

VANGUARD

# 1

K'taögmm-m

WOLLHEIM

"The word for One is K'taögmm;  
With a slight change of tone  
the word stands for Man also,  
and for Truth."

MARCH  
1945

Dr. Fogd

By Norman Matson

K'tabgm-m : Thoughts and Random Opinions of Donald A. Wollheim of  
98-50 67th Avenue, Forest Hills, N.Y. Vol.1,#1 (Second Edition)  
Written Jan. 29,1945. Published March 1945 for Vanguard A.P.A.

---

In the first Gapa Vanguard, we said that we were not at all sure that we would bother to offer our reasons for joining the new Vanguard APA; we were not sure that what members of the Fapa thought would be worth comment. Still and all, we do owe much to that club, of which we were co-founder and officer several times. We are still a member and we intend to remain active therein. Then, why should we feel any desire to join another organization of essentially the same type? It is a fair question and deserves a fair answer.

Essentially, it is a simple answer. Simply that we felt that the Fapa was somehow not fulfilling our desires. It just didn't seem to quite satisfy us.

This may be taken two ways. Either it failed of its worth and merit to live up to what we should like, or else it failed to do its duty to fantasy fandom, of which it was a powerful faction. Again, the answer would be that it did not meet its duties both ways.

Somehow the greater part of the Fapa seemed rather unpleasantly busy with self-analysis. The Rothman stuff, but much more poorly done. Rothman, after all, is a deep thinker even if a muddle-headed one. The others were just muddle-headed. Then, again, the tendency of ~~the~~ one section to regard itself as a "brain trust" and to attempt to control and monopolize the organization was irritating.

It would not have been irritating had this brain trust been actually what it claimed. Actually it was just the muddle-headed self-~~analyzing~~ analysts with the largest vocabularies. They mistook their wordage for intelligence. Unfortunately a study of their stands, the actual doings and movements of such as Art Widner, Al Ashley, Milty Rothman and others reveal only misunderstanding, lack of taste, lack of vision, lack of initiative, and above all--above everything else-- lack of a pioneering mentality.

Degler would have said they lacked cosmic minds. Only Degler didn't quite know what he was talking about. Olaf Stapledon does. Raym Washington does. John Michel does. And the term would have been well taken. They do lack cosmic minds. In their own refined fashion, they are disciples of J. Chapman Miske...with perhaps a touch of envy for Forrest J. Ackerman.

Their discussions, their debates, held little of interest for me because of the hopelessness of entering into argument with essentially closed minds. Now this may seem a ~~paradox~~ paradox--if they were debaters how could they have closed minds? Certainly they were liberals?

I know of no instance where any debater in Fapa in recent years changed another debater's mind. But then--to what? For not one of them had a stand. They lacked a philosophy save that of muddle-headed pseudo-intellectualism. Their world outlook was only that they were confused liberals and grimly determined to remain confused liberals.

Milty, it is true, claimed a philosophy. He said he was a socialist. Then so claimed Ackerman. And in all truth, it may be said that Ackerman has done a hundred times more to stand by his philosophy and to advance it than Rothman. For Milty is first and foremost a do-nothingist. He is negative to the bottom of his soul. His philosophy is just another escape mechanism, it lacks substance (But lest the reader mistake that I think Ackerman to be a great force for socialism, be it said that only an incredibly fine social micrometer could measure his contribution).

Art Widner is another social negative. He has expressed some advanced ideas--but it is significant that he struggles mightily to oppose any application.

And therewith I differ. I, too, have a philosophy. And it is curiously not liberal at all. My viewpoint is rather bull-doggish. And above all, my viewpoint is for doing things. Whatever I am, my mind is not in the least open to debate from persons who do not know or understand the world. The arguments of muddle-heads do not impress me, simply because they have not bothered to investigate their sources. I believe that I have investigated mine.

My philosophy works. Both in private life and in world history.

I am open to debate--but from those who debate from an honest and comprehensive platform. If you have adopted a philosophy, however wrong I think it to be, but if it is a real philosophy, a definite concrete set of ideas, ideas of a nature to move things in the world (rightly or wrongly), then I can argue with you. But those who have no platform in the first place, present nothing to demolish. They float in a cushion of air and blows merely bounce them from one indefinable void to another. About as satisfactory as punching pillars of gas.

So I have not bothered to enter into the heated (for gas acquires heat on joggling) discussions in Fapa. And I am ready to argue in Vanguard. For it is a tenet of Vangapa that we will not have muddle-heads. I have seen advance copies, for example, of Jim Blish's fascist defense of Ezra Pound. And I will answer these things in the next mailing. I shall take up the cudgel.

It is the same lack of a fixed world viewpoint that makes the Fapa a hotbed of quibbling over legal points raised without regard to the morals involved. To me, it is simply immoral to countenance published attacks on persons because of race. To me it is immoral, indecent and uncivilized.

But the Fapans never raised that aspect at all. When asked to accept a simple and decent things, they chose to quibble over false legalistics, imaginary problems, and presumptual slandering all the officers of Fapa to come. Morals never entered into it.

These same "brain-trusters" have probably given many dollars and much blood to aid in a certain war at the present time goin on all over the world. That they have actually no concept, no notion at all, of the meaning of this war, of the issues involves, of the historical background and future possibilities of this world-shaking and world-shaping conflagration their actions prove. Had they a platform, any platform, they would have known. And their arguments could then have applied directly to the problem in hand and not to the snide mental contortions on the wherefores and wereases of the wording.

No, I do not want to debate with these mental phantasms.

The Fapa is not all these people, of course. But it seems to have fallen under their sway. What had been needed is a debating ground where honest people may talk without interruption from the bird-brained bystanders and the self-inflated phonies. Vangapa is designed to be that.

That does not mean that I expect Vangapa to be entirely free of the shapeless liberals. Not at all. Only that their percentage will be smaller, their influence kept safely out of wrecking the club with sickening bibble-babble.

There are, of course, other considerations. For one thing, there are many bright new and old fans who want to join and contribute to a co-operative press association who are barred from Fapa by the accumulated muck of dead heads and back numbers. These people deserve a break. They deserve a chance to help start from the beginning in a new and vibrant organization. To help shape its form and chart its destinies.

Vangapa will take care of that angle--and in so doing acquire a spark of live freshness lacking in the Fapa.

I would like to think that my writings would be appreciated by them. Certainly the Fapa tends to blur one's worth.

Consider that I published in July 1944 a small fanzine named Vertigo. It was mailed out to about forty-five selected fans, I received far more comment, pro and con, far more satisfaction from that than from similar matter in the Fapa. It is obvious that size can often be a handicap in a club of this sort. It is obvious also that lack of ~~xxx~~ selectivity can also be a handicap. And I don't approve of subscription fanzines much--I believe in the APA way of handling things. So I am putting much of my trust into Vangapa now.

MIRRORS FROM M'LO

A page of purloined poetry

We understand that a publication such as is distributed exclusively through the medium of an amateur press association partake somewhat of the nature of a privileged communication. That is it may publish for its limited circulation readerhood material that is copyright. There being no intention of commercial profit thereby, there being no denial of the copyright ownership, the whole matter becomes a questionable problem. Copyright laws are dubious at best--and so--taking a chance, we shall from time to time publish here certain poems that happen to fit in with our moods or ideas. Thusly:

The Writing on the Wall

Rats, decent people in their nibbling way  
Have read the notice on the churchyard wall.  
"Rat Week next week!" they squeak. And that same day  
An urgent parish conference they call.  
"What can we do to check this inhumanity?"  
They ask; and twitch their whiskers in debate.  
Such methods, all admit, are sheer insanity,  
Barbarous, unthinkable, and out of date.

I find it odd, my biped self, that these  
Peace-loving rodents do not use our rational  
And righteous arguments of guns and gas,  
For though black rat and brown rat disagree,  
And individuals quarrel in the mass  
The Rat is resolutely international.

--Siegfried Sassoon  
(Left Review, 1936)

The Money Trail

In Arthur's day knights sought the Holy Grail  
Ladies were chaste and delicate and fair.  
Now they are fair by chemicals and often frail,  
And knights are making armor everywhere.

--Peter Lager  
("In Letters of Red", 1938)

---

"The word for One is K'tabgm-m; with a slight change of tone the word stands for Man also, and for Truth."

"Dr. Fogg" by Norman Matson

---