

particles. These particles have an amazing property: they can go back in time -- carrying information. The uncle calls the nephew to put the equipment to the test. Originally, the equipment is only capable of sending 6 characters or 48 bits of information into the past by 10 minutes.

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James Hogan shows many instances of paradox in this testing sequence where the nephew's testing capability is shown to determine the state of the actual processes. Once convinced of the reality of the device, the nephew and associate assist the uncle in increasing the time and capacity of the device to send back messages through time.

Side events, such as a fusion reactor being run in the nearby country side bring forth a romantic interest for the nephew. He has trouble with missing a date, due to the trouble taken to find a programming bug, relieved by a dated message being sent back to himself, telling himself to check this function carefully. He solves the problem and is able to see the girl. Other events of sickness and strange bugs that eat through animate and inanimate objects force the trio to use the time information device to save mankind -- not once, not twice but thrice upon a time.

I truly enjoyed reading this book -- both for the fascinating concept of passing information across time (rather than physically moving back through time) and the consequences of the action of the tau particles and in changing history/destiny. [-frl]

2. Having at various times in my life been short before reaching my current stature of a p_e_r_f_e_c_t five feet, six inches tall, I have a particular sympathy for the vertically disadvantaged. I don't know if you notice that society tends to favor the tall. It has been statistically observed that taller people get better service when standing in lines. Even at a perfect 5' 6" I notice the class of service I get when I go through the lunch line. A tall person will be served immediately. I get to the front of the line and the carver starts looking around for where his next hunk of meat is coming from and perhaps brings it out; the woman serving the vegetables decides now is the time to bring a new tray from the back room and to consolidate. The cashier decides it is the

perfect time to check the tape or to ask, "Gladys, you got any nickels?" "Uh, I have exact change." "I'll just be a moment. Hey, Clara, you got any nickels?"

Now here I am reading about the old science fiction clunker C_o_l_o_s_s_u_s_o_f_N_e_w_Y_o_r_k. You want to know how they promoted the thing?

FREE TICKETS TO TALL MEN!

ATTENTION MEN! DO YOU CONSIDER YOURSELF A COLOSSUS?

IF YOU ARE SIX-FEET-FIVE-INCHES TALL, OR MORE, YOU

QUALIFY TO BE A GUEST OF THE _____ THEATRE

(TOGETHER WITH A GUEST OF YOUR OWN) TO SEE

PARAMOUNT'S SCIENCE FICTION THRILLER

"THE COLOSSUS OF NEW YORK"

Isn't that pathetic? I can think of just about nobody I want less in a movie theater with me than someone over six-foot-five. Ever

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have somebody six-foot-five sit in front of you? That's just the kind of person you want to be a home-video fan. It's not the six-foot-fivers you want at a movie, it's the five-foot-sixers. I used to look for an empty seat to sit behind at the movies. Dumb idea. Five minutes after the films starts, a six-foot-fiver sits in front of me. It's got something to do with Einstein's time and space dilation, but you put that much meat in a person and time contracts for someone carrying all that mass. That's why they're always late. So these days rather than sitting behind an empty seat and ending up behind a six-foot-fiver, I head straight for the first five-foot-sixer and sit behind him. That's the ticket.

3. WNYC (broadcast channel 31) is going to run another one of those superb science fiction plays that the BBC does so well. If you get WNYC, I do recommend T_h_e_E_d_g_e_o_f_D_a_r_k_n_e_s_s, a very well-acted story that starts like a murder mystery, then goes in some very unexpected directions. Before it's over, it will satisfy mystery fans, James Bond fans, and science fiction fans. That is because in six one-hour installments, it takes the time to do all t_h_r_e_e stories well.

Bob Pack, an excellent English actor in somewhat the same slow-

burning vein as Ray Marsden, stars as Ronald Craven. Craven is a sort of work-a-day police investigator harried by the bureaucracy of his organization. Then his political-activist daughter is murdered right in front of him and he decides to investigate on his own. What he discovers involves ever-widening circles until the future of England and perhaps the world hangs in the balance. Involved are labor unions, radical ecologists, Northern Ireland, the nuclear power industry, and much more. The cast is a bunch of faces you may find familiar but you will probably be unable to name. Bob Peck was (under-used) in S_l_i_p_s_t_r_e_a_m. His daughter is played by Joanne Whalley from S_c_a_n_d_a_l and W_i_l_l_o_w. Joe Don Baker plays a bizarre Texan. There are several other familiar faces.

On Sunday, March 11, at 9 PM, WNYC will run parts one and two. Then Monday to Thursday at 9 PM, they will run the remaining four parts. Some of the BBC's good stuff is very, very good.

4. Last week's notice erroneously listed the next film festival as occurring on March 7. In fact, it was s_u_p_p_o_s_e_d to say March 1, which would have been the usual three weeks after the last film festival. The fault really belongs to whoever it was who first started putting caps at the tops of ones, hence making them occasionally look like sevens. If you are out there reading this, shame on you (and congratulations on living so long). In any case, Wednesday is all wrong for a Leeperhouse Fest so instead we will hold the fest on March 8 at 7 PM. Sorry you have to wait one more week. The notice should have read:

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At AT&T we are inventing the future every day. (Can you tell I am bucking for a job in advertising?) But what does the future hold for communications devices? Does ISDN really hold all the answers? Are there new frontiers beyond "call waiting"? Find out in our next Leeperhouse film festival, 7 PM, March 8, when we will show you

The Future of Communications
THIS ISLAND EARTH (1955) dir. by Joseph M. Newman
BRAINSTORM (1983) dir. by Douglas Trumbull

Yes, we found two films based around advanced communications devices.

5. I realize there has been a shortage of attachments to the MT VOID lately. This is in part the fault of Hollywood--there have been no movies worth seeing, much less reviewing. Also, I have been involved in reading publications eligible for the Readercon Small Press Awards (for which I am a judge) and so I haven't had time to review many books. But this week we have several book reviews (courtesy of Dale Skran), and several film reviews (courtesy of you-know-who). Next week we start a three-part series, my and Mark's Boskone convention report. The drought is ended! [-ecl]

Mark Leeper
MT 3D-441 957-5619
...mtgzx!leeper

We are, for example, clever enough to know that a year is a measure of passage, not permanence; we call the seasons spring, summer, autumn, and winter, knowing that they are continually passing one into the other. We are not surprised at this but when we give to seasons of another sort the names Rome, Byzantium, Islam, or Mongol Empire we are astonished to see that each one refuses to remain what it is.

-- Russell Hoban, PILGERMANN

Cable in March
Film comment by Mark R. Leeper
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B_e_d_l_a_m (1946) (American Movie Classics)
C_o_m_p_u_l_s_i_o_n (1959) (Cinemax)
T_h_e_C_h_o_c_o_l_a_t_e_W_a_r (1988) (Showtime)
T_h_e_I_n_n_o_c_e_n_t_s (1961) (American Movie Classics)
M_a_d_L_o_v_e (1935) (Showtime)
T_h_e_M_a_n_W_h_o_W_o_u_l_d_B_e_K_i_n_g (1975) (Cinemax)
N_o_r_t_h_b_y_N_o_r_t_h_w_e_s_t (1959) (Disney, HBO)
Q_B_V_I_I (1974) (HBO)
S_t_a_n_d_a_n_d_D_e_l_i_v_e_r (1988) (Cinemax)
T_h_i_n_g_s_C_h_a_n_g_e (1988) (HBO)
T_h_i_n_g_s_t_o_C_o_m_e (1936) (American Movie Classics)

Several of this month's films probably do not belong on this list because they are sufficiently well-known that most people do not need recommendations for them. T_h_e_M_a_n_W_h_o_W_o_u_l_d_B_e_K_i_n_g was recently recommended on national television. Most people have probably seen N_o_r_t_h_b_y_N_o_r_t_h_w_e_s_t and T_h_i_n_g_s_t_o_C_o_m_e. Let me start at the other end of the spectrum. Probably few people have heard of T_h_e_C_h_o_c_o_l_a_t_e_W_a_r. There are several films about the high school and the forces to get students to conform. In this film these forces take on a particularly sinister edge. I have seen the film only once but I found it quite a satisfyingly original treatment. A view of a very different high school experience is offered by S_t_a_n_d_a_n_d_D_e_l_i_v_e_r, which is like H_o_o_s_i_e_r_s and just as satisfying but the game isn't basketball, it's calculus. This is the true story of the barrio teacher who took some of the toughest kids in school and made mathematicians of them.

C_o_m_p_u_l_s_i_o_n is a film account of the notorious Leopold-Loeb murder, which was also the basis of Hitchcock's R_o_p_e. But C_o_m_p_u_l_s_i_o_n is the better film version. Two college students commit kidnapping and murder for the mental exercise. A great deal is made of Orson Welles's contribution to this film as the great American lawyer Clarence Darrow. It is a good role for Welles, but he does not appear until the last third of the film if I remember rightly, so it's hardly his picture. But Bradford Dillman and Dean Stockwell are good as the killers.

Speaking of crime films, there are major crime figures if little actual crime in the story of T_h_i_n_g_s_C_h_a_n_g_e, a gentle pleasant film about an Italian immigrant shoemaker who agrees to play the fall-guy for a crime he did not commit. In return for his being so obliging the syndicate will pay him well for the time he spends in prison. A small-time hood agrees to babysit and coach the convict-to-be, but instead takes him for a good time at a resort. David Mamet (H_o_u_s_e_o_f_G_a_m_e_s, T_h_e_U_n_t_o_u_c_h_a_b_l_e_s) wrote the story and directed. Don Ameche and Joe Mantegna star.

The crimes are considerably more serious in Q_B_V_I_I. The made-for-television film takes a while to get going, but it remains the best and most harrowing dramatic film about the horrors of Nazi concentration camps. In part this is because it does not try to visualize life in the camps but recreates it by courtroom testimony. Without starving actors to near-death, I seriously doubt if life in the death camps can ever be realistically shown on film.

As for more fanciful horror, there is Val Lewton's B_e_d_l_a_m. Almost all of Val Lewton's horror films are worth watching. This one is not up to his best mood piece, a nihilistic film called T_h_e_S_e_v_e_n_t_h_V_i_c_t_i_m, but it is a tidy little historical horror film.

M_a_d_L_o_v_e is arguably Peter Lorre's weirdest film. This is a strange version of the oft-filmed horror story "The Hands of Orlak." Lorre plays the mad surgeon Dr. Gogol, who quite understandably wants to get the heroine, played by attractive Frances Drake.

The most eerie horror film of the month is T_h_e_I_n_n_o_c_e_n_t_s, Jack Clayton's adaptation of Henry James's A_T_u_r_n_o_f_t_h_e_S_c_r_e_w. Atmospherically photographed by Freddie Francis, it retains all the ambiguity of the novel.

"Gee Whizz - Rockets and Stuff"
Yet Another Batch of Miscellaneous Reviews
by Dale L. Skran Jr.
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_ L _ a _ b _ y _ r _ i _ n _ t _ h by Dennis Schmidt

This book has a couple of strikes against it right off - it opens with a pretentious quote from Soren Kierkegaard (old fear and trembling himself), and is clearly labeled "Book One of the Questioner Trilogy." Neither of these things were sufficient to drive me off, since I was interesting in sampling an unfamiliar, and fairly little known author. As I read, I discovered that Schmidt alternated two stories, one occurring well after the other throughout the book. Unfortunately, the "prequel" was both less interesting and more difficult to follow than the main story, so I skipped parts of it.

_ L _ a _ b _ y _ r _ i _ n _ t _ h follows a large, bear-like alien as he attempts to find enlightenment on "Labyrinth," a living planet with a yen to kill the curious. His companions are a living computer, an elephant-like warrior, a reptilian coward, and an insectile philosopher. They are constantly lectured by a humanoid "teacher" who may - or may not - be an extension of the living planet.

This works out to a fairly typical conclusion as the explorers are picked off, each after encountering their greatest fears. Interesting,

but not high on my recommended list.

_ C _ o _ n _ t _ a _ c _ t _ a _ n _ d _ C _ o _ m _ m _ u _ n _ e by L. Neil Smith

On the surface, this tale has a lot going for it. Sometime in our future, when the USA has become part of the USSR and socialism has triumphed, some space shuttles are sent out to mine an asteroid. On it, they find a weird collection of inter-dimensional travelers, including intelligent birds, crab-like warriors, talking dogs, ordinary humans, and immense, ancient mollusks.

Unfortunately, Mr. Smith is much more interested in promulgating libertarian propaganda than in telling an interesting story. The "murder mystery" drags, the martial arts are fanciful (basic "magic" kung fu), and the conclusion unbelievable. Worse still, the reader must plow through interminable lectures by the giant mollusks on libertarian philosophy. NOT recommended.

_ A _ n _ g _ e _ l _ S _ t _ a _ t _ i _ o _ n by Walter Jon Williams

In the 50s Heinlein wrote good, wholesome adventure stories with super-smart, tough heroes and heroines, stories like _ B _ e _ t _ w _ e _ e _ n _ P _ l _ a _ n _ e _ t _ s, _ T _ h _ e _ R _ o _ l _ l _ i _ n _ g _ S _ t _ o _ n _ e _ s, _ C _ i _ t _ i _ z _ e _ n _ o _ f _ t _ h _ e _ G _ a _ l _ a _ x _ y, and so on. Later he added a dollop of sex and gave us _ T _ h _ e _ M _ o _ o _ n _ i _ s _ a _ H _ a _ r _ s _ h _ M _ i _ s _ t _ r _ e _ s _ s and "Stranger in a Strange Land." Now, Walter Jon Williams, cyberpunk copycat, has written what amounts to a Heinlein juvenile viewed through a cyberpunk lens.

Ubu Roy, a four-armed genetically engineered kid with an eidetic memory and his sister, Beautiful Maria, a cybernetic witch, take the universe by storm, struggling to survive in a dog-eat-dog future world

of black hole drives and immense O'Neil-style colonies. They are less brother and sister than most, since their father made them up from various sources, and in the far reaches of space no taboo inhibits their frolics.

They are down on their luck when they make the biggest score of all - first contact. Williams provides us with a pretty alien set of aliens, and a plausible series of adventures. Heinlein would be proud, I think. Recommended. I'm planning on nominating this for the 1990 Hugo.

Volume II: Vamphyri!, 470 pages
Volume III: The Source, 505 pages
by Dale L. Skran Jr.
Copyright 1990 Dale L. Skran Jr.

* Warning - Spoilers *

Mr. Lumley has created an awesome pastiche here, combining a wide variety of styles and ideas into a pretty impressive horror/SF series. It is almost pointless to summarize over 1500 pages of plot, so a focus on Lumley's style seems more appropriate. First, there is an element of Lovecraftian Horror here, with nameless ancient mysteries and leprous tentacles reaching up from bubbling pits. Second, Lumley has a dash of Clive Barker and Friday the 13th here, with just enough intestine dripping scenes to suggest that 13-year-olds should not be reading these books. Third, Lumley has added the spy thriller, with a James-bond style character fighting KGB minions. Beneath this is the fourth element, a classic John W. Campbell ESP adventure story, complete with many ESPers having unusual powers, such as spotters (who can detect other ESPers), a death-dealing evil eye, telepaths, pre-cogs, selective invulnerability of various sorts, etc. Most unusual of all are the necromancers, who can steal the secrets of the dead by destroying their bodies, and the singular Necroscope, Harry Keogh, who can speak to the dead, and raise them to do this bidding. This list just scratches the surface. Additional elements include Vampires (with a fairly detailed, non-supernatural life-cycle), mathematics (*with numerous diagrams*), E. E. Smith super-science, contact with other dimensions, and Edgar-Rice-Burroughs-style adventure in a fantastic land of weird animals and people.

The one line plot summary might be "Zombie Master vs. Vampires," but this trivializes the scope of Lumley's effort, which walks a line between horror, fantasy, and SF. Lumley's control over this vast, swirling mass is not always perfect, but improves as the series moves along. Unfortunately, it seems the final battle is yet to come at the end of the third book, and Lumley's explication of the origin of the Roumanian language more than a tad dubious.

The packaging of the novels deserves mention. A two part cover, with the outer art done by Bob Eggleton and an inner painting by Dennis Nolan makes the books especially striking (and disturbing!).

Lumley may have made the mistake of making his major hero, Harry Keogh, too powerful (in addition to be able to speak to and raise the dead, he learns teleportation as well), but in the third volume, it appears that Harry's son (who has Harry's powers!) has become a vampire, setting the stage for a battle royal in some later volume. In a recent "Weird Tales" interview Lumley mentioned something about "armageddon" in Volume V or VII, so be forewarned. This series could serve as the basis for one more than one fairly interesting movie, and appears intended for the screen at times.

Recommended to those who like this sort of stuff.

ENEMIES, A LOVE STORY
A film review by Mark R. Leeper
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Capsule review: A very substantial film with strong elements of both comedy and drama. A film with a strong period feel and a story worth telling and told on an adult level. Rating: +2.

The Holocaust is over and Herman Broder survived. Now he is haunted only by nightmares of the night the Nazis took his wife, Tamara, and children. All three had been killed in the death camps, he'd been told. Now Broder is married to Yadviga, the Polish servant whose family saved his life. Off and on he teaches Yadviga to be Jewish, though she seems more earnest about it than he is. He has an okay job as a ghost writer for a famous rabbi and he has a good-looking mistress on the side. That's Masha, a fiery Jewish woman who also survived the death camps. For now Broder is getting by, but soon his mistress will be pregnant and wanting to be married, and to make matters worse, Broder's first wife survived after all and this will leave Broder with two wives more than he can handle.

Paul Mazursky's E_n_e_m_i_e_s, A_L_o_v_e_S_t_o_r_y, based on a story by Isaac

Bashevis Singer, is a surprisingly well-realized comedy-drama with four characters, one husband and his three wives, all believable and three-dimensional. And the fifth character is the post-war Jewish community in New York, very authentically recreated on the screen--authentic enough that it brought back memories of when I was very young, not long after this film is set.

Broder's three wives are very different types, each with her own strengths. Margaret Sophie Stein plays stolid, sincere, and homely Yadviga, still half living in the Poland in which she grew up. She knows her husband has some hanky-panky going on, but ignores it while she can, thinking that if she can make herself Jewish enough she can hold on to him. The bewitching Lena Olin (of T_h_e_U_n_b_e_a_r_a_b_l_e_L_i_g_h_t_n_e_s_s o_f_B_e_i_n_g) plays Masha, burning out her life as quickly as she can. Then there is Anjelica Huston as Tamara, at first bitterly bent on reclaiming her husband but eventually transforming herself into a healing force. And at the center of these women is Herman himself (played by Ron

Silver), confused and indecisive, with a need to feel he is in control of things, most of which are beyond him.

There is a lot of film here. For a film with both comedy and drama, there is surprisingly much of each. The comedy does not feel at all forced and is all very human. The drama is also very human and at times very painful. Maurice Jarre understood the film very well and provided a score with light klezmer music to underscore the comedy and with sad clarinet music to underscore the more serious moments. E n e m i e s is one of the better films of 1989, a year that had more than its share of good films. I rate it a high +2 on the -4 to +4 scale. For those who worry about such things, there is explicit sex and indistinct dialogue. I didn't mind the former, but lamented the latter.