Pseudoscience may have merit

Dr. Tony Rothman advises that scientific principles may require second thought

"If someone’s got a theory, someone else will try to debunk it,” concluded Shermer. Shermer proceeded to introduce the speaker, Dr. Tony Rothman, explaining that his new book Doubt and Certainty attempts to take an objective view on the validity of knowledge and its application to everyday culture. However, these interpretations of the science behind physical events don’t always reflect the most practical or useful aspects of science, and they can often lead to misinterpretations of science as pseudoscience and vice versa.

"(Historically,) much less air time has been given to things like solid-state physics, which has given us modern electronics and plasma physics, which may give us nuclear fusion in the future, than has been given to cosmology and superstrings, which have no practical use at all," said Rothman.

His book address, among many other aspects of science, some of the more fundamental questions of physical law. These questions include:

- Why is there left and right?
- Why does time go forward?
- Is science relative or absolute?
- Is there a Theory of Everything?
- Is space curved?
- Can math describe nature?

The California Tech

Tech Editors

Give their Farewell

BY ERIK DILL ET AL.

It has been a long year. Thirty-four issues of the California Tech have been published since the previous editorial team surrendered the reins late last February. Thirty-four weeks of Dilbert and Coffeehouse reorganization, Professor Emeritus, Fun with Food, a live Ditch-Day electric chair, remodeling of Winnet, the passing of an undergraduate, alumni and past faculty, big donations for biology and financial aid, sculpture by way of Apollo and Chandler toilets, some heavy-duty Riversis, and finally Falstaff, a shiny new, functional riveting, and finally journalism to the standard Tech.

The passing of a undergraduate, Falstaff, a shiny new, functional riveting, and finally journalism to the standard Tech. It has also been an eventful year for many months of study and brief flashes of insight, for months of years of research. These are not exactly the ideal conditions for producing a newspaper, but somehow everything came together on a weekly basis. The superficial lack of interesting events forced us to dig a little and discover the fundamental elements of the Inconvenient. In a new, boring, ravenous search for each week’s front page, we witnessed an endless panoply of individuals bringing their interests, concerns, and ideas together.

By the end of that year, the editorial team had been whittled down to three by graduations. Owing to experience, and acquisition of a functional printer, the paper still came out. We even came across some stories that needed to be written, not just to fill white space, but because the associated opinions needed to be brought to light. After a year in the pubic..
UNFORTUNATELY, THIS IS WHERE PEOPLE ARE PUTTING TOO MANY RETIREMENT DOLLARS.

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EDITORS SAY GOODBYE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Rothman attempts to show that none of these questions can be answered with complete certainty, using his Aca­demy construct to show the reader that science is by no means perfect science.

Rothman concluded by calling attention to the fact that many of the most sacred scientific principles are hard-pressed when asked to deal with non-ideal situations. He cited the oscillation of a pendulum as an example of the failure of mathematics to describe accurately certain phenomena of nature.

"As long as the oscillations remain small, the math is simple and the motion is simple harmonic. But once you get to larger swings, you can approach the limit of the study whistle on the hill, but you won't get anywhere."

The next Skeptics Society lecture is Sunday, March 28th at 2pm, in Baxter, on The Hidden Book in the Bible, given by Dr. Richard Elliott Friedman.

KENTS STUDY CERTAINTY, DOUBT

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

March 12, 1999

PHOTOS Hollis McAdams

Advisers:
Cheryl Frantz
Cindy Torey

ANNUAL ACCOUNTS

March

EFEE:

Arabs

Arabs

Arabs

Arabs

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**The Outside World**

by Cheryl Forest and Tech Staff

**BELGRADE, YUGOSLAVIA:** "Yup, they're still fighting." A second of peace talks are scheduled to begin in France this coming Monday, but most officials involved in the current round of peace discussions don't anticipate that the fighting will end because of this conference.

**BOGOTA, COLOMBIA:** The bodies of the three Americans believed to have been kidnapped last week by Colombian rebels were discovered last Friday in western Venezuela. In the past week, Colombia's left wing FARC (Revolu-
tory Armed Forces of Colombia), a Marxist rebel group responsible for 60% of Colombia's 2,000 annual abduc-
tions, has claimed responsibility. Supposedly, "Commander Gilardo," a low-level guerrilla ordered the mur-
ders, but the Colombian government is asserting that this man is being used as a scapegoat for German Briceno, who is the brother of FARC's second in command, Jorge Briceno.

**EAST TIMOR:** The East Timorese people will soon have the opportunity to vote on a plan offering them "wider-rang-
ing autonomy" within Indonesia. East Timor is a former Portuguese colony that was invaded by Indonesia in 1975 and has been annexed a year later. If the people reject the auton-
omy vote as is expected, Indonesia will offer the coun-
try full independence.

**WALPORT, OREGON:** The wreck of the New Carissa was sunk on Thursday by a Navy destroyer after fir-
ing over 70 shells into it. The ship ran aground off of Coos Bay on February 4th of this year, and has been spil-
ing oil there since. Six hundred dead birds were found nearby.

**REDMOND, WASHINGTON:** On Wednesday Microsoft ac-
knowledge a security flaw in Windows NT that could al-
low a person to gain superuser privileges. Microsoft hopes that a patch will be available by the end of the week.

**ALBERTON, YUGOSLAVIA:** "Who?" I said, "what?" My fi-
rst face-to-face en-
counter with a Mac was when, as an undergraduate working late one night in a lab, I dared insert a floppy disk into the slot which I have since come to know as the black slot. When I was done working, I had the perhaps silly preten-
sion of getting my disk back. I looked for an eject button, but alas, without success. Af-
ter a long while of impioring this computer with personality to return my precious data, I had the good fortune of a passer-by telling me to throw my disk to the trash. 'What?! My disk, to the trash?'

I reassured the disk actu-
ally represented me, and that if I moved the disk there it would finally move to me, I hesitatingly did so. Bad start: any computer who calls its user trash has a serious psy-
chological problem. But then again, who doesn't have a psy-
chological problem, and so I learned to live with Mac's in-
complete command of the En-
lish language.

But last week, the psycho-
logical problem went physical, and became real impotence. My Mac was having a bad day, and decided not to load the op-
ering system. 'Fine'. I said, 'could I just have my disk back?'. And then I remem-
bered: a Mac does not even remem-
ber I am trash if unable to boot. My User's Guide gave the obvious answer: press Shift-Apple-I. My Mac re-

**From the Dungeon...**

"Calling People Trash: A Macintosh Computer's Psychological Problem"

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Seaweed and Vegetarian foods are highlight of restaurant menu

by Kevin Scaldeferri

NYC Seafood
715 W. Garvey Ave.
Monterey Park
*** (out of 4)

If you're looking for good, authentic and reasonably priced Chinese food, the trip down to Monterey Park is well worth it. Of the large number of restaurants clustered around Atlantic and Garvey, this is my favorite. There are a number of soups on the menu, including a section dedicated entirely to shark's fin soup (ranging from $8 per person to over $40). We went more conventional (and cheaper) with an order of the House Wanton Soup and the Hot and Sour Soup, both of which were $8 for a bowl that could have served six people. Both soups featured an exceptionally high staff-to-broth ratio. The house wantons were full of onion sauce, and vegetables with truly monster-sized wontons filled with pork and shrimp. The hot and sour, while not truly spicy, had much more zing to it than any you would find in Pasadena.

The entrees on the menu are quite varied and uniformly good, but the seafood and the vegetarian items are the real standouts. The Eggplant Hot Pot was truly outstanding, one of the finest dishes I have had in any restaurant. Even the people at our table who normally don't like eggplant and don't consider it food if it doesn't have meat were raving about this dish.

The Rock Cod Fillet with Vegetables was delicately flavored and the fish was very fresh, although there could have been a little more of it. The Szechuan String Beans were another wonderful vegetarian dish with the beans sautéed just the right balance of tenderness and crispness. Again, carnivores should still go for it as long as there's meat dishes elsewhere on the table.

I personally don't like the Shrimp and Walnuts with Salad Sauce (the same dish that goes by other names at other restaurants), but those who do like it said that this was the best version they had. The Szechuan Bean Curd was quite good, but not any better than I have had anywhere else. The other way of looking at this may be that this dish has tasted the same to me everywhere I've ever had it, so perhaps my tongue simply doesn't pick up on the subtleties of tofu.

The Chicken with Cashews was well, chicken with cashews. Better than you'll get at Panda Express but I'd suggest experimenting a bit if you're going to drive this far.

The only really disappointing dish we had was the Squid with Vegetables. I've gotten good squid here before but this time it was much too tough, a problem that wasn't helped by the fact that the pieces were huge.

Also, most of the vegetable in this and the Rock Cod was piles of bok choy with a staggering amount of MSG. Like our soup, the "hot" dishes were only mildly spicy. I suspect that this problem can be fixed by specifically requesting that they be hot or by making sure your group includes several Asians.

All told, we stuffed ourselves for $12 per person including tax and tip and we probably could have made due with one fewer entree. I recommend making the trip frequently.

Seafood and Vegetarian foods are highlight of restaurant menu

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The letters to the editor.

United States not totally at fault for deaths of innocent Iraqi citizens

Dear Sir or Madam -

It seems to me that an agent A is directly responsible for an outcome O if A makes a choice x that substantially contributes to the environment forming O (and thus, in a sense, helps to in fact define that O occurred) and if A had another feasible choice y that does not do so, i.e. after which one would not say that O had transpired.

In his letter of March 5, Mr. Philhous writes that a large number of innocent Iraqis have died as a direct consequence of U.S.-led sanctions, presumably implying that the U.S. government (A) is directly responsible for these deaths (O). I agree. However, it also follows that the Iraqi government (not people) is directly responsible for these deaths, since they have a choice (y), namely cooperation, that would have produced an entirely different outcome.

There is no reason that more than one agent cannot be directly responsible for an outcome, and in fact this is most often the case. I fear that Mr. Philhous has succumbed to the temptation of trying to blame one person or organization for a bad outcome (as have many modern Americans, hence all the lawsuits that we observe), even if facts suggest otherwise.

Sincerely,
Julian Jamison

p.s. From my definition (or any other plausible one, or even common sense), God is also directly responsible for these sad deaths. I can sympathize with not choosing to single God out for blame, though, primarily because it is considerably less likely to have any impact.

Please send submissions for letters to the editor to:
The California Tech
Caltech 40-58
Pasadena, CA 91125
or by electronic mail to:
editors@tech.caltech.edu

Deadline for submissions is Monday at 5 p.m. on the week of publication. The editor reserves the right to edit or refuse to print any letter for any reason.

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March 12, 1999

5

I was surprised and heartened recently after reading a letter sent by a former Techer concerning my last column. Surprised that someone actually reads my column and cares enough to send a letter about it and heartened by the content of the message. Apparently the last line of that article caught his attention: “One day, we will look back and say: ‘College was the best time of my life!’ Right now, I sure hope not.”

But if I go on myself any longer, there won’t be room for the letter. So here it is, hopefully a ray of sunshine in a sometimes dismal dark world. Thanks again, Shal!

Paw! Like a bullet between the eyes, the last paragraph of your 2/26 Innerspace hit close to home. The short story: this is not necessarily the best time of your life; the best may be yet to come.

I flamed out during second term of my Junior year in the spring of 1977. Valentine’s day wasn’t exactly the cause, but it didn’t help any either. At the time I didn’t admit to myself, much less to friends and family, that a driving force in my manic/depressive moods was simple loneliness. So my angst was expressed in a much safer, less personal way: “I don’t know what I want to do with my life.” I talked of considering careers other than EE, linguistics perhaps.

My family didn’t understand the depression that preceded the flame-out. They would attempt to reassure me that “you have everything going for you.” In my bitter moods the silent rejoinder was “but no one going for me.” One rainy day, cycling to campus from my apartment, I caught myself idly wondering about veering suddenly in front of oncoming trucks.

That focused my attention on what I was feeling. I visited a counselor at the health center. In one excruciating session he convinced me that he was far crazier than I would ever be. Seeing no hope of working through both my issues and my course work, I visited UASH. Then I had to tell my parents. That wasn’t easy, but it didn’t go as badly as I feared.

When I got home my parents were still baffled. Their misguided attempts to cheer me up included the assertion that I’d look back on these as ‘the best years of my life’ (sound effect: clang! followed by the fading echo). In what was probably the cruelest thing I ever did to my mother, I shot back: “If I truly believed that, I’d kill myself now.”

Fast forward to 1988. I never did have a girlfriend while at tech, but afterward I had half a dozen serious relationships, lasting a few months to a couple years each. Then I finally found “the one.” Those were turbulent years. Great joy, some disappointments. I did return to finish my junior year, and senior, graduating with a BS in EE/CS (there was no EE at the time) a couple years later than originally planned. Afterward, several classmates and I founded a company. Some still worked there, some had left. Some of them had married, some had children. But I, at last, married my soulmate.

Fast forward to 1999. I still set my wedding as the first day of the best years of my life. My wife and I are expecting our third child, and first daughter. That company survives, even flourishes, and despite ups and downs, has provided me both professional satisfaction and financial comfort. I am profoundly happy with my life, to a degree I could never have imagined in 1977.

By the way, don’t misunderstand me: I’m not advocating a leave of absence as a cure for anyone’s case of angst. What I’m saying is that these feelings can fester, and by not venting, may escalate to insurmountable. Don’t wallow in them, banish them. Easily said, not easily done; believe me, I know. It may take longer than you’d prefer, but things can and will get better. That’s the long story.

Shal Farley
**FEATURES**

**The Ticket Still**

by Justin Ho

8MM

In 1/2 disturbing “suspen…e” thriller.

Rated R for sex, bad sex, rea­lly bad sex, and brutality.

Come rain or shine, there is nothing in this world that is cer­tain except death, taxes, and, well, it seems like porn too. Con­gress’ futile attempts a few years ago to ban low-quality altogether from the Internet seems as had ow ing the glances of theater-goers has succeeded in at least attract­ting the glances of theater-goers and the pocketsbooks of not just a few cinemagic spectators.

8MM is one of those examples of movies where it pays to read a review prior to getting in the car. The movie trailer was absolutely misleading, with only a mild allu­sion to the hard-core sadomas­ochism which underlines the film, material which Joel Schumacher actually recrated in the course of making the movie (yikes, a step­backward from Batman & Robin). What the movie has cre­ated is definitely a disgust for the S&M industry, isolated as it is in the abject streets of urban L.A. and not so much the “legal” stuff which has been integrated with the visage of the Playboy maga­zine. As sleazy as the holows where it is manufactured or organized, are the immoral in­valids behind the camera, epitomi­zed by a disgusting “talking” scout and partner S&M slut virtu­oso director. But likewise, the film engenders no distinction between itself and what it has sati­sified. The same glimpses of de­humanization where it has pre­ever is used to describe simu­lated sex acts except bestial copulation is as abound as a verita­bly possible limit in which superhumanly. Net result: this film is as dirty as the film it tries to portray.

In the film’s beginning, pri­vate investigator Welles (Nicholas Cage) is employed by a recently-widowed, frail lady coincidentally named Mrs. Chris­tian who finds a disturbing rape­followed-by-slaying film among her deceased husband’s private items, but not that the film’s ex­istence has already discriminated her sick husband already, authentic or not. Cage lets guide her to send Welles on a mission to de­termine the veracity of film du­strial and the girl who is stabbed on film, and hopefully to find her before she dies.

For a while, Welles follows shady clues half-heartedly in the belief that snuff flicks are just ur­ban legend. In the course of his search for the first half of the movie, from gothy-drudged drudgeville Harrisburg, PA to Hollywood and New York, there is a rather decent pace with a tinge of sleazy once Welles arrives in California (Joaquin Phoenix), a rather nonsensical, quirky guy who has the brains to elude himself from the environment in which he has subjected himself, though he doesn’t. One might also be amused by the fact that a job has justified Welles’ gallivant­ing in porn and estrangement of his wife (Catherine Keener) and baby girl Cinderella.

The film takes a bad turn once it introduces the underworld of pornography, which necessity has forced it to cross into reality, the film is some pricey investment, not of the “home video” genre, and supposedly delicately pro­duced and directed. Seriously, it’s rather silly that such a degraded film has that kind of attached professionalism. The fact that there are these “professionals” making S&M media offers the coherence to the movie so that Welles can actually look through existing stuff on the market and determine the identity of the stuff film mak­ers based on similar style pops. In the process, the audience is in­troduced to those smiles, happy faced people in dark rooms watching and doing the devil’s work, and as Monsieur Max Cal says “You dance with the devil, the devil homosexuality, the Devil Changed you.”

Welles for the most part, seems immense, and only in such character-clinching moments, in front of the mirror murmuring “I’ll be okay” (immortalized in the movie trailer now), does he really seem fazed by the material. But his sudden display of emo­tion is almost unavowed better. When Cage escapes with his life, his first reaction is to drive, in his stern-faced still clear way, and only at cinematically convenient times does he question the human capacity and the truth of the private investigato­rs, to whom oneself from the subject to such an extent? Well, pragmatically so, there seems a limit in which even a dedication to occupation is superceded by feelings. Indeed, Welles questions his humanity, but it comes and goes with the regularity of an on-off switch. While the rare occasion glimpses of the mortal struggle are meant to assert Welles’ hu­manity, there is nevertheless a major shortcoming to Cage’s character, and likewise to the true conclusion meant for cinemagic suspense.

As the film passed its half­way point, there is something di­sastrously missing and wrong, that is inherently linked with the fact that there can’t be a decent film made about porn. The ele­ments of this story—so if and so hadn’t done this at this time, or if she hadn’t killed herself at the time, etc. there would have been further breakdown of the story, it’s hard to conceive of any changes making the story better. But thank goodness we don’t know of any real stories to compare this movie to, and to know what it should have been like.

200 Cigarettes

***america's comedy***

Rated-R ( implied naughty smoke) is not the only thing that they’re looking for, though the one-night stand men­tality of NYC New Year’s cul­ture has crafted dates for not the pri­mary purpose of lust. They’re twenty-something, but there’s an almost crushing sense of junior-high anxieties, a need to prove them­selves, if just for a day in spite of their personal miseries. To smoke and drink and treat each other like crap as the induc­ers of a crass perpetuation of zero­sum society. But there seems to be a limit in which that jeopardize the potential of intimacy and extended hap­piness. Forcing gratification upon themselves like some role of pas­sage in the world, which introduces themselves to their own shallowness, in rather comical ways. For two atypical ladies, they realize the hard way that their search for dates and partners are much more about thrust them into the company of losers, an attractive, but none­theless corny, bartender, for ex­ample, asking such character defin­ing question “will you help me like you your eggs scrambled or fertilized?” Lewdness though, isn’t prevalent in the movie, and is only used as a means for greater sexual situations.

With strong performances from a diverse cast, and all due respect for the coherence of the story despite the many charac­ters the audience has to keep track of, there’s nothing miss­ing from the film. Friendship, as epitomized in the film, is a such a good thing. Chastity, though still prevalent in the film, but the characters who meet their happy endings (via hor­izontal polka) do so out of what they think is love. For those who are post-pubescent and audience to begin with, there is deserving retribution. Lovely one-liners and amusing dialogue an hour and a half later…voila, the eff­ort of movies to put you in a good mood. A must-see movie to cap a month of otherwise crappy ones.

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Flat Panel
Adam Villani, Media Guy: 1998 Movie Armageddon

The upcoming Oscar ceremony marks the end of the 1998 movie season, and I hereby present to you, the reader, my summation of the year in film. I saw fifty-three new 1998 releases, and I am thoroughly familiar with a number of older feature films in repertory or on video. As always, I try to be selective and avoid movies I don’t think I’ll like, so I thought the majority of films I saw were pretty good. Most reviewers don’t have that luxury, but I decided to put the year in a capsule by presenting a ten best list. Some decisions come easy, like putting The Thin Red Line and Fireworks (Hana-Bi) at the top of the list, but with an assortment of older films having been released through movies far worse than Lethal Weapon 4, which was the worst motion picture I saw last year, but was at least entertaining in its own ludicrous way. Note that the Oscar ceremony has been switched this year to a Sunday, March 21.

Top Ten Films of 1998

Ranking and rating films is always a difficult job, but I decided to put the year in a capsule by presenting a ten best list. Some decisions come easy, like putting The Thin Red Line and Fireworks (Hana-Bi) at the top of the list, but with an assortment of older films having been released through movies far worse than Lethal Weapon 4, which was the worst motion picture I saw last year, but was at least entertaining in its own ludicrous way. Note that the Oscar ceremony has been switched this year to a Sunday, March 21.

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1. The Thin Red Line

Watching Terence Malick’s poetic meditation on war was the most compelling cinematic experience of 1998. It asks difficult questions and offers no easy answers. Some decisions come easy, like putting The Thin Red Line and Fireworks (Hana-Bi) at the top of the list, but with an assortment of older films having been released through movies far worse than Lethal Weapon 4, which was the worst motion picture I saw last year, but was at least entertaining in its own ludicrous way. Note that the Oscar ceremony has been switched this year to a Sunday, March 21.

2. Fireworks (Hana-Bi)

Director/Actor/Editor/Painter Takeshi Kitano is the most astonishing filmmaker of the year (he also directed Sonatte). This is a true work of art, juxtaposing sublime beauty and shocking violence.

3. The Celebration

Every scene in Lars von Trier’s grotesque Thomas Vinterberg’s bare-bones family drama rings of truth and immediacy.

4. Henry Fool

My first Hal Hartley film, I was engrossed from the first frame. Both humorous and intensely dramatic, Henry Fool deals with both grand and personal issues. Awesome direction/marriage proposal sequence, too.

5. The Kingdom

This continuation of The Kingdom develops the characters further and is funnier than the first film. Udo Kier as a half-demon baby with 2-meter limbs supported by an aluminum frame is by far 1998’s weirdest image on film.

6. Taste of Cherry

Abbas Kiarostami’s low-key drama about an unnamed man searching the streets of Tehran looking for someone to kill him was mysterious, contemplative, and sad.

7. Saving Private Ryan

Simplistic yet supremely crafted, Saving Private Ryan has quickly established itself in this country’s psyche as a landmark war film.

8. He Got Game

When are people going to realize that Spike Lee is one of this country’s best and most important directors? He Got Game shows Lee’s mastery of expressing ideas and telling stories through cinema.

9. Bulworth

Warren Beatty’s 1998 project said the things I’d been wanting to hear for a long time and was pretty damn funny, too. Too bad it didn’t get any traction. This vehicle for Winona Ryder in Love will probably pick up, but I’d vote for Pleasantville.

10. Rushmore

Though a little shaky at times, this was a movie where I wanted to cheer for the hero because he really liked the guy.

Special Mention:

Beautiful Honorable Mention: Babe: Pig in the City, The Big Lebowski, Central Station, The Eel, Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas, Forgotten Silver, Gods and Monsters, I Married a Strange Person, Love and Death on Long Island, The Opposite of Sex, Pleasantville, Shakespeare in Love, Sonatine, The Truman Show

Oscar Analysis:

In brief: Saving Private Ryan bags 8 awards and Shakespeare in Love gets as many as 6. Gods and Monsters has a shot at winning in all three of its nominated categories, but none of those are sure things. Don’t count out Miramax’s marketing muscle behind Life is Beautiful, either.

Best Picture: Saving Private Ryan was by far the favorite, but the momentous new is with crowd-pleaser Shakespeare in Love. Still, I want to bettin’ man, I’d put my money on the Spielberg film. I’d like to see The Thin Red Line take home the statuette and Elizabeth be removed from the ballot, but that’s not going to happen.

Director: Spielberg has this one wrapped up much tighter than the Best Picture Oscar. It was great to see the Academy honor Malick with a nomination here, but his movie is far too unconventional to win a major award here.

Actor: These are all good choices, though the forgotten John Hurt, from Love and Death on Long Island, was nearly as good as Ian McKellen in a similar role in Gods and Monsters. This one’s hard to call, though McKellen may have the critical edge. A possible upset would be for Benigni to duplicate his Screen Actors Guild win in this category.

Actress: The nominated performances I’ve seen here, Cate Blanchett, Fernanda Montenegro, and Gwyneth Paltrow, are all certainly worthy, though Sigourney Weaver in Alien 3.

The Academy will likely choose Paltrow. They missed an opportunity here to nominate a really edgy performance in The Opposite of Sex by Christina Ricci.

Supporting Actor: None of the nominees here really inspire me, but I guess the contest here is between Robert Duvall in A Civil Action and Ed Harris in The Thin Red Line. I’d vote for the latter.

Supporting Actress: For the record, I have no idea who the nominees here really are, but I think the contest here is between ridin’ the Lynn Redgrave was entertaining in Gods and Monsters; but hardly more than a caricature. Judi Dench made a strong impression with her brief role in Shakespeare in Love, but I would have preferred Joan Allen or even Reese Witherspoon in Pleasantville. I’d bet Dench rides in on Shakespeare’s coat tails.

Art Direction: These nominees are okay, but it’s a shame Babe: Pig in the City or The Truman Show weren’t nominated here. This is one Shakespeare in Love will probably pick up, but I’d vote for Pleasantville.

Cinematography: This is one of the few honors The Thin Red Line might actually walk away with, were it not for the competition in the form of Saving Private Ryan. The Academy voters will find it too difficult to pass up rewarding Ryan’s awesome battle scenes.

Costume Design: Velvet Goldmine won’t have much chance of pulling a Priscilla, Queen of the Desert-style upset here with Shakespeare in Love’s Elizabethan powerhouse in the running. The costumery in Shakespeare was sumptuous, but Goldmine’s was even more original. Also, as a general rule, expect the popular Shakespeare in Love to beat out the darker Elizabeth in head-to-head competition.

Documentary: Nobody can really predict these, so your best bet is to go with the Holocaust movie The Last Days and the short Sunrise Over Tiansman Square for some good acceptance speeches.

Editing: Saving Private Ryan wins hands down for its invasion sequence. Takeshi Kitano did some really amazing things in the editing room with Fireworks, though, but I’m sure almost nobody in the Academy saw that one.

Foreign Language Film: It’s Life is Beautiful all the way.

Makeup: Curiously enough, there are no horror movies (like Blade or The X-Files) in this category this year. Expect Saving Private Ryan’s dismembered bodies to win. The hairstyling on Denzel Washington in He Got Game deserves some recognition here.

Oscar Analysis:

Some things to look for: I would have gone for Bill Murray in Rushmore or Benigni’s Harry. I’ll probably pick up, but I’d vote for The Thin Red Line with some pretty interesting music.

Original Song: This category is always terrible. I guess Whitney and Mariah’s mellismic performance of “When You Believe” from Prince of Egypt will earn it an award, but I don’t see how the songs from There’s Something About Mary or The Royal Tenenbaums would win.

Rated R: Editing: Dito.

Visual Effects: I haven’t seen any of these. From what I hear, Mighty Joe Young’s effects were understated, and What Dreams May Come’s were pretty impressive. Armageddon was the biggest popcorn movie of the year, though, and will probably take home the statue.

Writing, Original Screenplay: In my view, there’s a pretty strong correlation between a good movie and a good screenplay, so for my favorites, you can basically look at the top 10 list, but I’d especially like to praise Henry Fool here. Shakespeare in Love will beat Ryan here, but probably not in the Picture or Director categories.

Writing, Adapted Screenplay: Usually most of the Best Picture nominees are adapted from other works, but this year only The Thin Red Line fits into this category. That makes it the one to beat here, and Gods and Monsters might do that. This may be the only statuette my favorite film of the year takes home.

Original Score, Musical or Comedy:

Disney will probably be trumped by Shakespeare in Love. Personally, I’d go for Jonathan Richman’s work in There’s Something About Mary.

Source Score, Director: Saving Private Ryan will be the likely winner here. The music categories are hard to judge because people generally pay attention to the action on the screen, so just go with the most popular movie on the soundtrack. The Thin Red Line had some pretty interesting music.

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Jaideep - Signups for IHC Secretary, Athletic Manager, and Food Chair are on the door of SAC 33.

Doll - Nothing to report.

Danny - Sanwa was closed today. Duh.

Mike - Everyone should report their key turn-in lists. The summaries for the past report are due now.

Alan - The signup for BoC Rep. at Large is on the door of SAC 33.

Baldeep - A few more changes need to be made to the online voting system and it will be perfect.

Meeting closes at 23:06. The BoD will not to fund the Carnivore Club. The BoD allocates $75 for the IEEE to get them registered as a chapter.

Meeting adjourned at 22:55.

Respectfully submitted,

Mike D. Asle
ASCIT Secretary

Present: BoD (minus Danny)

Meeting called to order at 22:05.

General Business

Meeting time - Baldeep will try to find some daylight hours to schedule our meetings so that administration and faculty would be able to attend if they please. The BoD decided to meet at lunch for the first Monday of each month, though the other meetings will remain at 10pm.

Meeting with Chris Brennen - Baldeep, Alan, and Jaideep met with Chris Brennen and discussed the reorganization and redistribution of Student Union accounts, which will be effective March 1. A boost in funding for the performing arts was mentioned. Also a new athletic director has been selected and will take office on April 2.

Fresh Camp - Baldeep and Jaideep also met with the deans to discuss fresh camp since it is likely that it will not be at Camp Fox for the incoming class of freshmen.

Budget Meeting - April 3 has been tentatively set as the date for the big ASCIT budget meeting. This is the first weekend of third term.

Off-campus picks -

Jaideep would like BoD input on how off-campus room picks should work since Kim West has set a March 1 deadline for a decision on how to run the off-campus room picks. Last year Avery had to make room picks before on campus housing and the rest of off campus housing room had room picks after. This has however, caused some conflicts for undergraduates unsure of whether or not they will be able to live on campus, those entering their senior year in particular. Jaideep met with the RA from Marks who said that they would prefer to have all of the off-campus room picks for Avery to be all together after the on campus room picks. Avery Council members have mentioned that they do not want Avery room picks before on-campus room picks in order to build a sense of community. Baldeep, Jaideep, Mike, and Dress met with the Avery Council at their meeting after dinner on Wednesday.

ASCIT van - Baldeep met with Brian Collins who asked that the ASCIT van should be over to the student shop to be signed out for student use so that both Collins and Avery picks do not to do so due to potential liability and risk.

Office Reports

Derek - Updated UROH and will look into reserving a room to use for the budget meeting.

Jereham - Be careful about putting up fliers at Occidential. Security will accost you and you ask to leave.

Garrett - Looking into possible locations for the ASCIT formal. He has talked about it with Tom Mannion and says that Ritz Carlton would be a location he will try to pursue. Garrett has also looked into the possibility of bringing back Interhouse but there are many things to consider before pursuing it.

Melvin - Met with the Dean to discuss the student advising system. There will be an open meeting discussion on Wednesday at 5pm in Steele 102 to discussing the possibility of an ECE major.

Mikkel - Sent a letter to the IHC webpage. The URL is www.aecs.caltech.edu/~ihc. Jaideep also working on some off-campus picks issues. See general business for more details.

Hanna - Will put up signups for appointed offices soon. Requests check for more details.

Meeting adjourned at 22:36.

Respectfully submitted,

Hanna Kim
ASCIT Secretary

Present: BoD, Dan Fain, Ben Wu, Susan Sher

Meeting called to order at 22:08.

Dealing With Guests

Ben - requests CCSA's money for second term so Danny writes him a check.

Dan Fain - Wants $250 for an elec party for March 27, 1999. Location to be determined.

General Business

Meeting with Patti - Baldeep and Danny met with Avery to be all together after the on campus room picks. Avery Council members have mentioned that they do not want Avery room picks before on-campus room picks in order to build a sense of community. Baldeep, Jaideep, Mike, and Dress met with the Avery Council at their meeting after dinner on Wednesday.

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Hanna Kim
ASCIT Secretary
Present: BoD (Danny Sanders in at 22:16, Derek Capra retreat. The copier @ 11:10, Marie was apppointed offices and only a good time. Decompression will be held at Whitten. The food will be on the roof and entertainment in the main room. The Club room will be showing videos.

Good luck on Finals! Alternative Spring Break is going to Taijuna. We will be doing community service work, mostly painting and helping out a community computer lab, in a village near the city. Accommodations and food are arranged, there is no cost for the trip. All you need to bring is clothes to work in and anything you want to spend money for when we go shopping.

Forms are available at Steele house. We are limited to twenty people and many people have already signed up. The first twenty people to fill out and return the forms will go, the remaining people will be placed on a waiting list.

Just a reminder, applications for the Students Memorial Award are due today. The Students Memorial Award is a travel grant of $3,000 that will be awarded to a Caltech undergraduate who would benefit from a period away from the academic community in order to obtain a better understanding of self and to consider and explore possible options for his/her future. Those applying must be in good academic standing. Financial need will be considered.

Interested Caltech undergraduates should submit a concise written proposal which describes the intended use of the award. Specific travel plans and estimated expenses should be included as well as an explanation as to how these plans fulfill the purpose of the award which is to provide options for his/her future.

To be considered, the application must be received at the Caltech Y office, Mail Code 210, by 4:00 p.m. Friday, March 12, 1999. Include your student ID number and email address on the application.
Belief and knowledge are very different things even though at times one can be mistaken for the other. In my last column I wrote about the origin of the wheel, and implied that it was not such a trivial matter as it seemed, to reinvent it. I based my belief on the information I had gathered, too hastily perhaps, about where and when ancient wheels or carriages had been found. From the dates assigned to these artifacts I concluded that there was no need to imagine that the wheel had been independently invented in different places. There had been plenty of time for wheels to roll from the near or middle East (where they seem to have originated, about which more below), to western and northern Europe, even if pulled by slow oxen. Say the trek is a roadless 5000 miles long, given that no oxcart would follow a baseline (do bees?). At 1 mile a day the trip might take 14 years. I guess there would be time even for a small pulled cart on a random walk to cover the distance. On the basis of pictorial evidence it is also widely believed, and I reported, that wheeled vehicles originated in Sumer, in the plains between the Tigris and the Euphrates.

Today I stand before you chastised, or at least less certain of my statements. My tentative knowledge has been degraded to belief. The hypothesis I had embraced may have been falsified. In the mail last Monday morning I anxiously received a copy of an article originally published in Scientific American some 30 years ago (The beginnings of wheel transport, S. Piggott, Sci. Am. July 1968, pp36-44). Prof. Piggott suggests the possibility of local development of wheeled vehicles in the Netherlands and Denmark, so there is no need to assume diffusion of wheeled carts. The same article casts some doubt that the first vehicles were invented in Mesopotamia, suggesting instead an origin a little to the North, between Lake Van in Eastern Asia Minor and Lake Urmia in Northern Iran. At first I was taken aback by this. As you might have gathered, I am an ignoramus in these matters, but I have gathered, I am an ignoramus in these matters. The hypothesis I had embraced may have been falsified. In the mail last Monday morning I anxiously received a copy of an article originally published in Scientific American some 30 years ago (The beginnings of wheel transport, S. Piggott, Sci. Am. July 1968, pp36-44). Prof. Piggott suggests the possibility of local development of wheeled vehicles in the Netherlands and Denmark, so there is no need to assume diffusion of wheeled carts. The same article casts some doubt that the first vehicles were invented in Mesopotamia, suggesting instead an origin a little to the North, between Lake Van in Eastern Asia Minor and Lake Urmia in Northern Iran. At first I was taken aback by this. As you might have gathered, I am an ignoramus in these matters.

The Freshman Summer Institute (FSI) is a six-week residential program for incoming Caltech Freshmen. The program provides a select group with an introduction to the freshman year at Caltech. The program begins on August 8, 1999 and ends of September 17, 1999. The following positions are available for Summer 1999:

Counselors
(1 Head Counselor and 3 Program Counselors)
Counselors provide a stabilizing influence in the residence hall and provide additional guidance for students in conjunction with program coordinators. Each counselor is responsible for tutoring and social activities.

Instructors and TA's
Instructors and TA's will prepare and implement the curriculum for the following subjects:
- Calculus
- Chemistry
- Math
- Physics
- Writing

There will be an informational meeting on Wednesday, March 17th at 3:00 PM in the Avery Library. All students interested in applying should plan on attending this meeting. Snacks will be provided.

Contact Cheryl, Yunuy, or Ramona at x6208 or email cherryl@caltech.edu for more information.

11
March 12, 1999

DEAN

Dean's Corner

A hitch in the wagon?

by Jean-Paul Revel

writing about

them with the superficial

authority conferred by books, may

encyclopedias? I suppose I could

have researched the topic more
diligently, searching for and read­
ing original sources perhaps, or
casting a wider net to get a greater
sampling of opinions. As I said
last week however, I had trouble
finding much data, but I guess
that's no excuse. So the Scientific
American article took me by
surprise, until I read it carefully.
The case it makes for the wheel
being reinvented in Northern Eu­
rope is not very strong it seems.
One important argument ad­
vanced to support this is that there
are very few, if any remnants of
wheeled vehicles found between
Southern Russia and Denmark or
the Netherlands. But a lack of
data is not very convincing, it may
only mean the archaeologists had
bad luck, or that conditions were
poor for the preservation of wooden parts. Of course may be
what diffused is the idea of wheel,
rather than cars per se. After all
there were no roads to start with.
On the other hand the pioneers of
the West made do without.

What is peculiar about the article
is not that it seemingly re­
futes the views I had gleaned from
other sources. I have no owner­ship in them, my opinions are
"prefabricated," derived from the
statements of others. Even if it
was my data, I should have looked
at it without emotional attach­
ment. What is peculiar is that, like
a tabloid, Scientific American
makes strong statements in the
title and the figure legends, but
these claims evaporate when one
reads the fine print. In this in­
stance the body of the paper es­
sentially retracts what it claims in
the title. The story emphasizes
that archaeologists in southern
Russia, Armenia and Georgia
have unearthed large amounts of
new prehistoric material, includ­
ing vehicles from as far back as
2500 BC. Having done so, it goes
on to state that nothing has been
found that is as old as the Sudanian
pictures of wheeled sleds (>3000 BC), the basis for claims of precedence for their
neighbors to the south. So here
we are: a statement is made
(people of old living where the
 Georgians, the Armenians, the
Russians live now, invented the
wheeled cart) and then contrary
evidence (the pictographs) is pre­
sented, the Sudanians were in fact
first. I guess the author does not
want to be confused by facts, they
are damaging to his headline hy­pothesis.
Belief, to be upgraded to
knowledge, needs to be passed
the test of factuality. Knowledge
however is always on trial, and
can, in fact must, be changed
when new evidence appears. In
this case there does not seem to
be new evidence except that cars
are found, but apparently from a
later period.

Prof. Piggott is well known
expert in the field but has never­
theless stumbled it would seem.
Although an expert is presumed
to disperse good advice or make
sensible statements about his
topic, there is a chance that he
will be wrong in assessing a
given situation. The fact that
there is a chance that the expert
might be wrong, does not make the non
expert more likely to the right. The Scientific American article does
not convince me that the wheel
was invented near Lake Van,
rather than further South in
Mesopotamia. Again that does
not make me, the non-expert,
right. If I had found the article
before writing my piece I would
have been more cautious in my
assertions. I would have done
more research, allowing me to
choose between the opinions of
more even experts, or make a con­
scious of the opinions based on
a wider sample. What really counts
is to continue our attempts at turn­
ning beliefs into knowledge.

Climb aboard the winning wagon.

Good luck on your finals and
a bientot.

Jean Paul Revel

The Presentment

BY D. PAUL THOMAS DIRECTED BY RICHARD SETO

WORLD PREMIERE MARCH 12 - APRIL 25 ONLY!

ON SALE NOW

PASADENA PLAYHOUSE STATE THEATRE OF CALIFORNIA

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA THEATER DIRECTORY

March 12, 1999

The California Tech
You have the time we need.

Goodwill Industries of Southern California is a non-profit organization whose mission is to enhance the quality of life for people who have disabilities and other vocational disadvantages by helping them to become productive and self-sufficient through meaningful work and training opportunities.

Goodwill helps more than 2,000 people each year and is nearly 90 percent self-supporting as it sells surplus goods through our retail stores, education, and job-training programs, computer recycling centers, and training services with local businesses. For more information on how you can help Goodwill, please call 626-794-4520 or email Robbin Brasil at 323-223-1211 ext. 230.

Are you bright, motivated, fun, and energetic? Goodwill Industries of Southern California is looking for high school seniors to join our staff. If you are interested in applying, please call 626-395-4652 or email Kim Ross at kross@goodwill.com.

Earthquake Preparedness Training will be offered by the Pasadena Fire Department from 8:00 am to 12:00 pm in Basser Lecture Hall on Tuesday, March 23. Learn what to do before, during, and after the event. This training is limited to the first 100 people who sign up. For reservations call Caprice Anderson at 626-395-6727.

The California Tech
Interhouse Drag Contest

Dabney House hosted the first ever interhouse drag party in the middle of last term, with full participation and friendly competition from every undergraduate house. The idea was born at a social leadership retreat held at UCLA’s conference center two weeks before the event, and Iljie Kim organized it to (hopefully) begin a wave of creative interhouse congeniality.

Five guys from each house entered the show, for a total of 35 beautiful women who strutted their stuff down a makeshift runway to the beat of some appropriately bad music. Each contestant was judged by a panel of judges representing each house on the basis of how convincing she was, her beauty, and in the case of the finalists, answers to questions like ‘What is your favorite nail polish color and why?’

Matt Musick of Fleming House came in first with his impressive roaring 20s era costume and sexy strut, and the audience which packed Dabney courtyard to overflow came away pretty happy with the exciting hour of dresses, makeup, and laughs.
Evil Geniuses Manifesto

We are the Evil Geniuses for a Better Tomorrow. Better for us, that is. Our purpose is to make the world conform to our objectives. We do this by:

1. Wreaking havoc, promoting chaos, and generally making a mess of things for our amusement.
2. Wreaking havoc, promoting chaos, and generally making a mess of things for our personal gain.

Well, you get the picture. We're in it for ourselves. We are the TIEs who are going to get you. We are watching you. And for crying out loud, get some better deodorant. We're getting tired of smelling you. We apologize for telling Microsoft programmers that a talking paper clip might be a neat idea. Aside from that, we deny everything. We think that you should, too.

"If you're not part of the problem, you're not one of us."

-Evil Geniuses for a Better Tomorrow (brain@ugcs)

Next meeting: 11:42 Tuesday in Keckkoff 298.

DEAN'S DRUG REVIEW CORNER

Hi there, it's Jean-Paul here again, with another review of the current quality of drugs to be found around L.A. As usual, the scale is from one to ten.

LSD (4) Most likely this was from the same batch as I tried last week, and it probably wasn't kept too well. Sure, the mind effects helped me make my "Dean's Corner" as usual, but the visuals just weren't that great. How long until we finally get some doses around here of the "Beans and Butthead" quality?

Crystal Meth? (7) You can usually rely on good old crank to keep you wired for long stretches, and the current Meth going around is no exception.

Crack (NA) I just had to add this one in re-assuring my claims that I have never tried crack, despite what some, you know, I mean, some people seem to think.

Student Rush $10,000 For Same Day Harvest

Don't Ask Don't Tell Ovulate

R. O. R. C. (Dean's Drug Review Corner)