

Obsessions 8

OBSESSIONS 8*Jeanne Gomoll*143 W. Gilman St. #303, Madison, WI 53703*608-251-5851*H1*

This is the situation. It is a week before the deadline for the April AWAPA. Typed onto stensils are comments to #8. Also typed onto stensils is a long, two-page piece addressed to the mess of recent months, firstly a reaction to RAZORBLADE, but then going back to the antescedents, etc. In my possession, but not typed onto stensils is a reaction to same by Sherri File, which I promised to frank through the apa for her. This was back before WisCon in January. I received the pages from Sherri at the end of January, and then there was finishing up the WisCon Jamus, the con preparations and then the con itself. There were people and an extraordinary burst of energy and then there was a month of ennui--not helped by feelings of exhaustion I'd already been feeling in connection with the whole apa controversy.

I started feeling guilty.

And then there have been more events, more new people and finding new ways of living for myself. Turmoil. But this is all normal. There's lots I really do want to tell you about, but right now I've got to deal with whether I'm going to or really: whether I feel right about putting my two pages of fury or (since it's a forgone negative on that score) whether I'm going to retype Sherri's words, and put them here for you all to read. I'm going to have to talk to her today or tomorrow about this. Basically, especially after reading Christine Passanen's zine, the thought of all these arguments extending themselves as we explain again, reacquaint ourselves, reargue, dilute, muddy, reinterpret the past feud--scares me. I don't want to see us doing that. If the original arguments were wastes of energy in themselves, future repetitions can be only more of the same. And as the waitlisters start appearing in the WAPA, I would hope that we could start again, and not spend all of our time on the past problems. The apa is still a great idea with much potential. And so I'm hoping that Sherri won't mind if I ask her if it's OK not to print her essay and anger here. This reason, to avoid going back into it all over and over again as new people come into the apa and ask why, and give their own opinions, and have to be answered again and again, each time with less and less connection to what really happened...this reason, is the only reason I want not to print it here. It is totally my fault that it did not appear in a postmailing to you in February when it might have been just as important to you as it was to me at the time.

I wish that we might have no more discussions now, of who is eligible and who is not to write in AWAPA. Once we begin, how will we prevent the "criteria" of membership to go beyond sex---but to the quality of female experience. In some of the people's minds in this apa, that seems already to have occurred. But shall we really judge by how good as feminists we have been? Perhaps we should set a minimum time requirement for how long one must have been committed to the women's movement. Or maybe by how many demonstrations against sexist institutions we have participated... or by how many women we have slept with. Or perhaps having borne children--or not having had children, or having experienced an abortion, or having been raped...or perhaps a simple overall rating by a panel of Expert Feminists as to the degree our lives reflect our feminism. What pettiness. Our experiences are all different, the words we use to describe our lives will differ, often fundamentally. These differences should help us to grow by offering alternatives to each other--not to limit us by eliminating those who have experienced themselves as women in different ways.

There are so much better things for us to be doing.

There is a short SF story about two lovers talking through long distances and involves long time lags between transmission and hearing, of communication. The lovers end up in tears and on the verge of hatred. For no good reason but the cumbersome

mechanical connection between them. I feel that has been part of the problem of hurt and misunderstanding and unresolved arguments, and I feel more that the transmission gaps of an everyothermonth apa will/could just continue this thing.

Again: there are so many better things we could do.

There is this year's WorldCon and the Hugos.

More, we can find and encourage the timid hiding among us, the women writers and artists in this apa to come out and be proud and fight sexism with their art, outargue it all with sheer numbers and a waterfall of laughter and beauty.

We can help each other by providing validation of each others experience—for we can share so much more than we have to fight about.

We can discover and invent new worlds that, maybe, some of us, someday, will actually make come true and live.

Once I mentioned that I thought that maybe the many of us who have the experience of rape, have shared a peculiarly radicalizing experience. But I doubt that that, (the negative, hurting experience we have all shared at the hands of patriarchal culture), is really the important thing that makes us unite and makes real change, revolution, possible. I think radicals are born not when they see how they are oppressed and learn to hate, but when they see what is possible. My awareness of myself as a feminist grew not so much by the hatred of the man who raped me, but through the love of women with whom I sensed and sense I can help create a different kind of community and new roles with.

We should be asking more than "what is sexism?" We should be asking what is feminism. What is it we want and can do? I don't think anyone's definition would include the destructive in-fighting that went on in AWAPA.

Thus in typing comments to #8, I left out whole sections addressed to Janet and Anne-Laurie and Terry, leaving out I fear too much else too, but this is how I plan to end my participation in this controversy, now that the Vote has decided the technical part of the disagreement. Any further discussion from me on this, I think, will be limited to personal letters.

Now on to the news of what has happened to me --since November? (sigh, well maybe just briefly), and then some comments on #9.

There was, in November, a real and final ending of my affair with Rick. I feel good about it (relieved, accomplished, wary of it ever happening again), but it seems to have made impossible any continuation of our friendship on any real level. We rarely talk now; he doesn't seem to know how or even why that's happened, he's acted confused for several months now. If he ever asks how long I will be uncommunicative and "not there" for him, I know I will say (I've said it so often in my head: Until you leave Rick. And then, if I remember, I will begin not writing to you.)

After that I totally immersed myself in work—doing Janus 10 for publication in December and then doing Janus 11 in January for WisCon (god, what a marathon production it was!). That whole time is a blur to me...I remember thinking of Christmas as an irritating interruption and feeling badly that I wasn't able to make things or afford much...but that being over quickly, there was too much to do. I began an affair that still goes on with a man who was/is, if anything, more harrassed and busy with his commitments than I. He's in Medical school on an accelerated, individual study program doing about one course per week. That was fine: neither of us felt guilty for not seeing more of one another. I didn't seem to need much more human contact. I thought in fact that I had gone almost completely asexual during that time. I figured I wouldn't get over it till after the con. Those last couple weeks before Feb. 17-19 have a weird, unreal feeling in my memory: there was so much to do...the art show, programming,...ah, but boring to retell I suspect.

Two days before the con, everything was pretty much organized, my work mostly done and something snapped inside of me; the texture of events/time changed entirely. About those next 5 or six days I can remember an incredible amount of detail, probably as much as I could bring back about the previous couple months in total. WisCon was like Westercon for me, in intensity: it wasn't so much the meeting/reaching out to new people of Westercon, but more of the renewal of contacts and loves began there. The

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similarity in feeling had a lot to do with the similarities in backgrounds of the two cons, both having a large amount of programming conceived of as supporting and contributing to feminist discussion. Vonda was wonderful: reading from DREAMSNAKE, participating in so many of the programs, knitting a jock strap for a Greek-type statue in the Women's rest room... And Susan was fine too, a dynamo, (though we managed to tire even Susan, scheduling her for so much that she was begging for a hamburger). Exciting times. There will be reports in the next Janus that will be more specific about programming and about the public aspects of the con. I feel especially good about how the art show went and how--through a public awards ceremony and the trophies made by Virginia Galco--we were able to bring the artists more recognition than they normally receive at cons.

Opposition to the emphasis on feminist programming was stronger this year than last. The opposition within the group on this score has been dealt with by saying: "If you want something else in programming, it is your responsibility to produce it, work for it, do the shit work for it. We will not, however, put energy into producing what you would consider a more "balanced" con for you. Yes this con is heavily oriented toward one point of view, or at least the facilitation of discussion in this area, but because it is a rare thing in fandom and until it no longer is, we will not feel at all inclined or obliged to channel our energies into putting on a different sort of con. If you want other kinds of programming, you do it." It's funny, ironic, etc., though not, I guess, very surprising, that the people most vocal in their complaints after the con were the ones who put the least work into the con. If the situation were reversed and the con committee was one like the one that does so many other cons, and there was a group of dissenters wanting more feminist (or a feminist) program items in the schedule, I wonder if they would be limited only by the amount of work they would commit to the con. A rhetorical question I fear. I expect WisCon 3 will again be heavily feminist oriented because the people who complained in our group are people who want to say how things should be, but don't really want to do the work. And MadStf has traditionally been a group in which projects get done by those who want to do them. All our projects, the zines, the con, the radio shows, everything, have been works of love and there's no one in our group that is at all inclined to take instructions about what or how they should be working. If that ever becomes the case, I think the group would rapidly disintegrate.

During all the controversy following the con though, reports coming in that Chicago fandom (for example, and I don't know which part exactly this refers to) was very Displeased by Wiscon (and weirdly, surprised, it is reported--but wasn't WisCon advertised as feminist? What surprise?), after all that, it was noted that for a small con, the very fact that our programming has gotten so much attention, is so much talked about, is in itself a compliment to the programming which in similarly sized cons aren't much noticed.

In retrospect, however, WisCon--as was Westercon for me--was first an emotional experience. I learned things about myself as I had during the summer convention, that I've got the feeling I'll be working on, rethinking, for quite a while. ...And there's no way that I can talk about it right now, here. The ideas and things I learned from those people will come up here no doubt, but I can't seem to get into it in chronological order like this. Later.

Work at the Institute goes well, though my financial situation because I am still there does not. Working with WRIW (Women's Research Institute of Wisconsin, Inc.) is fine in that I'm in contact with such great people and know about the projects they're doing. For instance the book incorporating the papers given at the Prism of Sex: Toward an Equitable Pursuit of Knowledge conference which several publishers are now fighting over, and the forward to it by Jesse Bernard, incredible woman! I'm involved with that, and another book (COGNITIVE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN) that I've done the cover design for. Most interesting though is the book/study now in progress by Julia Sherman on High School Girls that I talked about last time. The interviews

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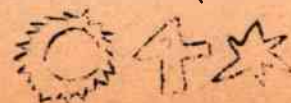
are fascinatingly gruesome...We're asking them more than why they decided not to go on or to go on in math, we're asking them about how they see their future lives, etc. and my impression is that there are an awful lot of high school girls who are really conservative, wanting lives with husband and child and no career or even work while the children are growing. So many of them describe their future husbands as being (or hoping they will be) religious, Christian, etc., and describe their future in terms of dependency on that husband. Many of them describe themselves as being old-fashioned, etc... I don't know, my impression may be wrong, maybe high school aged people have always been more affected by parents/society, etc. (I didn't think so, it wasn't my experience during the late '60's--but those years may be explanation in themselves), but the things I've been hearing during interviews, and later, transcribing other interviewers' reports, have scared me. This especially, because Madison has been traditionally a rather radical/liberal city. The study's original goals seem to be quite satisfyingly progressing though. The data flows in and looks pretty significant (in the mathematical sense) in terms of proving that women are effectively discouraged from taking math in school and that it is a fairly easy thing to just as effectively encourage them in the opposite direction. Still, I am uneasy about the rest of the questions and how they're being answered. A typical one: When told that she should imagine herself 27 years old, married with a 2-year old child, working as a scientist, and asked how she would imagine a typical day, one girl answered by saying that she'd march into the office and resign that silly job so that she could go home where she belonged and take care of her daughter. Most of the women, I'd say a good 80-90% are outraged that they would be working when there was a young child to be cared for. Most of them feel it to be an awful thing to leave her with a sitter or child care center. Not one of them has suggested that the husband stays home to care for the child. And most, when asked to react to the schedule of work, and child and husband care that they detail their days with, reply that it looks pretty grim, and boring. And yet it is the very life that they expect for themselves...

As I said, the work is fascinating, the pay is not. Because of some complications I've been getting less work time (averaging 30 hrs per week) the last few months. In the end, as a result of these complications, I would either have to commit myself to more than full time administrative type job here for which I would be expected to put in a lot more time, commitment and energy than I am currently putting in, or take a cut in hours. The reasons aren't very interesting so I'll skip that part. However, what it comes down to is that I am not willing to make an administrative job (regardless of the importance/value of the organization as a whole) and give up the activities which presently take up the majority of my free time and commitment and energy. I.E., Janus and freelance work. In fact what my plans are at this point is to stay with Janus another year at most and then put my energy into finding a professional position as art editor, layout person, designer/illustrator, something along this line. I think that by that time I will have learned all I can from the zine and will need to go on to something else, besides having lived long enough on the edge of starvation and debtors prison. For in this interim I've had to cut down on things I didn't know it was possible to cut down on. I am living frugally, to understate the situation. I've certainly found out what my real priorities are. Very unromantically though, the life of a struggling-artist-in-a-garret isn't nearly what it's sometimes advertised to be. I find I work much better when I have some measure of security, when I know how I'm going to pay my rent, when I don't have to spend time worrying if the check will clear, etc.

... Ah well. But there are rewards...

*****HUGO NOMONEES*****SCOOP*****SCOOP****FINAL HUGO BALLOT 1977*****SCOOP*****

Novels: THE FORBIDDEN TOWER (MZB), TIME STORM (Dickson), DYING OF THE LIGHT (Martin), LUCIFER'S HAMMER (Niven & Pournelle), GATEWAY (Pohl); NOVELLAS: A SNARK IN THE NIGHT (Benford), THE WONDERFUL SECRET (Laumer), AZTECS (McIntyre), STARDANCE (Robinson & Robinson), IN THE HALL OF THE MARTIAN KINGS (Varley); NOVELETTES: ENDER'S GAME (Card), PRISMATICA (Delany), THE 9TH SYMPHONY OF LVB AND OTHER LOST SONGS (Scholz), THE SCREW-FLY SOLUTION (Sheldon), EYES OF AMBER (Vinge); SHORT STORY: JEFFTY IS FIVE (Ellison),

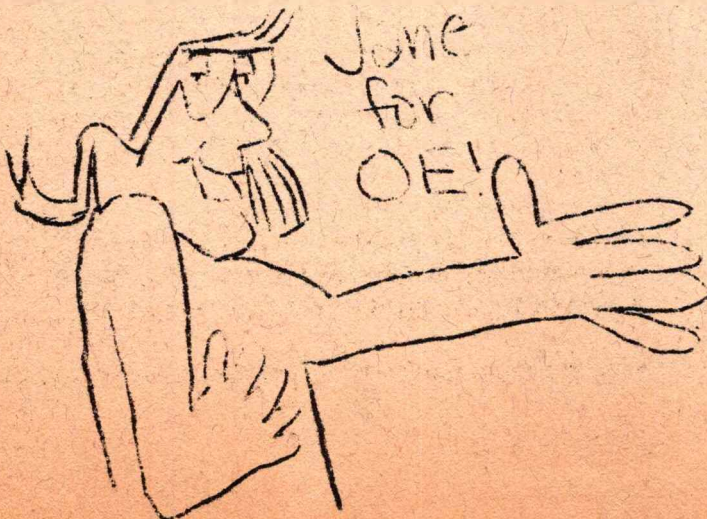


LAURALYN (Garrett), DOG DAY EVENING (Robinson), TIME-SHARING ANGEL (Tiptree), AIR RAID (Varley); DRAMATIC PRESENTATIONS: CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND, BLOOD! THE LIFE AND FUTURE TIMES OF JACK THE RIPPER (Bloch and Ellison), THE HOBBIT, STAR WARS, WIZARDS; PROFESSIONAL ARTISTS: Di Fate, Fabian, Freas, Sternbach, Whelan; PROFESSIONAL EDITORS: Baen, Bova, Carr, Ferman, Scithers; AMATEUR MAGAZINES: DON-O-SAUR, JANUS, LOCUS, MAYA, SFR; FAN WRITERS Brown, D'Amassa, Geis, Thompson, Wood; FAN ARTISTS: Canfield, Foglio, Gilliland, Gomoll, Shull; John Campbell Awards: Card, Chalker, Donaldson, Lynn, Sterling; Gandalf Grand Master of Fantasy: Anderson, Bradbury, LeGuin, Moorcock, Zelazny; Gandalf Book-Length Fantasy A SPELL FOR CHAMELEON (Anthony); LORD FOUL'S BANE (Donaldson), THE SHINING (Kink), OUR LADY OF DARKNESS (Leiber), THE SILMARILLION (Tolkien).

Well.

As I said, there are rewards. Not only did Janus get nominated, but so did I as fan artist. You should have seen me jumping up and down grinning all the time that day. I feel pretty good. Thank you, you voting block you. (This is what Glycer refers to us in FILE 770, which I reacted first, no not really, and then why not: as someone else remarked, isn't the readership of SFR Or LOCUS a voting block, as is the readership of any zine? Why is a group of people who vote for one thing or person so different when they may be mostly women, why I mean do they take on some "unfair" quality as Glycer seems to suggest? Anyway I've got the feeling we will be hearing a lot of this sort of thing, and if so, we should make the most of our power, and try to get Sheldon and McIntyre and Liz Lynn awarded the hughos. ...With the opposition of SFR and LOCUS, I really don't expect that JANUS has a very good chance, the joy for us is in the nomination, and much of that there is. Sigh.)

Other business before going on to the MC's concerns the upcoming vote for WAPA OE. Jane Hawkins who this issue is submitting her 3rd apa-zine will be running and I am going to **vote for her**. Jane is an extremely organized, capable woman: her ability to run and manage the apa is, I think, assured. In her work, outside of fandom, she holds a demanding managerial position and has shown herself in other areas, most recently in the management and coordination of Norwescon's Art Show to be quite capable of handling this sort of work—as the APA continually shows itself to be: a complicated job. Besides all that, she is a warm and considerate person, fair and compassionate in all the interactions I've seen her involved with others. Besides that, she's a great dancer: I got to know and love her at WisCon and would really be glad to see her OEing the apa. I've known her since Westercon actually, but since her one real disadvantage in the OE vote will no doubt be her relative unfamiliarity to the rest of the apa, I'm writing here to provide an early introduction to her, to you.



MAILING COMMENTS TO WAPA #8

ANN WEISER I can understand the reasons you've put love and sex in different spheres, not necessarily connected. My first reaction on reading that, was that, no, I didn't do that: that I've had sex with quite a few men to whom I wasn't strongly attracted. Many times I've wanted sex with someone for reasons somewhat unconnected to the person, etc. And yet I've seldom felt "unreal," or "unconnected" during sex.

But then I thought again, and from a different angle, I do see and identify with your feelings. There are many people whom I love, that I do not want and will probably never have sex with. The connection and reason is simply not there.

It is probably an unhealthy kind of expectation to need love and sexual feelings always to co-exist. And yet in varying degrees we are all taught that they should. I've been irritated recently by a person who will go bogus-named here, I'll call him George (to take your method of dealing with talking about "known" people). George is a friend of some time, many meetings, who when we had sex I think enjoyed himself as much as I did, but who--the next morning--seemed tense and worried and ready to run should I display next-morning-seriousness. Some men expect women to take sex on a more personal level than they themselves do. Ironically, I would probably agree with that assessment, and voice it not as a derogatory statement but describe it as a positive, enviable ability. Anyway though, I was not expected to be taking things in the way George thought he was taking it all. I had had a good time during the previous couple weeks with him, had had a marvelous evening, etc., and wanted only to continue in that spirit, i.e., much laughter and enjoyment of each other's company. Before long, however, I was forcing smiles, laughing stiffly, pushing the fact that I was feeling no differently than the night before...but it was hard, considering his crouched-animal-ready-to-flee appearance.

When at last it got through to him that I had indeed not fallen in love (with his cock?)...he became dismally depressed, for all the world, a rejected man.

From some men and through other societally implanted norms I hear: A woman loves (or soon does love) a man she sleeps with. It is Her Nature. To have sex with is to love.

And, dismally to me (I hate this argument) I hear some lesbians tell me that I am not "truly" a feminist, have not "really" learned to love women, until I sleep with women. To love is to have sex with.

Both absurd.

Postscript. Later on, George told friends of his, and it turned out of mine too (and so I heard)--that I had wanted to get too involved with him, that he was worried about the effect our sleeping together would have on me.

Maybe you need to find out for yourself (if you want to), whether sex can be a positive, friendship-growing experience with people you love, but are not strongly sexually attracted to. But I think if you find out that the different spheres (for love and for sex) are important and valid at times, for reasons now more varied than your earlier fear of disconnection, or even if that reason still holds--it's not an attitude that is necessarily unhealthy. I think. But everyone has to go back to fears we've buried and find out if our anxiety was and still is justified, or if they have disappeared unnoticed as we've changed since.

It's nice, actually, to find out that you can clear up old worries without having to actually work on them--to find out, I mean, that you've changed in so many good ways, that you've actually solved some problems without noticing. I wouldn't be surprised if you could find a whole bunch of problems you no longer are bothered by, if you tested them, including this fear.

One "fear" I found recently I'd overcome unconsciously was about mechanical things.



At home, I acquiesced to the typically female dumb-with-tools stereotype. Recently I was looking at my hands, very strong they are, and usually covered with scratches from matt knives, callouses from other tools; thinking how I can cope with nearly any apartment-linked fixing job that needs doing, am comfortable for longish periods of time out in the woods with a backpack, etc.--and enjoy my awareness of this capacity, and I grinned. But a sad grin too: thinking how stupid it is that regardless of all this hard evidence, that I should be surprised to realize my family's perception of my capabilities to be false.

Oh how sweet you paint your friendship between Leone and yourself. But love stories are boring?? I don't think so.

I very much like what you and other people have been saying about children's liberation. Recently I've been becoming aware that I am a terrible offender when it comes to putting children down, mostly I think, in reaction to pressures and my long fight against the assumption that as a woman I should have children. I tend to have little to do with children, and still cannot committ myself to a living situation with them. I will not/cannot take responsibility. There are so few options in this society for a woman to take a partial (less than half, or egen half) responsibility for a child. It always seems to end up having to be a major committment. I think I am justified in this sense, at this time. But a result of this resentment and anger and actions, I also have estranged myself from interaction with children on many other levels (than responsibility), and have developed many of the condescending, ignor-ant degrading attitudes that I hated coming from adults when I was young.

Agist pornography that I have gotten off on: LORD OF THE FLIES, A HIGH WIND IN JAMAICA, etc., that portrays children as essentially another species, or animalistic, because they have not acquired the actual or the facade of adult values. They aren't "civilized" people. How far is that view, really, from any of Kipling's racist writings about Indians, or Henry Miller's misogynist novels on women?

I have friendly "real" relations with my younger sister (15) and brother (7) but I know I tend to think of those friendships as exceptions to the rule...the young women who Diane has mentioned as starting to come to Madstf meetins a while ago, really, really irritated (and still do irritate) me. And it's hard to separate the irritation that I feel from their inconsideration/tactlessness, and the irritation I feel simply because they are young and don't "belong" with a group of people, my friends, all of whom are 10 or so years older than they.

I'm working at it.

However my prejudice against cats (in Madison, simply my lack of passion for the things gets translated into prejudice against them)--I don't think I'll work on very hard.

My, I'm spending a lot of time on MC's to you Ann. That's why I did you first, because I knew I tended to do that. You are worth ten times more, you make me (and everybody I think) feel so good! And you tell me such great ego-boosting things like about my Grand Trine. (Someday we will have time to go into detail on this.) You are truly amazing and wonderful.

I'm glad you understood, and connected my feelings to yourself re changing self/moving to a different place. (as in the poem) You heard me in exactly the way I was trying to communicate. And your poem was truly fitting and beautiful description of that process. Such closeness. Thank you.

Diane Martin Sorry about the drawing of your dress...I kind of left out the sholder stripes there. This is going to be interesting, reading you (and Lesleigh and Jan too) when I talk to you a few times a week. Now we'll be able to do all those "in" comments that AWAPA members who all come from the same cities do.

I love the sense of humor with which you write--nearly the exact thing that first made me like you in person so much.

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Jessica Amanda Salmonson I loved the story of the boys and girls of Diddletown and Hidden Valley (respectively). This and other stories of your's have reminded me a lot, in style, of the story ("the Sisters" by M. Pabst Battin) in the anthology Bitches and other Sad Ladies, an excellent collection by the way.

The letter from and responses to Rod Walker were truly depressing and remind me a lot of the stuff we get once in a while in the Janus mail and mostly, exhausted, simply don't print. I think it's the reasonable, well-meaning tone affected by the letter-writers that gets to me the most, never dreaming that anyone at all who was equally reasonable and well-meaning could possibly ever ever get upset by what they were saying. Like Bob Tucker coming up to me at a recent convention and, arm around my shoulder, father-like, heart-to-heart tone, warned me that even though I was obviously such a "sweet" person and not like the impression I was giving in Janus and through WisCon at all...that nevertheless, I was gaining the reputation of being a fanatical and militant individual. Oh my. His tone assured me that he knew I'd never in a million years actually want to project. How does one answer? I said well no I think I'm being pretty honest, probably not fanatical enough, etc. I said it sweetly though and he smiled benignly and went on to other topics of discussion with the group we were standing with as if he'd made his points sufficiently and next issue Janus would come out all cuddly and cute and sweet.

Good comments to Janet about abortion, and connections to medieval witch/midwife burnings: B. Ehrenreich & D. English's WITCHES, MIDWIVES, AND NURSES: A HISTORY OF WOMEN HEALERS (Feminist Press, 1973) is an excellent reference on those ideas.

Susan/Jessica Thank you much for the matriarchy bibliography. I've read most of them or know of them, but disagree entirely with you about EVOLUTION OF WOMEN. I found it very exciting.

Also, Susan, though I'm not going back and responding to the last couple issues that I missed doing mailing comments on, I did want to tell you how much I enjoyed and appreciated your article on women's images in sf. (Both reading it and hearing it at WisCon) I'm going to keep it separate from the apa as a reference. Good work! (Also I was pleased by your use of the Monique Wittig quote at the end of the article, since I used it earlier in Janus for much the same reason.)

Rebecca Lesses All the changes you've been going through, the experiences you had in in Santa Cruz sound really exciting and wonderful. The situation with the professor sounds depressing--and very familiar, unfortunately. I'm glad you were able to act on your anger to some degree at least.

Carolyn Thompson I liked your descriptions/characterizations of various cons. Also very sympathetic about your sense of being "invisible" and uncredited with regard to Don's fanac. I think it's good that you are aware of the problem.

Gina Clark The cover of "I Really Got Raped This Morning" is even now taped to the wall of my bedroom. So much of what you've contributed to this apa, I've wanted to share with others, non-apa people. You are amazing, your sense of awareness and humor are incredible. I'm very glad you're here. The quotes were great...er, horrible, whatever. I only wish I could meet you sometime.

Victoria Vsyne I'm sorry you're leaving the apa. I wish you'd reconsider your decision --but it does sound as if you are rather definite. It seems that for one reason at least, that you've made a lot of changes and thought through some things you hadn't before --and may do more such changing and thinking in the future--you should stay for a while more...But I can understand your decision, based on the assumptions and reasons you present. If you want me to send you future OBSESSIONS, let me know, and I would be glad to forward them to you.

C. Decarnin In this apa where there is so much discussion of the roles society has proscribed and in many very real senses produced in people, based upon the gender they happen to be born, I think it is very important to identify oneself as to sex... To assert the existence of a sexless "pure consciousness" is certainly not to deny the existence of the layers of sex-defined behaviors, expectations and values, society gloms on top. Male and female skeletons may be indistinguishable, but the construction of our dreams has a lot to do with whether or not a tampon can be inserted into the more identifiable fleshy layers.

I was intrigued by your description of the mob scene you were involved in. Recently a similar thing happened to me too. It's amazing and wonderful how the sound of a calm, caring voice can control and de-fuse a potentially dangerous crowd. The situation I was in was following an outdoor concert. There were too few exits and people started pushing, panic was rising. A few people started speaking in loud calm voices, passing food, joints, informing everyone of the outside situation.

"Hey, I'm pregnant and I'm going to have the baby right now!"

"Well, we'll have to charge you another admission then!"

And with laughter but effect, an aisle was opened for the woman and she got out, and we all settled down, enjoying the slow exit.

Re "The Prisoner" -- in Minneapolis I hear they're talking of doing a Prisoner-con. All the committee people are #2; all the members are #6, one day you wake up in the Leamington Hotel...

Good comments to Noah. I hadn't been exactly sure why his suggestions irritated me, and now I know and agree. Yes, we have been/are covering those topics already, and certainly the issues we've been talking about are the very themes of those authors he was suggesting we organize "new" discussion around. I share your impression of Tom Robbins too. I liked certain things about Cowgirls but mostly was irritated.

Thank you very much for the "Intro. to S/M, 101." I needed that. As someone said in this apa, maybe even you, we're all of us sometimes the ones who discriminate/oppress through ignorance of another group.

Beginning your zine I was preparing myself, tensing, to disagree a lot. Somehow the "pure consciousness" part bothered me. Maybe it was, as you said, your beginning stiffness, though no, you wrote the beginning last--I don't know. But reading your MC's and some other things makes me like you and look forward to more of your writing. And hoping to meet you some day (are you going to V-Con?). Welcome!

Avedon Carol I agree with you about the misuse of the word trashing. Enjoyed too, how much thought and good sense you manage to pack into a page and a half. Even when you don't have time, you can't help but be provocative and witty and enjoyable to read.

Marty Siegrist Hello! the descriptions of How Small your apartment is, were funny, and the brief comments about your law ambitions interesting. I hope we hear more about you and you have more time (and less nervousness) about writing next time.

Karen Pearlschtein I really admire you and congratulate you on the many tremendous changes you've gone through in recent months. For you, especially, I'm sorry I wasn't able to do mc's for the last couple mailings, but it's been good to read--and I did a lot of grinning during the reading--all about your decisions. You are a courageous and admirable woman!

Thank you for the description of the Toronto Women's movement. It's encouraging to hear about. (In Madison, feminism is alive too, though more noticeably in the arts than in politics. To me that isn't a bad thing, maybe just as productive and powerful an outlet.) It sounds like a good, valid decision for now for some women's groups to be

totally separatist: the reasons you mentioned are cogent to many situations.

Thankyou Karen, for doing the ballot. At the time, I think it was the best and sanest and most positive contribution that was advanced by any of us toward ending the controvercy... Certainly not full of shit. Thanks again for doing the work.

Margaret Henry Madison too is going through a period of extreme consciousness about the massage parlors. Best entertainment in town is tuning in the radio broadcasted council meetings and listening to the progod people damn the sleezies to everlasting fire. Facitious of course. Silly stuff. Recently the campaign has gotten more confused and funnier still. Reverend Pritchard was booked for child assault (rough spanking/punishment of a school child.) He refused bond and has made the jail his public rostrum, à la the '60's anti-war protest tactics, crying out about the injustice that he a reverend, espousing strict discipline (and moral rectitude, etc.) is in jail, while the massage parlour owners are out in the community. Really. And more: he's getting all sorts of support from the outraged right rallying to his side. Last I heard, one massage parlor owner was offering to pay his bail to shut him up. I can imagine the whole thing redone in a TV sitcom.

Ann Vargo Thank you for the NYTimes reprint. Very interesting and yes fuzzy indeed and weird, I don't know quite how to react. I agree about how stupid it is that our society stigmatizes virgins...but somehow don't agree that every virgin is "obviously" healthily so. During the time I was aware of my lack of ...um... experience, say, I was uptight about it and probably drove people away by my obvious wish to change the situation. I know that now, I avoid people who are transparently "hungry" to have a first lover or second or whatever lover. I get nervous about the responsibility I might have in such a situation because I remember how important the first person I was involved with for longer than one night became to me...because of the kinetic psychic energy that needing/wishing for so long seems to produce. But that's coming at the discussion from the opposite end, ah well. Maybe I'll disagree or agree violently with someone else's appraisal, so I'll wait.

In your comment to Bonanza, I read a lot of hurt, of the kind I know well. For me, I wish I'd done the mourning first...But I can't think it possible to have made that evaluation till after it's too late. And maybe too, I'm projecting your words on to a situation not at all analogous to the one you refer to...I think I know though what you mean.

D. Potter Bizaar and wonderous per usual. Your "definition" of mundane vs fan pungent and witty. Your worry and abstention (and reasons for) understandable. Yes.

Elinor Busby Oh what a gorgeous, wonderful cover! Oh what I wouldn't do for access to a color xerox! (In the last issue of Vootie --funny animal apa-- someone did their's in felt tip extravegant color, and it was so great, I was jealous.) Especially the picture of you and Liz and Jessica and Suzy, I remember seeing and wanting at Westercon so badly and the picture of Denys and Robyn--beautiful!

I think I'll start a rumor that I actually have felt tips instead of hands; that's why all the photos of me show my "hands" in my pockets.

Lesleigh I can't think of anything to say that I haven't said to you in person Luttrell better than I can at this point in the MC's. I still don't like the photo, but it does at least perpetuate the felt tip hands rumor. Your writing though again impresses me with its clarity and complexity of images. I think your writing is an important tool for you for the purpose of organizing your conceptions of yourself and relationship to job, projects and other people. I hope you never give it up--writing in letters, apas, articles, journals, whatever, it seems to me, is very strengthening and frefreshing for you.

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Ctein

I laughed alot about ~~the romance~~ story, and as you predicted disagree with you about GOODBAR. It looks too as if I'm one of the few people around who thought it was mostly good. I thought most of the changes from book to movie were understandable book-to-film necessities.

What I thought was interesting about the transference was that the book was about the self-destructive impulse of a person, while the movie turned out to be more about the self-destructiveness of a kind of life-style. In the weirdness-transformation of the good man, her "suiter," (I forget his name), her rejection assumes a reasonableness in the film that it did not have in the book. I.e., in the book this man was everything that she wanted/needed and by rejecting him, she puts herself into a situation wherein the people she is involved with are bound to cause her great damage. In the movie, it is her lifestyle per se (and that caused not by some conscious self-destructive choice but by the factors of her background) that make a nurturing, healthy relationship impossible for her to find... In the book, this suiter was a good person and her rejection of him was because she hated herself and was attracted to people who abused her. The ending was an extension of that given. In the film, the choice of lifestyle (not her psychological motives) was the subject. The woman in the movie wanted to love and was portrayed as liking herself for the most part. It was the life style/environment which rapes and kills her.

The movie affected me so much because I, for other reasons than hers, have chosen a lifestyle that is analogous to her's (at least from the viewpoint of her/my family/society). Where the film is bad, from my point of view, is in its assumptions about what an autonomous, urban life style for a woman is. I still think the whole description through the film of a person who encounters and comes to believe what our society says must be the fate of a woman who does not find love in more traditional ways, to be a powerful statement and a well done film. I won't accept criticisms of the film that dwell on the idea that we don't "need" more films about people who get themselves or are gotten into destructive situations. The pressures to do so are there, and Keaton does an excellent job in portraying a woman who doesn't find her way out. If you want a different film, make it, or wait for it.

I've found all sorts of good stuff to back up my grail romance analogy to CLOSE ENCOUNTERS and have been doing more work, really, analyzing that film than I have thinking more about GOODBAR. I saw that after all during Thanksgiving week, a long time ago, and I don't think I could bring myself to go through that last scene again. CE though I've seen several times, thought it several magnitudes above STAR WARS, and wrote a longish review of it (on the order of the one along time ago I did of THE MAN WHO FELL TO EARTH in Janus) for File 770 originally, but I guess since it is so long it will go into SCIENTIFRICTION. I mentioned your idea of the necessity of a mundane background to make the fantastic visible, I might even have mentioned your name. Anyway it's a beautiful film I think, and seeing how few good reviews of it I've seen in fanzines I'm probably alone in this too, or nearly so. The Grail Romance analogy goes something like this: sterile land (lacking, in CE, of sense of wonder): ordinary person becomes questing knight by giving up love, job, respect of community; goes off in quest of a vision, goes through many trials, even poison gas at the base of the mountain/chapel perilous; finds grail, embodiment of visions, questions are answered, and is apotheosized bodily into heaven (in CE via spaceship), while below the community is revived and refreshed with new hopes and new vistas. Loved it.

No one did a review of Piercy's WOMAN ON THE EDGE OF TIME????!! I thought I did last year in OBSESSIONS when it had just come out. It was long too, I think I was comparing it to Lessings novels. I wish it had been eligible for this year's hugo...not enough people had read it last year unfortunately.

Candice Massey

I don't think I ever commented on your postmailing last time, and I wanted to especially to tell you how much I liked the drawing on the cover. If it hadn't come out way before, I'd wonder if it wasn't a feminist parody of Close Encounters... (even Devil's Tower, the woman calling the clouds hiding the flying

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COMMENTS ON MAILING #9

Anna Vargo I will be seeing you soon...on your way to Seattle. I will have seen you perhaps already. Hello again.

Rebecca Lesses Wish you had made it to WisCon, will you be at V-Con? I think I will. There was a story in NEW WOMEN OF WONDER, actually I think it's probably still there, called "Songs of War" by Kit Reed, that has been bothering me and popped up from my memory when you made the comment/question to Anne-Laurie about whether women's culture shouldn't be for all women. I assume you meant a future, ideal sort of culture that would not stunt women's potentials: you ask whether we build a future for all women whatever they might be, or a future for women as they should be (and for those who are not as they should be, nothing). Just to get my assumption of your musing... In "Songs of War," it is the women revolutionaries decision in favor of the latter course of action (only women of correct politics will be included in the winners' plans), that causes the downfall of the revolution. It's a sort of alegorical story, and that part of it, I thought was kind of perceptive. Kind of because it kept bumping into other not-so-perceptive ideas, but more on those later. It was the familiar story of a group of people revolting from a given order and without having thought of the society they wanted to plant in the old one's place, they ended up creating a new brand of the old one, complete with hierarchies, etc. (Much the same theme as Charnas' MOTHERLINES.) Their values, for instance toward, uhg "housewives" was just as oppressive as the culture's they were trying to destroy. Kit Reed I think wrote this story as an alegory for probable cause of breakdown in the women's movement. On the whole, the story had a lot of problems though, and made me pretty angry. She saw the potential problems of a women's revolution clearly enough, though I'd argue with some, but ignored logical, expectable problems that the other "side" would have encountered. For instance the first step of the revolution, the women leaving the village, leaving their husbands and bonds was accomplished relatively easily. And at that point if things had really happened so easily, with solittle argument from the men, 90% of the battle was won. Reed, however, depicts the real battle to take place over occupation of the local shopping center (and eventual control of the town). Only then, do the men get really mad enough to take notice and fight and bring the women back by force. I seriously doubt that it would have taken any more than the dishes not done and the laundry starting to stink, etc. for the men to take to violence. Anyway, with regard to the idea you brought up, Rebecca, I think the story makes some good points. Other than that though it is an irritating story that I really wonder how it got into an otherwise excellent collection. (the #3 Women of Wonder series of books edited by Pamela Sargent...especially good, Chelsea Quinn Yarbro's "Dead in Irons," and Sonya Dorman's "Building Block" and Joan Vinge's Hugo nominee, "Eyes of Amber." Also some reprints of some excellent McIntyre --"Screwtop"-- and Russ--"When it Changed,"--and Tiptree--"The Women Men Don't See.")

C. Decarnin Your problem with the male sympathizer who wanted to be on the Women's Security Patrol, seems to be one that comes up a lot, that women have to be prepared to deal with. In Madison there is the Women's Transit --organized to combat rape by giving women alternative transportation at night. They drive anywere in the community to deliver women to jobs or bars--no priority except to women alone or in danger--in order to give them mobility free from fear. It's a good system (a lot better than advising women to stay off the streets after dark) and much praised by the community. However, last week while I was down at their offices doing a logo for them I witnessed one of their persistent problems: ie, men coming in and being offended to hear that they are not wanted to help staff the cars or the radio, that this is an all-women operation. He looked so angry to be left out, it was almost funny (as if this was the first time he had ever encountered the situation of exclusion for a project or group he decided was worth his efforts), if it weren't for the fact that he started threatening to sue. But really what a ridiculous situation that would be for men to be in the cars--a "perfect" set-up for a rapist, not to mention the necessity that the effort by women be by women, that we not rely on men to take care of us. ...So far it looks as if this man's threats of suit were just bluff. With friends like that--.

Sue-Rae
Rosenfeld

Thank you for the description of your feelings for and the life of your grandmother. Knowing enough details about a loved one's lives to be able to go over their lives in the manner you were able to is important on their death. I felt terribly sad several years ago when my mother's mother died, and I realized how little I really knew about her. Since then, I've grown closer to my grandfather..

Janet Small

I'm glad it's all settled. But OK I promised you that I would come up with some suggestions for making any future disagreements somewhat more quick in their resolutions. I would suggest that if anyone at anytime makes a suggestion or complaint relating to the rules of the apa that they include with that same issue of AWAPA enough informational ballots (not of actual decision-making capability unless the OE runs it through as such, and by noting that if she decides). These ballots will quickly establish by the next mailing if the issue is important to most of the membership and show, if necessary, the need for a serious ballot or OE pronouncement on the matter. The informational ballots should be designed by the person who first perceives the need for such a poll and if possible, tabulated also by that person, information as to its outcome conveyed to the OE for publication and/or action.

Karen Pearlschtein

I liked your theory on Piercy's WOMAN ON THE EDGE OF TIME about Connie and Luciente being the same person--but I'd extend it a little further. Connie is also Gildina, the woman in the other future, the future in which Mattapoissett does not happen. ...Depending on whether the Connies of now fight and are strong and try to make their dreams come true, the Connie of the future (as Mattapoissett is defined as only one possible alternate universe) can be many different women.

Terry Gary

Thanks for the lovely compliment. It's taken me a long time to be comfortable and a while longer to be relatively happy about how I look. Developing early early (3rd grade I think) has left me with a few neuroses, one of which is sadly enough not having much sense of pleasure or even sensation in my breasts. However I've long ago conquered the one concerning uneasiness. Thank you: that made me feel nice.

I hope you still stay in the apa (or both apas, whichever), I'd miss you.

Denys Howard

The poem August 1977 was excellent. I read it through again as soon as I'd finished, more gripped by the pain and the awfulness of the images than the first time. I'm so glad you gave me some of your poetry to put into Janus, it will be an exciting thing to illustrate your words, words of joy or pain or anger, the emotions always come through so clear and sensuously in your writing.

I really have read all the rest of the apa, but at this point, it being late and tomorrow having to run this all off, and besides, the Real Reason, I've been winging it this last page, I lost my notes for #9 MC's and can't right now, go back and do them over again. There's a lot I've got to get to, that I should have started this weekend in fact...but this apa is important and I've been negligent recently. In my future days are illustrations for a couple of books (in progress now), Janus 12--to be started, layout anyway next weekend (deadline for written material was this weekend), doing the writing that I should have given to Jan this weekend, a whole list of illustrations that I've promised out, working overtime at the Institute (a new proposal, fascinating: on the drastic increase in teenage pregnancies as correlated with lack of contraceptive/abortion information (Avedon, you will be interested in it perhaps, shall I send you the information we accumulate?)),--catch breath--two affairs with two men that so far haven't (or haven't been able to) cause me any pain, just wonderful times; and another person I love a lot on his way here. And I'm enjoying myself tremendously. Only bad thing recently is that I've got to find a new apartment --the rent is going to be raised \$20 in August.

But I guess I'm even looking forward to that. I enjoy the process of change: when change is an addition that is. I know I storm and cry and am stubborn about changes that are needless subtractions (subtractions of energy, of love, of friendships, of opportunity, etc.), but mostly it seems that the changes of these past months have all been changes of additions. Realizing that I am reaching the point of doing professionally what I most love to do. Expanding the parameters of my capacity to love, for even cutting myself off from Rick came at a time when I realize that fears of/ reactions against monogomous situations in my life are valid, and most importantly that I have the capacity to make so many alternatives to monogomous attachments that are just as, if not more fulfilling growth experiences for me. All this, and the excitement of the Hugo nominations, the good things happening at the Institute, the wonderful experience and people at WisCon...a feeling, in total of a growing competence and sense that I'm going in the right direction.

And it's Spring! The buds will be out soon, you can smell the newness in the air, and I find myself laughing a lot for no special reason. That would be a good note to end I think. I'll see you in June (if not earlier at V-Con): a wonderful Spring to all of you.

Love, Jeanne

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saucers... She's a neat looking woman too almost as if she were carved in wood or stone like the arrete behind her. Is it yours or did you copy it from someplace (where?) Either way it's a lovely job.

Each time we meet at a con I like you more and more. I think I see you more often than any other WAPA person at the cons.

I worry too about the ERA ending up to be the one issue of the women's movement as the vote was for the suffragettes, but not too much. I think most of us are aware that the movement is much more involved than simply a one-issue-fits/solves all. Maybe in fact the failure of the ERA will do as much to mobilize more women in future years as the right to vote seemed to immobilize our grandmothers.

I think I've talked to you and told you all I thought about the situation you described with the person you talk of in WILDFIRE...

You impressed me much with your ~~own~~ description of the images you associate with interactions with others. They are beautiful and evocative; poetry.

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