

Lincroft-Holmdel Science Fiction Club
Club Notice - 8/20/86 -- Vol. 5, No. 6

MEETINGS UPCOMING:

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

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

_D_A_T_E _T_O_P_I_C

- 08/27 LZ: 2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY by Arthur C. Clarke (Evolution)
09/17 The Elric series by Michael Moorcock (Magic as Science)
(THE DREAMING CITY, THE SAILOR ON THE SEAS OF FATE,
?, THE SLEEPING SORCERESS, ?, STORMBRINGER, ELRIC AT
THE END OF TIME, THE SINGING CITADEL, and maybe others)
10/08 BLOOD MUSIC by Greg Bear (Genetics)
10/29 MALLWORLD by Somtow Sucharitkul (Commerce)
11/19 THE LEFT HAND OF DARKNESS by Ursula K. LeGuin (Sexual Identity)
12/10 NEUROMANCER by William Gibson (Consciousness)

HO Chair is John Jetzt, HO 4F-528A (834-1563). LZ Chair is Rob Mitchell, LZ 1B-306 (576-6106). MT Chair is Mark Leeper, MT 3E-433 (957-5619). HO Librarian is Tim Schroeder, HO 2G-427A (949-5866). LZ Librarian is Lance Larsen, LZ 3C-219 (576-2668). MT Librarian is Bruce Szablak, MT 4C-418 (957-5868). Jill-of-all-trades is Evelyn Leeper, MT 1F-329 (957-2070). All material copyright by author unless otherwise noted.

1. There has been a slight programming change in this week's film festival. The lineup will be:

_S_n_e_a_k_P_r_e_v_i_e_w_s: Lyons and Medved on Animated films.
SKYWHALES (1985?)
FANTASTIC PLANET (1973) dir. by Rene Laloux
WARRIORS OF THE WIND (1985)

The first two pieces are shorts. It just happened that TV's _S_n_e_a_k_P_r_e_v_i_e_w_s just ran a segment devoted to animation. That runs about 25 minutes, SKYWHALES runs about 15 minutes. The other two are feature length films. The first item will allow you to get a little live action (if you can call two people sitting in movie seats an talking at you live action) with your 'toons.

2. Lincroft will be discussing 2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY next week.

Rob says everyone knows what it's about so he doesn't need to write a blurb.

3. Due to constraints of time and space, this issue will not include a review of the new production of the Broadway play _1_7_7_6

- 2 -

with an all-black cast.

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

THE FLY

A film review by Mark R. Leeper

Capsule review: The remake of T_h_e_F_l_y is more for fans of David Cronenberg films than for fans of the original story. In several ways the new film is an improvement, but overall the original is still a much better film. Don't see this film after you eat.

Earlier this summer we saw the release of I_n_v_a_d_e_r_s_f_r_o_m_M_a_r_s. In my review I had said that I had missed seeing the original when I was the proper age to enjoy it. I fared somewhat better with the original T_h_e_F_l_y. I was eight years old when I saw the original at a drive-in. I was too young to be objective about the scientifically improbable plot. The script was spell-binding to an 8-year-old--not surprising since it was written by James Clavell, who went on to write novels like S_h_o_g_u_n and N_o_b_l_e_H_o_u_s_e. It seemed to me that Andre Delambre had everything anyone could ever want and lost it all in a moment of carelessness--a tragedy more affecting than anything Sophocles ever wrote. It was with a combination of expectation and fear that I heard that David Cronenberg--who made films like S_c_a_n_n_e_r_s and D_e_a_d_Z_o_n_e--was going to remake one of my favorite films.

Well, apparently the original story of T_h_e_F_l_y was put on a matter transmitter with Cronenberg and what came out was part T_h_e_F_l_y and part Cronenberg. Cronenberg has always been fascinated with the idea of having physical deformity echo emotional state. Since the fusion of man and fly affects both the mind and the body, it is obvious why this project appealed to him. Unlike the original, the change in the remake is gradual and the audience gets a chance to see the thought processes as a human gradually transforms into an amalgam of human and insect. This is a theme only hinted at in the original film--Andre says that his new brain is telling him to do strange things--but it becomes one of the main virtues of the remake.

The story, if you missed the original and haven't figured it out by now, has a scientist (Seth Brundle, played by Jeff Goldblum) go through a matter transmitter with a fly and come out oddly mixed with the fly. In the remake a computer has reconstructed the two with mixed DNA but with a human exterior. Then slowly the fly DNA starts transforming the scientist.

The 1958 version depended for shock value on a realistic-looking fly head for the human. This film creates a revolting-looking physical creature--it looks like bubble gum that is still being chewed--not at all fly-like, but more revolting. Still it gets some of the habits of the insect.

The new T_h_e_F_l_y is good Cronenberg, which means I cannot give it a general recommendation. If you don't mind the sort of thing Cronenberg does, T_h_e_F_l_y is not a bad film, but not nearly as good as the original. Rate the Cronenberg a +1 on the -4 to +4 scale.

PIED PIPER

A film review by Mark R. Leeper

Capsule review: Interesting re-telling of the classic tale. In some ways it doesn't feel authentic; in others it is pretty good.

I had seen a children's version of this story--much cleaned up so

that it had a happy ending--when I was young. It had Van Johnson and was not very good. I was unaware there was a more sophisticated re-telling made in 1971 and starring Donovan in the title role, with John Hurt, Donald Pleasance and Michael Hordern. Hurt, Pleasance, and Hordern are all good actors, so I was intrigued to see what the film would be like.

Pied Piper is a film with some virtues and some faults. The story has been broadened to include some things the folk tale never had. There is a plot dealing with the plague and another with persecution of Jews. Donovan's portrayal of the Piper is one of the worst aspects of the film. He plays the Piper as likable and charismatic, rather than just having his music be. Also, unlike any re-telling of the story, he carries a very modern-looking guitar. I am not sure what guitars looked like in the 14th Century (point of fact: they were invented in the 12th Century), but I would have thought they would have changed in form more since then. Some of the re-creation of medieval life makes this film worth seeing if it pops up on TV near you. (This showing was on the USA Network.) Rate it a +1 on the -4 to +4 scale.

_N_O_T_E_S_ _F_R_O_M_ T_H_E_ N_E_T

Subject: The New World: A Review

Path: mtuxo!mtune!akguc!akgua!mcnc!rti-sel!wfi

Date: Mon, 11-Aug-86 19:39:38 EST

"This is a grand, glowing poem. Turner's wonderful hand at blending cultures... and the ease whereby tricks out of Star Wars shed their hokum and become a jamais litteraire
-- James Merrill

A year or two ago I asked in this newsgroup why all SF poetry was so abominable, and why there was no serious SF poetry as impressive as (say) The Book of the New Sun. There is now: Frederick Turner's "The New World: An Epic Poem," Princeton University Press, 1985, 182 pp.

What's it about? Since I can't say it any better, I quote from Turner's introduction:

"...The story opens in the year 2376 A.D. The world's fossil and nuclear fuels have been spent, its metallic ores exhausted, and much of its population either departed for the stars or slaughtered in the great twentieth- and twenty-first-century pogroms against the middle class. But high civilizations, based on a technology of solar and wind power, glass and resin chemistry, microprocessors and bioengineering, still flower on the earth. War is waged by mounted knights in resinite armor, with lasers and swords. The ancient institution of the nation state, obeying the same historical laws that brought it into existence, has collapsed, and the human race has discovered new forms of political organization: the Riots -- violent matriarchies based in the ancient cities, whose members have no incest prohibitions and no money, are addicted to the psychedelic joyjuice, and have almost lost the power of human language; the Burbs -- populations descended from the old middle class, whom the Riots hold hostage and use as slaves to produce their food, luxuries and joyjuice; the Mad Counties -- religious theocracies, dominated in North America, by fanatical fundamentalists; and the Free Counties -- independent Jeffersonian aristocratic democracies, where art, science, and the graces of human life are cultivated to their highest, as in classical Athens, Renaissance Florence, and Heian Japan. The Free Counties have developed a new religion of their own, combining science, Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism, and the other major religions. Under the influence of the great oriental cultures, the implicit divisions of American society have emerged explicitly in a caste system..."

Yow. And that's just the background for the story. :-) WARNING: possible spoilers follow (if a spoiler is possible with an epic that's made for retelling, that is).

The story takes place in a time when a league of Mad Counties have launched a Holy War against the free counties of Ahiah. It's about the events that happen to member of the McCloud and Quincy families, especially the hero James George Quincy. If this book had been written as an SF novel, it would probably be nominated for a major award: the story is a GREAT one, and the world Turner creates is convincing in a way that few SF worlds other than Dune, Middle Earth, and Urth are. It started slow for me: I had to read 50 to 60 pages before Turner's story grabbed me by the throat and made me take notice (interestingly, that's a point some reviewers have also made: it takes a while, I think, for the reader to adjust to a style so long out of fashion: "The New World" should be read aloud, perhaps, with a circle of friends). In reading this epic poem, I am reminded of several other SF works: "Engine Summer" by John Crowley, "The Book Of The New Sun" by Gene Wolfe, and "Dune" by Frank Herbert. Turner's universe has some similarities to the universes created in those works. I feel that it will take some time for SF fans to approach this work as SF (it's a quirky thing, writing an epic poem in the 1980s: and a still quirker thing writing an SF epic), but that eventually it will be recognized as an important and rich contribution to the genre. Not only is the story a great one, full of great drama, love, treachery and despair, but the main characters (mostly) are believable people you come to care for (the characters I have trouble with are comic characters, but that's OK if you can get into the classical tradition).

In my opinion, this is great and charming SF. Is it great poetry? I suspect it will be controversial, since it's a truly conservative challenge to the directions poetry has been going in in our century (Turner claims he's trying to go beyond modernist lyric poetry in the Introduction, which you should definitely read if you want to get into this book). At times the poetry drags, but that's true of all epics (epic, remember, is not lyric). But listen to the music of the first stanza in which the poet invokes his muse (Sperimenh is one of their gods, the god of human creativity (i.e., Experiment)). By the way, the poet is a voice from the 24th century; this is revealed toward the end (p. 160) when he talks about his own experiences in a time of hardship.

I sing of what it is to be a man and woman in our time.
Wind of the spirit, I should have called upon you long ago
but you would have me gasp, draw dust for breath,
weep without tears, spoil the tale in its telling,
wander an emigrant where no garden grows
before you'd take me back into the bosom of your word.
Sperimenh, master-mistress, heavenly ghost
of humanity, tell to me how heroines and heroes dignify
the windmills that they turn, how invent the truth out of nothing.
Your body, I know it as this sweet English that I learned;

- 3 -

It may be seen in other, finer dressing,
in the feathers of brilliant inflexions, in the scales and spines
of what barbaric or subtle or lucid civilizations,
but where I love your gentle face is in our English:
bright-eyed, furry, swift-footed, suckler of her young.
I have walked the maze of words, preoccupied, and then
burst out suddenly into your astonishing air, knowing
my toinl as a tiny threading of your immense mind,
a mind as innocent as meadows, as lovely, as beyond dying.
What that great web is you are weaving, no one of us knows;
lend me your lightning, apocalypse yourself, let me see

If you're going to read this poem, you'll need (as I've said) some
patience to get into it. As for me, I'm going to read it again right
away.

-- Cheers, Bill Ingogly

Subject: Tom Clancy: Red Storm Rising
Path: mtuxo!houxm!ihnp4!cbosgd!ucbvax!hplabs!hp-pcd!everett
Date: Thu, 14-Aug-86 15:30:00 EST

Tom Clancy's new novel "Red Storm Rising" is a recommended read. I
guarantee that it will be on the bestseller lists for many months (a
couple of years?) in both hardcover and paperback. It's about 650 pages
long, the first 100 have some slow moments while all the characters and

plot threads get established. After that, World War III starts as the Soviet Union attacks NATO (as a diversionary tactic: the real goal is securing oil fields in the Middle East without causing a nuclear war). Admittedly, I'm only about a third of the way through the book, but it's cut very much from the same vein as his first book "The Hunt For Red October". (If you haven't read it, get it first: it's out in paperback; the new one is \$19.95 in hardback.)

Everett Kaser

Subject: Belezaire the Cajun
Path: mtuxo!mtune!akguc!akgua!gatech!lll-lcc!pyramid!decwrl!larrabee
Date: Mon, 11-Aug-86 21:47:59 EST

This weekend I went to see a small film that I could easily have missed by blinking at the wrong time: Belezaire the Cajun.

It was very low budget, a bit rough, and *thoroughly* enjoyable. Also, if I am to believe my southern friend (who usually gets very upset at the accents portrayed in films set in the south), it is quite authentic (the credits say it was filmed in an "Acadian Village"). I have been

- 4 -

thinking about the film a lot since I left the theater 24 hours ago--I may even go back.

I can't give you a run-down on the famous actors in the movie because there was only one actor in it who I have ever heard of before (Robert Duvall), and he was only on screen for two minutes. I can't give you any fancy reviews using the words "genre" or "leit-motif," but the movie had me bouncing in my seat and gripping my viewing companion's arm. I don't want to tell much about the plot--the fact that it is set in Louisiana in the last century and involves the clash of two cultures (and an extremely charismatic main character) is probably enough. I can tell you that movie is about wealth and prejudice and smarts and loyalty--and that when I walked out of the theater I felt that I, as an audience member, had been treated like an intelligent being.

I also loved the music: If any of you can get the words (in French or

English) to the song that is sung at several points during the movie, I would be much obliged if you would send them to me.

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