



Mt. Holz Science Fiction Society
 Club Notice - 1/1/88 -- Vol. 6, No. 27

MEETINGS UPCOMING:

Unless otherwise stated, all meetings are on Wednesdays at noon.
 LZ meetings are in LZ 3A-206; MT meetings are in the cafeteria.

 D A T E T O P I C

- 01/06 MT: Religious SF (Blish's CASE OF CONSCIENCE, Boucher's "Quest for St. Aquin")
- 01/20 LZ: 20,000 LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA by Jules Verne (Classics)
- 01/27 MT: TBD
- 02/10 LZ: DRAGON WAITING by John Ford (Recent Fantasy)

- HO Chair: John Jetzt HO 1E-525 834-1563 mtuxo!jetzt
- LZ Chair: Rob Mitchell LZ 1B-306 576-6106 mtuxo!jrtr
- MT Chair: Mark Leeper MT 3E-433 957-5619 mtgzz!leeper
- HO Librarian: Tim Schroeder HO 3M-420 949-5866 homxb!tps
- LZ Librarian: Lance Larsen LZ 3L-312 576-6142 lzfme!lfl
- MT Librarian: Will Harmon MT 3C-406 957-5128 mtgzz!wch
- Factotum: Evelyn Leeper MT 1F-329 957-2070 mtgzy!ecl

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1. Religious science fiction, in particular science fiction with a Christian basis, will be discussed in the Middletown cafeteria on January 8. The particular topics are James Blish's A CASE OF CONSCIENCE and Anthony Boucher's "The Quest for Saint Aquin." Blish's book is the third of a loosely connected trilogy termed by Blish himself as "After Such Knowledge." The other books are DOCTOR MIRABILIS, a historical novel based on the life of Roger Bacon and BLACK EASTER (and its sequel DAY AFTER JUDGEMENT). All three ask if the acquisition and use of secular learning, or even the desire for it, is evil. A CASE OF CONSCIENCE deals with a Jesuit priest who is an emissary to a distant world of creatures who are (apparently) still living in a state of grace, having never "fallen." He must deal with the theological issues this raises, not the least of which is: is this a trick by the Devil to tempt man by showing him a race without sin, yet without God either? The

Club's only copy is in the Holmdel branch, but most libraries have copies and it has remained in print for thirty years, so bookstores should be able to oblige also.

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"The Quest for Saint Acquin" is a tale of the search for the remains of a saint in a post-atomic-holocaust world; to tell more would be to ruin it. (It is available in many anthologies, including THE SCIENCE FICTION HALL OF FAME (Volume 1), which is available in Holmdel and Lincroft and is also in print).

If there is interest, future meetings will target science fiction based on other religious backgrounds. [-ecl]

2. Bob Hoskins is not an actor a whole lot of people are familiar with. He is a short, forceful Cockney actor who is extremely good at both comic and serious roles. Some people may remember him from T_h_e_C_o_t_t_o_n_C_l_u_b playing Owney Madden, a peace-loving patriarchal gangster who owned the Cotton Club (well, at least they got the bit about owning the Cotton Club right). He is best known for the two films we are showing.

Bob Hoskins

MONA LISA (1986) dir. by Neil Jordan

THE LONG GOOD FRIDAY (1980) dir. by John Mackenzie

MONA LISA earned Hoskins a nomination for Best Actor (he should have won!). The story is about an ex-con who gets a job chauffeuring a prostitute to her engagements. The film is about his relationship with the prostitute, first angry, then sympathetic, then finally drawn into a mystery involving a friend of the prostitute. Cathy Tyson plays the prostitute; Michael Caine is also on hand. One of the best films of its year.

THE LONG GOOD FRIDAY is one of the most exciting and interesting gangster films I have seen. Hoskins plays a London gangland kingpin who has brought peace to the various gangs. On the morning of Good Friday he is ready to sign a deal with an American organized crime syndicate that will make him and his organization

rich. He is respected, even by the law; everybody loves him. Then all of a sudden, somebody starts wiping out his organization with incredible and ferocity. It will take all Hoskins's skill to keep his organization together. This is the earlier made of the two, but it must be watched more carefully so we are putting it second. That way people who wanted to be on time but had to come late (because the gypsy reading their tea leaves at dinner took too long) won't be a distraction.

3. It really disturbs me when I hear on the news about one of these mass-murderers who walks into a bank or a Winky-Dinky Dog and starts killing innocent people. Well, I know nobody likes to hear it, but I'm talking about something else. Yes, the news media play it up unmercifully, but that's not what I'm talking about either. How do they usually describe the guy? Think about it. "He's quiet. Most people really don't know him very well. He seems like a nice enough guy when you talk to him but not really very

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outgoing." I've heard it. That's the way they describe these guys who one day go crazy and start killing just whole bunches of people. Well, what disturbs me so much is that description fits me to a T. I tell you, it's scary. Every one of them is some guy just exactly like me. I keep wondering if my day is coming. Maybe I should make a list of people in case the day ever comes.

4. WBAI (99.5 FM) is our local anarchist radio station. They run a lot of anti-establishment programming, some of which is great fun to listen to, some very thought-provoking, and some pretty tiresome. They also run at least three weekly programs that science fiction fans should be aware of, particularly if they have (as I do) a reel-to-reel tape recorder. Why is that important? Because their interesting programs are each two hours long at inconvenient times.

Saturday morning from 5 AM to 7 AM they run a program called "Hour of the Wolf." They tend to digress but the subject matter is at least nominally science fiction and fantasy. Last week they ran a speech by a British professor, one J. R. R. Tolkien. I only heard after the fact that they ran the speech so I don't know what he talked about. The show host did go on at length about how good was

a fantasy trilogy that the professor had written.

Sunday morning from 5 AM to 7 AM the program is "Soundtrack," devoted to various aspects of the cinema including a lot of musical soundtracks. Last week, for example, they ran the entire score to George Pal's TIME MACHINE followed by the score and some dialogue (in stereo) from the recent remake of THE FLY. This program at one time got the right to have the first radio broadcast of the score to STAR WARS, before the score was even available on record. [Recently they got the score to CRY FREEDOM before it was available--if it even is. -ecl]

To round out their weekend programming, they have from 10:30 PM Sunday night to 12:30 AM Monday morning a program called "The Golden Age of Radio." A lot of what they have is old comedy programs, but the last four episodes have had parts one and two respectively of the radio adaptations of George Stewart's EARTH ABIDES and Pohl and Kornbluth's SPACE MERCHANTS respectively. And a few of you may want to consider joining the station to help keep them going. Oh, they do have occasional fund-raising marathons. Try and catch them some time when there isn't a marathon.

5. The following books have been donated to the Lincroft branch of the MT. HOLZ library system by Rich Gore:

Aldiss, Brian	Malacia Tapestry, The
Anderson, Poul	Tau Zero
Anderson, Poul	Winners
Asimov & Conklin	50 Short Science Fiction Stories
Carter, Lin	Found Wanting

Clarke, Arthur C.	Expedition to Earth
deCamp, L. Sprague	Lest Darkness Fall
deCamp, L. Sprague & Fletcher Pratt	Land of Unreason
Dick, Philip K.	Blade Runner
Dick, Philip K. & Roger Zelazny	Deus Irae
Dickson, Gordon R.	Wolfing
Foster, Alan Dean	Moment of the Magician, The
Gardner, Craig Shaw	Malady of Magicks, A
Haldeman, Joe	Forever War, The
Haldeman, Joe	Mindbridge

Harrison, Harry	Star Smashers of Galaxy Rangers
Heinlein, Robert A.	Glory Road
Howard, Robert E.	Red Nails
Leigh, Stephen	Quiet of Stone, A
Morressy, John	Graymantle
Morressy, John	Ironband
Niven, Larry & Jerry Pournelle	Footfall
Norton, Andre	Catseye
Norton, Andre	Daybreak 2250 A.D.
Norton, Andre	Zero Stone, The
Pohl, Frederik & Cyril Kornbluth	Gladiator-At-Law
Pohl, Frederik & Cyril Kornbluth	Space Merchants, The
Smith, Cordwainer	Norstrilia
Sturgeon, Theodore	Aliens 4, The
Sturgeon, Theodore	Caviar, The
Sturgeon, Theodore	Starshine, The
Sturgeon, Theodore	Venus Plus X, The

6. The next installment of "Star Trek Funnies" has been postponed for space reasons. Instead we are running the index and table of contents for the 1987 MT VOIDS. Back issues are available in the various branches of the Science Fiction Club Library. [-ecl]

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

BROADCAST NEWS
A film review by Mark R. Leeper
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Capsule review: A winning romantic comedy also takes some reasonably good shots at the television network news business. James L. Brooks (T_e_r_m_s_o_f_E_n_d_e_a_r_m_e_n_t) has made an adult film with solid characters.
Rating: +2.

In fairly short order Twentieth Century Fox has brought out two "what goes on behind the scenes" films each by a director of a film that won an Oscar for Best Picture. Each is a glossy, high-budget production and that is where the similarity ends. Oliver Stone's W_a_l_l_S_t_r_e_e_t is unoriginal and predictable and has poorly developed characters. What W_a_l_l_S_t_r_e_e_t has to say about the world of high finance you already know. You probably already know everything about network news you will learn from B_r_o_a_d_c_a_s_t_N_e_w_s, but along with the social statement you will get three interesting characters in one of the best love-triangle films since P_h_i_l_a_d_e_l_p_h_i_a_S_t_o_r_y. Nobody is reduced to being "the other man" or "the woman." Instead you have three well-defined characters who do not grow tiresome. B_r_o_a_d_c_a_s_t_N_e_w_s is 131 minutes long, but characters like these could have carried a film twice as long.

Holly Hunter--every bit as energetic as she was in another great comedy, R_a_i_s_i_n_g_A_r_i_z_o_n_a--plays Jane Craig, a high-tension news producer who usually works with reporter Aaron Altman (played by Albert Brooks): high IQ, low charisma. Along comes the network's new anchorman Tom Grunick: sincere, hard-working, and good-looking, but he doesn't always understand the news he's reading. Any bets who Jane ends up with? Don't bet. This is not a pat, predictable comedy of the type we get so many of these days. The characters are three-dimensional and have minds of their own. James L. Brooks wrote, produced, and directed the film, undoubtedly getting backing on the strength of his T_e_r_m_s_o_f_E_n_d_e_a_r_m_e_n_t. I personally did not respond well to the characters in that film, but B_r_o_a_d_c_a_s_t_N_e_w_s offers a much better choice. Two of the three leads are supposed to be highly intelligent and Brooks manages to write them so they really seem to be, as well as all three being just quirky enough to be real.

B_r_o_a_d_c_a_s_t_N_e_w_s is a sign that the film industry is starting to recover from the post-S_t_a_r_W_a_r_s decade and is starting to go back to making films as adult audience can appreciate. I would hope it would be nominated for Best Picture at least, though it would not be my choice to win. Rate it a +2 on the -4 to +4 scale.

WALL STREET

A film review by Mark R. Leeper

Copyright 1987 Mark R. Leeper

Capsule review: Oliver Stone's film about his father's profession. It does the difficult task of making the world of finance interesting. In the final analysis it is just a reworking of Rod Serling's teleplay and film P_a_t_t_e_r_n_s. The coming attraction was put together with more skill than the film was. Rating: 0.

There's an old television ad for a business magazine that shows a sword fight in a board room. The idea was to show that business is exciting stuff, that companies fight it out like Robin Hood and the Sheriff. Some ad agency just came to the realization that while a lot that is exciting happens, it is tough to show that on film. Most of the excitement comes from numbers on a board. That is what killed R_o_l_l_o_v_e_r a few years back. At least initially you had to get interested enough in numbers. The last half-hour made R_o_l_l_o_v_e_r a lot better if not downright worth seeing. It is tough to get people really into a movie about finance. Oliver Stone actually manages to keep the audience interested. He also tells a pretty good story, or at least retells a pretty good story. The original--assuming it was original even then--is Rod Serling's P_a_t_t_e_r_n_s.

Charlie Sheen plays Bud Fox, an ambitious young stockbroker who really wants to make it to the top. The top is Gordon Gekko (played by Michael Douglas). Gekko deals in billions of dollars every year. He buys and sells companies but he needs information and promises to make Fox rich along the way if Fox will get him information. Fox knows a lot of what he is being asked to do illegal but necessary to get to the top. You can pretty much figure out the film from that.

On hand as Fox's father Carl is Martin Sheen of all people. Carl is not like Bud. He is a hard-working union man who does not understand his son's career. This part is not borrowed from the Serling, but enough working class fathers not understanding non-working-class sons is a well-worn cliché.

Like Oliver Stone's P l a t o o n , W a l l S t r e e t was inspired by Stone's personal history. Stone's father was a stockbroker so Stone grew up knowing about the tensions and pressures of stock trading, perhaps the swashbuckling aspect of it. It is a pity his father didn't tell him a more interesting and original story he could adapt into a film. Rate it a 0 on the -4 to +4 scale.

SUSPECT

A film review by Mark R. Leeper
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Capsule review: A plot that would have made a good episode of P e r r y M a s o n is expanded to over two hours on the screen. There are some script problems, the greatest of which is that there are proper procedures when a juror finds he has evidence bearing on a case, but nobody seems to think of them in S u s p e c t. An okay mystery and courtroom drama. Rating: +1.

Detective novels tend to have the detective who goes out on his own to solve a crime. That works find in books because the author can say in text what the detective is thinking. And what the detective is thinking is important to the plot. In film you usually are told what the detective is thinking in one of two ways. Voice-over first-person narration was popular in the 1940s detective films. It may even have become cliché. (A comedy currently running on cable called E a t a n d R u n would be the final coffin nail for the voice-over if it was any better known.) The other approach is to send someone around with the detective who may or may not be a detective also. Holmes had Watson, Smith had Petrie, Chan had Number One Son, Nick had Nora. The more interesting the relationship, the better.

Suspect is a mystery/courtroom drama worthy of the old Perry
Mason

show, but the gimmick is that the detective pair cannot be seen together. Kathleen Riley (played by Cher) is a public defender appointed to the case of a derelict accused of murder. Eddie Sanger (played by Dennis Quaid) is a juror with a quick and logical mind who finds he is better at defending the derelict than Riley is. Sanger has sufficient reason to disqualify himself as a juror and have a substitute replace him, just as would happen if he had appendicitis. That would free him to help defend the charged man, which is clearly where his heart is. But that would mean there would be no story here. Instead he and Riley sneak around and she agonizes over the ethics of the situation.

The narrative line of Suspect is a little unusual. It begins with four widely separated plot strands that take a little while to wind together. So the opening is, perhaps, confusing or intriguing, depending on your point of view. There is a completely extraneous subplot of Sanger lobbying for dairy price supports on Capitol Hill, which broadens his character a little but could easily have been trimmed from this unusually long film. The final scene of the film, intended to lighten the proceedings, is miscalculated and is out of character for the serious lawyer Cher plays.

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Cher is supposed to be a competent lawyer in an unusual role for her. She does better by the role than does the scriptwriter, who has her overlook some very basic aspects of the evidence, leaving Sanger to point them out to her. Along those lines, this is the third film I have seen in about a month in which a defense lawyer unexpectedly tosses an object to a defendant to establish left- or right-handedness. Quaid adds another boyish-enthusiasm role to a filmography already stocked with them. Joseph Mantegna, who did such a superb job in HouseofGames is on hand in a less noticeable role as the prosecuting attorney.

Suspect has a reasonably good plot and some acceptable acting, but some minor script problems. Rate it a +1 on the -4 to +4 scale.

THE MISSION
A film review by Mark R. Leeper

Capsule review: Another fine historical film from Robert Bolt, complex and beautifully photographed. The film chronicles a conflict involving the Spanish, Portuguese, and Jesuits over who will determine the fate of the Guarani Indians. Well worth seeing. Rating: +3.

Well, I flubbed it on this film. I heard good things and bad things about it when it was in release. Among the bad things I heard was that although it was well-photographed it was also ponderous, the kind of film you have to steel yourself up for the experience of seeing. So I never saw T_h_e_M_i_s_s_i_o_n on the wide screen. In fact, I didn't see it until it came out on videocassette. generally the films that I put off seeing until they make it to cassette, I end up kicking myself over. I had a very good idea that I would not find it ponderous when I saw in the opening credits that the story and screenplay were by Robert Bolt. Bolt wrote the screenplays for D_r._Z_h_i_v_a_g_o and two of what I consider to be among the best historical films I have ever seen, L_a_w_r_e_n_c_e_o_f_A_r_a_b_i_a and A_M_a_n_f_o_r_A_l_l_S_e_a_s_o_n_s. T_h_e_M_i_s_s_i_o_n will probably go up there as a third.

T_h_e_M_i_s_s_i_o_n takes place in 1750 and is the story of the Jesuits, the Portuguese, and the Spanish struggling for control of the land when Argentina, Paraguay, and Brazil come together. Jeremy Irons plays a Jesuit priest desperately trying to bring enlightenment to the Guarani and to hold off the advances of the Portuguese, who consider the Guarani animals to enslave. The priest builds a mission in the territory everyone calls "the land above the falls." Irons's priest was one of the first Europeans above the falls, but shortly afterward comes a mercenary and slaver, Rodrigo (played by Robert DeNiro), with plans to capture and enslave the Guarani. But the real enemies prove to be the Portuguese and the Catholic Church, who allows the Guarani to become pawns in politics an ocean away.

It is difficult to gauge the accuracy of the history of T_h_e_M_i_s_s_i_o_n. That the Spanish and Portuguese were selfish, callous, and cruel, I have little doubt. The selflessness and idealism of the Jesuits seems inconsistent with what was their policy in places like Japan. The film clearly overstates what a paradise the jungle was before the coming of the Europeans. Nobody who has been to the jungle takes the naive view that it is anything like a paradise. Fighting nature and disease and infection does not make for an easy or a happy life. The Spanish and the Portuguese bringing their brand of civilization only made matters worse. While watching T_h_e_M_i_s_s_i_o_n I suspend disbelief and accept that the Jesuits were as unselfish as shown. If the history is right I give the film a strong +3.

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Diary of a Film Addict
by Mark R. Leeper

Christmas time is here again and stores are either packed or closed. I don't have family get-togethers or anything like that. I'd have to be nuts to go into New York City. Christmas weekend for me is usually a pretty dull affair. So a few years ago I decided that the way to celebrate was to have a film festival for Evelyn and myself. This year I do not have a lot of films off of cable backlogged so I intend to rewatch a number of older films I have wanted to see again. This year I expect them to be all quality films. (Last year's festival included films of all nine ratings from -4 to +4; this year there will be a few I haven't seen before, but most will be positively rated at least.)

RATBOY (1986, Sondra Locke)

It is tough to say exactly where this film went wrong. This is a sad parable of a boy with rat-like features. For years he has lived in a junkyard, thought by everyone to be just one more legend. Then he is kidnapped and falls into the hands of Sondra Locke, who wants to exploit him to make a fortune. In retrospect, a lot of the film was probably intended to be funny but just wasn't. The film's view of humanity as being entirely selfish and callous just is too familiar. Like H_a_r_o_l_d a_n_d M_a_u_d_e, this film was probably not intended to be a first-run hit but to become a cult film. Unfortunately, it never has the right touch. R_a_t_b_o_y is a production of Clint Eastwood's company Malpaso. These days usually Eastwood directs Malpaso films; this time he has allowed his

frequent co-star to direct. Rating: 0.(All films will be rated on the -4 to +4 scale.)

KING OF COMEDY (1981, Martin Scorsese)

Scorsese became best known for his realistic portrayal of New York City street life in films like M_e_a_n_S_t_r_e_e_t_s and T_a_x_i_D_r_i_v_e_r. Of late he has been doing comedies also set on the New York City streets. They are not for all tastes but they are perceptive and intelligent. I find A_f_t_e_r_H_o_u_r_s to be very good. In 1983 K_i_n_g_o_f_C_o_m_e_d_y was released after a two-year wait on the shelf. It is about the banality of American entertainment and the hardest of its hardcore fans. Rupert Pupkin (played by Robert DeNiro) is one of a cadre of fanatical fans of nighttime talkshow host Jerry Langford (played by Jerry Lewis). Fanaticism in any form, including fandom, can be dangerous, and dangerous Rupert turns out to be. The final scene of the film has a very nice irony most people caught, but also an ambiguity that I think has generally been overlooked. K_i_n_g_o_f_C_o_m_e_d_y is a remarkable film that

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combines the hard edge of Scorsese's previous films with some of the eccentric personality humor of A_f_t_e_r_H_o_u_r_s. This could well be Scorsese's best. Rating: +3. (The WPIX New York version was horribly cut.)

PERSONAL SERVICES (1987, Terry Jones)

This film came as something of a surprise, not because it was unusual but because after a few good reviews it turned out to be remarkably and unexpectedly usual. In spite of pretensions to be something more, P_e_r_s_o_n_a_l_S_e_r_v_i_c_e_s is little different from a lot of English sex comedies that get picked up to run on cable after midnight. Julie Waters (who was so good in E_d_u_c_a_t_i_n_g_R_i_t_a) plays a character the

film claims was inspired by but not based on Cynthia Payne, a notorious London madam. Due to unfortunate financial pressures, Cynthia is forced to become first a prostitute and then a madam. For a hard-hitting, realistic view of the world of prostitution, _ P _ e _ r _ s _ o _ n _ a _ l _ S _ e _ r _ v _ i _ c _ e _ s is

right

up there with _ T _ h _ e _ B _ e _ s _ t _ L _ i _ t _ t _ l _ e

_ W _ h _ o _ r _ e _ h _ o _ u _ s _ e _ i _ n _ T _ e _ x _ a _ s. There is no attempt at impartiality, and eventually the film degenerates to pure sex farce.

Rating: 0.

SID AND NANCY (1986, Alan Cox)

Spend a couple of hours safety-pinned to a punk rocker. See Sid Vicious slam his head against a brick wall to get a reaction from his girl friend. Watch him for two hours doing the same thing figuratively to get a reaction from anyone who will give it. This is an uncompromising film that never asks you to care for punk rocker Sid or his girlfriend Nancy, just as they never seem to first we see Sid among the London punk culture. They do likeable things like spray paint graffiti on borrowed apartments or kick in windshields of Rolls Royces. In the second part of the film we see them among bewildered non-punkers. They go to the United States as part of a tour and, among other activities, visit Nancy's grandparents who quickly tire of the little parasites. The title characters lead pointless, useless lives that are cut mercifully short by early deaths. Rating: +1. (Now will someone on Usenet please explain to me what the "Sid and Nancy scale" is?)

THE CONVERSATION (1974, Francis Ford Coppola)

Harry Caul is the best in his field. His field is "surveillance and security." He doesn't have the flash of others in his field, but he knows just about all there is to know about spying on people. He is so good at spying that some of his subjects have come to suspect their own associates of divulging information Harry has collected. That has

gotten innocent people killed. And their deaths weigh heavily on

Harry's conscience. Gene Hackman plays Harry Caul, who is afraid that his current assignment will get a woman and her lover killed. TheConversation is a film portrait about this empty shell of a man whose only life is his spying on others and the terror that he himself might be spied upon. And he knows that surveillance devices could be anywhere. TheConversation is a downbeat and disturbing view of the state of spying technology and a very good character study. Mixed in there is a small but clever mystery. Well worth seeing. Rating: +2.

A CHRISTMAS STORY (1983, Bob Clark)

This is a Christmas film festival. If it has to contain a Christmas film, there are two that are not too unctuous and disgusting. There is the Alistair Sim ChristmasCarol and AChristmasStory. Don't be misled by this film's banal title--this is a funny film. It is based on Jean Shepherd's stories of an unromanticized but very funny childhood as can be found in his book InGodWeTrust, AllOthersPayCash. Only one of the stories really has any connection to Christmas. AChristmasStory takes about six of his stories and does a time-division-multiplex of them so they are all going on at once. Shepherd has a world-class understanding of the mind of a child. He can poke fun at the way a child thinks and most of his barbs will be right on target. Some of the humor is intended to catch you by surprise and is blunted by repeated viewings. But at least on first viewing, this is a laugh-out-loud film. That should not be surprising. Shepherd is one of the very few authors who can write what is for me a laugh-out-loud story. Rating: +2.

TOOTSIE (1982, Sidney Pollack)

I believe that this is the second-highest grossing comedy ever made. I like it, but not nearly as much as most people seem to have. One of the things that hangs the credibility most is that Dustin Hoffman cannot do a woman's voice very well. He sounds like a man affecting a woman's voice. The film would have been more believable had he used his own voice and simply seemed a husky-voiced woman. In any case I know of no woman who is actually acting in television who looks or sounds like Dorothy. Some of the comic situations are funny but others are heavy-handed. One wonders if the incidents of sexual harassment are as common in the soap opera business as shown. It is possible, but I don't trust this film as being an unimpeachable source. Still and all, it is many times the film the top-grossing Ghostbusters is. Rating: +2.

THE MISSION (1986, Roland Joffe)

Capsule review: Another fine historical film from Robert Bolt, complex and beautifully photographed. The film chronicles a conflict involving the Spanish, Portuguese, and Jesuits over who will determine the fate of the Guarani Indians. Well worth seeing. Rating: +3.

(The full review appears elsewhere in this N o t i c e.)

WALL STREET (1987, Oliver Stone)

Capsule review: Oliver Stone's film about his father's profession. It does the difficult task of making the world of finance interesting. In the final analysis it is just a reworking of Rod Serling's teleplay and film P a t t e r n s. The coming attraction was put together with more skill than the film was. Rating: 0.

(The full review appears elsewhere in this N o t i c e.)

"Claymation Christmas Celebration" (1987, Will Vinton)

Will Vinton's clay animation has achieved some remarkable comic effects. His best known work is a line of dancing raisins for an ad, though it is nowhere near the effects he achieved in shorts like "Dinosaurs" and "The Great Cognito." In the New York City area all but about ten minutes of this thirty-minute show was pre-empted for news coverage of the verdict in the Howard Beach trial. What did get shown was often very clever in style but superbly banal in subject matter. Vinton deserves better material, even if someone else has to write it for him.

AMADEUS (1984, Milos Forman)

(I am going to take the easy way out on this. I reviewed it for the last Christmas film festival.) Generally I prefer seeing the film adaptation of a play to seeing the play itself. Well, that's not exactly true--it is more fun to go to a play--but I think a lot more can be done with a film. The film of F_i_d_d_l_e_r_o_n_t_h_e_R_o_o_f really made the shtetl life come alive in a way the play never could. I guess in a way "The Caine Mutiny Court Martial" is an exception, although the film and the play were really just based on the same book. A real exception, however, is A_m_a_d_e_u_s. The effect of the play was powerful, to say the least. The story was somehow diluted for the film by putting in more about Mozart and less about Salieri. Salieri's machinations are even a

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bit toned down for the film. I think Tom Hulce overplays his part. F. Murray Abraham is, as always, a very charismatic actor.

THE COLOR PURPLE (1985, Steven Spielberg)

I have been getting myself into trouble of late championing Steven Spielberg though in fact I am defending only J_a_w_s and R_a_i_d_e_r_s_o_f_t_h_e_L_o_s_t_A_r_k as good entertainment films, T_h_e_C_o_l_o_r_P_u_r_p_l_e and E_m_p_i_r_e_o_f_t_h_e_S_u_n as adult dare, and E_T for children. As for whether I think T_h_e_C_o_l_o_r_P_u_r_p_l_e is manipulative, let me again borrow Woody Allen's line: "It is if you're doing it right." Alice Walker's life is not quite right for a rollicking comedy. Any filmmaker who did the story and didn't deeply affect his audience would have been incompetent. Spielberg did some marvelous things with this film. It is easier for someone to make a strong film about his/her own group. Spielberg isn't black, he isn't a woman, and he sure as heck isn't poor. Yet this is a powerful and deeply affecting film about Alice Walker who was all three. After seeing T_h_e_C_o_l_o_r_P_u_r_p_l_e, E_m_p_i_r_e_o_f_t_h_e_S_u_n, and T_h_e_M_i_s_s_i_o_n so close to each other, it will be hard for other films to measure up.
Rating: +3.

BROADCAST NEWS (1987, James L. Brooks)

Capsule review: A winning romantic comedy also takes some reasonably good shots at the television network news business. James L. Brooks (_ T_ e_ r_ m_ s_ o_ f_ E_ n_ d_ e_ a_ r_ m_ e_ n_ t) has made an adult film with solid characters. Rating: +2.

(The full review appears elsewhere in this _ N_ o_ t_ i_ c_ e.)

STALAG 17 (1953, Billy Wilder)

This is one of the most enjoyable World War II POW camp films. It was probably the inspiration for television's _ H_ o_ g_ a_ n' _ s_ H_ e_ r_ o_ e_ s, though it is in every way superior. William Holden has set himself up as the King Rat of the prison camp. He has apparently been a master trader and has gotten himself luxuries like cigars and fresh eggs. The question is, has he dealt in exclusively in goods or has he also been trading information? The story has action, suspense, and comedy. No small part of the latter is provided by two great comic actors, Robert Strauss and Harvey Lembeck. Otto Preminger is a no-nonsense camp commandant. There are a host of familiar faces from films and television, including Peter Graves. Pretty good. Rating: +3.

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