

Lincroft-Holmdel Science Fiction Club  
Club Notice - 5/28/86 -- Vol. 4, No. 45

MEETINGS UPCOMING:

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

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

\_D\_A\_T\_E

\_T\_O\_P\_I\_C

06/04 LZ: THIS PERFECT DAY by Ira Levin ("Utopias")

06/25 LZ: STAR GUARD by Andre Norton (Humans as underdogs)

07/16 LZ: SHADRACH IN THE FURNACE by Robert Silverberg (Ethics)

08/06 LZ: TUNNEL IN THE SKY by Robert Heinlein (Faster-Than-Light Travel)

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

1. The concept of perfect worlds ("Utopias") has been around probably ever since humanity began telling stories. Anti-utopias ("Dystopias") have been around almost as long, providing even more interesting grist for the story-telling mill. After all, perfection is boring, eh?

On Wednesday, June 4th, the Lincroft chapter will be discussing that and similarly controversial claims as it looks at "Utopias" in science fiction. The main book under discussion is Ira Levin's THIS PERFECT DAY, a Huxley-esque novel of mankind kept civilized and happy via drugs and computer control of everyday life, until one man rebels... We'll no doubt also be discussing other books in the Utopia/Dystopia genre, such as Huxley's BRAVE NEW WORLD, Swift's GULLIVER'S TRAVELS, Skinner's WALDEN II, and 1984/ANIMAL FARM by you-know-how. Everyone is welcome, even if you haven't read any of these books. [-jrrt]

2. For the time being there has been a moratorium on meetings at Holmdel as well as Middletown. The reason seems to be one of population in each case. In Middletown there are not enough people present to have enough who want to read and discuss science fiction. What is required is a critical mass of people to have

reasonable people. Lincroft has that critical mass that Middletown lacks. Holmdel seems to also have enough people to have the critical mass but in their case they have enough mass to have a meltdown and have the membership participation figures burn their way through the basement. What generally happens is that the

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participation will drop down to the point where it hits the water table, then the activity will increase again as active particles go out in all directions. Does that make sense?

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

KAMIKAZE '89  
A film review by Mark R. Leeper

Capsule review: German import film gives a confused look at the year 1989 with a hard-to-follow story. Some interesting images.

An unlikely formula that seems to be the basis of a number of science fiction films since A\_l\_p\_h\_a\_v\_i\_l\_l\_e is the futuristic detective story. The story is part mystery, part travelogue visit to a future society. In addition to A\_l\_p\_h\_a\_v\_i\_l\_l\_e, we have L\_a\_s\_t\_D\_a\_y\_s\_o\_f\_M\_a\_n\_o\_n\_E\_a\_r\_t\_h, R\_u\_n\_a\_w\_a\_y, B\_l\_a\_d\_e\_r\_u\_n\_n\_e\_r, and the 1982 German K\_a\_m\_i\_k\_a\_z\_e'\_8\_9.

It is 1989. All is in order. Pollution and dangerous drugs are just bad memories. Poverty and starvation have been eradicated. Germany is the richest and most powerful country in the world and Germany is virtually ruled by "The Concern." "The Concern" is a megalithic conglomerate that (among other things) runs Germany's media. 98% of Germany tunes in to see entertaining programs like laughing contests and to read comic strips in which the Blue Panther fights the

evil organization Krysmopompas. Krysmopompas may or may not be a real organization but the few discontents of society have taken its name to be their battle cry.

Somebody, perhaps Krysmopompas, has made a bomb threat on the Concern's offices and Police Chief Inspector Jansen (played by art film director Rainer Werner Fassbinder) is called in to investigate. Jansen is a consummate slob in his leopard-spotted leisure suits. Even his car and the handle of his gun are decorated in leopardskin. Jansen's adventures in the pop-art near-future world are more confusing than enlightening. And any understanding of the plot that the viewer gleans are hard-won victories over a film style intended to obscure rather than to enlighten. Still, every once in a while director Wolf Gremm gives the viewer a tantalizing look at a sort of pop-art future with millions anesthetized by the totally banal media that the Concern serves up. And we see Jansen's frustration with the banal society and his retreat into images of adventure and the untamed.

K\_a\_m\_i\_k\_a\_z\_e'\_8\_9 is hardly the most entertaining film available in video stores. It is a hard film to watch and nearly impossible to follow. But stick with it. There is more to this than meets the eye. I would give it a 0 on the -4 to +4 scale. Maybe if the story were better told it would have been rated higher.

GOTCHA!

A film review by Mark R. Leeper

Capsule review: Really good beginning leads toward overly predictable and uninteresting second half.

Most films ask the viewer to sit through some buildup before they get to the meat of the film. Often the idea is that the meat of the

film is in the second half but you have to see what leads up to it to follow that second half. My recommendation would be something like "stick with the film and it will be worth it." Sometimes it works the other way. Some films are very good in the first half and then die. I guess I would suggest seeing just the first half, though I never walk out on a film myself. One example of a film that might be worth seeing and walking out on is T\_h\_e\_B\_l\_a\_c\_k\_S\_t\_a\_l\_l\_i\_o\_n, a film that wastes a beautiful first half on a cliched and dull sports film. (Realize I am prejudiced; the only sports films I have ever liked have been I\_t\_H\_a\_p\_p\_e\_n\_s\_E\_v\_e\_r\_y\_S\_p\_r\_i\_n\_g, T\_h\_e\_N\_a\_t\_u\_r\_a\_l, and perhaps P\_h\_a\_r\_L\_a\_p.) Another wasted beginning is that of C\_o\_a\_l\_M\_i\_n\_e'r's\_D\_a\_u\_g\_h\_t\_e\_r, which turns a gritty realistic beginning into a slobbery sentimental story worthy of the newspapers on grocery checkout lines.

This month's cable brought a new example. The film is G\_o\_t\_c\_h\_a!--considerably more forgettable than the films mentioned above, but a film that nonetheless was still quite good at the halfway point. The basic premise is that Anthony Edwards is his school's champion Assassin player. Assassin is a real game inspired by Robert Sheckley's story "The Seventh Victim" and its film's adaptation T\_h\_e\_T\_e\_n\_t\_h\_V\_i\_c\_t\_i\_m. In the story a central organization chooses at random one player to be an assassin and one to be the victim. The player who dies is the loser; the player who lives is the winner, except in the game Assassin of course, the weapons aren't real. The premise of G\_o\_t\_c\_h\_a! is that someone who is good at the game when it is a game might be good at the game when it is for real.

The first half of the film gets Edwards involved with an international agent and into and out of East Berlin, never really fully using his assassin talents. Still, it is an intriguing story. But all good things must come to an end and the interesting part of this film does so early. When Edwards returns home there are still agents chasing him and the story predictably climaxes with a chase around his campus and with Edwards pulling the same high-jinx that he did at the beginning of the film. The film continues at a low level until the very last scene which makes it step from mediocre right down to be (arguably) offensive. My recommendation if G\_o\_t\_c\_h\_a! runs on cable: watch it. When Edwards gets back to America, go do the laundry. Rate it a +1 on the -4 to +4 scale.

June on Cable  
Film reviews by Mark R. Leeper

As an experiment I will give my biased opinion of several of the films listed in the cable guide for the next month. This probably won't be a regular feature, but then who knows? (Films are rated on the -4 to +4 scale.)

A\_i\_r\_p\_l\_a\_n\_e (+2): The producers seem to think that if you put a joke into a film every 15 seconds that for each viewer enough will be funny that you will end up with a really funny film. The facts seem to bear them out. Even with a batting average of .250, this film has enough jokes to keep almost anyone laughing.

A\_l\_l\_o\_f\_M\_e (+1): One of Steve Martin's better comedies, but not up to his M\_a\_n\_w\_i\_t\_h\_T\_w\_o\_B\_r\_a\_i\_n\_s.

A\_m\_a\_d\_e\_u\_s (+2): Good film but if you have seen the play it will be disappointing. The film is longer but Salieri has less of a part.

A\_m\_a\_t\_e\_u\_r (0): This is a confused spy film that does not always make sense but it has some good espionage drama.

A\_n\_d\_r\_o\_i\_d (+1): Well above average for New World Pictures with Don Oper good as a robot with an identity crisis. Unless Lucas change the meaning of the word 'android', this film should be called R\_o\_b\_o\_t.

A\_r\_t\_h\_u\_r (-1): Take away John Gielgud and this film would be a low -2. Dudley Moore--rich, drunk, and laughing at his own jokes--falls in love with a shoplifter. Who cares? (Minority opinion here.)

B\_a\_c\_h\_e\_l\_o\_r\_P\_a\_r\_t\_y (-1): Aimed at boys in the 13- to 17-year-old range. Yawn.

B\_a\_d\_B\_o\_y\_s (+2): Actually a pretty suspenseful story of a youth prison.

B\_i\_r\_d\_y (-1): Failed attempt to make a meaningful symbolic film. It is done in much the same style as John Irving films like T\_h\_e\_W\_o\_r\_l\_d\_A\_c\_c\_o\_r\_d\_i\_n\_g\_t\_o\_G\_a\_r\_p and H\_o\_t\_e\_l\_N\_e\_w\_H\_a\_m\_p\_s\_h\_i\_r\_e.

B\_l\_a\_c\_k\_o\_u\_t (+1): Watchable mystery does keep you wondering.

B\_l\_o\_o\_d\_S\_i\_m\_p\_l\_e (+3): Low-budget murder story is hypnotizing.

B\_o\_l\_e\_r\_o (-3): Not as bad as everyone seems to think it is. A solid -3 due to photography that is at least mediocre photography and editing that is at worst poor. The story and acting are its weak links.

A\_B\_o\_y\_a\_n\_d\_H\_i\_s\_D\_o\_g (-1): The scenes above ground are not too bad, but still this film is for Harlan Ellison fans only.

C\_h\_e\_e\_c\_h\_a\_n\_d\_C\_h\_o\_n\_g's\_N\_i\_c\_e\_D\_r\_e\_a\_m\_s (-2): Maybe four good jokes spread over an hour and a half. For those who think stoned.

C\_h\_i\_l\_d\_r\_e\_n\_o\_f\_t\_h\_e\_C\_o\_r\_n (-1): Tedious adaptation of a Stephen King story.

C\_o\_m\_f\_o\_r\_t\_a\_n\_d\_J\_o\_y (+2): Scottish director Bill Forsythe is always good. I though this was funnier than the whimsical L\_o\_c\_a\_l\_H\_e\_r\_o with maybe a tad less interesting characters.

D\_r\_a\_w! (0): Made-for-cable Western could have turned out a lot worse.

D\_r\_e\_a\_m\_s\_c\_a\_p\_e (+1): Script-writers seem confused about Dennis Quaid's powers. Okay premise.

E\_v\_e\_r\_y\_t\_h\_i\_n\_g\_Y\_o\_u\_A\_l\_w\_a\_y\_s\_W\_a\_n\_t\_e\_d\_t\_o\_K\_n\_o\_w\_a\_b\_o\_u\_t\_S\_e\_x (+1): One of the "earlier, funnier films" from Woody Allen.

E\_v\_i\_l\_u\_n\_d\_e\_r\_t\_h\_e\_S\_u\_n (+1): Above-average Agatha Christie.

F\_i\_n\_a\_l\_O\_p\_t\_i\_o\_n (0): Political premise wasted on a standard hostage siege film from Britain.

F\_l\_e\_t\_c\_h (+1): Reasonable as a comedy or a mystery, but not great as either.

G\_r\_e\_a\_s\_e (0): Dull musical popular with the under-15 set.

T\_h\_e\_G\_u\_a\_r\_d\_i\_a\_n (+1): Story of a possibly sinister security guard of an apartment building. Nothing is really resolved in this film.

H\_e\_a\_r\_t\_l\_a\_n\_d (+1): Solid, believable picture of frontier life.

H\_i\_s\_t\_o\_r\_y\_o\_f\_t\_h\_e\_W\_o\_r\_l\_d--P\_a\_r\_t\_I (-1): Proof that Mel Brooks lost the knack of being funny.

H\_y\_s\_t\_e\_r\_i\_c\_a\_l(+1): Amateurish, but definitely funny at times send-up of horror films.

T\_h\_e\_I\_n-L\_a\_w\_s(+1): Alan Arkin and Peter Falk in a film that gets more and more madcap as it goes along.

I\_n\_t\_o\_t\_h\_e\_N\_i\_g\_h\_t(+1): John-Landis-directed suspense comedy has some decent touches. Landis is better at humor than story-telling, though.

T\_h\_e\_K\_a\_r\_a\_t\_e\_K\_i\_d(+1): Cliched story but Pat Morita's character is an absolute joy.

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T\_h\_e\_L\_a\_s\_t\_S\_t\_a\_r\_f\_i\_g\_h\_t\_e\_r(0): Cray special effects in a sort of remake and extension of T\_h\_i\_s\_I\_s\_l\_a\_n\_d\_E\_a\_r\_t\_h. The effects don't really work.

L\_o\_s\_t\_i\_n\_A\_m\_e\_r\_i\_c\_a(+2): Albert Brooks comedies are an acquired taste; this one is subtle and funny.

T\_h\_e\_M\_a\_n\_W\_h\_o\_C\_o\_u\_l\_d\_W\_o\_r\_k\_M\_i\_r\_a\_c\_l\_e\_s(+1): Mediocre fantasy with philosophical implications, based on a story by H. G. Wells.

M\_y\_S\_c\_i\_e\_n\_c\_e\_P\_r\_o\_j\_e\_c\_t(0): This would have been a really good film if Disney had made it in the 60's. It was too late.

T\_h\_e\_N\_e\_v\_e\_r\_e\_n\_d\_i\_n\_g\_S\_t\_o\_r\_y(+2): Strange fantasy with lots of meta-touches.

1\_9\_8\_4(+2): Depressing, downbeat, occasionally dull, stagnant film. Accurate representation of the book.

N\_i\_n\_j\_a\_I\_I\_I--T\_h\_e\_D\_o\_m\_i\_n\_a\_t\_i\_o\_n(-2): The supernatural collides with martial arts and you should be someplace else when it happens.

O\_n\_c\_e\_U\_p\_o\_n\_a\_T\_i\_m\_e\_i\_n\_A\_m\_e\_r\_i\_c\_a(+2): I haven't seen the abridged version; the long version is a little confused in places but not too bad.

T\_h\_e\_P\_e\_r\_i\_l\_s\_i\_n\_G\_w\_e\_n\_d\_o\_l\_i\_n\_e\_i\_n



\_ t \_ h \_ e \_ L \_ a \_ n \_ d \_ o \_ f \_ t \_ h \_ e \_ Y \_ i \_ k \_ Y \_ a \_ k (0): This film really captures the style of a comic strip, perhaps a racy French one. Lots of nudity, leather, and kinky situations. Fun if it catches you in the right mood.

\_ T \_ h \_ e \_ P \_ h \_ i \_ l \_ a \_ d \_ e \_ l \_ p \_ h \_ i \_ a \_ E \_ x \_ p \_ e \_ r \_ i \_ m \_ e \_ n \_ t (0): So-so story of World War II navy sailors projected into our present.

\_ T \_ h \_ e \_ P \_ o \_ p \_ e \_ o \_ f \_ G \_ r \_ e \_ e \_ n \_ w \_ i \_ c \_ h \_ V \_ i \_ l \_ l \_ a \_ g \_ e (+1): Not a bad story of ne'er-do-well hoods in New York City.

\_ P \_ u \_ r \_ p \_ l \_ e \_ R \_ a \_ i \_ n (-1): Music video with minimal social significance. Mostly a vanity production by Prince.

\_ T \_ h \_ e \_ R \_ i \_ v \_ e \_ r (+1): Least interesting of the recent spate of "save-the-farm" films.

\_ R \_ o \_ m \_ a \_ n \_ c \_ i \_ n \_ g \_ t \_ h \_ e \_ S \_ t \_ o \_ n \_ e (+2): Adventure comedy that was a big hit.

\_ T \_ h \_ e \_ S \_ e \_ c \_ r \_ e \_ t \_ o \_ f \_ N \_ I \_ M \_ H (+1): Ex-Disney animator Don Bluth, making his own Disneyesque animated fantasy. It needs more detail about the heroes of the story, but it isn't bad.

\_ T \_ h \_ e \_ S \_ e \_ d \_ u \_ c \_ t \_ i \_ o \_ n (-1): Avoidable film about a fan harassing a pretty TV newscaster.

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\_ S \_ e \_ e \_ m \_ s \_ L \_ i \_ k \_ e \_ O \_ l \_ d \_ T \_ i \_ m \_ e \_ s (0): Neil Simon screenplay is funny at times, but the film is little better than a TV situation comedy.

\_ S \_ o \_ u \_ n \_ d \_ e \_ r (+2): Black family perseveres and survives the Depression.

\_ T \_ h \_ e \_ S \_ t \_ o \_ n \_ e \_ B \_ o \_ y (+2): Well-acted, realistic film about a young boy's stigma.

\_ T\_ h\_ e\_ S\_ u\_ r\_ e\_ T\_ h\_ i\_ n\_ g (+1): Enjoyable comedy about unlikely traveling companions.

\_ T\_ a\_ r\_ z\_ a\_ n, \_ t\_ h\_ e\_ A\_ p\_ e\_ M\_ a\_ n (-3): Two dumb blondes find each other in the jungle.

\_ T\_ e\_ n\_ d\_ e\_ r\_ M\_ e\_ r\_ c\_ i\_ e\_ s (+2): Robert Duvall is the American Laurence Olivier. This is a very well-acted film that won him an Oscar.

\_ T\_ h\_ e\_ T\_ h\_ r\_ e\_ e (0): 1936 adaptation of "The Children's Hour" pulls most of its punches and plasters on a happy ending.

\_ T\_ h\_ e\_ T\_ h\_ i\_ n\_ g (+2): Class 1951 horror film based on a story by John W. Campbell. Good characters, blah monster.

\_ T\_ i\_ g\_ h\_ t\_ r\_ o\_ p\_ e (0): Standard psychopath-versus-police story with B&D theme.

\_ A\_ V\_ i\_ e\_ w\_ t\_ o\_ a\_ K\_ i\_ l\_ l (0): In many ways a remake of \_ G\_ o\_ l\_ d\_ f\_ i\_ n\_ g\_ e\_ r with a certain lack of panache. Moore's final Bond film.

\_ Y\_ o\_ u\_ n\_ g\_ B\_ e\_ s\_ s (0): Bland historical drama for the 1953 Saturday matinee crowd.

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

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Subject: The Road to Heaven: Science Fiction and the Militarization of Space  
Path: mtuxo!houxm!ihnp4!raysd!jps  
Date: Mon, 19-May-86 09:17:44 EST

In the 10th May issue of "The Nation" there appears an article by Thomas Disch (author of "Camp Concentration") titled: "The Road to Heaven: Science Fiction and the Militarization of Space".

In this article Mr. Disch discuss's the Challenger incident, SDI, NASA and their relationship to some recognized science fiction writers. His criticism of the "Fascist" school of science fiction is particularly good. Recommended reading for those who would like a glimpse at what one school of authors thinks of the other.

|| J. P. Schroeder {allegra,linus,raybed2,ccice5,brunix}!raysd!jps ||

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Subject: Good Book!  
Path: mtuxo!houxm!ihnp4!qantel!ptsfa!hoptoad!lll-crg!caip!daemon  
Date: Sat, 24-May-86 00:14:38 EST

WIZENBEAK, by Alexis A. Gilliland, just out from Bluejay in trade is a very good book. Don't be misled by the stupid cover blurb, or the truly idiotic first-page come-on ("If you like Myth Adventures or Xanth..." -- there is no resemblance to either), or even the cutesy cover illio, this book is a good SERIOUS fantasy novel with a very interesting culture that smacks of both imaginary European and Japanese medieval traditions (like in a seemingly pseudo-European kingdom, nobles wear the paired samurai swords and say things like "Pen and sword, in accord").

Bluejay has done such a bad job of marketing, it could stand as a shining example of how to screw over an author. If I were Gilliland they would already be in court.... In fact, with the messages badmouthing Baen Books (who I don't attempt to defend), I am surprised no one has mentioned Bluejay. They seem to have something of a reputation among booksellers for screwing up consignments, shipping dates, etc., and this terrible job on WIZENBEAK is just another piece of evidence of their laziness.

Well, back to WIZENBEAK, I haven't even finished the book, but paused in the middle (I'll finish it tonight) because of the most egregious typo/typesetting error I have ever seen in a book. This is from the

middle of a paragraph:

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Zeldones didn't fit -- the shelf was well short of six feet -- but he put restore "Marji and Derk"? I find it confusing as is on the shelf, and made himself comfortable sitting up against the wall as she went off to her bed in the other room.

Obviously the second line is an editor's note, and its presence totally ruins the flow of the narrative. I'll rank it with any other of the typos mentioned previously in the discussion of typos in recent volumes. Just another reason to dislike Bluejay -- the thing is, though, they seem to print a lot of stuff I like, and can't find elsewhere until the mass market edition, which in some cases takes years, especially it seems, with Bluejay....

-Laurence

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Subject: Thor meets Captain America

Path: dls

Date: Wed, 21-May-86 15:54:54 EST

The July F&SF has a story by David Brin(Startide Rising) titled "Thor Meets Captain America" which I suggest to all and sundry, especially those with an interest in comics.

Perhaps surprisingly, the story is pretty good.

This is not the Marvel mythos, but Brin's own, and frankly, I look forward to more stories set in this alternative past, one in which Thor, Loki, and a host of others meet someone who may(or may not) be Captain America, but who is certainly a living legend.

Dale

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Subject: "Contact" by Carl Sagan

Path: mtuxo!houxm!ihnp4!qantel!ptsfa!hoptoad!lll-crg!caip!daemon

Date: Tue, 20-May-86 12:10:21 EST

I'm surprised that there's been so little mention of "Contact" here. It's been out in paperback for months now. Are people turned off by the bestseller-hype around it? By Sagan's TV series?

If so, you're missing a treat. Sagan is not an sf fan, and he's not strong on plot, but there's more Sense of Wonder in this book than I've seen in a long time. It's about a subject that's dear to Sagan's heart, the search for extraterrestrial intelligence. The protagonist is a woman astronomer that gets caught up in the search, to the point of becoming the director of a radio telescope array in the Southwest that's dedicated to it. The Message finally comes in and the chase begins:

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what does it mean? Who sent it? What shall we do about it? I won't say anything more about the plot, except to add that it ends with the most extraordinary way to prove the existence of God that I've ever come across.

The characters are good, the technical parts are fascinating, and there's a strong current of philosophy. This is a five out of five star sf book, folks, and it was done by an outsider. Why can't our regular sf authors do this well?

John Redford

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Subject: Footfall - Long with Mild Spoilers!

Path: mtuxo!houxm!whuxl!whuxlm!akgua!gatech!seismo!columbia!caip!daemon

Date: Thu, 22-May-86 15:57:22 EST

I am a true Niven and Pournelle fan. I have all their collaborations, which include a few someone didn't mention...

The Mote in God's Eye   Definitively the best first contact book!

Inferno               Dante look out. Hell revisited. Funny!

Lucifer's Hammer    The best Irwin Allen disaster book ever.

Oath of Fealty       Intriguing questions of morality and technology.

Footfall            The best invasion of Earth I have read.

Footfall SPOILERS!!!!

I just finished reading Footfall in two marathon sessions, and I loved it. I thought the entire thing was well done, as usual for Niven and Pournelle. There were a few things I wasn't quite clear on. Since the snouts could drop rocks within 15 feet of a moving semi, how in the world did we get those space shuttles up into space? Did they go up on Michael, and if so, how did they get from Florida to Bellingham without being bombarded?

I think the survivalists were placed in B'ham for two reasons; to get the plot into Bellingham and to take out Roger the reporter after he learns about Project Michael. Aside from that, I am sure that there are plenty of people who would react that way. Survivalism is a definite trend in today's society. Are there any survivalists out there?

And as for Bellingham, I was going to Western Washington University when Niven and Pournelle attended our SF club's convention. It was a great con, in stark contrast to the previous ones that no one came to because they didn't know where Bellingham was. Once Niven and Pournelle said they would come a whole slew (do writers come in slews or is there a special word for them?) of SF writers showed up. It was amazing. Turns out the whole reason N&P decided to come was so that they could see what B'ham was like for to blast it to smithereens with a thousand nukes. Impolite of them to do that, but B'ham is a small price to pay for the

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destruction of the snouts.

And contrary to what they say, Bellingham is a very nice little college town that used to be heavy into lumber before the Japanese took over. It has gorgeous mountains, rivers and forests. Stop in and visit on your way to Expo in Vancouver. See where they built the ship. And be sure to take Chuckanut Drive and see the San Juan Islands. They are gorgeous! But enough, I'll leave the rest for the Tourbots.

I agree that the most innovative part of the book was the herd mentality of the snouts. They really had a hard time grasping the human way of thinking, whereas we got an insight to them much quicker. Not

necessarily a given, but from the assumptions laid down it worked. I also liked the Predessors, which were never clearly identified. It seems they were similar to the Thrint and Tnuctipin that appear in Niven's Known Space series, except that they managed to destroy themselves and not each other. By leaving their "blocks" of information for the snouts to use and learn from, they paved the way for an immature culture to take to the stars. Unfortunately for both sides, this did not allow them to learn many of the things we have learned (all those enrolled in the school of hard knocks, please raise your hands). It was said by the herdmaster that they had anticipated that this was the case when they were travelling. Something about "familiarity with their own technology" instead of learning from the Predessors.

All in all, I give the book 3 out of 4 stars. I enjoyed it immensely, and it was not nearly as obvious as Lucifer's Hammer was. The aliens were unique, as far as I can remember. Does anyone know of other stories involving intelligent herd societies?

Jon

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Subject: re: Footfall

Path: mtuxo!houxm!whuxl!whuxlm!akgua!gatech!seismo!caip!daemon

Date: Fri, 23-May-86 02:32:35 EST

After finishing reading Footfall about a week and a half ago (in a reading sprint which was not good for my classwork!) I felt that this was one of the best novels of this type I have read in a long time. And *\*no\**, I didn't think the ending was bad; quite the contrary, too many novels drag out the ending to the point where I simply give up reading.

Granted, Footfall may have left some loose ends lying around, but after the conclusion of the story, it's rather predictable how those ends will be tied together.

I HATE stories that drag. They should cut clean, and not wear us out. The reward ceremony of Luke Skywalker and Han Solo at the very end of Star Wars was *\*booooooring!\**; the "Epilog" of Crime And Punishment

was a waste of good paper.

Thank goodness that Footfall Did Not Suffer This Fate!

- William Woody

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Subject: BORN TO EXILE by Phyllis Eisenstein (mild spoiler)

Path: mtuxo!houxm!whuxl!whuxlm!akgua!gatech!seismo!hao!noao!terak!anasazi!duane

Date: Thu, 22-May-86 11:09:54 EST

The jacket reads:

"Disowned by his family as a witch-child, the minstrel Alaric had long trod his path alone, armed with his lute, his songs, and his power to move magically from place to place.

When he came upon the grandeur of Castle Royale, he had no idea that there he would find temptation, and within temptation, danger. Bedazzled by the unparalleled beauty of Princess Solinde, caught in the dark intrigues of Medron the magician, Alaric would know the still darker exile of the sinister Inn of the Black Swan. There he would meet the ultimate test that could end his exile -- or end his life."

Though it looks like a novel, this book actually consists of five stories, all involving the same main character, Alaric. They are in chronological order, but, as is stated near the copyright notice, "portions of this novel appeared originally in issues of THE MAGAZINE OF F & SF". As a novel, the book suffers from having originally been short stories. Each story has its own development and climax, so the book as a whole doesn't have either.

The stories are all pretty good. Alaric is a teenager throughout, and he uses his magical power as little as possible since "witches" are severely persecuted. The time period seems to be late renaissance, though the planet isn't mentioned; this book is once of fantasy and isn't concerned with other worlds or aliens. Further, it has more to do with Alaric's interactions with other people than with magic or adventure.

The last story in the book is the most interesting, and I would like to have seen it developed into an entire book. The ending of that story is very unsatisfactory, however; I got the impression that the author hurriedly finished it to meet a deadline.

I give the book 2.5 stars (out of 4.0: good, but plan to trade it in). On the jacket, there's a quote by Jerry Pournelle saying this is the best fantasy novel he's read this year (1978?). I wonder if he wrote that in January.



Duane Morse ...!noao!{mot|terak}!anasazi!duane

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Subject: Summer, Self-Pity and the Professional Film Critic  
Path: mtuxo!houxm!ihnp4!qantel!hplabs!tektronix!uw-beaver!fluke!moriarty  
Date: Fri, 16-May-86 20:20:45 EST

Having not seen one of the excellent summer movie guides that the net seems to produce every year, I started hunting around for one in the local book stores and newspaper joints for just such a critter, without much success. Finally discovered a rather skimpy one in the Seattle Times (which I am posting, in the next article or so, with a few of my own comments thrown in...). But, of course (as all you Seattlites know), I had to put up with the usual whining tones of John Hartl, a man who has the distinction of being Seattle's most well-known (and worst) film critic . For those of you living outside the Emerald City, I'll spare you comments about Mr. "if-it's-small-and-independent-it-HAS-to-be-good" Hartl. However, the opinions he expressed in this particular issue are those that I hear repeated over and over again, every summer, by almost every film critic in the country (including those I like); and frankly, I'm getting a bit sick of it.

You've undoubtedly heard it before, the spiel about how they HATE summer films because they HAVE to sit and watch and review every single one of them. They go on about how the American Film industry produces nothing but crap over the summer (OK, most of it is mediocre, no argument), and how the terrible grind wears on their nerves, affects their appetite, and breaks up their family life. Bring his listless verbs to the zenith of outrage, Hartl's article described how Pauline Kael, dean of movie critics and reviewer for The New Yorker, confessed to "falling asleep while she was \*writing\* a review of another vapid teen epic".

Oh, horrors. Let's hope her head didn't smash into the CRT of her word processor in its downward arc towards her desk.

C'mon, give me a break. There's nothing wrong with self-pity, as long as others don't have to listen to it; but when I think of the tough jobs out there, Film Critics don't come to mind right off. They get paid to sit in comfortable chairs, eat popcorn and watch entertainment most other people pay for, and then write a few words about it. The way so many critics go on about it, you'd think they were patrolling The Hill in Hill Street Blues

every day. Sure, an overdose of bad movies can make you feel like your brains are dribbling out your ears; but, as a wonderful American character said years ago, "You knew the job was dangerous when you took it, Fred." I imagine they get paid fairly well for the job (in some cases, quite well), and I'm getting a little tired of this annual plea for my sympathy.

I suggest that we get a group of film critics and a group of ditch-diggers together and make them switch jobs for a few summer months. It would probably bring around a change of attitude with the film critics, and at

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least in Seattle, it would probably improve the movie reviews.

Moriarty, aka Jeff Meyer

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Subject: SUMMER MOVIE GUIDE

Path: mtuxo!houxm!ihnp4!qantel!hplabs!tektronix!uw-beaver!fluke!moriarty

Date: Sat, 17-May-86 13:51:38 EST

Before getting into this, I'd like to thank the people who put together the excellent Summer Film Guides that appeared on net.movies last year -- there was some really wonderful stuff there (with extremely humorous comments), and I really enjoyed it a lot. I'm afraid the following is not up to those standards, but perhaps it will inspire them to do better and post their own lists.

A few preambles:

- 1) The dates listed here are for release in the Seattle Area; some films may open later or earlier in different parts of the country, especially the independent and foreign films.
- 2) As you well know, Hollywood's favorite shell game is moving film release dates around like chips on a craps table, so expect some changes and delays and films not on this list.

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MAY 16th (today):

TOP GUN -- Tom Cruise jumps between making love to Kelly McGillis and being a fighter jock. You've seen the MTV video... so why see the movie? Also starring Val Kilmer.

SWEET LIBERTY -- Alan Alda's first film in four years, written, directed and starring Alda as a historian whose American Revolution book is adapted into a film in his home town. Also starring Michael Caine, Michelle Pfeiffer and Bob Hoskins.

THE ADVENTURES OF MARK TWAIN [Local Seattle Release] -- Will Vinton brings his Claymation process to a full-length feature film.

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MAY 23rd:

COBRA -- "Crime is the Disease. Stallone is the Cure." Unh-huh. With all the MIAs out of Vietnam, guess Stallone will have to have his violence Urban Style. Directed by the director of RAMBO, Fred Flintstone... oops, I mean, George Cosmatos (not comatose).

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POLTERGEIST II: THE OTHER SIDE -- What can you say about a family that returns to a house haunted by malevolent spooks? Not too bright... Craig Stevens and JoBeth Williams quake.

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JUNE 6th:

FERRIS BUELLER'S DAY OFF -- Teen Comedy or real comedy? Matthew Broderick skips school in a Ferrari. Hum.

ONE MORE SATURDAY NIGHT -- Written by Franken and Davis of the old Saturday Night Live show, it's about small town teenagers looking for romance (but, of course, not sex...)

RAW DEAL -- Arnold Schwarzcgf... Schwartenaeeeg.. Big Arnold is directed by John Irwin, who directed Turtle Diaries. I have no idea what this is about, but Arnold, unlike Stallone, likes to poke fun

at his image, and has been in some pretty decent films. This shows he's at least trying...

SPACECAMP -- Kids spend a summer in a space shuttle. But wait! First they have to get launched successfully....

SALVADOR -- A film we didn't get in Seattle; it's being picked up by a British distributor. Gene and Roger didn't like it.

MY BEAUTIFUL LAUNDRETTE -- This is getting a lot of play as a funny, quirky comedy about several Pakistanis and their friends in South London.

HOME OF THE BRAVE -- Concert film by Laurie Anderson. Yowza!

THE MANHATTAN PROJECT -- A teenager builds a nuclear bomb. Looks interesting, and John Lithgow stars.

BACK TO SCHOOL -- Rodney Dangerfield as a millionaire who goes back to college. Probably earned it in all those Lite Beer commercials...

INVADERS FROM MARS -- (I've waited 20 years for a film with that title!). Tobe Hooper, who usually does good work on either the Big Screen or the little one (Twilight Zone) in his version of a 50s flick where a kid is just SURE his parents have been replaced with... martians!

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JUNE 20th

KARATE KID II -- Ralph Macchio and Noriyuki Morita return to this sequel, and director John Avildsen also return (unusual, that the

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director would return to the sequel). The latter might indicate elements of interest.

LEGAL EAGLES -- Debrah Winger, Darryl Hannah and Robert Redford in a romantic comedy about competing lawyers.

EIGHT MILLION WAYS TO DIE -- Jeff Bridges and Rosanna Arquette star in what has been described as "LA Vice".

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JUNE 27th

RUTHLESS PEOPLE -- A new Disney (Touchstone?) film with Bette Midler. Has she got some kind of contract with them (e.g. DOWN AND OUT IN BEVERLY HILLS)?

LABYRINTH -- Jim Henson, George Lucas and David Bowie in a fantasy with more muppets (not Muppets) than you can shake a rock star at.

RUNNING SCARED -- Gregory Hines and Billy Crystal as cops in an "action comedy". Sounds like the dreaded BHC clone syndrome

AMERICAN ANTHEM -- Kids-as-athletes-and-their-problems movie, with an Olympic gold medalist playing the lead.

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JULY 2

THE GREAT MOUSE DETECTIVE -- Basil Of Baker Street is adapted in a new Disney animated movie. Don't screw it up, guys, those were good books...

BIG TROUBLE IN LITTLE CHINA -- Kung Fu and Kurt Russel, and (I'll bet, I don't know for sure) John Carpenter.

UNDER THE CHERRY MOON -- Prince. You're welcome to it.

PSYCHO III -- Anthony Perkins stars as the original good ol' boy, Norman Bates; he's directing this time. Perkins is showing up to show this at the Seattle Film Festival, so I'll see what it's like...

ABOUT LAST NIGHT -- (aka "Sexual Perversity in Chicago"). Based on the play by David Marmet (that's what it says here in the paper...). More St. Elmo's fire alumnus Rob Lowe and Demi Moore.

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JULY 11th (Approximate)

PIRATES -- FINALLY, the lavish swashbuckler I've been waiting for so long, by Roman Polanski. \$40 Million Dollars, Walter Matthau, pirates, treasure, swordplay -- we've need a film like this for years! Debuts at Cannes this week -- any word on that yet, folks?

JAKE SPEED -- starring Dennis Christopher. We don't know anything else about it.

DOWN BY LAW -- A comedy from the maker of "Stranger than Paradise".

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JULY 18th

ALIENS -- Yes, we've been waiting for this, Haven't We? Sigourney Weaver stars, and the director of THE TERMINATOR directs, so this could be good.

QUARTERMAIN -- Sequel to a film so bad it deserved retroactive burning, KING SOLOMON'S MINES. Ack-Ack fodder.

HAUNTED HONEYMOON -- Gilda Radner and Gene Wilder. Genetic history: GHOSTBUSTERS, probably.

CLUB PARADISE -- Peter O'Toole and Robin Williams at a single resort. Now THAT could be funny...

MAXIMUM OVERDRIVE -- Stephen King directs his own story. Jerry Boyajian's been waiting for this, I'll bet.

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JULY 25

VAMP -- Grace Jones. That's all I know. Vampire? Got me...

OUT OF BOUNDS -- A thriller with (?) Anthony Michael Hall of every teen movie of recent memory (boy, is he bad on SNL...)

HEARTBURN -- Look! Maybe something neat! Jack Nicholson! Meryll Streep! Mike Nichols directs! Bestseller by Nora Ephron! God knows I didn't read it -- was it any good?

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AUGUST

A FINE MESS -- Blake Edwards, Howie Mandel, Ted Danson. A comedy.

JUMPIN' JACK FLASH -- Whoopi Goldberg. Hope it's better than last week's Moonlighting appearance.

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HOWARD THE DUCK -- LucasFilm's adaptation of Steve Gerber's popular comic character. Lots of special effects. Probably no Marilu Henner (sigh).

SOLARBABIES -- "Science Fiction" produced by Mel Brookes. Can you say "mutually incompatible", kids?

THE FLIGHT OF THE NAVIGATOR -- Disney film of a time-traveling 10-year-old.

THE WHOOPEE BOYS -- No, not the comedienne's fan club. Michael O'Keefe tries to break into the upper classes.

LET'S GET HARRY -- Robert Duvall and Gary Busey, two people high up on my "Best Actor's list", organize a group to rescue a kidnapped friend. Sounds good.

DEADLY FRIEND -- Wes Craven's, who did "Nightmare on Elm Street" and numerous good Twilight Zones this year, new film.

THE FLY -- Remake of the classic by David Cronenberg (should be gross).

CHERRY 2000 -- A kid must choose between a robot woman and a real girl. Oh, joy; guess where this one came from.

STEWARDESS SCHOOL -- And you thought CHERRY 2000 sounded bad...

FRIDAY THE 13th, PART VI -- Mayday! Mayday! We're in a dive!!

TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE II -- Oh, you just \*know\* they'll commercialize it...

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CHILDREN OF A LESSER GOD -- William Hurt, Piper Laurie in an

adaptation of the play of the same name.

NIGHT MOTHER -- Sisse Spacek, Ann Bancroft.

THE MISSION -- Robert DeNiro.

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Moriarty, aka Jeff Meyer

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Subject: Japanese Animation: An Introduction for the Uninitiated

Path: allegra!ulysses!burl!clyde!watmath!mwtilden

Date: Fri, 23-May-86 17:01:42 EST

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You've probably seen one or two postings to the net about Japanese animation but so far as I know, nobody's posted a general summary of what it's all about. Here's an attempt to fill that void and hopefully swell our ranks.

For those of you not familiar, Japanese TV is apparently almost 30% "cartoons". However, unlike American anime [animation] the plots, artwork and character development are directed at mature audiences (some are *\*very\** [ahem!] mature). The themes and plots follow genuine conflicts for survival or culture/power clashes. (it's *\*not\** all just a barrage of hyper-intelligent children thwarting the plans of meglomaniac adults with impossible machinery)

The shows range from single episode plots to 150 episode series on every subject from hard sci-fi to surreal fantasy to modern day drama. There are comedy series, anti-hero series and towards the low end, the all to familiar VOLTRON and TRANSFORMER shows directed strictly at the kiddies. There are also movies galore with a similar spectrum (You might want to check out WARRIORS OF THE WIND in your local video store. It's one of the only movies translated with the original soundtrack. Just great!).

Most of the good stuff is still in Japanese but check out ROBOTECH on your local TV networks (usually carried by the independents) if you haven't done so already. It's three series that have been reasonably



translated and blended into one plot. Good hard sci-fi with character development, great styling, covert violence and everything else they seem to have cut out of Bugs Bunny nowadays. Most of the \*nasty\* stuff never made it past the american censors but original copies are around and I was impressed with their candor. ROBOTECH is nothing when compared to the good Jap series like HEAVY METAL L'GAIM (MARK II) or ZETA-ZETA GUNDAM but it's a start. With enough interest, there will be more soon.

You can get a look at some of these shows by attending sci-fi conventions or by contacting your local chapter of the Cartoon Fantasy Organization. Give it a try, it's quality stuff.

Mark Tilden