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# why you must subscribe



**y**ou haven't subscribed to *boING-boING* yet. You've refused to plunk down a measly ten-dollar bill, ten nearly-worthless Federal Reserve Notes, to get the next four issues of *boING-boING* sent to your home. We must say we admire your stubbornness.

Maybe we should let you in on our little secret. Way back in 1989, when we started *boING-boING*, we also launched the biggest mind-control campaign of the 20th century, dwarfing similar government programs such as *Cointelpro* and *MK-Ultra*. The purpose of our covert campaign, dubbed BOMB! (Buy Our Magazine, Biped!) was to make every human on the planet a paying *boING-boING* subscriber by the end of 1990. Sadly, it appears that we have failed. You are the lone human, the wayward mofo, who prevented our plan from achieving complete fruition.

Our ultrasonic subliminal transmissions emanating from clandestine satellites apparently had no effect on you. When we purchased all the major media networks and had them "speak between the lines", imploring you to buy *boING-boING*, you didn't listen. We even put George Bush in office because he promised that he'd get everybody to subscribe. He *promised*. I guess promises aren't very important to Mr. Bush. But we

don't blame him. As a mere puppet at the bottom of a very tall totem pole, Georgie just does what we tell him to do, without comprehending an inkling of our true designs. No, the blaming finger must be pointed elsewhere. At you.

You are at fault for destroying our plans. At one time we were angry. But we're not angry anymore. Because we know that you're going to subscribe.

Why, you ask? We'll tell you.

The pages of your copy of this magazine have been coated with a powerful neurotoxin combined with DMSO. As soon as you touched *boING-boING*, enough poison entered your biosystem to knock off a two-ton sea elephant. In the next year, you can expect to enjoy slowly deteriorating mental

functioning and diminishing motor control. Eventually you'll be reduced to a quivering mass of glop.

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*(Oh, and a personal note to our current subscribers: It seems that we accidentally treated two copies of boING-boING with the poison. We apologize if your copy happens to be the extra one.) •*

\*That's right, \$14. The antidote we're using isn't cheap!

PO BOX 12311 **boing boing** BOULDER, CO 80303

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How dare you extort money from me in such a way! I am disgusted that you are so crass as to force me to subscribe under threat of a painful death, rather than by offering intriguing articles and stories. Here's my \$14!

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*The cover is a from a Postscript file generated using Rudy Rucker's Cellular Automata Lab (Autodesk). It is an example of the "hodge" rule.*

boING-boING T-Shirts: Our customers  
speak out -

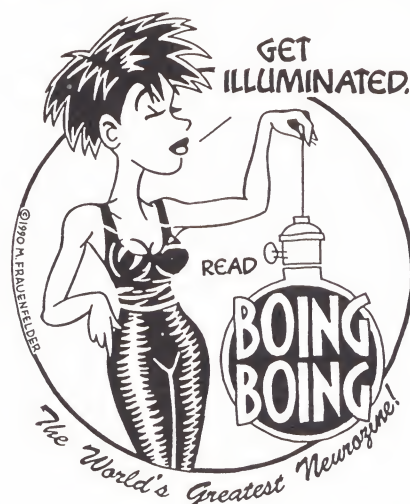
*I used to kill garden pests with a  
pitchfork. Now I simply wear my  
boING-boING t-shirt and steal toilet  
paper rolls from Taco Bell restrooms!*  
- Mighty Atom, Tokyo, Japan

*My head, which is the size and color of  
an unripe kumquat, has always been a  
sore point with the neighbors. Today I  
recived my boING-boING t-shirt.  
Thank you so much!*

- Roger Daltrey, London, England

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boING-boING T-shirt represents a  
nice thing to have around*

- Samantha Galaxy



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issue 5

sometime in 1991

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# welcome!



op Quiz: Why is it that Los Angeles Chief of Police Daryl Gates wants to shoot weekend pot smokers?

a) Marijuana smokers are more dangerous than rapists, serial killers and arsonists.

b) The casual pot smoker is to blame for America's declining rank as a world economic and military leader.

c) Daryl Gates can't stand to see anyone else having fun.

The answer is *b*, of course. And ol' Daryl is one-pissed off hombre. He's so mad about once-a-week pot smokers that he couldn't shoot the broad side of a barn if he was standing on the inside. But that's OK. It isn't necessary to kill pot smokers. There are plenty of other ways to stop people from living their lives as they see fit.

All these newfangled brain toys that pump signals into your head could be easily modified by government scientists to prevent people from experiencing anything but ordinary 9-5 consciousness. Why, I figure they could record the brainwave patterns of an upstanding decent American like Ed Meese or Charlie Keating and integrate them on a silicon chip. That way, we could all see the world as it really is. Not through some dope, meditation, or sex-induced stupor.

In fact, for a few extra tax dollars per citizen, these "brain governors" could

be rigged up to produce an electrical shock whenever the user slips out of the beta state. That way, folks could be trained to all think alike. Wouldn't that be neat! What's more, these machines could be locked on our heads so scofflaws couldn't get away with any cheating.

At the end of every month, each citizen would go down to the "Adjustment Center" for "brainwave pattern assessment." People with the most consistent patterns could be given tax credits or prayer books written by Marilyn Quayle. Troublesome "wave violators" might have to get a small piece of their brain snipped away in order to "get with the program."

Can't you just see it? A quarter-billion human beings, marching down the street, waving Old Glory and looking just like a super-giant *Up With People* concert. A nation of productive, tireless workers, creating an endless cornucopia of goods and services to be sold all over the world at a competitive price. A strong nation where each citizen, although only an easily broken stick by himself, combines with all the other sticks to form an unbreakable bundle!

It's gonna be a great country! •

# MARK

BOING-boING issue No. 5. Sometime in 1991. Published approximately four times per solar year. PO Box 12311, Boulder, CO 80303 USA. Single copy price \$3.95 in North America, \$6 (U.S. funds only) international & beyond. 4 issue subscriptions \$14 North America, \$19 international & beyond. Unsolicited submissions are welcome, but please enclose an SASE for return of material. Copyright © 1990. All rights reserved by original contributors. No similarity between any of the names, characters, persons and institutions in BOING-boING and anything in the real world is intended and any alleged similarity is either coincidence, Jungian synchronicity, or your own brain playing a well-deserved trick on itself.





Be be,  
Mark

## Rant of the month

Dear Editor

Do you remember listening to ZZ TOP when you were young? It promised fun. It was gonna be good getting older. DRINKING...SENIORITAS...TEXAS...Songs about getting high in CARS...Night in AMERICA...KICKING ASS...GETTING LAID...DRIVING WHILE BLIND. Well folks, that future is unsustainable and can't be realized.

When I went to college right after high school, we enjoyed innovations pioneered by our righteous forefathers like NO GRADES and COED residence halls. Today, almost ten years and 1000 lifetimes later the new inductees ponder the option of SUBSTANCE FREE halls. To us that would have meant you didn't have to pay for your dope. Students today drink! So what's new you say? Well it appears that's about the only elixer that remains out of the old arsenal. Drugs and Sex parties seem to be ancient forgotten rituals practiced only by banished warriors and used sacramentally by the monogamous. Where are the new wild ones?

Psychedelics are still prevalent among the Orthodox long hairs, musicians, artists, and outlaws. But the masses still use them only at DEAD shows. This situation must be corrected.

I have been dwelling on chemicals, but they are a barometer to measure levels of curiosity and expansion. When the young in this once radical California school seem to becoming less questioning, apathetic, and dull (Red Tail Ales on end without bong hits will do it), it should be noted by someone. My generation is still striving to be twisted - most are addicted to something -but we give a damn. We grew up on Cocaine, Led Zeppelin, Sinsemillan & Jimmy Carter, we give you Earth First!

Bob  
Santa Cruz, CA

Who's ZZ Top?  
Mark

**We crave feed-back! Send your cards and letters to our PO Box or e-mail mark on the WELL.**

## floccipaucinihilipilification

Dear Mark,

Yeah, I've been getting BOING and enjoying it.

No, I can't write any free articles right now. Too fucking busy. Can't even catch up on mail....your letter is dated July 29 and I've got a pile more that came in since then...

If you wanna, you can print my SLF manifesto (enclosed.) Or you can print this letter. Who knows? Somebody might find it amusing....or confusing....or something...

The longest nonscientific word in the English language is "floccipaucinihilipilification," meaning the act of estimating somebody or something as worthless. Use it in a sentence as soon as possible (that's the way to build vocabulary.) "When I think of the history of religion, I have a tendency toward floccipaucinihilipilification." See?

We have a President who won't eat his vegetables, a vice President who plays with dolls, and an ex-President in his 70s who still calls his wife "Mommy." What would the country be like if it were run by grown-ups for a change?

Well, I must be chugging along.

Preserve the Wombat! Keep the lasagna flying,

Robert Anton Wilson  
Los Angeles, CA

## Angry about bouncy mammary glands

Mark,

Rian sent me a copy of BB - There's some good ol' shit in there but it pisses me off. & I'll tell you why - it seems to me that it caters exclusively to men. And this is why I say this:

1. A comic strip where it is men who are the movers and shakers, and the main woman is used only as bait for another man (as well as a trussed-up and helpless pornographic display).

2. Promos and T-shirts for yer mag feature women (stereotypical 80s skinny bouncy-tit

women) in skin-tight clothes. I have nothing against arousing pictures. However, when these pictures are solely of the male-arousing variety, the message given is that

a: heterosexual men are important and are the ones addressed, & women are unimportant and not worth addressing &

b: the purpose of a woman is to be sexually appealing, those who are not are not portrayed.

Look, I'm not trying to be preachy or say that I have no sexism. However, I do believe that our society forces many "sexisms" on its members, often without their knowledge. So I consider it my duty to make a fuss & not just let these things slip by.

Be,  
Q

Dear Q,

*You must be busy being a duty-bound fussy lad, if you indeed don't let things you consider sexist slip by.*

*Thanks for sharing your interpretation of selected BOING BOING symbols and icons. Your subjective understanding of the graphic representations has been noted.*

*I'd like to comment on your assessment of the t-shirt logo. About half the people who have BOING BOING t-shirts are well-educated and sexually liberated human females. They all like the drawing. Only one woman has commented on the sexual feelings about the drawing, however. She's a lesbian and says that she finds the drawing quite luscious.*

*Forgive me if the cartoon image appeared in your eyes as a beautiful woman. If you'll use an ink eraser on the drawing, you'll find that the person possesses two sets of sexual organs, one male and the other female. An androgynous hermaphrodite!*

*I have received quite a number of complaints that I'm using images of human beings too much in my magazine, and that I'm a raging speciest. This also has been noted. Henceforth I intend to placate everyone and everything in the world.*



# a memetic lexicon

Glenn Grant, Memeticist

Version 2.0

*"An idea is something you have; an ideology is something that has you."*

--Morris Berman



This is a collection of neologisms which may prove useful in the study of memetics. A *meme* (pronounced meem) is an idea that replicates by parasitically infecting human minds and altering their behavior, causing them to propagate the meme --similar to the way a T-phage virus reproduces by hijacking the DNA of a bacterium. Unlike a virus, which is encoded in DNA molecules, a meme is nothing more than a pattern of information, one that happens to have evolved a form which induces people to repeat that pattern. Individual slogans, ideas, catchphrases, melodies, icons, inventions, and fashions are typical memes.

Whether memes can be considered true life forms or not is a topic of some debate, but this is irrelevant: they behave in a way similar to life forms, allowing us to combine the analytical techniques of epidemiology, evolution-

ary science, immunology, linguistics, and semiotics, into an extremely effective system known as "memetics". Rather than debate the inherent "truth" or lack of "truth" in an idea, memetics is largely concerned with how that idea itself gets replicated.

---

**host:** A person who has been successfully infected by a meme. Also called a carrier. (Not all hosts are *memeoids*.)

---

Memetics is vital to the understanding of cults, ideologies, and marketing campaigns of all kinds, and it provides the best immunity from dangerous information-contagions. The neophyte reader, for instance, should be aware that he or she has just been infected with the Meta-meme, the meme about memes....

In the lexicon below, names in parenthesis refer to those who first coined and defined each word, although some definitions have been paraphrased and altered. "GMG" is the author.

*Sources:*

*Richard Dawkins, The Selfish Gene.*

*Keith Henson, "Memetics", Whole Earth Review #57: 50-55.*

*Douglas Hofstadter, Metamagical The-  
mas.*

*Howard Rheingold, "Untranslatable  
Words", Whole Earth Review #57:  
3-8.*

**auto-toxic:** Dangerous to itself. Highly auto-toxic memes are usually self-limiting because they promote the destruction of their hosts (such as: the Jim Jones meme; any military indoctrination meme-complex; any martyrdom: meme). (GMG) (See *exo-toxic* )

**bait:** The part of a meme-complex that promises to benefit the host (usually in turn for replicating the complex). The bait usually justifies, but does not explicitly urge, the replication of a meme-complex (D. Going, quoted by Hofstadter). Also called the reward co-meme. (In many religions, "Salvation" bait co-memes are "Eternal Bliss", "Security", "Prosperity", "Freedom".) (See: hook; threat;



infection strategy.)

**belief-space:** since a person can only be infected with and transmit a finite number of memes, there is a limit to their belief space (Henson). Memes evolve in competition for niches in the belief-space of individuals and societies.

**co-meme:** A meme which has symbiotically co-evolved with other memes, to form a mutually-assisting meme-complex. Also called a *symmeme*. (GMG)

**cult:** A sociotype of an auto-toxic meme-complex, composed of (or recruiting) membots or memeoids (GMG). Characteristics of cults include: self-isolation of the infected group (or at least new recruits); brainwashing by repetitive exposure (inducing dependent mental states); genetic functions discouraged (through celibacy, sterilization, devalued family) in favor of replication (proselytizing); leader-worship ("personality cult"). (Henson)

**earworm:** A tune or melody which infects a population rapidly. (Rheingold); a hit song. (Such as: "Don't Worry, Be Happy".) (f. German, *ohrwurm* = earworm.)

**Endmeme, the:** *The Millennial meme*, (see). (GMG)

**exo-toxic:** Dangerous to others. Highly exo-toxic memes promote the destruction of persons other than their hosts, particularly those who are carriers of rival memes. (Such as: Nazism, the Inquisition, Pol Pot.) (see *meme-allergy*.) (GMG)

**meme:** (pron. *meem*) A contagious information pattern that replicates by parasitically infecting human minds and altering their behavior, causing them to propagate the pattern. (Term coined by Dawkins, by analogy with "gene".) Individual slogans, catch phrases, melodies, icons, inventions and fashions are typical memes. An idea or information pattern is not a meme until it causes someone to replicate it, and repeat it to someone else. All transmitted knowledge is memetic. Note that a meme need not necessarily reflect the "truth" to be successful. Memetic replication depends more on the appeal of a meme's logical structure rather than on its truthfulness. (Wheelis, as quoted in Hofstadter.) (See *meme-complex*)

**hook:** The part of a meme-complex that urges replication. The hook is often most effective when it is not an explicit statement, but a logical consequence of the meme's content. (Hofstadter) (See *bait*, *threat*.)

**ideosphere:** The realm of memetic evolution, as the biosphere is the realm of biological evolution. The entire memetic ecology (Hofstadter). The health of an ideosphere can be measured by its memetic diversity.

**immuno-depressant:** Anything that tends to reduce a person's memetic immunity. Common immuno-depressants are: travel (disorientation), physical and emotional exhaustion, insecurity, emotional shock, loss of home or loved ones, future shock, culture shock, isolation stress, unfamiliar social situations, certain drugs, loneliness, alienation, paranoia, repeated exposure, respect for Authority, escapism, and hypnosis (suspension of critical judgement). Recruiters for cults often target airports and bus terminals because travellers are likely to be subject to a number of these immuno-depressants. (GMG) (See *cult*.)

**immuno-meme:** See *vaccine*. (GMG)

**infection strategy:** Any memetic strategy which encourages infection of a host. Common infection strategies are "Villain vs Victim," "Fear of Death," and "Sense of Community." In a meme complex, the bait embodies the infection strategy. Jokes encourage infection by being humorous,

## Junk Junk



Felipe Echevarria



tunes by evoking various emotions, slogans and catch-phrases by being terse and continuously repeated. (See *replication-strategy*; *mimicry*.) (GMG)

**membot:** A person whose entire life has become subordinated to the propagation of a meme, robotically and at every opportunity. (Such as Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons, Krishnas, etc.) Due to internal competition, the most vocal and extreme membots tend to rise to the top of their sociotype's hierarchy. A self-destructive membot is a *memeoid*. (GMG)

**meme-allergy:** A form of intolerance; a condition which causes a person to react in an unusually extreme manner when exposed to a specific semiotic stimulus, or meme-allergen. Exo-toxic meme-complexes typically confer dangerous meme-allergies on their hosts. Often, the actual meme-allergens need not be present in a semiotic stimuli, but merely perceived to be present, to trigger a reaction. Common meme-allergies include homophobia, paranoid anti-Communism, and pornophobia. Common forms of meme-allergic reaction are censorship, vandalism, belligerent verbal abuse, and physical violence. (GMG)

**meme-complex:** A set of mutually-assisting memes which have co-evolved a symbiotic relationship. Religious and political dogmas, social movements, artistic styles, traditions and customs, chain letters, paradigms, languages, etc. are meme-complexes. Also called an *m-plex*, or *scheme* (Hofstadter). Types of co-memes commonly found in a scheme are called the: *bait*; *hook*; *threat*; and *vaccime*. A successful *scheme* commonly has certain attributes: scope (a paradigm that explains much); opportunity for the carriers to participate and contribute; conviction of its self-evident truth (carrying Authority); staves off dread of meaninglessness by offering order and a sense of place. (Wheelis, quoted by Hofstadter.)

**memeoid, or memoid:** A person "whose behavior is so strongly influenced by a [meme] that their own survival becomes inconsequential in their own minds." (Henson) (Such as Kamikaze, Shiite terrorists, Jim Jones followers, any military personnel). *Hosts*, *carriers*, and *membots* are not necessarily memoids. (See *auto-*

*toxic*, *exo-toxic*.)

**memetic:** Related to memes.

**memetic drift:** Accumulated mis-replications; (the rate of) memetic mutation or evolution. Written text tends to slow the drift of dogmas. (Henson)

**memetic engineer:** One who constantly devises memes, through meme-splicing and memetic synthesis, with the intent of altering the behavior of others. Writers of manifestos and of commercials are typical memetic engineers. (GMG)

## FUN STUFF

### Lucifer's Lexicon

Atheist, *n.* A theist.

Basket Case, *n.* A member of the armed forces who is no longer armed - or legged.

Boeing, *n.* The sound made by airplane parts bouncing off the ground.

Fountainhead, *n.* The most spectacular kind of head, the kind Ayn Rand used to give Nathaniel Branden.

Immortalist, *n.* An optimist who isn't dead yet.

Mandatory Drug Testing, *n.* Urination of sheep.

National Debt, *n.* Never have so many owed so much to so few.

Objectivist, *n.* One who knows that A is A, but has not yet learned the rest of the alphabet.

Sexism, *n.* A new heresy - or rather, a new hisesy.

Sin, *n.* In the Judeo-Christian tradition, a synonym for fun.

TV, *n.* Transcendental Vegetation, the most popular American method of meditation.

*From the Fall 1990 Supplement of the Loompanics Catalog, courtesy of L.A. Rollins.*

**memeticist:** 1. One who studies memetics. 2. A memetic engineer.

**memetics:** The study of memes and their social effects.

**memotype:** 1. The actual information-content of a meme, as distinct from its sociotype. 2. A class of similar memes. (GMG)

**meta-meme:** Any meme about memes (such as "tolerance," "metaphor").

**Meta-meme, the:** The concept of memes, considered as a meme itself.

**Millennial-meme, the:** Any of several

### We're a happy family

The American Drug Detecting and Testing Corporation of Lakewood, Colorado is now offering narcotic detection dogs for parents to bring into their homes to sniff out drugs. "With a dog, you can find the drugs in most homes within twenty minutes," says Ted Schwartz, the company's owner. Schwartz also recommends that parents buy his home urine testing kit to check their kids' pee 2-3 times per month. The cost for the dog is \$250 per hour, and the test kit is \$29.95.

### More kanine kapers

828 radioactive dead beagles were recently shipped from California in 55-gallon drums to Hanford, Washington for burial. The cold-war experimental dogs also produced 17.5 tons of radioactive excrement which also must be buried under federal rules governing low-level radioactive waste. Taxpayers can rejoice in the knowledge that they will pay \$22 million dollars to have all this crap buried. •



currently-epidemic memes which predict catastrophic events for the year 2000, including the battle of Armageddon, the rapture, the thousand-year reign of Jesus, etc. The "Imminent New Age" meme is simply a pan-denominational version of this. (Also called the *Endmeme*.) Millennial Hysteria, the widespread expectation of the End of the World, is already causing great damage to society, leading to apathy, lack of concern for the environment and nuclear proliferation, increasing cultism and survivalism, witch-hunts, New Age mindlessness, and so on. It is hoped that knowledge of memetics will help reduce chances of repeating history: in the years leading up to the year 1000, bloody wars were fought over holy relics, which were considered "safe passage" tickets to the Second Coming.

**mimicry:** An infection strategy in which a meme attempts to imitate the semiotics of another successful meme. Such as: psuedoscience (Creationism, UFOlogy, New Age); psuedo-rebelliousness (Heavy Metal); subversion by forgery (Situationist detournement). (GMG)

**replication strategy:** Any memetic strategy that encourages a meme's host to repeat it to other people. The *hook co-meme* of a meme complex. (GMG)

**retromeme:** A meme which attempts to splice itself into an existing meme-complex (such as Marxists-Leninists trying to co-opt other sociotypes). (GMG)

**scheme:** A meme-complex. (Hofstadter)

**sociotype:** 1. The social expression of a memotype, as the body of an organism is the physical expression (phenotype) of the gene (genotype). Hence, the Protestant Church is one sociotype of the Bible's memotype. 2. A class of similar social phenomena. (GMG)

**threat:** The part of a meme-complex that encourages adherence and discourages misreplication. ("Damnation to Hell" is the threat co-meme in many religious schemes.) (see *bait*, *hook*, *vaccime*.) (Hofstadter)

**Tolerance:** A meta-meme which confers resistance to a wide variety of memes (and their sociotypes), without conferring meme-allergies. In its purest form, Tolerance allows its host to be repeatedly

exposed to rival memes, even intolerant rivals, without infection of meme-allergic reaction. Tolerance is a central co-meme in a wide variety of schemes, particularly "liberalism", and "democracy". Without it, a scheme will often become exo-toxic and confer meme-allergies on its hosts. Since belief-space is finite, tolerance is not necessarily a virtue in a scheme, but it has co-evolved in the ideosphere in much the same way as co-operation has evolved in biological ecosystems. (Henson)

**vaccime:** (pron. *vak-seem*) Any meta-meme which confers resistance or immunity to one or more memes, allowing that person to be exposed without being infected. Also called an immuno-meme. Most meme-complexes include vaccimes to protect against rival meme-complexes. Common immuno-conferring co-memes are "Faith," "Loyalty," "Skepticism," and "Tolerance." A violently extreme immuno-memetic infection is called a *meme-allergy*. (GMG)

**vector:** A medium, method, or vehicle for the transmission of memes. Almost any communication medium can be a memetic vector. (GMG)

**Villain vs Victim:** An infection strategy common to many meme-complexes. Placing the potential host in the role of Victim and playing on their insecurity, as in: "The bourgeoisie is oppressing the proletariat" (Hofstadter). Often dangerously toxic to host and society in general. Also known as the "Us-and-Them" strategy. •

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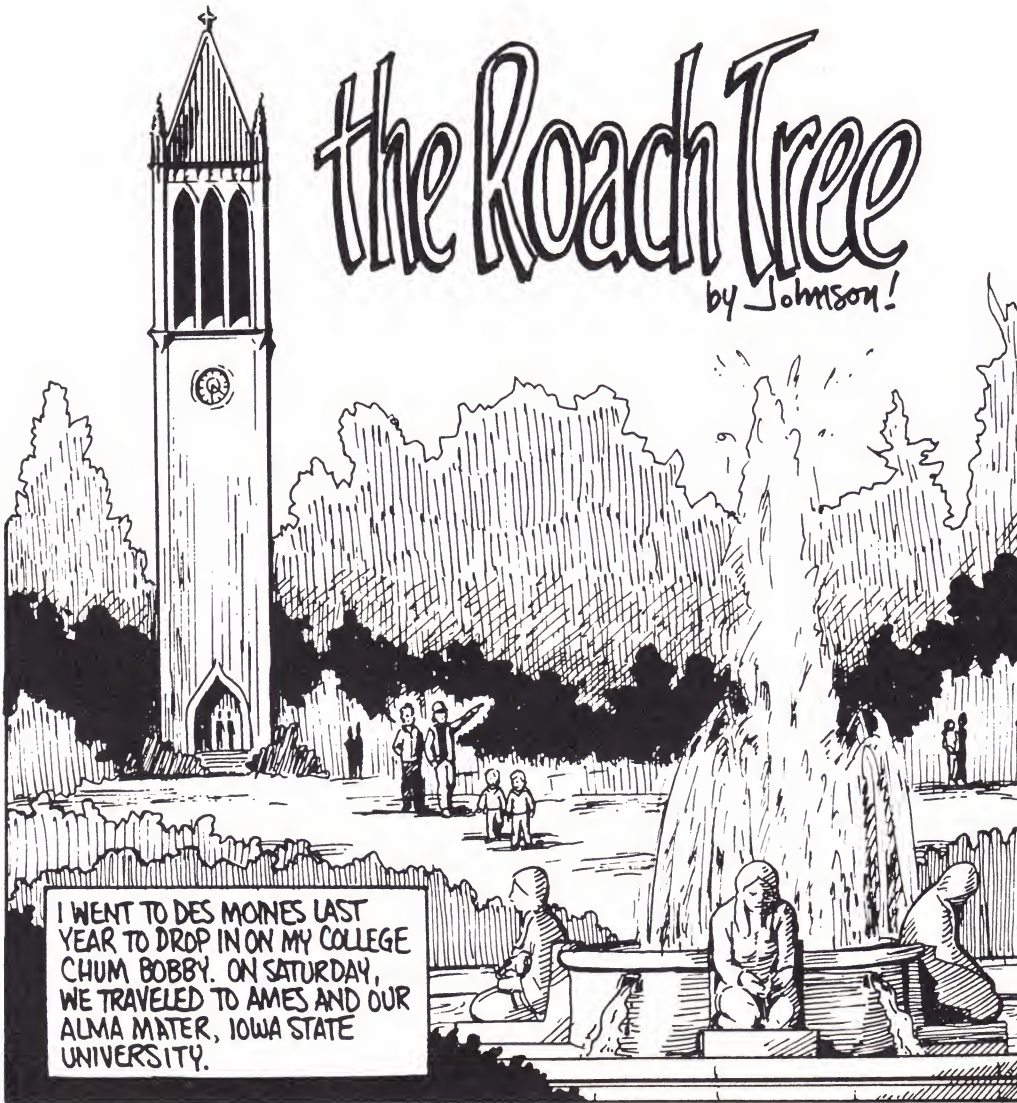


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# the Roach Tree

by Johnson!



I WENT TO DES MOINES LAST YEAR TO DROP IN ON MY COLLEGE CHUM BOBBY. ON SATURDAY, WE TRAVELED TO AMES AND OUR ALMA MATER, IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY.

A LOT HAD CHANGED FOR US IN TEN YEARS... MARRIAGES, DIVORCES, KIDS...

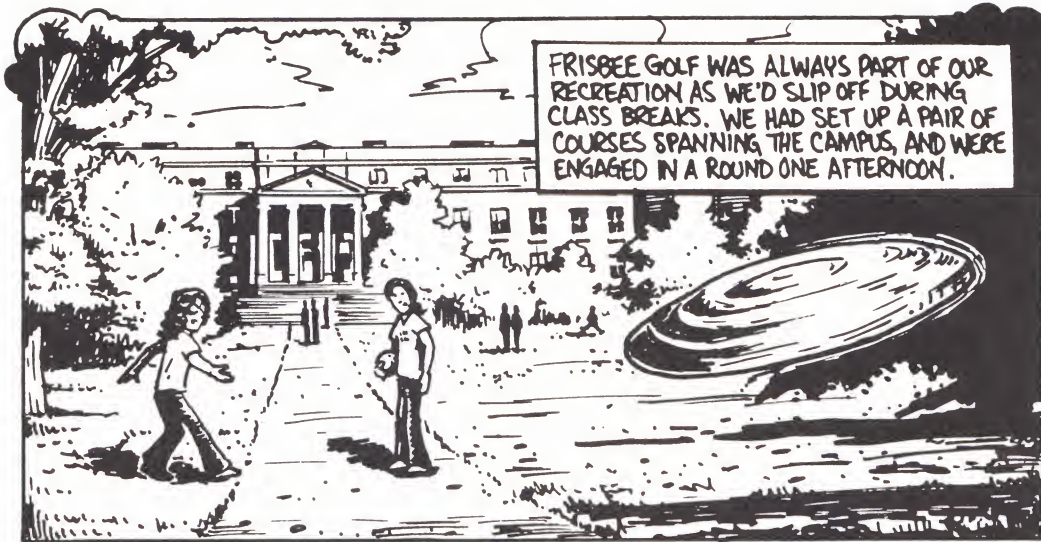


BUT THE CAMPUS SEEMED UNCHANGED, CAUGHT IN SOME KIND OF SNAPSHOT.

AS THE FRISBEES FLEW, WE COULD ALMOST FEEL IT WAS STILL 1978...







FRISBEE GOLF WAS ALWAYS PART OF OUR RECREATION AS WE'D SLIP OFF DURING CLASS BREAKS. WE HAD SET UP A PAIR OF COURSES SPANNING THE CAMPUS, AND WERE ENGAGED IN A ROUND ONE AFTERNOON.



I HAD JUST HOOKED ANOTHER SHOT AROUND THE WRONG TREE WHEN BOBBY MOTIONED FOR ME TO LOOK CLOSER.



HE STARTED TO PICK AT A CRACK IN THE BARK, AND TO MY AMAZEMENT, PULLED OUT A TINY ROACH!



I PRESSED HIM TO TELL ME HOW HE DID IT. AS USUAL, BOBBY PLAYED IT COOL.



BUT AS THE WEEKS WENT BY, IT BECAME CLEAR THAT HE HAD BEEN STASHING THESE TREATS FOR A LONG TIME.



IT ALWAYS AMAZED ME — NOT THAT HE WOULD DO IT, BUT THAT HE WOULD REMEMBER WHERE THEY WERE! SO LAST YEAR, I WAS SHOCKED AGAIN WHEN HE LED ME TO A BIG ELM ON CENTRAL CAMPUS.

AND GUESS WHAT?

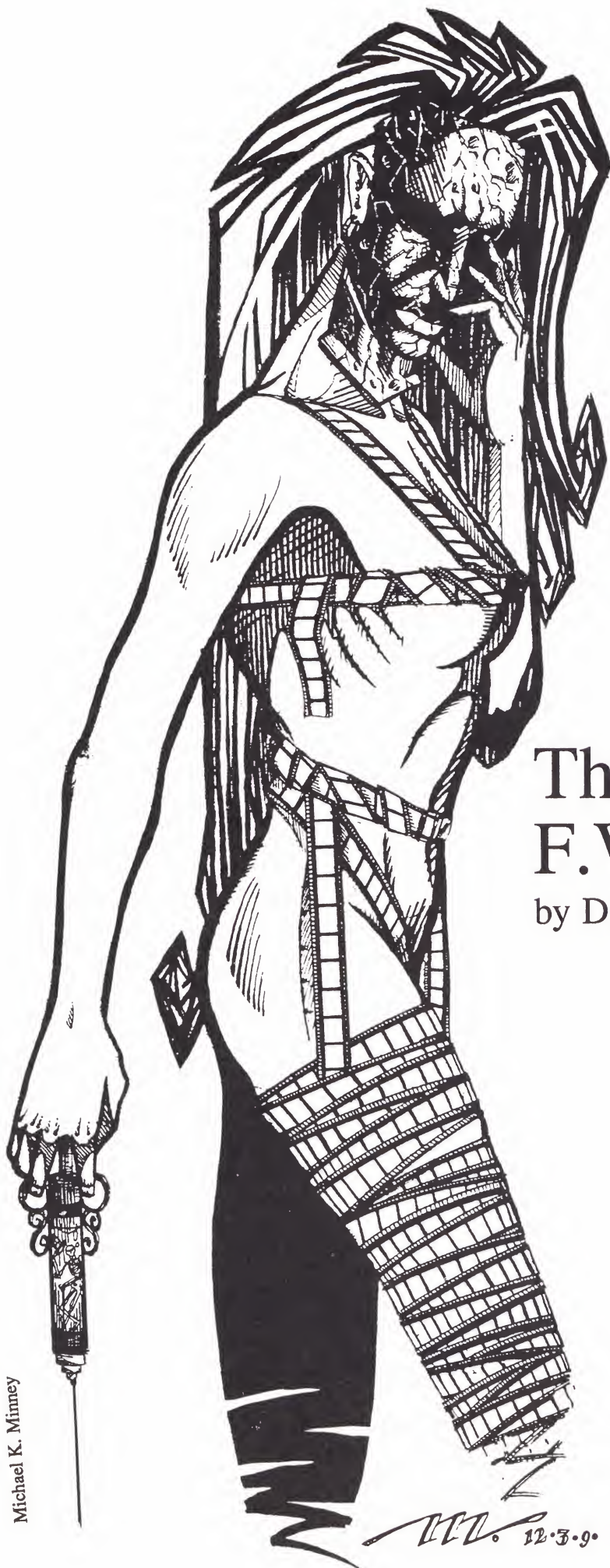


WELL, WHAT DO YOU THINK,  
AFTER TEN YEARS?

BUT I KNOW, SOMEWHERE  
AT I.S.U., STILL STANDS  
BOBBY'S ROACH TREE.







Michael K. Minney

ribofunk fiction contest winner

*Top dog in the meme-pool! Several stories battled it out for the chance to replicate umpteen thousands of times, both on paper, and in the nervous systems of receptive bb readers. David's prize is a Day-Dreamer brain toy.*



he important thing is to discover your true self," I remember Gilbert telling me. He said "It doesn't matter where you start."

After Gilbert Manx invented the vector feedback sensor, he went into the desert. There, at the end of seventeen days of fasting, he visualized what he afterwards christened "Homo Futuris" -- the Future Person -- a perfect, anonymous, self-regenerating mechanism. It was, by his own admission, a mystical concept, but he found the people to put enough of a scientific backbone on it to get something started.

Interactive prosthesis was the result, and not, I think, because Gilbert was such a seer, but because he was a savvy entrepreneur. His company, Perfect Prosthetics Corporation, fea-

## The Death Mask of F.W. Murnau

by David Hast

turing an all-star team of the world's leading bioengineers and biomechanics, eventually patented artificial versions of virtually every organ in the human body.

Gilbert was never secretive about this work, beyond guarding trade secrets. He felt obliged to tell it to the world. As the organs became commonplace in the operating rooms of industrial nations, Gilbert turned into something of a celebrity. He had his own TV special, and after that his own series. He was -- mistakenly -- portrayed by the media as a grey-haired, benevolent genius in the tradition of Einstein. He even cultivated certain aspects of his appearance in order to more closely resemble the great historical physicist.

But in truth, Gilbert was not much of a scientist. To this day, I'm convinced he never



really understood the processes that made his devices interfaceable with human flesh. He was a competent tinkerer and draftsman who could design structures to scale and do it prettily. His truest skill was recognizing talent and exploiting it. If he hadn't recruited a bundle of distinguished researchers, his ideas could never have been practically realized. He would have been a simple, clock-punching robot manufacturer. Or a hack organics tooler in some crummy lab, cranking out substandard organs with stock membranes or, God only knows, animal tissue.

As for me, Laurie Novic, how could I turn down a ten-fold salary increase, especially now that AT&T had decided to sell off the financially troubled University of California system to the notorious Exxon? The dominant rumor at the time I left was that Exxon planned to close three entire campuses, including my own Berkeley, and to direct all the scientific resources of the remaining schools into petroleum research -- a final, desperate effort to prop up their dying industry. I understood AT&T's decision to eliminate the Humanities and Social Sciences from the curriculum -- no one wanted to study that stuff anyway. The School of Management covered all the necessary human and social issues. But to shut down medical research -- that was too much. Three weeks after I resigned, the rumor became reality.

Looking back at my first few months at Perfect Prosthetics, I should have seen the warning signs. Gilbert's little hobby project, for instance. For no apparent reason, he took this one dead Loafer and kept jumpstarting it over and over again, each time with a new organ patched on. Of course, we always tested new organs or interface membranes on Loafers. In ipso homine was our motto. It wasn't the most

pleasant task, but that's what Loafers are for. They are as you know, here expressly for such things as medical research, organ harvesting, and other public usage. Loafers are society's dregs, who must be put to some use -- you can't call them real people, exactly.

But this experiment of Gilbert's was different. After a while, I couldn't even look at the thing. It was like meat. People around Perfect Prosthetics began to talk, call him incompetent, crazy. But I knew Gilbert pretty well by then, and I knew he was doing it because he'd been enthralled by this old novel he was reading about a mad doctor who makes a man out of spare parts or something -- only how could I tell people that? It was too ridiculous.

I stopped coming around to Gilbert's lab finally, so I wouldn't have to witness the ghoulish work. At that time I had an idealized view of Gilbert, the public hero, which I was reluctant to taint with -- it's so obvious in retrospect -- the truth. Gilbert was obsessed with reinventing the human species. Up to a point, I was a willing accomplice. But then he crossed the line.

Behind all our backs, Gilbert started his genetic pharmacology team on a new project. All the scientists involved were sworn to secrecy, as was the Vice President in charge of the project -- my husband, Henry Crick. Later when I'd figured out a couple of things one of the geneticists let slip, Henry admitted to me that Gilbert had gotten the idea for their project after reading another old book, or seeing some old movie about a guy who turns himself into another person by swallowing a potion. And what was worse, he'd convinced Henry and a few other managers that it was their corporate duty to take this new potion themselves, along

with him, and become the first Future People.

\*

When I walked into Gilbert's office on a frigid January morning two years ago, more tired than usual from dragging my big, pregnant belly around, I was in no mood for his games. I should have gotten a transbot to cart me through the maze of hallways, but I was trying to stay in touch with my pathetic motherhood. I had just discovered what kind of monster I might be carrying in me. I suppose Gilbert got the idea for that from some old movie, too.

"Gilbert!" I shouted at him, leaving his office door open so the staff outside would hear. "Do you have any idea what Preformin is? How long have you and Henry and the others been taking it?" I looked down at my future child. Gilbert palmed a small vial and slid his fist off the desk.

"Of course I know what it is," he answered calmly, ignoring the second question. "Preformin is a binding analog to be used with the Mumau Model Two. The Mumau Model One was an ordinary artificial head -- albeit state of the art, like all our products -- while the Mumau II --"

"Gilbert, Preformin is changing your genetic material. It will recode and restructure your body on a cellular level. Do you know what that means?" I put my palms on his desk and leaned forward. "I've just spent the morning with the genetic team, going over their data. If I'd had any idea...!"

Somewhere along the line, reading those old books and seeing those old movies, Gilbert had become obsessed with this Friedrich Wilhelm Mumau character, a movie director or something. He said Greta Garbo, who was a lonely "beauty queen" -- whatever a beauty queen was -- had a sort of plaster or clay mask of Mumau

## TWISTED IMAGE by Ace Backwords ©1990





when he died. He had shown me this moldy old thing he said was the very mask, and announced to the manufacturing division that from now on all prosthetic heads would be constructed with this face, both male and female variations. The Perfect Prosthetics Corporation would no simply longer offer a choice of facial characteristics on the complete head. Artificial face pieces could still be purchased separately -- but if you wanted the stock head, you got Mumau.

To my surprise, the Mumau -- stock face and all -- held its own in the market. There were enough calls for whole heads, in terms of the general population, that anyone with such a head would probably not run into one or two others in a year's time. In a small town, you'd almost certainly be the only one. There just weren't a lot of heads out there at this point. And it turned out that of those who bought the head, only ten percent chose to replace the face with their own or another. Either they couldn't afford it or they didn't care. People aren't so concerned about individuality as they used to be.

But the Mumau II was much more than just a head.

"You know damn well Preformin isn't a 'binding analog'," I said. "Every device is self-binding, anti-rejection. It's all encoded. Always has been."

"Well, it's sort of a brain and body binder. It makes them adapt to each other better."

"Is it really possible that you don't understand? No, it's not possible. You're toying with me Gilbert. The genetic team made Preformin according to your specifications. It alters anyone who takes it to some absurd, 'ideal' character model you've dreamed up with this so-called 'F.W. Mumau', and it replicates the program to all new cells. It changes your whole personality.

It gives you new genes and it rewrites your mind and memory."

"That's true," he said, just like that.

"It also exerts powerful genetic dominance," I continued. "If Henry took enough of that stuff before we -- before I got pregnant -- then you know what our baby's going to be, don't you?"

"She'll be F.W. Mumau."

"Gilbert, she's not even a boy! She's not even going to get to be her own self!"

"It's okay," Gilbert said. "Mumau has a gentle, feminine side. He was the perfect model for either sex. And she most certainly will be her own self. She'll be F.W. Mumau: a genius!"

I wanted to cry. I think I even started to cry. But then I felt a controlled anger come over me. At that moment, I could have gracefully, and without emotion, pulled the eyes out of Gilbert's skull. Maybe I should have. Then the control slipped and anger burst out.

"She and how many others?" I snapped. I moved around to his side of the desk and ripped the vial of pills from his hand. "How the hell did you get this past the F.D.A.? I really should have paid more attention to what you were doing this year." I threw the pills against the wall.

"All Mumau II recipients are prescribed Preformin binding analog," Gilbert said calmly.

"You might as well just make robot heads and replace the whole thing, brain and all," I said, disgusted.

"Well, we did have it printed onto a cerebral ROM graft," said Gilbert, taking my sarcasm literally. "We'll be putting Mumau software on the test market sometime next quarter. It won't work without a Mumau face, of course; we had to interlock the two. I think we'll subcontract that one out. Simula Cosmetic and Control,

probably."

"Gilbert. All the offspring of people with Mumau IIs will be little 'Mumaus'. It doesn't matter that there are only five hundred Mumau IIs on order -- once they're distributed, you'll be planting a new family tree. In fifty years there'll be thousands of them."

"That's true," he said. This seemed to disturb him, and for a moment I held out some hope. "But we can get more than that if we just sell more Preformin. I think the public is ready for it. People will be happy with the Mumau face once their minds start to change. And anyway, it takes less than a year for new facial bone and other structural cells to replace all the old ones, so even if they can't afford the face, any Preformin addict will sooner or later make the total transformation."

"Addict?"

"Of course," Gilbert said. "Preformin's a lot of fun, Laurie. You ought to try it. He pulled another vial from the desk, poured two tabs into his palm and held them out to me. I looked away for the first time since I'd stormed in, and saw half a dozen members of Gilbert's staff standing in the doorway, watching. They all exhibited the same, unexpressive little half-smile.

I got out of there fast. Two months later the baby was born and, well, I don't have to tell you.

The funny thing about the Preformin program is that it's based on Gilbert's single-minded impressions of this obscure man from an obscure time, and only faintly on any actual historical account. The personality it creates is really just Gilbert, only less manic. The Mumau personality also tends toward bisexuality, or asexuality. Any Preformin addict can be comfortably

## A MAYAN MYSTERY

**M**AYAN MONUMENTS RECORD DATES THAT GO BACK AS FAR AS 400,000,000 YEARS AGO. ARCHAEOLOGIST JOSÉ ARGÜELLES BELIEVES THAT THE MAYANS WERE MASTER TIME TRAVELERS WITH LOTS OF HELPFUL HINTS FOR OUR CONFUSED, POST-INDUSTRIAL CIVILIZATION.


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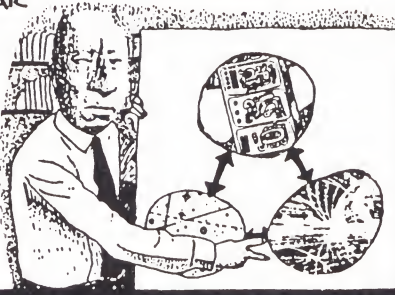
BY

## DOUGLASS • TRUTH

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**N**OVELIST WILLIAM S. BURROUGHS CONJECTURES THAT A SINKER & OPPRESSIVE PRIESTHOOD USED UP TIME FOR THEIR OWN SELFISH ENDS, LEAVING US WITH A TATTERED WORLD FILLED WITH LOW-GRADE HUMAN "PRODUCT" AND MILLIONS OF YEARS OF BAD CHECKS TO PAY.

"MAYAN MOTIVATIONAL SECRETS" 





intimate with any other. Which is maybe why so many people have turned to it in the fifteen months it's been on the market. These are unhappy times. Preformin addicts may not be happy, but they're not unhappy either.

But they are all truly alike. They speak in an odd movie lingo, talking about "cutting the scene" if they want to change the topic, or "raising the key light" on a subject they wish to explore more deeply. And they're always talking about "making a movie." If a Preformin addict says, "I've got to go make a movie" or "Let's make a film," it means they're going to take a dose.

I set to work right away on a drug to cure Preformin addiction. The task was next to impossible. My specialty is membrane chemistry, not genetic intelligence, and certainly not pharmacology. I could have designed something in a few weeks to block transport of Preformin across cell membranes, but all that would have accomplished would have been screaming, crying addicts withdrawing from it and calling attention to themselves and me. It would also have done nothing to alleviate the desire for Preformin.

It's hard to argue with Preformin. It doesn't debilitate your body, it doesn't diminish your motivation, and it does make you peaceful, docile, and somewhat witty. It provides a reassuring world-view, and lets you forget the unimportant things. Or so it seems to the user.

Legal recourse was out of the question. I was not surprised to learn that Gilbert had not deceived the F.D.A. at all: they loved it. Preformin addicts are prompt and dependable on the job, and except for the occasional fit of "artistic anxiety" that Gilbert considered an essential part of the Mumau personality, they were even-tempered, unadventurous, model citizens.

My hope lay with early-stage users. Around three weeks into the addiction, most Preformin users begin to experience a mild psychosis and anxiety associated with the final loss of their original personality. As the old self makes its last stand against the invading Mumau persona, some addicts -- maybe five percent -- actually want to turn back. These were the people I would try my antidote on -- if I could find an antidote. I would also try it on my daughter, Lethe, a well-behaved, rather dull little girl.

After months of frustrating research -- not to mention the end of my marriage to Henry -- I convinced Sherma Rubens to help me. She was one of the geneticists who'd designed Preformin in the first place. Naturally, Gilbert was paying them all very handsomely -- anyone, in fact, who worked in any way on Preformin, down to the lab assistants and secretaries. If he could have made the robots on the Preformin team richer, he would have done that too. But I

convinced Sherma that Gilbert was very possibly engineering the death of humanity. It was a pretty futuristic scenario, she said, but she had to admit I might be right.

There were a lot of people addicted to a lot of different drugs out there, and people with dangerous mechanical appendages, and people who played very evil games and robots and so forth, so Preformin appeared to be far from the worst of them. But it was the only one that had become a significant trend. It had quietly slipped into society and within only two years, almost unnoticed, it was outselling every drug but the leading painkillers and muscle relaxants.

We had to work secretly, and for very small increments of time. Perhaps distrusting me, now that I'd left his lackey Henry, Gilbert kept me very busy on some tricky problems with spinal synapses. As fascinating as this research was, it was a distraction from what I knew now to be my real work. He kept Sherma and the Preformin team equally occupied trying to iron-out the first month double personality phenomenon. His hope was that they'd be able to accelerate the mind-changing aspect of Preformin so that it could defeat the individual will before that will even knew it was challenged.

We had to steal chemicals, synthesize forbidden ones, forge, lie, and once, even murder. One of the anxiety subjects we tried had gone a bit too far into Mumau and was secretly upping his dose of Preformin when he returned home at night. By the time we had figured out that he had already become F.W. Mumau, despite the antidote treatment, he was literally on his way to Gilbert's office. They may not have had individual drive, but the Mumaus were single-mindedly committed to their common program.

I don't know where she got it, but Sherma had a little black market Readymade that allowed her to command a transport robot to kill. Transbots frequently ride elevators. When the subject got to the eighteenth floor, he was dead in the elevator and the transbot had destroyed the command chip. We had survived a very close call.

"Reformin", as we dubbed it, was revealed quietly to the scientific world through the courage and goodwill of the editor of Membrane Quarterly. Earlier in the year, the journal had published a daring editorial against Preformin, which had brought on government harassment and almost ruined them. They were playing it safe now, printing routine studies, and so attention had shifted away from them somewhat. Our article was published pseudonymously, toward the back of the magazine, disguised as a paper on the synthesis of a new compound to weaken bonding at the cell/prosthetic interface. There were several of these substances already on the market, for use in the removal or

replacement of prosthetics. Our Reformin was supposed to function on striated-muscle tissue. Since standard, adequate agents were already used for these reactions, and since we made the article very convoluted and obscure, few people were likely to read it. Only the name Reformin was unusual, and it was used only once and buried deep in the paper, it being a sort of brand name that a chemist would never apply. The chemical we discussed for most of the article was, in fact, a striated-muscle antibinder. The actual synthesis of Reformin was highly coded. All we hoped for was that one or two sympathetic scientists would understand it and help pass the secret on.

One scientist read it and understood it the day his subscription copy of Membrane Quarterly arrived: my ex-husband, Henry Crick, chief of the Preformin team at Perfect Prosthetics and a paid consultant to the F.D.A. At least that's who I assume it was. It's hard to tell. It's pretty dark here. It's quiet. They come in three times a day to feed me and give me my shot. The world has been told that Nobel Prize-winner Laurie Novic, M.D., and geneticist Sherma Rubens, M.D., Ph.D., died in a fire at Perfect Prosthetics. I wonder where they were willing to start a fire in Gilbert's lovely building? Maybe they didn't have to. The press never checks into these things.

I guess I'll be here a month, until I'm a Mumau. Or maybe they'll keep me even longer, until enough physical transformations have taken place to eliminate all risk of recognition, and until I no longer experience the hidden memories that occasionally flash back to Mumaus.

I don't really feel all that bad, if you want to know the truth. We did the best that we could, me and Sherma. And the food's good, they keep me somewhat entertained with movies and such, though I do wish they'd give me more light so I could at least have books to read. I guess the dark is supposed to keep me calm. But to be totally honest, I don't really want to read books anyway. They just make me depressed about being here. I prefer movies. Silent movies, mostly. With long shadows and long shadowy people.

I've got to go know. There's really not much point to this, since I won't exactly be Laurie Novic much longer. Diaries like this, where people die in prison -- or whatever it is I'm doing -- they can be really dull. I'm not that good a writer that I could really make it worth your while. I think more in pictures, in light and shadow. Excuse me, they're here again. I've got to go make a movie. I've got to go now. •

**New contest: Strangest true experience on a bus, train, or subway. Deadline: September 30, 1991**



# Wilder Predicts

by Luke McGuff

Jake Wilder Started having his precognitive dreams on December 6th, 1989: He dreamt he would take the bus to work the next day.

Jake took the same bus to work every day: "20B Plymouth Chalet." Same time, 1:35 p.m. Same stop, 25th St. and 27th Ave., at the corner of Matthews Park by the sledding hill. Same bus driver: "Anna Karil" her nametag said. She reminded him of an older, more bitter version of a woman with whom he had had a failed relationship. There was an instant dislike between them.

Even a couple other passengers were the same. "Bus Buddies," Jake called them, and tried to put them as far into the landscape as possible.

It was the specificity of the dream that came back to Jake. The shape of the clouds in the sky, the wind cutting through his parka, burning his cheeks. The old man crossing the street, walking his poodle.

The alarm played on next to him, as he lay in bed trying to figure out why this memory had risen out of the background. But he'd lived in a different neighborhood last year, and it hadn't been cold enough for parkas yet this year.

The weather came on: "A mass of arctic air swept in from Canada last night. Our expected high today is 8 degrees. At four degrees below zero right now, we have a windchill of 20 below."

Jake blinked, opened his eyes. First day of serious cold. Forgetting memory and dream both, he got up, got the coffee going, showered, made breakfast.

Jake worked second shift because he could stay up late, sleep late, and still have a good morning. The idea of having to get up and go off to work before being fully awake would just make all his allergies worse. Jake read a magazine over breakfast, pushed aside the plate.

Something hung at the back of his mind, something about a man and a dog. Was it from a movie or the tv? A little dog: Jake remembered his first girlfriend, Ellen, in Chicago, telling him about the old man who came into her neighborhood bar with his dog, a miniature schnauzer. The man would order a glass of beer and a saucer for the dog. Every time he got another glass, the man would fill the dog's saucer. They went to the bathroom together. When the dog fell over, the old man would pick him up and leave.

Jake put the last dish in the strainer,

thinking of Ellen, drunk, telling him this story. Their first time at Stash's, whispering slurrily in his face, tingling his knee with her touch. The beer and cigarette smell, pool players arguing over a Cub's game, Jake nodding his head, yes, yes, as Ellen says, don't look now, there he is.

Jake kept staring at Ellen's lips, her teeth, her chin, her cheekbones, her eyes. He wanted to climb down her throat tongue first but he settled for asking "Did the dig ever puke?"

The memory, more than a dozen years old, kept swimming out of Jake's background. It carried him through getting ready to go to work. Half in memory, half looking for his scarf, Jake remembered Ellen telling him the old man went through a dog a year.

Jake laughed as he put on his winter hat, scarf, parka, gloves. He locked the front door behind him, stepped out into the sunny, cold, wind-swept Minneapolis street.

The first day of serious cold was always a shock. Demoralizing, some people made jokes about counting off the minutes until spring. Jake got so bundled up he felt like Charlie Brown sometimes, and if he fell down he'd have to wait for Snoopy to come along and nose him home.

The few puffy clouds looked like cut-outs from the sharp blue sky. The wind laced into his parka, burning his cheekbones. Jake stopped, looked down the street. His neighborhood was a mixture of residential and light industry, and Jake lived on a truck route.

Barreling towards him was a truck, vrooming through the gears and leaving behind a cloud of diesel smoke thick enough to pick up and hold. But the truck seemed to be coming to Jake through something, an invisible barrier; the truck rippled briefly like a swimmer's face in that last second before surfacing. The driver's wave was the last tearing thread: Jake's dream came back to him, and he was in it.

Powerless, mobile, a camera, an eye, he looked at his gloved hands; the wind blowing against him, he moved in slo-mo, like even though the monster was right behind him he couldn't move faster. The air tasted like cold water.

Jake remembered the clouds, the exact black shadows, how everything looked so sharp and ultra-clear. His immediate experience was also a memory, but he only remembered the dream as he walked through it.

People only have precognitive experiences about something really serious, right? Like thinking about a grade school friend for the first time in years and then later on you find out she died right when you were thinking of her. That was the folklore. Dreaming of a friend in the middle of the night, waking up to call him and talk him out of a suicide.

Or the stories, the fiction: The man who dreams the end of the world or the death of a president. What mechanism selects them

and by whom are they touched? Jake thought for a second of a 4th dimensional spirit feather arbitrarily tickling the sleeping, receptive brains.

All Jake had dreamed about was a walk to the bus, something he did at roughly the same time, five days a week. But the feeling of importance weighed him down, put a layer of dread over his layers of winter clothes. Very rare for Jake, nothing reminded him of anything else, no memories swam up out of his background. He was right there, in that moment, barely able to put one foot in front of the other to continue walking at his normal pace.

Jake turned the corner and saw the old man from his dream, walking the dog. The man was tall, angular, his long overcoat flapping at the bottom. The dog was old, snuffling at the bare cement looking for a place to shit. The man turned his back on the dog when it squatted.

Jake felt like a pebble tossed into a lake, rippling to the edge; or like he was a nail, and the old man was a shoe, and what world event could the horse possibly be?

The old man was bent over, using his pooper scooper when Jake approached. Pushed forward like a finger puppet, Jake said impulsively, "Hey mister, be careful."

The man looked up, shocked. They were in a neighborhood where you could talk to strangers, but it was on the order of cold day, nice dog, how about those Timberwolves. The old man stood up straight, eyes thick, face grizzled, "Huh whuzzat?"

"I mean, I don't know," Jake said. Whatever had pushed him forward left like the last bit of water down the drain. "Just ... be careful. Anything could happen, you never know."

"What the fuck are you saying?" The man's voice was deep from abuse. The dog stood by the man's ankles, giving Jake a don't-trust-im, lemme-at-im-boss look.

Jake opened his mouth to speak and the finger puppet force left him swinging in the background, his brain full of static electricity and misfiring. He wanted to take off his gloves and pick at his cuticles. He felt like one of those toys where you push the base and it falls down comically.

"Nothing. Sorry. Cold day. Nice dog." Jake turned away. He felt like he'd remember this for years, that sometime in another city it would come back to him.

"Hey buddy fuck you," the old man said, and walked his dog over to Skol Liquors. Jake stood watching. The man started to tie his dog up outside, then saw Jake and took the dog in with him.

Jake crossed the street and saw the bus coming. He waved it down. It was the same driver, the same old lady she always talked to, Jake walked down the aisle and sat at the same seat. As the bus pulled away, Jake saw the old man come out of the liquor store with a 12-pack. Jake felt like he had thrown away the nail. •



# SMART DRUGS: Just say Know

Smart drugs are substances that improve mental functions such as memory, learning, creativity and alertness. Several years ago, Timothy Leary proposed the acronym S.M.I.L.E. (Space Migration, Intelligence Increase, Life Extension) as a goal for futants and neuroniks. Smart drugs may play a part in filling the bill. **boING boING** spoke with John Morgenthaler and Ward Dean on October 22, 1990.



Danny Hellman



Ward Dean is a physician involved in life extension research. He is the author of *Biological Aging Measurement -- Clinical Applications*, and *The Neuro-endocrine Basis of Aging*, books written about life extension, both published by the Center for Biogerontology.

John Morgenthaler has a background in computer science. He worked in Silicon Valley for a firm that creates artificial intelligence applications. He has also studied psychology and life extension.

Their book is called *Smart Drugs & Nutrients: How to Improve Your Memory and Increase Your Intelligence Using the Latest Discoveries in Neuroscience*, by John Morgenthaler and Ward Dean, M.D. B&J publications, PO Box 483, Santa Cruz, CA 95061. \$9.95 + \$2.00 shipping (add 6.25% tax for California orders) approx. 170 pages, toll-free number for orders: 1-800-669-2030. ISBN 0-9627418-9-2

**boING-boING:** How did you originally get involved with smart drugs?

**John Morgenthaler:** My original contact with it was quite a few years ago when I read Dirk Pearson and Sandy Shaw's original book ( *Life Extension* ). I became more and more interested in it and started doing computer database research about it. And that was the primary method of writing this book, using on-line database searches of Medical databases, dating back to 1967.

**bb:** How do some of the different drugs described in your book work?

**JM:** Vaso-pressin, for example, improves imprinting of new memories, while most of the nootropics (pronounced new-troe-pics) improve recall. Actually most nootropics are helpful in both memory consolidation and recall. Some



nootropics include Piracetam, Fipexide, Anaracetam, Primeracetam. Also, there's a natural one called pyroglutamate or pyroglutamic acid, which can be found in a lot of foods.

**bb:** Can you buy pyroglutamate in health food stores?

**JM:** Yes, you can.

**bb:** How does it compare with the synthetic nootropics?

**JM:** In terms of the scientific backup, it's difficult to compare, because these synthetic drugs have the financial backing of major pharmaceutical companies, so you can find, in many cases, hundreds of good, solid pieces of science done on them. Whereas pyroglutamic acid is a natural substance, therefore not patentable, therefore no pharmaceutical company is going to bother putting money behind it, because they would not be able to cover their cost of research. But there is some science done on it and what there is looks very good.

I also know from talking to people who have tried it that they like the effects very much, although most of them said it didn't seem to be quite as effective as Piracetam.

**bb:** Do these smart drugs help people with all levels of intelligence get smarter?

**JM:** It doesn't work for everybody.

**Ward Dean, M.D.:** That's the point I was going to make. The effects are very hard to predict. They don't work for everybody, and the dosages for people are very different. In many cases, it's trial and error to find which drug works, and what the optimum dosage is for a particular person.

**JM:** If a person is going to experiment with some of these things, and they find the first thing they experiment with doesn't work at all, they should try some other things. There's a lot of room here for individual biochemistry, and what works for one person isn't going to work for everybody.

**bb:** What kind of objective test data are you aware of that demonstrates that these drugs can cause an increase in intelligence?

**JM:** In the research they use I.Q. tests and

various kinds of memory tests.

**WD:** They'll also test laboratory animals to see how long it takes them to run mazes or the time it takes them to learn a new trick which enables them to get their food.

**JM:** Or also shock avoidance tests, testing rats to see how good they are at avoiding a shock, and how long they retain that memory.

**bb:** What is your experience with smart drugs?

**WD:** In my clinical practice, I've had excellent success. I learn the most from my patients' feedback. The results of many of the drugs have been dramatic. Probably one of the most commonly used, and the one that's been popularized by Pearson and Shaw, is Hydergine. Hydergine is a drug that has been approved for use for Alzheimer's disease. But in



Europe, it's taken primarily by younger people. The recommended dosage in this country is only 3 milligrams per day whereas in Europe they often will start people with three times that dosage. Everybody doesn't need that high dosage and I know many patients who get along very well with one or two milligrams per day, but I know other people who might need anywhere from 9 to 12 milligrams per day.

**bb:** Dr. Albert Hofmann of Sandoz synthesized Hydergine. Does he take it?

**JM:** Last I heard, he doesn't take it.

**WD:** That's what I heard, too.

**JM:** Speaking of dosage, there's another point that we discuss at length in the book about the synergistic effect between these



cognition enhancing drugs. There's evidence that Hydergine and Piracetam will potentiate each other by as much as five times, indicating that they might be able to get by on about five times less Hydergine if you're taking it with Piracetam. Also, nearly all of these smart drugs have what's called an "inverted-U dose response-curve" which means that as you increase the dosage, the effect gets stronger up to a point, and then it gets less and less so. So if you are taking too much, you could be getting no effect at all, or even a reverse effect. The optimum dosage of Piracetam seems to be 2.5 to 4.5 grams. But if you're taking it with Hydergine, the optimum dosage might be considerably lower than that.

**WD:** More is not always better. The key point is self-experimentation. This is almost a recreational use that we're talking about. Drugs are not designed to make people smarter, in general; they're designed for other uses, such as people who are clinically sick. And here we are recommending that they be used by normal people to make themselves even smarter. So scientific research has not been done to find the optimum dosages of these drugs for healthy people, nor have they tested them in various combinations. There's really an awful lot of research remaining to be done. But a key point is that most of these drugs have a very low toxicity, and so the safety margin in experimenting is very great.

**bb:** So you feel safe in taking these substances yourself?

**WD:** In the recommended dosages, yes.

**bb:** You mentioned pyro-glutamic acid as one of the natural substances. Are there any others?

**JM:** Well the one that's most well-known is choline. Then there's ginkgo. It's great stuff. Ginkgo biloba has been referred to by at least one researcher as a nootropic herb. We don't categorize it that way in the book, but it has a lot of similarities. It increases ATP production in nerve cells. It increases blood flow in the brain and other parts of the body. It seems to selectively dilate micro-capillaries.

**bb:** What's the active ingredient in ginkgo?

**WD:** In a plant extract there are usually so many alkaloids that it's very hard to put a finger on which is the key one.

**bb:** It seems to me that one can place a smart drug in one of two categories: the kind that produce an instant buzz, or the kind that build up slowly over time.

**JM:** Yes. There's a dramatic difference between say, Vasopressin, which takes



effect in ten seconds, and Hydergine, which may take a couple months.

**WD:** Vasopressin provides a rapid clearing of the cobwebs.

**JM:** Although I notice Hydergine right away.

**WD:** Some people do.

**bb:** What is Vasopressin?

**WD:** It's produced by the posterior pituitary gland, and it's the antidiuretic hormone. It's the same hormone that's suppressed by alcohol - the old "drink one, pee two" syndrome. The reason you tend to urinate so much when you drink alcohol is that the anti-diuretic hormone is suppressed. The indicated usage for Vasopressin is for diabetes, where there is a lack of antidiuretic hormones, which cause people to pee a lot.

**JM:** If you take a little Vasopressin with alcohol, it's a better experience. You're not

so dumb. You have the alcohol effects, but you don't have the memory-loss effects that go with alcohol.

**WD:** And you're not going to have to continually excuse yourself from the party!

**bb:** Then do you recommend that people modify their fluid intake if they take Vasopressin?

**WD:** I don't think it makes any difference.

**bb:** What other smart drugs produce a quick effect like Vasopressin?

**JM:** Piracetam takes effect within 20 or 30 minutes, and stays in your brain for about 12 hours. It's one of the nootropics and it's remarkable because it has apparently zero toxicity.

**bb:** Do you investigate any home-brew or designer drugs in your book?

**JM:** No. Everything we talk about in the book is perfectly legal. Not everything is a pharmaceutical that has been approved in the United States, but that doesn't make it illegal. If it hasn't been approved in the United States, it's been approved somewhere, therefore it's legal under new FDA guidelines to import small quantities for your own personal use.

**WD:** A lot of the drugs in the book have been approved for other uses, but which will occasionally improve mental functioning. Dilantin has a number of mind-enhancing effects. It's kind of a brain cell normalizer. It's been used for people with epilepsy, or people who are depressed, agitated, or those in a smoking withdrawal program. •

#### Sources:

*The two firms listed below sell nootropics that are unavailable without a prescription in the US.*

**Interlab, PO Box 587, Newport Pagnell, Bucks MK16 8AA, ENGLAND**

**Inhome Health Services, PO Box 3112/CH-2800 Delemont, SWITZERLAND**





### THE MANSON FILE

*Edited by Nikolas Schreck.  
1986; 202 pp.; softbound  
\$9.95 from AMOK Press  
Box 51 Cooper Station  
New York, NY 10276*

**F**or anyone who could watch TV, listen to the radio or read the popular press during the latter days of the turbulent 1960's, the name and face of mass-murderer Charles Manson swept a series of powerfully polarized images across the psychic landscape of an increasingly troubled America. During those times, our society became both transfixed and transformed, caught in a growing web of new meaning, symbols and images. As such, many of these ideas became ideological staples, often sampled indiscriminately by a baby-boom generation hungry for answers, purposes and truth in a world rapidly changing around them.

Paradoxically temporary, while seemingly eternal and all-at-once, cultural extremes of virtue and vice stepped forth from their usually held-in-check homes

laden amongst our dreams and fantasies. Colliding together to conspire within day-to-day events, they painted on portraits which defined a generation. LSD, The Viet Nam war, political assassinations, rock and roll, mass riots, etc. acted not unlike sculptured psycho-social passion plays - each with their own lessons, scripts, main characters and audience. There were many, many plays during those fantastic 60's years and many, many important players. While the majority of such scripts/events have been forgotten by a culture enraptured with the new, a few, seemingly beyond their appointed time, have retained a certain vitality - shuffling still within America's collective unconscious.

*The Manson File* by Nikolas Schreck specifically chronicles one such "prime mover" - the unpopularly/popular arch villain Charles Manson and the scripts which did, and still do, surround him. As retrospective pop anthropology, Manson and his philosophy, his crimes and our reactions to all of this reveal many hard-to-swallow truths about the then blossoming 60's counter-culture, the power of our media in idea shaping, and - as well - our society's almost mythological needs

involving both the scapegoat and the celebrity.

To quote Manson himself:

"When you take up a negative from a picture and hold it up to the light, you see the negative. So what you think in your mind as you look at me is how you're judging yourself and the world."

Both editor Schreck and Manson hold to a vision also recently popularized by such fields as Gestalt psychology, quantum physics and various schools of yoga, which is that as a culture or individually, we are unable - literally - to see anything beyond what society and the mass media draw for us or leave for us to use in forming conclusions.

Schreck speaks as both the journalist & the social psychiatrist, stating:

*"Charles Manson has been transmogrified by the electronic thaumaturgy of mass media into a mythic creation, a larger than life heiratic emblem of evil."*

(Schreck pp. 13)

Certainly, many powerful metaphors were summoned or reported by the press during the 1960's. These metaphors, in the



case of Charles Manson, spread all the way from the classroom to the White House.

Schreck, acting as both metaphor logician and transformer, attempts by way of this book, a novel, though troublesome style of information reporting about Manson. Here is an attempt to peek at the reality behind many provocative cliché's - guru/Manson's legendary "hypnotic" power; drug-crazed teen-age sex slaves; brutally killed blond starlets, etc. As this book opens, author Schreck reflects:

*"Let us make a bold speculation. Perhaps NBC, ABC, the Los Angeles Time, Vincent Bugliosi and most of the other supposed purveyors of truth have allowed interests more pecuniary than ethical to rule in their creation of the Manson mythos. We have all heard, for instance, that Manson possesses a 'dangerous' philosophy. Dangerous? In what way? And to whom? Of what, exactly, does the philosophy exist ...?"*

(Schreck pp. 14)

The scope of *The Manson File* is to present, without very much qualification or annotation, Charles Manson and his Family through their own words, through their deeds and by way of their philosophy. Much of this leaves a disturbing though captivating aura - especially in retrospect - and certainly none of it is boring. Unlike many earlier books about Manson from a more mercenary point of view (like *Five to Die*; *Witness to Evil*; *Chronicle of Death*; *Mind Fuckers*; *The Manson Trial*; *The Family*, etc.) Shreck's *The Manson File*, along with films like the California-banned *The Family*, reveal a complicated, well-integrated system of ethics and belief by a quasi-religious group bent on self-illumination and revolution. Practising through a mystical system known as "the left hand path," various revelations were achieved by overturning or inverting standard ethics, morals, politics, and religious practises towards transcendence and non-attachment.

What this book, Charles Manson and his philosophy, and similarly styled people sprouting in today's world have in common is their fascist, Nazi-like defiance of existing culture and its tenets. Many such people or groups, who use Manson or Squeaky Fromme as hero/martyrs (like the Universal Order or the June 2nd Move-

ment) openly quote from the Family's diatribes and catechisms.

Author Nikolas Shreck has editorially organized his *The Manson Files* into ten main chapters, including Philosophy; The Testimony (at Manson's trial); Music (Manson was immersed in the West Coast music scene); Art; Selected Writings; Poetry; The Occult Messiah; Politics, etc. There is also a section dealing with both the commercialization of Manson in film and media; and splinter groups paralleling Manson's Family and philosophy. Also included are networking sources for those inspired enough to pursue this subject beyond the book's contents.

*The Manson Files*, author Nikolas Shreck and publisher Amok Press deserve both a review and a careful weighing not only by readers wishing to know more about Charles Manson, but those interested in understanding cult attractiveness, free will and what can occur when the desire for a higher good becomes bait for too-late-too-get-out evils.

History has notoriously played fickle in defining our heroes and villains, and one generation's monster can sometimes become tomorrow's prophet, especially in times of social upheaval and change. How history will define Charles Manson is a high point of controversy, and books like *The Manson File* will certainly shed considerable light on both a period and a person who will continue to be judged for generations to come. (Reviewed by Thomas Lytle)

## THE SELFISH GENE

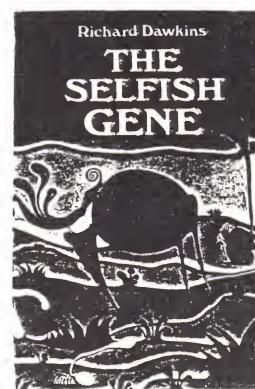
Richard Dawkins

1976; 224 pp.; softbound

ISBN 0-19-520000-4

\$7.95 from Oxford University Press, New York

In the introduction to *The Selfish Gene*, Oxford biologist Richard Dawkins writes that his book should be "read almost as though it were science fiction." The concepts and new methods of thinking about life, behavior and evolution are told in such a way that the reader is bound to start thinking about life forms on earth, including humans, to be even more



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fabulously strange things than ever before. The ideas in *The Selfish Gene* will buzz your brain as effectively as those found in the best science fiction.

Dawkins proposes that the gene, rather than an individual life form or species, is the fundamental unit of evolution, and argues his point very convincingly. Genes drive evolution and genes drive behavior. Human beings and all other life forms are merely survival machines which have developed over the aeons as a result of genes interacting with the environment. In fact, humans (and other survival machines) can be thought of as collections of viruses co-existing in symbiotic relationships. People are "virus colonies" in much the same way that anthills are "ant colonies." The brain is just an on board computer that has been blindly designed by the interaction of genes and the environment in which the genes replicate.

The book is full of examples of behavior patterns of animals, and explanations based on genetic Darwinism. To help the reader understand, Dawkins offers a primer on game theory. In lieu of mathematical formulas, intuitive explanations are offered that can make the most non-technical person appreciate the amazing contribution Charles Darwin made with his discovery of natural selection.

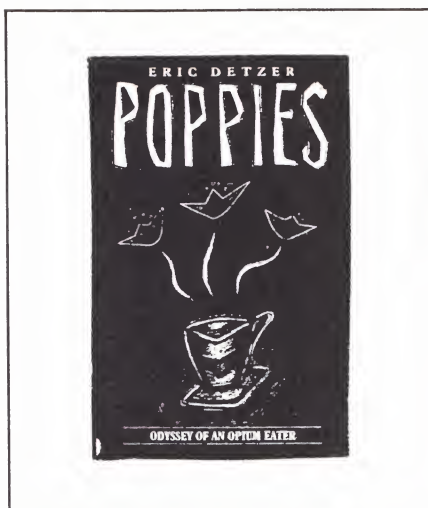
This is also the book that first introduced the concept of memes, and it's interesting to see how deeply the meme about memes has ingrained itself into our nervous systems since this book was first published fifteen years ago. (MLF)

(Note: At press time, I discovered that a completely updated edition of *The Selfish Gene* has been released. I haven't had a chance to read it, but Dawkins has added an extra chapter, as well as commentary on each of the original chapters. I think it costs \$8.95)

## POPPIES

Eric Detzer  
1988; 170 pp; softbound  
\$8.95 from Mercury House  
300 Montgomery Street, Suite 700  
San Francisco, CA 94104

*Poppies* is the autobiography of a Washington State psychiatric social worker who was addicted to opiates for over 20 years.



There are already dozens of junkie autobiographies on the bookshelves, but the thing that makes this one interesting is that Detzer obtained all his opium by raiding peoples' gardens for poppy plants.

It isn't well known that domestic poppy plants contain opium, but Detzer, once a typical San Francisco heroin addict, learned that he could make a poppy mash from 20 or so bulbs, drink it down, and make it through the day. Because this method of opiate addiction isn't financially ruinous, Detzer was able to function in society and hold his job without anyone suspecting he was a hard-core junkie. His wife and children knew of his addiction, and were able to work around it, although it did

put a strain on their relationships.

Detzer has a keen sense for telling a story. The book drifts between the philosophical (examining the extreme actions taken by people just to feel comfortable), to the hilarious (describing being chased from little old ladies garden patches), to the historical/mythological. (He is related to Vlad the Impaler, the basis for the Count Dracula legend, and he asks himself if Vlad's bloodlust has been passed down to him in a different form.)

A good portion of the book deals with his many unsuccessful attempts to stop using opium. At the end of the book he claims victory over his addiction, and I wonder if he has really won his internal battle.

Whatever Detzer's intentions were for writing the book, to me, *Poppies* presented a strong case for the legalization, or at least decriminalization, of heroin. When drugs are illegal, the junkies are worse off, and so are the people the junkies mug and rob. If the nation's drug bizarre would ever read

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this book, he'd probably see it as an excuse to increase his efforts for the escalation of the police state, but I don't think he'd read Poppies in the first place. It's obvious he's not interested in either the truth or the safety and health of human beings. (MLF)

### **THE OCCULT TECHNOLOGY OF POWER**

*from Loompanics*  
PO Box 1197  
Port Townsend, WA 98368

A work of "fiction" in which a head honcho of the banking conspiracy explains to his son how the people of the world are being used to make the elite richer and more powerful. Sure to confirm your favorite paranoid fantasies, and guaranteed to germinate some new ones as well.

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Because it's only about 70 pages long, you can get through it in a single sitting. I enjoyed this book. (MLF)

#### **Reviews of Fun Books by Kevin Bloom**

Hey! Welcome back to the wonderful world of *B X B*. I've got some more strange books for you, some old, some new. The first two are:

### **BASEMENT NUKES**

Erwin S. Strauss  
1984; 97 pp, softbound; \$8.95

and

### **HOW TO START YOUR OWN COUNTRY**

1984; 174 pp, softbound; \$7.95  
Erwin S. Strauss  
both from Loompanics  
PO Box 1197  
Port Townsend, WA 98368

While it's true that this book has been out for a while, I'm certain that many of you haven't read it, though I'm just as certain that you'd probably enjoy it. Although there are numerous details regarding nuclear and biological weapons construction here, it's doubtful that you could build

THE BOMB in your basement, and were you willing to try, you wouldn't possess the necessary intelligence to succeed. (Do you really want this stuff in your basement? Think about it!)

The main thrust of the author's position is that nukes are no longer the monopoly of the Evil empires, and chemical and biological weapons even less so. Proliferation is certain, and recent events in Iraq would seem to bear out Strauss' theory. Indeed, once the process is understood, one wonders why more nations haven't joined the Atomics Club. (Perhaps they have, and we'll find out soon!) All it takes is cash, and voila! - you're ready to trash your neighbors. Strauss sees decentralization and smaller cities as an inevitable consequence of cheap megadeath. After all, terrorists are quite capable of creating an anthrax bomb, and large populations are too tempting to ignore forever.

The author takes an interesting philosophical position in this work, and it's also a great read and conversation piece. If you're thinking of picking up *Basement Nukes*, do yourself a favor and buy *How to Start Your Own Country*. This book is a must-have reference for the imagination, and provides a good starting point if, as the title suggests, you'd like to start your own country. (And who doesn't, might I add!) The reason these two books are so intertwined is that established nations take a dim view of new nation-builders, and you should be prepared to inflict unacceptable casualties on your new enemies if you really want to succeed. As I mentioned before, all it takes is cash, although if you want to start a model country like Castellania, it needn't take that much. New from our pals at Loompanics is:

### **TAKE NO PRISONERS, DESTROY- ING ENEMIES WITH DIRTY AND MALICIOUS TRICKS**

Mack Nasty  
118 pp; softbound; \$10  
from Loompanics  
PO Box 1197  
Port Townsend, WA 98368

Many of you are no doubt familiar with the many books on harassment and/or revenge that are available these days. *Take No Prisoners* goes beyond petty tricks and

teaches you how to destroy your enemy's life. In fact, as near as I can tell, every single strategy in this book is illegal. Still, it makes for an entertaining read. Most of us wouldn't consider framing someone for child molestation, or stashing a gun in their airline luggage, or even cancelling another's car insurance before stealing their vehicle and playing bumper cars in a parking lot. But if you were just really, really mad ...

When buying books from Loompanics, remember to enclose \$3 for shipping and handling. This will also get you their catalog, which is very large and amusing by itself. Let me hit you now with my favorite book of the year! It's called:

### **ABOVE THE LAW: THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO OBTAINING DIPLOMA- TIC IMMUNITY**

Ambassador X  
32 pp; 1990, softbound; \$9.95  
from GRF Press  
2050 Idle Hour Center #108  
Lexington, KY 40502

I must admit, the arrival of this book left me in a dilemma. The information is so potentially valuable that I was torn between the desire to share the knowledge, and the desire to keep quiet, while exploiting this bombshell for my own financial gain. Being a Libertarian, though, I decided to do both, if possible. There are two things you need to know about diplomatic immunity. One: It's something you want to have. Two: It's going to cost you money. From \$3000 to \$15,000 depending on what you want. If you only have access to \$10, you should definitely buy this book, if only for the pleasure of selling your newfound consulting skills for big bucks. Although there are only 32 pages to this marvelous little beastie, do yourself a favor and buy it now. Anything this fun will disappear fast! •





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# UNDER



Debra Ostrokolowicz

# GROUND

by Paul Di Filippo

The girl came hurtling out of the faraway blot of darkness and down the radiant tiled corridor at me, crucified on a dirty white square of light.

The air was filled with a roaring like the bellows of slaughtered mechanical gods.

Before I had time to register more than a flash of her frightened face and awkwardly contorted form, she was past me, and the train ground shudderingly to a halt.

I was standing at the very end -- and edge -- of the platform, so I was even now with the first car. My wingtips overhung the stained concrete by less than an inch, but the train actually brushed them before I could pull back. I was that startled by the apparition of the girl pressed up against the grime-smear window of the lead car.

While I stood transfixed by what I had seen (or imagined I'd seen), the doors nearest me -- and along the length of the train -- opened with a noisy rolling clatter.

(I've often thought -- in years of subterranean travels -- how much this opening of doors resembles the way impulses propagate down a nerve, as if this subway were the fibers of something sentient, thinking vast and inconceivable thoughts, of which humans are merely the chemical messengers.)

Everywhere down the long, impatient waiting bulk of the train, people exited. Everywhere, that is, except from the first car, the car I stood beside. No one came through any of the three sets of doors in its length -- most certainly not the girl I had briefly seen.

I thought this was odd. The first car always had an inexplicable tendency to attract fewer passengers than the others. But it shouldn't have been entirely empty at this hour of the morning. Was there something the matter onboard? Was I going to be putting myself in jeopardy by getting in? What about the girl I had seen? Was she the victim of some assault, whom everyone had abandoned? Or --and why did I imagine this?-- was she the cause of the car's being empty?

All these thoughts rattled through my head in the time it took the hungry train to disgorge its old riders and swallow new ones. Then I heard the doors begin to roll shut, saw them inching out of their slots, and I knew the train was chafing to be gone.

If I didn't move now, it would leave without me.

How would I ever learn the story of the girl pinned to the window like a dead butterfly?

Did I even want to learn it?

Yes, I thought. I did.

I tossed myself through the narrowing doors, feeling them snap at my coattails.

Inside I caught a pole with my free hand (briefcase swinging in the other), spun around halfway, and fell into the grey plastic bench against the inner wall.

As the train roared off, I saw that the car was indeed empty, except for one small figure at the front end (and, I assumed, the driver, ensconced in his little coffin-like cab up front; however, I had not noticed him in his window when the train pulled in, since the drivers tend to keep their cabs dark for better tunnel vision, and I had also been so shaken at the sight of the girl; for all I knew the cab could be empty and the train a driverless rogue).

The other person in the car with me was, of course, the girl I had seen as the train surged into the station.

From my new perspective, the girl was even more dramatically positioned. Only now the window was an obsidian black, shot through with an occasional blue tunnel-light.

Her arms were raised over her head as she gripped the narrow ledge above the door. (I knew her fingers would come away filthy from such a hold, since I had often stood that way myself.) Her legs were braced wide apart, to accommodate the unpredictable rocking of the train. The X of her body seemed pasted to the graffiti-sprayed wall. As I watched, she pressed her young loins against the door as if to burn a hole in it with the force of some fervid desire compounded not of sex, but of some even more primal emotion.

She was dressed like a million other girls: flat shoes, black stretch-pants, a white shirt hanging out to below her slim hips. Her shoulder-length hair was an unusual color, though: icy blonde, almost platinum. The black headband she wore across the top of her skull and down underneath her fall of hair only accentuated the startling color, and I could picture her choosing it for just that reason.

With that confident -- and usually false -- sense of certainty we sometimes get from strangers, I felt that she had to be a student, either late high-school or first year of college.



Why was she standing in such a strained and dramatic fashion, though -- that I couldn't say. Was she high, I thought, so early in the morning? Or was she only emotionally distressed? Perhaps she stood as she did just for the hell of it. As I said, I often stood and gazed out the front window myself, watching the lost, dark miles of track go by, wondering when the last time was anyone had set foot on any particular spot. I especially liked watching as the train pulled into the stations, seeing the assembled commuters sprawled chaotically like chess-pieces shaken out of their box.

Now that I had seen how bizarre a person framed in the lead window could look, however, I doubted I'd be doing it again soon.

Deceleration tugged at me as my thoughts wandered all around the girl in this fashion. The train was slowing for the next stop. I looked intently at the girl -- whose face I had not really seen well from the platform -- wondering what she would do now, if this was perhaps her stop, and would I learn anymore about her.

But as the train ground with screeches and shivers to a halt she remained immobile, a martyred saint out of some medieval triptych, still glued to the wall.

The doors rumbled open, and I waited for fellow passengers to stream in, since this was usually a busy stop.

But no one else got into my car.

When the doors closed and we got underway again, I had decided. I couldn't just sit here and not ask the girl if she was OK.. Her hole posture bespoke some tremendous agony or anxiety, which was obviously communicating itself to everyone on the platform and keeping them off this car. (Everyone except me, of course. And why was that? Some special affinity for the girl, since I had so often been in her position? I found it hard to say.)

So deciding, I stood up in the swaying car,

clutching my briefcase in one hand and in the other a strap (what an anachronism, to call these metal, shovel-grip arms "straps;" but the City is made up of many such layers of new reality over old terms).

I moved awkwardly down toward the front of the car.

The girl didn't turn until I was right behind her.

Then she swung around stiffly, as if she had to fight to make her muscles obey her.

I saw her face.

Maybe it could have been beautiful under different circumstances. Now it was distorted by a mixture of emotions: fear, rage, terror, grief, uncertainty.

Her skin was blotchy from crying. Her lips were tightly compressed, her chin dimpled with the effort. A lot of my uncertainty about her looks stemmed from the sunglasses she wore. (Yes, now I remembered her visage striped with blackness through the window.) Darker than an abandoned station, hugging her pronounced cheekbones, they concealed her eyes entirely, making her face largely a mystery.

"Leave me alone," she said grimly, barely moving her lips to utter the warning.

"Listen, Miss," I said. "I don't normally bug people on the subway -- no sense pushing the wrong button and getting shot. But you look like you could use some help."

She barked, a noise I hesitate to call a laugh. It was more like a hysterical, indrawn sob.

"You can't help me. I'm dead."

Her words hit me like a runaway train. The fetid underground air seemed to thicken as she spoke, until I felt I was going to choke. The train passed over a gap in the power-rail and the overhead lights went out for a second, just like a candle in the wind, leaving the wan glow of the emergency bulbs to fill the car with a sickly orange hue. The noise of the train's enormous

passage suddenly changed to a sitar-like whine, and I heard in my head, of all things, the Beatles singing:

*She said,*

*She said,*

*I know what it's like to be dead.*

The memory of the familiar song restored me a little to myself, serving as a reassuringly mundane touchstone. What kind of person would say such a thing? She didn't look crazy, so she had to be really distraught.

"Don't talk like that," I said, "even as a joke. It's wrong. You're no more dead than I am."

Again, she barked, a sound to harsh for such a young throat. When she turned, she had dropped her arms to her sides, and now one hand wrung the other, as if it were a washcloth that had to be squeezed dry.

"All right," she said bitterly. "If it makes you feel better, I'm not dead. Maybe I was just never born. That would explain it. I feel like part of this train anyway. I've been riding it since I was a kid, going one place or another. Sometimes it seems I'm down here more often than I'm not. Do you know how that can be, Mister? Is time different down here, maybe? You think that's it?"

She seemed to be calming down a little -- or was I just deluding myself? She still stood taut as a bowstring, almost ready to snap. Perhaps if I humored her, I could get her to sit down at least.

"I don't know," I said. "I never thought about it that way before. Perhaps you're right though. Sometimes you read a page in your book, look up, and you're halfway across the City. Other times to go a few blocks down here can take forever."

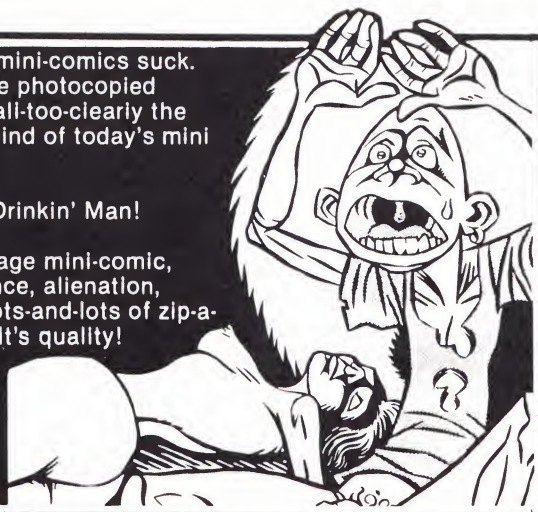
She nodded rather too violently, as if what I had said confirmed her worst fears. A tear leaked out from under her glasses and crawled

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"I don't think.... I get it..."

"Strange...enigmatic...maddening..."

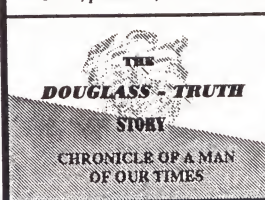
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you know,  
people seem to need the truth



slowly down one cheek. I wished I could see her eyes.

"Forever," she said after a few seconds, looking as if she wanted to spit. "Jesus, how I hate that word. It's so fucking big and cold. It's like a stone in my stomach."

She left off wringing her hands and laid them both across her stomach. She bent forward violently, as if someone had gut-punched her. It was as if she were the magician's assistant in the sawed-woman trick and something had gone wrong and now she was feeling the toothed blade pulled back and forth across her soft flesh.

"Hey," I said, really concerned now. "Why don't you sit down for a minute?"

She unfolded herself gradually -- as if the pain were receding, or perhaps had been only remembered -- with an immense effort of will and energy. She looked straight at me. At least I think it was straight at me. Those damn glasses made it almost impossible to tell. She could just as easily have been looking over my shoulder at some nightmare vision conjured up out of her own brain.

Suddenly I felt that maybe, in looking at her, I was doing that very thing also.

"No," she said, now feeling somewhat more self-possessed. "No, I don't want to sit down. I want to stand here and look where we're going."

With that she turned again toward the window set in the door and practically mashed her face up against it, insofar as her glasses would allow. I wanted to say: *If you've ridden this train so often, surely you know where you're going.* But something kept me from speaking.

I wondered what the driver beside us -- if he could hear us through the closed door of his cab -- thought of our crazy conversation. I wondered what I thought of it. Was it worth pursuing? Shouldn't I just leave this poor distressed kid to her private sorrows and move to another car? What right did I have to intrude?

I was just turning to go when her voice brought me back.

"Hey, Mister, it's lonely in this car. Won't you look out with me?"

I hesitated. Then I heard myself saying, "Sure, if you want me to."

She didn't say anything to that, so I assumed it was OK.

I moved beside her and she shifted to give me some room at the window. It was a tight squeeze and our hips ended up touching.

Hers was as cold as the water that dripped from station ceilings in the winter. Her touch seemed to suck the living heat from my body.

But I couldn't find it in myself to desert her.

Together we stared at the hurtling scene, as if it were some television broadcast from hell.

Just beyond the door was a small platform extending out a few inches. Three or four

weak-looking chains were strung across the edge of this precarious ledge. They were all that would hold you back from falling to the tracks if you stepped out.

But I had no intention of stepping out. Why had I even briefly considered it?

Beyond the nose of the car the tunnel was a claustrophobic, stygian alley, relieved here and there by puny lights outlining emergency exits to the surface or certain inscrutable valves and switches. The train's own headlights barely diminished the overwhelming darkness that continually rushed forward at us. The track was littered with random rubbish: paper cups, spikes, boards, pipes, rags. I wondered how the drivers could stand to confront this senseless, monotonous, utterly ugly vista hour after hour. What must it do to their souls?

And to the souls of those who rode as passengers?

Suddenly, without warning, my perceptions of the scene flipped ninety degrees. The tunnel, instead of being horizontal, became vertical.

It was an endless pit. And we were plunging straight down it.

I witnessed our heart-stopping fall for countless seconds, sweat beading on my brow, my pulse racing. My hand clutching the handle of my briefcase ached.

A portion of the tunnel on both sides suddenly flared brightly, and I knew we were pulling into another station. The spell began to lift then. But for a long moment I saw the station as a vertical slice of the pit, all the people hanging at right-angles to gravity's inexorable pull.

I yanked back at last from the window with an involuntary grunt as the train pulled completely in and the illusion shattered. My palms were wet and my heart was pounding. Still the girl stood by the end door, apparently unfazed by--if she had indeed shared--my dizzy vision.

I waited for other passengers to board the train, so that I could shuck off the responsibility for this girl onto them.

But no one dared step in with me.

The doors rattled shut.

We pulled out, acceleration tugging my limbs like an angry demon.

The girl was--looking?--at me again. The lower portion of her features was wreathed with mixed puzzlement and anger.

"Why underground?" she demanded.

"What?"

"Why did they

have to build these damn tracks underground?" she nearly yelled. Her lowered hands were balled into fists. "Why couldn't they have left them out in the sun and air, out with the living?"

"Well," I said, my voice sounding much too sane for the circumstances, "some of the tracks are aboveground. You know that, I'm sure. But as for the rest -- it saves valuable space to bury them."

Even to my ears this explanation sounded lame and inane. To her, in her crazed condition -- and by now I was beginning to be reluctantly convinced that whatever my initial estimation, she was indeed crazy -- my words must have sounded positively insulting.

"So it saves space," she shouted above the noise of the train's swift rush. "Is that the most important thing? Cremating the dead saves space, but mostly we bury them, don't we?" That rough bark escaped her throat again. "Oh yes, we bury them, although they don't always rest easy, even with such a blanket."

Now I definitely felt that it was useless to continue to try to help this girl. She was beyond any aid I could render. I made as if to move away.

She laid a hand on my arm.

Through suit- and shirt-sleeve, it felt cold as her hip.

I found I couldn't leave.

Her goggled, insect eyes fixing me, she said:

"I want to feel the breeze once more. Open the door for me."

I wanted desperately to say no. I struggled to. But it was beyond me.

Instead I found my free hand moving toward the door-latch.

I pulled it up and back.

The front door of the front car slid back like the well-oiled jaw of a snake.

A wind that stank of decay and piss, of grease and electricity, flooded into the car. It caressed us like a skeletal lover.

"Step out with me," she said. "it's easy --

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I've done it before."

I did.

Out in the tiny rocking platform everything happened both fast and slow.

The driver saw us through his window. His face cracked in amazement and he brought a walkie-talkie to his lips.

The girl -- still gripping my arm -- reached up to her face and removed her glasses.

She had no eyes. Where they should have been were only two pools of underground blackness.

"Come with me," she said.

Then she jumped.

But she never screamed.

Her grip on my arm, before it came loose, upset my balance. I came up hard against the chains and the top two snapped. I let go of my briefcase and it fell beneath the wheels of the train. The lower two chains caught me in the back of the knees. I started to topple over and out, following my briefcase down.

My flailing hands found one of the thin poles that supported the chains and clamped on. I kept falling. My right leg swung out to dangle in mid-air in front of the train.

My left leg got snared in the chains, both the ones that had broken and the ones that remained.

Hanging like some obscure figurehead, I kept my eyes shut as the train slowed.

At last it stopped.

When I was done talking with the cops and transit officials, they let me go into the daylight and fresh air. They were still looking for the body of the girl.

Outside I blinked wetly and looked around like one reborn. The familiar street scene struck me like some new paradise.

There was a newsstand at my elbow. The daily tabloids were propped up so passersby could see the headlines. Automatically I read them:

#### COED IN MIDNIGHT SUBWAY SUICIDE

I had a moment of supreme disorientation, as I imagined that what I had just lived through had already been miraculously digested and excreted by the media. But when I bought a copy and read the story, I knew that it was only a coincidence. The incident the papers referred to had happened while I slept. I realized then that that was what one of the cops had meant when he muttered something about "another one."

I went off to work just the same that day, outwardly normal but inside strangely numb after all that had happened. All day I listened to the radio, expecting each minute to hear that the authorities had found the girl's corpse.

But when I saw the first girl's picture on the six-o'clock news that night, I knew they never would. •

# interview

## Peter Lambhorn Wilson

By Mark Frauenfelder

*Peter Lambhorn Wilson is a scholar of Islamic verse, and the editor of **Semiotext(e)**, a nifty magazine that comes out too infrequently. We had the opportunity to interview him on 22 July 1990, while he was lecturing at Boulder, Colorado's Naropa Institute, a beatnik school for writers and artists.*

**PLW:** *Semiotext(e)* has been around since '74, but I've only been involved with it since '84. Sylvere Lotringer is the founding editor and the managing editor's name is Jim Fleming. *Semiotext(e)* was started at Columbia University, not by Columbia University. If people want to think that we're an authentic academic journal that's fine because it gets us certain advantages but the truth of the matter is that Sylvere has tenure. Otherwise they would have thrown us out of there long ago.

**BB:** The only issues of *Semiotext(e)* I've seen have been *U.S.A.* and *SF*. What are the earlier issues like?

**PLW:** The first issues are like mimeographed highly technical semiotic stuff. I haven't even seen those issues, they're so rare. Then there began to be issues on specific subjects. The first issue to hit the

stride of what it is now was the *All-Nietzsche* issue, then the *Anti-Oedipus* issue. Then there were the *German* and the *Italian* issues.

**BB:** I saw the cover of an interesting one, called the *Polysexuality* issue.

**PLW:** Yes, that was the one that got it in a lot of trouble, with Columbia and with the US Senate.

**BB:** Didn't they get mad about *Semiotext(e)*, saying that the magazine advocated sex between humans and other animals?

**PLW:** Right, and bestiality was the only thing that wasn't in that book, which proves that they didn't read it. Then there was a special issue on man-boy love that we're still overstocked on because no bookstores will take it. That was one of our very few financial disasters. Then there was another issue that came out before the *U.S.A.* issue called *Oasis*, which also didn't do too well. They were both very good issues, but one was too scandalous and the other was too obscure.

**BB:** Do you think that *Factsheet Five* and the growing interest in the micro-press has helped boost the circulation of the last two issues of *Semiotext(e)*?

**PLW:** Oh yeah, we got a lot of orders through *Factsheet Five* directly. Just because we entered into a conversa-



tion with the margin through the *U.S.A.* issue.

**BB:** *Factsheet Five* is such an interesting phenomenon. If not for *Factsheet Five* serving as a central hub, nobody would know what in the hell was going on.

**PLW:** It's an indispensable tool. It's always the first thing I recommend at writing seminars and stuff like that. I tell them "I know a way you can get your poetry published. Can any other teacher tell you that?"

**BB:** What is your background.?

**PLW:** I'm a Columbia dropout, a hippie, lived in the East for ten years, mostly India and Iran.

**BB:** Is that how you developed your interest in Islamic verse?

**PLW:** Yes, it was an existential thing, not an academic thing. The American academic world couldn't provide any answers in those days. Maybe it could by now. So I just had to go there and find out. I had a very interesting time. Most of the ten years were spent in Iran because I could make a very good living there just because I spoke English. The only country in the third world where that's still true is Thailand, and for people who are interested in doing this now, I recommend they go to Thailand.

**BB:** To teach English?

**PLW:** Luckily I never had to teach English, which I consider a really low occupation. I wrote in journals and edited.

**BB:** I taught English in Japan for a while.

**PLW:** The Japanese may need help with English, but they won't take it. I probably couldn't get a job on an English newspaper in Japan, because they are going to give jobs to the Japanese first, which is fine. But if you want a little adventure in doing wacky journalism in the third world, Japan is not the place for it. You could probably get some interesting work in Taiwan.

**BB:** What is *Autonomea*?

**PLW:** *Autonomea* is now the umbrella company which publishes *Semiotext(e)* and other things. There is also a line of *Autonomea* books. They make the *Foreign Agents* series, the little black books. They are supposed to at least theoretically have certain parameters, most of which we've broken at one time or another. The *Autonomea* books can be anything. Any size, any format.

**BB:** How did you join up with Rudy Rucker and Robert Anton Wilson to produce *SF*?

**PLW:** They both contributed to the *U.S.A.* issue. Of all the people in the science fiction world that I knew, I felt that they were the ones to work with because they already knew the magazine. Bob wrote a story and an introduction, that was his contribution, which was very good. Rudy went a lot farther in that he actually went out and drummed up people. He's more involved in the *SF* world than Bob is. Bob doesn't go to conventions, Rudy does. So he got Bruce Sterling involved and Bruce Sterling then lined up all the cyberpunks. He sends out the word and everybody says "Yes, Chairman Bruce." So that was really great. His name could have almost appeared as co-editor.

**BB:** I really liked Sterling's story in *SF*.

**PLW:** It's a very excellent story.

**BB:** What is the next *Semiotext(e)* going to be about?

**PLW:** Well we're not sure what the next one is going to be about. We've got a lot of projects bubbling. Some of them could turn out to be issues of the magazine and some of them could turn out to be books. We're working on a book right now about the cassette underground. And we've also started thinking about an "alternative radio" book or issue. We've also given some consideration to some sort of Latin American book or issue.

**BB:** What is your radio show about?

**PLW:** *WBAI* is the Pacifica station in

New York, part of a listener-sponsored non-commercial radio network.

**BB:** Yeah we have *KGNU* out here. They are Pacifica too.

**PLW:** No, *KGNU* is *public*, that's different. They buy the Pacifica report, that's all. There are only four stations in the network that are completely listener-sponsored. Public radio is not listener-sponsored. It's government-sponsored. Pacifica was started about forty years ago. My connection with *WBAI* started back in the 60s. When I was gone, I obviously had nothing to do with it, but when I came back many of my old friends were high muckamucks at the station. My show is a sort of *Factsheet Five* on the air, a review of the marginal press, which I've been doing for about three years. It's called the *Moorish Orthodox Radio Crusade*.

**BB:** What's the Moorish Orthodox Church? Did you start it?

**PLW:** No, it was an existing church, started back in the late 50s. It's an offshoot of a yet-earlier organization called the Moorish Science Temple, which was the first black Islamic church in America. And some white people got involved and started not a schism, but a friendly branch that was for hippies and beatniks.

**BB:** Did it serve as a partial model for Discordianism or the Church of the SubGenius?

**PLW:** No, I don't think so. I don't think they knew about it. It was pretty small. We were around in the psychedelic area, but we weren't nearly as big time as the Neo-American Church or the League for Spiritual Discovery. The way we treat it is very similar to Discordianism. We take a partly self-entertaining line about it all. My idea is that there is a whole group of what I call the "Free Religions" which includes Discordianism, anarcho-Taoism and Zen-socialism. They are basically adaptations of Oriental or Western Traditions that remove the problem of authority, particularly by laughing at it, or laughing it out of existence. But it doesn't mean that these religions are

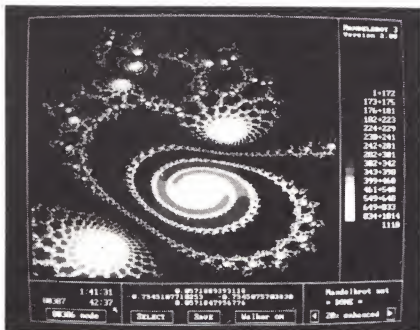


jokes. They're funny religions, weird is another word I prefer to use. The Church of the SubGenius is not just a joke.

**BB:** That's one of the great things about these religions in comparison with traditional Western religions. It's okay to laugh it up during ceremonies and such. Did you discover any intentionally humorous elements of Eastern religions you've studied?

**PLW:** Yes and no. Zen and Sufi humor are very famous. But on the other hand, they're both authoritarian structures. The difference is that for them the humor is secondary. GK Chester once said that laughter will get you to the gates of heaven, but not through them. And this is the position on humor of most organized religions. You can't carry the joke too far. But the free religions do carry the joke too far, they go all the way with it. •

## matter reviews



**MANDELBROT 3** (Software for IBM clones, \$25 from Midnight Beach Software, 1805A Felt St, Santa Cruz, CA 95062 408/479-9916) I've had the opportunity to look at a few different fractal programs, and *Mandelbrot 3* is the neatest one I've seen. It's fast, and the best part about it is that it fills the entire screen with a rough pattern, and then fills it in with patterns of increasingly higher resolution. This makes it nice to locate and zoom in on interesting areas without waiting for the program to paint the pattern sequentially from the top of the screen on down, like most other programs do.

Another fine goody here that I haven't seen on other 'brot programs is the "walker" option, a timesaving feature that assumes areas between sets don't need calculating. It's fun to watch the little walker dot leave a windy multi-colored



slug trail.

The user interface is slick and the well-written manual is unnecessary, unless you want to read about basic fractal theory.

Don't let the low price hornswoogle you into believing that this is a kludgey hunk o' shareware. *Mandelbrot 3* is important enough to warrant my keeping it on my always-crammed 20 Meg hard drive. Kick in an extra \$10, and they'll send you **KALEIDOSCOPIES**, a disk with five neat graphics/chaos programs. My fave is the Fractal Landscape program, which generates one alien planetscape after another.

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Reviewed by Mark Frauenfelder

**FOCUS 101** (Brain Toy from Focus Electronics Ges.m.b.H, 1070 Wien, Neubaugasse 44, Tel. 0222/93 90 82 od. 93 11 82 AUSTRIA) Look at this cute 'lil thing -- A Bauhaus-style mind machine! The Focus folks sent me only a picture and some literature, so I can't tell you what it does to your head. They also didn't say how much it costs, but I imagine you'll pay a pretty schilling to plug yourself into it.

The *Focus 101* uses sound and light tuned to operate within harmonical laws. The goggles sport ten LEDS, five for each eye. Each LED can be individually control-





led. The sound is generated by two synthesizer chips. Maybe when I send this copy of *boING-boING* to them, they'll give me a free Focus 101, and then I can give you a full-fledged report.

**AUTODESK ANIMATOR** (*Software for IBM clones with VGA, \$395 from Autodesk, Inc. 2320 Marinship Way, Sausalito, CA 94965-9910*) A breakthrough program. After playing with it for five or ten minutes, I was amazed to learn what my computer was capable of doing. And after playing with it for six months or so, I am amazed that I am still learning new tricks. *Animator* is a powerful program, even though the animation is just 2-dimensional. (Autodesk has recently released a 3-D package, but the price is around \$3,000 and it requires a super-powerful system.)

*Animator* costs less than \$400 and features cel, metamorphosis and shape animation. A menu full of nifty painting techniques such as smear, glass and jumble provide your animated creations with spectacular effects. Special tricks such as "tweening" do a lot of the work for you, so that you don't have to spend a lot of time drawing each individual in-between frame in your movie.

By using the 320 X 200 pixel VGA mode, you can incorporate up to 256 colors at one time. The color manipulation tools are very powerful, and the package comes with a utility to convert graphics files with various formats so you can use them in *Animator*. Excellent titling tools are offered, so you can roll credits after your movie, just like the big boys and girls.

If you make a neat movie that you want to send to your friends, just put it on a floppy along with the thoughtfully-provided run-time version of *Animator*.

Besides the reference manual, *Animator* comes with a spiral-bound tutorial to run you through the different menu commands. The chapters are loaded with examples and projects. Be warned, however, that it takes a long time to master *Animator*, and that the tutorial can really only hint at its possibilities. If you are serious about using *Animator*, you will probably have to take a class, or a least buy a third-party book and be prepared to spend a lot of time getting yourself unstuck. •



*These just came in and I don't have time to give them full reviews, but they all peg the boING-boING durometer past the red line. BUY BUY BUY!*

**MONDO 2000 #3** (\$24/5 issues, PO Box 10171, Berkeley, CA 94709) 176 pages of hacking, phreaking, fashion, music, life extension, aphrodisiacs, quantum physics, etc. Sex, Drugs & Rock 'n' Roll pushed way beyond the limits, the way you like it. This zine reminds me of the replicants in **BLADE RUNNER**. It looks mainstream & slick on the outside, but it is actually a highly subversive brain bomb.

**GURPS CYBERPUNK** (\$16.95 + \$2.00 from Steve Jackson Games, Box 18957, Austin, TX 78760. Tel. 512/447-7866. Fax 512/447-1144) A cyberpunk game that was deemed so dangerous by the US Secret Service that they seized everything that wasn't nailed down at the offices of Steve Jackson Games. It's a great game - not a cyber-style manual for overthrowing the gov't, as the techno-illiterate poltroons manning the US Secret Service think. These federal clowns still haven't returned Steve Jackson Games' computer equipment! The legal fees and other hassles endured by SJG have almost wiped them out, even though

they are the nation's second largest game company next to Milton-Bradley. But don't buy *Gurps Cyberpunk* just to try and save SJG. Buy it because it's a hell of a lot of fun! If you can't find this at your local retailer, you can buy it directly from the above address.

**VIRUS 23 #PI** (\$7.00, PO Box 46, Red Deer, Alberta, CANADA T4N 5E7) The Temple of Psychic Youth explain why Crowley was one of the greatest hackers of all times. There's also LSD urban legends and shamanism. The overall look is clean and well-thought-out. Editor Eric Fletcher's guardian angel must have been invoked while he put *Virus 23 #PI* together, because it is just so gosh darn fine. 70 pp.

**EDGE DETECTOR #1 & 2** (\$2.50 to Glenn Grant 1850 Lincoln Ave #803, Montreal, Quebec H3H 1H4 CANADA) Comics, articles, fiction, and columns by Rudy Rucker, Robert Anton Wilson, Paul DiFilippo, etc. Is this the Canadian version of *boING-boING*? It's been a while since editor Glenn Grant has released a new issue of *Edge Detector*, but he still has issues 1 & 2 available. For a sample of Glenn's work, see the "Memetic Lexicon" in this issue of *boING-boING*. •



NOT FUNNY HA HA

# Funny Book



he causes for this remarkable decrease are multitudinous (big vocabulary word!) and are of major concern to numerous social and educational institutions, if not to the general public. One alleged cause that has withstood blame time

and again is the comic book. Yet, in spite of the fact that the population is larger today, there were far, far more units of comics sold in the 1940's than there are now; moreover, far more of what comics are sold now are sold to people much older than 14. It is apparent that comic books, which do have to be read after all, don't have a thing to do with matters relating to poor vocabulary. What is more plentiful today is TV, movies, video games and drugs. A comic book, by comparison, is much to be desired.

But no matter how much older than 14 you are, you can enjoy comics like *Groo the Wanderer*, *Zot!* and *The Cartoon History of the Universe* (there's a little nudity in this one, kids, but it's of the non-threatening National Geographic style; oh yes, and animals have sex, but we all knew that, didn't we?). Now if you're younger than 14, let it be known that *Shade the Changing Man* is chock full of



Groo the Wanderer © Sergio Aragones

According to Harper's Index, the average number of words in the written vocabulary of a person aged 6 to 14 in the year 1945 was 25,000. In 1990, that average number is 10,000.

## Review

horrific violence, no getting around that. Regrettably, it lacks all of the subtle charm of wholesome publications like *The Punisher* and *Wolverine*, which have so fervently captured the innocent hearts of our youth. Finally, *Warts and All* is most fully appreciated by those old enough to know who Andy Devine and Tor Johnson were. One sweeping generalization that can be made is that ADULTS will enjoy all these titles! And possibly pick up a new vocabulary word or two.

**GROO THE WANDERER** (*Epic Comics, ongoing monthly series, color*)

*Groo* is the most consistent publication on the market today. Every issue is just like every other issue. The same stuff keeps happening to the same guy with the same results. And it couldn't work any other way.

*Groo* is the creation of Sergio Aragones. You know his work from all the little cartoons in the margins of *Mad* magazine. Epic comics is owned by Marvel and when Sergio struck the deal to be published by Epic while still maintaining ownership of the book for himself, it was a great moment for comic creators' rights. It's taking the business end of this industry a long time to get with the 20th century, but it looks like it'll get there in about 10 years.

Anyway, *Groo* is the perfect example of a comic that's great for kids and adults. On the surface it's a cartoony parody of *Conan the Barbarian*. Every month the thick and dull-witted Groo wanders into a new town or kingdom, and through sheer lack of comprehension, destroys or renders useless all that he touches (or hacks away with his sword). He fancies himself the greatest warrior in all the land, yet he can barely remember his name. Each issue has a little moral at the end reminding the reader to quit doing things that Groo would do.

That's for the kids. Another reading of any issue could reveal that Groo embodies an anarchistic and natural force that Man cannot control and would only perish in the attempt to do so. Everywhere that Groo goes the masses-at-large fear him and flee before him; his reputation has rightly informed the common man that some things are beyond control, like earthquakes and swelling insurgencies. Yet always, some person, a wizard

by B. Barrows



or a king or a prophet or a general, sees Groo and wants to control him, shape him, use him for his own advancement. With no exceptions do those who try to manipulate Groo fail. It is not that Groo rebels; to the contrary, he never even knows that he is being manipulated. Groo hasn't enough of the concept of manipulation to realize that his own brain manipulates his body. The greedy and power-hungry who attempt to exploit Groo's relentless energies fail because his force is that very force that denies comprehension, explanation or control. Groo is anarchy. He is emotion and instinct and gravity. He was born with the Big Bang and will die with the last Black Hole. Wherever there is chance or regret or molecular attraction, there is Groo. He will always be with us. The moral of the story for adults is, "Knowledge is finite. Don't mess with forces you know nothing about." Or "Situation Normal All ..."

**THE CARTOON HISTORY OF THE UNIVERSE** (Doubleday, Trade Paperback, Black & White) Larry Gonick had

the seven chapters cover, respectively: pre-humanity, prehistoric man, Sumer and Egypt, the Old Testament, the early Greeks, Athens and Athens again. The material is authoritatively researched (the bibliography, also presented as a cartoon, includes nearly 200 books) and is presented in a tight, humorous narrative. Gonick freely editorializes with an informed air through many casual jokes that punctuate the story-telling. His usual style is to present a panel depicting some historical characters or events, give fairly-straight-forward facts concerning the subject at hand, but have the subjects themselves make side comments that are relevant, memorable and funny.

Gonick also has a knack for pointing out little-known facts of interest. Did you know that the popular Greek statesman Pericles had a pointed head due to an accident of birth? That the brewers and bartenders of ancient Sumeria were always women, and that their drink of choice was beer? That the corpses of Egyptian noblewomen were allowed to decay a bit

that Gonick may emphasize the budding of Eastern civilization in forthcoming chapters and I hope that this is true. Although the Mideast has inadvertently received moderate coverage, the East is now ready for the limelight.

This history is alive and fresh, an excellent companion to "real" readings in the subject. It is a guarantee that every page will be fascinating and intellectually stimulating. What more do you want, for crying out loud? Oh, probably just power,



Zot! © by Scott McCloud

security and fame like everyone else in history.

**SHADE THE CHANGING MAN** (DC Comics, Inc. Ongoing monthly series, color)

**ZOT!** (Eclipse Comics, Erratically scheduled ongoing series, black & white)

At first, these two comics seem to have nothing in common. *Shade* is a psychological horror saga chronicling the destructive capability of "The American Scream," a supernatural force that makes its way across the United States uncovering and rampantly displaying the disturbing underbellies of the American mindset. The stories gyrate with bright colors and emotions on overload. The scope is exhausting and harsh.

On the other hand, *Zot!* initially told thoughtful adventure stories that took place in a futuristic yet nostalgic other-dimension, but has lately devoted itself to "The Earth Stories," wherein a different member of a small group of high school friends is sensitively focused on in each issue. *Shade* deals with the "big" issues: social corruption, mass neurosis, etc. *Zot!* deals with the "little" issues: the adolescent development



The Cartoon History of the Universe © by Larry Gonick

previously published seven issues of this delightful and informative comic and now it is available in one tidy 350 page volume. To understand how extensive this history is, one must realize that part seven only gets as far as Alexander the Great in his early years. The chapter breakdown gives a good idea of the book's emphasis; roughly,

prior to mummification to discourage necrophilia? God knows, this book could help in Trivial Pursuit if nothing else.

Hopefully, chapter eight will be published soon as it's been some time since chapter seven was first released; but such a project takes time and we must allow some patience. A little bit, anyway. It appears



of self-concept, individual intellectual and emotional maturation, etc.

What the characters Zot and Shade share are common starting points: the outsider looking in. Both characters are from other dimensions and are stranded on earth. They each have a close female companion from earth who serves as an anchor. They both have power but use it sparingly. But the respective authors of each comic use this starting point of the unknown traveller to create utterly diverging viewpoints. Writer Peter Milligan has Shade experience earth, or America more precisely, as a prison containing madness and murder and hysteria. Every American obsession, from the death of JFK to the glamorization of Hollywood, is likened unto a disease that infiltrates and destroys our collective reasoning. Despair and decay excel. Victories are small and temporary.

Writer/artist Scott McCloud has depicted Zot as coming from another dimension where everything always seems to work out and no one really gets hurt. Zot is the ultimate optimist, for his experience has given him every reason to be just that. But now he is stuck on earth. Zot is a teenager and his optimism is resilient, although his new-found friends, a nerdy clique of high-schoolers, have a tougher time of it. Zot gives up center stage and learns

devastating horror and the sublimation of the will to fear and corruption. Two different writers start with the same premise but let their visions guide them to effective and powerful opposing perspectives.

**WARTS AND ALL** (*Penguin Books, Paperback one-shot, black & white*) Artist Drew Friedman (with frequent collaborator and always brother Josh Alan) have put into this book a collection of tales and vignettes of the most hideous and grotesque personages in the history of film and TV. D. Friedman's black & white pointillistic and photorealistic style mocks the camera and pans across the circus of dead and/or disgusting "stars" of yesteryear, such as Ernest Borgnine, Bob Hope, Hattie McDaniel, Bela Lugosi, Frank Sinatra Jr., Mike Douglas and on and on. These sad misfits are freaks to be gawked at and possibly pitied, but never admired or envied. Chance put them in the limelight and it was all a mistake.

This book is made up of material that has appeared in various places from *The Village Voice* to *Spy* to *Raw* to *National Lampoon*, but even if you are such a dedicated fan of the Friedmans' that you have amassed all of this material already, this book is still worth buying for the cover

has never been used with such evocative effect.

My favorite piece in this book is "I, Joey Heatherton." The history of this unfortunate woman sums up everything that can go wrong in Hollywood. Exploitation, drugs, jealousy, violence and humiliation form her life story. The spotty news snippets we've seen here and there are brought together to create a cohesive but haunting biography, a modern Grimm's Fairy Tale that warns of the worst possible fate, wherein the heroine becomes the



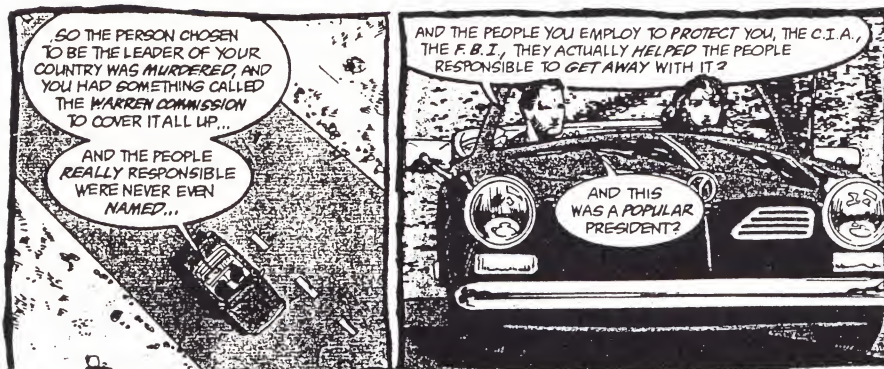
Warts & All © by Drew Friedman

witch.

The Friedman Brothers have conjured up a landscape of the cinematic past that is populated by grotesqueries that are far more poignant than the "stars" themselves. Here, those who thought it was worth it to make their lives public in return for fame and adulation are suffering in Hell. The pain of no privacy; the fame of fools. And it's really funny, too.

\*\*\*

Despite the title of this column, with its reference to the "not funny ha ha" cliché, several of the publications just discussed are indeed humorous. That's okay because they're "funny strange" as well. If you look at anything closely enough it becomes strange and intriguing and that's what makes people write and read columns about things as odd as funnybooks. •



Shade the Changing Man © by Peter Milligan

vicariously as each of his friends comes of age; Zot appears naive by comparison as he slowly realizes the nature of the kinds of beauty that can exist only in an imperfect world.

Where Zot has come to earth and seen quiet beauty and subtle but meaningful expressions of will, Shade has seen

alone: several lecherous and cantankerous old men peer out at you, the potential buyer. They appear so lifelike and disease-ridden that you cannot resist picking up the book to take a closer look. Just as you discern what appears to be warts all over the rasty men's faces -- Yow! You drop the book quickly because you feel the warts! The science of embossed printing



# The Grotesque

by Carla Frauenfelder



scene sticks to mind, even three years after reading it, from Rudy Rucker's novel *White Light* (page 23). The scene is about a teacher named Felix Rayman walking through campus, and it goes like this:

"I mounted the steps, face level with the ordinary denim butt of a student several steps ahead of me. Suddenly she let out a skirling cry, kicked out her right leg, and fell down in a fit, head nodding ecstatic agreeoent to that old-time nerve music.

"My feeling of alienation from the SUCAS community was such that I simply picked my way around her. Someone else would be eager to help...one of the most popular majors on campus was "Special Education." As I neared the top of the steps the door swung open and a blind student came out. I stepped aside, and he tapped past me, only to trip over the epileptic and fall onto her.

"It hurt a little to see them bashing around on those stone steps, and I hesitated, on the verge of helping. Her brown hair was webbed across her spitty face, and her hand was beating his pathetically pale back, acned and exposed to light where his cheap plaid shirt had rucked up. He continued loudly to apologize. A husky blond girl came running across the quad, slipped, twisted her ankle

and fell horribly at the foot of the steps. I went ahead into Todd, guilty and depressed."

I read this horrifying scene with utmost delight. I didn't analyze it at the time; I just knew that it provoked a rare emotion, one of pity and hilarity at the same time. This wasn't a new sensation, I had felt it with other literary and cinematic work. But it was hard to pinpoint exactly what it was or what caused it. I only knew that when this sensation came along, I thoroughly enjoyed it.

Later on in *White Light*, Rucker introduces a cockroach named Franx. Similar to Kafka's character in *Metamorphosis*, this insect is human-like and suffers from a lodged apple in his back that someone had hurled. An example of Rucker's delectable writing when describing this character is when Felix tries to dislodge the now rotten and infectious apple from Franx's back:

"Franx sped across the lobby to where a woman in a black and white tailored silk suit was drinking a demi-tasse of coffee. She recoiled from him, and he snatched her cup from the low table in front of her. With his other forelimb he snagged a newspaper and came scuttling back to me.

"There was nothing for it but to scoop the diseased region out of the huge insect's back. I dumped the foul smelling globs onto the newspaper Franx had spread out, trying not to retch. I felt I was making a poor impression on the other guests, and I was relieved when I finished.

"The giant cockroach had kept a stoic silence during the operation. Now he turned himself slowly around to examine the mess on the paper. Still without a sound, he lowered his head and began to feed...the giant cockroach had finished his little snack. I looked at him with revulsion. He had been eating his own rotten flesh."

Again a clash of emotions. Although this time it was disgust instead of pity I felt along with laughter, it was that same rare emotion that exhilarated me and kept the pages flying.

But it wasn't until recently that I discovered this mode of literature (and other forms of art) actually fit into a category, one that has been around for many centuries. They call it the *grotesque*.

The grotesque is a concept or mode of art which traces back to the early Christian period of Roman culture, where artists integrated human, animal and vegetable parts into one painting. These paintings were produced in caves, or grottes, and were thus termed *la grottesca* which later became the grotesque around 1640 and expanded its meaning to include literature and finally film.

We now define the grotesque as a scene which is both humorous and horrifying or disgusting at the same time. It provokes different emotions which are not compatible with one another. Laughter is simultaneously felt with repulsion, pity or even nausea. The reaction of one ingesting the grotesque is usually that of confusion and resistance to accepting the combination of horror and comedy. Instead of adding comic relief, the humor in the grotesque only seems to add to the appalling flavor of the scene. Some find this to be very enthralling.

A comic book which has me in its clutch is *Eight Ball*, by Daniel Clowes. One of its ongoing stories, *Like a Velvet Glove Cast in Iron*, is about a man, Clay Loudermilk, who is involuntarily thrown down a road of escapade, where grotesque vignettes pop up everywhere. These episodes include a pathetic potato shaped waitress with a hook for a hand and a peg leg who falls in love with Clay and cries a lot, and to please him lays some eggs on his bed.

And of course there's film maker David Lynch. He seems to be a master at using the grotesque. From *Eraserhead* to *Wild at*



*Heart*, the grotesque oozes out of every frame. But I think *Blue Velvet* does it the best. A memorable scene is when Frank Booth and his many sidekicks kidnap Jeffery Beaumont in the middle of the night and take him to a deserted lot to terrorize him. While Booth is vigorously kissing and thus smearing lipstick over Beaumont's mouth and then pummeling him into unconscious, a woman in skin tight clothing and high heels is dancing on top of the car to "In Dreams" by Roy Orbison, which is blasting out of the car's radio. It's a truly fascinating scene.

Now that I have discovered the grotesque I find that many contemporary artists have use it, such as Rucker, Clowes, Lynch, Federico Fellini, Salvador Dali, Poe, Hitchcock, Gabriel Garcia Marquez and Franz Kafka. But I have also found and enjoyed it in classic literature, and would like to end this article with an extract of a poem by Jonathan Swift called *A Beautiful Young Nymph Going to Bed*:

"Corinna, pride of Drury Lane,  
For whom no shepherd sighs in vain;  
Never did Covent Garden boast  
So bright a batter'd strolling toast!  
No drunken rake to pick her up,  
No cellar where on tick to sup;  
Returning at the midnight hour,  
Four stories climbing to her bower;  
Then, seated on a three-legg'd chair,  
Takes off her artificial hair;  
Now picking out a crystal eye,  
She wipes it clean, and lays it by.  
Her eyebrows from a mouse's hide  
Stuck on with art on either side,  
Pulls off with care, and first displays 'em  
Then in a play-book smoothly lays 'em.  
Now dexterously her plumpers draws,  
That serve to fill her hollow jaws,  
Untwists a wire, and from her gums  
A set of teeth completely comes;  
Pulls out the rags contrived to prop  
Her flabby dugs, and down they drop.  
Proceeding on, the lovely goddess  
Unlaces next her steel-ribb'd bodice,  
Which, by the operator's skill,  
Press down the lumps, the hollows fill.  
Up goes her hand, and off she slips  
The bolsters that supply her hips;  
With gentlest touch she next explores  
Her chancres, issues, running sores;  
Effects of many a sad disaster,  
And then to each applies a plaster... •



Revised by Mark Frauenfelder

**GAWK #6** (\$3 for poor people, or \$4-5 or more for less poor people for 4 issue subscription to Tom Shearer, PO Box 31431, San Francisco, CA 94131) GAWK stands for Gay Artists and Writers Collective. Here is GAWK's Official Statement of Porpoise:

*GAWK magazine serves mainly to gratify the egos of the editors. A second purpose is to provide amusement and delight to the homo community. A third goal is to provide a forum for new or underexposed queer voices. We print art & writing by lesbians & sodomites, er, excuse me, gay men, and we're always a-lookin' for material.*

GAWK editor Tom Shearer is quite a card indeed. His writing style will keep you smiling all the way through the mag. The artwork and layout are superb. Lots of cartoons and reviews that should make any gay a very happy person.

**OFFICE NUMBER ONE Vol. 99,331 NO. 7,876** (\$8.42 for 8 issue subscription to ONO, Subscription Dept. 1709 San Antonio Street, Austin, TX 78701, digest, 12 pp) Fake news stories that remind me of *boING-boING's* "Exciting News" section. I believe that this is a one-man operation, put out by a guy who goes by the name of Carlos B. Dingus. Wonderful absurdist satire and political jabs.

**23 SKIDOO #1** (\$2.00 to Steven Stwalley, 141 Green Mt. Dr., Iowa City, IA 52245,

digest, 36 pp) Weird and funny stuff clipped from the papers: Synchronicities, fringe science, delightful hand-colored comics, fun surprises, and conspiracies. The layout is a tad sloppy, but it's still an enjoyable rag.

**THE ELECTRIC PLASTIC INFLATABLE** (\$4.50 to Steven Stwalley, see address above, standard, 36 pp) Steve's two favorite things in life are comics and brain change. What a great guy! Full of short comics ranging from the slapstick to the absurd. Meta-comics, which refer to themselves and poke fun at the medium are one of Steve's specialties. Steve has a twisted sense of humor, and never takes himself too seriously. *TEPI* has high-quality layout and production values.

**BLAB #5** (\$7.95 to Kitchen Sink Press, No. 2 Swamp Road, Princeton WI 54968, digest, 128 pp) I've really liked *BLAB* a lot, up until this issue. This one just didn't have much going for it. The general theme of #5 has to do with crime, especially violent, serial-killer type stuff. Yawn. I hope they clamber back up to the top of the Blab Pinnacle they normally sit atop.

**THE POSITIVE TIMES #1** (\$3.00 to Jerry Posner, Box 244, Wets Stockbridge, MA 01266-0244, standard, 16 pp) Page after page of hyper-positive self affirmation sloganeering. Posner is into self-programming and mind-machines. A good idea, but kind of "lite" for my taste.

**EDGE CITY VIEW** (\$1? from Pangaea, PO Box 49575, Austin, TX 78765, digest, 8



pp) An interesting little zine. Editor Mack White writes a frightening fictitious news article from 1997 about the end of privacy as a result of the war on drugs. The real reason behind John Lennon's assassination is examined in a review of Mack White's book *Who Killed John Lennon?* (St. Martin's Press) (As you might have guessed, the altruistic and kindly men in the CIA are the number one suspects.) Drawings and ads for poetry chapbooks are sprinkled liberally throughout.

**GOING GA-GA #7** (\$3 to Gareth Branwyn, 2630 Robert Walker Place, Arlington, VA 22207, cassette) GGG #7 is an extra-special issue of one of my favorite zines. This time Gareth has created a cassette version of GGG on the subject of "intoxication and the vagaries of psychedelic experience." In keeping with the theme, the issue is delivered in the form of a cheap paperback book. The book is opened to reveal the cassette hidden within a spot cut out of the pages. The contents of the cassette are equally fun: strange music, LSD experience stories, and quirky sound-bites. Gareth is one of a handful of people who is creating and defining a new kind of art through zines.

**SWELLSVILLE #11** (\$2.50 to Jack Thompson, PO Box 85334, Seattle, WA 98145, standard, 50 pp) "A critical guide for consumer deviants." They review some great old *Holly & the Italians* singles, talk about why men want to marry Sinead O'Connor, and give David Lynch's movie, *Wild At Heart*, a well-deserved slugging. A good review zine for the otherground.

**SINGULARITY #3** (\$3.00 to Ronald-Hale Evans, 89 Mass Ave, Suite 199, Boston MA 02115, standard, 32 pp) Lots of good stuff for the Drexler/Wilson/Cyberpunk afficiando. The lead article by Walter Scott chronicalizes his experience in a mental ward as a result of kinda trying to kill himself. His insights into the mental health treatment industry are astute and fascinating. Editor Ronald writes about the involuntary tendency of humans to form cliques. L-5 meister H. Keith Henson has a cool spiel about memes, and Jeremy Wolff debriefs us on his trip to cyberspace. Good artwork is provided by Jay O'Connell.

**COFFEE DRINKIN'MAN** (\$1.25, half-

legal, 12 pp) and **HALF-ASSED COMICS** (\$2, standard, 24 pp) (to Danny Hellman, PO Box 901, Old Chelsea Station NYC, NY, 10113-0901) Danny draws great comics in that good ol' 50/60's jazzbo style, with some Egon Schiele stirred in. I love this kind of clean, solid artwork that punches me right in the brain. I expect we'll all be seeing a lot more of Hellman's work popping up in strange places, and the world will be a better place because of it.

**PSYCHEDELIC MONOGRAPHS & ESSAYS #4** (Compiled and Annotated by Thomas Lytle, Summer 1989, 257 pages, PM&E Publishing group, \$10 to Scott Wollman, 1626 N Wilcox #632, Hollywood, CA 90028) PM&E is a magazine disguised as a alluring paperback book with a wraparound fractal cover.

Inside we are treated to an article by Timothy Leary about the fun-hating orthodox religions of the temperate zones, and their attempts to destroy the nature-loving pagan religions of the tropics. There are several articles about MDMA (aka Ecstasy). One gives examples of the news media sensationalization of MDMA through a one-upmanship hype arms-race with competing newspapers. Another article gives an account of the Drug Enforcement Agency's ram-rod prohibition of MDMA, and psychologist's and neurologist's counter-efforts to establish limited use for research and therapy.

Other articles include information about the Albert Hofmann foundation, the drug known as U4Euh or Intellex, mushroom harvesting, and psychedelic book reviews. This is a well-balanced book and I recommend it to anyone interested in psychedelic thinking.

**EXTROPY #6** (\$3 to Max More, PO Box 77243, Los Angeles, CA 90007-7243) Extropy is dense reading, and I keep flipping through the pages looking for some pictures of *Garbage Pail Kids*, or a review of the new *Transvision Vamp* album. But they're not in here. But that's OK, I guess I have to exercise my noggin every now and then. The *Extropy* guys are serious, and quite a bit of in-house quibbling over itsy-bisty philosophical points takes place.

The parts I can understand, however, I do find enjoyable, such as their book reviews. Max More's article "Tranhumanism - Towards a Futurist Philosophy" is an excellent piece about the causes for religion and the extropian alternative to religion. This lucid and optimistic piece alone is well worth the price of the magazine.

An article entitled "The Thermodynamics of Death" by Michael C. Price explains why the "rule" of entropy does not necessitate the expected eventual "heat death" of the universe, but I didn't get it, even after reading it twice. I think he says that because the total energy of the universe was presumably zero before the Big Bang, we can still use an unlimited amount of free energy at any time. I thought the law of entropy didn't mean that energy appears or disappears, but that it merely becomes diluted and harder to use. All energy activity has the eventual result of transferring heat from one spot "A" to a comparatively cooler spot "B". So when the universe is finally one homogeneous temperature, how will heat ever be transferred, and how will any energy activity take place? Maybe I should read the article a third time.

**MODERN TABOO** (\$? to PO Box 55138, Atlanta GA, 30308-0138, standard, 8 pp) Strange musings, artwork and record reviews. Learn how chanting whilst lawn-mowing can cause massive brain-change. Find out how special breathing exercises can intensify orgasm. •

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### Who Will Monitor Her Bosons?

She pressed her gigalips to me

and I found them bitter,

and I cursed her

and shot a load of Zs

up her reactor.

Decay was rapid.

Charm was lucky.

Plasma drank down the well of time.

---

- Chris Dietz



## Recommended Reading: The Emperor Wears No Clothes by Jack Herer

The real facts on cannabis/ hemp. The history, uses, and legal abuses behind this plant. "This book is the most powerful weapon we have in the war to end pot prohibition."

*S. Hager/ High Times*

A very timely and informative book. A must for anyone who wants to know more about hemp and the marijuana conspiracy. 1990 revised edition.

182 pages, pictures

\$15.88 (tax & shipping included)



## Also: What A Long Strange Trip It's Been: A Hippies History of the 60's & Beyond by Lewis Sanders

A compendium of the politics, culture & consciousness from Then until Now  
... A Mind Blowing Journey

Written by a local author, this informative book explores the changes and events that have shaped our country over the past three decades. It's intense focus on both cultural and political events, combined with the author's unique insight, creates a directed, powerful history of the transformation of consciousness in America.

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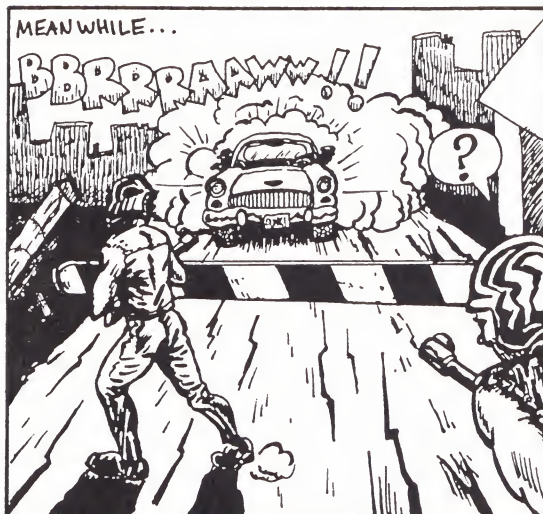
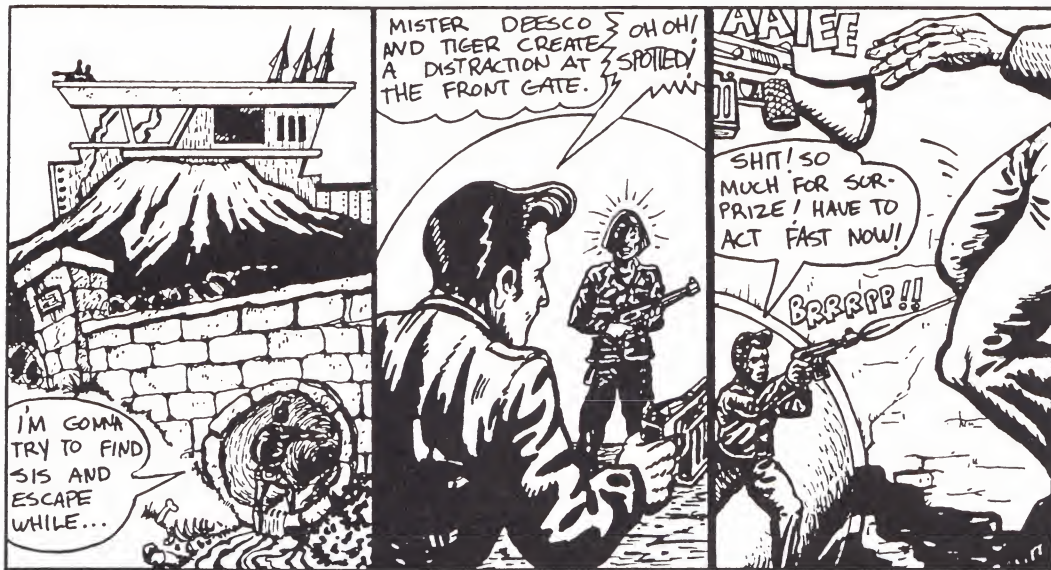
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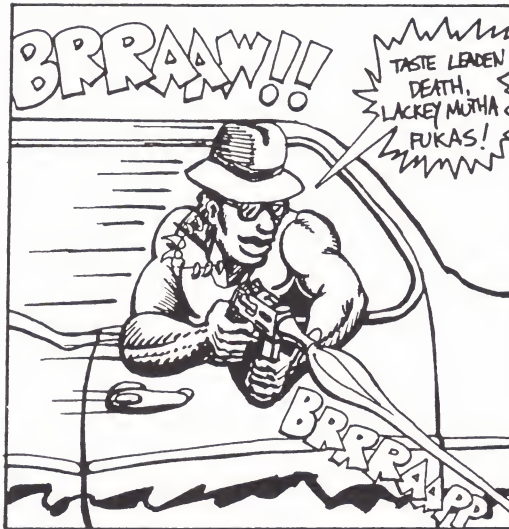
TEEN PUNKS OF PLANET BALTIMORE, Part II by STEVE SWINK











To be concluded in the next issue •



# E X C I T I N G

## All Dead in Gorp

Reported by Melinda Brindley

Fizzwygyp, Gorp - Ten thousand were killed in a massacre of unknown cause in the city of Thaaawg, Gorp. It is believed the Fizzwzgyp Liberation Committee was behind the attack, as a wall left standing in Thaaawg was spray-painted with the message: "FLC was here."

When asked for an explanation, the leader of the Fizzwzgyp Liberation Committee, Heeyahi Hneiihu, replied, "It is the way of my people." He then drove his truck into a brick wall.

A tornado destroyed neighboring cities of Blaht, Splaht, and Fzzissg, and ensuing floods destroyed the remaining cities Gorp.

The only survivors were a weenie vendor in the city of Thppp and a senile kilt-maker in the city's capital, Ptui.

The weenie vendor was killed soon after by a large ball of hail, although hail was not seen elsewhere in the area.

The whereabouts of the kilt-maker are not known at this time, but sources say she was later sighted by authorities at the Benihana border wearing a kilt and

# News

playing bagpipes in an "aggressive manner", and was shot.

When asked to comment, President Bush said, "Where the hell is Gorp?"

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## New Obscenity Law Promises an Improved Planet

Reported by Media Dupe International

Sea of Tranquility, Luna - President Bush signed into law today a bill making it illegal to show mouths in print, film and television. At a press conference held from his Lunar retreat on the Sea of Tranquility, Bush answered reporters' questions through a painter's mask.

"This law is long overdue, and it is going to make America the decent, family kind of place that our forefathers intended it to be. The Reverend Samuel Roberts should be commended for successfully

fighting a three-year battle with the licentious Democrats who tried hard from keeping the tight-lip bill from becoming law."

The Reverend Roberts, who changed his first name in 2013 from Oral to Samuel, started a campaign five years ago to eliminate the display of the human mouth in the media. Roberts was also responsible for influencing hundreds of millions of Americans to wear painter's masks over their mouths in order not to offend others. He had already been successful in convincing the Federal government to hold the highway funds of any state that did not take away the driver's licenses and voting privileges of people who refused to wear some sort of mouth clothing. Roberts was present at the press conference to speak to reporters.

"Thank the Lord that we no longer have to look at the pink, wet, open mouths of other people while we enjoy otherwise wholesome family entertainment with our spouses and children. It took Adam and Eve a very short while to realize that the naked body is a shameful, disgusting thing; why did it take us so much longer to realize that the mouth is a filthy organ capable of performing many unimaginably abhorrent acts? It's about time we covered it up with clothing just as we do the sexual organs. Some things just don't belong in public, and the mouth is one of them. Now we have a law to enforce this fact."

The new law also gives the Federal Police the power to destroy any copies of so called "classic" movies that don't have black censor circles over the mouths of the actors. •



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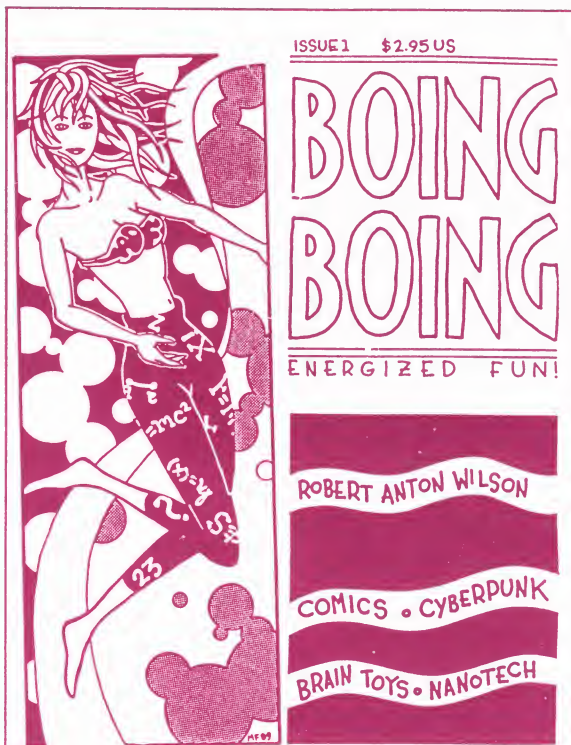
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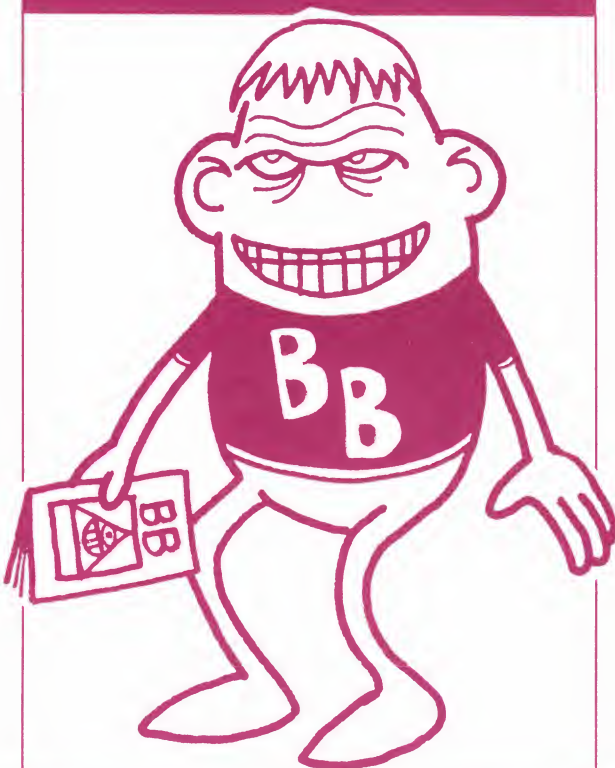
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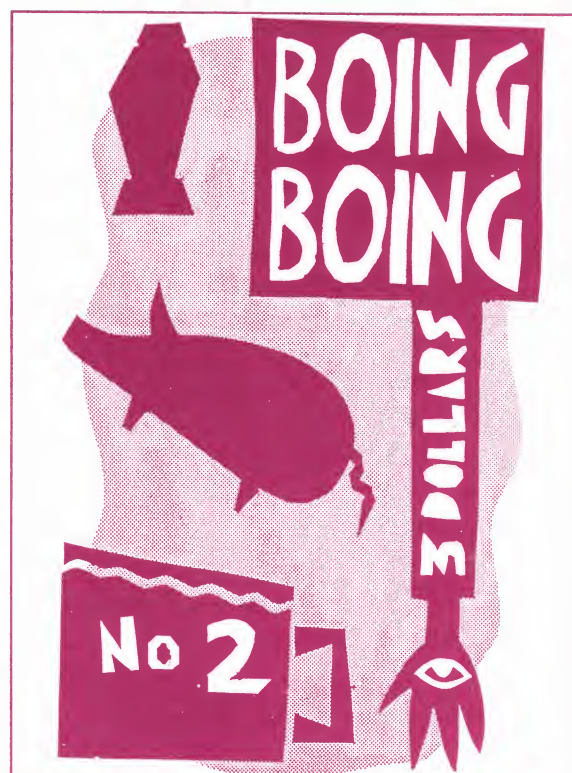
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#1 - Robert Anton Wilson Interview, Guerrilla Data Encryption.



#3 - Rudy Rucker Interview, Antero Alli, Brain Toys, Fractals, Marc Laidlaw



#2 - Antero Alli, Rudy Rucker Comic, Brain Toys, Government & LSD.

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number 4 \$3



#4 - Brain Software, U.S. Drug Policy, Antero Alli Interview, Comix.