

Lincroft-Holmdel Science Fiction Club  
Club Notice - 8/13/86 -- Vol. 5, No. 5

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.

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- 08/27 LZ: 2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY by Arthur C. Clarke (Evolution)  
09/17 The Elric series by Michael Moorcock (Magic as Science)  
(THE DREAMING CITY, THE SAILOR ON THE SEAS OF FATE,  
?, THE SLEEPING SORCERESS, ?, STORMBRINGER, ELRIC AT  
THE END OF TIME, THE SINGING CITADEL, and maybe others)  
10/08 BLOOD MUSIC by Greg Bear (Genetics)  
10/29 MALLWORLD by Somtow Sucharitkul (Commerce)  
11/19 THE LEFT HAND OF DARKNESS by Ursula K. LeGuin (Sexual Identity)  
12/10 NEUROMANCER by William Gibson (Consciousness)

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). MT Librarian is Bruce Szablak, MT 4C-418 (957-5868). Jill-of-all-trades is Evelyn Leeper, MT 1F-329 (957-2070). All material copyright by author unless otherwise noted.

1. Well, we had our altered-human film festival; next we intend to have one on animation in science fiction. What you are probably saying to yourself is something like "old Mark Leeper must have dust in his clock if he thinks I am going to spend a beautiful August night watching vacuous barbarians with swords that shoot rays or world-saving robots that fold up into packages of cream cheese or into gasoline pumps." Yes, animated science fiction IS in a sorry state today. The fact remains that animation is an ideal medium for science fiction. Any image the eye can picture can be done at relatively low cost with animation. Yet animated science fiction has, on the whole, wasted the opportunities that the medium has provided. On Thursday, August 21 we will show two of the better examples of animated science fiction.

SKYWHALES (1985?)  
FANTASTIC PLANET (1973) dir. by Rene Laloux

WARRIORS OF THE WIND (1985)  
SKYWHALES (1985?)

These came from three different countries. SKYWHALES was, if you remember my review, the best entry in the INTERNATIONAL TOURNEE OF

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ANIMATION. It also ran shortly thereafter on PBS. We are going to run it twice, once at the beginning while late people arrive, once again at the end of the evening. It took me three viewings to take in all of what was happening, but you will have to make do with two. (Flash Gordon -- who, as you may remember from last time, was about to be hit by Ming the Merciless's Neurosis Ray, and was about to get a triple whammy of Oedipal Complex, Identity Crisis, and Foot Fetish -- will have to wait another three weeks to get himself out of this pickle. I am sure we all will wait as anxiously as Dale Arden will to see how he gets out of it.)

FANTASTIC PLANET is a French film based on a novel that nobody has ever heard of called "Planet of the Oms". On an alien planet humans are considered pets and vermin. The aliens, many times our size, are a mystical race who are in the process of deciding if humans should be exterminated on their planet or not.

WARRIORS OF THE WIND involves a future Earth that has been destroyed by pollution. Some humans remain, however, in an advanced society, fighting mutant insects and other societies. Some of the imagery is very impressive.

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

\_N\_O\_T\_E\_S\_ \_F\_R\_O\_M\_ T\_H\_E\_ N\_E\_T

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Subject: HEART of the COMET - A book review  
Path: mtuxo!houxm!ihnp4!cbosgd!cbatt!clyde!caip!daemon  
Date: Thu, 7-Aug-86 11:29:32 EST

I finished Heart Of the Comet by Gregory Benford and David Brin several days ago. Before my impressions fail me, I will relate them:

--BEWARE OF MILD SPOILERS--

Earth people have landed on Comet Halley and are attempting to find out any deep dark secrets it may carry. There are several characters in the story, with the main plot being concerned with 3 of those people and a very special AI "being" known as JonVon. HotC is intended to reflect the state of the earth's affairs today..petty politics, desperation and extreme prejudice. The prejudice isn't racial, rather it is ideological in nature. A couple of the characters remind of Switzerland, that is they try to remain neutral in all the squabbling. The text is heavy

with wordy ideas and passages, there wasn't enough "REAL" SF to satisfy me. The reader is asked to accept a few outlandish ideas, and that's tough enough in a book that I like. The overall organization is good; chapters are told from the viewpoint of a certain individual, but not in the first person. The book has the proper elements of action, sex and a little SF but it doesn't quite gel properly. Ratings: scale -4 to +4 Heart of the Comet rates a -1.5. That makes it one to read when desperate for a late night sedative..... - Craig.

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Subject: SPEAKER FOR THE DEAD by Orson Scott Card: Book Review  
Path: mtuxo!houxm!ihnp4!cbosgd!cbatt!clyde!caip!unirot!dtt  
Date: Thu, 7-Aug-86 19:49:57 EST

I just read Speaker for the Dead, Orson Scott Card's sequel to Ender's Game. I was so taken with the first book that as soon as I finished it, I began my search for the sequel. It's not out in paperback yet, and I had to look through the SF shelves of about eight bookstores before I found it. I expected to be disappointed by Speaker, because (as we all know) everything gets worse, especially in the arts. Fortunately, my expectations were dashed. The book was great.

- \* Major spoilers ahead if you haven't read Ender's Game
- \* Minor spoilers ahead otherwise

Following Ender's destruction of the Bugger homeworld in Ender's Game, he establishes a sort of "religion" centered around the idea of speaking about a person following their death -- a speech which is an honest

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portrayal of the deceased person's life, ambitions, actions, motivations, etc. Caught up in this is the religion's "bible", a book describing the Buggers' civilization. In fact, this book was written by Ender himself, with the help of the bugger hive queen (who still lives, although nobody knows it).

Speaker for the Dead opens on a new world where the men have encountered yet another intelligent species (the third such species following humans and buggers). Contact between men and the newly discovered species (called "piggies") is severely limited by law (a Star Trek-style non-

interference law, but more rigidly enforced). Eventually, the piggies start killing men for mysterious reasons. Ender is called to Speak the death of one of the dead men, and most of the book concerns the unravelling of the mystery of the deaths, in which Ender plays a central role.

The book stands out for a number of reasons. First are its believable characters -- they have human emotions, motivations, and shortcomings. Their reactions are much more believable than most sf I'm familiar with. Also, the characters' culture, for once, is not based on that of WASP America. The inhabitants are originally from Portugal, and are strongly Catholic. (This, of course, makes Ender's task all the more difficult since he comes as the emissary of a sort of humanist religion). The book contains some Portuguese, and it does indeed add to the book's authenticity (the names of the characters are an example of this).

The technology the book introduces is, for the most part, believable. I have problems with the notion of the "ansible" (originally seen, I think, in Le Guin's The Left Hand of Darkness and The Word for World is Forest) which provides instant communication across any amount of space. It doesn't make sense in light of Card's use of it in conjunction with relativistic time dilation. The use of computers is commendable, as it was in Ender's Game, although his introduction of a spontaneously generated artificially intelligent being undermines the book's credibility if you know anything about computers. Net addicts will appreciate Card's use of computer networks in both novels.

It seems that Speaker is the middle book in a trilogy. I can't wait to read the next one -- the first two rank with David Brin's Startide Rising as my favorite sf novels of the past few years.

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Subject: Mike Resnick's Santiago: A myth of the far future  
Path: mtuxo!houxm!ihnp4!cbosgd!decuac!gouldsd!mjranum  
Date: Fri, 8-Aug-86 09:34:10 EST

I just finished this one, and would like to recommend it to those out there who enjoy a decently crafted novel of no great social importance.

The plot is tightly wrapped, and there are many interesting characters that manage to retain believability despite some very unusual quirks. While the writing style is completely different, for some reason a lot of the characters and general tone made me think of Sam Delaney.

This is another book about the bleak future of mankind. A bounty hunter and a journalist, along with assorted scum and a cyborg spaceship go in search of the galaxy's greatest criminal. There are lots of cold-eyed assassins straight out of your favorite cliché, but gore and grossness are minimal.

On a 0-10 this is a solid 6. Certainly it is a \*LOT\* better than the works various "famous" writers in SF are putting out nowadays. Read it.

mjr

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Subject: Howard the Duck (review)  
Path: mtuxo!houxm!ihnp4!cbosgd!cbatt!clyde!caip!trudel  
Date: Tue, 5-Aug-86 11:55:42 EST

I had read a little of the Marvel Comic book Howard The Dusk a few years ago, and when I went to the theatre, I tried to enter that mindset. Yah! There are quite a few funny jokes, but also quite a few (if not more) awful and I do mean awful puns in this movie. I screamed in agony at some of them.

Howard the Duck is a being from a planet of ducks that is a close parallel to our own. By some method I won't describe, he is brought to our Earth, or more precisely, Cleveland. The movie details his attempt to return to his home. Jeffrey Jones plays a scientist who helps him on his quest.

There are so many bad puns, and so few gems in this one that I really can't give this a real rating. I really still don't know whether I liked it or I hated it. For that reason I give this one a -2 AND a +2 because I can't make up my mind. Being that I haven't yet done so, I would start hedging towards the negative.

\*\*\*\*Spoiler Warning\*\*\*\*

The puns are really bad. They really try too hard. I was expecting awful humor, and I got more than that. The humor was almost as bad as my own, and I don't feel that I have to pay for it (I could just stay at home and do the same if I really wanted to). If they had tried to do a little more in the way of character development, I think I would have liked it much better.

Howard looks almost lifelike. I didn't see 'a person in a duck suit' (alright, so there were a few). Some of my friends disagreed, though,

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but others agreed with me. This choice is best left to the individual. Lea Thompson, well, I just can't give her a negative review. I don't see how any red-blooded, heterosexual male could. She suffers from bad writing, if there be any flaw with her. I mean, "Book 'em, Duck-o" almost made my stomach turn. For those of you who don't remember (I didn't) she played Micheal J. Fox's mother in Back to the Future, and she looks quite different here. The one thing that keeps me from completely panning this film is Jeffrey Jones, who makes an excellent Dark Overlord. The demon scenes are well put together, and decently 'coreographed'. This man is becoming as versatile as John Lithgow in his different roles.

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Subject: notes on Howard the Duck

Path: cbatt!clyde!caip!nike!ucbcad!ucbvax!hplabs!sdcrcf!ism780c!ism780!steven

Date: Mon, 4-Aug-86 18:00:00 EST

Is "Howard the Duck" a disappointment from the man who brought you "Star Wars", or is it a surprisingly sprightly effort from the creators of "Best Defense"??? Tough call. I enjoyed watching it, but I'm not sure it merits a go-see recommendation to most others.

Evening cityscape. Howard comes home to his apartment, leafs through the mail, opens a beer, turns on the tube, and plops down in his favorite easy chair. Only, he's a duck. Imagine Howard's surprise when he gets sucked across the galaxy to a planet inhabited by hairless apes where the only person who will befriend him is punkette singer Bev (Lea Thompson).

"Howard" is two movies in one, just like "Superman". First half shows us the history of Howard and how he relates to his strange new world. Second half follows Howard as he battles an arch-villain, in this case, a Dark Overlord who has been brought to Earth by the same device that zapped Howard here. Finale is also very reminiscent in tone of "Ghostbusters" (these Lucasfilm folk; conceptually they were very canny and probably close to the right track in deciding to do this project) in that we get a lot of high-tech special effect silliness.

Unfortunately, it doesn't all work. The movie meanders crazily over the

line between being weird/funny or calculated/overblown. Strong performances by the human leads contribute mightily to the success of much of the humor. Katz and Huyck invest the setting with some genuinely funny quirky humor ala "The Adventures of Buckaroo Banzai: Across the Eighth Dimension", but as directed, aren't able to maximize all of their written vision. Action and effects go on a little long. And some people just won't be able to suspend disbelief in some of the bedroom scenes (BEDROOM scenes!?!).

How is Howard? The ILM boys weren't able to create a completely amazing realization of a talking 3 foot 2 inch duck; eyes don't have a lifelike

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appearance and he usually walks like a midget rather than a duck. On the other hand, Howard's characterization is strong enough that you it won't bother you too much, I think.

It's sort of like hitting a double and getting stranded when the inning ends. "Howard the Duck" doesn't put a run up on the scoreboard, but it's a mighty pretty effort.

Two stars out of four.

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Subject: REVIEW -- Howard the Duck  
Path: topaz!uwvax!husc6!harvard!panda!genrad!decvax!decwrl!sun!jstein  
Date: Mon, 4-Aug-86 13:52:58 EST

If you haven't been told anything about Howard the Duck and aren't versed in the comic, you probably don't know what to expect from a movie such as this.

That's a good part of the fun right there.

Imagine yourself as a duck, living peacefully on a planet full of ducks, sitting in your living room reading PLAYDUCK. Basically you're minding your own business, when suddenly >=== WHOOSH ===> you are whisked through space to a strange planet populated by truly bizarre looking, uh, well- bizarre looking \*humans\*.



This is the predicament that Howard T. Duck finds himself in - trapped in a world where his MallardCard isn't accepted at thousands of locations worldwide. Trapped where duck hunting is a sport and fried eggs are a standard breakfast. And worse, he doesn't know if he can get back to where he came from, or how he even got here in the first place. Enter Beverly, lead singer of an all female rockband. She meets Howard when he saves her from a couple of her 'rowdier' fans, and thus begins the bizarre relationship between woman -- and duck.

To say much more would be to spoil the fun.

Howard the Duck is a Lucasfilm production, and it shows: this film is loaded with superb special effects. Despite the fact that it borrows slightly from other movies (most notably Alien), it is worth seeing. It is also what I call an "audience picture" in that it is more fun when the auditorium is full. No doubt about it, this one's a crowd pleaser all the way around.

Stars Lea Thompson as Beverly. RT = 1 hr 50 min. A Lucasfilm LTD production.

I rate HtD :  
a \$5.50 movie

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a B+  
three 1/2 stars out of four  
+3 on a -4 to +4 scale  
Three Months on the time-between-similar-quality scale

Jay T Stein, Sun Microsystems <temp>

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Subject: HOWARD THE DUCK  
Path: cbatt!clyde!caip!ll-xn!cit-vax!tybalt.caltech.edu!jdw  
Date: Fri, 8-Aug-86 04:59:46 EST

Ok, I went to this movie not sure about what to expect. The music video on TV had me a bit confused and I had'nt read a Howard The Duck comic in six years. Ok, it's starting, let's go for it...

After a blast of cute puns, I got into the 'Howard adjusts to our earth' movie theme and was enjoying myself. He was doing ok, and the bed scenes with Bev.! (groan) When the movie jumped track midway through, I was a tad lost for a moment, but got back into it quickly.

Both parts were good but different. You fight the idea of a new story midway through but afterwards there's more Howard the Duck action and adventure. For those complaining about the human/duck emotional plot in the beginning, those less familiar with Howard would have a hard time.

I liked both parts, the characters, the effects, and the movie altogether. +3 on -4 to 4 scale.

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