

MOVIES

'Indiana Jones' Is Perfect ... But Only if You Don't Remember 'Gunga Din'

By Michael Gallagher
New York (NC) — In the wake of "The Natural" and "The Bounty," two big movies that are good but flawed, we have "Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom" (Paramount).

There's nothing flawed about "Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom." Of its kind, it's perfect. No need to puzzle here over nuances of characterization and motivation. For there aren't any, kids.

This time out, old Indy (Harrison Ford), with the help of a chorus girl (Kate Capshaw) and a Chinese war orphan (Ke Huy Quan), routs

a nasty Indian sect of ritual stranglers — Thugees, you know, old chap — and returns a sacred stone to its rightful owners.

If you can recall Cary Grant and Sam Jaffe watching awestruck from behind a rock while the leader of the Thugees delivers his fanatical homily to his Thuggish congregation in a huge, candle-lit cave, then you'll know how much director Steven Spielberg and writers Willard Huyck and Gloria Katz owe to that great movie "Gunga Din."

Nor are Spielberg and company too proud to pay homage — it's not stealing,

you realize, it's paying homage — to something as recent as Jim Henson's "Dark Crystal" of two years ago.

One sequence bears a striking resemblance to the Skesis' messy banquet scene. Ms. Capshaw, whose sole — perhaps only — function in the movie is to react with either hysteria or aversion to each successive event, faints dead away when a dessert of chilled monkey brains arrives.

But Spielberg and his collaborators have never pretended to originality. Spielberg's forte, rather, is to take the best parts of movies past and burnish them to state-of-the-art perfection.

So if this is the kind of thing you like, you'll surely like this kind of thing. The stunts are the be-all and end-all, and the decibel level surrounding their execution either drowns out the dialogue or, at the very least, distracts your attention from it. In either case a decided plus.

I hate to be an old spoilsport, but give me "Gunga Din" any day.

Then, too, the sight of those extras from Sri Lanka, with their bad teeth and their ribs sticking out, standing next to the well-fed Ford and Ms. Capshaw, further inhibited me from losing myself in Spielberg's machine-tooled fantasy. The Third World isn't what it used to be, it seems, in terms of catering to escapism. We know too much now — or at least we should.

Finally, despite the PG classification, parents should be aware that the violence does get very intense. In one sequence, for example, the leader of the Thugees pulls the heart out of a man's chest. True, it's done very neatly, considering the circumstances, but some parents might wonder if this is the kind of fun thing they want their 9-year-olds to be enjoying.

The U.S. Catholic Conference accordingly has classified it A-III — adults.



Arriving at India's Mayapore village, Harrison Ford as Indiana Jones, Ke Huy Quan as his sidekick, Short Round, and Kate Capshaw as Willie Scott are surrounded by distraught villagers in a scene from "Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom." (NC Photo)

Capsule Movie Review

'Breakin' (MGM-UA and Cannon)

It might not make you forget "The Turning Point," but this quickie movie done to cash in on the break-dancing craze is innocuous, light entertainment. Lucinda Dickey, playing a classical dancer going nowhere as a waitress, joins up with break dancers Adolfo "Shabba-Doo" Quinones and Michael "Bongaloo Shrimp" Chambers, and the three conquer the prejudice of the dance establishment and make it to Broadway. Bergman and Fellini it's not, but it has a kind of charm in its unpretentiousness. Under Joel Silberg's direction, moreover, it avoids the kind of exploitation that is rife these days. The U.S. Catholic Conference has classified it A-II — adults and adolescents. The Motion Picture Association of America has rated it PG — parental guidance suggested.

"Making the Grade" (MGM-UA/Cannon)

A thoroughly wretched and contemptible movie about an obnoxious rich kid who hires a tough city kid to go to prep school for him. Directed by Dorian Walker and written by Gene Quintano, it is crude, tasteless and sexually exploitative. The U.S. Catholic Conference has classified it O — morally offensive. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is R — restricted.

"Finders Keepers" (Warners)

This attempt at screwball comedy directed by Richard Lester, who has done better things but not lately, concerns a variety of characters trying to get their hands on a stolen \$5 million in the course of a transcontinental train ride. With the exception of David Wayne as the world's oldest conductor, none of the performers involved — Michael O'Keefe, Ed Lauter, Beverly D'Angelo, Lou Gossett Jr. — show much flair for comedy. But given the witless, vulgar script by Ronnie Graham, Terrence Marsh and Charles Dennis, it wouldn't have mattered much if they had. Because of its tastelessness, its language, which is notably foul even given the prevalent standard, and a humorously intended sexual sequence at the beginning, it has been classified O — morally offensive — by the U.S. Catholic Conference. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is R — restricted.

BOOKS

"The Color of Light," by William Goldman. Warner (New York, 1984). 355 pp., \$17.50.

Reviewed by Patricia B. Hoffman
NC News Service

What makes an author? What spurs a man to write? This is the subject of William Goldman's latest novel, "The Color of Light."

Its main character, Charles (Chub) Fuller, discovers his gift as a child and while still in college makes his entrance into the world of the professional. He is aided by his friend, Stanley Kitchel, familiarly known as "Two-Brew," whose father happens to head a large and prestigious publishing house.

After a meteoric rise to fame, young Fuller finds that he can no longer write, and takes up literary research as a means of earning a living. In the course of it, he finds himself in a number of melodramatic situations, and the breaking of his "writer's block" provides the denouement of the book.

All of Fuller's experiences, mostly unpleasant, serve to provide material for his fiction. Through a series of shifts, flashbacks, changes of scene, the reader finds out the who, what and why of Fuller's life: an unwanted child, with an alcoholic father and demented mother looming over his childhood and adolescence. These factors have made the man and are the stuff from which his writing is extracted.

This should have made an interesting novel, as surely some of it must be autobiographical. Unfortunately, it has not succeeded. Goldman has produced a book that ultimately bores the reader. Chub Fuller never really comes to life, and the supporting cast seem no more than lurid shadows. The novel's mixture of foul language, steamy sex and violence eventually becomes monotonous.

Goldman has had considerable success as a screen writer. He had best stick to the movies where shallowness and vulgarity can be dominant. There are far better ways to spend \$17.50 than on this novel.

(Mrs. Hoffman is a free-lance writer and critic based in Indiana.)

"Without Fear or Favor: George Higgins on the Record," by Gerald M. Costello. Twenty-Third Publications (Mystic, Conn., 1984). 292 pp., \$9.95 (paper).

Reviewed by Joseph R. Thomas
NC News Service

This match of an award-winning writer-editor and a strong and controversial public figure results in a compelling story told in what has to be one of the most aptly titled books of the year.

"Without Fear or Favor" does indeed describe Msgr. George G. Higgins, who has rightly been called the social conscience of the American Church as a result of his work as the long-time director of the U.S. Catholic Conference social action department.

Camp Stella Maris Sets Windsurfing Clinic

Camp Stella Maris will sponsor a windsurfing clinic the weekend of June 15-17, at the Conesus Lake site.

The clinic will include several hours of instruction in the safety, use, wind theory, equipment, and procedures and techniques used in sail boarding.

The first sessions will begin Friday night, June 15, and continue throughout Saturday. On Sunday, the clinic will conclude with a competition among the participants.

All boys and girls from across the Finger Lakes area are invited to participate. Registration fees are \$60 per

person, includes board rental; \$45 per person, without board rental. A \$15 deposit is required of all registrants. Fees include room and board for the weekend.

Those interested in the clinic should contact the camp office, 3052 East Lake Road, Livonia, 14487, or call 716/346-2243.

CATHOLIC BROADCAST SCHEDULE

PROGRAM	CABLE COMPANY	CHANNEL	MON.	THURS.
American Catholic w/Fr. John Powell, S.J.	American Cable (Rochester)	20	7:30 p.m.	
	American Cable (Webster)	20	7:30 p.m.	
	Peoples Cable (Suburban Rochester)	27	7:30 p.m.	
	Channel 12 West (Greece, Gates, Chili)	12		8:00 p.m.

And the subtitle "George Higgins on the Record" describes the approach to his subject taken by Gerald M. Costello, editor of Catholic New York. Through lengthy interviews which catch the flavor of the man and extensive research into the columns written by Msgr. Higgins over the years, we do have him "on the record."

That record is one of loyalty to Church, advocacy of social justice, fairness to foe as well as friend, respect for contrary views and support not only for the labor movement but for a wide variety of justice causes, including civil rights.

Not that George Higgins, the son of a postal clerk who introduced him to the thoughts of the leading Catholic writers of the day, was a party-liner. He could be critical of even the Rev. Martin Luther King when he thought such criticism was warranted (although, truth to tell, Dr. King was right about Vietnam, an issue on which Msgr. Higgins eventually moved full circle).

Costello has written a generous tribute which rightly recognizes the many contributions of a man who more and more is acknowledged as one of the most influential churchmen of our times, one who had an impact on the Second Vatican Council, and on Christian-Jewish relations in this country as well as on the American labor movement, especially the successful struggle waged by Cesar Chavez and the United Farm Workers.

Adding spice to the whole are the many

anecdotes and insights gathered by Costello in the course of his research. This book presents the most comprehensive report I've yet seen on the circumstances surrounding the 1978 announcement of Msgr. Higgins' early "retirement" and the phase-out of the department he headed for so many years.

For the American bishops, it was a monumental public relations blunder and one on which they were forced to backtrack almost immediately. It was a strange development, inasmuch as Msgr. Higgins had never been appointed officially to a staff position, although serving there from 1944 onward.

Msgr. Higgins, of course, did "retire" four years ago although he still writes his weekly Yardstick column for NC News Service and lectures at The Catholic University of America. Through his column, as ponderous as it was at times — Msgr. Higgins was never parsimonious with words — he helped shape the social thought of millions of Catholics, bishops as well as laity, managers as well as workers.

To be familiar with the issues that occupied him is to be familiar with all the leading themes of the past 40 years, themes which have occupied Costello on a day-to-day basis for many of them. His book is a judicious assessment of those themes and one man's impact on them.

(Thomas is editor in chief of The Christophers.)