

Holmdel Science Fiction Discussion Group
Club Notice - 8/25/80

MEETINGS UPCOMING:

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

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TOPIC</u>
8/27/80	DORSAI! by Gordon Dickson, rm 4H-205 [PROTECTOR by Larry Niven, at HP]
9/10/80	Book Exchange, rm 4H-205
9/17/80	RAX [alias HELLO SUMMER, GOODBYE] by Michael G. Coney, rm 4H-205
10/8/80	CANTICLE FOR LEIBOWITZ by Walter M. Miller, rm 4H-205

Our library is in HO 2C-401. Rich Ditch (x3432) is librarian. Debi Bennett (HP 1B-368 x2408) is in charge of South Plainfield activities. Evelyn Leeper (HO 1E-321 x6334) is Club book-buyer.

1. Another meeting is coming up, people. The discussion this time will be of DORSAI! by Gordon Dickson (unless you are one of the South Plainfield exiles, in which case you can discuss PROTECTOR by Larry Niven.


2. Those people who send me things in the interoffice mail (of which there are a fair number) should notice that my office number has been subtly modified in a misguided attempt by the "powers that be" to confuse things and slow down the mails. Fear not, however, people wanting to submit materials for this notice will find that I am even more willing to accept and publish materials sent to the new room number than I was for materials sent to the old room number.

3. Our club expediter is organizing a Boomerang club for people interested in the esoteric sport of throwing boomerangs. People interested in joining should contact Evelyn Leeper, HO 1E-321, x6334.

4. The library now has a copy of Contento's index to anthologies. This is the most complete reference on where short stories have appeared in print. If you are looking for a particular story, this is a valuable source.

5. Included with this notice is a motleier than usual collection of attachments.

Mark Leeper
HO 2B-515 x7093



Internal Chronology
of Marion Zimmer Bradley's
Darkover Series

by R. L. Ditch

- | | | |
|----------------------------|------|-----|
| 1. Darkover Landfall | (DL) | |
| 2. The Storm Queen | (SQ) | (2) |
| 3. Two to Conquer | (TC) | (3) |
| 4. The Spell Sword | (SS) | |
| 5. The Forbidden Tower | (FT) | (4) |
| 6. The Shattered Chain | (SC) | (5) |
| 7. Star of Danger | (SD) | |
| 8. The Winds of Darkover | (WD) | |
| 9. The Bloody Sun | (BS) | |
| 10. The Heritage of Hastur | (HH) | |
| 11. The Planet Savers | (PS) | (6) |
| 12. The Sword of Aldones | (SA) | (6) |
| 13. The World Wreckers | (WW) | |

Notes on the order:

1. The order of DL, SS, SD, WD, BS, HH, PS, SA, and WW is taken from "The Darkover Dilemma: Problems of the Darkover Series", by S. Wise, copyright 1976 by T-K Graphics.
2. From SQ "Note from the Author", during the Age of Chaos, before Varzil the Good.
3. From TC "Note from the Author", toward the end of the Age of Chaos, at the time of Varzil.
4. My placement. A direct sequel to SS. The "Encyclopedia of Science Fiction", edited by Peter Nicholls, places this after WD.
5. From the "Encyclopedia of Science Fiction".
6. The "Encyclopedia of Science Fiction" reverses the order of these.

UPCOMING BOOKS

DAW:

Chandler, A. Bertram--STAR LOOT (UE1564, \$1.75)

Another John Grimes novel.

Lee, Tanith--DRINKING SAPPHIRE WINE (UE1565, \$1.75)

Reprint of this sequel to DON'T BITE THE SUN.

Lee, Tanith--KILL THE DEAD (UE1561, \$1.75)

Horror fantasy novel.

Norton, Andre--LORE OF THE WITCH WORLD (UJ1560, \$1.95)

Collection of novelettes and short stories.

Vance, Jack--NOPALGARTH (UE1563, \$2.25)

Three "novels" previously published in Ace Double format:

"Nopalgarth" (formerly "The Brains of Earth"), "Son of the Tree", and "The Houses of Iszm".

VIKING:

King, Stephen--FIRESTARTER (\$13.95)

Horrific novel with science fiction elements.

McCauley, Kirby--DARK FORCES (\$16.95)

Horror anthology featuring many big-name authors (King, Matheson, Gorey, etc.)

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS--SPECIAL EDITION
film commentary by Mark R. Leeper

Ah, fans, remember three glorious years ago, 1977? What a great year that was for science fiction films! The director of JAWS, Steven Spielberg, and the director of AMERICAN GRAFFITI, George Lucas, were each planning to direct his own super-spectacular science fiction film. When they did, the result was fantastic. Suddenly science fiction was big box office and was the main interest of film producers. The question was, could either of the directors top their 1977 output in the inevitable follow-up films? Well, the question had to wait until the summer of 1980 to be answered. Both films had their follow-ups this summer. And were they successful? Well, in my own prejudiced opinion, only one was. Spielberg has topped CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND with CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND - SPECIAL EDITION. Lucas fell a little short of STAR WARS with THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK. Yes, while STARS WARS was a science fiction classic, EMPIRE STRIKES BACK is merely a new and extremely good science fiction film. While CLOSE ENCOUNTERS was on the level of tv-movie, SPECIAL EDITION is on the level of a better tv-movie, even if it is a rerun.

So what were the mistakes that Lucas made that Spielberg avoided? Well, the law in Hollywood seems to be that when you direct a sequel to a film, you must make a new film that is just like the old film. For example, an expert can tell the difference between JAWS and JAWS II, but just about no one else can. So JAWS II was a reasonably successful film. On the other hand, when John Boorman made EXORCIST II he tried to create a larger context for the story and to do some intelligent stylistic experiments. I know of only two people other than myself who liked EXORCIST II (British film critic John Baxter and Chicopee census-taker David Bara). At any rate, two substantial film-makers like Lucas and Spielberg felt they could fly in the face of the "make a new film just like the old film" rule. Lucas did not make his follow-up just like the old film, and Spielberg didn't make a new film. Lucas started over with as many new concepts as possible, as many new images as he could picture. Spielberg shot six or seven new scenes, edited out some of the more obvious garbage, and suffixed his title with the impressive sounding "SPECIAL EDITION." Makes it sound like they hand-numbered the prints or something, doesn't it? Actually, there were only two or three scenes of any substance added, a couple of others deleted. If you go to SPECIAL EDITION expecting to learn more about Spielberg's aliens, forget it. Spielberg shows you a little more incomprehensible hardware, but doesn't tell the audience anything it didn't already

know. In specific, he still has three different breeds of alien running around because the director couldn't decide which kind he wanted. We have the Daddy-long-legs we see when the ship lets out its first alien. He disappears inexplicably and is replaced by the Pun'kin-heads. Then they disappear and are replaced by the Friendly-Pillsbury-dough-boy. Spielberg could have explained away the problem or edited out the two aliens he did not want, but he did neither. He still has three noticeably different version of his alien running around.

The SPECIAL EDITION is made better then the original by the addition of one scene inside the alien craft, one scene with a lost ship placed conveniently and logically in the Gobi desert (deep thinkers, these aliens!), and the deletion of the ludicrous scene in which Richard Dreyfus callously destroys his own home in a fit of artistic inspiration. Of course, this deletion leaves one to wonder why Dreyfus's wife decides suddenly to leave home in pajamas. But that little problem can be cleared up in CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND--THE NEW SUPER-SPECIAL EDITION, which we can hope will be still better than SPECIAL EDITION, and so forth until Spielberg is finally satisfied that he's got the film right.

THE FIENDISH PLOT OF DR. FU MANCHU
a film review by Mark R. Leeper

It is a little sad that Peter Sellers, who died this summer, could not have left a better film around as a last film than THE FIENDISH PLOT OF DR. FU MANCHU. In some ways it is an appropriate final film since it does contain a number of little in-joke references to Sellers's previous work, but the sad fact is that this witless comedy is hardly representative of the talent of a very good comedian.

For THE FIENDISH PLOT OF DR. FU MANCHU, scriptwriters Jim Moloney and Rudy Dochtermann resurrected arch-villain Fu Manchu and his nemesis Inspector Nayland Smith (both played by Sellers) but have left curiously unmentioned Professor Petrie (the Dr. Watson-like assistant to Smith). The story takes place around 1933 (we are told in no uncertain terms) when Nayland Smith is about 75 and doddering on the edge of senility. At this same time Fu is a spry 168 (years, not pounds), due, in part, to a special elixir of life that keeps him alive. When the remaining elixir is accidentally destroyed, Fu must quickly whip up a new batch. The prime ingredient of the elixir is large diamonds (one would think small ones would be easier to get, but apparently large ones are needed). Fu sets off to steal the diamonds in a crime wave more absurd than amusing.

I have never seen Sellers working so hard, nor having so little success at being funny. He is not alone in his lack of success. Simon Williams, who may be remembered as the ne'er-do-well son in the BBC's UPSTAIRS DOWNSTAIRS, does even worse as a bumbler somehow connected by family to Scotland Yard. It is not clear that the total blame should be placed in the laps of the actors. For much of the misfired humor, it is not clear why it fails to be funny. The problem is probably as much in the direction and the film editing department than it is in acting. Unlike the ideas of WHOLLY MOSES, the ideas for gags in THE FIENDISH PLOT OF DR. FU MANCHU seem like they do have possibilities, they just fail to come through due to incompetent handling. For example when a house turns out to be the cabin of a hot air balloon, the scene could have been an amusing parody of Victorian literature. Instead, the poor miniature used drains all the humor from the scene.

To be sure, there are some interesting references to Sellers's life and work. An actor shows up from the Pink Panther series and Fu Manchu apparently recognizes the face. Fu later tells a police woman that his nickname is Fred. This is undoubtedly a reference to a play, "The Revenge of Fred Fu Manchu," in which Sellers acted on the BBC radio Goon Show series. One macabre reference is that Fu Manchu keeps himself alive with electrical shocks, much as Sellers himself had to do wearing a pacemaker the last year of his life. While the film, itself, is fast-paced, Sellers seems a bit tired. As a farewell film THE FIENDISH PLOT OF DR. FU MANCHU is more sad than funny.

Art: Science Fiction At Bronx Museum

By VIVIEN RAYNOR

EXCEPT as a twig on the tree of Pop Art, science fiction illustration has not attracted a lot of attention. But now its time seems to have come — with an extraordinary show at the Bronx Museum of the Arts, 851 Grand Concourse at 161st Street.

Actually, "Science Fiction: Imaginary Voyages" is not the first show of its kind, the New Britain Museum of American Art in Connecticut having staged a similar one this year. The genre nevertheless remains obscure to those who don't attend science fiction conventions, where space-art shows are commonly held, and who neither read the literature nor keep up with space exploration.

Which is not to say that astronomical artists feel at a loss; on the contrary, some regard theirs as a far higher calling than earth-inspired art, requiring greater imagination and da Vinci-like skills. The names of Lucien Rudaux and Chesley Bonestell may mean nothing to ordinary gallerygoers, but to space connoisseurs they seem the equivalents of Cézanne and Picasso.

Incidentally, Mr. Bonestell, represented by three oils in this exhibition, including an imposing study of Saturn as seen from its moon Titan, is still active at the age of 92. A former architect, he spent many years as a special-effects painter for movies — "Citizen Kane" and "The Hunchback of Notre Dame" among them. His astronomical work has included planetarium murals and spreads for such magazines as the old Illustrated London News and Life, and he has exhibited at the Smithsonian Institution.

Other celebrities featured are Virgil Finlay, Alex Schomburg, Ludek Pesek and, of a younger generation, H. R. Giger, who won an Academy Award for special effects in "Alien," and whose drawing style is a little reminiscent of Christo's. Among "fine" artists who have sneaked in is Chris Burden, with an unconvincing spaceport that seems made of interlocking plastic nail brushes in primary colors. On the other hand, Gerhardt Liebmann, a painter new to this observer, presents two good canvases of stylized roofs by moonlight. According to a history of the medium, written by one of the younger exhibitors, Ron Miller ("Space Art," published by Starlog magazine in 1978), Rockwell Kent is one of the few name artists who have toyed with science fiction themes.

There are close to 100 works in the show, including 19 monsters by Michael Sullivan, which are crammed unceremoniously into one glass case. Among them are some wonderful melon-headed cousins to the Coneheads of television's "Saturday Night Live." Apart from legs ending in flippers, the figures are human enough, with small, cross-looking faces and eyes made of glittering beads. A dog made of brass machine parts with an agreeably Roverish expression in his green glass eyes is also worth noting.

Though divided into sections titled "Landscapes," "Aliens," "Rocketry" and so forth, the show consists basically of two kinds of fantasies — the technological and the mystical. Most of the technological art manages to look dated, the early specimens because the hardware depicted has been superseded, the late because of the styles in which some of them are painted. Slick action realism is all very well for posters advertising movie blockbusters, and it certainly has its adherents today among Russian Realists. But a technique developed in battle pictures around the time of World War I somehow makes spacecraft look like battling biplanes.

The purely photographic visions are on the whole more effective, especially when they are airbrush tours de force, like Adolph Schaller's "Jupiter Probe." A balloon hovers in a huge vista of purple cumulus, pierced by the sun's rays; it's a sky as heroic as any painted by Albert Bierstadt. (Come to think of it, Space Age rhetoric often has a Manifest Destiny tone to it.)

Much more various, the mystical fantasies speak more of inner than outer space. H. R. Van Dongen's gouache "Starlight," for example, features a rose-color craft shaped like a whale that is beached among black rocks in a green, watery element. Evidently waiting for the occupants to emerge are two black-and-red creatures like centipedes. Another talented visionary is Wayne Barlow, who invents new species. The best of these, "salaman," is not, however, the most original, being close to a monitor lizard, except that it walks on its hind legs, wears a diamond-pattern tunic and has, strapped to its head, a large green leaf.

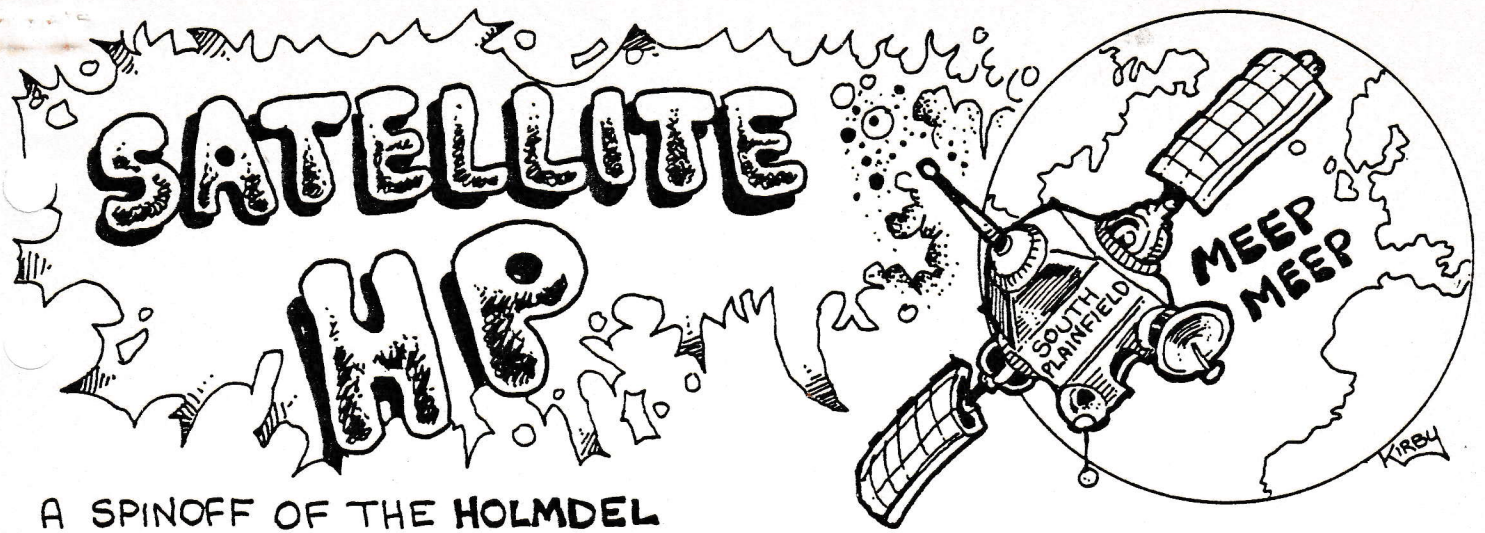
Other unforgettable scenes are Hannes Bok's oil of picnicking Martians, who are a cross between jerboa and mosquitos, and Carl Lundgren's pre-Raphaelite dragon, who lurks under a tree observing an A train in all its defaced glory swinging past a castle. None of these artists are included in Mr. Miller's history, indicating perhaps that whimsy no longer has a place in science fiction, which is a pity.

The exhibition, organized by Judy Blum and Rose Viggiano, guest curators, comes with an illustrated brochure that unfortunately contains little information about the artists. The enterprise was funded by the New York State Council on the Arts, the City's Department of Cultural Affairs, the Bronx Council on the Arts, Asap Photolab, Apco Apeda Photo Company, Ryder Truck Rental and private donors. (Through Aug. 29.)



The New York Times / Jim Cummins

A mechanical dog, top, and family members, lower left, are part of "19 Monsters" by Michael Sullivan. At right is Wayne Barlow's "Salaman," part of the science-fiction-illustration show at the Bronx Museum.



A SPINOFF OF THE HOLMDEL
SCIENCE FICTION CLUB.

8/21

Yes, this is what you've all been waiting for! Next Wednesday, Aug. 27 at 12:00 in HP IB-245, we will be showing the film "The Attack of the Tire People" (starring Robert Tredford) produced, directed, and written by HP'er Pat Autilio. We will also be discussing Protector by Larry Niven. This is one meeting you won't want to miss! Be there on time to assure yourself a seat for this great extravaganza (it sure beats a walk around the HP parking lot!).

Mark,

Just to let you
know ...

→ Debi