

---

Subject: SF-LOVERS Digest V6 #99  
Posted by [Anonymous](#) on Wed, 01 Aug 2012 05:49:30 GMT  
[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

---

Originally posted by: utzoo!decvax!ucbvax!sf-lovers

Article-I.D.: ucbvax.320  
Posted: Fri Dec 10 11:33:59 1982  
Received: Tue Dec 14 01:28:44 1982

>From SFL@SRI-CSL Fri Dec 10 10:46:11 1982  
Reply-To: SF-LOVERS at SRI-CSL  
To: SF-LOVERS@SRI-CSL

SF-LOVERS Digest      Tuesday, 7 Dec 1982      Volume 6 : Issue 99

Today's Topics:

Misc - SF media, starting in SF  
Books - Wolfe's BOOK OF THE NEW SUN, Vinge/Martin's TRUE NAMES  
          Miller's A CANTICLE FOR LEIBOWITZ  
Queries - decompression, Sharra  
T.V. - Dr. Who, Star Trek  
Movies - SW/TESB  
Music - space rock

---

From: "WAJENBERG AT MERLIN c/o"  
Posted-date: 30-Nov-1982  
Subject: SF in different media

Daniel Spear recently asked for discussion of SF in different media, and the strengths and weaknesses of each medium. So here is my two cents' worth.

I think each medium has a characteristic range of lengths it can accomodate, for any kind of literature, not just SF. Broadcast media, like TV, movies, and radio, must either limit themselves to one or two hours or serialize. A printed story, on the other hand, can range over a much wider variety of lengths (though even they are suffering from gigantism at the moment, I think).

A one- or two-hour movie reduces to a short story or novella, if you convert the one to the other. This is one reason conversions are so often unsatisfactory. If you convert a novel to a movie, you are going to have to leave out some bits. If you are clumsy about it, you will leave out important bits; but even if you are clever about it, you will leave out some bits that any admirer of the novel liked.

Hence he will find fault with the movie, or, at best, have to excuse the movie. The various attempts to make a movie out of Lord of the Rings are good examples of this problem.

If you convert a movie into a novel, you will probably have to pad it out. This sometimes works fairly well, but then again sometimes it doesn't. The novelizations of Star Wars were middling at best, I think, and padded. The novelization of The Wrath of Kahn was pretty good, but only because the author was very good at inventing her padding and integrating it with the movie script.

I think James Blish had the right idea when he converted several hour-long Star Trek episodes into anthologies of short stories -- one short story per episode. I also think the BBC or Douglas Adams or whoever had the right idea in turning Hitchhiker's Guide into a serial. However, not all novels take well to being serialized, or to being radically trimmed. These novels simply cannot be converted successfully to broadcast media.

(Lord of the Rings might do well as a serial movie -- it was moderately good as a radio serial -- but it would take forever to produce. Also, at present there would be a strong temptation to introduce more flashy visual effects than the story really warrants.)

Some stories cannot be turned into visual media because they deal too much with non-visual subjects. To use Lord of the Rings again, it is very, very hard to come up with human actors that will live up to most reader's expectations of Elves, who are more or less DEFINED as being super-humanly beautiful. Many stories, in many genres, are very mental and spend lots of time examining the consciousness of the main characters. This doesn't turn into film easily. (Echo-chamber voices to represent thoughts might help, but they are not the fashion at present.)

Contrariwise, printed media cannot convey the visual impacts of movies and TV. That's why the novelizations of SF and fantasy movies frequently have a sheaf of pictures in the middle. If a book is to give you a visual or spatial impression, it must weave its spell slowly, with descriptive passages and allusions in the dialogue. This slow effect is not inferior to the fast one of a movie, but it is different and the one may not be consistently turned into the other. (The same limitations apply to radio as well as to books. Wind-noises and bird-song and ocean waves are all well and good, but they aren't the same as seeing the place.)

Finally, books are addressed to an audience of one, while radio, movies, and TV are addressed to a mass. A movie, especially, is addressed to a large number of people sitting together in the dark, at

the same time and place. TV and radio is addressed to a large number of people in different places at the same time. Usually, an author wants his book to be read by a great number of people, of course, but not always; many books are written for a limited audience. And books are not nearly as limited by constraints of space and time.

The result is that books can practice an elitism which the other media cannot. A book can deal with rarefied ideas or feelings at a length which would leave a mass audience bored and restless, simply because most of them are not interested in that topic. This may be why science fiction so seldom gets into the movies except as space opera. Space opera has ready visual appeal and precious little intellectual appeal, while a great deal of science fiction is (or tries to be) a literature of ideas. Consider one of James White's Sector General stories. It would make a moderately good movie in that you would have a pair of human lovers (Conway and Murchison, though they are seldom shown acting tenderly) and an interesting variety of non-humans. But the point of these stories is usually a piece of biological deduction carried out by Conway. In a movie, this would almost certainly be shoved into a few odd minutes and be lost on most of the audience, simply because they were distracted by the sight of Dr. Prilicla (an insectile empath) or Dr. Thornastor (an elephantine pathologist).

-----

Date: 6 Dec 1982 12:52:31-EST  
From: csin!cjh at CCA-UNIX  
Subject: Re re "True Names"

1. "True Names" was not exactly obscure, as it \was/ nominated for a Hugo in its category. The problem was that its category was unusually strong this year (although I happen to think that "True Names" was better than the winner, Anderson's "The Saturn Game", that may reflect my dislike of tSG's subject).

2. The rule you describe was indeed passed at Chicon; however, since it depends on the vote of the WSFS business meeting (which usually has more important things to deal with, unless it gets packed as it did this year by fanzine twits) it's not likely to be invoked very often.

The rule was passed in response to a stupid squabble between Denvention and Chicon over SUPERMAN II, which had been released on other continents (away from most eligible nominators) in the eligibility year before it appeared in this country. This is what frequently happens with the WSFS bylaws; somebody sees (or thinks they see) a problem and tries to do something about it, but by the time a fix can be ratified and take effect (the rules have been interpreted that a concom cannot be constrained by amendments passed after the concom was awarded the worldcon, which award is generally announced

before the final raitification of anything before the current meeting)  
either people have come to their senses or the external problem has  
disappeared.

-----  
From: "PAUL WINALSKI AT METOO c/o"  
Posted-date: 01-Dec-1982  
Subject: Wolfe's BOOK OF THE NEW SUN

RE: question about third book in the "Torturer" series

Gene Wolfe's BOOK OF THE NEW SUN is a tetralogy, not a trilogy. The  
four books are:

The Shadow of the Torturer  
The Claw of the Conciliator  
The Sword of the Lictor  
The Citadel of the Autarch

THE SWORD OF THE LICTOR is currently available in hard cover only.  
The first two books are available both in hard cover and in paperback.  
Book four is supposed to be out in January.

I won't risk a spoiler by discussing plot details of tSotL. Suffice  
it to say that the literary quality is up to the high standards set by  
the first two volumes, and there are plenty of loose ends to be tied  
up in book four.

--PSW

[THE SWORD OF THE LICTOR is available in a Timescape paperback. THE  
CITADEL OF THE AUTARCH is only in hardback at the moment, with a  
paperback to come in early 1983. --Stuart]

-----  
Date: 6 Dec 1982 0439-EST  
From: TYG at MIT-OZ at MIT-MC  
Subject: Miscellaneous

Several comments:

1) Trade pbs are definately for the birds, except for Starblazes. Not  
so much that they're padded and the like, but that they are actually  
of poorer quality than regular pbs. Starblaze puts out a  
well-designed, aesthetic package. But even hbs are going downhill  
fast. I'm refusing to buy hbs of Foundation's Edge and 2010 due to

the poor physical quality of the books. Edge is particularly bad, with glued binding and non-trimmed pages, it looks like an SF Book Club selection at 2-3X the price!

2) Anybody else have the probably futile wish that the other hope is R2-D2? The way things are going, someone (before this reaches the net) will suggest that the consciousness of Luke's father was implanted in R2-D2. Also, i think Lucas has been quoted that 3PO and R2 will be the only characters present in all 9 of the movies (makes sense; they're about the only two who can be played reasonably over 21 years of real-time.

3) Totally off-the-wall suggestion; How 'bout SF-L for best fanzine Hugo? Yeah, i know the existence is pseudo-confidential, but if someone put together a couple of issues of "The Best of SF-L" and stripped off the computer headers, then all N000 of us could join Constellation and vote it in.

4) Finally, juvenalia sf (although this topic may have been mined out back in summer of '81). Did anyone else read Wyndham's Rebirth at an early age? The protagonist goes from about 7 to i'd guess 16-18 and is a telepathic mutant in a hunted society. I don't think it was deliberately a juvenile, although i may be mistaken, but it certainly struck me when i was 9.

tom galloway

[Do you volunteer to find the "best of SF-L"? It should be a few months before you've finished wading through the archives! --Stuart]

-----  
Date: 5 Dec 82 19:12:39-PST (Sun)  
From: harpo!zeppo!whuxk!3722trn at Ucb-C70  
Subject: Starting in SF and other ramblings

In addition to what you first read in the sf genre, think about when and why you started. In my case, in either 5th or 6th grade I asked the librarian if there was anything else I could read besides kiddee books. She showed me the 'young adult' section which consisted of 100 version of "Debbie's First Love", and sf. Luckily I reached the age for full use of the adult section of the library before I ran out the sf books.

A crucial early influence was probably all the comics I read before that. 'Mystery in Space' and 'Metal Men' were around, and the usual Superman stuff. Back then, each issue had at least two half-page fillers on science.

re: Fantastic Voyage, I believe that Asimov did the novelization of the movie, which is an Irwin Allen bonanza.

re: book stores and such. Willimantic, Ct, about 20 miles east of Hartford, and 8 miles south of Storrs, CT. (home of Univ of Conn) has a lot of sf, and a comix division upstairs. They used to have a branch in Storrs called the Little Brother, but I don't know if it's still there.

Sorry, the name of the place is Zeissing Brothers Book Emporium.

In addition to the SF Book Shop in NY, there's also the Forbidden Planet, across the street from the Strand Bookstore around 22nd street. Check that address before you go.

The Strand has some used sf, but find it for yourself (it takes some wandering).

When in London, there's a store in the West End off the main theatre drag that sells comix and sf books, with a branch around the corner that sells all kinds of related goodies. I picked up a Tardis savings bank there.

more food for thought: George Lucas == George Luke S. ???

-----  
From: "JOHN FRANCIS AT EIFFEL c/o"  
Posted-date: 01-Dec-1982  
Subject: Dr. Who

Many thanks to the person who contributed the guide to the Dr. Who series. I printed off a copy for my wife (an avid Dr. Who fan), and she was very pleased with it. But - can anyone explain why she tried to beat me to death with it ? All I did was to tell her it was a "Who's Who"!

-----  
Date: 6 Dec 1982 0905-MST  
From: Evelyn Mathey  
Subject: SHARRA

Sharra is a violent, melevolent flame-goddess-force created by MZB in an early book which has been rewritten in two books published by SFBC under the title "Heritage of Hastur(sp?)". Sharra is keyed to a ninth level matrix and is called from a different space-time dimension by a

matrix circle. Since 'her' nature is violent 'she' awakens that side of the humans in contact with 'her'. If you don't understand this talk of matrix's etc, I can only recomend that you read some of Marion Zimmer Bradley's Darkover books. "The Bloody Sun" was the first written. "Darkover Landfall" is indeed the first in the sense of being set in the earliest time. I don't have the book here where I can check, but I believe that it was not written my MZB but by fans, and that she picked the stories out of many submitted. She has openly invited people to "play in my world" i.e. write about Darkover. The "Heritage of Hastur" is an excellent book to start with as MZB has stated the Lew has always been one of her favorite characters and is most representative of Darkover. If you are really interested in the seven domains, the gifts of each family, the order of the books etc, the Condordance is a good buy. It was put together by MZB's husband and some fans who are close friends. There are also several very active fan groups.

If you are not into parapsychology you may not care for the Darkover series. If, however, mental powers turn you on and you haven't read these, I highly recommend them. Do look at the covers carefully before buying. There are several Darkover books which are short stories written by fans. Some are fairly good and some aren't. Most contain at least one story by MZB, but they are a long way from one of her books. As far as I know MZB has been writing SF just about as long as any other woman in the field. She started when SF was very strongly male dominated.

-- Evelyn.

-----  
Date: 6 Dec 1982 1004-EST  
From: DAVID.LEWIN  
Subject: Pronouncing "Leibowitz"

The reason Leibowitz is pronounced "Leebowits" and not "Lybowits" is because it is pronounced in >>Yiddish

---