

commendable. Rating: low +2 (-4 to +4)."

Charlie Harris says he has been saving all the postings to Usenet regarding 12 MONKEYS and will send a copy to anyone who wants to study up before the meeting next Wednesday in the *Lincroft*

THE MT VOID

Page 2

cafeteria. Contact him at ulysses!csh. [-ec]

3. Evelyn and I had our first fight ever over money recently. Certainly if we fought over money before it was a long time in the past. But this was a fight over taxes. She said something about how when you are in our bracket you pay a certain amount on the first thousand dollars you make and a different amount on the next.

And I said "that doesn't make any sense. The first dollar doesn't enter into it. At our point on the curve we pay a certain amount in taxes that is a function of our earnings (less deductions, exemptions, falsifications, etc.)."

"That is not how it works," she explained. "The function is only arrive at because you paid at a certain rate for the first money you earned, a certain rate on the next,"

"That may be, but given a certain amount of earnings, isn't there a certain amount of taxes due that does not vary from person to person that is the amount of tax due?"

"Well, yes, there are tax tables to tell you that amount."

"Then that is the amount of tax on that amount of income. How they came up with that figure is only of interest to the man behind the curtain."

"But if we earn another thousand dollars it is important to know how much tax there is on that."

"But surely that just depends on the earnings curve around where we

are. Look if you buy a \$1.50 hamburger, does it really make any difference to you that the first bite is \$1.50 and the rest of the burger is free? Is that any different from having the last bite cost you \$1.50 and having all the bites up to that point be free?"

Well, I don't think I convinced her. Some people think very logically about money until it comes to taxes, then they get all fuzzy-headed. There are people who think that having a flat tax rate, you know a certain percentage of your income and the same percentage for everybody, is a big simplification of taxes over a graduated income tax. "Make out your taxes on a postcard." That is what people say. Well, the way I figure it the tax process is to figure your earnings, and then to pay the corresponding tax amount from the table. Where the complication comes in is in figuring out just exactly what your earnings are, and after you have done that and found where you are on the tax curve you fudge your way up or down from there. Just about none of the

THE MT VOID

Page 3

complication comes from the shape of that tax curve. It all comes in haggling the x-coordinate, figuring the y-coordinate, and then haggling to move that point down. Tax simplification is really a mathematically independent issue. You could simplify a graduated tax as much as you could simplify a flat tax except for the one step where you have to look up a value in a table instead of doing a multiplication on a calculator. And let's face it, most people would look it up in the table even if they could just multiply to get it. But it is one of the myths of our society that a flat tax is just a whole lot simpler than a graduated tax and if you think about it mathematically that makes no sense. [-mrl]

4. James E. LaBarre of the Science Fiction Association of Bergen County sends us the following list of upcoming events.

02/09/96 (Friday) Ellen Datlow, Susan Palwick Science Fiction,
and Jane Yolen, panel. Mysteries and More!,
5:30PM New York, NY
02/09/96 (Friday) The Final Frontier Barnes & Noble,

- (Star Trek), 7:30PM Livingston, NJ
- 02/09/96 (Friday) Craig Shaw Gardner at Phila- International House,
delphia Science-Fiction Philadelphia, PA
Society, 9:00PM
- 02/10/96 (Saturday) Garden State Horror Writers, Manaplan, NJ
11:00AM
- 02/10/96 (Saturday) U S S Lexington (Star Trek Public Library
Empire) meeting Wayne, NJ
- 02/10/96 (Saturday) Advanced Dungeons & Dragons GameMaster,
game, 1:00PM Fair Lawn, NJ
- 02/10/96 (Saturday) Used Book Sale, 6:00PM Begen Highlands
Anime Videos, 6:00PM Methodist Church,
Final Frontier, 6:00PM Upper Saddle River,
Tony Daniels at S.F.A.B.C.,
8:00PM
- 02/12/96 (Monday) Sector X: The Bermuda Barnes & Noble, West
Triangle, 8:00PM Patterson, NJ
- 02/13/96 (Tuesday) How to Self-Publish, talk by Barnes & Noble,
Cynthia Soroka West Patterson, NJ
- 02/13/96 (Tuesday) The Penguin Book of Vampire Barnes & Noble,
Stories, 7:30PM Paramus (Route 17
South), NJ
- 02/15/96 (Thursday) Alexander Jabokov & Maureen Dixon Place,
McHugh readings, 7:30PM New York, NY
- 02/16/96 (Friday) Linda Zimmerman talk. Civil PACE Campus,
War roundtable, 8:00PM Pleasantville, NY
- 02/16-18/96 Boskone 33 Science-Fiction Framingham, MA
Convention
- 02/17/96 (Saturday) New Jersey SF Society Meeting Masonic Temple,

- 7:30PM Belleville, NJ
- 02/20/96 (Tuesday) At the Mountains of Madness Borders Books,
by H.P. Lovecraft, SF Book Paramus, NJ
Group, 8:00PM
- 02/23/96 (Friday) Miniature Golf, Special Golf World, Pompton
Activities Group, 8:00PM Plains, NJ
- 02/24/96 (Saturday) Lunarians Meeting, 7:30PM TRS Inc., New York, NY
- 02/24/96 (Saturday) Russel Roberts talk, 2:00PM Barnes & Noble,
Princeton, NJ
- 02/24/96 (Saturday) Creation Collectors Show The Inn at 57th Street,

(no guests, only dealers) New York, NY
02/25/96 (Sunday) Writer's Critique Group, DeParto home,
3:00PM Lyndhurst, NJ
02/25/96 (Sunday) U S S Justice (Starfleet) private home
Maplewood, NJ
02/26/96 (Monday) Fear by Michael Crichton, Borders Books,
7:30PM East Brunswick, NJ
02/27/96 (Tuesday) Fantasy writer Stephen Brust Borders Books,
discussed, SF Discussion Wayne, NJ
Group, 8:00PM

5. RESTORATION (a film review by Mark R. Leeper):

Capsule: This is a throwback to the historical epics of the 40s and 50s. The story is an enjoyable if overly-contrived potboiler. But the historical texture, the spectacle, and the costumes are most of the show. The minor weaknesses in the plotting are more than made up for by the terrific visualizations. Rating: high +1 (-4 to +4)

On January 30, 1649, Charles I of England, who had earlier lost his fight to restrict the power of Parliament, paid the price and was beheaded. England was in the hands of the Parliamentarians. Oliver Cromwell, the Puritan who commanded the New Model Army remained as unbeatable as Charles I had found him. Cromwell took control of the government making himself essentially a dictator. He went on and within months subdued the rebellious Ireland. Charles I's son, who had been crowned Charles II of Scotland, raised an army to invade England, but he was beaten back by Cromwell's army. In another victory Cromwell presided over a successful war with the Netherlands. But now the dictator needed money to finance his victories. To get it he reversed a ruling of Edward I (see my review of BRAVEHEART) and allowed Jews back into England to get their financial support.

When Cromwell died on September 3, 1658, there was nobody worthy to replace him and his son Richard was the nobody worthy who was chosen. To have a continuation of the harsh Puritanical rule of a Cromwell and the lack of leadership that Richard offered brought discontent throughout England. It did not take much of Richard Cromwell's rule to make Charles II of Scotland look like a natural leader. Charles II was given the throne of England on assurances that he would take no revenge for his father's death and would allow religious freedom for England. With the return of the monarchy to England begins the period called the Restoration.

Thus we have an England that was still ravaged from the Civil War. And it still has bitter conflict between severe Puritans and more free-living and perhaps even decadent followers of the two Charles Stuarts. In spite of continuing conflicts the Restoration was the time of great cultural landmarks in English history. Milton wrote "Paradise Lost." Social philosophers Thomas Hobbes and John Locke were publishing. King Charles had a particular interest in science and chartered the Royal Society of London to do scientific research. Isaac Newton was 19 when Charles returned and was doing his early work. When the Great Plague struck London with its full force in April of 1665 Newton fled to his mother's farm and there worked out the laws of gravitation. Meanwhile over 50,000 people in London died of the pestilence. Luckily he was still out of London 17 months later when a bakery fire broke out near London Bridge and engulfed a street of vulnerable wood houses. Fanned by east winds the inferno continued to spread and burn for four days until much of the city had been consumed. Even with a large piece of the city leveled, an estimated 13,000 houses, enough to make 100,000 people homeless, Charles could not convince property owners to rebuild along lines planned by master architect Christopher Wren and Charles had to settle for Wren's redesign of St. Paul's Cathedral. It is in this Restoration England that the story of RESTORATION is set.

Robert Merivale (Robert Downey Jr.) and John Pearce (David Thewlis) are close friends who are very similar but very different. Both are promising medical students, but for John successes come only through hard work and a dedication that is well in keeping with his stern Quaker background. Robert has more of a genius for medicine, or would if he would ever stop partying. One day Robert is called to court in a personal mission of healing by Charles II (Sam Neill). While there his womanizing is noticed by Charles. Charles is looking for a nominal and platonic husband for his mistress Celia (Polly Walker). Once she is married he can continue his affair with her while she is still under a cloak of respectability. Along with this non-wife wife Robert is given a house and lands and a pension. But then the plot takes the obvious turn with Robert falling in love with his for-show wife Celia. Luckily this complication leads to others which turn what was a rather bland situation comedy in an interesting setting into another story

entirely that affords a much better view of Restoration England.

Yes, the story does improve as it goes along but the one factor that remains constant is that the story is never so interesting as to avoid being upstaged by the detailed and beautifully filmed setting. Michael Hoffman, whose best known film to date was SOAPDISH, manages to bring in a sumptuous look at mid-17th Century England at a surprisingly small budget of \$18.5 million. The budget is in large part helped by having cinematographer Oliver Stapleton use relatively close shots of nearly every fancy scene. This only occasionally gives a feeling of constriction and probably saves immensely on costs. Rupert Walters's screenplay based on the novel by Rose Tremain moves the story at a pace that never drags and allows the action to bring the audience to a surprising number of interesting places, yet never occupies the viewer too much to look for the detail at the sides of the frame. The film is a study in contrasts. We go back and forth from the pleasureless work of the Quakers to the workless pleasures of life in Charles's court. We see people who are all style and no substance and styleless people of great substance.

In spite of the low budget, one has to look a fair distance down the cast list to find unfamiliar names. David Thewlis is very good as the dedicated and serious friend and colleague though he carries some baggage from his skin-crawling role in NAKED. Polly Walker of ENCHANTED APRIL and PATRIOT GAMES makes a fetching mistress. Also present are Meg Ryan, Ian McKellen (currently starring in RICHARD III), and of course Hugh Grant.

For those who like films that show them a bit of a different world and a different time, this film should be a pleasant surprise. I give it a high +1 on the -4 to +4 scale.

For fans of historical films wanting to expand their film experience and learn about the period, there is a terrific Worldwide Web site for this film at

<http://www.obs-us.com/obs/english/films/mx/rest/top.htm>
with great links to original source material about the Restoration. This is what the Web was made for. I just hope it remains around long enough for the readers of this review to who want to have an

opportunity access it. [-mrl]

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The better the radio reception, the more religious
the station.

-- Richard Kosterlitz