

Steppenwolf

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leaves it being relieved that it was not worse — that it was not a reduction of the book into trite sayings and hippie-dippie banality.

In other words, it is a nice try at a probably impossible task. The first half of the book is an analysis of Haller — both the human and wolf-like parts of his personality. It includes a lengthy "Treatise on the Steppenwolf." To put this on film is hard. The movie uses a ten-minute-long animated and narrated sequence for the treatise. It is a fair attempt. The narration is fair, as is the animation, and cannot be too harshly criticized. But it does lack any luster.

That is the problem with the whole screenplay. The writing avoids being trite or silly, but it simply lacks even a brief moment of brilliance or life. The feelings imparted by Hesse with his pen fail to come through in either the screenplay or the photography itself. A movie obviously cannot say everything a book says, but it can attempt to translate the meaning and feeling into the film medium by means of good editing and an effective screenplay. It is as if the people who made the film were really trying, but just weren't creative enough to make the whole thing come off.

The movie is worth seeing for those who have read the book — at least they will not be disappointed by a film which has rewritten the whole story, as some film adaptations do. But those who have not read the book might just wonder what the whole thing is about.

In any event, one thing other than fatalistic curiosity makes "Steppenwolf" minimally entertaining: the "Magic Theatre" sequence. While the special effects are neither particularly expensive nor sophisticated, they are fun to watch.

So the recommendation is this: go see "Steppenwolf" if you have either (1) read the book and have masochistic tendencies, (2) like being part of a fad, or (3) are extremely drunk or loaded.

If you attend under any other conditions you fully deserve to be subjected to the laughter of the Immortals of Hollywood as they rake in the cold, hard cash you paid for admission.

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By LEE SIEGEL

One of the most lucrative literary fads in recent years has been development of the Cult of Hesse. While I personally like most of the Hesse I've read, it is hard not to be repelled by the overcommercialization of his works, and worse, the overpopularization of the trite and trivial Cozmic Troths which often drool from the greasier regions of his literary efforts. For every overworked platitude one can envision a whole legion of burned-out dopers, disillusioned activists and blank-eyed Searchers for Ultimate Reality waiting to slurp it up.

And that's why films of Hesse's works are beginning to catch on — they're a veritable gold mine. Last year it was "Siddhartha," which I did not even bother to see since the book provided enough upon which to gag — and the movie could have only been much, much worse. But now, we have the film version of "Steppenwolf," the story of Harry Haller, a man struggling to live both with himself and with an insane world.

If it is first made clear that I deplore the Hesse fad, I will sink to the admission that I very much liked the book "Steppenwolf," and thus, like a butterfly to a flame, was drawn to see the film.

The film was not good, but one

Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore

— (thank god)

By DAVID COURSEN

"Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore" is the first major studio film from young director Martin Scorsese, who previously won critical acclaim and little else for "Mean Streets," a film that never made it to Eugene. "Alice" boasts an Academy Award winning performance from star Ellen Burstyn, wide distribution, and a measure of box office success.

From the opening credits, neat script over a technicolor silk sheet (which I finally, unfortunately, managed to identify — "I Love Lucy") the film is a masterful package of nostalgia, "Women's Pictures," and an alleged feminist consciousness (or something). Supposedly, women played a major role in making this film, through director, writer, cinematographer and most technicians were men. And the primary women who did work on it are all wives or "old ladies" (can't someone think of a better phrase) of successful male directors. Hardly a promising setting for a meaningful statement on the women's movement.

More to the point of the film-as-package problem are the characterizations. Alice and her son Tommy trade wisecracks, but from the beginning they are always movie mother and son. "Alice" is full of references to old films, and not just good ones. Instead of genuine human feelings, it too often gives us Hollywood cuteness, an effect that is regrettably deliberate. Perhaps the most revealingly Hollywoodish moment is at the film's introduction, a bizarre parody of the opening of "The Wizard of Oz," when young Alice tells her little dolly "I can sing better than Alice Faye, I swear to Christ I can." This is meant to show the difference between the sanitized "niceness" of little movie children and the naturalness of real ones, and we get the message. Then, in an example of overkill where the movie's response to the old stereotype is so overrated it becomes a new, equally dishonest one, she adds, "And anybody who doesn't like it can blow it out their ass." Old Hollywood becomes new Hollywood, with never a pause for humanity.

Some of "Alice's" humor does succeed, though the effects are rarely as funny as intended. It's too cute to succeed as comedy, but the light touch does help it work as a study of the dilemma of a suddenly unmarried nearly-middle-aged woman. At the beginning she is the dutiful wife of a loutish Coke delivery truck driver (and quick food fills the screen almost from the moment of his death.) That death gives her the chance to test her claim that she could get along very well without a man. The answer, a decidedly unfeminist "no" may offend some people, but it's really inevitable, given her character, situation and sensibility. The ending is a trifle dishonest, but Alice joining a lesbian feminist commune would be a blatant contrivance indeed.

Alice is simply not equipped, by experience or conditioning, to do much besides be a housewife. She sets out to resume a singing career her marriage interrupted fifteen years earlier, but with her thin, flat voice, can only get a job by crying in front of a prospective employer. The banality and impossibility of her dream objectify the "will to fail" with which so many women are conditioned from birth. All she has is a capacity for communicating with and responding to others, first her son, then her cheerfully profane fellow waitress Flo, and finally, ostensibly, the new man in her life. Unfortunately, these are not qualities much in demand on the job market.

The first man Alice becomes involved with is a disaster who gives us a good sense of the romanticism above judgment that must have led her into her first marriage. She does somewhat implausibly better her final choice, but the most important moments in the film come with Flo, as the two women discuss the difficulties of living independently (or trying to.) And these are among the only times the camera holds a close-up without fidgeting.

In a way, the compulsive camera movement is typical of the whole film. "Alice" seems to share Alice's confusion about who to be or what to become. The camera movements may have been meticulously planned, but the effect is of random endless doodling. Unfortunately, this is sometimes the case with the characterizations as well. It all goes back to that opening. Any film that borrows from "I Love Lucy" and the "Wizard of Oz," and tries to add profanity and social consciousness to the mix is bound to be jumbled. "Alice" shouldn't be watched too seriously. If you have to analyze something, try to figure out the punchline of the bizarre story Tommy keeps repeating.

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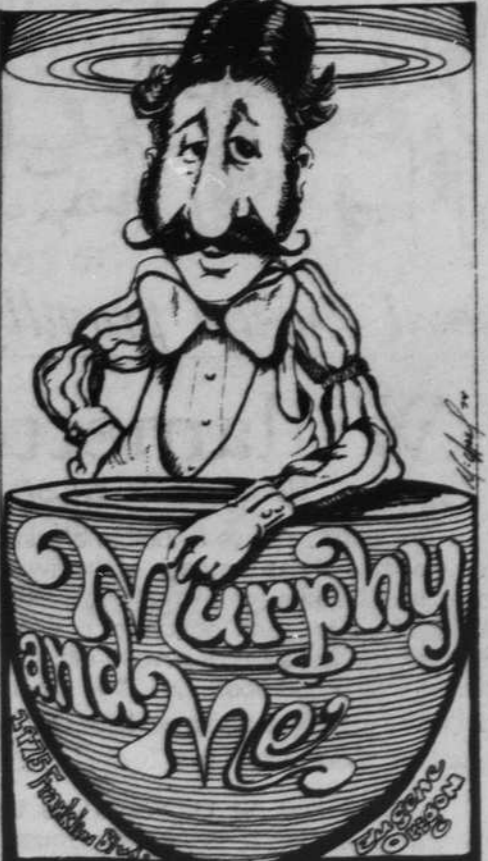
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Prine elevates his songs above simple country tunes

By DON CROUCH

Call it charisma, dynamics, karma, anything you wish — John Prine enjoys performing.

And those who attended last Wednesday's concert at the Lane County Fairgrounds couldn't help but be affected by the enthusiasm and vigor that Prine brought to the stage.

From the beginning, his bouncing manner and "illegal" smile elevated his songs above that of the simple, cute country tunes he has often been criticized for writing.

The show began with Prine performing solo. All his songs were well played and sung, with "Please Don't Bury Me," and "The Accident," from the "Sweet Revenge" album particularly pleasing.

The acoustic set was far superior to the second half of the show, which consisted of Prine backed by four-piece band. The electric songs, mostly material from his new album, "Common Sense," often suffered from sloppy arrangements and below average guitar solos. Chuck Berry's "You Never Can Tell" did, however, provide a rousing encore.

The Amazing Grace promoters, who provided a comfortable atmosphere in a potentially uncomfortable auditorium, thanks in part to some nice plants donated by the Home Grown Shoppe. If this show provides any indication, there will be some truly fine offerings from them in the months to come.

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The Oregana staff would like to thank those people that lent support to the yearbook throughout the school year. Since this is the last day for sales, be sure to come to our office on the mezzanine floor of the EMU, Room M-111. Just take the stairway next to the elevator outside the fishbowl—we are at the end of the hall.

You can also order your Oregana at the pen counter in the Bookstore.

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Review: 'Tartuffe'

By DAN CRONIN

The University Theatre's grand opening performance of Moliere's "Tartuffe" lagged far behind grand. While it had laudable moments, the performance was, at best, modest.

Much of Moliere's farcical humor, witty, ribald or slapstick jabs at the hypocrisy (and gullibility) of religious piety, rarely got off the ground. Not fully worked out, the comic situations were choked before they could bear the fruits of just laughter. We were left unsatisfied, desiring more than a chuckle, but invariably let down. It was as frustrating as coitus interruptus.

Take the first scene. Here, Madame Pernelle strutted, waving her cane and furiously denouncing her family's skepticism of Tartuffe's holiness. The irony of the situation was marked by the supposedly pious woman's outrage; the humor was to emerge by an exaggeration of the contradiction. As she paced both left and right, her every step was to be mimed in choreographic precision by the others. Alas, it

was so sloppy that the intended punch got lost somewhere in the syncopated rhythms. Coitus interruptus.


Of course, we did howl — and many even cheered — during the sexy seduction scene, where Elmire tempts Tartuffe's lust for her. Yea, sex always works, but it is too often a laugh-getting crutch. Perhaps this scene was more than a mere crutch. But it sure aroused those whose eyelids drooped below their navels when the play's tempo tended to drag.

Granted, the oracle technique did come off well. Each player addressed us as if to a jury, trying to persuade one and all of Tartuffe's innocence or guilt. We were moved to nod our heads during each plea, and, consequently, to break-up at our own gullibility. This tactic was, however, one of the choice rarities which actually bore fruit.

All but two actors were shaky or awkward in their roles. The lyrical, rhyming verses were delivered choppy and their move-

(Continued on Page 8)

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