

3. I think the whole honors thing is getting out of hand. There are just too many honors given. You don't hear all that much about Japan giving people honors, do you? No, they understand teamwork; they don't single out individuals for honors. Kids today who

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graduate high school with honors can't read a book. The film industry has this giant dumb event each year to honor filmmakers, yet films seem to get worse. This year Jodie Foster won Best Performance by an Actress. Jodie Foster! I don't know if they thought she deserved it or if they were just trying to impress her. But what really goes against the grain is that some people have the brass to stand up and ask to be honored. Well, it's a common thing in the film industry around nomination time to see ads that say, "For your consideration: Sylvester Stallone for Best Actor in O_v_e_r_t_h_e_T_o_p." Well, if you have to campaign for an honor it does not seem like it is really an honor. It has always seemed to me that if you have to ask for an honor, it really isn't an honor. I mean you don't have people saying, "Uh, can I have a Nobel Prize, please?" You feel really good if you get a Nobel Prize, but in large part because it was really someone else's idea. You cannot really request an honor or it really isn't an honor.

What brought all this up? Well, two close friends are getting married and I just got an invitation. It starts out naming the parents--really nice people, this is no reflection on them--and say that they request the honor of my presence at the wedding....

4. The above commentary on honors was written before Mark knew about all the brouhaha about the bloc voting in the Hugo nominations. This is an example of synchronicity.

And the confusion continues. Noreascon III has just released the following:

The following nominees should be deleted from the list:

THE GUARDSMAN (Best Novel) Todd
Cameron Hamilton (Best Professional
Artist)

In addition the text on the bottom half of the release's first page should be replaced by:

In counting the nominations, we observed a significant pattern of what appeared to us to be bloc voting, amounting to over 50 votes in some categories. The number of these votes was sufficient to place nominees on the final ballot in five categories. More seriously, about half of these ballots were received with new Supporting Memberships, nearly all of which appeared to have been paid for by the same person or persons (the payments were made with blocks of consecutively-numbered \$20

money orders, purchased at the same post office). We were highly disturbed by this practice. While we did not consider it appropriate to invalidate the ballots in question, we did not wish any potential nominee to be deprived of a place on the ballot because of them. We therefore added a sixth nominee to the ballot in those categories where the presumed bloc voting had been successful (except where fifth-place ties had already produced the same result). We recognize that there is nothing in the WSFS Constitution authorizing this action; however, we felt that this was the course which would do the least damage to the Hugo process. For the same reason, we allowed on the ballot Campbell Award nominees with only 11 of 230 votes, marginally below the 5%

required by Hugo rules. We trust the voters will render an appropriate judgement.

After the original version of this press release was distributed, we were asked by Todd Cameron Hamilton, on behalf of himself and P.J. Beese, to remove from the ballot the following nominees: The Guardsman, by P.J. Beese and Todd Cameron Hamilton, from the Novel category; and Todd Cameron Hamilton, from the Professional Artist category. These nominees were among the beneficiaries of the bloc voting described above. Because we are satisfied that Mr. Hamilton did not take part in arranging the bloc vote or purchasing memberships for voters, we have agreed to his request to remove the nominees in question from the ballot; we have also eliminated the list of categories affected by the bloc voting. We wish to emphasize that we have not clearly established who was responsible for the bloc voting; any inferences that people may have drawn as to who was

responsible are not supported by the published facts.

We request that you pass on these changes to anyone whom you may have notified of the contents of the original release.

In an unrelated change, we have been asked to list the editors of Niekas (Best Fanzine) as Edmund R.

Meskys, Mike Bastraw, and Anne Braude. This change will also be made on the ballot.

[-ecl]

5. The following convention announcement comes from Kimiye Tipton, our member in the sunny South:

OASIS 2 (May 19-21 '89) Howard Johnson's Florida Center, Orlando FL; rms \$49. GoH: Mike Resnick. AGoH: Ingrid Neilson. FGoH: Chosen by drawing open to all members. Filk GoH: Joe and Gay Haldeman. Special Guests: Andre Norton, Robert Adams, Brad Linaweaver, Charles L. Fontenay, Richard Byers, Jack C. Haldeman, many more. Memb: \$15 to 4/15/89, \$18 at door, \$8 Fri, Sun; \$10 Sat only. Info: OASIS 2, P.O. Box 616469, Orlando, FL 32861-6469.

6. The attached theatre reviews of R_i_c_h_a_r_d_I_I, and S_i_n_g_l_e_S_p_i_e_s are from our recent trip to London, as was the review of T_h_e_S_e_c_r_e_t_o_f_S_h_e_r_l_o_c_k_H_o_l_m_e_s last week. The review of C_h_u_C_h_e_m (in honor of Passover) is based on the Broadway production. [-ecl]

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

There is no perfect knowledge which can be entitled ours, that is innate; none but what has been obtained from experience, or derived in some way from our senses; all knowledge, at all events, is examined by these, approved by them, and finally presents itself to us firmly grounded upon some pre-existing knowledge which we possessed; because without memory there is no experience, which is nothing else than reiterated memory; in like manner memory cannot exist without endurance of the things perceived, and the thing perceived cannot remain wher it has never been.

-- William Harvey (1578-1657)

MIRRORSHADES edited by Bruce Sterling
ACE SF, ISBN 0-441-53382-5, \$3.50
A book review by Andy Castineiras
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A long, long time ago, back soon after the publication of "Sand Kings" by George R. R. Martin in O_m_n_i Magazine, I stopped reading the fiction in that monthly journal. "Sand Kings" was perhaps the last great short sf story to be printed in O_m_n_i, everything since then seems to pale in comparison.

What, you might ask, does O_m_n_i have to do with MIRRORSHADES? It turns out that I may have been missing out on a whole new revolution in sf, by not reading those stories in O_m_n_i (but maybe not, read on). Many of the stories in this collection first appeared in O_m_n_i between 1982 and 1986.

This anthology contains twelve short stories written by self-proclaimed luminaries of cyberpunk such as William Gibson, Greg Bear and the editor Bruce Sterling (who manages to get two stories he co-authored into the collection).

For those of you that know nothing about CYBERPUNK (like me) and would like to find out what all the fuss is about, you may want to read this book. The preface by Sterling gives a rather detailed history of the Cyberpunk movement, also called Radical Hard SF, the Eighties Wave and the Mirrorshades Group (according to Sterling), hence the name of the book.

The first story is by Gibson and is called "The Gernsback Continuum." It is an amusing story of a whigged out traveling salesman who has a serious reality problem. The story was Gibson's first professional sale back in 1981. It is one of the most enjoyable stories in the collection, but is it sf, you decide (I vote no), at least it wasn't depressing.

"Snake Eyes" by Tom Maddox was originally published in O_m_n_i April 1986. It is a serious piece of sf, to me it represents the best of what cyberpunk has to offer. It is the disturbing story of a veteran who must deal with a piece of hardware that the Air Force left in his head is not my idea of sf, it is not my idea of cyberpunk, it's just weird.

"Tales of Houdini" by Rudy Rucker is another weird story. It follows the unlikely exploits of one Harry Houdini, a truly bizarre story.

"400 Boys" by Marc Laidlaw is also from O_m_n_i (Nov 1983). I actually read this one when it was first published. I didn't understand it then, and I don't understand it now. At least it is more like

traditional sf than the previous two stories. It involves a number of gangs in a post holocaust city who come up against the new gang in town (and boy are they big and bad).

"Solstice" by James Patrick Kelly is an intriguing story which follows the life of a well known "drug artist." It tells a fascinating story of a world in which recreational drug use is a fine art. One of the most well written pieces in the collection.

"Petra" by Greg Bear (_O_m_n_i Feb 82) is a pseudo-religious story that deals with a half-stone, half-human central character. It takes place in an alternate reality world where cities disappeared and statues came to life and co-mingled with "real" people. A depressing, weird story.

"Till Human Voices Wake Us" is by Lewis Shiner. This is the provocative story of a scientist obsessed with finding out what his company is up to in a fenced off region of water off a beautiful south pacific island. He finds out more than he ever wanted to know. The story fits my idea of what cyberpunk is, and maybe just plain sf.

"Freezone" by John Shirley is the story of a rock singer in a time of more sophisticated entertainments. The protagonist falls in with a group of international do-gooders who are out to "Make a difference." An interesting story, full of dark descriptions and foul language, it has something, but doesn't quite make it.

"Stone Lives" by Paul DiFilippo sounds like a sequel to "Petra" from the title, but it is not. The story deals with a blind man named Stone from the "Bungle" (Bronx Free Enterprise Zone or Bronx FEP or Bronx Zoo or Bronx Jungle hence BUNGLE). The Bronx has been fenced in and the "undesirables" kept inside. They can only leave if they get jobs. Stone is selected, apparently at random, to perform a unique kind of job, with very interesting results. Another depressing, dark tale from the masters of cyberpunk, nonetheless, it is interesting reading (especially for someone from DA BRONX, like me)!

"Red Star, Winter Orbit" by Bruce Sterling and William Gibson is another fugitive from _O_m_n_i (July 1983). I also read this when it first was published. It is the interesting story of a Soviet space station in its last days of operation. The premise is that while the USSR

continued their move into space, the US stopped, and now the USSR is also losing interest in space and want to shut down the station. This piece easily qualifies as sf, and perhaps as cyberpunk as well. The ending is surprising and somewhat uplifting. This is perhaps the best story of the collection.

The final story is "Mozart in Mirrorshades" by Sterling and Lewis Shiner. It is also from O m n i (Sept 1985), and I also read it when it first came out. The story involves a mission to an alternate 18th Century Earth to send oil and other riches back to "realtime," a period sometime in our future. We meet many figures from that period,

Mirrorshades

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including our friend Mozart. The story is very entertaining and fun. It's amazing what rock music and blue jeans can do to 18th Century Europe. A fitting end to a predominantly down beat book.

I really can't recommend this book. The only thing that I can say is that if you want to decide if you like cyberpunk, then read this book. You will k n o w by the time you finish it! It helps to read one story at a time and watch alot of TV sitcoms in between to lighten your mood before you trust yourself back into the black world of cyberpunk. This lot of authors are one down-beat bunch of guys!

SAY ANYTHING

A film review by Mark R. Leeper

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Capsule review: One more comedy about high school dating, yet for once one that can be enjoyed by adults. John Mahoney is excellent as the father of the school valedictorian and John Cusack is nearly as good as a brash and quirky kick-boxer intent on wooing Mahoney's daughter. Rating: +2.

There must be at least a hundred high school dating movies made each year by Hollywood since there are about two new ones on cable each week. It would be very easy to assume that this type of film had been

all mined out and that there was not much more that could be done with it. But in fact there is always room in any genre for a film of fresh and well-observed characters. Humans like looking at humans and seeing how humans behave. James Bonds are fun to watch too, or sexy mannequins doing unrealistic things under some circumstances, but a film that shows fresh and real people will always be a joy to watch. S_a_y_A_n_y_t_h_i_n_g is unique and a very human comedy/drama.

Diane Court (played by Ione Skye) has it all. She is class valedictorian, she has won a prestigious fellowship to study in England, she is beautiful, and in all probability she has butterscotch in her veins. Lloyd Dobler (played by John Cusack) is not good-looking and is below average in his class. He has no goals except to be a better kick-boxer and to date Diane. Sound familiar? Except for the valedictorian part it has been done hundreds of times. Give the film half an hour and you will start to like this film a lot better, particularly James Court, played superbly by John Mahoney, who goes from bemused at Lloyd, to protective of his daughter through a lot more changes until he becomes the focal point of the film. S_a_y_A_n_y_t_h_i_n_g goes from a teen comedy to a very solid drama of human interaction.

The writer/director of S_a_y_A_n_y_t_h_i_n_g is Cameron Crowe, who is best known for screenwriting F_a_s_t_T_i_m_e_s_a_t_R_i_d_g_e_m_o_n_t_H_i_g_h based on his novel of the same name. That film was about 90% teen comedy but had a surprisingly solid piece of human drama at its core. This time the comedy is more even balanced with the drama. S_a_y_A_n_y_t_h_i_n_g joins T_e_r_m_s_o_f_E_n_d_e_a_r_m_e_n_t and B_r_o_a_d_c_a_s_t_N_e_w_s as a James L. Brooks produced film. of a woman choosing between love and loyalty. That may, of course, be coincidental, but because each triangle is resolved in a different and believable way, the films make an excellent trilogy. Through unlike Debra Winger and Holly Hunter, Ione Skye cannot quite hold her own for audience interest against the other two vertices. While it is not quite the strength of a B_r_o_a_d_c_a_s_t_N_e_w_s (nor probably T_e_r_m_s_o_f_E_n_d_e_a_r_m_e_n_t, though I am not as fond of that film), S_a_y_A_n_y_t_h_i_n_g does the nearly impossible of making a satisfying film from a high school dating comedy. I rate it a +2 on the -4 to +4 scale.

CITIZEN VAMPIRE by Les Daniels
Charles Scribner's Sons, 1981, ISBN 0-684-16827-8, \$9.95
A book review by Mark R. Leeper
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CitizenVampire is the third of four novels so far written by Les Daniels featuring the vampire Don Sebastian de Villaneuva. The books in the series are:

TheBlackCastle
TheSilverSkull
CitizenVampire
YellowFog

At least initially Daniels seemed to make Don Sebastian different than more romantic vampire heroes such as Chelsea Quinn Yarbro's handsome St. Germaine. Yarbro's vampire could lead an almost normal (or should I say human-like) life if he just kept the dirt of his homeland in the heels of his shoes. He became a sort of typical dashing romance novel hero so Yarbro could write what were basically romance novels. Daniels, by making his vampire a little more revolting, made him considerably less unctuous. Don Sebastian was not a vampire of the drawing room, but of the graveyard. Don Sebastian would tease his brother by making faces at him: Sebastian would roll his eyes into his head and blow smoke out of the empty eye sockets. That is a scene far more vivid than any Yarbro creates by describing what all the characters were wearing. That is one reason why I keep reading Don Sebastian novels while I gave up on St. Germaine after only one novel, HotelTransylvania.

There is, however, an unfortunate sameness to the Don Sebastian novels. Each seems to be set in some historical period of great turmoil. TheBlackCastle was set in the Spanish Inquisition,

Silver
Skull in Cortez's conquest of Moctezuma's Mexico, and Citizen
Vampire in
the French Reign of Terror. Don Sebastian is revived only at the worst times of history and as such gets a very distorted view of mankind, not unlike the time traveler in George Pal's film of TheTimeMachine.
The

theme of each book is the same: that we do not need the supernatural for real horror, that humans with the power to do so can be far more horrifying than anything the supernatural has to offer. Daniels has given in to the temptation of putting his vampire in only the worst of times and then making him a sort of nihilistic moralist. Don Sebastian has crossed over from being anti-hero to being hero, not unlike St. Germaine.

It is perhaps a mistake for Daniels to have Don Sebastian keep turning up only at humanity's darkest hours. Jerzy Kosinski, in his excellent PaintedBird, portrayed a world of far greater horror because it was no less cruel in time when there was no Holocaust--the cruelty was only less focused. Don Sebastian could turn up nearly any time and place in history and find equal cruelty. In CitizenVampire, Don Sebastian is revived during the French Reign of Terror by a sorceror in

the pay of a rather stupid and fatuous wife of a French nobleman. We care little for her at first, but as the story progresses she becomes more an innocent among wolves. Along the way Don Sebastian meets his usual quota of historical notables, including the Marquis de Sade and Dr. Guillotin. We are privy to discussions on the feasibility of mass execution by guillotine and discussions of just how fast death is. The book's most imaginative sequence follows the thoughts of a victim through an actual guillotining and the moments after.

While this is the least engaging Don Sebastian novel to date, it has its moments of wit and of horror. And Daniels is that rare breed among horror writers today, an author who can tell his story in two hundred pages and who does not mark time to build up word count. You could spend a worse evening.

RICHARD II

A West End theatre review by Mark R. Leeper
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I have a very bad memory when it comes to Shakespeare. It is difficult for me to remember for long that I really like and enjoy Shakespeare plays. I usually go into them wondering if I will be able to figure out what people are saying and if the story will be of interest. And of course I rarely find a Shakespeare production that I do not find I have thoroughly enjoyed and for which my fears were groundless.

Derek Jacobi is, of course, masterful as Richard II, who made the mistake of believing that God wanted him to be king. He uses that belief as license to do much as he pleases as king, making enemies as he goes. When one of his banished enemies returns to England intent on

deposing him, Richard's reaction is one of incredulity that mere men could so oppose the manifest will of God. He soon finds out, however, that kings can be deposed and that God is quite willing to let it happen. Richard's almost childlike feeling of betrayal and regret form the emotional core of the play.

Jacobi's performance is powerful and very emotional, though occasionally his tendency to spit when he talks is a bit distracting and probably is unwelcome by his fellow actors. Still, it is clear that it is Jacobi that the audiences have come to see and the play is mostly his performance.

CHU CHEM

A Broadway theatre review by Mark R. Leeper

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It is called C _ h _ u _ C _ h _ e _ m and it bills itself as "the first Chinese-Jewish musical." That conjures up memories of the 1950s when movies would come out claiming to be the first film in Techno-vista-rama. Leeper's Second Constant is 90.3%: when a play or film comes out billing itself as the first something, 90.3% of the time there will be no others. I think that will probably be the case here. It seems like a natural to bring in two well-educated ethnic groups to the theatre and perhaps it would have if they had concentrated on the Chinese culture as much as on the Jewish.

I do not know a whole lot about Chinese culture, but I do know enough to be able to tell when somebody else does not either and those alarms went off almost immediately when the play started. The first two people on the stage went into a martial arts posture. Well, yes, there are martial arts in Chinese culture and even in Chinese opera, but it seems to be much more important in modern Americans' view of historic China than it ought to be. Questionable but forgivable. Then one of the characters of the court of the prince is wearing a small black hat of a design that I have always associated with the Japanese court. Well ... maybe they wore them both places. And maybe not. Then they show a screen with the ying-yang symbol surrounded by the eight trigrams of the

_ I _ C _ h _ i _ n _ g except that there are only seven different trigrams on the screen with one showing up twice. Very sloppy. The final straw, however, is toward the end of the play when one of the characters dresses for war in a samurai helmet. Ted Allen, who wrote play, seems to think that Chinese wars were more bloodless competitions at making the loudest noise. A pleasant concept, but hardly one with a basis in truth. Well, while the play bills itself as "Chinese-Jewish," there was not one Chinese face in the audience. Understandably. Each act opens with the admonition to the audience that they must "orient" themselves to the Chinese way of thinking. My response would be, "You first."

The story, set in the 14th Century, tells of how the Jewish Chu Chem, his daughter, and his brother-in-law come to Kaifeng, China, looking for a fabled community of Jews who had migrated to China many years earlier. If you want to picture Chu Chem, picture Tevye from

_ F _ i _ d _ d _ l _ e _ r _ o _ n _ t _ h _ e _ R _ o _ o _ f. And if Chu Chem has stepped out of

_ F _ i _ d _ d _ l _ e _ r, his daughter Lotte has stepped out of the 1980s. We are to believe that Jewish women's attitudes have not changed in six hundred years and that women's liberation was a common Jewish attitude in the Middle Ages. The local prince and Lotte fall in love, but Lotte will not marry him until he frees his concubines--at first happy in their state, but who come to see that the liberated way is better--and until he agrees to have only one wife. And thereby hangs the sadly featherweight tale.

Chu Chem

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The actors in _ C _ h _ u _ C _ h _ e _ m are a real disappointment also. Mark Zeller in the title role seems to be reciting lines rather than responding to what is being said to him. Most of the cast seem to rely on the songs to convey emotion, but the songs are surprisingly weak. The stage visual effects--and there are two, a river and an explosion--work like Albert Marre, who staged the play, never watched it from the audience.

_ C _ h _ u _ C _ h _ e _ m is currently playing to audiences two-thirds of which are empty seats. New Yorkers know a good thing when they see it.

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SINGLE SPIES

A West End theatre review by Mark R. Leeper
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Simply put, I have the feeling I missed the point of SingleSpies and cannot in fairness pass judgement on the quality of the play. I did not greatly enjoy SingleSpies. The play is really two short plays, each involving a famous mole in British intelligence. "An Englishman Abroad" is a dramatization of an actual meeting in the Soviet Union of Guy Burgess, defected spy, and Coral Browne, British actress. They spend an uncomfortable hour or so together, then Browne returns to England and tries to procure for Burgess a suit and some pajamas. This was the more interesting of the two plays.

"A Question of Attribution" follows Anthony Blunt in the period after he has been discovered to be a Soviet agent but before it has been made public. Blunt, who holds the position of Surveyor of the Queen's Pictures, is questioned by a boorish security officer with a budding interest in art. Blunt then goes to the Palace where he has a long, dull conversation with a somewhat ditzy and vacant Queen Elizabeth. The conversation is, however, fraught with double meanings concerning Blunt's odd position of unrevealed traitor. It is unclear if the Queen is aware of his crimes or not.

If there was more going on, I missed it. Seemingly a pointless play.