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Mlg. 67

COVER: Harness - Yet another variation on the Silver Surfer?

RABANOS RADIAUTIVOS #67: Patten - Perhaps what was wrong with Russ Jones' Dracula is what was wrong with the original (which I haven't read), but I found the plotting extremely awkward, the pacing by turns pell-mell and then dragging, and the use of coincidence, lack of motivation, et al, galling.

"Camp" is a phrase which definitely originated in the "gay world," back in the early or mid-fifties. "That's campy," was a typical usage. I believe Barry Gold is wrong in stating that it went out of usage at least eight years ago; I was still hearing it used here in NYC, "gay center of the world," somewhat later than that.

What happened, of course, is that the squares -- the ones who are forever trying to become hip, In, or whatever -- in the person of Susan Sontag (or however her name is spelled) latched onto the phrase as a new means of propelling themselves into the Inner World, which is often dominated by homosexuals.

Camp does not, however, now mean "something that's so bad it's worth keeping around for laughs." It refers quite often to elements of nostalgia, such items as Tiffiny shades, et al. The present-day "camp" in Batman lies in the fact that adults remember him as a part of their childhood.

ROQUAT #14: Ruth Berman - Obviously you never read Jack Vance's The Dying Earth, to which the Cugel The Clever stories are a sequel. Vance wrote the book around 1950, or thereabouts, and it very quickly assumed the status of a classic, going out of print until Lancer republished it in 1962. Vance is copying no one in our field, and cashing in only on the popularity of his previous work. If you want antecedents, you'll have to go back to Anglo-Saxon fantasies, such as Jack, the Giantkiller.

I strongly disagree with you that "the stories are pretty awful... Cugel the Clever is a Colorless Character and the other characters are just as flat..." Frankly, I very much enjoyed editing them, and I regard the amoral and witty Cugel as anything but "colorless".

DEGLER! #107: Porter - "The Memory Shop may not have comics, but..." As a matter of fact, the last I heard, the Memory Shop did have comics...although outrageously overpriced... (But then, everyone who sells comics today overprices.)

IPZIK!: Bailes - Flying a plane (a small one, anyway) is both easy and difficult. In basic theory, it is easy. Acquiring the reflexive skills is sometimes difficult. I found it neither easier nor harder than I'd expected, but rather simply different. With someone next to you, his own hands and feet on or next to the controls, telling you what to do and ready to correct for your mistakes, it's pretty easy, though.

I'm not a chess fan, but I know how to play the game, and have occasionally beat people supposedly better than myself. It moves too

slowly for me to get passionate about it, though.

Perhaps my difficulty lay in the fact that I could not visualize the "moves" in the story as directly analogous to chess moves except in the most gross fashion. The city had but four squares, and thus ruled itself out as a chess-board analogue, and I did not have the original game handy for reference.

But my main complaint is that this is a structure forced upon the story from without, and it requires that the natural movement of the characters, motivation, etc., must be subordinated to the dictates of the exterior plot. I do not think Brunner succeeded in this. I did not feel that Hakluyt was being manipulated in a devious fashion by a chessmaster -- only that he was bubbling around, largely without purpose. And if you agree with me on the weakness of the ending, I'm afraid then we must both agree that the book was, in this respect if no other, flawed. A book which ends poorly is a poor book.

HOUSE OF GAMES #39: Kaiser - No, it's quite true: for stuff which sfans would be looking for (magazines, comics, books) NYC is a bad bargain. Dealers here have generally higher prices than anywhere else in the country -- although it sounds, from recent descriptions, as though some LA dealers are trying to catch up. I'm sure there are hole-in-the-wall shops here with decent prices, as everywhere, but they're hard to find, and jealously guarded by those who do find them. (And two of my finds went out of business this year, \*sigh\*...)

But it wasn't Chalker's AWFUL UNLAWFUL which had the mailing data on its back cover, you clod! You reprinted it right here yourself! What Andy was talking about was the issue of IBEX devoted to attacking him, Andy. Although Chalker claims copies went only to SAP -- in the mailing -- he obviously prepared it for mailing to non-SAP type. He now claims that he didn't, but a lot of copies were floating around Philly and other non-NYC areas, despite the fact that he didn't bother sending one to Porter himself for months. Chalker has pulled this "I was just joking" bit several times now, after making a fool of himself, and I think he's overworked the schtick.

While your explanation of "Annish" is largely correct to Barry Gold, you are wrong in stating that it means "annual issue." It actually means "anniversary issue." Usually the anniversary celebrated is an annual one, of course.

What the hell is the "Bradbury Building?"

ROWRBAZZLE #11: June Konigsberg - Jack Lemmon is one of my favorite male actors. I've loved him since I saw the movie "Mr. Roberts", and his role in "The Apartment" was superb. I liked him in "How To Murder Your Wife," too, though. Sorry about that.

John R. Neill's illustrations deteriorated steadily as he "modernized" his style through the years. His work in the Baum books is generally his best -- fine, flowing calligraphy, perfect in conjuring the fairy-like and yet nostalgia-oriented Oz as it was originally painted -- but by the time of his own books (I stand corrected; I have read the third, too, but many years ago on all three) his dry-brush technique was a cute caricature of the evocative drawings he'd done years earlier.

HET BPEMR #67: Pelz - I have a drawing of Dian's up on my wall -- a lovely line drawing with a hint of color that I got at the Westcon -- and I admire it. But, can she draw in the Neill manner? The early Neill manner? If so, we'll see...

FOR SOME REASON I caught up too quickly with the mailings, and am no longer observing my usual one-week lag. Because this is too wearing on my pocket-book, I am continuing these comments next week.