

newspaper article I read a couple of years ago back when I used to have time to read. Well, I want you to know I am remaining literate. I am writing. I'll let others do the reading. You're elected.

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Anyway, we are going to have a discussion of something other than books to give the post-literate a chance to partake of discussion. It seems that the past six weeks have seen a different science fiction or fantasy film come out each week, as you would know if you have been reading the notice. (But then that would make you a throwback to the pre-post-literate society.) We intend to have a discussion of these six films on Wednesday, December 7, at noon. The films are, in case you have forgotten:

THE PUPPET MASTERS
STARGATE
FRANKENSTEIN
INTERVIEW WITH THE VAMPIRE
STAR TREK GENERATIONS
JUNIOR

Of course, many of you already know what to think of these films since you are a member of the informed intelligentsia of this country. I am referring, of course, to those astute members of the club with the erudition to read my film reviews and the perspicacity to appreciate the high quality of my acumen and critical faculties. (If all this sounds familiar it is what Rush Limbaugh tells his fans, but I think I ought to be able to steal his prose. That is just good laissez faire economics. Right?) Anyway, why not drop around and discuss the films?

Some of you will notice that I did not have a club get-together for JUNIOR. I guess I had more mercy than that on our club members.
[-mrl]

2. JUNIOR (a film review by Mark R. Leeper):
Capsule: High concept: Arnold Schwarzenegger is

pregnant. In-depth analysis: Arnold Schwarzenegger is pregnant. This gives us a chance to see dramatized all the cliches about pregnancy, but with Arnold as the central figure. This film might have been amusing as a five-minute comedy sketch. Unfortunately, it has another 104 unnecessary minutes. Rating: -1 (-4 to +4)

Ivan Reitman has a spotty background directing comedies. Films like MEATBALLS, TWINS, and GHOSTBUSTERS I and II have had good gags but have been rather thin on story. DAVE seemed to indicate Reitman was starting to get a feel for plotting and characters. It must have been a fluke, however, since he is back to featherweight comedies with under-developed characters in JUNIOR. Once you know that the idea is to show Schwarzenegger going through the same physical changes that pregnant women go through, you can probably

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think of more amusing scene possibilities than you will actually see in this film.

Dr. Alexander Hesse is an incredibly well-built scientist with an Austrian accent and an aversion to babies. Ironically, he is working on Expectane, a drug to improve the safety of pregnancies. When the FDA decides that the drug needs more testing, Hesse's fast-talking partner Dr. Larry Arbogast (Danny DeVito), thinks that human testing will be more convincing. Arbogast talks Hesse into a surgical implantation of an egg, but only for the first three months. Meanwhile the university has evicted the two scientists from their lab space and has replaced them with Dr. Diana Reddin (Emma Thompson), a winning but rather awkward scientist. Her research unwittingly provides Hesse and Arbogast with some of the materials they need for their experiment, and the first male pregnancy is initiated.

It must have seemed like a comic natural to have the super-masculine Schwarzenegger in a role with cross-gender implications, but it is a real mistake. Gender-crossing films like TOOTSIE and MRS. DOUBTFIRE have been big successes for other stars, but Schwarzenegger simply does not project personality the way that a

Dustin Hoffman or a Robin Williams does. And Reitman intentionally tones down Schwarzenegger's personality so that later in the film he can appear to be more "humanized" by the experience. The problem is that it takes all of Schwarzenegger's strength to project any personality at all and later it is hard to work up much interest in the character even in his unusual predicament. In TOOTSIE, look how well-defined a character Hoffman creates even before any of the cross-gender material. Besides, Schwarzenegger already bulges oddly and making him pregnant almost seems redundant. Actually part of the pleasure of such a film would be to see how a man struggles with the fatigue of carrying the additional weight. This makes an Austrian body-builder perhaps less appropriate than many other actors would have been. It is not clear why Danny DeVito is in this film since he is not at all credible as a scientist and his comic potential is all but ignored. It may well be that the film is trying to play off Reitman's previous success in TWINS. Similarly, Frank Langella is around to play a shady university executive in a story that didn't seem to need a villain. But he was good in DAVE so Reitman seems to want to use what has worked before.

It was obviously assumed that the situation would be so funny that the writing seems to have been done on autopilot. This is a film without any well-developed character in anything but the physical sense. It returns again and again to common scenes of pregnancy whose only humor value is that you are seeing a man going through the changes. Once you have seen Arnold complaining that his nipples are getting sensitive and crying at soap operas, is it still supposed to be funny to see him eating pickles and ice cream,

or is that really just a variation on the same gag? I picture writers Kevin Wade and Chris Conrad just making a checklist of pregnancy cliches and writing a scene for each. Time and again opportunities for a funnier and more believable script are passed up for cheap gags. At this stage of development the drug would not have been given a suggestive trade name like "Expectane," it would be called something like "Themoxodil." To pick up the pacing, the film throws in slapstick humor, mostly built around Thompson's clumsiness. But the slapstick isn't funny and it sabotages her effort to make her character believable. Her body language is the

best thing about this film, but the slapstick is misplaced and even she cannot make it work.

This is a cookie-cutter formula comedy that drags on what might have worked as a short skit far too long. Rate it a -1 on the -4 to +4 scale. [-mrl]

3. HEAVENLY CREATURES (a film review by Mark R. Leeper):

Capsule: New Zealand film director Peter Jackson, famous for his BAD TASTE, creates a very odd but fascinating film about the darker side of imagination. The film tells the true story of two 1950s teenagers who are pulled into a vortex of creative fantasy and drawn to a bloody and violent conclusion. This is a surprising and inventive film that blends fantasy and reality in ways you haven't seen before. Rating: +2 (-4 to +4)

One of the few remaining "sacred cows" of film is imagination. Nearly all films about imagination profess reverence. Currently we have the remake of MIRACLE ON 34TH STREET telling us how wonderful childhood imagination is and the original film version made the point even more strongly. It is extremely remarkable when we get a film seriously portraying a downside to imagination. Films on this theme include THE CURSE OF THE CAT PEOPLE and EQUUS, but not much else that comes to mind. Now an intelligent film has been made on this theme. Even more surprising is the source, director Peter Jackson who previously created BAD TASTE, BRAIN DEAD, and DEAD ALIVE. What is surprising is not just the theme but that the intelligence from one of very few filmmakers who up to this film I would have accused of making films that work only on sheer shock value.

HEAVENLY CREATURES is a dramatization of a famous New Zealand tabloid murder from the 1950s. Life is not easy for Pauline Rieper (played by Melanie Lynskey), an awkward and insecure schoolgirl from a working-class family in Christchurch. She is equally unhappy at

home and school and looks for some magical escape route. Enter a transfer student, Juliet Hulme (Kate Winslet), a bright, artistic, and magnetic English schoolgirl from a cultured academic family. Juliet immediately wins Pauline's admiration for being willing to stand up to the teachers, even correcting the French teacher's grammar. Friendship with Juliet awakens Pauline's imagination and intellect. The two outward opposites become ever-closer friends, dependent on each other and even sexually attracted. Together they concoct an escape fantasy world of imagination--a middle-European realm they call Borovnia, ruled by characters they name Charles, Deborah, and their serial killer son Dielo. Clay figures Juliet creates of these characters come to life in their imagination and in startling special effects scenes.

Jackson's screenplay, which he co-authored with Francis Walsh, captures the rapid shifts from exhilaration to depression and back. The two romantically fixate on Mario Lanza as the great tenor and the king of their fantasy world. One chance comment from one about Orson Welles, and he is the paragon of all the world's evils--the prototype of the mad, knife-wielding Dielo. And with this same melodrama, they react when their alarmed parents attempts to separate the two girls.

The story has much more going on than initially meets the eye. There are subtle signs of class conflict between the two families. There is an intellectual elitism in the two girls, very much like the elitism Maggie Smith's character exploits in THE PRIME OF MISS JEAN BRODIE. And, of course, there are the homophobic attitudes of the two families anxious to separate the two girls who they see as having been drawn too far into their relationship--with some justification.

This is a film with more visual creativity than many fantasy films. In the imagination of the girls, and on the screen, fields transform into gardens with giant butterflies and unicorns. We travel inside Borovnia--with its golem-like characters based on Juliet's clay figures. Jackson keeps his camera constantly moving as if even the viewer is a hyperkinetic teenager. Peter Jackson has gone from an unpromising beginning of making nearly unwatchable films to in one leap become a talent who deserves watching. I rate this film +2 on the -4 to +4 scale. It would be interesting to get the reactions of the film from the two women who were the subjects. Pauline Rieper (later Parker) still lives in New Zealand. Juliet Hulme is living in Britain and is now a popular novelist under her current name, Anne Perry. [-mrl]

4. THE LAST SEDUCTION (a film review by Mark R. Leeper):
Capsule: Even without a good story, this film

would be fascinating if only for the characterization of Bridget Gregory. Linda Fiorentino plays a brilliant, calculating, manipulative woman. Steve Barancik has written a taut, steamy murder thriller that has already played on cable and is now getting only a tiny theatrical release. THE LAST SEDUCTION is worth seeking out. Rating: +2 (-4 to +4)

Last year RED ROCK WEST, directed by John Dahl, went directly to video, then got a small theatrical release based on very good word of mouth. In fact, it was a nice little thriller that deserved much better treatment. That was unfortunate. But when Dahl's THE LAST SEDUCTION got the same treatment this year it was nearly criminal. I am sorry I missed it on HBO, but it was worth paying to see in a theater. This steamy crime thriller with tight and fascinating script by Steve Barancik is far better than the average run of theatrical films.

Bridget Gregory (played by Linda Fiorentino) is as cold and calculating a woman as has ever been shown on the screen. She is as quick-thinking and amoral as a computer. Gregory instantly sizes up situations and subtly manipulates people and events to her own advantage. She works for insurance companies as a "lead generator," someone who is able to find potential customers for her company. And she must be good at her job based on the sampling we see. Just as a demonstration of her abilities she takes a credit history database and in a chillingly logical manner generates a list of women who would be anxious to have their husbands murdered. The method makes sufficient sense that one almost worries that some viewer will copy the method in real life. This is a female Hannibal Lecter whose fixation is making money rather than on cannibalism and mutilation, And because her desires are so normal, she is much harder to catch.

As the film opens Bridget does her thing for a New York City insurance company while her physician husband, Clay (Bill Pullman) pulls off a dangerous but lucrative drug deal that Bridget has master-minded. Hubby comes home with lots of cash, only to have his loving wife take the money and run. She is headed to Chicago,

but to avoid thugs hired by her husband, she lays low in Beston, a suburb of Buffalo. She picks up one of the locals, Mike Swale (Peter Berg) as a bedmate to use with approximately the same consideration she would give a vibrator. Under Dahl's direction the sex scenes are often explicit and erotic. Some of the violence scenes are also fairly graphic.

Fiorentino plays Bridget like a breed of spider. She is purely cold and calculating, the epitome of sang froid. Peter Berg seems sufficiently young and naive to fall into her web. And Bill Pullman, who was pushed around by the woman in his life in RUTHLESS

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PEOPLE, here plays someone a lot smarter but still totally out-classed. J. T. Walsh, who has becoming a very familiar screen heavy, plays a crooked lawyer who can only look on with envy at what Bridget can do.

Fiorentino makes this film as exciting a thriller as we have seen this year. This is film noir with a vengeance with a femme fatale who could give lessons to Stanwick in DOUBLE INDEMNITY and Turner in BODY HEAT. Watch for it. I give this film a +2 on the -4 to +4 scale. [-mrl]

5. Montreal Film Festival (film reviews and commentary by Mark R. Leeper) (part 1 of 5):

I had never been to a film festival before and I was curious what made them click. Is it just a lot of films being shown various places? Are there any central activities? How does it work?

Well, first some large numbers. People who attend the full festival get their choice of 250 films to see. There are roughly 300,000 attendees. Four movie theaters participate but because two are large multiplexes there are as many as eleven different films showing at the same time and perhaps a twelfth if you include the free screenings of films in the park. Filmmakers from all over the world provide films and on one screen you may have a real mixed bag

of films showing in one day. A typical theater will show in one day:

DINNER'S ON THE TABLE (Canadian)
LES AMOUREUX (French)
BANDIT QUEEN (Indian)
FAUT PAS RIRE DU BONHEUR (French)
I LOVE YOU ROSA (Turkish)
NOT ANGELS BUT ANGELS (Czech)
SHE LIVES TO RIDE (US made-for-TV)

Uh, monolinguals like myself have to be a little careful. I wanted to see a film about Joan of Arc and then Evelyn noticed it was just in French. Of course they seem geared to boorish US visitors: their description of the film explained who Joan of Arc was. (It turns out education seems to be failing Canadians just like it is failing US people. If anything, you see more people listing prices like .99 cents here than you see in the US.

There are two handbooks of the festival. There is a free handout with schedules at the various theaters and an index so that you can find when a given film is playing. It also has a page or two of descriptions of the film, but not nearly enough. For C\$16 you get a catalog of films 3/4-inch thick and heavier than you might want

to carry around. It has a page on each of the feature films. The printed materials are poorly designed. If you look through the catalog and a film looks interesting, but you are not sure it will be in English you have to go to the handout and look up in the index to see when the film is playing. But that is only a time and date. You then have eleven different listings to search to find which theater is showing the film you want. (Evelyn points out that there the index does tell you in an encoded form which theater has the film, but I am just slowly catching on.) Then you look at that listing to find the language. Some are English, some are French with English subtitles. You might have picked a film that is in Dutch with French subtitles. It is not quite that bad because you can look at the title of the film and usually can guess what language the film will be in and usually the non-English films will have English subtitles. But the listings could be a lot more convenient to use.

Oh, and you are currently reading not just the best description of the rules of how the fest works--well, that goes without saying--you are reading the only one. We have not found in French or in English any explanation of how things work at the festival. We missed the first night's film because we did not know about exchanging tickets in advance, but that is getting a bit ahead of myself.

Tickets for the showings (other than three or four free films shown out of doors--mostly concert films like the director's cut of WOODSTOCK) are inexpensive compared to evening tickets at home. They are C\$6.50 individually or C\$45 for a book of ten. (In US currency \$5.08 and \$35.16 respectively.) You basically have to pick up tickets in advance or risk the film selling out. Evelyn assumed that only if you pay the C\$6.50 you can reserve a place at the film. That made all the difference. She thought that if they "sold out" all their seats with individual tickets, nobody could get in using tickets from the ticket books. By this misunderstanding that is what happened Thursday night, the first night of the festival. They had two featured films, KABLOONAK and NATURAL BORN KILLERS. We did not know we could get advanced tickets with the book so both were sold out. Instead we went to another film, one not showing as part of the festival, but playing at a non-participating theater to the same audience. It is:

ARCHITECTURE OF DOOM

This is a 1992 Swedish documentary (in German--perhaps for German television?) by Peter Cohen examining Hitler's philosophy and National Socialism as an aesthetic movement and an attempt to impose by force a single aesthetic sensibility on the world. It was a fanatical effort by any Procrustian means necessary to make the world fit his personal idea of what is beauty. Hitler's aesthetic was, it is suggested, built on three pillars: the town

where he was born, Wagner, and Classical art.

Cohen sees the entire political career of Hitler from this point of view. Hitler was a failed painter and architect who saw the

collapse of the world coming led by degenerate art and tolerance of what he personally considered ugly. His inspiration was Rienzi, a knight in a Wagnerian opera who wanted to return to the grandeur of Mediterranean Classical cultures but was betrayed. According to Hitler the Classical age was entirely beautiful, but that the protection and preservation of so-called "genetic defectives" like the mentally and physically handicapped as well as Jews was a threat to what he saw as an ever-diminishing proportion of the population who were people of pure and untainted blood. He considered himself "a political Robert Koch" ferreting out the impure genetic microbes in society and restoring society to health. He brought 45% of German physicians into the Nazi party and then had them institute programs of what he called "euthanasia" to murder those who had impure blood.

Cohen's Hitler did not want art that pointed to social ills in his new world. The only acceptable art would portray man as noble and living in harmony with an idealized nature. He himself designed the uniforms, insignia, and standards of his followers. Part of his plan was to make over Berlin as a fantastic futuristic city based on Classical artistic principles decorated with huge statues, thirty feet tall or higher. Part of the design was that even the ruins should outdo Roman and Greek ruins in magnificence. Cohen shows us all this with remarkable new documentary footage and places more familiar footage in a new context.

At first it seems a trivialization of Nazism to consider it an aesthetic movement--an attempt to beautify the world. It also at first glance seems to be literally adding insult to injury for Hitler's victims. This certainly is not the point of view of the of ARCHITECTURE OF DOOM and Cohen's interpretation only serves to make Hitler seem more perverted. He fashions himself a heroic exterminator of pests without giving any thought to the equalizing of humans to lice, rats, and insects in his attempts to get to his idealized vision of a squeaky clean world. This film serves as an admonition to those who would regulate art forms like rock and rap the extremes to which it is possible to go and how destructive the results can be when carried to fascist extremes. I am not accusing those who would limit and censor lyrics of going to the extremes of a Hitler, but there may be similarities in the impulses and the film is a warning against trying too hard to re-form the world to fit some idealized view of how things should be.

This film is a major reinterpretation of history, but it is not clear that any really useful conclusions can be drawn from it. Does it make a difference whether people are murdered from a motive of hatred or aesthetics? In fact, might it not even be the same

thing? While the value of ARCHITECTURE OF DOOM's conclusions might be questioned, it is a totally engrossing documentary which has a lot of very striking archival footage. I rate it a high +2 on the -4 to +4 scale.

At this writing it is the second day of the festival. Montreal is a city that has, if anything, more panhandlers than Manhattan. They are a much narrower ethnic mix, but Rue Ste. Catherine seems to draw them. Ste. Catherine is the center of the festival. All the theaters are on Ste. Catherine or are a short distance off of it on a side street.

Waiting in line for our second film we talked to a gentleman from the Bronx who told us what was wrong with the festival. We told him what films had looked interesting and he told us what bad taste in films we had. Ah, New Yorkers! Well, he has to get in line if he wants to insult my taste. Come to think of it, he did.

On our way in we got had news and good news. The bad news was that they did not just take coupons from the book for entrance, we had to go back and pick up tickets for the specific film. The good news was that Evelyn was wrong and we could get advance tickets with our book coupons. We had erroneously bestowed upon ourselves the status of second-class citizens because we had bought tickets in bulk. Well, no problem. We probably saw a better film-- although a really bad print-- as a result.

Our second film is an ironic juxtaposition with ARCHITECTURE OF DOOM.

THE ADVENTURES OF PRISCILLA, QUEEN OF THE DESERT

This is a film that has gotten a lot of favorable critical comment and that is in large part because it is a nice pleasant enjoyable film that takes no chances beyond those obvious in the premise. The story is of three drag queens making a journey across the Australian desert from Sydney to Alice Springs to make a performance engagement. Knowing that, about two-thirds of the script more or less writes itself on auto-pilot. Of course they run into bigots along the way and have a violent scene with them. Of course their gaudy show clothing looks really strange on the backdrop of the desert. Of course there are conflicts among the three and some deep realizations along the way. Of course aborigines, children, and other people pure of heart accept them without a second thought and it is mostly their parents and boozy men in bars who have problems accepting them. Of course every love

song will have a second interpretation when sung by this crowd. (It is not unlike the game of adding the phrase "in bed" to fortune cookie fortunes.) This film is about as daring as wearing white socks with black shoes and is certainly in no worse taste. That aside, many of the cliches it uses are cliches because they are

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entertaining and this film that wants so much to be shocking is nothing more than light, pleasant entertainment.

Felicia, Mitzi, and Bernadette, born respectively Adam, Anthony, and Ralph, played respectively by Guy Pearce, Hugo Weaving, and Terence Stamp, dress in gaudy women's show clothing and mouth the lyrics of popular songs. Hey, it's a living. The first two are drag queens while Bernadette is a transsexual. They have to get to Alice Springs for an engagement so Felicia buys an old tour bus and christens it "Priscilla, Queen of the Desert." Tensions are constantly present as they try to outdo each other in being catty to each other. But the first real strain on their relationship comes when Mitzi admits to having a wife in Alice Springs. Not too unpredictably the bus breaks down and getting going again is a minor adventure in itself.

Director Stephen Elliott has very little insightful to tell us about drag queens. I would like to assume that these people are somewhat deeper than this film's slightly insulting behavior. One, for example, has as her great ambition to climb to the top of King's Canyon in drag. Elliott can tell his audience that this is an innocent enough ambition but isn't he being insulting by making his character so superficial? Much has been made of the departure this film is for Terence Stamp. Until now he has played mostly straight-laced anal-retentives. Bernadette is not straight-laced but if anything she is even more anal-retentive than Stamp's usual characters.

This film is really little more daring than having Whoopi Goldberg dress as a nun. Unless you reject the well-labeled premise from the start, you will probably find this a surprisingly wholesome feel-good sort of film, a little strong on manipulation and weak on credibility in spots, but rarely failing to entertain. I found it to be about a +1 on the -4 to +4 scale.

After the film we queued up to get the tickets for upcoming showings. We got near the door to enter the theater when an employee of the theater came to fold the line with posts and velvet ropes. One placed a post to my left about two feet from the door and attached a rope to it going back and another hooked to the doors to its left. "That's not right," I thought. The line shouldn't have a bend here. This is where the line should end. A second employee came out, saw the same thing we did and tried to explain to the first why what he was doing would not work. The first employee went off to take down the first rope. The wiser rolled his eyes in an expression that transcended the language barrier. Eventually we got in and got tickets for everything else we wanted to see. Though it did not at first appear so, Luck of Leeper was positive for once. The weather could be nicer, I suppose. But ARCHITECTURE OF DOOM seemed to have reverberations in PRISCILLA and also in our next film.

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JACK L. WARNER, THE LAST MOGUL

There are many accusation made these days about the Jewish people. It is claimed that they controlled the State Department... totally untrue. It is claimed they control banking and finance... also an invention. It is claimed they control the film industry. Well, that one really was true at one time. They didn't just control it, they WERE the film industry. Jews invented it, often risking all they had on it. The major studios were all founded by Jews before there was a film industry. But unique among the major studios was Warner Brothers. It was actually owned by a family. They made running a studio a family business.

JACK L. WARNER is a television documentary made for one of the Turner stations, written and directed by Gregory Orr, the son of a step-daughter of Warner. It covers much the same territory as the book HOLLYWOOD BE THY NAME by Cass Sperling, another grandchild of Warner. Orr's documentary style is workman-like, but the film benefits from particularly interesting subject matter. Warner's career spans the film industry from the time of Edison's Kinetiscopes up through the film 1776.

The brothers were four of the five sons of a Polish shoemaker who came to America fleeing the oppression of Cossacks. The fledgling cinema industry was the last of several businesses the boys tried, first projecting, then exhibiting, then distributing, and finally making films. They might have remained just a minor studio that would have quickly died but for their gamble on sound which made them into a major studio. The documentary covers their carving out a niche of films appealing to the common people without the high gloss of an MGM. Crime and gangster films were their mainstay.

But while Jack was trying to appeal to the common viewer, his second wife was building his house into a palace and price was no object. Orr says the studio made the first anti-Nazi feature film, *CONFESSIONS OF A NAZI SPY*. At the request of FDR they also made the pro-Russian *MISSION TO MOSCOW*. It was a favor they would come to regret. The film covers the war period, the decline in the post-war era, Jack's cooperation with HUAC, and the power struggles at the studio with their roots in the earliest family days.

The documentary gets off to a slow start with Orr telling his childhood reminiscences of the Warner mansion and showing an amateur film he made as a boy. That is the worst touch of the film and it is over quickly enough. But Orr continues to put himself too much into the film. There is also a disorienting effect from Orr taking events in semi-chronological order, but straying once in a while. We hear *CASABLANCA* discussed before we are told about the studio's response to the US getting involved in the war.

Orr uses interviews of people famous and not so famous who knew Jack Warner. But the greatest insights come from Neal Gabler who seems to put Warner into a context better than Orr can. Also, of course, there is a wealth of documentary footage, old home movies, and of course clips from the films made.

Gabler's insights include observations that the United States seems to have gotten its image of itself from movies created by outsiders, recent immigrants mostly. Warner in particular made film about characters a lot like himself: short, feisty underdogs,

often recently emigrated from Europe. That description fits Cagney, Robinson, Raft, and Muni. Gabler cites the conflicts between Harry Warner with his Old World ways and Jack Warner who was more a product of the Americas. This conflict is reflected in the rabbi and his son in THE JAZZ SINGER.

JACK L. WARNER, THE LAST MOGUL is nothing great, but how wrong can it go in covering so much of the history of the American film industry through one of its most pivotal figures? It gets a tremendous boost from the cinematic interest value. My rating would be a low +1 on the -4 to +4 scale.

Montreal is a very good restaurant town. There is a really good ethnic mix of restaurants. Dinners out so far have been "Smoked meat Pizzagheti." For a Yankee like myself that name had the greatest number of mysteries to unravel. That turns out to be more segregated than the title implies. "Pizzagheti" is just a small pizza with a side of spaghetti. For local food, a great favorite seems to be the mysteriously named "smoked meat." I am not used to ordering anything with a name so vague. (Even "hot dog" is specific if not accurate.) Smoked meat turns out to be what we would call "corned beef." At least I hope so. I think there was a horror film once called MOTEL HELL in which food was similarly just called "meat" without being more specific. The meat turned out to be what the pirates used to call "long pork" or "long John." How many readers of TREASURE ISLAND recognize the delicious irony of having a ship's cook named Long John Silver? But that is one heck of a digression. Our second night was had Arab fast food and our third night we had a nice meal of Hungarian food. [-mrl]

[To be continued]

6. Last week we ran two copies of Evelyn Leeper's review of Bruce Sterling's GLOBALHEAD. It wasn't that the review was that good; it was a proof-reading slip-up.

Also, by popular demand, we are going to try to limit the underlining in the MT VOID. Titles will appear in all capital

letters; emphasized words will be set off with asterisks (assuming
of course we make no *further* proof-reading errors). [-ecl]

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Look for the ridiculous in everything and you find it.
--Jules Renard

