

Published for Vapa by Chandler Davis, vulgarly (hence appropriately) called Seedy, whose address is 16 Highland St, Cambridge 38 Mass. This issue will be distributed thru Vapa in default of macVert.

Drag up a stool, fellow pigeons

Blithering Heights, dedicated to Virginia the Kidd, who doesn't like my poetry, which is what this is.

EVENING STAR

From living forest's edge I gaze
Westward;
Through waiting air, expectant of the night,
Through cloud-forms, tenuous, unpredictable,
Upward I gaze
At one star.

There in the cold and simple universe, a star,
Firm in its far-trailing niche,
Steadfast against victorious vacancy,
There--
A sudden planet, an abrupt oasis,
Significant, complex,
Living, expectant, unpredictable.

LUNATIC

How am I to tell you
Of bleak moons rising onto far bleak hilltops
Beside bleak trees? Of fine detail and pointless
Of moon-etched blacknesses of far trees' branches?
And how to tell you of the white swan silence
That falls cloud-blown between the moon and ocean?
Of flows of silent, icy-fingered lava
That frost warm leaves and hidden summer shadows
With moon's insanity? Of moons that linger,
Aloof and sane, to watch each crystal madness
Shrink, become perfect, an intense, brief cosmos?

No, nor can I tell you
How in your cloud-flecked eyes the white swan wanders;
How bleak moon's white cool silence swings within you;
How your calm words can form the icy finger
Upon my brow, can bid me rise, creator
Of evanescent worlds of passioned crystal;
How cruel you are to stay aloofly sane.

SYNTHESIS

Is it to tramp in step with tramping pines
 Up patient hill's long slanting mystery,
 To feel the loving hand of summer rain
 Upon our foreheads? Is it to gaze from hilltop,
 In wide bright wonder, at the purple grass
 Far woven on the acquiescent loom
 Of brook-lined meadows? Is it to sit on high,
 Among leaf-shadowed branches of a tree,
 A beech so coolly dim we can pretend,
 At noon, that twilight lies upon our eyes?

Or is it to prod delicately
 With febrile fleshless fingers
 The intricate unknown
 To build the cold hard universe of mind
 On structure of universe of eye and ear
 (Structure dubious
 Dark-cornered)
 (World that changes
 Destroying)
 (Mind that flies
 Space airless and unbounded)
 To integrate
 From zero to infinity?
 Is it that?

Which is first? What is good?

Is it perhaps to tread with feet of men
 Old childhood's ancient and ensorcelled mountains?
 Is it perhaps to gaze with wiser eyes
 Upon the child-faced meadow? Is it perhaps
 To relish leaf-stirred breeze upon our cheeks,
 To relish it the more now, knowing?
 To see the settling evening mist as vapor
 Yielding its spirithood into the cold,
 To hear the bullfrog's distant song as poly-
 Chromatic radiance of sphere-spread sound,
 To relish it the more now, knowing?

Please any of you who don't like these snuck up & say why. I dislike polite critics, not being one myself.

Somet imes this ty per s kips a l i t t l e

Prof Dirk J Struik, addressing a Tech course in Tensor Calculus: "To reason in this way is confusing to children and engineers. And sometimes it bothers mathematicians too!"

Tinkle tinkle little bar Gargle gargle little gink
 If he hollers make him drink Forty jiggers in a jar

The Science of Blithering

"A-bar-bar-Ree-bar!"--ReeDragonette

It gives this time some quotes, some relevant to Korzybski's A-blar, some to my NON CREDO; & my comments thereon. First from Hume's ENQUIRY CONCERNING HUMAN UNDERSTANDING, Sec II: "Though our thought seems to possess unbounded liberty, we shall find, upon examination, that it is really confined within very narrow limits, and that all this creative power of the mind amounts to no more than the faculty of compounding, transposing, augmenting, or diminishing the materials afforded us by the senses and experience." The same book, Sec VIII; Hume is discussing the determinism-free-will dispute: "Nothing, one would think, could preserve the dispute so long undecided but some ambiguous expressions, which keep the antagonists still at a distance, and hinder them from grappling with each other. All mankind, both learned and ignorant, have always been of the same opinion with regard to this subject, and a few intelligible definitions would immediately have put an end to the whole controversy." Which reminds me to wonder whether determinism has ever been batted around in the fan press. It mite well have been, in view of its relevance to time travel.

Hume again, Sec XI: "While we argue from the course of nature, and infer a particular intelligent cause, which first bestowed, and still preserves order in the universe, we embrace a principle, which is both uncertain and useless. It is uncertain; because the subject lies entirely beyond the reach of human experience. It is useless; because our knowledge of this cause being derived entirely from the course of nature, we can never return back from the cause with any new inference, or making additions to the common and experienced course of nature, establish any new principles of conduct." I'd put this in mathematical terminology: The "cause" as we conceive it must be isomorphic to the "effect" as we observe it. K & I would agree that talk of the "cause" was mere verbalism.

I was going to stick in a quote from Dr Johnson, but won't because I'm not sure its author understood it. I think Johnson operated on the 50-million-monkey principle: he said so much, some of it had to be good.

The Summer 46 issue of Science & Society has an article by SL Rubinstein (a Soviet psychologist) which echoes thruout Korzybski's soundest ideas. Is K being read in the USSR? Sample quotes:

"The chief shortcoming of the old idealist psychology of consciousness was that it 'isolated the psychic,' instead of treating it as one element in a unified process....Behaviorist psychologies, which offered themselves as alternative to the idealist psychology, actually constituted only /its/ reverse....The isolation /by the idealists/ of consciousness from the real life of the individual results in the liquidation of consciousness, clearing the way for the mechanism of the behaviorists, which negates consciousness altogether...."

"Something similar occurs when the objective social content is detached from the motives of human behavior. In idealist ethics the content of the socially important factor in the human will appears alienated from the concrete individual and becomes transformed into a transcendental subject or an ideal imperative which is counterposed to every real impulse. As a result, what remains within the sphere of concrete motivation is merely narrow personal elemen-

tary sensual impulses and organic needs. Paradoxical as it may seem, nevertheless the crudely naturalistic position of the psychological school ... (Freud), was nothing but the reverse side of the Platonist or Kantian theory of the transcendental Ought....

"Consciousness is primarily the perception of the objective world; when consciousness turns from the world, as perceived through the senses, conception, etc., and to these conceptions themselves, that is something secondary and derivative." K would call it a higher-order abstraction. "Consciousness arises and develops on the basis of human activity and is indissolubly bound up with the development of speech and language."

Many US psychologists are also adopting the non-elementalistic viewpoint, but few, to my knowledge, state it so clearly as Rubinstein.

From James Stephens's THE DEMI-GODS: "Man is a scientific creature; he labels his ignorance and shelves it: mystery affrights him, it bores him, but once he has given a name to any appearance then mystery flies away."

Comment: It is of course hily reprehensible to assume, when you've assigned a verbal label to a phenomenon, that you've given the fullest possible explanation. 17th-century doctors, who contented themselves with murmuring sympathetically, "Peritonitis," whenever a patient with the symptoms showed up, mite better have attended to anatomy & learned about the appendix. Linnaeus did not say the final word when he said, "Canis familiaris;" modern studies of phylogenesis were yet to come.

One does do something, however, when one assigns a name. Our 17th-century knew something about peritonitis: they recognized its symptoms when they saw them. Linnaeus assigned the name "Canis familiaris" to a group because he saw that the group existed; he knew a dog from a cat. In each case the word-assigning indicated the drawing of a generalization, the singling-out of a class, the making of an abstraction, the recognition of a uniformity. All our words are names for uniformities, with only trivial exceptions.

What's required after the first noting of a uniformity? To seek further ones; to make further inductions; to "explain" the thing we've named. & if then we assign a word to something which we call the first thing's cause-- we've just recognized another uniformity.

Then there are the words which denote non-existent uniformities --what K calls "noises."

A blithering wast is in order against these characters who prate of "the ultimate secret of life." What bosh! The word "life", in its very simplest uses, is a hier-order abstraction than the names for any of the phenomena it includes; it can't be considered apart from those phenomena. It's a name for a none-too-uniform uniformity, for a class which is not at all clearcut. We've got a lot to learn about life: by learning more about the phenomena comprehended under the term, we may correlate more & more characteristics with those by which we now distinguish the class of living things. In the process we may or may not delimit the class more sharply. Probably not. It'll probably continue to be a dubious point, & a purely verbal point, whether we should call a virus, or an

individual gene, "living."

We'll never find any "ultimate secret." We may find secrets of greater & less importance, but never one so important as to be called ultimate. For the ultimate secret of a hi-order abstraction would include complete knowledge of all the items from which we abstracted; this, it's inconceivable that we should ever achieve.

The closer we approach the boundaries of science the farther they recede. Or put it this way: predictability can be improved but never perfected.

My reaction is similar in the case of the phrases "fundamental nature of matter", "underlying principle of evolution", "final explanation of human behavior", etc. Not to mention "ultimate answers to science's questions", "nature of reality", or "first cause". Aagh!

Note on economic planning: Harvard students may sign up for meals at the dining halls for \$11.50 a week. The Bursar's Office figures the amount of food required quite precisely (31.28% of students miss weekday breakfast, 54.10% miss Sun breakfast, or whatever). Roy Glauber tells of the time, in his freshman yr, when he tried to cancel his chow payments while he left college on a brief trip. He got this answer: "You can't do that! When we calculated how much to charge you we figured on 9.06% of the students' leaving Harvard on short trips. There's no such thing as free will!"

From the ms of my TO STILL THE DRUMS, as submitted: "He was a little short colored fellow, about forty I guess." From the same story as published in ASF: "He was a fellow, about forty I guess." Now if I'd said he was a 9-ft, green-tentacled Arisian, it'd have been okay.

I suggest a survey to discover what fraction of Americans think that "Wherefore art thou Romeo?" means "Where are you, Romeo?".

& what fraction of college graduates thinks "like" can be a conjunction?

Ad astra per exaspera

The Summer Fapa mailing upb-rated:

- A: FanTods, The Thing, Plenu m
- E: Fantasy Commentator, Ad Interim, Venal, BT, Horizons, a, MOO, Sus-Pro, SusPro, FanDango, Mahope, CanFan, Fantast's Folly
- C: Phantagraph, Fantasy Times, Phanteur, Timebinder, Tomorrow on the March
- D: Falling Petals, Voice
- E: Science-Fiction Savant
- unrated: Devil Take the Hindmost, FA

& now, mailing reviews, but don't go 'way, Vapans, there'll be more for you.

FanTods#14: You're correct in part, Geosmith. A rod standing on one end with the center of gravity at a point of greater potential than the point of support will, in the idealized frictionless case, balance only if its position is correct to an impossible number of decimal places-- an infinite number, in fact. & if we were to position such a rod by hand the probability of getting it exactly rite would be exactly zero; correct. So what? Your objection is entirely invalid just because this is an idealized case. From it we get an answer (has anyone got one yet?) which will be close to the proper position for a rod which is close to an idealized rod under conditions close to our idealized ones. We let friction, or adjustments subsequent to original positioning, compensate in the actual case for the deviations from perfection resulting from our not living in the universe of Whittaker's ANALYTICAL DYNAMICS.

Such a slitley nonfysical mathematical model as this wouldn't bother you if you had in your makeup more of Thomas Lionel, theoretical fysicist, & less of Tom Lionel, consulting engineer. Nor would I, had I more of Chan Davis, practical man, & less of H Chandler Davis, pedant, in my makeup, jump on you quite so hard.

PS has any etymologist yet perceived the pun on "Geosmith"?...

Alas for I & my illuminating fan articles. SPACE & HYPER-SPACE seems to have appealed mostly to fellow-mathers like Stanley, NON CREDO mostly to fellow-atheists like Rothman....Don't know why THE EXTRA PATIENT shouldn't sell....Nice issue, Norm, & nice mathing, Bill Evans.

FA: Personal fidelity bond, duration 1 yr, amount \$1000, costs \$5.... I see Speer's using K's symbol ".,," for "etc.,".

Phantagraph 15#3: So Derleth thinks Stuart's TWILIGHT "palls into insignificance" (sic) beside Bierce's MOXON'S MASTER? To Derleth brrak.

Ad Interim#2: Check on the deadliness of the military. It's been officially recognized that most psycho cases during this war have stemmed less from combat conditions than from the simple "routine of military life." & at one Stateside Naval base, complement 5000, there occurred, within a 3-mo period, 2 murders, 1 scissor-fite in the Waves barracks, & 1 case of insanity that I know about. Adding the cases I didn't know about, you got quite a record. That ain't normal, & buddy that ain't combat fatigue either. That's the Navy.

Venal#1: Cranted, no generalizations are eternal & absolute; does that inevitable shortcoming make all generalizations worthless?

Falling Petals#2: I quote one of Larry's quotes: "Dig up the question of intellectuality (in regard to religion) and you will generally find the grub of immorality in the roots." One gathers one is supposed to seek truth by asking no questions. I find this attitude more loathsome in its utterasininity than Jesuit sofistry in its.

The Things#2: Laney proposes we adopt one neofan apiece, & raves, "The novice's enthusiasm would do something to our annui; either boredom would quickly change into complete disgust or-- " You can stop there, Fran. Already vast new vistas are vusting: "Men! Are You Bored? In

a Rut? Try LANEY'S DISGUSTING SERVICE-- Guaranteed to Make Your Gorge Rise within Two Weeks! Remember: LANEY'S DISGUSTING SERVICE."

When you occasionally write a clean story, Crane, under what name do you sell it?...So-o-o, the 2 little Unspeakables don't like my math. Well, kids, I realize only 3 subjects interest you, with a jaying & fantasy running 2nd & 3rd. Maybe my next math article should have SA, huh? I should be more ingenious? (Nico kid, that Genius. Lite brown hair.)

Fantasy Times 1#12: Quoth Seafles, "The actions of human beings form patterns which have not altered, to our knowledge, throughout history. The use of these patterns will give science-fiction the permanence it must have." Mores & social structures have altered a hell of a lot, don't tell me they haven't. Miten't speculations on them be of permanent interest? This old fallacy that human nature doesn't change is a big handicap to s-f....For unconscious humor, Nitka's book review is 2nd only to vanVogt's convention speech.

BT His Mag#3: I take back anything I've said against this mag. Not just cause I'm afraid you'll sick the post office on me, either.

Phanteur#3: If you're an S-7, isn't "draftsman" a rather modest term to apply to yourself?

Plenum#2: Korzybski had me on his side from the time I finished that big hunk of quotes (Poincare, Russell, Bridgeman, Weyl, & co) which opens the main text of SCIENCE & SANITY. K couldn't have had the wit to collect such a remarkable bunch of quotes if he weren't on the ball himself....You too using ".,"!...Datum for your proposed survey: I, who presumably am pretty much the same "type of individual" as you, also had "luck" in my military career.

Timebinder 2#3: No, Fortier, you're rite, let's not waste our time. Let's nother bother to "look for a salve that pulls a glittering veil before our mind's eye."

The Voice#4: Les misses the point of FTL's objection to Light's all-girl issue; which is partly Fran's fault.

Horizons 7#4: Ah, the skeptics. "And there was a group called the Skeptics whose main activity was not believing things. They doubted their newspapers, even the part that said, 'May 12, 1942;' they doubted the radio, even when it said only, '9 O'Clock Eastern Time.' They used to have doubting contests, seeing how little each could believe. Since, in not believing, not understanding is a great asset, such contests were usually won by one of the club's moron members.

"The day came when one of the Skeptics perceived a fault in their programs. They were not doubting themselves! Now the hardest thing to not believe is one's self, and when this was realized self-skepticism became the group's most favored occupation. They spent more and more time on it. Skeptics would sit cross-legged on the clubroom floor, muttering, 'I doubt it. I doubt that I doubt it. I doubt that I doubt that I--'

"After two months the Skeptics as a group joined the Church." Whether that's really relevant to Fortc-

ans or anyone else, I don't know....

"When We Were Very Young" is only now entering the period where I remember the stuff you're talking about; I'm enjoying it more, as I had expected I would.

a#5: Ray Palmer seems to have cracked under your assaults, Bob. Have you selected your next victim yet? (He says, with a sickly grin.)

Mopsy#17: So formists say there are "two types of inductions: those yielding descriptions of empirical uniformities, and those yielding descriptions of natural laws." I guess I'm not a formist. I see no distinction between the 2 types, unless in the degree of reliability. & to the question, "Why could not some ultimate /sic/ natural laws be flexible?" the answer is this: All our natural laws will always be flexible.

SusPro Fall/F44 & Winter/F44: You ask me, "Since each chromosome, and perhaps even each gene, helps determine several characteristics, will certain easily imaginable combinations of characteristics never occur save by mutation?" Well, I doubt if you'll find pink-eyed men without the other albino features, Jack. But remember: each characteristic is determined by several genes, too....You showed good judgment in abandoning "the mathematics of ethics." It's apparently a pretty sterile subject at the present state of our knowledge.

Tomorrow on the March: Is this the guy who wrote BLACK DESTROYER, SLAM!, THE SEESAW, & ASYLUM?

FanDango 3#4: COUNTERCOCKWISEBreeks of Thorne Smith; wonderful reek!

Mahope 1#1: Occam's Razor isn't a book, but another name for the Law of Parsimony of inductive logic. & did you really think that NON CREDO was a statement of "atheist directives" to be "taken on blind faith?" I must have done a lousy job of exposition!

"Unitive knowledge of the divine Ground" sounds like Aldous Huxley. I'll give a fuller quote from his THE WORKING HYPOTHESIS, with my reactions.

"The minimum working hypothesis would seem to run about like this:

"That there is a Godhead, Ground, Brahman, which is the unmanifested principle of all manifestations." (This says, in very inadequate words, that "God" is structurally identical with the Universe, "Universe" being defined as in NON CREDO.)

"That the Ground is at once transcendent and immanent." (I don't know what this means.)

"That it is possible for human beings to become actually identical with the divine Ground." ("Nonsense" is a gentle term for this unjustifiable assumption. It's a meaningless noise.)

"That to achieve this unitive knowledge of the Godhead is the final purpose of human existence." (This says, if it says anything, that men will be happier if they're religious. Dubious.)

Later, Huxley says rather presumptuously, "This of course accounts for the facts of history." The fact that it does nothing of the kind is what really sinks Huxley's

"working hypothesis" as a hypothesis....

I agree that 14-yr-olds can't often appreciate adult poetry; the same doesn't apply to prose, tho.

CanFan#10: If Speer & Swisher persist in questioning the Archangel Heisenberg, I suppose I'll have to quash their heresy. The Uncertainty Principle in its present form applies only as long as the quantum is our smallest unit of energy. (If we learn where an electron is, we can't tell which way it's going to jump, because we have to slug it with at least one quantum in order to locate it, & that'll affect its jumping.) But the more general thing which the UP says is that there's a limit to the precision of our predictions. We've pushed close enuf to our present limit to be within site of it, unlike 18th-century scientists, who were too far from their limit to see & define it, & so had a superficially determinist theory. We may some day push beyond our now limit, in which case our present UP would go; but we'd still have a limit, & I think we'd still know where it was. When & if we find a sub-quantum, we'll need a new theory in which sub-quantum-sized events are uncertain.

If we pushed the limit so far down into smallness that we lost site of it, the new physics would have no uncertainty in its formal statement. That wouldn't be the same as "sub-electronic causation" or "sub-electronic determinism;" our predictions still wouldn't be absolutely accurate.

In view of the above, I think you needn't worry about the fact that quantum mech's statistical methods resemble somewhat macroscopic statistics. I for one am surprised the resemblance is no closer than it is. The extent of the coincidence seems to be the appearance in quantum mech of statistics's Gaussian function, $\exp(-x^2)$; & Heisenberg (the very same) asserts this is in fact only coincidence....

Beak Taylor is identical with me as regards age, height, weight, & occupation. Name, address, & nationality seem to be different, but you can't expect these coincidences to go too far....Liked best LASON IN MONTREAL & MIRROR.

Fantast's Folly#4: BRAVE NEW WORLD (yours, not Huxley's) was well enuf written to compensate entirely for its implausibility....In re your jingle, RELIGION-- in US armed forces, religious discrimination isn't open. In fact it seems that the only reason we of the Navy were asked our creeds was so that we could be contacted by the appropriate churches while Stateside. In order to keep church propaganda out of my mailbox, I told the Navy honestly that I was an atheist. Never got extra duty because of it, either.

.....
Hogamous, hyggamous,
Men are polyganous;
hyggamous, hogamous,
Women- polyganous.
.....

Prof Berry to the Thermodynamics class: "Energy is something, not discovered, but defined."

.....
Bliss & Knight sand sinking on the coroner, lost the fought.
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