

2. About our discussion book for *THURSDAY*, January 26 (NOTE DIFFERENT DAY!!), Dale Skran says:

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"Donald McQuinn has written an epic post-nuclear war adventure series set in the Pacific Northwest 500 years after it all fell apart in a rather nasty war. Humanity has survived, and the former Seattle area resembles medieval Europe, with castles and "Dog Warriors" living on the plains hunting with enormous hounds. In the first volume, WARRIOR, a delicate balance of power between the Harbundai, the Olans (a corrupt feudal state), the Mountain People (cruel bands of scavengers), and the Dog People east of the mountains. is upset when an ancient creche is cracked open by an earthquake, springing a tiny band of survivors, kept alive from the early 21st Century in cold-sleep, onto an unsuspecting reborn world. They include Donnacee Tate, a black female marine major, Conway, an army transportation manager yearning for adventure, four feminist teachers, Jones, a nutty preacher, Falconner, the highest ranking military person, and Leclerc, an engineer. They join forces with Gan Moondark, the heir to the chiefdom of the Dog People, to overthrow the harsh totalitarian state of Ola, where women are executed by torture if found reading. The word "teach" is considered obscene, and books, if found, are ritually burnt by the "Church," an all-female combination of Christianity and Medicine that maintains its position by providing "War Healers" to all comers."

The series is continued in WANDERER and WITCH, reviewed in the 11/18/94 (Vol. 13, No. 21) issue of the MT VOID. [-dls]

3. Last week I was complaining about New York City. Yes, I'm still on about that!

I think of the Holland and Lincoln Tunnels as sort of compression chambers to prepare you for driving in Manhattan. Part of the

problem is that three out of every four weekends is some Italian feast day that will attract multitudes to Little Italy. It is the frequency of these feast days that explains Luciano Pavarotti.

It is bumper-to-bumper, and when you are in the tunnel and when you get out, nothing changes. Once you are in the city it takes you twenty minutes to go a block. I can mosey a lot faster than that. In fact, a recent study showed up the amazing but useless statistic that in New York City itself, a car on the street cannot match the speeds of a rook on an average chessboard. Of course for a rook, most of the traffic is stop-and-go, but that's what it is for a car. And the rook has the advantage of moving in any direction, The car has to contend with one-way streets. Many date the beginning of the collapse of civilization to the invention of the one-way street. Up until the invention of the one-way street, when things got sticky enough you could always retreat the way you came. With the invention of the one-way street it became possible for the

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residents of places like Manhattan to trap cars by forcing them into pens, then to strip them down for parts, and to eat the people inside.

Why is the traffic so slow in New York City? Well since the Middle Ages or the Great Depression (having been taught with the new enlightened educational system I forget which came first), New York City has had a managed economy. Traffic moves slowly so beggars have a chance to smear your windshield with greasy, grimy rags and then to ask you to put money in their paper cups. It is always the same paper cups. All over New York everybody has the same paper cups. They are white and blue and have a picture of the Parthenon or someplace. Nobody knows where all these Greek paper cups come from, by the way. Or if they do they haven't explained it to me, which is tantamount to the same thing.

Had enough? Well, next week I will **still** be talking about Manhattan. [-mrl]

4. LEGENDS OF THE FALL (a film review by Mark R. Leeper):

Capsule: This is an old-fashioned epic of an early 20th Century Montana ranching family and the coming of more urbanized life styles. An alienated father and three very different sons pull in different directions. The film features nice photography and a rich score.
Rating: low +3 (-4 to +4).

Much too rarely seen these days are the big, sprawling historical epics with beautiful scenery well photographed, and with big brash scores. That's what LEGENDS OF THE FALL is. This is a story of Montana going through the transition from its more wild frontier past to so-called civilization. It is the story of the three sons of a ranch family: Tristan (Brad Pitt), a wild remnant of the frontier culture; Alfred (Aidan Quinn), who chooses ties with the coming civic world; and the young idealist Samuel (Henry Thomas). The head of the family is Col. William Ludlow (Anthony Hopkins), an alienated and disillusioned retired cavalry officer who grew to hate all government after he was ordered to help preside over the destruction of the Plains Indians. From his early youth Tristan forms a bond with OneStab (Gordon Tootoosis), Col. Ludlow's Indian scout who now lives on the ranch. OneStab introduces Tristan to Indian mystical ways. The boys grow with a seemingly unbreakable bond. But when Samuel first brings home a fiancée, Susannah Finncannon (Julia Ormond), then convinces his other two brothers that the three should enlist to fight in the Great War breaking out in Europe, he sets in motion a train of events that were to change

completely all the relationships in the family.

The storytelling is occasionally just a bit rushed and sketchy in LEGENDS OF THE FALL. The plot has a lot of territory to cover and while the film is 134 minutes long, it could easily have made good use of another half hour or more. Though the story that formed the basis was of only novella length when published in ESQUIRE, the film has an epic sweep. John Toll's camera work can admire the foothills of Montana or show the chaos of a battlefield in France with equal grace. On the other hand, however, there are some

noticeable visual mistakes, including a child of thirteen who when seen three or four years later still looks like a child of thirteen. The narrative could have fallen into melodrama with its fraternal romantic conflicts, but Zwick generally keeps the story on a higher level. The one concession to melodrama that bothers is in Tristan's practicing of Indian ritual, often in unlikely places like a battlefield in France.

Following close on the heels of INTERVIEW WITH THE VAMPIRE, we have a very different sort of role for Brad Pitt. Considering that in 1992 he was still getting thankless roles like the minor one in COOL WORLD, his is becoming a major name in films. While his is the character of greatest interest, the most demanding role is probably Aidan Quinn's. Anthony Hopkins gets second billing, but has a distinctly secondary role. An actor of less stature would probably not gotten second billing for this role as written.

LEGENDS OF THE FALL is a thoughtful and occasionally powerful epic film. It is unusual to see film makers taking a risk on this type of film any more, but this one deserves to pay off. I rate it a low +3 on the -4 to +4 scale. [-mrl]

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Most people are other people. Their thoughts are someone else's opinions, their lives a mimicry, their passions a quotation.

--Oscar Wilde