

(the low-budget kind) though they often produced as well. Their work represents the soul of the 1950s science fiction film. Not even listing the films they worked on separately, together they worked on R_o_c_k_e_t_s_h_i_p_X-M, U_n_k_n_o_w_n_W_o_r_l_d, F_l_i_g_h_t_t_o_M_a_r_s, I_n_v_i_s_i_b_l_e B_o_y, K_r_o_n_o_s, W_a_r_o_f_t_h_e_S_a_t_e_l_l_i_t_e_s, T_h_i_r_t_y-F_o_o_t_B_r_i_d_e_o_f C_a_n_d_y

THE MT VOID

Page 2

R_o_c_k, and A_t_o_m_i_c_S_u_b_m_a_r_i_n_e. Block is also credited with the original story of F_o_r_b_i_d_d_e_n_P_l_a_n_e_t.

We will show two 1957 films:

Rabin and Block '57

INVISIBLE BOY (1957) dir. by Herman Hoffman

KRONOS (1957) dir. by Kurt Neumann

INVISIBLE BOY is a sort of sequel/prequel to F_o_r_b_i_d_d_e_n_P_l_a_n_e_t. A scientist's experiments in time travel have brought into the present the disassembled pieces of Robby the Robot, but nobody knows how to put the pieces together until a supercomputer with designs on world conquest hypnotizes an overly cute young boy and has the boy repair Robby. This film is just chock full of time travel, space travel, an evil computer, a friendly (?) robot, mind control, and absent-minded professors. Mostly aimed at a younger audience but very strange.

Our second feature is KRONOS. This is the story of an attack by aliens who take over a scientist's mind and use it to control a giant robot-like energy accumulator that rampages up the West Coast. Adults are often surprised to see that this was actually a low-budget film. Childhood memories of this film rank it with much more expensive films, films that seem at most marginally more spectacular.

Again, note that this will be on WEDNESDAY.

2. Let me tell you something that happened a couple of years back. In all marriages there are fights and Evelyn and I were having a particularly nasty one. (To those who know Evelyn and me I need

hardly add that she was 100% wrong, but that doesn't matter here.) About 10 in the evening we just couldn't stand the sight of each other. I went into the bedroom, grabbed her pillow, and marched into the den with it. "Take it," I snarled. She just glared at me, thinking that things were worse than she thought if I was ordering her to sleep in the den. Things had n_e_v_e_r been anywhere near that bad. "Take it!" I told her again. She did. "Now hit me with it as hard as you can." Her frown turned into an impish half-smile and she swung it and hit me. "Harder!" I ordered. She caught me one that knocked me back an inch or two, clearly enjoying herself. I knew she couldn't hurt me with a pillow. I was better off; she was enjoying herself. End of argument.

This message is brought to you in the hopes that the United States has begun a long and successful Olympic losing streak. There are all kinds of ways to hand other people pillows.

3. Actually, Mark was 100% wrong, but who's keeping track? [-ecl]

Mark Leeper
MT 3E-433 957-5619
...mtgzz!leeper

BECOMING ALIEN by Rebecca Ore
Tor, 1988, 0-812-54794-2, \$3.50.
NATIVE TONGUE by Suzette Haden Elgin
DAW, 1984, 0-87997-945-3, \$3.50.
Two book reviews by Evelyn C. Leeper
Copyright 1988 Evelyn C. Leeper

The science of linguistics has been largely neglected by science fiction, so I found it an odd coincidence (or for the Jungians out there, just another example of synchronicity) that I read in quick succession two novels dealing with the subject, the more so because one is a new novel and the other a four-year-old novel that I recently decided to read.

B_e_c_o_m_i_n_g_A_l_i_e_n is a "Ben Bova Discovery" and considerably better than the two previous entries in that series. (You'd never know it from the cover, of course, which rips off E_n_e_m_y_M_i_n_e to a fare-thee-well.) Tom finds a crashed alien ship and tries to save the occupant. He fails,

but the beings who come after the alien decide he is not entirely xenophobic and recruit him for the Space Academy. Part--a very important part--of his training involves learning alien languages, and to do this effectively he must have his brain modified to cope with them. There is a lot more to his "becoming alien," but it's all connected to language.

Ore does an excellent job of conveying alien ideas and concepts, although I found her choice of main character (the brother of a small-time drug dealer) to be less than totally satisfying. Bova and Spider Robinson both compare B_e_c_o_m_i_n_g_A_l_i_e_n_t_o_T_h_e_L_e_f_t_H_a_n_d_o_f_D_a_r_k_n_e_s_s, which may be overdoing it a bit, but it is a novel worth reading.

N_a_t_i_v_e_T_o_n_g_u_e is based on the same premise as Margaret Atwood's H_a_n_d_m_a_i_d's_T_a_l_e (though it predates it by a couple of years): that women have been relegated to second-class status, kept as chattel by their fathers or husbands. This is brought about by the 24th Amendment, which repealed the 19th, and the 25th Amendment, which deemed women legally minors. I suppose this makes this an alternate history since the actual 24th Amendment (ratified in 1967) outlawed poll taxes and the actual 25th Amendment (ratified in 1971) described the procedure for filling vacancies in the Vice-Presidency, etc. However, since the rest of novel seems to presuppose our current reality, I can only conclude that Elgin did her research from a copy of the Constitution printed before 1967. Such sloppy research does not encourage one regarding the rest of the book.

There is another premise, however: that we have been contacted by aliens and certain families ("Lines") are especially adept at learning languages, both human and alien. That women are as good at this as men is one factor that keeps them from total subjugation--there is too great

Becoming Alien/Native Tongue March 1, 1988

Page 2

a shortage of translators to waste anyone. The plot of N_a_t_i_v_e_T_o_n_g_u_e revolves around this situation and the attempt of women to create their own language.

I disliked this novel for three reasons: two minor and one major. The first minor reason is the sloppy research already mentioned, but this could have been corrected by a good editor, apparently not present

at DAW when this manuscript arrived. The other minor reason is that the children in the novel all learn three to five un-related Earth languages and one alien one from infancy. If the purpose of learning languages is to communicate with aliens and English is a universal Earth language (as it seems to be), why have the children learning Hopi and Swedish when they could be learning alien languages--especially when alien translators are in such short supply that a given alien language probably has only three human speakers, including one toddler and one woman? It's not from some abstract desire to keep these languages alive, because the men of the Lines are obviously too cold-blooded for that.

The major reason I disliked this book is that I found it so stridently "women's lib" as to be positively reprehensible. Most books which postulate a male-dominated society of the future show some moderating influences. Atwood's book, for example, localized the situation to the United States and even there there were men who didn't entirely support it. There was also a justification for the change in society (a decrease in fertility) and the idea that women in such organizations as Women Against Pornography did as much to bring it about as men. Elgin's androcracy is world-wide (hard to explain on the basis of two amendments to the United States Constitution), brought about against the wishes of all women (so far as we can tell), and every man--w_i_t_h_o_u_t_e_x_c_e_p_t_i_o_n--fully supports it. All women, even ones who go around poisoning people, are to be admired; all men are scum. I know some men on this planet and the only conclusion that I can draw is that Elgin is writing about an alien planet with an alien species on it. The extremism of her premise and her characters makes it and them impossible to believe and the idea that a language invented just for women would help the situation is just one more impossibility piled on top. This is the sort of literature often deemed "hate-literature" and I cannot recommend it.

REPLAY by Ken Grimwood
Berkley, 1988 (c1987), 0-425-10640-3, \$3.95.
A book review by Evelyn C. Leeper
Copyright 1988 Evelyn C. Leeper

Whatif you could live your life over and over again?

That's the back-cover blurb to this unique alternate worlds/time travel novel. And that's the chance Jeff Winston gets when he wakes up from his fatal heart attack to find himself back in college. He resolves that things will be different this time--and they are, in part because he, like so many other time travelers, can remember the outcomes of all sorts of sporting events to bet on. (Quick, who won the 1963 World Series?) But soon 1988 rolls around again and bang! heart attack and he's back in 1963 again. And round it goes.

In one cycle he meets Pamela, another replayer. Together they try to make sense of what's happening. It's not easy--forewarned is not necessarily forearmed and, as in so many time travel stories, trying to improve history often backfires. And Winston discovers that often the knowledge that "next time" he could do things differently makes his decisions this time seem meaningless. But he keeps trying to change things. Sometimes he leads a life of dissipation; other times he tries to change the world. Sometimes he tries working behind the scenes; other times he tells everyone he can predict the future. (The latter scenario is particularly chilling.)

One wonders how a novel such as this could have a satisfying resolution, but Grimwood manages it very well. As a unique approach to alternate history and time travel, Replay is highly recommended.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT ALMOST BLANK

Star Trek Funnies VIII
by Jeff Trim

Picard: "Star Date 144565.09. We are in orbit around Gamma-Bingulese VI, and we have established no contact with the civilization there. I anxiously awaiting a script change so I can get on with this episode."

[Enter Wesley - wearing his usual RAINBOW BRIGHT Costume]

Picard: "Ensign Crusher, WHY ARE YOU ON THE BRIDGE??"

Wesley: "...uh...I was planning on NAVIGATING the ship as ALWAYS Sir! You know if I WAS AN ADULT you wouldn't give me this kind of trouble all the time!!"

Picard: "It's not because you're YOUNG, it's because you behave like a 2-year-old! Act like a man and fly the ship for once!!"

Wesley: "If you keep pushing me, Picard, I'm gonna pull rank on you!"

Picard: "HA! A little IMP like you! You couldn't pull rank on me in 20 Billion Years!! If I could write these scripts I'd have you beamed on to an asteroid."

Wesley: "Okay, Picard, that's it! Gene?"

Gene: "Why, Yes Wesley!"

Wesley: "I want you to let me run the ship for once!!"

Gene: "Okay, let me tell script writer Bob. YO, BOB!"

Bob: "I've already got the answer to this one Gene! Ready - ACTION!!"

Yar: "Message from Star Fleet Command! Ensign Crusher gets Immediate Command!"

Troi: "Oh Pain, Great Pain..."

[Yar is about to say something WHEN...]

Wesley: "DON'T SAY IT, YAR! You only get one line per episode."

Yar: "Oh yeah, I forgot about that...[realizing her mistake] Oops, oh, well, I guess I've said this week's line! I guess I am picking my check up at the door now."

Gene: "That's right, Yar, bye now!"

Yar: "See you next week Gene!"

Star Trek Funnies 8 March 4, 1988

Page 2

Wesley: "Take Mr. Picard and his smiling "Number One" down to security and book 'em!"

Picard: [Realizing it's a choice of Fight or Surrender to the situation]
"Okay, I surrender!"

Wesley: "I knew you would Sir, bye now!"

Data: "What are your orders [trying to keep from laughing], Captain Welsey?"

Wesley: "Oh Boy..weeeeeeee. Gee Golly this is fun! What does that button do? I want to try the Photon Firing Controls, launch a couple of

those Gravidic Mines!"

Worf: "Okay, I'VE HAD IT. [Pulls out a Klingon Communicator] Beam me outta here, Krudge!"

Krudge: "Gladly, Worf! Disengage Cloaking Device!"

[In front of Enterprise, a Shimmering Klingon Bird of Prey appears]
[At that same instance, Worf Beams Away!]

Ryker: "Worf, is that you?"

Worf: "You betcha! On this ship I get to have more lines and I don't have to say stuff like "Oh, gee, Wesley you're such a GOD" It's great! Want to switch sides?"

Ryker: "SURE - count me in, anyone else?"

Troi: [looking at Wesley] "..uh..yeah! Get me off this rust bucket!"

Data: "Intriguing, we'd actually get more LINES! Count me in! Besides, he took over MY NAVIGATION Station! I've wanted to get even for 20 episodes now!!!"

Picard: "You know after the 21st episode Wesley's shirt has really started to smell. ICK, I would just leave to get away from that!" Change your shirt for christsake!!! Put on some deodorant!!!"

[They beam out, leaving Wesley alone on the bridge]

Wesley: "Aw Gee.... [tears on his face], WAAAAAHH."

Gene: "Cheer up Wesley, you still have 3,100 other people to command"

Wesley: "Oh Yeah! That's Right! All Kids between the ages of 12-15 report to the bridge!"

And so, we leave the TNG - as it always is, with Wesley getting all the lines and all the kids having all the fun! But isn't that what Star Trek is all about? We don't need mature adults in space after all - Wesley can handle it!