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Mt. Holz Science Fiction Society
Club Notice - 3/11/88 -- Vol. 6, No. 37

MEETINGS UPCOMING:

Unless otherwise stated, all meetings are on Wednesdays at noon.
LZ meetings are in LZ 3A-206; MT meetings are in the cafeteria.

 D A T E T O P I C

- 03/16 MT: Best SF Movies of 1987
- 03/23 LZ: THE WATCHMAN Graphic Novel by Alan Moore & Dave Gibbons
(Comics and Graphic Novels)
- 04/06 MT: TBD
- 04/13 LZ: THE SKYLARK OF SPACE by E. E. "Doc" Smith (Space Opera)
- 05/04 LZ: THE WAYFARER TRILOGY by Dennis Schmidt (Symbiotic Life,
Alternate History, and Zen Buddhism)
- 05/25 LZ: THE MAKING OF 2001 by Jerry Abel (The Creative Process)
- 06/15 LZ: The Oz Books by Frank L. Baum (Oz)

 D A T E E X T E R N A L M E E T I N G S / C O N V E N T I O N S / E T C.

- 03/19 New Jersey Science Fiction Society: "Space: The Next Frontier"
(C. Divine) (phone 201-432-5965 for details)
- 04/01 Con: Balticon, Baltimore. GOH: Spider Robinson.
-04/03 (Info: Balticon 22, P.O. Box 686, Baltimore, MD 21203)
- 04/09 Science Fiction Association of Bergen County: TBA
(phone 201-933-2724 for details)

HO Chair: John Jetzt HO 1E-525 834-1563 mtuxo!jetzt
LZ Chair: Rob Mitchell LZ 1B-306 576-6106 mtuxo!jrrt
MT Chair: Mark Leeper MT 3E-433 957-5619 mtgzz!leeper
HO Librarian: Tim Schroeder HO 3M-420 949-5866 homxb!tps
LZ Librarian: Lance Larsen LZ 3L-312 576-6142 lzfme!lfl
MT Librarian: Will Harmon MT 3C-406 957-5128 mtgzz!wch
Factotum: Evelyn Leeper MT 1F-329 957-2070 mtgzy!ecl
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1. You like spy series? I want to recommend a very good television series that WLIW (broadcast channel 21; location unknown on your

cable system) is starting to run for a third and probably last time. I have yet to talk with anyone who watched the series who didn't think it was great (and so far I've talked to more than a dozen or so people). (Blaine Garst, who [wrongly] told me the first episode was not as great as I'd claimed, later returned to

THE MT VOID

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lord over me how I'd missed an episode and he'd seen the entire series.) The series is T_h_e_S_a_n_d_b_a_g_g_e_r_s. WLIW will run it at 10:30 on Thursday nights and re-run it the following Sunday night at 11:30-ish.

T_h_e_S_a_n_d_b_a_g_g_e_r_s is a series of stories about the Special Operations Unit of the British Secret Intelligence Service. Each episode is a one-hour, self-contained story, but as a whole the series also tells a story. The series shows that even in escapist television, British television can be really excellent. When WLIW ran T_h_e_S_a_n_d_b_a_g_g_e_r_s the first time, the series was the high point of my week. Seriously, if you get WLIW and like spy stories, watch T_h_e_S_a_n_d_b_a_g_g_e_r_s.

2. This is a punk notice. It has (painfully) stapled to it a list of the sf/horror/fantasy films of 1987. It is undergoing this torture to prove it is macho and so that you can pick out your choice for best genre films of last year and discuss them at the next Middletown meeting, March 16, MT Cafeteria, at the stroke of High Noon. If you do not plan to attend, the least you can do is take out a pair of scissors and give the notice a Mohawk. Heavy, man!

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

VICE VERSA

A film review by Mark R. Leeper
Copyright 1988 Mark R. Leeper

Capsule review: Father and son trade bodies in what seems an unpromising comedy-fantasy but which breathes new life into an old concept. V_i_c_e_V_e_r_s_a compares favorably with the Thorne Smith fantasy-comedies of the 1940s. Judge Reinhold's and Fred Savage's acting is very much on target. Rating: +2.

Thorne Smith was the master of the sophisticated supernatural comedy. Back in the 1920s and 1930s he wrote a series of sophisticated comic novels including T_h_e_P_a_s_s_i_o_n_a_t_e_W_i_t_c_h and N_i_g_h_t_L_i_f_e_o_f_t_h_e_G_o_d_s, though his best-known series were the "Topper" books. Hollywood 1940s comedy fantasies including T_u_r_n_a_b_o_u_t,I_M_a_r_r_i_e_d_a_W_i_t_c_h, and the "Topper" series were based on his novels. T_u_r_n_a_b_o_u_t involved the comic effects of a man and a woman who somehow trade minds. The same idea of variations has been tried in films with uneven results. Not too long

ago there was a reputedly terrible film on this theme called L_i_k_e
F_a_t_h_e_r, L_i_k_e S_o_n in which a father and son change places. Dudley Moore
played first the father, then the son. It appeared to be one more step
down in Moore's career, which has been spotty since the hilarious
B_e_d_a_z_z_l_e_d. Now, perhaps too soon afterwards, another film has come out
on the same theme and this one, I must say, is worthy of the Thorne
Smith tradition.

Seymour Marshall (played by Judge Reinhold in one of his first
adult roles) is an executive for a large department store who, through a
smuggling slip-up, has come into possession of a magical skull from
Tibet. While caring for his son while his ex-wife is on vacation, he
whimsically wishes to trade places with his son Charlie (played by Fred
Savage). For once whimsey does make it so. Now such a plot can be and
has been done well or poorly. V_i_c_e V_e_r_s_a does it about as well as it
can be done. Dick Clement and Ian LaFrenais, who produced the script
the film as well as wrote the script, have really creative imaginations
for comic situations. The result is a story that is not just cute but
genuinely very funny. The film's only real false step is to mix in a
cliched subplot with criminals and chases, but it remains a small part
of the plot and even it is resolved in a novel manner.

The acting is surprisingly good by both Reinhold and Savage, who
play the father and son (or v_i_c_e v_e_r_s_a) under the direction of Brian
Gilbert. Each has a feel for the mannerisms of the other. Savage is
staid and dignified with a dominant edge; Reinhold's eleven-year-old boy
is sloppy and explosive with a great feel for physical comedy. Savage
as the father pretending to be the son finds seventh grade a breeze, but
dealing with seventh grade bullies takes more than just an "enlightened,
mature" approach. Reinhold's little boy as department store executive,
dealing with what he calls "yin-yangs" and what the credits call "the
backstabbers," has a winning ingenuous quality. V_i_c_e V_e_r_s_a was a very
pleasant surprise. Rate it a low +2 on the -2 to +4 scale.

FRANTIC

A film review by Mark R. Leeper
Copyright 1988 Mark R. Leeper

Capsule review: Harrison Ford stars in a
straightforward thriller from writer/director Roman
Polanski. While mostly done in Hitchcock's style, it
manages more credibility at the expense of some of the
panache. Rating: +1.

Richard Walker (played by Harrison Ford) is in Paris for a medical convention. He banter with his wife on the way to the hotel, checks in, and takes a shower. When he comes out of the shower his wife seems to have stepped out. Room service brings in an ordered breakfast and Walker eats it and takes a nap. When he wakes up, still no wife. He goes to the lobby to look for her. One by one, he checks out possibilities of what could have happened to her. Soon his worst fears are confirmed. He learns that she has been kidnapped. The police are surly; the American authorities can do nothing. Walker has to take matters into his own hands. This is not too original a plot and, in truth, much of F_r_a_n_t_i_c has a ring of familiarity. In some ways it follows the classic style of a Hitchcock thriller. The one-word title, the innocent bystander hero, a genuine McGuffin, even rooftop struggles. Where it strays from being Hitchcockian is in its nearly humorless approach and its cold-fish hero. Harrison Ford is nowhere near a personable one as a Cary Grant or a James Stewart. That makes the acting a few steps closer to reality, but the viewer is left to guess what the character must be feeling rather than feeling with the character. We are drawn to Harrison Ford, but at arm's length. With Hitchcock and the right actor we would actually be living the adventure with the character. On the other hand, with most Hitchcock films it would be easier to pick holes in the plot. Even a V_e_r_t_i_g_o has a plot that entirely hinges on a man recognizing a specific Spanish villa from a description from somebody's dream. Following the initial events that set the action of F_r_a_n_t_i_c in motion, events follow a suspenseful but logical course. (The major unexplained point of the film is how an action that was not intended to be a kidnapping--and seemingly could easily have avoided being turned into one--was so botched.)

Ford's search for his missing wife takes him to, if not Paris's underbelly, at least somewhere below Paris's waist. His best clue leads him to Michelle, a sinuous drugged punker played by Emmanuelle Seigner, who provides a somewhat less innocent bystander to the plot and provides the attractive female lead required in any Roman-Polanski-directed film. As a cliché-buster, however, Walker reacts with total disinterest to Michelle's attempts at seduction. First, last, and always, he is in this to get back his wife (played by Betty Buckley, who played a sympathetic teacher in C_a_r_r_i_e, a sympathetic mother in E_i_g_h_t_I_s_E_n_o_u_g_h, and an unsympathetic singer in T_e_n_d_e_r_M_e_r_c_i_e_s).

F_r_a_n_t_i_c is a surprisingly straightforward thriller from director and co-scripter Roman Polanski, who is usually known for more convoluted and psychological storylines. Rate it a high +1 on the -4 to +4 scale.

GOOD MORNING, BABYLON
A film review by Mark R. Leeper
Copyright 1988 Mark R. Leeper

Capsule review: At last--the untold story that film historians have been waiting for: the mammoth epic story of how the elephants were sculpted for the Babylon set of I_n_t_o_l_e_r_a_n_c_e and the tragic story of the men who devoted their lives so that you and I might have better elephants. A slightly overdone Italian film about the early days of Hollywood. Rate it a slightly bemused -2.

Right now you are probably asking yourself why it is that it was the United States and not Italy that for so many years dominated the international film market even after that great Italian masterpiece of 1913, C_a_b_i_r_i_a, directed by Giovanni Pastione. Well, Italian directors Paolo and Vittorio Taviani have brought the whole sordid story of how two poor brothers from Italy saved Hollywood by sculpting the elephants for the Babylon set of D. W. Griffith's I_n_t_o_l_e_r_a_n_c_e.

Ah, yes. What a gripping tale it is, as two young architect-sculptors find themselves out of work in Italy and come to the United States only to find that they can be employed only as pig-herders. But talents like theirs cannot remain hidden long and soon they become plasterers for the great San Francisco Exposition. Meanwhile, D. W. Griffith sees C_a_b_i_r_i_a and is stunned. It is greater than anything he ever did. How can an American hope to compete with the great Italian film industry? And what impressed D. W. the most? The great stone elephant! D. W. cancels his current film. He must make a film with stone elephants. But where can he find someone with talent enough to sculpt truly great elephants? In the nick of time he sees the Italian architecture at the San Francisco Exposition and asks to get the same geniuses.

But the boys' troubles are not over yet. They still must overcome genuine intolerance before they can achieve their destiny and sculpt the elephants for the Babylon set of the film I_n_t_o_l_e_r_a_n_c_e. Their troubles aren't even over when, on the premiere night of I_n_t_o_l_e_r_a_n_c_e, D. W. Griffith cannot accept the applause of the audience. He defers the credit to where it is really due, to the two Italian boys who sculpted the elephants for the Babylon set. Then destiny separates the brothers only to bring them together once again on a World War I Italian battlefield where, dying together, too weak to struggle to get help, they find strength enough to film each other dying. Their last effort is to leave a lasting momento for the kids at home and all those legions of fans of the stone elephants in the Babylon set of I_n_t_o_l_e_r_a_n_c_e.

Believe it or not, G_o_o_d_M_o_r_n_i_n_g,_B_a_b_y_l_o_n was not a comedy. And the same directors did the very fine N_i_g_h_t_o_f_t_h_e_S_h_o_o_t_i_n_g_S_t_a_r_s. Harlan

Ellison can rest easy. Somebody finally made a sappier film about Hollywood than his film T_h_e_O_s_c_a_r. Rate this one a -2 on the -4 to +4 scale. Oh, an historical note: C_a_b_i_r_i_a did make something of a splash at the time and had one indelible effect on the Italian film industry. This 1913 film introduced the character Machiste, who has returned in countless Italian strongman films. Many times his name shows up as Atlas or Samson or Goliath in the English translation, but in Italian it was Machiste.

Dramatic Presentations Eligible for the 1988 Hugo

Alien Predator (Falling), Allan Quatermain and the Lost City of Gold, Amazon Women on the Moon, Amazons, America 3000, American Gothic, Amerika (TVM), Angel Heart, Anguish, As Time Goes By, Barbarians, Bates Motel (TVM), Batteries Not Included, Bay Coven (TVM), Bear-Skinned Man (Der Barenhauter), Beauty and the Beast (TV), Believers, Bigfoot (TVM), Blood Diner, Blood Frenzy, Blood Hook, Blood Sisters, Blue Monkey (Green Monkey), Brave Little Toaster, Burning Sands (Areias Escaldantes), Bus, Caller, Care Bears Adventure in Wonderland!, Charmings (TV), Chine Ghost Story, Chipmunk Adventure, Claymation Christmas Celebration (TV), Coda, Creepozoids, Creepshow II, Cry Wilderness, Curse, Date with an Angel, Deathrow Gameshow, Deathstalker II, Deranged, Disney's Golden Anniversary of Snow White & the Seven Dwarfs (TV), Distant Lights, Dolls, Down & Out with Donald Duck (TV), Duck Tales (TVN), Eat the Rich, Edge of Hell (Rock 'n' Roll Nightmare), Enchanted Forest (Bosque Animado), Equalizer 2000, Evil Dead II, Evil Town, Fatal Attraction, Final Test, Fire and Ice (TVM), Flowers in the Attic, Frenchman's Farm, Friday the 13th (TV), From a Whisper to a Scream, Garbage Pail Kids Movie, Garfield Christmas Special (TV), Gate, Ghost Fever, Ghost of a Change (TVM), Gor, Hansel and Gretel, Harry and the Hendersons, Haunted by Her Past (TVM), Haunting of Barney Palmer (TV), Hauntings III (TV), He, the Dolphin (Ele, o Boto), Heaven, Hello Again, Hellraiser, Hidden, Highway to Heaven (TVM), House II: The Second Story, Hungarian Fairy Tale (Hol Volt, Hol Nem Volt), Hyperspace, I Was a Teenage Zombie, Infiltrator (TV), InnerSpace, Invisible Man (Der Unsichtbare), Iron Warrior (Echoes of Wizardry), It's Alive 3: Island of the Alive (Island of the Alive), Jane and the Lost City, Jar, Jaws 4: The Revenge (Jaws '87), Julia and Julia, Killer Workout (Aerobicide), Kindred, King Dong, Laputa (Tenku no shiro Laputa), Like Father Like Son, Living Daylights, Long Live the New Flesh (TV), Lost Boys, Made in Heaven, Magic Snowman (Winter's Tale), Making Mr. Right, Making Mr. Right, Man Facing Southeast, Man Who Fell to Earth (TVM), Mannequin, Marsupials: The Howling III, Masters of the Universe, Max Headroom (TV), Mind Killer (Brain

Creature), Mio in the Land of Faraway, Miracles, Monster Squad, Munchies, Muppet Family Christmas (TV), Murder Lust (Mass Murderer), Mutant Hunt, My Demon Lover, Near Dark, Necropolis, Night Screams, Nightflyers, Nightmare at Shadow Woods, Nightmare on Elm Street 3: Dream Warriors, Not Quite Human (TVM), Offspring, Once a Hero, Open House, Opera, Oracle, Out of This World, Out on a Limb (TVM), Outing, Phantom of the Opera (TH), Poison for Fairies (Veneno para las Hadas), Possessed--The Dracula Musical (TH), Possession--Until Death Do You Part, Predator, Prince of Darkness, Princess Bride, Prison Ship (Star Slammer) (Adventures of Taura Part I), Programmed to Kill (Retaliator), Project X, Psycho Girls, Psychos in Love, Puppetoon Movie, Quest Beyond Time (TV), Raising Arizona, Rawhead Rex, Real Men, Red Riding Hood, Retribution, Return of Sherlock Holmes (TVM), Return of the Shaggy Dog (TVM), Return of the Six Million Man & the Bionic Woman (TVM), Return to Horror High, Robinson's Garden (Robinson No Niwa), Robocop, Robot Holocaust, Roxanne, Rumpelstiltskin, Running Man, Shadey, Silent Night, Deadly Night Part II, Slave Girls from Beyond Infinity, Slumber Beach Massacre, Sorceress (Moine et Le Sorciere), Sorority House Massacre, Space Rage, Spaceballs, Spirit, Stagefright, Star Trek: The Next Generation (TV), Steel Dawn, Stepfather, Stepford Children (TVM), Storyteller (TV), Stranded, Mistera Khaida, Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll & Mr. Hyde (Strannaya Istoriyar Doktora Dzhekila I Mistera Khaida, Stripped to Kill, Summer Camp Nightmare, Superfantozzi, Superman IV: The Quest for Peace, Surf Nazis Must Die, Teen Wolf Too, Terminus, Texas Comedy Massacre, Thanatos, Thirteenth Bride of the Prince (Trinajstata Godenica Na Princa), Thorny Way to the Stars, Time Guardian, Timestalkers (TVM), Tis the Season to Be Smurfy (TV), Too Much, Treasure Island (L'Isola del Tesoro) (TVM), Trouble with Dick, Video Violence: When Renting's Not Enough, Vision, Warrior Queen, Werewolf (TVM), What Waits Below, When the Wind Blows, Wild Thing, Wind, Witchcoard, Witches of Eastwick, Zero Boys, Zombie High, Zombie Nightmare

Hugo Award-Winning Novels

1953	The Demolished Man	Alfred Bester	
1954	[No awards given]		
1955	They'd Rather be Right	Mark Clifton and	Frank Riley
1956	Double Star	Robert A. Heinlein	
1957	[No fiction awards given]		
1958	The Big Time	Fritz Leiber	
1959	A Case of Conscience	James Blish	
1960	Starship Troopers	Robert A. Heinlein	
1961	A Canticle for Leibowitz	Walter M. Miller	
1962	Stranger in a Strange Land	Robert A. Heinlein	
1963	The Man in the High Castle	Philip K. Dick	
1964	Here Gather the Stars	Clifford D. Simak	
	(also titled: Way Station)		

1965	The Wanderer	Fritz Leiber
1966	...And Call me Conrad	Roger Zelazny
	(also titled: This Immortal)	
(tie)	Dune	Frank Herbert
1967	The Moon is a Harsh Mistress	Robert A. Heinlein
1968	Lords of Light	Roger Zelazny
1969	Stand on Zanzibar	John Brunner
1970	The Left Hand of Darkness	Ursula K. LeGuin
1971	Ringworld	Larry Niven
1972	To Your Scattered Bodies Go	Philip Jose' Farmer
1973	The Gods Themselves	Isaac Asimov
1974	Rendezvous With Rama	Arthur C. Clarke
1975	The Dispossessed	Ursula K. LeGuin
1976	The Forever War	Joe Haldeman
1977	Where Late the Sweet Birds Sang	Kate Wilhelm
1978	Gateway	Fred Pohl
1979	Dreamsnake	Vonda N. McIntyre
1980	The Fountains of Paradise	Arthur C. Clarke
1981	The Snow Queen	Joan D. Vinge
1982	Downbelow Station	C. J. Cherryh
1983	Foundation's Edge	Isaac Asimov
1984	Startide Rising	David Brin
1985	Neuromancer	William Gibson
1986	Ender's Game	Orson Scott Card
1987	Speaker for the Dead	Orson Scott Card

Cyberhacker!
 (commentary-on-a-stick)
 by Dr. Odd

OK. The 64 Mbps question before us is this: Cyberpunk and the Hacker Ethic, is there a connection, or what?

Now, according to your relative cranial bandwidth you may think to yourself "The philosophical implications of this are staggering!" or "Haven't I got something better to do than read this tripe? After all, there are zits to pop and Twinkies to ingest." Well, since the answer is obvious (and by definition left as an exercise to the student), we shall plow bravely on into the glory of journalistic oblivion.

The obvious starting point is to define what a Hacker is. Personally I tend to favor the old fashioned definition, which effectively names a Hacker as that individual who Fiddles With The System. Further regressively (and anal retentively) defining our terms we can state that "The System" means the hard or soft aspects of technology (e.g. machines and the code that runs them), "Fiddles" means obsessively fondles, tweaks, and manipulates, "With" means the opposite of "Without," and, of course, "The" is one of those Zen concepts fully understood only by California Yuppies who attend those Human Potential seminars where everybody hugs a lot and no one is allowed to go to the bathroom. Wiggly, ain't it?

Now, I would be remiss in giving you your money's worth for this article if I did not note that in recent years the definition of a Hacker has evolved somewhat, mainly due to the mutating effects of cosmic rays on the minds of modern journalists. Our esteemed press, in its never-ending search for the pithy headline, has created the image of a pimply-faced youth breaking into the secret Pentagon nuclear code files with an Apple II and his mom's credit card. Behold, The Modern Media Hacker! Hacking has become synonymous with breaking into computer systems and trampling over the metaphorical daisies of the file system. The spate of FBI raids on teen wireheads addicted to stroking their software and the rash of media-inspired laws against breaking the System fence (so quickly embraced by the righteously telegenic politicians) contributed to this catchy label image. We, of course, know that there is more to this than that. Or the other. Zig it?

Having pedantically defined what a Hacker is (Isn't it nice to be classified boys? To be filed into the correct receptacle? Inserted into the appropriate sort slot? Collated into the right sequence? Gives you this deeply penetrating feeling deep in the retrospatial domain...) it is time to move on to the profoundly high-brow concept of The Hacker Ethic. Now, some people question the very existence of any

sort of ethical code as practiced by the Hacker community at large. Those people, the product of an excess of liberal arts education and lacking in the harsh experience of a null pointer at three in the morning, have the amusing notion that ethics has much to do with the high moral ground occupied by the corpses of Greek philosophers. As it happens they are wrong. (You saw that coming, didn't you?.)

Ethics refers to the standards of professional and moral conduct. The definition says nothing about the type of morality which is involved nor about the social standing of the profession. Thus we are perfectly free to make up our own definition of The Hacker Ethic, a common practice among scholars and informally known as "bullshitting for tenure." Once we do that we can go on to compare and contrast it with Cyberpunk values and really grab your flagging interest.

So let's classify the elements of The Hacker Ethic, hitting the obvious high points, which most people (and I use the term loosely) in the field would agree on:

- Throbbing creative urges directed at Breaking The System
- A deeply ethereal respect for authority
- Supernaturally intense technical curiosity
- Pathological persistence
- Not Getting Caught (Always a worthy goal in itself)
- A genetic predisposition for getting into things

(I suspect that this last bullet has a lot to do with the fact that the stupefying majority of Hackers are male, but don't tell Shere Hite I said so. Ah, yes! Psychology in a well-designed, sanitary, disposable pocket. It's all in the marketing.)

So how the hell does all this relate to Cyberpunk? Do you care? Well read on and find out? Dr. Odd has no problem telling you what you think.

I would argue that Cyberpunk has its roots firmly embedded in the flesh of the Hacker zombies. Basically, Cyberpunk is evolved directly out of bits and pieces of cultural DNA, with the Hacker ethic a major chain of molecules tossed into a blender, along with essence of Madison Avenue, Wall Street, Popart, Punk/New Wave music, High Tech, and low

life. Set it on puree, pour it out, throw it at the wall, and Viola!
You have Cyberpunk oozing down your psyche. Nice image, what?

Remember, the Hacker techie underculture gave us that ultimately
Cyberpunk appliance, the personal computer. That underculture, that
cauldron of late nights, stale Twinkies, cold pizza and assembly

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language on a home-made board was the genesis of the personal computer.
Oh sure, the mass production which brought it up, that was paid for by
the big corporations, in particular Apple for the home market and IBM
for the business market. But still, the proto-Cyberpunk started it all
with the kits and the first primitive software. Some of them even
became the big corporations (Egad! Jobs & Woz as Cyberpunk? Casting
from hell...).

The point of this abbreviated history-on-a-spoon lesson is that I'm
desperately hunting for that elusive connection which would justify the
time I invested in this article. Well, not really. There *is* a
connection, and in noting that Cyberpunk at least in part evolved from
the Hacker experience of the 70's we should note that Cyberpunk must
incorporate some elements of that elusive Hacker Ethic.

Think about it for a second (millions of cycles, plenty of time).
It's all in the name. Cyber the technology, Punk the rebellion.
Cyberpunk is about street-smart technology applied to creative, self-
enriching (literally) rebellion. Life on The Edge socially and tech.
Now, the ultimate modern Hacker wet dream is to crack a banking system
with their suped up PC and hijack megabytes of \$. Beat The System by
Fiddling With it. Technology in the service of ego gratification, power
flowing from the keyboard. What could be more Cyberpunk?

Then there is that wonderful attitude towards authority. Cyberpunk
is more than anything else about decentralization. The central
mainframe with it's implication of central control is totally anathema.
It's all distributed processing plugged directly into your own
fingertips. You have all that power under your own control and are not
subject to the dictates of the totalitarian, all controlling Operating
System. Ultimately it's all aimed at controlling your own outlets of
creativity, at getting away with your own eccentricity (the civilized
word for buck naked weirdness).

Now consider the Hacker Ethic. Authority? HAH! It's all about breaking the rules, isn't it? Authority is the thing to beat. It's the thing to test your technical creativity against and win. Rebellion at the end of the electric outlet. You don't hack in the modern media sense just because it feels so good when you stop. Oh no. You do it because it is to some extent elitist. You are part of the club. You know the jargon. You have the right access codes. Ultimately, it's a way of proving that you are better than The Authority which designed the hack-proof system. And Not Getting Caught. By getting in you become the authority. Yeah I know, it's all because you hate your father and want to sleep with your mother. Dr. Odd should be charging by the hour in LA-LA land (CA). But think about it. It's plausible. It reads well. You're still awake....

Now think about the old-fashioned way, where hacking means staring glossy-eyed at your CRT for 24 hours straight, fixing and recompiling, fixing and recompiling, fixing and recompiling, ad nauseum. It's that

Cyberhacker!

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fascinating addiction to make that silly machine do your bidding, make it do backflips (the proper relationship of software to the user) in the most baroque of domains. You sleep with it, you eat with it, and the first thing you think of when you wake up is that next line of code. Those of you who have been there know what I mean. Heroin has nothing on serious hacking. It's a mental drug. There's your persistence. There is that deep need to know what the manuals don't specify.

Now read some Cyberpunk novels. How is that almost mystical interface with the computer different from the melding you experience when you hack on your latest software baby? You live it and you breathe it. If you could you would meld your mind to it. Cyberpunk to the N-th degree. The wireheads in the novels get lost in the system by becoming addicted to it. It's that vast bit diddling potential, it's that sweet variety of interfaces, the exhilarating *speed*. They know the systems on an almost supernatural level, they are artists on the machines, using them as delicately as Da Vinci ever wielded his brush on those misty backgrounds.

Cyberpunk and the Hacker Ethic. Is there a connection, or what? Well, or what. There is a connection. Don't doubt it. The proof? The

final undeniable piece of clincher? Most of you who read this hack in the old and new sense. You phreak. You phrack. You eat pizza. And fess up, you've tried Twinkies. And here you are. Reading a Cyberpunk rag. You're the connection bright boys and girls! Children of the techno-generation. Feral kids on bright metal streets spitting on the polished walls. Johnny would be proud.

There it is. Earth-shattering, ain't it? Hits you just about there, between the frontal lobe and the pubic region. Feels kind of good, doesn't it? Let's do it again sometime. You pay.

(Dr. Odd is the founder and, on a good day, overseer of Cyberpunk International, an ill defined organization designed to spread the Cyberpunk virus. During his trips into Deep Reality he designs mainframes in, [where else?] Silicon Valley.)

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