
Subject: SF-LOVERS Digest V6 #100
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Reply-To: SF-LOVERS at SRI-CSL
To: SF-LOVERS@SRI-CSL

SF-LOVERS Digest Wednesday, 8 Dec 1982 Volume 6 : Issue 100

Today's Topics:

- Themes - time travel, shrinking
- Misc - small presses, beginning SF
- Queries - Sharra, perfect space suit
- T.V. - Star Trek "Menagerie" & star dates
- Movies - SW/TESB/ROTJ the other, light-saber, plot prediction

Date: 6 Dec 82 20:32:17 EST (Mon)
From: Fred Blonder
Subject: Re: Time travel

From: Rene Steiner

There are a lot of books concerning time travel, some good and some not so good. What are some favorites?

``Door into summer" (Heinlein) and ``Time and Again" (author unknown), not to be confused with the movie ``Time After Time".

Date: 6 Dec 82 10:03:04-PST (Mon)
From: decvax!microsof!uw-beave!uw-june!palmer at Ucb-C70
Subject: shrinking

Enough of this science fiction stuff, try reality?

When comet Kohoutek (sp?) passed by one year, there was someone (in Arizona I think) who claimed that he was shrinking people (voluntarily), so that they could fit onto an alien's spaceship before

the comet hit the earth (on Christmas, of course).

As you can see, we don't really need sf authors, pseudo-truth is stranger than fiction.

David Palmer

Date: Tue, 7 Dec 1982 0843-CST
From: marick at DTI (Brian Marick)
Subject: Small presses

I'd like the addresses of some small presses: Gregg Press, Elephant Press, and the like. Short descriptions of what they publish would also be helpful. Please mail direct to me and I'll summarize for the digest.

brian

Date: 5 Dec 1982 1333-EST
From: Stephen R Balzac
Subject: Sharra

For those who are unaware of it, Sharra is a "character" from Bradley's Darkover series.

From: duntemann.wbst
Date: 7-Dec-82 12:22:51 EST
Subject: Fantastic Voyage

There are more worms in the concept of miniaturization than are immediately obvious, as with most good SF fetishes. I can think of only one author who even tried to come to grips with any of them, and that's our old friend Dr. Asimov.

I read Fantastic Voyage when it was originally serialized in (would you believe) the Saturday Evening Post early in 1966, and later when the book hit print. Here's a couple of points Dr. A. brought to light:

You do not compress space without dilating time. Time passed much more slowly for the microsub's passengers than it did for the Real

World. What was one hour in the Real World was a great many hours in Benes' bloodstream.

Communication with the sub was next to impossible. Radio waves produced by the sub were actually wavelength-reduced far beyond visible light into UV. It was tracked on its journey by radiation from its nuclear power plant.

You do not simply poke a tube into Benes' lungs to grab more air to breathe; the air molecules are almost literally big enough for the sub's passengers to see; in the novel they used an on-board miniaturizer to reduce the size of the air molecules to compatibility with what was on board.

Asimov never explained why, but his contention was that radioactive material is not reduceable, so that the atomic pile in the sub's engine was driven by a speck of nuclear dust which "grew" to the proper size as the sub shrank.

The screenplay played fast and loose with some of these items, but the novel did its best to jive with physics as we knew them in 1966. Visually, the film was stunning for its time; in particular the views of the interior of the brain, with luminous purple impulses racing along spiderweb neurons, impressed the hell out of 13-year-old me. I caught the film's great error, even then: They didn't take the sub out with them, and left behind fifty tons of metal and glass atoms to automatically return to normal size inside Benes' poor head. Now that's an Excedrin headache...

(In the book, of course, the micronauts made damned sure the white blood cell which engulfed the sub followed them out through Benes' tear ducts, and they "grew" in the miniaturization room with a proper pile of wreckage behind them. Asimov always comes through.)

I know of no other work of fiction which dealt so squarely with the problems of large-scale miniaturization.

--Jeff Duntemann duntemann.wbst@parc-maxc

Date: 8 December 1982 01:02-EST
From: Stewart D. Rubenstein
Subject: The perfect spacesuit

Mike Meyer mentioned one example of the attempt to describe an optimal spacesuit. This topic has been at least glancingly addressed in probably hundreds of novels.

My vote for the perfect spacesuit goes to the symbiotic growth in Spider & Jean Robinson's "Stardance". Even the humans' original spacesuits are pretty minimal. This is an excellent novel, by the way; the characters are mostly believable, including the "aliens", and I've read no other book which so vividly conveys a feeling for the absolute \awesomeness/ of outer space.

stew

Date: 7 Dec 1982 2214-EST
From: Nat Feldman
Subject: Miscellaneous

1) Shrinking-There was an Avengers episode entitled "Mission-Highly Improbable", that involved a device for shrinking spies, tanks, etc.

2) Favorite ST-Personally, my favorites correspond exactly with Steve Balzac's, and my least favorite (to be kind) is "The Mark of Gideon". That episode's premise always struck me as utterly ridiculous, and was just a way of being topical. My eating club (Stevenson Hall, Princeton University, circa 1975) established an in-house ratings guide from 1 (worst) to 5 (best). The solitary episode that rated a five, I believe, was "The Trouble with Tribbles". It's my father's favorite as well.

3)My First S.F.-comic books, including the translation of the French Tin-Tin's. Also, Citizen of the Galaxy and Runaway Robot by Lester del Ray.

4) WAPP, a New York, northern New Jersey FM rock station is at 102.5 on that rather crowded dial. I did not know they were broadcasting Dr. Demento, and I would appreciate someone telling me when it's on.

5) Someone (sorry I missed the name) suggested discussions on comic book topics or some such. Although I enjoy them, I have given up reading them for now mostly because I cannot afford them. I do credit comic books with my early interest in science, expansion of my vocabulary, and love of reading-despite the anti-intellectual connotation they entail.

--Nathaniel Feldman

Date: 6 Dec 82 12:35:08-PST (Mon)

From: harpo!eagle!mhuxt!mhuxj!mhuxi!macrev at Ucb-C70
Subject: SF beginnings

I read my first sf in the seventh grade -- we all ordered paperbacks, and I ordered "Costigan's Needle" for me, and a book on teen-age etiquette to please my mother. From "Needle" I went to Wolheim's (sp?) "Green Man From Mars," Heinlein's "Secret of the Martian Moons," and the Lucky Starr series (remember "Lucky Starr and the Oceans of Venus?"). Then I went through my Andre Norton phase. Her early stuff was fantastic. How about "Starman's Son," "Starborn," and "Star Gate?" For old time's sake, I reread Star Gate a few weeks ago. Even at my advanced age (I was in the seventh grade in 1957), I still get a kick now then reading some of those old "young adult" sf novels.

Mike Lynch BTL Short Hills

Date: 7 Dec 82 16:45:32 EST (Tue)
From: Fred Blonder
Subject: Re: Trek

From: Lauren Weinstein

Many of the lines from "Menagerie" that dont seem to make much sense (in the "flashback" footage) make perfect sense when viewed in their original context.

--Lauren--

One of these which took me quite a long time to figure out is how they got the footage of Capt. Pike walking back to the Talosian's elevator with the girl after he had beamed down to the planet, which was televised to the Enterprise at the end of ``The Menagerie''. Since they couldn't have known of the need for this scene when ``The Cage'' was filmed, and the notion that they went to the trouble of re-creating the set for a 5-second shot seemed equally ridiculous, there was no explanation for where this film came from.

The answer lies in Capt. Pike's request: ``You'll give her back her illusion of beauty?', to which the Talosian replies: ``Yes, that and more.". The ``more" the Talosian was referring to (in the original) was the illusion of Capt. Pike returning with her to the Talosian's caves, not ``more beauty" as was implied in the version which made it to TV. Thus in ``The Cage" the film is of an illusory Capt. Pike returning to the elevator while in ``The Menagerie" it is used as a

scene of the real capt. Pike.

This change of context seems rather clever. (and fortunate too, that they were able to do it)

From: CAIN@MIT-AI
Date: 12/07/82 22:42:13
Subject: Stardates and ROTJ

CAIN@MIT-AI 12/07/82 22:42:13 Re: Stardates and ROTJ

To: sf-lovers at MIT-MC

Just a quick note:

Stardates are an arbitrary sequence of 5 digits (XXXX.X) in Star Trek. SUPPOSEDLY, they take into account relativistic effects, but noone has EVER explained that one to me.

About ROTJ, Obi Wan, and "The Other"--
Why shouldn't Obi be corporeal [sic]???
ROTJ chronologically comes BEFORE Star Wars (or A New Hope, as you like), and thus has not yet been killed. Also, since this is (most probably, it seems to me) about the end of the clone wars,

why does it even have to mention "the other"? In fact, they could make alot more if they DON'T reveal him...(her?)

Jonathan Levine
CAIN @ MIT-AI
(at least for December...)

Date: 6 Dec 82 20:19:54 EST (Mon)
From: Fred Blonder
Subject: Re: "Won back from the dark side"

Subject: "Won back from the dark side"

Vader? won back from the dark side? How large a stack of bibles would you make Adolf Hitler stand on before you believe he was "won back" from genocidal tendencies? After all, Vader only destroyed one planet...

No! It was Tarkin who ordered Alderaan destroyed. Vader just sat back and enjoyed the show.

Date: 5 December 1982 01:43 mst
From: Schauble.HDSA at M.PCO.LISD.HIS
Subject: "Won back from the dark side"
Reply-to: Schauble%PCO-Multics at MIT-MULTICS

Date: 1 Dec 1982 2233-PST
Subject: "Won back from the dark side"
From: Dave Dyer

Vader? won back from the dark side? How large a stack of bibles would you make Adolf Hitler stand on before you believe he was "won back" from genocidal tendencies? After all, Vader only destroyed one planet...

Unless my memory is suffering from several undetected parity errors, it wasn't Vader who destroyed Alderaan. It was Governor Tarkin.

Paul

Date: 6 Dec 82 16:23:01-PST (Mon)
From: decvax!duke!mcncldennis at Ucb-C70
Subject: Re: SW other again

Ah HAH! If it isn't someone we have seen, and there are no new characters, then it must be the Millenium Falcon itself! Don't forget that Han had to get C3P0 to talk to the Falcon in order to learn what the trouble was after Lando didn't fix it. Therefore, there's something in there...

With tongue firmly planted in cheek...

Date: 6 Dec 1982 1654-EST
From: Stephen R Balzac
Subject: The Other

In reality, the other is Kim Kinnison (the Gray Lensman, from Doc Smith's books), who will drop in via Hyper-Spatial tube with Mentor right behind him, and Richard Seaton in the Skylark of Valeron to back them up.

Date: 7 Dec 82 20:02:10 EST (Tue)
From: Rene Steiner
Subject: Luke's light saber

When his hand was cut off, his light saber fell into that long waste disposal chute (or whatever it was). When he fell in, and landed at the bottom, did he get it back in the moment before he fell threw the trapdoor?

This brings another, old, question: if Luke's father gave Obi-wan his lightsaber to give to Luke, and Darth is Luke's father, where did Vader get his saber? I got the impression that they were fairly rare. (Maybe he saved up box tops from Crunchy Rebels cereal?)

- rene

Date: 6 Dec 82 21:16:03 EST (Mon)
From: Fred Blonder
Subject: ROTJ: A scene I'd like to see

The line: "I've got a bad feeling about this." has of course become a Star Wars cliché. The proper person to utter the line in RotJ would be Darth Vader at the start of the light saber battle between him and Luke, when he realizes Luke has been practicing.

Date: 06 Dec 82 20:55:56 PST (Mon)
From: Stephen Willson
Subject: TESB Plot

Greetings fellow speculators:

I think we can deduce a lot about the plot of TESB by reasoning from a purely technical standpoint. Consider the over-riding consideration: Lucas is a sensitive person. He wants very much to make as many people happy as possible. This is his mission.

In SW4:ANH, he hit the broadest possible market: the average American. The reviews, while very favorable, still contained some biting remarks. Where is the love interest? Where is the deeper

meaning? The evil vs. good was often considered too black and white.

The result of this is SW5:TESB, in which the issues are less black and black and there is a love interest. But where is the deeper meaning? I would like to suggest that many people will be satisfied with Lucas if he does something somewhat abstract in SW6:RotJ. He has the job of doing this while not alienating the average American. How can the wizard of ILM accomplish both goals?

Simple, as I see it. What's your favorite SF movie with 'deep' meaning? 2001, of course. But 2001 is special: you can see it stoned and still think it's great, because of the flashy ending. Here's how I see the basic plot structure of SW6:

It has to start out with punch. That's to keep Mr. Average American happy. The punch is from Lando and Chewie rescuing Han. Using the usual business of intercutting two plots that join later (ala the first two movies), we also see Luke continuing his training and wrapping up a few plot strands in conference with Yoda and OB1.

After Han is rescued (Luke is still training) he returns to the new rebel hide-out on Tatooine to be reunited with the princess. The main action here is Han's troublesome decision whether to settle down or to remain Han 'Solo'. How will this be resolved? This is intercut with the rebel's preparing the final assault (do or die) on the Emperor's palace. Luke is not seen so much. In fact, we begin to worry, will he arrive in time to help out?

After exposing Han's reluctance to settle down, we start intercutting with Darth and the Emperor. We are introduced to 'the other' during this time. Darth is in charge of organizing the defense of the Palace. Still no word from Luke, as the rebel's begin to transport themselves to the Palace. Han is in charge, since the guy in charge in SW5 was killed.

The battle begins (lots of explosions for Mr. Average American). Han is almost killed, but *Surprise*, Luke shows up under the ethereal guidance of OB1 and saves him. (After all, as Han says, "That's two you owe me Junior".) We begin intercutting between Luke's independent trek through the Palace in search of Darth and the Emperor, and the general battle.

Luke and Darth come upon each other. Now comes the 'deep' part that Mr. Average American can get into. Remember 2 things: in SW5 we saw just a taste of Darth's power in terms of winging stuff around. Also, SFX have improved since then. One imagines the ensuing fight to be fought not only with light sabres but with the maximum available power from the force. The 'deep' part is going to be the mental battle that wages between Luke and Darth. Darth is going to pull out all the stops and do clever things to try to trick Luke (like changing form and causing all kinds of neat illusions to try to confound Luke). Fortunately, the ethereal OB1 will help out. Their fight will be quite psychedelic. Meanwhile, the more mundane fighting by the rebels will be intercut.

Leia will be captured along with Han by the Emperor. They will be

held as hostages against an advancing Luke and army. (Luke will have dispatched Vader by this time.) Unfortunately, Luke is extremely weak from his battle with Darth, and can't save them alone. Good thing for the 'other', who will provide the required opening.

Everyone is saved. Han settles down with Leia. Luke marries the Emperor's daughter, thus unifying the kingdom. We have a psychodelic ending. (You can tell that I think many people will take the psychodelic ending to be 'deep', somehow.) Darth and the Emperor are dispatched. The long struggle to rebuild a civilized Empire begins as the screen irises down to reveal the credits.

Remember, you heard it here first!

-- Steve Willson

End of SF-LOVERS Digest
