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Mt. Holz Science Fiction Society
 Club Notice - 06/19/92 -- Vol. 10, No. 51

MEETINGS UPCOMING:

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

 D_A_T_E T_O_P_I_C

- 06/24 HO: RAFT by Stephen Baxter (Gravity) (HO 1N-410)
- 07/15 MT: THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO SCIENCE FICTION by David Pringle (SF
reference books) (MT 1P-364)
- 08/05 HO: THE SILMARILLION by J.R.R. Tolkien (Alternate Mythologies)
(HO 1N-410)
- 08/26 HO: BONE DANCE by Emma Bull (Hugo nominee) (HO 1N-410)

 D_A_T_E E_X_T_E_R_N_A_L_M_E_E_T_I_N_G_S/_C_O_N_V_E_N_T_I_O_N_S/_E_T_C.

- 06/20 NJSFS: New Jersey Science Fiction Society: TBA
(phone 201-432-5965 for details) (Saturday)
- 07/11 SFABC: Science Fiction Association of Bergen County: Nicholas
Jainschigg (artist) (phone 201-933-2724 for details)
(Saturday)

HO Chair: John Jetzt HO 1E-525 908-834-1563 hocpb!jetzt
 LZ Chair: Rob Mitchell HO 1D-505A 908-834-1267 mtuxo!jrtr
 MT Chair: Mark Leeper MT 3D-441 908-957-5619 mtgzy!leeper
 HO Librarian: Nick Sauer HO 4F-427 908-949-7076 homxc!11366ns
 LZ Librarian: Lance Larsen LZ 3L-312 908-576-3346 mtfme!lfl
 MT Librarian: Mark Leeper MT 3D-441 908-957-5619 mtgzy!leeper
 Factotum: Evelyn Leeper MT 1F-329 908-957-2070 mtgzy!ecl
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1. Of the next *Holmdel* discussion book (Wednesday, June 24),
 Evelyn Leeper says:

After four people independently recommended R_a_f_t in a period of
 only five days, I decided I had to read it. Okay, it may not be
 the greatest thing since sliced bread, but it is a very competently
 done hard science story a la Clarke and Niven (both of whom are

quoted on the cover) and Clement and Heinlein (who aren't). The back blurb gives you the premise in its first sentence: "Imagine a universe whose force of gravity is one billion times stronger than today's." Somehow a spaceship from our universe crossed into this one and got stranded many generations ago, and at the time of the

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story we have three distinct societies: the Raft, the Miners, and the Boneyes, each of which hates and/or distrusts the other two, but will have to learn to cooperate with them because of a newly discovered menace to them all. This is more a space adventure book than an idea book. There are some intriguing ideas, yes, but all have to do with weird physics or biology. The values are Heinleinian, as are the characters. (Whether this is good or bad is left as an exercise for the reader.) In fact, I would probably describe R_a_f_t as what we would have gotten had Hal Clement and Robert Heinlein ever collaborated.

So join us in Holmdel and lend your opinion. (Note: R_a_f_t is available only in paperback, so you will probably have more luck at the bookstore than at your library, unless your library is one of the rare ones that buys paperbacks.) [-ecl]

2. Dale Skran announces another Japanese animation film festival:

On Thursday, May 25, starting at 7:00 PM the Leeperhouse Film Festival will show "Bubble Gum Crisis, Part II"--the last four episodes (i.e., 5-8). Return to a future Cyberpunk Japan where vampire androids, robots, giant corporations, the police, and a group of adventurers in powered suits struggle for control of the future direction of human evolution. A fair amount does get wrapped up in these episodes, but since there is sequel ("Bubble Gum Crash"--three episodes), don't expect total closure. It helps to have seen the first four episodes, but the stories are reasonably self-contained.

For those not familiar with Japanese animation, expect fast-paced action, rock-n-roll, English subtitles, and more violence and nudity than normally seen in US animation. The backgrounds are excellent, the imagination outstanding, the plots fairly complex, but the animation itself a bit on the cheap. Not for the little

ones, but if you'd let your kid see T_e_r_m_i_n_a_t_o_r_I_I, nothing here is going to bother you here. [-dls]

3. It is the policy of this notice not to endorse any Presidential candidate. I do, however, join the political pundits who say that for George Bush to win this election he's going to have to see what needs to be done and actually do it. For George Bush to win he's going to have to prove he still stands for the old-fashioned values. He's going to have to prove his integrity in an emergency. George Bush is going to have to haul off and give Dan Quayle a good crack across the chops.

Dan Quayle has called himself "the pit bull of the '92 elections." Quayle has been pitbulling against the cultural elite. I guess he must mean the people who watch "Murphy Brown." But now he is actually taking steps to improve the situation, at least as he sees it. As part of his pit bull campaign, Quayle was running an

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elementary school spelling bee in Trenton, New Jersey. That should be harmless, you'd think. "Potato," he gave young William Figueroa. Figueroa wrote "potato" on the board. "No, you left out the 'e' at the end." (It is true that vegetables have gone through a bad time with this administration. Broccoli has taken its licks from Bush.) Of course, Figueroa knew perfectly well which of the two of them needed a course in remedial spelling. But he knew a little kid cannot correct a Vice-President. On the other hand, Bush can and I say he should. One crack across the mouth would give the whole country as much satisfaction as they got from winning the Persian Gulf War (back when we thought we did!).

I will say that after I announced my candidacy, campaign contributions have been three or four times what I expected. I think I may form my own None of the Above political party.

4. Does anyone have a copy of the March *1991* A_m_a_z_i_n_g (with the story "Dog's Life" by Martha Soukup) that I could borrow? I've read all the Hugo nominees but this one, and naturally I can't find it anywhere. [-ecl]

Mark Leeper
MT 3D-441 908-957-5619
...mtgzy!leeper

God was able to create the world in only seven days
because he had no installed base to consider.

-- Andy Finkel, Commodore-Amiga Inc.

CLOVEN HOOVES by Megan Lindholm
Bantam Spectra, 1991, ISBN 0-553-29327-3, \$4.99.
A book review by Evelyn C. Leeper
Copyright 1992 Evelyn C. Leeper

I have to admit that the description of this book as being
about a woman who leaves her husband to go to live with a faun in
the forest did not make me want to run out and read it. It sounded

just a bit too "woodlands-cutesy." But a friend who knows me said that I might enjoy it--it wasn't quite what I was thinking.

Well, she was right that it wasn't woodlands-cutesy, and I think Lindholm shows promise, but I can't wholeheartedly recommend the book. The problem is the characters--they are all one-dimensional (with the possible exception of the main character, who avoids being one-dimensional only by being a collection of quirks, "funny hats" in an almost literal sense, as her clothes are a large part of her characterization). Take the husband, for example. The whole point of his character is that he has no independence--he functions only as an appendage of his family. The son seems present in the book only as a plot device, not a fully realized character. Ironically, the faun is perhaps the most fully realized character--ironic because he is the one whose nature is the least complex. (Well, maybe it's not so ironic after all.)

As far as the main character goes, she seems so spineless as to be almost a non-entity. She puts up with an unbelievable amount of emotional abuse from her family and her husband's family until one day she just leaves and runs off with the faun. Now I'm sure that there are people who put up with emotional abuse, so I can't say it's unrealistic, but I can say that to me it was unconvincing. Your mileage may vary. (It shouldn't be necessary to say that in a review, but my experience is that it is.)

Maybe this is all a modern-day fairy tale and I should look more at the meaning than at the characterization. (How much personality did Snow White have?) There is a power in Lindholm's writing that kept me reading even when I wanted to shake some life into the characters. So I give Cloven Hooves a conditional recommendation.

ZENTROPA

A film review by Mark R. Leeper

Copyright 1992 Mark R. Leeper

Capsule review: A weird and hypnotic film, but ultimately a disappointment. The viewer is apparently hypnotized and regressed to be a German-American in Germany shortly after WWII. He becomes a train conductor pulled into the conflict of the Americans against the anti-American resistance.
Rating: high 0 (-4 to +4).

You are being hypnotized and regressed to an earlier existence. The hypnotist puts you to sleep and makes you live the life of an American of German descent who went to Germany a few months after World War II ended to become a sleeping car conductor. You are under the supervision of a stern uncle whom you have just met, and he pushes you through a Kafkaesque world that places impossible demands on you, all to meet the incredibly high standards of being a sleeping car conductor on the Zentropa train line. But this is only the beginning. You are about to be drawn into an intrigue that pits the Americans occupying Germany against werewolves--the secret German resistance against the occupation.

Z_e_n_t_r_o_p_a is a complex and confusing film, very heavy on style. Sometimes it is dense with ideas, sometimes totally incomprehensible. It is filmed mostly in black and white with selective use of color. Some scenes are all black and white, some are all color, some have only the foreground in color. Sometimes just one object will be in color like in a Nuprin ad. The black-and-white photography is usually crisp and sharp, with some amazing images. One of the best is a train speeding through a tunnel seen from a few feet ahead with the smoke forming a streaming "hair-do" over the top of the train.

Z_e_n_t_r_o_p_a (original title: E_u_r_o_p_a) is Danish director Lars Van Triers's strange look at Germany after war. Parts of the world seem as if they could never have been. The Zentropa Railroad is a world out of B_r_a_z_i_l crossed with Kafka in which the individual is beaten into submission by the system. In the film's one obvious joke, our main character has just had to pay for his uniform--which nevertheless belongs to the company--and several other expenses he must pay in order to start work on the railroad. "I now understand German unemployment," he says. "Nobody can afford to work."

Ultimately Z_e_n_t_r_o_p_a is a muddled thriller that only partly makes sense. The viewer is never certain if the historical detail has any validity or is being made up from the whole cloth. There are certainly moments of tension, but more of confusion. It won the Jury Prize at the Cannes Film festival of 1991, but lost out to B_a_r_t_o_n_F_i_n_k for the Golden Palm, at which Van Trier reportedly was extremely indignant. Stylistically it is an achievement, but the

viewer will have to decide if it is really is an entertainment experience. For me it had all the elements to work but a few logical questions left unanswered. For that I rate it a high 0 on the -4 to +4 scale.

6TH ANNUAL SUMMER FESTIVAL OF FANTASY, HORROR, AND SCIENCE FICTION
Film Forum, 209 West Houston Street, New York City, NY 10014, 212-727-8110

Fri-Thu Aug 14-20 THE TINGLER (in Percepto)
Fri-Sat Aug 21-22 DRACULA (new print); FRANKENSTEIN
Sun-Mon Aug 23-24 AELITA, QUEEN OF MARS; SHE (1935)
Tue Aug 25 THE BEAST FROM 20,000 FATHOMS
Wed Aug 26 HANGOVER SQUARE; THE UNDYING MONSTER
Thu-Fri Aug 27-28 DIABOLIQUE; EYES WITHOUT A FACE
Sat-Mon Aug 28-31 INVADERS FROM MARS (1953);
THE 5,000 FINGERS OF DR. T.
Tue-Wed Sep 01-Sep 02 DELUGE; CHANDU THE MAGICIAN
Thu Sep 03 BRIDE OF THE GORILLA;
THE NAVY VS. THE NIGHT MONSTERS
Fri-Mon Sep 04-07 PHANTOM OF THE RUE MORGUE (in 3-D);
SEA DREAM (in 3-d) (Friday only!)
Tue-Wed Sep 08-09 PLAN 9 FROM OUTER SPACE; NIGHTS OF THE GHOULS;
JAIL BAIT
Thu-Sat Sep 10-12 VAMPIRE HUNTER D (animated);
AKIRA (in Japanese with English subtitles)
Sun-Mon Sep 13-14 THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL;
THE DAY THE EARTH CAUGHT FIRE;
THE DAY OF THE TRIFFIDS
Tue-Wed Sep 15-16 THE MAZE (in 3-D); CAT WOMEN OF THE MOON
Thu-Sat Sep 17-19 THE BLOB; WORLD WITHOUT END
Sun-Mon Sep 20-21 PANDORA AND THE FLYING DUTCHMAN;
BELL, BOOK AND CANDLE
Tue Sep 22 KRONOS; WOMEN OF THE PREHISTORIC PLANET
Wed-Thu Sep 23-24 CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON (in 3-D);
REVENGE OF THE CREATURE;
THE CREATURE WALKS AMONG US

