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1. In the 1970s Hollywood had two directors who could be counted on

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to make funny films: Woody Allen and Mel Brooks. And while neither is making funny movies any more, they have left an undeniable legacy. On Thursday, January 12, at 7 PM, the Leeperhouse fest will show a vintage film from the early careers of each.

Vintage Comedy

BANANAS (1971) dir. by Woody Allen

THE TWELVE CHAIRS (1970) dir. by Mel Brooks

BANANAS was the high point of Allen's wackiness. Allen plays an all-American schnook who gets involved with a Latin American revolution. Look for a small role played by Sylvester Stallone and a cameo appearance by J. Edgar Hoover. Virtually anything I could tell you about this one would ruin a gag, so enough said.

THE TWELVE CHAIRS, made between T_h_e_P_r_o_d_u_c_e_r_s and B_l_a_z_i_n_g_S_a_d_d_l_e_s, is perhaps Brooks' least seen and least remembered comedy. It is not a bad film either--Maltin rates it three stars; so does Scheuer. Ron Moody and Frank Langella star as two scoundrels in post-Revolutionary Russia who team up to find a fortune in jewelry hidden in one of a dispersed set of chairs. Dom DeLuise plays a rival antique hunter in one of the few roles in which I think he is actually funny.

2. Yes, you can get free books! The following books are available for the asking *if you review them for the MT VOID*. Let me (Evelyn Leeper) know if you're interested:

Anderson, Poul	Rebel Worlds
Asimov, Isaac	Cosmic Knights
Asimov, Isaac	Mythical Beasties
Asimov, Isaac	Spells
Belden, David	Children of Arable
Brunner, John	Shockwave Rider
Clayton, Jo	Bait of Dreams

Clayton, Jo	Star Hunters
Coney, Michael G.	Fang the Gnome
Friesner, Esther	Elf Defense
Hughes, Zach	Dark Side
Kurtz, Katherine	Bishop's Heir
Lanier, Sterling E.	Hiero's Journey
Major, H. M.	Alien Trace & Time Twister (two-book set)
Pratchett, Terry	Equal Rites
Pratchett, Terry	Light Fantastic
Rawn, Melanie	Dragon Prince
Ruse, Gary Alan	Morlac: Quest of Green Magician
Young, Robert F.	Vizier's Second Daughter

3. The following is the description of the next Bell Labs Star Trek in the 20th Century Club meeting:

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In the Star Trek episode "The Apple" the Enterprise visited a planet where the inhabitants had been baby-sat by a computer for centuries. There was no sickness, no jealousy, and no social and technological progress. Captain Kirk and company, however, brought "the apple" into this planet-wide "Garden of Eden" by destroying the computer and releasing the inhabitants to the freedom of love, sex, marriage, and parenthood. Without the baby-sitter, the people were forced to evolve their own culture and become their own providers.

Questions to Ponder:

1. Did Captain Kirk violate the Prime Directive of Non-Interference?
2. Were Captain Kirk's actions beneficial or harmful to the inhabitants in the long run?
3. On love, sex, marriage, and parenthood:
 - a. How do you know that you are in love? (i.e. What is love?)

- b. Who are you willing to have sex with? (i.e. Is sex affectionate or recreational?)
 - c. What is the significance of marriage as opposed to cohabitation?
 - d. Do you prefer monogamy to polygamy or open marriages?
 - e. What do you think of dual-career marriages and equal sharing of housekeeping and child rearing responsibilities? How does it affect the images and definitions of a good husband/wife and a good father/mother?
 - f. How do you view homosexuality?
 - g. Should there be a mandatory aptitude test in parenting for the parents-to-be?
4. What do you think of BRAVE NEW WORLD's treatment of love, sex, marriage, and parenthood?

You are welcome to either or both of the show and discussion. Hope to see you there! If you have any questions, additions to the agenda, or suggestions for future topics of discussion, please send e-mail to mtund!newton or call 576-3541.

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CYBERNETIC SAMURAI by Victor Milan
Ace, 1986 (hard cover by Arbor House 1985)
ISBN 0-441-13234-0, \$3.50.
A book review by Avi I. Hauser
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I remember reading some other book by Milan and even though I refuse to clutter my mind with irrelevant facts I recollect that he had

a background in sciences. This comes as no surprise to anyone who has read this book. The story evolves around post world war three Japan, with 5th generation computers all around. The barbaric character of the society coupled to the reemerging old order of feudal Japan are the setting for this hard core science-fiction story. A group of scientists try (and succeed) in making the first self aware being. The story tells us about the different people who interact with this cybernetic being, as well as the learning process and the molding of its character. It is being taught to be a samurai, and no it is not the story of the monster that tries to kill its creator.

Though the dramatic story-line lacks conviction, I found this a very interesting book. It fulfills all the "definitions" of a good S.F. book since it relies on natural and plausible extensions of today's scientific knowledge. It succeeds in putting you in the right setting without too much lecturing as many other books tend to do. The author knows the physical principles of quantum mechanics, as well as AI fundamentals, but doesn't try to impress the fact upon the reader. The action parts of the story are good, the sex description is so-so and the philosophical parts leave a lot to be desired. It is not a masterpiece but over all it is better than average.

Recommended reading for one of these long winter nights, but not immediately after we get to know our salary raises...

DANGEROUS LIAISONS
A film review by Mark R. Leeper
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Capsule review: Beautifully filmed and acted adaptation of a scandalous French novel of 1782 and the play based on it by Christopher Hampton (who also wrote the screenplay). The film proceeds like a sexual chess game with two master players and a board full of pawns. One of the year's best. Rating: +3.

It is the France of Louis XVI and the aristocracy has turned sex into a game like chess with strategy and tactics. The Marquise de Merteuil seems prim and proper, but behind the facade she is a conniving power-monger who on a whim can destroy the lives of those around her. If less capable of escaping notice for his sexual manipulations, no less adroit at the manipulation is the Vicomte de Valmont. The Marquise, to get revenge on a former lover, suggests that the Vicomte seduce the innocent 16-year-old fiancée of the lover. But the Vicomte considers seduction of the innocent too small a challenge; instead, he will attempt seduction of the truly virtuous and proposes to bed the highly moral Madame de Tourvel. The Vicomte then proceeds to accomplish both challenges. and the film becomes a sort of sexual "Mission Impossible" as under a cultured facade this merciless game of strategy and tactics takes place.

Based on the stage play L_e_s_L_i_a_i_s_o_n_s_D_a_n_g_e_r_e_u_s_e_s and the 1782 novel of the same title by Choderlos de Laclos, D_a_n_g_e_r_o_u_s_L_i_a_i_s_o_n_s comes to the screen beautifully directed by Stephen Frears. Losing the immediacy of a live on-stage performance, Frears takes full advantage of the new medium by making use of the most perfect facial expressions by John Malkovich as the Vicomte and by Glenn Close as the Marquise. Even if such expression were possible in the stage play, it would be lost on all but the first few rows. The film also stars semi-actress Michelle Pfeiffer, who is as out-classed by Close and Malkovich as her character is by theirs. Frears uses her as little more than a mannequin. It is unfortunate for her sake that she and Frears were content to let her give such a flat performance in a film in which there was real direction and acting going on.

In fairness, I should mention that Malkovich has been criticized for using such an American accent for his role. Why he has been singled out I am not sure. In the syntax of cinema French accents are often used rather than subtitling when the characters would realistically be speaking French. Frears did not follow the convention and I was not bothered by it. I wondered whether an actor as plain-faced as Malkovich could play a man women found so seductive as the Vicomte. This too I never questioned while actually watching the film.

If the very most basic plot is a little too much like some of those

incompetently made French sex-romps that show up on late-night cable, everything else is first-rate in this production. I would give D_a_n_g_e_r_o_u_s_L_i_a_i_s_o_n_s a +3 on the -4 to +4 scale.

WORKING GIRL

A film review by Mark R. Leeper

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Capsule review: W_o_r_k_i_n_g_G_i_r_l will probably be the film with which Melanie Griffith breaks through to stardom and genuine name recognition. She plays a secretary who discovers that her boss (Sigourney Weaver) has stolen her idea and decides to put the idea over herself. Rating: low +2.

Tess McGill is one of hundreds of secretaries in a Manhattan brokerage house. She has gone to night school to learn the business and what she hopes will set her apart is her drive to get ahead. Her company holds out the carrot to her that she may someday get a better job, but it is clear from her modish mini-skirted dress, her excessive jewelry and makeup, and her long hair that she is just not the type of person who makes it into the upper echelons. One evening she discovers that her boyfriend is cheating on her and that her boss is using her and stealing her ideas for a client's investments. Fed up, she decides to get serious about the business. She cuts her hair, dresses for a higher class, passes herself off as being at her boss's level, and goes out to pitch her ideas for herself. W_o_r_k_i_n_g_G_i_r_l is the story of the elaborate ruse and the effects it has on Tess, her boss, and a foundering executive at the client's business.

Just as Tess was competent but never got any special notice until she pulled her business coup, Melanie Griffith (who plays Tess) did not get any particular recognition until W_o_r_k_i_n_g_G_i_r_l. She was a familiar face who had been seen in several films: N_i_g_h_t_M_o_v_e_s, the all too rarely seen S_m_i_l_e, O_n_e_o_n_O_n_e, B_o_d_y_D_o_u_b_l_e, S_t_o_r_m_y_M_o_n_d_a_y, and T_h_e_M_i_l_a_g_r_o_B_e_a_n_f_i_e_l_d_W_a_r. Her only role that really got critical attention was that of Lulu in Jonathan Demme's S_o_m_e_t_h_i_n_g_W_i_l_d. I suspect that with W_o_r_k_i_n_g_G_i_r_l she has made herself a recognizable star. W_o_r_k_i_n_g_G_i_r_l is her film even if Fox unconscionably gives her third billing. Second billing goes to Sigourney Weaver as her boss and adversary. Weaver

plays a slick shark of an executive who uses every dirty trick, including sex, to fight the fight. This is the first time I have seen her play a villain. Top billing goes to Harrison Ford who is just barely one of the major characters of the film. (Perhaps as a subtle protest to the billing, Sigourney Weaver has been quoted as saying, "I loved the idea of playing a supporting role with Melanie the star.")

W_o_r_k_i_n_g_G_i_r_l was directed by Mike Nichols with a little less bite than his films usually have. Of course, Nichols' best-loved film is T_h_e_G_r_a_d_u_a_t_e and generally his films (like C_a_t_c_h_2_2, W_h_o's_A_f_r_a_i_d_o_f_V_i_r_g_i_n_i_a_W_o_o_l_f?, C_a_r_n_a_l_K_n_o_w_l_e_d_g_e, and S_i_l_k_w_o_o_d) make a social statement. The social statement here is "do not exploit you fellow workers" and "you should fight to get ahead," not unlike the moral of Colin Higgins' comparable--but not as good--9_t_o_5. Where S_i_l_k_w_o_o_d was negative on big business, W_o_r_k_i_n_g_G_i_r_l concentrates on both faults and virtues. Rate it a low +2 on the -4 to +4 scale.