

SYNAPSE

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DENDRITES

I didn't expect to be publishing this issue of Synapse. With the three pages i had in Two Shot, i figured i could make up my sustaining activity by putting the sheets for Civil War in the mailing. As the crunch approached, i looked for them around the House of Follies and the garage. Not finding them here, i assumed they were at Outrider Hut, where i have dead storage. But Friday i was in Tucumcari, and all i found in that line was a couple dozen of the game boards. I must conclude they're still in the basement at Middle Earth, which is chagrining, for i was in Snoqualmie some two months ago, about the time of the Baycon. I brought back a good deal of stuff, and could easily have brought Civil War.

So i had to work up a lightweight Synapse on a weekend when i was supposed to be shepherding kiddie crews distributing Democratic propaganda. Then an election and a brief intervened, so after The World the Flesh and the Devil on Thursday Night at the Movies, i'm staying up all night to get it executed.

The artwork is by Ed Speer. I haven't read all the intervening mailings, so there are no comments. My reading is as usual way behind. Fandom's circulating copy of Greek Love reached here a while back, but i've scarcely looked at it. Still, i did take time to read some Arthur C Clarke, after seeing 2001 with the Albuquerque club. The movie seems to have made an impression on the city. A newspaper article discussed the plunge into the vacuum, predictably misspelling "The Red Peri" "The Red Peril". A dj on our favorite radio station said he was worried about a friend of his, who identifies with the monolith.

I don't believe Aq got any passersby to the Baycon. Pre-Baycon we had Takumi Shibano, but Aq wasn't exactly en route for him. Since the last Synapse we've also had a flying visit from Dick Eney, sometime between Tet and the 31st of March. The Coulsons paid a visit during the summer. More recently, welcome visitors to a club meeting and Yggdrasil were Bob and Peggy Pavlat.

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SE DICE

Dick Eney commented on the Synapse before last:

...
But I thought the moral law described the way we should want to go, rather than constrained us to follow it. (I'm not up on Catholic theory, but I thought the law was prescriptive rather than descriptive. Of course, it doesn't constrain of itself; the actual constraining would have to be by priests usw.)

I think humanoid is a better word for djann than manlike. I mean, they have tusks and claws and superhuman stature, just to start with, besides various eldritch powers like that of levitation, and apparently a non-material nature like that of angels since they're able to expand and contract within very wide limits. ... Like other stfnic humanoids of the Good Olde Dayes they combined non-human biology with a human social system of primitive type. I know fruitful intermarriage with humans was also possible, but then that was the case with angels too...

...
I'm not familiar with personnel policy, but the ET's comment that if he showed he could conquer the galaxy his superiors would give him a promotion seems like a reasonable expectation. Most organizations have merit promotion policies nowadays. (The point I intended to make about the Khartoum episode of the Time Tunnel was that the ET's supposedly superior weapons and technology were abysmally primitive by stfnic standards, so conquering even a corner of the Galaxy was not a reasonable expectation.)

For pete sake, don't note your kid can tell why nobody can time travel and then not pass the information along. ... (I'm afraid Ed's reason was rather elementary. Something like it's already happened so you can't change it.)

...
I believe it is still Islamic doctrine that everything that happens is willed deliberately by Allah, but this doesn't equate with the view that the sprouting of a seed is a miracle. Some ulemas claim that it negates the possibility of miracles: if a stone falls upward or a bullet curves around and misses you, it's because Allah happened to will things that way this time; but it's not contrary to nature, because everything happens because Allah wills it to. ** ... ** The comment about god's different reactions to foreseeing and actuality suggests he is himself bound by time, rather than standing outside it where he would directly perceive the future happening without regard to time-flow, much like our reading terrain from the air as contrasted to travelling over it on the ground. ** I recall that Anatol France had an ingenious solution for the problem of god's foreknowledge. When changing the penguins of Penguin Island into French, god simply deliberately refused to look into the future. (Can God limit himself? Can he make a weight so heavy he can't lift it?) ** I don't see how you can limit generation of possible futures to "persons" without postulating some sort of threshold between exercise and nonexercise of free will. As no hard line can be drawn to define conscious ability to choose, I think you'd at least have to include primates, porpoises, and pachyderms among the generators of alternate worlds unless you had a rather high threshold below which "choice" did not involve free-will acts. Understand, I am by no means opposed in principle to having porpoises generate alternate worlds.

THE PEANUT VENDOR MODEL

A presidential election is like competition between two peanut vendors.

In the model that has been described, the two vendors operate from movable stands in a long and busy city block. Net flow of foot traffic is the same in both directions. People are going in and out of stores along the street, and perhaps coming from a park across the street, but it is essentially a linear arrangement.

Peanut-eaters will buy from whichever vendor is nearest them. Therefore each vendor tries to position himself on the sidewalk so that the greater part of the potential customers are nearer to him than to his competitor.

If we suppose the people to be evenly distributed along the sidewalk, the result of this competitive situation is that the vendors end up side by side in the middle of the block, the one on the left with half of the people to his left, the other with half the people to his right:

. pv pv

If the vendor on the left were to take a position farther to the left, the other would have a majority of the customers closer to him than to his competitor, and could increase his advantage slightly by moving leftward also. If the vendor on the left moved to the right instead, past his competitor, he would leave the competitor in the most advantageous spot, the center.

In politics of course the situation is not this simple. For one thing, there are several spectrums, domestic affairs and foreign affairs at least. In each of these, the candidate tries to guess the center as nearly as possible, and position himself there, so far as his principles and his previous public record permit. For some voters, one spectrum (e g foreign affairs) is of overriding importance.

Moreover the distribution of people along the street changes. Relative to where they were at the start, the people may on the whole move or be moved to one side. The candidates try to anticipate, influence, and go with such movement. They may end up like this:

. C..C...

In that situation, the candidate on the left wins.

The model holds only insofar as the voters correspond to the peanut-buyers, a linear arrangement patronizing whoever is closest to their position. Other factors affect voting. There are vote-influencing qualities other than position in a spectrum.

In a race for nomination, the peanut-vendor model is less applicable. There are several vendors, and they are pitching to only half the block, their own party, as if the other half had been closed off. Even within that half block, fewer people are buying, and some are buying more than others (that is, the enthusiasm of some supporters multiplies their importance). This is true at a convention, and only less so in a primary.

Delegates to a convention are likely to represent on the whole the center of that party's half-block. But in the convention, the paramount consideration is to nominate a winner. Thus it often results that a convention of delegates who would like to nominate a Bricker ends up with a Nixon, whom they believe to be nearer the center for the country than themselves are. The two-party system makes the parties compete to discover and carry out the will of the people. In doing so, it is no rebuke that they follow the lowly peanut-vendor model.

The above was roughdrafted last summer.

Dumbaugh, The Declaration of Independence, 50:

But even though it be conceded that a "people" may at any time "dissolve the political bands" which have theretofore confined them and may effect a "separation" from their former companions in the body politic, the troublesome question remains of determining what constitutes a "people."

To a large extent, the answer must be subjective and empirical. Any group whose sentiments of "belonging together" and esprit de corps are sufficiently strong to cause them to collaborate effectively in the establishment and maintenance of a sovereign and separate political organized society is undoubtedly a "people." The fact of success in asserting and maintaining independence is the best proof of a people's nationhood and right to be independent.

"Hold your nose and vote 'er straight."

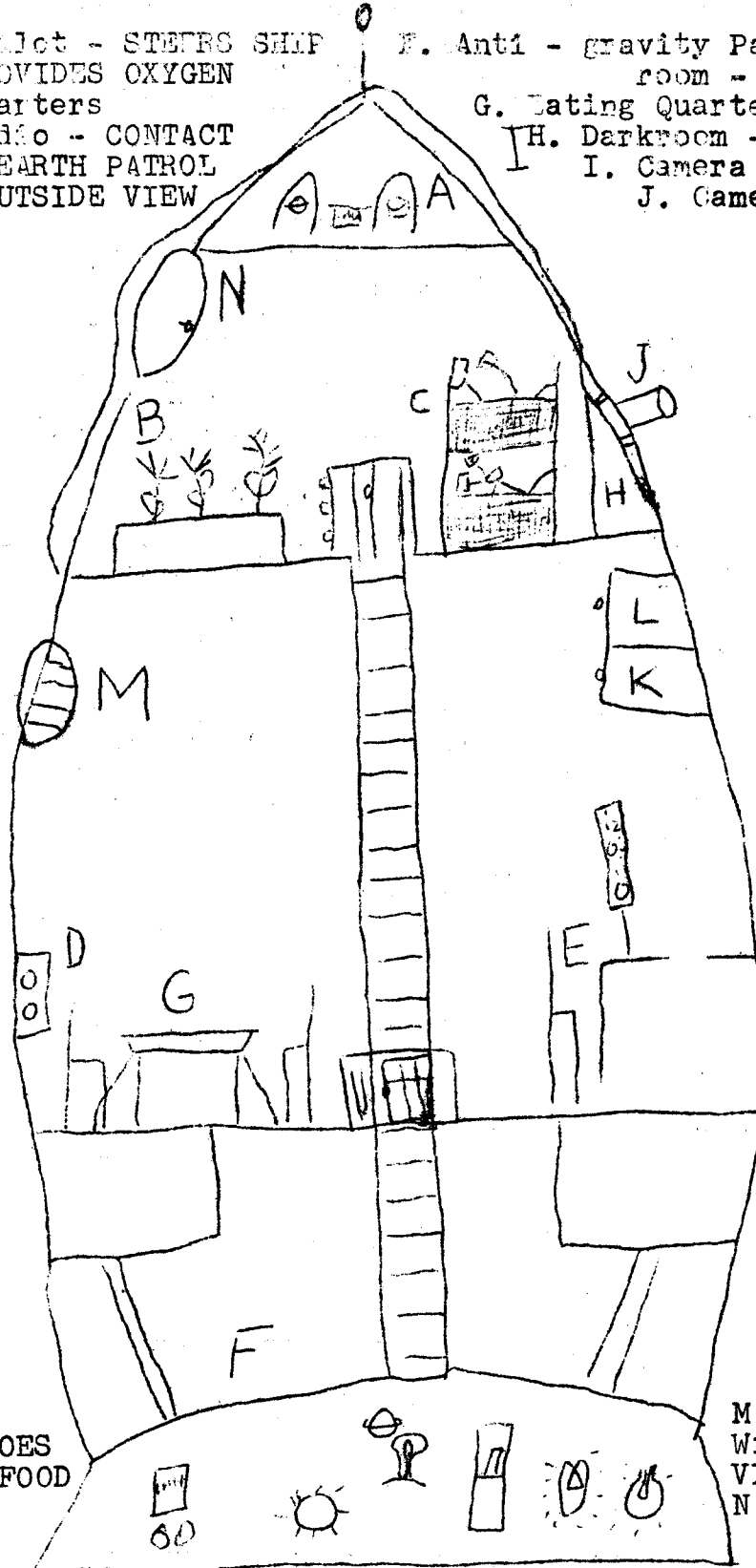
Hume, Essays Moral and Political, 305:

If the reason is askt of that Obedience, which we are bound to pay to Government, I readily answer; because Society cou'd not otherwise subsist; And this Answer is clear and intelligible to all Mankind. Your Answer is because we shou'd keep our Word. . . . You find yourself embarrass'd when tis asked you, why we are bound to keep our Word? And you can give no other Answer, but what would, immediately, without any Circuitry, have accounted for our Obligation to Allegiance.

"I have to hold mine just to vote a split ticket."

AN ANTI - GRAVITY PAINT POWERED SPACE SHIP

- A. Automatic pilot - STEERS SHIP
- B. Garden - PROVIDES OXYGEN
- C. Sleeping Quarters
- D. Two-way Radio - CONTACT WITH EARTH PATROL
- E. Scanner - OUTSIDE VIEW
- F. Anti - gravity Paint and Control room - POWER & SPEED
- G. Eating Quarters
- H. Darkroom - CAMERA FILM
- I. Camera Track
- J. Camera - SCANNER & PICTURES



- K. Cupboard - MAGNETIC SHOES
- L. Cupboard - FOOD

- M. Steel shuttered Window - OUTSIDE VIEW
- N. Hatch