

Great White Hope-- focus of masculinity

Review by
DANNA MILLS

The Great White Hope, currently showing at the Nebraska theater, is definitely a movie to see. I promise that you will not be bored.

Scripted by Howard Sackler, who also wrote the successful Broadway version, the film is based on the life of Jack Johnson (Jack Jefferson in the picture), the first black heavyweight champion of the world.

If we look for a reason for the tremendous interest in boxing in this country, I think we can easily agree with Eldridge Cleaver that "the boxing ring is the ultimate focus of masculinity in America, the two-fisted testing ground of manhood, and the heavyweight championship, as a symbol, is the real Mr. America."

That a black man should in 1910, when the white man reigned supreme, have the effrontery to claim that title by beating a white man in the ring was a serious shock to America's self-image.

That he would additionally, claim the right to love the woman of his choice, a white woman, unleashed a fury of self-righteous retaliation in white America. They needed a white hope, someone to reclaim the white race. And the concept of a "white hope" is their concept, not Cleaver's.

It was rampant in the journalism of the time, just as it was during the current heavyweight bout, and even the Ali-Patterson fight.

Cleaver, in discussing the Ali-Patterson fight observes, "both black and white America, looking on, were sucked into the vortex of the

Candidates plan appearance

NU's three student candidates for City Council will appear with other city election candidates Monday night in a program sponsored by the League of Women Voters, said Mrs. Thomas Coleman, moderator.

The program, to be televised on channel 9, will begin at 8 p.m. at the Lincoln Center Building. Each City Council, Airport Authority and School Board candidate has been invited, she said.

Each candidate including students, John Breslow, William Bennett and William Hermes, will give a three-minute talk before the meeting is opened for questions.

Union offers booths to ASUN candidates

Booths in the Nebraska Union are now available for candidates running for the ASUN elections, according to Electoral Commissioner Dave Bingham.

Top priorities for the booths will go to independent executive candidates and organized parties. Bingham said if the need arises, tables will be set up for individual senatorial candidates.

Use of the booths will follow Nebraska Union rules. Bingham said if problems come up, the Electoral Commission reserves the right to alter these rules in order to be fair to all concerned.

event, feeling somehow a profound relationship to what was being enacted in that ring. They knew that a triumph and a defeat were taking place, transcending the fortunes of the two men squaring off in the ring to test their strength."

Jefferson, unlike the white contenders, did not consider himself a "black hope." As he says, "Man, ah ain't fighting for no race, ain't redeeming no body! My mamma tole me Mr. Lincoln done that-- ain't that why you shot him?"

Yet in spite of his protests the issue was racial and the play is about the white effort to put him in his place, and the struggle of Jefferson to retain his honor, his self-respect and his autonomy.

You cannot fault the acting. James Earl Jones as Jefferson has the kind of physical and emotional responsiveness and control that excites the

spectator, that draws him in and lets him share the inner life of the character.

Jane Alexander as Ellie, Jack's woman, reveals skillfully the complete essence of what it is like to be the victim, to maintain the impossible position against impossible odds.

But we cannot overlook the

rest of the cast. Hal Holbrook is magnificent as Cameron, the suave, polite, cool, efficient, gentlemanly, bigoted Chicago district attorney. Beah Richards, as Jefferson's mother, lets us share her anguish with uncomfortable poignancy.

See this film. It won't leave you unmoved.



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