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Although married in Back Bay they were banned in Boston.

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Published and edited about this time of the quarter by Vernon L. McCain, Box 458, Payette, Idaho....note new address, all.

This issue is NOT mimeed by Shelby Vick.

BIRDSMITH is a publication of the Society for the Preservation of Robert Bloch. Remember, "Satisfaction guaranteed or double your offerings back...." No other Ghod can make that Statement.

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NOTE TO GREENELL: On page 6 you forgot Call Me

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### 1929 WAS A LONG TIME AGO

BLEEN--Yes, Dean, it could very well have been Autrey. Two or three years ago Columbia Records proudly announced that Johnny Ray's "Cry" was their second best selling record of all time. #1? "Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer" by guess who.

DREAM QUEST--The article on Palmer was interesting but I am at a loss why this intense interest of yours in Palmer all these years and your repeated attempts to try to steer him into more sensible paths, as revealed by these quotes. Admittedly Palmer is an interesting example of the odd dead-ends the human mind can construct for itself, but I can think of few, if any, people in sf who possess less potential for advancing sf in any constructive manner. Palmer is the skeleton in science fiction's closet and it is not incumbent upon fandom to open too many doors since Palmer was just about the first important fan and certainly the first important example to turn pro. It can happen here! Let's consider ourselves lucky Degler never got a job as an editor.

FANTASY ALATHEUR--Just to keep the record straight Shelby Vick had nothing to do with the double installment of BIRDSMITH in the 70th mailing, nor has he had since the Spring 1954 mailing. I'd forgotten about that credit line being on the stencil by the time they were finally run off or I'd have covered it up. Don't attempt to read any signs of a feud into the above. Shelby was, and probably remains, the closest friend I ever made in fandom. But apparently he's indulging in the most king-size gafia of all time. Although he adhered religiously to our agreement for running off the magazine, eventually you grow a trifle self-conscious of any such arrangement when you hear not a word of correspondence out of the other half. As of now it's about a year since I last heard from Shelby so I've opened up other methods of reproducing BIRDSMITH. Apparently this fits with Shelby's desires since I notice he's been dropped from the membership.

HORIZONS--I liked everything about "Young Fan's Mancy" except the title. More, please. "What's Wrong With Fan Poetry" also made interesting reading although I hadn't bothered reading any of the examples you cite. I don't care for most real poetry so can't see any reason to bother with fan stuff....which usually lacks even metre. Like Wilson with Palmer, I really can't see why you bother giving anything so trivial such close attention.



MASQUE--I don't know where the California insurgents got the idea that huge magazines composed wholly of little accounts of minutiae of their daily lives was the way to publish a magazine. Oddly enough, almost every one of these items is fascinating, taken by itself.....but strung one after another with no connecting thread or unifying pattern it is indigestible, to say the least. Maybe I should ration this stuff out....read one item a day. By the next mailing I'd be through, maybe. As it is I read four or five pages and then start getting the same restless reaction that must be felt by a husband whose wife never serves any food but potato chips or perhaps any listeners to that Southern radio station which played "Stiggy Boom" (or whatever the title was) over and over for three days. Even brilliance gets monotonous, if unrelieved. As an example let me cite the GRUE's and BLEEN's of today as compared with the unrelieved nothing-but-interlineations publications of Grennell when he first entered FAPA.

PHLOTSAM\*-In case Bob fails to protest, let me do so for him. He did not write that critique of Player Piano, Limbo, etc.....merely published it. Otherwise, though, I think I agree with your views more than Vardan's on the matter. Nice zine, Phyllis, and a nice addition to FAPA. Hope you can be in every mailing from now on.

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Yes, I know the above mailing comments were unbelievably brief and I apologize to everyone skipped but I'm just not in a mailing comment frame of mind at present....and there's a good chance future mailing comments in BIRDSMITH may be equally brief....and again they may not. Of course part of it was simply that I read these mags three weeks ago and that's too long to remember most of what I wanted to comment on plus which I have to many interesting things in abeyance right now to have the patience to re-read the entire mailing so I just sort of skimmed through each mag this time round. Even so it still took the better part of two evenings.  
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No wonder a man considers his navel and gafia. -- BALLARD  
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THIS BUSINESS OF PREJUDICE

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"So you say with an oath that you aren't prejudiced against the Jewish race? And you visualized Bob Silverberg as 'a big, fat old slob with heavy 4 o'clock shadowy jowls and cigarette ash in the wrinkles of your soup-spotted vest', didn't you?"--Harry Warner, reviewing GENZIE in HORIZONS #61

I read the above quotation, in the last mailing, with a sense of slight shock. I'd never particularly concerned myself with G.L. Carr's prejudice or lack of same where the Jewish race is concerned but if I had it would never have occurred to me to search through her remarks anent Bob Silverberg for evidence as to it. You see, it simply hadn't occurred to me to think of Bob Silverberg as being Jewish.

Oh, perhaps when I first encountered his name I may have thought of its obvious Jewish origin in trying to visualize him as an individual and personality with every new person I encounter, whether personally or otherwise.



this is page three

If I did think of it it certainly made no deep impression as I cannot recall it now and, within three to six months, I was thinking of him strictly as an East Coast fan about whom I knew considerable, not as a representative of any racial strain.

And before I proceed any further in this (since the rest of this article has nothing to do with Bob Silverberg) let me add that I have tremendous respect for Bob as an individual, which any prejudice or lack of same towards Jewish people, and my sudden awakening to the fact that he is of this group, could hardly affect at this late date.

This is not the first time this has happened. Several years ago, in discussing Forrie Ackerman, a local fan remarked that "of course, he's a Jew". I was taken aback for a second and, then, agreed that possibly he was. His physical appearance was not incompatible with what I had come to regard as Jewish characteristics, nor did the name make it impossible. But it had never occurred to me to search for any evidence of Jewishness in him and it didn't strike me as too important whether he was or not even after it had been brought to my attention. Whether Ackerman actually is Jewish or not is beside the point. The point is that any evidence of such ancestry must be pointed out to me. I never notice it for myself or particularly look for it.

These cases are not unique. The same thing has happened to me on several other occasions, involving individuals not fans.

Perhaps this is only another indication of the distressingly small use I make of my observational faculties...probably my greatest drawback in trying to write. But, if so, I think it is a healthy disability and one a large percentage of the populace would be well off to share, in this particular respect.

What makes this most surprising, to me, is that if anyone inquired about my prejudices an honest answer would require that I place Jewish prejudice quite near the top. This is a fairly recent development. In the small town in which I was raised I was personally acquainted with only one Jewish individual. And he occupied (and still occupies) a very high spot in my esteem. Physically, and in his speech, he partook of many of the attributes most ridiculed by anti-Jewish extremists. He ran a clothing store and, although it sold the most expensive merchandise of any such store in that town in a period when our family was forced to watch every penny, we were regular customers of his, and very unhappy when he retired about ten years ago. Sol Spear believed in value received for money. His merchandise cost more than any of his competitors but it also lasted longer and gave more satisfaction while in use. He knew the clothing business thoroughly and anything he sold carried an implicit guarantee of quality. In addition, I have never known any store of any type which would go to such great lengths to give good service. Spear, and the clerks he trained, saw to it that the interests of every customer were served to the best of their ability. The only sales talks you ever got were when they were genuinely convinced you'd be more satisfied with the item than the one you were leaning toward buying. And, invariably, you found their judgment correct.

My anti-Jewish prejudice (if such it actually is) stems from the notion of Israel. When the Palestinian crisis first developed I had read considerable about it but not thought too deeply on the matter. My sympathies were with the Jews.



But the shot that killed Count Folke Bernadotte also killed my sympathy for the Israeli cause. Not that I blamed the Israeli government for the assassination itself. Every group has its irresponsible fanatics who tend to bring more reputable members of the group into disrepute.

What did shock me thoroughly was the Israeli government's indifferent attitude toward the whole matter and the fact that they hardly made even a token effort to search down the culprits and bring them to justice. When the fanatics of one group commit a crime against a neutral third party it is the responsibility of those within that group to see to it that steps taken are even quicker and more effective than if the same crime had been committed against an important individual within the group. Failure to do so, no matter what their sympathies, makes the entire group guilty and this is a principle recognized in almost every group throughout the world and through history. Current-day Communists are, of course, an exception but they operate by different rules of conduct.

Since then I have seen nothing to soften my opinion of the Israeli group. On the contrary further acts have tended to solidify my low opinion of them and I now regard the Israeli government as being on the same low plane of international morality as the governments of Spain, Argentina, and Yugoslavia. In fairness, I must add that it appears that internally a higher level of morality is maintained although, even here, much is done which Americans would find insufferable invasions of freedom.

As my opinion of Israel grew lower my sympathy for the Arabs grew greater. I think any unbiased investigation will show the balance of moral and/or ethical right to be on the side of the Arabs in this clash, despite the heavy propaganda barrage to the contrary which we in this country are smothered with. Not all right is on one side, of course. The closest parallel seems to be with the early days of the American West, with the Arab corresponding to the American Indian. The Arab is more sophisticated, better educated, and better equipped than the Indian was. And the American settlers lacked the slight excuse (masquerading as moral justification) of brief prior occupancy of the territory some millenia earlier. (I'm not sure just how long the Hebrews occupied Palestine, and have no intention of referring to the Bible to find out, but I believe it was not more than three or four hundred years at the most before they were forcibly scattered. Since they had taken the country by force in the first place, displacing its occupants, and the Arabs had established since then a record of consecutive occupancy for some two thousand years any moral justification for the reclaiming of Palestine by the Jewish race pretty well vanishes).

Just as Indians engineered many sneak attacks and have a long list of atrocities such as scalping defenseless women and children to their credit, so have the Arabs harried the Jews and done many things of which we cannot approve. But in each case it was the invader with the more efficient weapons and discipline who started the quarrel and who has carried it out most savagely. It is he who must bear the moral stigma. And it is from his hands that the most vicious atrocities have originated. (Notice that the comparatively disinterested United Nations has twice censured Israeli for actions beyond the pale for a civilized nation, although these have been played down in the American press).



My anti-Jewish 'prejudice' is confined to the Israeli government ~~and to~~ these individuals in this country who go out of their way to whitewash it and praise it. These individuals seem to be of two types; first are those with the obviously Jewish names....American citizens whose first allegiance lies elsewhere. This is understandable perhaps, but is on exactly the same level as German-American citizens who, in the thirties, supported the German-American Bund. Each was allowing his racial ties to draw him into supporting something morally reprehensible.

The other group is made up wholly of politicians who are aware of the numbers of Jewish voters in this country. It was precisely this motive which resulted in the cynical action of Truman's administration in aiding Israel during the war....while all our other allies (most noticeably Britain) recognized and, actively or passively, aided the Arab cause. Truman's vice-president later lent his name and his considerable abilities to the Jewish relief fund (which managed to afford full page ads in all the big national magazines about the plight of the poor Israelis) while totally ignoring the displaced Arabs whose numbers were much greater and whose plight was much graver.....and remains so today, by the way.

I feel much the same toward these politicians as I did toward the late Senator McCarran for his championship of Spain (although, in fairness, I must add that there are few Spanish voters in Nevada and the most he ever got out of it appears to have been a velvet-carpet V.I.P. treatment whenever he chose to visit Spain) or as I felt to the chance acquaintance I once met who spent most of his time in Latin America and was telling me how Dictator Trujillo of the Dominican Republic (Porfirio Rubirosa's first father-in-law to those of you who read only the society pages), a personal friend of this man, was the "best friend we ever had in fighting the Communists". Yes..... just as Russia was the best friend we had in fighting the Germans. But the fact remains that, had Hitler succeeded in conquering the world, he would have been less of a threat than if the Russian Communists accomplished the same purpose. For our living standards would have sunk far less and our ~~living~~ institutions of living changed less under Hitler than under Stalin. We'd have lost a great deal of freedom and suffered considerable humiliation but Soviet theory is actually far more alien to our life than was the Nazi tyranny. When will people learn that those who are 'agin' the same as we do not necessarily become lily-white thereby? And, yes, just for the record I was taken in ~~xxx~~ by that wartime propaganda about the Russians being our friends, just like almost everyone else. I like to think I'm a little more aware today. But most people do not seem to have learned anything. The McCarthyites continue to use the same fallacious reasoning.

But back to prejudice.

Aside from my anti-Jewish prejudice I would say I feel prejudice towards only three other racial or ethnic groups....negroes, Italian-Americans, and Irish-Americans. My feeling towards Italians stems from the period when I was in the Navy and on the East Coast where they are heavily settled throughout New England and the New York area. I had no pre-conceptions here. My prejudices are the result of much personal experience wherein I came to thoroughly dislike Italian-Americans as a group, although I made several very close friends within the group....people I came to admire highly. But the fact remains that I am prejudiced against Italian-Americans and any such person must overcome my instinctive dislike, at first sight, and prove his



worth before I cease to regard him as a representative of a group but, instead, as an individual who may possess very good qualities.

The Irish-American prejudice I've felt since a very early age and it stems from the noise braggadocio of the 200% Irish (similar to the 200% patriotism of the type who idolize McCarthy).....American citizens who work so hard at being Irish that they distort it completely from the original (and Walt Willis says the original wasn't authentic Irish, anyway, but adoption of a stage stereotype Irishman invented by the British). You know the sort of person I mean....the professional Irishmen like Pat O'Brien and George Murphy. George Murphy, Hollywood's suppose 'good-will ambassador' had a very bad radio program a few years ago in which he attempted to sell Hollywood to the public as a folksy shoes-off town. Part of the program involved questions from listeners which he answered over the air. One time, in regard to an earlier program in which David Wayne had been a guest star and he and Murphy had indulged in some of this 'professional Irishism' byplay a woman wrote in mentioning Murphy's saying he was Irish and asking for the truth and saying she'd always understood he was an American. This was probably strictly tongue-in-cheek but, instead of taking the well-deserved rebuke in good part Murphy gave the woman a public tongue-lashing over the air telling her that the world was full of things that should be fought and she should devote her attacks to those rather than to George Murphy and David Wayne having a little harmless fun.

As in the case of Jewish individuals I seldom think about whether someone is Irish or not unless they make a point of it. And, it may be my imagination but it seems to me there are fewer such people around today than fifteen years ago.

As for the negro prejudice this last is the most complex. I personally believe that no individual can be raised in the United States in any locality without partaking of Negro prejudice to some extent. The derogatory viewpoint of negroes is rooted so deeply in our culture that every media passes it further. It is in our songs, our books, our folklore, our jokes, our movies.... The situation is improving, of course, and little by little the contemptuous viewpoint of the negro is being removed from various places. But how many decades or centuries before a saying like "A n--- in the woodpile" is eradicated. Although twenty years may have improved the situation somewhat, even with the best of a non-prejudiced environment (and mine came very close to that maximum) one imbibes a viewpoint of negroes as not-quite-human.....something akin to a talking chimpanzee, perhaps. And I feel no matter how hard an individual may work to eradicate that prejudice some of it is there to stay. It may take the form, as it did in my case during my teens, of over-compensation wherein I felt so violently on the subject of negro prejudice that I regarded even lynching as too good for anyone who furthered it. I've outgrown that now and realize that a violent equalitarian attitude only aggravates the problem. Perhaps because I can't do much else, I tend to feel now that relaxing and playing down the problem will cause the differences to be smoothed away more rapidly than anything else.

I still feel somewhat guilty about my views toward negroes but I no longer try to forcibly change them and they are decreasing, of themselves, gradually since my intense interest in jazz (which is a negro invention and features about two to one negroes as its greatest stars) has led to greater knowledges of negroes, negro mores, and neg-



ro ways. And negro culture and daily life has come to have a fascination for me such as no other culture has. It wouldn't take too great a push to divert my interests to it so much as to cause me to make a life study of it.

But, despite abstract adherence to the principle that "All men are equal" and interest in the negro culture as a whole and veneration for certain negro musicians I must confess that I have cared very little for negroes I have known personally. And that is putting it mildly in some cases. The most interesting, intelligent, and likable negro I have ever known would have been regarded with contempt by most members of his race and referred to with contempt as an 'Uncle Tom'....very definitely a term of opprobrium to negroes. And this facet of his character not only was the most difficult barrier in trying to become acquainted with him,...his servility and self-effacingness had a way of being extremely embarrassing. The only other negro I've known at all well and for whose intelligence I had any respect was not that way at all. He had a very easy relaxed manner which made it easy to forget his race....luckily since he was the only negro in a group of 140 sailors....but he also was far less interesting as an individual.

As for the rest, let's skip them. I blame the poor educational facilities for negroes more than I blame the individuals themselves and I feel that any group raised under similar disadvantages would result in similarly unattractive individuals.

So, in essence I feel that analysis shows me innocent of prejudice against Jews or the Irish. Prejudice means 'pre-judgment' and in both those instances my antagonisms do not appear until such time as the individual does something I consider objectionable. That is not pre-judgment....but the same method of assessing an individual which applies to all social contacts. I am guilty, however, of prejudice toward negroes and Italian-Americans. The former is a deeply rooted involuntary response....the latter a comparatively surface objection growing from experience. I would find it impossible to defend my views in this matter in a debate or argument since I know that any sweeping condemnation of a group is illogical and indefensible but the fact ~~is~~ remains that as a group (though not individually) I dislike Italian-Americans, for what I consider good reasons.

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Praising with faint blame is the most flattering form of sincerity.  
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#### SOME THOUGHTS ON OBJECTIVITY AND LACK OF SALE

The preceding article was not an objective one; rather it was a subjective one, dealing not with universals, but with the particular peculiarities and reactions of one individual, the author, and attempting to probe the reasons therefore and draw some useful conclusions. The almighty "I" was omnipresent. It is not the first such article to appear in BIRDSMITH; and in all probability it will not be the last.

Personally I feel it is better to use personal pronouns than for the writer to clumsily attempt to bypass the personal application when one is writing about one's personal reactions (as is done in this sentence). But these articles go further. But these articles go further than that. They deal with nothing save the consciousness and motives of one Vernon McCain and are of doubtful use to anyone else.



People fascinate me. They always have. I am unable to encounter anyone, in person, through correspondence, or through something that individual has written, without attempting to fill in, for my own satisfaction, as much as possible of his background, the sort of family he had as a child, his home life, his indoctrination toward the word and his subsequent adjustment to life, his likes and dislikes, his motivations, and, most of all, what goes on in his mind and how he arrives at his viewpoints and conclusions. Through years of continuous and almost involuntary study of everyone I encounter I flatter myself I've come to have a trifle deeper understanding than the average person has of this animal called the human being and its individual units and why they behave as they do....not through any greater native insight, but merely because I am sufficiently interested to observe and remember.

Much of this superior insight may be self-deception but on at least several definite occasions views I held (which were minority views) later proved correct.

Let me stress that all people interest me, although some more than others. The more unusual and paradoxical the character the greater the challenge to try to understand why. Among those whose motives and actions I'm constantly trying to solve is myself. And I devote more time to trying to solve that riddle than any other....not from sheer egotism, but because I have more data in my own case and am thus better qualified to draw conclusions than in any other instance.

It seems to me a natural urge....the desire to understand both oneself and others and the hidden motives from which stems the inexplicable. It has been said that the proper study of man is man himself. With this I am in complete agreement although there are times when I feel like rephrasing it to read "The proper study of man is man, HIMSELF."

If we cannot understand ourselves how can we possibly understand others? And how many of us truly understand ourselves? And, if we do not understand others how can we maintain social relations with them without committing horrible blunders?

The first time I recall attempting self-analysis and emerging with an interesting and important discovery about myself was when I was just emerging into adolescence and it was perhaps the most important step I made in that unpredictable stage. Between my 16th and 21st birthdays I made a whole series of them; each altered my basic personality to an extent and each, I felt, was a step toward maturity. I don't recall now how deliberate those probings were....I do know that today they are deliberate and when, every year or so, I discover something more about why I act as I do, I consider it further maturation, although perhaps less basic than the earlier ones.

Precisely how much of this experience is universal I do not know.

The extreme personality changes which overcome practically all new adolescents would indicate to me that similar experiences are anything but uncommon.

But people don't talk about them.

Why not?

Too personal? Too intimate?

I assume that must be the reason. It appears to be practically a universal view, violated only by a few poking philosophers, psychiatrists, writers, and general busybodies who don't know when they're well off, like myself.



this is page nine

I am totally at a loss to understand the "Don't talk about it, keep it hidden" attitude toward all but the most surface regions of the human mind.

A great deal has been done and written on the matter in the last fifty years but the average person remains almost totally ignorant of the findings. An occasional psychological suspense story, or a sugar-coated version of one or two of the more dramatic items in some movie is about the extent of Mr. Average Man's knowledge of the workings of his own mind.

This isn't too surprising among the John Doe's and Mary Ordinary's. The latest baseball game and permanent wave pretty well cover the limit of their interests, anyway. But what about Joe Fan and Mary Fanne? Once upon a time they styled themselves cosmic thinkers. They're too embarrassed to do that, anymore, but they do read a form of fiction which delves more deeply into the uncharted and only half-suspected than any other; their interests do usually extend far more widely than to just the sports or homemaking sections of the Sunday paper; most of them are interested, one way or another, in self-expression; and, whether they will admit it to anyone else or not, they regard themselves as possessors of superior mentalities 'even though everyone else in fandom is pretty dumb'. Yet how many of these 'superior mentalities' can tell you what makes them superior or how they got that way.

I've been around many such people, some of them fans, some of them interested in science fiction, some of them just intelligent alert and interesting human beings. Almost without exception I have found they regard the recesses of the mind, their own or anyone else's, as a taboo subject. Some of them are interested; but they don't want to probe too deeply. Tear off the first few layers of convention, self-deception, and hypocrisy (unconscious or otherwise\* and, when you attempt to go further; you encounter the embarrassed titter, the quickly changed subject, or the sudden flare of anger. This, of course, is if they themselves or some third party is under discussion. Let it be the one who is currently speaking and they feel (or at least affect) only boredom.

I have said that this constant analysis is an almost unconscious process with me, practically as natural....and unstoppable....as breathing. On a number of occasions I've had reason to regret it since people resent the attempt to understand their self, and thus also resent its possessor.

On at least one occasion the resentment was so strong, and so completely without any other apparent basis as to definitely determine its guilt as the motive, that the antagonism turned what had been a close and valued friendship into a condition of bare civility.

The more I understand about human beings the more I become aware that there is a constantly growing area which I still do not understand. Within this area is the reason why people are terrified at trying to unravel their own motivations. (Ever notice the large number of mildly malicious and definitely antagonistic jokes about psychiatrists?)

Having encountered this reaction on more than several occasions and being possessed of the constant urge to try to understand (and discuss) "why" the logical outcourse has been subjective articles discussing why I act as I do. While there is a certain value in self-analysis in that it has a bearing on your future happiness, I actually find myself no more interesting than others....rather



less so, since I am less of a puzzle to myself. But it is a safer topic. I recall several years ago when I did a page long piece on F. Towner Laney and said right in it that I would not attempt any solution to the puzzle of his personality, not knowing enough about him for that purpose, but merely pointing out sever of the more puzzling inconsistencies in this very paradoxical individual, Laney, himself, and several of his cronies responded rather indignantly to something I had thought wholly innocuous and even one neutral bystander referred to it as a "dissection" of Laney. I wonder what they would have thought if they'd ever read the full-scale five page analysis I did of Walt Willis' character a few years back, which never appeared in print for a variety of reasons. It is the only occasion I've ever really tried to turn on someone else, in fandom's public prints, the same spotlight I frequently throw on myself. The only reason I felt free to do so in this case was that it was a serious takeoff on a piece Walt had done earlier in analyzing Samx Merwin, thus making Walt himself fair game, plus which I felt I knew Walt himself closely enough to be sure he would not resent it and would take it in good stride. (I might add I was correct....since Walt saw fragments of it in proof form and reacted precisely that way.)

But I must admit I have been growing self-conscious about these subjective articles. As I continue to write objective articles up faster than I think up new ideas for them I am thrown back more and more upon the almost limitless resources of the fruits of self-analysis. But if such discussion bores people in person, will it not also bore them equally or more, in print? Every such article gives me a guilty feeling that at least some of the onlookers are mentally commenting, "There goes McCain again, exercising his ego by doing another mental striptease." I am not at all sure that there are not those whose resentment of all such explorations is so strong that they object even to my plumbing the depths of my own mind. Or if the reaction is not actual resentment, perhaps repulsion.

And I think such ideas definitely worth of consideration when I find myself being repelled by similar actions in someone else. For instance, recently we've had the spectacle of a neurotic young man hauling out the very newest and most repellant skeleton in his closet to do a puppet's dance of total, and seemingly pointless, degradation. Everyone commits base acts, at time. But to re-live vicariously one's own most objectionable such seems pointless and of doubtless therapeutic value. I am repelled by the personality which seems to gain sustenance from such morbidity. Yet is this not, very likely, the identical reaction others have to my self-analyses? Ah, but mine are different! Either they help me think things out by putting them on paper or they offer something of value to others if they look for it. Or so I tell myself. But isn't it possible that this is only my reaction, and others see a difference? So I grow increasingly hesitant about doing such pieces.

What I would like to know is how do you feel about it. Are you repelled? Do they disturb you? Do they make you angry? Do they bore you? Do you find them interesting? Stimulating? Or a sign of immaturity themselves?

I would genuinely like to know, and your reactions to some extent will govern their frequency in the future...although me being me there will probably always be a percentage of them as long as I remain in FIPA. For instance, this article was meant to be an objective one, and wound up highly subjective.