

woodwork. (Is there any woodwork?) In particular bring books with nice covers that are yellow with perhaps just a touch of pink.

2. The political thriller seems in large part to have been created in the early Sixties and had its heyday at that time, but remains with us. This season it is represented by T h e P a c k a g e . On

THE MT VOID

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Thursday, September 14, at 7 PM the Leeperhouse will show what I consider to be the two best, each with a great script and a great cast. Each was directed by John Frankenheimer.

The Great Political Thrillers

SEVEN DAYS IN MAY (1964) dir. by John Frankenheimer

THE MANCHURIAN CANDIDATE (1962) dir. by John Frankenheimer

For SEVEN DAYS IN MAY Rod Serling adapted the novel by Fletcher Knebel and Charles Bailey. There is something fishy going on behind closed doors at the military's Joint Chiefs of Staff. An odd pool on the Preakness, a lie here, a rumor of an unfamiliar military base there. Something is going on and the Director of the Joint Chiefs, Jiggs Casey (Kirk Douglas), wants to know more. His superior, a charismatic James Mattoon Scott (Burt Lancaster) seems to be at the core of the mystery. Fredric March, Ava Gardner, Martin Balsam, Edmond O'Brien, George Macready, and John Houseman co-star. Maltin gives it 3 stars and Scheuer gives it 3-1/2 out of 4.

THE MANCHURIAN CANDIDATE features a deliciously convoluted and clever plot. Pulled from circulation for many years, its recent re-release was considered a major cinematic event. Bennett Marco (Frank Sinatra) recently returned from the Korean War is having odd and violent nightmares concerning his war buddies and particularly Raymond Shaw (Laurence Harvey), winner of the Congressional Medal of Honor. While he knows Shaw was hated by everyone, Marco finds he has a strange mental block against saying anything negative about Shaw. George Axelrod adapted Richard Condon's novel. Janet Leigh, Angela Lansbury, and Henry Silva co-star. Maltin gives it 3-1/2 stars; Scheuer gives it the highest rating of 4 stars out of 4.

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A day spent without the sight or sound of beauty, the contemplation of mystery, or the search for truth and perfection is a poverty-stricken day; and a succession of such days is fatal to human life.

-- Lewis Mumford

Hugo Awards

Novel: CYTEEN, by C.J. Cherryh (Warner; Popular Library/Questar)
Novella: "The Last of the Winnebagos," by Connie Willis
(IASFM, Jul 88)
Novelette: "Schrodinger's Kitten," by George Alec Effinger
(OMNI, Sep 88)
Short Story: "Kirinyaga," by Mike Resnick (F&SF, Nov 88)
Non-Fiction: THE MOTION OF LIGHT IN WATER, by Samuel R. Delany
(Morrow)
Dramatic Pres.: WHO FRAMED ROGER RABBIT
Pro Editor: Gardner Dozois, IASFM
Pro Artist: Michael Whelan
Semi-Prozine: LOCUS (ed. Charles N. Brown)
Fanzine: FILE 770 (ed. Mike Glyer)
Fan Writer: Dave Langford
Fan Artist: Brad W. Foster and Diana Gallagher Wu (tie)
John W. Campbell Award: Michaela Roessner
Seiun ("Japanese Hugo") for Best Novel in Translation:
_ F _ o _ o _ t _ f _ a _ l _ l by Larry Niven

and Jerry Pournelle
Seiun for Best Short Story in Translation:
"Eye for Eye" by Orson Scott Card
First Fandom Award: L. Sprague deCamp
Donald Grant
Frederik Pohl
Big Heart Award: Arthur L. Widner
Special Awards: Alex Schomburg
SF-Lovers' Digest

SEX, LIES, & VIDEOTAPE
A film review by Mark R. Leeper
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Capsule review: An intense film about a cold,
sterile marriage that is put under pressure by the
husband's mistress and by his college roommate who now

makes a hobby of interviewing women about their sex lives. An award-winning film made on a shoestring budget. Rating: high +1.

_ S _ e _ x, _ L _ i _ e _ s, & _ V _ i _ d _ e _ o _ t _ a _ p _ e is an independent production that could well

be a hit like _ E _ a _ s _ y _ R _ i _ d _ e _ r was. Both films were longer on style than on budget yet used their low budget to give the film a more authentic feel.

Just as the youth movement used _ E _ a _ s _ y _ R _ i _ d _ e _ r to define itself to itself, yuppies may will find this film defining their feelings about sex for themselves.

At the core of the film are Ann and John Millany, played by Andie MacDowell and Peter Gallagher. They lead a sterile, colorless life together, each married to the other's image as a status symbol. Neither has much passion or even affection for the other. In very proper fashion Ann regularly sees a sterile, colorless therapist with whom she discusses her sterile, colorless sex life. But John is seeing another woman on the side, one who does not think of sex as if it were a spider that crawled into her house. And Ann is puzzled by Graham (played by James Spader), an old friend of John's who now makes his hobby interviewing women privately about their sex lives. This activity as a symptom of Graham's disturbance forms the psychological basis of the story.

_ S _ e _ x, _ L _ i _ e _ s, & _ V _ i _ d _ e _ o _ t _ a _ p _ e is an intense film about people with sexual

problems. It is more about attitudes and discussion about sex than it is about sex itself. The film has a cold sexual tension that is mostly devoid of eroticism. Viewers will leave having less of an urge to have sex than to talk about it. In fact, for better or worse the film is very likely to spawn a fad for amateur Kenseys all across the country to go out interviewing people about their sex lives.

First time writer and director Steven Soderbergh undoubtedly made a very hot commodity for a modest \$1.2 million budget. He creates not so much characters we have some feeling for as a set of walking case histories that are intriguing without being appealing. The characters have a depth that saves what would otherwise be a very soap-opera-ish plot While I cannot say that detailed films about people's sex lives

are really my cup of tea, I would still rate _ S _ e _ x, _ L _ i _ e _ s, & _ V _ i _ d _ e _ o _ t _ a _ p _ e a high +1.

THE STORY OF THE STONE by Barry Hughart
Doubleday Foundation, 1989, ISBN 0-385-24636-6, \$17.95.

A book review by Evelyn C. Leeper
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Like its predecessor (T_h_e_B_r_i_d_g_e_o_f_B_i_r_d_s), T_h_e_S_t_o_r_y_o_f_t_h_e_S_t_o_n_e is set in 7th Century China. Both are apparently based on excerpts of the classic D_r_e_a_m_o_f_t_h_e_R_e_d_C_h_a_m_b_e_r, though only on a small part of it

(much as the film E_r_e_n_d_i_r_a was based on a half-page from the epic novel O_n_e_H_u_n_d_r_e_d_Y_e_a_r_s_o_f_S_o_l_i_t_u_d_e). Of the first I said, "It's full of the

feel of China and the Orient." In retrospect I'm not sure I would still say that. There is a certain atmosphere to the books, but I'm not sure it isn't just a village atmosphere that could easily arise from a book set in Russia or Scotland or anywhere else. Consider F_i_d_d_l_e_r_o_n_t_h_e_R_o_o_f. It is a very popular play (and film) that people in the United States think is very Jewish (whatever that means). When it first played in Japan, people there liked it, but expressed surprise that it was popular in the United States. "After all," they said, "the story is so Japanese." And when Mark recently lent the film to a co-worker, the co-worker's father--who had been born in China and spoke little English--loved it, from which Mark concluded that perhaps Chinese village life was not so different from shetl life after all.

This is not to downgrade the books. I'm not sure at this point h_o_w one would write a book that had a "Chinese village" feel rather than just a village feel. And I do recommend the book, though I have several nits to pick with it.

It seems picky, I know, to point out mistakes. But there were several, and I found them annoying. For one thing, Hughart says the A.D. 650 is the Year of the Serpent. No, the closest years of the serpent to 650 are 645 and 657. Then later he talks about people with mercury poisoning and how hatters frequently suffer from this because of the mercury they use. I didn't think felt hats were that common in China in the Seventh Century; maybe they were, but it sounds wrong.

One of the references that I thought was a mistake may not be one. He has one clue refer to the "one hundred and forty-six scales of the dragon" and has Master Li try to analyze this as "one, four, and six." I didn't think the Seventh Century Chinese did arithmetic in base ten. But upon looking it up, I discovered that 1) the Hindus had zero (necessary for positional notation) as early as 100 B.C., and 2) it is thought that the Hindu-Arabic numerals that we use may have been derived

from the Chinese. So maybe the Chinese _ d _ i _ d do base ten arithmetic in the Seventh Century! (Though a Chinese friend says, no, they did arithmetic in base 60.) But Master Li also refers to an item thirty-six inches long corresponding to the 360 degrees of a circle. There are two things grating about this sentence. One is the use of the word "inches." Now if the author says, "The town was two miles away," I

Story of the Stone

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figure that's a translation of the actual units, and maybe the character really said it's twelve blargs away (or whatever). But here, the number of units is important, hence the unit cannot be just a translation or the number would change as well. And secondly, I don't think the Chinese used a 360-degree circle. It's possible (the Babylonians could have shipped it east as well as west, or gotten it from the east), but, again, it _ s _ o _ u _ n _ d _ s wrong. One can argue that an author shouldn't have to worry about the truth sounding wrong, but the publisher probably should have suggested an afterword clarifying some of this.

As I said before, I do recommend the book, though not as wholeheartedly as I recommended the first one.

