



in and filled the road entertainment vacuum that was left when Burma Shave stopped putting up signs. (And if you are too young to know about Burma Shave signs, please don't tell me--it will only depress me.) These truck drivers are masters of the veiled threat. The most common of the threats is "If you pass me on my right side,

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I will turn you into pressed duck." One is led to believe that passing a truck driver on the right is an act akin to racing a train to a railroad crossing. And since these drivers get on the road and head straight for the left lane, the idea is the driver is saying, "Get thee behind me and stay thee behind me. Wherever I'm going I'm getting there first." They may have mudflaps that say "yes" on the left and "no" on the right. The John Ciardi's among them may have an arrow pointing left that says "Safe side" and one pointing right that says "Suicide." I saw one today that shows a line drawing of a truck moving right and a car smacking into it with a big red flash. One is led to believe that somewhere behind the wheels is fresh pate of driver.

Now I always thought of this warning as plain good advice until I realized that you never see these signs on anything but trucks. If a car cuts someone off like that it is assumed that the driver is a candidate for the Home for the Criminally Stupid. The truck driver is warning you that he is driving more truck than he can legally control. So why should trucks be allowed to intimidate other drivers to give them a wide berth? When some trucks have signs that say, "This truck pays \$9,867,532 in road taxes each year," my first question is what the heck is he hauling that he can afford to pay that much? Must be funny white powder from Columbia. But even so, is it fair to ask this guy to bear so much of the burden of road taxes? Damn straight. That truck has 38 wheels on it, give or take a couple (not counting the two little wheels that don't reach the ground and evolution is in the process of eliminating. They used to serve a function in prehistoric trucks, but these days they just seem to go along for the ride.). The reason for all the wheels is that those suckers are heavy. You watch an ant walk across a cookie leaving it not visibly changed. Then you step on the cookie. Then you can tell me why you think a really heavy truck pays so much in road tax.

3. The Lincroft SF Library has T\_h\_e\_W\_a\_y\_f\_a\_r\_e\_r by Dennis Schmidt and has recently acquired T\_h\_e\_W\_i\_z\_a\_r\_d\_o\_f\_O\_z and T\_h\_e\_L\_a\_n\_d\_o\_f\_O\_z by L. Frank Baum for upcoming discussions.

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...mtgzz!leeper

PYRAMIDS by Fred Saberhagen  
Baen, 1987, 0-671-65609-0, \$3.50.  
AFTER THE FACT by Fred Saberhagen  
Baen, 1988, 0-671-65391-1, \$3.95.  
A book review by Evelyn C. Leeper  
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These are the first two books in the "Pilgrim" series; things being what they are today, I'm sure there will be more.

In P\_y\_r\_a\_m\_i\_d\_s we meet Pilgrim, an interstellar time traveler of sorts who needs 20th Century graduate student Tom Scheffler to help him recover part of his ship from Pharaonic Egypt. Well, sort of--one of the annoying aspects of this series is that the concept of time travel is not only different in the two books, it is actually contradictory. Without giving too much away, let me say that P\_y\_r\_a\_m\_i\_d\_s comes up with a unique way around the Grandfather Paradox, and A\_f\_t\_e\_r\_t\_h\_e\_F\_a\_c\_t seems to assume that the method used in P\_y\_r\_a\_m\_i\_d\_s doesn't exist. In A\_f\_t\_e\_r\_t\_h\_e\_F\_a\_c\_t Pilgrim uses yet another graduate student, Jerry Flint, to save President Lincoln from assassination.

P\_y\_r\_a\_m\_i\_d\_s is interesting in the way it uses the ancient Egyptian gods (reminiscent of Zelazny's C\_r\_e\_a\_t\_u\_r\_e\_s\_o\_f\_L\_i\_g\_h\_t\_a\_n\_d\_D\_a\_r\_k\_n\_e\_s\_s, I suppose) and its descriptions of ancient Egypt. A\_f\_t\_e\_r\_t\_h\_e\_F\_a\_c\_t is more accessible, being about a time the average reader knows better, but this very accessibility makes it less interesting, and the denouement is singularly unsatisfying. Saberhagen has the makings of a good series as soon as he settles on a consistent rationale, and I hope he returns to more interesting and alien settings with it.

LIFE DURING WARTIME by Lucius Shepard  
Bantam, 1987, 0-553-34381-5, \$7.95.  
A book review by Evelyn C. Leeper  
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Set in Central America sometime in the near future, this novel is a collection of four novellas, "R & R," "The Good Soldier," "Fire Zone Emerald," and "Sector Jade." The first was nominated for a Hugo in

1987; if the others have appeared previously, then the book gives no indication of this (nor, for that matter for "R & R" either).

David Mingolla is a soldier in Free Occupied Guatemala just trying to survive, but as the novel progresses he finds out more and more about himself and about the forces behind the war. This starts out as basically a war novel, but gradually becomes more fantastic (in a literal sense) as psychic powers become another weapon to be used in the war. His journey through the jungles has echoes of Dante's journey through the underworld combined with the concept of "rites of passage." It's not for everyone--I can't say I really enjoyed it, but then war stories are not my particular cup of tea. L\_i\_f\_e\_D\_u\_r\_i\_n\_g\_W\_a\_r\_t\_i\_m\_e is not your usual science fiction war story--there is not a lot of emphasis on tactics or battles with amazing weapons. It's a more sedate story about what goes on behind wars, and the day-to-day life during a war. In the latter regard it has more in common with something like Manlio Argueta's A\_D\_a\_y\_o\_f\_L\_i\_f\_e than with, say, David Drake's H\_a\_m\_m\_e'r'\_s\_S\_l\_a\_m\_m\_e\_r\_s. L\_i\_f\_e\_D\_u\_r\_i\_n\_g\_W\_a\_r\_t\_i\_m\_e is not being marketed as science fiction, no doubt because the audience it would appeal to is probably more attuned to the mainstream novel. In fact, it's being marketed as a trade paperback, similar to the "yuppie fiction paperbacks" that are so common now. If it sounds interesting, look for it in that section of your bookstore.

## Nebula Nominations 1988

### NOVELS:

Pat Murphy THE FALLING WOMAN (Tor)  
Gene Wolfe SOLDIER OF THE MIST (Tor)  
George Alec Effinger WHEN GRAVITY FAILS (Arbor House)  
David Brin THE UPLIFT WAR, (Bantam)  
Avram Davidson VERGIL IN AVERNO (Doubleday)  
Greg Bear THE FORGE OF GOD (Tor)

### NOVELLAS

"The Unconquered Country", Geoff Ryman (THE UNCONQUERED COUNTRY)  
"The Blind Geometer," Kim Stanley Robinson (IASFM)  
"The Secret Sharer," Robert Silverberg (IASFM)  
"Witness," Walter Jon Williams (WILD CARDS)  
"Fugue State," John M. Ford (UNDER THE WHEEL)  
"The Tiger Sweater," Keith Roberts (F & SF)

### NOVELLETTE

"Rachel In Love," Pat Murphy (IASFM)  
"Dream Baby," Bruce McAllister (IASFM)  
"Flowers of Edo," Bruce Sterling (IASFM)  
"The Evening & the Morning & the Night," Octavia Butler (OMNI)  
"Buffalo Gals Won't You Come Out Tonight," Ursula K. Le Guin (F&SF)  
"Swartzchild Radius," Connie Willis (THE UNIVERSE)

### SHORT STORIES

"The Faithful Companion At Forty," Karen Joy Fowler (IASFM)  
"Angel," Pat Cadigan (IASFM)  
"Cassandra's Photographs," Lisa Goldstein (IASFM)  
"Why I Left Harry's All-Night Hamburgers," Lawrence Watt-Evans (IASFM)  
"Temple To A Minor Goddess," Susan Schwartz (AMAZING)  
"Kid Charlemagne," Paul Di Fillipo (AMAZING)  
"Forever Yours, Anna," Kate Wilhelm (OMNI)

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Some Thoughts on Reading The Novel After Seeing the Film  
by Mark R. Leeper  
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[This started out as comments on reading E\_m\_p\_i\_r\_e\_o\_f\_t\_h\_e\_S\_u\_n by J. G. Ballard but I realized what I was reviewing was by J. G. Ballard, Tom Stoppard, and Steven Spielberg and was not fully a book any more.]

I would like to be able to review a book objectively after having seen the film. Unfortunately, that becomes no longer possible. For me, more than for other people I am told, seeing the film is a more powerful experience than reading the book. I am more attuned to the subtleties of a film than of a book. And, though I am not proud to say it, I see far more films than I read books. (It is difficult for me to imagine anyone reading as many books as I see films.) In large part I can never read the book E\_m\_p\_i\_r\_e\_o\_f\_t\_h\_e\_S\_u\_n as itself anymore. The freedom to picture characters as I would like, or perhaps even as Ballard would like, has been taken from me. But I am not sure I really miss it that much. What Spielberg has done to this book for me is really of the same character, but perhaps not of the same strength, as what any illustrator of the book might do. Internal illustrations, even cover art, affect the reader's view of a book. A film is, or can be, a lot of illustrations for a book--24 a second--at least where the film is accurate to the book. A film is an extension of the illustrator's art. And you can ask the same basic questions about a film as you can about art illustrations: how accurate to the book are they and do they help



shed more light on the subject matter? The first is an objective question, the second far more subjective.

I suspect that I am seeing more in the book having seen the film than I would have reading the book and not seeing the film. And reading the book is faster and easier after having seen the film--much as it would be after reading the Cliff's Notes. Reading any new novel, the brain has to organize a mass of letters on a page into words and a mass of words into an understandable story. Much of that organization is done for you if you have seen the film. You have a good idea where the story is going. You even have a better idea of what is going on in a specific scene. When words fit an expected pattern they are easier to interpret. I have heard that is one of the subconscious reasons we like meter and rhyme in poetry. They make it easier for the mind to translate sounds into words by limiting the set of words the listener might have heard. In a sense they save the mind some processing. That's part of the reason why a false rhyme offends the ear. It is in a sense making the mind work harder, sending it at first in the wrong direction. Seeing a film before reading a book does the same sort of pre-organization of information and variations from the actual text of the book can also make the novel at times harder to comprehend. The reader can even come away convinced that the film's interpretation and even plot was in the book when it really was not. I have known long-

Empire of Sun (book) February 26, 1988

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time science fiction fans to confuse the plot of George Pal's T\_i\_m\_e M\_a\_c\_h\_i\_n\_e with that of the book, even going to the book to find incidents that occurred only in the film.

So much of my interpretation of what I am seeing in Ballard's book takes Spielberg's interpretation as a starting point. Perhaps too much of it does not go beyond his interpretation. I am rolling the film at the back of my mind as I read the book. I see a little more to the story here, a little less than I see in the film there, but what will be easiest to remember is where the two were identical and when I am done I will probably just have seen the film once again in another medium. The book has become a portable way to re-see the film, perhaps a little less so than if the book were a novelization of the film (a novelization is sort of a videotape in prose), but still more than Ballard would like, I assume. In some ways it is perhaps better that film adaptations of books are wildly inaccurate. At least that way reading the book itself

as the book is still possible after seeing the movie.

Cyberpunk Glossary  
Compiled by Arthur P. Bebak

Big Black - Space. The final frontier. Where no man...you get the idea.

Bit Jockey - Programmer

Chrome - 1) Flash, glitter, bells and whistles, tinsel. Material used to spice up the appearance of something. 2) Sexy features on a program, not needed for functionality but radiating style (e.g. a guillotine instead of a trash can icon).

Cyberspace - 1) The conceptual space within a computer. 2) The conceptual medium within which computer communication takes place, e.g. electronic bulletin boards, online services, databases, or in general the program space of any computer which can run a communication program.

Deep Reality - The real world we live in. As opposed to the realities we create for ourselves within our minds (e.g. fantasy games) and in our processors (e.g. Cyberspace).

Glass Teat - TV and video in general. Coined by Harlan Ellison.

Hackware - Software produced by amateurs. Distinguished by the fact that it works and is ready 2 years before the professional version. Characterized by non-standard code, lack of comments, and great chrome (c.f.).

Latch Jockey - Digital hardware designer.

Lizard Brain - a cold, calculating, unemotional person, somebody always running in pure floating point mode (e.g. Mr. Spock).

Mentat - Brainy individual, specifically one who will stare at a problem without moving for a while and come up with an answer without doing any apparent intermediate steps (like writing things down).

Nerdlings - Immature nerds, implying inconsequential, generally annoying. Pejorative term.

Pods - People who are very much alike in thought, behavior, and appearance. Pejorative term. Also Podlings - particularly immature variations of the Pods.

Ray-Ban Mode - wearing shades.

Reduction - Slang for physical violence (e.g. "Hey punk, shut down (c.f.) your screamer (c.f.) or I'll reduce your face!"). See also

packing, spindling, stomping, etc..

Screamer - 1) Slang for mouth (e.g. "Hey punk, shut down (c.f.) your screamer!" 2) Something fast, sleek, and sexy, used as an expression of admiration (e.g. "She/He/It's a real screamer!"). 3) Somebody who screams a lot while being reduced (c.f.). 4) Somebody who screams a lot while being tightly interfaced (c.f.)

Screensheet - Newspaper, especially one catering to non-issues of the minute (e.g. USA TODAY, NATIONAL ENQUIRER). Coined by Walter Jon Williams.

The Scroll - 1) The constant, unremitting, and overwhelming barrage of information absorbed by everyone in modern society from the modern media, from Cyberspace feed, from the grapevine, and from any other means we have of tuning in to the world state. (E.g. we find out about the latest war in the Middle East, the latest hardware, the latest vaporware from The Scroll.) 2) The term used to describe the messages, bulletins, and other data daily being produced and scrolled off various Cyberspace systems.

Shortwire - To burn out, flame out, splash down, and generally crash mentally.

Shut Down - To shut up, used as an exclamation (e.g. "Hey punk, shut down!")

Spit Jockey - On camera (video) news reader, anchor, host. (also known as Talking Heads).

Splash - To shoot down. E.g. to splash an idea, or "Splash that bastard!"

Talking Heads - (see Spit Jockey).

Techno Scum - A personally very unpleasant, but technically brilliant individual.

Tight Interfacing - Sex

Wetware - 1) human augmentation mechanisms based on biochemical methods. E.g. biochemical processors, custom crafted DNA, custom biological tissue, brain implants/grfts, mind/body-altering drugs (rare). As opposed to hardware which is based on artificial, physics-based methods, e.g. chips. 2) The human brain.

Wirehead - Someone addicted to computers or electronic communication  
(e.g. a person who would rather hack than eat or have sex).