

Fantasy parallels ancient adventure

By JAMES ELLIOTT

The Warriors is a contemporary fantasy that parallels a true, bloody adventure of ancient Greece, *The March up Country*, written about 400 B.C.

In the Greek story, the satrap of most of Asia Minor tries to claim greater power with the help of Greek mercenaries, but he is killed in battle at the gates of Babylon. In the ensuing melee, Xenophon, hero and author of the tale, reorganizes his countrymen and leads them through barbarian-infested territories to their homeland on the Greek coast.

Action in *The Warriors* follows this ancient plot. Cyrus, charismatic leader of the best-organized street gang in New York City, plans to unite all rival gangs into a hoodlum army of 100,000 to completely control the city. As a first step, he calls unarmed representatives from each gang together for an anxious midnight meeting in the northern part of the city.

During a rousing address to the conclave, Cyrus is cut down by a bullet. One gang leader in the crowd cries out that the Warriors are to blame for the shooting. The Warriors' leader is brutalized in a scuffle that follows, leaving the war chief of the gang to lead his crew through police- and rival-infested Manhattan to home turf and safety on Coney Island.

Released this year by Paramount Pictures, Inc., *The Warriors* is less violent than *Taxi Driver* and certainly less gory than its counterpart in antiquity. It has gained notoriety for the violence it allegedly provoked

among movie-goers in some cities (frustrated athletes who went to see *Rocky* in gym shorts and jogging shoes can empathize).

In defense of *The Warriors*, however, one West Coast theater manager said it was not the movie itself that provoked a shooting, some knifings, and innumerable fights. Given the types that sat together in the same theater to see the film, you would have expected a rumble even if the feature had been *The Sound of Music*, he said.

Certainly, no violence was reported at the Varsity Theater here, where the film recently was shown.

Producer Larry Gordon (*The End, Hooper*) said in an interview in *Film Bulletin* that the movie was given an R-rating not so much for the violence but for the language, "which, to remain true to the story and characters, is necessarily rough and authentic."

Shot on location in the streets and subways of New York, *The Warriors* has fight scenes to rival any in film. The costuming is outlandish; the gangs resemble small armies of color-coordinated punk-rockers.

The movie's plot, examined in isolation from the fast-paced screenplay and classical allusion, is exciting but vacuous. If allowed to exist as an allegory, however, the story takes on new meaning. It is a representation of the political process and the psychology of the gang subculture.

In a 1919 essay entitled "War is the Health of the State," American Randolph Bourne wrote: the... "feeling of being with and supported by the collective herd very greatly feeds... will to power, the nourishment of which the individual organism so constantly demands. You feel powerful by conforming, and you feel forlorn and helpless if you are out of the crowd."

The Warriors does not espouse violence as an end in itself. It does, however, point out that violence, or the threat of it, is the basis of all power, and that there is safety in numbers.

'Rocky II' continues 'Italian stallion' story

By RENEE HARRIS

Sometimes it pays to go see a sequel film—even when you have prejudices toward sequels.

At worst, you come away with an "I-told-you-so" feeling which is good for your ego. At best, you leave with something else very special. *Rocky II* is, without a doubt, a sequel of the very special kind.

For one thing, this sequel does what a sequel is supposed to do. It continues the story. Not only are the same characters (and actors) present, but the story itself begins with the last five minutes of the original *Rocky*. There is no character switch and no time lapse. And it gets even better.

After he "goes the distance" with heavy-weight champion Apollo Creed, Rocky is rushed to the hospital for surgery on his eye. While he is there, the doctors advise him not to box again; there is a chance that if he is hit again, he could go blind.

His girlfriend (who becomes his wife), afraid for his sight, also refuses to let him box, and viewers are confronted with the problem of a man who refuses to admit to himself that he has to give up something he values highly: his career.

Sylvester Stallone's Rocky Balboa is a warm-hearted, corny, and self-consciously slow-witted Philadelphia hero. Proud of his heritage and the nickname, "The Italian Stallion," he reluctantly agrees to a grudge match with the champion Creed (Carl Weathers).

Next to Stallone's characterization, the part of Adrian (Talia Shire) is the most memorable. The charm and intensity of the quiet, cautious wife is the perfect complement to the brashness and impulsiveness of Rocky.

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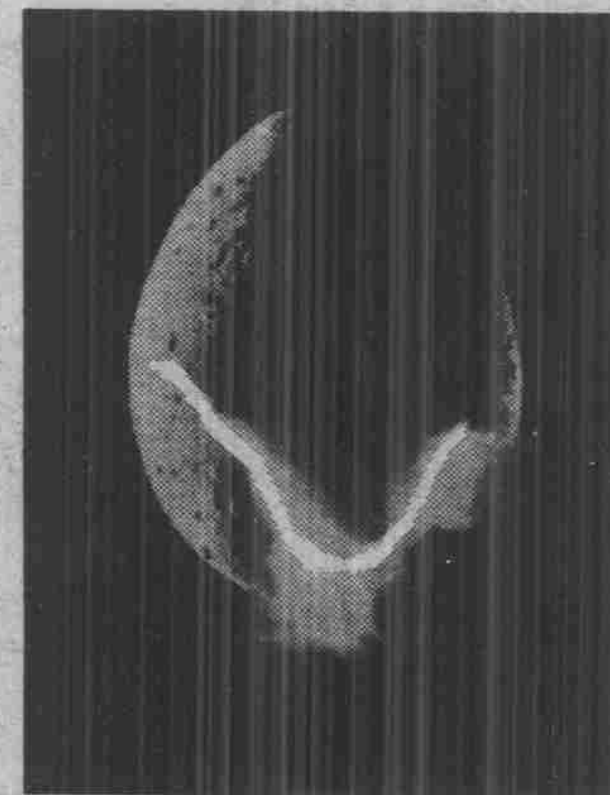
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