

N'APA 270

May 2024



The Official Organ

#270

Next deadline: July 15, 2024

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Procedure: Please Read:

Submissions should be sent to the preparer, Jefferson Swycaffer, abontides@gmail.com

N'APA is the Amateur Press Alliance for members of the National Fantasy Fan Federation (N3F). As it is distributed in PDF format, there are no dues or postage fees. It is open to all members of the N3F. If there are members interested in joining who have no computer access, special arrangements may be possible. People who only want to read are welcome to ask to be added to the email list. Check with the official collator, who is George Phillies, 48 Hancock Hill Drive, Worcester MA 01609; phillies@4liberty.net; 508 754 1859; and on facebook. To join this APA, contact George.

We regularly send a copy of N'APA to the accessible (email address needed) N3F membership, in the hope that some of you will join N'APA. Please join now!

Currently the frequency is every other month, with the deadline being on the fifteenth day of odd-numbered months. The mailing will normally be collated in due time, as the collator is retired and the preparer has a full-time job. N'APA has been in existence since 1959, but has transitioned from being a paper APA to an electronic one.

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Mini-Editorial

In TNFF, George Phillies wondered if N'APA might decide to welcome more fan fiction. Personally, I think this is a grand idea, and if anyone wants to drop some fan-fic in here, I'll applaud it. The APA format lives and dies, of course, by the Mailing Comments, which are essentially the most important part of the APA, the life's blood of the endeavor. Originality is wonderful, but it is collegiality that makes an APA come to life.

Someone told me once that APAs were invented by typeface foundries, in order to practice typesetting and to show off new fonts. Then as now, it is the comments that make the idea work. And, of course, because we're all friends and fans, comments are constructive. We have not had a "fan feud" in this incarnation of N'APA, something, alas, that we suffered from in times past. At this point in time, we're all cheerful and mutually supportive, and I couldn't hope for a more affable band!

Any ideas for the growth and the future of N'APA would be welcome, even if negative in form. "Less of this or that" is an entirely valid suggestion, as is "More of the good stuff!"

Putin: A lot of you will die, but that's a sacrifice I'm ready to make!

INTERMISSION #143

E-zine by Ahrvid Engholm, ahrvid@hotmail.com, for EAPA, N'APA and zineful souls. Follow @SFJournalen's Nordic fan news (posted 1-2 times/week, lack of time alas). Join our mighty fanzine blockade against Putin! Als must avoid typos or we all turn to piperclibs! Late Mar'24.

Editorially: NATO, Terror & Russoia, China, Etc

The question - To be or NATO be? - is answered. It's NATO be. March 8 the Swedish accession instruments for NATO was handed over to the US foreign secretary (the US runs the archive for it) and from the moment the paper left the hands of prime minister Ulf Kristersson and landed in the hand of US Sec of State Blinken we were in. To be on the safe side, a special flag rising ceremony was later held in Brussels Monday the 11th.

It's scandalous how Trump and his supporters in the US congress has treated Ukraine. "Do the heck you want!" Trump urges Putin. Crazy! A minority in the House blocks much needed supplies to Ukraine. Running out of shells, the Ukrainians had to withdraw from Avdiivka. Republican extremists have rejected good deals to "strengthen border security". It's as if they reject eternal life and a cure for cancer just because Biden offers it. The US status as a constructive partner is plummeting. What conclusions will the Taiwanese draw? The Israelis? The Americans already abandoned their Afghan partners and the Kurds...

Donald Trump, egotist par excellence and clearly unstable, shouldn't be let near the White House. Meanwhile Biden is far from the ideal opponent, I mean: he's doing OK but old. (Though Trump is the same age as Biden lats time, when Trump taunted him as "Sleepy Joe".) Biden should get himself a really good Vice President candidate. (I understand Kamela Harris isn't too popular. The dream VP would be Michelle Obama!). Trump should be unelectable, as a serial criminal: fraud, sex, espionage, insurgency.

Europe will have - and has begun - to increase it's support, The UK has been very active, Germany is stepping up (but send those missiles!), France is taking a lead (even thinking of sending troops), Czechia have found a million shells to send, Poland is investing twice the NATO standard on defence, and it's getting even more likely the Swedes will send those Gripen jets. Our arms industries - Bofors for guns and ammo, Hägglunds for IFVs, SAAB for missiles - go double shifts, I've read.

The Ukrainians have recently set over a dozen Russia oil refineries on fire with long-range drones. Russian refinery capacity is down 15%, which cost them hundreds of millions per day in lost revenue and deprives their tanks and warplanes of fuel. Brilliant!

Meanwhile, the Russians suffered a terrible terrorist action in a Moscow theatre. ISIS gunmen went in, gunned down 144 victims and set fire to the building – the death toll is likely to rise. Putin the Dictator tries to spin it it was the Ukrainians and "the West" claiming they were fleeing "towards Ukraine". But the suspects were apprehended closer to Belarussia and there's no way for people to cross the Ukrainian-Russian border in wartime. Further, ISIS has officially assumed responsibility! It's a giant failure for the corrupt Russian "security" apparatus. It took the police an hour to reach the theatre - their nearest posting was just 3 km away! - and they knew in advance an attack of a crowded place was boiling. The American Embassy had issued a warning, which Putin called a "provocation". Media reports that the US shared all info they had about a possible attack. Speculations are that while Putin wasn't directly behind it, he "let it happen". A juicy terrorist attack lets him intensify his war efforts. We've seen before how terrorist attacks have been used this way by bunker grandpa.

No more Worldcons in China, please! The Chinese interference in the Hugos even reached Swedish mainstream media, like major newspapers and TV's Culture News. The statutes should be amended to require the Worldcon host country to follow democratic principles.

Otherwise, this issue's history lesson will be a mixed bag. And you'll get a report from the yearly Short Film Festival. The Swedish mini-Bergmans send some of their films to international festivals so you may encounter some if, if you like me are into this stuff.

--Ahrvid Engholm



In the Swedish Championships, World Champ Jonna (l) lost the

sprint final to World Cup Champ Linn Svan (r) with...1/100th sec!

HISTORY CORNER

It was sad to hear of the passing of Christ Priest, a fine writer (though I found his *Inverted World* rather strange and...inverted). Anyway. We had him as GoH in 1985, and Dagens Nyheter had a note about it Aug 16:

Christopher Priest the wellknown English writer is one of the guest at the international sf-convention Swecon 5, held Aug 16-18 in Stockholm. During thre intense days sf enthusiasts ftrom all over the world take part in debates, lectures, film shows and an art exhibition around th eliterary genre science fiction. The press secretary of Swecon 85 Ahrvid Engholm thinks the press treats the biggest Nordic sf event lavishly and says "science fiction is a literary genre with critique to tendencies in today's science and society, while it leaves saucers and and green men to the UFOlogists, and all of this will be dealt with during the convention."

I don't remember saying that, but it sounds sensible... As for "all over the world" we had maybe five US or UK fen, but of course also Nordic neighbours. Maybe a German or French fan too. I remember we had the only known Faroe Islands fan coming: Sjurður Joensen. Since blog was restricted on his islands he did his fannish duty and became drunk... Look, an sf con is a party and on parties people become drunk. Bheer is Ghod. Leave them in a corner and wake them up when the program is over. I remember Sjurður subscribed to my SFJ for quite a while.

As for fandom, I'd like to remind of a story, from Norrskensflamman (a commiunist paper so they should know what happens in the Soviet sphere) 22 Nov 1962, *Club for the Adventure Minded*:

A club for the Adventure Minded has started in Kyiv. The purpose ois that members on their meetings shal ldiscuss science fiction and bold hypotheses of different kinds. Eg what awaits space travellers on alien planets or creation of artificial life. In the board for the Science Fiction-Club, as the official name is, there are several well known authors and scientists, e g professor of astronomy Sergei Vsekhsvyatski and profess of biology Michail Klovov.

Vsekhsvyatski was interested in ""Philosophical Issues of Cosmology and Cosmogony". More on that: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/357917696_Sergei_Vsekhsvyatskii's_Studies_on_Philosophical_Issues_of_Cosmology_and_Cosmogony I've contacted Ukrainian sf fans and clubs about this to get more info, without any replies. Maybe they are too...occupied. Anyway, if any of you have more info on this interesting club, plesase let me know!

Ukraine has recently been attacking Russian oil facilities using long-range drones. Reportedly 15% of Putin's oil refinery capacity is down, the Ukrainians aren't finished yet with this economic warfare targeting Putin's export (to China and India and whatever he can smuggle). The facilities are difficult to repair, especially as Western technology would be needed. The Russians don't have enough air defence to cover it's vast territory and what they have has been sent to the Ukrainian front. The Russians on their part keep targeting Ukranian apartment buildings with their missiles - or could their aiming be so primitive that they don't know what they are shooting at? The Ukrainians seems to be able to aim perfectly, hitting Ruski oil refineries daily, while the Russians hurls their bombs in the genera direction of cities and hope for the best...or worst. For the scores of civilians killed and maimed every day it's an academic question.

The fear or Russian missiles were the subject of an editorial in the daily Aftonbladet, Aug 23, already in 1953 - comparing it to the skiffy literature that began being noticed that year, in "Robots over Sweden" (note that missiles are often called "robots" in Swedish):

With brief intervals we have from sources in the USA learnt that Russian bases are aiming to shot ar Swede. These weapons are of course extremely dangerous and every country that may encounter them should

Christopher Priest
den kände engelske författaren, är en av de inbjudna gästerna till den internationella science fiction-kongressen, Swecon 85, som den 16-18 augusti håller till i Stockholm. Under tre intensiva dagar skall då sf-entusiaster från så gott som hela världen delta i debatter, föredrag, filmvisning och konstutställning kring litteraturgenren science fiction.
Swecon 85s pressskriverare Ahrvid Engholm anser att pressen behandlat 80-talets största nordiska sf-evenemang raljant och påpekar att "science fiction är en litteraturart som är kritiskt inställd till tendenser inom dagens vetenskap och samhälle, emedan man överläter tefat och gröna män till UFO-logerna, och att allt detta skall tas upp under kongressen".

Klubb för äventyrslystna

KIEV (APN) En klubb för äventyrslystna har startats i Kiev. Meningen är att deltagarna på sina sammanträden skall diskutera science fiction och djärva hypotester av de mest skilda slag. T. ex. vad som väntar rymdfararna på fjärran planeter eller möjligheterna att skapa konstgjort liv.

I styrelsen för Science fiction-klubben, som den officiellt heter, ingår flera kända författare och vetenskapsmän, bl. a. astronomiprofessorn Sergej Vsechsvjatskij och biologiprofessorn Michail Klovov.

beware. But it isn't certain is especially in the dangerous zone. There are other countries before us on the list in case of a Russian missile attack. Ad it isn't certain that we are on such a list. The missile weapon is today

more dangerous than by the war's end. The Russians are better prepared than the Germans were. The base fortifications are stronger, The projectiles have bigger explosive power precision and range. The speed of launch is still only a projectile every 15 minutes. The V1 weapon is due to relatively cheap production meant for mass effects but vulnerable for anti-aircraft fire and aeroplanes because of its low speed. There is no active counter-measure against the V2 weapon with its high speed, but is very expensive to produce, A range of 350 to 500 km is thought to be maximum. The claims of hitting Kiruna from the area of Kiev is as exaggerated as earlier talk about missile weapons darkening the sky over the Baltic Sea. It isn't known that the Russians have built missile bases in Porkala or Petsamo. Mines are also rather insensitive as targets. But the development of the missile weapon is serious, though it yet only is adding to the means of destruction. For us it increases the demands for protecting the civilian population in certain areas and makes it necessary to evacuate some bigger cities. Missiles against Sweden may become an efficient terror threat if the protection of the civilians isn't given the same attention as the purely military weapons. The literary genre called "science fiction" has been scrutinised in an editorial by Skånska Dagbadet, landing in the conclusion that the genre is dispensable. It's a conclusion anyone with cultural ambitions could have regarding practically any leisure reading. But the public asking for the leisure reading has less demands and in the Anglo-saxon countries found much joy in "science fiction". The genre fulfills a need and the relevant question is: which? A story of the "science fiction" type deals with atomic beams, robots, star rocket and similar things, fruits of technological developments partly real, partly our of technological imagination, The simplest form of "science fiction" won't reach further than that: it's about what big bangs you can get from these toys. But the somewhat more advanced type asks how it is for people in the world of advanced technology. It's questions like this that gives "science fiction" double hulls when it is at its best; the wondrous development on technological fields and the problems appearing on the field of the human society. The fear that the Nobel laureate Urey expressed when he warned us of the effects of splitting atoms could cause if used unwisely is the typical starting point for "science fiction". It seems this is a problem that is alive for the big American audience, as they want to see it treated in easy-going literary form: technology as the lord over Man and democracy heading for downfall. The conventional demand for a happy end wins out: man always manage to regain control and democracy survives on the last chapter. Of course the genre contains – just as the detective genre – things of different worth, from stuff that is technological probable and the problem solving is fascinating, to stuff that remains by the raw effects. But the literary genre shouldn't be judges from the junk. In any case it is worth noting the "science fiction" has conquered a million audience in a world where we this far has only seen technological progress from the angle of "progress"! It seems it is this angle we need to question.

As you notice the genre label "science fiction" wasn't accepted yet. Later this year several contests were announce to "find a Swedish name" for it (eg faktasi, vetsaga, futurama, teknodikt, vetenlek...) as *Intermission* has earlier reported.

Robotar över Sverige

Med korta mellanrum har man från källor i USA erfarit att ryska robotbaser är inställda på beskjutning av Sverige. Dessa vapen är naturligtvis oerhört farliga och bör tas med i beräkningen i varje land som kan räkna ut för dem. Men det är därför inte sagt att Sverige i särskild grad befinner sig i riskzonen. Det finns andra länder som står före oss på listan i händelse av ett ryskt robotangrepp. För övrigt är det inte givet att vi kommer med på listan alla.

Robotvapnen är numera farligare än vid krigets slut. Rysarna är i fyra avseenden bättre rustade än tyskarna var då. Befästningarna vid baserna är starkare. Projektilerna har ökad sprängverkan, precision och räckvidd. Skjuthastigheten är dock bara en projektil i kvarten från varje utskjutningsanordning. V 1-vapnet är på grund av relativt billig framställning avsett för massverkan men sårbart från flyg och luftvärn på grund av sin låga fart. Mot V 2-vapnet med dess höga fart har man däremot intet aktivt motmedel, men vapnet är mycket dyrt att framställa.

Man räknar med en räckvidd av 35 respektive 50 mil som det maximala. Uppgiften om tilltänkt beskjutning av Kiruna från Rigaområdet är därför lika överdriven som det tidigare talet om att robotvapen skulle förmörka himlen över Östersjön. Det är inte känt att rysarna byggt robotbaser i Porkkala- eller Petsamoområdena. Gruvor tillhör också de relativt okända målen.

Robotvapnets utveckling är allvarlig nog, men ännu betecknar det bara ett viktigt tillägg till förstörelsemedlen. För vårt vidkommande ökar det inom vissa områden i hög grad kraven på skydd åt civilbefolkningen och nödvändiggör en del större staders snabba utrymning. Robotar mot Sverige kan bli ett effektivt terrormedel om inte civilbefolkningens skydd ägnas lika stor uppmärksamhet som utvecklingen av de rent militära stridsmedlen.

Den litteraturart som kallas "science fiction" har synats i sömmarna i en ledare i Skånska Dagbladet, som utmynnar i att arten i fråga är umbärlig. Det omdömet torde av folk med kulturella anspråk kunna följaktligen om snart sagt varje slag av förströelseläsning. Men den allmänhet som efterfrågar förströelseläsningen är mindre anspråksfull, och den har i de anglosaxiska länderna funnit stort behag i "science fiction". Tydligen fyller genren ett behov, och den relevanta frågan är: vilket?

En roman av typen "science fiction" handlar om atomstrålar, robotar, stjärnraketer och snarlika ting, frukter av en teknisk utveckling som delvis är verklig, delvis alster av en tekniskt betonas fantasi. Den allra enklaste sortens "science fiction" når inte längre

än så: den handlar om vilka knalleffekter man kan ställa till med med dessa nya leksaker. Men den något mer avancerade sorten frågar sig hur människorna har det i denna värld av avancerad teknik. Det är denna frågeställning som ger de dubbla bottenarna åt "science fiction" när den är som bäst: den vidunderliga utvecklingen på det tekniska planet och de problem som uppstår på det mänskliga samhällslivets plan. Den fruktan som Nobelpristagaren Urey uttryckte, när han varnade för vad atomsprängningstekniken kunde ställa till med om den användes oförnuftigt, är den typiska utgångspunkten för "science fiction". Tydligen är detta ett problem som står levande för den stora amerikanska publiken eftersom den vill se det behandlat i lättköpt litterär form: tekniken som människans herre och det demokratiska samhällsskicket vägt till undergång. Det konventionella kravet på happy end slår emellertid igenom: människan lyckas alltid återta kontrollen över det hela, och demokratin reder sig i slutkapitlet.

Givetvis rymmer genren – liksom detektivgenren – ting av skiftande värde, från sådant som är tekniskt vederhäftigt och genomför problemlösningen på ett fängslande sätt, till sådant som håller sig till de råa effekterna. Men litteraturarten bör inte dömas efter skräpet. Det är i alla händelser värt att notera att science fiction" vunnit miljonpublik i en värld, där man allt hitills sett den tekniska utvecklingen endast ur "framåtskridande" synvinkel. Tydligen är det just det betraktelsesättet som börjar sättas i fråga.

As mentioned 1953 was the year of the "breakthrough" of the genre in Sweden. Papers suddenly began to write more about the genre. Here's a review of the first sf anthology in Swedish, *Adventures of Tomorrow* from Svenska Dagbladet April 16, "Comics in Words", edited by the distinguished professor of literature E N Tigerstedt:

Professor E N Tigerstedt has compiled a selection of the in USA incomprehensibly popular genre called science fiction, for the volume Adventures of Tomorrow. That these stories, mostly about space flight, are labelled as "scientific future stories seems strange. If you exclude misinterpreted relativity theory, they have as much to do with science as Arabian Nights. And neither are they short stories, e g since they don't feature humans, but figures from comics. The level of reality and depth is about the same as there, the intellectual lever somewhat higher. They turn to an audience not consisting of alphabets. A couple of the stories may be read also by people who not only in the clerical documentation are older than 13. "The Devil in East Upton" bear witness to surprising knowledge that possible inhabitants of the planet Jupiter must be substantially different from us humans and meeting them is definitely unpleasant. "The Huckle Is A Happy Beast" also has an atmosphere of the macabre and strange and to this an efficient ending. There is a certain grotesque comedy, not without its effect, in "Earthmen", a story of space travellers coming to Mars and there, with unpleasant results, are considered as lunatics or hallucination. And "Tower of the Beast" shows a rather big measure of unrestrained imagination from its creator. But otherwise what irremediable bunglers aren't these producers of machine, future and gothic romance compared to old HG Wells, the grand master of the genre. If Adventures of Tomorrow is representative, the literary level must not only be raised but the view of the intelligence of the public by the deliverers of these romances must have declined in a sad way the last 50-60 years.

"Vetenskapliga fantasier"

eller science fiction som den anglosaxiska ursprungsbenämningen lyder, introduceras på den svenska bokmarknaden av Eklunds förlag. Två volymer föreligger, och det är tydligen bara början.

Man ska nog vara en Stålmän eller Fantom med umgängesvana från kretsar där folk lyfter sig själva i håret och lätt utför andra mot naturlagarna stridande handlingar för att kunna njuta denna underhållning. Inte ens i atomålderns gryning underlåter den sansade att gnugga ögonen inför sådana produkter som jättevaxter på väg att erövra jorden och utplåna allt mänskligt liv.

Det vetenskapliga underlaget bör man nämna med små bokstäver. Med den pretentiösa etiketten (följden av en slentrianmässig och direkt översättning av en term) avlägsnad har läsaren lättare att uppskatta de kalla kärar som onekligen då och då kilar på hans rygg.

Sen är det en sak att herrarna inte är sparsamma med trycksvårta. Det är rent ofattbart att deras äventyrshjältar har tid till så långa språkvändningar ibland, medan världen hotas av undergång.

— BENGT GRAFSTRÖM

Tecknade serier i ord

Morgondagens äventyr. En antologi naturvetenskapliga framtidsnoveller, sammanställd av E. N. Tigerstedt. Natur och Kultur. Pris 12:50, inb. 16:50.

Professor E. N. Tigerstedt har sammanställt ett urval av den säregna i USA obegripligt populära litteratur-

genre som kallas science-fiction till en volym "Morgondagens äventyr". Att dessa historier, mestadels om rymdflugor, betecknas som "naturvetenskapliga framtidsnoveller" verkar något underligt. Om man fränsar lite missuppfattad relativitetsteori, har de lika mycket att skaffa med naturvetenskap som Tusen och en natt. Inte heller är de noveller, bl. a. därför att de inte är befolkade med människor, utan med figurer ur de tecknade serierna. Graden av verklighetssanning och fördjupning är ungefär densamma som där, den intellektuella nivån däremot något högre; de vänder sig ju till en publik som inte består av analfabeter.

Ett par av historierna låter sig f. ö. läsas också av personer som inte bara på prästhyget är äldre än 13 år. "Djävulen i East Upton" vittnar t. ex. om en överraskande insikt i att eventuella invånare på planeten Jupiter måste vara betydligt olika oss människor

och möten med dem alltså deciderat obehagliga. "Hurkeln är ett lyckligt djur" har också en makaber atmosfär av väsensolikhet och dessutom ett verkligt effektivt slut. Det finns en viss grotesk komik, som inte helt saknar verkan, i "Jordmännen", historien om rymdresenärerna, som kommer till Mars och där, med särdeles otrevligt resultat, blir tagna för dårar eller hallucinationer. Och "Odjurets torn" bevisar onekligen ett ganska stort mått av ohämmad fantasi hos sin upphovsman. Men eljest, vilka ohjälpliga klåpare är inte dessa fabrikanter av maskin-, framtids- och skräckromantik gent emot gamle H. G. Wells, stormästaren i genren! Om "Morgondagens äventyr" får anses representativ, måste inte bara den litterära nivån utan också romantikleverantörernas uppskattning av publikens intelligens ha sjunkit sorgligt på de senaste femtio, sextio åren.

S. S—r.

I remember this anthology as rather good, but this was a common approach to the genre from defenders of "good taste".

Another review in Expressen, June 18 that year, "Scientific Sagas":

or science fiction as the original Anglo-Saxon term is introduced to the Swedish market by Eklund publisher. There are two volumes and that's only the beginning. You must be a Superman or Phantom comfortable in circles where people lifted themselves by the bootstraps and easily acts against the natural laws, to enjoy this sort of entertainment. Not even in the dawn of the Atomic Age will anyone reasonable fail to rub the eyes to products about giant

plants conquering Earth and destroy all human life. The scientific content should be mentioned in non-caps. With the pretentious label removed (from a lazy and direct translation of the term) the reader may still poff and on feel thrills along the spine. But it's another matter that the gentlemen don't spare the ink. It's unbelievable that their adventure heroes have time for so much linguistic turns while the world is threatened by destruction.

It's probably John Wyndham's *The Day of the Triffids* this reviewer doesn't fully appreciate. Moving on: Swedish has a word for a writer of light, usually humorous small reflections on life and the world: *kåsör*. My computer refuses to find an English word for it. Here's more kind words from the classic "kåsör" (sounds related to "causerie"=informal discussion or chat) Red Top, from Dagens Nyheter april 2 1955, "We Are Way Ahead".

Authors of sf novels assume that there on other planets are beings way head in development than we Earth people, To investigate I flew to Mars yesterday night. The rocket wobbled a bit at launch so von Braun considered to blow it up by a signal from the ground. Luckily it soon took the right course and swished up through the blackening space. (I have no clear concepts around the trip to Mars and the landing, as I was deep-frozen before take off so I could cope with the acceleration and breaking.) When I woke up and exited through the hatch in the nose I found that climate and plant life reminded of our Earth's. The oxygen level of the air is different though. The sun was shining and the bird cherry blossomed. I found myself on the beach of a canal, and soon a little steamer came puffing. And called t and went on board. On the aft deck dome

Martians sat and talked. The had pushed the straw hat back towards the neck, removed their jackets and put the handkerchief between the collar and neck. The glasses in front of them were filled by a yellow liquid and hey had a bottle in an ice bucket. The Martians had big bellys and mustaches. They kindly offered me a drink and I found it was punsch. /A sweet, strong typical Swedish drink based on Arak./ When I explained I came from Earth they benevolently agreed to an interview. They explained that the biggest problem on Mars right now was the always rising prices. You couldn't any longer get s decent dinner for below 1:10. And a goof but modest servants couldn't be had for less than 18 crowns per month. Many tailors were bold enough to demand 105 crowns per month. I ask how it was with identity on Mars, and they answered that the awful Boston Walz spread like an epidemic and ruined the youth. Luckily the culture was otherwise in high standard and the oldest Martian even touchingly quoted from the two poems "Christmas of Santa Claus" and "Farewell by a Hero". But they were especially proud of the technological development. "You have surely noted, mister," one of them said, "that this ship isn't powered by a wheel as usual. How does it move?you ask. Well, through a screw In the back called propeller, a rather remarkable invention. "And," another gentleman said, "on the streets of our capital you may since some time back see some a u t o m o b i l e s, self-running wagons that may rush ahead as fast as 10 km/h. Though they have no practical use and must be seen as a curiosity. "We also experiment with replacing the unusual kerosene lamp In the homes with electric carbon-threaded lamps," a third said. It shines stronger than the strongest candle. "And speaking of that I must tell the latest joke," the fourth Martian said. "Why can't my at shine when mat shine of the Moon?" /a Swedish pun.../ When the storming joy subsided I asked the gentlemen about the political situation on Mars. "It's great," the oldest one replied. "All nations are friends and we can travel anywhere without a passport.. On top of than our own country recently discovered an explosive of such huge strength that future wars will be unthinkable. It is called -here he lowered his voice – cotton powder!" Since my oxygen was running low I bid the Martians farewell, and they rowed me ashore. I entered the rocket, was deep frozen, started and returned to Dr von Braun who was very disappointed to hear that Mars hadn't reseached further in development than 1908 tops. It was especially sad since his latest reports from Venus hinted that they there dancing Charlestone and build a palace for the League of Nations".

I'd say Mr Top has somewhat of a talent for writing sf! I liked this story. Anoter little piece from the same year, Aftonbladet October 30 reviewing a national radio show (and with only one channel it had some impact!):

Half-witted sf authors took a beating by Kjell Stensson in the radio puzzle yesterday night. They were advised to leave space alone and think of the famous Blandaren /famous student paper/ quote: Don't go faster than light because everything turns black. Stensson's puzzle was among the nicest in the contest, where one from Ljungby won by guessing the keywords "Venus". But he programmed moved through space in other ways too, from the stars of the astrologist to the top of the mountain Ida. Rune Mogren's monologue of the Venus measurements though the ages from fig leaves to the H-line ws the more "Earthbound" in the show. The Puzzle ended with Nils Linnman presenting a star, a primadonna assoluta, Zarah Leander, unfortunately somewhat infected by a supernatural cold.

BTW, spoke to Alsaac Alsimov on Trantor. Still too occupied for a new FaiNZINE "That damn 'Foundation' has began forming an annoying 'Second Foundation'. Got to go..."

Red Top

☐ Författare av science fiction-romaner tar för givet att det på andra planeter finns varelser som hunnit vida längre i utvecklingen än vi jordmänniskor.
För att undersöka hur det förhöll sig med denna sak for jag i går natt till Mars. Raketen vinglade en aning i utskjutningsögonblicket, varför dr von Braun övervägde att spränga den genom en impuls från marken. Lyckligtvis återtog den dock snabbt sin riktiga kurs och susade upp i den svartnande rymden. (Om själva färden till Mars och landningen där har jag inga klara begrepp, då man djupfryst mig före starten så att jag bättre skulle uthärda accelerations- och uppbromsningspåfrestningar.)
☐ Då jag vaknade och tog mig ut genom luckan i noskonen fann jag att Mars klimat och växtlighet påminde om vår egen jords. Luftens syrehalt är dock en annan. Solen sken och häggen blommade. Jag sökte mig ned till stranden av en kanal, och snart kom en liten ångbåt tuffande. Jag anropade den och gick ombord.
På akterdäck satt några Marsinvånare och konverserade. De hade skjutit halmhatten långt bak i nacken, tagit av sig kavajerna och stoppat näsduken mellan stjärkragen och halsen. Glasen framför dem var fyllda med en gul dryck och de hade en flaska i ishink.
Marsinvånarna hade stora magar och mustascher. De bjöd mig vänligt på ett glas och jag upptäckte att det var punsch.
Sedan jag förklarat att jag kom från jorden ställde de sig välvilligt till förfogande för en intervju. Man förklarade att det största problemet på Mars just nu var de ständigt stigande priserna. Man kunde inte längre spisa en anständigt middag under 1:10, och en duktig men anspråkslös tjänarinna stod ej att få under aderton kronor per månad. Mången skräddare hade fräckheten begära 105 kronor för en frackkostym.
☐ Jag frågade hur det sedliga tillståndet var på Mars, och de svarade att den förskräckliga Bostonvalsen spred sig som en farsot överallt och fördärvade ungdomen.

Vi ligger långt före...

Lyckligtvis stod kulturen i övrigt högt och den äldste Marsinvånaren citerade djupt gripen de båda dikterna: "Tomtefars jul" och "En hjältes afsked".
☐ Speciellt stolta var de emellertid över den tekniska utvecklingen.
— Helt säkert har ni, min herre sade en av dem, observerat att detta fartyg ej framdrives med hjul på vanligt sätt. Hur förflyttar det sig då? frågar ni. Jo, genom en skruf i aktern, kallad propeller, en högst märklig uppfinning!
— Och, sade en annan herre, på vår huvudstads gator synes sedan någon tid tillbaka enstaka automobiler, kjälfgåendeagnar som kunna framdrivas med ända upp till tio kilometers hastighet. De hafva dock ingen praktisk betydelse utan måste uteslutande betraktas som en kuriositet.
— Vi experimenterar äfven med att ersätta den vanliga fotogenbelysningen i hemmen med elektriska koltrådslampor, sade en tredje. De lysa starkare än det kraftigaste stearinljus!
— Än på det så måste jag berätta den allra senaste witzten, sade den fjärde Marsinvånaren: "Varför får inte min matta skina när månens matta sken!"
☐ Sedan den stormande munterheten lagt sig frågade jag herrarna hur det politiska läget var på Mars.
— Förträffligt, på min ära förträffligt, svarade den äldste. Alla nationer är vänner och vi kan färdas vart vi vill utan pass. Dessutom har vårt eget land i dagarna just upptäckt ett sprängämne af sådan enorm styrka att det gör framtida krig otänkbara. Dess namn är — här sänkte min meddelare rösten — bomullskrut!
☐ Eftersom mitt syreförråd var på upphällningen tog jag nu avsked av marsianerna, lät mig ros i land, kröp in i raketen, fryste ned mig, startade och återvände till dr von Braun, som blev mycket besviken när han fick höra att Mars inte hunnit längre än till högst 1908 i utvecklingen. Detta var så mycket tråkigare eftersom hans senaste rapporter från Venus tydde på att man där som bäst dansade charleston och byggde ett palats åt Nationernas förbund.

The interest in sf, exploding a couple of years earlier, was still boiling when our single radio channel – and there was no TV! - at the same time produced the sf series “Moon Phantom” in 20 episodes by the Finlander Allan Schulman, laer a major TV producer. From Dagens Nyheter Apr 3, 1955:

Allan Schulman came as a loan from Finland's Radop in the autumn 1953 and became a substitute at the entertainment section. It was to be for six months, after which he intended to return to Helsinki and direct the radio theatre and being an expert of Swedish language Karusell /popular family show/ programs like Lyckoskrinet he had done for several years.

Hösten 1953 kom Allan Schulman hit som lån från Finlands radio och började vi-kariera på underhållningssektionen. Det skulle vara i sex månader, sedan ämnade han återvända till Helsingfors och fortsätta som regissör för radioteater samt expert på svenskspråkiga karusellprogram i stil med det han skött under flera år, Lyckoskrinet. Men Schulman finns fortfarande mitt ibland oss. Han har flyttat över hustru och tre barn och blir för varje dag allt mera stockholmsk.

Lördagen den 7 maj serverar han den kvällens underhållnings-program i radion. Anrättningen kallar han Tittut. Ett av inslagen blir en monolog, författad av Stig Ahlgren. Mitt i sommaren börjar en science-fiction-serie, "Mänfantomerna". Under maj spelar man in 20 delar och man ämnar sända två delar i veckan kl. 18.45. Författarnamnet till programmet är "Peter Markland", samma som stod på thrillerboken "Jakt i rött dimma". Det var om den en kritiker sade att den var lika bra som Dennis Wheatley, men – tillade han – jag gillar inte Dennis Wheatley.

Och "Peter Markland" sonderfäler vid närmare granskning i Allan Schulman och Torsten Scheutz.

★ Fru och barn kring radion

Om de två nämnda programmen och om nästan alla program han gjort säger Allan Schulman:

— Det ska bli något för hela familjen.

När Schulman säger det är det inte ett tomt ord. Han vill samla fru och så mycket barn som möjligt runt högtalaren, och ve det underhållningsprogram som inte innehåller något i stil med "Barna Hedenhög" eller "Vi flyger med Kid" — bägge följetångerna var för resten serverade i Schulman-produktion. Radiounderhållning som inte samtidigt räknar med våra yngsta och käreste betraktar han som någonting ganska flärdfullt.

★ Skägget värmer

Sommarens "Mänfantomerna" utspelas i nutid. Schulman och Scheutz

startar handlingen på China-varietén, där vi träffar illusionisten Rex Morino, tolkad av Herman Ahlsell. En amerikansk journalista, Lo Briggs korsar hans stig. Och som henne hör vi Gunvor Pontén. Man utlovar att det hela skall sluta inne i månen.

När det blir vinter och kallt slutar Allan Schulman en dag helt enkelt att raka sig. Efter några veckor går det upp för omvärlden att han verkligen tänker lägga sig till med skägg. En vårdag när termometern vägat sig över noll låter han det hela försvinna under rakkniven. Det är alltså frågan om ren värmebesparing.

Skipped the original headline to save space, but it said "Finnish Radioman "borrowed" loves producing family programs"

But Schulman is still among us. His wife and three children has moved and for each day he becomes even more Stockholmer...In the middle of the summer starts a sf series, "The Moon Phantoms". In May they'll record 2 parts and they intend to broadcast

two episodes every week at 6.45 pm. The author's name is "Peter Markland", he same writing thre thriller "Hunt for Red Fog". A critic said about that it was as good as by Dennis Wheatley, but – he added – I don't like Dennis Wheatley. And upon scrutiny "Peter Markland" shows to be Allan Schulman and Torsten Scheutz

What is the most unknown Hugo winner?

Is it *Do Communists Dream of Hugo Tampering* or *Have Party Book, Will Travel*...sorry, got carried away, thinking of China's treatment of the golden dildo, which I personally think they can take and stick up their...

Have you heard of one Mark Clifton? And Frank Riley? They wrote *They'd Rather Be Right* which won the 1955 golden rocket for Best Novel. I can't find what other novels were nominated, but it beat eg Asimov's *Caves of Steel*, Heinlein's *The Star Beast*, Fredric Brown's *Martians Go Home* and Richard Matheson's *I Am a Legend*. It was a shaky year for the Hugos. No awards were presented in 1954, so maybe these awards, first presented in 1953, were on the way to be dropped. Maybe they in 1955 just took a novel out of a hat or space helmet without nominations? If someone knows more about those early Hugo years and the other nominees that year, please tell us. Wiki tells about *They'd Rather Be Right*.

Two professors create an advanced cybernetic brain, which they call "Bossy." Bossy can "optimise your mind...and give you eternal youth into [sic] the bargain, but only if you're ready to abandon all your favourite prejudices."However, when given the choice of admitting they were wrong and therefore being able to benefit from Bossy's abilities, most people would rather be right, and Bossy's ability to confer immortality is almost made ineffective by humanity's fear of her.

You can read the book here: <https://archive.org/details/theydratherberig00clif>

Mark Clifton made his debut in 1952 and was the one inventing Bossy the cybernetic brain. One reason he isn't more remembered may be that he died early, in 1963 at age 57. "Frank Riley" on the other hand, a pseudonym for one Frank Ryhlick, was more loosely connected to skiffy, being a travel reporter, working for LA Times, writing advertisement copy and hosting a radio show. ISFDB lists only a handful of short stories by him beside this novel.

So lets continue covering early treatment of electronic brains. It seems fitting today when we have Artificial Intelligence that can't tell the difference between A Hitler and E Musk.. The pinnacle of early computers in skiffy is of course Murray Leinster's "A Logic Named Joe" which more or less show desktop computers, E-mail, multimedia and some sort of communication network. The story is available here and there on the 'net, eg <https://epdf.tips/a-logic-named-joe.html> Here it is in the Dimension X radio series:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=93NbdS1Z3q8>

Time to close. See you later, mutated alligator!

Radion i gar

Halvhåblila science fiction-författare fick en ordentlig känga av Kjell Stensson i radiopuzzlet i går kväll. De fick rådet att låta världsrymden vara i fred och tänka på det gamla bevingade Blandar-ordet: Far inte fortare än ljuset, för då svartnar det för ögonen. Stenssons pusselbit hörde till de trevligaste inslagen i tävlingen, där en ljunghybo vann genom att gissa nyckelordet "Venus".

Men även i övrigt rörde sig programmet mest i världsrymden från astrologernas fixstjärna till gudinnan på berget Ida. Rune Möbbergs monolog om Venusmåtten genom tiderna, från fikionlövet till H-linjen, hörde till det "jordbundna" i programmet, men saknade därför ingalunda flykt.

Puzzlet slutade med att Nils Linnman presenterade en levande stjärna, primadonna assoluta Zarah Leander, tyvärr en aning infekterad av en föga överjordisk förkylning.

Head

Sweden's Short Film Festival 2024

I've been to almost all of the short film festivals since 1987, when we in the Swedish Space Movement had begun our film project, except a couple too far from Stockholm and recently a couple haunted by a Certain Virus. The series began in 1957 by the then amateur home movie federation, today named just the Film Federation of Sweden. In the old days home movies were on 8 or 16 mm celluloid, which turned into video, turning into DVDs and today finally just files, and everyone has a film camera in his cellular... (On my first festival 35 years ago a good half of the films were on celluloid!)

Knowing these festivals for a long time, I had the impression the one this year was among the most successful: lots of people, lots of films over three days, good entertainment. I estimate there were 150+ attendees, including some attending only one of the days to catch screening of their own film - many of the film makers were there. The program included 75 films - not counting the Minute Films - out of the 260 submitted, shown at the picturesque old Bio Rio near Hornstull in the Southside district of Stockholm. That's the district filled with hipsters, journalists and those who out of environmental concerns faithfully bring their garbage bags to the recycling stations...in their SUVs.

We got both sunshine and rain, outside the theatre and on the silver screen. Some films were sad, some happy. Some were wild, some were grey everyday. There were documentaries, love stories, horror, experimental, animations, armageddons, from 1 minute to some 20 minutes. The slogan of this year's festival was "Höj rösten" - Raise your voice!

To this came 83 films of 60 seconds each, because the festival hosted the famous Minute Film Cup, where flicks of minute length battled each other until one remained as a winner. The Minute Film Cup concept was invented by one Björn

Andreasson in 1985, a flyer tells us. The caretaker today is

Magnus Elmborg and now "minute films are produced all over the world" the flyer says. The winner of this year's Minute Film Cup was "*Svampboken*" ("The Mushroom book"), a little comedy about how to find out if a mushroom is poisonous.

Below just a personal selection of about half the films, perhaps a bit random, from notes hard to scribble down there in the dark, but it's the way it is. If your film isn't mentioned it doesn't necessarily mean it was bad. I'll translate the title if needed, name producer or director and length in minutes. There were two "classes": film schools and the "individual" class, ie all other entries.

A few things about the festival itself. I think there were more animated films than usual. Animation is getting easier to do with computer support. One trend to expect in the future is having AIs do *all* the work. There are already today AIs making complete, photo realistic films, and that's only the start! The organisers of this festival need to think deep about how to handle AIs. (I think you should always declare if a film is AI made, or what parts are AI-generated!) A majority of the films were by 20/30-something year-olds, in the beginning of a possible film career, so there's more Swedish moving pictures to expect in the future. We've noticed that Scandinavian Crime, with Millennium, "The Bridge", Wallander etc, has become rather successful exports and I'm sure more will come. Several of the festival films were thrillers or covered crime. A number of the films on the festival were in English, and those who weren't often had English subtitles. It's because many of the film makers also submitted their films to foreign festivals.

There was a whole forest themed block - the festival had 9 blocks of up to 9 films each - with reflects environmental thoughts. Some films touched upon criminality, a subject worth noting today with our problems from gang violence. War was covered, but less than one might have expected. There were some films where the world went down the drain, by flooding, a comet hitting or something. Armageddon doesn't seem so far off when a crazy dictator invades a neighbour. Throughout the screenings there were regular intermissions when film makers present were called to stage to present their work. There were also a coupler of mini-seminars,



Bio Rio, a nice local cinema. (Cinema=Biograf or Bio in Swedish.)



The Minute Cup winner, *"The Mushroom Book"*: unlucky souls were forced to test mushrooms for poison... which I tended to skip to get some breathing - watching films for three full days takes its toll. Film director Susanne Osten was guest of one seminar. (Trivia: her film "The Mozart Brothers" was what then Swedish PM Olof Palme saw just before being assassinated! BTW, chief prosecutor thinks the murderer is nailed, one Stig Engström who had his workplace nearby. But he was diseased when this was announced. Case closed...?)

I sat down on the first row as usual - I like to stretch my legs and have space for clothes. The master of ceremonies Åse (she was also artistic curator) came on stage to present the first film block, people coughed and went silent, the lights went down, and it began...

"Det mörka och det säkra" ("The Dark and Safe" Mirai Inoue Strand 14 min). A weather worn sheriff hunts the villain known as "The Darkness" with the help of a very young cowboy - but it later shown to be just in the imagination of the young boy. Well filmed and played.



"Eggs and Chicken" (Tora Wideryd, 8 in). Scenes from an art show - which BTW used food as art - and a security guard who tries to keep track of a little girl playing around and being annoying. BEST SOUND, FILM SCHOOL CLASS

"En sista dag" ("A Last Day" Marcud Bustad Taube 14 min). A man must reconsider things in his life after an

There were short interviews with the film makers. Master of Ceremonies Åse far left accident. A bit philosophical.

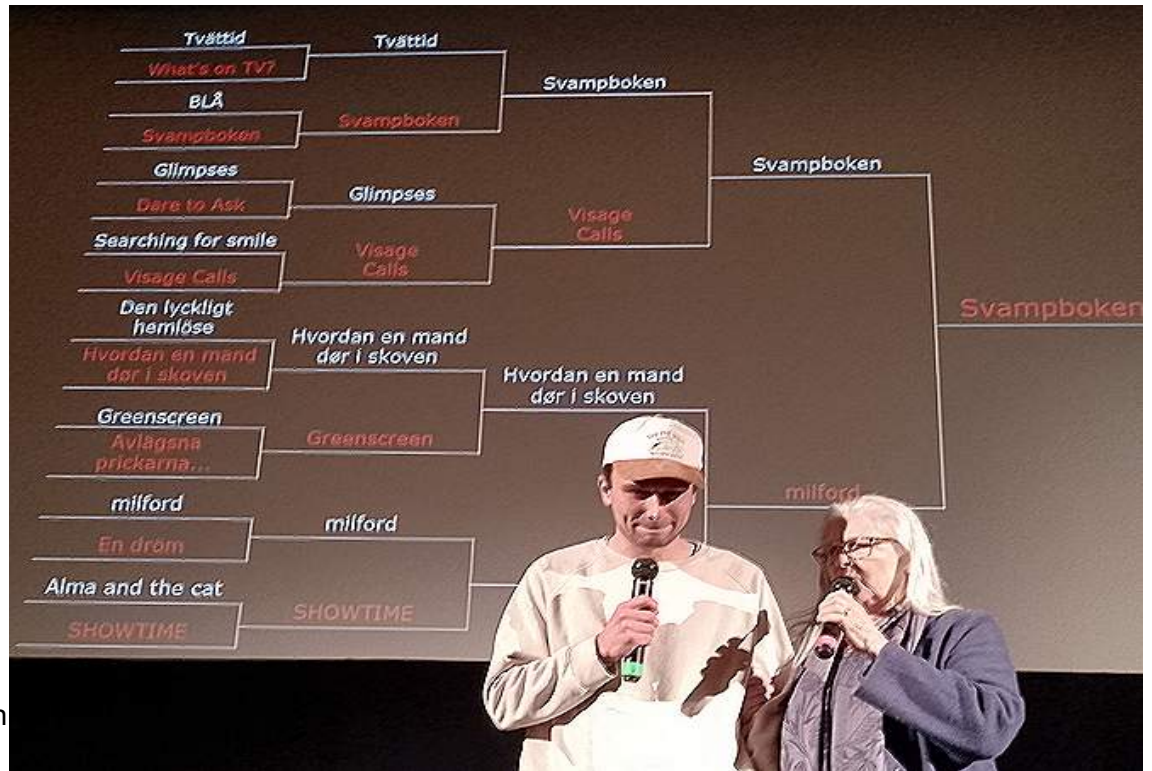
"Ersatt" ("Replaced" Amber Klaassen 10 min). A receptionist is being replaced by a talking AI box, which he doesn't like at all. A comment to the development in AI. A bit humorous.

"Huset Mittemot" ("The House Opposite" Siri Pårup 13 min) A study of the lives of tenants of a house, Hitchcock "Read Window" style. Rather interesting. But it was obvious the people shown were actors. HONOURARY MENTION, FILM SCHOOL CLASS

"Innan vi faller"

("Before We Fall" Josephine Bauer 9 min). A woman fleeing from Latvia gets entangled in an espionage business nlate WWII. Based on what the producer's grandmther experienced. Well made and interesting, but much to compressed at under 10 minutes.

"Klara and Vassi - On Kilometre at a Time" (Matilda Lundberg 10 min) A documentary about a girl in Northern Sweden,being a musher training dogs. In the Minute Film Cup films of 60 sec battled two and two to the bitter end. Some beautiful photo from northern Sweden. And cute dogs. BEST ORIGINAL MUSIC, FILM SCHOOL CLASS



"Lustens nödvändighet" ("The Necessity of Lust" Adriani Pauli 14 min). Statistics say 50% of all marriages results in divorce within seven years, but this film has a suggestion about what to do about it. Humorous. COMEDY OF THE YEAR

"Margit reser" ("Margit travels" Maria Wallin 9 min) A documentary of the vacations a woman went to for 50 years, from her own detailed reports in a diary and with her camera pictures. It eg shows how much the world changed during this period. Lots of nostalgia. BEST DOCUMENTARY, FILM SCHOOL CLASS

"Säg det bara" ("Just say it" Ines Hakers & Mariam Storozjik 12 min) Three girls preparing a school task, two of them becoming mad at each other and start to fight - the third interferes and they become friends again. Interesting study of small group dynamics, well played.

"Snälla ge mig jobbet" ("Please Give Me the Job" Maja Ingman 9 min) A guy on a job interview suddenly burst out into a song...abut how he needs the job to be able to buy cocaine! Humorous, an odd film, but very entertaining.

"Proje2t Toast" (Tobias Folkesson 7 min) Animated film about what happens when a comet is heading for Earth. Not too realistic. There are many disaster films these days. Wonder why?

"The Way Out" (Miranda Lunnerhag, 14 min) People around a camp fire tell stories, soon concentrating on a story about a man is fleeing form something unknown, perhaps himself... Well-filmed and played, The main story is a bit sad but also confusing.



This film's title title is "Vittra" backwards, a mythological creature not nice to meet in the forest.

"Arttiv" (Sanna Ekman 14 min) A woman travels to the family summer house in the forest to get some peace and quiet. But strange things are happening, frightening things. Horror ending! Well filmed. Beautiful photo. ("Arttiv" is backwards for "vittra", a strange forest being in Scandinavian mythology! We get a "vittra" in the end.)

"Brödrskapet" ("The Brotherhood" Bo Pärletun 15 min) A social drama. The lead actor of the film company's big, new film is accused of sexual misconduct. The director who knows the victim is pressured to "let it go". Lots of emotion and well played.

"En hyllning till skogens konung" ("Homage to the King of the Forest Kim Sundbeck 8 min) In Sweden that "king" is the moose. Documentary about a carpenter working for a long time on a big moose-themed armchair. A story of ambition and crushed dreams.

"En sällsam historia" ("A Strange Story" Truls Svenningsson 16 min) Girls arrive to a cabin in the woods, one of them fleeing from a violent ex-partner. As the night arrives things begin to happen and the man arrives. Well filmed and a bit of thrill. Resembles "Artiv" above.



From "Brotherhood", a psychological drama around a sexual offense.

"Fleshlight" (Gustav Andersson Lilliehörn 11 min) During an otherwise relaxed and friendly dinner party one of the women suddenly reveals she has discovered her husband's sex toy, which he had kept hidden. And the nice atmosphere changes. Is such a toy a sign of "you don't love me"? What about the mini-vibrator she has?

"I nattens mörker" ("In the Darkness of the Night" Anders & Millan Östberg Karl-johan Lundberg 3 min) A mini-thriller about a woman who wakes up from hearing something in the middle of the night and reaches for the light button and a baseball bat, with a funny and very surprising ending... I found it here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qOckzlvWv4U> (More of the film makers should put their films on Youtube or elsewhere, but maybe festivals they want to submit their work to don't like it?)

"Isblink" ("Iceblaik" Olgas Krussenberg 14 min) A documentary from Svalbard. How do people live on this northern island, cold and dark half the year? Fine photo of the nature of the place.

"Lika olika" ("Similar Dissimilar" Perla Heiefort 9 min) A couple on a first date. Promising in the beginning, but then one of them begins to air things not entirely Politically Correct and the mode swings 180 degrees. An illustration of the polarisation of today. BEST DIRECTOR, INDIVIDUAL CLASS

"Manimalen" (Mikael Bengtson Högman 9 min) Two women walking through a forest are followed by a strange man. They confront him...with a strange result. And this rather humorous story then becomes even stranger. One of several films this year of women fearing something in the woods.

"Potatis" ("Potato" Birgitta Liljedahl 14 min) A humorous dystopian tale. A family is tired of eating only potatoes in this authoritarian state and being watched all time. Then the state's inspector arrives and things turn weird.

"Skitväder" ("Shitty Weather" Jessica Lauren) The never ending rain has come, but this family doesn't care. They eat snacks and watch TV, until... Animated.

"Skogspoesi" ("Forest Poetry Jörgen Vikström 8 min) A narrator reads poetry to beautiful pictures from forests. Simple, but it works.

"Snart är det jul" ("Christmas Is Soon" Karl-Johan Lundberg Tomas Kulle 3 min) A man calls his son just before Christmas and says he and mom are getting a divorce. But there's something more to it. Humorous.



From "The Psychaitrist", a dinner ending in terrible horror...

"*Spillt blod torkar inte*" ("Spilled Blood Doesn't Dry" Danil Tomas Alexander Zadrun 6 min) A poetic but serious film about the violence we often see among the younger generation. BEST SOUND, INDIVIDUAL CLASS

"*Tänk om*" ("What if" Nora Tios Anton Clements 7 min) A man is jealous towards his girlfriend and her friend. Fantasy becomes reality. Good special effects.

"*The Psychiatrist*" (Christoffer Hammarlöf 14 min) A psychotic drama. Two couples on a dinner, but what was outside the window? People go out to investigate, but it doesn't end well... A well-made horror flick

"*The Source*" (Gilda Stillbäck Sofia Norlin 15 min) An Artsy dance film. People move over a post-apocalyptic landscape. Now and then they fall as if shot. In Black and white.

"*Vattenhål*" ("The Water Hole" Jacqueline Arapovic 13 min) An existential comedy. A trip through space by as bodybuilder to find God, commented now and then by what is an angel. Fine special effects. But difficult to understand. VISIONARY OF THE YEAR, INDIVIDUAL CLASS

More Info about some of the films can be found here: <https://sverigeskortfilmfestival.se/utvalda-filmer-2024/>

It all ended with handing out a number of awards Sunday. Above I have noted any award given to the film.

The complete award list is here: <https://sverigeskortfilmfestival.se/prisvinnare-2024/> Finally all the winners who were present were called to the stage for a big group photo.

All is well that ends well.



NOTE: My amateur film interest led me in the early 1990s to produce a 3 hour VHS, "Filmfandom", of all the films I could get hold on made by Swedish science fiction fans. Most of these films are available on Vimeo: <https://vimeo.com/groups/filmfandom> and <https://vimeo.com/clubcosmos> (the last also belongs to Filmfandom) I know many other sf fans also made films, some are on Fanac.org's channel on Youtube (but you have to sift through many interviews, panels, Worldcon footage, etc to find the amateur sf films). Please tell your favourite fanzine if you have anything special to reveal about your film making!

Mailing Comments

Henry Grynsten: As I may have f*cked up what I commented, here's comments to Henry for the Feb mailing: Who was the friend with a publishing company ■ It's true you tend to be ignored if you don't talk! I think aliens in claimed encounters are silent because those making the claims have no way to imagine what they would say. It's a good idea that "aliens" is the modern equivalent of ghosts! An interesting issue. ■ And now the March issue: Yeah, Sweden could have built A-bombs. We constructed plants to produce plutonium - like in Ägesta, south of Stockholm, closed in the mid 70s. The construction of an A.bomb isn't much of a secret, the thing is it's getting the material. Today we could probably get ourself nuclear firecrackers in 2-3 years if starting now. We have lots of plutonium in spent fuel now just being stored. ■ Your AI makes relevant, enthusiastic comments, but with little substance... ■ Sf as a zombie genre? While in a slump now developments in the real world - viruses, AI, war etc - will make the genre more relevant. We need sf that's more plot and idea oriented, rather than character and "social" slanted - which is more a thing for mainstream (non-sf).

William McCabe: So the problem was new software and it's failure in handling links? OK. ■ As for copyright: in most cases it has expired for US material up to the year 1963. It's like this AFAIK: original US copyright was for 28 years (actually 14 years, but very soon doubled to 28). Later came the option to extend it, by re-registering the work with the library of congress. That's it. When US entered the Bern convention staking a copyright period based on the author's death, not fixed from registration, US congress refused to make it retroactive - which means work having been in the public domain up to then *remained* in the public domain. (It's BTW a very sensible thing to avoid retroactive lawmaking.) Work up to 1963 had fallen for the 28 year rule and entered public domain. Re-registration for an extension is a hassle, costs money and most old work has very limited or no commercial value, but a small minority of work may have extended copyright being re-registered. I believe Canada still use the 50 year rule, ie work by authors dead before 1974 is free.

Garth Spencer: What is referred to as "robber-barons" where much more common 100+ years ago! Examples: John D Rockefeller acquired all smaller competitors to create a de facto monopoly on oil and petroleum. Andrew Carnegie did almost the same with steel. And JP Morgan with railways. While Henry Ford didn't have a formal monopoly, his T-Ford was so cheap - pushing the production line to max - most competition was crushed, 4 out of 5 cars sold were T-Fords. In later years IBM had a near monopoly in bigger computers and Microsoft in the OS for smaller desktop systems. The US anti-trust laws were adopted between 1890 and 1914, the years of the big "robber-barons" who tried to gain near monopoly. The situation today is much milder than back then and wealth is more even now compared to then. A typical billionaire today don't swim in cash like Uncle Scrooge. The formal fortune is mostly tied up in stocks, bonds and other kinds of paper. It isn't used for consumption but for managing companies. The fortunes are thus mostly only good for using the talent for company management. You don't sell the stock and buy kola fudge for the money! The rich are rich from running companies and just continue to run companies. While "robber barons" of today may be annoying, politicians have *much* more power and are usually more annoying... Like Trump. ■ One thing I've noted is that when a market have three or less major players those tend to find a common ground and more or less coordinate their prices - making it an oligopol. It' be good to get more players on markets. Today our local housing as well as grocery chain market both suffer from lack of competitio. ■ A reason socialism doesn't work is it puts companies in hands of folks who don't know how to run companies. And further: central planners process too little information and are usually victims of their own prejudices ■ No, I think it's what drives some towards Trump is rather the growth of things like making drag appearances for kids (gender confusion may cause irreversible bodily harm!), encouraging quotas (handing out free advantages, "including" others away), environmental mumbo-jumbo and such things. ■ Yes, we are getting new resources. We discover new oil wells all the time, open new mines, and more efficient ways to use resources and recycle. We use metal and other materials better. No atoms are destroyed, except a tiny amount in nuclear fission.

Bye bye: Time to stop. In nextish, probably something about ABBA and Eurovision, as this TV extravaganza comes to ABBAland in time for 50th anniversary of the group winning with Waterloo in Brighton (place of my 1st Worldcon, having a special spot in my heart). More history too, of course, and some cheering chants for Ukraine. They kick Russian ass for the sake of *all* of us. Let's hope Puting meets his Waterloo soon!



Слава Україні!

Archive Midwinter
a zine for N'APA 270

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10 March 2024

Comments:

Cover: Public Domain Art.

Ahrvid Engholm: Not to get too political, but I have to agree with your conclusions that dropping the A-Bomb on Japan was probably the right thing to do, in, of course, the same horrid sort of way that the entire war was “right” to fight at all. There are ugly necessities forced upon us by history’s shackles, and, ultimately, Truman had no other choice.

In the same vein, there is some room for the theme that strategic air power in WWII was wasted, and the war (in Europe, anyway) might have been shortened if the allies focused on tactical air. Rather than bombing factories, bomb tanks and troops right behind the front lines. I first heard this idea from sf and tech writer Jerry Pournelle, and he made it sound quite convincing.

Fun history of the Swedish effort to make a bomb, and of the early era of nuclear weapons in general, especially H.G. Wells’ forewight!



John Thiel: Apologies again for publishing blunders.

Re editorial, I would say that, rather than the world being a bad place, the world is simply a place where there is room for improvement, and thus efforts in that direction are good investments.

Ahrvid Engholm: Arist Jose Sanchez has been messing around with AI image production applications, and is getting some truly astonishing results. I’m keen to try this myself, but I’m completely unclear about the process and where to go to try it. Have you messed around much with AI images?

Fun features on Elon Musk and “Mechanical Men.” Great and highly-detailed information!

Mark Nelson: Fun reminiscence of your first convention!

Bless you for your offer to pay for Ahrvid’s N3F membership, in case he is asked to leave N’APA! Add me to the list of people subscribing to this fund!

Rect me, I well remember the hoas “postmodernist” essay that some scientists wrote, parodying the real PM viewpoint. Truly hilarious!

Garth Spencer: I ^LOVE^ the Venn diagram you included, of pseudoscience and quackery, broken down by category! I only wish I could read the labels, as they are too small for my aging little eyes! The concept is beautiful and brilliant. In times now gone, there was a website, "Crank.net," that maintained a survey of crank and crackpot websites. You could find creationists, flat-earthers, mathematical cranks (people who denied mathematical proofs of infinity, for example,) anti-Relativity cranks, faith-healers, and so many more. It was jolly fun!

"The closest we get to tragedy in contemporary fiction is horror." I would say that "Dystopian" fiction is inherently tragic, although often seasoned with an admixture of hope. Apocalyptic fiction is very often highly tragic. Science Fiction has never shied away from tragedy; there is a rich tradition of tragic SF stores. I'm thinking of "The Cold Equations" by Tom Godwin. (I once spoofed it in a story of my own, "The Stupid Equations.")

Heath Row: Fun reviews!

Re Bloch, at a tender age I read Groff Conklin's anthology, "Science Fiction Terror Tales," which certainly contains some truly gripping terror! One of the stories was Bloch's "The Other Inauguration," which rings horrifyingly true in this election season.

Rct me re the "Emerald Cove" writing group, we have actually published three books, on Amazon (self-publishing) which might be fun. "Kidnapped," "Stolen," and "Exiles of Eeria." Our ages range from three of us in our late sixties, to one thirty-something and one forty-something. Most of us are writing just for fun, but we have one member who is eager for publication, to the degree of "writing for the market," rather than writing for personal preference.

Re "Sic Biscuit Disintegrat," I believe it was "APA" format, and I believe Joy Beeson was the editor, but my memory is vague, and it could have been Joy Hibbert. Eons have passed!

Samuel Lubell: rct Ahrvid Engholm, I agree with you, and (politely) disagree with him, re Affirmative Action. The failure to address inequalities only perpetuates existing injustice. A "level playing field" is only to the benefit of the better-paid team. A system of handicapping works in golf...and I believe it should work in economics also.

Nice retrospective on Marion Zimmer Bradley. I met her once at a convention: I was the guy the con sent to pick her up at the airport and ferry her to the hotel. It went....badly. I guess De mortuis nil nisi bonum dicendum est.

Excellent review and analysis of A Connecticut Yankee!

George Phillis: re wargaming, I was an oldie, starting with the Avalon Hill classics. I discovered SPI via their credit for Panzerblitz. Then Role Playing Gaming came along, and, like many fans, I defected from wargaming pretty much entirely. Among my favorite wargames were SPI's "Prestags," Pre Seventeenth Century Tactical Wargames, which used a consistent background system to cover armies and battles from 3000 BC to the mid 1500s AD. The games require some tactical subtlety to play well, and, alas, my old gaming companions were shallow and stupid (they still are!) and they never put in the effort to play these games properly. I subscribed to The Avalon Hill General for several years -- that was where Jerry Pournelle floated his ideas about tactical airpower in WWII!

Rct Samuel Lubell, grin! I certainly hold that Romance Novels are an abomination, an offense to literature, and a grievous waste of human resources...but I would certainly include them in any survey of books and genres.

The Stupid Equations
by God Tomwin
a science fiction travesty
Copyright (c) 2007 by Jefferson P. Swycaffer

A.

The Space Patrol needed to ship a vial of serum to the Plague Planet. Twenty thousand lives were at stake. The only available laboratory where serum could be prepared was at Space Patrol Base. Time was running short.

The Pilot agreed to take the risky flight in an Emergency Craft.

The Emergency Craft was a marvel of engineering, trim and sleek, fast as the solar winds. It consisted of the absolute minimum of components, without so much as a kilogram of waste mass. It carried enough fuel for the voyage, and no more. It carried enough air to support the Pilot for the voyage, and no more. All excess mass had been stripped away. The Emergency Craft was the most efficient possible vehicle for an emergency run.

The Pilot boarded the Emergency Craft, and was launched on his voyage to the Plague Planet.

To his horror, he found that there was a stowaway aboard the ship, a young woman, little more than a girl. Her extra mass had never been calculated for when the ship was fueled. If she stayed aboard, the ship would not be able to match orbital velocities with the Plague Planet, and twenty thousand people would die.

The girl was ejected from the air lock, to save the people of the Plague Planet.

A 1

Air lock? What air lock? The ship was a miracle of Engineering, right? An air lock would add several tons to the ship's mass. There would be no air lock, only a sealed door. The girl could not be ejected. The Emergency Craft could not match orbital velocities with the Plague Planet, and sailed off into the infinite. Twenty thousand and two people died.

A 2

The girl was ejected from the ship by being chopped into little bits and put through the trash lock (see below.) It was grisly work, but it had to be done. The Emergency Craft arrived at the Plague Planet and saved twenty thousand lives.

A 2 a

The girl had been on the Emergency Craft for some time before being discovered. She had inhaled a part of the ship's air. The air ran out before the Pilot could match orbital velocities with the Plague Planet, and the ship sailed off into the infinite.

B

Where was the stowaway hidden? The Emergency Craft was a miracle of engineering efficiency. There were no interior bulkheads. There wasn't even a chair for the Pilot to sit in, nor a deck for him to stand on. The Pilot would stand on the bare ribs that braced the interior of the hull, and the single cabin would be as small as possible, little more than a closet. He saw the stowaway immediately when he boarded the Emergency Craft, and had her removed before he was launched on his voyage.

C

The Emergency Craft was a miracle of engineering efficiency. There was not a single kilogram of wasted mass. In fact, the ship's hull was exactly as thick as was needed to hold pressure, and not a millimeter thicker. Thus, when the Emergency Craft impacted a piece of space

dust about a microgram in mass, the hull was pierced and the air leaked out.

C 1

The Emergency Craft was a miracle of engineering efficiency. This applied to the reactor shielding too.

C 1 a

The Emergency Craft was a miracle of engineering efficiency. No more air was supplied than the Pilot required. Unfortunately, the Pilot, in his excitement at matching orbital velocities with the Plague Planet, had been breathing more heavily than normal. His air ran out ten minutes before he could land, and the ship crashed violently into the grey, stormy seas of the Plague Planet.

C 1 b

To the bathroom he doesn't have to go? But no: the Pilot is a stern, tough, doughty man, and can hold it. If nature calls, he will relieve himself in one corner of the cabin, and simply put up with the smell.

During deceleration turnover, however, in a brief period of zero gravity, the mess in the corner of the cabin floats upward and interferes with his controls. He never successfully matches orbital velocities with the Plague Planet, and drifts off into the infinite.

C 1 c

Okay, the engineers compromised and put a very small air lock, the aforementioned trash lock, only a few centimeters in size, in the hull, so that the Pilot can eject wastes.

Even so, the Pilot, planning ahead, has dehydrated himself and had his system cleansed, so that he carries the absolute minimum of wastes aboard with him.

The Pilot, in fact, is a triple amputee, missing both legs and one arm. He was always a small man, a dwarf actually, and he has starved himself for the weeks prior to the mission. It is this heroism that supports him during the long and uncomfortable voyage, at the end of which he successfully matches orbital velocities with the Plague Planet and saves twenty thousand lives.

C 1 c i

Of course, no airlock is absolutely efficient, and even the small trash lock will emit a certain amount of air along with the trash. The loss of a few cubic centimeters of air would seem trivial, but the Emergency Craft is a miracle of engineering efficiency, and carries no more air than is necessary. Weakened by his fasting and dehydration, the Pilot blacks out from want of air only seconds before landing on the Plague Planet, and the Emergency Craft crashes into the Plague Planet's capital city, killing more than nine thousand people. The Plague continues unchecked, and, in combination with the explosion, rather more than twenty thousand people die.

C 2

The Emergency Craft is a miracle of engineering efficiency. It carries no more fuel than is necessary.

Unfortunately, after matching orbital velocities, the Pilot learns that he must land at the Plague Planet's only spaceport, which is now on the approaching limb of the planet as it rotates.

The extra 1,500 kilometers per hour of the planet's rotational velocity are more than the Pilot can compensate for, and the ship crashes heavily into the grey and stormy seas of the Plague Planet.

C 2 a

Had the spaceport had been on the receding limb, the Pilot would actually have had fuel to spare after making a successful landing.

The engineers who created the Emergency Craft, a miracle of efficiency, would have corrected this defect for future voyages.

D

Although the crew at Space Patrol Base is kept to an absolute minimum, for reasons of efficiency, it occurred to one of the engineers, who created the miraculously efficient Emergency Craft, that the voyage was simply too important to leave to chance. Excusing himself from his drawing board (an absence which would have consequences far down the line) he went and posted himself as sentry outside the launching bay where the Emergency Craft waited.

He caught the stowaway as she tried to enter the Emergency Craft, and took her to a detention cell. The Pilot came to visit her and explained what would have happened. They became friends.

When the Pilot returned from the voyage, he met her again, and they fell in love. They were married, and had seven babies.

End

Brandy Hall Issue 6 (May 2024)

Brandy Hall 6 is produced for N'APA mailing 270 (May 2024) by Mark Nelson.

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This is West Riding Press Publications ??? This is West Riding Press Publications (Australia) 23

In my first issue I followed in the spirit, if not the flesh, of Garth Spencer (*BROWNIAN MOTION* 1, mailing 263), by discussing my involvement in non-SF fandoms. In my second issue I followed Garth more directly by discussing my interactions with SF fandom. In my third issue I discussed my involvement with APAs. In the fourth and final instalment, appearing in issue five, I recollected about my experiences attending science fiction conventions.

For a number of reasons I am going to start this issue with mailing comments. One of those reasons being that it is now Tuesday May 6th and I'm not sure that I'm going to have much time to write something else for this issue.

The Mathom House

Intermission 141 (Ahrvid Engholm)

Boring sports coverage? The UK is not known for its prowess in Winter Sports (Eddie the Eagle). However, as a child I used to enjoy watching the winter sports coverage on BBC 2. What is Winter Sports? That meant coverage of the various ski related sporting events from places in Scandinavia and Austria. (Probably other places on the continent, but they are the ones I remember. The only specific location I remember is Innsbruck in Austria).

I haven't read any books about the Manhattan project. But I have read several biographies of Richard Feynman and two of Oppenheimer.

"One thing constantly debated is Was It Right to Drop the Bomb?"

I don't think War Crimes mean anything other than Victors Justice. But if they did, then there is at least a valid argument about whether dropping the atomic bomb was a war crime.

"The US was also smart in letting the emperor stay, though as only a figure head, which is royals in practically all remaining monarchies are today. That was also face saving."

Have I already mentioned that I don't think War Crimes mean anything other than Victors Justice? But if they did do, then there is at least a valid argument that the Emperor should have been prosecuted for War Crimes. I understand that the 'official' reason he wasn't prosecuted was because the US claimed that he was only a figure head and wasn't aware of what was happening. The 'unofficial' reason was that the US recognised that they needed a pro-US Japan to prevent Soviet

expansion in Northeast Asia. Hanging the Emperor would not have swung the Japanese around to the Americans... So, as ever, Realpolitik trumps justice.

Interesting to read extracts from H.G. Wells's *The World Set Free* (1914). The only novels I've read by Wells are *The History of Mr Polly* (1910) and *The War of The Worlds* (1898, but serialised in 1897). The former was one of the texts I studied for my 'O' level examination in English Literature. The Ordinary level examinations were national examinations taken at the age of 16 after two years study by students in England, Northern Ireland, and Wales. Despite being called 'Ordinary' level, the examination was only taken by a minority of the student cohort. The majority of the students took the lower-level, and less academic, Certificate in General Education (CSE). Prior to 1973, when the school leaving age was increased to 16, many students would have left school without any qualifications.

A few years ago I was astonished to read that *The History of My Polly* is considered my some not only to be Well's greatest work but one of the great novels of the western canon. I suppose that there are some 14-16 year olds who are able to appreciate this novel. I didn't appreciate it. Nor did I enjoy it. Even though I came to learn that Well's was "the father of science fiction" (according to some), for many years my experience studying *The History of Mr Polly* for two years ensured I had no inclination to read anything else that he'd written. Six years ago I relaxed my fatwa on reading Wells, but I'm still reluctant to read any others.

THE RULE OF SEVEN

"For every sevenfold increase in time after detonation, there is a tenfold decrease in the radiation rate. So, after seven hours the radiation rate is only 10% of the original and after 49 hours it is 1%. After 196 hours, just over a week, residual radiation is 1/1000th."

(I realise that you did not write this paragraph.) As written, this passage does not make scientific sense. Seven hours after detonation is not a "sevenfold increase in time after detonation". The first sentence should instead read something along the following lines "Every seven hours after detonation, there is a tenfold decrease in the radiation rate".

"US Air Force's Strategic Air Command worried that in times of need the codes for the Minuteman ICBM force would not be available, so it decided to set the codes to 00000000 in all missile launch control centers."

If it wasn't so serious, that would be hilarious.

"But there's no doubt the Swedes in their own Manhattan project could build Bombs themselves /f/r/o/m /I/K/E/A /p/l/a/n/s."

That is also funny. Though in our household my wife would be the only one who could successful construct an IKEA bomb.

Ryctm

“While I'm against generally removing books due to their contents, it's more understandable if it's done in school libraries for grades under high school. I don't think young kids should be subject to explicit sex descriptions or anything that reflects the sex/trans/queer/etc debate in the adult world. They are too young for that, and a school library has an educational responsibility which means to teach pupils at the appropriate age”.

I wasn't going to reply to this comment. However, there was a news item in today's newspaper that touches on this. It was reported that a Sydney council has voted to ban “same-sex parents books and materials” from their eight local libraries. The vote was six in favour, five against, and four councillors absent. One of the books mentioned in the debate was Holly Duhig's *Same-Same Parents*, a book which explores the experience of having either two mums or two dads as parents. (The cover features two men and a young child.) The New South Wales Arts Minister has accused the council of censorship and the ban has blown up into a big debate.

The age range for *Same-Same Parents* is either 5-7 or 7-9 (sources differ). According to one review I found the book “tells the story of Daisy and her 2 dads”. Would you consider this an appropriate book for a *school* library? I agree with what you wrote, which is why I wasn't going to reply to it. OTOH, I see no problem having this book in a general library (based upon what I've read about the book, I haven't read it). Since April 2018 adoption by same-sex couples has been legal throughout Australia. Consequently, I'd have no problem with this book being in a school library. But I wasn't sure if you'd consider it to be reflecting “the sex/trans/queer etc debate in the adult world”. At least in Australia, I don't think so.

“Synergy 48 (John Thiel)

“Those who wonder why my Napa fanzine is called “Synergy” might hereby be appraised that after all the big talk about synergy, it seemed to disappear like a lost art and to be never mentioned again in fanzines.”

When was synergy discussed in fanzines? Before my time I am sure! It's unfortunate, but synergy has become one of those buzz words used by people who don't understand what it means. How many times have budget cuts been justified because the combining of previous independent units “will lead to unexpected synergies”?

“Another thing that kind of turned into a cult undertaking or coven has been genetics, robotics, behavioral science, and it might be scientific refuge but it takes all the magic out of sf and out of life.”

In what way do you believe that these examples have become “a cult undertaking”? Do you mean within the scientific community or within the science-fiction community? Or perhaps within both?

Intermission 142 (Ahrvid Engholm)

“Isaac Asimov invented, in a way, the modern robot in the 1940s, building on Rossum's Universal Robots Karel Capek let loose in the 1920s as he coined the word "robot" (Asimov in his turn coined "robotics").”

As you know by now, I don't need much motivation to look words up in the Oxford English Dictionary. The following is not the first use of the word in English...

1920 Ústřední kancelář továrny [= Central office of the factory] Rossum's Universal Robots.

K. Čapek, R.U.R.: Rossum's Universal Robots 7 (stage direction)

Here are some early uses of the word robot in English

1922 The robot, logical in everything, exterminate the human race until only one man is left.

Dial April 408

1922 Mildred Pierce was an essential character actor in ‘Doctor Jack’ and ‘Grandma's Boy’, but in his other comedies, Harold Lloyd could well have had a robot in her place.

Ogden (Utah) Times-Examiner 24 December 15/4

1923 You see..the have no interest in life. They have no enjoyments.

P. Selver, translation of K. Čapek, R.U.R. 28

And how can we leave the word robot without hearing from...

1942 Let's start with the three fundamental rules of Robotics—the three rules that are built most deeply into a 's positronic brain.

I. Asimov in Astounding Sci.-Fiction March 100/1

“The word “android” is actually older than “robot”. One Auguste Villiers de l'Isle-Adam's used it in Tomorrow's Eve, 1886, “a symbolist sf novel” according to Wiki...”

Another excuse to use the Oxford English Dictionary... The original meaning of the word android is “An automaton resembling a human being”. The first use of the word in this sense is 1657. This meaning of the word is now historical. The second meaning of the word android is the science fiction one.

2. spec. (originally and chiefly Science Fiction). An intelligent artificial being with a human appearance. Cf. Robot n.2 1a and droid n. 1.

The OED gives the first English usage much later than your Wiki example.

1936 The traffic that brought him such enormous wealth was the production and sale of androids... Eldo Arrynu... had come upon the secret of synthetic life. He generated artificial cells, and propagated them in nutrient media, controlling development by radiological and biochemical means.

J. Williamson in Astounding Science-Fiction August 146/2

However, this usage is android as a noun. The usage of android as an adjective is older.

1879 *a.*, resembling a man.

Webster's American Dictionary of English Language Supplement 1541/3

The OED notes that it is “sometimes difficult to distinguish ((its use as an adjective)) from use of sense [A.2](#) used as a modifier”.

“A similar robot called George was later built and toured Europe and Australia. “The Age newspaper described him as “the educated gentleman, alongside his rough-hewn awkward brother”.”

The National Library of Australia has been digitalising Australian newspapers, amongst other things, and these are text searchable. A search on “George” and “robot” pulls up a large number of hits. Here’s the top hit from *The Age* (Saturday 19th March, 1932). This isn’t the robot that is referred to above, but it’s still an interesting news item to reprint.

THE AUTOMATIC PILOT.

"GEORGE THE ROBOT" IN THE AIR

Amazing British Invention.

Dispensing with the human agency would appear to be a trend of modern invention. In several instances this has been done with a completeness which a few years ago would have been regarded as nothing short of marvellous. In other instances its completeness has only been partially realised. Will this be regarded as the age of Robots ? The inventive brains of world-famed people of genius seem to teem with such amazing schemes that one can not help speculating if the time will come when the ultimate invention will be one designed to dispense with self. So to-day in myriad research centres diligent workers are planning and experimenting with all manner of uncannily accurate devices whereby humans may be relieved either in part or in whole of their responsibilities as living forces, Of all modern inventions there is one concerning the piloting of aircraft which judging by recent trials simply staggers and stimulates the imagination. This device is known as the automatic pilot, and it has been dubbed "George the Robot." With such a name, one is not surprised to learn that George hails from Britain. Had he, or rather it, been invented in any other country, one feels certain that a much more suggestive title would have intrigued a somewhat blase world.

George, the automatic pilot, is a product of the Royal Aircraft Establishment, which is situated at Farnborough, England. Aviation generally owes an incalculable debt to this great research centre which, whilst primarily founded for the purpose of improving the efficiency of aircraft used by

the Royal Air Force, has exercised a far-reaching influence upon the designs of civil aircraft throughout the Empire. For the past ten years George has been in the embryo stage. The accumulated brain power and wealth which have been expended on this automatic pilot during that period can only be guessed, but it has been suggested that to date it has cost at least £100,000 of British Government money. That the time and expenditure has not been in vain is proved by the fact that already several flights lasting several hours and up to 100 miles, under all manner of weather conditions, have been made with the utmost satisfaction by using this automatic pilot. George the Robot has now reached the stage at which an aeroplane whilst in flight can be controlled automatically with far greater precision than is possible even the most skilled pilot.

This automatic pilot takes the form of a control which depends for its sense of direction on a gyroscope which is driven continuously by compressed air. The gyroscope operates pneumatically certain pistons, and these in turn move the rudder and elevators. The mechanism is so sensitive that the deviation of the aeroplane from a set course by a fraction of a degree is detected and instantly corrected. There is also an arrangement with this automatic pilot whereby the human pilot can make changes of course to correct for example the variation of wind, or for any of the other many climatic changes. Further, the automatic pilot can alter the trim of the aeroplane so that it can climb or dive to a different altitude whilst still maintaining complete automatic control.

This automatic pilot has been fitted to a number of widely different types of service aeroplanes, which range from the large twin-engined machines of the Virginia and Southampton types to the standard two-seat sorts. So far this device has been applied only to service aircraft, but its success in the recent trials indicates that its influence on civil aviation will be very far-reaching. It has proved, amongst many other things, that it can be of great value in the matter of relieving the pilot in charge of a large aeroplane of considerable fatigue. On a long-distance flight from Australia to England its value can well be imagined. From the purely commercial aspect, it is claimed that the automatic pilot should prove just another factor in reducing the cost of flying, especially in the case of the large air liners operating on the regular British-European routes. In regard to navigation, it is maintained that the automatic pilot has definitely proved its value by increasing the accuracy of flying. The tests have shown, with satisfaction to the British experts, that this is particularly the case when flying in cloudy or foggy weather.

Already a device of a similar nature has been tested on a certain type of cargo steamer and at least, one class of steamer has made the trip to Australia fitted with an automatic navigating officer. However, as far as aviation is concerned, the automatic pilot is still the close preserve of the British Government authorities, and the minute details of the invention are kept supremely secret. This is but another notable example of the unostentatious manner in which Britain indicates the way to even greater tilings.

I think I've found the article that gave your quote... This is from *The Age* (Friday 20th September, 1935).

MEET MR. ROBOT.

Not Forgetting His Master

Melbourne has had the honor of being the first city south of the Equator to entertain George, one of the most famous figures in the world. He is the leader of a new race of beings; one of the most marvellous scientific products of the twentieth century. Wherever he goes with his inventor, Captain W. H. Richards (English journalist and author) he establishes a reputation for obedience and versatility. For those readers who unfortunately will not be able to make George's acquaintance at the wonderfully attractive electrical exhibition, we had a talk with him and Capt. Richards, and learnt the following interesting facts:—

It took five months to produce George; he behaved well enough till it came to getting him to stand up properly. Not that he was lazy; in fact just the reverse, for instead of getting up from his seat slowly and with dignity, like a king of Robots should, George would rise straight up like a jack-in-a-box. However, with firm perseverance, Captain Richards succeeded in getting him to bow before rising.

George has only one suit — it is made of smooth polished aluminium, and has an apron of mall. As it is not showing signs of wear yet, it will probably do him for a long time. But he can display many moods, and if asked to show his teeth purple sparks appear in his mouth, accompanied by a sinister hissing.

As George was designed for travel, he had to become a perfect linguist, and when commanded, can talk in French, German, Hindustani, Chinese and Danish, as well as his native English.

When packed for travelling in his case, George weighs half a ton. Australia is the fifth continent he has "done" in his busy three years of existence, and he once gave a special performance for the Danish Royal family.

George's young brother, which Captain Richards built several years ago, has lost favor since George appeared. Captain Richards explained. This first robot cost £140 to make, which sounds plenty, and although he had a brilliant and exciting career— he was shot at once by the night watchman of a New York theatre— the appearance of George put him right out of countenance. George was the educated gentleman, alongside his rough-hewn awkward brother, and when you know that George cost almost £2000 you can't blame him altogether for being uppish.

Just how George is made is a secret, but the principle of his operation is that the voice of his master penetrates George's armor, strikes the 3-inch diaphragm of a microphone, which, according to the word spoken, transmits electrical currents which are harnessed to the sensitive mechanism for controlling such actions as the moving of his head, raising his arms and standing up.

"What is George's Inside like ?" the Captain was asked.

"Most disappointing," he said, "nothing but gears and cranks, Just like a watch on a large scale."

Archive Midwinter (Jefferson P. Swycaffer)

Ryctm

"Of course, I instantly saw the deadly loophole in mathematical logic: everything depends on the premises!"

That is true in all of pure mathematics, what you can prove depends upon what you assume. One thread in pure mathematics is to take a theorem that has been proved for a given set of premises and then to gradually weaken them. You might find that you can prove essentially the same theorem with a weaker set of premises. Or you might find that whilst you can't prove either the same theorem or what is essentially the same theorem, you can generalise the theorem in some way. Sometimes it takes pure mathematicians a long time to figure out the best way to generalise a theorem (or a concept). In some sense the best generalisation is the one that opens up the most number of interesting problems for future investigation.

"You can prove that grapes are geese, if you select the right premises. Robert Heinlein said that logic can't tell you anything you didn't already know, and, yeah, there's some validity to that."

One of Richard Feynman's anecdotes is about how pure mathematics can only prove theorems that are obvious. And in a sense that is true, because once you understand a proof then it's often obvious why the theorem is true. But it wasn't obvious before the theorem was proved. Perhaps it's just the benefit of hindsight that makes the theorem obvious.

"The joy of manipulating symbols in symbolic logic is that you arrive at conclusions "that you didn't know that you knew." The conclusions are inherent in the premises, but logic and make the conclusions explicit."

For quite a number of years specialised computer software has been able to check proofs in some areas of symbolic logic, though you need to write your proof in a certain style for it to be checked by the software. Needless to say, the style required is non-human. (This was an active research area in the 1990s, I knew PhD students working on that.) More recently the software has developed to a stage where it can discover its own theorems. There are two recent special issues of the *Bulletin of the American Mathematical Society* that contains papers addressing the issue of "the potential impact of AI [...] on how we do mathematics". I haven't read those issues, and I might never read them, so no comment from me on what the articles have to say.

Brownian Motion 7 (Garth Spencer)

Ryct Ahrvid Engholm

“One argument I ran across is that over the course of time, wars have generally cost more and more to wage... Which raises the question, what are other current wars expected to accomplish? In Gaza, for example, or in parts of Africa?”

Conflicts are often waged for the benefit of the chief antagonists. I doubt that such leaders care about who is going to pay for the long-term costs of such conflicts.

Ryct Samuel Lubell (**Samizdat** #23)

“As I recall Mark Twain’s remark, “The man who does not read is at no advantage over the man who cannot read.””

I have used the following Jane Austen quote, as a prelude to some book reviews, in my ANZAPA zine.

“The person, be it gentleman or lady, who has not pleasure in a good novel, must be intolerably stupid.”

I can replace that quote with your Mark Twain quote.

Snow Poster Township #15 (Heath Row)

“This novel is based on historical events (the “Kindertransport”), and Truus Wijsmuller was a real person who performed this heroic work.”

A documentary that I watched in 2001 was *“Into the Arms of Strangers-Stories of the Kindertransport”*. I don’t remember any more about it.

*“My impulse then was to reread another novel about similar, but very different circumstances, Neville Shulte’s *Pied Piper* (1941-1942).”*

Nevil Shulte (1899-1960) was recently discussed in ANZAPA. His novel *On the Beach* (1957) was made into the eponymous movie (1959). The female star in the movie, Ava Gardner, was reputed to have remarked that Melbourne was the perfect place to make a movie about the end of the world. However, I have read that that quote was made up by a journalist. Another of his well known novels, at least in Australia, is *A Town Like Alice* (1950), which was made into a movie (1956) and later a TV miniseries (1981). Shulte moved to Australia, from England, in 1950. I see that *Pied Piper* has been adapted to the big screen twice: in 1942 and 1959.

Ryct Garth Spencer (*Brownian Motion* #6)

“Inspired by voting for the Faan Awards, I’ve taken up writing letters of comment again. I wrote 12 last month and only one so far this month. My goal is to write a dozen a month, and to keep track of other letterhacks appearing in fanzines so I can better vote in the letterhack category.”

Last year I voted for the Faan Awards for the first time. It’s possible that I would not have done so had I not been a member of N’3F. I wasn’t going to vote, but when I looked at the list of eligible zines for the genzine category I saw that so many of them were N’3F zines that I then looked at how many zines I received in the general category. I didn’t give the letterhack category too much thought, so I voted for the one person whose name I see “all-over-the-place”. In preparation for the next set of awards I thought that I should better prepare myself for the letterhack category by keeping track of all loc writers that appear in the zines that I read. I struggle to find the time to write locs for more than a handful of SF fanzines, as I have to partition the little time I have for such activities between postal diplomacy and SF fanzines.

Samuel Lubell (*Samizdat* 24)

“When a college admissions staffer looks at two applicant, one from a rich family that could afford tutoring, a house in a good school district, and summer enrichment programs, and one from a poorer family that could afford none of that, the staffer should consider what the poorer student could have achieved if they had the rich student’s advantages rather than just look at their achievements as if they both started from the same place.”

When I applied to university (in England), entrance was determined by the grades that you received in your ‘A’ (for Advanced) level examinations. These examinations were introduced in 1951 for the small cohort of students that stayed at school to the age of eighteen. The pass grades ran from A (top) to E (bottom). A widely used coring system gave an A grade five points, down to one point for an E grade. A typical student would study three subjects for two years, i.e. between the ages of 16 and 18. Compared to other education systems this meant that English students had in-depth knowledge of a few subjects, three or four. In particular, students usually specialised in science subjects or non-science subjects.

I once read an article that looked at the correlation between performance in A level examinations and eventually degree classification. This showed that students with the very best A level grades were more likely to graduate with top degrees. Students with the worst A level grades were more likely to graduate with the ‘worst’ degree classifications. However, for most students A level grades were not a good predictor of university performance.

There are many reasons why “average” A level performance did not lead to “average” degree classification. However, one reason touches upon your point. Students attending private schools receive a great deal of coaching in how to answer exam questions. Students attending public schools received much less, if any, coaching. A typical private school student who receives average A level grades has, in academic terms, “peaked”. They are not going to receive coaching at university. So their degree classification upon graduation was often lower than predicted by their ‘A’ level results.

On the other hands, the average public school student received little, if any, coaching at school. Their 'A' level marks are more likely to be determined by raw talent. They have the potential to improve their performance, compared to what is predicted, if they settle in at university and being to teach themselves how to learn.

I read and very enjoyed *The Mists of Avalon* when I was a doctoral student. (I read it at least twice). I haven't read any of the subsequent books, should I?

I will run together two sentences from this issue.

"I agree that updating classics to make them reflect modern norms misleads readers into thinking that today's values are universal truths and denies them the opportunity to wonder that if what was acceptable in the past is no longer acceptable today then perhaps today's beliefs will be seen as wrong in the future..." (a comment on *Archive Midwinter* Jan 2024) *"...This raises an interesting question. Should people read good books by bad authors?"* (comment relating to Marion Zimmer Bradley).

Obviously, every individual makes their own decision as to what constitutes a "bad" author and draws their own line as to whether they should read them. For me, I'd have to make a decision on a case-by-case basis. However, let's recognise that many authors of classics could be considered "bad" authors by contemporary standards. Biographies of well-known writers often show them in bad light. (Whether or not the subject of a biography is cast in a bad light, can depend upon wheher they are living when the biography is published...)

The towns of Australia are replete with the statues of the Great White Men of the 19th century. Only it's turned out that most of them were not all that great, a significant number made their money at the expense of the lives of indigenous Australians. This has lead to calls for such statues to be removed. I do not want to glorify the actions of the men represented by statues, but I do not see that there is anything usefully gained by the removal of the statues. I'd rather see information made available adjacent to the statues that explains what they did.

Both my wife and myself are big fans of *Big Hero Six*, though not because of the battle at the end of the movie. It's about what happens before that point, particularly the relationship between the boy and his brother's robot. I also enjoyed the first part of *Dune*, not sure what my wife thought about it. It almost made me want to reread the novel. I think I've missed my chance to see the second *Dune* movie on the big screen.

Ryct to *Ye Murthered Master Mage* (Jan 2024)

"But I see this with my other SF clubs, there are a handful of people who do most of the work, a small group who can be counted on to help with the work, and the vast majority who participate in the social aspects."

I suspect that is true of many organisations, it's not particular to SF clubs.

George Phillies (*Ye Murthered Master Mage* 269)

I wish that either you moderated more Facebook groups, perhaps you won't care for that suggestion, or that more people moderated them the way you do. Have you published all 269 issues of *Ye Murthered Master Mage* in NAPA?

Ryct Archive Midwinter

"Of Breaking Waves is out as an e-book, and will soon be out as a paperback, so soon as the paperback cover is prepared. Ditto it will soon be out of the hardback if anyone wants the hardback."

I searched for your book, but I did not check its title very carefully. Instead, I search for 'Breaking Waves'. The number one hit for a book with this title was *The Breaking Wave* by Nevil Shute. As synchronicity would have it, Heath Row mentioned the same author in his contribution in the last mailing.

Here's another old quote on the relative merit of SF awards. This is from an interview with Brian Aldiss which appeared in *Tharunka* on Tuesday 23rd May 1978. (First published in 1953, *Tharunka* is the University of New South Wales' oldest student newspaper.)

Q: You were talking about standards improving and audiences getting more discriminating. How much of an influence do you think the Nebula and Hugo Awards and other general awards for merit, have on a field like science fiction and would you like to see more of them?

A: I feel rather uncertain about that. I don't feel at all uncertain about the Hugo. The Hugo is something that you vote for at world science fiction conventions. It's a fan vote for popularity.

Everyone readily understands and accepts the system. Occasionally it breaks down but that's the fault of a local subsidence and not, I think, of the general principle.

For instance there was an occasion, I think 10 years ago, when the Edgar Rice Burroughs fans decided en masse that they would all vote for 'Princess of Mars' and it did actually win the Hugo and a lot of very fast footwork had to be done in order not to bring us into discredit.

The Nebula has, I'm afraid, become largely discredited. It's awarded by the Science Fiction Writers of America which is a sort of guild of science fiction writers. They allow a few poor Englishmen in as well and Bert Chandler. But that actually, I think, doesn't work too well.

I was partly instrumental in setting up another award, the John W. Campbell Memorial Award and we decided that democracy should go by the board on this occasion and we would have a panel of seven judges who would read and deliberate and give their award for the best. That's worked out very well but it has its awful difficulties. It's very hard to give awards.

SWEDISH WORDS IN ENGLISH 3

A section in *Brandy Hall* devoted to words that have entered the English language from Swedish. (I ignore words which are now historical, obsolete, or pseudo-archaic and words which are now only used in an historical context.) I provide the original meaning of the word, a shortened etymology of the word, the first recorded use of the word, and a more recent example of its use. This information comes from the Oxford English Dictionary. The words are listed in the order in which they entered the English language.

Swedish Words in English 1 (*Brandy Hall* 3, November 2023, *NAPA* mailing 267) covered five words entering the English language from 1295 (Osmund) to 1447 (bail). Swedish Words in English 2 (*Brandy Hall* 5, February 2024, *NAPA* mailing 269) cover twelve words entering the English language from 1593 (Lapland) to 1755 (Nickel).

Tungsten (1770-) (Entered the English language in 1770 as a mineralogy term which is now obsolete. Its usage in the modern chemistry sense dates from 1776.)

(Formerly also in Latin form tungstenum as in other names of metals.) A heavy, steel-grey, ductile, very infusible metal, contained in the above mineral and in wolfram n. (iron and manganese tungstate) and other minerals; used for wire in incandescent electric lamps. Symbol W (= wolframium); atomic weight 184 (O = 16).

Etymology. A borrowing from Swedish.

Etymon: Swedish tungsten.

1796 The yellow oxyde of by ignition becomes blue or black.

Philosophical Transactions (Royal Society) vol. 86 291

Zeolite (1770-) Originally: any of certain silicate minerals having the property of swelling up, giving off water, and fusing when heated. In later use more widely: any of a large group of minerals comprising hydrated aluminosilicates of sodium, potassium, calcium, and barium whose crystal structures are open frameworks with channels and spaces which can hold water molecules; (also) any synthetic compound having similar properties or uses.

1770 If concentrated oil of vitriol is poured on pounded [Sw. Zeolit] zeolites a heat arises.

G. von Engeström & E. M. da Costa, translation of A. F. Cronstedt, Essay System of Mineralogy 116

Etymology. Of multiple origins. Partly a borrowing from Swedish. Partly a borrowing from Latin.

Etymons: Swedish zeolit; Latin zeolites.

(When I was a final year undergraduate I took a subject on catalysis. This was my favourite final year chemistry subject. There was a fair bit of content on zeolites, but I didn't learn that it was a Swedish word!)

Mandarin (1771-) More fully mandarin orange. A citrus fruit resembling a small, flattened, orange, but with sweet pulp, readily separating segments, and easily detached peel; esp. one with yellow or pale orange peel. Also: the tree bearing this fruit, *Citrus reticulata* (family Rutaceae), widely grown in subtropical regions.

1771 Here are two sorts of China oranges (*Citrus sinensis*). The first is that called the Mandarin-orange whose peel is quite loose.

J. R. Forster, translation of P. Osbeck, Voyage to China vol. I. 307

Etymology A borrowing from Swedish.

Etymon: Swedish mandarin.

(This is the second meaning of the word mandarin when used as a noun. The older meaning (1589-) is the historical usage for "An official in any of the senior grades of the former imperial Chinese civil service".)

Rutabaga (1789-) (Now chiefly US.) A type of brassica having a rounded, turnip-like root with firm yellow or white flesh, *Brassica napus* (Napobrassica group); the root of this plant, used as a vegetable or fodder for animals. Also †rutabaga turnip. Also called swede, Swedish turnip.

The rutabaga may have arisen by hybridization of the turnip and the cabbage, probably occurring in Finland in the sixteenth or early seventeenth century.

1789 I now inclose a small parcel of the Roota Baga seed.

Annals of Agriculture vol. 11 342

Etymology borrowing from Swedish. Perhaps also partly a borrowing from French.

Etymons: Swedish rotabagge; French rutabaga.

Trap (1794-) A dark-coloured igneous rock more or less columnar in structure: now extended to include all igneous rocks which are neither granitic nor of recent volcanic formation.

1794 ... Its name originates from the Swedish language. The term *trapp* describes a stone, which breaks in pieces of a rhomboidal figure, and consequently exhibits..steps like a stair case.

J. G. Schmeisser, System of Mineralogy vol. I. 184

Etymology A borrowing from Swedish.

Etymon: Swedish trapp.

Saeter (1799-) In Scandinavia: a mountain pasture where cattle remain during the summer months.

1799 His cows are now gone to pasture on the mountain - to saeter as they seem to call it.

T. R. Malthus, Diary 9 July (1966) 132

Eymology Of multiple origins. Partly a borrowing from Norwegian. Partly a borrowing from Swedish.

Etymons: Norwegian sæter, seter; Swedish säter.

Trona (1799-) (Minerology) Native hydrous sodium carbonate, found in various places in North Africa and America.

1799 The trona was not deprived of its water of crystallization.

R. Kirwan, Geological Essays 497

Eymology A borrowing from Swedish.

Etymon: Swedish trona.

(I wished I had indicated which of the previous words were technical minerology words, quite a few of them are.)

lindworm (1914-) A monstrous and evil serpent, common in Scandinavian legend.

1814 The terms worm, drake, dragon, and serpent, are indiscriminately applied to these monsters, as well as lind-drake and lind-worm probably from their haunt being generally under a linden or lime tree.

H. Weber, Illustrations of Northern Antiquities 60

(Not a word I know, but it's a good one for fantasy fans.)

Eymology Of multiple origins. Partly a borrowing from Danish. Partly a borrowing from Swedish.

Etymons: Danish lindorm, Swedish lindorm.

orthite (1817-) (Minerology) A silicate of cerium, iron, aluminium, and other metals, occurring as elongated crystals and now regarded as a variety of allanite.

1817 Orthite so named because it always forms straight radii.

Annals of Philosophy vol. 9 160

Eymology A borrowing from Swedish.

Etymon: Swedish orthit.

BROWNIAN MOTION #8

An apazine from Garth Spencer

For NAPA #270, May 2024



Beginnings

My first SF club was the Science Fiction Association of Victoria (which is a small city on the west coast of Canada). My first convention, if that's the right word, was a one-day affair in 1981 that the few clubs in Victoria held together; at the time they could get the space at the Student Union Building, at the University of Victoria. In later years I ventured out of Victoria to conventions such as VCon in Vancouver, Moscon in Idaho, and later still I attended conventions in Washington, Oregon, Alberta, New Brunswick, and Quebec.

It was pretty clear from the outset, I think, that SF conventions were like parties for a few hundred of your best friends (past or future), but too large to be held at your home, so you had to call it a convention and rent a hotel.

It was also clear that we were all amateurs, at forming clubs or running conventions or, for that matter, at producing fanzines. So I felt no apprehension at launching my own fan publications. (I did not try to lead a club or a convention because I knew, in my heart of hearts, my people skills were for shit.)

What was not clear to me – although the evidence was all around me from the beginning – that I was paying attention to a library of fanzines that SFAV, when I formed my impressions of fandom; I was not paying attention to the members, and I was still too naïve, in my early 20s, to notice how many of them were gamers or *Star Trek* fans, rather than readers. But I still thought fandom was fannish, revolving around reading SF, and sharing a number of reference points and in-jokes, and not taking anyone's reality too seriously, after putting on and taking off several different story universes in succession. I resisted learning otherwise, for decades.

I had to learn another of the basic truths of fandom the hard way. Shortly after my friends' second convention in 1982, one of them received a phone call from someone

claiming they had set up to convention for 1983. The caller was a *Star Wars* fan of vast ambition and, it turned out, half-vast execution. The vastly ambitious four-day convention in two hotels they had planned turned into a one-day event in a Jaycee Hall, which drew about a hundred people instead of a couple of thousands. I have no idea how much money they lost. Naturally the committee blamed my friends for sabotaging the convention, when they had simply stated they were not involved.

After a lot of research and correspondence, I think I established that some overenthusiastic people simply *will* do things like this five or six times a decade, in one or another part of North America. But at first, and for almost a decade, I thought SF fandom had to be defended from wild-eyed mediafans with no concept of budgeting or feasibility. So I edited a national newszine for Canadian fans, to raise our mutual awareness a little, from 1985 through 1987.

Consider the period. This was when postage and printing – first mimeography, and later photocopying – were the only way for fanzines to circulate, but they were still relatively cheap. Personal computers were just coming on the market; the Internet was barely a whisper on the horizon. We had barely begun to realize that wages were not increasing as much as economic productivity, let alone the costs of living, and travel was not yet becoming relatively expensive again. Also, the gap between fans who still thought of fandom in terms of fanzines and clubs and written SF, versus screen entertainment and media franchises and mainly commercial conventions, had not widened and become glaringly obvious.

This was the beginning of my learning experience. *(To be continued)*



News-Like Substances

Garth Loses His Documents, Has to Reconstruct them from Archives

About the beginning of May I opened my computer and discovered my entire current Documents directory was missing. Consequently I have been reconstructing the directory from backups. I had to go review my emails again to reconstruct my APA working folders again; now much of my deathless prose has vanished.

Robert Sawyer Rides Again!

Robert Sawyer's 25th novel, *The Downloaded*, is now available for pre-order in both print and ebook editions. He has released a detailed list of his May 2024 book-launch events across Canada, together with detailed pre-ordering information. Later this year, he will also attend events in: Brampton, Ontario; River John, Nova Scotia; Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan; Calgary; Atlanta; Eden Mills, Ontario; Brookings, South Dakota; Toronto; Niagara Falls, New York; and Ottawa.

Robert Sawyer is one of the best-known SF writers in Canada, and well-known for his promotional ability.

(<https://sfwriter.com/lnappear.htm>)

Amazing Stories vs. NBC

Steve Davidson writes:

"Last week (Apr. 22-26) I was informed by NBC representatives that I would have a communication from them regarding my missing payments on Tuesday (April 30) of this week.

"That email was in response to a query I sent to them regarding this non-payment issue.

"In the email, I stated that in the past, the only way(s) in which it seemed that I was able to get any action out of them was to go public with the issue.

"Twice previously I had to engage in such actions in order to get breaches of the contract cured through renegotiation.

"Major Hollywood personalities and production entities were embarrassed, upset and angered at the time by my accurate and truthful statements.

"Tuesday has come and gone with nary a whisper.

"I (and by extension, *Amazing Stories*) have been owed contractually negotiated fees since October of 2020.

"Read that date carefully. Later this year, non-payment will have gone on for FOUR years.

“While the funds owing are not great by Hollywood standards, they are great by *Amazing Stories*’ standards and affect its ability to pay authors and artists and others appropriate amounts. The absence of those funds has also negatively affected *Amazing*’s ability to promote and market its offerings as well.

“I informed NBC representatives that if I did not hear back from them (with progress) when they had promised to do so, I would be launching a crowd funding campaign to see if we could raise the missing dollars elsewhere.

“I also informed them that, out of necessity, that crowd funding effort would have to explain the entire history of my dealings with NBC (since 2015).

“Not included in my email to NBC representatives was my additional intention to encourage NBC to voluntarily give up the rights I licensed to them.

“When the contract was in breach (and NBC notified of termination - a notice that they also did not respond to until after I had gone public) I contacted several production studios with the idea of licensing them to do a show under that name.

“Several responded in the affirmative, even to the point of discussing a production partnership, in which *Amazing Stories* would have production credit and direct creative input into the show (after I pitched them the idea that I would be seeking Science Fiction authors with script writing experience to create episodes, as well as to script existing classics of the genre), but that they could not move forward until the “legal encumbrances” had been settled.

“The point being that, if free, the name could be used to (attempt) to produce a television show that would have great respect for the genre, would involve contemporary authors with proven story telling and script writing chops, would have ties to the magazine version and, obviously, the greater public footprint that a television show would bring.

“(Some may be familiar with the radio shows ‘Dimension X’ and ‘X Minus 1,’ where episodes were based on short stories drawn from the magazines of the era. This is what we believe we could do with television.)

“I will be forwarding a copy of this FB post to my contacts at NBC (again, who promised response by yesterday which was not forthcoming) and will begin putting together the crowd funding effort that I hope my friends and fellow fans here and elsewhere will support, either by contributing or helping to spread the word.

“That effort will be seeking funds to support the legal action of terminating the licensing agreement.

“Initial filings in pursuit of that goal are expected to cost approximately 15 to 20k. Some or all of those funds may be recoverable, depending upon a legal ruling.

“AGAIN. It is important for this statement to gain wide distribution if it going to have the desired effect. The crowd funding campaign will include additional details and suggestions as to how folks can help advance this effort, but starting here on FB will give it a boost.”

(Steve Davidson, *Amazing Stories*, Facebook, May 1, 2024)



Samples of Aurora Awards (Garth has two)

The **Aurora Awards 2024** voting ballot is now on the CSFFA website. The Aurora Awards – officially, the Canadian Science Fiction and Fantasy Awards – have been awarded to Canadian SFFH writers since 1981. Today, the number of award categories and nominees is a bit too large to list here.

June 8 to July 13, 2024 is the Aurora Awards voting period, when paid-up CSFFA members can vote for the creators and works shortlisted during the nomination period. Purchasing a CSFFA membership is open to Canadian citizens and landed residents, and will close on July 6 at 23:59 EDT.

August 10th will be the online Aurora Awards ceremony, when the winning creators and works are revealed.

(www.csffa.ca & Kalin Stacey, April 25, 2024)

Mailing Comments

Intermission 141, by Ahrvid Engholm

Good to hear about Sweden's past and present technological and scientific activities. I always thought nuclear weapons were hard to use effectively as they destroyed what had to be captured, but ... I admit, I have no military background for making such judgments.

The more I hear about the war between Russia and the Ukraine, the harder it is for me to understand what Putin was thinking. But you've explained that sufficiently.

Re the film *Oppenheimer*: I keep running into problems understanding the mindset of my parents' generation. Granted that nations were much more patriotic in those days, and people were much more tough-minded – the Allies were perfectly prepared to bomb cities that were incidental to the enemy war effort, as I am informed Dresden

was – still, the high-handed way Los Alamos was created must have grated on independent, old-fashioned American souls. Equally I have trouble understanding how born and bred North Americans could be induced to spy for the Soviets, but they did. I guess I show my own age, not being able to grant any government much credibility. The idea that a demonstration explosion might have had the same effect as bombing Hiroshima and Nagasaki must also show what generation Kim Stanley Robinson comes from, as one of his stories illustrates.

Re social absorption of nuclear information: I gather that the prewar generation was rather slow, in the aftermath of the second World War, to take in the facts about ionizing radiation or nuclear technology. In Canada and in the States, radioactive ore extraction was attended by some preposterous neglect of safety precautions, with lamentable effects on miners. In the U.S. Navy, I gather, personnel without any protection against radiation were assigned to wash down ships irradiated by nuclear test explosions. The facts about fallout, long-term radiation damage, pervasive environmental contamination, and electro-mechanical pulses kept coming as unexpected, nasty surprises. Evidently, previous generations confidently took on faith a number of assumptions that stopped being valid, in the nuclear age. But this is a twice-told story.

Re H.G. Wells, his novels and his socialism: more and more I get the impression that people are only intelligent and capable in one, or at most two directions. It would help explain why otherwise exceptional people can harbour very naïve misconceptions. I don't suppose socialized medical care and social services are misconceptions, but a totally socialized society can't work – not because "free" markets are efficient, but because they're systems too complex to comprehend, or control.

Wells never seemed to catch on to that. Well, many people still don't get the word about complexity; and I'm pretty certain this is one of the major conceptual breakthroughs of the 20th century.

FainZINE #3, by Isaac Asimov

The description of how to build an atomic bomb more or less resembles what I learned in first-year physics. I gather, though, that while even a high school student has designed a workable atomic bomb, the control of fissile materials has been good enough to keep them out of civilian, or criminal hands ... at least until the Soviet Union dissolved.

Synergy 12, by John Thiel

I regret that you have been having computer problems. I still look forward to your new fanzine, *Intermezzo*.

At one point, on Facebook, I saw a complaint from you about people ignoring *Surprising Stories*. That was the first time I had heard of the title, which suggested a solution to your problem.

So you get disappearing files, too? That happened to me ... as described at the beginning of this apazine.

Intermission 142, by Ahrvid Engholm

Maybe I should learn to make robots for my own purposes. It might save some effort that now goes to housekeeping, yardwork, and cleaning up after the cat.

Archive Midwinter, by Jefferson P. Swycaffer

Re your comments to me: glad to have given you some amusement!

Re epistemology: there seems to be something wrong with the view of the teacher who thought that only the evidence of our own unaided senses can be trusted. We take on faith, without testing them every day, the basics of mechanical physics and electronics every day, when we ride cars and buses, rely on electrical supply networks, and communicate by telephone or online. We take on faith, similarly, the basics of kitchen chemistry when we eat baked products, the basics of pharmacology when we take medications, and the basics of industrial chemistry and commercial quality assurance when we wear synthetic fabrics. I took clinical hygiene on faith when I gave blood yesterday. You probably see where I'm going with this – other people slowly and painfully worked out many medical, industrial, and commercial technologies, and we take them for granted.

Brandy Hall Issue 5 March 2024, by Mark Nelson

Interesting to compare your experiences of conventions with mine. It never once occurred to me to feel required to know SF, or fandom, very deeply, or to expect that anyone else would necessarily be so informed; but I did expect *some* of the people, the Trufans, to know more than I did. As I always do.

Re your suggestion to Ahrvid Engholm, re his exchange in *Intermission* #139 with Jefferson Swycaffer: something like your experiment has been conducted – not by a man writing a story that is rejected, then submitting it elsewhere under a female name – but by a writer in Quebec, whose stories were consistently rejected by a small magazine, submitting new stories under a different name. (Quebec has a small but dynamic French-language SFFH community.) Soon people were remarking on a hot new talent ... who was eventually revealed as the well-known Elisabeth Vonarburg, writing under a pseudonym.

Re your comment to me: When I used the phrase “cultivate my own garden,” I was being metaphorical – quoting Voltaire, about just tending to your own business because the great issues of one's time are beyond one's control.

Snow Poster Township #15, by Heath Row

Interesting read, about novels describing the evacuation of children to Britain. I read Nevil Shute's *Pied Piper*, too, and I was struck by the fact that in the novel, a German officer also wanted to get his child out of Europe.

How does a cover exchange work? Do we draw covers for each other, or what?

Re your comment to me: the 15 departments to which I have boiled down my life are, in order of priority:

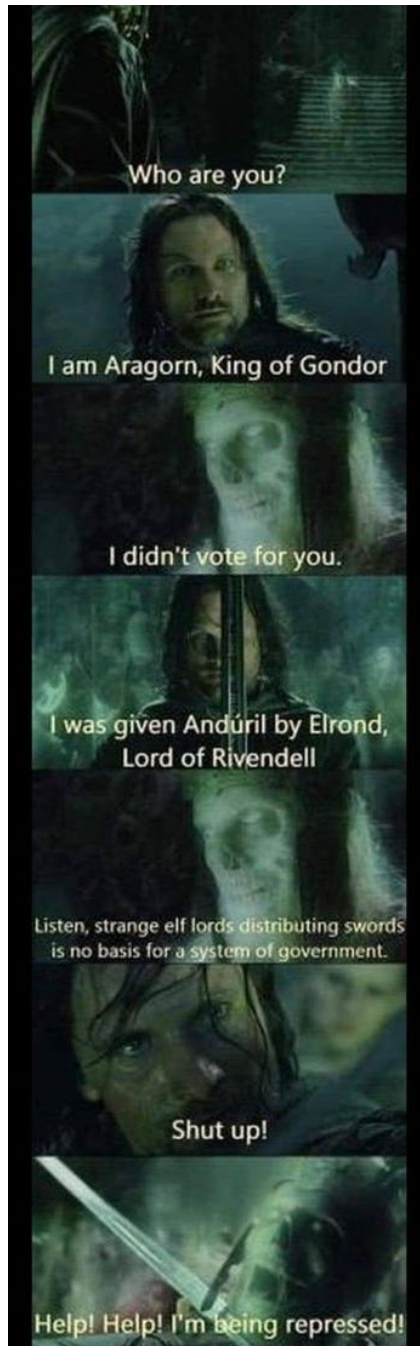
- 1 - My employment income
- 2 - Financial matters
- 3 - Housekeeping (and the Unity Housing Society)
- 4 - My cat Yvette
- 5 - Appliances and Possessions
- 6 - Medical matters
- 7 - Social matters
- 8 - The Heathen Freehold
- 9 - CSFFA, the Canadian SF and Fantasy Association (administers the Aurora Awards)
- 9 - CUFF, the Canadian Unity Fan Fund
- 9 - My new website
- 10 - Articles I intend to write
- 11 - Fanwriting: APAs I contribute to, my fanzine *The Obdurate Eye* ...
- 12 - Canadian Fanhistory
- 13 - Fiction Writing
- 14 - Garth's Stuff
- 15 - The Care of the Soul

Obviously this list is a bit ... lopsided. The system is a work in progress.

Samizdat... Ish #24, Jan/Feb 2024, by Samuel Lubell

Re your comments to me: I gather there was an episode of *South Park* where the song "Blame Canada" originated. Never saw it, but then I haven't seen much television since I moved in 2021. If anybody in the States blames Canada for anything, and I blame the Belgians for everything, who do the Belgians blame? The Ukrainians?

Re your comments to *Brandy Hall*: I have been working on a crank theory that may lend rigour to sociology, and other human studies. Or it may not.



Your profile of Marion Zimmer Bradley gave a succinct, concise outline of the scandal about her husband Walter Breen's sexual misdemeanours and her enabling him. Apparently they got it in their heads that true sexual liberation would include children and adults freely having sex with each other. It appears that Bradley's daughter failed to be indoctrinated.

I was recently reminded of this affair, the "Breendoggle," because one of the people who sided with Bradley was, apparently, Diana Paxson. Now, Diana Paxson not only hosted the original theme house party that inspired the Society for Creative Anachronism; she became a central figure in Norse paganism, sometimes called Asatru and sometimes called heathenism. And now, this month, she has been forced out of The Troth, a heathen organization she has served for a long time. The putative cause is some of her statements, and support she has given to people such as Walter Breen. (Why *now*, I wonder?)

Ye Murthered Master Mage 269, by George Phillies

Dear George – my fanzine *The Obdurate Eye* will now run advertising, if groups like the N3F send the ads to me.

Re your comment to me – I am not sure that I recommended an external *disk* drive; and there shouldn't be technical difficulties in finding an external drive that can be plugged into your existing computer system. I wonder why you are encountering difficulties?

**Ye Murthered
Master Mage 270**

**George Phillies
48 Hancock Hill Drive
Worcester, MA 01609**

How is the N3F doing? We can always use more members. Over the recent years, our count of dues-paying members has declined. Last year the count of Short Story Contest entrants hit a recent record.

The National Fantasy Fan is duller than I would like, reflecting the number of active Bureau Heads. Our active Bureau Heads are doing fine work. However, we could support a variety of types of bureau that we do not now have.

Jacqueline Lichtenberg, one of our very successful SF writers, pointed out to me that she got into SF writing by writing fan fiction, fiction about characters on television, the motion picture screen, or a series of novels. That's something we could support, right here, by making a place for members to try out their writing skills. I have contributed a piece in the next zine. Shepdon First is fan fiction, in the sense that you may be able to recognize the tale of which it is an echo.

Comments:

Intermission: 14,700 tons. However, the Treasury document covering the borrowing of course quoted the weight of silver in Troy ounces. A lot of Troy ounces. A generous donor covered your membership because you are in the bizarre position of being unable to send us membership dues.

I have read that the Swedish IR3 heavy-water reactor, early 1950s, was in part designed to make plutonium for bombs. And now perhaps Sweden-Norway-Finland-Poland-the Baltics will have a construction consortium. How do they solve the control problem, the Scholz-Hungary challenge? Unknown. The obvious answer is that the consortium builds the weapons, and hands them over to individual countries, so there is a Sweden nuclear force, a Latvia nuclear force...each under the control of its own government.

Archive Midwinter: The Intermission author problem has been solved. Thank you for judging the Short Story contest.

Brandy Hall: Thanks for your account of cons and fanzines of once upon a time. The personal point of view was most interesting.

Mathom House: Thank you for your kind words about my support of the N3F. I have done what I can. We have had some good points, membership climbing, and some bad points. I keep trying to make the good points happen more often.

Bad points? The worst was the occasion on which I encouraged members to publicize us on social media groups, and dutifully listed all the social media groups I knew, all five of them. Several had people or owners with political directions, all directions not being the same. We were in the peak of the cancellation enthusiasm. Two highly active members immediately rage quit and have not been heard from since. It seems that I had mentioned a social media site that they disliked, not without good reason.

As you have purchased The Midwich Cuckoos, you might want to read it before you read my new zine Fan Fiction.

Greenland produces parrots? An interesting rumor.

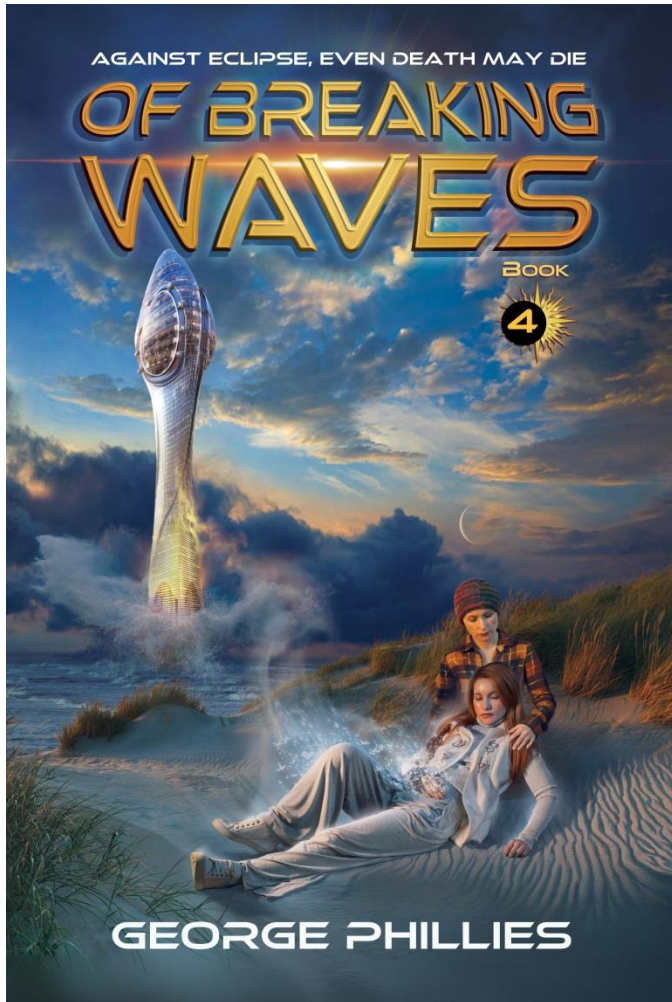
Best of luck producing Blue Moon Directory.

Brownian Motion: A Chaos Department? That's very clever, Garth.

Snow Poster Township: I have seen some plots from The Devil Bat. The plot had ingenious parts, somewhat buried in Hollywood tropes of the time.

Samizdat: I will be most grateful for reviews of Hugo nominees. I have occasionally asked a few of my regular reviewers for such reviews, but their opinion of the Hugo nominees they had read previously was so negative they had no interest in reading more. Thank you for the Review of A Connecticut Yankee. I read it when I was very little, missed the subtext, and was annoyed by the ending. Best of luck with chairing BaltiCon

Of Breaking Waves is now available as a paperback and a hardback.



I started writing the four-novel Eclipse sequence 40 years ago, including the novel *This Shining Sea* which was a dead end. The first section of the novel to be written was in fact *Victoria and the Peri*, a tale in which Eclipse and friends are in fact entirely absent.

Fan-Fic #1

George Phillies
48 Hancock Hill Drive
Worcester, MA 01609

To be not at great length, one of our very long-time members suggested that we should open up fan fiction writing as an activity for members, this being one path for people to advance toward full writing efforts, in your own worlds, with your own characters, descriptions, and plots. You start, however, by writing in someone else's world. As a start, I give a section of fan fiction, though mine has been written so that the names and plot denouement are not the same.

Shepdon Downs

It was a beautiful late Summer day. The view out the front window revealed farm fields separated with neat fences and lines of shrubbery. In the distance the rolling hills of Surrey were enrobed with the dark green of trees still in full leaf. A car had pulled into the driveway. Its driver opened the rear door, from which sprang the tall figure of a British army officer in service dress uniform.

The front door was open, with only a screen door in place to keep out annoying insects. The house's sole occupant waited behind the screen as the officer advanced up the stairs.

"Professor Mark Thornberry-Thistlewaite?" the officer asked. "I'm Captain Edmonds, sent here on this lovely day to deliver a message."

"I am indeed he," Thornberry-Thistlewaite answered. "Won't you please step in?" His visitor, Thistlewait thought, was a good six feet tall, well-tanned, with short dark hair under a service cap.

"Happy to," Edmonds answered, "though the message is quite short." He stepped into the house. "The lark is loud in song, the road is

wide and long, sun or moon is in the sky, the time is now this place to fly."

"Not at all what I expected," Thornberry-Thistlewaite answered. "Not after all these years. However, mindful of the penalties, my departure bags were recently refreshed and repacked. I need to close a few windows."

"You've been assigned an agent to keep an eye on your home." Edmonds nodded gravely. "You may be away a long time."

Thornberry-Thistlewaite opened a small decorative box at the front table by the entrance. "House key," he said. "Whoever it is gets to clean out the refrigerator, and may keep whatever is within. Unless you want to sit and wait while I do that." He solemnly handed Edmonds the key.

"We are in considerably more hurry than that," Edmonds said, "but I'll see that all is taken care of, so that your house is in good order when you return."

"Should I ask why am finally being called?" Thornberry-Thistlewaite asked quietly. "Surely we appear to be at peace."

"Not within my need to know," Edmonds said, "nor to indulge in speculation here. The hills may have ears."

"I see," Thornberry-Thistlewaite said. He returned in a few moments with two suitcases, from appearance respectably heavy. "We might as well advance."

They marched down to the car, Thornberry-Thistlewaite looking pensively back at his house. "Please do take good care of it," he said. "It's not that I have a housekeeper to descend every week and keep things properly dusted. Should I ask where we're going?"

"One of many things I'm not allowed to discuss," Captain Edmonds answered. "But it will be obvious soon enough."

Thornberry-Thistlewaite yawned. "I infer that there is nothing that we can discuss," he said. He handed the suitcases to the driver, who loaded them into the car's boot.

"Football scores might be safe," Edmonds answered. "Except I shouldn't say which teams I watch."

"Understood. Perhaps I shall just enjoy the countryside until we reach wherever. "

"Regrets, but I must opaque the windows," Edmonds said.

Several hours later, their driver finally spoke. "Car wash approaching, Sir," he observed.

Indeed, Thornberry-Thistlewaite thought, there was an American-style automatic carwash build into the side of a hill, a line of cars at one gate, a second gate closed. As they pulled up at the second gate, two attendants moved traffic cones to let them through. The second gate rolled up, Thornberry-Thistlewaite's car rolled in, and suddenly they were in a well-lit tunnel headed down.

"Be arriving in a moment," the still-nameless driver said. "I'll take care of your bags, Professor," the driver said, "while you're being escorted off to elsewhere."

There seemed, Thornberry-Thistlewaite thought, to be a remarkably excessive amount of security associated with whatever it was. You made your deal, many years ago, and now you are being called upon to keep it. Your three friends who took it all managed to die in action, while you were left in peace with your research projects.

Edmonds marched Thornberry-Thistlewaite down a long cement-lined corridor. A line of

fluorescent tubes provided only flickering illumination, not that there was anything interesting to see, at least from Thornberry-Thistlewaite's perspective. All side passage doors were closed. Small signs next to them bore mysterious alphanumeric codes.

Two soldiers in full battle dress stood at the end of the corridor checking identifications. Thornberry-Thistlewaite suspected that they were there for show, with other security precautions out of sight. Edmonds leaned into an alcove in one wall, waited, and was greeted with lights turning from red to green. He shepherded Thornberry-Thistlewaite into an elevator, an elevator not like any Thornberry-Thistlewaite had seen before. There were no pushbuttons to different floors. There were no indicators of floor level. Edmonds inserted a card in a slot in one wall, waited for an answering chirp from no obvious source, and withdrew the card. The elevator began its downward trip.

Finally the elevator door opened. Thornberry-Thistlewaite looked in surprise at the man waiting for them.

"Brian!" Thornberry-Thistlewaite exclaimed, "good to see you again!"

"And you also, Mark," the man Thornberry-Thistlewaite had addressed as Brian answered.

"Sir Humphreys," Captain Edmonds said, "I have brought your guest as ordered. I'm not cleared for anything else, so I should withdraw." He retreated into the elevator and vanished.

Sir Humphreys was properly dressed in three-piece suit with school tie. He looked to be two decades younger than Thornberry-Thistlewaite.

"Let us advance, Mark, into one of the secure chambers. I have tea, sandwiches, and sweet biscuits waiting. Fortunately, you have dutifully showed up every year for the security briefings, the briefings that you have never needed, have

been cleared for everything, and therefore I can bring us rapidly to the important situation."

Thornberry-Thistlewaite noted that he were being followed at a modest distance by two young women, both obviously in muscular good health, who did not say a word as they walked down yet another corridor. *This, Thornberry-Thistlewaite thought, was a remarkably large establishment. There had been rumors that military intelligence had built several hidden underground facilities. Apparently this was one of them.*

They reached a featureless room, white painted, furnished with two comfortable chairs, a roundtable with refreshments, and what looked to be a thick notebook. Standing over the notebook was another security guard, who saluted Sir Humphreys and withdrew as the two men entered.

"Many years ago," Thornberry-Thistlewaite observed quietly, "Brian, many years ago I made a deal, one that rewarded me very well, and infer that I am about to pay the piper. It was certainly a rewarding deal for me, so far."

"Indeed," Humphreys answered. He poured tea for the two of them. "If you recall your security briefings, which you always have, you remember we have nine levels of security, of which you've heard about eight and told you didn't need to know about the ninth. That now changes, assuming you are willing to go ahead with this. Alternatively, you may satisfy the discharge requirement, though what you've seen so far and are about to hear is still covered by ninth-level security."

"My life the last few years has been quite dull," Mark said. "My dear wife decided that I was too dull for words, we were both good people, though not for each other, and when she asked for a divorce and reasonable settlement I of course agreed. She took the cats." At the last sentence he frowned. "So if you have something interesting for me I would like to

hear about it, recognizing that once I do I am fully committed. Hopefully this does not involve putting a rifle sling over one shoulder and marching off into the wilds of the Stans. I am a bit old for that, not to mention that I really do need knee replacement one of these years."

"On one hand," Brian said, "you are not going to travel very far. On the other hand, this mission is potentially much more dangerous than being a trooper in some godforsaken foreign dust pile. However, first I have to tell you about ninth level security."

"I'm all ears," Thornberry-Thistlewaite said. "I assume that everything I am about to hear is ninth level security, whatever that is. After all, when last we met, eighth level security was codes and nuclear war commands, and I am not sure what could be more secret than that."

"The important feature of ninth level security is that first Her Majesty's government and now His Majesty's government, or at least the very few people who know about it, for very good reasons you are about to learn, have agreed that to keep these secrets secret I am authorized and directed to have anyone who tries to divulge them assassinated. This includes government employees, newspapermen, bloggers, and anyone else I need to take care of. You may assume that I have actually needed to do this at least once. The front page of that notebook is the authorization which you get to sign anyhow. Take your time reading it."

Sir Humphreys helped himself to a sandwich while Thornberry-Thistlewaite read. Thornberry-Thistlewaite read once to himself and the second time saying the words sotto voce.

"I need a pen," Thornberry-Thistlewaite said. He found the one in the notebooks and signed. "Now what is this?"

"Earth has been invaded by another planet," Sir Humphreys said. "Rather, we have been

invaded repeatedly. To our knowledge, each of the invasions has been destroyed. Except the most recent one, which we have been keeping under careful observation. If you open to the next page, you can see a typical pair of invaders."

Thornberry-Thistlewaite did as told. He saw the picture of a boy and girl in school uniforms, to his eye probably second or third form. *Brother and sister?* He thought. They were both ginger-haired, height impossible to judge, clearly not excessively thin or heavy, with penetrating eyes. It took him a moment to realize that the eyes were not simply blue, but that a bluish glow appeared to have infiltrated the eye's sclera.

"Alien invaders?" He asked.

"Indeed. Our alien visitors identify a village or small town, infiltrate at night, and over a period of three or six months somehow impregnate a significant number of the village's young women. They are moderately careful to impregnate women who could plausibly have become pregnant, thus avoiding some level of suspicion. The children are then born, grow up roughly as you see, but have certain odd features, notably they are fiercely bright, physically active, quite unemotional, and in direct sunlight their eyes appear golden. Also, you see a demonstration here, they have some level of mental powers. They can read minds of people out to a considerable distance, we estimate about 10 miles. They can apparently control the minds of people at least nearby, enough so the people being controlled will, for example, blow their own brains out with a pistol or fly their aircraft into the ground. We gather that they are being deposited here to take over the world. How they expect to do this when there are only a dozen or two dozen of them is not so obvious, at least unless their mind control powers develop a great deal and they become older. So far as we can tell those powers developed when there were a few years younger and have not changed since."

"How charming," Thornberry-Thistlewaite said. "Is there some reason they invaded England?"

"The details are in a series of briefing notebooks," Sir Humphreys said. "Suffice to say we know several other infestations in the United Kingdom, several in the United States, at least four in Russia, and apparently several spread around the rest of the world in less civilized parts. Of those other invasions, the familiar outcome is that someone arranges for a bomb to be delivered to some location where the children are assembled, and blows them to bits. At least once, the Russians used heavy artillery. Another occasion, the infestation continued for some time, the invaders interbred with humans, but, fortunately, the invader chromosome count is not ours. As a result, the second-generation of invader, like the tygon and the liger, was sterile. The second-generation also at some point went totally mad, and killed everyone in the vicinity, including the surviving first generation people, each other, and anyone else they got their hands in. The last of them somehow killed themselves or had some issue such that they died. Once the Russians used an atomic cannon and low yield nuclear device. On the last Russian occasion, they used nerve gas. Arrivals in primitive parts of the world have tended to eventuate quite unfortunately for the invaders. Somewhat before they are able to protect themselves well, the locals tend to kill all of them. On one American occasion, the vehicle in which the children were being driven was taken over by remote electronic control, from a considerable distance away, and driven off a bridge into a drop of a hundred feet or so into deep water. The Americans think that all of the passengers died, but they were unable to find two of the bodies."

"How charming," Thornberry-Thistlewaite said. "I noticed from your description, Brian, that the efforts to kill these people have all involved remote control or some other clever scheme, since, I gather, these supposed invaders would

read the mind of James Bond before he could assassinate them, and, if I am to believe you, would successfully order Bond to kill himself."

"I see that you understand. You get to read the briefing notebooks, which omit a considerable number of facts we do not want the invaders to learn that we know, because your mission, the payoff for all the support we gave you, is that you are to visit this village, take up residence, and make friends with the aliens. We'd like to learn what they think they are doing, how they are going to do it, and more important, the question that seems never to have been asked all of these prior visitations, what is going on up there that inspires these invasions.

"We infer that there is competition in the heavens. The main evidence for that is the next two pages. The first page shows something that looks like a man-ant hybrid. It is believed to be one of the aliens who planted the impregnation devices in our English village. The second page shows what appears to be a giant mealy bug crossed with a star mole. We were extremely lucky to get these photographs. In most cases, the aliens do something that suppresses all electronics, puts everyone and everything to sleep, and then in the dark of the night they do whatever it is that they do. However, they were a bit dilatory, so they were still at work when dawn approached, and someone had a security arrangement that used a chemical film camera. The mechanical shutter was entirely unbothered by whatever it was the aliens did."

"So you think I just go there and ask them and they'll tell me?" Thornberry-Thistlewaite asked. "That seems a bit optimistic."

"Our hope is that they will be as interested in you as you should be interested in them. After all you are the only University don they have ever encountered. Your mind is probably much more complicated and filled with facts than the minds of the local farmers and merchants. Also, from what we have learned the hard way, the visitors tend to be quite polite, namely they

think we are funny sort of cattle, so long as they are not threatened. If you befriend them, they may think you're a bit strange, but they probably won't kill you. I emphasize that I said probably. We've lost a fair number of agents this way. On the bright side, we did once make an arrangement with them, namely they would do us a favor and we would supply them with a considerable amount of extra money that they could spend on books and such not."

"I'm impressed you could negotiate with them," Thornberry-Thistlewaite said, "let alone that they had anything that you wanted other than them dropping dead."

"You may want to clear that thought from your mind, as they may react to it negatively." Sir Humphreys took another bite of the sandwich. "However, we had a captured spy, they can read minds, and they were perfectly happy to assist in the breakup of Russian spy networks, since after all Russia had killed large numbers of their relatives, in some cases for no good reason.

"The general objective is that you will spend the next year or two in Shepford-on-the-Beavie. I should emphasize that rescue is probably impossible, since any rescuers would get in range of their mind-reading and then unfortunate events would take place. So, you took the King's money, and now you get to serve His Majesty as a peculiar sort of spy."

"I see. In your mind, what was the main reason for not killing these people, for example using some remote attack that they couldn't protect themselves against?" Thornberry-Thistlewaite stared at the Sir Humphreys. It appeared that there were details that Humphreys had omitted.

"In particular, these people appear to be our only source of information about the war in the heavens," Humphreys said, "if there is a war in the heavens. We're currently in the predicament that we have no idea what is going

on, other than that there are two groups of aliens who are planting human-alien hybrids in our midst, the hybrids having the idea that they are somehow going to be able to conquer the world."

"Not that it will fool mind readers," Thornberry-Thistlewaite began, "but what is my nominal excuse for setting up camp in the small town?"

"You've regularly complained that you didn't have the peace and quiet needed to write your next monograph. We've rented a respectable cottage, which will be pleasantly furnished, you will have the research supplies you mentioned that you thought were going to be more than enough to write the book, and you may communicate by post with us if there are other things you need, for example photocopies of additional journal articles. Curiously, Shepdon does not have computer or wireless communication with the outside world. The aliens seem to support this arrangement, because it makes it much simpler for them to maintain their privacy."

"I get to read the briefing books, which contain whatever you need to tell me. Is there anything else I need to know?" Thornberry-Thistlewaite wondered if this could possibly be a true story he was being given, or if it was some sort of a practical joke.

"The aliens can sometimes be a bit prickly. When they are being a bit prickly, they have an occasional tendency to kill people who get in their way, notably the agents we have sent there to spy upon them. You, however, based on what we understand, should be entirely open about what your interests are in them. It may be that they will tell you that things are none of your business, in which case you should simply nod agreeably and go back to your writing. However, you might learn something."

"Forward. My life has long been quite dull, not challenging except for trying to rewrite this 8000-page proof from the Japanese gentleman,

in large numbers of smaller steps, so we can see if it is right or not, and what else if anything his thinking leads to. I suppose I should start reading, and see what questions I have.

&&&&

Brian Humphreys closed the door on an isolation chamber, allowed the AI to run a series of tests, and activated the video link. One would not trust AIs to do much, but they were entirely able to confirm that only one person was in the room. If they found a second one, they would lock the doors and wait for the combat robots to arrive. Thirty years ago, precautions had been much more casual; it appeared that one of the invaders had for some months set up residence in 10 Downing Street, seemingly not being noticed by the residents or the staff. That event might not repeat.

Some minutes later, the video screen cleared.

"General Gates. M.," Brian said. "Good to see both of you. The bird is on the wing."

"Noted," M. answered. "Hopefully in briefing him you did not emphasize the death rate among our agents in Shepdon?"

"I emphasized in the briefing books what had triggered the three deaths, Brian said. "Each agent had done something they emphatically had been told not to do."

"A might odd, that," General Gates observed.

"One might wonder," M. observed, "if they disobeyed orders--they were all young men and impulsive—or if they were mind controlled into performing the acts that triggered their deaths."

"Those are alternatives," Brian answered. "I have listened before to analysts as they prepared to descend a rabbit hole, claiming as they did that the sky down there was clear."

"You said you were giving our guests something interesting," M. observed, "but it was not safe for print."

"Indeed," Brian answered. "We know that our guests are fiercely bright, IQs around 130 or 140, but they are very similar in their thought patterns. That's assuming that they have separate minds rather than a hive arrangement. Their play of six-on-a-side football and basketball does not resemble our best guesses as to how hive minds would behave."

"We read your analyses," General Gates interjected.

"So I am presenting them with something they've never before encountered," Brian said. "Someone who is much smarter than they are. Thornberry-Thistlewaite did those strange American tests, once upon a time; his IQ is someplace in the 160 range. Other scores match. The invaders are naturally very curious. They will find him entirely too interesting to damage."

"He is the man who revived England's mathematics," M. said. "And we checked, one more time. His chromosome count is normal. He is not one of ... them."



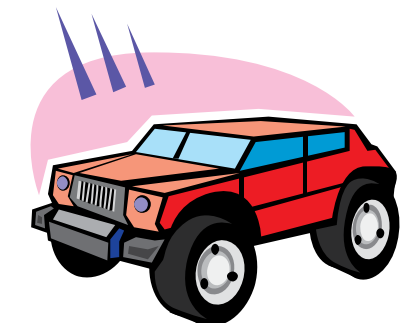
Art from Canva.com

May 27. Guests of honor include author L.E. Modesitt Jr., Editor Shelia Williams, Filker Rhiannon's Lark, Artist Omar Rayyan (see below), Publisher Tom Doherty, and Compton Crook winners Kemi Ashing-Giwa and Alex Jennings. If you cannot make it in person, get a virtual membership and you can watch a great deal of the programming including some virtual-only panels.

...LOC on N'APA 269

Intermission #141 - Congrats on Sweden joining NATO. I continue to be impressed by Ukraine's survival/success in the war. It just shows that being a superpower doesn't mean you can just assume you can defeat everyone else. I still haven't seen *Oppenheimer*, I really should. It is not true that most works up to 1963 are in the public domain in the U.S. There are a lot of articles and short stories that never had their copyright renewed because they were just printed in magazines and never reprinted. But nearly all movies, TV shows, and novels (except those out of print 28 years after publication) were renewed. I didn't know that H.G. Wells knew about the atomic bomb. What you found about the lack of security on nuclear weapons is very alarming and could form the basis for a great cold war thriller.

Fainzine #3 - I think this joke has run its course. I never understood the enthusiasm for flying cars. Considering how many automobile accidents we have, I can only imagine the increase with flying cars operating in 3-d air rather than the 2-d roads.



...Notes

This is the 25th issue of *Samizdat*. *Samizdat* #1 came out in May 2020 for N'APA 246. At that time, the world was in grip of Covid. Everything was shut down, including all in-person fan activity. So joining N3F and starting a zine made sense as a way to stay active in fandom. I've continued, even after the return of live fandom, because it is fun and because people occasionally comment on something I wrote.

Update on Hugo Nominations. Last Ish I listed what I nominated on the Hugo ballot. Two of my six nominees for best Novel became finalists - *Translation State* by Ann Leckie and *Some Desperate Glory* by Emily Tesh. Both are excellent books that I recommend. (I've also read *Starter Villain* by John Scalzi, but think it is light entertainment, not Hugo caliber.) For Best Series, I got one out of five - *The Laundry Files* by Charles Stross. For Best Dramatic Presentation, I got two out of five - *Nimona* and *Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse*.

Big News! [Balticon 58](#) is this month (May 2024) in Baltimore, Maryland. I am chairing this four-day convention on Memorial Day weekend from May 24 -



Syzygy #48 – I read that issue of *F&SF*. I run the magazine discussion group for the Washington SF Association and we discuss *F&SF* bimonthly (at least when the magazine sticks to that schedule. I've only received one issue so far in 2024.) Also, the editor of *F&SF*, Sheree Renée Thomas will be guest of honor at this year's Capclave in September (I'm not chairing this con in 2024, I chair Capclave in 2025).



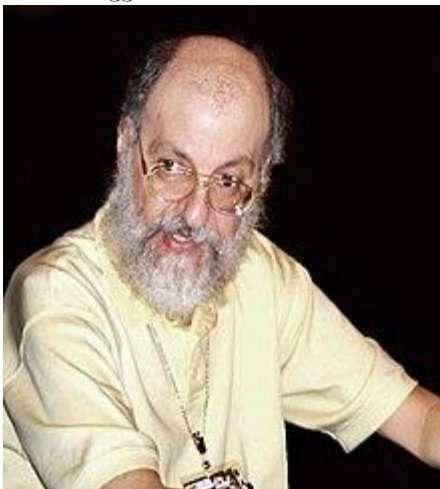
Archive Midwinter (269) – I actually used a ditto/mimeo machine in my first year of teaching. I would use a computer and printer to create worksheets for my students and then print it out on the ditto stencil paper and use the machine to make copies in purple for my students. I agree; I don't understand why people would vote against funding the government since the budget merely funds things that Congress already voted to fund. Yes, some comic books are more fantasy oriented than science fiction (Dr. Fate, Dr. Strange, Swamp Thing, Constantine, etc.) but far more are aliens, robots, scientists, victims of strange science etc.

Brandy Hall 5 – If you haven't read any Bob Shaw, read his "Light of Other Days," the first of his *Slow Glass* stories. I'm sorry you didn't enjoy your experiences with SF cons. Perhaps you'd find a gaming convention or a media convention more your cup of tea. *The Midwich Cuckoos* is an excellent book. I've been wasting too much time too and I have too much to do. I would disagree that the Hugo winners are less literary than the Nebula winners. There seems to be a great deal of overlap. It used to be that trilogies would have three books and then stop. Now, a successful trilogy will lead an author to add additional books, rather than starting a new separate trilogy. Spiderman is certainly science fiction since the spider was radioactive and the web shooters were an invention. There are plenty of SF novels that don't have much more in the way of science (although today the buzzword is more likely to be nanotechnology rather than radiation).

Brownian Motion #7 – Good luck on your APA list. That's an impressive info graph on Irrational Nonsense. There would have been substantial gains to Germany had they won WWII and in the U.S. spending on WWII pulled the country out of the Great Depression. The war in Gaza is over Hamas trying to kick the Israelis out of land the Palestinians think should be theirs. (While for Israel, it is a matter of self-defense and their continued survival.) Yes, literary means written (and within written works it applies to non-genre works of the type that gets read and discussed in colleges that emphasizes character and how the story is told rather than story and plot). In *The Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*, the Yankee does return to his time, but through Merlin causing him to sleep for 1,300 years (which he does, although the book had been calling Merlin a fraud up until this point).



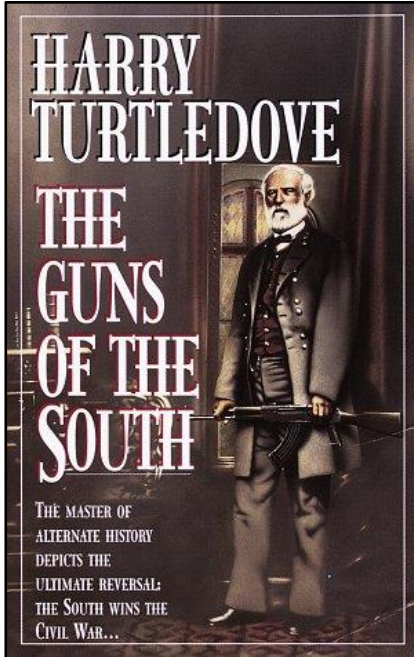
Slow Poster Township #15 – I like the idea of a convention targeting a younger audience. I know many conventions have struggled with this. Yes, even among Americans who read, few books are read. Good question about what I've learned from other cons. I learned how important it is to be flexible with the schedule and also about the need to advertise to keep memberships up.



...Author Spotlight: Harry Turtledove

Harry Turtledove (June 14, 1949) is best known for his alternate histories. But he has written a lot of other stuff too including regular history and fantasy. He grew up in California and earned a PhD in Byzantine History from UCLA in 1977. His first two novels *Wereblood* and *Werenight* came out two years later (when he was 30). He used various pen names for his early books since his editor maintained that no one would believe Turtledove was his real name.

Most of his works, even the straight fantasies, incorporate history. His *Videssos* cycle has a Roman legion misplaced into a world where magic works. His *Worldwar* series and sequel *Colonization* trilogy has aliens invade in the middle of WWII. His *Southern Victory* series has the South winning the Civil War and continuing as a separate nation. His *The War that Came Early* is another WWII alternate. His YA *Crosstime Traffic* has travel between parallel earths, each with different histories. And his collaboration with the actor Richard Dreyfuss, *The Two Georges*, is set in a world where the American Revolution never happened. In the *Presence of Mine Enemies* is about secret Jews in a world where the Nazis won WWII. Perhaps his best known novel, *Guns of the South*, has South African time travelers provide modern machine guns to the Confederates in the Civil War.



His interest in history and alternate history began when he read *Lest Darkness Fall* by L. Sprague de Camp as a young teenager. He went to his first con in 1976 and made his first sale (to a magazine that went under before printing the story) at age 28. Before becoming a full-time writer in 1991 (after selling *The Guns of the South*), he worked as a technical writer for the LA County Office of Education, writing everything from test questions to proposals to newsletters.

A good place to start reading Turtledove is the Subterranean Press collection *The Best of Harry Turtledove*. While the hardcover is expensive at \$65, the Kindle version is a more reasonable \$6. After that, I'd suggest *The Guns of the South*, which technically is time-travel not alternate history.

Artist Spotlight: Omar Rayyan

Since Omar Rayyan is the year's Balticon Artist Guest of Honor, I wrote this appreciation for the Balticon Program book. I'm sharing it with the readers of my zine to give a taste of Balticon.

Art is the oldest human creative act of which we have any record. It is certainly possible that ancient caveman had story contests and sing-alongs, but we have no recordings of those. We do have cave paintings going back at least 30-35,000 years ago. So it is fitting that we at Balticon recognize and honor artists along with writers, musicians, costumers, editors, and more.

Omar Rayyan is Balticon's art guest of honor. As chair of Balticon, I could have picked any artist; why him? I would cite the quality of his art. Rayyan's images combine realism with fantastic whimsy. He'll paint rats racing turtles, with the rats struggling to hold on at the turtle's high speed. But the animals are highly detailed and with the fur and skin lifelike as if you could touch it. He'll have animals struggling to keep up the sail of a boat in a storm with the feel and the realism of Renaissance art. His paintings are incredibly specific and do not depend on the fantasy element to make the art work. He'll paint a rabbit running through a forest surrounded by butterflies. It is only on second glance that you see the fairies and other fantastic creatures there as well. He uses the techniques and detail of fine art painting but includes fantastical content. So, his dragons have long blue coats and floral vests. His humans have elaborate detailed dresses, but also squid tentacles growing out of their faces. His landscapes have trees and leaves, but also hedgehogs smoking pipes and giant snails. Many of his paintings feature women in fancy gowns cradling animals both real and fantastical.

While originally known mainly as an illustrator of work's for children, Rayyan has illustrated books by Terry Pratchett, *The Brown Fairy Book*, and *A Traveller in Time* for the Folio Society; *Animal Farm*; "Goblin Market," a 19th century poem



by Christina Rossetti. He did art for Magic the Gathering's Lorwyn series of cards. He also has illustrated children's picture books. Even his works that are not based on books have a strong narrative sense. His paintings suggest there is a story behind each image.

The Jordan-born artist says he grew up "all over" and now lives and works in Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts, which allows his art to benefit from the island's timeless scenery. His paintings take cues from the Northern Renaissance of the 16th century, especially those of Dutch artists, but with his own unique spin, including elements from Romantic, Victorian, and Symbolist artists. He adds his own humorous touches, frequently showing monsters that are simultaneously hideous, yet also somehow adorable and "cute." He has said that he starts with his own vision, with a quick sketch to capture the energy he wants to depict. Only then does he research the subjects, the creatures and the background, and work out a way to convey the motion and the image he wants to depict. Rayyan's art is mostly watercolor paintings (with some oil on canvas). He has said that watercolors are more spontaneous and freeform than more complicated and restrictive oil painting which requires more planning.



Not only does Rayyan follow his own muse in making his art, he is listening to it in determining what art to make. He started his career working for publishers like Wizards of the Coast, Random House, Simon & Schuster, and Hyperion/Disney, painting covers and game cards. More recently, he has freed himself from the demands of publishing houses and game companies. Instead, he has turned to crowdfunding through Kickstarter for his illustrated version of Christina Rossetti's "Goblin Market" (with 100 watercolor paintings) and painting his own images and selling to collectors and the public through Etsy and the Haven Gallery in Northport, NY. His art appears in museums and galleries, near the work of traditional artists. In that respect, Rayyan is following the lead of Renaissance artists who were supported by patrons and painted religious and mythological themes, but in contemporary dress with visible textures and lifelike movement. He shows that art is more than just book covers designed to sell books. Rayyan is paving the way for a revival of creative independent artists who do their own thing, not merely commercial employees.



I strongly recommend that you take some time this Balticon to stop in the art show and look at some of Rayyan's art. I guarantee it will make you smile and enjoy his unusual vision of a world where the real and the fantastical coexist. And, while you are there, look at some of the other art. Perhaps you will spot a new artist who will grow into a future art guest of honor.

...From Wizard to Scientist: Changing Views towards the Scientist from Hawthorne to Twain (Part VI)

Readers of Samizdat may remember that I've been serializing my 1989 undergraduate thesis on what I very carefully did not tell Harvard was 19th century science fiction. But since this thesis was for the History and Literature Department, I had to also cover History. Here is the start of the History section of my thesis.

Science: From Hawthorne to Twain

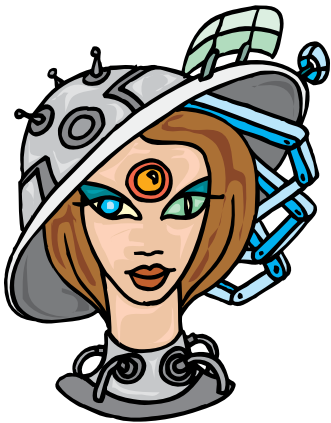


The nineteenth century has often been called the "The Age of Science". In the forty years between Nathaniel Hawthorne's writings and Mark Twain's *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*, there was an explosion of science and technology. New inventions and new ideas expanded the field of science. As its products became more important in daily life, the literate public developed a growing enthusiasm for science, and gave science it credit for the new technology that was improving their lives. In their minds, the increasingly practical science would lead to unprecedented prosperity and progress. Both Hawthorne and Twain wrote in genres meant for the general reader - Hawthorne in the

gothic romance and Twain in comedy - so the change in their attitudes towards science may reflect a change in their audiences' conception of it.

Hawthorne, the earlier of the two writers, wrote when these changes were only beginning, and much of his fiction is set in an age when science was even less developed. In his period, American science was in the hands of amateurs, who, usually working alone, experimented within a broad range. These investigators in pre-nineteenth century science, most notably Cotton Mather, John Winthrop, and Benjamin Franklin pursued science as a hobby or a sidelight to their main professions. Prudence Steiner suggests a connection between Hawthorne's scientists and "these earlier scientists- men of extensive and systematic knowledge- the soul-physicians of the 17th and 18th century Protestant clergy."¹

Like the science practiced by Hawthorne's characters, much of the science of the early and mid-nineteenth century fell into his category of the "doubtful sciences" especially mesmerism, phrenology, and spiritualism, which often dealt with the supernatural. Belief in mesmerism hit its peak among the upper classes in the 1840's, when it was used to invoke mental powers of telepathy and clairvoyance, to cure the sick, and to contact the spirit world.² Authors of the time quickly latched onto the fictional possibilities of this belief. Edgar Allen Poe wrote a hoax in the style of a report on mesmerism, "The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar" in 1845, and Hawthorne included mesmerism in the plots of *The House of the Seven Gables* and *Blithedale Romance* to express his fears about it. Although mesmerism was seen as scientific in the 1840's, it became more mystical in later years.



Another pseudo-science, phrenology, was more durable. Popularized by Lorenzo and Orson Fowler, phrenology claimed to be able to read a person's character in the shape of his skull.³ Doctors, social reformers, teachers, and even artists applied this "science" to their professions. This "science" grew especially popular among the public, who eagerly bought china heads with phrenological bumps.⁴ In the early part of the century, even communication with the dead, spiritualism, was accepted as a science. Evidence of "spiritual manifestations" was produced in great quantities, "soon automatic writing, table levitation, and the playing of 'untouched musical instruments' were common occurrences."⁵ Though to modern ears this sounds more like magic than science, in the early nineteenth century there were few controls on what claimed scientific status.⁶

Starting in the 1830's the American public developed an interest in science as a useful way of viewing the world. The fashionable traveling lecture series called lyceums often featured scientific topics. Hawthorne himself was peripherally involved in this education effort through editing the *American Magazine of Useful and Entertaining Knowledge*. But like his magazine and the lyceums themselves, this interest in science lacked focus; fads grew and vanished according to the public taste. The term "Science" was still used to apply to all useful knowledge; and scientists themselves had only just emerged from being "natural philosophers" when the word scientist was coined in 1833.⁷ While people in the eighteenth century Enlightenment saw all science, indeed all knowledge, as potentially valuable in its own right, Americans in the mid-nineteenth century were starting to limit their

¹ Prudence Steiner, *Rappaccini's Family*. (Harvard Doctoral Thesis, 1980) p.30

² Taylor Stoehr, *Hawthorne's Mad Scientists*. (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1978) p.33

³ Arthur Wrobel, "Phrenology as a Political Science" in *Pseudo-Science and Society in Nineteenth Century America* edited by Arthur Wrobel (Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky, 1987) p.124-5

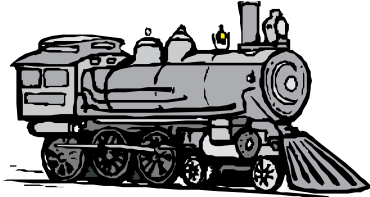
⁴ David Knight, *The Age of Science* (New York: Basil Blackwell Inc. 1986) p. 79

⁵ Robert Delp, "Andrew Jackson Davis and Spiritualism" in *Pseudo-Science and Society in Nineteenth Century America* edited by Arthur Wrobel (Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky, 1987) p.101

⁶ There was a degree of scientific merit in the "pseudo-sciences", information on hypnosis and early psychology came out of mesmerism, and some early knowledge of the mentally ill developed from phrenology. See "Afterward" in *Pseudo-Science and Society*, edited by Arthur Wrobel.

⁷ S. Ross, "Scientist: The Story of a Word," *Annals of Science* 18 (1962)

investigations to what seemed to be immediately useful.⁸ This more specific view, utilitarian science, came to dominate the nineteenth century, especially since few people distinguished between science and technology. In reality, technology was largely separate from science, consisting in craft techniques applied and refined without much understanding of the theory behind the results. Still, the scientific community cultivated this misconception to make their own work seem more useful in an age when science was not yet producing many practical benefits. The “pseudo-scientists” capitalized on this gap between the increasingly utilitarian definition and the reality, producing their own visible results. Thus, in the early nineteenth century, the image of the scientist shifted from being a scholar examining the natural world, to being an applied scientist using knowledge to achieve some material benefit.

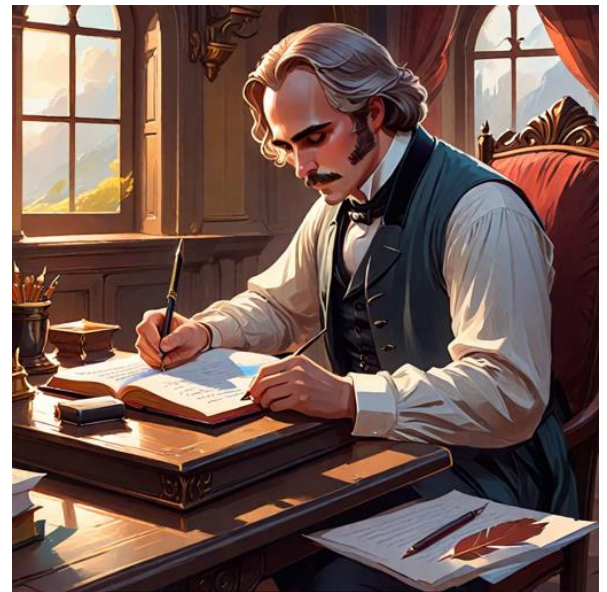


Hawthorne’s early involvement in science persisted throughout his life. While at the American consulate in England, he mentioned seeing the *American Journal of Science and Arts*, the “only trace of... American learning or ability in any department” in Oxford.” Hawthorne often viewed the accomplishments of science, including technology, as unnatural, outside the realm of man and nature. Leo Marx, in his *The Machine in the Garden*, analyzes a passage from Hawthorne’s notebooks, showing how Hawthorne, meditating in the woods, was startled by a railroad train but not by the sounds of village work. The village sounds could mingle with those of nature, “without any perceptible change of mood or tone he shifts from images of nature to images of man and society”, but Hawthorne was unable to incorporate the sounds of a locomotive into this scheme:

But hark! there is the whistle of the locomotive-the long shriek, harsh, above all other harshness, for the space of a mile cannot mollify it into harmony. It tells a story of busy men, citizens from the hot street, who have come to spend a day in a country village, men of business; in short of all unquietness; and no wonder that it gives such a startling shriek, since it brings the noisy world into the midst of our slumberous peace.¹⁰

This example of his thought suggests that Hawthorne’s questioning of science did not only result from his use of the gothic form, but also from his opposition to the belief that technology was always an improvement. Passengers on a railroad to the Celestial City, in “The Celestial Railroad” (an allegorical tale based on Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress*), remark on the convenience and ease of this modern mode of travel and laugh at the backward pilgrims still walking on foot; while in reality their convenient railroad is “a sort of mechanical demon”¹¹ taking them to Hell.

Hawthorne opposed science’s transition from the more academic realm of “natural philosophy” to the practical world of utilitarian science, with its emphasis on exploiting nature. His scientists - Rappaccini, Chillingworth, and Aylmer - were all originally scholars and searchers for truth, who only later, out of personal concerns, seek control over nature. These characters reflect Hawthorne’s grave doubts about the more active role of scientists in society. Since much of the world of nature was unknown, scientists’ attempts to manipulate it could have disastrous consequences. His characters’ fatal error is not their acquisition of knowledge, but their arrogance in applying that knowledge to alter the world and people



Hotpot AI Image Generator.

⁸ George Daniels, *Science in American Society* (NY: Alfred A. Knopf 1971) p.158-9

⁹ Cited in Daniels, *Science in American Society* p. 151

¹⁰ Citation and analysis in Leo Marx, *The Machine and the Garden* (NY: Oxford University Press 1964) p.13

¹¹ Nathaniel Hawthorne, “The Celestial Railroad” in Norman Pearson, editor. *The Complete Novels and Selected Tales of Nathaniel Hawthorne* (NY: Modern Library 1937) p. 1073

around them.¹² By describing scientists in terms of sorcerers, Hawthorne emphasized their fundamental similarity—both had power and so both could misuse it.

The huge popularity of pseudo-science allowed Hawthorne to use the scientist-wizard to point out this danger of power. Many pseudo-sciences, especially spiritualism and mesmerism, were similar to magic, and were often presented in stage shows just as a “conjurer” would present magic tricks. The power of a mesmerist over his subject resembled that of a wizard, violating a victim’s soul. Hawthorne just took this analogy from what the proponents of pseudo-science claimed, drawing his fictional wizard-scientists out of the science of his own day. There was not much difference between these sciences and magic; and in an age before the label “pseudo-sciences” differentiated them from legitimate science, the public’s definition of science included their resemblance to magic.

Therefore, Hawthorne’s readers would have recognized the science of their own day in the supernatural mechanisms of his scientists).¹³

...Status of Projects

Past readers of Samizdat will remember that I have launched a series of projects to better my life. Due to working on Balticon, which I am chairing, I made less progress than usual. Here’s my latest report on my projects.

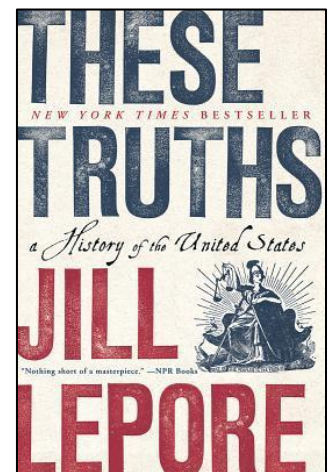


Project Nonfiction—I read *Democracy Awakening: Notes on the State of America* by Heather Cox Richardson. This book claims that autocrats are using language and false history to undermine democracy and replace it with a strong man authoritarian movement. The American people allowed a minority to take over (even before Donald Trump) claiming that the elite few should rule over everyone else. There is a lot on the problem, how the rich have convinced many that the government is to blame for their problems and manufactured outrage and mythologized history. But there is very little here on what to do about it.

I also read, and led a discussion on *The Storm Before the Calm: America’s Discord, the Coming Crisis of the 2020s, and the Triumph Beyond* by George Friedman. The book asserts that there is an institutional cycle which leads to a major political change every 80 years and a separate socioeconomic cycle that creates major cultural and workforce change every 50 years. And, due to the calendar, both these cycles will hit in the mid to late 2020s. Much of

the book is devoted to a historical overview showing these trends. But I found them less than convincing and think that events in other years are at least as important as the ones that fit his cycles. The book’s discussion about conflict between the technocratic elite and post-industrial masses did help me understand why so many people support Donald Trump despite all of his negatives. If he is right, the U.S. faces a lot more turmoil before the younger generation overthrows the aging technocrats to begin a new period of American greatness.

I continue to read *These Truths* by Jill Lepore. This history of the US weaves together the traditional historical narrative with a stress on traditionally marginalized and ignored people (especially African Americans), showing where these groups fit into the history of America rather than treating them as a separate, unrelated, storyline. I’m on page 272 which is the period leading up to the Civil War, perhaps my favorite part of American history.



I had been listening to *Epochs of European Civilization* by Geoffrey Hosking in the car as I drive. This is part of the Modern Scholar series. The author focuses on trends and historical forces rather than on the idea that great and

¹² Kent Kreuter, *Literary response to Science Technology and Industrialization* (University of Wisconsin: Ann Arbor University Microfilms 1963) p. 54

¹³ Stoeckl p. 252

influential leaders make history. This works better for some periods (such as the Reformation (he doesn't like calling the Catholic Reformation the Counter-Reformation) but less so with the rise of Napoleon.

Project Classics: I made very little progress with *The Source* by James A. Michener. This book is set at an archeological dig in Israel in the 1960s (when the book was written). But the meat of the book is the stories of people who lived at the site in different time periods. I'm on page 509, which begins a chapter set in 351 CE. I'm finding the book slow going, perhaps because each chapter is essentially a new story, making it easy to put the book down. And the book is literally disintegrating as I read it (cheap paperbacks of the 1960s were not designed to last nearly 60 years). I've had to tape on a new cardboard cover and the last few pages are torn.

Project Conventions: I went to Ravencon in Richmond, VA. The hotel was rather far from any food and the parking was so limited that I didn't dare drive anywhere. (Also, it was Passover so there wasn't much I could eat anyway.) I spent most of my time at the Balticon table promoting Balticon, but I did hear an interesting talk from GoH Ellen Datlow about how she started off in editing. And of course, I've been doing lots of work on Balticon.

Project Video: Netflix was removing a lot of their DC comics-based movies so I watched a bunch I hadn't seen.

Wonder Woman 84 - Considering how good the first WW movie was, it is amazing how bad this one is even though it was made by the same people. The big problem was that the villain had a way of granting wishes so WW wishes for her love Steve Trevor to be alive again (he takes over someone else's body), but this makes WW look rather selfish, especially as keeping the wish going winds up sapping her strength. And the movie is full of things that don't make logical sense, such as the Smithsonian keeping planes ready to fly, complete with enough fuel to fly to Egypt, and which this pilot from World War One was somehow able to fly.

The Suicide Squad-This R rated movie about a bunch of criminals who go on suicide missions for the government is much better than anyone would have predicted. It is surprisingly faithful to the comics, but it manages to humanize many of its characters, even though they are criminals, lunatics, and even a walking and talking shark. It is a lot of fun and even though the end sequence has them facing a giant starfish the movie somehow works.



Shazam! is an action comedy about a young orphan boy who is given the power to transform into an unnamed (which nicely avoids the debate over whether he is Captain Marvel or Shazam) adult superhero. It is fun seeing him figure out his powers and learn what it means to be a hero. The finale where he shared his power with his new family worked well. The sequel was not as good, mainly because the humorous tone of the first movie kept fading in and out with the more serious threat to the world. Black Adam had a previous hero, empowered with the magic of Shazam, wake in the present day. At first he plans on using his power to rule but he gets involved with an archeologist's family and fights the criminals who have taken over his country with his murderous justice. Four heroes from the Justice Society - Hawkman, Dr. Fate, Atom Smasher, and Cyclone are sent to stop him. After a few fights, they team up to fight the real villains and Black Adam learns how to be nice (or at least nicer).

I also watched *Justice League*. I didn't find it as bad as others have, but it still wasn't as good as it should have been. The last third seemed rushed. I would have spent less time on the buildup and the slow gathering of the team. The whole plotline of bringing Superman back to life only for him to go on a dangerous rampage seems unnecessary.

On May Fourth (Star Wars Day) I watched a couple episodes of *The Mandalorian*, which I found slow. Since the main character almost never removes his helmet and rarely speaks, there isn't much other than special effects and fights. But Baby Yoda is cute. I also watched a couple of episodes of the *Rebels* cartoon which seems like a mix of *Star Wars* and *Firefly* as the title characters act as mercenaries and thieves as long as the mission hurts the Empire. So the feel is closer to the original *Star Wars* movie than the prequel or sequel trilogy.

Project Shorts - I read an issue of *Asimov's* and finally got my long-delayed issue of the *Magazine of Fantasy & SF* (which wasn't really all that good. The editor is using too many super short stories that are more vignettes or story setups without much plot.) I am on Page 245 of *The Ascent of Wonder*.

Unfortunately, I have not made any progress on Project Cleanup, Project Exercise, Project Trek, Project Shakespeare, or Project Paperback. But by writing this, I'm resolving to do something on these as soon as I finish with Balticon.

...Author's Note

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