

.....VANGUARD

.....VARIORUM

.....MAY, 1946

Published, but scarcely edited, by Larry Shaw

A. E. VAN VOGT:

476 Hartford Ave.
Los Angeles 13, Calif.
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Dear Larry Shaw:

Damon Knight's criticism of my novel, *WORLD OF A*, interested me partly because he is an excellent writer but mainly because his analysis of the story was so completely wrong. His weaknesses as a critic stand out in his very first paragraph, in which he calls *WORLD OF A* one of the worst science fiction stories ever published. This is a wild statement, and he makes many similar in-temperate remarks apparently because such phrases sound more dramatic than would a more restrained and careful criticism. In themselves, such statements partly nullify his whole argument.

A is not one of the worst "so-called" adult stf stories ever published. Because of its scope, its subject and because the author reached for the skies, it is of the "best" group, this in spite of its shortcomings. There are two kinds of stories being written in every field of writing. There are those in which the author aims low, and attains his objectives, and there are those in which the author sets himself an unachievable goal, and fails in part, but leaves with thousands of readers little glimpses of what might have been. It is these glimpses, these partial successes that justify science fiction. If they were not attainable, I would not be interested in writing for the field, and I am sure that thousands of readers who now wade through the mass of junk published every month, would long ago have turned away to greener pastures.

I am not going to answer Knight's criticisms in detail. But I will touch on a few points. His synopsis of the plot seems too long-winded. To me, the story might be compared to a roughly drawn but complete circle. Gosseyn starts out looking for the answer to the riddle of himself. In the end he is back approximately where he began. This is out of life. Most men start out on the great adventure with a verve and excitement that slowly peters out as they discover that life offers only double meanings at best. Nothing is ever quite satisfactory, and in the end for most human beings there is only a coffin.

Gosseyn is no agent of the Gosseyn. Once on his own, he makes up his own mind and runs his own life. He is a separate individual, strongly egoistic and quite determined not to be the fall guy for anybody. Surely, this was made clear by the extent and nature of his private fears as shown throughout the story. Gosseyn, in spite of his extra-brain, was an ordinary human being, and not a superman. The very nature of the ending proves that the Gosseyn was not a superman either, but a fairly ordinary individual who could be killed, and who had already attained his three score and ten.

We have then the oldest theme in literature, the story of a man vainly trying to solve the mystery of himself. The fact that I introduced this theme into science fiction should exhilarate readers who desire to raise the level of their favorite type of story. To Mr. Knight it is merely evidence that my stories have no plots.

A little later I shall take up a few of Knight's criticisms of the so-called "illogicalities" in *WORLD OF A* and I shall show that they are capable of such simple explanations that at the time I wrote the story I decided that they would take up too much space, and so I didn't bother. Right now I want to agree with Mr. Knight that it is impossible to prove that an author's style is bad, but I want to add that it is also impossible to prove that it is good.

However, some of the examples which Mr. Knight cites as particularly atrocious writing constitute a partial answer to another criticism he makes, that is, that there is no science in my stories. I could of course refer him to *THE STORM* (the nature of a storm in space, a description unique in science fiction, and what a planet of a super-Nova is like), *THE VAULT OF THE BEAST* (a discussion, out of which I cut a thousand words to speed up the action, of the philosophy of numbers), *JUGGERNAUT* (Let any steel man criticize my descriptions of what goes on in a steel mill), *THE HARMONIZER* (an accurate picture of the structure of life in the twilight zone where the microscope only recently penetrated), and finally *WORLD OF A* itself, in which, for the first time, the basic science and vocabulary of semantics was introduced to the world of science fiction. In addition, in *null-A*, I included such an array of psycho-logical and non-Aristotelian pedagogy that the story probably stands alone as an example of science-fiction.

The science in my stories literally permeates the stories. I seldom pause, as so many writers do, and launch a solid chunk of science at the reader. Theirs is the easy way, and enormously bad examples appear in all the more juvenile pulps. The result of course always varies with the skill of the writer, but in my opinion my method belongs definitely in the skilled group. For instance, I shall re-quote one of the sentences that Mr. Knight attempted to use against me:

"Gossey compared his awareness of the night to the physical world as it appeared to man's senses."

There is a re-statement of one of *A*'s basic ideas, emphasizing the limited world of the senses. Man is a being who, with his nervous system, attempts to understand the real world. He is like a creature standing in a great night, and he shines a dim flashlight into the surrounding darkness. What does he see? We know that he sees very little, and all that immense meaning is there in one sentence. Naturally, I did not expect the meaning to penetrate from one statement, but the same statement in a different fashion, and others about other points, are repeated from time to time throughout the story.

I admit that sometimes this method of introducing ideas makes for awkward sentence structure, but I maintain that science fiction is different from other kinds of writing. In science fiction, endless explanation is necessary. The measure of an author's skill is his ability to introduce his explanations into his story without slowing up the action. My stories are not necessarily the best examples of this type of skill, but it is not from want of trying.

The fact that some readers found their first bite into the most fascinating of all the sciences indigestible does not condemn *A*. The groundwork had to be laid. It has been, and I think I can safely say that *WORLD OF A* is not a story that will be quickly forgotten. As a result of it, scores of people

are trying to obtain books on the subject of semantics. For the record I might say that I had my story "plot" before I thought of using the semantic philosophy as the science background. I had the machine, I had the idea of Venus as heaven and so on. Semantics just happened to fit into this set-up, and accordingly I put it in with a certain amount of satisfaction.

The regiphile trend which Knight has discovered in my writings is really amusing. He cites particularly THE WEAPON MAKERS series and THE MIXED MEN series. Mr. Knight, I am afraid, has read into words meanings that might apply now, but surely will not always apply. Did he not recognize (it was stated plainly) that the governmental system in the world of the weapon shops was a development of the two party system, where the weaker party was always in power, and the stronger acted as a constant check on its excesses. As for the Mixed Men, a few references to Imperial Earth, one reference to a king--and Mr. Knight was up in arms. The truth is that, in planning the necessary background, I had to decide, what would be the nature of a system where a woman would be in command of a battleship? So far as I am concerned, no arguments will ever convince me that anybody but the Lady Laurr of Noble Laurr, and others like her, would ever get such commands. Having solved that problem, I forgot all about Imperial earth, except for occasional references. Mr. Knight, on the other hand, states plainly that he does not intend to say what he thinks of a man who loves monarchies (a devastating attack in itself) but then over a period of three paragraphs he proceeds to say what he thinks in no uncertain terms. Permit me to say, so that there may be no mistake, that I do not like monarchies, not even the constitutional kind, not even the Swedish brand, nor do I like them by any other name, like secretary or comrade, nor do I like the "presidents" of certain of our southern neighbors. There is no title, however harmless it originally was, that cannot be used as a concealment for a bloody dictatorship. In actual practice, there is as wide a variance between dictatorships as there is between democracies. Americans, generally, hate the ones that are particularly militaristic and oppressive, but only when these are brought to their attention via a press campaign.

All this is partly beside the point. I have written dozens of stories in which there are no dictators. These do not apparently constitute a trend. I have written a handful of stories in which dictators or kings were mentioned. A few readers have taken this as a trend. They have assumed that, because I treat all my characters as human beings (which I shall continue to do) I must be sympathetic to the baddies. Because of their obsession with the monarchical idea, they failed to see the overtones of the stories in question, the two party system in WEAPON MAKERS, the fact that imperialism is only a vague background in THE MIXED MEN series, and they certainly failed to recognize that the dictator of HEIR APPARENT was a product of atomic disaster. Believe me, my friends, if there is an atomic war there are going to be some political changes on this earth. And if a man should invent such a weapon as I described in HEIR, he will very likely make those changes. However, nothing so fortunate is laible to happen. In the event of an atomic war, the world will collapse from chaos to chaos until finally one power emerges to rule the world.

But now, I come to Mr. Knight's specific criticisms of my plot. I am going to change his interpretation of the story slightly. My version is as follows: The Gosseyn, discovering some hundreds of years before the story opens, that a secret base of an interstellar empire has been illegally established on Venus, decides to make his stand there and on that issue. He is no super strong man, no super-genius, but he manages to establish the machine on earth, and he manages to start the process of non-Aristotelian training, which he regards as the only hope of the entire universe. Somebody becomes aware of what he is trying to do, and therefore, when the final crisis comes, the Gosseyn has not only

the problem of the Imperial power to fight, but also he must protect himself and the duplicate bodies which he has created. He does this in two main ways. He makes one of the bodies into the mental and physical monstrosity called "X", and he sends out Gosseyn I. At no time does "X" know that he is an agent, and that his thoughts, his knowledge of the inner ring of the gang, are being registered on the brain of Gosseyn III. The Gosseyn is also working in the dark. He is not aware of the identity of the agents of the imperial power until a very late date (This explains Crang's diatribe against the machine. At that time he had still no desire to be known as an Imperial agent). Gosseyn I is sent out knowing literally nothing in order to call the attention of the ordinary agents of the Imperial power to the fact that there is opposition. The purpose is to turn the direction of their efforts. So long as they are Imperial generals they represent military power almost beyond imagination. By swerving them so that they would seek purely personal gains, their subsequent actions and purposes would be profoundly altered.

In this he was successful. Thorson and Crang and Prescott lost interest in the battle against the Venerian A's, and set themselves in the pursuit of immortality. Under normal circumstances, they would never have attacked the agents of the galactic league, but now they no longer cared, and so, in seeking a purely personal reward, Thorson actually found the Gosseyn, and was killed. The Gosseyn, in concealing himself among the league agents because that seemed the safest place, likewise overplayed his hand, and so he too was destroyed.

Mr. Knight assumes that the Gosseyns are responsible for the presence of human beings on every habitable planet. He is in error. The Gosseyns have not the faintest idea who is against them. For better or worse, I decided not to reveal the identity of the somebody who is responsible until the sequel. I admit that this weakened the last installment of A as I had to be so careful in handling that character, but it's done and it can't be helped now.

It would have required about two dozen paragraphs to explain the foregoing as well as other points brought up by Mr. Knight. The story already seemed long enough to me, and besides I have frequently left things unexplained in my stories, and discovered that the readers rather liked the idea of suggestions which each reader interpreted according to his own fancy. In this case, my fear of too much explanation collided head-on with those readers who demand not only the substance but must possess the very shadow of the soul. These readers want from science fiction what they can only obtain from life itself, and then only if they understand their nervous systems. Only a full utilization of the A training will ever bring satisfaction of this illimitable hunger.

And now, finally, I have a real complaint to make against Mr. Knight. About two years ago a friend of mine showed me a letter or an article by Knight (I cannot remember which) in which he discussed my work in the following manner. He said that he could not see how anyone had ever seen anything in any story that I had ever written.

Let me hasten to add that I am not objecting to Mr. Knight having such an opinion of my work, and he is certainly entitled to publish it to his heart's content. But it seems to me that, in view of his previous statement, he is in his present article sailing under false colors. He says in this latest criticism that he has been progressively annoyed by my work ever since SLAN. But he did not except SLAN from that statement two years before. Then he could not see how anybody had ever liked anything I had ever written.

What am I getting at? It seems clear to me that Mr. Knight now rendered implied praise of SLAN in order to establish himself as an objective critic of my

stories. His present wording indicates that he has been saddened by my gradual decline. He is not saddened, nor is he the slightest bit objective. His nervous system has set itself into a curious pattern of outward, and, so far as his conscious thought is concerned, genuine hostility to everything that I have ever written.

What I would like to know is why has he read my stories so thoroughly that no revealing sentence in them has escaped his eagle eyes? It would be different if he were a paid critic whose duty it was to review current magazine fiction, but under the circumstances I maintain that Mr. Knight's criticism should not even exist in this plane of probability. Surely, if he felt as he did two years ago--and he did--he should not even have read WORLD OF A. He should have passed it by just as I skip the writings of authors who do not interest me.

There is however another explanation of Mr. Knight's outward hostility. The truth is that my stories do not bore him. They excite him, they provoke him to new thoughts, they send him to his typewriter again and again, and since he does not understand the impulses that move him to these reactions, the result is attack after attack. Human nature being what it is, I have a very strong hunch that, far from hating my stories, Mr. Knight is actually one of my most ardent admirers.

Cordially yours,

van Vogt
A. E. van Vogt

SOPHI

by lazarus

I know a smugness, coupled with claptrap
More thinly disguised than what truth it contains;
And I know an ear-splitting echo that spreads it
By mimeo ink from South Bixel to Maine.
- He calls it poetry!

SHE'S ENGAGED SHE'S LOVELY SHE USES PONDS DEPT.

(Avant-garde division)

"You can't be modern and not read View." --magazine ad.

"You can't visit Art of This Century and not be modern." --gallery ad.

Trapped, by God!

--James Blish

James Blish:

(. . .)

JOE'S JOTTINGS: I cannot but agree that my sponsoring of PETULANT was an error. Apparently so serious-minded a group as Vanguard finds mockery the hardest kind of criticism to take...My rating of Joe deserves an addendum this trip: as Judy has noted, he is a master of the squib...To Vanguard-ifs interested in Fantasy, I add also a recommendation of Fantasy Review, a thorough and equal-minded survey even more neatly mimeo'd than JOTTINGS.

AGENBITE OF INWIT: My criticisms of SCIENCE*FICTION brought both Judy and Dan'l down upon my dwelling machine with yelps of protest and threats of murder and worse. After taking notes on their complaints and checking carefully with what I had written, I find three corrections or retractions which I am glad to make for whatever balm they may offer:

1. The phrase "atheistically-minded publisher" on p. 11 is a misprint; please read "atheistically-minded reader."

2. On p. 12, the phrase "science fiction's most illiterate author" refers to George O. Smith, as the reader may confirm by consulting the blurb on S*F's contents page. This seems to me to be obvious from the text, but Judy says it might be taken to mean Dan, which I certainly did not intend.

3. My substitution of "electricity" for "electronics" was based upon the assumption that this word, as a title, applied specifically to the article under discussion. Since the word Dan used is plainly stated to be the title, not of one article, but of a series, my cavil is invalid.

Otherwise my comments seem to me to be just and accurate.

The attribution of the "Lyric" to the Oldes, one of the most non-lyrical ethnic groups in history, is a common error. The Oldes lived under an agrarian communal system and had nothing to sing about. The Lyric is actually a folk tune of the Whorie, whose policy of "self-effacement" it celebrates.. Sometimes I quail, myself.

Cerifs delightful.

Mailing comments: Lyons knows little Greek, himself, and did not expect the churls to learn it in order to read his poem. The point was that those who did not recognize the title in Greek would not be likely to learn much from a glossary; as stated in TUMBRILS No. 6, the thing required is a thorough knowledge of Thersetes' position in the Odyssey. Doc's definition of "thorough" differs from the poet's - no information derivable from a gloss would be anything more than misleading in getting to the bottom of the poem.* It is, after all, written for an audience which knows Homer, not one which has been told about him at second hand.

...Is it your opinion that the one hundred thousand lives extinguished in the bombing of Hiroshima, plus the even greater number extinguished at Nagasaki, were any less valuable per se than the problematical number of American lives saved by these atrocities? I can see no reason for such an evaluation. What is there about an American which makes him less deserving of death in uniform than a Japanese out of it?...And what is there about Japanese imperialism which makes it more evil than American imperialism? What has been gained by American resistance to Japan's "rival imperialism"? What in the salvaging of English imperialism at Singapore and Shanghai, or the salvaging of Dutch imperialism at Indonesia, justifies the thousands of American lives which were sacrificed? Can it be, Doc, that after all your self-righteousness on the subject of racism in FAPA and VAPA

*I refer, of course, to secondary elaboration alone, since on the level of primary elaboration poetic symbology is always available by Freudian procedure.

mailings, you are making an equally spurious geographical judgment?...I protest your ringing-in of Germany at the tail end of your objection, since as you well know from our last year's discussion with Kidd, I consider the war against Germany justifiable upon the basis of the "significant fraction" - that I believe the number of lives lost by fighting Germany to be less than the number of lives which would have been lost had we chosen some other form of resistance or not resisted Nazi policy at all. My point to Danner depends upon my correlative belief that no such justification can be found for the war with Japan, a war which we invited upon no better grounds than that some American financial interests in China were being devalued by Japanese military interference...Remember who asked for it; remember also the results - vicious, every one.

Thanks for the various comments on SFOHR. I had intended a reply in the next TUMBRILS, along with treatment of a number of subjects raised by Vanguardists in 1945 which I didn't then have space to mention; but an advance look over Damon's shoulder informs me that he is relieving me of most of the work. Therefore, just a few minor matters:

"Dialectics may be 'outdated,' but they're still running the show." The dialectic is a procedural method and never ran any show but the Marxian vaudeville. My own statement was that whatever was useful in the dialectic has been outdated by the calculus of statement, another procedural method. The newer way of thinking-by-symbols shows every sign of producing more accurate results with fewer operations than the older. Stanley might point to this fact in answering Judy's asseveration that we all think we're using scientific methods; for part of the scientific method is the law of parsimony, which rules that the simplest methods which satisfy the given conditions are the most valid. The use of the dialectic as a procedural method has thus become outdated upon the basis of this law, and can't any longer be considered as "scientific."

Of course dialectics will nevertheless continue to be used, like many another outmoded institution, but my essay did not pretend to treat that problem. The essay presents what seems to me to be a rational way of viewing the historical problem, and non-rational ways of all kinds do not fall within its scope except by definition. In other words, I did not deny the existence of non-rational procedure, I simply defined it as irrational. For this reason your phrase about "Historical Realism" is simply a noise; for this phrase is oriented toward the political, and has no bearing upon my writing, which is oriented toward the metaphysical.

"I can safely predict that were this hypothetical pattern discovered tomorrow, scarcely two adherents of it cd/ agree on what actions it predicated as meaningful and that time and time again their predictions wd/ be discovered to be pure fantasy." This is like saying that scarcely two people could agree upon actions relative to Bode's Law, and that predictions upon its basis would be mostly pure fantasy. You can't interpret a pattern, Doc. It's either there or it isn't. Motivation and semantics cannot effect actions and predictions unless they are based on an incomplete pattern - one with, say, a 6% error. Men had plenty of motivation, on the basis of incomplete patterns, to cling to theories involving no more than eight planets, in a certain definite arrangement. When Bode's law was formulated, motivation left the picture; it became evident at once that this was the way things actually were, like it or lump it, because predictions made upon it were never wrong except by accidental error - which accidental error was immediately correctable because the pattern predicated invariably meaningful actions to catch and correct such accidents.

The absence of basic Marxian texts in SFOHR's bibliography requires the reader to remember what he has read over a space of about 5 pages. Those who are unable to do this have my condolences. I have at this point entirely lost my patience with the attitude, first expressed in VAPA by DAW, that no one has read a book unless he has, somewhere, listed it publically. The attitude makes one suspect that its promulgators may feel that, on the other hand, listing a book consti-

tutes having read it. If it is true (as Shaw and some other experts claim) that I am ignorant of Marxism, then this ignorance must inevitably show in the essay itself, and can be exposed from internal evidence. Thus far no such exposition has been attempted; instead, there are only remarks that Marxist texts are not listed at the caboose of the article. The only fitting response to this is to refuse to believe that those who make this remark have read any Socialist texts unless they can show their familiarity by specifically contesting statements I have made about Marxism.

VANGUARD AMATEUR: ... Considering that the VAPA poll dealt with material of much wider general interest than the Pound discussion, I am amazed at the comparative response. Twelve answers is a pitiful record, even when one allows for the additional 3¢ per ballot required of the voter... I am in agreement with Kennedy on the scoring system; his Fantasy Review method of grading on a basis of 10 to 4, while no less arbitrary, shows both position and distribution of the votes very fairly.

Widner's remarks on "The Hills and the Heights" I think very pointed indeed, albeit remarkably gentle.

Gershwin is actually one of the few composers who failed, and very completely, at the incorporation of jazz into standard forms. He did succeed in incorporating the Broadway idioms of his time - the level of intensity of his jazz never goes deeper than the Charleston theme in An American in Paris, and his most popular tune, the adagio from the Rhapsody, is pure balladry of the Stardust kind - but his only real musical success depends upon that part of his work which is not essentially devoted to jazz at all. As a serious composer he belongs, along with Loeffler and Griffes, to the small school of American Impressionists, and his writing in that idiom was competent and occasionally more than that. His jazz themes never get beyond the most superficial of Tin Pan Alley emotions, and are inconsiderable beside those of such men as Milhaud, or even Ellington. I think it indicative that Widner mentioned Porgy and Bess as his example of a good jazz-standard amalgam; for that opera is the only work Gershwin wrote which comes even to the margins of the fundamental bases of Negro music, and it does so, in the main, through spirituals treated in an Impressionist manner, and fails when attempting jazz per se. It is, indeed, a kind of rewrite of Charpentier's Louise; into which some very uninteresting musical comedy tunes have been introduced in about the same way Artur Blond was given ten-day poison.

GLOSSARY: As an afterthought to Widner's common-sense pessimism on the atom-bomb, I offer a brief guide to the new language which the Atomic Age has fathered:

- "World destruction" - the other fellow's fault.
- "The last war" - the next war.
- "Secret information" - what we're going to do with it.
- "Peace" - a new source of technological unemployment.
- "Unless we realize ..." - Unless the other fellow realizes.
- "World government" - Curs.
- "UNO" - a shortcut to disagreement.
- "nuclear physicist" - member of subversive organization.
- "suicide" - disagreeing with us.
- "atom" - something smaller than a diplomat.
- "democracy" - violation of the Espionage Act.

Applying these definitions to the Congressional Record, articles in Pravda, and speeches in the House of Commons will help to close up that gap that Birrham points out between the stated meaning and the real meaning of political documents.

damon knight:

On the 6th Mailing

FELLOW HEDONISTS:

Agenbite/ A for neatness. The reviews make good reading, but they're hardly meaty enough to fill the bulk of a magazine. "Jurgenlied", however, would make up for almost anything. This, for my money, is the best poem Lowndes has ever written.

Tumbrils/ "Stampunct's Revolution", I think, is Lyons' best effort to date. The mechanical construction of his earlier two stories in Renascence is reflected here, but it's subdued to a degree that spells "competence" rather than "copybook". I also like Blish's reply to Laney, though it's marred in places by the venom which he seems unable to repress.

Science*Fiction/ Blish carries off most of the honors with "Zombie", and "Knell" is a close second. I have been saying that the latter is a good story for a couple of years now, and I still say so.

Index/ A commendable job -- and a huge one, as anyone knows who has tackled an index. Vote of thanks to Blownden.

Stefantasy/ Great improvement. I like pretty damn near everything in this issue; special mention for "An Amedieval Romance", "Penseroso", the cover and the new size. Only one bitch: the dingbatted contents page.

Vanguard Amateur/ Good job, as usual. Have no objection whatever to subscribers' letters being included, providing that Kubilius writes them all. If the poll were revised as he suggests, by the way, I think it would make sense.

Vanguard Variorum/ Like the name and the idea. In fact, if Shaw would be willing to keep on publishing the thing, I'd be happy to see everybody's reviews out of the way under one cover.

FELLOW VULTURES:

Tumbrils/ Speaking of semantics, "I shall oppose . . . any attempt to foist upon the public the notion that the USSR is anything but what the most reliable evidence shows it to be" is nonsense. Since "most reliable" implies a purely subjective judgment, the sentence can be meaningfully construed only as "I shall oppose any attempt to promulgate any opinion of the USSR which differs from mine." . . . Hey Doc, remember the old days? . . . Other comments on Tumbrils will be found strewn around

Science*Fiction/ Afraid I think this is an anomaly. The bulk of the material, the policy being what it is, is inevitably made up of two classes: amateur work trying to look professional, and professional work not good enough to sell. Neither is good of its kind, and the overall effect is that of the platypus.

Local No. 449/ Leave us, for God's sake, not try to be cute any more.

File Works/ This is just for the record, account of I have already told Kidd: Was pretty sure somebody would spot that "non-Aristotelian logic" error in the Van Vogt article, but I caught it myself too late to change it. Meant to say "system of education" or something instead. As to hair-splitting -- a criticism of the article that several have made -- I'd be glad to argue with anybody who thinks I exaggerated any one of VW's faults. I don't think it's possible, myself, but I'm willing to be convinced.

Vanguard Variorum/ Crack in here by Judy, "Honestly, now, was it worth all that trouble?" which has undoubtedly been flung around before. I would like to do my bit to keep it from being flung again. This is a natural enough reaction to a thing that one would not have taken the trouble to do oneself, but it leads only to bloodshed. Of course the damned thing was worth all that trouble, to the guy who did it; otherwise he wouldn't have done it. Q. E. D.

On the 7th Mailing

FELLOW H'S:

Joe's Jottings/ Small, but pleasant. Nod to "A Group of Quatrains".

Agenbite/ Big and interesting. Comments will be found mainly in the V section, but rightly interpreted, this is a compliment of sorts. Finally got the "Old Lyric", after having my nose rubbed in it several times. Nice Cerifs, especially the letters. Do you mean "Serifs", Doc?

Renascence/ Even heavier going than usual, but worth it for the most part.

Vanguard Amateur/ Poll results interesting, but probably not very meaningful. Filthy with money, aren't we? Hi, Widner.

FELLOW V'S:

Agenbite/ "Institutions have a depressing habit of continuing to exist long after they have ceased to fulfill anything like their function, as they proclaim it to be, and the University, as described in 'Decline and Fall' is but one of a list." Granted. "To pile up the evidence and then conclude on the basis of it: 'The University is done for' is a neat bit of wishful thinking . . ." Huh? Outmoded institutions continue to exist only until the next wave of reform tears them down; admittedly, this usually takes a long time. Surely you didn't infer that we were all going to wake up tomorrow morning and find the Universities vanished like the dew, Doc? . . . Speaking of semantics, you have rather violently distorted the meaning of Blish's "Outside this consummately simple equation, no twentieth-century political discussion has meaning," by substituting "political force" for "political discussion". . . . The distinction between "implies" and "involves" is a nice one. According to Webster, the two words are sometimes interchangeable, and I have Blish's assurance that in this case, such was his intent. I think it is fairly clear from the sentence structure that it was. . . . Afraid your conversion is not complete, Doc: semantics is not the same thing as symbolic logic. . . . Disagreement, like you say, is hardly sufficient grounds for refusing to print dunkelbergers. Good taste, however? Or our much-discussed standards of quality? . . . Hope you were kidding with "We favor the cold-blooded artist, prepared to comprehend and cope with the nawsty old world on its own ground." Like Tom Benton, for instance, or Max Steiner, or Phil Wylie? If you're serious, you can have them. . . . Wish you would stop popping in and out of the

FSNY; your outlines are becoming a trifle blurred: . . . Blish: ". . . in such cases I consider the usage to be thoroughly justified regardless of the amount of research it requires of the reader. After all, the greater amount of the work has been done by the poet -- he is within his province to demand some attention on the reader's part." Quibble: Any work of art demands something of the reader, listener or beholder; but the artist is in no position to demand anything. Work on a higher level of abstraction only limits his audience. . . . The name of the painter referred to, as practically everybody knows, is Leonardo daMoniac, not D. Leonardo da Knight. . . . I am not amused by "cd/", "wd/" and "shd/". It reeks of fan. Ugh!

V. K. Emden:

VAPOR

The baby just discovered how to crawl under the gate which keeps* her in the nursery and out of my office; I am faced with the prospect of 118 hours of hard and intensive work, starting at 9:30 a.m. tomorrow; it has been so long since I put anything in Vanguard, and Vanguard has had such spasmodic and miniscule mailings recently that I hardly know what items are up for review or what I want to say about them; the pissoir is again out of commission and we are all reduced to using the privy in the hall (as Larry says, "... in the outer outhouse only"); Jim has gone ahead and announced "Bar Sinister" for Renaissance which means I really have to whip it into final shape, immediately; the gas and electric company has caught up with me -- but it's spring, and there is one of the new dateless mailings coming up in the very near future, and all portents say I will be included therein. Since my new alphabetical system of filing has put the publications out of mailing order anyhow, and since every chance visitor to Fort Wit has had one thing or another he wanted to check up on which was buried in those files (but was seldom re-interred afterwards) I do not guarantee that you will be able to find the usual scrupulous attention to every individual item, or even that you will find anything other than a big blank space after I once get myself unwound from this introductory paragraph, but I have at least gotten started. And it is spring, so who knows?

Contemplation of Stefantasy almost makes out of me the sunny-tempered little character that the Zissman-Knight-Shaw contingent dreamed up out of nowhere. I am so proud of Danner I could bust. In case there remains anyone who is not aware of the fact, let me proclaim loudly that it was I who introduced Bill to amateur publishing. I won't bother to list everything in the issue that I thought was funny - it would just be a tabulation of the magazine, item by item. Only an Amedieval Romance was sub-standard, while the self-explanatory graph on The First Page was absolutely hilarious, and surely makes up for any minor lacks elsewhere. W. Michelangelo Danner and W. Milton Danner are among my favorite artists and poets. Even the postcard was funny; I wish I could conscientiously have returned it with a hearty yea for A Dangerous Thing -- that was such a good title!

January Agenbite is fruitful ground. Beginning with the cover quote from Einstein, I learn that Doc found it in the Times or some equally stodgy organ. Shaw first pointed it out to me in PM, unfailing source of bigger and better typos, where Einstein's comment read like this: "Since I do not foresee that atomic energy is to be a great boom for a long time, I have to say that for the present it's a menace." Amen! The running heads continue to out-Zissman Zissman. Underneath one of the best, where doshes distinned to Inwit, Lowndes

*used to keep, I mean

did take the Emden to task: "The somewhat persecuted tone /of "Final--Blackout!" are to be deplored. /sic/ ... Personal correspondence is the vehicle for details and personal comment." Reprising my first indignant yowls (in common with just about everyone else, I hate to be spanked in public), my only comments are (1) I did not succeed, evidently, in what I wanted to do in the diatribe, and I am duly sorry for any pain I caused the more delicate-minded Vanguardifs and (since it doesn't get me anywhere) I'll try not to lose my temper in public in the future, and (2) I would like to clear up my stand on your last point. Most of my Vanguard output comprises all the personal correspondence I engage in these days. I have taken (and intend to continue to take) full advantage of the correspondence club side of an apa. Details and personal comment make very interesting reading, ordinarily, and I have found that when I do restrict myself to lofty pronouncements on general subjects I sound just about as stuffy as you do in the passage I quoted. A finished essay, critical or expository, is another matter, and I will continue to take the greatest care with both style and content when I work in earnest; but leave us not exclude details and personal comment. Vanguard would die of dry rot and Dreiser's Botch in short order.

In my own peculiar style (whatever it may be after the lambasting I received - and not only from Doc, either; everybody jumped on the Emden; but while they hold me down and try to sit on my head I can still be heard squeaking like a dormouse, "The personaler the comment the grister to my mill" -) I proceed to the February issue of Agenbite. The Old Lyric is delightful, although I admit I didn't get it until it was explained to me. I don't see that either the title or the quotation from Rosenkavalier do anything but sit around gratuitously and evoke pleasant associations of their own without any discernible relevance. to the poem headed off by the name of Sachs, but the poem itself is, I think, very good indeed. In view of your delightful use of "Saw, smelled, heard, clasped, tasted" and finally "thought" I think it might be called a veritable QuintusSense of a Poem. Cerifs tickled my risibilities no end. Your recent experience with the billiard bottles would make an even better item, if the story could only be told! The Sofoto, (mentioned by special permission of Vladimir Ilyitch Lowndsovsky) is priceless. You should inadvertently skip more page numbers, Doc. Vanguard needs art of this calibre. I had a nasty experience on the final poem; I like it very much indeed, but I was going to ask you in rather snotty fashion if what you meant was anchorite. When I looked it up in the dictionary I was amazed to find that anchoret is the preferred spelling; I had never seen it spelled like this before to my knowledge. please don't do this often, Doc; it does horrid things to my awareness of my own infallibility. This was a good issue; more, please.

Hello Central was a good gag (or at least I thought so after this one was explained to me, too - sharp like a marble these days, ain't I?) and contained the best of news.

Joe's Jot-tings was as enjoyable as I had hoped. Once having been converted, I go all out for Kennedy. I agree with Judy, who pointed out that the fellow has a genius for the filler. Is John Holbrook Caley allee samee Joe Kennedy?

Biggest, best, and it now develops final Vanguard issue of Renaissance gets loud laudings from this corner. Josephs is as positive and incisive in his work as he is modest and retiring in person, and he has done an excellent job on these two poems; I am hard put to say which I like better, and have no criticism whatsoever to offer, whether constructive, destructive or comparative. I have said all I had to say on the question of Ezra Pound's guilt in the note on the ethical aspect which I submitted to Renaissance recently, and will note here only that I was offended by Mr. Patchen's emotional binge. I am reminded of Blish's tag-line -- "Getcha programs heah, folks, can't tell Patchen from Elsie B. without a program" -- although he was speaking (strange coupling) of PM and Parnassus when he used it. I would say that Patchen's boil definitely erupted. "The Blurred Men Howl" comes off somewhat

better, although the fancy of the crime being that of preserving a clear-cut outline in a sea of shadows seems to me more poetic than accurate. Many of the writers of the liblab press, far from having melted into the anonymity of majority opinion, are the articulate, three-dimensional spokesman in the vanguard of same; they may be as objectionable as a dunghill, but they are just as solid. Since the victim of persecution is not necessarily great but only unorthodox, is not the true crime then that of variance in the midst of conformity? But this is a quibble with the way you say what you say; the argument itself I endorse. While I do not find "Romanticism and Survival" a critical essay in any sense of the word, and would perhaps be disappointed in it were that all I was looking for, I am grateful to Sostman for some of the material here presented which was not previously available to me (I am unfortunately not a Columbia undergraduate -- or should I say: "I am fortunately not the typical Columbia undergraduate?"). In addition, since I consider Sostman an artist of some stature on the basis of "Four Poets" and what I have seen of his poetry, even the somewhat dubious "The Folded and the Quiet," I found this placing, as it were, by the artist of himself in what he conceives to be his milieu, to be of great interest. When the artist pulls himself up short and surveys his world (particularly his world as it may be affected by nuclear fission) the result is bound to be at least as interesting as and very likely better propounded than the ordinary writer's diagnosis and prognosis. /Systole-diastole, demon, systole-diastole. I said it, and I'm glad I said it./ Sostman has certainly not said anything new or even anything very brilliant, but he has clearly indicated that whatever direction the world is going in, HES chooses romanticism as his expression of his times. The department Recordia continues in great style. The 20th-century-music-only policy is a good thing, but leave me advise you not to be inelastic about this. There was music written before 1900 which, when reissued or unearthed for a first time, is well worth flinging a bone to. In fact, I should think inelasticity is the last thing on earth Renaissance could indulge in, considering its policies and aims. Lowndes' preoccupation with silken cruelty is an interesting phenomenon to observe, but when he strikes the pose of so tawdry a Bluebeard as he does in "Desire", one stifles a yawn. At least, this one does. I resent the easy punch line after the excellence of the opening five lines. Inception of Reports from the Field gives me a hell of a big kick; I have been trying to batter down the policy of non-reportage on current shows, showings, and musical performances for ever so long. Non-availability of such material to out-of-towners is no drawback whatsoever in my estimation; witness the avidity with which I devoured the New Yorker for years before I arrived in New Mecca - I mean New York.

The Index is a fine thing, and I can attest to the amount of work that went into it. Including The Last Page!

I find Science*Fiction to be not nearly so good as the long wait and the standards announced led me to expect. I quote, in its entirety, an item from 2-1-1: "Science*Fiction, as its name implies (although this is another case of a temporary name --- so who knows WHAT will happen to this one?), will be devoted to scientific literature. ... The frequency of its issue will be dependent entirely on the amount of time necessary to accumulate enough material of sufficiently high caliber to meet the minimum standards we are setting up for the magazine. ... We cannot promise a date for the first issue, except to say that it will appear as soon as it is at all feasible...." Judging from my ellipses (they must be mine, since Juddy practically never uses a three-dot ellipsis) I am not quoting in its entirety, but if you want to see what I left out, look it up. I must not have been sufficiently interested, or I would have included it in the first place. /Quit-cha gripin'. Yuh got a nice shiny new index, aincha?/ This was March 1945. In 1946, we are presented with a cover which is distinguished only for its remarkable ugliness, Bloch at his most trivial, Blish doing a Little Knell, an optimistic editorial complete with signature. ... What point is there in going on? I would register also an objection which has been voiced somewhat differently else-

where. Why waste Danny's talents on Geo. O. Smith? I am allergic to how-to-do-it articles, and anyhow highly technical instruction is not practicably imparted in bimonthly seminars. I wouldn't study an article on Electronics any more than I would study the fine points of performing an appendectomy - I neither expect nor desire to have an opportunity to put either sort of pseudo-knowledge to the test. I am disappointed that your department of Reviews and Science News missed Gimbel's advertisement for flame guns at \$24.98 (or some equally casual sum) the which appeared at about the time Science*Fiction was being made up; it had me in a tizzy for weeks. Incidentally, the mimeography on the magazine ain't good; nor is the format outstanding. ... No one seems to have noticed this blooper in "The Halls and the Heights":

"Monday, August 5th, 1945: something exploded in Japan.. Hiroshima, to be precise. Seismographs all over the world recorded the disturbance, and scientists wondered mildly what it might be.

"Monday, August 6th, and the whole world knew."

Monday, August 7th, the Futurians realized it. Monday, August 8th, Catonsville, Md., declared war upon the axis. Monday--TIME MARCHES ON, but as has been noted, you have to run like hell just to stay in the same place. ... Much as I hate to note the fact, I found this first issue of Science*Fiction to be rather poor. I hope it improves rapidly, and steps up its publishing schedule. "Galatea" I like very much - if not as absolute poetry (which is to say music) as science-fictional poetry; in this specialized and practically uncontested field, it ranks very high.

I disagree with Blish on what he claims to be the unmasking of demon's title through a slip of d-zissman's stencil technique -- namely, to wit, viz., *ibid*, Q.E.D.: "The watt is the electrical unit of 'work' or ." That word in single quotes is a dirty word, and should not be mentioned in the knight's presence. Actually, I think, in searching my memory I have found the clue. "This is Shhh---" is a worthy successor to "This is --It" and I feel that demon is to be congratulated. A fine publication, and one of the biggest shocks I have sustained since I descended on Futuria something over a year ago. The customs of Time are indeed reprehensible, and as has been mentioned in several reviews /it's hell to be several mailings behind in making my comments - everybody who is everybody has already said everything/ Decline and Fall is much better than the Blish treatment of the same subject. I don't know about the authenticity of the story of the seduction of the iron dog, but do you remember what Lyons did to that bench in Abingdon Square? Him and those little slats he picks up! ... With regard to your About-Face, I wonder if it wasn't perhaps also a desire to show us how it should be done that made you return to amateur publishing? Beautiful beautiful mimeography.

Tumbrils, quarrelsome little Tumbrils, I have always liked. I was about to say that it is no longer the august publication it was at its inception, but as a matter of fact the first issue carried the two delightful satirical poems by M. Lyons, which would indicate that from the very first Jim has had his tongue in his cheek, just as he has in "The Feeble of the Who's and the Guilden Yeggs." It is hard, I think, for a lot of Vanguardifs to recognize the fact that Jim has a sense of humor that is out of this world. (Perhaps that's why.) I've seen disgusted complaints about The Feeble from those who found it incomprehensible. Too bad. "Stamm-punct's Revolution" is pleasing, and should be a revelation to DAW -- but wouldn't be, of course. Congratulations and hearty endorsements on "The Wilderness of Mirrors"; I don't agree with every line of it, but it's good stuff. Blurb on "Heirs-Presumptive" says it exactly; that's about the only trouble with a Blish publication for me -- Jim says everything there is to say, and says it curtly, clearly and concisely, leaving nothing for the writer of reviews to do but bob the head rapidly up and down and, if he says anything, simply echo Jim.

January Amateur notable for very interesting letter from Sostman, and a sort of apa history by RWL which I for one found biased and

misleading. May I explain to Kubilius that I am not in the least interested in writing about the drama in the "concise" and "precise" style of the newspapers. "How Many Angels" was meant to be an essay on the state of the drama, a critical essay, see -- not a capsule review. I used the Bentley remarks, and the Jordan play, as well as a symposium of critical opinion (since it was my first venture into the field and I more or less distrusted my own abilities) on which to hang my conclusion as to the present state of the drama -- i.e., that it continues to exist.

February Amateur notable for the listing of the results of the poll. I'm duly gratified by every point awarded me, and I thank you one and all. I thought the financial note in the preceding Amateur ("The 1945 accounts will appear in the next issue of the official organ. For the moment, rest assured that our coffers are brimming,") was marvelous in its own way, and the actual financial report is a marvel of succinctness. What with the quoted remark and frequent bons mots such as the "Remember your landslide!" in the same issue, I begin to think that someone should start making a collection with an eye to issuing a volume of Lowndesiana some day.

Vanguard Variorum I have no comments on except to say I was deeply interested by all comments, as I always am; I think the publication is a fine idea; I expect to be represented in the next issue; I think contributors owe it to Larry to pay them for the stencils he uses to cut their reviews; and WHAT in HELL happened to your mimeoing technique, Larry?

It didn't even occur to me when I read various comments, and I didn't believe it when others referred indignantly to it, but when the direct statement was made in my hearing by one of the interested characters, I found myself roused to action and anger. I am now convinced that Shaw was trying to imply that Marshall Grassly performed the acts of vandalism which ruined some of the cut stencils for Science*Fiction; I think this is several degrees worse than a base canard. And I think an apology is in order. I don't know who did write back-fence-stuff on one of the stencils and wantonly deface others, but I think it's for damn sure that Marshall Grassly, a personal friend of Blish's and mine, and a guest in this building, didn't.

While I'm feeling belligerent, I would like to mention that I am simply at a loss to account for the general hostility and mirth surrounding my projected year book. Ranging from Kennedy's cryptic "You kidding?" to Larry's "But frankly phooey on the Discrete thing," the attitudes puzzle me. ... The response was very spotty, so I gave it up, so I hope you're satisfied. I'd appreciate an explanation of the hostility if of nothing else. But the point is hardly worth belaboring, and I weakly offer the Zissman-knight-Shaw contingent a bob and a curtsy as I wrap the tattered remnants of my wit and good taste (and let us not forget my charm) in a winding sheet and lay them away.

But anyhow and nonetheless, love and kisses to you all, from -- The Emden.

PS to Norman Stanley - oh boy, am I belligerent. This is your last chance, Norm. If you don't tell me what book you would like to have, and that quickly, I'll give you the back of my ha--- I mean, I'll send you, post-haste, one copy of Edna St. Vincent Millay's Conversation at Midnight. It's no longer my most favorite book by a long shot, but if you don't have it, I do think you might enjoy it thoroughly. If you don't agree, open up and tell me what you would like to have. I'm determined to send you a book. Incidentally, I've been trying in a desultory sort of fashion to find out the spelling of Phrontistery in the Greek for you. A simple transliteration starts like this, buttsort of peters out:

Φροντιστερ -- 05 -- 02 ??? I have seen the FAPA edition of Fantods, and am looking forward to the day our own edition arrives at Airless Eyrie.

And a further post script, to Bill Danner. I am delighted to discover in

the Benet radio play having to do with the Vox Populi, this line, spoken by "An Older Voice, Conservative: And if you let the working-classes have coal, they'll fill it with bathtubs." Sine quibus non -- or, post quo, quid? vke.

Larry Shaw (from here on out):

A) PRELIMINARY BOUTS

"Quick," she snapped suddenly to her companion, "duck around this corner! Here comes that horrible old man with the format again."

They reached the safety of the side street just in time. Down the main thoroughfare they had just left a bent and shivering little figure tottered, creaking faintly as it passed. The old man's eyes peered dimly before him, and he had no inkling of the proximity of the young couple who had so narrowly avoided him.

"That's Larry Shaw," the girl explained to her puzzled escort. "One of the charter members of The Vanguard, and now the oldest living member. You'd expect him to be an interesting person, but he's really a terrible bore. All he ever talks about is the format of other peoples' magazines -- and never anything constructive; he simply keeps quetsching about how poor practically all the publications are in that respect! As if he had ever accomplished anything outstanding -- even in format! But he's no better than anyone. Why, in the museum the other day I saw the first issue of his Vanguard Variorum, and. . . ."

At this point, I could probably find takers for bets on the accuracy of this little vision of the future. I claim it ain't never gonna happen, 'cause I'm going to attempt to settle the question right now; but I daresay some of you are going to be hard to convince.

Look, in the first place, you could splash all the comments I've made in print about magazine format s all over the cover of Renaissance, and you'd still have to look three or four times to see them at all. Go back and count them up, chums. I've made lots of side-comments to members in person, sure; but if those are going to count let me know about it so I can revise my ideas on how Vanguard works, eh?

And I never said I was an authority on format, either. To be trite, I'm not a barber, but I can still tell when damon needs a haircut. This is being unnecessarily humble, though: I think my formats are okay, mostly. My printing may be lousy sometimes (It was last issue. I hereby apologize to practically all of you. I can't explain, because I'm still puzzled as to what caused it.), but some sort of planning and layout is always there.

Which is all I ask of anybody. Some sort of planning and layout. Of course, if you get a typer with a crumby type-face, as has happened to Kidd f'rinstance, that's going to affect your format and there's not much you can do. But a little attention to details -- all of which are very individual depending on the general plan -- will make a mountain of difference.

In the future, I shall continue to comment on the formats of Vanguard publications -- especially when they stink. I hope that Danner, and whoever else agrees with us, will too. There's room for plenty of improvement. And it just possibly might be a good idea to make the mailings attractive to prospective members, no?

II. Oh me. This is a problem, it seems, that people who are experts on absolutely nothing are doomed to run into fairly often. This time, however, I'll face it with something I read in PM, which quoted it from Walter Winchell in The Daily

Mirror: "Oscar Levant, when asked his opinion about a certain film, said: 'It stinks.' 'Who are you to say it stinks?' yelled the indignant producer. To which Oscar shouted: 'Who do you have to be?'"

(Yeah, you got it, bub. It's the haircut act all over again.)

I didn't say I was an expert on Marxism, Jim, honest I didn't. And by "careful examination" of your article I really didn't mean that at all; I only meant that I had read it four times and had a couple of rather long discussions of it with people. I know damned well I couldn't present a specific criticism of the entire thing; what I did say was designed to show why I, like Dan'l, would consider such a project as time-wasting. My ability has nothing to do with it. I could poke a lot of holes in certain things you said, I think, but you could come back with further information and background material that I (a) never heard of, and (b) just never would have thought of as relevant to the issue even if I had been familiar with it. And it is certainly far beyond my ability to construct anything so complicated as the combination suit of armor and double-headed battleaxe your "Bibliography" has turned out to be.

In short, you win -- I give up. But just one thing I'd like to know before I crawl away: What are you talking about when you mention my "political mentor" (your quotes)? Are you trying to be insulting or funny? I said that I took most of my political instruction and inspiration from Judy; it doesn't follow that she at any time deliberately tried to convert me to her beliefs. In fact, the only person who ever did that -- and who thus would qualify as my mentor -- was Michel, who made a very painstaking and time-consuming effort to convert me to his beliefs. But then Michel, it seems to me, would be classed as a Marxist. And that gives rise to the suspicion that all that stuff he kept telling me was about Marxism. Gee, isn't it too bad I never listened!

III. If you really want answers to the other questions you asked me in the last Agenbite, Jim (which, naturally, I doubt), you might try going back and reading my original statements again. I think they are all as complete as possible; I think they are all justified. The great Wollheim suit, as has been pointed out before, has made us all a little more careful about what we say in print; any lack of bluntness on my part was not by choice, and certainly didn't indicate anything in my attitudes or ideas that I would desire to hide from my friends.

B) THE MAIN EVENT

AGENBITE OF INVIT (January): The paper made a good impression. I have the feeling I ought to be able to say something terrifically funny about "War of the Moles", but the spectacle of millions of hungry, homeless, displaced moles arises to haunt me -- and I weep instead.

TUMBRILS: I've thought of a way you can save some money on the production of this, Jim. Simply save your cover stencil until you're ready to do the next issue, then mask off the used sections and do another cover in the unused part. (I knew that contents page idea of mine had an advantage to it, somewhere or other.) ... The feeble: You can always depend on the U. S. Marines to come through in a crisis.

SCIENCE*FICTION: I'm afraid there won't be any more issues of this after the first one. Both Judy and I now have typewriters without *s.*

HELLO CENTRAL: A party line?

*Now, not this typer. This is damon's. My new one, Notgnimer (everything else on it is backwards), makes its appearance only on the cover and headings.

VANGUARD INDEX: Wow!

FILE WORKS: Anybody got a match?

STEFANTASY: I don't care at all for the idea you discuss on page 9, Bill. Maybe
-mis vaw siht pu tes ffuts gnidaer tub ,dnim kcart-eno a evah tsuj I
nly makes me dizzy. But then, I never did care an awful lot for spectating at
.rehtie ,sehctam sinnet

: Gowan, it was all my pushing that made you change your mind about
publishing, knight. And I'm only a figment of your imagination,
too! (Gee, maybe that also makes me a , hah?) But seriously, I was
almost as surprised as everybody else by this, and I thought it not only the best
item in the mailing, but one of the best apa publications I've seen at any time.*

VANGUARD VARIORUM: I think knight put a curse on the stencils he sold me. They
worked fine for him, and the kind I usually use worked fine
on the last two pages, after I had run out of damon's. But he won't tell me how
he did it, or why -- which is harder to understand, since his comments came out
the worst of all.

VANGUARD AMATEUR (January): Look, knight. Lowndes has finally recognized our
worth, and put us in a separate classification all
by ourselves. Goody, huh?

JOE'S JOTTINGS: Int'lecks Emden, Blish, and Lowndes
(Et cet.) feed Vanguard to the howndes;
They comment on mags both cute and punk --
But as to why, they've never thunk.

That answer your question, jhc?

APENBITE (February): Nyah, it took me less time to get the Old Lyric than any-
body! I demand a prize, I do! ... Sofoto: This sort of
taing is good once. (ell, I had to say it about something, doggone it.)

RENASCENCE: Wow!

VANGUARD AMATEUR (February): Well, anyway, we can only have one poll a year.

C) THE FINAL BELL

There was going to be a Statement of Policy here. But I'm a sailor now -- yes, a
really, truly sailor this time. I haven't got a pretty uniform, but I do have a
nice little Merchant Mariner's Document that means a lot more. And while I may
be on the beach for quite a spell yet, I'm hoping to ship out in the near future,
possibly within a few days. So future issues of VV are uncertain. And more is-
sues are possible, I'll let all probable contributors know in plenty of time. In
the meantime, if I can't publish, I'll certainly be around in some form. I have
written so many notices like this one in the past that I'm beginning to believe
they always jinx the plans that would force me to cease publication, thus making
me look pretty silly, so I'll stop right now.

*Last minute news item: Cohen has completely forgotten how to pronounce the name
of knight's magazine. I can still remember my translation of Chet's pronuncia-
tion (which damon perhaps misleadingly called my "version"), but I am more than
slightly worried. If I forget, maybe everyone will forget the magazine itself in
turn. And then dk may be forgotten (with, of course, all the figments of his im-
agination). Don't laugh -- this may affect you more than you realize! . . .