

(_ W _ o _ n _ d _ e _ r _ f _ u _ l _ L _ i _ f _ e) would undoubtedly point out that such action would inevitably lead to the extinction of a species practicing it. Or would he? Come to the discussion in Lincroft on Wednesday, April 22, and add your opinion.

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2. So this was how it came down this morning. I was listening to WABC talk radio--never a good idea at the best of times. Curtis and Lisa Sliwa were interviewing a Pat Buchanan backer and apparently a racist. As the racist maintained, "I have a right to defend my species." At that Lisa bristled. "Blacks aren't your species?"

"No, if you read science books, blacks and whites are different species."

"Well, not everything science tells us is true."

At this point we have four losers: the racist, Curtis Sliwa, Lisa Sliwa, and science. And I don't think science even knows it was playing. For the record, pigmentation is far too trivial a difference to draw a species line. As a rule of thumb, if A and B can mate, they are the same species. Undoubtedly there are those who think there should not be interracial marriage, but if blacks and whites were different species, it would not even be an issue. Someone has been lying about what science says and using the lie for their own ends and all parties in the above conversation had roughly the scientific knowledge of fleas.

I am reminded of the famous story about Harry Cohn, one-time master of Columbia Studios. Cohen's brother Jack had brought Harry a proposal for a Biblical epic he thought the studio should make. "You don't know a damn thing about the Bible," Harry stormed (a peculiar choice of words). "I've got fifty dollars that says you don't even know the Lord's Prayer."

Jack thought for a second and said, "Now I lay me down to sleep...."

Sheepishly Harry took out fifty dollars. "I'll be damned! I _ r _ e _ a _ l _ l _ y didn't think you knew it."

3. John Manoyan is doing his best to keep Mark honest; he sends the following corrections to the March 27 issue of the MT VOID:

1. BACILLUM is not a recognized form. Too bad because it sounds good. It's either BACILLUS or BACTERIUM but not something in between. Bacillus is normally used to refer to rod-shaped bacteria.

[Oh gosh! I hope I haven't offended any! I suppose the ones I was talking about were bacillus, but I bet if I say that in the notice I will get mail from some saying they prefer to be called bacteria. -mrl]

2. Idem with BOTULINUS. Botulism is the food poisoning that you can do without. Botulinum is the Clostridium Botulinum

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bacterium that causes it, and botulin is the toxin. You know, you would've gotten it right if you had swapped the M for the S [or vice versa] in each case.

[Sorry, I am just not keeping up with my S and M these days. -mrl]

Thanks for the corrections, and sorry to take so long to print them! (Glad to know people are actually reading these things.)

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Do not use power to suppress opinions you think pernicious,
for if you do the opinions will suppress you.

-- Bertrand Russell

GENE WOLFE'S BOOK OF DAYS by Gene Wolfe
Arrow, 1985, ISBN 0-09-939230-5, L2.25.

A book review by Evelyn C. Leeper

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You're probably asking why I'm bothering to review a seven-year-old book now, especially in a British edition. Well, first of

all, some people who are reading this may actually live in Britain, but also, if I managed to find this, you might too.

Clearly I'm going to recommend this book (else why would I be reviewing it?). It's an intriguing idea--eighteen stories, each for a particular holiday. Though this edition is British, there was an American edition in 1981, which would explain the choice of some purely American holidays: Lincoln's Birthday, Arbor Day, Armed Forces Day, Memorial Day, It's odd, in fact, that Independence Day is missing--I wonder if it was in the original edition and omitted in this one. And the Memorial Day story is about World War II, not the Civil War. I should explain to the majority of United States readers as well as those elsewhere that Arbor Day is a holiday celebrating trees (no, not by cutting them down, like at Christmas, but by planting them). It's very popular in the Midwest, especially in the schools--I can remember every year in school in Illinois buying a small sapling for a nickel (if I recall correctly--certainly no more than a dime) and taking it home to plant it in the yard. Two or three of the five actually survived until we moved-- they may still be there. However, it could be that the Midwest borrowed it from Israel. (Gene Wolfe lives in either Illinois or Indiana, so that would explain his use of Arbor Day.)

Now that I have finished the Midwest cultural lesson, I can return to the book at hand. What makes this collection even more unusual is that Wolfe did not start out to write a story for each holiday. The copyright dates indicate that they were written over a span of several years, but this merely underscores the importance holidays have in our lives. Even when the holiday is not mentioned in the story, it is the same underlying motivation for both. Wolfe's stories would be good even without the holiday theme, but it serves to focus our attention on the fact that holidays were not just invented by greeting card companies (well, not all holidays anyway) and that they have a meaning and, to the extent they show us that meaning, a purpose. And this is what makes this collection worth seeking out.

THUNDERHEART

A film review by Mark R. Leeper

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Capsule review: Awful cliché-ridden script about a murder case on the Oglala Sioux Indian Reservation. Well-intentioned film has a good performance by Graham Greene (of D_a_n_c_e_s_w_i_t_h_W_o_l_v_e_s), but don't trust the film's portrayal of Native American culture and don't expect to see a new plot.
Rating: -1 (-4 to +4).

Okay, now we all know the rules; let's go over them one more time. On one side we've got good guys, on the other we've got bad guys. All the cute people with personality on are the good guys' side. Bad guys get to be backed by the United States government. Good guys get all the women and children. Bad guys get all the fancy guns. Good guys get to fight for their land, their homes, and principle. Bad guys are fighting for money and always get to strike first. Nice looking woman. Yeah, she's a good guy all right. Heck, bad guys are all men anyway. She's lived here all her life. No, wait. She went away to school but she came back to help her people. Yeah. She's a doctor or a teacher or something that's got the right tone. And she's v_e_r_y_p_o_l_i_t_i_c_a_l_l_y_c_o_m_m_i_t_t_e_d. After all, this is the 1990s. The old woman who looks like a Cabbage Patch doll? She's the doctor's mother. Now you need someone for the audience to identify with. He's the star, and he's an American. So naturally he comes in sort of on the bad guys' side. But when he sees how nasty the bad guys are and how cute and good the good guys are, he slowly changes sides. He's attracted to the teacher. Or did we decide she was a doctor? Anyway, through learning about the good guys by being around them and through the magic of sexual tension, our hero slowly figures out who the good guys are and who the bad guys are. Now who are the good guys going to be? Indians? No, we did them with B_r_o_k_e_n_A_r_r_o_w. Vietnamese? T_h_e_U_g_l_y_A_m_e_r_i_c_a_n! Chinese? T_h_e_S_a_n_d_P_e_b_b_l_e_s! Salvadorans? U_n_d_e_r_F_i_r_e. We've done Arabs a_n_d Jews and blacks. It's been done with the Irish, but then it was the British government supplying the bullets. Maybe it's time for Indians again.

Oh, heck, I know director Michael Apted's heart was in the right place, but John Fusco's script was just awful. Twenty-five years ago this would have been a good script but it has been used, with variations, just too often. And the Indians who have been handed so many injustices deserve a better story. The motive for the murder that brings FBI man Ray Lavo (played by Val Kilmer) to

the Oglala Sioux reservation is also one that has been used too many times. And for one more cheap shot, the film leaves ambiguous if Indian magic might be working. I thought that went out with

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 B i l l y J a c k. Native Americans don't have any magic any more than anyone else does. I wish they did. Maybe if they did, they could use it to get some justice. But Apter uses trick photography and staged scenes to imply you really can see ghost dancers who disappear in a flash or to imply that a man might have turned himself into a deer. Indians are not great magical people who live half in a spirit world. They are just a group of ethnic peoples who have been cheated and exploited and who desperately need a little bit of justice. Throwing them a bone by implying that their magic really breaks the laws of physics is just not what they need. If enough people confuse compassion for American Indians with liking this film, Tri-Star Pictures could make a bundle of money, almost none of which will go to help the Indians.

Some note should be made of Graham Greene's performance as a reservation policeman. His laconic performance is the most likable thing on the screen. And seeing his special Indian detection skills were certainly of some interest. Unfortunately, there is not enough of Greene to keep the film afloat. And for those who care, yes, there is a car chase to liven things up. I think that it is typical of Americans that after this whole plot is so thoroughly worn out, they give it to the Indians. I give T h u n d e r h e a r t a -1 on the -4 to +4 scale.

