

*the old lady on the subway -  
Culler's again*

B I R D S M I T H

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Vol. 1, No. 1 of a publication issued solely for FAPA members and obtainable no other way. This magazine is published and edited by one Vernon L. McCain, RFD #3, Nampa, Idaho.....composed on the stencil so it will not have justified margins....and since I forgot to buy correction fluids, er, pardon, that should be fluid, and would be if I hadn't forgotten, you will have to put up with strikeouts this issue. Since I habitually overlook such trifles you might as well resign yourself to strikeouts every issue. Actually this is the same magazine that has been appearing under various titles in FAPA, carrying my comments, for several years, starting as a small portion of SLOTHFUL THING and continuing, with comments by Lee Hoffman, through a variety of Hoffman-titled publications which were each essentially McCain, however. So I finally decided these might as well appear consecutively under one title and here it is. Anyone who does not incidentally recognize this most memorable word in all science-fantasy history is instantly branded as a fake fan and should turn in his beanie and zap gun to the official editor. This should make the 63rd mailing and if all goes well is published, um, quarterly.

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FAMOUS QUOTATIONS, #1..."People are no damn good." -- Rosco Edward Wright, 1951.

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WITH BACKTURNED GLANCE....a bit of reminiscence and a shudder or two, at the 62nd mailing.....

THE BEM AND I--Pretty good hektoing, unless I got one of the early copies. As one who has safely gotten his own biography out of the way perhaps I can now say that the only biographies which greatly interest me are those of people who have been in fandom longer than I. There seems to be a monotonous sameness about the more recent ones. I don't know whether it is because they pre-date me or because to be in fandom more than four or five years is the mark of an unusual character, but the sort of biogs I really enjoy are those by old-timers like Tucker, Warner, Ackerman, or even Boggs. Maybe it's because they've been around long enough to have more happen to them and with a larger percentage of high spots to choose from can make even fandom sound exciting and glamorous. You left out your best chance for something interesting, though, Terry, your second-hand association with the Willis hoax.

BURBLINGS--Does anyone know if Rotsler was a bottle baby or not?

CRIFAPAC--

Lowndes couldn't very well have been referring to Shaw since this was some time after he first printed a Shaw story and Shaw was hardly a rank amateur, having appeared earlier in at least one other magazine. In fact, it couldn't possibly have been Shaw, since the first Shaw story Lowndes used was written around the cover on assignment.

D'JOURNAL D'ART--Attractive dittoing on the cover. Shoulder shrugs for the rest of the mag. Ok for some but Rich, you can do, and have done, better.

DREAM QUEST--A most auspicious re-entry. The most promising acquisition (or re-acquisition) fandom has made in some time. I particularly like your version of PRO-PHILE. Hope you include this in each issue, and have an issue in each mailing.



FLOP and STUFF--this two front cover business is wearing thin. Was refreshing when used by C-SFD and amusing when Wollheim moved it into produm on his current line of paperback books. But the novelty is gone and I can't see any really good reason for it in ~~this~~ this case.

THE FOUR-SQUARE FANZINE--Gosh, a fanzine dedicated to all you fen with square muzzles on your six-shooters. If I'd been in fandom longer I'd publish a mag titled "Strange Things Fandom Knows about Tucker".

FUNCTIONS OF X--This does not seem to be my mailing to be chatty. In fact, so far I haven't really found any magazine I feel any particular urge to comment on. Maybe I should throw away these stencils and start over.

GOOFIA NOT-POETRY LEAFLET NUMBER ONE--Ballard would probably be revolving in his grave over this were he not, the last time I heard, still revolving madly in North Dakota. At last we know where Rapp's true genius lies. I move we unanimously crown him Not-Poet Laureat of fandom, or at least of FAPA.

HALLUCINATIONS--I've yet to hear of a truck driver so skillful he could make his truck weigh less, which is where most of the damage comes in. And, for that matter, skillful driving doesn't help much to speed trucks up, and highway experts seem agreed (and anyone who's ever driven on a long trip could hardly disagree) that trucks by their size and slowness are a major traffic hazard if for no other reason than their irritant effect on the vast majority of drivers.

HORIZONS--Any movement to ban postmailings will get my vote. In the meantime I just don't review them.///Perhaps the solution to the expense problems of films, which you mention, lies in the infant development of magnetized tape for motion pictures. Of course it will be years before the details is good enough to replace motion pictures. And probably more years before it becomes economically feasible for the average person to buy his own tapes. But after that I imagine some bold operator working on a shoestring will experiment with 'unpopular' material, probably lasting only ten or twenty minutes each, for the most part. Sooner or later technology seems to find a way for even the most esoteric developments. Not that Columbia now has a so-called hi-fi phonograph on the market. And all the fabulously rare items now available on LP. However, even catering to a mass market, I find a number of very worthwhile pictures, although it's necessary to watch for them. And Hollywood usually loses money on them. Each year I like less movies than the year before, however. So far I've only seen two or three pictures released in 1952 which I could unreservedly plump for. However, several academy award contenders, released at the last moment, haven't yet been around. Far and away the best was "Come Back, Little Sheba". The other two, surprisingly, were both low budget pictures which hewed close to traditional Hollywood lines but did it so well that they managed to remind that there is nothing wrong with the basic plots Hollywood keeps using, only in the lack of originality. The first of these two was a little high-tension suspenser set, as so many of the best stories of this type, on a train; "The Narrow Margin". The other I have a few reservations about since I might have been in an unusually receptive mood the night I saw it but it was the animal comedy, "Fearless Fagan". One thing to which I object is that television, which I detest, is making commercially unprofitable most of the films which I liked best in the past and the film capital is concentrating more and more on the splendid, technicolored, and unendingly dull, western or adventure film. With the advent of 3-D and large screens I suppose this trend will be accented. ~~Meanwhile~~ Meanwhile let's hope this magnetic tape, which



the Crosby corporation reportedly has within six months of perfection for television use is the radical new technological advance you mention.//// The ODD TALES hoax was admittedly clever and amusing but I doubt if sufficiently so to make up for the fact it was a hoax. It seems to me that hoaxing and the desire to hoax are both symptomatic of the infantile approach, the idea "Boy, wouldn't I be smart if I tell Jimmy down the street a lie and he thinks I'm telling the truth." sort of thing. Personally, I feel the only justified hoax is the inverted hoax, the one where you tell the precise truth at all times (omitting certain segments of the truth being the nearest one strays to ~~xxxxx~~ lying) and by doing so convince someone of something untrue. The Hoffman Hoax is a good example. I get a great deal of amusement from this sort whether I am the perpetrator, onlooker, or victim. I've always enjoyed taking some unlikely sounding but 100% true fact and telling it to some abnormally skeptical person (the world is full of them) in such a manner and with the proper intonation as to make it sound to his suspicious ears as if I were doing a poor job of tall-tale-telling. At his open skepticism one simply reiterates that he is speaking the truth, being careful not to place any positive proof in evidence. For the fullest flavor on this sort of joke one must be sure to arrange for the doubter to come 'accidentally' on the proof of what you have told him several hours or days later.////I frequently disagree with TIME (and abhor LIFE, the illiterates bible) but I must say I can think of few publications (THE NEW YORK TIMES and THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR are the only two to come to mind) which can be trusted farther. No sooner does someone denounce them for undue prejudice one way than an extremist from the opposite camp produces a similar denunciation of favoritism for the other side. The liberal press has long glared at TIME and its publishers as the arch-architect of the popularity of reactionary MacArthur and his policies. I note the current issue quotes an aide of Senator McCarthy as saying "TIME" is a smear word as far as they are concerned. And last spring when I was ardently championing Taft's presidential candidacy and growing increasingly angry at what I ~~xxxx~~ still consider TIME's deliberate distortion of the facts to aid Eisenhower, a friend of mine who likes neither TIME nor Taft used their 'support of Taft' as one of his points of attack.////Forgot you'd mentioned later in your mag the taped movies I speak of above. Surprised you haven't heard of this before Harry. This has been a theoretical possibility for years and, like all theoretical possibilities which sound desirable, was destined to be just a matter of time before it materialised. This was probably the soberest prediction in Gernsback's entire Christmas card this year and almost certainly will be ~~xxx~~ the first to take concrete form though as I said above it will probably be fifteen or twenty years before they are available en masse for home use. The visual tapes are said to be already up to the standard of definition of television around 1947 and the Crosby group expects to have them ready to record programs on for television at its present level next fall. They expect this to be of considerably higher quality than kinescoping and infinitely cheaper if you don't count the initial cost for equipment which I understand is something like \$50,000 for each station which wishes to be so equipped, at the moment.

IRUSABEN--For my money del Rey's FANTASY, which domes delightfully close to recreating the old UNKNOWN, is far and away the best magazine on the market. I'm waiting anxiously to see what Gold's BEYOND is like. Should be out a few weeks before this mailing arrives, incidentally.////As for how you got in the 40th mailing, tch, tch....you a stfan, too! Haven't you ever heard of time machines? Actually, I haven't yet figured out how 40th got substituted for 60th, whether I misread something, or whether it was a typing error by either Hoffman or myself, or whether Hoffman just happened to be in a devil-



ish mood and did it deliberately.

LIGHT--The profession you're involved in is always the one with the unreasonable requests. Let's face it, people are people, and it's a pretty questionable arrangement. You'd be surprised the number of people who demand all sorts of information as to the intentions and history of the senders of their telegrams. They are completely unable to absorb the fact that the person reading them the telegram can only read what is said on the message and is doing his best to do so if they will just shut up and quit interrupting. And there are the people who scream with outrage at the idea they should be responsible for the charges on any collect telegrams they want to send.... and I could go on for hours. You might as well face it. Any business that deals with the public must put up with a constant flow of unreasonable requests and outrageous demands. Actually, you're doing pretty well if you're getting as much pay as a common laborer. That is becoming an increasingly well-paid group as more and more people become well-educated and decline to take on such unpleasant and boring work. I wish I made as much as a common laborer. Incidentally, not that it proves anything, but the most inefficient radio repairmen I've dealt with also turned out the most atrociously incompetent work. By which I mean, in both the cases I'm thinking of, I was forced to have the work redone immediately by a more economical repairman.///I'd agree completely with you that Gary Cooper acts natural. That is precisely my objection to him, same as Marlon Brando. I consider Cooper not an ~~xxxx~~ actor at all but a personality. In every picture he plays Gary Cooper. And it just happens that the sort of character Gary Cooper depicts on the screen makes me mildly ill. There are plenty of Hollywood stars, of which the same statement is true. Bing Crosby, for instance. But I find the Crosby personality attractive enough that I don't mind watching it on the screen, rather enjoyed it in fact up until seven or eight years ago when it got exaggerated into something of a caricature. But Cooper and Brando just happen to have personalities I dislike. I realize I'm in a tiny minority where Cooper is concerned. I've found only about two other people who agree with me. That's even less than the people who detest the cartoons of Disney and his imitators. (I except "Fantasia".) I don't know if I can say just why I dislike Cooper. I think it is essentially because I feel he is a phony; a perhaps unconscious collaborator in a hoax on an all-too-willing public. Cooper impresses me as merely the grown-up version of Roy Rogers and Gene Autrey. These heroes of the small fry are admittedly tremendous distortions of anything known in real life. They are completely unrealistic, always honest, always true, kind to women, animals, and children, not interested in women as sexual objects, they are forever being made the victims of underhanded schemes, yet they never seem to catch on. They always fight fair while their opponents pitch low blows, shatter chairs over their heads and try to roll them over cliffs. Yet Rogers or Autrey always emerge triumphant even when facing odds of four or five to one. The mental outlook ~~ix~~ reminds me a little of a boy I knew when I was in High School. A very clean-cut type, and with the sort of handsomeness which Hollywood picked in its leading men in the 30's, this boy, within his engaging exterior had the mentality of a high-grade moron. His interests were juvenile, he learned slowly from experience if at all, and he had tremendous faith in all the tired moralistic cliches of our time. He was a cowboy hero brought to life. Gary Cooper impresses me as being only a slightly sugar-coated version of the same thing....altered just enough for adults to swallow. Cooper on the screen is allowed casual conversation with the heroine on the screen which is not always solely for the purpose of divulging the villains plans. Sometimes he is allowed an embarrassed



kiss. Sometimes he is given a rather mousy wife, but usually only if there is a highly sexed woman in the picture against whom Cooper must be protected. He is allowed to learn from experience, although still somewhat slower than the average person and the villains consistently outwit him. The movie viewer is left to conclude that his triumphal emergence is due to one of two laws; "The Lord takes care of fools and drunkards." or "His strength was as the strength of ten because his heart was pure." Cooper can be safely taken to the hearts of sentimental old ladies and their younger counterparts since he can be trusted to exemplify at all times all the virtues women associate with masculinity with none but the tiniest of what they consider to be the faults which go hand in hand with the virtues. Cooper represents the modern Sir Galahad on a horse, only wearing a stetson this time. Now, as then, the figure was only half a man and to make the figure believable this creature must be endowed with only half a mentality. My objection to Cooper is that I feel that, unlike other actors called upon to play this role on occasions, he actually believes it himself and is deluding himself into believing he is that sort even though it is obvious no person of normal intelligence could live up to this form (or perhaps I should say down to it) in real life. I have no objections to such actors as Randolph Scott and John Wayne who frequently play similar roles for in those cases, especially the former, you feel they are real mean. Or at least I do. You get the idea that when the camera isn't watching they are apt to break into a string of profanity calculated to paralyze your Aunt Minnie for a week, that they like women and are fully appreciative of feminine charms even though they mayn't be as respectful to them as Cooper, Rogers, Autrey, and company; that they probably get drunk on Saturday nights, unlike Cooper who does so only if he's been drummed out of a military academy or deserted by the underserving female to whom he's engaged. They look as if they were in the habit of going weeks without a bath when portraying old West characters who found water not the most available of commodities whereas Cooper invariably looks as if he'd stepped from a shower at all times unless he's in the midst of a sandstorm or portraying the tenth day of being lost in a desert. I'd say Cooper has become some sort of symbol to the American public, and just as I can't share this mass longing for a spiritual symbol to worship, so my particular form of peculiarity makes it impossible for me to observe this particular symbol without revulsion. I have somewhat similar feelings about another different type of symbol, Spencer Tracy, though here I must admit Tracy is a fine actor and has managed to keep from becoming nearly so badly type-cast as Cooper and manages to make some pretty fair pictures when he can break loose from the stereotyped brilliant and gentle but still virile Father symbol which the public has hung on him.

LARK--The public will take a lot but I'm sure the recording industry would shudder at the thought of trying to sell a shellac LP. Have you any idea of the tremendous amount of scratch potential that is added by the slower speed and smaller grooves. The only way found around this (as I've read in I don't know how many articles in trade papers and elsewhere) was the scratchless (or nearly so) vinyl. Without the invention of vinyl or some other substance providing similar results we'd still have 78's. Actually, I'm afraid you can't simplify the reasons behind LP development. Too many factors enter in. Both LP's and 45's were the results of laboratory experiments for a more satisfactory recording medium. One of the biggest spurs back of this was the discovery of the much finer recording medium of vinyl. However, vinyl was so expensive that the various attempts at converting it to 78's (it was used in four different ways that I know of) all proved impractical. It simply



wasn't economically feasible to sell the man on the street a piece of vinylite measuring ten or twelve inches across and containing only two selections. The problem was solved in two ways. Columbia quadrupled the amount of music and charged more. Victor cut the piece down to seven inches (and that large hole in the center was a valuable saving you never hear mentioned) and crowded the music into a smaller section. Admittedly part of it was pure merchandising. Both systems were kept under wraps for years during boom business times and brought out when record business sagged. Undoubtedly the immediate reason was to stimulate record sales with a new and obviously better type of record (non-breakable, scratchless, and to start with cheaper). I doubt if the record manufacturers seriously counted on the business to be gained by replacing old records with the new speeds. Certainly it wasn't mentioned frequently, if at all, in the trade papers at the time. I should say it probably proved a completely unexpected bonus. After all, it had been close to fifty years since the last such change in the record industry and it is not something too likely to be foreseen, although it appears obvious when one looks with hindsight. It will undoubtedly be the dominant factor in industry thinking if they switch to binaural recordings now or in the future. But, after all, in what other industry could a comparable situation arise. Records are more similar to books than anything else and old books do not become outmoded by new printing methods. On the contrary, they become more valuable. Most other things tend to be used till they are outmoded and traded for a newer model. The only item with a similarly high replacement value through change of which I can think is the automobile. And perhaps women's clothes, also. On the other hand one can't completely disregard the claim that record company's were striving to increase the quality of reproduced music. Otherwise why did they make their LP's high-fidelity from the start even when machines were not available to reproduce what was on the record?////As far as I know, Rosco isn't quitting printing at all, although he is getting married which could cause him to vanish from both fandom and FAPA. But WASTEBASKET was my magazine while EUSIFANSO and VIEWPOINTS are his. I can't help feel- I should end that explanation with some clever and cutting remark but I can't think of any that isn't pretty limp. Anyway, does that explain why WASTEBASKET doesn't continue to appear now that I'm no longer in Eugene even tho at least one fan and the ~~XXXXXX~~ presses on which it was printed remain? ///I'll admit I'm another who prefers LARK to STEF. It lacks that carefully studied air which puts the chill on much of the intended humor in STEF.

MASQUE--I'll have to admit I've wondered on one or two occasions through the years why I never got the copy of this you promised me. Fabulous, I'll have to admit but, like the ANNISHES, just a bit too much. After about the first thirty pages it becomes impossible to properly appreciate any fanzine no matter how excellent the material. I found Boggs piece most interesting among a number of items, all of which would have drawn comment in a smaller issue.

PROMETHEUS--Beautifully produced, but the material didn't deserve it tho the Boggs piece was a fine exposition of a point he's made in less detailed form many times before. Maybe you're a jazz lover but I'd judge just the opposite from this issue.

REVOLT IN DEVELOPMENT--Personally, after five minutes of "Bwana Devil" I found myself with a higher than ever opinion of 2-D pictures. Too bad Oboler chose the only picture on his schedule to date which was not a stfilm to introduce the 3-D process. I suppose he wanted to play safe and not be radical with his



subject matter as well as photography. But last I heard "Bwana Devil" was scheduled to gross nine million dollars before it was through, or already had, one of the two. Since there are only about thirty pictures in Hollywood's history which have topped five million and I think only about five which go above ten million, think what this would have done for stfilms. We might even have eventually gotten a good one. As it is, "B'wana Devil" looks as a good bet to go down in cinema history along with "The Great Train Robbery", "Birth of a Nation", ~~King Kong~~ and "The Jazz Singer" as one of the great pioneering films. I'll probably see some of the other 3-D films as they appear since the second and third ones, in a review I read today are said to be better technically and eventually they're bound to start filming good stories. However, I suppose I should have foreseen my indifference to 3-D. After all, I'm the guy who thinks practically all television entertainment and absolutely all television reception stinks and since I'd rather read a good book than attend a good movie I suppose I'm not quite so much the fan of novelties as I'd thot. One thing I haven't heard anyone else mention was the way the colored lenses distorted the color values of the film. To me, the great advantage of color film, since it is far too gaudy in most cases to be natural, is the entranting play of colors good cameramen (and Hollywood has many of them) get. But watching this film was like watching real life through an amber glass. Surely my eyesight isn't so much better than other peoples that I'm the only one who noticed.

THE ROAD TO FAME--I fully believe D.R.Smith is the most skillful verbalist ever to write for the fan press and wonder why he has never succumbed to the attraction to write for the pros, even though his pro-work probably wouldn't be as delightful as his fan satires. However, this was a bit too old and dated and before my time for me to wade through. Despite my recent voluminous reading of old mags too many characters were either completely unknown or only dimly remembered by me.

SKY HOOK--By now you should know that premags subscription departments exist solely for one purpose; To supply APA members with subjects for articles./// For your information, Redd, someone has already moved ahead of Robert Abernathy in the alphabetical listing of authors. His name is Abel, Franklin Abel I believe and he wrote a story called "Freudian Slip" appearing in GALAXY sometime in late '51 or early '52. Of course there is still plenty of room for all you Abbott's and Aaren's./// Personally, I'd much rather read a good fantasy called "Abandoned in a Harem". Comes earlier in the alphabet, too. But I'm afraid if it was written it would be printed by someone like Palmer or Hamling and then I wouldn't enjoy reading it./// As for the Marilyn Monroe doctrine, you can have Monroe, I'd prefer Marilyn Maxwell. Hmm, four more? Well, Debbie Reynolds, Marlene Dietrich, and, uh.....no particular choice after that. Any two other convenient ones will do provided they don't include Lassie.....or Boris Karloff./// How could S&S have refloated UNKNOWN on the 'crest of the sf wave' when, to all appearances, we're a long way from reaching it yet. There've been a couple of mild troughs since the boom started in 1949 but the sf field is certainly booming more right now than at any other time since this started and with more new magazines constantly appearing the end is not in sight. Comparing the type fantasy MOF ~~edit~~ uses compared with their sf I can see why they are stressing the latter. Actually, I don't care much for the average fantasy or the average fantasy magazine. But I feel ~~UNKNOWN~~ fantasy of the UNKNOWN type makes a particular appeal to the sort of logical mind which enjoys sf and that at least one out of every four or five sf readers, at a minimum, should enjoy that type fantasy. Even this small a number should be able to support two or three UNKish fantasy magazines with the sf total now topping 20. "We of 1952 demand



....". Who is 'we', Redd? Are you speaking for the entire two billion inhabitants of this planet? The 170,000,000 people in this country? Some smaller group? Or just Redd Boggs and a few close friends? I assure you you're not speaking for me. Not when you use such broad and undefined terms, anyway. I'm willing to grant the essential desirability of everything you mention and the general need to try to retain them in some acceptable form. However, I feel we have given up far more in the way of freedom than we've gained and I for one would gladly give up the advances to regain the freedom. Incidentally, I would tend to suffer through the absence of them too. But I feel that freedom is too precious a thing to be bartered away for things like a full stomach and a few extra pennies on payday. And I'm conceited enough to feel I have sufficient ability and intelligence to survive and make my way without the artificial crutches of our present society. I realize there are others who are not....that is why they were constructed in the first place; in fact our whole society today seems to place a premium on mediocrity and penalize any deviations from that pattern. I realize ~~excessive~~ suffering would result but again I think freedom is more important. Like most people I learned at an early age that it is impossible to assume the burdens of everyone else and refuse to be happy yourself until no one else is sick, in pain, or hungry. If I had not made that adjustment, added that dimension of selfish callousness, I would be a social worker, perhaps in the Salvation Army. As it is, I have sufficient selfishness that I would prefer to live in a world where the able person is given opportunity to develop himself and even live in a larger house than the person without his natural abilities even though this makes the unable person understandably unhappy. Or to put it in simpler terms (altho this really is oversimplifying it since money is one of the lesser things involved) I never expect to ~~make~~ become a millionaire or even amass a sizable amount of money. However, I want the way left open so there is always the possibility of becoming a millionaire should I become lucky or have a brainstorm. When this country was younger the vast majority felt this way and I feel the more recent trend of assuring pensions and punishing the wealthy for being wealthy is a degradation of the soul of a once great people. The grudging of another person his good fortune is one of the pettiest emotions known and that, essentially, is what our present tax policies are. Certainly they have only the slightest effect on our national treasury although most economists agree they do inhibit our industrial progress.

SPACEWARP--Ah, if 'twere only the original bearer of that name. Good, but pale compared to Goofia, etc.

STEFANTASY--Are you sure D.H.Moore isn't the product of some middle-aged spinster novelist's imagination. He sounds far too good to be true. You mean people who live this sort of life actually exist? Well, I never actually believed in the irrepressibly pungent grandma or grandpa, as always depicted in movies and radio, either till I started corresponding with soon-to-be-great-grandmother Rory Faulkner. Anyway, I like his general outlook, even if his super-patriotism is a bit out of line with the rest.

TEILCHEN--What can I say except that one of my correspondents is defending Harlan Ellison as one of the nicest fans he knows, while another is defending Ken Beale ditto (completely unbeknownst to each other) and growling about the way he was treated at the CHICON. Since I've never met either party, and had next to no contact with them I'm hardly in a position to say. Must say your recital of events gives Beale the best of it, tho, so I think I'll enclose it ~~xy~~ in my next letter to the Ellison-defender.



TIME OUT OF MINE--Fiction?

UNASKED OPINION--Enjoyed your letter and some of the compliments implied, therein, but I have not changed my views as you evidently assume. Are you trying to say those old ladies in Salem actually were witches? And if the Name McCarthy automatically brings up the words 'witch-hunt' has McCarthey anyone but McCarthey to blame for it? Incidentally, you seem to fail to realize McCartheyism is not confined to McCarthey. And while most of McCarthey's targets have been big enough fish not to be seriously damaged in the earning of a living by his charges there are a number of known cases where this has happened by the number of small-fry McCarthey imitators who have sprung up in his wake and who are even more careless and vicious in there charges than McCarthey. And how many times do I have to repeat this to everyone with whom I argue on the subject. In this ~~xxxxxx~~ country a person is innocent until proven guilty. The burden of proof rest with the accuser. It is frequently impossible for the innocent person to prove his innocence and it is morally indefensible that the innocent should wrongly suffer. Thus all people remain innocent until proven guilty. It is perhaps the basic cornerstone of all our freedoms and our judicial system. So, until it can be proven in a court of law the accused remains innocent. So it is very simple to answer your question about which innocents have suffered at McCarthey's hands. The answer is anyone who has suffered from McCarthey's attacks since McCarthey has yet to make one of his charges stick although Owen Lattimore is under indictment. As for the general conclusions of your ~~xxxxxx~~ article, no doubt it is very naive of me but I still hold to my childhood convictions that a principle is worth defending through thin as through thick. Lincoln said "When You make a bad bargain, hug it all the tighter." and I can't see this process of defending our freedoms by abandoning them at the slightest provocation if there is someone we dislike who can be made to suffer in no other way.

VIEWPOINTS--The first article on religion was bad enough but this second restatement.....impresses me as about the biggest waste of paper in this mailing. I agree with what Gerry says but why at such length? And so ponderously? I know Gerry knows smaller words. He wouldn't dream of committing such crimes with prose in his fiction. Why don't you print one of his stories? ~~There~~ They're much better. For that matter, why an article on religion at all, unless he has something more to say than this? Who set the type? Ed? I'd be willing to bet you didn't.

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FAMOUS QUOTATIONS #2, "Light a match to see if there's any gas in there!" ANON  
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\* ME AND MUSIC \*

Readers of the last mailing comments by yours truly may have found an unusually heavy flavoring of music comments therein, especially considering that I had probably never mentioned the subject in FAPA before. This is not a new avocation, however. In fact my FAPA membership stems directly from it. I joined FAPA because I was active in fandom. My fan activity grew from an encounter with Shelby Vick and his wire-recorded fanzine, which in turn stemmed from my fascination at the time with wire-recording. I originally bought my wire recorder as an adjunct to my record collection.

I started collecting records in earnest in ~~xxxxx~~ late 1945 and by the time LP's were introduced in 1948 I had about 600 78's, something of a storage ~~problem~~



problem. Of these 600 about half were popular records, about 45% jazz and the rest classical, miscellaneous and etc. I even had a few cowboy records. 78's were not the ideal medium for appreciating classical music and I had confined myself to a few favored pieces such as Bach's "Tocatta and Fugue in D-Minor" in the form.

In mid-1946 I had been introduced to jazz by the discovery of two artists, Mildred Bailey and Art Tatum. They are still both great favorites of mine of whom I have tremendous collections. I am more in earnest about my collection of the late great Bailey than any other and plan eventually to try to obtain every single commercial record she ever made plus air checks of her radio programs and soundtracks of any movies she may have appeared in. An ambitious and expensive project but one that is well within the realm of possibility since it has been accomplished with other people.

With this introduction to jazz I gradually came to appreciate more and more artists in the field with a particular interest in the modernist movement then flowering. Stan Kenton was a particular hero of mine at the time. I still enjoy the better things done by such modernists as Kenton, Herman, and the bop boys but I find it an unrelaxing type of music which becomes wearing after a short time. Instead my jazz interests have retrogressed, chronologically ~~and~~ at least and perhaps musically. My great interest now centers on the swing era, the period of the great orchestras and the great combos. I'm also developing a great fondness for music of the pre-swing era, chiefly the early 30's when many of the great names of the future were still nearly unknown. The record business was at the depths, jazz' first popularity had been swept away by the depression and about the only way the jazzman had of making a living was to join Paul Whiteman's band. But somehow the jazz records continued to be made during this period and since there really was no such thing as a commercial jazz record at the time the musicians were able to play pretty much to please themselves. The result is some of the most relaxed improvising and noodling around ever put between grooves.

I also buy a certain percentage of pre-1930 recordings but these are chiefly confined to Armstrong and Ellington at present.

My habits in record buying have always been a little peculiar. In the sf magazine collecting field I'd be referred to as a completist, I suppose, but within limits. Collecting every jazz record ever made would be considerably more difficult and expensive than every sf or fantasy magazine ever published. However, I suppose I'm like the person who has every issue of ASF and UNKNOWN and perhaps one or two other magazines but only an occasional favorite of any other title.

I have a number of favorites in the jazz field. There are many I enjoy listening to but of these only a few are such consistently fine artists that you can depend on anything they've recorded at any period to be worthwhile. These artists who make perhaps one poor record out of twenty are the ones who become my favorites and whom I go completist on. I collect artists, not performances, for the most part. Even the most sparkling record can become dull if one listens to it too often. But if you have a minimum of 30 or 40 records by an artist, he is far less likely to tire you with any one. Besides I like mood programming. I like to decide I'm in a mood for \_\_\_\_\_ today, and stick on two or three hours of that individual. It is very frustrating to fall under the spell of a record only to awaken rudely at the end to the realization it is all you have by that artist and you have your choice of playing it over again or switching to something else.



So I buy more and more records by my particular favorites and more or less ignore the rest. Among those whom I am collecting in entirety, (eventually I hope) are Mildred Bailey, Art Tatum, Benny Goodman, Duke Ellington, Louis Armstrong, Jack Teagarden, Red Norvo, Erroll Garner, Earl Hines, and Teddy Wilson. In other cases my completism is limited. I collect Lionel Hampton, but only the records he made on Victor prior to the first record ban. I am a near-completist on ~~Billie Holiday~~ Billie Holiday, but draw the line somewhere in the last five years. I have no intention of ever buying the stuff she is recording now. Others which may eventually be added to the list but are omitted at present due to the paucity of their recordings on LP are Lee Wiley, Charlie Barnet, and Wingy Manone. Possibly some of the better of the swing era bands, besides Goodman's, may be added eventually also. At present I am concentrating on LP and EP. Once I get everything available on those two media, I buy 45 singles and 78's by the artist. So far only Bailey and Tatum are completed this far. After that I shall be forced to buy the old unavilable singles from second-hand houses by mail at high prices. However, as long as the record labels are digging out so many collectors items and repressing them on LP I'm in no hurry to start that portion of it.

As can be judged so far I don't have a complete collection of any one artist. (I collect not only items under their own names but those on which they appeared where someone else received label credit). I've come closest with Art Tatum. Tatum hasn't done a tremendous amount of recording. I'd estimate he has made perhaps 100 piano solo recordings and perhaps another 25 on which he was leading a combo, accompanying someone, or was a sideman. Of these I am missing maybe 20. And, incidentally, my Tatum collection is one of the least interesting ones to me now. As every true collector knows a great deal more of the enjoyment is in the pursuit than in the capture. A complete collection isn't half so fascinating as a two-thirds complete one and the anticipation of acquiring the missing items.

Through the years I've read a great deal on the subject of jazz, listened to a lot of it, talked to some of the men who make the music and others who put it on record. I've acquired a lot of knowledge by osmosis on the subject and while I wouldn't set myself up as an expert on any facet of jazz I do feel I know as much or more on the subject as the average non-musician who appreciates jazz and considerably more than the average layman.

On classical musical it is quite another matter. In jazz I know what I like and what I dislike. I also know what is considered good and what bad (which doesn't always agree with my tastes). I also can discourse on who influenced who, when and where each school of jazz started and how it affected the mainstream, etc. indefinitely. In other words I feel I know the subject of jazz about as well as I know the subject of science-fiction. But when it comes to classical music I don't always know what I like. I learned long ago that, unlike jazz, classical music does nothing to me on the first hearing. It isn't until the third or fourth hearing that I really become addicted to it. And, although I've learned a lot in the last couple of years I still am vastly ignorant as to what is good and why it is considered so, in the classical field. It's history I know only in the vagues possible manner. However, this I do know, I like classical music. I mentioned above liking to program my records for moods. The best mood music in the world is classical music. Most classical music features selections long enough to satisfy one without looking for a lot more of the same. And most such music does a far more thorough job of stirring the emotion centers than the more primitive types of popular and jazz music. But my attempts to buy classical



78's never met with much success. They were more expensive and less attractive on first playing. And the longer works were broken into bits and pieces. With the advent of LP this changed for the better, but not much.

I still ran into the difficulty of not appreciating the music on first hearing properly. A booth is not the best place to listen to music, especially classical music. When I was attracted by something it would prove to be the item of which I tired most rapidly. Whereas the ones I appreciated most in the long run were those which I didn't care for at first. Still I began to get a few classical LP's, one here another there. (In 1950 I sent off a dollar for one of the sample CONCERT HALL records. It was a couple of obscure pieces by Vivaldi. Usually I am properly appreciative of a record by the third or fourth hearing but in this case I must have played the record ten or a dozen times over a period of a couple of years before it began to make musical sense to me. Now it is one of my two favorite classical records and I doubt if I'll ever tire of it.) Recognizing this phenomenon that I liked most classical music but not ~~xxx~~ until after I'd heard it a while and deviled by my inability to decide from a first hearing what to buy (and for a variety of reasons relatively ignorant where classical music was concerned with little chance to hear it except on records) I was stumped for a while. But a little over a year ago, recognizing my increasing fondness for the dozen or so classical LP's in my collection, I reached into my mental grab-bag and designed myself a system to overcome these difficulties. I've always had a fascination for systems and every since I can remember I have concocted endlessly complex systems by which I live. After a few years if I tire of one of the ones I am currently using I discard it and enjoy the pleasures of not following the complicated method for a while. But inevitably I think up another to take its place. At any given time I am making use of any place ~~xxxxxxx~~ from three to ten of these in my various activities. These are definitely not systems which increase efficiency (tho once in a while they may temporarily produce that effect as a side result). On the contrary they are designed to produce intellectual amusement for me and to introduce a factor of carefully controlled chance into practically everything I do. I despise dull~~xx~~ and efficient systems which always produce the same results. On the other hand, leaving things purely to chance results in my bogging down in a rut of doing the same thing over and over. Thus my addiction to these hopelessly complex systems which no one but myself ever understands.

Usually any attempt to explain one of these systems to someone else results in that person's hopeless confusion. However, I find this one both considerably simpler than most of my systems and a bit amusing, and decided that it just possibly might interest the FAPA-type mentality to learn how I go about buying my classical records, the large element of chance involved and the quite genuine results in music education and appreciation which I am gaining with it.

The system is based on two things. My recognition that I like practically all classical music (purists will please excuse the use of the word classical throughout when I am actually referring to serious music -- it is more easily understood and simpler to write) except that involving vocals. (As far as I'm concerned there is only one opera, "Carmen" which I've adored since the age of 13. The rest give me a slow but steady pain.) The second fact was that I already had the germ of a collection and that the composers I knew I liked were almost all represented. Obviously it was desirable that I gradually experiment with new composers, in the meantime playing safe by concentrating on the ones I liked. I've always liked the alphabet very much. In fact I have something of a fixation toward it. Like all my other systems this was to feature it strongly. Since I was unable to tell just what I liked on first hearing it became completely unnecessary to listen to the records in advance.



I could, and in fact do, order most of my classical records by mail in order to get what I want. This had an added advantage since I could patronize certain mail order houses though I've not actually gotten around to doing so, yet. My still untrained ear cannot distinguish between a fair performance and a good one, nor between a good performance and a fine one. So it really didn't matter too much if I bought some lemons at first. It was all part of my musical education and I felt sure (from similar experience in other fields) that I would wind up eventually quite well-informed on the subject, and with fairly good taste. So, with much figuring to ~~xxx~~ make sure I ~~would~~ would get the maximum of what I desired from the system I finally evolved it as it now stands.

As it now stands I allow myself to buy around two classical records, and around four jazz records, on the average, each month. (This applies only to LP's. EP's are not credited to that portion of the budget.) The jazz records of course are usually of those artists I collect. However, when I get ready to buy a classical record (actually I do it long before I buy, in order to be prepared) I pull out my listing of all LP records and turn to the classical second. These, like my system, are arranged alphabetically by composers.

Let's say the last record I bought was by Ravel. Very well, knowing which composers I am buying I pass on to the next one alphabetically. This involves bypassing some rather well-known names such as Rimsky-Korsakoff who are not yet in the collection, though I know they are worthy. However, if I set out to buy everything I would like to have or that is worth having I'd bankrupt myself in no time. In order to keep happy within my budget I stick strictly to my system (one of the prime reasons I ~~invented~~ invent these complicated methods. So we'll bypass Rimsky-Korsakoff, Schubert, the Schumanns, etc. because the system says to and ~~xxx~~ our next stop is Stravinsky. Having decided the next record is to be Stravinsky I check the last couple of classical reviews out of the dozen or so ~~I~~ read to see if there is any new work by Stravinsky which is particularly recommended. Usually there isn't. If there is I abandon my system here and set out to get it. If not I revert to the alphabet again. Recollecting my last Stravinsky record which contained two pieces by Stravinsky and one by Bloch (not Robert) I take great pains to choose the title which was not the one which caused me to buy the record, and select the next alphabetical title immediately following it, provided I don't already own that. Musically, I'd probably get just as good results taking an artist from first to last in alphabetical order but this makes a dull ~~xxx~~ system and in some cases I'd be buying the same type of work by an artist for the next five years before I worked out of the Concerto section of the alphabet. Having selected the title I'm to buy I then look to see how many recordings of it are available. If there is only one that simplifies matters. If not, and all other things being equal, I choose the cheapest record, Remington's having preference over Royale since they are of so much better quality, ditto Entre and Bluebird. If it is not available on any of the cheap labels (and I seldom pick one that is) then I take it on the slightly cheaper Columbia label or almost any label in preference to London. However, price doesn't too often enter into it. If I have to choose between a recording backed up by something else by the same composer or by another person, I'll ~~xxx~~ pick the one which is all by the same artist, Stravinsky in this case. (Actually in the case I'm speaking of, the next alphabetical selection is "Petrouchka", which of course I'll soon be buying, and it takes up both sides of a 12" LP.) ~~I~~ My reason for preferring all one composer on a record is mood programming again. However, if I must choose backing by another composer already in my collection and one who is not, I



choose the one who is not. This gives me a chance to experiment with new composers and find if I like them. This is about the only way they can sneak into the collection, and if I do like them (I usually do) they too take their alphabetical turn next time around. Now I know what I want to buy. That doesn't necessarily mean I'll buy it. Next step is to go to the local record store. "Do you have the such and such label recording of "Petrouchka"?" I ask? The answer is yes about once in five times. My next question is, "Do you have it on any label?" Here the answer is always 100% no. Whereupon refusing to take their word I go look at their racks. About another once out of five times I find (inevitably if I find any version at all) not only the exact version I was searching for but also a couple of others. Amongst much red-faced explanation by the record clerks I secure my recording and toddle home. If the record story hasn't the selection I'm looking for I sometimes will buy an EP record by the same composer but I allow myself to do this less than half the time (I feel LP's on the whole are more satisfying) and the formula on that is complicated enough I shan't include it here.

As has been seen, my chances of getting my record are less than 50%. If I succeeded the whole process starts over. If I failed, then I go home and order four or five records by mail including the particular selection on the particular label I wish.

I mystify record store proprietor since I never care to hear records in advance. I buy only jazz and classical records now; if jazz I know that I automatically buy everything by that ~~xx~~ artist; if classical I am buying blind and am not a fit judge on the first hearing. In either case I know what I want before I hear it.

This system might be thought to load me down with an extraordinarily large amount of junk but it is surprising how few I've gotten which I didn't like extremely well. I can only think of about three cases. One was the Royale recording of "L'Arlesienne Suites" which I described in the last mailing. This inevitably will be replaced by a better record someday. Another was Vivaldi's "Beatus Vir" which I bought because of unanimous raves by the reviewers only to discover it is something of an oratorio featuring vocals throughout. And much as I like Vivaldi I don't like his music with vocals added. The third was a collection of short pieces by Poulenc. I came close to marking Poulenc off my list to collect (only others who didn't go on the permanent list were Gershwin and Grofe, a couple whom I bought in quantity in my early days of buying what I liked on first hearing) except that shortly before I shipped that record home (on the road this way I can keep any given record with me only a few months due to space limitations) I found it beginning to run through my head after perhaps five or six hearings. So Poulenc remains tentatively on the list.

But for the most part I couldn't be happier over the results. I'm constantly learning more and more about music, it's history, and some of the instruments which are not common in the jazz field and which I thus wasn't very familiar with. (I find myself developing a predilection for the harp, for instance.) I'm already developing a large number of favorites in the field. My particular favorites are Bizet, Vivaldi, and Stravinsky though I've pulled items on which I'm lukewarm on all three. (I'm just about to run out of recorded selections by Bizet....). Heading the second string favorites (I've yet to buy anything by him which didn't satisfy me wholeheartedly) is Ravel, with Debussy, Mozart, and Bach. Delius may make that list also, altho there is so little available by him on LP (for some unfathomable reason as he's quite well known and fairly popular) that it's hard to



tell for sure. Through chance Beethoven is not yet a part of the collection, although I've always liked his well-known "Moonlight Sonata". There are a number of other composers in the collection towards whom I'm favorably disposed but these are the ones over whom I'm enthusiastic.

I am in no great rush on this. With this grab-bag system I'll admittedly have to replace some of these selections. But there are surprisingly few really bad performances on classical LP's. And barring the advent of binaural or some similarly advanced process making LP's obsolete I feel that these recordings ~~xxxxxxxxxx~~ and the music on them will last me the rest of my life. This is not the sort of music ~~one~~ tires of.

Unlike my jazz collection, which I'm building up more rapidly due to the necessity of buying while they're available, the classical performances for the most part will always be available. You have to get the particular record you want in jazz, no other performance is quite like it. This is not true to the same extent in classical music and as far as I'm concerned to date, is not true at all. And classical music is not subject to the fluctuations in taste of jazz. These recordings, in one version or another, will always be available. I'm not yet sufficiently adept to tell the difference between a Gieseeking or Badura-Skoda performance and that of their rivals. Some of the lesser known works will move in and out of the available catalog, of course, but ~~for~~ the classical catalogue is far too big for me to worry over that.

To hedge against some of these I did join the Concert Hall society recently. They claim to specialize in obscure and unavailable works, although that is a much more difficult thing to do today than seven years ago. My experience has been that they do an excellent job, both of performance, and recording, so I figure to buy some of the lesser known works they record and thus delay buying the more popular works on the general market which will be available longer. This will of course introduce a number of new composers into my collection, but that's all to the good. However, I'm sticking as close to my old reliables as their repertoire allows.

At any rate my system to date is living up to my highest expectations for it. I'm aware it would drive any normal person batty but for me it is eminently satisfactory. And I'd be willing to bet I have the most unique system for selecting records of anyone in FAQA. I'll admit to a bit of surprise myself that it's worked so well.

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FAMOUS QUOTATIONS #3, "Street ~~and~~(you will pardon the expression) Smith.....

WAW, 1951

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"IF YOU'RE SO SMART, WHY AIN'T YOU RICH?"

being an open letter to Redd Boggs

" 'Campbell killed forever the validity of citing "authority"!? I seem to have overlooked Campbell's epoch-making coup de grace. How does this contribution compare with Galileo's work in discrediting Aristotle's theory of natural motion? More important in the context of your remarks, how does the lack of validity of citing authority in a scientific matter connect with the alleged lack of



validity of doing so in matters of art?"

Redd Boggs, ~~XXXXXX~~

SKY HOOK, Wtr. 1952-3

Dear Redd,

The title with which I'm heading this letter was used as the title of a story in ASTOUNDING, circa around 1939, I believe. It remains one of those unanswerable questions along with "Haven~~xxx~~ you stopped beating your wife?" There is such an air of skepticism in the words that it is useless to even attempt an answer. One can point out that there are such things as opportunity and luck, which also play a part in obtaining a fortune; that other things are equally important, or even moreso, than wealth; that some people prove their intelligence by actually preferring not to be rich when they could be; and that the ability to acquire money is actually the result of a trait completely unrelated to intelligence. All of these are to a considerable extent true, and all would meet only a sneer as pitiful excuses if used in reply to the above question.

And even if you are rich you aren't free from that question. Substitute for the word rich, 'famous', 'powerful', 'successful', etc. and you will see that practically all men are subject to such a thoughtless and casual writing-off of their talents by the irreverent observer. Perhaps in all the world today only General Eisenhower and Georgi Malenkov are not subject to such a question....and maybe not even they are exempt.

It seems obvious to me that such a question is basically unfair. Are all non-rich men automatically failures at life. Even if a man is a failure does that mean his brain can be assumed to be totally incapable of every producing a worthwhile thought or ever functioning more efficiently than that of the richer, more powerful, and perhaps even in general smarter man? With the exception of those who believe divine guidance towards the right invariably flows from the hands of certain heads of religions such as the Pope, I think any fair assessment would have to conclude the test of the worth of a man's words must lie in their context, not in the contents of his pocketbook, his position in life, or ancestors. How many of the worlds great thinkers lived and died in poverty, frequently in ridicule, and yet managed to enrich humanity's heritage forever?

I have always had an instinctive feeling toward this but it didn't crystallise until 1946 when I was in the Navy. I had a fairly close friend who was a great admirer of Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal. As readers of my FAPazines have doubtless observed~~x~~ these are sympathies I do not wholly share.

As will happen with friends who disagree, we fell into a discussion and the discussion led to an only mildly heated argument. My friend in defending these policies used one of the better arguments New Deal supporters have traditionally put forward. I countered by pointing out a fallacy in the basic New Deal philosophy of economics (I might add, this was not original with me...I'd cribbed it from an article I'd read a few years earlier..... It is "The Plate Glass Window Fallacy" for any of you familiar with it.) It is a beautifully simple exposition and beautifully unanswerable. Or at least my friend failed to find any answer to it. However, he had an answer for me. "If that is true" said he "and so obvious then why didn't all thos



famous and smart men~~x~~ Roosevelt had around him see it?".....Or in other words, "If You're so smart, why ain't you rich?". I didn't have an answer then and I don't have now. What could I say? That I was right, and they were wrong? Even admitting that I'd gotten my fallacy elsewhere, that would have been tantamount to declaring myself more intelligent than a roomful of college professors, a most undiplomatic, unengaging, and unconvincing method to use in any argument. Should I have said that history is full of brilliant and well-educated men who failed to see the truth until some pioneer came along and showed them how simple it was? Again it's true I'd provoke the same response. "You mean you're the pioneer. If you're so smart, why ain't you rich?" Or should I point out that even well-educated people tend to believe what they want to believe? Perhaps the best of the lot, but still weak, very weak. Actually, I couldn't answer because I didn't know the answer. It did seem obvious and it seemed impossible no one had ever pointed it out to them. Actually that is the basis of all disagreement. What seems so simple and obvious to us is still something our opponents refuse to accept. Why do they do it? Or, for that matter, why do they fail to agree with us? I couldn't say, but I do know the correct answer isn't "If you're so smart, why ain't you rich?" .

I reached the conclusion that the only fair way to evaluate a man's thinking and arguments is by examining them, not comparing them with currently accepted opinion. You can quote the experts, but what if your opponent also quotes experts. You see the experts (frequently called authorities) have a distressing habit of disagreeing.

So I began gradually to discount all 'authorities' except those who deal with things that can be measured. After all, if you are satisfied of a man's truthfulness and carefulness and he says 'I examined so-and-so and found thus-and-so to be true.' then I believe he can be accepted as an authority, but only to the extent of his observations, not his interpretations because, no matter how skilled and experienced he is I would say history shows his chances of making the right interpretation are well below 50%. In our present-day world an authority has tended to become any man with a degree after his name since there is a craze for authorities. Any one who has watched the way many of our colleges operate can be forgiven, however, for putting less than blind faith in these 'authorities'.

When Campbell came along in mid-1950 (I'm sure you know the editorial to which I refer, Redd, despite your assumed ignorance) and in a beautifully written exposition proceeded to point out exactly why Alfred Einstein's words carry no more meaning than John Smith's except when he can prove what he says, it crystallised much that I had felt for a long time. It seemed to me so flawlessly reasoned that I still fail to see how anyone can seriously question his chain of logic. As Campbell pointed out, in science you must have the facts to prove your statements to have any authority. In the world of ideas you cannot prove them three-dimensionally. All you can do here is to set up a chain of ideas.....'If this is true, then it follows that this must be true.' And so on. Here it is the duty of each individual to follow the argument closely and if he can see a flaw in the chain of reasoning and ~~xxx~~ if he does to pounce and say, 'Ah, but that doesn't necessarily follow. Perhaps this could result instead.' Usually there are a number of such openings for valid disagreement.....disagreement not with 'authority' but with the way the ideas are expressed and the reasoning back of them. I happen to think the chain of reasoning back of this particular Campbell editorial happens to be one in which no such weakness exists. Thus I find it completely convincing and regard it as 'proven'.....until someone comes along who can disprove it or at least through serious doubt upon its validity



someplace along the way.

And to me it seemed so obvious as to be not worth mentioning that if this were true of the exact field of science it is far more so of the unmeasurable essence we term 'art'. No one has yet been able to successfully define or describe art in other than subjective terms. It is primarily a matter of emotion or that unmeasurable portion of the intelligence we call the aesthetic sense. All any art form can do is to react on the individual. If the individual appreciates it it is good; if not, it is bad....as far as he is concerned. We have critics of the arts, but they are not true authorities. There is no real source of authority since no man's opinion, in this case, can be better than that of any other. The most he can say is that more people agree with him on the matter than his opponent. The critic exists for several purposes; to help guide formative opinion by describing what is generally thought to be good and why; to give, not just his reactions, but the reason for his reactions to any new work; and most ~~all~~ important of all, he is there to register his reactions so that people who know from experience that they usually agree with him will be guided whether to purchase or not purchase. If the only proof of a scientific fact is measurement, then surely the only proof of an idea is a flawless chain of logic to support the idea. And the chain cannot validly be examined for source. If it is unassailable it is equally so if propounded by a not-too-bright second grader as if it were advanced by the dean of a giant university. Ideas must be examined in their context alone. And if authorities cannot exist in these fields how much less can they exist in the subjective world of art? The only sort of authority that can actually exist is the authority who is acknowledged as one by both sides of a dispute. If one of the sides refuses to accept the authority (as I refuse to accept the dictionary for reasons given in a recent fan article) then the authority is not an authority but just a worthless argument and the arguer must fall back on the hard mental work of proving his statements logically rather than falling back on "So and so says its true....or if you're so smart, why ain't you rich?"

I would like to make some apologies however. I'll admit my terminology was a bit too all-inclusive in my statement a couple of mailings ago. When I ~~say~~ refer to a sf figure like John Campbell and say he 'forever proved' something I assume that the reader will know, unless I specify otherwise, that I am referring strictly to our own little microcosmos of sf or fandom. I realize that the vast majority of people never have and never will read the article. The fact that it appeared in a small-circulation sf magazine and was written by an editor does not alter the basic logic behind it or make it any less convincing than if it were printed in every college textbook in the country. But something cannot very well have been proven to someone who's never heard of it. Thus that reference referred to sf fandom only. I admit I should have made clearer what I meant, but going into detail on each term used can quadruple an article's length easily. And a fault I have is being overly loquacious when I write. I know this and am trying to do something about it. This, unfortunately, involves frequently accenting unconsciously another fault of mine, that of being overly dogmatic. Thus the sentence should have read, "Campbell killed forever (to those who read and understood it) the validity of citing 'authority' (as far as I'm concerned)." But for brevity's sake I leave out constant references to 'in my opinion' and 'as I see it'. The result tends to sound like Moses on Mount Sinai.

I hope this ~~indefinite~~ has clarified a matter on which I have rather strong feelings. And even tho you ain't rich, Redd, I still respect your logic. Sincerely

Vernon L. McCain