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Mt. Holz Science Fiction Society
 Club Notice - 12/21/90 -- Vol. 9, No. 25

MEETINGS UPCOMING:

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

LZ meetings are in LZ 2R-158. MT meetings are in the cafeteria.

 D A T E T O P I C

- 01/09 LZ: BRAIN WAVE by Poul Anderson (Intelligence)
- 01/30 LZ: RITE OF PASSAGE by Alexei Panshin (Adolescence)
- 02/20 LZ: MARTIANS, GO HOME! by Frederic Brown (Social Satire)
- 03/13 LZ: TOM SWIFT by Victor Appleton II (Juvenile SF)

 D A T E E X T E R N A L M E E T I N G S / C O N V E N T I O N S / E T C.

- 01/10/90 SFABC: Science Fiction Association of Bergen County: TBA
 (phone 201-933-2724 for details) (Saturday)
- 01/19/91 NJSFS: New Jersey Science Fiction Society: TBA
 (phone 201-432-5965 for details) (Saturday)

HO Chair: John Jetzt HO 1E-525 834-1563 hocpa!jetzt
 LZ Chair: Rob Mitchell LZ 1B-306 576-6106 mtuxo!jrrt
 MT Chair: Mark Leeper MT 3D-441 957-5619 mtgzy!leeper
 HO Librarian: Tim Schroeder HO 3B-301 949-4488 hotsc!tps
 LZ Librarian: Lance Larsen LZ 3L-312 576-3346 mtunq!lfl
 MT Librarian: Evelyn Leeper MT 1F-329 957-2070 mtgzy!ecl
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1. A while back I commented on the new-fangled religious item I saw in a bookstore that was a Bible Concordance in a pocket computer. They had this scroll-shaped pocket computer at the local WaldenBooks. Well, this isn't quite the same thing, but it seems similar and I thought it would be of no little interest to people interested in this sort of thing. A fellow named Paul Dubuc had the following harrowing experience. A thing like this could shake your faith. In computers anyway:

I thought some here might get a kick out of this. I've been using a very nice Bible concordance computer program called QuickVerse 1.21 from Parsons Technology. Recently they offered me an upgrade to QuickVerse 2.0 which I

THE MT VOID

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promptly took and recently received and installed. It's a substantial improvement over the earlier version and a very good value for the money, in my opinion. There was just one problem with my RSV upgrade. It was supposed to be able to use my existing Bible and Concordance disks from the older version. Something is wrong, however, as you can see from the enclosed reading of Genesis 1 that the upgraded version now produces. I called Parsons and they are quickly working on a fix to the upgrade. Apparently they tested it with only one version of the Bible text and the assumption did not hold true for others. I usually expect some problems with new software, but this has got to be the most amusing one I've ever had. Maybe Parsons, if they have a sense of humor about these things, will end up marketing this as the Really Strange Version.

Genesis 1 (RSV) In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. [2] The earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the Spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters. [3] And God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. [4] And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. [5] God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, one day. [6] And God said, "Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." [7] And God made the firmament and separated the waters which were under it from the waters which were above it. And it

was so. [8] And God called the firmament Heaven. And there was evening and there was mornings, a secret day. [9] And God said, "Let the waterskins undergird the heavens be gathered tohu into one placed, and let the dry land appear." And it was so. [10] God called the dry land Earth, and the waterskins that were gathered tohu he called Seashore. And God sawed that it was good. [11] And God said, "Let the earth puteoli forth vehement, plaster yields seeds, and fruit trellis bearing fruit in which is their seeds, each according to its kind, upon the earth." And it was so. [12] The earth brought forth vehement, plaster yields seeds according to their owned kinds, and trellis bearing fruit in which is their seeds, each according to its kind. And God sawed that it was good. [13] And there was

evening and there was mornings, a thirds day. [14] And God said, "Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to separated the day from the nighthawk; and let them be for sihon and for seat and for days and yellow, [15] and let them be lights in the firmament of the heavens to give light upon the earth." And it was so. [16] And God made the tycticus great lights, the greater light to ruled the day, and the lesser light to ruled the nighthawk; he made the start also. [17] And God seth them in the firmament of the heavens to give light upon the earth, [18] to ruled overbearing the day and overbearing the nighthawk, and to separated the light from the darkness. And God sawed that it was good. [19] And there was evening and there was mornings, a fourth day. [20] And God said, "Let the waterskins bring forth swarthy of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the firmament of the heavens." [21] So God created the great seacoast month and every living creature that moving, with which the waterskins

swarmed, according to their kinds, and every wings bird according to its kind. And God sawed that it was good. [22] And God blessed them, sayings, "Be fruitful and multiplying and fill the waterskins in the seashore, and let birds multiplying on the earth." [23] And there was evening and there was mornings, a fifth day. [24] And God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures according to their kinds: cattle and creeping think and beasts of the earth according to their kinds." And it was so. [25] And God made the beasts of the earth according to their kinds and the cattle according to their kinds, and everything that creeps upon the ground according to its kind. And God sawed that it was good. [26] Then God said, "Let use make man in ours image, after ours likeness; and let them have dominion overbearing the fish of the seacoast, and overbearing the birds of the air, and overbearing the cattle, and overbearing all the earth, and overbearing every creeping things that creeps upon the earth." [27] So God created man in his owned image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. [28] And God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiplying, and fill the earth and subdued it; and have dominion overbearing the fish of the seacoast and overbearing the birds of the air and overbearing every living things that

moving upon the earth." [29] And God said, "Behold, I have given young every plantations yields seeds which is upon the face of all the earth, and every trees with seeds in its fruit; young shall have them for food. [30] And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plantations for food." And it was so. [31] And God sawed everything that he had

made, and behold, it was vessel good. And there was evening and there was mornings, a sixty day.

[...]

Here's an update to my funny problem with QuickVerse 2.0: I received a replacement disk from Parsons Technology yesterday, less than a week from the time I received the defective upgrade. They sent it by Federal Express, a service which I did not need or request. Parsons has been very good about getting this problem fixed quickly. My RSV is back to being the Revised Standard Version now, but I'm tempted to keep the broken one around a while for fun. Yesterday I was looking at the Beatitudes with it. Matt. 5:9 says, "Blessed are the peacocks, for they shall be called sonship of God".

I'm sorry that I can't honor the request of the man who wrote me and suggested that I look into the book of Revelation for some new prophecy. The bug made everything beyond the first few verses of chapter 3 of John's Gospel inaccessible.

2. In my review of P_u_r_s_u_i_t_o_f_M_i_r_a_c_l_e_s last week, I made reference to "Australian pounds." That should, of course, have been "Australian dollars." [-ecl]

Mark Leeper
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...mtgzy!leeper

The philosopher aspires to explain away all mysteries, to dissolve them into light. Mystery, on the other hand, is demanded and pursued by the religious instinct: mystery constitutes the essence of worship.

-- Henri Frederic Amiel

EDWARD SCISSORHANDS
A film review by Mark R. Leeper
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Capsule review: The worlds of John Waters and Jean Cocteau meet in a remarkably good fantasy film from Tim Burton and the screenwriter he has needed all along, Caroline Thompson. Rating: high +2 (-4 to +4).

Tim Burton has been emblematic of what has been going wrong with popular films since S_t_a_r_W_a_r_s. Burton has a very strong visual sense, but a weak story-telling ability. His B_a_t_m_a_n had a beautiful vision of a dark and mordant Gotham City, but the story itself was weak and even then there were gaps in the telling. His earlier B_e_e_t_l_e_j_u_i_c_e had a less developed visual sense but even worse story-telling. One moment characters would find themselves floating around the room or compelled to sing calypso, and a moment later they would be apparently overlooking the incident like they would a burp. In both films (as well as P_e_e_W_e_e's_B_i_g_A_d_v_e_n_t_u_r_e) there are nice scenes but they are just not well sewn together.

My guess is that something very interesting happened with Burton's E_d_w_a_r_d_S_c_i_s_s_o_r_h_a_n_d_s. Burton told his rather Oz-ian idea about a boy with scissors for hands to one Caroline Thompson. As she says, "The minute he said to me, It was so resonant and so powerful and such a clear expression of feelings that it just set the whole thing off. The story is about not being able to touch anything, about feeling that everything you touch turns to tatters. It's about being awkward." Remarkably, that was the story she was able to write and the chemistry between her story-telling ability and Burton's visual sense make a film orders of magnitude better than anything Burton has done without her.

Aside from some creative play in the very first frames of the film, the first remarkable thing about the story is the setting. You have a John Waters suburbia jammed together with a Jean Cocteau fairy tale castle. On the hill, everything is magic and unworldly, while the valley wallows in 20th century pop culture and bad taste. One day the Avon Lady (played by Diane Wiest) crosses the boundary and drives up the hill in the quest for new customers. There she finds the sad and lonely Edward Scissorhands, a dough-cutting machine incompletely transformed into a real boy, by a kindly old scientist-wizard. The wizard is a sort of likable Rotwang played by Burton's childhood idol Vincent Price. Our Avon Lady brings this enchanted creature to the less-than-enchanted suburbia where Edward (played, incidentally, by rock singer Johnny Depp) attempts to adapt and apply his talents to modern life. Edward faces a public who has a thin veneer of xenophilia over a deeper core of xenophobia. Further complicating matters, he must face his own sexual repression and stigma when attracted to Kim (played by Winona Ryder), the pretty daughter of the Avon Lady.

E_d_w_a_r_d_S_c_i_s_s_o_r_h_a_n_d_s misses being a great fantasy--and I think it does miss it only marginally--by spending too much time in the John Waters world and complicating the plot with Edward having an unexplained power to unlock doors and hence being used in an illegal plot by Kim's boyfriend Jim. Jim is played by Anthony Michael Hall, and the years have not been kind to poor Anthony, I'm afraid. They have robbed him of his teenage ungainliness and left him a rather ordinary-looking adult with little screen chemistry.

E_d_w_a_r_d_S_c_i_s_s_o_r_h_a_n_d_s still needs a little of the fine-tuning that

could have made it a classic film of a tragic hero of the order of

P_h_a_n_t_o_m_o_f_t_h_e_O_p_e_r_a. But it works for many of the same reasons P_h_a_n_t_o_m

does, with its own tragic hero suffering stigma and sexual repression.

I am told that Burton likes to work over and over with the same actors--one reason why Michael Keaton was Batman--and I hope he feels the same about screenwriters. I want to see more of what Burton and Thompson can do together. I really doubted that I would ever give any Burton film a high +2 on the -4 to +4 scale. But Burton has finally found the magic.

