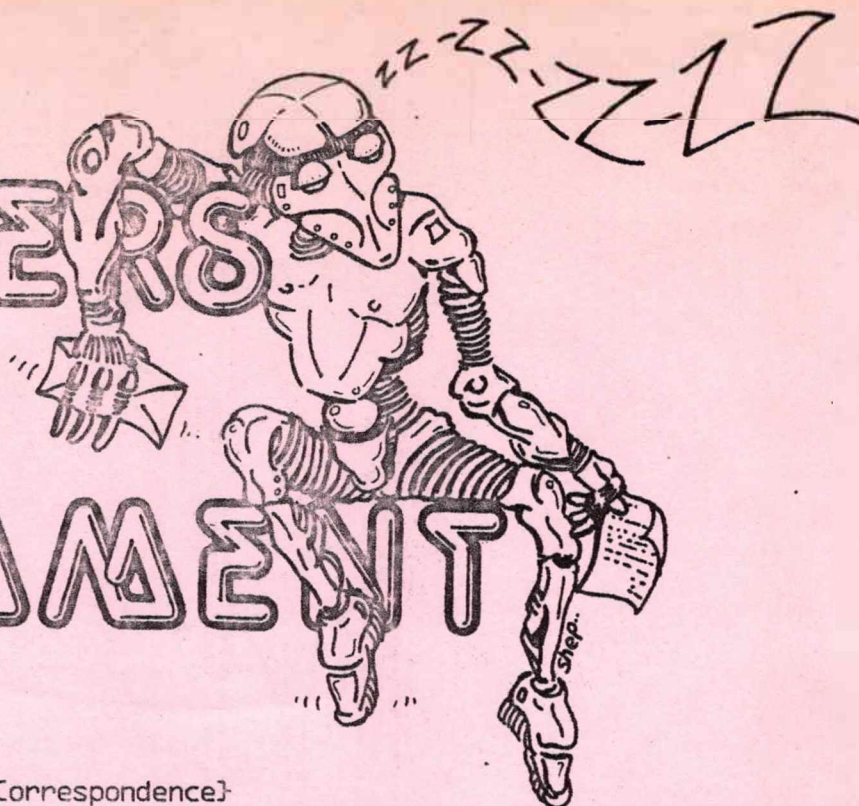


the
Space Wastrel

LETTERS OF COMMENT



INCORPORATING:

FucT in SPACE

{The Fuck The Notional Correspondence}

LoCt in SPACE

{More LoCs and Fake Fen}

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* * * * * THE REST OF THE COLOPHON * * * * *

THE PICTURES

Craig Hilton Front Cover, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 13, 33, R19
Larry Dunning. Rat Attack Endpiece {14}
Betty De Gabrielle 12, 31
Dave Collins 15, R12
Shep Kirkbride Reverse Cover, 2
Graham Ferner. 23
Sheryl Birkhead. 10, R15, R22
Tom Cardy. 19, 21
Filched. The Appendages to 'A Mail Revue'

Thanks to all of you for your artwork - magnificent as usual!

THE THANK YOUS

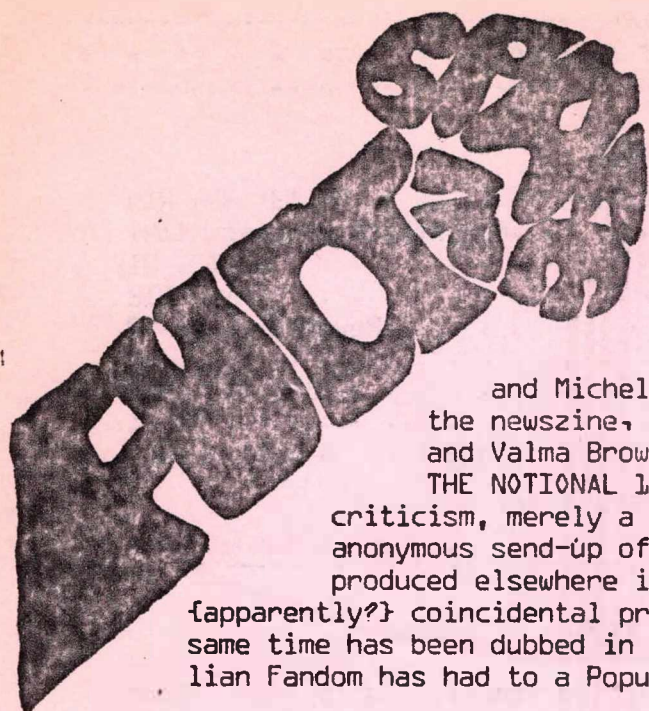
Many thanks to Peter Burns, who did the electro-stencilling for us. {Poor soul didn't realise when he volunteered that there was going to be seventy pages of it!} Also thanks to John Newman, worthy soul, who contributed a Gestetner to the cause. Such assistance is doubly welcome when one is in a new city and isn't too sure just how the hell one is going to be able to pub one's ish.

FOLLOWED BY AN APOLOGY

Your enthusiastic production team, Mark and Michelle, had some problems adjusting to using a Gestetner (and it had some problems adjusting to them) which has resulted in some technical foul ups. We're sorry if your copy is hard to read in places and we're particularly sorry if it's your article or artwork that has suffered in this way. We're also a little distressed about the black streaks that appear down the side of the pages in some copies, but at least these don't interfere with comprehension! Anyway, please don't tune out, we hope to have a better picture for you next issue.

* * * WHY YOU GOT THIS * * WHY YOU GOT THIS * * WHY YOU GOT THIS * * *

- ☐ You contributed/You locced/Your name is mentioned/You paid {like, wow!}
- ☐ We can still remember the last time
- ☐ We think your name looks good on our mailing list {you must be a BNF/Pro}
- ☐ We trade/Would like to trade for:
- ☒ We live in hope/You've got something we want:
- ☐ We'd like to add you to our mailing list and will send two {2} issues
- ☐ This is goodbye, not au revoir, unless something mutually satisfying occurs
- ☒ This issue all persons may claim a prize on PERSONAL application to our residence, P O Box [redacted], Fitzroy, Victoria, 3065, Australia. {This is due to complaints from persons who received insufficient ticks to claim a prize last issue but we're BASICALLY PRETTY DAMNED HEARTLESS so it's a ONCE ONLY offer. Back to three ticks for a prize next issue.}



FUCT IN SPACE:

The FUCK THE NOTIONAL Letters

This is the correspondence on a one-shot that most of you out there haven't seen, since it was mainly distributed in Australia. FUCK THE NOTIONAL was produced by the editorial collective of Mark Loney, Dave Luckett, Julian Warner, Ian Nichols and Michelle Muijsert, and it was a criticism of the newszine, THE NOTIONAL, produced by Leigh Edmonds and Valma Brown. In the main it was a criticism of THE NOTIONAL 14 and was not intended as a personal criticism, merely a fannish one. At the same time an anonymous send-up of THE NOTIONAL 14 called THE MOTIONAL was produced elsewhere in the country and circulated. The {apparently?} coincidental production of these two one-shots at the same time has been dubbed in many quarters the closest thing Australian Fandom has had to a Popular Revolution.

In order to facilitate reading {and typing} of the FTN LetterCol zine titles will be abbreviated and the following will be used:-

THE NOTIONAL.....TN

THE MOTIONAL.....TM

FUCK THE TORIES.....FTT

THE SPACE WASTREL....TSW

FUCK THE NOTIONAL.....FTN

To date, the producer{s} of TM remain{s} anonymous. Some comments on this will also appear herein, as this appears to be a logical forum for them. You may enter into further correspondence on the topic if you wish but we are most unlikely to print it, unless it is scintillating, enlightening, or an admission of culpability in the matter of TM. Onwards...

* * * * *

---Carey Handfield---

Thank you for FTN a zine which says a lot of things I agree with. Also thank you for the copies of TSW a most enjoyable zine despite what Edmonds and Brown might say. Keep up the good work..

---Nick Machiavelli---

On FTN, those are the three words that impinged themselves upon my consciousness after perusing the second ish of TN, therefore I can't comment on the depths to which it has apparently sunk since I gave up on it.

DON'T GET ME WRONG!!4444! I do think there is a place for "Ideologically Correct" fanzines -- the bottom of a cocky's cage springs to mind, among other places. {One day I may write up the Etiology of ICFs -- on the back of a 24 postage stamp, in 24 point characters.} This leaves me in the position of believing that the fan mafia debate at SwanCon 11 may have been leading the right way, and that those responsible for TN should be shot, then given a fair trial....

Whilst still foaming at the mouth-parts, reviewing one's own work in a zine is, in a word MASTURBATION. Australian fandom has a long way to go if it still accepts mindless self aggrandisement as legit. lit. crit.

---John Newman---

{{Dear Indignant Friends}} Thank you for FTN. It was notable for its vituperative

vigour, and some criticisms well expressed. There is only one question that remains.

How do some people get in the position where their immature mutterings can raise this much ire?

Maybe I've never been into fan publishing enough to understand the significance of these people. Maybe I'm just ignorant. Maybe I don't have to bother with condescending nonsense from those representatives from "old fandom" who figure they set the standards for us all.

Maybe. Still, as past FFANZ administrator I can certainly say that I've had no assistance or feedback of any kind from Leigh Edmonds, and that I had long since stopped notifying him of things FFANZ was doing due to his apparent lack of interest. I enclose a copy of the letter I sent him when I was shown a copy of TN's FFANZ results coverage. There was, of course, no reply. Obviously I should have written to Valma Brown {to get her to wind him up} but it always seemed to me that her position in the 'zine was responsible for its name. Events have not proved me wrong.

---John Newman TO Leigh Edmonds--- I must thank you for a good laugh, if a somewhat bitter one. I've seen many pathetic excuses for not voting for fan funds, but never yet seen the same excuse used as a reason not to publicise one.

As I read the FFANZ item in the May TN, it appears that you decided that it wasn't close enough to the deadline to bother voting. Why else would not knowing how far away the deadline was stop someone from voting?

I admit that, due to an oversight, the closing date was not published in that THYME issue. As much as anything else, this was due to the fact that the fund had been re-started, after failing to get nominations during 1985. It was only due to Roger Maddall convincing George to run {along with Roger} that we were able to hold the race at all.

Yes, FFANZ had a little trouble getting its act together in 85/86, but fortunately a good number of people took the time to vote when presented with the opportunity, and made for a reasonably successful result.

---Irwin Hirsh--- I still believe TM was not that well done. It was largely rewriting an issue of TN, when a truly creative way of doing things would've been to invent news items and report them in a bastard son style of the way Leigh and Valma report things.

....I was more impressed with FTN. You make your points well. I know that when I sent a LoC to TN and only got one more issue added to my sub, I decided I wouldn't send them any more. I don't write a great many LoCs these days, but I would like to receive something in return. Most faneds would keep you on their mailing list for three issues for a publishable LoC....

As Bruce Gillespie pointed out to me, between the time Jack Herman wrote his review and the time I published it, TN has become boring. If I wasn't trading LARRIKIN for it, my sub would be due soon, and there is nothing in the issues which would make me want to re-subscribe. The first few issues were beter.

Michelle's comments were called for, but one thing which should be said is that John Newman didn't run the race very well. The ballot that went through THYME missed out on a lot of vital information. I only voted when someone told me what the deadline was.

MM: Hmm.... I didn't at the time wish to get into discussion of the actual running of FFANZ and I still don't. I don't believe that it was truly the issue under discussion. But to comment - by now you will have read John Newman's letter and it will be apparent that all may not have been as it appeared as regards the lack of publicity for FFANZ. The non-inclusion of the closing date in

FUCT IN SPACE-----

THYME was an accident, nothing more or less.

Yes, there were problems. FFANZ is a young fund and has a shakedown period to go through. I, for instance, remain unconvinced after all discussion of the matter that a professional SF writer - no matter how poor - should be accepted as a Fan Fund candidate (though there were extenuating circumstances on this occasion). If Aotearoan fen wish to meet Australian authors, let them invite them as GoH (which has happened before) or get together a Fund such as the BoSh fund.

---Frank Macskasy, Jnr---

The thing which really got my goat in FTN {cute name; oozing with camaraderie, niceness, and eyecatching too...} was the assertion by some people that they were deprived of voting for FFANZ because they weren't made aware of it going on.

I've had similar experiences of this sort of thing here in Aotearoa/nz; an event taking place; fen not taking part because of apathy; and then blaming the organisers of not publicising the said event properly.... Basically it's a poor attempt to shift the blame from one's own apathy to Organisers' so-called inability to organise.

{I may be risking a couple of votes for my own candidacy for the current FFANZ race, but I feel this has got to be said regardless of the chance that I'm alienating the editors of TN; but shifting the blame for one's own apathy, toward Organisers, is rarely successful and only results in the critic looking silly in the eyes of others....}

---John Foyster---

The arrival of FTN sort of prompts one to respond, even if this was only after a suspense-filled week in which various Melbourne fans wondered why A had received FTN but not TM and B vice versa, and C neither, and whatever other combination you might care to conjure up; is there a pattern to it all? we wondered. It seems not, just a weird sort of mail delivery, if not despatch.

The May TN was, as you rightly point out, a bit much: you did leave out 'pompous', though, in your catechism of faults. Perhaps this was more a matter of running out of room than anything else. Overall, however, I thought FTN was less penetrating {what other word could one use?} in its criticism than was TM. Plainly this is because TM lets the original words incriminate themselves, which they manage quite well without any outside help. Your analysis, by contrast, is more focused, and perhaps therefore easier to respond to.

Leigh's fanzines have always been appallingly spelled/typed. Mostly the flaws aren't fatal - though from time to time when a key word is typoed the author can become extremely pissed off. For example, just before the onslaught of criticism last week I was going to complain to Leigh about a paragraph of my Lupoff piece being typoed to death, but perhaps this is less than tactful at the moment. {By the way, Dave Luckett failed to identify my piece as the 'moderately good short article': I'm sure this is an oversight, and will the enclosed \$5 cover expenses?} But the depiction of Valma as TN's answer to Geraldine Doogue by Dave L. seems pretty close to the knuckle, and the truth.

The FFANZ question is a different one. I can't make out whether the voting forms were distributed in any way other than through MM's hands, though presumably some were distributed with THYME. The point, it seems to me, is that you get more votes if you distribute the voting form more widely, and most newszines don't charge for distributing voting forms. If TN didn't get a copy of the form to distribute, it can't act as Michelle suggests it should, 'as a newszine', and can't entirely be blamed if it looks more like a 'scandal-mongering little rag'.

Mark Loney raises an entirely different question: that of trading for TN. Trading is something which makes sense when most of the recipients actually publish a fanzine. Relatively few people, so far as I can make out, fall into the category of being regular fanzine publishers and readers of TN. To cope with this, Leigh and Valma seem to attempt, at least, to follow an old tradition by offering one-for-one trades. One-for-one trading is normal, but risky when the other fanzine is a newszine, and I don't think I could live as a completist and rely upon trading my irregular fmz: much wiser is to subscribe. I suppose I ought to pick a nit here. If the fanzine offers a discount for subscribing to twelve issues, what was Michelle's expectation when she subscribed for six issues? Paying for five? If so, why not pay for one at a time and get them for \$1.25 each? In that case, what about a discount for a year's sub? And so on. If someone offers me a discount for quantity, it seems to me I either take that quantity offer or buy one at a time: I don't invent a discount which suits me. But I don't know the details: Mark doesn't tell us. Actually, when you come down to it, this is the second article which has been a little vague on detail - the kind of detail which could tell us whether the Wastrels are presenting the case fairly. {I assume that you are, but there's little printed evidence.}

Julian Warner's is, despite his contrary declaration, rather more the 'voice of moderation and decency' than he allows: he sees the merits of TN and is able to identify weaknesses and the back page in particular is carefully balanced. This doesn't mean he doesn't say some dumb things. For example, Julian ought to know that, not being a public servant able to take two hour lunchtimes {TSW2:3 P19} and Australian writers being paid as poorly as they are, George isn't exactly flush. In addition, George's age bars him from full-time employment, Roger's doesn't.

((???Speaking of dumb things, the relevancy of that comment eludes us, the lunch hours, I mean. On the other hand, you might as well say that Roger's age bars him from the Old Age Pension, which is a larger amount than the dole. MM.))

As for Leigh and Valma helping Roger and Peter - well, my understanding {and I may be wrong} was that TN was started primarily because THYME wasn't publishing much 'news' and didn't seem interested in doing so. In any case, Roger's already been around for more than one fan generation, so can hardly be described as 'young' any more. 'Younger', yes, but lots of people are younger than lots of others.

Overall, FTN I found generally convincing: if the case was put a little too strongly in places, the nature of the problem - which is major {as measured by the strength of reactions to the May issue} - explains this.

One thing, however, does trouble me, and that's the occasional reference to in-group jokes and Leigh Edmonds as a Founding Father/occupant of fan heaven. To the extent that I know him, Leigh seems to me to be modest and more inclined to poke fun at himself than look for salutes. On the other hand a carelessly-written half-mocking piece can easily be read otherwise {by the author amongst others} so that in time what starts as a joke begins to look serious to others. I don't know what lies behind the dumb fanzine reviews: surely one outcome of Ted White's piece one could have reasonably expected was a sensible go at fanzine reviewing.

On the Founding Father stuff, though, it seems to me that you folks must have forgotten to pick up a number when you came in the door. Remeber there was that little box at the right? And every now and then a number gets called out? That's how people get to be BNFs: and I don't think Leigh's number has been called yet.

FUCT IN SPACE-----

MM: Well, John, certainly the most INTERESTING letter we received (collect your prize from the little box at the right of our front door when next you visit).

Re. your comment on my expectation of being able to subscribe for six issues. At the time I sent the cheque, I hadn't seen TN and assumed that, like just about every other zine around then, it was on offer for \$1 per issue. We were very broke at the time, and weren't sure if we actually wanted to see the zine or not, hence I just sent off what I expected would be sufficient for half a dozen issues. No cheating intended!

Speaking, as you were momentarily, of news content, let me sneak in here a comment from a Canadian correspondent on just that.

---Garth Spencer---

Speaking of TN: let me append here a loc to FTN. See, I was puzzled but not offended by the zine - it seemed like early, thin Maple Leaf Rags {the Canadian newszine}, only without news. I was waiting for TN to smarten up and tell me about fan and pro news. And waiting... and waiting... but that was about all my reaction.

---Jack Herman---

I have read with thoroughness, some bemusement and some agreement, your polemic in respect of the May issue of TN.

I have some trepidation here as another of what might be classed the 'jaded elder statespersons' of the Eastern States. But I have to agree that there were several instances in those TN articles that gave rise to the response - although, not, to my mind, the strength and viciousness of some aspects of the response.

Like your members, I was puzzled by Valma's vapid SwanCon review. I found it badly and confusingly written. I wasn't sure though whether I was reacting to the strange, not very complimentary, remarks Valma made about me. Like Dave, I hope they are intended as humour but it is a very fey form of humour and one that has so far escaped my {or Cath's} understanding. Several of the paragraphs indicate that Valma is writing about things she didn't see {like the Fan Olympics}. Like you, I found the tone incredibly condescending.

The remarks about FFANZ were unpalatable and intolerable. It seems as if Leigh and Valma are deliberately trying to stir up another TAFF wars and I cannot understand why.

The fanzine reviews overstepped the bounds by a long way: it was quite within acceptable rules for Leigh to review the zines in the way he did, except for the remarks he made about FTT. I am, however, prepared to believe that the action was intended in jest. The later review of TSW in the June TN shows that Leigh quite likes your zine and is a lot less condescending.

....I enjoyed FTN while reading it but wonder in retrospect what good it will do for Australian fanzine fandom.

MM: Probably about as much good as zines such as TN14... but then an eye for an eye isn't a very mature creed, is it? What WOULD be a positive effect, would be if Leigh were to move on from TN and do something more worthy of his considerable editorial skills and experience.

---Alex Heatley---

I found FTN terrifying. Terrifying because of the amount of effort and work put into tearing down someone else's creation. While from the sounds of it, I agree with you that TN is a rip-off, is it really worth the amount of effort you poured into producing FTN? That you did seems to me to be evidence that someone out there is taking things far too seriously. {Please remember though, that I'm an Aotearoan Fan and we don't have things like that here - with the possible exception of the Frank-Greg-Duncan feud a while ago.}

.... Yet I must commend you for a considerable amount of restraint. You could have gone over the deep end and abused hell out of TN, instead you politely, sanely, rationally pointed out its defects. For that I thank you, I shall not be subscribing or contributing to TN.

The other thing that concerns me, however, is your attempt to codify and define the correct behaviour for a fanzine. PHLOG is a subscription oriented fanzine and is such for reasons I've outlined earlier and I think it succeeds within that framework - it certainly doesn't make a profit or break-even and if it ever did make a profit I'd pour that into the next issue. But FTN seems to come down hard on all such fanzines - it really made me feel as if I shouldn't be publishing because I wasn't distributing my zine to everyone free.

MM: Mark wasn't very clear in his comments in this regard. He was not bothered by the sub. aspect, but by the fact that he was given no extension for a piece of writing that was used in the zine. This isn't your policy, it definitely isn't ours, and it didn't appear to be the stated policy of TN either. That was what he saw as not being fannish cricket.

---Tim Jones---

My overall reaction to FTN was disappointment - not so much at what was said, as at the way it was said and the possibility it could lead to a heated, lengthy and ultimately pointless fan feud. I agree that Valma and Leigh tend to take a high-and-mighty attitude in TN, and that FFANZ deserved better treatment than they gave it; on the other hand, the fact that Leigh and Valma are charging for TN doesn't bother me. I pay to get it, and enjoy it despite Damien Broderick's interminable Fannish Inquisition.

((The Fannish Inquisition has the opposite intention to the original. Not only does everyone expect the Fannish Inquisition, but its object is to prove that you're one of the boys, rather than a heretic. - Dave Lockett))

But I don't think an entire zine specifically devoted to attacking another zine, whatever its shortcomings, is going to help matters a hell of a lot. The likely effect is to make Valma and Leigh feel defensive and threatened, and therefore angry - and a full-scale feud, with its potential to drag in the innocent and unwary, will be in progress. Why didn't you get together, sort out the main points of criticism, and write them a letter?

MM: It did seem to us that if we sent a letter to Leigh and Valma it might never see the light of day.... Comments in TN tend to bear this out. For instance in TN 15, Lee Harding inquired if the Broderick/Turner correspondence was ever going to end. He suggested doing a poll to see what the readers thought. The reply was, and I quote in full: "There's no point in taking a poll, people write and tell me. This means that, wishing not to drive away all our subscribers, the following letter is the last in the series."

Who wrote? What did they say? Were there other criticisms? We don't know - their letters weren't printed. Just as John Newman's letter, reprinted earlier in this column, was neither printed nor replied to.

Possibly we also wished to make a greater impact than one letter could.

---Marilyn Pride---

As for FTN and TM: not funny. The pleasure of coming home to find a pile of fanzines for perusal was quickly spoiled by the inclusion of these two gratuitously vicious little numbers. We skirted round the edges of some petty and unpleasant fan fights in the US, and I hate to see people trying to stir up pointless trouble here.

MM: Voices of moderation are always worth listening to. However, Marilyn, I would have been interested to know what your reaction to TN 14 was. Neither ourselves nor the editor(s) of TM were alone in finding this an extremely provocative zine. In particular, the effort to start a Fan Fund brouhaha like TAFF over FFANZ was noted with contempt in a number of places before

FUCT IN SPACE-----

either one-shot came out. I think perhaps you could make that three gratuitously vicious little numbes and I would then find myself perfectly in agreement with you.

(I might note here that FTN was not an exercise lightly embarked upon and that we all have or have had misgivings at various times. Though none of us are afraid of the fray I guess, we are not the sort of people who favour feuding as a means of communication. Nor did we see this as an attempt to start a feud.)

---Lucy Sussex---

The ASFR committee {a} admires the way
you mob dish it out and {b} hopes
fervently never to be on the receiving end of your vitriol. We must clearly
try not to offend WA fen {apart from David King!}

Everybody here thinks Sally Beasley is responsible for TM.

MM: Not having huge stores in the first place, I think we're all vitriol-ed out somehow. As for Sally being responsible for TM, I've heard stranger suggestions. (But not much!!)

---Jack Herman---

I thought TM was so sophomoric and
unfunny in its attempt at humour, that
the obviousculprit must be Valma. Sorry, Mark, of all the hoaxes and fake-
fans I have perpetrated {and there have been some}, this was not one of them.

MM: Well!

And here we pause for an aptly expressed philosophy that must be behind many an unwrit LoC.

---Kevin Dillon---

If I didn't thank you for FTN way back
when, then I certainly meant to - but
found it too easy to restrain myself from being foolhardy enough to try to
comment. Sorry.

MM: Perhaps we faneds should be encouraging foolhardiness. Speaking of which, it is now our
honour to present our first (and presumably last, due to being such outstanding failures) abusive
letter from Joseph Nicholas.

== DRUM ROLLS ==

---Joseph Nicholas---

I wasn't intending to write a letter of
comment on the June 1986 issue of TSW,
there being nothing in it that particularly enraged my attention; but then
I was sent a photocopy of FTN.

((Perhaps we should point out that Joseph and Judith, as well as Terry Hughes, were sent copies
of FTN - seamail though. (Only about six or seven copies were sent outside Australasia.) The
photocopy (airmail) was courtesy of Roger Weddall - newshound editor of THYME. - ML))

Before I go any further, you should clearly understand that this is specifically
NOT a defence of Leigh and Valma, good friends though they are. But it is
most certainly an attack on the shabbiness of your method - one so laboured
that you're incapable of accusing them of being pretentious and condescending
without sounding pretentious and condescending yourselves. Lockett's contri-
bution is the clearest example of this, as pompous and long-winded as the
mouthings of any High Tory {never mind the fact that someone who can't spell
"informative" has no business preaching grammar to anyone else}. Like Tories,
you find it necessary to massage facts which don't fit your arguments until
they do - such as the suggestion, by both Nichols and Loney, that Leigh and
Valma had any role in the actual EDITING of the second issue of FTT {presum-
ably they couldn't be bothered to read the colophon}. This disingenuousness
is only compounded by Warner's claim that he and Loney are still inexperienced
fanzine editors who should be given more leeway, despite the fact that they've
been in the business for some time {although it is of course quite possible
that they've learned fuck-all from their years of practice}. And any specu-
lation on Muijsert's part in this debased and ignoble effort returns to the

interesting fact that she lost DUFF to some good friends of the current object of her venom.

((Excuse me for interrupting but I have to admit you've got me there. For some time now, I've been planning a one-shot denouncing Nick, Lewis and Marilyn and all their friends. I'd been holding back because this would mean denouncing most of Australian fandom, including our Fellow House Comrade, Roger Weddall, (come to think of it I have spoken to Marilyn myself) but now that I'm discovered I think I'll have to get on with it and spleen my vent or something. Watch out Australian Fandom - here comes FUCK THY NEIGHBOUR! - MM))

The contemptibility of your assault is pointed up by the fact that, as you admit, so much of it is based on pique at the failure of TSW to get the glowing review you think it deserved. You think it's a good fanzine. In Australian terms it probably is. But compared with what's produced elsewhere in the world it rates barely a second glance. Like most Australian fanzines, it's read once, then filed away and forgotten about - assuming it's even read at all. The awful truth, one which you had better learn fast if you wish to have any significant international impact, is that throughout Britain and North America Australian fanzines are derided by everyone as boring and uninteresting - so boring and uninteresting, in fact, that their recipients can't even be bothered to write letters of dismissal to their editors. Indeed, one fan we know throws away unopened the Australian fanzines he receives.

((Wouldn't it be smarter to mark those boring and uninteresting Australian zines 'RTS' and throw them away in the nearest postbox? Then the problem of future issues inconsiderately arriving would be avoided entirely.... More seriously though, I find it difficult to take this paragraph any more seriously than the rest of your letter. Your first sentence is a deliberate misrepresentation of what was said in FTN, and, judging from the response we get to TSW from outside Australasia, the rest of it is just as cockeyed. - ML))

Right now there are precisely six Australian fanzines of any interest to the rest of the world. In alphabetical order, they are AUSTRALIAN SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW, LARRIKIN, THE METAPHYSICAL REVIEW, THE NOTIONAL, SIKANDER and THYME. Everything else falls well below the threshold of minimal critical acceptability. In simple terms, THEY DON'T MEASURE UP. They are a tedious, unfunny joke, reflecting badly on Australian fandom at large.

((Do you realise you've just listed about half the zines regularly in production in Australia? - ML))

In your eyes, it was presumably a crime for Leigh and Valma to write reviews that pointed this out. No doubt it was also a crime for Ted White to do the same in SIKANDER &. And I've just committed a similarly criminal act for the forthcoming third issue of PULP. But while our criticisms may not be correct in every particular Australian fandom's apparently consistent refusal to face up to the truth they convey marks you out as the kind of cretinous wankers who refuse to learn their lessons and then howl when they get caned.

When are you going to wake up?

MM: And as they read this, on the other side of the country Julian Warner did wake up (different time zone, you know, Australia's actually quite a large place, well a bit bigger than Britain anyway) and wrote an article on Joseph in reply to his excess in THYME. Little did Jules know we had another lot right here in our very own TSW Editorial Offices, just waiting to act as a lead-in to Jules' rather crunchy little piece.

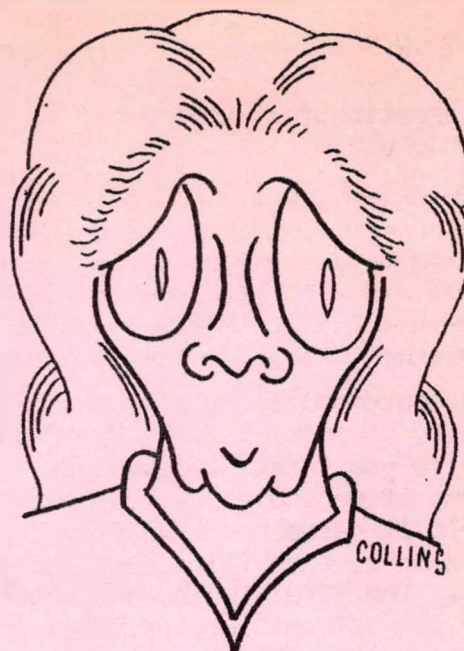
Take it away, Rev. Warner!



* * * * *

KING ISLAND PENGUIN
CREME tm

SOUND THE CHARGE BEFORE THE LAST POST



---by Julian Warner---

And you think when you see him that maybe he's Percy Bysshe Shelley; what with the pageboy/choirboy haircut and the exaggerated "artistic" gestures. In reality though, he is not actually that assumptive of any particular emotional response. Perhaps a healthier version of one of Hogarth's Gin-Lane geriatrics? Nay, under that apparently friendly visage steam great brooding mud-pools of vituperation, gurgling stickily in self-satisfaction.

The tongue is not often employed to deliver the full acid attack. No, the LoC and the fanzine are used as the mortars from which are lobbed, in slow and deadly arcs, explosive shells of caustic critique. For many years has he carped from afar, sniping from his ideologically-soundproofed bunker - aided, abetted, deflowered and deflated by his ideologically-sound spouse. For many years he has policed the traffic in fanzines fulsomely denouncing the errors and erroneous {?} thinking in the "readable" zines, whilst totally ignoring the ineptitudes of the socially and socialistically unacceptable zines.

Hands up all ye faneds who needs must smile in joy when his slings and arrows find their marks within your own besmudged pages; the joy of irksome recognition. "Oh Lord, let it be me whom HE shall choose to slag off next!"

But Zounds! Hark what rebellious force stirs in the poorly inseminated beds of non-Brit fandom? What reactionaries tweak their personal force-fields and grind their axes in anticipation of the oncoming printed prize-fight?

Could it be that HIS deadly blasts are no longer leaving their victims in terminal shellshock? Could it be that fans with thicker hides, finer wits and purple-faced, perspirant perspicacity are weathering the storms of protest and returning volleys of their own crafted viciousness?

This man of whom we speak is not perfect, nay not even as logical as Spock, for upon his personal pogo-stick he performs quantam leaps in illogic; jumping to and from conclusions, performing horrendous hops of hignorance and "missing", purposely, vital points whilst microscopically examining irrelevanties.

Tho' his writing may be pithy, terse and enjoyable to read, the precepts upon which he founds same are still ragged-arsed. A hole is a hole whether it be in finely-wrought phraseology or in the crudest esperants of the desperate.

He is but a man with red knickers and a lily-liver. If he shall bend over for his lone brown eye to wink cheekily at us, we shall not be bathed in beams of sunlight. No, he shits round and brown like the rest of us - and it still smells.

Append your name and upend the red-rag depot. The Joseph Nicholas backlash rolls on.

* * * * *

LOCT IN SPACE

Before we get into the LoCs I'd just like to talk about that bugbear of faneds, non-printable LoCs....

POLICY ON LOCS

Point number one is that a printable LoC will get you AT LEAST two issues of TSW, and probably lots more, but don't let that put you off writing each ish...

On the other hand, while we like receiving letters that tell us the correspondent really likes the zine and doesn't want to be dropped, we do prefer what we receive to include something a little more Earth-shattering. An 'I like the zine but I don't have anything to say...' letter will only get you 1 {one} issue. Aren't we mean? Not really, since I do in fact have some suggestions to help you. ~~Subscribe~~. If you don't have anything to say about TSW, that's fine. How about telling us... how your life is going... what's happening fannishly in your area... anecdotes... bad jokes... even good ones, if you must... your opinion about something contentious or current... any and all Hot Gossip {must be happening SOMEWHERE}... For those of you with computers how about some graphics - a frieze or something we can pretty the zine up with? Or perhaps you could send us clippings of bizarre things seen in magazines or newspapers lately? Why not write to us about the OTHER zines you receive? Fandom is supposed to thrive on interaction, after all.

One way or another, I'm sure you all have something more to say than "I don't have anything to say..." coz if you don't, you're going to be very busy writing just that each and every issue!!

* * * * *

We Also Heard From... Margaret Craven, who wrote the sort of non-constructive, EXTREMELY personal letter that we don't like getting and certainly aren't going to publish. Ms Craven, if you really feel that strongly about Ian Nichols, we suggest you contact him at the address shown at the front of this section. We're not interested in receiving your abuse...

Kevin Dillon, who seemed to like most things about Number 4, which we're pleased to hear...

Sheryl Birkhead, who's studying hard but sent us some artwork anyway, much appreciated...

Greg Egan, who isn't a fan and doesn't really relate to the zine but sent us rather a good review to use anyway - a very civilised attitude...

Dave Collins, who sent some illos, ta very much...

Andrew & Ruth Murphy, who commend Kinkon III, the 1989 NatCon bid, to the attention of Australian readers...

John Playford, who was somewhat surprised to see the zine as he's not invloved in fandom or even SF any more. I must admit that I too am sympathetic to a greater interest in magic realism/the literature of the fantastic than to that much loved lit of teen times, good old SF...

Jenny Blackford, who promises in response to my accusations of dryness that ASFR is getting damper...

Mark Turner, who advises for a change that all the WindyCon details are the same as last time we went to print...

Linette Horne, who had heard about us and wanted a sample... it's okay, we just sent her a couple of copies of TSW.

STAR WARS

---Richard J Faulder---

The destabilising effect of Star Wars, and its potential for allowing a first strike, have been raised infrequently. That they are not raised more frequently is symptomatic, not of Reagan having set the terms for the debate but rather, I think, that Reagan really is too naive to be able to see these potentials in the system. {However, I doubt if his military chiefs and the members of the Jesus for First Strike committee are so naive.} Consequently, those opposing the development of the system see their only hope of convincing the President to abandon the system lies in showing its unworkability. The thing I find odd is that from time to time the atomic physicist who is apparently one of the prime movers behind the project is interviewed, and he always talks as though what they are actually working on is not some sort of anti-missile weapons system, but rather a passive device, in the nature of a force field. Curious. On the positive side, as those in the West increasingly point out the unfeasibility of the system, the Soviets will be less tempted to take some sort of preemptive action, but will simply wait until Reagan ceases to be president, and the driving force behind Star Wars evaporates.

ML: The view of SDI that it's some kind of benign force-field that will make incoming ICBMs evaporate is, as you say, very prevalent. It's also very wrong - I wouldn't want to be living under the nuclear debris that will drift down after any nuclear exchange/SDI engagement. But then again, considering that the most optimistic US Dept of Defence studies predict a 10% 'leakage' rate (or roughly 300 nuclear warheads detonating across the US), that could be the least of anyone's problems.

Since stepping down from the Astronautical Society Management Committee, as I've mentioned before, my access to good information about SDI has decreased - even more so now that we've moved to Melbourne (thinks - must take out a subscription to Aviation Week & Space Technology). But I'm not confident that the USSR will stop worrying about SDI just because it's patently obvious it won't protect population centres (cf: the recent Reykjavik summit). As the Pentagon candidly admits, SDI will be very good for giving the US a survivable nuclear strike capacity - just the sort of thing you need to plan a first strike - or a long, drawn-out series of nuclear exchanges.

Not to mention the conceptual flaw that underlies the whole of the SDI, that is that the only nuclear threat to the US consists of ICBMs launched from the USSR. What about submarine launched ballistic missiles? What if the USSR filled the Atlantic with ships armed with cruise missiles? (Casper Weinberger: "SDI will not and cannot be a defense against cruise missiles.") The list of low countries through which this modern Maginot line can be breached is more than extensive - until you realise that the US Dept of Defence has always realised that protecting population centres is impossible and sees the SDI as a way of increasing the survivability of a limited number of military installations.

LoCt in Space/Star Wars-----

And then there's always the fact that orbital lasers capable of knocking down ICBMs would also be just dandy for setting cities/crops/forests/name your combustible target on fire. I think I should stop now, foaming at the mouth is always so embarrassing. Will SDI disappear with Reagan? Insufficient data is my current measured opinion.

----- WORLDCON & ALL THAT -----

1 ---Jack R Herman---

Irwin misses the point when he says that the USA or North Americans should have a national/continental con; they already have one, except with typical overstated modesty they call it WORLDCON, like they call their baseball championships a world series and a large local fair a world's fair. It is typical US American hyperbole but they have come to believe it themselves, and, therefore, with what Marcuse might have called "repressivetolerance", they allow their continental convention to leave their shores, but in a bastardised and incomplete form, every few years. But wherever it is held, WorldCon, as currently constituted, is an American convention.

Of course, US American fans are parochial. Harry Warner's arguments, while interesting, do not address the question. If they weren't parochial, why would they keep the Labour Day WorldCon date even when the WorldCon is elsewhere? If they weren't parochial, why would they be so ignorant of the politics, geography and history of the rest of the world? As I have said elsewhere, on a different subject, the larger fandom gets, the more closely it reflects the society from which it arises, and the USA is a very parochial society.

MM: There's a good reason why Aussies find it so easy to recognise the USA as a parochial society, of course... (Speaking as someone from a very small country, I won't buy into this except to say that I was under the impression that the date of WorldCon could be moved by the host country when the WorldCon was outside the USA.)

And here we very unkindly slip in a piece from an earlier letter of Jack's.

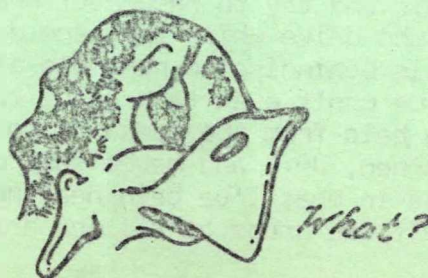
---Jack R Herman---

....How does all this sit with me running a WorldCon bid? Well, I like running bids - it is good fun. But I wouldn't want to win one or actually have to run a WorldCon.

MM: Remember, you heard it here.

---T Kevin Atherton---

Thanks {No 3} for informing me that there actually is a "Non-Con" and that my weak little jest was in fact a vigorous reality.... I should have known that the wits of fandom would have proceeded me. Sometimes I wonder whether in the naming of cons we aren't witnessing a variation on that belief described in the Arthur C Clarke story in which a group of monks are chanting their way through the nine-billion or so names of God, at the completion of which task they expect the world to end... Will something like that happen when pun-maddened fans have found every possible clever twist on the word "Con"? Has anyone used "ConTiki", do you know, for a South Sea Convention or "Constantinople" for an Istanbulish get-together? Have Sagan fans (assuming there are any) considered a "Contact"? Or... whoops! Better stop; the Earth just trembled....



PARADISE LOST

---Sue Thomason---

I was interested to read Dave Lockett's PARADISE LOST article, which must parallel the experiences of many sensitive adolescents. He had been taught that sex was wonderful, and that given the right circumstances {or a reasonable approximation of them} it would probably 'just happen'. The un-named woman had been taught that it was polite to pay for a meal and a night out with sexual favours. How easily ritual becomes a substitute for intimacy, rather than an aid to it {this happens with other situations in which ritual figures prominently, e.g. religion}. Dave was obviously badly hurt by the experience {common to many women, and probably more men than would admit to it} of being treated as a sexual object. The difference between male and female experience of being a sexual object is that traditionally both men and women are concerned to gratify the man's lust. And men must find it much harder to bring things to a speedy conclusion by faking an orgasm.

---Shep Kirkbride---

PARADISE LOST by Dave Lockett, I found very funny and my heart went out to the guy. The I realised that maybe it wasn't meant to be so funny. Whatever, either way, Dave pressed the right buttons.

The booze-up article on the other hand upset me. What a mean trick to list all those different beers when I haven't a snowball in hell's chance of tasting them! Unless you could ship me a crate over?

MM: How about an exchange system?

AND SO TO ALCOHOL

---Bev Clark---

I appreciated the two articles on spirituous beverages. Now I'll know some beers to try or avoid if I ever make it Down Under {all I need is a recommendation about which is best for someone who doesn't like beer all that much and definitely doesn't like the stuff when it gets close to stout}. The article on cognac isn't likely to affect my behaviour, I'm afraid. Even third-rate cognac is out of my budget. And frankly, my one experience with cognac wouldn't impel me to try to make room for the good stuff. It was kind of like the only cigarette I've ever smoked - I couldn't understand the mystique. The cigarette gave me a raging sore throat; the cognac made me choke and splutter. I'll stick to good white wine.

ML: The trick with cognac, as I discovered about half-way through the first bottle I bought (Remy Martin VSOP Champagne Cognac for those interested), is that you cannot enjoy or appreciate cognac if you are drinking it incorrectly. From your description, I'd say your drinking technique needed to be modified. Try some cognac again but remember to only sip very small amounts. Roll those very small amounts over your tongue, you want the cognac to evaporate in your mouth, with the last of it wetting the back of your throat. It won't always supplant a good white wine - but it should be an attractive alternative.

This is assuming, of course, that the anti-drunk driving forces in the US don't get too enthusiastic and try to resurrect Prohibition. I'm all for cracking down on people who drive while they are drunk, but some of the rhetoric on the subject is beginning to resemble alarmingly the old exhortations against the Demon Rum. We won't even talk about the anti-drug hysteria that's sprung up overnight with help from the media. {Now I've probably got myself in trouble with Harry Warner, Jr., and maybe some other people. But I really don't like the undertones in what I've been hearing about use of alcohol and drugs lately - and I don't use drugs at all and drink only seldom.}

---Bev Clark---

There's a trap involved here.... and I'm not sure I can explain what I mean clearly.

That is, Mark and Bob seem to have different ideas about the nature of the novel and its characters. Shaw perceives and writes the characters as individuals {I'm not sure a writer could consciously do anything else without engaging in allegory or something else that is not quite fiction}. Mark sees them primarily as symbols; and he further seems to see them as symbols of, among other things, the author's own beliefs and so on. The trap here is not realising that an author can, if he or she so wishes, create characters that are totally at odds with the author's own attitudes. It's sometimes difficult to separate the character from the author, particularly in fiction with a viewpoint in which we are privy to at least one character's thoughts, because everything that character perceives is filtered through the character's point of view, if the story is done well. The other trap is in {implicitly} not allowing an author to write characters or viewpoints that conflict the current enlightened attitude on some subject or other. It would be nice if everyone had the same beliefs, but they don't. It would be nice if only people with our own beliefs wrote books, but misguided and wrongheaded people write books too. And you never know; maybe in a hundred years our own most cherished beliefs will turn out to be misguided and wrongheaded.

ML: Well, yes and no. Yes - you have put your finger on two different approaches to the novel. No - I don't think it's a trap. I was using a specific critical approach to try and analyse my very different reactions to substantially the same body of literature at two points in time separated by several years. So I was working at a level in the text where I was looking for those symbols. Different characters in different books are often defined by the same traits. Bob certainly wrote each separately - but that doesn't stop there being common elements that can be looked at in a broader context.

This sounds like I agree with Mark that Bob's books are sexist but am defending his right to write them anyway. However, I don't agree, mostly on the basis of ignorance but also because I don't think Mark has proved his case; his sample is too small and at least one of the passages he discusses in some detail - Garry Dallen's feelings about his wife's not accompanying him to Earth - is open to alternate interpretation. I agree with both Mark and Bob's interpretations: that is, yes, I think in this passage one can logically infer that Garry Dallen at this moment wishes his wife weren't so independant, but I also think that, in this passage at least, the thought reflects not sexism but the natural and realistic ambivalence of a man who loves his wife and would like to have her with him about the things that prevent her from being there. If Garry Dallen did not feel resentful and upset and hurt and just plain unhappy at the situation, I wouldn't believe that he did, indeed, love his wife. The average woman is going to feel similarly in a similar situation, for that matter, no matter how much she might appreciate and praise the very same qualities in other circumstances. In other words, the portrayal is realistic, even if it isn't Politically Correct.

---Steve Gallacci---

Another observation on the Shaw article.

While I too haven't read enough Shaw or the controversial article to make any comment on them, Mark Loney's defense of his position reveals entirely too much of his own bias. He is desperately trying to nail Shaw with his politically correct feminist sensitivity, very much an ex post facto tactic. While I support legitimate feminist/unisexist efforts, Mark's comments have the same strident tone as the revisionist extremists.

To demand that literature conform to a particular political or social order can be as 'evil' as the undesirable aspect that is intended to be combatted.

While it would be nice for modern literature, especially progressive, forward thinking science fiction, to be rid of outmoded and unenlightened social mores, to artificially sterilize stories would be unrealistic, creating stilted and awkward literary forms that would ultimately be unattractive to the audiences that would benefit. {Remember social realism?}

But more than that, and much to the discomfort of progressive forces, is the 'problem' that we have a sexist history, and by and large, arbitrary sex roles are in no danger of becoming extinct. This is not to say that we should give it up as a hopeless cause - rather, that hypersensitivity and over-zealousness {Remember when no -- fill in the minority -- could be portrayed in a derogatory fashion?} be moderated by more responsible and wide-minded assessments of the issues.

---John Foyster---

I don't think that Mark Loney makes out a good case regarding Bob Shaw. It isn't just the small number of books, it's a recent experience I had in talking with Roger Weddall. We were discussing Dick Lupoff's novels and getting very confused. We were sure we were talking about the same writer, we had read lots of his works, but we couldn't get onto the same wavelength. Eventually one of us {I forget who} had the sense to say "all right, exactly which books are you talking about?" It turned out that, unlikely as it was, we had read exactly complimentary sets which seemed to represent entirely different aspects of Lupoff's work. Ever since then I've been as cautious as possible when talking in generalities about writers....

---Tim Jones---

Looking over TSW 3 again, however, a possibility occurs to me that doesn't seem to have occurred to either Bob or Mark: maybe, if Garry Dallen in ORBITSVILLE DEPARTURE does wish that Cona Dallen was less self-willed and self reliant, it's because that's how such a character is likely to think, not because that's what Bob Shaw would wish if he was in the same situation.

Now, I don't know that this is the case for Garry Dallen, but as a general rule I don't think you can assume sexism expressed by the male protagonists of male authors necessarily means that the authors approve of that sexism. To give you an example, I once wrote a story which featured a fairly repellant protagonist - not deliberately evil, just self-centred and narrow-minded. At one point, this character refers to a woman he used to be involved with making a good career for herself, and refers to her as a 'sensible girl'.

I hope I would never say this about a woman myself, but I think it was both true of and illustrative about this character. However, when I sold this story to an SF anthology for secondary schools {my one and only professional fiction sale, which according to the researches of Sean McMullen as published in THYME means I'm condemned to a purgatory of rejection slips and slipping standards}, the editor changed 'sensible girl' to 'sensible woman'. I confirmed with her that this change had been made to avoid sexist language in a publication for school pupils. That's a good reason for a change, yet it {marginally} lessens the strength of the characterisation.

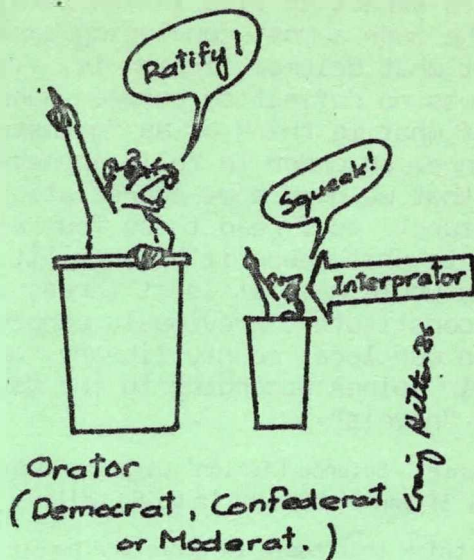
ML: I think the forest is disappearing for the sake of a tree here. My assertion was that there was an observable pattern in the work of Bob Shaw extant between 1969 and 1983. That pattern was that women were either (1) attractive, intelligent, youthful, sexually desirable and unmarried, or (2) unattractive, stupid, emotionally manipulative, sexually undesirable and married. I proffered the relevant paragraph as an example of this pattern, not as the pattern. Please also note that in the above I haven't said that Bob Shaw thinks that women fit into one of those two categories. I originally pointed out that pattern to comment on the fact that now I find it repugnant whereas several years ago I read many of the same books and didn't even notice it. It made me think again about where I had come from and where I was going to. I think it's interesting that only one loc (from Brian Earl Brown) picked up on that aspect of what I wrote.

But I have noticed recently that written debate in fanzines tends to get bogged down in tortuous argument over minor details that have little to do with the overall argument. C'est la vie. And after a final comment from Deathwish Drang this is finis (and I mean it this time!) to correspondence on the topic.

---Deathwish Drang---

One thing that came through strongly is that there are far better letter writers than I out there. Thus I have very little to say on the SDI and ResCon debates. However I am concerned over some writers who seem to prefer full frontal attacks as opposed to gentle chiding in their criticism. An example of this is Skel's attack on Mark Loney as he speaks of fairness, courtesy and ethics

yet applies none of them to his letter which becomes more and more strident as it progresses until it descends into outright patronising. I actually thought that Mark and Bob were having a *discussion*: Mark had written an article with which Bob disagreed, saying "you have misinterpreted what I have set out to do", Mark then responded by saying that Bob had misunderstood some of the points that he had made. And so on. If the point of the discussion is trying to arrive at an interpretation then it DOESN'T matter who has the last word. If Bob feels that Mark has sufficiently expressed himself then he need not continue and likewise for Mark. I agree that we all have better things to do than throw argumentative balls backwards and forwards but that doesn't seem to be happening in this case. I feel that Skel has been unfair to Mark. And I think that Mark has a perfect right to say "yes but" if he isn't happy with Bob's comments. That Mark wishes to continue the discussion is more to his credit than against him.



GENRE WARS

ML: Perhaps I should say, by way of introduction to the following letters that both Ian's essay 'The Trooper in Heinlein' and my own 'Genre: Science Fiction' were the result of course work at the Western Australian Institute of Technology. 'The Trooper in Heinlein' is an essay from a second year unit where the brief was the application of a specific critical approach to a text. 'Genre: Science Fiction' was my major theoretical essay in a third year unit on structuralism and narratology. ("What?" do I hear you cry?) So both essays were written for quite different audiences than the one they found with TSW 4. There was obviously a problem with accessibility of language; the specialised academic terms that both Ian and I used aren't in most dictionaries (and when the word is, occasionally, in a dictionary, that definition can be completely unrelated to the specialised usage). But what's the point of having your own fanzine if you can't experiment?

---Jack R Herman---

I'm not sure of the efficacy of following the three earlierishes, dealing with things fannishly, with an 'aberrant' serconish. It creates difficulty in defining the personality of a fanzine.

ML: Hmmm....

---Richard J Faulder---

Mark Loney's essay was most impressive, displaying the sort of academic rigour

that I'd expect to find in Van Ikin's SCIENCE FICTION, and by and large I think he made a most convincing case, taking a fresh approach to the problem of just what science fiction is. ...However... a source of unease is that there was no definition between genre and non-genre literature. Given that most of what we think of as "mainstream" fiction could be best be described as non-genre, in order to fully appreciate science fiction as a genre, it seems to me that we need some appreciation of the boundary between it and non-genre literature. As I read those four elements of any piece of fiction which will define to what genre it belongs, it seems to me that many pieces of mainstream fiction would have at least three, if not four, elements in common, and so would constitute a previously unrecognised genre. {As an aside, I would mention our local county library, wherein the books have coloured spots placed on their spines according to the usual genres, but with a catch-all category called "novels".}

ML: 'Genre: Science Fiction' will be making a repeat appearance in SCIENCE FICTION. Quite soon, in fact, if Van's schedule is going well.

I don't think that there is genre and non-genre fiction in the way you seem to see it. Detective, romance, SF and war novels are all easily recognised as being genre based. But so are the fictions your library so coyly describes as "novels". The dichotomy comes from the fact that to describe writing as genre writing used to be, and still has overtones of being, a putdown. So "novels", where the focus of the writing is much more on character observation/analysis/interaction and there is the intent to be 'literary' aren't usually discussed in terms of belonging to a specific genre with limitations and conventions like any other. They are discussed, as you do, as somehow being above considerations of genre. Which, of course, they aren't.

---Jane Tisell---

Mark's essay "Genre: Science Fiction" is well written, absorbing, etc, etc, etc,

but it also went so far over my head I didn't even hear the jets. Sorry. There will be many {no doubt} who will write to argue a point, correct you, or laud you on the theory, but for one I'd like to know why we must define things so closely? I am sure there is a point, but it escapes me. The language of the piece is lovely, anyway.

MM: Why, indeed, must we define things so closely? Well, it is a growth industry (the more complex the theory, the further there is to go to perfecting it and the more there is to study) and how many do we have these days? And how many of them are as harmless as academia?

ML: And then there's the fact that if you're going to review or analyse the written word on a basis more sophisticated than 'I know what I like and this is/isn't it', you need a theoretical basis from which to work. Not to forget that a lot of people like thinking about complex matters that other people find of limited value or interest - affine plane geometry or other quirky little fields of mathematics for example.

MM: Unfortunately, there's a serious answer to everything....

HEINLEIN: THE POLITICS OF PROPAGANDA?

---Deathwish Drang---

I like 'Analysing the Trooper in Heinlein' better than 'Genre: Science Fiction' - it

was more... accessible. I found it very interesting. I have often had thoughts along these lines about Heinlein's {and Pournelle's, Spider Robinson's et al} work. Ian's essay served well as an expansion and summary of my feelings towards the genre. However I would take issue with one point: Heinlein has often expounded the concept of 'Personal Responsibility', his characters may be fascists or manipulative {in the case of females} but they are prepared to take responsibility for their actions. This concept I feel is

valuable - unfortunately Heinlein uses it to justify his 'might makes right' ideology. The other point that I believe Ian may have missed is that Heinlein's societies tend to be built on discipline or 'rule through fear'. He seems to believe that if you physically punish a person for an act they will learn not to do the act - this is incorrect - they tend to learn to fear the punisher and act in such a way as to not be punished {regardless of whether the act is morally right or wrong}. The result of this is that their morals are external to them - switch morals and they will follow. If the discipline is removed then they have no external reference and tend to react by not applying any morals at all.

My belief is that a better approach is to teach people moral behaviour by allowing them to understand the reasons for and benefits of moral behaviour. The rule through fear and force method breaks down far too easily {consider Gandhi for example}. Further, one of Heinlein's aphorisms is 'A person who won't be blackmailed can't be blackmailed', he seems never to have made the connection between blackmail and the use of force. Finally 'men are not dogs' - Heinlein is applying methods that work on dogs to people, effectively reducing them to dogs. It is a great pity that he never had a chance to raise children by his methods - the resulting human beings would have been most interesting or would they be dogs?

MM: Think about it, chickadees. I sure am.

---Frank Macskasy Jnr---

Without indulging in words greater than two syllables, my feelings about Heinlein's

STARSHIP TROOPERS could be summed up as:

"He got a Hugo for this?"

Something which Ian forgot to mention about STARSHIP TROOPERS is that it was a blatant, ill-disguised lecture. The bit about spaceships, soldiers, wars, etc, was only a minor dressing... but the dressing was thin and couldn't hide the fact that Heinlein was using this 'novel' to push his own ideology. At best, STARSHIP TROOPERS might be described as clumsy propaganda...

---Jack R Herman---

Ian's article on STARSHIP TROOPERS over-looks an important piece of information

without which an analysis of the novel is incomplete. Heinlein wrote the book for Scrivner's as another in his juvenile SF series, so it was aimed, primarily, at adolescent males in the US. Even so, for an SF novel of its time and market, it was remarkably advanced in its views of the female role. Like HAVE SPACE SUIT WILL TRAVEL, THE STAR BEAST and other Heinlein juveniles, it, at least, saw a major role for its female characters and had some development of them beyond the wife-and-mother concept. Unlike his contemporaries, Heinlein had his women as part of the forces, military and civilian, and being the front-line spaceship pilots is hardly the sort of protected position Ian implies. The virginity of the women is reflected by a similar virginity of the men, particularly the protagonist - it was a 50s kids' book, after all.

MM: Wow, Ian sure did 'forget' to put in a lot. Just as well tho', we don't have the space to print book-length criticism. So saying, have a (nearly) article length analysis of Ian's article.

---Roger Weddall---

As I've liked most of Ian Nichol's recent work, I picked up his article on 'The

Trooper in Heinlein'. Well, how disappointing. I hadn't read Mark's piece on SF as a genre but the fact that it was there in the same zine as this article on Heinlein weighed heavily on my mind as I watched Ian bumble through the first page of his article in an awkward and embarrassing attempt to define the genre of science fiction.

This was certainly bad editing on your part, to allow him to meander pointlessly from his topic, and meander so clumsily at that. I know nothing about spirits, so when Ian takes us back to basics and patiently explains the subject - with a nonchantly jocular touch - I am interested in what he has to say, and how he says it.

boh humbug...



When Ian, on the other hand, talks of 'the transition of a boy {the protagonist of STARSHIP TROOPERS} into a man, in the ideological terms of the book', he is not taking the reader back to look at the basics of the story, nor is he making a valid or sensible point. At this stage I realise I am reading someone who either does not know how to deal with his subject, or who has become overwhelmed by the critical vocabulary he should be able to use as a tool to succinctly explain his thoughts to others. The example I have given is not an isolated case in point.

Listen to this: "in SF the word {ship} has a signification which is so far removed along the paradigmatic axis from other uses of the word that it becomes part of an almost totally new syntagm." This is quite an incompetent use of the English language, as well as - at heart - being factually incorrect. What Ian intended to say was: in SF the word 'ship' has a meaning which is so far different from its normal usage that it belongs in an almost entirely new class of words. One could be picky and take the article apart almost word by word in spots, but a mercifully short example will serve to show how Ian tries to lead his readers up the garden path. A 'syntagm', as we all know, is 'a string of constituents forming a syntactical unit' {Macquarie Dictionary}. That is, a 'class of words' or if you must, a 'class of nouns', in this case. Piaget used the word 'scheme' to approximate this idea on a very personal level.

Ian is claiming that, in SF, the word 'ship' {spaceship} has a radically new meaning from the term we've known and used for millenia to refer to sea-going craft. This is not true. The parallels between a 'ship' and 'spaceship' are so many and obvious - their usage in SF is similarly so close to one another. Having said what he has above, he then uses that as the only basis for his next step in the development of his argument which, based on such a faulty {and ineptly delivered} premise, is bound to fail.

But, would you believe, this is not the worst of it: the main trouble with Ian's piece is that it doesn't even really try to amount to anything. No sooner has he attempted to make a point, than he is off on an unrelated tangent, making more mistakes. This scatter-gun approach can work quite well when you're engaged in slander, or if your name is Anna Murdoch and you have a guaranteed publisher; otherwise it usually reflects worse on the person doing the writing than on anyone or anything else. As I've already said, I was surprised you yourselves showed such error in judgement as to let this through. Keep Ian writing - on subjects about which he knows something.

VANCE & WOMEN

---Avedon Carol---

I think I like your sercon approach.

Although I generally prefer the fannish type of zine {this is at least partly because many sercon zines get so tediously academic}, I've missed fanzines that talked about Science Fiction. Oh, there are some, but I always get the feeling that each piece was

approached by the author as a distasteful chore, and the readers are asked to make an equivalent sacrifice in reading it.

None of that with TSW 4. I was particularly impressed with Dave Lockett's piece on Vance's Women, because it made do without that endless list of references and quotations and all of the other alleged "necessaries" in presenting a perceived pattern. Dave just described the pattern he saw with the minimum details and an admirable brevity. It is not so much the shortness of the piece that I like, but rather the spareness - the sense that there is no fat, that nothing was there that was not necessary.

Dave Lockett: On fat in my writing. Would that the rest of my corpus were the same....

---Deathwish Drang---

On the other hand 'Rescuer of Maidens'

was very good. It continued the theme of

Mark Loney's article on Bob Shaw's work very well by examining it through the works of another author. Unfortunately by taking a subject and pushing it up one more notch doesn't always mean that your readers will assume you are being satirical. I suspect that there are many males out there lapping up this sort of stuff and taking it for granted that this is the way the world is {some of them I have met - like most curs they slink away once kicked}. And, short of asking Jack Vance we don't really know if he is being satirical or not. Many feminists would tend to shoot Vance once ((or perhaps kick him? - MM)) and ask questions later based on your description of his work. I feel that satire on sensitive subjects has to be fairly blatant to be recognised - otherwise people tend to jump ((when you kick them? - MM)) to the conclusion that you are 'for real'.

FEAR & LOATHING IN THE REVIEW COLUMN

---Avedon Carol---

I am uncomfortable with fanzine reviews or listings which divide zines into groups by

geographical point of origin. It certainly is the fashion to do so, but I'm always happier with simple alphabetising. I think something changes in perception in general when we think of the zines as originating from a place rather than from the individuals who produce them. There is also that amusing little problem you may also have noticed of where to place FUCK THE TORIES {don't say it} in your list, since it is edited in three different countries.

Actually, I would be fascinated to see you write a review {or an explanation} of your own publications - as long as it wasn't anonymous. Anonymity, especially where a value judgement is rendered or implied, strikes me as grossly dishonest, cowardly and misleading. Assuming reasonable integrity on the part of the editor, it might be interesting to see a good editor sit down and admit that they know where their publications have failed. The fact is, many editors do know, and one of the greatest weaknesses I have found in the recent crop of reviewers and critics in fanzines is that they never seem to be able to discuss the flaws in the zines they like or the strengths in the zines they don't like - we have been seeing a lot of all-good or all-bad reviews lately.

I was dismayed, recently, to receive a letter from someone suggesting that I was the author of an anonymous review column which wildly praised one of my own publications and strongly attacked someone else's. I was astonished as much by the suggestion that I would attack someone that way from the cover of a pseudonym as by the implication that I would review one of my own fanzines in such a way as to imply that it was wholly without flaws. To have done so anonymously would, of course, have been out of the question. I thought I produced a good fanzine, but, as always, I spent months thereafter agonising

over everything I'd done wrong. To pretend it was perfect would have been unthinkable.

I can't say I approve of the technique of fanzines or articles which attack people without crediting the perpetrators - but then, I'm not thrilled with the idea of attacking people. Attacking logic, attacking ideas, yes - but disagreeing with what someone said or even what they did does not justify condemnation of the people themselves. We aren't really entitled to decide we're gods with the right to judge the immortal souls of others. If you write something I don't like, I may think you're a jackass to write such a thing, but if I sit down to my typer to discuss it, there's really no point in my saying that you're an asshole - I have to be able to disassociate you from your idea long enough to analyse what it was I didn't like about the idea. If you can operate from that basis, you shouldn't need a pseudonym {although I have seen things published that were so ghastly I was forced to wonder what would cause anyone to publish such things under their own names...}.

{{The letter is signed by Avedon in a delightful red shade, with the legend, 'here in kindergarten, we use crayons'.}}

MM: Avedon, lots of interesting stuff here. Division of zines by nation is certainly simplistic, but also much easier than alpha sorting, which is why I did it last time. Having thought about your words, the zine reviews this time are not sorted in any particular order, nor were they reviewed in any particular order (not that I have reviewed many at all this time) - last time the reviews were written in the order they appeared. Are there attitudinal changes? Doubtless, particularly since last time was my first attempt at zine reviews.

Yes, I'd love to review TSW and I will, too. Not this time, though. Lack of time due to having moved from Perth to Melbourne so recently, having a super-large issue of the zine to do before Christmas and, of course, the fact that we're having a great time socialising in our new home (love Melbourne!). I do actually feel TSW's weaknesses acutely - I'm sure most Editors must feel some disappointment each issue. From time to time, I also worry about all the people out there who don't like the same things in a fanzine as I (or Mark or Julian) do in the first place but this really is pointless. One is as one is and can't change merely for the Joseph Nicholases of this world. (Though if we weren't getting mostly positive responses I'd probably beat a hasty retreat from this side of the editorial desk for a while.)

I was confused by the latter half of your letter, initially, until I heard about the PULP brouhaha. You have certainly been on the receiving end of a most unfair and upsetting affair. I freely admit that I have not read the offending articles but must say that from what I know of the affair your comments are entirely appropriate.

Unfortunately, it would seem that I have myself been guilty of subjective rather than objective criticism and it is an easy trap to fall into. I refer not to FUCK THE NOTIONAL, wherein I feel we were mostly objective and certainly my own comments were what I believed then to be the truth and still do, but to my review of Michael Hailstone's THE MATALAN RAVE. Michael bemoans (screches?) his fate at my hands...

---Michael Hailstone---

I've been meaning to write to you for quite some time, first to comment on TSW 5, then to praise you for FUCK THE NOTIONAL. Yes, I was going to congratulate you, sympathise with you and point out to you the worse even more patronizing criticisms my fanzine had suffered at the editorial hands of THE NOTIONAL. But then what happens? No sooner have I thought, here are some folk on my side, than the September SPACE WASTREL comes, and what do I see? You're just taking over from THE NOTIONAL. Et tu, Brute.

Let me begin though with some comments on FTN. Mr Loney attacks Leigh and Valma for lacking the fannish decency to offer their zine for trade but rather to make it available for *money* insted of the usual. Well, for a start, as Mr Loney himself points out, they did offer it to trade on a one to one basis, and, as far as I'm concerned, they did this. I got a NOTIONAL for every

MATALAN RAVE I sent them. On the other hand I've never once received a copy of THYME from your beloved Roger Weddall, though I've sent him a raves. Yes, it ses ((sic)) in your *reviews* that THYME is available only for *money*, but apparently that's quite okay for THYME but not for the NOTIONAL. I'm fucked if I can make eny ((I would say sic, but I suppose from a phonetic point of view this one makes a bit more sense than the last one did)) out of that.

To go on, a few quotes from FTN. "Then there are the fanzine reviews... that review... is condescending, arrogant, uninformative..."

"The condescension of it was what got to me. Who, I thought... are these people who set themselves up as arbiters of what is good and what is not good in fan publications...?" {Stress yours.}

"One only needs to read a few words of condescension in a fanzine to be put off from reading any further."

Condescension, right? And arrogance and paternalism. Right. So fuck the NOTIONAL, okay. But what about the SPACE WASTREL? Michelle makes a most condescending, to say the least, remark, not so much about my fanzine as me personally. "...Michael's on a different wave length to the rest of us." That's not condescending, no, rather it's downright insulting. Have you thought through the full implications of that statement? For one thing, it means that, while I'm on one wavelength, everybody else is on another single wavelength. To put it another way, I'm out of tune with everybody else. No, I've copped enough of that kind of shit alre dy, umpteen fucking gutfuls, and I don't see why I should have to start taking it from you. I mean, who the fuck is Michelle to have the gall the ((sic)) presume to speak for everybody else?

Then she puts "Recommended" or "Not Recommended" at the bottom of her reviews. God almighty, she's reviewing fanzines for chrissakes, not books or magazines for sale {with the exception of some like CRUX, to which we'll come shortly}. But okay, she's recommending whether other faneds should trade with the reviewed zines. But who is this person {or who are you people} who sets herself up as an arbiter of what is good and what is not good in fannish publications? Does that sound familiar? Who the fuck is she to recommend or not to recommend a fanzine to others with different tastes? Or doesn't she believe that anyone other than I has tastes different from hers?

Then there's the review of CRUX 6. "Haven't read it but it certainly looks lovely"? Christ almighty. If that's not condescending, I don't know what is. And how bloody dickheded can you get, reviewing something you haven't even red? {As I once had to point out to Merv Binns.}

I notice that Michelle calls herself the faanish member of your committee. That explains why she doesn't like the rave, for faanish it is not. And that makes her case worse. For who is she to set herself up as a gauge of public {fannish} opinion? Furthermore, seeing that the rave is Not Recommended, meaning that you don't like it, then why the fuck do you keep trading with me? {By the way, the only reason you got CRUX is that Mr Loney has been a subscriber.}

To give credit where it's due, okay her reviews are a lot kinder and slightly fairer than those of the NOTIONAL, and I appreciate that Michelle has the goodwill at least to refer to me by name, which is more than can be sed to the editor of the NOTIONAL. There is a lightheartedness about her reviews, so I haven't been sure how seriously I should take them, though, unless she really is joking, which she doesn't seem to be, that doesn't excuse her condescending alienating insults. But at least I still don't get with you the feeling of nastiness I have about the editor of that other zine.

LoCt in Space/The Review Column-----

MM: Okay Michael, guilty as charged on one count only. Let me take your letter point by point.

Para 1 - we're taking over from TN. Rubbish; and you know it is. Even your own letter doesn't support this.

Para 2. Roger says that the most recent issue is the only one he has received. If you've sent others, take it up with Australia Post. Roger has written you a letter regarding this, in which he tells you, amongst other things, the rather large number of ways other than money that it is possible to get THYME. Too many to list in a review column, where the availability quoted is often only a guideline in this and other zines. Mark's contention was not that TN wouldn't trade but that having used a review of his, he shouldn't have suffered a red 'X' on the same issue (though I agree that he didn't state this point particularly well). I think that money only is okay - though credit should be given for things printed - but that it is common courtesy to (1) advise if you're not going to trade (general comment - not related to TN) and (2) to state your policy on 'free' issues clearly. It is pointless to equate Mark's statements with my opinion of a zine. We are different people with (very) different opinions. All contributors to TSW and FTN are, and were, free to state their opinion with little or (in the case of FTN) no censorship from the other parties.

The quotes from FTN. Stress not mine. I had nothing to do with these statements. I neither agree nor disagree with them. That aspect of TN didn't particularly bother me. I made no statement about it.

Condescending. Okay, I agree, my comment on TMR ~~was~~ patronising, basically. I apologise for that aspect of my comment. As is so often the case when people make silly comments, I was trying to avoid something I saw as much worse. I know that TMR must be something which is important to you - you have certainly showed considerable dedication to it. Unfortunately my honest opinion of it is that it is a badly laid out, poorly reproduced, paranoid, appallingly executed mess which is, by and large, being sent out to people who aren't interested in it. I also think your spelling reform, while reform is a good idea, is phonetically incorrect, confusing in places and rather too simplistic. I had no desire to say anything so cruel. I didn't feel that you merited it. But I was also brought up to be honest. In foxtrotting around this dilemma, I fucked up.

Who am I to set myself up as arbiter? Well, I don't believe I do. I make it perfectly obvious that it is merely my opinion. I also make it obvious what I do and don't like in a fanzine - anyone with half a brain can see that, if they don't agree with these tastes, they won't agree with my summation. One would assume that using their half-brain, they would then disregard my opinions and go elsewhere for their fanzine reviews (tho there aren't many other places to go in Australian zines and most of those that there are, are less rather than more kind than I).

As to Recommended or Not Recommended, it is (once again) my opinion that in amongst dodging about between statements of contents and what aspect was interesting and good or bad, a reviewer should state what they honest-to-god really think about a zine. Just my opinion, but I'm sticking to it. Though I have taken your opinion into account to some degree in that the rating system is totally different in the review column of this zine.

What this comes down to is, what right do I have to review? Just this:- I am involved in the production of this zine and I want to. The only real qualification that anyone has to do anything in Fandom, is that they are interested and involved. Well, I am. I may change my reviewing style at others' behest (after all, I am just starting out) but I am not going to stop reviewing.

Your comment about my comment about CRUX 6. Remember I said paranoid. Don't let things carry you away Michael. CRUX does look lovely. I meant that. You should be proud of it. I value an aesthetic appearance very highly (as is, once again, obvious in my reviews) and what I said in this regard was a no-holds-barred compliment. Take them where you can get them. As for not having read it - apologies. I haven't, I won't, I can't get into fan fiction or, indeed, much SF fiction any more. Perhaps I shouldn't have mentioned the zine. But I think it is polite to acknowledge everything that comes in.

'Michelle is the faanish member of the committe...' etc. As per my comment two paragraphs ago, interested parties are entitled to comment in fandom. That's just the way it is. Why do we keep trading? There are three parties involved in this zine. Mark at least likes to receive TMR and see what's going on in Spelling Reform Land (tho Jules thinks we should drop you from the mailing list).

Your final paragraph. Lighthearted. Right. I do like to laugh, I don't like to be nasty or condescending or patronising. And now I have been extremely nasty in reply to your letter. Because I always feel I should be honest and now you have got me mad. Oh shit!

WHO IS KATHERINE CHOPIN?

Who is Katherine Chopin, and why did we print her letter, you might ask - others did.

---Perry Middlemiss---

Oddly enough, one of the few things I read immediately in issue 4 was the very last letter from Katherine Chopin, then, what do you know, Roger Weddall dropped in my copy of the latest issue of THYME and there, on the second last page, is the news that Ian Nichols is out scouting for clues to the whereabouts - or even true identity - of the hatchet-wielding letter-writer. Gee, fandom seems to be getting a little vitriolic of late. Far be it for me to tell you your job but if I had been in your place I very much doubt whether I would have published Ms Chopin's letter - especially in that much detail. My suggestion to Ian would be to write it off as a bad joke and let the matter rest. Nothing will be gained by returning bile for vilification.

---Jane Tisell---

First of all - why publish that particularly virulent letter from what'sherface in NSW? There seems no merit in the letter at all, only pure viciousness, a venting of spleen. There are no doubt many other fans who could have written nasty letters of comment, possibly with more justification, but have restrained themselves. I don't think that the letter should have been published at all, but filed under crank letters, preferably in the swing top file cupboard that's tossed out once a week!

---Susan Margaret---

If Ms Chopin is really a new TSW reader who knows nothing of Dave Luckett and Ian Nichols but their writing, her remarks are within bounds for a LoC, though personally I find speculation about writers' physical and social characteristics based only on their work a singularly profitless pastime, which I tend to associate with armchair psychology and spurious character analysis of other unpleasant kinds.

If Katherine Chopin is a pseudonym for someone who DOES have personal knowledge of the two writers and chooses to express her/his opinion of them in this roundabout fashion, then I say to that person: YOU ARE OUT OF ORDER. Writing is writing: if you don't like it, find good, stylistic reasons why. Personal characteristics are usually fair game in fanzines, but not while you hide behind a pseudonym, and not when you use personal feelings as a basis for criticism of writing.

To the editors I say: you printed Ian Nichols' article, and the Chopin letter calls your judgement into question. Don't you think your readers and writers are entitled to know YOUR opinion of the article? While I appreciate that a juicy personal conflict like this can keep a letter column going for months, didn't I read a complaint about American fanzines in this same TSW - "all fan warfare and episodes of Dhalgren"? If you took the letter at face value, as an honest response, then to print it without editorial comment was perhaps a lapse of responsibility. If you had any reason to doubt its authenticity, then editorial comment was mandatory. Otherwise no-one of sound mind would consider writing articles for you.

ML: Okay, why did we print it? The same reason we printed, for example, Skel's criticism of me in the same issue. We certainly didn't necessarily agree with any or all of Ms Chopin's comments - but that doesn't mean that we should have filed it in the waste-paper basket. I think that the

tone Ian had been adopting in his Grapeshot articles was patronising. Knowing Ian as I do, I found that tone entertaining rather than annoying. This is not to say that readers who only know Ian from his Grapeshot articles would have the same reaction. Ms Chopin's letter indicated that there was at least one reader finding it objectionable. Printing her letter was the best way of finding out if Ian was alienating his (and our) readership. As it turns out, he isn't.

I see the true (?) identity of Katherine Chopin as a side-issue at best and quite possibly irrelevant. What matters, to my mind, is that the letter was written and the opinions expressed. This issue we did decline to print a letter that proffered criticism of Ian (once again from an unknown female). That was because it was purely a personal attack on Ian. The Katherine Chopin letter was textually based on Ian's writing (although it seems probable she also brought other, more personal, knowledge to bear). Obviously there is a fine line here between what to print and what not to print. So far we think we've made the right decisions. Only time and feedback will tell.

MM: I don't recall who said that about American fanzines in TSW (and can't find the comment either), but it's not a view I subscribe to.

Further to what Mark said, there is the fact that if you don't print your own criticism, then it's apt to turn up elsewhere. For instance, in one-shots like FUCK THE NOTIONAL. It is also true that Ian is not above handing out some pretty pointed criticism to our correspondents himself and, for this reason, we thought he would be able to handle a bit of bitchiness himself. And, to his credit, he has.

The other thing about the letter itself is that it is overboard and, in fact, both Mark and I laughed when we read it. (As it came in at the last minute, poor old Jules wasn't there when it arrived and didn't get to see it until it was in print.) Certainly very few of our readers seem to have considered it seriously as a criticism of Ian. Most of them, too, seem to see it as a slightly bizarre exercise in rhetoric.

---Alex Heatley---

I'm considering whether to write something about Ms Chopin's letter - a more abusive, foul and arrogant letter I have never read {except on the nets but that's another story}. The only problem is should I waste the time trying to put the point of view across to her that this is not the way to criticise someone or merely ignore her as a fuckwit? I shall consider that in depth.
((Comment lifted from a personal letter.))

MM: A number of people concluded (perhaps correctly?) that Ms Chopin was the one who needed the psychoanalysis.

---Terry Frost---

I dunno who Katherine Chopin is {a pseudonym, p'raps?} but she definitely sounds like a Bellevue Hill type. {Cocaine, fucking tennis pros, Gucci tampons, that sort of thing.} The new Sydney phone book has no Bellevue Hill Chopins in it. I'd say that someone is trying a hoax here.

---Deathwish Drang---

Lastly we come to Ms Chopin {I apologise in advance if Ms Chopin prefers to be branded with the label Miss, Mrs or Mr}. At the risk of saying something that others will do far better than I - I would like to give my thoughts on her letter. Upon reading her letter I became seriously concerned that here was a person that appeared so wrapped up in her own rhetoric that she had lost sight of her initial intention, which I believe was to chide Ian Nichols for his perceived pomposity and patronising tone. Instead she resorted to pure insult.

The major fault that I can find with her letter is pre-judging Ian by one article, not only does Ms Chopin know the state of Ian's mind but even his physical features {I would be curious to see how she imagines me...} from *one* article! Such judgement is extreme! Surely Ms Chopin does not judge people she encounters by the first meeting? Surely she realises that insulting

a person is the easiest method of closing their mind to one's arguments? Surely Ms Chopin realises that people adopt differing writing styles according to the subject matter {I cite as an example Ian's excellent article in this issue}?

But perhaps not, she also appears oblivious to the irony that her comments about Ian are also arrogant, patronising and pompous. I would be tempted, if I were Ms Chopin, to write her off from this letter. However, I feel that she may have, in an excess of zeal, forgotten to take a step backwards from her own prose and look at it carefully for obvious hypocrisy. Please, Ms Chopin, save paper - all you had to do was say that you found Ian's writing style offensive - there was no need to try and hurt him as much as you felt you had been offended.

---Roger Weddall---

As time goes by I seem to have less and less time for alcohol - I just don't seem to encounter it much these days - so I feel immune from the sort of snobbery that can so easily manifest itself when talking of alcohol.

Perhaps it is this type of snobbery - a very strong suspicion, on my part - that someone such as 'Katherine Chopin' sees in themselves and then reacts so strongly against when they think they see another person showing signs of that same snobbery.

MM: And at this point, the one in-depth analysis of Ian we did receive, from Someone Who Knows...

---Dave Luckett---

I would like to say a word or two in defence of my old mate Ian Nichols, and

I will then shut and go away.

Ian, as all who know him will attest, is perhaps not the easiest of mortals to get on with. He is extraordinarily competitive. He suffers fools very badly and boring people not at all. He is not widely known for his charity, though there is some of it there, and he tends to react to what he regards as insult by going for the jugular. {Some regrettable evidence of this appeared in the last TSW and also appears in this.} He regards himself as an expert on a wide variety of subjects, some of which he actually is an expert on, and he tends to express himself on these subjects in ways which the uninitiated can interpret as patronising. This is due, I think, to that competitive urge, which requires him to show that he is better at a given pursuit than the local competition - provided, that is, that he sees the pursuit as interesting and worthwhile. To be the centre of attention is important to him - even to the extent of antagonising people to get there.

However, despite the difficulties of cultivating him, Ian is well worthwhile as a friend. He is one of the very few in fandom whom I would trust with a confidence, and on whose loyalty I could rely. He really does know about, and enjoy, many of the things I do. He is generous, and he doesn't care about fashion. He is not greatly concerned with the appearance of things. He is unfailingly honest. He is intelligent and {usually} well-informed.

Perhaps I wouldn't feel the same way about him if I were female, because Ian {to put it mildly} relates to women differently to the way he relates to men. I can't say.

All of this is beside the point. The point is this. Ian wrote interestingly and wittily about wine, a subject that he does know about, though his tastes are different to mine. The article was certainly of a standard to grace any fanzine that I've ever read, and, in my opinion, bore comparison with professional writing on the same subject and in the same vein. It was welcomed by the editors, as it deserved, and attracted good notices. Any faned

will inform you of the problems of obtaining writing of this standard for a zine; in fact, of the notable difficulty of getting people to contribute at all.

In return for his trouble, Ian received some good notices, and also a savage slanging directed, not against the article, which is fair enough, but against him personally. The writer descended to the utmost depths of abuse and insult and spared nothing in an all-out assault on everything about Ian that she could reach. The language was so extreme that I cannot, and do not, believe that the letter was motivated by mere critical antipathy to the article. On the contrary, it bore all the marks of a personal grudge being revenged.

That is to say, on textual grounds I regard the writer as being motivated by malice, rather than by critical perception. It follows from this that she knows Ian (and probably me as well), and that in turn implies that she used a false name and that she deliberately misrepresented herself. This conclusion is supported by evidence in the text - she allowed some of her reflections on Ian's baldness and status as a {then} unemployed teacher to get a little too accurate for chance - and also by the fact that no-one's ever heard of 'Katherine Chopin'.

She said some nice things about my article, I am ashamed to say. Ashamed, because if I'm right, it means that I have attracted the favourable notice of a person of very poor judgement. I'd rather not have done so.

MM: Something we were very pleased about was the number of people who wrote and told us that they liked Ian's writing. (Which was what we always suspected....)

---Deathwish Drang---

I am not sure whether I like Ian Nichol's style in 'Grapeshot'. But his writing flows easily from point to point in a light breezy style. Perhaps it is patronising at times but not {to me at least} obtrusive. If it ever gets in the way I'll stop reading Ian's articles on this subject. My compliments on a well crafted article, I found it most enjoyable.

---Sue Thomason---

I'm afraid that as far as alcohol is concerned, I'm one of the 'I know what I like' school. Compared to most fans {or at least compared to the image they project} I do very little drinking; in beer I prefer mild to bitter, in wine I enjoy just about anything I can't afford to buy for myself {though horrible rough cheap red is very good mulled}, and in spirits I like brandy in coffee and single malt whiskey on my birthday. I find Ian's articles fascinating, because he genuinely knows what he's talking about. I'd love to have dinner with him for this reason; he's probably an excellent conversationalist as well as certainly knowing all the best places to eat in his locality.

MM: So in the midst of all this, who the hell is Katherine Chopin? Yvonne Rousseau has found something interesting... is Ms Chopin a poltergeist?

KATE CHOPIN {nee O'Flaherty} - 1850-1904 - was the daughter of an Irish immigrant father and Creole mother; she was born in St Louis, Missouri, and brought up in a largely female household. She married Oscar Chopin, a Creole, and went to live in New Orleans, Louisiana, spending her summers at Grand Isle, a fashionable resort off the south coast. Her husband's business did not prosper and he returned to the family plantation in the Cane River district, where he died of swamp fever in 1882, leaving her with six children to support.

After paying off his debts she returned to St Louis and began to write, using as material her memories of New Orleans and of Cane River, the latter providing material for three collections of short stories. She was originally acclaimed as a 'local colourist', but has won posthumous recognition principally for THE AWAKENING, first published in 1899, when it was greeted as scandalous and

morbid. Discouraged from writing more full-length fiction, she turned to poems, essays, and short stories until her death from a brain haemorrhage. Interest in her largely neglected work increased from the late 1940s; in 1962 E. Wilson devoted six pages of PATRIOTIC GORE to it, and she has since attracted much attention from feminist scholars.

((Account taken from Margaret Drabble's edition of THE OXFORD COMPANION TO ENGLISH LITERATURE.))

MM: Well, I really think Ms Chopin has had more space in this TSW than she deserves.
! Before we finish though, a couple of brief comments. Firstly, something philosophical...

---Frank Macskasy, Jr---

One thing you might say about Katherine Chopin's letter; she sure was passionate, though the comment about Ian's penis was a bit below the belt. And anyway, according to sex manuals, etc., it's not How Big It Is which is what they keep telling us, but What You Do With It that counts. A metre-long Dong isn't much good for a Lady Friend if one uses it only to club rodents unconscious - while a ten-centimetre Peter put in the right place could certainly bring about much breathing, sweating, and rumpled bedsheets.
{This letter was signed: "Yours fannishly ~~and~~/MIXX/d/medium/sized/Whanger"
just for the record...}}

MM: And lastly, one lone supporter for Ms Chopin. Do my eyes deceive me? Another fake fan?

---Nick Machiavelli---

Who is the mysterious Ms Chopin? Where can we send a bottle of good champagne to?
I too have found something vaguely offensive about Ian Nichols' visualisation of the intellectual level of TSW.

ODDS'N'ENDS DEPARTMENT

---Roger Weddall---

There is one thing I must mention, however, before I go. When I saw that I was ticked off: 'X' in two categories on the back cover, and saw the bit about 'claim a prize' if you were ticked off in three categories, I thought long and hard about how to gain a third tick. Most of the categories are hopeless to try for - some of them I wouldn't want to be on. The 'we trade' one is no good - you've got a paid-up sub to THYME for ages yet. The only one left is the nebulous 'We live in hope/You've got something we want'. All I can say is: It's good to live in hope; the alternative surely is despair. Forget the expense of all those prizes you'll have to go out and buy - mark everybody's 'We live in hope' spaces!

MM: Okay, Roger. Just for this issue, everyone is entitled to a prize (see the conditions on Why You Got This). But one issue only - we're not made of chocolate fish!

---Deathwish Drang---

The last issue of TSW was superb! Most enjoyable but before I get into commenting on it I must make one thing entirely clear. While I am not enthused about the application of labels to myself - if you must do so, remember this important fact - I am not and never have been a card carrying fascist. If you want a label for my political leanings try Conservative Socialist Anarchist. Got that? Good, I won't have to send round the boys in leather to beat you into submission then.

... FROM THE END OF THE SAME LETTER ...

....Space Wastrels, thank you for your patience in reading this letter and remember, publish it or I'll send the leather boys around {leather girls cost extra and aren't in your contract}.

LoCt in Space/Odds'n'Ends-----

MM: Sorry DeathWish, I'm not convinced. (Unless Conservative Socialist Anarchist is another name for Leather Boy?) But that's okay, fascists are people too.

Except maybe for rich fascists...

---Terry Frost---

Julian's vignette on the cafe struck a sympathetic chord. All this Amerika's Cup merchandising is a blatant con-job. My pay-packet included some souvenir offer wherein for \$18.00 I could get a sailcloth bookmark, a colour book with pictures of boats in it and other crap - they even offered to deduct it from my next pay! I declined the offer to come across with the readies so that rich bastards can dook around the Indian Ocean and get showered in perfectly quaffable champers. Sink the fuckers, I say!

MM: And finally, here's Tom Cardy with the Philosophy of Life.

---Tom Cardy---

Sorry that I took my time to reply, but you know how it is. Being in Wellington really fills one's social calendar. The all night parties, the drugs, the booze, the movies and other things I fantasise about but never experience.

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A WORD FROM MR WARNER

The subjects of the Fuck The Notional/Motional debate and the Katherine Chopin letter have certainly raised a lot of flak. I hope that amongst the material we have reproduced, there may be found all the pro and con ideas on those subjects, enough for readers to form their own opinions.

I will say that Ian Nichols was disturbed by the unabashed libel of the Katherine Chopin letter and I have no doubt that Leigh and Valma were disturbed by FTN and The Motional.

Now that the matters have been aired, I think they should be folded and put away. The only further correspondence I wish to see on either matter would be Katherine Chopin's revelation of her identity or Leigh and Valma's reasoned reply to the plethora of criticism that they have attracted. Otherwise, subjects closed.

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STOP PRESS

Due to the new across-continent-editing method and the size of the zine this time we found it necessary to close off the letter column half way through November. It is now early December and we are holding letters for publication from Garth Spencer, Bob Lee, John Berry, Walt Willis, Gordon Lingard and Sue Thomason. Sorry we didn't put your comments in people, but they will appear in Number 6 which is due out in February. Right now, though, we are unable to resist the urge to quote briefly from a letter from Brian Earl Brown, which likewise missed our deadline. BeB comments, in reaction to FTN: "What's nice is to see Australian Fandom lively enough to get pissed at another's zine. At least you're not dead any more."

That's all. Have fun til next time!

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