
Subject: SF-LOVERS Digest V6 #118
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Reply-To: SF-LOVERS at SRI-CSL
To: SF-LOVERS@SRI-CSL

SF-LOVERS Digest Tuesday, 28 Dec 1982 Volume 6 : Issue 118

Today's Topics:

Books - J. Lieber's BEYOND REJECTION
Query - F. Lieber's doings
Misc - Harper's attack
Movies - The Dark Crystal, SW/TESB/ROTJ

Date: 17 Dec 82 16:33:58-PST (Fri)
From: decvax!yale-com!brunix!rb at Ucb-C70
Subject: Re: misc.

I read BEYOND REJECTION a while back. It's entertaining, but nothing stupendous. I didn't find it very mind-expanding.

Ronen

Date: 23 Dec 82 10:12:38-PST (Thu)
From: decvax!utzoo!utcsrgv!kramer at Ucb-C70
Subject: Fritz Lieber

Does any one know what, if anything, Fritz Lieber has been writing recently?

Date: 17 Dec 82 9:48:00-PST (Fri)
From: harpo!ihnp4!ixn5c!inexc!pur-ee!CSvax.Pucc-H.Physics.retief at Ucb-C70
Subject: Re: SF attacked in December Harper's magazine

Mr. Army Klein is most obviously a BIG jerk and I doubt he has ever read a complete SF book (instead of reading the inside jacket.) There really isn't much to flame about, because anyone who has read SF can easily see that Mr. Klein a big mouth and, surely, has big shoes to stick in it.

Dwight

Date: 17 Dec 82 18:04:46-PST (Fri)
From: harpo!floyd!trb at Ucb-C70
Subject: Re: SF attacked in December Harper"s magazine

It is with great fear that I post this message, but I have always let my feelings on non-asinine issues be known, so...

I find the childish reactions (over this medium) to the Harpers article laughable. If the guy was accurate then he was accurate. If he was inaccurate then he was inaccurate. But SF fandom must rear its macho head in defense of the wrongs (right or wrong) that this fellow has committed.

I am not an SF fanatic, and I am not a Harpers reader. I have read a small bit of SF, and I have found the classic works satisfying and the trash disappointing. I see that there are many SF fans who chew through SF pulp as though it was their sole subsistence. I see people involved in SF who appear every bit as addicted to it as others are addicted to drugs and alcohol.

I'm not saying that all SF is trash, but I AM saying that much SF is trash, much of any literary genre is trash. Trouble is that the really hungry SF fiends buy and defend this trash, and when someone attacks the mass of SF work as a whole, they get offended, rather than either recognizing the attacker as ignorant or separating the wheat from the chaff.

[Here it comes...] I have met SF fans who seemed to have no connection to the real world. I find that sad.

My God. I fully expect to have three-headed monsters from outer space burning effigies on my lawn by morning; that's the price I gotta pay.

Andy Tannenbaum Bell Labs Whippany, NJ (201) 386-6491

Date: 19 Dec 82 11:17:26-PST (Sun)

From: harpo!npoiv!alice!mhtsa!eagle!mhuxt!mhuxi!macrev at Ucb-C70
Subject: Thoughts on trb, Harper's, and SF

Andy makes some good points -- I doubt that he'll get many flames, but who knows (looked out at your front lawn lately, Andy?). But he's not telling most of us anything we haven't already thought through many times. Most SF IS something less than literature (I hesitate to say trash -- it's no more trash than most of the other popular fiction on the racks). And maybe our response to the Harper's article was more than it deserved. But why is it that of all the popular genres, SF is the one usually singled out for attacks like the one in Harper's? When was the last time any of you saw mysteries, or westerns, or spy thrillers taken to task?

Science fiction is a type of popular fiction, no more, no less. People usually read for pleasure and exscape, and their choice of genre is a personal one. In other words, what I read is my business -- why should it bother someone else? Go ahead and read your westerns, but don't thumb your nose at my science fiction.

I've been reading SF for twenty-five years. I began by "chewing through SF pulp," as I'm sure a lot of others did. As SF became more and more popular, its quality began to suffer (my opinion). Now I'm a more careful reader, and as often as not I'll come away from a bookstore with something other than SF -- for example, I just finished John Irving's "Hotel New Hampshire." My point here is that I believe most of us who read and enjoy SF have both feet firmly planted on this planet.

This leads me to what I consider an important distinction. There are SF "readers," and there are SF "fans." I have to state here that this is a personal opinion, and I expect flames. Readers are those who have strong feelings about what SF is and should be, and who select their reading carefully. SF fans are those who cling to the "popular" bandwagon, adopting as their own everything given the "SF" label by people who don't know what SF is. Fans engage in endless discussions of movies like Star Wars and Star Trek II. They have "tribbles" in a prominent place on their desk. I have to compare fans to those people who buy the latest in ski wear and hang around the ski lodges without ever putting on a pair of skis.

I like net.sf-lovers, and I tune in every chance I get. The SW discussions don't bother me -- I can always type "n," and I do so regularly. I WOULD like to see more reviews of books, and more discussion of SF as a literary genre. Maybe I can start some now. There were three SF novels on the NY Times best seller list last week. Anybody know what they were? Any reviews?

Date: 19 Dec 82 3:32:12-PST (Sun)
From: harpo!ihnp4!ihuxr!cjh at Ucb-C70
Subject: RE:Harpers

My response to people who don't like what I read or do is a general "Why should I care what YOU think ?". If they have a good (logical) reason then I'll consider it, if not (just their personal opinion) then I tell them to use 20 cents and call someone who cares. If someone doesn't think (a relative term) science fiction is worth while because they possibly don't understand it, they should consider the average person who doesn't know anything about computers and considers users manuals a waste of time.

C . J. Holzwarth
ihuxr!cjh

Date: 21 Dec 82 11:38:51-PST (Tue)
From: decvax!genradbo!mitccc!jmtun at Ucb-C70
Subject: Re: SF attacked in December Harper's magazine

Of course most SF is trash. Sturgeon's Law states that 90% of *anything* is trash. What is so irritating about the Harper's article is not that the author says "Some SF is trash", but "All SF is trash". If he had said "All 19th century Victorian novels are trash", I'd be just as mad (and I hate 19th century Victorian novels!)

This kind of violent outlash has an unfortunate progression.

- 1) X is trash
- 2) People who read trash are stupid
- 3) People who read X are stupid
- 4) People who are stupid...etc

Therefore, I make the following statement: Harper's is trash!

James

Date: 22 Dec 82 7:28:08-PST (Wed)
From: decvax!decwrl!sun!megatest!fortune!wdl1!jrb at Ucb-C70
Subject: Re: SF attacked in December Harper's magazine

Remember Sturgeon's Law:

1. 90% of Science Fiction is shit
2. 90% of everything is shit

Still true to-day (although I'm sometimes inclined to think its more like 95%).

John R Blaker
...!fortune!wdl1!jrb

Date: 24 Dec 82 22:35:37-PST (Fri)
From: hplabs!intelqa!omsvax!bc at Ucb-C70
Subject: Praise for "The Dark Crystal"

I've heard in the last few days that The Dark Crystal is not getting good promotion because the distributor doesn't know how to promote it, and reviewers are giving it lukewarm (at best) reviews because they don't know how to categorize it. So I thought I would proselytize for the movie a little, hoping that a word of mouth campaign of promotion would bring some people into the theaters, and help pay back the people who made this movie.

If its not obvious already, I'll spell it out:

I THINK THE DARK CRYSTAL IS AN EXCELLENT MOVIE !!!

If you enjoy puppetry, fantasy, or visual beauty in movies, I think you will agree with me. If you go into the theater expecting comedy, the Muppets, or Disney cuteness, you will be disappointed however. The Dark Crystal is not a children's story (though my two sons thoroughly enjoyed it, and want to see it again) nor is it sword and sorcery of the Mighty Thews the Barbarian school. It is a Tolkienesque fantasy, with a good bit of violence (not very graphic, but violence nonetheless), without a single human character. As far as I could see, there wasn't a single animal or sentient creature in the movie which was not a puppet of some sort, and it seemed that most of the plants were puppets too.

The movie is a masterpiece of technique, as one might expect of Jim Hensen's puppeteers, and Industrial Light and Magic's special effects wizards (the term fits well here). Moreover, it is visually striking, thanks largely to Brian Froud's overall design, and one of the best jobs of color coordination I have seen in a movie. The plot is stock: the quest to find and use the magical item which will end the reign of evil; nonetheless, the story carried my interest, and the ending, though not a vast surprise, was satisfying.

A word of advice: don't wait for The Dark Crystal to get to a cheap theater with a small screen, or for the cable TV systems to pick it

up. See it in wide screen, while the distribution prints are still in good shape. The visuals are worth it.

Bruce Cohen
Intel
...{pur-ee,hplabs}!intelqa!omsvax!bc

Date: 13 Dec 82 10:37:43-PST (Mon)
From: teklabs!tektronix!rich at Ucb-C70
Subject: Light Sabers

What's with all this "where does he get his LS" stuff? Surely, in a society that can produce blasters and Death Stars, making a simple light saber can be no trick. Granted, they "are rare." Big deal. Swords are not all that common in a society that uses M16s in battle, so why are we debating that Darth can't have a LS if Luke has his father's?

Note the color of the light, also. OB1's and Luke's have this really "pure" blue-white color, while DV's is a very evil dirty red. Does this imply that the light saber is a mirror of the soul, or simply that DV's was made at a different time or place than the others?

Rich Amber

Date: 20 Dec 82 14:24:01-PST (Mon)
From: decvax!utzoo!laura at Ucb-C70
Subject: Re: SW-IV & -V

I went and saw SW4 and SW5 again too. LUCAS is UNFAIR to WOOKIEES and WOMEN!! There are no female fighter-pilots, or Jedi, or officers of the Empire or even (as far as we know) storm troopers. The rebels had one female communications officer in TESB, though. In the triumphant procession at the end of SW Chewie, Han, and Luke march up in front of the rebel assembly ... but only Han and Luke receive medals. Drat! Is it against the Chewie's religion to wear anything besides that silver ammo-belt? (which may not even be an ammo belt?). Oh I forgot -- you get one shot of what is probably shoes on Chewie in TESB.

I have finally discovered why I *much prefer* SW to TESB (contrary to popular opinion). In SW the characters are often impetuous and conceited, but in TESB, even with time to think they act *STUPIDLY*.

Consider. Luke is in a cave with an abomknable snowman, miles and miles away from the base, and night is falling. What would you do? Start *walking* home? or kill the snow beast (or drive him away) with your light saber, and stay sheltered in the warm cave until morning? I know what *I* would do....

Han has survived a night outdoors on Hoth-moon. Now he wants to go out and check on the robot-droid-probe. Does he take a spacecraft which have now been fixed to work under cold conditions? As far as we know, he and Chewie walk -- though they may have taken Tauntauns. Why? Couldnt Chewie fit into a spacefighter? Are robot-droid-probes sensitive to electronic equipment?

Doesnt Darth Vader know that you never put all your prisoners together so they can comfort each other, regain morale, and plan how to escape? He knew about solitary confinement in SW -- why has he forgotten in TESB?

Questions: Luke draws his saber first every time he faces Vader, incl- uding in the cave. Anybody know whether Vader or OB1 draws first in their great battle? I forgot to look. How does R2D2 go down stairs? Why does Luke throw the food stick which he wont let Yoda eat into the swamp? What does the princess do her hair with after days of torture while in Solitary confinement?

Laura Creighton
decvax!utzoo!laura

Date: 19 Dec 82 16:16:30-PST (Sun)
From: harpo!ihnp4!larry at Ucb-C70
Subject: Luke Strikes First?

In an earlier article, somebdy thought that in both "major" battles between Luke and Darth, that Luke started the attack. This is wrong. In the cave, Luke ignites his lightsaber first, but only holds in in front of him -Darth makes the first lunge. HOWEVER in the carbon freezing chamber, Luke definitely does make the first move. The "restarts" of this fight have: Darth with light saber drawn, but instead "throws" things at Luke; and Darth almost surprising Luke with the 1st blow.

Some "other" thoughts: The Star Wars flicks are fantasy and basically follow a generic good-guys vs. pirates "swashbuckler". The movies are (for the most part) aimed at the "young" (pre-teen to early teen) audience. Based on this, OB-1 can NOT have lied and Darth MUST

have lied -- Darth is NOT Luke's dad. (I'll bend somewhat that Darth maybe a clone, but I doubt it) Also based on these ideas, I doubt that Leia will have ANYBODIES baby (to be the "other").

With the whole Star Wars being a trilogy of triologies, what are the 1st and 3rd tri's about?? Well, I recall an interview with Lucas somewhat after SW4-ANH is a big hit. In it he spoke of the next flick (SW5-TESB), but more important, he mentions that the original idea for episode 4 was supposed to play of the 'droids more! It wasn't until the "studio empire" told him that he had to punch up the human parts (or no flick) that Luke (and the others) became major characters. Now since Lucas can call all the shots, I'll bet that the overall 9 movies are about Artoo and Seepio. (clever the way Lucas pick their model-numbers so that they "sound" like names! --[[OB-1??]])

One more thought on "the other" -- who or whatever it may be -- it doesn't HAVE to be Jedi. Remember, Yoda tells Luke that the future is "difficult to tell... clouded by emotions". I suspect that there really won't be any new characters (not major ones at least), but that the "other" hope will be Leia's love for Luke. Luke is obviously taken in by her from the first time Artoo projects her image. Poor confused Leia in episode's 4 & 5 has been balancing between Luke and Han. In RotJ, I think she'll really pick one --Luke. Han will really turn out to be "Mr SOLO" --and not want to settle down. (that or else some other beauty will turn his head)

????

Larry Marek
...ihuxf!larry

Date: 20 Dec 82 9:55:37-PST (Mon)
From: decvax!utzoo!utcsrgv!perelgut at Ucb-C70
Subject: SW-IV & -V

Well, you people convinced me to go back and see episodes IV and V again. Some interesting things have been missed or mis-stated.

- 1) Darth Vader kills lots of people. He starts by picking up the commander of Leia's ship (the opening scenes) by the neck and shaking him until he is dead. Not particularly nice. He also kills lots of people by using the Force to strangle them.
- 2) OB-1 is definitely called OB-1. It seems that the future has slurred the 1 to sound more like Wan, but the more cultured

- types (such as old Ben himself) speak clearly enough.
- 3) Nobody mentioned that Luke's uncle's name was Owen (O-1). also says this fairly clearly at least twice.
 - 4) When Ben says Vader murdered Luke's father, I got the feeling he was speaking in a metaphysical sense. Vader (the dark side) won out over Skywalker (the better side). Thus Vader "murdered" Luke's father.
 - 5) There is some resemblance between the emperor and Ben but the credits list them as different actors.
 - 6) Leia is a little slut who obviously wants Luke, Han, and Chewie.
 - 7) Luke's light saber is very likely gone, although he could have used the Force to call it back to him.

Here is some wild speculation. I am not at all convinced that Luke will be an all around good-guy for the next movie. Although it goes against shlock American film-making practices, Luke could very well become a baddie. I wouldn't be surprised to see Vader/Skywalker and Luke take on the Emperor and then take over the Galaxy. Perhaps Vader might even die in the encounter. But the "other" will win out in the end.

One more thought before I go. Did anyone else notice that none of the good guys ever got hit by the laser blasts. At least not seriously. However, R2D2 stood in the line of fire more often without suffering any real damages. It (he?) only got caught a couple of time and usually it was "fortuitous happenstance" since it advanced R2D2 toward his current goals. R2D2 also circumvented every security system set up and talked freely with all other computers. If all R2 units had that capability the Galaxy would be controlled by 'droids, or unscrupulous 'droid owners.

--- Stephen Perelgut ---

Date: 21 Dec 82 8:03:58-PST (Tue)
From: harpo!ihnp4!larry at Ucb-C70
Subject: Darth vs OB-1

I watched episode 4 last nite. Some interesting points from the Darth vs OB-1 light saber battle. First OB-1 seems to almost "stumble" upon Darth. Darth is standing there blocking the way with his light saber ignited, OB-1 turns his on (in one of the best effects parts of the movie) --then OB-1 makes the first lunge!! As the fight goes on, it becomes obvious that OB-1 is manuvering the fight to distract the other guards so the Luke, Liea, & Han can escape. OB-1's final words still haunt me tho-- "You can't win Darth. Even if you strike me down, I'll become more powerful than you can ever imagine" So far, all the transcended OB-1 has done is whisper into Luke's ear. Doesn't sound very powerful to me. I suspect OB-1 to have a bigger

roll in RotJ.

Larry Marek

Date: 17 Dec 82 12:15:01-PST (Fri)
From: decvax!yale-com!brunix!jah at Ucb-C70
Subject: Re: re: light saber

The light saber may well be the only weapon that can stop a well trained jedi. Remember what happened when Darth was shot at close range from a blaster? (make that "with a blaster") He simply catches the "bullets."

Date: 18 Dec 82 18:29:13-PST (Sat)
From: harpo!npoiv!alice!sjb at Ucb-C70
Subject: Light Sabers

I think the fact that Darth's saber is red and Luke's and Ben's are blue/white is a VERY strong hint that the sabers ARE powered by the force. Hell, just because there's an on button doesn't mean it's not powered by the force. After all, if it was powered by the force and there were no button, it would be on ALL THE TIME! Now, I don't know about you, but I sure don't want that thing on and bouncing up and down while I am running (or even walking)! Nice way to amputate your own leg. What does this all mean? If the light saber is powered by the force, then Han sure has the force with him, leading to Han as the other.

End of SF-LOVERS Digest
