

Lincroft-Holmdel Science Fiction Club
Club Notice - 8/8/84 -- Vol. 3, No. 6

MEETINGS UPCOMING:

Unless otherwise stated, all Lincroft meetings are on Wednesdays
in LZ 3A-206 (HO meetings temporarily suspended) at noon.

_D_A_T_E _T_O_P_I_C

08/22 TEA WITH THE BLACK DRAGON by R. A. MacAvoy
09/11 Video: DAY OF THE TRIFFIDS (BBC version) Pt.1 Tue.
09/12 Video: DAY OF THE TRIFFIDS (BBC version) Pt.2 Wed.
09/13 Video: DAY OF THE TRIFFIDS (BBC version) Pt.3 Thur.
10/03 CIRCUS WORLD by Barry Longyear
11/14 THE TOMBS OF ATUAN by Ursula K. LeGuin
01/02 THE CIRCUS OF DR. LAO by Charles G. Finney
02/13 SLAN by A. E. Van Vogt

LZ's library and librarian Lance Larsen (576-2668) are in LZ 3C-219.
Mark Leeper (576-2571, LZ 3E-215) and Evelyn Leeper (576-2378, LZ
1D-216) are co-chairpeople. HO's library and librarian Tim Schroeder
(949-5866) are in HO 2G-432. John Jetzt (577-5316) is HO-chairperson.

1. On Thursday, August 16, 7:30pm, the semi-beautiful, almost-
spacious, perhaps-conveniently-located Loew's Leeper will be
showing the following two films:

Days of Future Past:

THE TRANSATLANTIC TUNNEL (1935) dir. by Maurice Elvey
THINGS TO COME (1936) dir. by William Cameron Menzies

These are two mid-Thirties looks at the wonders and terrors of the
future. TUNNEL is about one of the great engineering dreams of the
early part of this century, the building of a tunnel from the US to
Britain. Air transport has made this particular construction
unnecessary but the sense of wonder is in this film and the
marvelous vision of the giant machines that did the tunnel and the
larger than life men who run them.

No retrospective on the science fiction film would be complete
without THE great science fiction film of the thirties, THINGS TO
COME. H. G. Wells wrote the screenplay based on ideas in his own
non-fiction book of speculation about the future THE SHAPE OF

THINGS TO COME. The film begins with a very different WW-II than Europe actually faced within a few years and covers a hundred years of future history in Britain, following Wells' philosophy and vision of the world.

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P_l_e_a_s_e_n_o_t_e: These are two talky films. Sometimes the sound reproduction is not very good (I can tell you why at the films). Neither of these films is as spectacular or as fast-moving as STAR WARS. When Evelyn and I show a film, we are not making a statement that a film is good, but that in some way we feel it it is an important or interesting film. When going to the film festival, if you find you are not enjoying a film, vote with your feet, not your mouth. Please keep comments short, serious, and constructive. After the film, if you want to tell people what you thought of it, that is the proper time. Your opinions will be respected. Your wisecracks will also be respected and whether or not they are appreciated is up to the audience.

2. While Mark is reminding you about the "ground rules" (e.g. no heckling of films), let me mention a couple more. We try to start the films early enough so that everyone can get a reasonable amount of sleep that night (us included). While we enjoy talking about the films, science fiction, and life in general, we also enjoy sleeping. Midnight seems like a reasonable time to wind up whatever point you were making and head homeward.

And although we show films (videotapes) both at work and at home, we do NOT want to become a public lending library. (This goes for books, too.) 'Nuff said? [-ecl]

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

REVENGE OF THE NERDS
reviewed by Dale Skran

Preface: At one time or another, most SF fans have been probably called nerds. Thus, the new film R_e_v_e_n_g_e_o_f_t_h_e_N_e_r_d_s may be of more than passing interest to the readers of these pages.

Micro-review: A sometimes funny, sometimes implausible romp, rating a (+1) on a (-4) to (+4) scale.

Kids' review: They give it an R for a reason. Leave the kids at home. On the other hand, this movie is not excessive compared to other movies rated "R" (mainly language, T&A).

Macro-review: ROTN features an appealing and funny group of nerds, including Lewis, the quintessential nerd with black hornrims; Gilbert, the smalltown mamma's boy with a heart of gold yearning to be a man; Poindexter, the perennially overdressed guy with a violin; Boger, a hip but gross drug fan; Wormser, a generic child genius, and a one-size-fits-all Oriental batboy with a lot of ignorance of American customs.

The movie begins as the Alpha Betas, a jock frat, burn down their house, and are moved into the freshman dorm, ejecting the nerds into the gym. Eventually, the nerds find an old house and form their own frat, the Lambda Lambda Lambdas, setting the stage for a series of pranks and counter-pranks between the two groups. At its best, ROTNs rings hauntingly true, as when Gilbert and Judy (a girl nerd) exchange glasses to compare prescriptions. Wormser and Boger put a sparkle on the screen whenever they are given a few lines (Wormser: "No, I haven't seen enough" (with cute smile), and Boger: "I say we blow the ***** up!). I guess you had to be there. I knew these guys, I'm sure I did.

However, ROTNs suffers from plausibility problems *worse* than those in such comparable films as A_n_i_m_a_l_H_o_u_s_e. At one point the jocks "eject" a freshman from a dorm room by throwing him through a window. Nothing is done about it. Early in the movie the jocks drop a nerd from a second story building. Nothing comes of that either. Incidents like these ruin the overall believability of an otherwise frequently funny movie.

Another unfortunate theme is the way Lewis gets the chief jock's girlfriend. Although these scenes contain one of the movie's best lines ("You know why we nerds are better in bed. Jocks think about sports and sex. We think about sex all the time"), the movie doesn't justify her sudden change of heart in a believable fashion. In fact, women don't make out very well in ROTNs. Although the writers were able to collect an entire frat's worth of *different* male nerds, only one or two female nerds are presented as individuals, and these rather thinly.

Overall, there are enough good gags to justify the \$2.50 I paid to see ROTNs, but the movie that really conveys what it's like to be an outsider for reasons unrelated to race, creed, or sex has yet to be made.

GATE OF WORLDS by Robert Silverberg
Tor, 1984 (copyright 1967), \$2.95.
A book review by Evelyn C. Leeper

It is 1985 and Dan Beauchamp--an educated Englishman who has read Shakespeare in the original Turkish and who has learned Natuatl to further his goals--leaves Turkish-dominated Europe to find his fortune in the Aztec Empire of the Hesperides. Say what?

Yes, it's me again, back with another alternate history novel. This time it's Robert Silverberg's T_h_e_G_a_t_e_o_f_W_o_r_l_d_s, an older novel just now reprinted in paperback. The "what if?" in this novel is "what if the Black Plague had killed three-quarters of Europe instead of one-quarter?" Well, Europe would no longer have been strong enough to resist the Turkish and Arab invasions which besieged it. Busy being conquered in the 15th and 16th Centuries, she would not approach the New World until the late 16th Century. By then the Incans and Aztecs would have had time to consolidate their empires, and Moctezuma III, who was a soldier instead of the mystic that Moctezuma II had been, would have killed the "blond gods from the east" instead of worshipping them until it was too late to resist.

This Beauchamp learns from Quequex, sorcerer to the royal court. Beauchamp, the son of a poor but honest Englishman, has come to the New World to find fame and fortune. Though the setting is science fictional, the book is pure adventure, fast-moving and somewhat shallow. The depiction of a five-hundred-year-old Aztec Empire is somewhat dubious (and as Mark points out, why is it that technology in alternate universes is always about fifty to a hundred years behind that in o_w_n universe?). The fact that it is written in first-person (Silverberg seems to prefer this point-of-view) makes it less suspenseful than it might otherawise have been, and there is too much fore-shadowing of events, not to mention a most unlikely resolution of the book's greatest crisis. The historical and alternate universe ideas make it worth while, but it's not great literature.

N_O_T_E_S_F_R_O_M_T_H_E_N_E_T

Contributed by Rob Mitchell & Dale Skran

>From ihnp4!decwrl!dec-rhea!dec-dragon!spert Fri Aug 3 08:44:32 1984
Subject: Re: Matter Transmission

George O. Smith's later Venus Equilateral stories dealt with the economic consequences of matter duplication. As I recall, "goods" weren't worth anything and "services" were highly valued. Also interesting was the idea of "uniques". These were items like heirlooms that were certified to have never been duplicated. (I don't remember how this was guaranteed or if there was a way.) Smith had some things to say about how one pays for services when money is as easy to duplicate as anything else.

A particular wacky incident involved using matter duplication to win a snowball fight (in a space station!!).

How does the duplicator violate entropy? Presumably, the duplication machines require energy to operate. I imagine that there'd be a net increase in entropy.

John Spert

>From ihnp4!decwrl!decvax!mcnc!philabs!rdin!perl Thu Aug 2 13:41:22 1984
Subject: Re: Matter Transmission

I disagree that authors who use matter transmission should adjust their worlds to take all of the implications into account. Most science fiction stories are meant to make you think about current day issues. Matter transmission is used only as a way of speeding up the story so the author can get to the point without boring you with 200 pages of the characters sitting on an intergalactic bus.

As far as the matter duplication/modification issue, I don't think the problems of wealth/poverty are problems at all. The fact that we do have poverty at this time is a problem. If matter duplication/modification could solve this problem, what's wrong with that? As for death becoming meaningless, there are two possibilities:

1) The current concept of life and death is based on the fact that, at this time, death is a permanent condition. If the future brought about a change in that fact, people's attitudes about it would change too. In ancient times, having appendicitis could have been fatal. Now, people don't even worry about it.

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2) Producing a duplicate of oneself whenever one dies is not really immortality any more than having a child. While the duplicate would be the same in every external respect, would it really have the same "being"? Consider that, if the duplicate were to exist at the same time you did, would you experience the same things it did? If not, then once you die, you can no longer experience anything, but your duplicate would, as a separate being.

It would also take a very, very long time before the kinds of capabilities you suggested would be in wide enough use to phase the philosophers. What I'm talking about is good old fashioned bugs. You know as well as I do how unreliable hi-tech can be. Would you risk you life on the reliability record of any computer around today, running anybody's software? While it's true that the basic technology of matter transmission would open the door for matter modification, each type of modification would require a separate program, each program having to go through a debugging phase before most people would risk their lives, for example, to take a 2 second haircut.

All of the talk about changing the shape of the world reminded me of an issue that was dealt with on "I Dream of Jeannie" (I know, but please keep reading). Tony wanted to use Jeannie's powers to do great things, like stop wars and hunger. Jeannie told him that this was too tricky, because, for example, creating rain in one place could cause a drought somewhere else. Are you sure that changing the shape of the Earth and installing new planets into orbit around the sun would not cause this kind of side-effect?

Robert Perlberg

>From ihnp4!seismo!rlgvax!cvl!elsie!imsvax!rcc Fri Aug 3 14:01:51 1984
Subject: Re: Matter Transmission

I think that few SF authors who happen to use matter transmission as an ingredient or background in their work recognize all the implications of the technology. I speak here of electro-mechanical methods, not of psi powers like teleportation. I contend that, if you have matter transmission, you also have matter duplication. People offer arguments against that, speculating that it might be impossible to store the information necessary to reconstruct complex things like living

organisms or the like, but it seems doubtful that such restrictions would last long if they existed at all.

Even if you can't store the information needed to duplicate an item, if you can transmit the information, there's no reason why you couldn't transmit n copies of the information instead of just 1. This would require that an actual sample of the item being duplicated be on hand every time the item is duplicated (as opposed to having the molecular pattern recorded on some sort of long-lasting memory device), but this would still lead to a different society than one with only matter transmission.

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Getting on the topic of SF writers who recognized the matter transmission/duplication linkage, George O. Smith has a few stories about this in VENUS EQUILATERAL (a set of short stories). In the final story, "Identity" (I think, my memory's a little hazy), set 300 years after the invention of the matter duplicator, societal attitudes have changed so that to prize "uniqueness". Thus, the most prized things are things that have not or can not be duplicated, and also (a major part of the story, by the way), being an identical twin is a not a fun thing.

Ray Chen

>From mhuxl!ulysses!smb Sun Aug 5 13:13:21 1984
Subject: Re: Matter Transmission

Don't forget about Larry Niven's essay "Exercise in Speculation: The Theory and Practice of Teleportation", plus a whole set of short stories exploring some of the social effects.

>From ihnp4!decwrl!decvax!dartvax!davidk Sat Aug 4 14:44:41 1984
Subject: Re: Matter Transmission

Actually, in Venus Equilateral, the matter duplicator LOST the fight. It tossed very large snowballs with a catapult. They opposition noticed the regularity of the pattern, dodged it, and buried the operator under his own

snowballs.

All in all it is an amusing book.

David C. Kovar

>From ihnp4!decwrl!decvax!dartvax!karl Sat Aug 4 20:53:06 1984
Subject: U-Haul from the Milky Way to Andromeda.

Mr. Perlberg writes ``Producing a duplicate of oneself whenever one dies is not really immortality any more than having a child." Doesn't this depend on the notion we take of selfhood? As Mr. Perlberg points out, it seems likely such a duplicate would behave exactly the same in all situations as I would, given that it is starting from the same point, with the same memory impressions. But doesn't that make it another ``I"?

Isn't the only way to tell people apart from their behavior? For all practical purposes, it would seem to be the same person. And yet, this appears to be intuitively wrong. I suppose we'll have to wait until someone develops a matter transmitter, then we can experiment.

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Mr. Perlberg also points out such a transmitter would take a long time to develop to perfection. Almost surely true, but what's the difference between imagining the changes 5,000 years from now, or 10,000? Also, one hopes that with such technical expertise, the problem Jeannie faced of creating droughts by making it rain and the like would also be better understood, and thus avoided. Such a future would be very interesting. ``May you live in interesting times."

dartvax!karl karl@dartmouth

>From ihnp4!clyde!watmath!utzoo!utcsrgv!nick Sun Aug 5 12:33:09 1984
Subject: Re: U-Haul from the Milky Way to Andromeda.

Somehow, this business of matter transmission and self-duplication seems to

be one of those questions that keeps coming up. It would seem to me that the result of the exact physical duplication of a human being will depend upon what actually makes up a human being. Either you take a view that man consists of his physical component only, or else you take the view that in addition to man's material flesh and bones form, there is 'something else' that gives man his elevated place in the animal world. Elaboration:

If you follow a strictly traditional evolutionary view, and say that man is just a collection of chemicals that has attained through evolutionary selection an illusion of consciousness, then fine: the exact duplication of every molecule of somebody's body will create a new, living human being. However, there is no reason to assume that this new being in any sense would provide a continuity for the original person should the original person cease to exist upon the creation of the duplicate. If you were to give me, say, a small wooden statue, I could meticulously copy every detail of it, and create a new statue that to all external tests would appear to be the same statue. However, if I were to burn your statue, I do not think that I could seriously claim that your statue still existed. Only one rather like it.

If you believe that there is more to man than his physical form (eg, a soul), then simply copying the physical form is not going to be good enough. The crucial part, the soul is not going to be captured during the molecular-level transfer. This is a little more scary: imagine, a matter transfer takes place, the body is transmitted, the soul remains stranded outside the evaporated original host body, and a new, soulless body is assembled at the other end of the transmitter. The soul makes its merry way off to the next world, but what happens to the body? If we follow the Christian religion, it is quite possible for a body to survive without a soul -- animals do it all the time. So do we, in one fell swoop, wipe out the souls of every person on earth? Sounds like a good 50's horror movie. All we need is a mad scientist...

Anyway, that's about it as far as I can see. I don't claim to know whether a soul exists or not; however neither situation seems really thrilling to

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me. Guess I'll never walk into a matter transmitter.

Nick Graham

>From ihnp4!zehntel!hplabs!sri-unix!RG.JMTURN%MIT-OZ@MIT-MC.ARPA
Sun Aug 12 00:36:00 1984
Subject: It's time again...

to think about the yearly SFL Worldcon Party. The annual pairing of faces and net-names, and a chance to communicate with your fellow fan faster than 9600 baud.

Look for "Friends of Duffey, Jaffe, and Lauren" on the party boards.

James Turner

>From ihnp4!zehntel!hplabs!sri-unix!Mailer@SRI-KL.ARPA Mon Jul 30 22:32:58 1984
From: William "Chops" Westfield <BILLW@SRI-KL.ARPA>
Subject: Book reveiw: "King Kobold Revived" by Christopher Stasheff

Micro-reveiw: You shouldn't re-write the middle book of a trilogy. Other than that, better than the original.

Reveiw: This is a re-write of "king Kobold", the middle book of the "warlock in spite of himself" trilogy. I read the original (hard to find) version, and it was really much worse than the other books, and as such, I guess rewriting it was a good idea. Unfortunately, some of the major plot elements and twists from the original have been changed completely. This isn't so bad by itself, but now "Warlock Unleashed" refers back to events that never happened. Oh well. Basic plot summary: The good guys are being attacked by mean nasty guys with powerful (even for gramarye!) evil-eye psychic powers. So our hero has to figure out who and why and how to defeat them. The book is much smoother than the original "king kobold", and you wont be getting ripped off by buying both, but it just doesn't fit in as well with the rest of the trilogy.

Speaking of Stasheff, in the prequel ("Escape velocity"), There are a number of planets that might be interesting in the future. One is Gramarye, one is the asteroid where Fess comes from, and the third is the "prison planet" where the book opens. Whatever happened to that place? Is it the topic of any other books?

BillW

>From ihnp4!zehntel!dual!amd!fortune!foros!bragvax!david

Mon Aug 6 18:47:05 1984
Subject: Re: Matter Transmission

I don't think the economic effect of technological (non-magical) matter transmitters/duplicators would be very dramatic (especially when compared to the other effects). Energy would still be a useful/logical currency, and the economic situation would not be all that different. For example, only the wealthiest organizations would possess the (energy) capital to synthesize a new matter transmitter. It would take a great deal of wealth to even rent one. (Can you afford to rent an oil refinery for one day, much less construct one?)

Of course, I may be wrong. I'm assuming that the efficiency of a generalized matter transmuter would be very low.

>From ihnp4!zehntel!hplabs!sri-unix!finnegan@uci-750a Mon Aug 6 14:10:25 1984
Subject: Julian May and The Adversary

I just received the final book (yes, it is the final book) in the Julian May's Pliocene Era tetology. I couldn't resist peeking at the end of the book to see if this was indeed the final chapter, but May fans need not fret; there is a new trilogy under way that covers the events of the rebellion in the Galactic Milieu.

If any of you out there are time travel or psychic power fans - you should not miss this series. It presents some rather interesting ideas. And if you are not fans - read it anyway - it's good fun.

More on the latest book, The Adversary, when I finish reading it.

Greg (finnegan@uci-750a)

>From ihnp4!pur-ee!tektronix!orca!shark!hutch Tue Aug 7 03:51:47 1984
Subject: Re: U-Haul (matter transmission)

For an interesting analysis of matter transmission as a stored record phenomenon, see "Farthest Star" and "Wall Around A Star" by Frederick Pohl and Jack Williamson.

This was collected as "The Saga of Cuckoo" by Sci Fi book club.

It has all sorts of interesting ramifications. The transmitter does NOT

transmit. It makes a copy. Energy and matter are fed in the receiver and reformatted into an exact copy of the item (however complex) in the sender.

They did get into the moral and human implications of this. Ignore the ending, it seems to be more of their rather insipid techno-humanist crapola.

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The real story comes in the effects of this one new technology on all the races, and the whole Cuckoo thing merely provides a not-too-original not-very-plausible conflict to catalyze the action.

Hutch

>From ihnp4!pur-ee!tektronix!orca!andrew Tue Aug 7 16:15:40 1984
Subject: Re: U-Haul from the Milky Way to Andromeda.

"The exact duplication of every molecule of somebody's body will create a new, living human being."

Setting aside for the moment the transmission of the "soul", there's still the conflict with Heisenberg's thesis, which states [briefly] that you can't exactly determine both the position and the velocity of a subatomic particle. Without this information, you can't replicate the particle with its velocity.

And, yes, I agree that this thesis may well prove to be surmountable, but some pretty heavy present-day theory rests on it. Anyway, it makes as much sense to cling to Heisenberg as to the Einsteinian anti-FTL claims ...

-- Andrew Klossner (decvax!tektronix!orca!andrew) [UUCP]

>From ihnp4!decwrl!dec-rhea!dec-akov68!boyajjian Thu Aug 2 03:38:35 1984
Subject: Next SW film begins production

>From CINEFANTASTIQUE, Vol. 14 #4/5, September 1984 (reprinted w/o permission):

STAR WARS IV: ROCK & ROLL INSPIRED

After wrapping up work on INDIANA JONES AND THE TEMPLE OF DOOM, director Steven Spielberg and producer Frank Marshall began scouting locations for the next installment of George Lucas' STAR WARS saga, which Spielberg will direct.

Filming begins this September in Hollywood, a shift from the series' traditional production base at London's Pinewood Studios. Lucasfilm producer Howard Kazanjian is said to have insisted on the move for the film, to be titled either THE OLD REPUBLIC or THE CLONE WARS. Effects will feature ILM's version of the kind of computer-animated spaceships developed first by rival expert John Whitney, Jr., on view now in Universal's THE LAST STARFIGHTER.

Lucas was widely quoted when RETURN OF THE JEDI was released last year that he would swear off involvement with the series to take a much-needed rest. Rock star Linda Ronstadt is said to have rekindled Lucas' interest in STAR

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WARS. The couple has been linked romantically in the press. Ronstadt starred in Universal's version of THE PIRATES OF PENZANCE last year. When asked whether Ronstadt would appear in the new STAR WARS film or provide songs, sources close to Lucasfilm smiled broadly, but kept mum.

BTW, this issue of CINEFANTASTIQUE has 32 pages worth of material on the forthcoming DUNE film. One might be dubious about the fact that it's a "diary" of the production written by Paul Sammon, the publicist for the film (if any of you saw a presentation of the film at an sf convention, it was most likely Sammon doing it), but it's information presented is worthwhile, and it's chock full of nice production photos. So, if you want to see the designs for the Guild Navigators, or an H.R. Giger (ALIEN) painting of a sandworm for the aborted Jodorowsky DUNE production, this is where to go. It's an expensive magazine (this double-sized issue, 112 pages, costs \$8.95), but if you're really interested in sf/fantasy films, it's worth it.

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

