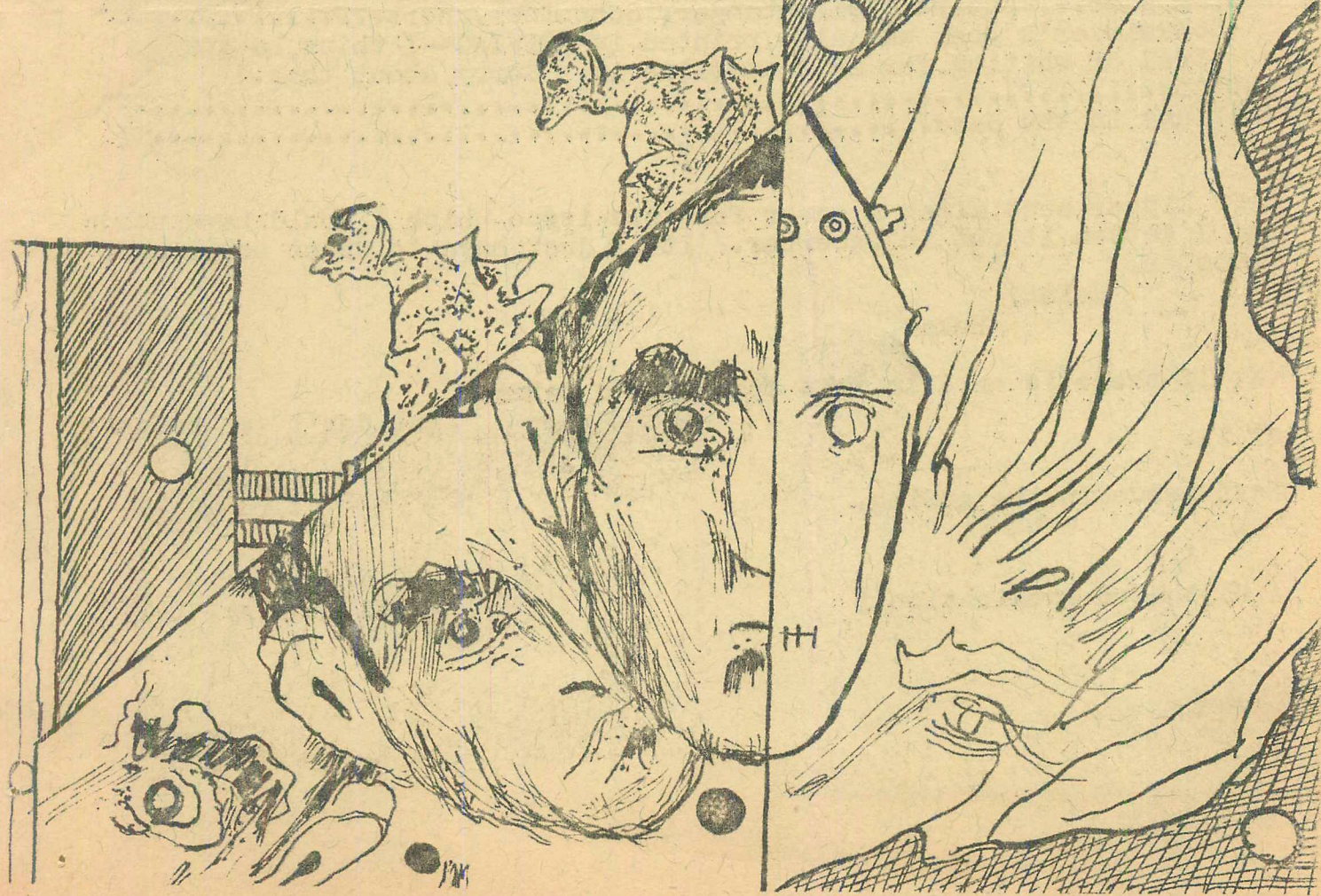
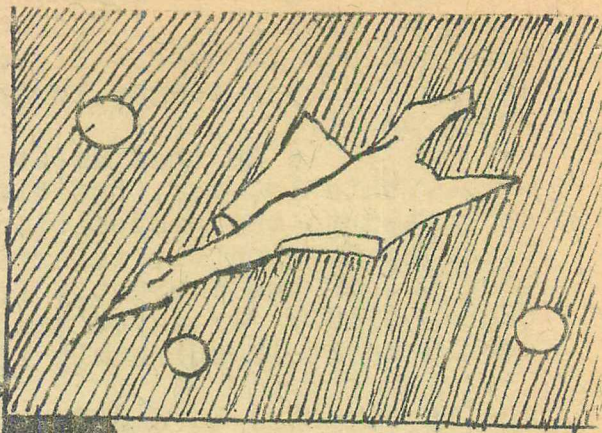


DYNATRON





Greetings once again, he said. This is the somewhat delayed 61st issue of DYNATRON. I had hoped to have it out a month or so ago but you know how it goes. If you really do, let me know, please. There may be too many commas in that sentence. I'll have to let Juffus check on it.

Be that as it may...and I'll sure be glad when May gets here...this is, yes, the 61st issue of DYNATRON, a fanzine of sorts, dedicated to the proposition, and published now and again by Roy Tackett, hereinafter referred to as Roy Tackett, at 915 Green Valley Road NW, in the currently frozen wastes of Albuquerque, New Mexico, USofA, 87107. Or maybe that should be 87107, USA. Whichever way it should be it is currently frozen.

Continuing with the sort of thing one is expected to continue with in this portion of the zine...Dynatron is available for all the usual reasons--or unreasons--but mostly because the editor so wills it. A sample copy may be had for...oh, let's say 0.47 yuan this time except for members of OPEC who are requested to send along one ounce of gold. Employees of American oil companies can have a copy for two ounces of gold. Let's see Don Miller figure out the price this time.

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Jeff Kipper sent along a cover for this issue which I would have used had I gotten it out in December. It'll just have to wait until next December.

Wait?

Hokay.

(X) If there is an X in this space you'd better.

at it.

But don't get caught

Next issue in the spring.

A Marinated Publication X

dated January, 1975



Some thoughts on

FRANZ KAFKA

by

ANDREW DARLINGTON

Kafka would never have read this.

He had a great cynicism about the press and believed only in its capacity for lies and the perversion of truth. He died two years after James Joyce had finished Ulysses, the same year that Thomas Mann completed The Magic Mountain. He died after destroying much of his work in manuscript form leaving, with instructions that they, too, should be burnt, three unfinished novels. Luckily his friend and executor, Max Brod, disobeyed these last instructions.

Colin Wilson used the example of Franz Kafka to illustrate his "outsider syndrome." The strange, solitary Czech writer representing, in this context, the man whose ability to see beyond the superficial veneer of society made him a form of outcast.

Priestly in Literature and Western Man describes Kafka as a "Czech-Jewish clerk who wrote odd stories that he hardly ever finished and did not even want to be published : yet in the thirties such was his fame that an adjective familiar to everybody concerned with literature (Kafkaesque-meaning symbolism beyond allegory) had been coined from his name." J.B.

There are two ways that these contentions can be tested, by the way Kafka lived his life, and by the ideas that he expressed in his books. Both paths lead to a composite picture of a man haunted by the almost psychopathic sensitivity to intangible powers and unanswerable questions.

He was born in Prague in 1883, the year that, in Britain, Thomas Hardy was writing the Dynasts. He was a Jew, the son of a proud, practical, self-made merchant. His mother came from a family of scholars given to religious contemplation. He was brought up in the Karpfengasse, the Judenstader or Jewish ghetto, where he met and befriended Gustav Janouch. Later Janouch was to publish a book of their conversations. Many of the people he knew from this time, artists and writers such as Milena Jesenka (with whom Kafka was to fall in love), Ernst Lederer, Josef Capek, died in concentration camps.

As Kafka grew, developing a strong interest in literature, the opposing personality of his father, Hermann Kafka, caused many clashes. As a concession to his father's will, he studied law, graduated from Prague University, worked in an insurance company and later at a semi-government office. His diaries, edited and published by Max Brod, cover these years and describe his dissatisfaction with the clerk's life. Kafka eventually broke with his father completely, an action that critics have attempted to use to explain much of his allegory. He moved to Berlin to devote his life to writing. His Die Verwandlung (The Metamorphosis) was published in 1916, two years after an unsatisfactory relationship with a girl he had hoped to marry. His first published book was Die Betrachtung (The Consideration).

Kafka could not accept truth from a superficial judgement of face values. He investigated and rejected conventional morality, materialism, and ultimately even human relationships. The developing stages of each



argument can be charted in his books, diaries and conversations.

In the short story The Great Mole he expresses his suspicion of material, in comparison to aesthetic rewards. The Mole of the title is used symbolically to represent a cause. A dedication that Kafka suggests is more important than the cause itself or the material rewards that may result. To avoid the possibility of the story being misunderstood as an attack on any specific belief or ideology he made the cause ridiculous: a Mole "larger than any other ever recorded. It is put to the central character, a village school-teacher who has dedicated himself to proving the existence of the mole, "What if your thesis receives critical acceptance (What if your mission finds material fulfillment?)? What if you receive medals, a museum named after you, a little more money, will that help the cause?"

On a wider scale the story can be seen as a parable of the search for truth that drove Kafka, the question being of greater importance than the answer. An existentialist idea.

It is interesting to compare the central ideas of Jean Paul Sartre's Intimacy and Kafka's Metamorphosis. In the former Sartre questions the validity of relationships. He asks, "What if people were transparent like jellyfish?" suggesting that love is attraction to the superficial, that no person can truly know the essential being of any other person. Love, therefore, is a compromise of appearances.

Kafka goes beyond rumination, although his story was published the earlier of the two. A salesman wakes up one morning to find himself transformed into a giant beetle. Kafka observes without moral comment the reaction of his family to this unexplained happening. Rumour and pathos are blended as the beetle is reviled, ignored and eventually dies from a combination of malnutrition, dejection and wounds inflicted by its father. The family is relieved at the death, cannot identify the insect with the person.

Thus Kafka judges the depths of human understanding and love.

His book The Trial utilises a surrealist nightmare technique. A man is arrested and put on trial for a crime about which he, or the reader, know nothing. "Someone must have been telling lies about Joseph K. for without having done anything wrong he was arrested one fine morning." So unfolds the fantasy of fear and uncertainty, until Joseph is executed, still ignorant of his supposed crime.

Das Schloser (The Castle), written between 1921 and 1922, begins with a stranger arriving in a strange place without knowing how he has arrived there or why. (This idea was used in 1958 by the playwright Ionesco in the theological play Tuer sans gages.) Again there is the symbolism of strange omnipotent powers, unattainable and absolute.

America, first published in 1913 as the short story The Stocker, was developed and almost doubled in length, but remains unfinished according to Kafka. Although there are places within the development of the plot where, logically, it could have ended, this was not Kafka's method or aim. It has been described as his most humorous book and was, perhaps, the one that he most enjoyed writing. It was translated by Willa and Edwin Muir and published in the U.K. in 1938. The hero, Karl Rossman, works as a lift-boy in a hotel, describes the endless uncertainty of human action, the chaos underlying every possible movement. Yet it is not nightmarish or symbolic in the way that The Castle is, although certain passages,



such as the inclusion of Delamarches, hint at its existence. The descriptive power of the observations is even more amazing when it is realised that Kafka never travelled beyond France and Upper Italy.

Priestly describes Kafka as "not so much a writer as an atmosphere."

The unseen, inaccessible power of The Castle, the cold merciless justice of The Trial, the exile of Rossman by his parents to America can be seen as a comment about his relationship with his father, a relationship never fully realised, a power never really understood, but which he had longed to obtain.

But then it can also be argued that the same ideas stem from a representation of the Jewish people's search for a community, a home, in the face of almost universal repression--Kafka was strongly conscious of his Judaism and was a Zionist. His fears can be explained as the attitude of the "Outsider" to a world he finds at once strange and shallow, yet necessary, the world of normality. For his was neither a voluntary "opting-out" from society, nor an excommunication by his fellows, but something perhaps inherent in the psychological make-up of the individual that made him feel out-of-step with the rest of mankind.

It has also been said, by Max Brod, that The Castle at least is a distorted version of Kafka's doomed love affair with Milena Jesenska.

Probably none of these ideas are wholly accurate, but that some idea of the writer to whom writing was "a form of prayer" can be gained by a consideration of the ideas en masse.

Franz Kafka died in a small private sanatorium just outside Kierling, near Vienna, on June 3rd, 1924, aged 41. The "hunger years" of post-war Berlin attacked his already ailing health. He contracted tuberculosis following a second unsuccessful attempt at marriage.

Perhaps finally the short story The Burrow can be used to represent Kafka. A creature frightened of personal contact with any other potentially harmful entity, lies exultantly in its isolation spending its time thinking of more complex methods of self-insulation. Yet aware of the reality beyond that will, ultimately, explode all around him.

Isolation, to Kafka, was not just a weakness, but also a strength, a religion.

ANDREW DARLINGTON

\*\*\*\*\*

"The ultimate result of shielding men from folly is to fill the world with fools."

Herbert Spencer



## TIME-LAPSE

by

BILL WOLFENBARGER

It came to me like a flash of thunder early one cold afternoon to sit down and review a couple of old science-fiction and fantasy magazines, in a remembrance of things past. There's the 25th Anniversary Issue of WEIRD TALES, March 1948, which has all the stories new; no reprints. Lee Brown Coye did the cover, depicting some old evil witch of sorts in a tattered red shroud...part of an ancient town set on a hill-top behind him, and on both sides, in the foreground, are skulls with an obviously evil bird perched on top of one of them. August Derleth and Seabury Quinn present flashbacks on the rich history of the magazine.

Edmond Hamilton leads off the issue with The Might-Have-Been which is a poor weird tale and the only thing that attempts to save it is large pieces of action. It seems hurridly written. Following is H. Russell Wakefield's Ghost Hunt which is a neat little ghost story about a haunted house. One of Manly Wade Wellman's better pieces, The Leonardo Rondache is a tight short story which contains glimpses of genuine horror. Then we come to Lovecraft's poem, The House, which is about the ultimate horror of decay. Then there's a story by Allison V. Harding, a WEIRD TALES author I personally dig a lot. It's called The Coming of M. Alkerhaus; the story would be spoiled if I told you anything about it. Carl Jacobi has a good one called The La Prellio Paper dealing with extra dimensions--seems to me Jacobi has always been good at stuff like this. One of Derleth's heavier works is Something in Wood; reads like a collaboration between Derleth, Lovecraft and Smith--it has eerie, spook-filled horror. Ray Bradbury's The October Game follows and I imagine everyone knows this one--about a little boy getting scared on Halloween. If you read Robert Bloch's Catnip for the first time it just might make you squirm a little--this is the kind of tale he does so well. C. A. Smith's The Master of the Crabs spooked me, as his better tales never fail to do; it is the best story in the magazine. Second best is Sturgeon's The Professor's Teddy Bear--it'll make your flesh crawl. Seabury Quinn has a story departing from Jules de Grandin, called The Merrow, and the moral here is that, in the sight of the Universe, man must be nothing than the fool he is. Hmmm....Roman Remains by Algernon Blackwood is the final weird tale in this issue. I wonder where the editor, D. McIlwraith, dug this one up. It's not a bad story, it's a pleasant departure from the bulk of Blackwood's nature stories.

And that is WT's 25th Anniversary issue. The reason I haven't gone into more detail on the stories is because I don't want to spoil them for anyone who hasn't yet read them and if I told you more about them they would be spoiled. Not at all a bad issue for only 20¢ in 1948. You got all those groovy stories to scare the pants off you plus artwork by Lee Brown Coye, Boris Dolgov and John Giunta.

Of course that 20¢ magazine will probably cost you a dollar these days.

BILL WOLFENBARGER

XXXXX



1984 REVISITED

Well, it's finally here,  
the year Orwell said  
all those gloomy things about.  
But for better or worse  
it's not the way he pictured it  
at all.

While it's true we've had  
our limited nuclear war  
and the disruption  
of society it produced  
called for strict controls  
which are  
not to everyone's liking,  
it can hardly be said  
that we're living  
in a totalitarian nitemare.

We don't have newspeak  
or doublethink  
except in the ways  
we've always had such headaches  
and if you're bothered by the  
thot police  
you're probably doing something  
to deserve it.  
We mustn't forget we're fighting  
a war in Eastasia  
and while we can depend  
on the Russo-Europeans  
as long as they're also  
under attack,  
world conditions are not reassuring  
to anyone looking toward 1985,  
let alone 2000.

But we must set these thots aside.  
If we concentrate on our own lives  
and serve as best we can  
Big Brother will be proud of us  
and who can ask more of life  
than that?

NEAL WILGUS

XXXXXX



## DREAMS FADE, IDEALS DIE

our one time  
heroes now are  
dead, else they  
sing of thwarted love.  
the fire of the  
revolution  
is gone from  
their songs.  
our woodstock is  
already a myth.  
the love and peace  
we thought  
we sought  
we never found.  
our generation  
has grown old  
beyond its years.

NICK SHEARS  
June, 1972

✕

## VENICE VISIONS

Venice is a vision  
a holy dream  
in the real world--  
a transcendence in your eye  
a confessional fumbling in the breast  
vibrations from God's holy Eye,  
the physical vision  
a vision in eternity  
of eternity  
tearful tender tremblings  
fantasy fantastical  
in hallucination holy holy--  
breath to complete the being  
because aughst agoneys  
exit haunted horey  
dimensions spent with  
reeking time---

BILL WOLFENBARGER  
August, 1967

✕

## Love Anti-Poem

I have no intention whatsoever of comparing you to a summer's day  
and you don't remind me of the moon at night,  
or the sea with its gentle inevitable tide caressing the sand and shore,  
or a star fixed in its course, beckoning to me across a cold and  
lifeless universe,  
or a sparrow returning to its nest,  
or a budding rose,  
or pure white winter's snow,  
or the flowers of early spring, bursting forth from virgin earth  
to welcome the sun,  
or anything like that -  
those things that poets write about.

You are you  
I am me  
Love is--

I have never attempted to write love poetry,  
abstract and symbolic,  
simple and sentimental,  
or otherwise.

For one thing it strikes me as very contrived.  
For another I wouldn't know what the hell I was talking about.

DARRELL SCHWEITZER

✕

"Why, oh why," you ask of me,  
"do you print fannish poetry?"  
It isn't good, it doesn't rhyme,  
It really is a waste of time."

It's not that it appeals to me,  
It's pretty bad, I must agree.  
It never will become the rage,  
But, what the hell, it fills the  
page.

ROYTAC

✕



THE READER VIBRATES OR THE ETHER SPEAKS OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT:

PAULINE PALMER  
2510 48th ST  
BELLINGHAM, WASH.  
98225

Well, I thought the bit about the Lomas Avenue Paint & Body Shop was funny. So why did your first mention of it bring puzzled inquiries, I wondered. After all, the humor involved seemed fairly obvious...

But then I tried to tell several others about it and got only confused stares for my trouble... There are certainly some very weird people around.

And now the following has appeared in a September issue of PEOPLE magazine. I thought you'd enjoy it (in fact we may be the only two people in the world that find it amusing):

THE LOMAS AVENUE PAINT & BODY SHOP SYNDROME STRIKES AGAIN!

"It's all very tantalizing to learn that the PARIS REVIEW has left Paris and returned to New York, but Steuben, Maine doesn't seem to have been on its itinerary. How can I get a subscription? /s/ Phil Conkling, Steuben, Me."

"Write the PARIS REVIEW, 45-39 171 Pl., Flushing, N.Y. 11358-ED."

⌞Actually, there are three of us. Ethel Lindsay will also see the humor.⌟

RONALD M. SALOMON  
1014 CONCORD ST.  
FRAMINGHAM, MASS.  
01701

Just got DYNATRON #60 - happy anniversary--and I thank you for giving me the big thrill of letting me see my name in print for the first time in any publication - proof to my family that someone is reading these letters.

Appropos the Postal Service, #60 has a cancellation date of Sept 14 on it - it takes over four weeks to get from New Mexico to Massachusetts?? The mail delivery system is going down hill fast - we now get mail delivered anytime from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. and sometimes they simply skip deliveries for a day at a time. We've also had packages left on the street in front of the house--I wonder if the mail truck slows down when they throw them at us?

Very interesting item about the U.S. Indian Claims Commission. In the end the Indians (or do they prefer Native Americans?) may have the last laugh regarding the slaughter of the bison if one day we will satisfy our meat cravings with the "beefalo", that cross-bred cattle/buffalo strain some people are betting on to feed the public.

⌞Oh, we read the letters that come in...even if they don't get printed every time.⌟The horror stories about the U.S.

Postal Service grow daily. I think it is time the Congress re-established the U.S. Post Office.⌟

PAT McCRAW  
7508 BELLROSE NE,  
ALBUQUERQUE, N.M.  
87110

You said "no one ever fails a science fiction course" and that this was a dumping ground for students who were too lazy to learn regular English. I object! People do fail these courses and some of these courses are extremely difficult.

As a junior high school teacher, I failed students in science fiction classes. These students failed because they refused to open a book (much less read the cover); they refused to think, and they refused to use their imaginations. Simply put, they were lazy, lazy, LAZY. Other English teachers and the administrators do think that science fiction is



a snap course--but not in my class.

In the beginning, the biggest problem for all the students was vocabulary. The kids couldn't imagine an adult making up words to name things that don't exist--like an anti-gravity machine or a time machine or a phaser. But once they learned that these words were really easy to understand, the majority of the students took off on a science fiction trek. (Of course, those receiving the F's never got this far.)

In my class, science fiction was never called literature. It was simply creative-writing in use; it was ideas in writing; and this appealed to the kids. They like to think about things that they or their parents don't normally think about.

For them, science fiction was a fascinating trip. They were amazed that some adults took science fiction seriously and even more astounded that it was taught in schools.

These students had an opportunity to set their imaginations free--without fear of parental laughter--and they used their imaginations. Ideas ranged from a giant marshmallow that ate a city to a man controlled by robots. The students wrote about their "worlds" and people like themselves. The way they wrote was refreshing and in many cases better than some of the garbage we see in VERTEX and even sometimes in ANALOG.

{{I think I saw the one about the giant marshmallow on TV a while back.}}

JACKIE FRANKE  
BOX 51-A, RR 2,  
BEECHER, ILL. 60401

I see by DYNATRON 60 that I either respond or get booted off your mailing list. Gee, Tackett, you're a hard man. It's only been four issues since I wrote! Can't you give a kid a chance?

Though it is appreciated that, with the paper shortage and all, a faned has to get paper from wherever and by whatever means he can, it has been a minor fannish tragedy to see DYNATRON pale into a seared version of its former self. I've nothing against Vardeman's choice of color for SANDWORM; it fits that zine. But for the Greenzine? No! Now it would be more appropose to nickname it the breezine, or possibly the granzine, since it's changed to either a greenish brown or a tannish-green. I know it's supposed to be plain ole tan, but somehow the cerebral processes alter its hue in translating the visual data into electrical pulses, and I see it as some distorted shades of green. A dead, burned-out green, like desert scrub, but green nonetheless. It's somewhat analogous to a confirmed Nixon-hater looking at the Watergate mess before quite so much damaging evidence was revealed. No way could I color him any way but Guilty, since my brain was set up to see him in a certain light, and nothing like facts would change that.

Schweitzer is, of course, arguing from the Either-Or standpoint. And, to a limited degree, he has that right. There are fans among us who do, indeed, wish to return to the Dear Old Days of thud and blunder space opera. Thankfully, their number is few. But in the main, those fans who object to this stressing of "literariness" in SF aren't stating that SF should be judged by different standards, only that writers who purport to write SF, should write exactly that...not poorly bandaged mainstream failures passed off as SF. Too many newer writers, in perhaps a search for a new dimension or slant towards the field, have totally ignored what it is that makes SF Science Fiction. They write of alienation, dissolution and apathy, add a few fillups to make it sound not quite like the here-



and-now, and call it "speculative fiction", figuring that reduction to its initials will help sf fans fall for the fakery. And the bulk of fandom isn't falling for it; thankfully.

The most solid thread that runs through SF that I read and enjoy is PLOT. Then characterization, setting, accuracy, etc. A few, very few, pieces of anecdotal nature, mood pieces, I like to read, but in the main I want to be told a story, not lectured to, not harangued at, not politicked at. If a writer is good, he can do these things, but in such a way that they are a part of the story itself, and so assimilated into it that they do not stand out baldly, like warts on skin, but are simple subtle shadings of hue and shadow. There aren't many writers, in or out of SF that can do that, but there are some. Just because most SF is crap, and is crap because the writers of it don't know how to write well, it does not stand to reason that, ipso facto, because a person can write, he will write good SF. There are persons with aspersions toward literateness who attempt the writing of the Classic Western, and have their Hero firing at bandits or Indians from horseback with a revolver and knocking his targets off with deadly accuracy. Well, it just doesn't jibe. No matter how well the action is described, no matter how motivated the hero or villain, no matter how lyrical the sentence structure is, if the author doesn't know, ignores, or fakes his medium, it isn't a good story.

In other words, the reason the artsy-craftsy set are being looked at askance is not because they are daring, trend-setters, or Lit'ry People... it's simply because they can't (or won't) write SF. Sf is a gestalt, after all, and none of its parts has overriding importance. Surely not Idea; but equally as surely, not Style. Those who love the genre want both, and all the other facets that go into it as well. Sometimes, though, I get the feeling We Ask Too Much...because we sure as hell aren't getting it. Or, at least, not often.

Oh, well said! I think that is what I have been trying to get across although certainly not with the clarity and success you did.//I think this will probably use up my SANDWORM paper and the next one--whenever it appears--will be green once more.//I have to threaten to cut the mailing list now and again... Faneds need that response, you know...and I sure can't stand having the circulation of this thing getting much higher than it is at present.}}

BETH SLICK  
9030 HARRATT, APT 2,  
WEST HOLLYWOOD, CALIF.  
90069

I must confess a continued enjoyment of Dynatron--but then we all have our weaknesses. In reference to your weather observations, I'm enclosing a newspaper clipping about Moscow's warmest October in 100 years which seems strangely contradictory to the overall world temperature drop. As you pointed out, no big conclusions can be drawn from these limited incidents, but it is interesting to keep track of what is going on. (Moscow's celebration of the November revolution was, I understand, spoiled by a vast snowstorm.}}

As a self admitted Trekie I'd like to let you know there are a few good ST zines. Ruth Berman's T-NEGATIVE is one of the best and is the only one I'm still receiving. The level of fiction is usually high, with articles and a lettercol. Of course, the material is all about STAR TREK so if you didn't like the show you'll feel the same way about the zine. If you have an open mind on the subject I'd recommend it.



JODIE OFFUTT  
FUNNY FARM  
HALDEMAN, KY. 40329

Wow! A DYNATRON! I'm impressed with myself  
to rate it. {{Well, you know how it goes...the  
wheels of fate and all that...}}

God, I wish some  
insightive soul would come up with a new concept in space for book  
storage! The hell with better mouse traps---give us more bookshelves.  
Our book population is compounded by one son who buys paperbacks at  
cons, only to discover his dad already has it. That's called geometric  
growth plus a failure to communicate. Or something like that.

Who  
knows what's happening to the Earth's climate? Our temperatures were  
on the rise a tiny bit before the '40s. Since then all the carbon di-  
oxide from fossil fuels had added to the greenhouse effect, increasing  
the atmosphere by about 12% (since about 1880) and since the 40's we've  
been in a slight decline in temperature. We keep adding to the atmos-  
phere with other pollutants, so who knows what might happen.

{{We could end up like Venus? Maybe that's what happened to  
our sister planet?}}

Take the course! If for no other reason than  
to discover what the "comic and Ironic" are. That, and Silverberg's  
personal vision. Maybe some of your readers would like to chip in to  
help defray the costs, then you could enlighten everybody. {{Anybody  
who reads Dynatron is beyond enlightening.}}

C. W. John's column is  
interesting. What we're doing is using the wrong materials for the  
wrong things. We should be using plastic for permanent structures; in-  
stead we use plastic that won't burn without polluting for throw-away  
containers and wood and metal that wears out for buildings we expect  
to last a while.

I can't see how the "cities" he describes would help  
much. We'd still have ghettos, only they'd be structured. We have  
some of those now. Brasilia sure hasn't worked out too well.

MICHAEL T. SHOEMAKER  
2123 NORTH EARLY ST.  
ALEXANDRIA, VA. 22302

I don't know if I ever mentioned it but last  
year I took a Literature of Fantasy course at  
Catholic University. It was very good mainly  
because it concentrated on the mythic and arch-

typal patterns to be found in the works we read. Here is the reading  
list: Grimm's Fairy Tales, Le Morte de Arthur, Alice in Wonderland &  
Through the Looking Glass, The Crock of Gold, The Hobbit & Lord of the  
Rings, and Out of the Silent Planet. And this was a one semester course.  
Of course, I had already read most of the items. You will note that it  
is a very academically safe reading list. Yet the teacher said that the  
administration refused to let her expand the course to a full year, and  
they refused to consider for a moment any "sci-fi" course. So much for  
the academic acceptance of SF. True, there is wider academic acceptance  
but I think the extent has been greatly exaggerated.

{{From the name, Catholic University, I would assume that  
the school you attended belongs to the Roman Church. One  
does not expect acceptance of science fiction or fantasy  
by that particular organization. The acceptance of sf has  
come in non-religious educational institutions.}}

C. W. John's  
vision is a nightmare to my mind and one that I refuse to seriously con-  
sider. Reminds me of an excellent NET Playhouse SF production of about  
5 years ago entitled Home. Of course, reality may be no better. I sus-  
pect a cataclysmic solution is almost inevitable.



It's a funny thing--I never thought I'd see the day--but in the last couple of years I've come around to the belief that SF really has a very low potential for being great literature. The basic problem I think is in the very nature of the genre, the fact that SF is not very mimetic. Because of its imaginative content, most SF is so far outside the reader's experience that there is little chance for the reader to identify with anything in the story, hence there is very little reader involvement. So I would have to agree that the idea is the most important element. Since it is the imaginative content that makes SF unique, this is the facet that should always be most fully exploited (otherwise, the writer might as well go and write Literature instead of SF, right?).

{{Ah, but dyed-in-the-wool sf readers (read "fans") have no trouble in identifying with elements in sf yarns. Is there a message there?}}

JEFFREY B. KIPPER  
9015 NE 21ST PLACE  
BELLEVUE, WASH. 98004

I don't know what to think of your political sensibility when you extend your perversity to expressing the slogan "Boycott grapes" in the same tone as you express "Restore the Czar",

but I guess you can get away with anything in a Science Fiction Fanzine as opposed to a Farm Workers Fanzine).

The Four Poems by Neal Wilgus are a delight. They express my sentiments exactly. It's always stimulating to come into contact with a fellow optimist.

{{You're a member of the Optimists Club, are you?//Inasmuch as politics make no sense whatsoever, my political sensibilities are as good as anyone else's. I don't see anything too incompatible in the two interlinos quoted. One expresses an interest in the well-being of the workers and the other an interest in the well-being of the aristocracy...a general interest in keeping everybody well. Sure.

HARRY WARNER  
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Don't they have half-price paperback shops in Albuquerque where you can turn in unwanted books for credit slips? Of course you begin to clutter up your house again as soon as you cash in the credit slip on other books, but you have the satisfaction of knowing that someone else will get some enjoyment from your books. Do you really want them converted into paper bags, mail order house advertising and other representative samples of recycled paper? Unfortunately, all this is not from experience. I don't part with a book often and whenever I do, I discover or invent a good reason for regretting its loss within six months or so. It's a good thing I don't have a family to get outraged about the mess on the attic which results from this book-hoarding.

{{I think you misread me. The books were turned over to places where they'd be re-read (I hope). Yes we have used paperback hourses but the idea was to eliminate--not bring in more. Hourses? They feed paperbacks to horses. Oh, never mind. Our situations are different, Harry--you are not sharing a house with three other people.}}

I don't think the new "cities" proposed by C. W. John would be nice places to live, unless the occupants were restrained by more restrictions and laws and regulations than any dictatorship has ever imposed on large numbers of people. Right now we have the beginnings of this kind of living in the form of public housing projects, and the decent people who



live in them are made miserable by the trash in the same buildings. Think of the additional tensions that would be created by all the rules which would be required to prevent bloodshed. Imagine the transportation problem created by a building complex housing 50,000 or more people: whether private autos or public transportation was used, think of the mess when everyone left for work and returned from work at more or less the same time, the school bus tangles, and conditions on icy days. That many people in a square mile-sized building would represent a population density perhaps ten times greater than that in the typical town of today. (The density difference wouldn't be as great compared with the most crowded tenement areas of New York City but most inhabitants of those blocks don't have two cars to a family and they're already as miserable as the occupants of the new cities would be.

John says transportation difficulties would be minimal as schools, stores and most places of employment would be contained within the building...these are to be self-contained cities. He says he expects most factories will be "cyber-nated." As for rules and regulations, yes, they would be strict and strictly enforced. John has been, I think, studying the Chinese Legalist school.}}

Darrell Schweitzer's dislike for Dr. E. E. Smith's stories is becoming sort of conspicuous in fanzines nowadays. I'm gradually gaining the suspicion that Darrell loves the Skylark and Lensman novels, re-reads them constantly, and is adopting this way of proving to himself that he can't stand them, because they don't fit his standards of great literature. But I've also had a lifelong urge to ask Ray Bradbury if he has ever read from beginning to end those literary classics he keeps raving about.

I like Alexis Gilliland's idea that the space race could be the modern equivalent for war. Couldn't the United States and Russia harry up and provide Israel and Egypt with specifications and some money for building some satellites? I don't believe the space race to be essentially useless as Alexis does. In fact, I'd like to see the United States' share of it stepped up as part of the fight against inflation. Instead of appeals to the public to spend less or a surtax on income, Uncle Sam should impose a 10% sales tax on every type of non-cash transaction: installment plan purchases, revolving charge accounts, credit card uses, and so on, then apply that money to speeding up the first manned flight to Mars and beginning tests on the technology that will be needed for the first star ships. A tax on credit buying will discourage people from buying beyond the limits of their income and might even drive prices on certain kinds of merchandise downward if demand falls off sufficiently.

Your idea will never be adopted, Harry, it makes too much sense. And you can bet the country's financial institutions would really fight any attempt to put a special tax on credit buying--that's where they make their money. And there isn't a one of the 535 members of the congress with enough guts--or honesty--to introduce a bill of that sort.//I certainly agree on the need for stepping up the space program. How about tossing ten million bucks to MIT, CalTech, and a couple of other such schools and telling them, "Find a star drive." I think they could do it.// Heh. If that special tax were put into effect the revenue would most likely be used for increased "welfare" programs. That buys votes--the space program doesn't.}}



AND WE ALSO HEARD FROM: Sheryl Birkhead, Ben Indick, Ross Pavlac (you are going to have to do better than that, Ross), Neal Wilgus, Sheryl Birkhead (what again?), Gil Gaier, Bill Wollenbanger, Darrell Schweitzer (I'll probably print that one nexttime), Chester Cuthbert, Jake Thompson and probably some others whose letters are around here somewhere. Would Mike to print them all but I've got to leave some room in this fanzine for

## WRITINGS IN THE SAND

Sneaky, eh? You thought you might get by this issue without having to put up with this nonsense. Ah, but you should know that these sand scribblings would show up somewhere. If they are not in their customary place at the front then, obviously, they must be somewhere else. And if they are somewhere else then they can't be in this fanzine at all. Why are you sitting there staring at this page?

We didn't do much convention-going this year. The lengthy trip through Canada cancelled out any other travelling plans. (Speer will want to know where these plans were travelling to.) We didn't attend Westercon or MileHiCon or the worldcon. And that's probably just as well. All of the reports I've read on Discon indicate that it was a mob scene--vast herds of people wandering around the place like a legion of zombies. The fans had to put up special notices on semi-secret meetings so they could get together for nuclear fizz and talk.

And as has been the case after the last two or three worldcons there is now some half-hearted discussion about what can be done to cut the size of the annual conclave. Of course tossing the subject around between thee and me really doesn't accomplish anything--the only people who can do anything about the size of the worldcons are the convention committees and I rather imagine those worthies are all in favor of big cons. It means more money. Worldcons have become, at least in the view of the conventional middle-class fan, a good-sized business with several thousand dollars involved. It is up to the convention committees to decide if they really want to forego all those dollars and get the conventions down to a more manageable size. I really don't know what the solution is. I suspect there will have to be some changes in programming, publicity and the way memberships are handled.

The 1973 Bubonicon was by no means a large conference; attendance was something over 100. Still it was felt that there were too many walkins who came mainly out of curiosity. This year the committee eliminated local publicity as much as possible--it is difficult to keep the word from getting around but it can be minimized--and attendance was down by about 20% from last year. We had very few walkins.

Of course the counter-argument to that is that you are not recruiting anyone new but that argument doesn't hold up. We had a number of new attendees this year.

For my own part I plan to take the only personal action I can towards reducing the size of worldcons--I won't be attending them. There are far too many regional conferences to bother with the mob at the worldcon.



Denny Lien quoted the LIBRARY JOURNAL a few issues back as saying fanzines were unimportant because they did not discuss the important issues of the day. I have given considerable thought to this and have decided that his page will discuss those important issues. Yes. Most publications of the LIBRARY JOURNAL type (if I've got the wrong magazine here I should apologize...) consider politics to be the most important issue so...

#### POLITICS

The biennial circus was held recently. Here in the Land of Enchantment the usual gaggle of clowns and crooks filed for public office. In the race for governor the GOP candidate was backed by Big Oil, the Demo candidate was backed by the organization that doesn't exist (he won) and the AIP candidate was backed into the corner and forgotten about.

#### INFLATION

I understand there are only two men in Washington who fully understand the problem--and they don't agree.

#### CYPRUS

If Russia attacks Turkey from the rear will Greece help?

#### THE WHITE HOUSE

Considering Mrs. Ford's recent surgery, one could say that makes two boobs removed from the White House this year.

This concludes our discussion of the important issues of the day.

What ever became of flower power and the counter-culture? Earth Day and concern over the environment? Plans to develop sources of energy other than oil?

It would seem to me--but, of course, it won't happen--that by their arrogant attitude the "energy companies" are begging to be nationalized. Consider the local natural gas distributor here, for example. It seems this company has been cheating the producers for some time now. The producers have sued. The distributor has gone to the state public service (ha!) commission and asked for permission to raise its rates so it will be able to pay the anticipated judgement against it.

As I mentioned above the candidate who won the New Mexico governor's contest had the unofficial backing of the organization that doesn't exist. The choice between that outfit and Big Business was easy to make. We know what they are up to--they are, at least, honest crooks.

When a society reaches the point where people place more trust in organized crime than they do in their "legitimate" institutions then it is time to take a good hard look at those institutions.

One of the speakers at Torcon II faulted SF writers for missing significant trends --like the rising influence of the Arabs in the world. As recent developments have shown the world is lining up behind the Arabs who have the oil. One wonders how long it will be before the U.S. decides that support of Israel isn't worth what it will cost in Arab oil.

Or how long before the industrial nations decide that the situation would be vastly improved in the Arabs didn't control all that oil.....?



## BOOK DEPARTMENT

Wherein ye ed writes about recent reading because nobody else will.

The Immortals by René Barjeval (William Morrow & Co., 1974, \$6.95, 239pp)

It is, I tell you, all a conspiracy. Everything. Conspiracy on top of conspiracy. It used to be conspiracies by evil villains like Fu Manchu or The Octopus or Dr Death. Nowadays, of course, the evilist villains anybody can think of are national governments (usually it is the U.S. government and I explained the reason for this in a review scheduled for Sam Long's MAGNIFICENT QWERTYUIOP) and I suppose they are right.

Shri Bahanba is an Indian doctor who has devoted his life to finding a cure for cancer. He finds immortality and it is a contagious disease.

The conspiracy? Ah, that's where the great powers get together to keep the disease from spreading.

THE IMMORTALS is called the #1 best selling novel in France. (Is that true Eric Batard?) The story has many facets; one of the major themes is the love story between Jeanne and Roland.

On the whole a rather good book. Somewhat preposterous in places but readable.

Star Smashers of the Galaxy Rangers by Harry Harrison (Berkley, 95¢, 190 pp). Just what it sounds like...campy space opera. It's fun in places and funny in places (cheddar cheese as the main constituent of a star drive?) but gets to be a drag. Yes. There is a hardcover edition of this for \$5.95. Don't waste your money.

STRANGE BEDFELLOWS edited by Thomas N. Scortia (Pocket Books, 1974, 254 pp, 95¢).

A couple of years ago Joseph Elder, I think it was, put together an anthology titled EROS IN ORBIT all about, he said, sex and science fiction. It wasn't very good. Thomas Scortia now has a go at the same theme with this anthology of 19 tales in which sex is more or less as much an element of the story as is science. Which, sometimes, isn't much.

It is rare these days to find an anthology in which all stories are first rate--most of them are quite uneven in quality and this one is no exception. Still, it is better overall than the Elder anthology was.

STRANGE GODS edited by Roger Elwood (Pocket Books, 1974, 191pp, 95¢)

According to Bruce Arthurs in GODLESS, Roger now represents 50% or thereabouts, of the SF market. I am not impressed. I have seen just a few of Elwood's anthologies and those few have been nothing to dance the fling over (Hey, Ethel, how does one dance the fling?). According to Arthurs, Elwood is something of a fundamentalist Christian and that has an effect on his choice of stories. I viewed this volume with some interest then. The intro by George Zebrowski (who he?) goes on at some length about stf based on religion all of which has nothing to do with this book. Strange gods, indeed.

If this is an example of the sort of anthologies Elwood regularly turns out--I wonder who is buying them.



FELLOWSHIP OF THE STARS edited by Terry Carr (Simon & Schuster, 1974, 222pp, \$7.95)

As repeatedly stated these original anthologies are all decidedly uneven in content. Terry Carr's latest "has focused on the theme of friendship between humans and beings from other dimensions." That's what the blurb writer says anyway. Nine stories here ranging from a well-done sentimental tale of a girl, a horse and Home, Dream Done Green by Alan Dean Foster (a horse is an alien creature?--not in this part of the country), to an utterly blah thing called Enjoy, Enjoy by Frederik Pohl--who should know better. Nine stories with more --'s than +-'s, I'm afraid.

Barry Malzberg has a new one out called The Sodom and Gomorrah Business if you care. I don't. The cover blurb informs me that Malzberg's sales now total over 5,000,000. (No, it doesn't say 5,000,000 what.) I wouldn't doubt it. The country is full of idiots.

THE MOTE IN GOD'S EYE by Larry Niven & Jerry Pournelle (Simon & Schuster, 1974, 537 pp, \$9.95)

"Possibly the finest science fiction novel I have ever read"--Robert Heinlein" says the cover blurb and that, one must admit, is a tremendous recommendation. I wouldn't go quite that far but this is one hell of a fine science fiction novel. This is a great first contact story--no doubt about it. The background is possible, the aliens are alien--and contain some real jolters--and I don't really object too much to the idea of an empire complete with royalty and nobility (when it comes right down to it most people seem to prefer the idea of a king) but...but...but. There is something here that just doesn't come off. Characterization is part of it. There is at the front of the book a long list of "Dramatis Personae" and, quite frankly, reading over the list after finishing the story I found that I came up with a blank on most of them. They were in the story? I guess so but they were not portrayed strongly enough to really make an impression. The Mote In God's Eye is good, no doubt about it--lots of points scored. It will probably be a Hugo contender. But there is something about it--and I can't say what--that leaves me feeling it could have been a hell of a lot better.

THE TEACHINGS OF DON JUAN all by Carlos Castaneda (Pocket Books, 1974, A SEPARATE REALITY \$1.50 each) These three volumes--and I believe Castaneda now has a fourth out in hard-cover--have created something of a stir in various quarters. They deal with Castaneda's apprenticeship under a Yaqui sorcerer he calls "Don Juan" and his experiments with peyote and other hallucinogenics in an effort to achieve a view of the old Indian's view of things as they are. Or as they seem to be while under the influence of drugs. Castaneda's books are certainly interesting from the point of view of the anthropologist as they give a view of a little known culture. There seems to be some question, though, as to just how much reality there is involved here and how much of it comes from Castaneda's imagination.

Awful lot of viewing going on in that paragraph.

Sigh. I think I'll do like Schweitzer--reread the Lens saga. Or better still the works of A. Merritt. Yes.



Yes, yes, I know those are half-hearted and uninteresting book reviews but there is far too much half-hearted and uninteresting science fiction being published these days. The best thing I've found in recent months is Ballentine's The Best of Stanley G. Weinbaum, 306 pages for \$1.65. Weinbaum's stories were written back in the 1930s and reads better than anything that the new generation of sf writers is turning out. It is a bit dated in places, Weinbaum's material, but the old SoW still comes through. And, no, it is not just because I am being nostalgic and fondly remembering the days of my youth. A lot of the stories written back then were bad, too. But when you get fans who are reading these stories for the first time, Vardeman, Dick Fatten, and René Tackett come immediately to mind, exclaiming over the excellence of these stories then it has to be something other than nostalgia. It would behoove today's writers of relevant speculative fiction to study the works of Stanley G. Weinbaum...maybe they'll get some pointers on how to write science fiction.

Looking over various fanzines, particularly Donn Brazier's excellent TITLE, one can't help noticing the parallels along which fan move. We are, 99% of us, middle class and at one time or another dabble in the offbeat and glamour occupations. Donn notes, for example, that he at one time was moderator for a television panel of teen-age book reviewers. Some 20 or more years ago I had weekly programs on three different radio stations in Ogden, Utah. All public service-type stuff.

During the latter stages of the Korean War the Marine Corps was attempting to rebuild its reserve units and I was one of those who was sent to Ogden to re-establish the reserve there. Working with the reserves involves a lot of public relations, a lot of identification with the local community. Publicity is the name of the game and I ground out vast numbers of "news releases" for the local papers, spent a lot of time speaking before local organizations and was on the air three nights a week.

One show was a teen-age panel discussion of questions of interest to teen-agers. Why teen-agers? Obviously this was the age group from which we hoped to recruit reserves. The second show was a typical dj thing--records with plugs for the Reserve unit sandwiched in between. The third was an interview show on which I talked to various "civic leaders". My first jobs after leaving the service were also in broadcasting, both radio and television, I stayed with it about a year before moving on into industrial electronics and then to civil service. That's another fannish characteristic--we maydabble around in the glamour professions but as we get older we move to nice, safe, mundane jobs where the pay is better. It is a middle class characteristic and fans are, for all their vaunted individuality and independence, very much, for the most part, middle-class conformists.

Harry Warner frequently expresses concern over the expansion of fanzine distribution outside the conventional bounds of fandom. Fanzines, especially since the appearance of Wertham's book, are being sought by libraries, universities, mundane collectors and others of that ilk. Other than the fact that one's acquaintances might be surprised to find one associated with what many might consider another nut group, I don't see where there is anything to fear. And with the increasing respectability of science fiction and its acceptance by academia I don't think that is a reasonable fear anymore either. The days when reading science fiction was considered odd and rather disreputable are gone.



Neil Armstrong's one small step and the solemn pontificating of that great father figure of the airways, Walter Cronkite, insured that, for the present, at least,

As for the fanzines, they are rather innocuous filled for the most part with trivia. They may well be spreading out into the mundane world but that should be of no concern to anyone. The worst that can be said about them is that some of the material may be in questionable taste but I doubt that anyone outside of fandom--and few people in fandom--attaches any import to them. Donn Brazier expresses some concern that some sort of censorship of fanzines might come about but that is quite far-fetched.

I wouldn't be surprised to see a form of censorship applied to prozines, though, and even, perhaps, to the worldcon. The prozines practiced censorship on their stories for years, of course, when they thought that a large percentage of the buyers were juveniles. Presumably the market is more adult these days and so are the stories...or at least some of them. (We could get into a discussion on what constitutes an adult story.)

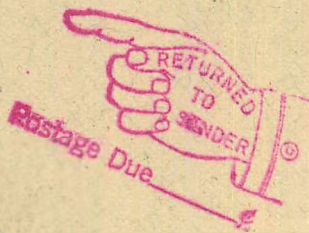
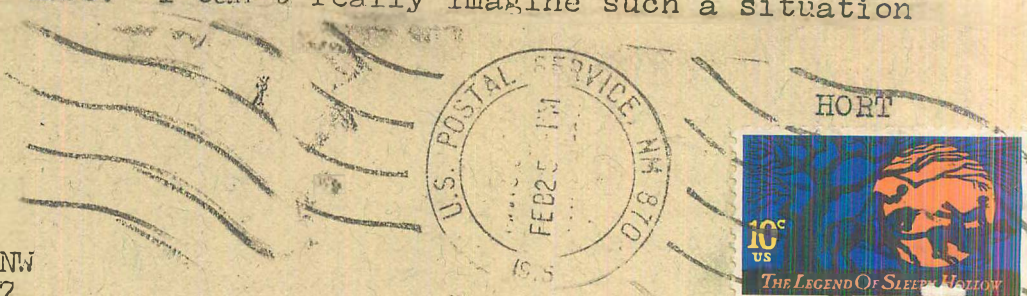
But censorship of the worldcon?? Oh, come now, Tackett, Don't be silly.

Let me offer a hypothetical case. Suppose that over half of the market for science fiction stories was dominated by one editor. And suppose this one editor had, shall we say, strong fundamentalist Christian leanings. There could be, possibly, a number of things about a worldcon he might find offensive. He could demand that the committee change its programming to suit his tastes. Could he make it stick? He could tell the pros... either you back me on this or I don't buy any more of your stories. And without the support of the pros there wouldn't be much of a worldcon. All hypothetical, of course. I can't really imagine such a situation arising.

Can you?

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