

Generation Ships

The Whorl list — 2 messages, 2 voices, 25 Feb 1997

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David_Lebling — 25 Feb 1997, 09:18

mantis,

Not to blow my own horn, but I wrote _Starcross_, the Infocom game you mention. It was modelled most explicitly on _Rendezvous with Rama_. The idea was that the generation ship was a puzzle posed by its builders, and the prize was a star-drive. Each system it stopped in had "contributed" inhabitants.

Don't forget Damon Knight's _Thorinn's World_, where (IIRC) the protagonist gets the chance to land the ship and doesn't. Like _Long Sun_, it starts looking like something very much else (in this case, an Icelandic saga).

There was also the classic van Vogt (?) story where the home technology surpasses what was available when the ship was launched, so it arrives at Alpha Centauri to find a thriving colony already in place.

rat,

Those are great references. I had completely forgotten the "Starlost" monitors (no doubt Harlan Ellison would like us to forget all of it). BTW, I think Joe-Jim in _Orphans of the Sky_ was the leader of the muties; the "normal" people were ruled by a thearchy.

The monitors also remind me of the "Mirror, mirror, on the wall" in "Snow White" (not to mention the one in Vance's _Lyonese_ trilogy). Recall that "glass" is an old synonym for "mirror." No wonder Hyacinth got caught by Kypris; she's the original stereotypical woman who can't walk by a shop window without looking at her reflection.

-vizcacha (watch that 'z')!
(david_lebling at avid.com)

Questions or problems to whorl-owner at lists.best.com

m.driussi — 26 Feb 1997, 05:15 · follows David_Lebling

Reply: Item #2848746 from WHORL at LISTS.BEST.COM@INET#

vizcacha,

Re: "Starcross," frankly I thought it was better than RENDEZVOUS WITH RAMA. Maybe because of the interactive nature? Here I was going to mention the whole "floater vector" thing, or "what happens when an object leaves the surface of a big centerfuge, even if it is near the axis" which is covered in "Starcross" and had my friends arguing over the physics. That was the very best Infocom game, imho--kudos to you! (Did you write any other games?)

The van Vogt you are thinking of is "Alpha Centauri," I believe. (They use a suspended animation drug and a slower than light drive.)

Kiernan Cleary,

Hello and welcome aboard. Re: Moly, right, it is short for Molybdenum--this is given in the text and in the lists. I just wanted to point out that it is another case where the name has two meanings. While we're on the topic of names, do you (or anybody else, for that matter) have a notion of what animal Jerboa is thinking of (IV, 172) when he wonders if "Incus" is a egg eating, tree-dwelling creature? (For the answer I'm braced and ready for a very bad pun.)

Re: Flier names, Derek Bell caught most of them. Of course, if you and Derek (and anybody else) could find the other odd Flier words, or determine what the male/female naming conventions are ("Sumaire" seems quite strange--unless she is an inhumu, of course. Then it makes perfect sense! <g>), that would be a handy thing.

alga,

Re: "Black Sheep," it reads like one of the "The Island of Doctor Death and Other Stories" stories. Imho.

=mantis=

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