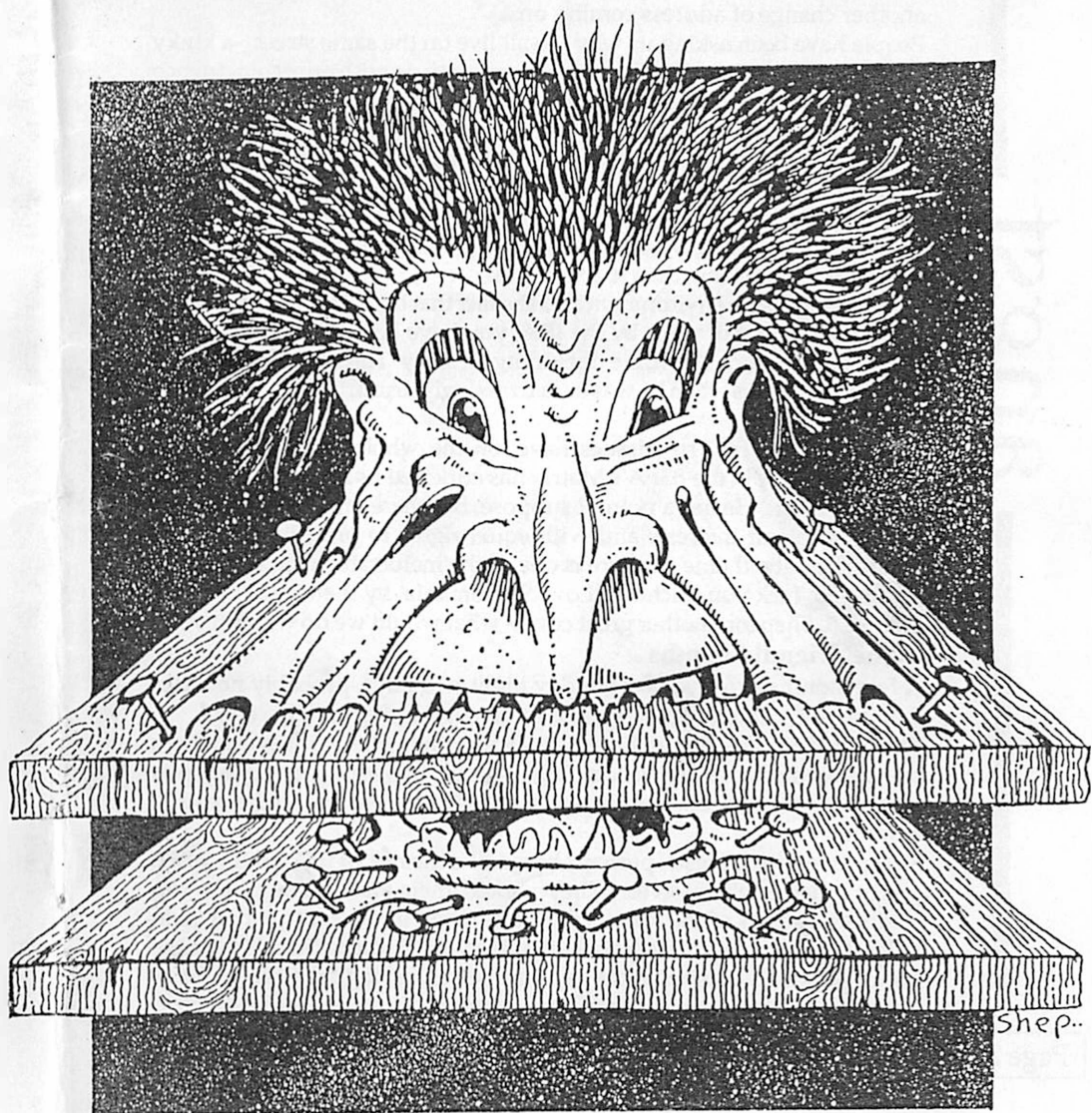


# Götterdämmerung



## mark

Welcome to Götterdämmerung III- albeit rather later than expected. This issue should have materialised last Autumn but various things have conspired to delay its appearance until now with, I believe, Seasonal Affective Disorder being the main culprit. That, or else sheer laziness.

James and Tommy are well enough equipped to relate to you their own pathetic self-pitying tales of woe. As for myself the *flat-behind-the-stairs*, a.k.a. my home, has, I believe, not lent a conducive atmosphere for any kind of writing. As I look out of my living room window at a solid red brick wall, any ideas for the fanzine have somehow failed to appear. I feel another change of address coming on...

People have been asking us why we all live on the same street -a kinky *menage a trois*, perhaps? Well,...no, it has more to do with pure coincidence actually. No one in their right mind would live on Camden Street by choice. It is, as they say, a shithole. A university backwater with at least one brothel; a yuppie theme pub; a hippy commune; a clairvoyant called Gerrard; an ex-offender's centre; a prime location for the re-settlement of one time psychiatric patients; and, of course, home to the eldritch towers of Götterdämmerung Mansions. Even this description makes the place seem more interesting than it actually is.

Despite the hostile environment and the fact that both Tommy and I have been bombed out of work by the IRA, you have before you issue three. More contributors this time including a story Tommy nicked from Graham Andrews when he was embarrassingly drunk in Dun Laoghaire, (Graham, that is).

Reviews of the first two issues have, on the whole, been favourable. Michael Ashley in the BSFA's Matrix has criticised us for not having any editorial rigor. He has a point, I suppose, but there are three of us with widely different interests and with equal rights to print whatever we want. The only 'theme', if there is one, is the ineluctable modality of the visible. So, fuck you Michael. (Love Saliromania, by the way).

Thanks to Shep for another great cover- what would we do without you?

### Come, friendly bombs

A few months ago on a wet Sunday night two guys, probably no older than myself, climbed into a van and drove it into Belfast city centre.

The centre is a ghost town on a Sunday evening, what with everywhere being closed and draconian licensing laws only allowing the pubs to open for about five minutes. "Depressingly dull" is a phrase that jumps readily to mind.

So our two protagonists, perhaps bored like the rest of us, had the place pretty much to themselves. They parked their van in one of the top business districts of the town, got out, climbed into a car that had been following them and drove off. Fortunately for Bedford Street the three hundred pound bomb that the van had been carrying failed to go off as expected and was later defused by the Army.

The event made two paragraphs in the next morning's newspapers. I only happened to notice it because the van had been left approximately twenty metres from the first floor office where I work - Bryson House - a local charity. I mentioned the story to a few fellows workers who shrugged and said, so what? It didn't go off, did it?

Seemingly undeterred by their first failure the IRA tried an identical venture on a Sunday night just before Christmas. Again the giant bomb, another three hundred pound bastard, failed to go off. Again two paragraphs in the local papers.

### Apathy rules

Hang on a minute I thought to myself I think I see a trend here! No one was much interested at work though.

Apathy rules in Northern Ireland amongst everyone but the extremists. Anyway, what can ordinary people do about such things?

Well, the inevitable happened at 9.28pm on Sunday, 5th January when yet another three hundred pound van bomb was left in Bedford Street in exactly the same location just across from Bryson House. This time the IRA technical experts had their device working perfectly - unfortunately for Bedford street.

The explosion was heard twenty miles away and the blast turned much of Bedford Street into a twin suburb of downtown west Beirut.

Arriving the next morning for work I was glad to see that at least Bryson House was still upright if not looking too healthy. I

met a Jewish friend of mine of his way to work who was visibly shaken by what he saw. He had been with the Israeli army in Lebanon but never saw anything like this. Okay, so it was *worse* than a downtown suburb of west Beirut.

### Shrapnel

Inside Bryson House the place was well and truly fucked - ceilings down, walls blown in, glass and shrapnel everywhere. One bit of the exploded van, about ten

inches long, was lodged in my desk. Nasty.

So what was the reaction to all this? Hysteria? Not quite, it is difficult to describe. Much tsk-tsking the terrorists but no real shock. The general impression seemed to be that it made a change

from the normal boring Monday morning. After all, no one was killed or injured - and just think of the insurance money! Apathy rules. People have to be horribly maimed or killed before you get a reaction here any more it seems.

Taking advantage of the unexpected afternoon off work, my girlfriend and I sauntered into the city centre to visit some bookshops. Not, I admit now that I look back on it, a terribly bright thing to do. While looking at some rather gruesome Hieronymus Bosch prints yet another bomb went off. Another three hundred pound motherfucker and this time we were close. The blast left my ears ringing for the rest of the day. The explosion wiped out Tommy's place of work - the Tax Office - one person slightly injured. I saw people



actually cheer whenever they heard it was the Tax Office -nice to know you are loved -eh, Tommy?

### Action replay

Not having to be told twice we scurried of home, had dinner and watched the day's events again on the evening news. It seemed much more real the second time around. So what's the trite moral I'm going to finish off on? I'm not really sure. The only thing that keeps coming to mind is the sheer apathy of people around me -myself included. No one gives much of a toss any more unless it's themselves personally who is being blown up or shot. Perhaps this is some psychological coping mechanism, I don't know.

This apathy is usually described as "Not giving into Terrorism" or "Business as Usual". The determination to show that everything is hunky dory in Northern Ireland. What scares the shit out of me is that most people have ended up *believing* it even when their offices are blown to smithereens.

So they leave all their decisions to a bunch of palaeolithic politicians in London, Dublin and Belfast or the O.C.s of the IRA and things go on being 'normal'.

I'd like to repeat my Israeli friend's honest assessment of the people of the North - "They're all fucking crazy!"

One final thing. On the day the bomb exploded I got a phone call offering me a new job... with the Northern Ireland Community Relations Council. I think I'll take it.

## james

It's Tuesday 4th Feb and Götterdämmerung III is about to hit the metal. (What 4th of Feb. and it took X weeks to reach me? Yes, yes, I know but

we're trying!)

At long last I've finally got around to writing my editorial. By tradition (and it's only issue 3!) my editorial is always the last thing to go in the zine. Tommy always finishes his first, Mark is a close second but mine always scrapes in just before the final proof. Deadlines, what deadlines? Alright, I know that this issue was promised a while back and even Michael Ashley was on tenterhooks a few weeks back but a lot has been going on of late which prevented this coming out sooner.

### Killer

Never mind the two new jobs, moving house again, that famous villain - the writer's block was one of the major culprits. A sudden collective weakening of nerve brought on by another K.T.F. review of Götter 2. Yes, we've been trashed before (several times, in fact) and bounced back, but the real killer was old Mike Ashley himself. No single line sledgehammer this one ("Excuse for DTP etc.") but a measured and calculated destruction of G2. And fair (in places). That was what really hurt.

### Perception

Confidence, that's what it's all about. And suddenly I hadn't got any. As noted by John Nelson "McKee is the shy one". Perceptive, very perceptive. But then I am not one for splattering my innermost being across the pages at every opportunity. Suddenly the flow of ideas dried up and everything was weighed with an "is it good enough?"

Tommy, the survivor of many a TASH thrashing was unabashed and trotted out another couple of stories from his voluminous archives. However, for myself (and Mark) the flow (of effluent) came to an abrupt halt as a crisis of nerves set in. And it's taken quite a while to recover.

So what's happened to me since the last issue? Quite a lot, really. I languished all summer without a job, and filled the time doing voluntary work in Bryson House, Belfast's biggest charity. From a situation wherein employers wouldn't touch me with someone else's bargepole, I suddenly found myself in October with two possibilities. Not two jobs, but two applications - one for a research post at the University of Ulster at Jordanstown and the other with a small local electronics firm. Time passed and I went for the interview with the firm and got the job - however the interview for the research job was pending and I really wanted it.

### Reality

A large measure of reality was called for. I took the job with the local firm since it was a concrete job and not just a possibility. And found it was surprisingly pleasant. Being a small firm the pressure was there, but that made it interesting. I gradually settled into the work - not wildly exciting but interesting enough in its own way.

Meanwhile the university in its own lethargic way got round to processing my application and calling me for interview, a mere three months and a half months later. So again I went for interview and got it. And now the crunch decision - move or stay? Research was more interesting by far but less money. I had also settled in where I was. But luckily (I think?) I was true to my original wish and took the research post. The firm were very understanding and wished me the best. So I'm here, back at U.U.J., starting my third week and finding it all very strange.

### Moving

I also moved house again. A friend of mine was moving out of a small flat in Stranmillis - a good area of Belfast - and asked me if I would like it. I jumped at the chance to get

out of the bedsit I was in which was really starting to piss me off after six months. Mark is obviously made of sterner stuff than I since he stuck it for over a year.

### Rant

So all correspondences should be addressed to me at Flat 1, 26 Elaine Street, Stranmillis, BT9 5AR. By the way, the GōDā address has and will probably always be my address as this is NOT a TASH press production (feel the quality!) and there are three editors for this zine (as noted by the late Joe McNally). Tommy is busy enough with his apa (the Org.) and I have always looked after the GōDā correspondence and have yet to ignore letters addressed to Tommy when they arrive at my house.

As ever a few films, books and zines are worth mentioning. Personal cinematic highpoints over the last six months - Miller's Crossing. Got it out on video over the weekend and it makes a lot more sense the second time around. The cinematography, characterisation and music are excellent, though it loses a lot of 'presence' on the tv. As you will have realised, Mark is doing the music column this time around (just wait till Tommy has a go) and I can wait a while longer - just shows you how bland the latest crop of albums have been.

### Fanzines

Zines - ah zines. Too many to mention really, though I really will try to review a few R.S.N. Feedback is the name of the game and I'm acutely aware that I haven't been giving anyone any (fnarr, fnarr). However, I love getting them all and all are read and enjoyed. Some are uniformly excellent (ERG, anything by Kench) and some are more contentious eg. Saliromania 2/3 which Mark and I admire and Tommy hates. (nice cover illustration, Michael, I was almost tempted to raise G3 to your masterful heights). Bye for now.

## tommy

So here we are gathered once more in this small company. A few of us have been a little more voluble than in the last issue; some like what we are doing; some like the way we are doing it; and some just couldn't care less. Well, that is fine. We are out to please everyone and, if amongst those who find at least one thing in the zine worthwhile, there are one or two who find nothing palatable, then at least that is one or two zines less we need to produce, pack and post. The Inland Revenue is not a great payer and so I welcome these voices.

As to the remaining band of loyal followers there has been an immense diversity of opinion about the whole venture, further details of which can be found in the letters page. Suffice is to say here that we are reaching everyone with something, and some of the material in *Götterdämmerung* is reaching no-one. Even Michael Ashley saw a light at the end of the tunnel with the review of *And the Ass Saw the Angel*, Nick Cave's book. Perhaps there is hope for us yet.

As a veteran of many an unreadable zine the only real complaint I have to make of our Loccers is that some of them complain about our production techniques. I really can't see any fault in the zines repro, we are using top of the range equipment upon which to edit the material, print and copy it. It is eminently readable, clear and well presented. Go on, fault us; I dare you. As the old saying goes: 'Fans do it with their reproductive systems.'

I hope by the time you get this issue you'll all have received, digested and be in the process of consulting your GP about TASH 6. I've used the same mailing list as

*Götterdämmerung* (but with a few additions of my own devising, poor sods...), but if you know anyone who would be even vaguely interested in receiving a copy, drop me a line and I'll inflict it upon them. After all one good turn deserves another, and I do consider it a good turn deciding to accept Götter into your life. Letters of comment are always welcome and buying me a pint is, of course, even more welcome.

As you may have gathered from the above it's come time for me to change jobs and move house again. This is because Critical Wave just printed a change of address for me which was my last house. Also: a friend wanted clarification of my postcode and proceeded to name an address I'd forgotten I'd lived in, it was over two years and four houses ago. You see people are starting to catch up with me and may even get to the stage of knowing EXACTLY where I'm living and PRECISELY what job I'm doing. That just wouldn't do. So hopefully if my job plans do alter I'll be able to move into a proper flat of my own. See Mark's idiotorial for further info on our combined jobs front.

So what about a little personal shit? (As a little aside, a New Zealander who lives in the bedsit above me answered the phone whilst I was in the toilet. Upon asking him to take a message he replied, to Eugene thankfully, 'I'm sorry mate, he's in the jaxie chucking a dark one.' Well I never...)

Well, life continues to collect in little pennies around my job in the Infernal Revenue. I've been promoted recently, which isn't as great as it first appears. By crediting me with 'Certification' I earn another £7.00 or so a week extra to justify my incredible stupidity at still working for the Revenue after twelve months. Not for nothing is



this single honour continually misquoted as 'Certified'.

They've also moved my boss and my colleagues into new jobs, taken away half of my responsibilities (the most important and enjoyable half, dontcha know) and then offered us a 6.5% pay rise in a year in which inflation averaged out at over 8 or nearly 9%. Ah shucks folks, I'm just so happy to have a job, and the government knows it.

Personally I recently realised that I'm not as liberal, easy going and 'Renaissance Man' as I thought I was; in fact in one case in particular quite the opposite. Now for a smug, self assured little shit like me that came as quite a shock; the reverberations shook my psyche quite a lot. They've begun to settle down somewhat recently with, I hope, no serious after effects or tremors but have left my viewpoint and perspective of the world, its people and the relationships between those people completely altered. I'm not even sure if this is a good thing. I was enjoying a fairly quiet life emotionally; stable loving relationship, family who knew what the score was and friends who could be relied upon. Obviously some of those things haven't changed in the slightest (guys...) but they have red-shifted with this new perspective.

So what was this drastic event that moved my life? Well after nearly six months in London Nyree 'went out' with another man, something we'd both agreed might happen and accepted. Except, of course, that when I found out I went a little buck mad. Strange behaviour for one who

prided himself upon being fairly open minded and liberal. Self satisfied little fucker. eh?

So what happened? Well a lot of drinks and a tragic long conversation with Nyree which didn't help things at all and probably just made them worse in the long run. Introspection followed on introspection, my mind twirled and whirled like a dervish on PCP and finally it hit me. Wise up, or you'll lose her. It was as simple as that.

I had felt angry and annoyed that she could do this to me. Then I thought - but I told her she could, we'd agreed to have an 'open' relationship and all that 80's liberal bullshit. So I swallowed all the bile, and it didn't taste good, but then I had a good crap and flushed it all away. A few drinks to get the system in gear again and now, well you never know, we may even get married. Jesus Christ, duck guys, there is a low flying pig diving in from the sun...

Further details may follow.

As Mark has already mentioned my office was recently blown up. It didn't actually move, but the windows did enjoy a 0.6 of a second dash thirty yards to the left. Messy. That was it. Mark is right and apathy does rule.

Well enough of that personal stuff and more of this personal stuff. Welcome to *Götterdämmerung III*, if you like it, tell your friends.



● Joe McNally on the pleasures of fungi...

# adventures in mycology

Mushrooms. Mushrooms are fun. Of course, by the time this hits the streets, the season will be well and truly over, so you're going to have to keep this fanzine handy until next October, aren't you?

Magic Mushrooms are, basically, a great idea. They provide free, interesting trips in return for half an hour or so of wandering around a field with a carrier bag. This has always struck me as being a really good deal; a lot better than acid, because you don't have to give any money to crusties.

The important point about mushrooms is that you really need to know exactly what you're looking for, and where to look for it. Yer basic shroom is a sort of creamy brown, about two to four inches high, and has a very distinctively-shaped cap.

The cap should have a sort of nipple on top, and be roughly parabolic in shape, curving in around the edges. If it doesn't look like this, DON'T EAT IT!

After a couple of days of heavy rainfall, the mushrooms might look a bit grey. Don't worry about this, it doesn't affect the psilocybin, they're still safe to eat.

So, where should you look for them? Your garden (if you have one) can be a good starting point. Any large expanse of grass is bound to have at least a few dozen kicking around. You only need about forty for a fairly good trip.

Once you've got them, you can store them in a variety of ways. First of all, you can

make tea with them by bunging them in boiling water for a while; you can dry them out by putting them on a sheet of paper in the airing cupboard for a couple of days - three at most; or you can bung them in a jar of honey.

If you do make tea out of them, for god's sake don't drink it straight, because it



"And, of course, no side effects whatsoever..."



tastes fucking vile. I recommend mixing it about 4:1 with strong sweet black coffee, which covers the taste completely.

Well, you're probably saying, I've spent a day wandering around Glenariffe in the rain with a bin bag over my shoulder, I've spent hours brewing up litre upon litre of foul-smelling brown liquid, now what do I get?

Let you tell you about my first trip. Myself and my kid sidekick, Joli, took about sixty each in coffee. It took about half an hour to kick in, but then we felt ourselves getting lighter and lighter, and less able to precisely control our limbs.

After another twenty minutes or so, we felt incredibly 'up', a bit like we'd smoked a huge amount of dope, but without any of the bad bits, like the tiredness and the torpor.

After a while sitting round the house, we went out for a walk, which was interesting. We felt like we were walking on a very spongy mattress - like the ground was offering no resistance, but gradually firmed up and bounced us back. The streetlights were fascinating, I seem to remember.

Joli had arranged to phone her boyfriend that night, so she did; I waited outside the phone box for forty five minutes until she had finished, watching the traffic go past and trying to get a good look at the grid pattern the clouds were making behind the streetlights, over the ocean.

To give you some measure of how damned good we were feeling, this was midnight, in mid-October, on the North Coast of Northern Ireland; I was wearing an open shirt, a t-shirt, and light trousers and I didn't feel cold.

After Joli had finished on the phone, we wandered back to the house and watched some TV. It was Burt Reynolds in "The Mechanic", and I don't know whether it was the film or the mushrooms, but it made fuck all sense.

We gave up on that and made some coffee. We spent a highly enjoyable ten minutes or so watching the interesting swirly patterns the milk made in it, then drank it. Best coffee we'd ever had.

It was getting pretty late by this stage, so we got the fire going and put some nice music on the stereo (Glenn Branca's *Symphony #6, Devil Choirs at the Gates of Heaven* and Fripp and Eno's (*no pussyfooting*)) and sat and watched the fire for an hour or so, babbling at each other.

Eventually, I fell asleep on the sofa and Joli headed off to bed. Next morning, I felt damned fine (no hangovers with this stuff!) and well refreshed.

So what are you waiting for? Get a binbag and get picking!



## † In memorium †

This article is dedicated to the memory of Joseph McNally who recently died in a tragic and bizarre gardening accident. Joe and his ukelele will be sadly missed.

- Mark Mc Cann unfortunately survives...

## octocon II:the wrath of McCann

Octocon II: 5th and 6th October 1991.

My first thought on arriving at Octocon was- Shit, I'm dying. Sitting down in the Royal Marine hotel bar I was hit with a sudden and severe asthma attack. Whether this was triggered by the two and a half hour smoke-ridden bus journey I had just undergone, or the sight of so many Trekkies gathered together in one place, I couldn't decide. Looking at some sad individual dressed up as 'Data' from the Next Generation, I plumed for the latter. Whatever the aetiology of the attack though, I was at that moment getting less oxygen than a... an appropriate sf metaphor fails me.

Always a proponent of the dilatory qualities of alcohol, I croaked for a pint of Guinness and, just to be sure, to be sure, I inhaled a few shots of my Ventalin also. The attack quickly began to ease but for the rest of the weekend I felt somewhat weakened and irritable. This, I believe, may have somewhat coloured my views on the proceedings.

Before sniffing around the convention we decided to have another few drinks. Eugene bought first. Now, because there were seven of us, and as we were all determined not to let anyone miss out on a round, each person had to buy seven pints of Guinness before we could move on. Seven pints of Guinness takes a hell of a long time to pour never mind drink so this episode took up much of the morning.

That wouldn't have been too bad but for

the fact that some in the group drunk a lot faster than others; so while we were waiting for these 'others' to finish up, Tommy and James slipped their bottles of Smirnoff from under the table and began ordering orange juice from the bar. Triple vodka and oranges began to be passed around.

If truth be told, before I knew it we were plastered out of our skulls and spraying each other's hair green. Quite childish really, I suppose. My pubes haven't been right since.

And then it was teatime. I knew it was tea time because I got this sudden craving for liquid animal fat and chips. Four of us crawled of looking for Eugene's favourite Dun Laoghaire greasy spoon. Unfortunately, we found it.

And then it was back to the hotel but to a different bar this time- the one where the convention seemed to be actually taking place in. More Guinness, more vodka, more Ventalin. James White passed through my field of view; so too did some german girl in brown leather trousers and hairy armpits, which I quite liked- the trousers not the armpits, I mean... well, now that I come to think of it, the armpits as well.

Then Tommy took out his camera. Unfortunately, he only had a zoom lens with him and so had to stand three hundred yards back to get your whole face into shot. I haven't seen the final prints yet but I can guess most are made up of bits of "famous" sf authors features- ie. spot Ann

McCaffery's nasal hair; George RR Martin's hernia scars, etc. Then Eugene got out his fanzine with a bifurcated penis- which is quite a trick if you can do it.

"Is this the convention?", I asked Tommy.

"Oh, yes, isn't it wonderful?", he replied. Thinking that this is pretty much what goes on in Belfast on a Thursday night without the added bus fare but with the same people, I couldn't exactly agree. At least there were no Trekkies in Belfast. I suddenly felt homesick.

What was this awful fascination with a crap television programme? As far as I'm concerned The Next Generation could be retitled *The Exceedingly Bland Adventures of the Politically Correct Intragalactic Social Workers*. It's so self righteous it makes me want to puke which, funnily enough, is exactly what I did. Cleaning the vomit off Tommy's Hush Puppies, I decided to visit a few of the con-like activities that were taking place upstairs. Surely it couldn't all be Star Wank.

When I got up there I was informed most of the programme was over for the night but that old Blake's Seven episodes were being shown in the TV room. I stuck my head around the door of said room only to see a crowd of people being sexually aroused by Avon snogging it with Jenna - Jesus, free country and all that but give me a break!

Back to the bar and it was getting late. Damian was beginning to fight with Graham Andrews and calling the only hotel resident who could get us drink at four in the morning, "a fucking wanker"- not a smart move. I gave Graham the last of our Smirnoff to bring him under control.

I sat down only to be accosted by someone who told me the only sf novels he read were the James Blish Star Trek books. At this stage I was desperate enough to start talking to a John Norman fan-*anyone* apart from a bleeding Trekkie.

Eventually, I became so exhausted I just had to sleep; so it was back to the TV room to lie among the self-copulating fen of Blake's Seven. I lay down under a few chairs and slept fitfully except for being woken in the night by some asshole using my back as a footrest.

That night I had a pleasant dream in which Gene Roddenberry had died and the Enterprise and all its crew had sadly been wiped out by a show of extremely intolerant fascism.

A resigned feeling had come over me by the next morning- a detachment and out-of-focusness that I'd never felt before. Standing in the toilet watching Eugene unwittingly washing in a sink that James had only just thrown up in a few moments before, I decided to go for a walk along the Harbour.

There was a gentle breeze outside and the sun was quite warm for October. Seagulls flew overhead and the sound of the waves of Dublin Bay breaking against the shore soothed my pained brow. I put on my cool shades and sat contentedly watching the middle class girls of Dun Laoghaire taking their dogs for Sunday walks along the Harbour wall.

"Want to join Starbase Ireland?", asked a bubbly female Klingon with dayglo frontal lobes.

"Get a life", I replied quietly and headed off back to the hotel to enjoy another day at the con.



● Mark Mc Cann delves into the mystic...

# too late to stop

There's never much joy in the week between Christmas day and New Year' Eve. You wander around with a continuous headache after too much alcohol and sustained chocolate abuse. Nowhere's open and all your friends have pissed off somewhere else.

It's like you have stepped into a Twilight Zone where the population has been decimated by some unknown disease. Where the hell is everyone? It's so damned quiet.

So with a Van Morrison ticket in one hand and Paracodol in the other I walked through the deserted streets of Belfast to the Ulster Hall -(this was before the bomb and it was still in one piece), to hear the sour auld bastard sing and maybe shake off those post Christmas suicide blues.

The first three numbers were hammered out with all the soul and finesse of your average pub band. And what's more I had to stand. *Standing* at a Van Morrison concert! What were they expecting us to do? Dance?! Morrison has a reputation of not being very consistent in his live shows. If he's feeling particularly pissed off that night he'll stand behind the drummer; strum his guitar and mumble at his microphone for forty-five minutes and then walk off to much abuse from the audience. This show seemed to be sliding dangerously in that direction. After a particularly cruel and uncalled for version of *Moondance* I was ready for going home.

But then lo!-a waft of strange sickly smelling smoke came my direction and I felt my tensions clear. My headache eased slightly and I was suddenly surrounded by a gaggle of arse sweaters wearing celtic soul sisters.

Something was happening on stage too. A female xylophone player appeared followed by a female saxophonist and an oboe player. An oboe for Christssake at a rock concert!

The band eased into a version of *Sweet Thing*. Nothing like that insipid version by the Waterboys but the real thing. Lots of oboe and xylophone sounds and Van mucking about with a harmonica-shouting and grunting through it and generally scaring the audience who thought he was suffering a massive coronary.

"It's alright ladies and Gentlemen, Mr Morrison is just experiencing epiphany." This was followed by *Mama don't allow no saxophone round here* which actually did get people dancing. I'm not a fan of the Belfast Shouter's new material which has brought him some chart success and a new CD buying yuppie following. It's all soppy romantic ballads that the old fellow can knock out in his sleep -and most probably does. I prefer the eighty-five minute long rambling mystic celtic nonsense with incoherent lyrics and some obscure eastern european instrumentals. That or just his straight thumping blues numbers. Stuff Cliff Richard -give me John Lee Hooker any day.

The concert finished with three encores-Jesus, Van must be getting his oats these days. A brilliant rendition of *Ballerina* from *Astral Weeks* that would make even the most ardent hippy basher cry like a baby and then the whole evening was over. Three hours had passed and I felt like getting pissed. Why can't it be like this all the time?



● fiction from Graham Andrews

# brainwaive

## I

My name is Lionel Wesker.

I have long been an avid reader of true crime stories and blood-thirsty thrillers, so that when I set out to murder my rich -- but miserly -- Uncle Silas, I realised the importance of not making a single tell-tale mistake. After all, there are times when I am a little -- what's the word, no? -- absent-minded.

Also, in order to avoid even the most remote possibility of making an error, *simplicity* -- utter simplicity -- had to be the keynote. No elaborate alibi which ran the high risk of being broken by dogged detectives. No bizarre *modus operandi*. No tantalising red herrings.

Well . . . perhaps just *one* small red herring; a very simple one.

I'd have to rob my uncle's house, too, of the many (portable) valuables it contained, so that the actual murder would be passed off by the police as being the unfortunate aftermath of a common-or-garden burglary. Otherwise, as my uncle's sole heir, I myself would be the prime suspect.

Oh, yes . . . I've already mentioned my tendency towards absent-mindedness. One day, shortly after I'd decided to murder my Uncle Silas, I replied to this advertisement in the Sun-day:

"DR. MANTRA . . . IMPROVE YOUR CONCENTRATION IN JUST SEVEN DAYS OR MONEY REFUNDED. REVOLUTIONARY TECHNIQUE! . . . In scientific terms, concentration is the fixing of the attention; or a high degree of . . . 'etc., etc.'"

A small package, wrapped in the customary plain brown paper, soon landed upon my doormat. I lost no time in implementing Dr. Mantra's 'revolutionary technique' (which involved 'Vitaplex tablets' and mild self-hypnosis) and his general advice ('first things first', 'get your priorities right', etc.), to the letter.

Just over a week later . . .

I took great pains in acquiring a small, but suitably hefty crowbar in such a roundabout manner that it could not possibly be traced back to me. It would serve me well enough, both as a tool and as a murder weapon.

In fact, *every* move of the projected crime was planned with meticulous attention to detail. I dared not make a single error, and -- thanks to Dr. Mantra's Vitaplex tablets, etc. -- I was confident that I would not do so. The night and the hour were chosen with consummate care.

## II

It turned out to be a chilly, moonless night.

I made my way into the overgrown grounds of Uncle Silas' decrepit old mansion without being spotted. ("First things first', 'get your priorities right', etc.") The pencil flashlight which I carried gave me adequate illumination.

The crowbar easily and silently forced an entrance through a downstairs window. ("First things first', 'get your priorities right', etc.") Uncle Silas was too much of a skinflint to install even the cheapest burglar alarm system.

Cat-footed, I ascended the stairs.

The door to my uncle's bedroom was slightly ajar, but as no sound save for a raucous snoring issued from it, I decide to press on with the bogus burglary. ("First things first', 'get your priorities right', etc.") It had to be done according to plan; confusion, yes, but not too *organised*-looking.

I knew from previous clandestine visits just where the old Scrooge kept at least some of his jealously hoarded 'loot', but I'd have to make it look as if a thorough ransacking had taken place.

There was no need for me to hurry. ("First things first', 'get your priorities right', etc.") I moved like a wraith through the darkened house . . .

## III

Back home almost two hours later, I undressed quickly and clambered back into bed. Everything was A-OK. The police hadn't got a pup's chance of learning about the crime before tomorrow.

But, even supposing that they did come sooner, I was well prepared for them. ("First things first', 'get your priorities right', etc.") The money, the sundry valuables, and the incriminating crowbar had all been disposed of in a dank canal cut.

It had blistered my mercenary soul to jettison several thousand pounds worth of property, but it was the only safe way. ("First things first', 'get your priorities right', etc.") Besides, it was chickenfeed compared to the fortune which I'd inevitably inherit.

All of a sudden, there was a heavy knock at the front door.

"Already?" I asked myself, nervously.

But, after swallowing a Vitaplex tablet, I willed myself to be calm. ("First things first', 'get your priorities right', etc.") Throwing on my dressing gown, I went to the front door and opened it.

Three police officers pushed their way into the hall; a dapper, mustachioed detective flanked by two burly, uniformed constables. They bored down on me like avenging Furies.

"Are you Mr Lionel Wesker, unemployed bookbinder?" said the detective.

I nodded, abstractedly.

"I am Chief Inspector Lockhart, C.I.D." He continued, in magisterial tones: "Lionel Wesker, I have here a warrant for your arrest. Please be so good as to get dressed and come along with us."



"'A warrant for my arrest?'" I repeated, vaguely. "I don't understand. What for?"

"Burglary and grand larceny. You have –"

"Gulp."

"– the right to remain silent. Anything you *do* say will be taken down and may be used as evidence."

I mumbled something that might have been, "Why?"

"Your uncle saw and recognised you from his bedroom doorway. He stayed quiet until after you'd gone, then he walked down to the nearest police station and made out a complaint against you."

"I, I --"

"It seems that this telephone was cut off years ago, for persistent non-payment of bills. And he hasn't owned a bicycle, let alone a car, since 1947. He's not too keen on public transport either."

But I wasn't really listening to Chief Inspector Lockhart's wry explanation. I felt as if the sky itself had just fallen in upon me, never mind the ceiling.

I had made a mistake, after all. ("First things first", 'get your priorities right' – hah! Vitaplex tablets – again, hah! Dr. '... OR MONEY REFUNDED' Mantra is going to hear from me.") A very big mistake.

'The best laid schemes o' mice 'an men gang alft a-gley'.

I'd planned the perfect murder, sure enough, but – in my Vitaplex-ridden, self-hypnotised preoccupation with the mock burglary – had absent-mindedly forgotten to commit it.

## THE END.

Graham Andrews was born in Belfast but has wisely lived in Belgium since 1982. He has been published in *Extro*, *Foundation*, *Million*, *Paperback Inferno*, *The Sunday Sport*, *Big Bazookas*, and *Screw* magazine. He also won the Aishling Ghael competition in 1982.



● Mark McCann eats hard boiled eggs...

The first issue of Götter in 1992 so how about a review of the great movies of the year past? What an original idea! Well, not really I suppose but I'll do it anyway. Thinking about my movie-going over the past twelve months I am hard pressed to come up with any film worth wasting good 486 processing time writing about- and this is from someone who had a free Cannon Cinema pass for half the year! On the whole Hollywood's offerings in 1991 have been dire to say the least, and that's certainly true for the long suffering sf movie-goer.



# popcorn double feature

Okay, so there was *Terminator II*. I quite like Arnie- I must be the only Philip K. Dick fan who enjoyed *Total Recall*; the man has a certain gormless charm -but T2 left me deeply unsatisfied. At first glance there's the usual rake of mind-blowing special effects, eg. Mr Mercury Man, but the human mind is infinitely unimpressable and by the end of the two hours you're going: "Seen it all before". I saw T2 twice, (I had the free pass and there was nothing else to see that week), and half way through the second viewing I left in sheer boredom. A movie has got to have something more. Okay, supposedly T2 has a feminist/pro-gun law/right-on subtext and the violence is all ironic. I must admit my younger

brother started reading the works of Peter Kropotkin after seeing big Arnie smash a few heads- did he fuck...

## Revolutionary chic

That's it with the sf movies- give me the arty french movie any day. *Milou en Mai* and *Romauld et Juliett*. (So maybe they weren't released in 1991 but that's when I saw them so they're eligible). *Milou* is directed by Louis Malle and concerns a group of bourgeoisie French enjoying a week in the country in 1968. Suddenly they hear on the radio that the students are revolting and President De Gaulle is considering heading for the hills. Things start to get weird -communal love, crabs, slipping on semen in the streets etc., but suddenly reality returns when they find out that the geezer with the big conk is still in power. Great.

## Sex and Yoghurt

*Romauld et Juliett* is one of those films that if Hollywood made a version of it you would throw up in disgust at its tweeness by about scene two. The owner of a Yoghurt factory is caught up in an insider dealing scam and runs off with his large black office cleaner, cuddly Juliett. She lives in a tiny flat with her three kids. They end up getting married and you leave the cinema full of peace and love man. Get it out on video- honestly, it's not as bad as it sounds. I remember reading Dashiell Hammett's

*Red Harvest* one summer while working in a compost factory. Good reading for getting your brain back into gear after sealing ten million black plastic bags, I can tell you. The Cohen brothers' *Miller's Crossing* is an almost perfect translation of *Red Harvest* to the big screen - something I didn't realise until about half way through the movie when I got this sudden image of a sealed black plastic bag before me...

Some of the scenes are too good to be true, eg, Albert Finney's Danny Boy and Tommy gun episode. You just want to stand up and applaud the directors. The dialogue is excellent. I wanted to take out a notebook and write it all down - which would have been quite useful right at this moment. Forget the *Godfather*, forget *Goodfellas*, the *Untouchables*, etc. See *Miller's Crossing* at least five times.

Next up, *Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer*. No Dr Lector, this bloke. No sirree, bit of a psycho actually and not a film I would recommend to anyone as I kinda wish I hadn't seen it myself. Violent death for absolutely no reason apart from having something to do. The eyeball bursting scene was the worst... I think. Less offensive than *Silence of the Lambs* though - at least the death isn't glossed up and Henry is unlikely ever to become anyone's sculthero. Last movie is *Ai No Corriada* a.k.a. *In the Realm of the Senses*. Banned for sixteen years it only got a certificate in 1991 and I still can't understand how it got past those bloody censors.

If you like your films to have real sex graphically portrayed then this Japanese masterpiece is for you. I've got to admit I enjoyed it immensely despite the annoying number of people who walked out. Jesus - it said on the posters: 'EXPLICIT SEX' - what did they expect? Fun with Dick and Jane?

I don't understand this difficulty people have with sex in films - these same people

who enjoy seeing extreme violence. A movielike T2 with individuals getting their heads crushed in giant cogwheels gets a 15 certificate. But show some love making - and let's face it, incredible as it might seem, most people have sex at least *once* in their lives - and we are not even allowed to see it by the censors. Which is more objectionable?

I don't believe *Ai No Corriada* is pornographic - it involved two people who both equally wanted to perform various interesting sex acts. So what? Eating a hard-boiled egg will never be the same again. Less violence, more sex please! Post coital cigarettes in the foyer later.



### Blown Flowers

I am a Vulcan Flower.

I exist in an emotional conundrum!

From the barren wastes of Ceti Alpha Six

My mistress, T'Pol, took me

On a voyage to where no flower had gone before.

Virgin mists of ancient time begotten  
Under skies of crystalline delithythium  
Loved Kirk but forbidden to come  
To Warp Speed:

Alien Life forms orgasmed

Now it is illogical captain, in this position.

Seven years my wrathful loins search  
Motioning homewards, clinging on to some hope

For an enterprising cloaking device.  
My photon torpedo ejected too soon  
Causing a fascinating, but illogical,  
Planetary Erupting blossom...

Damian Kearney

- Tommy Ferguson surveys the fanzine horizon.

# charity, chastity, prudence and

In response to our efforts with Götterdämmerung over the past year we have received a lot of zines in trade; something we are always keen to get.

**A Child's Garden of Olaf 11/Outhouse 3.**  
Ken Cheslin, 10 Coney Green, Stourbridge,  
West Midlands, DY8 1LA

ACGOO 11 contains, unsurprisingly, a lot of Olaf cartoons. I don't know about cute, as James calls them, but I think the basic nature of the art in the cartoons and the extremely silly captions go a long way to explaining just why they work. A lot of the humour evident in the illustrations is of the slapstick variety but there are also one or two gems like a pirate being threatened with a cutlass and replying: "cold steel is no defense against peanut butter."

Articles? Who needs em? Oh, okay. There was some class stuff from that old die hard ('and boy we've tried...') Eric Mayer on fan history which some on the committee weren't too clued up on. I caught one or two bits and looked up my Fancypedia for the rest and thoroughly enjoyed it. Its the sort of fan writing you can enjoy even though you know in your heart of hearts that Harry Bond is going to love it as well.

Flotsam & Jetsam, I thought, should have come before the Dud Dudley article as it explained away the whole story before you even got to it. This spoiled the appreciation somewhat, which is a shame as it too proved an interesting read. China

ten years on provided an interesting insight into an area which none of us really knows that much about. David Wingrove has tried, to varying degrees (depending on who you believe...) but this first hand insight is something you don't often get.

**What You See Is What You Get**  
Eugene Doherty, Flat 3, 92 Eglantine Ave,  
Belfast BT9

It's strange that Eugene thanks Vinç Clarke for his great tolerance and constructive criticism over WYSIWYG - which amounted to: "any fool can cut out pictures"; but that is obviously what he did. But Oh, what pictures. They range from the cover which illustrates and interesting anatomical display of self mutilation, to cannibalism, Nazism, Christianity, Zombies, Medieval Tortures and loads of other offensive material mostly involving Genitalia.

Taken in totality what you see IS what you get and this needs a lot more work. Not something to read in the toilet. Actually, it is something to read in the toilet.

**STET 2,3, &4**  
Leah Zeldes Smith, 17 Kerry Lane,  
Wheeling, IL 60090-6415, USA

Now, THIS is a fanzine. It's dupered to such a high degree of clarity you begin to appreciate just how cheap yet versatile this method of production is and not only because of E-Stencilling. The artwork

looks as though it was drawn for the Duper but with Alan Hunter and Brad Foster featuring then you know that this is a plus and not a minus for the zine. It's laid out immacutely and the text fits well. Altogether it looks just great.

Looking good and reading good are generally two mutually exclusive qualities, but not in this case. Its all about fans and fanzines, food recipes, buying and moving house (that perennial fan topic), loads of LOCs and lots of fannish infighting and general bitching, you know that fannish stuff. If you're into typical fanzines, you'll be well into STET.

**Arrows of Desire 5.5.**  
S.V. O'Jay, P.O. Box 29. Hitchin, Herts,  
SG4 9TG, UK.

This is a four page follow-on from AOD 5 and appears to be an interim report on the LOCs and responses to that issue whilst the editor prepares to get the next issue together. Then again, I may be mistaken. AOD was supposed to be appear in Nov. 1991 (it may already have, the tail end of 1991 wasn't good for some of the Götter team and LOCs/zines etc went unanswered).

AOD 5 contained a deeply serious article that the author/editor expected a lot of replies to but seemingly didn't get. In this interim issue he does get a reply from one of the people concerned and it is dramatic and gut wrenching reading. Its not a

pleasant, easy to read zine, but for the brilliance of the writing and the it is definitely worthwhile. Get this.

**ERG 114.**  
T. Jeeves, 56 Red Scar  
Dr., Scarborough, N.  
Yorkshire, YO12 5RQ;

The last I heard of ERG was when I got the 100th issue with an editorial L saying that this would be the final issue. Famous last words eh. So we go and do *Götterdämmerung* and send it out, more as a thank you for the many issues of Erg I got than anything else, and lo and behold issue 113 & 4 popped through the editorial letterbox.. and even more strangely nothing has changed - thankfully.

It is still the same mixture of congenial and interesting articles; still the clear and well presented layout and reproduction and the illos are still as Jeevian as before. I like this zine. Nothing jumps out to grab my guts and twist, turn and shake them like Arrows of Desire yet I do feel better after reading it, it brings a smile to my face and a chuckle to my lips. Whatever else you may say of it achieves that.

**Saliromania 2,3...by Mike Ashley**  
Oh dear, no room...

fanzines

- another riveting travelogue from you know who...

# ferguson on tour

"You're in Fahan now..."

This is the catchphrase of nearly fifteen years of family holidays in the small Donegal village of Fahan. About ten miles across the border from our home town of Derry this idyllic hamlet is the perfect place for aspiring authors to get away from it all; and harassed Tax Collectors to get some very necessary R&R. Now we all know how I get on with the family so it may surprise some of you (Hi Pamela...) to find out that not only did I go to Fahan for five days with my family but seven nieces and nephews as well. That is six adults and seven children in a house designed for four. It will probably surprise you even more to find out that I had a thoroughly good time.

The reasons for this are fairly self evident: there was a lot of people around, there were the kids and we're talking about Fahan; the last is the most important of all. The fact that there were seven adults meant that not all of them would be around at the same time, I enjoyed talking with one or the other at various times and could then go off on my own or go and talk to another person. This was how I discovered my sister is three months pregnant with her fourth child -she wants seven but will probably stop when she has her first girl. Things like this slip past you when you don't keep in touch.

Most people who know me realise that I hate kids. All the children that were on holiday with us were under six years old, probably the most obnoxious children you

can get. They have personalities of their own but are insanely jealous of each other and everything that goes on has to be seen to be fair to each of them. Christ they really annoy me. Close friends though will also know I'm sucker for the little sods. Nyree has even said, ominously, that I'd make a great father after seeing me 'entertain' three of them at one go. Taking the kids to the beach in Fahan was an undeniable joy; it was so clear that they were enjoying the experience for exactly the same reasons I'd enjoyed it fifteen to twenty years ago. I enjoyed it with them, though I supposed I envied them more than anything.

That brings me to the beach and the place itself. To get to the beach you have to walk down forty three steps inlaid into a steep cliff. Nyree, who visited briefly, asked half way down:

"Who laid these stones?" I took great delight in telling her, "My great grandfather."

The family has been here for as long as I can remember and longer still and it is obvious to a blind man why.

It is beautiful.

Lough Swilly not only looks stunning, it smells wonderful and the sounds on a late summers eve are such as would make your heart sing. Look it up on a Map, its just across the border from 'Londonderry' in amongst the little villages which surround the lough, with relief mountains to the back, the sound out to one side, Inch



Island to another and the glory of the lake spread out like a checkered tablecloth before you. Constable definitely missed his vocation.

The memories that place hold for me are incalculable. There is lifting apples from the doctor in the village. He lived behind a six foot wall (which appeared to be at least fifteen feet to us when we were knee height to a grasshopper) and who had a ravenous dog. It was fed twice a year on small children who had the audacity to try lifting apples. It never caught anyone but the merest hint of a bark and the wild stories our parents told and the rumours that the old men outside the tavern were wont to relate had us off down the drive and over the wall like Daley Thompson on steroids. Although the apples were nearly always run through with maggots they tasted wonderful to us.

The best way to get to the orchard was up the beach. Now, when I say we live in Fahan I should clarify that this is just to indicate the general area in which we lived you would need a bloody good map to see Beach Halt. In reality we lived about two miles outside the village towards Buncrana, and as the road curved and tortuously bent back upon itself so much this was more like three and a half. So we tramped up the beach to get anywhere near the best vantage point towards those wonderfully puke-full apples.

The beach is wonderful place to a ten year old. One day its the midst of Holland in 1943 with German soldiers everywhere trying to shoot the hapless Irish Rangers (a bit of childhood license here) out of the

skies and the intrepid sergeant (officers were pansies) shooting seven kinds of shit out them. On other occasions it was the worm infested deserts of Dune with the real sand dunes continually being assaulted with sticks trying to call the sand worms. Walking to the apples was of course high adventure with the French Foreign Legion; accuracy being replaced with the amazing discoveries washed up on the shore: crabs a foot and a half in diameter, star and jellyfish and shotgun cartridges. By the time it came around to snitching the apples you were too tired fighting off inter-galactic invading space fleets to even think of climbing the amazing 'Ringwall' to get to them, making up stories when you got back home empty handed about how it was the bi-annual feeding time for Bonzo.

Living in 'Beach Halt' you could only go one way up the beach, down towards Buncrana was the North-West golf club. Oh here was so much adventure you could shake a stick at (or, as was the case, a golf club) and still get paid for having a high old time. If there any golfers amongst our readership they will know of the boys who continually 'find' lost golfballs and attempt to sell them back to the employers. We were the pinnacle of chutzpa, looking out for the balls as they sailed over grass banks and the dunes, keeping an eye on the direction and then (a few hours later) attempting to sell the balls we stolen back to the players we'd pinched them off. Not only was this financially rewarding it was also trespassing, theft and a brass neck that deserved a good thump.

There were some wonderful locations amongst the golf course: the dug outs where



the players went when it rained, damp and smelling of stale urine. The watercourse that ran through the middle of the main fairway that was narrow (about four or five feet across) but extremely fast and very dangerous; being kids though that only added to the thrill as the golfers weren't likely to follow us over the stream with golf bags and carts. There were also sand banks near the beach which were inhabited by a bunch of mixamatoxis rabbits which I even now shudder to think about; children can be very cruel.

Behind our house (everyone called it 'The Hut' because it had a two foot wall surround built up with tin sheets and then laid over with a tin and plywood roof) was the mountains. Even now when I know they barely qualified as hills I still call them the mountains. They were covered with that rich deep purple heather that grows very close to the ground and is extremely thick and makes a wonderfully soft mattress as you tumble arse over tit down hundreds of feet of mountainside. Yes there were large out-cropping of rock, boulders strewn everywhere, lurking in amongst the heather waiting to jump out at the stupid kids. Steering down a mountainside when your tumbling head over heels and rolling around and around was a major factor in your skill level and survival rate. So okay, we broke a few limbs here and there, and there was that serious skull fracture but hey, we had a good time.

The mountains were covered with sheep with an attitude. If you've seen TASH 6 you will know what I mean by sheep with an attitude. Sheep aren't natural. They were

genetically designed and breed from the original stock to be chops wearing sweaters; well someone forgot to tell the Irish sheep and boy are they pissed. We had chased them wildly one day throwing things at them and generally being very nasty and childlike and they just stood there looking at us charging them. The closer we got the harder they stared, and I was never very good at out staring people, but a sheep? Naturally the less they moved and the closer we got the more worried and agitated we became; they knew something. This wasn't right, and we'd slow down and then stop. Jump up and down a bit, shouting and waving our arms vigorously; all to no effect. How the hell can a sheep out-cool you?

Up on the mountain, a way off towards the Buncrana end of the 'range', was the old rock where they used to conduct masses in secret when it was banned by the English (or was it where St. Patrick first met the locals, or where the Doherty Clan first proclaimed Donegal their own; y'know, one of those stories which make the Americans feel good about parting with their money) which has now become a wishing well. We'd get the tourists on coach trips trekking up the side of the mountain throwing their useless foreign currency into the waters and the Germans thinking of the return on their wishes and then there were the English. They would widely proclaim how great this was, never realising they'd caused it in the first place. We'd be watching this from a few hundred yards off, just over the rise amongst the heather, when they'd gone we'd wade into the water and recover whatever copper

and silver that was spendable.

Coming from the beach, to Fahan, up across the mountains and down into Buncrana we come full circle. After the wonderfulness of mother nature saying here you go humanity, beat this; we try and fail miserably: Buncrana is a hernia on the bum of the world. Imagine, if you will, the tackiest of tacky seaside resorts. No, no, worse than that; go on let the paint peel a bit more, the shop displays are somewhat more soiled and the barkers on the rides are older and a bit more hoarse. Those lager louts you imagine on the Prom have imbibed a similar number of pints but its Guinness, the noise from the night clubs is more rowdy and the gift shops are keeping the Hang Sen at an all-time high. Imagine all this, imagine all this and worse and you just might come close to picturing Buncrana in your mind; but I doubt it.

Jesus Christ, but we loved it.

You have got to remember that we were kids anything from five years up, when I first started going to Fahan for my holidays. Buncrana was a consumer land: it had arcades, ice cream, candy floss, fun fairs, rides, dodgem cars and parents who would give you money for all of these and more if only you'd leave them alone with their few drinks and the horse racing/bingo. We got into place weren't supposed to, shot things with the air rifles (usually each other) and generally got up to all sorts of mischief. A particularly evil stunt I remember was when it was late and time that the parents would come looking for us we'd go down to the west end of the

town notorious for its night clubs and places of disrepute and badger the drunks until they'd give us 10p. Twenty years on the roles have reversed somewhat.

Buncrana was Disneyland in North West Ireland and no-one could tell us different. As the years passed though the avenues of fun and entertainment became less and less; even the 'west end' became dull and predictable. We saw the beer for what it was, the smiling faces weren't laughing with you and joys of the arcades paled into a neon lit dark underworld where kids got off on power trips. Growing up is a nasty business, but there are still the memories:

"Thomas get your feet off the sofa, you're not in Fahan now you know..."



## The strange world of Null-A

An occasional cut-out-and-keep foray into the strange and interesting world of Null-A symbolic logic from our resident AE Van Vogt expert, Damian Kearney:

1. All science fiction fans wear glasses.
2. People who wear glasses have bad eye sight.
3. Masturbation causes bad eye sight.
4. QED. All sf fans are wankers.

Need we say more...

- Bo Carson with an essay on the fantasy and sf of Harlan Ellison.

# blood thoughts

*"It's a confrontation from morning 'til night. It's a confrontation with yourself. With the people around you, or with your society, or just with nature... the stance is one of readiness, of understanding. That you must inter-relate... if there's no confrontation, then the police win, and the system wins. If you don't take an electric current and run it into that jelly, then that jelly is going to stay jelly all the rest of its life. Confrontation seems to me a very worthwhile and worthy thing."*

*-Harlan Ellison April 1976*

Describing violence properly. Studying confrontation. It practically goes without saying that these are two of the main preoccupations in Harlan Ellison's writing. To say the least, Ellison puts his characters in situations that are extreme. There is the grotesque descent into the sewers in *Croatoan*, and the narrator's confrontation with the aborted children riding the alligators. AM inflicts as much pain, both emotional and physical, as he possibly can on the last five people left alive in *I have no mouth and I must scream*, and the story seems to be an outburst of rage against the human condition; or as Virginia Kidd describes it, it is a story of religious experience. It is a fable, a myth. Ellison is concerned with creating myths out of man's violence against himself and his environment. Or as Ellison himself puts it in his introduction to *Deathbird Stories*:-

*"A New Testament of deities for the computerised age of confrontation and relevance. A grimoire and a guide. A pantheon of the holiest of holies for modern man.*

*Know then now... they rule the nights through which we move. Kitty Genovese met one of them, as did the students of Kent State University. Black men have known them longer than white men, but have been ill served by them."*

Back to confrontation. If we're talking about confrontation, then we must, by necessity, talk about confrontation with something. The confrontation in Ellison's writing is with those who stand by, with that horrible tendency we all in fact have to stand by whilst cruelty and stupidity thrive. Again and again Ellison comes back to the brutal rape and murder of Kitty Genovese, knifed to death in New York's Kew Gardens in full view of thirty eight people who simply stood and watched whilst her killer took over thirty minutes to carve her up. The incident is the very obvious source of inspiration for Ellison's *The Whimper of the Whipped Dogs*, and the story is mentioned as a key-note in a number of his introductions, even to compilations of his early work, such as *The Deadly Streets* and *No Doors, No Windows*. Why the Genovese murder is such an obsession with Ellison is explained very aptly by Philip K. Dick in his essay *Man, Android and Machine*:-

*"I fear the cold, the weariness; I fear the death of wearing out on endless stairs, while someone cruel, or anyhow wearing a cruel mask, watches and offers no aid- the machine, lacking empathy, watching as mere spectator, the same horror which I know haunts Harlan Ellison."*

I mention *The Whimper of the Whipped Dogs* for a particular reason. It was the first Ellison story which I can actually remember reading, and it had a very strong impact on me. Back in 1977, back in the good old days of punk, back in the days of Patti Smith and the Clash on the radio, and impending apocalypse in the air, (or so we all thought), I was coming back from a concert in the Ulster Hall, accompanied by some friends. So there we all were, standing at the bus stop, minding our own business, as if out of nowhere there appeared a gang of skin heads. They surrounded us, but the really strange thing was that none of them said anything. They simply encircled us so that we had our backs against the wall. Nothing was shouted at us. They just stood there and stared at us for what seemed like a very long time.

The seconds stretched. Then I felt myself being kicked and hit on the head. I thumped one of them and promptly got mashed into the wall for my stupidity. After about a minute we were all lying on the street covered in bruises. It took a long time for everything to sink in, but later on, when I got home, I started to think about what had happened to us. These people had never met me before in their lives, and I had said nothing to them, done nothing to them. They had simply decided to kick my head in and calmly walk away. All through the incident they were expressionless. Apart from the fact that it very probably been a sectarian attack, it didn't render the incident any more comprehensible to me. It had been a methodical doing over, as if they were used to doing this sort of thing. Machines lacking empathy. The first time I'd sat down to write a story a couple of years prior to this, it had been heavily influenced by *The Whimper of the Whipped Dogs*. I re-wrote the story after the attack, making the violence more graphic. More realistic.

So what's the point of all this? What does my own personal experience have to do with Harlan Ellison? The point I think is that when you've experienced violence it is very difficult to find a rational, intellectual explanation for what has happened. It simply doesn't help. To quote Ellison on the Genovese murder:-

*"I was never satisfied with the intellectual theories about why no one had aided her. It's not the kind of dehumanised behaviour that can be explained with phrases like 'disinvolvement' or 'alienation' or 'inurement to the realities of violence from seeing so much death on nightly newscasts'. It was the kind of mythic situation that could only be explained in terms of magic realism, fantasy."*

This idea isn't a new one, really. The problem with trying to intellectually comprehend the violence and horror of existence is that in the process one can become twisted and perverted oneself. Or as Nietzsche put it: *'Battle not with monsters, lest ye become a monster, and if you gaze into the abyss, the abyss gazes also into you'*. And so it is that in *The Whimper of the Whipped Dogs* that Beth becomes a part of the brutality and darkness that has been inflicted upon her:-

*"Tomorrow she would not have to worry about walking in the streets, because no harm could come to her. Tomorrow she could even remove the police lock. Nothing in the city could do her any further evil, because she had made the only choice. She was now a dweller in the city, now wholly and richly a part of it. Now she was taken to the bosom of her God... she drank deeply of the night, knowing whatever voices she heard from this moment forward, they would be the voices not of*

*whipped dogs, but those of strong, meat-eating beasts."*

And so it is that violence and horror are understood in Ellison's fiction in terms of the fantastic. Ellison seems to be concerned with creating a vision out of conflict. It is as if Ellison is following Joseph Conrad's dictum: *"Immerse yourself in the most destructive element- and swim!"*. This is made clearer in his introduction to *No Doors, No Windows*, where Ellison defines the true artists as 'the mad dreamers', *'reporting back that the midnight of madness is upon us; that wolves who turn into men are stalking our babies; that trees will bleed and birds will speak in strange tongues'*. Although Ellison has very clear ethical concerns these are superseded by a wish to *'speak of the unreal, the forbidden, all the seasons of the witch'*. Light and darkness, good and evil, are simply two sides of the same coin; both are necessary for change, for conflict, for the dynamics of art. In Ellison's work, an incident of horror or brutality is just as equally capable of providing a protagonist with insight as any moment of joy or mystical experience. This theme is evidenced most acutely in *Paingod*, when Trente returns to the Ethos, having visited Earth and dispensed pain. The conclusion he has come to at the end of the story is an understanding of his role:

*"I know that pain is the most important thing in the universes. Greater than survival, greater than love, greater even than the beauty it brings about. For without pain there can be no pleasure. Without sadness there can be no happiness. Without misery there can be no beauty. And without these, life is endless, hopeless, doomed and damned."*

If all this seems somehow nihilistic it is simply because Ellison avoids ideology and false optimism. In his essay cum introduction to *Approaching Oblivion, Reaping the Whirlwind*, he rails against the mediocrity of the 'Common Man' and points out that for every Ghandi and Thoreau, there will be *'a hundred thousand Nixons to stifle freedom of expression, joy of living and preservation of the past'*. It is the voice of an Ellison grown disillusioned by the failures of the revolutionaries of the sixties and early seventies, by their betrayal of their own values, by the fact that all too many people ultimately sold out to the mores of Middle America, Ronnie Reagan. And if you think I'm being pessimistic here, just consider how many people consistently and persistently voted for Thatcher, read the Sun etc. ad nauseam perpetuating the twisted and failed values of a mediocre society.

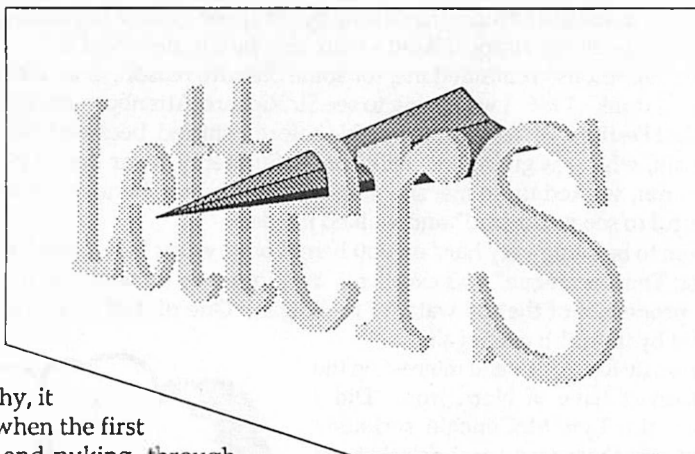
But I digress from the essential point here (but there's nothing like getting carried away with a little vitriol every now and again -does wonders for the spirit). The point is, I suppose, that within each individual there is good and evil, an infinite capacity for inflicting and receiving pain. As Ellison puts it, there is only *'a membrane, only a vapour, that separates Robbie Burns and his love, from a Leopold Sacher-Masoch and his hate'*. Perhaps it is the ultimate and terrifying paradox of the human condition. Fantasy allows us to tackle this problem, to try to understand it; to communicate the pain in strange and wonderful images that will linger in our minds. The last word here should be Ellison's: *"And all we have to stand between us and the irrational crazy chicken-running-around-squawking terror that those mortal dreads lay on us, is wisdom and courage. That is why I tell you all this, and why I write to shock you and anger you and frighten you. To tell you with love and care that you are not alone."*



Longer letter column  
this time. Thank you all  
so much for actually  
reading this shit..

Joe McNally, 106  
Somerton Road,  
Belfast, BT15 4DG

Dear  
Götterdämmerung,



Lawk-a-mercy, two  
issues old already. Why, it  
only seems like June when the first  
issue came, mewling and puking, through  
my letterbox. Probably because it was only June.

Anyway, *Götterdämmerung II* was, to say the very least, partly rugose and partly  
squamous, but not unwelcome. Frankly, after the savaging you got from the reviewers  
(Mike Ashley, come on down), I would have expected you to throw yourselves off the top  
of the Europa immediately. And was it just me or did nobody really notice that there are  
three editors, only one of whom has a "Ferguson" in their name?

"Always coming home" was a whinging piece of crap. Sorry, Tommy, I'm sure it's not  
nice to have your life story described in these terms. But... well, it was just a downer. Not  
that I want you to stop writing stuff like this; I mean, that's how you get better. I just didn't  
like it.

"Full Metal Aerosol"; if you're not careful, I'll write you an article about my pilonidal  
sinus one of these days. Then you'll be sorry.

"Streams of Whiskey" was a long-overdue look at one of the greats of European  
Literature. It's a pity that Mark missed out the one piece of naBraienenn's work that most  
people would be familiar with, the original treatment for John Ford's 'The Quiet Man'. Of  
course, it was changed radically before it made it to the screen, so much so that  
naBraienenn insisted his name be removed from the credits, but it still retains something  
of the charm of his vision. He actually makes a cameo appearance in the pub scene, for  
these with dead good freeze-frame and frame-advance on their videos.

"Mona Lisa Overhype" could have been longer. In fact, it should have been longer. The  
Brunner/cyberpunk thing has been discussed in the past, and it really needs a bit more  
than one page to go into it properly.

"Nauseous Odyssey" - Brilliant! A Masterpiece! It's just a pity that Tommy leaves out a  
couple of minor pieces of information, like the name of the con he was on his way to, the  
name of the hotel he's bitching about, when all this took place, where it was, unimportant  
shit like that. Now, I know that it was Follycon, in Liverpool, in 1988. This raises the  
important question of what the fuck Tommy is doing publishing a three-and-a-half year  
old conrep that's already been in TASH (or was it THINGY?) and doesn't actually tell you  
anything about the con. Other than that, I liked it.

Good to see that I'm not the only fan with good taste in music. The Fatima Mansions



concert was made all the more interesting by the speed-crazed skinheads at the front who kept trying to kill the support band - who, let's face it, deserved it.

"Poetic Champions" reminded me, for some obscure reason, of an incident which took place in - I think - 1986. I was going to see Sir Richard Attenborough speaking as part of the Belfast Festival. I was waiting outside before it started, because I had to meet up with my cousin, who was giving me a lift home. Suddenly, a car drew up and Sir Richard stepped out, walked up to me, shook me warmly by the hand, exclaimed "Absolutely wonderful to see you again!" and walked inside.

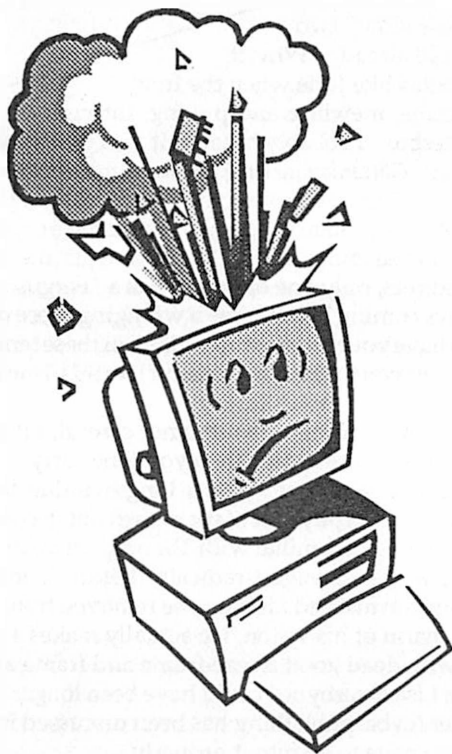
I do seem to be being very hard on you here, Tommy, but "Thoughts" was shite as well. "Belfast: The Decalogue" was excellent. You forgot to mention the marvellous health-giving properties of the spa water of the Lagan. One pint of that, and you'll never be troubled by ill health ever again.

But seriously folks, it's dead interesting the view formers have of Norn Iron. Did I mention the Lyn McConchie seriously thought that there was a real risk that she might be kidnapped and used as a human car bomb? *[without the car?]* Now, I know that this would in fact be a good move on the part of the provos, but ferfuxake, like. Gerry O'Connor. Sorry, who is this cunt? Hadn't his parents heard of gin and hot baths? Seriously. Does he have some juicy information on you three? *[No, but he does have a laser printer]* and if not why the fuck do you publish huge piles of steamies like his two pieces in *Götterdämmerung II*?

I mean, they're not just dull... completely ungrammatical... little spas... Did he bollocks! .. without wishing to seem too pedantic... A minor factual error, which, it must be said, still does not prevent the whole article from being an experience somewhat less enjoyable than having electrodes attached to your testicles and then being forced to talk to Mark Whatfuck. *[Note: this paragraph has been substantially edited.]*

Letters: Ken Lake. HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA. Christ what a useless cunt. Shit for brains and sense of humour to match. Ken, honey, didn't some of the other SF facts alert you to the fact that they were not actually true? Or do you really think that the Queen Mum (god bless 'er) has the world's largest Van Vogt collection?

No, the Ulsterbus didn't take a circuitous route. He took you down the M1 to Belfast, then he took you out the ring road to Cultra. I don't know what the hell you expected? A quick game of pass the parcel in the Europa?



"With the reputation of the people of the six counties being what it is..." Sorry, Ken, are you attempting to imply something here? Like that the people from Northern Ireland have a reputation for being incorrigible sex murderers? Because it's news to me.

Actually, attempts have been made to silence the Sunday World. A few years ago, the provos shot its northern editor. I'm glad to hear you approve of such tactics for dealing with people whose views you find disagreeable.

*[Calm down Joe, calm down. Catch a fucking grip.]*

"Dop",

Orchard Cottage, 2 Saville Hall Lane, Dodworth, Barnsley, Yorks, S75 3NG.

Sign outside a pub in Barnsley: "Karaoke Evening- Your chance to make a complete prat of yourself in front of all your friends."

Regarding Cyberpunk, well, there's nothing really new.. A book written in the mid-70s had people putting electrodes on their heads and entering a computer 'virtual reality' type world..

But surely scotch Whisk(e)y is spelt without the 'e', and you missed out the "West Midlands Serious Crime Squad" warrant card in the list of 'things not to take along'. Bye for now.

*[Have you ever heard of the word 'pedantic'?]*

Hilary Robinson

25 Princetown Road, Bangor, Co. Down, BT20 3TA.

I am overcome with guilt and remorse for never having responded to *Götterdämmerung* Vol 1 No 1. Has there been a vol 1 No 2? *[yes]* Put down my ungrateful silence to any or all of the following:-

- 1) Being one of the "eleven gainfully employed persons in the province" (page 13).
- 2) Eating, drinking and sleeping (but not necessarily in that order)
- 3) Bashing out the odd word now and again on my WP in order to maintain my claim to being a "writer"

(Delete as appropriate)

I believed every one of your "It's a fact!" titbits until the last on page 21, which I know to be a fallacy, so I was therefore shocked that all the rest must be untrue as well (you mean Arthur C. Clarke's geraniums DIDN'T win???)

I had some problems with Magherafelt being described as "Approximately 50 miles east north east of Belfast" (page 17) which would place it somewhere between Larne and the Mull of Kintyre. Is it the fabled lost city of Atlantis?

*[Point taken, Hilary, but the bus journey has James disorientated somewhat.]*

Walt Willis,

32 Warren Road, Donaghadee, N.I. BT21 0PD.

Thank you for *Götterdämmerung II*. I feel privileged to witness this apotheosis of the current N.I. fanzine. Readability seems to have miraculously accompanied legibility, so

that nearly all of your material is high class.

I have a special interest in Mark's review of Pirsig's latest, because my reaction to the original 'Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance' was similar to his, and a lengthy review of it was the last fanzine article I wrote during my previous period of fan activity. My tentative conclusion at that period (1975) was that Pirsig's practical message for world improvement amounted to little more than that of Candide, namely to cultivate your garden (or maintain your motorcycle) as to set an example to others. It's interesting to note that his is how the downfall of communism has actually been brought about, by first hand observation of the superior efficiency of the western economic system. *[I've just started reading the sequel 'Lila' -sadly it has a serious lack of 'Quality']*.

Tommy Ferguson's account of his family was poignant, unexpectedly so to a member of the other persuasion. We Prods are inclined to think of Catholics as happy-go-lucky lot, preserved from guilt by the ritual of priestly absolution.

Mark's account of his verucca and other feet fungi was horrifying. I had what I understood to be verucca once, but it was only a lump on my finger. Nevertheless my doctor said I'd better get rid of it and sent me to the hospital. To my surprise they admitted me overnight and the next morning gave me a general aesthetic. I felt I was using the NHS resources frivolously, but judging from Mark's experience they were dead right.

I'm suspending judgment on whether or not Mark's account of Conor NaBraienenn is a hoax. I can accept, just, the possibility of copies of Astounding making their way from Shannon to Killybegs, a long and circuitous journey, but the role of Swatragh is a little too much.

After more angst from Tommy Ferguson it was a relief to come upon some as cool as James McKee on lukewarm fusion, but I thought Mark McCann's piece about Seamus Heaney at the funeral was the best thing in this issue. Incidentally both Mark and his famous relative seem to me to display over- sensitivity to the reference by British newspapers to famous Irishman as "English Speaking". It is of interest to the english reader that an inhabitant of a neighbouring island should win a cycle race in France or make himself prominent in what is after all English Literature. I don't see anything presumptuous about drawing the reader's attention to it, anymore than would a reference to Joseph Conrad as part of English literature imply some sort of cultural imperialism vis à vis Poland.

Of the two other excerpts from Tommy's diary, the lecture bit is the one I would prefer to see extended. The Belfast decalogue had some nice bits, but assumed too much local knowledge, and Gerry O'Connor assumed too much knowledge of computers for at least one reader. It was nice though to know that one's education was being extended by someone who knows what he is talking about. I don't feel quite the same assurance on Tommy Ferguson and the Russian revolution, but perhaps this would have come if he had continued his lecture a few months into 1905.

Thanks again for GD, and congratulations again on producing a fanzine Norn Iron can be proud of. Best.

Pamela Boal,  
4 Wesfield Way, Charlton Heights, Wantage, Oxon, OX12 7EW.

Dear Trioofgeds,

Well, you certainly are making good use of your equipment, computer programme and laser printer that is. However, beauty is only skin deep I'm not too sure that you are yet fully using your mental equipment.

Certainly your articles are readable enough for me to say I would, please, like the next issue but they don't quite give me pause for thought, inform me or make me chuckle. Both Tommy and Mark come near to achieving what has always seemed to be the forté of fannish writers, the creation of humour from personal discomfort and disaster. "You've gotter laugh or you'd cry." Perhaps the story of Mark's feet and that of Tommy's journey fall short because there is too much cry in them.

So you went to a lecture James! I've been to a few myself. Your article simply does not give us enough facts or even opinion about the future of fusion research and only the vaguest images of Flieshmann as a central figure in the cold fusion controversy. On the other hand your article on cyberpunk is good, strong opinion backed by well presented facts.

One doesn't have to have visited Northern Ireland to empathise with the special problems parents have in raising their children there. What seemed to you bigoted religious preaching Tommy, may well have seemed to your parents an attempt to share with you the one safe anchor in their lives. I should imagine your mother is only one of many thousands of women taking valium in Northern Ireland, for years GP's saw valium as the only avenue of help available to their patients, little knowing that they were creating another hell for those patients because of valium's addictive nature. How can your father fight his illness or your mother her valium addiction when the centre of their cultural world, if not their personal one, their children, reject them? You make me feel very blessed, our children came home to be with us not just to get their laundry done. Of course the youngest is now 30 and I may be looking back through rose coloured glasses but I don't recall them ever being as intolerant as yourself.

*[My parents have no memory of me ever being as intolerant as 'you can never go home' would indicate because they know nothing about these views. Doesn't mean that they are invalid, its just that I wouldn't be as insensitive as you make me out to be by telling them or letting them see the article.]*

Ken Cheslin,  
10 Coney Green, Stourbridge, West Midlands DY8 1LA

I have read (Götter) through once...and I must say how extremely chuffed I was to see a fanzine appearing out of Ireland again... sort of "Out of the Silent Planet" and all that...

not that I know what has been happening in N.I. lately.. back in the early seventies when I FAFIATED there were still sort of unquiet stirrings from the old IF, which by the 1988 Beccon when I resurrected had as good as ceased.. so anything can have been happening (and probably was?) over there. *[In 1987 IF made a brief reappearance to celebrate 40 years of IF with the publishing of HYPHEN 37 and an appearance at the Worldcon in Brighton. I don't know if the intention was there to continue again, but I doubt it. The current batch of Northern Irish fans began with NICON 1 in 1986, We've continued on since then with another two NICONs and UNICON 10 in Belfast in 1989. Since then things have been quiet.]*

I don't know how many zines you lot have produced, but if this is only the second you've done...well, course it can't be, can it. *[yes it can]* I don't want to go back to the "dear dead" days of carving on stone, or even hecto...but I'm always astonished at modern zines, its the equipment available I suppose, they've always got great repro.. with the old Roneo few fans produced a neat first few issues...mind you, good repro doesn't mean good material, though it could make poor material show up better I suppose...hmmm, unless the very legibility allows folk to detect good/bad material, which theoretically I suppose smudgy old Roneo could hide Have you ever seen a book called THE TAO OF POOH? I thought TF's piece was (I'd say poinnant if I could spell it without the trouble of looking it up in the dictionary)(poinant, er oh heck, poignant, fancy the cunning devils slipping the 'g' in there) its the sort of thing which, one way or another is common human experience, though of course the gulf varies from a crack to a canyon.

Mark M. I sympathise with- the poor bloke..I've never suffered with such, (clutches amulet, sez to Cuthulu or summat) but the wife and daughter, mostly the daughter have... which is not entirely the point which was, if I can still find it..ah, the lady chiropodist (I usually transported patient and sat in during treatment) used to regale us with all sorts of horror stories...from the inefficient overcharged jumped up young practitioners to tales of folk covered virtually from head to foot with veruccas...made your blood run cold.

MM's STREAMS OF WHISKY is more tantalising than anything else, this conor Na Braienenn might be great, but if it can't be read in English I'm never going to find out...one thing made me feel that maybe fandom has really changed in the past 15 years is the way MM writes: "Science fiction, horror and fantasy fans" as if he were lumping them all together.. Personally I don't mind be spoken of in the same breath as fantasy fans, (sword and sorcery or even war games) but horror, well, I wouldn't be strung up in the same dungeon with them...well, not them so much as the genre.

James McKee curls me up in his very first sentence that bit about "The greatest step forward for SF since the New Wave", sheesh and much dark mutterings. When I read about the new wave being the a great step forward, well, my confidence in JM suffered. I was never much of a fan of the New Wave but his basic premise about Cyberpunk and its been done b4 or what have you, I'd agree with. But then I don't think much to Brunner either, or is it Ballard, you know the fella who writes the same meandering non-story but changes water for ice or crystal or summat.

The lukewarm fusion was interesting. I feel inclined to root for cold fusion myself, though

I'd feel happier standing on the sidelines and seeing what happens. Best item in zine. Though MM's poetic champions was a good second...a very good second. JM madness abounds...Garret to ground floor TF- ok.TF (again!) thoughts also ok...but none of these inspire me to comment. Belfast.. I'm sure this'll do wonders for the tourist trade. I'm half Belfast Catholic Irish, I suppose that's why I can write such wonderful locs.. I'm glad you appreciate Ken Lakes attempt to spread sweetness and light, anyway James White seems to like you (Shep is right, the cover is weird).

**John Nelson**

**19 Cherry Valley, Knock, Belfast, BT5 6PJ.**

Howdy, Nice piccy up front. Read it cover to cover and have deduced that McKee is the shy one. I now know more than I ever wanted to about Ferguson and McCann while McKee remains an enigma, the human within only hinted at by his choice of reading and listening material. Come on, boy, open up, get in touch with your feelings, plaster your innermosts across the page in bit-mapped splendour like the other inmates.

High points: Full Metal Aerosol- I laughed aloud at this, which has probably fucked my karma in aces. And I was making such an effort to be nice in this life time.

:Nauseous Odyssey- Trad. Ferg. Self-pity and alcohol. Tried to find an outstanding McKee article but nothing shone. They're all very well written and informative, but none really grabbed me by the balls. I'll probably be buying the Nick Cave book on his recommendation, however.

*['James' is, in fact, a clever literary creation by myself, (Mark) and Tommy -an attempt to create a believable human being solely out of interesting fanzine articles. So far it appears to be working. People seem to think he actually exists!]*

**Terry Jeeves,**

**56 Red Scar Drive, Scarborough, YO12 5RQ.**

The zine is so immaculately produced and illustrated that it fair makes me spit- but as aunt Emmaline used to say, if you want to get your own back, just spit into the wind- so I won't. Nice cover, even if I didn't understand what it was all about, as for the interior art, Shep has surpassed itself. It is totally professional in every aspect- neat, well drawn, no fuzzy lines and in most cases, nicely fitting to the associated text. Give him 99 out of 100 (well, nobody's poifick).*[erm, well... not all of the art came from human hands.. all the good stuff did.]* Sundry bits of text, in total seemed very much on the downbeat side— flat hunting, unemployment, splitting with the family, lethal showers, veruccas, missing ferry boats, funerals, being hassled by customs, even the music bit is on the 'blues'. I understand that life amongst bombs and bullets isn't exactly the most conducive to happy sing-a-longs, tiddlywink contests and dancing around any handy maypole, but surely, you do have



cheerful exploits now and then?

Interested in James' thesis that Brunner invented cyberpunk..but if you dig back in SF in the Forties I'm sure you'll find other claimants. Not that it is an honour to brag about, but then neither is 'New Wave'. Also enjoyed the piece on cold fusion, which is one of those things we'd all like to believe see operational. Sadly, no amount of waffle and 'explanation' counts much against the fact that nobody seems able to make it work- and that includes its inventors.

I liked the 'first lecture' but would have loved to hear more details. *[There aren't any more- Tommy made it up!]* My own first teaching days began with a class of sixty eleven-year-olds, and included an epileptic. He had to sit in the front row so that when he had a seizure, we (the kids and I) could slide him down under the desk and out onto the floor. He would then rest there until he recovered, whilst I stepped over him each time I used the blackboard. Another lad was a paraplegic and couldn't walk, so at playtimes his mates used to carry him to the cricket wicket, prop him up with a bat and bowl underhand so that he could join in. Nowadays, they'd scrag him!

I sympathise with Gerry O'Connor and the teachers who bugger up his computers. I used to be in charge of an even more simpler device- a banda colour duper, and to make sure everyone could operate it, I had drawn a detailed diagram complete with simple numbered instructions on how to operate it—and to close it down again. Did the teachers read 'em? Did they heck. Slam in paper, shove pressure roller to maximum and fuel flow to full. Pump like mad, then crank away. When finished, just walk away leaving fuel on and pressure slowly crushing flat on the rollers.

Also enjoyed the LOCs, Ken Lake is always good for a strange response which usually knocks hell out of some straw man he has set up. He loves initiating arguments in this way.

The J.R. Hartley Appreciation Society,  
Andy Sawyer, 1 The Flaxyard, Woodfall Lane, South Wirral, L64 4BT.

I liked Mark's piece on meeting Seamus Heaney: it must be difficult to meet someone that famous in that sort of a situation, though it must be worse if you are a famous poet and someone expects you to be something special all the time.

Interesting to read about Robert M. Pirsig having a new novel out, I bought *Zen and the art of Motorcycle Maintenance* shortly after it was published in this country and I started to read it almost at once. I thought it was a terrific book, one that made complete sense and was the kind of book that changes lives. It had everything in it that I believed in philosophically, described perfectly. Then, when I was half-way through it, something happened to make me put it down (I can't remember what- a call of "dinner's ready" perhaps) and I HAVE NEVER RETURNED TO IT SINCE. What's more I've never felt I've wanted to return to it. Very Strange. It remains one of the great half read books of all time. The piece on Brunner and cyberpunk was also interesting (if too brief) and I declare interest in that I have an uncompleted article on Brunner which explores some of the same

territory (I probably won't complete it because there is no point in going over the same area twice and I'd already come to the conclusion that this is stale ground.) As a concept, cyberpunk is dead and has been for some time. Brunner is a "precursor" of the genre simply because in those books you describe he set out simply to do what most SF writers try to do and fail or are too lazy to do- examine the trends and tendencies of the world today and extrapolate into possible futures. Because he is a good writer and perceptive viewer of social trends, the worlds he envisages are worlds we can now see are familiar, possible analogues of our own world in the way that our world today is a possible precursors of the world in Gibson's NEUROMANCER etc. (I'm not saying that things have turned out the way Brunner suggests or that we will be living in a Gibsonian world in the twenty years time- I don't believe that SF writers are or should be prophets in quite that way anyway; but the best SF does show a distorted mirror image of a familiar world.)

At the moment Brunner is shamefully neglected by both publishers and the reading public, and I wish something could be doing to wake people up to this fact.

*[James: I continue to be frustrated that novels of the quality of 'The Sheep Look Up', 'Stand on Zanzibar' and 'The Shockwave Rider' remain relatively unknown whilst Clarke makes a mint on huge piles of streamies (to quote Joe McNally) like 'Rendezvous with Bank Manager II' to say nothing of L.Ron.]*

Ethel Lindsay,  
69 Barry Road, Carnoustie, Angus, DD7 7QQ.

Many thanks for *Götterdämmerung* I can remember when another three Irish fans began publishing. Hope you do as well.

The Taxman cometh rather saddened me. Tommy is twenty-four year old *[with a mental age of two]*- a bit too young to be so scathing about people. The folks like Tommy describe are usually more to be pitied than scorned. At least that is what I've always found. People waste so much of their lives- you would think they had dozens more to go.

I see that Mark isn't much better- all those people who annoy him. Mind you I envy him the video- wish I could afford one. *[That was a bit of creative license - he doesn't have one!]*

*That's it for this issue. Bit of a constipated bugger to get out but we made it in the end. We look forward to receiving your letters with our usual air of mild disdain and faint superiority.*

Götterdämmerung

# GÖTTERDÄMMERUNG

Vol 2. No. 1

Northern Ireland's Leading Fanzine

Spring 1992

Nothing changes -Note *yet again* that Götterdämmerung Mansions has moved. The old pile has uprooted from the ghettos of Camden Street and settled down in the relatively peaceful and prosperous area of Stranmillis. All correspondence to the address below.

- Joe McNally: the man, the mushroom, and the mescaline habit.
- Tommy does yet another travellog.
- Gene Roddenberry is dead, thank fuck.
- Where's the McKee article?
- A quaint Graham Andrews story.
- Ellison and horror.

If you happen to be reading this issue at Trincon you are witnessing a bloody miracle.

P.S. Die. Trekkie scum!

Götterdämmerung is produced by:

James McKee  
Tommy Ferguson  
Mark McCann

with contributions from  
Graham Andrews  
Bo Carson  
Joe McNally

Cover Artwork this issue  
by  
Shep Kirkbride

Letters of comment,  
writs and other forms of  
correspondence to:

James McKee  
Flat 1, 26 Elaine St.,  
Stranmillis Road, Belfast,  
BT9 5AR, N. Ireland.

Contributions can be accepted on 5.25" or 3.5" disks in any IBM format. Even if you're still in the typewriter age we can take your efforts. Artwork graciously accepted from any source.

Götterdämmerung is copyright of the editorial committee; individual copyright reverts to original authors upon publication.

Nell Simpson is a fuckhead.