

Lincroft-Holmdel Science Fiction Club
Club Notice - 12/12/84 -- Vol. 3, No. 22

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.

_D_A_T_E _T_O_P_I_C

01/09 LZ: THE CIRCUS OF DR. LAO by Charles G. Finney

01/09 HO: Book Swap

01/29 LZ: Video meeting: THE FLY (part 1)

01/30 LZ: Video meeting: THE FLY (part 2)

01/30 HO: COURTSHIP RITE by Donald Kingsbury

02/20 LZ: SLAN by A. E. Van Vogt

03/13 HO: DOWNBELOW STATION by C. J. Cherryh

LZ Chair is Mark Leeper, LZ 3E-215 (576-2571). HO Chair is John Jetzt, FJ 1F-108 (577-5316). LZ Librarian is Lance Larsen, LZ 3C-219 (576-2668). HO Librarian is Tim Schroeder, HO 2G-432 (949-5866). Jill-of-all-trades is Evelyn Leeper, HO 1B-437A (834-4723).

1. This issue will contain a review of 2010. It is an interesting sidelight of the film that its story would not work if Douglas Trumbell had been a little better with his special effects work in the first film. How do I come to a weird conclusion like that? Well, those of you who both read the book and saw the movie of 2001 will know that there is an inconsistency. In the book and the original script the mission was to Saturn. Unfortunately, Trumbell's special effect of showing the rings of Saturn was not believable enough for Kubrick. (As I said recently in another notice, they were used in SILENT RUNNING and I think proved Kubrick to be correct.) In any case, the site of the film was moved to Jupiter. The story of both the book and the film of 2010 take place around Jupiter and use the fact that it is Jupiter and not Saturn. There are technical reasons why the same story would not work if it were set at Saturn. Among other things, this implies that the book 2010 is a sequel to the film and not the book 2001. It also implies that a necessary step in the creation of 2010 was the rejection of Trumbell's effect for the first film.

Mark Leeper

LZ 3E-215 x2571
...{houxn,hogpd,hocse}!lznv!mrl

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT ALMOST BLANK

2010: THE YEAR WE MAKE CONTACT
A film review by Mark R. Leeper

Peter Hyams is one of the last people whom I would have expected would make a sequel to 2_0_0_1. It was the a point of pride with Clarke and Kubrick that their 1968 film be as faithful to scientific fact as was possible. Hyams has played fast and loose with scientific accuracy in his two previous science fiction films, C_a_p_r_i_c_o_r_n_O_n_e and O_u_t_l_a_n_d. Hyams was to write, produce, and direct 2_0_1_0 by himself. Clarke had retired to Sri Lanka and apparently could not oversee the scientific accuracy of the production.

So how do the two films compare? Hyams's film by itself is a remarkable film. As an adaptation of the book, it is a real rarity. It is a pure science fiction film. That does not mean science fantasy, it does not mean science horror. It means that this is a film that takes scientific ideas and plays with them. It does so not to scare us with monsters, not to give us a western set in space, not to show us a love story that happens to take place in space. It is an extrapolation of theory and idea. The story concerns men and women making scientific discoveries, but it is primarily about the discoveries, not the people making them. By following a team of

scientists as they attack scientific problems it is closer in spirit to Clarke's R_e_n_d_e_z_v_o_u_s_w_i_t_h_R_a_m_a than it is to 2_0_0_1.

2_0_1_0 stands head and shoulders above anything that we could have expected from Hyams based on his previous work. But that is no surprise since Hyams merely had to be accurate to a pure science fiction book. Word has it that it is a fairly accurate representation, with a few minor liberties. As far as pacing, the second film is a considerable improvement. Hyams has made a slightly less visual film, still very visual, and picked up the pace considerably. 2_0_0_1 was intended to be a showcase of the future and that means in many places the plot stops dead to show a visual effect. The new film's science is a little less accurate. As in O_u_t_l_a_n_d, Hyams does not understand gravity, artificial and natural.

With the exception of scientific errors, the worst faults of 2_0_1_0 probably lie with Clarke and the novel. The film teasingly promises to give new insights into the questions raised in the first film. It then reneges on that promise. When it is over, the alien race is as much a mystery as it was in 1968. There are more theories as to what the monolith actually is, but they remain theories. Clarke's "see the movie, read the book, see the movie, read the book..." does not seem to be a sufficient answer to the questions. Now it probably is true that that is a realistic touch. The aliens probably would be unfathomable to the human mind. But to fall back on that does not make for good cinema and even makes unsatisfying science fiction. The trailers and script promise that at the end of the film "something wonderful" will happen. In fact, what happens is wondrous, but the film is very unsuccessful in conveying why it is wonderful. Most of the effect of the something wonderful appears to be that it temporarily averts a war on Earth and that there are somewhat superficial celestial events that

- 2 -

can be seen from Earth. The full implications of the something wonderful are never explained. The impact of the something wonderful on the audience is considerably undercut by an almost identical something wonderful that happened in another popular science fiction film of the past few years. That makes the big surprise at the end something of a letdown.

Production credits are all very good. Visually the film shows a number of remarkable sights without making them the static set pieces that the first film made of them. There are still a fair number of scenes of stark beauty, such as the view of the churning surface of Jupiter. I was a little

sorry to see the part of Heywood Floyd went to Roy Scheider instead of the underrated William Sylvester, who played the part in the original and is a familiar face from a number of good British genre films. John Lithgow is along in large part for comic relief. Helen Mirren, familiar from T_h_e_L_o_n_g_G_o_o_d_F_r_i_d_a_y and E_x_c_a_l_i_b_u_r, plays one of the few Russian characters not played by a member of the cast of M_o_s_c_o_w_o_n_t_h_e_H_u_d_s_o_n. Bob Balaban at first seems miscast as Dr. Chandra, since he has no Indian accent, but by 2010 he could be a second or third generation American. In a less than stellar year for science fiction films this is the best so far. Give it a 2 on the -4 to +4 scale.

MODESTY BLAISE
A book review by Mark R. Leeper

A few weeks back I reviewed a film called A_m_e_r_i_c_a_n_D_r_e_a_m_e_r. In it I said that the fictional character that JoBeth Williams imagines herself to be is based on Modesty Blaise. At the time my only knowledge of Modesty Blaise was derived from conversations with a friend who was fond of the "Modesty Blaise" books by Peter O'Donnell. In order to get some better knowledge of the character and the books, I read the first book in the series, titled, logically enough, M_o_d_e_s_t_y_B_l_a_i_s_e.

The series involves the adventures of a most remarkable woman. Her earliest memories were from a DP camp in the Middle East. By age 26 she has been married and divorced, has set up a criminal syndicate called The Network, made herself independently wealthy, and retired. Yet she remains a well-oiled fighting machine, master of many martial arts. Her best friend, and through the series of books her sidekick, is Willie Garvin, a hood with a cockney accent. It is the relationship between Modesty and Willie that creates the greatest curiosity of the series. It seems that it is one of mutual admiration and some sexual attraction, but in actions, anyway, it is totally platonic and professional. It is extremely rare in popular fiction to have close relationships between men and women that are not romantic. It is this subtly frustrated sexual tension between the Willie and Modesty that makes the relationship live for the reader. There is no doubt for the reader that Willie means much more to Modesty than any of her casual paramours.

The "Modesty Blaise" novels, in fact, are an adaptation from another medium and the writing style reflects it. The stories started as a comic strip and in 1965, at the height of the James Bond craze, the cartoonist started writing the stories as novels. There are vestiges of the comic strip origins in O'Donnell's writing. Part of the comic strip's attraction was in the the title character's sexual attraction. O'Donnell always takes pains to describe what Modesty's clothing which is often just enough to cover the subject. While the real plot of M_o_d_e_s_t_y_B_l_a_i_s_e does not start until the second half of the book, there is action throughout so that the reader is never bored. O'Donnell has a straightforward, clean writing style that makes his prose very easy to read.

In the first novel the British government calls Modesty out of retirement asking a favor and paying her by giving her information that her old friend Willie is in danger and how she can save him. In return for the information, they would like Modesty use her connections in the underground to guarantee that a certain shipment of diamonds to an Arab sheik gets to its destination. The story makes for a crisp thriller with comic strip style villains, but not more exaggerated than Ian Fleming would have created, and certainly more believable than most that one would find in a James Bond film. The book makes for fun light reading and is enjoyable enough that I would want to read more in the series. Rate it a +1 on the -4 to +4 scale.

THE OTHER SIDE OF MIDNIGHT
A film review by Mark R. Leeper

I suppose I have always been a little curious to see this film. This was intended to be 20th Century Fox's big grossing film of 1977. Even though the deal was illegal, rumor had it that if exhibitors wanted to show T_h_e_O_t_h_e_r_S_i_d_e_o_f_M_i_d_n_i_g_h_t, they would have to book Fox's summer children's film, S_t_a_r_W_a_r_s. The two came as a package: you couldn't rent one without renting the other. A week or so after S_t_a_r_W_a_r_s's release, the distributor decided that the Lucas film could make it on its own without being boosted by T_h_e_O_t_h_e_r_S_i_d_e_o_f_M_i_d_n_i_g_h_t. By the end of the summer, however, the two films were again linked as a package deal; the package was just expressed a little differently this time.

So in a sense T_h_e_O_t_h_e_r_S_i_d_e_o_f_M_i_d_n_i_g_h_t is a sort of a S_t_a_r_W_a_r_s curio. Reports were that it was really a terrible film, and those reports were not far from the truth. In actual fact, T_h_e_O_t_h_e_r_S_i_d_e_o_f_M_i_d_n_i_g_h_t looks and feels like a TV mini-series. By that, I guess I mean that it has a more complex plot spanning more years than do most films. Usually network TV will take a story of this sort and stretch it out to four hours or more and stretch it out over a number of nights. The basic plot involves a French girl who was seduced and abandoned by an American pilot in the early days of WWII. It follows their lives after that as the girl, who had been led to the path of sin by the flyer, becomes an international star and eventually the wife of a fabulously wealthy Greek tycoon. As one of the richest women in the world, she has the power to exact her revenge on the pilot. The style of the film is polished but uninteresting.

The lead actors, Marie-France Pisier and John Beck, are a bit flat and are easily outshone by Susan Sarandon and Raf Vallone as their respective spouses. Sarandon had earlier played in Fox's R_o_c_k_y_H_o_r_r_o_r_P_i_c_t_u_r_e_S_h_o_w, incidentally, and I am reasonably sure her outgoing nature in that film helped her get this role. There is one sex scene that is a good deal more explicit than one usually sees in a major film, which is probably why Fox expected this film to be a winner. The only really good thing about the film is a nice ironic plot twist toward the end. I think the same story would have made an engaging half hour on the old A_l_f_r_e_d_H_i_t_c_h_c_o_c_k_P_r_e_s_e_n_t_s program. It is not clever enough, however, to make a 166-minute film

worthwhile, however. This one is for film devotees only.

_N_O_T_E_S_F_R_O_M_T_H_E_N_E_T

Subject: EMPIRE OF THE SUN by J G Ballard

Path: houxm!ihnp4!zehnte!hplabs!hao!seismo!cmcl2!philabs!pwa-b!utah-gr!donn

Date: Sun, 2-Dec-84 19:36:27 EST

A lot of sf readers profess not to enjoy the work of J G Ballard. His stories are often cold and pessimistic, built around metaphors instead of plot or character development; his anti-heroes behave irrationally at best; his universes are usually brutal and indifferent to human struggles. I sometimes think these things, and it's true that I haven't bought very much that Ballard has done recently, but I find that many images from Ballard stories stick with me and that upon rereading they seem to mean different things. Novels like THE CRYSTAL WORLD, THE DROUGHT, stories like "The Terminal Beach", "Chronopolis", "The Voices of Time" or (my favorite) "Build-up", have dream-like settings which appeal strongly to me when I'm in the right mood. Why is Ballard's fictional space so strange? It's not because he indulges in fashionable technophobia and world-weariness; in Charles Platt's interview with Ballard in DREAM MAKERS we hear: "I'm completely out of sympathy with the whole antitechnology movement... [A]ll these doom-sayers and echo-watchers -- their prescriptions for disaster always strike me as simply wrong, factually, and also appallingly defeatist, expressing some sort of latent sense of failure. I feel very OPTIMISTIC about science and technology. And yet almost my entire fiction has been an illustration of the opposite. I show all these entropic universes with

everything running down. I think it has a lot to do with my childhood in Shanghai during the war."

EMPIRE OF THE SUN (Simon and Schuster, 1984; 279 pp.) is a novel which deals with Ballard's wartime experiences in excruciating detail. It is unlike anything of Ballard's that I have ever read before; in fact it (deceptively) reads like a straightforward mainstream novel, but it really is an exhaustive catalog of all the images and characters which Ballard has used in his work. The drained swimming pools, the wrecks of aircraft, the inhuman protagonists, the Kafkaesque agents of authority: they're all here, and it's exceedingly disturbing that they can't be dismissed as figments of nightmares as they sometimes can in Ballard's stories. They are all real, terrifyingly real, all evidences of a basic disturbance in the universe which has caused the rind of culture and civilization that we take for granted to be peeled away. Young Jim is eleven years old in December, 1941, when the novel opens; he lives a comfortable existence as the son of a well-to-do English mill owner in Shanghai. Across the Yangtze the Japanese gather for their final assault, but life among the expatriates proceeds as usual. On the morning of December 8 (December 7 across the date line in Hawaii), the ships in the Shanghai roads are bombed by the Japanese, and in the ensuing panic Jim is separated from his parents. He manages to find his way back to his house in the British quarter, but his parents never return... Jim's world begins to bend, then crack under the weight of

- 2 -

events; his childish outlook is never shaken, however, and it adapts in a remarkable way to account for a life of eating weevils for protein, volunteering for kitchen duty in order to steal sweet potatoes, watching Chinese beaten to death for sport by guards, stripping bodies of salable possessions. In short he becomes a classic Ballard character: someone whose soul has died but whose body lives on. This is not a novel for people who maintain that war brings out heroism in the common man. In EMPIRE, war is simply an efficient way of converting common men and women into bloated, fly-spotted corpses.

EMPIRE OF THE SUN is not a book for the squeamish, but it is an effective book: it achieves its narrative purpose, it shocks you from your complacent existence, showing you just how little experience you may have of the way the world operates outside your comfortable pocket in it. It is not technically a science fiction novel, but its world is as alien to ours as any distant planet, and it is an encyclopedia of images from Ballard's sf.

Despite my lingering revulsion, I'm glad I bought the book.

Donn Seeley University of Utah CS Dept donn@utah-cs.arpa

Subject: Re: Gene Wolfe - some spoilers

Path: ihnp4!hplabs!nsc!ames!barry

Date: Thu, 6-Dec-84 16:43:18 EST

What's your opinion of Wolfe and Disch (among others) publishing unaffordable collectors editions that you'd be afraid to read for fear of damaging them, even if you could afford them... I'm not even talking about \$18 hardbacks (although those are bad enough) . I'm complaining about \$100 books, and somewhat about Disch's booklets like _Ringtime_ for Toothpaste Press... Opinions?

Why would you want to complain? You're not required to buy the expensive collector's editions. These books almost invariably come out in large trade editions, as well, or in paperback. The only ones that don't are those which wouldn't have a mass audience. In such cases high prices are inevitable, since you're unable to prorate the costs of publishing over a large print run.

The main reasons these editions are expensive is that they are limited editions, and they (usually) are better made than trade editions. The reason they're published at all is that there are collectors who are willing to pay the high prices for them. I've paid more than \$100.00 for some books, and I have no complaints.

Having roasted you adequately, let me back down a bit. I **have** seen cases where there has been an unconscionably long delay between the publishing of the collector's edition, and later publishing of the trade edition. This seems to be an effort to boost sales of the expensive version by withholding the affordable copies, and I consider it a low practice. Lest the

- 3 -

libertarians flame me, I should add that publishers have a right to do it; but I don't have to like it.

- From the Crow's Nest -

Kenn Barry

Subject: Collector's editions
Path: ihnp4!decwrl!dec-rhea!dec-mrvax!ddb
Date: Thu, 6-Dec-84 10:05:43 EST

Having a housemate who collects seriously, and knowing the perpetrators of two different small presses, I have some opinions about collectors editions to contribute in response to Laurence Roberts' query.

First, they aren't generally published "by" the author, as your message seems to imply. Generally, the small press approaches the author; the author simply accepts the offer (perhaps after negotiation).

More important, I think, is that a collector's edition rarely delays the appearance of a mass-market edition. Often they appear after a regular hardback is out. I do know of one case where a collector's edition delayed publication of the paperback by (I think it's) 9 months; but that edition cost only \$17, not out of range for a normal hardcover. Some of the things appearing in special editions probably won't ever appear in mass-market paper; no demand. Few authors (and I note that Gene Wolfe, in particular, went to supporting himself entirely from his writing relatively recently) will agree to a limited-profit edition if it interferes with a mass edition.

On other points in that message, my memory of Fifth Head is a bit old; but I think that drawing the parallel of "transformation" between that and Lord Valentine is a bit thin. Transformation could be argued to be the theme of essentially any "literary" work (any work which features character development prominently), with about as good a case. You could make the case even more strongly, perhaps, for most of Jack Chalker's books. As someone pointed out here long ago, he puts his characters through far more than most authors.

(Fire preventative: I am not commenting on character development in Chalker's works!! I am not pushing his books into the "literary" genre; more the reverse, actually.)

-- David Dyer-Bennet

Subject: "M.A. Foster - I like him. Anyone else?"
Path: ihnp4!watmath!watrose!mwnorman
Date: Fri, 7-Dec-84 15:23:19 EST

I'd like to know if anyone out there in net-land has heard of a SF author by

the name of M.A. Foster? He/she (I don't know which) did "Warriors of Dawn", "Game Players of Zan", "Waves" ... etc

In my opinion, this person is just a fantastic writer. It seems to me that he (in the generic-use-mode) must have a very solid grounding in social psychology AND math. He likes most to play with different societies which he constructs with great detail. I don't mean that there is a lot of volume there, it's just that what he presents is so believable. The characters are interesting as well. He usually doesn't draw upon the usual North-American cultures when he does the background history of these people (or planets). It's quite refreshing to see something very new and very good at the same time.

Mike Norman

Subject: tape tracks 12/5 (Andy Warhol's DRACULA)

Path: houxm!ihnp4!nsc!chuqui

Date: Thu, 6-Dec-84 03:00:14 EST

Andy Warhol's Dracula- -1*

Clint Eastwood said it best-- The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly. Annie Hall is Good. Emmanuelle is Bad. Andy Warhol's Dracula is Ugly. Dracula is suddenly into virginal style blood-- only. Evidently there isn't a virgin left in Bulgaria because the count (coffin and all) goes to Italy in search of virgins. (Italy? you gotta be kidding!). Anyway, this vampire, which is immortal, will die without virgin blood. Warhol also seems to have forgotten that vampires can't walk around in daylight without getting chapped skin, either. Of course, he also forgot a few other details such as plots, characterization, dialog, intelligence, sanity, cinematography and diction lessons for his actors ('I MUFT haf a WURGIN! I MUFT haf a WURGIN! This whorsh bloot is killink me!') (* no, I'm not exaggerating*). He must have figured something was wrong with the film (he was wrong-- EVERYTHING is wrong with the film) because about every 20 minutes some woman crawls out of her clothes and/or into bed with this charming bolshevik that makes Adolph Hitler sound absolutely charismatic. It wouldn't have been so bad if there had been a REASON for them to crawl out of their clothes, but it wasn't in the plotline (such as it was) and in some cases the clothing was an improvement. sigh. I was ready for schlock going in, but I wasn't ready for Andy Warhol's Dracula-- this makes Plan Nine from Outer Space look good, folks... Very, very good.

enjoy!

chuq

Subject: Re: tape tracks 12/5
Path: houxm!ihnp4!fortune!strook

- 5 -

Date: Fri, 7-Dec-84 17:16:02 EST

Andy Warhols Dracula- -1*

I was ready for schlock going in, but I wasn't ready for Andy Warhol's Dracula-- this makes Plan Nine from outer space look good, folks...
Very, very good.

I disagree, this is a vote in favor of Warhols Dracula.

Subject: Carpenter's Starman: A Review
Path: houxm!ihnp4!cbosgd!clyde!watmath!utzoo!hervax!hervx1!tracy
Date: Tue, 4-Dec-84 21:29:06 EST

Here follows a review of John Carpenter's movie Starman starring Jeff Bridges and Karen Allen.

It appears that a major trend in film and television has been towards "situations". In television the situation comedy reigned paramount for some time and one could describe most crime shows as "situation crime" series. The major premise itself was typically a situation ("hey! let's have a guy living with two girls!") which was typically implemented as a series of smaller situations (a la Three's Company) rather than the actions of interesting characters within the situation (a la Man About the House). It's all a question of balance.

There are signs in television that purely situation based shows (where the characterization merely supports the situation and remains consistent) are becoming less acceptable to the public. In film though, the question hasn't yet been settled, and John Carpenter has given us a new experimental film, Starman.

Starman takes the situation premise to its logical conclusion. The characterization and psychology of its characters are in no sense sane, recognizable or consistent. They are sacrificed boldly for the sense of the situation.

The situation is that of an invited guest (our alien friend, invited by the Voyager recording) who is ambushed at the door by a shotgunning lunatic. Perhaps a good way to describe _Starman_ is to provide a simple algorithm that could produce a movie like it.

The first step is to phrase the situation in simplistic terms and then to engrave it in the soundstage floor so that no one will forget it. In fact, if we write it as a litany it might be appropriate: "The alien can expect NO rational behaviour from human beings. All sense of reality and art may be sacrificed for

- 6 -

this holy goal." I will point out that this step will force you to accept an uninteresting and unrealistic situation. We ignore that for now. (Carpenter did.)

The next step is to write the script with the holy goal held uppermost in your mind. Now, it's hard to see a black cat in a coal cellar, so you know that you are going to need contrast in order to make the alien's plight visible. So *someone* is going to have to be rational. The trick is to decide who, where and when. Try this... have the plot and characters wander back and forth between rationality and a pathological sort of fear and evil. Don't try to make the actions consistent within character context, plot context, or reality. Don't try to make it make sense. Don't try to make anyone predictable. (See what I mean by experimental?)

What you should end up with is an pointless study of unreal, bodiless paranoia, fear and stupidity. And that's what _Starman_ is.

Tracy Tims {linus,allegra,decvax}!watmath!...

Subject: Starman review
Path: houxm!ihnp4!cbosgd!clyde!burl!ulysses!ucbvax!chin
Date: Wed, 5-Dec-84 22:52:17 EST

This was gleamed from a "sneak preview", so some of it may change by the time Starman actually is released.

Rating: 3.5/4

Synopsis: Starman is billed as a "Science Fiction Love Story". Jeff Bridges plays an alien who takes up the Voyager probe's invitation to visit earth, is shot down, and clones a human body by analysis of chromosomes in some hair. This body is a replica of that of the husband of a recently breaved widow, played by Karen Allen. The story is about the many humorous/touching/suspensful (in that order) episodes the two encounter as the Starman enlists Karen Allen's help in driving to a rendezvous with his mother ship. Allen of course gradually falls in love with the Starman along the way. (Note: I didn't put a spoiler warning for the above because it does not detract anything from the movie).

Critique: This is the movie that Close Encounters tried to be, but failed. It's an ET for adults (no cutesy aliens ala Spielberg/Lucas here). Special Effects are minimal and used only in appropriate situations. The acting by Bridges and Allen is very good. The script is spotty with some great humorous skits but intersperesed with some really hokey lines (e.g. the Starman states that the best quality of humanity is that "you are at your best when things are at their worse" which elicited an unintended chuckle

- 7 -

from the audience). Although the plot is completely predictable, the love story is still quite believable largely through the superior acting of the two principals. Unfortunately, all the other parts are completely cardboard, ranging from a trigger-happy, totally inhumane military officer, to an eccentric, bleeding-heart-liberal scientist (contrasted with stereotype scientists in white lab coats). This is a science fiction film with a large human element for people that like warm humorous love stories and not Special Effects for its own sake.

David Chin

Subject: 2010 review--non spoiler
Path: houxm!ihnp4!bbncca!sdyer
Date: Mon, 10-Dec-84 01:30:39 EST

2001 was one of the few movies which was richer in allusion and subtlety than the book. Unfortunately, 2010, the movie, continues this seemingly inexorable progress towards literal-mindedness. It begins with a "computer printout" summary of what "happened" in 2001 (just the facts, ma'am) worthy of the 3 minute synopses which begin the episodes of made-for-TV mini-series extravaganzas, and proceeds with some horrendous expository dialogue for the next 40 minutes or so. The characters here don't talk to each other, they explain the background of the plot to the audience. This is static stuff, anti-cinematic really, and the director (what's his name, who cares?) does nothing to help.

In fact, this movie really is TV quality: the characters are thinly drawn--non-dimensional, perhaps. The Soviets (you've all seen the plot summaries, right?) are cold war zombies, and our hero Roy Scheider knows it all, in the best US tradition. As tensions increase on earth, with a war brewing between the superpowers, things begin to "heat up" on Jupiter. "Something wonderful is about to happen!" claims a resurrected Dave Bowman, late of 2001, to Scheider. Indeed! If you gagged on "Close Encounters", you'll choke on 2010.

There are a very few good scenes, especially those involving the HAL 9000 computer and Chandra, HAL's programmer, but they do not a movie make.

Many people have argued that 2010 should not be judged against 2001, one of the most influential movies of all time. Perhaps it IS an unfair the most influential movies of all time. Perhaps it IS an unfair comparison, for 2010 is inferior in almost every respect. But, let's face the nature of sequels: their lot is to be compared against the original. Simply because so few sequels are equal or better is no reason to accept mediocrity. And, what's more, a sequel, by trading on the success of the original, bears a heavy responsibility to its audience.

2010's special effects are nothing special, mostly being of the Star Trek throw-yourself-across-the-room variety. Compare this with 2001, whose

effects set a new standard (and raised own own standards.)

2010's use of music is minimal, and certainly suffers compared with Kubrick's. It dusts off the Ligeti "Kyrie" from 2001 occasionally when the monolith appears, but more often contents itself with pedestrian workaday movie music.

But most earthbound is the vision of 2010. Compared with Kubrick's sardonic view of a soulless consumer culture of the 1960s projected into the 21st century and its salvation despite itself, and filled with inchoate, resonant symbols, 2010 contents itself with a connect-the-dots sledge-hammer message of peace and brotherhood, completely lacking in subtlety, guaranteed to incense anyone who thought highly of the first movie.

/Steve Dyer

Subject: 2010 review

Path: houxm!ihnp4!zehnte!dual!decwrl!dec-rhea!dec-akov68!boyajian

Date: Mon, 10-Dec-84 05:58:17 EST

There're two ways of looking at 2010: as its own movie and as a companion to 2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY. The latter first.

They say comparisons are odious, but here it's inevitable. Quite frankly, as a sequel to 2001, 2010 just doesn't cut the mustard. First of all, as primitive as 2001's effects look these days, they look much better than the ones in the sequel. Many of the models, as well as the Jupiter/Io/Europa mattes, did not look very convincing. The biggest consequence of this for me was that I didn't have the feeling of really being in space that I got with the first film.

Secondly, I found the direction too ordinary. Kubrick was very much a stylist, and though 2001's characters (and through the characters, the implied sociology of our future) seemed dull, that dullness was for a stylistic reason, to indicate a dehumanization process. Mankind reaching a plateau in evolution that the events in the film would help to overcome. In contrast, 2010's characters (and implied sociology) seemed too much like our present-day. Maybe it's more reasonable to suggest that life in 2010 would be pretty much just like it is now, but it still doesn't give the sense of alienness that was a part of the heart of 2001.

However, as its own film, I found 2010 to be very enjoyable. Peter Hyams, while not a *bad* writer/director, didn't inspire much confidence for me. And I certainly found many scenes in 2010 to be handled very awkwardly (much of this being Dr. Floyd's "diary" voice-overs), just as I'd expected. Where Hyams really brought this off, however, was in the characters. The characterization and dialogue were, for the most part, delightful, aided immeasurably by the talents of a top-notch cast. Roy Scheider is an actor I admire, and he didn't let me down. And John Lithgow --- words fail me. He

isn't always superb, and to be honest, his work in 2010 isn't among his best, but I'm impressed by the *range* of his talent. I have yet to see him play the same character twice! Contrast this with someone like Peter O'Toole, who always plays the same brash, self-indulgent character. The real treat here, though, was Helen Mirren. I wasn't all that taken with her performance as Morgana in EXCALIBUR, but here she managed to convincingly pull off the role as the Soviet mission commander.

2010 wasn't the greatest thing since sliced bread, but it was *far* better than I had expected it to be, and I highly recommend it. On a scale of 1-10, I would give this a 7.

--- jayembee (Jerry Boyajian, DEC, Maynard, MA)

Subject: 2010 review (non-spoiler/spoiler sectioned)
Path: houxm!vax135!cornell!uw-beaver!ssc-vax!fluke!moriarty
Date: Mon, 10-Dec-84 16:08:46 EST

<Non-spoiler section>

Summary: A movie I went into which I had some great hopes for, though not with comparisons to 2001 (I assumed that it was inimitable). Still, after reading the book, I had hoped that we would see a movie depicting what space travel would REALLY be like, and something which would try to exploit the feeling of wonder associated with space and with an alien encounter. Unfortunately, Peter Hyams (who, being director, screenwriter, and director of photography, must take the full blame) sacrificed all of this for quick laughs, cheap thrills and political intrigue, all of which appears pretty inconsequential when examined in context of the enormity of the monolith et. al. This is not a terrible movie; it is beautifully shot, and is entertaining. But it could have been, given the plot and situation Clarke (and Kubric before them) provided, much, much more moving and exciting with relatively little effort or inventiveness on the part of Hyams. Instead, he seems almost intent on squashing out the visionary aspects of the book, and literally takes the low road. Basically a slow-moving hour-and-a-half with a fairly taut last-half hour. The ending itself is ludicrous and seems pretty out-of-character for creatures advanced enough to have provided the stimulus for the advancement of man, besides emphasizing a message Clarke

never placed into it in the first place (though the very last scene is nice). You will probably not be bored by this movie, but you won't be moved by it much, either.

SPOILERS FOLLOW

Well, I'll try to add to what I have stated before:

ATMOSPHERE:

- 10 -

Looks to me as if Hyams so loved the cloudy, dark, ALIEN-rip-off lighting of OUTLAND he decided to use it here (apparently Intravision was used, also); for a movie which has for a subject the first (well, almost) encounter with an alien race, it tends to look more like a horror/suspense movie than anything. Where are the beautiful, stark vistas shown in 2001? Lord, it can't be THAT tough to do these days. It always looks like the giant mutant iguana lizard of planet X is going to jump out any minute. Only in the scenes which deal with Bowman/Starchild is there any flavor, any light (more on this later). It seems to show a place where space travel is a trudge, a chore rather like commuting in New York via the subway.

SPECIAL EFFECTS:

Well, next to Trumbell (who is the best... I've looked at scenes 15 times in BLADERUNNER without figuring out how the Hell he did it), Richard Edlund is probably the best in the business these days; and no one can deny that they are spectacular in this movie. But here we come across an interesting phenomena: a film where there is no flaw in the special effects except for their appropriateness. The LEONOV is shot from such a bewildering variety of shots, and in such poor contrast, that she might as well be the Death Star. Also, LEONOV's rotating section appears to create gravity in a satisfactory manner (however, I assumed there was normal gravity on the decks of the ship, as everyone was walking casually -- until Mirren and Schieder pull the pen/pencil stunt in midair to explain the escape method. Wha' happen?); but the ship falls into the non-smooth, bumpy-grimey style of every ship since Star Wars. The DISCOVERY, even after floating around for 9 years, and covered with sulfur, looks better. I would place the blame more on Hyams and the designer than Edlund... it still has some striking effects

(especially the metamorphosis of Jupiter).

THE SCRIPT:

Well, here's my MAJOR GRIPE. I could go on forever about how Hyams tries to turn this into a audience-manipulation-emotion movie, like INDIANA JONES AND THE TEMPLE OF WHOOPEE, with the energy jumping out of the hole in Europa (Jaws music should have been inserted), and the funny things everyone says, as if Hyams is saying, "This is probably too much for you to comprehend... I'll lower it all to your level." Huh. It's not that it isn't entertaining; it's just that I AM SICK AND TIRED OF "ENTERTAINING" SCIENCE FICTION! How about something with some vision and wonder? Cripes, if I see another band of hostilities.

Some specific points:

1) The Russian & American subplot. Obviously, Hyams throws this in so that at the end he can pull a Michael Rennie and have aliens so advanced that we can't comprehend them say "Live in Peace and Love, baby!" My God, you think anything that advanced cares about diplomatic relations between two petty world powers? And the Russians in the film completely blow any feeling of comraderie in the book (which I enjoyed); is there something in Hollywood that says all Russians must be represented as sullen, hostile, and most of

- 11 -

all, DUMB (why was Alexi killed? he wasn't in the book! I guess just to show Americans are smart, and Russians are dumb). And so much for being scientists... Really the worst thing about the movie.

2) John Lithgows walk in space ("Pant Pant!"). Come on, you think anyone responsible for Discovery's design and construction hasn't been spacewalking around the Earth or Moon for most of his time? Really stupid.

Well, I'm running out of time. A few good things (and there are some):

GOOD THINGS

1) HAL 9000. Very well done subplot, and the final discussion between he and Chandra had me misting up quite a bit. I'd like to think that my Fat Mac will like me that much. But this is brought from the book, as is most good stuff in the movie.

- 2) Roy Schieder's meeting with Bowman/Starchild. Very nice verbal interplay between Schieder and HAL.
- 3) Destruction of Jupiter... really made you feel the power it would take to do this.
- 4) The very last scene with the monolith on Europa... this is much more circular (with 2001) than Clarke's ending. It also shows the idea of a movie, which is to represent thousand's of words with appropriate images. Hyams did here; it is a shame he had to wait 2 hours before coming out with a great scene.

Moriarty, aka Jeff Meyer

Subject: Re: 2010 review review
Path: houxm!vax135!cornell!uw-beaver!ssc-vax!eder
Date: Tue, 11-Dec-84 20:19:48 EST

Much of the science of "2010" is questionable in the face of what we knew, know and are learning. A new star appears in the solar system and the earth escapes without a tremor. The Leonov embarks without enough fuel to either return or slow down. They do "air braking" (without air) to slow Leonov as she whips around the planet and into a new orbit. How's that for science friction.

missed. The Leonov doesn't depart without enough fuel. The early departure from Jupiter is makes the kludge with Discovery necessary. And "air braking" is not science fiction made up for the movie, it was even featured on the cover of Popular Science a year or so ago.

First of all, the term is 'aerobraking'. Yes it is possible (we are studying it here at Boeing. In fact, Dr. Dana Andrews, who does aero-

- 12 -

propulsion design, has a patent on the concept and was a technical consultant for 2010.) No, it was not accurately portrayed in the film. A one-half orbit around Jupiter at cloud top level takes 88.6 minutes. In the film it is portrayed as taking 1-2 minutes. The aerobrake trail would be

too small to see on the scale of Jupiter as a whole.

Credit goes to the filmmakers for getting a reasonable design for the aerobrake, a multiple-ballute type. They got the color right, it would be dark so as to radiate the absorbed heat flux. You would probably jettison them as in the film.

While on the subject of technical mistakes, the Discovery is found rotating endwise. Initially, the carousel stopping would leave it spinning around its' long axis. This is unstable and would decay into the end-for-end rotation. But, when you spin up the carousel again, it wouldn't stop rotating end-for-end, it would be a combination motion. The spinning Discovery would also be pulling about 5 g's at the command center.

The apparent motion of the clouds on Jupiter works out to more than escape velocity (good stiff breeze). Your hair floats in zero-gravity (see any shuttle tapes). They probably knew about this one but passed because of cost. They did know that stars are not visible in space when the sun or a planet is out, but felt the audience would accept it better with stars.

When they are escaping from Jupiter, it implodes just as they burn out the Leonov's engines. Surface escape from Jupiter is 67 kilometers/second (151,000 mph) in the few minutes since they started to escape, their distance would have changed insignificantly. If Jupiter is as bright at Europa as the Sun is at Earth, then Jupiter as seen from the Earth would be as bright as a first-quarter moon. In the daytime you would have a hard time finding it.

Dani Eder / Boeing Aerospace Company / ssc-vax!eder / (206)773-4545
p.s. The aerobrake flight demonstration is scheduled (Congress willing) for 1988. It won't be 'untried'.

