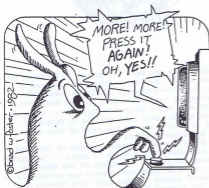


Shards of Babel



Shards Of Babel is the European SF newsletter published by thoroughbred Dutchman Roelof Goudriaan and mongrel Internationalist Lynne Ann Morse, of Noordwal 2, 2513 EA The Hague, The Netherlands. We try to appear every six weeks, and our next deadline is 13 July 1986. Send us your news even earlier and we'll publish before then. Anything really hot can be phoned to us: between 10.00 and 22.00 the number is 31 (70) 647 340.

"What's an Internationalist?" wonders Lynne Ann as she types the colophon for this SOB 19. Never mind. For the next six issues we'll take subscriptions for US \$5, £3.50 or f 13.--. In cash or to postgiro (NL-) 4113560. Or you can give us juicy news.

Title by Iain Byers, artwork by Brad Foster, calligraphy by LAMorse, entire issue contents copyright (c) 1986 by Roelof Goudriaan and Lynne Ann Morse. ISSN 0168-2776. Today has been 3 June 1986. Till next time!

Eastern Europe

Asteriod "Strugatskia"

The popularity of the Strugatski brothers is confirmed time and again. Earlier this year, this became apparent when an asteroid with a diameter of 17 kilometers, discovered in 1977 by N.S. Chernykh of the Crimea observatory, got its proposed name "Strugatskia" confirmed by the international centre on small planets.

The Strugatski's themselves still continue onward as well. In Minsk, publishing house "Yunatszva" published the Strugatski novella *HONDAY BEGINS ON SATURDAY* in a 180,000 copy print-run, and another novel, *THE WAVES STILL A WIND*, has seen print too, now that the last instalment has finally been published in the 1986-3 issue of *Znaniya-Sila*.

Amidst publications in print-runs of 50,000 to 150,000 for well-known Russian writers like Olga Larionova and V.I. Gskov, it is interesting to note the publication of *A VERY DESERVING FATE*, by David Konstantinovskiy, in Novosibirsk with a print-run of a "mere" 15,000. The story is about a young married couple doing research on the moon who discover time travel. They decide to travel into the past to help the rebels of the insurrection of 1825...

Truly major print-runs are reserved for novels like Sinclair Lewis's *IT CAN'T HAPPEN HERE*: 500,000 copies, from the Moscow publishing house "Pravda". ((IT CAN'T HAPPEN HERE is Sinclair Lewis's only SF novel, written in 1935 and predicting, without much eye for American political institutions, the development of a Nazi-like fascist party in the USA and their coup d'etat. --RG--))

Isaac Asimov's *END OF ETERNITY* is also good for 200,000 copies, and USSR SF fans have also been able to read stories from Shekley, Bradbury, Longyear, Simak and others in the anthology *FATES OF OUR CHILDREN*, with a foreword by Soviet cosmonaut Yu. Gagarin and colour illustrations by another cosmonaut, V. Dzhanibekov.

News from Sverdlovsk says that the 1986 Aelita Award, the major SF award in the USSR, will not be awarded. Unfortunately, I have no further details at the moment. Next time! ((Boris Zavgorodny))

Marjorie Brunner suffers stroke

We were shocked to hear that Marjorie Brunner suffered a stroke on 14th April. John says that her recovery, if she is fortunate to make one, will certainly be a matter of many weeks and could take months or even years. We wish Marjorie and John every ounce of strength.

Awards, awards France

This year's "Grand Prix de la Science-Fiction Française", the major SF award in France, went to *LES VAUTOURS* by Joël Boussin for best novel and "Le commerce des sondes" by Charles Dobynski for best short story. *LES VAUTOURS* (THE VULTURES) is a dystopian vein on organ transplants. Publisher: Fleuve Noir. ((Jean-Paul Cronisse))

the lowlands

The first pub SF meeting in the Hague was a success. Monday May 26, about 20 people showed up for the comfy atmosphere of the Amicitia pub, including most of the Holland in 1990 bid committee, a good deal of furriners and, luckily, also a couple of newcomers. Loyal "On-timers" like Lynne Ann and myself showed up at eight pm together with our American and the party didn't wind down until 1.30 am. Future pub meetings: every last Monday of the month, Amicitia, The Hague. Info from your SOB editors.

Will there be a Belgian Beneluxcon, after all? Eddy Bertin mentions a one-day con in mid-October. Stay tuned...



International SF

World SF, the international association for SF professionals, can keep its name. A problem about the name "World SF" began when the steering committee for the annual WorldCon registered the names "World Science Fiction Society", "Hugo", "WorldCon" and "MSFS" as trademarks. Some members of the steering committee considered World SF to be

an infringement of the trademark, and MSFS sent an official letter to World SF in August '84, calling on World SF to change their name.

The matter was resolved amiably when a number of World SF members who attended the 1985 WorldCon in Melbourne attended a business meeting and proposed that the meeting officially declare that World SF's use of its name did not infringe any valid registered mark of the MSFS or the WorldCon. The resolution passed, putting an end to the risks that frictions between fan and professional SF groups might arise. //World SF Newsletter//

One of the main events in the 1985 season of Italy's fantastic cinema isn't exactly SF or Fantasy -- it's a Western!

Director Duccio Tessari shot the full-length "Tex e il signore degli abissi" ("Tex and the Lord of the Abyss") that brings Tex Willer and his "pards" Kit Carson and Tiger Jack to the screen for the first time: all three characters feature in a well-known Western comic-serial in Italy.

Tex Willer was created by Giovanni Luigi Bonelli and drawn by Aurelio Galleppini in 1948; now the magazine which he started (Tex) has reached 300 issues. In the comic field, its circulation of 500,000 competes with Topolino ("Mickey Mouse") and it excels among the various adventure comics published in Italy.

A singular peculiarity of the Italian Western comic is the introduction of narrative elements from other genres, like Horror and SF. So, a Western's heroes live their adventures not in a world where magic and sorcery are simple Indian superstitions, but a tangible reality. Sometimes their enemies are powerful magicians, supernatural entities, zombies, vampires or even little green men coming from other planets -- it is a characteristic that, in the worst cases, risks degeneration into pure kitsch.

That feature of "Western" comics is maybe an attempt to prevent "hardening of the arteries" in the genre, and to complete the exploitation of its classic themes. Or, as Aurelio Galleppini maintains, it is a substantial renewal that insures a qualitative improvement to the stories, quality that was already present in the comic that gave rise to the film script: "Il signore dell'abisso" ("The Lord of the Abyss") was published in 1969. The fantasy element is clearly emphasized in Tessari's film, where Tex is almost transformed into an Indiana Jones type hero, grappling with extraordinary events.

In the film, Tex is living in a Navajo Indian reserve as a Federal Agent. He is called on to investigate the theft of fire-arms. His inquiries lead him to a belligerent Aztec tribe whose Princess disposes of magic weapons.

The film adopts a comic narrative technique; developing action is not only expressed by the characters' movements, but also by a fast film editing of fixed shots having a considerable fidelity to the original artwork in the comic. The fixed shots are the work of Letteri, one of the many draughtsmen who know contribute to the comic serial.

"Tex e il signore degli abissi" is shot in Spain, near Almeria, in order to have surroundings similar to the Texas-Mexico border where the story takes place. The film was first shown at the Venice International Film Exhibition, where some of the critics remarked on a certain ingenuousness as its main characteristic.

The story of Tex's transformation into film began in 1976. The original project by director Enzo G. Castellari, with Charlston Heston as the leading actor, never reached fruition. However, Italy's RAI 3 and Cinecittà cooperated in the final filming; its budget was 2,500,000,000 lire (US \$ 1,599,481, UK £ 1,071,191), or as Tessari likes to put it, "forty-six thousand millions less than Indiana Jones". The film has already been sold for exhibition in Spain, Germany and the Middle East, and its possible success might lead to a future television serial of twenty-six episodes.



At first a contract for the part of Tex was to be given to Patrick Wayne, the son of John Wayne. Later on, because of some problems for the film-producers, Giuliano Gemma filled role. He is an actor who has featured in various Westerns; this is his eighth work under Tessari's direction. He was chosen in a public opinion poll commissioned to determine which actor would be most suited to the role of Tex; Gemma beat Paul Newman and Robert Redford.

Tessari, like Gemma, is an authentic veteran of the kind of film named -- sometimes with a touch of scorn -- "spaghetti Western", meaning the Italian imitation of the American Westerns. However, neither Gemma nor Tessari are novices in the field of fantastic cinema. In the late 50's Tessari was the script-writer for several "peplum". These are historical-mythological films where Gemma also made his debut, as an actor.

In the year 1962 Gemma was also the leading actor in "Arrivano i titani" ("The Titans are coming"), the very first film directed by Tessari. In recent years he has acted in Dario Argento's horror film "Tenebre" ("Darkness", 1982) and in Valerio Zurlini's "Il deserto dei tartari" ("The Tartar Steppe", 1966), drawn from a novel by Dino Buzzati.

Gemma's partners in "Tex e il signore degli abissi" are the actors William Berger, as Kit Carson, and Carlo Mucari, the Navajo Indian Tiger Jack. A meaningful presence in the cast is Flavio Bucci: he is a theatrical actor who turned to the cinema in the early 70's. Among his films there are "Suspira" (1977) by Dario Argento and "Sogno di una notte d'estate" ("A Summer's Night Dream", 1983) by Gabriele Salvatores. It is a sort of fantastic rock musical drawn from Shakespeare's play. But his major role was in "Ligabue" (1978), by Salvatore Nocita, where he played the mad painter Antonio Ligabue. In "Tex... Bucci plays the role of the wizard Kamaz.

Giovanni Luigi Bonelli, Tex's creator, makes a cameo appearance in the film's prologue. He is the old Indian who introduces the story.

Tex e il signore degli abissi, Italy 1985, 105 minutes.

Director: Duccio Tessari

Story: Giovanni Luigi Bonelli. (Il signore dell'abisso" is

published in Tex, 101 - 103, March - May 1969)

Foreign distributor: Secis.

Italian distributor: Titanus.

Parcon

18-20 April 1986.
Pardubice, Czechoslovakia

A report by Ivan Adamovic

Parcon is the national convention of Czechoslovak SF fans. About four hundred people attended this year, a number limited by a small hall; approximately the same number of short stories were sent to the organizers of the Karel Capek Award "Mik" (Mewt) which is announced at the convention. Winner of this award was Josef Pecinovsky, a long-time fan-writer. Josef Hresvach was awarded a prize of merit at the occasion of his 60th birthday. Another award announced at the convention is the Ludvik Award for best Czech short story, best book, merits in the genre and for best translation. All three Czech prizes went to a new and very popular writer, Ondrej Neff, for his story "The Kinkist guy in the history of Swan" (as an approximate translation would be),

his collection "Inverted Egg" and the way in which he is popularizing SF. "This is the second time in my life I have been awarded a prize," Ondrej said. "The first time was in 1957, when I received a certificate for a ninth place in the air-gun shooting competition on International Children's Day."

Parcon's programme included speeches of Ondrej Neff, Jaroslav Veis and SF artist Theodor Rotrel. There was also a speech about the 60th birthday of Ludvik Soufek, in memoriam. Beside video films we could see archive films like THE FILM, which was not enthusiastically received, and the so much more charming METROPOLIS. After seeing this film, I could understand why Forrest Ackermann considers METROPOLIS his favourite SF film. Featured together with the album "Metropolis", the audience could enjoy a very impressive mixture.

Although there were no fanish fun shows at Parcon like there are at West European cons, we enjoyed ourselves thoroughly. Maybe the greatest show was an auction of old SF books and the astronomical prices paid for them. We had a good time, that weekend.

DE CIRKELJAREN
(THE CIRCLE YEARS)
by Guido Eekhout.
Published by De
Clauwaert, Korbek-
Lo, Belgium.
May, 1986. 495 Bf.

Reviewed by
Roelof Goudriaan.



The main character of DE CIRKELJAREN is Gaddis, a successful writer in a society that is trying hard to sustain the knowledge from before the Holocaust -- or whatever happened, because we are left to guess. Gaddis is writing the only kind of books still published, re-writings of classics like MOSBY DICK, based on interviews with people who can still remember reading the book fifty or sixty years ago. Hardly any book has survived the disaster and the subsequent book-burning.

After the suicide of his wife and child, Gaddis lives alone in a remote village, with his library of re-written books and his antique pre-disaster car. The character of his latest novel, HAMLET, voices with increasing frequency his von fear and obsessions. Besides the sorrow for his dead wife and child, Gaddis lives in fear that one day, an original copy of one of the books he has re-written will be discovered, making his own work obsolete.

Then he meets Miranda, a 16-year old girl who desperately wants to get away from her own miserable life. She destroys half his book collection, offers him sex, and moves in with him. This doesn't prevent Miranda from having another lover. She has a hot affair with Konrad, once a student, now following her. Konrad's jealousy keeps growing until he murders Miranda. He finally dies himself while burning Gaddis' house (and library) to the ground.

Gaddis, faced with another tragedy, resolves to act upon his great wish: to start writing a novel of his own, instead of re-writing outdated novels.

How likely is it that no copies of the major best-selling and classic books survive when so much else does -- cars, trains, or the knowledge needed for industry? I'm not convinced by the explanation that Eekhout gives, but the image is intriguing.

Even where Eekhout is hampered by a stiff, sometimes nearly pompous choice of words, he takes time to paint Gaddis' character, his desolation, fears and dreams. But in the end, I'm asking myself "Is this what it's all about?" The only character development present is directed at Gaddis' justification of writing the original novel. And that reeks of self-importance.

I'm glad to see that a small literary publisher is willing to try science fiction. Unfortunately, DE CIRKELJAREN is not the best choice to start with.

Interzone Afterimage -- review by Lynne Ann Morse

After reading Interzone 15, I began to wonder -- could there be such a thing as a typical "radical SF" story? I'm not saying the stories and features of this issue were all the same, oh no. In fact they're very different, both from each other and from other English language SF magazines you might run across. But for the stories there seemed to be only one exception to an attitude of "start in the middle of the action, and leave the reader twisting in the wind, trying to put the big picture together with the details we see fit to provide." (By the way, that one exception, "The One and Only Tale from The White Horse," by John Brosnan, makes you pay for the courtesy of starting you on familiar ground. Dear, wickedly, and wonderfully too.)

What else could be typical about these stories in Interzone? Well, . . . they are all well-told, and quickly engaging. Then again, I'm a sucker for trying to put together the "big picture" from scraps of detail. The stories have characters, people reacting to their future (or not so future) environments, and trying to shape those environments, get on top of them; master them. The writers make new uses of ideas: a son's concern for his father prevents the father from achieving complete immortality in a capsule Garden of Eden, because the son's "reality" overrides that of his father; or, a ship is captained successively by different crew members in the correct phase of the manic-depressive cycle.

Typical of these stories to me is that they aren't merely reacting to the perceived shortcomings of the old "sensa-wunda" tied to rockets and ray guns -- they go beyond them, making science fiction's sense of wonder more complete. Interzone adds good artwork to these stories; matching mood of artwork to story is especially successful in "A Multiplication of Lives," the story about the multi-captained ship, by Diana Reed. The artwork could have almost been drawn by the story's main character herself.

Interzone's other features become yet more political than just a commitment to "radical SF." Perhaps because we're dealing with real people now. Nick Lowe's movie review begins with a little axe-grinding: "The ideology of the family has settled into Hollywood like a soft, inoperable brain tumour." But then again, Lowe's contempt for the film season's more popular offerings means that his attention is saved for films of lower budgets, greater risks and more taste -- although "taste" here means curry beef or a hot tamale versus the Hollywood tapicia Lowe sees.

If I continue like this I'll cover the whole of Interzone, and that doesn't seem quite fair, even if this is a review. Read it yourself and see what you think: after all this should only pique your interest, not be an Interzone substitute.

Interzone 15, Spring 1986, quarterly
Editors: Simon Ounsley, David Pringle.
Associate Editor: Judith Hanna
Subscriptions £6 for 4 issues, £1.50 newsstand copies (UK)
Address: 124 Osborne Road, Brighton, BN1 6LJ, United Kingdom.

Go Dutch - our way!

A Bid for the 1990 Worldcon -- proposed site: The Hague, in the Netherlands! Support a truly international Worldcon: pre-supporting memberships are f 15,-, US \$5, or £3.50. The bid's newsletter, *High Tide 2*, is out and will be sent to all new pre-supporters. Go for it!

Holland in 1990

Postbus 95370, 2509 CJ The Hague, The Netherlands.





CON TOURS

SCENE FROM AN SCI-FI CLASSIC "INVASION OF A WHOLE BUNCH OF BIG ROBOTS"

FANCON 86: June 12-15, 1986

12th national Italian SF convention, held in hotel Borghetto, Montepulciano (near Siena). Bruno Valle reports that "the trend of this convention will be distinctly cultural, unlike some former editions; the SF art and the relations between SF and cinema will be widely dealt with. An exhibition will show postcards with space and fantastic topics provided by the Soviet fan Boris Zavgorodny."

Membership fees are lire 35000 for the entire con, or lire 12000 for one day. Write to "Space Opera Club", Casella Postale 63, I-10098 Rivoli, Italia.

COLONIA-CON: June 14-15, 1986

One of the main German conventions, held in Köln, with a more fanish reputation than most German conventions. Place of action: Kölner Jugendpark. For info, write to Frank Werner, Rheinbacherstr 10, D-5000 Köln, BRD.

BALLCON: 10-13 July, 1986

The 1986 Eurocon, held in Zagreb, Yugoslavia. We'd love to get more information about this con: all we know is that all attendees are supposed to bring a ball, and that membership is US\$12 supporting and US\$25 attending. Organizer Krsto Mazuranc is planning an all European Fanzone show, Costume show, philatelic show, Funny Finnish olympic, and more. Write to Ballcon, c/o SFera, Ivančičeva 41 a, YU-41000 Zagreb, Yugoslavia.

FITTECON: 11-13 July, 1986

Celebrating 15 years of the Birmingham SF Group, at the Royal Angus in Birmingham, UK. GsoH are Brian Aldiss and Harry Harrison. Attending membership is £6. For information: Pauline Morgan, 321 Sarehole Road, Hall Green, Birmingham B28, UK.

MYTICON: July 18-20, 1986

Goh Marion Zimmer Bradley, and held at the Victoria hotel in Nottingham, UK. Attending membership is £10, to Penny Hill, 53 Glencoe Street, Hull, North Humberside HU3 6NR, UK.

SAAR-CON '86: July 25-27, 1986

SFCD-Jahrescon, held in the Bürgerhaus Saarbrücken-Burbach. Talks, SFCD meeting, and other more or less serious items. Write to SFCD-regionalgruppe Süd-west, Thomas Recktenwald, Sprenger Str 107, D-6635 Schwalbach, BRD. Attending membership is DM 25.

CONSEPT-UN7CON: August 8-10, 1986

University of Surrey, UK. Goh is Tanith Lee; membership fees £8 attending, £4 supporting. More info from ConSept, 9 Graham Road, Wealdstone, Harrow, Middlesex HA1 3RP, UK.

LILLE 86: September 6-9, 1986

National French convention, held in Lille. Write to Alain Garguir, Librairie Andromède, 34 rue de la Clef, F-59800 Lille, France.

PR-MELTCON: September 6-7, 1986

Saarlandhalle, Saarbrücken, West Germany. With a host of Perry Rhodan authors etc. Information from Pabel Verlag, Abt.Public-relations, Postfach 1780, D-7550 Rastatt, BRD.

DELFTCON: 20 September 1986

One-day convention in Delft, the Netherlands. It's not entirely certain yet that this day will be held. Good fanish programme. Write to Henk Karsbergen, Myrstraat 5, 2613 XK Delft, Netherlands.

XIICON: September 26-29, 1986

Central hotel, Glasgow. Goh Harry Harrison, attending membership is £9, supporting £3. Hotel rates between £17 (single) and £13 (triple without shower) ppn. Progress report 1 now out.

NANSE-CON: October 1986

Second Nansecon, held in Lubeck, West Germany. Write to Frank Möller, Stargasse 7, D-2400 Lubeck, BRD.

NOVACON 16: October 31-November 1, 1986

De Vere hotel, Coventry, UK. Goh Ted Rubb, special guest Chris Evans. Registration £8 to Graham Poole, 86 Berwood Farm Road, Wyde Green, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands, UK. Rumour has it that hotel and committee are not overly friendly towards room parties etc....

BECOCN '87: the 1987 EASTCON:

Metropole hotel, Birmingham, UK. For details send SAE to Becocn '87, 191 the Heights, Northolt, Middlesex UB5 4BU, UK.

CONSPIRACY '87: August 27-September 2, 1987

The 45th WorldCon! With Anything & Everything. Progress report 1 is out now. Attending membership is £25, or local equivalents - to Conspiracy '87, PO Box 43, Cambridge, England, or to your local agent.

CENTERCON: July 9-12, 1987

the 12th Eurocon, in Perpignan, France. Membership is 150 ff attending and 70 ff supporting, until July 31st - higher thereafter. Write to "Fictions" Centercon, 9 rue du 14 juillet, F-66000 Perpignan, France.

ALBA-CON 88 -- BID FOR THE 1988 EUROCON

To be held in Glasgow, Scotland. £1 presupporting to Albacon at 105 Craigton Rd, Govan, Glasgow G51, UK.

Goudriaan and Morse
Noordwal 2
2513 EA The Hague
The Netherlands

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