

Lincroft-Holmdel Science Fiction Club  
Club Notice - 9/4/85 -- Vol. 4, No. 10

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.

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TOPIC</u>
09/18	LZ: THE MARTIAN CHRONICLES by Ray Bradbury (Near Future History)
09/24	HO: JHEREG by Stephen Brust (*Tuesday*) (12:30PM)
10/02	MT: CONTINENT OF LIES by James Morrow & Organizational Mtg
10/09	LZ: THE SHEEP LOOK UP by John Brunner (Catastrophes)
10/16	HO: THRICE UPON A TIME by James G. Hogan (11:00AM)

HO Chair is Mark Leeper, HO 1E-412 (834-2657). LZ Chair is Rob Mitchell, LZ 1B-306 (576-6106). LZ Librarian is Lance Larsen, LZ 3C-219 (576-2668). HO Librarian is Tim Schroeder, HO 2G-427A (949-5866). Jill-of-all-trades is Evelyn Leeper, HO 1B-500A (834-4723).

1. In a misguided attempt to save members from having the stigma of having a % in front of their names as not having re-enlisted, Evelyn put no %-signs in front of anybody's name in the last notice. I am sorry, but we can no longer be so kind. If there is a %-sign in front of your name, you are a prime candidate to be dropped from the club. You will have to learn what it is like to live without the sterling writing that has come to be the science fiction notice. You still have a chance. Re-enlistment is as simple as ripping off this sheet (or the top sheet of the last issue), writing your company affiliation next to your address folding it in half with this side in, stapling it shut with one staple, and dropping it into the interoffice mail.

2. A "Thursday night double feature" will be shown on \*Tuesday\* September 10th at 7:30pm. The films are concerned with government solutions to anti-social behavior. No, we aren't showing CLOCKWORK ORANGE, but two films that it is a little less likely you have seen.

PRIVILEGE (1967) dir. by Peter Watkins  
ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK (1981) dir. by John Carpenter

PRIVILEGE is an odd film by the director of the Oscar winning THE WAR GAME. This is another pseudo-documentary, in this case about an incredibly popular and powerful rock star whom the British government sees as a means to control British youth. It is an odd film, but it has a lot of interesting things to say about both the government and the rock business. Leonard Maltin gives it three

stars out of four. It has a good musical score.

John Carpenter's ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK is set in a future when the government can no longer keep law and order in New York. So Manhattan is sealed off and turned into a maximum security prison. Of course when the President of the United States gets trapped inside the city, there is some question if he can be gotten out alive.

3. A few new books have been donated to, bought for, or abandoned at the Holmdel Branch of the club library:

James Blish	A CASE OF CONSCIENCE
Steven Brust	JHEREG
Samuel R. Delany	TRITON
James P. Hogan	THRICE UPON A TIME
Aldous Huxley	ISLAND
C. S. Lewis	PERELANDRA
J. R. R. Tolkien	THE BOOK OF LOST TALES (Part 1)
Jules Verne	20,000 LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA

[-tps]

Mark Leeper  
HO 1E-412 834-2657  
...mtgzz!leeper

The Vampire--Jung and Old  
VAMPIRE JUNCTION by S. P. Somtow (Somtow Sucharitkul)  
Berkley, 1985, \$2.95.  
A book review by Evelyn C. Leeper

For years vampires have been drawn in the Freudian mode--as symbols of repressed sexuality in a Victorian era and so on. (Undoubtedly Freud would say that the vampire's fangs piercing the woman's body are obviously representative of the penis.) Now, it seems, it has become time for the Jungians to have their shot at the vampire legend, and S. P. Somtow (an admitted pseudonym for Somtow Sucharitkul) has obliged with Vampire Junction.

Since it is less widely known than Freudian psychology, Jungian psychology should perhaps be briefly explained. The four identifiable aspects that appear in this novel are the archetypal unconscious, the animus/anima dichotomy, the theory of synchronicity, and the goal of individuation. The archetypal unconscious forms half of a person's unconscious, the other half being personal, i.e., composed of the person's individual experiences. The archetypal, or collective, unconsciousness seems to be not unlike the concept of race memory. Jung's theory of animus/anima is another familiar idea--that of each individual having both male and female aspects. The theory of synchronicity postulates the coincidence of seemingly unrelated events having similar or identical meaning. (The same idea shows up in some of the strangest places--for example, the child-like character in Repo Man, who talks about how, after you've just been thinking of a plate of shrimp, someone will say "plate" or "shrimp" or "plate of shrimp." But then, that's synchronicity for you.) Finally, individuation (according to Jung) is the process of uniting the conscious and the unconscious within oneself and hence becoming whole. End of psychology digression.

Somtow's vampire, Timmy Valentine, seeks out a therapist to help him. But he needs a Jungian therapist, because he is the Jungian archetype, formed out of the collective unconsciousness of the human beings who see him. And they see him as they expect to see him--some as a cat stalking down the street, some as a flickering shadow, some as a rock star. He finds Carla Rubens, who tries to deal with the archetype turned flesh. She, in turn, was previously involved with Stephen Miles, an operatic conductor. Miles, while at Cambridge, was drawn into a satanic group called "The Gods of Chaos" (who knew of his pyromania and used that as a hold on him). During one of their ceremonies many years ago (in which a woman was murdered) Miles caught a glimpse of Valentine. Now the Gods of Chaos are re-uniting in Thailand to recover the two halves of an idol that will give them enormous power. It may sound incredibly coincidental, but the word is synchronistic.

Valentine, in his two-thousand-year existence (give or take a century), has known many ages and many men. The usual symbols that the



vampire fears no longer have any effect on him; with his age comes the wisdom that they cannot harm him. In most vampire stories, the humans fighting the vampire must believe in the symbols (especially the cross) to have them work; in this case, the vampire must believe. Valentine can walk about during the day, does not fear crosses, is not repelled by garlic, etc. But those that he makes vampires still have these fears--they have not yet outgrown them.

While this book is written from a Jungian perspective, the frequent references to dreams seems distinctly Freudian. But these are not what we think of as dreams, but rather expressions of the collective unconscious. Valentine's house, with its ever-changing halls and rooms, is shaped by the union of its inhabitants unconsciousnesses. Whether you find the house, or Valentine, or the novel, convincing depends in large part on whether you find Jungian psychology convincing.

And there is the real problem. Somtow can handle the horror scenes fairly well (though Junction, Idaho, reminds me a lot of 'Salem's Lot). The premise of a vampire living through various horrors of history is hardly new, but Somtow does manage to put some twists on it that I hadn't seen before (and I tend to follow vampire novels). But the story of Valentine's two-millenia search for individuation, and its culmination, fails to convince me even on the level required for a vampire novel. I mean, one is willing to accept some mysticism, but it seems unlikely to me that even a dedicated Jungian would accept this novel. Though Somtow writes with a certain flair, the inherent unfamiliarity of his concepts (at least to most) will make this book very difficult to enjoy, which is a pity. I find the Jungian analysis of the vampire interesting, and it gives a different interpretation than the usual Freudian one. But the extent to which Somtow tries to put all of Jungian psychology in this novel smothers the originality that it would otherwise display.



The Golem in Literature  
An article by Mark R. Leeper

An Introduction

Back when I was ten or eleven years old I used to get monster movie bubble gum cards. They usually had familiar stills from monster movies. One, however, puzzled me a bit. It looked like a human-shaped furnace with glowing eyes and a disproportionately big fist. It was labeled simply "The Golem." There was no explanation as to what the Golem was. Since I usually recognized what was on these cards, I filed in the back of my mind that there is something called a "Golem" that I wanted to know more about. It didn't occur to me to look in a dictionary any more than it would to look up "Godzilla." Dictionaries never have the really interesting words!

A month or so later my parents were going to a Yiddish play put on at the Jewish Community Center. It was called "The Golem," and was written by H. Leivik. Now I knew darn well that my mother did not go to plays about monsters that looked like human-shaped furnaces with glowing eyes and disproportionately big fists. She saw Bride of Frankenstein when she was growing up and decided on the spot that any story with a monster was stupid. It had to be just a co-incidence of name, right? Well, my parents came back from the play and told me I would have liked the story..."it was weird." It was about a rabbi who made a man out of clay. At this point I realized that the bubble gum card and the play were somehow related, and even more surprising, this monster was somehow a Jewish monster.

I did some research into Golems and discovered that they are indeed creatures of Jewish folklore that have been the subject of monster movies. (Incidentally, there turned out to be one other traditional Jewish monster, a dybbuk. It is a possessing spirit, not too unlike the one in The Exorcist.)

There are apparently several Golem stories in Jewish folklore, but I have found nothing but fleeting references to any Golem legend other than "The Golem of Prague."

The story is set in Prague in the 16th Century. The Jewish community is threatened by blood-libels--claims that they were murdering Christian children and using their blood to make matzoh. (Actually, Jewish law strictly forbids the consumption of any blood at all.) A Christian who murdered a child and planted it in a Jew's house could report the Jew. The Jew would be executed and his property would be split between the Christian who reported him and the government. Clearly the ghetto needed a very good watchman.

Rabbi Judah Loew used information from the Kabbalah--the central book of Jewish mysticism--to learn the formula by which God first made

man out of clay, and with the help of two other pious men built a man out of clay and brought him to life. The final step of this process was to place God's secret name on a parchment and place it in the forehead of the Golem.

Loew's Golem was between 7-1/2 and 9 feet tall and had tremendous strength, but had a very placid and passive disposition when not under orders to act otherwise. He also lacked the one faculty that only God can give, the power of speech. Because this giant was passive and mute, people in the ghetto assumed he was half-witted and the word "golem" has also come to mean "idiot."

One story about the early days of this Golem was probably inspired by "The Sorcerer's Apprentice." The Golem was told to fetch water, but was not told how much. The result was a minor flood. This tendency to do what he was told to do, not what he was expected to do, has endeared the Golem story to computer people like Norbert Wiener. It may also be part of the basis of Asimov's robot stories.

At night the Golem guarded the ghetto, catching all would-be libelists red-handed. He single-handedly ended the possibility of successfully blood-libeling the Jewish community. Loew then got the Emperor to end the practice of letting blood-libelers profit from their actions. When the Golem was no longer needed, Loew removed the parchment, returning the Golem to being a statue, and the statue was laid to rest in the attic of the synagogue.

A popular variation on the story has the Golem rebel and become an uncontrolled monster before being stopped and returned to clay. It has been speculated that Mary Shelley patterned Frankenstein on this story.

The Golem has appeared several times on the screen, though only once in an English-language film. The first cinematic appearance was in Der Golem (1914) with Paul Wegener in the title role. The story deals with the modern discovery and re-animation of the Golem. This was apparently a lost film until it was found again in 1958. It still is almost never seen.

Wegener returned to the role in a second German film, also called Der Golem (1920). This film is loosely based on "The Golem of Prague." The Jews are portrayed as being weird magicians who live in a strange expressionistic ghetto. In fact, the early parts of the film seems to presage the anti-Semitism that was soon to engulf Germany. The images of the Jewish community are not all that different looking than those of propaganda films of the following years.

One of the most interesting touches of the film is the subplot of Prince Florian. The beautiful Prince Florian wants to save the rabbi's daughter from the destruction that is to come to the Jews. However, Florian is so unctuous and disgusting that when he is killed by the Golem, the viewer is more relieved than shocked, and perhaps that is



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just what was intended. In any case, the Golem is able to avert destruction of the Jewish community. Then the Golem's own love for the rabbi's daughter is denied and he becomes a dangerous monster only to be destroyed by a child's hand. The rabbi then praises God for twice saving the Jews of the ghetto.

Wegener may have also made a lesser known German film, The Golem and the Dancer, in 1917. The actual existence of this film has never been established. A French-Czech film called The Golem was made in 1935. Harry Baur starred in the story which was done much in the style of a Universal horror film. The story deals with another tyrannical attempt to destroy Jews. Through much of the film, the rediscovered Golem remains chained in a tyrant's dungeon. Just when things are at their blackest, the Golem comes to life and destroys everything, once again saving the Jews.

A number of Czech comedies have been about the Golem, including The Golem and the Emperor's Baker (1951). In this, the Golem ends up as an oven for the baker.

The only English-language Golem film I know of is a British cheapie called It! (1967) with Roddy McDowell. A psychotic museum curator who lives with the corpse of his mother acquires the Golem of Prague and uses it for his own purposes. In the end, the Golem survives a nuclear blast that kills his master and he quietly walks into the sea.

This article will cover all those books about the Golem that I wanted to read for years and never got around to. This article was a good excuse. So here goes.

THE GOLEM by Gustav Meyrink (Dover, 1976 (1928), \$4.50\*.)

This is not actually a tale of the supernatural, in spite of the title, though at times the strange things that happen border on the supernatural and the events are all overshadowed by the legend of the golem.

Athanasius Pernath is a Christian living in the Jewish quarter of Prague. He is interested in the golem legends, particularly the Golem of Prague, but as someone comments, everyone seems to be talking about the golem. Pernath's own personality seems to parallel that of the golem—he seems to have little will of his own other than that of altruism. Much of the book is really just observation of the inhabitants of the Ghetto until Pernath becomes embroiled in a crime that another has committed.

This is not light reading any more than Camus's The Stranger is. It has a plot but more important is the character's introspection, the truths the character is learning about himself and the characters around him. Time and again Pernath returns to the legend of the golem in his



thoughts as his life patterns itself after the golem's. He is used my many of the characters, some well-meaning but needing help, others selfish, and his wish to set things right is his only reward. In essence he is a human golem.

Meyrink found writing the novel almost as bewildering as it is for the reader to read it or the character to live it. Somewhere towards the middle (Bleiler says in the introduction to the Dover edition), Meyrink lost track of the multiplicity of his characters and needed a friend to graph them out geometrically on a chess board before he could proceed. The result is not one, but many stories intertwined, which adds to the difficulty in reading the novel, but also gives a number of views of the Jewish Ghetto in pre-World-War-II Prague. This is not an entertaining novel, but it is worthwhile to read.

\*The Dover edition also includes The Man Who Was Born Again by Paul Busson.

THE GOLEM by H. Leivick  
(in The Dybbuk and Other Great Yiddish Plays, Bantam, 1966, \$1.25.)

This is one of the most famous plays of Yiddish theater. H. Leivick (actually Leivick Halper) re-tells once again the story of the Golem of Prague, but in more obscure and symbolic terms. To be frank, the play probably requires a closer reading than I was willing to give it (if not actually seeing a production). It is a long play, written in verse, that requires study and an investment of time rather than the quick reading I gave it, so these comments should be taken as first impressions.

Certain concessions had to be made to dramatic style. The primary concession was that this Golem speaks. A mute character in a stage drama would be little more than a mime, and Leivick wanted to get into the character of the man-made man. That he certainly does, more successfully than any other version of the story I know of. In spite of the Golem's stature, he is troubled and fearful. In following the rabbi's orders, he is usually as fearful as any normal human would be. He is reluctant to go into dark caves at the rabbi's bidding. He is stigmatized and lonely.

Much of what is happening in the play is going on on a symbolic and metaphysical plane. Dark figures, never explained, appear and carry on abstract conversations. I think that the style of the play can be exemplified by stage directions like "the brightness of invisibility begins to glow around him." Even the stage directions are obscure! I will leave this play for others to interpret.



THE GOLEM OF PRAGUE by Gershon Winkler (Judaica Press, 1980, \$9.95.)

Winkler's book is in two parts: an introduction and the story itself. The story does not start until page 75, so the introduction is a major part of the book and deserves separate comment. Part of the reason is not what the introduction says about Golems but because of what it says about Winkler.

In Winkler's description of his occupation, he says that he "teach[es] Torah weekly on Long Island, primarily to young Jewish adults with minimal Jewish knowledge and identity, and he has also been helping young Jews return from 'Hebrew-Christian' and Far Eastern movements."

He begins his introduction with an attack on what he calls "sciencism." The latter is apparently a belief, fostered by scientific reasoning, that leads one to be skeptical of the existence of God and miracles. As an example, he says, "For more than fifty years, the museum's exhibition of a stooped, ape-like man helped many people in our culture to overcome their guilt over the rejection of G-d and the idea of Creation... In 1958, the Congress of Zoology in London declared that the 'Neanderthal Man' was really nothing more than the remains of a modern-type man, affected by age and arthritis... Nevertheless, these scientific errors were never expressed to the subsequent generations of school children. Such a public revelation would have been outright and left humanity with no alternative explanation for the phenomenon of existence but G-d."

Winkler has a section on "Making Golems" in his introduction. He rambles for 16 pages on a few Golem legends and references to the ineffable name of God. On the actual subject of the section, he has only the following helpful words to say: "It is not within the scope of this overview to discuss the mystical mechanics of The Book of Formation and how to use it to make Golems. Readers are advised to study day-to-day Judaism first, before investigating its profound mystical dimensions. After many years of having mastered the down-to-earth aspects of the Torah, on both the practical and intellectual level, one can then examine books like Derech HaShem... which discusses the interactive relationships of the natural and supernatural, and the role of the Divine Names." If that was all he had to say on the subject, it is not clear why he tried to tantalize the reader by having an extensive section promising to tell more.

The introduction also includes a picture labeled "Monument to the Maharal's [Loew's] Golem standing at the entrance of the old Jewish sector of Prague." No further explanation is given. This would be an impressive sight if it were not obviously a picture of a knight in Teutonic armor. Anyone who recognizes German armor would not be taken in by this fraud perpetrated by a man trying to convince us of the superiority of his religious views.

In short, I am less than impressed with the introduction.

As Winkler gets into the main text of the story, he editorializes less but there is still a strong undercurrent of didactic lecturing in his writing. The story of the Golem of Prague is broken into short stories extolling the values of a good Jewish education and traditional Jewish values. The real common thread of these stories is Rabbi Judah Loevy (a.k.a. Loew). In many of the stories the Golem itself is the most minor of characters. The stories are really about the mystical wisdom and power of the rabbi.

In these stories we see no end of evils caused by not giving a Jew a proper Jewish education or by a young Jewish woman marrying a Christian. The vehemence with which the Christians want to convert Jews verges on the incredible. In one story, the Duke wants so much to win one Jewish woman to Christianity that he is willing to marry his only son to her. The two do indeed fall into love, but the bride-to-be decides she cannot betray her family. Eventually the two marry, but only after the Duke's son converts to Judaism.

In this version of the story, the Golem is much less monstrous and apparently indistinguishable from a flesh-and-blood human. Yet as the story requires, he seems to have strange magical powers. In one story he can see a soul hovering over a grave; in another he has an amulet of invisibility. The stories start to lose interest as the Golem has too many powers, all bestowed on him by Rabbi Loevy.

Oddly enough, the only character of real interest is the arch-villain Father Thaddeus. From "the green church," as it is called, he hatches plot after plot against the Jews. By turns he is charming and then vicious and ruthless--whatever is called for in his anti-Semitic plots. The depth of his hatred is never fully gauged by the reader until he cold-bloodedly murders a young (Christian) child in order to frame the Jews for ritual murder. After Thaddeus dies, the stories have a marked drop in quality. Rabbi Loevy himself is the paragon of Jewish learning and knowledge. In investigating crimes, his first question is always the one that leads to the solution. Paragons make very dull characters, and since his thought processes are arrived at only through religious knowledge far beyond that of the reader, he never becomes a comprehensible character.

Winkler clearly looses steam in his story-telling in the second half of his tale, but the first half is worth reading far more than the introduction or the second half.



THE SWORD OF THE GOLEM by Abraham Rothberg (Bantam, 1970, \$1.25.)

Of the various re-tellings of the story of the Golem of Prague, this is certainly the most readable and the most enjoyable, though perhaps not the most faithful to its source material.

The Golem in this version is, for the first time, a believable three-dimensional character. He doesn't just walk, he talks, he feels, he loves, he hates, and if pushed far enough, he kills. Instead of being broken into short stories of threats against individuals in the Jewish community, this novel is one continual threat and eventually a riot against the Jews. The Golem in all this is not a protective angel sent by Rabbi Low (the spelling in this version) who is just an extension of the Rabbi. The Golem sympathizes with the Jewish community and considers himself to be Jewish, but he has free will and his own reasons for doing what he does.

Another reason this is the most enjoyable version is that for once even the anti-Jewish Christians are portrayed as more than just thugs. There is more than one debate between Rabbi Low and Brother Thaddeus, the chief instigator of the anti-Semitism. Of course, to the reader it is clear that Thaddeus loses the debate, but his reasons for what Thaddeus does come much clearer in any other version. One could almost stretch it to the point that Thaddeus is a sympathetic character. He at least believes that his hatred of the Jews is well-founded in Catholic doctrine and his arguments for anti-Semitism do come out of a twisted idealism, rather than just selfishness as other versions of the story indicate.

This 1970 novel is dedicated "most of all to the great Leivick, who breathed new life into the Golem's clay." But I feel I can recommend the book more highly than the play. In fact, this (which was the last major Golem work I read) is the most satisfying and the only one I recommend as a novel.

THE TRIBE by Bari Wood (Signet, 1984, \$2.95.)

This was the first that I read of the works reviewed here. It gave me the idea for this article. When I was growing up, I wanted to write a horror novel about a golem. I had a whole story plotted out, but it was never written. Now, unfortunately, Bari Wood has beaten me to the punch with The Tribe. Sadly, it turns out to be more a murder story than the real pull-out-all-the-stops horror story I had envisioned.

The story starts with the mystery of why one barracks of Jews at the Belzec concentration camp given very special treatment. They were not only left alive, but in addition, the SS gave them the best food available. They were eating canned sausage while the SS were eating garbage.



Flash forward to the present when five blacks who mug and murder the son of one of the survivors of that barracks are themselves brutally murdered. The story then tells in boring detail about the affair between the murdered Jew's widow and the black police inspector who was a close friend of her husband's father.

Any given paragraph by Wood is clearly written, but this story seems to jump back and forth in time with disconcerting rapidity. The legends that this story was built around have a much greater potential than this story would indicate. The whole story is preparation for the final few pages, when the characters finally get to confront the evil that until that point they had only heard about second-hand. Like too many contemporary horror novels, there is too much writing without enough worthwhile story. If you want to read a novel about the Golem, this is not the one to start with.

MATHEMATICS AND HUMOR by John Allen Paulos  
University of Chicago Press, 1980, \$12.95.  
A book review by Mark R. Leeper

A good while back, I came to the conclusion that most humor is really making a philosophical point in a very pithy and succinct manner. It seemed to me that laughter at a joke was much akin to what Martin Gardner calls the "Aha!" experience in problem solving. It seemed to me that if I thought long enough about any joke, deep down there was a philosophical principle it demonstrated. Let me give at least some examples that show at least some jokes come down to such principles. A film I saw recently had a character speaking a foreign translation, the English translation of which was printed on the screen in subtitles. Another character who didn't understand the foreign language looked down and read the subtitles instead. What point does this make? It says in the syntax of cinema that two completely different images are superimposed on the screen. One is the story level containing the characters; the other is a helping "presentation" layer. This layer does things like translate with subtitles and shows that little blip that tells the projectionist that the end of the reel is coming. The joke is really just a way of saying that the story layer is not supposed to be affected by the presentation layer. The result of breaking that rule is incongruity.

Here is another example, in this case from Monty Python. In most disciplines, if you know for sure that a procedure works, that procedure will probably be more useful to you. You prove a theorem, for example, and then you can apply it elsewhere. A counter-example is a foreign phrase-book. The way to know for sure that a phrase-book would be useful is to know both languages and hence make the phrase-book useless to you. A phrase-book is only useful to you if you have no direct evidence that it is useful. Monty Python makes this point in a very terse manner when it has a phrase-book translate innocent foreign phrases into English phrases like "Please fondle my buttocks."

But the sad fact is that, while it is often not all that difficult to pull a philosophical idea out of a joke, it seems to be more an art than a science. Someone else might be able to pull a very different philosophical point out of a joke and if they can do that, it calls to question whether the joke is really making a real philosophical point or not. This was the state I was in when I came upon the book Mathematics and Humor by John Allen Paulos.

Paulos claims to use mathematical structures to analyze humor and what is funny. In fact, I am not sure that Paulos really has a better idea than I already had on how to glean serious points out of humor. He explains a few mathematical structures--self-referential statements, recursion, over-lapping sets, and catastrophe sheets--to analyze some jokes, but he seems to just take a few jokes to exemplify each and even

there, the over-lapping sets and the catastrophe sheets could be used for the same jokes. Take an example. He uses over-lapping sets to explain the joke:

Interviewer [presumably at YMCA]: Do you think clubs are



appropriate for small children?

W. C. Fields: Only when kindness fails.

The word 'clubs' really fits into two classes: social organizations and blunt instruments. The joke switches us from one of these classes as a context to the other. However, the same joke could have turned up in a later chapter as a "jumping between the sheets" in a catastrophe theory model. Catastrophe theory studies discontinuous events in which small changes will have large effects, like "the straw that broke the camel's back." Fields's remark snaps us from one context for the term 'clubs' to another. Paulos's book does little to add to our analytical understanding of humor.

One useful idea that does come out of the book comes from Wittgenstein. The philosopher feels that you could write an entire book of philosophy made up of only jokes. To understand each joke is to understand a philosophical point. That is sort of the dual of the statement I made. It would mean that for any philosophical chain of arguments, there is a chain of jokes expressing it. My contention was that any joke can be resolved into a philosophical point. Together they form a sort of equivalence theorem.

Getting back to the book, it does not add much to our understanding of humor, but it might tempt some students to read it for the humor and learn a little math along the way.

## CREEPERS

A film review by Mark R. Leeper

Capsule review: Rack up yet one more mad killer film for Dario Argento. Argento uses the theme of a girl who can control insects only to spice up the same old story he always does and to give him a much desired opportunity to film maggots.

Dario Argento seems to like films about psychotic killers. He made films like Deep Red, The Bird with the Crystal Plumage, Cat O' Nine Tails, Four Flies in Grey Velvet, and probably several more psycho-killer films that do not come to mind. His Suspiria was a departure for him in that the killer turns out to be supernatural, not psychotic. The ads for his new film promise another apparent departure. Creepers appears to be a story like Willard about a girl who has power over insects. A problem in timing led me to see this major departure for Argento. The story is really about a girl with power over insects who uses this power to catch a psychotic killer.

Yes, friends, this is yet another psycho-killer film and Argento is going to keep on making and re-making the same film until he gets it right. Currently, he gets it wronger every time he tries. This time there is a psycho-killer haunting a town and in particular, a girls' school. *Our main character is a typical girl from the school except that she sleepwalks and her father is a famous movie star and she is a split personality and she has the power to control insects.*

Creepers features rock music by several well-known groups almost always played where it can ruin the atmosphere the most. And atmosphere is about all an Argento film offers. This one thinks that the way to create atmosphere is to use liberal doses of maggots. The acting is lackluster, including a very half-hearted performance by Donald Pleasence with Scottish accent.

This is not a good film; rate it a -2 on the -4 to +4 scale.