

Recommended Movie

Muppets from Space. In considering the depth of meaning and understanding which were subtly woven into movies starring the Muppets in the past, I believe that a great light left the earth when Jim Henson died. With this movie, I am encouraged to believe that Brian Henson has come very close to rising to the level of his father's work.

As with the first Muppet movies, a great amount of laughter and lightness are the mask of the deeper themes that give life to each unfolding moment. I have sometimes heard people complain of not having good "role models" during their childhood and teenage years. My response has consistently been the encouragement to "go out and be the role model you wish you'd had." What makes this comment relevant to this movie, is the demonstration of true friendship that makes the entire adventure and ultimate self-discovery possible.

Themes of loneliness, personal integrity, and a commitment to living outside of the cage of the approval and expectations of others, guide an often overlooked member of the Muppet family, Gonzo, through a panorama of current social issues, to the discovery within himself of the very thing he initially sought within distant stars and galaxies. In those moments when it would be easy for his friends to label him deluded and abandon him, they demonstrate a commitment to each other that requires neither approval nor agreement. In life-threatening moments, the response is understanding and compassion rather than judgement and rejection, but with an ability to see the comedy within the potential tragedy and the serious need within the comedy.

Ultimately there is also the reassurance that in the bigger scheme of things, moments of being "used" by small-minded people for questionable purposes, just don't matter that much. (How wonderful it would be to have that higher perspective when I'm standing nose-to-nose with such moments.) If Gonzo had viewed the opportunities with the usual suspicion instead of charging forward, the story and the victory of this movie might never have happened. Yet he understood the

value and importance of the work of self-discovery with which he was engaged and this made any negative reaction he received unimportant.

Demonstrating the depth of their commitment to him and his happiness, when a moment of parting presents itself, the other Muppets make no attempt to possess or control Gonzo. If leaving is what would bring him the greatest happiness, then that's what they want him to do. If they were unconcerned for him, however, they wouldn't have been present at this moment in the first place. Without keeping score of what it cost them, the Muppets chose without hesitation to stand by Gonzo through each moment and to choose only what was truly best for him--as determined by him.

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Sister Who's Perspective

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Life is a collaborative effort, encompassing more than we know. In a time of abundant "information overload," news, communication, and travel across great distances, we often talk at each other without listening, communicating, or understanding.

Humanity needs its icons, but also its iconoclasts to grow beyond the good and bad qualities that now limit and describe us. The essences of both God and us remain, in the midst of questions, to be discovered, experienced, and expressed.

Please share in this ongoing dialogue, remembering to indicate whether and how you wish to be identified.

Blessings, love, and peace to you.

---Sister Who

Seeds of Copernicus

Hundreds of years ago, a Polish astronomer named Nicolas Copernicus (1473-1543) discovered (without the use of a telescope) that the earth is not the center of the universe (as was popularly believed), but rather that the earth revolved around the sun. At the time, such an idea was considered to be totally heretical and ridiculous, even offensive. The modern-day comedic response to this is often "Of course the earth is not the center of the universe; I am the center of the universe."

I find this response to be both ironic and disturbing. Ironic, because most people think they're joking when they say this. Disturbing, because most people live as if the statement were true.

What Copernicus discovered and what I and perhaps a thousand others have been saying for a very long time, is that everything is interconnected. Therefore, everything has relationship with, influence upon, and need of everything else. Each time another species or type of person becomes extinct, the world and everything within it is further impoverished.

I remain quite amazed by fellow students and administrators of the computer school which I am currently attending, who behave as if the future holds success and promise only for successful computer programmers. I seem to recall that less than a quarter of the world's population work directly with computers. Is three-fourths of the world's population about to be plunged into a bottomless abyss of poverty and desperation? While I will grant

that an unwise portion of civilization as we know it, is dependent upon computers, I cannot believe that these empowered electronic boxes are as essential to life as so many insist.

Computers are simply tools, to be used in whatever way we decide. If we have them, certain things become possible. If we don't have them, life goes on in other ways--which is not the case with essentials like air, food, and water. If we don't have those, our physical bodies will die.

Business and economics also seem to be perceived as indispensable, yet I maintain that just as there was a time before money existed, there will also be a time when money no longer exists. What remains to be seen is whether human decency will be a part of that time--or perhaps even a cause of it.

One of the specific challenges of the current generation of humanity seems to be the challenge of dealing with a myriad of excesses. More people than ever before have more options for food, clothing, shelter, education, entertainment, information, religious perspective, cultural experience, and choice than any of us have the ability to manage, answer, or even simply comprehend. How we deal with this flood of options will tell a great deal about us, individually and collectively.

Yet the old saying echoes once more in our ears, "the more things change, the more they stay the same." One of the most fundamental conflicts of human history remains quite stubbornly in our midst, known by a wide range of

names: business versus art, intellectual versus emotional, left-brain versus right-brain, body versus spirit, industrial versus natural, Mars versus Venus, human versus divine.

Without exception, it seems, within every occasion upon which the rigid rules of corporate business have tried to control or regulate the watery tidal shifts of art and emotion, the latter has been diminished. The former requires that everything be measured, documented, and reduced to absolute efficiency. The latter cannot breathe within such a restrictive context.

In the midst of this timeless struggle, now and always it seems, stands humanity.

When we have veered too far into a pursuit of religious or spiritual experience, we lose our grasp of the skeleton, the structure, which gives focus and direction to the movement of our muscles and internal organs.

When we have veered too far into a pursuit of economic wealth and material goods, we lose the living energy which animates and redeems the otherwise dry and brittle bones of our material existence.

One of the main reasons the conflict continues is that the relationship between the two is more often seen as adversarial rather than symbiotic. Everything contains both and in fact needs to contain both. Integrating the two is also known as increasing one's wisdom and maturity. Too often, what actually happens, is a commitment to the archetype of Peter Pan, also demonstrated by the main character of the book and movie, Die Blechtrommel (The Tin Drum). Growing up seems too complicated, so consciously or unconsciously we flee toward perpetual infancy.

Like any good marriage, the worlds of business and art, of body and spirit, must choose to trust and value and support each other, without needing to fully understand or control each other. Business and economic interests must support those who work in areas of spiritual and emotional health and growth, without needing to see a measurable or well-defined product in return. Spiritual and emotional health generally is not able to

be measured by business or economic constructs. On the other hand, those who work in areas of spiritual and emotional health must not demonize local, regional, national, or international commerce. The complexities of economic balance and exchange do not usually (if ever) translate accurately into terms of spiritual value.

There is a peculiar randomness to the way that life unfolds around, between, and within us, individually and collectively. Gifted people are frequently born into adversarial rather than supportive contexts. Someone is given vast financial resources without the heart or spirit to accomplish the most good within humanity. Someone else has an abundance of love and understanding but spends all of his or her time dealing with the basics of food, clothing, and shelter. A gifted musician experiences an inability to compose original music. A gifted songwriter lacks the ability to notate and orchestrate eloquent and stirring lyrics. A powerful orator reads the words of others, not knowing otherwise what to say. The words of God come to human ears through the mouth of a donkey. Vast sums of money are spent on rare items which will remain locked within airtight display cases. Words which could guide troubled souls to spiritual and emotional health are never spoken, because the funds to broadcast the message cannot be found.

As individual examples of humanity, we stand within this expanse and wonder what to do. A myriad of opportunities to support the integration of body and spirit may pass by under our noses, yet for a hundred different reasons we do not see them. The most central reason, however, is usually that the particular form seems too inconsistent with the inner quality we seek.

Everything is interconnected and we all take turns being the one in need.

Within the smallest gift is the seed of the greatest supply. Within the simplest word spoken with love may be the greatest healing a person could ever need. Within the silence of truly listening may be the distant thunder of a major break-through within a particular relationship. Within the

acceptance of one's own vulnerability may be the strength required for the survival of the soul. Within the willingness to participate in another's struggles may be a long-awaited catalyst for one's own growth. Within the steadfast commitment to one's own integrity may be the foundation of a more humane economy than the world has ever known. Within a simple prayer whispered each morning may be the divine intervention that turns a tiny seed into a giant redwood tree.

The seeds of heaven lie within each human heart and may be planted today and every day from this day forward. Planting seeds--this we can do.

**“There are
a hundred ways
you may choose
to tell the story.
How you choose
to tell the story
is not nearly
so important
as that you do,
in fact,
tell the story
(or sing the song
or dance the dance
or...).”**

---Sister Who

Regarding Production of New Episodes of “Sister Who Presents...” and Other Programs

The last four months has been filled with increasing frustration, as a new administration of Denver Community Television (apparently with a more business-oriented intention) has become less and less cooperative and supportive of my work. I altered my production schedule several times to accommodate their demands, restricted my list of volunteer crew list according to their specifications, and was finally informed that the equipment I needed was not going to be available to me. The content and technical requirements of my shows (in their opinion, formed without direct observation of the production of any of my shows) did not warrant the expenses associated with using the equipment.

Certainly there are other accusations that could be made and I am very upset about the change, considering how very many people have told me directly that they are regularly watching the shows when they are cablecast. I was also beginning to put together a holiday special recognizing at least four different December holidays and including a number of original songs, but this will have to be postponed until new resources can be found.

I would like to think that this is simply a form of divine guidance, that the time has come for me to begin working through different resources, except that I am still waiting for those resources to show themselves.

I am, in any case, investigating alternative resources, but would like to invite suggestions or possibilities from or through anyone reading this newsletter as well.

It seems it is time, (oh sigh--again!) to be bigger than the present experience and allow something new to develop, beyond the scope of anything possible within the small world of Denver Community Television. I had rather hoped that the 1994 aggravation of dealing with an apathetic and occasionally antagonistic administration within this organization would not be repeated. Hopefully, in time, this current event will be transformed into a positive and productive course change, leading myself and all of us in a new and better direction.