

Lincroft-Holmdel Science Fiction Club
Club Notice - 6/15/83 -- Vol. 1, No. 33

MEETINGS UPCOMING:

Unless otherwise stated, all Lincroft meetings are on Wednesdays
in LZ 3A-206 (HO meetings in HO 3N-418) at noon.

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TOPIC</u>
6/29	TALES FROM THE WHITE HART by A. C. Clarke
6/29	HO: CANTICLE FOR LIEBOWITZ by Walter Miller
7/19 (tue)	Video meeting: PHASE IV pt. 1
7/20	Video meeting: PHASE IV pt. 2
8/10	HO: TALES FROM THE WHITE HART by A. C. Clarke

LZ's library and librarian Lance Larsen (576-2668) are in LZ 3C-219.
Mark Leeper (576-2571) is chairperson. HO's library and librarian
Mike Lukacs (949-4043) are in HO 4B-510. John Jetzt (834-3332) is
HO-chairperson.

1. Traditions are very important to us in the Bell System. One
tradition that I have followed in this notice is that if I mention
a member of the club in the notice, I take a verbal swipe at
him/her. This is done for humorous effect. Presumably whomever I
insult in the notice knows it is meant in jest and is just a
convention of the medium. So it is that in announcing that John
Palframan has just donated sixty or so paperbacks to the Lincroft
club library I find it incumbent on myself to find something nasty
to say about John. In fact, it should be particularly nasty
because the donation does do so much for the breadth of the
selection in the library and I don't want to slight him with only a
brief, half-thought-out insult. Well, the problem is that I am
dry. I can't think of a single mean or spiteful thing to say about
him, other than something of the ilk of "you're ugly and your
mother dresses you funny" (i.e. something that you would apply to
anyone with nothing personalized about it). Nothing at all
insulting comes to mind when I think of John. Well, all I can say
is that if I can't think of anything derogatory to say, Palframan
must be a real Milquetoast.

*****Presorted*****
* Leeper, Evelyn C. *
* LZ 1D-216 *

2. From ConStellation Progress Report 4: "ConStellation is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization, and may be eligible for matching funds from companies which have contribution programs. If you work for a company with such a program, check it out. ConStellation may be eligible for a donation equal to the amount you paid for your membership. This means more goodies for you at the convention!" If you're getting this newsletter, you work for such a company. Send those checks and matching contribution forms to ConStellation, Box 1046, Baltimore, MD 21203. (This only applies to memberships sent after 1/1/82 -- yes, 1982.) [This item suggested by Evelyn Leeper and typed by Paul Chisholm; I don't know what Bell would think of it -- The editor.]

3. Mini-review: PSYCHO II has a plot that keeps the audience guessing and some clever visual and verbal quotes from the first film. On the other hand, it doesn't really work as a mystery because it doesn't play fair with the audience. It works better as a comedy than as a mystery.

4. Included in this notice is an article by Evelyn on Zen and the Star Wars saga. It is several cuts above her usual entries. [Remember that I am honor-bound to say something derogatory about her.]

5. The item in the last notice about profit of films gave rental figures, not total gross.

6. THE FOLLOWING ITEM SHOULD BE READ ONLY BY PEOPLE WHO HAVE ALREADY SEEN RETURN OF THE JEDI. Some comments about Evelyn's article on Star Wars from the previous notice. Evelyn paints the Ewoks as being a simple forest people who are cajoled into fighting somebody else's battle (and a pretty unmatched one) by what they consider to be their god. What we see in the film will bear much of that interpretation, but I saw the film somewhat differently. In spite of the first scenes of the Ewoks being so much like scenes from H. Beam Piper's LITTLE FUZZY, and in spite of the Imperial Force's apparent higher technology, it is the Ewoks who slaughter the Empire. That is not necessarily just a literary necessity. Technological weapons are often no substitute for knowing the territory, particularly if the weapons are supremely unsuited for the terrain. The battle in JEDI is not necessarily unrealistic. The Ewoks very cleverly play on the weaknesses of their enemies and the lack of maneuverability of large machinery in a forest. They are far better suited to forest warfare than are their adversary.

As for what made them decide to battle the Empire, it is never explained in the film. They had clearly studied the Empire's means of fighting for some time with the option of ridding themselves of the aliens. They could easily have already had a dislike for the Empire and have had some plans for fighting them. It is clear that a number of their weapons were better suited to disabling large machinery than to hunting deer. Our intrepid crew's appearance

probably only hastened a battle that would have occurred eventually. Indeed it was strategically moved up to the benefit of the Ewoks. They saw that the best time to attack the Imperial forces was at the same time the rebels were also attacking. That is the best way to be sure that the Empire would be unable to send reinforcements. By cooperation it cut to a fraction the size of the contingent they would have to defeat. The film gives sufficient reason to believe that the Ewoks could have decided on their own to attack the Empire, though the script is silent as to whether this was the case.

Three more nits I will pick. In EMPIRE, Luke goes to the cloud city but he doesn't "return" there. To say that Leia takes decisive action in the last film but doesn't in the first is out-and-out wrong. In the third film she is apparently just following Luke's plan when she rescues Han (though she does take action during the forest battle). On the other hand she does take command of her own rescue party in the first film. She does more than just complain in the first film and the example of her taking action in the third film is apparently wrong. Finally, Evelyn implies that when Lucas cast the first film he knew he would have the same actors in the same parts six years and two films later. At the time he wasn't even sure he could make the first film, much less a whole series. He may have had more stories in mind, just in case the first film made money, but he didn't know if he would get a chance to make them, nor did he know the inter-film interval.

7. Counter-comment: I admit that a second viewing of the film will support Mark's interpretation as well as mine. In THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK, Luke returns to his friends, not to the Cloud City [No, he rejoins his friends at a place they had never been before. This is not returning anywhere -- MRL]. I see Leia's actions as growing more decisive through the series: In the first film she does get the rescue team out through the trash masher [And directs their actions until they are off the Deathstar -- MRL]. In the second she is commanding the rebels on Hoth. In the third, she is actually fighting as a rebel [As well as in the first -- MRL]. Her action in jumping on the scooter I see as one which she would not have done earlier; rather she would have told Luke to follow the guards [Not my reading of the woman who takes command during the escape, but we will never know -- MRL]. And while Lucas may not have known that he would be making three films, it is not unreasonable to think that he considered the possibility (and had some idea of how long each would take). [Not unreasonable, only unlikely -- MRL]. And finally, "Oh yeh? Sez who?" (That's my derogatory comment.) [Sez me -- MRL] -- Evelyn Leeper

Mark Leeper
LZ 3E-215 x2571

THE FORCE AS ZEN

or, "The Force and the Art of Light-saber Maintenance"

An article by Evelyn C. Leeper

While the STAR WARS films have spawned all sorts of reactions, from the fans at conventions running around in their "Luke Skywalker pajamas" (as Harlan Ellison describes them), to serious studies of "the STAR WARS phenomenon," no one seems to have adopted the beliefs described in the films, the value system of the Force. Yet the idea of this is not as absurd as one might imagine, and to do so should be considered not merely a childish game of make-believe, but rather accepting a "modernized" version of an old philosophy.

Lucas certainly did not invent a new religion or even a new idea. The Force is simply Zen with futuristic trappings. Its concepts and teachings, as described by Obi-Wan and Yoda, are merely re-phrasings of Zen teachings. Although people today are perhaps unwilling to admit to a belief in Zen, believing that they will be considered "old-fashioned" and "anti-technology" (this would be more of a problem in SF circles than in society as a whole), a belief in "the Force" would not carry this stigma. Unfortunately, it is liable to get them labeled as "childish" instead. After all, "it's only a movie!" But a comparison of Zen and the Force indicates that, though the name and the setting are different, the ideas are the same.

For example, one of the main ideas in the first film is that to be a Jedi, you should use your instincts, not your intellect. (Or as the introduction to THE BOOK OF FIVE RINGS describes it: "Zen teachings are concerned with the practitioner attaining an intuitive experience. ... The body is allowed its own wisdom, and is completely free from any mental steering.")(1) As Obi-Wan tells Luke during the practice sessions on the Millennium Falcon, "Let go your conscious self and act on instinct. ... Your eyes can deceive you; don't trust them. Stretch out with your feelings."(2) Compare this to Zen teachings: "It is when you do not think about it any more that you begin to do it so well. ... There is no longer any conscious direction in the

1. All Zen quotes in this article are from THE BOOK OF FIVE RINGS unless otherwise noted.

2. Obi-Wan in STAR WARS

movement." and "Intellectual understanding is not always sufficient to effectively communicate." And what is the entire training exercise with the blast shield down on the helmet if not a demonstration of the Zen precept, "Perceive that which cannot be seen with the eye."? (Whether or not you agree with the conclusion of the first film that your eyes are more trustworthy than computers and your feelings are more trustworthy than your eyes is your own choice, but apparently in the STAR WARS universe this is true.) And, as Obi-Wan says, "Many of the truths we cling to depend greatly on our point of view."(3)

Another strong Zen-like concept is that of the Force being omnipresent: "The Force is what gives the Jedi his power. It's an energy field created by all living things. It surrounds us and penetrates us; it binds the galaxy together."(4) In Zen, the same idea is approached from a slightly different angle, that of "object and ground." The concept of "object and ground" can be described as follows: given a picture of a vase on a lawn, we generally assume that the vase is the object and the lawn is the background. But we could just as easily interpret it the other way. In fact, several optical illusions are based on this; one famous one involves a picture which could be interpreted as either a white vase on a black background or two black profiles on a white background. Given a garden of rocks set on sand, Zen describes itself as "[preparing] you to look at the spaces around the rocks."

For all its emphasis on the martial arts, Zen also insists on humanity, on the individual being part of the whole: "The 'self' is understood not only as an individual, but as a member of the community of individuals ('society')." The Force also displays this feeling, as when Obi-Wan says, "I felt a great disturbance in the Force, as if millions of voices suddenly cried out in terror and were suddenly silenced."(5) Both Zen and the Force are more than means of winning battles; they are means of becoming part of the whole of humanity.

Both the Force and Zen emphasize the danger of anger, of uncontrolled (or uncontrollable) emotion. The goal is control: "... the Zen-trained martial artist ... truly acts only in response to aggression. He does not seek it out. When made, his responses are non-resistant and non-violent.

3. RETURN OF THE JEDI

4. Obi-Wan in STAR WARS

5. Obi-Wan in STAR WARS

In other words, he acts only to defend. (This may involve killing the opponent, but this is a defensive action; one kills out of necessity, not from anger. As Yoda says, "Wars not make one great."(6)) The Jedi, too, remains in control:

Obi-Wan: Remember, a Jedi can feel the Force flowing through him.

Luke: You mean it controls your actions?

Obi-Wan: Partially, but it also obeys your commands.(7)

And later, "Concentrate. Feel the Force flow. Good, calm, yes, through the Force things you will see: other places, the future, the past, old friends long gone. Control, control, you must learn control!"(8)

Both are philosophies of will-power and self-reliance; both bring about confidence, calmness, and patience. Zen expresses it thusly: "You become more observant, more aware, more sure, and more confident. The effect of this change is reduce your ego: the more confident you are, the less likely you are to boast or brag." Obi-Wan tells Yoda, "He [Luke] will learn patience."(9) He later tells Luke, "Impatience is the easiest door -- for you, like your father. Only, your father was seduced by what he found on the other side of the door, and you have held firm. You're no longer so reckless now, Luke. You are strong and patient."(10)

Perhaps the best summary of the Zen-like ideas of the Force is to be found in this exchange:

Yoda: A Jedi's strength flows from the Force, but beware the Dark Side -- anger, fear, aggression. The Dark Side of the Force easily does flow, quick to join when you fight. If once you start down the dark path, forever will it dominate your destiny. Consume you it will, as it did Obi-Wan's apprentice.

Luke: But how am I to know the good side from the bad?

Yoda: You will know, when you're calm, at peace, passive. A Jedi uses the Force for knowledge and defense, never for attack.

Luke: But tell me why...

Yoda: No, no, there is no why.(11)

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6. THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK
 7. STAR WARS
 8. Yoda in THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK
 9. THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK
 10. RETURN OF THE JEDI (novelization)
 11. THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK

In other words, Yoda admonishes Luke to avoid anger, remain calm, use only defensive measures, and trust his instincts. Intellectualization -- asking why -- is not the means to the end. That Luke does not immediately absorb this teaching is obvious; he is sent into the cave which contains "only what you take with you", according to Yoda, who also tells him, "Your weapons -- you will not need them." So what does Luke do? Of course. He straps on his light saber anyway, and goes into the cave. Naturally he fails the test, gives way to anger, and sees himself destroyed because of it (only in the context of the test, of course; he still has the chance to learn from his mistakes in real life).

One of the points Yoda makes to Luke is that size is unimportant to a Jedi; lifting a large ship is no different than lifting a rock.

Yoda: So certain are you? Always with you it cannot be done. Hear you nothing that I say?

Luke: Master, moving stones around is one thing; this is totally different.

Yoda: No, no different. Only different in your mind. You must unlearn what you have learned.

Luke: All right, I'll give it a try.

Yoda: No! Try not. Do or do not; there is no try.

Luke: I can't, it's too big.

Yoda: Size matters not. Look at me. Judge me by my size do you? And well you should not, for my ally is the Force, and a powerful ally it is. Life creates it, makes it grow. Its energy surrounds us, and binds us. Luminous beings are we, not this crude matter. You must feel the Force around you, here, between you, me, the tree, the rock, everywhere. Yes, even between the land and the ship.

Luke: You want the impossible.

(Yoda then raises the ship.)

Luke: I don't believe it.

Yoda: That is why you fail.(12)

Or, briefly, "It was a Jedi rule-of-thumb ... when outnumbered, attack."(13)

Zen teaches the same idea: "To win against one opponent is the same as winning against thousands or tens of thousands of opponents." Closely tied to this is the emphasis on confidence in results. In Zen it is necessary "...to believe that you cannot fail in doing anything:"

12. THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK

13. James Kahn, RETURN OF THE JEDI (novelization)

(Both of these are related to the fundamentalist belief that if one has enough faith, one can perform miracles -- walk on water, handle poisonous snakes without being poisoned, etc.)

In order to develop the required self-confidence, the ability to concentrate needs to be learned. This is expressed over and over in Zen, but most succinctly as: "Keep your mind on the center and do not waver. Calm your mind and do not cease the firmness even for a second." And what is the first thing Yoda tries to teach Luke? "Patience ... patience."(14) And later, speaking to Obi-Wan of Luke, he says, "A Jedi must have the deepest commitment, the most serious mind. This one a long time have I watched. All his life has he looked away, to the future, to the horizon. Never his mind on where he was, on what he was doing. Adventure? Heh! Excitement? Heh! A Jedi craves not these things. You [Luke] are reckless. Will he finish what he begins?"(15) He gets his answer later in this exchange:

Yoda: You must complete the training.

Luke: I can't keep the vision out of my head. They're my friends; I've got to help them.

Yoda: You must not go.

Luke: But Han and Leia will die if I don't!

Obi-Wan: You don't know that. Even Yoda cannot see their fate.

Luke: But I can help them! I feel the Force.

Obi-Wan: But you cannot control it. This is a dangerous time for you, when you will be tempted by the Dark Side of the Force.

Yoda: Yes, yes, to Obi-Wan you listen. The cave, remember your failure at the cave.

Luke: But I've learned so much since then. Master Yoda, I promise to return and finish what I've begun; you have my word.

Obi-Wan: It is you and your abilities the Emperor wants. That is why your friends are made to suffer.

Luke: That's why I have to go.

Obi-Wan: Luke, I don't want to lose you to the Emperor the way I lost Vader.

Luke: You won't.

Yoda: Stopped they must be. On this all depends. Only a fully trained Jedi knight, with the Force as his ally, will conquer Vader and his Emperor. If you end your training now, if you choose the quick and easy path as Vader did, you will be come an agent of evil.

14. THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK

15. THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK

Obi-Wan: Patience.

Luke: And sacrifice Han and Leia?

Yoda: If you honor what they fought for, yes.

Obi-Wan: If you choose to face Vader, you do it alone;
I cannot interfere.

Luke: I understand. R2, fire up the converters.

Obi-Wan: Luke! Don't give in to hate. That leads to
the Dark Side.

Yoda: Strong is Vader. Mind what you have learned.
Serve you it can.

Luke: I will and I will return, I promise.

Yoda [to Obi-Wan]: Told you I did. Reckless is he.
Now matters are worse. That boy
is our last hope.

Obi-Wan: No. There is another.(16)

Yet in rejecting the completion of his training, the "concentration" that he needs, Luke is answering the call of his humanity. It is this, along with Obi-Wan's final warning, that saves him.

Even the Jedi weapon, the light saber, reflects this concentration. As Obi-Wan describes it, the light saber is "...not as clumsy or random as a blaster."(17) In other words, the weapon, like the wielder, concentrates its efforts on the task at hand, rather than spraying its firepower over everything in sight. Regarding the choice of weapon, Zen says: "One must have a weapon...comfortable in one's hand." This seems to be a requirement of a Jedi; it is only when Vader sees that Luke has constructed his own light saber (to his own specifications, presumably), that Vader accepts Luke as a Jedi.(18) One cannot use another person's weapon; it simply won't "fit" in one's hand.

Finally, there is the technique of "frustrating" one's opponent, of turning his own efforts against him. In Zen this is described as, "When the opponent attempts to execute a move, frustrate it from the onset, make whatever the opponent was trying to accomplish of no use, and achieve the freedom with which to lead the opponent." You are "like a bamboo stalk that bends under the weight of snow until the snow is thrown off, leaving the stalk where it was before." This was an important part of Luke's training also. "Thus had Ben and Yoda both instructed him: when you are attacked, fall. Let your opponent's power buffet you as a strong wind topples the grass. In time he will expend himself, and you

16. THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK

17. STAR WARS

18. RETURN OF THE JEDI

will still be upright."(19) And what is Luke's final tossing away of his light saber if not this: "Never! Never will I turn to the Dark Side! I am a Jedi, as my father was before me."(20) By refusing to allow himself to be led, by making what the Emperor was trying to accomplish of no use, he achieves his ultimate victory. One sees also his belief in the code of the samurai -- better death with honor than life with dishonor.

19. James Kahn, RETURN OF THE JEDI (novelization)

20. RETURN OF THE JEDI

War Games

A review response by Mark B. Mueller

In response to Mark Leeper's review of War Games (The Notice, Vol. 1, No. 32, 6/5/83), I think Mark missed the mark by panning the film. First of all it is, in places, downright hilarious (intentionally). Second, though there are some minor technical flaws with the electronics and computer science, the techniques demonstrated and alluded to all have at least an analogy in the real world. Granted, the physical security of NORAD was less than credible, but the plot revolved around the technology, and that was pretty good.

Though Mark is worried that his job is threatened by a popular uprising against dangerously inept programmers (though not, necessarily, him personally), I think there is a valid point to be made: where high-risk decisions are made, immediate human intervention must always be preserved as an option. In other words, never surrender your option to "pull the plug".

As for the political statement, it wasn't quite as simplistic as "Nuclear war is bad". In my opinion it was: "If you think nuclear war is winnable, I'd like to hear your definition of 'win'". Yes, Virginia, the concept of a winnable nuclear war has been held by people in high places. It also brought up the question of how artificially intelligent systems can distinguish between reality and a mental exercise. But probably the most important theme was that of amorality.

David is not portrayed as the stereotypic high school student; he is an under-achiever in school and a more-or-less loner. He is, perhaps, the stereotypic computer hacker. Like some hackers I've known, he is by and large amoral, and amorality coupled with outstanding technical prowess is a dangerous mixture. The same dangerous mixture is seen in the WOPR (War Operations Programmed Response) computer, an artificially intelligent wargaming system which is rather precipitously given launch control of all nuclear missiles in the United States. David learns to consider the consequences of his acts by nearly starting World War III and by being chased by the FBI. WOPR, with the help of David and others, recognizes the futility of war through a delightfully simple example from the universe with which it is most familiar: games.

I think that most people will realize that the scenario presented in War Games is not an indictment of automation, for WOPR logically reasoned its way to pacificism when

pacifism was never presented as a viable alternative. Rather, it is a caution to human beings to retain compassion and vision as they consider their strategies and tactics. And, of course, make sure they have a reasonable definition of "win".

WAR GAMES

a response by Mark R. Leeper to a response by Mark B. Mueller
to a film review by Mark R. Leeper

At last a chance to get get some argument (and interest value) into the notice. Somebody didn't like one of my reviews. I feel impelled to respond to Mark Mueller's response (and of course being the editor, I have the power to do so). Mark does make some good points about the film, WAR GAMES. Most of our disagreement seem to be a matter of degree. I did find the basic plot of the film enjoyable, at least until the the last fifteen minutes when the sheer weight of the bull pulled the story down to the point where it made no sense at all. When the computer exploded rather than face the consequences of its own computation, but in the next scene it continued to function, I no longer could say I understood what I was seeing on the screen.

Mark discusses the "minor technical flaws" of the film, but doesn't list them. Let me list a few. The film shows a computer vital to national defense (even before it is connected to NORAD) which can be called by anyone who knows the telephone number. When it is called, it will give anyone who wants a listing of the files stored on it before they identify themselves with user-code or password. In fact, there isn't even the double security of user-code and password; the user needs only a password to log on. Oh yes, the telephone number I mentioned earlier! How did our little hero get it? Well of the seven digits, he knew four possibilities for the three-digit prefix. That left only 40,000 possibilities for the telephone number. Our hero set up his home to make tens of thousands of long distance phone calls in one 24-hour period, yet the phone company software that at least initially kept records of the calls did not tip anyone off that something funny was going on.

It is, of course, conceivable that the government computer can understand questions written in simple King's English, but that young David should just expect that it would seem foolish plotting. Other absurdities include a computer with a will so strong that even when it is disconnected from a terminal physically, it continues to control the terminal, much to the surprise of the terminal's owner. And that isn't the only strange thing about WOPR, a computer designed to evaluate nuclear scenarios. For years it has chosen scenarios and evaluated them. Then on command it goes through all possible scenarios, repeating years of work and completing the problem, all in a two-minute period.

Mark claims all this can be rationalized by saying that technical matters were simplified for the viewer and

everything in the film has an analog in the real world (including the idea that a computer faced with a logical inconsistency self-destructs or that a computer that has self-destructed can also continue working somehow). I don't believe that that is true. I think if somebody went in to try to clear up the the technical problems (a task much greater than Asimov had when he tried to do the same thing in his novelization of FANTASTIC VOYAGE) either the task would prove impossible or the scenario of the film would have to be stretched over decades. David was simply doing in minutes what it should have taken him months or years to do.

Mark is right that the impression the film gives of automatic systems worries me, but it doesn't make me fearful for my job. The popular uprising he describes is more likely to threaten my life than my job. I recently heard a description as to how the Northeast blackout of 1967 was caused by an employee who refused to take the responsibility to black-out only Queens when the grid was going down. Queens went down anyway and dragged all of the Northeast with it. The employee chose to ignore instructions from a computer that would have limited the blackout to one or two boroughs and instead created a situation that led to looting and personal danger for a great many people. Three Mile Island was similarly been traced to human error. The automatic systems functioned perfectly and helped prevent even more serious problems.

It seems to be a new and unfortunately acceptable form of bigotry to despise and fear computers and automatic systems. We have all seen simple scapegoating ("Our computer made a mistake"). That seems innocent enough because the computer certainly doesn't object to being blamed. [I find it rather significant that even the myth of "They're gonna come raping our womenfolk" -- one of the sillier excuses for paranoia used against any group of people who are different -- has already been the basis for the novel DEMON SEED and the film based on that novel of computer-phobia.] In fact, while automatic systems do face situations that were unpredictable, and hence are not completely reliable, humans do also and in addition make wrong decisions in situations that had been planned for. The simple fact is that automatic systems are far safer and more reliable than systems involving humans. If power companies start deciding that the way to appease the masses is to have more manual systems and fewer automatic systems, we could all be in trouble.

Mark's summary of the nuclear war theme is not supported by the film. He says that the theme is "If you think nuclear war is winnable, I'd like to hear your definition of 'win.'"

In fact, the film doesn't accept that there can be more than one definition. It over-simplifies each scenario outcome to "win" or "lose". I certainly hope that there is nobody in government who thinks of nuclear war in the simplistic terms that the film portrays it. I think that most people acknowledge that any overall outcome of a nuclear war is bad, but that some possible outcomes are worse than others. I don't question the film's conclusion that nuclear war is unwinnable, I was questioning the controversiality or profundity of that conclusion.

Overall, I found that the film has some entertainment value, it was overshadowed by the simplistic view of nuclear war and particularly its playing off the popular prejudice against computers and automatic systems in general. And if that wasn't bad enough, the film could have been far better if the screenwriter had gone to his friendly neighborhood high school computer hacker and asked where the script made horrible blunders.