

Lincroft-Holmdel Science Fiction Club  
Club Notice - 11/7/84 -- Vol. 3, No. 17

MEETINGS UPCOMING:

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

LZ meetings are in LZ 3A-206; HO meetings are in HO 2N-523.

\_D\_A\_T\_E                    \_T\_O\_P\_I\_C

- 11/14 LZ: THE TOMBS OF ATUAN by Ursula K. LeGuin
- 11/14 HO: Video Meeting: ConStellation Masquerade
- 12/04 LZ: Video meeting: THE FLY (part 1)
- 12/05 LZ: Video meeting: THE FLY (part 2)
- 12/05 HO: STARTIDE RISING by David Brin
- 01/02 LZ: THE CIRCUS OF DR. LAO by Charles G. Finney
- 01/23 HO: COURTSHIP RITE by Donald Kingsbur
- 02/13 LZ: SLAN by A. E. Van Vogt
- 03/06 HO: DOWNBELOW STATION by C. J. Cherryh

LZ Chair is Mark Leeper, LZ 3E-215 (576-2571). HO Chair is John Jetzt, FJ 1F-108 (577-5316). LZ Librarian is Lance Larsen, LZ 3C-219 (576-2668). HO Librarian is Tim Schroeder, HO 2G-432 (949-5866). Jill-of-all-trades is Evelyn Leeper, HO 1B-437A (834-4723).

1. Our next discussion, November 14 at noon, will be of the book THE TOMBS OF ATUAN by Ursula K. LeGuin. This is the middle book in the Earthsea Trilogy. On hand to lead the discussion will be the Jackson sisters: Sasha, Carol, and Katushka. Michael has also promised to come if he is free, but don't hold your breath. Of course, the LeGuin book is just one topic we will discuss. We will, as usual drift into the a discussion of current science fiction films and of h\_u\_b\_r\_i\_s in the novels of the Bronte sisters (Charlotte, Emily, Ann, Sasha, Carol, and, of course, Katushka).

2. Those of you who infest Holmdel will have three choices of what to do that same hour on the Ides (Minus one) of November. You can come to Lincroft for the LeGuin discussion, you can go to see a videotape of the ConStellation Masquerade (nod-nod-wink-wink), or you can splash in the water and play with the styrofoam swans. The smart money is on your doing the third, but we will see what you decide to do. It may interest you to know that the Holmdel swans are world-famous for their luxurious, soft plumage which is used to make the finest disposable coffee cups. This particular breed is

also known for its docile temperament and for the odd fact that it is one of the rare breeds of bird whose mating and breeding habits involve the use of an injection molding press. The babies, oddly enough, are born nearly full-grown and are almost indistinguishable from the parents, except they are a little less soggy. They are

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non-migratory.

3. It saddens me to announce that this brings to an end the Leeperhouse series of double features of fantasy films. For a year and a half now we have shown a double feature of fantasy films every other Thursday night. I thought it was a nice tradition. Evelyn has put the kabosh on it by scheduling a non-fantasy film (gasp!). Our November 15 (7:30) film program will have only one fantasy film. And that one is only sort of fantasy.

CASABLANCA (1942) dir. by Michael Curtiz  
PLAY IT AGAIN, SAM (1972) dir. by Woody Allen

I am, pleased to announce, that November 29, the second fantasy film festival will start where the old one left off when Evelyn murdered it in an untimely manner.

[I prefer to think of it as letting the fantasy film festival take a well-deserved vacation while having the non-fantasy film festival sit in for one week. It's all in how you look at it. --Evelyn]

Mark Leeper  
LZ 3E-215 x2571  
...{houxn,hogpd,hocse}!lznv!mrl

## TERMINATOR

A film review by Mark R. Leeper

The concept of a human from a future being sent into the past to prevent that future from ever happening has been done before. Specific examples include C\_y\_b\_o\_r\_g\_2\_0\_8\_7 (1966), and an early episode of O\_u\_t\_e\_r\_L\_i\_m\_i\_t\_s called "Soldier" and written by Harlan Ellison. T\_e\_r\_m\_i\_n\_a\_t\_o\_r, for what it's worth, has an interesting variation on this theme. Yes, the nuclear war came. It wasn't between East and West so much as between humans and sentient defense machines. Our defense systems revolted and decided to have the nuclear war all by themselves. When it was over, they modified themselves like Saberhagen's Berserkers to hunt down and kill the remaining humans. Oddly enough, this is n\_o\_t the nightmare future that anyone tries to avoid. It is considered pretty much a forgone conclusion that the war will take place. What happened is that the humans eventually rallied under the direction of a powerful human leader and defeated the machines. Why the machines could not destroy all life with remaining nuclear weapons is not clear. In any case, the machines' idea of how to prevent the counter-revolution is to send an invincible, flesh-covered robot (Arnold Schwarzenegger) into 1984 to kill Sarah Connor, the mother of the

revolutionary leader-to-be. The humans send back a representative to thwart the robot's plans.

Now all this is more science fiction concept than most science fiction films have, but it really amounts to just a few minutes of screen time. That and about five minutes at the end actually make this a science fiction/horror film, but most of the rest of the film is chase and mindless violence. Schwarzenegger is a terminator-class robot (hence the title--I wonder if a machine would really pick a name like that for another machine). He arrives naked from the future. The machines have invented time travel, but it doesn't work on clothing. It works fine on flesh-covered robots, metal skeleton and all, and it works fine on humans, but it has this problem sending clothing. He must find his own clothing and weapons, as must the human who follows him. Whatever the robot needs, it can kill to get. We are treated (?) to a long stretch of chasing and killing and shooting and more chasing.

The end of the film finally gets around to some more traditional mindless SF trappings to please the people who saw the film expecting them, but until then the SF audience just has to sit and count inconsistencies. One I noted is that while the Terminator is said to come to 1984, someone in the film refers to Thursday, May 12. It was 1983 that May 12 fell on a Thursday, gang; this year it's a Saturday. In another, the human from the future gives Sarah a handgun to protect herself from the robot. At this point everyone concerned should know that a handgun is useless. Sometimes the robot is not even affected by the momentum of the gunblasts, sometimes he is. The list goes on. This film is rated a neutral 0 (on a -4 to +4 scale) for having some ideas to ponder but burying them in trash.

## ALL OF ME

A film review by Mark R. Leeper

Steve Martin's humor is a matter of taste. I generally find something to like in a Steve Martin act, and a good deal that I consider just stupid. His films, on the other hand, get better the more he makes, and I will say that he seems willing to experiment. P\_e\_n\_n\_i\_e\_s\_f\_r\_o\_m\_H\_e\_a\_v\_e\_n, for example, was an ambitious failure that deserves a little more recognition than it got.

The same probably goes for D\_e\_a\_d\_M\_e\_n\_D\_o\_n't\_W\_e\_a\_r\_P\_l\_a\_i\_d. A\_l\_l\_o\_f\_M\_e is a little more traditional a comedy, but only a little. The plot concerns a wealthy woman (Lily Tomlin) who wants to have her soul put in a younger body when she dies. It is, but not the body she had planned on. Instead of inhabiting her stableman's beautiful daughter (don't they always have beautiful daughters?), it instead inhabits the right side of Steve Martin's body. Hence she becomes his better half through literal cohabitation.

Martin's abilities as a physical comedian are really put to the test by all of this and occasionally are found wanting, but generally he is quite good at disassociating the two halves of his body, having each play a different character. The script is often very funny with a particular favorite scene being in a courtroom in which Martin is a man imitating a woman imitating a man. As my wife pointed out, this makes the scene an interesting dual to V\_i\_c\_t\_o\_r\_V\_i\_c\_t\_o\_r\_i\_a. This is one of the best comedies I have seen in a while. Rate it +1 on a -4 to +4 scale.

AMERICAN DREAMER  
A film review by Mark R. Leeper

Cathy Palmer (Jo Beth Williams) is an American housewife with a monumentally insensitive accountant for a husband. She also has a passion for pulpy mystery/adventures, particularly those about Rebecca Ryan, a series heroine modeled on Modesty Blaise. Cathy loves the books so well that entering a contest to write a Rebecca Ryan story is for her a labor of love. She wins first prize, a week in Paris and a chance to meet the author of the Rebecca Ryan books. Shortly after she arrives she is hit by a car and comes to consciousness believing herself actually to be Rebecca Ryan. She goes to Rebecca's fictional residence, somehow finds she knows her way around it, and picks up a bemused sidekick, Alan McMann (Tom Conti), whom she believes to be Rebecca's fictional partner Dimitri. With McMann, she goes to an Embassy ball, and, behaving like Rebecca Ryan, she falls into the coils of a real international plot.

As should be obvious, this is a story with coincidences and holes in the plot so big that their only explanation is supernatural. The plots that Palmer's mystery-saturated mind create somehow always materialize in reality. While the film struggles to capture the flavor of cheap detective fiction, the script owes more to D\_o\_n\_Q\_u\_i\_x\_o\_t\_e. With a little more care, the film could have been another R\_o\_m\_a\_n\_c\_i\_n\_g\_t\_h\_e\_S\_t\_o\_n\_e. Instead it is conspicuous for its wanton disregard for loose ends, yawning gaps in logic, and incredible coincidences.

The film is very well cast. Williams and Conti make an appealing team as they run around Paris collecting clues and unmasking different villains involved in unrelated plots. The film is better cast than plotted.

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\_N\_O\_T\_E\_S\_F\_R\_O\_M\_T\_H\_E\_N\_E\_T

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Subject: Re: Yes, \*H\*A\*R\*L\*A\*N\* \*E\*L\*L\*I\*S\*O\*N\*

Path: hocs!hogpc!houxe!drutx!druri!isiw

Date: Fri, 2-Nov-84 10:58:21 EST

Well, I for one agree with the previous. If I read one more Harlan-Ellison-I'm-SO-depressed-and-nobody-likes-me-so-I'm-going-to-blow-up-the-whole-world story, I'm going to be ill. The guy has \*no\* understanding of the word "subtlety". His idea of compassion is maudlin sentimentality and shameless pandering to the popular swings of fandom. And all this "Final Dangerous Visions" crap - so he's got a writer's block, eh? On an \*anthology\*? Give me a break! He's a hack, just like all the others, it's just that he's a young hack who made it early enough so nobody wants to call him a hack, and now all the sf types who try to hold up an example of science fiction's literary legitimacy use \*Harlan Ellison\* as their shining example and give everyone who reads serious novels a good laugh. What a joke - the guy's been living in Hollywood too long, he finally believes all the nice things everybody says about him because they wouldn't know great writing if it came up and bit 'em.

But at least he's got company - John Varley, George R. Martin, Barry B. Longyear, Anne McCaffrey (oh, those dragons are just \*so\* cute!). Meanwhile, mainstream fiction has Martin Cruz Smith, Mark Halprin, geez - even Rosemary Rogers writes better than they do! Wake up! Neat ideas and far-off worlds



and fantastic expositions don't make up for bad characterization, weak plots, and no character development, no matter \*how\* many tribbles you strew around.

If it wasn't for Gene Wolfe and Orson Scott Card holding up a mirror to the rest of their peers, the level would be even worse than it was in the alleged "Golden Age". These two are all that stands between sf and mediocre garbage, though you might include the new-improved Robert Silverberg if you were being charitable.

Davis Tucker

P.S. - Stephen R. Donaldson is a hack, too.

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Subject: Re: Harlan Ellison - (nf)

Path: hocs!hogpc!houxe!drutx!ihnp4!inuxc!pur-ee!uiucdcs!render

Date: Fri, 2-Nov-84 14:02:00 EST

Regarding the recent note concerning the "morbidity" and lack of humanity of Harlan Ellison, I find it hard to believe that anyone who has read any fair share of his work could question his feeling for people. Admittedly some of his stories are grim (i.e. "I Have No Mouth And I Must Scream") and most

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exhibit a cynical view of the human race, but it obviously stems from his deep concern for the poor way in which we present ourselves as a supposedly wise and caring species. Such works as "Jeffty is Five" and "Repent! Harlequin, Cried the Ticktockman" are warm, funny and supremely humane, while still challenging us to better ourselves. I would much rather read the works of a man who dares us to be what we should, as opposed to the stories of many authors who merely congratulate us on being such a grand folk.

Comments, anyone?

Hal Render

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Subject: Re: Yes, \*H\*A\*R\*L\*A\*N\* \*E\*L\*L\*I\*S\*O\*N\*

Path: ihnp4!sdcsvox!sdcc6!ix241  
Date: Thu, 1-Nov-84 11:46:16 EST

from the terminal of Tim Lasko

His stories are not often optimistic, but they are practically guaranteed to make you \*think\*, and maybe reconsider part of the world around you. And maybe it just might help you share a lonely, depressed evening. And maybe even survive one.

Ellison's stories are depressing. They make you think. They need to be taken in small doses. I would not 'share' such an evening with Ellison unless I had something a bit more cheerful to relieve the depression he added to it. It is much more enlightening and fun to read his commentary on just about anything. His acerbic wit makes his prose on any subject enjoyable to read even if it pisses you off. It makes you think as well. So I agree with Tim's last statement.

Writing Harlan Ellison of(f) as "morbid" is doing him a great injustice.

John Testa

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Subject: Re: Re: Harlan Ellison - (nf)  
Path: hocsl!hogpc!houxm!ihnp4!inexc!pur-ee!uiucdcs!ea!mwm  
Date: Fri, 2-Nov-84 15:22:00 EST

RE: Harlan Ellision?

I suppose if what you like is terminally depressing unrelieved morbidness, Ellison is the writer for you. Personally, I would rather read something that has at least one little glimmer of humanness somewhere in it.

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"Looking for Kadak" (sp?) terminally depressing unrelieved morbidness?

Much of what Ellison writes is depressing, but \*all\* of it makes me think. I like that; that's why I like Ellison.

<mike

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Subject: Re: Discovered David Brin  
Path: hocsl!hogpc!houxm!ihnp4!ucbvax!dcmartin  
Date: Sun, 4-Nov-84 03:33:33 EST

I have read Startide Rising and Sundiver with great appreciation as well, but was turned off by the Practice Effect not being of the same subject. (I will grant you that I did not read the entire novel, so no flames please!) I have picked up a novel on recommendation that I found of the same style. (Not uplift, but writing) It is called The Demolished Man by Alfred Bester and was the winner of the first Hugo. I would highly recommend it to anyone who liked David Brin's style.

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Subject: Re: RE: Yes, \*H\*A\*R\*L\*A\*N\* \*E\*L\*L\*I\*S\*O\*N\*  
Path: hocsl!hogpc!houxe!drutx!ihnp4!mit-eddie!rh  
Date: Sun, 4-Nov-84 22:22:41 EST

I've seen him speak twice in the last few years, and he is an incredibly dynamic speaker. I also had the rare 'treat' of eating dinner with him the last time he was here. Well, let's just say this: having met him in person and spent time in a social situation, I'd be more content to continue reading his stuff than I would to be counted among his close personal friends. Oh, well. I was a bit disappointed, but that's life. I still find his writing to be the stuff that has what it takes.

Randwulf (Randy Haskins); Path= genrad!mit-eddie!rh

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Subject: Ellison and 'I Have No Mouth...' - (nf)  
Path: hocsl!hogpc!houxe!drutx!ihnp4!inuxc!pur-ee!ecn-ee!hsut  
Date: Mon, 12-Nov-84 00:27:02 EST

I enjoy a fair amount of Ellison's work, and also detest a lot of it. Ellison is more subtle than many people think (though he has also written stories that are gimmicky and less than inspiring). What no one has pointed out yet about "I Have No Mouth and I Must Scream" is the POINT of VIEW of the narrator, which changes the tone of the story entirely.

In an essay Ellison wrote about "I Have No Mouth..." (I don't remember where it was published --- should be easily available) the author stressed that

the narrator used to be a compassionate and generous person. It is this compassionate nature that the computer warped and distorted, just as it had mutilated the other human survivors in more obvious ways. The story is cold, cruel and morbid because WE SEE IT THROUGH THE NARRATOR'S DISTORTED VIEWPOINT. It is an expression of the cynical and cruel personality generated by the computer in the narrator.

There is more to Ellison than unrelieved gloom and pessimism. Try "Jefty Is Five" and "Paingod" for beautiful, human stories.

Bill Hsu

