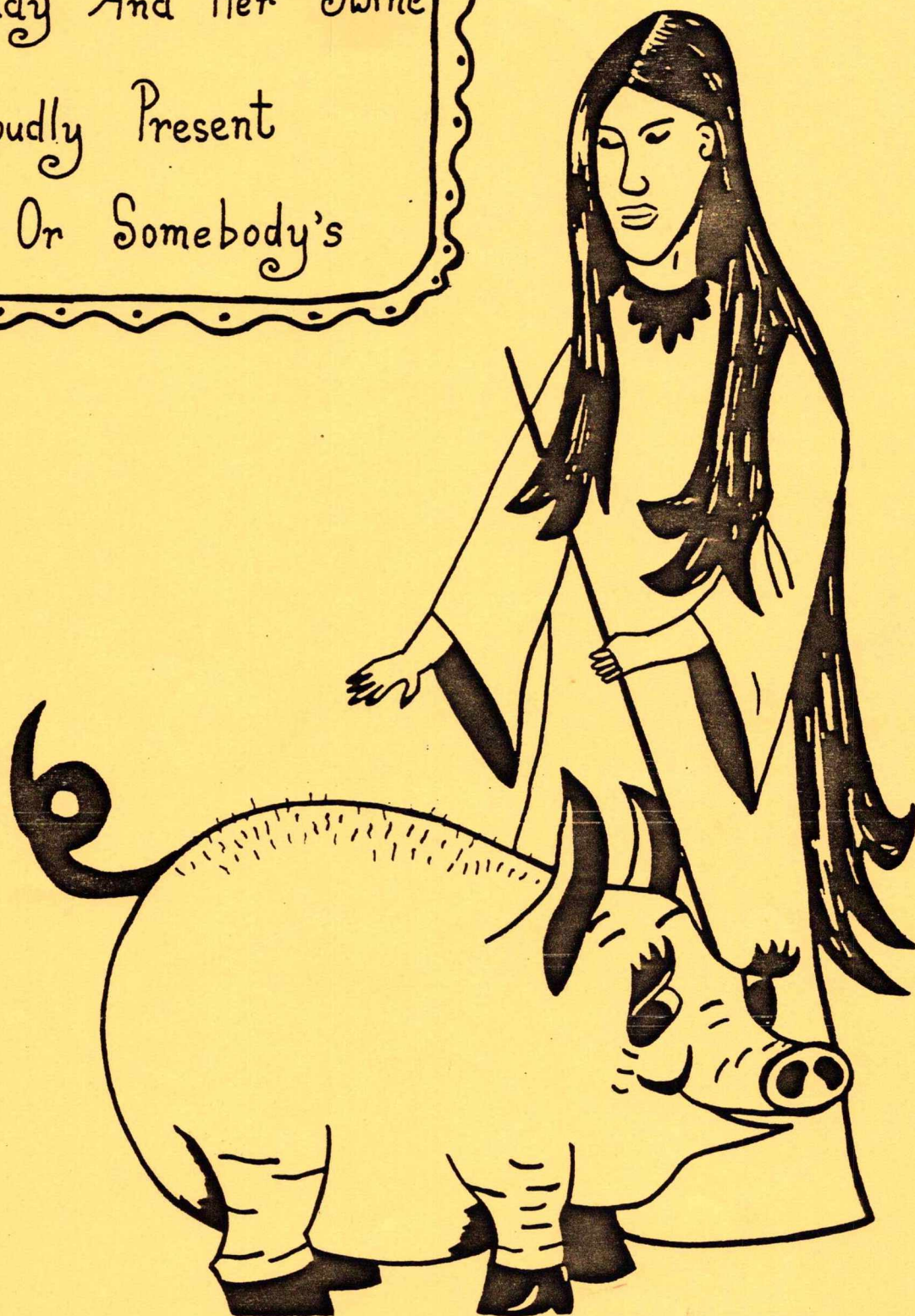


The Lady And Her Swine  
Proudly Present  
Their Or Somebody's



SORGENKIND

This, the third episode of DRAGONBURST, the successor to MUSIC FROM A FIRE, still incorporating BLACKBIRDS EGG, is SORGENKIND, the less than masterwork of CHRISTINA LAKE who resides in chaos and uncertainty at 20A CHATSWORTH PARADE, QUEENSWAY, PETTS WOOD, KENT, BR5 1DF, perpetrating unmentionable spelling errors, but still hoping to trade the end product for multitudinous goodies, or even fanzines.  
July 1983

# CONTENTS

		<u>Page</u>
To the Dregs and Beyond...	Me	2
Hello Again Reptiles	More Me	3
Squelch	Pete Presford	5
Whatever Gets You Thru Your Life	Me again (yawn)	6
A Lesson in Machiavellism	Bruce Saville	8
Quest - Chi valry Made Simple	Me too	11
Hardly the Kind of Stuff ...	Peter-Fred	13
Letter Column	Me Plus	15
Have Title Will Travel	End of Me	17



## More Credits

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TO THE DREGS AND BEYOND...

Editorial, who needs an editorial? Still, I suppose I ought to explain what the name means or I'll bore myself silly trying to think up something when I've already forgotten myself. Sorgenkind means problem child and is a word that turns up a lot in German to express a mixture of exasperation and affection towards a foundering entity, company or project for which one has responsibility, like one's bankrupt Peruvian subsidiary. Dragonburst 3 is my Sorgenkind, not quite bankrupt yet, but causing no end of problems. First there is time and its famous opposite no-time. This opposite managed to ensconce itself in my life between the publication of Music From A Fire and Now, one and a bit years later. Also my other fanzine, This Never Happens has become more viable as coeditress Lilian Edwards and I no longer live five countries apart and we want to publish it twice a year instead of once. So articles half-written, semi-conceived or remotely projected for the not precisely Sorgenkind yet fanzine were shelved as we prepared an Easter issue of TNH.

Then of course there's reproduction, no nothing biological, just me vacillating because I don't know whether to duplicate or photocopy. The trouble is I've been spoiled: typing for TNH and The Woman's Periodical has given me a freedom to experiment with page headings and the like that I wouldn't have on duplicated pages, at least not without heavy use of electrostencils. And the only electrostencil I've ever used was the disastrous cover for Dragonburst 1, so no thanks. Besides Brian Ameringen (the people's photocopier?) is so amenable and cheap, and all the collating gets done and well, yes, I've been spoiled! But it took me, oh months, of agonising to set out on my first clean sheet of typing paper and leave the stencils and corflu firmly in my drawer, thus putting aside forever the chances of fannish recognition and acclaim for the neat, artless, duplicated quarto of my (their?) dreams.

RELENTLESS EUPHONY

Onto the contents: even more of a headache than the modus duplicandi (couldn't come up with a gerund from reproduction, sorry). Bruce Saville's Machiavellism had been festering in a plastic bag along with the letters for over a year, the paper had grown yellow and spelling conventions all changed but I decided to use it since it continued the themes of a couple of articles in the previous issue and claimed (not divine) inspiration from Music. Of more recent vintage, was Pete Presford's Squelch which was sent for TNH 3 but didn't seem to fit in with its mostly personal confession style contents (and we already had more material than intended) so I nabbed it. Finally there was Peter-Fred's own Sorgenkind, wrested forcibly from his possessive pen before its 100th revision to just escape inclusion on the back cover. It was flattering to hear people say my last fanzine didn't really need outside contributors, but somehow I didn't like the relentless effect of one piece of my work following another, so this time you get me relentlessly filling all the gaps, holes and crevices between my contributors instead, and I'll see if I like that any better. At least I feel less exposed.

So there you have it, my Sorgenkind, foundering or founded on bad management and irrational production techniques, but bravely turning out material that won't sell even when dumped in Sri Lanka at half price, and defying all the marketing experts of Europe and Japan to do so. Happy reading!

Advertising Break

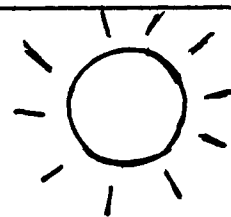
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# Hello Again, Reptiles!

Anyone who spent their youth alternately falling in love with DJs and fantasising about being one will retain a residual weakness<sup>f</sup> for these unreal creatures who spend their time behaving like film stars off the air and making appallingly sexist jokes and comments on it. Yes, this means you, Steve Wright! (not that I have any weakness for him whatsoever). Radio One became my companion after the demise of Radio Caroline, because I could never stick the advertisements and ten minute news bulletins of commercial radio. Even the advent of Essex Radio, launched by Clive James in a glider, made no impact; it was all non-stop Tommy Vance material, interlarded with interminable requests from people at my brothers' old school. I fled back across the airwaves to where David 'Kid' Jensen was desperately reestablishing himself after a sojourn in America and John Peel continued to play 'weird' music in his inimitable, paranoid fashion.

Daytime radio as any unemployed citizen will tell you is for morons and housewives - the latter being mainly treated as the former. Nowadays the life of superstar is so arduous that daytime stints seem to last about one hour each (just right for cramming in the Top 20) and the period between ten and four, once the domain of three people with a decent stint each has now been parcelled out between countless DJs and newsreaders, as if the BBC were subject to some ineffective law of succession. Those who can't take the pace of an hour a day, can always opt for ten minutes at the weekend, or if they're Noel Edmonds, five minutes on Sundays when they've nothing better to do and the weather doesn't look too promising.

I've watched the moral decline of Mike Read from pleasant evening DJ to big-headed morning superstar. The rot set in when he discovered the dubious art form of imitating his colleagues and began repeating the same routine every morning ad nauseam, till I was forced to turn off my radio. Then there were the fantasies about Page 3 girls, the sexist innuendo, the playboy image and the whining, injured tone when anybody presumed to criticise him. Yet every time Steve Wright takes over the show for a couple of weeks, I welcome Mike back with open arms.

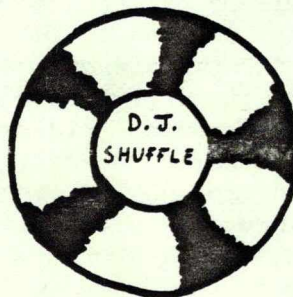
In the face of such colleagues, nighttime DJ, John Peel, sets himself up as anti-hero. His endless series of anecdotes are based on the contrast between the glamour of the average Radio One DJ's life and the mundanities of his own: cycling to work, failing to be recognised in record shops, not receiving invitations to showbiz receptions and going home to mother's after his programme. He revels in his role of black sheep; the outcast none of the others like to talk about; the one who doesn't open supermarkets. This role has been compromised a bit by his intergration into the Top Of The Tops circuit, though a certain irreverence to the sacred icon, the Top Thirty, shines through. Kid Jensen is so fresh-faced and keen that he's the perfect straight man for John Peel. John makes gentle fun of Kid's desire for integration and Scottish roots by calling<sup>him</sup> the Laird and making snide remarks about the probable transience of his allegiance to his latest football team: St. Mirrens. Kid constantly has famous people dropping in and out of his studio and tends to espouse slightly more trendy music than the obdurately obscure Mr. Peel. John once remarked that Kid plays so much Belle Stars on his programme that he keeps thinking one of them must have died! The implication that he only plays trendy music upsets Kid, who vainly begs his listeners to write in suggestions for old Blues groups for his three of the best spot to save him from doing Duran Duran for the twentieth time.

Credibility, a nebulous concept best described in terms of placings in the NME readers' poll, begins to afflict DJs at about four in the evening. Unfortunately, if you happen to be Peter Powell and have been involved with a best-selling slim to music record, you can't hope for much of it. Kid Jensen still has to live down having been a daytime DJ, not to mention selling his soul to American TV. Once upon a time the lunchtime spot had credibility, but that was long ago when Johnny

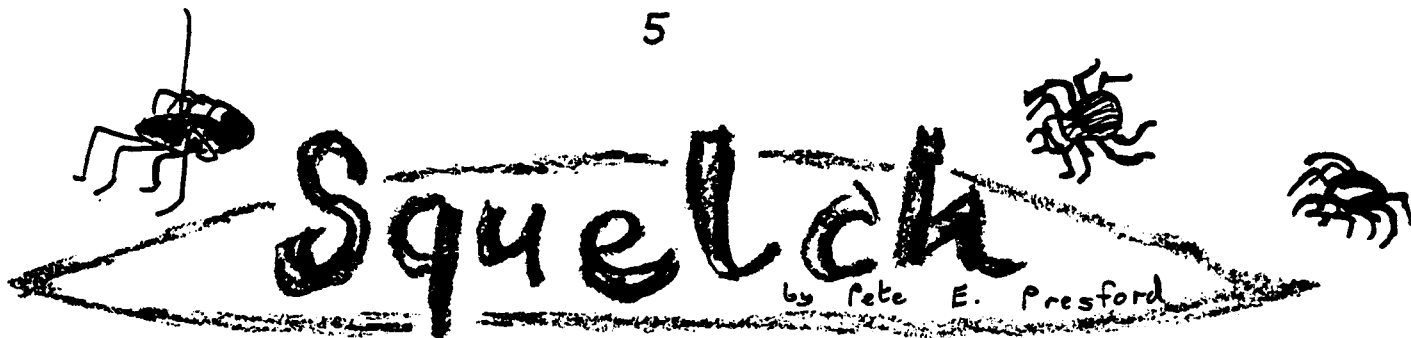
Walker used to play the album charts and introduced one to such outré bands as Love and The Byrds, but the magic of the hour faded when Paul Burnett took over. The only person with built-in infallible credibility is John Peel (unless you count his producer and some time broadcaster, John Walters, who probably has even more credibility, if measured in terms of the volume of obscure music per square minute of broadcast). Peel does tend to keep the proportion of famous records low, and some would say the proportion of recognisable music even lower, but that's because he aims to play as much new material as possible, especially music that's unlikely to be heard elsewhere. If this leads to what looks like a deliberate penchant for obscure German and African records, that'll be because they're what he finds the most exciting and adventurous at the time. Peel once made an analogy between his musical philosophy and watching football matches (his other great love), explaining that he wouldn't want to keep seeing reruns of last years cup final, when what's happening out on the pitch NOW is so much more exciting, and he finds the same thing true of music. This forward-looking view is what keeps his programmes alive, and what had him playing punk back in 1976 when everyone else was treating it as tuneless junk. Not that Peel doesn't have his favourites from the past or instantly discards a record when it loses currency, but he obviously has no time for the attitude that's ossified Stairway To Heaven, or whatever, as the all-time, forever rock classic.

It must be even more misguided to expect a DJ to be a kind of folk hero than to pin the same image on rock stars, who at least (some) are genuine artists. A DJ only talks after all and probably doesn't even choose his own records (they all blame particularly painful links on their producers). They are very close to being pure superstar, essence of celebrity, without the distraction of being famous for anything. That's why ultimately they give up pretending to play records to concentrate on being public figures, doing all the things that anyone with one ounce of real vocation for n'importe quoi would find hopelessly time-consuming and tedious. If the entire royal family were to be struck down by plague piecemeal one fine day, then Radio One's troupe of performing DJs could step into the gap effortlessly and no-one would notice, except perhaps the primeminister who'd object to the levity the former Queens speech was subjected to in the hands of Steve Wright.

People who write to DJs are obviously in need of a good fanzine to loc. Not all of them want to hear their name read out on the radio; some want to sound clever in public; some have a hole in their lives that only a certain DJ fills and write as they might to a friend and some see him as the sacred link between themselves and Marc Almond or Boyd George. All of it's potential creative energy going astray, but at least going somewhere, and between the mindless comments there's music, always music, and sometimes the record with the divine spark of inspiration that'll have you smiling, even on a monday morning, and realising that life's still worth living!



The next article is for spider lovers of all ages. I would like to point out that despite being female I am the official spider-disposer in my family and carry out my duties humanely, with minimum loss of life (the odd sibling or two washed down the bath plughole, nothing serious). The menfolk of my family tend to be less effective than me, since they aren't willing to actually touch the poor offending creature, so fumble about with bits of paper and generally lose it to the light fitting or other elevated regions where it can chuckle away at the clumsy attempts below to cast it out into the cold night. Anyway, this is :-



# Squelch

by Pete E. Presford

Even I have had to quake in my boots of late.

We seem to be going through a surfeit of 'nasties' ... no, sit down, it isn't the mother-in-law coming up the garden path again. If we stick to basic creepies with an S.F. theme we aren't doing too bad, and I'm sure we don't want to count the many so called horror movies that breed in every Video Store.

For a race of beings that runs wild at such wee things as mice and money spiders, it just amazes me the droves of men and women that throw their lives away by walking into dark corners alone when they know 'IT' is lurking nearby.

I've been in a house when a 'smarter than yer average human' mouse has sauntered across the Wilton. Ladies who instantly forget their equal opportunities look to their hardened males to deal with the crisis. Which is a shame really ... 'cause if they ain't all crowded in the bathroom you suddenly find they all seem to be members of 'Save World Wildlife'.

An even better 'Brian Rix Farce' is that huge, amiable spider that has lived with his brood down the side of the stone fire-place since it was built. Perhaps he is a little lax one night when he ambles out after a plump little wood-lice. He freezes instantly at the first scream, and hopes to be taken for a piece of Wedgewood. But there is no chance of that, as father is already weighing up the Guardian against the Times as to which is the heavier tome to crush poor Boris.

By this time mother has decided she can wait no longer, and grabs any paper that lies within handy reach. The first swipe takes Pa's pipe-rack away: the second removes his specs and the third knocks over his bottle of Stout. This forces the male of the house to move in with a fierce under-hand swing that promptly splatters Boris all over the 'Apple Pink' wood-chip. This was the wrong thing to do as Mother only wanted to frighten it away, not redecorate the room.

It is this inherent fear of creepie-crawlies that makes me wonder even more at some of the things that travel multi-million light years just to wipe us humans out. And if the next Alien who happened to look a bit like Boris was a real nice thing (just like Boris), would we swat it with a huge Sunday edition of the Times? It really doesn't seem fair that everything we seem to meet from Outer Space wants to eat us, or at least assimilate us. But it is with some slight acumen that I notice they only come in ones. With our track record the odds must be against anything sneaking down to Terra at all.

A simple scene could be set in a sleepy hamlet in darkest Cymru/ or brightest Australia. It's the sheep yer know.

Friendly alien lands amidst quiet countryside, and looks on in wonder as thousands of white fluffy creatures bounce about going "baaaa baaaa". It spies in the distance the twinkle of light; towards which it heads with great optimism. It gently rattles a claw at the door, then squats down in a position that shows no harm and greetings from one far away.

Sheep shearer opens door and proceeds to study his visitor with some disquiet. A chance look over an armoured shoulder changes all this in a flash to "Bloooddy hell! Look what it's done to me sheep".

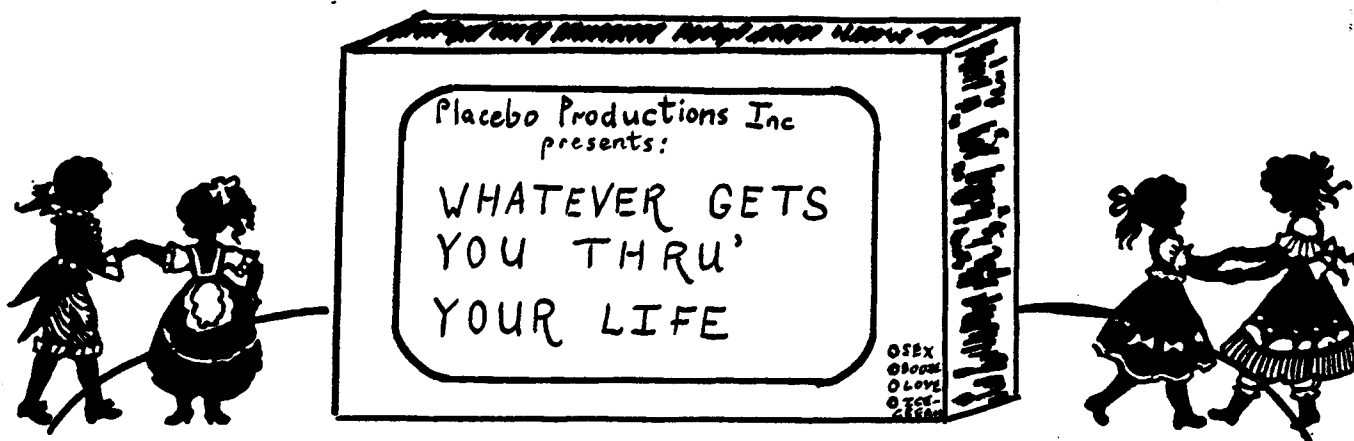
A quick thunder of footsteps heralds the departure of Farmer, and before the alien can move he's back emptying both barrels of his 12-bore straight up a quivering proboscis. In Its haste to move away from the scene of such further treatment the Farmer becomes a human Boris. And so the sad story starts to roll onwards once again.

Do we portray all these creatures as baddies merely because we can't come to the simple conclusion that man himself is a complete nutter? Is it beyond our comprehension to realise that something that is ugly need not be nasty?

I shudder at the thought of man travelling to the stars. And maybe, someday, landing on Alpha 6 where thousands of things like Boris go about their daily work.

Yes! I wonder whose proverbial wood-chip we'll get splattered on?





How do you confess to being a soap opera addict? Not, I add hastily, that I am. I gave it all up for fandom, oh many, many years ago, and even in the old days, well I might have watched the odd episode or two of Triangle or The Angels, but at least they were on BBC and not American. (My mother never let me watch American programmes because she didn't like the accent, so I never learned how to watch films and have an optimal attention span of fifty five minutes!)

Blakes 7 was of course soap opera, more so than Star Trek, which was merely a series of interchangeable films with no character development, or Dr Who where adventures lasted several episodes but always restored the status quo at the end. Blakes 7 had a sense of chronology; those of us who watched, watched to see what happened next (unless we were swooning over Avon's macho image), like who'd be stupid enough to fall into Servalan's latest trap, how long the Federation could conceivably hold out and who'd be the first to break down and kill off everyone else.

But let's get away from all this science fiction, which is only clouding the issue and find a real soap opera, viz Britain's finest: Crossroads. This is mostly surmise as I was never allowed to watch Crossroads either, so if it sounds as if I'm talking about the Archers, don't be surprised, I probably am! So, surmising, I'd say this type of soap opera is in a category of its own. It aspires, if it can be said to aspire at all, to represent a parallel world to our own, or more accurately a substitute world. Not a better one in any moral or social sense, or even a different one, as care is taken to keep the two in line (the Archers laboriously includes last minute topical allusions and Christmas is scrupulously celebrated each year), merely one where the problems are other peoples' and everyone can join in vicariously without leaving the living room. The advantages other the real thing (life, you know) are that there is always something happening and that you (the audience) tend to know more than them (the protagonists). Plotting in these series is one endless cliché for the good reason that the climaxes it works up to are the stock major happenings of births, marriages and deaths, while the intervening episodes aim at everyday minor<sup>events</sup> of the order of lost jobs, husbands and innocence.

In the American model, like Dallas or Dynasty, everyday life is jazzed up a bit to make the drama commensurately larger than life (at least I assume life's not like that over there!). Kidnappings, blackmail, seduction and sheer bitchiness (not just in the female characters either) are the order of the day. The more unlikely the actions and motivations the better, it seems, perhaps to prove the adage that the rich really are different. The programmes are power fantasies—a nightmare glimpse of what people with too much money can get away with—and wish-fulfillment, showing what money can do for your looks and wardrobe.

Dallas still pretends to be of our time and space, but is in fact nearer costume drama in its relationship, or lack thereof, to mundane day to day life. Here, I'm afraid, we come to my chief vice: the historical series. Lavish productions like Poldark, the Pallisers, Upstairs Downstairs, even the Cleopatras, hold me rivetted to my TV set, swallowing any kind of high drama they care to lay out in front of me, regardless of period inaccuracies. Here you find not the commonplace, but the personal intertwined in and magnified by The Great Event; or the long, convoluted

family saga with only the BBC stage funeral to mark the passage from one generation to the next. The characters live and learn (or more often die and fail to learn) in magnificent houses, unreal costumes and eccentric atmospheres. Occasionally they walk about between cardboard trees as one strange series about the Plantagenets, but I'm always fascinated. Then there's the war dramas: The Secret Army, Colditz, Wings; full of men and women living on the edge of their nerves risking death every day, losing their humanity or finding it, with brief moments of celebration and release counterpointing the long succession of tragedies and defeats (and then there's all those fanciable young actors playing upper-class heroes....)

Had video recorders been invented in my young days they would have spared me untold agonies, for if soap operas be a modern evil, the root of this evil is surely their addictiveness, which is capable of setting whole families at each other's throats and mortally injuring the young and impressionable when they are told that the repeats of their favourite programme don't take precedence over That's Life or Blankety Blank. Soap operas are more addictive than good books, which often offer a superior and more subtle story, because they are doled out a little at a time, so that you can't bolt it down all at once, then forget the enticing world you lived in for a day or two, but get insidiously drawn further and further into the make-believe reality as the weeks go by until the imagination is trapped and you don't want to leave. Another factor is that in most cases the characters live beyond their own series. Written characters are too much the property of their creator to be anything but delimited by the books in which they appear, but television characters are an amalgam of the scriptwriters' words, the director's vision and the actors who play them. In certain cases they create themselves as they go along (Sue-Ellen's character apparently was born of one passing expression of hatred for J.R., ad-libbed by the actress) and it is this sense of untapped potential which keeps one watching and involved. It also accounts for the temptation to continue the series in the imagination, or if the series happens to be Star Trek or Blakes 7, on paper. The main crime imputed to television is the passivity it foster in its acolytes. Yet occasionally it stirs the victim to creativity. A secondary kind of creativity admittedly when the world concerned has already been invented; a worthless creativity even, but nonetheless a source of pleasure to those concerned. More people have the desire to express themselves than actually have the ability to do so professionally. A television universe can satisfy this desire and even provide a sympathetic audience, so that the vision is shared in shorthand, without the hard work and responsibilities of professional authorship.

It is probably true that women are more prone to immerse themselves in soap opera worlds than men. Part of the cause is lack of outlets to the real world, especially in the case of the woman who doesn't go out to work. But even those who do are less likely to be totally involved in a career than men, so where men can live out some of their fantasies in real life, the woman will go home and take her sustenance from the boardroom struggles of The Brothers. Both are common ways of occupying life, or if you like, evading it; in the former satisfaction is likely to be more real and failure more disastrous (whoever got ulcers from watching the box? Ah, if only medical science knew...). But is the difference so great, and is the desire to live in another world a harmless pleasure, or a sign that our society has so little to offer so many people that only fiction makes the world palatable? My theory is that real life is at best uninspiring, and needs a dose of fantasy to lubricate it, to make you get up on Monday morning and leap over the gaps between one action and the next - be that fantasy a very mundane television programme, a party on Friday week, a convention next Easter or a person you think you love. The grace of all graces though, I suspect, is to walk independently through life without having to grasp these handles to pull one forward, but in the meantime there's always the repeats of Grange Hill to keep me going...

ss

Hello! This is Gloria speaking! I live at the bottom of pages in fanzines and create havoc by stretching when editors need a little extra room to fit in that last sentence. Let's see, is there time to contract, to land Christina with a nasty white space; maybe she'll try to draw some more spiders (hee hee) .... whoops too late!;



Now for some musings from Bruce Saville, who was allowed to watch American TV programmes in his youth and consequently has watched more films than I saw episodes of Colditz. Doubtless, exposure to such cynicism and corruption at an early age, has made him the perfect person to give

# A Lesson In Machiavellism

Bruce Saville



To a person like me who devours any tiny morsel concerning the American political scene, last year's BBC2 film season on 'darker side of American politics', was a major repast, and before I'd managed to digest it all, they served up for afters the marvellous TV series 'Washington: Behind Closed Doors'. All this started me thinking on this obsession of America with Machiavellian tactics.

Each film in the season showed one part of the American political scene: the military and business, with their designs on influencing the Presidency; the grass roots of American politics, looking at various senators; the influence that a government department has on the country; and the impact and power wielded by the Presidency. The season finished off with 'The Private Files of Edgar Hoover', which showed how the FBI uses politics for its non-political role (but as they say in Behind Closed Doors: "Everyone in Washington has to be political"), with the files being used to blackmail everyone who Hoover feels is a threat to the US. In all the films, *corruption* crawls through the corridors, demonstrating the adage power corrupts. One might say that this season was just spectacular examples spotlighted for our benefit, but if you look you see similar assumptions scattered through several genres. Many thrillers and adventure stories have backgrounds featuring corrupt government officials and abuses by various systems of the Establishment. To my mind, the theme is strongest in the Western. Almost any Western you see involves corruption in one form or another. Many show the town run by a ranch boss, corrupt saloon owner, sherriff, gun slinger etc, then the hero rides in and saves the day by replacing the 'baddie' with what must be good. In 'The Man Who Shot Liberty Vallance' James Stewart goes into political office riding on the belief that he rid the town of the domineering gunslinger. One form of corruption replaced by another that is more distant but eventually more destructive. Of course the point is the corruption comes about by having to use various Machiavellian methods to get things done, and officials don't start out that way. In high office, the assumption is that the people involved are honest and find themselves having to use corrupt and criminal acts to defend their ideals and what they want for the country; the only furthering of their own means is in covering up the act so that they don't face any criminal proceedings. In short, they try not ot be found out. Thus we can ask if the shock of the American public at Watergate was because the officials used corrupt methods, or because they were found out. Evidence of the latter could be that signs in Washington now show Watergate (the site) as a tourist attraction.

If all this Machiavellian behaviour is part of the human character why is it not reflected more often in S.F.? Its absence may be partly due to the Western's reliance on it, or, in forming societies, authors forget this activity which is very much in the background of ours. The most frequent expression of Machiavellism in S.F. is groups revolting against regimes (governmental, industrial etc) or various individuals using these techniques against a human race totally unaware of their existence. There are quite a few stories like this, but if you look at the background closely enough you see that almost everyone is using various methods to get ahead, but only the 'hero' shows his methods. Thus in these stories all seems well but the hero's activities show up the shadows of the system. An example is Keith Laumer's Retief using various methods to discover what activities a government is engaged in. His findings usually show the ALIENS up to some nefarious scheme. His use of Machiavellism reveals its existence in others. It also shows that Machiavellism isn't the sole province of humans, as do the Jason DinAlt and

and Jim DiGriz stories of Harry Harrison. However one does sense that these indiscretions of others, in a way, justify the hero's activities. Possibly a little "If you play dirty, then so will I."

But excluding stories dealing with governments etc, does the shadowy sense of corruption appear in the background? I think not. I'm not talking about stories that involve societies that are dictatorial or moribund as the corruption is a major feature of the story. No, I refer to stories involving societies modelled on a free democratic basis. It seems that in our society you see evidence of corruption all around but possibly it's so well engrained into this reality that only an author who can really characterise a society well could possibly bring it out in his stories. It probably helps if you are somewhat sceptical about what goes on in our world.

Perhaps my natural scepticism has been heightened by the film and TV series and I believe I see Machiavellism being practised everywhere, or is it a genuine lack I've detected? After all Machiavelli was only reporting what he saw as part of the human character and surely should appear in the descendants of humans in other systems. While you ponder that consider, if Machiavellism is present almost everywhere, then what Machiavellian techniques have I utilised against you the reader?

-----

Well, I shan't reveal the subtle way Bruce manipulated me into printing his article (but can I have the photos back now?). I suppose the lack of effectively drawn political scenarios is related to S.F.'s notorious lack of effective characterisation - when you've some super new technology to play around with, all the double-dealing governmental idiots become outclassed and irrelevant. Moreover, I remember that the average scientific type at school or university would adopt an attitude of superiority to politics, justifying their uninterest by maintaining that the world should be run by a logically selected group of the best brains available. I suspect a similar attitude to be prevalent among writers of 'hard' S.F., particularly back in the '50s.

Trundle, whirr, another thought flitting through my head as I typed Bruce's piece was how I'd always thought the background in Westerns did much the same as in some S.F., i.e. just another good excuse for an adventure yarn, and didn't realise the strength of the corruption/revenge motif. But, I guess that's what comes of holding theories on matters I know nothing about!

\*\*\*\*\*

PANGALCTIC GARGLE BLASTER TIME!

Someone I knew at university once offered to concoct a version of the above-mentioned drink for the person who managed to explain Eraserhead to him, so when my American penfriend, Ben Gleisser, mentioned his interest in the film, I pressed him for an explanation:

"I think Eraserhead is a kind of black humour-type joke on sex and death," he wrote. "The little worm things are sperms - if you remember one of the opening shots, the worm drops in the hole - the sewer - then later we learn Henry's got a baby. The decrepit man by the machine, the subconscious in us all, is pulling the switches of our brains so we do things by rote - such as sex. Henry's dreariness is kept alive by fantasising about the woman in the radiator, a fantasy he soon becomes by his own mental death - the kid making erasers from his head (implying, is that all our brains are worth?)

And there's the subliminal messages - after seeing the movie half a dozen times or so I've caught them - words that flash for a frame or two: STOP and OBEY and QUIET and LISTEN and I'm sure there's others I haven't caught.



But what I love most is the camera-work, the expressionistic lighting and use of shadows. Almost a throwback to the German silent films, my favourite cinematic genre. Over here it's become trendy to go back to black and white movies. Woodie Allen is the biggest. But David Lynch does it best. Tho' Martin Scorsese did a pretty good job with Raging Bull."

Well, Mike, I hope that's put you out of your misery, and there should be a pangalactic gargle blaster winging its way across the ocean to Ben any day now!

AUNTY FLEUR - FREE ADVICE

Aunty Fleur, although she comes from Finland has successfully advised many UK people. "Human heart knows no geographical limits," she explains, "No human problem is alien to me." Aunty Fleur wishes to extend her services to fandom, so I'm printing some samples of the sterling work she has done within my company, in the hope of attracting a new clientele.

Dear Aunty Fleur,

I've recently started work at Predicasts as an abstractor/indexer and like the job immensely, except for one problem: I'm allergic to Tipp-Ex! I can usually get away with crossing out figures and words when I make a mistake, but when I write out tables, the forms are such a mess that the typists are beginning to complain, and the level of transcription errors in my indexes is getting-phenomenal. Also the more I try to re-write things to get them right, the more mistakes I seem to make, so my productivity is just going down and down. Please tell me what I can do, as I'm getting desperate and would like to keep my job.

Yours faithfully,

A Worried Abstractor •

Auntie Fleur replies:

Dear Worried Abstractor,

I don't think your allergy is the real problem, which is on a deeper level. Try yoga, a vegetable diet and a change of climate. Try saying 'what the hell' ten times before going to sleep and indexes will flow from your pen without any need for Tipp-Ex sniffing or other artificial aids.

Best Wishes,

Aunty Fleur

Dear Aunty Fleur,

My life is an awful mess. I've been two-timing my fiance for the past three months with a man I met at the local literary society. I don't love this man, but want to keep seeing him as he's the only person who's ever taken my poetry seriously, and he has numerous contacts in the publishing world, which could be useful to me. Our relationship isn't quite just platonic, and he doesn't know I'm engaged. I didn't intend to mislead him, it just happened that way, and now I think he'd be annoyed if I told him the truth, and would give me no more help and encouragement (which I desperately need!). In the meantime, I keep having to lie to my fiance, who is beginning to get suspicious about the frequency of my alleged literary club outings (and I'm running out of plays I can convincingly pretend to have seen!). I'm so worried, I can't even write poetry any more.

Yours sincerely,

Aspiring Poet and Wife

P.S. Could I please have advice soon, because my literary friend wants me to go to a writer's workshop on the same weekend as I'm meant to be getting married!

Dear Aspiring Poet & Wife,

Relax. These days you can have your cake and eat it. Marry your fiance and keep on two-timing your husband. The tensions inherent in such a situation may give an extra boost to your creative energies. There is no reason why you should not achieve both of your aspirations. After all, lots of women manage to combine strings of lovers, husbands, children and exciting careers with household chores.

Good Luck!

Aunty Fleur

Send your problems to Aunty Fleur, c/o this fanzine. No burden too trivial!

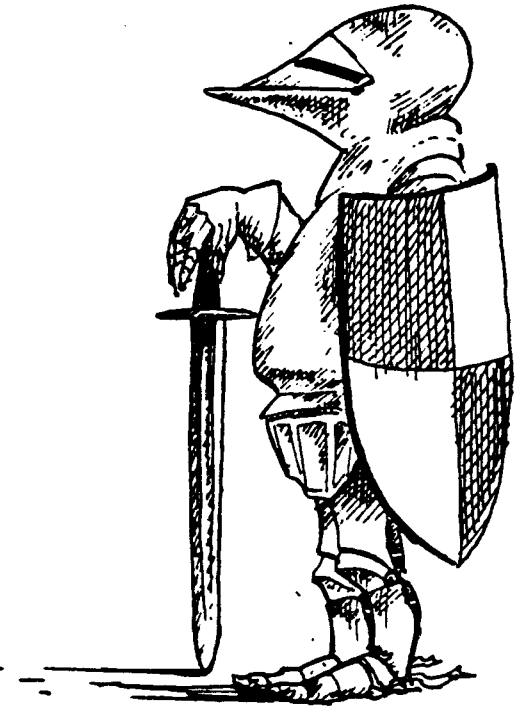
{Bring back Marvin! - G.}

CCCCCCCC

QUEST

—

- chivalry made simple



Chivalry was invented one wet February Sunday after a particularly dull winter, when the successive inventions of the printing press, acrylic fibres and spectral chromatography had failed to arouse any interest. It was invented naturally enough by a woman, possibly an ancestress of Eleanor of Aquitaine or maybe even Eleanor herself (though not, as erroneously claimed in *Dragonburst 1*, by William of Aquitaine her great-grandfather). The lady in question looked around the crowded, odoriferous castle where she'd spent all winter fending off advances from bored knights (or fending off boring nights with winter advances according to mood) and decided she'd be well rid of the whole drunken, brawling mob of them. So she composed the rules for Quest, a game for all the male sex (except for peasants and burghers who never cluttered up the castle anyway), requiring only horse, armour, sword and a pair of dice to play. The rules were simple: the women in the castle took it in turns to hide, while the rest made up an elaborate story of how the missing damsel had been kidnapped by a wizard/ogre/dragon/black knight or giant rice pudding and urged as many men as possible to journey to the end of the world, or at the very least Italy, to find her.

Extensive game testing revealed a flaw in the rules that necessitated the hasty invention of Courtly Love, an ill-thought out system whereby the female could opt out of marriage (or rape) with the first knight to find her, and indeed, send him off on yet more ludicrous quests while she perfected her master-plan for seducing the chaplain. The drawback of the system was that all the wrong men tended to be taken in by the myth of aloof chastity it propounded. The gaunt blonde haired knight, carefully lined up for the rescue scene and ultimate seduction, would write reams of sensitive poetry about the wonders of a woman's eyes, but considered it sacrilege to so much as touch the hem of her skirt. Meanwhile all the blustering boors the women had been trying to rid themselves of in the first place never grasped the finer points of courtly love and had to be fended off much as before. Being a perpetual paragon became so wearisome in the long term that more and more women sneaked off to convents when their husbands backs were turned to lead the much less rigorous life of a nun.

The game of Quest became so popular that even the Pope wanted to play, so he brought out his own version called Crusades, which dispensed with the chancy and theologically unsound feminine element and the fanciful and frankly unchristian mythological element and replaced them with a good old tried and tested Holy War. Mainly, it must be said, to divert the flow of questing knights from Italy to a different end of the world (which disappointingly had not materialised in 1000 AD, probably because the comic publishing houses of the day were a little worried about what to run as a sequel). The men of Christendom duly trooped off towards

Jerusalem, conquering Greece en route because they had forgotten that the Greeks were meant to be allies, not to mention fellow members of the Common Market (though it is thought that disagreements over textile quotas may have been a major factor in the conflict).

While the men were away, the women orchestrated a trial run of the Renaissance (no lets not be sexist about this - while the more pugnacious and loutish elements of the male sex were away the women and a few troubadors orchesrated a trial run of the Renaissance). This event, which was to be known as the twelfth century Renaissance by the more imaginative historians, could be said to be the direct cause of Chretien de Troyes, familiarly nicknamed the Cretin of Troy by generations of equally imaginative school children. Chretien was one of the major promoters of chivalry. He had an eye for the commercial potential of Romance. The armour of his contemporaries might be rusty and their manners frankly gross, but with startling prescience he extrapolated the inevitability of Women's Own, Teenage Loving and My Man, Isn't He Wonderful and set about polishing up the armour of his fellow knights, embellishing it with gold leaf and endowing them with a strict, hair-raising and unhistorical sense of 'courtoisie'. Man (and woman) was becoming sophisticated again. A taste for crude sword & sorcery, Conan the Barbarian type fare, was giving way to a taste for fantasy. Lacking Lord of The Rings, writers had to make do with Arthurian settings and the accolade 'equal to that-unknown-Welsh-poet-who-invented-the-adultery-between-Lancelot-and-Guinevere at his best'. Because all the law-makers and powerful men were away in the Middle East, losing armies and destroying old civilisations, nobody informed the poets they were supposed to be original, so the same material was worked and reworked without any symptoms of guilt, and with a perverse sense of achievement. The literature of chivalry migrated unerringly to the court of King Arthur where it could exist in a perfection and subtlety that even then, at

its supposed height, was impossible in the real world. So, on the whole, everyone was quite glad when all the thoughtless, quarrelsome, down-to-earth, unsophisticated fighters lurched back to their castles, clutching the golden noses of Greek statues and other trophies of innocent iconoclasm, and life could go back to normal.

Pockets of chivalry continued to flourish, particularly in court circles, despite a certain amount of feminine disillusion over their place in this cult they had so thoughtlessly spawned and the increasing evidence of the unchivalrous ways of the world. Finally the plague came and disposed of all such idealism, as a minor side effect of killing off 33% of the population of Europe. The castles weren't crowded anymore, so no-one needed chivalry. The next dull winter they decided to invent central heating.



I always thought the job of record company reviewer a pretty cushy number, you know, just sitting around listening to music all day (but then I was one of those who for many years of my childhood thought publisher's reader was the only job I might consider when I grew up, since to be paid for reading all day sounded like bliss. Fortunately I never grew up... ). Maybe a bit of the hero worship I reserved for DJs and NME writers spilled over onto those in the 'biz', albeit I envisaged them as rich, ageing hippies, so a tad lacking in that over-valued quality, street-credibility. (I still remember the race not to sign up Siouxsie and the Banshees.) Never once did I suspect they were ordinary mortals, facing broken marriages, warped records and cracked bottles, but illusions shattered, here's PETER - FRED with

## HARDLY THE KIND OF STUFF . . . a review?) (that sells millions -

"...regretfully. However I look forward to hearing your next - underlined - single for which I hope to be able to offer a contract. Yours sincerely etc. Just send the standard rejections to the others, Jill, and bring me today's batch of hopefuls."

Hopefuls? Christ! Hopeless, absolutely hopeless the lot of them, I wouldn't pay them in buttons not that I get much...

"Thanks Jill, that's all for now."

So what have we got here? Another cassette, oh well, better give it listen I suppose. Who are they? 'The Griffin Blue Band' - sounds like margarine - 'Hardly the Kind of Stuff that Sells Millions' - probably. Pretty stupid title though, that'll have to go for a start. Got Dolby has it, bet they haven't paid for the trademark, and off we go, settle down with a nice glass of ... no! no! got to break this habit. Ah! Interesting start bum bum bum bum piti-tang bum bum... What the hell's this? Some sci-fi rubbish where's the case gone? Ah! 'Ice Warriors'. Oh yes, it's from that kid's programme I used to watch with Tony, Dr., Dr, who was it, nice idea, no we'd never get the copyright off the Beeb. Shame though, it's a snappy beat and the keyboards aren't bad either, quite a nice number in fact.. What's this came with it? A booklet. ((A fanzine? - Ed)) Well, it is hard putting sleeve notes on a cassette. This track's pretty dynamic too - Luxury Length - hey it's about getting laid. God, I wish I could! That new typist's not bad at all - nice legs - I wonder what she's doing tonight, must find out her name, yes, umm; she'll never replace Susan though. Sod it! Missed some, can't have been very good though. This must be 'Gothic Horror', yes very sinister, but hasn't Pete Hammill done it all already? Booklet looks pretty silly - Story of the Griffin Blue Band - 'one of the earliest influences on their music was the chorus of Canada geese which lived on the lake behind the flat' ... sillier yet... at least they've got a sense of humour, most of these hopefuls take themselves far too seriously by half. What did he say? 'maybe you've peace of mind'. Oh shit I wish I had, this is good, really like the blend of sounds, oh it's finished. What's next? It's all in French reminds me of that band, what was it, Plastique Bertrand, oh I see, they're taking the piss out of it, and a good thing too. But it wouldn't sell. 'Why'. Why not? Interesting rythmn. 'Throbbing head is all that tells me I'm alive' that's familiar. Oh no, a protest song! Good keyboards though. Oh, he used to be 'content with his' did he? So did I mate, so did I! No, don't tell me about nuclear war, I don't want to know, I'll just listen to the sax, it's very good. Oh no, they've put some jolly carnival type music in the middle just to make it worse, reminds me of that awful funfair I used to take Tony to, those were the days. 'Why?' Yes, why did it have to end. Oh that's the end of the side, better turn it over I suppose, right, where's the Scotch, oh good it's nearly full.

Hey! What the hell! They can play better than this, oh must be taking the piss again. Better put the top back on. Ah, that's smooth! Must get another bottle. Right, what else is in this book? Technical information... oh, I like that: 'noise reduction: by shutting the door'. And biographies ... don't believe a word... funny though. And the music's getting better, more lyrics. Ah, glass is empty, perhaps I'll have another to get me in the mood, mind you I don't fancy the mood of this track at all, it's so what's the word? Relentless! That's it! Implausible! Frightening even... World War III ... oh, so we're all going to

die', are we? Yes, I suppose we are, oh shit I don't want to die, let up a bit will you just change the beat or something please? I'll just hide under the desk, OK? Where's the bottle? Agh! What's that noise getting louder and louder, oh God it's the bomb... no, it's only the tape. Now there's nothing left, just the sea and the seagulls, I mean the synth, where are all the people, where's Susan, she'll be blown up I expect and Tony, where did we go wrong? Where's my glass? This is better, something's starting up again, that's a relief. This is quite restful, maybe I can face the next track, what is it; 'Beetle' yes, here it goes. Nice percussion in fact, the drumming's been pretty good all round, I mean half these hopefuls couldn't drum their way out of a paper bag! 'It's tough being a beetle; beetle' - but they really made it! Why can't I find someone like them?. I like the drawings with this they remind me of things Tony brought home from school. Ah, stop it pay attention!

Let's see, 'Mass Entity', pom, pom, pom 'now is the time to...' have another drink! Right! Ha! Ha! he can't remember, that's funny, hey the sax is great, really liquid, like this scotch, oh that was short, so we must be on the last track, which is, um, eh! 'Werewolf' whee! Really fast! Ba-dump-dump-dump 'I used to be a werewolf, but I'm alright now-ow-ow-ow!!!' Ha! ha! ha! Crazy!

"What? Yes, Jill, I'm fine thank-you, I was just singing along OK? Fine!"

Great back to this; it's really tight! It'll sell a million, this is it I've made it yeah! Go it group! Ba-da-dump-da damn! Knocked the bottle over!

The Griffin Blue Band's cassette Hardly The Kind Of Stuff That Sells Millions is available for £2.50 (plus 35p post and packing) from A.R. Bradford, Welk Tapes, 76, Holly Lane, Erdington, Birmingham, B24 9JR.

#### CRAWLING TO THE LETTER COLUMN!

Who will introduce my letter column this time (plaintive squeak)? Laura's too busy writing APA contributions and attending die-ins, Rowena's given up discos to finance a second four-poster bed, three dogs and five cats, and Therese has eaten the hamster and emigrated to Bolivia to revive the bicycle industry. I'm left alone with a modest pile of not terribly up-to-date locs (though if I siphoned off a few from TNH 3 would Lilian notice?), a few spiders and a kitschy type entity, known as Gloria, that never talks to me anyway!

I would describe the response to Music From A Fire as pleasant, not overwhelming, but nice in a way I've grown not to expect. It brought me into contact with the newly revived Vinç Clarke, his sidekick Terry Hill (sorry!) and the nascent Kent Trufandom, which by an accident of geography I seemed entitled to join. It convinced me that Simon Ounsley's opinions really are worth listening to and taught me to print rather more than 60 copies of a fanzine (that's all there was of Music - TNH 2 was brought out partially to cover contractual obligations as they say, since the hoped for reprint didn't materialise). Now, of course, Music's just another fanzine lost in the mists of time, all but forgotten, even by me, in the rush forward to bigger and better things. I sometimes wonder what it's all for... (If I carry on like this, I'll end up agreeing with Rob Hansen or trying to anthropologise my own work, unethical and narcissist as that may sound; but no, it costs me enough to publish the new stuff!)

#### INTO A BRAND NEW PARAGRAPH

But if it is for anything, then surely that thing must be receiving and publishing letters. So for a moment lets cast our mind back to the long forgotten zine that most of didn't get or promptly lost and see that all that's left of it can be summarised in the key words: Albania, 12th Century and Golden Wonder (or do they just make peanuts?). The rest is probably lost somewhere in the letters of HARRY AND-RUSCHAK, COLIN FINE, BRUCE SAVILLE and TERRY HILL whom I don't quote from (at least not under their own name).

And so up to my ankles in water, weighed down by a ton or more of less or more worthy, worthwhile fanzines it's my proud duty to unveil the letter column...

TA RA!!

SOUNDS FROM AFAR MUSIC ON A WALL OUTBURSTS II DRACOLGY  
 PIGS ON THE RAMPAGE KISSING THE TORTOISE WRITTEN ON THE DINING ROOM  
 WALLPAPER IN BELGIUM LETTERS IN  
 PENCIL 'N PAPER JUS' THE SORG'N KIND  
 RELENTLESS YOU PHONE ME BEYOND A  
 DREG THE FALLING MIND THE  
 STANDING JOKE FIRING SQUAD SWINE  
 BEFORE PEARLS PROVERBIAL BLACKBIRD'S  
 EGG UNION FANDOM MAGIC  
 WITHOUT MURDER TO THE SOUND OF SPLINTERED GLASS I WILL NOT GO

# Dear Chris

\*\*\*\*\*P I G\*\*CORNER\*\*\*\*\*S T A R\*\*L E T T E R\*\*\*\*\*

To the Miss Lake, who is, editrice, of the burning music:-  
 Dear Missy,

We of SSPQK which is science fiction and pig society of  
 Shqipëria (Albania) is much liking of the fire music fanzine.  
 But we are much troubled, too, of seeing contribution from  
 rvisionist so-called ANSFA and likspittle Hovha.

ANSFA was last year made, by likspittle Hovha what was ex-  
 pelled from SSPQK because of he was write Albanian transla-  
 tion of scurilus English book the Farm of the Animals what  
 is disrespectful to pigs. Therefore so he is falsely claim  
 how he have bona fide SF and pig society. Do not send him  
 your quids. Send instead quids and pig foods to SSPQK who  
 must support starving writers.

We of SSPQK like best of the burning music the pigs, also  
 the inside, but we cannot find which is the peice, from the  
 inside, which the pigs are in it.

If you are agreeable we will send you perhaps a peice  
 about SF and pigs ((yes please - CJL)) who was written by  
 us. Is that good?

Thank you  
 Fajtor Brumbull

RECORD TOKEN WINNER

## THE GREAT CRISP BAG DEBATE CONTINUES!

I'm surprised to see the piece on Twelfth Century  
 Fandom without mention of the most famous of them all,  
 Robin Hood, BNF (Big Name Forester), tho' of course  
 he wasn't into s-f; his Merry Men were all enthusiasts  
 of...wait for it...THE ARCHERS! Ugh.

I think you do yourself a disservice by explaining  
 that the reason you don't throw away paper, apple  
 cores etc is parental training; thinking people re-  
 alise you don't foul the environment, either with  
 crisp-bags, graffiti, or noise. Just with fanzines.  
 I do think that this piece of yours is a lovely me-  
 ander which ultimately adds up to a big fat zilch,  
 as Bertrand Russell would say. Novelists are con-  
 cerned with the voluntary actions of their charac-  
 ters; they haven't time or space for detailing the  
 thousand-and-one minutiae of everyday existence.  
 ((the realists of 19th century France tried - CJL))  
 I can't recall Dostoevsky worrying about Fyodor  
 Karamazov's unfortunate habit of stuffing (empty)  
 crisp bags into his left earhole, or that equally  
 powerful novelist P.G. Wodehouse getting Lord Bas-  
 worth to wipe his feet after he'd been to visit the  
 sty. If you haven't read it, try Pohl's Age of the  
 Pussyfoot for a nice clash of cultural viewpoints.

Ving Clarke, 16 Wendover Way, Welling, Kent, DA16 2BN

## THUNDERBIRDS!

Of all Anderson's TV series, Thunderbirds was the  
 one that most gripped my imagination. I never  
 thought of John running a blackmail business, but  
 then I scarcely noticed the people. It was the  
 machines I enjoyed, particularly the bright-col-  
 oured red TB3 and yellow TB4, which generally got  
 left out of missions, while the two dull craft,  
 TB's 1 and 2 ((slander!! - CJL)), hogged the  
 glory. (As for TB5, I could never work out why  
 it was a Thunderbird and, say, the Mole wasn't).  
 In fact, I felt so strongly about this that I  
 once wrote and illustrated a story (long since  
 lost, alas!) in which, when Virgil left behind  
 a vital piece of equipment for a rescue, Alan  
 in Thunderbird 3 had to deliver it by means of  
 a bombing run from the stratosphere! Gordon in  
 Thunderbird 4 was involved too as I recall.

Peter Wareham, 12 Bracken Rd., Cox Green,  
 Maidenhead, Berkshire. SL6 3EP



JOYCE ANTI

Dear Khrystina,  
What is about awl this, that reeding Jacobus Joyce ist affectating mine writting styll, as be mentioned in thine esteemed publication, A voice from a fire (nor music from a far belloused wishe wishe to thuartpatrick), also sprach Zarathustra, known as Dragon Barat too. Ich habeen care-faulty wreiding avery ting I right ant its eems alb right tome. Yore comment is Purely Klotous Derogation.

I can't sustain that writing style for long. No wonder it took him seventeen years to write the Wake. Back to normal now. Anyway I thought I'd better produce another of my tediously pretentious locs. There's a method to writing these locs. (It matters not if you're wearing socks) ((Yes it does if they're in the colours Paul favours:)) Just pick a pen, read up on Zen, and put all your thoughts in a box. I think this issue was an improvement. Every article was nearly interesting. Sorry, I mean nearly every article was interesting.

"est une expression qui, quand elle est précédé de sa traduction, mise entre guillemets, dans la langue provenant de l'autre côté de la Manche, crée une fausseté" is an expression which, when it is preceded by its translation, placed in quotation marks, into the language originating on the other side of the Channel, yields a falsehood.

I have found corroboratory evidence for your article on twelfth century fandom. In Bueller's Proenca, I discovered an extract from a conrep by Bertrand de Born, in which he considers the problems of weapon control at cons: ...Veiran de mon bran com talha, ...They'll find out how this sword cuts

Que sus del chap li farai bard for I'll cover their heads with mud and mix their mail with brains.  
De cervel mesclat ab malha.

This Rocket Terminates at Charing Cross was right so far as it goes, but you miss one obvious train of thought: the two girls thought your hanging on to your rubbish strange enough to question. Yet they have been brought up in approximately the same society. No two people will have exactly the same thought processes. These differences show up in fiction as characterisation, which, despite its reputation for stereotyping, is found in SF. Perhaps by examining literature from various cultures and ages one can distinguish what attitudes tend to be constant in human societies. Then again, maybe all a piece of writing can tell is something about the thought processes of the person who wrote it. Even this letter. Even this very sentence fragment!

Well that's it. With our best youlldied greetings to Pep and Mewy and the old folkers below and beyant, wishing them all very merry Incarnations in this land of the livvey and plenty of preposperousness through their coming new yonks, from

jake, jack and little sousoucie  
(the babes that mean too)

remol J.J

remol T. Luap

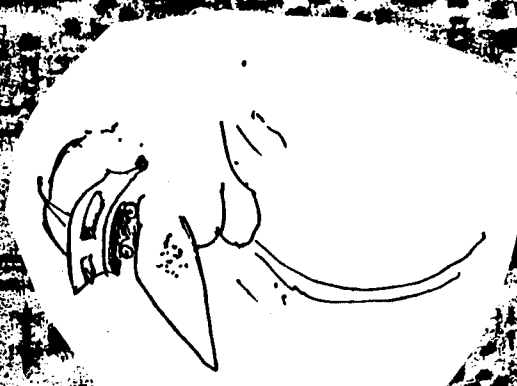
Paul Dörner, 41, Lee Court, Lee High Road, London SE13 5PE

THE WAY IT WAS . . . .

It's hardly surprising that fanzines had such a small circulation back in the 12th Century, since the duplicator hadn't been invented, and all the copies had to be written out by hand. We may moan at hotel managements and security people, but think how it must have disrupted things at conventions when you were liable to find a whole hostile army with a band of inquisitors at their head turning up on the doorstep. The last big con at Montsegur is a good example, though they did manage to smuggle the Doc Weir Award of the time out before it was too late, and it later passed through various hands, eventually turning up at a market stall in Toulouse and being bought for use as an early model of propellor beanie. Unfortunately it didn't provide enough lift and one neofan's career was abruptly terminated.

Darroll Pardoe, 11B Cote Lea Square, Southgate, Runcorn, Cheshire WA7 2SA

((Raffles, my teddy, insisted I print this letter because he's convinced Darroll's bear really wrote it - CJL))



OVERSEAS SUBVERSIVE LETTER OF THE WEEK!

On to the 12th century fandom, a really outstanding piece. Toulouse is a city famous for the 1979 French national con which was held there with an attendance of about a dozen persons. True fact! but of course the then convention organiser does not like to be reminded of it. Since then, at various stages, French fans have taken to liberally label 'convention any dinner party numbering in excess of 8 or 9... The next logical step now is to reprint some of Raimon Matraqueur's stuff, preferably in the original medieval Latin or Langued'Oc, don't you think? ((Definitely, but I'm haven't a little trouble deciphering his writing at present - CJL))

And of course, there's Albania. There'll always be Albania, the only truly Marxist-Leninist country of the world! Let's all stand behind Comrade Enver Hodja (Hoxha?), and never forget the quote of the Great Helmsman: "We have in hand the Marxist-Leninist weapon of criticism and self-criticism. We are able to get rid of the bad working style, and to uphold the correct one." (Would sound more fannish if we dropped 'working', which anyway is a very fannish thing to do). That quote is authentic, don't you doubt it - I recently boug a cheap copy of the Little Red Book, and open it at random (well, almost) to enliven my letters. Fannish Yi King.

Pascal Thomas, 11bis rue Vasco de Gama, 75015 PARIS



I have discovered a truly marvelous proof that this loc is true which, unfortunately, is too small to contain.

# HAVE TITLE WILL TRAVEL

## - An Uncultured Fantasy

I felt like starting this article with a punchy bit of racism (or at least culturism) and stating: 'The Germans have not the least ounce/milligram of poetry in their souls'. But let's not be so categoric, and rather confine myself (me and my ghostwriter) to commenting on the way book titles are translated from English into German. The horrible streak of literalism that turns picturesque sounding signs of the zodiac like Pisces and Aquarius into fishes and water man does much the same for book titles: The Left Hand of Darkness becomes the Winter Planet; The Moon is a Harsh Mistress - Revolt on Luna; and Hello Summer Goodbye - The Summer Goes. The imaginative effort reaches its nadir at Dune, which comes out as the Desert Planet, accompanied by Master of the Desert Planet and God-Kaiser of the Desert Planet.

Another characteristic of German titles is a pendantic desire to spell out the precise subject of the book; so the foreign title Alien has to be qualified with the phrase 'the strange creature from another world' (God knows what they've done to E.T. - the hyped monstrosity from outer-space?). John Norman's first Gor novel becomes Gor - The Counterearth and Riverworld is glossed as the Riverworld of Time. Some titles defy identification, perhaps because of my faulty German or deficient knowledge of S.F.. For example, did Heinlein really write a book called Space Molluscs Conquer the World or Pournelle one called Mars, I Hate You?

But let's not dwell on the faults of the Germans when their delightful neighbours, the French, have still to be dealt with. One would expect poetry or leastways sonorous lyricism - the sort to make monstrosities like Ringworld Engineers sound enticing - but if the truth be told (& don't let Pascal Thomas kid you otherwise) the French do naught but stick an article before the English title and voila la translation. C'est simple, admirable and so trendy, like le jean and le parking.

As for the Albanians. Horror, the things they do to book titles! Of course, very little has been translated yet: just classics like Lord of the Rings, Dune, the Lensman series and The Many Coloured Land (which, in fact, was market tested in Albania). The concept of LOTR changed slightly in translation and it was eventually published as Foreman of the Mines, while the lens of Lensman fame was deemed a revolutionary concept, liable to set the populace demanding such decadent luxuries as spectacles, so was eventually replaced by a wooden eye that allowed the heroes, a hardy line of technically inclined peasants to penetrate all the secrets of the Whitehouse. The series included such unforgettable titles as Red Wood Wielder, Second Stage Woodcutter, Babes In The Wood and Masters of the US.

Oh dear, I must stop before the culturism gets out of hand and I lose you in a deep Amazonian jungle as I futilely attempt to explain the Brazilian translation of Dhalgren or mire up the opera of Ian Watson in an African swamp. Still they do say travel broadens the mind. But broadens the book title!?

### WHEREIN IT ENDS BEFORE IT BEGINS . . .

This my Sorgenkind being the third version of Dragonburst comes under the heading of purely hypothetical according to the Cerebron classification of dragons\* and so nonexists in a different way from its mythical and chimerical predecessors and may well be succeeded by a-, anti and minus dragons or swallowed by the dracological paradox (which states that any fanzine with dragons or pigs on the cover does not exist). Since statistical draconics show that one has to wait a good sixteen quintoquadrillion heptillion years for the spontaneous manifestation of an average dragon do not be surprised if another Dragonburst does not occur in your lifetime or mine. But then again, three was so much against the odds that a fourth cannot be excluded.

Bye Bye

\*cf The Dragons of Probability - Stanislaw Lem