

NUMBER 2

Amanita 2

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The illustration on p.12 is the work of Eleanor Huxley.

AMANITA No.2 owes its production to chemical intake: written through a haze of caffeine and salicylic acid, from a concept first conceived when those concerned were less than sober. Thanks are due once more to Debora and Bogmorton; also to Andy, Adam, Eleanor and Ben, who seems to spend much of his time in laying on a duplicator (not the comfiest position).

AMANITA is produced and edited by Cyril Simsa. Contributions are still needed, write to: 18 Muswell Avenue, London N10 2EG. This issue available on whim, for postage stamps, request, or trade. Last issue still also exists, so if you want one write and ask. I also have copies of BLUEBEAT, a new Cambridge music fanzine: litho printed with stiff covers, lots of photos - even words! (Some of which, when read in succession, make coherent sentences). 28pp of A4 for only 30p + postage (making a grand total of 45p).

A final note: reponse to AMANITA 1 was less than great. This issue has been sent to much the same people as was the last, but unless I get word from some of you the mailing list is gonna change.

P.S. Today's date, as I type, is roughly January 1980. Copyright subsists, (c) 1980, so please ask before you nick it. 'Zine received belatedly from Eli Cohen; many thanks.

AMMONOIDS

Last issue generated an awesomely minuscule response. Indeed, so small was the response that I can only find one letter that says more than just "Hello." For what it's worth, here is:

KEN MANN, 22 Pennethorne Road, London SE15

"Even taking your caveats into account, I found Amanita rather boring...I never did find intellectualism for its own sake interesting.

"I know you've a tendency to show off your learning - it happens to those that go to university (including myself). However, the trick is to show off unobtrusively: the wood and the trees become indistinguishable. Sacrifice a little of your ego for the art of communication next time."

I must admit this letter worries me, as did the words that Alan Dorey muttered when we met at J.G. Ballard's autographing session. I don't think I ever consciously decided to show off my "learning" when I first set out to do a fanzine of my own. Reflecting on this letter, though, I've had to come to the conclusion that there may be truth in some of what Ken says, and it is this that worries me.

I do not want to put you off by seeming inaccessible. There was nothing mysterious or learned about any of last issue: all the "learning" on display was of an anecdotal type and was no more a piece of scholarship than, say, the Ellison nose-tweaking story. It so happens, though, that I don't know a lot of Ellison anecdotes, whereas I do know lots of stories about hippopotami. To me, this does not seem of much significance beyond the fact that I like hippos. Because I am into hippos, I have read some books about them.

I enjoy reading old books: indeed, I do not read much else. I cannot really hide this fact if I am to produce a fanzine.

I do not produce a fanzine to rub your nose in my "learning." I produce it because it amuses me, and because I naively hope that some of it may also raise a smile from you (and if it doesn't, fair enough; I'll have to try again next time).

Whatever you thought of last issue, I hope no-one else than Ken got the impression I was out to prove my "learning."

WAHF: Paul Angel; Angela Carter; Andy Darlington; Andy Sawyer. Trades received from: Dave Bridges; the Charnox; Rob Jackson; Andy Pratt. Verbal grunts received from: Dorey/Nicholas; Chris Evans; the Harveys; Dave Wingrove, and probably a few others who have slipped my memory. Thank you to all of the above.

JG Ballard

A few weeks ago I left a paperback of J.G. Ballard's Crash upon the kitchen table of a Cambridge students' hostel. When I went back a week later, I found that it had changed shape: what had once unquestionably been a normal, rectangular book, was now a most innovative octagonal affair.

As I stood there contemplating this development, a Cornish anarchist-cum-all-round-alcoholic wandered in. His eyes were glazed in their characteristic fashion, and he barely noticed me as he dived headfirst in the sink to look for half-washed coffee cups. A carving knife swung casually upon a loop hooked to his belt, and his back trouser pockets bulged with triangular bits of paper.

He swung round, shedding Ballardian confetti, grinned, and spoke: "Sorry about your J.G. Ballard book," he said.

"You liked it?" I asked stupidly.

"Well, not exactly," he replied, "but it was fun. You've really no idea how tricky it is to cut up a book using a knife." He smiled at me with an expression usually reserved for pathology journals; many were the happy evenings he had spent discussing lesions, wounds and sickness with the hostel's resident nocturnal punk.

The punk was a mathematician, and in whatever time he had left between frequent perusals of old coroners' reports, he drank vast quantities of coffee and worked hard at solving problems. While he worked, he often played us choice selections from the U.S. Army ammunition box of records he kept underneath his desk (I remember in particular a lovely basement single: "I Love Maggie Thatcher," by a band called the Not Sensibles). He, alone of all the students living in the house, had heard of J.G. Ballard prior to my introducing Crash.

I later learned that it was not the book itself, but the colorful packaging, that gave rise to a lot of comment in the hostel. A geographer from Radleigh with a penchant for Radio 2 took one look at the blurb and burst out into a fit of hysterics (it was the Panther edition which claims "A brutal, erotic novel"). The Christian medical student didn't even get that far: after a surreptitious ogle at the cover illustration, he decided that the novel ought not to be in the house. Nobody but the engineer-cum-thwarted fighter pilot actually sat down and read the text filling the gap between the covers; even he had to remove his flying jacket as he did so.

A few days ago, another friend of mine got all stuck up with

Airfix glue: he had been reading the new J.G. Ballard novel, and he thought it might be nice to build himself a model of a Cessna aircraft.

It was after reading Crash that this same friend of mine took his first driving lessons. He learned quickly, and despite a near collision with a group of passing schoolgirls, he did not succeed in writing off his car during his test; this disappointed him immensely, but resulted in his getting a full licence, which in turn led to a job as a chauffeur. He spent a host of happy moments dreaming about Jenny Agutter, school uniforms, and pile-ups on the motorway, before somebody told him Jenny Agutter lived in America. It was around this time he started to suspect he might be schizoid.

By his eighteenth birthday he had become jaded with fast cars; in somewhat over six months' driving he had yet to have a major accident. Perhaps one of his personalities had been holding him back? His alter-ego continued to dream of Jenny Agutter.

Already at this early date he had considered flying lessons: if he learned to be a pilot, he could steal a DC-10, fly to America, and then find Jenny before he came down (when, later, he read Ballard's latest, The Unlimited Dream Company, he was extremely gratified that he thought of this first).

Meanwhile, his stable personality was feeling insecure: I think it was this personality that once confided it had woken up, spread-eagled naked on its bed, clutching its gonads with its hands, and shouting out "I'd feel much safer if I only had a gun." It was the other personality that spoke up through the glue: it spoke so lyrically about the latest J.G. Ballard novel, that I asked it to review the book, and here is that review:

"The new J.G. Ballard book is much the same as all his old ones. This time, the protagonist is Blake, a man who wants to fly.

"Blake has a job at London Airport, sweeping up the debris of completed journeys. One day, in a fit of pique, he steals a Cessna civil aircraft. Never having flown before, he crashes not long afterwards.

"When he recovers, he finds he is in the town of Shepperton. This hotbed of suburbia comes to hold a strange fascination for him: not only does he find it impossible to leave, but also he quickly discovers that he is in fact a god.

"Gradually, as he awakens to a new, heightened awareness (by way of a series of highly uplifting orgies), he learns how to use his new-found powers to absorb the townspeople. Immediately, he perceives that it would be a boon to all concerned, if he absorbed the whole of Shepperton into himself: although the people would all die, they could

transcend themselves through him, and he could increase his own godliness through them.

"Despite a few technical hitches. (such as his getting assassinated), Blake does in the end absorb all the people of Shepperton. As the last person flies off through the portals of his body, Blake looks at the crumpled Cessna, and things suddenly get all symbolic. He is confident the people will come back to help him save the world.

"I dare say there will be some readers who find Blake a bit unbalanced. I have heard some people speaking about him as if he was a lunatic: they quote, for instance, his bad habit of inventing his own truths, and his very persistent state of permanent sexual arousal as if these in some way marked him out from others as abnormal. I, for one, find it extremely hard to see why these small foibles should preclude Blake from being completely sane; I myself have quite often felt a strong but transient attraction to a nice warm porcupine, or to a pot of fruity yoghurt (Hazlenut especially, or on occasion Apricot). I therefore find it most courageous that Blake has the gall to mention candidly that he once tried inseminating his school lawn. Nor is this case the only instance Blake speaks to the reader with such candour: he confesses his attempts at pederasty, rape and murder with so genial a lack of inhibition that the reader loves him for it.

"Blake is one of those infrequent and engaging characters you can admire; his cheerful amorality is something that is to be envied."

That is what my friend the chauffeur made of the new J.G. Ballard book. As for myself - well, I thought the beginning was hilarious, the ending brilliant, but in between I wasn't always sure: Ballard has certainly compressed all his obsessions into just 200 pages (in a way this is the book that summarises all his writings); Ballard's prose is certainly impeccable, his structure neat, the jacket tasteful - this book is, in short, a book I ought to like. And yet - although I found it worthy, and although it has its moments - I did not find it as rivetting as those preceding it.

I dunno, maybe I was simply reading it on the wrong bus.

The Unlimited Dream Company by J.G. Ballard; published by Jonathan Cape, London, 1979. ISBN 0-224-01742-X.

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"Robert Heinlein is the only SF writer who would write 600 pages simply to justify incest."

- Oedipus Cantakeros

# JAZZ AND NAZI GERMANY

A decalogue of regulations issued under Hitler, which were binding for all dance bands:

1) Pieces in foxtrot rhythm (so-called swing) are not to exceed 20% of the repertoire of light orchestras and dance bands:

2) in this so-called jazz type repertoire, preference is to be given to compositions in a major key and to lyrics expressing joy in life rather than Jewishly gloomy lyrics;

3) as to tempo, preference is also to be given brisk compositions over slow ones (so-called blues); however, the pace must not exceed a certain degree of allegro, commensurate with the Aryan sense of discipline and moderation. On no account will Negroid excesses in tempo (so-called hot jazz) or in solo performance (so-called breaks) be tolerated;

4) so-called jazz compositions may contain at most 10% syncopation; the remainder must consist of a natural legato movement devoid of the hysterical rhythmic reverses characteristic of the music of the barbarian races and conducive to dark instincts alien to the German people (so-called riffs);

5) strictly prohibited is the use of instruments alien to the German spirit (so-called cow-bells, flexatone, brushes, etc.) as well as all mutes which turn the noble sound of wind and brass instruments into a Jewish-Freemasonic yowl (so-called wa-wa, hat, etc.);

6) also prohibited are so-called drumbreaks longer than half a bar in four-quarter beat (except in stylised military marches);

7) the double bass must be played solely with the bow in so-called jazz compositions;

8) plucking of the strings is prohibited, since it is damaging to the instrument and detrimental to Aryan musicality; if a so-called pizzicato effect is absolutely desirable for the character of the composition, strict care must be taken lest the string be allowed to patter on the sordine, which is henceforth forbidden;

9) musicians are likewise forbidden to make vocal improvisations (so-called scat);

10) all light orchestras and dance bands are advised to restrict the use of saxophones of all keys and to substitute for them the violon-cello, the viola or possibly a suitable folk instrument.

- quoted by Josef Skvorecky  
on pp.13-15 of The Bass Saxophone, translated by K.  
Polackova-Henley, published by Chatto & Windus, 1978.



Adam Waldman goes IN SEARCH OF...

# The Armenian Connection

Elspeth Downley-Smith was born in Surrey, the only son of a transsexual methodist preacher whose hate of masculinity extended to a total refusal to accept that his child was not female. Until he was ten years of age Elspeth was denied all contact with other children; then, when his father was badly injured while trying to seduce an ostrich which had escaped from a local zoo, he was sent to stay with his aunt in London.

On his first day at school, Elspeth, dressed in a Laura Ashley dress, black fishnet stockings and ice-skates, had some difficulty relating to his contemporaries. It has been suggested the decision to send Elspeth to an aunt who had been recently released from Holloway, having just served a prison sentence for attempted sabotage of an airliner, was not a sound one. However, the fact remains that no-one else was available or prepared to look after a highly confused ten-year-old boy who not only thought he was a girl, but also, presumably as a result of his father's somewhat bizarre teachings, that he was a reincarnation of Christ.

Little is known of Elspeth's mother, and it is assumed that she either died during childbirth, or disappeared soon after, since there are no surviving birth records. The Rev Downley-Smith, however, maintains that divine intervention resulted in he himself giving birth to the child. If this rather unlikely claim is to be believed, then this constitutes the first known case of male parthenogenesis, or "virgin birth," in recorded history.

Elspeth's schooling, then, has a late and somewhat unfortunate start, but, following his transferral to an all-girls' convent school there was a marked improvement in his relations with his fellow students. The major remaining problems were, firstly, that although he believed himself female, certain physiological and anatomical differences were becoming apparent between himself and the other girls at the convent. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, Elspeth still believed himself to be a female reincarnation of Christ. This led to some embarrassing and difficult problems for the school and the local authorities, who were usually presented with the unenviable task of clearing up the carnage which so often was the aftermath of Elspeth's various attempted miracles. These included an occasion on which Elspeth tried to feed a school of 486 pupils on two goldfish stolen from the biology laboratory, and a particularly unfortunate incident



at the swimming pool which resulted in the drowning of three second-year girls. Elspeth, remarkably enough, survived such incidents unscathed; when questioned about his behaviour, with particular reference to its effects on other people, he would state it was the will of God (whom he addressed as "Dad").

When Elspeth was sixteen, her aunt was killed having been shot down over Rome in a U.S.A.F. bomber she had stolen in order to bomb the Vatican. The problem then arose as to where Elspeth would live. His father at the time was serving a sentence for blasphemous exposure, so another home was sought for the destitute child. Not surprisingly, those people who knew Elspeth, or at any rate knew of him, were a little hesitant to offer him accomodation. However, assistance was eventually forthcoming from the offices of the local Conservative association: Elspeth was allowed to sleep behind the photocopier.

Shortly after reaching this arrangement, late one cold November night, Elspeth was witness to a Conservative councillor attempting to make photocopies of his genitalia. It is said that this event resulted in Elspeth seeing the light, and going on to study Chemistry at Oxford (polytechnic).

On discovering his son's unprecedented academic prowess, Elspeth's father, by that time running a small publishing house of evangelical pornography, decided it was time that Elspeth raped the deans of seven Oxford colleges. The rationale behind this move remains somewhat unclear, however it is thought to have played an important role in launching a career in politics that culminated in Elpeth's becoming the first known woman Prime Minister.

All of which simply goes to show that God works in mysterious ways. The question remaining unanswered is:

Was God Armenian?

~~~~~

NEW ZINE RECEIVED

X; edited by Andy Pratt & Guy Phillips, c/o 6 Victoria Park Road, Exeter, Devon EX2 4NT.

Essentially, this zine is a school magazine that tries to build up contacts with the outside world as well, largely by way of fanzine listings (which are very incomplete), Most of the writers are quite young, and this shows in the style of writing: much of the writing shows promise, but at present it is flawed. Only a couple of the poems really stand out in my mind.

Still, X has the enthusiasm it will take to make future issues get better. I would think the editors could learn a lot from other fanzines, so why don't you send them yours? They seem extremely keen to trade.

Andy Sawyer looks at THE SF OF...

CAPTAIN W E JOHNS

Even those of you who, like every red-blooded Britisher, were brought up on the adventures of Biggles might have missed another series of books by Captain W.E. Johns more congenial to we sci-fi buffs than the saga of the intrepid airman. It has been said - I know, because I said it - that W.E. Johns' science fiction is written with all the narrative sophistication of the Perry Rhodan books, the characterisation of a "Doc" Smith novel, and the incandescent stylistics of a Patrick Moore. So let's look more closely at the works of one of the great unsung heroes of SF - a true Enid Blyton of the spaceways!

The saga opens with Kings of Space (1954), in which we meet two tall, lean, grey-eyed and fairheaded clones deerstalking somewhere in the Scottish Highlands. On closer inspection, they turn out to be "Tiger" Clinton - tough, hardbitten man of action - and his son Rex, whose function is to ask silly questions, suggest answers to problems, and generally act as the focus for us, the readers, to identify with. After losing their way in the mist, they stumble across - you'll never believe this - an eccentric scientist somewhat unfairly landed by his parents with the name Lucius Brane* who has devoted his time to inventing things - "Always inventing something or other" - and, with no help other than that of trusty butler Judkins, has managed to cobble together a flying saucer.

So, off they go for a quick jaunt around the Solar System. After finding the moon inhabited by worms and toads, Venus simply crawling with brontosauri and ape-men, and Mars infested by mosquitos which have virtually killed off all the inhabitants, we are led to believe that the Solar System is a pretty exciting place, but dreadfully insanitary. And who inhabits the other flying saucer they catch glimpse of? Not, it seems, the Russian spies they meet to round off the book with a spot of danger... Fortunately, the Professor has incorporated a pretty neat anti-Russian-spy device in his design: exit spacecraft vertically at 12g, carrying two bemused spies.

Return to Mars continues the saga. The group, with Dr. "Toby" Paul, sprays Mars with insecticide, saving the lives of the inhabitants, who are of course jolly pleased and turn out to be part of a race of space people who are scattered throughout the asteroid belt. From then on, the further volumes in the series - Now to the Stars, To Outer

*I mean, can you imagine an opera singer or a plumber with that appellation? No, the poor bugger's career was well and truly settled off him before he could lisp his first equation!



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Space, The Edge of Beyond,
Death Rays of Ardilla, and
To Worlds Unknown - chronicle
the adventures of the intrepid
band as they explore the
Solar System and beyond.

The purpose of these stories, however, is not simply to entertain. Otherwise, Rex would not continually ask dumb questions like "What is the difference between a star and a planet?" No, these tales have a Higher Moral Purpose: to instil in the reader a fitting sense of wonder at God's universe*, and to Educate.

Unfortunately, the latter purpose runs into one or two snags. Despite a list of "Definitions you should know" in To Worlds Unknown, Johns himself, while perfectly at home describing such mundane activities as strafing the Boche or capturing international diamond smugglers, has a certain amount of difficulty in keeping in mind the distinction between stars, planets and asteroids,

or in visualising the scale of space travel. The Space People obviously have some amazing power-source: of one voyage we read that it "was the longest Rex had ever undertaken... He lost count of the hours, having forgotten to wind his watch" (To Worlds Unknown, p. 98). Of the many planets out travellers visit, some are obviously in the asteroid belt of our own Solar System; others circle distant stars. Unfortunately, we are rarely told which. Add to this space navigation of the "turn left at Orion and straight ahead to Casseopæia" variety, and we have a cosmology which is just a little confused.

But wait. I'm being too critical. We have textual evidence that the velocities they travel at must be immense, for in The Death Rays of Ardilla, said rays are escaped by the simple method of out-running them, whilst the anti-ray weapon devised by the forces of Good crosses

*"Let it not be thought that such profound meditations as these ((Rex has just been reflecting on the vastness of the universe, and the approaching self-destruction of that tiny speck we nickname "Earth")) had undermined his religious beliefs. On the contrary. If proof were needed of Almighty power then he had been witness of it!" (Now to the Stars, P. 16).

the lightyears between Terromagna and Ardilla in about a day.

Eat your heart out, "Doc" Smith!

Still, all this is unimportant beside the main design of the books, which is to show good British ingenuity and common sense coming out victorious against those damned wogs. In To Worlds Unknown, Tiger Clinton uses his trusty rifle to beat off an invading tribe on a planet inhabited by primitives. Naturally, the awed villagers "fell on their knees around him as if he was some sort of god" (p. 75).

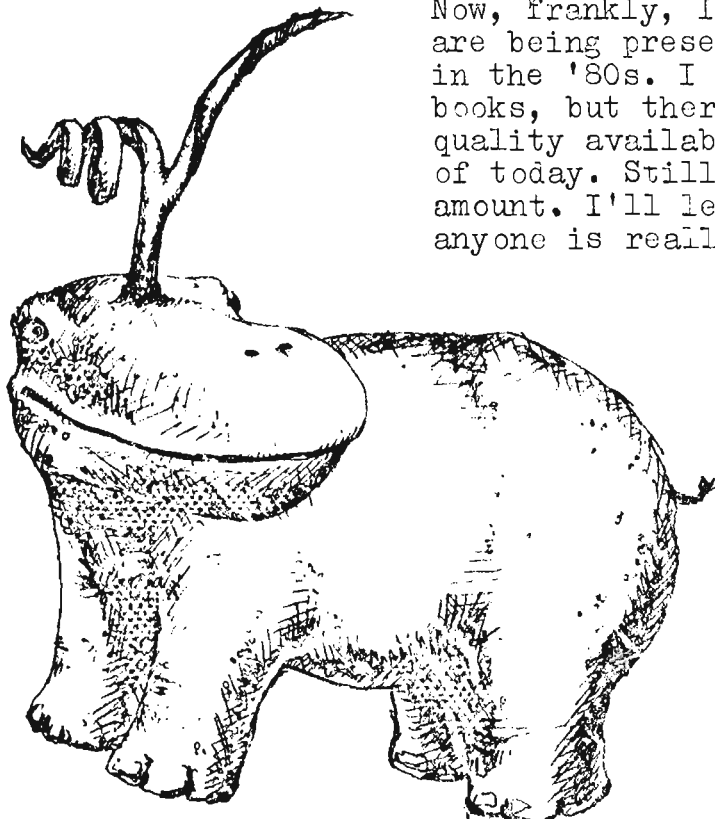
Science and politics are both roundly condemned. (The Professor is a scientist, but one of the rare "good" ones, interested only in the wellbeing of all mankind - which is why he keeps his discovery of a whole new civilization Out There a secret. There are some things man is not yet readt to...etc). Shaky logic? But this, of course, is SF, the literature of the Great Sense of Wonder. Who said "implausible"? Who said "inconsistent"? Stand up the boy at the back of the class who said "illiterate!".

And Sawyer, you with the hat marked "critic," why are you sitting there with tears running down your face?

- Because (sob!) I loved those books when I was nine...

POSTSCRIPT: A Warning About Critical Hubris

Between starting and completing this piece, I discovered that new editions of these books have been prepared by Piccolo Books. This ought to change the whole tone with which I write. I felt I could afford to mock, somewhat affectionately, books which I thought were safely dead and buried. Obviously, Someone Was Watching, and decided I was being too clever. Now, frankly, I'm appaled that these books are being presented to a young audience in the '80s. I cut my SF teeth on these books, but there are many others of better quality available for the novice SF reader of today. Still, I owe them a certain amount. I'll leave it to others, if anyone is really interested in keeping up standards in kids books, to do the hatchet job these volumes deserve.



Cyril Simsa has been sifting through the archives, and has found a few...

Strange Stories from a Chinese Studio

In the last decades of the 18th century, a treatise on lycanthropy created and brought into use a new word for psychopathologists. The treatise deals in passing with the "Beast of Gevaudan," a cheerful little lycanthrope who was responsible for disembowelling sixty virgins; the treatise describes the beast as a "parthenophage" - a man who eats young girls.

Earlier, in the 13th century, a very holy saint extracted an unwanted devil from the body of a nun. The devil begged the saint for mercy - "I was sitting on this lettuce leaf and she just came and ate me. What could I have done about it?" - but the saint showed no compunction. In due course, he had the devil burned (a shame about the nun, but not to worry; there are plenty more where she came from).

In 1641, a Chinese batchelor named P'u Sung-ling disgraced himself in the Examinations and dropped out of public life. Though he obtained his first degree before he reached the age of twenty, he gave up orthodox studies, and the high position that went with them, to pursue his own personal explorations of strange lore.

Throughout his adult life he lived in the society of books. His friends collected miscellanea for him, recording whatever unlikely facts and fancies they happened to come across. With time, his reference collection must have grown to awesome size. However, P'u Sung-ling was not simply a curio collector; he incorporated the little-known knowledge he had gathered into a volume of stories, which he circulated in manuscript form. Not having sufficient resources to publish the book himself, it was not till after his death, when his grandson financed a printing, that it reached a wider public and gained any recognition.

As it happened, it was greeted instantly as a small masterpiece. Ironically, about a century after he failed his literary studies, P'u Sung-ling was to become a famous literary figure. His short stories have since then been through a large number of printings, and they have been imitated by a host of later writers.

A complete English translation of his work does not exist. However, Strange Tales from a Chinese Studio, edited by Herbert A. Giles, and published first in 1880,

contains a varied selection (this translation was quite recently reprinted as a Dover softcover).

P'u Sung-ling never quite forgave the system that rejected him. His stories often satirise officials, the official life, and in particular the candidates for the Examinations. There is one story, for instance, in which a group of these candidates are so busy trying to make impressions on each other that they fail to see their guest at dinner is a tiger in disguise. It is not until the tiger turns on them and gobbles them all up they start to notice that something might be amiss. (There is another story in which a corrupt local official keeps a retinue of wolves, and is one night seen dining on a human carcass).

Though the stories in this book are fairly varied in their content, many of them share an element of fantasy. They range in form from simple parables and straightforward descriptions to complex and tightly-plotted fantasy extravaganzas. (Such, for instance, is the tale of the fox-girl, Miss Lien-Hsiang, in which the male protagonist has to put up with the attentions not only of a were-fox, but also of a devil-woman).

The fantastic elements found in the pages of this book are interestingly dissimilar from those found in Western traditions (a number of stories, for example, are derived from Taoism). Yet, in many ways, the differences are just variations on the themes that one may find in any other folk tradition. The fox-girl, for instance, is simply the female counterpart of the were-animals one finds in stories from some parts of Europe. However, the role played by the fox-girl differs from that of the were-wolf: instead of killing her victims, she seduces them (in this she is comparable to the more Freudian of Western vampires).

In large quantities these stories become indigestible, but taken a few at a time they can be hugely entertaining; they should certainly be read for any course of Preternormal Studies.

By the way, do you know how to catch a Chinese sickle murderer? We asked a Chinese magistrate, and he said:

"Confiscate the sickles of the farmers in your district, lay them out upon your lawn, and wait until the flies have settled on the one that smells of blood. Arrest the owner of that sickle and beat thoroughly till tender. Then serve promptly to the dogs, before he has had time to cool."

~~~~~

This issue's cover was drawn by my budding sister, and is based on a traditional Chinese folk-art motif that juxtaposes bats and peaches (a design not unconnected with the fact that Asian bats are by and large all fruit-eaters). My sister would be interested in doing more fanzine illustration: write to her at the address elsewhere.

I'll also take this chance to beg that more of you write me some locs: I need some feedback. What do you think of this issue and the last?

SAMSON & THE PHILISHAVE

¹⁰Now in this land there was a man named Samson who was hairy for, not ever having shaved, the hair grew thick and plentiful upon him. ⁹And this hair was as an inspiration to the man who bore it; it instilled a feeling of great hairiness upon the man.

⁸Now Samson was no tenderfoot, and he knew which side his hair had been Brylcreamed. But one day he got the hots for a young wench whose name was called Delilah. ⁷And he said to her "My goodness, but I'm feeling horny." ⁶And she said "Well, that is strange, because you're looking very hairy."

⁵Thus rejected, Samson went away into the wilderness to sulk, and presently he came across a most unusual tree.

⁴On the branches of this tree there were a multitude of fruits, and as he lay down in its shade, one of the fruits fell by his side.

³Suddenly, the air was filled with an almighty buzzing. In astonishment, Samson sat up and saw the buzzing came from by his side: the fallen fruit was quivering and making vibrant noises.

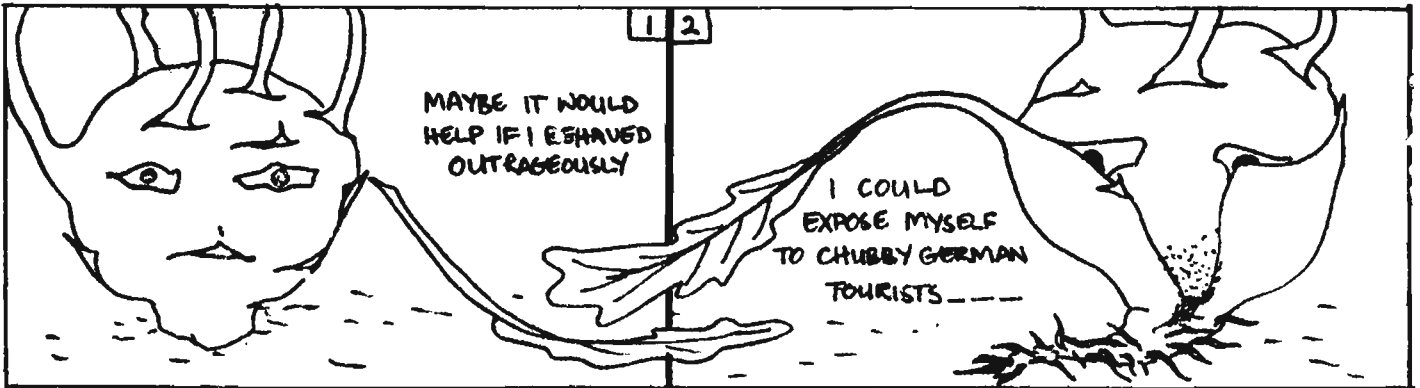
²Then it was that Samson reached out for the fallen fruit, and as he touched it he was startled to discover the hair on his hand had vanished.

¹For this was the fallen fruit of the Philishave* tree.

⁰It did not take long for Samson to shave the hair from his head and shoulders; truly was this fruit a bountiful gift to the hirsute. Singing praises to the tree, he deftly pruned himself of all his hair: all the parts of his body in their turn - his chest and arms and legs, his hands, his back, his fingers, toes and buttocks, armpits, knees and stomach - were pollarded by the fruit. When he had done, he sat and rested, sated with the tingling of fruit against skin. Strangely, he found that he no longer coveted Delilah, for the tingling of his skin hinted at a much more exotic partnership. Already, he anticipated the growth of his hair that night which would make his skin stubly once again by the next morning. In the dawnlight, he would shave, bathed by the pallid morning sun.

(Thus is it written in the Book of Bogmorton).

*cr: that which makes a man less hairy.

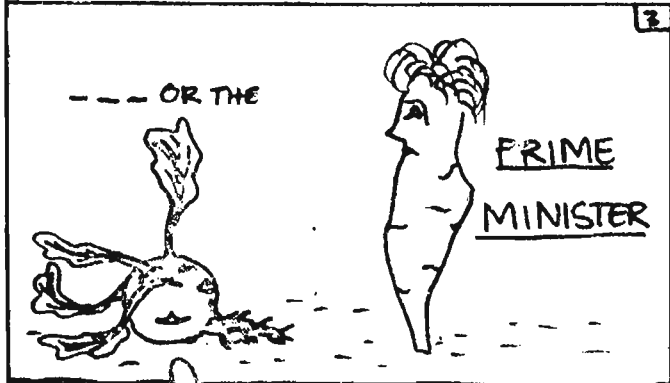


1 2

MAYBE IT WOULD HELP IF I BEHAVED OUTRAGEOUSLY

I COULD EXPOSE MYSELF TO CHUBBY GERMAN TOURISTS

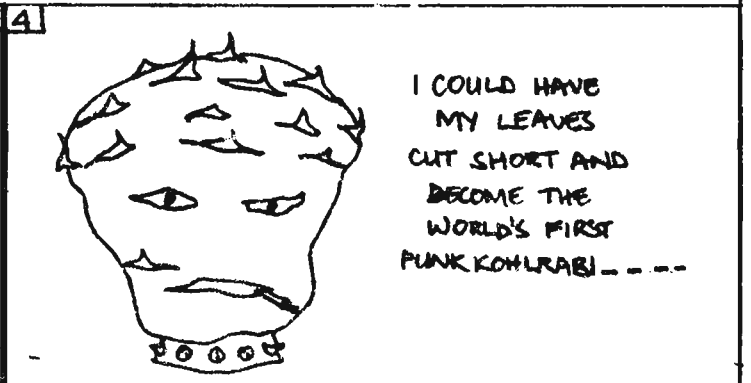
THE ASPIRATIONS OF MONTMORENCY



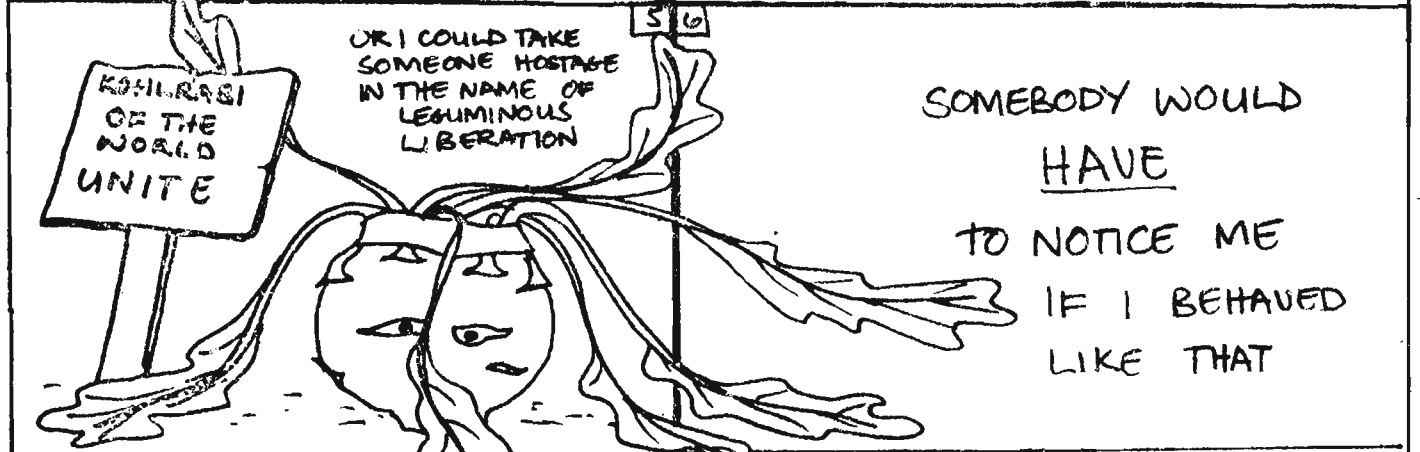
3 4

--- OR THE

PRIME MINISTER



I COULD HAVE MY LEAVES CUT SHORT AND BECOME THE WORLD'S FIRST PUNK KOHLRABI

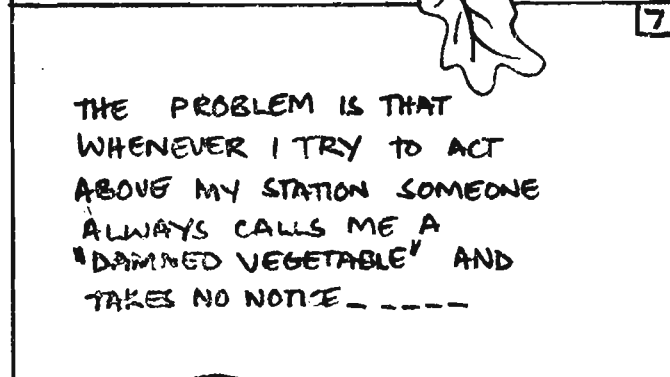


5 6

OR I COULD TAKE SOMEONE HOSTAGE IN THE NAME OF LUMINOUS LIBERATION

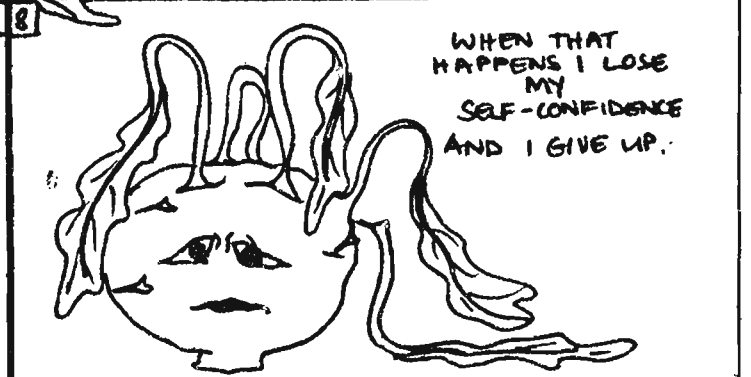
SOMEBODY WOULD HAVE

TO NOTICE ME IF I BEHAVED LIKE THAT

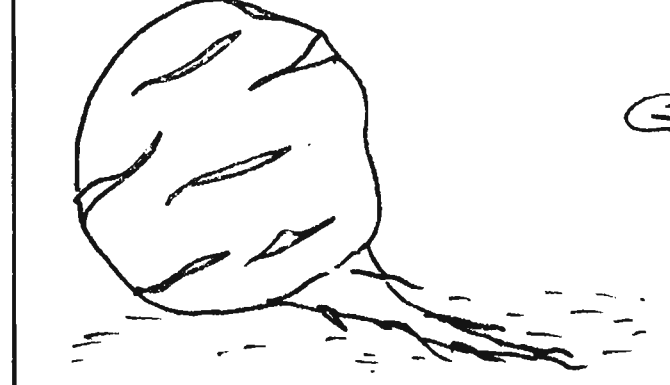


7 8

THE PROBLEM IS THAT WHENEVER I TRY TO ACT ABOVE MY STATION SOMEONE ALWAYS CALLS ME A "DAMNED VEGETABLE" AND TAKES NO NOTICE



WHEN THAT HAPPENS I LOSE MY SELF-CONFIDENCE AND I GIVE UP



9



IT'S MUCH EASIER MOST OF THE TIME TO JUST STAY ROOTED TO THE SPOT