



RUMBLE

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From this angle, fandom looks pretty well reactivated compared to six or eight months ago. Perhaps it is an illusion created by the many semizines like Rumble which have started since then. But then, what is illusory about 6 to ten fanzines being published on a nearly-weekly basis? It is easy to believe that something small and frequent is relatively inconsequential.

Seems to me the opposite is true. Most of the semizines constitute a more enjoyable dimension of fanning than most of the subzines have in years past. Don't get me wrong: I consider Skyhook better reading than Fanac; I consider Varioso more pleasureable than Rumble. But how much better is it to receive a weekly magazine centering entirely around the editorial personality -- being the equivalent of an editorial in a subzine -- than to receive twice or thrice a year one such editorial in a 20 or 30 pager filled out with corny attempts at amateur journalism? The most frequent request received by fanzine editors is "We want more of you; more editorializing." The thing most frequently filling the issue in which such a request may appear...is gush like "Neofan's Art Folio," "How to Break Beer Bottles Over Bob Tucker's Head," or "Zugg of the Golden Galaxy, ch. III."

Contrast this with perhaps 50 editorial-type semizines, of two to three pages each. This works out to a half-dozen 20-25 page issues of pure editorial. That's a bimonthly mag, filled with the only stuff that made most subzines interesting.

Aside from the editorial, what has always been the most interesting part of a fanzine? The letter column...

And what has nosed its way inevitably into the semizines but the noble letter column. And is it better or worse than the subzine lettercolumn? It's ten times better because a) it's more frequent and up-to-date b) it gives the perennial lister of likes & dislikes a wonderful case of malnutrition. The semizine letter writer has to dig into one or more genuine discussions, and the result has been more writing from certain fans than we've seen from them for years. With the aid of such letters a few of the semizines have grown to about 6 pages --

which works out to a 25 page monthly. This I call an improvement over the usual fan publishing schedule.

Of course, as Jean Young says, sometimes you just feel like publishing a magazine. The urge comes to manufacture something of weight and substance. Varioso will continue, as I hope all the other subzines published by semizine editors will continue. But at their own pace, and for their own special value.

THE WEEKLY ZINE somehow seems appropriate to the new directions fandom is taking. Used to be the bimonthly or whatever was the medium of fandom. A convention (like the Nolacon, or Chicon II) was a dream-world in which these fanmags came to life. But nowadays there's a convention every month, and fans think nothing of going 500 miles for a weekend visit. Personal contact may not be as permanent or Educational as a.j., but it's a lot more attractive. When a fan comes by the house, you can't just dump him on a pile of other old fans until you get around to him -- but that is what is done with fanzines.

The semizine shares the spontaneity of a fanvisit. One is more inclined to read it -- knowing it will only take a few minutes. And it is more receptive to the discussion of deep-seated ideas and opinions. There is an air of freedom of expression lacking even in the more lackadaisical subzines.

The fan of today has fewer big blocks of time and more interests than the sixth fandomfan. The semizine is perfect in this context.

M A R I O N B R A D L E Y : lettercolumns for newblood.

I agree tremendously that fandom needs new blood. Since the letter columns died as a place for new fans to get into the sf act, fandom has become more and more inbred...and more fannish.

Maybe that statement needs some explaining. Back in the days when every sf magazine had a letter-column (you can kid the old Sarge Saturn and Vizigraph columns until you're black and blue, but they served a terrific purpose) -- a new reader would read sf, then, turning to the letter column, he would find out that others shared his interests, and sooner or later he would write to the magazines and then he would get into fandom.

Nowadays, the letter columns have vanished as a proving-ground and place of public communication/controversy for the fans. The few mags which DO have letter columns (i.e. AMAZING STORIES) print only the "I like your old magazine" type of letter, briefly, for fans who want to see their names in print. But they offer no place for the articulare, intelligent reader to discuss science fiction, fandom, or the integration of both elements.

So two problems arise: first, how does an articulate-intelligent-reader-of-science-fiction go about GETTING INTERESTED in fandom these days? Second, how do we prevent fandom from dying on the vine JUST because the Old Guard try to treat fandom as a nice little private club?

Another problem arises, of course. Since the sf magazines no longer serve as a touchstone for those who are entering fandom, a lot of fans get interested nowadays, not by reading sf, but by reading fanzines printed by their friends -- pen pals, college co-students, etc. Often these new "fanzine fans" have no interest in sf at all. They just like the fannish notion, and their special interests -- jazz, sports cars, and the like -- gradually take over the zine, because most of them are not sf fans at all. They want the fanzine -- but they want to keep sf out of it.

Maybe we all ought to get up a petition to the magazines to revive the letter-columns -- science fiction, I think everybody would admit, was better back in the days when a writer knew he would be walloped by the articulate fans IN PUBLIC. Nowadays, with no letter columns, a writer has NO WAY OF KNOWING what the intelligent readers think of his stories.

Very few will take the trouble to write to the author -- even to say "Hey you, Joe Doakes, your story stunk all the way to Pluto." So the sf writer can pocket his check...and write more crud.

Most editors, all things being the same, would rather print good stories than crud. And all intelligent readers would rather read good stories than crud. But -- to cite Sturgeon's Law -- almost 90% of everything is crud. And it is a lamentable fact that the ordinary (i.e. not too intelligent) reader would just as soon read crud, because he simply doesn't know the difference. The editor does -- but if crud sells well, he will buy the crud IN THE ABSENCE OF ANY ARTICULATE MINORITY PANNING HELL OUT OF THE CRUD.

The only thing I could personally suggest, to revive science fiction and fandom almost simultaneously, would be the immediate revival of letter-columns of serious comment in ALL worthwhile magazines. Probably the editors won't do it, but maybe, with enough pressure, they could be persuaded of the difference.

The only other thing I could think of would be for every articulate, intelligent sf reader to start bombarding the sf magazines with

- 1 Long critical letters, just as if they WERE going to be printed.
- 2 Denunciations of the crud.
- 3 Praise for the occasional good story.
- 4 Requests for the return of letter columns.

The trouble is, fans are so egotistical that most of them won't bother writing in to a magazine unless they are going to see their names in print.

If science fiction gets better, most of the listlessness in fandom will revive.

M Z B O N G M C a n d M O O M A W

Hah, you talk about the need for fans who don't make "backstabbing their pet activity," then print letters by Carr and Moomaw, two of (to put it politely) the most angry and controversial fans around since Wetzel and Claude Hall lost interest in writing letters. ((I do not consider GMC or Moomaw backstabbers. With a few excusable exceptions they, more than other fans, react to ideas, not personalities. This does not mean that I endorse their methods or conclusions -- only that I wasn't speaking directly of them last issue. Meanwhile, I can picture both of them shuddering to be put in a class with each other.))

If I may briefly comment on G.M.Carr's letter: I do not, and never will believe in the freedom to starve, since that implies, by extension, the right to starve others. I will not believe in the freedom to die, because it implies the freedom to kill.

Freedom exists only where there is room for one to turn around without gouging out his neighbor's ribs, and personal freedom ends the moment it impinges on the right to infringe another's freedom.

Everyone has the right of Freedom From.

BUT -- "Freedom to" usually means freedom to go ahead and do what you damn please. Freedom to make a million -- by underpaying and starving others. Freedom to farm inefficiently -- thus ruining the land that belongs to future generations. Freedom to drive a car -- even if half blind, deaf and paralyzed. When anyone starts talking about Freedom To, I start wondering, Freedom to Do what to whom? Dig down into the basic psychology of these militant Free-enterprisers, and it usually winds up as "I have a right to do anything to anybody," and the right to commit sins of omission such as "To hell with you, Jack: I've got mine."

Believe me -- I'm NOT backstabbing. But when Carr & Moomaw make their opinion known, I think those who disagree ought to stand up and be counted.

. . . A N D O N Y O U N G , B O G G S , & M I S C E L L A N Y

Andy Young is right: Redd Boggs and I have been in correspondence, as the whole world knows via UGLY BIRD, for eleven years now; and my opinion of individzines is about as secret as the Queen of Spain's legs. Therefore I am his "correspondent," but he wasn't being merely elusive; it's plain good manners not to make the contents of a third party's letter public by name without explicit permission. (In fact, it's the law; letters are the personal property of the recipient but their contents cannot legally be made public without the written consent of the writer.)

And in return I would like to say that this Rumble rumble fractures me. Everybody is jumping down Boggs' throat as a perfectionist -- yet Redd himself coined the term "Pseudo-Campbell" for overly meticulous fan publishers who put too much emphasis on format because they yearned to be a small-size J.W.Campbell.

Moomaw in especial fractures me. In addition to damning Boggs for his academic point of view, he confesses that he never reads the papers and doesn't care about current events -- surprise, surprise, surprise -- well, I suppose I was equally fuggheaded once, but that pose of being bored with the real world and the academic world alike is one I don't dig. What world DOES Moomaw live in? It's easy to make fun of world-shaking events and realities by calling other people fuggheads, but it's pretty sad to sit in a dive somewhere and play it cool, man, cool, while other people are doing the serious work of trying to keep things from going smash around us. ((I believe it was the fallacies of inappropriate academicism that Kent disparaged -- such as holding the standards of a scholastic study to a hobby activity. He is not against the academic world of research and education because he objects to such misapplication of standards. And Kent doesn't think he's disinterested in world-shaking events or preventing war -- he just has a different conception of what is world-shaking. The gossip of government clerks, and hassling over who paid whose hotel bill, is considered less weighty in some circles than are economic movements and psychological developments. The newspaper is a false cathartic, allowing millions of otherwise intelligent people to get righteously excited after dinner -- mouth a few words about what should be done to which bastards -- and then settle down to TV in peace, content they have done their part to reform the world by agreeing or disagreeing with various hostile outbursts quoted on the front page. Anyone can read the newspaper and think he is up to date. Hah. If the newspaper were a genuine information device, it would only be a pale reflection of psycho-socio-economic activity rooted, not in Dulles' mouthings, but in the fabric of our culture. Is DeGaulle taking over World Shaking? Hah. The factors in action in Algeria are not determined by respectable heros, but rather by economic opportunism, empiricism, lack of education, and the simple if misdirected ambition of masses seeking to gain for themselves what everyone else has been bragging about for decades: progress. If proper schools and proper opportunities had been provided, say 50 years ago, Algeria would be a paradise today. I yawn 50 years after. I am thoroughly disinterested in Algeria today. Right now I am interested in, for example, Nigeria, where a solid future is being constructed in a very calm, un-newsworthy way.))

F A L A S C A S O N W S F S

Rick Sneary has mentioned the WSFS CONTROVERSY, and I suppose, in my good ole fuggheaded way, I ought to pull out my poison typewriter and give George W.tz.l some competition. First off, I understand that Ground Zero was an attempt to answer Fandom's Burden before FB saw print. It defended the concept of an incorporation, which (as Rick points out) we do not propose to find fault. The Terrans have been incorporated since the year before the Clevention. It is a Good Thing.

In FB we went to great extremes to emphasize that we did not feel that the "ends" justified the "means" in the organization of the corporation. However, there are many that do. To this I can only say that I disagree. Incorporating, as the incorporating faction did, was morally wrong as far as I was concerned and, (I did not mention this in FB) it was also legally wrong according to New York Corporate Law.

P. 8282, Sec. 11., No. 9: SPECIAL PROVISIONS FOR INCORPORATIONS:
The certificate of incorporation of an unincorporated Society shall have annexed to it an affidavit of at least five of the subscribers of such certificate stating that the subscribers of such certificate CONSTITUTE A MAJORITY OF THE MEMBERS OF A COMMITTEE AUTHORIZED TO INCORPORATE SUCH SOCIETY BY VOTE, AS REQUIRED BY THE ORGANIC LAW OF THE SOCIETY for the amendment of such organic law.

Our organic law was majority approval at the business session of the World Convention. No approval was given and no committee authorized,

I find it difficult to believe that such tawdry and fraudulent beginnings as were ours can ever lead to a Good Thing. Once we accept the idea that the ends justify the means, there is no telling where it will lead. The corporation was born illegally, but it is accepted because the "ends justify the means."

A lawsuit against Kyle and a suit against Ellington (which later was dropped) were illegally instituted but this was also accepted because the "ends justify the means."

There are proper channels through which the above mentioned items could have been processed, however, the instigators ignored these and set themselves above law. When any minority act according to personal ideals to insure that justice be done, I disapprove.

Today we are recognized by the state of New York and are subject to its laws. We are out among the big boys. If this were merely intramural politicking such as characterized the N3F of a few years ago, I too could sit back and say "so what?" But instead, we are involved with "due process....etc." Now that we want protection from the law, we are also obligated to respect demands that law makes upon us. Consequently, I am unable to tolerate the "ends justify the means" policy.

I do not intend this as a threat or even more so, a prediction, but it is entirely conceivable that someday you, Rick, as Treasurer of the Solacon, may become an end that is about to be justified.

Incidentally, we are proud of what we said in FB and would do it again. No one has as yet denied the charges or asked for a retraction. Once again, we state that the Falascas are not going to throw a bomb on the WSFS, Inc., but we know of a goodly number of people that are heartily in favor of demolition. We can sympathize with them and we wouldn't stop them, but neither would we help them. Nothing would be accomplished that way, although it would be a much more beautiful display of pyrotechnics.

Perhaps this letter clarifies just what the Falascas are objecting to.

-- Nick & Noreen