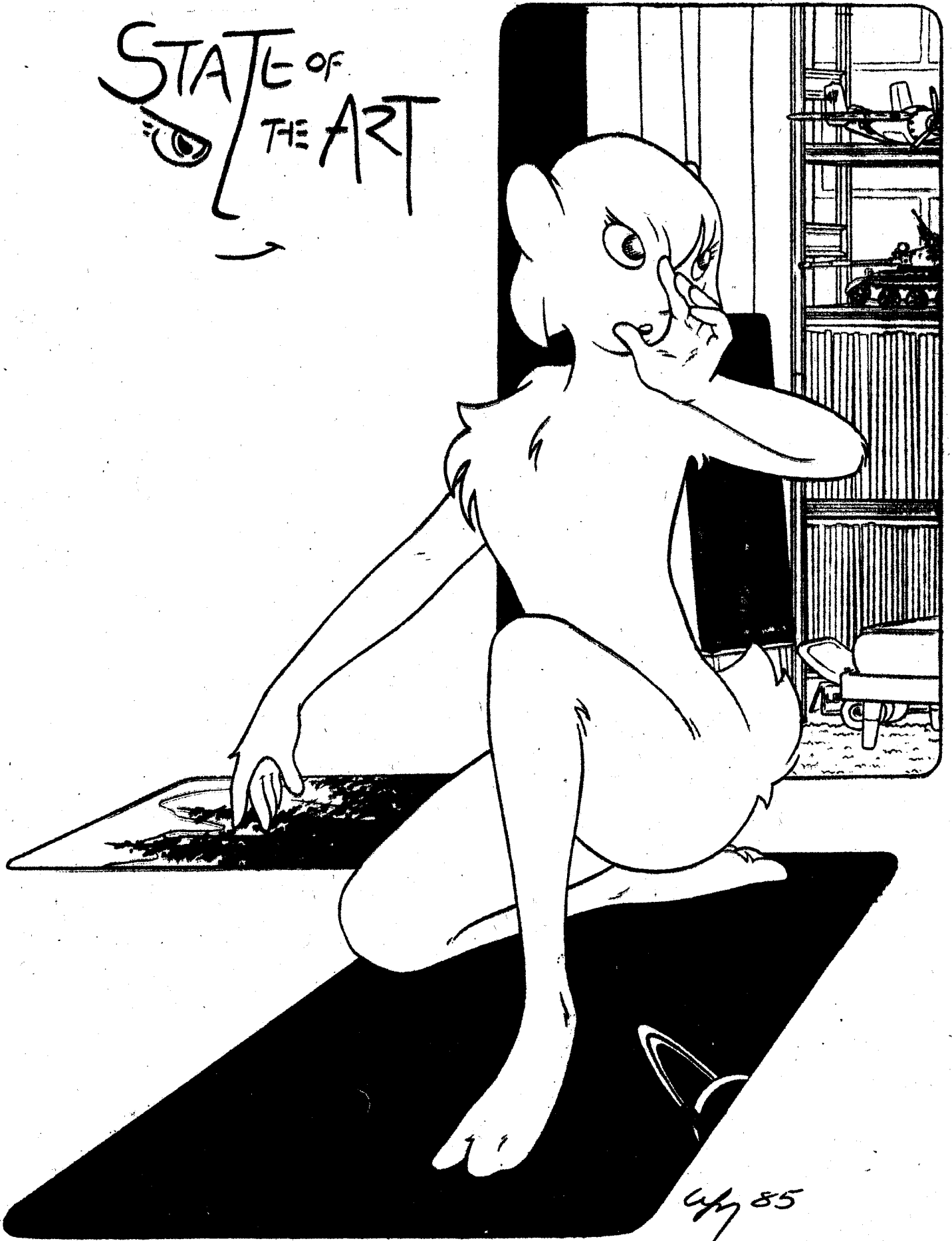


STATE OF
THE ART



Taral Wayne March 1986, from 1812-415
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 Canada, M2N 5B4. (416) 221 3517.
 A Taralble Mistake 162, for Rowbrazzle &
 a few friends. (Print run approx. 90)

As usual, there's too much for this Issue of SotA. I have to decide among several choice items -- an interview with Rocky the Flying Squirrel, mailing comments, a new strip, and my 1985 calendar year. But why be hasty? I don't have to decide now. Let's procrastinate a while first.

To start with, Brazzle came at a very oportune time. Or a very bad time, depending on how you look at it. I just last night (Jan.14) put the finishing touches on "Mything Persons", a story for my next genzine, and all that's left is typing the stencils. I really don't look forward to it, so Brazzle's arrival was a break. On the other hand, I gotta type those stencils sooner or later, and Brazzle's arrival is an unfortunate delay.

The last time I published a genzine I swore "never again". Time heals all wounds. In barely fifteen months I'm publishing a new genzine called New Toy. It was supposed to be fairly casual (like SotA) -- not too long or fancy. (Excuse me while I laugh.) Predictably, the zine is a third again as long as it ought to be -- extra pages to stencil, mimeograph, and mail.

Working on New Toy has kept me a slave to my typewriter for the last couple of months. The output has been gratifying as sheer quantity, and has had moments of gratifying quality as well. Apart from a 2,000 word editorial, I've written "The Ghost on my Bed", a 2,500 word personal recollection -- "A Bout Faces", 3,000 words on wrestling and nationalism that's mostly amusing -- and the 7,750 word "Mything Persons". (That's about twelve ordinary typewritten pages such as you'd find in Brazzle.)

At first I planned to publish a story about a borderline psychotic in the 1950's, who thought he was the superman,

and that Martians were helping him to eliminate the unfit. But "Roach Motel" -- as I called it -- went to over 7,100 words, and was too long for the issue. So I dug an Idea out of my notebook and wrote an imaginary party with several friends and four imaginary characters from fan fiction. (Brazzlers aren't likely familiar with Jophan, Goon Bleary, O. Wertyuiop, or Hoy Ping Pong, but they are well known in my corner of fandom.) Unfortunately, "Mything Persons" ran even longer than "Roach Motel" -- 7,750 words. I may be a little dense at times, but I'm beginning to get the message. I'm not going to be allowed a short, easy first issue.

As if that weren't enough writing for two months, I also produced six pages for a friend of mine who's working on his next issue. (Let's not even think about SotA 7...)

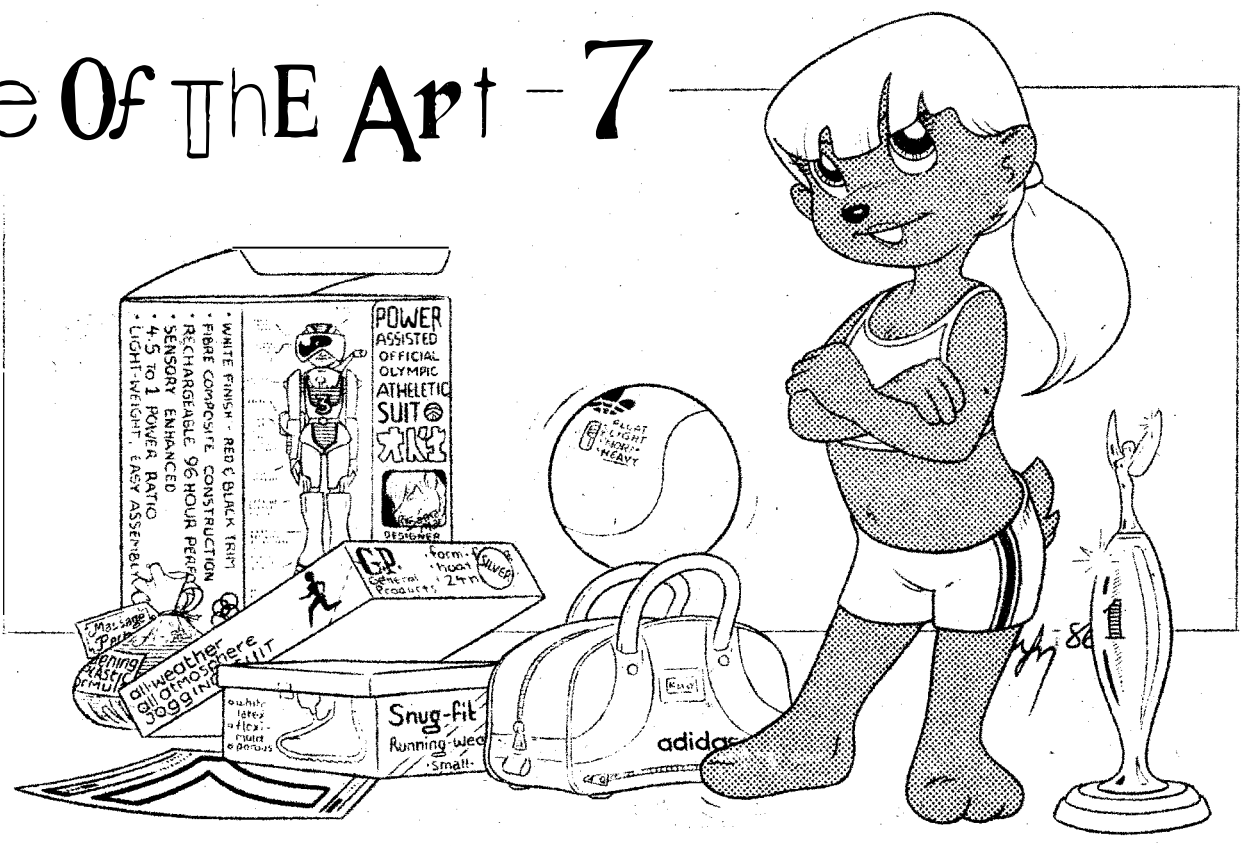
In case anyone needs it spelled out, these last two months haven't been very productive for me as an artist. In November I did a piece for Jim Groat's collective Christmas card for Schirm, and a trivial bit of filler for a six by five inch hole in a fanzine. December was as bad. I did a "photo" of Rocky the Squirrel on the wing of his WW-II Mustang, and a sheet of faked Bill Rotsler letteraset illos. More than midway through January, now, and I've finished no art at all. (Unless you want to count the two bullet holes I cut in a green beret to annoy Dorsal Irregulars in fandom.)

At least it doesn't mean that I haven't made any sketches. I do have a large number of things penciled and waiting for me to ink them. I wonder when that'll be, though?

Anyway, all this talk about writing is a reflection of my self-absorption. It doesn't have much to do with Brazzle. While I have put a few Brazzlers on my mailing list, for New Toy I, there isn't anyway I can squeeze all of you into a print run of around 175. So the bulk of my writing these last two months is of academic interest to most members.

It was either that or talk about my television set breaking down, which has a little to do with my not drawing much too.

State Of The Art - 7



* * * * *

Before getting down to business, I thought I'd mention a book of possible interest to Brazzle members. It was recommended to me by a fellow fan who was also a mystery buff. "Who Censored Roger Rabbit", by Gary Wolf, is ostensibly a novel about a hard-boiled detective solving a murder. The catch is that in this world there are people and there are "toons" -- cartoon characters who live and breathe but speak in word-balloons. Dick Tracy and Hagar the Horrible have walk-on roles. In this world there are no comics artists. Dik Browne, Chester Gould, and Roger's "artist" are photographers. Roger is murdered by his estranged wife, a ravishing Brenda Starr type 'toon, or so everyone seems anxious to believe... Except Eddie Valiant. The book isn't new, I'm afraid. The hardcover appeared in 1981, and the Ballantyne paperback edition in '82. Still, you should be able to find one if you look for a blue cover with a slanted white title, a picture of the Bogart-styled detective, Roger Rabbit, and the LA City Hall in the background. One of the stranger things about this book is the joke it makes of the racism in most pulp mysteries. Read "toons" for "shades" or "negroes", and you get the picture, sweetheart?

* * * * *

Let's see. If I keep the mailing comments short I can possibly get the interview, the comic strip, and the folio all into this issue. What this means is that I'm making replies to mailing comments to me, but not saying terribly much about anyone's art. This is reprehensible, I know, but I never said it'd be easy to get everything in this issue. And to be honest, I figure that I've carried my load and can afford to slack a while.

MARK ASHWORTH

Shrewd deduction Sherlock Holmes.

Your logic was impeccable in tracing me as "the man with two brains", through the movie of the same name by -- yes! Now everyone in Brazzle knows that Steve Martin and I are one and the same! But do you know which of us is the pseudonym?

DAVE BENNET

Gee, is "The Bolo Caper" another

educational spot, or a cartoon? I'm never up in time to catch Saturday morning programming, so I'm not very well informed on animation. Would that particular cell be one of yours? (Subsequently photocopied onto plastic and painted, of course.)

Thanks for the egoboo. I spend two or three days on most full page work like the cover of the last State of the Art, and then another day to add the dot screens. Admittedly not full eight hour days, but say twenty to twenty-four hours in total went into "Commando". You're right that at first I was thinking of her as "Cynthia", (the letters C-Y-N-T-H appear on her nametag), but it didn't fit her as well as I liked. Now I think her name is Simone St. Cynthea, which is better. If there were only some way to publish the coloured version in Brazzle! I have "Commando" in the original outline, in dot screen, in colour, and in negative. (Thanks to xerox.) They make an interesting progression. Also interesting is lining up the horizons of several copies end to end, to make one long unbroken horizon.

The "Gothic Scenario" stuff was sheer self-indulgence on my part. I like geology, the American west, science fiction, and WWII history, and just put them all together in one mish-mosh that no one but myself is ever likely to get into.

JERRY COLLINS

You jealous? Of me? Say, this has unsavory possibilities, like a Hitch-

cock movie. Scene: Jerry Collins stabs Janet Leigh to death in shower with felt tip pen. Ink runs down the tiles to the drain. Repressive, anal-retentive friend is never seen at the same time. During the big climax (Freudian slip?) the villain is unmasked, and Tara is found dead for twenty years in the basement. Now. There's a world of difference between us. Several worlds and a couple of planetoids too. We have different drawing styles and incompatible sexual hangups. I can spell better than you (marginally), but you draw lots faster. While I'm still finishing "Heart of Dixie" early in

the next century, you'll have had twenty entries in the Jones Book of All the World's Comic Characters. (And I hope your canary has air sickness.)

Actually, you did seem to be lashing out at people in the last mailing unnecessarily. One suspects that this has less to do with the people than devils that are persuing you that only you know about.

TIM FAY

I can't agree with you more about "alternate" or "independent" comics.

Although there's enormous potential there, most of the publishers have reverted to the same formulas that make most DC and Marvel comics so tiresome. Even when they're good, I can't work up enthusiasm for yet another costumed strongman (or woman) with magic powers, who settles all problems with a fight. Yet you dislike "60's" undergrounds. Why? I would have thought that they were truly alternate comics, with nary a superhero in sight. It can't be the unpolished style, since there are unpolished artists right here in Brazzle, and a fair number of highly polished undergrounds. The violence perhaps? Or the politics? Or the drugs, that may not appear in all undergrounds but nevertheless pervade undergrounds as a genre? Of course, most undergrounds were pretty bad. Most of anything is -- superheroes, pop music, fast foods, best-sellers, Saturday morning cartoons, apazines -- unless there are specific criteria of quality from the start. Bad symphonies are written, but they aren't performed. Bad television programs are produced, and monopolize the airwaves. Perhaps the difference is caused by the expectations of the audience. In any case, undergrounds and comics of all sorts fall into the later category -- most of the audience will put up with and actually prefers shit. C'est le vive.

Yeah, I'm one of those damned liberals. Once I was in an apa that seemed positively right-wing -- half the members were from military families and the other half were survivalists. They figured I was an out and out communist, and used to talk about me and a Maoist in their midst in one breath. But among my radical doping left-wing feminist friends I was a notorious conservative, who could hardly be trusted not to inform to the pigs at first. What does this mean? That political labels are meaningless, of course. In the real world I almost invariably vote for the party out of power, hoping to confuse established bureaucracy as much as possible. I never vote for the NDP because liberal that I may be, I can add up a column of figures. The NDP's election promises always seem to require spending half again as much money as the last government, and twice as much of the actual revenue.

JIM GROAT

Great, we seem to be over whatever unspecified unpleasantness there

was between us. I know weapons adequately I guess, but don't make a thorough job of it. I can't remember the differences between the various family members of AIM-9 Sidewinder missiles, I don't know how many UH-1 helicopters the DOD bought, nor for the life of me could I operate a wire-guided anti-tank weapon. I can tell an M-14 from an M-16, and my main interest is in flashy combat aircraft. I like to get the overall feel of things more than I want to memorize details. Although it's a childhood interest, it could be important to keep up to date, lest by giving up the responsibility to "experts" we all be tried in our sleep.

The closest I have to a gun is a life-size Japanese plastic model of an M-177 Commando version of the M-16. It has all moving parts, sliding tube stock, shortened barrel, and a 30-round magazine that feeds into the breech. I could probably slip a bit of coat-hanger wire into the breech-block instead of the plastic firing pin, and blow off one of my hands with a live round... if I were stupid. Having built this thing might mean I could strip and operate an M-16. Or maybe not. I've never tried to find out. I've five other plastic model guns. Two are actually toys that were fairly accurate, that I worked on to improve -- a Schmeisser and a Magnum 45. The other three are kits -- an 1851 Colt Naval Revolver, an 1860 Colt Dragoon, and the classic 1873 Peacemaker. They were cheap, and I got the Japanese M-177 at a considerable discount also.

Speaking of character design, one of the purposes of the funny animal genre is that you have no trouble creating characters when one is a rabbit, another a fox, etc. Have you thought of branching out zoomorphically?

STEVE MARTIN

This is a better story than I've seen you do in Brazzle before, and you're putting more into the backgrounds too. But the biggest surprise is that you haven't used the plot you described to me back in the summer of '84, when I was visiting Schirm. That story seemed like a thin excuse to get the characters into bondage and discipline, similar to all the stories I'd seen up to that time. Christian Critturs as it is gets your zeitmotif across more interestingly. Maybe what I'm saying is that titillation is sometimes better than non-stop orgasm, ahem. On the other hand, who am I to tell you to sugarcoat your obsessions?

RONN SUTTON

(I presume.) After copyrighting, trademarking, and autographing every copy of Chuck the Duck, I wasn't prepared to guess who drew The Many Perils of Kitty Malone. No help from the Table of Contents again, either. But there are some things that are unmistakable, such as the way you draw ducks, do a doubletake, or use the word "bozo". Odds are that you're behind this nicely done tongue-in-cheek adventure. But "The Six" better not be the Bakka Boys.

GARY THOMAS

I sent you a cover? Now that you mention it, I have a vague memory of sending you a photocopy of something to use if you didn't care if it turned up in some other fanzine sometime, as long as you or your readers were never likely to see it again. But now I'm worried. Which art was it? Have I changed any arrangements since then, violating your trust? I should go back to keeping a record of where I send my art, but I'm too blasé about fandom to keep up the effort. Also, it was depressing to have a record of all the art that hadn't been published yet by editors after eight or ten years.

EDD VICK

Of course we've already talked about this, but for the benefit of Brazzle members it won't hurt if I say that I'm not likely to satirize anyone who I'm not on the very best of terms with, whose work I don't understand well, for which there isn't some evident way to parody. For instance, I'd love to take on Schirm's stuff, but it's so funny in itself that I can't see a way to parody it. I had a flash while reading some of Jim Groat's stuff, but I didn't think it was a very friendly joke. I think most, if not all, Brazzlers can rest easy.

The doubletalk about Saara's starship was done tongue-in-cheek. Otherwise it would have been a pointless exercise of self-indulgence that would bore everyone. (Maybe it did anyway.) But I have most of Saara's world worked out in similar kind of detail, and hope it holds up as well as most SF backgrounds.

Is Brazzle the "alternate apa"? It seemed like it to me, who hasn't seen all that many comic apas. Most of those I have seen are the superhero type. I've heard of one for animation, and suppose there are several specifically for Japanimation. Since Brazzle is mostly funny animals, it seems off the beaten track already. The other couple of apas spun off by Brazzle are less diverse in their membership, unless I'm mistaken. (Funny animals only, or foxes only.) All the same, I have to agree with you that the "alternate" material in Brazzle is a mite thin, a leaven in an otherwise kosher recipe.

No, sorry, I didn't use shading plates for the cover of the last State of the Art. Maybe you thought so because it was mimeographed? But I electrostenciled the art, whose camouflage was done by Letratrone dot screens.

How do you assign a value to a person's identification to their totem? *By their inscriptions?*

MARK WALLACE

Your comment, "clean draftsmanship gives your low-detail characters a terrifying reality" is much appreciated. There in ten words are much of what I try to do -- make things seem

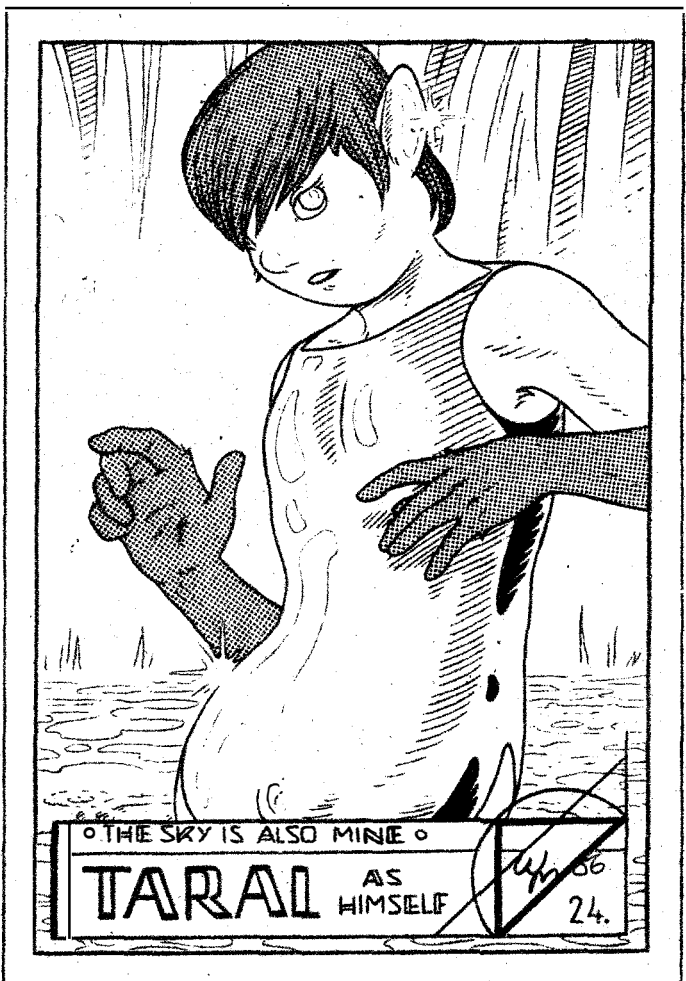
real. In the same ten words are the difference between Jerry's Bambloids and the pastiches of them I've done. Jerry draws them, well, to avoid analysing his head-space, Bambloldish. I draw them as much like real people that you can imagine being with -- the goal of most of my character drawings. Comparing the two, as there was some unfortunate tendency last issue, is like comparing certain well-known fruits.

WENDELL WASHER

You appear to say that if I have ideas that don't agree with your Christian beliefs, it's offensive to speak them in public. You grant me the right to have my non-Christian beliefs, but suggest it isn't nice to offend people with them. This assumes that most of us are practicing Christians, which I don't think is true. Most people are Christians in name only, and many even in our society are Jews, Moslems, Buddhists, Hindus, Mormons, Marxists, agnostics, atheists, even Moonies, Sufis, Khrlsnas, Bahais, pagans, Wiccans, Theosophists, and people who see UFO's. America (and Canada too) is not, never has been naturally Christian, and it's good to remember we live in a pluralistic society.

There's also implicit in your message that a non-Christian can't have his own sense of morality, since ultimately it doesn't derive from God. It doesn't matter what any human being thinks is right or wrong, only what God thinks is right or wrong. On many issues God and I have much in common, but where I think God is wrong I stand up for my beliefs, not for his right to force my obedience to his word by reward or punishment. If I'm wrong I want to know why, so that I'll believe it's wrong. This is not pride of will, a pat phrase used by many evangelists who feel threatened by people's independence, it's a sense of principle above authority, surely the basis of any system of justice.

No one ever said it was easy to be free, or that happiness matters most.





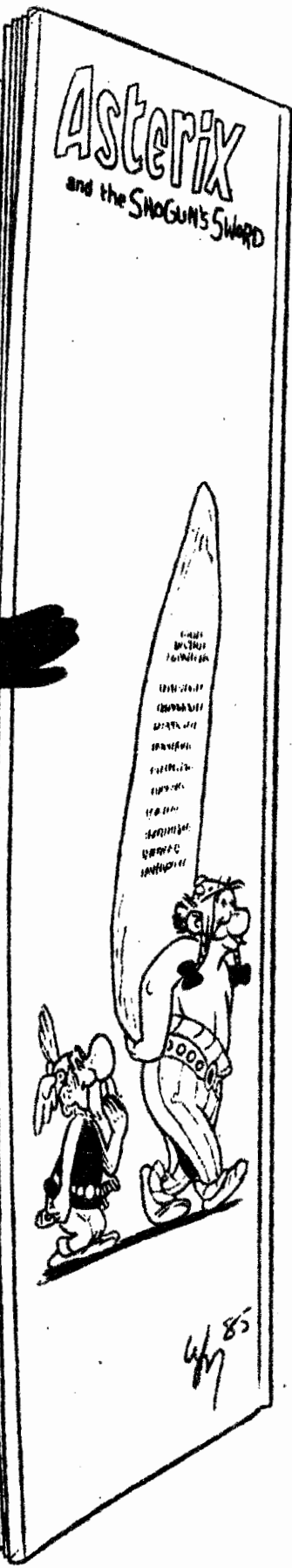


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