

THE DEVIL'S WORK
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from Norm Metcalf, P.O. Box 1368, Boulder, Colorado
80302 USA. This is intended for the February, 1974
FAPA mailing.

THE RAMBLING FAP #64 - Gregg CALKINS

Yes, FFM did have Dian Of the Lost Land and Ogden's Strange Story on its title page though only excerpts from both stories were published. And contrary to their policy of not reprinting anything that had seen previous magazine publication Ogden's Strange Story had previously appeared in Popular Magazine and I may yet find Dian Of the Lost Land. The permeating hypocrisy of FFM (neither fantastic nor mysterious, not always famous) rather disgusts me, even though Mary Gnaedinger chose some fine titles to butcher.

3-5-0-0 #15 or #16 [sic] - JERRY LAPIDUS

As for suggestions on improving conventions and Hugos I have a few. The cons should eliminate non-fannish programming and make it clear that the cons are only being run for fans. Of course, when was the last time that any fans were on a con committee? Perhaps what is needed is for fandom to take an interest in putting on what are ostensibly fannish conventions.

I think the problems with the Hugos would be solved if fandom took an interest in the voting, particularly the nominations. But there's the long tradition of disassociating the Hugos and cons from fandom that has caused fans to lose interest in both of them. Perhaps the first step should be for a large-circulation fanzine to carry running nominations in order that potential voters become aware of what's worthwhile. The nominations are one of the worst present aspects of the Hugos since many of the better works haven't made the final ballot and the best works on the final ballot haven't won. What it takes (I hope) is more participation. At present a dozen or so people are controlling the Hugos (assuming no greater interest in them than was demonstrated by Pacificon II).

As for what Ben Stark has done was to destroy some of my index cards and alter some of the rest as I was restoring them after Donald B. Day had done the same and then go ahead and publish the results without notice that it is a swindle. He's thus guilty of criminal simulation, mail fraud, criminal misappropriation and various other violations of statutory law, common law, ethics and morals.

When nominating all-time great pro artists you list Powers. Do you mean Richard Powers? I thought that most of his work for sf was poor to bad. He did some much better illustrations for a Joseph Conrad volume. But I always had the feeling that Powers was out of his field of competence in sf. Artists such as Roy Hunt and Charles Schneeman grew up loving sf and illustrating it with genius. Hubert Rogers made a successful transition from other fields to sf. But too many other illustrators are drawing through a glass darkly.

WALLOWING IN FAPA - LOUIS MORRA & BILL SCHELLY

Nonreporting of the facts is not something that Charlie Brown has just thought up. And I don't think it fair to indict Charlie on such grounds. Ignoring non-fannish events is right

and proper for a fanzine. Trying to rewrite reality has been characteristic of so-called "newszines" for years. I hope Charlie is not going to try a fannish version of pseudo--fannish newszines.

Your comments on stories which develop from the here-and-now into an alien attitude of the mind together with your comments on run-of-the-mill sf bring to mind some long-ago comments of Don Franson who was lamenting the loss of the frame by which sf authors departed from the here-and-now into space-time to bring back the story (dead-or-alive, usually dead). Some of them could have profited from lost-race stories and many were doubtlessly inspired by lost-race fiction in managing their transitions. The last use of a frame that I can recall is Hubbard's "The End Is Not Yet" in which Hubbard forgot about his frame just as Eddison forgot about the frame of The Worm Ouroboros. But Don was making the point that by paying careful attention to his frame the author made the story more credible. Perhaps so, but the best example of this type of story is such as The Legion Of Space, while some of the worst sf had frames, and most of the best had absolutely no frame. It's more of a test of skill on the part of the author to precipitate his reader into an alien situation and make a good story move along without rest stops for exposition. Eugene Manlove Rhodes, R. B. Cunninghame Graham, Stanley G. Weinbaum, Robert A. Heinlein, etc. have all managed with varying degrees of success.

Your point about being outside a story looking in vs. being in and looking around inside could be a means of classifying stories as ends in themselves and preachments and/or failures on the part of the author to thoroughly visualize his story. SF preachments usually (always?) intended to contrast at least some aspect of our world with what the author considers to be an improvement or else the nadir of his phobias, whereas stories told for their own sake may reveal a better (or a worse) world, but preachment is not the primary aim of the author. If he has enough concern and enough skill we read a story that is good. Of course, there are some skilled authors who don't always care to exercise their potential.

ERG #44 - TERRY JEEVES

John W. Campbell, Jr. published the Fenton & Blake stories under his own name, not as "Don A. Stuart".

TARGET: FAPA OpCrif 458 - DICK ENEY

Well, I'm willing to give Cohen the benefit of the doubt -- up to a point. One item that I don't recall being explained is whether or not Ziff-Davis turned over their copies of the authors' contracts (did the various predecessor companies turn over the contracts in succession?). One author told me that he'd sold only First North American Serial Rights to Ziff-Davis but that he'd thrown out his copies of the contracts (he had no agent for most of his career) upon moving. Cohen has reprinted a number of stories by this author and his estate is upset. Other authors still have their contracts and have raised a fuss. Some haven't even known that their stories are being reprinted and re-reprinted since they'd sold only one-time reprint rights to Gernsback and then found out that Cohen was reprinting the stories. Cohen should check and not proceed unless he can prove that he's legally right in each instance. But Cohen might be in less disfavor if Gernsback had done what he did with "The Metal Emperor" and put a line about second serial rights being purchased. Gernsback seldom acknowledged that he was reprinting, though in the case of Wells and particularly Verne it was fairly obvious. I may not have tracked down all the reprints

and I may not have all the original sources for items for which I've found previous sources but Cohen is welcome to what information I have.

DIFFERENT Vol. IV #2 Nov 73 - SAM MOSKOWITZ

Richard Hodgens: Whiteness as a symbol and plot element was used at about the same time as did Melville in Poe's "The Narrative Of A. Gordon Pym" to which Verne and others have written sequels.

You can record Gernsback with at least one divergence, instead of following your examples by having the girl explain the society (as to the extent of self-awareness of Hudson's A Crystal Age did the girl explain the future to the time traveller) he had Ralph explain the society to the girl.

There are a number of variations on the means of explanation and the degree of skill in doing so. Snorri Sturluson used very little explanation in Egil's Saga and little more in Heimskringla. This is even more interesting since the Age of the Sturlungs is also somewhat alien to modern conceptions. E. R. Eddison was apparently influenced by his translation of Egil's Saga for Lessingham is soon discarded as a bridge of understanding between Earth and Mercury. Rhodes used a subordinate character in Pasó Por Aqui to explain the mores governing the actions of Ross McEwen and Pat Garrett, but his explanation is woven into the story, and indeed is the story. Weinbaum's "A Martian Cdysey" is often justly cited as a sf example of this sort of craftsmanship. Heinlein has been capable of it, but apparently has lost interest in craftsmanship, hopefully only temporarily.

(Are there any properly mimeographed copies of this issue? If so, I'd like one.)

SYNAPSE for FAPA 145 - Jack SPEER

Speaking of alien languages in sf do you recall Edmond Hamilton's "Wacky World" in which Mars was cursed with all the imaginings of sf, including Martians unable to communicate with the rest because the sf writers had tried various imaginary Martian languages in place of the usual English?

You were condemning Amazing Stories for having had out-of-date ideas, but the stories you apparently had mind of were previously published in 1923, 1919, 1924, 1923, 1912, 1920, 1919, 1924, 1900, etc., etc. so that I'm not surprised that the science in them did not reflect the date of reprinting. Did you expect Gernsback to write new passages or were you unaware that the stories were reprints?

And of course, the entire concept of where do sf writers receive their crazy ideas comes into play. A number of authors who began in the sf magazines received their concepts of science from reading sf, the editorials and the occasional substantial articles prior to the late 30's when articles took off in two directions, the informative ones such as Campbell published and the misinformative ones such as Ray Palmer favored. (To do Palmer justice I don't think he began by deliberately publishing bilge articles, he wanted interesting articles and though his mind is excellent I don't think he could discriminate between an interesting factual article and sensational nonsense on the basis of the informational content. And these days he's so thoroughly committed himself to the lunatic fringe that I wonder what he would do if given the chance for a new beginning.)

There are also authors who don't care about scientific accuracy. The lists are long and full of them. One of the earliest of these was Arthur J. Burks who went so far as to claim that he had no facts in his stories. Harry Bates tells of having tried to straighten out Burks. But with the rise of Palmer, etc. we have had editors who didn't care. Sam Merwin had an ambivalent attitude in that he wanted sf without science, he once commented to the effect that the stories Kuttner wrote for Campbell were inferior to the stories that he wrote for Merwin because the latter had more warmth and less science. I'd argue the warmth but not the science. Merwin's taste as expressed in reviews was sounder than his editorial selections. I can't recall one really top-notch story for his years as editor. Wondering why his selections weren't better leads to taste vs. budget vs. slanting for his perceptions of his audience. Campbell edited rings around all the Sams. But Campbell realized that errors destroyed the impact of a story, he was sensitive to genuine literary values. I think he pretty well balanced the science with the fiction, though not perfectly and not all the time.

LETTERS

Redd Boggs, P.O. Box 1111, Berkeley, California 94701

Dear Norm:

I like your encyclopedic knowledge of science fiction and am sorry you don't print something a bit more substantial and authoritative than these off-the-cuff, fragmentary issues of *The Devil's Work*. Your concluding sentence addressed to Geo. Turner in issue #26 could be slightly altered and readdressed to you.

I'm not so sure that Campbell continued to publish George O. Smith after Smith "acceded to" JWC's wife. My impression is that Smith suddenly stopped appearing in ASF after about 1949, although he was selling widely elsewhere.

Redd

1] I consider my index more important than my writings, so time taken off for writings has to come from indexing. However, for any apa I'm in I'm not trying for minac, but for a fannish dialog. *The Devil's Work* is a mirror of the fannish content of FAPA.

2] If Turner had had a copy of my index and had checked out the entries on Campbell he could have done a better job. After all, he came so close to doing a very good job that a little bit more would have resulted in a far better job.

3] As for George O. Smith vs. John W. Campbell, Jr. see the 1948 and 1951 editions of *Who Goes There?* dedicated respectively to Dona Stuart and Margaret Winters. In ASF in 1947 Smith had six stories, in 1948 two, 1949 zero, 1959 three, 1961 a spoof and 1964 one. There are several inherent possibilities, but as for Campbell having a grudge, if so it was not a lasting one. One of Campbell's leading stars told me that he had done Campbell in once and was henceforth ashamed to work for him again. Smith may have felt the same way.