

Holmdel Science Fiction Discussion Group  
Club Notice - 9/20/79

MEETINGS UPCOMING:

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

DATE	TOPIC
10/3/79	Book exchange, room 4H-205
10/10/79	A FAR SUNSET by Edmund Cooper, rm 4H-505
10/31/79	STAINLESS STEEL RAT by Harry Harrison and nomination of officers, rm 4A-215
11/21/79	THE STARS MY DESTINATION by Alfred Bester and election of officers
12/12/79	GATEWAY by Fredrick Pohl
1/9/80	BLIND VOICES by Tom Reamy
1/30/80	BERSERKER by Fred Sabernagen
2/20/80	LAST AND FIRST MEN by Olaf Stapledon
3/12/80	DINOSAUR BEACH by Keith Laumer
4/2/80	JUPITER THEFT by Donald Moffit
4/23/80	MOON IS A HARSH MISTRESS by Robert Heinlein
5/14/80	MASTERS OF SOLITUDE by Kaye & Godwin
6/4/80	MASKE: THAERY by Jack Vance
6/25/80	JEM by Fredrick Pohl

Our library is in HO 2D-634A. Rich Ditch (x3432) is librarian.  
Evelyn Leeper (HO 4E-507B x6334) is Club book-buyer.

1. Our next discussion meeting will be October 10 and we will be discussing A FAR SUNSET by Edmund Cooper.
2. It has been three months since our last book exchange, so it is about time to have another one. You can bring books and magazines of possible science fiction interest to trade for books and/or money. The book exchange will be in 4H-205 at noon on Wednesday, October 3. Expect it to be over some time around 12:45 unless trade becomes particularly heavy.
3. At the last meeting we chose the next thirteen books to be discussed at meetings and developed the schedule above. Anyone wanting to have the club book buyer purchase them copies of the discussion books should order the books from her by close of business on next Wednesday, September 26. Because of the size of the club we must ask you to pay the cover price of the book in with your order and the price will be adjusted (probably downward due to the discount) at the time the books are delivered to you. Use the coupon with this notice. Be reminded that neither the club nor any individuals makes any profit from these orders.

4. As usual we have a number of reviews with this notice.

Mark Leeper  
HO 1B-512 x7093

Return to Evelyn Leeper, HO 4E-507A

STAINLESS STEEL RAT by Harry Harrison	2.25	----
THE STARS MY DESTINATION by Alfred Bester	1.75	----
GATEWAY by Fredrick Pohl	1.95	----
BLIND VOICES by Tom Reamy	1.95	----
BERSERKER by Fred Saberhagen	1.95	----
LAST AND FIRST MEN by Olaf Stapledon		
with sequel LAST MEN IN LONDON	2.95	----
with STARMAKER in Dover edition	4.00	----
DINOSAUR BEACH by Keith Laumer	1.50	----
JUPITER THEFT by Donald Moffit	1.95	----
MOON IS A HARSH MISTRESS by Robert Heinlein	1.95	----
MASTERS OF SOLITUDE by Kaye & Godwin	2.50	----
MASKE: TRAERY by Jack Vance	1.50	----

Name----- Total-----

Room----- Extension -----

Checks should be payable to Evelyn Leeper



MILLENNIAL WOMEN, by Virginia Kidd. Dell, New York, 1979, 305p, Paper, Anthology, \$1.95. ISBN 0-440-16301-3.

This anthology includes four short stories, a novelette, and a full-length novel (all by women and all with woman protagonists, as the title hints). "No One Said Forever" (by Cynthia Felice) is not science fiction; it is set in the future, but the concepts are all present-day. With a change in year (and possibly job description) the story could have been sold to any magazine as straight fiction. "The Song of N'Sardi-El" (by Diana L. Paxson) is more science fictional, though the problem of betraying a trust is certainly not new. "Jubilee's Story" (by Elizabeth A. Lynn) and "Phoenix in the Ashes" (by Joan D. Vinge) have similar settings (post-holocaust) and not especially new or interesting ideas. "Mab Gallen Recalled" (by Cherry Wilder) is the least coherent and least interesting story of the book.

The novel, THE EYE OF THE HERON, is by Ursula K. Le Guin. For Le Guin fans, this will be reason enough to buy the book. It is written in the usual Le Guin style, with most of the emphasis on characters and setting rather than plot. The setting is Victoria, a planet used as a penal colony. Victoria contains two societies: the City, founded by the original prisoners (thieves, murderers, etc.), and Shantih Town, founded by the People of the Peace, who were sent to Victoria for preaching non-violence during a time of war. The culture portrayed in the City is similar in many ways to the culture of "Phoenix in the Ashes", showing strong Latin American influences in language and societal structure. Both Le Guin and Vinge have postulated societies in which women are sheltered from men, in which marriages are arranged by the groom and the father of the bride, in which wife-beating is common and even respected. They then proceed to show what is wrong with their respective societies. The fact that both authors independently used these concepts indicates that perhaps the ideas have grown stale and should be traded in for some new ones. (Certainly this type of society has been appearing with unusual regularity in all the new, "liberated" science fiction.) In spite of this problem, Le Guin manages to construct an interesting story, incorporating aspects of Eric Frank Russell's "And Then There Were None" and her own THE DISPOSSESSED side by side with her strict society.

This book as a whole contains no new or exciting ideas. If this anthology is any indication, the sub-genre of "feminist science fiction" is beginning to run down. Those authors who can write "general science fiction" will remain. (Le Guin, for example, was writing long before the feminists discovered science fiction, and will be writing long after they have departed.) Those who insist on dealing with the same old themes in the same old ways will leave.

Evelyn C. Leeper



A READER'S GUIDE TO SCIENCE FICTION, by Baird Searles, Martin Last, Beth Meacham, and Michael Franklin. Avon, New York, 1979, 266p, Paper, Non-fiction, \$2.95. ISBN 0-380-46128-5.

This book finally helps answer the question, "If I liked author A, will I like author B?" (Fill in your own A and B.) The main section of the book covers about two hundred authors, giving brief biographical sketches, descriptions of their styles and themes, synopses of their major works, and a recommendation for other authors with similar styles. One might quibble with the choice of authors covered (Daniel Keyes, who wrote only one major SF work, is covered, while Nigel Kneale, who wrote several, is not), but this may only reflect an American bias. Certainly there has been an effort to introduce authors who should be more widely known. (It has always been my feeling, for example, that Olaf Stapledon has never achieved the sort of recognition that he should have in the science fiction field. The authors point out, however, that Stapledon was unaware of the existence of science fiction as a separate field when he wrote his major works, LAST AND FIRST MEN and STARMAKER.) All the well-known authors are listed, as well as some of the newer or lesser-known ones, and the recommendations tend to form a long chain rather than several small circles. (If you like A, they recommend B and C. For B, they recommend A, C, and D. For D, they recommend E, and so on.) This means that someone using this book as a guide will gradually be exposed to the entire range of SF, rather than remain isolated on a small island of authors. The authors of this book are well-suited for this sort of recommendation, since they are the staff of the Science Fiction Shop in New York City (56 Eighth Avenue near W. 10th Street), and have probably been queried thousands of times for suggestions. (Anyone who has even stood in the science fiction section of a bookstore in the past two years has probably been asked, "My son (nephew, brother, etc.) liked STAR WARS. What else would he like?")

The book also includes a listing of major series in science fiction with their component books in order. (As well as can be done -- as the authors point out, Michael Moorcock's series require at least a three-dimensional grid.) The authors also warn you that whenever a new book in a series appears, one of the earlier volumes goes out of print, but at least this provides a guide. There is a list of the Hugo and Nebula Award winners (novel, novelette, novella, and short story categories), and a brief history of SF from Mary Shelley through New Wave. There is also a "5-Parsec Shelf" of basic SF reading, most of which are readily available. The appendices (by proportion to the main part of the book, even if they are not called that), while useful, are not necessarily the best available. (They are the best available at this price, which is an important consideration for those who don't want an entire shelf of reference works.) The award winners, for example, are listed in most other SF reference books, where you will also find the winners in the "non-literary" categories. The series lists are a subset of what one would find

in Stuart Wells's SCIENCE FICTION & HEROIC FANTASY AUTHOR INDEX and Wells gives bibliographic information in addition. And every SF reference book seems to have a "basic reading list", though the authors' expertise in the field makes theirs more valuable than most.

Who should buy this book? Bookstores and libraries should definitely have a reference copy for assisting customers. Readers just starting in SF should have a copy for use as a road-map and general guide. Long-time SF readers should have a copy to introduce them to some of the newer and/or lesser-known authors in the field. Conclusion? Buy this book!

Evelyn C. Leeper