

Lincroft-Holmdel Science Fiction Club
Club Notice - 11/13/85 -- Vol. 4, No. 20

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>
11/20	LZ: JIREL OF JOIRY by C. L. Moore (Female Protagonists)
11/27	HO: ?
12/04	MT: ?
12/11	LZ: BRING THE JUBILEE by Ward Moore (Alternate Histories)
01/08	LZ: PHOENIX WITHOUT ASHES by Edward Bryant (Generation Ships)
01/29	LZ: STAR SMASHERS OF THE GALAXY RANGERS by Harry Harrison (Humor)
02/19	LZ: WORLDS by Joe Haldeman (Politics)

HO Chair is John Jetzt, HO 4F-528A (834-4844). LZ Chair is Rob Mitchell, LZ 1B-306 (576-6106). MT Chair is Mark Leeper, MT 3G-434 (957-5619). HO Librarian is Tim Schroeder, HO 2G-427A (949-5866). LZ Librarian is Lance Larsen, LZ 3C-219 (576-2668). Jill-of-all-trades is Evelyn Leeper, MT 1A-121 (957-2288).

1. On Wednesday, November 20th, the Lincroft chapter will discuss JIREL OF JOIRY, by C. L. Moore, and other works that come under the theme of Female Protagonists. JIREL OF JOIRY is a collection of five fantasy novellas written by Moore (a woman) in the mid-Thirties. These stories focus on Jirel, an impressive warrior and leader of Castle Joiry. There's relatively little hack-and-slash in these stories, though -- Moore concentrates more on maintaining the somber mood and following the thoughts of hertragically-flawed heroine. The book reminds me in some ways of the better ELRIC books by Moorcock.

As usual, though, we'll be discussing more than one book. Feel free to come by and help us evaluate other books on our theme, such as Panshin's RITE OF PASSAGE, McCafferty's DRAGONWORLD series, and Sagan's CONTACT. [-r.mitchell]

2. On Thursday, November 21th, at 7:30pm, to celebrate the beginning of the last month of autumn (we really are scraping the bottom of the barrel, aren't we?) we will be showing John Boorman's version of the King Arthur Legend, EXCALIBUR. Boorman's 1981 film stars Nigel Terry as Arthur, King of Britain, Nicol Williamson as Merlin, and Thelma the Wonder Pony as Hwinnie, the battle pony. This is a beautiful film to watch and to hear thanks to a great classical score. It does funny things to the legend, but then so did most of the authors who told the story.

*****Presorted*****
* Leeper, Evelyn C. *
* 127A MT 1A-121 *

- 2 -

Mark Leeper
MT 3G-434 957-5619
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SUPERGIRL: The Movie
A short Review
by Dale Skran

Frequently we talk about movies intended for the twelve-year-old mind. Supergirl obviously was intended for the five year old mind. The script writer has created one of the choppiest, most incoherent, confused, and nonsensical stories I've seen in some time. Almost nothing in this film makes sense or fits into any story. It draws neither from the comic nor the earlier Superman movies. Example: Supergirl is Superman's cousin, BUT she is from "Argo City" in "innerspace." She reaches innerspace by diving into the ocean. Krypton? You mean she's supposed to be from Krypton?!

This is unfortunate, since the actress portraying "Supergirl" is fairly credible, and several million dollars worth of effects, none especially original, are lavished on this tattered piece of confusion. Faye Dunaway and Peter O'Toole also waste their time as the villainess and Supergirl father-figure respectively. This film follows the lead set by the earlier Superman movies, namely that the villains are by definition clowns. Hence, no suspense whatsoever exists. The amazing thing is how long it takes Supergirl to vanquish the dull-witted witch played by Dunaway.

It seems especially sad to see this mistreatment of Supergirl in film just after her death in the world of comics. Her final battle against the Anti-monitor as part of DC's "Crisis on Infinite Earths" mini-series carved out a niche for her as one of the great super-heroines of fantasy, right along side Jean Grey (aka Marvel Girl, aka Phoenix, aka Dark Phoenix) and Electra. The makers of Supergirl: The Movie don't understand that heroism cannot exist without real risk, and real danger, and superheroines must face the most deadly dangers, not an assembly of paltrons and idiots.

Rate this turkey as a (-1.5) on the Leeper scale.

WARRIORS

A film review by Mark R. Leeper

Capsule review: This is a solid, well-paced, if controversial, action film. It has less graphic violence than its detractors would claim, but it does have powerful photography. Director Hill tried to repeat the feel with Streets of Fire, but ended up with a much inferior film.

The first time I noticed Walter Hill as a director was for the film of his I like the least, Streets of Fire. The film had some nice scenes done with a good visual sense, but the story was cliched Western in a nonsense setting that mixed 1950's sets and cars with contemporary rock music and a society that has fallen apart. The whole idea seemed pretty foolish. With all the license Hill took with the setting he could have come up with a better plot. He also directed The Long Riders, the impressive Southern Comfort, and 48 Hours. Hill obviously has a taste for directing violence. His most notorious film was the 1979 The Warriors, which the press blamed for starting a number of small riots.

I have been racking my brain trying to remember the ancient Greek play that Sol Yurick's novel The Warriors is based on. (Anyone out there who can help me?) In any case, the story is an updating, setting the same story in New York City. All the major street gangs of the city have sent representatives to a giant convocation called by Cyrus, a charismatic gang leader who wants to organize and unite all the gangs in the city. For kicks, one particularly vicious punk kills Cyrus and lays the blame on an innocent gang called The Warriors. Suddenly the nine warriors find they have 60,000 enemies and have to get home through enemy territory. The rest of the film is how the Warriors have to fight their way back to their home turf of Coney Island.

I am no expert on New York City street gangs, but some of the gangs seemed a bit too colorful to be real. Particularly odd-looking was one gang who wore baseball uniforms, painted their faces, and used baseball bats as their weapon of preference. My suspicion is that these guys would be the laughing stock of New York if they really acted that way.

Speaking of acting, Michael Beck is a typical Walter Hill hero, much like the hero of Streets of Fire. He has sort of rugged good looks, but his acting is quite forgettable. James Remar, on the other hand, is the character most people will remember. Apparently, in this film he made a name for himself by playing a punk who makes your flesh crawl, a part he repeated in films like 48 Hours and Commando, but especially for Dreamscape.

The Warriors has gotten a lot of flack and has been mentioned in a number of discussions of the social responsibilities of filmmakers, but in simple fact, it is neither as bad nor as good as it has been made out to be. Rate it a +1 on the -4 to +4 scale.

"Herbert West--The Re-Animator" by H. P. Lovecraft
A book review by Mark R. Leeper

Having recently seen the film Re-Animator, I was curious to read the H. P. Lovecraft story on which the film claimed to be based, "Herbert West--The Re-Animator". I found it in a British paperback, Dagon and Other Macabre Tales by Lovecraft. Reading it, I got some insight into how the author must have used his name to get stories published. At first it would appear to be one story in six chapters. It quickly becomes apparent as each chapter is self-contained and re-introduces the characters that this is not one story in six chapters, but six stories which must have been published separately. The stories must have been collected without re-editing and called a single story. However, if one reads still further it dawns on the reader that this is not six stories but one story told six times with minor variations. Lovecraft wrote these stories much the way Kelly Freas did covers for Laser Books or producers make Friday the 13th films.

Lovecraft churned out these stories by formula. He introduces the main character and Herbert West, sating how they met in medical school. He says that West re-animated the dead and it caused trouble in the past. Then he explains the new experiment and how by bringing someone or something back from the dead, West had created a really hideous being, that if you saw it it would really scare the Bejesus out of you. Actually, the closest analogy to this style of story-telling is that of the Hammer "Frankenstein" series, in which the scientist tries a different experiment in each film, but they all seem to end in shambling horror.

Lovecraft told this same story six times and was probably paid as if each was an original. In actual fact, the film was probably no worse than the story. It did use a number of ideas from the story and molded them together into a seventh Herbert West story, somewhat more complex than the first six, but not all that different.

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NOMINATE MARK R. LEEPER FOR HUGO FOR BEST FAN WRITER

AMAZON by Brian Kelly and Mark London
Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1983, \$9.95.
A book review by Mark R. Leeper

It is a region of contradictions. It is a land of dreams coming true; it is a land of nightmarish injustice. It is a land of incredible wealth; it is a land of incredible poverty. Its resources are too great for man to ever make a dent in; its resources will be gone by the turn of the century. The jungle is an implacable, invincible enemy; the jungle is as fragile as a flower and is already dying. It is a land of infinite promise; it is a land of constant failure. In other words, it is one hell of a mess!

Amazon is the true account of two journalists' journey to investigate the vast territories surrounding the Amazon River. Brian Kelly and Mark London go from town to village to boat to city through Brazil and Peru trying to get a better picture of what is really happening in the Amazon and instead getting a mosaic of diverse and contradictory impressions.

One theme they return to again and again is whether the jungle is in danger of being depleted, and with it a substantial part of the world's oxygen supply. The authors present a gamut of opinions. To some the jungle will soon be gone; to others, scarcely any of it is gone. Of the many opinions the writers hear, the most believable is that only about 3% of the jungle has been deforested, but the yearly rate of deforestation increases each year. If the rate of increase continues as it has, the jungle will be in real trouble in the next decade or so.

But while Brazil looks at the Amazon rain forest as a gold mine waiting to make the country rich, one attempt after another seems to be foolish and end in disaster. The rubber trees that brought a short-lived affluence to the area were transplanted to other parts of the world where greater profits were made from them. And it is not just the locals who fail to make a go of things in the jungle. Henry Ford built a company town to grow rubber trees plantation-style. The town would have suited Detroit well, but the houses, designed in the U.S., did not have the ventilation needed for the area. Growing fields of rubber trees close together was a worse mistake. A contagious parasitic fungus spread from tree to tree, ruining Ford's dream of Fordlandia.

In much the same way, project after project dies in the Amazon of failure to understand the region. When projects don't fail, more often than not they are run by someone getting rich by raping the jungle. As one particularly vicious lumber entrepreneur says gleefully, "God has given us this forest for us to take advantage of. We are to use it as we need it."

It is clear throughout the book that the authors disapproved of much that they saw. The hero of one passage will be the villain of another. Landowners fighting the government to stay alive will by Indian oppressors later. Amazon is a glum travel book with moments of humor, but usually at the expense of the locals. One gets the impression that it is equally depressing to visit the Amazon or to know the authors.