

It seems to be generally accepted, all over the world, that science fiction fandom is on the decline. The enthusiasm of the old days is gone. No longer does one feel anything out of the ordinary in being a science fiction fan.

The diehards will counter this by saying that there are more known fans and general readers in the world than ever before. This is only because science fiction is more widespread than ever before. The enthusiasm, that was, is almost non-existent now.

The reason for this is the lack of enthusiasm amongst the writers. No longer do they feel that their feelings of rebellion against society are satisfied by writing science fiction.

All the themes have been worked through and through. The new story nowadays is the one that makes a new twist on an old theme. Not the one that invents a new theme. Consequentially, both the writer and the reader are robbed of that sense of awe that comes of dealing with the unknown. The emphasis is on trick endings, subtle twists and the like.

One could compare the zeal and idealism of the very early christians, when theirs was a new faith, with that of the medieval priests, who argued on the single or double nature of Christ. Once the existence was established and his various doings accepted the zeal naturally waned. It was only during the Crusades, when the ultimate nature of Christ was called to question, that the zeal was found again.

Perhaps, were science fiction to be banned, the zeal of former years would return. But, if it isn't, fandom will just waste away. Someone in New Worlds or Science Fantasy, I can't remember which, wrote an article slinging off at modern stories; the "slick" way they are written in and it's uninduciveness to creating a sense of awe. Could you imagine Clark Ashton Smith writing in a slick style?