

Lincroft-Holmdel Science Fiction Club  
Club Notice - 12/17/86 -- Vol. 5, No. 23

MEETINGS UPCOMING:

Unless otherwise stated, all meetings are on Wednesdays at noon.

LZ meetings are in LZ 3A-206; MT meetings are in MT 4A-235.

\_ D \_ A \_ T \_ E                    \_ T \_ O \_ P \_ I \_ C

01/7/87 LZ: NEUROMANCER by William Gibson (Consciousness)

01/14 MT: Movie: (to be announced)

HO Chair:        John Jetzt    HO 1E-525 834-1563  
LZ Chair:        Rob Mitchell LZ 1B-306 576-6106  
MT Chair:        Mark Leeper  MT 3E-433 957-5619  
HO Librarian:    Tim Schroeder HO 2G-427A 949-5866  
LZ Librarian:    Lance Larsen  LZ 1C-117 576-2068  
MT Librarian:    Bruce Szablak MT 4C-418 957-5868  
Jill-of-all-trades: Evelyn Leeper MT 1F-329 957-2070  
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1. Due to the week of Christmas, club activities will be limited to Middletown and Holmdel. At Middletown the activity will be individual trips out to the Middletown swing. People from other locations who wish to come over and use the facilities should get it cleared with some Middletown resident. It is recommended that if we have a white Christmas that you bring a warm change of clothing for after swinging. Over in Holmdel the big activity will be the annual Christmas banquet for the Holmdel swans. In the spirit of Christmas on December 24th, when some people will be inside selfishly feeding themselves, club members who have been saving packing material "corn-curls" all year long will be feeding the corn-curls to the styrofoam swans. The grateful looks on the swans' faces make this selfless activity worthwhile. Please join us and add new meaning to your Christmas.

Mark Leeper  
MT 3E-433 957-5619  
...mtgzz!leeper

Recommendation on Cinemax Films  
Film comment by Mark R. Leeper

Looking at this month's cable listings, I see two older films on Cinemax that deserve special recommendation. Even if you do not get that station, both are available on videocassette.

During a boring probability lecture in graduate school, I suddenly remembered having seen C\_a\_p\_t\_a\_i\_n\_H\_o\_r\_a\_t\_i\_o H\_o\_r\_n\_b\_l\_o\_w\_e\_r years earlier. Within an hour I was reading B\_e\_a\_t\_t\_o\_Q\_u\_a\_r\_t\_e\_r\_s, the first novel C. S. Forester wrote about his fictional naval hero of the Napoleonic wars. The film, as it turned out, was based on the this book and its two immediate sequels, S\_h\_i\_p\_o\_f\_t\_h\_e\_L\_i\_n\_e and F\_l\_y\_i\_n\_g C\_o\_l\_o\_r\_s (in proportions about 1/2, 1/3, and 1/6). Gregory Peck is probably a little too handsome to play Hornblower, but nonetheless defines the character and it is hard to read a Hornblower novel without seeing Peck. While the script slights the second and third books a bit, B\_e\_a\_t\_t\_o\_Q\_u\_a\_r\_t\_e\_r\_s is the most enjoyable of the Hornblower stories as Hornblower must court and unwelcome ally, a South American dictator who calls himself by the Spanish name for God. The modelwork for the sea battles is excellent considering the film was released a quarter of a century before S\_t\_a\_r\_W\_a\_r\_s.

A very different sort of film is T\_h\_e\_H\_e\_a\_r\_t\_I\_s\_a\_L\_o\_n\_e\_l\_y H\_u\_n\_t\_e\_r, a 1968 film based on the novel by Carson McCullers. Alan Arkin plays a deaf-mute who must move to a new town when his best friend is hospitalized in that town. Mr. Singer touches the lives of many people, improving each, in a sort of a search. This is a very moving film, done very well with a cast that includes Sondra Locke, Stacy Keach, Percy Rodriguez, and Cecily Tyson. I won't say they don't make films like

this anymore, but these days when they do, it is really an event.

For different reasons, both these films are much recommended.

## THE GOLDEN CHILD

A film review by Mark R. Leeper

Capsule review: The mind boggles. This film is  
\_ B\_ e\_ v\_ e\_ r\_ l\_ y\_ H\_ i\_ l\_ l\_ s\_ C\_ o\_ p with Industrial Light & Magic special  
effects. The film offers that audacious concept and then  
little else that is new. It is fun-to-watch fluff and  
that is just about all it is.

Rumor has it that Eddie Murphy is a fantasy fan. He has wanted to  
do a fantasy film, but never had the opportunity to make one. At one  
point it was announced that \_ S\_ t\_ a\_ r\_ T\_ r\_ e\_ k\_ I\_ V would guest-star Eddie Murphy.  
Presumably he would have been one of the characters the crew ran into in  
the 20th Century. Perhaps mercifully we have missed the opportunity to  
see Murphy mugging for Captain Kirk. Instead he has been given by  
Paramount his own comedy-fantasy film, sort of \_ B\_ e\_ v\_ e\_ r\_ l\_ y\_ H\_ i\_ l\_ l\_ s\_ C\_ o\_ p  
\_ i\_ n\_ t\_ h\_ e

\_ T \_ e \_ m \_ p \_ l \_ e \_ o \_ f \_ D \_ o \_ o \_ m .

The Golden Child, a Tibetan avatar sent to save the world from itself, is kidnapped by evil forces. Murphy plays Chandler Jarrow, a sort of Los Angeles amateur detective who specializes in finding missing children. Well, the Golden Child is certainly a missing child. Who better to find him than Murphy? Well, just about anyone, from Murphy's point of view. So virtually the same character that Murphy played in \_ B \_ e \_ v \_ e \_ r \_ l \_ y \_ H \_ i \_ l \_ l \_ s \_ C \_ o \_ p is thrown into the middle of a plot worthy of A. Merritt.

When the Golden Child works it is because of the Murphy persona who is definitely funnier and has more audience appeal than, say, Howard the Duck. And that is important because in this film Murphy faces the same sort of foe, brought to the screen by virtually identical Industrial Light & Magic special effects. The surprise that all of a sudden Murphy's character is fighting something very fantastical is blunted by the over-familiarity of this style of effects. For \_ S \_ t \_ a \_ r \_ T \_ r \_ e \_ k \_ I \_ V, ILM gave Paramount some beautiful new effects and some spectacular scenes. They proved with that film that they still could do new stuff. But \_ T \_ h \_ e \_ G \_ o \_ l \_ d \_ e \_ n \_ C \_ h \_ i \_ l \_ d's effects were already well-worn two or three films back and lack the novelty that they would need to be really exciting.

One more peeve I have against \_ T \_ h \_ e \_ G \_ o \_ l \_ d \_ e \_ n \_ C \_ h \_ i \_ l \_ d is its irreverence for Asian culture and Asian cuisine. Now in this it pales beside \_ I \_ n \_ d \_ i \_ a \_ n \_ a \_ J \_ o \_ n \_ e \_ s \_ a \_ n \_ d \_ t \_ h \_ e \_ T \_ e \_ m \_ p \_ l \_ e \_ o \_ f \_ D \_ o \_ o \_ m, but it still is going to win no prizes for bringing about international understanding. In spite of very funny scenes with its stars, it offers little that is new but the idea of combining Murphy-style comedy with fantasy. Rate it a 0 on the -4 to +4 scale.

THE WARRIOR AND THE SORCERESS  
A film review by Mark R. Leeper

Capsule review: Blech!

I sit here, like the audience in T\_h\_e\_P\_r\_o\_d\_u\_c\_e\_r\_s, with my mouth half-open, and for the same sort of reason. I am being assaulted by a barrage of bad taste that I am finding hard to believe. Well, let me start at the beginning and the beginning of this mess is Akira Kurosawa, the great Japanese filmmaker. He has made a number of great films.

Sometimes he borrows his plots from well-known stories like M\_a\_c\_b\_e\_t\_h for his T\_h\_r\_o\_n\_e\_o\_f\_B\_l\_o\_o\_d and K\_i\_n\_g\_L\_e\_a\_r for his R\_a\_n. More often, other filmmakers borrow Kurosawa plots and build new films around them. His S\_e\_v\_e\_n\_S\_a\_m\_u\_r\_a\_i was remade once as a Western (T\_h\_e\_M\_a\_g\_n\_i\_f\_i\_c\_e\_n\_t\_S\_e\_v\_e\_n), once as a space opera (B\_a\_t\_t\_l\_e\_B\_e\_y\_o\_n\_d\_t\_h\_e\_S\_t\_a\_r\_s), and once as an Italian muscleman epic (S\_e\_v\_e\_n\_M\_a\_g\_n\_i\_f\_i\_c\_e\_n\_t\_G\_l\_a\_d\_i\_a\_t\_o\_r\_s). Each version was a step downhill from its direct predecessor. His Y\_o\_j\_i\_m\_b\_o, an adventure about a grimy and grizzled ronin who brings peace to a village torn apart by feuding clans, was remade as A\_F\_i\_s\_t\_F\_u\_l\_l\_o\_f\_D\_o\_l\_l\_a\_r\_s with Clint Eastwood's Man-with-No-Name designed to be nothing more or less than a cowboy version of Kurosawa's Sanjuro.

Well, that brings me to what I am watching. It is a low-budget sword-and-sorcery piece called T\_h\_e\_W\_a\_r\_r\_i\_o\_r\_a\_n\_d\_t\_h\_e\_S\_o\_r\_c\_e\_r\_e\_s\_s and, sad to say, it is every low-quality remake of Y\_o\_j\_i\_m\_b\_o in which a grimy and grizzled warrior brings peace (and a lot of dead bodies) to a village torn apart by feuding clans. In a surprising concession to good taste, a few of the many women in the film are dressed so their breasts are covered. Unfortunately, that does include a four-breasted dancing girl who tries to kill Kain. Oh, yes. Kain. David Carradine plays the warrior Kain, just so when characters mention his name, you know who they are talking about. It is almost the same name he had on K\_u\_n\_g\_F\_u. Actually the filmmakers pass up this great opportunity by having everyone call the un-swarthy Kain "The Dark Warrior." Nobody had ever seen him before but everyone knows to call him "The Dark Warrior."

The musical score steals from James Horner and what sounds like an Italian Western. The score is credited to someone called "Saunders" in spite of obvious borrowings from other composers.

The only value of watching T\_h\_e\_W\_a\_r\_r\_i\_o\_r\_a\_n\_d\_t\_h\_e\_S\_o\_r\_c\_e\_r\_e\_s\_s is in recognizing what was stolen from better films. It is strongly recommended that you avoid this turkey. Rate it as a low -2 on the -4 to +4 scale.

SWORD OF GIDEON  
A film review by Mark R. Leeper

Capsule review: HBO's own production of S w o r d o f G i d e o n (based on George Jonas's non-fiction book V e n g e a n c e) is a thoughtful, intelligent thriller about the squad sent out to get revenge after the 1972 Munich Massacre. At its heart is the question of what would be an appropriate response to terrorism and it asks the viewer--it doesn't tell the viewer. Your neighborhood multiplex theater probably does not have a more intelligent film right now and hasn't for a good long while.

This month HBO is showing a film made specifically for cable and video, but one which is probably as intelligent as anything the local theaters are playing right now. S w o r d o f G i d e o n is the story of a vengeance squad sent out by the Israeli government after the massacre of eleven Israeli athletes at the 1972 Munich Olympics. At first brush this looks like it will be a rather superficial action film with action, explosions, blood, and an occasional thrill. This is an action film, but it is far from a mindless one. At the heart of S w o r d o f G i d e o n is a very real moral dilemma: does vengeance do as much damage as the attacks it is trying to prevent?

Avner (Steven Bauer) is a captain in the Israeli army requested by an intelligence chief (played by Rod Steiger) and Golda Meir (played by Colleen Dewhurst) to lead a squad of five men and kill the planners of the Munich massacre. Their cardinal rule: no harm to innocent bystanders. The team are successful, but soon find themselves disturbed by thoughts of the families of the men they are killing. Further, when characters Avner cares about are killed as counter-vengeance for the actions Avner's men are taking, Avner has to decide if he himself is doing good or evil.

S w o r d o f G i d e o n offers no pat answers on the justification for vengeance squads. Rather than present a pre-packaged answer to the question of a proper response to terrorism, it presents the issue and

asks the viewer to decide for him/herself.

HBO has a very well-made production with S w o r d o f G i d e o n including a beautiful musical score of George Delarue. The acting is uniformly very good to excellent. Dewhurst's Meir does not have the screen time to contribute much, but Steiger is a consummate actor and when he is on the screen it is all too easy to ignore everything else that is happening. Michael York plays the team's explosives expert, an important role but surprisingly small considering the actor's popularity. If you don't get cable, keep an eye out for the cassette. The film is a strong +2 on the -4 to +4 scale.

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