

THE DEVIL'S WORK
Volume 1, Number 34
January, 1976

from Norm Metcalf, P.O. Box 1368, Boulder, Colorado
80302 USA. This is intended for the February, 1976
mailing of the Fantasy Amateur Press Association.

NOTES FROM ARINAM #5 - Roy TACKETT

Your complaints about the poor quality of sword & sorcery fiction still brings up the question -- if there are any good examples, why aren't they mentioned? I'll agree with you that Leiber's earlier stories are good, some of Robert E. Howard's are passable, but what about the rest?

The story you're trying to recall wasn't written by Walt Willis, but rather published by him. It is Clive Jackson's "The Swordsmen of Varnis" which originally appeared under the pseudonym of Geoffrey Cobbe in Slant, Spr 50 and was reprinted under his own name in the Sep 50 OW and in book form.

MINIMUM OPUS #2 - MILTON F. STEVENS

Unlike you I'm with Moskowitz in writing as he did about P. Schuyler Miller's writing career. Miller was a very good author who became sidetracked and I found it very interesting to read about his earlier days in sf, most of which took place before I began reading sf. I gained new views of Miller's writings and life rather than having a dreary rehash of his book reviews (all of which in the prozines I've read and enjoyed).

STUNNED MULLET #1 - JOHN BANGSUND

Usuform robots go back at least to William White's "Q. U. R.", ASF Mar 43, i. e., Quinby's Usuform Robots -- designed in competition to Robots, Inc., for specific applications, hence the name.

SYNAPSE (for FAPA 153) - Jack SPEER

When do you date eofandom? And how do you define "fandom"? As for your statement about there having been no eofans in Tennessee how about Rufus E. Bowland, Jr., Lewis Cook, Jr., Fred W. Fisher, Jr., Thomas S. Gardner & Joe Humphreys. On what grounds would you not allow them?

As for your question about the Clayton Astounding -- it was the first literal pulp in sf because it was. Amazing Stories, Amazing Stories Annual, Amazing Stories Quarterly, Science Wonder Stories, Air Wonder Stories and Science Wonder Quarterly were all bedsheet size, printed on paper ranging from pulpy book to slick and felt aloof from the pulps. The appeal supposedly was to a superior class of readers than the pulp image appealed to (though there were superior pulps such as Adventure and Romance and second-rate pulps such as Blue Book, Argosy and All-Story). Read the letter columns of the times for snide comments about the Clayton Astounding and its lowbrow pulp approach degrading sf. Harry Bates agrees and he was the editor. Read the comments of those who felt betrayed when Wonder Stories and then Amazing Stories went pulp size.

No, the seeming (to me) division point of The Ship Of Ishtar is in Chapter Eight when Kenton

left the ship. The padding seems to begin when he implores Ishtar to return him to the ship. The tenor of the story is different from then on and I think the remainder was written upon the request of Bob Davis. Merritt was a strange author in some senses. The Ship Of Ishtar, The Moon Pool and Conquest Of the Moon Pool, The Face In the Abyss and The Snake Mother were all the result of combining novelettes with much longer sequels and they all show it. I've discussed this with Alva Rogers and separately with Roy Hunt. Alva prefers the separate versions as having more flavor while Roy and I prefer the book versions as being better artistically. Thus Roy and I prefer Dwellers In the Mirage as Merritt's finest with The Face In the Abyss in second place while Alva prefers "The Face In the Abyss" & "The Snake Mother" with Dwellers In the Mirage as being second.

In reading Merritt I think he was primarily striving for mood and imagery, secondarily for story, plot, characterization, etc. Bob Peterson prefers "The Metal Emperor" apparently because it is closest to traditional sf (and correct me if I have misinterpreted you, Bob). Other fans seem to like Merritt because of his vocabulary and phraseology (such was not standard sf fare then). He was praised by readers for his poetical prose and by comparison with second-rate and third-rate sf authors this is quite true. But he's not all that great. I vastly prefer the better works of Chesterton to the better works of A. Merritt, but I will re-read Merritt which I won't do for many another sf author.

Yes, Harold Lamb wrote for Adventure. All of his best fiction except for A Carden To the Eastward (his best novel and borderline sf) appeared in Adventure, he was one of their top authors from about 1918 until the early 30's with probably over a million words of great fiction published under Arthur Sullivant Hoffman's editorship. Arthur G. Brodeur (another top Adventure author of the period) told me that Lamb, he and the other stars were paid 10¢ a word or better most of the time. Frederick Faust was paid only 5¢ a word by Argosy while Eugene Manlove Rhodes was paid around 25¢ a word by the Saturday Evening Post in the depression. Of course, by the 30's Lamb had become quite successful with his partially fictionalized historical narratives and wrote very little straight fiction thereafter.

Haven't you heard of Eric Blair's novel about fuggocrats titled 1984? It is still a quite well-known sf novel (though Poul Anderson considers it not sf but political fiction derived from Blair's knowledge of the Soviet fuggocracy). Sure, it's a low-order extrapolation, but it has been an "inspiration" to fuggdom with "newspeak", "doublethink" providing semantic labels for their antics.

Can you provide a functional definition of sf fandom that includes non-fans? I doubt it. I presume you've found people guilty in your courtroom that have pleaded innocent. If so, you adhere to the idea that people are what they are, rather than always what they say they are. Someone saying that they are a fan does not necessarily make them a fan, engaging in fanac makes them a fan. And when presented with the opportunity of engaging in fanac choosing some other activity certainly is indicative.

Why do you identify hypocrisy with fandom? I said a few words against hypocrisy and you construe that as denigrating fandom. One of my points was that fandom and hypocrisy are not identical.

Yes, Charles Nutt is dead.

Another pertinent question is why non-fans wish to be identified as fans. And what is so objectionable about engaging in fanac?

KITTLE PITCHERING HUBBLE DE SHUFF #11 - DON MILLER

Childhood's End first appeared in FFM Apr 50 as an unsigned collaboration with James Blish and then in NW Win 50, both titled "Guardian Angel".

You might have pointed out that the Jun 59 Satellite was never published, though it was printed. Reputedly Moskowitz has most of the copies (which he had salvaged from the printer).

DIASPAR #17 - TERRY CARR

Bob Shaw: Your article about technological advances in sf should be required reading for all sf authors. As you say, too many people assume that any new invention will immediately obsolete everything else in its field. A particularly ironic instance is the recent discovery by the U.S. Urban Mass Transit Administration of the streetcar which is now supposed to obsolete buses and automobiles which in turn had supposedly obsoleted streetcars. The year is now 1885, I presume.