

in love with an American gangster, played by James Garner.

TOOTSIE is the flip side of VICTOR/VICTORIA. Dustin Hoffman plays an actor who can't get a job until he masquerades as an actress and lands a job in a soap opera, a job that his girlfriend had also

THE MT VOID

Page 2

auditioned for. Then he falls for another actress in the soap opera (played by Jessica Lange) and, needless to say, complications ensue.

These are two long films, so we will be starting p_r_o_m_p_t_l_y at 7 PM.
[-ecl]

2. I was talking last week about the poor television ratings that the President of the United States has been getting for his television Presidential addresses. This is not entirely his fault because of increased video competition. And when you consider the vast number of angry phone calls NBC got when it ran an interview with Mikhail Gorbachav rather than ALF.... Well, as anyone can see, Presidential addresses have not kept pace with the times on television. They are done in a style called "talking heads" that really went out in the 1950s. The President sits and talks, saying nothing new, while the picture shows you nothing new. The president is aware of the problem and has made some suggestions on how to put more pizzazz into his own addresses. First, there is the title. Originally he wanted to call his addresses J_F_K: T_h_e_N_e_x_t_G_e_n_e_r_a_t_i_o_n (apparently JFK was the last President anyone really enjoyed watching on television). Then he started thinking about his credibility and to be honest with the American people he renamed it J_F_K: T_h_e_P_r_e_v_i_o_u_s_G_e_n_e_r_a_t_i_o_n. Somehow that didn't have the feel he wanted either and because he couldn't figure out any way to work Suzanne Somers into his addresses, it was back to the drawing board.

3. Randy Kutz is looking for a copy of Mary Staton's F_r_o_m_t_h_e_L_e_g_i_o_n_o_f_B_i_e_l (published by Ace in 1965). Anyone who can help him out or suggest a source for it, please call him at (201) 758-2181.

Mark Leeper

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

THE SERPENT AND THE RAINBOW
A film review by Mark R. Leeper
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Capsule review: American anthropologist is pulled into the world of voodoo and politics in Haiti during the fall of Duvalier. Only in Haiti could a zombie story and a political thriller fit so well together. The storyline gets muddled at times and cliched at others, but this could have been a very good and a powerful film and just barely missed it. Surprisingly solid effort from Wes Craven. Rating: +1.

It has been a while since we have seen a real zombie film being made. I do not mean the various imitations of N_i_g_h_t_o_f_t_h_e_L_i_v_i_n_g_D_e_a_d. The creatures in those films are usually called "zombies" or "ghouls," though they certainly are not zombies and they are just the opposite of ghouls. But films about the voodoo-reanimated dead have not been around much since the 1950s. Now Wes Craven, whose stock and trade used to be low-budget films with weak stories, and more recently has struck paydirt

with the "Elm Street" films, has made a true zombie film with the genuine gloss of a big-budget production. Big-budget in this cases means actually filming in Haiti (and the Dominican Republic) and filling in at least the supporting roles with some impressive names: names like Cathy Tyson (of M_o_n_a_L_i_s_a), Broadway actor Zakes Mokae (of M_a_s_t_e_r_H_a_r_o_l_d_a_n_d_t_h_e_B_o_y_s), Paul Winfield, and, like a blast from the past, Michael Gough.

A much less familiar Bill Pullman plays Dennis Alan, a Harvard-bred anthropologist who goes to Haiti to try and find a mysterious drug that makes people appear dead enough to be buried, but leaves them alive. (Okay, so maybe these are not true zombies either, but the idea of a zombie-fying drug has been around since the classic zombie film W_h_i_t_e_Z_o_m_b_i_e, perhaps even back to R_o_m_e_o_a_n_d_J_u_l_i_e_t.) In Haiti during the fall of Baby Doc Duvalier, Alan finds himself enmeshed in a web of politics as well as voodoo. In fact, one of the points made by the script is that in Haiti religion, politics, and voodoo are inextricably intertwined. As psychiatrist Marielle (played by Tyson) tells Alan, Haiti is 80% Catholic and 110% voodoo. As well as being a horror film, T_h_e_S_e_r_p_e_n_t_a_n_d_t_h_e_R_a_i_n_b_o_w is in no small part a political thriller also. Haiti is portrayed as being a sort of voodocracy in which most public officials practice the arts.

While the story is ultimately simplistic and disappointing, it does paint a powerful portrait of a society in which public officials can threaten not only the body but also the soul. Mixing church and state is bad enough; when the mixture also includes a potent dose of destructive magic, you have real trouble. While this is a fantasy in which magic works, the film's most frightening sequences depend only on

people believing the voodoo, not on the actual efficacy of the art. And because voodoo really is believed in in Haiti, these scenes may not be far from true. For confused narrative and for the letdown of the cliched last five minutes, I rate this film only a +1 on the -4 to +4 scale, but I think somewhere deep down these really is some of the film that actors like Tyson and Mokae must have thought they were making.

Boskone 25

Con report by Evelyn C. Leeper and Mark R. Leeper
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(Part II)

[Most of this is written by Evelyn. The parts of this that are written by Mark will be labeled as such as they occur.]

Arthurian Films
Saturday, 11 AM
Craig Shaw Gardner, Darrell Schweitzer

This panel started off with a list of Arthurian films. Since Mark and I were able to double the size of the list the panel had, I'm not sure how much they did their homework. The final list (for those of you who like lists) was:

A_r_t_h_u_r_t_h_e_K_i_n_g (TV movie with Malcolm McDowell)

A_r_t_h_u_r,t_h_e_Y_o_u_n_g_W_a_r_l_o_r_d

C_a_m_e_l_o_t (film version)

C_a_m_e_l_o_t (HBO version)

A_C_o_n_n_e_c_t_i_c_u_t_Y_a_n_k_e_e_i_n_K_i_n_g_A_r_t_h_u_r's_C_o_u_r_t (Bing Crosby version)

A_C_o_n_n_e_c_t_i_c_u_t_Y_a_n_k_e_e_i_n_K_i_n_g_A_r_t_h_u_r's_C_o_u_r_t (Richard Basehart version)

T_h_e_C_o_u_r_t_J_e_s_t_e_r (Danny Kaye--not Arthurian, but of the period)

E_x_c_a_l_i_b_u_r

T_h_e_G_r_e_e_n_K_n_i_g_h_t

K_i_n_g_A_r_t_h_u_r (Lionheart television)

K_i_n_g_A_r_t_h_u_r's_D_a_u_g_h_t_e_r

K_n_i_g_h_t_r_i_d_e_r_s

K_n_i_g_h_t_s_o_f_t_h_e_R_o_u_n_d_T_a_b_l_e

L_a_n_c_e_l_o_t_d_u_L_a_c

"Last Defender of Camelot" (Twilight Zone episode)

L_o_v_e_s_p_e_l_l (a.k.a. T_r_i_s_t_a_n_a_n_d_I_s_o_l_d_e)

M_o_n_t_y_P_y_t_h_o_n_a_n_d_t_h_e_H_o_l_y_G_r_a_i_l

T_h_e_S_w_o_r_d_i_n_t_h_e_S_t_o_n_e

S_w_o_r_d_o_f_L_a_n_c_e_l_o_t

It turns out that in checking my sources I discovered that versions of A_C_o_n_n_e_c_t_i_c_u_t_Y_a_n_k_e_e_i_n_K_i_n_g_A_r_t_h_u_r's_C_o_u_r_t were also made in 1921

and 1931 (with Will Rogers) and that it was also remade as U_n_i_d_e_n_t_i_f_i_e_d

F_l_y_i_n_g_O_d_d_b_a_l_l. No one there could remember the name of A_r_t_h_u_r_t_h_e_K_i_n_g; that was also from sources later.

The rest of the hour after the listing was done was spent discussing fantasy films in general, rather than Arthurian films in particular. Hollywood's tendency towards whimsy rather than high fantasy was given as the reason for so few true fantasy films. The discussion was pretty much limited to United States films, with even British films being somewhat slighted, though when films dealing with

other source material were mentioned, both the Australian L_a_s_t_W_a_v_e

Boskone 25

February 5, 1988

Page 2

(based on aboriginal legends) and the German films based on Siegfried, the Nibelungenlied, and other Germanic legends were discussed. A fair number of films have been based on Greek mythology, and there are an interminable number which have drawn from the Bible and Christian mythology (particularly if one includes films about saints as well as the traditional Biblical epics). Tolkien has been adapted to film three times, never particularly well.

My feeling is that Hollywood c_o_u_l_d do fantasy well, but wouldn't. That is, they have the ability, but not the will--sort of like the United States space program.

SF Turkeys
Saturday, 2 PM
Mark Keller

This panel, or rather slide presentation, was mobbed which seemed to support Mark (Leeper)'s theory that there is growing trend toward heckling literature the same way people have been heckling films. Certainly there was no dearth of program items which, by design or by accident, spent their time attacking "bad" literature.

Keller said he would limit the talk to written science fiction; however, it was supplemented by a boom box playing musical numbers at full volume. Two pieces he played were Julie Brown's "Earth Girls Are Easy" (soon to be made into a motion picture, if you believe it!) and "Star Trekking." Unfortunately, we chose our seats in the front row before we realized this and I spent a fair proportion of the time with my fingers in my ears. Much of his material was drawn from Neil Gaiman's G_h_a_s_t_l_y_B_e_y_o_n_d_B_e_l_i_e_f, a collection of examples of "bad" science fiction, fantasy, and horror writing.

His list included an entire spectrum. There were those books and authors that most people agree are bad: Perry Rhodan, There were a couple of romance novels (Y_a_r_g_o by Jacqueline Susann and R_e_s_t_o_r_e_e by Anne McCaffrey, which I haven't read and cannot pass judgement on). He showed us copies of the comic book "Reagan's Raiders," in which the Raiders attack the Ayatollah Khomeini and Columbian drug kings and

rescue MIAs from Vietnam. He made the usual attacks on Robert Adams, Piers Anthony, Terry Brooks, L. Ron Hubbard, John Jakes, and John Norman. These are being to wear a little thin. Adams's "Horseclans" novels (the primary target of his works) I haven't read. Anthony was attacked for many books, but especially for T_r_i_p_l_e_D_e_t_e_n_t_e, which Keller claimed was his worst. I think R_a_c_e_i_n_T_i_m_e is worse, and in any case that T_r_i_p_l_e_D_e_t_e_n_t_e is not all that bad. L. Ron Hubbard is a popular target, but the book of his that I read B_l_a_c_k_G_e_n_e_s_i_s was fairly enjoyable, if overlong. I think I voted it fourth out of six choices for the Hugo last year--it seemed like an attempt to imitate Douglas Adams. Keller attacked Jakes's B_l_a_c_k_i_n_T_i_m_e at two different panels this convention and on other panels at other conventions. It's getting to be a bit of a stuck needle so far as I'm concerned. And I still

Boskone 25

February 5, 1988

Page 3

contend that the first five "Gor" novels are reasonable action/adventure novels. It just turns out that Norman can make more writing trash than good novels, and given that he probably isn't going to get rich from his job as a professor, he's chosen to "go for the gold," as they say.

(Keller says the book he's waiting for is F_r_e_e_A_m_a_z_o_n_s_o_f_G_o_r. Mark and Dave are waiting for C_h_i_c_k_e_n-P_l_u_c_k_e_r_o_f_G_o_r.)

Carlos Castenada's works were flamed as an attempt to pass off fiction as reality, as was Whitley Streiber's C_o_m_m_u_n_i_o_n. I wonder why he didn't attack the "Illuminati" books as well.

One can argue that many of those are bad. But he also included such Hugo winners as Mark Clifton and Frank Riley's T_h_e_y'_d_R_a_t_h_e_r_B_e_R_i_g_h_t (perhaps not Hugo material, but not actively bad either) and Orson Scott Card's E_n_d_e_r's_G_a_m_e, which he claimed was bad simply because it was based on the writing cliché of "We thought it was a game, but it turned out to be real after all." (The flip side of this is "We thought it was real, but it turned out to be just a game[or a dream].) Keller seemed to think this was on the same level as the "Adam and Eve" cliché, and perhaps he's right, but it is also true that there is no idea so hackneyed that a good author cannot produce a good work based on it.

Superconductors: The Effect on the Future
Saturday, 3 PM
Mark Olson, Jeff Hecht, Monty Wells

I will not give the entire content of this panel, since it was mostly an overview of all that is going on in the field of superconductors and is well-covered in magazines elsewhere. Olson started out by observing that superconductivity had been discovered in 1911, but it wasn't until recently--very recently--that liquid-nitrogen-temperature superconductors had been discovered/developed. Current superconductors are niobium-tin or niobium-vanadium; the newer ones being investigated are yttrium-barium-copper-oxide with superconductivity at 90 to 95 degrees Kelvin. Samples are still erratic, and many lose their superconductivity after a few trials.

Applications being investigated are power storage (using large loops), Josephson's Junctions (very fast, no-mechanical switches), SQUIDs (Superconductor Quantum Interference Devices which could be used for earthquake detection and in airport detectors), and Nuclear Magnetic Resonance Imaging (which would have many applications in the medical field). And of course there's the Meisner Effect (magnetic repulsion) which is being considered in applications for transportation, though I think we would have to get at least 373 Kelvin superconductors before we started to run trains on it.

Some of the problems before all this science fiction becomes reality are how to work the ceramic materials that are superconductors into ductile wire and how to assure the retention of the superconductivity.

Boskone 25

February 5, 1988

Page 4

Fantasy by Streetlights

Saturday, 4 PM

Debbie Notkin, Beth Fleisher, Michael Jan Friedman,
Esther Friesner, Rick Hautala

This panel dealt with urbanfantasy. A brief mention was made at the beginning of a parallel area, urban legends, which has been researched most thoroughly by Jan Harold Brunvand in his books T_h_e V_a_n_i_s_h_i_n_g_H_i_t_c_h_h_i_k_e_r and T_h_e C_h_o_k_i_n_g_D_o_b_e_r_m_a_n.

Some of the books mentioned were Peter David's K_n_i_g_h_t_L_i_f_e, Friesner's N_e_w_Y_o_r_k_b_y_K_n_i_g_h_t (never let it be said that authors on

panels don't plug their own books!), John Crowley's *Littletime*, R. A. MacAvoy's *Thea with the Black Dragon*, and Mark Helprin's *Winter's Tale*.

The panelists seemed to be looking for books that had a juxtaposition of elements from both fantasy and urban reality; in *King's Lief*, for example, Arthur Pendragon comes back to life and runs for mayor of New York City. *Elves living in Central Park*, or the "Oh, God" movies would be this sort of thing also. I, however, would distinguish two kinds of urban fantasy: the kind they mention (traditional elements in an urban setting) and the kind where the fantasy is based on the urban setting (such as *Andrew's Tale* or Viido Polikarpus and Tappan King's *Drown Town*).

The panelists also recommended Michael De Larrabeiti's "Borribles" books, though a friend of mine says they're terrible ("De gustibus non disputandum"). Piers Anthony's "Incarnations of Immortality" was mentioned, though I don't think actually recommended--the description sounded similar to the "Illuminati" books in that there is a vast conspiracy running the world of which most people are unaware. The television series *Beauty and the Beast* was cited and Emma Bull's *Warrior* *the Oaks*, the first of the new Ace Fantasy Specials," was recommended here and in other panels also.

One question that arose was how characters in an urban fantasy should react to, say, a vampire. In Stephen King's novels, his characters know about vampires from books and films. Other authors tend to put their characters more in a vacuum--if women are dying with strange teeth-marks in their necks, no one ever says, "Gee, this seems like a vampire." *Kolchak, the Night Stalker* got a lot of mileage by having Kolchak recognize the weekly occurrences as supernatural when everyone else pooh-pooed them. At the end of *The Howling*, when a newscaster turns into a wolf on live television, the primary reaction of the audience seems to be, "They can do wonders with special effects these days."

Dinner: Peking Duck House

Dinner was at the Peking Duck House, which has branches in New York's Chinatown and West Side. For a Springfield restaurant it was pretty exotic--they even had jellyfish on the menu! Even more surprising, Kate tried some! We'll probably try the Chinatown one someday. We were smart to go right at 5 PM though; it was almost empty when we arrived, but by the time we were finished (about 6:30 PM) there was a long line to get in.

Changing the Past

Saturday, 7 PM

Janet Morris, David Drake, Roger McBride Allen, Chuck Rothman

Revisionism. On the one hand, it's revising our idea of history to fit new facts, like the switch to warm-blooded dinosaurs. On the other hand, it's "rewriting" history to match our philosophical or political perceptions of what history should be, as those who claim the Holocaust never happened are trying to do (which at least one panel member claimed was actually a form of alternate history). In between is the whole spectrum.

According to Morris, the revised version of what killed the dinosaurs (a meteoric collision) has been expanded into the concept of nuclear winter. Of course, all of this grew out of observations by Viking on Mars of Martian dust storms that were so severe as to obscure the sun and cause the temperature to drop. A classic "what was the history?" novel mentioned was Josephine Tey's What was the truth about Richard III? ("What was the truth about Richard III?").

On the "political rewrite" side, Morris recommended Lies and Deceit in Shanghai by Nien Cheng, which describes how during the Cultural Revolution history was being changed almost daily. One audience member mentioned the Lusitania, which led to a long discussion of wartime reporting and how much it could be trusted. During this, I found Morris's patronizing attitude toward members of the audience who didn't have the same perspicacity that she felt she had to be increasingly annoying, and was glad when the topic changed again.

It was Morris's contention that current events affect us more than changes in history. This isn't really surprising, but she spent a lot of time asking the audience if they could name any instances in which historical revelations changed their lives. Most of the revelations were personal in nature, again not surprising. Morris talked about hypnotic regression as a way that people try to investigate the past, and the topic drifted to UFO experiences. The panelists seemed to think that all these stories about UFO kidnapping people and performing all sorts of medical experiments on them were ridiculous--after all, why would a race as advanced as space travelers must be do such things? One wonders first of all what these people would say when told that tribes of chimpanzees in Africa probably hear the same sorts of stories about humans who kidnap them, take them aboard their vehicles, perform

experiments, and then let them go. If the chimpanzees' stories are

Boskone 25

February 5, 1988

Page 6

true, why is it so impossible that the people's stories should also be true? And secondly, it is extremely inconsistent for the panel to talk about how Christian fundamentalists refuse to acknowledge any physical evidence contradicting the Bible (which was considered valid history until recently), and then in the next breath to refuse to acknowledge the evidence of the alleged kidnapped victims. Mind you, I'm not saying that these people were kidnapped by aliens, just that the panel seemed to want to set separate standards for what they personally believed and what they didn't, standards that had no basis in logic.

The panel was, unfortunately, marred by these sorts of hidden philosophical and political agenda, and I suspect I will steer clear of such panels in the future.

V_e_r_n_e F_a_b_u_l_o_u_s W_o_r_l_d_o_f_J_u_l_e_s
Saturday, 8:30 PM

T_h_e F_a_b_u_l_o_u_s W_o_r_l_d_o_f_J_u_l_e_s
V_e_r_n_e is based on the spirit of Verne's
work rather than the letter. It is not a rendition of any particular
novel or set of characters, but it f_e_e_l_s like it is. Made in 1958 in
Czechoslovakia, it combines live-action with paper and wood cut-out
animation, all filmed in a sepia tone with the graininess of old-time
illustrations that gives the film a charmingly Victorian feel. Parts of
it are inaccurate (particularly the underwater motion sequences, which
are very unrealistic, and the idea that one changes the picture from a
projector by changing the shutter), but this can be forgiven. Parts of
it are almost surrealistic, with roller-skating camels and a wonderful
sequence in which animated fish segue into animated butterflies in a
manner not unlike an Escher drawing. The director, Karel Zeman, went on
to make T_h_e F_a_b_u_l_o_u_s B_a_r_o_n
M_u_n_c_h_a_u_s_e_n in 1961.

T_h_e F_a_b_u_l_o_u_s W_o_r_l_d_o_f_J_u_l_e_s
V_e_r_n_e was followed by a short, "Ballet
Robotique," which consisted of four sequences of robots working in
factories set to music (sort of like C_a_n_d_i_d C_a_m_e_r_a used to do traffic

policemen). The section "Pas de Deux" was done to the "Blue Danube" waltz, which is a bit overused in science fiction. The segment "Finale" was done on an automobile assembly line to the _ 1 _ 8 _ 1 _ 2 _ O _ v _ e _ r _ t _ u _ r _ e and had sparks flying during the cannon shots--pretty clever.

It is worth noting that in keeping with the new, more sedate Boskone, there was no heckling!

Kirk Poland Memorial Bad Prose Competition
Saturday, 10 PM
Craig Shaw Gardner, Geary Gravel, Ellen Kushner,
Darrell Schweitzer, Eric Van

This was a repeat of a popular item at Readercon last year. Kirk Poland is the hack author in some science fiction novel whose name and author escape me at the moment. The competition worked like this: a section of bad prose from a published science fiction novel was read to

Boskone 25

February 5, 1988

Page 7

the audience, ending in mid-sentence. Then five possible endings were read--one from each of the contestants (Craig Shaw Gardner, Geary Gravel, Ellen Kushner, and Darrell Schweitzer) and the _ r _ e _ a _ l ending. The audience then voted on which they thought was the real ending. Each author got a point for each member of the audience s/he fooled; the audience got a point for each vote for the correct ending. The authors "honored" in this competition included Leo Brett

(a.k.a. R. L. Fanthorpe) (_ F _ a _ c _ e _ l _ e _ s _ s _ P _ l _ a _ n _ e _ t, Philip K. Dick (_ T _ h _ e _ Z _ a _ p _ G _ u _ n), Alan Dean Foster (_ B _ l _ o _ o _ d _ h _ y _ p _ e), L. Ron Hubbard ("Fear"), Robert Silverberg (_ R _ e _ v _ o _ l _ t _ o _ n _ A _ l _ p _ h _ a _ C), E. E. Smith (_ T _ r _ i _ p _ l _ a _ n _ e _ t _ a _ r _ y), A. E. Van Vogt (_ P _ l _ a _ y _ e _ r _ s _ o _ f _ N _ u _ l _ l _ A), and Lin Carter (_ T _ h _ o _ n _ g _ o _ r _ o _ f _ L _ e _ m _ u _ r _ i _ a).

Geary Gravel, the defending champion, again won handily. At Readercon they had ten selections; here they had eight, and it took about two hours. Perhaps a further cut is needed. But there's the whole question of the philosophy of this panel. As Mark pointed out, a few years ago Boskone started showing a midnight "turkey film" for heckling purposes. People liked it so much they started heckling all the films. Now they're starting a "turkey science fiction" item

(actually more than one). And a lot of what is being called a "turkey" isn't (see my comments on Ender's_Game et al in the section on the "SF Turkeys" presentation). I think that there is enough good science fiction that doesn't get recognized that the panels should work on that rather than having everyone laugh at bad science fiction, not to mention how the authors who are singled out for this "honor" must feel. If they must have a "bad writing" competition, I think it would come off as less vicious if they chose selections from authors generally lauded in the field (as with the Silverberg and Dick entries this year). To attack an author's entire ouvere, as the organizers of this competition have done with A. E. Van Vogt, L. Ron Hubbard, and especially Lin Carter, is offensive and in extremely poor taste.

Readercon Party
Saturday, 11 PM

The Readercon committee was much in evidence throughout Boskone--no doubt because they all wore their bright red Readercon T-shirts. Many of the items seemed to have been organized by them, which some people felt was an attempt on their part to "take over" Boskone, but I would interpret as people volunteering to work on program items they were particularly interested in. The Kirk Poland Competition was, of course, a direct steal from Readercon, but it shouldn't surprise anyone that people who run a convention dedicated to books will be on panels entitled "How to Read Better" and "I Just Read the Stuff!" Had they not been wearing the T-shirts, people wouldn't have even noticed. But that's an old NESFA tradition--before every Worldcon, NESFA issues a suggested schedule to its members of which T-shirt should be worn on which day.

By the way, Readercon has had a change of date and a change of venue and will be held at the Lowell Hilton November 18-20, 1988. The

Boskone 25

February 5, 1988

Page 8

Guest of Honor remains Samuel R. Delany.

Turn of the Century Illustration
Sunday, 11 AM
Paul Chadwick

[This section was written by Mark R. Leeper.]

I have a lot of nerve trying to describe a slide show of art without being able to illustrate any of it, but here goes. Paul Chadwick, I take it from some of his own art he mixed in, is a comic book artist with a fascination for the history of illustration. The art he showed was made up of the art of the Robinson family which included among others W. Heath Robinson (1872-1944) and Charles Robinson, and the art of Kay Nielsen. The slide show opened with W. Heath Robinson's illustrations for a book-length poem "The Song of England" about the far-flung reaches that Englishmen had gone to to spread the civilization. Now what was interesting is the illustrations showed the bones of dead Englishmen all over the world beckoning the living to pick up where they left off. These dead are out there, don't let their death be in vain. How different from the current feeling to avoid space like the old neighborhood haunted house because seven people died there in one day.

Robinson's style tends toward the mystical with campfire smoke forming into women's heads beckoning the intrepid explorers on. There

were pieces for the V_e_r_s_e_s_o_f_R_u_d_y_a_r_d
K_i_p_l_i_n_g and S_e_r_v_i_c_e_S_o_n_g_s_o_f_S_o_u_t_h
A_f_r_i_c_a (also by Kipling), and some great illustrations for

M_i_d_s_u_m_m_e_r

N_i_g_h_t's_D_r_e_a_m showing the characters floating in space. Charles

Robinson's art did not have quite the same quality but it had more of a feel of reality, even for stories like "The Frog Prince." One piece by Thomas Robinson looked much like the kind of art one finds in Lang's multi-colored "Fairy Books."

Kay Nielsen I had always thought of as a light fantasist, but many of the illustrations Chadwick chose had a bored and decadent look one associates with Aubrey Beardsley. Others showed exaggerated features,

like very long noses, that were later imitated by Brian Froud. Nielsen

did the inspirational work for F_a_n_t_a_s_i_a. He did a series of sketches

that Disney Studios then used to inspire their artists. Several of the

illustrations were from E_a_s_t_o't_h_e_S_u_n, W_e_s_t_o't_h_e

M_o_o_n. [--Mark R.

Leeper]

The Future Went Wrong

Sunday, 12 noon

Hal Clement, Bob Eggleton, Julius Schwartz, Darrell Schweitzer

You can tell Clement is a teacher--this panel was a lot more structured than most of the others. After defining what a prediction was (it had to be specific as to exactly what it was predicting and when; something interpreted after the fact as a prediction, like much of

Nostradamus, wouldn't count), the panelists listed a few popular predictions gone wrong: backyard rockets, lost races on the far side of the moon, new elements, new wavelengths (David Lindsay's new colors in A V o y a g e t o A r c t u r u s might be an example of this), personal helicopters.

Even those who predicted scientific developments got the details off; no predictions of the first human landing on the moon included millions watching it live on television. And what everyone failed to predict were social changes: the civil rights movement, the women's movement, and now the gay rights movement. Stories written in the Forties have the social sensibilities of the Forties and so on. I recently saw parts of G u e s s W h o' s C o m i n g t o D i n n e r? and was struck by how ridiculous it all looked now, twenty years later. (But then, I thought it was ridiculous even at the time.) Science fiction suffers from the same myopia; what seems like a revolutionary social idea now will undoubtedly be totally ridiculous in twenty years.

Two novels of prediction that were specifically discussed were George Orwell's 1 9 8 4 and Philip Wylie's T h e E n d o f t h e D r e a m. The former has not come to pass, and even when it was written it was a bit of an alternate history, since seemingly World War II never occurred. The latter may yet come true--parts of it reflect a very real environmental trend--but we can't tell at this point.

And in all the robotics stories, no one ever predicted what is coming to pass: that in Japan the workers are agitating to have the robots join the unions so that the workers won't be at a disadvantage because of their necessity for food and sleep.

How to Read Better

Sunday, 2 PM

David G. Hartwell, Patrick Nielsen-Hayden,
Teresa Nielsen-Hayden, Eric Van

In describing how to read better, the panel started by explaining that science fiction is different from other fiction in that it is literal rather than metaphorical (though mystery fiction may share this distinction also). This means that when a mainstream reader picks up a science fiction novel, s/he may well start by asking, "What do these aliens represent?" when that question is meaningless--they represent aliens. On the other hand, a science fiction reader may get into trouble trying to take a mainstream novel literally when it is really an allegory. Science fiction also has more emphasis on short fiction (short story, novelette, and novella--the latter category being almost

entirely moribund except in science fiction). This established, the first advice on how to read better was to read more--to read other genres and other types of writing and think about the differences. The example given was how the reader should interpret the sentence "Her world exploded." Obviously if this sentence is encountered in a romance novel it has a different meaning than if it is encountered in a science fiction novel (though see the comments on _ R_ e_ s_ t_ o_ r_ e and _ Y_ a_ r_ g_ o above).

Boskone 25

February 5, 1988

Page 10

One thing science fiction readers have to train themselves to do is to read slower. In general, let the style dictate the speed; poetry is the form that probably should be read the slowest. Read aloud. Get used to hearing how things sound. I found this almost the only way to read _ T_ h_ e _ C_ o_ l_ o_ r_ P_ u_ r_ p_ l_ e--not actually reading it aloud, but hearing it in my head. It's hard to explain, but you probably know what I mean. One of the panelists claimed this was the only way he could make sense of Chaucer. Listening to authors' readings is a variation on this.

Re-read what you have read; often more will be discovered on the second reading--particularly if it has taken you a while to get in synch with the book during the first reading. I found myself reading Ford's _ D_ r_ a_ g_ o_ n_ W_ a_ i_ t_ i_ n_ g with some misapprehensions; a re-reading cleared them up.

The hardest topic to read, and hence one of the best for practicing your reading skills, is philosophy. One panelist described it as being like running with weights on your ankles.

Various works on reading and writing were cited, among them:

- _ O_ r_ i_ g_ i_ n_ a_ n_ d_ D_ e_ v_ e_ l_ o_ p_ m_ e_ n_ t_ o_ f_ t_ h_ e
_ E_ n_ g_ l_ i_ s_ h_ L_ a_ n_ g_ u_ a_ g_ e

- _ H_ o_ w _ D_ o_ e_ s _ a _ P_ o_ e_ m _ M_ e_ a_ n? (John Ciardi)

- _ L_ i_ t_ e_ r_ a_ r_ y_ T_ h_ e_ o_ r_ y: _ A_ n
_ I_ n_ t_ r_ o_ d_ u_ c_ t_ i_ o_ n (Terry Eagleton)

- _ A_ s_ p_ e_ c_ t_ s_ o_ f_ t_ h_ e _ N_ o_ v_ e_ l (E. M. Forster)

- T h e A B C o f R e a d i n g (Ezra Pound)

Specific to science fiction, the following are highly recommended:

- T h e I s s u e a t H a n d and M o r e I s s u e s a t H a n d (James Blish, writing as William Atheling)

- T h e T a l e T h a t W a g s t h e D o g (James Blish)

- S t a r b o a r d W i n e (Samuel Delany)

- I n S e a r c h o f W o n d e r (Damon Knight)

- W o r l d s o f W o n d e r (Robert Silverberg)

- T h o s e W h o C a n (Robin Scott Wilson)

Things You Should Have Read

Sunday, 3 PM

Moshe Feder, Ginger Buchanan, Greg Cox, Debbie Notkin

This was yet another list panel; however, some trends were discussed before the listing got under way. Notkin observed that, to no

one's surprise, books are getting more expensive. Everyone commented on the trend toward shared worlds and franchised titles ("Joe Unknown writing in the Robot Universe of Isaac Asimov"--though the authors in the current Robot City series are not unknown). Someone did that at least some of the shared world series are winding down. Of the new trend toward franchising, someone said, "Did you ever think you'd look back to the shared world books with nostalgia?" There are a lot of books trying to look like William Gibson.

Then the panelists got to listing books. I will provide the list (with comments where applicable, and in no particular order):

- R e p l a y (Ken Grimwood), recommended by both Buchanan and Cox. It was marketed in hardcover as mainstream but deals with alternate

histories and time travel. I think it's being marketed as a mystery novel in paperback--it's listed in Waldenbooks "Crime Times."

- _ A _ M _ a _ s _ k _ f _ o _ r _ t _ h _ e _ G _ e _ n _ e _ r _ a _ l (Lisa Goldstein), recommended by Notkin.
Post-holocaust.

- _ C _ h _ e _ r _ n _ o _ b _ y _ l (Frederik Pohl), recommended by Buchanan.

- _ W _ a _ r _ _ f _ o _ r _ t _ h _ e _ _ O _ a _ k _ s (Emma Bull), recommended by Notkin. She's really pushing this book.

- _ T _ h _ e _ _ F _ a _ l _ l _ e _ n _ W _ o _ m _ a _ n (Pat Murphy), recommended by Buchanan.
The main character is a woman who can sense where archaeologists should dig for finds.

- _ T _ h _ e _ _ S _ u _ n , _ t _ h _ e _ M _ o _ o _ n , _ a _ n _ d _ t _ h _ e _ _ S _ t _ a _ r _ s (Steven Brust)

- _ O _ n _ S _ t _ r _ a _ n _ g _ e _ r _ _ T _ i _ d _ e _ s (Tim Powers)

- _ S _ w _ o _ r _ d _ s _ p _ o _ i _ n _ t (Ellen Kushner)

- _ L _ a _ n _ d _ o _ f _ D _ r _ e _ a _ m _ s (Jim Blaylock)

- _ S _ t _ r _ a _ n _ g _ e _ T _ o _ y _ s and _ L _ i _ v _ i _ n _ g _ i _ n _ E _ t _ h _ e _ r (Patricia Geary), recommended by Notkin, though Kate Pott says they're not that good.

- _ V _ o _ i _ c _ e _ o _ f _ O _ u _ r _ S _ h _ a _ d _ o _ w , _ B _ o _ n _ e _ s _ o _ f _ t _ h _ e _ M _ o _ o _ n , and _ L _ a _ n _ d _ o _ f _ _ L _ a _ u _ g _ h _ s (Jonathan Carroll)

- _ S _ o _ l _ d _ i _ e _ r _ o _ f _ t _ h _ e _ M _ i _ s _ t (Gene Wolfe)

- _ W _ h _ e _ n _ G _ r _ a _ v _ i _ t _ y _ F _ a _ i _ l _ s (George Alec Effinger), an intentionally cyberpunk novel.

- _ V _ a _ c _ u _ u _ m _ F _ l _ o _ w _ e _ r _ s (Michael Swanwick), a novel that everyone treats as cyberpunk that isn't.

- P_e_r_f_u_m_e (Patrick Susskind), a horror novel about someone with no sense of smell who uses odors as a means of disguise.
- A_s_h _ W_e_d_n_e_s_d_a_y (Chet Williamson)
- F_o_r_g_e_o_f_G_o_d (Greg Bear)
- M_a_r_b_l_e_S_t_r_e_e_t and R_e_p_l_i_c_a_n_t (Richard Bowker)
- M_i_s_e_r_y (Stephen King)
- T_o_o_l_o_f_t_h_e _ T_r_a_d_e (Joe Haldeman)
- H_o_w _ M_u_c_h_f_o_r_J_u_s_t_t_h_e_P_l_a_n_e_t? (John M. Ford), a "Star Trek" novel not just for Trekkies.
- M_i_n_d_P_l_a_y_e_r_s (Pat Cadigan)
- J_o_u_r_n_a_l_o_f_N_i_c_h_o_l_a_s _ t_h_e _ A_m_e_r_i_c_a_n (Leigh Kennedy)
- "The Evening, the Morning, and the Night" (Octavia Butler)
- "Why I Left Joe's All-Night Hamburgers" (Lawrence Watt-Evans)
- S_o_l_d_i_e_r_s_o_f _ P_a_r_a_d_i_s_e (Paul Parks)
- short works of Neil Barrett appearing in A_s_i_m_o_v'_s
- I_n_t_h_e_F_i_e_l_d_s_o_f_F_i_r_e (edited by Jack Dann), a collection of stories about the Vietnam War.

One unusual item mentioned was W_a_t_c_h_m_e_n, a graphic novel of an alternate history a la W_i_l_d_C_a_r_d_s.

The Way We Were...
 Sunday, 4 PM
 Jim Mann, Laurie Mann

This was the traditional gripe session. The major complaints seemed to center around the cutbacks that Boskone had had in the areas of film programming and costuming. NESFA explained that they had in some regards (costuming and the age limit policy) perhaps overreacted. But they couldn't afford to take the chance. Next year's policies will probably reflect the consensus that the geographical change has weeded out the worst of the problem.

My major gripe about the gripe session was that some of the people

who were presenting gripes seemed to have come directly from Bob & Ray's "Slow Talkers of America." Though people were supposedly limited to two or three minutes each, some took longer than that to just express what their gripe was. In addition, there was one person who seemed to think

Boskone 25

February 5, 1988

Page 13

this was the time to do street theater about how "we were not numbers, we were free men" (a la T_h_e_P_r_i_s_o_n_e_r intro--I wonder what he thought I was!) and so on. Amusing though it was, this was not the right place for it, when other people were waiting to speak. His excuse was that no one on the committee ever listened to the gripes anyway, a claim patently false, since many of this year's changes came out of last year's gripe session.

Miscellaneous

Attendance was somewhere between 1300 and 1500, making this the smallest Boskone since 1981. There was an area in the Marriott with the information table, message board, party board, freebie tables, etc. The boards were much neater and more readable than in previous years, as was the freebie table. The flyers didn't overflow onto the floor or get all shuffled together, making it easier to see what was there. There were also tables for organizations--Noreascon3 (NESFA had a table in the hucksters' room as well), Orlando in '92, DC in '92, and the Gaylaxians, a Massachusetts group whose motto is "Out of the closet and into the universe!" (In case anyone is interested, their address is P. O. Box 1051, Back Bay Annex, Boston MA 02117.) No other clubs had tables.

Summary

As I said at the gripe session, there were problems. I would have liked a better film program, and there were people with attitude problems on both sides (attendees and staff). There were some technical difficulties with having two hotels, and not everything was perfect. But it was s_o much better than Boskone 24 than I can't begin to describe it. You could talk to people. You could get a cup of coffee, sit down, and read if you wanted to. No one was waving swords at you, breaking elevators, or destroying the hotels. One attendee (see the gripe session above) was loudly berating NESFA for running a terrible convention. When I said the real test was how many came back next year, he agreed. He seemed to think no one would. I think he's wrong, and I

explain some of my reasons in the gripe session section above. Everyone I came with signed up already for Boskone 26 (January 27-29, 1989; Guest of Honor Tim Powers), and I think will be even better.

BAKER STREET DOZEN edited by Pj Doyle and E. W. McDiarmid
Congdon & Weed, 1987, 0-86553-187-0, \$16.95.
A book review by Evelyn C. Leeper
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This anthology contains the twelve stories selected by Conan Doyle as the best Holmes stories, as well as essays pertaining to the stories. In addition, "Silver Blaze" is included because almost all attempts to list the twelve best Holmes stories include it. Conan Doyle left it off because of its many technical errors with regard to racing, but most readers agree that he was being too harsh on himself.

The essays are by noted Sherlockians, of whom Isaac Asimov, Richard Lancelyn Green, and John Bennett Shaw are perhaps the best known. Some of the essays discuss the stories themselves: Ann Byerly with "The Red-Headed League," Ely Liebow with "The Final Problem," Joseph B. Connors with "The Adventure of the Empty House," Asimov with "The Five Orange Pips," and George Fletcher with "The Adventure of the Priory School." Bryce Crawford, Jr., compares the three "missing government documents" stories to see why Doyle chose "The Adventure of the Second Stain." Brad Keefauver looks at the treatment of horror in "The Adventure of the

Devil's Foot." One finds Asimov's strangely out of sync with the rest of the book--though certainly well-written, it is hardly the paean to Holmes that one would expect. James Shannon goes even further and accuses Holmes of fixing the Wessex Cup Race! Fletcher attacks Doyle more than Holmes, but his complaints are not very original.

Others examine the origin of the ideas of the stories: Alvin E. Rodin and Jack D. Key discuss poisonous snakes in "The Speckled Band," Kelvin I. Jones looks at the "dancing men" of the adventure of the same name, Alison Janice Cox and J. Randolph Cox try to discern the real "scandal in Bohemia," Derham Groves compares the three houses in "The Musgrave Ritual," and Richard Lancelyn Green discusses the calligraphy in "The Reigate Squires."

While the essays are of passing interest (though some of the additional items, like the list of "Twelve Women in the Life of Sherlock Holmes," are a total waste, and I disagree strongly that YoungSherlockHolmes is one of the "Twelve Best Films of Sherlock Holmes"), they total perhaps 80 pages. No one would think \$16.95 a reasonable price to pay for so slim a volume, so the stories were included as well. Of course, any Sherlockian will already have the stories--probably in more than one edition--and anyone who doesn't have the stories won't be interested in the essays. If this comes out in paperback, it might be worth buying, but at hardback prices it's strictly a library acquisition.