

Shards of Babel

Shards Of Babel 21 is the Summer Holidays issue of the European SF newsletter published by Roelof Goudriaan and Lynne Ann Morse of Noordwal 2, 2513 EA Den Haag, the Netherlands.

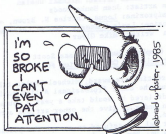
This issue is printed and partly typed at Lynne Ann's old homestead: Madison, Wisconsin, USA. This makes the artwork this issue (by Brad Foster) ring even more true than usual!

We try to appear every six weeks: news for SOB 22 should reach us before the end of October. Anything hot or juicy can be phoned to us: between 10.00 and 22.00 the number is 31 (70) 647 340. Subscription rates, for those who have no news to share, are \$5 or Fl.13,- for six issues. Subs up to \$10 accepted.

If you send money by cheque, please remember that there is a bank charge! Money preferably in cash (all Western currencies accepted).

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Help in providing the essentials for producing a fanzine, such as typers, icecream and pizza, from Dick Russell and Diane Martin. Thanks!



FAN PRESS

The latest novel by Swedish SF author Börje Crona is the cause of a feud in Swedish SF fandom. Reason of this: the novel was changed (and to no improvement) in many spots -- by the typesetters!

VARLD I FARA (Endangered World), as the novel is titled, is published by the fan-owned publishing house "LFF", and the type-setters working there are taken from the ranks of fandom. The change that infuriated Börje Crona most appears on page 142, where the typesetters have spontaneously inserted the expression (excuse us!) "bloody cunt-bastards". Crona considered preventing the novel from being distributed, but settled for publishing small adverts in Swedish dailies in which the changes are condemned.

Now of course everyone agrees that type-setters shouldn't spontaneously alter texts, don't we? Wrong: since the type-setters are fans, some fanzines have begun to appear from their friends defending the practice, as well as zines and statements from others that take the opposite side (Sam J Lundwall: "You simply don't do a thing like that with a book!").

This wasn't the first time that books published by LFF have been altered by the type-setters. Some type-setting sessions of the publishing house have been described as "oneshot evenings". It should be noted that the responsible book editors are innocent: due to delays and lack of time they haven't always had time to proof-read the books before publication, but relied instead on the basic proof-reading done during type-setting.

The translator Inge Larsson has recently complained in public about the sf publisher LFF. The publisher is sometimes late with translation payments. Mr. Larsson has issued an announcement urging others who have had similar problems to join forces with him, and not to accept further translations until the old ones are paid. LFF's John-Henri Holmberg has answered that LFF has had some cash-flow problems due to recent, big investments -- a new typesetting-machine, for example. He also added that Inge had extremely bad luck with needing/demanding the money at a time when there was none. The problems will solve themselves later this autumn, Mr. Holmberg concluded. Mr. Inge still doesn't seem satisfied, and the debate will go on. (Arvid Engholm)

We were sad to hear about the death of Marjorie Brunner, wife of John Brunner. She passed away 5 August 1986, after having suffered a stroke earlier this summer. She will be missed.

Czechoslovakia

Lo! Spectra, which was the most active SF club in our country, metamorphosed into a club exclusively for school children. Its leader, Vladimír Veverka, left the Fan Activity Coordination Board. "I finally have some spare time for my new club, Studio Clone," he said. The new club contains many members from the old Spectra.

In addition to the increasing number of fanzines, there are new types of publications for which I use the term "fanthologies". They are anthologies with a small print run, containing Czech or foreign stories issued by fans or clubs and printed by mimeo or offset. The most popular is Pavel Kosatík's fanthology series, "Flights in Forbidden Space", the quality of which exceeds the official anthologies. Zdeněk Rámpas' fanthology of the best Parcon '85 stories also appeared this year, along with a fanthology of my own containing Anglo-American new wave.

As you may have read in SOB 20, the long-awaited fanzine IKÁRIE published its first issue. This is the first Czech fanzine that can be considered a semi-professional magazine. Its staff, which includes Jaroslav Olsá as editor-in-chief, consists of a couple of specialists: O. Neff as film editor, P. Kosatík as Czech-SF editor, and I. Adamovič as foreign SF editor, among others. Unfortunately, the problems of printing continue to be great, so a happy future for IKÁRIE still lays in the mists of unborn time. (Ivan Adamovič)

France

The weekly magazine of the French railroads, *La Vie du Rail*, with a print-run of about 278,000 copies, is publishing a series of eight SF short stories this summer. This is the first time that VdR publishes any fiction; the whole scheme was cooked up by Stéphane Nicot, who had been writing SF reviews for them, and added to it an interview with G.J. Arnaud, author of the "Compagnie des Glaces" series -- about an icebound future where railways are the only means of transportation, and indeed of survival (30 novels so far!). The stories in VdR are all original works by French writers, and include some railway element.

(Pascal Thomas)

In this issue

The 1986 Hugos: page 2. Editorial on Eurocon: page 3. Terry Carr & Carl Brandon, Jr.: page 465. A critique of American criticism: page 6. Video mania in Prague: page 7. General Products feud in Japan: page 8. Survey of Italian magazines: page 9. Feedback (letters): page 10.

Best Novel: Orson Scott Card, Ender's Game
 Best Novella: Roger Zelazny, "Twenty-Four Views of Mt. Fuji, by Hokusai"
 Best Noveller: Harlan Ellison, "Paladin of the Lost Hour"
 Best Short Story: Frederik Pohl, "Fermi and Frost"
 Best Non-Fiction: Tom Weiler, Science Made Stupid
 Best Dramatic Presentation: Back to the Future
 Best Professional Editor: Judy-Lynn Del Ray
 Best Professional Artist: Michael Whelan
 Best Fan Artist: Joan Hanks-Woods
 Best Semiprozine: Locus, Charles N. Brown, editor
 Best Fanzine: Lan's Lantern, George Laskowski, editor
 Best Fan Writer: Mike Glyer

John W. Campbell Award: Melissa Scott
 (from Articles of Confederation #6)

In accepting his award, Michael Whelan told the audience to applaud the other Professional Artist nominees as well. Then he declared he would take a year's sabbatical from the Hugos, in order to give the other artists a chance to win the award.

Lester Del Rey refused to accept the posthumous award for Judy-Lynn Del Rey. In a letter read at the Hugo ceremony, Mr. Del Rey said that his wife did not believe in posthumous awards, and that he did not believe that she would have received this award had she not died.

Harlan Ellison wasn't even going to be at Confederation -- however, he was presiding at an auction held during the convention to raise funds for the estate of Manley Wade Selman. When Mr. Ellison came to collect his award, he insisted that he didn't have anything to say. But he still managed to tell the audience something meaningful to think about.

Attendees of Confederation also got to choose the sites of

the 1988 and 1989 Worldcons. Each voter had to pay an additional site selection fee, but we heard that there were a record number of voters this year. The winners -- New Orleans for 1988, and Boston (the only official candidate) for 1989. New Orleans drew 53% of the votes, giving it a surprising victory in the first round. Second in the race was the "Bernadette Triangle" bid with 25% of the votes cast. New Orleans' Guest of Honour will be Donald Wollheim. (Lynne Ann Morse)

Holland in 1990

Holland in 1990 sold 270 presupposing memberships during Confederation. That was beyond the most optimistic expectations of the bidding committee, which travelled to Atlanta along with the bid's public relations person, Johan-Martin Flaton, and the convention building, IJssena Charlotte Kanermans.

The Holland in 1990 presence included a table in the main hall from which to sell presupposing memberships and t-shirts, a handsome exhibit from the Netherlands Congress Center in the exhibition hall, and bidding parties on Friday, Saturday and Sunday night during the convention.

By Sunday afternoon, every button and t-shirt had sold out. Some additional presupposing memberships were taken, until receipts ran out. Offers of help for Holland in 1990 came in various forms. Belligerents entertained the party crowd on Saturday night. People who offered to throw parties at their local cons were referred to the US agents of the bid. There were offers of advice for the bid given to the main committee. On Sunday night of the convention, the Perth in '94 bid donated two huge boxes of party supplies to the party.

Holland in 1990 gained a lot of support this convention. Its appearance at Confederation, which looked a lot like a grand opening for "the American campaign" was a Success. (Lynne Ann Morse)

Nasacon

THE FANNISH CHALLENGER
 Ahvrid Engholm

Some people might wonder what fannishness is like in northern Europe. Ice-bears with beanie caps? Deep-frozen conflict? Beautiful Scandinavian blondes distracting the faithful fanned from his important Misogogic Tasks?

Well, it isn't exactly like that. Swedish fandom is holding three to four conventions a year, usually one of a bigger size and the rest almost entirely fannish minicons. The longest-running convention is Nasacon, a fannish summer convention. Nasacon 7 attracted 80 to 85 attendees, and Goss was the old-time fan and book editor Jörgen Petersén -- the rule that veteran fans usually become book editors carries a lot of weight, even in Sweden.

Swedish fandom is growing: from 50 fanzines in 1976 to 300 or 400 fanzines now, with the number of cons increasing from one to about four conventions yearly. As a consequence, fandom here depends on its neofans. The neofans are the fans of the future, mind you. We try to attract them to our small fannish conventions, too -- so even fannish conventions over here need files and serious panels. However, we keep even the serious panels lighthearted. One of the files at Nasacon was "The Rocky Horror Picture Show", a cult film showing many fannish facets. Another item was a discussion about nuclear power, joyfully inspired by Chernobyl, of course. We were sitting in our protective suits, choking from radio-active dust, and wondered how some North-American papers could publish stories that half the Swedish population was being evacuated. Another serious item was imported from the USA: Bill Johns, an American fan known from Moscon, has been living in Stockholm on a research grant the past year, and he delivered a brilliant speech about "What NASA did wrong with Challenger (But Nasacon Didn't)" and other space issues. By the way, Nasacon is based after the Stockholm suburb it is held in -- Nacka-Saltjärn (Naden -- and not for any American institution).

The fannish programme items were numerous. There was the traditional game of "Meteorball", an improved version of softball where you are "disintegrated" rather than "out". Truefans consider this an improvement, as "disintegrated" takes a second longer to pronounce than "out", thus giving the player an extra second to reach the base.

Another programme item was the Great Peanut Race. As the British reader will realize, the idea for this race has been borrowed from the "Pork Pie" races. Since a peanut is considerably smaller than a pork pie, the rules for this competition are to transport the nut across a table rather than the floor of a big room. Any original contraption used for this is permissible...

Other attractions were the Vagon Poetry competition; the "Just a minute" panel (talk for a minute without hesitating, repeating or straying from the subject); "The Pun Panel", "Nasacon 42", a fannish play about Nasacon 35 years in the future; "Feed the BEH", where one had to throw potatoes in the hungry jaws of a BEH, and a good music show with synth and reggae music.

Summed up, we had a jolly good time, ice-bears, cold coffee, blondes and all.

"Pride goeth before..." and Welcome!

Since Eurocon in Zagreb, I am now the proud owner of a heavy block of dark green transparent plastic, handed over to me by WORLD SF president Gianfranco Viviani. It is World SF's HARRY HARRISON AWARD:

"For improving the Status of Science Fiction Internationally."

Thank you -- this award means something to me.

It was made out to "Roelof Goudriaan", but who cares? Locus thinks I'm Belgian; and in the Confederation newsletter a notice appeared that my name, "Roelof Goudriaan", had been misspelled in the programme guide. It should have been "Roelof Goudriaan". These things happen...

This issue of SOB will be the first one a lot of fans, especially American fans, will see. We're sending out some 300 samples to people who might be interested in European SF. For those people: the editorial policy of SOB is to cover news about SF & fandom worldwide, with the exception of Northern America. We do not exclude USA news because we have any negative sentiments about the USA (on the contrary) but there are already fanzines like File 770 and SF Chronicle that cover USA news in every sort of detail.

Next issue, we hope to be home again, and working with a new word processor. (the easy life!) Enjoy and, if you like the issue, please respond. (Roelof Goudriaan)

the son of Brandon

by John-Henri Holmberg

"Look, kid," Carl said to me one of those times. "Don't let it bother you. Remember I'm not really here. I'm really just a figment of your imagination. Or maybe a pigment of Terry's." And he laughed his snickering laugh while I winced in pain. Carl's puns were always ghodawful. But then, I never really had much talent in that particular respect.

Am I going too fast? Something missing? Okay. Let's do it over. This time, I'll try to take it from the top.

You see, I used to be a good fan and true, but kind of small. Like thirteen. Now, thirteen is a perfectly good age in more respects. And if we get into the Golden Age of science fiction, it's even a bit ripe. But in early 1963, when I walked into my first convention and found that all those other youngsters were not only older than I, but positively grown-up, and in some cases perhaps even over twenty -- I was crushed.

At this time I had believed that I was safely through my rite of passage: I had mailed out my first couple issues of fanzines. I had received the first couple of condescendingly kind letters from a couple of obligatory BNFs. (Although not until years later when I had grown into one of those BNFs -- automatically winding up on the mailing list of every neo's first illegible and ghodawful efforts and feeling the urge to be totally honest for once while simultaneously struggling to think of at least one reasonable relevant nice phrase -- did I realize quite how condescending, kind, or obligatory my own first loes had been.) I had joined the local fan group and here I was at my first science fiction con.

And they were all so tall, so adult, so unapproachable. Maybe a few of them even shaved every day!

So I went home and stared at my trusty typewriter. A day or perhaps a couple of months later, a recently garfated former Swedish BNF turned up on my doorstep. He did not seem irrevocably disconcerted by my excessive youth, and said to me, "Kid, do as I tell you and I'll make you a Secret Master of Fandom!"

This, it turned out, was not totally true. What he really had in mind was to be a SMOF himself, using me as a practical front so he wouldn't have to type too many pages himself. So I got saddled with editing, typing and pasting up his fanzine, the Swedish edition of the then-famous SCIENCE FICTION TIMES. At about the same time my kindly local fan club held its annual general meeting, and the normal kind of discussion occurred. Like this:

Chairman: "Okay, so we'll re-elect me and the rest of the gang. But how about an Official Editor? So resigned half a year ago, and we haven't gotten an issue out since long before then."

Honorable Secretary: "Oh no. No way. I've got better things to do."

Everybody else: "Gotta run. Nice meeting. Keep it up."

Never having witnessed this ritual before, I remained both seated and silent. This, of course, was my undoing.

Chairman: "But how about our newest member here? He's already published a great fanzine! Whaddya say, kid?"

Me: "What? Me? Why, well..."

Chairman: "Great! So that's settled. Any further business?"

Which is how I also got to edit the then-equally-famous SCIENCE FICTION FORUM for the Scandinavian Science Fiction Society, grand names indeed considering that the Society could boast of perhaps 35 members in Stockholm and another ten in the rest of Scandinavia. But still.

Both of these fanzines were extremely serious and at least tried, bravely, to be constructive as

well. FORUM published intriguing essays such as Mr. Bengt-Olof Ringberg's 60-page analysis, "Some Notes on Astronomy and Science in Edward Hamilton's Captian Future Novels" (no, I wouldn't kid you on a thing like this; it really was in there), while SCIENCE FICTION TIMES published, among other titillating news items, a translation of an interminable essay dealing issue by issue with the contents of STARTLING STORIES, which by then had been defunct for 10 years and had incidentally never been available in Sweden anyway.

At some point during the late autumn, I felt myself on the verge of stupefied suffocation. I was managing a monthly TIMES, and a more or less bi-monthly FORUM, and I also went along with my possibly insane, former-BNF sponsor in reviving another fanzine, UNION SF. It purported to be the official organ of Science Fiction Union Scandinavia, a horrible, but happily since many years defunct attempt to organize fans in Sweden along the lines pioneered by Science Fiction Club Deutschland.

This, I thought, was not the road to becoming the Secret Master of Fandom. Actually, it felt more like the road to total madness -- not to mention disenchantment even with science fiction, the production of which I had so far, along with Arthur C. Clarke, felt deeply to be the ultimate human endeavour.

So I sat down, and I started to read or reread the scudily paper box full of old and mostly foreign fanzines, which my kindly benefactors among the established BNFs had given me instead of throwing out. I came back with glazed eyes and a new outlook on the world, for I had discovered fabulous Sherkely fandom.

Among the old fanzines in the box were a small stack of the Terry Carr and Ron Ellik FANACS and a few odd copies of INRUENDO, VOID, and LIGHTHOUSE. This was enough. I was entranced, filled with a sense of wonder equal at least to that I remembered from the time I first read HAVE SPACE SUIT -- WILL TRAVEL when I was nine. If this was what fandom could be, then why was I jerking around with all this Swedish junk?

So I pondered the obviously severe problems facing me. This was in the early Fall of 1963. I was in Sweden and had just turned fourteen. What I yearned for was Berkeley, California, in 1958. To go there, I would have to enroll in the university, which I would probably not be allowed to do even if I could fix the five years and five thousand miles separating me from my Mecca of fanish existence.

Simply going, then, was not the solution. This would take more devious means than even lots of money, a faked birth certificate, and a time machine.

Which is how Carl was reborn.

Carl Joshua Brandon, as every true fan should know, was a giant among men and fan alike and one of the pillars of Berkeley fandom in the mid-fifties. He published brilliant fanish parodies of more or less famous mundane literary works, from novels such as THE BNF OF 12 and ON THE ROAD, through plays like THE PURPLE PASTURES to short stories like "The Daring Young Fan on the Flying Trapeze" and others. Had Carl lived longer, we would all have been enriched by his work-in-progress, the FANTASY TALES. But alas, this was not to be.

Sometime in the dark nights preceding SoLaCon, the 1958 Worldcon in Los Angeles, a small band of culprits including Terry Carr, Dave Pike and Ron Ellik decided to kill Carl off. And although occasional posthumous pieces were unearthed years later, and published, this was in effect the end of Carl Brandon.

This horrible act, of course, should have ren-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

I had the good fortune to be invited as Fan Guest Of Honour for the 1986 Eurocon in Zagreb, Yugoslavia, which enabled us to get to know a lot of fans from Yugoslavia and other parts of Europe, and to strengthen some other, already existing friendships.

Eurocon seemed in many places organized at the last possible moment, but chairman Krsto Mažuranić had everything well under control, and the end result was a very enjoyable convention: an excellent film programme drawing hundreds of people (who could see BLADE RUNNER a.o. for the price of a cup of coffee) in the cinema of the students' Centre, and a varied set of talks and panels with people like Joe Haldeman, Gerry Webb, Gianfranco Viviani and others. Mellow and relaxed in atmosphere.

Rather than a con report, I'll focus on two subjects: future Eurocons, and the European SF Achievement Awards.

Eurocon 1988

One of the decisions made at the business meeting of the European SF Society in Zagreb was the location of the 1988 Eurocon. I knew of two bids: the Glasgow bid chaired by Bob Jewett, which had announced its candidacy well in advance, and a bid for Budapest, Hungary, which surprised us two weeks before the Zagreb meeting. The status of both bids was rather unclear.

During the Zagreb meeting, we heard that Budapest had been promised the 1988 Eurocon at the 1985 Euro-conference in Fayence, France! As Jean-Paul Cronin was the decision to give Budapest the 1988 Eurocon had been made in Fayence on two grounds: one, the fact that neither Bob Jewett nor Colin Fine had responded to letters of inquiry about the Glasgow bid, sent out just before Fayence; and two, that the Hungarians couldn't get the 1987 bid they originally bid for!

Bob Jewett had just moved house, so didn't receive the first letter. Colin Fine received the info about Fayence much too late to do anything with it (Fayence was organized with a couple of weeks' notice), and didn't interpret this as a request to supply info about the Glasgow bid; this period will probably remain slightly fuzzy.

But whatever the case, neither ESFS officials nor the concon of the Hungarian bid made any public announcement after Fayence! As a result, no-one knew about this, neither Shards Of Babel nor the Glasgow people. As a consequence, the Glasgow people continued their bid! This in turn was not known to the officials of the European SF Society, until publication in SOL...

Results: at the Zagreb meeting, the 1988 Eurocon went to Budapest, with six votes against three (who did not feel bound by the decision made in Fayence).

Communication to the ESFS was probably not made easier either by the fact that the position of general secretary for Western Europe changed hands: Jean-Paul Cronin was forced by a too busy professional life to resign, and was succeeded by the Belgian fan Joseph Vanden Borre. Unfortunately, since this also happened at Fayence and since Vanden Borre has not been in touch with people since, no-one knew about this, either!

Summarized: communication of the European SF Society will have to be improved drastically if the ESFS wants to have any kind of unifying influence.

Apart from the way in which Hungary won the Eurocon, Budapest deserves consideration. The Hungarian SF Society is now an official organization in Hungary, and much of the red tape that made earlier attempts for a Eurocon fold are by this no longer a problem. The Budapest bid can offer the facilities of the Budapest Novotel (317 rooms) and the Budapest Convention Centre (main hall to seat 1300; 5 smaller halls to seat 30 to 270 people). They are campaigning to get the 1988 World SF meeting also to Budapest. No details are known about the programme, yet. Address for information is: Hungarian SF Society, PO Box 514, H-1374 Budapest 3, Hungary.

At the same meeting, Wiktor Bukato announced that Poland intends to bid for the 1990 Eurocon. To avoid possible speculation: if the Dutch bid for the 1990 WorldCon is successful, we will not try to combine the 1990 WorldCon and Eurocon.



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EUROPEAN SF ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

Judging and comparing the merit of different European SF stories is almost impossible. In Europe, SF works are being published in a score of languages, and very few of those works get translated into other languages.

Most European fans will be able to read SF stories in English, or French or German if necessary; however, for any of the other languages, be it Dutch, Serbo-Croatian, Bulgarian, Italian etc., you'll find only a small percentage of foreigners who'll understand the language, and no-one who speaks all these tongues!

This is the problem that faces the ESFS with its European SF Achievement Awards, or Eurocon Awards as they are often called. Most fans can not read the science fiction stories from their neighbouring countries, or their neighbours again. How then can you judge works for a general SF Award?

No good solution has been found yet, and unfortunately there was little progress made the past year. At the meeting, suggestions were made to give awards to SF works in all countries, to base judgement on 'promising new growth', and a rotation schedule was suggested to limit the number of awards given each year. The new chairman for the ESFS, Gianfranco Viviani of Milan, Italy, announced that further work will be done so that statutes and rules for the Eurocon awards will be changed.

This still left the problem of what had to be done with the 1986 Eurocon Awards. Of the eight delegates (or in my case, their replacements) present, four voted for not giving any Eurocon Awards in 1986, seeing the as yet unsolved difficulties; the other four voted against this. The vote of Viviani was decisive: he decided to present awards in order to preserve the tradition of a European Award.

The awards have a promotional character, as Viviani said, because merit of the works could not be judged by all delegates.

Twenty-four awards were presented, of which I'll mention: Magazines: Urania for best SF Magazine in Italy; Sirius for best SF magazine in Yugoslavia; Fantastyka for best SF magazine in Poland; Galektika (Hungary); Jules Verne Magazine (Sweden) and Zapiski (Czechoslovakia). Fanzines: La Spada Spezzata for best fanzine in Italy; Fikcie (Poland) and Tharrie (Czechoslovakia). Shards of Babel was nominated for an award, but withdrawn by both its editors.

European SF Society addresses:

Secretary for Western Europe:
Joseph vanden Borre, Akkermonstersraai 6, B-1930 Zaventem, Belgium.
Secretary for Eastern Europe:
Rodek Jacek, Plac Konstytucji 5/10, Warszawa 00 657, Poland.

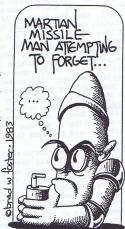
Slowly, other Swedish fanzines dropped their speculative science essays in favor of fanzine reviews or fanzine-historical articles. Letters of comment stopped debating the relative merits of J. G. Ballard and E. E. Smith, and instead began to put their emphasis on who got drunker than who at the latest club meeting. Convention reports refrained from giving detailed summaries of guest of honour speeches, but instead concentrated on the debauchery performed late at night during the room parties. Sweden, at last, had developed a fanzine strain: the remnants of the previous fan generation finally gave it all up and disappeared into the welcoming folds of the Swedish Captain Future Society, never to be heard from again.

And the rest?

Carl made his last published appearance in Sweden sometime in 1982, when he interviewed John-Henri Holmberg for a fanzine. He seemed as sarcastic, as hopelessly trufannish and as critical of extra-mural science fiction activities as ever. And in particular, he didn't seem dead in the least. It may be that the American Carl Brandon is gone; his Swedish offspring seems, at worst, to lie dormant.

But not without poking his schizophrenic thoughts into mine every now and then, to remind me that keeping the fanzine flames burning is still a task requiring constant vigilance and unfailing commitment.

Why, only the other day, he almost took control when he happened to notice that I had absent-mindedly crumpled a beer can, instead of adding it to this thing we are building in the back yard.



Unfortunately, since Carl had never existed anyway, this was not the case. Having made Carl up, they were also allowed, for inscrutable reasons, to bury him. There is little justice in the world.

However through my mouldy box of fanzines, I relished at my impressionable age the career of Carl. And I realized that a made-up personality would perhaps be the answer to my worries. Through writing, I could show that I was really a fabulous and fanzine fan. Then the fact of my slight stature, bad complexion and insufferable muteness at club meetings would hopefully no longer prevent my reaching the exalted status of Secret Master of Fandom. But since so many fellow fans had already met my own persona, I needed to create a new one for them to be impressed by.

In those days, the gap between thought and action was narrow indeed. I sometimes wonder what cataclysms have befallen me since, to make it so insurmountably wide now.

His name, of course, was Carl Joshua Brandon, but humbly, as an homage to his predecessor, I added a "Junior" to his name. His first fanzine act was to publish the Swedish FANAC, a fanzine newszine modelled on the original American FANAC. Not surprisingly, he saved his most vitriolic ironies for the inane serconism of such competing fanzines like SCIENCE FICTION TIMES, SCIENCE FICTION FORUM and UNION SF -- incidentally all published by John-Henri Holmberg, a dullard if ever one seemed to dominate fandom, according to Carl's high standards of trufannish behavior.

And beginning in late 1964, it all came true. Carl published FANAC incessantly. He started other fanzines, most notably the personal zine GAFIAC. He contributed vehement essays to other fanzines, with titles like "More fanziness is what Swedish fandom needs!", and he corresponded indefatigably with all and sundry. At the culmination of all, he was simultaneously voted Best Fanzine Writer, and Best All-Around Fan in the first Swedish fan poll's second annual roundup. Not atypically, he had started the poll himself.

And by his activities, he slowly, gradually, but irrevocably changed Swedish fandom.

Swedish fandom, as with most fandoms on the European continent, had been very correct, very seriously concerned with science fiction, with technology, with space exploration and the imminent arrival of functional anti-gravity or of flying saucer people. Carl introduced new concerns. His idea was that if he was once and for all banished from Berkeley, then he had better create a new

FANDOM HARVEST by Terry Carr

review by Ahrvud Engblom

Published by LFP AB, Räsundavägen 129, S-171 30 Solna, SWEDEN.

191 pp. Hardbound, 16\$ US, plus \$1.50 postage, cheques payable to John-Henri Holmberg

FANDOM HARVEST is the first title in what will hopefully be a series of English-language fan-writing collections, published in Sweden by LFP AB, the well-known publisher of Nova, Galax, etc. These books are aimed at the international market. Future books include a collection of the best fan writing by John Berry of Ireland.

Terry Carr is well known as an sf-author, and even more so as an upmeten-times, award-winning editor. But how many know the very important contributions to the world of sf-fandom that Carr has made? Check the good ol' Hugo award lists and you'll find a Hugo for a fanzine by the name of FANAC that was co-edited by Carr. Ask middle-aged American fans about the most important fanzine 25 years ago, and they will say something about INNUENDO. Carr is responsible for that one too. And who happened to master-mind the most successful hoax-fan of American fanzine history, Carl J. Brandon? You have to ask?

This collection gives us a good cross-section of the best of Carr's fan writing career from the very start,

beginning with FANAC and INNUENDO, and going to fan writing done as a pro in the semi-prozines. It tells us lots of interesting stories from the early days of famous Bherkeley fandom (like how Carr "convinces" his girl-friend to operate his mineo for him, or how LASFS did their amateur films), as well as a few pieces of terrific fan-fiction (fiction about fans, as opposed to fan-fiction, which is just amateur sf). Have you ever wondered what can make a man go through eternal life? As we read on, the theses gradually move towards prodom. We learn how agents work (if you hope to sell a book for \$750, don't go under \$1250). We understand why the best illustrators sell fewer books with their best covers. We chuckle about the half-minute during which Gene Wolfe had a Nebula, instead of Mr. No Award.

The book is beautifully printed, hardbound, and each story is illustrated by Grant Canfield (including some of the best and funniest illos I've ever seen from him!). There are some complaints about a higher-than-average level of typos (Take note: the complaints were first heard from the publishers themselves!). This is understandable, when a non-English publishing house breaks into the English market, using typesetters that understand English, but don't use it as a native language. The book was proof-read, but the typos still speeused through. It didn't disturb my reading, and it's still a bargain for \$16.

A Chatty and Superficial (But Sweeping) Critique of American Criticism That Manages To Insult Everybody Except the Paradigmatic Twins D. Suvin and M. Angelot, and Proceeds, Space Permitting, To Be a Little Longer Than The Title.

by Ellen Pedersen

"Science fiction is what I read". That is the one theoretical statement common to American critics of sf. That, obviously, is not much of a critical stance. I have been wondering why this is so. I shall remain wondering about the cause, but I have stopped wondering about the effect.

I have come to agree with both clones of Tom Disch on what science fiction as a "field" presents itself as. Michael Thomas says it's a brand of children's literature. Thomas Michael says it is a church. (The statements by both clones were made a good while ago, but I haven't seen them fighting each other, or attempting to take any of it back.) Out of it emerges, in the United States, the sensawonder school of critics, whose main theoretical emphasis is on the alleged effect this type of text has on the reader, rather than on the text itself.

Sometimes the theoretical position takes the form of a glorified "Gosh, wow!" response. Sometimes we're told earnestly that the response is intellectual first, and then emotional, or that this must be the order. In any case we're told that sf is something one responds to, rather than something which is produced, or something which exists.

The sensawonder school, surprisingly enough, are perfectly aware that science fiction is both produced and marketed before it can be fully consumed in this sense. They seem to be saying, however, that science fiction is what people read when they say they read science fiction. And they fail to state what they know perfectly well, which is that it is publishers rather than writers who tell potential readers what sf is. Show me a publisher who is willing to say there is no such thing as science fiction, and I'll show you ten writers who said the same thing fifteen years ago, and meant it.

There are several sources of controversy in this, several ways to go. So I'll skip questions of history, I'll try not to go into the question of what we recognize in one another through our texts, and I'll do my damndest to avoid general problems of methodology.

I'll try to explain, though, why I think there is more recognition than cognition to be gained from a consumption-oriented reading of sf. One particularly annoying example of stuff coming out of the sensawonder school is Gary Wolfe's concept of iconography (in *The Known and the Unknown*, 1979.) It's annoying, precisely because he is so close to making sense in more American terms than the other American theorists who do make sense. Take the concept of icon. The city is one. The machine is one. The spaceship is one. The concept makes a lot of sense, particularly if the rocket is what first generated the idea, if this is what Wolfe began generalizing from.

Imagine you make an agreement with a journal or a newspaper to do regular capsule reviews of the crummy length of, say, 50 words. If all your assigned works were sf, and the editor persuaded you to rate the stuff using a four or five star system, what motif would you suggest for the "stars"? Not stars, surely. They have been metaphors too long. How about skulls? Swords? Pistols? Whips? Horses? Cats? Bunnies? (Close Encounters, the ostensibly improved version, got four bunnies in *PLAYBOY*. A Danish film journal, *LIVING PICTURES*, uses eyes -- for some films the whole face; for other films eyes covered by hands.) The obvious choice for an sf column to most people would be spaceships, making the spaceship the prototypical icon in this sense.

So, Wolfe has potential, but he spoils it by having the icons do nothing but send a repeated message to the reader saying, "This ain't here, this ain't here". That "this" is not enough is obvious when Wolfe extends the discussion to other elements in the texts being those which Produce Sensawonder. These are what in European theory is called exposition. Delany gave an example once, of the writer telling us the red sun was high, the blue low. (Sorry, Readers, I

haven't got the exact wording and reference, and I am pressed for time.) If readers do what critics say they do, an American reader being told this would most probably utter and astonished "Wow!", feeling the Sensawonder, whereas to a European reader this would be exposition, and the reader would just nod, and say, "Oh, so that's where we are!"

I don't think I am just writing with a British accent here. Whatever else it reflects, this may reflect different popular attitudes, but the main point is that Wolfe, whose work is otherwise intelligent and insightful, allows elements of the texts to be subsumed under the theoretically useless concept of Sense of Wonder. And in doing so, he loses both depth and precision, a loss which he makes up for only partially through his analysis of actual works of fiction.

If you put yourself, literally, in a critical position that is close to the point of consumption, only by looking back can you see anything but shelf upon shelf of gory covers, or young people reading rather than fucking their way through college. What you do in that critical position is looking back through the text, so to speak, rather than directly at it. Looking from that perspective you have to make a real effort, and it's not often very successful, to clearly perceive the text, to distinguish the text from the universe it came out of, the one that has a writer in it, and to understand the universe of which the text is a postulated part. (This later level is close to what Marc Angenot has called the Absent Paradigm.)

The universe that has a writer in it also has a reader, but from this critical position it is difficult to see of what nature the relationship between them is. There are connections across the text, between the writer and reader. Of course there are, and I don't mean in terms of the reader buying something literally or metaphorically off the writer. That is general again, not bearing specifically on the type of text we're talking about. What I have in mind is the implicit, mutual trust unique to this type of text, and to some extent, to the less cognitive genre of fantasy, and to the less technological genre of utopian fiction.

In a science fiction text, the writer makes into things that in her own mind are concepts. I am not saying this is now everybody actually writes. Some writers start with people rather than with concepts. I think the notion that "all science fiction writers" start with "ideas" is just another popular fallacy among critics. But what we find in an sf text, more so than in other forms of literature except a couple of sub-genres of pornography, are a lot of things, material objects, and the environment taking up a lot of narrative time and fictional space. This is where the writer can't have the reader see it all simply as architecture or chess games. If this was all the reader does, then the communication, which this process also is, will have failed.

The trust that goes in the opposite direction has often been discussed. The writer, often in one of the first paragraphs, says, "This is not here and now..." and the reader has to depend on the continuation being, "But I'll tell you when and where as we go along."

I don't think these processes can be understood in terms of marketing categories, or in terms of writers producing what they know will sell. Writers essentially write what they have to write. Another fallacy among consumption-oriented critics is assuming that in order for these processes to take place at all, writer and reader must share specific attitudes. Attitudes to time, history, change, society, ethical values, etc. And consequently, that these attitudes, whatever they are, are a part of the definition

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of SF. The most obvious counterexample I can think of is Ellis Weiner's *Doon* versus Frank Herbert's *Dune*. *Doon* obviously doesn't share the attitudes of *Dune*, and it may just be that the same people read the two books with differing amounts of pleasure -- I, for one, find *Doon* much more entertaining than *Dune*, and about as edifying. In *Dune* there is a guy running about in the pages, a guy who is supposed to shorten the way. I find it no less reasonable having a similar type in *Doon* who provides a full return ticket to Paradise and back. (That's how the Kwisatz Haderach and the Mahdi are defined in their respective glossary entries.) Obviously, the reader of *Dune* who became the writer of *Doon* intends his text to be satirical. That, to a critic/theorist with a consumption-oriented attitude would be a serious problem. The first analytical act of such a critic would be to throw sideways glances at the book trying to determine whether it was satirical or not. And only then would the critic begin to determine what was in the text. Which amounts to asking the writer, "Are you now, or have you ever been, serious?"

Consumption, or as those who work with it seriously call it, reception, is important, but on other levels. How does a writer realize her or his full potential, and at the same time become saleable to a mass market? Do people buy their own concept of a particular writer or sub-genre rather than that writer's work? Where do young writers find good editors and first readers? Where do older writers find good editors and first readers? (That's sometimes even more important. The works of a number of experienced writers in recent years have suffered from under-editing.) These were just a few questions that I can think of off hand, but they're way beyond the questions raised by the sensawonder school.

I would suggest that we get sensawonder out of the attempts to analyse SF, and out of the attempts to theorize on it, as the unfinished whole that it is. After all, anyone can identify relatively quickly a science fictional text as such. There is no need to sit and wait to see if such a feeling crystallizes itself within one, and similarly, no need to glorify it into a tool of criticism/theory. In general analysis, sensawonder is noise. It is lousy set theory, anyway. What genre theory does that is unique to genre theory is setting up criteria for determining the boundaries between different sets. And who would want to analyse, using sensawonder as criticism, a great many texts out of one's vision, and in the process gain elements of other sets such as sex and religion that are not literature

useless. There is no need, even in American theory, to be stuck with consumption-oriented analyses at all. What is needed, in terms of shifting a critical position, is picking up your camera and trotting further back in time towards the point of emission where, through whatever, out of whatever, a text appears and turns out to have some specific characteristics. And there are plenty of possibilities in existing theories produced by American scholars, several ideas to take up and elaborate on, several people's work to gain inspiration from.

There is Angenot's Absent Paradigm, which is not identical with my Postulated Reality above, but it's close. (Paradigm is not a difficult word, really. In linguistics it means "replacable items in the same place".) There is Delany's literalisation of metaphor (what I said before about trust between writer and reader in one direction contains elements of this.) There is Delany's Dialogue between the fictional world and this one, and Delany-Disch-Hacker's perceived relation between SF and poetry, which Thomas Disch now says (in *Foundation 36*), was an article of faith among the evangelists of the New Wave. There is Joanna Russ' Aesthetics, in which among a good many other things, she talks about work as a central concern of SF. I should add that the SF-and-poetry angle shows the danger of focusing on the production-level (there are cognitive pitfalls in all theories); if, as I think, the connection is in terms of comparable processes taking place at the point of emission, the risk is in probing so deep that what you end up saying applies to all fiction, or even to fiction writing plus a great number of other activities.

Gary Wolfe's *ICONS*, which I spent some time on before, and his *KNOWN AND UNKNOWN*, have laid some sound groundwork despite a few obvious absurdities and the unnecessary consumption bias, and Mark Rose's "Almost Everything as Alien" carries a couple of quite essential truths. And there is, of course, Darko Suvin's Cognitive Estrangement, which presents only two problems: that Europeans don't understand the word cognitive, and the Americans don't understand the word estrangement.

(Ellen Pedersen has worked professionally with SF since 1978. She is a writer and a translator; Lem and Vinge are among the authors Ellen has worked on. She is a member of the Science Fiction Research Association, and a national chair person/secretary for World SF. Ellen is presently working with ethics and man/machine themes.)



Video mania in prague

Onofej Neff.

The invasion of video in this country began two or three years ago. At the moment, authorities estimate that there are 250,000 video recorders in Czechoslovakia, and about 5 million video tapes. Only 2,500 of these recorders were bought in state-owned shops, and a few thousand were bought from the Tuzex shops, a chain where people have to pay with hard currency. So, more than 200,000 video recorders were imported into the country, some legally, some illegally.

The first video-tape rental shop opened last year during the summer; it had only Czech and Soviet films in stock. Then there were the SF movies? In private hands, or semi-private, as you will see.

In SOB 20, I wrote about the Speleological Society, which publishes SF because some of its members like SF. There is which literally means "The Union for cooperation with the Army." Svazarm is a vast league of hobbyists: model makers, flying foalms, scuba divers, dog-lovers, radio fanatics --

and this last group is important! The Radio club of Svazarm set up a video division, which became the nucleus of the SF club ADA. The club owns its own video recorder, plus a collection of tapes.

The Beirut Connection

Those tapes entered the country in a number of ways, but most were smuggled in. Five installments of "V" came from four different sources, in Sweden, Belgium, Australia, and through the "Beirut Connection" -- there's a chap living in Lebanon, with access to a movie theatre. He occasionally makes copies of brand new movies. That way Czech fans could see STAR TREK III and MAD MAX III right after their original release, and long before the video tape was officially released. Of course, films from the "Beirut Connection" have a translation in the Arabic alphabet written at the bottom of the screen...

The "Kuwait Connection" is even worse: films we get from Kuwait have subtitles in the middle of the screen! Swedish and Belgian tapes are decent, with neat subtitles at the bottom.

Movies come mostly by air, though: in the Western part of our country we can receive West German television, so people in Pilsen or Domalice can easily tape the films that are being broadcast there. The signal is too weak to be received here in Prague -- our capital is some 120 miles from the border -- but near the town, in the countryside, is an unique spot where reception of the West German signal is excellent. The place is frequented by clever people

knowing the exact location; they have a strong car battery -- with a gadget converting 24V direct current

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220V/50Hz alternating current -- plus a video recorder, a tv and an aerial that is attached to the roof of the car. With this, they record the SF films broadcasted by West German television!

Dubbing

There is another - obvious - problem: Czech people speak Czech, and foreign films are spoken in foreign languages. 95% of those tapes are in German, and only 5% in English, since Germany really is next-door. However, we have found a way around this problem, too. Some video recorders are equipped with a dubbing device: they are models with

"stereo sound" (two sound tracks and the possibility of recording on the right track only, while the original sound remains on the left track. After simultaneous translation, people can choose between the original sound and the Czech version!

The most popular video film is STAR WARS; contenders are ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK, ALIEN, TERMINATOR and BLADE RUNNER. DUNE wasn't successful, perhaps because the book was not translated into Czech as a result, people hardly understood what the movie was about.

Personally, I love BRASIL, a video tape that fans could see at last year's annual convention Parcon, but it was met with a lack of enthusiasm. GREMLINS and GHOSTBUSTERS are accepted with hesitation, too. (CW)

General Products

by Hazu Hiroaki

The latest scandal in Japanese fandom is the suspected foul play in the election of Takeda Yasuhiro as chairman of the "Union of SF fanclubs of Japan".

Takeda was elected at the 1985 national Japan convention, Gatacon. He succeeded Kadokura Jun'ichi, who had often expressed desire to resign because of being too busy. Many active fans wanted to replace him with Tatsumi Takayuki, a highly esteemed critic and BMF. However, Tatsumi went to the USA in 1984 to study American literature at Cornell University, Ithaca NY. There were no other candidates when Takeda put himself forward at Gatacon.

((Takeda is co-owner of an SF specialty store, "General Products". He is popular as a showman at conventions, yet at the same time he also has a bad reputation in some circles. This bad name is caused by the SF film GREAT JAPAN, THE PATRIOTIC COMMANDO that was produced by General Products. GREAT JAPAN is a xenophobic film, with texts like:

If Japan is weak

Russia will invade us soon

Our houses will be burnt,

our farms will be turned into kolkhozes

Japan is our country!

We save our country from the red enemy!

Takeda is also known for his songs making fun of the "Hibakushas", that is the victims of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. GREAT JAPAN and these songs have caused a major feud between Takeda and people who accused Takeda of immoral xenophobic behaviour -- see *Shards Of Babel* 12 for full details. -RG.-))

To qualify as a candidate, Takeda needed letters of support from SF clubs in the Union. He presented 32 of these letters.

Now, the number of member clubs in the Union had risen from forty to over a hundred just a few months before Gatacon, because the concon demanded a fee for handling fanzines of all non-Union clubs with plans to sell their zines at the convention. As a consequence, the assembly of the Union at Gatacon was chaos. Many newcomers didn't show up, and delegates who were present didn't know which clubs were members of the Union.

Anyway, they had never heard of the 32 clubs which were said to have given letters of support to Takeda. In fact, I dare say that Japanese fandom hadn't heard of these clubs until then. This made some delegates oppose the candidacy -- clubs like Lunatic, Perception and our own club Ikatseli. Others supported Takeda mainly by a lack of another candidate. In the end, Takeda was elected chairman with votes to spare.

But shortly after Gatacon, many fans began to wonder: where did those 32 clubs come from? And what were they?

Tsuchiya Yousichi, secretary general of the Union since 1984, answered my question telling that "many of the 32 clubs applied for Union membership the day before the assembly. The clubs consist of few members -- in some cases, only one. All of them are from Osaka and its vicinity, where many friends of General Products live, fans and non-fans. These clubs haven't published fanzines, and some of them didn't have names for the club until that moment."

His words reminded me of a riddle of the Sphinx, but I interpreted them to mean: they are all stooges of Takeda or General Products.



(But why did Tsuchiya have to give me a riddle instead of plain words? Well, he found himself in a difficult position: he got a job with a company, Gynax, that is producing animation films and is actually co-owned by Takeda himself!)

Some people have asked Tsuchiya to publish the list of members of the Union, but so far these requests have been in vain. I have asked four times for this list myself without results -- and I am one of the three secretaries of the Union! One fan wondered if Tsuchiya cannot publish the list because he doesn't have a copy himself, and the 32 clubs are non-existent.

Takeda might have had three reasons for his actions: firstly, to put some pressure on the concon of DaiCon 5, the 25th national SF con which was held in August in Osaka. The chairman of DaiCon, Yamane Hiroshi, is an avowed foe of General Products, and other people in the concon are also adverse to General Products. By presiding the Union which authorizes national cons, Takeda could put pressure on DaiCon.

A second reason could be General Products' wish to "revenge" itself for the criticism it has received. Especially at the 1984 national convention, when the tide against General Products reached its peak, they felt like losers, refusing to show up on stage for both the opening ceremony and the panel on "Great Japan". Yamane, chairman of DaiCon 5, hinted at that convention that DaiCon 5 had a plan to stop General Products from using the name "DaiCon Films" for their SF films. General Products has been waiting for a chance for revenge ever since, I suppose.

A last reason is that General Products might be hunting for awards. The ex-chairman of the Union, Kadokura, has twice refused to give a Seison Award (the Japanese Nebula) to General Products, despite the fact that they ended at first place, because the activities of General Products are not professional. In *Jikan Shisabun* (the Hourly Times), a zine which is published once per hour at major cons, Takeda criticized Kadokura and the Union in bitter tones: in the meantime, they hit upon the idea that they might eliminate the obstacle by "ruling" the Union.

DELFTCON: 20 September 1986.

Major one-day convention in Delft, the Netherlands. Presentations of the 10th annual Dutch-language SF anthology, *Ganymedes*, and of Gerben Hellings's novel *Coriolis* are in the works. Will include good fanish program, too. Information: Henk Kersbergen, Mijlstraat 5, 2611 XK Delft, Netherlands.

INTERCON: September 25-28, 1986

the 1st International Science Fiction Festival in Warsaw, Poland. Organised by the Polish Fantasy and SF Association, PO Box 77, 00-973 Warsaw 22, Poland, which is also the address for correspondence. No membership rates known.

HANSE-CON: October 1986

Second Hansecon, held in Lübeck, West Germany. Write to Frank Möller, Stargasse 7, D-2400 Lübeck, BRD.

BENELUXCON 13: October 25, 1986.

A one-day-con in Zaai de Nieuwe Madelon, Grote Markt, Aalst, Belgium. The con starts at 10 am, and entrance is free. No hotel reservations through the committee, but info about hotels is available. Write to Patrick van de Wiele, Wigerstraat 3, B-9330 Herderse (Aalst), Belgium.

NOVACON 16: October 31-November 1, 1986

De Viers Hotel, Coventry, UK. Goli Ted Rabb, special guest Chris Evans. Registration £8 to Graham Poole, 85 Berwood Farm Road, Wyde Green, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands, UK.

CONCEPTION: February 13-15, 1987

Leeds, Britain. A convention "to celebrate 50 years of Science Fiction conventions" "Come to the plush Queens hotel for 24 hours a day of drinking at reduced prices" "Three days of intense and happy commemoration for the start of CONVENTIONS - those glorious events which bring us together periodically so we can face the real world the rest of the year!" "Sneer at the brass monkeys and demon milk float drivers as you take to the Leeds streets on a guided tour to the site of Where It All Began..." The tone of the flyer travels the middle road between the benign Trufanish smile at Serious conventions and an outright hoax, but do check them out for yourselves: Conception, 12 Fearville Terrace, Oakwood Leeds LS8 3DU, England.

BECCON '87: the 1987 EASTCON!

Metropole hotel, Birmingham, UK. For details send SAE to Beccon '87, 191 the Heights, Northolt, Middlesex UB5 4BU, UK.

EUROCON 1987: May 1987.

Pascal Thomas writes that the 1987 French Eurocon has been going through some changes. "Death of projected Goli René Barjavel caused disintegration of the Perpignan team, and the event was moved to the nearby town of Montpellier. The new con chairman is Gilles Murat, artist and printer, and a fairly active character (I met him in late July) who is requesting subsidies left and right (and appears to get them). This, however, meant he had to follow the municipal government when they asked him to change the date, which will now be the last weekend in May 1987. The address for information is Gilles Murat, 112 route de Toulouse, F-34000 Montpellier, France."

Italian SF Magazines

Bruno Valle.

For many years, it has proven impossible to start an sf magazine in Italy that could survive on bookstore sales. The history of Italian sf is strewn with a row of periodicals which were forced to fold. *Gemma*, which published 27 issues between 1965 and 1968, was clearly too far ahead of its time (it published critical writings in a period where no-one was taking sf seriously yet), but in the last decade alone, I could list at least a dozen major magazines which folded after more or less troubled vicissitudes.

Lately, specialized sf magazines seem to be reviving, despite problems of establishing a good distribution. Most of these magazines seem to sprout from groups of fans, and are not sold in bookstores, but available through subscription only. They also fail to pay their contributors on a regular basis. This makes it debatable whether they are "professional" magazines. For the moment, I'll only look at criteria like quality of print and circulation: I want some magazines left to write about...

Pulp is a magazine that can be pointed at as the symbol of the will and passion that animates some sf projects. The magazine was created by the tireless Gianfranco Briatore, a prolific writer known under various pen-names. *Pulp*'s staff is active in the "Space Opera Club", and in fact the middle pages usually contain a supplement with short articles and news about the club; however, *Pulp* also pays its contributors regularly. The first issue appeared in March 1983, and was sold through bookstores. However, by the third issue, this proved to be too expensive, and *Pulp* disappeared from the bookstands and became available through subscription only. Keeping the initial printing quality, *Pulp* has now reached its 13th issue. It publishes mainly adventure SF by Italian writers.

In comparison with *Pulp*, *SF.ere* can boast of a long tradition. It started in 1978 as a stenciled fanzine, but turned "pro" with the second issue. Appearing five times per year, it features both Italian and foreign authors, has excellent artwork, and has featured good critical material, especially on Italian proto-SF. *SF.ere* is published by the "SF Amateurs National Association", and has received several of the traditional Italcron Awards as best SF magazine, and one Eurocon Award.

L'Altro Regno is one of the two sf magazines published by Marino Solfaneli. The magazine originally folded in 1982, but Solfaneli picked it up in January 1985, and has published six issues so far.

The main feature of *L'Altro Regno* is political ideology:

fascism as a basis of interpretation of sf and fantastic themes. Chief editor of *L'Altro Regno*, De Turris, is the main theorist of this literary school based on esoteric beliefs, myths and symbolisms.

The ominous presence of such an "intelligentsia" in Italian sf and fandom is not a recent development; for instance, De Turris has been one of the men behind the specialized publishing-house "Fanucci" for many years. *L'Altro Regno* is at least quite definitely and recognizably of a fascist nature: there are critics present in clubs, fanzines and magazines who are more ambiguous, and in my opinion all the more dangerous because of it.

Lovecraft is a very new magazine; the first issue appeared recently. The magazine's title says enough about its main scope: horror fiction and the supernatural. Editor of *Lovecraft* is film director Luigi Cozzi (maybe better-known as "Lewis Coates"); among its staff and contributors are some of the main personalities of Italian sf. *Lovecraft*'s first issue prints fiction by HPL, by the Belgian writer Jean Ray, Rosemary Timmerley, Hamilton, Bradbury, but also contains a story by James G. Ballard as a testimonial to the width of editorial policy.

I'm concluding my outline of Italian sf magazines with two magazines from publishing house Nord, which do have a wide distribution. The first one is *La città e le stelle*, (after Arthur C. Clarke's *THE CITY AND THE STARS*), containing monographic critical essays. The four issues published since 1981 deal with "British SF in the 20th Century", "American SF from Philip K. Dick to Fiction by Women Writers", "Futuristic Views of Our Planet" and "From Victorian Age to Modern SF". Editor of the series is professor Carlo Pagetti, who is also teaching Anglo-American literature at the university of Pescara.

Finally, *Cosmo Informatore* is the promotional magazine of Nord, distributed freely to people who buy Nord's books for some 15 years now. Though it's publicity, it contains material of interest: a large news-column edited by Mauro Gaffo and Piergiorgio Nicolazzini, fandom reports, reprints of critical prefaces, etc.

mentioned Italian magazines:

Pulp, Edizione Pulp, Casella Postale 63, I-10098 Rivoli
SF.ere, Gianni Pilo, Via Gallesse 30, I-00189 Roma.
L'Altro Regno, Marino Solfaneli Editore, Via G. Vitelliana 12
I-66100 Chieti
La città e le stelle and *Cosmo Informatore*, Editrice Nord,
Via Rubens 25, I-20148 Milano.



WHY YOU ARE GETTING THIS ZINE:

- () Because you're paid up until SOB _____.
 - () We trade.
 - () You give us lots of lovely news to print!
 - () Roelof and/or Lynne Ann just felt like it.
 - () You're mentioned on page ____.
 - () Don't sweat, you're a lifer.
 - () Trade, please?
 - () Send us news or locs, please?
 - () Artwork, please?
 - () You asked for a sample at Confederation.
 - () This is a free sample, because you support Holland in 1990.
 - () This is a free sample, as we saw your name elsewhere.
- () RESPOND RESPOND RESPOND or face the Axe. And that's a promise.

Pam Wells
24A Beech Road
Bowes Park
LONDON N11 2DA
England

"I am hoping for help from SOB readers in my role as 'Fan Liaison' for Conspiracy, the 1987 WorldCon. Between now and next August, I want to collect as much fan information as I can. I'm compiling a list of SF clubs worldwide, and I'd like people so that my list can be as complete as possible. I'm also looking to receive fanzines and newazines produced between now and Conspiracy, which will all be available in the fan room at the convention for people to browse through.

"But more than that, I'm looking to build up a network of fanish contacts in Europe so that the fan committee can involve them in our ideas and programming. Shards Of Babel is the only European contact I have on a regular basis at the present, so I hope you can help me to widen my awareness of what's happening!

"If it helps, between us on the fan committee, we speak German, French, Spanish and (I think!) Italian, so zines and correspondence in those languages will be acceptable, although English communication is naturally preferable where possible!"

Herbert Stumpe
Franz-Marc-Strasse 32
D-8113 RIED
B.R.Deutschland

"I have read Shards Of Babel with interest. You have a good formula there, and if the subscription rate wasn't there, I would be happy to become a subscriber. However, a price of 2 DM (almost ninety cents) is a bit steep for a fanzine of four pages. Or so it seems to me."

Goudriaan and Morse
Noordwal 2
2513 EA The Hague
The Netherlands

((We're sorry that you have misunderstood our policy. We publish not for profit, but for fun. A lot of the copies we get printed are sent out free, to fans and pros who send us news or regular letters of comment. Money is nice, but we really do prefer a more personal sort of feedback...))

((There are people who cannot send us news -- if they're too busy, or shy, or not in touch with good sources -- and for such folk we accept subscriptions. The rates listed are what we pay to get those copies printed and mailed, so you don't have to worry that you are subsidizing so many free copies. The bulk of our mailing goes abroad, which is already expensive enough for our cash-paying customers.))

((In SOB 20, we said about Novacon, held in October in Birmingham, UK, that "rumor has it that hotel and committee are not overly friendly towards room parties etc..." Martin Tudor, chair of former Novacons, replies:))

Martin Tudor
121 Cape Hill
Smethwick Warley
WEST MIDLANDS B66 4SH
United Kingdom

"Come on you two, be fair to Tony Berry and the rest of the NOVACON 16 committee! All Tony had said in the first PR is standard for all cons held in hotels. A site bluntly perhaps -- but still nothing new. Let me state now -- for the record -- as the ex-chairman of Novacon 16 that neither the committee nor the hotel have anything against 'room parties, etc' (Come on, Roelof. You know Birmingham fans better than that! Do you really think we'd use a hotel that was remotely against such things!) All we ask is that people are discreet! At Novacon 15 we suffered greatly from people insisting on drinking their own bottles of scotch in the main con bar whilst the bar was still open...crashing out with 3 non-residents in a single room with the door open, etc. Not to mention smashing up a lift, ripping out a telephone, etc, etc.

If I can find the time more details will follow in a letter."

((We'd like that very much, Martin. We're handicapped here in that we don't know what people don't tell us. Our other sources are ranging from John-Paul Sait and other Dutch fans with many British contacts to Dave Langford in Britain. All have reacted in the same way to the stimuli provided by Novacon 15 and Tony Berry's words from the PR (and elsewhere). Tony is exceptionally blunt; we are as worried about this as our sources are))

ANTARES

Jean-Pierre Nounon
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France

"The semi-professional SF & Fantasy magazine Antares needs serious and complete essays on SF & Fantasy in all European, Latin-American, African and Asian countries. Both histories of the genre and articles about specific authors are welcomed. Shards Of Babel readers who are interested in contributing are invited to get in touch with me at the above address."

((Jean-Pierre did not include any details about payment. My guess is that payment will be in copies or subscriptions. --RG--))

Address Correction Requested