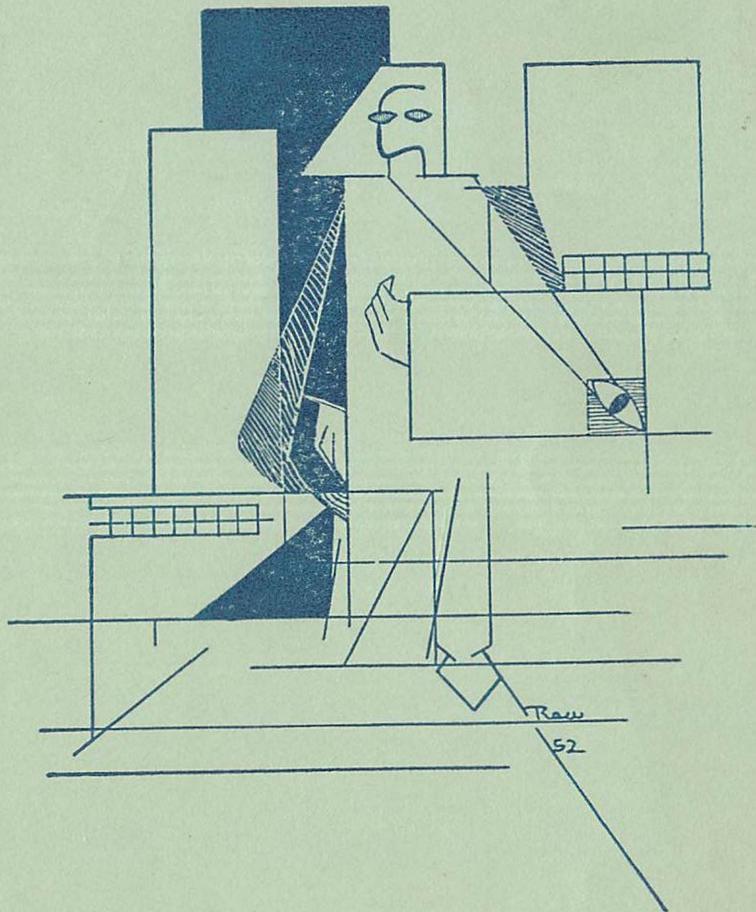


VIEWPOINTS

SCIENCE FICTION

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Autumn 1952 Issue Two

VIEWPOINTS

FALL 1952

ISSUE TWO

editorial

Here before me is a fascinating part of this game: the few beginning pages of the second issue of VIEWPOINTS. As yet I do not know what the remaining six pages will contain - unless I glee over todays letter from Z-D announcing that they will fold FANTASTIC ADVENTURES with the October issue! I likewise glee to note that their highbrow digest FANTASTIC is reported to be very successful.

Incidentally, this issue I'm switching from Broadway to Onyx for interior title type. It's a freer style. I hope you like it.

At this time I don't know what FAPA thought of the first issue except Beale asked me to drop dead and McCain and Boggs said it looked good.

---Rosco

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Hoaxes and the Hoaxed

Once in a while a hoax or a semi-hoax is good for a laugh though it usually just adds to the confusion of life and frequently obstructs things of greater importance and interest.

Perhaps the cleverest and most amusing hoax in the history of sf fandom was the one dealing with the sex of Lee Hoffman. For a long while Lee published QUANDRY and out of pure silence on the matter, had all the readers assuming Lee Hoffman was male. Lee continued to ignore the matter. Then at the NOLACON Lee revealed herself as a girl! This surprised and delighted fandom but, by no means, did it obstruct any projects, lead to any harmful deceptions or do more than perhaps embarrass a few careless letter writers.

There have been other hoaxes. One somewhat different was the Julius Unger ODD TALES hoax back in the early 40's. Here was a magazine announced and a cover picture to prove it. It was a great magazine for its day -- a dream magazine! It was to appear at a time when the wartime paper shortage was killing all but the strongest of the pro mags -- a time when the members of fandom were gloomy indeed. The fact that the first letters in the names of the writers listed on the cover spelled the word "fake" was missed by almost all of fandom. In a few weeks there came at day of reckoning. Fandom was deeply disillusioned.

Another type of hoax that is occasionally pulled is the "pro-mag-is-folding" hoax. For example the announcement that ASF is purchasing GALAXY or vice versa or that one of them is going broke.

This type of hoax leads writers to reconsider before mailing choice manuscripts to a magazine that might be folding. That plus a circulating rumor that the magazine is folding can cause no end of embarrassment and loss to editors, publishers, and writers. It can also lead to suits against the hoaxter -- though, in my opinion decapitation would be sufficient for a first offense with leniency shown if the hoaxter were out to bankrupt a "Shaver Mystery" type magazine. After all, you have to take strong measures against an odious enemy.

Then there is the death hoax, falling into two catagories: (1) A person creates a hoax about his own death; (2) Someone circulates a "death announcement" about someone else.

In the first case few will care and those who do will take solace in the fact that someday it will actually be true.

In the latter case, decapitation is insufficient. This type hoax can cause considerable complication in numerous matters, including financial.

I should like to quote one of the worst of this kind. It was a poorly mimeographed card which reached me June 3, 1952.

FLASH! We regret to inform you that the well-known Irish fan, Walter A. Willis, is dead. He passed away at his home in Northern Ireland, at the hour of 9:30 A.M. on Thursday May 15. The doctor said he died of diphtheria, a disease from which he had been suffering for some time. The Chicago Convention will honor his death by cancelling the Banquet, and by limiting the auction to quiet bidding. Most fanzines will have a memorial issue, which will be

for sale only to fans who contributed to the "WAW with the crew in '52" fund. Fans who contributed to the "WAW with the crew in '52" fund, send your name and address to Shelby Vick, and he will return your money. All fanzine publishers are asked not to treat this announcement as a hoax, but to give it full consideration and to announce it in his own magazine, so that fans may know of this throughout the nation and world. Yours, An Interested Fan Who Is Willing To Pay Postage For These Cds."

And that is that and for that I have this:

First: The most obvious false note is the lack of a signature or a return address on this card postmarked: "SAN FRANCISCO, CALIF 14 MAY 28 11-30 AM 1952." Yet some fans, who might conceivably gotten news ahead of time and are socially awkward enough to publish such an announcement in such a sloppy fashion, though most of them would sign their names in the hopes of gaining a little immortality in their little lives without even uncurling their minds from their permanent foetal position.

Second: Fandom's most reliable News Source, FANTASY TIMES, would get the news about as soon as anyone and since Walter A. Willis is the object of a nation-wide campaign to get him over here to the Tenth World Science-Fiction Convention, FANTASY TIMES would undoubtedly have rushed out a special edition which would have reached most parts of the country by the time the nasty little card did. Yet here too there is some slight room for unusual circumstances.

Third: DIPHTHERIA is an unlikely disease in this day and age in Ireland, and is seldom chronic and almost never fatal.

Fourth: The Chicago Convention might cancel the banquet but "keeping" the auction to quiet bidding is absurd. An auction is quiet or exciting depending on whether or not anything interesting is being auctioned and how bad the bidders want it. YET a few fans have a tendency to jump to conclusions and automatically assume that their conclusion has equal status with any known facts. And, of course, to such people "known" and "assumed" facts are of equal value.

Fifth: Now just how in the hell would anyone know which if any, fanzines would plan memorial issues? It would take months for that to be discovered. In addition, the idea of "selling" the fanzines only to those who contributed to the fund to bring Willis to America is one of the most absurd ideas in existence - were it met seriously.

Sixth: Now, except for the fact that this hoax will be taken seriously by some of the younger fans who will mis-quote or partially quote it in their magazines, this could all be excused as simply a hoax in very poor taste, but there is the request that the item be not considered as a hoax but to be taken seriously and published widely. This, then, is the epitome of assininity. This violates the constancy of a hoax and leads one to realize that the perpetrator was not clever enough to pull a tongue-in-the-cheek hoax but had to resort to outright lies.

I cordially invite the publisher or publishers of this card to start walking down Market Street- down Market Street toward the docks and to keep walking.

In general and particular, Hoaxes, except of the type like the one concerning Lee Hoffman's sex, are in poor taste, damaging to the functions of society and sometimes painful to the persons involved. It is high time fandom outgrew such practices— as most fans have. There is no way to prevent a hoax and sometimes they are difficult to recognize. If a hoax is signed we know whom to boycott. The Willis hoax still leaves me at a loss. What can you do with a hoaxter hiding under an anonymous flat rock? □□□

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Sanity and ARMAGEDDON

by

"The questions asked by Epicurus, of old," wrote Scottish philosopher David Hume in the Eighteenth Century, "are yet unanswered. Is Deity willing to prevent evil, but not able? Then he is impotent. Is he able, but not willing? Then he is malevolent. Is he both able and willing? Then whence cometh evil? Is he neither able nor willing? Then why call Him Deity?

The fact that the Greek's questions have not been answered to this day has been of little apparent concern to either theologians or their mentally dormant flock. The leaders exercise well-practised ability to doublethink. The followers think not at all. They merely follow.

The followers deny this, bolstering the denial with the traditional arguments of natural theology. The knowing attack the sceptic with what they claim to be irrefutable proof, not only of Deity's existence, but their conception of Him, His designs, His means, and His ends. The cosmological argument argues back from effect to cause and arrives at Deity. The argument, however, fails to establish anything other than a characterless First Cause. — and this only if we are more inclined to accept a Being eternally existent than an infinite regression. The moral argument, (to presuppose moral law with startling metaphysical consequences); and then dealing with the argument ex consensu gentium we must remember that not long ago everyone thought the world was flat. Even that sure-fire piece of heavy artillery, the argument from design, arguing to Deity as Designer, misfires sadly when, as William James pointed out, "One



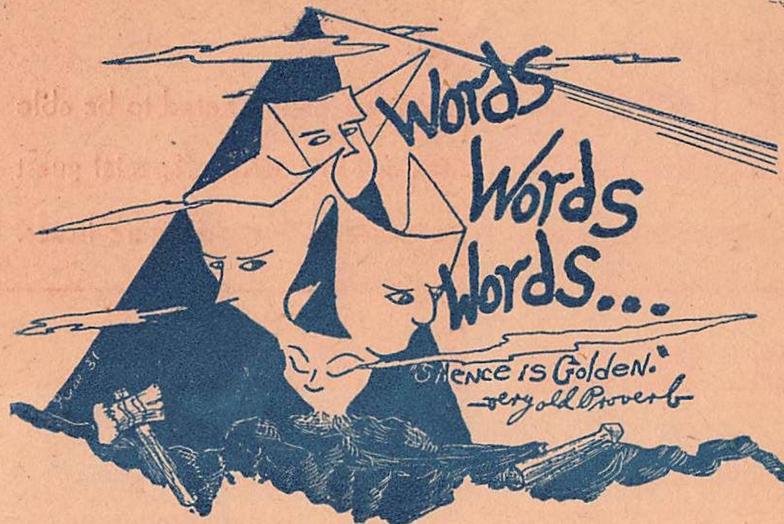
VIEWPOINTS is pleased and flattered to be able
to present this article, as the first in a series of special guest
features to appear in these pages in this and future issues.

GERALD PEARCE

views the world with no definite theological bias one way or the other" and "sees that order and disorder, as we now recognize them, are purely human inventions..." The fact will always be with us that these arguments for the existence of God are only as logically coercive as our disposition to accept them.

Now refutation of an argument does not, as such, constitute an argument for the other side of the question. It is far from my purpose to advocate atheism, or any other ism. But I pose the question: Can any system of philosophy based upon so shaky a foundation support the startling superstructure of redundant, if scholarly, architecture that theologians through the ages have heaped up on it? If I, for one, could answer yes, then I would willingly align myself with the angels and the happy host Mrs. Gertrude Carr had written about.

(continued page 12)



Duckspeak Spoke Dept...

Royal Drummond's comments about LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE vs. SPICY WESTERN in the last issue of DUCKSPEAK reminded me that the reason I deserted Annie for other 'literature' was because— due to the widening of my intellect I came to demand in my heroines much more development of character and mammary glands. As I grew older I learned to conceal my true feelings with the statement, "Little Orphan Annie is a paranoid strip and besides the plot is dull." Yet, to tell the truth, for years and years, she could have lured me back with a falsie.

Light's Out...

Nothing much to say about LIGHT this issue except that I'm herewith appointing Prof. L. Crouch Dean of the Anthropology Department at the University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon; and furthermore authorize him to present this issue of VIEWPOINTS as his credentials. (The local wheels are terribly persnickity about one having the wright credentials!) Yes, indeed, Les, I'm proud of you! Who else could have ascertained that steaks came about as a straightforward result of a cave man singeing his helpmate's posterior with a hot rock? Yes, sir, Les, you are the Einstein of Archaeology. By the way, just how would you account for the invention of the hot dog, or 'wiener'?

Tucker In...

Page nine of FANTASY JACKASS was very fine in its thorough contradiction of a hasty conclusion by a fan who had half a fact wed to a suspicion and both bedded down with wishful thinking while all served as evidence of, and justification for, publishing an inaccuracy as a journalistic truth.

There are several such pip-squeaks in fandom- who do such things much to the dismay of their victims. It probably all stems out of sheer enthusiasm, but damnitall to hell, a person can send a short question to the publisher, editor, or human being they wish to publish dirt about, and get reasonably authentic material with much more weight than that which arises from a 33 second burst of sherlock holmesism.

Hawl of Fame



Within this horizon, Harry Warner, Jr. has touched off an idea. To be explicit- it should be exquisite to counteract his ten most influential science fiction fans with the ten bottom fans. I realize that mere type can hardly deal adequately with this deep subject suggested by those two or so pages in the SPRING 1952 issue of Warner's HORIZONS, yet arise what may, by the grace of God, soap and water, and these three pious hands of mine I shall pi enough type to get my line across.

First you must come with me down the stairs to the basement, through the print shop, by the furnace, (step over the stream of water please) and on southward in the basement to the laundry. In the right hand corner we find a long handled implement of affection with a round rubber suction cup on the end. We place it gingerly in our hands and with a bow toward New York we walk to the south east section of the room, there where the drain pipe leads down, down into the grizzly depths of Eugene, and we plunge, and plunge, and plunge and finally up comes our first specimen. We look at it for a moment, and decide that it must have left fandom with the tail end of Degler's cosmic circle. We drop it reluctantly back in the drain, screw the cap on, lay a box of linotype slugs over the top, then tip the washing machine over on the whole works for good measure. Then with inhibited reluctance rush leisurely upstairs and dial 9-9537. "Hello! McGill Realty Company? We would like to sell our residence. Could we trade it in, immediately, for something on higher ground?"

And with that we bid fair adieu to the project of dredging up the ten bottom fans of science-fiction fandom.

FANSPEAK by Sir Arthur (H. Rapp) makes a splendid successor to the FANCYCLOPEDIA and a much more amusing publication than was that worthy, though I think both of them should be preserved, with many other items, for source material with which some future sociologist might earn a Ph. D.

ON THOUGHTS WHILE BANDSAWING, Laney is right. The man of god is always on the receiving end. They even try to get church stationery at reduced prices! And if it's anything I don't like it's these christian bastards fixing money so it moves away from me. Lost a printing customer that way--probably with the help of one of my partners. Somehow, someway a fellow ought to be able to start his own church and use the proceeds to support his fan mags---count it as entertainment, or advertizing, or help for the heathen or something uplifting.

A LA BOOM--- suggests that sometimes W. Max Keasler almost shows promise of homogenous composition in his drawings-- but still his stuff is like a sloppy comic book- albeit revealing much more technical skill than most mimeograph artists.

SKY HOOK... cover was an admirable bit of color combination. The lavender paper stock alone would have been rather revolting, but the brown ink and the touch of red give the cover an activity and a warmth which, with many other things, helps to endear Gafia Press to me.

The cover of SLOTHFULL THING looks like Dale Donaldson salted, which reminds me of a very dirty story. But what I'm interested in is the cartoon strip about LOW the poor Indian (what a state he was in!) This is something to make Wells turn in his grave, and Toynbee go to his-- all because of the historical significance of the lowering of LOW the poor Indian.

I'm not offering any prizes, but I am offering to print, at my own expense, a small book of "BASTEING WITH BULLARD". I'll split the profits with the idiots responsible for the inspired side of the deal.

I've made what is indeed a pleasant discovery! I expected that Miss Hoffman could write clever little rhymes if she set her heart to it. But these in the GAFIA LEAFLET were good. These poems have smooth rhythmic beauty, logical and pleasing continuity and a

delightful' amount of suprise. SHALL I SIT ON A RED SATIN CUSHION had much in common with T.S. ELLIOT. BLACK COATS had a Walter de La Mare tone. Lee also gets the blue ribbon for art, (to be pinned on her by hand by some lucky judge), for the memographed drawing inside the back cover of W&OBJ. This was a simple and effective bit with good space relationship and scale.



Sanity and Armageddon

(continued)

When logic comes a-tumbling down we are told to exercise faith. This may mean a sincere belief or doublethink. Alternately we are told that reason proves faith — faith called in to substitute for reason that would not provide fare to the prearranged destination. But you cannot deduce a Mephistophelean blast furnace from the cosmological First Cause by any means which could not be sidetracked to a ludicrous absurdity by anyone with a normal imagination and a predilection for iconoclasm. The merry-go-round is a muddy one.

But a few things are clear.

Whatever parasitic theological vines you may wish to weave about religion, to whatever extent you believe that religion is or should be in accord with objective fact, religion is the product of experience, not a corollary to logic picked out of a book. The originating experience being non-transferable, the only way a new faith may be proved and spread is, beyond a certain point, through logical demonstration of the alleged truth it embodies. Further, since religion — almost each and every religion — claims to deal with absolute answers to ultimate questions, the whole business would be a farce and a catastrophe if it could be shown up as completely out of gear with the bare facts of reality; -not to mention the fact that a fullblown religion is often simultaneously a full-blown big

business with a strong non-spiritual yen for keeping in the good graces of the thoughtful members of the congregation. Hence, prostituted reason. And all the philosophic, sophistic and theological trappings--including the denial of reason-- which must be laid at dark of night at reason's door. The facts of religious experience are few and disputed. The redundancies are advanced to the primary position.

It's a strange one, this over-all picture, alternately funny, ludicrous, pathetic, vicious. Fundamentalist wars on Unitarian, Christian on Muslim, theist on pantheism, rosary on the prayer wheel, and the eternalist on the wheel of life. The problem is not academic. The dead are legion -- and few have been canonized like Joan of Arc. Disputing voices buzz like angry flies. Works, grace, or karma? How many angels can dance on the head of a pin? Free will or Divine Predestination? What will be the temporal relationships of the Millenium, Armageddon, and some Last Atomic War in the time scheme of the future.

Built of bad logic, shored up by superstition, adorned with dogma, these and myriad other top-heavy verbal structures rise above the plain of sanity to obstruct the vision of thinking men. Voices which should be only an echoed muttering from the past bleat like sour Medieval trumpets. Ignorant by choice or circumstance, the followers line up to carry out their time-honored function.

Despite appearances, man is not necessarily sheep-like. But there is in his nature a demanding need for some kind of defining philosophy. Its origins we need not explore. The need itself and the nature of its fulfilment are well portrayed in William James' "The Will to Believe." His conclusions may be summarized as follows:

Inherent in man is a desire to know his universe. He wants to fit himself into that universe so that some positive relationship exists. He wants affirmation of his value as a man, a philosophy that does not insist that he and his kind are so many ciphers. This philosophy must somehow validate him, be concerned with his behavior as a man, and show a why and wherefore understandable within his human frame of reference.

It must, of course, be rational. That is, it must arouse what James calls the "sentiment of rationality." One is conscious of the sentiment of rationality when enjoying unimpeded mental process. The introduction of factors snagging the flow of satisfactory thought causes the contrary feeling of irrationality. The irrational and the rational, then, are subjective qualities, and inasmuch as people vary in background, education, and temperament, what is rational for one will to another be the opposite. The subjective nature of rationality leads to the conclusion that there is no ultimate criterion. Beyond a certain point you cannot go without including in your fabric of belief some pattern whose appeal to you is passional. You take it on faith, and incorporate it in a system of belief the whole of which arouses within you the satisfied sentiment of rationality. We believe, ultimately, what we need to believe.

We must seek beyond James for the final factor.

To repeat, we believe what we need to believe. To basic beliefs reflecting man's nature, discordant corollaries are appended. Some of the faithful renounce that title, and revolt. But the vast majority, only half-conscious, derive satisfaction from what they can digest and remain blithely unaware of the rest. There are few satisfactions like dead certainty. To quote John Dewey: "Love of certainty is a demand for guarantees in advance of action. Ignoring the fact that truth can be bought only by the adventure of experiment, dogmatism turns truth into an insurance company. Fixed ends upon one side and fixed 'principles' -- that is authoritative rules-- on the other, are props for a feeling of safety, the refuge of the timid, and the means by which the bold prey on the weak." Above all things, immersion in the twin opiates of ritual and dogma provides a supernal certainty none has experienced since the womb.

With such a bribe before them, it is small wonder that so many succumb.

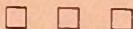
Out of primeval archetypes representing man's unverbalized insights into his nature have sprung religions through a thousand steps of clan taboo and tribal totem. By means of who knows what mesh of Oedipal resentment, repressed patricidal or incestuous desires and socially forbidden patterns, the mind of man has been made good prey for the warped, guilt-ridden negations religions have so often become. Thus could the fixed guilt-patterns of some become

the property of the many. In the absence of the great sense of guilt, the desperately guilty missionary must create and instill it, presenting it to the prospective convert as a bitter pill coated with saccharine absolutes.

Guilt, Armageddon, prostituted intelligence-- these are the corollaries to the sense of certainty, the price of the absolutes.

Not until he has shucked off his worn-out absolutes and their stifling appurtenances can man become conscious, capable of self-realization, and a potential victor in the battle of love against hate, integration against destruction, self against the self, of which struggle so many great conflagrations are only projections.

Faith, in man, can only take the form of complete commitment to an adventure, self realization, the adventure of life itself. This is the battle for sanity. This is Armageddon.



NOTE: VIEWPOINTS regrets that a miscalculation on our part caused us to insist that Pearce keep his word count down lower than was convenient; thus his article may sound harsh or blunt because of the absence of much developmental material which had to be left out. VIEWPOINTS will, however, print materials on both sides in future issues. We suggest you write us rather than wait for the next mailing so that we can speed up replies.

ERRATA: Page 6, Paragraph 3, Sentence 5:
The moral argument, to presuppose its moral lawgiver, must presuppose prior moral law (with startling metaphysical consequences); and when dealing with the argument *ex consensu gentium* we must remember that not so long ago everyone thought the world was flat.

VIEWPOINTS

Had to be postmailed for the 60th mailing
because we couldn't get it done fast enough
between commercial jobs and other work.
We might here express our thanks to Ed
Zimmerman for the many hours he spent setting
body type for this issue. Without that help
we would still be in the press.

— Rosco
