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x YE ED. WISHES ALL FANS A HAPPY NEW YEAR !  
x "DELIRIUM TREATIES" x From: "Wicklow", 87 Oakridge Road,  
x HIGH WYCOMBE, Bucks. -- JMR still  
x Number 7. Jan. 1943. x duplicates, as if you didn't know!  
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JULIAN F. PARR replies to Edwin MacDonald's "THAT MAN HOLMES".

I don't see Mac's point in following "the average fan's intelligence is on a level very much higher indeed than the average Britisher" with another standard, thus: "of the average man of the world". It should be obvious, even to a science-fiction fan, that the intelligence of an average Britisher (or of an average German, or an average Belgian) is bound to be higher than that of an average human. In fact, an "average human being" is a very low standard in most respects.

May I offer "Love on the Dole" or "Eyeless in Gaza" as examples of non-escapist literature? If Mac will compare them with most (notice I said most) science-fiction stories, he will perhaps understand. Personally, I do not think it possible to class fiction of one type as escapist -- only the individual novels. Anybody agree?

I think I rather agree with Mac about the science-fiction fan's intelligence. But intelligence is not the only quality to be sought. I'm rather inclined to think that fans have many faults. They are much too individualistic, socially irresponsible, (observe R.R. Johnson's "s-f fans have... a dislike for purely commonplace, mundane matters") and lazy with regard to social obligations.

Are they (we) entitled to ignore the "commonplace and mundane" as though they were synonyms for "unimportant"? The "collective" intelligence of s-f fans is NIL. They remind me of Huxley's "Higher Shirkers". What do they know of party politics, of the electoral system, of economics, of mass meetings, of political history? "These are mundane and commonplace and beneath our dignity. It is obvious that our higher intelligence be devoted to higher problems -- the possibilities of life on Mars, for instance." Huxley put it thus: "...conquering an unknown province of knowledge. Getting the better of a problem. Forcing ideas to associate or come apart. Bullying recalcitrant words to assume a certain pattern. All the fun of being a dictator without any risks or responsibilities...."

Yes. If a man is a Christian, he should do something about it. But s-f fans are predominantly Atheist. If a man is a militarist, he does things about his principles. But s-f fans are largely Pacifists.

Do other fans (i.e. intelligent fans), agree with this:-  
That the philosophies of most s-f fans -- and their subjects of thought -- are based on a deep-founded moral laziness, and that this fact neutralises any value their intelligence may have otherwise been.

NEWS FROM AMERICA: Donald A. Wollheim, editor of "Stirring Science Stories" (has that mag gone under once more?), is preparing a small pocket book of science-fiction and fantasy stories; contents will be "The Green Splotches" by T.S. Stripling, "The Last Man" by Wallace West, "A Martian Odyssey" by S.G. Weinbaum, "Twilight" by Campbell, "And He Built A Crooked House" by R.A. Heinlein, "Microcosmic God" by Sturgeon, and the following from books:- "The New Accelerator" and "In the Abyss" by H.G. Wells, "Moxon's Master" by Bierce, "By the Waters of Babylon" by Benet, "When the Earth Screamed" by Doyle, "The Diamond Lens" by O'Brien, and "Green Thoughts" by Collier. Publication date is as yet unknown.

"TIME TO SPARE" by Robert J. Silburn.

Referring to your assertion [mine--Ed.] that time travel is impossible.... To quote Joad, it all depends what you mean by time travel. The old-style travel, where one went backwards, "killed his grandfather", and returned to an unchanged present is certainly illogical, because his very presence in a past era would start a chain of events that would materially affect the present, which would in this sense be the future. Even the slightest action would affect the future. It might not have a very far-reaching effect, yet again, it might transform the whole scene. Take this imaginary chain for example. A time traveller steps out on to a lawn. A dog barks. The house cat, who is nervous, scoots away into the garage, spilling a jar of acid there over delicate equipment. The owner, who is in the garage, removes the acid, but is surprised to find that the mechanism works better. He patents this device, becomes a rich man, enters politics, is made Ambassador to a foreign country and by his clumsy handling of the situation there, fosters anti-British sentiment. Enemy propagandists pour oil on the flames and there is a declaration of war by the country. We thus lose an important Naval Base, and so on. Rather a clumsy chain, I admit, but you get the idea.

Any person going to the past would inevitably return to a changed present. As it was so simply put in Alfred Bester's "The Probable Man", if a, b and c are events now, and A, B and C are events brought about in the future by a, b and c respectively and a time traveller inserts another event, d, in the present, then a plus b plus c plus d can never produce the same future of A plus B plus C.

But I can see no logical reason against time travel myself, provided the person is prepared to say good-bye to his own time forever. It may be found absolutely impossible when we know what time really is, when we can work with it as we do now with space; but, at the moment, there seems no logical reason preventing time travel.

Finally, one more point. Future travel is presumably impossible, as there is no fixed future, but only infinite possibilities.

Having had complaints from Ron Holmes about no help forthcoming with his sheet, we present this issue:-

A R E V I E W.

ASTOUNDING SCIENCE FICTION, November 1942.... Lead novel is "Overthrow" by Cleve Cartmill. A three-star (maximum possible is five) tale about a man who set out to regain his lost position and to prove that he was no traitor. But things went wrong, and he did exactly the opposite. This story is set in a future where cities are States named after their chief industries, such as: Food Centre, Power Centre, Plastic Centre &c. -- The other novel is "Minus Sign" by Will Stewart, being a continuation of his "Collision Orbit" in the July issue. The experiences of the firm Drake, McGee and Drake in their experiments with contraterrene, or "inside-out" matter. Four stars for this. Van Vogt has the lead in the shorts with "Not Only Dead Men", telling us of another way, apart from death, which makes sure no tales will be told. Four Plus. "Four Little Ships" is an ingenious tale from Murray Leinster, and I rate it at four merely because of its cleverness. However, it is not s-f, and does not belong in an s-f magazine. "The Gentle Pirates" by John Berryman is about a hackish incident in space. Score one. Finally, "Sand" by Colin Keith, also hack, but it scores two plus for good style. Two articles this issue: "Vulcan: Ice King" by Malcolm Jameson, and "It's A Tough Life" by F.B.Long. Usual departments, plus a book review. Cover fair. Interior drawings poor.