
Subject: SF-LOVERS Digest V6 #115
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Reply-To: SF-LOVERS at SRI-CSL
To: SF-LOVERS@SRI-CSL

SF-LOVERS Digest Thursday, 23 Dec 1982 Volume 6 : Issue 115

Today's Topics:

- Authors - Brunner's style
- Themes - shrinking
- Books - Bakka bookstore, Snyder's BLACK AND BLUE MAGIC
- T.V. - Outer Limits, Kung Fu as SF?, Star Trek, Voyagers,
Secret Agent, Land of the Giants
- Movies - E.T. vs The Day the Earth Stood Still, SW/TESEB/ROTJ,
Conquest of Space

Date: 21 Dec 82 14:19:36-EST (Tue)
From: David Axler
Subject: John Brunner's style

In SFL 6:110, Mankins mentions the "collage style" used by John Brunner in "The Sheep Look Up" and "Stand On Zanzibar" (it's also used in "The Jagged Orbit", the middle book of this series. Literarily speaking, this is an intentional steal on Brunner's part from the classic "U.S.A." trilogy by John dos Passos, which uses the same mechanisms to describe the Depression. Brunner's adaptation of this device to sf is quite well done, by the way, but he's not the originator.

Date: 17 Dec 82 14:15:37 EST (Fri)
From: Fred Blonder
Subject: randomness

A good shrinking story: ``A matter of Size" by Harry Bates in
``Adventures in Time and Space".

I'm not claiming that this is significant, but there are a few similarities between E.T. and Klaatu (from ``The Day the Earth Stood Still"). They both come to Earth, go into hiding, are befriended by a human, sought out and eventually captured by government agents, die, are revived and leave Earth after an emotional parting-scene. Granted, there are even more things different about them, but the similarities are interesting. Another point: if we assume that what Klaatu was doing when he made that short speech inside his ship (``Klaatu imray naruwat . . .") was communicating with his home planet for help (Aha! another similarity), and Gort used the same instrument after Patricia Neal delivered Klaatu's message, then ``Klaatu barada nikto" may just mean ``Gort: phone home" (i.e.: for instructions)

Date: 20 Dec 1982 1214-PST
From: CARROLL at USC-ISIF
Subject: Items

The book Ronen Barzel is looking for is "Black and Blue Magic", by Zilpha Keatley Snyder. * * *

In answer to Will Martin's query about "Conquest of Space":

This movie has shown at least half a dozen times in the Los Angeles area in the last ten years, so it's not impossible to find, but perhaps difficult. I think it was usually on during a weekday afternoon.

The film deals with a flight to Mars to investigate the possibility of colonization (not clone-ization!). The ship departs from 'The Wheel', the donut-style space station, and drops used fuel tanks during the voyage. I think it was based on an actual design of the time, and was pretty nice. A lot of the film dealt with interpersonal character conflicts, tied into the mission (I believe the rookie-son accidentally kills the commander- father, so the loyal old-timer becomes mutinous.).

There is quite a bit of scientific exposition in the film, but not to the point of being boring. It is laced with action, for example as the crew loses one member to a meteoroid swarm, and runs out of drinking water just before it begins snowing on Mars. They wait for proper juxtaposition of Earth and the red planet (several months), and then blast homeward, taking with them some flowers that had actually grown in the Martian soil.

I think the film reflected some of the scientific thought of the day. It was similar in many ways to Pal's "Destination Moon", being entertaining as well as thought-provoking. * * *

There's a new station out in Anaheim, California, airing "Land of the Giants" weekdays at 4, and "Secret Agent" on Saturdays. KDOC,

channel 56. * * *

Am I the only one who watches "Voyagers!" instead of "60 Minutes"? Does anybody else enjoy this show? It's really quite fun. * * *

I submit that Rocket J. Squirrel is the 'other'. He can levitate himself with ease, instantly decrypt secret messages, and mysteriously appear in Bullwinkle's hat. He always relies on his own abilities instead of weapons, and is small and cute like Yoda. You need not be told what the 'J.' stands for.

Steve

Date: 21 Dec 82 14:12:14-EST (Tue)
From: David Axler
Subject: Bakka Address & Info

(Re: Newcomer's request for info on Bakka; SFL 107)

Bakka is one of the better sf bookstores, with a good selection of new and used material from the US, Canada, Australia, and the UK. They're located at 282 Queen St. West, Toronto M5V 2A1, Ontario, Canada; phone: 416-596-8161. If you're on their mailing list, you receive the "Bakka Bookie Sheet" every so often, which lists what new items they've received, as well as stuff they expect to be out-of-print in the near future. They do mail orders extremely efficiently, and charge a minimal fee for postage and handling.

By the way, if you're planning to order stuff from them and live in the US, place your order by phone and bill it to a major credit card like Visa or Mastercharge. It turns out that the currency exchange is then processed at the rate given to banks (= credit card companies), which is several percent less than that which you'll pay if you try to get a money order in Canadian currency. And, when you read their prices, remember that (these days) the Canadian \$ is worth about \$.85 US.

Some things worth picking up that you won't find elsewhere are the group of anthologies edited by John Robert Columbo, an important Canadian fan and literateur. His "Other Canadas" is a superb collection of sf by Canadian writers, and his new "Windigo" is an excellent anthology of stories on the title topic.

Date: 21 Dec 1982 0741-PST
From: First at SUMEX-AIM
Subject: OUTER LIMITS

WOLF 357, the Outer Limits episode referred to by John Krieger, points

out some of the basic problems with this series. Let me first say that I think that Outer Limits was one of the best TV series ever, SF or otherwise. Besides the SF themes, the photographic style and moody set designs were more interesting and innovative than many films. Anyway, the WOLF 357 episode, in which a scientist is growing a microcosm of a world in his laboratory, had the potential of being an excellent episode. The implication was that human -like evolution was taking place on the planet surface and the scientist had the ability to view the activities on the planet under a microscope, with the hope of being able to see the Earth's future--a fascinating idea with its obvious Pirandellian overtones (i.e. we could be in a similar situation, under an alien's microscope). Unfortunately, the plot digresses and eventually centers on this mysterious monster which starts terrorizing the scientist and eventually is gotten rid of by destroying the planet, at the moment when the evolutionary scale had caught up to Earth. What a cop out! (Godzilla Ex Machina?!?) Many episodes had similar problems, where interesting SF concepts are overtaken by monsters. I believe the reason for this reflects the continuing SF-LOVERS discussion about SF on TV--the show aired on ABC-TV (still the sleaziest of the networks) and they required the producers of Outer Limits to have a "monster a week". Within that ridiculous constraint, it is to the producers' credit that the show was as good as it was. My favorite episode: "Controlled Experiment", with Carroll O'Connor as a martian spy doing a controlled experiment to try to find out the underlying motivations behind violence

--no monsters in this one!

--Michael (FIRST@SUMEX-AIM, FIRST@NLM-MCS)

[I'm a long-time fan of Outer Limits and have collected 24 hours of the best episodes on video-tape, uncut. I didn't save the episode you mention, WOLF 357, because I didn't think it was very good. Yes, the monster criticism is valid, but often the make-up was so amazing that a monster-a-week could almost be forgiven. And often the quality of the direction, atmosphere, and acting were very impressive. I've always held the opinion that Outer Limits (at least the first season) was second only in production quality to The Prisoner as speculative video-fiction, and far ahead of Twilight Zone, Star Trek, etc.

--Stuart]

Date: 20 Dec 1982 1827-PST
Subject: Kung Fu TV series as SF
From: Mike Leavitt

The last thing the list needs now is a new topic, but . . . I wonder if anyone has had the same reaction to the old David Carradine series

Kung Fu that I have.. I get the same kind of lift from watching old episodes that I get from watching a few of the old STs, and I don't exactly know why. Last week I saw a repeat that began to give me some insight, in that Caine acted a bit more like a Superman than he usually does, and I made that particular connection. There are very definite echoes of some Van Vogt. Has anyone else had similar reactions?

Mike

Date: 19 Dec 1982 0856-PST
From: Henry W. Miller
Subject: Kirk, etc

Has anyone out there see William Shatner's new show, "T. J. Hooker"?

Well, it is another cop show, but Shatner pulls it off well.. He is an old vetren of the the force, (no, no, not that FORCE...) who spends part of his time with the trainees. As a cop, he is a no-nonsense type of guy. As a human being, he is full of foibles, as are we all.

I like the show. At last Shatner has another outlet so diaplay his true acting ability other than Star Trek remakes. (If you don't believe the man can act, then you didn't see "The Wrath of Kahn". It took me six times to see that movie before I didn't cry at Spock's funeral..)

Interesting point: in one of the earlier episodes of "Hooker", Vic Tayback, (Mel on "Alice", better known as JoJo Kracko in "A Piece of the Action") made a guest appearance.

Now, if they could get Nimoy as a guest star. Wow BUT, What a trip, if in addition to Nimoy, they got DeForrest Kelly, Jimmy Doohan, Walter Koenig, George Takei, Nichelle Nichols and Majel Barrett in a show. Even playing bit parts, it would blow alot of folks away. It would probably blow "Hooker" into the top 10 at least for a couple of weeks.

Hooker is alot like Kirk. Maybe that is why Shatner is so good at playing "autocratic leaders". They both go by the book, until it suits them to do otherwise.

It is truly a trip here i the Bay Area, watching Star Trek at 7:00 PM, then watching Hooker from 8:00 to 9:00. Same man, but 15

years later. Ya'know, he's not getting older; he's getting better.

-HWM

[Supposedly Nimoy *will* guest star on a T.J. Hooker episode. They showed a brief clip. He and Shatner will be antagonists. --Stuart]

Date: 14 Dec 82 12:58:20-PST (Tue)
From: harpo!ihnp4!ihuxx!marks at Ucb-C70
Subject: Re: The Emperor

I'm not surprised that the credits showed the Emperor played by someone else. I seem to recall that Alec Guinness died sometime after SW was filmed. Am I all wet or what?

Mark Beckner Bell Labs

Date: 14 Dec 82 16:54:19-PST (Tue)
From: harpo!npoiv!hou5f!hou5d!hou5a!hou5e!jjm at Ucb-C70
Subject: The Emperor in The Empire Strikes Back

The Emperor in TESB was played by an English actor named Clive Reville (sp?).

I have seen him in other movies, so this is not a fake name.

Despite a previous news item, Alec Guinness is not dead. (Anyone who saw the recent TV movie "Smiley's People" knows that.)

Jim McParland
BTL - Holmdel
hou5e!jjm

Date: 22 Dec 1982 (Wednesday) 2347-EDT
From: SPEAR at Wharton-10 (Daniel Spear)
Subject: Voice of the Emperor

Clive Revill (People were looking at me funny when they saw me take notes at the movie theatre, but damned if I can remember that name.)

Dan

Date: 20 Dec 82 09:41:31 EST (Mon)
From: Craig Stanfill
Subject: Luke's Light Sabre

If Han Solo's attitude towards Light Sabres is indicative of the general sentiment towards the weapon, I expect Luke can pick one up at a flea market or third hand junk shop for a few credits.

Date: 20 Dec 82 10:51:45 EST (Mon)
From: Rene Steiner
Subject: more decompression and luke's hand

1) Well, the problem of explosive decompression was solved once and for all in 'Airplane II: the Sequel'. Kent McCord and the other guy (sorry, don't remember his name) were sucked out of the airlock and danced a last waltz together to the tune of 'Blue Danube'. Neither looked exploded or messy in any way. So there you have it. Of course, they also had air on the moon ...

2) I thought that Luke would be killed in RoTJ even before Lucas mentioned 'the [one] survivor' of the second (current) trilogy. There are elements of Norse mythology in the Star Wars movies. For instance, in 'The Beowulf', Beowulf has three encounters with evil forces. The first, with Grendel, he wins handily, and there is wide celebration. The second, with Grendel's dam, he barely wins with outside help (the sudden appearance of a magical sword). The third, with the dragon, he barely kills with the help of his one faithful retainer, but he is mortally wounded, and dies. Also, in the first, Grendel comes to his world. He seeks out Grendel's dam in her world, and almost dies. Anyway, Lucas seems to be in to mythological stories. There is also Tyr, who lost his hand to the wolf Fenrir. Losing a hand sometimes symbolizes losing one's humanity. Tolkien used mythology heavily in his tragic stories - Morgoth and (I think) Beren, and of course Frodo loses a finger. Also (one more) people who learn about themselves, who become whole through their experiences, tend to die in the Heroic Tradition. Boromir, Beowulf, and Frodo (who dies for all intents and purposes), and Spock, and others (sorry, it's been over a year since my Northern Mythology course - I don't remember all the characters - any mythology buffs out there?). Anyway, the point of my rather rambling discourse is that when the third movie comes out, there are sure to be lots of mythological roots to be found in the trilogy (and in the others as well). Anyway.

- rene

Date: 21 Dec 82 16:21:21 EST (Tue)
From: Speaker-To-Animals
Subject: Light Saber Power Source.

The Light Saber is NOT powered by the force. In the book, Luke examines the Light Saber Obi-Wan gives him and notes that the rating on the power cell is the largest he has ever seen on a device this size.

Clearly the Light Saber needs batteries.

- Speaker

Date: 20 Dec 82 14:08:15 EST (Mon)
From: Rene Steiner
Subject: detection of good and evil in the Force

Ah, but Good CAN be detected - Darth Vader detected Obi-wan on the Death Star ("I feel a presence in the force, someone I have not detected since...." not an exact quote, but you get the idea.)

- rene

Date: 15 Dec 82 18:32:41-PST (Wed)
From: decvax!utzoo!watmath!bstempleton at Ucb-C70
Subject: Re: Food for thought.....TESB, the "other, etc.

I think the force is with Han Solo, too - although he's not the other.

I should point out however that Han did NOT hit Darth Vader in the death star battle. He hit Vader's wingman, and that ship went out of control and crashed into Vader's ship.

End of SF-LOVERS Digest
