

1. There isn't much to say this week. If anyone wants Mark's 36-page trip log for Egypt or his 40-page trip log for East Africa, send me your e-mail address and I will send you the raw version. If you have no e-mail address, I will print up a copy, but I'd just as soon not be in the publishing business, as evidenced by the fact I am *not* attaching the log to every copy of the MT VOID! [-ecl]

THE MT VOID

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MYSTIC PIZZA

A film review by Mark R. Leeper
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Capsule review: The lives of two sisters and a friend, pizza parlor waitresses, is not original and the individual stories are predictable, but as a whole it is a satisfying slice-of-life film and worth seeing.
Rating: low +2.

My_s_t_i_c_P_i_z_z_a is a sort of a T_h_e_B_e_s_t_o_f
E_v_e_r_y_t_h_i_n_g for the
Eighties. I guess that in itself is something of a surprise: that
someone is making a T_h_e_B_e_s_t_o_f_E_v_e_r_y_t_h_i_n_g in the
Eighties. It is not a
film with much flash. It is just a quiet (dare I say it?) soap opera
about three young women who waitress together in a pizza parlor and
share each other's lives. There are the two sisters Kat and Daisy and
their friend Jojo. Kat is the serious sort. She is holding down
several jobs to try to earn enough to take advantage of a scholarship
from Yale. Her sister Daisy is affable, attractive, and shoots a mean
game of pool. She is looking to have a little bit of fun and to live a
little. Jojo wants to be like Daisy. Having canceled out on her
wedding day, she wants sex with her boyfriend but no commitments.
My_s_t_i_c_P_i_z_z_a is really three stories, one for each woman, braided
together into a single story.

Of the three stories the film concentrates mostly on the sisters'

stories; neither is particularly original. Kat babysits for the daughter of a handsome young architect who happens to be a Yale graduate and whose wife is off in Europe. You can plot this one yourself. Daisy has a relationship with a rich law student with a checkered past and a bigoted family. Perhaps you cannot plot this one yourself, but it is unlikely you will be very surprised either.

So the individual stories are not much to see the film for. But this is one of those films where the whole is considerably more than the sum of its parts. For one thing, there are few enough films that show women who are friends and how their friendship works, and at times does not work.

My s t i c P i z z a is not one of the year's best films--though I think at least one critic was claiming that it was--but at a time when so many films look alike it is a surprisingly satisfying film to watch and enjoy and hopefully is a sign of more adult films (no, I mean l i t e r a l l y adult films) being made. Rate it a low +2 on the -4 to +4 scale.

(Oh, a side note: New York City restaurants offered a dinner to go with viewing B a b e t t e' s F e a s t, but it was about \$100 a plate. After seeing T a m p o p o I could not find a Japanese noodle house nearby. For those of you who want to coordinate a movie and dinner, this is the film!)

THEY LIVE

A film review by Mark R. Leeper

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Capsule review: Science fiction films catch up to some of the lighter stuff being written in the 1960s. John Carpenter's adaptation of a famous story drags a lot, even at 93 minutes. This is due to Carpenter using spare time to add action rather than to expand much on the original plot. Still, there is a story there and one that is not like other action films being made right now and Carpenter gets points for that. Rating: +2.

These days you have two kinds of filmmakers. You have your original filmmakers who tell new stories and make new films. Then you have filmmakers who recombine elements of successful movies. This kind sprinkles science fiction ideas into a police action film and gets

something like _ A_ l_ i_ e_ n_ N_ a_ t_ i_ o_ n_ or_ D_ e_ e_ p_ S_ p_ a_ c_ e. One filmmaker you can

usually depend on being mostly original is John Carpenter. He may add some prefabricated filler but at least his films are stories you have not seen on film before. This time around Carpenter has adapted a comic book version of the popular science fiction story "Eight O'Clock in the Morning" by Ray Nelson, beefed up its political message, added a lot of not very imaginative padding, and turned a fast-paced story into a snail's-paced 93-minute movie.

The story is that of John Nada (called George Nada in the short story), who gets a pair of sunglasses that allows him to see what is _ r_ e_ a_ l_ l_ y going on. (In the short story Nada is awakened too far from an hypnotic state.) And what is going on? We are all being shepherded by aliens who to most people pass for human. All our literature and advertising and television gives us nothing but subliminal messages like "Buy," "Obey," "Stay asleep," "No imagination," "Marry and reproduce," and "No independent thought." With the sunglasses the world is black and white but you can see what is really going on. (HmMMM! Could this be a comment on colorization?)

The real problem with _ T_ h_ e_ y_ L_ i_ v_ e is that Carpenter has taken his five-page story and added little to it but padding. Most of the padding is action scenes which undiscerning audiences have come to accept as a substitute for plot. If the filmmaker has people shooting each other, breaking windows, having fist fights, and in general keeping images flicking on the screen, audiences do not care that the story is stopped stock still and is not advancing one whit. This film is packed with very long stretches of mindless action, including a seemingly endless fist fight. And mindlessness in the media is very apropos for the plot of _ T_ h_ e_ y_ L_ i_ v_ e, though at one point in the film Carpenter explicitly lists himself and George Romero as being part of the solution rather than part of the problem.

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In spite of the fact that there was only about thirty minutes worth of story here, it is a good story and for its sake I would rate this a +2 on the -4 to +4 scale.

Sources of "Eight O'Clock in the Morning" by Ray Nelson:

_ M_ a_ g_ a_ z_ i_ n_ e_ o_ f_ F_ a_ n_ t_ a_ s_ y_ a_ n_ d

- S_c_i_e_n_c_e_F_i_c_t_i_o_n, November, 1963
- B_e_s_t_o_f_T_h_e_M_a_g_a_z_i_n_e_o_f_F_a_n_t_a_s_y
- a_n_d_S_c_i_e_n_c_e_F_i_c_t_i_o_n#_1_3, ed. by Avram Davidson
- T_h_e_O_t_h_e_r_s, ed. by Terry Carr
- T_a_l_e_s_o_f_T_e_r_r_o_r_f_r_o_m_O_u_t_e_r
- S_p_a_c_e, ed. by R. Chetwynd-Hayes
- Y_e_a_r's_B_e_s_t_S_c_i_e_n_c_e_F_i_c_t_i_o_n#_9, ed. by
Judith Merril

