

Selected by D. Webster at the usual address: omission of which gives me room to mention it is very kindly duplicated and distributed with Fido by J. Michael Rosenblum.

Three-Fold Discussion. I started this sheet because it would probably be of interest to fans - at least, to those I know. I daresay I have made mistakes, but in a recent letter DRSmith accuses me of nearly every sin under the sun, including dogmatism, intolerance & maliciousness; accordingly, the first page of this issues will be squandered by myself.

1st., THE SNAG (take a bow, George, take a bow). Myself I enjoyed The Snag; mine was always the mind that revelled in Fantacynic. Sam Youd's reply is here given, verbatim if poss., & further discussion will be welcomed provided participants remember to be very short & snappy (see point 3 below). As is inevitable when a fan starts slinging mud, RGM made some unjustified cracks, & I am with CSY in, e.g., his point 5/

I was meaning to make some nasty remarks about the decease of Warbull & fans who won't discuss politics. But why stir up more trouble? - they do exist, and since it's their support that makes Fido possible, their word is law. The Bard doesn't seem upset about Warbull-demise, being more concerned with --

2nd., FANTASY, which you may have received ere now. A plug is indicated. No matter how much various people (including me) disagree with some of its ed's opinions & actions, all agree that Fay is the best farmag England has produced. Why not support it? - 244 Desborough Road, Eastleigh, Hants. CSY hopes to produce an issue/month until called up, & there's hope of continuation after that. But..."I should add that this new monthly appearance will depend wholly on readers. Several are some months behind with subscriptions; others may shy at the new price - 6d. The point is that I have always lost from 5/- to 10/- per issue on Fay, even with the greatest benevolence towards fans I do not propose to drop that amount regularly and continue to publish monthly." Then why squall at 6d an issue, fans? - it'll do you more good than a cup of coffee & a biscuit bought at a cafe for the same price.

3rd., THE GENTLEST ART - hereafter Les Tart, altho Smith's Gent is good too. Firstly, I can imagine that the average reader of Michael's Mailing finds much to dislike in Les, but in this case, not being an exponent of telepathy (should I say ESP? -- ah, crool!) I can't do anything about it. However, my friends write me. Of these I am surprised that Johnny Burke has said no harsh word to me, for I have included bits of his letters which he would hardly wish flaunted, with remarks that probably added to the misunderstanding; however, since I gather from one of Smith's Fables of Misch-Masch that JTB now treats me as one not in full possession of his intellect, he has, I expect, wearied. Others--notably Smith & Medhurst--howled because I cut out long sections of arguments. My reasons were two:- (a) I had 4 pages to play with, had to keep extracts within reasonable limits, & wanted to let as many as possible have a say; (b) I wanted to do a thing I now realise was impossible, namely, conduct arguments without including the fiery & sarcastic whiplashes which may not be intended seriously but become slanderous in print. (b) I'll have to ignore in future. However, the only sensible critic of (a) seems to be CSYoud, who, I beg the others to notice, has edited a magazine & had experience in cramming 2 pages of material into a single page, only to find everyone surprised he could not pack in 6. Never again will I be annoyed at editorial cutting! To complete the arguments raised in an issue of Tart I should need at least 3 times the space I have for the next one. I intend now to stencil out another 4 pages containing a few of the deleted arguments & opinions: I hope JHR can include it with this, but if not I don't blame him & the supplement will be had - more postage expense! - on application. Thereafter Les Tart will presumably revert to insipidity, & if any fiery persons like DRS feel they must give it the go-by (as he has done this ish) perhaps calmer correspondents like Erikopkins, who have discussed things this long time without calling each other names, may still cling to the out-moded man of peace. Di-da-di-da-di-da.

2/ The gentleman referred to a coupla lines ago is really ERIC C. HOPKINS, who has suffered more than most of my friends through having his letters missed out entirely; can any of you who know him imagine Eric being featured as much in Les as DRS has been & howling grievances to the moon? (Ah, if I were truly a man of peace I should forgive him all...) On the British people--- "The popular view of 'Civilization' is a nation based upon equality, social-economic-political justice, least work compatible with the needs of a luxurious people enjoying every benefit of the sciences and peace. This ideal I am inclined to plump for on grounds of reason. But by ~~instinct~~ I should want a civilization of artistic standards with a sense of values & the power of self-criticism. In which I would do little but read, write, study, & go to the opera, the theatre, or the concert hall. Johnny badly needs the latter type of civilization (so do I come to that) /me too! DW/ & he therefore bases his criticisms on his desires, but mine are based upon reason (says he, ha'ha') & I realise that I am vastly outnumbered by people who don't care a damn for artistic & intellectual activities, & who do not really think it worth the trouble even to make an effort to better their physical lot (which is all they care for), but who wish only to be left alone in their miserable little boxes of lath & plaster, forced to irksome work, with little leisure /dunno, tho - one of the major problems, which will be much worse after the war when working-hours will be a lot shorter, is that people have quite a bit of leisure but spend it very badly indeed/, which they spend looking at football, looking at boxing, looking at all-in wrestling, looking at cricket, horse & greyhound & speedway-and-motor car /I'm led to believe ECH is addicted to darts & billiards!/, looking at bloody accidents or street-fights - or a drunkard - or a bomb-crater, looking at their money & having a flutter to raise some excitement. The people want this: if any of us sincerely wish to aid them we must ~~sink~~ our own desires whatever they may be, & help to give them all that they would like but not enough to get it:- the 'ideal' civilization I summed up at the top of this page, social-economic-political justice, but no Art. Our hope would be that, given the education & leisure to think, we could seduce sufficient individuals from the ordinary ranks to gain recognition & advancement of the arts. But in the meantime it is useless to make a commotion about the British people's lack of cultural instinct (tho' I do!) or the Americans', the Germans', even the French. Give the people education, opportunity, leisure, & a little spoon-feeding, & they'll develop the necessary sentiments. Or perhaps they won't: the phenomenon of an almost perfectly civilised race like the Greeks of Pericles' Age & thereabouts may never occur again, & if their attitude of mind cannot be inculcated in an indifferent race then we may well be screaming for a moon of quite unattainable remoteness. We can but try, however, so if you ~~move~~ your fellow man, brother, On to Altruism!"

ARTHUR C. CLARKE was enticed down from his mountain wilds and, on being allowed to show round the unique collection of photos he has collected with Eric Russell, persuaded to say this:- "Concerning JFB's remarks /Les 27/, I am more or less in agreement with him, but do not consider that the British race are much worse than the rest of 'em. I've heard a lot about the standard of culture in Finland (I can't imagine us treating Sibelius as they did) and I am prepared to admit that they may have a higher civilisation than ours. But quite frankly, we "Star-begotten" ~~consider ourselves~~ the equals of anyone else in the potty little world, so I don't see why JFB should have such a down on the race which has produced most of us. True, we are heavily diluted with a lot of poor material, but we'll get rid of that in time. With good education, it could be done in a generation. I believe that the aim of civilization is the abolition of the proletariat, by which I mean the half educated ~~hard~~ ~~we~~ sees pouring into the cinemas any Saturday night.\*\*\*/In the interests of space I must cut out a highly amusing bit, not quite to the point./\*\*\* I cannot tolerate the presence of people who are incapable of any appreciation of things beyond their immediate surroundings - people who know nothing of art, who care nothing for the destiny of their race or the world, who have never thought that things will one day be different from what they are today. And the world is full of such people: in fact as I look around me (an occupation too painful to be indulged in very frequent-



3/ ly) my usual reaction is "Thank God I am not as other men!" Yet the tragic thing is that all these 'Englishmen' (as JFB would put it) are capable of great things under certain circumstances, & show in fleeting glimpses the promise that was lost in them because they left school at 14 or never had any sort of guidance in distinguishing the cheap & petty from the great & valuable. \* \* \* Sometimes I feel I would like to exterminate them without pity had I the power; more often I feel an overwhelming sorrow that they have not had the good fortune I have had, & remember "There, but for the grace of God, goes A.C.C."

And today's lesson is finished by my psychologist friend, tho (a) I don't remember ever mentioning a new social order - as you know, it's an idea I have an alarming paucity of ideas on; & (b) I don't know where the mathematics teacher comes from - psychoanalysis, I guess! "I should like to write a few writing-pads on your plausible but technically unsound theory of a new social order, which I myself have held (in essence) for some time. I must say something on the subject - the question is, how to stop. However... I both like & pity the poor and wretched (incidentally, a very small percentage indeed are wretched). But you say they don't know what to think about it, or how to think at all, because of insufficient education & incitement to think, & that this is why they are poor, wretched &c. &c. /It does sound an ingenious theory, tho - quite like me./ On the contrary, they don't think because their I.Q. is not sufficiently high, & they are poor, wretched &c &c, partly for the same reason, & partly because those who are capable of thinking won't think about them, think the wrong things, or won't act on their thoughts. I know plenty of the poor are of average intelligence or more, & these either think, or at least once thought, but have realised its futility in their position. Thus - in my opinion - the fault lies in the administration & not in the people, and insofar as the administration is chosen by people who can't think, it is faulty. I'm not suggesting the Nazi idea that the people are merely animal & must be driven. I am suggesting that those of the people who are of intelligence considerably (or even slightly, I sometimes think) subnormal should not choose their own administrators, & that those to be chosen should also be proved to be of intelligence definitely above average." . . . On second thoughts, I'll miss out the rest, including the maths teacher, since it's hardly relevant.

This US farmag business - again for American eyes. Since I stencilled the last issue, two parcels have been received at Idlewild with tumultuous cheers, from that latter-day Good Samaritan (as the Bard so gracefully puts it). I can only hope that others will follow his example - they will be as generously repaid. Any issues I receive I shall be very glad to pass round also to JFBurke & Harry Turner (& CSYoud if he wishes them), so that one copy, if any American is generous enough to slip it into JMR's envelope, will go the round of the Fido + contributors; if Rennison is going to ask for copies as well, he can fend for himself. Million thanks, Shangri-LA!

C.S.YOUD - not that I agree with him throughout, but RGM had a whole 4 pages, so-- "Medhurst's outburst is so violently & grotesquely crazy, that I will content myself with nailing down a few lies. 1/ War Bull was withdrawn, & remains so. True, I hadn't planned to produce that last issue, but I thought Johnny was getting above himself and, anyway, I hoped it would appear in the same issue as Michael's announcement. 2/ I can hardly think Mike is stirring up trouble, & am left on wonderment about the source from where /Did wonder why my correspondent should say 'from where' - 'tis 'which'; 'he' throughout 2/ is RGM/ he learned I didn't like his remarks. There is a whopping big lie here, for I never had any intention of completely ignoring his letter (although he has atill not replied to an earlier one of mine). As I told Michael, he will hear from me, when I have time. Since there are others, more deserving, he will have to wait with what little patience he can muster. 3/ His comment re "Lilliput" & BBC intellectuals was either invidious or in downright bad taste. 4/ I have never refused to give a hearing to the opposition, & should have thought that would be the last insult to be offered. Doubters may enquire of Harry Kay. It is perfectly true that Michael asked me to change War Bull (in order to talk more science-fiction') & that I preferred to withdraw. Otherwise I would have published, verbatim if required, any hostile comment. I still will - in FANTAST. /Just

4/ one more reason for buying FANTAST, boys! 5/ The description of me as "searching frantically for a philosophy" was Michael's, & I have replied to it. Need I point out that the procedure Medhurst recommends is one I always try to follow. Correspondents from the beginning (& neither or Johnny nor Medhurst need apply here) ~~will remember~~ will remember that I have in turn attacked everything from radicalism, through Britain, pacifism, communism, militarism & pacifism again to intellectual snobbery. 6/ RGM now calls me a liar point-blank for saying I withdrew War Bull because of outcry from people who found any discussion but SF boring. Apply Michael. 7/ Oh, the sweet intellectual snob! [I] Say right, you're in good company, George. TLS is beneath contempt, of course. You sweet sap, Medhurst! 8/ If Medhurst objects to articles in GARGOYLE, why not write to Mac? Sarcasm is poor stuff. 9/ Recommendation of Socialist Standard beautifully ambiguous. 3/ cheers for the People's Convention, Palme Dutt & Adolf! 10/ The whole Snag, except where, as frequently, it touched me, I found boring. Medhurst, whatever else he may be, is not a writer, ~~he will find~~ that his would-be humorous treatment of opposition gets nowhere. [I] disagree - I found it most entertaining. He has now, in fact, (& print this, please, Doug) at exactly the mental stage I reached two years ago, in the Grand Old Days of violent socialism, intellectual anti-Britishness, communism wars and never to be forgotten - FANTASYCINIC! In fact, most of THE SNAG reads as though Fantasy-cynic has written it (which will not, I hope, lead folks to identify me with Medhurst!). I don't know RGM's physical age (20 I think) but it is a sad reflection to think that he at 20 & I at 16 are emotionally, artistically & politically as nearly identical!"

. . . Reprisals will be entertained . . .

I had meant here to quote an excellent passage by Harry Turner on atheism, but on looking it up I find rather more than 2 pages. I think his "Creed of an Atheist" - which I also have here - should be in the current Fay, but if, after that, you still want more, I shall try to squeeze in his letter; or put it at Sam You'd - force of habit! - Your's disposal. ROD HOLMES follows up his "Snag" passage, thus - "Has it ever occurred to you that a Christian is so called because he is supposed to be Christ-like? If a person says that the average Christian is Christ-like, there are but two conclusions, nay three, I can draw. First, that I have the wrong idea of Christ, i.e. I have taken his description by the world in general too literally. Two, that the perpetrator of the remark is a fool; or three, that Christ was definitely not the guy you are led to believe. Personally, I consider there was only one Christ, just as I insist there was only one Christian. Likewise, "There is only one Holmes", thus everything I do is Holmsonian. \* \* \* Yet why should I bother debunking a silly religion when I don't even know it exists? We have six senses, sight, sound, touch, smell, taste & knowledge. One does not smell or taste Religion. But one is supposed to hear teaching, see records (Bibles & suchlike) & touch either or both. Yet one can't prove to one's satisfaction that one is really seeing a Bible, one sees so many things which do not exist. Hallucinations are common things, & at times far more reasonable than things which really(?) exist. What proof have you that that dream you had last night was not reality, & you are dreaming now? Touch? How do you know you've touched a thing? I'll let you answer that one, if you can, satisfactorily. \* \* So we come to the sixth sense, knowledge. Call it what you like, conscience if you wish. There are things which you know do exist, will happen & have happened before. Unreasonable things, perhaps, but enough to leave a mark. This is the one & only true sense, the will to know, the will to do. A sense which, by use of concentration can neutralise the other five. Before you condemn this, I'd like you to try a few experiments. Sit & close your eyes - what is your favourite food? Now concentrate: can you see it? Now try to imagine its taste & smell. If you can't, you're feeble-minded. Touch something against your face - you are very aware of it - now touch it (not grip) - you can't feel it quite so much - now concentrate, convince yourself your arm is just stretched out, holding nothing. You will lose the sense of touch momentarily. Ponder a while upon dreams, hallucinations, eyes, retinas, & nerves. This will all bring doubt, but try to question your own existence, the fact that which you call Dougie Webster [it's a lie!] is; there will be no doubt you know that." ....Boy, are you asking for it! It's with difficulty I restrain myself. Yes, friends, DW \*s.