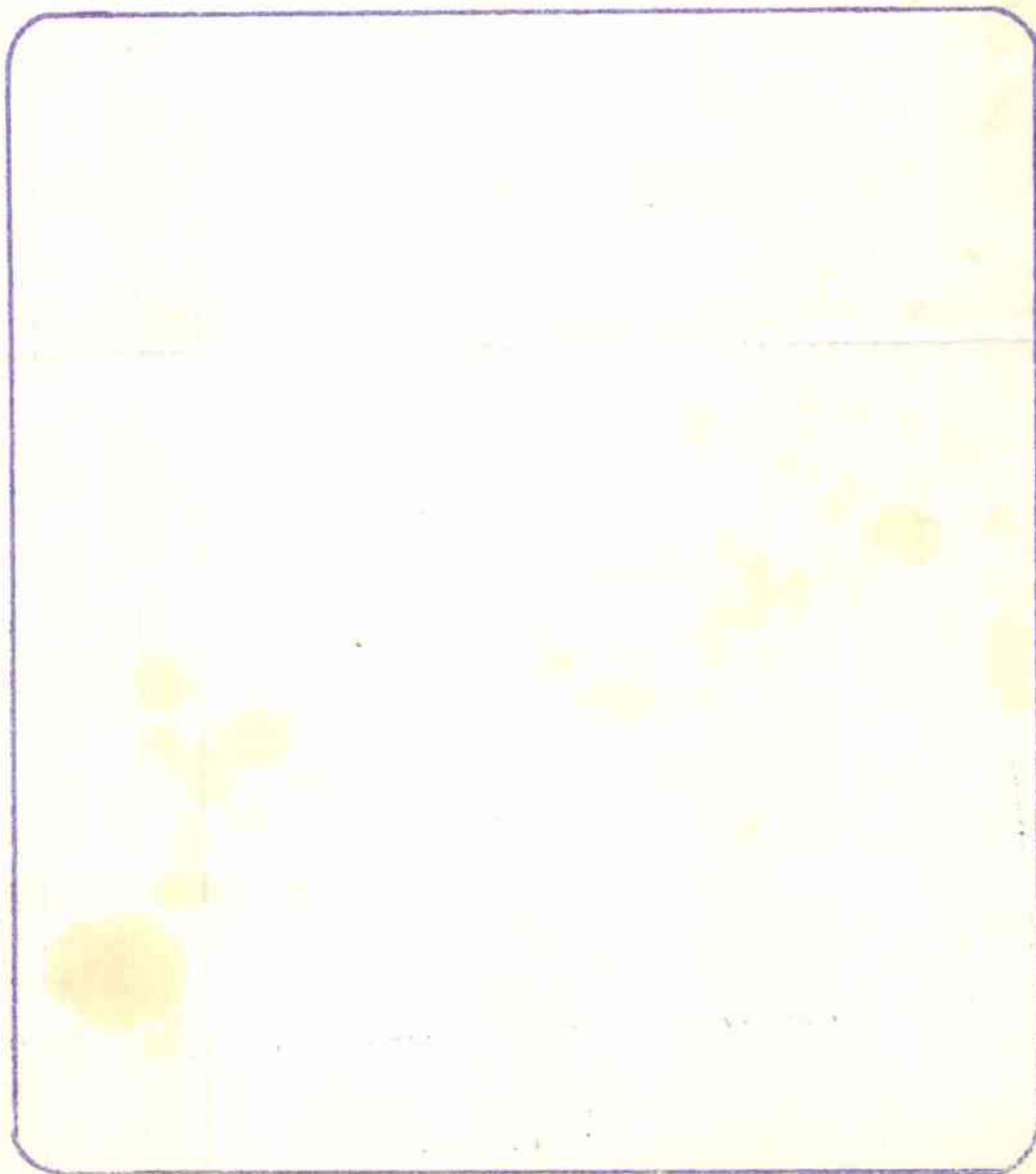




érotisme

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ésotérique



ENTHIAPIXH

Last week I saw three science fiction movies. They were KING DINOSAUR, THE BEAST WITH A MILLION EYES, and THE SNOW CREATURE. Let's talk about them. The first one I enjoyed, as I enjoyed them all. Now I know very well that the True Fan (note spelling) would waste no time at all but jump right into it and whale the living daylights out of it. Does it give science fiction a bad name? It makes it nameless! Yet it is from this genre of movie that we were born, or so I felt all throughout the picture. And I assure you that this feeling is all that keeps me from assassinating the film.

The story, for the fortunate uninitiated, is this: A Planet comes into an orbit so close to earth that man can now attempt space travel. Man does. Maybe this is giving man more credit than he's worth, but we're science fiction fans, and we can let that one pass unharmed. Now the problem is to send a crew of humans to the planet before the dirty extracted foreign countries can (which, of course, we do). Thus we do not wastetime sending monkeys, baboons, and tuberculosis bacilli to the planet; we jump in whole hog with true steffish spirit and shove a few of our own grotesque species over into this Brave New World.

The picture opens with a narrative that is much more serious than the above, but you get the idea. Now the narrator flops into the crew and introduces them to us, all four in typical scientist poses (a hundred years from now that may well supersede the Heroic Pose, or has it already?). Naturally, two of them are women. Four branches of the sciences are represented because they must be represented; I've forgotten which ones they were. It doesn't really matter, for they behave unscientistlike to the epitome when the action starts; now I won't debate the philosophical question that the action stops when the scientists start acting. They reach this new world, and it's soon made clear that they range from the capable levelheaded scientist who's never around to the hysterical female Who Is In Love (and you can just imagine whether He is with her or not!)

Well, all sorts of things happen to our skitterbrained group. When the girl sees a common ordinary crocodile ten feet from Him (didn't I tell you?), she lets out an unutterable yell, he stops dead in his tracks and naturally then has to fight the c. and get all bashed up with Heavingbosom Q. Wiltflower twittering on his chest while Levelhead is trying to do something for the poor jerk (him, not her). Well, the other scientiste, a pleasant-looking and up to now levelheaded girl, has a passion to explore the Island in the middle of the Lake, and off they go, of course doing the worst thing they could and leaving the Other with her wounded boyfriend. They promptly find that the island is swarming with prehistoric beasts (did I tell you? the Wounded One is been blasting the guts out of superimposed "giant" kitchen ants attracted when She screams seeing them from afar), and naturally get trapped in a cave. To make a hideous story end, they escape and leave an atomic bomb on the island to blow up in 30 min., get lost on the island, get across the mainland to the shore (sorry) and jump behind a 2-ft. rise in the ground and WATCH the bomb go off.

Now this mess carried the flavor of the Early Days of science fiction--until I began to think. Now I took that story, which I've done too much e laborating on, as a mild adventure of incapable fools battling superimposed beasts. But it came to me that: the audience is supposed to identify itself with the WOMEN? Then the Men become Heroes and the whole thing is thrilling beyond compare! This movie is slanted toward morons...it's appalling. Enough of this--I've only 2/3 page left.

THE BEAST WITH A MILLION EYES was not science fiction, although SF was a minor feature of it. It was more of a morality play: alien comes who feeds on hatred, and the slow and horrible realization of what's going on bring together couple married 20 yrs (I wouldn't believe it.). Amateurish production, on a low low LOW budget. Sort of like a school or college-produced movie would look like, if there were such a thing. The picture may be trying to emulate THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL, in my estimation the alltime great stf movie, which was imbued with Message, Meaning, but which put it across most splendidly. THE BEAST just can't. In it there are four people living off-season on their ranch (I didn't get whether it was dude or some Florida place). Father, mother teenage daughter, and army buddy of father who has part of brain out and is under father's custody. They have grown apart from each other, helped not a little by the isolation they live in; the Beast comes; he is a disincorporate mental being who preys on minds; he must draw one apart to obsess it; thus he is where hatred is, for with love, creatures are unitedly strong. Obsessing the animals, birds, and finally the custodiee and the daughter, he slowly makes his method clear to the couple in time to save the daughter in a mental battle between parents and "beast" The make-up, costumes, and scenery is so real I fell in love with it; and the parts of the father and mother are well acted. Of course the other fellow can't speak. But the acting of the girl should have been left in the ninth grade. This and the dragginess the dialog is wont to enter are the salient marring features. (At the end the father makes a beautifully loaded statement which carries the full meaning of the picture in a web of subtleties and then proceeds, b' dialog, to explain to the unobservant...ruins the effect completely.)

THE SNOW CREATURE is a strange picture. It starts in the Himalayas with a geologist's expedition. Their Sherpa guide gets word that his wife has been abducted by the Abominable Snowman, which is legend to that tribe, and he revolts and turns the expedition into a search for the yeti. Understandably, when he finds him, the guide wants to kill the creature, but in the interest of science, the geologists disarm him at the last moment and bring the thing back alive to the Nepalese (?) authorities. Good mountain-climbing scenes, good dialog, good acting, everything you'd want to find. The plot begins to twist and weave itself, and you think you've found a really GOOD monster-movie. But here in the middle we go of all places to San Francisco. Where the thing should have ended with the geol's marching off to SFO with the thing, they prolong it into a new, Dragnetish, adventure in the sewers of (I'd swear) Oakland. THEM did the same thing, and well. The SNOW CREATURE film, however, has no right to tack an interesting Himalayan adventure together with an American dragnet the likes of which are well, well known in these quarters. Ghod, if they had only stuck in Nepal, they'd have had a movie for a fan to be proud of.

STABLE OF CONTENTS: a fan satire by George Wetzels. This is not meant in libelous, vicious, etcetera tones or anything. You should be able to tell from the character "Pretzel the Bender" that it's purely in fannish fun, but there have been so many accusations leveled at the Wetzelian reputation that I have to make this disclaimer. Disclaimed, already! Next, you will remember that in talking about French and Belgian fandom last ish, Greg Benford said, "Jan will probably disagree with me." Jan did. And the Flaming Fleming flumes into a flashy four full pages. Also included on the roster is Larry Stark's definition of a BNF--or, "My adventures with Lee Hoffman." Whetted? Well, proceed.

MERRY CHRISTMAS STORY

George Wetzel

From behind ashcans the two fiends leered at the house across the street in the slums. The infamous Pretzel the Bender took a drink of ditto fluid. He was on another bender. Calvin Becker pointed to Dick Ellington, who approached the house's cellar door, carrying a bag of peanuts in one hand and a book of "Modern Poetry" in the other.

"Wonder what's in the bag?" said Becker.

"A fowl submission to Mason's COUP," answered Pretzel.

Ellington knocked, and a red-haired character needing a red shave looked out belligerently. "I thought you were Becker trying to get in again."

Behind him sneered a little BEM, wearing be-bop glasses and brown suede shoes. It was Harem Ellizon, the ineffectual collector of females.

"Hi," Ellington greeted the little BEM.

"Nyah," said the little BEM.

"Three bags full," Pretzel added in a whisper.

"Atheling--er, I mean Redd Buggs, will be here later," Mason informed Ellington. "So come on into the house."

"And when he visits Redd Buggs," Pretzel explained to Becker, "he visits a Bugghouse."

Becker had some difficulty in talking for a minute after this.

"Mason turned craven when you asked him for a copy of Coup to send the FBI?"

"Yes," replied Pretzel the Bender, "he turned chicken on me and would not send Coup."

"Which reminds me," Becker interjected hastily, "let's start the operation before Mason flies the coop."

"What about Redd Buggs? He isn't in there yet."

"Three birds in the coup (and one a chicken) is better than waiting for four in ambush."

They found a phone booth, and Becker dialed the FBI, remarking, "I think I'll tell them Mason is having a cell meeting this time."

Then: "FBI? I want to report that at 14 $\frac{1}{2}$ Jones St. a Communist rally is going on in the cellar; they plan to assassinate McCarthy and nominate Trotsky for president."

Pretzel the Bender took his turn. "Should I tell them that Mason is seducing young girls?"

"No, you used that last time, remember."

"I got it." He dialed and then said, "Police, go quickly to 14 $\frac{1}{2}$ Jones St., in the cellar, 'cause they're manufacturing moonshine and selling it without a license besides, and throwing the empties at pedestrians, neighbors, the landlord, and a little child playing with a hoop in the street."

Then Becker dialed and said, "Narcotics squad? You better hurry over to the cellar of 14 $\frac{1}{2}$ Jones St.--it's an opium den, the fumes and smoke are pouring out into the street and are so thick that autos are using their fog lights passing by it. And the stuff they are smoking is without filter tips."

Pretzel saw a figure climbing atop the roof of Mason's place. "No, it can't be--even though this is December 24--besides, I don't believe in him."

Becker took a long look and said, "It's Redd Buggs. He's probably going down Mason's chimney and coming out of his cellar from the furnace in a Santa Claus suit and surprise the others at their soiree. That gives me another idea--" And Becker grabbed the phone: "Greenwich Police Precinct Station, there's a guy on my roof in a red suit--he may be a Communist too--and he's trying to force a burglarous entry into my house through the chimney. And he must have already robbed some other places too, because he's carrying a bag full of his loot on his back. This is 14 Jones Street. --And I think I know who he is; he's bugghouse and does this every Christmas eve when they let him out of the stir."

"I got one more," said Pretzel. He dialed: "Fire department, get over to 14 Jones St., there's a pyromaniac playing with matches in the cellar and he has set the rest of the neighborhood on fire already. There's a helluva fire there now, and in fact that cellar is going to be RED-hot in three different ways when you get here; so hurry and run over people if you have to--but HURRY!"

The two fiends were silently fanning themselves with their tails; Becker asked: "Which of the four do you think will get here first?"

"Don't know. But I would like to see it a dead heat--what an uproar!"

The emissaries of Satan then returned to the slum place of Mason; and the cellar window being quite small, only Becker could see inside. "They're playing games." Merry shouts of "more" followed by the applause of two people sounded. "I hate myself when I think of what is coming," remarked Becker. "Mason's trying to pick flyspecks out of pepper wearing boxing gloves."

"What's he doing now?"

"Mason's reading the directions on the bottom of a boot for pouring water out of it...nope, he failed, not a drop came out." Police and fire sirens rent the air. "Quick spread around those copies of the 'Daily Red Worker' in front of the door, and don't forget the empty whisky bottles."

The two fiends then hastened back among the ashcans to watch the fun, expecting all hell soon to break loose. The bright red fire engines plowed down three morbid curiosity seekers, who, attracted by the noise,

had it coming to them anyway. Then the fire hoses were turned on and flooded every house in the block indiscriminately. A small boy appeared at one window and exchanged several volleys from his water pistol at the fireman, who had the advantage of the bigger gun, and squirted him gleefully until he was drowned to death in his room. Fire axes were chopping down locked doors all along the street. One fearful householder in advertantly unlocked his door to save it from the ax; this only infuriated the firemen, who pushed him down a manhole, locked his door, climbed out the window, and proceeded to ax it down.

An innocent passerby stopping to light a cigarette was nearly doused with a fire hose, but ducked diviningly into a doorway, where he was cruelly beaten by members of the narcotics squad under suspicion of smoking marijuana, or at least not smoking their brand.

The bulls in their police suits had stopped a late Christmas shopper, and finding he had in a package a bottle of perfume for his wife, containing 4% alcohol, arrested him for being the fence of the moonshine ring and bravely slugged him into unconsciousness, writing on the report, "arrested unconscious in a drunken condition."

The Feds were picking up cigar butts from the sidewalk under the pretext that they were Clues and smoking them when Philbrick, their leader, spotted the copies of the "Daily Red Worker."

A fire hose was stuck through the cellar window and flushed out Mason, Ellington, and the little BEM, breaking up their soiree, which had gone on innocent of the outside hullabaloo. Their sensitive fan-nish faces were wrinkled in curiosity.

"Lord, I hate scenes," murmured Pretzel as a concerted rush was made for the three innocents by the bulls, the Feds, the Fire Chief, and his henchmen, and the vice squad.

"Just because you caught me that time at City Hall," alibied Mason, "with a can of gasoline and a box of matches, is no proof I was trying to burn it down; I was cold, that's all."

"You can't arrest him for a firebug," argued the bulls. "We have a call here that this guy is a moonshiner, and we have first priority."

"What do you mean?" shouted Philbrick. "We have first jurisdiction. The guy's a Communist--pipe that red hair."

"Wait a minute," said the fire chief, "there are three of them, so let's divide them up."

"That will leave one of us without a culprit," said the bulls, "there are four of us and only three of them."

"I bet Calvin called the bulls," Mason said to Ellington. "I think he did it last time too." And as one of the cops began to man-handle him, he snorted, "You wouldn't do this to me if I had my boxing gloves on!"

The fire chief grabbed at Harem Ellison, whom he caught with his hands in his (the fire chief's) pocket; and Ellison commenced to kick him. "What's the idea of trying to pick my pocket?" the chief said.

"It's a dirty lie!:" the little street Arab shouted. "My hands're cold 'n I don't have any gloves, I only put 'em in to warm 'em!"

One of the bulls grabbed the little monster and tried to make a pinch when the jurisdictional dispute then erupted into open warfare with every man for himself.

"Wait a minute," cried someone, namely the swampdemon Pretzel, "there's another one on the roof." All turned and looked up to where a surprised face peered over the roof at them, attired in a loosely fitting Santa Claus suit. "Redd Buggs, alias Sticky Fingers, alias Sandy Claws," the swampy Pretzel shouted. "After him, men!"

Buggs's sack of fannish Christmas joy fell to the street, where its contents spilled out: fanzines.

"Aha, Communist literature!" said Philbrick. "Give the guy in the red suit a subpoena!"

"No, he's ours," argued the vice squad. "That stuff is lewd and obscene literature."

"Wrong all of yuhs," egotistically spoke up the cops, "any FOOL can plainly see it's used in their moonshine sour mash--can't you smell that ditto fluid?"

The three Innocents, shocked numb by the statements of Philbrick and the vice squad, still had the energy to look inquiringly at one another at the mention of "ditto" and "Buggs" in the same context. "Well," Ellington said, weakly but philosophically, "I guess mimeo is just too proletariat these days."

"Oh yeah!" demanded the fire chief to the bluecoated agents, "anybody, anybody can see that material has no better use than to start fires with--who would want to read such crud, much less savor the aroma of its cheap and streaky ditto fluid (here Ellington began to topple). Anybody who prints such stuff is making a potential pyromaniac out of any innocent, unsuspecting normal person who chances across the dangerous, highly inflammable stuff. The guy's a firebug."

"You're right about that," came the voice of wet Pretzel from behind the ashcans. "He is 'buggs'--but not firebuggs but Redd Buggs."

"Red!?" said Philbrick. "That's my department. With that red suit and that first name he's a Commie."

The fire chief,--in something of a huff, tried to run Philbrick down with his bright red fire engine, as the latter made a note of the engine's red color and would investigate the chief later for Communist leanings; and the fire chief would invoke the Fifth Amendment, whatever that was. The bulls proceeded to beat all within reach with their day and night sticks, irregardless of race, religion, color, or political beliefs, thus forestalling an editorial Mason had been contemplating for Coup about discrimination. Redd Buggs fell off the roof into the net of the fire chief's henchmen.

"I always did say that they should get a net and take Buggs to a quite place," mused Pretzel the Bender.

A tug of war then ensued over the corpus of Buggs, who was now non compos mentis. A man with a large family accidentally turning the corner saw the seeming dismemberment and apparent violence done to Santa Claus, and observed to himself, "Next to the stork, that guy they are tearing limb from limb is the man who has caused me the most trouble and bills. Thank the Lord he is at last being lynched--I think I will help them."

Becker and Pretzel were now surfeit with their repast of the savage emotions across the street (which were momentarily crescendoed when the hater of Santa Claus arrived to help the "lynching" and joined his ancestors), and they slowly walked away; yet like true gourmets, they still savored the cries for mercy.

"A good night's work," Becker complimented Pretzel. "We'll meet again next time Mason is crazy enough to have another party without inviting us. Merry Christmas!" "Merry Christmas."

Each went his separate way to his domain, by entering a different manhole; as Pretzel passed down through the mutant marine life in the pipes, he wondered why some fool among the rioters was shouting Help, murder, police when the police were doing most of the murdering.

Peace on earth. Good will to all men.

BNF

A DEFINITION

Larry Stark

Last summer I sat in a couple of times on Ted White's lectures on "How to Become the Focal Point of Fandom." A year ago, Peter J. Vorzimer (whatever happened to him?) was beating the gong for V. Pau's brother Andy Nowel as the newest BNF in fandom. About the same time I once sat till four in the morning with my fingers wrapped around a glass of Chianti and a glazed expression wrapped around my eyeballs while Bob Silverberg clicked off descriptions and histories of Boggs, Tucker, Hoffman, et al, as though he were an IBM cellnor a volume of the Encyclopedia Britannica. Last October I sat till four in the morning with my fingers wrapped around an empty glass gazing shyly at Lee Hoffman's right elbow. I have read, I have listened, I have observed, I have analyzed. Till now I may be the only fan on the North American Continent who hasn't defined the term "BNF" for the benefit of the ignoramuses among us. I shall now become a conformist.

I hate to go ontological on you here, but at its bluntest the truth is that a BNF is a fan with a big name. (Stick with me; Umbra will get soiled if you "throw it across the room and say a VERY nasty word.") If I may enlarge and clarify: a BNF is a person whose name, when mentioned by a fan in conversation or in print, is completely familiar to both the speaker/writer and all his fan-listeners or readers--even if neither the speaker nor the listeners have ever met the BNF or read anything written by the BNF.

Today (any time, really) those people are easy to name: Lee Hoffman, Harlan Ellison, Bobs Tucker and Bloch, Walter A. Willis, Redd Boggs, and Dean Grennell. There are others we might quibble over, but certainly these are names that don't need to have faces attached for fans to recognize them. I've only met one, and her very recently, but (mostly) from only the things said about them I've formed complete pictures and opinions of the owners of these names. In fact, you might say their names are more widely known than they are.

I think Lee Hoffman is an excellent name to us as an example of a BNF. When I was just getting curious about Fandom's Box in 1952, Lee was the big topic of conversation. By the time I began corresponding with Silverberg, and Fandom took hold of me, she was already teaching

Kehli how to tromp unopened fan-correspondence and still-stapled fanzines into the mud of her Savannah back yard. For my three years of active fanning, nothing but occasional letters and a FAPazine had come from Georgia's gift to the Cosmic Circle. Yet I doubt if there was a fan I heard more about than Lee Hoffman. It took me years, and the friendship of the OE, to squeeze some Hoffman-iana out of FAPA; but I know her very well before I ever glommed a line of her misspelt perfection. LeeH existed, as a rarified concept in my mind, before I ever saw tangible proof of her existence.

I can now veer off in two possible directions, both of them related. Logically, I ought to wonder whether Lee really did exist, or was perhaps a mass hallucination; she did, and she does. Also, I might wonder if the example of Hoffman doesn't prove that it's really not what YOU do that makes you a BNF, but what everyone else does--if possible, it isn't even necessary to put out a fanzine to find yourself suddenly a household word in every inky cellar in America. In a way, that's right--you become a BNF by the acclaim others give you, not (as PJV seemed to think) by the acclaim you give yourself. But, how can you get said acclaim except by working in and with fandom and its various activities? There is no Royal Road to the Enchanted Duplicator. Pure work will get you nowhere if it isn't talked about, but you'll surely never be talked about if no one hears from your typewriter.

But the real point, I think, is that not only the BNF but fandom itself is simply the similarity of knowledge and interest existing in many minds at once. Fans are able to talk and joke and understand one another at short acquaintance because they know the same things. It's not telepathy but common background and common interest that make fans more like other fans than like other people. That's what makes most interlineations funny to you but flat-sounding when you read them to your family.

Just who out of the hundreds or thousands of fans in the world at one time becomes a BNF depends inevitably on a kind of collective taste ...and I suppose these few widely-known names reflect the general character of all the hundreds of fans who chatter about them. The mass of fandom reduces itself, ultimately, to a few representatives whose names and personalities everyone has heard about and talked about. Or, if the collective personality-traits of all fans are not mirrored in the BNF's they raise, at least the personality-traits that most fans wish they had could be determined by studying their BNF's.

Perhaps, someday, some sociologist will!

LSIII

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KAYMAR STF TRADER

HERE, REVIVED, is the Kaymar Trader of old, preserving the ancient, magnetic flavor of fandom's most outstanding trade journal. Following the resignation of K. Martin Carlson, the Founder of this institution of fandom, from the masthead of Kaymar Trader, it passed veritably thru the "valley of the shadow of death" and is now experiencing revival at the capable hands of Ray Schaffer. As always, this magazine will be devoted to advertising; new features, such as articles, will be sub-junctive to the advertisement section. Ads will cost \$1.00/page, 50¢/1/4, and 25¢/1/4 page, and subscriptions are 10¢, 3/25¢. (NFFF members 1/2 rate) Send copy, capital for same, and subs to Ray Schaffer, 4541 3rd St. NW, Pleasant Hills, Canton, Ohio. With monthly schedule, circulation is 200.

KAYMAR STF TRADER

UIT VLAANDEREN ENGELS

Jan Jansen

This column should be, at this very moment, on the desk or table in front of John Hitchcock. For it is the nineteenth, and I had expressed hopes of having the column there before the twentieth, his deadline for this issue of Umbra. I dare write this issue, instead of last issue, as I expect John to be typing up the last stencils during the Xmas break, and these pages will be there before then.

In a way, it is fortunate that I had not yet sent a missile his way, for this evening Umbra 10 arrived, and immediately all the notes I had made (plus a rough draft) became worthless. Worthless in so far that I have here two pages devoted to a subject very dear to me. And they are being presented as something like the gospel truth. Unfortunately, the information suffers from being obtained not directly from source but second hand. I know my second hand when I see it.

Therefore, I feel that some amplification must be made to said article, and why not devote my column to it? Greg has been for a period a frequent correspondent of mine, and I let this lapse for entirely private (nonfannish) reasons. Or he might have caught on to a bit more.

He is in the first place very much guilty, even if perhaps unwittingly, of playing down Belgian and French fandom too much. Especially the latter, where fandom (concerned with its own language) is much more extended than German fandom at this moment.

Let's sum France up. FICTION has just published its 25th issue. For those of you who have not seen any mention of the mag, it is the French edition of The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction, differing pleasantly from other foreign editions of magazines in that it presents one or two original French stories in each issue. (The same publishers also run the Ellery Queen Mystery Magazine in its French edition.) Late spring this year, the editor, Maurice Renault, decided to start a club for those readers who felt like discussing science fiction, fantasy and the "roman policier," discussions he was very much interested in, but could hardly allow space for in his professional publications.

I don't believe I need say that the club must have had some measure of success, when its magazine, CELLULES GRISES, has appeared four times already, printed professionally. Of course, that "printed professionally" tag will, according to some fans, ban the magazine from a classification under fanzines. When you however allow STFantasy, Inside, Fantastic Worlds and, yes, the German YKS, under fanzines, Cellules Grises belongs there too. It has devoted its pages in a very fair division: half to sf/fantasy and half to detectives. In the letter column discussions are raging against and for fantasy, while a separate page is set aside for short-short stories, which through material treatment, or lack of polish, are unsuitable for professional publication.

I can't give any exact figures on the membership of the club, as I never bothered to ask, being satisfied with the statement that the club prospers. However, there were some three hundred members about a month after its conception.

Besides publishing Cellules Grises, the club also offers monthly film-meetings at Paris, where in the month of October the film FIVE was shown to clubmembers, with a discussion on merits and shortcomings by M. Renault and some of the more authoritative persons present. Some notices are appearing that local groups are being formed, and sooner or later they too will join in the fray to show that "talent" has been "neglected" elsewhere.

Unfortunately, I have little time to check all my files to corroborate and extend the above, but I trust it will show that France can't be lightly ignored, if one wants to talk about "Continental" fandom.

On the professional side, I must mention the further existence of another prozine: GALAXIE, and I won't need to tell you where that originates from. I haven't kept up with the magazine, for the simple fact that in the dozen or so issues I had seen, there were translations (none too good either) and nothing else. Having a complete Galaxy file myself, I didn't feel like supporting this venture. There has also been an attempt at a professional magazine entitled Science Fiction Magazine, published for four issues under the editorship of a D. Carrion, whom I have since run down to earth as an amateur publisher in the general fiction and poetry field. One day I'll write him...

Besides these magazines there are three or even four series of novels devoted entirely to science fiction. One, Rayon Fantastique, has been occasionally mentioned in Fantasy Times. It relies mainly on translations from US and UK authors, and the quality varies somewhat, though it is on the whole the best collection. Another series publishes sf under the title ANTICIPATION, and I will just note down that they seem to think highly of Vargo Statten and similar material, though one or two novels have merited attention. Further still we have a LIV REMETAL series, if memory proves correct, mainly publishing original material, and of a fairly good standard. There are more regular collections devoted to fantasy alone.

On top of this lot, a new venture is being announced more or less unofficially, to publish a basic sf and fantasy library. There are also a few publishing houses which publish an occasional sf novel, and Bradbury fans will be delighted to hear that he has touched French translation rights for all of his books so far.

On the fannish side? How far does this term "fannish" apply? Does it include the person who reads a fanzine because it prints something about sf? Or does it take a more esoteric interest in the field and the persons in fandom themselves to shape one? In the first case, there are hundreds--otherwise, there's only a handful--not even that, come to think of it. Marc, Jean, with a slight stretching Massiera, and one or two others I'm not able to class in any category as I don't know them well enough.

Not much? But then what have we in Germany that this country should deserve so much boosting compared to France?

On the pro side: UTOPIA. Selling about 30,000 copies of each issue. So it is mentioned. The mag? Nice in production, but the less said about the story quality the better. Practically every issue I have seen (plus those mentioned on the lists that I have read in the original English) are the purest form of space opera existing. But it is science fiction and therefore deserves our interest. Each issue contains one novel, and a reader/editorial section, much like the first issues of the British Authentic. An infrequent "Special Issue" (I believe on quarterly schedule) is/will be published, and promises to be more of a magazine with short stories and novelettes, rather than the one novel.

For magazines, that's all. Re books: Germany has a splendid tradition from way back for its "fantastic" novels, names like Dominik, Gail, and

Daumann, to name but a few, having reached far beyond the German language frontier. Present names that have cropped up haven't gone that far, and I refrain from judgment, lack of knowledge and familiarity forcing me, but there have been some excellent book translations from US and UK authors. Some are really top-flight material,--compared to which Utopia is as much waste paper.

The only redeeming feature in my opinion is that Walter Ernsting has started a science fiction club through its pages. Membership should be around the two hundred mark by this time. It will remain a question mark just how many of these will turn out to be fans(either sercon or tru)or how many will just lapse into hibernation after paying their subscriptions which include subs to Utopia. At the present moment the SFCD is not much more than a list of names who are awaiting decisions as to what the club is actually going to do, and what profit they can get in the line of book price reductions which have been announced. Not that I find anything wrong with that--just that I can hardly call these hundreds of people fans.

However, some of the people are already active as fans. Witness: Walter mentioned, earlier on, publishing a fanzine for the clubmembers, Andromeda. Also editor for Utopia. Especially on the latter count he annoys me: either he's big boy at the office and does what he likes, in which case he has a lousy taste in science fiction, or what is more likely, he has to take orders from the publisher (the usual rule on the continent, it seems) which leaves him with little if anything to say in the case of a publication coming out with nothing but a novel per issue. I sincerely hope it's the publisher that's responsible for the selected material, or I'll never get to appreciate anything Walter does.

If, however, he just has to take orders, he will have to be excused for the material. But then I wish he'd come off his high horse and be a bit more human, instead of trying to set himself up as a sort of tin god. What with the series of ghu, ghod, kloonu, pogo, etc., I have far better choice. (Note my failing to mention either bkeer or Jack Daniels!)

I could of course antagonize Walter further, but I won't. I shall after all see him personally next month (when most of you are reading this) and perhaps he will actually have some saint-like quality....

Next to him there is another Walter. Spiegl is the name here, and he's the representative in Germany for Forry Ackerman. Outside this, I can find nothing to connect him with science fiction, though it may exist. (Come to think of it, I believe he does write sf himself under a penname.) As a fan? No other marks than that he was one of the founders of the SFCD. A third club-official lives as Hein Bingenheimer, of whom I know no more than that he runs the book sales at a 20% discount if more than 3 books are taken at a time. I can't very well say anything about that.

Ernst Richter (unmentioned by Greg, tststs) seems to be the one who is least interested in science fiction as "pro." Though he is known to have written a few novels (novellas?) so that perhaps I'm wrong. Which makes 4 professionals plus Walter Ernsting's wife (as treasurer) on the SFCD officials-roster. Pros can make good fans, undoubtedly, but I'd feel far happier if some people had some say in the club who weren't directly interested in making money out of science fiction. Walter has to defend Utopia and its brand of space opera; his job is connected with it. Is that then the policy of the SFCD? Seemingly so, as the first circular mentioned that membership fees included subscriptions to Utopia itself, though a very nice person managed to get that retracted, and had membership dues fixed, much like the ISFCC, where the sub includes the fan-zine produced by and for the club, and no other tags attached.

However, there's other people around. And speaking fanwise, at least half a year in advance of the SFOD we have Ann Steul. (She too, it should be noted, is professionally interested as having translated at least a few sf stories). (Seems every fan is pro over there.) She is also nuts. Very much so sometimes, but as far as fannish activities are concerned, she did get an issue of that Fannia published before Walt started on Andromeda. So please, Greg, don't say she came afterwards.

It was, however, a close tie between Walt and Klaus Unbehau, with Andro winning out. However, Klaus had been active on his own, where he turned a few amateur sf movies out a few years ago. I'm not sure whether this activity belongs to the filmfan or the sf fan field, but shall we give him the benefit of the doubt?

There's the Englishman (dignified, I wonder?) Julian Parr. Hip hip. For once I fail to turn up pro-stuff; and of course the twins. Meddlesome brats they are too! Due credit to all of them however, for sort of accelerating the movement. There are other fans who are taking an active interest, but listing them all would be rather a tedious process. Manfred Schultz, Rose Ebert, and Heinz-Dieter Reiss, seem to be some of the more active ones from mentions in correspondence.

If anyone wonders how come there are more names mentioned here than under France... I'm trying to collect people I have reason to believe will stay active in fandom. Active as fans, not to sponsor a club directly influenced by professionals and their interests. Directly as "fannish" people, with a selection as harddriven as I did for France, I can come up only with Ann, Klaus, and with equal stretching Manfred Schultz and his 2 colleagues above. I would not include Walter. Saint-like Walter.

And I can obviously do as well and better where Belgium is concerned, and nearly as well where Holland gets mentioned. But that territory I covered only recently in Satellite, and I can hardly go over it all again.

But where Greg states that there's only one fan in Belgium, certainly no one will hold it against me if I apply far less stringent measures against his flaunted Gerfandom. For after all, there is a Dave Vendelmans and somewhere I have heard of Willy Rombouts and Maurice Delplace. And the "Twerp" designer Jean Steer? They're not as active as I of course, but I should have thought they'd done more than Manfred, Rose, or Heinz-Dieter?

His knowledge of fans in Holland is much worse though. Outside of Wim Struyck, Teun van Ingen, and a gafiating Ben Abas we're wasting our time looking for more. Again, as "active fans." There's a Nic Oosterbaan running around, ex-editor of Planeet, and according to his own statement, "in fandom for the money I can make out of it." Perhaps his statement also explains the lack of his recent activities, excepting for appearances both at the Kettering and Twerp cons.

Sweden seems to have a spattering of fanclubs with as many clubs as there are fans, and one or more zines of their own. But no letters of mine sent over there have ever been able to get a reply loose from these fellows. Norway has an active fan in Cato Lindberg, wistfully thinking of a bilingual fanpublication. But then, Basil once intended a fanmag from his hometown in Greece...

There is no conclusion cause there's no need for one. There's just a ream of facts and words. Fandom is on the rise, but as long as it took present Anglo-American fandom to work its way up, equally long will be the way to a true continental fandom. There'll be some shortcuts, but I'm afraid there'll be far more shortcomings.

JAN.

((For Swed. fandom see Eric Bentcliffe's letter. Lindberg: see fmz reviews. Also Anne Steul's summary of Gerfandom in letter sect. JH))

...arbitrarily called a letter column and thus hereinabove referred to...

RON BENNETT

72 Clavell Rd.,

Allerton, Liverpool 19

YES, as WAW pointed out, you certainly do strike a new note in fmz reviewing. ((How subtle of you.)) I must reprint that PLOY review sometime. It got quite a laugh over here (though not from me...it was read out loud by Norman Shorroock to the Liverpool SFS on our way to a meeting at Norman's place. We were on the top deck of a bus at the time). Actually, I have the same trouble distinguishing American names myself, especially those belonging to fen I'm not in correspondence with or who, like Grennell, can't be bothered (1) sending me GRUE, (2) answering my comments on GRUE, or (3) sending me comments on PLOY, or (4) acknowledging PLOY, (5) Phooey to you too.

((Your comments on my reviewing in Um 10 are very gentle and kindly constructive. Perhaps this is because you were writing about Umbra 9, but I shall not make guesses as to your generous motives. It took me five letters to get through to Grennell--but really all you need is patient perseverance.))

Bennett-san continuing: What is the Cult, exactly? And how does one join? Do you think PJV and Co. would allow a foreigner in the thing? And WAPA also? And for that matter Hopkins? What are they?

((The Cult is an apa consisting of 13 members who publish one ish of the OO in turn. There are stiff letter-response requirements about replying on one ish to the nextish's editor which would exclude anyone in Eng. or Europe from membership, sorry. You join by writing to the OE of the specific issue that's about to be published--which is like catching the brass ring on a merrygoround. By the time you read this, he'll be Larry Stark III, 13 Serviss Ave EBT, New Brunsw'k, NJ. Vorzimer is gone. Wapa is gone. Hopkins is a Great University (The Johns Hopkins University) whereat I am studying. Happy-san?))

RON ELLIK

277 Pomona Ave., Long Beach 3, Calif.

Jan Jansen, you might be interested in knowing, is now in FAPA. I just got a FAREWELL FROM DENMO--which means Moreen has resigned. Ergo, JJ, #1 on the waiting list, is IN. What I'd like to know is what happens to the Cult now--I thought Moreen was an official arbiter of some sort, and was the only thing holding the club together...

((Denny was running for OA when Gafia hit him. The Cult is built to have no officers, the majority ruling, and the editor-of-the-moment serving as an administrator of sorts--to a reasonable extent. The only thing that hurts the Cult is lack of participation 100%--when someone holds up the cycle a month or so. It's a very selfsufficient org.))

ERIC BENTCLIFFE

47 Alldis St., Great Moor, Stockport, Ches., Eng.
I found Greg Benford's article about the most interesting thing in the issue, though I wish he had expanded it a little. He missed out several Continental personalities worthy of mention. George Gallet, of Paris, a real old-time stf fan who's attended quite a few of the UK conventions, and been largely responsible for much of the stf that's appeared in France. He's a pro-fan these days, but still a fan. Then in Holland there is Nic Oosterbaan, who has also been over to several of the British cons--he was over at Kettering last year--and Ben Abas. Nic was the prime mover behind PLANEET, the Dutch stf mag which unfortunately only saw one issue. Ben Abas is a very good stf artist; occasionally he does a few illos for Alpha, but his best work is done in oils.

I dunno if Greg includes the Scandinavian countries in his conception of Continental fandom; if he does, he's missed the biggest center of active fanning outside the UK-USA bloc. Sweden has at least five fan-clubs; two in Stockholm, two in Goteberg, and one each in Lund, and Urebo. It has to date three fanmags, FUTURA, after the club of the same name in Stockholm, COSMOS, oo of the Cosmos-klubben in Goteberg, and SSFF, also originating from Stockholm.

I think that Sweden is one of the most interesting centers of new fandom, interesting because it's developed all by itself with little or no aid from Anglo-American fen...Sweden has been blessed with a little more stf than the other continental countries; the Jules-Verne-Magasinet was published every week from '40 to '48, and now there's the monthly Håpna, which is quite an excellent mag. All the fanzines are in Swedish and not many of the fans speak or write English...but from what little correspondence I've had with Swedish fen, I wouldn't judge them to be overly serco.

There are fen in the rest of Scandinavia too, Dag Siggerud in Oslo, etc...but you can more or less lump them in with Sweden for this isn't the center of things fannish in Scandinavia. In case you'd like to contact these boys, Lars Helander, Lohegatan 11, Eskilstuna 3, Sweden, is one of the English-speaking types who does quite a deal of corresponding.

Before I sign off, I'd like to correct your misimpression (see your review of Alpha) that I'm crusading agin sex... Not so John, I just found it an interesting and easy theme to write about for my column in Alpha. And intended confining my comments on Sex to Alpha, but Lee wrote and asked me for an article on similar lines, and he tells me that it's gone over rather well too.

((Germany didn't have too much help, either, except from Forry Ackerman, perhaps, and Ackerman writes for Håpna, too. Germany's just had more heralding of A Great New Fandom. But it is surprising, n'est-ce pas, that the Teutonic countries are experiencing the awakening of fandom much more quickly than the others? Only France among the non Teutonic countries is possessor of what I'd call a fandom. In split Belgium, Jan Jansen is a Fleming and Teutonic, living in the Teutonic part of that country. US, Canada, Australia, UK, Germany, Belg($\frac{1}{2}$), Holland, Norway, Sweden all have native fans and are Teutonic.

DEUTSCHLAND UEBER ALLES!))

ANNE STEUL

Wetzlar/Lahn, Falkenstrasse 17, Germany.

((Whups! For more heralding of Gerfandom, shift yo' eyeballs up yonder[↑]))

((ahhh, wasn't that a pleasant trip?)) -- But above all, dear John, I wanted to congratulate you on your interest in continental fandom. Especially evident by the note on Umbra's back cover. And since I may take your interest for granted, the situation in Germany is as follows:

We have two promags. Utopia-Gross- und Kleinband. The less said about the Kleinband the better. They are space opera--low, very low in quality. The Grossband brings reprints of American and English authors. The selection itself is not all that it could be. One of the "Redakteure" (like editor) has recently founded a SFCD (Science Fiction Club Deutschland) with a fanmag, however not dedicated to fan-ish things, but a means of promoting SF. Very serious, constructive and so forth--but nothing for me, I am afraid.

On 14/15 January next year (1956) we will have a SFcon at Wetzlar and if something interesting comes out of it, I will let you know, all right? Apart from Andromeda, the fanmag of the SFCD, there is Yks, a very nice little mag, edited by Klaus Unbehau, a smallfilm amateur. We hope that after the Wetzcon there will be a few more people with fanmags. Furthermore there are the Benford twins, who edit Void, a fanzine in English. It will be quite a time until we German fen will have promags like Astounding, Galaxy, and so on, in German. So far, both readers and editors do not show too much interest in SF, at least not if the price is high.

((Well, Umbrane reader, there you have it. Quite confusing, I admit, with so many people talking about it at the same time; but I rather think that it's only with several people's reports being compared that you can get a good idea of what's going on in Germany. This condition of two or more people reporting the same thing, although most probably from quite different aspects, will continue in Umbra if all goes well. Already Anne and Jan Jansen have promised reports on the Wetzcon, the first sf convention in Germany (is that right?). Wading through the correspondence from last issue (shallow, but enough to take my shoes off for), I discovered that many of you are rather bored with all this talk, hence this note. I am proceeding on the principle of The more the merrier, coupled with an innate curiosity within the Editorial Personality. I have found fandom to be one of the most interesting aggregations of human beings it has ever been my fortunate experience to associate with, and exploring its frontiers and changing aspects as well as its innumerable nooks and crannies is for me a fascinating and in the long run somewhat broadening occupation. Bringing the complicated, hardly-begun saga (or sagas) of Continental Fandom to light is space-consuming, true; but it was in this spirit that the Immortal Storm and all other such fannish histories were composed. So if anyone else wants to jump into the melee, you are cordially invited so to do.))

ALAN DODD

77 Stanstead Rd., Hoddesdon, Herts., Eng.
One point I will agree with Jan on though, is his hatred of anything military. How right he is. If only all politicians and would-be ones would follow Sen. Taft's splendid example and drop dead, and the Military ((and the Militant, too, please?)) were to be all killed off, I think this might be a little more peaceful land. Maybe.

May Jan Jansen and I be the first to congratulate you on getting a letter from a Texas fan. Except for Claude Hall, Texas fans never write. ((And sometimes I wish Claude wouldn't!)) Wim Struyck's letter is fascinatingly accurate and parallels facts in England. You'd be surprised how many people take Hollywood films as being gospel truth.

Your fanzine reviews have started me thinking--hear that creak--now you've cast doubts on the sex of Randy Brown. How many other fanzine editors might be female now you think of it. All people with names like Gene or Randy or Bobby are suspect. It's all your fault now.

((Come to think of it, that's right. How awful. Especially when some women call themselves "Johnnie" too. Why, I could never figure out, unless they just subconsciously missed being recognized as gifts from God, which is what John means. I know a secret about J. L. Magnus...))

JACK HARNESS

"The Elmwood" 1627 19th St. N. W., Washington, D. C.

Archie: But it's clear that the populace((sic))in DAS SYNDIC loved the mobsters and kept it out of respect and cognizance of its utility. A limited monarchy in an easy anarchy. Similarly, England has a functional monarch; what would it do without her? Collapse! I think it's an excellent game for a group to play--having a limited monarch. I'll have to try it myself sometime. Anent Weaver, you don't know half the evils of TV. Woe, woe unto the land of the sky-blue antenna. Live entertainment, whither wither? And before I forget: a salubrious solstice to each and every one.

You call this an annish? You? THIS an annish? Why, I recall when fans were bled dry and worked all night (Joel Nightall did, anyway) to eeeexxp---aaaaand. Pft. Merry Eclipsemass to all, and a Happy New Tron.

((Would England collapse without Elizabeth? England hardly collapsed under the Commonwealth, even though she did get out from under it in a relative hurry. Annishes? Oops!a is pleasantly non-expansive about its anniversaries (although perhaps Gregg feels he makes up for it by announcing his own birthday every year). And Dick Geis of Psy never went much out of his way for an annish. Too much work. And what happened to Joel Nightall and his annish after he had worked all night? Why, the bulb went out. But what I'm really looking forward to is the annish of Ann Steuls Fanannia.))

ANDY YOUNG

10 Summer Rd., Cambridge 38, Mass.

Granted, a control group does not have to have the active support of the majority of a population; it doesn't have to please, actively, the majority. But it does have to avoid the active displeasure of the general populace. In other words, it has to retain the passive support, or at least tolerance, of most people. A group like the Mob could certainly further its own self-interest without making most of its subjects very displeased, and thereby be just as long-lived as the Sundic. Isn't this approximately what the situation is in Russia today? A lot of the people may not like Communism and the policies of the Party, but they are not very badly displeased with it either. So they just go on taking it. Of course, the so-called "rulers" of the Russians are not particularly out for their own good any more than most control groups usually are, but you see what I mean.

All this applies a fortiori to the Syndic, which did not maintain its control by force, but relied on pleasing the population in an active manner. In this sense, the population had a direct control over the rules of operation of the Syndic and its relation to the population; hence the Syndic would be a democracy since the people, in effect, rule themselves. The reason I mentioned the term Republic is that many people confuse the terms and I wanted to make it clear which one I meant.

And on the term Republic, I again refer to my handy dictionary and find: "A state in which the sovereign power resides in a certain body of the people (the electorate), and is exercised by representatives elected by, and responsible to, them; also, the form of government of such a state." You bet I'm the man who uses his dictionary, especially on well defined technical terms like this! Hah! to you, Julian Parr!

I was quite fascinated by the authentic picture of Basil Coukis. He looks like a very interesting person; in a word, he has a sensitive fannish face.

((In case you're interested, here's the definition of democracy to compare with republic: Government by the people; a form of government in which the supreme power is vested in the people and exercised by them or their elected agents; also, a state having such a form of government, a state in which the supreme power is vested in the people and exercised directly by them rather than by elected representatives (cf. republic). I am sorry that I smeared Basil around last time--I forgot that his delicate constitution couldn't assimilate such powerful philosophical concepts as those I bandied around in his name. Mes apologies.))

RON SMITH,

611 W. 114th St., Apt. 3D-310, New York 25, N. Y.

One point that I think needs to be made is that there isn't any Top zine, and there can't be. If you took a poll of one type of fan, GRUE or HYPHEN would come out on top. If you took a poll of another type of fan--the type that is seldom heard from in active fandom--PEON would probably come out on top. You prefer the first two and I prefer the latter. It boils down to that.

((Then how do you intend to make Inside the top zine in fandom if (a) there can't be any, and (b) you'd mould it after Peon which gets little active attention in "actifandom"?)

Also, is it true that there is no Top zine and can't be one? If you're going to talk about that, you're going to have to define fandom. I'd say it's a group of people communicating freely with one another in the fashion we as fans know too well (this to shorten my definition). Fans communicate with one another, and the most important issues sooner or later get into letter columns in fanzines and start a flood of these communications. The fanzine that channels through itself the greatest amount of most important fannish communications (they take the form of articles, too, thus rounding out the fellow's fanzine) is the Top zine. That's why I think Psychotic was the top zine in America during Geis's heyday. OK, there's a definition.

Now let's apply it. There just isn't a true Top zine in America today. There's just not enough interest in American fandom to make one. But with an increase in interest in fandom, there will be a Top zine again here. So with the present situation the possibility of a Top zine rests on the amount of interest given by Americans to their fandom.))

RON ELLIK

Struyck's views on America fit in very well with what I've been told by Americans who have been abroad--only I got it from their viewpoint. I may travel some day--what am I to do? ((Make some friends abroad and live with them, natch.)) Act as the typical tourist acts, or be diminutive and get robbed. Let's start a discussion column between us'ns and them'ns, to find out more about how they look at amerikaners. ((An excellent idea. Just get me someone to ward off the "What's it got to do with fandom" segment of our society, and I'll gladly do it.))

BOOK REVIEWS

Ballantine Books carry a little claim on their covers. It's boiled down about as far as it can be, for what could be simpler than one word? That word, of course, is "Originals."

There's a lot of meaning in that one word. A prospective buyer, scanning the stands, could reasonably be expected to believe that any book so labeled would be something he had not read before. Unfortunately that does not necessarily hold true.

An item can be as old as the hills and still be original, so long as it is presented in a new and distinctive format. And that is just what they have done with Ted Sturgeon's latest, "Caviar." With one notable exception, and that being mainstream fiction.

The collecting fan, in the form of the prospective buyer, might think that this book was another science fiction selection. The author is noted mainly in this field, as are most of the stories. But the presence of "Bright Segment" destroys the classification. Admittedly, it is an excellent job of writing; but it still remains a character sketch, with no elements of either science or fantasy.

The remaining stories vary from merely good to excellent. In the former category I would place "Prodigy," "Medusa," and "Twink." The first two always struck me as being mainly written for the cash they would immediately bring, and the Hell with any everlasting value. And "Twink," one of the character stories Sturgeon has been spending most of his current efforts on, seemed forced to me when I first read it in Galaxy. Rereading gives me no reason for changing my mind.

"Microcosmic God" I have read approximately umpteen times, and it never fails to entertain, holding many of the qualities of Jack Daniels, another perennial personal favorite, albeit the fact that its pleasures are sharply different. However, I don't think this printing was necessary. It, like most other really decent stories of the early forties, has been reprinted to death, if such be possible.

"Ghost of a Chance" and "Blabbermouth" have both appealed to me for some time, although they do not rank with his best work. I have a feeling that it is because I read them while in a receptive mood, and my first impressions have lasted.

My own selection as the best single item of the volume would be "Shadow, Shadow on the Wall." From the beginning of the story, I was able to associate myself with Bobby; at all times I felt violently antagonistic towards Mommy Gwen. Rather a sugar-coated moralistic bit, its excellence is brought about by Sturgeon's never-failing technique.

Despite the fact that all stories within are good, I would not recommend parting with 35¢ to buy the book. The only item unattainable elsewhere is "Bright Segment," and it alone is simply not worth the purchase price.

BOB HOSKINS.

from the pipsqueak of the hitchcocks

CHICKENSCRATCHES

MUZZY 8, Claude Hall, 2212 San Antonio, Austin 5, Texas; 25¢ for one, or Par; irregular, mimeoed, 46 pp. --Hall is much better than last issue. His artists have submitted mostly cartoons for this issue, and the DEs are fabulous, worth ten of that twenty-five cents alone. Claude has a fourteen page editorial, which is very good--holds the interest--and a fanzine review column eight pages long, which shows great improvement over last issue's. Unfortunately, however, Claude makes a few remarks which hail back to the olden days of his Zeitschrift, thusly: on Psychotic 20, he ends his review with "Dick's unjustifiable exaggeration of his "touches"--which I do not call humor, he also makes two errors in the possessive use of the apostrophe. Dick furthermore fails to take notice that other fanzine editors prior to his time used editorial comments to exemplify each particular item. CONCLUSION: I wouldn't recommend this crap-zine to a bird dog." Claude's opinion, I fear, is tinted by his unhealthy feelings toward Geis. He fails to consider that Psy was the greatest fanzine of its era, but instead he rips apart Dick's unforgivable misuse of the honorable apostrophe, misinterprets Dick's flavorsomely humorous remarks for signs of a demented, stultified mind (Dick was mock-scolding Clifford Gould for copying Dick's method of making up a contents page with "humorous touches."). Yet in the same issue Claude reiterates that he is "out to have fun" and fandom is "only a ghoddamned hobby." Claude, in the spirit of fun, can't a person poke satirical fun at himself? And as for those unutterably minor mistakes (which, incidentally, I couldn't find in Claude's quote of Geis), C. R., you make a whole barrel of minor spelling errors...not the least of which is the misspelling of my name in the review of Umbra wherein you try to be vituperative and aggressive (look Ma, a spelling error) and fail rather miserably...the name is Hiccough, not Hic-up. This error, I believe, reflects the mentality and capability of a fourth-grader in a Howard County high school. The rest of this issue is filled out with Nancy Share's column in which she makes perfectly Terrible misspellings and misuses the apostrophe no end, an article which states very solemnly that science fiction is now come to a crossroads, and a very nice story by Hal Annas. Claude tries to emulate Alan Dodd in his letter column and fails miserably. CONCLUSION: Muzzy is improving from its postwar slump, but it has far to go; and although the issue is packed with good and interesting material, the price is a bit too high. Best feature: the Dave English cartoons scattered throughout, which were riots.

PHANTASMAGORIA v2n1, new series (?), Derek Pickels, 197 Cutler Hts. La., Bradford 4, Yorks., Eng.; FREE, irregular?, mimeoed, 32 1/2 size pp. -- All in all this is a nice zine. The editorial and the letter section are long, which is always a good feature, and these merry Englishmen capitalize on it. Outside material includes a short fannish fiction bit and a short profile by and of Gregg Galkins. The latter seems to be all the rage this season, and Phanny is right on top of it. As I said, the editorial and the letter section take up the decided majority of the issue, and the personality expression in them is, as usual, of no little fascination. CONCLUSION: A nice little mag, unpretentious but containing plenty of nice fannishness. Best feature: the very neat appearance.

TACITUM 6, Benny Sodek, 1432 Calhoun St., New Orleans 18, La.; 10¢, 3/25¢ monthly, mimeoed, 24 pp. elite. --First of all, Tacitum is as usual, a very attractive zine. Material, in order of appearance, includes a 1½ p. column by Hall in which he tries meekly and blearily to be voracious, defaming Geis and Quandry now, pronouncing those who believe in a perfect God stupid then. In the interim he again proves he cannot spell "hic-cough," "locales," calles the Editor of Umbra an idiot (unoriginal fellow --I've said as much myself quite often) and, rather oddly, a "sheep-fan." Just thought I might let you know what Claude II is doing these days. To proceed: Ray Schaffer performs some competent biblianalyses, Lee Sorenson asks questions most of which have been asked in vain before, and we top ourselves off with the Texas imitation of the Toronto Derogations. There are seven pages of letter column, making me very envious of M. Sodek, and an editorial note. CONCLUSION, or rather Opinion: Sodek has attractive format, very attractive, and he's outfitted himself with some good sercon contributors. A long letter column enhances the mag greatly, and since Hall was talking personalities, I couldn't say how esoteric he made himself; but for ten cents, Tac is worth it. Best feature: the format and the paper. Repro suffers from what I see as bad stencils.

OOPSLA! 19, Gregg Calkins, 2817 11th St., StalMonica, Calif.; 15¢, 2/25¢, nominally every 1½ months, mimeoed, 30 pp. --Where Benny Sodek is commendable for his beautiful appearance, Gregg Calkins is thoroughly excellent in just the same vein. The superior artwork of fandom's superior artists and the elite typewriter of Calkins blend into the fibers of O's softly somber pages as if to do so were their sole purpose in existence. Outside material by Grennell, Willis, and Berry is allowed to spread to heart's content, and the last quarter of this issue as usual is devoted to Gregg Calkins's own self-expression. This reading material is wonderful. CONCLUSION: Previously I've made the statement that Oopsla! is America's best fanzine. Nothing's happened to change that belief.

HÆMOGLOBIN 2, Fred L. Smith, 613 Great Western Rd., Glasgow W2, Scot.; 10c, biannually, mimeoed, 22 pp. --A very nice magazine whose only drawback is its schedule. It just isn't worth waiting two years for. Put it out bimonthly or quarterly, and people will take notice. Three sercon articles: on Orwell, IF, and ESP research are summations of what most of us already know, but it's a good thing to have summaries somewhere. However, the idea of three articles of the same type in one ish doesn't sound too healthy either in theory or, as here, in practice. Letters are two years old, thus precluding the possibility of raging feuds. Reproduction varies and format is far from what it should be, but Fred probably has difficulties getting adequate duplicating equipment in Glasgow, and this is H's first mimeoed issue. CONCLUSION: H. needs a drastic change in its schedule and a more varied atmosphere in its articles. With experience, appearance will improve. Best feature: no feature is outstandingly above or below the average except the back cover, which suffers quite a bit.

CONFAB 11, Bob Peatrowsky, Box 634, Norfolk, Nebr.; irregular, dittoed, 8 pp. Fandom's only letterzine...or rather only independent letterzine, since I remember something called Belle-Lettre is on the list too. Bob again proves that the letter column can easily stand on its own as a separate magazine. CONCLUSION: Anything can be brought up--there's no editorial policy. Worth asking for. Best feature: the letters.

FAFHRD, Ed Cox and Ron Ellik, 115 $\frac{1}{2}$ 19th St., Hermosa Beach, Calif., FREE, irregular, mimeoed, 24 pp. --Cover is a capella. Inside material goes this way: a nine-page reprint by Redd Boggs which deals with the effect of space travel on stf and fandom. Boggs says stf will disintegrate, & take fandom with it. Boggs says that although advances have only been made in the field of space travel, the whole of science fiction will collapse into the abyss created by the progress of science. In other words, science fiction now is ahead of science; but the momentous act of developing space travel will catch up with all of science fiction. Precedents are quoted, if I remember correctly, in the discovery of the atom bomb. Previously science fiction had held the vanguard in the atom race, but the good old USA caught up with its imaginative rival.

Thus Redd is saying that science is going to catch up with science fiction eventually, and he links this to the present, showing how science is just now moving inevitably closer to the imminent day of conjunction. I beg to disagree. In the thirties you had atom bombs and space travel, in the forties, you could only have space travel without getting mundane (and time travel too, of course). But now take a good long look at ASF. What branch of science are they going in for? Theoretical psychology. It's obvious. Their mechanical stories of civilizations, of invasions from space and their effect on the mass's mind...and to cap it off, who printed the Dianetics articles? The science of the workings of the human mind, of semantics, and of modern theoretical physics too, is involved. They won't change too much with the onslaught of wide-open space travel. And the brand of science fiction that deals with these sciences--it will, I think, be the new Basic Science that stf authors will concern themselves with, when space travel becomes mundane, and, somehow, time travel with it. Science fiction will change drastically with the realization of space travel, but it won't disintegrate. Space travel won't mark the end of imaginative frontiers in the scientific fields. Mundane literature will continue to interpret the workings of the mind and win Pulitzer Prizes right and left, while science fiction will soar into imagination and mix the sturdy science of the mind and its expression with the ideas of amateur scientists trying to push forward their won theoretical frontiers. It's a very adaptable field of literature we have.

To return to the mundanities of fanzine reviewing: after Redd Boggs guest book reviews, three in number, are educationally competent and well written. Fanzine reviews and letters close out the issue. CONCLUSION: The level of material is high in quality, the repro very readable, and the schizophrenic editorial personality is far from lacking. For a 2¢ postcard telling them you want one, it is infinitely more than worth it. Best feature: depends on what you're looking for. Cox's fmz reviews are written in inimicable style, and Boggs carries Portent.

YKS, Klaus Unbehaun, Wuppertal-Elberfeld, Adersstr. 34, Germany; DM 0.50 for Germans, free to us dirty extracted foreigners, irreg. but very frequent, mimeoed, 34 $\frac{1}{2}$ size pp., in German. --Since YKS is in German, I haven't had the time to struggle through it, but have picked up odds and ends here and there. It's a nice little magazine (#3), quite sercon in material content, and unafraid to talk about filmstrips (Klaus's occupation dealing therewith). But small elements of fannishness creep into a few corners--or at least fannishness as we know it. This is known to be the best fanzine of German fandom. I believe the rumor. Klaus is inviting trades and seems very philanthropic with his productions. CONCLUSION: Why not write and ask him for a copy? This is a whole new fandom starting along much the same path as our own 25 years back.

O, Gary Labowitz, 7234 Baltimore, Kansas City 14, Mo.; 10¢, no sch., mimeoed, 12 pp. --This journal starts off with a poor cover and immediately gets worse. Gleelessly typing through his illustrations, Gary makes such esoteric statements as "As for Jan and Ray, STOP FIGHTING!" Now this brings to mind Jan Jansen and Ray Schafer? S chapiro? Thompson? And I didn't know Jan was fighting with them. No, I don't think Gary knows what Jan Jansen is. It's probably Jan Sadler, and O is a fanzine devoted to making a little clique of its own, right from the start. Outside material? None. Four of this mag's 12 pages are old left-over ads from Kaymar Trader, four are editorial (he might have picked something of interest to talk about, or at least tried to start something among our more bellicose fans), one is fanzine ads, one is the cover, and the other two are blank. Format is that of KT: lacking. That's alright in an adzine, but it has no place in a fanzine. There's really not much else you can say about it, except that I have a vague wish it were a one-shot, it looks more like it than a fanzine, even a first-ish fanzine. CONCLUSION: Gary should send out his first 5 issues free; by then he ought to show enough improvement to put a price on. Best feature: the left-over ads, which are to disappear with O.2.

BELLE LETTRE, Irene Gore, 45 Worcester Ave., Bowerham, Lancs., Eng.; subsidiary to Brennschluss (German for hotseat), mimeoed, 22 pp. --Twenty-two pages of letters are better than Confab's eleven pages of them any day, true; but as I mentioned, this is not an independent zine but the separate letter column to Brennschluss (a very good fanzine). Probably the editorial purpose is to air the comments on the recent Brennschluss and give Offended Parties, etc., chances to reply for the next Brennschluss's letter column. A handy thing to do when you've got no material around; I'd do it occasionally, but I've not got the letters, which is another prerequisite. Format is attractive, black on green--quite easy on the eyes; nice cover, very wide margins. CONCLUSION: A nice letterzine, but you have to get Brennschluss to get B.L., and tho Brennschluss is worth getting, I don't have subscription figures for it. Best feature: the letters.

WENDIGO, Georgina Ellis, 1428 15th St. E, Calgary, Alta., Canada; irreg. but nicely frequent; mimeoed, 12 pp., #6. --What a difference in these twelve pages! Pardon, 14 pages, twelve of which are the editorial. The editor is one of the few people left that has the ability to ramble on about most everything, extremely disjointedly, yet keep enough true conversational style in each item to unify the whole heterogeneous mess into a delightful heterogeneous whole. If you're not afraid to be un-sercon, Wendigo is the fanzine for you. (That was a CONCLUSION.) Best feature: Isn't any Best feature. Write and ask for a copy. Believe me, it's an experience to read it that you'll never forget--at least not for a couple years.

FAPA BOOZE, Bob Tucker, Box 702, Bloomington, Ill.; trade & Fapa, Gestetnered grue, 10 pp. A moment of rejoicing as Bob Tucker finally quits his terrible sandy-sheriff typewriter. The new look is stately and dignified, as it should be. (How often has Sans Serif meant Bob Tucker?) Bob's ramblings are somewhat in William Saroyan's style without Saroyan's fabulous atmosphere...which sort of clutches the heart out of S.'s style, but what can you expect in a mere fanzine? Head and shoulders above its longer counterparts. CONCLUSION: Put this address on your trade list. Best feature: Tucker on Gilgamesh (who it appears is unused to being laid on.)

ALPHA, Jan Jansen, 229 Berchemlei, Borgerhout, and Dave Vendelmans, 130 Strijdhof Leen, Berchem, -Belgium; in America, Dick Ellington, 299 Morningside Dr., Apt 11A, New York 25, N. Y.; 6/60¢, quarterly, mimeoed, 16 pp. For new form see below. --This issue (#11?) suffers from what every faned suffers--extreme lack of material. So much so that the two editors have been forced to be their own sole contributors. Granted, their ramblings, too, (--as well as other ramblezines) are nice to read, but Alpha loses not flavor but substance. Worth a dime? Just about, whereas previous issues were worth a good deal more. The only outside contributions are letters, five pages thereof, which include a pretty-good poem by Linard, in French. Now the editors have turned this issue into a giant Request for Material, and well they might, seeing what they had on hand. So, in cooperation with their little scheme, I can vouch for Alpha's being a very good place to send your material contributions, both monetary and verbose. More of the latter is presently needed.

With the next issue Alpha suffers inverted fission. (This statement alone may make Jansen realize the error of his ways.) The editors are going to put out separate magazines, each titled Alpha, and bind the two together. Inverted fission mainly because they'll be upside down of one another. Now Dave's Alpha will probably tend towards a Canadian style, what with his preoccupation with jazz. Pardon, not so much a Canadian style but an Ontarian style, since that province is where most of this genre, if not all, comes from. Raeburn, Lyons, Steward, and so on. Jan Jansen's Alpha will stick closer to the style of the old Alphas, mainly because Jan was the most active of the two (pardon me, Claude, the MORE active; I was merely thinking in French). And mainly for that reason, I give Jan's Alpha better odds of longevity than Dave's. Both will be for the price of one and that price may be sent manifested in material wealth to M. Ellington of Nouvel York(!). Material, which they'll need more desperately than before should be sent to Them at the above addresses (which is why I included them.).

CONCLUSION: This Alphan issue had better be ignored. Alpha in the future will have a radically different form, and considering its past success, should be valuable to keep in touch with. Best feature: Jan replying to Claude Hall's Texan explications-- "Of course we here know that TEXAS is big, sorry BIG!!! We see pictures now and then. It's also empty...which seems to be mirrored in the heads of natives..."

FANTASI, Cato Lindberg, Skogerveien 69, Drammen, Norway; 10¢, 3/25; irregular (?), dittoed (?), 26 1/2 size pages. #3(5). --Fantasi is the only other foreign language mag I've seen in fandom. This issue is attractive, if you allow for postal mauling and lack of great experience handling format, since the reproduction is quite sharp for ditto. Sort of like Umbra at its best. In fact, since there's some definite offset marring the pages, I wonder if it's dittoed after all. The means of reproduction is some branch of the direct family, as opposed to photo-offset and stencil reproduction. Fantasi is much more fannish, again in our sense of the word, than Yks. Several pleasant stabs at fanfiction writing, reprinted cartoons from British fanzines give the impression of a lightness the Germans haven't attained. The next issue, if I know my Norwegian cognates well enough, will revert to fullsize and, from Cato, it will be partly in English if anyone contributes. The price tag says kr. 0,85, but since it's illegal to send kroner (or even k ronor) out of the country, I'll appoint myself temporary American agent, and if you want to, send me a dime and I'll make it up with Cato. CONCLUSION: Of interest to people who are interested in Yks, Alpha, Norwegian, or just anything different. This one certainly is.

RENEW - ED RAMBLINGS

Reproduction this issue took a flying leap backwards. Ted White on or about Dec. 26 sent me by mail some covers and 100 Carter's (best) masters. This is January 8, and they haven't gotten here yet. So I've had to use the inferior brand peddled here in Baltimore (Columbia). I had a few Carters left, and Jan Jansen and most of the pages with lettering on them are done on Carters. A select thirty of you won't be able to tell the difference, because Columbias are glorious on the first 30, but begin to have their ailings after that.

Since the covers haven't gotten here either, Umbra has the worst cover in its history...or does it? At any rate, there are other things to discuss. I happen to be the American agent for Etherline, the biweekly Australian fan news magazine, and a veritable window on a world. Sub rates are \$2 a year, c/o me.

While wrapped up in eulogizing Infinity last month, I ignored the possibility that its editor might want people to send him bits of coin for extra copies of the third and last issue of this fannish phenomenon. Although I included his address in the Change of Address column, I fear that I have done him great damage. Too, he tells me that his mailing wrappers were of the perishable sort, and many fans who should have received it haven't. If you haven't gotten Infinity 3 or if you want a copy of it, (the latter at 15¢), write to Charles Harris, Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, Pa.

TAFF, the very worthy Transatlantic Fan Fund, is holding elections for its candidate to the British con in Easter '56. Candidates are: Forry Ackerman, GMCarr, Kent Corey, Lee Hoffman, Dave Kyle, Hal Shapiro, Lou Tabakow, and Wally Weber. Donations to (USA) Don Ford, 129 Maple Ave., Sharonville, Ohio, and (UK) to Walt Willis, 170 Upper Newtownards Rd., Belfast, N. Ireland. Let's try to send over someone to repay for the Bulmers' coming here and brightening our lives.

Denis Moreen departs from fandom the way I want to do when I do: with all good intentions...I hope you will excuse typos throughout and lack of illoes; by waiting so long for masters from Ted, I left myself with only three days to put this issue out...mailing date Um 11 is Jan 9.

UMBRA is published monthly by John Hitchcock, 15 Arbutus Ave., Baltimore 28, Maryland, USA, at the rate of 10¢ a copy and three for 25¢. In other lands: Australia, 1/-, 3 for 2/6. England, 9d, 3 for 2/-. Belgium, 5fr. and 3 for 12.50. Holland, 40c, 3 for fl. Norway, 0.70 kr, 3 for 1.75. Germany, 0.40 DM, 3 for 1 DM. Sweden, kr. 0.50, 3 for 1.25. Or for a letter of comment every so often (NOT compulsory with each ish!) *****
Index to issue: EN THI APXHI, editorial, p.3; A MERRY CHRISTMAS! STORY, George Wetzel, fanfiction, p.5; BNF...A DEFINITION, Larry Stark, article, p.9; UIT VLAANDEREN VLAAMS, Jan Jansen, column, p.11; WHAAAT, letters, not enough, please comment on thish...p.15; BOOK REVIEW, Bob Hoskins, p. 20; Chickenscratches, fanzine reviews, p.21. ("CONCLUSION"s, Claude Hall.) *****

CHANGES OF ADDRESS (thanks to Ron Ellik & others who sent in changes):

xCharles Lee Riddle, USS CASCADE (AD 16), Fleet P.O., New York, N.Y.

xBob Hoskins, Box 19, Lyons Falls, N.Y.

xAV/JK Clarke, 7 Inchmery Rd., London SE6, England.

xSam Johnson, 814 Garth Ave., Jacksonville 5, Fla.

xRichard H. Eney, 417 Ft. Hunt Rd., Alexandria, Va.

If anyone's going to move, or knows someone who is, let me know, and I'll publicize his new address. Deadline for material for Umbra 12: Feb 5.

Probable date of mailing: Feb 12. Let me hear from y'all sometime...

& till then, enjoy yourselves!

JOHN HITCHCOCK.

(Circ. 137)