

DEPT. OF GOOFS OF DAVE Uh, it's
VAN ARNAM (OF 1730 like this...
HARRISON AVE, APT 353, I left work
BRONX, NY 10453: last Friday
 a bit early,

and so didn't have time to send off
FD 140 to Fred Patten. Then next
week I forgot my promise to myself
to mail it off Monday. So this week
I've got nothing in Apa L, and next
week I'll have two things. *sigh*

FIRST DRAFT #141

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WHITE-LUPOFF FEUD ERUPTS! FLASH NEWSBREAK! A small bumbledy kitten variously named 'Sunny' and 'Little Mary Sunshine' has been tearing up #353 for some weeks now. (The kitten has been so determinedly disruptive that I have occasionally meditated unilaterally changing its name to 'No'...) Well, this cat, obtained (as every schoolboy knows) from Ted & Robin White, now has a a tiny little feline 'chum' or 'buddy' obtained yesterday (Thanksgiving) from Pat & Dick Lupoff. (This furry atom of kittenlife was named 'Mickey Mouse' by Ken Lupoff, and seems appropriate enough, in a vaguely obscure fashion.)

We introduced them, they rubbed noses, and they have been fighting ever since. At least until an hour ago, when I left them peacefully sleeping side by side. I presume the conflict will begin again upon their awakening, and the White-Lupoff feud will continue...

DEPT OF HOUSES: Cindy & I went out to Staten Island last week to check out an ad for a house which sounded like the maddest thing ever to be put on the block; well, it was, pretty much -- 15 rooms or so, a turret, 2d floor porches front and rear, peaceful residential residence ten minutes from the ferry, 3 floors and basement, tudor dining room, and a variety of nutty archetectonics sufficient to gladden the eye of any lover of substantial old houses.

Unfortunately we can't afford it.

Next year after a bunch of movie scripts, maybe. This year, no. *sigh*

BOOKS I HAVE WRITTEN DEPT: I took the day off today, seeing as it was between Thanksgiving and the weekend, to write. Bigholly, I got six pages done. I might get done by the end of next week.

MOVIES I HAVE NOT: Three movie contracts (total value \$12,000/-) are resting in Henry Morrison's hands, pending approval by his lawyer. Ted and Rich have each done an outline, which I hope to retype this weekend. It seems almost certain now that after 2½ and more years, we're getting our chance. I am, however, avoiding my customary hysterical tone because I no longer believe in this situation one way or the other; I'm simply numb. We'll probably get the jobs, do them, get paid, and see the screenings before I'll finally accept it. owell; it's late. Hence, some *filler* ...

LETTERS...

DAN GOODMAN:

Dear Dave, STAR GLADIATOR #133: The metaphors in that 9-line sentence aren't too bad, although they are something which should be revised out by the third draft. ((What! Metaphor is the soul of prose & poetry!))

Null-Q Press
Undecided Publication #230

RP: :22H
IF: : (?)

((DAN GOODMAN continued:)) Main trouble is where you say "...is perhaps beginning to...." YOU USE TOO MANY DAMNED MANY QUALIFIERS AND PASSIVE VERBS! That phrase sounds indecisive, the way you have it there. ((GHoddammit, it's supposed to! On the other hand, no doubt it's the last leftover heritage from my decade of ensorcellment to the prose style of James Branch Cabell... -- dgv))

You're doing two things, which you've lumped together under "learning to write." One is learning to produce good prose. The other is learning proper work habits. J.R.R. Tolkien is a mster of prose, but no one with his work habits could possibly make a living as a writer. Earle Stanley Gardner has eminently professional work habits, but he'll never be more than a mediocre writer. ((Learning the proper work habits is far more work, I suspect, than learning the proper prose style, at least on some levels.))

Yes, writing inferior stuff is a prerequisite to learning to write better. But you must be willing to learn. And you'll never become as good a writer as you might be, unless everything you ever write is inferior. Inferior to what you're going to write next, that is. There are three kinds of writers; those who strive to improve, and are never satisfied; those who repeat themselves; and those who are on the way down.

You've seen part of my share of the thing I'm writing with Earl Evers. It's the best fiction I've done so far; it incorporates everything I've learned about writing. (By the time Earl and I get through ~~staying at each other~~ correcting each other's mistakes, the damn story should be salable.) But it's only a shadow of the fantasy I want to write; and which I didn't realize I wanted to write till I'd begun on this. Once I've gotten that one written, I can start on something else -- of which I have only the vaguest glimpse now.

Listen to Lin Carter's and Ted White's advice, yes -- but remember that they're both still learning how to write. Carter knows far more about literature than he knows how to use in his own fiction. I have trouble reading his stuff -- I keep tripping over ghostly footnotes.

Ted is still short of his goal, whatever it is. The book he's trying to write will be enjoyable when he finally gets it on paper; but it won't be anything I would want to write, and quite likely it'll be nothing like the book you want to do. Ted has a rather simple picture of the world (oversimplified, by my standards), which shows through in his fiction even when he's trying to be van Vogtian. It's perhaps more obvious in his political statements; he doesn't think about politics in black-and-white fashion, but he sees politics as being basically simple.

Your picture of the universe, as expressed both in your writing and in your political statements, is ~~unspeakable~~ rather harder to describe. I'm not yet sure whether it's complex or inconsistent, or both. ((I've not yet formulated my views, but they no doubt will relate to my basically eclectic outlook on Things.)) And the way I look at the world? Wheels within subplots within hoaxes within conspiracies within trends. If I don't watch myself carefully, I tend to add at least one plot twist per paragraph. Which might not be bad, except I do it instead of characterization. ((Take a leaf from Ted -- Block Your Action Out Ahead.)) Extremism in the defense of moderation is no vice,

☐☐☐ & Hoping You Are The
Sane... -- dgv

Dan