



TommyWorld

Where Fandom
Gets Personal.

The Sixty Eighth issue of a sort-of letter substitute, kinda thing. Maybe weekly, maybe not. Available from:

30 Ava Park, Belfast, BT7 3BX, Northern Ireland

tw@tommyworld.net

<http://www.tommyworld.net>.

Available via the World Wide Web, or as an email attachment. I recommend the Portable Document Format (pdf) or, if you insist, a word or Rich Text Format (rtf) can also be emailed. Get in touch and we'll sort something out. You are going to [TorCon III](#), aren't you? Dated, already, 16/06/03.

Chunga

Only four issues old and already a bloody good fanzine.

I came to this conclusion shortly after reading Claire Brialey's article in the very first issue where she discusses, amongst other Helicon news, the fanzine panel. From what I can tell, essentially a 'what makes a good fanzine' discussion it raised a number of points which she has reported back on.

One of these was from Lilian Edwards - a fan writer I've always admired but who, for personal reasons, still refuses to send me copies of her zines - and Claire notes:

"Lilian's theory was that good fan writing has to be by people you know; or, rather, that you appreciate an article far more when you know more about them."

Saying that I liked Randy, Lesley and Andy's stuff more than Luke, Jerry or Stu's stuff in these issues puts me firmly in the same camp of liking writing that is by people that I know well. I've met both Luke and Jerry but have spent a lot more time with the other three. So I completely agree with Lilian and I think this is why I like *Chunga* so much.

With my tag line "Where fandom gets personal," it doesn't take a genius to know that I also like my fan articles more personal in nature. It so happens that the writers I mentioned write more about themselves and their environment than about SF, fanzine or even fandom itself. Not that these aren't valid subjects, it's just a personal preference. I do think this extends to a wider application: it seems to me that some of the best fannish writing is personal in nature.

I've always admired Randy Byer's writing for example, and I'm very happy that a wider UK audience has actually got to meet the man in person. Nearly as tasty as his writing I'm led to believe! A well kept secret in the US is his truly outstanding personal memoir *Travels with The Wild child* which has a lot of resonance with his *Cliff-hanger*, the outstanding piece of the four issues to date.

Randy's article is that bit more powerful because I've met him on a few occasions and got to know him personally. I've also read other personal stuff by him and he is really able to get under your skin. The fact that his article resonates with my own family dynamic at the moment also increases its effect. If you write of feelings and emotions that we all share, in a powerful and emotive way, then you're bound to touch on a few nerves and connect with a few people. Inspiring emotion through personal interpretations of someone else's experience is a rare ability in someone's writing, not just fate. You just couldn't get this type of writing elsewhere in such context.

Lesley Reece should just write more. It is that simple. Her article on Coffee (I'm a double tall Americano – research she helped me undertake) is just on the button. And the stuff on being weird, well we're all fans, we all know about that, but not many of us can write about the experiences as well as Lesley can.

Andy Hooper is a damn good writer and his Halloween piece came close to this level; his injection of the right amount of pathos helped. He takes subjects that I have no interest in what so ever, would normally skip over in any other writer or fanzine and turns them on their head. Of course I always thought he was just riffing on ideas that had come to him, now I know he is a very good researcher, knows his stuff and when makes mistakes is not adverse to admitting them. I think I saw the same Animal Planet documentary on elephants as he did, but certainly would not have been able to get across what we both felt.

I know I'm skipping over a lot of other writers and artists but Chunga also looks as good as it reads. Carl Juarez is someone who belies his influence on the zines he works on. The introduction page of the very first issue announced that he had lost none of his style and technique; the stars falling out of the drop caps was truly inspired. The design and layout of the rest of the issues are elegant, purposeful and dammit just look good. They are also fun.

Coming back to Lilian's view, my appreciation of Chunga was also influenced by knowing most of the people involved and imagining them in the situations they describe. I can imagine them voicing the opinions they are writing about and espousing the causes. This is the essence of fandom – going as far back as Willis and the gang. They all knew each other and were in continual correspondence with their Trans Atlantic subscribers. They were writing to an audience that, bar a few, they all knew.

Talk about knowing your market.

All four of these issues are on efanzone.com and I strongly urge you to go there now if your online click [here](http://www.efanzines.com/Chunga/index.html), if not go here: <http://www.efanzines.com/Chunga/index.html>

There was some response to James' article last time round as well as some Locs which I'll be printing next time. Also next time some more personal stuff from me and then another zine review with more controversial stuff, with a local twist, from James further down the line.

See you soon.

This is being distributed to a whole bunch of friends on the net, if you received this and would NOT like to be on the mailing list please accept my apologies for this intrusion and let me know so that you will not be bothered by further ramblings. If you know someone who would like to be on the mailing drop me a line.