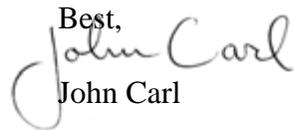


Hmm. I see that FANGLE #1 was put out before I even entered fandom. I hope that that doesn't mean that I'll have to gafiate before you'll be able to put out another one.

People like you make me jealous. You can Write, and you can Draw. I seem to be capable of writing (note absence of cap) and nothing more. I've always been a sort of frustrated artist. I used to fancy that a great artist was locked inside of me somewhere, struggling to get out, but I no longer kid myself in that regard. I seem to be incapable of producing any piece of art with more than a modicum of complexity, and even the simplest of cartoons always seem to turn out slightly lopsided. Nevertheless, I've had some small drawings appear in several fanzines (mostly lettering; I'm capable of greater flexibility there than in any other artistic field)—but that appears to be the high point of personal artistic success.

Best,

John Carl

It's all too conceivable that you might have gafiated before I came out with this, I'm sorry to say. Might have done any number of times, in fact...

I've never worried overmuch about my illos and cartoons when they go lopsided. I either straighten them up on Photoshop or pretend that that's the way they were supposed to be. Mostly the latter. As to complexity—with all due seriousness, sometimes simplest is best. Witness the great Rotsler.

ERIC MEYER

October 25, 1974 – Falls, PA

I trust that FANGLE will come out again, soon! This is what I always say when confronted with excellent faanish zines like TANDEM, MOTA, SWOON... You can do it, Ross. I know you can!! The cover is one of the best I've seen. Original, well designed, well executed. I've spent a good deal of time looking at it. As you probably know, I, like so many of your letter writers, have tried my hand at a bit of Art. That's about the extent of it. I do not consider myself a fanartist. It just happened that at the time I was breaking into Fandom I was going through one of those "artistic phases" which seem to grip me every five years or so.

I'm not quite sure what it is that triggers these "phases." Perhaps discouragement with my writing. At any rate, most of my artistic production can be better understood in terms of psychology than aesthetics. I find that drawing occupies my mind. The physical action of scratching a pen against a piece of paper seems to have a certain therapeutic value. Therefore, the more scratching I do the better I like it. I'm sure there must be some psychological explanation of why someone feels compelled to fill whole blank sheets of paper with minute scratchings, and I'd rather not hear it.

The fact that I cannot draw also affects my artwork to a certain extent. Aliens, for instance, become my favorite subjects, since no one knows what an alien looks like. Perhaps their elbows really do flex backwards, perhaps their calves really are down around their ankles. Who can criticize my rendering of such creatures? Then there is my method of composition. I may start doodling in the center of my paper. Suddenly there appears a line which resembles a forearm I once saw in BRIDGEMAN'S ANATOMY. I take it from there. If the arm is in an awkward position I may rest

it upon something, or place something in its hand. The drawing proceeds outward from this central core, bits and pieces being added at random, to fill up all available space. This way I don't have to think about what I'm doing. I haven't yet worked out a similar method for writing which I find damnably hard work.

Art does have an advantage over writing in that you create a tangible object rather than just words on paper.

I've always drawn. I was very fond of airplanes. Being a reactionary during my youth I stuck with propeller driven planes. I wasn't much for tanks or war machines, preferring more personalized violence. My friends and I wasted most of our school tablets in drawing the adventures of a race of beings consisting of a round head-body and stick limbs. It wasn't that we were unable to draw people.

It was just that we could whip these creatures out faster and put them through their paces with less effort. The "adventures" we drew invariably involved the protagonists in some sort of gross mutilation. They were either either stabbed, shot, burned, eaten, or blown to smithereens. I was very fond of the war motif, the bloodier the better. I believe that most of my cartoons were based on the Alamo, wherein all the heroes are slaughtered one by one. I possessed, at one time, the entire set of Davy Crockett bubble gum cards. There was one card depicting the death of each major character. Bowie, you'll recall, died in bed, knife in hand. I seem to recall that Davy's sidekick (or one of his sidekicks) was picked off by a rather good marksman. At least I remember that the card in question was called "A bullet finds its mark." At any rate, it was all worked out very neatly with a particular, unique death for each character. And this was the model for much of my early cartooning.

Strange isn't it how children are so uniformly attracted to war. That seems to indicate the whole concept is rather infantile.

Well, yes, I have copious notes for a novel myself. It's going to be a really excellent novel, until I try to write it, so for that reason I'll probably never get around to it.

Incidentally, I don't want to exaggerate the talents of fanwriters—I'm not aware of any fanish writing that could even approach the quality of your average, solid sf novel—but I have seen quite a lot of pure trash in magazines lately. In recent issues of IF and FANTASTIC for example, I've read stories that seemed to me nonprofessional and far below the quality of the best fanwriting. I'm surprised that, under these circumstances, more fanwriters haven't broken into professional print. What do you think about this? Is there some explanation? Am I prejudiced toward fans?

Well, see you next issue... right? ...right?



Ri-i-i-ght.... And here it is!

I can certainly understand about those "phases." With me it sometimes has to do with deadlines and expectations... If a piece of art is promised to a faned, I seem to have a sudden yen to create imperishable prose. Or even the more usual perishable kind, so long as it's written, not ~~stirred~~ drawn. On the other hand—you see it coming, don't you!—if I'm on deadline for an essay or article or other piece of written material, the ol' doodling pen, pencil, stylus, mouse... whatever it takes...begins to practically move itself across the sketchpad (mousepad...whatever). Nothing quite as automatic as you describe, however, in either case.

Re the fondness of children for war—I do like your conclusion. It stems, I think, from the fact that children often do not learn empathy or personal responsibility for some time. Complaints about the dire effects of this or that popular pastime, from comic books when I was a kid, to videogames in recent years, with multitudinous variations on those themes along with