

BROADWORLD

WARHEAD



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Retrospective: The War Trilogy

"He who fights with monsters might take care lest he thereby become a monster."

-Friedrich Nietzsche
Beyond Good and Evil

It is not surprising that Nietzsche's warning has surfaced several times in the New Adventures; indeed, it serves well as a succinct appraisal of the entire series. Many have despaired at the representation of a "dark" Doctor, in many ways little different from those he destroys; questions abound regarding how true the NAs are to the "spirit" of the programme. It is hard to argue, however, against a trend that began in the final years of the original television series, during Andrew Cartmel's reign as script editor.

Cartmel's "trilogy" of NAs (*Cat's Cradle: Warhead*, *Warlock* and *War-child*) offer us a glimpse into the direction *Doctor Who* might have taken post-*Survival*, albeit if a larger budget had been available.

Each book stands alone quite well, although a group of recurring characters loosely binds the trilogy together. The interplay between them, particularly their changes in outlook and behaviour with the passage of time, brings home the strength of characterization. These people react as they would in reality; their problems and concerns are believable in their depth. They help to define the trilogy's underlying theme, a Nietzschean warning about the danger of fighting monsters, lest you spawn more monsters in the process. Vincent Weaton's corruption and eventual destruction can be laid firmly at the Doctor's doorstep, no matter how hard he tried to deny it.

The reader should not infer from this that the books are perfect; each of the three novels has its own peculiar strengths and weaknesses, factors that tend to balance out when viewed as part of the overall picture. They should be reviewed individually; each novel judged on its own merits as well as its contribution not only to the trilogy, but to the NA series as a whole.

CAT'S CRADLE: WARHEAD

The Earth is nearing the point of

environmental collapse; increased pollution levels have led to a notably higher occurrence of cancer, resulting in organ transplants becoming everyday events for the rich. Society has begun to deteriorate; gang warfare is on the increase, and New Age beliefs are gaining credence. The world appears destined for disaster, but the mega-rich shareholders in the Butler Institute have already planned their escape. In order to save the planet, the Doctor and Ace must stop them...

They succeed, of course, although not without difficulty. *Warhead* was the first NA to deal openly with the concept of a "dark" Doctor; cast in the role of puppet master, he pulled the appropriate strings to ensure events occurred the way he'd planned. The way those plans appeared destined for last-minute failure, only to be saved by accident, brought home the Doctor's essential fallibility; the best laid plans of mice and Time Lords can still go dangerously awry...

His condemnation of Maria for failing to do anything about Level 51, combined with his remarks to Brodie during the opening and closing scenes, serve to remind us that the Doctor isn't human; we shouldn't expect him to conform to human codes of morality. Cartmel is in no doubt that the Doctor will do what is *right*, regardless of whether it is just or fair, no matter what the cost. The dying Shreela's comment "I think sometimes that perhaps you're the enemy" is met with silence, the remark too close for the Doctor's liking.

Some of the most moving scenes in the whole book were centred on an abandoned McDonalds restaurant; multi-national corporations were just as defenceless as everyone else against the breakdown of society. The adoption of new belief systems, a "...blend of ecological activism and older ways of thinking" are a natural reaction against the dehumanizing nature of the modern world; Justine's attack on Ace's narrow, science-based world view is arguably the most powerful piece of writing to appear in an NA. Is the Doctor a scientist or a sorcerer? Clarke's Law, and Cartmel, would have us believe there

is no distinction; the "off-screen" use of the TARDIS only served to re-enforce this message.

Warhead is unique amongst the NAs in being a part of three trilogies: the War trilogy, the *Cat's Cradle* trilogy, and the *Revelation-Time's Crucible-Warhead* "trilogy" of mould-breaking NAs.

While *Warhead* was originally written as a one-off novel, and the three *Cat's Cradle* books are really a trilogy in name only, its importance as the concluding episode of the final "trilogy" should not be underrated. *Revelation* took us inside the Doctor's head; *Time's Crucible* turned the entire concept of *Doctor Who* (as well as the TARDIS) inside out; and *Warhead* dared to show us the seedy underside of a dystopian future barely hinted at in the television series. These three novels helped to set the standard for subsequent NAs, ensuring they didn't lapse into something akin to the novelizations.

When first released, *Warhead* was accused by some of being untrue to the "spirit" of *Doctor Who* (a similar charge would later be laid against *Transit*); the cyberpunk genre was felt to have no place in the *Who* pantheon. Over the years it has, however, gained a deserved reputation as a minor classic.

Cyberpunk is the voice of environmental damage, unchecked industrialization and urban decay; Philip K. Dick wrote some of the most powerful material in the genre years before the term was even coined. *Warhead's* subtle underlying message, a warning about the environmental and social dangers we all face, would have been far more obvious and hence less effective otherwise.

Like most good novels, *Warhead* raises some unanswered questions, the answers left to the reader's speculation. Just who is Miss David? How can Justine's senseless abandonment of Sammy be reconciled with the blatantly obvious pro-animal rights message in *Warlock*? And what happened to Mancuso after the story concluded?

Steve Leahy

Continued next issue.



CAT'S CRADLE: WARHEAD

We put out a general request on rec.arts.drwho for comments on *Warhead*; these are some of the replies.

Rob Stradling

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I remember Cartmel being criticized for "failing to understand the essence of *Doctor Who*", a statement which I found appallingly arrogant and unprofessionally subjective. As the old adage goes, The Format Is; There Is No Format. *Warhead* was a fine piece of science-fiction in the cyberpunk mould, which just happened to feature characters from *Who* within it's pages. Agreed, it felt strange for *Doctor Who*, but then so did *Kinda* or *The Happiness Patrol*.

I found the conclusion particularly satisfying - rare praise indeed for a New Adventure. The idea that the Doctor had planned everything meticulously, only to fail and be outrageously lucky, was marvellous. Also, we saw at first hand (and remember, he didn't) the results of his actions, as his somewhat indiscriminate 'justice' enveloped the guilty, the merely culpable, and the downright innocent alike.

Robert Smith

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Loved it! Absolutely loved it! Cartmel 'speaks' with a style most other writers could only dream of. If he wrote "WarLaundry-List", it'd be a piece of utterly brilliant characterisation and incredibly involving writing.

This was the New Adventure which proved to me that *Doctor Who* had grown up. *Revelation* showed us just how far we could stretch *Doctor Who*, Cartmel went the other way and ended up doing the same thing.

The fact that the Doctor, Ace and the TARDIS are so often seen precise-



ly as they would have been by real people in the real world is so incredibly refreshing. The word TARDIS appears once, but the machine is actually used multiple times - prompting Anthony Brown to not realise this in his DWB review and refer to the Doctor's mode of transportation as "More mysterious, magical means" (and he did it *again* with the TARDIS in his review of *Warlock!*). Which is *exactly* what the TARDIS is and was originally intended to be.

The beginning is absolutely wonderful. The fact that the Doctor disappears for some time, the existence of a young boy with mind powers, the entire scene where the Doctor contacts Ace - all of these (and more) are wonderful allusions to very similar scenes done in *Time's Crucible* and yet with *totally* different settings. These two books were linked together incredibly well from a thematic point of view - it's a pity Andrew Hunt wasn't up to the job in *Witch Mark*.

And the ending, with the Doctor having to improvise to save the day when the Masterplan fails, is just pure *Doctor Who*.

Trina L. Short

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Warhead. Ah the early days of the NAs when I had to wait months to get the latest one and visit several book stores to get it. It was still a new genre to me: *Doctor Who* as a novel (note, not novelization). It was new, different and exciting. I knew nothing about the books before I read them, except what could be gleaned from the back cover. The Doctor was more real to me than ever, because now he was a character in a book - and characters in books have always meant more to me than mere TV personalities. But what about this particular novel?

Warhead. I had never read a "cyberpunk" (if that's what this could be called) novel before. I mainly read mysteries, so the settings were new to me. The Doctor was always around, but not always seen, and I liked that. Ace was becoming more independent and able to fight with the big boys. I could see both of my favourite characters in their scenes - Sophie Aldred a little older and tanner, Sylvester McCoy still in his season 26 outfit - more mysterious than at the end of *Fenric*. I particularly remember the Doctor stroking the cat while he broke into the computers at the Butler Institute.

Warhead. The other characters captured my imagination. The police team - woman and gun (poor McIlveen). The Butler Institute cleaning lady. The boys on their island. The boy and his slingshot. Vincent and Justine. O'Hara - a cold man if ever there was one (pun poor but intended). And Mrs. Woodcott, who intrigued me and then disappeared. The one recurring character in Cartmel's trilogy that I enjoyed in all three tales.

Warhead. This is still one of my favourite NAs. Even after Bernice Summerfield arrived on the scene and stole my heart, it remains in my top ten.

Ben Aaronovitch

An interview with the author of *Transit* and *The Also People*

1. We asked some people to describe *Transit* in one word, here is a sample of what they said: hectic, brilliant, complex, engrossing, superb. How would you characterise *Transit*?

Frantic (to write that is).

2. In *Transit* you have paid so much attention to people, customs, language and culture. How important is it for you to understand the people and society of your books? Is it necessary to have all this in mind before you even begin writing?

I tend to write from the basis of characters and situations rather than plot everything out in advance. Cultures like characters seem to arrive from nowhere in my head pretty much fully formed and then argue with me when I try to make them conform to a plot-line. In the case of *Transit* the society kept on refusing to be as dystopian as I would like it to be, in fact much of the society of that period would be regarded as very pleasant by our terms it's just that we spent a lot of times in the black spots such as 'The Stop'.

I did quite a lot of research for Roz's Xhosa background and then tried to filter that through the society portrayed in *Original Sin*.

For the worldsphere I started with a few premises and then asked myself how it would work. I liked the idea of setting a story in a utopian society that got away from the rustic simplicity model that people tend to use when designing utopian stories. Again as I wrote *The Also People* aspects of the worldsphere and its people seemed to emerge from somewhere as I needed them.

Yes it's true that the worldsphere was influenced by the Iain Banks 'culture' novels, just as *Transit* was definitely influenced by William Gibson, you tend to emulate and steal ideas off people whose work

you like. The truth is that once you start to postulate about a society that is actually geared towards 'caring' for the needs of its citizens you're going to end up with something rather like the culture universe whether you like it or not. Besides haven't you ever wanted to drop the Doctor into the middle of one of your favourite books?

3. Where did the idea of 'An explosion of Aces' come from?

An unkindness of ravens, a murder of crows, an explosion of Aces - it seemed logical Captain.

4. Do you think that the only reason a majority of people didn't like *Transit* was because of the inclusion of the word 'fuck', or do you think there is something 'inherently psychologically problematic' with these fans when it comes to a story like *Transit*?

I don't know why people didn't like *Transit*, it had a lot of flaws but I don't think the word fuck was one of them. I did over use it but you had to understand that I'd just finished two *Doctor Who* stories, one episode of *Casualty* and a novelisation under very strict language guidelines and I think the sense of freedom went to my head a bit.

I think some fans felt that the NAs should be a literal continuation of the TV series but this was not the brief I got from Virgin. I can understand why they were put off by *Transit* but looking back I think it was important to make use of the opportunity of writing in prose, with the depth and breadth and the unlimited SFX budget to push *Doctor Who* as far as it would go. The TV series had a history of pushing its own envelope and I believed I was carrying on in that tradition. If we'd had the budgets and a later timeslot when writing for the TV series I'm fairly certain we would have done the same thing.

5. Could you perhaps tell us where some of the ideas in *The Also People* come from?

Most works of fiction tend to come about when several ideas, reactions etc converge to form a sort of soup, I'd say gestalt but soup is the more accurate term.

Set Piece by Kate Orman - one day a disk turned up through the post with a novel on it. At this point I hadn't read a single NA since *Love and War*. I read it as fast as I could download it and I thought, that was fun, I really enjoyed that, I wonder if Virgin will let me write another one?

I then went out and bought every single NA available (*The Highest Science* to *Blood Harvest*) and read them over the following weeks.

OH GOD IT'S ALL SO DEPRESSING - while I was cogitating on what to write (Virgin is so pedantic about you having a plot before they commission you) I read in quick succession *Strange England*, *St Anthony's Fire*, *Falls the Shadow* and *Parasite*. All of which, I think you'll agree, our grim books dealing with death, despair and in the case of *Parasite*, horrible yucky organic squelchiness and despair. I thought it would be nice to write a story where the body-count would be a bit lower, the universe would not be at risk etc. Then I thought, what if the Doctor and his companions go on holiday (and here's a heretic thought) actually have a holiday.

PARASITE - *Parasite* is a classic 'artefact' book, what is thing for, what are its mysteries? I noticed that big alien artefacts tend to always be unknowable or deserted or on the brink of disaster: [Lucifer, Rama, Ring-world, ST:TNG *Relics* etc] I thought it might be nice if a) the artefact was all working perfectly smoothly and b) setting a story on a Dyson sphere and then confining it to a small town by the sea. (The working title was ori-

ginally *The City by the Endless Sea*.)

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCES (see question 7)

6. Who do you write for? Do you aim to please yourself, or *Doctor Who* fans? Do you put in certain scenes to please fans?

Well you have to please your publisher or you don't get published. I write books that I want to read, I hope other people like to read them as well. If I tried to please anyone else I'd probably freeze up out of sheer terror. Besides since *Doctor Who* fans are as eclectic [sic] a bunch of people as you're liable to meet, they like different bits or themes or emphasis, trying to please all of them is impossible and an attempt would lead to paralysis.

7. Are your novels a means to vent certain ideas about racism, class structure etc., or are you more interested in telling a story?

The story sort of grows out of the soup I mentioned at the beginning, it's made up of all sort of ingredients including political, philosophical and ideological concepts as well as character, situation and what you were watching on TV that morning. Hmnn, perhaps compost would have been a better metaphor, all these elements go into a compost heap and you hope that you can grow a decent story from it.

One particular sub-text that relates to *The Also People* was built in from the start and is clear from the title. I was struck by how often you get a simplistic dichotomy between machines and people where machine equates with soulless and evil and organic equates with good. Thus machines are invoked as metaphors for evil, Daleks, Cybermen, the Ship in *Set Piece* etc. There is always the implication that machines, even when they are sentient are not really people, I wanted to explore that. Especially since Kadiatu was the perfect vehicle for that debate, is she a machine or a person, what at root are the essential differences.

One deliberate ideological point in *Transit* was Kadiatu and her African background. Most of the time genetic supermen or physically perfect people are portrayed in the blonde, blue haired aryan mould, Kadiatu was a reaction to that, and to the countless power fantasy characters that populate SF and other genres. Another consideration was that in most SF depictions of the future Africa is either still a basket case of a continent or else a westernised copy of (usually) American society. I thought it would be interesting to posit a future where Africa and African culture was much more influential in global terms. This was taken up by Kate Orman in *Sleepy*. It was also the reason why I based the society in *The Also People* much more

on an African model than a European one, hence the super-extended families and the way the community makes less distinction between their own and other people's children.

8. Can *Doctor Who* and *Star Trek* (pop sci-fi) be places where serious sci-fi, what-ever that means, can be explored? Is it true that anything serious always turn into half hearted attempts?

I don't make that kind of distinction, either it's well written or it's not, you enjoy it or you don't. Some of the wildest scientific concept I've ever seen permeated *Sky Pirates*.

9. Should *Doctor Who* stories have limits? Can there be an erotic New Adventure, or an extremely violent one, I'm thinking of Brent Easton Ellis's *American Psycho*. Could Bernice be a victim of a serial rapists?

All genres and sub-genres have inherent limits if you are going to exceed or subvert them then you had better make sure you do a damn good job of it.

On a tangent the sex scenes in *Transit* where there for good reasons, even the 'taste of semen' line but that's a whole other track.

Ben Aaronovitch was interviewed (via the Internet) by David Robinson.

newwho: That terrible insufferable whine of those who have something you don't have. Usually high pitched and original confined to insufferable busy bodies, usually English housewives who seem to only have the words "You Who" making up their vocabulary.

splunge: the position to take when you don't have an opinion. original Monty Python's Flying Circus. eg: "So what's going on Doctor" asked one of the Doctor's eager beaver companions. "Oh this. That. Splunge."

sinical: original cynical but changed to include the fact that you really enjoyed putting down an insufferable bastard.

sliders: What you would like to do to bastards.

Original Steve Leahy. "Damn that Jason Miller bloke am I going to make sure he suffers a sliders."

yadallee *v.* to mumble incoherently, with vague religious undertones. *n.* a serious condition resulting in the inability to spell words consistently or correctly.

segal *v.* to incur the wrath of sundry Americans for giving them exactly what they thought they wanted.

mcintee *v.* to write fiction using long, drawn out, disjointed sentences, in which the usual relationship between subject, verb and object, the type of relationship between them which is usually found in the english language, is often reversed if not totally absent.



WARCHILD

ANDREW CARTMEL

Reviewer: Bruce Greenwood



Warchild has one thing in common with *Warlock* - It's not really a story about the Doctor. However, this time it's not a kitten that takes centre stage. This is the story of Creed McIlveen and his son, Ricky.

Instead of being an unsubtle and rather boring treatise against animal experimentation, it is an unsubtle and wonderful essay about school bullies.

I picked up this book expecting to hate it. I didn't enjoy *Warlock* at all, and *Warhead*, though a million times better than it, has been overshadowed several times over. I have read it three times this week and am thinking of doing so again. From start to finish, this book is a damn good read. Buy it now.

The book starts in what should be an overly familiar fashion, with Chris, Benny and Roz already galumphing all over the place on "errands" arranged by the Doctor. Roz is soon drafted into a Special Emergency group headed by Mrs Woodcott (the aging drug-dealer from the first two War books), Benny does almost nothing and Chris apparently is off somewhere being shaven-headed. The other half of the story is about Ricky McIlveen and his first few days at a new school, with Creed now lusting after a younger woman, having become estranged from Justine.

Similar to *Warlock*, you aren't told who the real Bad Guy is until the closing stages of the story. Unlike *Warlock*, the Bad Guy hasn't been tacked on rather listlessly, but actually fits in with the rest of the story. This book is well written, with just enough balance between character and action to stop it from becoming either silly or boring. If I had to give

it rating, I'd give it at least 8.5 out of 10. Buy it, read it, enjoy it.

THE MAN IN THE VELVET MASK

DANIEL O'MAHONY

Reviewer: Richard Prekodravac



Its sweetness is cast in a delicate fashion. Exquisiteness of his prose can be devoured and smothered in a soft velvet crush as the words play upon the sweet gentle lips of the reader, who is slowly corrupted

within the horror of this world machine. Bitter. Sweet. Its uniqueness transcends these Earthly lusts as if caught between sheets in an embrace that cannot be said by passion alone. The racing pulse deep within human flesh bewitches all sense and reason. I have become a slave/enslaved with chains of words and meaning. All this runs with a feverish intent to corrupt.

And so with all this racing in my mind I lay *The Man in the Velvet Mask* to blame. The writing of Daniel O'Mahony has captivated me, I am lost within the words of description and dialogue.

"Why does anyone pursue beauty? ... To possess it? To cherish it? To bathe in it? No! We pursue it so we might destroy it!" (page 79)

Within the beauty of the dialogue the themes are played with, mixed frantically as if brought about by some fever. Such an interplay of words and meanings only suffocate the poor reader with a flourish of intelligence, wit and poetry by the author of these words.

And then upon this the play of masks and actors and performance, hidden truths, concealed motives, gaps in the air behind the world there lies are hidden - the cogs and wheels

that give it life.

Alongside with this beauty and deviousness are gruesome ideas and deviance that relishes in its macabre madness. Far more sadistic than *Falls the Shadow*, well with the Marquis de Sade himself deriving pleasure in his own way, we finally come to an idea of what darkness truly is. Not quite *American Psycho* but almost there.

It's becomes disturbing that every woman featured throughout the novel become a victim of some cruelty.

It's thoroughly frightening, we never know if Daniel has only an interest in psychopathy or whether Daniel is reflecting upon his own psyche, thoughts which are "a dark and peaceful silence".

SLEEPY

KATE ORMAN

Reviewer: David Golding



There is a progression in Kate Orman's work. She describes herself as a 'frock who's secretly packing a gun'; but that gun is shrinking in calibre as her books progress. Hummer

hanged on its plot -- it was like a charging bull that dragged you forward. *Set Piece*, while beginning and ending in the same vein, had expanses of plotlessness in the centre. *Sleepy* is the most plotless yet.

In fact, the very substance of *Sleepy* is the argument of frocks over guns.

The plot as rendered on the blurb sounds hackneyed, cliched. If it was in the book, I didn't notice. For the third time we are treated to Kate's wonderful writing style. And for the first time, the character interaction truly overwhelms the action.

We are treated to the loving concerns of Cinnabar and Byerly, the seclusion of Smith-Smith, the social

sickness of White. Their perceptions of the world, and their actions in accordance with their perceptions are what makes this book truly special. It's the small details of their everyday lives, as Benny points out, that are important. Artefacts and history as represented by White are shown as obstacles to understanding.

If you read *Sleepy* for the action you may come away disappointed. The writing is there, the regulars are excellently characterised (except Benny occasionally lapses into the author, I think), there are the first links to the larger psi-power series. But like *The Also People*, the larger action of the NAs is treated dismissively.

No one dies.

But if you want to follow Chris as he discovers what a cultural bias is, or see the world through the eyes of a deaf woman, or find out what it is really like to be a telepath, *Sleepy* is for you. It's a people kind of book, and wears its frock proudly.

If there must be some criticism, it is that some sections are written so non-linearly as to be incomprehensible, and the filching of the first chapter from a short story of Kate's. And who says there has to be criticism in a review?

THE ENGLISH WAY OF DEATH

GARETH ROBERTS

Reviewer: David Robinson



Once again Gareth has captured the rapport between the fourth Doctor and Romana the second. Like in *The Romance of Crime*, he captures the wit and elegance of the interaction between the characters.

Gareth provides strong, solid characters and weaves the plot around them and the way they react

to the situation. This is considerably more satisfying than the 'characters get caught up in events beyond their control'.

K-9 is portrayed as intelligent and useful; his vocabulary and speech patterns were getting on my nerves by the end of it. As is required in any story featuring K-9 he invariably runs out of power (or something) at the critical point in the story. He is also shown to have other limitations; somehow it feels odd yet refreshing to have a scene where K-9 misses the target.

The novel does a few other strange things, like having both the 'good guys' and the 'bad guys' trying to achieve the same goal, and trying to prevent the 'other side' from doing it. It also has the strange 'lets make the villain really weird', with Zodaal being an 'infernal vapour'.

While the story is serious with an interesting villain and a rather strange way to destroy the Earth, it still has a large amount of subtle humour. The one thing that Gareth leaves out of his fourth Doctor stories is the Doctor getting angry. It seems that we would rather forget that the fourth Doctor did get angry and very violent if he particularly detested whatever it was that he detested. Naturally he can't get angry all the time but through the whole book the Doctor is teeth, curls and tripping over his scarf and I don't think he was like that all the time either.

MYSTERY REVIEW

Reviewer: David Becker
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Late one night I stayed up and re-read a New Adventure that was sitting on my bookshelf and collecting dust. Already knowing how it was going to end, I found it easier to read parts that I had previously skipped or skimmed over thinking they had little or no bearing on how the plot turned out, and I was surprised to find that this book was slightly different from when I read it

first time!

For one thing, I noticed many names mentioned in passing that I didn't see before: Leonard Cohen, Arthur Jefferson, Donald Pleasance, Harry Houdini, Isaac Newton, and even Ken Dodd (!). New planets I discovered were Byzantine, Trieste, Glasson Minor and Cosgon.

There are many references to the fourth Doctor (including the use of the sonic screwdriver, the yo-yo and the Doctor has a sudden craving for jelly babies), and a couple to the first (the TARDIS makes a wheezing sound inside when it materialises, the Doctor mentions his granddaughter).

There's a really funny part where this drug dealer is on some dope and he's having a flashback to when he was walking home one day and he thought the whole town was following him along a deserted street. The more he turned around and saw no-one, the more he knew that they were hiding from him.

But it wasn't really the sporadic humour that caught my attention on the second reading. It was the casual allusions to the Seven Deadly Sins, illustrated by the drug dealers, the prostitutes, the Killers, the Cun, the shape-changers, the UNIT Colonel, etc., which paled in comparison to the true evil of the real villains, (the Yssgaroth and their followers), culminating in the revelation of a horrible secret from Gallifrey's past.

The Doctor is an agnostic (as he should be), but he clearly had some sort of religious instruction when he was a child on Gallifrey, and even the great scientist Doctor Who-ever-he-is has limits to his knowledge and to his faith in science and rational logic. The Doctor reveals that what he fears the most is 'the lack of hope ... the point when there's no hope left', which goes all the way back to the second DW episode, *The Cave of Skulls*. That is why he acts so strange throughout this story; there is more at stake here than usual.

Even though he's taking the word of a religious fanatic, he has to let the antagonist win this time, for he acknowledges the possibility that if he

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Why I love Kate Orman, and why I think I'm on the wrong track with everything.

by Patrick Porter

How do you be a fan without being a leach? How can you appreciate and admire a writer without being sycophantic, annoying and overly eager for attention?

These are the questions I have been asking myself for the last month [October-November 1995] or so, ever since I first e-mailed Kate Orman. Kate. I think her writing is brilliant. I love the poetic quality of her writing. But do I love Kate Orman?

The answer is, I don't know. And I won't know until I actually meet her. I am in Love with her writing, but apart from the information that I glean from her books and essays, I wouldn't have the foggiest idea what she's like! Nonetheless I am still attracted to her. To her writing, her opinions, and her position.

She has it all; the ability to write, a strong collection of ideas she is not afraid to share, an a position as President of the Australian Doctor Who Fan Club. She is everything I might like to be. At the moment I am unsure of my ability to write, have opinions which are often quite firmly 'on the fence' and 'in the closet', and have barely brushed with fandom.

Most (every) people reading this wouldn't even know who Patrick Porter is let alone read any of his writing. Most people reading this think I'm either a) batty, b) over ambitious, c) an extrovert, d) an introvert, or e) don't care ...

It is very worrying to me. I don't want Kate, who might be reading this, "hi Kate!", to think I'm one of those obsessed fans with a desire to slobber all over her hands or shoot the President of the United States to get her attention. In some strange way I only desire to become friends with her (which is very difficult considering she lives in Sydney and I live in Country Victoria). Somehow, I don't think this bit of writing is going to succeed in persuading her to 'be my friend'. If anything, it would make her apprehensive, and will probably make her worry quite a lot about the author. I know I am!

Anyway, let me tell you about my e-mail message. It quite simply outlined my appreciation of her, and her writing, and stuff. I accidentally sent it twice because it was my first go at e-mail and I thought it hadn't worked. Bad start. How do you think she saw me after receiving two virtually identical letters in the space of two days from someone she had never heard of? Was this some desperate moron who wanted her attention? Then I bought *Set Piece*, and sat up all night reading it for some strange reason.

Overcome with exhaustion and a dreaded attack of the 'un sleepy hyperactive bug' I immediately sent her another e-mail to explain how I completed my first ever "all-nighter" for the sake of her book, and how honoured she must feel ... I even wrote a poem about her and published it on the Internet.

Replies to both letters were very polite. She even offered information about a certain subject I was writing an essay on, but had neglected to start because of her book. She encouraged me to try writing after I complained about my lack of time, talent and inspiration. The resulting euphoria I felt at this first contact with Kate was amazing,

and now quite embarrassing in hindsight.

It was like I had spoken to god and he/she had revealed the secrets of the universe.

It was also like a seed of evil had been planted in me. A jealous, evil seed that threatened to consume me from the inside. And I was suddenly reminded of Nick McRoberts. Who is Nick McRoberts? I hear you all say. He was a boy in my year at high school who was quite talented at, well, everything. I desperately wanted to be his friend, and succeeded. Then I realised I hated him, and liked him at the same time. He was good company, but he made me feel small and insignificant. I wanted to be near him always, hoping some of his genius would brush off. I also wanted to kill him, my jealousy was so huge. And then I realised that I didn't need him to be near me to be special. I just needed to be me. I need to work on my own brand of talent, whatever it was, and do something for myself.

The same applies to Kate. I think I want to be her friend so that I can learn how to be successful. At the same time I realise that her success is different to my success. The only way I will be successful is to try to be myself.

So I have decided to write my own New Adventure. I have decided to write articles for fanzines, and get involved etc. I'm going to do something for myself and stop being a leach.

But Kate, if you're out there reading this, I still wouldn't mind meeting you?!! Please?

My address is Oh, and what did you think of the poem.

Poem: *Ode to Orman*

Oh, Kate, how your prose,
Is quite like a rose,
How it's beauty does fulfil my need,
Set Piece is set well,
your adventures excel,
though a rose thorn can make my heart bleed

Your plots are well suited,
If a tad convoluted,
to the travels of our favourite doc,
And the mess he gets in,
in your pages, therein,
do affect me with feelings of shock,

You will use pyramids,
And will blow up fake kids,
who are really..., well I don't want to spoil,
but the plots are whiz bang,
and leave me with a pang,
of when I think of the hours you must toil

Ace, - I want the return,
which I hope we will learn
will be written by you any day
for I love her alas,
and my grief will amass,
until you write her back in an NA

And feel safe in the thought
that *Sleepy* will be bought
and devoured by this little black duck
But I sincerely hope
that the readers can cope
when you use the real version of "cruck"



The 1995 Sgloomi Po Awards

Thank you for to all 16 people who voted in the inaugural Sgloomi Po Awards. Most of the categories were decided by a majority vote, however for inanimate object and unbelievable explanation were decided by the systematic toss of the coin.

The awards are at the moment being crafted with the finest hands and will be sent to the authors and artist as soon they're ready. Until Next Year.

1. The Sgloomi Po for the best character in a novel.

Chick (*Warlock*)

2. The Sgloomi Po for the novel that surprised you by turning out to be really good.

Sky Pirates!

3. The Sgloomi Po for the best returning character.

Kadiatu (*Set Piece* and *The Also People*)

4. The Sgloomi Po for the best line in a novel.

Sky Pirates!

5. The Sgloomi Po for the most unbelievable explanation given in a novel.

The way *Original Sin* fitted together

6. The Sgloomi Po for the novel with the best cover.

(Awarded to the artists, we accept bribes from the artists).

The Also People, cover artwork by Tony Masero

7. The Sgloomi Po for the best novel written by an Australian author. (Whilst this is a forgone conclusion, we have to be fair).

Set Piece

8. The Sgloomi Po for the best use of an inanimate object.

Chris's Calvins (*Zamper*)

9. The Silver Sgloomi Po for the New Adventure you would like to see win a Silver Sgloomi Po.

Human Nature

10. The Silver Sgloomi Po for the Missing Adventure you would like to see win a Silver Sgloomi Po.

The Romance of Crime

11. The Golden Sgloomi Po for the novel you wish you had written.

Sky Pirates!

VIRGIN REJECTS

Richard "Uncle Halibut" Salter

OK, here's the dirt.

Storm God Rising was the first attempt by the rec.arts.drwho news-group to produce a professional Decalog submission for Virgin. It was to be a collection of 10 or more stories, involving the same enemy and his encounters with the Doctor in his various incarnations. The enemy was a Storm Demon by the name of Achmael.

It was edited by myself and Jason Miller, and was to include contributions from Lou Anders, Craig Hinton, Dan Blythe, Kate Orman, Mike Zecca, and others.

Suffice to say, they rejected it.

Interesting comments:

They don't like playing around with time. They objected to the 4th Doctor returning to Achmael's creation (in the first story) because of the paradox this causes, in that the Doctor has met Achmael in previous incarnations, and so should know that he can't win this time. They said, "Yes I know about *Genesis of the Daleks*, but we're trying to iron out this sort of thing now". So there you go.

We also didn't have a correct balance of published and new writers, having only 3 NA writers agreeing to contribute. My story also

wasn't much cop :)

Reaction:

Disappointment. My immediate reaction was to want to give up. But the response from the Net for another try was strong enough to make me want to try again. The letter we received from Andy Bodle (who I've since met) was very helpful and constructive, and helped us to identify where we were going wrong so we didn't make the same mistakes again.

This time, with *Net Decalog*, we stand a much better chance of acceptance. Wish us luck.



By the time you read this, the new *Doctor Who* tele-movie will have been screened in the United States (and probably the UK); very likely the first of the off-air recordings will have arrived by air-mail. I'm writing this article just as the pre-screening hype reaches its peak in the States; even *HotWired*¹, the on-line companion to *Wired* magazine, featured an article on the history of *Doctor Who*, as an introduction to the tele-movie².

Reports from people fortunate enough to have seen the movie at one of the various charity/press "premieres", have been favourable, and the increasing speculation about the commissioning of a new series seem to have some basis in reality, although whether it will be a weekly series, or a series of tele-movies, has yet to be determined.

For those of you interested in keeping up with the latest news, Kate Orman's web site³ has one of the best jumping points for information on the whole eighth *Doctor* phenomenon you'll find on the web. Thanks, Kate, for bundling all those links together in one place; it's a great resource for those of us trying to keep up-to-date.

Given the apparent success of the tele-movie, one of the major concerns on rec.arts.drwho over recent weeks has been the fate of the NAs and MAs. At the time of writing, no further news was to hand regarding the renewal of Virgin's licensing agreement with the BBC; books are only being commissioned for publication before mid-1997. We can only hope that the BBC realizes the major role Virgin has played in keeping interest in *Doctor Who* "alive" during the interim, and behaves accordingly. We'll keep you posted.

In the meantime, why not visit the *Broadsword* web site?⁴ A number of changes over the past months have vastly improved the site, increasing the ease of internal navigation while also increasing the amount of material available.



The NA details are no longer split over two sites (hopefully the update of the MA details will also have been completed by the time you read this); in-depth character and location breakdowns are now available for more of the NAs than ever before.

The majority of the articles, reviews, interviews and fiction from previous issues of *Broadsword* are now also available on-line. As is the first in the new series of specially commissioned Preludes to upcoming NAs. And to top it all off, you'll find a copy of the Writers' Guidelines in glorious HTML; there's now no need to send a couple of International Reply Coupons to Virgin, and then wait a month or two for their reply.

If you still haven't reached your prescribed dose of *Who*-related material, why not pop "next-door" as it were, and visit my web site?⁵ In addition to a number of varied and entertaining items on *Doctor Who*, you'll also find a mirror of the US Nitro9 web site, an archive of articles from the 80s fanzine *The Gallifrey Gazette*, and for the X-philes amongst you there's even the aus.tv.x-files web site. Enjoy!

Steve Leahy

1. <http://www.hotwired.com>
2. <http://www.hotwired.com/popfeature/96/19/index4a.html>
3. <http://www.ocs.mq.edu.au:80/~korman/>
4. <http://modjadji.anu.edu.au/steve/broadsword>
5. <http://modjadji.anu.edu.au/steve>

REVIEWS...RE

Continued from page 7

doesn't, the consequences would be worse than the destruction of the universe; it would be the total *ravaging* of the universe.

To me, the villains in this novel are far more frightening than anything Paul Cornell could write, and they make O'Mahony's Gabriel and Tanith look like cardboard dummies. I'd rather read this than *Falls the Shadow* or *Blood Harvest* any day.

Many people have mentioned they thought this book was boring and, I have to admit, I too found it a little boring the first time I read it. I also thought Shakespeare was *really* boring the first time I read it, (though I wouldn't say this is quite as boring as Shakespeare). So, if you're one of those people who didn't like this book, I suggest you go back with an open mind and reconsider it.

In case you haven't figured out which book I'm talking about by now, it's the one with "Blake's Seven" :,), more commonly known as *The Pit* by Neil Penswick, and I give it...

9/10

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