

Obsessions

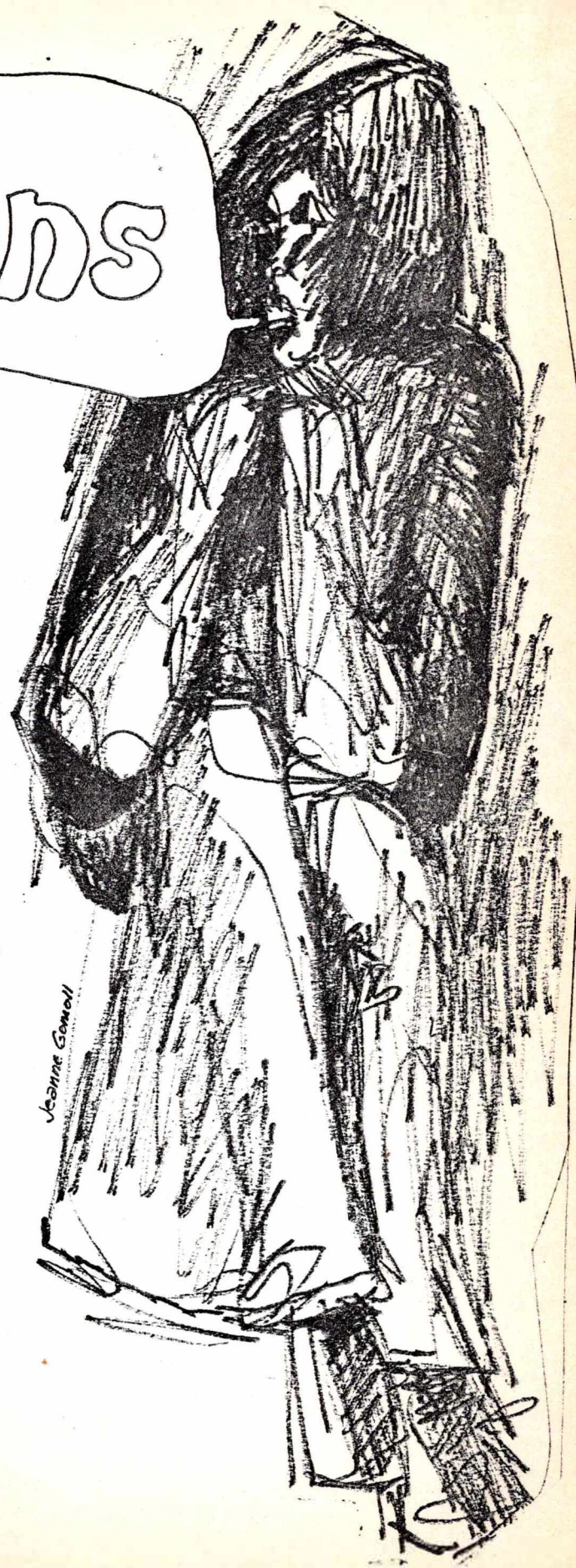
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NUMBER FOUR

Holden P. ...



This is the drawing of Cyn that I didn't get into Obsessions 3.



Joanne Goveil

MAILING COMMENTS...

Janet Small

People here were rather skeptical about the Tiptree news until it came out so well documented apparently in LOCUS, since she had been known to have answered a direct question (in print interview) with a firm negative as to whether she was really a woman. Weirdly, we got a note from "Tiptree," saying sorry, no, "he" couldn't make it to Wiscon. We also sent a letter to Racoon Sheldon another pseudonym apparently; she, however didn't answer.

Ctein

I'm glad the war is over. I think it's best to just let things calm down, and see what the effect of the SubApa will be. As it has been mentioned before, it will probably come down to the subapa becoming a different apa.

Yes, I'd like to see the comments on THE FEMALE MAN. But you might contact Amanda Bankier first to see if she's still planning her Russ issue of tWatCh... The comments might get more of an audience there--

Terry

If I wasn't clear about your identity last time (combining your first name and Ctein's only into one), I certainly am now. Your memory of the incident in the park impressed me as no doubt it has you. Also-- I really enjoyed your poetry.

Victoria

Up to now, I've been having difficulty getting into mailing comments. I've been enjoying the reading but there hasn't seemed to be a lot to say in response. Lucifer, though, sparked all sorts of possible comment. I can see, Victoria, that we are indeed rather different with regard to life style/philosophy... But I do (really) enjoy reading your words

(both in Simulcrum and Lucifer). I hope you don't feel that you have to agree with everyone (or I with you) in order to form a friendship.

Both books that you mentioned seemed pretty interesting, but I was intrigued mostly by the first one you described, Broadbent's HOW TO BE LOVED. Actually I think everyone is interested in theories that define people and behavior in the form of lists of "types." No matter, even, that the "types" are all derogatory in a sense (as in Broadbent's) it is reassuring in a way to find ourselves or our behavior described--mainly, I think, because it gives us the excuse to articulate our self-image, etc. Even the most skeptical of people know their astronomical sign: the Zodiac and its' accompanying list of defining characteristics being another typing system. In so far as such lists encourage introspection and self-awareness, I think they are good things. Sometimes though, the "types"



are used to lean on or hide behind--to explain behavior that one disapproves of and really doesn't want to change. (I know someone who maintains that his smoking habit is irreversible, given his sign...) And in the Broadbent list's case, I think it's possible to worry too much about when one's interaction behavior is manipulative or merely the way one has learned to interact with people until or if a real friendship develops.

For myself, the "saint style" applies a bit: I hide bad moods or dislike behind a facade of smiles and laughter, but then I consider that just good

manners, i.e., that I'm not willing to unload frustration/anger/depression, etc. on everyone I come into contact with. I identify too, with the super self-sufficient style--this because I admire very competent people, and I've found that one way to become competent is to pretend to be so and the having to put into action what I've "promised." ("I

can take care of that," she says.

And then doing it.)

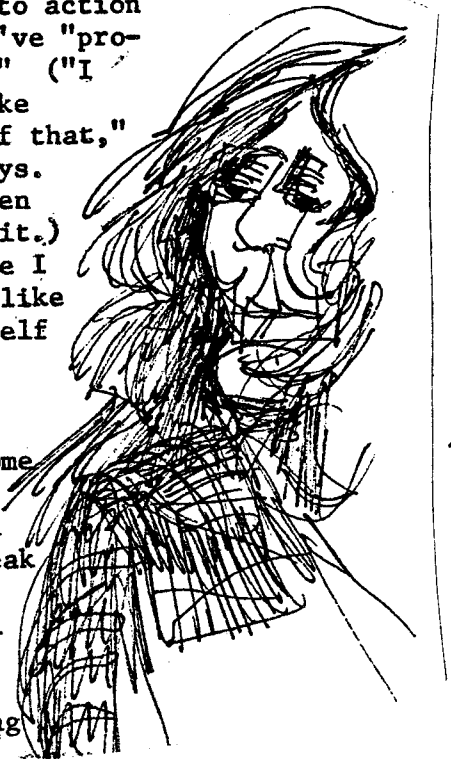
The one I do dislike in myself

--the toilet bowl syndrome

--is a hard to break habit of all the time telling jokes

about ridiculous calamities/bad luck that befalls me. I joke, but still it is a pull for sympathy that seems dishonest and at times to negate all my work to prove myself--to others and me--a competent individual. At times I find myself too often in the supportive "mothering" position with friends and this is perhaps a result of my self-doned role of competency and, at times camouflaged unhappiness...And so maybe, also, the RedCross Style works for me.

Actually, (like the beginning Psychology students who recognize every newly learned neurosis and psychosis in themselves as they go through their courses), I guess it's possible to find nearly any of Broadbent's traits in oneself... Humans seem endlessly



capable of generalization with regard to their self-images. That's why astrology "works," I suppose.

The second book/test seems valid/invalid for an individual on similar grounds. In that it makes you think about what you and others think about yourself--it's good. But as you noted, such tests rarely result in surprising descriptions. The fact that there are so many books out now about the way we look at ourselves may, as detractors maintain, be bad in that we become too introspective, psychically-hypocondriac perhaps... (Doing to ourselves what the French are doing to SF, to give an obscure simile). But I don't think that's too much a danger. In fact, if you liked those two books, you might also like SCRIPTS PEOPLE PLAY by --um, ah: Claude Steiner (to be filled in later I guess). It is a compilation/summary of all sorts of people theories of recent years that has attempted to de-retoricize psychological theories ("You're OK - I'm OK" and Script therapy, TA, etc. & Hoagie Wycoff's list of "types" in it is especially good). The best thing about such recent "popular" psychology is the solid workable advice incorporated into the theory for the individual to change their behavior if they want to... For example, in script analysis you change line-by-line, not in one dramatic, impossible metamorphosis.

In your general comments you wondered if men might not be oppressed if they had personality traits usually associated with oppressed women, traits that "may well be traits on the average with females." (you said). Perhaps--but the problem is whether or not those traits (perhaps generally "female" traits) are not socialized into people who have female genitalia and are thus part of the oppression and not it's cause at all. [I believe strongly with many other people that this is indeed the case and think that the bulk of scientific testing supports this view.] Take passivity, for an example, a top 10 "female" trait. If

individual men behaved passively to an extreme degree, they too would get walked upon. Yes. But women are expected, to a degree, to be passive. There are a few psych. studies, one: Sherman, Koufacos & Kenworthy (1973, I think) that showed that psychologists and psychiatrists defined "normal" human behavior and male behavior pretty much the same. "Normal" female behavior (containing such trait descriptions as, passivity and non-assertion), corresponded rather to neurotic behavior. You don't have to be in therapy to come into contact with such expectations... It's all over the place.

I guess, therefore, that we disagree on the amount of oppression that there is to overcome. I see sexism, apparently, as being a far more basic part of the society in which we've grown up in. But don't--and I'm sure you're not really planning to "go chameleon." I enjoy the discussion and won't dislike you for having your own ideas. However, I do think you have and are making a lot of assumptions that are extremely arguable.

By the way, Victoria, before going on to MCs on the next apazine, I want to tell you how much I admire the quality of your magazines. They're all really beautiful. Even without illustrations Lucifer is enviable for its clean reproduction, interesting line margins on the first page and the neat triangle dividers. I could say much more about SIMULACRUM. I wonder if you'd mind critiquing JANUS for me. I'm the one primarily responsible for that part of JANUS and though I'm excited and proud of what we've done so far, I can see we've got lots of room for improvement...

especially when I see SIMULACRUM. I'd really appreciate to hear your comments --either here or otherwise.

Avedon

I like the title Womanspace instead of subapa, and I agree it's best that we start thinking of it as another apa.

I do mean to contribute more to the subapa, though I missed the last issue.

Carolyn

A good title, "The Open Space" -- you carry your prairies within your mind, city or space station.

Diane

Where were you? I thought you were coming to WisCon??

On the subject of Conventions and re your quoted suggestions in Susan Wood's AMOR, I think it would be a good idea for those of us in the Apa who are thinking of attending SunCon this year or who would like to affect the proceedings to begin talking --here-- about what we can do there. What kind of panels, film program additions, special meeting rooms, etc. can we help design and/or instigate?

Jan Bogstad and myself will probably (depending on money and time restrictions) be going to SunCon and if so, will probably be participating in the feminism and fanzine panel. Any Ideas?

Jessica

I can understand your discomfort about being "known" ahead of time to some of us in the apa, about a loss, in a sense, of privacy, not being able to reveal things in the time and way you choose to.

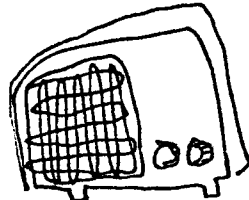


But when you do/if you do decide to talk about this aspect of your life, I would like to initiate some conversation. I've had some troubling thoughts concerning transexuality and media "use" of the stories (i.e., essentially seeming to imply that the existence of people who choose to change their physical sex, proves the contention of a much deeper "difference" between men and women. The author of CONUNDRUM, for example, (I forget her name), saying that she at last felt comfortable acting like a woman--being passive, letting men make decisions for her, etc.) I believe that there should, ideally, be some androgynous definition of good or normal human feelings/behavior, combining the best of what we've got divided up between "masculine" and "feminine" traits. (I don't think it is necessary to have a clitoris in order to be gentle and supportive, nor a penis to be assertive and strong.) --And I wonder how you feel about the way the media has exploited such personal situations. Perhaps you would rather I explain my puzzlement more in a personal letter, and that perhaps after we've known each other much longer. In any case, I understand completely if you decide not to respond right now or in the apa or the subapa.

For a while there, I was getting a bit paranoid. Mostly nobody was commenting on OBSESSIONS. Was I so boring? What did I talk about in #2 except WisCon? Did everyone just think it was simply a not-worth-comment advertisement? But no, wait! I talked about Piercy's WOMAN ON THE EDGE OF TIME, didn't I? That was pretty interesting. Or was it all too stuffy and academic?

--But, no, phew, it's OK, calm down, it got to everyone late remember. Ok,

"...WORT, FM
NOW leaves
the air..."



OK, I'm better now. --Sigh--

Back to you now, Jessica...your final paragraph about not being able to respond to the postmailings reminded me...

About your perfect description of shit-secretarial work, I know, I know, ...oh god, I know, I know...

Me

I hope you do a better job of mimeoing or dittoing your zine next time, whatever you do. The first page was really crud-



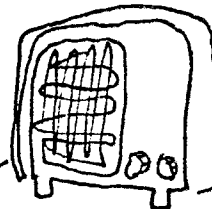
dy, and all the rest were crooked and there were letters chopped off at the margins because you typed too far to the right. All I can say is it certainly was downhill from the last one: shape up! [Good

to know I can yell at somebody in this apa...] And do you really think you're going to get those T-Shirts out by March, when all these people will have only received notice of the new deadline by mid-February? And when you are so much in debt that you can't afford to pay for the t-shirts yourself and bill people and so have to wait for checks anyway... I always did say you were a bit cracked.

Denys

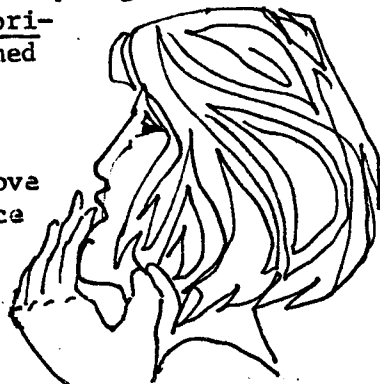
After reading THE PALATINE MANNER 41 and then BELLEROPHON'S RAGE, I find that I like you a great deal; more, that I trust you. That's a nice feeling. You seem to have a wonderfully clear idea of how and why it's important to communicate with people.

"...gasp...
Aaaa..."



From what I've heard (from a friend who did some work on Amazon mythology

and history), the breast removal thing was not true, but an obvious inaccuracy added by 1800's anthropologists as a purely metaphorical device (it seemed "appropriate" to describe the cold Amazon as one who was willing to remove such tender evidence of her womanhood for mere convenience...). I could perhaps get a reference for you if you or anyone else would like to track it down.



Lucky you didn't decide to come to the convention. It was in Madison, not Ann Arbor... Or maybe you did?

I'll probably get to a con report of sorts after these mailing comments, but I have to ask you, do you know Tom Moylan? Are you friends? If so, All the more reason to like you. He was my friend/professor many years ago. I wrote a paper on SF and got him to start reading the stuff... Needless to say the result has been profound. He mentioned your name in some context at WisCon, I forget, on that crazy weekend.

I'm sitting in Ella's, Madison's comfortable, radical-gathering place & Deli, reading and writing. I came in shivering cold and now am flushed and hot, the more engrossed with this I get, determined to finish before I go home. I started with hot chocolate and am now on coke. I started at 5:00pm and it's now 9pm, and I'm wondering if I will finish. I doubt my ability to give valid feedback to forty people, or more... I am wondering how worthwhile these scattered comments are. I am wondering where my ideas of making this a radically different literary/diary form are. Maybe I will find out

when I get to what comes after the mailing comments.

Jennifer

About verbal vs non-verbal signals to tohers--I too have always had difficulty coping with the situation, or mutants of the same. Certainly there is a subtle language of non-verbal words to be learned whenever one gets to know any individual well. We've all got our own mannerisms, expressions, etc... that add much depth and detail to any statement. To know a person well is to understand far more than what is merely said... But then there is that vast area of shared non-verbal signals, the ones used in bars and supermarkets or wherever people "hang out" and the ones used to communicate through closed automobile windows, etc. These are easy to learn once you have had a few experiences with how simple they really are to use. (Last year, I went through an episode of frequent "pick-ups," going to the Student UW Union and communicating invitations with as few words as possible. It was fun at first, but finally boring, because the final amount of communication was as shallow as the initial method of meeting...) The main problem I've had in this area however has risen because I am essentially a verbal person: I want things said. I say "I like you," or "I love you," or "I feel hurt when you say/do this," etc. and I need feedback in similar worded fashion. My major difficulty with relationships with men is the feeling that I always have had to "train" them how to talk about their emotions and feelings and that often there is an unbridgeable gap between us because, isolated or not, I was brought up to be aware of these things and they were not. I find myself trying to justify this sensitivity (or over-sensitivity, or taking-things-too-personally as it is often described) and I bitterly resent having to do that (or doing it anyway). Often these

people, (these men, mostly) will explain their lack of response/participation as stemming from an inability to communicate their feelings verbally. They are non-verbal lovers, they will say. (And then proceed to resist learning the words by invalidating your's: "You're imagining things," "You're over-sensitive" etcetera)

Copout. Mostly, I think, if you can't put something into words at all, you don't know what you feel. Sure, some things are hard to say, but articulating makes them easier to say and understand next time. I distrust the man who can't define the kind of commitment he wants in a relationship, because he will be the first one to suddenly react with "I didn't mean that...I can't take this relationship: it's too heavy; you need too much, I never promised..." I distrust the men



who know the phrases of intimate friendships, but can't talk about the specifics of what those phrases mean for him and for me if we are friends. All too often I've been communicating "from a distance" so to speak (i.e., with little articulated verbally) and digging my hole (defining my involvement) and calling over to him where he is digging his. Confusion reigns and we think, or I think we're digging equally deep. But then something goes wrong and he hops out of his hole, only a little scratch, a mere ditch, it turns out, and I am left sitting in this enormous pit, knowing it will take me a long time to get out, certainly no little "hop" out will do it.

I demand verbalization now. But I'm tiring of having to teach it. A friend



and I have jokingly imagined a sort of women's consumer service: lists of men would be kept there with details as to the level of his consciousness, how much work he still has to do, what has been accomplished, whether he is a worthwhile or beyond-help possibility... If we are going to end up training men to interact with other women and men, it would be nice to have some service like this available.

So, in a lot of cases, Jennifer, I don't think you should feel bad about not participating in that mysterious non-verbal language. It's facil in some caces and a cover up in others. I think you are perfectly right to need and ask others to respond to you with words, to explain, to answer. Language may be very imperfect, but there's a lot more chance for misunderstanding if you assume he loves you're in bed together, etc...

By the way, it was good to meet you and talk to you at Wiscon, what little time we did have...

Hilde

You asked about the convention. I should be talking about Wiscon at the end of the Mailing Comments section.

Rebecca

In your mailing comment to Gina, you mention having seen SEVEN BEAUTIES. I gave up on Wertmiller after having seen SWEPT



AWAY. (I'd seen THE SEDUCTION OF MIMI and LOVE AND ANARCHY before that.) Each time I saw one of her films, I shed more of my original impression that she was a women and therefore, couldn't

be that sexist:

I must be imagining it, I thought. (The scene in SEDUCTION, for instance, where Mimi has that "hilarious seducing the fat woman...") But with SWEPT AWAY, I finally stopped giving her the benefit of the doubt. I have never

been so sickened by a film. To me, she said that, to be happy, women and men must find their primoral roles (like Golding's LORD OF THE FLIES children find theirs', i.e., to be savages). For Wertmiller, men are essentially sadistic and women, masochistic. Witness the climax scene after the "heroine" recognized herself in the flayed rabbit and the scene (full of humor, Wertmiller always cushions her heavy messages with jokes) in which she asks to be sodomized. The rape scene affected me as no other in any film has done. I was very nearly sick with horror at what was going on the screen (with obviously so little artistic disapproval by Wertmiller) and at what was going on in the audience-- e.g., scattered laughter. And noone is going to convince me that it wasn't a sexual alegory, e.g., that it was more political and had their economic statuses been reversed, so too would the roles of the characters.

Unfortunately, I think Wertmiller is successful and has attained "auteur" status as a director, because she directs like a man, like an extremely sexist man.

Well I got that said and on little provocation. Did anyone else have such violent reactions to Wertmiller's films? I haven't seen any of her movies since SWEPT AWAY. Has she changed, do you think? I've heard she's only gotten worse.

Susan

We got your LoC/T-Shirt order, etc. But I have no idea why it didn't get to me the first time. I haven't moved and have the title "JANUS" printed on my mail box, so it should have been delivered. I've gotten stuff addressed to Jan and myself before. Weird.

I agree about the idea of very limited circulation of the WAPA. So far the only people I have or want to share it with is people I think might be interested in becoming involved. I've shown it to Lesleigh Luttrell and Jan Bogstad (Lesleigh is going to join I guess but Jan has decided she won't have the time). I've sent copies of my #1 and #2 OBSESSIONS to friends but that's it, and as the mailing comments take over, I probably won't be doing that either.

Strange---coming into fandom backwards as I have (from Fanzine editor/artist to con-goer to apa participant, and now more frequently to contributor-of-art to other zines) I become aware only slowly how unusual is the almost half female fan group here in Madison: especially in that the quasi-club zine, JANUS, is managed/created by two women. Talking to Lesleigh Luttrell and hearing you talk about the opposite case makes me feel all the warmer about the "family" we have here in Madison. Mostly the sexism in SF that I am personally aware of is in the literature and only recently, since I've gone to the conventions, have I come into contact with the fannish sort...

Thanks so much for sending us AMOR. They have been lovely. I want to respond somehow and get to know you more and you me, etc. Would you like artwork? Thanks also for the good words in ALGOL

too, though we haven't seen the February issue yet.

Patrick

Hello. (Jennifer says you might like to see JANUS. Yes?)

Anne Laurie

It was rather difficult to read your apa: my copy was smudged and blurry. But the drawings came through nicely. I'm running out of energy to respond and I can't think of anything to say except that I have green eyes too and though they're not myopic (they're "legally blind"), they're doing a lot of squinting right now.

I am getting tired. My post MC section will definitely have to wait.

John Singer

I love Chris Williamson's music too. I'm sure you do seeing your ap's title: But if you ever get a chance to see/hear her, and if you haven't yet, definitely do so. You will love her music 100 times more. She's marvelous. What energy! definitely something I love at the moment. (Your handwriting however gave my eyes a much needed break... thank. It is "now" 11:00 pm. Gawd.)

Gina Clarke

I just began your story, and must say before I bleary-eyed forget, that I LOVE your imagery: hoping no one suspected you "of hairy palms. Or hairy ideas." or "as if perfume were to mask the smell of disinfectant and

the make-up to cover wounds." Ohhhh... (that's envy.)

[This is the typist speaking now, not that coke-doped deli denizen trying desperately to keep her eyes open: Some time after reading your story privately, I took your story to a MADSTF party where we typically tend to do show and tell sorts of things, reading our great treatises, etc., and I read it aloud. I hope you don't mind, but I was so impressed I had to share it with other people. Everyone thought it was marvelous, and I had a really great time reading it...]

Finishing, and now very much awake again [Ha] [You should see her handwriting: if scrawls could commit...] --I can only gasp out praise. You are a wonderful writer. I want to read the whole thing (Is it possible? If you don't publish it all in WAPA, I mean) I want to publish it (part of it?), but it is so very good, I imagine that you are hoping for a more professional market than a fanzine... But I would like to anyway. Your words paint electric images, like the final sentence: "Show her a counter labelled Feminine Hygiene and she'd hack it to bits..." More, more, more!

Karen

Why not call him your friend? I've never seen any reason to continually call attention to the status of a relationship in everyday conversation. People I know, understand that the word "friend" is important to me whatever the connotation. If I want to specify on certain occasions, I say "lover," but the information, like the word is special and "privileged." More often I will use the special term "intimate friend" which means more ^{than} but not in all cases a sexual relationship. I agree: boy/girl friend is pretty awful.

Sarah

I agree with you about being tired of the subapa argument and so I'm afraid I don't have too much to say... Except that to me feminist isn't yet, hopefully never will be a meaningless and/or limiting lable: it is a battle cry, and the opposite of limitation.

Alicia

Thank you for the biographical prose... I'd like to hear more about the feminist fanzine one-shot.

D. Potter

To ditto Denys' reaction: How Bizaar, and add that I liked your asides... But maybe I should read you again later: this being the last-sigh-apa and it now being midnight... [Sorry, she didn't]. They're probably wondering if I'm going to pay the bill [she did].



AFTER THE MAILING COMMENTS

It seems that by natural progression of events and response, these mailing comments will inevitably bulge and grow with each new issue of the apa... Or is there a natural "stopping point?" Well, we'll see. Now there are some things I should say.

First, it is more than a month after all those mailing comments were written, a month and a blizzard and a week of spring-time, melting lakes and winter coats hung up on heavy hangers and smothered with plastic. I don't remember at all what I said and for the moment have no desire to backtrack and re-aquaint myself. I do recall however that I have yet to mention WisCon. WisCon is also now, a long way away... So I went back to listen to the tapes and found to my relief that it wasn't all as confused and contentless as my memory had tended to recall.

I am one of those people whose peculiar neurosis it is (and an enviable one, I've bee told if you have to have one, in comparison with its opposite) --that I invariably doubt myself, and am only positive of any enterprize's failure--after the thing is done. The paper written in a frenzy of self-assured brilliance and eagerness, once handed in, is suddenly realized to be pure bullshit, unadulterated egoism, etcetera. The resume seems to convey nothing of value agter it is sealed and mailed off to a prospective employer. And on and on... Admittedly it's better than worrying while doing a thing but--

Most of the time my worries, at least in their drastic forms (they'll flunk me, they'll realize I'm a fake) never materialize. But I never seem to learn from this familiar sequence of event and reaction. And so I avoided the tapes of the Wiscon feminist panel for a month, growing more and more assured that I should never have attempted the thing in the first place and becoming more and more uncomfortable at the prospect of having to write about these rotting memories in JANUS, a promised article for CORR (ed., Perri Corrick), and here in the apa. I did finally listen to the tapes though and a good thing it was, or I may never have been able to write about it.

The convention itself, as a whole, came off really well, I think. The only ones

of us that has had any experience whatsoever in putting on such circuses was Hank and Lesleigh Luttrell. We managed however, to put on a convention in which everything started on time, nothing serious went wrong, and everything went relatively smooth because of the willingness of everyone to help out. The opening ceremonies wherein we all introduced ourselves in a --um--shall we say "informal" manner, and folloled up with the play, INTERGALACTIC BANANA DEALER or THAT'S A LOT OF BANANAS, started things off on a really fine, exuberantly friendly note. The films Hank Lutrell and Perri Corrick got were all excellent: I think Madison's WisCon will eventually derive its reputation as a feminist and film oriented con.

I saw a lot of the films, but not too much of the daytime programming because of one of the very-soon-apparent disadvantages to being on the convention committee, i.e., lack of time, of course. I was in charge of the Art Show and auction, helping to coordinate programing and doing a lot of the publicity-type work (design of program book, etc. and signs, that sort of thing). If I have any bad feelings about it, it is guilt at not being able to talk enough to Amanda Bankier (we'd been planning much conversation that just became impossible as the convention progressed and I never became untangled except for brief periods of time), as well as frustrated at not being able to talk more to others. On the other hand, the people who did come to WisCon, provided a sense of the best of the weekend. I felt really good about the "tone" of the convention: friendly, a lot of feminists, though mostly area people, I'm sure this will change from year to year.

As for the feminist panel. There were five of us participating: Mary B@d@m, Jan Bogstad, Amanda Bankier, and Katherine MacLean. The panel was set up to try to cover various fields of know-

ledge and describe how various changes within those fields (of theory, assumptions, structure, developments, etc.) had resulted from feminist awareness and could be applied to the writing of science fiction, just as similar sf idea material has traditionally been drawn from similar sources. The new theories about matriarchies developing in Anthropology, or the new ideas about the goddess religions being brought up in Archeology (respectively in Evelyn Reed's WOMEN'S EVOLUTION and Merlin Stone's WHEN GOD WAS A WOMAN). Those were the topics I talked about.

Mary B@d@m spoke first though, and wonderfully. She began from a personal perspective, speaking about the effect sf had on her in her youth, saying that it had been an emancipating aspect, working against the development of racism, working for a healthy attitude toward change, she said. I felt close to her as she talked about feeling as if



she lived two lives though: one in sf and one as a feminist; and how she felt the need to connect the two. B@d@m said she feels that sf is a literature in a culture, of a cultur and responsi- ble for changing ideas. This she especially related to the problems of sex roles in this society.

I spoke next. You've heard a lot of what I said (or read it rather): about what I think is function of sf for me as a feminist ("And Failing that, Invent"), and about Evelyn Reed's WOMEN'S EVOLUTION. I haven't mentioned Merlin Stone's WHEN GOD WAS A WOMAN though. It is a great book: taking up the problem of the ignored/belittled importance of the pre-male god religions that accompanied the matriarchies. It is Stone's interesting thesis that the ancient goddess religions (once just as widespread as the male oriented religions that followed them and relegated them to pagan "cults") were perverted by the patriarchal cultures that militarily conquered matriarchal ones in order to solidify their power. In other words, a male oriented culture that conquered a female oriented culture would bring about the death, rape, or marriage of the goddess by their god in order to "justify" the god's claim to the people of the area. Her theory is well documented and very convincing. Her explanations of the bible's many anti-female statements (admonishments only to women to be faithful to one man, their husband, etc.) are shown to be the laws made by a determined patriarchal culture to suppress a matriarchal culture. For in order to maintain paternal inheritance female promiscuity had to be totally eliminated. She ends her book with a discussion of the Adam and Eve myth as an extension of all these things.



I found it a fascinating book, and recommend it highly. Even though it is very academic at times, I read it as if it were a novel.

As to these ideas application to sf, which was the purpose of the panel, I think it's fairly clear that if we know our past to be more than an iron-clad dominance of men and male oriented cultures and philosophies, a future of different possibilities will be easier to imagine and create.

But I've said all this before here: So I will spare you.

Jan spoke next in similar terms about linguistics, citing Casey Miller and Kate Swift's WORDS AND WOMEN, and Robin Lakoff's LANGUAGE AND WOMEN. She talked about how language shapes peoples' lives and gave several examples about how new words can be used in sf to reveal an equitable society and also to jog our minds about the conception we have about ours'. She mentioned for instance, Marge Piercy's WOMAN ON THE EDGE OF TIME and the use of a nonsexist language in that book and of Suzy Charnas' WALK TO THE END OF THE WORLD, citing the derogatory women-words in that book that emphasized and realistically were portrayed as further brutalizing the women.

She also spoke of new developments and ideas in Political theory and Economic fields. But I don't really feel capable of discussing those things here. She will be writing about some of the things she spoke of there in the next JANUS.

Amanda spoke next of the Psychology fields, bringing up the studies I mentioned earlier in the mailing comments of this apa, about therapists' definitions of mental health (differing for men/people as opposed to women/unhealthy people). She also talked about the current controversy surrounding women and mathematics learning, "math panic" (as it is beginning to be referred to as).

Up to this point I was very (and am now), again, very pleased as to how things went. The discussion questions we got afterwards clearly indicated that we had interested a lot of people and I wish only that instead of the big discussion group after the panel, we had divided up into smaller, special interest, groups. Maybe that can be something to work for at SunCon.

Katherine MacLean spoke next, or last I should say. I like her very much:

She is an intense, talkative, witty, enjoyable person. She arrived Thursday night with only a napsack and sat in on the play rehearsal and began to participate right there, offering advice to the actors, and later at the convention talking to every-one who wanted to speak to her. I was really impressed as to how available she was, and how accessible. Some people that she snared in conversation didn't even realize at first to whom they were talking. And when she talked... well, it was like listening to some incredible idea machine, spewing out story plots and things she had read in recent scientific journals and sometimes strange philosophies, humorous/argumentative cracks. After a conversation with her you felt as if you'd been running for an hour. This was how she delivered her GOh speech and how she spoke (...and spoke) on the feminist panel. I think, for the purposes of the panel as Jan and I envisioned it, we shouldn't have asked Katherine to participate on it. In some ways a lot of what she said there was offensive, and a great many people (feminists at least) rightfully took it in this way. The remarks about the tendency to rape being an inheritable thing. But as she said herself, she loved to throw out ideas simply for the sake of argument, and I think that's what was happening there. She is not a feminist in conscious terms, though she is a strong and independent woman in her personal life I think. But neither is she sexist in the way she lives, interacts with others or writes. It is simply I think, that she has never felt a crisis that has forced her to think out her ideas on sexual roles. The ideas she spewed at the panel were not convictions, merely pretty ideas that were quite effective in that indeed she most certainly got people arguing.



Part of my disappointment with the panel (that delayed this writing and blossomed into worry) had to do with the fact that so much of the discussion after the panel was funnelled into discussing the things Katherine had said, not at all relating to our planned fields-study, and leading to the basics-arguments... Ah well.

After Katherine, Mary spoke again, summing up things with a statement that the important questions of the day, including those brought up by feminists, must be reflected in sf in order for sf to remain an exciting/dynamic literature.

...That's it. That's my conreport to you. Happy Spring.

As to other things in my life since the last OBSESSIONS, I guess I will fill up the rest of the page with that. Money is low in the Women's Research Institute and I am out trying to find illustrating jobs, making do with freelance until I get something permanent, because I don't want to get a secretarial job. I'm feeling very insecure depending on undependable free lance commissions to pay room and board. Temporarily my hours are down to 20 a week at the WRIW. Bad. But I've done some brochures for a conference on child abuse and on police relations with retarded citizens. And I'm doing some slides for the latter group too. Also a Bugle American illustration, some flyers and posters for various groups...it would be nice though if I could get the job I'm applying for at WHA, for Graphic Designer. Hope for me.

Madstf has done some unique monthly programs (the cover of OBSESSIONS is ^{not} an ad for one of them which turned out really well.* Next week will be a program on time travel stories.). We're working on JANUS #8 and have gotten lots of controversial response from MZB and Russ and others in reaction to the "conversation" between Suzy McKee Charnas, Amanda Bankier, Jan and myself that was published in JANUS #6. Should be good. But no more room now: bye, see you in June.

*well it was,
but it was too heavy...

Jeanne

