

# FAN-NOISE

#1 ("America's Finest Amateur Publication, Regardless of Category") is made by Gary Deindorfer, 40 Atterbury Avenue, Trenton, N. J. 08618, to be sent out as a rider with Focal Point ("America's Amateur Publication"). Fan-Noise has been hyphenated for your pronouncing convenience.

"TERRY CARR FOR TAFF!" -- This Terry Carr fellow has been one of our best fans and people for many years now. He has published such magazines as DARK STAR and TROLL CHOWDER, he is an exmember of Cult, and he has had material in Charles Lee Riddle's PEON. Why shouldn't we send him over and give him the trip of his life? I can't think of a reason. Vote Terry Carr for TAFF!

SOMETHING FOR REDD BOGGS -- I went down to the local stationery store again last week. "I'll have a quire of A B Dick Legalength stencils with film covers," I said.

The counterman is a little rolypoly fellow with a crewcut that grows in unsightly patches. He is the guy who usually waits on me. I call him Stewhead, or sometimes Brushhead. "A B Dick Legalength stencils?" he asked. "A quire? With film covers?"

"Yes! That's right!" I said. I was getting mighty impatient.

He reached up on a shelf behind him. "Here you are, sir. One quire A B Dick Legalength stencils with film covers." He wrapped them up for me.

A minute later I was out on the street with my stencils under my arm, thinking what a juicy new chapter this incident would make in the Stewhead Report. What a stupid guy! Redd Boggs will sure get a kick out of hearing about this, I said to myself.

PRO DEPT. -- Lovely young Flora Fauna, femmefan, reports that she has just sold her body to the Belmont Hotel in New York City. "I'll be charging \$5 straight, \$8 French," says Flora. Congratulations!

RECURRENT THEME SYMBOLS IN THE SCIENCE FICTION OF HENRY SLESAR, PART ONE -- I propose in this series of critical articles to examine "recurrent theme symbols" in the science fiction of Henry Slesar. I have found these theme symbols to recur, again and again in Slesar's work---so insistently, in fact, that I like to think of them as being recurrent. I consider them theme symbols because I have discovered them to partake of the qualities not only of the theme, per se, but also of the symbol.

But first things first.

I would seem to stand alone in considering Henry Slesar an important---nay, a seminal---influence in the science fiction of the past fifteen years. At least, nobody has ever agreed with me about this.

Probably that is why I am writing this series of articles instead of somebody else. But let's not be sidetracked by unimportant considerations.

The first of these theme symbols I call machine consciousness. Slesar, or, rather, Slesar, deals with this machine consciousness in a light, humorous manner---though with the familiar profound coating---in "The Success Machine" (AMAZING STORIES, September 1957). This story deals with the Personnelvac, a machine whose job it is to evaluate employee performance and to recommend separating the employee from the organization (known as General Products) where this would appear to be in the best interests of the organization.

The Personnelvac---with a most amusing manner of burping out its judgments on printed cards (but, then, physical humor like burping and throwing up and falling down has always been my favorite kind)---begins coughing up recommendations that nearly everybody connected with the organization be fired. What a development! Honestly, with all that burping, I laughed and laughed and laughed!

But let's return to the real matter at or on hand.

Recurrent Theme Symbols in SF of H. Slesar, cont'd:

Things have reached a pretty pass, I want to tell you! Then a gentleman named Colihan is struck with a most ingenious solution to this problem of a power mad machine. He makes out an employee record on the Personnelvac itself and he feeds this information to the machine. After a period for rumination, the Personnelvac digests this information on itself and coughs up a judgment, to wit:

"...because of a mechanistic approach to humanistic evaluation, subject displays inability to incorporate human equation in analytical computation, resulting in technically accurate but humanistically incorrect deductions.

Recommendation: Fire him."

Colihan dropped the pink card into the chute. In half an hour, the Action wheels of General Products concluded their work and the Personnelvac had winked for the last time.

Well, there certainly are some important and deep issues raised by this story, aren't there? Henry Slesar posits a number of questions, some of them perhaps capable of many answers. The human equation. Ah, yes, the human equation! Just what is it, how can it be resolved? asks Slesar. What is a machine? What is machine consciousness? Is there a future for the machine or will man supercede it? Is man a machine? Is a machine a man? What does "winked for the last time" mean? Could it be a misprint for something even more interesting? What do theymake at General Products?

One is somehow reminded of the issues raised by such stories as Karl Capek's RUR and the Asimov robot series. One also realizes that these writers have nothing on Slesar.

Well, what about these questions? Henry Slesar characteristically has chosen not to propose glib answers to them. I can do no less. I propose to examine other of these recurrent theme symbols (as I call them) of Slesar in future installments. I will also name other Slesar stories where this matter of machine consciousness is raised, showing how he rings impressive and telling changes on this important problem which we will have to solve.

Our very survival may well depend upon it.

---Continued in next  
issue.

BAD GUY -- There is a Bad Guy in fandom and I have been watching him. I want to warn this Bad Guy right now that I will hurt him if he acts up! I am sorry to have to inject this ominous note into my magazine, but sometimes a person has got to speak out!

JUST FREEZE ME -- That is my awfully clever title leading off a few quick comments on the new process of human being freezing that has been getting some publicity of late. I have heard the force behind the idea, Robert Ettinger, along with Fred Pohl and others, discussing the whole thing at great length on the all-night Randi show on WOR radio in NYC. I must raise the same objection that Lester del Rey mentioned recently (on a television show, come to think of it). He pointed out the fact that as things are set up now, the plan is to freeze people after they have died. This makes absolutely no sense, of course. Brain cells deteriorate immediately upon death and they are not restorable. Pohl, Ettinger & Co. would seem to blithely ignore this "basic problem, and continue to insist that "human beings must be frozen!" And that is all these gentleman will say. They would seem intent on freezing souls with brains quite ruined by the time their bodies have been frozen (and quite a long process at that, during which time the cells continue to deteriorate), to be awakened at a later time when men will have the presumed intention and desire of reeducating a body with a mass of ruined sludge inside its skull.

Straighten up there, you guys! Think this out! I insist! ---gd.