

As we say over here:

Beat them yellow and blues INTERMISSION #121

E-zine by Ahrvid Engholm, ahrvid@hotmail.com, for EPA, N'APA and other fanalytically minded. Follow @SFJournalen's sf/f/h&fandom newstweets. I too want 155 mm howitzers, to blow up all typos! Join Intermission's fanzine blockade against Putin! Slava Ukraini! June 2022.

Editorially: To Be or Nato Be, That Is the Question

In lastish I was rather certain Sweden and Finland would end up in Nato, and now we have submitted applications (though one Mr Erdogan of Turkey is sour since we don't share his view that all Kurds are terrorists - let's hope the issue will be solved). It's all because Russia or more precisely one Mr Putin-on-the-Blitz thought it was a dandy idea to invade a peaceful neighbour. That made Swedish politicians so scared that they peed in their pants.

And in Finland they became so frightened that they pooped in their pants. Finland has had some really bad experiences with the Russians in modern history, so they announced they'd go Nato no matter what. Though they have a good army, Soumi is populationwise only 1/8th of Ukraine. This would leave Sweden as the *only* country in northern Europe not covered by Nato, so our politicians said: *Hey, wait for us...* Our regional politics could become strange and complicated if we were the odd man out, the only outside Nato in our neighborhood. We'd also be more exposed to blackmail.

But I think we could have defended ourselves, because unlike Ukraine we have a lot of water between us and the Moscow Madman. Sweden has over 100 top jets (the nifty Gripen, als exported to Nato countries) with anti-ship missiles. Our five Gotland and Blekinge class submarines are the stealthiest in the world thanks to air-independent, silent Sterling machinery. They have "sunk" US aircraft carriers in wargames. The missile-carryng innovative Visby corvettes also have stealth properties and our coastal anti-ship missile system was recently reactivated. The Russian navy would be slaughtered at sea! And they haven't even shown to be very competent, proven by getting their Black Sea flagship HRAS Moscow sunk (=His Royal Asshole's Ship).



The medieval city wall is still intact around Visby, main city of Gotland!

However, the mid-Baltic island of Gotland would be exposed. The politicians love to have their huge summer conference on Gotland, around the same time the summer Stockholmers invade (slightly more peacefully than Russians would). If you like to fool around as a medieval tin man Gotland has the big medieval festival for you. Ingmar Bergman also wrote his film scripts on Gotland and put them under seven seals. So to protect Gotland, if nothing else, Nato seemed so much better... *så mycket bättre!* Confession, I did my national service on Gotland 30 years back, as a morse-code tapper, and think I know this beautiful place. The island capital Visby with its original city wall is perhaps even more picturesque than Stockholm's Old Town. And Gotland dricku is the Nectar of Gods!

If you have been neutral for 200+ years Nato it is a Huge Deal. Sweden's second to last war was in 1808-09 when Russians (who else!) attacked and conquered Finland, that had been a part of the realm for over 600+ years. Our last war was in 1813-14, in the coalition against Napoleon, ending in attacking Norway which we imagined we should have instead of Finland. (The resulting union broke up as late as 1905. Personally I think we shouldn't have left the 1397 Kalmar Union!) After that we



Finnish and Swedish Nato ambassadors as they handed in membership applications. GenSec Stoltenberg in the middle.

attacked, the UK will send everything we request (and if Britain is attacked, Sweden have some fine jets and subs to send). It feels good to have the Coldstream Guards and the like behind you. Our Nordic neighbours, US, Germany, France and others makes similar pledges, though not on paper.

The Society of Creative Anachronism would feel so lost if they can't have their joustings and black death plague reenactments on Gotland. Where would the lobbyists and political types go to get their summer fix of rose wine? And where else to worship Film God Ingmar? Gotland is worth defending.

There'll be some more war talk in this, a little History Corner, ABBA babble, and some comments to the APAs you should joi, because Fanzines Are Fandom's Eternal Backbone (FAFEB!). I'll try not to make it too many pages. (I skip eg event reports, like a fascinating evening with the Swedenborgians. A later issue perhaps.) Comments are welcome! If you have something really interesting on your mind, I may run it as a LoC. Finally, war is a terrible thing, so:

Mr Putin, turn down this war!



UK's Boris & Maggie of Sweden sign, in effect, a military pact.

Arms for War Footing

We were a bit late and out of breath when we arrived to the potluck party. There's a stuffed Turkey on the table and Finland is already there, but what did we bring?

The Finns have a 1340 kilometre reason to have one of the strongest armies in Europe, fielding 300 000+ (and a potential 900 000 in reserve) with over 800 heavy guns. We? Well, Sweden brings in a strong air force and navy and an advanced arms industry (details below). The Swedish army fields only 86 000 according to the latest figures, including the home guard, but that will increase as the government has decided to increase military funding.

The home guard has seen applications increase a couple of hundred percent. It's a rather experienced and well-equipped force, comparable to the US national guard. Many guardsmen are those previously doing regular national service, and when the army downsized at the end of the cold war a lot of modern, powerful equipment could be transferred to the home guard.

During the cold war, Sweden had compulsory conscription, taking ca 85% of all males 19 and over (15% were rejected, did non-armed service or were simply placed in "training reserve"). But as the USSR collapsed and Putin didn't yet show his true bloody colours, fewer and fewer were conscripted until conscription was mothballed in 2010 and we went for a smaller contract army.

Since a couple of years back selected conscription has been re-introduced. In practice it seems to be that if you are enthusiastic



A Gripen starting from a motorway base.

and really want to, you get conscripted. The army took in 5000 in 2020, but it has increased to 8000 and will go up more. But as modern war is more about equipment than numbers, let's go into that...

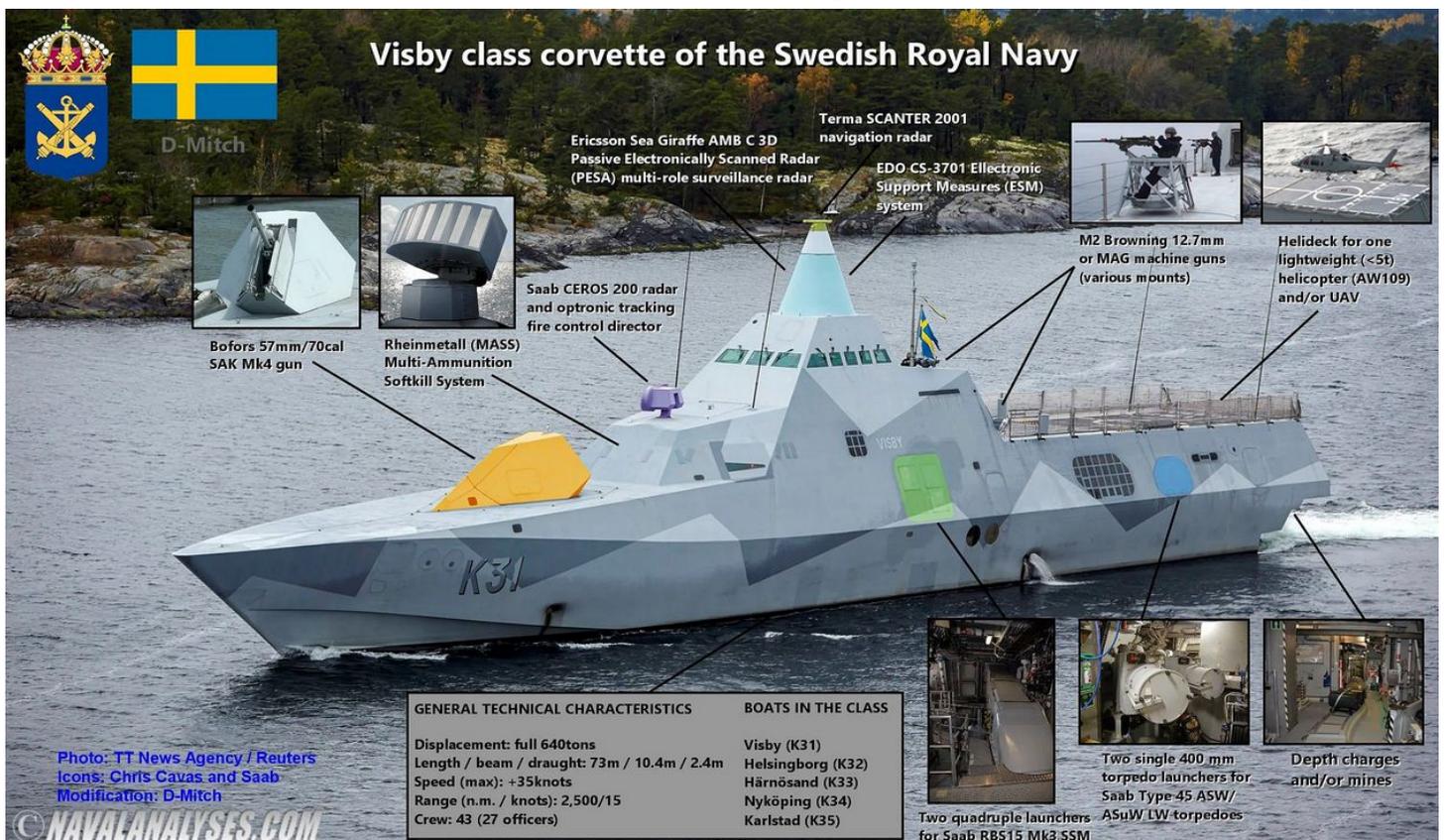
The **JAS 39 Gripen** jet is the first thing worth mentioning. It's a heavily computerised, prepared for E-warfare, multirole jet that with a push on a button on the dashboard can switch between modes **Jakt** (fighter), **Attack** and **Spaning** (reconnaissance, the letters making up the "JAS" prefix). It's constructed to be very manoeuvrable, cost efficient and is exported to half a dozen countries (incl the Czechs and Hungarians in Nato). It's simple and cheap to operate with low flight hour costs, and able to start from short, makeshift runways like motorway stretches. The Gripen can be refueled and rearmed in 10 minutes by lightly trained conscripts and take off from 500 m of motorway. Sweden operates 130+ of the C and E versions, the last being the brand new, heavier model with more weapon hard points, a stronger engine and more fuel for extended range. The Gripen is mean little bastard, more than a match for MIGs! See eg <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L6O6N3UlvI> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vK8Ytx1hAZo> https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saab_JAS_39_Gripen



Caption is wrong. A Gotland sub is more like \$500m. Still lots of bangs for the buck!

Next in the defence line are the **submarines**. The Swedish navy operates three of the Gotland class and two of the new Blekinge class are on their way in. They have air-independent, LOX-fed and very silent Sterling engines, giving them up to two weeks submersible endurance. The US Navy leased a Gotland which in wargames showed it could penetrate their submarine defence and "sink" their heavy carriers! Each carry 18 guided torpedoes and would wreak havoc among Russian ships, See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6QRchTMUCe8> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=saCdvAp5cow> https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gotland-class_submarine

Talking of stealth, the navy's **Visby class corvettes** will also take a bite out of the Russian navy if they dare to lower their toes into Baltic waters. The Visby's are radar deflection built out of composite materials and carry missiles, torpedoes, mines, depth charges and a fully automatic 57 mm gun just



to be sure. (And with increased budget, I think they get those SAMs too, earlier delayed to save costs.) Should the Russians somehow squeeze past Gripens, Gotlands and Visbys they'd be met on land by a barrage of **portable tank busters** and precision artillery, though they would in the north first

have go through Finland, who'd give them a warm welcome (they'd fry them sauna style)..

On land the Ruskis would have to worry about the rapid-firing **Archer artillery system**, of with the Swedish army has 40 (of a total of 72 ordered). It's a 6-wheel drive truck-carried 155 mm automatic howitzer that fire 9 rounds a minute with a range of 40-60 km. The last distance is with the rocket-assisted Excalibur GPS-guided shells, said to be accurate to within 5 metres of the programmed target. It's one of the most flexible self-propelled guns in the world. You sit in the armoured "cockpit", press a few buttons and the gun does the rest. Even the US Army are looking into getting it. See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TK1d7Dyp7IU> https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Archer_Artillery_System <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=56cQDI6vx2k>



Archer fires up to 9 rounds/min, up to 60 km with Excalibur GPS ammo, said to hit within 5 metres of target!

It's rumoured that Sweden will or has sent Archers to Ukraine. Our government has announced more military help, but details are kept under wraps (probably to be kind to P the Patient of the Kremlin asylum, so the poor guy doesn't contracts brain hemorrhage!). I think Archer's manufacturer would love to get it tested in live field conditions, so they have probably lobbied for it.

And then there is the **Combat Vehicle 90** from BAE Systems Hägglunds (joint Swedish-British company) exported to half a dozen countries, crewed by three, seating 6-8 troops (depending on version).



Fast, carries troops, but not a tank. Armour is "only" against 30mm tops, but CV90 can be fitted with reactive armour against shaped charges.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Combat_Vehicle_90 Not mentioned are **Leopard tanks**, a German design (claimed by many to be better than the US Abrams) with our own improvements in electronics, sensors, extra armour. The portable anti-tank launchers **NLAW** (here called Robot 57), **AT4** and **Carl Gustaf** have been covered in earlier issues. The Swedes may not have the highest number of troops, but quite a lot of quality equipment, most domestically

produced. In modern wars weapon systems often count more than numbers.

And wouldn't all of this help, we'd treat any trespassers trying to stick their filthy noses in our affairs with that fishy, fermented, stinking *surströmming*...



The Ultimate Weapon...

ABBA Entered Orbit!

I wasn't a fan the first time they were around. Not that I hated them, I just didn't care as I was a fan of another kind and had no time. I was too busy with reading Asimov, Clarke, Vance, JVM and whatever it was, and then I cranked the to let world take part of it all. But as music became boring – the top lists reached bottom sometime in the 1990s bottom - I vaguely remembered tunes that not only caught you but kept to prisoner. So I opened my ears to ABBA.

I've covered them before here - forgive me the BABA parody last Christmas! - and have of course been interested to know how it went with the premiere of their "ABBAtar" show in London.

Look, they built a special venue for it, spent five weeks in ridiculous dotted leotards with 800 Star

Wars-animators, they wrote an unexpected whole new album, and then we had to...wait...and wait..and... The project is said to have costed them £150m, but they can afford it being the world's second best-selling band in history (after John, Paul & Co).

Would it work? I thought the know-it-alls would give it thumbs down, saying they've bitten off more than they can chew. Aiming for the stars and reaching the tree tops. Four 70-somethings from the 70s in a mist of dementia. Things like that.

I wouldn't have to worry. The ABBAatars took off... *And reached orbit!*

Most reviewers, using the common scale to 5, give the show 4 or 5! They may be a 3 somewhere in a corner and local rags were sour: *"Against all pop music is about"* Dagens Nyheter said and *"Why did you choose to do this?"* Svenska Dagbladet exclaimed. They are braver on the home turf. But else most others loved it!

BBC: *"Abba Voyage: The band's virtual concert needs to be seen to be believed"*

<https://www.bbc.com/news/entertainment-arts-61592104>

Variety: *"ABBA's Voyage'CGI Extravaganza Is Everything It's Cracked Up to Be, and More"*

<https://variety.com/2022/music/concert-reviews/abba-voyage-cgi-concert-review-1235280181/>

The Telegraph: *"A mind-blowing celebration of some of the greatest pop music ever made"*

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/music/what-to-listen-to/abba-voyage-review-mind-blowing-celebration-greatest-pop-music/>

The Guardian: *"Jaw-dropping avatar act that's destined to be copied"*

<https://www.theguardian.com/music/2022/may/26/abba-voyage-review-jaw-dropping-avatar-act-thats-destined-to-be-copied>

NME: *"ABBA Voyage live in London: an epic avatar mega-mix from a brave new world"*

<https://www.nme.com/reviews/live/abba-voyage-live-in-london-review-photos-video-setlist-3235227>

Most note that the animated ABBAatars - they are *not* holograms - seemed to work very well. After a while you forget they are just pixels on a huge zillion dots screen, people said. And of course, the ABBAreals were there. Here on the read carpet:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yXjKkWCnjqQ>

Here a little on how the show was made:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1NnltrVDAg8>

An excerpt of "Mamma Mia", with the ABBAatars:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4-w35GgQ218>

And "Dancing Queen" (shot by the audience, though at some distance):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ntfjqjF859c>

Even the Swedish king (Carl XVI) Gustaf and queen (Silvia) were there for the premiere. <https://www.euronews.com/2022/05/27/sweden-s-king-and-queen-attend-premier-of-new-abba-digital-concert-in-london> and 18s in

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ntfjqjF859c> (Frida actually became a Swiss princess through marriage, and is personally acquainted with the Royal family.)

Here're the songs of the show as it stands now: *The Visitors* / *Hole In Your Soul* (an underappreciated gem!) / *SOS* ("The World's best pop song" said The Who's Pete Townsend) / *Knowing Me, Knowing You* / *Chiquitita* / *Fernando* / *Mamma Mia* (musical and films!) / *Does Your Mother Know?* (done in a new version) / *Eagle* (another underappreciated gem!) / *Lay All Your Love On Me* / *Summer Night City* (the band wasn't first satisfied with the recording, I think it's great!) / *Gimme! Gimme! Gimme! (A Man After Midnight)* / *Voulez-Vous* (the song Björn said he'd



The ABBAatars had new virtual clothes too. Five different sets.



Electric Agnetha!

dance to) / *When All Is Said And Done* / *Don't Shut Me Down* (the best one from the new album) / *I Still Have Faith In You* (from new album) / *Waterloo* (6th of April 1974...) / *Dancing Queen* (played by defibrillators to revive the dead!) / *Thank You For The Music* (thanks a thousand!) / *The Winner Takes It All* (and they took it all - the audience, fans, critics, the sales...and yes: money).

I didn't comment the first track, "The Visitors" from the album of that name. It's another of those underrated gems. Beside musically being rather advanced (listen: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T_xFpjlRf38) I think they picked it to open because of Russia's war against Ukraine. This is a song against Putin's Soviet union roots. The "visitors" knocking on the door are KGB, as Björn Ulvaeus has explained. From the lyrics:

*I hear the door-bell ring and suddenly the panic takes me
The sound so ominously tearing through the silence
I cannot move, I'm standing numb and frozen
Among the things I love so dearly
The books, the paintings and the furniture, help me*

...
*These walls have witnessed all the anguish of humiliation
And seen the hope of freedom glow in shining faces
And now they've come to take me, come to break me
And yet it isn't unexpected
I have been waiting for these visitors, help me*

Now in Ukraine, the heirs of KGB knock on the offices of Ukrainian mayors to kidnap and murder them, they break up the entrances to garages and cellars to steal, torture and rape, they strip civilians in roadblocks looking for imaginary "nazi" tattoos and steal their cellphones - they are themselves the Nazis! Bombs and missiles make unwelcome visit from the sky, and in Moscow holding up a blank piece of paper (!) will make corrupt Putin police visit you...

Each day of the five weeks of motion capture sessions had one ABBA song as theme, which means they did 25-35 songs, depending on if they worked weekends, so they probably have more songs prepared for the ABBA-tar show. After a year or so I think they'll shuffle around a bit in the song list. to give the audience an excuse to come back for a second fix. Presently hits like "Super Trouper", "Money money money", "When I kissed the teacher", "If it wasn't for the nights" and others aren't in the show. Still it's sold out until December with 380 000 tickets being booked. It's BTW claimed that when ABBA played on Wembley in London in the late 1970's, they had 10 million who wanted tickets... The special arena is constructed to be able to take a voyage. You can take it down and put it up on another site. They actually *need* that exact venue with all its technology for the show to work. Rumors have it that Las Vegas is ready to bid a billion or two to get the ABBA-tar arena. But there is some free space around our Museum of Technology here - not very far from the existing ABBA museum BTW - so this hi-tech arena should of course end up in Stockholm!

Just watch this in the Summer Night City with Agnetha at the wheel:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ntfjqjF859c>



King Carl XVI Gustaf & Queen Silvia

History Corner

I still have a bundle of sf & fandom related newspaper articles, from my diggings in the Stockholm Royal Library archives. And as usual I'll do quick (not perfect) translations and/or summarise. We'll start this's history expose with Flying Saucers, a term from the private pilot Kenneth Arnold who described things he claimed to see in 1947 (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kenneth_Arnold_UFO_sighting) as "saucers skipping on water". In Sweden these things which began flying around by the end of WWII were initially called "ghost rockets". There were speculations about that it was secret Russian weapons or tests with left-over German V-rockets. But some thought they were from further away, as we read in Aftonbladet Aug 17, 1947: "*Ghost rockets visiting from Mars?*":

"Spökraketerna" påhälsning från Mars?

Folkfantasin har sedan århundraden tillbaka alltid varit road av att frossa i de mest vidunderliga upptäcktsfärder i den okända världsrymden. T. o. m. en så modern människa som våra dagars amerikan, han må vara hissgrabb på Waldorf Astoria eller framstående industrimagnat, läser med största förtjusning vecka efter vecka om "Blixt Gordon", "Tom Trick", "Rymdens Riddare" eller någon annan teknad bildserie, som innehåller rafflande äventyr i främmande världar. Man måste först den jaktade amerikanen, som under ett ögonblicks avkoppling unnar sin fantasi fritt spelrum, alltunder det ögonen glider fram över de både underhållande och många gånger skönt teknade figurerna. I synnerhet kvinnorna på de okända planeter, som seriehjältarna dimper ned på, har ju som bekant ett utseende som en filmstjärna skulle kunna avundas dem.

Men kanske amerikanen med sitt, för fascinerande projekt tränade sinne är mera klärvänt än andra människor och han kanske också inser, att vad som i dag verkar fantastiskt och ogenomförbart, kommer för morgondagens människa att bli rena vardagsmaten. Vi har ju dock, fast ganska okärligt, glidit in i en ny tidsepok — atomåldern, och vad denna bär i sitt sköte kan ingen med säkerhet förutsäga men kanske de flesta ana.

Under kriget gjordes som känt är många uppfinningar, varav flera nu i frestid kommit till mänsklighetens gagn och fromma. Hitt hör exempelvis Radar eller den s. k. ekoradion, med vars hjälp man kan "se" i det mest ogenomträngliga mörker eller dimma. Nyligen har också vetenskapsmännen världen runt haft kontakt med månen pr ekoradio och planerar även för liknande försök med planeterna Mars och Venus m. fl. Vad beträffar den förstnämnda himlakroppen hoppas man att med Radar, i viss mån, få hjälp med lösandet av mysteriet med de s. k. "kanalerna". Men de fortsatta experimenten för utforskande av världsrymden fordrar ett både tidsödande och mycket dyrbart förarbete, innan positiva resultat kan framliggas. Bl. a. måste radarstrålarnas kapacitet ökas oerhört och mångdubbelt övertäffa styrkan hos de strålar, vilka utsändes mot månen.

Att experiment med radiostyrda raketer och projektiler eller dylika drivna med atomkraft f. n. febrilt pågår världen runt, är icke längre någon hemlighet. Därom vittnar så gott som dagligen både press och radio. Inte minst de för vårt land så aktuella "spökraketerna" är fullgoda bevis på att "något är i görningen". Givetvis omges själva experimentarbetena och resultaten därav inom resp. länder med den största sekretess, men av vad som dock sipprat ut, lär synnerligen värdefulla rön ha gjorts, såväl inom atomenergins utnyttjande som konstruktioner av olika raketer (projektiler). För en tid sedan kunde man även läsa en notis om, att franska vetenskapsmän arbetar på ett atomdrivet raketskepp och att "vi borde vara klara för den första flygningen till Mars 1960". Alltså inom en tidrymd av 20 år beräknas den första människan kunna landstiga på planeten Mars!

Är det nu radiostyrda, av människor konstruerade och tillverkade raketer, som f. n. överflyger vårt land? Så länge icke något påtagligt bevis i form av t. ex. splittror från någon nedslags projektill av jordisk metall framlagts för beskådande i dagsljuset, torde ingen här i landet med bestämdhet kunna säga att det rör sig om mänskliga försök. Naturligtvis är det med 99 procentig säkerhet dylika försök som pågår, men så länge som — vad skulle det annars vara? Meteoriter? Synvillor? Påhälsning från Mars?

För många år sedan skrev den i dagarna bortgångne författaren H. G. Wells sin berömda bok "Världarnas krig". I romanen låt han marsborna bombardera jorden med jätteprojektiler, vilka slog ned i England. Ur dessa kröp sedan fram vederstyggliga varelser, som med sina mystiska dödsstrålar försökte förinta världen. En annan författare, som däremot gav marsmänniskan ett mera humant och intelligentare utprägnande, var Kurd Lasswitz, som i sin bok "På tvännen planeter" beskrev hurusom två polarforskare kom att hamna på planeten Mars. Vem som har rätt, får väl framtidens utvisa, om det nu inte kommer att visa sig att planeten är lika utdöd som månen. Hur många böcker som sedan

Folkfantasiens frossor i märkliga upptäcktsfärder. — Atomåldern förverkligar det otroliga. — Radar avslöjar andra planeters hemligheter. — Kontakt med Mars klar 1960?

tidernas begynnelse skrivits om rymdforskning och i synnerhet om planeten Mars, kan inte exakt anges; dock torde antalet snarare över- än understiga tusentalet.

Finns det levande varelser på Mars eller Venus? Beträffande den sistnämnda himlakroppen, vars bana går närmare solen än vår egen jord, tvislar vetenskapsmännen, bl. a. på grund av den där rådande hettan från solen. Likaså är Venus alltid omgiven av täta moln- eller dimbankar, varför ett mera ingående studium av nämnda planet är förknippat med synnerligen svåra omständigheter. Det är här Radar beräknas komma att spela en stor roll. Mars däremot, som oaktat den ligger längre från jorden än Venus, är mera känd på grund av klarare atmosfär runt sin kropp samt att dess bana omsluter jordbanan. Bl. a. har planeten i analogi med vår egen jord vita fläckar vid bägge polerna, vilka har uttytts som event, snö. Och finns det snö, är steget inte långt till fruset vatten, som ju består av väte och syre. Vad de mörka "kanalerna" är för något, får väl Radar, som tidigare påpekats, så småningom bidra till att lösa, eller det nya jätteteleskopet i Amerika, när detta i sinom tid blir färdigställt. Vad som däremot är bekymmersamt är temperaturförhållandena på Mars. Temperaturen beräknas nämligen ligga endast vid omkring +4° C., samtidigt som atmosfärtrycket endast är 1/7 av jordens. Kanske har marsinvånaren tvingats till att "gå under jorden", en sak som människorna på vår egen planet om miljoner år kommer att få sina sig i. då solens värme börjat avta och jorden alltigenom blivit kall.

En kropp som med svindlande fart rusar mot jorden, blir på grund av friktionen så småningom glödande, såvida icke hastigheten kan regleras, såvida t. ex. exempel här på meteoriterna, som då och då dimper ned på vår jord. Om marsvarelserna vill bombardera jorden med något slag av projektiler, måste farten sålunda regleras under färden genom världsrymden. En annan viktig sak att ta med i beräkningen är jordens dragningskraft. Tas icke nödig hänsyn till nysannade faktorer, föreligger således risken att ifrågavarande föremål upphetter och så småningom förgasas samt under ett väsende eller visslande ljud upplöses i tomma intet — utan knall!

Men om det nu, som många tror, verkligen existerar levande varelser på Mars, och att dessa på grund av den där rådande kylan tvingats till att förlägga sin verksamhet i själva planetens inre, måste ju detta i så fall peka på ett visst mått av intelligens och äveledes på en väl framskriden teknisk utveckling. Varför skulle då Marsborna icke tidigare ha sökt kontakt med jorden, då man kan räkna med att deras teknik vida överträffar vår egen? Den som lever tar se, heter ett gammalt ordspråk; låt oss därför alla hoppas på att få uppleva år 1960.

Hans Hansson



Popular imagination has since centuries indulged in the most extraordinary expeditions in unknown space. Even such a modern person as the American of today... finds huge enjoyment in week after week reading about Flash Gordon, Brick Bradford or Knights of Space or any other of the comics presenting baffling adventures from alien worlds. You have to understand the stressed-out American, who likes to relax for just a while and give imagination free roaming, with eyes meanwhile glancing the entertaining and finely drawn figures. Especially the women on the unknown planet the comics heroes land on have as we know a look a film star would envy. /Speculation that Americans are very acquainted with the future, And now we've reached the Atomic Age. WWII saw many useful inventions, like radar. / Scientists around the world have recently had contact with the Moon via echo-radio and similar attempts are planned for Mars and Venus. Regarding the first they hope radar will to some extent help to solve the mystery of the so called canals. /More space explorations tests with radar will come, but also: / experiments with radio-guided rockets or projectiles driven by atomic power goes on around the world, and are no longer a secret. You hear about it daily in the press and radio. In our country the recent "ghost rockets" are full evidence of that "something is going on". The rockets and the experiments with them are of course top secret, but from what has leaked we learn very valuable results have been reached with both use of atomic power and in rocket (projectile) construction. A while ago you could read a story about how French scientists work on an atomic powered spaceship and that we "should be ready for the first trip to Mars in 1960". So, within 20 years the first human being is believed to land on Mars! Is it radio-guided, man-made and constructed rockets that at this time flies over our country? As long as no tangible evidence is presented like shrapnel from a crashed projectile of EARTHLY metals meeting daylight, no one in this country can say for sure it's from human trials. Of course such tests are with 99% certainty going on, but as long as - what could it otherwise be? Meteors? Illusions? Visit from Mars? The the recently deceased HG Wells many years ago wrote his famous book War of the Worlds. In the novel he let the Martians bombard Earth with giant projectiles, landing in England. Hideous creatures emerged from these, with mystical death rays trying to destroy the world. Another author who instead gave the Martians a more humane and intelligent behavior was Kurd Lasswitz in his book Between Two Planets, describing how two Arctic researchers happened to end up on the planet Mars. The future will tell who is right, unless it will be shown that the planet is as dead as the Moon. You can't exactly say how many books have been written since the beginning of time about space research and especially the planet Mars, but the number should rather be more than less than a thousand. Are there living beings on Mars or Venus? Regarding the last body with an orbit closer to the sun than our own Earth, science has doubts, eg due to the heat from the sun. And Venus is also covered by thick clouds or fog, which makes a closer study of the planet extremely difficult. Radar is here expected to play a role. Mars on the other hand is further from Earth than Venus and known for its clear atmosphere and that the orbit is outside Earth's. Eg the planet has analogous to Earth white patches around the poles possibly interpreted as snow. And if there's snow it isn't far from being water, consisting of hydrogen and oxygen. /Radar and the new giant US telescope, Mt Palomar, will reveal what the canals are. Mars is very cold. / The temperature is calculated to be only +4C, with an atmosphere pressure only 1/7th of Earth's. Martians have perhaps been forced to go underground, something people on our own planets millions of

years hence will have to endure as the sun's heat will decrease and Earth becomes cold. /Talk about meteorites and if Martians send projectiles they should burn up in our atmosphere. Many believe there are Martians and if they've been forced to go underground/ ...it points to certain intelligence and also to advanced technological development. But why haven't the Martians then not tried to contact Earth before, when you can count on that their technology is far ahead ours? We'll have to see...and let's hope we'll experience the year 1960.

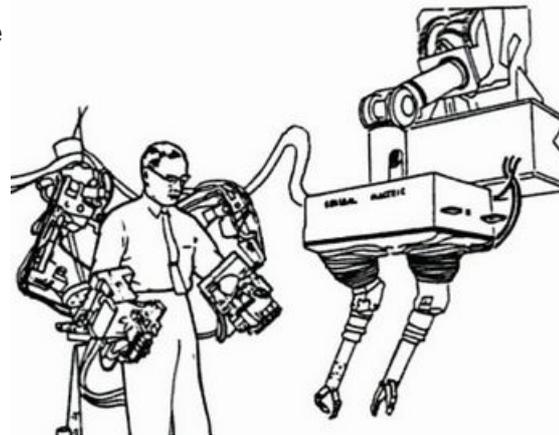
The sf genre began to grow over here in the 1950's, with new book series, the prozine *Häpna!*, an expanding fandom, newspaper articles, spots in radio and the new TV medium, like the radio show "Tidspegeln" ("Time Mirror") reviewed in Svenska Dagbladet March 29 1958:

The spaceman is today what the Wild West gun lad was 30 years ago. Folke Isaksson sampled the sf literature in Tidspegeln. Ray Bradbury got a solid A for his latest space book, Fahrenheit 451. Yes, Bradbury stands above most of the gentlemen in this space business. You may just as well call him a promising descendant of Jules Verne. But it's more dubious if he's big enough so that the listeners must also connect his name with Edgar Allan Poe.

The radio host Isaksson or the newspaper reviewer must be a bit confused. Fahrenheit 451 hasn't anything with space to do! But yes, why not compare Bradbury to Poe?

That the space age had begun put focus on sf and space, with the Sputnik satellite (and soon after, the US Explorer). Haley's Comets and Elvis had also given us rock music, which may be the reason for the headline "Rocking robot may reach the Moon", in Svenska Dagbladet March 31, 1959:

On Easter Day General Electric revealed some data on a new robot of real "sf format", that could be the first "man" on the Moon. The robot has the nickname Handyman, resembles a human in many ways and can perform a lot of manual work with its massive arms and hands. It can be remotely controlled at distances of 10 000's of km and according to General Electric it'd be possible to place Handyman on the Moon and direct it from Earth. It could serve as a sort of mechanic. It has been designed primarily to work in atomic power stations and other radioactive places where people can't stay. Handyman is according to the designers the first robot to have grip like a human hand. It can work with nails and screws and even manoeuvre a hula hoop ring. The two arms of the robot have ten basic movements and the operator feels what the robot feels through a complicated electro-hydraulic system. And the robot may further be equipped with a 3D TV-system to serve as eyes. To prove the robot's supreme construction the company says that it's so soft and exact that it can pick the petals off a rose without damaging it.



Handyman and its operator.

Rockande robot kan nå månen

SCHENECTADY. General Electric avslöjade på påskdagen några data om en ny robot av verkligt "science fiction-format", som skulle kunna bli den första "människan" på månen.

Roboten, som fått arbetsnamnet "Handyman", liknar i mångt och mycket en människa och kan utträtta en hel del manuellt arbete med sina massiva armar och händer. Den kan fjärrmanövreras på distanser av tusentals mil, och det skulle enligt General Electric vara möjligt att placera "Handyman" på månen och ge den direktiv från jorden. Meningen är att roboten skulle tjänstgöra som ett slags "mekaniker". Den har konstruerats först och främst för att arbeta inom atomkraftstationer och på andra radioaktiva ställen, där människor inte kan vistas.

"Handyman" är enligt sina upphovsmän den första robot som kan göra griprorelser på samma sätt som en människohand. Den kan slå i spik, den kan dra i skruv och bult och den kan till och med manövrera en hula hoop-ring.

Var och en av robotens två armar och händer kan göra tio grundrörelser, och den som manövrerar roboten känner vad roboten "känner" genom ett komplicerat elektrohydrauliskt system. Dessutom kan "Handyman" utrustas med en tredimensionell televisioninordning som tjänar som ögon.

Som ett bevis på robotens fulländade konstruktion meddelar bolaget att hans "handlag" är så mjukt och exakt att han kan plocka blombladen från en ros utan att skada dem.

Rymdmannen är i dag vad Vilda Västerens revolvergosse var för 30 år sedan. I Tidspegeln botaniserade Folke Isaksson i science fiction-litteraturen. Ray Bradbury fick mer än godkänt för sin senaste rymdbok, "Fahrenheit 451". Ja, Bradbury är huvudet högre än de flesta herrarna i rymdbranschen. Man kan gärna kalla honom en lovande ättling till Jules Verne. Om han är så stor att lyssnarna också måste få hans namn förbundet med Edgar Allan Poe är mera tveksamt.

"De små gröna männen"

I söndags refererades i P2 en USA-författare som i en nyutkommen bok raljerar över de små gröna männen, dvs besättningarna på de flygande tefaten. Förf. anser att tefatsbesättningarna skulle vara så enfalda att de inte kunde inse att vi människor skulle kunna ha byggt upp vår civilisation.

En dylik enfalda kan man väl knappast förutsätta hos varelser, intelligenta nog att bemästra interplanetarisk trafik.

Har nutidsmänniskan över huvud lärt sig något av den tid hon lever i, så är det väl att man aldrig ska säga aldrig. 1800-talets science fiction är en

realitet i dag: ubåtar, TV, radio, flyg. Så sent som omkring 1916 visades en veckotidning hur "framtidens krig" skulle utkämpas: målsökande robotar, som reagerade för ljud-, ljus- och värmestrålning, avfyrades mot fiendliga plan och sprängde dem. Då — 1916 — flinade man åt dessa vildsinta fantasier och kåsörerna fyllde spaltmeter med nojs på teknarnas bekostnad. I dag, 1960, ingår sådana robotar i om i småstaternas standardutrustning.

Bättre tåga

An illustration I found reveals that Handyman works along the Waldo principle - described and named by Robert Heinlein! - replicating the operator's movements.

But robots would first of all come to military use, as a reader's letter in Expressen Dec 22, 1960, reminds us, "Small Green Men":

Last Sunday P2 (=radio channel) referred to a USA author who in a recent book made fun of the small green men, ie the crews of the flying saucers. The author thinks the saucer crews are so stupid they don't realise we humans can build a civilisation. Such stupidity could hardly be possible with beings intelligent enough to master interplanetary traffic. If the man of today has learnt something, it is never say never. The sf of the 1800s is today real: submarines, TV, radio, aircraft. As late as ca 1916 a magazine showed how the "war of the future" would be fought: guided missiles reacting to sound, light and heat, fired on enemy planes to blow them up. These wild fantasies were laughed at then - 1916 - and pundits filled long columns with silliness against the illustrators. Today, 1960, such robots are in the arsenals even for small states.

Science fiction igen

När jag fick syn på artikeln om science-fiction i PRESENS måste jag säga, att det glädde mig att tidningen har ägnat ett så stort utrymme åt denna litterära genre. Men efter att ha läst igenom artikeln kunde jag konstatera att red. s kännedom om SF är ytterst begränsad. Red. påstår bl. a. att den svenska publiken fick sin första kontakt med SF år 1889 i och med översättningen av Lauries roman: DEN STORA MAGNETEN. Detta kan emellertid ifrågasättas. Det utgavs åtskilliga SF-verk tidigare, av vilka många med största säkerhet har översatts till svenska. Redan de gamla grekerna skrev SF. Bland dessa kan nämnas Lukianos från Samosata, som skrev berättelser om resor till solen och månen. Även i Odysseen kan vissa delar betraktas som SF. 1726 utkom en roman som verkligen var SF i allra högsta grad, nämligen GULLIVERS RESOR. Vidare kan jag nämna att vi nordbor har haft en författare som skrev SF. Det är ingen mindre än Ludvig Holberg som skrev en roman om Niels Klims resor i jordens inandömen. Holberg levde som bekant redan på 1700-talet.

Men det som tydligast visade red. s kunskaper om SF var det att han påstod att Robert A. Heinlein har skrivit JAG ROBOT. Så är ingalunda fallet. Författaren till denna utmärkta roman är nämligen professorn i biokemi vid Bostons universitet, Isaac Asimov. Om red. vill läsa något av Heinleins till svenska översatta litterära alster kan han t. ex. läsa: MÄNNEN SOM SÅLDE MÄNEN eller VARNING FÖR OKÄND PLANET, vilka båda är utmärkta SF-böcker.

HANS EKLUND.

Speaking of Heinlein and Waldo and that reviewers could learn more about the sf genre, another reader's letter had a complaint, "Sf again", Svenska Dagbladet, June 10 1960:

When I saw the article about sf in PRESENS I must say I was glad that the magazine spent so much space on this literary genre. But after reading through the article I could note that the editor's knowledge about the genre is very limited. Ed claims that the Swedish audience had its first contact with sf in 1889 with the translation of Laurie's novel The Big Magnet. It can be questioned. Many works of sf was published before, of which many was certainly translated to Swedish. Already the ancient Greeks wrote sf. Among those we can name Lucian of Samosata who wrote tales of trips to the sun and moon. Odysseus may also to some parts be seen as sf. In 1976 came the novel that really to e high degree can be called sf, namely GULLIVER'S TRAVELS. I can further mention that we people of the North had a writer who wrote sf. That is no less than Ludvig Holberg who wrote a novel about Niels Klim's trips in Earth's underground. Holberg lived already in the 1700s as you know. But what most clearly shows the Ed's small knowledge about sf is that he claimed that Robert A Heinlein had written I ROBOT. That is not the case. The author of this excellent book is the professor of biochemistry at Boston University, Isaac Asimov. If Ed wants to read something by Heinlein translated to Swedish he can for instance read: THE MAN WHO SOLD THE MOON or STARMAN JONES, which both are excellent sf books.

The letter is signed Hans Eklund, a known fan at the time. My Fandbook fancylopedia mentions he was as "Lord Orgie" ruler of the "country" Parth in the early 1960's famous Fannish War, published *Fantazine* and also held lectures at sf cons.

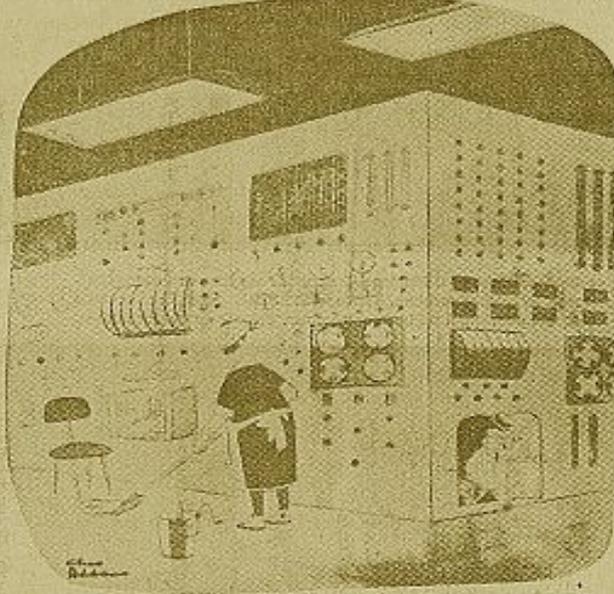
For robots some sort of "Thinking Machines" are needed, as we learn in Dagens Nyheter September 22, 1962, reviewing a new book on computers:

The lively discussion about the government's purchase of computers for the population registry shows how the concept of "computer" /called "data machines" in Swedish at the time/ has entered the public's mind. It's been fast. Just a few years ago we talked about electronic brains. It was rumours about machines could faster and more efficient than the human brain. Sf authors saw the complete robot invasion at the horizon. In a fundamental way, they thought, man had been surpassed by his own creation, the machine. /Carl Erik Frölund's book Data Machines lack such excesses and Bengt Sigurd contributes a chapter on machine translation. ENIAC was first 1944. Computers have been much used for atomic bombs and space tech. Sweden invests a lot but has a deficit of trained people. Programming is a bottle neck./ Computer translation was an idea born 15 years ago by mathematicians and technicians. When linguists entered to solve grammar problems it was clear the grammar machines needed was something else. Rules must be phrased strictly in math. You can say a new sort of linguistics now grows in the shadows of the machines. It is closely related to math logics...an effect of machine translation promises to be just as interesting as practical results. Those are as yet few. Further on wide perspectives open, not only for translation but also for the fundamental problem of letting machines search for info. No wonder they put a lot into the project in both America and Russia. For the moment it seems USSR is in the lead in this race for the "Sputnik of linguistics"...Fröberg notes that the question can't be resolved until it has been defined what it means to "think". That machines in some meaning think is obvious. They can read, remember, be made to learn from mistakes and play a rather decent naughts and crosses. The perhaps biggest difference between man and machine is that our brain has a much bigger capacity than even the biggest computers built this far. Another difference is that machines of course must be programmed by humans. But we are ourselves also in a way "programmed". Our reactions are to a high degree decided by our genetics, a "program" created for the struggle for existence. /Machines can't solve judgement problems, even with help of languages like Algol and Cobol./ The reader won't understand much of the program excerpts in the book except for the flow charts.

TÄNKANDE MASKINER

Om datamaskiner och deras användning inom vetenskap, administration och språköversättning handlar den fjärta volymen i skrifterna Tema, som utges av Biblioteksförbundet i Lund. Boken anmäls här av professor Alvar Ellegård.

Den livliga diskussionen om statens inslag av datamaskiner för folkbokföringens behov är ett tecken så gott som något på hur väl begreppet "datamaskin" arbetats in i allmänhetens medvetande. Det har gått fort. För bara några år sedan började man utänfor fackkrönikorna mest talas om "elektronhjärnor". Det ryktades om maskiner som kunde tänka, snabbare och effektivare än den mänskliga hjärnan. Science fiction-förställda såg den fullkonliga robotrevolutionen vid horisonten. På ett stort, avgörande fält, tankens, hade militärens överflyglats av sin egen skapelse, maskinen.



Teckning av Chas. Addams in The New Yorker.

Någon sådan överdramatisering träffar man inte på i den betydande lilla skriften Datamaskiner (Tema, 14-), där laborator Carl Eric Fröberg vid institutionen för numerisk analys i Lund ger en översikt över datamaskinernas historia, arbetssätt och användningsområden, medan språkforskaren fil. dr Bengt Sigurd bidrar med ett särskilt kapitel om maskinell språköversättning.

Den första elektroniska datamaskinen var den amerikanska ENIAC från 1944, som bl.a. användes för räkningar på atombombprojektet. Fröberg påpekar att kretslagen knappast, och rymdstationerna inte alla, skulle ha kunnat förverkligas utan datamaskinernas hjälp. Rymdtekniken kräver både mycket omfattande och mycket snabba räkneoperationer.

I dag investeras bara i Sverige småmiljonbelopp i datamaskiner. Att det inte är ännu mer beror på att bristen på utbildad folk inte räcker till tekniker, utan administratörer och organisatörer, som måste lära sig att formulera sina problem på sådant sätt att maskinerna kan angripa dem. Detta är en springande punkt. Den som använder maskinen måste förstå dess arbetssätt. Vi skall inte lära våra programmerare fysik, vi skall göra våra fysiker till programmerare, säger Fröberg. Detta gäller i än högre grad för de kommersiella och administrativa användarna, ty de har i betydligt mindre grad än ingenjörerna lärt sig behöriga det språk som är datamaskinernas, nämligen det logikmatematiska. Här har vi en trög fläck. När det kommer gästa med Fröberg när han säger att elektronisk databehandling här

vara ett självklart ämne vid handelshögskolorna.

Svårigheten att formulera problemen så att maskinen kan behandla dem har också språkvetarna fått känna på. Språköversättning med datamaskin är en led som köptes för ungefär femton år sedan — av matematiker och tekniker. När sedan lingvister trädde till för att lösa de grammatiska problemen stod det snart klart att den grammatik som maskinerna behövde var något helt nytt. Reglerna måste formuleras med matematisk stringens. Man kan rent av säga att en ny sorts språkvetenskap nu håller på att växa fram i maskinernas skugga. Den har nära anknytning till matematisk logik. Den kommer inte att ersätta den traditionella språkvetenskapen, som ju nyter sig till pedagogiken, estetiken och sociologin. Men den kommer säkert att verka befruktande i teoretiskt avseende.

Denna följdverkan av arbetet med maskinöversättning lovar faktiskt att bli väl så intressant som de praktiska resultaten. Dessa är än så länge tämligen magra. Men på längre sikt öppnas vida perspektiv, inte bara för språköversättning, utan också för det mer fundamentala problemet: maskinell sändning av information. Det är därför inte att undra på att det satsas hårt på de här projekten, både i Amerika och i Ryssland. För närvarande tycks det vara Sovjet som leder i denna kapplopp om "lingvistikens sputnik", som Sigurds uttryck lyder.

"Tänkande maskiner!" heter ett av de sista kapitlen i boken. Fröberg påpekar att frågan inte kan avgöras förrän man definierat "tänka". Att maskinerna i vissa mening tänker är ju klart. De kan läsa, de kan minnas, de kan få ut lära av sina misstag, och de kan spela "ett ganska njutbart luffarschack". Karaktär, den största skillnaden mellan människan och maskinen är att vår hjärna har en mycket större kapacitet än till och med de största av de hittills byggda datamaskinerna. En annan skillnad är förstås att maskinerna måste programmeras av människor. Men också vi själva är ju på sätt och vis "programmerade": våra reaktioner bestäms i hög grad av våra genetiska anlag, vilkas "program" kan sägas ha pressats fram i kampen för tillvaron.

Datamaskinerna kan bara lösa välfdefinierade problem — de kan inte göra allmänna rimlighetsöverväganden som människohjärnan. Konsten att definiera problem är därför den stora svårigheten för den som vill utnyttja maskinen. Svårigheterna mildras inte märkbart när man nu börjar få hjälpspråket algol och cobol som mellanled vid programmeringen. Den grundläggande kunskapen om maskinens sätt att arbeta kan maskinanvändaren inte undvara.

Fröbergs och Sigurds bok är inte någon lärobok. Av programutrustningarna som boken innehåller fårståt nog den övriga läsaren inte mycket utöver flödesdiagrammen. Men han får åtminstone en någorlunda klar uppfattning om

Well, getting computers to translate natural language is still a problem, 60 years later... Early computer reports tended to be a bit exaggerated. Computers in those days could crunch less numbers than your wristwatch. Governments want computers to register (and thus control) people, as you saw. Sf authors have often warned against the electronic surveillance state, so it's no wonder some wanted to rename sf as "PF" (Political Fiction), as we learn in Aftonbladet 7 July, 1962:

It's usually a joy to read Libertas. /A magazine/ But the substitute intelligentsia... on the left have assembled a crowd of intelligence and pens. That #3 of Libertas, now out, has political opinions that both clashes with SvD's reactionary head but also deviates from official Social Democrat course, is nothing to linger on here. To be inoffensive is our program and honour. But we can go past Jacob Palme's article on sf and society. A naive love for sf can stay also in an older heart. So it is worth noting that Palme finds good reasons to rename sf to pf, political fiction. Social sciences is more important for sf than natural sciences.

Speaking about computers, Jacob Palme who was a very active fan in the 1960s, later became professor of computer science and rather important in these circles, eg setting up the KOM messaging system in the 1970s, a precursor to

P F
 ● DET ÄR I REGEL ett nöje att läsa "Libertas". Man får ett intryck av att den radikala begävningsreserven gott och väl räcker till och att vår egen, smått mossbelupna generation inte behöver hålla ut mer än ett knappt decennium till för att tidningarna på vänsterkanten ska få tillgång till ett vimmel av intelligenser och pennor.
 Att nr 3 av "Libertas", som är aktuellt för dagen, rymmer politiska meningar som inte bara stöter S-D för dess reaktionära huvud utan också avviker från officiell socialdemokratisk kurs, ska vi inte närmare uppehålla oss vid på denna plats. Oförargligheten är vårt program och vår heder. Men vi går inte gärna förbi Jacob Palmes artikel om science fiction och samhället. En klockarkälek till science fiction kan dröja kvar också i ett åldrat hjärta. Och då är det för det första att notera, att Palme finner goda skäl att döpa om sf till pf, science fiction till political fiction. Samhällsvetenskaperna betyder mer för sf än naturvetenskaperna.

Internet. (He was BTW a distant relative to Olof Palme, the Social Democrat Prime Minister who was murdered in 1986. Resulting in a very long investigation and recently landing on that one Stig Engström - already deceased - was the killer, an odd man, loosely right wing activist and employee of a firm near the murder scene.)

Author, critic etc Sven Christer Swahn (1933-2006) was very important for Swedish sf. He sometimes came to our cons, was semi-active in fandom - wrote in sf, I sometimes had LoCs from him - wrote sf and on sf. And he was interested in our stuff from early on, https://sf-encyclopedia.com/entry/swahn_sven_christer, here reviewing Kingsley Amis, "In the Hell of SF Authors", Expressen (biggest daily at the time) May 18 1960:

New Maps of Hell, that's what the new book by Kingsley Amis is about. But it is a non-theological hell: it deals with the mapping of the future by sf literature /books with spaceship covers now becoming popular, and we meet a new Amis/ with dayjob as university teacher and now when dealing with sf literature hesitates between its two roles: the author himself coined the book title...the teacher continued with "A Survey of SF"...Every second sentence begins so pompous that you hear the Adam's apple pound against the evening dress of science - and then suddenly a few lines of jargon, attempts to soften the language in a fiction way. Kingsley Amis describes himself as an avid sf reader and values everything belonging to the genre, but notes it must be well-written. / Amis skips the list of all sf through history from the Bible to Shakespeare/ Isn't there in "A Midsummer Tempest" two persons who are classic in all sf stories, the excentric scientist and his beautiful daughter? When he comes to the real pioneers, Verne and Wells, he goes more into detail. His harsh criticism of Verne shows deficiencies in his equipment, but you are apt to agree with his final words on Wells: "It is very probable that Wells soon will have a well-deserved full recognition, not somewhat half, as the pioneer." You also appreciate that Amis mentions a thing like Wells' "A Story of the Days to Come": it's usually overlooked, despite having much modern sf contents. The Swedes, Amis says, are the people in Europe that best understand real jazz (except for England), and that is probably a reason they have such a stated interest in sf. Jazz and sf belongs together. Well if it is the case that Swedes are so into reading sf - they will also find a lot of gaps in Kingsley Amis' book. You agree with Kingsley Amis about the social scourging sf author Pohl's importance, but won't be sure that his co-worker Kornbluth needs to stand in a corner in shame - you agree with that the ex-wonder kid Sheckley has an abundance of talent, but are not totally convinced about eg Golding (this may stand for me only). The most baffling blunder is not mentioning Brian Aldiss, though he is an Englishman who has been active a number of years and a quite convincing talent. For a time I played around with the thought that Kingsley Amis and Aldiss were one and the same, but it's impossible: Brian Aldiss writes to well. An author lately getting a lot of space on Swedish culture pages is Bradbury. Kingsley Amis has here an odd attitude. He says he will only judge authors from their efforts in the sf genre, ie keeping to the topic, but when he comes with the today so common bashing of Bradbury he bases it on an excerpt from one of his ghost stories. His reaction indicates his simplemindedness as reader - you can compare with his distaste for Verne. Of course, Kingsley Amis is correct in that Bradbury (especially in Fahrenheit 451) has sunken low in stylistics, but it seems unfair to not want to see his greatness as a prose artist in other circumstances.

It's true that the Swedes liked jazz. Louis Armstrong toured here already in the 1930s (to the horror of some columnist who talked about his music as "primitive roars from the darkest jungles") and jazz clubs like Nalen were very important in the 1940/50s, but unfortunately this didn't translate totally into a love for scientificfiction. The 1950's positive curiosity about sf seemed to die off in the 1960s.

Lets finish with Swahn again, "Lost in Hyperspace", in Expressen shortly later, July 17, 1960:

I SF-FÖRFATTARNAS HELVETEN

Nya helveteskartor — det är vad Kingsley Amis nya bok ska handla om. Helvetet är emellertid oteologiskt: det är sciencefiction-litteraturens kartläggning av framtiden boken berör. De helveten som beskrivs har läsarna redan mött i de små lätthanterliga böckerna som just sprids över världen — böcker med ryndskepp på omslaget.

Man möter också en ny sida av Kingsley Amis (den har förstas skymsat förut i hans artiklar och debattinlägg) — möter en författare som till vardags är universitetslärare och nu när det gäller att bema upp sf-litteraturen tvekat lite mellan sina

två roller; författaröget myntade bokens titel, om de nya helveteskartorna, läraren fortsatte med "A Survey of Science Fiction". Samma tveksamhet röjs i hela boken. Var och varannan mening börjar så pompöst att man hör ett adamsäpple bulta mot vetenskaplig frackkrage — så helt plöteligt några rader jargong, försök till skönlitterär uppluekring av språket.

Kingsley Amis beskriver sig själv som inbiten sf-läsare och sätter stort värde på allt som hör till genren, nota bene om det är välskrivet. Man slipper den invanda uppräknningen av sf-litteraturen genom tiderna, de där listorna som brukar börja med Bibeln och via Lucianos tappert fortsätta genom seklerna. Ganska roande visar han att man i så fall mycket väl kunde räkna Shakespeare till

sf-klassikerna; finns inte i "Stormen" två personer som blivit klassiska i all sf-novellistik, den excentriska vetenskapsmannen och hans sköna dotter? När han närmar sig de verkliga föregångsmännen, Verne och Wells, blir han med all rätt utfärligare. Hans kärva kritik av Verne visar väl på vissa brister i hans egen utrustning; men man instämmer gärna i hans slutord om Wells "Det är mycket troligt att Wells snart får ett helt, inte halvt om halvt, väl-förtjänt erkännande som pionjär. Man uppskattar också att Amis tar upp en sådan sak av Wells som "A Story of the Days to Come"; den brukar alldeles komma bort, fast den rymmer mycket av modernt sf-stoff.

Svenskarna, säger Amis, är det folk som bäst förstår sig på ordentlig jazz i Europa (med undantag för England) och därmed hör säkert samman, tror han, att de har ett så markant intresse för science fiction. Jazz och sf hör ihop. Ja, om det är

Av

SVEN CH. SWAHN

riktigt att svenskarna är inställda på sf-läsning — då är de också ett folk som kommer att hitta gott om blottor i Kingsley Amis bok.

Man är ense med Kingsley Amis om den samhällsgisslande sf-författaren Pohl's betydelse men inte helt säker på att hans medarbetare Kornbluth behöver stå i ett hörn och skämmas — man är ense om att före detta underbarnet Sheckley har förlangit övermått, men inte helt övertygad av tex Golding (det sista kanske får stå för min egen riktning). Det mest förbluffande uttalandet i boken är att Brian Aldiss inte nämns, som ändå är engelsman, som har varit verksam några år redan och som är en mycket övertygad begåvning. Jag lekte ett ögonblick med tanken att Kingsley Amis och Aldiss vore en och samma person, men det håller inte: Brian Aldiss skriver för bra.

En författare som fått gott om utrymme på svenska kultursidor sista åren är Bradbury. Kingsley Amis inställning är här lite underlig. Han föklarar att han uteslutande vill bedöma författarna efter deras insatser i sf-genren, han vill hålla sig till ämnet kort sagt, men när han riktar ett av de numera så vanliga huggen åt Ray Bradbury utgår han just från ett stillprovt hämtat ur en av dennes spökhistorier; hans reaktion visar f.ö. på hans ensidighet som läsare — man kan jämföra med ogillandet av Verne. Naturligtvis har Kingsley Amis rätt i att Bradbury (framför allt i "Fahrenheit 451") sjunkit lågt som stilist; men det förefaller orättvist att inte vilja se hans storhet som prosakonstnär i andra sammanhang.



Old cartoon on the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact... Putin would fit well in this company!

Sven Christer Swahn
vid en galaktisk bår

SF vilse i hyperrymden?

I dagarna har en påkostad och ambitiös svensk SF-tidning kommit med sitt sista nummer.

Galaxy heter tidningen, eller heter, och nu har alltså ett överväldigt antal fjälliga venusianer och svagt lysande antropoider från Alpha Centauri lagts i en alltför tidig grav. Galaxy ägnade sig helhjärtat åt oändligheten, både tidens och rummets, och när perspektiven växer krymper stundom läsekretsen. Här några tankar vid gravstenen av en som inte tillhör

de allra närmast sörjande men ändå färdiga.

Snart, i dessa samma dagar, samlas det en astronautisk kongress i Stockholm, och ett försvarligt antal herrar skall då utan att stamma och snegla förläget mot planeterna yttra sig positivt om hur man inom rimlig tid ska förfara med dem — med Mars och Venus och de andra. Atminstone inbillar jag mig att en god astronautiker inte är nöjd med att bara kalkylera om de mindre ljus som sänts att lysa på himlen. Och är det kanske möjligen så att

ju fler astronautiker som samlas, med gedigna blåkopior i portföljerna, desto färre blir de människor som samlas kring klockerna för att köpa science fiction-magasin? Så att alltså människor som läst SF-böcker och SF-tidningar hela sitt liv plögligt börjar skämmas för sin lektyr när raketterna perforerar en verklig rymd på väg mot en påtaglig lösa? Det är ju det första man kommer att tänka på när det gäller tidningsöden i SF-genren.

Skamsenhet i USA?

För Amerikas del kan man tänka sig att en viss skamsenhet spelar med — också där är det många SF-magasin som läggs ner. Det är kanske inte så stimulerande att läsa om unga amerikaners pionjärdåd på månen, när andra varit framme där. Jag tror man förs betona hur självklart den livaktiga amerikanska SF-litteraturen gjort det för många därborta att rymden redan praktiskt taget erövrats och att ett engelsktalande universum — med omiskänslig amerikansk brytning — redan öppnats för alla goda amerikanska medborgares tjusta blickar. Sedan är det en annan sak att SF-författarna ofta varit mycket angelägna om att skicka upp rymdskeppsbesättningar med blandat rasinnehåll: en präktig skandinav brukar vara med, och en schackspelare ryss brukar sitta och säga kloka saker i en vrå, och en gånglig fullblodsindian går omkring med kaptenmössa och har glömt allt om reservat och hat. De har ändå talat amerikanska hela buntan.

Men Henrik Rabe, redaktör för Galaxy, tror i sina avskedsord till läsekretsen inte att det behövs några "subtila hänvisningar till världshändelserna" för att förklara att hans tidning inte orkar längre. Han hän-

Och härtill kommer att det inte känns riktigt naturligt med helvensiskt science fiction för de svenska författare som ägnat sig åt genren. Ibland görs tappria försök att låta Lund eller Sundsvall bli språngbrädan ut i rymden, men också i sådana fall har den gamla amerikanska mallen oftast lyst igenom: man känner igen greppet om ämnet, sätier att utveckla tankeförflykten, sätier att tvinga fram den oödmätade poängen. Sjämlorna är många, men poängerna få, kan SF-läsaren tycka ibland, i stunder av övermättnad.

Förvuxen genre

Man kanske inte bara behöver hänvisa till detta med den begränsade publiken eller delta att verkligheten — astronautiska kongresser och annat — gjort fiktionen överflödigt, här som i andra fall gäller väl också att en smula förvuxen, eller i varje fall uttämmt de närmast till hands liggande möjligheterna. Då måste det komma en paus, en andhäntning, och sen får man se om det kommer nytt vin i de gamla läglarna.

Det är ofrånkomligt att det inte finns mycket mer att göra åt vissa standardsituationer i världsrymden längre. En novellsamling med SF-stoff kan likna en bok med schackpartier. En traditionsrik öppning — övergång till en annan variant, nästan lika valkänd — försök till fria fantasier i mittspelet och slutligen uppgivet från författarens eller läsarens sida. Trasan vrids tills den blir torr.

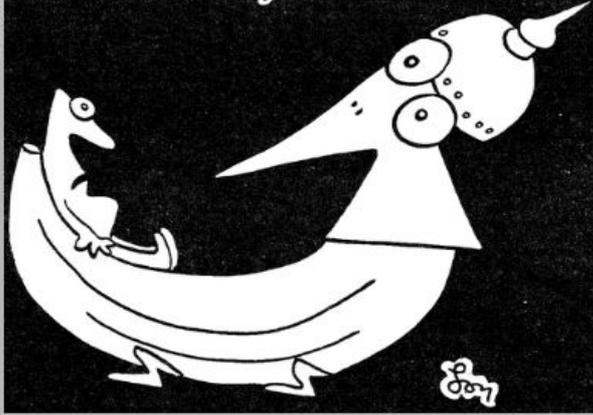
Integenting är vanligare än omedvetna plagiat inom SF-litteraturen, och de är nästan mer nerstående än de klumpiga och fullt medvetna. Redan H G Wells ställde nästan alla de fortfarande aktuella frågorna och hann med en förbluffande mängd av

författare: det måste vara ytterligt svårt att verkligen fånga läsaren med en novell på det uppslaget. I en lika lång novell får man beivtra, än en gång, mutanters främgångsrika kamp mot vanliga människor. Författaren, här man känsla av, måste ha fått en hemsk vision av en redan från första stund gäspande läsekrets var gång han lyfte huvudet över tangentbrädan.

Vilse i hyperrymden är Fredrik Pohl i en annan novell (inte alldeles färsk, för övrigt). Han är aldrig tråkig, men läsaren har svårt att tänka på det skri av förtjusning alla SF-författare utgöva när en i deras krets hittade på "hyperrymden" som gjorde det möjligt att låta besättningsmännen flyga hur långt som helst i rymden utan att frysa ner dem i tråkiga isblock etc.

I Sheekleynovellen (det är inga dåliga namn man fått ihop till avskedsnummer) kan inte den eleganta rymdvaresepsykologin undanskymmas det allmogliga i mötet mellan människan och främlingen fjärran ifrån. Det är kanske just i detta den stora risken ligger: det sällsammaste av allt, mötet med en annan existensform, blir i SF-litteraturen till slut det banalaste tänkbara, och det måste extra kryddor till, och nya variationer: det brukar vara ett säkert tecken på trötthetskänslor hos författare och läsare.

Lars LON Olsson goes bananas...



Recently a lavish and ambitious Swedish sf magazine came with its last issue. The name is Galaxy, or was, so now an incalculable number of scaly Venusians and slightly following anthropoids from Alpha Centauri are been laid down in a much too early grave. Galaxy was full-heartedly into the eternity, of both time and space, and when the perspectives grow the readership sometimes shrinks. Here some thoughts by the grave by someone who isn't among the closest relatives but still has shed some tears. Soon, these days, an astronautic convention will convene in Stockholm, and a sizeable number of gentlemen will then without stuttering and shy looks at the planets talk positively about how to deal with them within reasonable time - with Mars and Venus and the others. I at least imagine that a decent astronautician isn't satisfied with calculating only about the smaller lights that has been put there to light up the sky. And perhaps it is so that the if more astronauticians gather with proper blueprints in their briefcases, fewer gather at the newsstands to buy sf magazines! As if people who have read sf books and magazines all their life suddenly becomes ashamed about their reading when rockets blast through real space on their way to tangible danger. This is what you ponder around the death of magazines in the sf genre. /At one point there were perhaps 30-40 US sf mags published at the same time. This then dropped sharply.../ In the case of America you can imagine that a certain amount of shame plays a role - many sf magazines fold also over there. It may not be stimulating to read about young Americans pioneering deeds on the Moon, when others have been there. I think we dare to stress how self-evident the American sf literature has been for many over there, that space had already been conquered and that an English speaking universe - with notable American accent - has already opened for all good American citizens' lusty eyes. But it's another thing that sf authors often have been eager to send off space crews with a mixed race content: a decent Scandinavian is usually present and a Russian playing chess and saying wise words there in a corner, and a tall full-blood indian walks around with the captain's hat and has forgotten everything about reservations and hatred. But Henrik Rabe, editor of Galaxy, doesn't in his farewell words believe that the readership needs any "subtle references to world events" to explain that his magazine can't hold out longer...To this is added that it hasn't felt natural with Swedish sf for the Swedish authors who have dealt with the genre. There are sometime brave attempts to let Lund or Sundsvall become starting point for the jump into space, but even in those cases the American mould have often shone through: you recognise the handling of the subject, the way to develop thoughts, the way to force through the fatal point. The stars are many but the points are few, the sf reader may sometimes think in times of saturation. Perhaps you only need to refer to the limited audience or that this with reality - astronomical conventions and other things - making fiction redundant, here as in other cases it's probable that a genre grows until it's a bit overgrown or at least picked the lowest hanging fruits. Then there must be a pause, to catch breath, and then you'll have to see if new fruit will grow... It's inevitable that you can't do much more about some standard situations in space. A short story collection with sf stuff can be seen as a book with chess openings. A traditional opening - transfer to another variant, almost as well-known - attempts at free fantasies in the mid game and finally resignation from the author or the reader. The cloth is twisted until it is dry. Nothing is more common than unintentional

plagiarism in sf literature, and they are almost more pathetic as those who are clumsy and fully intentional. Already HG Wells asked about almost all of the still living topics...it must be extremely hard to catch the reader with a story based on that. In another short story you can witness, once more, the successful struggle of mutants against ordinary people. The author must have, you get a feeling of, a nasty vision of a readership that is yawning already from the start everytime he lifted his head above the keyboard. Fredrik Pohl is lost in hyperspace in another story (not all that recent, BTW). He is never boring, but the reader find it hard to think of the outcry of happiness that came from all sf authors when one in their rank invented "hyperspace" which made it possible for crews to fly any distance in space without being frozen into boring blocks of ice. In the Sheckley story (there aren't any bad names they put together in the farewell issue) the elegant alien psychology hide the commonplace in the meeting between man and the alien from far off. It's perhaps here the risk lies: the strangest of all, meeting another existence, in sf literature finally becomes the most banal, and you must put extra spices into it and new variations: it's usually a sure sign of tired authors and readers.

Mailing Comments

Comments to APAs this zine litters... But join the fun and help fanzines reenter fandom's main stage! Silly computer animations, textiles, toys etc isn't fandom. Do a zine, be an apaman, crank a virtual mimeo!

Henry Grynsten: Thanks for the review of my book! □ □ □ doubt Creole could evolve from scratch in 50 years (a generation is ca 25 years) but I agree that humans have pre-existing mental structures for language (and conscioussness is important). Development of tools has been incremental AFAIK. First archeologists found a smashed rock with a vague edge, then a rock with a better cutting edge, and then a quite elaborated hand axe, and then some who put a shaft on the hand axe - through 100 000's of years of course. The hand axe *did* evolve. There were eg different types, from less to more advanced. It was just that its evolution was slow (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hand_axe) very slow. Your "field of dots" illustrates that changes in primitive things take a long time, due to difficulties to pass info over time. □ □ □ agree with most what you write about fake news, news "slanted in an undesirable way". Of course I don't believe everything in the papers (or other traditional media) is impartial and true. Staff of our semi-governmental TV/radio company is 82% supporters of the red-green parties (says Gothenburg Univ) and similar bias is widespread. I don't believe people in general - at least the vast majority - are stupid and gullible so they don't need "protection". The Nazis in the 1930's were helped by a "mental climate" that was extremely favourable for them. The Versailles treaty was seen many Germans as humiliating. The depresstion and hyper-inflation of 1923 (returning in 1929) shocked people. Hitler had a field day with humiliation and economic disasters. I've read about the communist Norrland miners who went to the USSR...they were in for a slight disappointment. □ □ □ think that properties of old USSR lingers in today's Putin-Russia. In fact, much of the old Czar-Russia was inherited by the communists and even that has been transferred to today's Russia. Czar=Stalin=Putin! Serfs were just changed to forced collective farmer. The nobility of the Czardom was exchanged to the communist party elite and today the elite are the oligarchs. Corruption has been rampant in Russia through history, from Czar to Putin, and so has war (WWI, civil war, WWII, Afghanistan, now Ukraine). The labels of Russian things have changed, that's all. I read about HG Wells meeting Stalin. HG was like a naive schoolboy, almost as dumb and blind as Jan Myrdal was on Cambodia (but Myrdal's *Jules Verne Magasinet* anthology was good!). A couple of Swedes going to Stalin's Russia in the 1930s (in culture/trade trips) were artist Karl Gerhard, afterwards writing the satirical "Hooray, it's fun in Moscow!" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aUQD9JW7NDA>, and Nobelist Harry Martinson who also saw through the cracks. He has written about it, and a concrete reply from him was to sign up in the Winter War for Finland against the Soviets. He was a messenger with the Swedish volunteer corps. □ □ □ see the George Floyd demos and the Capitol attack - serious and from opposite political sides - as examples of polarisation, emanating from the left side getting more fanatic. We have postmodernism etc in universities, evolving from the 1970s, environmentalism demanding command economy, identity politics praising collectivism, etc. This activity push some to the "right" and activates them, as we see with eg as the growth of the Sweden Democrats. (I'm not sure they should be called right wing - I call them neo-nationalists.) There's a huge danger in companies (Facebook, Twitter etc) inventing their own restrictive laws for speech! Message services must be seen as the post office! If it is legal to do and say and send via a letter, it must be allowed on Internet. To lie is actually legal (in most cases) but no problem as long as we with free speech can correct it. Falsehood and 'net propaganda isn't the problem. The problem is people themselves, being susceptible to mob psychology when being in groups. Fake news can always and should be countered by true news and counter arguments. ElonMusk taking over Twitter is a promising thing.

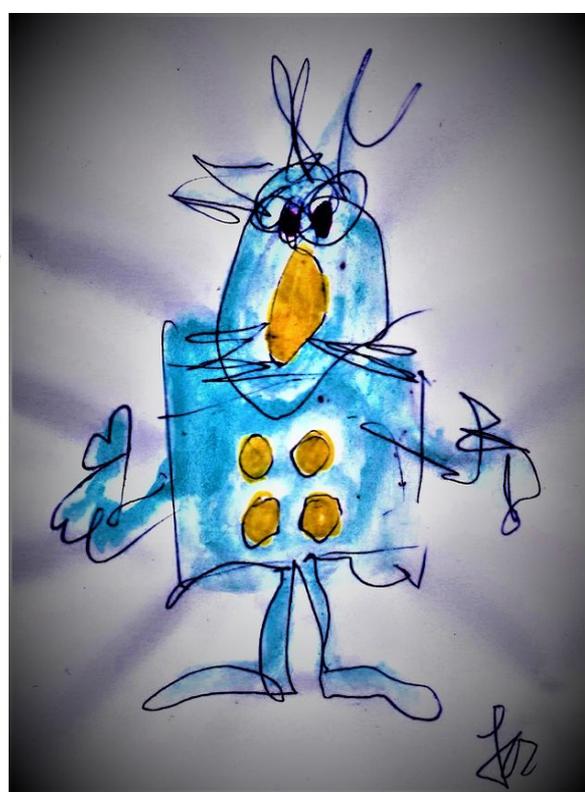
Garth Spencer: Trudeau would have gotten *plenty* from meeting with the truckers. With personal meetings you a) get direct response, b) may interpret subtle signals (body language, tone of voice etc) better and c) you have more time. Meeting them he'd experience they were people from all walks of life and couldn't possibly be "a fringe minority". Meeting in person means allocating more time - unlike short soundbytes on TV, which is all we get without real meetings - which makes it possible to explain your position in more detail. But I suspect Trudeau wouldn't go because he feared his position would then *weaken*. The case for treating the virus the hard way was weakening, due to a) that Omicron had proven to be very mild, and b) statistics showed that a "hard line" was inefficient, and could even make things worse. A softer approach - like in Sweden - had proved sufficient or even *better*. But if you invested so much rhetoric in a hard line you don't want your faults exposed! You must defend forced vaccinations and health passports (that civil & human rights organisations say are

dangerous for personal integrity). In other words, he fled, cowardly fearing he'd lose the debate.

William McCabe: How to define science fiction is an interesting question. In high school you had to do a "special assignment". Mine was a long essay (30+ pages) on sf, in which I listed a number of possible sf definitions and discussed the matter. In the maths class we had been going into set theory, ie how groups (sets) and sub-groups are related to each other. My conclusion is that mainstream literature ("non-sf") is a subset of science fiction, since it's just like sf - only missing a part, the "fantastic" element. All mainstream can be defined as being in the sf set (group), but all sf can't be defined as being in the mainstream set. Another way to phrase it is that an sf story can describe and contain everything a mainstream story can, but a mainstream story can't contain and describe everything an sf story can. (Reasoning in a similar manner, fantasy is also a subset of sf. If you take eg Tolkien. Elves, orcs and other strange beings can be described in an sf setting as being just mutants or aliens with special powers. Magic can be explained as just being telekinesis, effects of quantum uncertainty, or whatever.) In practice, you of course want to separate sf from mainstream - to get what you want to read in the bookstore or library - so my practical definition is something like:

*Science fiction is a story that can take place anywhere, at any time, contain anything, but we only call it sf if it has at least one *fundamental* difference from the world we know.* The difference is the fantastic element. Exact meaning of "fundamental" can of course be discussed. Sherlock Holmes isn't sf, because having a private detective isn't a fundamental difference even if he is super smart (there are detectives in our world, there are some who are super smart!). But Conan Doyle's *The Lost World* is sf, because we know there are no secret spots where dinosaurs have survived.

Samuel Lubell: Look, flu comes from a corona virus. Covid comes from a corona virus. They are in the same virus family: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coronavirus> Earlier variants of the pandemic virus were more serious. Estimates vary, maybe X2-4 more lethal than seasonal flu. Now as the omicron has come and taken over and showed to be much milder, it becomes very close to the ordinary seasonal corona flu! So it's reasonable to compare it with...a flu. You say "many" get so called long covid. From what I can read in the statistics here https://covid19dataportal.se/dashboards/post_covid/ the ratio seems to be 2.5-5%. If that is "many" can be discussed, but I'm sure other flus have similar longer time effects (which in most cases still subsides after a while). Medical people "who truly want people to be safe" may have additional motivations, like feeling gratification and importance when finally getting noticed. Don't underestimate the strife for egoboo! And remember how merry mathematicians waved and helloed about their "virus models" – *which were almost always wrong!* To this come politicians who want to appear resourceful and responsible and like to push people around. (Politicians always want to "reform" others.) You get a dubious combination that leads to overreactions. You may disagree about virus stats being exaggerated as much as you want, but analysis of the reliable excess deaths figures say they are. I looked into official gov data for Sweden 2020 and 2021. I'm sorry this is in Swedish, but try Google Translate: <https://www.freelists.org/post/skriva/Stor-verrappartering-av-virusavlidna> Claimed virus deaths for the two pandemic years were 9500+5170=14670. Combined excess deaths were...2559! For instance, 2021 had a death deficit, which means that 2020 "borrowed" some deaths from 2021. Stats were exaggerated for sure - here with the factor 6 - and tough measures against the virus have played a limited role. There's even a tendency that lockdowns, mask, closing schools and businesses have *increased* virus effects! (Locked in families easily infect each other. People tired of restrictions break rules.) Some articles worth reading: <https://washingtonmonthly.com/2022/04/19/what-sweden-got-right-about-covid/> <https://www.theweek.co.uk/news/science-health/956673/did-sweden-covid-experiment-pay-off> <https://nypost.com/2022/05/06/sweden-saw-fewer-covid-19-deaths-than-majority-of-europe/> □ □ □ Books don't get better with using too many words! A machine doesn't get better with more parts. It should use the parts it needs, but not more. More parts just means more than may break. Less is more - more is less! The role of characterisation is in my opinion exaggerated, because: 1. We are not telepathic, so we can't get into the mind of others. 2. We therefore only have our own minds to draw from. 3. So characterisation will all will be different aspects of the writer *him/herself* - what we get is *characterisation of just one person*, albeit from different angles. 4. And getting a ton of details stemming from just *one* person really should carry that much weight... Take eg Heinlein! Aren't Heinlein characters more or less Heinlein himself! PK Dick, most characters are outsiders, doubting reality, bouncing around like in a pinball game —like what Dick was (I think). My view of modern mainstream (non-sf) is how one-sided many characterisations are, tending to bend to popular ideologies and mindsets. We shall have characterisation in fiction, of course, but don't put it on a pedestal! Plot and ideas are more important. □ □ □ The 2010 Hugos probably went to some of the best writers! Unlike now.



Is this Robot 57? Ask artist Lars LON Olsson!

Слава Україні! (=Glory to Ukraine!)