This issue we look at some examples of brains being kept alive in machines and then begin to examine one particular universe of the imagination infested by such creatures.

AY “Doctor Who” these days and probably the words which come most readily to mind are “cancellation”, “the end” and “finished”, yet only a couple of years ago the most common one would have been “Daleks”. Few people would disagree that the programme owes its early success to those animated pepper pots, but strangely these aliens are not by any means a very new idea. Perhaps the first variation of this theme was used by good old H.G. Wells in his story The War of the Worlds. His Martians were almost all brain and were carried around in their three-legged machines.

As long as 1953 two films were released with ideas along this line. Donovan’s Brain was about a brain kept alive in a tank, and Invaders From Mars (now re-made by Toby Hooper) featured a Martian which comprised just a head with arms coming out of it. The film Colossus of New York (1958), concerned the placing of a man’s brain in a mechanical body. As nearly always seems to happen in these stories the awesome power of the new body corrupted the living brain and it became power-mad. In a Quatermass type ending, the creature realised it was losing its humanity and effectively destroyed itself.

In 1965 the American magazine IF published a story by Keith Laumer which went on to form the basis of his novel A Plague of Demons. The demons of the title were on Earth collecting the brains of creatures, particularly Mankind’s, to use in a war on a far-off planet. The brains were conditioned, de-personalised, and placed inside vast war machines, over seventy-two feet tall. (This is not very far from the idea of the ‘new’ Daleks which Davros was trying to create from humans in Revelation of the Daleks.) The brains of cats and dogs were also used, to animate maintenance machines.

Another story published in 1964 including this theme was the short story The Coldest Place by Larry Niven. In this there were only two characters, the narrator and Eric. Eric, however, was not an ordinary character; he was a brain operating a space
Marinus. They, however, were encased in glass domes in a control room and were totallyjuvenile. In The Brain of Morbius (1976) the brain of the supposedly dead Time Lord Morbius was kept alive in a life-support machine before Solon placed it in its new body.

**Origins of the Daleks**

Why is it, then, that in 1963, and for the next few years, the Daleks caused such a sensation with what was essentially an old idea? The answer to this question is a complex one that involves many levels, but it is evident that there were two main reasons. For one thing, although the idea itself was basically not new, the underlying reason for the "brains" existence was unique. The historical background to the Daleks was important, and the way in which they had been shaped into the almost emotionless, cruelly efficient breeding creatures we all loved to hate. However, it must be pointed out that the Daleks have been given two origins by their creator, Terry Nation, namely the original (and best) atton in their very first story, and the Davros version, which runs as follows:

Davros was a great scientist of the Kaled race on Skaro. His people had been at war with the Thals for hundreds of years and during that time the weapons used began to produce genetic mutations. The Kaleds expelled those afflicted by these changes, the Mutos, from their city to keep the race pure, but Davros foresaw that the Kaleds would inevitably mutate and he experimented to find their final form. This form was a twisted creature, effectively a brain with an almost no body. The creatures were virtually immobile and so needed some means to move and protect themselves. Davros tried various "travel machines" and the Mark III version proved successful. This combination of creature and machine he named a Dalek. (Although why the word Dalek should just happen to be an anagram for kids in the alien language of Skaro I'm not sure.)

Turning to the original explanation of the creation of the Daleks, which, to me, has always been the more interesting and credible, it must be borne in mind that in 1963 it was novel for the TV audience to find the drama taking place on a planet way beyond our solar system. Everything was new and very alien, enough to frighten us behind the sofa.

The history of these Daleks was different from the Davros version, and even sadder. The Davros Daleks were the hapless unnatural consequences of Davros's experiments and mind control. The original Daleks were the natural product of just one unnatural event.

The explosion of a Neutron Bomb. Over five hundred years before the Doctor first arrived on Skaro there had been two races on the planet, the Thals and the Daleks. The Thals were a warlike race while the Daleks were philosophers and teachers. War broke out between the races, ending with the explosion of the neutron bomb. Nearly all life on the planet was destroyed, but not quite.

The Thals wandered the planet, with generation after generation of mutation. Finally their form settled on the tall handsome blond-haired humanoids. At the same time they devised a drug which prevented the radiation from affecting them any more. The outcome of the war had been so terrible that they rejected all thoughts of violence and became totally peaceful.

The story for the Daleks was somewhat different. In a desperate, and abortive, attempt to shield themselves from the radiation they built personal protective machines which they then lived in all the time.

So were born the Daleks. They built a huge underground city as a shelter, and retreated into it. Yet despite their precautions the radiation was still taking its toll, and inside their machines they also mutated.

For them the mutation did not go full circle. They kept their brilliance, probably even increased it, but their bodies started to waste away and become deformed. They depended more and more on their machines and grew increasingly to hate other life forms which were not so afflicted. In their warped minds they were the norm, and the Thals the horrible mutations. This was confirmed even more in their minds when they discovered that they actually needed the radiation in order to survive.

There was a sad story of a brilliant race destroyed, a true tragedy, and, as we learned later, a curse on the rest of the Universe.

Thus were the audiences of the early sixties introduced to a very alien race, in a very alien setting, which brings me to another reason for the success of the Daleks - their design and the design of their environment.

**An Alien Look**

The design of the futuristic Dalek world came from the mind of Raymond Cusick. He took what seems to be a very obvious step, but one which is nearly always ignored, even now, and designed the Dalek world for the Daleks, not for humans. In how many films or TV series have alien ships or worlds been really designed with the requirements of the human heroes in mind? This was not for Mr Cusick - he wanted to emphasise the complete alien-ness of Skaro and the Daleks, and designed accordingly.

Even before we met the Daleks, their strange environment had been established. There was a petrified jungle, full of dead plants which were clearly not of our world, and just beyond it the marvellous Dalek city, at the foot of a vast mountain range. Incidentally, the city we eventually saw was not the first model built by the makers of the programme. This had proved to look too small on the screen and so a larger one was built. For many years after the story had been shown the Dalek city was talked about in tones of admiration. Viewed from afar, however, the city could have been built for humans. It was only when we saw inside that it quickly became

DOCTOR WHO: The Dalek city on Skaro, a "huge underground shelter"

**Television**

On television there have been a few ventures into this area. In Star Trek (20-09-68) the idea of Niven's Eric was paralleled when Spock's brain was used for a while to control the environment of an alien community on a planet. The Doomsday episode "The Iron Doctor" (23-01-71) concerned a man (Patrick Troughton) slowly dying of an incurable disease. As each part of his body failed it was replaced by something mechanical: iron lungs, kidney machines etc. Eventually the brain would only be able to communicate with the outside world by a form of Morse Code.

In *Doctor Who* the idea of parts of a body being replaced as it degenerates has been used quite often, most memorably giving rise to the infamous Cybermen, although these were creatures more of an altered and improved body rather than an encased brain. In the story *The Mind of Evil* (1971) a strange brain-like creature was housed inside the Klikor machine. From there it fed on the evil emanations of human beings, learning to move, and kill. The Murpho in the 1964 story *The Keys of Marinus* were a type of mutated brain which ruled a city on

DOCTOR WHO: A city built for Daleks (two Daleks thru' corridor)
Dalek Technology

Another important factor in the Dalek machinery was the eyestalk. The eyes were open-ended tubes that could be used to fire a microscopic ray or to emit a beam of light for guidance. The eyestalks were also used to detect sonic vibrations, which could be used to locate hidden objects or to discern the presence of living creatures. The Daleks themselves were only slightly modi-

TV ZONE
by PETER ANDREWS

WHAT do Mary Poppins, Bedelia, Miss Marple and Jack the Ripper have in common? Well, apart from the fact that they are all works of fiction, adapted to television. In this format they all incorporated one of the most imaginative ideas in the history of television - live action with animation. Who remembers the old animated cartoons of the adventures of Huck Finn with his friend Tom Sawyer and a girl whose name escapes me (put on the back of the first person to remember her name), being shot weekly into the world of animation and fighting evil villains, the leader of whom borrowed quite extensively from Disney's interpretation of J.M. Barrie's Captain Hook? If you do, you'll probably be quite fond of programmes that mix the real with the imaginary (the series had very little else to recommend it). The recent release by BBC Video of two of its seventies 55 minute extravaganza prompts me to look up the maker of the programmes, The Snow Queen and The Light Princess.

Ian Kell has a quite a background in the field of TV Fantasy. His work is made by the BBC's Network Features (i.e. the 'three-programme- doesn't easily fit into any other category' department) and consists of programmes that are not just entertainment shows – usually a programme of children's content to all the studios and made them fit together even better.

The second Dalek story featured little new in the Dalek universe since it was set on Earth. We did manage to see inside the Dalek flying saucers, full of the control machinery from their first story, and the Daleks themselves were only slightly modi-

fied to travel on the ground. They were given deeper base skirts (to conceal bigger wheels for ground travel) and discs on their backs to pick up power.

Another change in the Dalek design, and an advance in their technological capability, was due in their next story, as we shall see in the next issue of Starburst.

The Snow Queen
The Snow Queen was based on Hans Anderson's fairy tale about a broken mirror, an arrogant little boy and innocent love. The devil makes a mirror that reflects nothing but the evil within us all. The little demon tries to show in the face of God but drop it on the way and the tiny splinters spread through the universe, become part of other glass-based objects. One of these is a street lamp that shatters on Christmas Eve and a silver goes down the eye of a boy called Kay who is playing with his friend Gerda. From that moment on Kay's heart seems to grow colder and colder and he loses his way. He is saved by the Snow Queen, a malevolent mattewar who lives beyond Lapland and is made, somewhat hopefully, to solve a puzzle. Kay is promised power in return. Gerda meanwhile chases after Kay and meets all sorts of strange people and talking animals on her travels. Finally she enters the Summer Garden and meets the pantomime-like witch (played somewhat Widow Twanky style by David Bailey) and a bunch of totally unhelpful talking flowers. Leaving there she encounters a German man and crown who says he may have seen the errant Kay. The man tells Kay's story and her quest for a snow princess and quite simply Kay is her twin sister. The Snow Queen has seen Kay and has even finished the puzzle. The animals and birds are lured away and Kay is lost. She sends Gerda to find Kay and the Snow Queen has her articles, the Snow Queen is in her dispenser and Kay is there. Gerda is given the wrong Gerda by the Snow Queen and Gerda gets past the pantomime witch and finds Kay, but cannot convince him to leave with her. The puzzle, forming the word Three out of rocks, is also most complete and then the Snow Queen (the special effects make-up on actress Mercedes Burnleigh is beautiful) returns. Kay is dis-

racted, and the ice thaws, the town becomes one, helped by Gerda's love. Just as the Snow Queen is about to ensnare her revenge on Gerda the Ice Palace in which the Queen is apparently destroyed. Gerda and Kay are protected by the Summer Garden Witch's spells while the Fintuitive (Dewi Taylor) sends the four winds to carry out heroes home for Christmas, and so they swerve in two. Kay now has his normal self with no recollection of the adventures.

The Snow Queen is a very good story but potentially unintentionally the animatons animals are a lot more endearing than their human counterparts. Joshu Le Toulou as Kay is sometimes convincingly heartfelt, but Linda Stater as Gerda is neither consistently good or bad but totally inconsistent - it is a shame that Tracey Childs didn't play her. Ennio Le Cam's illustrations are stunning, very fairy tale and quite captivating - especially the exterior of the Ice Palace, which is both best when Gerda is trying to rescue Kay at the climax. The story is almost word for word in places that of Anderson's original, which sets it down as there is little room for humour, which in a fantasy like this is a mistake, if only because of the inclusion of the Summer Garden Witch, who is too out of place with the rest of the characters, whether real or animated.

The Light Princess
Humor humour is much more prevalent in Ian Kell's production of The Light Princess. The story is told in a style of high camp. The bull frog is the King who leaves his counting house to visit

B.C. Video

The Snow Queen

The Light Princess

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