

Holmdel Science Fiction Discussion Group
Club Notice - 6/7/79

MEETINGS UPCOMING:

(All meetings are in room 3H-506 on Wednesdays at noon.)

DATE -----	TOPIC -----
6/27/79	STAND ON ZANZIBAR by John Brunner
7/18/79	SPACE MERCHANTS by Frederik Pohl
8/8/79	DRAGONFLIGHT by Ann McCaffrey
8/29/79	A SPECTRE IS HAUNTING TEXAS by Fritz Leiber
9/19/79	THE DISPOSSESSED by Ursula K. Le Guin
10/10/79	THE WEAPON SHOPS OF ISHER by A. E. Van Vogt
10/31/79	THE EYES OF THE OVERWORLD by Jack Vance
11/21/79	CHILDHOOD'S END by Arthur C. Clarke
12/12/79	A FAR SUNSET by Edmund Cooper

Our library is in HO 2D-634A. Rich Ditch (x3432) is librarian.
Evelyn Leeper (HO 1B-527 x6334) is Club book-buyer.

1. As you can see from the above, the attendees at the June 6th meeting have picked an initial list of books to read from the list of nominations we have collected. Our next meeting, not including the showing of UGLY LITTLE BOY on June 25, will be a discussion of STAND ON ZANZIBAR by John Brunner. The following meeting will be a discussion of SPACE MERCHANTS by Frederik Pohl. If you wish to purchase any of the books listed above, get in touch with Evelyn, the club expeditor. Get your order to her by Wednesday, June 13 at noon. She will not order books again until August.

2. Attached you will find a review of ALIEN. Initially I had intended to include also a review of LOVE AT FIRST BITE, but it was not written in time. Suffice it to say that that film gets off to a very funny first hour but dies in the final third. George Hamilton is apparently very good at mimicry and satire, something that his previous films have never shown. As long as the film contents itself with satirizing the sub-genre of vampire films it gives him, Dick Benjamin, and Arte Johnson some good opportunities for humor. But when the film gets ambitious and tries to tell its own story it falls on its neck.

3. Also not in time for this notice, but for the next issue we hope to make it a permanent feature, is a list of upcoming conventions with dates. *P.S. Made it after all!*

4. To date only Rich Ditch, Evelyn, and I have submitted reviews to be published with the notice. How about something from someone else?

Mark Leeper
HO 1B-512 x7093

ALIEN

by Mark R. Leeper

ALIEN is a film of surprising contradictions. It is a film that is very ambitious and also a little poetic, but at the same time the plot comes off a little stale. Although the storyline will be familiar to fans of science fiction/horror films, the execution of this storyline is original and very finely crafted. One might say that this is very nearly the ultimate version of the perhaps over-used plot of the earth people pitted against the alien monster.

Why the disparity between over-familiar storyline and original approach? It is an open secret that the director, Ridley Scott, wanted to make this film for a modest million dollars. Twentieth Century Fox did not want to make a low-budget science fiction film, but felt that the market wanted high-budget special effects oriented SF films. Scott had permission to make his film only if he could effectively spend six million dollars on it. Apparently, while Scott was somewhat ambivalent over having an extra five million to spend on his one million dollar story, he spent the money wisely by having extremely talented illustrators design his sets to create precisely the downbeat mood the story needed. In a future when space travel is as humdrum as piloting a barge is today, spaceships will be just about as clean and shiny as barges are today. The space barge NOSTROMO, where most of the action takes place, is a dark, dirty, brooding place, often with the feel of some rotting, cavernous cathedral. An

alien derelict spacecraft is a surreal nightmare with shapes that look partially mechanical, partially biological.

The title character is, unfortunately, not as totally alien as it could have been. But as an amalgamation of the characteristics and behavioral habits of earthbound viruses, insects, spiders, and shellfish, with a few characteristics not found at all on Earth, it is definitely as alien as any creature ever portrayed in a science fiction film before.

The acting is superb. This almost goes without saying in a cast that is stocked with actors like John Hurt, who played Richard Rich in A MAN FOR ALL SEASONS and Caligula in the BBC's I, CLAUDIUS. In a less demanding role, there is Ian Holm, a veteran of NICHOLAS AND ALEXANDRA and YOUNG WINSTON. The pivotal role, however, is played by a newcomer to film, Sigourney Weaver, whose acting is convincing and effective. But the real star of the film is the alien landscapes, the alien spaceship, and the alien alien, all of which cost (and were worth) big bucks. Maybe Fox knew what it was doing after all.

UPCOMING CONVENTIONS

DATE	NAME	LOCATION	COMMENTS
6-7 July	OhioRivaCon	Louisville KY	
4 July	WesterCon*	San Francisco CA	GOH: R. Lupoff.
6-8 July	X-Con	Milwaukee WI	GOH: Kelly & Polly Freas
13-15 July	Darkover Council	New York NY	GOH: Marion Zimmer Bradley
17-15 July	Archon	St. Louis MO	GOH: Joe Haldeman
22 July	UniCon	Washington DC	
20-22 July	DeepSouthCon	New Orleans LA	GOH: R. A. Lafferty
20-22 July	Conebulus	Syracuse NY	
21-22 July	OKon	Tulsa OK	GOH: Jack Williamson
27-29 July	Space: 1999 Con	Pittsburgh PA	
3-5 Aug	August Party	Washington DC	Star Trek Con
23-27 Aug	SeaCon*	Brighton England	GOH: Brian W. Aldiss
30 Aug - 3 Sept	NorthAmeriCon*	Louisville KY	GOH: Fred Pohl, Lester Del Rey
30 Sept	RoVaCon	Roanoke VA	
28-30 Sept	MosCon	Moscow ID	GOH: Robert A. Heinlein
13-14 Oct	SciCon	Hampton Va	GOH: Joe Haldeman, Kelly Freas
26-28 Oct	MileHiCon	Denver CO	GOH: Jack Williamson
26-28 Oct	MapleCon	Ottawa Ontario	
1980			
29 Aug - 1 Sept	NorEasCon II*	Boston MA	GOH: Damon Knight, Kate Wilhelm

* Major Convention.

GOH--Guest of Honor.

Contact Evelyn Leeper (1B-527, x6334) for further details.