

Lincroft-Holmdel Science Fiction Club  
Club Notice - 11/21/84 -- Vol. 3, No. 19

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

- 12/05 HO: STARTIDE RISING by David Brin
- 01/09 LZ: THE CIRCUS OF DR. LAO by Charles G. Finney
- 01/09 HO: Book Swap
- 01/29 LZ: Video meeting: THE FLY (part 1)
- 01/30 LZ: Video meeting: THE FLY (part 2)
- 01/30 HO: COURTSHIP RITE by Donald Kingsbury
- 02/20 LZ: SLAN by A. E. Van Vogt
- 03/13 HO: DOWNBELOW STATION by C. J. Cherryh

LZ Chair is Mark Leeper, LZ 3E-215 (576-2571). HO Chair is John Jetzt, FJ 1F-108 (577-5316). LZ Librarian is Lance Larsen, LZ 3C-219 (576-2668). HO Librarian is Tim Schroeder, HO 2G-432 (949-5866). Jill-of-all-trades is Evelyn Leeper, HO 1B-437A (834-4723).

1. On Thursday, November 29, at 7:30 the mighty Leeperhouse VCRs will be showing two rare and fairly good British science fiction films. Those of you who have received this notice for some time know that my favorite science fiction film is QUATERMASS AND THE PIT (FIVE MILLION YEARS TO EARTH). It is the third film of three (four if you count a recent made for TV in Britain) about the character Bernard Quatermass, rocket scientist. Quatermass was the creation of Nigel Kneale and any Quatermass film is very good. The three original films were based on BBC television serials. FIVE MILLION YEARS TO EARTH show up on New York TV at least once a year (watch for it), but the first two films are also quite good and rarely get shown because they are low budget black and white affairs that can only boast having really good nightmarish scripts. I don't know about you but I am looking forward to seeing on a double bill

THE QUATERMASS EXPERIMENT (aka THE CREEPING UNKNOWN) (1956)  
dir. by Val Guest  
QUATERMASS II (aka ENEMY FROM SPACE) (1957) dir. by Val Guest

The first involves a spaceship that was sent into space with three occupants and seems to have returned with only one and he doesn't seem to be quite the man who left. In the second film Quatermass's has a plan for a colony on the moon. Then he finds that a very similar colony has been built on the English countryside, and it is

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supporting a different sort of life colonizing the Earth. These are two good science fiction thrillers.

2. Please note our meetings have been shuffled. Our showing of THE FLY will be in January. This was done because I will not be around for the earlier showing date.

3. Also, I may not get around to reviewing NIGHT OF THE COMET for this issue, or perhaps at all. Let me just give you a capsule saying that it would have been an awfully weak science fiction film if it were not for a whimsical approach to the script. It is not actually a comedy (at least I don't think it was intended to be) but there is a lot of good humor in the film. Most of the ideas are old hat, but the style was fresh and pleasant enough. (If one can refer to a film that does have some explicit gore, some zombies, and most of Earth's population being killed off as pleasant. These days I think you can.) I ended up giving it a +1 (-4 to +4 scale) much to my surprise. That ends up rating it higher than the surprise hit TERMINATOR. The latter had more and better ideas, but they were flawed and it is more enjoyable to laugh at one well-written line than to see five people get blown away. I guess I have funny ideas about entertainment.

Mark Leeper  
LZ 3E-215 x2571  
...{houxn,hogpd,hocse}!lznv!mrl

## Philcon

A convention report by Cathy E. Hudson

Philcon was pretty sedate for me. (This con was my first in 4 years.) I arrived in Philly Sat. afternoon using the Pinball Transit Method from Asbury Park. After parking the car and orienting myself in the packed lobby, I registered up on the third floor with the other capes, button people, slave girls, and the cutesie beast on the shoulder people. Guy Wicker intercepted me 1 minute after I left the line. Ate a late lunch with Guy, then saw the art show and huckster rooms. Watched Foglio et al do enjoyable artist improvisation, then walked to Drexel University and ate supper with Pat, Guy and other Kingston NY IBMers. The conversation drifted frequently between fact and fiction, with little difference being attached to either.

Sat through 10 minutes of Larry Niven's speech. The man can write, but he can't speak. He is not too good at getting his facts straight or his math either. I started to squirm in my seat after the phrase "perfect power sources which could be built..." and departed until the masquerade began.

There weren't many contestants, but the costumes were above average. Channel 6 marred the program by shining bright spots into the audience's faces, blinding them. Since this act was done by a hostile lightman (He had been asked earlier not to shine the light on the audience), Channel 6 was requested to leave. Marty Gear (Count Dracula) was an excellent MC and behaved commendably during the incident with Channel 6.

I went to sleep at 10:30, so I could rise early to see "Dr. Strangelove". This viewing of "Dr. Strangelove" was my first. The film is funny the same way fingernails on a blackboard or being tickled until you sprain your diaphragm is funny. However, as Mark would say, a +2.

Spent the rest of the day eating and walking through Philly with Pat. The day was grey and mist-rain. Watched the tail end of the art auction, which was very favorable to the artists this time, with many high bids. Said adieu to my con roommates (which took a long time--there were so many) and pinballed back to NJ.

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\_N\_O\_T\_E\_S\_F\_R\_O\_M\_T\_H\_E\_N\_E\_T

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Subject: Gene Wolfe's Book of the New Sun  
Path: hocsl!hogpc!houxm!vax135!petsd!cjh  
Date: Wed, 14-Nov-84 14:09:01 EST

Ian Kaplan writes:

In these books Wolfe has woven an incredibly complex plot whose central point I hoped would be revealed in the last book. For me at least, this did not happen and the books remain enigmatic. In the last few pages of the last New Sun book, "The Citadel of the Autarch", the new Autarch, whose previous career we have followed, states that he is leaving the Book of the New Sun behind on earth and going to meet the extra-terrestrials. While on this flight he will rewrite the book a second time. Since he has perfect memory, he can reproduce the book exactly. He says that if you don't understand the book, read it a second time, just as he is writing it a second time.

I found that repeated readings of these books were needed, not only to refresh my memory of them (they came out at intervals of 8 to 12 months) but also to understand them at all. Wolfe apparently wants the reader to work hard (as witness his use of obscure words, not explained), and in many places a "throw-away line" clarifies something that appeared hundreds of pages back, or even in a previous volume.

What does it all mean?

I don't know that it *\*has\** to mean anything. If a book engages the reader's attention and gives enjoyment, then it is satisfactory. If it survives several attentive rereadings, and still gives enjoyment, it is excellent. I think The New Sun qualifies.

One reservation: Severian's promotion to the position of Autarch seems unmotivated; i.e. it does not make sense in the context of the book. (Even the characters in the book seem to feel their world is pretty weird.) This is a defect, and is not repaired by having the previous Autarch suggest that indeed it was unmotivated. But maybe, the next time around, I'll see why Severian was the obvious choice, and this was the obvious thing to happen to him.

Chris

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Subject: Re: Robots of Dawn -> -> tieins  
Path: ihnp4!watmath!jagardner  
Date: Thu, 15-Nov-84 11:58:58 EST

One of the great strengths and weaknesses of SF is how much it is a literature of ideas. Of course there are many authors who also handle character, plot, and language well, but there are a large number of SF writers who simply come up with interesting ideas and write cardboard characters and plots as an excuse to present the ideas.

Given this, tie-ins make a good deal more sense in SF than in many other genres. When a book is written in some other genre, it follows a character or a story and ends when the character has passed some significant turning point or when the story comes to an end. In SF, on the other hand, things aren't so cleanly tied off. Characters may die or pass their turning point, and stories may end, but the ideas go on. They also go on percolating in the author's mind and also in the minds of fans who may suggest new ideas to the author. At any rate, the ideas spawn new ideas and eventually one gets spin-off novels and stories. It doesn't hurt that the SF-buying public encourages this trend by clamouring for sequels and by gobbling up books that are related to previous scenarios.

Furthermore, there is the pure intellectual challenge of tying a set of ideas together. This makes for a sort of meta-idea that appeals greatly to the average SF writer.

Remember that SF writers often have strong science backgrounds and that one of the foremost goals of scientists is to tie a large number of observations together into a single simple system. The same impulse leads writers to strive to tie everything together into one glorious consistency. Most readers (me included) also enjoy this tying together, even though it's annoying if you haven't read all the preceding books. To paraphrase Hannibal on the A-Team, "I love it when a universe comes together."

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Subject: Re: Carcinoma Angels  
Path: ihnp4!uwvax!uwmaccl!consult  
Date: Wed, 21-Nov-84 00:28:22 EST

Rik Faith writes:

Several years ago I read a short story by that title (Carcinoma Angels) about a guy who got cancer and cured himself by taking a weird concoction of drugs. I don't know who it's by or in what anthology it

appears. If anybody out there knows who wrote this story, or where I can find a copy, please send mail. Thanks in advance.

The story was written by Norman Spinrad. He's also the author of THE Iron Dream, which says on the cover that it was written by Adolph Hitler. (to be explained) And he wrote at least one episode of Star Trek.

Several years ago, Norman Spinrad came to speak to a science fiction class that I was taking. After the class, several of us went to the Union to have a beer with him. Someone asked him why there were motorcycle riders in many of his stories (including Carcinoma Angles and the Iron Dream) He said that

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he had spent a lot of time with some motorcycle gangs in California. He had some friends in the gangs, and they would sometimes show up at his house and invite him somewhere. He didn't dare offend them and not go, so he would sometimes disappear with them for several days.

About The Iron Dream: According to the cover, it was written by Adolph Hitler. In the introduction, Spinrad says that Hitler 'dabbled in radical politics' in Germany, got frustrated, and moved to the U. S. in the early 30's, and began to write science fiction, including THE Iron Dream.

Spinrad told us that he wrote the book by immersing (sp?) himself in everything Hitler had written, and everything written about him. (Including a 600 page book titled 'Hitler's Dinner conversations') He finished the book just in time for Mardi Gras, and got Hitler out of his system by going to New Orleans and partying for several days.

I still have my copy of The Iron Dream, which he autographed "Adolph Hitler".

Sue Brunkow

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Subject: Review of "THE GODS MUST BE CRAZY", and other tidbits  
Path: hocsl!hogpc!houxm!vax135!cornell!uw-beaver!ssc-vax!fluke!moriarty  
Date: Mon, 12-Nov-84 22:23:13 EST

Occasionally you come across a film at which you have a marvelous time, but



consider to be, generally, a piece of fluff. I know I felt that way when I saw this yesterday. Since the film itself has been described ad infinitum, I'll just comment that I went into a packed 2:30 PM matinee on Sunday, and watched an audience (and myself) laugh ourselves silly.

However, on the way home, I began going over certain sequences in the movie time and again. Upon entering the apartment, I grabbed Halliwell's FG and a few other reference manuals; and after several hours of intense research, I am prepared to state that THE GODS MUST BE CRAZY is definitely \*not\* a piece of fluff. In fact (please note: I do not tend to overstate these types of comparisons), I believe this to be about the best piece of slapstick made in more than 50 years.

What? This trifle about a bushman in Botswana, a love-muddled guano collector (excuse me, with a degree), and easily the most inept bunch of terrorists in the Upper Basin rates up there with THE GENERAL, CITY LIGHTS, and THE GOLD RUSH?

Well, yes.

Let me recite something which James Agee, a film critic who has become trendy despite the fact that he (unusually) actually deserves his accolads, used to state that movie comedy had gone downhill steadily since the

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introduction of sound; that slapstick had degenerated into pratfalls and purely physical humor, without the slightest planning or setup work involved. Chaplin used to lecture on methods of doing this (see David Niven's "Bring on the Empty Horses", which is a Hell of a lot of fun anyway). And I'd tend to agree with him. Look at the Three Stooges (not on the dreaded weed; Kafka would be a chucklefest on that). Look at IT'S A MAD MAD .... MAD MAD WORLD. Look at your average Disney walking kiddie disaster (non-animated post-dead-Walt). People struggling to make people laugh with a gesture.

Well, maybe the director and the writer of THE GODS MUST BE CRAZY didn't look at old silent comedies at all. Maybe they just have a remarkable eye for slapstick comedy; maybe their visual timing, their sense of constructing laughter on the very POTENTIAL of a pratfall is a natural gift, not the result of a combination of great talent and great appreciation. Maybe the sweetness and innocent nature (yes, how long has it been since you've seen

an American comedy with INNOCENT humor (that is funny?) of THE KID or CITY LIGHTS had nothing to do with the same gentle comedy here. I hope not, because I think that the men and women who made this film should have treat of seeing that, by George, there WERE other people who know how to do this type of humor -- perhaps they won't feel so isolated. At any rate they all deserve remarkable credit for their own film; it may not be a "stature" film, but in it's own good humor and laughter, it overshadows many others. A round of applause...

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Oh, during previews, I noted that apparently all we American middle-class upwardly mobile types have forgotten about the men in Vietnam who were left behind and are now MIA. Apparently they are being used by nasty, inscrutable Oriental men (stock villians brought out from old 1940s movies and THE GREEN BERETS) for slave labor, and we wimpy four-eyed liberal types, aided by self-serving bureaucrats and politicians, have completely given up on them. After being alerted to the problem, I was just about to make a note about calling up my Congressman to complain about this, when the self-same trailer mentioned that I needn't worry, as that man of men, that purveyor of justice, that champion of Law & Order (or L&O, as we call it up here in Seattle) was gonna go and do something about. Yes, folks, I'm talking Chuck Norris (please, ladies, no fainting in paroxysms of ecstasy), in Vietnam, with guns, with helicopters, with his hands and feet (which, of course, are all he really needs), beating up every blamed Commie in sight. Well, all I can say is, isn't it just GREAT what's happening in America today, when an actor born with all the range of expression of a pet rock can rise to represent all that is macho and violent in the mythos of the USofA? No place else in the world, boy! (except maybe Italy....)

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Subject: Buckaroo Banzai - Revisited  
Path: hocsl!hogpc!houxm!hjuxa!ganash!russ  
Date: Thu, 15-Nov-84 09:06:08 EST

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Buckaroo Banzai - Revisited

Well, after all the rave reviews, I just had to go see Buckaroo Banzai's adventures across the eight dimension. I thought that I had all the right

credentials:

- 1) love sci-fi (generally, I will even swallow bad sci-fi)
- 2) love pulps
- 3) love the assorted actors and actresses appearing in the movie.

However, I walked. (Stop that. You look silly when you gasp.)

I found the major problems of this film to lie in the the editing and the performances.

I really didn't mind the lack of exposition in the script. I understood why there was little or no characters developement. These aspects of the film were part and parcel of the pulp effect that the director and/or writer and/or producer (whose names escape me) were trying to acheive.

Well, given those requirements, this picture could only work if

- 1) The central character projects enough screen persona to grab and hold the viewer.

or

- 2) The film moves with such deftness and velocity that the viewer is draw into the plot.

The Central Character

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Peter Weller plays underplays Buckaroo to the hilt. Unfortunately, Weller is not Gary Cooper. Weller alternates between a look of mild confusion and one of some determination throughout the film. The supporting characters are little help in filling the void since they all, with the notable exceptions of Jeff Goldblum and John Lithgow, seem to mimic this trait. I guess that the director gets his share of the blame here.

Weller also suffers from being unable to project any kind of film presence. All the reviewers mention Lithgow because he is practically the only actor who seems to come alive in his role. With everyone else underplaying by saying their lines into their respective armpits, Lithgow is practically the only one you can hear. Goldblum is the exception to this in that his distinctive delivery seems to carry him out of the armpit class.

Velocity

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Given the performances and script, this film cries out for fast-paced, cohesive editing. The editing is certainly fast paced. However there is little or no cohesion. Events occur and the continual jump cuts succeed admirably in ruining whatever connections there are between them. I sincerely believe that better editing would have at least kept me in my seat until the picture ended. (Anyone who doesn't think that editing can have that big

an effect should try to remember why they liked Star Wars - It wasn't the great acting or fabulous script - it was the SPFX and the editing.)

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Well, I am running out of steam now and I will end by saying that the real reason that I wrote this review was out of a deep sense of dissapointment in both the film and the net reviewers. I generally take all my reviews with several salt grains but this time I actually got my hopes up.

Shot down again.

Hoping it wasn't too disjointed or boring,

Russ Wolf

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Subject: Motel Hell  
Path: ihnp4!fortune!strook  
Date: Thu, 15-Nov-84 13:03:35 EST

Motel Hell has been out for a while but I just caught it on cable the other night. I had heard terrible things about this movie but it turned out to be pretty good. It doesn't take itself very seriously, at times it seemed like a spoof on slash movies. Not only did it have its fun moments but also scary and tense moments too.

Its about a brother and sister team who run a motel and make smoked sausage on the side. Their sausage is the best around and the secret ingredient is human flesh. Their victims are knocked out with some kind of gas, planted in the ground (how absurd), have their vocal cords cut, then are fattened up for sausage time.

There is a good dueling chainsaw fight scene between a sheriff and the suasage maker with the sausage maker wearing a pigs head mask. Tense and funny at the same time.

Highly recommended for an entertaining evening.

