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Dup

Horizons is with us once again, with its i restored to complete health and its editor even more distant from that alluring condition. The tottering Harry Warner, Jr., 423 Summit Avenue, Hagerstown, Maryland, 21740, U.S.A., has written it, with the help of Edgar Allan Martin. The far-flung publishing resources of the Coulson complex may be credited with the reproduction. This is whole number 109, FAPA number 103, volume 28, number 2, dated February, 1967.

In the Beginning

The Fantasy Amateur: The vote-encouraging at the Tricon seems harmless enough to inspire no complaints from me. However, I suppose I should raise the technical objection to anything that tends to overemphasize the importance of FAPA elections. I hope they don't become prestige events of a hotly contested nature. Too many unhappy events occurred in FAPA's infancy when there were formal parties and tickets seeking control like competing groups of flies out to conquer the flypaper. Celephais: Bill should have pointed out that the Steber performance of Knoxville, Summer of 1915, has been reissued by Columbia on ML 5843; the ten-incher he mentions is long unobtainable. The Rambling Fap: This paean to the electric blanket hits in a tender, cowardly spot. I bought one of the things quite a while back and haven't used it yet because I have not had an overnight guest for so long and I've been reluctant to run it for the first time over an extended period while alone in the house because of the risk of a mechanical defect that might cause a fire. Yes, I know I could heat up an empty bed for a day or so, but that wouldn't duplicate the stress on the wiring that my nocturnal writhing would create. '' I imagine that the operator reveals the unlisted status of a number to save a lot of extra work. Without the flat disclosure, the person seeking the number might ask her to hunt several times again, thinking it might be listed under the name of other people in the house or at a former address. Helen's Fantasia: Hang onto those early Blondie cartoons. Price lists indicate that the fantasy comic inflation has begun to run like wildfire through virtually every form of comic strips. A few more years, and those Blondies could give the whole family an extended visit to Japan. '' There must be something to the theory that FAPA is casting off all associations with the rest of fandom, when Helen is baffled by the term Tricon. All we need now is for some member to ask her in this mailing, "Who was Laney?" '' For no real reason, the pages on Glen Ridge make me recall a conversation I overheard in Leesburg, Va.: "We've only lived here four years. You aren't a native until you've lived here ten years." Horib: So many FAPA members have been telling about sickness lately that I'm concerned. I dassn't get sick. I can't figure out if I get only mildly sick when I suffer from the virus or upset stomach, or if I stay on my feet and keep going because there's nobody to take care of me if I do get sick in bed. It has been eight or nine years since I missed a day's work due to sickness, as distinguished from the time lost after the two falls. '' The continuing turmoil over the Kennedy assassination might not exist, if it hadn't been for one thing. The factor that must have started the skepticism was the authorities' haste to identify Oswald as the one and only original murderer. There's usually at least an interim of a day or two before the public is told that

everyone is sure that this arrest settles everything. If they'd told us they had one guilty man and were continuing an extensive search for possible accomplices, we wouldn't have wondered if someone had instructions to lay off before they uncovered too much. Scrote: Has anyone ever explained why so many American cities have those narrow streets in the central section? The lack of space must have been troublesome even when the town was laid out and large wagons were forced to pass or turn. Maybe it was just a case of attempting to imitate the European cities from which so many of the Americans had emigrated, with streets that were built before people could afford big wagons. '' If we ever settle this problem about why a mirror reverses horizontally but not vertically, we should take up the case of cameras, which do the same thing if there's a prism between the lens and the finder through which the scene is viewed through the lens, but turn things upside down too in some cases, like the image that forms on the film which certainly has no eyes. The Vinegar Worm: It is pleasant to find another connoisseur of autumn leaves. Every autumn I run my rubber off on the county roads, taking color pictures of the autumn scenery, and every winter I feel exasperated and angry at myself because I did such a poor job of capturing on film what I saw. Maybe someone will eventually discover why some people are so affected by autumn colors. I'm unmoved by the beauties that some persons find in spring's transformation of the landscape, even the most handsome flowers mean nothing to me, but autumn leaves are the second best colors in my experience. Christmas decorations are the best. Some Notes: I've probably said too much about polls in the past, to justify a lot of repetition here. So just a few stray remarks: One value of the poll tradition that nobody has mentioned is the fact that the poll's existence may tend to cause an apa's members to do particularly well at least once a year, for the mailing in which poll sheets were distributed. I still prefer the old-fashioned habit of asking votes to be listed simply in descending order of preference, on the grounds that asking the voter to dole out a quantity of points may be enough extra work to prevent him from voting. On the method of tabulating, I am fairly neutral except to prefer that enough information be included to let the reader change around results to suit himself if he disagrees with the way the teller lumped, for instance, votes for two titles by the same member into one overall total for him in that category. The Vorpal Dragon: Maybe Phil can explain the palmistry factor that has always baffled me. How does the reader of the palm figure out the chronology of what he sees? Do the lines change as the individual's death approaches, or can the reader calculate how many years are covered by the intact part of a life-line? '' The only Mannings I knew in fandom were those in the civilization that once flourished in the now dead city of Decker, Ind. None of those was named Russ. '' A newcomer to fandom could be lost to the field by a naked lady magazine, even if he had no objection to the things. Even the least prudish person might decide that fandom is just a cover-up for something else, if the naked bodies are thrust under his nose as soon as the first hellos have been spoken. Different: I thought this publication was going to be in the best FAPA traditions. Then I find Sam writing about a non-fantasy story, Graph by Stanley

Weinbaum, and Chris suggesting a form of communications that has nothing to do with telepathy, and I begin to wonder how we'll ever maintain FAPA's standard as a fantasy organization. Science-Fiction Five-Yearly: It never seemed possible that there would be a brighter side to the gloomy prospect of the accelerating pace with which the years whiz past as I grow older. But right here it is, shining before my eyes, the fact that it won't seem quite as long until the next issue of this publication in 1971. If the proof weren't before me, I wouldn't believe that a group of fans could retain their ability to produce material of unvarying merit and flawless style over such long intervals of silence. '' But except for a recommendation to re-read the above praise an infinite number of times, there is only one item in this issue which I find conducive to any extended comment. That is this latest attempt to set up boundaries between fandoms. I never put too much faith in the Speer-Silverberg eras, and the more I think about the matter, the more convinced I am that there have been only three fandoms. First fandom was everything up to circa 1930, the decades when fans were mostly lone wolves, collecting was the big type of fanac, and publishing urges were relieved in mundane apas and school publications. Second fandom lasted for most of the 1930's, the period when fans spent most of their time fawning at the pros but were creating good-sized clubs and real fanzines for the first time. Third fandom has been everything since second fandom, starting approximately when the Science Fiction League ceased to be an effective force and Conrad Ruppert stopped making it possible for fanzines to go letterpress. I see little difference in fandom since the late 30's or early 40's, and I believe the fandoms under the conventional numbering system can be differentiated only by closing memory's eye to ten similarities for every small difference. Doorway: If it's more comfortable to write in the first person, and editors might complain about too steady adherence to this process, why not use first person in first draft and change it when typing the manuscript for submission? Sercon's Bane: If Buz thinks the opinion of one waiting lister on FAPA changes is worth heeding, I would like to propose an opinion poll of the entire waiting list. FAPA can easily afford to distribute with the Fantasy Amateur a sheet on which waiting listers would mark their reactions to the most frequently discussed proposals for solving the problem. Moreover, I would like even more to try to find the fans who would like to be in FAPA but refuse to wait so long, and poll them too. We are losing lots of good people to apas with fairly quick entrance. Remember Dick Ryan? He wasn't FAPA's most prolific member but he was one of its most literate and valued members. A letter just came from him, asking me to recommend an apa that he could join now that his fannish interests are reviving, "without too long a wait." I'll try to persuade him to get on the waiting list. But he might gafiate again in another five years, just about the time he reached the top of the list. And this situation exists because some forgotten FAPA official found one day an applicant with no vacancies and decided without considering consequences to establish a waiting list, and we've all been too stodgy to establish a logical process for admissions

ever since. '' The principal objection to the quarterly acknowledgment for waiting listers is the unfair advantage it gives the listers with homes near the secretary-treasurer. Past FAPA experience has shown that the local friends of that officer never got dropped from the list. Salud: Gandalf couldn't possibly have died. Everything would have stopped for a couple of chapters in order to describe the lamentations, if Tolkien hadn't been using the cliff-faller method of writing a story. '' That's dangerously close to anti-Americanism, to suggest to Rich Brown that he should live close to his job. How can the capitalistic structure be maintained, if American families live so close to work that they don't need at least two family cars, endless commuter time that boosts sales of nerve pills, and traffic jams in the suburb necessitating construction of two more lanes of highway every two years? '' One reason for the shortage of trained potential employes: industry and business are no longer hiring people and training them. An industry that contemplates erection of a factory will often give the local government an ultimatum: you don't get our new factory unless you set up adult education courses for the kind of workers we need in your school system. Aliquot: You should get several free convention trips out of all those old fanzines, if my recent experience shows the state of the market. Someone offered me $25 for just one issue of one of the more obscure fanzines published in 1938. Damballa: Chuck Hansen's apologies for his cover art are becoming a FAPA tradition, and that is the only justification for apologies on this subject. This is the best of the series, I think, and I hope a lot of members remember the Damballa covers if we have another poll, in the artist category. I think Chuck might undergo a surprise if he entered some of this type of art in a worldcon show. '' Another matter that requires no excuses is the publication of a conreport. This art form is vanishing unless people think that a fan who rarely attends a con shouldn't receive issues of fanzines containing the reports. I have yet to read an extensive conreport on London and I've seen only two or three long ones on Cleveland. This is excellent conreporting, and it gives me a chance to wonder out loud how many people voted on this year's Hugos and whether the truth on this topic wouldn't make FAPA participation in the egoboo poll seem quite good. Vandy: York wouldn't be a bad city to visit just after a worldcon. It has a wonderful fair, the first or second week in September, neither embarrassingly primitive nor unbearably commercialized in nature. '' Last I heard, Carl H. Claudy was editing a telephone company magazine, The Transmitter, in Washington, D.C. The Larean: Satiated though I am with journalism, I think I would enjoy your type, with its freedom from the routine and the nasty assignments. I can't figure out from these excerpts one important matter: if there's freedom to say unfavorable things as well as to issue the compliments. Binx: I'd like to see Dean continue his FAPA activity and add to it a Rotsler-type publication in which complete control over circulation would permit him to speak freely. It's exasperating to know that I won't find in Binx material that I would keep to myself, simply because some FAPA members could be indiscreet. Spiane: The photography restrictions at the Tricon sound fair

enough. In the unlikely event that someone else's flash goes off simultaneously with your own flash, you'll get 50% overexposure, nothing worse. But if your flash goes off while someone else is exposing by available light, his negative will be unprintable and the probability is somewhat higher because he'll be using a slower shutter speed. Maybe a good compromise would consist of being a parasite on the floods of the movie camera people: if they're bright enough to affect your flash pictures, they're bright enough to use the simple camera with flashless. '' Normally FAPA members do not complain about constitution-flouting when it is done to meet a situation which the constitution writers did not foresee. Technically, the president should have been the officer who made the decision on decreasing dues, because the extreme surplus is a situation not covered by the constitution. But there is no end to the nitpicking that would ensue if we complained about every informality which makes sense and is beneficial: strictly interpreted, it is unconstitutional to send 70 copies of a FAPA publication to the official editor, to alter the mailing date if the official editor finds personal business makes it necessary to postpone the mailing until two days later, or to get volunteer help in assembling the mailing. If we must complain about unconstitutional small matters, the requirement for surplus stock to be sold annually to members or waiting listers might be a better subject. Spinnaker Reach: Weinbaum wrote a story entitled "Tweel"? I know about the character of that name in A Martian Odyssey and Valley of Dreams, but life is incomplete if I've gone all this time without awareness of a third in the series. '' I doubt that Al Fick, so little known in fandom, would have been saved for the organization even if we had a different method of handling the waiting list. Maybe Russell's use of some of his material will encourage others to do the same for members who perished prematurely young and those who failed to come to term at all. Synapse: Of course, robots deserve equal rights if they're intelligent enough to comprehend matters as complicated as those three laws and if they are mistaken for true humans in one Asimov story. I suspect that Speer is sensitive about this because he has decided to think of robots as he thought of Negroes before it became politically inexpedient to consider the latter an inferior race. '' Something is wrong somewhere when Speer uses Disney as an example of how I try to ruin other people's pleasure. I was under the impression that most fans were shickering at me because of my attempt to found Disney fandom. '' Of course there's time travel that changes the past and the present and the future. Otherwise we would never find nitpicking Speer referring to an existing situation in the past tense: "I'm surprised that few of the people at the Montreal gas stations spoke English. I thought nearly everyone there was bilingual." Then there's the tampering with time that caused another apparent inconsistency. On page 8 Speer scolds someone for "would have to have been" and two pages later he writes himself: "Life is much better in Western Europe than it was prewar; it seems a reasonable hypothesis that this would have been true in Eastern Europe if...." If those television fantasies about time weren't true, Speer would have written simply "a reasonable hypothesis that this would be

true". Vukat: There's one major trouble with a FAPA anthology of unreprinted prozine stories. Few of us have seen enough anthologies to know what to pick. I would choose instantly something by Laurence Manning, for instance, if I could remember which of the Stranger Club series I've seen mentioned in anthology reviews. Maybe a better theme would be an anthology made up of stories that weren't worth anthologizing when originally reprinted. '' Alas, Tolkien books are no longer in the non-fiction section of the local Marboro store because the store non est. It closed a couple of months ago in favor of a toy and hobby store, and I note from the mail order catalog that Marboro hasn't repeated the experiment with a retail outlet in a small city. The Persian Slipper: This is very convincing but I still think something less strenuous, like cross-country racing, would be a better new interest for me. After my youthful attempts to ride bicycles, I decided that the man who invented the wheel wasn't as much a genius as the man who invented the third and fourth wheels. Lighthouse: Another superb issue that will get less comment than it deserves because of psychological inhibitions over the hopelessness of finding space for full consideration of all comment-hooks in a gargantuan fanzine. Briefly, then, I thought Carol Carr's one-page travelog superior to the endless one by Tom Disch. The latter seemed bent on saying the tritest things about the weather and architecture in novel ways. I kept thinking of the tourist described on the television special, This Is Wednesday So This Must Be Belgium, who took pictures of nothing in Europe but litter. George Metzger emerges from the mimeographed page even more vividly than usual. When I read about the adventures of a Rotsler or a Nelson I'm utterly fascinated and I feel admiration for their success in being real persons but I can't imagine myself enjoying their special way of life; yet with Metzger, who is equally special as a bold spirit, I not only admire but sense that I'd enjoy myself if I did as he does. '' Maybe some day Pat Lupoff will come to Hagerstown and prepare an essay on this city's answer to the decline of the West's bad guys. One local family gives the courts, jails, and cops a workout at least once monthly. It's something like a radio serial. A couple of brothers get caught for forgery and are sent away. One breaks out of the clink, comes back and with two other brothers beats up the guy who put the finger on them. All three go behind bars. Now their time is up and during a trial of another family member one of the returnees insists on testifying and launches into an account of how he went with the guy they beat up during a series of bad check-passing episodes. '' Jack Gaughan makes the best impression of the pros in this issue, and Philip Dick comes out worst. Dick sounds very much like Elmer Perdue on an off day. '' I like the attitude toward prodom that Terry Carr demonstrates in his conreport. I can't bear the attitude of some people that science fiction is a superb and mysterious thing best discussed in whispers and oblique references, nor do I approve of those who excuse any enormity they commit in prodom by the fact that they made a few bucks that way. Terry seems to steer a good middle course. The Book of Bjimpson: Only one complaint about this: its excellence brought back too poignant memories of the equally fine and much plumper artzines that used to arrive from Los Angeles just before each Christmas. I miss them dreadfully each Advent.

The Worst of Martin

Sea Saga

At first he resisted catering to his normal male requirements but as the months passed by he succumbed with increasing periodicity.

The island was small and quite deserted. No matter how he tried to waste time varying his diet there were only so many tropical fruits available, and only so many fish trapped in the shallows at low tide. And low tide being as infrequent as it normally is there were a great many hours for his idle hands.

Who has not dreamed of the delights of being shipwrecked? Warm breezes, beautiful maidens in the moonlight awaiting your most boyeurous whim--he dreamed of it constantly! He had to--to keep sane! It was hot as blazes during the day, he shivered at night, and what clothes remained were a crumby mess.

But he continued to dream and that was fatal to his staunch resistance. At first he simply drifted with the tide of his needs but when he noted an occasional desultory reaction he began to worry. He was not that old! Perhaps it was the diet! And he began to emphasize what protein he could garner from the sea.

There came a time when even the most curious fantasies could not excite his jaded history. He slumped dejected and stared hollow-eyed out to sea.

"A ship!" he cried. He leaped and ran to the edge of the water. "They will save me! They will take me aboard, and feed me, and build up my strength. A few good nights' warm sleep and I'll be back in L.A. with all my old strengths and energies.

"I'll have plenty of money, collecting interest all this time, and the first thing I'll do is draw out a good wad. Then, I'll find me a woman--a nice big beautiful blonde--and I'll take her up to a hotel room. By the sheer weight of my needs, by the months of my pitiful abstinence, I'll convince her...

"Ah!" he finished. "Fooled you! There's no ship!"

The Gentleman

One of those first luxurious warm days of spring when you may go for a walk ostensibly to inspect the weather, but rather to stretch like a tom-cat, for you can virtually feel the sap rising in you.

The park was large, deserted, an unspoiled woodland, and he swung down the shaded path thinking spring-thoughts.

At a turn she was seated in a wheelchair, the most beautiful woman he had ever seen. Her face was like a cameo but with full sensuous lips, the proverbial enigmatic smile, and her figure, even in the wheel chair, he could see was lovely.

His sudden desire for this woman in the wheel chair made him blush furiously as she smiled back. Her tinkling laughter convinced him she knew his inner thoughts and he hurried on, confused and annoyed. And then he became interested. If she did know his passing fancy her laugh was inviting. What could he lose? Even if she said "no", flatly, his directness might amuse or flatter her.

"Delighted!" she said, when he made his unusual offer in a direct manner, befitting a gentleman with a serious but civilized problem. "I suggest you wheel me deeper into the wood. Although we are now off the main path, I think you can push me through those trees for the ground is fairly clear."

At a point beneath a low-hanging bough, she said: "Although I am unable to support myself on my yet-lovely but paralyzed legs, I have strong arms."

And she thrust herself up and hung from the limb with a practiced agility. It was even possible for her, after what for some people would be the enervating strain of many moments in that position, to manipulate her strong wrists and sway gently back and forth.

He was delighted with her hidden abilities and placing her back in the wheelchair, pushed her through the wood, all the while whistling in a satiated manner.

At the edge of the park, she said: "That's my apartment across the street, if you would care to push me so far."

"Love to!" he answered. "Would like to do it many a day. But tell me, who is that big man coming towards us?"

"My husband," she said. And the man was beside them. "Darling," she continued, "this man was nice to me in the park."

He thought it ironic that the phrase "paralyzed with fear" should enter his mind and appear like a beacon of truth, a way of life.

The man swung around and shook his hand warmly. "Thank you, sir, thank you very much."

"I don't get this," he said, relaxing but a little, "I'm--er, 'nice' to your wife in the park and you thank me?"

"Of course," the man said. "Most of the fellows just leave her hanging there...."

(Reprinted from the Winter, 1962, issue of Ed Martin's Grotesque)

Great Moments in Hagerstown Journalism

rl: From the April 16, 1912, issue of The Morning Herald:

PASSENGERS ON TITANIC SAFE

Plowing through the ocean on her first voyage to America, the great White Star liner Titanic smashed into an iceberg late Sunday night and in a moment almost had been transformed from the modern queen of the seas to a helpless derelict.

Her passengers, totaling altogether about 1,400, were shocked into realization of the fact that they had suddenly become the center of another sea tragedy, but they soon knew that their plight was eased by the fact that modern science has robbed even a mid-ocean collision of many of its terrors....

Soon after daybreak, however, came the message that with the sea calm all over, the passengers of the Titanic had been placed in the small boats....

Shortly before 11 o'clock, the wireless began singing the song of rescue. The fact that the great steamer had to be towed into Halifax is evidence that her injuries are serious. It is considered a remarkable tribute to the skill of the modern shipbuilders that she did not sink.

Tom, Dick and Harry

Several generations ago, when I was a boy, relatives stared at me in obvious surprise every spring, because bronchitis and related maladies seemed certain to do away with me the previous winter. These bouts of illness caused me to miss quite a bit of school and permitted me to get my first contact with good music. Walter Damrosch had an hour-long music appreciation program on Fridays at 2 p.m., over NBC. The local school system didn't use radio as a source of instruction, possibly because so many of the schools would have had to mess around with batteries in that remote era before power lines had been extended to the frontier parts of the county. So the dilapidation of my bronchial tubes deserves credit for providing access so early in life to the most magnificent of all man's creations, serious music. It also gave me vivid memories of a unique man and musician. Damrosch is almost forgotten nowadays. His compositions are in limbo, although I managed to latch onto a copy of the vocal score for his last opera, The Man Without a Country, a while back and found it no further back of its time than Bach was behind his time. He outlived his career as a recording artist; as early as 1936, when the first big reference work on recordings was compiled, only one Brahms symphony and a single disc or two survived in the catalogs and I know of only one reissue on lp, and that was a three-minute snippet that wasn't issued commercially. It was just a few months ago that I finally was able to buy a second-hand copy of his autobiography. If you hunt through recent books about 20th century music-makers, you'll usually discover only a sentence or two about Damrosch, praising him as a pioneer and disparaging him as a conductor who took everything much too slowly but could evoke unique qualities of tone from the strings. Well, I knew Walter Damrosch as a radio educator whose humanity and love for music made me forget that he was educating. He started each broadcast with a statement in tones that might have come from the lips of an Old Testament prophet who'd spent his boyhood in Germany and never lost his accent: "My dear children!" After that, he talked to us man to man. He chose the greatest music to explain, not the most popular serious music or the cutest serious music. He world work through a Beethoven symphony in two hours, playing the piano badly to illustrate this or that feature, then conducting the studio orchestra in the same section, and finally putting the whole work together and conducting it as a whole. Damrosch never fell into the Bernstein mannerism of being the first to reveal a musical secret that actually leaked out in 1852 or thereabouts.

Even though I was just discovering music, I could sense the link that Damrosch represented with the past. Here was a man who not only had known personally Wagner, Brahms, Liszt, and many other legendary figures; they had been houseguests in his home. When he sang for us the nightwatchman's little song from Meistersinger, there was always the chance that some inflection in his quavery old voice might derive directly from the way he'd heard Wagner sing the tune. The horn call that symbolizes the gold in the first of the Nibelungen operas became even more impressive when I discovered that as a child, he'd staged a puppet version of Das Rheingold in his home before any opera house in America

had put it on the stage. Strangely, I can't recall too many specific things that Damrosch said about Wagner's music. This uncooperative memory clings to such remarks as the arresting images he drew to dramatize Beethoven's Fifth Symphony. The second movement, he said, was like a walk through a beautiful, large garden, and repeatedly coming on a fine statue of a great national hero. The famous section that causes the transition to the last movement was like a wakening in the early hours of morning when doubts and fears go round and round in the mind. But whatever he said about Wagner, it converted me as completely as if I had built a pyre around the courthouse, set it afire, and jumped in. I listened to a Ring cycle on the Radio City Music Hall of the Air broadcasts, which fortunately could be enjoyed in sickness or health because they occurred at 12:30 p.m. Sundays. Erno Rapee cut down each act to one hour, an operation that must have had remarkable effects on the first act of Götterdämmerung, but I didn't know better, and this represented my first deliberate listening to good music on a non-educational basis. (Someday the musical world should recognize Rapee's heroism: this obscure man who waved his baton over the stage orchestra on other days not only presented this first Ring cycle on radio, but also conducted all nine Mahler symphonies a year or two later, and when NBC wouldn't finance his symphonic orchestra during the summer broadcasts, he got Elisabeth Schumann as a replacement.) Blissfully ignorant of what another Wagner enthusiast was doing three thousand miles to the east, I was as complete a Wagnerite as any of the originals of the breed, the ones who thrived in the late 19th century.

At this point, I am sure that any FAPA member who for some reason is still reading this has begun to pencil into the margin a note to the effect that Wagner has begun to go out of fashion, and why should I write an article about the composer at this unfortunate time? But Wagner and baseball have two things in common. I love both and both have been described as in their death throes for a half-century or longer, without suffering any apparent deterioration during these extended final spasms. "My Musical Life", the Damrosch autobiography, was published in 1923, and it contains a lament over the fact that Wagner no longer is the mighty musical force of a few years back. I suspect that the real process is something more complicated. Wagner fell into disgrace during both world wars, because all German music of less than a century's age was suspected of Kaiser sympathies in the first conflict, and because of Hitler's musical preferences in the second war. Combined with these effects on Wagner's popularity is a phenomenon which seems to afflict many of us Wagnerites: a manic-depressive reaction to his music. Sometimes this leaves the individual permanently convinced that he no longer likes Wagner, such as Debussy, who promptly produced Pelleas, a completely Wagnerian opera except for the omission of the fortissimo marks. I was among the more fortunate. After a few years of complete obsession with Wagner as the greatest of all composers, I underwent the reaction, suddenly found it impossible to listen with pleasure to the music which now sounded blatant and vulgar, and also turned against the Wagner-influenced composers, which meant a quarrel with virtually everyone who com-

posed any music in the Western Hemisphere after about 1860. I was still in this condition after I finally acquired a phonograph and began to purchase records. One day, a furniture store in Hagerstown bought out a store in a nearby town and offered its stock at greatly reduced prices. A fairly good batch of phonograph records somehow came along with the stock, and they were offered for a dime apiece. At that bargain, I couldn't pass up even an album which interested me as little as a 78 rpm two-disc Columbia set of Götterdämmerung excerpts. I played them a couple of times and suddenly I was well again, home again, back in my musical sanity. The discs were the result of an actual performance conducted by Sir Thomas Beecham at the Royal Opera House in London on May 29, 1936. Voices faded and rose a trifle as the singers moved about the stage, the Gibichung boots pounded resoundingly against the boards of the stage as Hagen blew into that ominous-sounding horn, shields produced loud noises at the correct moments, and when Herbert Janssen sailed up with Brünnhilde, it was more real than any left-ro-right stage effect I've ever heard in a stereo recording. I felt that Sir Thomas had saved me from some sort of living musical death. All that had been wrong, apparently, was my forgetfulness that Wagner is essentially a dramatic composer, that his music loses a great deal of its urgency in even the best concert performance. For the past twenty years, I've never backslid again from my reconverted status. By now I'm so set in my ways that it is not likely that I'll ever want to recant for a second time.

It is not altogether simple to admit a fondness for Wagner nowadays. The ghost of Hitler and the horrors of anti-Semitism render suspect anyone who loves Wagner's music. I hope it isn't necessary to belabor in this company the obvious by pointing out the difficulties involved in taking the opposite stand to Hitler's on all matters consistently, or the chronological difficulties involved in any assumption that Wagner's form of anti-Semitism had anything in common with the anti-Semitism that led to what happened in 20th century Germany. But it might be well to point out several things that are not fully understood about this most unpleasant and nastiest phase of Wagner's personality. Wagner was the most inconsistent of theorists, Wagner had theories about many other segments of the population which are ignored while everyone remembers what he thought about Jewish composers, and I think there is some reason to believe that Wagner had some sort of subconscious mess that made his attitude toward Jewish composers the vicious and unforgivable thing that it became.

Remember, Wagner was not a general anti-Semite. He gave a Jew, Karl Tausig, the important duty of making the piano arrangements of some of his operas. He entrusted the conducting of Parsifal to a rabbi's son, Hermann Levi. There were Jews in Wagner's family, they sang leading roles in his operas, they played in his orchestra at Bayreuth. The real Wagnerian prejudice against the Jews was based on his contention later in life that they could not compose music, after he had praised extravagantly Jewish composers as a youthful writer of prose about musical matters. Now, if you really want to accuse Wagner of prejudice, and to extend the blame for that prejudice to those who like his music, you might try for size his opinions of Parisians. After all,

he came right out and admitted once that he admired the fourth act of Les Huguenots, but I don't know of any reneging at all involving any Parisians.

Nowhere have I found any authorities who support my semi-theory about what might have caused Wagner's sudden change from admiration for the music of great Jewish composers to such frightful hatred of it. This isn't intended as a psychoanalysis by someone who knows nothing of the topic and isn't quite old enough to have chatted with a couched Wagner. It's simply a guess. There was a semi-scandal in the Wagner family around the time of Richard's birth that must have bothered him as he grew up. Wagner's mother's husband died just after the child was born and there are certain reasons for suspecting that the father of the foetal Richard may have been someone else, a Jew (under the Hitler and Old South assumption that a little Jewish or Negro blood is enough to qualify the individual for prejudice) named Ludwig Geyer. He eventually became young Richard's stepfather and Wagner admired him entirely too much to suit those who assume Wagner to have been a total anti-Semite. But isn't it possible that as years went on, and people kept whispering about the past, and Wagner's genius asserted itself unmistakably, his subconscious reasoned like this: I am a great composer in my own opinion and that of many other intelligent persons, I am not a bastard, Jewish men cannot compose great music, and this proves that I could not possibly be the son of a Jew?

Fortunately, it is easier and less speculative to debunk some other qualities that Wagner is supposed to have possessed as man and musician. He didn't have some of these alleged bad qualities at all, and the rest are things he owned in common with many other persons who are not blamed for the same reasons. (And parenthetically, I might point out that the very musical powers who take the most delight today in proclaiming Wagner's fallacious statements about Jewish music fail to do the thing that really needs doing. As if they believed implicitly in the nonsense that Wagner wrote on the subject, they ignore completely the very musical geniuses whom Wagner scorned. Meyerbeer is completely dead in North America except for a rare performance of an aria or some ballet music, and only slightly more alive in Europe. Mendelssohn survives only in a very minor portion of his total output, part of his orchestral music. The Schwann catalog is misleading, because all those recordings of his piano and chamber music aren't matched with any great number of performances in concert halls, and almost all the Mendelssohn music for voice, his finest in my estimation, is as obscure today as Wagner could have wished.)

There is the frequent charge that Wagner's music is fascist in nature, that the Ring operas glorify the might-makes-right philosophy. This is such a big lie that it has succeeded where a minor lie would have been ignored. You might as well call the Tolkien novels a glorification of the evil ways of the Orcs. The big difference between Wagner and Tolkien, in their treatment of overlapping legends, is that we must accept on faith Tolkien's assurances that the other side contains the bad guys. Wagner lets us see the bad guys for what they are and even demonstrates how they got that way. This Wagnerian procedure has the advantage of allowing us to see that these were potentially good guys who went astray through flaws in their makeup, and in some magical

way, we simultaneously feel even more repelled by this evil while we are filled with sadness at what might have been. It is the difference between a murderer in any Hitchcock thriller and Faulkner's Popeye. If Alberich had been satisfied with some simple method of satisfying his lust, he wouldn't have committed his great renunciation of love. All through the four Ring operas, the message is pounded home again and again, that love is a thing that makes strength, power, wealth, greed, and all other apparently powerful emotions unavailing and empty in the end. If Hitler did not realize this, so much the worse for him and for the civilized world; if we don't understand it, we're just as stupid as Hitler and perhaps just as dangerous to civilization.

The length of Wagner's operas is another handicap to their enjoyment by some persons. I think this is somewhat less serious a situation than the new potential Wagnerite might suspect. Historically, Wagner's operas were not as unprecedentedly lengthy as we now imagine. He started his successful composing career by imitating the big spectacle operas with which Meyerbeer had been most successful. Most of these were five-acters, many of them as long from opening curtain to final curtain calls as all but one or two Wagner operas. Rossini's William Tell is reputed to have taken five hours to perform at its premiere; the only performance of Les Huguenots I've ever heard was a tape from Radio Italiana that lasted nearly three hours without intermissions between acts and represented not more than two-thirds of the entire score, at a rough guess. Today, the average Broadway play is finished an hour quicker than an average Wagner opera, but we don't condemn the screen version of Gone with the Wind in an uncut performance as a demonstration of Teutonic diffuseness, although we do with justice say other critical things about it. Of course, the fact that Wagner's music is now available in recorded form settles part of this problem. It's now quite easy to enjoy it one act a day, if you prefer it that way. Brahms liked Wagner in that manner and I personally find myself unable to withstand the emotional effects of undivided attention to a Wagner opera from beginning to end on one day, unless there are unusually long intervals between acts, like those for which Bayreuth is famous.

I must emphasize that Wagner's prose and poetry are not nearly as bad as the English-speaking person assumes them to be. He wrote a very stilted form of German in Tannhäuser and Lohengrin, but his other librettos are far superior in the original to the dreadful translations that we still must put up with today. Whether you get the translations through vocal scores, librettos or the booklets that come with records, you are almost sure to find Wagner translated in a way that makes him appear to have used more archaic, more complicated, and more graceless words than the German originals. Some of this results, no doubt, from efforts to match in the translations the rhymes that he used part of the time in his earlier works and the alliteration of the Ring operas. But much more of it seems to derive from a theory that any translation of a dramatic work into English should be modeled on Shakespearean mannerisms, and the remainder must be caused by sheer stupidity and blundering. Apparently nobody even takes the trouble to do the most fundamental sort of editing when a new edition of an English translation is put into print. I own three copies of the Tristan libretto, for example,

in the Crown edition of all the major Wagner librettos, in the booklet distributed with the Furtwängler recording when it appeared on the RCA Victor label, and a copy purchassd years ago at the Met. All contain enough differences of typeface and arrangement to make it obvious that they were all published from newly set type, not copied by some photographic process. All three contain exactly the same deletions, frequently involving sections of the work that are invariably included in even sharply cut stage performances today, all contain several lines for Brangaena in the last act that Wagner published when he first put the poem into print but which he did not set to music, and there are the same identical typographical errors. At one point in each libretto, Isolde is alleged to have said, speaking of herself in the third person, "So bange Tage / wachte sie sehend". This would translate to "She watched seeing those terrible days," obvious nonsense. I can only conclude that nobody involved in the preparation of any of these three editions knew any German or took the time to compare the German text with an authentic copy of the libretto, and even the typesetters must have known only English, because the error is totally obvious, a dropped n in sehnend that the English version betrays when it says: "Such weary days I waited and longed" in all three editions.

The person who knows the Meistersinger text only in the usual English translations can't possibly realize how Wagner used quite plain, everyday German to demonstrate the human natures of his characters. When Eva says her shoes are so fine that she hates to wear them, Wagner puts it into these words: "Dass ich sie noch nicht an die Füss' mir getraut"--"I still haven't let myself put them on," which one translator turns into a haughty "I dare not such gems to my feet confide." When Sachs interjects "Das mein' ich", he is saying roughly, "I should say so!" and the translator with a memory cell cocked on Elizabethan English turns it into an "Aye, marry!" Sometimes the translations aren't even English. If you find David saying "all must smarten," he really is trying to say "all must smarten up" but the meter didn't allow the translator to complete the expression. If the Meistersinger situation causes people to think Wagner wrote out of character, the translations of the more turgid librettos must give the impression that the original makes no sense at all. A sample from the last act of Lohengrin: "Through distant countries still in his possession, / The chosen one his matchless pow'r retains. / For innocence to fight against oppression / Tarries he, while his name unknown remains." Maybe W. S. Gilbert studied this very translation and learned from such couplets as: "See, Elsa comes--that lady peerless, / Surely her face is pale and cheerless." To make things even worse, Wagner's original words are indissolubly linked to his music and the translations if followed while the singers are proceeding in the original cause all these carefully calculated effects to be lost or reversed. (I refuse to believe that anyone has ever actually sung these translations in performance.) In Isolde's first act narrative of what has gone before, she recalls how Tristan lay sick and helpless before her at a moment when she was about to take vengenace for his slaying of her betrothed, and then he looked up, not at her sword, not at her hand, but "Er sah' mir in die Augen", "he looked into my eyes".

This line forms an emotional climax and is set to an ascending phrase for the voice, which seems to respond to the upward glance of the recollection. And in the translation we get "His eyes on mine were fastened", accurate enough without the music, but putting the musical climax onto the unimportant word, "fastened", rather than the key word, "eyes". Such things happen on almost every page of the score and there is simply no way to remedy the situation in a translation mirroring the accentual and syllabic scheme of the original. What we need is an Act of Congress requiring new translations that could not be sung to Wagner's vocal lines but following the musical sense closely enough to permit the person ignorant of German to comprehend the relationship between text and music. I learned a reading knowledge of German because I was so anxious to learn more about Wagner's operas, a procedure I recommend to anyone who feels the slightest interest in them and has enough spare time to spend with a good textbook and dictionary.

I have no intention, you will rejoice to learn, of producing at this point an essay within the essay on the influence that Wagner's music had over the work of his comtemporaries and future composers. You can take it on faith or look it up at the public library. But you must remember that the anti-Wagner sentiment has has its influence even in this phase of musical history. Today it is fashionable to pretend that Wagner's influence has been dissipated for the past half-century or longer and that it was never very important in the case of the most important composers who came immediately after him. There is as much accuracy in this as in the thesis that Wagner was responsible for Dachau. Someone once said that all French music since 1875 or thereabouts consists of the prelude to the third act of Tristan and a touch of Grieg. Look at any dodecaphonic score and you will see a slight rearrangement of the prelude to the third act of Parsifal. The composers who were most violently anti-Wagner in their pronouncements usually ended up by producing the closest imitations of him. Debussy used to object to learned analyses of his compositions with the analogy that children are not allowed to tear open their dolls to see what is inside. I believe that his real fear was that the laboratory men woudd find too much offset from the pages of Tristan and Rheingold on the pages of the scores of Pelleas and La Mer. I think that Wagner's greatest genius of all lay in his ability to make use of all resources that already existed, and to mix them with the resources that he invented. The only way in which composers since Wagner's time have been able to appear free from his influence has consisted of renunciation of all but some tiny corner of the giant storeroom of resources that Wagnerism built. Orff abjures everything except the simplest vocal lines and most elementay rhythms as violently as Alberich renounced love, Stravinsky runs scared by changing his style completely every second or third year and causing just one element to predominate in the style that he currently utilizes, and other composers scoot back to the safety of compositions meant to sound like the composers who lived before Wagner with just enough wrong-sounding notes to prove that it isn't plagiarism. I feel certain that eventually, the charlatans will vanish from the concert programs and the talented 20th century composers will gain their due

recognition for having added their own personality and technical advances to the tonal and harmonic universe that Wagner opened up instead of wasting a creative life in an effort to rebel against this musical father image.

I should point out that Wagner's innovations are not limited to those involving music itself. When we read books about Wagner, we are most likely to be told about how he substituted continuous musical action for the operatic tradition that had ordained a halt for applause at the end of set numbers and had sharply distinguished between these set numbers and recitative; that he took the irrevocable plunge into a musical sea where all tonalities could be attained by chromatic motion without reliance on the strict rules that the textbooks listed concerning modulation or the musical ambiguities that the diminished seventh and augmented triad had offered to more daring composers; that he altered the ancient device of "memory motives" (where a tune from the first act is sung in shortened form as the soprano dies in the last act) into the leitmotif concept, where a short musical passage symbolizes one or more things or people or concepts and is capable of development in keeping with the varying dramatic significance of what it symbolizes. But we're not as likely to realize how completely Wagner changed the whole concept of the theater when he designed Bayreuth. Even movie theaters might have been built with tiers of boxes piled atop one another, if Bayreuth hadn't proved how much more practical it is to put most of the seats on one sloping level. Probably the invention of the movies would eventually have created another change in the legitimate theater, that of turning down the house lights during the performance itself, but the fact remains that Wagner was the one who convinced the theater-going public that it was distracting to have the house lights blazing right through each act. I'm not sure if one other enormous Wagnerian influence was good or bad in the end. Whatever the case, it's quite clear that Wagner's music was the first that attracted attention as a social and moral force, that caused literary controversies over its effect on the course of the world, that made people understand how wise Plato had been in his remarks on the key role of music in human life. Somewhere I read that Wagner stands in either third or fourth place as the historical figure about whom the most books have been written, depending on whether Christ is counted as an historical figure. Of course, books had been written in vast quantities even before Wagner's time about music and about some composers, but they involved music pretty much as a closed system, not in its relationship to humanity. (I hope nobody embarrasses me at this point by asking about the theological controversies over the satanic nature of the raised leading tone and the resulting musica ficta. Men of the cloth searched out the most improbable things to argue about in the Middle Ages and I hardly think that this particular heresy occupied the attention of anyone but the hairsplitters.) Centuries of studies of the Greek myths had never caused the general public to get riled up over the unprecedented biological things that went on in the family trees of the gods, but when a brother and sister realize their love for each other at the end of the first act of Die Walküre it produced a controversy even greater than that over the wisdom of David Copperfield in marrying Dora. (Wagner's stage direction at the end of that act instructs the curtain to fall

quickly. I wish I could remember who it was that produced the famous comment on the temperature of the music at that moment: "Just in time.") Composers had been disputing with producers and publishers for centuries about rights to their works, but never did the composer's wishes become a cause celebre until Wagner tried so hard to reserve Parsifal for Bayreuth; until then, it had been taken for granted that the composer's duty was to sell the right for the highest price, not to attempt to make certain that his composition would be treated with the proper respect.

I think the other major charges against Wagner can be disposed of quite rapidly. Some people still find his music unpalatable because it was written by a man who treated his first wife with less than model etiquette, either wrote a famous opera because of an affair with another man's wife or had an affair with another man's wife because he wrote a great opera, then achieved the perfect climax by stealing a woman who was the wife of one good friend and the daughter of another. All I can do is point to the careers of a lot of other important composers who had equally lurid romantic adventures. Debussy is a particularly nasty example of this sort, and it's terrifying to think of the size of the Wagner literature, if Richard had married as frequently as d'Albert. I feel that Wagner's literary accomplishments outside his opera texts have been caused to seem somewhat worse than they really are by bad translations. He did not write with a light touch in German at the best of times but there is a certain amount of good humor and naturalness in his earlier essays that disappears completely in the translations. I'm not acquainted with the originals of the later essays and they could quite possibly be as deadly in style as in their content.

One nice subsidiary benefit of admiration for Wagner is that the admirer will always have puzzles and mysteries to fret himself over. Tristan is now more than a century old, and still you'll find an occasional new attempt to answer some of the questions that it poses. The famous "Tristan chord", the one that is heard in the first phrase, can be explained as either an independent new chord or as the effect of a long appoggiatura and you'd be surprised how easy it is for the ear to hear it in either manner, once you understand the difference and monkey around with it on the piano a little. Wagnerites can still argue interminably over the questions of whether Brangaene poured out the love potion intentionally or accidentally, after she'd been told to prepare a slug of the death potion, whether Tristan and Isolde meet for the first time since arrival in the second act or have been having an extended affair in the interim, and whether King Mark has formally taken her to wife before the second act begins. Then there are the interpretation questions. For one thing, how fast should Wagner be performed? Every instinct tells me that he is usually played too rapidly nowadays, and yet Wagner himself complained near the end of his life that conductors were beating time in his works much more slowly than they used to, and he didn't like this trend at all. Should Wagner on the stage retain the oldfashioned scenery or was Wieland Wagner on the right track when he restaged the works at Bayreuth on an almost bare stage without backdrops and with only a symbolic phallus or two to detract the eye from the actors? (I don't have the opportunity to see actual performances of Wagner very often, singers and musicians of the proper capabilities and interests being a mite scarce in Hagerstown. But

I'm pretty sure I prefer Wagner with all the traditional paraphernalia of painted scenery and props, augmented by modern lighting and projection techniques. This is perhaps analogous to the Wagnerian musical principles of retaining much of the old while taking advantage of the new. Besides, Wagner made the tiers of boxes vanish, he cast the orchestra into a pit, he once expressed a wish that he could cause the walls of the theater to disappear, but I know of no invectives against the old staging procedures and this might be significant.)

It surely shouldn't be necessary to come right out and say that the Wagner operas should interest the fantasy fan because nine of the ten mature works have fantasy elements in their plots. I imagine that Siegfried was at least an indirect influence on Edgar Rice Burroughs. His intellectual capacity may have been quite a distance below the ability to pay attention to the music, but the concept of the human growing from infancy to strong manhood in a wilderness away from all fully human contacts echoed through a lot of the fiction and non-fiction that ERB must have encountered when he was ready to snare the notion of Tarzan. Would we have today such a long list of novels which are based on mythology, if Wagner hadn't shown the world how it is possible to retell the old legends and the earliest minstrel tales in altered and personalized form? I rather think not; up to his time, most fantasy works in the opera house were outright fairy tales or adaptations of brand new stories about the supernatural, not reworkings of a nation's literary heritage. I suppose it's going too far to claim that Wagner anticipated Einstein. Still, it's quite a shock to hear Gurnemanz tell Parsifal that "space and time are the same thing" when the latter is puzzled by the way the scenery is suddenly beginning to move. Wagner, unfortunately, didn't carry the idea any farther; if he had, he probably wouldn't have been embarrassed by his miscalculation that caused the scenery to finish changing when the scenery-changing music had been only half performed, during those first Bayreuth productions.

I wonder what it's like to be a teen-ager today when you can buy easily at moderate prices good recordings of any famous work of serious music, like Wagner's operas. Now, I started record-buying when I was already practically middle-aged, around 1946, but I doubt that any of today's young sprats will be able to comprehend how we struggled then to get fairly complete sets of Wagner operas. The war years had decimated the 78 rpm catalogs and the lp disc was still a couple of years in the future. No Wagner opera had all its music recorded on commercially available discs, even if you counted the cutouts. Walküre and Tannhäuser could be collected complete except for perhaps five per cent of their total music, if you could find a store that could find a distributor who could supply the theoretically available sets and you could scrape up a week's salary or more to pay the price. You could get together about three-fourths of Siegfried if you could bear lightning-fast speeds and three or four performers for each role and had the strength to lug ten-record albums around without smashing them. Each year, a smaller amount of previously unrecorded Wagner music came on the market and it seemed obvious that in another few years, nobody could hope to come closer to completeness. Now some of the Wagner operas have been recorded complete a half-dozen times or oftener, and even Rienzi may be expected to turn up

on records some day when a repertoire man can't think of any other prestige item that hasn't already been done to death. I hope it does, because I'd like to know how that opera comes out. Long ago I purchased in a second-hand shop a bound large volume containing the vocal score of the first half of Rienzi. The second volume in the set never turned up and I've never read the Bulwer-Lytton novel on which it's based.

For what it's worth, I might append here the facts about the recordings of complete Wagner operas that live in my home. I must be the only Wagnerite still breathing who has never replaced with something more modern his copy of the first complete Flying Dutchman, the old Mercury album issued around 1950 and apparently recorded a half-dozen years or more earlier. The sound is terrible, but I haven't heard any more recent recording that I'd rather have. Clemens Krauss makes the spray fly and the wind whine as no other conductor in my experience has done in this score, about which one old musician complained that he sneezed and shivered every time he opened the covers. Besides, there's a magnificent Dutchman, Hans Hotter. I'm also doggedly fond of old lp recordings in the cases of Lohengrin and Tannhäuser. I like the Urania sets which were gunned down by the critics when first issued and are on the surface hopelessly inferior to the high-powered artists and orchestras that later recordings have featured. They have the enormous advantage of uniform Germanity. Nobody ever forgets himself and slips into an Italianate way of phrasing an important melodic passage. I was so excited about London's pioneering complete Meistersinger set that I bought it in the first form, in three albums, and despite strong temptations to acquire the set soon issued by Columbia, I have not caused the London records to feel jealousy. The sound is much better than the recording date would make probable. Of course there is no question about the Tristan that anyone should own, the Furtwängler set that Angel now sells. He has been blamed for imposing his own whims on the music, but listen to the discs with a score in hand and see how many of these apparent liberties turn out to be instructions that Wagner put down in black and white. I'm perfectly content with my first London recording of Parsifal. It has been castigated because it is an unusually lurid case of splicing and piecing together from many rehearsals and performances. This worries me not at all. I think it's the ideal way to hear music, just as the best way to compose music is by rewriting and revising and amending first thoughts that could be improved. Besides, it is impossible for the human mind to recall the effect created by just one performance of one song after he has sat through a recital; his memories will be conditioned by everything he heard in all the songs, and there is no reason why the recording should not be similarly composite. There is little choice just now for anyone who wants all the Ring operas. I have many musical bones to pick with Solti, but I must live with his haste-makes-waste conducting of the three operas which have no competitors on the market, at least for a while. It's Furtwängler again for Walküre, naturally. There must be something significent, though, in my failure to buy more modern performances of some Wagner operas, because I haven't hesitated to do this with some Verdi works. Quite possibly, that demonstrates the all-outness of my enthusiasm for Wagner, a devotion that either causes me to overlook certain inadequacies or proves the old adage that only the best

music is worth performing badly.

Of the older 78 rpm discs in my possession, I find myself playing most frequently the old ten-record Victor set of Siegfried excerpts, the Melchior-Janssen set for Columbia that contains much of Tristan's Act Three, and quite naturally anything sung by Schorr. I'm still hopeful of locating at a sensible figure some of the other large 78 rpm Wagner sets, particularly the Columbia Tannhäuser and Parsifal albums. I have about half of the Columbia Tristan album and can't evade the sensation that somewhere is an individual who has the other half of it and wants my batch as badly as I want his.

After all this rhetoric, I still haven't tackled the hardest problem, an explanation of why I like Wagner's works so much. It is a temptation to offer the easy reasons. One would be the urge to take up lost causes, although Wagner is not as obscure as most of the lost causes that normally interest my type. There might be contributions from my own subconscious at work. Could the similarity between Wagner and Warner have had an effect on my ego, causing me to imagine that if I glorify Wagner, I do something for Warner? There is the additional point that Wagner reminds me in one way of my father: both had the remarkable ability to accomplish anything they really decided to do. My father's sudden decisions to accomplish something about which he knew nothing involved less world-shaking matters than Wagner's undertakings, like building a piece of furniture when there wasn't enough money to buy what he wanted, or fight and win, without hiring a lawyer, a battle over rights to a patent against the resources and determination of a large corporation in the radio manufacturing industry. But the basic ability to accomplish an apparently outlandish feat was shared by them. Alas, I possess that Wagner-Warner gift in a severely distorted form: I can't succeed in big tasks, but I do occasionally find myself doing the impossible when there is some sort of emergency, even when it's something I have no particular desire to work miracles over.

Still, there must be a pony down there somewhere. I imagine that I'm so fond of Wagner's music partly because it's the source from which so much other music has sprung, and bears the same relationship to that offspring as the sight of a celebrated mountain itself bears to staring at a transparency of that mountain projected onto a screen in your den. Wagner's method of writing for the human voice meshes perfectly with the sort of singing that I prefer, because I've never enjoyed listening to a singer demonstrate how high a climactic note he can bellow or how rapidly he can sing embellishments on a simple melody. Wagner has the reputation of destroying all but the sturdiest voices, and this is not a valid reputation. Most of his roles lie much more comfortably within the comfort range that human physiology creates than the roles created by Mozart or Bizet, for example. Nor do I hold with the theory that true Wagnerian voices have vanished from the world with the retirement of Melchior. I suspect that Melchior was a phenomenon that even Wagner would not have believed, and that the great Wagnerian singers had voices of human dimensions like those of the better Wagnerian singers of today. I like Wagner's operas because there is so much of them that suddenly becomes newly recognized wisdom after I've experienced some

critical moment or other in my own life. And I never fail to be astonished at the fact that Wagner's operas have this attraction for me in the face of the fact that I really don't believe in the things that the works ask me to assume. I don't believe in pagan gods, particularly when they are as greedy and jealous as modern men; I don't believe there was ever a holy grail or a curse on a sailor or any reason to get upset because an elected church official pronounced anathema on a sinner; I have yet to find evidence in the reality of a girl who would give up everything for some wretch or other like most of the Wagnerian peerless maids; medieval Nürnberg wasn't as genial and quaint as all that; and yet while I'm witnessing the operas on the rare occasions or listening to them much more frequently, I forget these opinions and prejudices and doubts and am carried away by the intensity of the makebelieve that Wagner has somehow achieved. He was reputedly a magnificent actor when he showed singers at rehearsals how he wanted it done, and he must have poured into his poetry and music all the ability to make the unreal real that he never utilized in the more conventional manner of becoming a professional actor. I refuse to draw myself into an argument with me over the problem of whether my love for things German has caused an intensified admiration for Wagner, or vice versa; whichever the true situation, it's almost impossible to find in Wagner's music after Rienzi the jarring interpolations of passages that sound foreign to the composer's style, incongruous musical interjections that can be found in almost every other great composer. And yet the Wagner operas are different from one another. I won't agree with Conrad Osborne, who has been insisting in his Wagner discography for High Fidelity that nothing from this Wagner opera would sound proper in that Wagner opera: many melodies and whole passages could be interchanged between Lohengrin and Tannhäuser, even between Meistersinger and Tristan. And yet it's hard to imagine a whole act from Wagnerian opera turning up in another work by the same composer.

I suppose the answer to the question of why I like Wagner so much must be answered by the evasion that it's because his music is so great and welded so indissolubly to adequate texts. This tells us no more than to ask why I don't write music as well as Wagner did and to answer that it's because he was a genius and I am not. In any event, I know too many good people who also like Wagner to worry myself about the old legend that only the radicals and neurotics are interested in his music; after a century of life, the operas seem sure to survive indefinitely if the university professors who couldn't stand Wagner when he lived and won't listen to his works now are prevented from taking over all the world's governments; and the arrival of crude, too-expensive home video tape recorders even gives me something additional to live for. There was the time when I didn't dare hope I'd someday own any recordings better than the chopped-up, sonically inadequate 78 rpm discs; now I'm starting to wonder if I might have a chance of surviving until those home video tape machines give better pictures on less expensive tape and will permit me in some future year to watch the recorded operas while I hear them, when I feel the urge for Wagner and there's no live performance within reach.

How I Missed Another Worldcon

The fan rang my doorbell the first Saturday after the worldcon. I was happily surprised to see him. Now that Interstate 70 was finally complete through Maryland, I'd thought I'd never get any visitors as postconvention fallout; when through traffic took Route 40 through Hagerstown, I never knew who might turn up.

"I really did intend to go to the worldcon this year," I told my visitor. "But I thought it was finally safe to use an escalator, after all this time had passed since my last broken hip. I should have tried the experiment in late September, not late August."

"I should have known," the fan said. He looked tireder than even a fan on the Saturday after a worldcon should look. "Let's see. You missed the Tricon with a bellyache and the next year you missed the Nycon because of the Greyhound drivers' strike, and then the next year it was your sulkiness over your election as NFFF president that kept you home, and then more recently...."

"But my hip socket still doesn't feel right. Anyway, who won the worldcon bid for next year? I'm certain nothing's going to keep me home next year."

"I don't remember." He stared through the window onto Summit Avenue and I wished I'd replaced those wornout curtains as I'd meant to do for years. Then I realized what he'd said.

"You must have been at a real party in someone's room," I told him. "After the fights the past couple of years, I thought everyone would have been screaming the news all through the hotel after the voting."

"I probably heard. But I couldn't concentrate too well. Something went wrong," the fan said and stopped. He looked suspiciously at me. "You're sure you didn't go?"

"You'd have seen me if I'd been there. And I can take you down to Newberry's and let you talk to the clerks who separated me from that escalator. What happened at the con? Hotel detectives or a brawl or?"

"Nothing overt. Maybe nothing at all. It was a better than usual con, in fact. Good will all over the place. Sercon fans slobbering on the shoulders of faans in friendship. Strange fans accepted as part of the crowd instantly. And the biggest, longest party in worldcon history. The New York and Los Angeles fans had finagled rooms on one floor, there weren't any mundanes at all on that half of the floor, and the management agreed to let us rope off the corridors. Almost every room open, no non-fans complaining about fans milling in the corridors, even hotel staff people bringing liquor and mixing with us. You could see the shy people getting gregarious, the suspicious people speaking freely, good fellowship everywhere. That party might have lasted until the end of the con if some grease hadn't caught fire early Sunday down in the kitchen. Nothing to do with the con or fandom, of course, but that piddling little bit of smoke and smell meant a visit would be scheduled from the fire marshal's office, and the management told us we'd better clear the corridors. Even that advice struck all the fans like a friendly gesture, I didn't hear any bitching, and some of us hustled around to gather the litter

up before it got listed as a fire hazard. I saw one fellow in this sanitary squad latch onto an old Rhodomagnetic Digest. I could guess who'd lost it but it wasn't one of those cons where you feel like depriving a person of flotsam. But there must have been quite a few careless fans drinking at that party. I picked up a map of the city, one of the detailed ones that you pay a dollar for, not the little one that the con committee had distributed to show how to get to the hotel."

The telephone rang and my visitor winced. I feared the worst, one of those pests who say that they called me at home because they know I'm so busy at the office, and now if I'll just take a few notes and a list of fifty people who attended this Legion ceremony. Fortunately, it was a small voice asking to talk to Cathy or Kathy and I explained that nobody of that name lives at 423 Summit Avenue.

"I think I'm developing a phobia toward the telephone," I said.

"You're getting a phobia? Welcome to the club. But as I was saying, that had been such a perfect night that I didn't go looking for another party or joining the small bunch that had moved indoors on this floor. I was afraid something would happen to spoil the sense of well-being that had built up earlier that night. So I went back to my room and sat on the edge of the bed, wondering if I should read a while to relax myself before trying to sleep, and I felt that goddamn map between the bedspread and my rear end. I hadn't thrown it into the big trash container with the rest of the litter because I liked the little I'd seen of this city and I thought maybe some time I'd want to come back and explore it, when there wasn't a worldcon to distract me. If I did that, a map would come in handy.

"I pulled it from my hip pocket, for the sake of comfort, and tried to refold it neatly. Whoever had lost it had folded it the wrong way and I couldn't figure out how a couple of the creases should run and I remember thinking that some math expert in fandom should write a trivia-type article on the most efficient method of folding a large sheet into a small area. While I was trying to get it to fold flat I noticed that the map was marked up quite a bit with lines in different colors that hid some of the names of streets and roads.

"Right away, I did a fool thing. I decided that this map didn't belong to me and I'd getter get it back to whoever had done so much work on it. It might show the best way to drive from his home to the home of every other fan in the county, or it might be something a traveling salesman used in his job. I went out of my room, hunting the owner. Of course I wouldn't have done any such thing if I'd been cold sober and if I hadn't been filled with all-out benevolence to all fandom that particular night. I felt that I would spoil the night in a sense if I created even a small amount of annoyance for the person who'd lost his map.

"Maybe there was an extra-good party in progress by then, because I saw few fan friends around the hotel and it was too late to call rooms at random. I was about to go back to my room and write a little note about the map for posting on a bulletin board somewhere, when I saw a couple of members of the con committee. They were arguing with a subordinate hotel official over the keys

to one of the meeting rooms. I showed them my map. They disproved my theory about local fans' homes and said the markings were close to some things like city hall and an army post in the outlying areas, so it might have been prepared for a tourist who wanted to see all the local sights.

"I went back to my room and didn't sleep the rest of the night, what was left of it. I thought I'd noticed a sort of pattern in those lines."

The fan crossed his legs and almost immediately straightened them out again before he continued: "You know my job is with the telephone company. I remembered a fellow who used to work with me and had been transferred to the worldcon city a year or so ago. I got in touch with him the next day, even if it cost me a chance to go to the banquet. He confirmed my suspicions. And I didn't know what to do then. If I did the right thing I might be a quiet hero and if I did the wrong thing I might disrupt fandom as we know it needlessly.

"Right here in Hagerstown there are some key places in the network of telephone wires. We put them in underground now as much as possible but they still run on poles around older buildings and through open country. Someone who knows how to climb poles and use wire-cutters or a good marksman with a high powered rifle could just about paralyze a community's normal activities by damaging lines at a few key points. That map showed a lot of key points and the path of the cables in and around the worldcon city.

"While they were hearing bids for next year's con, I was sitting bolt upright in a chair in my room, as if that would let me take instant action if I decided on instant action. I could take the map to the local FBI, tell them exactly what had happened and what I knew about communications. That might result in discovery of someone dangerous. It wouldn't have necessarily been a fan. Lots of mundanes had wandered into that area before we'd roped it off. And I knew that the investigation would stretch out to each fan who had been on that floor that night, meaning almost everyone at the worldcon. Some skeletons would come tumbling out of closets as a nasty byproduct of the investigation. If they caught a spy and he was a fan, Reader's Digest or the Saturday Evening Post would write it up and we'd all shrivel in the publicity.

"I also knew that it could be a false alarm. I could think of simple explanations. Some local fans might be monkeying around with their own version of the old L.A. Coventry, and this could be a guideline to territories. Key areas would naturally be important if that was the case. A reporter might have dropped it because the press had been covering us and these are parts of a community where a lot of assignments would occur.

"Besides. If a foreign power had someone in that city who dropped in on the con and was stupid enough to lose a marked map, wouldn't he blunder again soon enough to be caught?

"I didn't ask for advice from anyone else at the con. I didn't call the FBI or the CIA. I'm not going to tell you what I did with the map but it's safe. Then I thought I'd stop and see you. I thought maybe telling someone would help me decide what to do. It hasn't. Fandom or the nation, I wouldn't hesitate to tell if I were sure, but when it's just a wild suspicion...."

I decided I didn't want to attend the worldcon the next year.