

Lincroft-Holmdel Science Fiction Club  
Club Notice - 10/29/86 -- Vol. 5, No. 16

MEETINGS UPCOMING:

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

LZ meetings are in LZ 3A-206; MT meetings are in MT 4A-235.

\_D\_A\_T\_E

\_T\_O\_P\_I\_C

- 10/30 MT: Film: METROPOLIS (part 2) (MT 4A-229) (==Thursday!==)  
11/12 MT: THE CIRCUS OF DR. LAO by Charles Finney (The Weird Circus)  
11/19 LZ: THE LEFT HAND OF DARKNESS by Ursula K. LeGuin (Sexual Identity)  
12/02 MT: Film: to be announced (==Tuesday!==)  
12/03 MT: Film: to be announced  
12/10 LZ: NEUROMANCER by William Gibson (Consciousness)  
12/17 MT: ENDER'S GAME by Orson Scott Card (War in Space)

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 1C-117 (576-2068). 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. It is with some regret that I announce that the fantasy film festival that I, as chairperson of the Science Fiction Club, have sponsored for the last three years is coming to an end. Not that it hasn't been successful. Anyone who has attended regularly has seen most of the important science fiction, horror, and fantasy films of all time. But the strain of getting a new film in that category on the average every ten days is starting to show. It wouldn't be long before the quality of the festival presentations would start to suffer. Thanks for coming and for enjoying films with me. I will miss the old film festival. But I won't miss it all that much because I intend to start a general film festival. Very often it will show fantasy films, probably most of the time, but it will not be limited to showing at least one fantasy film. (Well, we did have double features like ZULU DAWN and ZULU, but they were always considered just film evenings, not official parts of the festival.) For the most part, member will not notice that we are in a new film festival. We still won't show anything that the old film festival showed, but we will throw in non-fantasy

films a lot more freely than we did in the past.

Part of the idea of showing double features is that the two films together should be more than the sum of each of them. Our first film night will be chosen to do just that. Each is a powerful

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film, together they say considerably more than each of them says alone. The films are Thursday, November 6, 7 PM at my place. (Note the two-week interval this time.) Call for directions. Call early if you want me to send you a map.

Modern Greece in Turmoil  
Z (1969) dir. by Costa-Gavras  
ELENI (1985) dir. by Peter Yates

Both of these are excellent films and each says something about the other. Each makes the other more comprehensible and gives a more three-dimensional view of ideological struggles in that part of the world. Z stars Yves Montand and an international cast. ELENI stars John Malkovitch. You won't see anything as good on television all year long as this one double feature. Please come early, the two films together are quite a full evening.

Future festival showings may include the entire four-hour restored classic NAPOLEAN and an Alfred Hitchcock double feature. Let me know what sort of thing you would like to see and I will see if I can arrange it.

2. Phil DeParto of the Science Fiction Association of Bergen County tells me that on Saturday evening, November 8, his group will have three science fiction editors speaking. The topic will be "It Was a Dark and Stormy Planet: Bad Writing in Science Fiction." The speakers will be Ellen Datlow of OMNI Magazine, Shawna McCarthy of Bantam Books, and Patrick LoBruto of Doubleday Books. If you want more information, you can call Phil at (201) 933-2724.

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

FROM BEYOND  
A film review by Mark R. Leeper

Capsule review: Much of the same crew that did T\_h\_e  
R\_e\_A\_n\_i\_m\_a\_t\_o\_r are back with another H. P. Lovecraft story.  
While there is much in the film that Lovecraft never  
intended, some of his themes have survived the  
transition.

It has long been recognized that a film company that can turn out  
enough horror and science fiction films that are mediocre or better can  
stay out of bankruptcy. The company that founded the strategy was  
probably PRC in the 1940's, but American International in the 1960's (at  
that time the home of Roger Corman) seems to have been its most  
successful practitioner. The company doing it most successfully in the  
1980's is Empire Pictures. Empire turns out one horror film after  
another and their quality is reasonably dependable. You probably can  
find Empire films in just about every video store in the country. Some  
are as bad as T\_e\_r\_r\_o\_r\_V\_i\_s\_i\_o\_n, to which I'd give a -1 on the -4 to +4  
scale. T\_r\_o\_l\_l, on the other hand, would get a +2. Last year Empire hit

boxoffice paydirt with T\_h\_e\_R\_e-A\_n\_i\_m\_a\_t\_o\_r, an adaptation of "Herbert West-Re-Animator" by H. P. Lovecraft. The adaptation was quite liberal, but then the story was probably one of Lovecraft's worst. That film was directed by Stuart Gordon and starred Jeffrey Combs. Empire knows a good thing when their accountant points it out, so the Gordon-Combs-Lovecraft combination is back with F\_r\_o\_m\_B\_e\_y\_o\_n\_d.

Once again the adaptation from the Lovecraft is more imaginative than faithful, though many of the plot elements are preserved, albeit somewhat re-shuffled. The story deals with a machine that, through vibration, somehow extends our senses so we can see things around us that would otherwise be invisible. The catch is that they suddenly can also see us.

F\_r\_o\_m\_B\_e\_y\_o\_n\_d's source is a story only eight pages long--less a story than a single scene, really. To adapt this into a full-length film a lot had to be added. There are plenty of ideas in the film. The best of them are taken from the original story. However, some of the film seems borrowed in spirit from the films of David Cronenberg. Then there is a kinky sex/bondage subplot is nothing at all like Lovecraft would have ever written. The problem is that the ideas just don't fit together well. F\_r\_o\_m\_B\_e\_y\_o\_n\_d does seem to create a feel of unnameable dread that Lovecraft would have appreciated. Though at times the pace is a bit too slow, overall the concepts make the film worth seeing. There is a little explicit gore but much less than was in T\_h\_e\_R\_e-A\_n\_i\_m\_a\_t\_o\_r.

F\_r\_o\_m\_B\_e\_y\_o\_n\_d is a reasonably good little horror film that touches on some interesting concepts. Rate it a +1.

## CONTACT

by Carl Sagan

Reviewed by Dale Skran

Sagan has written a surprisingly good novel. For a first time writer, Sagan has remarkable plot control and characterization, as well as excellent SF ideas. The book's weaknesses lie in two areas. First, although the scientists in the book are well characterized, the politicians are the worst sort of paranoid stick figures. Sagan displays a deep seated contempt coupled with vast ignorance when it

comes to political matters. Second, the world view taken by the book can be best described as liberal nuke freezer wet dream, and has less reality than most comics. Basically everyone just gets together and works hand in hand for the common good, and if you buy that ....

In spite of these complaints, this remains one of the best first contact SF novels I've read, and deals with the issue in a gripping yet consistent way. Sagan makes certain technological assumptions, one of which is that wormhole travel is possible, that point the story in a particular direction. What Sagan does not deal with is: suppose FTL is impossible - where are they then? Sagan's SF ideas are also scientific ideas, and I assure you that the last page will leave you wondering for quite a while about the "numinous."

JUMPING JACK FLASH  
A film review by Mark R. Leeper

Capsule review: Whoopi Goldberg's likable personality carries this comedy-thriller, which functions better as comedy than as thriller. There are really good actors in supporting roles but the script does not let them contribute much.

Terry Doolittle has got to have one of the duller jobs in existence. She sits at a terminal all day long and enters transactions for banks exchanging money. When work is over she goes back to her apartment and reads. To keep herself from going stir-crazy in this bland existence she has nonsensical decorations all over her apartment and her desk at work. She reads thrillers and occasionally she swaps jokes with similar workers at other banks. One evening she starts getting messages from someone who claims to be trapped behind the Iron Curtain--someone who signs his name "Jumping Jack Flash." Before long she is fighting for her life in a battle of wits with the KGB.

Does the plot sound familiar? It should. The "innocent bystander" comedy-thriller is almost cliché or perhaps its own sub-genre. Notable examples are T\_h\_e\_3\_9\_S\_t\_e\_p\_s, N\_o\_r\_t\_h\_b\_y\_N\_o\_r\_t\_h\_w\_e\_s\_t, F\_o\_u\_l\_P\_l\_a\_y, and, more recently, I\_n\_t\_o\_t\_h\_e\_N\_i\_g\_h\_t. In each some poor ordinary guy is swept up into the world of intrigue for some apparently innocuous reason. What those films had that J\_u\_m\_p\_i\_n\_g\_J\_a\_c\_k\_F\_l\_a\_s\_h lacks most is a single unifying reason for everything that is happening and from which all the events flow logically. True, Terry wants one thing--to rescue her correspondent from being killed--but to do this she is given a set of scavenger-hunt-like random tasks. One minute it is finding a certain frying pan; the next it is attaching some unexplained module to a terminal in a high-security room at the British Consulate. You know that each time she completes a task there will be another absurd request coming from her terminal in minutes and another strange chase would begin. The plot is contrived rather than created.

Whoopi Goldberg is, however, more than funny enough to carry the comedy of the film. Comedy is, of course, her main occupation, though after the stirring performance she gave in T\_h\_e\_C\_o\_l\_o\_r\_P\_u\_r\_p\_l\_e it seems a pity that she doesn't do more drama. Steven Collins and Carol Kane are passable, but wasted in little more than cameos are two fine actors, Roscoe Lee Brown and Jonathan Pryce. (Tangent here: Pryce is just a young man but I think he has the potential of becoming an actor of the stature of a John Gielgud. His ability makes the minimal size and demands of his part seem a real shame.)

J\_u\_m\_p\_i\_n\_g\_J\_a\_c\_k\_F\_l\_a\_s\_h is an enjoyable throwaway, but falling short of being memorable. Rate it a +1 on the -4 to +4 scale.

## TOUGH GUYS

A film review by Mark R. Leeper

Capsule review: Two train robbers released from jail after thirty years find it hard to adjust to 1986 until they return to a life of crime. Classic film team Kirk Douglas and Burt Lancaster make this film worth seeing.

Back in the 1930's and 1940's Hollywood's biggest and bestest studio was MGM. You could depend on a MGM film to be worth the price of the ticket. Well, times have changed somewhat. Today the biggest filmmaker is, I believe, Tri-Star, which is owned by HBO. I think a case could be made that the bestest is now Disney/Touchstone. The studio that once wasted its tie with films of the S\_u\_p\_e\_r\_d\_a\_d and M\_o\_n\_k\_e\_y'\_s U\_n\_c\_l\_e ilk has managed to turn its image around. It has been a good long time since a real clunker came out of Disney Studios, the last one being P\_o\_p\_e\_y\_e. Since then they have made films like D\_r\_a\_g\_o\_n\_s\_l\_a\_y\_e\_r, N\_e\_v\_e\_r\_C\_r\_y W\_o\_l\_f, S\_p\_l\_a\_s\_h, C\_o\_u\_n\_t\_r\_y, D\_o\_w\_n\_a\_n\_d\_O\_u\_t\_i\_n\_B\_e\_v\_e\_r\_l\_y\_H\_i\_l\_l\_s, and the funniest comedy I have seen in quite a while, R\_u\_t\_h\_l\_e\_s\_s\_P\_e\_o\_p\_l\_e. I don't even remember J\_o\_u\_r\_n\_e\_y\_o\_f\_N\_a\_t\_t\_y\_G\_a\_n\_n playing in a theater, but if you want to see a good story done well as a film, rent it. No sex, no nudity, very minimal violence, but it hard to imagine just about anyone not liking it.

Touchstone's current release is T\_o\_u\_g\_h\_G\_u\_y\_s starring Kirk Douglas and Burt Lancaster as Archie Long and Harry Doyle. Thirty years ago, Archie and Harry went to jail for robbing a train. As they proudly point out, it was the last train robbery this country ever had. Now they are out of jail and trying to fit into a world that has changed more in the three decades they were on ice than it had since the Civil War. Complicating matters is Charles Durning as the policeman who caught them after their train robbery and is anxious to find an excuse to send them back again. Complicating them even more is Eli Wallach as a half-blind assassin who is making it quite clear that he wants to kill them but not at all clear why. Eventually they return to a life of crime with a huge, senseless, but symbolic act.

Lancaster and Douglas are famous as a film team from films like G\_u\_n\_f\_i\_g\_h\_t\_a\_s\_t\_h\_e\_O.\_K.\_C\_o\_r\_r\_a\_l and S\_e\_v\_e\_n\_D\_a\_y\_s\_i\_n\_M\_a\_y. As they have aged, there is still chemistry between them, but it has changed somewhat. In spite of the film making it clear that both (but especially Douglas) have kept in shape, they do not exude the vitality that they once had. They look like old men. But that only means that the chemistry has changed. There is more comedy between them. At one point Lancaster even kids Douglas about the famous dimple in his chin.

T\_o\_u\_g\_h\_G\_u\_y\_s is not a classic that people will be eagerly watching in 30 years but it makes for an entertaining Sunday afternoon. Give it a +2 on the -4 to +4 scale.

\_ N \_ O \_ T \_ E \_ S \_ F \_ R \_ O \_ M \_ T \_ H \_ E \_ N \_ E \_ T

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Subject: Review of "The Backlash Mission"  
Path: mtuxo!mtune!codas!burl!clyde!rutgers!daemon  
Date: Thu, 23-Oct-86 21:01:27 EST

"The Backlash Mision" is the sequel to "The Blackcollar" by Timothy Zahn. Like Cobra, these focuses on superhuman warriors. But instead of using mechanical means, in this universe, chemicals give the warriors increase reflexs and other things. The flavor of the "The Backlash Mision" is much the same as "The Blackcollar". Lots of complex plots, fast action, and generally a "good escape from daily life" story. This is not a great book in terms of hidden meanings, or a message. But it is great fun. The story moves along quickly. If you liked "The Blackcollar" you'll enjoy this.

One side comment. The tittle page reads "Blackcollar: "The Backlash Mission". Zahn may be planing to put one of these out every six months or so.

\*\*\*slight spoiler, summary of whats on the back of the book\*\*\*

Backlash, a secret drug, turned ordinay soldiers into Blackcollars. But



the drug has been used up, and a commando team heads to Earth to try and find the formula. One possible spot is the Aegis Mountain, an impregnable fortress that the Ryqril had never cracked. Could the commando team survive long enough to get the formula?

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Subject: Belgariad by David Eddings  
Path: ihnp4!msudoc!lawitzke  
Date: Thu, 23-Oct-86 21:09:47 EST

I recently finished reading The Belgariad by David Eddings and would like to highly recommend it to anyone who has the time to read it.

The Belgariad consists of five books: Pawn of Prophecy, Queen of Sorcery, Magician's Gambit, Castle of Wizardry, and Enchanter's End Game. The story is about a boy named Garion. He grew up on a farm and is about 12 years old when the story begins. As the story progresses it turns out that is the sole hope for the survival of mankind. I can't say anymore without revealing the story, but I found it to be very compelling reading.

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Subject: Children of Flux and Anchor

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Path: rutgers!seismo!rochester!pt.cs.cmu.edu!f.word.cs.cmu.edu!sherman  
Date: Sat, 25-Oct-86 22:43:43 EST

Children of Flux and Anchor, book five of the Soul Rider Trilogy :-) by Jack Chalker has just come out. It takes place about 40 years after the great flux war. Not a really great read but if you liked the rest of the series it is probably worth picking up. If you haven't read the series yet, give it a try.

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Subject: Deadly Friend  
Path: ihnp4!crash!victoro  
Date: Tue, 21-Oct-86 03:11:43 EST

Keywords What a STUPID ending

OK, so maybe I was expecting a bad movie, but I found my "Deadly Friend button - how could I not go. After all it was a good idea for a story, and I like lovecraftian stories.

NANO REVIEW: What a STUPID ending. (Said by most viewers when leaving and heard by cashiers according to an informal poll)

It's a good story. Some silly excessive special effects (read: Gore) and some stupid acts by OUR HERO. But still I began to feel for the heroine. And that is the judge for me, If I care then the film has merit. I give it 2/5 of possible. See it on dollar night, or wait for video/cable (The ending (shocker) is so dumb in ruins EVERYTHING!)

SPOILER WARNING: \*\*\*\*\*

The story concerns a teenage genius that enrolls at a major university (best medical program in the country) to continue his research on the working of the human brain. His previous work has been with artificial intelligence with his creation BB (BaBy?).

He makes friends with the local paperboy and the victimized girl- next-door who, over a period of months, becomes rather close. But before a real relationship can develop she is killed by her evil father.

The hero, with the aid of the paperboy, rescue her from the hospital even though she has been diagnosed as brain dead. "But they've tried everything, you can't help her." "They don't know what I know, what I can do - I have a plan to bring her back."

His plan is to install BB's brain into her to re-route her brain around her damaged areas and restore her to life. While the computer program maintains her bodily functions so she can live off life support equipment.

OK SO FAR.

She then slowly recovers her mind and control over her bodily movements with our hero's help and he attempt to keep her hidden from everyone. This he fails to do as she escapes a number of times and does acts of revenge to the individuals who killed her, her father and and the old bag who shot up BB. She also kills a biker who attacked her, and her friends, but only by accident.

And as the human side is growing in control (shown by flashes of normal vision between computer simulations) she is chased by everyone in town, surrounded by the police. And when she runs to our hero in a flash of recognition as he struggles with the police she is gunned down in self-defence (I don'tblame the police.)

LEAVE THE THEATRE NOW!

We have the story of one mans nobel attempt to attempt the impossible and return life to his love who was attacked by her evil father. We have the story of a friendship stretched to the point of breaking over actions beyond mans comprehension (replace with typical lines from H.P. Lovecraft). And we have the story of a very intellegent (for a change) youngster who can not communicate important information before it causes the loss of one he loves (Soo often). And we have the story of a dedicated scientist who notices no improvement in his patient and so never notices her progress toward humanity and never tries to explain his actions or understand hers.

(#%&\*!) She comes first. That's what he's risking everything for, he should pay attention to her!

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Subject: notes on Down By Law  
Path: elroy!smeagol!usc-oberon!sdcrcdf!ism780c!ism780!steven  
Date: Tue, 21-Oct-86 19:40:00 EST

Zack (Tom Waits) and Jack (John Lurie) get thrown in the slammer in New Orleans along with oddball foreigner Bob (Roberto Benigni). This uneasy assemblage breaks out of prison together and wanders around the swamp.

Structurally and stylistically it's uncomfortably reminiscent of Jarmusch's debut flick "Stranger Than Paradise"; certainly this wouldn't mean so much if it was a Hollywood flick (where everybody cannibalizes everybody) but this is the art-house circuit, man! There are different expectations here, and one of those expectations is for something different each trip around the block.

That caveat aside, Jarmusch's deadpan comedic style is still well honed and again well served by a fine cast. In particular Benigni, an Italian comic who recently put in a bizaare hyperkinetic appearance on "Late

Night With David Letterman", punches through the supercilious cool of the movie with his hysterically funny portrayal of a strange guy in a strange land. Robby Muller contributes splendid black and white cinematography which, one hopes, Color Systems Technology or Colorization, Inc. will never get their filthy mitts on.

Two and a half stars out of four.

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Subject: Children Of A Lesser God (review, no spoilers)  
Path: mtuxo!houxm!mhuxt!mhuxv!mhuxf!ihnp4!fortune!stirling  
Date: Fri, 24-Oct-86 21:29:26 EST

I saw this film about a week ago - it's been out here for at least 2 weeks; I'm surprised at the lack of discussion/reviews on the net. I really liked it - it's one of the best films I've seen for a long time. The story is a pretty standard love story: man and woman meet, fall in love, lose each other, find each other. However this one was done very sensitively, and the acting was exceptional. The movie is set in a school for deaf and hearing impaired children. All of the people portraying hearing impaired characters are actually hearing impaired. William Hurt (male lead) plays a very togetherness and unconventional teacher, and Marlee Matlin (female lead) plays an ex-pupil who works as a "gofer" in the school kitchens. There are two particularly interesting aspects to the movie: the use of sound, and how non-speaking characters "say" their lines. In fact, Marlee Matlin is the only person with no spoken lines - her character is totally deaf and refuses to learn to speak. She uses sign language throughout. This is dealt with by having Hurt speak her lines. I was very impressed with the way this was done - he very rarely actually parroted what she was signing. Instead, his replies to her made it obvious what she had signed, without it being obviously for the audience's sake. It was done so well that I felt as if I could understand the sign language. The second aspect is the use of sound. In general this is a very "soundy" movie - from waves crashing on a beach to hearing impaired kids listening to a stereo system (loud!). The few moments of silence were very effective (e.g a deaf people's party). In addition to the love-story drama, the film has many comedic moments. I really liked these - they were not the usual kind of slapstick or set up jokes, but rather depended on you (the audience) knowing and understanding the characters involved. For example, Hurt gets one kid to talk by making the kid swear out loud to him instead of signing. Then later on the kid swears at Hurt in inappropriate places (well I guess you had to be there!) My only, minor, gripe is that Hurt's

character is unbelievably "together" - he's never unsure of himself.  
This is an excellent film and I think you should go and see it. A solid  
+4 on the Leeper scale, or \*\*\*\*.