



you see films you never knew existed. I recently saw in Massachusetts a theater showing something called LITTLE WOMEN HEAVYWEIGHTS. The theater near my house is showing THE TIE THAT BINDS APOLLO 13. That is the theater that is the same theater that had the classic of this sort of thing, the macabre BABY KILLING

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FIELDS. [-mrl]

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3. They had a piece on the radio this morning about Disney Enterprises and someone talked about how they were not expecting too much from Disneyworld, but how they were really bowled over by whatever exhibit it is that had "It's a Small, Small World." The small world sentiment is one that people find tremendously appealing. It gives some of us a nice warm fuzzy feeling to think of the world like a single "global village" to use another popular expression. The sentiment is 1) that we are all really alike and 2) the world is small and everybody is our neighbor. I hate to be a spoil-sport but neither of these gives me a real cushy feeling.

One of the delightful realities of the world is that people are not alike. No, this is not going to be a standard company-based piece of propaganda about how wonderful diversity in the workplace is. But the whole basis we have for co-existence is that people are different. If everyone were like me, there would not be enough squid to feed the world and the species would soon be extinct. That's assuming I ever thought to eat squid in the first place, which I probably would not have. (I heard you out there. Someone said "Ooooo, does he really eat squid? With tentacles? Yug." Well that's my point. I will take your squid and sushi and habanero peppers; you can have my licorice and peppermint and chopped liver. We couldn't set up a nifty deal like that if we were just alike.)

If I could duplicate myself, like in William F. Temple's "Four-Sided Triangle," I would probably not be able to live with myself-literally. The other me would want to do all the same tasks around the house. If you have read the Temple story, by the way,

you know that what goes wrong there is that the two women are too similar. (For the benefit of those who don't know the story, you can fake it by nodding your head "yes" and I will pretend I believe you.)

It has been my observation that people dislike in each other particularly what they see of themselves. We are least forgiving of other people giving in to temptations we share with them. (This is why Republican and Democrats always hate each other and think the other party is nuts, even when they trade sides on issues.) At work it is the people who most want to be promoted who complain about others bucking for promotion. The whole issue of water rights, to take an example we are hearing more about and which is becoming a much more serious issue each passing year, is a problem of us being too much alike (we all like water) and the world being too small (there is not enough water in the world with only 70% of the Earth covered by it).

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Anyway, even in high school I realized the fallacy of feeling comforted by the supposed smallness of the world. I wrote my own verses to the feel-good song.

It's a small, small world so we all must try  
Not to poke our elbows in someone's eye.  
Stay off people's feet and try not to eat.  
It's a small world after all.

It's a small, small world so there'll come a day  
When we'll tell the world, "Just stay out of our way."  
If they all disagree then we start World War III.  
It's a small world after all. [-mrl]

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#### 4. THE USUAL SUSPECTS (a film review by Mark R. Leeper):

Capsule: With a whimsical title, THE USUAL SUSPECTS looks superficially to be a piece of light entertainment. In fact, it is a

crackling crime drama that tests the logical abilities of its audience rather than simply entertaining them. Somebody invested heavily in the actors, and the photography, but the writing is the real attraction. Rating: +2 (-4 to +4)

When most films end people get up, go to their cars, and drive away. Then there are some films that get a significant part of the audience standing around and discussing--maybe even puzzling over--what they have seen. There are a lot of decent films in the first category, but there are almost no bad films in the second. A new film to discuss and puzzle over is THE USUAL SUSPECTS. This is a complicated crime story, occasionally violent, but one that builds compellingly to one climax, then suddenly turns into a complex set of logic puzzles that must be solved to understand what actually happened in the story. This is not like RASHOMON, which throws up its hands and says truth is unknowable because everybody sees things differently. Instead, it is closer to Raymond Smullyan's logic problems where we know only that certain things are true if other things are false. One feels all the information is there to figure out the truth, if only one can work the puzzle. But a complete understanding of the plot may not be possible without multiple viewings. But worry not, you don't have to solve the puzzles completely to enjoy the film.

The film begins with a cryptic but beautifully filmed crime scene. A man is apparently shot; a fire is set. But what exactly have we seen? The police (played by Chazz Palminteri and Dan Hedaya) pick up the aptly-named Verbal (Kevin Spacey) and he begins his tale of

the six weeks that led to the crime. In flashback, when a police operation fails, the police bring to a line-up five suspects, and based on this chance introduction the five decide to combine their various talents on a job. Along with Spacey, the five are played by Gabriel Byrne, Kevin Pollak, Stephen Baldwin, and Benicio Del Toro. From there the plot of the film doubles and redoubles in complexity. And casting his shadow over the whole plot is a mysterious international criminal, Kaiser Soza, who may be real or may be a total myth.

The film was co-produced and directed by Bryan Singer, whose only previous film is the relatively unknown PUBLIC ACCESS. Here he directs a clever screenplay by Christopher McQuarrie. Singer and McQuarrie manage nicely to characterize each of the criminals with just a few moments in the line-up and in the subsequent police examination. But even with the characterization, they keep the story moving forward at a headlong pace, forcing the audience to work to keep up.

Curiously, for a film as small and somewhat experimental as this, the producers have chosen to go for a cast with a surprising number of familiar actors. We are generally used to seeing at most one or two recognizable actors in independent films and, indeed, those films are often the route actors use these days to become more familiar. The producers have chosen to go with a cast of familiar and established character actors, even in some roles that really do not require it. Conceivably with the film's main attraction being its writing, the budget elsewhere was low enough that the producers could afford to go with an established cast. It is not clear it pays off for them, however. Putting an actor like Paul Bartel in a tiny and undemanding role may be more of a distraction than a casting necessity. Still, a veteran cast does deliver the goods for Singer.

This is a film that looks good, and has good actors, but the writing is really the film's strongest point. This is a film that demands some thought and perhaps even multiple viewings to understand fully and it gets a +2 on the -4 to +4 scale. [-mrl]

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#### 5. BEYOND RANGOON (a film review by Mark R. Leeper):

Capsule: An American woman is caught up in the 1988 Democracy Riots in Burma and their aftermath. The brutality of the current Burmese military regime forms the backdrop to this moving politically-oriented adventure. While the film is weak on solid issues, it is a good first brush for those who are not aware of

current Burmese politics. Rating: +2 (-4 to +4)

It is August, 1988, and Laura Bowman (Patricia Arquette) has lost her husband and son to crime in the United States. Shell-shocked and feeling she has little left to live for, she has agreed to accompany her sister on a tour of Southeast Asia. In Rangoon she loses her passport while visiting a mesmerizing pro-democracy rally. Forced to remain in Burma while her group goes on to Thailand, she finds herself getting in deeper and deeper trouble until she is on the run across country, chased by the military police. Along the way she has seen more of the day-to-day brutality of the Burmese government than the military can afford to have her report to the outside world. Accompanying her is a pro-democracy ex-college professor U Aung Ko (played by U Aung Ko).

When setting a story against a strongly political backdrop the decision must always be made of how much of the issues to lay before the audience. BEYOND RANGOON may not be of the caliber of THE KILLING FIELDS, an obvious film to compare this one with for more than its Southeast Asia setting. But BEYOND RANGOON is well ahead of the cliched THUNDERHEAR or A DRY WHITE SEASON. For political films this one is close to (and perhaps just a notch below) UNDER FIRE. Yes, it has a lot of chase scenes and hair-breadth escapes, but it also is a fairly good introduction to the state of Burma under a military dictatorship.

Hans Zimmer can add one more exotic musical score to his resume, and while this one is not as lyrical as some of his previous work, it certainly works in the film. Boorman's visual sense stands him in good stead with a few small lapses in judgement. One such lapse is a scene involving mirrors that calls too much attention to itself. Another odd distraction has one character (a Burmese-speaking policeman who comes to a hotel), whose words do not fit his lip movements, like in a badly dubbed movie.

Patricia Arquette seems to have the acting range of Keanu Reeves, but as someone who has been through some trying emotional experiences before and during the course of the film, that may be all that would be expected of the character. U Aung Ko has a likeable worldly air. Since the actor and the character have the same name, one wonders if the script told his real background. Frances McDormand and Spaulding Gray get second and third billing for what must have been contractual reasons, though they are quickly out of the film.

While one might question the depth of the political thought that went into the scripting of this film, the film is certainly suspenseful and should be pleasing for most viewers. It should be noted that this film did what a Nobel Peace Prize could not: it got the Burmese government to free Aung San Suu Kyi. I give this one a

+2 on the -4 to +4 scale. [-mrl]

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6. THE BROTHERS MCMULLEN (a film review by Mark R. Leeper):

Capsule: Three Irish-American brothers in a lower middle-class neighborhood confide in each other as they work out their personal relationships. The writing is generally decent, but plotting has problems. Rating: low +1 (-4 to +4) [A spoiler comment follows the review.]

Filmmaking can be a big international industry and it can be a small cottage industry. THE BROTHERS MCMULLEN is one of the films produced in informal manner. It was made over eight months of weekends in Edward Burns's house with Burns's mother cooking for the cast and crew. Burns wrote, co-produced, directed, and acted in the film. The other producer, incidentally, was Dick Fisher who also filmed the movie and edited. The film was shot on 16-millimeter and blown up to 35-,millimeter giving it a grainy look and making even the bright scenes seem dim.

The senior McMullen was an abusive, alcoholic, wife-beater. He died five years earlier, totally unlamented. His wife returned to Ireland to marry the man she really loved when McMullen made her pregnant. That leaves three sons, ages 22 to 33, living in the same house. Each is at a different stage of relationships with the opposite sex. Youngest son Patrick (Mike McGlone) has a Jewish girlfriend who is making plans for future with Patrick working for her father. Barry (Edward Burns) wants to remain a bachelor all his life. and Jack (Jack Mulcahy) appears happily married but is not sure he wants to take the next step and have a child. This is a family that talks and can freely criticize each other's behavior toward women. Much of the film is filled with the brothers asking each other and other people philosophical questions like "Are you better off alone than with someone who is not your soulmate?" Each seems to represent a different aspect of a group personality.

Patrick, for example, is the conscience of the family. He takes his Catholicism very seriously and sees his brothers' behavior in stern, moralistic terms. But the most serious problem with the plot is in the spoiler comment at the end of the review.

Considering that this film was made the way it was, it is not surprising that there are no familiar faces in the cast, nor are any really needed. The acting is uniformly very good, indicating that Burns is already a better director than many with more experience. The continuity of the performances is all the more impressive when one considers that this is a film shot mostly in

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weekends and in spare time. There is not a bad performance and the presence of some actors who don't look like actors is a definite plus. There are none of the bad performances one often finds in informal productions like this one. Occasionally there is some uneven camerawork including a few disorienting extreme closeups in the middle of a scene. There are also some continuity problems.

But overall Burns has his story to tell and his characters to create and he does it in fine form. My major complaint with his script takes the form of a spoiler and so follows the review. I give this film a low +1 on the -4 to +4 scale.

SPOILER SPOILER SPOILER SPOILER SPOILER

The real problem with the script of THE BROTHERS MCMULLEN is the sheer predictability of the subplots. There are three stories and each story telegraphed what was going to happen. In each case it was the simplest and most obvious conclusion to the story. Burns has to learn how to put a little bit of spin on the ball. Humorous dialogue and some characterization are nice in telling a story, but there needs to be a story to tell. [-mrl]

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7. Intersection 1995 (a convention report by Evelyn C. Leeper)  
(part 1 of probably 6 parts):



## Introduction

Intersection, the 53rd World Science Fiction Convention, was held from 24 August through 28 August 1995 in Glasgow, Scotland. There were approximately 4800 people attending, making this larger than Confiction but smaller than Conspiracy. (It was also smaller than ConAdian, but it felt larger.)

## Convention Centre

We decided to walk from our hotel to the SECC (Scottish Exhibition and Convention Centre), since it appeared to be only a fifteen-minute walk (or someone may actually have claimed that). As Mark noted, however, "It's a fifteen-minute walk ... for Pheidippides." (Or for the classically challenged, Roger Bannister.) And it wasn't even an interesting walk, but rather along the Clyde through a basically deserted area.

This is the probably the place to note that Intersection is the most inconvenient convention we have attended in this regard. Our hotel in The Hague was further away from the convention centre, but

the tram ran from in front of our hotel to within two or three blocks of the centre. Most North American conventions have the hotels within ten minutes walk, and the main hotels are frequently attached. Even Brighton was more compact, and the area around the Convention Centre was full of shops, restaurants, etc., which made the walking more pleasant and safer (or at least gave one that feeling--it may be perfectly safe in Glasgow, but it doesn't feel that way).

(Later we found out that there was a train station at the SECC connected to the city centre, but it was flooded earlier this year and is still being repaired. With the train, things would presumably have been more convenient. Still later, we found out that a city bus ran from a block from our hotel to the SECC, but the convention never told anyone about it. There was a special shuttle bus to the major hotels, L7 for a pass or L1 per ride, but

it ran only once per hour. The city bus was 30p.)

### Registration/Program Books/Etc

Registration was very fast--there were no lines, pretty amazing for noon Thursday. We picked up the freebies, which included an anthology of Scottish SF and some sample chapters from Voyager books. Luckily there were no heavy books.

I looked through the Pocket Programme, which is in a small loose-leaf binder for no really good reason, and discovered that while I was credited for the Glasgow Bookshop List, I was not listed in the Programme Participant Index. Well, I suppose they wanted to limit to three pages and needed to include all the pros first. The Pocket Programme requires a larger than normal pocket, and still fails to provide a convenient daily grid, as only the (somewhat non-descriptive) titles of the panels are on the grid--the descriptions are elsewhere in it (for most of the items). As is distressingly common, the film schedule is not included in the grid (though it is in the book), and the video schedule is not in it at all.

My suggestions for a Pocket Programme are:

- It should fit in a standard man's shirt pocket.
- It should have daily grids which include all programming tracks. These should have a \*useful\* title, participants, room, and time. Evening grids should be part of the daily grids.
- It should have an index by participant.
- It should have an art show map, a dealers room map, site maps, street map, and pertinent local information (e.g., ATMs, chemist's, etc.). It is more important to locate the restaurants on the map than the bookshops.

While I'm at it, I should also mention that there were no schedules posted outside each room, giving the day's schedule for that room. These help early-arrivers determine if they're at the right place, and also remind people of things they might want to attend that

might get lost in the longer full lists.

One request for future conventions with a large international attendance: if you use abbreviation for the various countries, publish a list of what they stand for. Telling people, "Oh, they're the same as what you see on license plates" may be meaningful to European fans, but meaningless to people from other continents.

The SECC is very nice, with a glass-roofed concourse and lots of food stands. The Dealers Room is a bit smaller than North American Worldcon Dealers Rooms, but with a higher concentration of books. (Some people even claimed there were too \*many\* books.) Of course, at shipping rates, I can't afford to buy a whole lot....

There are, however, two problems. One, there are no clocks. Two, there are too few non-smoking areas, particularly on the concourse itself.

### Art Show

I got to this briefly once, but then every other time I had free, the art show was closed. Part of the problem was that the art was not arranged in aisles which made resuming a tour of it easy, but rather it was laid out in unmapped islands. Friends I spoke with had major objections to the bidding process, which was remarkably undefined (how many bids \*did\* it take to send something to auction?) and having most of the pieces labeled "POA" ("Price On Asking") didn't help. There should be a sheet with the rules given to bidders, and the rules should be followed. (Apparently, some pieces without bids ended up in the auction.)

### Programming

Intersection had fewer panels that I was interested in than any other Worldcon of recent memory, and only one or two more than Boskone. The Green Room was actually three separate Green Rooms, with coffee not available in the Moat House one, only drinks. (In my opinion, more panelists need coffee than alcohol before a panel.) One could supposedly get a chit for a drink later, but whenever I tried they said they were running low on chits and to just go over and get my drink--I didn't need a chit. I don't think they quite understood.

The mechanics of the panels were not thought out. The rooms had no clocks, and no one came in with signs for ten- and five-minute warnings. It wasn't until Sunday that Programming asked the panelists (via tiny notes on the tables) to wrap up about ten minutes early. The signs for the panel titles and panelists' names were hand-lettered instead of printed, making them at times hard to read. (Apparently the convention organizers dismissed a lot of suggestions from North American convention organizers, saying, "We don't want to put on a North American convention." It was only after a day or so that they decided that some of these suggestions were good ideas for any large convention.)

And finally, a problem that the convention planners may not have any control over. Some dip had a cellular phone that kept ringing during panels, to the extent that by Sunday moderators were requesting at the beginning of panels that people turn their cellular phones off and their pagers to mute.

Horizon 10--American Futures  
Thursday, 15:00  
Jim Young (m), Joe Haldeman,  
Allen Steele, Harry Turtledove

"The rise of the right and the fundamentalists, a boom and bust economy and the largest debt on the planet. Where is America going? Factionalism and terminal decline? Or are these problems only temporary--will America rediscover global leadership and turn outwards again?"

["We" and "us" in the following refer to the United States.]

Young said that the panel would focus on the United States for next thirty years, and asked the panelists for three scenarios each: very likely, moderately likely, and least likely.

Haldeman said that the least likely is that the United States would get a single vision and become the moral and economic leader of the world. The most likely is that we would spend money on small, disastrous wars until we became a Third World country. In between is his prediction of the primacy of fundamentalist religion (he note that there are a \*lot\* of new churches being built in the South). What Haldeman said he would \*like\* to see would be a slow increase in respect for education rather than for accumulating money.

Steele said that the 20th Century is called the "American Century," but that it is unlikely this will continue. Currently, Steele said, the United States is "the tough guy on the block that nobody wants to play with." In the future, the United States won't dominate affairs; the European Community or Japan will. For one

thing, "Every four years a whole bunch of zeroes come in who want to be President of the United States." Also, the United States won't completely break up, but some states may secede. For example, five or six years ago, Vermont had a debate and a non-binding vote, and voted to secede. There is also a movement in the Pacific Northwest (Washington, Oregon, and northern California, as well as parts of Canada) to form Cascadia. Certainly, Steele says, no one wants to become a state, citing the recent Puerto Rican referendum and the separatist movement in Guam. So in 2095 (so much for "focusing on the next thirty years") there will probably be forty to forty-five states, not fifty-one.

Turtledove saw the most likely scenario as a rough continuation of status quo. He didn't see a rosy future, saying, "God knows the United States of America has its problems," and its emphasis on short-term results exacerbates the other problems of racial/economic problems. But he thinks we may have more than fifty states, because some of the Canadian provinces might join the United States if Canada breaks up. He also observed that this was the "American Century" because "we built up our industrial base over two world wars and haven't had the living crap kicked out of us at least once." (Someone in the audience pointed out that Switzerland and Sweden also avoided getting the crap kicked out of them.) The key question may be if we have learned the lesson of Vietnam (and stay out of wars we can't win).

Young said that he believed there was a hundred-year cycle of domestic upheaval that the United States follows (the Whiskey Rebellion in the 1790s, strife in the 1890s, and now unrest in the 1990s). Frankly, I think he has too few data points to generalize. He said, "Reform is the ideological goal toward which we want to move," but no one agrees on what it is. So everyone comes up with insane ideas on how to reform. He also foresees lots of technological revolutions at hand (e.g., a bio-technological one)

with ethical, moral, economic, and other implications. These revolutions are more market-driven than previous revolutions, though. Young also asks, "If we are entering into a period in which literacy is primarily dependent on the computer, is it likely that we will build a new kind of society built on a class structure based on [the skills of] reading, writing, and typing?"

Young somewhat agreed with Turtledove, saying that the most likely scenario is that we fumble along. He believes the Religious Right will eventually collapse because, he said, Jesus will not return in 2000. (I suspect it will hang on until at least 2033 or 2034, but maybe the magic of the round number 2000 will overcome historical logic. There are certainly groups who have predicted the end of the world in the past, and survived as a group even when it didn't happen.)

Turtledove noted that Young had a baby-boom perspective in that Young appeared to believe that rough economic equality and equality of opportunity are the norm. This is not a God-given right, Turtledove observed, or even very common.

Steele said that the microelectronics revolution is a double-edged sword, and "Newt Gingrich's solution [to the economic problems some people would have in accessing the Net] of giving everyone a laptop computer is absolutely asinine." (Young then noted that Sturgeon's Law applies to Gingrich's ideas.) Steele said that the computer revolution has brought back the salon, conversation, and letter-writing, albeit in somewhat different forms. And it may even bring back literacy: even smart people look idiotic if their posts are full of grammatical errors.

Haldeman saw as fairly likely an apocalyptic future. For example, he talked to the War College about military futures in 2020, predicting the "dis-urbanization" of the United States following terrorist nuclear or biological attacks on cities. We will have virtual cities instead. As far as the problems of the information superhighway requiring that people have computer equipment, Haldeman said there was an obvious parallel to the interstate

highway system, which requires that people have a car to use it directly, but clearly benefit even if they don't. (For example, their groceries get to market faster and cheaper.)

As far as literacy goes, Haldeman thought we would skip over that to voice-recognition systems, leading to a discussion of how soon we actually would have such systems. Young claimed that "voice recognition is one of the hardest nuts to crack." Haldeman countered that they used to claim computers wouldn't be able to play decent chess or speak a sentence in this century. Of course, only time will tell.

Young said that the issues the panelists needed to look at to make predictions are the "functional questions" such as energy problems. Haldeman said the answer to the energy problems was cold fusion, getting a big laugh. Steele said fusion--hot or cold--would help, but thought the answer was solar power satellites and mining the moon, and said that Japan and Germany are actually planning to do something like this. Haldeman responded that in his upcoming book THE FOREVER PEACE (must everything have a sequel?) he has "warm fusion."

Turtledove noted that history has shown that if you absolutely run out of a resource, you will figure out how to make do without it somehow, and gave the example of whale oil in the 19th Century. Of course, he also observed that our problems in solving the energy crisis are due in part to the fact that "for the last twenty years, we're been afraid of fuel which contains atoms in any way." (Steele said he had once seen a protest sign that said, "No atoms

in New Hampshire.") The problem with fossil fuels, Steele claimed, was "they're not making dinosaurs like they used to," to which Turtledove replied, "In Congress? Are you kidding?"

Someone asked about the "new world order" and Haldeman said that the phrase was deceptive: the world won't change in an orderly fashion; we won't change until we have to. We are a nice people, but bumbling, and war-like, and we have killed more people than Nazi Germany. (Turtledove later pointed out that Stalin and Mao were probably ahead of us as well. And one needs to look at

equivalent periods of time--is Haldeman comparing two hundred years of our history to shorter periods of others'?) Turtledove also said in defense of the United States, "God knows we're not perfect but for the pack of bumlbers we are, we haven't done too bad."

Steele said, "The nastiness is surface detail, [and] a lot of cooperation happens under the surface." He told the story of seeing Congressmen fighting bitterly on the floor of Congress, then going into the men's room afterward and planning their golf game together, to which Young noted, "I've heard of standing in the middle of a pissing match before...."

Someone in passing quoted S. I. Hayakawa as saying, "The reason we have a two-party system instead of a three-party system is that the latter has never worked."

Haldeman and Turtledove talked about one of the downsides of being a super-power: "You have to pay for all this stuff. That's why there's not a Soviet Union any more; they couldn't pay for it."

Someone in the audience asked if it was possible that the United States would solve their energy problems by learning to conserve, using public transit, etc. The quick answer was "no" (though I will point out that in the United States we have more recycling of Styrofoam, glass, and other trash than I see here in Britain). Turtledove pointed out that public transit doesn't work in United States because of the spread-out scale of cities, and that this diffuseness is not really appreciated by Europeans. Steele said that in fact we did start conserving, to the extent that we brought about the failure of the nuclear industry, which had been predicated on the assumption that the use of electricity would increase, or at least stay level. But instead we started using more efficient appliances and decreased our usage.

Someone else claimed that the United States was more energy-efficient for its standard of living than any other country. (How does one actually measure that?)

An audience member said that the panel was ignoring that the rest of the world exists. Then she went on to talk about energy problems, saying that the rest of the world will use energy to get



at the United States. Someone else asked about illegitimacy: "Is this as big a problem as some of the politicians say it is?" Turtledove replied, "Nothing is as big a problem as some of the politicians say it is." Haldeman thought that there was a problem with the break-down of the "nuclear family," although he didn't think that marriage was a necessary ingredient; two people bringing up a child together with or without benefit of a marriage license was what he was talking about. Of course, he didn't completely define what he meant by a nuclear family.

Steele said that in spite of all the negative comments, he has faith in coming generation. He said that he finds young people today are more interested in sciences than they used to be. And he also said that he is seeing less drug use at concerts, to which Haldeman responded, "They just don't offer it to you any more."

To wrap up, Turtledove suggested that people who feel the United States interfered in Iran, Chile, and Guatemala (as someone suggested earlier) compare and contrast those with other situations such as Hungary and Czechoslovakia. And Haldeman noted one pitfall when he observe, "People like me are not paid to think in optimistic terms." But in spite of that, he personally remains somewhat optimistic.

We then spent an hour or so talking to our friend Pete Rubinstein, who always has bizarre travel stories to tell. I also manage to determine that the panel on Timebinders that I was scheduled for had been canceled, which I had guessed by noticing that it did not appear on my schedule or the program grid. (It later resurfaced with a single panelist on Monday.) There was free wine provided at the entrance to the hall containing the Dealers Room, Art Show, and other displays, I suppose in conjunction with the opening ceremonies.

I also left a message for a German fan who is producing an alternate history issue of his fanzine. It's DM8, and since I have some left-over DM from our stop-over on the way to India, I figure it's easier to pay him cash now than to try to send him a check or something later. (In fact, I did find him and gave him DM10, getting 90p change.)

Further Visions  
Thursday, 18:00  
Stephen Baxter

"A talk on sequels to THE TIME MACHINE, from the first anonymous sequel in 1900 through Jeter, Priest and Dr Who."

This being the centenary of H. G. Wells's TIME MACHINE, there were several program items focusing on THE TIME MACHINE in specific and Wells in general, of which this was the first.

Baxter began by restating the direction of his talk: "What if Wells had written a sequel or prequel, and what have other authors done?" In 1897, Wells published "In the Days to Come," later developed into WHEN THE SLEEPER WAKES, with upper and lower levels. (One wonders if this is where Lang got his idea for METROPOLIS.) But Wells was not as "strong" as he might have been. For example, Baxter said that Wells depicted horrors of lower levels more or less as "fist fights on Saturday night."

Baxter also said that in "Chapter 11: The Further Vision," Wells shows the possibilities of the future, with the crab-like monster and the giant white butterfly. This vision of a "terminal beach" has become a regular metaphor in science fiction. But the first draft of 1887 ("The Chronic Argonauts"), serialized in 1894, had an extra stop between Weena and the beach, with something between a rabbit and a kangaroo, as well as an immense centipede. The traveler speculates that these are remnants of humanity, and it may be that the crabs and butterflies are also. And again, the round thing the Time Traveller finds on the beach is another aspect of man's devolution.

Wells later wrote "The Man of the Year Million," where man has heads and hands more greatly developed than now, and bodies less developed. (This idea was later adopted by Olaf Stapledon, who must have read Wells's works, for part of LAST AND FIRST MEN.) Wells still later used echoes of this idea in his Selenites, and possibly even his Martians, but he wanted to be somewhat ambiguous regarding this in THE TIME MACHINE. He also cut out an episode in the year 12,000, and other sections as well. But Baxter said that the round thing was the "Man of the Year Million stranded on the Terminal Beach."

Baxter speculated that one reason Wells was fascinated by this idea of the supremacy of the mind over the body was that Wells himself was sickly, or as Baxter put it, "Wells was alive in mind trapped in an ailing body."

Baxter then went on to discuss other authors' sequels to THE TIME MACHINE. (Some spoilers occur in these descriptions. You have been warned.) He said that the best known is probably K. W. Jeter's MORLOCK NIGHT (1978). This may be true in the United Kingdom, but I suspect it is not the case in the United States. In this, we discover that the Time Traveller missed the smarter Morlocks the first time, and that the smart ones are using the time machine to invade Victorian England. It gets a little far afield after that: King Arthur is the only one who can save England, etc. As Baxter said, "It's a fun book, I suppose." There is not much

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more about the Time Traveller, however, as he is killed on his return journey to the future.

The first sequel to THE TIME MACHINE, however, was apparently a 1900 book, LEEDS BEATIFIED. Baxter has been able only to find one reference to it and couldn't find the author's name or any other description.

The next sequel Baxter discussed was David Lake's THE MAN WHO LOVED MORLOCKS (1981). In this, it is revealed that the Eloi are actually dying off and the Morlocks are kidnapping them to take them to laboratories underground to try to analyze what is killing the Eloi and hence to save them.

Christopher Priest's SPACE MACHINE (1977) was described as a cross between THE TIME MACHINE and THE WAR OF THE WORLDS. (Baxter did not stick to a strict chronological order.) This book is "recursive science fiction": it has H. G. Wells as a character. In fact, this has been done several times since, resulting in a blurring between Wells and the Time Traveller. Baxter noted here that one thing that readers need to keep in mind is that while the landscape of the base story THE TIME MACHINE, and that of THE WAR OF THE WORLDS, was indeed familiar to Wells's readers in the 1890s, it is an alien landscape to us now. He also said that Priest does not resolve what happens to the Time Traveller.

In what Baxter described as Michael Moorcock's "Multiverse" series, there is a trilogy which is a sequel to THE TIME MACHINE: "The

Dancers at the End of Time" (1972-1976), comprising AN ALIEN HEAT, THE HOLLOW LANDS, and THE END OF ALL SONGS. Baxter described this as a comic epic of a decadent future in which Moorcock's hero meets Wells, and the Time Traveller becomes a time tourist in a chrononibus in a variety of time lines.

Other sequels mentioned briefly included Eric Brown's "Inheritors of Earth" (1990) and Brian Stableford's "Hunger & Ecstasy of Vampires" (1995). I recently reviewed the latter on the Internet and highly recommend it.

In the visual media, Baxter mentioned TIME AFTER TIME (1979) in which Wells has built a time machine and follows Jack the Ripper in it to modern-day San Francisco. There was also an episode of DR. WHO, "The Time Lash," which has H. G. Wells as a character, and has him get the idea for the book THE TIME MACHINE from what happens to him in the story. And an episode of LOIS & CLARK has Wells as an inventor of time machine visiting a utopia founded by the descendents of Superman. (Baxter described this as "postmodern meta-fiction.")

Baxter said at this point that one reason that many sequels in the popular media confuse Wells with the Time Traveller is that "a lot

of people outside the science fiction world don't read much Wells these days." I would note that the same is true \*in\* the SF world; I suspect most people who started reading science fiction in the last twenty years have not read any Wells at all. Oh, they know about it (at least THE TIME MACHINE and THE WAR OF THE WORLDS), but have they actually read it?

Baxter said that the strangest sequel was probably Egon Friedell's RETURN OF THE TIME MACHINE (1946, published in an English translation by DAW in 1972). This is an exploration of the scientific and philosophic implications of time travel. It has a narrative frame somewhat like the original, with an account of the second journey into time. The Time Traveller tried to go back to 1870, but couldn't, so he went forward to 1995 (a 1995 not much like ours, of course). Then he went forward to 2123, still trying to pick up enough momentum to break through back to 1870.

Baxter said this book might have been written as early as the 1920s, and that Friedell committed suicide in 1938 because of his Jewish ancestry when Austria was seized by Nazis.

Baxter then talked about his own recent book, THE TIME SHIPS (published recently in the United Kingdom, but not yet in the United States). In this, the Time Traveller changes the future by his actions and reportage in Wells's time. Baxter said this project attracted him because "people say that science fiction lacks characters but the Time Traveller is a great character." In fact, Baxter feels that THE TIME MACHINE is emerging as perhaps Wells's greatest novel.

Mark asked Baxter about George Pal's novelization of TIME MACHINE II, a proposed sequel to the film. Baxter had never hear of it, so Mark will be sending him information on it.

Someone asked about the recent British Post Office stamps honoring Wells. Baxter liked them, though I would have preferred a more Edwardian feel rather than the modern look. (Mark says these are honoring the sub-genres of science fiction that Wells created, rather than Wells himself.)

Baxter said he would now like to do a book about time paradoxes, and to push the limits of time travel: for example, to have time travelers from our time found a human colony fifty million years ago, to use time travel to get oil from the Devonian, etc.

Baxter mentioned he had thought of doing time travel in a Dr. Who book, but decided that was not for him. Getting authorization for THE TIME SHIPS was not difficult, and there were no legal problems with any of Wells's thirty-six descendents. In the United Kingdom, all of Wells's work is still in copyright, since copyrights run until fifty years after the death of the author, and soon (starting

in a year or so) seventy-five, leaving everything in copyright until 2016. In the United States, however, most of his science fiction works are in public domain.

However, no one is sure who has the film rights now, so a film is unlikely unless someone wants to spend a lot of effort untangling them.

After this we got together with our friend Hannu Pajunen from Finland and went to dinner at the Jade Dragon. Afterwards we tried to go to:

SF Myths--Physics  
Thursday, 21:00  
Del Cotter (m), Stephen Baxter, Hal Clement,  
Howard Davidson, Geoffrey Landis

"[The panelists] look at scientific misconceptions that authors have inadvertently promoted to the extent that they have become 'common knowledge' amongst readers. We're not talking about \*obvious\* scientific errors, but rather the more subtle mistakes that slip by both author and reader. Examples include:

- Superconductors also have no \*thermal\* resistance
- FTL travel is possible if you 'get around' travelling at c
- Single-molecule objects or wires are indestructible"

Well, we walked back to this after dinner, in the rain, but couldn't find the hotel! Apparently it is visible only from one side of the block, which is not quite what the map indicated. At any rate, I figured that it didn't pay to spend a lot of time looking for it--by the time we found it, the panel would be over.  
[-ecl]

[to be continued]

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Each class preaches the importance of those virtues  
it need not exercise. The rich harp on the value of  
thrift, the idle grow eloquent over the dignity of labor.  
-- Oscar Wilde

