

I suspect the beer company chose Spuds to make a superstar not to stand a stand for tolerance, but because of all the stars they could have chosen, Spuds alone is still willing to work for a can of rank-smelling horsemeat a day. I would like to believe they had higher principles, perhaps principles of promoting greater

THE MT VOID

Page 2

understanding, but then I see ads of Spuds standing on a surfboard with the caption "Hang twenty!" As even their photographer should have been able to tell them, the proper caption is "Hang eighteen!" Obviously nobody at the beer company got to know Spuds well enough to tell the difference.

So this issue is dedicated to the great actor Spuds Mackenzie, with the hopes that with his balance of easy charm, good looks without being pretty, and obvious hidden reserves of power, he should be considered for the role of the next James Bond.

2. The holiday season seems to have addled my brain. I claimed the Middletown discussion was on January 8; it was January 6. I said the Boucher story was "The Quest for St. Aquin"; it was "The Quest for Saint Aquin." And I forgot to give the date and time for the film festival. I guess my New Year's resolution will have to be to de-addle myself. [-ecl]

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

ETHER ORE by H. C. Turk
Tor, 1987, 0-812-55635-6, \$3.50.
A book review by Evelyn C. Leeper
Copyright 1988 Evelyn C. Leeper

This is the second book I've read in the "Ben Bova Discoveries" series (the first was N_a_p_o_l_e_o_n_D_i_s_e_n_t_i_m_e_d) and frankly, I don't get it. Both seem to be written as though the reader should find them hysterically funny. I wish I could explain precisely what I mean by that, but I can't. Just think back to the last time you want a comedy show that wasn't funny, and you'll know the feeling. N_a_p_o_l_e_o_n_D_i_s_e_n_t_i_m_e_d had some background adventure-type plot to sustain it, but E_t_h_e_r_O_r_e just falls flat.

Melody Preece--the blurb describes her as "Alice in Wonderland, Dorothy of Oz and Barbra Streisand, all rolled into one," after which build-up disappointment is almost inevitable--anyway, Melody Preece wants to go to Marz, the Tan Planet. Oh, yes, this is also an alternate worlds novel--not an alternate history novel, mind you. A sample from the first chapter explains, "In this era, the greatest influence on

world politics and society was the pacifist Adele Hidler. Fuhrher* Hidler had gained her greatest fame by virtually preventing World War II using the force of her personality, overcoming her demokraptic nemesis, Wynton Churchell, via heated and well-publicized debates. Hidler convinced the world to reject Churchell's ideas, his militarism, and especially the Briticher's unfortunate desire to force Yurope's Hebish populations into a separate state instead of integrating them with the societies of their home nations. Hidler's insistence was to accept Jewbrews as people instead of segregating them as religious cult." I won't even mention (okay, I just did) that Turk does not mean that Hidler virtually prevented World War II, but rather that she d_i_d prevent it almost entirely by the force of her personality. And a subsidiary observation is that if she prevented it, it wouldn't have the name "World War II" either.

The novel continues in this vein, with Lynda Buns Jonestown, Calizonia, Doitchland, ad infinitum, truly ad nauseum. Turk seems to think that misspelling every proper name s/he can sandwich in makes the novel clever; it merely makes it look like a proofreading nightmare, or your average Ace book (sorry, that was a cheap shot, but I couldn't resist it). The advantage to this, of course, is that even if E_t_h_e_r_O_r_e were badly proofread, it would be almost impossible to detect.

* Note: The feminine of "Fuhrer" would actually be, I believe, "Fuhrerin."

Melody gets to Marz, where she somehow changes universes to another alternate world, is thought to be a witch and is sentenced to burn at the stake. From here it's just one madcap adventure after another. Whoopee! I feel like the character in he Four Seasons who says, "Is this the fun part? Are we having fun yet?"

It isn't and I didn't.

=====

GOLDEN GATE by Vikram Seth
Vintage, 1987, 0-394-75063-2, \$5.95.
A book review by Evelyn C. Leeper
Copyright 1988 Evelyn C. Leeper

This review I'm moved to write in verse
For reasons that should soon be clear.
I hope my message is none the worse
Though I ape the author, Seth, here.
He tells, in this novel poetic,
Of thoughts both noble and pathetic.
His tales of friendship gained, then lost,
And of the heavy human cost
Should move the reader to think about
His (her) own friends--and lovers too--
And what he (she) can put them through.
I urge you, reader, without a doubt,
To try this quite unusual book--
It really does deserve a look.

MUSIC OF THE SPHERES
A film review by Mark R. Leeper
Copyright 1988 Mark R. Leeper

Capsule review: Rock-bottom budget science fiction film has little or nothing to offer but some really intriguing science fiction ideas. If you disliked films like L_i_f_e_f_o_r_c_e and P_r_i_n_c_e_o_f_D_a_r_k_n_e_s_s, you're going to really hate this one and I suggest you watch T_h_e_T_e_r_m_i_n_a_t_o_r again instead. Rating: +2.

One of the oddest science fiction films of the 1960s is C_r_e_a_t_i_o_n_o_f_t_h_e_H_u_m_a_n_o_i_d_s. It was an incredible combination of the very good and the very bad. It was made on a lemonade-stand budget. The sets were cheap, the acting incompetent. But the script had interesting ideas, mostly based on Jack Williamson's "Humanoids" stories. There was some decent drama that led one to believe this might have made a decent stage play. It has remained a "cult film" and a curiosity. It was quite unique until now. I think I have just seen my choice for the "Creation of the Humanoids" of the 1980s. It has a classy title, M_u_s_i_c_o_f_t_h_e_S_p_h_e_r_e_s; it has some pretty heavy ideas. going for it. But the budget is bargain-basement; some of the acting and all of the special effects are terrible. Watch it carefully for ten minutes; if you are not intrigued by the film in that time, shut it off.

The film is set in a future perhaps a century from now. The superpowers have fallen apart of their own weight and after the chaos came an order controlled by huge biological computers, the largest of which is called the Beast. The computers have minds of their own and the only way they can be controlled or even communicated with is by having a specially selected human mind-meld with them. And it is important to have a human mind-meld with the Beast because the computer is being used to implement a project to turn three asteroids into solar cells that will beam a constant supply of energy via microwaves to Earth. But the Beast seems to be trying to prevent the project from going ahead. Do you think I am telling you too much? This much all comes out in the first five minutes or so and the ideas keep coming.

This is a Canadian film done in English and French with subtitles. The cost of the film was reportedly \$C110,000 in 1983. That is almost certainly less than 1% of what a film like T_h_e_T_e_r_m_i_n_a_t_o_r cost, and that's low budget! Of course, the production values are dirt-cheap and the film needed a stronger ending. But ideas are cheap, so this film has more than you can take in on one viewing. Where did this thing turn up? Cable television's USA station ran it on a late-night counter-culture program called N_i_g_h_t_F_l_i_g_h_t. I doubt that one in a hundred science fiction fans will even like the film--be warned. But for the few who are willing to put up with its rough edges, I'd rate it a +2 on the -4 to +4 scale.

RAW

A film review by Mark R. Leeper

Copyright 1988 Mark R. Leeper

Capsule review: Ultimately a very downbeat and bitter stand-up comic concert film. The problem is not that the humor is tasteless but that it is not particularly clever. R_a_w is a short film that has occasional laugh-out-loud jokes but not enough to make it worthwhile. Rating: 0.

I am not sure you can measure a concert film by the same standards by which you measure other films. Certainly a lot of the criteria you would apply to the quality of a dramatic film just do not apply to a concert film--considerations like, "Did the plot make sense?" But then, if one says a concert film is not a dramatic film, can you really say that M_y_D_i_n_n_e_r_w_i_t_h_A_n_d_r_e is? It is somewhere in the gray area between drama and concert film. Well, one thing that seems to be called a concert film is a filmed comedy act by a stand-up comic. (If you look at Webster, a single person cannot give a concert, it has to be a c_o_n_c_e_r_t_e_d effort. Eddie Murphy's R_a_w just barely squeaks by on a technicality.)

And if R_a_w does just squeak by, that is just about the only place it does squeak. Generally it tends to roar in language that will never make it to commercial television. In fact, part of Murphy's appeal seems to be in the creative ways he finds to use profanity. And his appeal is undeniable and amazing. He has a line of anti-feminist and anti-homosexual patter that would do a Grand Wizard proud, and yet it is considered unobjectionable because it is embedded in profanity, like almonds in a Hershey bar, and hence is funny. It can be a strange world.

R_a_w begs comparison to other black stand-up comic concert films, particularly those of Richard Pryor and Bill Cosby. Even more than of dramatic films, comparisons of stand-up comics will be a matter of taste, but for my money Murphy comes in a distinct third. Of the three comics Cosby is the funniest. There is nothing I have ever seen Murphy

do that has had me laughing like Cosby's dentist routine. From Cosby to Pryor to Murphy the jokes become more bitter, less creative, more profane, and generally less funny. Murphy does a good impression of Cosby telling him to clean up his act, but the profanity that is Murphy's trademark is the least of his faults. Murphy's humor is at bottom very downbeat and often, as when he describes his bowel movements, just not all that interesting. Rate R_a_w a flat 0 on the -4 to +4 scale.

THROW MOMMA FROM THE TRAIN
A film review by Mark R. Leeper
Copyright 1988 Mark R. Leeper

Capsule review: Danny DeVito's directing debut seems to indicate he is not yet ready to direct. The characters are neither believable nor likable and the comedy is not funny. DeVito needs and deserves a better director than DeVito. Rating: -1.

I think most successful comic actors should learn from Harry Langdon's career. Langdon made a number of successful comedies back in the silent era. He had a funny face that just worked well with screen comedy. He was also ambitious and wanted to direct his own films. He spread a rumor that his director, Frank Capra, really was an incompetent and that he himself did most of the direction on his films. So the studio let Frank Capra go. (Fear not, it was a while, but Capra d_i_d eventually get work directing films again.) Langdon directed his own comedies for two or three flops, then he let other directors misuse him and his career just sort of petered out. Not everyone who is good in comedy acting knows how to direct him or herself. Gene Wilder is another example. A third is probably Danny DeVito. DeVito needs a director who wants to and knows how to show him off. (I have been surprised by how many fans of O_n_e_F_l_e_w_O_v_e_r_t_h_e_C_u_c_k_o'o's_N_e_s_t and T_e_r_m_s_o_f_E_n_d_e_a_r_m_e_n_t do not even remember that DeVito was in those films.)

DeVito has been funny only when he has had really talented directors. His first attempt to direct himself just proves he does not (yet?) have that talent.

_ T_ h_ r_ o_ w_ M_ o_ m_ m_ a_ f_ r_ o_ m_ t_ h_ e_ T_ r_ a_ i_ n is a patchwork of comedy styles that never gels into a real film. The plot is a sendup of Hitchcock's _ S_ t_ r_ a_ n_ g_ e_ r_ s_ o_ n_ a_ T_ r_ a_ i_ n. Larry (played by Billy Crystal) is a writing instructor who teaches his class that a writer always writes. He himself, however, has a writing block connected with his hatred of his ex-wife, a hatred he makes no secret. Owen (played by Danny DeVito) is a student in his class hatching murder plots in fiction and for real equally incompetently. Owen's mother is about as revolting as a woman can appear on screen and Owen, quite justifiably, wants to do her in. Through misunderstanding Owen thinks Larry has suggested an exchange of murders to throw off the police.

The concept could have made for a successful comedy, but virtually nothing in this comedy is funny. The film starts with Larry struggling for much too long with the first sentence for his book. He wants a great first line and he knows it will be "The night was <something>." He has been stuck for months looking for the right adjective. The scriptwriter seems to think that a writer finds a first line and then builds a story around it--not too surprising, since he seems to have built a film around a funny title he never successfully fits into the

Throw Momma from Train January 2, 1988

Page 2

plot. The situation is neither believable nor funny. And that is just how the rest of the film proceeds, leaving implausibilities and loose ends in its unfunny wake. The characters are inconsistent and unbelievable. (Would you help someone you thought was trying to kill you to find the right word for a line in a story?) In the great glut of comedies we are having, so unfunny a comedy will be quickly forgotten. Rate it a -1 on the -4 to +4 scale.

=====

THE REVENGE OF THE HOUND by Michael Hardwick

Villard, 1986, ISBN 0-394-55653-4, \$17.95.

A book review by Evelyn C. Leeper

Copyright 1988 Evelyn C. Leeper

Of the many authors who have followed in the footsteps of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Michael Hardwick has perhaps the best credentials. He has written several scholarly works about Sherlock Holmes as well as eight short Sherlockian plays and, before this novel, wrote P_r_i_s_o_n_e_r_o_f_t_h_e_D_e_v_i_l in which Sherlock Holmes gets involved in the Dreyfus affair. (Given that Sherlock Holmes has n_o direct dealings with the historical personages of his day in the Canon, one has to wonder why all imitators feel obliged to drag in all these well-known people. What is this, "Private Investigations of the Rich and Famous"?)

Be that as it may, Hardwick does write a good story. If that sounds like damning with faint praise, you have not read some of the stuff published to cash in on Holmes's popularity. If Hardwick harps on Watson's love life a bit too much, at least he doesn't turn him into Casanova. And if Holmes is involved in deep political plots, at least he doesn't meet all the crowned (or uncrowned) heads of Europe in the process. My one real complaint is that he feels the need to refer back to several Canonical stories in addition to T_h_e_H_o_u_n_d_o_f_t_h_e_B_a_s_k_e_r_v_i_l_l_e_s.

The various strings of the reappearance of the hound, the seemingly senseless murder of a ship's steward, and the coronation of Edward VII are all tied up nicely at the end. Of course, it's easy for a writer to do that when s/he starts with the end and works back, but even so, so few writers seem to bother these days.

Steranko's illustrations are on the whole good, though one or two seem "muddy." Whether that is due to the reproduction or to the dimness of the scene he is portraying, I don't know.

I want to recommend T_h_e_R_e_v_e_n_g_e_o_f_t_h_e_H_o_u_n_d, but I must add a proviso. Unless you are a collector of Holmesiana or very wealthy, get this from the library, buy it used, or wait for the paperback. I realize this is the age of the \$7 movie, the \$50 Broadway ticket, and the \$1.50 cup of coffee, but \$17.95 for a novel? Of course, you could always give it to a friend as a gift and then borrow it back.

Star Trek Funnies V
Anonymous
Provided by Seth Meyer and William Chao

----- Star Trek: The Next Generation -----
----- Episode XX: Share Minds but Kill the Kid -----

Scene 1:

[Sickbay...Kirk Enters]

Kirk: How is she, Bones?

McCoy: Well, Jim, I gave her a sedative but she keeps rambling on.

Troi: Oh..pain...share minds...never got to share....mommy...

McCoy: I told Nurse Chapel to leave. 'Mom' that is. I don't get the connection but it was driving Chapel crazy.

Kirk: [rubbing his chin] Share minds...hmm...What does she mean by sharing minds?

McCoy: I'm not sure.... It's like nothing I've ever encountered.

[Kirk presses button on wall intercom]

Kirk: Kirk to Spock...

Spock: <<Spock here, Captain.>>

Kirk: Come to sickbay. We want you to help us with Troi.

Spock: <<Affirmative, Captain. But what shall I do with Wesley?>>

Kirk: Explain.

Spock: <<Well, he said he's trying to re-invent Transwarp Drive.>>

Kirk: Hmm...let him talk to Scotty.

Spock: <<Acknowledged.>>

[After a minute, Spock enters sickbay]

Kirk: Spock, we need you to mind-meld with Troi here. Find out what you

can.

Spock: Acknowledged. [Places fingers carefully on Troi's face] Our minds are getting closer and closer....

Troi: Yesss...Share minds...

Spock: ...Our minds are....wow! [A smile appears on Spock's face. He starts to blush, and he begins to shudder uncontrollably. Spock's face begins to moisten with sweat, and both eyebrows are 'jumping' up and down. Finally, after three minutes, the contact is broken, though Spock's odd grin persists]Oboy, oboy, oboy! Errr...I mean, fascinating.

Troi: Oh yes! Joy! Pleasure! Satisfaction! Wonderful! Gratitude! Again!! [Chapel enters] Mom!! [Chapel exits, blushing] Confusion... dismay...pain...oh the pain!! [Spock proceeds to mind-meld again] Yes!! Joy! More!!

Kirk: Keep her quiet and give me a report in an hour, Mr. Spock.

Spock: If you...uhhh...insist.

Kirk: Bones, let's go check up on Wesley.

[Exit]

Scene 2:

Scotty: ...an' if ya ever try ta do that again, I'll take ya by yur bloody hair and send ya into space and torp' you, ya little...

[Kirk enters]

Scotty: Capt'in! Thank God yur here!

Kirk: What happened?

Scotty: Well, this little brat came down here an' used this here device ta make it sound like your voice, tellin me to come up to the

bridge. When I found out you were in sickbay and that Wesley was going to meet me, I ran back here but Wesley locked the Engineering doors. It took me a good two minutes to reprogram the computer to override Wesley's practical joke.

Wes: I'm sorry, but gee, it was fun!

Kirk: Take it easy, Scotty. He really meant no harm.

Star Trek Funnies 5 January 8, 1988

Page 3

Scotty: Aye, Capt'in, but the little bugger better watch his step, or I might use the transporter to get rid of his brain.

[Wesley and Kirk leave Engineering]

Kirk: Wesley, you better watch what you do around here. Another stunt like that and you will be confined.

Wesley: Gee, Captain, I only want everyone to know how smart I am. [He looks up at Kirk at notices hair] Gee, you having hair problems? Picard did too, 'cept he didn't use a toupee. He's a real boring guy. Hey, how's Troi?

Kirk: [Yelling and waving arms in old dramatic-Kirk-like fashion] Listen Wesley, *you* have the opportunity...to make something of yourself. Don't blow it by doing stupid things.

Wesley: Gee, you don't have to be so dramatic...

Kirk: [slamming Wesley into corridor wall] Listen, you stupid little jackass! After Charlie X, Trelayne, Miri & Jahn, and the children from Triacus you're nothing. If you ever try to get wise to me or to any of my crew, I will put you over my knee and...[high pitched whistle from intercom]...[pushing intercom button]...What!?

McCoy: I'm in sickbay, Jim. Sorry to disturb you, but it's Spock. I..I think you better get down here.

Kirk: Why? Has Spock died again?

McCoy: Now!

Kirk: On my way.

[Kirk, followed by Wesley run into the turbo-lift]

Scene 3:

[Sickbay, Kirk and Wesley enter]

Kirk: What is it Bones ohmygodisthatspock?

Wesley: Gosh!

[Kirk and Wesley look in shock at Spock and Troi]

[Spock is sitting next to Troi. They are both smoking a cigarette, and staring into one another's eyes. Spock has the biggest grin on his face.]

Star Trek Funnies 5 January 8, 1988

Page 4

McCoy: Well, Jim, Spock seems to be in total bliss. I haven't encountered anything like this since you and that Deltan. I think Spock's life is in danger.

Kirk: Don't spend too much time worrying about it Bones...Spock will pull through...He's a regular. However, I think I will need some time alone with Troi, in my quarters.

Wes: Oh yeah! Jimmy boy is gonna do Troi!

Kirk: [aside to Wesley]...shut up kid!...

Scene 4:

Chekov: Cowordinites Capt'in?

Kirk: Hmmmmmm...

Sulu: [to Chekov] I don't understand it. He's been like that after that session he had with Troi.

Chekov: [shrugs, and repeats] Cowordinates Capt'in?

Wesley: Yo Captain! The Russkie asked you for coordinates!

Kirk: [Suddenly remembering where he is and what he should be doing and that the kid is still on his ship] Set a course for the neutral zone. [presses button on chair] Scotty, I need maximum warp now!

Scotty: <<I can give ya warp 9>>

Kirk: [almost whispering into chair intercom] Look, do you want to get rid of the kid or not?

Scotty: <<I'll have warp 11 for ya in a jiffy.Scott out>>

Wesley: Warp 11 is impossible!! Maximum logical warp is 10, stupid! I should know.

Kirk: [into chair intercom] Security, come to bridge and confine Wesley. Strip-search him and I want a twenty-four hour watch on him.

Security Head: Aye, Sir.

Kirk: Uhura, send a message to Starbase 5, Code 2, that the highly valuable commodity, Wesley, is aboard, but we are having engine problems and are heading for the neutral zone.

Uhura: But sir, the Klingon-Romulan Empire have broken Code Two a long time ago.

Kirk: I know [smiles to Uhura].

Scene 5:

[Exiting warp speed...]

Spock: We are in the neutral zone, Jimbo.

Kirk: [To Spock] Jim! You used to call me Jim! Remember? [sighs, and then speaks into chair intercom] Scotty, I need you to transport Wesley into the first Klingon ship that enters transportation range, and then get us out of here.

Scotty: <<Aye! That'll be a pleasure. And if they thought tribbles were bad...>>

Uhura: Klingons are hailing us.

Kirk: On viewer. [she does and nods]

Klingon: This is Captain Dk'ls of the starship Tr'gn, representing the Klingon empire. Your presence here is an act of war. Give us the human known as Wesley or prepare to die.

Kirk: [in chair intercom] Now, Scotty! [turns] Go, Sulu!!

[Wooooosssshhhhh!!!!]

Scene 6:

[In a more computerized-looking universe...]

Picard: What's wrong with you?

Crusher: Shouldn't you be on the bridge? You're supposed to be monitoring the reattachment of the saucer section.

Picard: No need. It's on automatic as usual. I'm let Ryker think he's doing it manually and.... What's wrong?

Crusher: Dammit, it's my son! Why did you get rid of him?

Picard: I got rid of them so we could have better adventures. Troi was driving me crazy, and your son was such a brat. C'mon, we are

finally alone...no Wesley...no crises...lets get under the covers and....

Crusher: [pushing Picard into the wall] You had no right to do that! He may of been a brat, but he was *my* son. There will be no future between us until you get my son back!! Don't come to me to console you during your next crises!!!

Picard: Oh, all right. [Pressing insignia] Ryker. Picard here. Re-separate saucer section and lets go back and get Wesley and Troi.

=====
Next Episode...Klingons, Peace, Pain, oh the pain!
=====

//////////| To be continued...|
//////////

This episode of Star Trek: The Next Generation, has been created, thanks to the following older episodes:

Trek Classic (old series) Diet Trek (cartoons) {Same old ST with a
===== bit less Trek than

- Charlie X More Tribbles, More Troubles usual}
- The Squire of Gothos
- The Naked Time
- The Deadly Years
- Miri
- This Side of Paradise
- The Trouble With Tribbles
- Ellan of Troyius
- The Enterprise Incident
- Let That Be Your last Battlefield
- And The Children Shall Lead
- The Savage Curtain

Cherry Trek (Movies) {Trek with a New Trek (The Next Generation)
===== little extra} =====

- ST: The Motion Picture Encounter at Farpoint
- STII: The Wrath of Khan The Naked Now
- STIV: The Voyage Home Code of Honor
- The Last Outpost

-----> Seth Meyer <-----

* NEW NOVEL *

The Deltan Encounter

(Originally called: Death With a Smile)
