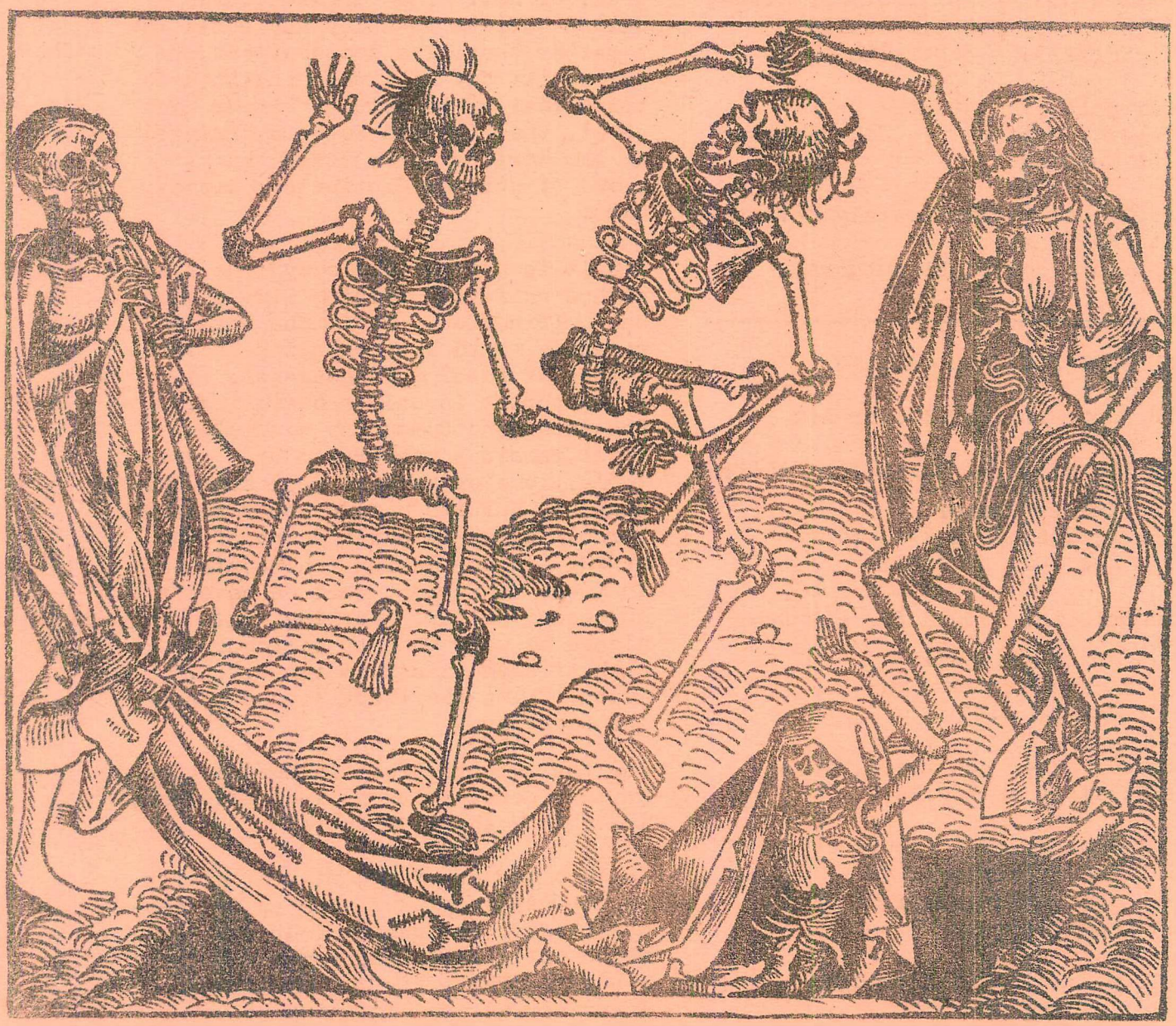
australian SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW



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EDITORIAL

"As far as I'm concerned," said Robert Bloch in ASFR 11, "science fiction performs a far better job of global unification than the U.N."

I'm not sure if I wish that were true, or not. The failure of the United Nations to unify the world is a matter that lies somewhat out of our ambit; but if I were inclined to think that sf is doing a better job of it, then I would be more dismayed at the world's sorry state than proud of science fiction's achievement.

And it is not particularly true that sf has achieved anything like a global unification. We in the English-speaking world are beginning to take notice of foreign-language sf, it is true; but it is only a beginning. The Asian and Communist countries still remain a mystery to us. Admittedly, some of us have read some Russian sf, but its motive power remains largely alien to our concept of the genre. As for making real contacts in these countries, well we haven't succeeded so far. Nothing would please us more than to correspond with sf enthusiasts in the U.S.S.R., Japan, China (is there any sf there?), and elsewhere.

For the moment, there is Europe - and we must never think we know all there is to know about sf there.

In this issue, at the risk of giving an impression of dullness to the casual reader, we present four articles which will, we think, repay careful reading. The articles on German, Scandinavian and Argentine sf, by Messrs. Rottensteiner, Eklund and Kitaigorodzki, we have had on hand for some months, awaiting a suitable opportunity to present them. Still a little apprehensive at the lack of a unifying thread we decided to publish them in this issue; and on the very day that stencilling began, there arrived in the mail Fred Strochnetter's translation of 'SF AUTARCHICO' OPPURE 'SF EUROPEA' by Gianfranco de Turris

and Sebastiano Fusco. Here was the dimension we wanted: a view of European sf, to round out the otherwise excellent national views. (No, I am not assuming Argentina to be in Europe - at least it wasn't last time I looked - but I think that in a real sense Argentine sf is part of European sf, just as Australian sf is part of the Anglo-American genre.)

From there we have to go on to a view of sf as an international genre, and it isn't all that easy. Messrs. de Turris and Fusco voice a certain feeling of competition that must be entered into, and from a strictly commercial point of view they are quite right to do so, because the people who put up the money to publish sf are not, surprisingly, in the game for the good of their health, nor to advance the cause of literature. European sf will have to fight for a place in a market at present dominated by Anglo-American writers.

But, as they say, where there's a will there's a willbarrow. Three vehicles of this kind may be mentioned: SF HORIZONS has consistently encouraged intelligent discussion of sf; Frederik Pohl's new venture, INTERNATIONAL SF, provides an arena for it; and ASFR (doubtless not alone among fanzines is this respect, though I have seen few others) will in future be providing some space in each issue for the subject. There is room, in fact, for a fanzine devoted solely to reprinting in English articles and reviews from foreign-language publications - but, I hasten to assure you, ASFR is not it. Jean Muggoch's newsletter (see p.23 this issue) is a pointer to a kind of fanzine which would be most valuable in this respect.

What exactly is ASFR for?

This is a question which has exercised our minds since the magazine's inception. It seems to have grown in a Topsy-like fashion, and most people we hear from seem to like the way it has grown; but this does not absolve us from serious thoughts about policy. Are we aiming at the faans (as distinct from the fans: the difference apparently being that the fans still read sf); the isolated, or not-so-isolated, buyer of sf who needs a market-guide; the professional writers and editors; or, cynically, the people who vote for the Hugos?

Well, we can count the last one out. Lee Harding remarked recently, "ASFR doesn't need a Hugo!" and I'm inclined to agree with him: we would like one, sure - who wouldn't? - but we don't need it. We have our reward. And surely the hope of winning a Hugo would be as short-sighted an aim for producing a fanzine as could be imagined. I am sure that loftier motives, or more enjoyable ones, drive the publishers of RIVERSIDE QUARTERLY or YANDRO, to mention only two of our illustrious contemporaries. That they deserve Hugos is another matter entirely, a recognition by fandom of their value.

We love fandom, most of us who have anything to do with the magazine: it's fun. But we don't feel that it would be right to ask people to pay out the kind of money we have to charge, to read fabulous-faanish stuff. Let's face it, anyway, the competition's too strong. (On the other hand, we don't want to become so serious-constructive that we can't talk about willbarrows.)

We are interested in the professional men of sf - the writers, the editors, the critics; and primarily, the writers. Lin Carter, some issues back, talked about "professional readers", and that's us: we tell the writers what we think of their work, and they tell us why we're wrong, and perhaps in the process we all learn something. The "market-guide" aspect of ASFR is, we

feel, not quite as important as this. More and more we ask from our reviewers analysis and criticism, rather than story-outlines and the like. That the latter have their place, and that they will continue to appear in ASFR (and, I am sure, continue to be appreciated), goes without saying.

But most of all we are interested in and aim at those people who are not yet and may never be professionals, yet who have the interests of sf at heart, who love the stuff for all its faults, and who want to read and write intelligently about it.

There are those who have suggested that we drop the word "Australian" from our title but, though I take it as a compliment, I do not agree with them. It may be that we have neglected to some extent our stated intention of examining Australian sf, of promoting a uniquely Australian branch of the genre; but I think it must be conceded that every issue to date has displayed a "bias Australian", if not offensively so.

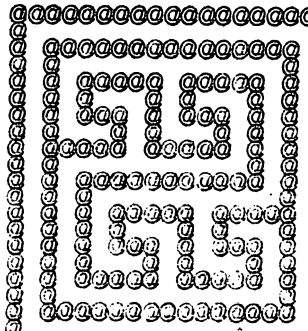
* * *

This issue has suffered more than the usual number of vicissitudes. Originally I had planned to publish it in January, and another issue in February, since this one contains - I was about to say, no reviews, but there is one by Franz Rottensteiner on page 24. However, during the first week of January I somehow injured my shoulder and was unable to type for a fortnight. However, before this happened, anticipating immediate publication, I posted the cover artwork to a duplicating firm in the city (which shall be nameless) with detailed instructions for its production. These instructions they ignored completely, with the sorry result that you see. The same firm supplied the paper in the second half of this issue, and for some reason it glummed up my duplicator, wasting reams of the stuff and necessitating re-typing of several pages. These problems overcome, the mail drivers went out on strike and the whole of Australia went without postal services for ten days. (And since the Arbitration Court has handed down a decision which rejects the mail drivers' wage case, I guess they'll be out on strike again in the near future.)

If you manage to get this issue before Easter, do think seriously about becoming a member of the Melbourne SF Conference. Most of the programme may be gathered from the advertisements that have appeared, but there is one matter which until now has not been publicized. One of the subjects for discussion at the Conference is the possibility of organizing an Australia-wide Science Fiction Society - something like the British SF Association, or the American National Fantasy Fan Federation. The subject is completely open for ideas and suggestions. The basic feeling is that since there are now organized groups in Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane (the Science Fiction-Fact Society: contact David Campbell, c/- PO Box 174, Broadway 4000), and informal groups meeting occasionally in Hobart and Perth, there should be some means for all these people to communicate with each other and to meet each other. A national group could organize conventions, pool information, and generally be of service to fans anywhere in Australia. We understand that there will be folk from Sydney, Brisbane and Perth at the Conference. If you can't come, but would like to take some part in this discussion, please write down your ideas and feelings and send them to the Secretary (address back cover).

* * *

Advertisements in the March F&SF list respectively sf authors in favour of and opposed to America's involvement in Viet Nam. I don't know that it proves anything but ASFR has two subscribers on the pro list and ten on the anti list. If you're interested, ASFR's editorial staff is entirely anti.



THE UN-COMMON MARKET

Towards a European SF

GIANFRANCO DE TURRIS & SEBASTIANO FUSCO

One of the most interesting questions dealt with by Jean-Pierre Fontana and Gerard Temey, editors-publishers of the French magazine MERCURY, in their commentary on the Carrara conference, is the one regarding the isolation of Italian 'fantascienza' and of the formation of a 'fantascienza' of European orientation.

"We believe," say the Frenchmen, "that only a European sf, and not a plurality of national sfs, can be relied on one day to enter into a serious and respected competition with American sf, and this as much in the economic sphere as in the qualitative." And they emphasize: "An sf purely Italian and self-sufficient has, in itself and by itself, little worth, if it be thought of as what it could become if it directly confronts the other writers in the field."

The problem of European sf is an important one, raised to gigantic size lately by a new phenomenon - the crisis in American sf. It is known that for a year in that country the specialized Anglo-Saxon magazines have been losing readers and authors. ANALOG has had to give up the splendid format it inaugurated in 1963; WORLDS OF TOMORROW has passed from bi-monthly to tri-monthly; AMAZING and FANTASTIC have been reduced to publishing (without paying for them) stories extracted from their own old issues; and other magazines have found it necessary to raise prices. And, above all, the average level of stories appearing in the magazines is catastrophically decadent, as Italian readers can gather from translations appearing in our country. The most negative aspect of the crisis, however, is the lack of valuable new authors with original ideas and a stylistically acceptable presentation; in fact, it has been seen that none of the third-generation Anglo-Saxon writers has gone beyond a certain professionalism, a nimbleness of language that surely cannot give them a reputation outside of a limited circle of fans. The search for stylistic originality is lost in negative abstractions; on the other hand having rejected the themes of Heinlein, van Vogt, de Camp - that is, of second-generation writers - they have not succeeded in creating their own themes. Nor have the innovators, such as Cordwainer Smith and Brian Aldiss, nor those who have listened to the voice of tradition, such as Keith Laumer and Jack Vance, succeeded in putting themselves on a par with those who gave birth to the "Golden Age" of American sf. Those who have recently acquired something of a reputation for original themes and style (if quite debatable from various points of view) are the Englishman J.G. Ballard and the American Kurt Vonnegut. Rather few for this third generation of sf authors, in comparison with what happened in the early forties, when all the greatest writers that specialized sf has produced came to light in a very short time.

Without enquiring into the factors that have brought about this crisis, one must draw the conclusion that at the moment there exists not only the opportunity, but also the necessity, of becoming aware of European 'fantas-

cienza' (excluding the English output, which by reason of language makes use almost completely of the American market, and for that reason is absorbed by it for the most part). If the Americans, who until recently have held the lead in the genre, come upon a scarcity of ideas and of authors, it is logical that the fermenting of renewal or rehabilitation of sf should take place in Europe, where ultimately the phenomenon was born, later to be revived in the new continent by the Luxemburgian Hugo Gernsback, who, it is well to remember, when he began to put sf in his technical magazines, from 1907 on, fell back almost exclusively on translations of European tales, English, French and German.

After expounding these facts, let us try to examine the situation in the countries which possess a more developed sf - with the exclusion of the Eastern countries, which from reasons of publishing or of censorship would require a special article.

One can very well generalize by saying that in each of these countries - Germany, Spain, Italy and the French-speaking countries - there exists, besides the translations of Anglo-Saxon material, a national output, more or less important, more or less recognized, more or less encouraged. Therefore the major preoccupation of interested authors and publishers, for the present, is to give the maximum impulse and development to a purely national output; on the one hand, through the appearance of fanzines and other strictly private ventures; on the other, through the place conceded it, with greater or lesser goodwill, in collections and magazines. In this way is created an exclusion of each country's sf from other European countries; although the average reader, from long conditioning, prefers American sf and therefore, this having been attended to, the little space left free is devoted to national authors. This leads in practice to an isolation of the various national outputs; ideas do not circulate; and there comes about the absurdity that a more or less mediocre American writer has millions of readers in America and Europe, while a good French, Italian, Spanish &c author can attain only a thousand or so in his own country.

The need is evident for the various countries to publish in the greatest measure possible (with due discernment, certainly) its writers' output, in order to develop it, to make it "adult", to allow the men to gain experience and professionalism; but it is equally evident that at some time it is necessary to arrive at a level on which the various results are diffused, made known and made to be appreciated by both the European and the American publics. It is necessary to take into account that the common cultural patrimony of the European nations should constitute an effective and natural means of communication that would ensure the autonomy of European sf while respecting the themes it has in common with Anglo-Saxon sf.

From what has been said you can already draw some conclusions: that it is necessary to complete this period of incubation through which the specialized sf of each country must pass; that this making of contact, if only between fanzines at the moment, will doubtless serve to accelerate the growing awareness of the various national outputs; that, finally, it will have to enter into a competitive phase with respect to American sf, overcoming the present passive acceptance, but without falling into the opposite error - total exclusion of American sf and maximum development of European (or national) sf - a posture which would be as prejudiced as it is useless. Sf from across the Atlantic, despite its periodic waverings, now has a store of material, a position, an irreplaceable tradition; and to want to disown it through prejudice and partisanship would be an unpardonable error.

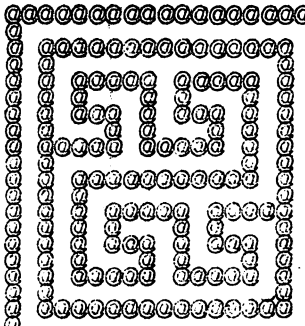
But how to attain an adult and (self-) conscious European sf? Taking into account the position of sf in the nations mentioned, the considerations expounded above are condemned to remain mere theories, with no substantial change being brought about. In Germany and Spain there are collections that - apparently without discrimination - publish novels or collected stories by national authors as well as Anglo-Americans. But there is no magazine which publishes heterogeneous material, which would be an indispensable premise for the realization of inter-European contacts. Fortunately, in Germany, which until a little while ago had shown itself obstinately against accepting short works, the collection UTOPIA has begun to publish groups of stories of various origins and by various writers; and in Spain, where a genuine magazine was similarly lacking, authors and enthusiasts have joined forces to give birth to a pair of publications of this type, one of which, ANTICIPACION (of Barcelona), has just been issued. In French-speaking countries (disregarding what happens in fanzines), specialists unbosom themselves in the magazine FICTION (of Paris), which despite the goodwill of the publisher is certainly still limited. (Lately there have been rumours of a new publishing project.) As for Italy, the situation in the sf world is well-known, for which reason it is useless to waste space discussing it.

As can be seen, the outlook isn't bright, inasmuch as the material means are lacking to carry out the programme set forth. It will be indispensable as a prime condition (certainly not to be looked askance at) that in each of the countries in which sf has greater diffusion, these ideas should be consolidated so that, provided adequate means, they could give birth to magazines in which might be published, without discrimination, European sf - even sf from countries without a long professional tradition in the field, such as the Nordic and Eastern countries.

The idea is less strange than at first might appear: contacts of this kind have been going on for a long time among fans; open any fanzine and you will see how this manner of thinking is already consolidated. In the Spanish CUENTA ATRAS you can read Italian and French stories; in the Belgian ATLANTA, Italian, Dutch, Flemish and Spanish stories; in the French MERCURY and LE JARDIN SIDERAL, Belgian, Spanish and Italian stories; and so on. The same thing could happen in an Italian fanzine. What is now needed is that this spirit, zealous but disorganized, which animates the various national fandoms should be transferred from a dilettante plane to a more professional one, with that rigour and seriousness which are necessary in order to achieve the desired results, and that lavel of quality indispensable in competing with English-speaking authors.

* * *

Notes: This article originally appeared under the title "SF AUTARCHICO" OPPURE "SF EUROPEA" ("Self-Sufficient SF" or "European SF") in the Italian magazine OLTRE IN CIELO no.147. It was subsequently translated into Spanish by Carlo Fradetti and published in CUENTA ATRAS -94, from which version the above translation was made by Fred Strochnetter. (And perhaps I should mention again that my own clarifying of the English in certain awkward passages, though it makes for easier reading, may possibly distort the sense of the original: for which, if this has happened, my apologies.) It will be seen, from certain references to professional magazines, for example, that the article was written some time ago; but I have preferred not to alter any of these references. And it is somewhat unfortunate that the situation of sf in Italy is not as well-known to ASFR's readers as it is to readers of OLTRE IN CIELO. For some information about Italian sf, I would refer you to SF HORIZONS no.2, or to ASFR 9, which contains a brief note by Ugo Malaguti.



SCIENCE FICTION IN GERMANY

FRANZ ROTTENSTEINER

There is a large body of fantastic literature in the German language, both in the past and in the present; it is second only to the English. Until about World War II, German authors wrote the bulk of this material: translations, although always represented, played only a minor role, and were of more importance in the field of fantasy than in science fiction.

After World War II, and especially since about 1956, the opposite is true. The bulk of the material is still being written by German authors, but almost all of the better works of sf are translations, mostly of American and British authors, but with an occasional book from French, Spanish, Italian or Russian authors.

Due to the political division of Germany, we are perhaps in a better position to look at world sf than any other country: in the German Democratic Republic there are published mostly translations of Russian and other Eastern writers - not many, because the paper supply for this sort of literature is still restricted, but what is published finds its way into Western Germany; and in Western Germany there is an unlimited supply of American and British sf. Some English-language pocketbooks are imported into Germany in small quantities; they do not count for much, but there are many translations.

Sf publishing in Western Germany falls into two very different classes. On the one hand there are the many series of dime-novels - small, saddle-stitched pamphlets of about 64 pages each. Sometimes they are mistakenly called magazines, but they are not true magazines, for they mostly feature a complete novel in every issue, often with a series character as hero. Lately there has also been published an occasional short story collection or anthology. These dime-novels appear weekly or fortnightly, and form the bulk of the sf being published in Germany, both in number of titles and in circulation.

And there are the books and pocketbooks. Until a few years ago, we had very few of them, but by now they are an integral part of the German sf scene. Of course, there were always books of a fantastic or science-fictional nature from general publishers now and then, but special sf publishing began in 1951 when Weiss Brothers in Berlin published the first of Heinlein's juveniles, ROCKETSHIP GALILEO. Later they followed up with ten more of Heinlein's novels, mostly juveniles, but including THE PUPPET MASTERS and DOUBLE STAR. Their other main author was Arthur C. Clarke - CHILDHOOD'S END, PRELUDE TO SPACE, SANDS OF MARS, &c. As well as these two authors they also published Edmond Hamilton's THE STAR KINGS and CITY AT WORLD'S END, Fredric Brown's MARTIANS, GO HOME, a number of German authors writing in the traditional vein of Hans Dominik (including Dominik himself, Claus Eigk, Richard Koch and Freder van Holk), some French novels by

Rene Barjavel and Jean Gaston Vandel, Capek, and still others. Now, however, that particular firm has ceased to publish sf; the competition of the paperbacks has driven them out of business.

Another memorable venture was begun in 1952 and did not last for a year - Rauch's Space Books in Düsseldorf. This series consisted of but four books: Isaac Asimov's I, ROBOT, Jack Williamson's THE HUMANOIDS, John W. Campbell's THE INCREDIBLE PLANET, and a good anthology compiled by the editor Gotthard Günther, who is known to American fans for some articles in STARTLING STORIES and ASTOUNDING. Like the Weiss books, these were excellently translated and presented, but they never sold well.

The current situation in Germany is more like that of America than of England: there is virtually no publishing in hard-covers. In 1960, Goldmann in Munich started a new series of sf books, which began well with some of Asimov's books, Bester's THE DEMOLISHED MAN and Blish's EARTHMAN, COME HOME. Six introductory books were published simultaneously, and they proceeded to issue a hard-cover book every month. Later they added two monthly pocketbooks to their schedule, featuring reprints. But they were not able to keep this up, and now they are back to a bi-monthly book and a monthly pocketbook. Their hard-cover books are also simultaneously issued in paperback. Although Goldmann have published many fine books, it is generally felt that they have fallen into a rut. They are publishing many boring novels. But they do have one very good writer in their programme - John Brunner; NO FUTURE IN IT, TELEPATHIST and THE LONG RESULT have all appeared here.

Another major hard-cover publisher is Diogenes of Zurich, in Switzerland. His books are among the best-produced in the German-speaking world. Sf, however, is only an insignificant part of his list. He concentrates on weird fiction and fantasy, with such authors as Walter de la Mare, Saki, Poe, William F. Harvey and Maurice Sandoz. His sf consists of Bradbury's THE ILLUSTRATED MAN, a good anthology compiled by Peter Neugebauer, and an illustrated collection of Fredric Brown's stories called THE ANGELIC ANGLEWORM.

Of interest is the Verne boom now occurring in Germany (much later than in France or the USA). Two publishers are issuing his novels, in lavishly illustrated editions: Diogenes, and Bärmeier & Nikel in Germany. The Diogenes editions follow closely the original French texts, and they contain the original French illustrations. B&N publish two or three novels of Verne in one volume, in a streamlined modern version, deleting Verne's quaintnesses of style.

Weird-fantasy appears to be successful even in hard-back: Rowohlt published Roald Dahl and John Collier, and Hanser in Munich have just started a BIBLIOTHECA DRACULA. Bram Stoker's DRACULA is now out, with Le Fanu's short stories and Maturin's MELMOTH THE WANDERER to follow.

But despite these few books, the pocketbooks predominate. At present there are five pocketbooks, sometimes more, being published every month: Goldmann publish one, Heyne (an off-shoot of the big house of Moewig) two, and Moewig themselves two. Pabel published a few pocketbooks - James Gunn's THE JOY MAKERS, Marion Zimmer Bradley's THE BLOODY SUN, Tenn's TIME IN ADVANCE, Carnell's anthology LAMBDA 1, and Pohl & Williamson's THE REEFS OF SPACE - but they seem to have stopped again. Winther K.G., a Danish group, now publish a sf pocketbook every other month. The quality is mixed. Their first selections were Anderson & Kurland's TEN YEARS TO DOOMSDAY,

Piper's LORD KALVAN OF OTHERWHEN, and Gordon R. Dickson's NAKED TO THE STARS. Circulation, except for the monthly Perry Rhodan pocketbooks published by Moewig, is small. (The Rhodan series is rumoured to run to about 15,000 copies, but some books go into second printings.) The best of the pocketbook publishers is Heyne: their authors include Bester, Clarke, Heinlein, Asimov, van Vogt, Harrison, Sheckley and Aldiss. Besides their novels and short story collections, they feature now and then anthologies from the pages of F&SF and GALAXY. The selections, however, which are done by Walter Ernsting, are not as good as they might be. Until recently there were also two big, 300-page, quarterly anthologies (one sf, the other horror) from Heyne, but they seem now to have been dropped. Short stories never sold in Germany, and both UTOPIA MAGAZINE and GALAXIS folded, after 26 and 15 issues, respectively. Then everyone seems to have gone short story crazy, with even the cheap series featuring many anthologies.

The dime-novel publisher Pabel bought a number of collections by Ballard, Pohl, Tenn, del Rey, Farmer and Davidson, and mixed them. I really wonder what the readers of Pabel's UTOPIA ZUKUNFTSROMANE, who had existed on a diet of John E. Muller, Lionel Fanthorpe, Russ Wintherbotham and German hacks, were supposed to think when they encountered Vermilion Sands for the first time. Reaction was violent, especially to Ballard and Davidson. Now Lore Matthaey of Pabel has strict orders not to buy any more short stories, and I suppose it is the same with other publishers. The trend appears to be again away from short stories, and I have even heard some talk that GALAXY and EINE AUSWAHL DER BESTEN GESCHICHTEN AUS F&SF will fold. I am, however, not in a position to make more than mere conjectures. Not affected by this ban are series stories, which are very popular here: even Hubbard's OLD DOC METHUSELAH has been resurrected.

Heyne has the most varied sf programme, with nearly all of the big names appearing here. Lately they have inaugurated a new policy of reprinting in pocketbook novels which previously had appeared only in the heavily-cut cheap series. So we again have an opportunity to read Asimov's THE END OF TIME and his Foundation stories, Frank Herbert's UNDER PRESSURE, van Vogt's SLAN, THE WEAPON SHOPS OF ISHER and THE WEAPON MAKERS, Harry Harrison's DEATHWORLD, Poul Anderson's BRAIN WAVE and Heinlein's UNIVERSE!

Moewig's TERRA-SONDERREIHE began as a series of dime novels (96 pages each), but with no.100 it was turned into a pocketbook series. The difference between the Heyne and Moewig pocketbooks is that the former have better covers and publish also reprints; the Moewig pocketbooks feature only material new to Germany, mostly translations. Quality is again very good; authors include James White, Poul Anderson, A.E. van Vogt, Keith Laumer and Robert Heinlein. Most of these pocketbooks are slightly cut, some considerably: Leiber's THE WANDERER and Heinlein's FARNHAM'S FREEHOLD were shortened by Heyne by about 50% or more.

With the exception of the Perry Rhodan pocketbooks, all German pocketbooks are almost exclusively translations. In the cheaper series, on the other hand, we find a preponderance of German authors (although even they mostly use English-sounding pseudonyms).

The most successful of the dime-novel series is PERRY RHODAN. It is the most popular sf series ever to appear in Germany, perhaps in the whole world. Begun in 1961 as a fortnightly, the series soon switched over to a weekly schedule. Circulation has been growing ever since. The first issues soon had to be reprinted, and have been several times reprinted since.

Recent reports have it that today PERRY RHODAN has easily passed the 120,000 weekly circulation mark, and I have heard rumours of 200,000. In addition to the regular new issues (now well over 300), there are issued "revised second editions" (officially so called); and a pocketbook series dealing with some characters who appear only briefly in the main series has been added. ATLAS, a new series, also dealing with some neglected characters, will be added shortly. There is a special library edition in Germany, foreign rights have been sold to France, and negotiations are under way in the United States. Donald Wollheim told me, however, that Ace Books rejected the series last year, but there is still some chance that Forrest Ackerman might find an American publisher. The first PERRY RHODAN movie, incorporating the first three stories, will be released in September 1967, with others to follow.

Walter Ernsting, well-known German fan and author, writing under the pseudonym of Clark Dalton, had the idea of his life when he invented Perry Rhodan. The name is derived from Perry Como or Perry Mason and Rhodan, the infamous Japanese movie monster. Starting from the first flight to the Moon (No.1, MISSION STARDUST), the series went further and further, introducing ever new perils and discoveries, ETs, FTL travelling, PSI, immortality, galactic empires, and all the other paraphernalia. By now, 330 issues later, Perry Rhodan and his crew of robots, mutants and aliens are conquering distant galaxies.

PERRY RHODAN is written by a team, and the authors Clark Dalton, K.H. Scheer (who works out the plot outlines), Willi Voltz, Hans Kneifel, Conrad Shepherd (formerly editor of the fanzine MUTANT; in real life Conrad Schaef), Kurt Mahr (Klaus Mahn, a physicist now studying in the USA) and H.G. Ewers (an ex-teacher named Horst Gehrmann) have introduced every idea and plot they could think of - or, more likely, that they have ever read. Fandom has, on the whole, disliked the series. If I am to judge from what few reports I have seen, Perry Rhodan, the main hero, is Tom Swift, Kimball Kinnison, John Carter, Superman, Buck Rogers, Richard Seaton and Tarzan, all rolled into one. There is no denying the appeal that Perry Rhodan has for the great unwashed German public. Perry Rhodan Clubs have sprung up all over the country. As far as circulation and reader-support is concerned, Perry Rhodan ranks second only to G-MAN JERRY COTTON, a German imitation of Mike Hammer. What makes Perry Rhodan interesting as a document of fannish history is that Walter Ernsting has buried some in-group jokes in it, and most of Germany's prominent fans are featured at some length, their names being clearly recognizable to the cognoscenti. Gindorf, Zboron, Kwiat, Schluck, Mötteli, Ettl, Arenz - you name them. You find also that the intrepid crew drink that hellish fannish brew called "Vurguzz" - which tastes like a mixture of hydrochloric acid, pepper and inversion oil, and which was invented by the dentist Franz Ettl just to spoil German (and British) fandom. Therein lies Perry Rhodan's major claim to immortality.

The success of Perry Rhodan forced other publishers into action. Moewig's major rival, Pabel, to whom the series had originally been offered by Walter Ernsting and K.H. Scheer (and rejected, to their subsequent sorrow), were slow to follow and have never caught up. By 1963 they had their own series running: MARK POWERS - a derivative and diluted copy of Perry Rhodan which was never much of a success either with readers or critics. Chief author was W.W. Shols (Winfried Scholz), who had been for some time in the Perry Rhodan team. MARK POWERS folded in 1964 as a series, but an occasional novel still appears in UTOPIA-ZUKUNFTSROMANE. This series will also be filmed. Further competition began in 1966, when Bastei issued REX CORDA, THE SAVIOUR OF EARTH, and another publisher, Kelter, issued REN DHARK. But neither series was very successful, and REX CORDA is now back on a fort-

nightly schedule. It is still doubtful whether either series will survive.

Also in 1966, Zauberkreis started a general series, using only nearly unknown German authors: ZAUBERKREIS SF. So we have today four general dime-novel series: ZAUBERKREIS SF, Moewig's TERRA and TERRA-EXTRA, and Pabel's UTOPIA-ZUKUNFTSROMANE. Of these, only the last-mentioned is a fortnightly; the rest are weekly.

Pabel and Moewig publish about half German and half foreign authors. TERRA-EXTRA is a reprint series; besides K.H. Scheer, Clark Dalton and other Rhodan authors, those American writers are featured who are thought worthy of reprint, but not good enough to appear in pocketbook.

One can easily see that Moewig/Heyne are the leading German sf publishers, with over 16 titles appearing every month. All the novels in the TERRA and TERRA-EXTRA are cut. The standard is somewhat lower than that of the pocketbooks, but still good, with authors such as Chandler, Anderson, Heinlein, White and Vance. And even Moewig's German authors are, with one exception, better than those of the other publishers. I am not in a position to speak authoritatively about them, as I have long ceased reading the series, but the general opinion is that Dalton, Ewers, Voltz, Mahr, Vlcek, Kneifel and Shepherd are at least entertaining, although their work can only be described as hack.

UTOPIA-ZUKUNFTSROMANE presents a very mixed bag: besides L. Sprague de Camp, James Blish, Eric Frank Russell and John Brunner, we find some of the worst crap ever written.

I think I can safely say that any American or British novel that is not too controversial, and which has some discernible, reasonably exciting plot, has a fair chance of appearing in Germany. The German market for translations is probably the biggest in the world, albeit rather low paying. Some types of sf, however, are out; and I doubt whether there'll be much change in the future. In some cases this may be due to the fact that the authors who write these types of sf best are not well represented (if at all) by German literary agents; but in most cases it is clearly due to a general rejection of the type of story which they write.

Damon Knight, Frederik Pohl and Michael Moorcock, for instance, were offered to German publishers, but with little success. None of Philip K. Dick's more complicated novels has ever appeared in Germany. We have had only Farmer's worst stories (and one of his very best, THE NIGHT OF LIGHT, in an anthology), practically no Cordwainer Smith, and nothing of the new wave (except some of Ballard's stories, which seem to have appeared by accident). Excluded also is sword & sorcery, most straight fantasy, and the now widespread "science & sorcery" published by Ace Books. I do not know, however, whether the latter is due to a summary rejection, or whether it simply hasn't been offered to German publishers so far.

Some other writers are not well represented here; nearly every word van Vogt has ever written has appeared here, for example, but it is impossible to buy a pocketbook by Jack Vance. Even TO LIVE FOREVER and THE BLUE WORLD appeared only in 64-page versions. This indicates a lack of editorial discrimination. In the future, I do not expect much change: the pocketbooks will continue to publish good, middle-of-the-road sf by foreign authors; with German writers the trend towards series such as PERRY RHODAN will continue. It is only to be hoped that the new pocketbook markets will induce some of the more enterprising authors to write better stuff, for the most

serious deficiency of the German sf scene is the lack of German authors worth reading.

Indeed, there is only one exception the Viennese-born physicist Herbert W. Franke, and he has stopped writing sf after several books; it doesn't pay to write solely for the German market, and his publisher, Goldmann, has proved unable to sell his novels abroad. So far he has written four novels - THE CAGE OF ORCHIDS, THE GLASS TRAP, THE DESERT OF STEEL and THE IVORY TOWER - and a rather unfortunate collection of 65-odd short stories in 180 pages, THE GREEN COMET. Principally he is a writer of non-fiction, and he has also scripted some sf for radio.

THE IVORY TOWER, published in 1965, is his last sf novel and also his best. All his books depict modern men in a super-technological world as being manipulated by evil men or technological processes that have got out of hand. In THE IVORY TOWER, a rather complicated affair, some men who long for the individualism of bygone days start a revolution, which, contrary to most revolutions in sf, fails. The ruling class and its nearly omnipotent computer prove to be stronger. The revolutionaries, for the most part highly trained technicians, manage to steal a space ship and escape. They find a virgin world and try to set up a colony there. They are only a few people and, recognizing that they simply aren't numerous enough to keep a fair level of culture and technology, they turn to another, watery world, inhabited by some kind of jelly-fish, and turn themselves into natives. Rather than keep their human shapes and deteriorate into savages, they choose to assume the shapes of another sentient species. This is an implicit refutation of the many over-optimistic sf stories, in which a few people set up a colony and develop a technological civilization in no time flat.

Although Franke's style is nothing exceptional, and there is perhaps a preponderance of technical detail, his books are important, because his subject matter is important, and remarkable for their blending of science and psychology. In Germany at least, Franke stands unequalled; closest to him in tone, perhaps, is the Aldiss of SKELETON CREW and MAN ON BRIDGE.

Clark Dalton (Walter Ernsting) and Hans Kneifel might be mentioned as authors who occasionally show a desire to produce better things. Now and then they sell a pocketbook. Kneifel tries to write a better style than his colleagues, but he is only partially successful; his plots are weak and his treatment is often conventional and over-sentimental. Ernsting has written three juveniles for a major publisher and, in collaboration with Robert Artner, AT THE END OF FEAR, a collection for Heyne, and a novel, THE RADIATING DEATH for Moewig. The short stories are all one-punchers, superficially thought out and superficially written, and so is his end-of-the-world novel. The novel is completely flat and devoid of vividness; you don't give a damn what happens to his characters.

Mommers and Vlcek are two Austrian authors generally thought to show promise; two of their stories are scheduled for Frederik Pohl's INTERNATIONAL SF.

A much talked-about novel is Otto Basil's WENN DAS DER FUEHRER WUESSTE (If But The Fuehrer Knew It), which appeared from Molden of Vienna, the publisher who bought Svetlana Stalin's memoirs for German publication. Otto Basil is an Austrian author and critic. His novel is about an alternate world in which the Nazis won their war. I feel that it is much too sensational, and that the quiet horror lurking in the background of Phil Dick's THE MAN IN THE HIGH CASTLE is much more effective than the gaudy colours of this novel. Basil, who was imprisoned for some years in a German concen-

tration camp, has attributed to the Nazis any scientific, human and sexual aberrations he could conceive, and connected these themes with an atomic war between Japan and Germany after Hitler's death. The book has no positive hero, its nominal hero being an unimportant member of the Nazi Party, a heel and a pervert; and everything ends with a big bang. This is surely the most ambitious sf novel written here in recent years, and it is not very successful.

But the most astonishing German sf author, and undoubtedly the most popular, is K.H. Scheer. This would be less surprising if Scheer were not easily the worst author currently writing sf. His writing has all the grace of a machine-gun, endlessly firing; there is a monotony about it and an ugliness that must be hard to achieve. He has only one, highly incredible character, whom he uses in all of his fiction. This is a competent officer or space ship commander, whose every word is obeyed by his trembling subordinates. He is continually wise-cracking, and so far I have been unable to decide whether this trait is juvenile or senile.

Scheer delights in endless descriptions of space battles and horrible wars, and to him the most beautiful thing must be the explosion of an atomic bomb. Having slaughtered the yellow race several times over in half a dozen novels, Scheer widened his scope to include the whole galaxy, and then several other universes as well. Since then he has never known a shortage of bad people in need of annihilation.

The inferiority of German sf is due, I believe, largely to a lack of experienced editorial guidance. There is nobody to point out to young authors their errors, and to tell them how to improve their work. The demands of the market are such that any manuscript written in reasonable German will be accepted. What little editing is done appears to be directed entirely towards making manuscripts the right length, and, if necessary, eliminating passages that might offend some large group of the population. If an author only takes care to avoid gross brutality (i.e. beating scenes and the like), too overtly sexual acts, Communist or other political statements, or diatribes against religion, he will sell his story no matter how badly written it might be. If we had true magazines, the situation would be different; or maybe it wouldn't, so long as there are markets which will print any old crap. Also, German fandom does not provide any real criticism of these authors; those who could do it think it a waste of time to read them; those who read them can't do it. Perhaps the emergence of the pocketbooks will gradually lead to some change.

German fandom has often been accused of too much seriousness. This is both true and untrue. Generally, German fanzines contain little about sf; for the most part they are about fans and their doings; but really humorous pieces are as rare as serious essays. There is a "satirical fanzine" being published - Waldemar Kumming's MUNICH ROUND-UP - but it contains little satire, some criticism, and fine convention reports with photographs. It is one of the oldest German fanzines, and still going strong.

Two important fanzines that are necessities for anyone who wants to learn about happenings in Germany are SF TIMES and NIBELUNGEN. Because of difficulties with the printer, SF TIMES has appeared somewhat irregularly in the past few months; normally it is monthly, and for only DM4.00 ($1.00) you get over 300 pages a year. It reports on sf in Germany, occasionally on fandom, and contains long reviews by Hans Joachim Alpers, its literary editor. Less important items are covered in shorter form. Hagen Zboron's NIBELUNGEN (5 for DM5.00 = $1.25), like Ethel Lindsay's HAVERINGS, reports

on fanzines, and it covers all fanzines appearing in Germany, Austria and Switzerland. Zboron prints not just short, personal notices, but full-scale reviews. Fan news is also included. If you want to know anything about German fanzines, you'll need NIBELUNGEN.

The centre of German fandom is still the SFCD (Science Fiction Club of Germany), which has over 300 members. Membership is $3 a year if you want only ANDROMEDA, the offical organ; for $1.50 extra you get either PIONEER or ANABIS, and for a further $1.50, both. ANDROMEDA, for long one of the worst German fanzines, has been much improved by its present editor, Gert Zech. It appears six times a year, each time with well over 60 pages. It is good on films and fandom, but lacks competent reviews. ANABIS and PIONEER are both literary fanzines, as the term is understood by some Germans: they concentrate on fiction. PIONEER pirates many Anglo-American stories; ANABIS publishes fan fiction and articles on old German sf. Both contain good illustrations and lack critical pieces. ANABIS is the only photo-offset fanzine in Germany. Both are well-produced (although PIONEER is not proof-read at all), but I feel that there is no need to publish fiction, much less professional stories, in fanzines. For details, contact Kiyanush Sarkosch. There is a host of other fanzines, many of them appearing in the apa FAN, but few of them are of any importance.

During the last few years the trend has been away from big genzines and towards small apa and personal zines. Genzines of the past such as TELESKOP, SOL, SPACE TIMES are all dead; only the SFCD still produces big fanzines. MUTANT, the last of the big privately-published fanzines, folded this year when Conrad Schaef started writing professionally and Dieter Braeg gafiated.

Perhaps I should mention my own QUARBER MERKUR, which had appeared in the pages of MUTANT, and is now again published as a fanzine in its own right. It is the only Austrian (or German) fanzine that has consistently used only critical essays on sf. It covers mostly American and British sf, but also international and old German sf, with pieces on Lasswitz, Colerus and DER ORCHIDEENGARTEN (1919-21), which was probably the first specialized fantasy magazine in the world.

Fannish activities other than publishing are very prevalent in Germany, especially notable being the Cons, which constantly prove to be very entertaining. There are several of them every year.

The best thing about German fandom, I feel, is its openness towards other fandoms. Most German fans like to get into contact with foreign fans, as those British fans can attest who have either visited German Cons or have met Germans at British Cons. Best known German fan is, of course, Thomas Schlück, the last winner of TAFF, but there are others equally active in British and American fandom. At present, thereaare plans afoot to form a European Fan Fund, in order to bring either a British fan to a German Con, or to make possible a visit by the next American TAFF winner to Germany. I hope that these plans do not prove as abortive as earlier similar ventures.

And Heidelberg will be bidding for the 1970 World Convention.

(August, 1967)

Postscript, 5.12.67:

Many things have been happening here - the scene is changing rapidly. REX CORDA is now defunct; Pabel's UTOPIA-ZUKUNFTSROMANE is now again weekly, after being for a time fortnightly; a new series (in the Perry Rhodan vein)

has been started, called AD ASTRA; Moewig's TERRA and TERRA-EXTRA bi-weekly; REN DHARK fortnightly (*); GALAXY and F&SF will continue; big anthologies of Heyne will appear in a smaller format in the general pocketbook series of that publisher; no longer stories in the series of dime-novels.

* * *

Notes: This article was specially written for ASFR, as also are those which follow. (*) Taking my usual editorial liberties, I carefully changed Franz's "bi-weekly" into "fortnightly" throughout the article. There is an unfortunate ambiguity about the word, and I apparently have chosen the wrong sense. If you can find it in your heart to forgive any publisher issuing, or any person buying, two complete 64-page adventures of FRIEDRICH NERK, SAVIOUR OF THE COSMOS everyweek, then I am sure you will also forgive my error. ::: Fellow-monolinguists should note that most German fanzines are published in German, despite English-sounding titles. However, I am given to understand that if the Heidelberg bid for the 1970 World Convention is successful, the official Con language will be English. (Clever lot, these German chaps.) Following are some addresses of German and Austrian fans:

FRANZ ROTTENSTEINER, A-2762 Ortmann, Felsenstr.20, Austria; HANS JOACHIM ALPERS, 285 Bremerhaven 1, Weissenburgerstr.6, Germany; WALDEMAR KUMMING, 8 Muenchen 2, Herzogspitalstr.5, Germany; HAGEN ZBORON, 7441 Unterensingen, Goethestr.23, Germany; KIYANUSH SARKHOSCH, 8 Muenchen 13, Merianstr.29/III, Germany; MARIO KWIAT, 4400 Munster, Stettinerstr.38, Germany; TOM SCHLUECK, 3 Hannover, Georgswall 5, Germany; WALTER ERNSTING, Salzburg, Prinzingerstr. 16, Austria; HORST-PETER SCHWAGENSCHEIDT (editor, SF TIMES), 4300 Essen, Girardetstr.63, Germany.

I regret that I do not know Franz Ettl's address, but I would like to suggest to the celebrated inventor of Vurguzz that should he ever write his memoirs he might consider as a title for this work - LYRIC, or ETTL BY ETTL.

* * *

Thus spake Zarathustra:
"Everything human is strange, a noise on dark streets!"

The noise
is sometimes despairing, sometimes hopeful,
but always and always incoherent, meaningless;

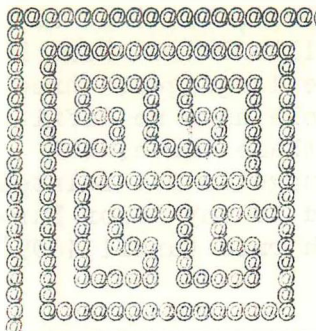
The street
leads nowhere - but because it is dark, no-one knows this,
save he who sees in the dark;

He who sees in the dark
sees nothing; there is nothing beyond the darkness
and the darkness itself is nothing;

He who sees in the dark
cannot enlighten his companions - for who can tell nothing?
who enlighten who has discovered no light?

But we make a noise to cheer us,
a noise to illumine our darkness,
words to hide our dilemma, disguise our doom,
cheer us from darkness to darkness.

Koncrit Florbryx



SCIENCE FICTION IN SCANDINAVIA

SVEN EKLUND

This article is not meant to be a complete coverage of its subject, but perhaps it will serve as a brief introduction for you sf fans on the other side of the world.

As you know, Scandinavia consists of three countries - Denmark, Norway and Sweden. Historically, five separate countries form a cultural unit in this part of the world - the three mentioned, together with Iceland and Finland. This group is then called the North. It might have been correct to treat the whole area in this article, but I am not qualified to do that. I know something of sf activity in Finland, but nothing about Iceland. About Denmark and Norway I know a little more.

Sf has been published in Scandinavia for a long time. One elderly example is Ludvig Holberg's THE SUBTERRANEAN TRAVELS OF NIELS KLIM, published anonymously at Leipzig in 1741. It was in Latin, but in the following year it was translated into the author's language, Danish. One of the first sf magazines in the world was HUGIN, published 1916-19 by Otto Witt. But I suppose that the first real sf boom came when a weekly professional magazine called THE JULES VERNE MAGAZINE came out in 1940. It ran until 1947, and published a total of 330 issues, something of a record in the sf world. The quality of this magazine was very questionable: it was very much like the Astounding and Amazing of the early thirties. In such a large number of issues it is of course possible to find some good material; there were authors like Simak and Kuttner and, perhaps most popular, Edmond Hamilton, with his Captain Future stories. I am sure that most of its readers were young boys, and some of them were perhaps about twenty when the second big boom came, shortly after 1950.

In 1954 a new professional sf magazine was issued, called HÄPNA! (Amaze!) It was immediately followed by a lot of excellent (at least by Scandinavian standards) translations of authors like Clarke, Asimov, Wyndham, Heinlein, Bradbury, van Vogt, Bester, and so on. At this time also the first active sf fandom broke out, the first fanzines were duplicated, the first clubs formed. This second boom was surely a high-point in Scandinavian sf activity, and it has never been surpassed. It was a high-point especially for professional writing, and perhaps also for club activity, but not so much for fanzine publishing, which reached a peak in 1966.

The third and latest of the big sf magazines came in 1957. It was a Swedish edition of GALAXY, containing not only translated material, but also original stories, and reprints of classics like H.G. Wells, Jack London, and Scandinavian equivalents. SWE-GALAXY lasted only 19 issues, then disappeared, apparently because it didn't return enough profit to the publishers. Yet GALAXY was very popular among the fans, and it published perhaps the best sf in Scandinavia until now.

I have heard that a Finnish edition of GALAXY was produced, but I do not know how many issues have been published or whether it still exists. Here I might mention a vital fact about the North. There are five languages, three of them closely related: Danish, Swedish and Norwegian people have no difficulty understanding one another. Icelandic is related to these three, but is not so close or as easily understood. The Finnish language is not related at all to the others (in fact is not even distantly related to any major European language, except Hungarian), but 700 years of Swedish rule (until 1809) left its mark and many in Finland understand Swedish.

HÄPNA! ceased publication in 1966, after 120 issues. Its essential material came from magazines like F&SF, ASTOUNDING/ANALOG, NEW WORLDS and so on. Like GALAXY it also published original material; one author often published was the Danish professional Niels E. Nielsen; but many amateurs also broke into print in this way. In its last years the magazine's quality sank catastrophically. The translations were bad, the covers were reprinted time after time, there were no editorials or letter-columns. Double-, triple- and even quadruple-issues became more and more usual. The fans (with a certain Anders S. Fröberg in the lead) became more and more critical, and in spite of a last-minute attempt at improvement, it disappeared. When GALAXY went there was at least an editorial in the last issue to explain why.

Many thought that fandom must disappear too when the prozines sank, but there is still a fandom, and it is as active as it was a couple of years ago. Perhaps the English-language magazines have taken the place of GALAXY and HÄPNA! But communication between potential fans is a problem.

Another aspect of the Scandinavian professional sf world is, of course, books. But, at least in Sweden, the market for sf books is almost non-existent. There were, as I have said, some hopeful signs about 1954, but since then only a few, un-representative, sf books have been published. The only foreign writer whose books have to any extent been translated into Swedish is Ray Bradbury, who has had nine books published. Great authors such as Sheckley, Vonnegut, Ballard, Tenn, Dick, Miller, Sturgeon and Clifton haven't yet had a single volume printed in Swedish, and even a brilliant author like Brian Aldiss is still waiting for his first story to be published here. Professional sf is dead in Sweden right now.

In Denmark and Norway, the situation is perhaps a little better. Jannick Storm and Jon Bing & Tor Åge Brinsværd have all compiled fresh sf anthologies. The Bing/Bringsværd anthology is already published and contains stories by Sturgeon, Matheson, Anderson, Christopher, and so on.

Fan activity in Scandinavia dates from the years after 1954. In 1964 a well-known fan, Ingvar Svensson, published a summary called SKANDIFANDOM which covers comprehensively the years between. It ran to 154 pages, and has been followed by a supplement of 86 pages covering 1965 and 1966. In these two duplicated books one finds many interesting facts: it is a goldmine for anyone who wants to know anything about Scandinavian fandom. For instance, there is a catalogue of fan publications, which shows that in 1954 about 100 pages were published, in 1965 about 1,000. (1966 looks like being the record year, with 1,140 pages. I don't think there will have been as many in 1967.)

There has been a long row of Conventions, too. The first was LunCon, Lund 1956. There have been five in Stockholm, and two MalCons, at Malmö 1959 and 1966 - although the first was perhaps a joke: in SKANDIFANDOM one reads a quote from one of the joiners, Denis Lidbohm, that "Malcon was a

devilish chequemove. I got exactly the persons I wanted. It was an extraordinary convention." A one-day Con was held at Uppsala in 1963. Last year's Con was at Gothenburg, and in 1968 there will be one in Oslo. The biggest convention so far has been Stockon I with 65 members, the smallest the Götcon, with 27.

Since I first came in contact with other fans in 1963, I am most familiar with the period since then. The most active fan in this period is without question John-Henri Holmberg, for a long time concealed behind the pseudonym "Carl J. Brandon, Jr." and best known as the editor of the Swedish edition of FANAC. In the beginning of 1967 FANAC ceased with its 36th issue, but a similar news-fanzine still exists in Ingmar Nilsson's monthly WONDERAMA. JHH is still young, since his first contact with fandom was in the beginning of 1963 - in which year he edited no less than five separate zines: ZLEWWY, UNION SF, SF TIMES, SF FORUM and the first two issues of FANAC.

SF FORUM is generally regarded as the leading fanzine of the period. It is the official organ of SFSF (Scandinavian SF Association), the leading club, which has members throughout Scandinavia. After Holmberg came Mats Linder as editor, then Lars Sjöström for two or three issues, and during the last year Holmberg and Linder have edited in collaboration. 35 issues have been published. The content varies. The most-published fiction writers are Denis Lindbohm, Sam J. Lundwall and Bertil Mårtensson, who were all represented in HÄPNA! There is always a letter-column. There are articles, columns, reviews (the best by Linder, Mårtensson and Holmberg). There have been speeches from conventions, and a taped discussion between Jannick Storm and Harry Harrison. SFSF holds regular meetings in Stockholm, where those who attend, usually between 5 and 10, discuss different things - sometimes even sf.

But SF FORUM is by no means the only fanzine: in 1966 it accounted for 370 of the 1140 pages published. There are a lot of oneshots and other occasional publications. In 1964 JHH started a new project for Scandinavia - the Scandinavian Amateur Press Alliance, SAPA. It still exists, but with only a dozen members, where it once had twenty.

Ingvar Svensson, who compiled SKANDIFANDOM, also founded the Scandinavian SF Academy, an organization which tries to keep fandom on the right track and to direct sf research. It has also given annual awards to prominent fans: Sam J. Lundwall, Denis Lindbohm, Jannick Storm and John-Henri Holmberg.

I'm sorry that I can't tell very much about sf and fandom in Denmark and Norway. In Denmark Jannick Storm is without question the leading fan. He is one of the few very active fans in Scandinavia who doesn't publish his own fanzine; instead he writes and has had much published in newspapers, and of course in fanzines. Especially one can mention articles about Danish sf in NIEKAS 13, CUENTA ATRAS -98-97, and the supplement to SKANDIFANDOM; and he has, as you know, written for ASFR.

In Norway Roar Ringdahl and Per G. Olsen were long the leading fans. Per G. Olsen has written a good article about the Norwegian sf club, Phobos, in the supplement to SKANDIFANDOM. Roar is an expert on film, especially sf-film, and his latest zine is called FILM FORUM. Per is one of the best artists in Scandinavia, and the most active at present. Over the last year Øystein Holter has appeared as a promising editor in his zine SURG. In SURG 2 there was a valuable index to Norwegian sf books. In Oslo there is

a special sf club for students, led by Jon Bing, called ANIARA. The club has published an excellent fanzine FENOMEN, mostly in English. There is also a student sf club at Lund, in Sweden.

There have been a couple of sf polls - the biggest, perhaps, one which I started in 1964. I published a preliminary result the same year, but in 1965 I announced a continuation. The definite result has yet to be published, but I can mention the first three results in each category to show what is regarded as good sf in Scandinavia. The poll had nine different categories, six international and three Scandinavian:

INTERNATIONAL CATEGORIES

Novels:
Simak: CITY
Clarke: CHILDHOOD'S END
Pohl/Kornbluth: THE SPACE MERCHANTS

Short Stories:
Keyes: FLOWERS FOR ALGERNON
Aldiss: WHO CAN REPLACE A MAN?
Asimov: DREAMING IS A PRIVATE THING

Story Collections:
Bradbury: THE ILLUSTRATED MAN
Sheckley: UNTOUCHED BY HUMAN HANDS
Van Vogt: DESTINATION: UNIVERSE

Anthologies:
Pohl: STAR SCIENCE FICTION
Boucher: BEST FROM F&SF
Knight: A CENTURY OF SF

Fantasy Books:
Bradbury: THE OCTOBER COUNTRY
Tolkien: THE LORD OF THE RINGS
Orwell: ANIMAL FARM

Fantasy Short Stories:
Bixby: IT'S A GOOD LIFE
Bradbury: THE PLAYGROUND
Brown: VOODOO

SCANDINAVIAN CATEGORIES

Novels:
Clarke: CHILDHOOD'S END
Pohl/Kornbluth: THE SPACE MERCHANTS
Huxley: BRAVE NEW WORLD

Short Stories:
Clarke: THE STAR
Brown: LETTER TO A PHOENIX
Simak: THE BIG FRONT YARD

Story Collections:
Asimov: I, ROBOT
Van Vogt: DESTINATION: UNIVERSE
Bradbury: THE ILLUSTRATED MAN

What else do fans do in Scandinavia? Well, for one thing, they compile indexes. The greatest work in this line is Sam J. Lundwall's BIBLIOGRAFI ÖVER SF OCH FANTASY, which covers Swedish sf from 1772 to April 1964. Leif Andersson has compiled an index to the contents of HÄPNA!; Ingemar Nilsson the same to SWEGALAXY; and Bengt-Olav Ringberg has done a not yet published index for the JULES VERNE MAGAZINE.

I suppose that altogether Scandinavian fans number not more than fifty active and a couple of hundred semi-active (who write, say, a letter or two in a couple of years). Perhaps there are also some hundreds who have no contact with active fans, but who fairly regularly read sf, either foreign in origin or the few translations.

Sf is rather rare on radio and TV. There has been a long, serious radio talk, in three half-hour parts, by one of the real sf experts, Göran Bengtson. On TV we've seen the American programme on Ray Bradbury, and once there was a short programme in which four fans from Malmö, Bertil Mårtensson, Leif Andrsson, Einar Pettersson and Denis Lindbohm, joined. Some series have also been seen, usually worse than TV series usually are - but you've heard that story before.

We've seen some sf films, too. FAHRENHEIT 451 is the latest, and last year we saw ALPHAVILLE and THE DAMNED - but it isn't necessary to go on: I suppose the repertoire is pretty much the same the world over. Those interested should write to Roar Ringdahl; he sometimes publishes indexes, and his

FILM FORUM is partly in English.

Sf articles are sometimes published in the general press. Johan Asplund had a good piece in Stockholms-Tidningen in 1964; some years earlier a negative article appeared in the literary magazine BLM, based primarily on the books THE VOYAGE OF THE SPACE BEAGLE and Heinlein's SIXTH COLUMN; Roland Adlerbeth, who was a reviewer in HAPNA!, has also appeared in different publications, for example in the yearbook AIRCRAFT 1958-59. A good but somewhat negative article by Michel Butor appeared on the subject in a Danish newspaper.

I will conclude by saying something about original professional sf in Scandinavia.

According to Jannick Storm the best Danish sf novel of all time is THE MAN WHO REMEMBERED (Manden der huskede) by Eiler Jørgensen, published in 1951. Niels E. Nielsen must be mentioned for his novels IT IS REPORTED FROM THE SAHARA, 1953, and TREE OF KNOWLEDGE, 1955, and TWO SUNS DID RISE, 1960. I like also many of his short stories, but Jannick Storm is on the whole quite critical of Nielsen; he means that Nielsen shows too much good human nature, and that he is too much like Bradbury. "Paul Bergsøe is Denmark's Arthur C. Clarke," says Jannick, "but he has written only one sf book." That book is THE SHADOW OF THE STAR (Stjernens skygge), 1932.

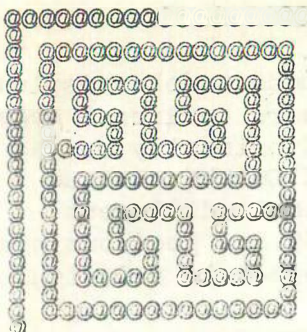
For Norwegian sf I refer you to Øystein Holter's index in SURG 2.

In one of the SPECTRUM anthologies, Kingsley Amis says that Harry Martinsson's ANIARA is bad sf. I think it is good literature, and most fans regard it as sf. Martinsson is a good author, if not the best alive in Sweden, and ANIARA is at least his most original work, light-years above most sf. It's absurd to hear Amis in his critique: ANIARA is a higher literary version of Aldiss's NON-STOP. Karin Boye's KALLOCAIN, 1948, is a story which compares in quality and subject with Orwell's 1984, and the same might be said about Ann-Margret Dahlquist-Ljungberg's THE BEAM (Strålen), published in 1958.

* * *

Notes: I'm not at all sure what Sven (or Denis Lindbohm) means by "a devilish chequemove", but it's something I intend to look into. ::: An interesting sidelight on that same "extraordinary convention" is that here, for the first time, out-of-town convention members were reduced to lodging in makeshift accomodation of the most rudimentary kind; they were not the least bit happy with these MalCon Tents, as they were called, and the name seems to have passed into the language. (Jag beklagar...) ::: A name overlooked in Sven's article is that of Sten Dahlskog. One can't mention everyone in an article like this, of course, but I think I should point out for the benefit of newcomers to ASFR that Sten had an excellent article on some works of Ursula K. LeGuin and Tom Disch in ASFR 8. ::: Some addresses:

SVEN EKLUND, Tvisegatan 6, Börlange 1, Sweden; STEN DAHLSKOG, Tuna Backar 17a, Uppsala 16, Sweden; JANNICK STORM, Ejbyvej 142, Rødovre, Denmark; CARL J. BRANDON, JR. (John-Henri Holmberg), Sällskapsvägen 7, Stockholm 48, Sweden; MATS LINDER, Antunavägen 3, Göteborg, Sweden; BERTIL MÅRTENSSON, Gymnastistgatan 10, Malmö S, Sweden; SVEND KREINER MOELLER, Lergravsvej 9, 4s th, DK 2300, Copenhagen S, Denmark; ROAR RINGDAHL, Postboks 495, Drammen, Norway; LEIF ANDERSSON, Stenastorp, Felkenberg, Sweden; INGEMAR NILSSON, Wranglesgatan 7a, Göteborg, Sweden; SAM J. LUNDWALL, Box 409, Hägersten 4, Sweden; PER INSULANDER, Midsommarv.33, Hägersten, Sweden.



SCIENCE FICTION IN ARGENTINA

MAURICIO KITAIGORODZKI

Some months ago, ANALOG printed a letter of mine in which, among other things, I asked for the pleasure of exchanging correspondence with foreign sf fans. Shortly after this I was happily up to my eyebrows in letters from all kinds of people, from school-boys to space-programme technicians, and from all over the world.

Many of these people (too many, if you ask me) were awfully misinformed about Latin America in general and Argentina in particular. Some had barely heard about this country at all, and one fellow admitted that he knew about Rio de Janeiro because he had seen BLACK ORPHEUS, but that the rest was a vague picture of jungles, pampas, savage Indians, piranhas, jaguars, constant revolutions and government coups, the Christ of the Andes - and, of course, Brasilia, because he had also seen (God bless the cinema!) THAT MAN IN RIO. As for Buenos Aires (or Argentina for that matter), he would be hopelessly lost trying to mark it on a blank map of South America. At first it surprised me that he had not mentioned the best-known Argentine feature - beef. Later I understood the reason: he can get very good meat in Melbourne (unless I am as misinformed as he is), so that would be nothing extraordinary for him.

After philosophizing for a while about the often mutual ignorance existing in such similar countries, it struck me that if he knew so little about the land he would be even less aware of the local sf movement. As it is getting to be important enough to attract the attention of quite a number of foreign publishers and writers, I sent my friend a summary of the situation. He then asked me for an article for his journal - and here (with the assistance of a local sf expert, and my good friend, Hector Pessina) it is:

In the first place, we must consider several facts which are characteristic of our sf market:

1. There is a very limited output of original Spanish sf, so the larger part of the publishers' production is made of translations from foreign stories, mainly American and British. On the other hand, a fairly large amount of readers know enough English to be able to read a lot of stuff which is never rendered into Spanish, mostly in the form of paperbacks, which are in abundant supply at several stores which specialize in foreign books.

2. The number of fans cannot be readily estimated, although a rough guess would be around 5,000. Quite a small number, of course, if compared with the American or British situation, but with a very interesting feature: A science fiction book printed in Spanish <u>always</u> sells out, if it is good. So there are not only about 5,000 fans, but also (which is so important to publishers) practically the same number of buyers.

3. In the Anglo-Saxon world, fandom (both basic and circumstantial) can be counted in the millions. This, of course, allows for all kinds of people. Here, on the contrary, nearly all sf readers belong to an often contradictory but always intellectual group. This forces the publishers to be very careful about the stuff they print, because if a book is rejected it stays rejected. As a result, most of the sf published in Spanish is quite good.

So much for books. As for magazines, they are an appreciated but rare commodity. Very few have appeared, and fewer lasted very long. One of the exceptions was MAS ALLA (roughly, "Beyond"), which appeared monthly and lasted for exactly four years from June 1953 to June 1958. It followed the American model for sf magazines, and many of the current fans (present company included) are the product of its influence. It was the first to print in Spanish such classics as Heinlein's THE MAN WHO SOLD THE MOON, Asimov's Robot stories and THE CAVES OF STEEL, Bradbury's MARTIAN CHRONICLES, and many others. At the same time it printed stories by Argentine authors, many of which, due to their strongly local setting, were not suitable for export. This magazine was also an important influence in the subsequent shaping of clubs.

Currently F&SF is translated and printed here, under the name MINOTAURO, and its popularity is strongly limited by its erratic time-table.

Other short-lived sf magazines: HOMBRES DEL FUTURO ("Men of the Future") - 3 issues in 1947, based on STARTLING STORIES. It published a novel by Stanley Weinbaum, THE BLACK FLAME, in which Argentina appears as the head of a tri-planetary system formed (of course) of Terra, Venus and Mars, with Buenos Aires as its thirty-million-inhabitants capital. URANIA - a few issues in 1953, and named after the Italian magazine of which it was a translation. It printed Dick's THE VARIABLE MAN and Bradbury's first story in Spanish, HERE BE TYGERS. GEMINIS - two issues in 1965.

Sf films are another matter altogether. The large amounts involved in their production and exhibition has limited drastically the filming of local sf pictures, and there have been only a few short ones. Foreign pictures, although having the same financial problems for local theatre-owners, appear from time to time, but only a few, and not always the best, get through. Nonetheless we have seen some of the best sf films made abroad, such as DESTINATION MOON, FORBIDDEN PLANET (which, incidentally, was the first film with electronic music to be seen in Argentina), and lately FANTASTIC VOYAGE and VOYAGE TO THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA.

On television, several sf serials have found their way to the local small screens. Starting with THE TWILIGHT ZONE and THE OUTER LIMITS, and more lately TIME TUNNEL and IT'S ABOUT TIME, they have a limited audience. Fans usually find little interest in them and non-fans consider them rubbish (which they usually are). Children love the strips specially prepared for them - THUNDERBIRD, BATMAN, CAPTAIN ZODIAC - so hope is not altogether lost.

Sf has become both fashionable and commercially feasible in this country. This, however, has not brought about a close fan-relationship. There are several reasons for this. Most of the organizations have been a combination of amateur rocketry and sf clubs, in which the first element has been usually far more important than the second. These clubs had their own science-oriented libraries (which eventually became their most important asset) and carried out various activities such as conferences about scientific

subjects, rocket techniques, experiments, and sometimes sf. These small local clubs were the foundation of subsequent large national organizations, in which sf was left far behind. In fact, the biggest problem which had to be faced by the few people who attempted to set up 100% sf clubs was fandom itself; firstly because there were few people so interested in sf (shall we say "professional" fans?) as to see the need and the convenience of a club entirely devoted to the field, and secondly because even those few often had such different views that co-operation became difficult. So most of the sporadic efforts to organize sf clubs failed, usually with a lot of noise, in spite of the good will of their founders and supporters. But some of these efforts were successful, and notably, perhaps most important of them all, the Argentine Science Fiction Club, which started some years ago and has an important library; this latter solely because the people in charge of it, all of them raving fans and in some cases with a scholastic knowledge of the field, fought doggedly to keep it alive. The Club's president, Hector Pessina, publishes the only (to date) Argentine fanzine - Argentine SF Review, which is partly in English.

This has been just a sketchy outline of what is bound to become an important international sf centre if the current favourable conditions prevail for a few more years. One thing is certain: there are many sf writers in the world who are unknown here, and if any of them are reading this they might do well to contact an Argentine publisher.

* * *

Notes: In a letter, Hector Pessina makes a number of remarks which generally cover the same ground as Mauricio's article, but I would like to quote his concluding paragraph:

"In spite of the short story of sf in Argentina (what we know about the rest of Latin America would fill half a page or less) it has had a number of conflicts and problems which have many times threatened to do away with it altogether. The Argentine SF Club has survived and is still active, with a reduced membership and fewer activities than in the past. I was one of the founding members of the ASFC and have been its President for over six years, having survived several coups-d'etat and the like. It has a well-stocked library with most of the books published in Spanish and a large number of novels and magazines from the USA and England, as well as a few from France and Germany. It has published three issues of its official organ, FICCION CIENTIFICA Y REALIDAD, and a few issues of a smaller bulletin called CAFC (= Club Argentino de Ficcion Cientifica) NEWS. ... The history of sf in this country hasn't yet been written, but when it is it will no doubt prove to be as eventful and interesting as that of the USA, England or Australia."

I should also mention that since Mauricio's article was written two Argentine fans, Messrs. Elliff and Lerena, have published an ARGENTINE SCIENCE FICTION, FANTASY & HORROR FILM INDEX. That information courtesy of Roar Ringdahl's FILM FORUM. (Small world...)

Addresses: MAURICIO KITAIGORODZKI, Aguirre 688-3°B, Buenos Aires, Argentina. HECTOR PESSINA, CC 3869, Correo Central, Buenos Aires, Argentina. OSWALT ELLIFF, Calle 2 nº 270 2dpæ , La Plata (B.A.), Argentina.

I don't know what sort of success they've had with it, but Mauricio and Hector have been trying to get a paperback exchange business under way. If you have any sf (or mystery) paperbacks to sell, I'm sure they would like to hear from you. Send a list, with a description of editions & condition of the books.

* * *

SF EUROPA SF EUROPA SF EUROPA SF EU

ROPA SF EUROPA SF EUROPA SF EUROPA:

In ASFR 13 we published several reviews by overseas authors under the heading "Guest Spot". This idea is now extended to what we hope will become a regular column devoted to news and reviews from Europe. This first instalment contains news filched from EUROPEAN NEWSBULLETIN no.1, published by Jean Muggoch, 15 Balcombe House, Taunton Place, London NW.1. Anyone who is at all interested in what is going on in European sf should write to Jean and demand a subscription.

ITALY ::: An anthology of Italian sf has appeared in an edition of 50,000 copies in Russia. It is entitled THE MOON WITH TWENTY ARMS. ::: An "Active Fandom Movement" has been launched (secretary Ricardo Valla) to spread the sf word amongst the public. A series of awards for fiction and fanzines has been instituted. ::: Ugo Malaguti's NOVA SF has appeared, with pieces on Bradbury and Pohl & Kornbluth. (Australian agent John Bangsund: 80¢ per issue.) ::: The Centro Cultori Science Fiction celebrated its 5th anniversary in November. The CCSF publishes a newszine, SF CRONACHE, and is engaged on Italian bibliographical work. Write Gian Paolo Cossato for details.

SPAIN ::: A new magazine is to be published - NUEVA DIMENSION. The only sf magazine in Spanish, it is being produced by three fans, Luis Vigil, Pedro Domingo & Sebastiano Martinez. ::: Carlos Buiza, editor of CUENTA ATRAS and professional sf author, has had two of his stories made into TV films: MUNDO SIN LUZ (World Without Light) won an award in Berlin and EL ASFALTO won one and shared another at the Monte Carlo TV Festival.

SWEDEN ::: Brian Aldiss visited Scandinavia in December. ::: 1968 Convention will be held in Stockholm either at Easter or Whitsuntide.

BRITAIN ::: 1968 Convention, the ThirdManCon, will be held at St. Anne Hotel, Buxton, near Manchester at Easter. Guest of Honour, Ken Bulmer. Programme will include DeltaFilm's version of Aldiss's ALL THE WORLD'S TEARS. Fee 7s6d to Bill Burns. ::: The SF Club of London held a one-day MiniCon in November. Guest of Honour was John Carnell, and there was an address by John Brunner. ::: It is expected that the Kubrick/Clarke film 2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY will have its premiere in America at Easter.

GERMANY ::: The PERRY RHODAN series has been sold to Ace Books in America. ::: Rudolf Noelte and Maximilian Schell are filming Kafka's THE CASTLE. ::: The Science Fiction Club Deutschland will hold a convention at Heidelberg from 2nd to 4th August this year. Details from Gerd Zech. ::: At the last SFCD Convention in Berlin the following awards were made for German sf: Best Novel - Otto Basil WENN DAS FUEHRER WUESSTE; Best Translation - Christa Jacob: THE JOY MAKERS, Tom Schlueck: THE STAR-MAKER, Hans Ulrich Nichau: ALL FLESH IS GRASS; Best Fan Writer - Gerd Maximovic, Axel Melhardt, Horst Christiani; Best Fanzine - ANABIS, MUTANT, ANDROMEDA; Best One-Shot - Walt Willis, special issue MUTANT on Trieste SF Festival; Best Fan Critic - Rottensteiner, Alpers, Eduard Lukschandl; Best Film - FAHRENHEIT 451, FANTASTIC VOYAGE, RAUMPATROUILLE.

Addresses: GIAN PAOLO COSSATO, 5 Barkston Gardens, London SW.5 ::: RICCARDO VALLA, Fermo Posta, 10100 Torino, Italy ::: LUIS VIGIL, Jose Anselmo Clave, 4 2º 2ª, Barcelona 2, Spain ::: ØYSTEIN HOLTER, N.H. Abels Vei 31b, Oslo 8, Norway ::: BILL BURNS, 13 Swanage Road, Winton, Eccles, Manchester, England ::: GERD ZECH, 6900 Heidelberg, Münchhofstr. 12-14, Astonomisches Rechen-Institut, Germany ::: AXEL MELHARDT, Hintzerstr. 11/19, A.1030 Wien, Austria ::: CARLOS BUIZA, Atocha 12, Madrid 12, Spain ::: LEIF ANDERSSON, Dag Hammarskjoldsvag 4d:206, Lund, Sweden

CARLOS RASCH: DIE UMKEHR DER MERIDIAN
("The Return of the Meridian")
Deutscher Militaerverlag, East Germany
- reviewed by FRANZ ROTTENSTEINER

Different as sf in the Communist countries may be from that of the West, there exist many similarities. One of them is the chiliastic belief in benevolent extraterrestrials, shared by Communists, saucer cultists and American sf writers alike. In Jack Williamson's BRIGHT NEW UNIVERSE (a mistaken title: it's just another of those dreary old universes), for instance, a man forsakes his family, his fiancee and even a poor old asthmatic aunt in order to bring mankind into contact with aliens. His conviction is based on no evidence whatsoever, but miraculously it turns out that there exist indeed such friends of humanity who will solve all our problems for us. In Rasch's story, a spaceship out beyond the solar system receives an alien message containing the secret of immortality.

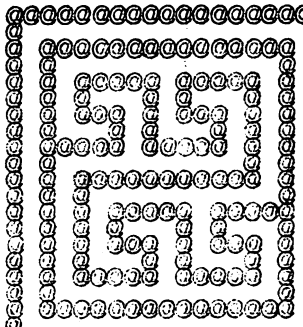
There is little action in the novel: the spaceship is damaged by cosmic rays and further damaged by a panicking crew member, and it seems dubious whether the crew will see Earth again. The characters are all good unselfish Communists who assure each other that only society is important and that the life of no man is worth more than that of any other, which is repeated only three times. The panicking officer seems to be an exception, an atavistic survival from the days of the struggle for existence, but even he is careful not to lead the reader astray. Even when highly excited he still points out that his words are only his opinion. Before the novel begins he had done his share of heroism, when he saved the people aboard an aeroplane. His guilt consists in thinking himself more fit than he actually is: he should have reported the incident, but didn't because the long psychological examination this would have entailed would have prevented his partaking in the stellar expedition. Under the new strain he breaks. All ends well, of course; he becomes sane again and repents his error.

The background of the story is the usual Communist world state. All of its citizens are so damned noble and unselfish, so completely free from evil, that they only bore the reader. The only thing that serves to bring them somewhat nearer to us is their unwillingness to give their lives for what they believe in. Like many heroes in American fiction they believe that human life isn't the most important thing - but they do not share the conviction of those fascist sf heroes that it is the lives of others which are of no importance.

Political history has come to an end: in the Utopian society all change possible is in the sciences, socialism being the highest possible form of social order. History has become identical with scientific progress. This common assumption of all Communist sf is what makes it so very much alike: when you have read one story, you know the social content of them all. Since a Utopian tale has but two appeals anyway - style and ideas - there isn't much left that we can enjoy. The style is usually very ordinary, engineer-like, so that there remains only the science. Accordingly, this novel is full of boring descriptions of places and things.

* * *

SOME AUSTRALIAN NEWS: Publishing events during the first part of this year include four paperbacks from Horwitz and an anthology from Angus & Robertson. The titles from Horwitz are: A. Bertram Chandler: FALSE FATHERLAND, John Baxter: THE GOD-KILLERS, Lawrence Janifer (ed): MASTERS' CHOICE OF SCIENCE FICTION (two volumes). The A&R anthology, edited by John Baxter, and to be published in their Pacific Paperbacks series, will contain stories by A. Bertram Chandler, Frank Bryning, Kit Denton, Ron Smith, Colin Free, John Baxter, Lee Harding, Damien Broderick, Frank Roberts, Martin Loran, Jack Wodhams, Stephen Cook and David Rome.



K I N G ' S C R O S S I N O R B I T

Edmond Hamilton & Leigh Brackett in Sydney

Inaugural Meeting of the Sydney Science Fiction Foundation

PATRICK A. M. TERRY

John Bangsund sent out a circular letter about the forthcoming visit of the Hamiltons to Sydney, and suggested in it that we get in touch with Miss Betsy Holt and organize a welcome for them. Following the receipt of this letter, on 2nd November, I immediately wrote, and had posted that same morning, a letter to Miss Holt; but in my haste I addressed the envelope to Miss Betsy Scott. Realizing this, just after the letter had been posted, I made my way up to my upstairs neighbour's flat, and went to telephone the number given in John's letter - only to realize that the letter prefixes having been discontinued for several months, none of us knew what numbers on the new dial represented the old letters. As my neighbour's husband had their phone book away in his car, I rang Information and asked what numbers had replaced the letters "MW". Told to "hold the line, please", I did so, and after waiting patiently for at least ten minutes the lass came back and said she was very sorry, but she was only a relieving operator, and she didn't know the answer herself - and had been unable to locate anyone who did know! Then I asked her to give me the number of the Sydney University (which was what I should have asked in the first place). A number was given me, which, as it differed from that in John's letter, to make sure I asked for a repeat, and wrote it down, figure by figure, as it was given. Thinking that probably Sydney University would have more than one number, I rang the one given, only to hear a voice say, "Yes? Chullora Fire Station here." When I tried to explain that I wanted Sydney University, he promptly hung up. Then my neighbour suggested that she should ring a friend and ask her to look up the number for us. She did so, and at last we had the right number.

I rang the University and asked for the Department of English. A male voice answered. I asked if I could speak to Miss Betsy Holt, and was told to "hang on a moment, please". After "hanging on" for ten minutes or more, the voice suddenly said, "Hullo? Sorry, Miss Holt is not in today," and hung up. (Progress score: three paid telephone calls, one letter. Result: nil.)

So I went downstairs, rewrotemy letter, correctly addressing the envelope this time, and as my neighbour was just going out, she posted it, just catching the 1.30pm collection. Then I wrote to, in all, twenty-one people who I thought might be interested in (a) meeting the Hamiltons (explaining that, of course, Leigh Brackett is Mrs. Hamilton's pen-name) and (b) the formation of a new group, club, society or what-have-you; and asked them, if interested, to contact either myself or Miss Holt. I also wrote to Ron Clarke, Norma Williams (at Inverell, but just in case she were in town), Kevin Dillon, Ken Rolph and Captain A. Bertram Chandler. (Not being aware that Bert was on leave, I sent his letter to the Shipping Company's box number.) Ron Clarke visited me and said he would join in any arrangements made; and Ken Rolph wrote to explain that he was temporarily "out of action". So, by Thursday, 9th November at 2pm the Progress Score stood at three tele-

phone calls, twenty-five letters (plus another to John Bangsund); Results: one visit (affirmative), one letter (negative). So I decided to try to contact Miss Holt again by telephone, as I had received no acknowledgement of my letters.

Sure, I think I must be allergic to telephones, or something. Briefly, here are the sorry results of the next few days' efforts. Thursday: telephoned University, asked switchboard operator for "Miss Betsy Holt, Department of English"; male voice answers; I repeat the request to speak to Miss Betsy Holt, and after a wait I am told, "Sorry, Miss Holt is not available today". Friday: rang again, same procedure, but this time a young lady answered; usual request; very prompt reply, "Oh, Miss Holt is never here on Fridays". Monday: same again; man answers; waited; "Sorry, Miss Holt cannot be located." Tuesday: a young lady answers my request with, "Oh, I'm so sorry, you can't reach Miss Holt on this extension: you will have to ring extension 2088." (2088 is my postal district number , so I was sure of this one, but the young lady hung up on me while I was asking her to transfer me back to the switchboard.) I rang again, and asked for extension 2088: very gruff voice says, "Yes?"; I ask for Miss Betsy Holt; "Who?" shouts the voice; I repeat the name and the voice says angrily, "Are you kidding? This is the bloody Printing Shop, and there's no bloody females down here!" and - bang!! - I nearly had a busted eardrum as a result of wasted phone call no.8.

By this time there were several people waiting to use the phone, so, being only a couple of hundred yards from Spit Junction Post Office, I decided to send a reply-paid urgent telegram to the elusive (and, so I was beginning to think, mythical) Miss Betsy Holt. I did so, and walked back to the taxi-rank, caught a taxi straight away, and went home - where, to my amazement, the reply to my telegram had already been delivered!! (I wondered if the signature "Holt" had evoked visions of Prime Minister Holt among the PMG officials, thus accounting for the speed of the delivery, but perhaps that's unjust.)

The telegram informed me that the correct extension was 2208. So, once more to the instrument of torture, and, at long last, there was Miss Holt. When I explained who I was, she said she had been so busy that she had forgotten to answer my letter. As this was already the 14th, and only twelve days remained before the expected arrival of the Hamiltons, I was, I think, justifiably anxious to know if Miss Holt had had any response to the various efforts that had been made, and she told me that she had received a number of letters and phone calls, and that she had arranged for a meeting to take place on Monday 27th November at the large apartment of Mr. John Danza at Potts Point - which is only a short distance from the Chevron-Hilton where the visitors were to stay. They were now not expected to arrive until the morning of the 27th, but the information was still not definite. Our biggest difficulty had been that we did not know for sure whether the Hamiltons were travelling by sea or air, but we now knew that they were coming on a Quantas flight from Hong Kong, arriving about 7.50am. After I had hung up, with Miss Holt's promise to confirm date, time and place of meeting in writing, and with, I thought, an assurance that there would be a number of fans to meet the Hamiltons at the airport, I went down to my own flat - still feeling somewhat uneasy about things.

Then I remembered that flights from Hong Kong usually land at about 6am, so back once more to the telephone. I rang Quantas and, yes, the flight from Hong Kong was due at 6am. No, they would not know the names of passengers aboard until 10pm on the 26th. So I rang the hotel, and was told that World Travel Headquarters had booked the Hamiltons in, from the 27th to the

4th, but had given no time of arrival. So I rang World Travel, and finally got the whole story. The Hamiltons would arrive at 7.50am - from Singapore. When I remarked that the Chevron-Hilton people did not know the estimated time of arrival, I was profusely thanked and told that a courier would immediately rectify the omission. As Miss Holt had the correct arrival time, I did not bother to phone her again at that time. Progress score to date: 26 letters written and sent, one reply-paid telegram, 12 telephone calls, and a large number of hours spent. Result: Definite knowledge of the Hamiltons' route and e.t.a.; definite knowledge of 4 people who would be present at the meeting on the 27th (Ron Clarke, Miss Holt, John Danza and myself); Miss Holt's assurance that there would be people to meet the visitors at the airport, and that there would be lots of people at the meeting. Somehow I still had an uneasy feeling that something, somewhere, was not quite right. Even though, when on Saturday 25th November I was honoured and pleased to be visited by Diane & John Bangsund, Leigh Edmonds and Paul Stevens (who had come up, fruitlessly as it turned out, from Melbourne), I may have seemed confident that all was well, in fact I still had a nagging doubt in my mind.

My doctor had absolutely vetoed any suggestion that I go to the airport, but he gave me permission to go over to the Hotel and await the arrival of our distinguished visitors there; so on Monday morning I managed to get myself over to the Hotel by about 8.20 am. When I asked at the reception desk how long it usually took for guests to reach the Hotel from the airport, I was told usually between 45 and 60 minutes. On my remarking that that was fine, as I would not have long to wait, I was asked who I wanted to meet. When I told the young lady, she said they had been informed that the flight would be at least an hour late, and then she told me I was welcome to make myself comfortable in one of the big armchairs, and that she would call me immediately on my friends' arrival. She also found out that I did not know the Hamiltons by sight, and when they finally did arrive at about 10.45am, I was called over and introduced to them.

Gosh, they were pleased. Ed did his best to shake my arm loose from my shoulder, and a hug and a kiss from Leigh completed my captivation. Ed insisted that it was the greatest honour and the finest compliment they had ever been paid, that the oldest known and longest-addicted active sf fan should be the very first person to bid them welcome to Australia. In some surprise, I asked were they not met at the airport, and was told "Never a sign of anyone." No-one else had come to the Hotel, either, so I quietly gave thanks that I had decided to be there, as it would have been, I feel, utterly disgraceful had they arrived and found no-one to meet them in person, no matter how many letters of welcome awaited them. As they were very tired, having been flying since 10.45 the previous night, and, owing to some spoilt noisy children unable to get any sleep, I was a little diffident about mentioning the meeting arranged for that same night, but they assured me that they wouldn't miss it for anything.

After leaving them to have some much-needed rest, I rang to tell Miss Holt of their safe arrival, and how I was the only one to meet them, but I was told that Miss Holt was not in and not expected, and that no, I could not be given her home address. Then I tried to ring Bert Chandler, again without success, so I went home.

Ron Clarke called for me that evening at 7.15, and drove me to Potts Point. After some difficulty in finding a parking spot we climbed up the three flights of stairs (whew) to John Danza's place, where we were welcomed by John and his charming daughter, Marlen. Shortly after we arrived, along came Bert Chandler, whom I had the pleasure of meeting for the first

time in person, although we have long corresponded. When the Hamiltons arrived there were, in all, thirty-three people there to meet them, and I had fears for the safety of the roof, so vociferous was the welcome. After they had moved around and met, I think, everyone there, they came and sat down to talk to Bert Chandler and myself, while a veritable orgy of picture-taking went on. (I got my share, too.)

Miss Holt welcomed the distinguished guests, and spoke of forming a Sydney sf group, and suggested that interested parties could talk the matter over, there and then. John Danza also welcomed all of us to his home on such an auspicious and historic occasion, and expressed his pleasure that in addition to our guests so many young and, he hoped, energetic folk had come along, who could ensure a successful beginning and continuance of an active new group of fans in Sydney. Then he asked Ed (as he insists I call him) to say a few words. Sure now, Ed is a trifle deaf, and as neither Miss Holt nor John Danza are terribly loud speakers, I don't think he heard a great deal of what had been said. (But Leigh doesn't miss a word, and she told me quietly that Ed would expect her to tell him all about things later.) Anyway, Ed stood up and said how delighted, honoured and complimented he was at the reception he and his wife had received, but, he said, "I always let my wife do all the talking for both of us, and anyway I can't stop her talking, so - you get on with it, Leigh." And he sat down again. Leigh certainly can speak well, and she spoke very movingly of the pleasure this visit had already given them, with the promise of much more enjoyment to come, and of their regret that their stay in Australia would be so short. Her last words were, "You just bet your lives, we will be back again, and for a much longer stay." When she sat down, John Danza asked Bert Chandler to say a few words, and he did - very few indeed - canny bird that he is. He got up and said, "I am here tonight merely as a long-time and great admirer of the books of both our visitors, and I compliment them on their works and popularity. I heartily join in the welcome to them."

Ed and I were having quite a yarn about his books while Leigh talked to Bert and most of the younger folk were having a "meeting within a meeting" to discuss the formation of the new group. During this time Ed told me that both he and Leigh were now in the happy position where they could choose for themselves what they would write and when, without being subject any longer to editors' or publishers' deadlines. He went on to say that Ace Books had contracted to buy at least four,and, at Ed's choice, eight, books in his new series, the "STARWOLF" series. The first title, STARWOLF 1 has already been published, with the sub-title, THE WEAPON FROM BEYOND, and the second ms. had been delivered to Ace just before they started their trip. I had in my pocket (not by chance, either) a copy of STARWORLF 1, which I produced, intending to ask Ed to autograph it, but I didn't get a chance to ask. He said, "Here, lend me that for a moment," and he wrote inside the front cover, "To Mr. Terry, who paid me the greatest compliment of my life. With affection, Edmond Hamilton." That's one book no-one will ever get their hands on while I'm alive.

Then Leigh came over and shooed Ed off to talk to Bert, as she reckoned it was now her turn for a talk with me. Many of the places they had recently visited were old familiar stamping grouds of mine, many years ago. South Africa, round the turn of the century, and India, the Taj Mahal, the Khyber Pass, Delhi, Afghanistan, Peshawar, and parts of Persia and Iran, between 1904 and 1913, and again between 1919 and 1922, and it got so that I would describe these places as I knew them, and Leigh would then describe them as they are today. Sure, and 'tis a wonderful power of description she has, too. You can see, hear, and darn near smell the places as she describes them.

Then, after a while, she said that she might consider also starting a series of books; so, seizing my chance, out from my pocket came my copy of THE SWORD OF RHIANNON, my favourite among her books, and while she was writing in it almost the same words as Ed used, I asked her, only partly in jest, "Why not a follow-on series to this one? Surely there ought to be some more good stories in that Sword of Rhiannon?" She then told me that she had been bothered quite a bit after the book had been published by letters from people who had been annoyed with her for turning Rhiannon into a somewhat evil God, when in reality Rhiannon was a much-loved woman. 'Tis just fortunate that I know the real old Irish legend of Rhiannon, who was indeed a legendary Irish hero, warrior-king, and later one of the old Gods. There was also, in much later times, a daughter of a tribal chieftain who was named Rhianon, who later became chieftainess and was a much-loved and venerated woman. The similar spelling of the names had evidently led Leigh's correspondents into error. (Rhiannon was also loosely identified with one of the old Norse Gods, named, I think, Rohannon - but this I am not sure about.) All this led to a most interesting discussion of the old Irish legends, of which I have promised to write out as many as I can remember and send them to her.

Then the younger folk returned, and it was announced that a temporary comittee had been appointed, under the chairmanship of Warren Glass, to meet on 29th November to rough out a constitution, rules, name and so on, for presentation at a full meeting of those interested on 6th December, and conversation once more became general. When Ron and I left at near 1am, things were still going strong. John Danza and Marlen had provided all kinds of food and drink, which had freely circulated all through the hours of the meeting, and when leaving I remembered to thank them for their very generous hospitality, only to be told to forget it.

When taking my leave of the Hamiltons, I was told to keep a day free towards the end of their visit, for a long quiet talkative time just by ourselves, provided their already multifarious social engagements would permit them a free day. Trips had been arranged for them both by the Tour directors and people from the meeting, but I was unable for various reasons to accept their cordial invitation to join them in these ventures. I will however know all about their journeys and, more important, their impressions, when I receive a letter from Leigh. Owing to a sudden slight indisposition, I did not again meet the visitors, but Ed wrote to me and expressed their thorough enjoyment of their stay, and their regret that the stay was so short. They had enquired about altering their tour schedule to allow them a longer period in Australia, but as the only alternative possible would not have enabled them to get back home in time for Christmas, the tour had to proceed as arranged. He intimated that they would return, possibly next year, for a much longer stay, and also wrote of his intention to try to round up a bunch of other sf writers to form a big party for the trip.

After the Hamiltons' departure, the temporary committee met as arranged, and on Wednesday 6th December Ron Clarke drove me ove to what could be termed the inaugural meeting of the new group. On the way I asked about reports and who would be writing them, but Ron said he didn't intend to do this, and he was not too clear about Miss Holt's intentions. He told me that when the temporary committee was being appointed that Miss Holt had spoken at some length about the objectives of the group if it were formed, but had rather confused Ron by saying that she was in the position of a kind of midwife, who attended and supervised the birth, but that the education and growth of the group did not concern her. I gathered that she had not been at the meeting on 29th November, and that there was still some confusion in the minds of the committee members. When Warren Glass declared the meeting

open at 8pm there were, in all, six teen of us present, but Miss Holt failed to attend. The first thing to be discussed was the name by which the group would be known. After some discussion , Warren called for a formal motion, and Mr. Danza moved, seconded Mr. Terry, that the official name be "The Sydney Science Fiction Foundation." An amend ment to change the word "Foundation" to "Forum" was defeated, as much emphasis had been placed on the fact that to sf fans the word "Foundation" had connotations. The original motion was then carried.

It was then agreed that there should be an Executive Committee, consisting of President, Secretary, Treasurer, Librarian amd three other members. As I had stated that, owing to age and uncertainty of health, I would not stand for any office, I was unanimously elected Chairman - merely to conduct the elections, the temporary Committee resigning en masse for this election. Warren Glass being the only nominee for the Presidential position, I duly declared him elected and promptly re-installed him in the chair. (And no-one, except John Danza, realized that by doing this I had pulled a swifty on Warren, since by rights I should have remained in the chair until all the officers were elected...) Ron Clarke, being the only nominee not to decline, was elected Secretary; Zian Wilkinson, after a tied vote, was elected Treasurer on the toss of a coin; and John Danza was elected Librarian. Other committee members elected were Derek Hall, Stuart Leslie and John Dowden.

The President allowed informal discussion on the subject of tenure of office, and strongly stressed his view that the first committee should only hold office for a comparitively short period, as a kind of settling-down time. Finally the decision was reached that the present committee should hold office until May 1968, the exact date to be decided by the committee, and from then on, annually until May each year.

A quorum is to consist of the President (or, in his absence, the officer next in superiority) and three other members. The presiding officer is to have ordinary voting rights, plus a casting vote in case of a deadlock. The committee, or a quorum of the committee, is empowered to co-opt the services of a financial member to serve the unexpired term of office of any committee member vacating his position.

In regard to fees, it was agreed that members should pay $3.00 per year or $1.00 per quarter in advance, and that university and high school students should pay half these amounts. Meetings are to be held weekly at 7.30pm on Wednesdays, at Flat 7, 116 Victoria Street, Potts Point.

The meeting was declared closed by the President at 10.15pm, when John Danza provided refreshments and members moved around to talk and get to know each other for a considerable time.

I cannot end this report without a sincere tribute to John Danza, whose astoundingly generous hospitality seems to be unending! Prior to the closing of the meeting, a motion of thanks was tendered and carried by acclamation, that John be thanked sincerely for his hospitality and that the motion be recorded in the archives.

John has made his entire residence available for the welcome and meeting with the Hamiltons, and has provided, with the assistance of his charming daughter, an unending supply of food and drink of every description. He has also offered his residence to the group for all meetings for an indefinite period. Also, as Librarian he will catalogue, house and supervise the lending operations of the Foundation's library. He will also make available a large

room for several hours from Monday to Friday as a reading room, and the use of his own amazingly extensive library. He has already suggested various projects to the members. His residence is literally lined with books, and his sf collection is enough to make anyone envious. There is, apparently, no end to his sf activities; at this moment he is engaged on the task of translating an Italian article for John Bangsund - in addition to everything else he is doing! One thing I do stress very strongly: all his magnificent offers to the SSFF are, in his words, to be without any cost to the group. This is, I feel, a state of affairs which cannot be permitted for very long.

* * *

JB: Well, there you have Pat's report, and I think it's an historic document. Though it by no means exhausts the subject: many people have memories of those weeks, including people like myself who are not part of Sydney fandom. I won't bore you with the full story of our raid on Sydney; briefly, Diane and I decided on the spur of the moment on the Friday night to drive up to Sydney to meet the Hamiltons (who, as far as we knew, had arrived that morning), and were halfway through packing when Leigh and Paul joined us; we drove all night; saw the sunrise as we passed through Gundagai; were stranded for what seemed like hours in the Liverpool Saturday-morning crush; and finally arrived half-dead at King's (adj.) Cross about 12.30pm; after a few hours recuperating we visited John Danza and Pat Terry; then, first thing Sunday we took off again, visiting Alan France at Wodonga about 9pm and arriving home about midnight. (My pleasantest memory of the trip, our visits aside, is of a waitress at Albury who was wearing a low-cut thingummy and who leaned over to take my order - I speak rather softly at times - and proved that "everything she had was absolutely real..." Being a grown man, I can take this sort of thing (yes, please), but the next time I flicked my cigarette lighter, it blew up. No kidding - I have witnesses.)

The following Saturday night, while I was out buying our fish'n'chips, Leigh Hamilton rang us, and Diane chatted to her and Ed. When I came back I rang Sydney (and now you know why we have to live on fish'n'chips) and yarned with them until the vision of mammoth phone bills made me finish. They sounded exactly as Pat and others have pictured them, and they apparently enjoyed their stay here immensely. I asked Leigh when she intended to write more sf. "Oh, very soon now," she said. "May I quote you?" I asked. "Why, sure!" she said. So there you are: watch out for new Brackett books, you lucky people.

Since then the interstate fan traffic has been heavy. First John Danza came to Melbourne on Xmas Eve and met a mob of Melbourne fans at our place. We talked interminably and passed pennies back and forth (but decided not to overthrow the government just now). Then Lee Harding drove up to Sydney and spent nearly a week with John Baxter. His comments on that visit may appear in ASFR 15, if he can get over the combined effect of a new addition to the family and spilling paint on his beautiful new lounge-room carpet in time to write them for us. And last weekend we were visited by the Secretary and Treasurer of the Sydney group, Ron Clarke and Zian Wilkinson. From all these visits and discussions, and from letters received, we have a fairly clear picture of what is happening in Sydney. The SSFF is rich in strong and conflicting personalities, and is not without the problems common to all clubs everywhere; but there is plenty of good will and a uniting purpose. I am sure that given a little patience and understanding on all sides, the Sydney group will come to be a major force in fandom. Already it has shown such initiative and produced such good ideas that Melbourne club members have started to wonder what they've been at all these years: to such an extent that one has even heard sf discussed lately at the Club!

AN INTERVIEW WITH PUNJENT SINJH

JOHN BANGSUND

Noted Indian film director, Punjent Sinjh, has announced that he is shortly to commence work on a science fiction film. ASFR's man on the spot, Roland Pinn, visited Mr. Sinjh at his home in Hyderadown and taped this interview:

RP: What films have you made in recent years, Mr. Sinjh?

PS: In 1963 I made beautiful film about Indian high society. It was amusical - indeed very amusical - called MYSORE LADY. In the following year I made film of profound and searching social comments, as even your great Australian critic Colon Bent has said at the time, though unfortunately banned in your lovely country, and this was entitle HOLLOW DELHI. In 1965 I feel upsurging of patriotisms and national pride you understand, and also with one eye cocked as you say to the box office, and I produce first spy film by a noted Indian film director. This film is based on a story which you may know by late Ian Flemings, with a little alteration which I am making for not upsetting local religious beliefs which is big power in box office, and is called YOU ONLY LIVE MANY TIMES. I also change the hero a little to local conditions and call him Dick Turban to avoid copyright infringings you understand. This film also is very amusical and big success.

RP: Tell me, why did you change James Bond into Dick Turban?

PS: Ah, this is to kill two vultures with one pebble as we say. Dick Turban is big powerful Sikh with black turban and a way with the ladies you know, what you might call a bit of a hood in fact. I make him this because is also big popularity with box office in this country for Sikh comedy.

RP: I see. Well, perhaps we should talk about your new film. Why do you wish to make a science fiction film, sir?

PS: Every film director, indeed every Indian film director, is making a science fiction film, because science fiction is most important of subjects now occupying box offices, even as James Bond is most recently important.

RP: In other words, because science fiction is the "in" thing?

PS: As you truly say, yes.

RP: And what is your film to be called, Mr. Sinjh?

PS: My film is entitle THE REMAINDER WORLD. The title comes from book by J. Ballard...

RP: Ballard!! Oh, sorry about that - I shouldn't get carried away - but, Mr. Sinjh, I don't know of any Ballard book by that name!

PS: Ah, no, in fact he has not written this book as yet. But I am reading a review of this book which has not been written, and this review is by W. Willis, an Irish gentleman, no? I am saying to myself, this sounds like a lousy book indeed, but so beautiful the title! So I ask my London agent, in England, to visit J. Ballard and say to him we will buy your book. My agent finds J. Ballard at a desk where he is typing pages and cutting them up with scissors, and my agent say we will buy your book THE REMAINDER WORLD. J. Ballard say I do not know this book, and my agent thinking quickly say Ballard Sahib will you write this book for us to make film? J. Ballard just look sadly at my agent, saying there is no time, and go on cutting up pages.

RP: So you have a title, but no story?

PS: Aha, indeed we have story. In New Delhi is very gifted science fiction writer, also writer of mysteries cookery notes and crossword puzzles for Delhi TELEGRAPH and other newspapers, and his name is Harlan Ali Singh. He write story for us to go with title in just one weekend. Is very gifted you understand. Is also not very good writer.

RP: And what is the story about, sir?

PS: In time to come Indian Government find too many people to support. At same time every country find too many people to support, so is war and much hardship and devastations. But after war is even less food than before and still too many people, so governments decide to send colonies by spaceship to the moon or some other planet, I forget. In meantime is frightful diseases sweeping Earth and there is much hurry to make spaceships leave, also much arguments about who should go, since only enough room in spaceships for one person in four hundred to go...

RP: Pardon my saying so, Mr. Sinjh, but this plot sounds like many I have heard of, but in particular it sounds like a novel called ONE IN THREE HUNDRED, by J.T. McIntosh...

PS: Indeed we know this. That is why we do not pay Mr. Harlan Ali Singh for script which he has stolen.

RP: I see. And - I will be careful how I put this - do you have a good cast for the film, sir?

PS: Ah, yes, of course I understand you do not wish to make old joke about good caste. Yes, we have engaged for leading role famous Indian actor, Mujk Rev Odneb...

RP: Rev Odneb? - I say! - "Ben Dover" backwards!

PS: Indeed? Is very strenuous, not to say non-dignified, but, ha ha, if it will amuse your readers, I will gladly - harrumph....

(The tape concludes with the sounds of a noted Indian film director bending over backwards.)

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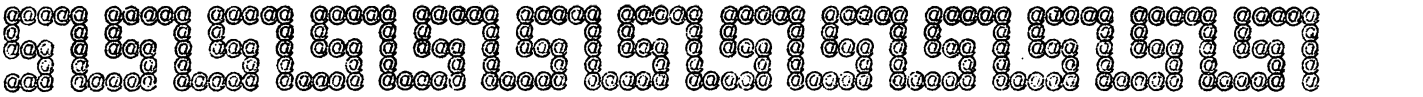

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SAMUEL R. DELANY
New York

It's good to see such a collection of criticism, and it is certainly heartening to hear the positive reactions to the ASFR that come past on this side of the equator and the I.D.L. I note an editorial problem:

Though I've only seen six-odd issues, the following has happened enough times so I thought I'd mention it. Often I'm three quarters of the way through a review or critical piece before I find out just where, up or down on the critical scale, the critic is sitting as he declaims his praise or damnation. In a good review the introductory paragraph (here goes one of those generalizations for which there are so many, many exceptions) should precis out to the form, "This is a good (or bad) book because ------." What follows "because" lets the reader know where the reviewer is at in relation to the book: e.g. "because I read it all the way through in an hour and a half" defines one kind of "goodness"; whereas, "because the cogent analogy of the story with the current plight of the migrant fruit pickers of Northern Sicily is both moving and informed" defines another; "because, while the author has nothing new in the line of ideas, his facility with language and story telling is a delight" defines still another. No matter how subjective the review becomes from there on, the reader knows at just which level the reviewer has chosen to climb into the work. This sort of clarity is the kind an editor can push for without (hopefully) stepping on the talent of individual reviewers.

In ASFR 12 I note THE SCIENCE IN SF. The last couple of years has produced a lot of discussion about this, by everyone from Dr. Asimov down and around. It is a subject that recently netted me what must be, by now, a classic experience for the sf writer. In May '67 I finished a novel that, among other things, discusses a series of stable elements with atomic numbers well over a hundred. I postulated that stability (which breaks down almost totally at ninety-nine) would recommence near atomic number three hundred. I based the supposition on a rather non-rigorous perusal of "hyperron" data, some of which went back as far as 1959. Now particle physics is a field notorious for almost completely revising its rules and regulations once a month, so I should have known that any information that old would be out of date by now; still, it looked so neat and tidy... At the NYCon this September I was discussing said theory with Harvard physics instructor Sid Coleman. Sid allowed as how the idea of high number stables was interesting, but demonstrated pretty quickly that my idea of hyperron nuclear bonding transference just wouldn't hold up. A couple or three months later, out came the news of the synthesis of the first high stable (well, comparatively stable) element, number 256. (I searched the article for mention of hyperron nuclear bonding, but Sid was right; the great lump of a nucleus was glued together with pions, just like you and me.) Now, to revise the book (which will not appear from Doubleday until August '68) I would have to re-write perhaps five sentences to bring the matter up to date with the information available, say, two months ago. I don't intend to do it. The reason is a bit complicated, so attend:

Even the most "poetic" sf writer is probably a good deal more scientifically informed than the average man on the street. One of the historical uses that sf will be put to, I'm sure, is a way of measuring the progress of the dispersal of scientific knowledge among the intellectual communities of the world. How exciting it would be if we had as much sf, carefully dated year to year, month to month, from the time of, say, Francis Bacon, as future his-

torians will have from the time of Bertrand Russell! How much light it would throw on the intellectual tenor of the times, telling us what the ordinary intellectual considered probable, or possible. This is why I think the composition date (dutifully placed on all my manuscripts and as dutifully removed by all my editors) is the important one in sf, rather than publication.

Larry Niven has a similar anecdote about his first published story, sold in June '64, THE COLDEST PLACE. The story has a sort of a twist having to do with the fact that the coldest place in the solar system is not the frigid wastes of Pluto, which is large enough to have a faint enough atmosphere to keep the surface a respectable number of degrees above zero Kelvin, but rather the dark side of Mercury, the planet closest to the Sun (!), Mercury being too small to have any atmosphere at all - or so it was feasible to think until August '64, when it was discovered that Mercury did have just the slightest gaseous envelope after all. But the story wasn't published until December. The point, however, is that though the story is "obsolete" it is not invalid. THE COLDEST PLACE essentially asks the question, "What is a man?" in a way redolent with poetic irony. And I respond to it even with all its (now) out-dated science. A scientifically "inaccurate" story (as opposed to a scientifically illiterate or just totally unbelievable one, which is something else) as soon as it is written becomes an historic monument in man's progress from ignorance to knowledge.

One of the attitudes I've always personally deplored in sf is the cliche that technological progress means dehumanization and loss of freedom. Misuse of technology is what causes dehumanization, by the same process that mis-use of political force, or economic power, or any social institution causes it. The popular "vague-distrust" of the technical is one reason why I've always tried for reasonable scientific accuracy in my books and stories; though, unlike Niven, I don't recall a hard-science discovery ever being the inspiration for a book or story. Still, I've never put any hard-science into a tale without checking on it first.

The "science" section in BABEL-17 that John Foyster got so upset about a few issues back was merely a dramatization of Fredrick Kantor's rather brilliant solution to what was considered a classically insoluble problem - up until 1965: the totally internal determination of location from within a free-falling system. It's a problem that classical relativity maintains is impossible. Twenty-two year old Kantor discovered his ingenious and much-lauded solution two months before I wrote the section. It's a particularly beautiful one because it uses no more math than a high school senior might be expected to learn in his first month of solid geometry (or, in Dr. Kantor's own words, "All you need is a clock and a bag of marbles," which is just what they use in the Noisy Number). Within physics circles concerned with such things, the Kantor solution was hot news at the time. But that was '65. The book wasn't published till April '66 or thereabouts. Even so, months after publication, I was receiving congratulatory letters from physicists who, upon recognizing this well-known problem, assumed the solution was my own! That, I suppose, merely comments on thedispersal speed of scientific information in this country. (I'll grit my teeth and say nothing of the time it takes for information to get down under to Mr. Foyster. Well, he says he only skimmed the book...)

Anyway, thanks muchly for the space you've devoted to my books and stories. Reading a review of one's own work is a rather odd experience. The time between writing a piece and reading a review of it, for me, has never been less than a year and a half. That record for promptness, by the way, was set with the ASFR review of DRIFTGLASS. The greatest lapse so far has been four years, and that record was set by ANALOG. In any case, the effect

is rather like some guy running up and earnestly beginning to tell me about something particularly witty or absurdly gauche I said at last year's New Year's Eve party. I know I said it, but for the life of me I don't remember this guy being there.

I think the distance is a good thing.

Ravings, both to the good and the bad, seem unreal, irrelevant, and ultimately make little impression. When a critic says, "Suchandsuch is in this book," or "The author is doing suchandsuch," and, yes, it is something I did try to do or put there, then I have a surge of pride and a feeling of success. Conversely, when the reviewer sees something that I expressly tried not to put in, or thinks I am doing one thing when I am trying to do another, I feel I have failed, and I find myself depressed, even at a distance of years. And it doesn't really matter how good or bad the reviewer thinks it is. After all, writing is essentially communication; it succeeds when it communicates what the writer had in mind.

The most useful review - and I <u>am</u> biased toward that review which helps me work on whatever I am writing at the present - is the thoughtfully considered one that more or less follows the classical outline, "The writer is trying to do suchandsuch in this book, but he fails (or succeeds) because..." This sort of review is helpful to me as a writer when it is written about my own work. When it is written about others', I find it equally helpful in selecting what I want to read. (Of course, part of this is because I am interested in the way other writers have handled the inextricably meshed problems of art and entertainment.) In the past couple of years I have had to do a bit of reviewing myself, so I am painfully aware how hard it is to write this type of review. There will probably always be too few of them. But I am thankful for each one that comes along.

I wish you all the best. The Review - a number of people around here have started referring to it simply as "The Review" (indicating that there is no other, perhaps?) - has become one of the more intriguing voices in the dialogue of current sf.

* * *

<u>John Foyster:</u> I first intended to type out a quick and fiery reply, objecting vigorously to SRD's requirements in reviews, and then, using my own pieces as examples, to indicate just what <u>I</u> thought a good review should do. Fortunately I checked through my reviews for this year, and unbelievably every one has an opening paragraph with just the information Delany asks. I didn't check the other reviews, though. Anyway, that sort of spoilt my point. It might also make me rethink the matter of reviews.

Well then, excepting only that I don't do it myself, I think a good review should go out of its way <u>not</u> to tell the reader whether the book is good or bad, at least until the closing paragraph. Then and only then might the opinion be expressed. A bit like a mystery story, in a way. I dislike knowing the climax right from the start.

Poor Larry Niven really suffered. The twist was by no means new, of course, and has been widely mentioned in popular books on solar astronomy. The thing which really killed the notion was the discovery that Mercury does <u>not</u> keep the same face to the sun. But compare Bert Chandler's attitude when Venus was discovered to be waterless: no crying in the beer then!

You may imagine my chagrin at not having heard about Dr. Kantor's wonderful discovery. This was tempered by the further discovery that neither PHYSICS ABSTRACTS nor MATHEMATICAL REVIEWS had heard of this "hot news." None of the 20 or so other journals in the area (aerospace, astronomy, mathematics and physics) which I consulted for a couple of hours seemed to have heard of it, either. So if Mr. Delany can tell us where we can read all about it...

JOHN BRUNNER
London

It seems a bit strange to be conducting an argument with someone in California by way of Australia! But Harry Harrison's comments on my article on the economics of sf writing only reached me yesterday (9.12.67). And I really have to take up the odd point here and there. Forgive me?

First off, concerning the reference to the Flash Gordon strip: I recall that before Harry took it on, it had been (briefly, I think) in the hands of one-time BNF Larry Shaw, now editor for Lancer Books, and as I remember he was not the first writer to take it on who is otherwise known to us for work within the actual sf field. If I'm wrong about this, I apologize, but I've never followed the comics closely.

I still think this is a devious expedient for keeping afloat in sf, though! I should stress that in my article I was thinking exclusively of being an sf freelance. The item I actually had in mind when I referred to beating one's brains out on a TV serial turned out, when I checked back, to be an account of writing a radio serial - sorry - but the guy suffered ulcers in consequence (mentally if not physically) and quit.

My hypothetical "Mr. Frishblitz" had the sole ambition of becoming an sf writer per se; so do the majority of the would-be writers I encounter among sf fans whether here or in the States at the World Cons I now manage to get to fairly regularly. My bread-and-butter has come primarily from sf for nine years now; I've only once been paid as much for a non-sf novel as for an sf one. As I stated in the article my experience is therefore highly subjective. I've never kept afloat by writing confessions or men's adventures. In view of the clear qualifications I prefaced my remarks with, I think it's a trifle unfair to object to my not having averaged out my argument by incorporating elements from the experience of literary editors of the OXFORD MAIL, roving reporters for ROGUE and skin-diving experts - to cite but a few of the various personalities we're lucky to have in sf!

The so-called "factual error" about ANALOG's word-rate was an error when the article appeared in ASFR, but not two years ago when it first appeared in VECTOR. The top rate still does not, I believe, apply to long stories and serials. I've been paid 1¢ per word for one story in the past five years, and that wasn't bought by an sf magazine - it was a sale to the MAGAZINE OF HORROR AND STRANGE STORIES, and an earlier version of the same tale had already appeared in SCIENCE FANTASY. The creep who boasted about a ½¢ rate had damned well better be a member of a vanishing species. I've exactly once been asked to write a story around a bought cover and I got 3¢ per word for the job. I wouldn't have touched it for less than a cent and a half even though it was found money.

On the other hand, whereas Harry secured a $2500 advance for his first novel and also had it serialized for $2800, my first novel was serialized for only £200 or so, and secured an advance of $1000 from the US publisher. It was a matter of six years or so before I started to command advances up around the $2000 level, and I've only recently - about thirteen years after my first sales to American magazines and seven years after launching out as a freelance - been in a position to write at my own speed and pressure. I've no objection to discussing this because I think interchange of such information is going to benefit everyone, and also because on one point here Harry is absolutely damned right, when he says that the third alternative is to write so well you get paid more per unit of labour. (This is undermined by lousy writers - Harold Robbins, to cite but a few - who get paid incredibly for rubbish; that's essentially why I didn't mention the idea in the original article, because it hadn't then happened to me. In some senses it still hasn't, but next year Doubleday will publish a novel into which I put absolutely everything I know about my craft, and it damned well ought to be

a howling success. I think and hope it's going to produce my highest-yet advance from a British hardback house. But still and all, it took five months in the writing, it was completed and mailed last February, and as of this moment the entire profit amounts to an advance of $1500 less agent's commission!)

(It's called STAND ON ZANZIBAR. Plug.)

Now just to round out the picture a little. Recently I've been talking to a couple of American sf writers who were thinking of moving to Europe at least for a while and wanted to know what their incomes would be worth. This is how I discovered that one of them, who's been a household name - in my household - for years and who has furthermore had some of his work picked up for filming by a very distinguished director, and who is possessed of a varied and startling talent which he's turned to spy stories and straight novels as well as sf, feels that he cannot rely (stress that!) on much more than the income I assigned to my imaginary Mr. Frishblitz. (If Harry wishes to be referred to the person in question, I'll send his current address.) Another commands almost exactly double, from his writing only, plus the same again from the well-paid job he holds down, but this essentially stems from the large backlog of reprintable material he's accumulated. In Year Ten of his career Mr. Frishblitz was just about coming up to this point. I hope I am, in Year Fifteen, but it hasn't happened yet.

No, Harry me fran', I'm not wearing blinders - or as well call them in our quaint British dialect, blinkers. And in common with Mr. Frishblitz I wouldn't trade problems with anyone else I know. Of course anyone who makes a living from writing is infintely better off in terms of fringe benefits than the vast bulk of the population who don't really give a damn about what they do to earn their income, just so long as it's regular and adequate. I'm in the trade because it's fun, dammit, FUN, and if I do have some underlying gripe of the kind you (Harry) claim to detect, it must stem from the inevitable problem that I can't afford to do everything I want to do to improve my writing, like take a year thinking about a single book. I wish I could detect the gripe, though...

It's just started to pour with snow and I have to go out. Goddamn. Now there's a real gripe for you.

* * *

BUCK COULSON
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"Atheling" has one quite good point in objecting to Pohl's comment about critics only being entertaining when they have something entertaining to review. Anyone who has read a Jerry Sohl novel, and then read a Damon Knight review of a Jerry Sohl novel, should agree that Knight's review is far more entertaining than the original work.

Foyster makes me happy I quit NEW WORLDS some time ago. I thought Ballard was too big a name to indulge in literary name-dropping of his own, but apparently not. (And that is all the use of the name "John Fitzgerald Kennedy" - especially in a title - amounts to: a none-too-ethical device to get the rubes to look at the story.)

Having seen Bloch's episodes of STAR TREK, I hope he sticks to Hitchcock in future. He is a great fantasy writer, but the best I can say for his stf is that it is somewhat unfortunate, and the STAR TREK episodes made from his scripts are among the worst of the year. (When he sticks to fantasy or horror though, he's hard to top; unlike a lot of book and magazine writers, he seems to have an eye for what will provide good scenes on the screen. It's just that his "science" is so awfully pulpish.

Harry Harrison's article was interesting, but hardly an answer to Brun-

ner's. So he made $7000 off one book - over how many years? And how often can one author duplicate that? Sure, Heinlein is quite happy; one author out of how many? (And if I could write as well as Heinlein I'd be quite happy in a literary field, too; I wouldn't be dabbling one toe in it as I am now. Sometimes I think my best writing is done on instruction sheets.) And since Brunner never denied that he enjoys writing, despite the drawbacks, Harrison's final point is just a trifle irrelevant.

I'll give you advance warning; in some desk drawer at Ace (or possibly propping up a weak leg) is an U.N.C.L.E. novel by "Thomas Stratton", with the setting in Australia. Whether it ever gets published or not apparently depends on what Ace decide to do with the book series next year; you may think of it as a small literary time bomb, ready to explode at an unexpected moment. Background has been provided mostly by a huge back issue file of WALKABOUT, plus several books on the dark continent. (Or rather, will be provided: all that has actually been written so far is three chapters and an outline.) Leigh Edmonds has contributed a copy of LET STALK STRINE; we shall endeavour to base our local conversation on this. (Once I figure it out myself, that is.) First time I've had to do much of any research; previous novels have been set in midwestern United States.

* * *

JB: Let's burn Leigh Edmonds!! Buck, I implore you to think twice about using Strine in your book. Strine is merely a game, and an obscure and laboured one at that. At times it comes very close to the way some Australians speak - hence its tremendous popularity with book-buyers here and elsewhere a couple of years ago. But it is a fake, even if a snobbishly amiable fake. Even the misconception which started the whole thing off is misleading. A visiting authoress (I forget who), signing copies of her book in a Syndey store was approached by someone who said "How much is it?" But this was pronounced something like "emmuchisit" and the authoress signed the book, "Emma Chisett, with best wishes &c". Now you see that there were two people at fault here: the customer, who thought he/she said "How much is it?" and the authoress, who thought she heard "Emma Chisett". The plain fact is that if you had a character in your book who said "Emma Chisett?" you would be amusing in an unoriginal way, and dead wrong about the Australian pronunciation of the English language. The only people who come close to Strine are those of the lower classes - clerks, politicians, &c.

* * *

BRIAN RICHARDS
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ASFR 13 to hand, read, absorbed and inwardly digested. I advise a quick retreat to the air-raid shelter before the blast comes from Pat Terry; all his pet peeves in great profusion. (And some of mine, too.)

Foyster in the classroom suffered his usual complete inability to stick to the point. It did purport to give the kids' opinions, but in fact furnished as yet another boring Foyster soap-box. One must concede however that John is magnificent in his casual assumption of infallibility as a literary judge. I adored his comment that C.P. Snow does not know what fiction is; world-wide recognition as a novelist, fame, wealth, a knighthood, a beautiful and talented wife - My God, I could only wish to be as ignorant as Snow.

Harding's article on Moorcock said a large number of things I had noted ready to knock into an essay, so I should hate him for this, but I feel that the effect of the praise was diminished by the last few sentences - too unctuous by far - almost read as if he were interested in selling stories to the man.

N ticed MAKE ROOM! MAKE ROOM! get its second mention in the august pages.

I have seen about eight or nine reviews now, all favourable, but nobody seems to have made the essential contrast with the earlier, and in my opinion inferior, CAVES OF STEEL by Asimov. The vastly different treatment of a basic theme of police work amongst overcrowded humanity is most intriguing and you would find it worthwhile to read both books with this in mind.

Diana Martin still writes my favourite reviews and still manages to get hold of the books I would most like to read. Very pleasant to see the odd down-to-earth commentary of a pragmatic person.

Santa Claus brought me the Caedmon recording of UNDER MILKWOOD. My cup runneth over.

p.s. My kids are envious of what to you are the tribulations of Ferny Gulch. Go-karts, pop-groups - Why don't we live in a place like that, Daddie?

* * *

JB: I had a rather indignant reaction from a young Melbourne fan, Gary Woodman, over my complaints about noisy rock groups. He couldn't understand why they made a noise. I began to think we were talking at cross-purposes and questioned him a bit closer on the subject. Turned out he belongs to a lapidary club, and he thought I had one of them next door...

* * *

STEN DAHLSKOG
Tuna Backar 17a
Uppsala 16
Sweden

Many thanks for ASFR! Number 10 has finally crossed the Arctic Circle and found me. The wait is long, but it is worth the waiting. And when one decides to spend one's summers in Lapland one has to learn how to wait, anyhow. This is the one corner of Europe where there still are distances.

I can see two peaks above 2000 meters, about fifteen above 1500, and more than I have bothered to count above the timber-line (which is at 800 m) from my door-step. I can see several glaciers and a large delta (which I am busy investigating for an eventual Ph.D. in geomorphology). I can't see the 4km-long rapids of the delta tributaries, but I hear them, because they are just ten minutes walk from my cottage. Mooses walk around my cottage, ravens and eagles fly over it, and ermines live beneath it. The village (Kvikkjokk) has about fifty inhabitants, including my wife and myself; there are eleven people in a village 8km to the east, and about twenty in another village 12km further east: the population density is of a tolerable proportion. The nearest town is Norway's Bodø, 70km to the west, but the road stops here, so if we go to town we have 120km to go. Our village has a church, a hotel, a school, a post office, a shop - and would not have that much if it were not for the tourists, who are about as common as mosquitoes in summer. But now winter is approaching, there are two decimetres of snow, the rivers are freezing, and it is very quiet. One should not miss anything in a place like this, and yet I do. A Swedish-English dictionary.

(JB: Sten felt the need of a dictionary in translating a newspaper clipping, which appears at this point in his letter, but which I will not inflict on you. It is headed DISTINGUISHED HONOURS TO BANGSUND, and concerns my great-uncle Erling Bangsund of Tromsø, who recently received a royal medal for "cultural activities.")

I would like to comment on ASFR 10 at length, but then this letter would never get posted, and I have almost only nice things to say, anyhow. So I will just single out my BIG COMPLAINT this time. It concerns John Foyster's "review" of Delany. To give Foyster his due, he is at least honest. But really, John! If your reviewers complain because they have to read every word in a book, why don't you start an AUSTRALIAN READER'S DIGEST OF SF

instead, and have done with it? I did not expect that degree of silliness in ASFR.

I was amused to see that Lin Carter thinks my name is pure Andre Norton! Wonder what he would think if he knew that literally translated it is Stone Valleyforest?

Wish I could send a picture of the aurora borealis glowing in the sky just now. Wish I could take it with me down to Uppsala. Wish I did not have to go to Uppsala to make money. It is a damn foolish waste of time, which should be spent here.

* * *

JB: Doesn't that letter make you green with envy? Hell, it nearly made me cry, all that snow and eagles and mooses and auroras and... Damn this heat!

* * *

T. D. GOLDING
1815 Dandenong Road
Clayton Victoria 3168

I read through ASFR 13 without dozing off once, and only felt glassy-eyed once - during Jannick Storm's review of TERMUSH, ATLANTERHAVSKYSTEN (brother!), which read more like a sales talk for transcendental meditation than a sf review. But the Guest Spot reviews were interesting, and I hope you retain them. Whilst on the subject of reviews, may I register a protest at the interminable number which have appeared on second-rate books? Surely a brief mention of the duds would be enough, and the space saved could be used for more articles.

* * *

JB: I don't really think that second rate books are the problem, T.D. (See Buck Coulson's letter...) What I like to get are good reviews of good, fairly good, and stinkingly bad books. It's hard to write a good review of a mediocre-but-not-completely-lousy book.

END OF LETTERS END OF LETTERS END OF LETTERS END OF LETTERS END OF LETTERS

Born: To Carla & Lee Harding, a son, Stephen Christopher, on 12th December. A brother for Erik & Belinda, and yet another collator for ASFR 100.

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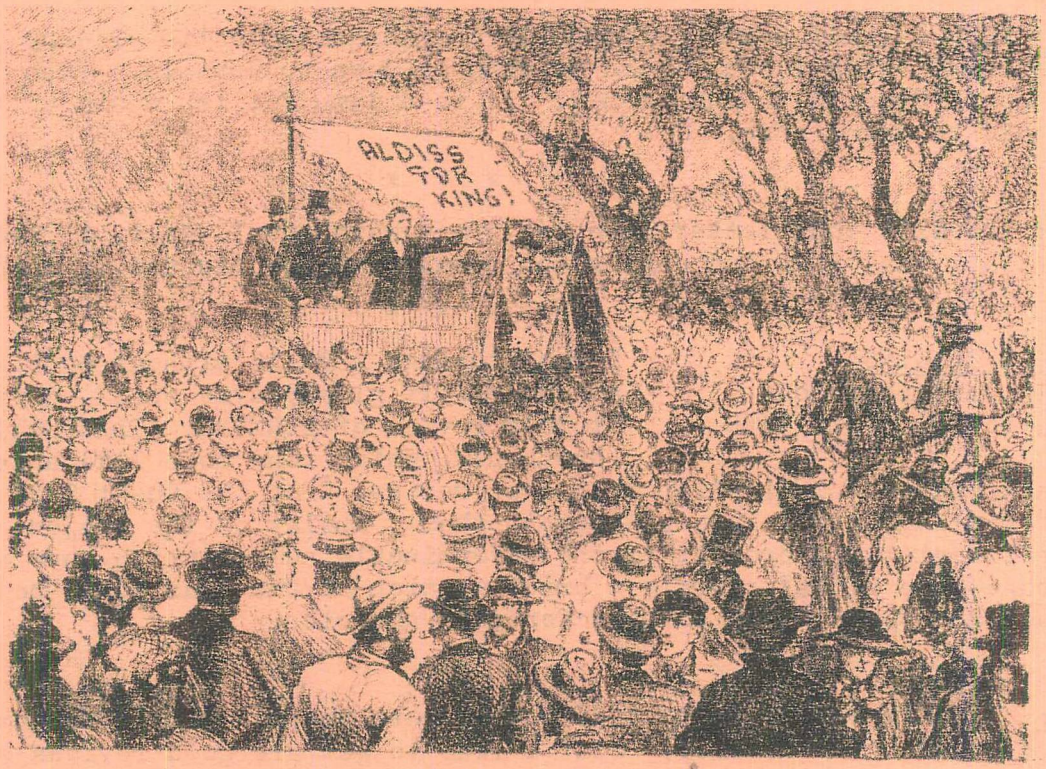

EASTER 1968 APRIL 12-14

You know it's on, of course. Some of you have even become members. Others may be wondering who will be there.

Would you believe JUDITH MERRIL, JAMES BLISH, HARRY HARRISON? ROSS ROCKLYNNE, ROBERT MOORE WILLIAMS, CHARLES R. TANNER? BUCK COULSON? Maybe even ----- and -----? Well - all these people will be at the Conference! (Not in person, true, but you'll hear them.)

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