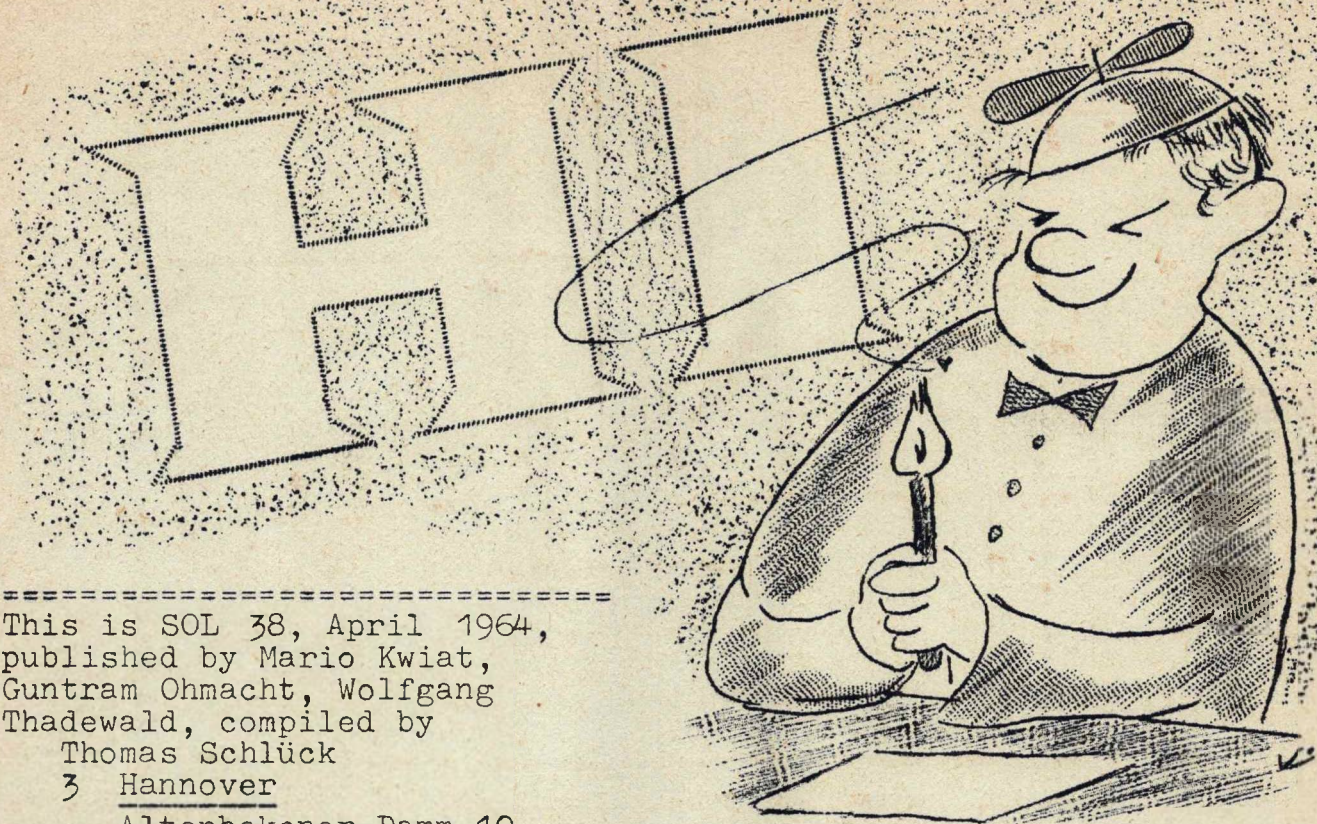


SOUL



RECEIVED APR 15 1964



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 This is SOL 38, April 1964,
 published by Mario Kwiat,
 Guntram Ohmacht, Wolfgang
 Thadewald, compiled by
 Thomas Schlück
 3 Hannover
 Altenbekener Damm 10
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Well, here we are again. Many of you will know me from SOL-Reader of about two years ago. Whoever thought that our courage would be dead after such a long time was wrong - here is the glorious second appearance of this our English-language enterprise! But there's a great difference, this is not a selection from SOL anymore, but SOL itself, a fanzine that appeared in German for more than five years. We finally didn't want to bear the hard schedule any longer - so tried to get sort of rid of it. Well after some quarrels with the Berlin fans we couldn't help - SOL folded, but it's reincarnated now in an English language version. We do not plan to fill this issue with reprints altogether, but would be pleased to have original material from both sides, serious and humorous contributions as well as letters.

Well, and here I am sitting in front of my typer, trying to press out of my brain whatever may be in it, and I am left alone with a band of publishers (see the row of their names up there!) who don't speak and read the English language as fluently as would be necessary to read a fanzine of this sort. But they'll improve, if only to be able to catch what's appearing in these pages. You will laugh at this (I did, too, and I'm sure Rolf Gindorf will even more) - three publishers unable to read a fanzine they are helping to publish!

Just give me some lines to introduce them:

Mario is about 20 by now, and he is Gerfandom's busiest and most prosperous artist since ever. As far as my fandom-memories reach back his strangely shaped cartoon figures have crowded most of the German fanzines, his appealing generously and slightly sketched illustrations have taken much place in German fandom. Most of the illustrations in SOL will bear his marks, too. He is happily married, and he finds time nevertheless to do work for fandom. He is to be blamed for the reproduction of this issue.

Guntram is the heaviest of us all, the slowest and most comfortable. Those who got to know him in Harrogate will know what I mean. He is our man of praxis, doing most of the things we are too lazy to do, and he is in strong favour of bureaucracy. His life is just about to undergo severe changes, caused by one nice little female being whom he intends to marry and who God bless her, agreed.

Wolfgang is our man "with the sharp tongue", and this title is well-known throughout our fandom. He possesses the ability of doing some remarkable ironical writing and of doing real nonsense, but he is nevertheless possessed by a strong sense of orderness. He will be the one to contribute the "special angle" themes, ranging from "The special effects of women in sft" to "The Importance of the capital "R" in alphabetical usage".

In short, these are the men behind SOL-- I am their slave, being the one to whom all blamings and acknowledgements should be directed. And there should be lots of them!

I have been told not to be modest as it seems I was in my last editorial. Tom, they said, just don't belittle yourself so much. And this struck me, see, and so I'm this energetic-type editor this time, cheering up whenever I can and spreading around my lot of self-consciousness everywhere.

And I have reason to be proud; at least I've been told so for several times, and I was able to pile up about 15 letters and as many fanzines, and that out of an edition of about 300! You see, this was a great success, wasn't it? Well, I know, a two-year-schedule is no basis for a successful fanzine editor, but I hope to make this SOL fairly regular, though I can take no guarantees whatever. And the circulation will be cut down, down, and down again.

The standard of English will have gone down again in this issue, since no native English speaker got a chance of helping us, with the exception of a few, they are listed elsewhere. The Lettercolumn is rather dated, and even the stencils are about one year old. But since SOL-Reader was rated under "special interest" label, some interesting opinions are being published on the last pages. But, please, write again.

By the way: who first started writing "Altenbekener Damm" in my address? I know that it's a temptation for punny natures to express their feeling like this. But it's a spreading plague by now... Ja, I know that it's a horrible address for you (Did you ever try to speak it aloud?) But this? --- The equivalent for "Damm" is "Boulevard", and "Altenbeken" is a small town in the southwest of Hannover. So the street where I live is named "Altenbeken's Blvd", that's all about the mystery. And I am busy informing you about the peculiarities of my address, I shall go on to tell you about those little numbers that are placed in front of German town names since recently. The US PO discovered the same system last year (well, we won't argue about which country "invented the scheme, won't we?), but their numbers are placed behind. In Germany every place got its registration number, the big cities one numeral (Hannover "3"), the smaller ones two (Braunschweig near Hannover "33"), and the even smaller and smallest places three or four numerals. All spots situated in the Hannover area begin with the Hannover number of "3", and so on. The numbers placed conveniently on the envelopes, this is going to help the German PO install big electronic sorting machines that check the letters' destinations

and sort them out automatically. Very useful for the PO, but we? Though parts of the population internally revolted against these numbers, they are already used by 70% or more of the letter writers. At first the GPO even had to place commercial advertisements, "Forget-me-now, the postal number". And they raised their fees last year...

Germany seems to be involved in the danger of inflation at the moment. Alarming news in the economic sections of the newspapers. Prices up and up, wages up and up, and no end. For years our balance of commerce has been positive, i.e. we sold more goods in foreign countries than we had to buy ourselves. This flood of foreign money is regarded to undermine the intern stability of our currency and whole commercial system. There are calls for an increased participation of the government in economical matters, for a "strong hand". The free touch of individual interests which is being regarded essential for our democratic economic system should be limited again, to avoid disadvantages for all. We all know that in each democracy the economic system is subject to more or less hard regulations - though not to a degree similar to that of communistic states. No democracy without order; the absolute freedom of interests (in economical respect) is not to be realized. But who is competent enough to judge about the properness of regulations, of taking influence, of cutting certain goods off the German market to keep prices off? etc.

See the Communal Market. Each country fights for the interests of its own, each countries has to give up parts of its conceptions to make way for the whole of it. Each country has to sacrifice at least something, at least one part of the population will not be content with the agreements. But who is to decide about all this, about the basis of all living in a country?

Let's take the Brussels negotiations of last Dec. There were hasty conferences to meet the deadline of Dec 31st that had been set for the next stage of negotiations. De Gaulle insisted on this date, and people began to see the European Communal Market break into pieces, in case there should be no positive results. But is hurry to be justified in matters concerning millions of people, concerning what they eat, what they earn and wear? There are so many aspects to be regarded that any untimely haste is a sin.

Well, they showed up with results. But "theories are grey", as we in Germany say. (Thomas, the rhymer).

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SOL is free for trade, letters, and - above all - material. We do want to come out as regularly as we can manage, about three to four times a year. Each author represents himself and his own opinion. My heartiest thanks to all those who helped me with this issue, who helped polishing up articles, stories and parts of the above editorial that were originally intended for SOL-Reader II: Margie Harrison, Dick Schultz, Harry Warner jr. The last German language issue of SOL was SOL nr. 37, we decided to continue in its tracks, hence the strange number. The cover is by Mario - and has already been used for SOL 34 (Nov/Dec. 1962). LONCON IN' (& = '65! CASTLE CON IN '64!

JAMES BLISH'S

FAILURE AS A THINKER

or

The Strange Universe of "The Seedling Stars"

by

FRANZ ROTTENSTEINER

There is a tendency in Germany to interpret every work of science fiction, however badly written or poor in thinking, in terms of philosophy and metaphysics. Science Fiction, we are told by some of our brighter intellectuals, is the forerunner of a new kind of metaphysics and its authors are amongst the most important thinkers of the world. America, as far as I can ascertain, has been spared from this mania.

One of the most astonishing cases in this respect is the acclaim with which James Blish's 'novel' THE SEEDLING STARS was received in Germany. Especially those people who had not read Stapledon praised James Blish's 'thinking', the daring and originality of his story. Today, the book is considered by many the best piece of Science Fiction that ever appeared in Germany. Since even some of you seem to think that the book contains some good sf thinking, it might be interesting so analyse the underlying thoughts of the book.

I am not at all concerned with the quality of writing. I doubt my qualification to judge a text in a foreign language, but I should like to say that I think the writing is not exceptional but quite good indeed.

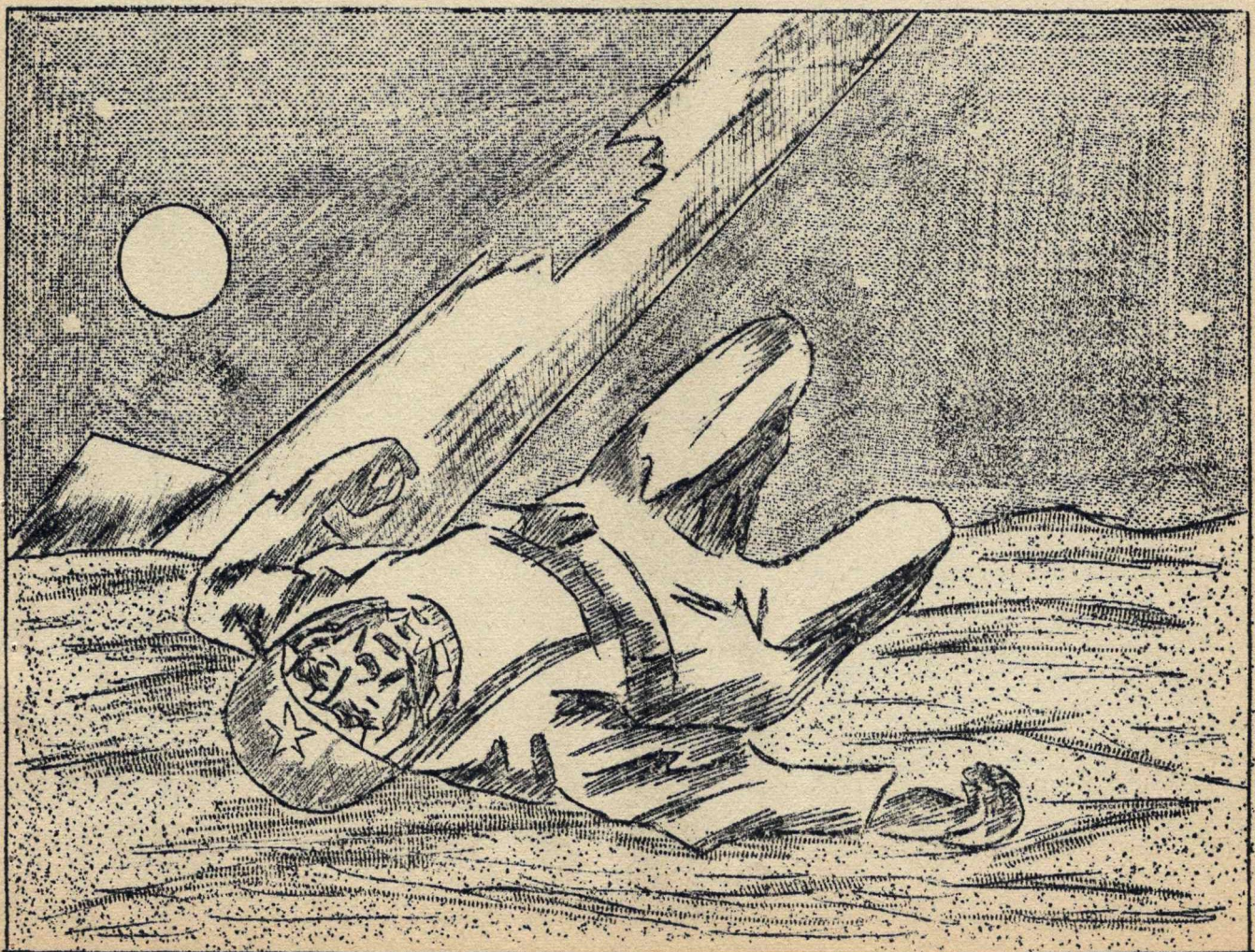
As the reader may know, the book consists of four stories, "Seeding Program", "The Thing in the Attic", "Surface Tension", and "Watershed", in that order. All stories deal with pantropy, Blish's fictional science that enables us to adapt man to different environments. "Seeding Program", originally "A Time to Survive" in F&SF, Feb. 1956, tells of the early origins of pantropy and the "Seeding Program". A pantrope named Sweeney, who has been brought up on the moon, is sent to Ganymede by the Port Authorities, to get back Dr. Rullman, another pantrope. Sweeney has been told that the pantropes on Ganymede are outlaws and pirates raiding the commerce of the solar system. So he wants to help Earth by bringing back Dr. Rullman for punishment. This done Sweeney is to be made a normal man again.

Thanks to James Blish (he coined the word) we have a term to describe this sort of thing: it's an idiot plot, or more specifically, what Damon Knight calls a second-order idiot plot. Every character appearing in the story has to be a grade-A idiot, or there would be no story. Sweeney is an idiot, Dr. Rullman is an idiot, and, above all, the Port Authorities are idiots.

Why do the Port Authorities want Dr. Rullman? Has he got any knowledge they want to get? No, they just want to kill him - and any other pantrope would do just as well. As Dr. Rullman says to Sweeney, "We'll be executed, most likely, by exposing us in public to Earthnormal conditions." And earlier, "And it is an absolute requirement of Port's policy that the colony be a failure and that they be able to prove it. That's why they want us back." That's very interesting. The Port Authorities, controlling the governments of Earth, go into all this trouble for the sole purpose of getting a few specimen for public execution! But they don't need Dr. Rullman or any other pantrope from Ganymede; they produced Sweeney and might produce any number of p pantropes if need be. Why don't they kill Sweeney then, and show him to the world?

Second item: The government wants to terraform Mars. Yet they don't do it. Why this? They have been waiting for many years to bring up and educate a pantrope for a task that is unnecessary. Why should they waste time instead of going right ahead with their project? The fact that pantropy is possible and that there is already a colony of pantropes elsewhere on a heavenly body has no political significance whatever. Neither Rullman nor Sweeney see this.

The reasoning of the story is rather idiotic. The government tells people that pantropes are monsters. By doing this they want to influence pantropy against pantropy. Dr. Rullman tells Sweeney about Earth's monster propaganda. It sounds pretty silly - yet Sweeney is deeply moved and cries, "stop!" But the government does not need to have recourse to such propaganda, neither do they have to kill pantropes (it is doubtful, I think, if a public execution would really support the cause of the Authorities.



The Authorities need only tell the truth: that pantropy, as Mr. Blish depicts it, is pretty worthless.

The treatment of the idea of pantropy splendidly illustrates one of the greatest failures of science fiction "thinkers": the failure to integrate a few simple facts. They do not know enough neither of people nor of science. When they set about to develop some original idea, they forget anything else but this very idea. Their minds seem to be unable to encompass more than just one or a very few things at a time. When they are writing a "social" story, they ignore physical sciences, when they compose a psychological tale, they forget all other things, and so on. Every writer has to make selections of course, and it may be worth while to consider an idea isolated from other things. But then its value is limited. It is the KIND of selection that mark the great writer. Most sf authors, however, seem to be bent on exploring trifles. They concentrate on some minor details and forget the major issues. Let's take religion. Whenever sf is attacked as being a literature wholly devoid of religious feeling, its defenders complainingly point to the few stories dealing with religious themes. It is true that there are some religious stories - even some expressing genuine faith -, but sf authors are unaware that many other problems have religious implications. It would be tedious of course to find every writer exploring religious aspects of inventions or theories -- but it is equally disappointing when it is never done. Now, what would religious thinkers say to the changing of the very shape and nature of man? Blish doesn't answer this. In fact nothing suggests that he is aware of the problem at all. Of course he is entitled to have his own opinion, but I think no writer has got a right simply to ignore things he dislikes. The Port Authorities don't bring religious arguments into their propaganda (which would give them much support), no, they prefer their monster talk. They do not even try to use the logical arguments that are evident: to begin with, what use has pantropy for us, for all mankind? It is the only way to colonize the planets, the author tells us. Well, as far as I know, people do not have a strong desire to colonize the planets, and I cannot imagine why the common man of the future should be decided to put pantropy to a use. But they don't need pantropy for COLONIZING; they are in possession of an interstellar drive (also suppressed by the Authorities) and nobody ever found it worthwhile to seek out Earthlike planets. And don't say there aren't any! -- there is at least one such planet: Telluria in "The Thing in the Attic". One might think that there is no need to use pantropy, if there are Earthlike Planets in the Galaxy. The Authorities are against interstellar travel for the same reasons why they are against pantropy: they can't collect tolls from it (believe it or not, that's the major reason, no kidding). It's beyond my range why there would be no interstellar traffic to collect from, what with all the drives used in Blish's stories. It is because of the possibility of collection tolls that they want to terraform Mars. Let's examine this more thoroughly.

Having terraformed Mars they will (in the opinion of the author) get rich by collecting landing fees of \$ 10,000.--, \$ 1,000.-- for a passage and by selling land at \$ 100.-- an acre. Now, the Solar System being devoid of habitable planets, there is no traffic, no spaceships. They would have to be built in the first place. Space travel, however, is in charge of the Authorities -- thus they would be collecting the fees from themselves. In addition, Mars needs a vegetation after having been terraformed; there would be a need of

roads and schools, etc. Most likely, the Authorities would not earn much. Anyway, they cannot do more than what is politically and economically possible. If they tried to collect too much money, there simply would be no traffic or there would ensue a revolution. Blish contradicts himself by saying through the mouth of Dr. Rullman, "They needed to get rid of their pullulating masses by the bucketful, not by the eyedropperful." This is used as an argument against domes. If they really wanted to get rid of their surplus population, they would have to encourage emigration, not to hinder it. For the rich there would be no need of emigrating to Mars, they could live comfortably on Earth. It is the poor that form the majority of emigrants.

Another problem troubles Mr. Blish, "If the Authority knew that emigration increases the home population rather than cuts it, the Authority carefully refrained from saying so to the governments involved; they could re-discover Franklin's Law for themselves."

It may be true that there exists such a thing as Franklin's Law for all I know (and for all I very much care), but the two cited passages show the kind of argument used in so many a sf-story: they are intended to mislead the reader rather than to educate him. If emigration does not solve population problems, it is much beside the point: combined with other measures it may still be a partial solution. On the other hand Blish ignores possible other advantages of emigration and, more important, he doesn't say that pantropy cannot solve population problems either! If some far off planet were seeded with beings produced from the germ plasm of a very few individuals, what effect might this possibly have on Earth population? The effect would be the same if we settled Ganymede with dogs, cats, androids, or adapted Men. I might add that other sf writers also seem to share Blish's opinion on pantropy. Chad Oliver mentions pantropy as a possible solution of population pressure (in "Transfusion").

This is one thing I hate: the introduction of completely irrelevant arguments used to 'prove' the point of the author.

Another remarkable thing about pantropy: Blish begins with the most complex being: with man. It never occurs to him that pantropy might be put to a better use (and a more logical, if I may say so) by producing better crops and cattle. These, in case of failure, we might destroy without remorse.

Indeed, pantrope plants and animals might be used to terraform Mars. Evidently pantropy of man alone would be completely useless, if our current view of Mars is correct. If there are no plants and animals on Mars, what will the pantropes eat? We should have to produce adapted animals and plants first.

Blish suggests three possible solutions how to colonize the stars: terraforming, domes, and pantropy. "Sentimental reasons aside pantropy seems to be by far the most logical," Larry T. Shaw and Irwin Stein wrote in Infinity, April 1957. Well, is it? Blish's chief argument for pantropy seems to be that its expenses are low. This is interesting from the economical point of view. Even ignoring the fact that there are still unsettled Earthlike planets in the Galaxy, is it really cheaper to seed, say, Mars than to terraform it? If a planet is fit for terraforming at all, shouldn't we do it without considering expenses, instead of choosing a seemingly cheaper method? Dr. Rullman, in the story, makes it up this way: the terraforming of Mars would cost 33 billions, on the other hand the production of pantropes would cost only a few millions with no further expenses. Well, if we see it this way, it would be still cheaper to not settle the planet at all. But if we really

want to settle other heavenly bodies, how do we spend our money best? Of course you might argue that it is cheaper to waste a few millions rather than to spend much more money on terraforming a planet. But in each economic system you have to compare the money spent and the profit gained. If we terraform a planet --well, then we have a planet; if we seed it with pantropes, we have got nothing, since the planet belongs to other beings who, maybe, haven't much use for our products in return and perhaps won't like us. I shall be discussing this problem when I come to the Seeding Program itself.

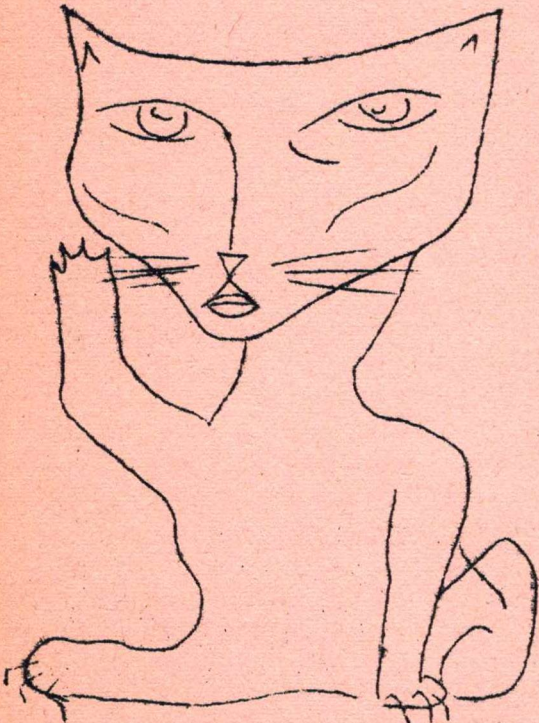
Let's continue the vivisection of "A Time to Survive" first. When Boucher printed the story in his magazine, he seemed quite happy about the development of Sweeney's character. The reader knows that Sweeney is finally taken in by Rullman's arguments. Not content that Sweeney cannot return to Earth because pantropy works only with germ plasm, not with full-grown beings, Blish also introduces the strange coincidence that on Earth Sweeney would be cancer-susceptible. This is bad story-telling. To explain why the Authorities don't simply atombomb the colony on Ganymede, he has to introduce another "fact", -- atomic bombs would set off a chain reaction and disturb the balance of the Solar system.

Now, if he really wanted to destroy the colony, conventional bombs would be sufficient - but in its present state the colony is no danger whatsoever. It is just an abandoned experiment; the pantropes live in a completely different atmosphere. At the end of the story Sweeney rides around in an atomic-powered fourteen-ton-truck. Could the colonists have gained technical civilisation? The answer is no. Any industrial civilisation needs men. A few hundred men, however intelligent they may be, cannot keep a technical civilization going, not to speak of building a new one. The industrial processes employed on Earth wouldn't work in a methane atmosphere, the pantropes would have to start all a-new. And they couldn't

possibly be more than a bunch of savages. They would be lucky, if they were ever able to produce a few pounds of iron to make some simple tools. Yet they apply to atomic power, moder laboratories, they have doctors (where did Dr. Rullmen get his education?), and yet they have not really established themselves on Ganymede and think of nothing else but to spread pantropy among the stars.

They send off their interstellar spaceship, and in the next story we find pantropy fully established, apparently due to this one rocket. Are we then to assume that this colony made the Authorities change their minds?

Among the other marvels of the story we find interplanetary spaceships of the Authority having built-in interstellar drives ("just in case..." the author assures us). This sounds like someone telling us that aeroplanes have built-in rockets to fly to the moon - 'just in case...'



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Now that we know what to expect, we are brought to the planet Telluria somewhere in the Galaxy. "The Thing in the Attic" is a strange story, too, full of original "thinking". Here we encounter a race of Adapted Men living in treetops. But -- "the life in the treetops was to have been only an interim period, while you gathered knowledge you needed about Telluria and put it to use. But to be the real masters of the world, you will have to conquer the surface, too," an Earthman says to an Adapted Man. The story is one of the nicest pieces of nonsense I ever read.

To begin with, Telluria is an Earthlike planet, where human beings might very well live. It has an atmosphere of oxygen, the only difficulties being a vast jungle and ferocious beasts. If people have to descend to the ground eventually, why adapt them to trees in the first place? The reason given ("to gather knowledge about Telluria") doesn't stand water. As the story shows, they did not learn anything, and why should they have? Living in treetops they cannot learn about metals -- therefore they are even more helpless against the beasts on the ground. Human colonists would have learned all necessary facts about Telluria in a much shorter time -- and they would have had weapons to deal with the unkind aspects of Telluria's fauna. Blish doesn't tell either how the colonists were adapted in the first place. Newborn human beings, be they normally born, or manufactured by means of "pantropy," are the most helpless beings you can imagine. If we are to assume that fourteen-year-old youngsters can survive by themselves, the seeding-ship would have to spend at least 14 years on a planet in order to educate the Adapted Men. Considering the case of Telluria this sounds a bit difficult -- the youngsters climbing trees and the Earthmen doing what? The seeding-ship would need supplies, too. Really, why don't the humans settle the planet themselves?

Another point is ignored completely by Mr. Blish: the Adapted Men are not intelligently adapted. The author tells us that they are only half the size of man. This is silly, considering the fact that a being of less mass isn't as strong as a taller being and is therefore less equipped to deal with the monsters of the surface, even if we ignore the fact that it will also be less intelligent (provided its structure is human).

It seems as if Mr. Blish lacked imagination to invent planets on which pantropy would be necessary, but fond of his idea as he was, he went on using it in any case. So he parodies himself and turned his idea of adapting man to planets into the idea of adapting man to trees. With all due respect I should like to remark that I think a brain is of more use for climbing trees than a tail. If the Spaniards and Portugese had known pantropy when they explored America, they would undoubtedly have chosen to produce an Amazonas man instead of settling the jungle themselves -- to employ Mr. Blish's logic.

Instead of settling a few planets at a time, seeding-ships are sent all over the Galaxy. James Blish explains the purpose of this venture in "Watershed": Man can take most of the Galaxy under occupation without stealing anyone else's planets in the process. An occupation without dispossession, without bloodshed. Yet if some race other than man should develop imperial ambitions and try to annex our planets, it will find itself enormously outnumbered."

Well, but there aren't any aliens in the stories. So what is the advantage of the "seeding Program" for us humans? Why should any government finance any such program? Even if there were aliens: what exactly is the difference then between any alien and Adapted Man? Even if we are of the opinion that there are important genetical differences between Adapted Men and other, non-human races --

do they really matter? An Adapted Man is no human being - a being that lives in an atmosphere of methane has to be different by necessity. No human being can mate with an Adapted Man (and if they can breathe the same air, why, then there is at least one adaption unnecessary). But then, if we extend the term "human" to include also beings vastly different in form and psychology and metabolism, why should we draw a limit and exclude sentient life-forms of genes other than 'human'? Why should man care for beings for the purely sentimental reason that they have germ plasm (if in changed form) from human beings? Then it doesn't make a difference if a planet -- which we can't settle anyway -- is peopled with Adapted Men or aliens.

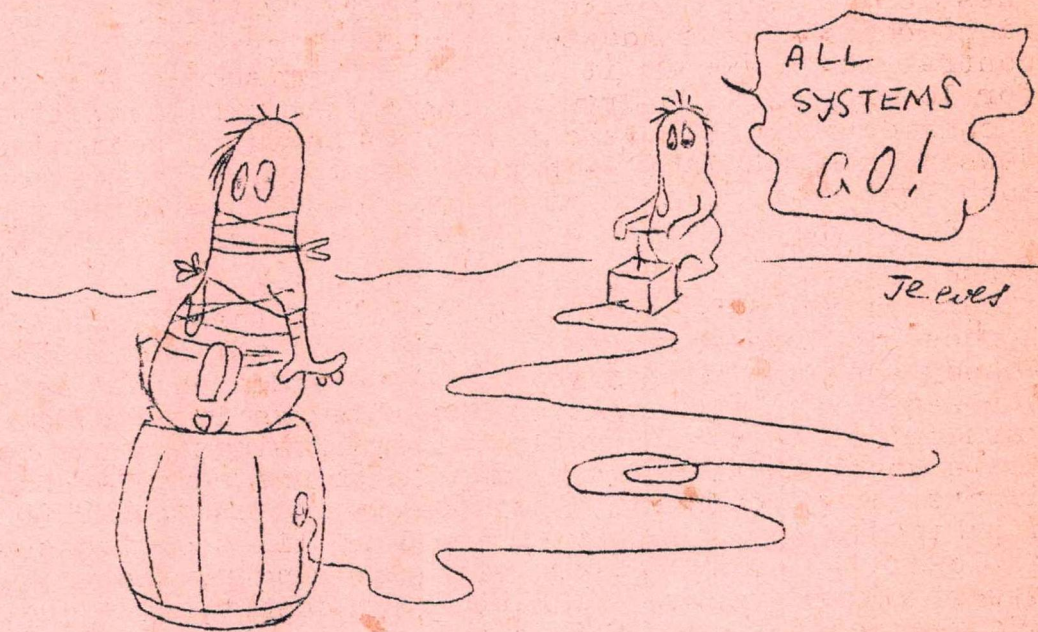
This applies to genetical differences - but there exist differences basing on history. And here I find the book's biggest fault. According to the stories, the Adapted Men, once they have been seeded, are left alone. Only sporadically a ship visits them (as in "The Thing in the Attic"), and they are told by the crew that the planet belongs to the Adapted Men now and that nobody is going to take it away from them. This is an idiotic procedure. It is a waste of intelligent beings in the first place. (the Adapted beings have to make all inventions again, thus slowly struggling up to civilisation), secondly there is no immediate return for the money spent for seeding ships, and thirdly it is the best way of making enemies. As long as the Adapted Men are savages, they are no danger, but what will happen once they learn what happened to them? Why should they love man and perhaps help him fighting some aliens? The question is not, as Blish puts it in "Watershed", that human beings might consider the Adapted race as inferior beings -- but on the contrary we must put it this way, "Why should they see any reason for loving us?" To draw an historical parallel; it is, undoubtedly, a considerable improvement that we begin to recognize Negroes and Jews as human beings -- but before long, I think, nobody will care much what we may think of other races. It will be the other way round - maybe the Negroes will enjoy being masters over white slaves?

These questions are ignored by Mr. Blish. His stories describe technical trivialities but miss all of the important issues. His heroes seed the Universe and hope that all's well that ends well. Nobody sees any reason why the Adaped Men should be educated. They are seeded and grow like so many flowers in a meadow and - wonder! - turn out to be as perfectly rational beings as the sealmen in "Watershed". Rational they may be in one sense -- but they are still idiots. They are quite happy to people an Earth that has become inhabitable in the interim. The last lines of the story run as follows: "...both men were still staring at the vast and tumbled desert of the Earth." If Earth is a desert, what are two or three Adapted Men doing there? What do they eat and drink? What is the use of populating a planet that has no water, no vegetation, and a very thin atmosphere?

The reasons of Earth becoming a desert are given, and they are worth quoting: "In their own prehistory, fifteen thousand years before their official zero date, they cleared farmland by burning it off. Then they would plant a crop, harvest it, and let the jungle return. Then they burned the jungle off and went through the cycle again" ... and so on..."even after they achieved spaceflight, that method of farming was standard in most of the remaining jungle areas - even though the bare rock was showing through everywhere by that time."

That's the explanation, and it's a fine piece of thinking. Perhaps people were concentrating so much on seeding the stars that they forgot everything else. In the story there has been no technical progress, nobody thought of reforestation -- "they still burn the jungle."

Rather than to use his brains (that one factor distinguishing man from beast), he chooses to change himself not to become more intelligent or wiser - no, just to make his bare survival possible. This is an anti-scientific attitude, and it is surprising to find this in the work of a writer who is allegedly one of the prime science fiction thinkers. "Watershed" blames man that he has been unable to keep his own planet habitable. It may be remarked that the Adapted Men have to employ essentially the same agricultural methods as on Earth, so that adaption is no solution at all. Furthermore, not nature is changing, with man following -- it is the other way around. It is man who changes his environment, and as the sciences progress, man will become more and more independent from "nature". As long as a planet has a hospitable atmosphere, it is still habitable. But when a planet has lost it, even the Adapted Men would not be able to live there. There is nothing behind Mr. Blish's suggestion that another race of Adapted Men might move in, one a planet has become inhabitable for one of them. Man has got the intelligence of remaking the world and adapt nature. It is silly to want to change the most complex creature, man himself, as long as



there are so many other things that can be changed much easier. In my opinion, THE SEEDING STARS is just a grabbag of clichés, unsound reasoning, and foolish explanations. Economical, political, and theological questions are either ignored or misinterpreted. ... It is easy to make up a few gadgets and to invent a universe of one's own, but it matters most what you finally make out of it.

Franz Rottensteiner

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CASTLE CON IN '64! (Marquartstein/Obb. Germany)

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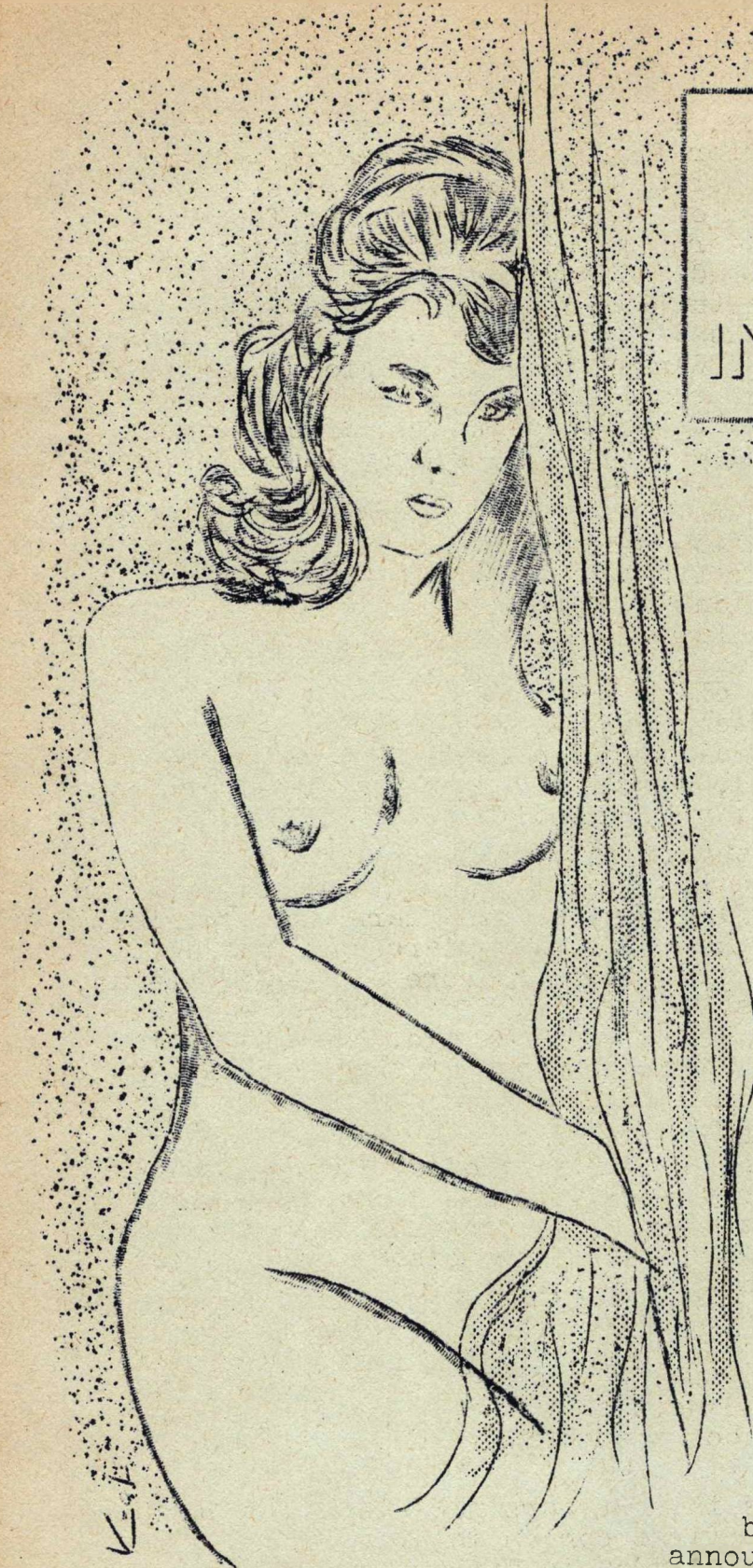
FOUR MEN AND ONE GOD

fiction by Harald Kressler

- the bespectacled one: Do you see that old man?
the whitehaired one: The old man?
the bespectacled one: He's lying in the snow over there.
the whitehaired one: And he's too weak to come up again.
the old man: You will help me, won't you? You will give me what I need?
the whitehaired one: Of course we'll aid, old man.
the bespectacled one: If we won't do injustice to anyone, quite certainly.
the crippled one: When I can make you happy, I'll take pains, old man.
the old man: I'm not yet old. I haven't finished half of my life yet.
the bespectacled one: What's it that you want from us?
the old man: Give me drink. Just a small drink... Not much, mind you, but please give me...
the bespectacled one: You're not so old, you might work again. Your hands are strong, and you ought not to let yourself be destroyed by alcohol. Go ye now and work!
the whitehaired one: Old man, the drink would be dangerous for thee. You really ought to refrain from alcohol, you know. Here's a slice of bread for you.
the old man: Give me a drink...
the crippled one: Here, old man, here's your bottle of dreams.
the bespectacled one: Will you want to ruin this old and weak man even more? Do you believe that he, after he's finished the bottle you just gave him, will stop drinking? This way the old man will never be respectable!
the whitehaired one: You acted in a most unwise manner. This old one ought to work. You should not have supported his urge.
the bespectacled one: You must have been mad!
the whitehaired one: Watch thyself, sinner!
the crippled one: The old man wanted a drink. I gave it to him. Is that a heinous crime?
the bespectacled one: It is certainly not a just act. You were most unjust in giving him what he wanted, instead of what he needed.
the whitehaired one: Your act was quite bad. You robbed him of his support.
the crippled one: But he wanted a drink!
the bespectacled one: There, do you see that throne?

the whitehaired one: And do you see the man on the throne?
 the crippled man: He is God.
 God: Come closer!
 the bespectacled one: Should I go alone?
 the whitehaired one: I've wanted to get to know God for some time now...
 the crippled one: May I approach you? God is indeed not of my sort...is not of the sort of any man!
 God: Come closer and do not be afraid.
 the bespectacled one: We ask Thee to be our judge...
 the whitehaired one: As Thou quite well knowest, knowing all things, and old man was lying in the street, in the snow. He wanted some liquor.
 God: Did thee give it to him?
 the bespectacled one: Of course not! He would not have been able to work then.
 the whitehaired one: I gave him a piece of bread.
 the crippled one: And I gave him the bottle of liquor he wanted so.
 God: Why?
 the crippled one: He wanted it and he longed for it so much that he was quite weak. He lacked it and I possessed it. That's why I gave it to him. Was this act wrong?
 the bespectacled one: Of course! You ought to have...
 the whitehaired one: You haven't acted nearly well...
 God: You, bespectacled one, you have done rightly in refusing your help to the old man. He would have had to try for himself. But justice is not yours, it is God's.
 You, whitehaired one, have done well. You gave a piece of bread to the old man. But goodness is not yours, it is God's.
 You, crippled one, have acted humanely by giving the bottle of liquor to the old man. This was not just and not good. But humanity is not mine, but man's.
 Go.

(SOL 29, Jan/Febr. 1962)
 Raw draft in English by yed,
 worked over by Dick Schultz



CHATS IN THE DARK

Franz Rottensteiner, living in Austria, is reknown in German fandom for his sharp and direct style, and his sometimes furious attacks against fans, fanzines, authors, and publishers. He fights straightly, confronting his readers with an opinion spread before them as being absolute. This has been Franz' way of writing since ever. The counterattacks were seldom less furious, and the various German sf-clubs were about to threaten "boycott" to any fanzine that would continue to publish contributions by him. Franz vigorously spoke against the German flood of pulp editions (and very sharply and openly indeed!) against some outstanding trivialities of German fandom's club life. In addition he published able articles about foreign authors, including a series of biographies, ranging from Heinlein to Pohl. His knowledge about the German as well as about the British and American science fiction

market is extraordinarily vast, basing on extended reading. He

announces his opinion in a provoking manner, as to enflame discussions. And with this he is similar to Rolf Gindorf. Those two fans for the first time managed to move fandom around, succeeded in making the (on the whole) lame and lazy German fans protest, by respectlessly attacking them or their ideals. These quarrels were taken seriously on the side of the majority; for Franz and Rolf they were nothing but "sports", I think, though some unwritten laws of fairness were sometimes hurt.

I did not read the novel in charge, but Franz succeeded in raising my interest. I shall be participating in the discussion.

Willi Voltz, reknown German fan, is a dirty pro. He trained his style by writing many stories for fanzines in his early years in fandom. Then he succeeded in entering some of his stories in an anthology (1957), in which some of the best writers of fandom were introduced to a wider readership. He gradually retired from fandom, but never really gafiated, he continued to publish in fanzines, but mostly humorous stuff, together with Mario. He saw his first novel published (praised and damned), and then entered into the production of a weekly German science fiction pulp series, featuring "Perry Rhodan, Son of the Universe" (Buck Rogers, we know you!), a series in which all the elements and circumstances of sf are pressed together in (now about 150) weekly instalments of about 100 book pages each.

He is to blame for introducing me into fandom back in 1958 ff., and he answered my boring questions with a patience I cannot but admire afterwards. I don't know if my tones would have remained that friendly in such a situation; and in fact he was my first and (for a long time) only link to fandom -- a fandom which in the time of my fannish birth consisted of nothing but the club I had just joined and the fanzine of this club.

Well, we don't know if we've been cheated, but rumour went that he married "Whisky" in January. We mailed off a suitable card, pre-congratulating him and his wife, but we never heard anything about it. He seems to keep the card for the final date...

Harald Kressler is not what I should call well-known to me. We exchanged one or two letters in impersonal matters. Harald lives in Austria, and he was active in fandom by writing darn good stories. I recall him publishing a fanzine many, many years ago, and his was the very first German fanzine ever to feature a 100-page-issue, quite a sensation in those days. He retired from fandom, when he had to enter the Austrian army some two years ago. He left behind what is generally regarded as the work of one of the best writers Gerfandom ever experienced.

Re illustrations. All illustrations in this issue are by Mario Kwiat (spoken Que-ut or so), with the exception of those on pages 10 and 13. The latter is by Terry Jeeves, who - I'm sure - will be astonished at running across one of his cartoons just here. Well, you originally sent them to Helmut Klemm, who passed them on to one of his friends for a fanzine (LYRA), which consisted of nothing but non-German material. I took part in this fanzine and was to cut your illos on stencil; and then LYRA folded. So here we are... The scribbling on page 10 is by one Dietmar Kasper. He is no fan, but knows about the nonsense. He does some really good sketches at times, and since we went to school together... You'll see him again!

Castle Con I hope this word is in your ears now! If it isn't, here the dates. The CC is Gerfandom's first con on international basis, held over the August 1-2-3 weekend 1964 in Marquartstein/ Southern Germany. This village in a beautiful landscape circles around the majestic building of a 1000-year-old castle, which, as I have been told, was involved in some real middle-age-fighting.

Well, this castle we rented to give the background for our fannish activities, for costume party and parties, for talk and fun. The interiors are well up to standard as I was able to see from some photographs, and there are about twenty rooms waiting for you. The rest of the con gang will be lodging in the village of Marquartstein, or in the near-by place of Unterwössen, according to prices. This is a lovely chance of spending a holiday ...blah, blah, blah. If you don't see the advantages, I can't help. I'm no commercial travel agent!!!

!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

THE COSTUME

by Willi Voltz

It's really too difficult, fighting the dust in my room. I'm no sooner through with dusting than I have to start over again. Since I've no intention to end up as some sort of gigantic whisk broom, my visitors normally find me sitting in a settee besides a cool glass.

Normally the other occupants of my room are shelves and stacks of books, the settee, the liquor in the glass, and a window. Occasionally this idyllic retreat is disturbed by Papa's inspections. ("Zack, zack, hurry up, get away that dust, zack boingg!") Due to Papa's increasing corpulence these attacks occur less often, and the quantity of dust grows in proportion, as Papa becomes more and more spherical. Of course, this couldn't be allowed to continue without something happening. So, some weeks ago...

"It's regrettable, how you allow yourself to receive me here," Whisky pointly commented. A long time ago I allowed myself to become involved with Whisky. Why and how, I'm not quite sure.

She sulkily inspected my faded blue jeans and scowled as I nervously ran my fingers through my hair and pulled my pullover over my belt.

"Now would you just look at all this dust!" Her creamy fingers ran quickly over the ledge in front of Maugham, Somerset, to Sturgeon, Ted. A little lint settled on one red-lacquered fingertip.

She turned and glared at the paper in the typewriter.

"Nights With Linda," she exclaimed forcefully. "Who's Linda?"

"Nothing, nought but a creature of my fancy," I replied. "Linda's a mastiff and the whole thing's going to be a mystery story when I'm done."

Her eyes sparked as if to ask what sort of fellow I was.

"Thou shalt never ask me," I mumbled melancholically. Sighing, I asked, "Mayhaps you can tell me the reason for your being here?"

"We'll attend a costume ball this Saturday," she said.

"We'll attend a costume ball this Saturday," I repeated.

Whisky's face showed that teary expression which is undoubtedly the most effective and horrible form of extortion available to womankind. But nonetheless it steals my thunder in a most effective manner.

"I'll be going as Diana," she said. "I saw a most wonderful design for it in an old CONSTANZE-journal just recently."

"Totally in character," I commented. She looked at me oddly, then brightened and said, "And I've the most wonderful costume for you, too! I know you'll just love it!"

"Yes," I replied. "I'll go as a cowboy. Bang, bang, bang! Yippeeeyy-eeeeiiiiiiii!" I screamed, suddenly active. I stalked across to the window on the balls of my feet, face as High Noonish as I could get it and fanned my trusty (and non-existent) Colt at the biography shelf.

became dirty and a series of streaks and smudges appeared on the leg. There must have been something decidedly wrong with the gravity today, I decided, as I realized I was now tilting towards the floor alarmingly.

"Papa!" I cried.

Papa came running into the room, his face lathered, his suspenders hanging about his hips and his shirt tail out. I must have seemed a sad sight.

"I'm busy shaving," he blubbered around the soap. He was panting a little.

"Sure, Papa," I said. "But you've got to help me with my spaceman. I can't move my knees!"

Unhappily Papa stared through his soap face. Then he moved forward, brush still in his hand and kicked the back of my knee a sharp blow. As I tried to get back up I found that my leg was still stiff. Papa had not been able to help any with his direct action. "Papa... You must help me put on my costume or I shall be late!" I pleaded.

"The back-shield first," I ordered. "It must be fixed to the front and to the legs."

I observed unhappily the motions of Papa, as he slowly fumbled the shield on. There was a terrible noise.

"Nothing fits!" he said. "You're much too thin."

He held up the back shield by one cord while I held the other one over the shoulders. He grabbed the front shield as I instructed him. That's when his trousers started slipping.

He unhappily put down the front shield, pulled up his trousers with one hand and grabbed the front shield again. Unfortunately his shirt had caught on a stud of the front shield and he tried to pull it loose. He slipped and collided into me, holding the front shield in front of him.

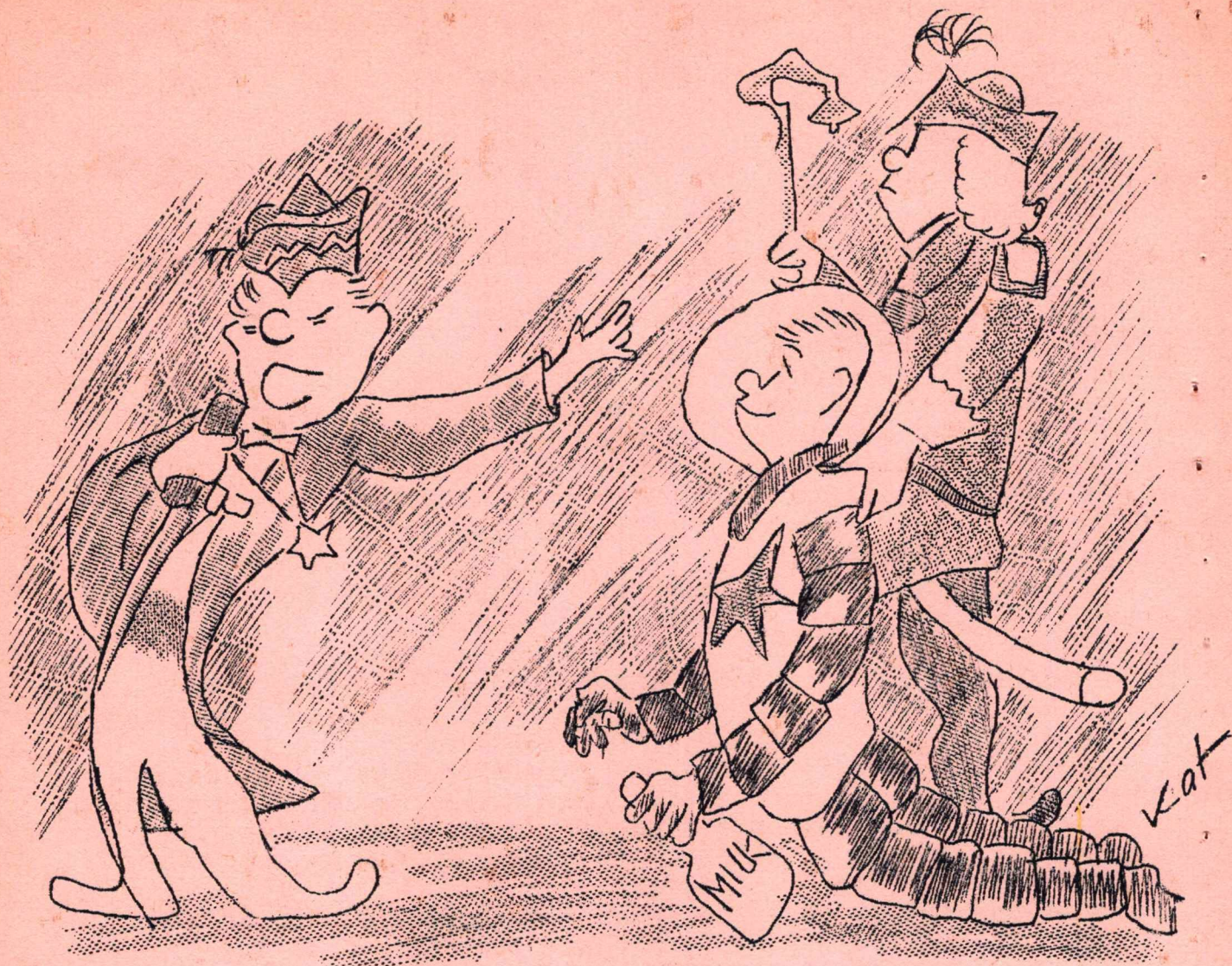
When I was able to breathe again I noticed a number of things. One, I was on the floor. Two, Papa was trying to get me up. And three, that the back-shield, from the way it was d gging into me, must be bent somewhat.

I got back up and Papa was soon trying to hook the front shield into the cords from the back shield. Unfortunately we'd forgotten all about Papa's shaving brush. He'd laid it on a ledge, but it had since moved. He didn't notice it until he stepped onto it.

In a moment I was able to convince myself that my ribs weren't more than cracked and Papa was getting up again. He helped me up and this time attached a badly dented front shield to an equally misused back shield. I was practically bathed in lather by then, Papa was tinted a lovely shiny tone of bronze-silver, the shields looked like they'd come off the hull of a ship involved in a sea collision, and my left leg still didn't bend. I walked in a definite pidgeon-toed way now. But Papa soon arranged the covering plates about me and around my waist.

"Now the can-arms," I said.

I looked like a misused iron-maiden in the mirror, but reality must have been much worse. Swearing in chorus (I didn't know Papa knew Spanish and French), we finally fitted my bruised arms into their metal sheaths. I looked somewhat like a stylised dwarf, like the one they use for Michelin-X-tyres, or like a huge orange juice can that someone had taken a rifle to... But hardly like some daring space wayfarer. I couldn't breathe, the soap itched, sweat trickled down my back, and I felt ninety-five pounds heavier. And



I was. I was about to tell Papa to save me from this iron maiden, when he slipped the helmet over my head. It felt like someone had clouted me with a lead pipe.

So all I did was jingle in front of the mirror, sounding like a bathtub full of nuts and bolts falling end over end down a flight of stairs.

"It fits," Papa commented between pants. At least that's what I think he said. It was hard to tell with a genuine honest fake tin earphone screwed into my occipital bone a full centimeter. I stared through the plastic panel at the apparition in the mirror.

That was me. Pocketbook edition of Captain Future in null-armor, a shortened version of Kimball Kinnison ready to repel all portable dis-rays. Edison's miraculous filament was nothing beside the wonder of this costume.

Papa went downstairs to hire a lorry to drive me to the ball.

Eventually five strong men were sufficient to carry me up the stairs to the ball room. The master of ceremonies, a bit slurry-tongued by the spirit of joy prevalent in the ballroom was yelling into his microphone. I managed to creak and stomp my way towards the viewing stand and heard him say, "Folks, it is my pleasure to present to you the prize winner of this here Costume Ball..."

BRUCE MASON:

Brother,
what do you know
about the stars?
That they
are far away?
That they are very hot?
That
planets circle around them?

No,
you're knowing more!
You know
that they bear
your brothers,
your brothers of space,
strange
in appearance
but well-known
in spirit.

You know
that there, too
the endless striving
after perfection
exists.
And you
anticipate
that hand in hand
the way
over those glassy rocks
will not be so
steep.

D'you hear those
spheric sounds?

No,
that's
the thundering
of the rockets
sounding
from the future.
That's the way
to these brothers.
The world is too small
for a heart
full of longing,
space
never too large
for exploring brains

Brother,
what do you know
about the stars?

THAT
THEY
ARE
OUR
FUTURE!

With four helpers I made it up
onto the stage. I lifted my arm in
benediction, and the nearest ten
spectators shrank away, thinking
that I was roaring at them in
some foreign language. I felt
like Pearl Harbour the day after
C. the man Who Had Once Been Used
III. The MC at the mike pressed
the trophy into my upraised hand
and slanted my shoulder in
congratulations.

I don't think he broke anything,
tho'.

It felt a bit silly standing up th
there, holding up the trophy,
but it was some time before I
got anyone to pull my arm down
again. Far down the hall I saw
one certain Diana walking
towards the bar. Accompanied by
a Sultan. If I could have walked
over there I think I would have
acted most boorishly.

I warn anyone not to attend a
costume ball, ever. Forget all
about science fiction. And
especially keep away from types
who think it's funny to use you
as an animated ashtray.

I'm going to send the plumber's
bill for getting me out of the
costume to Whisky. Just to be
fair, tho, she can have the
costume...

(SOL 25 May/June 61)

Worked over by

Dick Schultz

=====

The shortest science fiction
story I ever read.

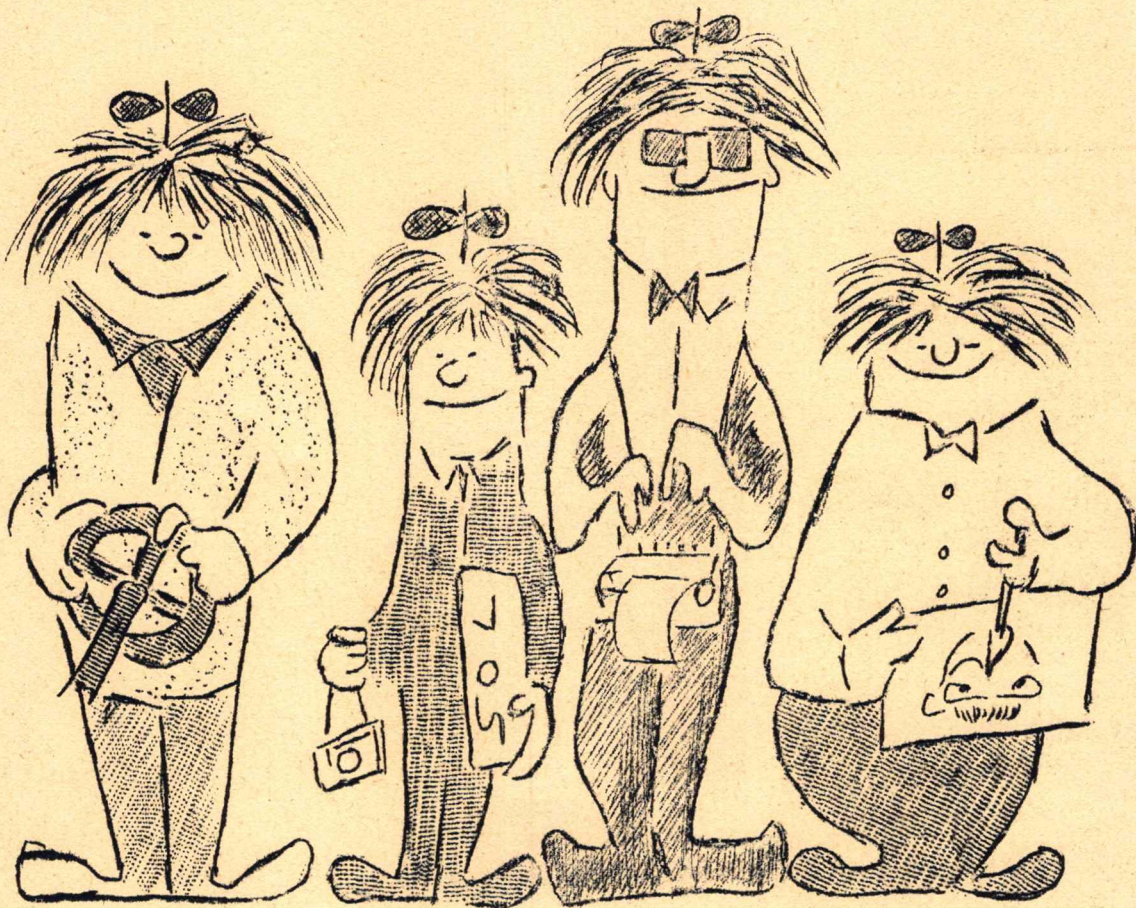
EXPERIMENT by JuNo

Miller raised the gun and fired.
As the bullet struck his back he
knew that Maran was a globe...

=====

Scrawl

by Mario Kriet



SOL - BEATLES:

GUNTRAM

WOLFI

TOM

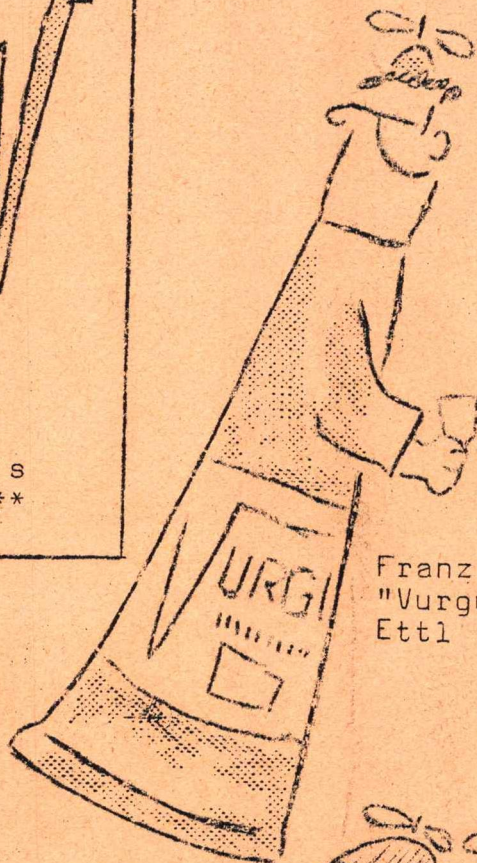
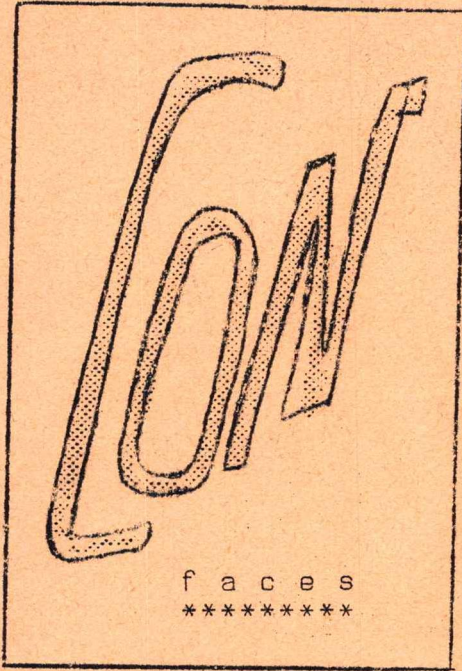
and

I

The 5th NIEDERRHEINCON
was in
DUISBURG

We
visited
the fans

DUISBURG-
CON-MARCH 64



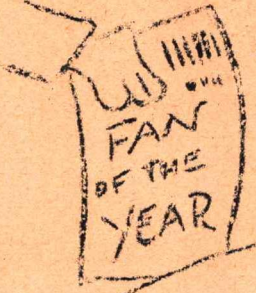
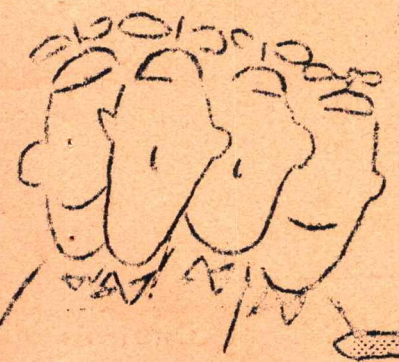
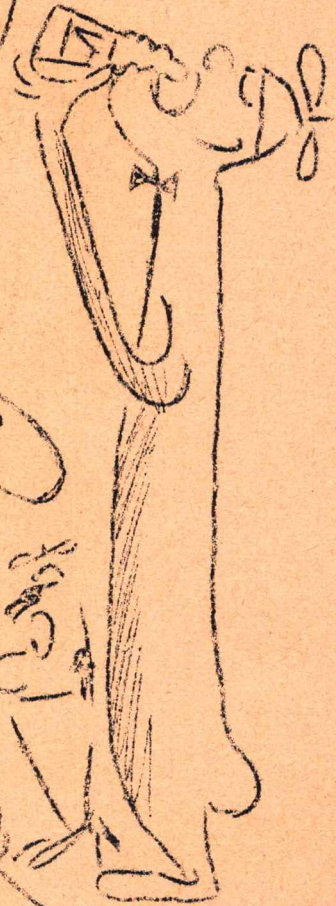
Franz
"Vurguzz"
Ettl



Ernesto
"TV"
Mascaro



Thea "Molly" Grade



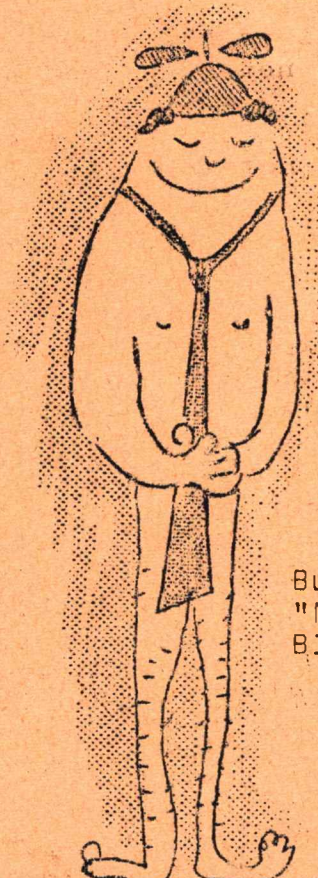
Dieter "Starfighter"
Steinseifer



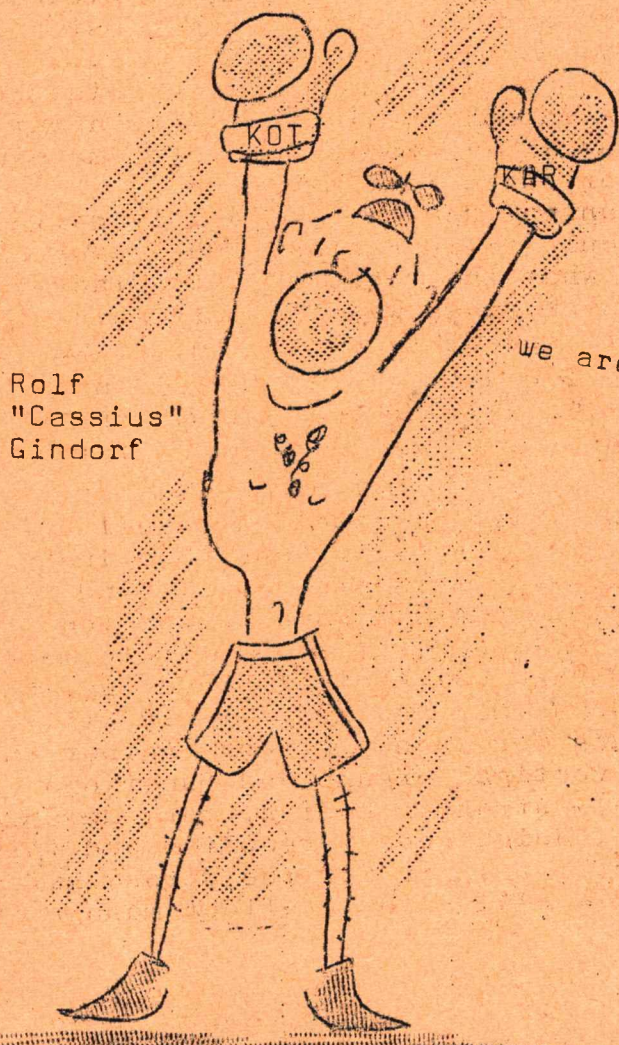
..... and many NEO-fan.....



Franz "laxity" Rottensteiner



Burkhard
"Nappa"
Bluem



Rolf
"Cassius"
Gindorf

we are the King!

CORRECTION : TOM SPEAKING :
Proofreading the prints I discovered some nasty typos.
Please look for the worst of them:
Page 5, third paragraph, second line word No 4 "country"
instead of "countries". Page 7 third paragraph, third
line, word "population" instead of "pantropy".

READER'S CORNER

Those people who sent letters which are not reprinted here are: Robert A. Heinlein, Jack Williamson, Ethel Lindsay, Dorothy Hartwell, Nancy Shriner, and last not least, Margie Harrison. Thank you to them all, and especially for their encouraging words. The others should not be too proud at having their letters "reprinted" here; regarding the pagecount I had to omit so much that they will hardly recognize their own writings, Let's start with

ALAN BURNS:

...However I thought your SOL reader excellent, I said so at the con and I say it again. ...

The Golem. This was most interesting. I recall Willy Ley talking about the Golem in Galaxy. It seems that in the film of that name, the golem had a magic charm, it picked up a child, the child stole the charm and the golem became just a stone stature. Didn't Fritz Lang have a Golem in Metropolis? ...

Twelve minutes was a very fascinating little story and I liked it. It had a haunting air of mystery about it that left me feeling not unlike as if I'd had a dose of some heavy trance-inducing drug, it was a very nice feeling.

Mechanical Romance was simply delightful. This is the sort of stuff that should be in Fantasy and Science-Fiction. I never guessed until the end what the robot's little lady-love was.

The next stage was the only thing that I didn't find very interesting. I like to speculate on the future in stories but not in articles. ...

+++ I didn't see METROPOLIS until recently and was very impressed. Quite unlike those generations of British con-goers I'd like to see it some times more. As far as I can recall there was no golem.

TERRY JEEVES:

...The material itself was well up to standard, I particularly enjoyed the chess story and "Meeting"; but S-F and Poetry — well, poetry is my bête noire, and I find that just about .01 % poetry meets my taste. Mechanical Romance was too hacknayed and gave away its gimmick far too early to be little more use than a space filler. ...

Next Stage was thought provoking, but the author takes too much for granted. Man may and very likely will, improve — but there are other directions for such progress, rather than to sheer disembodied intellect. Loss of vestigial organs and functions (appendix and goose-flesh for instance) — stronger bodies, more durable or even self-renewing flesh and bone. Heightened perception and thinking are just a few. Disembodied intellect I feel is for the birds. Life is dynamic, it evolves, and excretes — how would intellect manage this? Nevertheless a fascinating article.

DARROLL PARDOE:

...The illo of you on page 5 is not a very good likeness — I've met you personally, so I know. And what on earth are you trying to eat?

The Chess piece is superb — if that was the mood of the German original, it's been captured beautifully. The disclaimer about losing in translation at the end was probably unnecessary, but if it HAS lost, what heights the original must have attained! It almost brought my sense of wonder back from its grave.

The Article on poetry was good, too, though of course you haven't needed to translate poems - where they ever translated into German, anyway? ...

+++I'll tell you what I'm going to eat on that illo. You see, Mario once visited me and we lunched together, and when I was about to begin eating my portion of fish, Mario began looking at me in a strange manner - he was making up the illo in his mind. Bah, and I never ate fish using a knife! The poems appeared in SOL as they were, and we were confident that most of our readers would be able to understand them.

J.S.ROOT:

...The chess piece was lovely, and very well translated. I got the feeling that either the author or the translator - or maybe both would make a good poet. Aside from a very faint trace of clumsiness about the English - hardly above the average fannish level of typographical errors - the writing is beautiful: that first paragraph is an utter gem. One of the hardest things about writing is to make a good beginning: you must 1) catch your reader's attention, 2) establish the scene of the story, and 3) set the mood of the story; and Kressler does all three, effortlessly, in two brilliantly evocative sentences. The idea, too, is a good one, and nicely developed; and the whole story has a flavour of fantasy about it - an air of unreality, of belonging wholly to a world of its own (like much of Kafka, or Waiting for Godot) - which fits the idea to perfection, without (as this sort of thing too often is) being annoying in itself. Aside from a certain bodilessness about the protagonist - how did he get this way, and what will happen to him now? - and a feeling that some of the force of the ending was dissipated by a little too much playing with it (letting the idea run away with the story), I would say that the piece is as near-perfect as fan fiction can be. I wish we could do as well.

"The Golem" is, unfortunately, quite another matter. The piece itself is a little too far-out - that is, esoteric - for my taste; and the translation is clumsy at best. Compare this first paragraph - on any level: for elegance, compactness, content, interest, what have you, with Kressler's. 'Nuff said.

Ragatzy has rather a nice idea here, but I can't say I'm fond of the examples he picked. I find more of the spirit of science fiction in for instance Yeats' "The Second Coming" - which has nothing explicit of sf in it - than in all of Ragatzy's examples. And tell him that people like Juanita Coulson and Gordy Dickson are doing definite modern science-fiction poetry, right now.

I would say that Jeschke understands poetry - what it's for and how to use it - much better than Ragatzy. There are the makings of a fine poet about this boy. He has the swing and rhythm of it, and the love of sound, and the trick of looking at the world from somewhere else. But let him earn compression - to pack each line, each word, with thoughts and meanings double what is here, and more - and there will be no stopping him. And whoever translated this one is no mean poet himself. ...

The philosophical essay was disappointing. I don't entirely agree with him, but there wasn't really enough there to take issue with; and the whole thing was presented with such an air of certainty that it hardly seems worth it. ...

JACK L. CHALKER:

...Yes, the READER is an excellent idea for letting the English-speaking fan world know what's going on. Of course we have Helmut

Klemm's THE BUG EYE (of which you seem to be totally unaware although TBE is a regular fanzine published in Germany in the English language). But then, Hel Klemm's usually at war with everybody...Gerfandom in particular (all of it) and so I find the fact that it is ignored in SOL-Reader understandable... ..

CHESS IN THE EVENING - didn't lose in translation from style or mood built-up; Kressler would have telegraphed his ending in any language. Besides, it's a direct variation of Poe's "William Wilson." ...

The Jeschke (how do you pronounce that --- Jess - Key?) piece I only skimmed. I don't know just what he (or you?) was trying to prove by laying it out in that format, plus the blankverse presentation when blank-verse wasn't present, but it was very distracting. This may have been the piece to suffer from translation. +++We are pronouncing his name like "Jesh-K" +++

THE MEETING was very interesting and well told from my point of view, but I doubt if you'll get any praises from the British, who hate Von Braun with a violence and would love to tear him to pieces or boil him in oil even today (hi Alan Dodd!).

LONCON IN '65? Why? I'm thoroughly against it, and here are some reasons: 1)- it would be a British con, with few American attendees due to distance and the great cost involved. Even pros (non-British, that is) would be absent. In other words, it would be an Eastercon in September, and what's the percentage in that? 2)- If your reason for backing it is that it would be much more convenient for Gerfandom to get to, I think we can dispose of that. Many of you can speak English -- but in a country where the language was English pure and simple, most persons from non-English-speaking countries would feel like outsiders. 3)- The Loncon would rob the east coast of the U.S. of a convention, while the mid-west and west of the U.S. would not suffer at all by the scheduling. Is it fair to extent the eastern limits for the EAST year of a con to the easternmost borders of Europe, yet end the western border at California? The west coast wouldn't like to be robbed of a con year. ANYWHERE BUT LONDON IN '65!

+++Ella, help! I can see your point, but you should see mine (ours). The British just DESERVE a WorldCon now and then, and that they are able to handle such a project shows the example of the '57-Worldcon in London. I don't think World Cons are just a matter of American fandom; beside, could the west coast area not just skip their plan of a world con for one year instead of three and then continue the rotation plan as before? SO LONCON IN '65! And I'll quite certainly be there, as I and five of my German fan-friends didn't feel as outsiders at all when we attended year's Harrogate-con.

HARRY WARNER JR.:

...The article by Anton Ragatzy is a remarkable achievement. I'd hate to be assigned the job of finding one young American who has read enough German poem to be able to cite one occurrence of a fantasy or science fiction theme in the verses. Tennyson was like many other men who have written about the future: he prophesied very well but he was not too familiar with current science. In another poem he wrote about railroad trains in the belief that their wheels contain V-grooves that fit over the rails, like the little wheel on the old-time trolley cars that contacted the wire. I suspect that the Milton excerpt is mistaken identity, because this was probably meant simply as a poetic way of saying that a big thunderstorm was in progress.

The high point to me of this issue was the Wolfgang Thadewald article. It is exceptionally vivid reporting, of the kind that first-rate American magazines occasionally publish. Too often an event of this kind in the United States will be written up with a detailed account of what this fan ate on the way to the meeting and the remarks that another fan made after the event, and the major occurrence itself is forgotten.

I suspect that Dick Schultz' translation task in this issue was Twelve Minutes and Somewhat More. It reads somehow like the style of writing that he has been doing in American fanzines for the past year. I'll accept your assurance that the item had a swing to it in the original, and I'll try to find time to give it the four readings that you found necessary for comprehension. After one reading, I feel as if I'd just read a van Vogt novel from which all but a half-dozen pages were missing.

As you indicated, the item about The Golem was a trifle obscure to an individual who hadn't read the work and had never even heard consciously of Gustav Meyrink previously. To make things worse, I have always succeeded in mixing completely the Golem and the Dybbuk, and it's pretty hard to think of any less similar items that could be mixed up or any greater confusion of mind than could result from such a mixup.

Dieter Gerzelka's item makes me believe that it is just as well that I didn't purchase THE WORLD AS WILL and IDEA long ago when the Schopenhauer fans were offering it in a cheap paperback edition. I

would probably have lost all my small store of patience with abstract notions like "the embodiment of the will to live."

Of the fiction Mechanical Romance gave me the greatest pleasure. The short one on the next to the last page was too similar to some real events that occasionally find their way into newspapers and magazines, when a hunter shoots himself accidentally in the leg or some similar mishap occurred to the artificial limb. Chess in the Evening was effective in a way, but I was distracted while reading it by a couple of difficulties with terminology. Instead of paying attention to the story, I kept wondering for no real reason whether "runner" means the piece that we call a knight or something else with the knight translated here as "horse". I know that I could find out by looking in the largest German dictionary available, but that would have broken the mood even worse.

+++The Jeschke-piece was translated by Germans only, by K.-H. Jakubett and H. Mar-geit, to be exact. Dick did THE MEETING.



BETTY KUJAWA:

...Harland Kressler---yes, I can see why he was elected best fan writer. And he didn't pad it out or make the tale too long either... as blessing and talent few have alas.

Oh, The Golem!!! Now you're talking! You see, way back when I started collecting books in The Cinema I ran across one film photo that has haunted me ever since!! I can't find the book now--it's buried under hundreds of books somewhere in our house...but I do have another copy of it here besides me now---as illustration (18th in the soft-cover edition of Siegfried Kracauer's From Caligari to Hitler). That photo sort of set me off hunting up more about the Golem Legend. ...

Interesting to read Wolfgang's report on meeting vonBraun--he struck Gene much the same way (Wernher, I mean...not Wolfgang)... he comes here once in awhile, and about four years back Gene was out at the air-field filling out his flight book when he turned to find von Braun standing behind him. For once he recognised the man and had a small chat with him. ...

Does Ethel speak and write German? Noticed you list her amongst the helpers/contributors. ...

+++As far as I know Ethel does not speak German, as she will probably have told you herself by now. She was so kind to "polish" up some texts given to her, which some of the German translators had given a rough English-language appearance. And you should know that the name is "Harald Kressler" not Harland. And to make this table of info complete: I was on that certain tape, trying in vain to tell you something about our trip. Ella was too loud and the others probably, too. (They had some Whisky there, it seems...)

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I better stop here, folks, to finish up the issue by saying good-bye to you all. But before I've got to list those friendly fans who send their fanzines in trade. Thanks to them all, and he who might not be mentioned here, please don't be angry about it. Norman Metcalf, Ken Cheslin, Fred Hunter, Terry Jeeves, Colin Freeman, Walt Willis, Helmut Klemm, Pat Kearney, Jack L. Chalker, Art Hayes, Richard Bergeron, Dick Schultz, Al Andrews, Dave Hale, Bo Stenfors. You all, don't let yourself keep from sending your appreciated works and letters..
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