



Mlg. 67, Continued

BOROGROVE #27: Wolford - Some win, some lose. You got a copy of Mlg. 65; I didn't. Anyone have one they'd be willing to part with? But while I missed that mlg., and missed getting it, I am not, as yet, "leaving" good old APA L. I'm not quite sure why, though; the feedback has been diminishing considerably.

Recently Fred Phillips showed me a copy of your genzine, and I was amazed to read Fred's FISTFA reports therein. My name was copiously mentioned. If you were to send such zines to me, I might respond with a LoC at the very least, you know... By the bye, Fred has an amazingly naive and distorted view of the group relationships in FISTFA.

DJANGO #1: Brooker - While your use of this title for your zine is laudable, your information on Django Reinhardt is not. Reinhardt did not die "30 years ago;" he came to the US in 1946, and died somewhere around fifteen years ago. And this bit about "he managed to play guitar with only a few fingers on one hand and practically no hand at all on the other arm," is pure nonsense. Actually he was handicapped only to the extent that he had two immoveable fingers on his left hand.

What is more noteworthy about Reinhardt is that he was a European gypsey, who adapted gypsey guitar-playing to jazz in the '30's, joining the Hot Club of France for some memorable recordings. Today there are two basic styles of jazz guitar: Reinhardt's and the bop style of Charlie Christian. Among present-day guitarists, Charlie Byrd plays a Reinhardt-influenced style.

APTERYX #5: Helen Smith - I was a little surprised when my 1966 sticker arrived with instructions to paste it over the 1965 sticker on my California license plate. But I did so. I hope this will cause no trouble on my next trip to California. (In New York state they couldn't care less.)

See my comments to Barry Gold on Stranger as great literature.

MAYHEM ANNEX #35: Felice - Hey, cut out this minac, and get back to two pages and mlg. comments, hey.

The Superman shows on tv are re-runs, or, more likely, re-re-re-runs. They're based on the movie-serial approach to Superman, which was neither funny nor campy, but which I enjoyed enormously as a kid.

#67: Gold - Well, fella, there's humor, and they's humor. Your idea of something pretty funny is my idea of juvenile blithering. Too bad about that, but it bothers me not at all. I find I have no difficulty appreciating the humor of a Tucker, Willis, Carr, or Burbee. If I find your vaunted Lloyd House Purity Test both unoriginal and sophomoric, I guess you'll just have to bear up under the fact. Of course, it is just barely possible that some day you'll grow up and realize that sex is not something dirty and untried, to be snickered at covertly, and that the epitome of humor is not the deft use of forbidden words and concepts. Let me know when you reach this stage, and we'll resume our discussion of humor.

I find your observation that "anyone who claims a score of under 20 on that test is lying in his teeth. It is designed to have an effective range of 20-100." interesting, but believable only if you are referring to both parts A and B. Good old part A could probably be scored as low as five without difficulty. But maybe this is another example of Barry Gold Humor?

Your long dissertation on the relative merits of calling someone a junkie or not is one of the most assinine pieces I've ever read in APA L, Barry. It ranks right along-side Stine's and Baker's incoherencies on Objectivism. Let's avoid names, for the sake of what little propriety can be retained, and for heaven's sake, try not to go blithering off the deep end about who could sue whom for how much. I'm talking about reality, not what happens to Art Linkletter or Alan Funt. I'm talking about a member of APA L identifying another member, in rather freely circulated print, as a "junkie." A "junkie", Barry, is not a pot-head. He does not smoke marijuana. He takes narcotics. Usually morphine or heroin. "Junk." This is illegal. The laws on the subject are often harshly enforced. Most of us would have little sympathy with a person -- any person -- in our midst being dealt with under those laws. If he was in fact a junkie, we might hope for a Synanon-type cure, or at least Camarillo. But, if we had any consideration, we would not run around screaming, "X is a junkie!" This is, as I said earlier, Uncool.

But let's stake the other side of the coin. Let us suppose X is not a junkie. It's unlikely that in a fannish climate he'd sue, but what of it? Does that make it okay to run around slandering him? If Y had called X a thief, I think I'd have objected on the same grounds. It does not make for the funniest jokes in the world to laughingly accuse someone of being a criminal. I doubt that X would disagree, whatever his status (and Barry, using LSD or like that does not make one a "junkie"), and Y has already agreed that his joke was in bad taste. It's about time you grew up a little, Barry, or whatever you're calling yourself now.

Come off it. Stranger in a Strange Land is not "well plotted." Its plot is held together with toothpicks and old hangers. "2) It adheres very closely to its form." What form? It can be reread, revealing new ideas? I suppose that depends on your comprehension rate, but in any case this alone is no criterion of literature, and is more often a characteristic of non-fiction. I could say it more easily of a half-dozen works on psychology and philosophy which I have, than of anything by Heinlein, whom I have often reread, incidentally.

I am amazed that "The first time I read Stranger, it was merely a typical Heinlein novel, but longer and more intense; it had the usual elements of 'Typical Heinlein Humor', and the best Heinlein character I had seen." I am amazed because even on first, low-comprehension reading, it should be obvious that Stranger was in no respect a "typical Heinlein Novel." The style was weaker, the plot vaguer than usual, the philosophy new (for Heinlein), and the sex embarrassingly badly done. We will say nothing for the farcical Green Pastures sections in the Afterlife. They destroyed what little suspension of disbelief most readers could muster. The humor was thin and forced (I trust you're Pulling My Leg about its "High Density"), and the characters were right out of previous Heinlein books (only the names were new), with the single exception of MVS Smith, who was never adequately characterized anyway.

I certainly don't expect "Great Literature" to be action-oriented. But I do expect of "Great Literature" that it be well-written and convincingly portray human characters. This Heinlein fails totally in Stranger, it's his weakest book. For the whole subject in greater detail, I refer you to my article on Heinlein and Stranger in VOID 28, which Pete Weston is planning to reprint in ZENITH one of these days.