

DATELINE NO. 116 NEW YORK
LAWRENCE S. FREUND

SEPTEMBER 29, 1976

COMICS: AASNES TO ZOZO
(VOICED PIECE, INSERTS IN TAPE LIBRARY)

ANNCR: DATELINE: NEW YORK -- PICTURES IN SOUND OF PEOPLE,
PLACES AND EVENTS IN AMERICA'S METROPOLIS -- BROUGHT
TO YOU BY THE VOICE OF AMERICA EACH WEEK (AT THIS TIME).
TODAY, A REPORT BY LARRY FREUND ON A SCHOLAR OF THE
COMICS.

NARR: MAURICE HORN IS THE AUTHOR OF A NEW ENCYCLOPEDIA
THAT BEGINS WITH "AASNES" -- HAKON AASNES -- AND ENDS
WITH "ZOZO". AASNES AND ZOZO HAVE A LOT IN COMMON.
SO DO BARBARELLA, BUGS BUNNY AND BETTY BOOP.

THEY ARE ALL PART OF THE COMICS: COMIC STRIPS AND
COMIC BOOKS. AND THEY ARE ALL IN MISTER HORN'S NEW
"WORLD ENCYCLOPEDIA OF COMICS" -- HAKON AASNES,
THE FIRST ENTRY IN THE NEW BOOK, IS A THIRTY-THREE
YEAR OLD NORWEGIAN CARTOONIST -- OR "COMIC ARTIST,"
ACCORDING TO THE ENCYCLOPEDIA -- WHILE ZOZO WAS A
BELGIAN COMIC STRIP LAST PUBLISHED IN NINETEEN
FORTY-EIGHT.

MAURICE HORN, THE FRENCH-BORN EDITOR OF THE
ENCYCLOPEDIA, CHARACTERIZES COMICS AS A DISTINCT
FORM OF ART THAT HAS SUFFERED , IN HIS WORDS, "PUBLIC
SCORN, CENSURE AND RIDICULE." BUT MISTER HORN ADDS
THAT THIS IS NO LONGER SO. AND HE HAS GONE A LONG
WAY ON HIS OWN TO DISPEL THE NOTION THAT THE COMICS
ARE "GRUBBY PURVEYORS OF MINDLESS ENTERTAINMENT."

NARR: MISTER HORN TRACES THE COMICS ROOTS TO WILLIAM HOGARTH,
(CONT) AN EARLY EIGHTEENTH CENTURY ENGLISH ILLUSTRATOR WHO
PIONEERED THE CARTOON. BUT COMICS -- THE SPECIAL
CONCERN OF MISTER HORN -- DID NOT COME ALONG FOR ANOTHER
CENTURY AND A HALF UNTIL THE EIGHTEEN-NINETIES HERE
IN NEW YORK CITY. THE FIRST RECORDED COMIC STRIP HAD
THE UNLIKELY NAME, "THE YELLOW KID."

TAPE: CUT ONE -- HORN

"IT DEVELOPED AS A GIMMICK IN THE BATTLE FOR SUPREMACY
IN THE AMERICAN MARKET FOR NEWSPAPERS BETWEEN (MASS-
CIRCULATION PUBLISHERS) JOSEPH PULITZER AND WILLIAM
RANDOLPH HEARST. AND ONE OF THE OBJECTS OF THIS
FIGHT WAS THE YELLOW KID WHICH IS REGARDED AS THE
FIRST COMIC STRIP, CREATED IN 1895, DEVELOPED LATER
IN 1896 BY THE CARTOONIST OUTCAULT. AS A MATTER OF
FACT HEARST BOUGHT OUT THE WHOLE STAFF OF PULITZER AT
ONE POINT. AND BY THE WAY, THE YELLOW KID IS WHAT
GAVE THE NAME TO YELLOW JOURNALISM."

NARR: "THE YELLOW KID" COMIC STRIP WON ITS NAME AND FAME FROM
THE YELLOW SHIRT WORN BY ITS HERO, AN OTHERWISE NAMELESS
BOY. "YELLOW JOURNALISM" BECAME THE LABEL FOR THE
SENSATIONAL STORIES EXPLOITED BY THE COMPETING NEW
YORK NEWSPAPERS TO BUILD THEIR READERSHIPS."

WITH "THE YELLOW KID" CAME "HAPPY HOOLIGAN," "THE
KATZENJAMMER KIDS" AND "LITTLE NEMO" ... ALL ANCESTORS
OF THE AMERICAN COMIC BOOKS AND COMIC STRIPS THAT GREW
AND SPREAD THROUGH THE NINETEEN TWENTIES AND THIRTIES.
THEY ARE ALL NOW OBJECTS OF SCHOLARSHIP AND NOSTALGIA,
ACCORDING TO "WORLD ENCYCLOPEDIA OF COMICS" EDITOR MAURICE
HORN...

TAPE: CUT TWO -- HORN

"PEOPLE ARE LOOKING BACK AT THEIR CHILDHOOD OR ADOLESCENCE AND ARE LOOKING BACK AT THE PRODUCT WHEN IT WAS A PRISTINE ART FORM. SO THE COMIC BOOKS IN THE NINETEEN THIRTIES WERE THE BEGINNING OF THE MEDIUM AND THEY WERE MUCH MORE INTERESTING -- LESS SOPHISTICATED, VERY CRUDE, BUT MUCH MORE INTERESTING THAN NOW."

NARR: THE COMICS DID NOT STOP THEIR DEVELOPMENT AT THE AMERICAN BORDER. CONTRIBUTORS TO MISTER HORN'S NEW ENCYCLOPEDIA COME FROM TEN COUNTRIES, INCLUDING ITALY, GERMANY, SPAIN, THE PHILIPPINES, JAPAN, AUSTRALIA AND YUGOSLAVIA ... AND THEIR ENTRIES IN THE NEARLY EIGHT HUNDRED PAGE BOOK REFLECT THE HISTORY OF COMICS BEYOND AMERICAN SHORES...

TAPE: CUT THREE -- HORN

"IT'S A PARADOXICAL SITUATION THAT NOW THEY ARE BETTER IN MANY WAYS THAN THEIR AMERICAN COUNTERPARTS. WHILE THE COMIC STRIP AS AN ART FORM HAS BEEN GOING DOWN IN THE UNITED STATES, IT HAS BEEN GOING UP IN THE REST OF THE WORLD, ESPECIALLY IN EUROPE AND IN JAPAN. AND THEY HAVE LEARNED THE LESSONS TAUGHT BY THE AMERICAN CARTOONISTS VERY WELL."

NARR: HISTORIAN MAURICE HORN BELIEVES THE NEWSPAPER COMIC STRIP -- AT LEAST IN THE UNITED STATES -- IS SUFFERING WHAT HE CALLS THE "WORST ARTISTIC AND ECONOMIC SLUMP IN ITS HISTORY"... "AN UNMITIGATED ARTISTIC DISASTER" THAT HE LAYS ON THE DOORSTEP OF THE ORGANIZATIONS THAT DISTRIBUTE THE STRIPS TO AMERICAN NEWSPAPERS. AT THE SAME TIME, WRITES MISTER HORN, "COSMIC BOOKS HAVE RECENTLY COME DOWN FROM THE HIGH PEAK OF THEIR POPULARITY." BUT MISTER HORN IS NOT GLUM ABOUT THE

NARR: FUTURE OF COMICS. HE SAYS THE NINETEEN SIXTIES AND
(CONT) THE FIRST HALF OF THE NINETEEN SEVENTIES HAVE WITNESSED
THE EXUBERANT GROWTH OF THE COMIC FORM IN THE REST OF
THE WORLD, OUTSIDE THE UNITED STATES.

TAPE: CUT FOUR -- HORN

"THE COMICS PER SE AS AN ART FORM, AS A MEDIUM, IS NOT
GOING TO DISAPPEAR. I THINK IT HAS PROVED ITS
VIABILITY. WHAT'S GOING TO DISAPPEAR IS THE WAY IN
WHICH IT'S BEING MARKETING."

NARR: MAURICE HORN BELIEVES COMICS MAY EVENTUALLY BE
SOLD IN THE UNITED STATES, AS ELSEWHERE, IN WEEKLY OR
MONTHLY MAGAZINES ... DESIGNED FOR A SPECIALIZED,
KNOWLEDGEABLE PUBLIC, A PUBLIC -- MISTER HORN WRITES
-- THAT CAN ONLY BENEFIT THE IMAGINATIVE, THE
INNOVATORS AND THE GENUINELY TALENTED WHO WILL ENJOY
GREATER FREEDOM AND MORE EXPERIMENTATION. "IN THIS
FACT" MAURICE HORN CONCLUDES IN THE WORLD ENCYCLOPEDIA
OF COMICS, "ALL LOVERS OF THE COMIC FORM CAN ONLY
REJOICE."

ANNCR: SOME THOUGHTS ON COMICS FROM THE EDITOR OF THE WORLD
ENCYCLOPEDIA OF COMICS. THIS HAS BEEN DATELINE:
NEW YORK. JOIN US AGAIN NEXT FOR ANOTHER PROGRAM IN
THIS SERIES.

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