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FANTOIDS

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fortunately fandom's only triennial quarterly

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----- "By the same token I'm going out and shoot my old geometry teacher." -----

OUT TO DEMONSTRATE that anything, however improbable, can happen in eternity, that horrid example of FAPA's dead timber, Norm Stanley, has produced an issue of Fan-Tods. Unlike its eighteen predecessors, this issue emerges from Encumbered Acre, P. O. Box 895, Rockland, Maine. However, it's still going to members of the Fantasy Amateur Press Association, wherever they are.

----- "He didn't know the cave was loaded!" -----

And it is a poor enough reward, indeed, for their forbearance and courtesy in fixedly staring the other way the while I have most illegally continued my membership the past two (or is it three?) years without the production of so much as a smidgeon of activity. In fact, I got by this past year without paying any dues, either. I did send a check to Burbee long ago, but what fate befell it I know not, for it has never returned to roost. Rumor has it that he has had it preserved in an atmosphere of helium in anticipation of the day when the autograph will bring more than the face value of the document, but whatever disposition was made of it, I only wish more of my creditors would do the same. And speaking of credit, much should go to Mlle. Mireille Koenig who kindly supplied the translation of the Paris Match squib you'll find on page 8 of this issue.

SOME NOTES ON DIANETICS

Thomas S. Gardner

I have been very much interested in Dianetics for three reasons. First of all I have a high regard for Hubbard's better fiction writing; secondly, I also have a liking for Hubbard personally, and finally, for the really important consideration, I am most anxious to see the development of some form of mental therapy that mankind can use to become sane as a group. The big question which I and many other people have been asking is whether or not Dianetics is this long sought science of the mind.

When I wrote the short article, The Rise of the Hybrid Sciences, in Warner's HORIZONS, #17, I thought that Dianetics might be the answer. My later letter, also published in that issue, expressed my doubts which arose on better acquaintance with Dianetics. I had discussed this matter to some extent with Hubbard at one of the August Conclaves in New York City about two years ago. At that time Hubbard called his system "Perspectives" and said that it began where General Semantics left off. Good! -- if true. Hubbard also described some of his work in hypnoanalysis and the total recall under hypnosis of events which took place while the patient was under the deepest anesthesia. All of this sounded very interesting to me and so when I read Hubbard's article, Dianetics, in the May 1950 ASTOUNDING SCIENCE FICTION, I looked for something new and interesting.

I was not altogether disappointed. Although the article was very poorly written, at about the level of Hubbard's poorest pot-boiler fiction, and seemed to have been hastily thrown together, there was discernible in it a great deal of the conclusions and new work of General Semantics, Cybernetics (in its philosophical implications), and modern logic. Fine, for a starter. But there were still plenty of faults to be found in Hubbard's development of his thesis. As an example, one error of statement, possibly due to hasty writing, stuck out on page 86, where Proposition 13 stated: "Dianetics sets forth the non-germ theory of disease..." Now there are many non-germ theories of disease which are far beyond being mere hypotheses. We know, for example, that mineral and vitamin deficiencies result in the well known deficiency syndromes, while hormone imbalances produce yet other types of illness. Hence Hubbard should have modified his statement. But perhaps such things as that ought to be tolerated, if not excused, in a popular exposition. I felt sure Hubbard knew those facts, but had overlooked them, or failed to express himself properly in that connection, due to his haste in preparing the article. Hence, on the basis of my conversations with Hubbard and of the article in Astounding, I wrote the short item for HORIZONS.

There has been a gradual build-up through Mathematical Biophysics, Symbolic Logic, General Semantics, and Cybernetics that rather definitely points toward the emergence of an all-embracing science of the mind. I had hoped that Dianetics might be it. I received quite a set-back, however, on reading Hubbard's book, for I found in it not the anticipated development of the matter so sketchily treated in the ASF article but instead a great mass of words put forth as a method of mental therapy. A

closer tie-up with procedures and methods of thinking would have been very useful. However a straightforward handbook dealing with the therapy alone is also useful, if it gives the needed information in a useable form.

Hubbard's book doesn't do this. I read it with care and found it hard reading, due to Hubbard's involved method of statement. The same weakness, unfortunately, has been shared by important books in other fields, Korzybski's Science and Sanity being well known as a horrible example. It would be an impossible task to discuss all the implications and points of Hubbard's book; the following, though, struck me as being especially pertinent:

Hubbard's theory of the engram as a special kind of cellular recording irrespective of the nervous system would require the most laborious and painstaking work for its satisfactory proof. Such proof would require mechanically recorded conversations between the parents at different periods of the development of the foetus. These would have to be locked away for years until the child had become adult, and then, by dianetic procedure, the recall obtained and checked against the original recordings. Now Hubbard has tried to use cross-checks for his verification, but I feel that he errs in accepting testimony from related individuals as evidence, even if this testimony is taken under reverie conditions. This hypothesis that everything that happens is recorded on a cellular level and thus stored in the cell along with the genes, etc., permits a revival of the racial memory theory. That is an old idea but has never been proven. It is implied in Dianetics, however, or so I gathered. In theory it could be extrapolated back to the primordial cell! But are there enough stereochemical configurations of the protein molecules in a cell to carry cellular recordings for such a length of time? What happens when the number of protein configurations becomes saturated and the cell can no longer receive cellular recordings? In my humble opinion the theory of cellular recordings is the weakest spot in Dianetics and may be its bane.

A curious implication of the engram theory is that a child would be better off if he were conceived by artificial insemination, or perhaps even better by fertilization and incubation of the ovum entirely outside the human body. In the former case it would also be better if the parents were not to have intercourse at all during the time from conception to birth. Better for the child, that is, but rather tough on the parents!

And then Dianetics was presented in the book in such a manner as to engender suspicion from the scientific and medical world. To make claims without citing verifiable case histories is the surest way to get attacked. What is needed is a book on case histories that can be verified and checked on. In one aspect the book, I think, was very poor in regard to this question of proper scientific and medical evaluation. That is the book's overwhelming claims of cures. This is a characteristic one associates with quackery and charlatanism. Even if true, such all-inclusive claims ought to have been soft-pedalled because of this prejudicial association and because they are really not necessary, for if they proved true other people would speedily find out the worth of Dianetics and thus promulgate it on a more credible basis. Frankly, I doubt if there is any panacea, any elixir that can cure all groups of illnesses or even a major portion of any group. Some antibiotics come close to this for certain susceptible diseases, but are not applicable to others. Every treatment has its limitations, even on the types of disease which are susceptible to that treatment. I do not believe in any all-curing mechanism. This attitude is based on past work from all over the world. The body is too complex a phenomenon for such a treatment as dianetic therapy to cure as much as is claimed for it. Also the claims of cures of syndromes such as arthritis, bursitis, colds, etc., should have been clearly separated into two groups, one of allergic syndromes, the other of infectious illnesses. For example, about 30% of the so-called colds are due to virus infections that are

transmittable. They are the true colds. About 70% are allergic reactions and aren't transmittable. The antihistamines relieve the allergic reactions and have very little effect on the virus infections. When you have a "cold" it would be a tough job to classify it by culturing the virus, if there is one. A simpler method is to try an antihistamine. If the rhinitis decreases and the stuffiness decreases then you had a pseudo-cold. A similar situation exists for arthritis. Some cases are allergic. Now did Hubbard ever have any serum work, X-rays, etc., done to determine if his cases of arthritis were real or pseudo? Frankly it is rather distracting to read of claims for cures that are badly needed without any proof being offered that the author differentiated between syndromes from real and from mental causes. (By "real" I mean other than psychosomatic.) With Hubbard so much is left out that should be in, and so much extra verbiage stuck in that ought to have been left out, that the trained reader is inclined to toss the book in the trash-basket. Such a situation could have been avoided.

A very much discussed question is whether or not Dianetics is just another name for hypnoanalysis. The early technique of Dianetics, which used counting to start the session, led to this question, but that technique is now supposed to have been abandoned. However that still does not solve the dilemma. The question of the state of hypnosis seems to be the key point. Hypnosis, as Hubbard knows, may run from conscious autosuggestion on down to the deep cataleptic state. It has been found possible to examine different mental states by the use of electroencephalographic recordings. I have seen several (presented at the Gerontological Society meeting of January 1949 in New York) and noted that deep hypnosis gave a typical pattern. (I am trusting to memory here, but feel confident that I recall this correctly.) If so, then if the recordings taken under different levels of hypnosis were to be compared with similar recordings from patients under dianetic reveries a proper decision could be made. It should also be recalled that induced hypnosis may be obtained without mechanical means or direction from the operator. The statements used at the beginning of the dianetic reveries ought to be sufficient, in my opinion. Now I am more inclined to believe that Dianetics involves light hypnosis than otherwise. I would analyze the situation thusly: Since Hubbard knows the superstitious fear that the public has of hypnosis, he realized it would be fatal to use the word, hypnoanalysis, even for the lightest states. In his choice of other words and by resort to the trick of appearing to condemn hypnosis he would be using a clever device to get around the popular fear. The relationship of Dianetics to the super-confessional state induced by the Church, and to some aspects of psychoanalysis also bear out this viewpoint. The technique of running the engram and reworking to eliminate unpleasant memories has been used as the basis of other therapies. And there is truth in the old saw that confession is good for the soul. The phenomena of the dianetic reverie are quite verifiable and have not been greatly disputed. However I have used and seen used suggestion to bring about states of emotion, illness, and also a sense of well-being. I believe that psychiatry and psychoanalysis have also observed similar cases.

A fundamental point that I got from the book is that a "clear" person or even a partially released pre-clear exhibits increased mental ability. Thus higher intelligence is implied. What kind of I.Q. tests were given before and after the treatments? What are the criteria of improvement? Achievement? Who gave the tests? Subjective statements are so much hog-wash. According to the theory a clear has no psychoneurotic drives and hypothetically is therefore better off. How better off? The evidence is pretty overwhelming that every one in the world who has ever achieved anything had quite a number of psychoneurotic drives. Would a perfectly "clear" individual, then, be anything but a contented robot? Some of the people whom I know to be undergoing dianetic therapy were somewhat whacky to start with, and I am following their cases with interest, as with these it will be easier to note any improvement. After all, improvement is the most important thing, and if Dianetics can bring about consistent and permanent improvement then it is a valuable therapy, if

it can not it is worthless and we shall justifiably say to Hell with it. It will take about two years for Dianetics to have enough cases scattered about the country to enable one to come to a definite opinion. This estimate is based on experience with other types of medical therapy. Also if a few psychotic individuals happen to commit crimes and blame Dianetics there may be legal action against the workers in the field. I wouldn't be surprised to see some form of licensing for auditors. And if Dianetics, as outlined, is strictly true, then a criminal is not really responsible for his actions as he is aberrative and can be cleared, that is made normal in the Dianetics sense, by therapy. Does that mean that a murderer should receive dianetic treatment rather than punishment for his crime? What about the practical aspect of this, irrespective of the ethical side?

I heard Dr. Winter speak in New York, on July 2, 1950, at the science fiction meeting of the Hydra-ESFA groups. Frankly I was shocked at the confused and apologetic attitude Dr. Winter exhibited. I had expected an objective and straight-forward discussion of Dianetics, its aspects, implications, etc. Actually nothing of any importance or significance was said by Dr. Winter. As an example of even a pre-clear he was not very encouraging. This may have been due to a belief that he was up against a hypercritical audience, but oughtn't that to have brought forth a greater effort to meet the challenge?

To summarize, I am most suspicious of the claims, as well as the theory, of Dianetics. I am observing a few cases taking treatment and am looking for concrete results. To date it is too early to tell. I am willing to be convinced, but must necessarily remain unconvinced until and unless Dianetics proves its claims.

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DEPARTMENT DEPARTMENT

(Apologies to Bob Tucker, now that he is with us, praise be, once again, and thereby available for apologizing to.)

A BAS LA DIANETIQUE DEPARTMENT: "It has been proved in 1950 that the public would believe in anything. When Velikovsky published 'Worlds in Collision', at the beginning of the year, he was considered by the most tolerant people as a man of vision, but he was so far surpassed in the second half of the year that in our day he appears as a classic author. Franz [sic] Scully, of whom we can say to his credit that he is probably a faker, produced a best seller by revealing that three flying saucers which fell into the sea had yielded into the hands of their American rescuers nineteen small corpses about ninety-five centimeters in height, dressed in clothing of the style of 1890 and definitely known to have come from Venus. But Franz Scully is a child compared to Ron Hubbard. Hubbard made in 1950 the discovery, of which he leaves to no one else the task of describing it as the most important in the progress of mankind since the discovery of fire, that of 'engrams', which, caused by shocks to the unconscious mind, live in the human body like little devils and are responsible for all its ills. The science which Hubbard has thought up to exorcise them, 'dianetics', reconstructs all philosophy, all psychology, all pathology, all medicine, and is taught for the price of twenty-five dollars a lesson. The magazine, 'Look', pretends that Hubbard surpasses Barnum and so implicitly awards him one of the most brilliant crowns of 1950. But everything considered, Barnum was an entertainer while Hubbard is an imposter.

-- Paris Match

HALF DIM (PARTIAL) BLACKOUT DEPARTMENT: "The principle of verification is supposed to furnish a criterion by which it can be determined whether or not a sentence is literally meaningful. A simple way to formulate it would be to say that a sentence had literal meaning if and only if the proposition it expressed was either analytic or empirically verifiable. To this, however, it might be objected that unless a sentence was literally meaningful it would not express a proposition; for it is commonly assumed that every proposition is either true or false, and to say that a sentence expressed what was either true or false would entail saying that it was literally meaningful. Accordingly, if the principle of verification were formulated in this way, it might be argued not only that it was incomplete as a criterion of meaning, since it would not cover the case of sentences which did not express any propositions at all, but also that it was otiose, on the ground that the question which it was designed to answer must already have been answered before the principle could be applied. It will be seen that when I introduce the principle in this book I try to avoid this difficulty by speaking of 'putative propositions' and of the proposition which a sentence 'purports to express'; but this device is not satisfactory. For, in the first place, the use of words like 'putative' and 'purports' seems to bring in psychological considerations into which I do not wish to enter, and secondly, in the case where the 'putative proposition' is neither analytic nor empirically verifiable, there would, according to this way of speaking, appear to be nothing that the sentence in question could properly be said to express. But if a sentence expresses nothing there seems to be a contradiction in saying that what it expresses is empirically unverifiable; for even if the sentence is adjudged on this ground to be meaningless, the reference to 'what it expresses' appears still to imply that something is expressed."

-- A. J. Ayer, Language, Truth and Logic.

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NERNST TO THE LIBERAL ARTS DEPARTMENT DEPARTMENT: "A rigorous statement of the third law is the following: For any substance in a single pure quantum state, the entropy at the absolute zero of temperature may be taken as zero. No known exceptions to this law are known."

-- Perry, Chemical Engineers' Handbook

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TURBOENCABULATION DEPARTMENT: "The Sensicon Circuit with the Permaky Wave Filter, Statomic Oscillator, Differential Squelch, Capacitance Discriminator, and Thermally Balanced Crystal Oven, all exclusive Motorola developments, has advanced the art to permit practicable adjacent channel operation."

-- advertisement, Electronics, June 1950

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DEMONOLOGY DEPARTMENT: "The operational fallacy of Maxwell's Demon as an agent for decreasing the entropy of the universe was shown by Szilard for some special cases. Brillouin, using the Shannon-Wiener concepts of information, has shown that such a Demon, using radiation to gain its information, must cause a net entropy gain. The 'efficiency' of a Demon process is proportional to the ratio of entropy decrease to information requirement. Calculations for standard door-opening Demons are made on this basis, and their efficiencies are shown to be less than unity."

-- Monthly Program of the New York Academy of Sciences, Oct. 1951

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DEMON RUM DEPARTMENT: "So it was that I spent several Sundays as a guest of Craig Rice, in real life Mrs. Lawrence Lipton. The Liptons, it developed, held open-houses nearly every Sunday, and the assorted collection of people that dropped in and out was as interesting and stimulating as it was heterogeneous. . . . All these soirees were rather similar, except of course for the conversations. The pattern centered around a profuse use of liquor--everyone present having entree to the refrigerator and passing around drinks to all present whenever someone got dry, a practice which often led to one's having two or three drinks in front of himself simultaneously. I never saw anyone get out of line from drinking out there,

but on the other hand the amount of booze flowing around the place made it really rugged for me, since I was supposed to be working regular hours, while few of the others were. These parties used liquor in the way I've always felt the stuff was designed to be used: as an ice-breaker and tongue-lossener; and such was the high level of most of the conversation that partaking in it burned up most of the alcohol as fast as it was drunk."

-- F. T. Laney, Ah! Sweet Idiocy!

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"Los Angeles, Nov. 22. (AP) -- Craig Rice, 41-year-old mystery story writer, today was committed for an indefinite term in a state hospital on an alcoholism petition signed by her daughter.

"At the hearing in psychopathic court the daughter, Mrs. Nancy Atwill, testified that Miss Rice had used liquor to excess for four or five years and needs institutional care.

"The court ordered Miss Rice to the state mental institution at Camarillo for treatment.

"The author filed divorce suit against her fourth husband, Henry W. Demott, jr., 29, last August but later said she was seeking a reconciliation."

I've forgotten what year that Nov. 22 occurred in; 1949 I think it was (news while it's still news dept)

... e s i w i r a r t n o c

For the relief and reassurance of those whilom Vanguardifs who are still around, this column is not going to consist of reviews of long since mouldered VAPA mailings. Having just used Revista to perpetrate that stunt with respect to FAPA, I quite lack the audacity to try it again.

Contrariwise, it shall be used this time for FAPA, not VAPA, discussion. It won't be devoted to forgotten mailings, but to recent stuff (well, fairly recent). And it won't be the customary review/discussion, for which I've the inclination only--not the time. I'll just do a jot of running comment on a number of items that took my fancy in the current and fairly recently previous mailings.

Was it you, Harry, who once let it be known, oh, long ago, and with what I recall as something like pride, that your record collection consisted of a disc of "The Beautiful Blue Danube" stirringly executed by a military band? Rightly or not, that thought has popped into my mind repeatedly during the past year or so, as I've read successive items in HORIZONS about a record player, an amplifier, a coaxial speaker and, to judge from a trend noticeable in your musical discussions, what must be by now a sizeable stack of recorded music. Me too, Harry and others, with the makings of what will be a rather elaborate and gadget-ridden (wohell, I like gadgets.) music system when it's all built into my recently acquired house. At present it's strewn about and hooked up in a haywire, but tolerably ear-satisfying, manner. But no more of that right now; no doubt you'll all hear about it at tedious length later.

It was also you, I believe, Harry, who discussed recorded church music and mentioned in particular the verdi Requiem. I'm with you on that; I've heard it once, maybe twice,

via radio, and also had the particular good fortune about a year ago to be in Los Angeles during the three weeks of the UCLA Music Festival, the opening concert of which featured an unforgettable performance of the Requiem. Now I see it's been LP'd by three different companies, a triple fulfillment of your prediction. Which one should I buy?

And while on this subject I'd like to recommend Bloch's (Ernest, not Robert) Sacred Service, on London LLP-123. (There is also, confusingly, a Milhaud "Sacred Service", a lengthier work on which I can comment only "no comment", having never heard it.) The Bloch recording I find notable in several respects: As music it is beautifully and movingly impressive, a massive composition yet achieving that substance without the percussive thunder (which I like, too) of the Dies Irae in the Verdi. The text, which is in English, is clearly enunciated and completely intelligible in the singing, and it is good poetry and of a content that I found interesting, infidel dog of a logical positivist though I be. The bass baritone, Marko Rothmuller, has a very deep and extraordinarily resonant voice, quite unlike any other that I recall. And finally, the record has captured a peculiar effect, apparently due to the acoustics of the hall, which is of a nature that would simply fascinate H. C. Koenig. It's no detraction, either, as it brings a remarkable effect of presence to the reproduction.

Harry also mentioned the Concert Hall Society and its perennial hurry!hurry! ads for its limited edition recordings. Here now is the tale of folly on one who was sucked in by the ad and the (excellent) sample record. I'd be interested in comparing notes with any other former plutocrats who may've done likewise. Concert Hall doesn't offer such a bad deal: I got 22 12" LPs for \$111, which compares favorably with what I usually pay via mail order for trade edition LPs--20% off list plus something for shipping. The music seems uniformly good, worthy, and mostly not available elsewhere on LP. But as for the quality of reproduction of these limited-edition discs "custom-pressed...directly from gold and silver sputtered masters" -- I wonder? Was my experience typical, or did I just happen to get the rare lemons of the lot? As I parenthesized, CH's 10" sample record was very good technically; I can't say that of all the records I subsequently received. One was downright bad at first, having apparently been pressed from a vinylite-sputtered master, or something, as the grooves were clogged with what looked like excess molding powder. Happily, it has since cleared up considerably and is at least tolerable now. Several others had the same ailment in less degree.

What is, I believe, a more general characteristic of Concert Hall recordings is their extreme shrillness; their engineers appear to have a penchant for overly pre-emphasizing the treble. I've noticed comments on this, too, in reviews of CH's trade records. Along with this they seem also to my ear to be rather deficient in the bass. While undoubtedly some of these deficiencies are characteristic of my audio equipment and not of the recordings, that doesn't altogether account for them. Pending construction of a Williamson amplifier, I'm getting by with feeding my pickup through a jury-rigged preamp and thence through the audio section of a Halli-crafters SX-62 receiver. The speaker system is a temporarily set up three-way affair with two tweeters capable of faithful reproduction up to 20 KC. The woofer is admittedly inadequate, so I look for some loss of bass. But I've other LPs from which I get bass that is fairly solid, considering the speaker I'm using, and I don't get solid bass from the CH records at the points in the music where it should be. At the upper end of the spectrum, the extreme h-f content of Concert Hall's discs is often stimulating to hear, but is also fatiguing listening as reproduced on my equipment. Again, though I suspect I'm introducing distortion here, probably in the SX-62's sogenannte "high-fidelity" audio section, I've other LPs which have extreme h-f on them and which do not distort and are not tiring to listen to. There's that shattering-of-glass-like fff opening of the fourth movement of Mahler's First (Columbia ML-54251). I invariably jump a foot when it's uncorked, but it's not painful to hear on my equipment, from which it emerges crystal clear, full, complete; with apparently everything audible that ought to be and nothing that oughtn't. Another example is Varese's Integrales (EMS-401), to which I can listen at extreme volume levels without

the least discomfort. And those cymbals really shimmer in the final crescendo! (There are, of course, those who would have it that with Varese no one could distinguish the music from the distortion, anyway. I can't go along with that; to me Varese is one of the most musical of the experimental composers.)

Well, anyway, the Concert Hall records are made of very pretty transparent ruby vinylite. The luxurious leatherette case supplied to house them, though, is a flimsy affair which isn't going to hold together long, I see, under the usage I'm giving it. To sum it up, I'm unimpressed by the claims of technical perfection and far from satisfied with Concert Hall on that score. But I do very much like their choice of music, most of which I'd've hated to have missed. It was good to find that Beethoven composed more than just an overture for Goethe's Egmont. The rendition by Margit Flury of Clara Schumann's two songs, "Die Trommel gerühret!" and "Freudvoll und leidvoll", were for me the high spots of the recording. ("high" in two senses; both good.) I was amazed, though, at the temerity of a mere soprano's competing with a CH-recorded fife! On the lighter side, I was captivated by Martinu's altogether delightful La Revue de Cuisine with its amusing piano tour de force.

Much better recording, I'm delighted to report, is to be found in the first two Handel Society releases of the oratorios, Israel in Egypt and Acis and Galatea. Musically, Handel, in the first of these, gave us some of his very best choral work without carrying matters to the excessive length of a Messiah. With Acis, on the other hand, the choir plays a comparatively minor role, and the work is, in fact, more closely akin to opera than to oratorio. The text is a dramatization, not a narration, of the Acis-Galatea myth, with the choir functioning much like the chorus of classical Greek drama. I was taken particularly by its subtly sympathetic portrayal of the cyclops, Polyphemus, as a would-be, but hopelessly bumbling, lover who strives to express his tender emotion in song but succeeds only in making a great clamor about it. This recording, incidentally, is complete on three 12" LPs (Handel Society HDL-2), which should be borne in mind by the prospective purchaser as there is another LP recording of it (Harvard HLP-1) which, being on a single 12" disc, is obviously not complete. I'm a bit curious as to whether Concert Hall and the Handel Society are one-and-the-same or independent companies. They sometimes advertise together and, until recently at least, shared the same address. Nonetheless, of their products I've heard, there's a vast difference in the engineering on the two labels.

And I'm solidly with Bob Tucker in appreciation of Columbia's enterprise in lifting the score of Destination Moon off the film sound track and giving it to us on LP. And it is also all the excuse I need for similarly plugging London's enterprise in doing the same for the complete (or nearly so) performance of The Tales of Hoffmann in its film version. That film is a minor enthusiasm of mine since I first saw it about a year ago. It (the film, not the enthusiasm) is a sight to see and a delight to hear, and it certainly is sufficiently fantastic (even says so in the title) for anyone in the audience to whom that qualification is an essential requirement. It's a beautiful demonstration that film is the best medium for opera, that opera on film is opera plus. I can only wonder why nothing as good as that has been done before.

The thing to do is to see the film first and then get the album (London LLPA-4, 3-12"), play it a lot and then go to see the film again. As Bob remarked with reference to Destination Moon, by hearing the recording of the score you can mentally recreate the scenes and action of the film; at the same time you are also more aware of the score as music when it is freed of other distracting sense impressions. This is true with respect to ToFH, though perhaps with more appositeness to the libretto than to the score, which latter is prominently enough a feature of the film to hold the attention. But it is much easier -- after seeing the film -- to catch and grasp details and nuances of the witty Arundell libretto if the recording is available for replaying. (For some obscure reason London has issued this album without a printed text of the libretto or, indeed, notes of any sort other than a booklet much the same as that usually hawked at the road show exhibitions of the film.) One's impressions of such a highly colorful production are apt to be faulty in detail "when seen but

once", as our Helen has obliging illustrated for us in TUT with her misquotation of "Students! Art is long and time is short...." (This may be another illustration, so I've put that in quasi-quotes.)

Audio-wise, the recording is surprisingly natural and brilliant for a transcription from sound track. Playing it at greater than normal volume, as London recommends, does indeed help bring that out, though on wide-range equipment it also brings up the harmonic-loaded 50-cycle hum which, according to Bill Dannner, is a sort of trademark of London recordings, and which in this particular recording is slightly prodigious.

Robert Rounseville, as Hoffmann, is a robust and photogenic young tenor whose appearance here makes one wonder what manner of bushel he's been hiding under all this time. The essence of the film version of Hoffmann is that of starry-eyed ingenuousness, the goose to be plucked, as plucked he is from the word "Go!" by the hissworthily villainous Lindorf. Rounseville handles the role remarkably well, carrying off neatly the difficulties of being at once charming and ridiculous, tragic and comic. And one of the subtleties of this, which I missed in two viewings of the film and discovered only when the recording was at hand to facilitate attentive listening, consists in the profound banality of the verses which Rounseville sings beautifully, soulfully, and so utterly straight-facedly.

Another interesting discovery I made on hearing the recording is that it contains at least two scenes which have been cut from the film as it is exhibited in this country. The first occurs in the prologue, in the middle of the scene in Luther's Tavern, and is minor, consisting only in the expurgation of the mildly rowdy drinking song which runs somewhat as follows: "Let's light up a punch, boys! Let us booze! Let any who choose roll under the table!" Although at the time I was unaware of the cut in the film, I do recall being somewhat astonished, the first time I saw the film, at the rather magical way in which the blazing punch bowl materialized into the scene.

The other cut is more extensive and reprehensible and occurs in the third act where the best part of the amusing dialog between the irascible Crespel and the deaf servant, Franz, who misunderstands all that is said to him, has been censored out and along with it the comic song wherein Franz, in a cracked voice, sings of his vocal ability. It is difficult to see why these two scenes should've been yanked. The first seemingly is inoffensive enough to all save, possibly, the WCTU, and at that the white ribboners might well applaud Hoffmann's succinct comment on the flavor of Luther's beer. The second cut admittedly expunges one sadly overworked little Anglo-Saxon four-letter word on the sort you can hear everywhere except in the movies.

On the other hand, the music for the dragonfly ballet takes up just 83 seconds in the record, and I'd swear it was much longer than that in the film. Incidentally, does anyone know just what words the chorus sings in that scene? I've listened to it repeatedly and it still sounds to me like doubletalk. It could be that, I suppose, since this is a British film, in view of the high regard in which Britons appear to hold doubletalk as a humor form.

The debate on companionate marriage has proved interesting, and it is good to see that the old braintrusting tradition of the FAPA still survives. Although I'm in considerable agreement with the title of Mrs. Carr's contribution, I've plenty of quibbles over her argument. The statement that procreation is the "only" reason for the existence of "sex" is highly debatable. We discover that the word "sex" in her proposition means eroticism. Well, first, is it not questionable whether erotic pleasure is an essential mechanism to insure procreation? It's not necessary to go back to the amoeba to raise that doubt. Among mammals there are species of quite high order wherein courtship prior to copulation is practically nil and the act itself is too brief and violent to support the assumption that erotic pleasure or anticipation of pleasure plays any significant role. In other mammals, notably the rat, the nature of the sex impulse has been quite thoroughly investigated experimentally.

Mutilation experiments have shown that a male rat deprived of all the sensory channels necessary to experience erotic stimulation will still copulate with unabated ardor. Electric shock has been used to render copulation painful, with the surprising result that a very high threshold value was found necessary to discourage sexual union. The rat endured current practically to the point of electrocution before he would quit the female!

Again, it is an unwarranted disparagement of homo sap to dismiss him as an "educated mammal". He's a reasoning mammal. With the borderline exception of a few other species of the higher primates, man is the only being known to reason in any significant sense of the word. That is the opinion of practically all animal psychologists, lovers of the dog, cat, horse, etc., to the contrary. Any reasonably adequate account of human sex life must take fully into consideration this faculty which makes man unique among animals.

For nonreasoning animals the formulation, 'survival of the species is a consequence of procreation is a consequence of sexual activity which may involve (but not necessarily require) eroticism', is fairly adequate. There are no "reasons" involved in the deal, which requires no further justification. It just happens that way and "the survivors survive", as Charles Fort quipped with a wisdom he doubtless never imagined.

With man it's a different story. He abstracts. He thinks about his thoughts.. He senses that he senses. To a reasoning being there is no point in survival per se; he seeks some reason, or reasons, for his existence. Whatever reasons that we choose, they are nonlogical ones, postulates. We could take survival as a postulate, to be sure, but I think it's an intellectually unsatisfying one. Too abstract, it cannot be felt by direct experience. From a hedonistic point of view (and if anyone thinks there are other points of view which are not ultimately hedonistic, I'm just spoiling for an argument!) it is desirable to choose basic postulates that are more closely related to direct experience.

Suppose we choose, then, as a postulate, or "reason", the individual's appreciation of all that is aesthetic; this is broad enough and sufficiently acceptable generally to be an agreeable basis. With respect to this postulate we may justify the survival of our species--to provide beings to produce and to experience the aesthetic--and so on back up the line of "reasons" to eroticism. But eroticism itself can be aesthetic, intensely so, moreover. Hence, as a particular aspect of our general postulate, is not eroticism acceptable as an end in itself? So, with reference to Mrs. Carr's argument, we can turn it around and assert with good logic that eroticism is also a valid reason for procreation, there being undeniably an erotic (and highly aesthetic) satisfaction to be had from the production and nurture of offspring.

So why should we deprecate the practice of sex as an art and an aesthetic experience? Why consider it as a mere "sugar coating" of the task of procreation? It is as much a legitimate activity and an innate part of the nature of man to appreciate the aesthetic as it is to reproduce his kind.

This is a hedonistic philosophy, surely, but not necessarily a crassly sensate and selfish hedonism. The aesthetic appreciation of sexual activity is certainly enhanced if the partners deeply love each other. In using the word "love" here, I'm taking that multifaceted sentiment in the sense of the possession of a high regard for another, to the point of considering the loved one's welfare and pleasure ahead of one's own. This reconstitutes sexual behavior on the basis of its being more of a giving than a receiving of pleasure. But doesn't such a predominance of solicitude and concern for the satisfaction of one's sexual partner argue for the practice of sex as an art rather than a mere prelude to procreation? The interpretation of sexual behavior as a mode of aesthetic expression as well as experience is one that deserves more attention. I've a notion that were this attitude more generally recognized many, if not most, of the appallingly large number of cases of so-called sexual "incompatibility" would be revealed as mere selfishness, a seeking of pleasure in the absence of much conscious will or intent to contribute fully to

the relation. Likewise the dour attitude of taking sex as a sinful business on the road to obedience of Jehovah's injunction to be multiple and fruitfully obviously leads to the same kind of frustration.

The tale of Towner's going for dianetics (with an overboardness that'd astonish me if encountered in any other iconoclast that I know of) multiplies yet more my regret that I didn't look him up when I was in LA last year. I must've been there just about the time of the events he chronicles, or very shortly thereafter. But I don't recall any furore or screaming headlines re dianetics or Hubbard in any of the papers I saw while there. In fact I read nothing whatever about the subject. I do recall driving by a big, brown stucco, residential-looking house which had a huge sign out front proclaiming to me, the passer-by, that dianetics could change my life. Not being prepared for my change of life, I made no inquiry. Now, I am fascinated by the Laney account, though baffled by its being written in dianetics rather than English. Helen's tacit admission of a similar bafflement is amusing. I have two trivial observations to make: I don't know what "agorophobia" labels; possibly a fear of certain laxative preparations. It sure as Hell ain't a fear of spaces; that's "agoraphobia". And the Swisher-Hubbard meeting; I'm fairly well acquainted with Bob, and I don't believe he is, or ever was, on the faculty of M. I. T. At the time I saw the most of him, back during the war, he was a moderately-big-wheel research man with the Monsanto Chemical Company ("I'm hired to have chemical ideas.") and apparently had been exclusively that for some years. He still is, I gather, judging from the assignment of his recent patents.

-- Finely colored specimens of mice are worth as high as \$150 in the British Isles. --

REVIS
A

-- otherwise known as "Project D", consists of long-ago-written comments on some publications of the Fifty-second Mailing, now two years gone. Any complaints over their exhumation at this time are undoubtedly justified; I plead only that a certain measure of this stuff is still timely and, conceivably, even of interest to the present auditory. The rest I throw in for any historical (or amusement) value it may have and because I labored over it and am loath to see all that bst&t go for naught.

THE FANTASY AMATEUR, 13, iv: I always read the President's (Presidents'?) Messages, Dean, old bean. They're often ingeniously contrived to fall into humor or whimsy when it happens that nothing else waits to be said. Loads of fun, almost as much as the Official Critics' Critiques used to be.

HORIZONS, 11, iv: I'm quite in agreement with your proposals (1) and (3), but doubt if (2) is worth withcluttering the constitution. I've often felt that psychological lift on receiving a fat postmailed bundle from the Galactic Roomers, or the LASFSers, or the Insurgents (I hope this juxtaposition won't produce the same violent reaction as did a similar bit of tactlessness I perpetrated back in the day of the Outsiders!), or other centers of activity, whereas of individually postmailed items only the most outstanding make any impression at all on me. The emergent whole can be so much greater than its parts. Probably I should, as FAPA's most flagrant abuser of the postmailing privilege, assure one and all that I've never yet

participated in a group postmailing and don't intend to. But I do like to receive a bundle of fapazines, be it large or small, postmailed or not. And a postmailed bundle seems to me rather more like a bonus to the regular mailing than a simple collection of stragglers.

Proposal (3), incidentally, ought to have additional value as an at least partially effective means of barring undesirables. If they submit manuscript and no one consents to publish it then they don't get in. True, that's not effective against the goon with a duplicator, and about all we can do about doing in him, pending passage of federal legislation to require licensing of all editors, publishers, and duplicator operators, is to resort to some crude form of direct action, assassination, say.

This Coswal-Warner exchange has brought forth the closest thing to tartness I've ever seen come from our hermit. Is it a reflection of the temper of the times that even the most serene characters become a little edgy? Me, I know I'm rather more than a little so, having lately developed a distressing reflex for yapping out in conversation and, of course, immediately regretting having done so. I pulled this endearing little stunt at least twice at the Norwescon; I hope the recipients' failure to notice it was real and not simulated. An odd thing about it is that when I snap like that it's never from having taken offense (my reaction to a stab in the ego is quite the opposite -- I clam up); it's just an overwhelming sense of weariness and impatience that surges up to unseat my judgment. Is there a P. A. in the house?

Masochist, Harry? Sadist's the word, I'm thinking, after the torment of reading this particular copy of HORIZONS, which is of eye-rending illegibility and yet too fascinating in content to give up on. Second sheets'd be all right if only you'd be a little more ruthless in tossing out the poor impressions.

"Shipments are made by express..." You mean Railway Express Agency? Any westcoaster who buys mimeo paper at 75¢ f.o.b. New York and has it shipped that way will surely regret the deal when he pays the shipping charges. Down east here I've been getting my paper from a Portland outfit called Discount Martin, who presently asks \$1.00 per ream for 20 pound 8½x11 and sends it down by motor truck at negligible transportation cost. (It used to be 60¢ and free transportation, but them days is gone forever!)

Books? I'd like to put in a plug for Dover Publications, 1780 Broadway, New York 19, N. Y. This is a publishing house that specializes in low-priced photolith reprint editions of out-of-print scientific and mathematical works, but also as a rather extensive sideline sells remainders in such subjects as science, philosophy, history, social science, biology, literature, art, and the like. A card stating what subjects you're interested in will put you on Dover's mailing list; they ship out batches of flyers listing their offerings by subject every other week or so.

Dover, incidentally, is about to publish a reprint edition of Lewis and Langford, Symbolic Logic, which Gardner cited in his article on the hybrid sciences.

I'm surprised to learn that there's bad blood between the symbolic logic school and the Korzybskiites, though they are, apparently, going their separate ways. I know practically nothing of what goes on within the former camp; the general semantics journal, though, has had nothing that I can recall as indicative of disagreement with symbolic logic and its methodology. Rather, I'd the impression that symbolic logic was tacitly approved but in practice neglected by the semanticists, this being due, mayhap, to the circumstance that most of the leading figures in the g. s. movement are researching in the biological, psychological, and linguistic fields. Symbolic logic, on the other hand, is now pretty much tied up with mathematics, questions of rigor, and the like; it's still moving under the impetus Whitehead and Russell gave it forty-two years ago via their Principia Mathematica. In its Boolean algebraic formulation it has also become a popular engineering tool in certain fields, notably electronics. I suppose most semanticists would agree along with Korzybski that mathematics can and should be the proper language for the

elucidation of human problems, but isn't it likely that most of them also fail to retain the notion much below the verbal level and so feel something artificial about that viewpoint? The gap between mathematical formulations and verbal formulations remains abysmal for most of us, due to the utter lack in our early conditioning of any consistent effort to interrelate the two. Indeed, the essential math. formulations (e.g., invariance) aren't even introduced, as a rule, at the elementary level. Somewhere--in a VAPA discussion, I guess it was--I once confessed that what symbolic logic I'd studied had yet to prove of any practical use to me, but that my reading in Science and Sanity had from the first profoundly affected my outlook, not so much altering it as clarifying it, and that I'd found A of frequent aid in spotting the jokers in arguments which previously I had intuitively felt unsound without being able to discover just why.

As for the frequent complaint, now voiced yet again by Gardner, that S&S is involvedly written and difficult to study, I wouldn't debate that any further than to observe that the subject matter of g. s., as Korzybski saw it, was most intricately ramified, extending as it does into every field of human activity. A general synthesis of the sort he attempted is bound to be involved and in detail often unsatisfactory. The question of difficulties in studying a treatise is subjective; it can be discussed with precision only in reference to whomever does the studying. Subjectively, then, I've read the book completely through once. I spent three years on it, reading at it off and on, leaving it sometimes for months and then going back to reread a good deal and go on to a new high water mark. I found it fairly rough going in many places but really baffling in surprisingly few. The "difficulties" I found fell for the most part in one or more of these three categories: (a) Statements of "facts" which seemed to me incorrect; (b) Interpretations, which seemed to me incorrect, of factual data; (c) Questions raised and then answered unconvincingly or not answered at all. I am going to assume, egotistically, that these sore spots are at fault on the writing rather than the reading side of the relationship we call a "difficult book". At least I still find on reexamination that my original objections remain for the most part little altered. With respect to these, then, my criticism of S&S is that the not inextensive populations of sets (a) and (b) point up the desirability of having a work of synthesis like S&S refereed by specialists in all of the fields touched upon. This would be next to impossible in a first edition of a work of the scope and sheer bulk of S&S, but could and ought to have been made part of a long-range program for the editing of later editions. If any such work as this was done between the first and second editions of S&S it certainly was done most incompletely. The third edition, from what reviews I've read, appears to have had practically no further revision at all. Category (c) seems even more directly accountable to sloppy writing and editing. There is much justice, I'm sure, in the attitude of myself and the numerous others who have voiced similar criticisms; but such criticisms are, I think, closely akin to the counsel of perfection. This may be appreciated when one realizes fully that S&S was practically a one-man job, written by Korzybski not because he thought himself qualified to compose a satisfactory treatise but because he had things to say that were in crying need of being said, however imperfectly. So he did what he could to step outside his own specialty of mathematics and attempt to work up the data needed for his synthesis. This was done by heavy reading on his own part plus what help he could obtain from specialists in the fields he considered. As for the failure to adequately edit later editions I'd hazard a guess that K's association with the Institute of General Semantics had something to do with it. He was busy training people in his methods, and it may just be that he thought it more important to turn out disciples who could interpret his work to others than it was to perfect his own written expression of it. Finally, anyone capable of taking on S&S for more than a superficial reading ought to be able to read it critically and make the most essential revisions of the text in his own mind.

Probably some mention, in connection with cybernetics, ought to be made of the work of Shannon and others in communication theory. Mathematically, Shannon's work complements that of Wiener and quite likely it will profoundly influence our

conceptions of neural mechanisms if, as, and when neurology gets out of the exploratory/descriptive stage and becomes a quantitative science. Right now the applications are almost entirely to the electrical communications field, where some highly spectacular revelations are turning up. As, for example, the fact that an unlimited amount of information can (very theoretically, however) be transmitted by a single pulse of energy--Bang!--Like that.--, or the practically realizeable (though maybe not so economical) possibility of transmitting readable English speech via a communication channel of less than three cycles bandwidth.

I haven't yet seen Hubbard's magnum opus and so am quite unprepared to spout evaluations with my customary oldfaithfulness (or, more aptly, like those geysers which are supposed to erupt when stimulated by gunk tossed into them). I went off to the Norwescon in the expectation of learning something of what was going on in dianetics and did, indeed, hear a lot that was highly interesting, occasionally exciting, and rather more than a little disquieting. Good or bad, dianetics is making one hell of a big splash on the west coast, at least. But it looks to me as though a lot of its adherents have taken it up with the notion that it is primarily a surefire way to make a fast buck and only secondarily, if at all, a new and still relatively unverified science. Whatever merits dianetics may have when sanely and cautiously applied, it is still a technique whereby violent and spectacular phenomena are obtained in profusion and as such is a wide open invitation for charlatantry of the worst sort. This is a potentially dangerous situation if, as what evidence I've seen appears to indicate strongly, it is quite possible to misuse dianetic therapy and produce ill effects in the patient; it could become an explosive situation in view of the faddish, semihysterical way in which the dianetics cult seems to be rabbiting. I noted with interest that, whereas most of the Norwescon sessions were rather lightly attended, the dianetics meeting packed the hall with people, not all of whom appeared to be fans. I believe the period would've run over its time by hours had there not been the "Destination Moon" showing to break it up. I sensed a terrific current of emotionalism in the audience and the speakers appeared to be playing on that for all it was worth; Ted Sturgeon, in particular, exhibited some remarkable showmanship. It was not at all unlike a religious revival with the "Look, these things are fantastic, but they really happen!" keynote substituted for the appeal to faith. At the moment I am very uneasy over this tendency to get hysterical over dianetics. The Hubbard technique, nonetheless, is producing results so striking as to merit the most serious consideration of the system. The foundation itself is oddly cagey about exhibiting its own results, but the results of other experimenters outside the foundation are sufficient in themselves to justify attention. Many of these experimenters are fans, and there's a heady appeal here to fandom to climb on the Hubbard band wagon, since we were, in a measure, in on the ground floor. Hence I was greatly and favorably impressed by my observation in Portland that the fans, by and large, are not going overboard for dianetics. But they are studying it and experimenting with it and criticizing it, and the commonest attitude that I found was one of reservation of judgment. I think that is the most impressive testimonial I've yet seen to the fundamental level-headedness of our kind of people.

Whatever became of WWWVY, Harry?

LIGHT, 45: Gibson's quite right with his remarks on the high temperatures encountered in space and that, even though the temperature be high, the amount of heat energy in the extremely rarefied gas is so minute as to have negligible effect on a space ship. Radiation would be the big factor in heat transfer to or from a body in space; conduction would be practically nil.

Lamb, in his attack on WONDER STORY ANNUAL, expresses what I take is disapproval of one of my favoritest sf stories, namely, Pratt's "onslaught from Rigel". I want to register a dissent. (Dissent of me, wot?) I loved that tall, tall tale when I first read it, eighteen years back; I've reread it several times since down through the years to and including its reappearance in WSA. I still love it. Maybe what I loved most of all back then was Pratt's consummate audacity in writing a story around such an utterly ridiculous

scientific premise and making me like it, even back in those days when my views on accurate science in science fiction were no end more strait-laced than they are now. Scientifically, of course, the yarn's a fantasy, a prime example of the suspension-of-disbelief idea. If you're looking for fiction-coated science then you're right in dismissing the story as rubbish, which--scientifically--it is. But as a story--well, if the notion of one's waking up in the morning to find himself alive and kicking in a body of metal isn't enticing to the imagination, then what is? Grant the impossibility, forget your science, and I think we have here a pretty entertaining development of that basic idea. The characterization isn't bad; the metal people are types, maybe, but they're individuals, too. Zesty individuals, their breeziness was overwritten, perhaps; yet of the dialog in the story the flippancies of the dancer, Marta Lami, have somehow stuck with me in memory for years. I liked the portraiture of the Lassans--an old race, great with knowledge but inclined maybe to rest on the laurels of their past achievements. Lazy people, perhaps grumpy over the natural catastrophe that had forced them to flee their world, but not really malevolent. They were just moving in on a planet inhabited only by "lower animals". Grant that they'd likely never in their history been opposed by any race of sufficient intelligence to give them a fight for their money and it's not at all illogical that they were so easily thrown off balance and defeated, despite their enormous advantage in science and technology. The ending of the story, with its miraculous reconversion of the metal people back to flesh and blood, I'll admit was a bit hard to swallow, though. And, incidentally, what I have long admired as a very neat trick is Pratt's subtle use of the horror motif in that scene with the statue-like metal man, somehow still living though congealed into rigid metal, immovable save for rolling, sightless, eyes of metal. That, to me, is a most nightmarish notion and one of extreme shock value when interjected into the levity of the tale as a whole.

CONTOUR, 2: It's been so long since I read a pulp magazine other than sf that I'd not know whether or not I was being treated like a general pulp magazine reader. I'm standing up pretty well, though, under the strain of being treated like a sf magazine reader. I go along most of the way with you on your ratings of the current output, dissenting markedly only re the Standard group which I still like considerably¹. For myself, though, I wouldn't care to select my reading by the magazine it appears in. That's okay statistically, maybe; you'll get better stuff in the long run, obviously, by reading ASF and rejecting PLANET. Nonetheless I've often read something in one of the poorer magazines that I'd've hated to have missed. So I prefer for that reason to keep track of most of the current magazines and select my reading fare therefrom by the simple process of browsing--much the same technique as the editors use for sifting mss: I note title and author, read the blurb for a laugh (magazine blurbs are the most consistent sources of unconscious humor I've ever encountered), and if still interested by then I skip-read a little through the story. Having done that I know pretty well whether or not I want to go back and read the whole story. I do restrict my buying to some extent; WEIRD TALES is outside my field of interest, and FANTASTIC ADVENTURES I quit in disgust years ago and have never returned to it, though it has, I understand, improved of late. I've not seen much of the newer titles, pocketbooks, and such; they just don't hit the stands here. An amusing example of this latter blind spot in my sf experience happened at the Norwescon where somebody asked who authored "Colossus" and I said "Donald Wandrei" and got a blank stare in return. It wasn't until I bought a run of OTHER WORLDS at the auction that I discovered why.

Another thing: Isn't there somewhat of a tendency now for the various prozines to limber up on editorial policies and publish a wider variety of stories around their particular specialties? I've that impression and believe the increased catholicity may be due partly to a dawning realization by the publishers of thudblunder and juvenilia that somewhat more adult material is also not

1. I1952 still do.

unsaleable, and partly to a trend among the better authors to shop around for better rates in these inflationary times.

Well, at least it wasn't spelled "cavilry". . . . And I suppose letters from characters like your mt. trail climbing correspondent are among the hazards of calling the Washington a Disclave.

BOBOLINGS, 1: You've the bear by the tail now, chum!². . . . I think the rocket research fellowship you mention must be the Daniel and Florence Guggenheim Jet Propulsion Fellowships, which are still very much active. Ten of them were awarded this year. . . . Wonder if that "spouse-spice" gag goes any farther back than Christopher Morley?

SPACEWARP, 7, v: G. B. M. Laney's Industrial Electrician facet reminds me of the old J. R. Williams character we used to have in maintenance here at the Algin Corporation. He could do anything in the way of motor wiring blindfolded but would invariably do a bolix if called upon to put in a wall switch for a light. On one of those occasions we told him that his switch for the lab. lights had caused the disintegrator to start up. He believed it. (Yes, we really do use a "disintegrator" in the plant; the 20th-century version, though, takes a 70 HP motor and is a long way in evolution from the handy and portable gadget of Buck Rogers' day.)

SPACEWARP, 7, vi: In justification of justification I'll paraphrase you, Fran: The average fanzine editor ought to type a dummy to work from. Unless* he's one of those individuals who can compose decently on the stencil he'll want to// make and revise a draft of his own writings at least before committing them to the/// stencil. The way I go about it is to insert the usual justification symbols as I go// along with the initial composition. Each ~~page~~

sheet of this, if it's not so execrable as// to require complete rewriting, thus becomes a page of the dummy. ~~Part/page/revisions are then typed on another sheet, clipped to length and stuck in their places on the original. The result, which looks messy as hell, thus has all the information~~

~~are then typed on another sheet, clipped to length and stuck in their places on the original. The result, which looks messy as hell, thus has all the information~~ Part-page revisions are made by crossing out the offending lines, typing the revised versions on separate sheets and clipping them to the original. Since these usually change the number of// lines to the original sheet, marginal notations are used to indicate where the text// ~~begins and ends~~

in the goes from one page to the next. The result looks messy as hell but has all the in-// formation needed to type the justified page on the stencil with a minimal shedding of obliterine. I know nothing about Ditto mastersets, but as far as mimeo goes I'd say/ that the stencil is definitely not the place to do one's revising; it's rough on the/ stencil, a strain on the eyes, and time-consuming. As for ~~the justification, well, of~~ justification, well of////

~~course it's not necessary to~~

course it's merely an embellishment which can be omitted if you wish, but if you are/ going to make a dummy anyway the justification can be incorporated with very little// extra labor.

As an example (horrible, no?) I have reproduced the preceding paragraph exactly as it occurs in the dummy. See what I mean?

This is heresy, I suppose, but I can't recall any work by Rotsler which would rank him as more than a competent cartoonist. Some of Stibbard's work is rather interesting, though I doubt if he has much to offer to the fantasy field. Watson was rather good when he was around; I

2. Those who may be annoyed by the obscurity of this out-of-date remark have my understanding sympathy. I don't know now what it means, either.

3. 1950.

hope his talents are of value to him in selling automobiles, or whatever he's doing these days. Hunt was very good; is he still around? And all the rest are doodlers, and Finlay, too, doodles? Well, maybe -- depends on what you call doodling. Finlay does an illustration and loads it up with gingerbread. Some of the gingerbread may be relevant to the meaning of the drawing, some may not be. I'd level the doodling accusation only at the latter. In other symbols, doodling = meaningless detail. In this respect I'd agree that Grossman and Kroll doodle, Rotsler and Stibbard do not. The G. & K. bubble baths are pretty, beautifully drafted, and look like a hell of a lot of work went into them. They're cloying confections, I think, mainly because of a failure to be evocative. I don't mean they should have a definite meaning but rather than they should be capable of evoking definite ideas or associations in the mind of the observer. A sparse style is better for that sort of thing; with a great wealth of detail the trouble is that the association evoked by one detail is increasingly likely to be upset by some other detail. But as with Finlay, the gingerbread is quite proper in its proper place, which is as definite detail in an illustration of a definitely associable scene. I hope all you good people know what I'm talking about here.

The various Kennedy memoirs ought to be pulled together into a single article, ala Laney.

"...the same sort of half-witted 'fad' as General Semantics degenerated into." Do you really mean precisely what you said there, Redd, or is it merely an inaccuracy of expression? If you believe that G. S. is today no more than a half-witted fad, I'd very much like to know what evidence you have for that opinion. I'm getting plenty fed up with this recent tendency to identify, subtly and otherwise, a worthwhile and completely respectable school of thought with crackpotism. Laney's sniping I don't take seriously as it's obvious tomahawk-grinding, just as his kidding about Raym Washington's youth was really aimed not at Raym but at Degler. I am gravelled, though, by unthinking parrotings of this Towneresque humor in the guise of sober truth. Even Milt, in his defense of G. S., surprised me by differentiating between G. S. as a logical-positivist philosophy and a lunatic-fringe "mind training" version of G. S. The latter may exist, but I've never heard of it. Have you? At least nothing of that sort ever sees print in ETC., or even in QUOTE, which latter carries reports on local group activities and occasionally may get just a wee mite starry-eyed with enthusiasm. There may be, possibly, pseudo-semantic cults which are passing themselves off as A; if so I'd like nothing better than to have any such frauds exposed. However I'll demand better evidence than the writings of a fourteen-year-old boy or some apocryphal Ashley pontifications or Van Vogtean fantasy represented as serious A formulations.

For example, the "cortico-thalamic pause" has been the butt of some amusing jokes, but do you know that there is no reference to it in Science and Sanity? Even though Korzybski leaned rather heavily on the notion of Henri Pieron that neural currents passed from sense receptor up to the thalamus and from there to the "higher level" of the cortex, he repeatedly stressed the point that this idea was still hypothetical and oversimplified and as such wasn't to be taken as a picture of the actual physical process, although there were sufficient similarities in structure to make the formulation a provisionally good working hypothesis. In this connection it is interesting to find that the neurosurgeon, Russell Meyers, in a paper entitled "The Fiction of the Thalamus as the Neural Center of Emotions" (ETC., 7, ii), has now realized these forebodings by rather completely demolishing as structurally false the old formulation of Pieron and Korzybski of the thalamus and cortex as the respective seats of emotional and logical neural processes. The present evidence indicates a far more complicated situation for the description of which the old notion of thalamic, cortical, etc., "levels" of neural activity is quite inadequate and hence is now being superseded by a modern, cybernetic, formulation, stressing the idea of "reverberating (i.e., feedback) circuits".

Forgive me for the lecture, Redd, 'twarn't altogether aimed at you, anyway. That explosion's been gathering for a year or more and it just happened that you were wandering about the target range when it let go.

What was it about G. Peyton Wertenbaker that was news to Acky?⁴ I've long been mildly curious about that author who made a few rather infrequent appearances in AMAZING 'way back in the twenties. I hope Forry's interest in Wertenbaker is a professional one, as two or three of the Wertenbaker stories were extremely good and rate anthologizing. I'd once thought of calling him to Groff Conklin's attention, but as usual I never did get the letter written. I'm delighted to find, though, that Wertenbaker's excellent "The Ship that Turned Aside" has been included in a recent Conklin volume.

I read Pilgrim's Progress at a very early age and enjoyed it immensely as a bang-up adventure story; I was too young to be bothered by its being a religious allegory.

Howard Davison isn't by chance related to Charles Avison, Fran?

Watkins' mention of the meteors in Rocketship X-M as being "about the size of basketballs" interested me as an example of how widely such estimates differ. To me they looked about the size of a house, regular planetoidlets with sunlit and dark sides. It was a terrifically impressive scene, I thought, and very well done despite those swooshing noises. I don't see the objection to having all the meteors coming from the same point in space: They should; a meteor swarm moves in a definite orbit and the individual rocks of the swarm would therefore all be going in the same direction. Less likely is the relatively slow speed with which they came up on the ship, though that may be taken to indicate that the ship was traveling in the same direction as the meteors and at a slightly different speed. By the way, does anyone recall whether the characters called them "meteors" or "meteorites"?

While I agree as to the forgiveability of technical derelictions committed in the name of economy or as a concession to an audience not primarily interested in technicalities, I'd point out that the film still had plenty of boners whose elimination would've cost no more than a small amount of additional research or technical advice on rocketry. The one that amused me the most was the lecture (with diagrams cribbed from Oberth) on the step-rocket which culminated in the deadpan assertion that the bottom step was not to be cut loose until escape velocity was attained. And of course the phoney instrumentation wherein the rocket's enormous velocity in outer space was indicated on a huge dial marked "air speed". Incidentally, I think that the audience at the showing I attended must've all been null-A men: At the point where one of the actors said, in an awe-filled voice, "Infinite velocity!" everyone in the theater hawhawed loudly.

While the faults of Rocketship X-M are commendably absent from Destination Moon the latter is not altogether without blemish. For all the labor expended upon trying to achieve a realistic depiction of the starry vault of space, the result is hopelessly artificial-looking. That couldn't be helped; it's a tough problem and the attempt at its solution was ingenious, a good try if not a successful one. Not so excuseable, I thought, were some of the scenes wherein animation was used to show the space-suited figures crawling over the rocket hull. Considering George Pal's reputation as a pioneer in the use of animation I was surprised that these scenes were so crudely done. The jerky animation seemed of a level more appropriate to Monsters of the Moon than to Destination Moon.

MAG WITHOUT A NAME, summer 1950: That Gallet opus turned out to be rather interesting, after all. It'd've been the better for a little editing, though. What may be regarded as addenda to it are a couple of rather fanciful astronomical articles by C. P. Mason which were published in MECHANICS AND HANDICRAFT for Nov. 1935, Jan. 1936, Feb. 1936. The first of these, entitled "Rambling Through the Solar System", alluded to Voltaire's several-miles-tall Micromegas and

4. I 1952'd still like to know.

took off from there to postulate a Micromegas capable of striding through space at the speed of light. On that scale-up of the normal walking speed of four miles per hour Micromegas would be 180,000 miles high. The article proceeded to describe the solar system in terms corresponding to Micromegas' scale of sensations. In the second piece, "A Short Jaunt Among the Stars", Mason pointed out that the Micromegas of the preceding article, while quite at home within the solar system, would be far too small to extend his travels even to the nearer stars. So he imagines an even huger being, one Hypercosmos, who stands 60,000,000 miles high and who by running at 1000 times the speed of light for hours on end manages to get a look at some of the nearer stars.

SPACESHIP, 9: is somewhat reminiscent of the fanzines of the 1937-1940 era.

SKYLARK, 8: is, too.

THE TALISMAN, 1, ii: The "missing scientist's daughter" is, one may presume, closely related to the "pretty scientist's daughter" of "Golden Road" fame?

Phil Rasch is good, solid, objective, with his "Comments on Cycles", which is an excellent, if once over lightly, survey of the cyclic tribe of whitherers. Me, I'm not so objective, I fear, as I've long been subject to vague, but uncomfortably gnawing, suspicions with respect to the worth of political/sociological arguments whenever cyclic theories are trotted out as clinchers. There's a severe tendency there, I feel, to indulge in a sort of cycle worship, to imbue a possibly quite justified pragmatic formulation of a cyclic trend with a definitely mystical connotation of fated inevitability.

As for the long-term cyclic theorists, Spengler included, I question if they give weight, if indeed they recognize it at all, to the effect of long-term linear trends. Of these, the technology on which De Camp pins our hopes is only one and thus far comparatively short-term at that. A longer-termed trend and one which I'm inclined to think may be of the greatest importance is the increase in human population. While technology is now so well developed as to exert a great deal of influence toward furthering this trend (Granted, too, that technology in the military field could also reverse it.), the increase in the number of people has been going on steadily all along during the ages before technology became crucially important. It appears that primitive man was a rather rare animal who probably stayed that way until he invented agriculture⁵. From then on his numbers have increased. If this trend hasn't severely perturbed Spenglerian or other cycles in the past it may be because it is only very recently that the increase and the rate of increase have reached the point where a saturation density of population may be foreseen generally and, relative to technological application, already have been reached in certain regions. Too, with more men in the world we have more men with new ideas and more demand for those ideas and as a result a burgeoning of technology that already has accelerated to an explosive rate (NB Gardner's "The Research Age" in Efty-18).

The influence of technology, too, extends beyond the mere effect of its gadgetry. It has a concomitant in philosophy. Here, I think, the important thing is the development of rigor. Rigor, in its modern sense, is practically a product of the past half century. Even in its home ground of mathematics it goes back only a century more. Before that the notion was only vaguely formulated and at that was more professed than practiced. Among the modern thought trends which are rooted in the rigor concept we may mention for the field of philosophy, logical positivism, mathematical logic, and general semantics. In biology, mathematical biophysics is exerting a rigorizing effect on the whole science. In psychology, biodynamics seems a likely candidate to supersede Freudian and other animistic schools of thought. Even in religion--of all fields!--there's a tendency now to look

5. Itself a technology, to be sure.

for guidance more to semantics than to theology. And in sociology/politics -- well, I'd like to see some comments on that. I'm not well up on it, but would imagine that the most rigorous schools must be those which trace their pedigree back to Pareto. Information, please, someone!

The nub of the matter is, though, that these developments are all very recent. And when we consider the extent to which they've spread throughout the most diverse branches of human endeavor in this short time, the only words which seem properly to express their influence on our culture are "unique" and "revolutionary". In this milieu and at the present time my inclination is to place no chips at all on cyclic-based whitherings.

As for this being the day in which the power-minded individual can become politically creative, isn't this more or less the case at nearly any point in history? About the only real exception would seem to lie in tribal or feudal societies wherein the political structure is so disgregate that no one boss can acquire and hold a sufficiently large area of allegiance to exert much influence on the society as a whole. But even there it's the individual who determines the action of a group. At a later stage of political integration the individual has the opportunity of influencing history to a pronounced extent even though he cannot become a Caesar. Consider Henry VIII, Cromwell, Peter the Great: Again it's the individual who determines what's to be.

It's true that now, in this century, we've reached a point where the politically energetic individual does, indeed, stand a chance of making himself a Caesar of a sort. But the linear trends in history have been at work all this time and now they're working overtime. Consequently Caesarism in this cycle is something rather profoundly different from any previous Caesarism, so greatly different, in fact, that it's to be wondered if it's still useful to think in terms of fitting it into the Spenglerian pattern. Thus in the past Caesars have arisen as an outcome of the integration of interconnected groups into a "universal state" which, however, was "universal" only in that it included all groups with which it had consistent means of contact. It existed as such by virtue of that limitation and crumbled when overextension outstretched its means of liaison and/or brought it into contact with formidable competitive cultures outside its sphere of influence. For a twentieth-century Caesar to make a go of it, though, he'd have to be the boss of a truly universal state, technology having quite destroyed the condition of isolation under which previous Caesarisms existed.

--- "Great Caesar's bust is on the shelf, and I don't feel so well myself." ---

..... the phrontistery

"There may, on the other hand, be a revolt against the established cultural vocabulary that is by no means schizophrenic. Indeed a part and parcel of adolescence--at least, American adolescence--is an almost stereotyped revolt against the beliefs, attitudes, and cultural behavior of the adults. Since this revolt has itself a cultural vocabulary of its own in terms of which its youthful members express themselves with an almost servile deference, it can scarcely be viewed as schizophrenic. Eventually they 'settle down' into a middle-aged conformity to the cultural pattern which may even have been somewhat enriched at its periphery by the terms of the then antiquated revolt. Some few revolutionaries may continue with the antiquated revolt vocabulary; and amusing it is to see these perennial revolvers again, when one revisits one's youthful haunts and sits in the candlelight at the familiar and carefully wine-stained table opposite an old habitue who is still 'in revolt,' as each pair of eyes asks the other the unuttered question, 'Which of us is crazy?'"

-- George Kingsley Zipf