

FANTOPON

No. 3, intended for the Shadow FAPA mailing of November, 1961, no. 6 FAPA mailing 97; conducted by Les Geber. Fantopon, the narcotic zine, comes from the basement of Fath Berman, Fapa w-ler 38, 5620 Edgewater Boulevard, Minneapolis 17, Minnesota.

MAILING COMMENTS

I. The Mesmerists

#'Basket 1—Cal Demmon

I'd call you "Biff," but I don't know how to pronounce the double apostrophe marks. Certainly it is necessary to introduce oneself. Think what trouble you would have had filling that second page if you hadn't introduced yourself. Of course, you introduced very few truthful remarks into the introduction, but it still filled the page.

The Lurking Shadow Vol II No 1—Chuck Hansen

It was a pleasure to meet you at the Seacon—though rather a surprising one. Since you are one of Norm Metcalf's friends, I'd supposed you to be about Norm's age. From your interest in weapons, I'd been visualizing you as tall, thin, gangly, and given to imagining yourself as Conan. Instead you look and sound like an older Robin Goodfellow. Still, I hope that you do like to pretend to be Conan; it would be a pity if all the image were wrong.

Yeah, I went back two places on the w-1 in the May mailing, and only went up one in August. At this rate, none of us are going to get in. I like! walker cartoons.

Idle Hands 5—Norm Metcalf

Hip-hip-hurrah. Hip-hip-hurrah. You said you wanted a few cheers for Fuss Chauvenet for having started the SHAPA. Though they're not really needed, since each SHAPA mailing is a mimeographed monument to his idea. It spoils the alliteration, but I suppose I ought to say "mimeographed, dittoed, and somehow duplicated monument."

Le Shadeau Sait—Bob Lichtman

My main reason for not wanting surplus stock copies of FAPA mailings is that I would not be able to get them all, and, mailing comments being as they are, it would be like hearing one side of a telephone conversation. Besides, I have a little bit of Completist's Disease, and it would annoy me to have several mailings with a few missing.

Fipsissewa 1—Jerry Page and Charles Wells

So far as I know, there are no Christie or Sayers fandoms. There is a Colin Glencannon group, and I think I remember hearing about a Nero Wolfe group, but that's all. I doubt that many such fandoms are possible. I agree with you that Christie and Sayers (especially Sayers) are good writers, but their stories characterize only people whereas the great charm of the Holmes stories is the unconscious portrait of Victorian England. I wouldn't want to read articles on Lord Peter Whimsy and Hercule Poirot when I could read their adventures; but I do prefer to read certain kinds of writings on the writings rather than the Holmes stories [Heresy!]. By "certain kinds," I mean, mostly, writings about England as well as (or instead of) Holmes, such as Christopher Morley wrote. Contrariwise, I no longer read solutions of the various dating difficulties. The first ones are interesting, few essays trying to date the stories now are anything but second-splitters.

The fable is clever. So are the brief interlineations.

Fap 2—Les Gerber

I suggest that you send two mailings to the below-35 w-lers who send in Shapa zines: the mailing in which the zine appears, and the following mailing. If more than five such w-lers contribute to a mailing, you apologize to some (the ones whose zines came in last, I should think), and note in FAP that 110 zines are now required. That way a w-ler might miss the mailing in which his zine appeared, but would be sure to see the following mailing with egoboo for him (if any) and be able to put out another issue.

PI. The Hypnotists

Ankus 1—Bruce Felz

As I mentioned to you at the Seacon, there are two misprints in the "Ballade." It's my fault, because you showed this to me before using it, and I could have spotted the errors. But I was so busy admiring the illo that I didn't think to proof-read. Checking my files, I find that Bruce Henstell started the errors (unless it was a mistake in the copy I sent him), I noted the errors in a letter of comment, and, so far as I know, he did not bother to print the corrections. The errors are in the first two lines of the second verse which should read "Our dreams, from in our soft, still homes/ Go reaching high."

For someone who doesn't care much for Oz, Dean certainly has a thorough knowledge of its mortal inhabitants. Good misadventure.

Celephais 28—Bill Evans

Oh, but you must read The Once and Future King. At least, I think you should, though I can't compell you. The second and third parts are unsatisfying, but they are better in TOzFK because the cutting trimmed away a lot of excess. "The Sword in the Stone" is worse, because some of the best parts were cut. But the fourth part makes The Once and Future King even better than The Sword in the Stone. Stone is the story of the education of the king, ending in victory. King is the story of the reign of the king, ending in victory in defeat.

Moonshine 29—it rhymes!—Rick Sneary

State-level monarchy would be amusing and would have some advantages. I suspect that the monarchy described in Double Star would have the same advantages, though, and be easier to install. Or am I just enchanted by that handsome Freas cover of Lorenzo Smythe crogging at the be-robed Willem?

I'm not sure what my own personal hell would be like. It would involve large, loud juke-boxes playing rock-and-roll and schmaltzy versions of great compositions, and there wouldn't be anything to read...aside from that, I don't know. Maybe that would be enough! Of course, I don't believe in Hell, n-n-not at all. I do believe in Heaven, in a nebulous sort of way. I visualize it as the Inn at the End of the World. With many roads leading up to it: a cobble-stoned road with hansom cabs rattling by, a dusty path through a thick wood, etc. But no freeways!

Moonshade 2—Rick Sneary & Len Moffatt

"What's Next?...and When?" was interesting to read, though the only comment that comes to my mind is, "How true."

Vandy 12—Buck and Juanita Coulson

Tolkien fans who think it is The Lords of the Ring? That one, I don't think I've seen. We're continually typoing "Tolkien" as "Tolkein" (or maybe some of them don't know), and I'm always confused as to whether it is The Lord of the Ring or The Lord of the Rings. Excuse me while I check...Rings. Curious. Reminds me of the borogove/borogrove confusion.

"In those days one didn't say 'hell' over a national network." Hah! Why be so tame? I quote from the October 21-27, 1961 TV Guide: "This letter is written to remind you that there are still many people...who find such words as 'Hell' and 'damn' used in television shows objectionable—especially coming from teenagers as on last week's Bus Stop." To which the editor

replied, "Because of unfavorable reaction to Bus Stop 'hells' and 'damns,' ABC banned such words on all future network programs." I thought it was just network officials who atoned for sadism and stupidity by censoring little things; now I see that John Q. must be doing the same thing.

Limbo 7—Dave Rike, actually by Bill Donaho

I suspect that I know why Earl felt that the people answering WHY IS A FAN were evasive: they told the truth, but not the Truth. It is hard to tell the Truth, because, in the first place, one's view of it keeps changing, and, in the second place, it is a matter of balance of facts, not just of facts. In my answer, I gave Earl the facts, but I didn't try hard enough to balance them; I hadn't time. Bjo and Anonymous, I think, also failed to tell tell Truth. But their failure was different from mine and the rest, because they told one aspect of Truth—an unpleasant aspect—where we just told facts.

But, heavens, Bill! you say "when I was 8 and 9 we used to play all sorts of imaginative games together...By the time we were seventeen we bored the bigesus out of each other....Unlike A. J. I never played imaginative games when alone....I told myself stories." But that's how I was! Like you, I often told stories based on stories I had read, but most often my stories were ones I had made up myself (highly derivative, of course), and I believe I began telling myself "original" stories before I began re-telling stories. I still tell myself those stories. Your use of paper-dolls reminds me of a story (which I cannot find after an hour's search) about a man who, as a boy, had told himself and his nasty step-brother stories about a paper-man named Mr. Montmorency Mudge. The nasty brother shows up and Mr. Montmorency Mudge comes to the rescue. It appeared in F&SF, I feel sure. Anyone know it?

The Vinegar Worm Vol II No. 3—Bob Leman

At my high school, the time which, a generation ago, would have been used to teach grammar, was used to teach a little grammar and read many books. I think this is a better way of teaching correct usage, because one never has time to stop to think, "Is it 'if I were,' or 'if I was'?" If one has read so much that what is right simply sounds right, there is little trouble. Grammar is really useful only in the study of foreign languages, and I learned most of what I know of grammar in French classes.

Since I am an adolescent, or perhaps a Young Adult, I can't refute Cogswell myself. However, I have noticed that most of my best teachers have been people who did enjoy talking to their

pupils. That is, they did spend time talking with adolescents (though not with dullards) voluntarily. Of course, that doesn't refute Cogswell, either. The laws of school and campus being as they are, teachers aren't even to smoke with, let alone drink with their pupils.

The Rambling Feb 25-26-27—Gregg Calkins

At the University of Minnesota it is against the law for any student to smoke on campus. In fact, it is against the law for any student to smoke, and "student" goes from kindergarten through Ph.D. Nevertheless, the areas where it smoking is allowed on campus are carefully marked, and the "law" is never enforced. Thanks for putting out the Bloch and Heinlein bibliographies.

Driftwood—Sally Kidd

Enjoyed it, but have no comments.

Lighthouse 3—Pete Graham and Terry Carr

"Sometimes I'm Happy" has the beginning of a fine story, but the whole story isn't much of a story. Bitter boy begins to meet girl who will help him, is interrupted, and walks away. Nothing has happened. Tanner has done nothing and learned only what he knew before. I think it breaks down when Cynthia comes on-stage. She's too bitchy—and works too hard at it—to be quite believable.

No mailing comments; that's not too many....

The editorials and column were amusing, but I've no comments on them.

AN ARTICLE FOR BOB LEMAN

[Leman's crushing rejoinder to the letter from A.J. Budrys: Aw, come on, now, pal. Does a majority vote make one book better than another?...The Vinegar Worm, Vol II, No. 3]

When I was in eighth grade, our junior high play was an adaptation by a tenth grader (done without permission, so far as I know) of The Thirteen Clocks. My reaction was geegollygoshwow, and, when I failed to get a part, I begged sweetly and was given the job of "Assistant to the Director." During the early rehearsals, I had a lot of spare time and spent much of it reading.

One day the Golux brought a little book to rehearsal on "classic" books by Arnold Bennett. While he was busy finding 1000 jewels, I read the book. In it, Bennett said that a classic is simply one "which has been loved by a large number of otherwise intelligent people." After all, he said, what other criterion was there? One can set down rules for a great book, but the rules are found by examining earlier great books; those earlier great books were not found to be great because they followed those rules, but simply because a great many people loved them.

The stinger in Bennett's definition is "otherwise intelligent." How intelligent is "otherwise intelligent"? My own guess, is, "slightly above average," but the question really cannot be answered. Certainly, more intelligence is required to love Joyce than to love Dickens. I suspect that a workable definition of "otherwise intelligent" would be "intelligent enough to write a paper explaining why one liked or did not like the given work." In this case, my guess must be wrong, because the person slightly above average intelligence cannot write an essay on why he likes a book. Indeed, he cannot write an essay on anything, as hundreds of Freshman English courses testify.

Bennett goes on to say that the large number of people must come from different times. A minor virtue can make a book seem great at one period, and a minor fault can make a great book seem mediocre. George Meredith and William Shakespeare do nicely as examples, respectively. Thus no book is known to be a classic until it is about 100 years old or more.

To that I would add that the large number of people from different times must have read the book at different times in their own lives. Science fiction fans who re-read stories from the "Golden Age" (whichever period of stf they think is the GA) often find this out.

In other words, we cannot say now that any science fiction story is a classic (except, perhaps, H. G. Wells'), though we may feel sure that some will be recognized as classics later. In further other words, yes, Bob Leman, the majority vote does decide which is the best novel—in the case you mentioned, it does decide whether Rogue Moon or A Canticle for Leibowitz is better—with several ifs and Buts which disqualify the Hugo Awards. Hugos don't find The Best; they find stories which may be The Best.

