

I hope you don't mind me looking at my notes. You see, I figure there had better be someone here who knows what I'm saying, even if it's only me.

I gather I'm supposed to convince you all that fandom is still a force in science fiction. Well, to begin with, I'm sure you'll all agree that fandom is a force. A force is a thing that moves objects from one place to another, and by god it moved me. No, what the other side are going to argue, I suppose, is that fandom uses its force in the wrong way. That it spends too much time talking and writing about fandom itself instead of about science fiction. In other words, that it doesn't take science fiction seriously enough.

Well, of course there is a trend that way, and it has been going on for a long time. By a curious coincidence I happen to ~~have~~ have with me an extract from a magazine called....er...AMAZING STORIES, Vol.1 No. , dated in which our guest of honour wrote the following momentous words.

"One of our greatest surprises since we started publishing AMAZING STORIES is the tremendous amount of mail we receive from---shall we call them 'scientifiction fans'?--- who seem to be pretty well orientated in this type of literature."

That is the book of Genesis of science fiction fandom. Fandom was created and named. Now in the beginning was Forrest J Ackerman. And the Lord looked at Forrest J Ackerman and saw that he was good. And he divided him into two parts, the light and the serious. The serious he called Sam Moscovitz, and the light he called Bob Tucker. And ever since then these two people have, for me at least, symbolised the two aspects of fandom.

Now I don't think anyone will disagree that the serious side of fandom is still a very powerful force. Serious constructive fans write scholarly reviews of immense help to authors---or at least immense interest, because pro authors like ego-boo too---, they dig up rare works for anthologists (some of which would have been better left buried), they give inexperienced editors useful information and advice (whether they ask for it or not), they publish checklists. They do a hundred and one things to help the pros and improve the standard of science fiction. Take even in the last few months such worthy efforts as the Don Day Checklist, the Ray Bradbury Review, the Journal of Science Fiction, and FANTASTIC WORLDS. And in Europe the International Fantasy Award and Ken Slater's OPERATION FANTAST. But if these serious constructive fans have a fault it is that they cannot see that there is a place for the lighter side of fandom too. They used to criticise Bob Tucker for not taking science fiction seriously enough, and they are criticising his successors today for the very same thing. Way back in 1939, to quote from THE IMMORTAL STORM, Sam Moscovitz [QUOTE] "realised that when people laugh at ~~something~~

something they would no longer take it seriously." [UNQUOTE] Well I don't think that's true. People laugh at birth and death---in fact I believe there are even people who make jokes about sex (not among us today I trust)---but they can take these things seriously enough when the time comes. In fact maybe a sense of humour makes them all the better able to cope with the grim realities of life ~~etc...~~
line birth, death and serious constructive fans.

Well, of course the critics of Bob Tucker were proved wrong when he showed he was able to be serious and constructive with the best of them, and even to create some excellent science fiction himself. And those critics have been wrong all along the line. Way back in 1938 a group of what the Rhodomagnetic Digest would call 'cultist' fans were turning out in England a magazine very similar to ~~QUANDRY~~ *Wells & Wells?* QUANDRY today. And it was those same people---Ted Carnell, Arthur Clarke, and Bill Temple---who put English professional science fiction on the map. And the died-in-the-wool cultist fans of today are carrying on in the same tradition. You can see the names of many of the authors of the latest British prozines. Ted Tubb, John Aiken, Vince Clarke, Ken Bulmer, James White, Peter Ridley, and Alan Hunter. And there's a group of even younger fans behind this new Scottish prozine NEBULA. Teenage fans like John Matt Elder and John Brunner, the latter Astounding's youngest author. These are all members of the 'cultist' fandom which is not supposed to be doing anything for science fiction, every one of them a subscriber to QUANDRY.

In America the ~~average~~ age of the average fan is less, but I'm willing to bet that some of the young Quandry-type fans here today will be big names in tomorrow's science fiction. I'll bet that history will repeat itself, and that some of the serious-minded fans who are criticising ~~Orville~~ *Max* J Youngfan for ignoring science fiction will wake up to find themselves reviewing ~~Orville's~~ *Max's* new novel and wondering how he left them behind so fast.

it's
The truth is that/the fannish side of fandom, the ~~non-constructive~~ *Max's* so-called 'non-constructive' side, ~~is~~ that is the more creative one. The young creative writer ~~who~~ in fandom will prefer writing ~~imaginary~~ parodies and imaginary convention reports and fannish mythology to writing about what other people are writing. Just in the same way that *it's* ~~the~~ *that* fannish side of fandom ~~that~~ still attracts writers like Robert Bloch and Bob Tucker, whom you might call fandom's deathless pros. ~~MEMBER~~ *[PAUSE]* All imaginative writers prefer writing about people---or even fans---~~than~~ about things.

