
Subject: SF-LOVERS Digest Vol 6, #64
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SF-LOVERS Digest 20-Oct-82 Volume 6 : Issue 64

Today's Topics:

APRICON V, E.E. Smith's Family D'Alembert, Hogan getting better?,
Reviews of Niven/Barnes' DESCENT OF ANANSI, Stallman's THE BEAST,
Murphy's THE SHADOW HUNTER

Date: 17 Oct 1982 2033-EDT
From: Kenneth H Lee
Subject: APRICON V

APRICON V will be held on November 6, 1982. GoHs will be Joan D. Vinge and Jim Frenkel. Noon Til Midnight. Ferris Booth Hall at Columbia University at 115th and Broadway.

/Ken

Date: 19 Oct 1982 0953-EDT
From: Joseph M. Newcomer
Subject: Family D'Alembert

I have in my collection the following:

Imperial Stars (#1)
Strangers' Moon (#2)
The Clockwork Traitor (#3)
Getaway World (#4)
Appointment at Bloodstar (#5)
The Purity Plot (#6)
Planet of Treachery (#7)

The series is not yet complete as far as plot line.

joe

Date: 19 Oct 1982 1027-EDT

From: David Dyer-Bennet

Rick Schofield -- I think that Hogan has been getting better as a writer with each book. Stylistically, Voyage is probably his best book. However, I enjoyed even his very first one, and some of the details you mention (such as his eye for human detail) have always been present to some extent. I think you should probably read some more Hogan.

Tim Shimeall -- Speaking of Dream Park, I recently read Descent of Anansi, also by Niven and Barnes. I was very disappointed with Dream Park. It wasn't a bad D&D story, but it was a lousy Niven book. Descent, however, was quite good. Like Oath of Fealty (Niven & Pournelle), it deals somewhat with the interaction between high-tech people (space colony, arcology) versus the unfortunately-still-existing real world. However, Anansi is more a personal story and less a political/philosophical story. In fact, I could almost call it relatively light, but enjoyable, space adventure with tinges of high politics thrown in.

Date: 19 Oct 82 16:30-PDT

From: mclure at SRI-UNIX

Subject: landmark list location

A couple years ago, there was a poll for landmark SF works which resulted in an excellent reading list. The list is again available, this time on SRI-CSL in SF.LANDMARK. To get a copy, connect to SRI-CSL via FTP, login ANONYMOUSly, and grab the file. If you don't have access, send a note to sf-lovers-request@sri-csl and a copy will be sent to you.

Date: 19 Oct 1982 2157-EDT

From: HEDRICK at RUTGERS (Mgr DEC-20s/Dir LCSR Comp Facility)

Subject: a couple of new books that are worth reading

microreviews:

Robert Stallman, The Beast. One of the few truly original books I have read in the last few years. An excellent exploration of an alien being

and humanity.

Pat Murphy, *The Shadow Hunter*. Another of this small crop of really original books. Juxtaposes a young Neanderthal shaman with modern society. The plot sounds corny, but is very impressively executed.

reviews:

I strongly endorse Roland Green's favorable review of Robert Stallman's trilogy (*The Orphan*, *The Captive*, and *The Beast*). He manages to break new ground with each of the books. If you are going to read all of them, you should read the third one last. Each of them is satisfying when taken separately, but there is an element of mystery that the third book resolves. The basic idea is quite intriguing. We have a sort of werebeast whose human form has a separate personality. This is one of the most successful portrayals of an alien race that I have seen. The beast is clearly intelligent, at least as much so as a human. But it thinks differently. It is trapped in the human world, and has to come to grips with these rather puzzling human creatures. But its most complex problem is how to handle the human personalities that it takes on when in human form. In the first two books much of the drama comes from its struggle to deal fairly with these personalities but meet its own needs as well. (Only at the end of the third book do we find out what is really going on. I certainly would never have guessed what the real situation was, but it is quite convincing.) *The Beast* also spends a significant amount of time with a group of American Indians. It is interesting to compare this book with "*Altered States*". Both of them reach a high point reached in an Indian ceremony using drugs. To a certain extent the book can also be viewed as an exploration of "altered states". However *The Beast* is more humane, more realistic and more imaginative.

The Shadow Hunter is a book whose basic plot sounds corny, but which in fact is quite impressive. A scientist experimenting with a time machine accidentally brings a young Neanderthal into the 20th Century. (Fortunately he happens to have an appropriate wilderness environment around for him to live in.) There is no way I can say with any authority that the portrayal of the Neanderthal way of life is accurate. How can anyone know? But it is certainly convincing. One feels that this is really what it would be like to live in a world where the bear is a powerful spirit which can either strengthen the hunter who kills it, or destroy him. To a large extent this is Rousseau's "noble savage", and no doubt suffers to a certain extent from rose colored glasses. Like *The Beast*, it shows someone trying to live in a puzzling environment, doing his duty to the people he comes to love and to his own nature. It is sufficiently realistic that Sam doesn't really succeed at this. He never really comes to grips with the 20th Century, and he is powerless

to help his closest friend. But he does live "authentically", as the existentialists would say.

End of SF-LOVERS Digest

