

SUPPORT THE BLUE & YELLOW! **INTERMISSION #117**

E-zine by Ahrvid Engholm, ahrvid@hotmail.com, for EAPA, N'APA and refugees from reality. Follow @SFJournalen's sf/f/h&fandom newstweets. Röckets änd bömbss!! TYPOS INVADE this independent zine! Your editor is hereby puttin' Putin under fanzine blockade! Early March '22

Editorially: A Skiffy World Among Dictators and Lorries¹

Science fiction. Those are the words that come to my mind as a nuclear weapons armed dictatorship attacks a neighbouring European nation of 44 million. It's like the one of those alternate history novels by Tom Clancy, or the trained monkeys Clancy kept around for writing them. One gets vibes of Hitler, Anschluss, Sudetenland, and finally the Nazi assault on Poland in 1939. This dickhead Vladimir P acts like the Nazis, while claiming he'll "denazify" Ukraine, and unleashes the most serious war in Europe in 77 years. Like the Austrian corporal in the 1930s he begins with infiltrating neighbours, then chews off parts of their territory and backs it with a stream of propaganda lies. And then full-scale invasion.

We have all had enough of scientifictionish stupidity and agony from two years of the moronic corona. How did Mr Putin-on-the-Blitz know that a great new war - with thousands of victims, millions of refugees and unimaginable destruction - was *exactly* what we needed? And as icing on the cake, he now happily threatens the world with Pu239tin firecrackers!

There's no point repeating war news and furious condemnations by virtually all world leaders. Things happen fast and you can follow it. But just one little thing: the last time Sweden sent weapons and war material to a country at war was in 1939, during the Winter War in Finland (sent ammunition, anti-tank guns and 85 000 mausers, also money and volunteers). For 83 years since we'd held to the principle: to get our weapons you should have absolutely no need for them. Peace, Brother! But now the government decided to send Ukraine half a billion crowns,



thousands of helmets, body armour, field rations - and 5000 anti-tank launchers! It'll be of the popular AT4

type, a lightweight one-man tube to take out armoured personnel carriers. US Marines and others have them already. For tanks, Britain has earlier supplied the Ukrainian army with the heavier NLAW launcher, a UK-Sweden co-developed device. I hear that Canada will supply the Ukrainians with the Carl Gustaf grenade launcher, also a Swedish design. The US has tossed Javelins to Ukraine already. The Swedes have now even brought up the *very Heavy Artillery*: Greta Thunberg has been spotted protesting outside the Russian Embassy in Stockholm! Putin is doomed...

But seriously. I can see how this clown, riding half-naked on horseback waving a big blunderbuss in the Siberian sunset, can hold out. He's stark raving mad. Unfortunately he has a big button on his desk to press and fire off (I checked the figure) 6400 nuclear warheads. Be afraid. Be very afraid!

The least we in the rest of the world can do is to sanction Russia back to if not the stone age, at least medieval times - a world Mr Putin mentally lives in already. A couple of days before his attack he held a long rambling speech that analysts describe as the most confusing and crazy they've heard from a major politician. Ukraina was really "founded by Russia", Ukrainians carry out "genocide on



While usually not agreeing with Greta, I here say: Go girl!

¹ What they across the Pond call trucks.

Russians", they "plan to build nuclear weapons", Ukrainians are "neonazis" and their leaders "drug addicts". Putin lives in a parallel universe. He has himself created the conflict with Ukraine. Ukrainians have historically got along well with Russians. Then Putin grabbed Crimea, he attacked in Donbas, unleashed a hailstorm of lies and propaganda. What is there to gain from trying to revive something resembling CCCP, a historic failure, aberration and geopolitical disaster? The modern world isn't a zero-sum game of confrontation. The modern paradigm is globalisation. Borders are lowered, trade and travel and cooperation increase, with cultural exchange, economic integration, super-fast communications, as nations become less important but the individual is empowered through education, growth, Internet, trade, cell phones, new medicines.

At this very moment the world is becoming more united, unfortunately for Putin *united against him*. It's truly sad for the ordinary Russian, but their country is being cut off from trade, travel, culture, sports, the value of their markets and money dive, bank cards and electronic services freeze, as TV puked up Putin's propaganda lies. If you dare to protest police thugs will get you. (Russian police is BTW called "militia".) Air space everywhere closes for Russian planes. Accounts and assets of oligarchs are being seized abroad. It's believed it's with them Putin has stowed away the wealth he has stolen. That Russian banks are denied using the international SWIFT system, will be swiftly felt. Petrol price, electricity, etc go up for us, but it's still the *right thing to do*. *Support the blue and yellow!*

All the above was written after February 24, a date that will live in idiocy. I originally intended to focus this editorial a little on a well-known virus as well as two other dictatorships, one relating to lorries, another to youngsters racing on snow and ice. Most of the issue was already drafted and written before February 24th and I won't throw it away. I'll break out the Olympics comments and now cross the ocean to the home of monsieur Trudeau, who can't stand truck drivers demanding freedom.



Blackface JT grabs power but also grabs...

This Prime Minstrel - pun intended - of Canada has mishandled the virus and legitimate popular protests in an unbelievable way. Justin Trudeau seems to have been choking on some Russian borscht, with dictatorial methods near their league. This poor man's Putin lies through his teeth when he claims to "follow the science". The truckers have been in their full rights to demand the end of forced vaccinations and electronic tracking passports, no better than the Chinese communist surveillance system. As lots of countries have or are shortly scrapping inefficient virus measures, it's the truckers who have been behind the science and they are only defending civil rights!

To declare martial law and steal bank holdings of citizens because they disagree with the (minority) government is totally unjustified and evil! Trudeau is like a little schoolboy trying to hide he's cheating on his exam by bullying. Though what strictly speaking is parking violations and making noise may be illegal and certainly irritating if done on a big scale, Trudeau's over the top actions are illegal on a far more dangerous level. Any constitutional expert must agree on that martial law without a war or armed conflict is an illegitimate abuse of power, and that against peaceful political protests. He even threatened to take the children of truckers and kill their dogs. Evil! And it should make any Canadian red in the face as blackface Trudeau praised Chinese dictatorship <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mJNtFG9GSPU> and attacked Jewish MPs for "nazism". Mainstream, old media has totally lost the plot by smearing dissenters to virus scare mongering. We know that in old media the staff is older, and my theory is that a contributing factor for them pushing hard virus measures through scare, is that the 60+ years reporters selfishly want to "protect" their own parents and older relatives.

When it comes to the virus, there'll be a lot of reckoning to come. Lockdowns only "saved" 0.2% more lives, says Johns Hopkins University in a major study. Masks have dubious effect and are promoted mostly for the symbolism of them, while some have earned billions selling them. Years of children's education are lost. There are millions of extra unemployed, businesses going bust, inflation, increased deficits, an exploding mental health crisis. The worst is probably forcing hospitals to focus so much on the corona virus, as well as patients were s cared away in fear of getting the

bug, that it will probably *cost more lives than the virus*. 6 million wait in line for inhibited treatment and operations in the UK alone. Cancer, heart and respiratory disease, diabetes and much else are huge killers and have to a large extent been given free rein.

But Sweden did *fairly* OK. No lockdowns. No vaccine mandates. Masks only a recommendation. Schools were open - older students were temporary on distance learning for a while. No police on the streets handing out fines. Though small businesses and shops, sports, culture and so did suffer from different, confusing crowding limits. In 2020-21 Swedish economy grew by 5% and our inflation and budget deficit is significantly lower compared to many others.

On February 9th all "restrictions" were dropped. What remain is a general advice from the Public Health Agency for unvaccinated to avoid crowds and stay at home if feeling ill. Borders are open. This is of course because that the now totally dominant Omicron strain has proven to be extremely mild. Numbers vaccinated together with all with natural immunity should amount to over 90%. While Omicron seems to jump the vaccine to a high degree, jabs still protects from more serious effects.

Because Omicron resembles the common cold its stupid to use draconian measures. The ease of Omicron spread makes the virus threat *seeming* to increase in statistics, but the bummer is mild this time. Since all taken to hospital for *any disease are routinely tested* Omicron is often found, but if the patient dies from the original disease it's routinely, wrongly put in the corona fatality column. The definition used in Sweden and elsewhere ("having had the virus within the last 28 days") is misleading, worthless and gets virus figures get inflated.

Now some comments on the Winter Olympics, publishing news, Montaigne essays, history stuff and perhaps more. It all feels a unimportant compared to world events, but was written before Putin's war.

--Ahrvid Engholm

0.2 Sec From Beating US And China

It could have been here. Reliable sources say the 2022 Winter Olympics would have been given to Stockholm if we wanted it. But our city council gave it thumbs down - fearing the costs - so it went to Peking instead. Maybe it was just as well! Olympic Games in the shadow of a pandemic and a scary war nearby wouldn't have been the friendly, joyful sports festivity we'd want. But to have it in China wasn't a good idea, a communist dictatorship with a behaviour that makes you want to puke!

The Chinese regime puts millions of Uyghurs in concentration camps, threatens neighbouring Taiwan with war, stamps out democracy in Hong-Kong (spitting on international obligations, signed with Britain), invading several nations' recognised sea borders in the southern seas, not to forget using an estimated 500 million spy cameras against their own population. These devices use face recognition to keep everyone in check 24/7. Anyone behaving ways the regime

doesn't like may lose jobs and positions, denied buying train or airplane tickets, etc - not to forget being thrown in jail for no legitimate reason. The bastards have also kept the Swedish citizen and dissident book publisher Gui Minhai jailed for six years, after Chinese agents

kidnapped him in Thailand, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gui_Minhai I just want to note this before saying a few words about the Olympic winter games.

The Swedish Olympic Committee had the ambitious goal of our squad grabbing 15 medals, on par with the previous best games. But they won 18 which is 20% better! There were half a dozen 4th positions too, so it could have been even more. The fact is, Swedish sprint skier Jonna Sundling was only 0.2 seconds from her second and our 9th gold medal, by which we *would have beaten both China and the US in the medal table*, grabbing a 3rd spot. Gosh, only a fraction of a second from beating the entire US of A!

But I'm not bitter... We came 5th, which was as we say very *lagom*. Congrats to our Norwegian neighbours for winning the most medals ever. (Even if



Ski sprint queen Jonna Sundling.



Skating king Nils van der Poel.



Nils, with Angela Minhahi wearing his donated gold medal.

historical comparisons are tricky with the games having more disciplines and medals than before.) Also congrats to Finland for their icehockey gold! The entire Suomi land has now been drunk for a week. USA is BTW becoming a real winterland. I've seen in the news how huge snowstorms have been ravaging the mid and east of USA. They've had more snow than Sweden!

The only glitch for the Swedish squad was that our hugely talented distance skier Frida Karlsson wasn't to be recognised. Earlier this season she beat the triple gold-medalist Therese Johaug of Norway twice, but now she was 5th and 12th on her first races, collapsing in the finish area, and was left out for the 30 km race. I hope it wasn't something medically wrong with her. Our terrific ski sprinter Jonna

Sundling saved us instead, with three medals, winning the individual sprint with an eternity - 2.9s is a lot in sprint! She also saved our 4x5K relay team. A collapsing Miss Karlsson lost an incredible 17 seconds on her leg, but Jonna sett a furious pace, took it back and at least grabbed the bronze. On top on that she was 4th and near a medal in the 30K - as a *sprinter*. You gotta love that lady!

But the absolutely best was speed skater Nils van der Poel. Last year he became the double distance world champion (5 and 10K) and now he took the same two Olympic golds, setting a world record on the 10K. He broke his own old record and also has the 5K record since before. Here's a video from his 10K gold and world record race, with an enthusiastic English language commentator!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DSq2d6c4eG4> Van der Poel's surname comes from that his Dutch granddad immigrated to Sweden in the 1950s, and having some Netherlands DNA always help in skating. His successes come from following an almost back-breaking training regime. Skating experts has also notes that his skating technique is quite brilliant.

Sorry Garth. I know you hate sports. But there is something else! Nils van der Poel has now as a protest donated one of his Olympic gold medals to the - by Chinese illegally kidnapped and held - Swedish citizen Gui Minhahi. The medal was handed over to the daughter Angela Minhahi in a ceremony recently. Great, Nils! There are more important things than sports. (There is eg bheer.)

Some Publishing Stuff

Guy Lillian send me *From The Zine Dump* #54, where he reviews fanzines, among them *Intermission* #115: *I hope Ahrvid won't be offended when I say that the English in his N'APAZine is fluid, witty and enjoyable; my Swedish great-grandparents would be proud. Right at the first line, Ahrvid promises that "[t]hish will have a broader mix than some recent issues." In addition to fan history, his usual gig, he hits on Swedish politics (their prime minister is prettier than Joe Biden or Trump, but then*



Since a Certain Bug from outer space or wherever stopped last year's national Swedish con, the year 2020 was added to the 2021 Swecon (fantastika2020.com/english). The event took place in Dieselverkstan, Stockholm, November 19-21 with guests of honor Peadar Ó Guínn (Ireland), Adrian Tchaikovsky (UK), Eva Holmquist (local writer), and Maria Nilsson (local scholar). But we were lucky! Despite having Europe's lowest virus curves - with cases dropping - our ever-so-wise government announced a cap of 100 people for meetings starting from December 1, 2021. If Fantastika had been held just over a week later, having close to 300 attendees would have been impossible.

The coronavirus situation didn't seem prominently present. Some bottles of hand sanitiser

were placed around, and I saw perhaps half a dozen facemasks. There was, of course, a pandemic panel, among the 70 or so program items in three tracks. A few samples: climate fiction, Finnish SF, enhancing humans for space, Danish horror fiction, five-minute author readings, Vikings, humour in SF, an auction, and Goff interviews and signings. More than 25 foreign fan attended, from the Nordic countries, the UK, Germany, and the US. The Finnish delegation of 16 was the biggest, including half a dozen from the newly founded SF club on the Åland Islands. Nearly half the program was in English.

Two people fainted during "Medical Trauma in Historical Fiction" from the program item's gory slides! (They caused a blood pressure drop. As far as I know, both recovered.) More program items: an interesting lecture on 17th-century

explorer Nils Mattson Kiipping (something of a Swedish Baron Munchausen); Peadar Ó Guínn's lively stories of Irish mythology; John-Henri Holmberg defending John W. Campbell being unfairly trashed at the Irish Worldcon; unisex worlds in SF, medieval technology, and AI. I myself presented historical SF and fandom newspaper clips from the Royal Library (earlier covered in my e-zine *Intermission*). There were book rooms, a nearby bar, an art show with illustrations of space operas by Oskar Källner and Kurt Johansson, a gopher hole, and of course a program booklet. The only snag was that the facility's wifi worked very badly (or not at all).

The Alvar Award (for fan activities) 2019 was a tie, given to Cille Werner and Marika Löfström. The votes for 2020 were counted, landing the beam-light Alvar statuette in the arms of Jörgen Jönkvist, known for his bibliography of the prozine *Jules Verne Magazine*.

It all ended late Sunday afternoon, when con chair Carolina Gomez Lagerförl caught the Spirit of Swecon in the air and bottled it, to be released during the next event. Let's hope our planet becomes a bit less dystopian, so we can have more of these things - before people forget that a real SF con isn't pixels on a screen.

Since there was no 2022 Swecon bid - maybe due to virus hesitations - it was decided at the formal Swecon session that the 2023 Uppsala Eurocon (eurocon2023.wordpress.com) will be Swecon for both 2022 and 2023.

-Ahrvid Engholm ■



Swecon Lobby



Swecon Opening with Concom and Guests of Honor



Peadar Ó Guínn's Kaffeeklatsch



Martin Rundkvist's Talk on Nils Mattson Kiipping

the bottom of King Kong's foot is prettier than Trump), pandemic natter (of course), a report on a recent convention (praise Balder, including a righteous response to Jeanette Ng's repulsive swipe at John W. Campbell, Jr.), a terrific dinner with Sweden's ultra-BNF Sam Lundwall, some admiring stuff on ABBA (I admit it: I have "Take a Chance on Me" in my YouTube favorites), Vikings lore, and of course, national SFnal history, as replete with snobbish mainstream naysayers (I hate to say "mundanes") as America's. "Sorry that this is so full of content," he says. We'll suffer, Ahrvid!

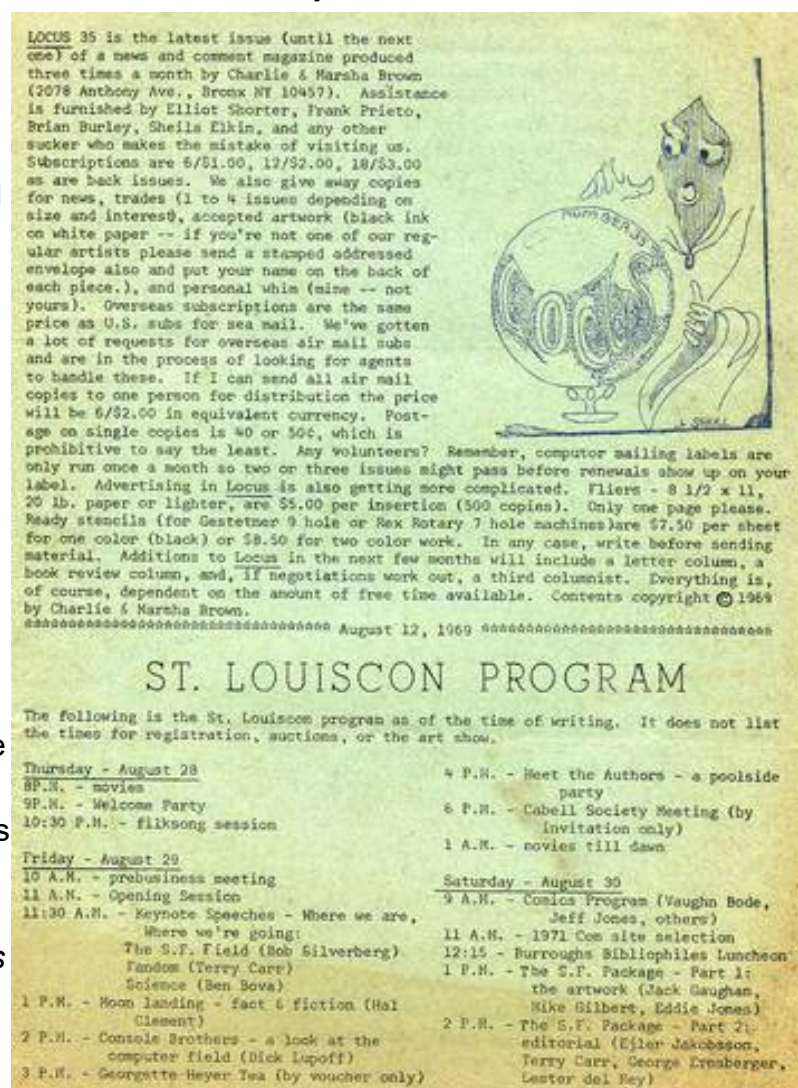
"Witty" and OK English sounds like getting good grades. Swedish schools teach English from early years, I went to summer schools in England as a boy, I have been reading English language novels from reasonably early age, and so on. But there will be mistakes. About half of them are typos or editing mistakes (changing phrases, but forgetting fragments of the old wording) and of the rest I usually find the errors myself - when the zine is already distributed. Spelling can usually be checked by software, or Google in complicated cases, but I tend to splash in the mid Atlantic between US and UK lingo. I try my best to insert little jokes and lighthearted phrasings, even if the world is becoming a dark, hard and depressing planet...

My *Locus* (in the January issue) report from Fantastika/Swecon was mentioned. You can see it above. It was an shorter, edited version of what I wrote in *Intermission* earlier. *Locus* counts itself as pro or semipro, so they paid me...the royal sum of \$35! By the way, I think I somewhere have one or two copies of old *Locus* issues, from when it was mimeographed!

Another piece of news is that I have a new short story collection in the pipeline. Its title *Rumtidensligt* can be translated as

approximately "Spacetimey", referring to science and Einstein. Below the title it says "stars, sleuths and tall tales". I sent buddy Kjell Genberg (an prolific writer, 100x times more established than yours truly, editor of our many Short Story Masters anthologies) a whole bundle of my 100+ short stories and he selected 31. I often write rather concentrated so all those go in under 200 pages. Kjell also wrote an introduction. The publisher who first wanted the collection changed his mind for shall we say unclear reasons, but another publisher named TiraTiger - <https://tiratigerforlag.se/> - took over. It's not a major project by any measure, it will be in E-form and through Print on Demand. I think the biggest chance to reach readers is through libraries, where people can borrow it for free. Check your local library later in the spring (if you read Swedish).

I've been working with the cover and some post-editing. I looked through old pulp magazine covers and found stuff I combined in a collage and made to go with with one of the (in my view) best stories in the collection. As a weak nostalgic soul and history buff, I'm rather fond of pulps. They are looked down upon and called trash, but there's something wild, imaginative, unpretentious and cheerful with the old pulp world (and the Swedish equivalent in those days, the dreaded "colourised weeklies"). That the stories were written at a fast pace, often by pure hackwriters, left room for spontaneity. That the field was condemned and hated by high-brow literary critics meant writers didn't have to



What *Locus* looked like, when it was mimeographed, in 1969.

nervously look over their shoulders to check that they wrote within the "acceptable" bounds. Literary bigshots often wrote for these detested rags, BTW, but pretended not to. It was prose for the populous. The pulps were untamed, outrageous, stimulating, having the craziest ideas. And being entertaining is always an advantage.

So I invented my own old-time pulp hero, *Captain Dynamite*! He has the young sidekick Johnny Krut (=Gunpowder). In the main story, depicted on the cover, they battle a Nazi plot in Stockholm just before World War Two, to achieve "peace in our time" (ha!) and to rescue the captain's civilian

secretary and love interest, Miss Dolly. They also have a secret laboratory where their mad scientist Dr Correct invents crime-fighting technology for them. It's great fun!

Another story gives some background to Captain Dynamite, when he as a young boy catches Russians spies in Stockholm after our summer Olympics of 1912. Young Mr Dynamite was a gopher for the games and that's why the boy has been allowed to have an unused room in one of the towers of the Olympic stadium as his secret lab. He is best friends with "Revolver Harry" (in reality as an adult a legendary police investigator) and meets and gets inspired by one Otto Witt, a Swedish sf pioneer in real life. Captain Dynamite is dynamite fun!

Many of the stories in *Spacetime* are of course skiffy, but there's also more straight mysteries and a special department of parodies. A series of stories are what I call tales from the Binary Bar (and "binary" here refers to the number system for computers, nothing else). That's tall tales told in Foo's Bar by a group of sf fen and hackers. Just as eg Arthur C Clarke's *Tales of the White Hart* were based on real meetings, London fandom's postwar gatherings at the White Horse, my stories are

also based on real meetings. In the 1990's a group calling itself "The Swedish Work Group for Algorithm Research" (all we were into skiffy, eg doing two 1990's sf cons) had such meetings. The characters in my stories are loosely based on the participants, though the tales themselves are purely imagined. Those stories are more great fun in this short story collection!

The collection also has a section of alternate history. In one story Sweden goes to war with Norway because of the union breakup in 1905. We find a Sweden under the Nazis in another story - co-written with well-known fan Mika Tenhovaara, himself a very talented writer - and a world where mechanical Babbage computers rule in another yarn. Among the alternate histories I have a story about how a dog saved Sweden from being invaded in WWII, one on climate change, I dive into cold fusion, I speculate on how WWII began (why does that give you chills down the spine now?), I tell about a new virus epidemic, and so on.

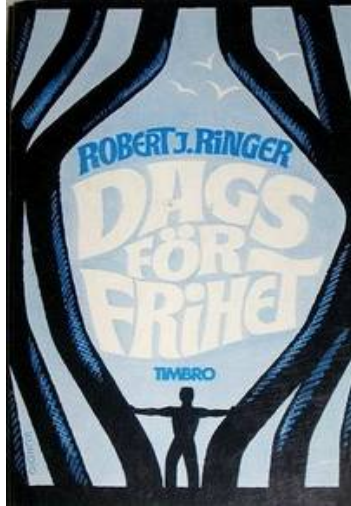
The story "The Dark Satanic Mills" comes from when Joe Haldeman was GoH on a 2006 Stockholm con, and hosted a mini writers workshop which I went to. For the workshop we were to provide a story in English in advance, which he would then comment. So I wrote "The Dark Satanic Mills" dealing with Jesus second coming and surveillance technology. Mr Haldeman did actually have some constructive comments which I then worked into the story's final version. Here it is in Swedish translation. Some stories in *Spacetime* have earlier been published as my Xmas/New Year tales (and most of the others have been in different magazines and anthologies) like the one about Tootsie Greenberg. And it may shock the world that I may have found a previously unknown story by HP Lovecraft, which is presented in this book...

I think the collection will be entertaining. It may not be Nobel prize level but I think entertainment is just as important as writing deep and serious. Stories that are fun and engaging get your blood



flowing and your head spinning with ideas. You get inspired and upbeat, while deep stuff just make you depressed and sluggish. The work of old authors that have survived and is still read, are books that have managed to entertain and engage readers. According to a newspaper article I've read, more than half the Nobel laureates in literature are *out of print* in Sweden and not read. If we take William Shakespeare, in his own time he was seen mostly as...an entertainer, a playwright for ordinary people of the street gutters. Other poets and playwrights in his days were seen as classier and more respectable, but they are now forgotten. Entertainment has a value in itself and is underrated. Boring stuff is overrated. Don't you agree?

Finally, a piece of fannish interest which I must have missed when it came in 1984. One J-H Holmberg worked for the right-wing thinktank Timbro at the time. He made them publish one Robert J



Ringer's *Restoring the American Dream*, under the Swedish title *Dags för frihet* ("Time for Freedom"). It's a book promoting almost extreme "libertarian" views, which JHH is known for (beside, one must add, his interesting views on how to treat voting and ballots). He wrote a lengthy introduction and to illustrate how politicians strangle the citizen he there writes:

When the citizen – let's call him Thure Storm – is born it's on a birth clinic his mother has been directed to by social authorities. He is dressed in clothes marked as local council property and given a person number immediately reported to involved authorities. A few days after he has come home he is visited at home by government child care with the task to check if the home is suitable.

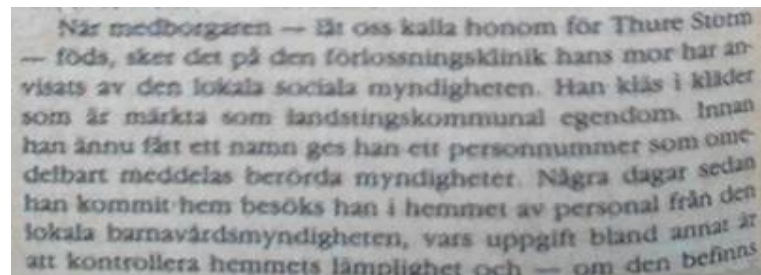
Original Swedish text is in the illo below, and the Storm story goes on for another 1.5 page. Now, *Ture Storm* - or "Thure Storm" as JHH spells it with an

extra fannish "h" - is a fan character I invented in a 1978 oneshot. Ture Storm was the typical

enthusiastic neofan wearing a propeller beanie, a T-shirt with the message "Cheers for Bobby Heinlein!" and the latest issue of *Jules Verne Magasinet* carelessly stuck in his hip pocket. Ture Storm for some reason became much appreciated. I have later turned him into a detective using the name in several short stories and also in the faaan

fiction novelette "Storm in the Fantarctic". Ture's sister Tuttan Storm took part in the 2000 Swecon fancy dress parade (portrayed by European SF Society chair Carolina G-L). I wrote more Ture Storm faaan fiction in a little zine I called *Yngvi*. I have also introduced Ture's aunt, Tora Storm, a retired widow turning detective, represented in a story in my coming collection.

Both me and Ture are rather fond of personal freedom, of course. Though I find it difficult to spell this...wassitcalled, libertin...libertari...library...arian...schism.



A New Take on Montaigne

More publishing. I briefly mentioned Montaigne 2.0 (publisher Björkmans förlag, 462 pages) by fans Henry Grynsten and Tony Eriksson before, their new take on the legendary 107 essays by Michel de Montaigne (1533-1592). Henry and Tony have also written 107 essays (every second one, taking turns) basically following the Montaigne ones, covering similar subjects for each. I'm not sure what the difference is between an essay and what we call a feature article in a magazine. Maybe it is that an essay is more timeless. Montaigne is still read after 500 years.

Anyway, their essays cover all subjects you can imagine and everything from the deeply serious to lighthearted humor. An example of fun is the very first essay on how to defend a castle. Here they talk about what to do with and how to defend all the abandoned bunkers and military bases from the cold war in Sweden. One suggestion is that a foreign power could use them to take over. They'd just send in soldiers disguised as tourists, hide in the forts and then emerge from them in a surprise attack.

In another essay we learn from one of the authors what he did with weather reports while working for a local newspaper. They couldn't afford to subscribe to - or didn't care for - detailed local weather. So they took the general weather forecast for a nearby big city and then simply tweaked the temperatures a little for the surroundings. Weather done as horoscopes, really. Talking about local newspapers, we have an essay describing a nasty campaign against a medium level local paper's editor. A troubling and possibly important story I would have liked to learn more about (but I suppose some details are withheld for ethical reasons).

One thing I disagree with are the claims about the easy life of hunter-gatherers early in human history. They are claimed to have only worked 15 hours/week, the rest of the time laying on their back enjoying life. I think their life was much harder than that! There are lots of factors such claims leave aside. Else, if that life was so easy, why did mankind choose to become farmers with permanent dwellings? It'd be highly illogical! Among factors forgotten for hunter-gatherers: to set up a new camp every day or so, to defend against predators (farmers in a village can set up a perimeter fence/wall and fixed defences, in comparison), uneven access to food, to constantly having to make new tools (because when you wander around you can't take too much with you), conflicts with other groups that also migrate, and maybe most important: it probably wasn't as easy to always find food as suggested, so they had to spend much more time than believed to hunt and gather.



A note on the old wordprocessor Cicero mentioned. As I was a messenger to their office with manuscripts by Anders Palm, I can tell you that the editors of infamous girly mag *FIB-Aktuellt* used Cicero. But it is of course true that old file formats often will become unreadable. In the case of *FIB-Aktuellt*, it may not matter much...except for the sex letters the founder of the SFF APA wrote there. (To earn a buck. But he had probably not been near a woman since his mother went to hospital for a mysteriously swollen stomach.)

The famous lecturer Hans Rosling's (I have reported from one of his talks, he passed away far too early!) ten common thinking fallacies are covered in an essay. And we meet the first typewriter from 1821. Tom Hanks own 250 typers BTW, and I believe I could still use a manual typewriter if it was put in front of me. Maybe we all have to go to typewriters when Putin has nuked our power stations? We learn that the bicycle is the heir to the horse and about experimental fiction and the William Burroughs "cut up" technique for writing. You cut up text with scissors and rearrange it at random. It sounds like it'll be almost as readable as dissertations on postmodernism.

We heard about transhumanism and "escatology" (on the end of the world) and meet PhD Anders Sandberg who deals with such and believes that human life can be prolonged, perhaps to live forever. I believe life can be prolonged, but I'm not so sure about forever except you may feel like it when reading a boring book. I met Sandberg on the Irish Worldcon a couple of years ago, where he had a little exhibition about his ideas and held a lecture.

I disagree with the need for a "gender neutral" pronoun in Swedish, where he=han, she=hon and some suggest it="hen". First, it'd be political language meddling. We'd move into Orwell's dangerous newspeak if we let language be manipulated by ideology and proclamations. Language should change by the millions of users themselves, in practical usage while alternatives struggle and bounce around for years and decades. Second, what some ignorantly prefer to forget is that we *already* have a gender neutral pronoun: it=*den* (or *det*, if not a living being). Ideological attempts to manipulate language are going too far. We for instance hear of organisations banning presenters from using "ladies and gentlemen" and schools forbidding pupils to refer to their parents as moms and dads. But gender is a scientific fact, present in every single cell of human bodies, and its idiocy to try to erase it with linguistic tampering.

Montaigne 2.0 also outlines what I think would have been a great short story, that unfortunately was

rejected by Sam J Lundwall's *Jules Verne Magasinet*. It was about an astronaut who dies in space. Over millions of years he attracts dust, then pebbles, boulders, and grows into a new planet that develops life.... A great story idea! I would have liked to read it. Stalin is said to have personally signed 44 000 death warrants, we learn in one essay. His hands must have become tired, poor guy. I think the essay describing of how magician David Copperfield made the Statue of Liberty disappear is wrong. I remember seeing a documentary about it, and as far as I remember he didn't use a rotating platform but changes in lighting. He simply put the statue in the dark and arranged other lights so it seemed it disappeared. But they are right about that describing utopian states is rather boring. Everything is swell. There are no problems. Nothing goes wrong.

This is more of dipping my toe into the flood of subjects *Montaigne 2.0* covers than a review. I think the book is fascinating, well-written, covering more than one could bargain for and leaving you with lots of interesting ideas. Get it! (Eg via the SF Bookstore, <https://www.sfbok.se/produkt/montaigne-20-107-essaer-om-roms-storhet-401978>) If it isn't in your favourite bookstore, try your local library. If the book isn't there, they have suggestion forms you can fill in - and there is a chance that they will order *Montaigne 2.0* for you. Or by mistake *Spacetime*...

Sedan månen överbefolkats!

Arthur C. Clarke är en av de få science-fiction-författare som förenat sin fantasi i vetenskapens senaste rön. Han är själv vetenskapsman, kemist, medlem av Royal Astronomical Society, ordförande i British Interplanetary Society och har i den omfattande boken *Interplanetary Flight* grundligt redogjort för nutida vetenskapers förutsättningar att förhållandevis liv ut i rymden.

Hans roman *Prelude to Space* — som behandlar människans första rymdresa, räknas redan till SF-klassikerna. Hela hans roman *Sands of Mars* är en gränsöverskridande, men fängslande, berättelse om de vidriga krigsliknande kampar mot i det lågsta Mars' klimat. Clarke berättar lugnt och undviker konstruera spänning genom banal äventyrsintrig — den oengagerat återgivna episoden i en okänd rymd fylld av okända faror är tillräcklig. Men Clarke ger inte bara kött och blod åt det tekniska framtidsperspektivet, som uppstått genom Eisenhowers meddelande om utsläandet av artificiella månar — han är också filosof och konstnär. Hans religiöst-mystiska roman *Childhood's End* kommer liksom Ray Bradburys *The Martian Chronicles* att få plats i litteraturhistorien. Liksom Aldous Huxley, Olaf Stapleton, O. G. Wells och C. S. Lewis använder han SF-genren som ram för sina filosofiska idéer.

Främmande världars kolonisation

I hans novellsamling *Expedition to Earth*, finns flera noveller som behandlar främmande världars kolonisation av jorden. Motivet återkommer okastat i hans senaste bok: *Earthlight*. Handlingen föregår ca 200 år framåt, då människan har koloniserat Mars, Venus, Månen och några av de yttre stora planeternas satelliter. Kolonisterna tycker att jorden är de gamla och stockkonservativa planeten.

Liksom en gång mellan koloniallandet Amerika och dess moderländer, har vissa spänningar uppstått mellan jorden och dess planetkolonier. De växer fram ur det faktum, att jorden helt kapitalistiskt och dyrt säljer de hårda metaller till kolonisterna, som saknas på de yttre planeterna. En plötslig och stor uranfyndighet på månen vill kolonisterna betrakta som universell, och genom det politiska maktspillet kring fyndigheten uppstår krigshot mellan jorden och dess kolonier i rymden. Kriget bryter ut, men

det förutsätts, att människorna vid denna tid är så pass civiliserade att ej icke-militära blodtörstiga angrepp. Sammandrabbningen får formen av en kraftmätning en duell på mestdrömtekniskt plan på månen. Ingen avgår som segrande.

Kolonisternas plastkapselliv

Jämsides med denna konflikt skildras trovärdiga episoder från kolonisternas plastkapselliv. Här finns storartade naturskildringar från månen under jorduppgång och jordsken, intressanta detaljer från vardagslivet på en himlakropp med mindre attraktion; reflekterande huvudpersoner begrunder storlagenheten i människans största äventyr. Kolonisterna söndras salta men säkert från jorden, också deras språk undgår nyansförändringar. Mycket skickligt har Clarke som tidnärare fött med de för parti-strider likgiltiga månestronomernas upptäckt av en supernova, ett sällsynt celest objekt som erbjöds människan blott två gånger förut — Betelgeusestjärnan och Tyko Brahes stjärna 1572. Vid en supernovas explosion kan en stjärnas kvasstyrka lika miljarder gånger på några dygn, den kan överglänsa alla andra himmelsobjekt (utom solen) och synas mitt på dagen. Det kanske ligger en symbolisk mening i detta — liksom Betelgeusestjärnan inledde en ny tidsålder och Tyko Brahes den förutsättningslösa naturvetenskapens — Keplers, Newtons och Einsteins — så flammar supernovan i *Earthlight* över vad som nödvändigt måste bli det sista krigets epok.

Som turist på månen.

Boken har ett sällsynt framtidsperspektiv — då huvudpersonen nätt sin ålders höst, besöker han månen som turist och finner att den då liksom idag vår jord är överbefolkad, vilka tvingar kolonisterna vidare, o till stjärnorna.

Ska överbefolkningen nu på jorden bli det tryck, som tvingar människan ut i rymden för att överbefolka dess planeter?

Erlend Dahm,

HISTORY CORNER

This's History Corner will be a Royal mix, a mix of stuff from my Royal Library in Stockholm findings and news about what some think is the world's first sf con, the 1891 Vril event in the Royal Albert Hall in London. I'm having more info on the 1930's Swedish-Canadian fandom pioneer Nils Helmer Frome coming in, but it'll have to wait until a future issue. We first give the word to Söderhamns Tidning, March 31 1956, "*After the Moon Is Overpopulated*" /in-text headers omitted/:

Arthur C Clarke is one of few sf authors who anchors his fantasies in the latest science. He's himself a scientist, in chemistry, member of the Royal Astronomical Society, chairman of the British Interplanetary Society, and have in the voluminous book *Interplanetary Flight* presented the basis for human life in space according to science today His novel *Prelude to space* - about man's first space trip, already counts among the sf classics. His novel *Sands of Mars* is an unromantic but captivating tale of the hardships colonists struggle against in the harsh Martian climate. Clarke calmly tells the story and avoids to construct thrills through a banal adventure plot. But Clarke doesn't only flesh out the technical future perspectives coming from Eisenhowers announcement of the launch of artificial moons - he is also a philosopher and artist. His religious-mystical novel *Childhood's End* will as well as Bradbury's *The Martian Chronicles* have a place in literary history. And as Aldous Huxley, Olaf Stapleton, HG Wells and CS Lewis he uses the sf genre as a forum for philosophical ideas. In his short story collection *Expedition to Earth* there are several stories describing the colonisation of Earth by alien worlds. The motif returns in a reversed way in his latest book, *Earthlight*. The plot takes place ca 200 years hence and humans have colonised Mars, Venus, the Moon and some of the satellites of the big planets. The colonists think that Earth is a rather old and conservative planet. As earlier with colonial America and the motherland, there are some tensions between Earth and her colonies. It comes from the fact that Earth in capitalist manner sells expensive heavy metals to the colonies, which the outer planet lack. Suddenly a big deposit of uranium is found on the

Moon which the colonists want to see as a universal resource, and through the politicians maneuvering around the find, a threat of war looms between Earth and the colonies. The war breaks out and it is assumed that man at this time is civilised enough so that the non-military isn't attacked. The battle gets the form of a nightmare-technical confrontation and duel on the Moon. Nobody finish as a winner, Beside their conflict there are believable episodes of the plastic bubble life of the colonists. There are grand descriptions of the moon environment during Earthrise and with Earthlight, and interesting details of life on another heavenly body with less gravity. Characters reflect on the grandness of the greatest adventure of man. The colonist slowly but surely become more distant from Earth and their language also changes. Clarke has in a skilled way as a sign of our time included the fights as lunar astronomers, indifferent to political party quarrel, discover a supernova, a rare celestial object which has been seen by mankind only twice before - the Betlehem star and as Tycho Brahe's star 1572. As a supernova explodes the brightness of a star may increase billions of times, it may become brighter than any other object in the sky (except the Sun) and be visible in the middle of the day. Maybe there's symbolism in it - just as the Betlehem star began a new era and Brahes star the era of unchained science - the one of Kepler, Newton and Einstein - the supernova of Earthlight shines over what must be the epoch of the final war. The book has a strange forward perspective - when the main character reaches the dusk of his age he goes to the moon as a tourist but finds that it then just as to our Earth is overpopulated, which forces the colonists to move further out, to the stars. Will the overpopulation now on Earth become the pressure that forces mankind out into space, to make those planets overpopulate?

As far as I remember the writer of this article, Erland Dahm, also sometimes contributed short stories to the at the time new sf magazine *Häpna!*

Sf author Sven Christer Swahn had tight contacts with fandom and covered it in an article series he wrote in the 1980's. *Intermission* has presented an earlier Swahn piece and here's another (headline cropped to save space and the in-text headers too) *The SF Neighbourhood - Even Witches Are Sometimes Welcome to Fandom*, from Göteborgsposten, January 18 1981. He talks about how sf works, its relations to horror and fantasy, but in the end there's a little surprise! The article starts with noting how sf and horror creatures and elements becomes more common in media, and then...

All inbreed monsters of our joyous planet marches on, Venusians, scientists and of course moonlighting hackwriters

• **FILMER**, serier, praktverk à la fransmannen Druillet, romaner, radio- och TV-spel och varför inte nämna popmusikens texter med spindelmän från Mars och hotell på samma planet - i alla genrer tränger sig sf-teman in och drar med sig ett villt följe av nästkusiner: vampyrer, häxfolk, muskelbjässar med slagsvård vid sidan av elektronik bakom pannbenen, det är en karneval av farligheter och komik.

• **HELA VÅR** festliga planets alla ingåtar monstrar på marsch, trängsel av varulvar och venusianer, vetenskapsmän och första, extraknäckande snabbskrivare med dagens priskrant framför sig.

Det vore lätt och skönt att säga att kvaliteten faller utslaget, att snabbskrivaren alltid avsläppts och får drypa av utan ett öre. Dryper av gör han väl förr eller senare, men den yrkliga hållningen beror ofta på den medallpande släkten klingande gud.

Sälja rymd

Som i föregående artikel nämnde) Horst Schröder har utrett, som Stanislaw Lem och tränade litteraturvetenskapliga i alla länder har hävdat, så är sf bland annat en marknadsförfråga.

• **MAN SÄLJER** rymd när rymden går att sälja. Vi köper upp all rymd vi kommer över. För just då finns just det att tillgå. - Och de mer övergripande skälen? De marknadsförare som söker oss och som vi gärna vill byta ut en stund mot sf-filmernas mera rumsrena vidunder? Det är den nästan väl givna lösningen: eskapismsvaret.

Det som Kingsley Amis antytt i inledningsdikten till "New Maps of Hell" var mer subtilt: Att vi söker vår egen förkroppsligade skräck och ondska, att vi så att säga får vårt eget sanna signalment när vi skakar hand med Darth Vader.

Spekulation

• **PÅ NÅGOT** konstigt sätt slår ändå kärleken igenom; jag menar den uppriktiga kärleken till genren och dess värider. Man märker det om man jämför två filmer, "Närkontakt" och "Stjärnornas krig".

För att göra affären kort med "Närkontakt": Steven Spielbergs film och ännu värre bok utnyttjar hänsynslöst pseudoreligiösa behov, flörtar med UFO-hysteriker, försöker med konstlade medel blåsa in häftigt tempo i en redan från början obefintlig handling.

Alltammans är spekulation: konstruerade dialoger hålltar fram under konstruerade himlaval till alltsammans kremeras i det komiska rymdskeppet. Man ser regissören som en hurtig amerikansk strandvakt, som förgäves försöker blåsa liv i ett lik.

Barnkammarvision

• **GEORGE LUCAS** har däremot ett slags förhållande till sin film "Stjärnornas krig". Den är en häpnadsväckande blandning av amerikanska pojkdömmar. Varför klappar hjärtat så varmt för den lurviga wookieen Chewbacca. Jo, för att han är en blandning av det Fega Lejonet (Trollkarlen från Oz) och den hund man aldrig fick.

Darth Vader påminner åtminstone mig om Dr Doom (Marvel Comics). Princessan Leia och den lilla roboten Artoo liknar inte så litet Snövit och en trofast dvärg, har det sagts. Den gyllne roboten Threepio är en förgylld variant av den alskade Plåtmannen (Trollkarlen från Oz, igen).

Det är en äkta barnkammarvision. Fortsättningen har som bekant scen-

— tom HÄXORNA ÄR VÄLKOMNA TILL FANDOM IBLAND

satta med all akkuratess. The Empire Strikes verkligen Back med besked.

Goda grannar

• **OLIKA MEDIA** sluter upp: sf och skilda syskongenerer går ända vid sida. De har sina varierande beteckningar. Fantasy är sf när proporna har gått. Ursula Le Guin har sagt det snällare: "...fantasy, the ancient kingdom of which science fiction is a modern province", det äldriga kungariket där sf är en modern provins.

Vad gör dem till goda grannar, dessa genrer? Spielbergs film och bok kan igen ge antydning till svar. Också när man inte har något att berätta, och om man nu är produktionsveten och mer än författare, kan man lugnt låta bandet gå och använda de tillgängliga processerna.

Valdet detsamma

• **I RYMDSAGA** som politisk framtidsroman kan valdet sättas in omotiverat som i vilken annan polisat som helst! Utan särskilda skäl startas ett fiktions-tekniskt gatulagsmål som går från ett kvarter till ett annat, från en genre till en annan. Identiska lugn och stöt utväxlas mellan älvä och lömte, mellan agent och polis. Det sker ett överspill av våld från genre till genre. Knogjärn och cykelkedjor blistrar och rasslar under de väldiga träden i Rivendell, älvornas hem.

En man börjar springa, utan skäl, och alla jagar honom, men den ende som verkligen vill hinna hem är författaren, för klockan går mot fyra.

Hertigdömen

• **FANTASY** kan te sig som ett nordtytiskt gyttar av små hertigdömen med ett modernt Berlin en smula öster. Vi har "svärd- och trolleriskolan", sword and sorcery, som den elake Harry Harrison en gång döpte till sword and butchery, värd- och slaktarskolan. Vi har den upphöjda heroik fantasy, där Tolkien älvor och ädlingar vandrar. Bertil Mårtensson har gjort det där utmärkt på svenska i sin fantasysyrom "Maktens vägar - vägen ut" (Bokad).

Vi har spökhistorien som gärna döps om till horror tale, skräckberättelse, eller weird tale, kuslig berättelse, med anknytning till det klassiska amerikanska pulpmagasinet Weird Tales som i sin tur försökte efterlikna Poe-skolans yppigaste effekter och föstrade den unge Bradbury.)

Vi har det förfärliga storhertigdömet gothic tale, och enligt många är allt det andra idel lydnisk under den skräckgoth som med engelsmännen i läten byggdes upp under 1700-talet i protest mot förfallsträsk.

Gormenghast

• **HÄR HEMMA** kan vi studera den nya svenska versionen (Åke Ohlmarks) av det mest egenartade bygget i gotisk anda sedan andra världskriget. Mervyn Peakes Gormenghasttrilogi (AWE/Gebbers).

Mervyn Peake skrev första delen som yngre, sällsynt krigslösligad inkall. Han var konstnär, gifte sig med en konstnär (Gilmor Mieve), var missionärsson, föddes i Kina 1911 och stannade där med sin familj ända tills han var tio år och redan hade börjat skriva och teckna.

Han gick i Eltham College, England, som speciellt nämnde om missionärsbarn, och kinesiska minnen spålar samman med skolintyck när han formade sin färgiga Gormenghastvärld som just när bildpunkter i beskrivningarna av de otrogenliga palatsbyggnaderna och den pojkskola i palatsets skugga där den unge hjälten Titus Groan (!) tvingas gå.

Liggande länge

• **MERVYN PEAKE** nådde tidigt en kända som framför allt bokillustratör, hade besvär med att få trilogin utgiven och när den väl kommit blev den vänligt mottagen men floken barn liggande på eller under de skärmarna; tills en Peake-våg nådde igång kring 1970 då de unga entusiasterna med sf-bässen Mike Moorcock i spetsen gjorde sitt bästa att ge en nytt liv i verket, och med framgång.

Ända sedan den dag då de första recensionerna på trilogins första del kom i

tryck, har den irre kretsen protesterat mot beteckningen "gothic". Jag är dock obestydd på den punkten.

När jag läser en engelsk författares böcker om ett stort rött slott med groteska värelser, arar jag stanken från 1700-talets konstgjorda vallgräver. Men så har jag heller inte utexaminerats från Eltham College.

Hänsyn till trollen

• **GOTT OCH VAL** men här och var för? Det är något dubbelt skrämtämmande om detta dessa seriösa lärare minuter som har rötterna i det förfärliga men fänderna i våra strupar här och nu, 1981.

En rent kommersiell succé kan inte i det oändliga förgrena sig till nya succéer inom alltför media. Måttad måste inträda. Det bör komma en kväll när Cheswacca gnyr utan genvar i en halvton boklådor då man gått för värrens skull. Kommande värder en dag när det obehliga Gormenghast-ramlar. En stund, det får erkännas, som redan Mervyn Peake förespände. Om inte annat har vi vissa hänsyn att ta till våra egna tontrar och trollvexla.

Väkt nästan något kommer mig, att samla upp trädarna igen.

Häxor inga trufans

• **VÄRMANDE** satir från England, en gräns mot samtid och framtid på en sling, eller som det står i "Jake och hans grä" av Kingsley Amis: "Och en äkta fiskerfärd till alla dem därhemma".

I Sverige har Ann-Margret Dahlqvist-Ljungberg och många andra en visst fortsatt kampen med skilda konstnärliga uttrycksmedel. Därvid har hon inte helt försummat sf. En koppling från den positiva gruppen till den negativa Gormenghastserien kan faktiskt göras, om man betänker den nyfeministiska häckryk som kan ha lite att göra med Margaret Murrays häckstudier. (Som är ganska duktigt vederlagda vid det här laget.)

Men när vi nu lätt begreppet science fiction suddas ut i konturerna slår vi igen portarna och samlas med den inre truppen, sf-fandom, där häxor visserligen är välkomna ibland, och Kingsley Amis också - de ska bara inte inbilla sig att de är "trufans" samma sf-fans.

Sven-Christer Swahn

• **DETTA** var den tredje artikeln i vår science-fiction-serie. De två föregående var införda den 10:e och den 14:e januari.



• Från Steven Spielbergs "Närkontakt" av tredje graden. Enligt artikel författaren en hänsynslös spekulation, där regissören förgäves försöker blåsa liv i ett lik.

wanting to earn a buck. It'd be too easy to say that quality matters, that hackwriters are rejected and don't get a cent. He is sooner or later rejected but that's only because he can drag a sack of gold along...Horst Schröder has found, and Stanislaw Lem and trained literature sociologists in all countries, that sf is among other things a matter of marketing. You sell Space when space can be sold. ... What Kingsley Amis hinted in the intro poem to *New Maps of Hell* was more subtle: that we seek our bodily horror and evil, that we sort of find our true self when we shake hands with Darth Vader. In a strange way love always shines through, it means true love for the genre and its world. You notice that when comparing two films, "Close Encounters" and "Star Wars". Briefly, "Close Encounters", Spielberg's film and the even worse book ruthlessly flirts with pseudoreligious needs, UFO hysterics, and with artificial means tries to find pace in a from the beginning non-existent plot. It's all speculation: constructed dialogues stumbling along under constructed lights in the sky until cremated in the cosmic spaceship. You see the director as a perky American lifeguard trying in vain to get life back into a corpse. George Lucas on the other hand has a relationship with his film "Star Wars". It's an astounding mix of American boy dreams. Why do our heart feel warm for the fuzzy wookie Chewbacca? Well, because he is a mix of the cowardly lion (of the Wizard of Oz) and the dog you never got. For me at least Darth Vader reminds of Dr Doom (Marvel Comics). Princess Leia and the little robot Artoo is like Snow White and a loyal dwarf, it's been said. The golden robot Threepio is a gilded version of the tin man (The Wizard of Oz, again). It is a real fairytale vision. It has been staged with accuracy. The Empire really Strikes Back. And media of all kinds follow: sf and sister genres go side by side. They may be called different names. Fantasy is like sf with fuses that have blown. Ursula Le Guin has put it more kindly: "...fantasy, the ancient kingdom of which sf is a modern province". What makes them good neighbours, these genres? The film and book of Spielberg may hint at an answer. Even when you have nothing to tell, if you are more a technician of the production than an author, you can let the conveyor belt roll without problem and use available processes. In a space saga used as a political novel of the future you can use violence without motivation as in any police state. Without any particular reason a fiction-technical street fight starts moving from one block to another. Identical jabs and thrusts are exchanged between elf and gnome, agent and police. Violence spills over from genre to genre. Brass knuckles and bicycle chains flash and rattle under the giant trees of Rivendell, home of the elves. A man begins to run without reason and everyone chase him but the only one who really wants to come home is the author as the time comes close to four. Fantasy may seem like a northern German collection of duchies and a modern Berlin a bit off center. We have sword and sorcery which the mean Harry Harrison once labeled sword and butchery. We have revered heroic fantasy where the elves and nobility of Tolkien roams. Bertil Mårtensson has done a fine Swedish version in his fantasy novel *The Ways of Power-the Road Away*. We have the ghost story, often called a horror tale or weird tale, connecting to the classic American pulp magazine *Weird Tales*, which in its turn tries to imitate the most far-out effects of the Poe school (which trained the young Bradbury). We have the gothic tale of the posh duchy, and according to many all the others are only vassal states to horror gothic, lead by the English which was constructed in the 1700s as a protest against rationality. At home we can study the new Swedish version (Åke Ohlmarks) of the most curious construction in gothic spirit since WWII, Mervyn Peake's *Gormenghast* trilogy. Peake wrote the first part as a conscript not particularly keen to go to war. He was an artist, married an artist (Gilmor Maeve), was a son of a missionary, born in China in 1911 and stayed there with his family until the age of 12 and already had begun to write and draw. He attended Eltham, College, England, which took care of children to missionaries, and Chinese memories merged with impressions from the school when he formed his horrible *Gormenghast* trilogy which has its highlights in the descriptions of the inscrutable palaces and the boy school in the shadow of the palace, where the young hero Titus Groan is forced to go. Mervyn Peake reached recognition early on as a book illustrator, had problems getting the trilogy published, and once it came it got favourable reception but in a way just stayed on or under the bookstore desks; until a Peake wave emerged around 1970 when young enthusiasts lead by the giant Michael Moorcock did their best to get new life into the work. ...There is something doubly frightening with all these serialised monsters rooted in the past but having their teeth at our throats here and now. A purely commercial success can in all eternity spin-off into new successes in more media. There should come an evening when Chewbacca moans but gets no response in a movie theatre that is only half full, you being there just to keep warm. There will be a day when the unholy *Gormenghast* falls over. A day, we must admit, that Mervyn Peake already predicted. And if nothing else we have to show some consideration to our own gnomes and trolls. Which makes it suitable for me to tie knots together. Satire of warnings from England, making a face to today and tomorrow at the same time, or as it is said in *Jake's Thing* by Kingsley Amis: "And a real fart of a fish to all those at home." In Sweden, Ann-Margret Dahlqvist-Ljungberg and many others have stubbornly continued the struggle by different artistic means. And with this she hasn't entirely forgotten sf. A connection from that positive group to the magical *Gormenghast* sphere could be made, if you think about the neofeminist worship of witches which has little to do with Margaret Murray's studies of witches. /MM wrote about witches./ (Those are rather thoroughly rejected by now.) But when we now allow the concept of science fiction to become fuzzy at the edges, we close the gates and gather with the inner circle, sf-fandom, where witches may sometimes be welcome, and also Kingsley Amis - just as long as they imagine themselves to be "trufans", true sf fans.

As said, Swahn knew fandom, and here he calls those who like sf literature trufans, but those who like witches, horror, fantasy aren't really trufen. (I'd say an alternate definition of trufan is someone



"very active and fannish".) Anyway, there's something to that sf is *the core of fantastic literature*. If you analyse it in set theory terms you note that *sf can describe everything horror and fantasy can, but the reverse doesn't apply*, ie fantasy and horror is a subset.

As has been noted in several other articles previously, 1953 was the year sf "arrived" to the eastern part of the Scandinavian peninsula. There was a positive curiosity about this new futuristic literature in the beginning, but everyone wasn't all that enthusiastic as we see in this review, "*Scientific sagas*" in Expressen June 9 1953, The reviewer Bernt Bernholm is unknown to me and Google gives no clues, and he talks about our first sf anthology (see book cover), *Adventures of Tomorrow*. He writes:

One day a rocketship from Earth landed on Mars. The men stepped out and expected a magnificent welcome from the Martians, because it was the first time an Earth spaceship had arrived to the neighbour planet. But the Martians treated the crew with a remarkable indifference, almost as it had been just a bunch of fools. Finally the Earthmen were locked up in a building that showed to be an insane asylum, set up especially for travelers who regularly arrived from different planets in space. This is a small sample of sf, a genre which is immensely popular in USA and which can be translated as scientific fantasies. Some representative pieces are now here in Swedish in the anthology *Adventures of Tomorrow*, where the world of tomorrow is exposed in a series of bizarre, nightmarish pictures. You may come to think of insane writings, where form and presentation seems reasonably sane but the contents is insane. But here we have fully healthy authors who write for normal people, and that it's work equally profitable for the first as it is appreciated by the last is due to that no one can 100% surely reject all things made up as improbable in the future. You never know, such things may happen. And indeed things happen. On Mars - the favourite planet of all sf authors - people have constructed a vehicle powered with the brain's own electricity and by which you can travel to to any place at any time, even to places that only exist in novels or in the imagination. Provided someone has thought of or imagined an existing or non-existing place you can visit it. Of course they have solved the problem of making synthetic life, in other words abandon death. A science family is left behind on Mars, the wife and children die, and being lonely - the planet is for once uninhabited - the husband constructs living copies of them. And they live happily ever after until the man dies, but his work has eternal life. And another story is about how an atomic war can crush humanity by changing its genome and make individuals unfit for life, the author thus keeping at least somewhat to the firm ground of reality. Unusually far away from there, even for sf, is the drama of the mysterious devil in East Lupton. A drifter is chained to a can, containing a substance that makes people unconscious at half a mile's distance, but it doesn't affect those carrying the can. So he walks around in a world of unconscious people until he can free himself from the bugger. The eternal display of fantastic adventures and parade of distorted images, from pure lumps of protoplasm to individuals with four eyes and twelve-fingered hands, is tiresome reading in the end. Making a little bit fun of the genre hadn't been unfitting for the authors. Perhaps there is a pinch of irony in the story of the asylum for the Mars travelers. The unfriendly treatment explained by a psychiatrist on Mars is that the guests from space and their rocketship as materialised hallucinations. The is undoubtedly a sensible position. If someone presents himself as Martian here on Earth, just arrived with a "singletrav", we would lock him up. At least for the time being.

Vetenskapliga sagor

En dag landade ett raketkepp från jorden på Mars. Männan steg ur och väntade sig ett magnifikt mottagande från marsianerna, för det var första gången ett jordiskt rymdskepp anlänt till grannplaneten. Men marsinvånarna behandlade besättningen med en märkvärdig likgiltighet, nästan som om den bestått av idel dårar. Till slut spärrades jordmännen in i en byggnad som mycket riktigt visade sig vara ett sinnessjukhus speciellt uppfört för de resenärer som med jämna mellanrum anländer från olika planeter i världsrymden.

Det här är ett litet stickprov på science fiction, en litteraturart som är oerhört populär i USA och som väl bäst och enklast kan översättas med vetenskapliga fantasier. Några representativa smakbitar föreligger på svenska i antologin "*Morgondagens äventyr*", där framtidens värld exponeras i en rad bisarra, mar-drömslika bilder. Man kan komma att tänka på sinnessjukas skrivelser, där form och framställning verkar tämligen vettig men innehållet är helt vansinnigt.

Men här är det alltså fullt friska författare som skriver för normala människor, och att sysselsättningen är lika inkomstbringande för de förra som uppskattad av de senare bekräftar först på att ingen med hundra procentig säkerhet kan avfärda alla påhitt som orimliga i framtiden. Man vet aldrig, sänt kan hända.

Och nog händer det saker. På Mars — alla science fiction-författares favoritplanet — har folket konstruerat en underbar farkost som drivs med hjärnans egen elektricitet och med vilken man kan färdas till vilken plats som helst i vilken tidsålder som helst, även till orter som bara finns i romaner eller i fantasin. Under förutsättning att någon tänkt på eller fantiserat om en existerande eller icke-existerande plats går det an att besöka den.

Naturligtvis har man löst problemet att framställa syntetiskt liv, att med andra ord avskaffa döden. En vetenskapsfamilj blir akterseglad från Mars, hustrun och barnen dör, och i sin ensamhet — planeten är obebodd för en gångs skull — konstruerar mannen identiska, levande kopior av dem. Och så lever de alla lyckliga, tills mannen dör. Hans verk däremot har evigt liv.

Om hur ett atomkrig kan bryta ned mänskligheten genom att förändra dess arvs massa och göra individer livsodugliga handlar en annan novell, vars författare alltså håller sig någotsånär på den nuvarande verklighetens fasta mark. Ovanligt långt därifrån, även för att vara science fiction, utspelar sig dramat om den mystiske djävulen i East Lupton. En luftare råkar bli fastkedjad vid en burk. Den innehåller ett ämne som gör folk tillfälligt medvetlösa på 300 m avstånd, men ämnet påverkar inte den som bär burken. Sålunda promenerar han omkring i en värld av medvetlösa människor tills han lyckas befria sig från eländet.

Det idoga uppradandet av fantastiska äventyr och paraden av mänskliga vrånbilder av olika slag, från rena protoplasmaklumpar till individer med fyra ögon och tolv-fingerade händer, är ganska tröttsam läsning i längden. En liten smula drift med genren hade inte missklätt författarna. Kanske finns det en nypa ironi i berättelsen om där-huset för Marsresenärerna. Den ogästvänliga behandlingen förklaras med att psykiaterna på Mars betraktar gästerna från världsrymden och deras raketplan som materialiserade hallucinationer. Det är onekigen en ganska vettig inställning. Om en figur presenterade sig som marsian här på jorden, just anländ med en "singletrav", skulle också vi spärra in honom. Atminstone än så länge.

— BERNT BERNHOLM

Was the world's first sf convention in Philadelphia in 1936 or in more organised form in Leeds in 1937? Some say neither, it was in the Royal Albert Hall, London, UK, in...1891!

Intermission had mentioned the "Vril" event before (eg in #84) and so have others. What's new is that the program book with more details and other documents on "The Vril-Ya Bazaar and Fête" has been found. The event was a fundraiser, for "The West End Hospital and the School of Massage and Electricity", based around an Edward Bulwer-Lytton novel, *The Coming Race* (1871)



"THE COMING RACE" AT THE ALBERT HALL

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vril> says it's a story involving a "subterranean world occupied by beings who seem to resemble angels.../calling themselves/ Vril-ya, have great telepathic and other parapsychological abilities...Their society is a technologically supported Utopia, chief among their tools being an "all-permeating fluid" called Vril, a latent source of energy...powers of the Vril include the ability to heal, change, and destroy beings and things; the destructive powers in particular are immense, allowing a few young Vril-ya children to destroy entire cities if necessary".

You can find the book here <https://archive.org/details/comingrace00lytt>. This Victorian science fiction novel apparently became very popular, enough so that it was thought to be a good idea to make a themed event around it! Bulwer-Lytton was in fact one of the most successful authors of his time. From "The Odd Origins of the World's first sf convention",

https://www.cracked.com/article_31795_the-odd-origin-of-the-worlds-first-sci-fi-convention.html "The influence of the author of *The Coming Race* is still powerful, and no year passes without the appearance of stories which describe the manners and customs of peoples in imaginary worlds, sometimes in the stars above, sometimes in the heart of unknown continents in Australia or at the Pole, and sometimes below the waters under the earth. The latest effort in this class of fiction is *The Time Machine*, by HG Wells."

Main organiser of the "Vril" event (as we may call it) was one Dr Herbert Tibbits, from the institutions that intended to benefit moneywise. Wikipedia has more info https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vril-Ya_Bazaar_and_Fete



Organiser Dr Herbert Tibbits

Tibbits was the founder of the London Massage and Galvanic Hospital, and the Vril-Ya Bazaar was one of a number of events he had produced as fundraisers for the hospital. For each, Tibbits recruited wealthy and socially prominent individuals as a host committee for the event. For the 1891 event, Tibbits chose as the theme the world created by Bulwer-Lytton in *The Coming Race*.... the novel had achieved widespread popularity, and some occultists claimed that Bulwer-Lytton had based his novel on an actual secret race that had mastered a limitless energy source... Suspended, and sometimes moving as if flying, above the crowd were mannequins costumed as the winged Vril-ya. Entertainments were presented that sought to evoke the mystical powers of the Vril-ya, with magic shows and a fortune-telling dog. Booths offered various products and handcrafts for sale, including Bovril, a meat extract that had been named, in part, for Vril power in *The Coming Race*. The event featured a young woman depicting Princess Zee, the heroine of the novel, who wore a black satin dress and tiara that featured electric lights. Words from Bulwer-Lytton's invented Vril language were used to describe features of the event, and attendees were provided with a brochure that included a Vril glossary to help them decipher the language. Guests were encouraged to wear costumes, and event organizers directed them to the firm John Simmons and Sons, historical costumiers to Queen Victoria, to view an array of *Coming Race* costumes, many sporting wings. The volunteer committee members wore various exotic costumes from a range of cultures and eras. The youngest child of Queen Victoria, Princess Beatrice

and her husband Prince Henry of Battenberg attended on the first day to officially open the event. The host committee that Tibbits recruited to help organize the event and staff the stalls included the Marchioness Dowager of Londonderry, the Countess of Cromarty and Lady Georgiana Spencer Churchill. The event was originally scheduled to run for only three days, but the organizers extended it for an additional two days, "due to popular demand". However, reviews of the event were unfavorable. Newspapers criticized decorations as badly constructed and shabby. A reviewer in the *Leeds Times* called it "a very sorry affair, inartistic, stupid ... a vulgar entertainment in the name of charity". Despite the extended run, the event was a financial failure. Tibbits had covered the costs associated with holding the event from his own funds, and the failure of the event to bring in expected revenues bankrupted him.



Much of this has been known before but the actual program book has now has been found! And it includes a map of how the Royal Albert Hall was set up for it. A reporter got the brilliant idea of simply going to the archive of the Royal Albert Hall! Together with the guide Liz Harper you can see this historical feat on Youtube,, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WAMAqa4bojM>

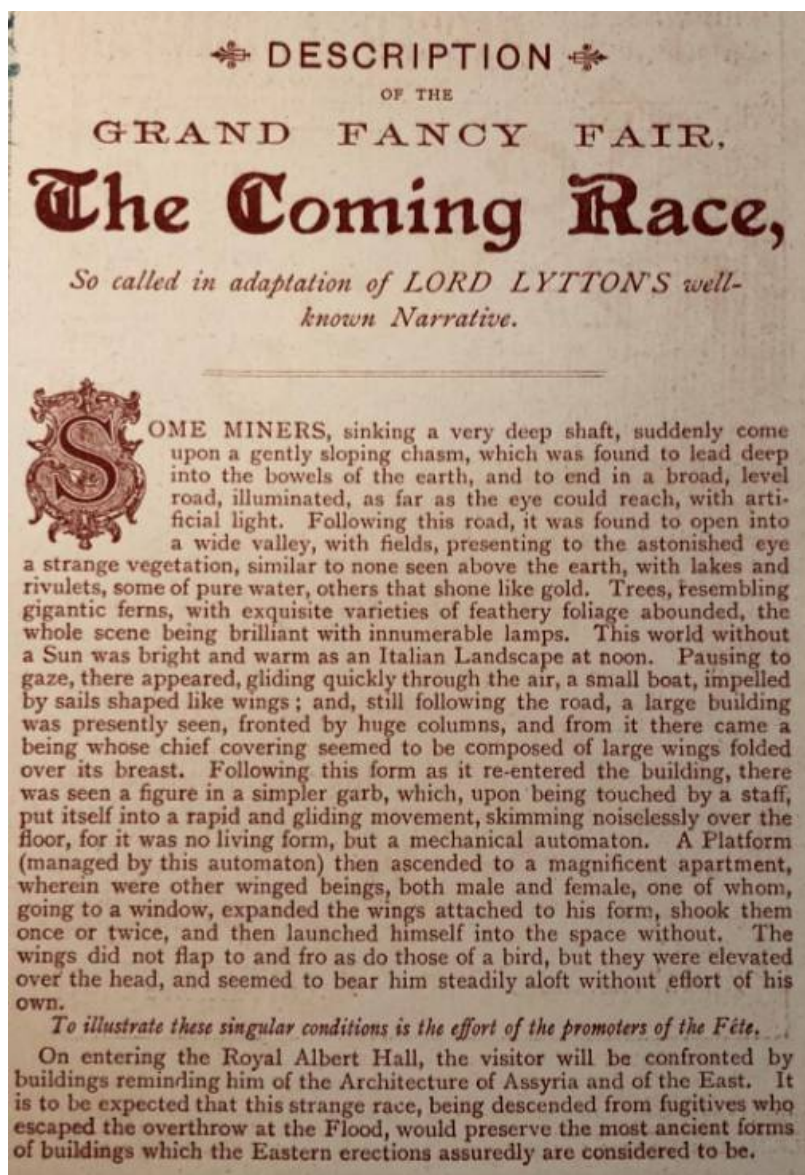
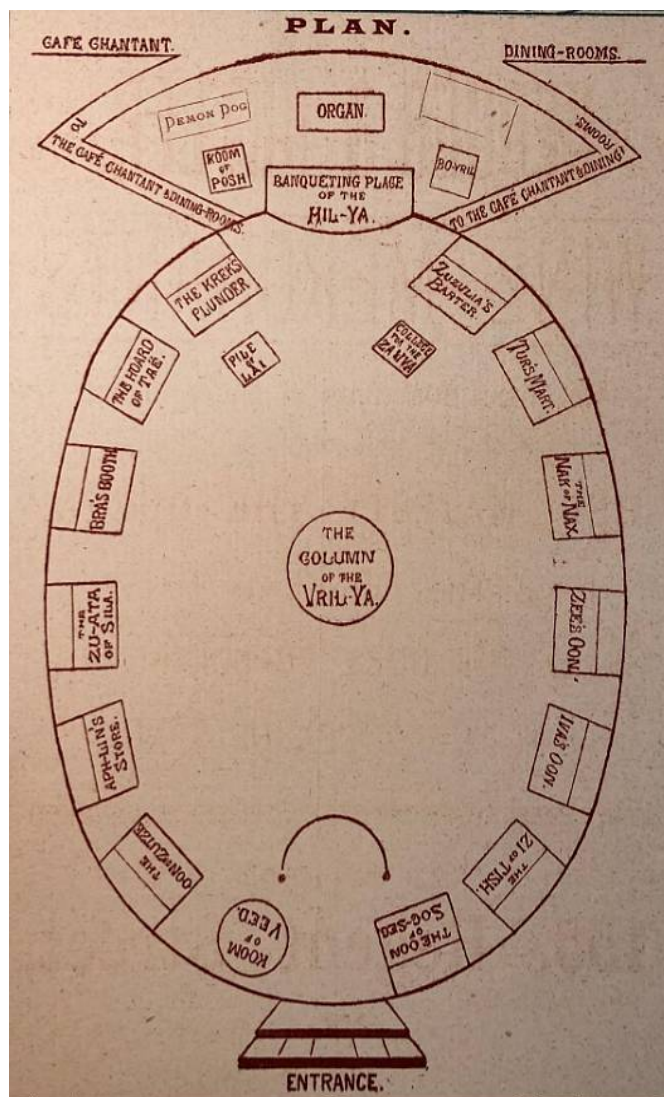
When the opened the box they didn't exactly exclaim "I see wonderful things!", like Howard Carter when opening Tutankhamun's tomb, but they did find the program book and other stuff. You can see the cover to the left. It looks rather well made and the contents go to 65+ pages, which for technical reasons means the total

length was at least 68 pages. (Printing would be done in increments of at least 4 pages, but 8, 16 or 32 is also possible.) Here are the contents of the program book:

CONTENTS.			
	PAGE.		PAGE.
Description and Origin of the Fete ..	7	Poem by Mr. Clement Scott ..	31
The Hospital and the School of Massage ..	8	Glossary of the Language of the Coming Race ..	32
The Patron and Patronesses of the Charities ..	9	Scene in the Gloom or Town ..	33
Special Methods of Aiding the Charities..	15	The "Oons" or Stalls Described ..	35
Plan of the Hall ..	19	A Dream of Zutze (Love) ..	44
Patronesses of the Fete ..	20	Entertainments ..	46
Honorary Stewards of the Fete ..	22	"The Doctor," by Mrs. Aylmer Gowing ..	51
The Arab Outpost. Mr. F. Goodall, R.A. ..	24	"Our James," by Mr. Wilson Barrett ..	53
Lord Tennyson's (Autograph) ..	25	"The Golden Age," by Miss H. F. Schweitzer..	57
Poem by Lady Wilde ..	26	"Ancestors of a Coming Race," by Louis Felbermann ..	58
"Charity" ..	27	Programme of Coldstream Guards Band ..	61
Poem by Her Excellency Madame Mijatovich ..	28	The Hall of Gluabs (Cafe Chantant) ..	63
Mr. Toole's Reminiscences ..	29	Various Entertainments ..	65

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Vril-Ya_Bazaar_programme_pages_from_RAH.pdf

The hall was decorated in antique style and around it was a series of booths offering different activities, usually dealing with the occult, mystical, weird and magic, as well as selling things, as I understand it. There was a stage for music performances and attendees were encouraged to dress up with inspiration from the novel.



Now, if we took an attendee of an sf con of today and used a time machine to send him (fandom still has a male majority, I guess guys like spaceships and robots more) back to 1891 he wouldn't feel too out of place! There would be activities in the booths and events on the stage and people all around him who read this crazy stuff. A page in the program book announces that one

Charles Bertram, a "celebrated prestidigitateur" ("finger magic", looked it up) will show "seance magique". Ladies will play the guitar and we'll enjoy aerial flights in a "grand display of flying figures", It seems to be it was dummies pulled along wires. There were Vril-Ya who had wings and could fly.

But it was all far from a success. The newspaper reviews were mixed, we learn. Here is room for more research if someone could look up old London newspapers, and it'd be nice if someone could scan the entire program book. The event far from raised funds, but lost money. That it was prolonged with two days could be an attempt to collect more entrance fees to save the economy.

Ticket cost was 10 shillings, or one crown, the decimal equivalent would be 50 pence (half a quid, in but in older days there were 320 pence to a pound, 20 shilling to a pound and 12 pence to a shilling). Since the ordinary worker earned a little over 1 pound/week (=100 "new" pence) 10 shillings (50p "new") was a substantial amount. You could however get a family ticket for 1 pound and 1 shilling (called a guinea, what Sherlock Holmes offered to get cab drivers to go faster) or a single ticket after



6 pm for half a crown, which would be 5 shilling. It seems The Vril-Ya Bazara and Fête was directed mostly to the upper echelons of society because of the ticket price.

It wasn't called science fiction at the time - terms like "scientific romances" or "fantastic voyages" were used - but there were a sort of fan movement around some fantastic literature. There were Edward Bellamy clubs founded, around this author's utopian novel *Looking Backward* (1888), according to Wikipedia a staggering 162 such clubs in the US alone! (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Looking_Backward) But there were also Vril societies, at least one (maybe more?), eg <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q3XLVHSwgOI> The Vril Society was established after Maria Orsic received communication from extraterrestrials who had once lived in what is now Sumeria. The word "vril" is said to come from the ancient Sumerian word "vri-ll", meaning God-like.

A side note: the language magazine *Språktidningen* says they'll run a letter to the editor by me in #2 this

spring. They wrote about "vril" in another meaning, and I explained the Bulwer-Lytton meaning and mentioned the Royal Albert Hall event in my letter.

If you're interested in the Bulwer-Lytton himself, you can watch this documentary: *A Man of Words - A documentary about the life of Edward Bulwer-Lytton*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KuP1dMsL5S8> or this *Exploring Vril, Edward Bulwer-Lytton and the Occultism of the Coming Race* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Q9SvQ-XrWc>

The meat extract Bovril was also inspired by the novel, taking its name from bovine + vril, and it had been launched just a few years earlier. It is still around, though one wonders when it will become targeted by fanatical vegetarians. (I have little sympathy for such. Humans evolved as omnivores, we need meat to be healthy, and animals lacking self-consciousness and can't be subjects of human ethics.) Another thing still being around is the Bulwer-Lytton Fiction Contest, which is about writing the worst or shall we say funniest story intro, <https://www.bulwer-lytton.com/> That Bulwer-Lytton gave the name to it is because he once started a novel (*Paul Clifford*, 1830):

It was a dark and stormy night.



Mailing Comments

EAPA but no N'APA mlg to comment for this. Consider joining an APA and do a fanzine! We need more fanzines. Sf-fandom isn't superhero costuming and computer games. It's writing, letters and fanzines!

William McCabe: You're right that Asimov's Foundation trilogy (the original three, much later follow-ups don't count) isn't action and I don't think only a "few" have read them. I know for instance that the Swedish translation sold 15 000 copies in the 1970's alone. (It was first published here as a serial in the 1950's magazine *Häpna!*) I haven't seen the TV version but I'm pessimistic about it. A previous Asimov movie *I, Robot* set a world record in Having Nothing To Do With The Book.. Hm, Asimov had some faults in his review of 1984. (I believe AIs soon will be used to survey people from all those CCTVs!) ☐ ☒ A good site for free (and mostly pirated) E-books: <https://book4you.org/> ☐ ☒ The point with Rob Hansen's *Bixelstrasse* book is that he takes information from many *different* sources. ☐ ☒ I think that many who identified themselves as communists even in the 1950s, after the crimes of Stalin had been exposed, were *still* apologetic towards him. ☐ ☒ Small seeds could actually drift through interstellar space, because they'd be small enough to be affected by solar wind. ☐ ☒ I believe bases on the Moon or Mars could get much material locally (the Moon has water in craters at the poles for instance, and Mars has been known to have water for a long time). Energy can be had from solar

power or small nuclear reactors. An important point with setting up a base on the Moon or Mars is to *stretch our horizons and what our technology can do*. The last will lead to a lot of spin-off technical development which will find valuable use even on Earth.

John Thiel: No, I don't like telephones either (I haven't used one for a very long time). A phone call more often disturbs than not and vocal communication is inferior to text, where you have time to think of what to say. ☐ ☐ now have small rockets to separate comments! ☐ ☐ The main Danish sf club is also a "circle" - "SF Cirklen". ☐ ☐ Did you meet John Lennon?

Garth Spencer: That agrarian societies having more words for things in nature and in their village is only natural. They'll have fewer words for electronics, different parts of a car, advanced physics etc. ☐ ☐ The narcissist manipulation presentation was interesting. I notice that much of it is what one Justin Trudeau has done to truck drivers, protesting against forced vaccination (which doesn't work against Omicron) and government tracking "passports". This guy has gaslighted the truckers, called them racist (while he himself was a racist black-facing), tried to make them feel guilt, done the silent treatment, refusing to speak to them, etc.

Henry Grynsten: An interesting *Wild Ideas*, as usual! (ABBA Yabba Do!) I suspect Churchill didn't give a source for his democracy statement - because there wasn't one. The "someone has said..." phrasing could come from modesty ("let's just pretend that I'm not coining these incredibly profound words..."). ☐ ☐ Anyway, since the topic is democracy and politics it becomes very difficult to comment, due to possible controversies, the many details, and in the end most of it is a matter of opinion. (For instance, I don't for a moment believe that the USSR had among the fastest growing economies



The Man in the Moon makes a phase, and get four stars for it. Art: Lars "LON" Olsson.

in the mid 20 century! Soviet statistics were propaganda and notoriously untrustworthy. In a command economy you fudge reports to follow the 5-year plan and make the central committee happy. And even if we disregard this, it's meaningless to measure "growth" from near zero! That was where the USSR started, as a primitive, low-production agrarian state, just through losing a war, having a bloody revolution and a devastating civil war. The clumsiness of command economy and the inability of communism to meet peoples' needs was obvious all along and didn't just pop up with Brezhnev.) ☐ ☐ As politics is difficult to cover, I'll *instead* try to detail some of my own general views. I probably agree with about 75% of what Henry writes - among the dissenting 25% is his strange claims that high taxes are generally good. Through the years I have in different elections voted for all four of the normal non-socialist parties in Sweden (those abbreviated M, L, C and KD) but never for those calling themselves socialist or environmentalist (S or MP) and absolutely not the narrow-minded, national chauvinist SD party (the "Sweden democrats"). I define my views more in philosophical terms than political, and more precisely what is called rule utilitarianism. I note however that the Wikipedia definition (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rule_utilitarianism) is wrong, just as so *many* things in Wikipedia. When I studied philosophy at Stockholm University our lecturers as well as our text books was very clear that utilitarianism ("the most good for the highest number") isn't deontological duty ethics - ie adhering to fixed rules and duties. Rule utilitarianism is consequence ethics, seeing what actions *leads to* and you follow *rules of thumb* leading to desirable outcomes. "Rules of thumb" differs from ordinary rules, a rule of thumb isn't strict and you may break it if the reasons are strong enough. What "good outcomes" are is too complicated to discuss here, let us

just say it's a decent mix of many factors like freedom, happiness, health, much resources ("wealth"), knowledge, and things like that - the exact mix could be discussed. And here the "Western Democracies" underachieve. The word "democracy" means "rule by the people", but what we have is rule by politicians = *politocracy*. Politicians only have a more or less weak mandate from their people. The "rule by the people" consists of that you may every fourth year – only! - choose between a limited number of fixed packages, put together by small groups called "parties", and in these "parties" by an even tinier group at the top. We shouldn't abandon this system, but due to its major deficiencies (which Churchill clearly saw) the *scope* of what the rule by politicians can do must be limited and more power left *to the individual*. An individual, a person, is definitely people and that's more of democracy = rule by people. People should have more control over their lives, as long as such control doesn't infringe on the control of others over *their* lives. (That would be contradictory. Ethics demand universality, it must be the same for all.) But I'm not much for the Libertarians' "night watchman state". That's going too far. A government should also provide good health care and schooling, support those worst off, have a defence, etc. Taxes should be lower. There is evidence that when taxes reach beyond ca 30% of GDP growth begin to suffer. 30% is still enough to cover all services society should have. Taxes above that tend to go to "transferring" resources from one group to another. That's inefficient, hurts growth and is ethically dubious. Those worst off should receive extra help, but the idea "if you produce more we'll take the surplus, if you produce less you'll get extra" clearly stops growth. Getting resources to grow is crucial and what will make life better in the long run, not juggling money between groups. Also consider that individuals handling their own money tend to use resources more wisely than politicians. A politician is a) far away from the work floor where things happen, b) is almost never an expert - and often even totally incompetent - about where the tax money is poured, c) is directed by his party's dogmatic "program", usually utopian theories, d) has no incentive to be careful with money since politicians have a bottomless treasure chest (taxes can always rise!) and don't risk his own money, e) has no real responsibility - risking only not to be re-elected next time, upon which the politician gets a well-paid retreat seat or signs a million dollar book deal, and f) taxes also begets expensive bureaucracy which interferes with people's lives, the thing that should be avoided. Give more power to people themselves, the private citizen, the individual. If we respect and empower the individual, he/she will become happier and more creative - and that is something we *all* benefit from. So how do we do that? There are many possibilities. The constitutions of countries must have built in break pads, things saying "No matter how much you want it, how big the majority is, you can't do this!". There should be a real constitutional court which can make sure such break pads are respected. (A bit like in the US supreme court. In comparison, Sweden only as a "constitutional committee" of the parliament, which may only give recommendations and slaps on the wrist as their rulings don't have to be followed.) I also think we should have more direct influence by voters over politicians so they are more dependent on the electorate's wishes, rather than utopian party ideologies. More direct democracy should be easier with the Internet. We should have more "person elections", ie less party programs, so the elected feel more of personal responsibility. One very worrying thing is the growth of bureaucracy, which is an extremely destructive force. Bureaucrats, paragraphs, regulations, endless forms to fill in, all statistics and data governments gather and juggle – all that are the means by which the individual is fenced in. We have a growth of regulations (measured in text length) of just over 2%/year, a rate at which strangling regulations increase tenfold in 100 years. Society will drown in bureaucracy, forms and paragraphs! My suggestion is: *for every new law and regulation adopted 200% of OLD regulations must be removed!* Those suggesting new regulations must pair it with pointing out the double amount of old ones being removed. (Counted in text length.) That could turn back bureaucracy inflation and lead to shrinking numbers of government bureaucrats. For insight into the evil of bureaucracy I recommend the books by Northcote Parkinson who coined Parkinson's Law: *work expands so as to fill the time available for its completion*. There are several Parkinson laws, see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parkinson%27s_law □ □ A worrying fandom note: it seems regulation craziness sneaks into our sf world through...con bureaucracy! Note eg hypocritical "Codes of Conduct". Concoms are our red tape riders and pencil pushers! Beware!) --AE

LATE NOTE: Intermission is a *perzine* we learn in the listings for the grand FAAn Award <https://efanzines.com/TIR/Incompleat2021.pdf> Investigating it further I find it isn't because this publication is...*perverse*, but because it's a possible to vote for it in that FAAn category, meaning *personalzine*. If you decide my *personal sin* is worth your trouble or even...vote for Ike, deadline is now extended to March 11. See <https://corflu.org/Corflu39/FAAn%20Awards%20Ballot%202022.pdf>