

Lincroft-Holmdel Science Fiction Club
Club Notice - 9/19/84 -- Vol. 3, No. 10

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

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 (834-????, HO
1B-437A) 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. This notice will include LA-CON II convention reports from all those people who completed them on time. Right now that is me. I doesn't even include Evelyn who set the deadline. Since I covered the film program, this may mean that only that aspect of the convention will be covered. After I submitted my report to Evelyn, it occurred to me that I should mention that there was one great film-related disappointment at the convention. It seems that Thelma the Wonder Pony was supposed to be there, but at the last minute was called away to reshoot some of her scenes for the upcoming production of DUNE.

2. The BBC has asked me to put the following messages into the notice.

- She looks at him like he is a muskrat she found in a seltzer bottle.
- He spread the green shoe polish daintily on the croissant.
- Winnie the Pooh and Tigger will be at Plato's Retreat.
- The wall has gone deaf.

If any of these messages is intended for you, presumably you will know what it means. If not, thank you for bearing with us. I am

told one of these sentences has just been found in a code book after it had been lost for a number of years. It means, "It is not a trick; World War II really is over." I am not sure what the other three mean.

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

Mercury Capsules - September 18, 1984

"Mercury Capsules": SF review column, edited by Paul S R Chisholm. Appears in the "Lincroft-Holmdel SF Club Notice".

A medium for quick reviews of anything of interest in the world of science fiction. I'll pass along anything (not slanderous or scatological) without nasty comments. I prefer to get reviews by electronic mail: send to wi!psc from the AT&T-IS ENS systems in Lincroft; hocse!lznv!psc, houxn!lznv!psc, or hogpd!lznv!psc from everywhere else. If that's impossible, I'm at LZ 1D-212, 576-2374.

o+ People asked why there weren't any Mercury Capsules for a few weeks. Well, I was either too busy, too sick, or both, to write even any capsule reviews myself. What's your excuse?

o+ T h e P h i a d e l p h i a E x p e r i m e n t : f i l m , 1 9 8 4 .

". . . more holes than swiss cheese . . ."

Cathy E Hudson

o+ Worldcon Con Report--Gaming.

I guess I won't be reporting on Gaming at the con, unless you'll accept a two sentence review. There simply wasn't much of any gaming going on; no new games released or announced; no particularly enthralling tournaments; nothing. This con had the least emphasis on gaming of any I've ever been to. My theory is that it was a West Coast con, whereas most of the gaming companies are East Coast (with a large MidWest contingent). Perhaps TSR, Eon Products, GDW, and so forth decided an SF WorldCon just wasn't worth the effort...

Rob Mitchell

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o+ J_a_w_s_o_f_S_a_t_a_n: film.

We have seen all sorts of films with satanicly possessed things wrecking havoc on small communities. D_e_v_i_l_D_o_g: H_o_u_n_d_o_f_H_e_l_l was one silly one that pitted Richard Crenna against a satanic dog. D_r_a_c_u_l_a'_s_D_o_g did too. T_h_e_C_a_r pitted James Brolin against a satanic car, sans driver.

J_a_w_s_o_f_S_a_t_a_n is pretty familiar stuff. This is the biblical Serpent returning to attack one community. Why Satan would pick out just one community to attack this way and not go anywhere else, is not really clear.

In any case, Satan shows up in a small community as The Serpent (who looks like a cobra) and organizes an uprising by all the local snakes. There are lots of funny scenes like a snake apparently slithering at about a half a mile an hour outrunning Fritz Weaver running at full speed. He has his revenge, though. In the end he uses a cross to reflect God's holy light on Satan/Cobra (God apparently can override the laws of optics). This one gets a -2.

Mark R Leeper

o+ D_r_e_a_m_s_c_a_p_e: film, 1984.

Following on the heels of B_r_a_i_n_s_t_o_r_m -- in fact it was copyright last year and apparently had a delayed release -- is a story with a similar idea. In this film Max Von Sydow has discovered a way for one experimental subject to be projected into and participate in another subject's dream. That would be an interesting enough premise, but they had to throw in the superstition that if you really die in a dream you die in real life also. Dennis "Who's the best pilot you know?" Quaid has "telekinetic" powers so is ideal. It is not clear the production people know what the term means though he occasionally exhibits "psychic" powers in the early parts of the film. Later when they would be useful to him, he seems to have forgotten that he has either power. It seems he is one of two dream-nauts who can stand the pressures of and terrors of other people's dreams and the other is an assassin in the control of a secret government agency out to... Well, never mind. Suffice it to say the film is watchable for an interesting idea and two or three all-too-short dream sequences, but somebody out there should have realized that with such a different idea, they were putting too many familiar plot elements in. Like most of the films this summer it is worth seeing, but nothing special. Yet another +1 film.

Mark R Leeper

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DAY OF THE TRIFFIDS: Thoughts on Seeing the Play
A film review by Mark R. Leeper

Some thoughts on T_h_e_D_a_y_o_f_t_h_e_T_r_i_f_f_i_d_s as I'm watching the BBC version for the third time. The reason that the 1961 film was so bad compared to the book and the BBC version is that it missed the point of the story. The film producers saw the book and thought "monsters." Triffids are man-eating plants and they could make a monster movie. They missed the point entirely.

T_h_e_D_a_y_o_f_t_h_e_T_r_i_f_f_i_d_s is really about society and what makes it work. It's about what makes small societies successful so they grow into big societies. The comet flashes--if that's what they were--that blinded all but a tiny fraction of society shook up the culture and everyone had to start over, forming their own small societies. The new society game is played in rounds, as I see it. In each round it gets successively tougher for a society to survive.

In round one, we see if a society is strong enough to hold together on its own. In T_h_e_D_a_y_o_f_t_h_e_T_r_i_f_f_i_d_s the ones that fail here are the ones that try to hold onto their valuable, sighted people claiming need. In these, the blind tell the sighted people, "Please don't go; we can't survive without you." It is a sad thing, but need alone does not suffice to hold people who are required. In round one, the societies that survive are the ones that offer their valuable people more than just a sense of doing the right thing. In round one, the name of the game is cohesion.

In round two, a society finds itself bumping up against other societies. Round two is all about competition. There is competition for food and resources. Jack Coker's first society of captive sighted people leading multiple groups of blind people was cohesively stable, perhaps even fair. But in round two, they could not survive marauders with guns. A few sighted people with guns smashed Coker's groups. Some societies work by militant defense, some by isolation, but the society that cannot avoid being destroyed by other societies obviously cannot survive.

Round three involves natural enemies, particularly disease. The society at Tynshin survived the first two rounds. Many might have died eventually by poor planning, but a nucleus probably would have survived. They died from the plague. The defense here is either the scientific knowledge of how to combat the disease or being a society of large enough population that it can survive attacks of its natural enemies. This is one of the things wrong with the old films in which everyone is wiped out but one man and one woman. These films end up with the two people walking off into the sunset under the title "The Beginning." Well, it's the beginning of a very short story. Without a critical mass of people, a society will die out through disease and inbreeding.

For those societies who make it past round three, there is a fourth round waiting, sort of a super-version of competition involving a relatively alien, intelligent culture. It is not until this round that the triffids are anything but a minor natural menace, killing off only the blind and the weak. For the societies that survive disease, this is a much more powerful enemy. The militaristic group we meet at the end of the novel have things pretty well in hand with tanks and presumably captured medical supplies, perhaps even doctors. When Bill Mason lets the triffids in on them, however, it is quite another story. Bill's response to this super-competition is to retreat to the Channel Islands and plot humanity's return to England. Whether he can do that or even survive on the Islands we are never told.

At any rate, there is a degree of depth and complexity in the book and the play that makes T_h_e_D_a_y_o_f_t_h_e_T_r_i_f_f_i_d_s a much more serious work than its plot makes it seem. If you haven't read it for a few years, read it again.

Multiple Path Adventure Books

A book review by Mark R. Leeper

To start with, I am not much of a game player. Those of you who know Alan Gopin will know that he would probably be much better at writing this review, though I doubt he has ever bothered playing any of these books. Still, these programmed game books seem to be popping up like mushrooms and while I have bought only one, I now have been given, one way or another, more than a dozen. I will review the ones I have seen by series, though there are a number of series I have seen in the bookstores I have never been given a copy of, so I know this guide will neither be complete, nor particularly well-informed. Still, here it comes.

The first series of multiple-path books I ever saw, back in the sixties, was called Tutortexts. They were not games but courses in book form that asked you a multiple-choice question at the end of each page. If you gave a wrong answer, it explained your mistake and might even give you a separate path explaining some topic in detail. They worked like a teaching machine. In fact, that was how I first learned algebra. The book was called ADVENTURES IN ALGEBRA and I enjoyed it thoroughly. There were also Tutortexts in everything from Contract Law to Contract Bridge. Good series of books.

The first series of games like this I saw was called "Choose Your Own Adventure" published by Bantam books. Perhaps inspired by multiple-path computer adventure games or role playing games like Dungeons and Dragons,

these books allowed the user to have some control over the events of the book. Bantam gets all its credit for the idea -- the games themselves are not so hot. There is no way to decide if a given course is a good one or not. The reader's decision of what course of action sounds best is the only thing controlling his fate. The ideal age would be something like eight to fourteen. Otherwise, they still are diverting for a good ten minutes or so.

Because the first multiple adventure book that came out were for children, people seem to have assumed that the idea is appropriate for children's books only. Granted, multiple adventure books are hardly the medium for a modern Tolstoy, but just like some computer games are reasonable on an adult level, it is conceivable that the multiple path book might be the basis of a more sophisticated game than it usually is. The same sort of pegging a genre as only appropriate to children happened to the animated film. Adult level animated films are rare or non-existent, depending on your opinion of Ralph Bakshi, but there is no reason a multiple-path game or an animated film cannot be on a sophisticated level.

Imitating the popularity of this first (I think) multiple path adventure series, a number of different series came out. Usually they had names like ZORK, taking the name of a popular computer adventure game. They are mostly intended for the eight to fourteen set. I have seen a number of them, without playing. One of the more unusual series is called

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"Lifechoices" or something like that. It is published by Signet and is the same sort of format but for love story fans. It follows some woman up the corporate ladder or into a blissful marriage.

I have played a series designed by Steve Jackson. Jackson is apparently a well-known game designer. These games -- I cannot find a series name, but they are published by Penguin Books in England and Dell in this country -- are probably the best of a bad lot and are a reasonable facsimile of a mediocre to good computer or role-playing game. The user has to keep track of quantities like his luck and his stamina and occasionally roll some dice to find the outcome of battles. It seems to me that logic here helps as much as luck does, but I have never played one of these games to victory, so I cannot be sure. I can say that this game can remain interesting for hours for ages ten to adult.

Signet has a new series called "Dragontales." Each month and adventure

comes out for boys and another for girls. Each is at least nominally written by one Rhondi Vilott. The name looks like an anagram and is probably a house name. The "About the Author" page says she is a writer of science fiction who attended the Clarion Science Fiction Writers' Workshop. It is pretty hard to believe there really is someone named Rhondi Vilott who can turn out two of these things a month, but it's possible. Dragontales are very much like the original Bantam series. The fate of the character is totally determined by the path the reader takes through the story. It is a little better written than the original Bantam series, but not that much. Give this series an age range of nine to sixteen.

The latest series I have seen are called "Wizards, Warriors, and You." It is published by Avon books at \$2.50 a shot. It is a poor imitation of the Steve Jackson books which are thicker, better designed and go for only \$1.95 a crack. WW&Y is aimed a little lower and doesn't require dice. It does have instructions like "flip a coin ten times" or "If it is Tuesday morning or Thursday evening turn to page 17. Otherwise turn to page 83" or "Quick -- pick a number from one to ten. If it is even turn to page..." The player can choose to be either a wizard with three spells or a warrior with three weapons. Not so hot. Make the age range ten to eighteen.

So what are my recommendations? Obviously, the Steve Jackson games are the best. Not perfect by a long shot, but pretty good as a role-playing game.

Covering the film program for L.A.con II is actually a bigger job than I bargained for. Most worldcons see their main business as covering literature. Films are considered like comic books, a related field with generally lower quality, but they are covered by the convention because there is an interest. That is true most places in the country, but not in Los Angeles. L.A. loves movies! All kinds of movies. Movies are always important around L.A. In addition, having Hollywood right there means that you have an incredible source of well-known film personalities -- not just actors, but directors, special effects technicians, even reviewers -- living right in the area. With film-related programming considered almost as important as literature-related programming, I have taken on the task of reviewing a large piece of what was going on at L.A.con II. I could not get to even most of what was going on, but I will cover what I saw.

S S S SA A A AN N N NJ J J JU U U UR R R RO O O O

This was shown with and is a sequel to Y o j i m b o, though I understand that the director's decision to connect the two films was after the fact. It does not matter a whole lot since the samurai in the two films are much the same and might well be considered the same man. Sanjuro seems just a bit more flea-bitten and grungy in the second film and is, of course, played by Japan's great samurai actor, Toshiro Mifune. S a n j u r o is a lighter film than I remember Y o j i m b o as being with a more comic touch.

Sanjuro is pretty much the Japanese equivalent of a Gordon Dickson Dorsai. On top of being a super-human swordsman, he is a super-human tactician and strategist. That is because the screenwriter pulls all the right strings for him. There is little bloodshed in S a n j u r o, but when a character is kill by Sanjuro at the end of the film, he sprays blood like a fire hydrant sprays water. Presumably the events of the film have given him high blood pressure, but it is hard to believe it was that high. The subtitles were obviously written by someone whose command of English was limited. He often confused his l's with his r's like the time the villian looks at Sanjuro's weapons and explains "There's flesh blood on his sword!" This is all to pick holes in an acknowledged classic. A little slow at times, but I am glad I saw it. Rate it a +1.

B B B BR R R RI I I IM M M MS S S ST T T TO O O ON N N NE E E E
A A A AN N N ND D D
T T T TR R R RE E E EA A A AC C C CL L L LE E E E

Unfortunately, this film's chief claim to fame is that it was the film debut of Sting of the Police. (I'm told "Sting of the Police" will mean something to some of my readers. I think it has something to do with popular music.)

The plot, something like a cross between N i g h t M u s t F a l l and T h e P l u m b e r, concerns a boy who latches onto a stranger's household, ingratiates

himself with the woman of the house, and will not go away. Denholm Elliot is delightfully squalid as a modestly lecherous publisher of religious cards confronted with a punk Tartuffe. Give this one a +1. It's sort of music-video-pretentious.

F F F Fi i i il l l lm m m m
P P P Pr r r re e e ev v v vi i i ie e e ew w w ws s s : : :
P P P PL L L LA A A AN N N NE E E ET T T TA A A AR R R RY Y Y Y
P P P PA A A AL L L L((((P P P PP P P P)))) a a a an n n nd d d d
D D D DU U U UN N N NE E E E

P l a n e t a r y P a l is a very low-budget cable-bound parody of E. T. It seems

that P.P. was left behind on Earth because he left his spacecraft to do -- guess what? The abbreviated title is a clue. Most of the humor seems just about that subtle. By calling this film low-budget, I mean under \$100,000, which is pretty cheap these days for a full-length film. Most of what I could see of the film was less than hilarious, but who can say how it will turn out? Maybe there were better jokes in the script than they showed. The producer claimed P.P. was special-effects intensive, but the effects seemed about what you'd expect from the budget. Model work is space ships made out of ice buckets and the like.

Some gentlemen who were probably pretty frightened presented their preview of D u n e. This mammoth film costs \$60,000,000, or over 600 times what P l a n e t a r y P a l cost. I felt like I was reading some company's beautifully decorated annual report, in which the figures add up to disaster. By standard calculations, the film is going to have to make between 120 and 150 million dollars at the boxoffice just to break even. That's about 24 million tickets sold. I wish them luck, but my guess is -- no way.

So how well can D u n e do? Well, it looks really good. The script seems like it has real possibilities. The film's design is exquisite. But most of the images I saw were cold (at least emotionally) and uninvolving. The main actors don't strike me as if they are going to get a lot of audience love and sympathy. In minor roles there are some really good people--people like Max Von Sydow--but Paul looks too much like a paper doll, not a hero with identification value. It is tough judging this from slides and I could be wrong, but what I saw, combined with the fact that it is David Lynch (E r a s e r h e a d, E l e p h a n t M a n) directing, suggests to me that the film will lack character appeal. Every SF fan I know will see it at least once but it

won't have the fun of a _ S _ t _ a _ r _ W _ a _ r _ s, so it won't capture the public's imagination. To me that adds up to a film that will end up in the red. It may be a while before investors will again want to put money into science fiction films.

L L L LO O O OS S S ST T T T
E E E EM M M MP P P PI I I IR R R RE E E E

I think this film sort of made sense ... at the time ... I think. The plot concerns three large and bountifully endowed ladies who apparently flunked the "Charlie's Angels" IQ test. Let me see if I have them straight. One is a lame'-clad super-cop, one is a sprung convict, and one is some sort of spirit that resulted from throwing a magic feather into fire. The villain is some sort of high priest who is trying to get some magic relic of ancient Lemuria. From there the plot seems to be borrowed from every cheap

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Philippine or Chinese martial arts film ever made. The style is very firmly tongue-in-cheek. The film features female nudity whenever possible to show off the main characters' strong suits. Rate this one a zero, but you might like it if it catches you in the right mood.

F F F Fi i i il l l lm m m m
P P P Pr r r re e e ev v v vi i i ie e e ew w w ws s s : : :
2 2 2 20 0 0 01 1 1 10 0 0 0 a a a an n n nd d d d O O O OZ Z Z Z

Sequels are big business. Any film that makes a reasonable profit at the box office is not a film, it is the first chapter of a series. In fact, it is so profitable to make sequels that it is attracting lots of filmmakers who haven't had successful first films. If your films have not been popular enough to warrant sequels, make a sequel to someone else's film. It's even better if you can pick some popular film by someone else and borrow their ready-made audience. We recently saw this done with _ P _ s _ y _ c _ h _ o. Now there are two films in production that are each a sequel to another person's film.

As a little arithmetic will tell you, _ 2 _ 0 _ 1 _ 0 takes place nine years after _ 2 _ 0 _ 0 _ 1. The film is being made by Peter Hyams, who will attempt to imitate the style and scientific accuracy of _ 2 _ 0 _ 0 _ 1. Scientific accuracy has been a keynote of Hyams's career. His _ C _ a _ p _ r _ i _ c _ o _ r _ n _ O _ n _ e had NASA staging a radio conversation supposedly between Earth and Mars, but with no speed-of-light delays. After that he did _ O _ u _ t _ l _ a _ n _ d with its oddly varying gravity fields on

a moon of Jupiter (one G indoors, about 1/5 G outdoors, and 0-G chambers in which blood flows up). With a record of care for scientific accuracy like that he intends to make a sequel to 2 0 0 1 (in which the worst error that has been found is one of food falling back in straws in freefall). After the last film, the sets and props were destroyed so that they couldn't show up later in films. (F o r b i d d e n P l a n e t props other than the robot showed up in

A t l a n t i s, t h e L o s t C o n t i n e n t and episodes of T h e T w i l i g h t Z o n e.) The coming attractions make the film look crisp with Roy Scheider continuing in high-key the role that William Sylvester created in low-key.

R e t u r n t o O z (or maybe it will be called just O z) chronicles the adventures of Dorothy when she returns there. It is presumably based on the book T h e T i c - T o c M a n o f O z by L. Frank Baum. The approach is intended to be

more realistic than its 1939 predecessor. In that version all the fantastical main characters are people in suits. This does not allow the characters to look a whole lot like the illustrations, but with technology what it was, that was all it could do. T h e W i z a r d o f O z was visually closer

to a stage play than it would be to a current fantasy film. Well, Disney's new film is pretty close to the illustrations in the book. The story looks like a pretty good copy of the sort of thing Baum would have written. I'm not holding my breath, but it looks like it should be pleasant to watch, more than a little like D a r k C r y s t a l. Both have Gary Kurtz as major contributor (I think producer or executive producer), so the similarities are understandable.

R R R RE E E EP P P PO O O OM M M MA A A AN N N N

Many years back the R o c k y H o r r o r P i c t u r e S h o w began making money hand over fist on the midnight counter-culture market. Since its success, there have been a number of films made with a counter-culture feel intended more

for cult audiences who pack theaters midnight after midnight than for general daytime audiences. Since then there have been a number of films made trying to tap this audience. None have had the creativity or wit of

_ R _ o _ c _ k _ y _ H _ o _ r _ r _ o _ r, not even its sequel _ S _ h _ o _ c _ k _ T _ r _ e _ a _ t _ m _ e _ n _ t. And in general these midnight films play for a few months in many theaters and then for many months in a few theaters. They do not have staying power that _ R _ o _ c _ k _ y _ H _ o _ r _ r _ o _ r had and after the midnight crew have seen them a few dozen times, they get tired of them. Last year the new thrill was _ L _ i _ q _ u _ i _ d _ S _ k _ y. I am not sure I could tell you where it is playing today. This year, it is _ R _ e _ p _ o _ M _ a _ n.

Like _ L _ i _ q _ u _ i _ d _ S _ k _ y, _ R _ e _ p _ o _ M _ a _ n has a minimally science fiction plot and

concentrates more on looking at a segment of counter-culture culture. In this case, it deals with Otto (Emilio Estevez), a down-on-his-luck, punk, box boy who is learning the ropes of the car repossession business. Complicating things (but not nearly enough) is the fact that one of the cars currently wanted has four dead aliens in the trunk. As these alien go on a moulderin' in the trunk they give off enough energy to burn down anyone who foolishly opens the trunk. There is a marvelous scene at the beginning when a traffic cop pulls over a mentally out to lunch driver and asks to see the trunk. The cop gets the key, opens THE TRUNK, and is reduced to two smoking boots. How the aliens vaporize him, badge, guns, and all without doing damage to the car is never explained. Midnight audiences don't worry about such details.

Most of the film concerns Otto's learning the trade of being a Repo Man and at the same time trying to fit into the weird underbelly of society that his friends inhabit. Among the weirdees are his partner, Bud (Harry Dean Stanton), who is all hung up of the nobility of repossession profession. He talks a lot about the high ethics of the Repo Man. How the Repo Man must never damage a car being repossessed; how he must never pass up an opportunity to get back a car. Then there is a second Repo Man whose main tool is his gun. He just does not go on a job without his trusty shooting iron. One of the stranger characters is lot mechanic. It is clear that this guy has done a lot of heavy drugs at one time and burned out most of what he had upstairs. He goes through life trying to make sense of things that the rest of us do not see as being particularly profound. As he confides to Otto "The more you drive, the less intelligent you get." And that flying saucers are the same as time machines (inspired, perhaps, by the rotating disk on George Pal's time machine). The setting of a science fiction comedy in the underbelly of society works out a little more realistically than it does in _ L _ i _ t _ t _ l _ e _ S _ h _ o _ p _ o _ f _ H _ o _ r _ r _ o _ r _ s, but not a whole lot more.

I I I IN N N NV V V VI I I IS S S SI I I IB B B BL L L LE E E E
R R R RA A A AY Y Y Y

Back in the thirties Boris Karloff and Bela Lugosi had a field day making Gothic horror stories for Universal. The science fiction film was still not an institution and most science fiction was treated in this country just like Gothic Horror. Frankenstein is, after all, an science fiction tale and most other films of the genre were set in dank castles with weird shadows. Science was just a substitute for black magic.

I n v i s i b l e R a y takes place in three different countries. It starts in the Carpathian mountains where renegade scientist Janos Rukh (Karloff) is demonstrating his to the scientists who ostracized him years before. Karloff looks like an Italian immigrant in a moustache and curly wig. Chief among them is the French Dr. Felix Benet, played by Bela Lugosi, undoubtedly for the French-sounding accent Lugosi always had. He apparently was doing some sort of physics experiment that blinded his own mother. That was not why they ostracized him, of course. It was because they did not believe in what he was doing. And it was something **MAN SHOULD NOT TAMPER WITH**. What it actually was is taking light rays that left the Earth millions of years ago and convincing them to come instantaneously back to Earth so he can focus them on a screen. But his experiment is only half physics; the other half is geology for what he is showing is that Earth got hit with and incredible outer space meteor millions of years ago. (A lucky guess, incidentally, though the film did not mention mass extinctions -- if it had I would have been really impressed.)

From there the scene shifts to Africa with Rukh finding the still smoking meteor. While Benet proves he is a good scientist by curing native children with "Astro-chemistry," Rukh threatens his bearers that they should not go home. He will blast the ones sneaking away with a ray gun he built using his newly discovered Radium X. Since he spends most of his time in his tent, there is no way he could make good on his threat, but it was a good way to show the audience Benet is a good scientist and Rukh is a bad one. Actually Lugosi seems so much more mechanical than Rukh that neither scientist wins any lovability prizes. At least Rukh seems human. Well, don't you know it, Radium X turns out to be another of those things man was not supposed to tamper with. Rukh gets a large enough dose to kill anyone he touches but not enough to kill himself. Go figure.

The scene then shifts to Paris where Rukh now invested with touch-of-death exacts his revenge on... But I shouldn't tell the whole story. In any case, in the grand scheme of things, this isn't a very good film. The film is more interesting for its style than its story. I remember it for

trying a number of interesting variations on the sort of thing that Universal was doing at that time. Rate it a -2 but call it a guilty pleasure. Catch it on the late show if they run it again.

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L L L LE E E EN N N NS S S SM M M MA A A AN N N N

This is a Japanese animated film ("cartoon" seems to be used less and less for these things and is now relegated to being used as a derogatory term). It is based on E. E. "Doc" Smith's Lensmen series of books originally written for the pulp magazines. When I got home from the con I looked in my old Lensmen books to see which book this was based on. Actually, the book turned out to be S t a r W a r s by George Lucas or perhaps a Green Lantern comic book. I missed the last half hour, so will not rate the film, but if you have seen an episode of S t a r b l a z e r s you have a pretty good idea what this is like. Lot's of battle and ray blasting. Not a whole lot of plot.

F F F Fi i i il l l lm m m m

P P P Pr r r re e e ev v v vi i i ie e e ew w w ws s s s: : : :

B B B BA A A AB B B BY Y Y Ya a a an n n nd d d d

B B B BL L L LA A A AC C C CK K K K

C C C CA A A AU U U UL L L LD D D DR R R RO O O ON N N N

Walt Disney Enterprises obviously saw the convention as an opportunity to publicize a number of their upcoming projects. B a b y, which I think that I may have mentioned in a previous con-report is an adventure concerning the discovery of an Apatosaurus family. They will undoubtedly call them Brontosauri, in spite of the fact that a Brontosaurus is an Apatosaurus onto which some over-ambitious paleontologist has put a Camarasaurus head. Yes, friends, the dinosaur you grew up with is a lie. In any case, Patrick McGoohan plays another over-ambitious paleontologist (the field actually used to be really cutthroat, by all accounts) out to cheat the a young graduate student (Sean Young) of the credit for her find. It looks like it turns into some sort of political thriller with lots of military hardware, but it is pretty tough to tell from the presentation. The dinosaurs we be

done by full size mechanical models and the the title looks like yet another damn incredibly-adorable-film-creature.

_ B_ l_ a_ c_ k_ C_ a_ u_ l_ d_ r_ o_ n is an adaptation of a significant portion of Lloyd Alexander's five book series. Disney is doing it in full animation, just like the old days. I think that once again he is making too many of the characters too cute. A pig was lovable enough to make me gag. When are they going to do more films like _ D_ r_ a_ g_ o_ n_ s_ l_ a_ y_ e_ r and _ S_ o_ m_ e_ t_ h_ i_ n_ g_ W_ i_ c_ k_ e_ d? _ T_ h_ i_ s_ W_ a_ y _ C_ o_ m_ e_ s? (I know. Probably never. Both fine films flopped at the boxoffice.)

E E E EY Y Y YE E E ES S S S
W W W WI I I IT T T TH H H HO O O OU U U UT T T TA A A A
F F F FA A A AC C C CE E E E

A lot of slow narrative, one really shocking scene, and a few really poetic images make this 1959 French film somewhat unusual. A mad plastic surgeon is trying to restore the face of his badly burned daughter. He does this by kidnapping young women, surgically removing their faces, and grafting them onto his daughter. His daughter spends much of the film wearing a mask that is an artificial imitation of an ideal of beauty. Most of the films most interesting scenes involve her and her look of otherworldliness wearing that mask. The film overall gets a -1, though isolated scenes are quite impressive. There is a very badly dubbed American version call _ H_ o_ r_ r_ o_ r_ C_ h_ a_ m_ b_ e_ r_ o_ f_ D_ o_ c_ t_ o_ r _ F_ a_ u_ s_ t_ u_ s. Avoid it. The subtitled French film is worth seeing, particularly if you bring something interesting

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to think about when the film starts running slow.

T T T TH H H HE E E ES S S SW W W WO O O OR R R RD D D D
A A A AN N N ND D D DT T T TH H H HE E E E
D D D DR R R RA A A AG G G GO O O ON N N N

One of the more interesting characters in this 1956 Russian fantasy is a wind demon who can create a gale by just filling his lungs and blowing it out. They let him loose and the whole film became overblown. _ T_ h_ e_ S_ w_ o_ r_ d_ a_ n_ d_ _ t_ h_ e_ D_ r_ a_ g_ o_ n is apparently based on a Russian folktale. It deals with a large, young peasant hero with a giant's sword. They cast an actor who

looks about 45 years young. The dubbing translation is incompetent enough that for many of the scenes the audience is left wondering if it missed something. Some of the scenes looked like they dressed up the whole Russian Army and marched them past the camera. The dragon puts in a token appearance at the end and is only a very faint-hearted effort at model work. There is something to be said for the spectacle of this film, but that is about all it has. Rate it -2.

Well, that wraps it up. Lot's of obscure films. I have been gone to about ten World Science Fiction Conventions by now. I would say if this was not the best film program, it was only beaten by the film program that Tom Reamy put together for MidAmericon in 1976. This was my idea of what a World Science Fiction Convention should have for a film program. I have not even covered Don Glut's film-illustrated history of dinosaurs in film or Bill Warren's film poster slide show. This is one of the rare conventions in which there was always something going on that I would have wanted to attend. Often two or three things at a time. Good Con!

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L.A.con II Convention Report
Miscellaneous
A report by Evelyn C. Leeper

Art Show

The art show at L.A.con II continues the trend toward a larger standard deviation in art shows that I've noticed lately. The good stuff is very good (and very expensive) and the amateur stuff is generally pretty bad. There were some exceptions to this trend, but not many. I'm really sick of unicorns, media art (how many pictures of Spock can one look at?), and cutesy-funny artwork. (Phil Foglio is not cutesy-funny.) Having a separate section for limited edition prints and other multiple-copy artwork that could be purchased easily and at reasonable prices was a good idea.

Hucksters

The huckster room at L.A.con II was roomy and well-lit. There were a good percentage of book dealers, a welcome change from recent conventions when it was almost impossible to buy a book in the huckster room. Prices were about what you'd expect. The fastest moving items seemed to be the Japanese toys and the buttons.

Exhibits

For the first time (at least as far as I know), there was a special exhibit area set aside for film (and other) exhibits. L.A.con II set aside approximately one-third of the hall for the art show to be used for various exhibits and presentations.

The film exhibits included:

- D u n e: large stills from the film and a slide show of all the main characters and other scenes
- 2 0 1 0: models of the two ships as well as a short documentary on the making of 2 0 1 0, and trailers for the film. Their gimmick was to give out holograms of the ship, which many people promptly had mounted onto the L a d y h a w k e buttons (see below), which happened to be exactly the right size.

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- Ladyhawke: a medieval fantasy-adventure due out next year. There were stills and a press release, along with several props from the film. The buttons they gave out to advertise the film were interesting in that they were square and just the right size to be used to mount the 2 0 1 0 holograms.
- Society for Creative Anachronism: a large exhibit of costumes, weapons, and crafts.
- Lucasfilms: various props from Lucas's "Star Wars" and "Indiana Jones" films.
- T h e M a n f r o m U N C L E: Lots of props and photos, including the car used in the show.
- 2 0 0 0 L e a g u e s U n d e r t h e S e a: Many props (and re-creations of props) from the film.
- T h e S t u f: A New Worlds Pictures parody. The exhibit consisted of about a half dozen stills.
- O z: A big walk-through exhibit (e.g., four times the size of a BTL office) with props, costumes, still, and a documentary on the making of the new Disney film. Looks good!

- Miscellaneous: The saucer from T_h_e_D_a_y_t_h_e_E_a_r_t_h
S_t_o_o_d_S_t_i_l_l, Robby the
Robot from L_o_s_t_i_n_S_p_a_c_e, a few dozen items from Forry Ackerman's
enormous collection of SF movie memorabilia, a display promoting the
Museum of Science Fiction and Fantasy (soon to open in Beaumont,
Texas), and various masquerade costumes from previous Worldcons.

Video Programming

As usual, there was a full track of video programming, consisting (of course) mostly of Japanese animated TV shows and films.

Masquerade

The masquerade was one of the major problems of the convention; it was too damned long. The first run-through took four hours (plus one hour for the Children's Masquerade), ending about midnight. The judging, awards, etc., were finally finished about 2AM. (I gave up about 10PM.)

Why was it so long? Well, for one thing there were several lengthy "presentations" (skits) which could have been eliminated. There is a time limit per group, but it is figured at x minutes for the first member of the group plus y seconds for each additional member. When you have groups of

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fourteen people, it seems interminable. Another problem was the plethora of media re-creation costumes. When you've seen one Luke Skywalker, you've seen them all--except at a masquerade, where there are probably five more waiting in the wings. And lastly, there is what Mark Leeper refers to as the "Ambassador from Thugbin" costume and claims is actually a media costume. This is the generic science fiction costume--long robe, funny headdress, and a title like "Grand Ambassador from Aldebaran V"--the sort of thing made popular by the "Journey to Babel" episode of S_t_a_r_T_r_e_k. Who needs it?

There were some very good costumes, and even good presentations, but they tended to be swamped by the mediocre and overly long. Someone was

videotaping the masquerade; with fast-scan it could be quite worth-while.

Hugo Awards

The Hugo Awards themselves were listed two weeks ago, but I'll include them here for completeness:

NOVEL -- S_t_a_r_t_i_d_e_R_i_s_i_n_g by David Brin

NOVELLA -- "Cascade Point" by Timothy Zahn (ANALOG 12/83)

NOVELETTE -- "Blood Music" by Greg Bear (ANALOG 6/83)

SHORT STORY -- "Speech Sounds" by Octavia Butler (IASFM mid-Dec/83)

NONFICTION BOOK -- E_n_c_y_c_l_o_p_e_d_i_a_o_f

S_c_i_e_n_c_e_F_i_c_t_i_o_n_a_n_d_F_a_n_t_a_s_y,_V_o_l.
3

by Donald Tuck

DRAMATIC PRESENTATION -- R_e_t_u_r_n_o_f_t_h_e_J_e_d_i

PROFESSIONAL EDITOR -- Shawna McCarthy

PRO ARTIST -- Michael Whelan

SEMIPROZINE -- Locus

FANZINE -- File 770

FAN WRITER -- Mike Glyer

FAN ARTIST -- Alexis Gilliland

JOHN W. CAMPBELL AWARD -- R. A. MacAvoy

Robert Bloch was a very entertaining Master of Ceremonies. He spoke of the first Worldcon (which he attended), which had 50 writers when there were only about a thousand readers. Now, he says, there are a thousand writers and only fifty people who actually read anymore.

Harlan Ellison and Robert Silverberg presented a special award to Larry Shaw, who was a major editor in the Fifties.

R. A. MacAvoy, in her acceptance speech for the Campbell Award said that she doubted that John Campbell would have liked what she wrote. She tried for many years to write what Campbell would have liked, but finally decided to write what she liked, and that at least, she says, he would have approved of.

Blood Drive

They collected about 120 pints, a very good amount. They could have had about 200, but the local Red Cross was not prepared for the large response and when the wait was over an hour, many people left discouraged. Future conventions should inform the Red Cross accordingly.

Attendance

There were over 9000 members registered, with over 7000 actually attending, making this the biggest Worldcon ever. In spite of this, it wasn't crowded (except at the _ D_ u_ n_ e presentation and the "Star Wars" marathon).

Programming, etc.

In general programming was good, with the inevitable conflicts and lulls for everyone. The pocket program was well-laid out and it was easy to tell exactly what was going on at any given time. The hotel kept the pool and jacuzzis open till midnight, so there was even time for hot-tubbing (the record was 56 in a jacuzzi, if you keep track of those things).

Panel: Making SF Films--Television

Gerd Oswald (_ O_ u_ t_ e_ r_ L_ i_ m_ i_ t_ s), Mike Casutt, Dan Blatt, David Carren, and Kirby McCauley (agent) discussed the past, present, and future of SF on television (mostly commercial television, though there was some mention of series being planned for HBO and other premium movie channels). One of these people was connected with _ V, but I forget which one.

Presentation: Movie Posters

Bill Warren gave a 90-minute talk (illustrated with slides) on SF movie posters from the Fifties. He was very informative, and at times very funny ("Bert I. Gordon has done two versions of H. G. Wells's _ F_ o_ o_ d _ o_ f_ t_ h_ e _ G_ o_ d_ s [_ V_ i_ l_ l_ a_ g_ e _ o_ f_ t_ h_ e _ G_ i_ a_ n_ t_ s and _ F_ o_ o_ d _ o_ f_ t_ h_ e _ G_ o_ d_ s] and he's going to keep doing it until he gets it right. If Warren ever does this again at a con you're at, see it. Someone stop him, please!").

Panel: Tourist Spots for the Time Traveler

Sandra Miesel moderated this panel, which also had Connie Willis ("Fire Watch"), Poul Anderson (_ G _ u _ a _ r _ d _ i _ a _ n _ s _ o _ f _ T _ i _ m _ e and others), and Somtow Sucharitkul (_ A _ q _ u _ i _ l _ a _ d). There was the usual discussion of observer versus participant, and the question of whether one can ever really see history. As Willis (I believe) pointed out, you can't "see" Dunkirk if you're there, only your little piece of it, to which Sucharitkul suggested hopping about at Dunkirk in much the same way a film director edits a film. There was some question about the effect of going back to a religious "event" (like the Crucifixion or the Giving of the Tablets) and discovering that it didn't really happen that way at all. (The conclusion was that believers would just claim that the whole trip was faked.) There was little discussion on the exact topic--I got no itinerary for _ m _ y next trip.

Presentation: Fantasy Dinosaurs in the Movies

Don Glut (_ T _ h _ e _ D _ i _ n _ o _ s _ a _ u _ r _ D _ i _ c _ t _ i _ o _ n _ a _ r _ y) gave a 90-minute presentation on dinosaurs in the movies, covering stop-motion, men-in-suits (he referred to Godzilla as a "maninsuitasaurus"), and mechanical modeling. In addition to tracing the general history of the sub-genre, he showed some fairly rare clips, including _ G _ e _ r _ t _ i _ e _ t _ h _ e _ D _ i _ n _ o _ s _ a _ u _ r , _ T _ h _ e _ D _ i _ n _ o _ s _ a _ u _ r _ a _ n _ d _ t _ h _ e _ M _ i _ s _ s _ i _ n _ g _ L _ i _ n _ k , _ K _ i _ n _ g _ K _ o _ n _ g (1933 version), _ O _ n _ e _ M _ i _ l _ l _ i _ o _ n _ B _ C . , and _ G _ o _ r _ g _ o . Lots of fun! (By the way, the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History in Washington had a similar "documentary" running in their dinosaur hall. We sat through that twice.)

Panel: Making SF Films-- _ T _ h _ e _ D _ a _ y _ t _ h _ e _ E _ a _ r _ t _ h _ S _ t _ o _ o _ d _ S _ t _ i _ l _ l

This panel was chaired by Mark McGee, and featured Robert Wise (the director of _ T _ h _ e _ D _ a _ y _ t _ h _ e _ E _ a _ r _ t _ h _ S _ t _ o _ o _ d

_ S_ t_ i_ l_ l), Ed North (the screenwriter), and Julian Blaustein (the producer). Blaustein did most of the talking, which was disappointing, because the director and screenwriter usually have more to do with making a movie what it is. North was asked about the Christ symbolism in the movie, and said that he had put it in, but didn't expect anyone to notice. (In fact, it was a fair while after the film came out before people began to comment on it and analyze it.) Wise admitted that he hadn't noticed it at all during the filming. North also apologized for the one major technical gaffe in the script of saying "miles" when "light-years" was probably intended. This resulted in Carpenter coming from somewhere in the asteroids instead of deep space. Blaustein (and the others) talked somewhat about making the film during a time of political paranoia, and of the different attitudes toward science fiction then and now.

Panel: What If?

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A light-weight panel with Ed Bryant (moderator), Greg Benford, Timothy Zahn, Spider Robinson, and Warren Norwood. Apparently they were given a set of ten questions such as "What if we could communicate with the dead?" or "What if the phrase WXYZ weather really meant that we could change the weather by changing the station our radio was tuned to?" Most of the questions were ridiculous (as you might have guessed from this sample), and in fact when Bryant showed them to an editor the night before and asked what her reaction would be if she received a story based on any of these ideas, she laughed. On the other hand, most of the questions listed turned to have had stories (Hugo-winning, even) based on them. One idea was "What if humans had a fixed mating season?" After a fair number of bad jokes ("They do; it's from January 1 to December 31") it was pointed out that _ L_ e_ f_ t_ H_ a_ n_ d_ o_ f
_ D_ a_ r_ k_ n_ e_ s_ s_ is based on just this premise (with some additional details thrown in). And there have been many stories based on the idea of communication with the dead. (One interesting point was that this ability might decrease the murder rate--there's no point in killing a witness to a crime if he/she can still testify against you after death. But then how would you punish a dead perjurer?)

A couple of the other ideas which seemed to appeal to Benford (as a physicist) in particular were "What if you could change any one physical law you wanted?" and "What if political parties were based on beliefs in scientific theories instead of in socio-economic ones?" Lowering the speed of light would have interesting effects--relativistic effects visible in everyday life; speeding it up would cause your tube of toothpaste to explode ($e = mc^2$, remember?). A more ridiculous one along the same lines that they played with was "What if you could have any one super-power?" A fun panel, but not particularly enlightening. (What do you expect at 11AM Sunday morning at a con?)

Panel: Making SF Films--The Low-Budget Film

Moderated by Randy Robertson, this panel had (I think) Charles B. Griffith (Seymour from L_i_t_t_l_e_S_h_o_p_o_f_H_o_r_r_o_r_s), Jim Wynorski (film critic), Paul Sammon (producer et al of P_l_a_n_e_t_a_r_y_P_a_l), Wes Craven (S_w_a_m_p_T_h_i_n_g), Jocko (Jock) Mahoney (ex-stuntman and Tarzan in T_a_r_z_a_n's_T_h_r_e_e_C_h_a_l_l_e_n_g_e_s and Tarzan Goes to India), and Larry Cohen (I_t's_A_l_i_v_e). This panel tended to ramble since the various participants drifted in as the hour progressed. I was disappointed because Jimmy Sangster (who wrote many Hammer Films scripts) and Dick Miller (the Michael Ripper of American International Pictures) were unable to attend as planned. The anecdotes were interesting at the time but somehow have escaped me now.

Panel: Does History Repeat Itself?

In a fine touch of irony, C. J. Cherryh (moderator), Brad Linaweaver, Paul Edwin Zimmer, and Steve Goldin rehashed the "Tourist Spots for Time Travelers" panel. I left early.

Panel: Making SF Films--Special Effects

Bob Greenberg moderated a panel consisting of Ron Cobb (Industrial Light and Magic), Craig Reardon, Greg Jein, Jim Danforth (F_l_e_s_h_G_o_r_d_o_n, W_h_e_n_D_i_n_o_s_a_u_r_s_R_u_l_e_d_t_h_e E_a_r_t_h), and Peter Kuran. They talked about many different kinds of special effects, which diluted the impact of the panel. Their advice on how to break into the special effects end of movie-making was less than excellent--it consisted mostly of stories of people being in the right place at the right time.

It's Atlanta in 1986!

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L.A.con II
The 41st Annual World Science Fiction Convention
Los Angeles, CA
30 August - 3 September 1984

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or
What I did on my summer vacation
by
Paul S R Chisholm

. . . so Tuesday we got onto the plane at eight AM in Newark, and by the magic of changing time zones, arrived at Los Angeles International two and a half hours later. Good grief, I was behind on sleep, and I hadn't even gotten there yet.

Tuesday afternoon was spent at Universal Studios. The tour was sort of interesting. We caught most of the shows - the A-Team show was disappointing, the cowboy stunt show great. Did any of you ever see the episode of W h i z K i d s where the hackers trapped the bad guys in some theater with smoke and lasers and a dragon? That's now the Conan show. That was sort of fun, too. It was late: all the medics who have to be around during the show rushed off for some medical emergency at the A-Team show.

We showed up at the wrong Hilton (there are two, right next to each other; both were convention hotels). So did Jerry Pournelle. I saw him later, checking into the right Hilton. (They'd lost his reservation; he was threatening any hotel management within cannon range that as convention master of ceremonies, he'd have some interesting awards to present during the Hugos. He got his room. I ran into him again; some friends and fans were gathered 'round. He said to anyone listening that he was going announce, at the convention, that he was quitting L5. Gasps of horror! (If he did so, I never heard about it; I think he was spreading the rumor to get L5 members more active.) He and I (and some guy from IBM) ended up drinking at the bar until about two in the morning. This is becoming an interesting

tradition.

The next day was Disneyland. Imagine something like Great Adventure, but with everything bigger except the lines. Lots of fun. Also lots of fans, since the convention had discount tickets.

Convention activities began at ten on Thursday. Opening ceremonies began at eleven. Registration finally got under way at about quarter past eleven. We decided that the con committee's rule, "No standing in lines", applied only to the con committee.

Programming. There were about seven tracks of programming, and they ran just about from the opening ceremony to the closing ceremony. All seven of them. I could have seen most of what I wanted, if I'd had a month. Lots of good stuff, too.

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There was a fairly strong writer's track, attended regularly by myself, Rob Mitchell, and Dale Skran. David Gerrold gave a taste of his zesty, e s t y writer's workshop. Other such panels included "Making Your First Sale", and "How Editors Develop Writers". There were also "behind the scenes" panels on "How to Succeed in Book Publishing" and "How Books are Really Published and Distributed". I didn't catch much science programming; only Robert Forward's "Off We Go Into the Wild Black Yonder" (someone's paying him to do design work on interstellar drives; he had a *lot* to say about antimatter) and the panel on nuclear winter (grim).

Jerry Pournelle had at least two "panels" all to himself. He pushed "Far Frontiers", the new book-magazine coming from Baen. (Warning to writers: he sits on manuscripts he likes for a long time, and pays pretty much on publication.) He also had a one man panel called "Beyond 1984", which was him pontificating on how the Soviets couldn't give up their despotic power if they wanted to, and how microcomputers will keep us free. His pontificating is entertaining; he's a lively speaker.

Robert Bloch, on the other hand, is absolutely deadpan. You have to listen to his calm, quiet tone for a few minutes to recognize it as outrageous sarcasm. Good fun.

I didn't even _ b _ o _ t _ h _ e _ r going to the Masquerade.

The Hugo ceremony started late (they had a slide projector instead of Diamond Vision, and somebody dropped the slide tray or some such at the last minute), but otherwise ran smoothly and _ f _ a _ s _ t. This even ignoring the fact that they presented two special awards, plus Pournelle's chocolate "Hugo that will get you through times of no money." Most of the people who really deserved a Hugo got one.

The video program was mostly Japanese animation (or maybe that was a separate program I went to). The usual - I saw _ C _ a _ s _ t _ l _ e _ C _ a _ g _ l _ i _ o _ s _ t _ r _ o (the Lupin III movie used for the video game "Cliff Hanger") for my third time. _ L _ e _ n _ s _ m _ a _ n was all I saw of the two tracks of film programming.

No party reports - I wasn't up to it. I did stop by at a quiet but open discussion party in George Scithers' room. We talked about Steven Spielberg's _ A _ m _ a _ z _ i _ n _ g series for cable, dot matrix printers, and other stuff.

The hot tubs, spas, whirlpools, what-cha-ma-call-its, were nice. The "42" party got forty-two people into one spa (built for eleven) on Friday night. On Saturday, they made forty-seven.

Oh yes, the Rockwell tour. It was announced that Wednesday and Thursday nights, Rick Foss of Ladera Travel would arrange tours of the Rockwell International factory, "where they build the shuttles". "Luckily", there were some people there Friday night, so Rick didn't have to conflict with Disneyland. We went Friday; all we got was a little speech, and a chance to look at a full sized mock up of the shuttle. No tour through the factory. They weren't even building anything for the shuttle at the time. Our busses

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wouldn't be back for two hours. Fifty fans got real depressed. The volunteers who gave the talk gave another talk, this one less elementary, more meaty. They got fifty grateful thanks. Fifty people signed a complaint against Rick Foss. He said he didn't understand; the Thursday night folk got a tour. He offered refunds to anyone who wanted them. He's a good travel agent, honest, but watch out for the ancillaries.

The con ended Monday evening. On Tuesday, we did Marineland, the La Brea tar pits, and Griffith Observatory. We caught the eleven PM flight out, and arrived at about six in the morning, Newark time. I got to work almost on

time, but it wasn't my most productive day. Next summer, we're gonna rent a house on the beach. Give my regards to Melbourne and Austin. (On the other hand, I got memberships for Atlanta, the 1982 World Science Fiction Convention.)

Exhausting convention. Too damn much to do. Too many people to see. More parties that even Lance could have done justice to. Too many films.

They again, who says moderation is a virtue?

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_N_O_T_E_S_F_R_O_M_T_H_E_N_E_T

Contributed by Rob Mitchell & Dale Skran

Subject: Star Trek Book Reviews
Path: ihnp4!zehntel!hplabs!sri-unix!Tli@Usc-Eclb
Date: Tue, 4-Sep-84 17:57:00 EDT

The Final Reflection, John M. Ford, Pocket Science Fiction #16

Micro-review: Fascinating.

Mini-review: This one is definitely different. Instead of the usual Enterprise crew roming the galaxy, this is completely about Klingons. I found it quite good. It's a biography of a Klingon names Venn from the time of his youth through his rise in the Imperial Fleet. What is most fascinating about this book is the treatment of Klingons. Remember the Klingoneese that is spoken in the movies? Well, the dialogue here starts out like that. Somehow it seems very authentic, although Mr. Ford does seem to taper out of this quite quickly.

The book is mostly historical, and covers early Klingon-Federation history. Well worth reading....

The Tears Of The Singers, Melinda Snodgras, Pocket Science Fiction #19

Micro-review: Yuk. Phewy. PU.

Mini-review: Well, this is pure garbage. As far as I can tell, Melinda took a Harlequin romance and put it to Star Trek. The fixation on Uhura is pretty strong. Great if you've just had a lobotomy, otherwise, forget it.

LL+P,
Tony ;-)

Subject: NATIVE TONGUE by S. H. Elgin
Path: ihnp4!zehntel!hplabs!sri-unix!Hoffman.es@XEROX.ARPA
Date: Tue, 4-Sep-84 14:01:16 EDT

NATIVE TONGUE by S. H. Elgin, DAW paperback, August 1984, \$3.50

Mini-precis: In 1991, the 25th Amendment assured the supremacy of males in every aspect of life. In the late 22nd and early 23rd century, the 13 families of Linguists are the sole interpreters of the hundreds of alien languages, though non-humanoid languages are beyond even their skills. The

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book deals with language learning, language inventing, and the cold war between the sexes. Among the topics: The Linguist women have been creating a 'women's language' for generations. The Linguists are indispensable to society and are highly resented. The government has a failing secret crash program to break a non-humanoid language.

Mini-review: Recommended. Lots of good ideas in an intriguing environment (mostly within a Linguist enclave). Quite a few well-developed characters and sub-plots. Well written, but occasional sloppy copy-editing (typos). Suzette Haden Elgin is a professor of linguistics and, it says here, author of nine major science fiction and fantasy novels since 1969, though I've never heard of her before. The ideas in this book reminded me of early Ian Watson and of many feminist SF writers.

--Rodney Hoffman

Subject: Some recent awards and nominations
Path: ihnp4!zehntel!hplabs!sri-unix!donn@utah-cs
Date: Wed, 5-Sep-84 03:26:34 EDT

Here are some recent awards and award nominations for novels and stories, culled from recent reading:

World Fantasy Award nominees (from LOCUS #284):

Novels:

THE DRAGON WAITING, John M. Ford
PET SEMATARY, Stephen King
THE WANDERING UNICORN, Manuel Mujica Lainez
TEA WITH THE BLACK DRAGON, R.A. MacAvoy
THE ARMAGEDDON RAG, George R.R. Martin
LYONESSE, Jack Vance

Novellas:

'The Lurking Duck', Scott Baker (Omni 12/83)
'The Monkey's Bride', Michael Bishop (HEROIC VISIONS)
'Nunc Dimittis', Tanith Lee (DODD, MEAD GALLERY OF HORROR)
'The Red Hawk', Elizabeth A. Lynn (Cheap Street)
'Black Air', Kim Stanley Robinson (F&SF 3/83)

Short Stories:

'The Silent Cradle', Leigh Kennedy (SHADOWS 6)
'Elle est Trois (La Mort)', Tanith Lee (WHISPERS 4)
'The Hundred-Year Christmas', David Morrell (Donald M. Grant pub.)
'Solitario's Eyes', Lucius Shepard (F&SF, 9/83)
'Into Whose Hands', Karl Edward Wagner, (WHISPERS 4)
'Wong's Lost and Found Emporium', William Wu (Amazing 5/83)

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The 1984 John W. Campbell Memorial Award, given for the best novel of 1983
(not the same as the Campbell award given to best new writer at WorldCons)
went to Gene Wolfe for THE CITADEL OF THE AUTARCH. (Also from LOCUS #284.)

Here is how SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW (#52) reported the SCIENCE FICTION
CHRONICLE Awards (voted on by readers of SF CHRONICLE):

Best Novel: THE ANUBIS GATES, Tim Powers
Best Novella: 'Her Habiline Husband', Michael Bishop
Best Novellette: 'Black Air', Kim Stanley Robinson
Best Short Story: 'The Peacemaker', Gardner Dozois

Still haven't read most of these, but now I have an idea where to look. By
the way, the 35th anniversary F&SF is now out and it has some really good
stuff in it -- check out especially the Effinger story (perhaps the funniest
thing I've read all year) and the Shepard story...

Any Hugo updates yet?

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

Subject: re: conservation of center of mass of the universe
Path: ihnp4!ut-sally!utastro!ethan
Date: Mon, 10-Sep-84 11:34:48 EDT

Perhaps this belongs in net.physics ... but converting mass to energy (or vice-versa) does not in any way invalidate the correct generalization of the invariance of the center of mass of an isolated system. The center of *mass-energy* does just fine thank you.

As to the center of mass of the universe, I'm not sure what that is, or if that concept can be given any rigorous definition. However, the argument still follows if we consider the planets, stellar systems whatever that include the beginning and endpoints of the matter transmission as an isolated system.

Ethan Vishniac

Subject: S. H. Elgin, redux
Path: ihnp4!zehntel!hplabs!sri-unix!ALBERGA%YKTVMX.BITNET@Berkeley
Date: Tue, 11-Sep-84 14:29:32 EDT

Emendations and corrections to list of titles:

The Communipaths Ace double, 441-11560-075, 1970
Furthest Ace, 441-25950-075, 1971
At the Seventh Level DAW, No. 10, 1972
Twelve Fair Kingdoms Doubleday, 1981

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Berkley, 0-425-05850-6 250, 1983
The Grand Jubilee Doubleday, 1981
Berkley, 0-425-06045-4 250, 1983
And Then There'll be Fireworks

Doubleday, 1981
Berkley, 0-425-06290-4 250, 1983
Star-Anchored, Star-angered
DAW, No. 579, 1984
(May have been published earlier by Doubleday)
Native Tongue DAW, No.589, 1984

Ms. Elgin has also published a novelette, "For the Sake of Grace", in The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction, May 1969. This was later expanded into "At the Seventh Level". She also has a short story, "Magic Granny says Don't Meddle", in the August 1984 F&SF.

She certainly has other short pieces, but I don't have the biblio. info., She had already published poetry before 1969, and has at least two books in popular linguistics. (I remember something like "Transformational Linguistics for the Beginner" -- wrong, but close -- and "More on the Gentle art of Verble Selfdefence" -- which seems to imply at least one more title.)

None of which illuminates the missing ninth novel. I have written to Ms. Elgin, and will report on anything I discover.

Cyril

P.S. I have enjoyed everything she has written, and feel sorry for anyone who doesn't like Responsible, though I will admit to liking Troublesome a bit more.

Path: hocsj!akgua!usceast!usceast!ted
Subject: Re: John Norman --> Dray Prescott
Date: Wed, 19-Sep-84 01:13:59 EDT

I gave up on John Norman long ago. I enjoyed the first few Gor books (back when Ballentine was doing them) , but after that I just got completely disgusted by his weird ideas and refused to wade through them even when the plot had some interesting points.

To my mind, the best Swords & Planets type of series going today is Alan Burt Akers' (probably Kenneth Bulmer) Dray Prescott series, also from DAW. It started off over 10 years ago as a fairly straight Burroughs' imitation, but picked up rapidly as the main character (Dray Prescott) actually grew and changed during the course of the series.

Prescott was brought to the planet Kregan as the unwilling errand boy for two super human factions, who are apt at any time to drop him naked into some confused situation and have him sort things out. If he doesn't, he is banished to Earth for extended periods. In between jobs, he has started to

work on goals of his own (including freeing all slaves) and has amassed a large number of lands and titles (Emperorship of the ravaged island empire of Vallia chief among them). Unlike Burrough's heroes, Prescott is painfully aware that he is not the best swordsman on Kregan (having been shatteringly beaten once) and expects more from his wife and other women than that they be easy prey for the hostage plot device.

If there's any justice (and I've heard that there isn't) Dray Prescott will be around long after Tarl Cabot & co have died from brain rot.

Ted Nolan

PS : in one early Prescott book, he mentions the continent "gar" on Kregan where people believe women are only fit for slavery : I'm still waiting for him to clean it up..

Subject: re: END OF THE WORLD NEWS

Path: ihnp4!zehntel!hplabs!sri-unix!boyajian%akov68.DEC@decwrl.ARPA

Date: Wed, 12-Sep-84 08:48:21 EDT

The third story is really about the end of the world. A rogue planet named Lynx is due to make a destructive flyby of Earth, round the sun, and return to collide with Earth one year later. The story is a half-parody of "When Worlds Collide", with a dash of "A Clockwork Orange" (another book by Burgess, which was made into an equally depraved movie by Kubrick) thrown in for good measure.

-jns

It's not just happenstance that Burgess wrote this "half-parody" of WHEN WORLDS COLLIDE. He had been contracted to write the screenplay for a remake of that film. The project later fell through, and Burgess probably saw this book as a way to salvage his work on the script. I have not read Burgess' book, but I've wondered how he managed to avoid infringing upon Wylie and Balmer's (or their estates') copyright on WHEN WORLDS COLLIDE.

By the way, if anyone has gotten a feeling of deja vu reading jns' review of Burgess' book, it might be because excerpts from the book were published in OMNI and PENTHOUSE last year.

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

Subject: Book Review : Code of the LifeMaker

Path: ihnp4!zehntel!dual!qantel!intelca!cem
Date: Fri, 14-Sep-84 12:38:06 EDT

Title - Code of The Lifemaker
Author - Tom Hogan

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Type of SF - HiTech

This is a "new" book (copyright 1983) by Tom Hogan that is set in a future of about 50 to 100 years. The main plot centers around an alien remote manufacturing system that has been damaged in flight, and the humans discovery and exploitation of that system. The aliens (they are never explicitly discussed) have developed a survey ship that seeks out promising planets or asteroids, sets up a an intelligent factory, that then builds robots, that then builds more factories that eventually become a production/extraction center that then ship refined metals and products back to the home system. One such survey ship is damaged by a nearby nova and wanders into our solar system and attempts to start the process on Titan. The nova has erased/ modified some of the programs in the ship and the whole thing doesn't quite work the way it should. What then follows is an electronic version of evolution (with self modifying code of course), the humans discover the system and some realize the potential of it as a prebuilt factory with free labor, materials, and transportation costs. Others take a more humanistic view of the machines that are n the surface.

There are several interesting characters, one of which is so obviously a play on "the amazing Kreskin" that I had to chuckle when I read it. I was a little disappointed in Hogan's handling of the "electronics" on Titan, (this is Hogan so we have to have a sentient computer right?) but the interactions of his characters came off well and were certainly dynamic enough. I enjoyed the book and was glad something other that fantasy was being written these days.

Reccomendations - If you are like me and enjoy the "hard" science type of science fiction I reccomend it.

-- Chuck

Subject: re: Wyndham's WEB
Path: ihnp4!zehntel!dual!amd!decwrl!dec-rhea!dec-akov68!boyajian
Date: Sat, 15-Sep-84 08:56:08 EDT
Sender: daemon@decwrl.UUCP

From: hocsj!ecl 11-Sep-1984 12:19:19

I guess what started that trend was Tolkien's SILMARILLION. More recently there was a new "Fuzzy" novel by H. Beam Piper. There are whole series of Doc Smith and Robert E. Howard books published after the author's death with the help of a co-author that the poor dead author never chose.

Methinks that you show a slight ignorance of this subject. First of all, this trend you describe started *long* before THE SILMARILLION. DeCamp and Carter, for instance, were hauling Robert Howard material out long before Christopher Tolkien did the same with Dear Old Dad.

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Secondly, The circumstances behind Piper's lost Fuzzy novel had nothing at all with whether Piper thought it was good enough to be published. He had written it, but never got around to submitting it before he blew his brains out, because he thought his stuff wasn't selling well enough for him to make a living as a writer. And as far as the dead author never choosing his "collaborator", Jerry Pournelle has written permission *from Piper himself* to write more Space Viking novels (now if only Jerry would write the suckers!).

Thirdly, the "new Doc Smith" books are nothing of the sort, except for SUBSPACE ENCOUNTER. The first Family D'Alembert book was a novelette by Smith expanded by Stephen Goldin into a novel. The further books in that series are *solely* the work of Goldin, though there are claims that he's working from notes left by Smith, and despite the use of the collaborative byline. The same is true of the Lord Tedric series by Gordon Eklund. And the new Lensman books are solely the work of the authors whose bylines are on the books.

As for the Robert E. Howard material, there has never been any pretense that it is "new" material by Howard. In some cases, whole stories found in storage have been published here and there, but in most cases what we end up with is DeCamp, Carter, or whoever writing a story from notes or fragments

found in Howard's papers. And in all of these cases, a collaborative byline is used.

I also think you are making a mistake in assuming that the reason a given story was never published in the author's lifetime was because it was an inferior work, and that the author recognized it as such. In the case of Howard, it was simply that many of his stories couldn't find a market. Some of the stories of his that found their way into print in the last couple of decades have been a lot better than much of what he sold in his lifetime, and I am glad they were discovered.

In the case of WEB, it could well be that Wyndham couldn't find anyone who wanted to buy it, not that he was "ashamed" of it. Remember, Cordwainer Smith couldn't sell "Scanners Live in Vain" for *years*, but once it finally found its way into print, it was hailed as a classic. Madeleine L'Engle tried selling A WRINKLE IN TIME for quite a while before one publisher finally accepted it, and then it won the Newbery Award as Best Children's Novel of the Year.

Admittedly, there are times when I think it gets a little out of hand, and often a "collaborator" doesn't do justice to the original author's material. On the other hand, many of these "resurrections" are for reasons of literary historical interest, such as, say, T. H. White's THE BOOK OF MERLIN. I can sympathize with the idea that an author may not have wanted some of his work to see the light of day, but I can also sympathize with his fans' interest in seeing more work from that author. Are their "rights" any less important than his?

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I don't mean to come down so hard, and I could well be reading things into your comments that you didn't intend. But I felt the need to debate your comments.

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

Subject: re: re: Wyndham's WEB
Path: ihnp4!lznv!mrl

Date: Wed, 19-Sep-84 08:27:40 EDT

jayembee,

Methinks that you show a slight ignorance of this subject. First of all, this trend you describe started *long* before THE SILMARILLION. DeCamp and Carter, for instance, were hauling Robert Howard material out long before Christopher Tolkien did the same with Dear Old Dad. That is probably true, they did. However I am not sure I really see it as a trend until Tolkien did it. Such diverse works as MYSTERY OF EDWIN DROOD and TURANDOT had unchosen co-authors after the famous author's death. It is a moot point when it became a trend.

Secondly, The circumstances behind Piper's lost Fuzzy novel had nothing at all with whether Piper thought it was good enough to be published. He had written it, but never got around to submitting it before he blew his brains out, because he thought his stuff wasn't selling well enough for him to make a living as a writer.

What I had heard was that the last Fuzzy novel had apparently actually been hidden by the author. I don't remember the exact story, but it seems to me it was hidden at the bottom of a box of correspondence or or a stationery box or something of the sort. It was really this story that prompted my original comments.

And as far as the dead author never choosing his "collaborator", Jerry Pournelle has written permission *from Piper himself* to write more Space Viking novels (now if only Jerry would write the suckers!).

If you look at what I said, I claimed only that Smith and Howard did not choose their co-authors. Who said that Piper never chose a collaborator? Any reference I made to Piper concerned the new Fuzzy novel and that I said concerned a related trend co-authoring trend.

Thirdly, the "new Doc Smith" books are nothing of the sort, except for SUBSPACE ENCOUNTER. The first Family D'Alembert book was a novelette by Smith expanded by Stephen Goldin into a novel. The further books in that series are *solely* the work of Goldin, though there are claims that he's working from notes left by Smith, and despite the use of the collaborative byline.

I still contend that they claim to be collaborations with the dead author. Smith's name is prominently on the cover. Whether or not they are really serious collaborations, the way the Conan books are, is irrelevant. They are still using the dead author's name to sell books without the dead author's consent.

The same is true of the Lord Tedric series by Gordon Eklund. And the new Lensman books are solely the work of the authors whose bylines are on the books.

As for the Robert E. Howard material, there has never been any pretense that it is "new" material by Howard. In some cases, whole stories found in storage have been published here and there, but in most cases what we end up with is DeCamp, Carter, or whoever writing a story from notes or fragments found in Howard's papers. And in all of these cases, a collaborative byline is used.

They still do the same thing, trade off a dead author's name and exploit completists of that author's works.

I also think you are making a mistake in assuming that the reason a given story was never published in the author's lifetime was because it was an inferior work, and that the author recognized it as such.

The phrase I use is "more often than not." That may be taking some license, since I haven't done a statistical study, but I do not claim it always is that way.

In the case of Howard, it was simply that many of his stories couldn't find a market. Some of the stories of his that found their way into print in the last couple of decades have been a lot better than much of what he sold in his lifetime, and I am glad they were discovered.

I do not say it is an invariable rule.

In the case of WEB, it could well be that Wyndham couldn't find anyone who wanted to buy it, not that he was "ashamed" of it. Remember, Cordwainer Smith couldn't sell "Scanners Live in Vain" for *years*, but once it finally found its way into print, it was hailed as a classic. Madeleine L'Engle tried selling A WRINKLE IN TIME for quite a while before one publisher finally accepted it, and then it won the Newbery Award as Best Children's Novel of the Year.

Don't forget WATERSHIP DOWN, CONFEDERACY OF DUNCES, and CATCH-22. Each of them nearly did not get published. Still, none of these contradict what I was saying.

Admittedly, there are times when I think it gets a little out of hand, and often a "collaborator" doesn't do justice to the original author's material. On the other hand, many of these "resurrections" are for reasons of literary historical interest, such as, say, T. H. White's THE BOOK OF MERLIN. I can sympathize with the idea that an author may not have wanted some of his work to see the light of day, but I can also sympathize with his fans' interest in seeing more work from that author. Are their "rights" any less important than his?

Sure they are. Writing is a struggle and not all exercises work out. An author has a right to privacy on what he considers his mistakes, even if his fans would love to see it. I am no Ayn Rand fan, but her point in FOUNTAINHEAD is well taken. A creator has the right to complete ownership of his creation. [There are special cases where a creation is already sold before it comes about... For example, I have sold away the right to my software creation when I came to work for AT&T, but it was my right to do so.] The right may not be enforceable for a dead author, but it should be.

I don't mean to come down so hard, and I could well be reading things into your comments that you didn't intend. But I felt the need to debate your comments.

Feel free. I don't agree with your arguments, as obvious from the above, but the discussion was worth having. In any case, I suspect that John Beynon Harris would have probably wanted WEB to come out under his real name. It is closer to the quality of those books that did. Only the few books he wrote that were especially good seem to have been published under the pseudonym John Wyndham and it is unlikely he would have wanted WEB associated with books as good as WHEN THE KRAKEN WAKES (OUT OF THE DEEPS), MIDWICH CUCKOOS (VILLAGE OF THE DAMNED), THE CHRYSALIDS (REBIRTH), and especially DAY (REVOLT) OF THE TRIFFIDS (I wonder what American publishers had against his original titles?)

Subject: Review on Metropolis
Path: ihnp4!zehntel!hplabs!sri-unix!Martelli.PA@XEROX.ARPA

Date: Tue, 4-Sep-84 18:05:00 EDT

My husband took me to see a German movie (made sometime in the 1920's) called Metropolis. Apparently the musical score had been redone to fit in more with the 80's. It depicts a society (or I should say someone from the 20's view of a society) in the year 2026. It was excellent. The music was fantastic, the acting was a bit essentric, which can be My husband had seen the original in a film class about 5 years ago and enjoyed it more this time around.

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It is presently playing at the Camera Three Theatre on First Street in San Jose.

KM

Subject: Re: Metropolis 1984
Path: ihnp4!zehntel!hplabs!sdcrcdf!trwrba!cadovax!keithd
Date: Mon, 10-Sep-84 16:01:23 EDT

Several years ago, I first saw Metropolis at the FOX Venice (or was it the Nuart?) in L.A.. I was very impressed by both the movie and the soundtrack. Later I purchased a copy of the videotape, and was disapointed to find that the soundtrack was different. Now I find there is a new soundtrack. Personally, I prefer the first one I heard, which was primarily piano and sax, a kind of Industrial Jazz that fit the visuals well, and appeared to be composed specifically for the film. The videotape had an orchestral piece that also was composed for the film, but I thought it was awful. Does anyone know: 1. what the jazz version music was, or 2. where a video copy of the film with this soundtrack might be obtained?

Keith Doyle

Subject: Re: Dune Movie Picture Book

Path: inhp4!zehntel!hplabs!sri-unix!Woody.pasa@XEROX.ARPA
Date: Tue, 4-Sep-84 15:30:00 EDT

Date: Sat 25 Aug 84 14:55:38-PDT
From: Steve Dennett <DENNETT@SRI-NIC.ARPA>
Subject: Dune Movie Picture Book

Having just finished reading "Dune", I glanced through the picture book to see how much the filmmakers had warped the original story. (I'm assuming that the book and the movie's script match pretty closely.) Wonderously enough, the only major digression I spotted was that the Paul brings the Fremen a device (developed by his father's staff) that transforms the Bene Gesserit "voice" into a weapon of destruction. If you've seen the previews, it's shown in the scene where the voice-over says "where a word can kill..."

-Cat Dennett

We're in trouble now, folks.

I've had reservations about "Dune: The Movie" since it was announced three million years ago. But, now: how can you fit in a device like the one above into a perfectly good story ("Dune: The Book") without

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screwing it up? I mean, what are the Fremen going to do with the device? Look at it, chuckle, and continue on like "Dune: The Book?"

What I don't believe is that somewhere, in the vast wasteland known as Hollywood, there is a movie script writer with the nerve to think that he can take an excellent book and improve it for the movies. [No arguments that the movie script writer isn't in Hollywood; you know what I mean anyways...] The best a script writer can do is try to fit the book into the two hours allowed for a movie.

And he (whoever he is) had the nerve to fit in a new device.

sigh And now I know why I got out of Filmmaking and into Computer Science. It was a wise choice on my part.

- Bill Woody

P.S. Oh, I still can't wait for the movie! I just don't expect the quality of the book, that's all. [Come on, with a book THAT good, do you 'spect a better movie???]

Subject: Comments on Metropolis & Review
Path: ihnp4!tektronix!tekchips!wm
Date: Thu, 13-Sep-84 14:04:43 EDT

Subject: Re: Review on Metropolis

Please do not mistake the current release of "Metropolis" for the real movie "Metropolis". Although all of the footage in it is from the authentic silent original, a great deal was chopped out, and the dialogue changed. In some cases, the dialogue was actually reversed -- "Yes" for "No", "Close the gates" for "Open the Gates", etc.

While the current release may present or even enhance the striking (purely black-and white) visual effect, it is NOT thematically or politically equivalent to the original.

lawrence <Lfeinberg.es> -- a Fritz Lang fan
p.s. Although much more was cut out, it is true that some missing scenes were restored relative to the standard American release.

I have not heard, nor did I notice that any scenes were cut out of this release of Metropolis. Reportedly, (and I would agree) this is the most complete version of Metropolis available anywhere. The primary achievement (in my opinion) of this release is generally excellent restoration job.

Other corrections: "Although all of the footage in it is from the authentic silent original...". Not true, Moroder reconstructed one scene (the tombstone of "Hel"), and several other scenes were made up

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from old production stills. As far as I know, the only changes in "dialogue" were to restore the film back to what was in the original screenplay. Also, the current release does not "enhance the striking (purely blank-and white) visual effect". In fact, color washes, and an

occasional specific tinting were added. This was consistent with some of the original prints that had been tinted.

The "original American release" was *severely* cut from the original German version, some people say as much as half. Several characters are simply missing from the original American release.

While I'm complaining about Metropolis reviews, there was someone who made a comment about the crude special effects, saying something about the use of old freight elevators. Maybe we didn't see the same movie. Even ignoring when this movie was made, some of the special effects were incredible. The first time you see the worker's city, it is riding down one of the elevators. Notice how the buildings change perspective as you come down. These are not cheap matte paintings. They built a whole indoor city in the UFA studios, and then they flooded it! And what about some of that machinery? Go see it again and look closely at some of the stuff in the background. Just because they don't shove it in your face like Hollywood does doesn't mean it doesn't exist.

Now a little review of the updated version. I saw it last night, and I liked the fact that Moroder had added subtitles instead of using the original title cards in some places. I found some of the restored scenes helped the plot. Although there were still not enough information on the character Hel to make much sense. Some of the music and the sound effects added enough to the movie to make it overall worthwhile, even though it often detracted. The color washes were ok, but the specific tinting detracted too much, especially the nightclub sign and the flask of liquid in Rotwang's lab.

Lastly, a little bit of interesting history on the original movie. Lang was a socialist, but his wife, who did most of his screenplays (they are both credited for the screenplay of Metropolis) was a fascist (remember, this is pre-WWII). The conflict between their two philosophies is never more evident than in this movie.

Wm Leler -- a German Expressionist Cinema fan

Subject: Toronto International Film Festival
Path: ihnp4!bbncca!lcliffor
Date: Mon, 17-Sep-84 14:35:08 EDT

Having just seen 15 films in 9 days while attending the "Festival of Festivals" in Toronto, I thought I'd give a quick encapsulization of them. Filmgoers at the festival had a chance to rate films from 1-7

for the Labatt's Most Popular Film award, so I'll include my ratings (1=very bad, 7=excellent).

1. Stranger Than Paradise **7**

Dir. Jim Jarmusch

Starring John Lurie (formerly of the N.Y. Lounge Lizards)

This film won the Cannes award for best first feature. It was a sheer delight! The story is basically about Willie, a Hungarian who has tried to become totally American and erase any ties with his family, and his reaction to his Hungarian female cousin who he is forced to put up in his one room New York apartment on her arrival. This film is obviously very low budget, so don't expect a slick looking movie - just a lot of talent, imagination and wit! A charming look at the seedier parts of the U.S.

2. All of Me **6**

Dir. Carl Reiner

Starring Steve Martin and Lily Tomlin

Steve Martin wins me back after a couple of less than great movies in his new comedy about a rich heiress who has a swami at hand to transport her soul into a new body at her death. Of course, a mistake occurs and guess whose body she ends up cohabiting! The initial scene where Martin realizes he's not alone is an instant comedy classic!

3. The Hit **6**

Dir. ?? (can't remember)

Starring John Hurt, Terence Stamp, John Roth, Laura del Sol

I hope this one gets a good distribution! The story of a former mob guy (T. Stamp) who put his boss and cronies into jail. Ten years later a hit man (J. Hurt) is sent to Spain to retrieve him. Great performances by the whole cast - new twists on an old theme.

4. The Brother From Another Planet **6**

Dir. John Sayles

Starring John Morton, John Sayles

A black alien lands in Harlem. Need I say more? An absolute wonder for a film budgetted at \$320,000 (looks multi-million).

5. Stop Making Sense **6**

Dir. Jonathon Demme

Starring The Talking Heads

The best concert film I have ever seen (and the Talking Heads watched it again a few rows in front of me!).

6. Metropolis (I didn't think it fair to rate this as new)
Dir. Fritz Lang, jazzed up by Giorgio Moroder

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Finally have seen Metropolis. I'd give just the film ***1/2. The tinting didn't detract from the film, and the soundtrack didn't bother me at all (it was rather good in parts). Could've done without the vocals though. All in all, not as obnoxious as I had been led to believe by reviews.

7. The Bay Boy **6**
Dir. Dan Petrie
Starring Kiefer Sutherland (Don's kid) and Liv Ullman

A delightful movie set in Nova Scotia about a young boy who has to deal with a sickly brother, the depression, Catholicism, a local murder, and girls. Kiefer Sutherland was quite good in his first time out. Liv Ullman was marvelous as the mother. Well directed. This was a Canadian production.

8. Where the Green Ants Dream **6**
Dir. Werner Herzog
Starring "the guy who rode the helicopter in Road Warrior"

Absolutely fantastic photography in this one! A sad film about a group of Aborigines fighting yet again for land which will be lost to them. A bit slow, but I gave it a 6 anyway because I really love Herzog (call it loyalty).

9. Places in the Heart **5**
Dir. Robert Benton
Starring Sally Field

Very warm film about a sheriff's wife in Texas who is widowed and must cope with saving her home and keeping her family together. Sally Field is excellent in the lead role. The two supporting characters, a black drifter who helps Field's character grow cotton and a blind veteran thrust upon her as a boarder by the bank, are also excellent. The film

is flawed, however, mainly by a stupid subplot about Field's sister's husband's extra-marital affair with the town's schoolteacher. Ed Harris is less than enthralling in this role. Terrific ending, though!

10. Full Moon in Paris **4**

Dir. Erich Rohmer

A cute film about a love triangle. Nothing special.

11. Los Santos Innocentes **5**

An incessantly hopeless film about a family of Spanish peasants being exploited by the aristocracy. Although this is a well-crafted film with several good characterizations, it was so completely depressing I didn't know how to feel about it. If you get emotional over a film's content, you'll want to stay in bed for a week after this.

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12. Love Streams **4**

Dir. John Cassevettes

Starring John Cassevettes and Gena Rowlands

Good character studies of a confused writer and his crazy sister. Couldn't figure out exactly what Cassevettes' point was though.

The following films were not featured by the festival:

Buckaroo Banzai

Can't figure out what all the fuss is about this one. John Lithgow as Dr. Emilio Lizardo should be given the Oscar for best supporting actor, however. Without his fantastically funny performance, this would have been a dud (and yes, I read the book first).

Under the Volcano

Albert Finney is truly extraordinary. He must be the greatest actor of our time. The story was told a little too simply for my tastes (I had just finished the book which is a ****!). Not as muddled as I had been expecting though. I'd still have to give it somewhere between **1/2 and ***.

The Fourth Man

What fun - I love symbolism in films and it's just piled on here (it jumps out at you)! An evil film with tongue in cheek - great use of color. ***