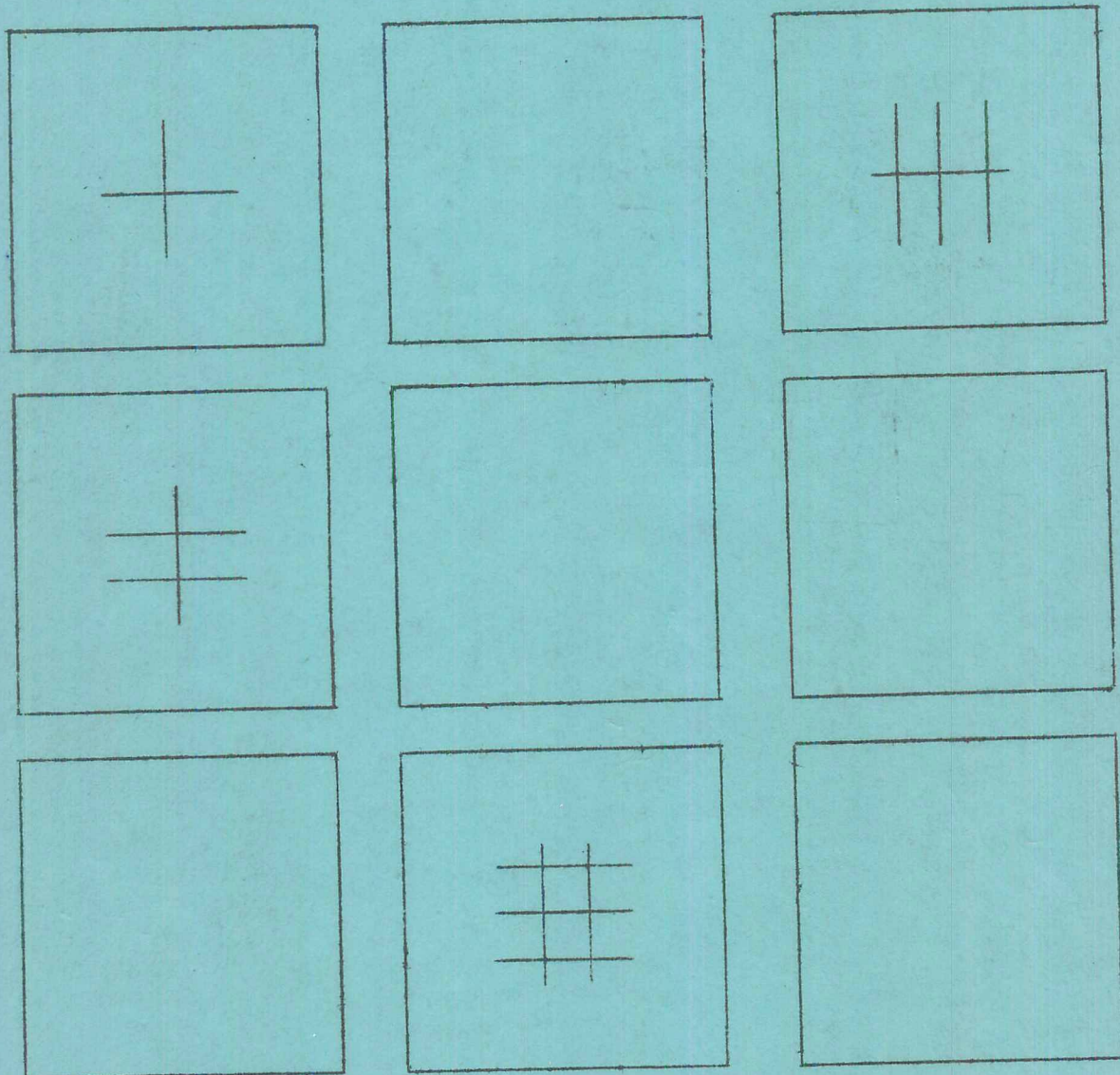


Hunkle

"The Happy Beast"



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HURKLE

is the informal publication issued occasionally for the Spectator Amateur Press Society by Redd Boggs, 2215 Benjamin Street N. E., Minneapolis 18, Minnesota. This issue, volume I, number 6, is intended for the July 1951 mailing. "The prettiest of the hurkle are blue." -- Theodore Sturgeon.

A Gafia Press publication.

BY ANY OTHER NAME?

You'll probably be seeing that title "Hurkle" up there on the masthead for as long as this magazine, SAPS, or I last. That statement may not sound as momentous as it was intended, but that's because you weren't aware of my steadfast intention of someday changing the title of this sheet. Since issue number one I've considered "Hurkle" a temporary title, to use only till I thought of a better one. I'm still not satisfied with the title, but I'm reconciled to its use henceforth.

Good fanzine titles are hard to find these days. They always were, of course, but as time goes on the supply of good, unused titles dwindles. The first fanzine, almost 20 years ago, used one of the best titles available -- The Time Traveller -- and in the years since, clever fans have laid claim to most of the other "naturals." Such titles as Inspiration, Dawn, Horizons, Paradox, and the almost perfect one, 2000 A.D., cause me to bite my lips in envy. I wish I could have thought of them first.

When I have to christen a new fanzine, I am usually up against a deadline and have to think of a suitable title almost overnight. I have to pluck a name from the air. The magazine is stencilled, mimeographed, and distributed before I have a chance to decide whether I like the title or not. Sky Hook was a title chosen in eleventh hour desperation, and although I wish I'd rendered it Skyhook, it's not a bad title, conveying as it does (at least to me) a sense of altitude and of man's straining higher toward the stars? heaven? utopia? on sheer determination alone. But Hurkle as a title is pretty sad. As a title it's greatly inferior to such current names as Contour, Skylark, Alpha and Omega (though none of these are my idea of a perfect title).

I intended to call this magazine Ad Lib, a title used on my abortive sapszine of 1947 which was never distributed. But I'd sent an incomplete copy of that unborn fanzine to Coslet and he'd printed part of it in his sapszine, making a game out of guessing who wrote it (no one succeeded). I didn't want to spoil Coswal's fun, so I seized upon Hurkle, a name from the then-recent Sturgeon story, though the name had no appealing connotations for me. I didn't even like the story!

Now it's too late to change. As Bob Pavlat pointed out last mailing, a regularly appearing title acquires a history and a tradition -- and in this case my respect for tradition is stronger than my dislike for the title. It would be irresponsible to switch titles now. If I changed the title once, that would be the precedent for changing it again. More irresponsibility.

So unless Theodore Sturgeon sues me for appropriating his coinage, it's Hurkle from now on. But I reserve the right to change my mind!

A CLASSICAL CLASSIC

Architectural expert and classics scholar Thomas Hardy gave the world a masterpiece in The Return of the Native (New York: Pocket Books, Inc.) that matches the balanced formality of both Gothic architecture and the Greek drama. This novel is

as painstakingly structured as to composition and form as the Salisbury cathedral, and in its rigid patterns it resembles the ancient Greek tragedy.

Like most Greek drama, The Return of the Native consists of five episodes (Hardy, of course, calls them "Books"), although as usually published, the novel has an added section, Book Six, "Aftercourses," the presence of which destroys the symmetry carefully constructed through five Books. That Hardy added it under protest, only to accede to the demands of those persons who must have a "happy ending," is clearly indicated in his footnote to the third chapter in an earlier edition of this work: "The writer may state here that the original conception of the story did not design a marriage between Thomasin and Venn....But certain circumstances of serial publication led to a change in intent. Readers can therefore choose between endings, and those with an austere artistic code can assume the more consistent conclusion to be the true one."

In its underlying structure, this novel also resembles the classical form. At least two of the dramatic unities are closely observed. Aristotle's first and most important principle, and the one most strictly preserved by the Greeks, that the action be "complete and whole and of a certain magnitude," is followed here. Hardy even seems to have followed the later and more rigid tradition that there must be no subplots: there are two sets of lovers in the story, but their destinies are so closely interwoven that their story is one, and a causal relationship exists between all incidents in the novel.

The unity of time -- even as modified to mean that the story should unfold in "a single revolution of the sun, or but slightly exceed this limit" -- is of course not observed, but a certain unity is attained by having the action of the story cover almost precisely one year's time, coming to a climax on the same date it began: the Fifth of November.

The third unity, that of place, is preserved: a single setting suffices -- "the vast tract of unenclosed wild known as Egdon Heath."

The setting is, perhaps, the most important factor of the novel, dominating as it does all characters in the story. The opening scene, presenting a lone figure toiling over the "long, laborious road" and swallowed by the desolation of the heathland, sets the mood of the whole book. Hardy was at his best when describing that "obscure, obsolete, superseded country" which he called Egdon heath. Few writers surpassed him in ability to describe and interpret the forces of nature as he found them exemplified by the somber wasteland. This passage is typical of Hardy:

At length Clym reached the margin of a fir and beech plantation that had been enclosed from heath land in the year of his birth. Here the trees, laden heavily with their new and humid leaves, were now suffering more damage than during the highest winds of the winter, when the boughs are specially disencumbered to do battle with the storm....Yet a few yards to Yeobright's right, on the open heath, how ineffectively gnashed the storm! Those gusts which tore the trees merely waved the furze and heather in a light caress. Egdon was made for such times as these.

This passage is especially significant in illuminating Hardy's feelings toward his characters. Like the imported, cultivated vegetation inside the fence is his chief protagonist, Eustacia Vye, who vows her hatred of the heath: "'Tis my cross, my misery, and will be my death." Like the furze and the heather are the people of the heath itself who bend before the winds of fate. Indeed, the wisdom of the heath

people seems to vary in direct ratio to their proximity to nature: Diggory Venn, the reddleman, who lives a lonely existence on the heath itself, is wisest of all.

The heath people serve two important functions in the novel. First, they take the Chorus' role, preventing the protagonists from planning secretly or doing anything covertly. Wildeve's abortive attempt to marry Thomasin; Wildeve's tryst with Eustacia; even Eustacia's disguise for the Yuletide mumming -- all are discovered by the villagers, who by gossip make these developments common knowledge both of the community and of the audience. In like fashion, they comment Chorus-like on the affairs of the protagonists, and the only touches of humor come from such Choric figures as Charlie and Christian Cantle.

More important, however, the people of Egdon heath portray the futile effect of struggling against nature, against destiny. In them Hardy depicts the governing influence of that which the Greeks called the Fates, against which struggle was useless.

The fatalistic view of the world is a philosophy Hardy gave pen to in the opening paragraph of Book First, chapter vii, "Queen of Night." In it, Eustacia Vye is characterized as having "the passions and instincts which make a model goddess." Hardy writes:

Had it been possible for the earth and mankind to be entirely in her grasp for a while, had she handled the distaff, the spindle, and the shears at her own free will, few in the world would have noticed the change of government. There would have been the same inequality of lot, the same heaping up of favors here, of contumely there, the same generosity before justice, the same perpetual dilemmas, the same captious alternation of caresses and blows that we endure now.

All classical protagonists have a fatal flaw. Eustacia's is her wilfulness, which is the mainspring of the plot, operating to disturb the lives of the others and in the end bringing on her own ruin and theirs.

The plot itself offers still another parallel to Greek tragedy: the unraveling of the plot-threads began well before the story opens. Thus, Clym has already decided to return to Egdon heath; Eustacia and Wildeve are already lovers; the proposed marriage of Wildeve and Thomasin has already failed. Though not beginning so abruptly upon the turning point as a Greek drama such as "Oedipus Rex," this novel devotes more time to the falling action than does the usual novel. It is more concerned with the outcome of the story than how it began. The ending, incidentally, resembles Greek tragedy in another respect: the death of Eustacia is not depicted directly -- it happens, rather, "off-stage."

Reading The Return of the Native is like witnessing a classic tragedy -- for "a great tragedy does not make us feel morbid or depressed; rather it uplifts us, 'purifies' us, so that we feel better for having seen it." The theme of the book, which is -- as Creon states it in "Antigone" -- "We must not wage a vain war with destiny" is not a pleasant one to modern man, who feels that through science he has freed himself from the demands of fate. In concise terms it is probably as abhorrent to most moderns as the predestination credo of the Calvinists. But in the continuum fashioned by Thomas Hardy the principle is not only logically but emotionally acceptable.

"They get lost without their maps/For they are really naught but saps."

ONCE OVER LIGHTLY

The policy is announced of reviewing only in FAPA all biapan publications. This means the editors of Zap, Bend Sinister, Nudity, Orgasm, and that Helena fanzine whose title I refuse to attempt to render here, will have to wait with bated breath till Sky Hook #11 comes out. Comments on their magazines appear there. Business out of the way, let's turn to Spectator. If the OE's term is one year, how come this -- your third mailing -- is election mailing, Eney? If it's only to allow the OE to take over for what technically is the mailing beginning the SAPS' fifth year, it is too bad. I think it was preferable to have the OE's term run concurrently with the calendar year. # If it matters what the average number of pages per magazine is for each mailing, it would be less misleading, for such mailings as the fifteenth, to figure some average other than the mean. The mean, as you figured it, of 17.1 pages per magazine was affected by the atypical size of Orgasm. Actually, that magazine of 30 pages was the only magazine larger than 16 pages. So in this case the mode or the median more accurately represented the "average" magazine. The mode was 6 pages, and the median was 7.5 pages. A vast difference from 17.1 pages!

The soprano tone of that Magazine called Alpha and Omega is enjoyable, but it's nice to have items like Bill Venable's "How to Be an Editor, Though Frustrated" for contrast. I enjoyed that article. I didn't care so much for Van Ingen's remarks about Agharti and "lost continents." Since he is an amateur archeologist, he should be aware of the concept of functionalism in culture, as expounded by modern anthropology (of which his field is only a branch). But he is not, or he wouldn't seize upon "the existence of pyramids in the Old as well as the New World" as evidence that Egypt and Central America had a common cultural beginning. All right, they both built pyramids, but for what use? Well, the Egyptian pyramids were Pharaohs' tombs; passages and crypts were hollowed out inside. The Mayan pyramids were bases upon which to erect temples -- they were flattened on top and were solid inside. In terms of function that's about as far apart as Egypt and Central America are geographically. I'll look up Dr Ossendowski, but I've a hunch his reputation is about as good as Colonel Churchward's. # Carrie Ohn's column is sometimes almost too feminine (if that's possible) but I'll admit that she digs up some odd facts and often makes a lovely wisecrack about them. But I had heard of Tannu Tuva, Carrie! You deserve a kiss (on the forehead, of course) for refraining from defining tuba in your item about that instrument as "an ill woodwind that nobody blows good." Thanks. # Either I'm flattered out of my wits because you said something nice about Hurkle, or that's a good mailing review, Meg. But it can't be the former, because I liked your fascinating remarks about Nudity better than your kind words about this fanzine. Well, yes, I do like Peter Pan, astronomy, and Genghis Khan (with reservations), but I'm neutral about Ogden Nash. Turning to your "In the Beginning" page, I find myself "sharing your views" about the Song of Solomon, too. # But, Meg, if you believe in lost continents, you'd better not read de Camp's book!

In Saprophyte, those anthropomorphic monoliths (?) were impressive and I liked that cartoon, "Modess, Because..." but the rest of this magazine was strictly space filler. Let's see some more, Henry.

2 Prime is another of those solemn promises of future activity that turn up regularly. I hope you're one of those unusual guys that keeps his promise, Bob. # Gilbert and Sullivan enthusiast? Trudy Kuslan would have loved you if you'd shown up in fandom when she was still around. Trudy never got anybody to share her enthusiasm for G & S very much. Art Widner related how tk's visitors were tied to their chairs and forced to listen to complete performances of "Pirates of Penzance," and so on. # Is it possible to "reprint in advance"? Hmm, I guess that's what the Reader's Digest does these days....

Polychromatic Revoltin' Development is almost improbably good, from the pointed and amusing "Education by Illustration" to the microfilm stuff. Yes, I did have a suitable lens, Martin. At least, it was strong enough, though too small in area. # There's no disgrace in specializing; you can still be a good fan though you read only the top three. I doubt if there are a dozen people in the world who buy every s-f magazine these days. And, as you say, nobody could read them all. # The only part of this magazine that didn't strike me as topnotch was the mailing review. For all you said there, you might as well have forgotten all about it.

We travel from Royal Oak to Detroit and Intergalactic. "Nearly everyone who reads stf winds up as an actifan sooner or later. Granted?" No. I'd say about one out of every five thousand readers becomes a fan. # Your prediction that there's going to be no s-f convention in 1952 or 1953 -- because there's going to be a third world war is like saying you won't be drinking rye on the rocks in 1952 -- because you're going to die in 1951. Is fandom such a way of life to you that the prospect of war makes you think only of cancelled stefcons? # Too bad I don't correspond with you, Gordon. Yours is an address I could easily remember. Rosemary, that's for remembrance. # The paradox on the last two pages was interesting. Now try this: BNFs always lie and non-BNFs always tell the truth. Suppose Smith, Brown, and Jones meet and Smith states that he belongs to one of the two classes -- BNFs or non-BNFs. Brown then says, "Smith says that he is not a BNF." And Jones says, "Smith is a BNF." Now, how many BNFs and how many non-BNFs are there in this trio?

Documenting your squib in Gem Tones about misspellings in fanzines, G. M., I cite your phrase on page 6: "...to it's biological conclusion." Why did you expect the SAPS to be "the last stronghold of spelling"? # Oh nuts, G. M., there's nothing wrong with saying "crud" right out in print these days. It's as inoffensive, despite its origin, as "nuts" is inoffensive, despite its origin, and it no longer has just a connotation of filth. Rapp's definition of it in Fanspeak, "Worthless or undesirable material," is accurate. # I decry your preoccupation with appearance and legibility in your mailing comments. These are important, of course, but not to the exclusion of what's said, and that you discussed very little. What's the purpose of rendering the full address of each sapszine you review? That would be laudable if you were publicizing them outside the SAPS itself, but I take it you're not. Or is Gem Tones a semi-subzine? Fact is, I see no particular reason for publishing one's address in his own sapszine, except that sometimes comments on a particular item in the mag are better communicated directly to the editor rather than printed here, and it's easier to find the editor's address in his magazine than it is to paw through the Spectator. But generally something as simple as Aimless publications' famous masthead notation "(Blame Chauvenet)" is sufficient. # I liked "Arpeggio" and the unliterary style in which it was told, which gave it an air of authenticity which I presume it cannot legitimately claim. # The contrasting views of TV cited in "...a rose by any other name..." are typically extreme and have the familiarity that 20 years controversy about radio and education has produced.

You needn't look too far, Wrai, to find examples of the "horse-and-sixgun into rocketship-and-blaster" switch you mention in Outsiders. But such a switch is certainly acceptable if well done. Take some of Weinbaum's yarns, for instance. # The tirade against the Lone Ranger is heresy. If TLR doesn't pay his "stooge" Tonto, there's no reason for Tonto to stick with him -- except that he wants to. As for the mask, that teaches a pretty elementary lesson but a good one: don't judge by appearances. TLR is not an outlaw. That was well established in a series of connected episodes on the radio program many years ago, when it was carried by only a few stations -- WGN, Chicago, being the only one I could hear. TLR had a run-in with a villain who had seen TLR sans mask and, though our boy piled the twine on the blackguard, he had to clear himself of the man's false accusations by unmasking for the

governor or some high-ranking official. There was a hint that TLR was a pretty famous man in his unmasked facet. Ambrose Bierce maybe?

Tom Jewett was in fandom too briefly to make any lasting impression, but stuff like his "How to Write a Novel" in Sapian indicates what a fine humorist he was. It is not in the same class with his classic, "Snow Use," but it's funny -- even though he starts out talking about novel-writing and then describes how to compile a non-fictional work. I got a shove out of "margins illuminated...by Boris Artzybasheff, with dust jacket by Marchioni." # For the rest of this issue, it seems to be all crud banished to the NFFF manuscript bureau and rescued therefrom. You put out too legible and neat a fanzine to use such trivia, Ray. Why not pester somebody like Burbee (I had to get his name into this issue) to write something for you?

Last but not least, out of Washington D. C. comes Aonia, that welcome new entry by Bob Pavlat. # Speaking of atrocious writing, Bob, your boy Irving Shulman is an outstanding example of a sensational writer who couldn't sell to a Sunday school paper on his writing talent alone. Despite the sex interest in The Amboy Dukes, I got so disgusted with his ineptness that I threw the book away. # Yes, your quote from Boggs to the effect that I'm "far more willing to listen to blasts against the price of beer in New York than many of the fannish items filling fanzines" is so damned rough that I don't recognize it at all (unless it might be from "Banister Takes It in the Nek" in File 13). I'd deny saying it, except that I agree 100 per cent with the sentiment. # Your observations about Coslet's annoying habit of changing fanzine titles with every issue are the best yet. If Coswal's reason is not reached by your remark that a fanzine with one title for all issues has a personality, "for it will have a history and experiences," it'll never be reached. # Read Steinbeck's Cannery Row just for the love poem "Black Marigolds"? Yeah, and drink a cocktail for the olive. Cannery Row isn't art, like Tortilla Flat tried to be, but it's entertainment with a capital N. Read it for itself. # I haven't been able to interest myself in "Conjure Wife," but maybe I'll try again sometime. Leiber is generally one of my favorite writers.

DYNASTIES TO COME

I'm in total ignorance as to who's running for SAPS official editor, but here's something you might consider as you mark your ballot: The OE has had an especially marked influence on the quality and slant of the bundles as a whole. During Lloyd Alpaugh's reign, the mailings had a strongly New Jersey flavor, and that was the era of Spacehound's Gazette, Sun-Shine, Jose-Pien, and the corny, slapsticky Yellum, which was the epitome of the humor-type popular then. Henry Spelman's three mailings saw the decline of newjerseyism, and the beginning of the rise of a new school. Under the editorship of Art Rapp, the Michigan prophets almost completely replaced the low comedy of the former dynasty with the sharper, more satirical humor peculiar to insurgentism. Timewarp became the top sapszine, and Mock, Stupefying Stories and others rode high. Walter Coslet's one-mailing editorship was again a transitional period, and when Richard Eney took over at the beginning of this year, the change in editors was reflected in the rise of the Washington contingent and the ascendancy of Snake Pit, Nudity, Zap, Aonia, and the Washington-published Orgasm.

It seems probable that if the official editorship moves away from Washington the present dominance of the Washingtonites will be challenged by a new group that will gather around the new official editor. Who will it be?

I thought I killed a farm beast but it was a farm animal.
