

Second Wind

SU to exhibit Cimino's racist comeback film The Year of the Dragon

It is not only a matter of personal discontent that the SU is showing Michael Cimino's controversial film *Year of the Dragon* on November 30 in SUB. In the eyes of many Canadian and American Chinese and Robert Daley, the author of the novel upon which the movie is based, the film is nothing more than racist and sexist. The exotic grandeur of the movie cannot deny its racist and sexist content. The actual social viewpoint of Cimino's comeback film is evident if one remembers Francis Coppola's criticism of *The Deer Hunter* as being politically naive in his press conference at the Cannes Film Festival.

The Chinese community acknowledges Cimino's comment on the invaluable contribution of Chinese workers in the railroad days. However, it condemns the misuse of racial slurs and stereotyping as suitable entertainment. Perhaps what focusses our attention is the racist effect, rather than the racist intention of the movie.

Biased portrayals of Chinese drivers as inept, "driving like their music — right to left" are objectionable, if not offensive, without mention of the word "chink" in the movie. When Stanley White (played by Mickey Rourke), a New York police officer, says "don't go for that one thousand year old stuff — this is America", regarding crimes in Chinatown, the audience is given a misleading image of Chinese history. Testimony on the Chinese Triad — "The Mafia concept was invented in China" — by White is impressive but not factual. The level

of activity of the Toronto Chinese gangster syndicate is exaggerated to massive proportions in the film. The portrayal of New York Chinatown is slanderous as the scenes are dominated by graphic images of poverty, disease and abuse. One should note that the representative Chinese characters in the film, almost without exception, are gangsters, subservient workers and gamblers. The only exceptions are the Chinese American broadcaster and undercover policeman, both of whom are subservient to White.

White incites hatred against persons of Chinese descent by placing all Vietnamese and Chinese in one undifferentiated group in his remark against Vietnamese. His statements are inflammatory, such as the Chinese being "the biggest overall importers of heroin". Last, the inferior image of Chinese people is compounded by the depiction of the young Chinese officer as a comically inept driver and marksman. Such a distortion of reality is highly unbelievable as police departments everywhere have minimum requirements for recruitment.

The affair of White with Tracy Tzu, the Chinese newswoman, is perhaps another version of the stereotypical submission of the Geisha girl. Tzu represents the fantasy of white male dominance over Asian women. Cimino finds it comfortable to depict Chinese women as submissive sex objects.

Stanley White continues the Vietnam War in New York's Chinatown, fulfilling the great white hope. He says, "If I give up, the

system gives up. This is Vietnam all over again. Nobody wants to win." Cimino imposes his pro-American attitude on the audience. White is a kind of transplanted blue-collar Rambo deposited in an urban environment, the most decorated cop in the history of the NYPD, to continue the war on his own turf. According to the movie, Chinatown is nothing less than the hub of international evil.

The real purpose of the Chinatown mission is to prove the superiority of White's race. Though White calls himself a proud Polack, he bears an Anglo-Saxon surname. The racist message of Cimino's *The Deer Hunter* is continued through repetition of that movie's score and the emphasis placed on American deaths in Vietnam and Korea. Dragging Vietnam into Chinatown, Cimino encourages his audience to hate cruel Asians.

As a gangster movie, *Year of the Dragon* is incomparable to other Hollywood films like *Once Upon a Time in America*, by Sergio Leone and Coppola's *Godfather* serial. Both Leone and Coppola portrayed a vivid and sentimental thirties' misery besides brutal violence. In particular, Coppola diagnosed the social background of the rise of the Italian Mafia in America.

Cimino overestimates the influence of Chinese gangsters in New York. There is no substantial evidence that the Chinese Triad predated the Mafia, or that it oversees heroin transactions out of the Golden Triangle in Thailand. Chinese as a minority group have, in

fact, limited competence in drug trafficking and other illegal activities.

Peculiar symbolism is found in the names of the characters: White equals American, Tai (Joey Tai is the leader of the Chinese Mafia in the film) reminds us of the Golden Triangle in Thailand, and Tzu is Chinese for pig. The message implicit in these names is not ambiguous.

Lastly, one cannot consent to the exploitation of Chinese minorities and Chinatown in the film for economic gain. The arrogant, chauvinistic attitude of the movie may promote the illusion that coloured people are primitive. The negative effect is aggregated especially on people who have had unfavourable

Vietnam experience or those having little contact with Chinese.

While one may claim similarities between biased depictions in the film and real life are accidental, the Toronto Mayor's Committee on Community and Race Relations resolved to protest the film.

Should the Students' Union wish to provide appropriate movies for entertainment, there are films with more accurate portrayals of Chinese like *Bamboo Lion and Dragon*, by the National Film Board and *Dimsum, a Little Bit of Heart*, by Wayne Wong, an independent film producer.

Ken Hui

Chinese Students' Drama Association



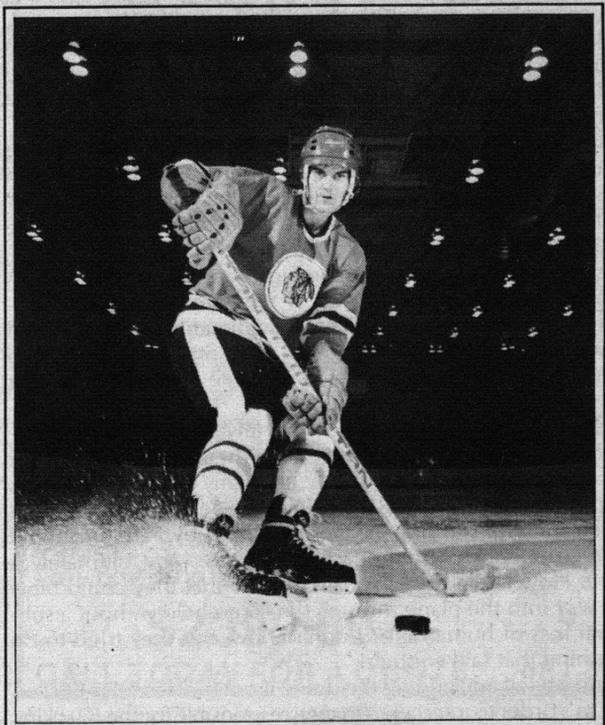
Staff meetings
Thursdays at 4:00 p.m.
New folks usually welcome.

He plays to win

He's competitive. He likes a challenge.
He's also a team player.

He's got what it takes to become a Certified Management Accountant.

If you're trying to decide about your future, call us.
You might be the player we're after.



Get a head start. Find out now what courses will give you advanced standing in the CMA program.

Our program specializes in management accounting and related management subjects as well as financial accounting.

Call: 428-6828

Toll Free: 1-800-232-1998

or write to:

The Society of Management Accountants

Canadian Commercial Bank Tower

1205 - 10104 - 103 Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta T5J 0H8



Duzhe Dobre!

**Have You Been To Our Buffet Supper Lately?
At CAB Cafeteria**

Every Tuesday and Thursday night
from 4:30 pm — 6:30 pm
Various ethnic themes each time.

**Tuesday Nov. 26 4:30 pm- 6:30 pm
Ukrainian Buffet Supper**

Cabbage rolls
Perrogies with sour cream and bacon
Kobasa (sausages)
Caesar Salad
Tossed Salad
Fruit Salad
Dessert

all for **\$3.99**

CAB Cafeteria ONLY