

—both parts and even the TV synthesis—established a place for him beside Welles and Eisenstein, and *Apocalypse Now* harkens back to the grandeur of D. W. Griffith. Coppola can, however, do effective work within tight boundaries, as in *The Outsiders* and *Rumble Fish*, but Coppola cannot work well with flexibility. And flexibility—a bit of give in the sides of the production envelope, horror stories about the road to the \$47 million notwithstanding—is what he had for making *The Cotton Club*. The film does have its merits—the sets and the



costumes are authentic, the singing and dancing are first-rate; but apart from the trappings, it has a kind of flimsy rigidity—especially its script by William Kennedy—which would be suitable for an Andy Hardy movie.

And the form is no stronger than the content. Coppola seems to be recycling techniques. For example, there is a pivotal scene when, through cross-cutting, a tap dancer's feet mimic the rat-a-tat of a machine gun. It's interesting, but unlike the baptism scene in *The Godfather*, which had a point, *The Cotton Club* has all the panache of a copybook exercise. cc

Object Lessons

Dune; Directed and written by David Lynch; Based on the novel by Frank Herbert; Universal.

2010; Written, produced, and directed by Peter Hyams; Based on the novel by Arthur C. Clarke; MGM.

When the opening credits for *Dune* roll, viewers are exposed to a long list of cinematic technologists. These are the people who built the elaborate SF circa-1930's sets, the creators of the special effects that make an ugly fat

man fly and permit slug-like creatures to "fold" space. This multimillion-dollar concern with gimmicks is why David Lynch's rendition of Frank Herbert's novel fails on a grand scale: Herbert is concerned with people; Lynch is concerned with things. At the heart of all of the *Dune* novels is the fact that one woman, Lady Jessica, loved her lord, Duke Leto Atreides, so much that she, breaking the plans of the Bene Gesserit sisterhood to which she belonged, bore Leto a son rather than a daughter. That act of Jessica's, which represents a thoroughgoing commitment to an individual rather than an adherence to a technogenetic program, has universal consequences in the scheme of Herbert's creation.

If *Dune* and its sequels did not have this emphasis on people, they would be crushed under the weight of their own pomposity—which is the case with the film version. Once the human element is diminished by camera tricks, our interest in the saga wanes.

Likewise, there's *2010*, the sequel to *2001: A Space Odyssey*. The December 1984 issue of *Omni* featured *2010* on its cover (an appropriate compliment, since an issue of the magazine appears in the film). Inside, Arthur C. Clarke describes the generation of the various stories that led to his *2010* and points out that he and writer-producer-director Peter Hyams were in daily contact via computers during the making of the movie. Technology is very near and dear to Clarke. In 1984: *Spring, a Choice of Futures*, Clarke harps on the decisive role that technology will play in the future of the planet: first, second, third, and developing worlds. Computers, solar-powered transistor radios, and gizmos that Tom Swift dreamed of will, Clarke argues, change the nature of politics; as the people become armed with information, it will no longer be the private domain of "public" servants.

There is an element in *2010* the movie that's missing from *2010* the novel and from the spirit of 1984: *Spring*. Low-tech politics are inserted. In *2010* (both forms) there is a joint U.S.-U.S.S.R. space mission much like the actual Apollo-Soyuz mission. In the novel, the American and Russian politicians aren't any more warm

toward each other than they are today; naturally, the astronauts become comrades in space. But Hyams, not satisfied with a state of ragged peace on terra firma, introduces a war set off by a U.S. naval blockade off the coast of Honduras.

One might expect that the space crew somehow manages to set things straight, that technology, which they represent, would save the day. Not so. Rather, the beings represented by that black refrigerator-shaped thing that had its debut in *2001* send a stern warning—in the form of a second sun—to the uppity Earthlings. Torn from the context that Clarke placed it in the novel, this trans-solar system semiotician's nightmare has all the serious impact of George Burns in *Oh, God!* cc

ART

Not for Eyes Only

Leon Kroll: A Spoken Memoir; Edited by Nancy Hale and Fredson Bowers; University Press of Virginia; Charlottesville.

An assemblage of reproductions of paintings by Leon Kroll—a middle-of-the-century worshiper of an idealized, white American female body. He was at the same time eclectic in style and a romantic realist with a knack for capturing the inexplicable sweetness of the 1920's and 30's—a shallow impression that gave his art a slightly commercial, Hollywoodish tone without demeaning its aesthetic value.

F. F. Bruce: *Abraham and David: Places They Knew*; Thomas Nelson Publishers; Nashville-New York.

A superb photographic travelogue of the journeys of Abraham and David provided with a readable text by one of the major biblical scholars of the 20th century; a visual guide for religious sentiments.

Mark Wyman: *Immigrants in the Valley*; Nelson-Hall; Chicago.

Images from the Upper Mississippi Country, from 1830 to 1860. Parochi-

al, moving, making us feel that we can be proud of what was before us.

Laurie Anderson: *United States*; Harper & Row; New York.

Oozing with banal superficiality. An attempt to sum up modernity in America in images and lyrics by a "performance artist," whom her publisher calls a "superstar of the avant-garde." What's "avant-garde" these days?

Edward Lucie-Smith: *Art in the Seventies*; Cornell University Press; Ithaca, New York.

A thorough survey of junk, artificiality, pretentiousness, platitudes, and sterility of what the term "art" tried to encompass during that decade—with a few bright and engaging exceptions.

George Tice: *Lincoln*; Rutgers University Press; New Brunswick, NJ.

The legend of Lincoln cast in stone; monuments and signboards, motels, and groceries—all in the name of Lincoln.

Peter Bacon Hales: *The Photography of American Urbanization, 1839-1915*; Temple University Press; Philadelphia.

Superb evocation of the American past in black and white photography that looks as if it was supposed to dramatize the message of what we have done on this earth.

Frank Whitford: *Bauhaus*; Thames & Hudson; New York.

An honest and meticulous introduction to the name, notion, and reputation (so often maligned) of a school of art and applied arts which formed the modern sense of the visual to a larger degree than most of us wish to admit.

John Fowles and Jo Draper: *Thomas Hardy's England*; Little, Brown & Co.; Boston.

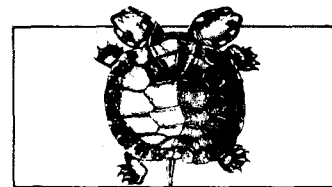
Photographs of Victorian and Edwardian England that bring Hardy and his work to mind with faded pictures that inspire the sort of sober sentimentality that pitches visual realism against nostalgic feelings. cc

LIBERAL ARTS

Academic Doublespeak

American scholars have a hard time reconciling the principle of academic freedom with their desires for political orthodoxy. The solution is found in the *Publications of the Modern Language Association*:

The journal is receptive to a variety of topics, whether general or specific, and to all scholarly methods and theoretical perspectives.



But:

The MLA urges its contributors to be sensitive to the social implications of language and to seek wording free of discriminatory overtones.

Ah, when lovely * * * * stoops to folly. cc

CORRESPONDENCE



The World (*Le Monde*) Has Stopped Turning

by Thomas Molnar

Le Monde is on the point of collapse!—screamed headlines in Paris last fall, and they did not mean that relatively unimportant thing, the universe, but the newspaper bearing that title. The collapse of the *New York Times* would be only half as supersensational, because, although the latter is far older than *Le Monde*, it is, believe it or not, only half as influential. The difference is that the French daily is not written

for the average 13-year-old, but for elite readers who expect their afternoon dose of subversion to be couched in a suggestive style, the pages to be filled with literary references, and the coverage to be in-depth, intelligent—and biased. More even than in the *N.Y. Times*, the systematic undermining of the Western world is understood to be a profoundly serious business. High KGB intelligence officers would have done well to learn the subtleties of their trade in *Le Monde's* editorial offices. Perhaps they did.

The announcement of the imminent collapse of *Le Monde* has struck the paper's friends and foes with about the same impact which the sack of

Rome had on St. Augustine. To understand the reason, we have to consider what *Le Monde* has represented for the past 40 years.

When Paris was recaptured from the Germans, not a few journalists and financial sponsors pounced on dailies and weeklies, confiscating editorial offices, equipment, and printshops, with the excuse that these publications had collaborated with the occupant. This was no more and no less true than, let's say, our university presidents' collaboration, in the 1970's, with the student rebels occupying their offices; the claim, however, sounded noble enough in a period when an entire nation of men suddenly discovered