



states. In this world, airplanes are as common as flying carpets, illusion and scientific devices each add their special part to the structure of the world.

THE MT VOID

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In this world, we are thrust into a small magical gem shop where a penniless customer is willing to try anything to get out of a suicidal depression. It is in this first book, O\_n\_a\_P\_a\_l\_e\_H\_o\_r\_s\_e, that we are introduced to Zane -- the soon-to-be future officeholder of Death. With the combination of science and magic, we discover that each of the major Incarnations is supreme in his sphere of influence and that transitions of office holders occurs infrequently and yet provides a certain sense of inadequacy for the new office holder.

Although each of the seven books deals with each Incarnation -- from Thanatos to Gaea, including Satan and God, the sub-plots lead up to the major plot of the entire series. It is fascinating in the methods that Piers Anthony has devised for the succession of Death, Time, Fate, War, Nature, Evil and Good.

An added feature of these series is the Author's Notes -- the little musings where Piers explains what happens to him personally during the writing times of this series. A great idea -- perhaps it is intended to let more people understand what he is undergoing while he writes.

This is a wonderful series with a somewhat predictable ending -- yet very enjoyable. The price of immortality for these office holders is that they get to do some very hard work -- for a long time. [frl]

2. A while ago I wrote a review of H\_e\_n\_r\_y\_V in which I claimed that Shakespeare over-rated the value of Henry's pre-battle pep talk and under-rated the value of the longbow. A number of people commented that while what I said was very likely true, there were other factors, such as Henry's choice of the battlefield. One correspondent sent me an article about the Washington D.C. police force demonstrating for the public their bullet-proof armor. The

armored jacket was put on a dummy. Then all the fire-power the police force could muster was brought to bear on the dummy. Sure enough, the smile never faded from the dummy's lips and the armored jacket was never pierced.

Then an uninvited guest across the field fired an arrow from a longbow at the dummy. While no bullet could pierce the jacket, the arrow shot from a longbow actually did. Twice. Once in front, once in back. The dummy still had its smile but it was somewhat belied by the hole through its chest. They found the arrow lying on the grass on the far side of the dummy.

The D.C. police department reportedly were unamused by this little demonstration of the power of the longbow. It is unlikely that we will see many of the street gangs of the urban centers of this country giving up some of the fine convenience features of the machine guns and bazookas that they have currently been collecting

THE MT VOID

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just in case they are needed. You know how things are. It is good to follow the Boy Scout motto and be prepared. It is good to know that real fire-power is possible from a technology that is too simple to outlaw and that even modern drug lords might have been no match for Henry and his dilapidated little army.

This message was brought to you by the National Rifle and Longbow Association, who suggests there is little in life so satisfying as using a bazooka on an unwanted intruder.

3. This year's Nebula winners are:

Novel: Elizabeth Ann Scarborough, T\_h\_e\_H\_e\_a\_l\_e\_r'\_s\_W\_a\_r

Novella: Lois McMaster Bujold, "Mountains of Mourning"

Novelette: Connie Willis, "At the Rialto"

Short Story: Geoffrey A. Landis, "Ripples in the Dirac Sea"

4. The SF Club library in Lincroft now has Algis Budrys's W\_r\_i\_t\_e\_r\_s\_o\_f\_t\_h\_e\_F\_u\_t\_u\_r\_e\_#\_5. [-ecl]

Mark Leeper  
MT 3D-441 957-5619

...mtgzx!leeper

All great truths begin with blasphemies.  
-- George Bernard Shaw

THE GODS MUST BE CRAZY II  
A film review by Mark R. Leeper  
Copyright 1990 Mark R. Leeper

Capsule review: "Pleasant" is the word for this  
lightweight African adventure starring N!xau again as the  
benevolent if not always well-understood Xixo, the  
Kalihari Bushman. Again slapstick and political farce

mix in this cultural-misunderstanding comedy. Rating:  
+2.

When T\_h\_e\_B\_e\_a\_r was released, I said that it was one film that I would not mind see being turned into a series because the character is interesting enough that I would not mind every year or so looking in to see what he was up to. Now that I have seen two "The Gods Must be Crazy" films, I think I would enjoy seeing as many of them as Jamie Uys wants to make. I thought the 1981 T\_h\_e\_G\_o\_d\_s\_M\_u\_s\_t\_B\_e\_C\_r\_a\_z\_y depended a little too much on political farce and on a brand of comedy that goes back to the silent film days. But then perhaps the film industry in Botswana is as young today as the American film industry was when those gags were popular here. What really was excellent about the first film was its view of modern society through the eyes of a Kalihari Bushman, Xixo (played by N!xau). In the newer film, Xixo is back, once again played by N!xau, who is by now running the risk of being typecast as a Kalihari Bushman and who may never get to play the classic roles such as the one uncorrupt cop in a big-city police force or the odd new partner of two policeman chasing down a killer.

The new plot has nine people running around the Kalihari in small groups that invariably got split up and united in various combinations. You have one adult Bushman, two Bushman children, two soldiers fighting, two poachers fleeing, one woman lawyer, one lost game warden, and a micro-plane high up in a tree. The chaos starts when Xixo's two children find a poachers' truck and climb on, only to have it start up so that they cannot get off. Xixo reads the tracks in the sand, understands what happened, and sets off to find his children. Meanwhile, Ann Taylor, a New York Lawyer (played by Lena Farugia), goes up for a half-hour plane ride with one game warden and finds herself stranded with another warden and an ultra-light airplane that is out of fuel. Also on the loose are two enemy mercenaries: one African, one Cuban.

As with the previous film, there is humorous animal footage, though this time obvious mock-ups of animals are often used and in one scene there appears to be two men in a rhinoceros suit. There is also a bit too much slapstick and fast-motion photography for intended humorous effect. There is, alas, less of the Bushman's view of our culture, but the story is affectionately told and charming if not always convincing.

T\_h\_e\_G\_o\_d\_s\_M\_u\_s\_t\_B\_e\_C\_r\_a\_z\_y\_I\_I is a likable if lightweight film. I rate it a +2 on the -4 to +4 scale.

## 22ND INTERNATIONAL TOURNEE OF ANIMATION

A film review by Mark R. Leeper

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Once again it's time for a release of an I\_n\_t\_e\_r\_n\_a\_t\_i\_o\_n\_a\_l\_T\_o\_u\_r\_n\_e\_e\_o\_f\_A\_n\_i\_m\_a\_t\_i\_o\_n. Each year a feature film is edited together from award-winning short animated films and from other films judged to be deserving by the producers. The resulting film then tours the country where typically it will show only in major cities and play in one theater at a time. For all I know there may be only one print that tours the country. Generally once I publish a review of a T\_o\_u\_r\_n\_e\_e I get asked by people if it will be coming to their city or if the films are available on cassette. I am sorry, but I cannot be very helpful with the first question. Sometimes before or after I see the T\_o\_u\_r\_n\_e\_e I hear that it has played in another city, but I have no advance information. You can, however, get the best of the last two T\_o\_u\_r\_n\_e\_es on video. An ad given out at the T\_o\_u\_r\_n\_e\_e offers cassettes of "the best" of the 1\_9\_t\_h and 2\_0\_t\_h T\_o\_u\_r\_n\_e\_e (no telling how long the selections are). Each is available for \$44 (including shipping and handling) from Animation, P.O.~Box 25547, Los Angeles CA 90025.

The quality of the films chosen is spotty with the worst selections being "just okay." The best are often very impressive. I am, for example, a great admirer of a short made for the BBC called "Skywhales" and I saw it for the first time at the 1\_9\_t\_h\_T\_o\_u\_r\_n\_e\_e\_o\_f\_A\_n\_i\_m\_a\_t\_i\_o\_n.

Surprisingly absent from the T\_o\_u\_r\_n\_e\_e was Pixar, Inc., who do nice work with computer animation. In general I find that the films that have been nominated for Academy Awards are not the best films and the Academy Award winner is the weakest of the nominees. This year the two best films were the Academy Award nominees. They were "The Cow" and "Balance." I have a minor preference for "The Cow," but "Balance" was the Academy's choice. It is a much more intelligent film than they have chosen in the past, and I do not fault them for the choice.

That is probably sufficient for general comments; let me get to discussion of the films themselves. I will rate them on a scale of -4 to +4, though my lowest rating here is -1 and the highest is +3.

Unadvertised, and punctuating the T\_o\_u\_r\_n\_e\_e at various points, are a set of enjoyable little sketches from MTV called "Plymptoons." These are little animated films about twenty seconds in length that start with a caption and then show about fifteen seconds of scene. The humor is much like that of Gary Larson's "Far Side" cartoons and are often just as funny. We saw three groups shown at different times with about four in each group. These have no great animation techniques, but they certainly are enjoyable. Rating: +2.

- "Kakania" (Karen Aqua; First Place--New York Film & Video Expo; USA; 3:53): The title apparently refers to a dance and that is all there is to this film: figures dancing. Mixed in are Amerind images but that purpose is obscure. Rating: 0.
- "A Touch of Deceit" (Michael Gagne; Canada; 2:04): This is sort of a gag on film, but much longer than a Plympton and not as funny. It is just not substantial enough to rate very high, though there is some feel of a send-up of Disney traditions. Rating: +1.
- "The Cow" (Alexander Petrov; Academy Award nominee 1989; USSR; 10:00): I found this a very moving film. It is apparently the narrator's memories of a cow on his farm when he was a boy. Life was hard for him but, as he thinks back with some guilt, much harder for the cow who was treated as if she were a piece of machinery. Her calf was taken away and sold as meat. She was forced to give her milk to people. She was harnessed to a plow. In the end she is killed in a vain attempt to find her calf and she is eaten by the family that owned her. The film could have become maudlin or ridiculous, but doesn't. The animation technique is very unusual, but well-suited to illustrating memories. It starts with a painting, then the artists paint over those parts that have moved and they fade from one picture to the next. I consider it to be the best piece in the entire T\_o\_u\_r\_n\_e\_e and rate it a +3.
- "Cat & Rat" (Jim Richardson; Student Academy Award Winner; USA; 3:46): This film uses several kinds of animation, from line drawings to three-dimensional models, but the ideas can all be found in old Warner Brothers cartoons and if you have seen those you don't really need to see this. Rating: +1.
- "A Very, Very Long Time Ago" (Olive Jar Animation Studios; USA; 2:38): This is a very short film that seems as if it is going one way and then takes a sharp right turn right out of Monty Python. What the film is about is the first attempt of a sea animal to crawl onto the land. Amusing. Rating: +1.
- "Sand Dance" (Richard Quade; Student Academy Award Winner; USA; 3:53): Like "Kakania," this is just figures dancing to music, but what sets this film apart is that the individual frames are sand

paintings. And surprise! sand paintings turn out to be a very inappropriate medium for animation. The figures are hazy and without the needed definition. Nice try, but somebody should have realized early on that this was not working. Rating: -1.

- "Pictures from Memory" (Nedjelko Dragic; Best Animation--Golden Gate Awards Competition; Yugoslavia; 11:58): Supposedly animated photographs from the life of the artist's father. They, in fact, piece together to show the viewer a quick thumbnail picture of the history of Yugoslavia in the 20th Century. There is surprising historic scope in this one short film. The animation is not

greatly original, but I would rate the film a +2.

- "Shadrach" (Nathaniel Hornblower, Chris Casady; USA; 4:05): This is a rap song by the Beastie Boys with paintings on the screen that are impressions of a rap concert. The paintings are sequential but this is not really animation to any great extent. It is just illustrated music with a lot of corners cut. Rating: -1.

- "Vykrutasy" (Garri Bardin; First Prize--Los Angeles International Animation Celebration; USSR; 10:15): This is a parable illustrated in figures made from shaping wire from a coil. The story deals with a man who builds a farm and then must protect it from trespassers who would inadvertently and carelessly destroy his crops. The man has to decide how far to go to protect his farm. Not great but generally pretty good. Rating: +2.

- "Gisele Kerozene" (Jan Kounen; First Prize--Avioraz Film Festival; France; 4:40): This is a fun piece of slapstick about modern witches with mechanical flying brooms fighting it out against the backdrop of a modern building complex. No profundity, a little blood and a little bad taste. Still, it is good-natured and fun. Rating: +1.

- "The Bedroom" (Maarten Koopman; Netherlands; 1:08): This is a very short piece of animation with a non-humorous surprise ending. Apparently in a small bedroom furniture is coming out of the walls and moving itself into place. To guess the surprise--and there really is no reason you should--you have to look at what pieces of



furniture are going where. An okay little gimmick film. Rating: +1.

- "Balance" (Christoph and Wolfgang Lauenstein; Academy Award Winner 1989; West Germany; 7:38): This is another parable but a more intelligent one and also one with a good deal of suspense. Imagine a platform floating in space (or on water?) with five sepulchral men in grey coats standing on it. They stand in a circle to balance their weight so that the platform does not tip and drop them off. If one steps away from the center, they all must in order to maintain the balance. Then one finds a valuable box and they all want it. But how to get it without tipping the platform? This is an Oscar winner and deservedly so. Rating: +2.
- "Train Gang" (Paul Driessen; Canada, Netherlands; 2:01): Very unoriginal animation techniques tell a story whose point I must have missed. Rating : low 0.
- "Juke-Bar" (Martin Barry/National Film Board; Grand Prix--World Film festival, Montreal; Canada; 10:15): A diner, infested with cockroaches, gets a new juke-box. The cockroaches, have humorous faces, see the juke-box as a great addition. They play the juke-box and start really partying, led by one wild and crazy cockroach,

Three-dimensional animation is used to tell a fun story. This is not profound or creative, but is a lot of fun with partying cockroaches reminiscent of partying little monsters in G\_r\_e\_m\_l\_i\_n\_s. Rating: +1.

- "Animated Self-Portraits" (David Ehrlich; Silver Plaque--Chicago Film Festival; USA, Yugoslavia, Estonia USSR, Czechoslovakia, Japan; 7:56): This piece is itself an anthology. An international cast of animators--at least ten--each does a very short animated film including a picture of him or herself. Almost as funny as the Plymptoons, this has not much depth but a lot of off-the-wall ideas. Rating: +2.
- "A Warm Reception in L.A." (Vincent Cafarelli and Candy Kugel; Golden Plaque--Chicago Film Festival; USA; 5:04): This was the only piece I had seen before. It is a music video for the ballad of the

main character's attempts to sell some of his writing to a film studio. The animation is in day-glow on a black background. Just okay. Rating: +1.

- "The Arnold Waltz" (Craig Bartlett; USA; 2:51): Having amusing animation in three dimensions, this story nonetheless goes no place. The unoriginal story shows a misfit schoolboy with fantasies of a more exciting life. Not really very funny or very interesting. Rating: +1.

- "All My Relations" (Joanna Priestly; USA; 4:53): This is a cartoon with a few amusing scenes but overall it is a pretty lackluster piece to end the T\_o\_u\_r\_n\_e\_e with. It is really just the story of a number of people going through the crises of life. It has no real conclusion, and not much punch. Rating: +1.

This was a very nicely rounded edition of the I\_n\_t\_e\_r\_n\_a\_t\_i\_o\_n\_a\_l  
T\_o\_u\_r\_n\_e\_e of A\_n\_i\_m\_a\_t\_i\_o\_n with some more substantial and serious pieces than  
in previous years. Now I want to get "The Cow" on video.

Capsule review: A loving look at a post-World War II Sicilian village and a boy who loved the movies. Salvatore Cascio is excellent as the boy and Philippe Noiret is good as his mentor. Sentimental but often moving. In re-editing much of the thrust of the film has apparently been redirected to make it a much different film than was screened in Italy. (If you have seen the film, please read the note at the end of the review.)  
Rating: low +3.

It is just after World War II in Giancaldo, a small town in Sicily. Life is hard, troubles are large, and most pleasures are small. One pleasure is big, bigger than the richest man in town. It is the big screen down at the Cinema Paradiso. The big screen tells big stories, stories of tortured love, action stories, musicals with big production numbers. And in front of the big screen is a small boy, Toto. To Toto there is school, there is sleep, there is work, there is food, and there are movies. The first four are mundane and leave Toto in Giancaldo. Movies are magical and can take him any place in the world, from the houses of the rich to the Wild West. To Toto not just the stories are magical but the theater is also, with its bright beam coming from a sculptured lion's mouth. Toto has even sneaked a look at the machine that makes the picture and at old Alfredo, the irritable man who runs the machine that makes the movies. For Toto to get closer to the movies he will have to make friends with Alfredo and maybe learn how Alfredo runs the projector.

Thus begins a life-long friendship between young Salvatore--called Toto--and Alfredo the poor projectionist. And the friendship is built around the love both have for the movies. Set against the backdrop of the Sicilian peasant village the story shows Salvatore himself become a projectionist; we see him grow up and fall in love. The story is told in flashback as it is remembered by the adult Salvatore on the night that he has heard of Alfredo's death.

C i n e m a P a r a d i s o, directed and written by Giuseppe Tornatore, is full of loving detail about the post-war movie exhibition business and has many endearing portraits of the Sicilian peasants who mob the theater to get a touch of something that transcends their unglamorous lives. Ennio Morricone scored this film, originally three hours in length, shown in Italy at two and a half hours in 1988, and cut to about two hours for American audiences. This is a sentimental and endearing film that will be well remembered. I rate it a low +3 on the -4 to +4 scale.

(Note for those who have seen the film, spoiler for those who have not: The following is a quote from the Variety 11/23/88 review of the film, then called NuovoCinemaParadiso. It reveals an important plot twist edited out of the version released in this country. "[Salvatore] returns to Sicily for Alfredo's funeral and finds his long lost love, now played by Brigitte Fossey. Amid many tears, Salvatore learns it was his blind friend who broke up this one, true romance of his life." In fact, it was a weakness of the film that that loose end was never tied up. Apparently the American distributor did not want Alfredo to be made less sympathetic, though anybody who steals pieces of films is not particularly sympathetic as far as I am concerned.)

## Q & A

A film review by Mark R. Leeper

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Capsule review: Sidney Lumet directed a very adult look at police corruption, racism, and politics. The story is complex and often hard to follow but it has a strong feel of authenticity. Rating: +2.

I generally claim that a film can tell the same story you could tell in forty to sixty pages of prose. That rule is not infallible. Q & A is a long film (at 132 minutes) but it is amazing how much happens in the course of this realistic thriller looking at police and politics.

It is difficult to believe this hard-edged film could have been directed by the same man who last year directed the much softer F\_a\_m\_i\_l\_y B\_u\_s\_i\_n\_e\_s\_s.

Q & A is complex and frankly, difficult to follow, with many more major characters than one expects to see in a film. It is nice to see a film that does not talk down to its audience even if perhaps it goes a little far in the other direction. Not making the film any easier to follow, much of the dialogue is spoken in (realistically) thick accents.

Q & A opens with policeman Mike Brennan (played by Nick Nolte) murdering a Puerto Rican drug pusher and then intimidating witnesses into saying the dead man pulled a gun on him. Called in purportedly to investigate (but actually to whitewash) is Al Reilly (played by Timothy Hutton), the new D.A.'s assistant. Reilly was formerly a policeman and the son of a much-loved legend on the police force. The case does look simple enough to start with, but a friend tips off Reilly that there may be more going on than is immediately apparent. The more Reilly digs the more he finds. His chief subject, Brennan, is a big, easy man instantly likable and quickly detestable. He has an open love of crude, though

often funny, ethnic jokes that soon gives way to an obvious racism. Brennan is finding himself in an increasingly multi-ethnic, multi-racial New York and resents how things have changed since the "good old days." In fact, there are many ethnic and other minorities represented in the plot--virtually every important character is from a minority--and the hatred each group has for the others is part of what the story is about. The plot involves Irish, Italians, Puerto Ricans, gays, and Jews--Sephardic and Ashkenazic. The plot also involves a D.A.~with higher political aspirations (played by Patrick O'Neal) and a drug runner (played by Armand Asante) involved with both the victim and with Reilly's former fiancée. There is no chance I can do a reasonable job of explaining a complex and highly inter-woven plot such as \_ Q & \_ A in a paragraph or two.

\_ Q & \_ A has a very downbeat feel to it, without the sorts of heroes this sort of film would usually have. Lumet is not trying to make us like his characters but instead just wants us to see the way things are. It is set in a New York City that is as easily recognizable by the feel as by the buildings. The music is by Ruben Blades, who also wrote the song under the titles. (Blades, incidentally, is reportedly very likely to announce soon his candidacy for the presidency of Panama.) For Lumet \_ Q & \_ A represents a return to a more serious style of filmmaking, such as his \_ P \_ r \_ i \_ n \_ c \_ e \_ o \_ f \_ t \_ h \_ e \_ C \_ i \_ t \_ y. I rate it a +2 on the -4 to +4 scale.

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Readercon 3  
Con report by Evelyn C. Leeper  
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(Part 3)

\_ S \_ t \_ o \_ p \_ M \_ e \_ I \_ f \_ Y \_ o \_ u ' \_ v \_ e \_ H \_ e \_ a \_ r \_ d \_ o \_ f \_ T \_ h \_ i \_ s

O\_n\_e: M\_o\_r\_e G\_r\_e\_a\_t O\_b\_s\_c\_u\_r\_e B\_o\_o\_k\_s  
Terry Bisson, John M. Ford, Scott E. Green, Franklin Hummel  
Sunday, 2:30 PM

As usual, I will provide just a listing of the books recommended  
(with who recommended them, if I made a note):

- Blish, James, "After Such Knowledge" series (A\_C\_a\_s\_e\_o\_f  
C\_o\_n\_s\_c\_i\_e\_n\_c\_e,  
B\_l\_a\_c\_k\_E\_a\_s\_t\_e\_r, D\_a\_y\_a\_f\_t\_e\_r  
J\_u\_d\_g\_e\_m\_e\_n\_t, and D\_o\_c\_t\_o\_r\_M\_i\_r\_a\_b\_i\_l\_i\_s, which  
Ford  
described as "a novel about Bacon"--it took some clarification from  
me to explain that he meant R\_o\_g\_e\_r Bacon, not bacon as in "bacon and  
eggs"!)
  - Carr, J. H., anything (Green)
  - Cover, Arthur Byron, A\_n\_E\_a\_s\_t\_W\_i\_n\_d\_C\_o\_m\_i\_n\_g (far future  
Sherlock  
Holmes pastiche of sorts)
  - Davidson, Avram, O\_n\_t\_h\_e\_E\_i\_g\_h\_t\_h\_D\_a\_y (written as Ellery Queen)  
(Ford)
  - Davies, L. P., anything (Titles include T\_h\_e\_A\_r\_t\_i\_f\_i\_c\_i\_a\_l\_M\_a\_n,  
D\_i\_m\_e\_n\_s\_i\_o\_n\_A, P\_s\_y\_c\_h\_o\_g\_e\_i\_s\_t, and T\_h\_e  
T\_w\_i\_l\_i\_g\_h\_t\_J\_o\_u\_r\_n\_e\_y) (Green)
  - De Angulo, Jaime, anything (part of Jack Kerouac's crowd, I  
believe)
  - Ehrlich, Leonard, G\_o\_d's\_A\_n\_g\_r\_y\_M\_a\_n (novel based on the life of John  
Brown) (Bisson)
  - Gibbons, Floyd P., R\_e\_d\_N\_a\_p\_o\_l\_e\_o\_n: A\_N\_o\_v\_e\_l (Ford)
  - Guin, Wayman, A\_S\_t\_a\_n\_d\_i\_n\_g\_J\_o\_y (Green)
  - Hodgson, William Hope, T\_h\_e\_H\_o\_u\_s\_e\_o\_n\_t\_h\_e  
B\_o\_r\_d\_e\_r\_l\_a\_n\_d
  - Holland, Cecelia, historical fiction, T\_h\_e\_D\_e\_a\_t\_h\_o\_f\_A\_t\_t\_i\_l\_a  
t\_h\_e\_H\_u\_n  
(These hardly seem obscure to me.) (Bisson)
  - Jakes, John, M\_e\_n\_t\_i\_o\_n\_M\_y\_N\_a\_m\_e\_i\_n  
A\_t\_l\_a\_n\_t\_i\_s
  - Klise, Thomas, T\_h\_e\_L\_a\_s\_t\_W\_e\_s\_t\_e\_r\_n
  - Lafferty, R. A., O\_k\_l\_a\_H\_a\_n\_n\_a\_l\_i (Bisson)



- Lafferty, R. A., \_ T \_ h \_ e \_ F \_ a \_ l \_ l \_ o \_ f \_ R \_ o \_ m \_ e (Ford)
- Langguth, A. J., \_ J \_ e \_ s \_ u \_ s \_ C \_ h \_ r \_ i \_ s \_ t \_ s
- Lymington, John, anything (Titles include \_ T \_ h \_ e \_ C \_ o \_ m \_ i \_ n \_ g \_ o \_ f \_ t \_ h \_ e  
\_ S \_ t \_ r \_ a \_ n \_ g \_ e \_ r \_ s , \_ F \_ r \_ o \_ o \_ m \_ b \_ R , \_ T \_ h \_ e \_ G \_ r \_ e \_ y  
\_ O \_ n \_ e \_ s , \_ T \_ h \_ e \_ N \_ i \_ g \_ h \_ t \_ S \_ p \_ i \_ d \_ e \_ r \_ s , \_ T \_ h \_ e  
\_ N \_ i \_ g \_ h \_ t \_ o \_ f  
\_ t \_ h \_ e \_ B \_ i \_ g \_ H \_ e \_ a \_ t , \_ T \_ h \_ e \_ S \_ c \_ r \_ e \_ a \_ m \_ i \_ n \_ g  
\_ F \_ a \_ c \_ e , and \_ T \_ h \_ e \_ S \_ w \_ o \_ r \_ d \_ A \_ b \_ o \_ v \_ e \_ t \_ h \_ e \_ N \_ i \_ g \_ h \_ t .)  
(Green)
- McKenna, Richard, \_ C \_ a \_ s \_ e \_ y \_ A \_ g \_ o \_ n \_ i \_ s \_ t \_ e \_ s
- Maclean, Katherine, anything (Titles include \_ T \_ h \_ e \_ D \_ i \_ p \_ l \_ o \_ i \_ d \_ s , \_ T \_ h \_ e  
\_ M \_ i \_ s \_ s \_ i \_ n \_ g \_ M \_ a \_ n , and \_ T \_ h \_ e \_ T \_ r \_ o \_ u \_ b \_ l \_ e \_ w \_ i \_ t \_ h  
\_ Y \_ o \_ u \_ E \_ a \_ r \_ t \_ h \_ P \_ e \_ o \_ p \_ l \_ e .)
- Mitchison, Naomi, \_ T \_ o \_ t \_ h \_ e \_ C \_ h \_ a \_ p \_ e \_ l \_ P \_ e \_ r \_ i \_ l \_ o \_ u \_ s (The  
description made it  
sound a bit like PBS's "Timeline," but Ford claims it is not.)  
(Ford)
- Morgan, Dan, \_ T \_ h \_ e \_ N \_ e \_ w \_ M \_ i \_ n \_ d \_ s , \_ T \_ h \_ e \_ S \_ e \_ v \_ e \_ r \_ a \_ l  
\_ M \_ i \_ n \_ d \_ s , \_ M \_ i \_ n \_ d \_ T \_ r \_ a \_ p , and \_ T \_ h \_ e  
\_ C \_ o \_ u \_ n \_ t \_ r \_ y \_ o \_ f \_ t \_ h \_ e \_ M \_ i \_ n \_ d (The latter is the fourth book of the  
series,  
but printed only in England.) (Hummel)
- Serafini, Luigi, \_ C \_ o \_ d \_ e \_ x \_ S \_ e \_ r \_ a \_ p \_ h \_ i \_ n \_ i \_ a \_ n \_ u \_ s (This is more an  
art book--  
there are no words in any known language in it.)
- Silverberg, Robert, \_ A \_ T \_ i \_ m \_ e \_ o \_ f \_ C \_ h \_ a \_ n \_ g \_ e \_ s
- Smith, Martin Cruz, \_ T \_ h \_ e \_ I \_ n \_ d \_ i \_ a \_ n \_ s \_ W \_ o \_ n (This is an alternate history  
that I have been looking for--Books in Print claims it is still in  
print, but I have my doubts.) (Bisson)

- Sobel, Robert, \_ F \_ o \_ r \_ W \_ a \_ n \_ t \_ o \_ f \_ a \_ N \_ a \_ i \_ l (my recommendation--an alternate history written as a history book, complete with footnotes and bibliography, all fake!)
  - Tevis, Walter, \_ T \_ h \_ e \_ Q \_ u \_ e \_ e \_ n ' \_ s \_ G \_ a \_ m \_ b \_ i \_ t and other works (Bisson)
  - Thomas, D. M., \_ A \_ r \_ a \_ r \_ a \_ t, \_ T \_ h \_ e \_ F \_ l \_ u \_ t \_ e \_ P \_ l \_ a \_ y \_ e \_ r, \_ S \_ p \_ h \_ i \_ n \_ x, \_ S \_ w \_ a \_ l \_ l \_ o \_ w, and \_ T \_ h \_ e \_ W \_ h \_ i \_ t \_ e \_ H \_ o \_ t \_ e \_ l and others (Green)
  - Waltari, Mika, \_ T \_ h \_ e \_ E \_ g \_ y \_ p \_ t \_ i \_ a \_ n, \_ T \_ h \_ e \_ E \_ t \_ r \_ u \_ s \_ c \_ a \_ n (Green)
  - Wilhelm, Kate (?), \_ L \_ e \_ t \_ t \_ h \_ e \_ F \_ i \_ r \_ e \_ F \_ a \_ l \_ l (I could not find any such novel written by Kate Wilhelm, but Michael Scanlan has one of this title. Given Green's track record, this is probably it.) (Green)
  - Wilson, Steve, \_ T \_ h \_ e \_ L \_ o \_ s \_ t \_ T \_ r \_ a \_ v \_ e \_ l \_ e \_ r (a novel about Hell's Angels)
- (Or should this be Steve Toth's \_ L \_ o \_ s \_ t \_ A \_ n \_ g \_ e \_ l \_ s? With Green you never can tell!) (Green)

- Wylie, Philip, everything (again, this does not seem all that obscure) (Titles include \_ T \_ h \_ e \_ D \_ i \_ s \_ a \_ p \_ p \_ e \_ a \_ r \_ a \_ n \_ c \_ e, \_ T \_ h \_ e \_ E \_ n \_ d \_ o \_ f \_ t \_ h \_ e \_ D \_ r \_ e \_ a \_ m, \_ G \_ l \_ a \_ d \_ i \_ a \_ t \_ o \_ r, \_ L \_ o \_ s \_ A \_ n \_ g \_ e \_ l \_ e \_ s \_ A \_ D \_ 2 \_ 0 \_ 1 \_ 7, \_ T \_ h \_ e \_ M \_ u \_ r \_ d \_ e \_ r \_ e \_ r \_ I \_ n \_ v \_ i \_ s \_ i \_ b \_ l \_ e, \_ T \_ h \_ e \_ S \_ m \_ u \_ g \_ g \_ l \_ e \_ d \_ A \_ t \_ o \_ m \_ B \_ o \_ m \_ b, \_ T \_ h \_ e \_ S \_ p \_ y \_ W \_ h \_ o \_ S \_ p \_ o \_ k \_ e \_ P \_ o \_ r \_ p \_ o \_ i \_ s \_ e, \_ T \_ o \_ m \_ o \_ r \_ r \_ o \_ w, and \_ T \_ r \_ i \_ u \_ m \_ p \_ h, . I doubt that they were really recommending \_ W \_ h \_ e \_ n \_ W \_ o \_ r \_ l \_ d \_ s \_ C \_ o \_ l \_ l \_ i \_ d \_ e or \_ A \_ f \_ t \_ e \_ r \_ W \_ o \_ r \_ l \_ d \_ s \_ C \_ o \_ l \_ l \_ i \_ d \_ e, but who knows?)
- \_ F \_ o \_ r \_ g \_ o \_ t \_ t \_ e \_ n \_ F \_ a \_ n \_ t \_ a \_ s \_ y magazine (Green)

Hummel, a librarian, reminded people that even if their own library did not have some of these items, they could request an inter-library loan by asking their librarian. It was observed that in small towns you might have to explain this concept.

Bisson (I believe) mentioned the "No-Frills" books marketed a few years back, and told who had written them. The mystery was written by Clark Daman (spelling?), the western by Victor Milan, and the science fiction by John Silbersack. So now you finally know.

T\_h\_e\_L\_i\_t\_e\_r\_a\_c\_y\_C\_r\_i\_s\_i\_s\_v\_s.\_t\_h\_e  
I\_n\_f\_o\_r\_m\_a\_t\_i\_o\_n\_E\_x\_p\_l\_o\_s\_i\_o\_n  
Teresa Nielsen-Hayden (moderator),  
Alexander Jablov, Kathei Logue.  
Sunday, 4:00 PM

Kathei Logue talked about her experiences working in a shelter for the homeless. Children there may start out interested in reading, but pretty soon they discover that they can get by without it, and having no incentive, they just stop.

Someone in the audience said they thought the problem (never defined, by the way) was that students were never held back in schools. The panelists pointed out that the current education system is not structured in such a way as to make this feasible. Everyone did seem to agree that the major factor was the student/teacher ratio.

On another level, this question was raised as to whether the state could compel people to read, or rather to learn to read. And for that matter, should it? One audience member put forth John Holt's theory that the compulsory school system is a prison, and that students realize that discipline is more important to the administrators than learning is. In this, Holt of course assumes that children understand the education process and could make rational decisions regarding it and that parents care about their children's education. Holt was promoting home teaching--which is an option to the "compulsory" education system he decried, but very few parents are dissatisfied enough with the latter to undertake it.

When someone asked the panelists about the information explosion, Teresa Nielsen-Hayden asked, "May I rant to that question?" She thinks most people lack the necessary skills to deal with this explosion. At this point, the panel seemed to drift into complaining about how few

people had the necessary skills or training to be a reference librarian, rather than to be an informed reader. The fact that people are starting to call any book a "novel" ("Do you have any novels on spectroscopy?") makes me think the latter is a bigger problem than the former. (See also my caveat on recommending anthologies, above.) One audience member seemed to think all this information on a topic could be filtered easily enough by going to the college bookstore and buying the cheapest "required reading" paperback on a given topic. The logic is that the only books printed in paperback are those that are expected to sell a lot, the cheaper paperbacks are expected to sell even more, and if it is required at least there is some guarantee of quality (or that the author is teaching the course!). Of course, this just says to let the professors do the pre-filtering for you.

One aspect of the information explosion is that we do not lose books through attrition anymore. Libraries and all the microfilm, and other technologies for saving information have resulted in many books being permanently saved which in earlier times would have gradually disappeared. Paper disintegrates and when saving books was more difficult, there was some minimum quality requirement for a book to meet before someone would bother to save it. Now everything is saved "just in case."

As one person said, if reading is the map to knowledge, we now need a meta-map to \_ w \_ h \_ a \_ t to read, and then perhaps a meta-meta-map, ....

At 5 PM, we left, ate dinner at the Turkey Farm restaurant in New Hampshire, then drove back to Amherst to drop Kate off, and then home, arriving home about 1 AM. Connecticut was again foggy.

Other notable programming items that occurred without the benefit of my attendance were:

Judging a Book by Page 117

The Senator from Elfland's Daughter: Why Is Fantasy Hung Up on Monarchy?  
Towards a Readers' Lobby

Hacks Anonymous vs. the Art Police

Stopping Glaciers with Hot Words: The Awful Warning Novel  
Is "Magic Realism" Just Spanish for "Literary Fantasy"

(I wanted to attend this, but it was one of those overlap conflicts I complained about earlier.)

Alternative Narrative Structure and the New Spec Fic Underground

(This turned out to be the April Fool's joke panel. Kate went and said that everyone talked very seriously about such works in progress as someone's novel being written by putting one word somewhere on each highway in the United States, and a magazine devoted to being as large as possible so as kill as many trees as possible to cause the United States to realize how important reforestation was. She said that the panelists said this magazine was available from Ziesing in the Dealers'

Room, but when she went in there, she overheard one of the

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panelists explaining to Ziesing about the joke and asking him to play along by saying he had them but they were sold out.)

### Miscellaneous

Crowley and Disch were on several panels each. I was impressed that Crowley also attended several panels that he was not on--how often does one see that at a "normal" science fiction convention. All too frequently, the Guest of Honor seems to hide in his/her hotel room when his/her presence is not required. Readercon Guests of Honor, on the other hand, have been very willing to spend time as participants as well as "stars." Crowley also had a scheduled autograph session, but was certainly willing to sign at other times as well.

Some of the committee organizers still seem to be over-extending themselves (Eric Van was on six panels). Still, this seems to create fewer problems than in previous years, and Eric mentioned that they had gotten three to six new committee members this year. Perhaps also the multiple tracks mean that a hitch in one program item is not as noticeable.

Unlike last year, program items tended to stay on time (except for the Saturday night events as noted). The Souvenir Book gets bigger each year, this year including several articles about the Guests of Honor, as well as recommended books by various authors. I do not particularly like this feature in T\_h\_e\_N\_e\_w\_Y\_o\_r\_k\_S\_c\_i\_e\_n\_c\_e\_F\_i\_c\_t\_i\_o\_n\_R\_e\_v\_i\_e\_w. Here at least some of the authors write a paragraph or so on each book, which tells me a lot more than the list format used in N\_Y\_S\_F\_R. Unfortunately, the Small Press Awards nominations were finished so late that the finalists could not be listed in the Souvenir Book, and ended up relegated to the Program Guide instead. The Program Guide included a copy of the Pocket Program plus full descriptions of the program items, an index to participants (with computerized schedules this seems to be becoming a standard for Program Books, and a welcome one it is!), and information about the Small Press Awards and the program participants. They improved the type faces on the badges this year, though they are still not up to Boskone's readability.

There was also a "Readercon anthology" published, priced at \$9.95 for a trade paperback. To keep the price down, the cover had no artwork, just the title and the names of the contributors in black and white. If NESFA can do a hardcover book with dust jacket artwork for \$8, why is this priced so much higher?

There were 471 people registered, with about 400 of those actually attending. The Readercon history is therefore:

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| YEAR | REGISTERED | ATTENDING | % INCREASE ATTENDING |
|------|------------|-----------|----------------------|
| 1987 | 330        | 280       | -                    |
| 1988 | 350        | 300       | 7                    |
| 1990 | 471        | 400       | 33                   |

If this trend continues, Readercon 10 will be held in the entire states of New York and Pennsylvania!

Last year the furthest attendees came from California and Utah; this year the prize obviously goes to Robert Hood and his family, who came from New South Wales, Australia! (His book, D\_a\_y\_D\_r\_e\_a\_m\_i\_n\_g\_o\_n\_C\_o\_m\_p\_a\_n\_y\_T\_i\_m\_e, was nominated for a Small Press Award and he said this provided him an excuse, since he had wanted to come to the United States anyway. Eric Van, co-chair of the Awards Committee, said he almost fell off his chair when he got the letter from Hood saying he was coming!)

#### Miscellaneous

Next year's Readercon will be July 12-14, 1991, at the Worcester Marriott (the Lowell Hilton either went bankrupt, or almost went bankrupt, I am not sure which). All the function space will be on one floor in the Marriott, which should help out in terms of handicapped access. Amazingly enough, Readercon 5 will be basically the same weekend in 1992 (July 10-12). Does this mean that Readercon will actually become an a\_n\_u\_a\_l convention?! Stay tuned, but Eric says that

is what they are aiming for! The Guest of Honor next year will be Thomas M. Disch, with Special Guest John Crowley. I commented to Eric that this might result in some of this year's members skipping next year, since the guests would be the same, but he says there will also be another, as yet unannounced, Guest of Honor, and future Readercons will continue to have two Guests of Honor each. He also promises \_ n \_ o \_ t to stagger programming starting times! Friday night they will be trying a Meet the Pros(e) Pool Party, which should be fun even if the pros are there yet. There will probably be a banquet (first rock 'n' roll, then films, now rubber chicken!). (In fairness, I should add that Eric says the Marriott's food has a good reputation, but the only really good banquet I have ever been to was the crab feast as ConStellation.)

Because of the rapid growth of Readercon, they are setting an 800-person limit (including complimentary memberships to guests, etc.) to future Readercons.

Eric promised that after 1992 they will retire the Kirk Poland Bad Prose Competition, but I am not holding my breath--they have been promising to retire it for a couple of years now.

(The End)