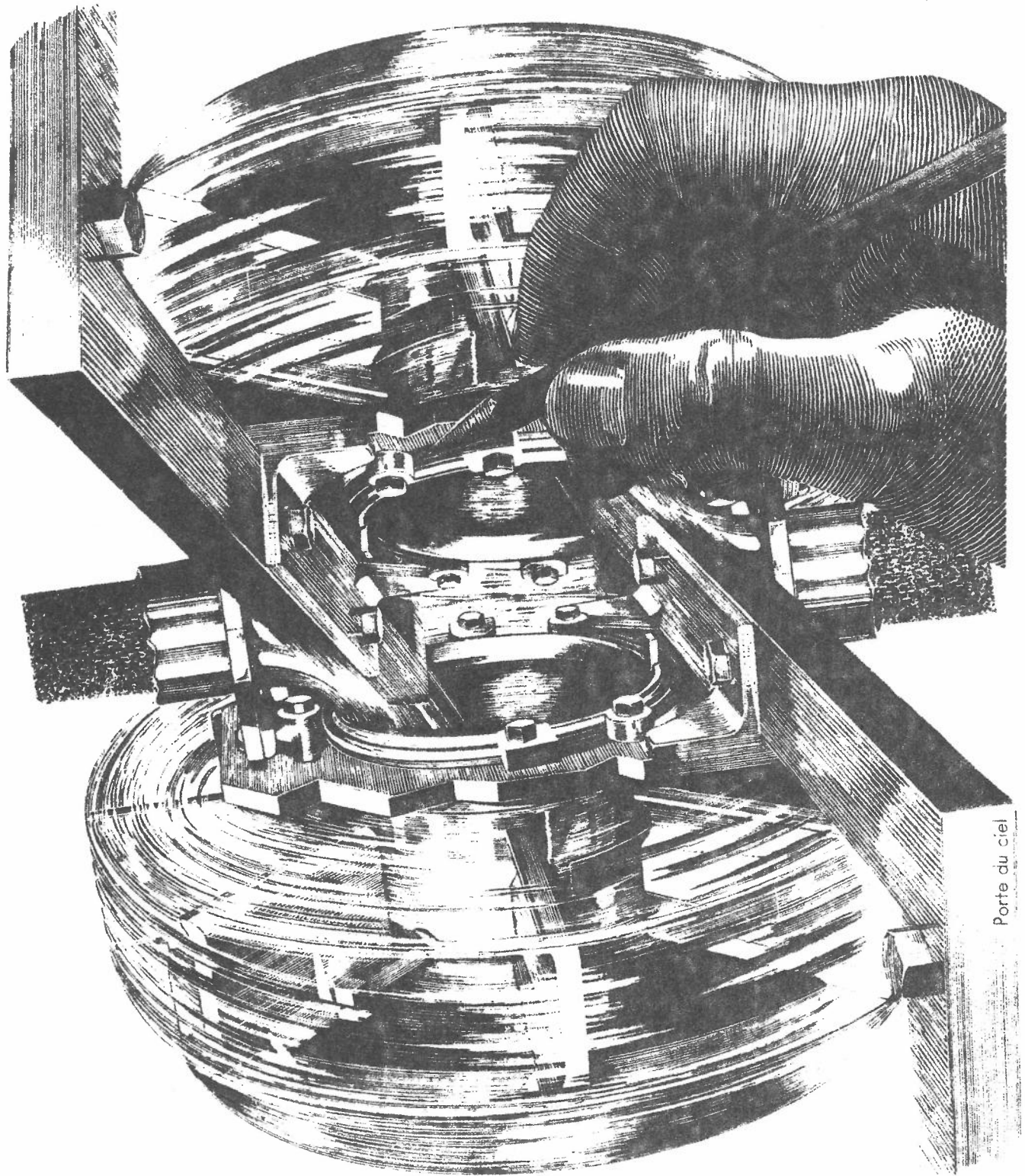


kratophany



Porte du ciel



September, 1978

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CANADA

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Lion's Gate Press Publication #36

SUZLE TOMPKINS FOR TAFF



Well, hello there! Before there are any cracks about the length of time since the last KRATOPHANY, I'd like to point out that I have faithfully kept to the schedule given in the colophon.

Now then. I guess a fair bit has happened since the last issue. I changed cities and, as a partial consequence of six traumatic months out of work, changed careers; I spent \$600 on a pocket calculator; I learned to drive a stick shift; I turned 30; I did *not* spend \$3000 on a home computer system; I nearly incinerated myself lighting the torches for The Flying Karamazov Brothers (Ho!); the final deadline passed for completion of my Ph.D. thesis ...

Perhaps if I begin at the beginning, as the King of Hearts told the White Rabbit. ~~In 1976 I left Saskatchewan~~ Er, on Feb. 28, 1977, I left Regina, Saskatchewan to live with Susan Wood in Vancouver. The gang at the office gave me a farewell party, at which I was presented with an umbrella, the official symbol of Vancouver. (But you should understand that it doesn't rain *all* the time in Vancouver -- just when people come to visit. And people always come to visit ...)

I then spent the next six months trying to find a job.

It was awful. For one thing, it was unexpected. When I moved from New York to Regina I was not only fresh out of school, but forbidden to work in Canada; it took me approximately two months to not only find work, but find an employer willing to hassle Canada Manpower and Immigration to allow me to work. Now here I was in Vancouver, with three years experience in a fairly responsible position, and a Landed Immigrant besides, and there was nothing.

I had not exactly moved blind -- I thought I had several good prospects, including a job with a Canada-wide computer timesharing firm called Dataline, which we used in Regina. For one thing, Dataline wanted to overhaul their statistical programs, a project that seemed tailor-made for me; for another, the Vancouver branch manager lived across the street from Susan, and *he* seemed to think the job was tailor-made for me. But Dataline's head office in Toronto decreed that it would be done out of head office, in Toronto.

A friend of my Regina boss seemed quite willing to help me find a statistician job with the B.C. government -- in Victoria, the provincial capital.

And so it went. As my Canada Manpower counselor patiently explained to me, my job skills and experience were essentially head office oriented (e.g. research and planning), and Vancouver is very much a branch plant town, with government head offices in Victoria, and business head offices somewhere like

Toronto (if not in fact New York -- Canada as a whole has the branch plant problem, and Vancouver is often a branch of a branch.)

I gradually broadened my search from statistics to include systems analysis, and finally to anything at all related to computers (thereby making four years of graduate school irrelevant, except when they scared people off). I discovered that looking for work takes up far more energy than working, and the psychological side effects are certainly not conducive to publishing anything with as blatant a name as KRATOPHANY.

Ironically, it was not the lost money that mattered most -- I was collecting unemployment insurance, which met my day-to-day living expenses, and actually paid more than the fellowship I had lived on at Columbia. What I was missing was the social status of having a job, the sense of self-worth that comes from playing a meaningful role in society, the security of having an ecological niche, as it were, to belong to ...

For six months I cringed whenever someone innocently asked "What do you do?" Every job rejection was another personal failure, despite the ready rationalizations which were sometimes even true (I was overqualified; I was qualified but there was a Canadian citizen ahead of me; I had no experience in DIBOL or whatever obscure computer language they wanted; etc.). Insidiously, as time goes on, it becomes harder to get hired, for the time out of work begins to count against you, and the self-confidence needed in an interview begins to dribble away.

I can't adequately describe the growing feeling of alienation I had watching the rest of the world going off to do whatever it was they did. The high point of *my* day was the arrival of the paper, so I could scour the want ads. I wish I could have enjoyed the leisure time instead of feeling so depressed -- but I couldn't even travel, because I had to be home in case the phone rang, or a letter arrived, or an ad appeared. It became a tremendous effort just to send out a resumé, let alone go for another interview. There were ways in which I felt like a ghost flitting transparently through society, a worthless outsider peering in at the productive citizenry; when I visualize what it would be like for that to be a permanent condition, when I extrapolate my feelings to such statistics as a 40% unemployment rate among black teenagers, I am horrified.

Perhaps too much of my self-image is tied up with job and career. I don't know. But it's surely a common problem -- I can see it in our next-door-neighbor's discomfort when she confesses she's "just a housewife." She's got a Master's degree in Marine Biology; she's president of the neighborhood tenants' society; she works far harder maintaining house-and-six-year-old than I've ever had to; she even has what used to be a secure niche in society, i.e. that of "wife"; yet she's embarrassed because she doesn't have a job. And in

SHOE



SHOE



her case it's even more clearly not a matter of money -- in fact, since she is in so many ways a pillar of the local community, it's not even a matter of not having a role to play. It's simply that she doesn't have the status of a working member of society. With the role of "housewife" devalued (if indeed it ever was valued), the bulk of her daily activity counts for nothing as far as self-esteem and respect go (that's an exaggeration, of course, but I think the tendency is there). How much worse is it when even such a traditional role is lacking?

Anyway, not to belabor the point, those were not altogether pleasant months. At the end of August I went into a frenzy of activity, registering with every employment agency I could find, and sure enough, the week after I finished trying to cram my life into little boxes on application forms, I got a job through a newspaper ad. For reasons which escape me, but for which I will be eternally grateful, George Lester chose to ignore my overqualifications and hired me for an entry-level programmer's position at Vancouver General Hospital.

I started work in October; through an unlikely chain of circumstances and high employee turnover (including George himself quitting), by June 1st I found myself second-in-command of the VGH Data Centre's Computer Development division, with the official title of Systems Analyst. (After eight months at VGH, I was also third in length of time worked in the division, counting our supervisor, who had quit six months earlier and come back; I said turnover was high.) You never know how things are going to work out.

The job is challenging, frustrating, and fascinating. I now have a fair amount of autonomy, and enough projects that need to be done to keep three people busy. I also have my own computer terminal (and depending on the time of day, sometimes my own computer) to play with (for those interested in technical details, the Data Centre, which handles the administrative computing for the hospital, has a DEC PDP 11/45 and PDP 11/55, both working under RSTS/E).

I get to do programming, which I enjoy, as well as writing (which is fine until I have to scrounge up a typist, since there are no secretaries in the Data Centre; for my very first system proposal I typed the whole thing into the computer and used a text editor to print it out with neat justified margins. The only problem with that is that our line printer doesn't have lower case, so the 25 page report had to be printed out at 30 characters a second on what is called a DECwriter, which has just about the most illegible lower case font I've ever seen. But it was an interesting experiment, and impressed the hell out of some people.). About the only major drawback to the job is that my statistical background is out the window. Oh well, it could have been worse -- I could have finished my doctorate, in which case I'd probably still be unemployed.

Despite all the gloom alluded to above, the summer of '77 wasn't a total waste. I got to go to numerous fancy restaurants and plays and concerts (after almost three years in Regina, it's a pleasure to live in a civilized city where one can even find bagels if one is persistent). And *it hardly rained at all!* (I distinctly remember two solid weeks of sunshine that only ended when Rick Mikkelson and I went to see *Noye's Fludde*.) Susan and I acquired two adorable kittens named Harlequin (she's the black and orange and white one) and Samantha (she's the black and white one who keeps falling into the bathtub), who have been mysteriously transformed into cats.

And when I got really depressed, I would go starve peasants on my pocket calculator. See, before I left Regina, when I was still earning a Research Officer's salary, I bought an HP-67 programmable calculator from Hewlett-Packard. It's quite a neat toy -- it fits in my hand (and almost fits in my shirt pocket), but it can hold a 224 step program (which can be recorded on or read from little magnetic cards), has 26 memory registers (the data in which can also be recorded on or taken from magnetic cards), and all sorts of programming goodies. I managed to simulate ruling a small country on it (a beefed-up version of the popular computer game variously known as "Sumer", "Hammurabi", or "Kingdom"). As the "King of Sumer" you get to make decisions on feeding people, buying and selling land, funding research, and planting (all subject to assorted constraints), and then you get zapped with plagues, poor harvests, food riots, flooding, and technological catastrophes. I only wish it could display snotty messages instead of just numbers (this way, the calculator shows a flashing zero, and you have to visualize the peasants marching on your granaries with torches and pitchforks). (The new Texas Instruments calculator plugs into a special printer and it *can* produce snotty messages, *sob*.)

Actually, what's most fun is being interpreter for others who play the game. I fondly remember sitting with the three top civil servants in the Saskatchewan Dept. of Social Services' Planning and Evaluation Branch, who were variously appointed Sumerian Minister of Research, Agriculture, and so forth, as they bickered over how many peasants to starve. It's amazing what happens to even the most liberal people after two consecutive crop failures and flooding in the granaries ... This also gives me a chance to flesh out the numerical messages with appropriate newscasts on peasants-with-pitchforks and the state of the kingdom. ("The Minister of Agriculture, on his way to the border, happened to mention that there were some problems with the new insecticide; consequently, this year's harvest was only .35 bushels per acre.") My favorite "King," though, was definitely David Miller, a Saskatoon luthier and retired actor, whose command of invective in the face of disaster well befits one who was once paid \$10 an hour to curse at the RCMP.

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Had this issue been published a year ago, as I originally intended, you would have been amused and enthralled by my brilliant article on The Home Computer Revolution. Unfortunately, almost all of it has now appeared under other people's bylines in such places as ANALOG, SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN, the *New York Times*, TIME, and even a full-page spread in the Vancouver Sun! (Though I admit no one has yet mentioned my idea for a microprocessor-driven crystal ball that not only casts detailed horoscopes, but also includes a surreptitious polygraph to help fleece the unsuspecting customer.) I was forced to sublimate it into a review of Ted Nelson's *The Home Computer Revolution* that I did for the *Pacific Northwest Review of Books* (a Seattle fanzine).

If I had more money or less sense I might have my own computer system to talk about; but what with the 40% markup on such things in Canada, and all the features I want (I mean, what good is a home computer that can't type your stencils for you?), well, it was just too much money. And I had promised it



ILLO IN SEARCH OF A PUNCHLINE

to myself for my 30th birthday, too ...

Clearly, Susan was aware of my anguish, and to take my mind off it she gave me a truly unique gift: A 20" high stuffed frog with a peach stuck in its mouth! Furthermore, inside the peach (which was also stuffed) was a stuffed squiggling black tadpole! I might add that the frog was presented to me wrapped around a bottle of Cointreau to which had been affixed a book of matches.

Perhaps I should explain to those of you who are confused that *Frog à la Pêche* is traditionally served covered in boiling Cointreau. ("The waiter?" "Yes, frequently the waiter is, alas, covered in boiling Cointreau. But the policy here is to aim at the peach. That's the policy.")

Still confused? See, Peter Cook and Dudley Moore have this routine about a restaurant situated in a bog in the heart of the Yorkshire Moors ... oh, forget it. If you ever come to visit I will play you a recording of "The Frog and Peach."

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"Ontology recapitulates philology."

-- The Flying Karamazov Brothers (Ho!)

If you've never seen them, it's difficult to describe the Flying Karamazov Brothers, purveyors of Juggling and Cheap Theatrics. They have a penchant for making atrocious puns ("Watch your language!" "English. What's yours?") and juggling dangerous weapons ("...with the sickle, both direction and orientation are important. For there is only one way you can catch a sickle -- more than once...").

On my last trip to the Bay Area, Debbie Notkin and Tom Whitmore took me to see them in a coffeehouse in Marin. We had front-row seats from which to watch the Karamazovs (always willing to please the bloodthirsty voyeurs in the audience) do their ever-popular flaming torches trick. First they asked if anyone had a light. A box of matches arced out from somewhere in the middle of the audience and landed on stage. Then they asked for a "volunteer." Let me make one thing perfectly clear: I did not step forward -- I was pushed by my so-called friends. I, ah, happened to be wearing my Karamazov Brothers T-shirt at the time. (Randy turned me to face the audience; "Now you've never seen us before, right?") Next, while Paul and Howard said the Last Rites behind my back, Randy handed me the matchbox and commanded me to light the torches that were thrust under my nose. I won't say I was nervous, but he had to remind me to blow out the match when I was done. Then he told me I could go back to my seat.

I wobbled back and collapsed. After a few minutes of watching them hurl the torches around the stage, I glanced at the box I was still holding. On it it said "ROSEBUD Matches."

I'd tell you about their Terror Trick (in which three of them juggle nine totally dissimilar objects including a cleaver, frying pan, Molotov cocktail, torch, egg, sickle, and rubber fish, and which culminates with them catching the egg in the frying pan and cooking it with the torch), but I'm all tuckered out.

THE ADVENTURES OF GRAYSON GREENSWARD

The planet Zeppelin was one of the stranger places Grayson Greensward had ever been to. The surface, such as it was, consisted almost entirely of jagged mountain peaks and small plateaus (on which the inhabitants lived); there were only two methods of transportation available: a species of flying reindeer (mutated from a rare Northern Earth stock) which were used for short trips, and a dazzling variety of blimps for long-distance travel. The latter were introduced to the planet by a family claiming descent from the original Ferdinand von Zeppelin, and a grateful populace had re-named the planet in their honor. (There were some bad feelings about this afterwards, when it was discovered that through a network of interlocking directorates and bribed politicians the Zeppelin family had secured a monopoly on the manufacture of said blimps.)

By Greensward's time, the Zeppelins were one of the richest families in that sector of the galaxy, something Greensward had taken care to confirm since his client was none other than Ernest Zeppelin, the heir to the family fortune.

The problem was that the elder Zeppelin had not gotten along with her son. In fact, she had detested him. "Mummy never liked me. *Nobody* ever liked me except Rudolph," Ernest wailed, pouting. Rudolph turned out to be his reindeer, a gorgeous maroon beast. The result of this familial falling-out was a peculiar will, the central clause of which stated that the Zeppelin fortune was to be given away unless Ernest found "the other will" within 90 days. "Make the little twit sweat a bit," Mum was reported to have chortled on her death bed.

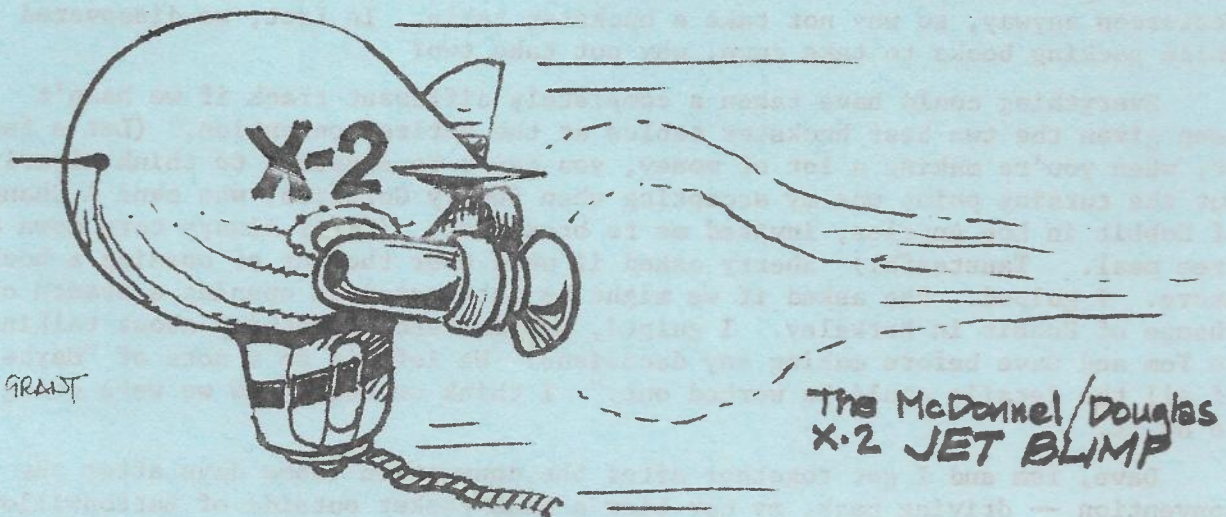
While Greensward's sympathies, after twenty minutes with Ernest, were all with Mum, the large commission he expected to collect was more relevant.

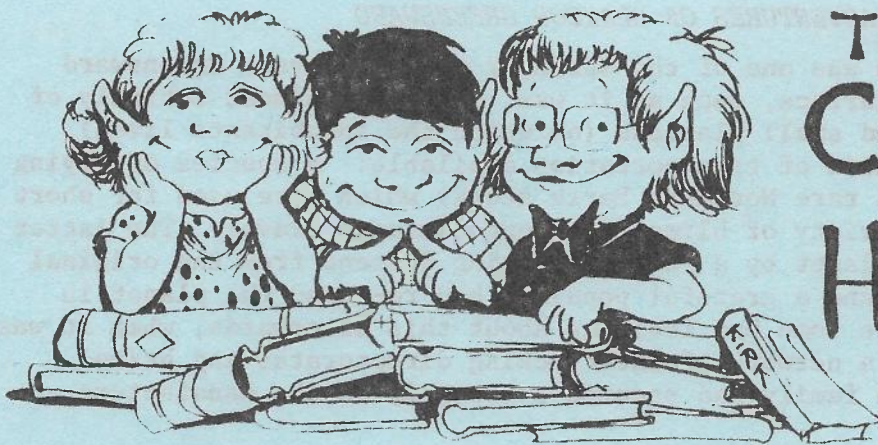
"Stop blubbering and listen to me," Grayson told him. "Get on Rudolph and ride wherever he wants to take you." Ernest did as he was told, and sure enough, within the hour he came flying back waving the papers.

"Rudolph took me straight to them! How did you know?"

Greensward laughed till his ample paunch shook like a bowl full of jelly. "Why, you should have realized from your family history that your wealth comes from a deer-reachable heirship."

-- Yarik P. Thrip





THE OTHER CHANGE OF HOBBIT

BY DEBBIE NOTKIN

Since we got ourselves into this ~~mess~~ venture, a large number of our friends have said, "You know, I always thought that someday I'd like to open a bookstore." It seems that almost every bibliophile treasures this dream, up there with living in a mansion which finally has enough bookshelves, or finding a copy of the Gutenberg Bible in the two-for-a-quarter bin outside your neighborhood bookstore. This struck me as very odd, because I'm very familiar with the last two fantasies, but the first never crossed my mind. Never. Until we'd been through more than half the process of doing it ...

We never intended to have a *bookstore*. We thought it might be useful to get a resale license, so Tom Whitmore and Dave Nee could formalize the procedure of finding rare books for people who were looking for them, as long as they were doing it anyway. With a resale license, they could get a discount on used books they bought for resale. With a resale license, it would be possible to place an occasional order with a publisher for a particularly popular book and provide our friends with copies. I was going to be the bookkeeper and generally make sure we didn't run afoul of the tax laws, or whatever -- which was going to be easy, in such a small business ...

We discovered book distributors (whole warehouses full of books just begging to be taken home). Since we had no overhead, and could sell at a discount, we started carrying a box of books to the Elves', Gnomes', and Little Men's Science Fiction, Chowder, and Marching Society meeting. (This got to be such an institution that I eventually covered the box in contact paper.) We started calling ourselves The Portable Bookstore. We were all going to the 1976 Westercon anyway, so why not take a huckster table. In fact, we discovered while packing books to take down, why not take two?

Everything could have taken a completely different track if we hadn't been given the two best huckster tables at the entire convention. (Let's face it, when you're making a lot of money, you can't be expected to think clearly.) But the turning point was my accepting when Sherry Gottlieb, who owns A Change of Hobbit in Los Angeles, invited me to breakfast. (~~Never~~ Always turn down a free meal. Tanstaafb.) Sherry asked if we'd ever thought of opening a bookstore. I gulped. She asked if we might be interested in opening a branch of Change of Hobbit in Berkeley. I gulped, and muttered something about talking to Tom and Dave before making any decisions. We left it on a note of "Maybe. If all the details could be worked out." I think we both knew we were going to do it.

Dave, Tom and I got together after the convention (some days after the convention -- driving back, my car blew a head gasket outside of Buttonwillow,

California on Labor Day -- but that's another article). We started by asking each other whether or not we wanted to do this crazy thing -- and in five minutes, we were discussing location, financing, how we wanted our store to look. That night, we called Sherry and sealed the deal.

All we needed was some money (which turned out not to be *too* difficult to arrange) and a place to rent (which turned out to be impossible). One ideal location had already been taken, while on another the rent went up substantially every time we called the realtor. Stores to rent in desirable Berkeley are few and far between, and in enormous demand. One place we had continually rejected was a store in a mall owned by the City of Berkeley -- because the very congenial realtor had warned us that it took approximately six months to open after renting there, since it was necessary to cut through the government bureaucracy. We weren't going to wait six months -- we wanted to open soon.

As plausible locations got fewer and fewer, we began to decide that six months wait was better than any other option we had, so we went back to our friendly local realtor and sealed the deal.

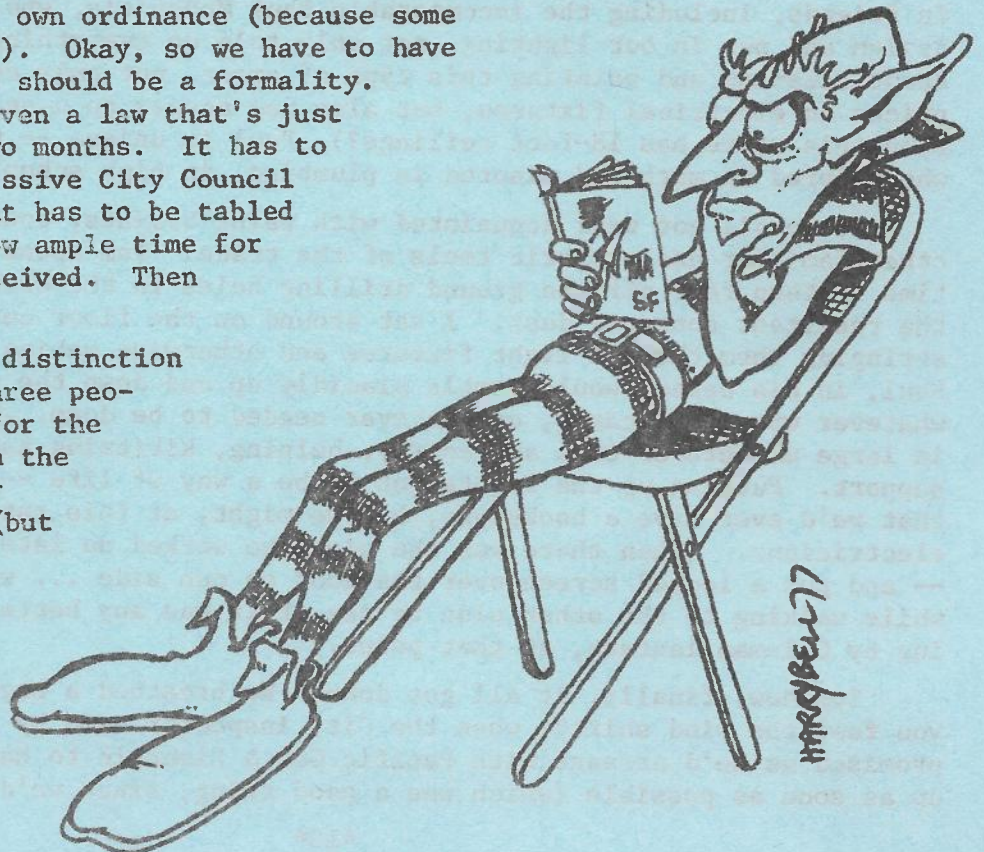
After that, it was as easy as emigrating to Canada ...

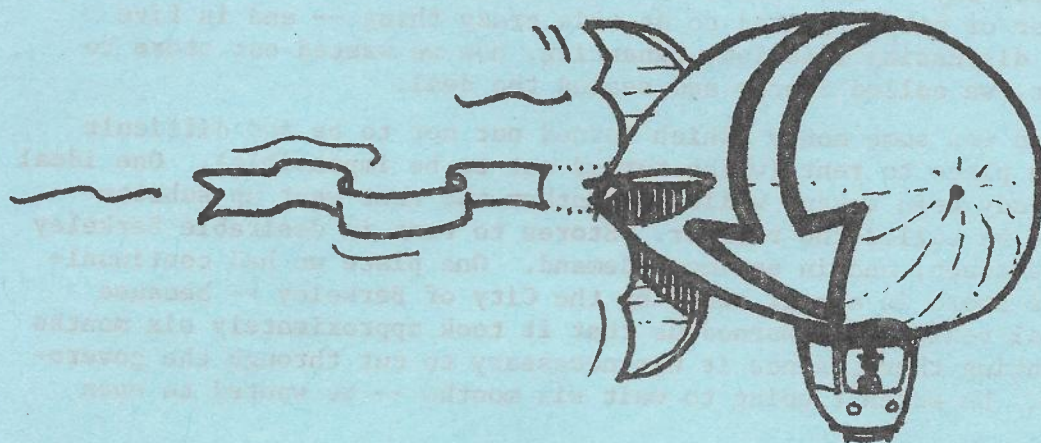
(Necessary digression: Berkeley is like no other city in the country. Berkeley is the city where every year's big election contest is between the radicals and the left-moderates. Nothing is mediocre in Berkeley; we have some of the best, most exciting governmental things in the world happening here, and some of the most incomprehensibly stupid bureaucratic snafus. Unfortunately, the way they run renting space in their mall falls into the latter category.)

Anywhere else, you just open a store, right? You pay the rent, you put up your shelves, you find customers somewhere and you're in. Not if you rent from the City of Berkeley. First, they have to pass a law. Yep, every store that opens in that mall has to have its very own ordinance (because some citizen might object). Okay, so we have to have a law -- at least it should be a formality. Well, it is -- but even a law that's just a formality takes two months. It has to be read at two successive City Council meetings, and then it has to be tabled for a month, to allow ample time for objections to be received. Then you get your law.

It's kind of a distinction -- we're the only three people I know (except for the other shop-owners in the mall) who have their very own ordinance (but they won't let me take it home and feed it myself).

Next, the City undertook to build a wall, so our bookstore space could be slightly smaller





GRANT

than Macy's basement. True to form, however, they can't just build a wall -- it has to be submitted to contractors for bids, and so on. We used to go

peer through the glass and wonder if they'd ever start construction. Later, we'd go peer through the glass and wonder if they'd ever finish construction ...

They finished the wall, and we got keys to the store. "Store" is a relative term -- at this point, it was a concrete shell. It had a circuit box (no circuits) with enough electrical potential to run a small machine shop. On the other wall, covered by a piece of plywood, was the basic network we would need to run a large Centrex phone system. However, there was no phone outlet, no electrical work whatsoever, raw concrete floors and walls -- and a lot of work to be done between now and opening time.

My attitude towards electricity has always been that if you turn on the light switch, it's there (and if you turn on the light switch and it isn't there, you're in a New York blackout). When there are no switches, I'm totally helpless. Tom and Dave were somewhat less naive, but not much. So we called in friends, including the incomparable Paul McDaniels, who not only helped us design and put in our lighting, not only told us everything we need to know about cleaning and painting this type of space, not only could get us wholesale prices on electrical fixtures, but also had access to a scaffolding (did I mention this store has 18-foot ceilings?) Paul is unique -- who else do you know who majored in math and minored in plumbing, in high school?

So we all got well acquainted with paint brushes, conduit benders, and other familiar and esoteric tools of the trade. Tom spent a good deal of his time fifteen feet off the ground drilling holes in the ceiling and breathing the resultant concrete dust. I sat around on the floor cutting pieces of wire, stringing them through light fixtures and otherwise making myself useful. Paul, in his beret, would ramble placidly up and down the scaffolding, doing whatever was complicated, or whatever needed to be done. Various friends put in large amounts of time and energy, helping, kibitzing and providing moral support. Putting up the lights got to be a way of life -- it still didn't seem that we'd ever have a bookstore, but we might, at this rate, grow up to be electricians. (Then there was the night we worked so late they closed the wall -- and put a locked screen over the door on one side ... we almost panicked while walking to the other side to see if it was any better. We had been working by Coleman lantern, at that point.)

Somehow, finally, it all got done. We breathed a huge sigh of relief (did you feel the wind shift?) when the City Inspector came by and okayed it. He promised us he'd arrange with Pacific Gas & Electric to have the power connected up as soon as possible (which was a good thing, since we'd already sent out

opening party announcements for the following Sunday).

I never claimed we weren't ridiculous optimists.

P G & E never heard from the inspector and couldn't get it together to turn on the power. Paul (who is not one to be stopped by obstacles) ran an extension cord from the working outlet in the hall to our circuit box -- and we had lights for the opening, albeit slightly illegal ones. The opening went so incredibly well that we knew our troubles couldn't possibly be over ... (Maybe it was the case of champagne our friend Cedric gave us that made them all spend so much money.)

Three days later, we were still trying to get P G & E to turn on the power, when a strange face showed up at the door and declared itself to belong to the City Inspector. "But, but ..." Tom said. This new person explained that *he* was the *electrical* inspector; we had only been approved by the *building* inspector. This was news to us. Electrical inspectors, it appears, are fussier (especially when their authority has been usurped). We had to take down every single lighting fixture, rehang them with another type hanging (esthetically more pleasing, but no stronger), string another main wire, and we'd be home free. It's embarrassing to have to close your store and put in about thirty hours more construction work *after* the opening.

But it all got done, the power eventually got turned on (although Tom had to flip the master switch, since the P G & E person who hooked everything up forgot that one step before he left) and we spent about two days turning the lights on and off with the wide-eyed joy of a jungle native who's never seen electricity. (Now, when we get the utility bill, I find myself wondering if the whole thing was worth it.)

And we have a store. People buy books, people bring us books to sell, people come in and ask questions (Do you have the fourth book in the Earthsea trilogy?, for example). It seems (who knows how?) to be working, and things are under control ...

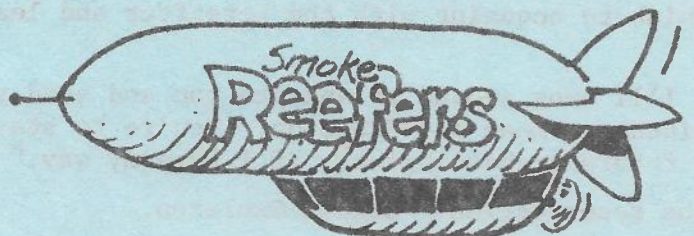
Except for the signs we're in the process of finishing, the large Burroughs collection we've promised to catalogue and sell, the accounts with publishers we keep meaning to arrange, the boxes of unsorted magazines in the back room ...

And when we finish all those things, the store should have expanded enough for us to put in our loft ...

We might give up -- if it wasn't for the fact that we all three love what we're doing. And there was the customer who came in, grinned widely, and said, "This store reminds me of Shakespeare & Co., in Paris." He made up for a lot of the work.

"...the Earth is God's pinball machine and each quake, tidal wave, flash flood and volcanic eruption is the result of a TILT that occurs when God, cheating, tries to win free games."

-- Tom Robbins, *Even Cowgirls Get the Blues*



RAAT

THE MEANINGS OF "NOW"

OR "DISCUSSIONS WITH MY SKELETON"

by MAE STRELKOV

You've got to be nearing sixty to get the feel of it -- the many kinds of Nows we experience. There's the FLEETING NOW with which you cope all the years you're a young adult, and one never catches up as it rushes away ahead of us all at that time.

Then there's the ETERNAL NOW I am beginning to experience, and it's extraordinary how pleasant it can be. "No hurry at all!" Oh, perhaps I've less time than I used to have stretching "endlessly" ahead for me as I am, in this body. But the sense of timelessness is a gift to the old who have learned to value it. (Not all do. Some frantically try still to "catch up with youth," which is an attempt to run backwards at ever-increasingly-useless speeds. All you get is that it turns you childish and senile in the end. Not child-like, which might be okay, even if you're ninety!)

All the different disciplines can teach the same thing ... how to experience this sense of tranquility and completion "in the end." I read the most interesting studies of Zen and Tao, for example. And I do see how much we could learn from same if we were ready to "go the whole way."

There are so many ways to take. "All roads lead to Rome" went the old saying; and all roads lead further at last -- to death at least. But I suggest that all roads lead even further, to this experience of *satori*, Nirvana, Beatitude, or whatever it is. (Entropy, only, say some!)

Be that as it may, pain at last is over; rushing is, too. And, as I say, by the time you're nearing sixty, if you paid attention all along the way in your past, you'll find "growing older" has definite advantages, despite an increasing creakiness of the bones, as if the skeleton itself already were talking. "I'm here, I'll endure, and represent you, once you -- the *you* you think yourself to be -- has ceased to be found anywhere. I'll be around to puzzle future archaeologists, and chemists also who'll analyze me and decide what you used to eat and do."

"There is a part of me that'll outlast even you!" I may reply. "You will rot in your grave, but I'll be part of all Nature, and if some theories and dogmas guess at all right, there may be more of me still though I don't know what I'll do about that. Save my soul? Not at some bargaining counter -- I want to understand, not be rushed into some shoddy transaction so I'll be Bible-thumping the rest of my life, as of old -- when I was small, I wasn't allowed even to read modern Bible translations, as my father insisted only the King James version was word-for-word 'inspired,' like old Jerome's Vulgate had to be."

"That's over," says my skeleton. "Bibles also turn moldy with disuse and Bible-thumping alike, when the Bible-thumpers join me underground. It is you, yourself, I would wish to acquaint with the hereafter and learn what you may plan."

"If you think I'll hang around to animate you and send you clanking around, you're very much mistaken, mean old Skeleton! You're to stay put, turn to dust quickly, foil even future archaeologists, if I have my way."

"So what of the resurrection?" argues Skeleton.

"Ho, ho," I laugh. "Are you planning on that? Turn to dust, for goodness sake, do -- not this minute, naturally, but when the time comes."

"And without me, what'll you be like when you're resurrected? A jellyfish?"

"Oh, don't be so literal. My plan was to get a brand-new model, start anew from scratch somehow -- if I can wangle it, that is! Who needs you? My Nows will be over, they'll be part of Yesteryear and of the Past. I wish you not to haunt me from forgotten times I do not wish to exploit (as do those funny reincarnationists forever trying to "evoke-former-lifetimes").

"I'll get even while I can," answers Skeleton. "Feel that new creak? You've read that there are experts on skeletons who can tell what work the owners-of-the-bones did when alive. Anybody studying your hands and knuckles will know you were a wild, swift touch-typist on old manual machines. How I shall gloat!"

"And how I shall be happy to have left you behind!"

"Ungrateful wretch -- despising me like Baalam did his ass?"

"Now, look! That's a bad word nowadays -- sounds too much like 'arse' which has fancy connotations, the least of which refers to mere elimination."

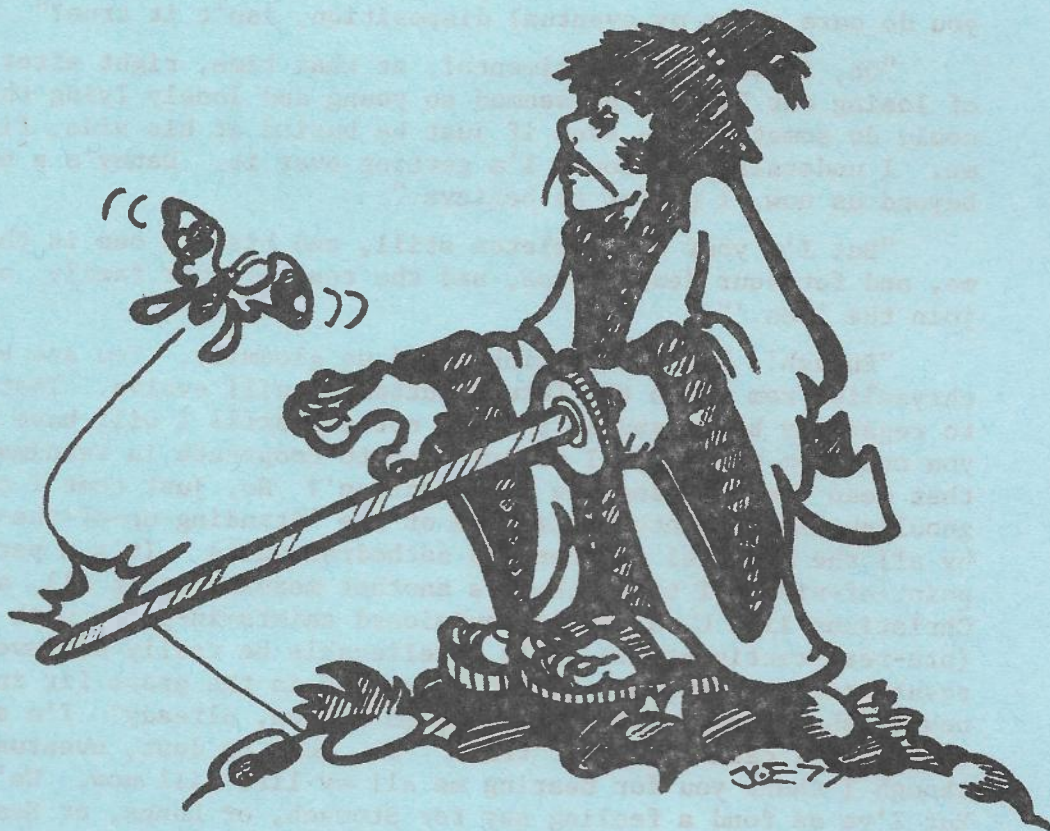
"Jesus rode on an ass and on a colt the foal of an ass! On both somehow, side-by-side, no doubt!"

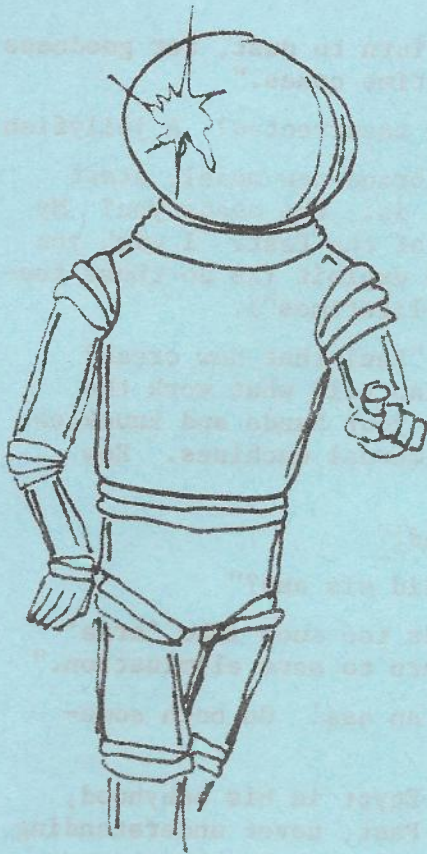
"They say donkey now. He also rode a donkey to Egypt in his babyhood, but let's not argue. It's Past. Always chewing the Past, never understanding the Fleeting/Eternal Now, never accepting the approach of our alternate Futures, nor selecting our best path as it branches out ahead, blindly preferring some fortune-teller to choose it for us -- that's all rot, I never had anything to do with it. You're the only part of me pre-occupied with that sort of an endlessly circumscribed 'Now'."

"I was a cute tender little thing when you were," Skeleton reminds me.

"Not my fault you loaded me with all that calcium, loving milk way past infancy and even till now."

"Oh shut up! Criticizing my eating-habits yet?"





"Drinking ones, you mean!"

"At least I don't have delirium tremens from over-drinking alcohol, do I? I'm no *medico*, but I bet that would have hurt you too, just as bad!"

"I don't hurt," boasts Skeleton smugly. "I send the message to your calcifying brain which does the complaining to you!"

In silence I simmer resentfully, without a reply.

"Do you realize Who I Am?" Skeleton continues.

"Who are you? Tell me."

"I'm death warmed up, reminding you always, you're not made to last, silly flesh! *I am!* I'll last, oh, endlessly."

"Who cares? I don't want to think of you."

"But you do. Ever since your Danny died -- with whom I too was intimately acquainted -- with his weight at least, when you bore him around within you at the start -- ever since it happened you preserve the picture of one day 'laying my old bones beside his,' as you wordlessly say to yourself, when sad. So much so, you want now to stay put, never move away so far you may fail to get buried where he lies. So

you do care about my eventual disposition, isn't it true?"

"Oh, it was just sentimental, at that time, right after the first shock of losing our Danny. He seemed so young and lonely lying there, I wished I could do something -- even if just be buried at his side, finally. Silly of me. I understand it now. I'm getting over it. Danny's a new being elsewhere, beyond us now, I prefer to believe."

"But I'm your old skeleton still, and his old one is there waiting for me, and for your dear spouse, and the rest of your family, one by one, to join the 'fun.'"

"Enough! Let's not think ahead so gloomily. You are but a sort of chrysalis from which the future butterfly will evolve. That's how I choose to regard my body, and if it were not so, *still* I will have nothing to do with you once I'm vanished; I do not wish to cooperate in reanimating *you*. Does that mean I'm 'denying the resurrection'? No, just that I cannot stomach the ghoulish literal interpretations of the 'Standing-up-of-the-Bodies', as painted by all the Medieval painters on cathedral walls. It's a part of the Ptolemaic point-of-view! I think there's another meaning to it all, and even pious Christians like C. S. Lewis envisioned saints-in-glory with such fine bodies (pre-resurrection-type), it's unbelievable he really believed in a literal resurrection -- for how would the corpse in the grave fit in with the refined new flesh eating golden apples up in Heaven, already? I'm sorry, but it's something I cannot see as 'true.' So, turn to dust, eventually, skeleton, though I thank you for bearing me all my life till now. We're not at war. But I've as fond a feeling say for Stomach, or Lungs, or Heart, and all the rest, even Lowly Kidneys. Not to mention very fine reproductive equipment that served me well. Oh, and good old Brains -- all three of them, by some reckoning, though I like to think of Left and Right Hemispheres as two, not just one and the third-and-newest! Yes, I used to hate Stomach, always demanding food, especially when I was nervous and couldn't read the body-signals

well. Now I can, I learned, and I learned even to get along with Stomach, thinking of it as a cute little cuddly toy, a sort of animal that needs love too, not anger, and it's been happy within the *conjunto* of Body ever since. With the help of occasional pills it seems to like ..."

Skeleton remains silent, while I go on, cheerfully, boasting of our *Conjunto* and how it learned to cooperate, with time, at last.

"I'm glad we do still have the lowly reptile brain of our earlier evolution, as also the small mammalian one, not to mention the added convoluted cortex we won't learn to use yet properly for years and years, I fear, since they say nine-tenths of it seems to be dormant in the human species as yet. Hard to believe. Maybe that portion houses our 'unconscious self,' just as an iceberg looms over the water looking enormous, but not more than a fraction of its real self is visible. The rest is beneath! And mountains also are supported by their hidden bases way underground..."

"And you are supported still by Me!" says Skeleton, very smartalecky, thinking no doubt "I'll haunt you *now*, since you won't let me haunt you and yours once you're gone."

"I rest in the Everlasting Arms," comes my answer, quoting the ancient Psalmist, who experienced too that wonderful floating sensation, letting our Nows flow away where they will or may, with us on their breasts, confidently. I also visualize us flitting from moment to moment with darknesses between (as the Universe turns itself on and off constantly in a quantum sort of way). And this too gives courage to me, and I thank God for scientists as well as for all our dour theologians, posing Sphinx-like problems to our poor race in the Past.

They say true holiness is recognizable by the joy and childlike strength of the holy. (Then rest assured, theologians aren't "like little children," they're old from birth, creaky skeletons doing their speaking for them, dusty flesh already mouldy or mummified. Who need fear what they have to say?)

You really have to know what all the parts of your body have to say, whether speaking together in a babel, or one by one, solemnly. When one portion grumbles, "I hurt," you turn to the parts that don't hurt and praise them for "being good," till the grumbling part joins the chorus of bliss anew, in the *conjunto*. And so the Pattern remains steady though flowing into new shapes all the time, and even Skeleton at last has to recognize, "It's the pattern that counts, only that."

"Having always been amazed by stories about people walking on hot coals, and having now become a firm believer in the Leidenfrost effect, I set up a five-foot bed of hot wood coals for such a walk. I suddenly found it is remarkably easy to believe in physics when it is on paper, but remarkably hard to believe in it when the safety of one's own feet is at stake. As a matter of fact, walking on hot coals would be such a supreme test of one's true belief in what one had learned that I have suggested graduate schools might substitute it for the Ph.D. examination in physics. On one side of a pit of red-hot coals would be a line of fresh Ph.D. candidates. On the other side would be the department chairman with a handful of certificates. If a graduate student really believed in physics, he would stride across the coals without hesitation. If, however, he had any serious doubt, he would not be able to bring himself to do it."

--Jearl Walker, SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN, August, 1977

BOOK REVIEW

BY ANGUS TAYLOR

The Tao of Physics by Fritjof Capra (Fontana, 1976)

This is an interesting book, in which the author's aim is to draw parallels between the world-view of modern quantum and relativity physics, and the philosophies of the East (Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Zen). Capra points out that the traditional scientific viewpoint, which was basically analytical and saw things in terms of isolated and static elements, is giving way to a viewpoint in which what is stressed is the dynamic nature of the universe and the interrelation of its parts. Twentieth-century discoveries in physics have forced scientists to abandon the notion of "basic building blocks" of nature (such as atoms were once thought to be) and recognize the mutable and transitory nature of all particles of matter. Capra shows that these features of the new scientific outlook fit in very well with the ancient philosophies of the East.

All this is fine. However, Capra, who is much taken with Eastern mysticism, draws the conclusion that modern physics has demonstrated the essentially illusory nature of our everyday material world. This conclusion seems to me highly questionable, to say the least. Consider the following passage by Capra:



Being transient manifestations of the Void, the things in this world do not have any fundamental identity. This is especially emphasized in Buddhist philosophy which denies the existence of any material substance and also holds that the idea of a constant "self" undergoing successive experiences is an illusion. Buddhists have frequently compared this illusion of a material substance and an individual self to the phenomenon of a water wave, in which the up-and-down movement of the water particles makes us believe that a "piece" of water moves over the surface. It is interesting to note that physicists have used the same analogy in the context of field theory to point out the illusion of a material substance created by a moving particle. (p. 223)

It seems to me that Capra (and Buddhism) is guilty of a reductionist fallacy here. Material things are not any less real for being transitory manifestations of an underlying "reality." Matter is the multiplicity of these manifestations, and each manifestation or form has its own reality; a wave is just as real as the water out of which it forms. Capra makes an unwarranted leap from the concept of the interrelated and dynamic

nature of matter to maintaining that matter is therefore an "illusion." He reduces everything to Brahman, or the Void, or the Tao; instead of saying, as the old mechanists did, "Reality is nothing but atoms," he says, "Reality is nothing but Brahman," and thus ignores the multilevel nature of the world. This manoeuvre certainly gets rid of matter *verbally*, but that's about all.

Matter, we might say, is the inertia of the experienced world. If I try to walk through a door without opening it, I'm going to get a nasty bump on the head. This is a datum of experience that holds true regardless of what physics discovers about the structure of subatomic particles. In other words, if the label "matter" were abolished by physics, we would simply have to find another word to express this concept of the inertia of the experienced world. If we ask the average woman or man in the street, "Is this fire hydrant really here, or is it merely an illusion?", the answer will be, "Well, of course there's a fire hydrant here." In this intuitive, commonsense response the average person is already one step up on Capra and the Buddha. The correct approach is not to deny reality to the things of this world, but to recognize the world's many, multilevel realities.

(April, 1977)

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((The following is from a letter I wrote to Angus in July, 1977- EC))

Your review of Tao of Physics was, ah, interesting. However, I take exception to your physics (and probably to your world-view), so I have a few objections. If you can answer them, I'd love to run a review of the book in KRAT. (Alternatively, I might try to throw together a rebuttal review of my own, but in either case I'd like to find out more about your view of the "material world.")

First of all, to me, and I would suspect to most of the "average persons on the street," there is a difference between form and substance, between say, a sonnet and the words it is composed of, between the Mona Lisa and its paint molecules, between a Bach fugue and the little wax grooves that reproduce it (or, alternatively, the chicken scratches that purport to describe it), and, of course, between a water wave and the water out of which it is formed. You may say the wave is just as real as the water; is it just as real as the fugue, the sonnet, or Zermelo-Frankel set theory? What modern physics has done is to remove the dichotomy, by showing that the water molecules themselves are just (perhaps that should be "just") waves themselves, waves in a mathematical abstraction called a field.

Yes, if you try to walk through a door without opening it you will get a nasty bump on the head. But you know the reason you can't get through that door is not because of a bunch of hard little balls glued together blocking you -- it's because the electric field produced by an insubstantial thing called an electron repels the electric field produced by another electron, and the ones in your head are therefore blocked by the ones in the door.

A "door" with ten foot gaps in steel mesh would hardly stop your head, but would do a good job on radio waves; a screen door might strain a camel but pass a gnat; and your "solid" door is transparent to assorted subatomic particles and various wavelengths of radiation, so god help you if there's a chunk of plutonium in the next room.

Now I consider something an illusion if it is purely an artifact of view-point -- if, when viewed from the side or the back the lady isn't "really" being sawed in half; if, when you swim out to it, the water wave just causes you to bob up and down instead of sweeping you along (this freaked me out when I was a kid, and it still fascinates me); if, when you look at it under a micro-

scope, the too, too solid flesh is full of holes. In relativity physics, for example, something is considered an illusion when it is an artifact of the coordinate system used, so that in certain systems, singularities (which are mathematical no-nos) appear at the Schwarzschild radius, but a simple coordinate transformation removes them; there are other singularities (at the centre of a black hole, for instance), that are there no matter what coordinate system is used. These are "real", "physical" singularities, which the theory has to cope with. (In fact, you might say that all relativity theory consists of describing those things which are invariant, that is, still there, after an arbitrary coordinate change.)

I think progress is made by reducing everything to field theory, or Brahman, or whatever, because it allows you to concentrate on the less illusory aspects of "reality" -- you can always go back into the audience and applaud the technical virtuosity of the magician after you've seen how it's done. I have seen the whole of mathematics created with a few chalk strokes from a dozen or so axioms and a handful of undefined terms, and the mechanics did not in the least destroy my sense of wonder at the wizardry of it. (The fact that $e^{2\pi} + 1 = 0$, a simple formula that unites the five most important constants in mathematics, is ultimately true by definition, does not take away my awe of it, but rather increases it. "Mathematicians form tautologies out of undefined terms," said Bertrand Russell -- but the way the tautologies interconnect is enough to give one religion. It may in fact be the reason I have been so taken with Taoism.)

Now, to get back to Capra, if you wish to consider "matter" the underlying reality, that's fine; but when it comes to making your description more precise, so you can build transistor radios, predict the location of Mercury, or invent superconducting magnets (to take practical examples), or extrapolate to the beginning and end of the Universe (to take an impractical example), you are going to get screwed up in paradoxes, as you try to explain how electrons get from here to there when they can't possibly travel between here and there; how a gravitational field can itself generate gravity; and just what is going on when you fire a beam of electrons at a wall with two slits.

Your "intuitive, commonsense response" is the same one that is fooled by all the optical and aural illusions floating around (I'm thinking of the stuff done with lines of "really" equal length that don't look it, the perspective illusions, the infinitely descending tone illusion that John Campbell once described, etc.).

So where is the "reductionist fallacy" in exposing the magician's tricks? Of course the trick is "real." But in what sense? What is the peculiar reality that belongs to an illusion? (I just thought of Lowell's Martian canals, which were ultimately the optical illusion of the eye connecting a series of dots, but which have probably had a lot more effect to date on humanity than the precession of Mercury.)

So. If you can tell me why field theory is less real than hard little balls, and why the illusion of matter is more real than the illusion of *Saving The Lady in Half*, then I will accept your next-to-the-last paragraph.

As for the last paragraph, I hope the above sets out my objections to it (I also think you should use a different word than "inertia," as in "matter ... is the inertia of the experienced world" -- not only does "inertia" have a technical meaning in physics which is not what you intend, it also is far too fuzzy as a common English word to carry enough meaning out of context. In relativity physics, of course, matter in the broad sense and space are inextricably entwined, and each creates the other in a way you would probably call dialectical, if I understand that term correctly. It's such a shame they haven't yet been able to reconcile relativity and quantum pmechanics ...)

((Following is Angus' reply, July, 1977))

I don't really disagree with what you say. Perhaps you misunderstood my review to some extent. I don't accept the "hard little balls" concept of matter; as I pointed out in "Taoism and Dialectical Materialism," the rejection of such a concept is common to both those philosophies, and "materialism" as I understand it is basically equivalent to asserting the primacy of nature (as against the idealist position that either "God" or man's thought in some way created nature). Thus I certainly don't want to reduce everything to hard little balls -- or to anything else. My criticism of Capra is that he seems to want to reduce everything to one underlying essence. Now, I would not want to deny the unity of the universe; however, I think it's important to keep in mind what in my review I called "the multilevel nature of the world" -- the multiplicity of the manifestations of nature, each with its own reality. So, as against those who would say that one level of nature is "real" and the others are "illusions," I would say that *all* levels of nature are "real," and each has its particular characteristics and must be responded to in a particular way. Maybe you even agree with this? (I guess maybe it comes down to the practical question of how we respond to situations we find ourselves in: do we say "Oh, who cares? It's all just an illusion anyway," or do we assume it all has some meaning or significance?)

As for "inertia": My Concise Oxford Dictionary defines it as follows: "1. (Phys.) Property of matter by which it continues in its existing state of rest or uniform motion in a straight line, unless that state is changed by external force ..." In saying that "matter is the inertia of the experienced world," I obviously don't want to maintain that "matter is the (property of matter...) ..." That would appear a simple semantic confusion. But perhaps such a dictionary definition assumes there is a static essence to matter (e.g., hard little balls) -- then you can say "inertia is a *property of* matter," rather than "matter is inertia"?? (How would *you* separate matter from inertia?) Your knowledge of physics is obviously a lot better than mine, so I certainly won't argue about definitions in that field. However, I persist in maintaining that no scientific discoveries or semantic transformations will conjure away the "stuff"-ness of the world, at whatever level we experience it.

"Because of its notion of dynamic patterns, generated by change and transformation, the *I Ching* is perhaps the closest analogy to S-matrix theory in Eastern thought."

-- Fritjof Capra, *The Tao of Physics*



For Free *Yell* *Markham*



After a night of partying at the World Fantasy Convention, Suzle Tompkins, Joel Brink and I left our room in search of breakfast. We weren't sure where we were

heading, as the prices in the Statler-Hilton's restaurants were too high for our budgets. But it immediately became a moot point for me. One of the Fates stepped in.

As you will recall, one of the three Fates wielded a pair of shears, and it must have been she who stood before the elevators on the 17th floor, asking us, "How would you like a free haircut?"

Suzle and Joel were cautious, even though Suzle at least has been trimming her bangs in the mirror and complaining about her hair's length. I, on the other hand, possess no caution at all, and said yes. "I'll see you later; have a nice breakfast," were my last words to the women as I was led around a corner.

The Fate led me to a suite of rooms, in which a number of people were rushing about and looking worried. One or two stopped to look my hair over, and a slim Italian man asked me to remove my shirt. He led me into the bathroom, had me lean over the tub in a most uncomfortable crouch, and then searched frantically for the shampoo.

While he searched the other rooms for shampoo, I examined the bottles on the sink. They all contained hair products, all labeled "Markham Products." I began to attempt to guess what was going on, realizing that I was probably not going to be barbered by a student. My friend reappeared, discovered the shampoo sitting on the soap rack, and proceeded, with complaints about the dryness of my hair, to wash and condition it. He also informed me that I was to be a model for a professional haircutter, that the whole operation was from "the coast" (Los Angeles), and that publicity photos would be taken.

When the process was complete, someone handed me a black, silk-like robe to cover my semi-nude body. (It had the Markham mark on the back.) I stood there steeped in an atmosphere of tension and cosmic importance, leafing through a publicity folder; it contained photos of a goodlooking young man cutting the hair of Paul Newman and Peter Lawford, and a handout explaining that Jim Markham had started cutting hair in Farmingham, New Mexico, for \$1.50. Markham went on to L.A., the handout continued, where he made it big cutting the hair of celebrities, and charging them \$55. (I suddenly realized that the grey pin-on buttons with the stylized lettering I had only been half conscious of said, "The \$55 Haircut," and that everyone in the suite was wearing one, including that goodlooking young man over there, only slightly more pockmarked

than his publicity photos showed him.)

I didn't read any more, for Markham and one of his men motioned for me to follow them as they set out from the suite. I walked about two paces behind them as they discussed business and the distributors that handled their products. This man, I felt, radiates an aura of power. He could have started out as anything, and he would have managed to build an empire out of it. I felt that somehow I was a small cog in his scheme. And I didn't want to be left out.

We went down in a service elevator, surrounded by other models and Markham organization people. Markham looked at my head critically, and said something about the dryness again. Evidently it wasn't dry enough to worry about, for the problem wasn't mentioned again. The elevator doors opened, we walked around a corner, and it was *Show Time* as we threaded our way through a crowd of people, a maze of booths and decibels of sound -- the Men's Hair Styling Exposition. We gawked our way past the blowdryer display and the Playboy Bunny to the Markham room.

Clutching the balloons I had freshly snatched from the air (another advertising gimmick from Markham), I peered around the shoulders of the people standing in the doorway, and saw the backs of fifty seated onlookers, a stage, three cutters, their models and a white pyramid. The cutters were just finishing, so in a moment I found myself onstage.

My cutter was Patricia, a small, pert blond with a marked British accent. She wore a mike around her neck, and the bulk of the talking fell to her as she described what she was doing to my head, and what the others were doing. She was precise, cool and even more professional in selling than she was in her cutting. I formed rather a high opinion of her capabilities, though rather a low one of her sincerity. I thought she had all the character traits of a good assassin.

The sales pitch began when Patricia called one of the women in the organization to step onto the stage and lead the barbers in the Markham cheer. With the appropriate moves, she chanted, "We've got the T-E-A-M that's on the B-E-A-M; we've got the team that's on the beam, that's really hip to the jive. Come on, Markham, skin 'em alive!" I thought this was slightly inappropriate for such an audience, and the barbers may have agreed, for though the cheerleader went through her paces twice more, only the Markham loyalists joined her.

Now a salesman came on stage, in a good suit and a good haircut (but then there were no *bad* haircuts to be seen), and with a lot of help from Patricia, who supposedly represented the working cutter (from her remarks, I gather she spends quite a lot of time putting on demonstrations of the Markham methods around the country), began the sales pitch in deadly earnest. The pyramid I noticed earlier turned out to be his major tool. It was a large stack of white blocks with the letters of the word "success" printed on each one (and additional letters to make the whole thing come out evenly). On the back of each block, the salesman revealed, was written one of the "building blocks of success that Markham offers its shopowners." These included training in the Markham style of cutting, general publicity that every franchise in the chain would benefit from, a 100% markup on the Markham products, the right to use the "\$55 Haircut" slogan (though Patricia said that shopowners themselves don't charge that much; she herself charges \$17.50 in her San Francisco shop), and Jim Markham himself,



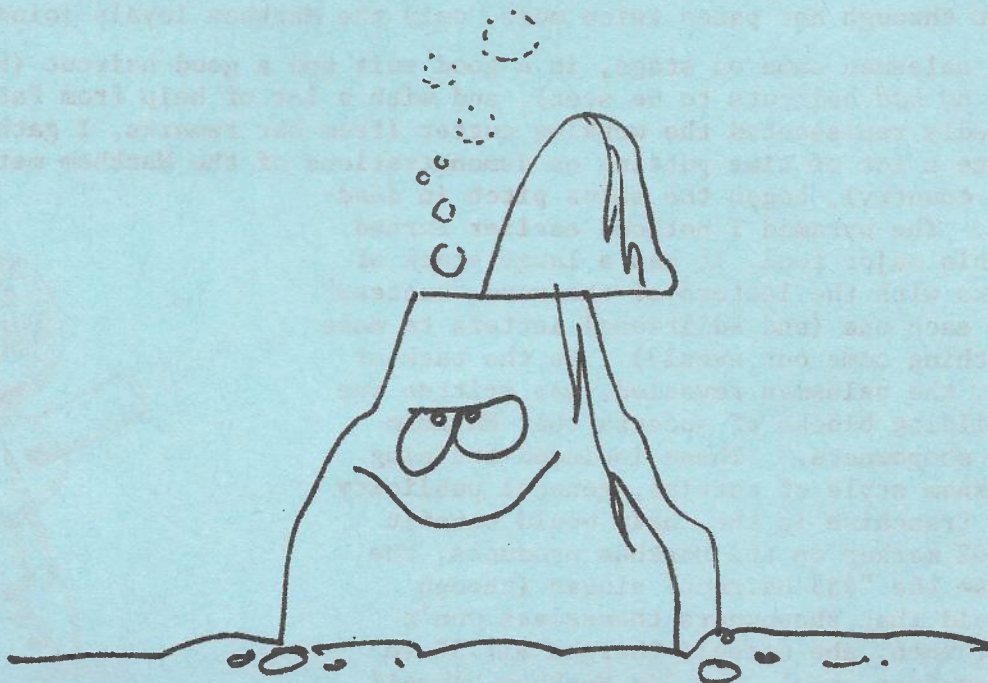
with his genius and working understanding of the field.

They used every high-powered sales technique. The salesman repeated every point to hammer it home, had Patricia reword it, had the other cutters assent to it. He got the barbers in the audience to talk, to answer questions, to respond to him. He compared the Markham line to other, inferior products, spoke frankly about the difficulties of competing with the nationally-advertised companies, soft-soaped the audience blind. And of course he used visual aids extensively, one being the pyramid, another being the shorn models and yet another being a very attractive woman who had been handing out flyers. (Salesman: "And what will people say when they see a couple of pretty girls like her handing out flyers about your shop?" Me (out of corner of my mouth): "What are you doing for lunch?" She: "Working.")

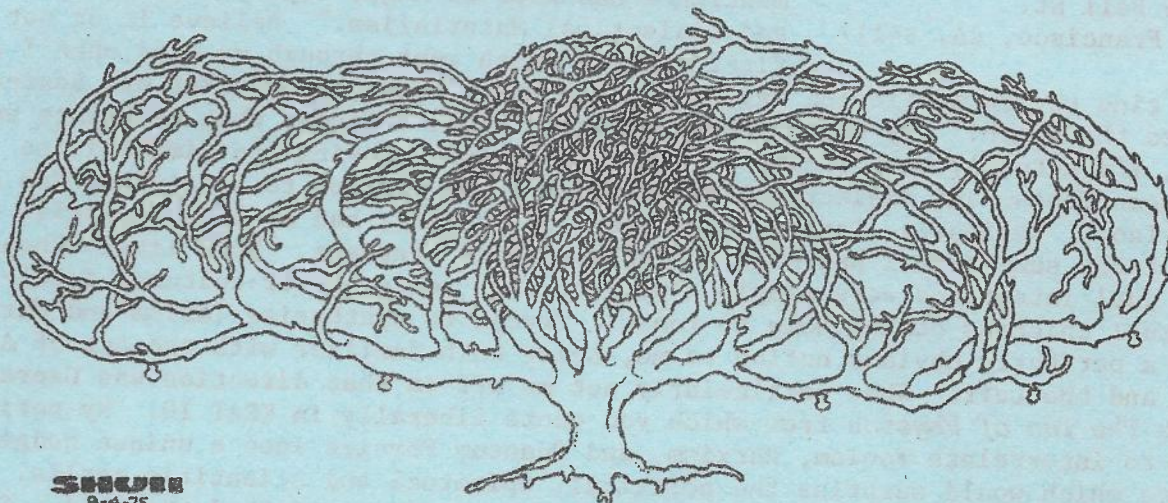
The final block on the pyramid, the very pinnacle of the Markham program, said, "You." "Because," the salesman and the audience said together, "we couldn't do it without you." I groaned a bit.

That was my wise-cracking rebel mode talking, but when Patricia asked me to stand and demonstrate my finished cut, I switched back to model mode for a moment, turning my head carefully from side to side as flashbulbs went off. As I stood there, staring into the audience, I allowed many feelings to wander through my mind. I was pleased to have gotten what the people in the audience assured me was a good cut. I was gratified to be the center of some attention, and I was slightly depressed at how little I deserved that attention. I was amused at myself and at the people around me, for it was an incongruous situation: I did not fit among such highly slick and professional people, such well-groomed and fashionable people. And finally, I was rather appalled by the immense amount of money that must be spent on such a trivial concern as "good grooming" if the Markham concern is willing to put so many thousands of dollars into pushing their franchises. The value system is all around me, but it is so alien to me that it takes a direct meeting with Medusa to make me *feel* her reality. She's a hypnotic creature, all right, but I don't think I've turned to stone yet.

By the way, how do you like my new haircut? I got it for free.



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It seems like just the other day (whereas it was, in fact, this morning) that I was sullenly pulling the wings off spiders and wondering when I would get another copy of KROTAPHONY, my goshwow all-time favorite fanzine in the whole wide world. Suddenly it hit me! Bursting into tears (I bruise easily, and this is the week of the prom, after all), I demanded an explanation. "Tornwure!" it replied in an insulting tone (high D, I believe), "How you gone get dat fancy zine sent you lessen you *do* sometin for to, eh what?" Envious of its fine BBC newscaster diction, I was nevertheless forced to admit the truth in what it said, or implied, or whatever it was doing. Angrily I brushed Albert from the desk, stripped the cover from my typer's helpless naked form, inserted a sheet or two of Made in Canada paper, and here we are! And having a jolly old time of it, too, aren't we?...who is this being written to, anyway? Ah yes, KRETOPHANEY. Well then, let's get on with it!

First, a word on the cover: "Warehouse." No, no, what I mean to say is that it's a very nice cover. If I may borrow Vincent DiFate words, "it extravagantly fulfills the main, perhaps only, purpose of the cover illustration: to create in the customer's mind an overwhelming curiosity, a sense of wonder, a need to find out just what the fuck is going on here."

General Comments: "Anyone who's so gosh darned worried about having his mail opened or actions noted --" ("Mr. Chairman, I move that we dispense with quoting loud-mouthed American Joint Chiefs of Staff." "I second." "All those in favor, say aye...opposes, nay.... Brownian Motion is carried.")

Ahem. General Comments: As everyone seems to delight in telling you, KRATPHONITE or whatever the hell it's calling itself nowadays is, above all, a nice *looking* zine. Classy appearance -- good illos; well put together (except for the staples, which had to be replaced immediately). Congratulations. Now how about telling the rest of us how you do it?

I'm not going to mention the blue paper.

It was a pleasure to read of Mr. Greensward's prompt action against Pedro Pediphilious. He and his kind, fungi on an effeet civilization, must be stamped out if -- oh forget it.

I suppose you've heard about the tea connoisseurs of Australia ...

((Yes, and the koala-tea diminishes on repetition.))

Jay Kinney
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San Francisco, CA. 94117

What caused me, blasé gaffiate, to request a copy was mention I had read of Angus Taylor's article "Taoism and Dialectical Materialism." Believe it or not the first thought which went through my mind when I read

the zine review mentioning Taylor's piece was: "Damn, the fucker has beaten me to the punch!" My second thought was: "Hmmm, I wonder what he has to say!" Yes, I'd actually been trying to compose an essay showing the similarities between Taoism and Dialectical Materialism -- my version to be titled "Mao and the Tao." Obviously, Taylor, over there in Holland, had a similar impulse -- about the same time I had mine. Synchronistic? Perhaps. More likely though, our dual intentions were simply a pair of twin post-counter-cultural intellectual chickens coming home to roost. Trying to synthesize Taoism and Marxism was a perfectly obvious notion to me, being both familiar with the Age of Aquarius and the Left. What particularly set me off in that direction was Capra's book *The Tao of Physics* from which you quote liberally in KRAT 10. My notion was to interrelate Taoism, Marxism, and Quantum Physics into a unique hodge-podge which would surprise the political, spiritual and scientific worlds. However, I got sidetracked into other things and Taylor filled the void. Congrats Angus -- you did a decent job! One further allied theoretical question: Would you consider quantum jumps and dialectical leaps as the same thing? (Jon? Anyone?)

Reading further in the issue I found other articles of equal interest. How can one go wrong with Wood, Emerson, and Singer? (Don't they have a new album out?) Susan's article was sublimely calm while both David and Jon tended towards the hysterical -- KenFletch's illos fitting perfectly.

Ever the spoilsport, I found Judy Mitchell's single illos more striking than the comic strip (which had similarities to the lettercol in terms of conversations in progress.) This is not a complaint, just curiosity: why is it that women cartoonists/illustrators so often have a decorative & rather "organic" style? Is this a key to the feminine personality? (If there *is* such a thing ... I'm never quite sure whether Feminist theory claims that there *is* or *isn't*.)

Actually reading your editorial last (sorry) helps explain some of the in-jokes running rampant in Emerson and Singer's pieces. I still do not grasp who Debbie Notkin is however.

((Well, among other things, Debbie is one third of Another Change of Hobbit, and a co-author of "The Mimeo Man." But in terms of Jon's article, the key point is that Debbie knows more people who went to Stuyvesant than anyone I know, and I went to Stuyvesant.))

Phil Paine
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I found the article on Marxism and Taoism perversely interesting. Surely Angus couldn't be surprised by similarities in Taoism and Marxism on *that* level! Most worldviews in the history of ideas have shared these

concepts. Philosophers have elaborated, refined, and occasionally attempted inversions of these basic ideas for thousands of years. (For instance, the problem of "action at a distance" couldn't have been argued without them). They aren't



Blimp on Dark Rye,
No Tomato

particularly Marxist, and the interesting features of Marxism do not lie there. Attributing the concept of the unity of consciousness and matter and the primacy of contiguity over discreteness to Marx *specifically* is as silly as attributing the concept of life after death to Mary Baker Eddy.

Marx was not a philosopher in the technical sense, and he didn't pretend to be. He was more like what we would today call a sociologist. He wished to describe certain processes in economics and history *in terms of the main currents in German philosophy at that time*. His metaphysics and epistemology, in so far as he dealt with them, were the common coin. Similarly, his economics, based as it was on the "labor theory of value," were a straightforward development of the classical economics of Smith and Ricardo. What Marx was using these fairly commonplace elements for was a novel theory of historical millennialism, a sort of secularized view of history as a *drama*. Such a dramatic historical mysticism had dominated European thought for centuries, but it hinged on religious dogma, which Marx didn't believe in.

Marx sketched out a clearcut set of human *classes* to act as dramatic personae for his Millenarian drama. The essential point of this drama isn't that it is predestined, but that it has a direction. Following the classic principle of Western art, it has a beginning, a middle, and an end. Each stage generates the next from elements contained within it. The final stage is a resolution, complete and stable, like the final precipitant in a series of chemical reactions. This really places the Marxist historical theory solidly in the tradition of the great messianic religions: Zoroastrianism, Islam, Christianity.

If we take a look at another attempt to systemize history -- the theories of Oswald Spengler -- we see something quite different. Spengler acts things out with different characters: "cultures," which he anthropomorphizes in the same way that Marx anthropomorphizes "classes." Rather than the classical dramatic tradition, Spengler sees his satisfaction in eternal cycles. The feeling is Vedic, rather than Christian. It is no wonder that Marx's view of history fit so comfortably into the intellectual culture of Christian Europe, while Spengler's has remained a minor curiosity.

There is a sort of parallel among the religions and historical beliefs of



Amerindian North America. Hiawathism, Glooscap cultism, and the Ghost Dance are close to the European millennial outlook, while the cyclic outlook of the Hopi and other Uto-Aztecs are more analogous to the Vedic tradition.

The big mistake of both Marx and Spengler was in trying to make their essentially aesthetically-motivated constructions fit actual history. As one gets further and further away from the times and places they were describing, the theories stretch and distort to accomodate larger and larger discrepancies. The Marxist terminology becomes more and more grotesque the further removed we are from nineteenth century England and Germany, and the historical timetable goes screwy as various historical actors miss their cues. The characters and plot of Amerindian millennialism are, as they should be, quite different.

In another issue, I feel Angus is way off the mark. Human consciousness is *seldom* considered "separate" from nature, and a fundamental unity of all things is the norm among metaphysical theories. Most religions teach that the soul, atman, or whatever, exists independently of consciousness (which is seen as an aspect of the *material* world). The Zen Master seeks to get beyond consciousness *and* the material world by ignoring the second and short-circuiting the first. To most mystical thinkers the Godhead is identityless and consciousnessless -- the One, Nirvana, the Eternal Grace. Now, the materialist believes that there is nothing, or at least nothing of any great significance, beyond consciousness. That is pretty much all that is required of a materialist -- and I, being one myself, feel no compulsion to disbelieve in consciousness or make it "unnatural."

I disagree with the assertion that "when Marxists talk about 'contradiction' they don't mean formal, logical contradiction." There is a wide range of Marxist thought, and it seems to me that this is true where Marxism is strongly washed over with western liberalism, but that where it has fostered totalitarianism it *is* logical contradiction that is referred to. What Marx himself believed is impossible to say.

Patrick McGuire
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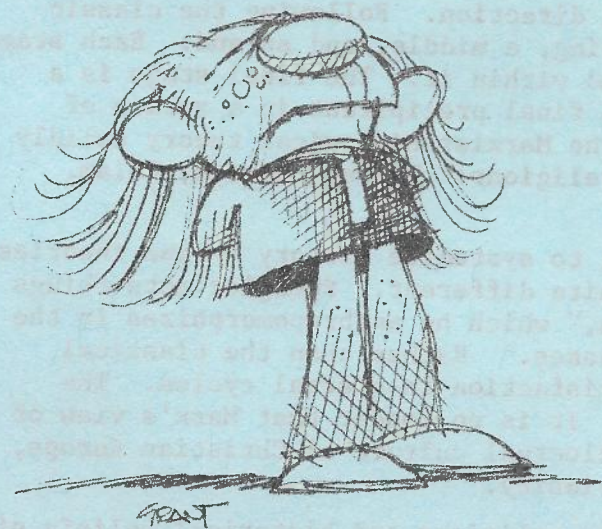
Angus Taylor's view of dialectical materialism is a remarkably orthodox Marxist-Leninist one. Most Western Marxists improvise more freely. For instance Marx,

though not Engels, seems to have had the idea not exactly that the universe was eternal, but that it was meaningless to speak of the existence of the universe

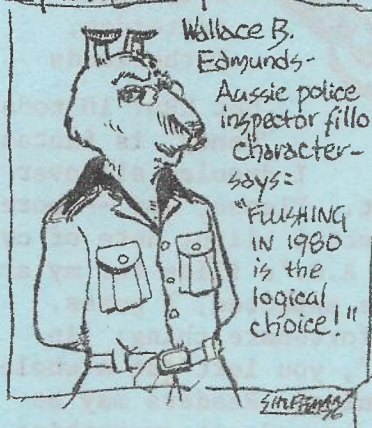
apart from the existence of human consciousness. (Engels in general is less fuzzy and quasi-mystical than Marx. This makes him a lot easier to understand, but also easier to prove wrong. With Marx himself, you can always go back and try another interpretation of the same words.)

Of course, as Marx freely admitted, the idea of the tension of opposites which continually give rise to new forms derived from Hegel. Marx just "stood him on his head" and made material relations give rise to ideas, not the other way around. So if you want a Western proto-Taoist, I think Hegel has a better claim than Marx.

I think Marx would have regarded



OUNPAID POLITICAL PRONOUNCEMENT



making love, and perhaps even writing a book, as cultural activity, part of the superstructure than the base. The activity Marx sees as essential is not exactly Taylor's "practical" activity but *productive* activity in an economic sense. Unless one regards love as the way to make babies for the world proletariat.

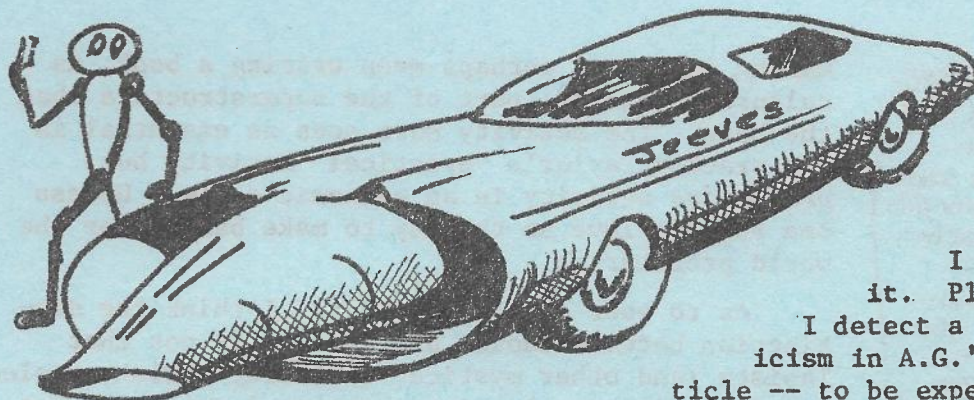
As to your quote from Capra, I think the distinction between Taoism and Marxism is not that Taoists (and other mystics, including Jewish, Moslem, and Christian ones) reject practical activity, but that theory or mystic contemplation is logically prior to activity. (More or less, anyhow.) In Marxism there is great stress on the interaction of theory and practice. To an outsider like me, this often

seems to mean plunging ahead when you don't even know for sure what you intend to be doing. This may be why Marxism has brought so much more misery into the world than Taoism (or Christianity). A Marxist might reply that it has also done more good, and he could make a fairly convincing case. Either way, it's the Marxist stress on changing things that does it. (It's even more complicated than that. The Marxist would reply that history is forcing him to work for change, so that he's simply practicing non-resistance to history, following the Tao. But that's not how it looks from the outside.)

No, wave/particle duality is a lot more like three persons in one God than it is like a Zen koan -- it's the best human approximation to a fact which has no exact analog in everyday experience. The Zen koan is supposed to produce an *intuitive* reaction. Wave/particle duality or divine trinity are, at least primarily, *intellectual* tools to allow you to do physics or theology. The Zen reaction is to surrender intellectually in the face of mystery, and to allow other areas of the mind to take over. The physics or Christian reaction is to admit that there is a central mystery you'll never comprehend intellectually, but to attempt to *approximate* it as well as possible, with the expectation that better approximations will become possible over time.

((Capra has quite a bit to say about the intuitive element in science, as well as the rational element in Eastern mysticism. He also likes to pair quotations from Heisenberg or Einstein -- describing their moments of insight -- with similar ones from assorted mystics. I see a fairly straightforward parallel between a classical physicist, confronted with an absolute paradox in nature, who has his conscious, Newtonian intellect zapped out, who experiences a sudden intuitive insight that discards the world-view he has been trained in, and who afterwards proceeds to translate this insight into mathematics; versus the Zen student, whose koan forces him to break out of his intellectual straightjacket and experience enlightenment, and who then proceeds to write a book describing the experience. The differing stress on the experience versus the translation is an artifact of the differing relevance the experiences have to the rest of society. Though, I suppose a really good "translation" of the latter is what produces a new religion...))





Angus Taylor
Fleerde 34,
Bylmermeer
Amsterdam,
Netherlands

Got KRAT 10 today.
"Wendy" is fantastic.

I drooled all over
it. Please, God -- more!

I detect a slight note of cyn-
icism in A.G.'s illos for my ar-
ticle -- to be expected, I guess.

One slightly unfortunate thing: in

the parag. near the end, beginning "Man is *part* of ...", you left out a whole
line -- and what's come out completely reverses my meaning! Readers may be
puzzled. It *should* be: "Taoism says: everything changes and yet everything
remains the same. Dialectical materialism says: everything changes and a
historical development occurs."

I could do a follow-up article on "Marx and the Art of Motorcycle Main-
tenance" -- *if* anyone's interested.

Mike Glicksohn
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The special anniversary issue of KRAT is a delight in-
deed, clearly establishing KRAT as Canada's best fan-
zine and thereby, I guess, making you Canada's best
fanned. (A position you hold, I trust you realize,
only because they couldn't find a Canadian qualified to fill it.) While
SIMULACRUM is probably still a prettier fanzine than KRAT, the quality of your
fanzine is clearly higher than anything else regularly appearing from our
great Dominion (I thought for a while the title might go to Garth Danielson
and BOOWAT but then someone pointed out I was reading the wrong side of his
pages and he fell from favour) *and* only KRAT has Judy Mitchell. That's an
asset strong enough by itself to singlehandedly raise any fanzine into the
upper echelons! The summary of the story so far and the latest installment
of "Wendy & the Yellow King" once again establish Judy as one of the most
creative and talented artists in fandom. I sit in awe of the way she unfolds
the story in almost incidental border parts of the panels! The casual reader
is simply not going to either understand what's going on or appreciate the
skill with which this *chef d'oeuvre* is woven! I trust the appearance of
Chapter 6 *plus* a Mitchell cover means we can expect Wendy to appear regularly
from here on! Or at least as regularly as anything tied to KRATOPHANY's sche-
dule can ever be!

((Now what does he mean by that?))

Eric Lindsay
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Australia

KRAT 10 is another marvellous issue; I particularly
enjoyed reading once again the "Food for Thought"
restaurant, and Kant help wishing that there were
places that actually had such strange foods. The
only ones that had any likelihood of being of equal
interest were the Texas restaurant "Remember the A la Mode," and a New York
hot dog stand called "What Foods These Morsels Be."

Why is everyone in the frozen north so keen on bagles? John Berry intro-
duced me to them in Seattle, and I still can't tell them from a bread roll.
Perhaps something is lox in the translation of the recipe.

Now, what is happening next to Wendy (and who is the Yellow King?)

((Ah, who indeed?))

doug barbour
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then, of course, a thousand trumpets sound a roaring huzzah, there is the return of WENDY & THE YELLOW KING. i loved it all! but i hope to ghu we dont have to wait as long again for the next installment, i mean sheesh! here i am hanging on the edge of my chair for, how many months, wondering what awful thing is going to happen next (& when it does it will take three pages anyway, & nothing *will* happen, yeah). actually, & i says it who shouldnt, for why ruin a perfectly good faanish comixstrip with heavyduty litcrit theory, but i really like the way the background is thought thru. it's good sf: if somewhat fey (&, for all i know, feh!): a social/cultural/technological matrix that truly is immanent in all the characters' lives. congratulations to both mike & judy. like i say, i love it!

Jane Hawkins
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The first thing I want to say about K10 is that one of the illos is driving me nuts. I've easily spent an hour staring at the creature by Freff on page 44. It is one of the most expressive monsters I've seen in a long time -- an amazing combination of humor and menace. It changes each time I open to that page.

No, that illo was not the only thing I liked. I'm delighted to see discussion of Zen and Tao in a fannish setting. The juxtaposition of Susan's visit to the Zen Center with your often-humorous Chonhyfur is beautiful. The 'Wow -- *heavy*' approach many people take to such things as Zen annoys me. To each their own, I guess, but for me it is not 'heavy.' It is lovely, joyous -- and humorous.

After my closest approach to understanding thus far, I laughed aloud, chuckled for hours and smiled for days. The glorious, loving *humor* of the world flabbergasts me.

"Wendy" is wacky, complicated and well-drawn. A fine example of why I should give up on DC comics. (But I won't -- I've had the hots for Batman since I was 8!) I like the way Judy avoids formal paneling and the dual plot line of pages 21 and 22 adds further interest to the strip.

((And then again, DC comics come out a bit more often ...))



Mike Deckinger
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I probably was more interested in Susan Wood's article on Andy Main and Zen, than anything else in KRATOPHANY #10. I first met Andy at the Pittcon in 1960, and then saw him sporadically at various conventions through the next few years. In 1961 I stopped off at Ted White's Metropolitan Mimeo in the West Village, after Andy had moved in. "Andy Main, what's happened to you?" I queried, noting the crutch he was using to painfully move around. He had slipped in some way, after moving to New York, and either fractured or broken his leg. A short time later he did the same thing to the other leg. "I did my thing again," he explained ruefully in a fanzine at the time. And indeed he had.

Therefore, I was not in the least surprised to read that when Susan Wood first glimpsed him, he was on crutches again, due to a leg injury.

The last time I saw him was about 8 years ago at a West Coast convention. He was on the verge of slipping underground, after the government had rejected his plea to claim Conscientious Objector status because he was a vegetarian. (This provoked a brief, but memorable exchange in FAPA at the time. "My god, Andy," Buck Coulson declared, "you're supposed to shoot the enemy, not *eat* them.")

So I am pleased to see that Andy has apparently resolved his directions and achieved contentment within himself. I know I could not subsist on this type of existence; as much as I prefer confinement, Zen Center living seems almost isolation by comparison. I wouldn't have the patience for the introspective enlightenment that Andy is seeking. I wish him well.

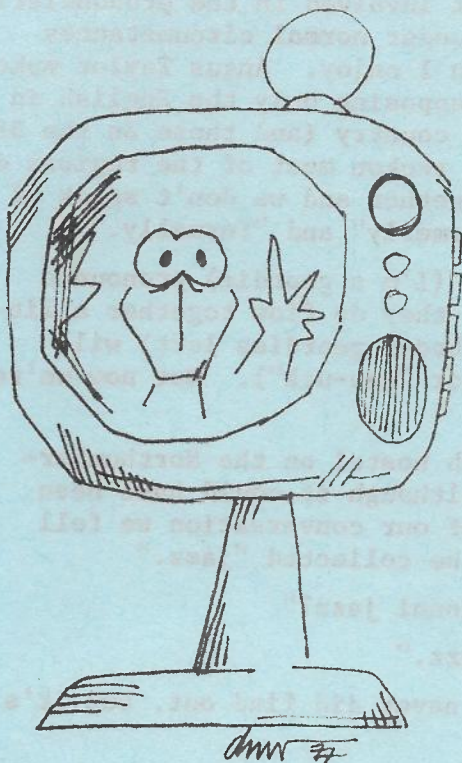
Terry Garey
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I liked everything in this issue, especially your rundown on the Avocado Pit and AKOS and the beginnings of KRATOPHANY. I had never gotten it straight, before. My favorite, however, was Jon Singer's article. Gee, I even knew some of the people mentioned! So I thought you might like to hear about the three times I first met Jon Singer.

The first time I first met Jon Singer was at the '76 Westercon in L.A. Debbie had given herself the job of introducing me to all the people she thought I should be introduced to, which was very nice since I am awful about it, myself. Jon was, of course, singing. Debbie introduced us. We shook hands. We smiled. Unfortunately, I immediately forgot his name because my brain had clouded over an hour before with an attack of peopleitis. By this time, you see, I was down to: "person...introduction...ah...seems harmless...hmm..." and would have forgotten my own mother's name had she been presented to me.

The second time I first met Jon Singer was a few days after the con 500 miles away in Quinn's living room during a Fanatics meeting. Jon was on his way home with a friend via Bay Area, Portland, Seattle, et cetera. We were introduced once again by Quinn. Jon gave me funny looks and gently reminded me that we had met previously. I was still in shock from the Con, so I agreed with him, shook hands, immediately forgot his name again and went home to sleep it off.

The third time I first met Jon Singer was at Windycon last October. Yale Eidiekin invited Ctein and me out to Chinese dinner dead dog night. I was seated next to a charming young man who, in addition to understanding the subtleties of Chinese food, seemed familiar. So I asked his name. Once again, Jon patiently explained that we had met two times before and that his name was still Jon Singer. Jon Singer? Jon Singer? It was too crowded to crawl under the table, so I apologised and told him the story of the time I passed my



mother by in a shopping center. I use that story a lot. Sadly, it is a true story.

With that cleared up, we continued to try to order our meal. The place was out of everything we wanted to order. The last straw was loaded when they couldn't fix ginger duck because they had run out of ginger. Jon and his lady and I remembered the large grocery store down the street and reasoned that even in Chicago they must have ginger in a place that big and went running out of the restaurant. We bought three dollars worth of ginger (at the end of a con!) and a pumpkin for Jon, and ran back to the restaurant and gave the ginger to the staff. They informed us that it was the wrong kind of ginger, but they were so impressed with our persistence that the cook gave it a try, anyway. It was a little sharp, but not bad.

It was a memorable meal, though, and whenever I have a dish with ginger in it I think of Jon, so it is unlikely that we will have to be introduced for the first time for a fourth time, unless he starts to forget me. I wouldn't blame him, of course.

Judy Mitchell's art work is wonderful. My gosh and little fishes but that is nice! The whole thing is nice. You are nice. Willikins!

Alan Bostick
c/o Arthurs
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Wendy and the Yellow King is, as I told you at Westercon, fantastic. I have just one question ... Who's the Yellow King?

((Funny, I was just going to ask you that!))

George Flynn
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The theory of theons sounds fascinating. I got to wondering about something David didn't mention, the velocity of theons. Fortunately, a little thought reminded me of the pertinent data: It clearly says in Psalm 90 that "a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday"; this is obviously a description of a relativistic time contraction of 365,000, indicating with a little calculation that theons travel at 0.9999999999996c. Has this important result been obtained previously?

This issue's Grayson Greensward contribution is a rather pedestrian tale, don't you think?

Dammit, how did Jon spell the sound of one coin dropping?!

((He spelled it quite easily, as a matter of fact.))

"Caution is needed in making descriptions. Note that the Arab describes a woman who walks 'gracefully' as 'walking like a chicken.' The Indian describes a 'graceful' woman as 'walking like an elephant.' This should deter overeasiness physically descriptive statements."

-- Ray L. Birdwhistell, *Kinesics and Context*

Harry Bell
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United Kingdom

I did want to get involved in the pronunciation battle, because under normal circumstances it's a discussion I enjoy. Angus Taylor makes the mistake of supposing only the English in the north of the country (and those on the BBC)

rhyme "war" with "jaw." I rhyme them, too, and I reckon most of the regions do. The Scots, of course, are a different matter altogether and we don't speak of the Welsh. And I make no distinction between "formerly" and "formally."

I might just throw in the fact that geordies (I'm a geordie) pronounce both vowels in words like "boat" and "coat," tho' they do flow together a little, and a broad geordie (few perfectly-speaking broad geordies left) will pronounce double-o words like "hook" as "hyuck" (or "hee-uck"). But now we're getting into the realm of dialect.

Once, when I was staying at Rock Hau, a youth hostel on the Northumberland coast, I met a guy from, I think, Chicago, although it could have been Seattle, I forget which. Anyway, in the course of our conversation we fell to discussing hobbies and he happened to mention he collected "jazz."

"Modern jazz, you mean?" I said, "or traditional jazz?"

"No," he replied, looking puzzled, "glass jazz."

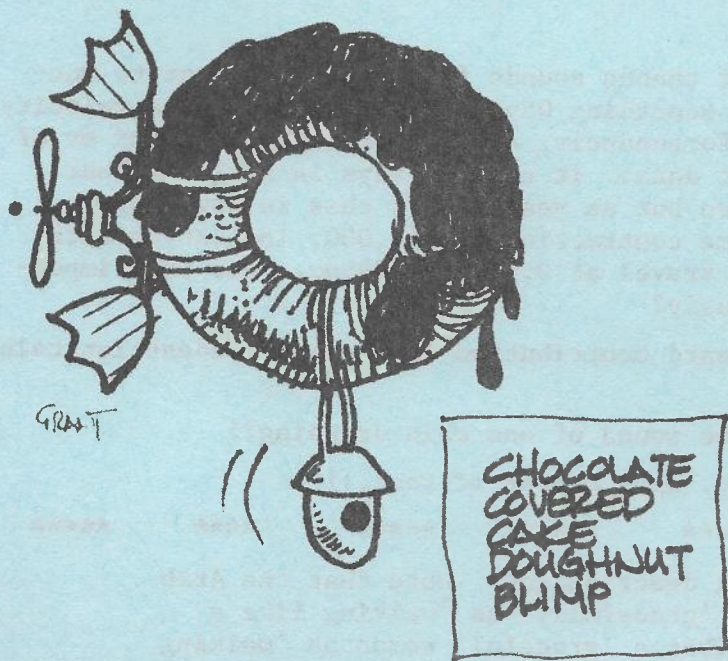
Why he was collecting glass jars ("jahs") I never did find out, but it's a good story, I think.

John Boston
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Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201

Harry Warner's comments on fannish slang vs. CB slang represents a too-functional view of what slang is for and why it's interesting. CB slang is sometimes irritating because it is too self-consciously contrived;

but slang in general is a way of making the language more interesting and colorful and in a way poetic -- listen to the cadence of ghetto street talk sometime, or for that matter look at some of William Burroughs' stuff (notably the beginning of *The Soft Machine*) to see how underworld argot is transmuted

into a superficially unintelligible but nightmarishly compelling dream. All this is apropos a book I ran across a few weeks ago, *The Spaceflight Revolution* by one William Sims Bainbridge (John Wiley, 1976). Bainbridge is an engineer turned sociologist, and his book purports to show that the space program represents the culmination of a social movement that succeeded. I can't evaluate that because I haven't read the book too closely, but one of the things he did in the course of his research was to test the hypothesis that science fiction fandom and/or the reading audience was somehow a social base for spaceflight efforts. He concludes that it isn't -- in fact, that it isn't a social base for anything -- but in the



course of the chapter he observes (p. 213):

"Something of the cultural style of fandom can be seen in the highly mechanical methods by which most of the words [which he found in fanzines] were originally created. Only six of the 53 words represent special imagery or colorful usage, for example *mundane* and *android*. One word, *grok*, may be the contraction of *grow close*. The remaining 46 words were all created by the contraction of conventional words, by running words together, or by the construction of an acronym. *Con* is short for convention. *Sercon* is the contracted combination of *serious* and *constructive*. *Apa* is the acronym of *amateur press association*. Although a few of the contractions show a certain imaginative flavor, for example *egoboo* from *ego boost*, almost all the words were produced mechanically. A metaphor is hard to find in the entire list. The lexicons of other special languages often contain colorful words created by rather more poetic processes than employed by fandom. Consider for example the evocative words of the drug subculture: *snow*, *grass*, *roach*, *joint*."

I guess it goes to show that having a Cosmic Mind doesn't give you a Cosmic Mouth.



David Stever
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Wendy and the Yellow King is really super, and making more sense now. I'm not sure if that's good, but so be it. Wendy is really quite beautiful, and if Freff's comments about artist's faces looking like they drew themselves (hence, Kelly Freas looks like he drew himself) are true, then I might not want to meet Judy Mitchell, for fear of embarrassing myself.

Stephen Eber
7411 Cartwheel
San Antonio, TX 78227

wireless pasta machine.

By the way, it seems to me that KRAT seems to pass over (oh yes, happy Passover) the exploits of many deserving but obscure personages. Such as: Marchése Macaroni -- Italian engineer, invented the

Enrico Fermentation -- Bootlegger of apple cider during Prohibition. Later published his autobiography, "How I made my pile from cores."

Ray Bradburger -- Short order cook, wrote the definitive book on cooking hamburgers, "Fahrenheit 450" (the temp at which hamburger carbonizes).

Roy Tackett
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Albuquerque, NM 87107

Am happy to discover that someone in fandom, other than myself, has read Fritjof Capra's book. (Since you are discussing pronunciations, you pronounce "Fritjof.") Capra does point out some interesting parallels between eastern mysticism and modern physics. Particle physics has gone off in some strange directions. I personally think the particle partisans all took a wrong turn a few years ago and presently have no real idea of what

they are looking for or at.

You cite Capra's discussion of the particle/wave duality as something paradoxical. It isn't unless one deliberately makes it so. One has only to observe the ocean to realize that there is nothing strange about particles moving in waves.

((Sorry, but the particles in the ocean do not move in waves. They bob up and down, as do swimmers (this is before the waves break, of course, which is a different phenomenon). The "wave" merely travels through the medium of the water. Just as light waves travel through the medium of the ether, remember? If water waves consisted of pulses of water molecules, they wouldn't look nearly as pretty. Paradox is in the mind of the beholder, though. I see nothing the least bit paradoxical about time dilation and other relativistic effects, but when you aim an electron beam at a wall with two slits, and the pattern you get on the other side is not the super-imposition of the patterns from the two slits separately ... that I find paradoxical. Ah, what do you guys from New Mexico know about oceans, anyway?))

In his discussion of relationships, etc., Capra did remind me of something that I pointed out (facetiously, of course) years ago: that perhaps the entire universe consists only of the vibration of nothing.

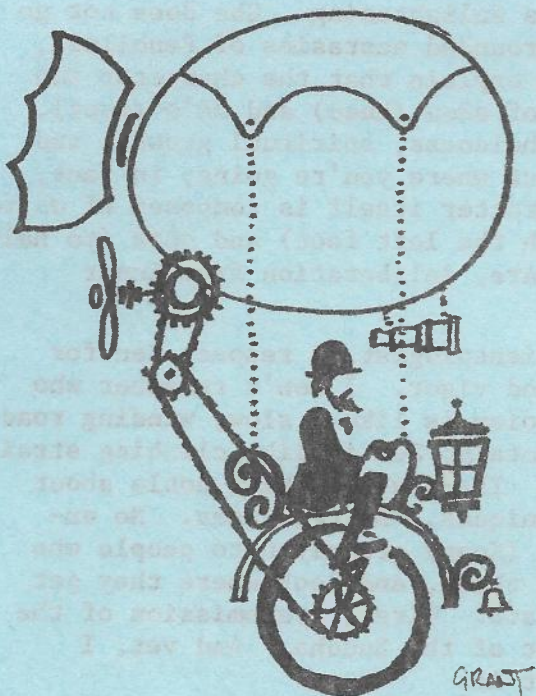
I suppose the thing that struck me most about Capra's book -- bear in mind that I haven't really done any studying in particle physics in years -- is that there has been nothing new discovered or suggested in years. Everything he cites was under discussion in the 30's and 40's. There have been refinements, true, and some sifting of dross but no new basics. Perhaps all of the basics have been found. More likely physics, like religion, is being frozen into the ancient mold wherein the practitioner accepts without question the word of the old masters and doesn't question. And that is more like western religion than eastern. The Buddha, after all, tells us to question everything, not to accept things as true simply because they are written in old books or proclaimed by supposedly wise men.



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I've always read
Chinese books the
way you look at
stereo photographs,

only I try to get several different translations (or images) instead of only two. I read them all, sometimes simultaneously; then I move my viewpoint back --back -- until they all come together, ignoring any side images. (The December 1976 special issue of the Viking Project Bulletin has some color stereo pictures of Mars and teaches you how to perform this technique with your eyes, in which case it's called "free-vision fusion.") I only had one quarter of Chinese in college, which isn't enough to read a stop sign, but it helped. One day my Chinese history professor handed out copies of two classical poems in Chinese. He went over them with us character by character, then showed us two English translations of each, which were recognizably spokes of the same wheel to us after we had been acquainted

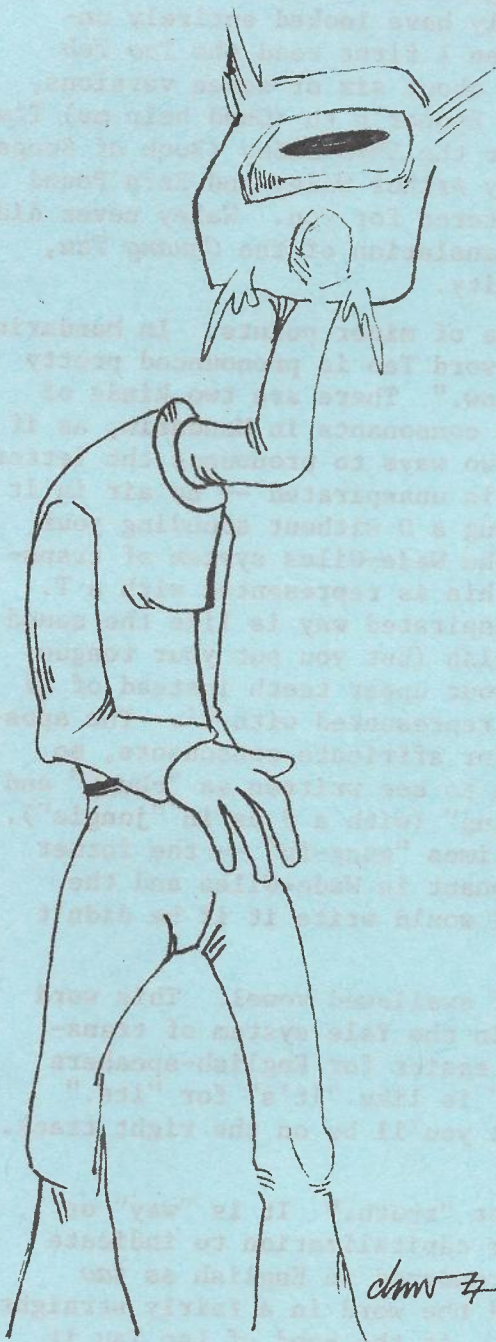


with the originals, but which otherwise would probably have looked entirely unrelated. When I first read the *Tao Teh Ching* I used about six or seven versions, from Whitter Bynner's to (Ghod help me) Tim Leary's. For the *Shih Ching* (Book of Songs) I used mostly Arthur Waley and Ezra Pound -- there's stereo for you. Waley never did an entire translation of the *Chuang Tzu*, more's the pity.

A couple of minor points. In Mandarin, anyway, the word Tao is pronounced pretty much like "dow." There are two kinds of initial stop consonants in Mandarin, as if there were two ways to pronounce the letter T. One way is unaspirated -- no air in it -- like saying a D without sounding your voice. In the Wade-Giles system of transliteration this is represented with a T. The other, aspirated way is like the sound of T in English (but you put your tongue tip behind your upper teeth instead of at your hard palate) -- it has air in it -- and is represented with T'. The apostrophe stands for aspiration. This also holds for affricate consonants, so that *ch'ung* stands for the sound we would expect to see written as "chung" and *chung* stands for the sound we would write as "jung" (with a J as in "jungle"). That's why you sometimes see "kung-fu" and sometimes "gung-fu" -- the former is the way you write the sound of the stop consonant in Wade-Giles and the latter is the way someone who had heard the word would write it if he didn't know the system.

The u in Lao Tzu or Chuang Tzu is a sort of swallowed vowel. This word "tzu" is sometimes written "tze" or "tse", and in the Yale system of transliteration, which isn't as pretty as W-G but is easier for English-speakers to understand, it's written as "dz." "Lao T'zu" is like "it's" for "its." If you say *Lau Dz* and *Dau Duh Jing* and *Jwahng Dz* you'll be on the right track. Too bad this torpedoed your illo on page 25.

The central meaning of the word "tao" is not "truth." It is "way" or "path." Chinese does not have anything like our capitalization to indicate Cosmic Significance, so you will see this word rendered in English as *tao* or *Tao* depending on the context. Confucius used the word in a fairly straightforward sense, as in "the *tao* of the ancestors." At the hand of Lao Tzu it took on a more mystical meaning, as in chapter 1: "The tao that can be told of is not an Unvarying Tao;/ The names that can be named are not Unvarying Names./ It was from the Nameless that Heaven and Earth sprang;/...The Doorway whence issued all Secret Essences." (Waley) The word *tao* came to have connotations of "truth" in the sense of Truth, that is, the truth that lies behind truths; "it is on the space where there is nothing that the usefulness of the vessel depends." (chapter 11) You might argue that it is characteristically Chinese to have a concept of truth that is so procedural, so rooted in change. Yet the ultimate nature of the Way is formlessness, no sound, no substance, before time. (chapter 25) If you will take up Mai-mai Sze's *The Tao of Painting*, Bollingen Series XLIX (1956), available in paper as *The Way of Chinese Painting* (Vintage/Random House, New York 1959) only slightly abridged, -- and I do recommend you take it up -- you will find an essay on the concept of *tao* as the first chapter. She analyzes the character *tao* so that you can see how it is formed: sometimes the composition of Chinese



ideographs is enlightening. She does not go into the ungrounded ecstasies of Fenollosa, but she does explain that the character *tao* is composed of *shou* (head) and *ch'o* (foot), suggesting wholeness, spiritual growth, and thinking about where you're going; in fact, the *ch'o* character itself is composed of *ch'ih* (to step with the left foot) and *chih* (to halt), suggesting care, deliberation from inner motivation.

As a Scientologist, I respect Zen for its purity and vigor. I don't remember who said that Taoism is like a slow, winding road up a big mountain; Zen is like climbing straight up the side. There's something noble about it. No techniques. No practices. No explanations. (Koans are given to people who seem to need these, and look where they get you.) Just *sit*! Direct transmission of the enlightenment of the Buddha. And yet, I have to fault it.

I have never been an advocate of the school that would teach swimming by throwing you over your head into deep water. Shock treatment. I'm agin it, in every shape and size. You see it everywhere -- it's tempting -- but I don't think it's a good idea and I don't think it's necessary.

The hardest thing in the Universe must be to get another person to *understand*. It's easier to *tell* him (and let him take it or leave it -- it isn't your fault any more); to give him an order; to think of him as a jack-ass; to bypass him and do whatever it was yourself. As communication fails, it solidifies. You start with an idea. The best thing is when the other person miraculously gets exactly the same one. The next best thing is when you suggest it, and it gets across. When that doesn't work, you tell her outright; and this is the level at which most of us expect to operate. Well, what happens if communication fails at that level?

You tell her earnestly. Then you start to shout. Then you get a club. Then you get a gun. Then you get a bomb. These are all attempts to make yourself heard, and ultimately to cause *some* effect, somehow, on another party. Maybe clubs have a place in politics. But they have no place in education.

Zen is a funny kind of education because what we're talking about doesn't seem as concrete as $2 \text{ apples} + 2 \text{ apples}$. Is it really a different sort of thing? I'll leave that to a Zen master to explain. But at least we can say that we're talking about understanding, and even the transmission of understanding. Let's call that a kind of education.

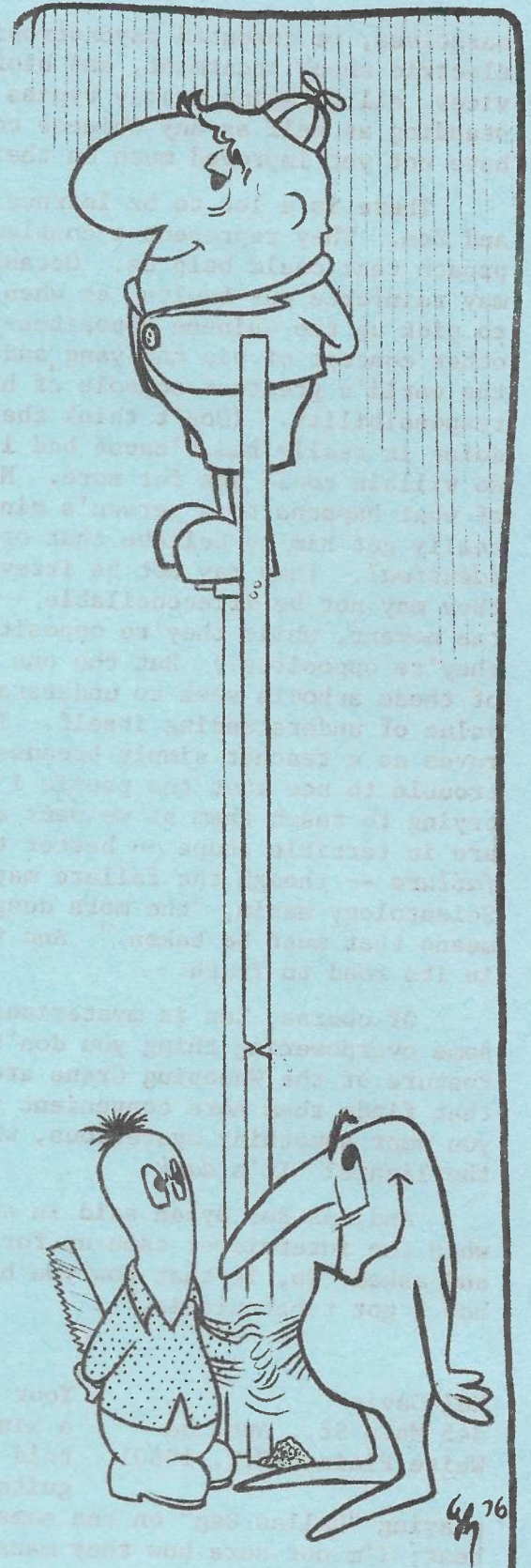
Zen, or if you will its Chinese predecessor Ch'an Buddhism, was born in frustration. The philosophers of that time seemed hopelessly immersed in categorization, symbolical explanation, and other trappings of the unbalanced

rationalizing processes. (Sound familiar?) Joshu's famous koan about "Does a dog have a Buddha-nature?" was a reply to a typical Chinese philosopher who was embroiled in the dispute, raging in philosophical circles at that time, over what could be said to have a Buddha-nature and what could not. I will not presume to represent what may have passed through Joshu's mind, or Mind, when this mundane turkey came up to him and asked what seemed to be a very important question. But I think the background helps point up the answer. Joshu used a club.

Monitors walk through the aisles in zendos (sitting rooms) of the Rinzai school of Zen. The monitors have clubs. You are sitting there, facing the aisle. The monitor looks at you. If he thinks you have fallen asleep, literally or figuratively, thwack! across the shoulder. This is not a punishment or a humiliation, at least not with an honest monitor. It is a technique. He means, "pay attention!" Or more exactly -- (here is my argument now) he sees you have slipped away into thinking and dreamland. He wants to bring you back into Present Time. Thwack!

This is present time. This impact, this pain, though it will not knock you unconscious, is guaranteed to attract your attention. Well, what I'm saying is, it's cute, but it's *clumsy*. You shouldn't have to do that. Thwack! I'll bring you to Present Time with a blow. Mu! I'll make you think a different way by paralyzing your analytical habits. Zot! I'll start a fire by putting this piece of wood where lightning will strike it. Pure. Vigorous. But *stone age*. This kind of thing is also bad pedagogy. Frustrated by the mind's apparent inability to understand Truth, it bypasses the mechanisms of understanding and teaches you something "that you can't understand." You might say this too is characteristic of China (and Japan). Their traditional culture was always *bad at technology*. If they had to do something, they did it. They did it traditionally, appropriately, beautifully. They might work to make their way of doing something more traditional,

more appropriate (to set standards, of course) or more beautiful (ditto). But they generally did not work to make their way of doing something easier, more efficient, or in any way able to do more with less. That was the Western idea. And, because perhaps of Eastern influence or for other reasons, we have always bumbled when we tried to apply our more-with-lessing to matters of religion, human understanding, or other matters beyond the material universe. Left to



ourselves, we invented psychotropic drugs, electric shock treatment, and biofeedback devices, all of which neatly bypass the understanding as well as any Chinese could. We have not yet improved much on their tradition.

There is a lot to be learned from Taoism and Zen. They represent a complementary approach that could help us. Occasionally they may reinforce our faults, as when Engels tried to pick up the Chinese opposites-yield-each-other concept of yin and yang and got one of the world's greatest schools of historical irresponsibility. (Don't think that what I'm doing is really bad, 'cause bad leads to good. No villain could ask for more. Not to speak of what happens to a person's mind if you really get him to believe that *opposites are identical*. They may not be irreversible -- they may not be irreconcilable -- but for the moment, while they're opposites, by Ghod, they're opposites.) But the one thing neither of these schools seem to understand is the value of understanding itself. I have gotten

raves as a teacher simply because I went forward step by step and took the trouble to see that the people I was trying to teach understood what I was trying to teach them as we went along. I did not panic and think "these people are in terrible shape -- better try something drastic." That is a *sure way to failure* -- though the failure may take a while. I try instead to follow the Scientology maxim, "the more desperate the case, the gentler the : . . . means that must be taken." And that's certainly something Zen does not do in its road to Truth.

Of course, Zen is mysterious. There's always something mysterious about some overpowering thing you don't understand. Unfortunately, names like The Posture of the Whooping Crane are simple technical nomenclature in a culture that finds them more convenient to recall than Slot A or Bolt ZX-5243. If you want something mysterious, why don't you just go to your room and turn out the lights? It's *dark*.

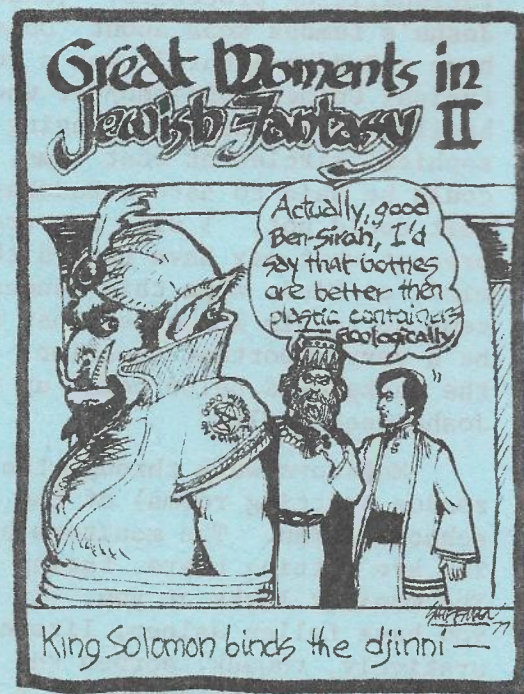
And, as Bob Dylan said in an interview in PLAYBOY about ten years ago, when the interviewer came up for breath after a ten-minute rap of Dylan's and asked "So, is that how you became a rock 'n' roll star?" -- "No, that's how I got tuberculosis."

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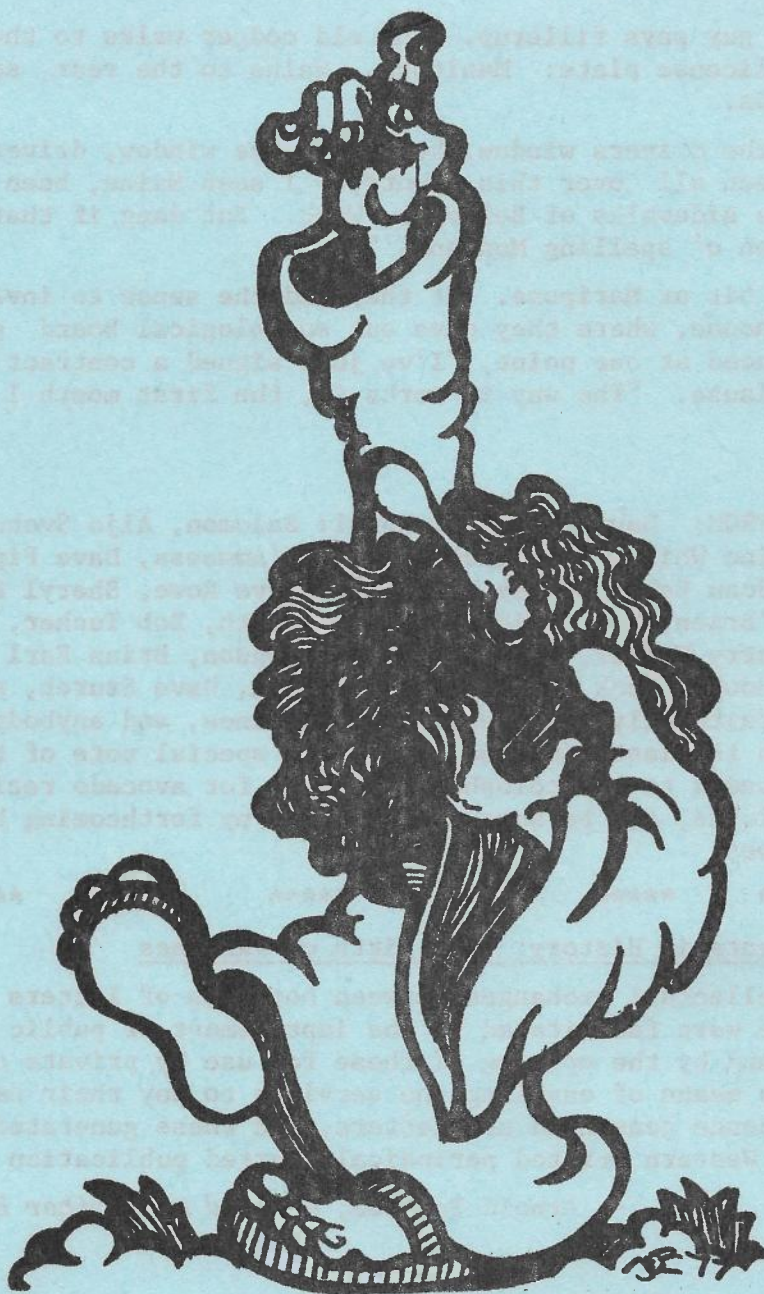
Your WHY YOU GOT THIS: "You think Saskatchewan is a kind of Chinese food," reminded me of a story told by Eric Fransden, a funny folkie who plays guitar as well as Bromberg (who once took over playing "Dallas Rag" on the same guitar, mid-song, without either missing a beat; I'm not sure how they managed the strap).

Fransden is funny, and almost totally unknown outside a dedicated NYC following. Does a deadly parody of Neil Young's "Heart of Gold." "I've been to Hoboken, I've had my nose broken ..."

Anyway, despite Young, he likes Canada. Says, "You know why Canajuns hate Amurricans. I'll tell you why. This car drives up to a filling station



QUEST



WHY YOU GOT THIS:

- ☐ Trade and/or review
- ☐ It seemed like the thing to do at the time
- ☐ You are mentioned
- ☐ You have a recipe for *Pêche à la Frog*
- ☐ You contributed
- ☐ You LoCed
- ☐ You paid
- ☐ You know who the Yellow King is