

December 15, 1979

Star Trek- The Motion Picture:

This "space opera" has some of the most "god- awful" acting and dialogue going. It completely lacks the humor, heroics and action of "Star Wars", and in the end, any encounter with it is invariably of the tedious kind. All the same, "Star Trek- The Motion Picture" is not without its saving graces. While it is not gripping, exciting or entertaining, it is humane, thought- provoking and mesmerizing.

Through the film's tale of the U.S.S. Enterprise's outer space interception of an earth threatening gaseous entity, the producers of this film, Robert Wise and Gene Roddenberry, attempt to do more than milk the old "Star Trek" TV series. In their film, they depict the possibility of reciprocity. They place technology within the context of human endeavour and history, and finally, albeit in a rather "ersatz" and somewhat unconvincing manner, i.e. through scene after scene of outer space emptiness and loneliness, they entreat us to gratefully meditate and wonder about the meaning of our lives within the context of the universe. Rather than re- vamping western adventure motifs for outer space settings or exploiting our predilection to believe in extra- terrestrial life forms, they aim in this film to deepen our consideration of our lot before the frontier of space. "Star Trek- The Motion Picture" is no mere "rip-off" of the "Star Trek" series. It is a circumspective look at the depth and possibility of human knowledge by way of a fad, and in that, its adventure and intrigue is based not on its drama but the intellectual connections it makes for its viewers.

Some will say that the film deals in a sort of technological mysticism, but I dare say, those who argue as much suffer from a nostalgia for a human reality that never has and never will exist. The film is good, for all its dramatic failing. It has integrity. Its idea about the evolution of synthetic intelligence is not all that implausible, and it does not glamourize violence and power. "Star Trek- The Motion Picture" would have us reflect and feel amazed about life, reason and space; most "Sci- Fi" films would have us do a lot less.

Rating: A-1

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Peter Aug", is located at the bottom right of the page.

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STAR TREK II

It was just what I expected. And I must confess that this type of movie on TV has never had an appeal on me. I could never stand a whole TV programme of this type. I find the characters, and the actors, little better than electronic robots. When humans are integrated with the colossal electronic and engineering sets, their human feelings and reactions almost completely controlled, they are liable to become part of the great sets which are the centre-piece of the whole movie. In that case human drama is ~~xxx~~ largely suppressed and there is only appeal to the imagination. And this appeal has its limits. The young ones, with a greater interest to see than to think, feel and appreciate, might find this movie rather absorbing. I found little interest in it.

I have mentioned human feeling being "almost" completely controlled. The movie has a touch of human drama, but it is hardly mentioned and mostly ignores the implications. The admiral has a son who, it seems, does not know the identity of his father. The mother refers to their son but the three of them seem to be completely absorbed in space adventures to ^{that he is} give much thought to their family problems. Eventually the son confesses to the father ~~to be~~ proud of him. Just like that. What has happened in the meantime, what were the reactions of the son when he came in contact with his father, are never mentioned. This relation ~~xxx~~ seems to have no motivation or impact on what is happening in space.

Khan is another character in the movie. We have only a few glimpses of him. He is the embodiment of hateful revenge. But his hatred leaves us cold. Dressed up, he and his friends, as if he were to sing an aria in one of Wagner's Ring operas, he seems to be quite familiar with all the scientific jargon of the 23rd century. This looks like a sequence from a comic strip.

The dialogue is stale, the action is repetitive: two enemies on two space ships try to out-do and out-mind each other, shooting rockets at each other, ~~at~~ until one of them, to the great relief of everyone, blows up in a ^{BSII} ~~smoke~~ of fire. I mention relief, because I felt I could not stand it any longer. I could not care who would

blow up, as long as the final credits appeared on the screen. Of course, there will be a Star Trek III, beginning, presumably with one of the heroes, dead in his casket and resting among exorbitant foliage in a forest, coming back to life and astound us with the knowledge of his computerised mind. As long as he's dead, we have a little respite.

There is nothing wrong, morally speaking, unless boring intelligent people may be classified as bad morality. And since it is the young people who go for such movies let them have fun if it suits their uneducated taste.

A I (Universal, for all)

Lawrence Gellel SJ

Lawrence Gellel SJ

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JUN 15 1982

June 10, 1982

The Wrath of Khan:

It has been said that this film is crammed with melodramatic pretension because it deals with aging and alludes to the great works of such as Shakespeare. Still, in "The Black Hole", a Disney work-up of the Faust legend, the bad guy quotes Goethe's last words ("More light!"), and nobody paid any mind. Rather, they focused on the special effects found in "The Black Hole", and they allowed the possible intellectual pretension of the film to slip by unnoticed. This course of events to me seems both unfair and evidence that many adults are under the delusion that Shakespeare is sophomoric while Goethe is serious. Frankly, I think youngsters can learn from the writings of both, and to a youngster's ear, the works of both writers are fresh and not in any hierarchical order.

Moreover, youngsters are sometimes more likely to learn from the comic book characters with which they can identify than real, "fleshed out" characters. I know I personally gained much of my moral education from the likes of Superman, Spiderman, and even the little illustrated Sunday school drawings of Jesus and his adventures. For kids, melodrama needn't look like pap or be uninformative.

Accordingly, "Star Trek II, The Wrath of Khan" should not be dismissed out of hand for all its possible dramatic faults. The film deals with philosophical and moral themes which young people need introduction, and though it may not do it in a manner which adults find fresh, it does it in a way youngsters may be particularly able to relate. And it is better that kids give some thought to the problems of aging and death than if they remain oblivious to such things altogether. More, it is not necessarily corny for the film to depict characters finding meaning in the work of Shakespeare and Dickens. For all the triteness adults may find in familiar quotes from such men, adults cannot escape the fact that such men have written words filled with meaning.

The film can provoke young people to honestly consider what makes life valuable, and I think that it is sincere in its attempt to come to terms with the human condition. Least ways, it doesn't trade on loud furious battle scenes, "macho" postures and stirring music.

Rating:

A-I

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DEC 17 1979

Al Frank

STAR TREK is a nice union who went in for that 1960s tv serial. But for most of us looking for some science fiction there's little to bedazzle. I'm not just talking special effects and how this movie is light years from STAR WARS. What I was looking for was some entertainment. But too much was devoted to the Trekkies most others will feel left out in a presentation which is less than scintillating. You've got to have more than long, loving shots of a plastic model. If not, even a somewhat unique story line won't save you. I'd suggest an A-1 rating.