

drag race drinking the beer from a can. Or say a snob appeal ad might say, "The next Leeperhouse film festival will feature two highly respected foreign films by the prize-winning Japanese film director Akira Kurosawa. YOJIMBO and SANJURO are films using a feudal Japanese historical dramatic motif, each involving unlikely

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tasks to illuminate unexpected facets of the character of his metaphorical Everyman, Sanjuro, precisely portrayed by Toshiro Mifune." On the other hand, a slob appeal approach might be "You know Clint Eastwood's "Man-with-No-Name" character from FIST FULL OF DOLLARS? Well, FIST was a remake of a nifty Japanese samurai flick called YOJIMBO and Eastwood's character is based on a character called Sanjuro. There are a whole bunch of Sanjuro films and the next Leeperhouse film festival will show the first two Sanjuro films, YOJIMBO and SANJURO. See ya there, pardner."

Of course, the only problem with all this is that snobs want subtitling and slobs want dubbing. To compromise we have arranged to show YOJIMBO dubbed and SANJURO subtitled. Then we can vote on which people prefer. Oh, this is all on October 5 at 7 PM.

Sanjuro: The Adventure Begins
YOJIMBO (1961) dir. by Akira Kurosawa
SANJURO (1962) dir. by Akira Kurosawa

2. With cost-cutting measures what they are these days, the SF Club finds its budget trimmed to the point that it will not cover copies of the discussion books and Hugo nominees. In order to buy these books, we are having a sale of duplicate copies of Club holdings. The following is a list of the books for sale and which "branch" they are located in. Note that we plan on keeping one copy of each, so if (for example) a book is listed in both HO and LZ, we will sell only the first one requested.

Books are half-price (minimum \$.50). Contact the librarian of the appropriate location(s) if you are interested. Contact information is listed above.

Adams, Douglas	Restaurant at End of Universe	HO, LZ(2)
Aldiss, Brian (ed.)	Space Opera	LZ, MT

Anderson, Poul	Avatar	HO(2), LZ
Anderson, Poul	Earth Book of Stormgate	HO, LZ
Anderson, Poul	Orion Shall Rise	LZ, MT
Anderson, Poul	Tau Zero	HO, LZ(4)
Anderson, Poul	Three Hearts and Three Lions	HO, LZ
Asimov, Isaac	Bicentennial Man	HO, LZ (2)
Asimov, Isaac	End of Eternity	HO, LZ
Asimov, Isaac	Foundation's Edge	HO (2), MT
Asimov, Isaac	Gods Themselves	HO(2), LZ(2)
Asimov, Isaac	I, Robot	LZ (2)
Asimov, Isaac	Robots and Empire	LZ, MT
Asimov, Isaac	Robots of Dawn	HO, MT
Asimov, Isaac	Second Foundation	LZ, MT
Asimov, Isaac (ed.)	Great SF Stories - 1	HO, LZ
Asprin, Robert	Thieves' World	HO, LZ(3)
Barnes, Steven & Niven	Dream Park	HO(2)
Bear, Greg	Blood Music	HO, LZ

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Bear, Greg	Eon	LZ, MT
Bester, Alfred	Computer Connection	HO, MT
Bester, Alfred	Golem 100	LZ, MT
Bester, Alfred	Stars My Destination	HO, LZ
Bischoff, David	Star Fall	HO, LZ
Bova, Ben	Voyagers	HO, LZ
Bradbury, Ray	Martian Chronicles	LZ(2), MT
Bradbury, Ray	Something Wicked This Way Comes	HO, LZ
Brin, David	Startide Rising	HO, LZ, MT
Brust, Steven	Jhereg	HO, LZ
Budrys, Algis	Michaelmas	HO, MT
Busby, F. M.	Demu Trilogy	HO, LZ(2)
Card, Orson Scott	Ender's Game	LZ, MT
Card, Orson Scott	Speaker for the Dead	HO, LZ
Carey, Diane	Dreadnought!	LZ, MT
Carter, Carmen	Dreams of the Raven	LZ, MT
Cherryh, C. J.	Cuckoo's Egg	HO, LZ
Cherryh, C. J.	Downbelow Station	HO(2)
Cherryh, C. J.	Gate of Ivrel	HO(2)
Cherryh, C. J.	Pride of Chanur	HO, LZ
Cherryh, C. J.	Serpent's Reach	LZ, MT
Clarke, Arthur C.	2010: Odyssey Two	HO, LZ, MT

Clarke, Arthur C.	Childhood's End	HO, LZ(2)
Clarke, Arthur C.	Imperial Earth	HO, LZ
Clarke, Arthur C.	Rendezvous With Rama	LZ(2), HO
Clarke, Arthur C.	Tales From the White Hart	HO, LZ
Clayton, Jo	Diadem from the Stars	HO, LZ
Coney, Michael G.	Rax	HO, LZ
Cooper, Edmond	Far Sunset	HO, LZ
Cowper, Richard	Road to Corlay	LZ(2)
De Camp, L. Sprague	Land of Unreason	LZ(2)
Dick, Philip K.	Flow My Tears Policeman Said	HO, LZ
Dick, Philip K. & Zelazny	Deus Irae	LZ(2)
Dickson, Gordon R.	Dorsai!	HO, LZ
Disch, Thomas M.	On Wings of Song	HO, LZ
Donaldson, Stephen R.	Illearth War	LZ(2), MT
Donaldson, Stephen R.	Lord Foul's Bane	LZ(2), MT
Donaldson, Stephen R.	One Tree	LZ, MT
Donaldson, Stephen R.	Power That Preserves	LZ(2), MT
Donaldson, Stephen R.	White Gold Wielder	LZ, MT
Donaldson, Stephen R.	Wounded Land	HO, LZ, MT
Farmer, Philip Jose	Dark Design	HO(2)
Farmer, Philip Jose	Fabulous Riverboat	HO, MT
Farmer, Philip Jose	Magic Labyrinth	HO, MT
Farmer, Philip Jose	To Your Scattered Bodies Go	LZ, MT
Finney, Charles G.	Circus of Dr. Lao	MT(2)
Forward, Robert L.	Dragon's Egg	HO, LZ
Foster, Alan Dean	Nor Crystal Tears	HO(2), LZ(2)
Foster, M. A.	Gameplayers of Zan	HO, LZ
Garrett, Randall	Too Many Magicians	HO, LZ
Gerrold, David	Galactic Whirlpool	LZ(2)

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Glut, Donald F.	Empire Strikes Back	LZ, MT
Godwin, Parke & Kaye	Masters of Solitude	HO(2)
Haldeman, Joe	Forever War	HO, LZ
Haldeman, Joe	Mindbridge	HO, LZ
Haldeman, Joe	Planet of Judgment	LZ(2)
Harrison, Harry	Adv. of Stainless Steel Rat	HO, LZ
Harrison, Harry	Deathworld Trilogy	LZ, MT
Harrison, Harry & Dickson	Lifeship	LZ, MT
Heinlein, Robert A.	Friday	HO, LZ, MT(2)
Heinlein, Robert A.	Friday**	LZ

Heinlein, Robert A.	Glory Road	LZ(2)
Heinlein, Robert A.	Man Who Sold the Moon	LZ, MT
Heinlein, Robert A.	Menace from Earth	LZ(2)
Heinlein, Robert A.	Moon Is a Harsh Mistress	HO, LZ(3)
Heinlein, Robert A.	Starship Troopers	HO, LZ
Herbert, Frank	Children of Dune	HO(2), LZ
Herbert, Frank	Dune	HO, LZ(2)
Herbert, Frank	Dune Messiah	HO, LZ(2)
Herbert, Frank	God Emperor of Dune	HO(2)
Hogan, James P.	Genesis Machine	HO, LZ
Hogan, James P.	Giants' Star	HO, LZ
Hogan, James P.	Thrice upon a Time	HO, MT
Howard, Robert E.	Conan the Warrior	HO(2)
Hubbard, L. Ron	Battlefield Earth	LZ, MT
Kingsbury, Donald	Courtship Rite	LZ(2)
Laumer, Keith	Star Colony	LZ(2), MT
LeGuin, Ursula K.	Dispossessed	HO, LZ
LeGuin, Ursula K.	Tombs of Atuan	LZ(2)
LeGuin, Ursula K.	Wizard of Earthsea, A	LZ(2)
Lem, Stanislaw	Cyberiad	HO, LZ
Longyear, Barry	Circus World	LZ(3), MT
Matheson, Richard	I Am Legend	LZ(2)
McCaffrey, Anne	Dragonflight	HO(2)
McCaffrey, Anne	Moreta: Dragonlady of Pern	HO, MT
McIntyre, Vonda M.	Star Trek II: The Wrath of Kahn	LZ, MT
McKillip, Patricia A.	Harpist in the Wind	HO, LZ
McKillip, Patricia A.	Heir of Sea and Fire	HO, LZ
McKillip, Patricia A.	Riddle-Master of Hed	HO, LZ(2)
Miller, Walter	Canticle for Leibowitz	HO(3), LZ(3)
Morrow, James	Continent of Lies	LZ, MT
Niven, Larry & Pournelle	Footfall	LZ, MT
Niven, Larry et al	Legacy of Heorot	HO, MT
Niven, Larry	Long Arm of Gil Hamilton	HO, MT
Niven, Larry & Pournelle	Mote in God's Eye	HO(2), LZ
Niven, Larry	Protector	HO, LZ
Niven, Larry	Ringworld	HO, LZ(2)
Norton, Andre	Catseye	LZ(2)
Norton, Andre	Dread Companion	HO(2)
Pohl, Frederick	Gateway	HO(3), LZ
Pohl, Frederick	Jem	HO, LZ(2)
Pohl, Frederik	Heechee Rendezvous	HO, MT

Pohl, Frederik & Kornbluth	Space Merchants	HO, LZ
Pournelle, Jerry	Janissaries: Clan and Crown	HO, MT
Reamy, Tom	Blind Voices	HO, LZ
Saberhagen, Fred	First Book of Swords	LZ, MT
Shelley, Mary	Frankenstein	HO, LZ
Silverberg, Robert	Lord Valentine's Castle	HO(2), LZ, MT
Silverberg, Robert	Majipoor Chronicles	LZ, MT
Silverberg, Robert	Man in the Maze	HO, LZ
Silverberg, Robert	Those Who Watch	HO, LZ
Simak, Clifford D.	City	HO, LZ
Simak, Clifford D.	Goblin Reservation	HO, LZ
Simak, Clifford D.	Project Pope	HO, LZ, MT
Spinrad, Norman	Void Captain's Tale	LZ, MT
Stallman, Robert	Orphan	HO, LZ
Stasheff, Christopher	Warlock in Spite of Himself	HO, LZ
Sucharitkul, Somtow	Starship and Haiku	HO, LZ
Van Vogt, A. E.	Slan	LZ(2), MT
Vance, Jack	Eyes of the Overworld	HO, LZ(2)
Varley, John	Demon	HO, LZ
Varley, John	Titan	HO, LZ
Varley, John	Wizard	HO, LZ
Vinge, Joan D.	Snow Queen	HO, LZ, MT
Vinge, Vernor	Marooned in Real Time	LZ, MT
Williamson, Jack	Three From the Legion	LZ, MT
Wilson, Robert Anton	Schrodinger's Cat	HO, LZ
Wolfe, Gene	Fifth Head of Cerberus	HO, LZ
Wolfe, Gene	Shadow of the Torturer	HO, LZ(2)
Wolfe, Gene	Sword of the Lictor	LZ(2)
Wyndham, John	Day of the Triffids	HO, LZ(2)
Zelazny, Roger	Courts of Chaos	HO, MT

Mark Leeper
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A strong conviction that something must be done is
 the parent of many bad measures.

--Daniel Webster

SHIRLEY VALENTINE
A film review by Mark R. Leeper
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Capsule review: A promising and well-written start leads to a rather bland romantic comedy in an exotic setting. While Shirley is unhappy, she is clever and endearing and funny. Unfortunately, her wish to visit Greece comes true and the story founders. Rating: +1.

be _ S _ h _ i _ r _ l _ e _ y _ V _ a _ l _ e _ n _ t _ i _ n _ e is a film about a woman who started out to remarkable, lost her way, and became very ordinary, only to find herself and become remarkable again. The film itself starts remarkable, becomes ordinary, but fails to become remarkable again. The play upon which the film was based had just one woman on stage talking about her experiences but the film decides to be more cinematic and actually dramatizes the incidents.

At 42, Shirley is a mousy little housewife taken for granted by her working-class husband and her two grown-up but less than totally mature children. We see her in her daily life of drudgery in which any deviance from her normal routine is seen by her family as rebellion. She reminisces about her slightly wild youth and wonders how that adventuresome schoolgirl got buried in the routine of drudgery. Deep inside she longs to go to Greece and sit by the sea sipping wine. These early parts of the film, set in England, have a warm humor and good writing. Finally Shirley gets her chance to go to Greece and the writing goes flat. We have a tepid and predictable romantic comedy of her Greek fling. There are still a few nice humorous scenes, but not enough to compensate for the staleness of the material.

Pauline Collins is likable in the title role, repeating the part she created on the London stage. (Ellen Burstyn played the same role in New York, perhaps with not so thick an accent.) The play was by Willy Russell, who wrote the film _ E _ d _ u _ c _ a _ t _ i _ n _ g _ R _ i _ t _ a. That film's director, Lewis Gilbert, also directs this film. Somehow _ E _ d _ u _ c _ a _ t _ i _ n _ g _ R _ i _ t _ a's paean to culture seemed like something that had to be said. In spite of some

clever writing, in S h i r l e y V a l e n t i n e Russell seems to be saying nothing

less banal than "You cannot please everyone so you have to please yourself." For those who need that homily reinforced this film may seem profound. My rating is a disappointing +1 on the -4 to +4 scale.

THE GATE TO WOMEN'S COUNTRY by Sheri S. Tepper

Doubleday, 1989, ISBN 0-385-24709-5, \$17.95.

A book review by Evelyn C. Leeper

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The premise of this book is that a nuclear war has taken place and civilization has fallen back to a technology somewhere around the 14th Century level (in general--more on that later). There are no guns; wars are fought with bows and arrows or close-contact weapons. Children are raised in the towns (the "women's country" of the title) until they are five years old. Then girls stay within the towns and boys are sent to their warrior fathers in the permanent army camps outside the towns. From age 5 through 15, the sons visit their mothers twice a year, during carnival. In fact, all the soldiers visit the town during carnival. That's when the couplings take place that produce children, because at age 15, the sons must choose whether to stay outside the walls (except for carnival) or return to women's country permanently as "servitors." This option is open to them until age 25, when they become full-fledged warriors and cannot return. Approximately 5% return. Women seem to have no choice other than to join gypsy camps or become prostitutes whom the warriors can visit year-round.

Now I claimed, upon hearing a summary of the preceding that it sounded like the sort of book that promotes the philosophy "Women are

all wonderful; men are all horrible brutes (except for the ones who come over to the women's way of thinking)." But it was recommended by so many people that I figured I would give it a try.

Well, it does manage to rise above my first impression in parts. Unfortunately, it takes a good three-quarters of the book to even attempt to rationalize its theses (by showing a different post-holocaust society and what _ i _ t would be like), and it is not until the very end that many of the motivations become clearer. At that point, much of what the reader may have dismissed as ridiculous begins to make a certain sense, but it may get the reader to that stage too late. It seems less a logical sequence than a magic trick, and magic tricks are notoriously poor things to base societies on.

And, along with others who have been less than bowled-over by this book, I find that the book does seem to say "women are good, men are bad." Though it shows some men as good (i.e., peace-loving), it does not show any women as violent or war-mongering. And the book's dismissal of homosexuality as a having been discovered to be a hormonal imbalance in the mother during pregnancy that is "easily corrected," strikes me as a scientifically inaccurate premise, not to mention the "solution" being out of line with the technological level shown in the rest of society. In fact, the plot seems to hinge on some technology being hundreds of years ahead of the average technology, without an industrial infrastructure to support it (or without much clue to the

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reader before the rabbit is pulled from the hat).

This is one of those "study war no more" novels that have been increasingly common of late. While I don't disagree with that philosophy, I think assigning all the blame to men and all the hope to women is too simplistic an approach. As a post-holocaust novel, _ T _ h _ e _ G _ a _ t _ e _ t _ o _ W _ o _ m _ e _ n ' _ s _ C _ o _ u _ n _ t _ r _ y works; as a philosophical look at the causes of conflict, it does not. If I were to compare it to another author's works, I would say it is most similar to Heinlein's, for two reasons. First, the story is interesting, but the philosophical underpinnings may turn the reader off. And second, the society portrayed works in the novel, and in fact characters point out how well it works, but it works because the author wrote it that way, not because the society really

would work that way in real life. Whether you enjoy _ T_ h_ e_ G_ a_ t_ e_ t_ o
_ W_ o_ m_ e_ n'_ s
_ C_ o_ u_ n_ t_ r_ y depends on what you're looking for.

MEMORIES OF THE SPACE AGE by J. G. Ballard
Arkham House, 1988 (1962-1988c), \$16.95.
A book review by Evelyn C. Leeper
Copyright 1989 Evelyn C. Leeper

This is a collection of eight stories by Ballard set in and around Cape Canaveral in the post-Space Age. While Ballard writes well, he is a better poet than a scientist (boy, there's an understatement!) and his attitude to space travel and science in general is liable to turn off the readers who would be most attracted to a work of this description--those interest in space and space travel.

In "The Cage of Sand," for example, Ballard postulates that people become so worried about the amount of material being shot off into space that they start bringing back sand from Mars as ballast so that the Earth's gravity doesn't change. This sand, however, turns out to contain bacteria which destroy all plant life they come in contact with, although they live in symbiosis with human intestinal bacteria. This is discovered when Florida is laid waste, and so Florida is quarantined, thus saving the rest of the Earth (and providing the setting for the story). Of course, all the tourists who acquired the bacteria in Florida and excreted it elsewhere are ignored. So, for that matter, is the fact that it is impossible to bring back enough material to make up for what is fired off, since the latter includes all the fuel. To bring back more requires firing off more fuel to do it. Assume that you launch a 100-pound rocket which is 10 pounds payload, 60 pounds fuel to get to Mars, and 30 pounds fuel used to get back. (And these are extremely optimistic figures.) If you try to bring back 90 pounds in sand, then you need another 270 pounds of fuel to bring it back. But then you need to bring back another 270 pounds of sand, If we could ship as much sand as Ballard suggests around as ballast, we'd have one hell of a space program!

But according to Ballard, we won't. Each story deals with its own disaster brought about by the space program. In one, those who travel into space (and eventually others) become susceptible to fugue states, in which they blank out for hours at a time. In another, they become susceptible to just the reverse--relative to them, everything else slows down. This in fact is one of the major faults of this collection: as a collection, it lacks continuity. Each story contradicts the others. In "The Cage of Sand," there is Martian sand surrounding the Cape; in "The Dead Astronaut," there is no Martian sand. In one it's fugue; in another it's time-dilation. Sometimes it's one set of dead astronauts circling the globe, sometimes another. Ballard really likes the image of dead astronauts circling the globe in their capsules, especially when he can have them achieve flaming re-entries as needed for the plot--always landing at the Cape, of course. It's not clear how this is accomplished, though one story mentions radio beacons in passing. Right--the whole Cape is deserted and covered by sand, but the beacons

still work.

There are a few stories that do not harp on the theme "there are some things man was not meant to tamper with." "A Question of Re-entry" is sort of your basic cargo-cult story. The final story, "The Man Who Walked on the Moon," is the most interesting, in that it doesn't try to slam the space program, but rather examines our need for heroes and myths and who we fill that need.

Now all this sounds very negative, and to a certain extent it is. But there is no denying that Ballard can write poetic and vivid prose (when not sabotaged by poor copy-editing that talks about "the siting [sic] of a satellite"). And I suppose it's reasonable that even pro-space advocates need to read the material of the opposition to be able to understand and counter it, though Ballard's total disregard for science or scientific law makes it difficult to discuss the issues raised logically. And the cover by Max Ernst and interior illustrations by Jeffrey K. Potter are much better than a lot of the artwork one seems on and in books these days. (Potter's illustrations go particularly well with the stories they illustrate, indicating a real effort on his part and on the part of the publisher to produce a coherent piece.)

(While I was putting this review together, I serendipitously ran across the following quote from Algis Budrys, which sums up much of what is wrong with these stories and Ballard's stories in general:

A story by J. G. Ballard, as you know, calls for people who don't think. One begins with characters who regard the physical universe as a mysterious and arbitrary place, and who would not dream of trying to understand its actual laws. Furthermore, in order to be the protagonist of a J. G. Ballard novel, or anything more than a very minor character therein, you must have cut yourself off from the entire body of scientific education. In this way, when the world disaster--be it wind or water--comes upon you, you are under absolutely no obligation to do anything about it but sit and worship it. Even more further, some force has acted to remove from the face of the world all people who might impose good sense or rational behavior on you, so that the disaster proceeds unchecked and unopposed except by the almost inevitable thumb-rule engineer type who for his individual comfort builds a huge pyramid (without huge footings) to resist high winds, or trains a herd of alligators and renegade divers to help him out in dealing with deep water.
[G a l a x y, December 1966]

And that says it all.)

NEVERNESS

A novel by David Zindell

Reviewed by Dale L. Skran, Jr.

One of the most unfair aspects of the Hugo nominating procedures is that good books by new authors stand little chance of winning. Typically a book is published in hardcover one year, and a few thousand people read it. The next year a paperback comes out, and many more read it, realizing to their chagrin that it is far better than any of the Hugo nominated novels from the previous year, the year in which it was eligible. Due to this effect, only books that go immediately to large paperback printings, are serialized in magazines, or are written by well known names have a chance. The net result is a whole string of "sympathy" Hugos, the most recent example is George Alec Effinger getting a Hugo for "Schrodinger's Kitten" after he missed out on the

Hugo for When Gravity Failed. This is not the perfect example, since

Effinger was fairly well known when Gravity was nominated. A better example is Donald Kingsbury's Courtship Rite or Vernor Vinge's

Marooned
in RealTime, both books that I voted first, but which had little chance of winning due to their publishing history. Meanwhile, anything C. J. Cherryh, Orson Scott Card, or William Gibson puts out will be nominated and has a good shot at winning.

Neverness should have won the Hugo in 1989. It is a fabulous sense of wonder novel with real characters and a compelling story, written with more style than most polished writers ever achieve. If this is Zindell's first novel, his tenth should get him the Nobel prize.

Neverness is also the best hard SF novel I have read in some time. Basically, Zindell builds on the groundwork of Stapledon, Sterling, and

Vinge, portraying for the first time a vivid, believable portrait of a man's ascent to godhood. N_e_v_e_r_n_e_s_s is more novel than anything Stapledon or Sterling have ever written, and more daring in its speculation than anyone except Stapledon. Add to this enough action to fuel an Alistair MacLean novel and enough lyrical beauty to illuminate the darkest night. On top of all this, Zindell makes mathematics and mathematicians the focus of the story, and one of the high points of the story is the proving of a theorem.

You should expect everything from N_e_v_e_r_n_e_s_s because it is all there. The only complaint I might have is that Zindell has not so much originated a new vision of our future, as combined elements from various sources into a unified whole and told a story that has never been told before. The ideas of Greg Bear's F_o_r_g_e_o_f_G_o_d and B_l_o_o_d_M_u_s_i_c and Larry Niven's R_i_n_g_w_o_r_l_d are mere footnotes in this galaxy-spanning tale of men, man-gods, gods, and Gods. And through it all, Mallory Ringess, Zindell's hero, loves, fails, dreams, grows, cheats, lies, lusts, and finally grows toward his final destiny.

You will not read a better *new* book this year unless Borges writes something (very unlikely since he died recently), and according to the jacket blurb, Gene Wolfe, Michael Bishop, and Orson Scott Card agree with me. And you will remember the colored ice of Neverness, the final city of humanity, Kalinda's flowers, the words of the warrior-poets, the glory of the Lavi transform, and cold of the winter wind for a long time to come.

sex, lies, and videotape
A movie review by Dale L. Skran, Jr.

I was most surprised that this film, the winner of the Cannes Film Festival, received a wide release given its subject matter. Essentially it deals with an individual whose techno-perversion is to make video tapes of women talking about sex while he is impotent with women. Twenty years ago, such a story would have qualified as science fiction, but today it is just another story in the city.

Having seen the film, I am no longer surprised that the film was given a wide release. Although R-rated, and more about sex than most films, very little sex per se is shown on screen. In fact, this is fundamentally a moral tale in which lies catch up with liars, and in which various characters decide to throw out their crutches and face themselves.

Overall, S_L&V_T is a well constructed, well filmed, "little movie" with few flaws other than lack of scope. It is everything D_a_n_g_e_r_o_u_s

_ L_ i_ a_ i_ s_ o_ n_ s is except a costume drama. It demands comparison to films such as _ B_ e_ t_ r_ a_ y_ a_ l (story by Harold Pinter, starring Ben Kingsley and Jeremy Irons). My other complaint is that the ending may be overly romantic. In the real world the characters would probably find themselves trapped in their neurotic escape mechanisms.

The story moves surprisingly well for what is really a play-style talking heads drama with little "action" or "scenery." The actors take on difficult portrayals and produce troubled but appealing characters. Much of the power of _ S_ L&_ V_ T comes from the conflict between certain archetypes, the macho hunter (John), the innocent (Ann), the raw sexual force (Cynthia), and the stranger who upsets everything (Graham). This is an ancient tale told in a modern setting, using video tape as the final metaphor for the distancing we all do to survive. The viewer is warned that this is an adult film -- kids probably will just be bored -- and that they should not expect car chases.

To put _ S_ L&_ V_ T in perspective, I would like to compare it to several somewhat similar films I've seen lately. _ S_ e_ a_ o_ f_ L_ o_ v_ e deals with many of the same themes: sex, lies, and the twistedness of modern life. Although well acted, it attempts much less than _ S_ L&_ V_ T _ D_ a_ n_ g_ e_ r_ o_ u_ s _ L_ i_ a_ i_ s_ o_ n_ s also deals with similar themes, but attempts -- and succeeds -- at far more. Another film, _ T_ h_ e_ P_ a_ c_ k_ a_ g_ e, also deals with lies and paranoia, but reduces the entire story to action and actively avoids intelligence (no pun intended!).

Another comparison that must be made is with _ D_ o_ t_ h_ e_ R_ i_ g_ h_ t _ T_ h_ i_ n_ g, the competition _ S_ L&_ V_ T faced at Cannes. There is little doubt that _ D_ o_ t_ h_ e_ R_ i_ g_ h_ t _ T_ h_ i_ n_ g is the more important film and will have the greater impact on society at large. However, I agree with the Cannes judges that by some distinct margin, _ S_ L&_ V_ T is a more ambitious, better told work than _ D_ o_ t_ h_ e_ R_ i_ g_ h_ t _ T_ h_ i_ n_ g. However, I will not claim the margin is a very large one.

At last, my ratings:

_ D_ a_ n_ g_ e_ r_ o_ u_ s_ L_ i_ a_ i_ s_ o_ n_ s	+4
_ S_ e_ x_ _ L_ i_ e_ s_ _ a_ n_ d_ _ V_ i_ d_ e_ o_ _ T_ a_ p_ e	+3
_ D_ o_ t_ h_ e_ R_ i_ g_ h_ t_ _ T_ h_ i_ n_ g	+2
_ S_ e_ a_ o_ f_ L_ o_ v_ e	+2
_ T_ h_ e_ P_ a_ c_ k_ a_ g_ e	+1

by Dale L. Skran, Jr.

MASTER OF THE FIVE MAGICS

by Lyndon Hardy

A good read, and a solid fantasy with an interesting idea of how magic might work. Hardy divides magic into several branches, "thaumaturgy," "alchemy," "magic," "sorcery," and "wizardry," each with its own arcane rules and guild secrets.

OLD TIN SORROWS

by Glen Cook

This book is perhaps the best of Cook's "detective in magic land"

books, SweetSilverBlues, BitterGoldHearts, and ColdCopperTears.
The latest deals with the haunting of an old mansion by a ghost, and has minimal supernatural content.

BITTER GOLD HEARTS

by Glen Cook

Here Cook's hardboiled detective runs up against big time magic, in another fun but forgettable adventure.

CABAL

by Clive Barker

Barker has improved his novel writing skills since DamnationGameandCabal is a smooth read. He has moved away a bit from the "head coming out of the toilet with a nail through the nose" style of horror. My major complaint is that the book will clearly have a sequel, and that it leaves many questions unanswered.

SHADOW GAMES

by Glen Cook

Cook continues the story of the Black Company as they move into the South seeking their lost heritage. We have the usual mix of warfare, love, magic, and sheer meanness that Cook has a reputation for. He kills off so many major characters at the end that it is hard to see how there can be a sequel. However, Croaker -- and Soul Catcher -- still live. Is the Lady really dead? Yes, I know, the final scene has her hand sticking up from an immense heap of bodies. But can the Lady ever really die? She is SHE WHO MUST BE OBEYED, the BLACK FLAME, the all powerful bitch-goddess that men hate and love in the same thought. My bet is that Cook will bring her back -- eventually.

- 2 -

THE SURVEILLANCE
THE METACONCERT
Books I&II of the Intervention
by Julian May

I am a sucker for Julian May's page turning tales of metapsychic adventure. Although their content is often wan, and as an alternate history they are frankly unbelievable, I read them anyway. They have the unusual property that the only really interesting character is Marc Remillard, the chief villain. I have been cheering for him from the beginning, and at the end of the second book, we are given strong reason to suspect that not only did he win out in the end, but that all of human history is his creation.

Julian May's description of the impact and use of metapsychic powers in the late 20th Century is as fundamentally fantastic as a Nancy Drew novel. The bad guys are bad and stupid, the good guys good and smart. In fact, the bad guys are so stupid that without their amazing psychic powers one of them could hardly tie his shoelaces.

Peace and Love win out in the end, as we know it would, and metapsychic powers lead to world government. All I can say is -- perhaps.

THE MACHIAVELLI INTERFACE
by Steve Perry

Martial artists called "matadors" take over the galaxy in this hard to believe and not very interesting tale. Neither the martial arts nor the story are worth the price.

JIAN
by Eric Van Lustbader

Another pot-boiling page turner by Lustbader, who brought the Ninja to the average airplane passenger. I was interested enough in this political thriller/martial arts tale to read all 542 pages, but I would only do this on an airplane.

BAD VOLTAGE
by Jonathan Littell

This is one of the better imitation Gibson novels around. To prove it is really cyberpunk, a list of the music the novel was written to is included as an appendix. This is a tale of tough and violent street gangs in a future Paris who become involved with a bit more illegal software than they should. It is not a very large story, and has no stunning vision of humans transcending their limits. For all that, it is a human, and believable story, with some good martial arts scenes.

Be warned, _ B _ a _ d _ V _ o _ l _ t _ a _ g _ e is cruel and violent and sexual, but for those who like a jolt, _ B _ a _ d _ V _ o _ l _ t _ a _ g _ e has it.

- 3 -

THE DREAMER IN DISCORD
by Craig Mills

A good read fantasy, but forgettable. Heh, I forgot.

THE MAN WHO PULLED DOWN THE SKY
by John Barnes

This is one of best "near future" hard SF novels of recent years. It deals with a not so distant future in which the L5 colonies have revolted and run the Earth/Moon system, and have actually occupied the Earth with troops. The asteroidal and out-system colonies depend on water from the inner system, and thus begins the second round of interplanetary war. The outer system sends agents to Earth to stir up rebellion and keep the L5ers busy while they mount the main attack.

Most of the action takes place in a violent, depressing Earth gone to Hell, so this is more a novel of partisan warfare than of space colonies. I recommend _ T _ h _ e _ M _ a _ n _ W _ h _ o _ P _ u _ l _ l _ e _ d _ D _ o _ w _ n _ t _ h _ e _ S _ k _ y as both a good read and a plausible projection of the future, and look forward to more work of this caliber from Barnes.

TOOLMAKER KOAN
by John McLoughlin

Another interesting novel of the near future. Recommended, but not as vivid or powerful as _ T _ h _ e _ M _ a _ n _ W _ h _ o _ P _ u _ l _ l _ e _ d _ D _ o _ w _ n _ t _ h _ e _ S _ k _ y.

FROM A CHANGELING STAR

by Jeffrey A. Carver

This novel derives fairly directly from the speculative book, E_n_g_i_n_e_s_o_f_C_r_e_a_t_i_o_n, by Eric Drexler. The main character is infected

with a set of nano-machines that won't let him die ever after he is assassinated. This represents one thread of the novel. The other revolves around the rather hum-drum idea that stars are advanced intelligences of some sort. I liked this book a fair amount when I read it, but just having read N_e_v_e_r_n_e_s_s, it seems pale by comparison.

THE PRINCE OF MERCENARIES

by Jerry Pournelle

In this stitched-together novel, Prince Lysander of Sparta becomes involved in various adventures of Falkenberg's mercenary legion. Several of these stories have appeared elsewhere previously, but the overall "novel" reads well. A good, familiar read from a familiar author who delivers what is promised, but not a lot more.

- 4 -

MASTERPLAY

by William F. Wu

I expected more from Wu, whose Hugo-nominated stories have been very good. I actually did not finish the novel due to a complete lack of interest in the conclusion. Wu believes, as do some other writers, that gaming is so fascinating to the reader that the story can be neglected. The background is an implausible attempt to justify the large-scale use of gaming to settle disputes.

THE LURKER AT THE THRESHOLD

by H. P. Lovecraft

This is an enjoyable read for those who like the "dark and nameless dread" style of Lovecraftian fiction. It never rises above a certain

level, but neither does it fall below that level.

HUYSMAN'S PETS
by Kate Wilhelm

Kate Wilhelm wastes some good writing on a tale told many times previously, the mutants created by the scientist who wants to sell them to the government for use as military weapons but the mutants don't like that and with the help of the MAIN CHARACTER triumph over the greedy and evil scientist. Basically not worth the time to read, but not dreck either. If written in 1935 it would have been a triumph, but alas, it was written in 1986.

THOSE WHO HUNT THE NIGHT
by Barbara Hambly

An enjoyable story about a vampire who hires a former British Secret Service agent as a detective. Someone is killing the vampires of London. The question is who, and why? An interesting twist on both the traditional detective story and the traditional vampire story. Not a "great novel" but worth reading.

Cable in October
Film comment by Mark R. Leeper
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B_l_e_s_s_t_h_e_B_e_a_s_t_s_a_n_d_C_h_i_l_d_r_e_n
(1972) (HBO)

D_r_a_c_u_l_a's_D_a_u_g_h_t_e_r(1936)(American Movie Classics)
H_i_g_h_R_o_a_d_t_o_C_h_i_n_a(1983)(Cinemax)
T_h_e_N_a_t_u_r_a_l(1984)(HBO)
N_i_g_h_t_m_a_r_e_A_l_l_e_y(1947)(American Movie Classics)
S_o_n_o_f_D_r_a_c_u_l_a(1943)(American Movie Classics)

I almost skipped this month's cable recommendations because, in truth, I did not find a lot that would not be familiar and at the same time is all that good. Well, let's have a go at what is available.

Those who liked the film S_t_a_n_d_b_y_M_e might like to sample this somewhat similar story. A group of misfits from a summer camp set off on a hike on an errand of mercy. Those who liked A_c_e_i_n_t_h_e_H_o_l_e a few months ago will find this film as bitter and misanthropic and nearly as powerful.

I have yet to hear of a published critic or reviewer who has any use for H_i_g_h_R_o_a_d_t_o_C_h_i_n_a. However, when I show this film to people I know, almost everyone seems to like it. How bad can a film be that combines Asia, bi-planes, and the Roaring 20s? Well, worse than this film certainly. And I would not have expected good comic chemistry between Tom Selleck and Bess Armstrong, but it still seems to be there. Skip the scenes with Robert Morley--they don't do much for the plot anyway--but Brian Blessed is a real gem.

I really do not like sports films, but I have to say that I do like two baseball fantasies: this year's F_i_e_l_d_o_f_D_r_e_a_m_s and 1984's T_h_e
N_a_t_u_r_a_l_T_h_e_N_a_t_u_r_a_l operates on several levels with a genuine mythic quality to it. Well-photographed, well-scripted, and with a very good musical score, it is very different from Bernard Malamud's book.

Speaking of mythic films, there is the haunting and allegorical N_i_g_h_t_m_a_r_e_A_l_l_e_y, a macabre film about carny life and a man who tries to escape it. Tyrone Power is a smooth sharpie who pushes his talents a bit too far.

Universal Pictures redefined the horror film in the 1930s and early 1940s, starting with the 1930 D_r_a_c_u_l_a. But D_r_a_c_u_l_a is for the most part a filmed stage play and is not that good. They made two more vampire films, both very good, and then relegated Dracula to being just one of a menagerie of monsters in the three remaining vampire films they made in this cycle. Their two best vampire films, D_r_a_c_u_l_a's_D_a_u_g_h_t_e_r and S_o_n_o_f
D_r_a_c_u_l_a, have not played (at least in the New York City area) for a long time. (I know. I'd have recorded them if they had.) People who think all you need to make a good horror film is a knife and a hockey mask

should take a look at two well-made horror films. _ D_ r_ a_ c_ u_ l_ a'_ s

_ D_ a_ u_ g_ h_ t_ e_ r is

a great mood piece, a very dark film, both literally and figuratively.

Irving Pichel, who went on to direct _ D_ e_ s_ t_ i_ n_ a_ t_ i_ o_ n_ M_ o_ o_ n, plays Sandar.

And, yes, there is a muted lesbian scene that goes about as far as the film code would let it at the time. And the film is about Dracula's daughter. If that sounds obvious, I will point out that there is

nothing in the actual script of _ S_ o_ n_ o_ f_ D_ r_ a_ c_ u_ l_ a to verify that is who Lon Chaney, Jr., is playing. He clearly is a vampire and is likely to be from the same family, but there is no reason to believe he is the son rather than Dracula himself. In any case, _ S_ o_ n is not as moody as

_ D_ a_ u_ g_ h_ t_ e_ r, but still has sufficient mood and also has a better story.

The scenes of Dracula on the lake are especially memorable. Dracula and decaying Southern mansions go very nicely together.

