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Published for the 20th Distribution of APA L by Bruce Pelz, who has, as usual, too damn many fanzines to publish. Incunebulous Publication 338, March 4, 1965. Syracuse in '66, Who Cares in '67, and Mercer for TAFF.  
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D I R E C T   C U R R E N T S

Once again I find I had better state my position and drop a subject that is getting out of hand and tedious. This time it is the Randism question. There appear to be three groups on the "Pro-" side: The Randists, the Objectivists, and the Galtists. As far as I can tell, the Randists and the Objectivists are those who, respectively, follow whatever Ayn Rand says, and/or follow the Objectivism Socio-Politico-Economical Philosophy. The third group simply follows, as much as possible, the Galtist Pledge: "I will not live my life for the sake of another, nor expect him to live for mine." I count myself among this third group, and I wish to echo Mr. Gold in pointing out that there are two sides to this pledge, and a Galtist must try to live by both of them. How well he/I may succeed is open to the judgement of others. So much for my opinions on the matter. Those who attack Randism and Objectivism may be answered by others, not by me.

JACK HARNESS: Very good cover. That's one way to make use of a two-year-old, already run off cover that would otherwise be wasted. ++ I have no objections to taking Barney Bernard's money -- I simply can't stand being in the same card game with the Fellow. He is the only one I have ever found who can drive me to the verge of hysteria with his inanities. ++ I'd like to compliment your improvement in card-playing attitude: when you hit a run of losing streaks, you do it with very good grace. It's when you don't win as much as you think you should that you are exasperating.

TED WHITE: You may call it being an "ecclectic" -- I think Scn. calls it "squirreling." Anyway, the collecting of bits and pieces from here and there seems to me to be the only way of obtaining a valid personal philosophy.

TRIMBLES: A couple lovely jobs -- JT's on the Agnos bit, and Bjo's comic strip. Applause.

TOM GILBERT: As a matter of fact, the idea that non-local APA L members have to be members of LASFS can be blamed on Don Fitch. We hadn't set any such requirement when we announced APA L, but the following week Don showed up with out of town contributions, announcing that these were from LASFS Member Richard Mann, LASFS Member Dave Van Arnam, etc. We merely continued the idea thereafter, as Don seemed to think it had been originally set up that way. ++ A N\*E\*A\*T jab at Harness's comments anent Objectivism and Scn. ++ I still have a complete set of APA L distributions! Why eliminate me from the list?

Belief in the validity of "necessary murder" or no, I would not commit suicide under any circumstance I can now think of -- continued and extreme pain might be a circumstance under which I would do so; I don't know. And it would sound a bit silly to state that I wouldn't object to someone's bumping me off if I were in the way of a Larger Good, even tho that's about the attitude I think I have. The problem with your hypothetical instance of "would you commit suicide to save five others?" is



that anyone who answers that he would do so should then be asked if he would commit suicide to save 4,3,2, or 1 others. If he changes to "No" anywhere along the line, he must then defend his change, which is much more difficult to do than to proclaim that, under the first Law of Nature, he won't commit suicide at all. Right?

GAIL THOMPSON: Thanks for the words to "Bye, bye Blackbird." I'll try to get around to doing the Blackbeard parody next week. Trouble is, now the words start going:

"Look at all the gaudy clothes  
There he goes, scaring crows --  
Bye, bye, Jack-Bird! ..."

Oh, well.....

SAM RUSSELL: I haven't tried to convince the SM Public Library about Vance not being Kuttner yet, but maybe I'll have a go at it. Dian and I stopped in there this past week, and did them: 1 favor (donation of a picture of a 19th Century French department store to their Picture File), 1 disservice (pointing out to the reference librarian that the public catalog lacked the cross-reference from Art, Finnish to Art-Finland, and having her write it down to tell the Cataloger), 1 piece of business (a book on Finland's art that Dian checked out), and 1 courtesy (showing that the other books we carried out were UCLA's, without having to be asked.) Another librarian can be quite a pest in a Public Library, and maybe I could do the job on Vance-Kuttner.

FRED WHITLEDGE: Even after the LASFS Meeting of a couple weeks ago, you still don't know enough about Coventry to spout off against it. One of these days I'll match you fantasy-land against your alleged real one. Or make that "-lands."

ED BAKER: Now what's this bit about "judging the references" of the time in which children were condemned for what would today be minor offences? You appear to be working entirely from a 20th Century viewpoint in saying that the punishment for a crime should be on a level with the extent of the crime itself (a point on which I agree with you, by the way). Otherwise, it would occur to you that these "extents" varied with the time, that the punishments must therefore also vary and that no other time can properly pass judgement on the extents of a previous time. From the high and lofty position of the 20th Century, you can well declare that the standards of the 17th Century were "wrong." But this is in context with present-day thinking only. What gives you the "right" to say what was proper under circumstances about which you can have only the vaguest ideas gleaned from texts?

Whoa.....are you postulating the Absolute Right, and Absolute Truth, etc. again? I thought we'd disposed of those some time ago, but if not, welll, we'll have to go thru it once more.

