
Subject: SF-LOVERS Digest V6 #93
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To: SF-LOVERS@SRI-CSL

SF-LOVERS Digest Wednesday, 1 Dec 1982 Volume 6 : Issue 93

Today's Topics:

Books - Gilliland's * from Rosinante, Vinge's Refugees from Heaven's Belt, Childhood's End spoiler, Adams' HHGttG, Chalker's Diamond & Wellworld series, Wolfe's Book of the New Sun series
Queries - decompression, minimal spacesuits
Themes - shrinking
T.V. - HHGttG, favorite Star Trek episodes
Movies - Star Trek, Revenge of the Jedi trailer, the Other in Star Wars / TESB

Date: 30 Nov 1982 18:31:11 EST (Tuesday)
From: David Mankins
Subject: * from Rosinante

This weekend I read three excellent books, all by Alexis A. Gilliland: "Revolution from Rosinante," "Long Shot for Rosinante," and "The Pirates of Rosinante."

Mundito (little world) Rosinante is an O'Neill space colony orbiting the asteroid Rosinante, constructed by the government of the North American Union. Of the two planned companion munditos, Don Quixote is destroyed in a labor dispute over back pay, and Sancho Panza is proxmired.

The three books tell the story of how Rosinante becomes independent, and then how it takes on the Japanese Navy in an undeclared, bloodless war.

The heroes of this book are Engineers (plus one plucky strategist and a computer prone to prophecy and Humphrey Bogart imitations). They think nothing of building a 20 kilometer long, solar-mirror pumped gas laser in a pinch (but then, they're used to building 7km-in-diameter, 50km-long habitats and they still have the equipment lying around).

These books are also about politics, they're sort of Allen Drury novels in the sky. Fortunately, they don't suffer the liability that Drury's or Pournelle's novels do--the villains are painted in shades of grey, not swaths of black, and have believable motives, and aren't simply Evil. Some of the villains aren't even villains, and some of the heroes just happen to be on the right side. In other words, just like real people.

Any way, if you're looking for some Space Fiction, with space ships and places to go in them, these books are pretty good.

Date: 30 Nov 1982 18:53:08 EST (Tuesday)
From: David Mankins
Subject: Joan D. Vinge's 'Refugees from Heaven Belt'

Heaven Belt is the perfect planetary system for space colonists: one gigantic asteroid-belt, with a single gas-giant. With all those asteroids you don't have to dig very deep to get all the minerals you need.

But, what happens when you have a civil war?

On a planet, like Earth, if you have a war that blows you back to the stone-age, well, tough. But you'll live.

In space, where EVERYTHING is manufactured--even your air and water--you can't afford to get blown back to the 20th Century, let alone the stone age, or everybody dies.

That's the point of ``Outcasts of Heaven Belt'' by Joan D. Vinge. It's a story about a ship sent to Heaven Belt by people on a colonized world (called Morningside), hoping to do some trading with the people of the fabulously-rich Heaven Belt system. When they get there, they find that, due to a civil war (the "reasons" for which are never explained) some 30 years ago, the system has been deteriorating, things going unrepaired, etc. The resources of the system are being exhausted simply trying to keep things running.

When the ship from Morningside arrives, the rival powers of the

Demarchy and the Grand Harmony are each desperate to get ahold of it, and use it to keep their people alive just a little longer. The people on the ship, who have lost most of their number in the initial attack by the Grand Harmony, just want to go home. In order to return home, the people on the ship have to refuel, which means contact, and the danger of capture.

But they also can't leave the system, with its hundreds of thousands of people, to die.

Good book.

Date: 29 Nov 82 20:30:14 EST (Mon)
From: Fred Blonder
Subject: Re: Decompression

From: CMP.TAYLOR at UTEXAS-20

It seems to me that if you kept your mouth shut, you should be able to survive zero atmosphere for about 30 seconds. I suspect that if you opened your mouth that the lungs would be much the worse for wear.

I doubt that keeping your mouth shut is what you want. For one thing, how would you close your nose, and if you didn't, what good would closing your mouth do?

The navy trains submarine crewmembers for emergency underwater evacuation by having them enter a deep water tank, through an airlock at the bottom, and float to the surface with the aid of a life preserver or some such device. As they drift toward the surface they must continually expell air from their lungs to avoid injury.

The pressure change they go through in this exercise is several atmospheres. I'm not sure what kind of injury you would suffer from attempting to hold a mere one atmosphere in your lungs. On the other hand, if you let all the air out of your lungs you might run the danger of having your lungs collapse. Probably the ``right" thing to do is to retain just a little air in your lungs.

Date: 30 Nov 1982 6:38:15 CST (Tuesday)
From: Mike Meyer
Subject: Minimal spacesuits

The perfect (and minimal) spacesuit is, of course, none at all. Therefore, ent, as that rder to determine how often and how much life support has to be provided to keep you alive in a vacuum. There have been various stories that use this idea. In particular, `Forever Enemy' by Howard L. Myers in the December '70 Analog describes the adventures of a person who . His own life-support system includes a gas converter in his throat, a stomach balloon, builtin radio, and (interstellar) transport system. There is a story (sorry, no author/title) that opens with an attack force of people so outfitted materializing above a planet. I like that image...

A more interesting question than what a perfect spacesuit is is how close can we come to the above system in the next couple of decades?

Date: 30 Nov 82 20:29:34 EST (Tue)
From: Fred Blonder
Subject: Re: explosive decompression

From: LFeinberg.es at PARC-MAXC

Clarke has written a short story involving the process of a man who must go unprotected into space for a short time. . . . The effects of the zero pressure didn't seem to be as much a problem as the direct exposure to sunlight.

I also read that story (title unknown). It concerned a dormitory compartment for the construction crew working on a partially completed space station. They wake up one ``morning" to find that they are in zero gravity and realize the compartment must have seperated from the rotating space station. Being sensible types, since they have no space suits in the compartment, they don't open any of the doors which normally lead to adjoining compartments. Meanwhile, the others at the station notice what has happened, rush out to rescue them, and communicate with them by banging on the compartment walls in morse code (or some such primitive means) to tell them when they have a spaceship with an open airlock door lined up as best they can with a compartment door.

What about other forms of radiation in open space?

Date: 30 Nov 1982 8:18:35 EST (Tuesday)
From: Drew M. Powles
Subject: childhood's end...possibly a spoiler

to Don Voreck: correction on the correction of your correction ,etc.

Read your book again.....They do not leave in spaceships. The centaur creatures leave the earth after they have done their part: somehow allowing the Overmind (correct name?) to influence the children. The earth is destroyed as the children are raised to a higher plane to join the Overmind (hence Childhood's End.....the end of the Childhood of the Human Race) All the adults have long since died out, but one lone human adult who had stowed away in a centaur spaceship and then returned with very little of his relative time passing because of the time affects of the centaur method of space travel describes the destruction of the earth and the raising of the children to the Overmind over a communication device to the centaurs as they leave the earth (bit of a long sentence there, i'm afraid).

as i said, take a look at it again, closely.

Date: 30 Nov 1982 1542-EST
From: Stephen R Balzac
Subject: shrinking

Gulliver's travels might be considered examples of shrinking and growing, although in a metaphorical sense, when Gulliver goes to Lilliput and Brobdingnag.

Also, there is a series of books about the "Micronauts". I have never read any, but they do seem to involve shrinking.

Date: 30 Nov 1982 18:26:25 EST (Tuesday)
From: David Mankins
Subject: good news for HHGttG fans

Good news, Hitch-hiker's Guide to the Galaxy fans, Douglas Adams, in an interview this evening on ``All things considered" revealed that, after he finished the second book (``Restaraunt at the end of the universe" he swore on the souls of his many ancestors that he would not write a third HHG book. Now that he's finished the third book, he's swearing on the souls of the ancestors of many of his friends that he won't write a fourth, but, he hasn't started on it yet....

Date: 30 Nov 82 17:28:22-EST (Tue)
From: David Axler
Subject: Shrinking in HHGtG

As usual, HHGtG takes a standard sf cliché (the aliens who are deadly, but tiny), and warps it beautifully into its plot. It's not really 'shrinking', but it's still well done: The episode (inserted as Arthur is being led into the bowels of Magrathea by Slartibartfast) I refer to is that dealing with the war between the V'l'hurg and the G'gugvunt [sp?], caused by Arthur's line "I've been having problems with my lifestyle lately" being sucked through a wormhole in space. When the combatants recognize that it's actually due to an ape descendant that they're fighting, they combine their fleets and send them off to destroy Earth. Alas, on arrival the entire fleet is swallowed by a dog!

The TV version of this scene, by the way, has the battle set up as an arcade game -- a very nice touch.

Date: 30 Nov 82 17:47:30-EST (Tue)
From: David Axler
Subject: Miscellaneous Comments

1) "The Citadel of the Autaurch" is not really "currently available" from the sf book club. They announced it for their November selection, but this mailing had gone out before the publisher and author announced a 2-3 month delay because Wolfe wanted to make some revisions. So, we'll see when it actually appears...

2) I think the "Mushroom Planet" books were written by Eleanor Estes Cameron, who also wrote "The Shy Stegosaurus of Cricket Creek," another fine kids sf book.

3) I've enjoyed Jack Chalker's 'Well World' and 'Diamond' series, though he's far from being a perfect writer. His ideas are, quite often, a few steps ahead of his technique, especially in the realm of characterization. In some ways, his stuff is pure "Golden Age" sf, though leavened a bit by contemporary mores and a greater interest in the 'soft' sciences. By the way, many (tho' not all) of the various hexes in the 'Well World' have names which are very definitely anagrams of those of major sf authors and/or characters; they're fun to check out.

4) SF in different media: I think it's important to note that, with the possible exception of some forms of visual media, almost all sf

that isn't in written form really starts out that way, and is then translated. Movies, radio plays, and the like all have scripts, from which the director/cast/producer/etc. must develop the visual possibilities. Many illustrations, esp. if they're directly connected with the publishing industry (books/mags), are also related to a piece of text. [And, when they're not, the authors often get annoyed; e.g. Donald Kingsbury's ire about the fact that the cover to "Courtship Rite" did not show tattoos that were anything like those described in his novel.]

Much of the translation is dependent on the work of the "special effects artists," of whom little has been said in sfl. Overall, they're an impressive crew. The best source of info for what's going on in that field, by the way, is not 'Cinefantastique,' but rather a lesser-known magazine, 'Cinefex,' which does some superb reporting. Of course, both have a similar problem -- they're dependent (symbiotically?) on what the various studios will provide them in terms of illustrations and prints; this does, though, provide the studios with extra publicity.

Date: 29 Nov 82 19:58:06 EST (Mon)
From: Fred Blender
Subject: Re: ST2WOK; inconsistencies

From: Reed B. Powell

CETI-ALPHI START SYSTEM:

They land on Planet #5, but think it is #6. Why?
. . . the explosion would indeed . . . have shifted the
orbit of at least #5 . . . This certainly would have been
noted by astronomers SOMEWHERE.

According to the book, CA-5 and CA-6 were a binary planet. The explosion of CA-6 would have a tremendous effect on CA-5 in this case. Also according to the book, the only previous missions to the Ceti Alpha system were the Enterprise's visit (which was kept secret to prevent anyone from trying to rescue Khan), and an unreliable robot probe some 100 years earlier, so the Reliant's crew wouldn't have known for certain what to expect. But then, why did Checkov forget about Khan? Was it because he wasn't in the "space seed" episode and so never knew in the first place?

I am annoyed at movies which require you to read the book to get the full story. This just means that the movie can't stand on its own.

Date: Tuesday, 30 November 1982 12:16-EST
From: Vince Fuller
Subject: Best ST episode

Didn't this episode ("City on the Edge of Forever") win a Hugo award? I agree that it was one of the best episodes - it has many of the aspects of a good SF/Trek plot (some room for speculation, paradoxes, and a touch of humor) and seems to be very "together". Still, my vote for favorite episode goes to "Mirror, Mirror" (a Hugo award nominee, but not a winner) which I thought was interesting since it showed an interesting alternative look at what the Federation (Empire) and all of its constituents could have been. Well, I like both time travel and alternate world SF, so both of these rate high on my list.

--vaf

Date: 30 Nov 1982 1538-EST
From: Stephen R Balzac
Subject: Favorite ST episode

My favorite ST episode is a toss-up between Trouble with Tribbles, A Piece of the Action, Balance of Terror, and the City at the Edge of Forever, in no particular order. This list is also likely to increase or decrease without warning depending on my mood when I see a particular episode.

Date: 30 November 1982 23:42-EST
From: Charles F. Von Rospach
Subject: Best ST episode

That is City on the Edge of Forever, Written by Harlan Ellison. The original script won him a hugo, and is much superior to the (very well done indeed) story that made it to tv.

Date: 1 Dec 1982 (Wednesday) 0022-EDT
From: KENNEA at Wharton-10 (Richard Kenneally)
Subject: "...out of stone knives and bear skins!"

"The City on the Edge of Forever" is a good choice for best ST episode. It won one award (HUGO?) and was the only award winning ST episode if memory serves me. One of my favorites was discussed

earlier--"Journey to Babel". The ambassador was Gav, a Tellerite. He was killed by Thelev, an Orion surgically altered to resemble the antenna bearing Andorians. Thelev used the ancient Vulcan method of neckbreaking known as Tal-Shaya (sp?) to put the blame on Spock's father. I enjoyed this one for the aliens and the background into Spock's family. I also liked "Menagerie", loved the Horta, and enjoyed meeting Jack the Ripper. Worst goes to "The Omega Glory" with "Miri" (remember seeing the North American continent on another planet?) a close second. My favorite scene of all I think was the look on the US Air Force security guard when he was beamed aboard the Enterprise and given chicken soup.

-]Rick

[The Nicholls encyclopedia gives the following information about Star Trek Hugos:

Dramatic presentation 1967 - The Menagerie

Dramatic presentation 1968 - City on the Edge of Forever

Additionally the latter won the Writers' Guild of America award for outstanding script 1967-68. -- Stuart]

Date: 30 November 1982 0533-EST

From: Don Provan at CMU-10A

Subject: raging movie notes

has everyone forgotten so soon that we never *see* spock's body after the farewell with kirk? why's everyone so sure it's in that photon torpedo shell? (by the way, that "coffin that has the same shape as a photon torpedo" has "photon torpedo" written on the side.)

i've been sure that Luke and Leia are brother and sister since seeing SWII for the first time. it *has* to be, because there's no other way out of the love triangle without Luke "losing" Leia, something that just can't fit into the SW genre. just because Leia thinks of that deceased gentleman on the deseased planet as her father doesn't mean he is actually her flesh and blood father. i've always hoped that Leia would be seen going through jedi training, but i guess i was just dreaming that she'd be the "other".

in the recent discussion, an interesting possibility occured to me: does anyone out there think that Vadar may be won back away from the evil side of the force? if anyone could do it, his talented son might be able to do it.

that reminds me, i can't imagine them doing anything anywhere near as

complex as having Vader lie about being Luke's father. it would take most of SWIII to explain why he felt the need to lie. i can't come up with a single other example of someone lying anywhere in the first two movies, so i can't imagine such a big lie *and* a lie that is essential to the plot.

my turn to mouth off....

don

Date: 29 Nov 82 12:27:14-PST (Mon)
From: decvax!cwruecmp!krm at Ucb-C70
Subject: Yoda

I have asked several of my friends why yoda wasn't involved in the war or the current struggle. The most common opinion is that Yoda was a *teacher* of the jedi and not a jedi himself. Yoda would not and could not fight Vader.

Date: 30 Nov 1982 09:51:45-EST
From: mclean at NRL-CSS (John McLean)
Subject: the other

If Vader and Luke unite to fight the emperor, could Vader actually be the other? Also, I would like some clarification, if possible, of the CLONE wars. I've seen reference to these in earlier digests, but was never sure what to make of it. In SW1 I heard reference to what I thought were COLON (rhymes with 'cologne') wars. I assumed that 'colon' was short for 'colonial'. What is the evidence that the war actually involved clones?

jdm

Date: 30-Nov-82 13:24:58-PST (Tue)
From: CSVAX.upstill@Berkeley
Subject: ROTJ trailer

Would someone who has seen the trailer for Revenge of the Jedi care to share their impressions with me? Is it worth seeing independent of another viewing of Empire? How long is it? How informative/interesting? I'm thinking of going but not sure if it's

worth going just for that.

Mail your opinions to me (upstill@UCBVAX) or to the group.

Thanks, Steve

Date: 30 Nov 82 19:25:39-EST (Tue)
From: Gene Spafford
Subject: Star Wars, or, Cloning Around

I haven't seen it mentioned yet, so was I hallucinating when I noticed that Obi-Wan and the emperor looked exactly the same? I even think their voices were similar. If you look closely you may notice that the emperor had a hood over the upper part of his face, but the similarity was most striking (to me).

If we think in terms of clones then we might speculate that Luke's father and Darth are clones, the Emperor and ObiWan are clones, and maybe Luke or Yoda have a clone out there.

My officemate suggests that Yoda is really Luke's father and the last hope of the Jedi is the mother. Of course, what will really happen is that Leia will marry Chewbacca (she loves those hairy, strong types), Bobba Fett will sell Han to Baskin and Robbins as the flavor of the month, Lando will suddenly discover he is the only black person in the galaxy (have you seen any others outside of the ones who died in fight scenes?) and take the Millenium Falcon to search for his roots, Luke takes Yoda on the road as a fake ventriloquist act, R2D2 and C3PO run off with waring blenders (met them at a robot fraternity mixer), Darth has a change of heart (done at an Aamco shop) and becomes a hood ornament on a Jawa pimpmobile, and the emperor becomes a benevolent dictator after he learns to use the power of the force --- gently but effectively --- on his problem constipation. The rebel forces, finding themselves without intelligent, effective leadership (like our country nowadays) will fly off in search of another movie and eventually be destroyed in random encounters with the Gallactica, the Enterprise, and the Jupiter II.

There, does that leave any loose ends?

Date: 29 Nov 82 19:22:08-PST (Mon)
From: harpo!npoiv!alice!rabbit!wildman at Ucb-C70
Subject: The OTHER, again.

I have also, usually to great laughter at my expense, proposed that Boba Fett was, if not the OTHER, at least a real good guy. Consider.

1) Boba Fett DOES backtalk Vader. He is the ONLY character, other than Luke and Obewan, who gets away with it, and the ONLY ONE who gets away whole. Furthermore, Vader agrees with Fett in much the same manner that the soldier in SWIV agrees with Obewan, which seems to mean that Fett somehow managed to dominate/charm Vader into the particular action. Why he saved Solo, then, is not clear, I must admit.

2) In all of the (2 so far) movies, the treatment of the character, as far as music and cinematography, has indicated the goodness/badness of the character. Fett, when taking off with Solo, flies off into a beautiful sunset, gracefully, with his ugly ship sillhouetted (sp, yes, I know) against the sunset so that it looks actually nice, and with HEROIC music, NOT heavy music. Seems a BIt strange. (This is what actually first caught my attention)

3) BF is mentioned as the person who can always find the man. Interesting, but not conclusive.

4) We already know that Leia has some sensitivity to the force, so her detection of a TRAINED and DESPERATE Luke doesn't make me that surprised.

5) When the disturbance in in the force is strong, Leia, Luke, and Fett are withing touching distance. HmMMM. Colletively they can control Sharra, perhaps???

Why don't we all wait until next April and see for ourselves?

P.S. Wasn't the quote "The Jedi does not CRAVE revenge." I have certainly gotten things that I do NOT crave.

Date: 1 Dec 1982 (Wednesday) 0025-EDT
From: KENNEA at Wharton-10 (Richard Kenneally)
Subject: another other

Emperor: "The son of Skywalker must not become a Jedi."

Are we so sure he meant Luke's dad?

Just a thought.

-]Rick

Date: 30 Nov 1982 1527-EST

From: Stephen R Balzac
Subject: SW:TESB

The solution to everything is indeed in clones:

- 1) Obi-wan fought in the clone wars. With a slight twist of pronunciation his name becomes, as everyone has been writing it, Ob1. Perhaps there are more Ob's?
- 2) Luke's father fought in the clone wars. However he was killed by Vader, who later claims to be Luke's father.
Solution: Vader is a clone of Luke's dad who managed to kill the original. This way both statements are true:
Ob1's that Vader killed Luke's dad, and Vader's that he is Luke's dad.
- 3) The other could easily be Boba-Fet. He wears armor from the clone wars, which dates him. He has never missed a kill (before Luke) which could indicate that the force is strong in him. He was able to mask himself (if the force is indeed strong in him) from Vader, which not even Ob1 could do. Remember, Boba-Fet stood only a few feet from Vader, and Vader never felt anything. This could mean either that Boba-Fet has nothing to do with the force, or that he is so powerful that no one can tell it if he doesn't want them to. Of course Boba-Fet did miss Luke. This could be explained by the Force being strong in Luke, but on the other hand, Boba-Fet had him at point blank range. It may be that Boba-Fet wanted to miss, not wanting to kill his son: Boba-Fet being, of course, yet another clone of Luke's father.
- 4) There may be more clones of Ob1 running around, too.
After all, the hologram of the emperor looked awfully familiar...

[This seems to be the most realistic explanation of the Star Wars/TESB mystery I've seen. Anyone care to try and punch holes in it? --Stuart]

End of SF-LOVERS Digest
