

ALVA ROGERS







January 1, 1945

TO ALL TO WHOM THESE PRESENTS COME, GREETINGS:

Be it known that the undersigned four individuals hereby bind themselves to perform the following task for the following person:

At whatever time during the calendar year 1945 the Editor of VoM (aka Verse of the Intoxication) wishes to present these presents to those at present signing these presents, the said signers will, cheerfully and with no thought of remuneration provide the said Editor of VoM (aka Valse of the Inebriation) with 1 (one) ((yes you heard us, ONE)) lithographed cover for the said VoM (aka Vodka of the Indigestion) subject to the following conditions:

(1) The Editor of VoM (aka Viggle of the Infatuation) shall furnish the original for the use of the lithographer.

(2) The Editor of VoM (aka Verms of the Intestine) shall convey all such material to and from the Lithographer.

(3) We wish you a Merry New Year, and a Happy Ground Hogs' Day!

Witness our hands:

*Francis J. Laney*  
*Jackie Laney*

Francis T. Laney

Jackie Laney

*Sandra Rae Laney*

Sandra Rae Laney

*Quiggie Lynn Laney*

Quiggie Lynn Laney

--And so, this month's cover comes to U, angled by the Papa Laney & all the lassies. The Editor of VoM (aka Verisimilitude of Intellectualism, aka Vanguard of the Insubordi-nation, aka Vice of the Imagi-nausea) thanx this quartet, particularly its favorite half pints, S&Q.

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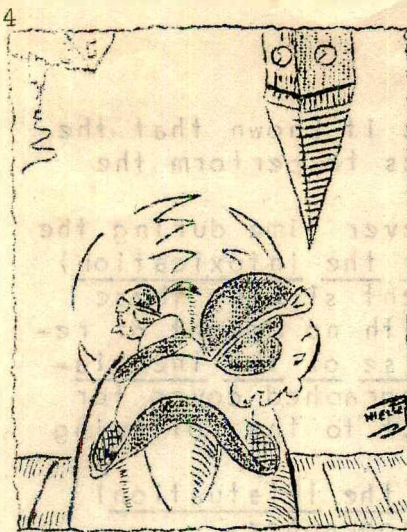
SOME SOCIOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF FANDOM (Supplement) - FTLaney.....10-12

VOICE of the IMAGI-NATION, aka VOM, #38. Jan '45. 15c, 7/\$. This is

An \*Ack-Ack\* Publication

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"Boy-o-boy, are we  
HIGH UP!"

CAPT DONN BRAZIER, of the former Frontier

Socy, now in the Marianas, censors his own mail, saying:  
Rothman always has something to say, and what he says about soldiers taking "nuthin from nobody" is right on. They'll take orders in the civilian world as they'll dip the soup spoon away from them, or tidy up the bedroom each morning before they go to work.

The army did not create any new educational methods that I know of; they did exploit certain methods long advocated in progressive education, but in general, I'd say they were pretty much traditional. Visual education is used when the materials are available and there is an aggressive officer in charge who will make it a point to obtain the materials. It's so easy to whip up a little talk - the old lecture method - based on the countless field manuals available. Soldiers have become so accustomed to the dry-rot material within the pages of the manuals, that a lecture based on other references and given in the speaker's own words and backed up with his own experiences is novelty enough to make it interesting. But this

cannot teach a man to do any of the complex things a technical branch of the service requires. Neither can a movie, nor an animated cartoon. The student can answer questions based on the movie, but the knowledge he spits back on paper in a sort of reflex action of words won't help him actually remove the propeller and install a new one. Thus, the vocational school is required, for there you learn to fix a tire by fixing a tire; it's a selected set of experiences condensed into a short period of time with proper supervision. Rothman recognizes the need for an education leading to something else besides the ability to perform a complex act like an automaton. So do I. But how are we going to get it, and still make a living in a technical world? There are only a limited number of writers, poets, artists, and musicians who will find livelihood in this new world.

Sex, whether a topic for discussion or yanked in by its pubic hairs to make things lively, is adolescent. Sex is normal. We are not interested in normality; at least, that's why I read science-fiction and fantasy, because of its abnormality. Some view sex as a mysterious, forbidden something. It's no more esoteric than a juicy beefsteak, and the latter interests me more right now.

A little personal data: I'm somewhere in the Marianas Islands, living under fairly rugged conditions, though pretty safe. We have occasional brushes with disorganized parties of Japs mostly after food, and our outfit has killed three and captured one. The weather here is agreeable, warm, but not too hot. Every so often we get rained out, but I don't mind the rain; I've developed a disregard for mud, filth, and wetness which amazes me. When it pours down during the movie, we all sit there watching some old beat-up thing from 1940 without moving a muscle, water streaming into our eyes. Where are all those new movies supposed to be sent overseas? #

JAY CHIDSEY, Geo-Vizifan of Green Springs, O, defends Yngvi: Anent your flaming denunciation of L. Searles. U are right in what you say about closed microcosm etc ... but aren't you overlooking just ONE lil thing? Namely - has Searles a point..he puts it very bluntly, but SHOULD FAPA CONTAIN ILLEGAL MATTER? Not matter that injures Langley's aesthetic sense, but matter Uncle Sammie disapproves of. I think it should not. If the matter in FAPA measures up to standard there will be no threat to you or any other publisher, any doubtful material will be judged by those qualified. I doubt if the matter will ever come to test, last FAPA showed nothing questionable that I see. Searles is braving unfavorable publicity to clean up the organization he considers his hobby. Hope it works. #

CPL GUS WILLMORTH, Americanglofan, knocks at our door to say: Am taking this opprotunity to announce a change of face. From being a gentleman whose soul (no typo-error) purpose was to sneer delicately at matters of religious potent, we change into a pious person who will ardently defend religion no matter whose or what kind. If there is any doubt in anyones mind as to the existence of supernatural forces of any sort what so ever, we shall take it onto ourselves to prove that several thousand generations of peoples cannot be wrong despite the majority of the people are most of the time. What, screams the fannish multitude, could be the causus of this bello?! Well, I'm gonna be a fan publisher, and my fmz is MYTH ((unpd adv--I hope I get away with it)), and since myths are distinctly gathered about peoples'beliefs in the supernatural, I must in all faithfulness to my fmz, defend those beliefs. So here goes all.

I defend. Chas McNutt cracks that Rolly Hollers are being futile in their manner of worship. Does the man not realize that to reach the gods first you must put yourself in tune with them and the infinite. Whether we put our vibrations in touch with the cosmic ones by working into a raging fervor as do the Rollers and certain primitive tribes, or if we do so by quietude and mental effort such as used in silent prayers, is not so much of matter. Thae fact remains that to become atuned to the infinity of the eternal creator, there must be some means of transmission whether by prayer or by sacrifice, causing the vibrations of the questor to reach the vibrations of the quested. If one does not succeed in getting through is this the fault of the traveler, the road, or the destination?

As for the social manifestations of religions, that is a deep and deverse question. All according to the particular sociology it may be permissable to kill, maim, rob, and rape with impunity according to the existant law. The fact that sociology has been woven inseparably into the beleif in the supernatural, is not necessary proof of its truths.

Bobby Bloch quizzes why not a bibliography. Well, Langley Searles seems to be



doing rather well there, and JM Rosenblum is trying to do his bit intermittantly, so why should VoM be repetitious. However, bibs are difficult things. I find that no matter how complete things can still be added. I know, I have just completed a file of some thousand and more books and was sweetly told by the second person that saw it that he could with sufficient time add some twice or thrice as many. My settling back at the finish of an arduous job with a sigh, turned into a limp flop with a moan..

However, something could be done about this credo for stiffs or the fantasy fans philosophy. Now why don't a few of you guys send in your fan's philosophy? Quite a bit has been printed, as see this ish VoM where the Cosmian League splurge was aired, about the ideals and views of fen. With these several hints who can whip up a bit of credo?

But ideas for discussion.....what is this---a class in better literature? If I may become GI Joe for a sec: My poor aching back!!

Fancylopedia received; it is truly a marvelous job. I have read over most of the contents, the greater part of which I find most entertaining and enlightening. A number of things, naturally, are missing, but one can hardly expect perfection. The binding and covers are very attractive. All in all it is tops, and everyone concerned with its publication should be complimented, I feel.--Gerry de la Ree.

DB Thompson "Seems to me I ought to write VOM a letter once a year," sez this Louisifana, greeting the VOMICS, "and this is it for 1944. I've enjoyed VOM all year, so I ought to tell you so. Besides, I'm taking something of a crack at Forrie in the next issue of PHANNY, and I ought to tell you that it is merely an expression of our complete disagreement as to the place and funtion (sic!) of SF fandom, and not a personal crack at all. But it is a bit rough." ((Alryt, U roughian!))

hully ROTHMAN, Cpl, currently at Upper Darby, Pa, has decided: I'll exhibit the "depth and breadth" of my learning by commenting on Speer's list of names. I can just see Harry Warner doing the same, and gloating over the names of the composers!

So we have the following composers of the modern and esoteric school:

Arnold Schoenberg (Verklärte Nacht) ~  
Eric Satie (Gymnopediae) ~ Alban Berg (A veddy modern violin concerto) ~ Paul Hindesmith (Ma-  
this der Mahler) ~ Bela Bartok (Bear Dance) ~  
For the others there are:

Martha Graham - Modern dance, Krafft-Ebbing -  
Psychopathia Sexualis, Jung - Psychoanalysis,  
Spengler - Decline & Fall of the Roman Empire,  
Eisenstein: Great Russian movie director,

Lear: Humorist, Arp: Modern artist ("Is Arp Art?" /Life/) Of course, a list like this is a dangerous thing, as many of these people I may know by reputation only. Certainly I've never read Spengler, nor played music by any of the above except Satie. Out of all those, the only ones with whom I have any real acquaintance (thru their work, of course) are Martha Graham and Sergei Eisenstein (Alexander Nevsky).

Recently I came across in a book called "Mathematics and the Imagination" an item which is more Astounding, startling, and thought-variant than any story by John Russell Fearn, and just as mad. There is a mathematical proof of the following theorem:

A body the size of a pea, and a body the size of the sun may be divided into a number of finite parts of equal magnitude in such a manner that the sum of the parts from the pea equals the sum of the parts from the sun.

But that's what it says. Hubba hubba.

P.S. If people care to continue the name game, here are a few who are tops in their respective lines: Georg Cantor - Eugene Gant - Lena Geyer - Andre Segovia. #

Enjoyed Fancylopedia very much. A great deal of information of interest to Fans, assembled in one place, which would take long searching to find elsewhere.

--WSHouston

Rob Mastell of 120 W 31 St, Hibbing, Minn, tells a bit about his tastes: Heinlein is probably my favorite author. I love sociological stories. I hope Van Vogt, Del Rey give us more of this type. Also de Camp. I haven't read much Wells yet. I read his "Star-Begotten" & "The Croquet Player", these were sent as book reviews to "Spaceways".

I have heard of Esp & Valopuk (Vola-puk = World-speech). I would learn either of these if they're worth learning. (lernu Esperanton!)

I am also interested in Forteanism, religion, mysticism, astronomy, psychology, philosophy, physics & radio, music, literature, art, weightlifting (the exercising medium of the future), mathematics, photography &



"I wish to put in for a transfer from being a belly ganner, sir!"



poetry. I would be glad to correspond with anyone interested.

As I see it these  
5 are outstanding as future foundations: 1- World Government. 2- World language.  
3- World Religion. 4- World calendar. 5- Metric system.

As a closing statement,  
I believe in an Omnipotent Mind or God. Does any care to argue? (If so, kindly do  
so in private correspondence--do not debate further in Vom.) #

Signing himself "A  
delinquent reader", a local reader drops an anonymous note: Anniversary issue excel-  
lent. Shall have to go back over a few preceding issues to see how much of this fine  
entertainment I've missed.

Enjoyed reading practically every letter in it. Seems  
you saved up some of the more better ones for the annual. Is that so?

Shall not com-  
ment further until I see what lead up to some of the current discussions. #

I claim to be the only person in the world to read the Fancyclopedia on a troop  
train enroute to Fort Bliss, Texas, unquote. By Tuscon I was up to LASFS. When we  
reached Douglas I was reading "reading". To a person who is fairly new to Fandom the  
Fancyclopedia was THE one thing.--Pvt Wm Rotsler, formerly of Camarillo, Cal.

BILL NEWMAN, prop. of the Crime Book Center (catering to fans) introduces himself  
from 509 N State St, Chicago 10: Where have I come from? W-a-a-l.  
Stranger- I horned in on this old Earth some two thousand years ago and have been re-  
incarnated times innumerable. I have been murdered 48 times and am hourly expecting  
to be murdered again (by my wife) for having adopted Science-Fiction and Weird Tales  
as avocation-hobby. This time I expect the extinction to be permanent! All joking  
aside: I have always been a screwball in my reading tastes and interested in this  
type of fiction....but always enjoyed the "realistic" or probable type, such as Van  
Vogt. Only lately though, have I discovered that Sc-F really matters....that it pre-  
sents certain aspects of Prophecy hitherto ignored by philosophers and economists a-  
like, in the main....to say nothing of the Scientific Discovery and Invention angle.  
I read very little Sc-Fandom always waiting for some one like August Derleth (visit-  
or to our store) to tell me what is what. Saves an awful lot of time, which is more  
valuable than gold these days. (Send for the CBC free catalog of stfantasy for sale.)

SAM MASON, "alias Count von Wacula und Gremlinsburg", 1617 N Philip St, Philadelphia  
22, Pa, broaches a Utopian idea: There is a group of about thirty peo-  
ple. scattered all over this country, who've got an idea I like. One Miss Atkinson is  
heading the thing, and started the ball rolling recently. She has a largish estate in  
N.C. and she'd like to start a colony on it, (or elsewhere if so decided) for writers,  
artists, intellectuals, etc., Ads in Writer's Digest and elsewhere have collected  
the thirty or so people who're in on it now, and we're arranging Round Robin letters  
to argue out various questions.

Fans who go in for social thinking will know all a-  
bout the original Brook Farm experiment. Others had better read up on it before some-  
body calls yez stupid. The name, in the case of the New Brook Farm Association, was  
only adopted to show the connection in spirit with that original. There will be no  
farm work in actuality- our objectives are more than that.

I believe that the larger  
this colony is, the better chance it has to succeed. Also, I feel that fans will be  
interested, some of them anyway. We are going to make this cooperative and communal,  
and we plan to keep religious ideas out of the picture. (I myself am not an atheist- I  
rather lean toward the sort of ideas James Thomas expressed. But I don't want any Holy  
Rollers in this.) We're going to have a mild sort of nudism- wear clothes, but not too  
many, and take 'em off if you wish. Also, I have some notions as to reform of the pre-  
sent hideous garments fashion imposes on us mere males. Oh, a whole stack of notions  
are circulating.

Stfans ought to be greatly interested in this project, because here  
are all the elements of science-fiction- an actual attempt to create a new way of life  
without resort to formulated thinking. There may be adherents of Communism, or commun-  
ism, or socialism, technocracy, even Deglerism among us- but the project itself isn't  
going to take up any formula. We want to create a retreat-colony, where members of the  
Association may go to live permanently or temporarily. Our plans include not merely  
one such place but as many as we can create. Our basic philosophy is somewhat anarch-  
istic- instead of creating a radically new social structure in this retreat, we want  
to free ourselves from social structures in order to be able to experiment with new  
ones, not to subjugate ourselves to any one of them.

But the principal effort will be  
to create an atmosphere in which creative work can be done. Any fan who is a writer, a  
painter, or anything similiar will understand the difficulties of attempting to do  
creative work in the ordinary life of American civilization. First, there is always  
the necessity of eating, which means work- and forty hours a week disappear into the  
maw of the machine. With the time that's left, one must do such a multiplicity of  
things that hardly any is left to paint, to write, or even think. Even if one is suc-  
cessful in the line of creative work, there are still the exigencies of life in this  
world.

In this colony, there will be, we hope, an entirely different atmosphere. We  
want to set it up within reaching distance of a city, but hardly so close that we'll  
smell the monoxide. (But carbon monoxide was a colorless, odorless gas, the last time I  
inhaled its lethal fumes & was reborn a zombie. --Ye vombe) One of these large but  
untillable farms and woodland sections, where the farmers have just about given up  
trying to wrest food from Mother Earth and have let the farmland turn back to forest  
would suit us.



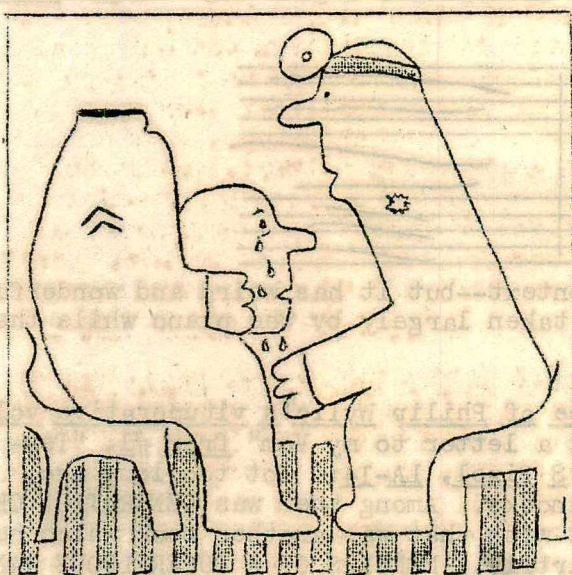
Here we'll have a central house- whatever buildings that are already there will do. In this will live some of those who spend an occasional weekend there, and also a few to keep things in order. There will be a library, and the powerplant, and any other small conveniences.

The land around will be made into as close a facsimile of its original condition of woods and grass as possible. As time goes by, there will be more buildings put up on this land, but the woods will be left as is. The buildings will be cottages and prefab cabins, owned by the group rather than the person who happens to live in them. We hope to attract others who want solitude and yet comfort, and who may build their own homes around the periphery of the retreat grounds. To any such, we'll sell land, or help in construction of their houses.

So far the plan includes having a large society of supporters living as usual outside the retreat. Such people would pay regular dues, meet together when they chose, and of course, be bound together by such interests as a magazine, regular bulletins about the retreats, etc. If one of these were to decide that he wanted to visit a retreat for a week, he would write and inform the director there that he was coming, and go. The average cost of a week at such a place would be much lower than the cost of a camp week, and much more interesting.

Ultimately he might decide that he liked it so well that he wanted to stay. If so, he'd have to be a writer, selling regularly- or some similiar work, since he would have to continue to contribute to the retreat's maintenance. Yet it would be much cheaper to live there than elsewhere.

We are now working on a plan to give people an opportunity to live in such a place on their re-



"Calm yourself, man, and tell me how it happened."

tirement from active life, by having been a member of the NBFA for a set period. Plans for financing the colony are well under way, and we just received something from an optimist who joined us recently- a complete set of plans for a rocket-port!! He's the same guy who's been pricing ivory, in sizes suitable for tower construction lately.

Incidentally, I had been expounding stf to Miss Atkinson, our chair-woman, who hadn't ever heard of it before, and she was literally wild with enthusiasm. She states that we're doing literature a great service by conducting a revolt against realism. In her infection, she's about to buy fanzines by the tons- look out, editors! Also, she promised that if the retreat should have the printing equipment promised by another citizen, she will let any fan who wants to turn out a fmz in on the machinery, the artists, everything. So, if our retreat works out, look out for the best-looking fmz yet.

Any fan who wants more information can get it from me- but please enclose a stamp if you write about it. Our treasury is absolutely nil. In case there are any fans who wish to join now, send us two dollars and you're in for one year, or two bits for part-payment. We will send you more material, and we'll make you set to work getting others in; we'll send you our quarterly magazine, when and if published, and we'll notify all our other henchmen of your presence, so if there are any in your vicinity, they will meet you. #

24 December 1944. Airmail from the Marianas. Yesterday the Fancyclopedia arrived, and what a Xmas present! It took me all day to read it, but read it I did; and what a wonderful piece of work! It's things like that which make me glow. It has pumped that proverbial adrenalin into my blood stream; and, if I were home, I'd sit down and publish a hundred page fanzine myself.--Capt Donn Brazier.

JOHNSON, "Homewood", 108 Kimberley Rd, Leicester, ENG, a fencer:  
Must rave about the cover of #34: superb. (Gibson's "smash" hit.)  
And what a pleasant change from the ubiquitous nudes! I put my vote on the nude question, by the bye, as "No."--not from prudishness, but because of the effect created on a not-too-tolerant outsider: parents, in the case of younger slen. We slen, being slen, understand that much is done "just for the hell of it"; others don't.

Gold medal to Alan P. Roberts;--but would like to "cast the first stone", having a clear conscience with regard to unsubstantial illusions; but really haven't the time. Too bad.

America is the traditional home of swing and jazz; and by a strange paradox, it is also the home of the world's two greatest conductors (Toscanini & Stokowski), and the greatest orchestra (Philadelphia.) Yet in that cross-section of American slandom known as VoM, we see no discussion on either music or jazz--a truly deplorable state of affairs. Surely, there are slen interested in such things? As one who is a keen follower of good music, with some aspirations to compose, and yet has also achieved the state of mind necessary to appreciate jive, which is not music and cannot be liked as such, I'd like to kick off with a few remarks.

Music and jive (this latter I use as a general term for all kinds of good jazz and swing) should appeal to the slen mind, apart from the technical aspects thereof. Good music, with its powers of inducing deep (introspective) thought, and of taking one "out of this world",



should appeal to the thoughtful and yet escapist nature of slen; while jive, a good way to "let off steam", should also appeal to slen, for they are so built as to need relief of this kind, witness the hilarity of conventions.

But, apart from these superficial effects, there is much more to music than the purely philosophical side; and something more to jive than its turbulent emotionalism--these are merely the first, most obvious qualities of the two. It is a fact that music cannot be fully appreciated unless one knows music--there are those who question the pleasure derived from following music on a score--but they are mostly people who cannot do so anyway and so cannot know. For them, the philosophical aspect of music is the one-and-only. Only musicians know better. Real pleasure can, indeed, be derived from just reading a score, as one would read a book: it is not easy--but neither is it easy to read a "heavy" book.

It cannot be expected that many slen will be avid musical enthusiasts, but it is at least surprising that they do not appreciate the philosophical pleasure to be derived from music, and it is a pity the topic is not discussed more in VoM.

I mentioned that I compose a little--I have a couple of preludes to my name, and a very few other little items, none worth publishing--but I am attempting something larger, a pianoforte concerto: and the interest from the slen view-point lies in the single leit-motif running through it which is connected to my profound desire to escape..... it runs through the whole of the work as a kind of corollary of the main subjects, themselves deliberately sordid in nature.

If there are any musicians at Shangri-LA who may be interested, I give that simple leit-motif below.



Perhaps not so hot when taken out of its context--but it has weird and wonderful results when incorporated with the rest. It is taken largely by the piano while the orchestra is expounding the main themes. #

*James Repner*

under the influence of Philip Wylie's vituperative volume, adresses "Just a letter to my Vom" from #1, "Tendrill Towers", 628 S Bixel, LA-14: Not too long ago,

Robert Block recommended several books for the snooks. Among them was GENERATION OF VIPERS, which I have since read, and in contrast with that was another book which he did not mention, but which I recommend quite heartily, MEMOIRS OF A SUPERFLUOUS MAN.

As I said, I would recommend both of these, that is, if you can take it. GENERATION is somewhat like a strong purgative -- I haven't yet thought of anything along that line to which I might compare MEMOIRS.

In the set of essays which forms his book, Wylie, like a young and vigorous sort of philosopher, and daring iconoclast, criticises man for being less than he might. The other book is a philosophical autobiography, turned by a more subdued, more mature, and yet rather sophisticated hand. Nock does not want to change things -- he only attempts to see things as they are. It is not a pretty sight, for neither of these authors considers this the best of all possible worlds -- they both, in fact, are of the rather strong opinion that its in a bad way.

Using his pen as a cat-o-nine-tails, Wylie lashes man for his stupidity. Nock is more subtle -- he merely gives mankind some thirty-six inches of rope.

Wylie is best compared to the Old Testament prophets, who thundered against the people for their shortcomings. As trenchant as the best of them, he attempts to awaken mankind to the realization that they are in a deplorable state, and quite needlessly so. Two thousand years of the church, and two hundred years of science have seemingly left man every bit as barbarous as before. All the panaceas held up to us now are not one whit better than the methods of objective science, of dogmatic faith, of which they, for the most part, are formula extensions. They are rather unlikely to fill the bill, any more than religion or science have done so far.

He picks several outstanding examples from American society, and holds them up to a searing light.

Beginning with a general disclaimer against the political front in these war days, he denounces not only the already well-denounced policies of the allies in the past, but their continuance of the same stupidity today. He shows how we had built our hope, first on Christianity, and then on science, and how both have failed to give what they promised. He accuses both of them of dogmatism, and of empty stupidity and hypocrisy. He paints a dark picture of the world of today -- and no one could well say that it is not a true portrait.

He goes into the back streets of our cities and exposes the filth that more polite authors ignore. With a masterful use of really constructive criticism, he shows America in its worst light.

Following is a study of the Archetypal figures in mythology that, as according to Jung, have typified man's character and aspirations, desires and fears, through their symbolism, from the days of the cave man to the present day. Man's instinctual nature has not changed in that time, he says. Although men today may deny that vig-



orously, and even many psychologists, whom Wylie tags as amateurs, claim instinct to be something below man, it is nevertheless true, he says, that the differences between the cave man and the modern American are for the most part superficial. It has been shown that with slight conditioning an entire nation, indeed one of the most cultured of modern nations, can be reduced to a state superior to Attalia's Huns in no other way than mechanics.

His remarks anent the American medical profession constitute one of the most antagonizing slaps they have received since Carrell's MAN THE UNKNOWN. The medico's were lucky to escape with their B.V.D.'s.

The advertising men were not so lucky as that. For sheer hypocrisy and charlatanism. Wylie feels that Goebbels has nothing on American advertising agencies.

This led to the discussion of the American Cinderella myth. The young girl who felt that if she used the right commercial products, she would blossom into a beautiful princess, and her Prince Charming would come immediately and sweep her off her feet --and they would live happily ever after. Wylie's comments on this are priceless. Understandably enough, this formula seldom works out in real life, and the end product is Mom, one of the greatest of American institutions. He shows how the cult of "Momism" has developed into one of our leading religions, mushy, stifling, and pernicious as any.

His discussion of the common man and of the hero, labelled as the common man's backside, are two of the best sections in the book. Included is an interesting parallel -- perhaps a foreshadowing: He makes an analysis of the Jewish problem (from its historic angle) which is surprisingly accurate and concise, and by a surprising analogy shows that the German people of today may be letting their descendants in for the same conditions which have been the Jews' lot in the last several centuries.

Statesmen, business men, military men alike come within his range, and in each case he offers some very cogent criticisms.

Wylie's final thesis, the only thesis of the book, is that if we are to have a better world, we must have better people. He places his faith in Democracy to do that. Only through the ability of each individual to know the truth, and honestly to act thereby, can we achieve any degree of civilization. This is freedom, the only freedom. After having examined the darkside of the coin, Wylie turns it over. Throughout his book runs the "law of opposites." It is a faith in this that allows, or rather forces, one to go on aiming for that better world, even in the face of such seemingly great odds. With all its imperfections, democracy can go on in the face of them, constantly struggling, "testing whether this nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure." To be concluded.

Enclosed find \$1.50; please rush me a copy of the Fancyclopedia. What a goon I was not to take advantage of a real bargain offer!--Wm Sykora.

DCNN BRAZIER: I have a SLAN who is one year old. I have never seen my little boy, and thus have never been able to experiment on him. Wish I were home to make plans for the indoctrination of the young fellow. Stimuli of all kinds must be created. He must have music, speech, light & color, textures, temperatures, pressures, etc. He must have large books around to make bridges out of, to scribble in, to jump from book to book as if he were leaping across a raging river from stone to stone. Books will be his friends, and soon he will learn to look at their pictures as something more than splashes of color, and then he will know they have stories in them, and then he will read in them himself. I believe as

Dunkelberger does: The home is and should be maintained as a wonderful place to live. Workshop, radio shop and a foto lab in the cellar; library, publishing, music room, art room on the main floor; museum of natural history, biological lab, game room upstairs. There are so many things to make home a place to have fun, and to learn. I wanted to conduct educational experiments with objects & stimuli somewhat in the line of Bordent and his helpers in "When the Bough Breaks". One thing I've had my wife do for me is to play musical records of all types for him since the day he was born. Her care and the constant presentation of stimuli & objects have made him very precocious, curious & aggressive. Attention to food, sleep & toilet habits have accelerated his physical maturation in step with mental. But enuf of this proud papa!

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# SOME SOCIOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF FANDOM

FRANCIS T. LANEY

## INTRODUCTION

THIS IS NOTHING MORE THAN A VERY ROUGH PRELIMINARY SKETCH OF WHAT MAY AT SOME LATER DATE GROW INTO A FAIRLY LARGE & INDEPENDENTLY PUBLISHED CONTRIBUTION TO THE PHILOSOPHY OF FANDOM. IN ITS PRESENT FORM IT IS THE RESULT OF A HASTY DIGESTION OF THE NFFF WELCOM BOOKLET, THE SPEER FANCYCLOPEDIA, AND THE LETTER FROM ROBERT BLOCH IN VOM #36. I FIRST BECAME INTERESTED IN THE PHILOSOPHIC ASPECTS OF FANDOM WHEN ASHLEY INTRODUCED HIS SLAN CENTER PROPOSAL; MY INTEREST (BOTH FAVORABLE & DEROGATORY) WAS GREATLY HEIGHTENED & STIMULATED BY MY MOVING TO LOS ANGELES AND PARTICIPATING IN THE VIOLENT CONFLICT OF IDEOLOGIES LAST WINTER. NOW WITH THE NEARLY SIMULTANEOUS PUBLICATION OF THE BOOKLET, THE FANCYCLOPEDIA AND BLOCH'S LETTER, I HAVE REACHED A POINT WHERE--VERY FRANKLY TO SET IN ORDER MY OWN IDEAS ON THE SUBJECT--I MUST SET THEM DOWN ON PAPER FOR DISCUSSION. I WISH TO STATE EMPHATICALLY THAT WHILE MANY OF THE IDEAS HEREIN SET FORTH ARE THE RESULT OF MEASURED DELIBERATION THE ESSAY AS A WHOLE IS NOT TO BE TAKEN AS A DEFINITIVE STATEMENT OF MY VIEWS, MANY OF WHICH ARE STILL SOMEWHAT IN A STATE OF FLUX. TO STIMULATE A HEARTY DISCUSSION IS MY ONLY INTENTION, AND I WISH TO RESERVE THE RIGHT TO RETREAT FROM STANDS WHICH MAY LATER BE SHOWN TO BE UNTENABLE.

## A Matter of Definition

It shouldn't be necessary to have to define our hobby before we start discussing it, but due to the radical differences of opinion among our own group, some exposition of fandom is made necessary. In the past few FAPA mailings, a great deal of space has been given to suggestions & inventions for some term or name by which to call ourselves. It seems that "fan", "fans" & "fandom" are a shade too plebian for some of our armchair intellectuals. The first suggestion was that the plural of "fan" be changed to "fen", and I must confess that I myself slipped here--actually adopting this hideous term myself for 2 or 3 months. This was followed by a whole host of suggestions; the most notable of which are Slan Shack's "imaginist", "imaginists" & "imagidom" (abbreviated "im", "ims" & "imdom"); and Speer's "Stefnist", "stefnists" & "stefnate".

When I got tired of foaming at the mouth over the utter ridiculousness of these suggestions, it suddenly occurred to me that these various gentlemen were not speaking of fandom at all--they actually were speaking of imdom or, better, the stefnate.

I should like to propose a few clarifications. A fan is a person who reads and/or writes and/or illustrates stf-weird-fantasy in marked preference to the following of any other form of literature or any other hobby. If he is an actifan, his activity will extend to fanzines, collecting and other fan activities. Fandom is the loosely-knit group, exclusive of such organizations as NFFF & FAPA.

A stefnist, on the other hand, is an individual whose activities are somewhat more difficult to define. While he probably started out as being a true fan, he has gradually lost much if not all of his interest in the field of stf-weird-fantasy; yet, at the same time, he still retains the interest in fandom and certain of its ramifications. His interests are probably considerably broader than those of a purist fan; yet, on the other hand, his continued connexion with fandom quite possibly prevents his following these extraneous interests nearly as well as if he cut loose from fandom altogether. The stefnist is an interesting psychological study. He might almost said to have certain of the characteristics of the oedipus complex, since he still clings to the swaddling clothes and leading strings of fandom. Despite this, the typical stefnist is not a bad fellow when he acknowledges--to himself at least--the essential maladjustment of his form of life, and does not attempt to set himself up as a Great Brain. The group of stefnists of course comprises the stefnate, under which classification I would also class both FAPA and the NFFF. FAPA, as is well known, is a "Fantasy" Amateur Press Association in name only; the material in the mailings is largely of a nature to interest the stefnate only, and the group is primarily an amateur journalists' society. Until I studied the NFFF Welcom Booklet, I would have placed this group under fandom, but a careful perusal of this, the official publication of NFFF, shows that the group is largely under the control of stefnists and not fans.

For purposes of example, I shall indicate a few of the more prominent figures in the field, and attempt to classify them. The leading stefnist, I should say, is Jack Speer. His interest in fandom, according to my purist definition, is extremely slight, as may be witnessed both by his many publications in FAPA and by the content of his Fancyclopedia. One of the highest ranking fans, on the other hand, is HCKoenig, who is known thruout our field as an active bibliophile and an exponent of the best in literate fantasy, and whose participation in the stefnate is largely characterized by its absence. An excellent example of the combined fan-stefnist is Forrest J Ackerman. If he had to be classified as one or the other, I personally would class him as a fan, due to the fact that his intellectual interests center almost entirely around stf-weird-fantasy. His interest in the stefnate, I believe, is largely based upon friendships & associations--not on a mental sympathy with the bulk of stefnistic interests. Bob Tucker seems to lean fairly heavily on the fan side, judging from his marked interest in fantasy books, yet he has many of the interests & characteristics of the stefnist. Purely on a basis of his published



writings during the past year, I should classify Raymond Washington Jr as a stefnist, pure & simple. Claude Degler would get the same rating, tho much less pure and far more simple!

I myself am primarily a fan, tho I find association & discussion with the stefnists quite amusing, due to the fact that I seem unable to enter into their doings without treading heavily on someone's corns. In this article, I am discussing the stefnate, and the stefnate only; nothing I say is to be applied to fandom unless especially indicated.

I hasten to add that this question of fandom vs the stefnate is by no means one of these "East is East" setups; as is well known to all, there are many individuals who are both fans & stefnists. I do feel, however, that a great many of the previous utterances on the ideology of fandom (including my own) are largely invalidated by the fact that, so far as I know, up to now there has been made no serious differentiation between the two groups. We have two parallel and partially coalesced groups of hobbyists: Fandom and the stefnate. Any utterances concerning them are largely valueless unless the author of them indicates carefully which group he is discussing.

Down with Civilization! Long Live the Stefmate!

Says Robert Bloch: "It ((The Fancyclopedia)) establishes a definite culture. It offers a complete history, sociological study, philosophy and modus vivendi. It makes fandom permanent as a social phenomenon." (Bloch of course is referring to the stefnate.)

THIS STATEMENT stopped me utterly cold. I have, of course, come into contact with scores of similar ones from stefnists, running from fairly plausible bits of pseudo-intellectuality on down to the unblushing assinity of "Today we rule Tellus, tomorrow the Universe", or something along that line. But I have never had any particular respect for the individuals who propagated such views, tending to lump them in one vast limbo with the rest of the crackpots. Robert Bloch, on the other hand, is not a crackpot; his taking this stand means far more than the similar utterances of professed stefnists.

AT FIRST, I thot that he was indulging in the well-known Bloch trait of jamming his tongue firmly into his left cheek, rolling in a sheet of paper, and burning out his typewriter. I even had the effrontery to ask him if this were so. His negative answer is largely responsible for this essay. I could see no light on the subject at all, until the self-evident fact of there being two different groups struck me.

BLOCH IS RIGHT. Speer is right. Washington is right. Yes, even Degler was right, I'm afraid. Because none of these fellows was talking about fandom at all. Consciously or unconsciously they were talking about the stefnate. On the other hand, my article in Shangri-I'affaires last summer ("My Ideals of Fandom") is completely in the groove, for I was talking about fandom.

BUT WHAT OF this stefnate? Can it actually claim to be considered as a separate culture, without reference to the rest of civilization? At the present time, I am inclined to believe that this is slightly too florid a statement; however, a logical carrying thru of certain modern stefnist trends is extremely likely to bring this to pass.

CONSIDER. The problems of making a living, of mingling in the world, of becoming an active part of civilization, seem to count little in the rabid stefnist's scheme of life. Such participation as he does have is made comparatively unwillingly. The chief interest of his life, whether he admits it or not, is the stefnate. His greatest triumphs are in the stefnate. His bitterest defeats likewise. His closest friends are probably stefnists.

IF THESE PREMISES be moderately tenable, there can follow no other conclusion but that the stefnist's real life is in the stefnate. It follows that if the proposed establishment of Slan Center is successfully carried thru, the stefnist will have made another great step toward making his own culture. If, thru the natural evolution of the project, it becomes self-supporting (as Art Widner, I believe, suggested in FAPA a few months ago) there is no longer any reason for the stefnist to have any connexion whatever with mundane civilization, save for occasional raids into the "wilderness". Not only will he have his own culture, his folkways & mores, but even his economic system will be largely his own and only indirectly dependent on the rest of the world. If his self-supporting economy be soundly established, there is no reason to suppose that anything short of another world war could possibly puncture the cosmic amnion which by then would have been set up.

UNLESS.... While the stefnate is no doubt quite willing to let the rest of the world alone (except of course for the reforming of the world in FAPA & VOM!), I cannot help wondering just what kind of witch hunt the stefnists' descendents might have to face. The mere fact of setting up a "different" civilization in the midst of sameness is enuf to cause severe hard feelings. If, moreover, this "different" group has more or less Utopian characteristics, the jealousy thus aroused is likely to redound most uncomfortably. Or, on the other hand, if the group were less successful, they might quite conceivably be treated much the way Degler was by his fellow citizens of Newcastle. To the average person, the suavest, most intelligent stefnist would probably seem fully as irresponsible as Degler did to both fandom and the stefnate.

#### Present Stefmate as a Civilization

MANY ASPECTS of an independent civilization are already with the stefnate, particularly those dealing with the simpler mores, with politics & government, with journalism & self-expression, and with the division of society into classes. An in-



teresting development of the past few months has been an inquiry into the ethics and philosophy of the stefnate. A few months more, and no doubt the stefnists will have added a definitive code to their culture.

The mores of the stefnate are very nearly as immutable as those of an extremely primitive society. Violation of them, oddly enough, is not punished except by disapprobation in the stefnic press. For the true-blue stefnist, however, to be censured publicly by one of the aristocracy such as Jack Speer, is far more painful than the death & disgrace meted out to a primitive who violates a tribal tabu. A few of the more common mores include: Preclusion of emotion in any form (the stefnists no doubt like to think of themselves as disembodied brains!); extreme conservatism as evidenced both by the extreme deference with which older stefnists expect to be (and usually are) treated and by a surprising allergy to new ideas--particularly those advanced by younger, new stefnists; marked puritanism; a liking for certain symphonic phonograph records; and the acceptance of certain books as almost sacred authorities. Perhaps of too little import to classify as mores, a professed interest in language & semantics apparently is expected of most stefnists. For "citizens of tomorrow in the world of today", the stefnists are astoundingly stereotyped. Still, it must be admitted that the adherence to definite and well-defined mores is one of the first criteria of a civilization. Otherwise we have nothing more than an anarchy.

POLITICS & GOVERNMENT are well-established, tho only semi-organized. The main difficulty encountered by national stefnist groups has been the dictatorial desires of all the members and their frustration by the fact that each stefnist (broadly speaking) wanted to be the dictator his own little self. When he couldn't, he generally picked up his bat & ball and went home. The stormy political history of the stefnate has of course evolved out of that of fandom. I hesitate to name the exact time of demarcation--the entire process was quite gradual--but probably the inception of Michelism is a fairly good spot to start. Michelism certainly was not of fandom--it was stefnic thru & thru--and, I believe, was about the first really prominent movement of a strictly stefnic nature. From there on out we have had blitzes, exclusion acts, inter-club feuds, and all of the other symptoms of advanced society Speer outlines so intimately in the Fancylopedia.

STEFNIC JOURNALISM and self-expression largely center in FAPA, tho there is a vast amount of stefnic material in Vom, and certain other subscription fanzines. Lately, we have begun to see the establishment of a genuine literature of the cult. Stemming from various stefnic articles in various fanzines, the trend hit a new high in 1944; a year which saw the publication of at least 3 "titles": Yerke's Memoirs (which while partially of fandom are, I believe, legitimately included under the stefnate), the Welcom Booklet and the gigantic Fancylopedia. Previous "titles" were limited to a handful of virtually forgotten Michelist pamphlets, and the Speer Full Length Article on the history of "fandom" (meaning in this case "stefnate"). This is by no means intended as a review; however, it should be noted in passing that Speer's Fancylopedia, while a "must" for anyone even remotely interested in the stefnic movement, is extremely unsatisfactory, due to the heavy bias with which it was compiled. Speer has an extremely lamentable tendency to consider of extreme importance anything he personally may have done or participated in, and thus (perhaps unconsciously) to overstress such material. I believe that future titles of a stefnic nature will far surpass this first crude volume.

THAT THE STEFNATE is divided into rather strict classes is quite obvious. No matter how friendly individual stefnists may be, many of the more prominent characters spare no pains to impress upon their fellows that they are of a superior quality. Oddly, one of the chief reasons they cite is their longer experience in the stefnate. It is peculiar that such rank conservatism & aristocratic pride should obtain with "the citizens of tomorrow in the world of today"; however, it, or something very like it, is certainly necessary to establish a lasting culture.

ONE EXTREMELY WEAK POINT of the stefnate is its generally poor adjustment to the opposite sex. If it hopes to establish a civilization of any kind, it must be centered in its members' offspring; if stefnists cannot get their nerve up to ask a girl for a date...well, no use discussing testube babies! There also seems to be a marked--if not widespread--aversion to children by many stefnists. This too is not a trait of an enduring civilization.

ANOTHER EXTREMELY QUESTIONABLE point is this: How long will the average stefnist (and please note that I am NOT talking of the average fan) hold his interest in a field which has already--by the submerging of weird-stf-fantasy--been virtually emasculated? Can the stefnate depend on any great number of its members' retaining their interest for decades?

BUT IN ANY EVENT, the rise, progress, or decline of the stefnate should furnish us all--actors & spectators--with a gripping and highly amusing drama.

Y'KNOW, I can't help hoping that the stefnate actually reaches the stature of an independent culture. I always did like a good circus. And, more seriously, the sublime egotism of some of the little Slannies touches a chord of sympathy even in this cynical old fan. Somehow, I wish them luck.

-oOo-

Next month, Kepner accepts the gage, and responds to this challenging article.

Would a Vom-conducted poll seem to be indicated for about the middle of the year, by which time this thing should be pretty well thrasht out? Such questions as, By the Definition laid down by Laney (or Kepner or Speer or Widner or Chauvenet or whoever may make the final one) do U consider yourself a fan or a stefnist? About how long after U became a fan woud U say U became a stefnist? Do U consider the stefnate a fall from fandom or a step beyond it? Any suggestions for further pollable inquiries?