
Subject: SF-LOVERS Digest V6 #104
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To: SF-LOVERS@SRI-CSL

SF-LOVERS Digest Sunday, 12 Dec 1982 Volume 6 : Issue 104

Today's Topics:

Books - Finney's TIME AND AGAIN
Authors - Varley
T.V. - Star Trek "We the people"
Movies - SW/TESB/ROTJ sabers, clones

Date: Friday, 10 December 1982 01:27-EST
From: KWH at MIT-MC
Subject: Time travel

"Time and Again" is by Jack Finney and is definitely worth reading--
While definitely not "hard" science fiction, it is a pleasure to
read--

Ken

Date: Saturday, 11 December 1982 09:34-EST
From: Chuck Weinstock
Subject: Time and Again

Time and Again was not by the actor Albert Finney, it was by the
author Jack Finney who also wrote the Invasion of the Body Snatchers.

Date: 10 Dec 82 22:25-PST
From: mclure at SRI-UNIX
Subject: why I don't like Varley's TITAN/WIZARD

In reply to duntemann.wbsd@parc-maxc's comments:

I don't see anything specifically bad about Varley's TITAN and WIZARD, but that's just the problem. Neither is there anything spectacular or innovative. Many times have we encountered the "living world" theme within SF and here it is again with a tiresome revenge plot thrown in for good measure, not to mention an unrealistic and boring earth mother and the usual cast of zany alien creatures populating the landscape in Gaea.

When you compare these two books with his shorts and previous novel, the former pale in comparison. In the latter there's stuff that just hadn't been done before to any great degree in SF: casting off of stereotypical sex roles (the real purposes behind the frequent sex-changes his characters undergo), disorienting non-Earth environments forced into an Earth-like mode and yet still retaining a hint of non-familiarity, odd combinations of symbiont and human bodies, extremely sensitive attention to characterizations even in the face of clearly different moral and social values, frequent use of realistic first-person female viewpoints, and so forth.

Varley's shorts and first novel evoke a sort of pastoral simplicity within an enormously complex technological framework. For example, I was half-way through my first Varley story a couple years ago before I realized that I wasn't even on Earth! The depressive atmosphere of immensely superior and indifferent Invaders having ousted Man from Earth somehow appeals to me. It means that Man must put up with harsh environments and yet try to recreate something resembling his imagined home world. In essence, it is the ultimate challenge to his ability of adapting to different environments, one which Varley clearly sees as being not beyond the capability of Man.

Stuart

Date: Saturday, 11 December 1982 16:58-EST
From: MERMAN.STEVER at MIT-MC
Subject: "We the people..."

I don't believe that this argument is actually going on. If only from Saturday morning cartoons (remember those? About the bill whose greatest ambition is to become a law? Conjunction junction? There was one called "We the people..."), I would think everyone would recognize:

"We the people of the United States, in order to form a more

perfect union, do ordain and establish this constitution..."

If the quote is to be believed, it's from the preamble of the Constitution of the United States.

Date: 9 Dec 82 0:54:07-PST (Thu)
From: decvax!microsof!jerryd at Ucb-C70
Subject: Stardates in ST

I recently spent some time wading through some old junk to dig out some material I ordered in my (much) younger days from Star Trek Enterprises (or was it Lincoln Enterprises?). Having read all of the recent discussion about stardates on the net, I decided to look them up in my copy of "The Star Trek Guide", Third Revision, dated April 17, 1967. (I remember ordering it as "The Star Trek Writer's Guide," but that's not what it says on the cover.)

The Guide says that stardates were invented to avoid having to mention ST's century, thus averting arguments about the state of technology in that century. Stardates were supposed to maintain a constant progression in one story, with each decimal point representing one tenth (surprise!) of a day. It further says that the writer didn't have to worry about progression with other scripts, and that "Stardates are a mathematical formula which varies depending on location in the galaxy, velocity of travel, and other factors, [and] can vary widely from episode to episode."

I hope this settles discussion on the subject; however, I do remember that one of the ST books ("World of Star Trek", I think) mentions that the first stories were filmed with ascending stardates, but when they weren't broadcast in filming order, the above double-talk was invented.

From: Woods.pa @ PARC-MAXC
Date: 10-Dec-82 1:14:48 PST
Subject: Star Trek & Light Sabers

A few remarks on recent digests...

I'm glad somebody else thought to ask about Luke's light saber. Those two questions (did he lose his when he lost his hand, and where did Vader get his if Luke's came from his father?) have been bothering me ever since TESB first came out. (Of course, the first question won't bother me as long as Luke manages without it from now on -- hah! --

and the second won't bother me if Darth turns out not to be Luke's father -- hah!) Note that we don't actually see Luke with a saber in the closing minutes of TESB; if he shows up with one in ROTJ, there'd better be an explanation along with it! (Don't you love empty threats?)

Nice of Nathan to remember the Star Trek ratings from Stevenson Hall; I was part of the "Bridge Crew" that concocted them, and I think I even made the ratings (and accompanying plot synopses) available to SFL a year or so ago. There were in fact two 5-star (max rating) shows, one being Tribbles and the other being A Piece of the Action. I think this tells us something, e.g., it's easier to do good comedy than good drama. The basic plot of APotA was so far-fetched that the show would have been considered lousy if done seriously, but as a comedy it fits right in, and all the essential aspects of the plot are at least given an attempt at justification. Tribbles doesn't even require that much suspension of disbelief; the plot holds together and all the different subplots and running gags blend with each other very well.

The City on the Edge of Forever, which many people have pointed to as the best Trek ever, got "only" 4 1/2 stars on our 0-5 scale. We all agree that it's an excellent show, but there's a basic flaw in the plot, and in an essential element at that. [SPOILER??] The Guardian is displaying Earth history, and Spock starts recording it at some point. Then McCoy goes through the portal, and history is changed, and the "display" stops. They get the Guardian to replay it, and Kirk and Spock jump through. Later, they look at the tricorder record to compare "future" events on the two time-lines. But HOW do they manage to have a record of what the future is SUPPOSED to be, since McCoy mucked it up before the Guardian got that far? (It's also not clear how they got the recording of the changed future, since they jumped through before getting that far, but one can argue that they made the recording and then jumped through on the third showing.) Also, less significantly, why couldn't they tell which recording was which? Then Spock would have known right away whether the "correct" future required that Edith die, as soon as he saw her obituary. There is a final objection, namely that it seems odd that the events displayed by the Guardian should include such details as Edith's obituary, but one can hand-wave that by noting that her death was an important "cusp" in history.

-- Don.

Date: 8 Dec 82 19:57:56-PST (Wed)
From: decvax!cwruecmp!honton at Ucb-C70

Subject: Darth Vader = Good Guy

Its good to see that many people are taking my suggestion that Darth is a good guy seriously. However, I no longer believe in the clone theory.

There are two good reasons why it is colon (short for colonial.):

First, the classic theme of independent, hardworking good guys being threatened by the heavy evil central government makes good watching.

Second, the two Star Wars films we have seen before, (and previous films by Lucas,) are fantasy. Not hard Science Fiction, but Fantasy. Clones do not make good fantasy. How do you explain this stuff to the general population?

Still, the turn around of Darth to a good guy, now that's fantasy!

chas
(..!decvax!cwruecmp!honton)

Date: 9 Dec 82 17:32:50-PST (Thu)
From: harpo!eagle!mhtsa!alice!wookie at Ucb-C70
Subject: Star Wars clone wars

While I think it is interesting that everone is taking the ancient wars as the colon (short for colonial) wars I just thought I would point out that in the book they are clearly referred to as the "clone wars". I think therefore we had better confine our extrapolations to that fact.

Keith Bauer
Bell Labs Murray Hill
White Tiger Racing

Date: 10 Dec 1982 at 1051-PST
Subject: Star Wars: Clones and such
From: chesley.tsca at SRI-TSC

(1) Clones as we know them today (of course, anything is possible in SF) don't spring up full-grown. There is roughly a generation of age between a person and his clone. Luke could be a clone.

(2) We have a lot of father figures in SW, but a definite lack

of mothers. Who was Luke's mother? How did she die? Did she? Who was the Princess's mother? Ditto? And, of course, are there any mothers at all?

(3) Are Jedi celibate? Magicians and priests often are. Is this why they needed clones? Is this why Luke and the Princess will never get together? (Side note: Han more follows the warrior model than the magician model, and warriors are most definitely not celibate.)

(4) "The Clone Wars" is a very neutral phrase. Was the war against clones? For them? With them? Started by them? Etc.?

(5) Maybe Han is the only non-clone in the known Universe, which is why he's "Solo"... :-)

--Harry...

Date: 10 Dec 82 18:03:26-PST (Fri)
From: hplabs!hp-pcd!harold (Harold Noyes) at Ucb-C70
Subject: LUKE'S *FAILURE* - (nf)

As a Star Wars fan, here's my two cents worth--

When Luke went into the cave for his TEST, the being he was fighting was *NOT* Darth Vader. Remember that when he had defeated the being, the face mask dissolved, revealing an image of *LUKE SKYWALKER*!

Why is this significant? Is it significant? Both are good questions.

Two items which I would like to throw out for consideration:

First, could Luke's failure in the cave have been his attempt to destroy his *dark* half rather than subdue it? The idea that the evil side of a person is vital to his ability to be courageous, strong-willed, and a leader has been presented many times in sci-fi (remember Capt. Kirk when he was divided into good and bad 'clones' by the transporter?).

This includes the idea that the reason that Luke did not need his weapons while in the cave was because the conflict between the good and bad is an internal struggle. It is person subjugating one side by practising and perfecting the other. It is fought within the confines of the 'soul'.

The second item for consideration.....

How did Luke's Dark Side get in there? Is that cave the source of all evil in the Universe? And, as the Master Jedi, is Yoda the only being

who can keep those forces in check.

All of the above are thoughts for your consideration and not necessarily the personal beliefs of the author, disclaimer, disclaimer, etc., etc. ****NO FLAMES PLEASE****

Forever Yours in the Force,

Harold

Date: 10 Dec 82 13:59:05-PST (Fri)
From: decvax!cwruecmp!ccc at Ucb-C70
Subject: Clone Wars in SW/ANH and SW/TESB

Lately there has been a lot of discussion about whether it is "clone wars" or "colon wars". In both the book and the @i(official) script (as published in The Art of Star Wars), the spelling is "clone". To me this would tend to indicate that that's how Lucas intended it.

Clayton Elwell
{usenet}!decvax!cwruecmp!ccc

Date: 10 Dec 82 18:09:16-PST (Fri)
From: decvax!genradbo!wjh12!mjl at Ucb-C70
Subject: Re: Darth Vader = Good Guy

I'm afraid I still have one very good reason to believe it's "Clone Wars" instead of the increasingly popular "Colon Wars". In the original novelization of Star Wars, the term "Clone Wars" is used quite frequently. Yes, I know novelizations are generally completely different from the films on which they are based, and this one is no exception. But this one was written by George Lucas himself. Sorry, all you Colon fans...

Matt Landau
...mhuxi!wjh12!mjl
...linus!wjh12!mjl
...genradbolton!wjh12!mjl

Date: 10 Dec 82 23:54:56-PST (Fri)
From: decvax!genradbo!wjh12!clp at Ucb-C70
Subject: Re: Darth Vader = Good Guy

Come on everyone... didn't Lucas say "...remember the CLONE wars..."
in that
interview?!? This is a decidable debate...

Charles Perkins
...mhuxi!wjh12!clp

Date: 11 Dec 1982 (Saturday) 1732-EDT
From: SPEAR at Wharton-10 (Daniel Spear)
Subject: Clones of Luke's father

The whole suggestion that Darth Vader and the senior Skywalker were clones arose from an attempt to take seemingly contradictory statements by Darth Vader and OB1 and make them consistent. I saw the movies again last night, and don't believe that it is possible. Darth says, when Luke says, "He (OB1) told me you killed him (Luke's dad)", "No. I am your father..." He specifically says that what OB1 says is incorrect (or what Luke says OB1 says, which is pretty accurate (OB1 says, "A young Jedi, Darth Vader, ... betrayed and killed your father.")). Therefore, one of them must be lying. I personally think it was OB1.

Dan

Date: Friday, 10 Dec 1982 09:02:30-PST
From: RHEA::HARDY::GLASSER%Shasta at SU-Score
Subject: part 2

I stole the following from the USENET net.jokes newsgroup. I thought that SFL should see it. I hope that the author does not mind.

Daniel Glasser
[USENET address ...!decvax!sultan!dag
no reliable ARPA address.]

From: decvax!sultan!decvax!genradbo!grkermit!markm
Newsgroups: net.jokes

Hitch Hikers Guide To The Net
Episode 2 - The Flamers

(The Infinity's scanners are showing the Flamer's ships approaching fast. Arnold Lint and Rod Perfect are frantically scurrying about.

Xaphod is trying to figure out how to fly the node, and Gillian is fixing her makeup. Martin the android is off on a corner moping about how he's too young to die.)

Xaphod: This is the node Infinity, we are on a peaceful, although a bit mercenary, mission. Hold your fire.

(The commander of the Flamer's fleet appears on the screen. He appears to be a normal human, except for a small silver halo stapled to his head.)

Flamer: I am Adolf Riteyus, commander of the Flaming Queen. You have violated Flaming space and must be blasted. You will be given a fair and drawn out hearing before you are found guilty.

Rod: We didn't know this was Flaming space!

Adolf: Ignorance is no excuse. Do you think that just because you don't know something you shouldn't be responsible for it? Why, if we didn't go around blasting people who thought they were innocent, there'd be no order. The whole power structure of the Net is based on the inalienable right to flame. He who flames the loudest and strongest will prevail, for he will have maintained purity of essence by not compromising his principles. It doesn't matter what one flames about, as long as one comes out a winner. Winning the argument for mandatory retroactive birth control is one of our greatest victories. We Flamers always win because we never give up. No, things are either our way or they're WRONG.

[The "Hitch Hikers Guide to the Net" lists the Flamers as one of the most argumentative races in the Net. History shows that the Flamers went to war over the right to keep and bear tongue depressors. They also had a violent and bloody discussion over the morality of Odor Eaters. The only time the Flamers can be easily beaten in combat is on Sunday mornings when they all watch evangelist shows, or during Ronco "Mr. Microphone" commercials (their symbol of worship).]

Gillian: What should we do?

Xaphod: How 'bout evasive actions?

Marvin: It won't help.

Rod: Oh shut up!

Rod: OK, evasive action!

Adolf: Where do you come from?

Xaphod: Not from around here.

Adolf: Where are you headed?

Rod: Left.

Gillian: That's telling him?
Adolf: What is your favorite color?
Arnold Lint: My what?
Adolf: Your favorite color!
Rod: White!
Adolf: What is the maximum warp speed of a ladened Swaldrel?
Xaphod: Denebian or Rigelian?
Adolf: I don't know that . . . all right, enough evading, if you don't surrender in the next five seconds I'll blast you right out of existance.
Rod: Well, now what.
Adolf: Five!
Arnold Lint: What's this button do?
Adolf: Four!
Xaphod: That's the Illogical Drive. It propels the node on power from hard drugs and acid rock. It's kind of dangerous though.
Adolf: Three!
Arnold Lint: Should we try it?
Adolf: Two!
Rod: Well, lets not . . . Four!
Adolf: Four!
Arnold Lint: So this is it, we're all going to die.
Adolf: Three!
Martin: I warned you about this trip.
Adolf: Two!
Xaphod: All right, all right, engage the Illogical Drive!
Adolf: One!

(Arnold Lint engages the Illogical drive. Images of the movie "Easy Rider" float across the view port. "In-a-gadda-da-vida" starts coming across the radio. The 12" CRT on Xaphod's shoulder starts scrolling "Wow man, what a trip!". The scanners show that the Flamers couldn't handle the sudden flood of sensory excitation and burst their brains. This only made their reactions a bit slower though as the Flamer's brain is remarkably small. The Infinity, charged up with Liquid Super Duetrillium, was able to make warp speed and turn the corner before the Highway patrol picked them up on radar. This was fortunate for it meant that they wouldn't be caught by Spiny Norman, the 45 foot blue hedgehog that had been following them.)

Gillian: We made it.
Rod: Yah, where are we Martin.
Martin: We're way out man.
Xaphod: Oh, he's useless now - it'll take a while before he comes down.
Arnold Lint: At least he isn't so gloOmy.
Martin: Nooo body knows, the trouble I've see . . . have any of you ever contemplated the death of a grain of salt?

[The "Hitch Hikers Guide to the Net" points out that the life and death of a grain of salt can have amazing importance in the course of life on the Net. On particular grain of salt (named Nigel) was responsible for the overthrow of an entire government. Nigel gave his
