
ALLARGANDO 4

And this is ALLARGANDO number 4/OBSESSIVE PRESS number 78, once again published by Jeanne Gomoll from Box 1443, Madison, WI 53701-1443, for TURBOAPA. Begun November 1986 and finished...well, check the end of the zine to see how long I left this lay about the house. Member, FWA.

But, **Pete**, what else is an apazine but a conversation? You don't ignore people at a party, for instance, because they don't initiate conversation topics and simply involve themselves in the discussions that go on around them. One person makes a comment, somebody else responds, and others carry on from there. I don't see why it can't be the same thing in an apazine. I feel that I can say important things within the context of a reply or a response to somebody else's zine without having to begin a new topic on my own in essay form, and I think it's still possible to take an active part in the on-going conversation and to reasonably expect people to respond to my comments as well.

I'm a slow writer, at least relative to all the commitments I have in the way of writing for other fanzines, and if I feel obliged to write self-standing essays for TurboApa, I'm pretty sure that either those other commitments are going to suffer, or that I'd rather quickly have to drop out of this apa because I couldn't keep up with the deadlines.

Also, I'm pretty greedy for the long, meaty responses I tend to get when I write an article for a fanzine (especially for my fanzine, Whimsey, because I get to read all the mail for that). No matter how much time and energy you put into an apa essay, you can usually count on only short paragraph "nods" for feedback from other apa members. Once in a while someone will write a long reply on the subject of some topic you really concentrated on in your apazine, but usually you get brief comment on some passing comment you made, usually not even a very central part of your last apazine.

Your comments about Tommy Thompson sounded quite sane to me. (Not that I mean this "in contrast to" anything else, I'm just changing the subject.) What is really awful to me about the gubernatorial race is not just what a nerd Tommy is, which is bad enough, but that the governor he follows is such a splendid, excellent governor. If he'd followed Drefus, it would just be one clown following another, but as it is, it's hard to believe that Wisconsin voters have given up such a good thing for such a bummer. (I've got the feeling that progressive Texas voters would be sympathetic to our predicament. They've apparently also voted a dummy into office. This guy has recently been studying Spanish and so now the political pundits say of him, "Oh, great, now he's bi-ignorant!!")

You want stories about my early years in fandom? Well, I guess I could slip in little anecdotal spots once in a while:

Back many years ago when Herb Varley (aka John Varley) was one of the most nominated SF writers of all time but had never (yet) actually won a Hugo, and the same year (one of the years) that JANUS was up for a Hugo, and it was worldcon time in Miami, Floriday, and...well, once upon a time, shall we say, I was an innocent in the ways of Big Name Authors and such things. I was dressed unusually, in a long, formal skirt and shoes with heels in honor of the Hugo ceremonies. We didn't win, of course, but it was thrilling anyway to be sitting up front with all the other nominees and to hear my name read out loud to the multitudes.

After the award ceremonies, I managed to get invited behind the stage with some newszine editors who were studying the voting statistics. The convention committee had provided the breakdown of the Australian ballot results for Mike Glycer (of FILE 770) and Andy Porter (of SF CHRONICLE) and Charlie Brown (of LOCUS) and others to publish in their newszines as well as the convention newsletter. Anyway, I managed to get a peak at the voting statistics myself. Armed with the "insider information" I strolled back to the hotel, back to the parties. And I saw Herb Varley ahead of me in the lobby. Herb hadn't attended the ceremonies I had noticed and so didn't know that his novel had not won the Hugo--but had come in second on the ballot. I thought that he'd probably like to know.

What I didn't know was that he'd begun to avoid the Hugos because he had been nominated so many times and every one of those times he'd lost and he'd get depressed sitting in the awards ceremony, hoping and getting tense, etc. It didn't occur to me that one could be depressed if one was actually nominated for a Hugo.

So I started running after him. I lifted my skirts off the ground somewhat and started click, click, clopping after him in my heels, calling "Herb, Herb! Hey, Herb!" I'd known him for a few years. We'd been co-GoH's at Armadillocon and had had some good conversations there and at other cons.

He spun around and saw me flying toward him, my skirts billowing behind me, by shoes clip-clopping dangerously as I tried to run gracefully in such uncomfortable heels, calling out his name. Obviously, I came from the Hugo awards ceremony. Obviously, I was excited. Obviously, I wanted to tell him something. Urgently. Of course, he jumped to the assumption that he'd actually won a Hugo this time.

But I didn't translate his expression till later on when I thought about it. At the time, I just caught up with him, caught my breath, and grinned. "You came in second!" I said. Luckily I didn't say congratulations. His face fell and he turned and walked away.

To this day I feel like apologising whenever I see Herb. He says not to worry about it, but I keep seeing his face when I told him he'd come in second. Embarrassing.

Surprise, this was not only the story that **Pete** requested about my experiences as a young fan, but also the story that **Andy** suggested* as a sort of comment hook last time. "What's the stupidest thing you've ever done?" Actually this particular thing is probably not the stupidest thing I've ever done, but it ranks right up there. (Oops, I mean the story that **Andy** and **Kim** suggested for a C. Hook.)

To **Peter Larsen**: sorry about the name misspelling. But it's to be expected. My misspelling is Legend. You along with everyone else has probably already noticed the spello on the cover of last month's TurboApa in which I added an extra "e" to the end of "metaphor." I expect that it will account for most of my mailing comments this issue. But that is nothing compared to the sort of thing I've done in JANUS and AURORA and countless other places. People here in town on the various SF3 committees don't let me proofread, not since the day they found three misspellings of the same word on the same page--all different, unique misspellings--for something I'd written for JANUS. I've had WHIMSEY extensively proofread before publication, but so far, every time I've published, I've misspelled the names of one of my LoC'ers (LoC=Letter of Comment), and no matter how good the proofreader, they can't know how to spell people's names if they don't know them. So this just gets added to the legend. Sorry. I really do try hard. I just can't spell.

"Is drawing easier than writing?" asked **DuCharme**. Yes: when I have a writing deadline. But, on the other hand, when I've got artwork due, it's far more easy to write. Unfortunate dilemma: always when I'm supposed to do one thing, I'm tempted to do the other. I think that both artforms, as methods of communication, offer certain "channels" of expression (how's'at for a media alegory?), but that

neither is usually totally satisfying. I think that's why I like to do cartoons so much. With cartoons (and the characters "saying" things in bubbles) I can combine drawing and writing.

But if you asked that to find out why I did the TurboApa cover before I did my apazine, it wasn't because drawing was "easier" than writing. I was behind on both jobs (as I usually am: I tend to work best under pressure for a deadline), but I figured that since I'd promised Andy a cover that he'd be more upset if I showed up without that than if I showed up without an apazine.

Gawd, **Mike**, you rated Tough Guys an "A"?!? I would have put it down as one of the worst movies I've ever seen (granted that I avoid most of the obviously bad movies). It was just an embarrassing, putridly written, bad movie. I felt so sorry for the actors (and I love both Lancaster and Douglas) who had to slog their way through such a degrading and loophole-ridden script. It was like the writers took the basic idea of The Runaway Train and said, "Hey, do you think we could make a screwball comedy out of this? Only let's make it about old guys and we'll show how much we respect older people by pretending that they're people too. We'll show them making it in bed and beating up people, just like real people, you know?" Yuck.

For all the people who liked the little beanies, sorry I forgot them in the rush to get to the bus last time. Beanies return this issue.

Thanks, **Julie**, for the amazing biographical fragment in your last zine. I'd like to hear more about what must be a really interesting (and sometimes painful) perspective, to have been involved in racial confrontations as you've been. Thanks for sharing all this with us.

I live on the south side of Madison, another high-density, black area in the city, and like your neighborhood near Truax, there's a big problem of vandalism, thefts, etc. here too, and again, blacks are usually the suspects. (As with your experience, though, the one theft in our building that was witnessed was pulled off by two white kids.) Still, the stereotype persists, and to some extent, it's justified because a larger percentage of black men than any other population in the city is unemployed and survive on public assistance, and are, therefore, at home during the day. The reasons they are unemployed make a lot of white people rather guilty and also very nervous and aware of the problem, and so when a crime is committed in mostly black neighborhoods, and the assumptions are made, it's easier to suggest that these blacks whose bad character is demonstrated by their crimes don't deserve jobs, than to suggest that blacks need to work in order to reduce black crime. There was a pretty good article in the latest TIME magazine about the exploding problem of unemployment among black men, and the way in which this trend feeds the racial biases against them. A quotation from that article:

"In Washington, as elsewhere, downtown shopkeepers lock their doors and refuse to buzz them in, provoking an agonizing debate about whether such actions are justified. In New York City, conflicted emotions simmer to the surface when the subject turns to Bernhard Goetz and the shots he fired at four young blacks aboard a Manhattan subway train. A nation that would like to believe it can shun stereotypes, that cherishes the ideals of equality and brotherhood, continues to be haunted by the plight of a segment of its citizenry that remains mired in a seemingly intractable dilemma of race and poverty: the young, black males of its underclass."

You wanted some recommended reading? I just finished two great books, one especially that I'd recommend to you: the new collection (of three novellas) by James Tiptree, Jr., called THE STARRY RIFT. Three really, really good stories. I'd recommend it for a book-of-the-month book, but scheduling has been done for most of the near-future meetings I think. Tiptree (who is really Alice Sheldon) does wonderful aliens.

Peter Larsen again: (Can you tell I'm leapfrogging around in the apa, skimming here and there, sitting down at the typewriter whenever I have something to say?) I have this feeling that your beginning essay about the degenerates who avoid poetry (or who dismiss it as "funny prose", or who say that many people write it because "it's easier than prose") is aimed at least in part, at me. And I have this desire to defend myself against your anger. I didn't mean, you see, that I thought that writing poetry was easier than writing prose. I meant that I was burnt out on reading poetry by people who seemed to believe that writing poetry was easier than writing prose because a poem is usually shorter than any work of prose. Which I thought was a laughable, obviously ironic conclusion.

It is my opinion that there is some similarity between the relationship of poetry to prose and the relationship of abstract art to photorealistic painting. In both cases, the abstract painting and the poem make use of their elements on many more levels and often in more complex manners than the same elements are utilized in the realistic painting or the expository prose piece. In both cases, a person unacquainted with the processes might think that the poem was "easier" because there were fewer words in it, or that the abstract painting was "easier" because the artist didn't have to use perspective to design its scene, and in both cases the person would be missing a great deal. Worse though, is when the supposed artist thinks the same way and spatters paint on a canvas or divides an adjective-strewn sentence into short lines and calls it an abstract or calls it a poem.

You might still object to my viewpoint because I still think there is an awful lot of very bad poetry because there are unfortunately so many people who fancy themselves to be "literary" and chose to write poems because they seem easier than novels.

So anyway, I just wanted to clear myself. I don't believe that good poetry is "easy", though I think bad poetry is—and that's why there is so much of it. A bad novel, for instance, no matter how bad, is quite a bit harder to complete.

By the way, I really like the drawings (Figures 3-6). Did you do them? (If so, you should do some work for AURORA, CUBE and/or the WisCon publications. They really are wonderful.) (If not, who's are they? I don't see any signatures, and they sure don't look like any clip art I've ever seen.)

Ray, thank you for the long, thoughtful comments you made on my zine, and on the conversation begun by Diane about Sagan, sexism, et al. I really enjoyed reading your response to this discussion, especially in connection with what you referred to as the tendency in the feminist movement to strive for superiority rather than equality. We hear that, in different forms, quite often in response to strong, anti-sexist statements. And for the most part, I think there's some mis-communication going on.

Until society offers women a much closer approximation to an equal footing with men, I think the fear that women will take power is pretty much a fantasy--daydream or nightmare, depending on your point of view. In the meantime, the expressions of anger, and strong pro-women sentiments that come from feminists are mainly confidence-building routines. Just like a football team getting psyched up to run out onto the playing field, or a person preparing to walk into a crucial job interview, the first step to making important changes in your life has to involve the building up of one's self-confidence. What you have been witnessing over the past years has been a massive, self-conscious, society-wide confidence-raising session among women. And some of it comes out sounding like "women are better than men," which may sound like strong stuff, but maybe works as the first step to pulling oneself out of the messages that society has swamped women in for so long that sound like "women are dirt compared to men." As a result of this constant battering, physical and emotional, many women go through a stage in their feminism (and some retreat there, wounded and never really recovered) where they reject as much of masculine culture and individual men as they can manage. They need the time alone, to find out what they want and what they are

away from the constant messages that they are nothing except in relation to a man. Having found out, they most of the time come back to the rest of society with a lot more to offer once they've discovered who they really are.

But there sure is a lot of fear about "reverse sexism" being talked about by men. One really funny example I read about on the newsstand last week (the cover of US NEWS TODAY, read through the glass) was titled something like "The New Reverse Sexism: Women Are Laughing at Men." I laughed. Whatever happened to the "women don't have a sense of humor" complaint, I wondered.

What I was trying to point out with my vague definitions of media fans vs. literary fans, fanzine fans, etc., is that the boundaries (if they are there at all) are extremely vague for individuals. One person, one day might be more a media fan than a literary fan, but the next day might be another sort altogether. That's what I was trying to get at when I mentioned what my label might be. I think that most people around here would have figured that I would classify myself as a literary fan, and pointing out that my prime identification right now is as a fanzine fan, I thought, would point out that labels are unrepresentative when we try to use them personally. They're only useful, I think as ways to point to large groups of people, and in the case of "media fans", the term is very necessary to describe some of the changes in big SF conventions over the past decade. But when we start using the term like astrological signs to describe the personalities of individuals, then the system doesn't work. You discover that this so-called media fan reads several books a week, and that so-called literary fan only fakes an understanding of the classics and secretly gobbles up gothic romances in their spare time, and that so-called fanzine fan doesn't have the time to read fanzines any more... Like I said before, use words when they're useful (a simple, but often overlooked rule of thumb). It's not necessarily the case that if we have a group of recognizable media fans that every one of the individuals in that group can be defined with that term as well. And there's no reason to want to do so anyway. People are more complicated than a label.

Actually, I think **Andy's** comment was right on the mark. He said, "media and literature are not the issue in our controversy. I propose scrapping the Media-fen title, and switching over to 'Scumfen,' a name which I think more closely approximates the human filth we've been talking about." (And, **Hope**, here's more on the subject you wanted to hear more about, i.e., "women," "blacks" and "media fans" converted from derogatory terms to proud titles.)

It's a pretty common phenomenon for a new label to draw a large portion of popular definition from the derogatory opinions of outsiders. The derogatory opinions might even be based on reality in some individual instances, but few people would argue that the minority characterize the group as a whole. But the best way to fight the degradation of a group's title is for the majority of the group members to wear it proudly and to ignore the slurs. Women are doing this with a lot of terms that used to be meant as insults when preceded by the adjective, "female." And the term "black" was changed from an insult to a battle cry and a proud affiliation. I should think that if "media fans" is a name you want to use, that it could be converted to just such a strong and proud title. Unless another one becomes powerful, in which case you could sneer at people who use it like SF fans sneer when they hear the appellation, "sci fi" fan. But it's up to the people who consider themselves to belong to that group to do the work of "converting" the title, not of the outsiders (to stop using it "unfairly").

Speaking of which: I think **Kim (K.)** made the most cogent comment on the assigned topic of why there weren't many blacks in fandom. I think too that the most we can really do (ourselves, I mean, as a group of white SF fans) is to ask questions. Obviously none of us has the answer. Do black kids read SF? Do black SF readers become attracted to fandom but get turned away? I'd be comfortable going a bit further and saying that I assume that black kids do (or would) read SF when it's available to them, and would enjoy fandom too. Too suggest that there might be some, real difference between blacks and whites that

affects intellectual interests seems so obviously crazy, and potentially racist to me, that I have to believe that the derth of black fans is a reflection of our still-divided society. Something that will eventually--soon, I hope--go away.

Laura, I didn't realize that you were still having trouble getting your apazine delivered. If you want, I would be willing to send it to you via interdepartmental mail, the same way you sent me your zines a couple months ago to give to Andy. If you get them to me before the Wednesday before the deadline, I could just give your zines to Andy at Nick's; and if you were willing to wait till the Wednesday after Andy hands out the apas, I could send them back to you the same way when I went to work the next day. Just let me know.

No, I didn't think Last Tango in ~~Buxley~~ Paris was erotic at all, Hope. Well maybe the part where she's trying to masturbate without touching herself. But most of the time, I was trying very hard not to identify with her because when I did, I felt like walking out of the theater (I felt I was supposed to be attracted to the idea of being the ultimate victim). And when I managed to stay "outside" of the character and the story, just a witness, I mostly felt appalled and completely unable to understand the two people's relationship or what the woman got out of it... So, no, not erotic for me.

You won't believe it, folks. But it's still November as I type this. To be specific it's very, very early in the morning of November 31. I'm high on the effects of several cans of diet coke, trying to get all the things done that I thought I'd have plenty of time to do today because Scott couldn't come to Madison this weekend. and I thought that Hope and I would be done with the claymation film yesterday (11/29). But we had to do about four hours of work on it this morning (11/30) and so I only had an afternoon free. In any case --with so, so much to do in so little time--of course, I decided to spend some of it finishing off this apazine. It's the old principle of The-Thing-That-You-Least-Have-To-Do-Is-The-Thing-You-Most-Want-To-Do.

So I'm going to shock Andy and hand him copies of this apazine next Wednesday, no doubt while he's still handing out copies of the last issue, and discover the answer to the mystery of whether early apa-members get their zines placed at the beginning or the end of the apa.

See you next month.

Jeanne

