you bring the, ah, uniform?"

Reaching down to one foot to remove her shoe, the woman looked up at Skelly. "Gee, all you guys are blind. I'm about twice Mona's size, how the hell could I ever fit in that schoolgirl outfit?"

Mona, a petite woman, dressed for Skelly each time as a parochial-school student: starched white shirt, blue blazer with a gold school crest, short blue-and-green tartan skirt, navy tights and brown Oxfords with flaps concealing their laces.

"Just stop undressing then," said Skelly. "If you don't have the uniform, it's useless."

"Another one wouldn't do as good?"

"Another one?" This was something Skelly hadn't anticipated.

"Sure. You think I don't prepare for a job? And believe me, I really had to run around to find something that would fit."

"It's not from a costume shop, is it? I can tell a fake."

The woman had removed both her shoes and was unzipping her skirt. "Nope. I borrowed it from my brother." She looked momentarily nervous. "We can't rip it or anything. He needs it this weekend."

Skelly was becoming aroused. "I guess after you went to all that trouble Say, what's your name?"

"Kimberly."

"Well, uh, Kimberly -- what is it?"

Now clad only in panties and bra, Kimberly stepped to where the garment bag hung. "You'll see soon enough. Just turn around now."

"All right."

Skelly waited with his back toward Kimberly. He heard zippers zipping, cloth rustling, and briefly, the bite of metal against metal. He grew more and more excited. Time seemed to stretch.

At last Kimberly spoke. "Okay, you can look." Skelly turned.

Kimberly wore the uniform of an NFF referee: white cap, black-and-white-striped shirt, white pants, black-ringed white socks, cleated shoes. A size or so too small in the hips and bust, the uniform fit with a delineation of her anatomy bordering on the obscene.

Skelly was astonished. He had never in his life imagined such an apparition. One thing troubled him though. "Are there really women refs in the NFL?"

Kimberly walked toward him, cleats digging into the carpet. "Does it matter?"

"Yes, it has to be real."

Kimberly embraced Skelly and began to kiss him. The uniform smelt of sweat. Skelly hoped Kimberly's brother would get a chance to clean it before the game this weekend.

Between kisses, Kimberly whispered, "Well, then, if it matters, sure, there are women refs."

Skelly took her at her word. He slid his hands down to her buttocks.

"Uh-oh," said Kimberly, "that's a foul."

"Wrong sport."

"Oh, sorry. Um, 'offside?'"

"Good enough," said Skelly.

Later, she remembered enough to shout, "Touchdown!"

For several weeks after Kimberly's inspired impersonation, Skelly was as happy as he ever got, living off memories and hopes. He dreamed of the day when he would have saved up enough money to call the offices of C.C.E.S. and request Kimberly's services once more. (Skelly was not entirely fickle: Mona still occupied a fine niche in his heart, and in his wildest dreams he even dared to speculate about being able to afford her and Kimberly together, although what plausible script could be constructed for the meeting of a Catholic-school girl and an NFL official eluded him. Perhaps a field trip ...?)

In the meantime, all Skelly could do was go on with his rather insipid and frustrating existence -- and pray that Kimberly's brother did not contemplate a change in jobs.

Skelly's own job was a source of discontent, although of a mild and tolerable sort. He worked in an office in a huge multistory glass-sided building, shuffling papers, as did everyone else he knew. The people were nice enough -- the men companionable, the woman ranging from smart and pretty all the way up to brilliant and beautiful -- but in terms of Skelly's peculiar fixations, there was little stimulation. About the only thing that might liven up his day was the arrival of a female messenger, or, in his lunch hour, the sight of a flock of hairdressers-in-training from the beauty school next door, which required its students to dress alike in white, like doves.

At those moments when it seemed as if he could not tolerate his job any longer, Skelly would

daydream about joining a branch of the United States Armed Forces. (Such episodes were usually provoked by watching a surfeit of *M*A*S*H* reruns.) He could waste hours envisioning being surrounded by women dressed in Navy blue and Army khaki, Air Force white and Marine olive. Uniforms of every kind, twenty-four hours a day Oak leaves, stripes, brass, muddy boots. Access to Paradise, just for signing on the dotted line? Skelly's common sense always persuaded him otherwise. He knew he would be signing away his independence, and that the kind of fooling around he dreamed of would be severely frowned upon. No, that was not a solution to his fix. It appeared that his best bet was to stick with his familiar life and hope that someday he would meet the woman of his dreams, however improbable that often seemed.

One lunch hour Skelly was idling in the plaza outside his building, watching the strolling crowd go by. It was a warm autumn day as goldenly transparent as the cellophane on a butterscotch candy. Skelly was soon treated to an awe-inspiring sight. There materialized, just a few yards down the sidewalk, all lolita-limbed, giggling, and wide-eyed, a troop of adolescent suburban Girl Scouts, under the watchful tutelage of their leader, who, like the girls, was uniformed in a thrilling forest-green wool skirt and top, complete with neckerchief held by a brass slide.

Skelly fell in love with the older woman at once. He watched her deft competence as she shepherd her charges safely across the street. Was there official Girl Scout underwear also, perhaps imprinted with the Sacred Trefoil just above the mons ...?

As the troop halted for a second on the sidewalk, pandemonium broke out nearby.

"Help, help!" shrieked a woman. "My chain!"

From the crowd of lunchers dashed a scared-looking youth clutching a gold chain. He sprinted through the stunned watchers, making good his escape.

Approaching the street, he took his eyes off his path, looking instinctively for traffic.

He collided with the Girl Scouts.

Snatcher and shrieking Scouts went tumbling.

In a second the boy was up again and running. The girls who had been knocked down were slower to recover.

Skelly was shocked. Leaving the apprehension of the snatcher to others, he hastened to help the fallen Scouts.

Skelly had his hands under the armpits of one Scout, helping her to stand, when some vague apprehension made him look over his shoulder.

Behind him stood the meter-maid whom he had propositioned months ago.

"So," she said, "it's the pervert. Get your hands off that girl."

"No," said Skelly, "you don't understand --"

Spectators had clumped around the scene.

"Oh, yeah, I know what's going on, you creep. You couldn't control yourself any longer."

The girl whom Skelly had helped up now stepped cautiously away from him. He could feel the massed gaze of the watchers boring into him. "You're crazy lady. That's not what happened at

all."

"Yeah, well, I think I'll just keep you here until the cops come."

The woman grabbed Skelly's arm.

Skelly jerked away. "The hell with you. I'm leaving."

The meter-maid turned toward the audience, as if to implore their help. Several of the men stirred tentatively. Skelly got frightened.

He turned without looking and took three steps into the street.

Shouts, screams, brakes, and life was looping back, a fleeting impression of a speeding white bulk tinged with red and blue, Christ, he was being run over by America --

This time there was no soft crossing-guard's lap to awaken in.

"Mister Skelly," said the nurse, "you have a visitor." Skelly wondered who it could possibly be. Although in traction, he could still nod, after a fashion. "Fine, send him in."

"It's a she," said the nurse.

"Oh. Well, send her in."

The nurse departed. Skelly admired her immaculate uniform. There were compensations for everything

Steps sounded. Skelly laboriously turned his head.

A short, dark-haired woman stood tentatively in the doorway.

She was dressed as a United States Postal Employee.

"Mister Skelly?" said the mailwoman.

"Yes."

"I'm Angelica Mason. I was driving the truck that hit you."

"Oh, Miss Mason, I'm so sorry--"

"You're sorry? That's supposed to be my line."

"Oh, no, it was all my fault. I stepped right out in front of you. There was no way you could have anticipated it, or stopped in time."

Angelica seemed to relax. "It was kinda stupid. I was sure I had killed you. And then, when I found out you had survived, I was so afraid you'd hate me."

"Hate you? I couldn't hate anyone."

"I can't tell you how glad I am you feel that way, Mister Skelly."

"Peter, please."

"Angie."

Silence.

"Uh, won't you have a seat, Angie?"

"Oh, no, I'm sorry, I couldn't stay. I'm on my break. I just wanted to stop by and see how you were doing."

"Not bad. I'll be up and around before you know it."

"That's wonderful. Well, I guess I'll be going then. If I can, I'll visit again."

"That would be great, Angie."

Skelly coughed as the postwoman was halfway out the door. She stopped and looked back.

"Could I ask you one question, Angie?"

"Why, sure, I guess."

"Do you enjoy your job?" •

Perhaps the most difficult thing to believe is the very thing that is happening to oneself. Maybe the second most difficult thing for me to believe is what the mass media says is happening out there in the world.

There seems to be three dissident epochs occurring simultaneously, with most people living in various parts of each. There's the past-oriented Industrial/military complex now giving way to the recently emerged Information Age which, in turn, is rapidly reaching its hyper-saturation point, globally -- with orbiting satellite networks -- and mutating into a "virtual" reality of consciousness itself. We can watch any situation on earth, as it occurs, on a big screen monitor hooked up to a satellite dish. Yet, as television has demonstrated, advanced communication systems have never guaranteed a higher truth quotient in the quality of information transmitted. Programs, as we know, are predetermined by the individual, corporate and/or government programmer. As the minority who can still think for themselves have discovered: **we are not the program.**

As diverse sources of information combine and concentrate inside the psyche, a shift in consciousness occurs. At its saturation point, **information turns into consciousness.** We perceive through the filters of what our mind has consumed. On the mass collective level, a widespread cultural awakening is on the verge of occurring.

What does this mean? What you read, hear or see will never again be as critical as how your consciousness has been prepared to interpret this information. When does this happen? From an astrological vantage, this era of invisibility pervades our lives during the conjunction of two outer planets - Uranus and Neptune - from March 1991 through 1995. (The last and only time in this century two outer planets were in a conjunction aspect commenced when Pluto conjuncted Uranus from 1964 to 1968.) What will happen? The awakening of the collective (Uranus) dreambody (Neptune) - collective consciousness separates from its collective body and enters a phase of symbolic disassociation. The human species has an out-of-body experience! If you think that's a wild idea, wait until it actually

BREAKING CULTURAL TRANCE

by Antero Alli

happens.

As you read these words, the Information Age explodes - inside and around you - with the Misinformation Missiles and Propaganda Bombs of outright Information Warfare. Traditionally, war has been fought for territory and economic gain. Information Wars are fought for the acquisition of territory indigenous to the Information Age, i.e., the human mind itself. In particular, it is the faculty of the imagination that is under a direct threat of extinction from the onslaughts of multi-media overload. What the vast plethora of media outlets would have us believe is anything but the inner truths of our own intuition and the creative workings of our own imaginations. **IMAGINATION ALERT: Multi-media, conglomerate Imagination Killers** are now flooding collective consciousness with a non-stop assault of **THEIR** images, icons and concepts (via magazines, books, film, radio and television). **DANGER!** Your imagination may not be your own.

THE CULTURE THAT DREAMS ITSELF INTO HISTORY

As a symbol, Neptune represents (among many other things) the transpersonal forces of the collective imagination and dreambody. Imagination, as defined here, is isomorphic to the internal workings of dreams and dreaming in general. They all generate images. At the onset of

biological sleep, electro-chemical reactions in the human brain (specifically, the release of a psychoactive, neuro-transmitter called serotonin) trigger in consciousness a spontaneous stream of mental imaging - imagining - while the physical body slumbers. Raised to a larger scale: when the collective body sleeps, the collective psyche dreams. The effects of the collective dreambody can be seen by observing the mutating phenomena of "cultural trance," wherein a culture dreams itself into existence.

The function of the imagination, in general, seems to include an ability to bond together -- in the psyche -- those images forming a basis for the inner world and life of the soul. In other words, without nurturing the faculty of imagination there may be no soul. "Species imagination," if you will, seems to operate as if it were the collective psyche's own cohesing agent -- formed out of the strongest resonances with those images resembling the zeitgeist, or spirit of the times. The entertainment industry, in particular cinema and popular music, act as "Neptunian" mediums for catalyzing collective imagination and its process of dreaming its newly emergent culture into existence.

The seventies film, *Saturday Night Fever*, induced a collective "disco trance" in a larger sector of the populace, just as the Sex Pistols, the premiere punk rock group, broke this trance and replenished it with its own brand of "anarchy trance." Both trances were "real" to their respective dreamers. The current wave of Hip Hop Rap music feels and looks like "reality" to millions of committed listeners and so, they dream themselves into the political history of its occurrence.

The collective, through its various degrees of resonances with certain images over others, determines its cultural validity. The audience always has the final say in the realm of collective culture. By these examples, it's easier to see how collective consciousness floats from one cultural trance, or dream, to another while imagining its own history into being. In the realm of the soul, dreams and trances are the commerce circulating as local currency.

Another example of making and breaking cultural trance can be seen at work in our observations of the history and psychological effects of the atomic bomb. Since its inception and execution, the atomic bomb has made a home in our individual and collective psyche's as a highly potent, and highly repressed, symbol -- representing the greatest manmade force ever unleashed on this planet. Since most people alive today were born

after 1945, the Bomb's status as a modern-day symbolic phenomena can no longer be denied. We've either learned to "live with the bomb" and the threat of our imminent extinction, and/or we've done our best to repress it -- garnering untold degrees of latent psychic power as **the bomb within**. There it is, within our subconscious depths, a lock-up account of monumental psychic force pulsating inside a turbo-charged atomic image.

Consider. In the collective psyche, this awesome internal force remains ON HOLD until activated by the detonation

Dare to embrace your charged atomic symbol and detonate it before the Arabs do it or before the USA does it before you. Before anybody else does it for you, **DO IT YOURSELF**. Set off your own internal atomic time bomb and enter the radical transformation of your own mind and, do it on purpose. Set yourself on fire! Use your imagination. If you are a casualty of the Information Wars and have lost your dreams, your mind, your imagination -- find someone whose vision you feel strongly enough about to fire your passions to the higher levels of spiritual awakening.

fought for and conquered during the Information Wars is nothing less than the human mind itself. The list of mental casualties include those who have never learned to think and process information through their own imaginations. These are the victims of Imagination Death, whose own imaginations have been sucked out and replaced by designer replicas supplied by the Corporate Imagination Killers referred to earlier. (For more symptoms and remedies of this dilemma, please see my book, *Astrologik*, page 205-212). Advertising geniuses worldwide know the economic value of upstaging public imagination with images promising more security, more status and more sex appeal. For those left with their imaginations intact, congratulations: you are surviving the World Entertainment Wars. ("World Entertainment War" is also the name of a rock'n'roll group led by California astrologer/poet, Rob "Pope Artaud" Brezsny).

As a culture sophisticates, it deepens its reliance on its images, icons and symbols as a way of defining itself and communicating with other cultures. As the accumulating mix of a culture's images floats around in its collective psyche certain isomorphic icons coalesce to produce and project an "illusion of reality." That is to say, when enough images agree with each other they almost seem to conspire and form a more convincing "fact." Examples of these include passing fads, fashion statements, artistic trends and the slower moving socio-political and economic shifts, as well as the slowest turning wheels of established religio-moral doctrines. Whosoever controls the metaphor, governs the mind -- personally and collectively.

BABES IN THE ABYSS

I'm referring to this period (March 1991-95) as an era of invisibility for several reasons, the first of which includes a more widespread need for accepting things unknown and unknowable. For example: as soon as we realize how network television and other multi-media outlets are controlled by those who pay them for advertising, the sooner it grows obvious how narrow and distorted the spectrum of available information is. For the most part nobody knows what is happening. The Persian

"It's the real thing, in the back of your mind, what you're hoping to find ... it's the real thing, Coke is!"

a post-hypnotic suggestion from the *Imagination Killers Handbook*

of an out-there, external nuclear incident. Is this the "quantum leap" collective consciousness needs for species survival now? As much as the author abhors, and is naive to, the horrific realities of nuclear devastation, he must also confess his urge to awaken from his part in the collective slumber or, at least, know his life may somehow contribute to the awakening of others.

THE BOMB AS COSMIC TRIGGER

The political revolution of the late sixties emerged, in part, from a global response to American intervention in Viet Nam. Remember, 1964-1968 was the last and only time in this century when global activities were marked by the conjunction aspect of the two outer planets (astrology refers to Uranus, Neptune and Pluto as the "outer" planets which, when in conjunction aspect, have been known to herald widespread political, economic and socio-religious shifts).

A highly idealistic and nearly impossible alternative to nuclear warfare is the prospect of engaging the kind of meditation which serves to ignite the Bomb Within. Miracles do happen, though ... so, why not atomic miracles? As individual psyches, each one of us can participate as a more creative force right now by **OWNING THE BOMB WITHIN. LOVE THE BOMB WITHIN.**



IMAGE IS KING IN THE LAND OF THE BLIND

When the mind fixates on an image of reality to the exclusion of the very reality that image refers to, consciousness fragments and begins to split (schitz) the psyche (phrenia). The "diseases of the future" will tend to be schizophrenically based in the erroneous identification with images (AKA the "eating the menu instead of the meal" syndrome), especially as the greater collective continues living out symbolic lives instead of real ones ... without realizing the difference. The distinction between "the symbolic" and "the real" is as basic as night and day, yet as a result of being inundated with culturally-conditioned images from birth, many of us still don't know the difference today.

As suggested earlier, the territory being

Gulf is proof enough how much front-page, headline newspaper can be printed *that says so little*. Ham-radio operators pointing their antennas at Iraq pick up more reliable data in three minutes than the mass media can in three weeks. The real question seems to be: once we have information, how are we interpreting it and putting it through our own imaginations?

IF there is a nuclear incident poised to send shock waves around the world and IF this does release tremendous forces from within our charged psyches, what kind of effects can we anticipate? That depends on each individual mind -- of how one has chosen to conceptualize the psychic realm and/or build defenses against recognizing its existence. IF the tragic occurrence of a nuclear explosion were to occur, I believe there would be a deep spectrum of reactions running the psychological gamut of people completely flipping out on one end and on the other end, people flipping even deeper into their bodies ... with all the gradations in between. Theoretically, psychic survival is now more paramount than physical.

One's psychic survival may depend on the degree of uncertainty one is willing to permit, alongside a faith in the capacity for intuitive resonance with unknowns. This amounts to keeping our antennas clean and the mobility of pointing them wherever we need the impressions of incoming signals. For those of us still immobilized by the paralysis of analysis or whose antennas are still warped in self-preoccupation, a rude awakening awaits. With all the usual information sources either exposed as fraudulent or, at best distorted, we may only be able to depend on our instincts, innate sensibilities and our best shot at interpreting them.

What is meant here by "psychic" is simply perception direct enough to be relatively free of culturally-conditioned concepts and beliefs. Using the term "psychic," we can already recognize certain conditioned responses: new age, flaky, occult, hidden, foreboding, evil, witchcraft, the devil's work, and so on. The actual state "psychic" refers to, however, is altogether different. The psychic, or perceptive, state is a product of a mind cleansed of its identification with thoughts, concepts and images ... a mind that includes no-mind. This is mind in a dynamic relationship with the potential state of being ... void, or nothingness, corresponding roughly with our comfort in being nothing ... and, in our conscious choice to be nobody-but-ourselves.

In this predominantly void-ignorant culture, there is little or no external support for being nothing. To your average culture vulture, being a "nobody" is akin to death. Mass media wizards know better than to appeal too directly to this void within us and do a good job barely dressing it up. They know how the less something exists, the more people want it. Imagination Killers stay in business by implementing formula-tested images with the greatest public appeal to an individual's security, status, ideological and sexual positions in life. The more defined the image, the greater the chance of hooking an indecisive mind. The more imaginative the concept, the greater the intrigue and entertainment for the consuming mind.

"Almost anybody can learn to think or believe or know, but not a single human being can be taught to be. Why? Because whenever you think or you believe or you know, you are a lot of other people: but the moment you are being, you're nobody-but-yourself. To be nobody-but-yourself -- in a world which is doing its best night and day to make you everybody else -- means to fight the hardest battle which any human being can fight, and never stop fighting ... Does this sound dismal? It isn't. It's the most wonderful life on earth." e.e. cummings.

Antero Alli is the author of *ASTROLOGIK* plus four other rebellious manifestoes on mystical realism. For his free catalog of books, tapes & services, write him at PO Box 45758 Seattle WA USA 98145. •

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Neato People: ROGER PRICE

by Carla Frauenfelder

Roger Price was a curmudgeon in every sense of the word. He was also an artist, humorist, satirical philosopher, writer, one of the owners and operators of *pss!* (Price/Stern/Sloan, a publishing company), and an ex-husband to a juggler (among several other wives).

Roger was born in 1918, and grew up in farm country in Charleston, West Virginia. He said he was so busy studying everything at an early age that he never had much time to go to school.

After hating the University of Michigan and an art school in Chicago (he thought teachers, like publishers, couldn't be trusted), he moved to southern California and became an actor in radio shows as well as a gag writer for Bob Hope. He then worked on a Broadway revue in New York called *Tickets, Please*, while lecturing in clubs on his views of American culture.

During this time he lived in a ritzy New York penthouse, which he managed to convert into a West Virginia-style farm house. He referred to the high-rise balcony as his porch. He roomed with a snarling monkey who sat on his shoulder whenever he greeted his guests at the front door. The sharp-toothed simian was known to bite certain guests at its discretion.

Roger also became a weather man on a television station in New York. He would get so wrapped up in chatting with the folks out in T.V. land that many times he forgot to give the weather. Finally, on one blistering summer day, he comically announced he was organizing a party that would go to Canada that afternoon to bring some

snow back to the city. Many viewers took him seriously, and hordes of people gathered outside the station, waiting for Roger to lead the way. The station became fed up with Roger and fired him. He moved to Los Angeles.

Steve Allen said he began his admiration for Roger in 1948, when Roger was performing as a comedian at a nightclub in Los Angeles. Allen said some drunk heckler was "totally lousing up Roger's low-key but very funny act." So Roger stepped off the stage and punched him.

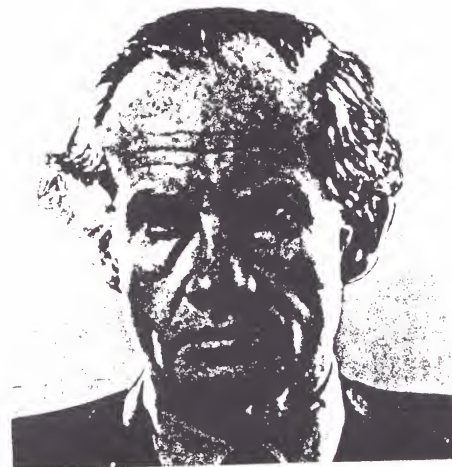
Among his many humorous and high-brow projects, three of his most notable creations were *The Great Roob Revolution*, *Doodles*, and "Avoidism."

In *The Great Roob Revolution*, Roger defines *Roobs* as a class of Americans, which, like supermarkets, are a phenomenon of the United States. Roger explains that *Roob* comes from the word *rube* (from Reuben), which is what carnival employees used to call the rural carnival-goers. When American farmers and country bumpkins attended the local carnivals, they would yuk it up with booze and brawls, and the carnival employees would cry out, "Hey, rube!" in exasperation.

Although these rubes were a bit too boisterous during these local gatherings, they were basically thought of as loyal, courageous, honest folks with a strong sense of pride. It wasn't until they decided to move out of the backwoods and into the cities that rubes became misplaced. They then began to act as they did at the carnivals: loud and pushy. And thus the Roob was born. Roger has three Roob Laws, and they are: 1) "If everybody doesn't want it, nobody gets it;" 2) "Mass man must be served by mass means;" and 3) "Everything is contagious."

Roger explains that the Roob is not the cause but the result of "mass culture, with its mass government, mass traffic, mass fads, mass morality and even mass eccentricity and mass dissent."

The Roob is strongly affixed with California, and Los Angeles is "the symbolic home of the Roobs." In fact, they would subconsciously like to



transform the whole world into one large California Carnival. The Roob loves TV (the Roob tube), and thinks everything is put on this earth for his/her pleasure. It's all just show business.

To eat, Roobs enjoy instant anything, fried anything with ketchup, barbecued anything, and hamburgers, hamburgers, hamburgers. But come any special occasion, it's steak and only steak.

Hobbies to which Roobs are addicted are: 1) disaster gawking (thousands of Roobs will suddenly appear at the scene and will stare for hours at the place Where It Happened); 2) bowling; 3) building stuff (inherited from the classic rubes) such as patios and hi-fi units; 4) sportsbiz (watching more than actually playing - letting someone else do it); 5) seduction (done with alcohol and drunken persuasion); and 6) taking a vacation or weekend trip to an over crowded, overpriced resort., otherwise known as the Roobmove.

Roger's book gives a detailed account of every aspect of the Roob's life, from their speech patterns to their sex patterns. He ends his book with a final statement, "Just in case it hasn't occurred to you, Roobs are not Other People." Although the Roob's life may not always (or ever) be an attractive picture, it would be hard for anyone not to find themselves at least a little Roobish. Heck, if you can't beat 'em, join 'em.

Roger called *Doodles* "an art book that fights back." Actually, it's a collection of his invented "Doodles" that over 165 newspapers featured. A Doodle, according to Roger, is a

sub-art form which "gives the Beginner a concrete method of Wasting Time that might otherwise be used in some dangerously constructive pursuit." Notice the fine Doodle bOING bOING created below.

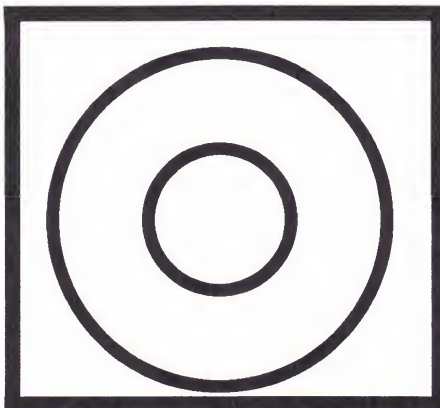
One of Roger's many philosophies or theories was "Avoidism," which is thoroughly explained in *In One Head and Out the Other*. But simply put, Avoidism is a simple philosophy in which one simply avoids things. This way, an Avoidist avoids Involvement, which is where all human's troubles begin. Roger quotes Descartes as saying, "I think, therefore I am." He then quotes the Avoidist as saying, "I won't, therefore I ain't gonna."

Modern primates suffer because of their quick and compulsive Involvement in plans, schemes, and actions, according to Roger. He says this leads to anxiety, frustration, and finally Neurosis. Who needs that? An Avoidist will tell you none of that is necessary.

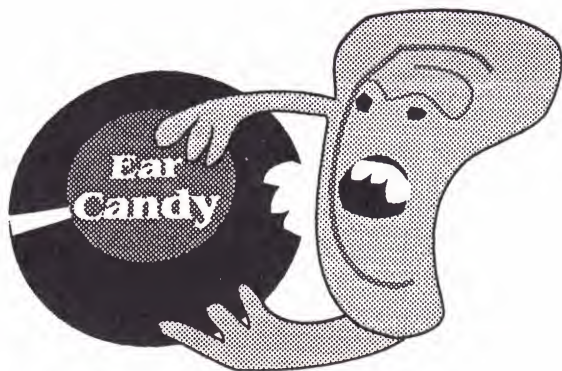
When threatened with a situation that requires a decision or action, just find the nearest couch and promptly take a snooze.

Other works by Roger include: *I'm For Me First!*, *The Decline and Fall*, *The Upright Ape*, *Mad Libs*, *You, Non-Quotes*, *What Not to Name the Baby*, *People Games*, and *ZAP!*

Roger died on Halloween, 1990, at age 72. •



bOING Doodle: A bald neuropsychiatrist



The Tape-beatles - MUSIC WITH SOUND (CD \$16 or Cassette \$8, *The Tape-beatles*, PO Box 8907, Iowa City IA 52244) The Tape-beatles hunt down sound, skin it, and prepare it in a way that is both delicious and disturbing. *Music With Sound* consists entirely of music, commercials, radio, tv, and other sounds stolen from the source, boiled down and tintured into highly concentrated versions of the present. By grabbing infonnoise from everyday living and presenting it in a new format, sounds take on new meaning. Listen to this one time and you will become a Tape-beatle whether you want to be one or not.

their neck of the woods do it that way. Being from the Pacific Northwest, Skin Yard is cursed/blessed (take your pick) with that Space Needle Sound. Side one is called *1000 Smiling Knuckles*, a song about a hundred upset folks making fists and pummeling other folks. The tuff-boy snarling vocals will make you quake in fear for decades. Side two is *Bulldog*, the Lennon/McCartney chestnut; a guaranteed crowd pleaser.

SOSODADA (Cassette \$3 or trade, Ken Pastore 42 Bellvue St. Elizabeth, NJ 07202) Warbling keyboards, raindrop drums, and sampled television

Skin Yard - THE BULLDOG SINGLE (10" single, Cruz Records, P.O. Box 7756, Long Beach, CA 90807) Skin Yard gets upset when people spell their name with one word, probably because other bands from

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commercials stirred together to create a mellifluous canoe ride through your brain. Inhale some industrial cleaning fluid, put on your headphones, and taste the music.

Wallmen - LAST OF THE BROKEN MEXICANS (Cassette, \$5, *Jethro Deluxe* 7711 Lisa Lane, North Syracuse, NY 13212 (315)454-4730) Snappy, slippery, at times melodious, at other times anti-musical, the Wallmen are everything I like in music. I am reminded of Spot 1014, the Pixies, They Might Be Giants, and early Camper Van Beethoven, but the songs are not derivative. This hooky and whimsical tape will loosen up even the most constipated brain.

Big Drill Car - BATCH (Cruz Records, Box 7756, Long Beach, CA 90807, (213)430-2077) Punk/popsters Big Drill Car will puree your brain and squirt it out your ears, and you will gleefully suck it back up off the floor with a straw. The catchy, powerful tunes remind me a bit of the Descendants at their best. •

BABBLING HOMELESS CLOWNS FROM OUTER SPACE

- A "True" story by Gareth Branwyn -

Contest Winner! Back in issue #5, we announced a contest calling for the strangest true experience on a bus, train or subway. Gareth Branwyn of Arlington, Virginia won the contest hands down. The fact that Gareth is a close personal friend and the only person to have entered the contest had no bearing on our judges' decision. Gareth's prize is the original art from the cover of *boING boING* #6.

- Mark

Behind our backs, but before our grinning faces, the clown continues to do what has kept him a significant force for morality. By keeping man in perspective with his times, the clown acts as a powerful corrective; he points out the breed of animal that lies under our hypocritical hides. Clowns point up frustrations, failure, ineptitude. -Bill Ballantine, Clown Alley



Several years ago I travelled to New York City to attend a workshop with Mary Catherine Bateson (daughter of the cyberneticist Gregory Bateson and Margaret Mead). Having no place to

stay in the city, I commuted from my mother-in-law's house in New Jersey. Each day, I would take the bus to Port Authority, then the subway to the workshop at Teachers' College. This

was only my second encounter with the Big Apple's lower intestines, and let me tell you, I was not too excited about it. The ride back to NJ on the first day started out like the ride in - frantic scrambling and shoving for seats, bars, poles, or anything else that would stabilize passengers from the anticipated whip lash. I sat on my hard, red plastic extrusion, trying not to look too bewildered (take your TV's advice: "never let them see you sweat"). The train, now filled to capacity with clinging urban monkeys, entered phase two of peer-approved subway behavior: Phase 1: kick, gouge, shove for seat; Phase 2: cease all eye contact - create invisible psychic forcefield. Spell out in body language: "Touch = Die!"

Just as the doors were about to snap shut (in the brutal way that only NYC subway doors do), one last passenger slipped through.

Nobody looked up. Nobody moved. Nobody screamed.

He was dressed in a full-regalia clown suit. His shoes were white with red heels and bulbous red toes. He wore a cheap clown jumper striped blue, yellow and red with fuzzy white buttons and a ruffly collar. His wig was one of those cheesy synthetic afros, originally red, now aged to an anemic pink. His make-up was standard-issue Barnum and Bailey, minus the white foundation. But, this guy was no ordinary circus clown, he was a street clown...no...a street person in a clown suit. A REAL street clown. Emmett Kelly on a binger. He obviously lived in that suit. Everything was dirty and wrinkled and smelly and lumpy. His wig was flattened on one side where his head obviously met the sidewalk each night. His make-up was smeared with dirt and shaded by days of beard growth. He wore torn white gloves, now two-tone: gray on top, black in the palms. Most horrifying of all, he carried a bull-horn. That's right, a loud "you're-under-arrest", battery operated bull-horn! An overturned box-lid from a case of Cambells' Chicken Noodle Soup hung by ropes around his neck making him look like some cigarette hostess from hell. This he used to collect "donations."

Nobody looked up. Nobody moved. Nobody screamed.

He stood right inside the door, spreading his legs in a police-like stance

as the train lurched forward. He clicked the button on the bull-horn:

"Homelessness is a crime against vampires. The Tri-Lateral Commission has pulled the rug over your eyes. International banking has got to go. The bible says 'thou shall not suffer from which to live.' Many people you meet on the street nowadays are not actually people, they're reptiles from outer space. THEY used to show them on TV, but THEY don't want to anymore, so STOP IT! Please HELP me! I need your help!!"

A crumpled show card, which clung desperately from the front of his soup box, summarized his main points. Periodically he would tip the bull-horn down towards the list in a gesture of emphasis. The last line "please help me" was delivered with genuine desperation and fear, like he was about to be tortured. It sent a shudder through me.

Nobody looked up. Nobody moved. Nobody screamed.

He started to make his way through the car as it shot through the darkness under New York. The lights flickered and the train pitched, but everyone sat (or stood) perfectly rigid, ignoring the "clown." He went from seat to seat and aimed the bull horn, point-blank, towards each person's face. (clack):

"Captain Kirk's not REALLY the captain. He's not Lost in Space. I'M the captain! The lizards can't get me. Nixon knew what they were talking about. Please help. Thank you. Help the homeless."

This "please help" was remote, controlled. There was no pain in it like the first time. "Help the homeless" was obviously someone else's line, maybe a "homeless advocate" he had heard outside a soup kitchen. "Ooh, good line," he might have thought. "The reptiles really go for that 'helping' stuff." Or more likely, he saw the money that was produced after the statement was delivered and attached it in his mind to a new bottle of Mad Dog (the "alcoholic fruit beverage"). The alien rap obviously wasn't very successful at generating cash. As he bent down to blow another passenger away with the naked truth, I saw that his box lid contained a grand total of 2 pop tops, one bubble gum wrapper, a cigarette butt, a dime or two, and several big grease stains. Something

moved in his wig.

Nobody looked up. Nobody moved. Nobody screamed.

Nobody even seemed to be in the car. They had all disappeared inside the pages of a book, or *The Times*, or they had crawled out of their heads on an invisible beam they created by their penetrating stares. No one even flinched as the bull horn was placed upside their heads and a high-decibel blast rattled their eardrums: (singing)"...the hairs of her dicky-di-doe, the hairs of her dicky-di-doe... Come on...sing! Everybody LOVES to sing!"

He was a few seats away from me now and I was starting to panic. I wasn't trained in NYC peer-approved subway behavior. I was weak, I couldn't turn off my humanity. God forbid, I CARED! What was I going to do? Would I give him money? Would I wince at the volume and the pain? Would I look up? Would I move? Would I scream? The scream in my head turned into a mechanical one as the subway fought its forward motion, brakes full-on.

The pillar outside said: "Port Authority." I sprang from my seat and was many cars down the platform before I had time to register my movements. I didn't even bother to look back and see where our homeless alien had gone. The chaos of the terminal allowed me to forget everything until I was safely on the bus. I looked around, half expecting another clown to be working this crowd. All was dark and quiet. I didn't even care that the bus driver was barrelling through city traffic with almost no hands on the wheel as he did his fare accounting. He drove with his elbows and knees. I quickly fell asleep and had a dream:

I'm back on the subway, back below the clown. He pulls out a big knife and starts to skin himself alive. He's writhing in pain, crying out "help me, HELP ME!" The reptile that is revealed under his skin flicks its tongue and hisses (hey, it's the Gorn from Star Trek!). He keeps cutting. He sheds skin after skin, laying raw, level upon level of human suffering. I'm watching all this from above, unable to speak or to respond.

Nobody looks up. Nobody moves. Nobody screams. •

Next Contest: Weirdest true confrontation with the "authorities." Deadline: January 31st, 1992.

catalogs

FLASHBACK BOOKS Catalog #3,5,6 (\$5 each 906 Samuel Dr. Petaluma CA 94952 707/762-4714) This gorgeous book catalog has a great illustration by political cartoonist Ron Cobb on the cover, and plenty of interesting and outrageous illos on the inside. Over 500 books dealing with psychedelia are listed here, ranging in price from ten dollars to several hundred dollars. Most items are very rare, and only one copy of each is available from Flashback Books. Catalog #6 features "Underground Hits" and deals mainly with music, film, and media. If you send them \$10, Flashback Books will send you three recent catalogs: #3 "Sexual Revolution," #5 "Drug Classics" and #6 "Underground Hits."

ILLUMINET PRESS (PO Box 746, Avondale Estates GA 30002-0746) Get a load of these strange and wonderful books! John Keel's classic book *The Mothman Prophecies* has been reissued by Illuminet. It's an investigation of a red-eyed flying man-thing that terrorized innocent proles in a small town in Virginia in the 60's. In *Behold a Pale Horse*, William Cooper, conspiracy freak extraordinaire, examines secret societies, UFO's, alien abductions, AIDS warfare and world domination, and ties them all up in a neat little bow. You can also grab some of Kerry Thornley's books, including a reissue of *Principia Discordia*.

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buying anything, this catalog is still fun to possess. (But you'll end up buying something once you see the jewels offered here.)

MUTILATION GRAPHICS (3765 Oriole Ct., Shrub Oak NY 10588) T-shirts displaying images of exploitation films, serial killers, surgery, auto wrecks and other stuff meant to make 15 year-old boys feel mean and scary when they wear them at the mall.

MYSTIC FIRE VIDEO (PO Box 9323, S. Burlington VT 05407 1-800-727-8433) Lots of interesting videos in this colorful catalog. The 1991 new release supplement offers videos and laserdiscs including a documentary of Russian filmmaker Sergei Eisenstein; a three-part series chronicling the U.S. government's direct involvement in the murders of hundreds of thousands of Central Americans; a political art video called *Borders* featuring Robert Anton Wilson; the story of an unorthodox but apparently effective cancer treatment that has been suppressed by the AMA and the U.S. government; and other videos about mythology and cultures of the world. Looks good.

...of the jungle (PO Box 1801, Sebastopol CA 95473) A small family company, concerned with preserving the immense database residing in the plants of the world's rain forests. The products offered for sale here do not promote the destruction of the rainforests, instead, they

encourage their protection and provide indigenous peoples with a way to gain wealth in ways while not jeopardizing their traditional low-environmental impact lifestyles. Hawaiian baby rosewood seeds, ayahuasca, kava kava & datura will appeal to neuronauts fed up with gambling their biocomputers on mystery substances purchased on street corners. Exotic tobaccos, peppers and teas are also offered at reasonable prices.

PSYCHEDELIC SOLUTION (\$3, 33 West 8th St., 2nd Floor, New York NY 10011 (212)529-2462) Great acid art, old and new, from early Rick Griffin Rock Posters, to Robt. Wms. oils, to Mark Mothersbaugh op art. The catalog is in b&w and color, and the prices for the stuff offered range from \$1 to hundreds of bucks.

SOCIALIST PARTY FAVORS (PO Box 8211, Des Moines IA 50301) Here's your chance to sport a sound bite on your jerkin and let people know that you'd rather wear a 5-word slogan than willingly sign up with the status quo. You can be sure that bumper stickers that say "I READ BANNED BOOKS," "I WON'T SCAB" and "FARMS NOT ARMS" will convince even the most pigheaded right wing monsters to throw in the towel and join forces with the Socialist Party USA. Isn't it fun being politically correct so that you will win the much-cherished approval of the "PC judges" out there? •



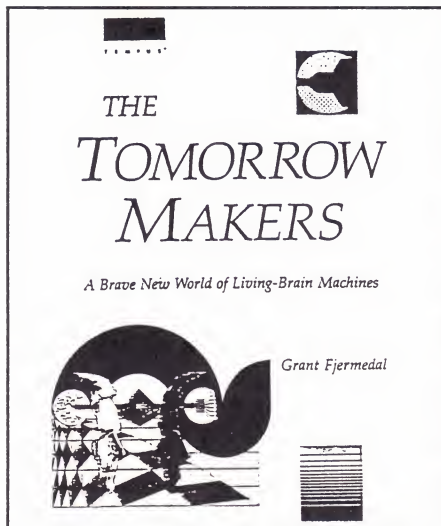
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ALL THE VISIONS

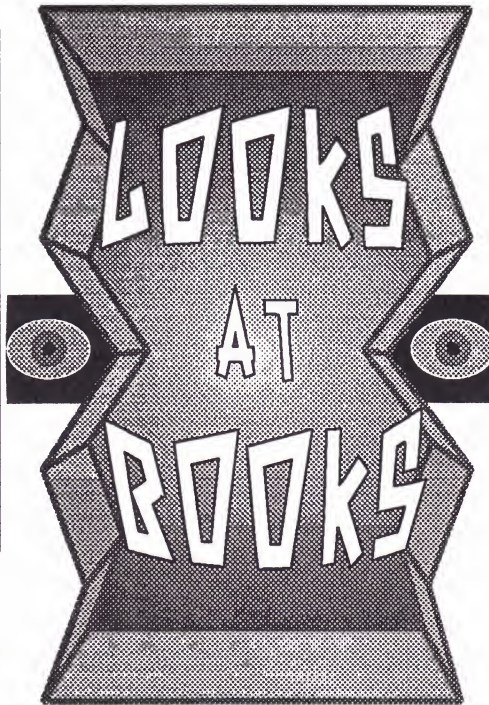
Rudy Rucker

Trade Paperback (bound with Space Baltic by Anselm Hollo) Ocean View Books

1991, 125 pp, \$9.95

ISBN 0-938075-12-8

All the Visions is three long paragraphs of stream-of-consciousness non-linearity typed on a Jack Kerouac-style roll of paper. The term "Experimental Writing" usually means "interesting but flawed." *All the Visions*, happily, is a fascinating and successfully executed cross section through the many selves of Conrad Bunker (a thinly disguised version of the Rucker): a schoolchild who shares the bottom of the classroom totem pole with a "strange slobberer named Skeeter;" a reluctant math professor; a drug mystic who will gladly risk his neck to reach the gnarl; a confused family man; a punk rock musician; and a cyberpunk novelist. *All the Visions* is concentrated autobiography, a



neural spelunking expedition conducted with humor and openness. Those who have read Rucker's novel *The Secret of Life* will experience *deja vu* when they read *All the Visions*, as both works share many scenes and characters.

"I've done five novels now, and people who don't know me too well often ask, 'where do you get your ideas?' There's a lot of possible answers to that, some just jokes. S. Clay Wilson, the underground cartoonist, used to answer, 'Dreams, Dope and Day-to-Day Data.' Or someone might say, 'I steal my ideas from people like you, that's why you don't have any.'" - Rudy Rucker, *All the Visions*

THE TOMORROW MAKERS

Grant Fjermedal

1986; 272 pp. Trade Paperback
\$8.95 from:

Tempus Books

16011 NE 36th Way

Box 97017

Redmond WA 98073-9717

ISBN 1-55615-113-6

"If a person is a robot and you get a wiring diagram of it, then you can make copies." - Marvin Minsky

Tomorrow Makers author Grant Fjermedal hung-out with technoweenies from Stanford, MIT, and Carnegie-Mellon, as well as robotic specialists in Japan to find out about



the latest developments in mobile robots that see, hear and learn.

This book is mainly about people who get such a terrific buzz out of using their brains that they are willing to live for a hundred thousand years or more as patterns of information inside a computer, perhaps with remote robots to do their bidding. "We are on the threshold of a change in the universe comparable to the transition from non-life to life" says Carnegie-Mellon computer scientist Hans Moravec, who wants to upload his mind into a computerized robot so he can live forever. Moravec envisions the day when small parts of his brain will be modeled one tiny section at a time with microscopic computers. Eventually, his head will be full of silicon, and his old brain will be chopped-up cubes on the surgery-room floor. Backup copies of his new brain can then be stored in lead boxes 100 meters underground, or in satellites orbiting the moon.

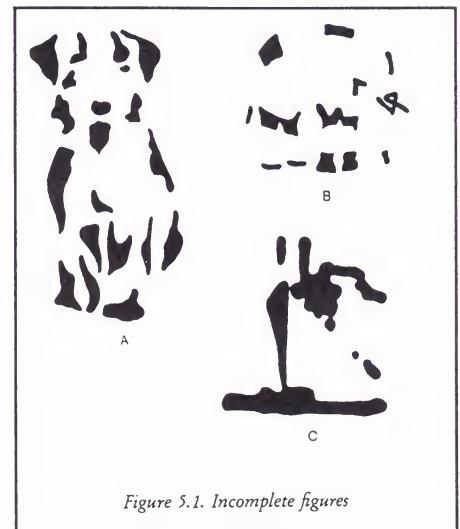
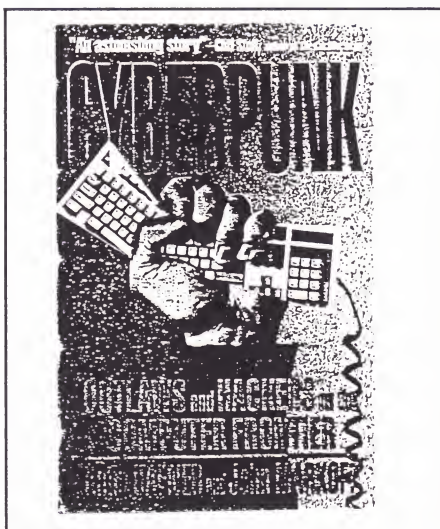


Figure 5.1. Incomplete figures

ZENARCHY

Kerry W. Thornley
1991; 119 pp.

\$9.98 from:

Illuminet Press

P.O. Box 746, Avondale Estates GA
30002

Reviewed by Ben G. Price

Kerry Thornley's *Zenarchy* is a book with its roots in the psychedelic past and a point of view somewhere beyond the veil of history. To those who watched the seventies and eighties roll over the nascent and perhaps naive hope for social reform born and buried in the dying days of the sixties, Thornley's *Zenarchy* might seem like Rip Van Winkle's waking attempt to make topical conversation. But it would be too easy to dismiss the message of this book as a case of attempted exhumation. Rather, we should heed it as we might an alarm clock set years ago to go off at just the right historical hour. But if we insist that in this book resides the ghost of the sixties come back to haunt the anarchist movement, we should not blame Thornley for the whiff of decomposition among our own political bedfellows.

I admit to having succumbed to a certain degree of nostalgia as I read *Zenarchy*. Thornley reminisces about the early days of what became known as the "hippy movement," recalling how it was a spontaneous phenomenon that was brought down by the weight of other people's awareness of it. At some length he decries the attention of the media which pigeonholed as a single phenomenon the creative lifestyles of those in the counter-culture. The labeling of "movements" and caricaturization of the counter-culture's quirks by the image manipulators turned spontaneity into a cliché and the cliché into a recruiting device for the would-be hip into a subculture that wasn't looking for rookies or converts.

Thornley was an early participant in an alternative lifestyle that he considers to have been made up of diverse groups of self-sufficient craftspeople and less optimistic beatniks; they were not a monolithic cadre of malcontents but tolerant individualists. He answers critics who accuse this counter-culture of having enforced a community of nonconformity with a shrug, saying that "only stepping back into the plastic world of mindlessness was discouraged."

At the time he decided to drop out of the body bag of mainstream society, Thornley

was editing a libertarian newsletter in California. "As a libertarian," he writes, "I was acquainted with that astute minority among us calling ourselves anarchists. That they were not a bunch of psychopathic bomb throwers out to stir up chaos and violence, but a group of sociologists independent of the constraints of institutional financing, was just beginning to dawn on me."

Aside from the media boosterism, Thornley attributes the counter-culture's impetus to LSD. It lent "cosmic confidence" to the already gregarious pot heads. When the paraphernalia of light shows, psychedelic boutiques, and lectures by luminaries of the head-set caught on, the magical mystery tour was underway.

Thornley developed contacts with others who shared his interest in Zen, the art of not-doing. His friends John Overton, who was to change his name and persona to Camden Benares, wrote *Zen Without Zen Masters* (Falcon Press, 1985) based on "stoned 1967 discussions [with Thornley] about mysticism and authority." Banares' book is the inspiration for this one, according to Thornley.

The cross pollination of Zen and anarchism was suggested to Thornley by Gary Snyder, who was fictionalized as Japhy Ryder in Jack Kerouac's *The Dharma Bums*. *Zenarchy* was a notion that was latent in Thornley's thinking until 1968. After moving to Florida, Thornley maintained contact with his California friends through his flyer *Zenarchy*, the first issue of which appeared August 19th 1968. In it he defined the term: "ZEN is meditation. ARCHY is

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Social Order. ZENARCHY is the Social Order which springs from meditation. As a doctrine, it holds Universal Enlightenment a prerequisite to the abolition of the State, after which the State will inevitably vanish. Or - that failing - nobody will give a damn."

Elsewhere he says that Zen embodies the natural lifestyle that is implied by anarchist politics: they constitute the Yin and the Yang of a creative synergetic power. Anarchist politics without the prerequisite subjective revolution of Zen, he seems to imply, would reflect an accurate picture of much of the anarchist scene today: infighting and squabbles over "correct" nomenclature and specific agenda to be adopted by the cause. Anarchy without Zen, without a subjective overthrow of the hierarchy of ideas, is thus like being a hippy without being hip. A system that requires adherence to expected behavior and definitions is already obsolete as a vehicle for liberation.

Thornley's debt to Alan Watts as an interpreter of Zen is evident in the many references to him. Also mentioned as a correspondent is Robert Anton Wilson, who participated with Thornley, Gregory Hill and others in the creation of the pseudo-religion "Discordianism" and its comic-scripture *Principia Discordia*. Here and in Wilson's *Illuminatus!* Thornley goes by the moniker Malaclypse the Younger, while elsewhere he used what he calls his *nom de guerre*, Ho Chi Zen.

In his regular column published by *Factsheet Five* (#35) he states quite directly: "My ideological ideas are largely the result of my association with Wilson," and Wilson has become known for his particular brand of ideological sparring, which he calls "guerilla ontology."

What Zen offers that anarchism does not,

claims Thornley, is freedom here and now. He systemizes the steps to zenarchy through a progressive "Yin Revolution" that starts with the subjective liberation of Zen, then evolves through to economic independence, parallel communications, liberated trade, and finally objective political freedom. The advantage to this unobtrusive revolution of lifestyles is that an individual or any size group "can proceed directly to freedom without waiting until all society joins the struggle. Without a transition phase where a self-appointed vanguard rules on behalf of the masses, it avoids the danger that such an elite will never relinquish power in the end," according to Thornley.

Perhaps because we are born into and taught to expect hierarchic rule, a system of thought, whether Zen or some other, is needed to overcome that conditioning and illustrate the possibility of transcending it. Zen seems up to the task of offering subjective transcendence of authoritarian constraints on individual freedom. Whether or not these subjective benefits can be translated into the objective freedoms we associate with economic and personal liberties remains to be demonstrated.

Thornley argues that an undogmatic form of self-liberation, such as Zen, is the first necessary step. But if he is right, we seem to be left with the unresolved problem of converting "the masses" to a plan that only a few are convinced is in their best interest. Against the unrelenting subversion of "Greyface," Thornley's personification of authoritarian propaganda, conditioning and coercion, the Yin Revolution appears no better placed, either in historical, social or dialectical terms, than countless other humanitarian liberationist systems that have succumbed to co-option and dilution by the

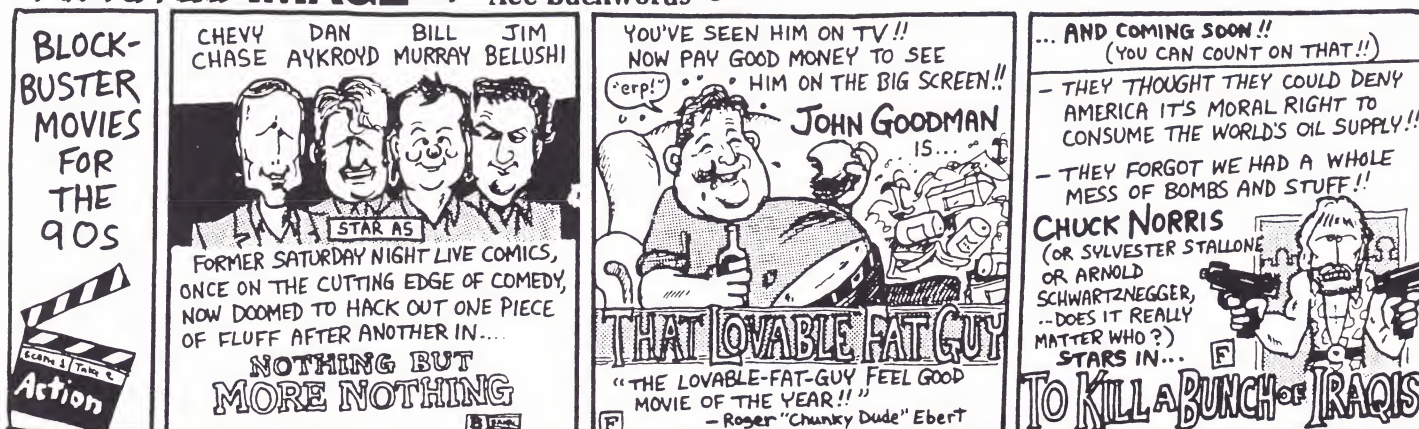
forces aligned against them.

If Kerry Thornley is right, social reform begins at the individual level and benefits anyone willing to renounce control and material attachments. But it will take a revolution within the human noosphere to bring about the objective phenomenal revolution those in the political counter-culture demand. Until significant numbers of people share in a gregarious detachment from power and property, satori is doomed to the status of a mythical vacationland, a place to which quieter minds can retreat and abandon the less harmonious fray of history.

Thornley says that Zenarchists "seldom call ourselves Christians or Buddhists, for that would make us useful to organized religion. And for the same reason we call our politics The No Politics - to avoid becoming useful to politicians." This may be his most practical contribution to the cause of objective liberty. After the subjective denunciation of attachments, if we remove the "handles" with which imperial forces grab hold and manipulate us, the ease and utility of enslavement is limited. Power can scarcely motivate where fear is eliminated, and fear is the visceral avoidance of loss. It is never desire that is controlled by tyrants, but only the objects of desire to which slaves are habituated.

The last quarter of Thornley's *Zenarchy* is a collection of "Zenarchy Stories" previously published by Elayne Wechsler in *Inside Joke*. They are very brief, hip epiphanies that do for anarchism what koans do for Zen: they exist somewhere between summary and illustration. What is needed now is a concrete demonstration of how a Yin Revolution can benefit the mindful as well as the mindless. Any volunteers will receive a sharp crack on the head.

TWISTED IMAGE by Ace Backwords ©1991



EXPLORING THE WORLD OF LUCID DREAMING

Stephen LaBerge & Howard Rheingold

1991; 277 pp.

\$18.95 from:

Ballantine Books

ISBN: 0-345-35894-5

Your brain is the best computer available for exploring virtual reality. It already contains icons for bodies, houses, trees etc., which it manipulates in accordance to electrical signals sent to it from your sense organs. When you fall asleep, the sensory signals sent to your brain are greatly attenuated. The icons become detached from objective reality and are no longer shackled by physical laws.

Remember those stupid comic book ads: "Learn While You Sleep!" For a long time I thought the only productive thing you could do while sleeping was rest. That was before I discovered lucid dreaming.

In *Exploring the World of Lucid Dreaming*, LaBerge and Rheingold teach your biocomputer to control itself while sleeping, so you can direct your dreams and explore the infinite universe within. The history of lucid dreaming is presented, from primitive cultures all the way to the use of a high-tech device designed by LaBerge called the *DreamLight™*, which monitors a sleeping person's eye movements and alerts her when she is in a REM state. (Rapid Eye Movement is the name of the sleep phase during which dreams occur.)

I read LaBerge's first book, *Lucid Dreaming* (see *BOING BOING* #1) and followed the exercises to increase the

likelihood of lucid dreams. I began having frequent LDs, and I started to keep a dream journal, which also helped me think about dreaming. *Exploring the World of Lucid Dreaming* has many new exercises and is set up more like a workbook than *Lucid Dreaming*.

When I started reading *Exploring the World of Lucid Dreaming* with the intention of reviewing it, I decided I wanted to try to solve a problem inside a lucid dream and display the result in *BOING BOING*. Here is a recent page from my dream journal:

"Two lucid dreams last night. It's Saturday, so when I woke up around 7:30, I tried to fall back asleep with the intention of having another lucid dream. My first LD was short and in black & white, I practiced meditation and breathing exercises in the dream and floated through a sky that was gray and broken up like crystal facets. The second one probably started around 8:15 and lasted until 8:50. I did a lot of spinning, as suggested in the LD book, and it kept me from waking up. I walked around a strange town, conducting all sorts of experiments. One was to pick up a bottle and see what the "recycle" logo looked like. I've never consciously studied the image before, so I wanted to see how well it had been stored in my brain. It looked a little different from what I remember. Also, instead of having the word "recycle" next to it, it said "Win Aluminum." I laughed at that, knowing that it didn't really mean anything. What kind of weird world was I in, strolling around my neocortex? I spent a lot of time examining details and testing the laws of physics. I didn't want to fly in this dream, I wanted to stay on the ground. I tried

walking through walls, but I couldn't do it. I'd bounce off. But I was able to push my head through a glass window without breaking it. Then I looked at little pieces of sand and dirt. They looked like they always do, which was amazing to me. Look how detailed the dirt is in my dreams! I crushed a thick piece of aluminum. When I tried biting a brick, it just scraped against my teeth. Too real. Then I decided to stick my entire hand inside my head through my ear. I started with my pinky, and even though it was just a dream, I was nervous and proceeded gingerly. I got up to half-way between the first and second knuckle. I took my pinky out, put my fingers together and started pushing them in my ear. I got my hand about 1/3 the way in and chickened out. It was very weird, and I was afraid that I was actually doing the same thing to my real body back in bed (even though I remembered that LaBerge and Rheingold said that a dreamer's body is paralyzed). Then I remembered that I wanted to look at books and magazines for *BOING BOING* cover ideas. I found a comic book store and inside I saw a box that said *BOING BOING*. How convenient! When I looked inside, I was very happy to see that it contained a bunch of my sketches from "the future." But as I looked through them, I decided that there wasn't much I wanted to use for a cover illustration. Lots of Richie Rich style drawings of a king standing triumphant with a sword, and his girlfriend on a magic carpet. I found another box full of magazines. One had a picture of a big lizard or monster clinging to a wall, under remote control by a scientist. It looked pretty good, so I decided to wake up

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and record this dream."

Exploring the World of Lucid Dreaming tells you how to have a lucid dream, and the authors, both seasoned lucid dreamers, share their experiences and suggest different things you can try while you dream. They also offer theories which explain why we dream and what a dream really is.

The book includes a bunch of dream accounts from other oneironauts (lucid dream explorers), and some of them are very inspiring. If you've ever accidentally experienced a lucid dream and wish that you could enter awareness in your dreams at will, this book will show you how.

Cyberpunk: Outlaws and Hackers on the Computer Frontier

Katie Hafner & John Markoff

1991; 368 pp.

\$22.95 from:

Simon & Schuster

ISBN: 0-671-68322-5

Reviewed by Robert Campanell

Katie Hafner and John Markoff's *Cyberpunk: Outlaws and Hackers on the Computer Frontier* is a collection of three exhilarating, fast-paced, 9600-baud stories. We are introduced to Kevin Mitnick, a cracker whose skills evolved from phone phreaking, Hans Hübner (a.k.a. Pengo) a Berlin cyberpunk with ambitions to become the world's greatest hacker, and Robert Tappan Morris, a brilliant computer science graduate student who released the worm that paralyzed Internet.

The first story is about Kevin Mitnick and his partners in crime, Roscoe, Susan and Lenny. Kevin was a teenage phone phreak when he joined up with Roscoe and Susan. Roscoe operated HOB0-UFO, a telephone conference line in L.A. Cracking and phreaking was a religious experience to them. The group had a common interest in phreaking, but that was the only thing that held them together. Kevin knew the phone system, Roscoe understood computer operating systems, and Susan had a special talent to manipulate people.

Susan could not stand having Kevin hanging around, but Roscoe needed Kevin for his knowledge of the phone system. Susan had a romantic interest in Roscoe, and he taught her how to hack and crack. Eventually to his own detriment, he taught her too much. Once Roscoe dumped Susan, his troubles were about to start.

Kevin later on hooked up with Lenny

DiCicco. Lenny shared Kevin's interest in cracking. They would spend entire evenings cracking. Once one challenge was conquered, it was on to something greater. Their last crack was the acquisition of Digital Equipment Corporation's source code for the latest version of its VMS operating system.

Pengo was involved in the Berlin punk rock scene before he started hacking. Once he discovered the wonders of a computer and a modem, he found his way to the notoriously famous Chaos Computing Club. There he met Karl Koch who liked to call himself Hagbard Celine, a character from the Robert Shea and Robert Anton Wilson *Illuminatus!* trilogy. Pengo was introduced to Hagbard's cronies Dob, and Peter Carl. Markus Hess later joined the group.

It was during one evening of hacking, cracking, and hash smoking when this group decided they should earn a little bit of cash for their talents. They decided to sell their services to the Soviets. They figured they could deliver the Soviets software to help them catch up with the technologically advanced West. The group believed that by selling the Soviets military and scientific information, they could help stabilize the world. They dubbed their effort PROJECT EQUALIZER.

The authors also take us through the efforts of Cliff Stoll, a computer administrator at Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory, to nab the German hacker entering his system. We are introduced to television investigative journalists Matthais Lehnhardt and Thomas Ammann who break the story about the group's espionage business. Lehnhardt and Ammann were instrumental in helping the young cyberpunk protagonist turn state's evidence in exchange for amnesty.

The third story is about the shy, yet smug, Robert Tappan Morris. Morris is the Cornell computer science graduate student who launched the worm that brought down Internet. The Internet worm was the biggest press story in the U.S. about hackers, and Morris was dubbed by some members of the press as the country's most villainous computer criminal. The authors examine the background of Robert Morris' father who was an early pioneer in the field of computer security. They attempt to include all the factors such as Morris' family background, childhood fascination with computers, and his social life to give the reader a better understanding of his motives. Morris reads UNIX manuals for fun, does this sound like the criminal mind?

What makes *Cyberpunk* so interesting is

that it's full of adventures that you would find in a cyberpunk novel, yet these events actually happened: A Colonel's abrupt reaction when Susan cracked a classified system while she was giving a security demonstration to some military brass. Kevin and Lenny's episodes of hacking at cheap hotels. The authors also tell a wonderful story about Pengo trying to explain Neuromancer to an in-the-dark judge while he is on the courtroom stand.

Katie Hafner and John Markoff demonstrate an in-depth knowledge of the cyberpunk culture. They are able to deliver a sympathetic portrait of the three protagonists based on their understanding of the culture. However, Digital Equipment Corporation does not fare so favorably. Digital official refused interview requests made by the authors. Digital officials were very hesitant to help the systems administrators who were having problems with Mitnick's cracking. It seems they were embarrassed about the VMS security flaws, and acknowledging the problems would cause a public relations disaster. Digital's convoluted logic was that if their customers did not know about the system's security flaws, then they did not have a security problem. It's ironic that Kevin Mitnick confiscated the *loginout* patch that he would use to crack VAXs from Digital itself.

Katie Hafner spent many espresso-induced evenings at smoke-filled Berlin cafes interviewing Pengo. She says that he was one of the very first cyberpunks in Berlin. Katie Hafner and John Markoff spent three years working on *Cyberpunk*, and their perseverance has paid off. *Cyberpunk* is a well-researched, insightful, and entertaining book. Very highly recommended.

PISSING AWAY THE AMERICAN DREAM

David Ross

1991; 64 pp.

\$8.95

from:

Digit Press

PO Box 920066

Norcross GA 30092

Author David Ross is a libertarian who works for the nation's largest refined petroleum pipeline, and the US Department of Transportation has decided that he, along with everybody working in industries regulated by it, must have pee-pee that is free of government-prohibited substances, or they will be fired. Ross didn't take kindly to this violation of his constitutional rights, so

he decided to fight back. This book uncovers the ugly sham perpetrated by the greedy and hateful bullies who have sleazed their way into the upper echelons of the U.S. government.

Ross has carefully researched the United States relatively recent decision to prohibit its citizens from taking certain psychoactive substances . (Not until the twenties did the government decide to outlaw certain drugs. And the problems most people associate with drugs were almost unheard of until they became illegal.)

The book recounts some of the horror stories about citizens being murdered by government zealots:

Bok Kwan Kim, a factory worker, lived in a tiny apartment with his wife, three daughters, and 78-year-old mother-in-law in Newark, California. Late on the night of May 12th, 1988, nine narcotics police broke down his front door, handcuffed him and beat him until he was unconscious, handcuffed his wife and shoved her to the floor as their daughters screamed, and ransacked the apartment.

Not one piece of furniture was left unbroken; every pillow or piece of upholstery was torn and emptied of its stuffing. All their dishes and porcelain were shattered. Only a picture of Jesus on the wall was left in one piece.

Why? The narcotics police had gotten a false tip from an informer that Kim had a stock of amphetamines ... Why the beating? The police said Kim had 'resisted' the destruction of his home and few possessions.

The book contains many articles which have appeared in other magazines. Ross also put together several charts showing Drug War expenditures through the years. We all know that the bloated *apparatchik* sub-humans (who have neither brains, talent nor the initiative to live creative, productive lives and must take parasitic government positions instead) waste money, but Ross' graphs clearly show that their Drug War spending is way beyond ridiculous.

Ross also includes copies of a letter he wrote to congresspeople about the DOT's fourth amendment violations. The replies from senators and congresspeople are case studies demonstrating how one can write for a page-and-a-half and say absolutely nothing.

Perhaps the most frightening thing in the book is a list of Executive Orders, which

have been recorded in the Federal Register and accepted by Congress as the law of the land. These measures can be put into effect anytime an emergency is declared (such as "wartime"):

10995 - All communications media seized by the Federal government

10997 - Seizure of all electrical power and fuels, including gasoline and minerals

10998 - Seizure of all food resources, farms and farm equipment

10999 - Seizure of all types of transportation, including your personal car and control of all highways and seaports

11000 - Seizure of all civilians for work under Federal supervision

11001 - Federal takeover of all health, education, and welfare

11002 - Postmaster General empowered to register every man, woman and child in the U.S.A.

11003 - Seizure of all aircraft and airports by the Federal Government

11004 - Housing and Finance Authority may shift population from one locality to another

11005 - Seizure of all railroads, inland waterways, and storage facilities

11051 - The Director of the Office of Emergency Planning authorized to put Executive Orders into effect in "times of increased international tension or financial crises." He is also to perform

such additional functions as the President may direct.

What these directives say to me is that the government will grant citizens their constitutional rights as long as the citizens don't need to exercise them. Those of you who worried about the possibility of Newt Gingrich's "Concentration Camp Bill" passing last year, shouldn't have bothered. This is the same thing, and it's already been law for some time now.

Ross also publishes the fine newsletter, *Urine Nation News* (see zine reviews).

LITERARY OUTLAW: The Life and Times of William S. Burroughs
 Ted Morgan
 1988; 659 pp.
 from:
 H. Holt Books

Reviewed by Shane Williams

I don't expect to read a better biography - ever. William Burroughs is not only a grand master of literature -- he is a wise old man. He got together with a friendly acquaintance who also happened to be a professional biographer with books to his credit on F.D.R. and Churchill. Then Burroughs gave the man access to his own files, access to himself over a period of 4 plus years, and let everyone know not to hold anything back, that he wanted his friends and acquaintances and associates not to withhold information from Morgan.

The product is both "warts and all" and sympathetic. It takes the reader from Burroughs' most disturbing early memories (or lack of them in one crucial instance) on through all the periods in Burroughs' life. The author is infected enough with the spirit of honesty to even share his own professional disgruntlement at writing a biography of someone who is still living - and thus "spoiling" the ending. A denouement of sorts is reached by the news that Burroughs' writing career might be over and that he will spend his remaining years as an artist - a pursuit that he sees as being much easier than writing. If Burroughs does write books, which we, his readers can only hope for fervently, then further biographical work will be necessary, and it can be hoped that Morgan will be able to publish a revised edition including the last chapter of Burroughs' life. Otherwise you can remain confident that the biographers that will, no doubt, appear like vultures upon Burroughs' death will not be of equal quality - it is hard to believe he let anyone get as close to him



as Morgan did, except of course, for his amanuensis, James Graverholz. So perhaps if he writes a book it will be a gem as well, but I can't imagine that even Brion Gysin could've written as revealingly or knowledgeably about William S. Burroughs. I'm not going to elaborate on what is to be found in these 650 some pages. It is all in there. There will be no cavils in this review, just an exhortation that anyone who even thinks they're interested in William Burroughs read *Literary Outlaw*. For those of us who are not only interested in the man, but also in his written works, we might find ourselves bristling that so many critics dismiss a lot of the later books. Perhaps even Morgan feels that the cut-up period that succeeded *Naked Lunch* and reviewed and reworked so many of the same routines was a lapse, righted by the purer narrative prose of what might well be the final trilogy of *Cities of the Red Night*, *The Place of Dead Roads* and *The Western Lands*. I don't agree. It certainly lowered my estimation of Anthony Burgess to discover he'd trashed Burroughs once. What is important in this authentic "life and times" aren't literary issues though - it is the story of a 20th century man - and his place in it.

Addendum: I apologize for implying that further biographical work will only be desirable if Burroughs continues to write - if all he does is pet his cats, I'd still want to read about it ... but I don't think it is imaginable that he won't continue to create and express himself. I also revealed a little about the inconsistencies of my own mind when I said I wouldn't cavil or bitch about any aspect of this bio and then proceed to do so ... oh well ...

I would like to sum up by saying that while many aspects of Burrough's life, as a self-admittedly tortured soul, are not enviable - that I certainly envy him for having been able to, and still being able to, express his rage and contempt for all the "shits" trying to grind us down. This envy is more than compensated by the satisfaction it gives me to internalize his rage by studying his works, and the hope that I may creatively reuse it, cut-it-up, and permute my own works with his as inspiration - something I indisputably will neither be the first or the last to do.

Transreal!

Rudy Rucker
1991; 534 pp
\$15 + \$2.50 s&h
from:
WCS Books
PO Box 4674
Englewood, CO 80155
303/771-5441

Rucker is a diamond that shoots beams of fantastically colored mind light. This anthology of his poems, essays, short stories and graphics (from his Chaos program, see review in this issue) is broken down into several sections.

His 1983 poetry book, *Light Fuse and Get Away*, is reprinted here for those who weren't able to pick it up the first time around (it was originally printed as a chapbook limited to 50 copies). They are amazingly great infodense poems, living creatures that'll make you marvel about what can be done with mere ASCII characters.

The second section is a reprinting of his 1983 paperback anthology of short fiction, *The 57th Franz Kafka*. There are plenty of funny stories with Fredric Brown-style twist endings.

The third section has his more recent fiction, and the final section contains essays on a variety of subjects, from his confrontation with the leader of the Moral Majority to his adventures with the *Mondo 2000* gang in Japan.

The fractal graphics spread throughout are really cool. The one on page 36 looks like a galaxy that's become sentient and rearranged itself, the one on page 102 looks like an airplane photo of a village built against a river, and the one on page 308 looks exactly like a happy cartoon-Rudy wearing a jester's cap! (Compare it to his photo on the back cover of *Transreal!* Perfect!)

If you are new to Rucker and can't grok my fanboy gushing, pick up a copy of *Transreal!* and sample a few of this man's many facets. The layout and design of the book are excellent. •

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ZINE Reviews

BABY SUE #7 (\$1.50 PO Box 1111, Decatur, GA 30031-1111) Dr. Don W. Sevin, editor of this zine of comix and parodies, finds a way of taking the most disgusting aspects of life on Earth, and making them funny. Warning to the neo-puritans of the "radical" left: NOT politically correct. This zine will be sure to piss you off. (Digest, xerox, 16 pages)

CATALYST COMICS (\$1?, PO Box 129, Delcalb, IL 60115) The cover is a photo from an advertisement showing a child modeling a toddler's straightjacket. Blurry photos and "quotations" from various famous naked apes. (8 pages, digest size, xerox)

DISEASED PARIAS NEWS #3 (\$2, PO Box 31431, San Francisco, CA 94131) A zine put together by and for people with HIV disease. Sharp layout and a curmudgeonly sense of humor. Issue #3 pays homage to former editor, the late Tom Shearer (who also edited *GAWK*, Gay Artists & Writers Kollektive) with an essay subtitled, "Damn! One of our editors is dead! Can *DPN* withstand the test of time?" Having (not making!) fun with a serious subject. (8.5" x 7" 30 30 pages, typeset) - reviewed by Carla

DISSONANCE March '91 (\$1.25, Leif Hunneman, 14 Louis St, New Brunswick, NJ 08901) Plenty of local color as editor Leif writes about his hometown, New Brunswick. A Nine Inch Nails concert review and a Skinny Puppy comic will clue you in as to Leif's fave music. Fun reading. (24 pages, xerox, standard size)

FORCED EXPOSURE #17 (\$3.95 or \$13/4 issues, PO Box 9102 Waltham, MA 02254) This excellent magazine which deals primarily with music has a great long interview with Rudy Rucker. Alexandro Jodorowsky (the director of *Sante Sangre*) is interviewed and author Lewis Shiner looks at books. This is the first time I've read *Forced Exposure*, and I think I'm going to add it to my must-read list. (130 pages, color cover, offset)

FREAK ANTIZINE (\$1, Scott Soufford, 305 N. Ingersoll St, Madison, WI 53703) The first page says it all: "This antizine really sucks... Really, it does." Inside, you'll find magazine collage art, drawings of disembodied genitals, an anti-Jesse Helms essay, and pictures of guns and dinosaurs. (14 pages, digest, unstapled)

ICHOR #5 (One Stamp, K. Emil Erickson, somekinda Publications, 2304 Pinebrook Lane, Des Moines, WA 98198-7553) A collection of poems on a sheet of foolscap, folded up into a little zine. (1 page, xeroxed)

LANA'S WORLD, WILD WIMMINS COMIX #11 (\$1, How do you spell it productions, PO Box 3633, Eugene, OR 97403) Feminist and lesbian funnies that range from the rough-hewn and ambitious to the polished and accomplished. (16 pages, xeroxed, unbound, digest size)

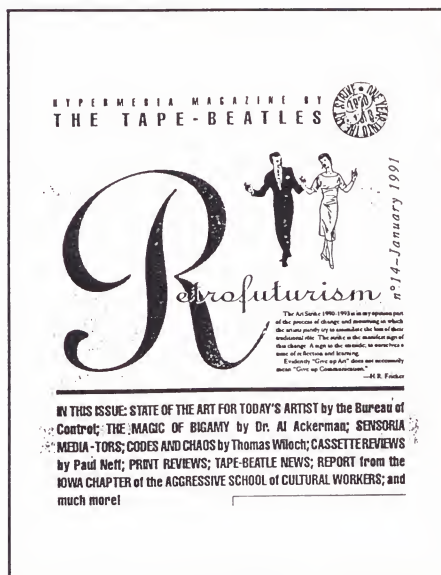
LIFE CARROTS POTATOES DEATH: LIMBO (?\$, P.O. Box 192261, San Francisco, CA 94119-2261 (415)436-3006) More of a book than a zine, *LCPD* is an irregularly published journal of experimental fiction from students at U.C. Berkeley. There are about 25 pieces in here. Anthologies are always mixed bags, but in this case, most of the stories are interesting and well-written. The editor of *LCPD*, Douglass Perry, also sent me information about his upcoming magazine, *Bandicoot*, which will include art, fiction, non-fiction, computer graphics, photography, news, children's art, and "a wild layout to boot." (130 pages, book format)



LOVING MORE (\$25/four issues Box 6306, Captain Cook, HI 96704-6306) *PEP* is a polyfidelity action network that shares information and ideas with people who choose to make lifelong family commitments with more than one partner. They recognize that serial monogamy just doesn't work for everybody, and that polyfidelity might be the answer for some of them. They also sell a *Polyfidelity Primer* for \$10. They sponsored a conference at the end of August in Berkeley, CA called "A Polyfidelitous Vision of the Future (or How to Save the Family, the Planet, & Have a Good Time Too)." Call (808)929-9691 for more information.

MONDO 2000 #4 (\$7 or \$24/5 issues, PO Box 10171, Berkeley, CA 94709) The latest *Mondo* is a beaut: almost every page has color, and the graphics are amazing. This issue is music-heavy, and the computers/drugs theme has taken a back seat to interviews with bands and authors. My favorite thing was Gareth Branwyn's interview with recumbent biker Steve Roberts, who's quite possibly the world's only real cyberpunk. (158 pages, color cover and innards, offset)

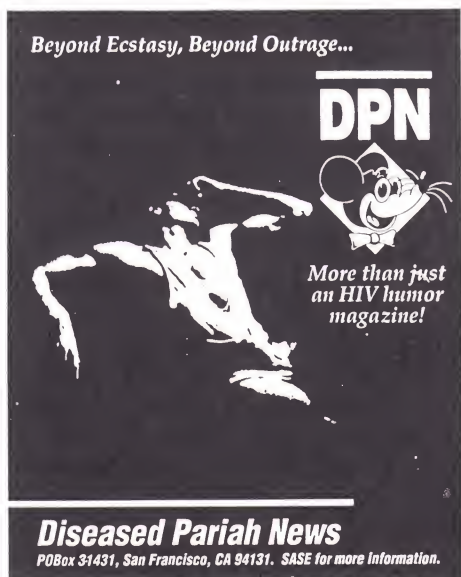
NEW PATHWAYS #19 (\$4.50 c/o MGA Services, PO Box 475174 Garland, TX 75047-5174) A highly literate SF zine that hovers pleasingly between zinedom and professional-style glossiness. Most of the fiction in this issue is excellent, especially Brian Aldiss' story about computer virus-spawned DNA robots with a murderous fear of human nature, and Tom Traub's tale of weekend pagans. The reviews and columns are thick and chewy. In the last few issues,



editor Michael G. Adkisson has branched out to include mainstream movie reviews and current event op/ed pieces. I can't say I'm in favor of this move - normality is cheap and toxic.

POMP AND SILLINESS #5 (*The Usual, Victor Raymond 1017 Raymond Ave #7, St. Paul, MN 55114*) A personalzine from the president of the Minnesota Science Fiction Society. In this issue, Raymond writes about the state of Fandom. (2 pages, typeset)

POPPIN' ZITS LITE #8 (\$27/trade, Jerod Pore, 1800 Market St #141, San Francisco, CA 94102-6227) Collage art/info featuring Japanese pornography, industrial robots, animal slaughtering technology magazine articles, and pictures of human oddities juxtaposed



with naked models. Printed on nice thick colored recycled paper. Though non-linear and apparently jumbled, you can almost pick out a strange story bubbling through here. (12 pages, standard, xerox)

PSYCHEDELIC MONOGRAPHS & ESSAYS v.5 (\$18.95 PM & E Publishing Group, PQ Box 4465, Boynton Beach FL 33424) A superb journal that comes out in quality paperback book form. This issue has a full color wraparound cover showing samples of acid blotter art, and some of them are plenty nifty: UFOs, Japanese iconography, day-glo Albert Hofmann portraits, flying eyeballs etc. The highlight of this issue (for me, anyway) is the Oscar Janiger interview conducted by *Psychedelics Encyclopedia* author Peter Stafford. Janiger is the Los

Angeles psychiatrist, who in the sixties, turned on scores of actors and artists, such as Cary Grant and Anais Nin. This interview reveals Janiger to be an extremely brilliant and erudite man with an uncanny sense of recall who is interested in everything. Here he talks about his first acid trip in 1954:

"I had the distinct feeling that my system was very much like a plane taxiing around a field, trying to generate escape velocity. It was like the system was revving up, moving to a higher threshold ... And then suddenly - there was a great picture window, and I looked out and then it began ... the first thing that I noticed was that the trees were moving. And they were doing a graceful arabesque, and I looked at that in astonishment - absolute astonishment. And that was the beginning. Then I made the inevitable connection with my feelings as a child. Only this was a much more powerful type of experience ... I got the whole treatment - the 'heaven' and the 'hell.' In fact, there were parts of it that were just so bad that I wanted out, you know. And there were parts of it that were so astonishingly marvelous that I never wanted out."

Jack Call, a former Boo-Hoo second only to Art Kleps of the Neo-American Church, has a story in this issue titled "A Big One, Early On," about an acid trip shared with a friend that didn't turn out as planned.

There are many other subjects covered in this 320-page journal, from a Grofian Interpretation of Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, to a discussion of the pineal gland's role in consciousness. Don't let the high price scare you off on this one; if you can afford it, buy it. You won't be disappointed.

PUSH BUTTON CONTROLLER #1 (\$3 K-9 Productions, Ltd.; 123 Saratoga Rd, Box 128, Glenville NY 12302) Great true tales from a guy who can remember his early escapades. This collection of flashbacks about tomato throwing, practical jokes, junior high school wars, beer smuggling, pack-rats, and discos is ample proof that Ben is a very talented, funny and insightful writer. I was engrossed while reading every page. If you don't like this zine you should be shot. (64 pages, standard size, offset

printed)

RETROFUTURISM #14 (\$3, PO Box 227, Iowa City, IA 52244) Beautifully produced "hypermedia magazine by the Tape beatles." Art strike stuff, Gulf War jibes, Carl Guderian's State of the Art For Today's Artists (reviewed in *boING boING* #6), a tale of early childhood by Al Ackerman, instant graffiti stickers, reviews, mail art networking. The creators of *Retrofuturism* are obviously having a good time. (8.5 X 7, Typeset, 50 pages)

SENSURED #21 (\$2, Ivana Ford, 3560 Temple Ave. Dept H221, Pomona, CA 91768) The L.A. clubster's pocket bible. Full of neat graphics and photos, as well as club announcements and serialized fiction. (26 pages, digest, typeset)

SINISTER WISHBONE #1 (\$1.00 + \$1.00 Shipping and Age Statement, Dan Gregory, Spue Monkey Graf*X, PO Box 805, New Castle, CA 95658) Bizarre sex comics, poetry, and other exotica.

SNAPP KRACKLE POP!!! #1 (\$3, PO Box 86516, Los Angeles CA 90086-516) A fun and useful magazine for the neuronaut. Editors Barry Atkinson and Margaret Kollas are interested in exploring and having fun with many of the same things *boING boING* explores and has fun with: Neuro-nutrients, virtually reality, Durk & Sandy, politics etc. This issue has an excellent article about the band Wire. I hope *SKP* stays around.

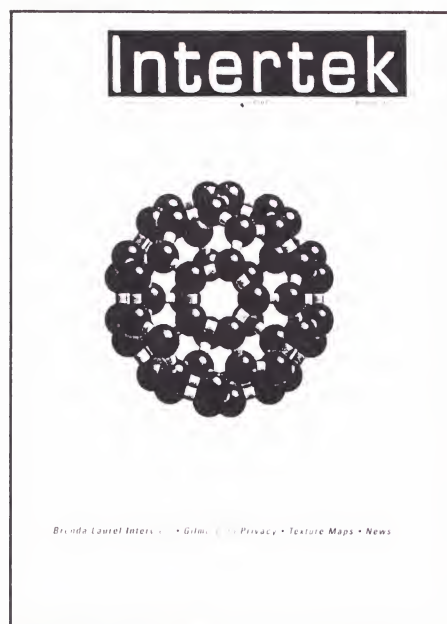
THE STRANGER #1 (Letter-of-comment, cash donation, or one-for-one trade with your magazine, PO Box 31848, Seattle, WA 98103) A critical zine that wants "to ensure that what is said is more important than who says it." The anonymous editor presents her/his opinions on the United States' mono-paradigmatic culture, political term-limiting and the Society of the Spectacle, and invites readers to respond. Send a couple of \$ to this stranger and join in on the fun.

The Stranger also sent me a little pseudo-catalog called *Statement Series*, which has truck-part catalog graphics surrounded by cool meme-ish statements, eg. "Sell your time to buy the time other people sold" and "Collective Stupidity is the Real Conspiracy." You can even send the stranger a blank disk & postage, and SHe will send you *Statements Concordance*, Hir complete

statements series on a *Hypercard 2* stack. Yeah! (8 pages, xerox, typeset)

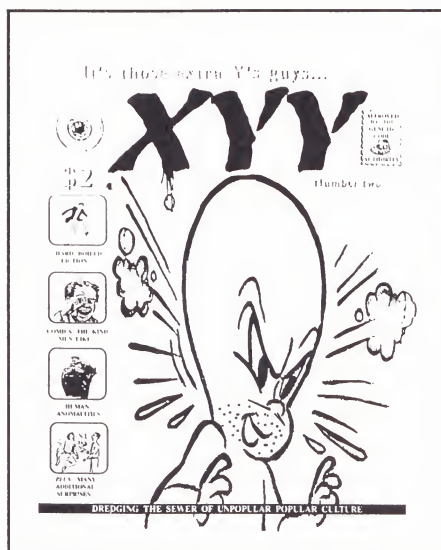
SWELLSVILLE #12 (\$2.50 to Jack Thompson, PO Box 85334, Seattle, WA 98145) The "Juvenilia and Catastrophe" issue of Jack's personal opinion zine. Music, comics, anti-war stuff, and single paragraph observations from a person with a brain that seems to be functioning pretty darn well. (49 pages, standard size, xerox)

TRAJECTORIES #9 (\$20/4 issues, Permanent Press, PO Box 700305, San Jose, CA 95170) Robert Anton Wilson's newsletter. Good stuff about the weird world we live in written in a way that makes the strange bumps in the spacetime continuum stick out even further. This issue has news about the California Government's quashing of



their own drug report, because it told the truth instead of toeing the party line. Our friend "Simon Moon" takes a look at the world of Ufology and decides that the Ufologists of today are far more interesting than any of the UFOs being sighted. Lots of other news tidbits and an excerpt from Wilson's forthcoming *Cosmic Trigger II*.

URINE NATION NEWS #5 (Free for 1 first class stamp per issue, Digit Press, PO Box 920066, Norcross, GA 30092) Printed on a lovely shade of piss-yellow paper, *The Urine Nation News* is establishing itself as the best source of information about the government's war on freedom. This issue features a



speech by Eric H. Sterling, president of the Criminal Law Foundation, which was originally delivered to the Colorado Bar Association. Sterling goes through the amendments in the Bill of Rights one-by-one, citing cases that illustrate how the war on drugs has turned the Constitution into a hollow fairy tale. Did you know that right now, if you own a gun and happen to take a pain-killer prescribed to a friend or spouse, you are a federal felon subject to a ten year sentence and a quarter-million dollar fine? There's also strange piece of news about a man who has Grave's disease and dug up his daughter's corpse. A doctor explains that people with Grave's disease experience periods of erratic behavior. (8 pages, standard, typeset)

XXX #2 (\$2, Standard X. Press, 82 Kimball Ave, Yonkers, NY 10704) Funny stuff about leeches, the Clown College, detoured Harvey comics, lies from the bible, dead author's tales, reviews of really bad writing, and a fond look at the movie *Billy Jack*. Recommended. (40 pages, color cover, offset, standard size)

VIRUS 23 #pi (\$7 PO Box 46, Red Deer, Alberta, CANADA, T4N 5E7) Beware: are you ready to expose your nervous system to this mind virus? This potent Canadian blend of cyberpunk, Crowleyanity, shamanism and psychedelia comes in an attractive, graphically innovative zine. *Virus 23* has been mutating simian brains for two issues by exposing them to media viruses, interviews with bleeding-edge technoshamans, reviews of weird literature, and fringe essays. A metaphysical pit-bull that'll rip your nervous system to shreds.

Classified Ads

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META-ADS

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Not Funny Haha Funnybook Review

B. Barrows

The following reviews are all positive. There are many different kinds of comic books and they all have different sorts of appeal for different sorts of people, but some are simply done better than others. The comics reviewed in this column are determined by the reviewer (that's me) to be of superior quality and should appeal to most intelligent people. In other words, you may not like every title reviewed because a certain subject matter may bore you to tears no matter what, but if a title looks at all appealing to you, chances are you'll like it.

wise-ass who is somehow a magician although we never see him perform magic, and that goes a long way toward making the series feel more real. Constantine was first introduced by Delano's friend, Alan Moore, in the *Swamp Thing* series as a supporting character. He originally looked just like Sting and acted a lot like Humphrey Bogart: calm, cool, collected and always smoking. As good a writer as Alan Moore is, Delano has spent more time with the character and Constantine has now outgrown his roots. We have seen him now lose his collective calm and cool, although he still always smokes, and that is exactly what new writer Garth Ennis addressed in his first storyline as Constantine developed lung cancer and had to barter with the forces of Hell in order to preserve his life.

Each of Delano's issues of *Hellblazer* fit into a larger story yet stood on its own as well. The subplots and general situation, instead of a cliffhanger, made the reader

living things do this- Viewed as literal, psychological, spiritual or whatever, Constantine's dilemmas have tended to deal with consequences, sometimes deserved, sometimes not. He anguishes with guilt over choosing the "lesser evil" despite it being the only choice he could make. Delano's stories vibrate with reminders of yin-yang cycles and patterns of growth and decay; Constantine must accept this in his own life to achieve status as a Magus, the figure of the balanced, spiritual hero. In Delano's final issue, it is implied that Constantine is somewhere on the road to that goal.

Hellblazer is labelled a horror series, but "psychological horror" is much more appropriate. Constantine is no Dr. Strange; he just happens to be in the right place at the right time so much that it seems like it's his "superpower."

Good luck to Garth Ennis on taking over this series. It's a tough act to follow. As a start, though, he has already had Constantine outwit three Lords of Hell in the following fashion: knowing that he was succumbing to cancer, Constantine sold his soul to each Lord of Hell. Upon his death, these Lords would all lay claim to his soul, but would have to go to war to determine who gets it. This would be a war that none could win, yet pride would make the war unavoidable. Therefore, to prevent such a war, these Lords of Hell have cured Constantine's cancer and are now active in their interest to preserve Constantine's life. With such cleverness does Constantine persevere. And Ennis has proven once and for all that he has Delano's character down pat when he concludes this classic confrontation by having Constantine flipping the bird to the Lords of Hell while saying, "Up Yours."

He has to be just a little more on the edge because he's fiction. It's what the reader has come to expect so it's appropriate that that is what the reader gets.

CLASSICS ILLUSTRATED

Berkley Books & First Comics / Semi-Monthly (Supposedly) / Prestige Format / Color

Most anyone who grew up in the early '70s or earlier might remember the *Classics Illustrated* comics that were first produced in the '40s and stayed in print for some 25 years. The art was stiff and the stories were unimaginative retellings of any classic novel that no longer had a copyright holding. English teachers hated them because too many kids read the comic adaptation of the book instead of the book itself. Kids liked them for the same reason.

In January of 1990, First Comics and



Hellblazer © 1991 DC Comics

HELLBLAZER

DC Comics / Ongoing Monthly / color

British writer Jamie Delano started this series about five years ago and has just permanently left it with issue #40. The new writer, Garth Ennis, has produced a very fine storyline in his first few issues, primarily because he has preserved Delano's mood and has also maintained a similar empathy for the series' anti-hero protagonist. So, happily, the book appears to be in good hands, but Jamie Delano's inspired run on this series does deserve notice.

The chief character of the series, the "Hellblazer," is John Constantine, a British

come back for more. The definitive tension of the series arose from Constantine's predilection to outlive his friends. All of his loved ones died at some point, always because of their relationship with him. Eventually, Constantine refused to allow himself to be close to anyone for fear of their safety. He felt cursed and tainted. Delano's last storyline on the book dealt with Constantine facing his "twin," his better half, whom he murdered while they shared their mother's womb. Cain and Abel before original sin. This act, literal or not, sums up Constantine's perception of himself, killing others so that he may live. Do not all



Classics Illustrated adaptation of *The Jungle*
© 1991 by First Publishing, Inc.

Berkley Books began co-publishing brand new classic novel adaptations under the old *Classics Illustrated* logo. Their goal was to use fresh, vibrant, innovative artists and breathe life into the adaptations. The results are mixed. Some issues are wonderful, some are as boring before.

There was a fascinating volley of debate in *The Comics Journal* a few months back about the appropriateness of this series. One side basically felt that adaptations are dilutions and that they bastardize and cheapen the original work, that our society is too comfortable with "lite" versions of anything and everything. The other side argued that the state of literacy in the U.S. is in such a poor state that the appeal of a classics adaptation is better than nothing; that adaptations are readily accepted in film, opera and stage; and that most efforts to keep literary figures alive in the public consciousness are worthwhile, and that the meaning of the figure transcends the vehicle that conveys it. Both arguments have solid points. I tend to view *Classics Illustrated* as a sound concept provided it doesn't replace the original work, and in the big picture, there's no danger of that. As I stated above, some of the adaptations are good and some aren't. The good ones are justified as unique visual interpretations, the bad ones detract from the imagination the book alone would

have spurred. Each adaptation, done by different creators, has to be judged on its own; they should not be lumped together.

There is strong prejudice against *Classics Illustrated* because of the lackluster work produced in its previous incarnation. Some fine work in the new series is being missed because of this prejudice. Some of the stronger issues have been: Edgar Allen Poe's *The Raven and Other Poems* and Ambrose Bierce's *The Devil's Dictionary and Other Stories* by Gahan Wilson, macabre cartoonist; Herman Melville's *Moby Dick* by Bill Sienkiewicz, moody painter; Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations* and Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights* by Rick Geary, Victorian obsessionist; R. L. Stevenson's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* and Joseph Conrad's *The Secret Agent* by John Y. Snyder, colorful expressionist; Edmond Rostand's *Cyrano De Bergerac* by Kyle Baker, playful humorist; Poe's *The Fall of the House of Usher* by P. Craig Russell and Jay Geldhof, sombre stylists; Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* by Peter Kuper, powerful expressionist; and a few others. As of this writing it seems likely that First Comics (who are now publishing *Classics* without the help of Berkley) will not be continuing this series, or any of their other ventures, for that matter. Nonetheless, enough copies of these adaptations were printed that they can still be found on shelves for awhile. Grab them before they're returned to the distributor to be destroyed if you are interested.

Don't get me wrong; in every instance, I feel that the original novel is superior. But that doesn't mean that these adaptations are "bad." Judge for yourself which issues seem worthwhile, but don't just pass these adaptations over because they're adaptations. They aren't trying to be the original; they are a genus unto themselves, a hybrid oddity that result from their own place and time, a cultural/commercial culmination built from previous cultural/commercial culminations. They have their own language that encompasses both words and pictures, too powerful a combination to ignore these days.

ARTISTIC LICENTIOUSNESS

Starhead Comix / Undetermined Publication
Schedule / Black & White

Maybe you know this and maybe you don't, but there is a glut in the comic market right now of pornographic material. It won't last, of course, but various titles will invariably survive while the vast majority of them will disappear in the midst of financial Darwinian struggle. 99% (an educated estimate) of the material is produced by men

and features women that reflect roughly 1% of the real female population. Although many of these titles may have art that is decent enough, virtually none of them have stories to speak of. A notable exception is *Artistic Licentiousness*.

This comic is written and drawn by Roberta Gregory, who has produced material for the undergrounds for a number of years. She is also presently producing a smutty comic for Fantagraphics called *Naughty Bits* and although it is not a bad book, more bawdy and cartoony than *Artistic Licentiousness*, it is not as refreshing an alternative as *A.L.*

Gregory produced one issue of this title and is waiting for sales and especially positive response (being a realist in the small press world) to determine what sort of follow-up she may be able to get together.

A.L. is a story of a bisexual woman named Denise who happens to be a little heavy, and lives underneath a nerdy virgin cartoonist named Kevin who also happens to be a little



Artistic Licentiousness © 1991 by Roberta Gregory

heavy. Denise falls in love with a lesbian who rejects her when she discovers Denise's bisexual nature. Kevin has his first sexual encounter with his best friend's bitter girlfriend who advances this encounter with the motive of revenge. Denise and Kevin end up together for a night, both of them on rebounds. They are brought together through the eroticism of their respective artistic ability, his erotic cartoons and her erotic prose. The relationship has all the makings of a one night stand and their story could

easily end with this one issue. On the other hand, the chemistry between Denise and Kevin, particularly as she deals with his clumsy sexuality, is charming enough to fuel more stories. Gregory has left the story open either way. This comic is leaps and bounds above the average porno comic for the following reasons: it is produced by a woman and avoids the usual stereotypes; the art is rough and not immediately erotic, not until you start reading does it gel; the characters not super-beautiful, they are normal; the story itself is erotic as the tensions between characters develop; people really act the way they act in this story as they are basically insecure.

As a man, I'm much more interested in reading an erotic story that sprang from the mind of a woman. Men producing porn for men really is inappropriate for heterosexuals when you think about it.

newspaper strip character *The Spirit* who was at the height of his popularity in the 1940s. *The Spirit* was a fine genre character and Eisner introduced genius story-telling techniques in those strips and would still be remembered for that alone had he done nothing else. Fortunately, he has done more. Since the mid-1970s, Eisner has produced a half-dozen or so graphic novels that have dealt primarily with the urban life in which he was raised in the first half of this century. The finest of these books, *A Contract With God* and *A Life Force*, have now been bested with the publication of *To the Heart of the Storm*.

Eisner states in the introduction that this graphic novel is a "thinly disguised autobiography." The frame of the story portrays Eisner on a train being taken away from his home for the first time. He is in uniform and is going to be one of the many fresh recruits to fill America's ranks in the early days of World War II. The body of the

personal and all-encompassing, that of his own individual history. Such a journey makes his public duty of military service all the more poignant. He is not just a soldier, he is a man with his own storm raging inside him. The storm of war reflects the smaller, inner wars.

The sheer purvey of this book is rich and extensive. Eisner relates the stories of his artist father in pre-WW I Vienna; his young mother in the latter half of the nineteenth century in the immigrant slums of New York; his own youth, shaped by the harsh experiences of his parents; and especially, his encounters with racism against his Jewish background, encounters that teach him, the fine art of survival in a capricious world. Each the many characters introduced through the years has a life out of his or her control; no one has all their dreams fulfilled. Eisner learns the positive value of compromise and then witnesses compromised lives around him fade into withered shades. These shades are human, though; no one is without fault.

One of my favorite sequences in the book (and one of the few true victories portrayed) is when Eisner's father, while a painter's apprentice in Vienna, gets back at his egotistical mentor by painting a fly on one of the works-in-progress with such realism that the soused mentor destroys his painting in his attempts to get rid of the "persistent" fly. The sequence resonates with pathos for all the parties involved: the painter for being fooled into self-destruction, the apprentice for having to resort to sabotage. All of the book's similar light moments are tinged with and created by such pitiable circumstances. All this to say nothing of the art. Every panel, every face oozes with expression. There can be no doubt or debate what the characters are feeling. Eisner draws pure emotion in faces, postures, gestures, clothing, shading, buildings, the ground and the sky.

Many comics are good within their genre, that is to say, such and such is a good humor comic; so and so is really good at drawing horror stuff; for a superhero comic, this one does okay. *To the Heart of the Storm* needs no qualifications; it is just plain old-fashioned good literature. It's the kind of book that makes you want to find out as much as you can about your own parents while you still can so that you can write your own personal history. It reminds you that you don't have to be a detective or a cowboy or a spaceman to have a story to tell. In fact, it reminds you that it's much better if you're not. •



To the Heart of the Storm © 1991 Will Eisner

TO THE HEART OF THE STORM

Kitchen Sink Press / One-Shot Graphic Novel / Black & White

Will Eisner is pretty much considered to be one of the top two or three comic creators of all time. This 1991 book reinforces that reputation once and for all.

Eisner is most known for creating the

story deals with Eisner's memories and flashbacks of not only most of his own life up to that point, but much of his mother's and father's well. Superficially, he appears to be on the outset of a journey to the heart of a storm that is World War II, but it quickly becomes apparent that the storm he travels to the heart of in this book is more

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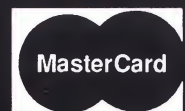
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