

Lincroft-Holmdel Science Fiction Club  
Club Notice - 4/30/86 -- Vol. 4, No. 41

MEETINGS UPCOMING:

Unless otherwise stated, all meetings are on Wednesdays at noon.

LZ meetings are in LZ 3A-206; HO meetings are in HO 2N-523.

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05/14 LZ: THE WEREWOLF PRINCIPLE by Clifford Simak (Biological Constructs)

05/21 HO: Is DR. WHO science fiction? (Specific discussion of  
THE CLAWS OF AXOS)

06/04 LZ: THIS PERFECT DAY by Ira Levin ("Utopias")

06/11 HO: ?

06/25 LZ: STAR GUARD by Andre Norton (Humans as underdogs)

07/16 LZ: SHADRACH IN THE FURNACE by Robert Silverberg (Ethics)

08/06 LZ: TUNNEL IN THE SKY by Robert Heinlein (Faster-Than-Light Travel)

HO Chair is John Jetzt, HO 4F-528A (834-1563). LZ Chair is Rob  
Mitchell, LZ 1B-306 (576-6106). MT Chair is Mark Leeper, MT 3G-434  
(957-5619). HO Librarian is Tim Schroeder, HO 2G-427A (949-5866).

LZ Librarian is Lance Larsen, LZ 3C-219 (576-2668).

Jill-of-all-trades is Evelyn Leeper, MT 1F-329 (957-2070).

1. The next evening film festival at the Leeper house will be on  
May 8, at 7pm. It is two African adventure tales by the great  
British author H. Rider Haggard.

FLASH GORDON CONQUERS THE UNIVERSE, Chapter 4 (1940)

KING SOLOMON'S MINES (1937) dir. by Robert Stevenson

SHE (1965) dir. by Robert Day

KING SOLOMON'S MINES is a classic adventure film that has been hard  
to find. It has Cedric Hardwick as Allan Quatermain and the  
legendary Paul Robeson as Umbopa. I have never seen the film and  
am waiting until the festival to see it. [This is not to be  
confused with the recent bad version of KING SOLOMON'S MINES. -ecl]

In the silent film era, one of the stories that had been made into  
films most often is Haggard's SHE. It had been made once in the  
sound era with Helen Gahagan (and the setting moved to the  
Himalayas!). Then in 1965, Hammer Films decided to remake the film  
and they hit pretty close to the spirit of the original novel. The

title role is played by Ursula Andress. The film stars John Richardson and Peter Cushing.

2.

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"You would think the President would spend his time worrying about Russia or China. He hasn't slept in eight nights, worrying about Libya!"

- James Coburn in "The President's Analyst" (1967)

3. The Club has recently acquired Hugo nominees BLOOD MUSIC (by Greg Bear), CUCKOO's EGG (by C. J. Cherryh), and FOOTFALL (by Larry Niven and Jerry Pournelle). These are available from the \*Lincroft\* branch (info in header above).

Mark Leeper  
MT 3G-434 957-5619  
...mtgzz!leeper

BLACK STAR RISING by Frederik Pohl  
Del Rey, 1985, \$3.50.  
A book review by Evelyn C. Leeper

As a member of a two-income family, I am acutely aware of what can and cannot be written off on taxes. So it is with some assurance that I say that B\_l\_a\_c\_k\_S\_t\_a\_r\_R\_i\_s\_i\_n\_g was written as a tax write-off.

Why do I say that? Well, a year or so ago Fred Pohl visited China. B\_l\_a\_c\_k\_S\_t\_a\_r\_R\_i\_s\_i\_n\_g takes place in a United States controlled by China (after an abortive nuclear exchange between the United States and the USSR). Castor (our hero) works on the Heavenly Grain Collective Farm outside Biloxi, Mississippi. When he finds a head in the rice paddies on the collective, he starts a sequence of events that embroil him in an alien (outer-space-type aliens this time) invasion of Earth.

Pohl leans heavily on his experiences in China for background, right down to the ubiquitous orange soda. (I say this with some assurance also, since I've also been to China. Unfortunately, I haven't figured out how to write off the trip.)

B\_l\_a\_c\_k\_S\_t\_a\_r\_R\_i\_s\_i\_n\_g is better Pohl than I've seen in a while. (Bear in mind that I am not a big fan of recent Pohl novels.) It's not a great novel and some of the coincidences tax the reader's "willing suspension of disbelief," but the background is interesting (and reasonably accurate). If the ending seems a bit of a letdown, well, it was fun getting there. The number of questions left unanswered make me believe there may be a sequel down the road.

(I don't see where the title comes from. It reminds me of Campbell's T\_h\_e\_B\_l\_a\_c\_k\_S\_t\_a\_r\_P\_a\_s\_s\_e\_s--a great old-time space story I would recommend--but the two stories have nothing in common.)

THE NORBY CHRONICLES by Janet and Isaac Asimov  
Ace, 1986, \$2.95.  
A book review by Evelyn C. Leeper

When I first saw this, complete with subtitle "More Asimov Robots!", I thought it might be part of his "real" robot series. However, a quick perusal indicated that this was not the case; it is in fact a juvenile totally unrelated to his other works. The other thing I

noticed was that J. O. Jeppson (a.k.a. Janet Jeppson) had finally given in to the pressures of business and is now writing under the name "Janet Asimov."

Be that as it may, the question is, "Is it any good?" Well, it's been a long time since I was of an age to really appreciate a juvenile novel, but I just had this feeling that this wasn't one. Jeff Wells, our teenage hero, has a older brother named Farley Gordon (he's called "Fargo Wells") and a second-hand robot named Norby ("one of the very ancient R2 models", which looks just like R2-D2 on the cover) and gets into trouble with them and eventually saves the Solar System from Ing the Ingrate and other nasties. Typical juvenile fare, but the situations are so unbelievable that no child old enough to read would believe it, or should. Example: the Inventors Union wants to take Norby apart to see what makes him tick. But Admiral Yobo is so friendly with Jeff that he breaks all sorts of rules to help them escape. Kids today are too sophisticated to believe that (I hope).

Just to see if I had gotten out of touch with juvenile novels, I re-read D\_a\_v\_i\_d\_S\_t\_a\_r,\_S\_p\_a\_c\_e\_R\_a\_n\_g\_e\_r. I had remembered it as being better than T\_h\_e\_N\_o\_r\_b\_y\_C\_h\_r\_o\_n\_i\_c\_l\_e\_s and it was. I must conclude that this novel (actually two novellas "Norby, the Mixed-Up Robot" and "Norby's Other Secret") was marketed to capitalize on Asimov's name. Pass it by.

DASHIELL HAMMETT'S SECRET X-9 edited by Tony Sparafucile  
International Polyonics Ltd., 1983, \$9.95.  
A book review by Mark R. Leeper

In an old "Goon Show" comedy script a guard is asked why he let someone into a building. The guard says, "He forced his way past me by putting money in me hand." In C\_i\_t\_i\_z\_e\_n\_K\_a\_n\_e we see Charles Foster Kane using much the same technique to get top newspapermen to join his paper. Kane knows who he wants and makes them a (monetary) offer they couldn't refuse. The real-life Kane, William Randolph Hearst, operated in a very similar way. He saw what he wanted to happen and then simply paid whatever it took. A rival paper had the comic strip "Dick Tracy" by Chester Gould. Hearst wanted it a better one. How about getting America's foremost mystery writer to write a comic strip about a crime fighter. Dashiell Hammett was the best with novels like T\_h\_e\_D\_a\_i\_n\_C\_u\_r\_s\_e, T\_h\_e\_M\_a\_l\_t\_e\_s\_e\_F\_a\_l\_c\_o\_n, T\_h\_e\_G\_l\_a\_s\_s\_K\_e\_y, and T\_h\_e\_T\_h\_i\_n\_M\_a\_n. But why would a very popular novelist want to write a newspaper comic strip? How about \$500 for six weekly strips? That was pretty good money for just writing the scripts.

For art Hearst selected a promising newcomer: Alex Raymond, who had just started his own strip, "Flash Gordon." Together Hammett and Raymond created a crime-fighter strip "Secret Agent X-9." X-9 uses many names but most commonly Dexter. You never find out very much about Dexter. You do find out his wife and daughter were killed by criminals trying to kill him. You also know he has impressive credentials because when he wants police cooperation he shows them something in his wallet and they are always very cooperative.

Hammett did "X-9" for about a year doing four stories of decreasing length and quality over a period of about a year. After that he went to work in Hollywood where the money and challenges were better. The four stories and a fifth done by Leslie Charteris--best known for his own character, "The Saint"--have been collected in a single book edited by Tony Sparafucile.

The artistic demands of writing a comic strip are very different from those of writing a novel. Every three or four panels you have to have at least a minor cliff-hanger. These make the stories even more hyper-kinetic than movie serials. At one point the story is interrupted for the message, "Things happen fast...so follow this story closely every day." Reading collections of comic strips like "Flash Gordon," "Buck Rogers," and "Dick Tracy," you discover that the overall stories are no very good. For any dozen or so consecutive strips the story isn't too bad but when it is all over you have a long but not really interesting story. "X-9"'s first story is at least partially an exception. The overall story is considerably better than most comic strip stories. It is a genuine mystery with a villain not revealed until the very last strip of the story. At one point a rather

calculating and cold-blooded woman has captured one of the henchmen of a master criminal known as "The Top". The woman calls The Top and tells him, "Hold on.... You heard that loud noise? That was me shooting one of your men." In a later story Dexter, questioning a crook, ties the crook's arms to a tree and his legs to the bumper of a car, leaving the crook suspended between. Not surprisingly, this makes the crook more than cooperative.

Within the comic strip medium the first story is still a fairly good mystery as well as being action-packed; the second story is more reminiscent of the movie serials of the Forties and Fifties with a masked super-criminal who gives orders by radio. The stories that follow trail off in quality but are considerably shorter. The best story went on for seven months and covers almost half of the book. And at the end of any daily strip it leaves you wondering what will happen next. Maybe Hearst had the right idea.

\_N\_O\_T\_E\_S\_F\_R\_O\_M\_T\_H\_E\_N\_E\_T

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Subject: Tim Zahn Speech

Path: mtuxo!houxm!whuxl!whuxlm!akgua!gatech!seismo!caip!daemon

Date: Tue, 22-Apr-86 09:18:12 EST

Excerpt from Tim Zahn GOH speech, CONTRAPTION, April 26th,  
Southfield Michigan.

--CLIMBING THE LADDER OF SUCCESS AS A WRITER.

STEP ONE:

Have a good, secure job so you can earn a living while you learn  
to write.

STEP TWO:

Have that secure job knocked out from under you.

STEP THREE:

Having lost your secure job, find that you're not qualified  
for another one.

STEP FOUR:

Decide that "What the heck, I might as well try writing for  
for a while"-also know as "You can't fir me, I quit!"

STEP FIVE:

Enlist the moral support of family and freinds who believe in you  
but think you're making a class six mistake.

STEP SIX:



Set a realistic goal for becoming a writing success...preferably one that allows you to eat once in a while.

STEP SEVEN:

Make a name for yourself among your readers by writing lotza great stories.

STEP EIGHT:

When you've got that first novel ready to go, attract the attention of a good agent and a publisher--preferably in that order.

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Subject: Zahn biblio

Path: mtuxo!houxm!whuxl!whuxlm!akgua!gatech!seismo!ll-xn!caip!daemon

Date: Fri, 25-Apr-86 06:58:05 EST

---BIBLIOGRAPGHY OF TIM ZAHN---  
SHORT STORIES

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Ernie	Analog,9/79
* The Dreamsender	" 7/80
A Lingerin Death	" 12/80
* The Challenge	The Space Gamer, 12/80
* The Energy Crisis of 2215	Amazing,3/81
Hollow Victory	Analog,3/81

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Red THoughts at Morning	" 4/81
Fantasy World	The Space Gamer,5/81
The Price of Survival	Analog, 6/81
* The Giftie Gie Us	" 7/81
The Sword's Man	The Space Gamer,9/81
Loop Hole	Analog,9/81
Raison D'Etre	" 10/81
* Job Inaction	" 11/81
Houseguest	F & SF 1/82
When Johnny Comes Marching Home	Analog,1/82
Symmknyn's Edge	The Space Gamer,2/82
Origin	IA's SFM,2/82
Final Solution	Analog,3/82
Pawn's Gambit	" "
Unitive factor	" 5/82

Between a Rock and a High Place " 7/82  
 The Peaceful Man F & SF 9/82  
 \* Dragon Pax Rigel, Fall '82  
 Dark Thoughts at Noon Analog,12/82  
 \* The Shadows of Evening F & SF,3/83  
 \* The Final Report on the Lifeline Experiment Analog,5/83  
 The Damocles Mission Ares,Winter'83  
 Warlord Analog,7/83  
 Expanded Charter " 9/83  
 Curtain Call Rigel, summer '83  
 \* The Cassandra Analog,11/83  
 \* Cascade Point " 12/83  
 Bette Noire " 3/84  
 \* Teamwork " 4/84  
 Vampire Trap The Fantasy Gamer #4,2/84  
 \* Return to the Fold Analog,9/84  
 Cordon Sanitaire Alien Stars, Baen Books 1/85  
 Music Hath Charms Analog,4/85  
 +The Evidence of Things Not Seen Analog 4/86  
 +Not Always to the Strong CASCADE POINT & OTHER STORIES

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NOVELS

THE BLACKCOLLAR DAW Books, July '83  
 A COMING OF AGE Bluejay Books, Feb. '85  
 COBRA Baen Books, Feb '86  
 SPINNERET Bluejay Books,Nov. '85  
 COBRA STRIKE Baen Books, Feb '86  
 THE TALISMAN MAGIC IN ITHKAR, Volume 4  
 +BLACKCOLLAR:THE BACKLASH MISSION DAW Books  
 +COBRA III(working title) Baen Books

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 \*--to be included in CASCADE POINT AND OTHER STORIES, Blue Jay Books,  
 March '86  
 + -- sold but not yet Published (possibly On Shelf)

Subject: Biased as a mathematician  
 Path: mtuxo!houxm!whuxl!whuxlm!akgua!gatech!seismo!caip!daemon  
 Date: Thu, 24-Apr-86 02:34:39 EST

Of course, I'm biased as a mathematician; how many SF books can you think of which involve something of actual mathematical interest (the game of Sprouts)?

Let me highly recommend DEFINITELY MAYBE by Arkady and Boris Sturgatsky, as containing the best treatment of mathematical research I have ever seen in SF or elsewhere. On a much lighter note, Rudy Rucker (PhD in math) has many hilarious books and short stories about cantor sets, infinities, multi dimensional spaces etc. My favorite of Rudy's books is a novel called WHITE LIGHT. THE 57th FRANZ KAFKA is an anthology with many of his mathematical short stories.

Steve

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Subject: Mini-review of new Warlock book (with mini-spoilers!)  
Path: mtuxo!drutx!ihnp4!cbosgd!gatech!seismo!caip!daemon  
Date: Sun, 27-Apr-86 17:42:14 EST

THE WARLOCK WANDERING  
by  
Christoper Stasheff  
Ace Science Fiction, 1986, 297 pages.

The up-and-down Warlock series is up again. Rod and Gwen Gallowglass (without the kids this time) go gallivanting through time and space, joining some of the characters from the novel ESCAPE VELOCITY. This book avoids most of the problems suffered by THE WARLOCK ENRAGED, and although it's a bit talky in spots (especially in the first third of the book), it's a real page-turner. (Someone on the net recently said that Stasheff was a poor SF writer but a great storyteller; THE WARLOCK WANDERING certainly supports that assertion.) It look like Stasheff is finally starting to shape events toward the grand destiny of the planet Gramarye that he has hinted at since the first book; this is all to the good, since I've been afraid that we would be subjected to an indefinite number of carbon-copy adventures of the Gallowglasses without anything really happening to advance the overall story. Fortunately, it looks like Stasheff has avoided that trap.

I rate THE WARLOCK WANDERING +3 on the -4 to +4 scale. For comparison, here is how I rate the other books in the series:

THE WARLOCK IN SPITE OF HIMSELF	+4
KING KOBOLD	0
THE WARLOCK UNLOCKED	+3
KING KOBOLD REVIVED	+1

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ESCAPE VELOCITY           +3  
THE WARLOCK ENRAGED       0

And by the way, the pre-title page lists the books in the series,  
including:

THE WARLOCK IS MISSING (coming September 1986.)

-- marty moore (mooremj@eglin-vax.arpa)

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Subject: Paperback release dates  
Path: mtuxo!drutx!ihnp4!ucbvax!nike!caip!daemon  
Date: Mon, 28-Apr-86 03:08:36 EST

New books often come in and sell out of bookstores very quickly, and most stores are poor about reordering these books. This especially goes for the chain stores which, as they get more and more computerized, they also get increasingly less flexible. (Employees can't get away with ordering books they know will sell in the face of company policy, as the main office will catch them at it.)

I watched the new books come in last month, so I'd have a more precise idea of when to pick up new books before they could disappear on me. The information below is a result of this surveying, and covers all paperbacks with a May interior date; the weeks are a Monday-Sunday coverage, with the date given the Monday beginning the period in question:

March 31: Bantam/Spectra  
April 7: Tor, Berkley  
April 14: Del Rey, Warner/Questar, Avon, Dell  
April 21: DAW/Signet, Ace, Baen/Pocket

Note that the above list does not include any hardcovers; these are not released on such regular schedules. While I have not previously kept precise records on release dates, the above list is consistent with my memory of the last few months. I hope this information comes in handy.

Andrew Sigel

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Subject: TURTLE DIARY  
Path: mtuxo!houxm!ihnp4!mhuxn!mhuxr!ulysses!bellcore!decvax!cca!cjh

Date: Sun, 13-Apr-86 20:46:24 EST

TURTLE DIARY is an English film that's so good I'm surprised there haven't been other reviews of it on the net. It's not exactly obscure, and there's a great deal of talent behind it: Ben (GHANDI) Kingsley is a divorced former executive, now clerking in a London bookstore; Glenda

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Jackson is a successful author of children's books; the story is based on a book by Russell (sp?) Hoban, made into a screenplay by Harold Pinter.

Now if "Harold Pinter" brings to mind THE BIRTHDAY PARTY or HOMECOMING, suggesting that this is going to be a basically nasty, whacked-out film--that's what I would have expected, but I've gotten used enough to the reviewers' biases in the local paper that I decided to take their word that this was worth seeing. I'm glad I did. The premise is quite simple: Kingsley and Jackson each become somewhat obsessed with the plight of three sea-turtles occupying a fairly small pool in the London zoo and, encouraged and coached by the keeper, determine to free them, meeting in the process of their plots.

If this were a Hollywood film there would be all sorts of gimmicks added to hold the interest of the viewers long enough that they wouldn't feel taken; TURTLE DIARY doesn't bother. It is a comedy, and there are a number of small laughs in it (and some larger---I broke up over the all-right-be-that-way expression of a busybody to whom Kingsley says he's making a crate to steal a sea tortoise with) but no slapstick. There's some wonderful photography of southwest England that doesn't hang around saying "Look at these gorgeous vistas!" There's no loud message---Kingsley and Jackson don't go chaining themselves to the zoo gates or otherwise advertising themselves, and they don't plot to free all the rest of the animals. There's quite a bit of material that seems extraneous but gives a good feel for what sort of quiet, relatively normal English people these are who up and make off with few hundredweight of turtle soup on the hoof<-<-<-flipper. And there's no neat tying-up of everything, with or without a sequel hook; matters are more-or-less settled, but with plausibility. Kingsley isn't even transformed from a nebbish to a MAN; he just gets a hair more determined.

I've seen it argued that European films don't fit neatly into the categories (comedy, adventure, drama, horror, tragedy(?)) that most American films are forced into---arguably because people don't know how to market a film without an easy, obvious hook. TURTLE DIARY is a good illustration: it shows a believable series of incidents without forcing them to fit a particularly coherent pattern. I found it all the more enjoyable because of this, and would vigorously recommend it to almost everyone.

CHip (Chip Hitchcock)

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Subject: Re: "LEGEND"

Path: mtuxo!houxm!ihnp4!hplabs!sdcrcf!ucla-cs!reiher

Date: Mon, 21-Apr-86 04:10:40 EST

The author of the previous article commented that he left "Legend"

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wanting more. Well, surprise, there is more. The European version of "Legend" is reputed to be considerably longer. It is also, supposedly, more oriented towards adult audiences (not in terms of explicit sex or violence, but in the complexities of the treatment). The Hollywood folks, many, many moons ago, took a look at Ridley Scott's first cut of "Legend", and groaned, sure in the knowledge that the 12-18 year olds weren't going to rush like lemmings to see it. "Legend" was first supposed to be released in the summer of 1984, and shooting was done well in time. It got delayed to spring 85, then summer 85, and now finally appears. Whether the longer version (which also features an orchestral score by Jerry Goldsmith, rather than Tangerine Dream's score; Goldsmith's score is reputed to be extremely good) ever appears over here is doubtful. Perhaps on videocassette, but "Legend" isn't a good film to see on cassette.

Considering what I'd heard about it beforehand, "Legend" was nearly as good as I figured it could be. The two main characters were pretty dull, but Tim Curry was great and some of the supporting players were very good. The sets, costumes, and makeup were also excellent. The plot was overly familiar for my tastes, and, to me, the cutting was obvious. Tom Cruise's sword and shield disappear without any

explanation, and everything has a rushed, rather confused air about it. The opening is rather tedious, and the unicorns are too reminiscent of far too many unicorn calendars aimed at pubescent girls who cross a horse fetish with a fondness for light fantasy. On the whole, worth seeing for fans of fantasy, and for those who like films with very dense created worlds (always one of Ridley Scott's strong points), but others won't miss much by skipping it. I'd rate it as Scott's weakest film.

P.S. I guess Ridley Scott likes Tom Cruise a lot. Cruise's next film is "Top Gun", directed by . . . Tony Scott, Ridley's brother.

Peter Reiher

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Subject: "The Gig" and "Torment"

Path: mtuxo!drutx!ihnp4!hplabs!sdcrcdf!ucla-cs!reiher

Date: Wed, 23-Apr-86 04:57:42 EST

"The Gig" and "Torment" are an odd coupling of films to share a single review, but they do have something in common, at least for me. Both are difficult for me to review. I liked them both much more than I expected to, and want to recommend them to people. However, both films are of a type normally seen by very limited groups of the moviegoing public. About the only way to get anyone else to try them out is to praise them to the sky. Unfortunately, since both films are good, but not great, that amount of praise would only raise false expectations, so those I persuaded to see the films would be disappointed, having expected a near-classic. Getting people to see these sorts of films without overselling them is quite hard, but I'll give it a shot.

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"The Gig" is a small "people" film. It's about a bunch of middleaged amateur musicians who play a couple hours of jazz, in their own homes, about once a week. Suddenly, they are given the chance to play a gig, for real money in a real resort. Despite initial misgivings, they go for it, and get a chance to learn what the world of professional music is really like. "Torment", on the other hand, is a suspense film about two women, one a cripple, trapped in a deserted house with a mad killer. Not an awful lot of plot similarities.

What distinguishes both films is that they take unpromising situations and make much more of them than I expected. The mad killer genre has been hacked to death by "Halloween" clones, but "Torment" manages to breath some life into it by avoiding the excesses of slasher films and adding a few neat twists. "The Gig" takes a plot which sounds dull, but manages to make it really fly by treating the characters like real human beings and avoiding pat solutions.

The characters from "The Gig" appear to be stereotypes, at first glance: one moderately sleazy used car salesman, one momma's boy, one jealous husband, one sullen outsider, etc. However, "The Gig" goes beyond the stereotypes to find real people behind them. Characters prove to have a lot more depth than you would first think. Coupled with a gentle sense of humor, good pacing, fine performances, and well written lines, this quality makes "The Gig" consistently entertaining. It's only problem is that it is not a "big" picture. No high drama, no screaming comedy, just real people doing real things. Many viewers, conditioned by a form of film inflation, tend to treat such films with a "so what?" attitude. Since the universe isn't saved, the film can't be important.

"Torment", being a genre film and having a clear goal (to keep you on the edge of your seat), doesn't face this problem. It does have the problem that it was made on a very low budget, and it shows. Some shots have the shadow of the microphone boom showing, the photography is mediocre, the script needed some polishing. More importantly, the low budget probably prevented the directors (Samson Aslanian and John Hopkins collaborated on both script and direction) from extracting as much suspense as they might have, due to a constrained shooting schedule. Also, the younger woman in the plot is stupid to the point of feble-mindedness.

On the plus side, "Torment" manages a great deal of tension at many points, and does it with a minimum of gore. Aslanian and Hopkins realize that the major means of building suspense isn't by showing the audience what happens, but allowing them to imagine the possibilities. "Torment" also benefits from a couple of good performances, Eve Brenner as the plucky, paranoid older woman, who can barely walk, and William Witt as the madman. Witt's part is nicely handled. Rather than being an unstoppable killing machine, he is a dangerous man who wobbles on the edge of sanity, frequently falling over on the wrong side. He may not be likeable, but he is definitely human.



The cast of "The Gig" is also to be commended. Wayne Rogers is good as the somewhat sleazy leader of the group, who makes up for his seaminess by being a true leader and, on the whole, a true friend. Cleavon Little does very nicely as a professional musician called in to replace the group's bassman. Joe Silver has some funny moments as the aggressively Jewish owner of the Catskill resort, and Andrew Duncan, Jerry Matz, Daniel Halbach, and Warren Vache fill out the parts of the other band members quite well. Each develops a recognizably human character, abetted by Frank D. Gilroy's script and direction.

I recommend both "Torment" and "The Gig" to those who might not otherwise see them. Of course, if you don't like suspense, no matter how well done, then there is little point in seeing "Torment", and if you demand importance and high significance in your films, "The Gig" may disappoint you. "Torment" has only suspense to offer, and "The Gig" only ordinary people living out a modest dream.

I would imagine that the vast bulk of people reading this would never go to see either of these films. They would be lost in the shuffle of better publicized, higher profile films. Maybe you already have missed these two movies, as they are opening regionally and may have already come and gone from your city. I would like to suggest a little experiment to you, though. The next time that you want to go out to the movies, and you have no preconceived idea of what you want to see, go get your local paper, and look through the ads. Try to find a film which you have never heard of, which doesn't have a huge, full-page ad, which doesn't feature a lot of big-named stars. (Avoid the obvious gross slasher pictures, teen sex films, and martial arts extravaganzas. These genres have their winners, too, but rooting them out is better left to their fans and fools like me who see almost everything.) Instead of seeing one of the major studio films playing around town, go see that obscure film, instead. Sure, you may wind up seeing "Cavegirl" or "Rad", but you might equally well see "Trouble in Mind", or "Turtle Diary", or "Echo Park", or "Torment", or "The Gig". Believe it or not, your chances of seeing a worthwhile film are just as good, if not better, than if you had gone for one of the big studio films. Try it some time.

Peter Reiher

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Subject: \_Bliss\_ (mild spoilers)  
Path: ihnp4!seismo!rlgvax!jsf  
Date: Sat, 19-Apr-86 19:36:53 EST

\_Bliss\_ tells the store of Harry Joy a likable middle aged man who has a heart attack and dies in the first 5 minutes of the film. He is revived by an EMS unit, but is left a little mad by the experience. He soon becomes convinced that he actually did die, and is in a cleverly arranged Hell intended to punish him for his sins. He then meets and

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falls in love with a beautiful hippy beekeeper/hooker. The ending is wonderfully happy, and it left me feeling very good.

Told in a style resembling It's a Wonderful Life, mixed in with a little Peter Wier and a touch of Videodrome, this story manages to be funny, touching, frightening, and very thought provoking. It manages the blend of comedy and seriousness better than Brazil, and has replaced Brazil as my favorite serious film of 1986 (well serious as a film if not serious subject matter). It's visual content is very rich, ranging from several cheap visual puns, to heavy symbolism, to subtle foreshadowing. The camera never seems to be violating the scene, instead you get a very personal and intimate feeling from the shots.

It is easy to see why this film won the 1985 Australian Academy Award for best picture. I hope it generates as much intelligent discussion in this group as did Brazil. I'm going back next week to see what I missed the first time through.

On the scale of -4 to +4 this one is an extremely strong +4.

Steve Fritzing

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Subject: Re: Legend

Path: bellcore!decvax!decwrl!sun!falk

Date: Tue, 22-Apr-86 23:38:15 EST

DISCLAIMER: I didn't go to this movie on purpose. There's only one theater within walking distance of where I live, and it wasn't until I walked all the way there that I realized that there was nothing else showing that wasn't either (a) something I'd seen already, or (b) pure shit.

I saw Legend this weekend, and have mixed feelings. Basically it's about the good guys trying to keep the bad guy (Tim Curry as Satan, but for some reason the movie makers wouldn't say it outright, so they had the characters refer to him as "the big D") from killing the only two Unicorns in the world and getting their horns.

This movie was so camp and hokey that the audience was giggling before the opening titles were finished running. There was no plot continuity whatsoever. We never find out who the heroine is (it's hinted that she's a princess of some kind, but we never learn more). We never find out exactly who the hero is other than that he's some kind of woods geek. We certainly never find out how the princess met, let alone fell in love with this unkempt woods geek. There's some sort of ritual involving throwing a ring into a river, but its relevance to saving the universe is completely lost. Why does the wood sprite hide the fact the fact that she can turn into a winged human at will from everybody but the hero? Why does she have the hots for the hero in the first place?

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Don't ask me, I'm still trying to figure the princess out. We're led to believe that by somehow reflecting some sunlight off a chain of platters to get it down into hell will help fight Satan off. When the light finally arrives, it (a) blows the doors off the wall, and (b) has no effect on Satan at all so the hero has to use his kung foo to save the day. They make a big deal out of his magic sword, but when the big fight scene arrives, it's mysteriously written out of the script.

HOWEVER

Tim Curry as Satan made the whole thing worth while. I wish they'd have had more of him and less of the other two. Between his acting, the special effects and his makeup job, he was magnificent. The makeup job was by far the best monster makeup I have ever seen in cinema -- we're talking academy award material here. From the ridges on his forehead to the cats-eye pupils it was perfect (well, maybe the horns were a wee bit big). His acting (he's had a lot of practices from the RHPS of course) was perfect for the part. There's one scene in the movie where the heroine is wearing the low-cut, black (of course) evening dress that Satan has given her and is looking at herself in the mirror. Suddenly, one of Satan's hands bursts through the mirror from the other side, and he slowly steps through the mirror to seduce her. Wow. Naturally, she resists him though; I wanted to shout "no you fool, don't go back to that woods twerp!".

Summary:

If there's nothing else showing, go see it.

-ed falk, sun microsystems