

Lincroft-Holmdel Science Fiction Club
Club Notice - 10/10/84 -- Vol. 3, No. 13

MEETINGS UPCOMING:

Unless otherwise stated, all LZ meetings are on Wednesdays in
LZ 3A-206 at noon; all HO meetings are in HO 2N-523 at noon.

_D_A_T_E

_T_O_P_I_C

- 10/23 Video meeting: THEM! (part 1)
- 10/24 Video meeting: THEM! (part 2)
- 10/24 TEA WITH THE BLACK DRAGON by R. A. MacAvoy(HO 2N-523)
- 11/15 THE TOMBS OF ATUAN by Ursula K. LeGuin
- 12/04 Video meeting: THE FLY (part 1)
- 12/05 Video meeting: THE FLY (part 2)

LZ's library and librarian Lance Larsen (576-2668) are in LZ 3C-219.
Mark Leeper (576-2571, LZ 3E-215) and Evelyn Leeper (834-4674, HO
1B-437A) are co-chairpeople. HO's library and librarian Tim Schroeder
(949-5866) are in HO 2G-432. John Jetzt (577-5316) is HO-chairperson.

1. Alec Guinness comedies from the Fifties are a positive pleasure.
For some time I have had in mind to show THE MAN IN THE WHITE SUIT
but I was not sure what film I could co-feature with it. It is the
only of the Guinness comedies that qualifies as science fiction. I
seem to remember that at some point later in his career Guinness
got involved with science fiction films, but I just can't remember
in what. In any case, cable TV came to my rescue a few months back
by showing a hilarious example of Guinness comedy that had some
ghosts in it in a very minor capacity. That makes it a fantasy.
So... on Thursday, October 18, at 7:30 pm at the Old Leeper Mansion
we will be showing:

_G_u_i_n_n_e_s_s_o_n_T_a_p

ALL AT SEA (BARNACLE BILL) (1958) dir. by Charles Frend
THE MAN IN THE WHITE SUIT (1952) dir. by Alexander Mackendrick

The first is the story of how Guinness became a naval hero without
ever trying to go to sea. You see there was this run-down
amusement pier... Well, no. That would be telling. ALL AT SEA is
full of visual gags from the opening credits to the end of the
film. See it.

THE MAN IN THE WHITE SUIT is genuine science fiction, sort of. It
also has a generous pocketful of social commentary about progress

and what effects it has on people. Incidentally it also is a very funny comedy.

Mark Leeper

LZ 3E-215 x2571

...{houxn,hogpd,hocse}!lznv!mrl

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT ALMOST BLANK

Mercury Capsules - October 10, 1984

"Mercury Capsules": SF review column, edited by Paul S R Chisholm. Appears in the "Lincroft-Holmdel SF Club Notice".

A medium for quick reviews of anything of interest in the world of science fiction. I'll pass along anything (not slanderous or scatological) without nasty comments. I prefer to get reviews by electronic mail: send to wi!psc from the AT&T-IS ENS systems in Lincroft; hocse!lznv!psc, houxn!lznv!psc, or hogpd!lznv!psc from everywhere else. If that's impossible, I'm at LZ 1D-212, 576-2374.

Apologies, both to Carol Jackson and you readers, for not acknowledging the source of her review of the Lessing interviews (A_l_l_T_h_i_n_g_s_C_o_n_s_i_d_e_r_e_d).

o+ B_u_c_k_a_r_o_o_B_a_n_z_a_i: film, 1984.

Take several parts each of comic books, 30s and 40s serials, bad 50s SF flicks, and punk rock. Add a smidgen (that's hardly any) of Orsen Welles, even less Japanese culture, and an ambiguous amount of humor. Mix until dizzy. Serve, take it back, change it a little, serve it again.

B_u_c_k_a_r_o_o_B_a_n_z_a_i isn't really that confusing. It's about the title character, a brain surgeon/physicist/musician/hero, and the assortment of characters who gather around, support him, and get together to make some (*sigh*) rather forgettable music (again, a smidgen). It's also a spoof of alien invasion stories. It also alleges to be just one in a series of Buckaroo's adventures (but I think that's just in keeping with the genre). Oddly enough, there's always some sort of action, but the whole film move more slowly than you might expect. You're unlikely to get very taken by this story, but it's reasonably good, and it's fun. +1 on [-4..+4].

Paul S R Chisholm

o+ B_u_c_k_a_r_o_o_B_a_n_z_a_i: film, 1984.

The problem with a movie where anything can happen is that *anything* can happen.

Evelyn C Leeper

- 2 -

o+ M_o_r_e_t'a's_R_i_d_e: novel, Anne McCaffery.

Well, it finally came out in paperback. I think it's good but not great. She has finally fallen into the trap that all the other Pern books managed to escape, the book attempts to cover too many people and too many events to be fully successful. Personally, I missed the details of the personal and group interactions and relations, the fleshing out of the characters. Perhaps she was trying to avoid having to write another trilogy (can't say I blame her), but I think the story would have fared better in a longer format. It's almost a vignette rather than a story.

To be fair, it has many of the strengths of her previous Pern books, too. Though, the ending was rather disappointing, and didn't mesh with the previous books. (She mentions that it doesn't in the forward.) And it would have been nice to see something of Moreta's Song.

Overall, I would recommend it to anyone who enjoyed her previous Pern books, but it is not a Must Buy, and it is not as "good" as her previous books (whatever the standard for "good" is).

hound!!lfe

- 30 -

BUCKEROO BANZAI
A film review by Mark R. Leeper

The phenomenon of the midnight audience cult classic has given rise to a number of films trying to outdo each other for weirdness. It seems that to capture this highly profitable audience the filmmaker has to create a film unlike the kind of fare that one usually sees when common work-a-day people can get to a theater. In nature the majority of mutations are non-viable, and the same principle applies to films that try to be different to catch the after-midnight crowd. Most are films everyone should see at most once. And that isn't the idea at all. Rare is the person who sits through E_r_a_s_e_r_h_e_a_d repeatedly. In any town big enough to make showing midnight films profitable, people who would see E_r_a_s_e_r_h_e_a_d more than once will find other establishments to cater to their masochistic tendencies.

More light-hearted than most attempted classics is B_u_c_k_e_r_o_o_B_a_n_z_a_i: A_c_r_o_s_s_t_h_e_8_t_h_D_i_m_e_n_s_i_o_n. This film bears roughly the same relationship to comic books that head cheese bears to meat. It is a very strange dicing and throwing together of many very odd ideas. It is sort of D_o_c_S_a_v_a_g_e crossed with T_h_e_M_o_n_i_t_o_r_s done in the style of T_h_e_L_a_s_t_D_a_y_s_o_f_M_a_n_o_n_E_a_r_t_h.

It

seems that we really were invaded the night of the famous Orson Welles broadcast of T_h_e_W_a_r_o_f_t_h_e_W_o_r_l_d_s on October 30, 1938. (The scriptwriter and most of the rest of the world think the date was the 31st, but the correct date was really Sunday the 30th.) There are two groups of battling aliens, the red Lectroids and the black Lectroids, with Earth caught in the middle. The only person who can save us is super-scientist/rock-singer/neurosurgeon Buckeroo Banzai. This over-achiever leads a band of loyal compatriots and an army of child confederates. On the side of evil is B.B.'s arch-enemy Emilio Lizardo (John Lithgow) and the nasty red Lectroids. Allied with Buckeroo for good are the black Lectroids. The aliens are all around but without special glasses, the red Lectroids look like AT&T executives and the blacks look like Rastafarians. Does that sound odd? There is more to come. B.B. has a new device that lets him move through solid matter by projecting him into the eight dimension which turns out to be the subway tunnel the Lectroids use to get here from Planet Ten (of course!). If that sounds confusing, don't worry. You now have a concrete advantage over the rest of the audience toward understanding this film. It may even give you a fighting chance to assimilate what is going on. Maybe.

Confusion, camp, bad acting, strange action, rock music, and homilies like, "No matter where you go, there you are" combine to make this film,...well...odd. Not too bad, but a long way from perfect. Rate it +1 (on a -4 to +4 scale).

TALES FROM THE DARKSIDE
A film review by Mark R. Leeper

T_a_l_e_s_f_r_o_m_t_h_e_D_a_r_k_s_i_d_e is an anthology series produced by George Romero (of N_i_g_h_t_o_f_t_h_e_L_i_v_i_n_g_D_e_a_d fame). It is syndicated to any local station who wants to fill a half hour here and there. It had a shaky but interesting pilot about a year ago, with an episode entitled "Trick or Treat." This time around the series opener is called "I'll Give a Million." I expected it to leave me yearning for the old T_w_i_l_i_g_h_t_Z_o_n_e_s I grew up with. Well, the story might have been better compared to Alfred Hitchcock's old half-hour show--it's more his style--but I'll give "I'll Give a Million" is a better story than most of Rod Serling's fare. It concerns two wealthy, ruthless old codgers--a la T_r_a_d_i_n_g_P_l_a_c_e_s--who have been pulling shady deals for a long time. Unexpectedly, one offers the other one million dollars for his soul. Since neither is particularly religious, it sounds like a good deal. Or is it?

Well, what can I tell you? I used to call T_a_l_e_s_o_f_t_h_e_U_n_e_x_p_e_c_t_e_d "Tales of the Totally Predictable" but this story did keep me guessing what was going on. There is something I like a lot about the last five minutes or so, but to say anything about it would rule out one or more of about five or six possible courses for the plot. I don't want to do that so somebody (please!) who has seen it, talk (write) to me about it so I can tell you what I liked. Nice going, Mr. Romero. Nice touch at the end. It shows you are more than just a horror story fan.

BOOK REVIEWS by Nigel

First of all, thanks to Lynda, Lance and Ilfe for sending and saying a few words each. Now, how about the rest of you. Put fingers to keys or pen to paper and speak your mind. The corollary will be that anyone who does not say something must be considered to be mindless. Since mindless people cannot read, you must be about to send me some mail.

So far this week I have read only one book and some old issues of A_n_a_l_o_g. It seems to me that magazines have very slow responses to the wants and desires of their readerships. It also seems to me that SF is more frequently at its best in the format of short to medium length stories. I will continue to review books only but I do recommend to all you, almost mindless, individuals that you read and collect all the magazines you can find. If nothing else, it will give you a change of pace from the neverending, overgrown and essentially mindless series that is the staple output of the book publishers.

THOUSAND SHRINE WARRIOR by Jessica Amanda Salmonson

This is the third tale of the Tomoe Gozen saga, to quote the cover. The book is bizarre but perhaps not as bizarre as the first book of the saga. I have but have not yet read the second book of the saga.

I am interested in Japan and bought the books for that reason. The images the tale creates of Japan in the early days of the Shogunate are clear and probably accurate. The martial arts in this book are minimal. Jessica appears to know what she is talking about and has, in this case, de-emphasised the how's of her battles scenes, in favour of how it turned out.

The spirits are integral to the plot and are well portrayed.

The only thing that does not happen is character development. Tomoe is the same person at the end of the epilogue as she was at the beginning. This feels wrong, especially as she is obviously supposed to have changed. The supporting cast is mostly cardboard, sometimes covered by or covering tissue paper.

For comparison look at 'Lord of the Rings' and think out the characters of the various Hobbits. Why is Sam so memorable? Is it because he develops from a gardeners assistant into a leader with the initiative to abandon his master for the good of a higher cause but with enough feeling to agonize over his decision.

All of you, or at least some of you, tell me what your most memorable story is and why you found it memorable.

- 2 -

These are a few more books that I read in the last few months. Thus and so some of these comments are based on retrospect. You decide if this is good or bad.

THE CRYSTAL CROWN
by B.W.Clough

This is an average or better adventure. The science is minimal and indistinguishable from magic.

The base idea is that of kingship bestowed by the crown. The crown carries the collected memories of all previous kings. It all kills immediately any proposed heir that it disapproves of.

Naturally the tale opens with it being assigned to a youth who has no interest in being king, but still gets to fight off a barbarian invasion.

The nice parts of the story are some of the trivial scenes. The main story is fairly obvious.

DEMONS OF THE DANCING GODS
by Jack L. Chalker

A standard Chalker plot and sequel to 'River of the Dancing Gods'. Not quite instantly forgettable but very close. The last paragraph promises at least one more sequel.

FUTURES PAST
by James White

A collection of ten or so years old short stories. All above average but not memorable by title alone.

THE SEARCH FOR KA
by Randall Garrett and Vicki Ann Heydron

This is the fifth book in the continuing saga of Gandalara. It is now clear that this is another neverending series. As time goes by such series become more and more predictable and I have less and less enthusiasm for reading them.

This particular series is better than some but as usual my recommendation is that you start with the first book and keep going until your interest dies.

- 3 -

THE FORLORN HOPE

by David Drake

Drake writes about the lower orders of military endeavour. This is not one of his better stories. I liked _ H _ a _ m _ m _ e _ r ' _ s _ S _ l _ a _ m _ m _ e _ r _ s better but that may have been because of the short story format.

THE MEMOIRS OF ALCHERINGIA
by Wayland Drew

A somewhat confused picture of a social experiment to achieve species survival. Either I don't know enough about the subject and thus have a head full of wrong theories or Drew doesn't know enough. Either way the social dynamics seem wrong and bound to failure.

This is also the first of a series. I could wait for ever, and still be convinced that I had missed nothing.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT ALMOST BLANK

_ N _ O _ T _ E _ S _ F _ R _ O _ M _ T _ H _ E _ N _ E _ T

Subject: Adolescence Of P-1 (SPOILER)

Path: ihnp4!zehntel!hplabs!sri-unix!mccoy%orc.DEC@decwrl.ARPA

Date: Tue, 2-Oct-84 12:38:55 EDT

THE FOLLOWING DISCUSSES THE ENDING OF THE BOOK THE ADOLESCENCE OF P-1.

*****SPOLIER WARNING*****

The ending is the book The Adolescence of P-1 by Thomas J. Ryan has intrigued me for some time. The first time through the book, I was unable to translate the last two words, however, my wife has given me what I believe to be the answer.

I will refresh your memory. (Are you still reading this if you haven't read the book?) Linda has just typed the letters 'p1' on Gregory's old computer console at the university he attended. As she is leaving, the following response is typed:

OOLCAY ITAY

My wife tells me this is 'pig Latin' (funny name for an encoding method). Removing the AY's and taking the C and moving it to the beginning of the first word we have:

COOL IT

This would seem to be an appropriate ending to the book, meaning that p-1 has survived, and is hiding out (or what ever a computer program does) as Gregory had once instructed.

My question is this, am I the only person who had trouble translating the

ending of the book. Pig Latin? I cannot remember any other reference to this in the book.

Gary McCoy

Subject: Valentina, Soul In Sapphire
Path: hocs!hogpc!houxm!vax135!cornell!uw-beaver!tektronix!orca!shark!hutch
Date: Thu, 4-Oct-84 18:35:59 EDT

Has anyone read "Valentina, Soul in Sapphire" yet?

It looks very much like a feminized version of "The Adolescence of P1" except that it is somewhat updated. Even includes Usenet (WELL, sort of).

I glanced at the first few pages in the store, and the writing looks to be somewhat better than "P1".

- 2 -

Also, the hackerese is somewhat better. The self-aware process speaks in "ModuLisp" which (of course) reads like a lisp-modula cross. I don't know if there actually IS such a language.

Hutch

Subject: Re: Adolescence Of P-1 (SPOILER)
Path: ihnp4!zehntel!hplabs!sri-unix!milne@uci-750a
Date: Sat, 6-Oct-84 03:30:46 EDT

"Pig Latin" is a joke, moderately commonly known. Pretending to be another language, it simply takes each English word, moves the first consonant (if any) to the end, and appends "ay". If the first letter is not a consonant, it just appends "ay". This is the only modification it makes. I assume it works for most other languages as well as (or as badly as) for English. P1 used it as people sometimes will who are trying to be secretive (pretty useless when it's commonly known). It was, as you say, trying to hide away in Waterloo's 370 (from what little I've heard of OS360, P1 may even have

had a good chance of succeeding).

Some cereal company (I don't know which and I certainly don't care) used it in its advertising campaign, years ago now, and I suspect that spread it around a good deal.

On to trivia even less important ...

A. Milne

Subject: A review of ICEHENGE by Kim Stanley Robinson
Path: ihnp4!zehntel!hplabs!sri-unix!donn@utah-cs
Date: Sat, 6-Oct-84 06:15:29 EDT

ICEHENGE. Kim Stanley Robinson. Ace, c1984.

Non-spoiler review: A very good book. Sensitive hard SF.

Micro-spoiler review:

A very different book from Robinson's previous novel, THE WILD SHORE, but just as well written. Robinson shows a lot of attention to detail in both characters and setting, evoking a clear vision of life on Mars and around the outer planets over the next seven centuries. The title refers to a curious structure of 66 blocks of ice in a circular array that has been found at the north pole of Pluto. Who built it? It's not an easy question, and you will be left guessing right up to the last couple pages. This is fine hard SF from a writer who brings more to the genre than most other writers.

- 3 -

Mini-spoiler review:

ICEHENGE reminds me strongly of Gregory Benford's work. Robinson has a thoroughly worked out picture of human history through at least the 2600's, covering the political consequences of planetary colonization and the social consequences of 600-year lifespans; the latter are particularly interesting given the hypothesis that memory diminishes over time, so that people can only maintain a clear image of their last hundred years or so and sometimes

need to resort to detective work to discover what they did when they were 'young'. Technology is altering the faces of the other planets in the solar system, and Robinson brings us along on a hike across a partially terraformed Mars. (One of Robinson's characters works for the Titan Weather Company.) Political unrest on Mars leads to revolt, which is handled (alas) much more realistically than in THE MOON IS A HARSH MISTRESS. This detail lends a wonderful feel to the book which is missing from the sort of space western which is all too prone to turn up when you look for hard SF.

The book is divided into three sections; each section is narrated by a character whose motives are called into question by the narrators of other sections, so that you are forced to judge for yourself whom to believe. The first section is told by Emma Weil, a life scientist who finds herself shanghaied by members of the Mars Starship Association during the confusion of the Martian Civil War. The second story is told by Hjalmar Nederland, a 300-year-old archaeologist who is desperately trying to prove that the official version of the war is not the right one. (Although Nederland lived during the war, it happened so long ago that his memory of it has evaporated...) The third story is told by Edmond Doya, the great-grandson of Nederland, who believes that Nederland and Weil were wrong and that someone behind the scenes has been manipulating events. His paranoia runs deep -- but perhaps not deep enough. Surrounding these three very different personalities is the enigmatic circle of Icehenge, whose mystery gradually secretes itself into the structure of their lives, leading to a grand obsession that can only be satisfied by the discovery of the builders.

Very nicely done and well recommended.

Donn Seeley University of Utah CS Dept donn@utah-cs.arpa

Subject: Gene Wolfe's new novel FREE LIVE FREE
Path: ihnp4!zehntel!hplabs!sri-unix!donn@utah-cs
Date: Sat, 6-Oct-84 06:47:39 EDT

Gene Wolfe's novel FREE LIVE FREE is going to be published by Mark Ziesing's specialty press sometime in the next few weeks. FREE LIVE FREE lived free of a contract for a while because Timescape Books went down the tubes, but in a deal with Ziesing, who also published Wolfe's book about THE BOOK OF THE NEW SUN named THE CASTLE OF THE OTTER, a special limited edition will come out this month. According to LOCUS #285, the edition will be illustrated, signed, and limited to 750 copies. According to Mark Ziesing

when I spoke to him on the phone, the book will be a high quality printing, 500 pages with a fancy dustjacket, and will cost \$45. I shelled out for one, and if you think \$45 is a bit steep then you can find out later whether it's worth it when I review it. If you're interested in a copy yourself, here are Mark's parameters:

Mark Ziesing
PO Box 806 (for orders) or
762 Main St. (where the shop is)
Willimantic CT 06226
(203) 423-5836 until 7 PM, Tuesday through Saturday

Mark has also published Phil Dick's early novel THE MAN WHOSE TEETH WERE ALL EXACTLY ALIKE, one of the missing books from Dick's pre-SF period. When Dick re-read his old unpublished novels soon before he died, he picked TEETH as his favorite. Mark will part with a copy of TEETH for \$19.50, plus \$1.50 postage and handling if it's not part of another order.

I have no connection with Mark Ziesing and have never even been to Connecticut,

Donn Seeley University of Utah CS Dept donn@utah-cs.arpa

