

CWAJD: On the Side of the Feminists

Okay! Here's my review of, and commentary on "Cannibal Women in the Avocado Jungle of Death".

This is the story of Margot, the Feminist Studies Ethno-History professor (Shannon Tweed), who is sent by the US Military into the Avocado Jungle to find a mysterious tribe called the Piranha Women, who have sex with men and then eat them with guacamole. Margot takes with her Bunny, a Home Ec major and beach bunny who wants to go into Feminist Studies. Their mission is to find the Piranha Women and convince them to retire to a subdivision in Malibu, thus freeing up a huge supply of avocados (necessary to defeat the Russians, don't you know).

This was a damn good movie! True enough, it's definitely a B-movie, and as such, is basically rather silly. However, it's much better than most lost tribe jungle movies. This is actually worth seeing. It's a movie that is essentially bouncing a few stereotyped characters off of each other and seeing what happens, but it is done in a movie with some depth of plot.

This film involves a lot of social commentary. It's making fun of B-movies. It's making fun of the US Military and Cold War tactics. It's making fun of chauvinism and feminism, although this movie is clearly on the feminists' side. It makes fun of California beach bunnies and frat house jerks, university administrators, and especially anthropological expeditions.

Is this movie anti-feminist? I don't think so. It pokes a little fun at some of the stock lines of feminist rhetoric, but it's always on their side. For instance, Margot and Bunny walk into a beer hall, and a scuzzy-looking guy says "Hey, chickies, can I buy you a drink?" Margot replies, "No, thank you" and looks away. The scuzz jumps up, bellowing "When I offer to buy a chick a drink, I expect..." Margot pulls out her gun and aims it between his eyes, saying "I am not a chick! I am an Ethno-Historian. Now, I understand that your need to assault women is a result of your exposure to the violent images of the Western media, so I won't blow your head off!" The scuzz thanked her and slithered away.

Is this movie pornographic? Well, now, let's see. There's a few shots of breasts in the opening scene. It's no big deal, really. They're breasts, they're there. The Piranha Women are shapely young women who aren't wearing a whole lot of clothing, but the camera isn't focusing on that, and it doesn't have much to do with the movie. If men in a jungle tribe were wearing exactly the same amount of clothing, nobody would complain that it was pornographic.

There is also the question that is frequently brought up in relation to this film of the "gang rape" of Bunny. Ah, yes. Well, let me tell you about this scene. While travelling through the Avocado Jungle, Margot, Bunny and Jim (the gold-chain-bedecked chauvinist scumball -- yes, that's really his role in the movie) meet up with a tribe of gentlemen who spend their time crocheting potholders and perfecting their tuna casserole recipes. They also make great hot cocoa. This completely offends Jim's concept of masculinity, so he teaches them to drink beer, read Penthouse, and verbally assault women. Jim then passes out from the beer, moments before Bunny comes out of her tent, saying that she couldn't sleep and wondered if the guys could make her some hot cocoa. The guys then turn on her, using all the lines that Jim has just taught them, and back Bunny up to a tree. She yells for them to get off of her, Margot comes out and fires a gun into the air, and the guys run away.

I'd say that this scene is not advocating rape or "taking women down" if they step out of line. It is, however, saying that Western society tells men that they are supposed to act violently towards women, and this scene shows how stupid they are when they do. Sorry, I don't see anything wrong with that.

Through the rest of the movie, Margot reconciles the two duelling tribes in the jungle (the Piranha Women like their men with guacamole, the Barracuda Women like theirs with clam dip) by having them set up biweekly committee meetings (accompanied by some commentary on useless infighting in the women's movement). She also challenges the anthropologist who preceded her into the jungle for compromising her academic ethics and exploiting the Piranha Women to write a book and get her tenure. Finally, Margot leaves the

jungle with Bunny, Jim, and Jacques, an intelligent, well-muscled would-be feminist scholar.

This is, in and of itself, a good movie with a lot of very clever satire in it. It makes good use of

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relatively simple characters to throw into relief prevalent academic and social attitudes, and to poke fun at anthropologists. As a teaching tool, it is a good idea. Is it the deepest movie ever made? Hell, no! Is it worth seeing? Sure!

You go too far

Who are you?
remove my right
to judge
moral, immoral
my decision
You scream, rant
declare your role
to defend
women
from whom?
no balance
Equality?
Rabid
chauvinist
don't speak
for me

I speak
for myself
Who are you?