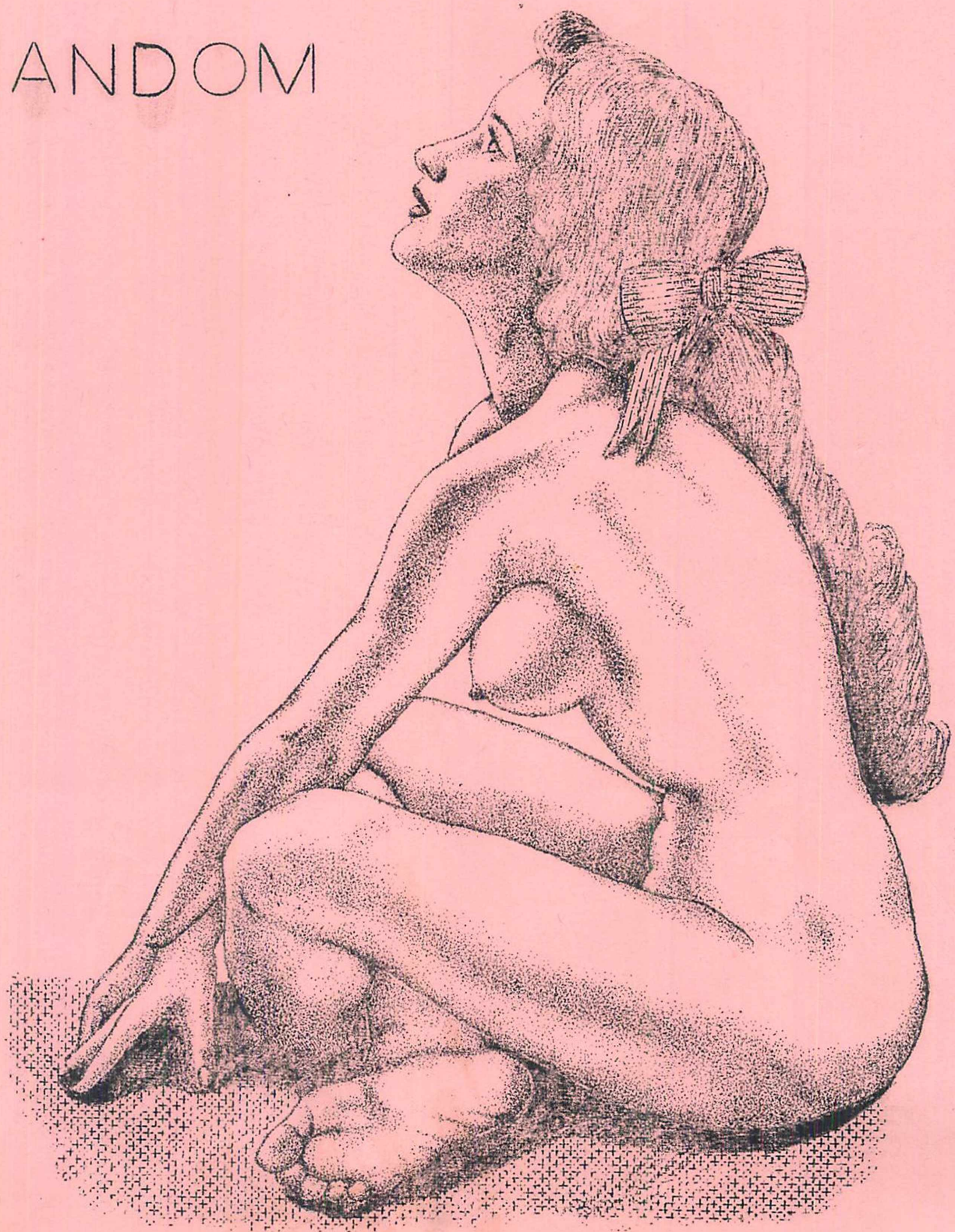


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RANDOM

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A FEW WEEKS AGO, after reading the last mailing, I nearly decided to turn RANDOM into a genzine. With so few members taking any interest in OMPA it seemed a waste to restrict circulation to OMPA alone and I thought perhaps I'd make this into a sort of light-hearted general fanzine to balance out the more serious stuff which I put into ESPRIT.

Last time, I sent out fifty copies to non-members but the result was disappointing as I had only a handful of replies. Nearly all of them, in fact, are published in the following few pages. Those who wrote will get this issue and I'll probably send out a few more free samples but if there isn't much response again I'll withdraw again into OMPA. I'm glad to see that this mailing is a lot bigger, anyway, than the last, though I suspect that it's only because the bulk of the memberships expire this month.

This issue is rather bitty compared with last, consisting, as it does, of letters and mailing comments but I've written the mailing comments in such a way that, even if you are not in OMPA and haven't read the last mailing, you'll find them understandable. I hope. As always with mailing comments, my aim has been to use remarks made in the other members' zines as starting points for rambling off on my own byways. Talking of byways, see how far you get along this:

Contempry Ferrtale

by John Rackham.

Thairwz wonsa gojus prinz s uada pity golball, ana garn, wida fishpon. Sheesa klamsy prinz s. Glump! Lotsa bubuls. Ano golball. Sheesa crine, anacrine. Upcumsa tode, algrene, alwet, huggli, anses, "Lookit watigot. Ulosta golball?" Shequits' ercrine, drisories. "Smine, uthief. Givit bactome!" Todis sprise. "Nossofast", eses. "Erza fourfeet, er penants." Ane telzer. Sheez gotofeedim, wider oan and; anezeze gotter liewider lika loafer. "Likell", sheses, "Ima googirl, afaire chin. Anicase, yura tode. Yuwaint bilt ferit". Butty asis wayan eetz arfer afters. Ermum spishus. "Utaka cairmigel" sheses. "Ima warninya." Ena prinz s putsa tode ona piller, putsout alite, cosshy donware anity, getsin bed, anen shesa wato drimlan. Ina moanin, erza manin erbed. "Ima prinz", eses. "Inow" sheses "Ilked!" "Inewit" ermmmses. "Swat cumsuv plane witballs ina garn."
* * * * *

Front and back covers by John Rackham

MOSTLY ABOUT WOMEN

.....some reactions to RANDOM 2.

BRIAN ALDISS For some while I have been meaning to write and tell you how much I enjoyed ESPRIT 3; it really has blossomed into a lively and interesting forum. But I kept postponing the dread event as I'm heavily involved in a novel just now. However, half an hour ago, RANDOM 2 slid through the door; so - action before you cut off the delectable supply.

On this question of the difference of sexes which you go into, you say, in an unguarded moment: "I wasted a good many years on the first alternative, namely, trying to convince men that women were not so stupid or inferior as men were taught to think." Your efforts would have been lost on me, who was never taught anything of the kind. For me and many thousands like me, reared in safe and rather stuffy middle-class homes, the current dogma was entirely opposite; we were taught - in the most compelling way, which is to say non-verbally - that there were two sorts of women, one being the acceptable Nice Girl, a clever and superior type if ever there was one, and whose Dad was manager of the local bank moreover. The other sort was not supposed to bother us.

Now this Nice Girl was given a number of attributes. She was well read (Wordsworth, Gene Stratton Porter, Dornford Yates); she had some sort of small talent, perhaps the ability to tear off a spot of Chopin on the piano; she could cook; she had no wild enthusiasms; she did not perspire. (And let me say in parenthesis that it would be easy here to sneer at this girl, yet in many cases she must have married and faced up well to things she hated: sweaty men who hated music, read only Edgar Wallace and loved a good old booze and singsong on a Saturday night.)

The Nice Girl had other attributes which seemed all the more impressive for never being mentioned. She disliked swearing and argument and copulation did not appeal to her - or, if it did, it was confined to a strict timetable and restricted to the missionary position..

She was, you see, very proper, poor girl, and thousands of young men quailed before her image and tried to make themselves proper for her. They sewed their wild oats and then went like lambs into the slaughter of dull, mindless and bodiless marriages. This is not the Victorian times I'm describing, though the decay of the Regency dandy marked the rise of the Windsorian martinet; to a steadily dwindling extent, this dead hand of respectability still lies heavy on the youth of suburbia.

Have I wandered from the point? Yes and no. You were generalising; now I'm generalising. What is needed is a way to be able to judge everything, including the sex opposite, on its individual merits rather than as a representative of a group or class. Think me up something more difficult to do, if you can!

DON FITCH You are the first fan who has sent me an apazine and I appreciate the gesture. And appreciate the zine too...it's good, California interesting and enjoyable (few apazines get many points in all three categorites). I don't intend to become embroiled in a discussion of sex and womens' position in life and in the modern world, etc., especially since I find myself agreeing with you (more or less) throughout, and a discussion is little fun unless there is quite a bit of disagreement. There are some points to think about, though; for instance, how are women drivers regarded in Britain? In this country, at least, they are different from men; they rarely lose control of their car in a tight situation but they frequently cause accidents by extreme caution or stopping dead in panic...the sort of thing which leads to scraped fenders, dented bumpers and very few fatalities. They know the car has a great deal of power and they respect it; men, on the other hand, tend to demonstrate their superiority by being negligent about the whole thing (except for professional racing car drivers who, in traffic, keep both hands just as firmly on the wheel as women do. But back to the subject...as a single man with no extensive experience of women, I'm glad to get a woman's eye view of the topic, even though you are atypical (all fen are atypical).

I've not met Bill Donaho yet, but everyone who has described him has used the words "mild" and "gentle"...maybe this is because he is such a big man.

Yes, many U.S. zines are in-groupish; I don't know how many fen there are in England, but there are several thousand here, and each zine (with a circulation of one or two hundred at most) tends to attract a core of fen with like interests and attitudes...it's part of the old problem of a group growing so large that it becomes unwieldy, then fragmenting, amoeba-like, into smaller bodies, which fortunately retain some contact, one with another, in fandom.

The "British Flavour" is difficult to define, but I assure you it is there. I'd say that it is a calm, sensible, thoughtful, not too emotional or extreme approach to a problem or discussion. You're probably thinking of exceptions right now, but most British fen do seem to be less flighty than do most U.S. fen. And OMPA seems to be the most tranquil and pleasant of the apas.

** What you say about women drivers is probably true in both our countries. Women are generally regarded as less likely to take risks on the road such as by overtaking at the wrong time, etc. And, as you say, cautiousness can cause minor accidents; if a car is going slower than the traffic stream generally, other cars are constantly overtaking it thus causing danger to those coming in the opposite direction. I imagine this particular hazard applies to England more than U.S. since we have more narrow roads playing the part of 'first class' roads than you probably do. In my own experience, there seems no doubt that men are more concerned over not "losing face" on the road than women are: a man noticing someone trying to get ahead of him is more likely to deliberately try to stop him than a woman, who is thinking more of "getting there" than "getting there first". Or am I prejudiced? // Yes, big men are often milder and gentler than others - one told me, once, that there is a fear of hurting others always present.// I suspect that the "British Flavour" in fanzines is rather influenced by preconceptions of the British "image": stolid, phlegmatic, etc. just as our own opinion of U.S. zines is a little influenced by the diehard British idea of the "excitable, immature Yank" - neither image having much truth in it except, perhaps, on a comparative basis. DPB **

JOHN PHILLIFENT
London

I liked the chatty aura of the mag. All very friendly and reasonable, but a bit too dependent on inside information to be altogether understandable to me. A point you didn't make, not very important but well worth remembering, in this context, is the really tremendous effort women have made, with very little in the way of encouragement, to become educated over the past fifty years. Higher education facilities are still against them in the ratio of one to five. I'd like to argue with you on one aspect, though. On women wanting to be like "ordinary human beings". The point is a good one, and I get you perfectly, but it could be misleading. There was a time when I used to proclaim myself a womanhater, to anyone who would listen. It made a good talking point because it was always assumed that I was labelling myself a misogynist whereas what I was against, and still am, was those individuals who, as female, were convinced they had some rights and privileges denied to men. I was averse to women as "women", but not women as "people". With maturity, however, (getting along that way anyhow) I'm not so sure. Women are different from men, inherently, genetically and, apart from a few tragic cases, quite positively. The results of upbringing and external influences, together with differing potencies of various glandular secretions, can shade the difference, but never quite eliminate it. And I think the bit of difference is important. If we are destined to move towards a saner, wiser way of living, we cannot afford to throw out anything which might contribute to wisdom. And wisdom comes, to some extent, from the attempt to reconcile opposites...very seldom from a bland uniformity.

I liked it, anyway. The only thing wrong with it, to my mind, was that I would never have been able to convince myself that friendly ramblings like these would be worth all the trouble of cutting, duplicating, collating and mailing.

** I must admit I sometimes wonder on that last score, too. Is it worth it? I must have thought so or I wouldn't have stayed in OMPA for seven years. But wouldn't an equal amount of correspondence have brought more satisfaction? Letters usually get answered...sooner or later...whereas apazines rarely call for letters and are not always commented on even by the other members of the apa. It seems illogical. What have other apa members (whichever one they are in) to say on this? And if you are an ex-member, had the lack of response anything to do with your dropping out? DPB **

ANN CHAMBERLAIN
Los Angeles

By your cover it is evident that someone on your staff (?) goes to art school...the pose and the stool are familiar to me...it is the same in art schools everywhere; as far over the states as I have been I have witnessed this...and very nice going too. You say "Intelligence is a natural characteristic that everyone must use to some extent and is not necessarily associated with a serious or earnest outlook". This may be true, at least in the sense you mean it... and even more likely true using the contrast of the very serious-minded simpleton which, in the theatre, is the "deadpan comedian" as showpeople here would term it. The entertainment field is full of comedians who take their art seriously...as it is also their living. There are scientists whose subject would ordinarily be taken as a deep subject, but which to them is but the joy of accomplishment...a knot to be untied which is indeed intriguing to them.. so that we find people who are capable of a seeming lightheartedness which apparently covers all serious and earnest thought. But let us be a

bit careful that we do not join the hordes of people who are against the intelligent, because it is too much for them, and they downgrade it as impossibly "egghead", not even knowing what was originally meant by this term. I will pretend to no authority for this description, but I can depend on my memory in such things as this, and when the term "egghead" first began to be used, it described what was called the "archetypal pattern"...that men of the "new race" could be recognised by this form...a rather long and narrow shaped head (as differentiated from the shape of the Neanderthal). What was implied was that this new race would have an intuition more dependable for truth or wisdom in judgement than the "logic" of the race which had gone before. And if you object that this is merely playing with words, how would you differentiate between what is theory and what is premonition? The two come very close together do they not? Yet the one is respected and the other often ridiculed.

** Yes, but I think it is also admitted that the research scientist, if he is to 'discover' anything really new must have intuition as well as logic. Isaac Asimov went into this very interestingly in "Those Crazy Ideas"(F&SF April 60 BRE)where he suggested ways of speeding up "breakthroughs" in scientific research. DPB **

JULIAN PARR Unfortunately (in a way) I agree with all you say in RANDOM 2 Germany so, after long thought, find that I have little to add! I presume you know the Pelican book "Sex and the Social Order", which provides very conclusive evidence to support your statement that "it is a result of the type of society we live in rather than something intrinsic in the nature of women, as such..." In my opinion, most non-physical sex characteristics in modern society are merely status symbols, which will eventually disappear (at least outside the bedroom!) In the above-mentioned book, it is said that "Superior culture and achievement seem to bring the sexes together, suggesting that when inequalities of social pressure are ruled out and members of both sexes enjoy the same kind of training, personality differences between them disappear." ¶ In the whole complex, there's only one paradox that puzzles me: why is homosexuality a punishable offence only in men and not in women? Ah well, another example of the inequality of the sexes before the Law!

** That last has always puzzled me, too. No doubt there's an answer to it somewhere amid the dusty tomes of the Law...wasn't it supposed to be one of the causes of the downfall of the Romans or something? DPB **

LEN MOFFATT Re women: (one of my favourite subjects, being a reasonably California healthy male, not too old or sated with the subject). Well, now, there are women and women, just as there are men and men...I think the reason we seem to find more "women-hating" women in fandom is that most fans, male and female, are "above-average" in intellect and imagination. This is proven by their willingness to discuss any subject or idea, whereas mundane types may or may not be interested in such discussions. The unimaginative types, male and female, outside of fandom, are more inclined to go along with the status quo. (I do not mean to imply that fandom has a monopoly of imaginative types, of course.) The housewife socialises with the other housewives in the neighbourhood. The husband plays cards or goes bowling with his buddies from work, or from the neighbourhood. The kids play with each other, date within their own 'class', etc. etc. The women form their little circle or group and make disparaging remarks about "Men!" The men do the same, sort of banding together against the women...saying things like,

6 "You can't live with 'em and you can't live without 'em..." But the men and women who have broadened their interests find the mundane types a bit on the boring side. In fandom they can find kindred souls, so to speak. Anna, for instance, is not especially chummy with the neighbourhood ladies. Not that they fight but they have nothing in common with her. They get along very well (we do have some very nice neighbours...this is not a criticism of mundane types) but they don't get together for coffee and gossip because they realise that they'd bore each other. I've heard Anna say that she prefers male company to female because the males are interesting because of their jobs or their interests but it still seems to be The Thing in our society for women to be Put Down as fluffy-brains, and too many women go along with the idea, in order, I suppose, to secure themselves a breadwinner and a nice, comfy home. Needless to say, the males and females in fandom have proven, for the most part, to be more interesting to Anna and me. We all have something in common...not necessarily intellect and imagination...but a willingness to express ourselves, to use our intellects and imaginations, without worrying whether or not someone is going to label us "kookie".

** It seems reasonable to suppose that women, being the weaker sex (hah!) are more dependent on convention than men are; they are much more apt to copy the "stereotype wife" they see in adverts and on films than men are to copy that type of husband. And if a woman hasn't made friends 'outside the home' she is dependent on the neighbours for company. To be different is to be left alone, so one can't really blame them for doing what everyone else does. Luckily, I think the situation is changing. Articles in even the most popular womens' magazines, I notice, are taking now an approving attitude to women having interests outside the home. Carrying on working before the family starts has been accepted for some time, of course, but there is ^{also} increasing acceptance of the idea that a woman will take up her job again just as soon as the children are old enough to look after themselves. Evening classes of all sorts are getting more wives attending - I have even seen a womens' class in car maintenance of all things. Boiled down, what it comes to is that "middle-class" conditions - i.e. leisure and a bit of money to spare - have inevitably led to a more "middle-class" outlook on life in place of what were previously "working-class" attitudes. Woman as a personality, a human being in her own right, instead of just something-that-does-the-housework-and-brings-up-the-children is a product of the more civilised way of living. It's slow going, though. DPB **

HARRY WARNER Your remarks about the apparent discrepancy between the size of Maryland. of England and travel times involved could be countered by the fact that the situation in the British Isles is quite close to that in the northeastern part of the United States. Of course there are some superhighways in this part of the nation, on which it is possible to make quite fantastic speeds. But starting places and destinations have a habit of lying scores of hundreds of miles from the nearest superhighway, even in this part of the nation, and it's really quite tedious and slow to travel from most places to most other places. For instance, Hagerstown is only about 130 miles from Philadelphia as the crow flies. But crows are notoriously undependable methods of transportation, so it's necessary to go by automobile or bus (there is no direct train or plane service). The fastest express bus, i.e., one that stops at only two or three large cities en route, requires a bit less than five hours for the trip. I can drive it

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about four hours if I'm really hurrying. Travel time becomes even more tedious in many parts of New England and even in the area just south of here, in the Virginias, where towns aren't as numerous but roads aren't as good. Ten years from now, most of this will be changed, because the nation is undergoing a major highway construction plan that is the first really adequate one in history: all the highways in this interstate system will be dual-lane roads, there will be no traffic lights or grade crossings on any of them, and all will have controlled access, which means that nobody can build a motel or lunchroom along the road with a driveway to permit cars to enter and leave the highway with resulting slow-downs of traffic and accident dangers. When this network of roads is complete, most spots in the nation shouldn't be more than a half-hour or so driving time from an access point to these fine dual highways, upon which the speed limit will be 70 miles an hour and it will be possible to maintain that speed under almost all driving conditions.

The discussion of sex in RANDOM was most interesting because of some experiences that I had during my hospital stay. (Not sexual, I assure you, because I was in traction in such a manner that precluded any thought of that type of amusement during convalescence!) It was the first time in my life that I had been thrown into intimate and constant contact with totally strange men chosen on a random basis, in the form of room-mates. I had seven of them in my ten weeks in the hospital, ranging in age from 14 to 70. In all but two of those seven men, I found an attitude toward women which I had never realised most men possess: an attitude that they are inferior creatures, to be tolerated for their usefulness but not worthy of one's full attention or consideration. Those five room-mates were confiding in me and on better terms with me after a day or two in the room together than they were with their wives and mothers, and some of them muttered some very telling things as they were emerging from the effects of anaesthesia or suffering extreme pain. I suppose that the illness brought out the attitude that usually lies hidden in some men. Fortunately, the two who really seemed to love their female relatives and friends and preferred to talk to them when they visited instead of to me were the most intelligent of the seven room-mates. I read, while in the hospital, Venus Plus X and this experience fitted quite well with some of the things that Sturgeon has to say about contemporary attitudes of the sexes. I am absolutely certain that the women I know get along much better with other women, not necessarily their best friends, than with men, outside of some specific vendettas and personality clashes. I can assure you that it was a weird experience, to spend most of visiting hours talking to the female visitors of room-mates while their suffering relatives ignored them, or just tolerated their presence. I must remember to be more observant now that I'm up and around again, to see whether men do a better job of hiding their attitude when they aren't under the strain of hospital care.

**
** Thank you, Harry, for sending me this unusual point of view. And if you do carry out the resolution in your last sentence, be sure and let me hear the result, won't you? We women are always curious to know what men are really like when they are on their own and I, personally, have a suspicion that they are not really as "bad" as the mens' magazines such as Esquire and Playboy would have us believe. Although as a child I was highly resentful of my bad luck in having been born a girl, I have realised since growing up that there are a fair amount of unpleasant disadvantages to being a man, too, the biggest one being the necessity to keep "face" by a pretence of being as much of a tough, insensitive, rule-breaking so-and-so as possible; a crippling mask to have to wear. **

MAILING COMMENTS

MAILING 27

AMBLE Congratulations on leaping the gap between a popular paper and The Times, Archie; I haven't aspired to the Times myself yet, because I regard The Guardian as the most readable and worthwhile daily in existence in this country. Mind you, I'm not judging its politics, whatever they are, because I'm ignorant of the subject, but I do find the articles, reviews, and other miscellanea pretty well un-put-downable.

What's more, the Guardian has the only sensible Woman's Page I've come across anywhere with the possible exception of The Observer. I've been taking it for eighteen months now and I haven't once seen an article on how to arrange flowers nor yet on the proper time to clip your poodle. That was the sort of thing that appeared in the womens' section of the Telegraph which I tried before the Guardian as being the only daily paper besides the Times which makes some claim to be taken seriously. I think the Telegraph is possibly more conservative than the Times, seeing as it takes up so much space reporting that Lady This has married General That and that the Duke and Duchess of Such and Such attended the traditional whatsit at the Lord Mayor's whatjamacallit. The Guardian seems to deal with things of general interest that are going on in the world and its Woman's Page seems to get contributions from all sorts of women on all sorts of subjects and actually written as though the writer thinks that women readers are, perhaps, intelligent human beings. The Guardian, of course, is owned by a Trust, which makes it independent of political parties and commercial advertisers alike. Last but not least, I think it's got a more attractive layout and presentation than the Times - not so stuffy-looking.

Your article about numbers is jolly good. Don't let anyone tell you you haven't got a mathematical mind - if you did badly at school on it you must have had a bad teacher. Mere numbers may seem elementary but you must have something of an analytical mind to have been able to work out those fundamental differences between cardinal and ordinal numbers. Reminds me of a Mentor pocketbook I started on a little while back called, The New Mathematics ics. In spite of being 'new', it deals with such apparently elementary things as the nature of counting on your fingers! And did you know that when you say " $2 + 3 = 5$ " you are performing a binary operation? I didn't, but I can just imagine some status-conscious parent after reading this boasting to the neighbours that his five-year-old is a genius who can do binary operations!

That's an interesting question you have there about what crime has been committed - if any- by a woman who comes to somebody else's husband in a darkened room pretending to be his wife. I imagine the answer is 'none' and it's just another example of one rule for men and another for women.

All in all, a very interesting issue.

BURP! I agree with you that the reason you find it more difficult these days is because you are out of practice....whoops! missed a phrase out (this is going straight on stencil) that should have read "more difficult to write". The more frequently you write, the easier it is to just start. That's what I find, anyway. There's also something in your suggestion that it's because you have higher standards than before. Another reason, that you didn't mention, is that after the first couple of years

in fandom the excitement of writing something, just anything at all, so long as it's published, wears off and one gets a feeling that paper, time and postage are valuable and might as well be used to good effect, if at all. Agreed?

You mention the insincerity (your word) of going at things hammer and tongs on paper and then smiling when face to face. I'd like to suggest a possible other explanation. When meeting socially, one is out to enjoy oneself, and there's no point in carrying on a feud which exists, really, only on paper. Except where the feud concerns the social meeting itself (such as disagreement between members of convention committees, say) the two worlds are entirely separate, I'd say. What is said in fanzines is kept within fanzines and when one goes to a gathering, it's almost like being in a different world. Perhaps it's because fan-gatherings are, in any case, comparatively rare and one wants to make the most of the atmosphere of enjoyment and put any feuds aside. You say you observed it more of Americans in England than when they are at home - but this is easily accounted for by the fact that international visits are even rarer and naturally anyone going to another country (English as well as American) knowing the impression they make is going to last a long time will want to make sure that no unpleasantness is left behind. Feuds are only passing things anyway, and it would be silly to let one mar such a valuable opportunity for enjoyment as visiting another country. Besides - when you meet anyone in person, you get an all-round view of them; not just the side you've seen feuding with you on paper and I imagine the effect is usually, "Why, he's a normal, decent fellow after all."

I liked your little word-picture of Art Hayes. I like to know what people look like and have so little idea of what most of the American fans look like at all. In this respect I'm much influenced by first names. For instance, Terry Carr, in my mind, looks just like Terry Jeeves. And that's simply because Terry Jeeves is the only man I've met called Terry so anyone else with that name that I haven't met automatically brings his face to mind. For the same reason Mike Deckinger looks like Mike Moorcock (in my mental image). And Lynn Hickman's a girl. (Sorry, Lynn, but the only way to erase that is send me a snapshot.) Conversely, I've only just found out, from a Hickmanzine oddly enough, that Dirce Archer is a girl and not a man. Some more of my mental images of OMPAns, if anyone's interested are: Dick Ellington like Dick Wilson, Jim Caughran like Jim Ratigan, Bill Evans like William Holden (don't ask me why), Dick Eney like a young scientist I saw in a film once, and - hold it - George Spencer like Bing Crosby when young! Most of the other Americans on the list I've either met, seen photographs of or have no clear image of. A stimulating issue, Ron.

ERG. The Guardian reported the item about some coloured sailors having to leave a British ship. It was supposed to be for their own benefit as the ship was going on to Africa. I've never seen the Christian Science Monitor but have always imagined it would be full of Church propoganda. Isn't it? I don't understand how any adult can go on reading the popular papers day after day and relying on them for their news of what is going on in the world. A person doesn't have to be serious-minded or anything to get fed up with the childish type of reporting in them, yet the majority of people, while complaining, still go on reading them. Why? They are like a drug that it's difficult to stop - and in comparison the more responsible papers seem 'dull', 'stuffy' 'fuddy-duddy'. It took me quite a long time to make the break but it was worth it. Nowadays I can pick up any popular paper and honestly say that I find nothing interesting in it. In fact, their reports

On 'almost anything are so superficial that they leave me saying, "What.. why..when..etc" and eager to know more, which is frustrating. Who wants to read that such and such an unusual thing happened but not why it happened, who caused it, etc.? Even the light entertainment I used to get from them disappeared when I realised that 95% of that amusement was created at the expense of other peoples' suffering; that peoples' attitudes and remarks are deliberately distorted and misrepresented to make a 'story' more often than not with the intent of ridiculing some person or group of persons who don't deserve it.

Not so long ago in ESPRIT (advt.) I got jumped on by almost everybody because I defended motivation research in advertising and said it wasn't doing much harm. But do any of these people who think that M.R. should be banned ever say that popular journalism should be banned? No. Yet it's doing to my mind, a great deal more harm. People and organisations get dragged in the dirt and reputations ruined merely in order to sell a few more copies. And controversies of the day get shown in a onesided manner so that people will have the opinion the paper wants them to have. I don't think that the majority of the public would be half so backward-minded as they appear to be if the papers did not push them into it. Any 'avant-garde' attitude is good for a laugh even when the new attitude, as so many of them are, is out to relieve some injustice or other undesirable thing. The bulk of ordinary people are fairly tolerant of anyone who is not harming them, however eccentric a person may be; 'live and let live' is a popular saying and is more or less carried out; but watch one of these same kind-hearted people when he or she has just read the lead sensation in their favourite daily and they're ready to commit mayhem, by golly. Yes, the papers have a lot to answer for.

But don't get me wrong. I have no objection to sensation or trashy writing per se. I don't object to Reveille, for instance, and similar papers, because they get their sensations and shocks from near-nude pin-ups, from provoking little articles about domestic strife and the men.v.woman war in general (Should men have to wash up? etc.) and for the real blood and thunder readers, they rely on historical articles about wives who poisoned two husbands and three lovers and then jumped off the castle roof. All harmless enough. But the dailies are using real live events and real live people to play with. Enough.

Well, Terry, this isn't commenting on ERG is it? Or is it? It stimulated me into a discussion and what more can one want of an apazine? I will add that I wish everyone sent their mags along in such neatly wrapped parcels as you do, and as early in the quarter, too (Speaking from the point of view of C.E.now.). Also, (speaking as me again) I wish everyone had as good readable repro. as you have. Almost everyone, including me, seems to go over to elite type sooner or later and it's then one realises how much more attractive pica looks. Helped, of course, by your layout.

PARAFANALIA The last part of this is more interesting than the beginning. Somehow I found it slow going at first and felt that it would have been a lot better if more compacted or, alternatively, expanded. You have a habit of mentioning things and people and then taking your attention off them when one is getting interested. I should like to have read, perhaps, fewer incidents treated in more detail. Or, if you could have managed it, all the incidents treated in more detail, like John Roles used to do. But there, it's not fair to compare you with John, who was one of OMPA's all-time best writers after all. Still, you can do and have done better.

SCOTTISHE

I have read your bit about dissatisfaction with OMPA about three 11
times and although I agree with you in general I'm not quite
sure what it is you dislike about the mailing comments. You
use the phrase "subject matter only" as though this were a mere nothing
but you really don't give any positive idea of what it is you want. At
least, you do say, in one place, "some criticism of my writing....and what did
they think of the zine as a whole", but I don't know what one can say in
this line without being mostly repetitive. Criticising this particular issue
I would say that your layout and reproduction have now reached a very high
standard, but now that you have achieved this look, you will probably retain
it, and so I'm not likely to say that same thing in future. People will
always criticise bad duplicating, etc., but as soon as a person produces
easily readable work, they will just expect it all the time. Sad but true,
I'm afraid. However, I know how you feel. It is disappointing when one
spends some time on layouts and headings, etc. not to have anyone appreciate
them. I don't think this is exclusive to OMPA though; when I despatched the
last ESPRIT I was happy with what I regarded as a vast improvement in its
appearance. I had a) a new typewriter b) a new duplicator c) artwork, such
as it was, for the first time, and d) drawn and spaced headings instead of
mere typed ones. But did anyone mention the new look? Offhand, I can only
remember one comment and that was from someone who said he didn't think
much of my drawings! I have come to the conclusion that repro. and layout
do make a difference to readers' opinions of a zine, OMPA or otherwise, but
that it's largely subconscious. The same goes for grammar, spelling and
punctuation - especially the latter. There's nothing so annoying as having
to read a sentence two or three times because there's something wrong with
the punctuation and the meaning is not clear. All these basic things are
probably half the battle towards being considered a good writer but they're
not things that one notices positively. They are noticed when they are not
there because they annoy the reader. Which accounts for the fact that people
were always, as you point out, criticising your duping in the old days but
now never give you credit for it. Perhaps the new Egoboo Poll will go a long
way towards remedying this. I hope it catches on and that people will support
it even though it's not official as yet.

Glad to see that you, too, are a Guardian reader; I think that
becoming a national newspaper by deleting the word 'Manchester' from its
title has helped it a lot and that anyone who glanced at it a few years ago
and decided it was too stuffy for them ought to have another look now. I
don't know what I'd do without it - read no daily at all, I suspect.

Walt's reminiscences are fascinating, not so much for the actual
events he recounts, which are probably typical of most new and active fans,
but because of his analysis of his own reactions, emotions etc. One thing
I find rather overdone, though, is his constant accusations against his
own motives; he makes it look as though he were a real nasty little youngster
and I'm sure that, in fact, he wasn't. I admire his courage in being ruth-
less with himself but, then, we were all pretty egocentric when younger.
His account of his correspondence with E.F. Russell gives a clear picture of
why it is that many pro-writers prefer to cut off contact with fandom
altogether. Take, for instance, Walt's reaction to getting the painting.
Walt immediately thinks that because Russell referred to it as "a consol-
ation prize" he was implying that he thought Walt was after something from
him and that he was bored with the relationship. A natural reaction but
probably Russell only meant "a consolation because I haven't time to write

any more letters". A busy writer must be in an awkward position when he has previously been a fan and it must be easy to give the impression unintentionally that he no longer has 'no use' for fans when, in fact, he has simply chosen an alternative way to use his time and can't do both. And I imagine that if a pro-writer writes an article for one fanzine, all the fan-edits say to themselves "Here's one that still writes for fanzines. Let's ask him for an article" and so he gets swamped. As I said, I am finding these introspections of Walt's fascinating and I hope they keep on for a long time. One thing: he has chosen the right OMPazine to be sure of regular publication and this sort of thing surely needs to be regular if one is not to lose track of what is going on.

I am glad to see you publishing a letter section - always one of my favourite parts of any zine. I like your own reminiscences, too. You certainly had some odd people to deal with in the old days. Almost makes one think what a good thing present-day conformity is! I look forward to seeing a lot more of your early days. And a lot more SCOTTISHE's.

TAFF VOTING FORM

I would like to say that I don't approve of members putting such things as this in to count towards their activity. And the new officers have threatened that they are going to be much stricter about what they count as activity. It's constitutional, I know, to send anything that's legal, but, all the same, is it fair? Editors really ought to be allowed some discretion about what counts and what doesn't; an appeal could always be made to the membership if someone thought they were being unfairly treated but I'd be interested to know: how many of you agree that such things as TAFF forms should not count as activity requirements? Don't you feel sort of cheated?

UL

I once asked a Jehovah's Witness what was the use of belonging to their organisation if only 144,000 were to be saved and how it tied up with their beliefs that everyone should 'believe and be saved' and I was told that the 144,000 was the number that were to be a sort of ruling council in heaven. The rest of us would also be saved but would continue to live here on earth. Oh yes. You can't catch them out; they have an answer to everything. Agree with your comments (under 'Viper') that the best approach to religion is an individual's own search for the truth and that denying God because you have to deny the Church is silly. Unfortunately, we all (I think?) tend to do this at first because we have been brought up to associate God and Church as one concept. It didn't occur to me for many years that one could admit the possibility of God, or rather a God, while having no use for the Church. Ever since I grew up I have called myself an agnostic; many people call themselves atheist when all they mean is that they have no use for the Church.

I looked up the word anechoic but it isn't in my dictionary so I thought it must be some new scientific device (anechoic chamber, I'm referring to). Then, just as I sat down to write this, I suddenly saw it must mean "having no echo". Right? I sometimes wish though, Norman, that you'd write something as well as mailing comments; or if not that you could be a bit fuller in those comments. We don't seem to hear anything of your real self except a brief line on this that and the other. It seems bitty. You do have some of the best set-out m.c.s though.

VERT I enjoyed all this but cannot comment because I don't go in for the sort of reading that you do myself. Most of those authors' names mean nothing to me. You've got a nice, readable layout and good repro but what on

earth is that on the front cover? I'll say this for it: it's quite pleasant which is more than one can say of much fan artwork.

13

VIPER

I like your occasional outbursts about your bad luck with second-hand cars. It's always interesting to hear from a fellow-sufferer.

We used to think that we had about the worst luck of anybody with cars but have since come to the conclusion that everybody is in much the same boat. If I started on our list of woes with cars I'd go on for pages, so I'd better not start. I'll just say that we bought a car for the first time in 1951 - for £45 - so you can guess what it was like. A little old Austin van made in 1934 with just about everything wrong with it including a flat battery. And having bought the car, we couldn't afford a new battery. So it broke down on the way home from where we'd bought it and wouldn't start again. We were just wondering which side road it would be safest in when a man offered to put it in his yard overnight. (He'd been helping us to push it to try and get it started.) This was in the Old Kent Road which is one of those old broken-down districts in S.E. London containing old broken-down buildings, warehouses, junkyard and other undesirable residences. So he pushed the car into the yard.

But, as luck would have it, the very next day Ron was sent on a job to Ireland for a few days and was unable to collect the car again. We didn't worry too much but when he eventually went back a week or so later, we found there'd been a real rumpus over it. The man had forgotten to tell the other tenants about the car so when they came out next morning and saw it, they rang the police and told them some thief had parked a stolen car in their backyard. Having pacified them and explained, we were driving home, having got the battery charged, when we were stopped by a policeman who wanted to know what a soldier was doing driving a private van. He seemed reluctant to believe that it was ours. And, since we'd only just bought it, we hadn't yet got the tax and insurance certificates through which seemed to confirm his suspicions. And within a few weeks of buying it, the back axle broke, the kingpins needed renewing, the side window shattered (through my trying to wind it down when the mechanism was faulty), the tyres wore out, the starter didn't work and lots of other details which I've forgotten. THIS was the car I learnt to drive in. Everytime I stalled it, which I did frequently in those first few months, Ron had to get out and wind the handle. In three months we sold it, this time for an Austin 1936 saloon which wasn't much better and in which we had the misplaced confidence to go on a tour round Devon and Cornwall. For the benefit of Americans reading this, I will add that Cornwall is sort of rocky and cliffy and no place for learning to drive, especially as you are likely to find yourself on a 1-in-3 slope without any warning. But although we had a few nasty moments it was worth it because, after that, my official driving test through S.E. London seemed laughably easy and I passed the first time. That was ten years ago and since then we've had eight more changes of car but are both agreed that the best all-round value-for-money is a Morris.

I said I wouldn't bore you all with car stories and here I've filled up a page on it already, so back to VIPER. Buz's parody was very well done, but I think it stretched out just a little too long. I think Elinor with her 'Ho' column will make a welcome contributor to OMPA and I'm glad we'll be seeing something of her work this way sooner than we might have done. I don't think she need worry about being yet another American in the British spa because if it weren't her it would be another U.S. fan probably.

14 I mean that all the British actifen are either in already or have been in and gafiated or are on the waitlist or something. There just aren't many of us here compared with the seething mass of you over there! And it suits me because I'm not in any other apa and so appreciate seeing the American point of view on things. I wonder how the other British members feel about this? But I'm against you, Elinor, regarding egoboo polls. I see your points against them but I don't really think poeple take them all that seriously, do you? It's only a question of personal likes and dislikes and not a matter of serious literary criticism.

The history of ASTOUNDING is not my cup of tea, I'm afraid, Bill, but Ron is enjoying it hugely. The Berry piece was amusing. Your attitude to mailing comments as shown in your comments to George Locke is one I endorse wholeheartedly. And Elinor is right to say that that is what apas are for. We can read articles and stories in genzines and I, for one, enjoy the more informal parts of OMPazines best. I also like your advice to "blame the writer, not the form" for the bad ones.

I, too, like frozen vegetables but I hadn't stopped to think that they could be actually fresher, in the sense of not having been picked so long, as fresh vegetables themselves. I must remember that if ever I come across some old-fashioned housewife who sneers at frozen vegetables. One of my favourite frozen veg. is sweet corn. Loose. So much easier to eat than gnawing it off a fresh cob.

I am aghast that you should keep wearing spectacles when you don't need to. Have always thought it must be awful to have to wear glasses and you wear them because you can't be bothered to take them off! That bit about anyone who could make love to a stranger in the dark and not know the difference being so insensitive that why bother, is very apt. I suppose some people are so unimaginative about the whole thing that there is no difference between them. Even so.....I mean.

Agree with you about Lady C. And you say "The distinction between love and lust is an academic one". Absolutely. Though it's not done for women to say so, of course! As a matter of fact, how many people, I wonder, noticed that there was only one incident of what could be called 'lust' in Lady C and that was never described. He made do with saying "It was a night of passion". All the other scenes were of the "tender love" type (is that why so many people say the book was dull, I wonder?). It's a funny thing when you come to think of it but, if an author has his hero say to the heroine, "I want to kiss you", not even the most narrow-minded prudish type would do anything but smile sentimentally. Yet isn't a kiss just as much a matter of fleshly lust as any other part of lovemaking? What is more I wouldn't be a bit surprised if the word 'kiss', since it's got four letters, wasn't an Anglo-Saxon word. (Any of you Eng. Lit. students care to check up?). Yet no one objects to it. Sex is just a goddam muddle. Needless to say, I enjoyed VIPER.

BACK YOUR FANCY To which my remarks on the TAFF Voting Form apply to an only slightly lesser extent. Still, as you always go well over your minimum requirements, Archie, and this is a bonus, I'll leave it at that.

TOPEE OR NOT TOPEE I rather think this is what the U.S. members will call in-groupish. The humour depends on jokes understood only by those who've visited the SFCoL. More or less.

THE WALL No comment.

15

BJOTTINGS Would have been more enjoyable if it weren't in pale blue ink on pale brown paper. I found some parts interesting but others dragged a bit. Not up to the standard of your previous OMPazine PIPRESS. Smiled at your "Printed Natter Only" on the back.

DEFILADE So much water has gone under the bridge since this that it would be out of date to comment.

GRIST Yes, there have been a good many changes in the British Forces since Ron enlisted and even since we've been married. You should see the mens' barracks here. All contemporary outside and in. Looks like a modern block of flats and has large expanses of window through which can be glimpsed mushroom-coloured walls, gay table lamps, and what-have-you. And the entrance to the grounds is all landscaped lawn with curving paths. Pity the personnel relationships and routines aren't just as up-to-date. Ron is a technical specialist but still has to put up with advice from superiors on what to do, said superiors not having a clue about it. There are still Mess Dinners once a month to which he has to turn up in full Best Blue Uniform. And when you think that a Dinner is supposed, by anyone's rules, to be for enjoyment and the promoting of good social relations, could anything be more self-defeating than having to wear these stiff-necked things? The worst things, of course, are the parades and having to keep these silly uniforms all spick and span, with blanco and brass-cleaning and whatnot. They expect the technical bods, in spite of their often dirty work, to look just as 100% perfect as anyone. If a man happens to spill some oil on his boots, the leather can never be shined up properly again so the man has to put up with being told day after day that he hasn't cleaned his boots properly, with no chance to explain. It is that sort of thing that keeps people away from the Army; the pay is comparable with civilians', the housing is decent, the hours are O.K. It's just this out-of-date way of treating soldiers as though they were hooligans who had to have a strict eye kept on them or they might revert to gutter-ways that makes responsible men fed up. I'd have got Ron to write something on this subject himself but he's too busy at the moment revising for exams and getting the garden dug over for an inspection that's coming up. (Another thing we resent.)

Liked that cartoon on the back cover. At the last office I was in, when they gave you a job and you asked when they wanted it by, they'd say "Yesterday." I suppose they had found that most people left a job to the last minute and made it late. That way, you got on with it immediately.

MAILING COMMENTS I guess you will have realised by now that that issue was number 7, not 6, as you put? Is that really so about twice as many women as men not being able to recognise "orthographic projections on paper"? From the context, I guessed 'orthographic' to refer to such things as blueprints, mechanical drawings, etc., not knowing exactly what the word meant. But I thought I'd look it up, just to make sure, and guess what my dictionary gives for 'orthographic': (sorry, 'orthography') "correct spelling; the study of the spelling of a certain period; the rules of spelling". Someone done got lost.

But, really, what I mean is, if women are so bad at recognising three-dimensional shapes on paper (which is what we're talking about isn't it?) how come they understand dressmaking? There's no more complicated shape than the human body, is there?

Yes, I'll let you get away with the morse. I've never heard of a P.O. ruling that dots and dashes can be described as obscene. It's not what you mean, it's what you say. isn't it, that counts? Say a WRONG WORD and that's indecent but say the same thing in another word and you're all right. Phooey.

Which seems to be all I have to say this time. Not one of your best issues, stimulatorwise, Dick.

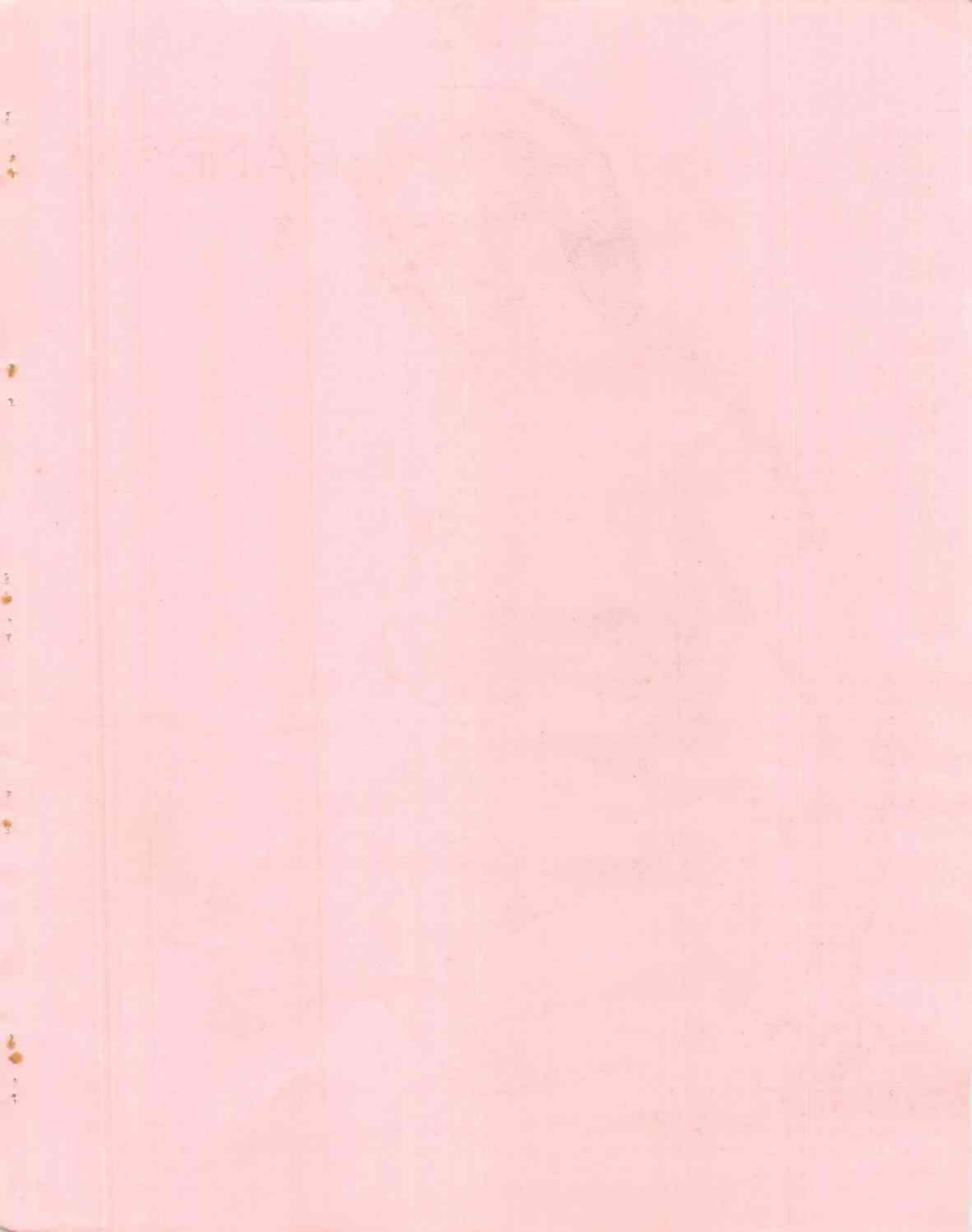
ROMP I was interested in your remarks about ages for leaving school and how you have to have a college degree to get anywhere in life. It is getting like that over here, too, but is not so yet. One of the country's great problems, at the moment, is how to get more children University-trained, the crux being how to get new buildings and facilities fast enough to keep up with the numbers who qualify for entrance. Not to mention getting enough teachers, of course. I have just read (in PUNCH of all places) that USA spends £33 per head of population on education, Russia £37 per head and Britain a mere £9.

How do I type? With two fingers of each hand the same as you do. I don't actually have to look for each letter but on the other hand I can't seem to do it without my eyes on the keyboard. When you say the other fingers are not strong enough to use, you really mean they're not practised. Mine feel weak, too, but I guess a typists' fingers get stronger as she practises. I'm making far more typos on this new typer than I did on my old one because the keys need a stronger push, they've got a stronger spring or something, and my finger keeps slipping off and hitting the next one. Anyone else have that trouble?

What do you mean, you "don't give a damn whose feelings I hurt, or whose sensibilities I offend, unless they have a right to be hurt or offended."? I don't understand - is there a word omitted there somewhere by mistake? And anyway, aren't you ever offended or hurt by what anyone else says? Why is it that so many people consider there's nothing wrong in hurting a person's sensibilities when they wouldn't dream of hurting a person physically? Sometimes a mental hurt can be a lot worse than a physical hurt and last a lot longer. Especially when a person has built up a worthwhile scale of values. I think teenagers - and please don't take this personally - are more toughminded than older people because they haven't yet built up any idea of values and therefore have nothing to be knocked down. One often hears a teenager boast of being "unshockable" thinking how grown-up this makes him sound but really the opposite is true. A person becomes more shockable as they grow older, not less. Well, perhaps; I should qualify that. They get more susceptible to being hurt by words, to being insulted. Teenagers don't care much what anybody calls them - they are likely to call something back and feel it's quits. A mature person is more likely to feel outraged. And calling back doesn't help, then.

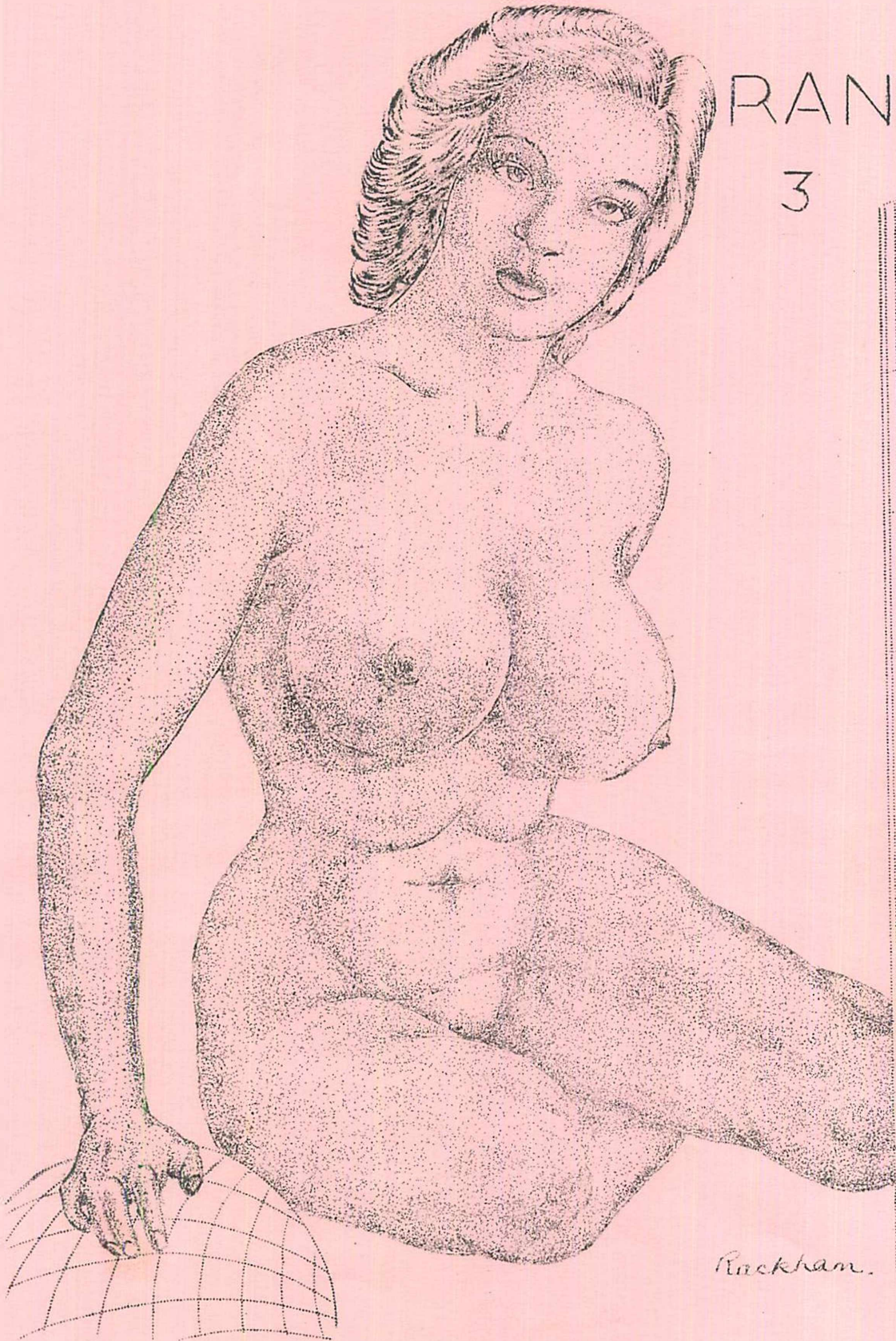
Personally, I don't see any need to hurt other peoples' feelings; So far as is possible, I think everyone should respect everyone else's beliefs. It's a very easy thing to shock people so where's there something to be proud of in it?

What sort of a test is a test "for Educational Development"? And why was it cheating to "work out all the answers instead of giving up halfway through and picking answers at random"? I should've thought that working out the answers was the proper thing to do in any test. Which is why I wonder what peculiar sort of test you must be talking about. And what do you mean you were "below 100" and your class was 1,100? You can't possibly mean there were 1,100 boys in the class but that's what it sound like! Very interesting comments you do.



RANDOM

3



Rackham.