



pain for those occasions to warn us not to lose feet. However, until alcohol it was tough to kill brain cells, so we did not develop pain sensors around them. (Uh, well, you could but it was with a club and that d i d hurt.) If it had worked out differently so that it hurt to kill brain cells and felt good to knock out

THE MT VOID

Page 2

teeth, no doubt a lot of people would be on liquid diets. Non-alcoholic liquid diets.

Now I know what you are saying to yourself. For the vast majority of us there is a big difference between teeth and brain cells. True. One of these differences is that science knows how to replace a tooth. Just how would you go about replacing a brain cell? Unlike diamonds, the loss of a brain cell r e a l l y is forever. Of course, a lot of brain cells never do get used, some of my drinking friends tell me. What better use for them than to have some fun Friday night lining them up on Brain Cell Death Row and dowsing them in alcohol? Now that's r e a l l y using your brain cells! And there's no way to say this one brain cell I am going to use, that one I won't, so it can be sacrificed. They go pretty much at random, like traffic fatalities.

And speaking of traffic, I have always loved those tables that tell you that if you have had n drinks in m hours ago you are legally "driving under the influence of alcohol." Do you mean to say that if last week you killed off a bunch of brain cells--ones that were all ready to help you drive but which died in alcohol in the meantime--do you mean that isn't "under the influence"? And do you think the alcohol in one glass of wine is not an "influence"?

Well, you know how these laws get enacted, don't you? Your lawmakers decide what behaviors they want to discourage and call them crimes. Then the lawmaker sits down and says, "Now what is the crime? Selling 4-year-olds into prostitution? Nah! I'd never do that! That must be a felony. Now driving under the influence of alcohol? well, I do like to have a little pick-me-up before dinner. And a glass of wine with dinner. And just once in a while a dessert liqueur. Hey, they might catch m e on this one. It must be a misdemeanor." You think you're gonna get laws against drunk driving? You're going to get wrist-slaps until drunk drivers start

aiming for legislators.

So you get people trying to do something about the problem themselves. You get MADD. That's Mothers Against Drunk Drivers. Why did they have to pick that name? Sure, it gives you a cute acronym, but do you really think that some drunk driver is going to say to himself, "Now I've done it. I've got somebody's m\_o\_t\_h\_e\_r angry at me." Yeah, good luck. I don't care who founded it, if they want to be effective they should call it something like "Handgun Owners Against Drunk Drivers."

2. The following is from Arthur Kaletzky:

Concerning Paul Chisholm's argument with Mark Leeper about rape and genetics, the idea that rape is a reasonable reproductive strategy for human males is far from speculative -- I have seen it propounded by a number of people (I wish I

THE MT VOID

Page 3

could remember the references, but I don't). Actually, it may be that the rapist's sadistic gratification may have been put there (by evolution) to compensate for the lack, in rape, of the many pleasant stimuli which would normally be obtained from sex with the female's consent.

None of this is a justification or excuse for rape -- I suspect the idea that rape is natural offends only those romantic souls who feel that Nature must be innocent (note the capital N). This is an obsolete view -- many instances of non-human murder have been documented, e.g., in brown bears. A very unpleasant example I read of goes as follows -- a baboon harem is taken over by a new dominant male, probably after murdering the previous master. The new master proceeds to murder all of the troop's infants -- both male and female -- which causes the newly bereaved mothers to come into heat. The new master then impregnates all of the females. How's this for a survival strategy! [-ak]

And finally, from Estes Slade:

Let us add just one more viewpoint to "Dr. Leeper's" and

"Prof. Paul's" views on rape.

So far both of you beings of average intelligence have given two interesting -- excuse me -- ONE interesting, and ONE sympathetic, mental image of the rape issue. Paul says evil, or "the devil made him do it" is the answer, while Mark suggests that genes could be the demoralizing trigger. Well guys, let me ask you; Paul, would your same views hold true if the majority of rape victims were men, or perhaps little boys? And Mark, how many times do you put on a pair of jeans without giving it a second thought as to what "they" might cause you to do? And before I forget, how many times have either of you been raped?

I tend to lean a little toward Mark's idea simply because it does no good to "future" victims to sit around saying "rape is bad . . . rape is bad . . ." when we all know RAPE IS BAD!!!!

Mark's "reproduction" theory makes sense for a number of reasons, most notably the fact that sperm, whether human or animal, just doesn't swim around blindly (in the female cavity) saying to itself "which way shall I go? . . . which way shall I go?" Due to its pre-programming it already knows where to go, and why!!

In closing let me suggest that Mark apologize to Paul so that Paul doesn't feel like Mark is against him if he (Paul) ever gets raped. And let Paul apologize to Mark, who obviously was ticked off at Paul's desire to mouth off with his "jeans down." [-ecs]

And the following is from a member who wishes to remain anonymous:

I'd like to add a vote of support to those such as yourself who are attempting to understand the causes of rape. To my mind, our only hope of attacking the problem lies in first understanding the causes. I use the plural here, because I am convinced that many factors come into play to result in such a crime. In my opinion, people such as Paul have been blinded

by their political ideology; by parroting the politically correct "explanation" that "rape is a crime of violence with no sexual component" they do disservice to future victims. They are in effect attempting to shut down the debate that is our best hope of coming to understand, and perhaps thereby forestall, such crimes. They are no doubt well-motivated (perhaps by fear that to explain rape is somehow to excuse it, a logical fallacy of course), but in my opinion, misguided.

I always enjoy the MT VOID, whether or not I happen to agree with you on any particular issue, and I encourage you to continue to speak your mind.

3. All people planning on attending next year's Worldcon in The Hague should be sure to sign up before December 31; rates go from \$70 to \$85 after that date. Contact me for details if you need them. [-ecl]

Mark Leeper  
MT 3D-441 957-5619  
...mtgzx!leeper

Damn the bright lights by which no one reads,  
damn the continuous music that no one hears,  
damn the grand pianos that no one can play,  
damn the white houses mortgaged up to their  
rain gutters, damn them for plundering the  
ocean for fish to feed the mink whose skins  
they wear...

-- John Cheever

THE LITTLE MERMAID  
A film review by Mark R. Leeper  
Copyright 1989 Mark R. Leeper

Capsule review: Disney Studios is clearly trying to create a classic for multiple re-releases by repeating the formula of some of Disney's most successful animated features. They probably have succeeded. Rating: high +1.

Walt Disney Studios built their reputation on animation, first with Mickey Mouse cartoons and later with their full-length animated features. Even among their feature-length animated films some seem to be more respected than others. The real classics are S\_n\_o\_w\_W\_h\_i\_t\_e, S\_l\_e\_e\_p\_i\_n\_g\_B\_e\_a\_u\_t\_y, and C\_i\_n\_d\_e\_r\_e\_l\_l\_a. The second-ranked ones are those such as P\_i\_n\_o\_c\_c\_h\_i\_o, B\_a\_m\_b\_i, and P\_e\_t\_e\_r\_P\_a\_n. Then there are the third-ranked ones such as T\_h\_e\_J\_u\_n\_g\_l\_e\_B\_o\_o\_k, T\_h\_e\_F\_o\_x\_a\_n\_d\_t\_h\_e\_H\_o\_u\_n\_d, and T\_h\_e\_S\_w\_o\_r\_d\_i\_n\_t\_h\_e\_S\_t\_o\_n\_e. The ones best regarded are adaptations of well-known German and French fairy tales. They each seem to pit a young woman representing the forces of innocence and good against an older woman who represents decadence and evil. Often the older woman also represents the forces of witchcraft.

T\_h\_e\_L\_i\_t\_t\_l\_e\_M\_e\_r\_m\_a\_i\_d represents a return not just to the classic tradition but also to the classic formula. Disney Studios is faced with the competition of Don Bluth--who was bred in the Disney Studios and who left to form his own competitive animation studios (much as Walter Lantz did previously). Intentionally or not, in the holiday season of 1989 we are having the showdown between Disney and Bluth. I have not seen Bluth's A\_l\_l\_D\_o\_g\_s\_G\_o\_t\_o\_H\_e\_a\_v\_e\_n, but general scuttlebutt is that Disney's classic formula has resulted in a much better film than Bluth's source.

T\_h\_e\_L\_i\_t\_t\_l\_e\_M\_e\_r\_m\_a\_i\_d is the story--very loosely based on the Hans Christian Andersen fairy-tale--of Ariel, a mermaid who is fascinated by the huge ship hulls she sees floating overhead. She also has a large collection of half-understood human artifacts salvaged from shipwrecks. Ariel's fascination with humans is in direct defiance of her father, King Triton, who wants Ariel to be happy, but entirely within the confines of his undersea kingdom. He has no interest in the "fish-eaters" who walk on two legs. Ariel is a minor departure from the heroines of previous Disney fairy tales in that she is strong-willed and intentionally disobedient. The film gives her more character than Snow White or Sleeping Beauty. Present to tempt Ariel is this film's villainess, the sea-witch Ursula. As Ariel is half girl and half fish, so Ursula is an octopus with a corpulent woman growing out of its head ... one of Disney's oddest-looking creatures.

The songs are by Howard Ashman and Alan Menken, who did the music and lyrics for the musical L\_i\_t\_t\_l\_e\_S\_h\_o\_p\_o\_f\_H\_o\_r\_r\_o\_r\_s. Their style in both

works is more verse-dialogue spoken to music than the usual song poetry. It is still perfectly pleasant but it is immediately recognizable as being in the same style. What is a slight disappointment is that the artwork in T\_h\_e\_L\_i\_t\_t\_l\_e\_M\_e\_r\_m\_a\_i\_d is noticeably less detailed than in other Disney classics. (Each frame of film i\_s different. This is unlike Japanese animation which has very nice artwork but fairly jerky motion with drawings used for three or four frames each.) But the sketches have less detail so were more economical to draw.

The result of all this is that in some ways T\_h\_e\_L\_i\_t\_t\_l\_e\_M\_e\_r\_m\_a\_i\_d is reminiscent of the best of Disney, in some ways it seems the victim of cost-cutting. It represents an investment in the future by Disney and will probably be released to theaters several times before it is ever sold on cassette. This means if it sounds good you should go to see it in a theater. That is the only way to see it. As for rating, I would give T\_h\_e\_L\_i\_t\_t\_l\_e\_M\_e\_r\_m\_a\_i\_d a high +1 on the -4 to +4 scale.

THE CUCKOO'S EGG by Clifford Stoll  
Doubleday, 1989, ISBN 0-385-24946-2, \$19.95.  
A book review by Evelyn C. Leeper  
Copyright 1989 Evelyn C. Leeper

If you're wondering what to get that computer-addict friend of yours for Hannukah, or she's wondering what to get you, try Clifford Stoll's book about tracking a West German spy through the UNIX\* computer networks. When I got the book I decided to take a look at the first couple of chapters just to see how it was, and found myself so hooked that I sat down and read it straight through in one evening.

Now perhaps I'm somewhat predisposed to this topic, being associated with security in a professional capacity. And since I am a science fiction reader, the whole cyberpunk movement (or non-movement) has made me even more aware of the possibilities for this sort of activity. So I can't say that you should run out and buy this book for your Uncle Fred, who has yet to figure out how to make the clock stop blinking on his VCR. But if you're at all interested in the topic and somewhat knowledgeable about computers, or willing to learn, you should have no trouble following the events described in the book. The groundwork and basic terminology are laid out and explained. In science fiction, this is usually accomplished by having the girlfriend of the hero ask, "Gee, Fred, what is a computer anyway?" but Stoll is able to avoid this, in part because he was not originally a computer scientist



and often needed terms and procedures clarified for himself.

In addition to having a fast-moving, hi-tech spy plot (is Stoll the Tom Clancy of the computer set?), the book provides some insight into how security \_ r \_ e \_ a \_ l \_ l \_ y works. For those who worry about how much the government is watching what they do, the truth will come as a great relief: it's next to impossible to get the government to care about anything that goes on in and around computers unless you can hit them over the end with the equivalent of a ten-ton weight, and even then they may merely blink momentarily. And while most of the time, that pesky 75-cent accounting error isn't worth tracking down, every once in a while you can hit the jackpot.

A nice by-product of all this is that the book would not be a bad supplemental text for a computer security course. (Well, a nice by-product for Stoll, anyway.) One of the problems with the standard UNIX system security texts is that they tell you how to make your system secure, but don't tell you what to do when you somehow find yourself

---

\* UNIX is a registered trademark of AT&T.

with a system insecure enough that someone has broken in. \_ T \_ h \_ e \_ C \_ u \_ c \_ k \_ o \_ o' \_ s  
\_ E \_ g \_ g shows you some "tricks of the trade" that aren't spelled out elsewhere. I find myself wishing that all our computer users would read this book so they'd stop asking why they need passwords or why permissions can't be freed up. (I occasionally describe the latter phenomenon by claiming that many users think that "0777" is the only possible first argument for \_ c \_ h \_ m \_ o \_ d.)

The book closes with an epilogue recounting the Great Internet Virus of November 1988. (With my usual excellent planning I was 8000 miles away when it all hit the fan and heard about it only in retrospect.) While some may question its place here--the virus, so far as anyone knows, had nothing to do with the West German hacker--I think the epilogue may teach the most important lesson of the book: your systems are never perfectly secure. There will always be one more hole, one

more back-door, one more weak point. To paraphrase John Philpot Curran, "The condition upon which [one has secure systems] is eternal vigilance." And while more technical descriptions of the virus are available "in the literature" (as they say), this is a good explanation for the wider audience of this book.

Some have said the book should be edited down, but I don't think the personal asides (including the infamous chocolate-chip cookie recipe everyone is talking about!) hurt the book, and they go a long way toward filling in a picture of what Stoll is like. (Actually, I saw him being interviewed on C-SPAN, and as quirky as he is in the book, he's three times more so on screen.)

[Note: a more concise, and somewhat more technically oriented, of this saga may be found in Stoll's article "Stalking the Wily Hacker" in the May 1988 C o m m u n i c a t i o n s o f t h e A C M.