

ENTERTAINMENT

# Star Trek: Insurrection lacks imagination and effort

By Tammy D. McMahan  
Special to Sentinel-Voice

Die-hard Trekkies say that odd-numbered movie versions of *Star Trek* and *Star Trek: The Next Generation* are cursed to be either sterile as in *Star Trek: The Motion Picture* and *Star Trek: Generations* or contain mystical psychobabble as seen in *Star Trek: The Search for Spock* and *Star Trek: The Final Frontier*.

It is arguable that the curse continues with the ninth installment of this venerable science fiction franchise, *Star Trek: Insurrection*. *Insurrection* concerns the efforts of the Enterprise crew to save the Ba'Ku, a group of 600 people, who live in a remote corner of the galaxy.

The Ba'Ku have found the fountain of youth in the metaphasic radiation of their planet which constantly regenerates their bodies. The small tribe lives an idyllic existence seemingly absent of any advanced technology.

Unbeknownst to the Ba'Ku, a spying operation maintained by the Federation and

the Son'a, an alien race which also lives in this remote galactic region, monitors their every move. The operation is revealed when Data (Brent Spiner), the usually lovable android, goes berserk, abandons the covert mission and shows the Ba'Ku the spy headquarters.

Admiral Dougherty (Anthony Zerbe) who is involved in the operation contacts Captain Jean-Luc Picard (Patrick Stewart) and informs him of Data's irrational behavior and threatens to terminate him.

Picard and the esteemed crew of the Enterprise including, Commander Riker (Jonathan Frakes), Lieutenant Commanders Geordi La Forge (LeVar Burton) and Worf (Michael Dorn), Counselor Deanna Troi (Marina Sirtis) and Dr. Beverly Crusher (Gates McFadden) rush to Data's aid before it's too late. Once on the planet, the crew soon realizes that the Federation has made a deal with the devil in the form of the Son'a to forcibly eject the Ba'Ku from the planet and harvest the youth-giving radiation.

The crew embarks on a mission to protect

the Ba'Ku from relocation. Along the way, the crew manifests more tenderness and quiriness, albeit highly predictable, than ever seen in the past *Star Trek: The Next Generation* movies. Picard falls in love with a beautiful Ba'Ku woman (Donna Murphy). Picard also tangles with the Son'a leader Ru'afo (F. Murray Abraham) whose painfully stretched skin gives new meaning to the Hollywoodesque phrase of "you've had some face work, haven't you?"

Data gains insight on childhood. Geordi's natural vision returns and he sees his first sunset. Worf experiences puberty once more. Deanna and Riker rekindle their love. Dr. Crusher becomes one feisty warrior.

*Insurrection* is largely an unimaginative work of science fiction with a number of deficiencies.

Firstly, the plot is weak. It's difficult to suspend disbelief when it seems entirely possible that the high tech scientists of the 24th century could study the life-enhancing radiation of the Ba'Ku planet and likely recreate it in a laboratory without throwing

the inhabitants off of their world.

Secondly, in the *Star Trek* universe the Enterprise crew always prevails, but the creativity comes in the how of the victory. The lackluster film only provides scenes of the crew rounding up the villagers to escape a Son'a attack, a predictable phaser versus Son'a weapon battle, and a race through space anomaly that adds nothing to the "spaceship near escape" gallery.

Furthermore, the humor is incredibly weak. The laughs are supposed to come when Picard and Data sing a song from H.M.S. Pinafore, Deanna and Riker lovingly tease each other and when Worf gets an oversized pimple, but the attempts fall flat.

As most Trekkies know, the *Star Trek: Next Generation* movies are usually the "Picard and Data show" and here there is little difference. In fact, if you blink too much you may miss LeVar Burton, Marina Sirtis and Gates McFadden. *Insurrection* is a disappointment showing a serious lack of effort on the part of the filmmakers and the actors.

# Kwanzaa time for reading up on Africa's storied history

By Dr. Conrad W. Worrill  
Special to Sentinel-Voice

The Kwanzaa season is a time for reflection and meditation. During this celebration, I suggest spending time reading and reflecting on important books aimed at helping us continue the struggle for African liberation and redemption.

One of the great African thinkers of this century is Dr. Jacob H. Carruthers.

His latest book, "Mdw Ntr Divine Speech: A Historiographical Reflection of African Deep Thought From The Time of Pharaohs To The Present," should be read during Kwanzaa.

Carruthers is one of the leading scholars in the African Centered Education Movement.

He has been a professor in the Department of Inner City Studies Education at Northeastern Illinois University for 28 years.

In this role, his research, writing, teaching and lectures have contributed greatly to the efforts of the African Centered Education Movement in reclaiming the true history of African people from ancient times to the present.

Carruthers said the "Mdw Ntr Divine Speech" is "aimed at the liberation of the deep thought of Africa."

Our great African scholar and elder, the late Dr. John Henrik Clarke, in writing the foreword, stated: "In some ways, Jacob Carruthers' new work is a continuation of his early work on Ancient Egypt, and in other ways this book is

broader in its approach to what Professor Carruthers refers to as "African Deep Thought" in Africa, the United States and the Caribbean."

An example of African deep thought can be examined in the 3,000-year old, "The Pyramid Text of Unas," which states, in part, "It is ... wrong to go about in darkness not seeing and upside down ... come forth on this day and bring the truth which is with me."

The book is the continuation of the tradition of African thinkers who since the late 18th and 19th centuries have revealed the real truth about Africa's contribution to the world.

The European White supremacy academic system has developed a fabricated role of Africa and African people in world history.

In fact, George Wilhelm Frederick Hegel, the so-called European scholar-guru, wrote in the early 19th century, "At this point we leave Africa, not to mention it again for it is not an historical part of the world..."

This kind of conceptualization and fabrication of African history, has caused the kind of severe damage to the African psyche that "The Pyramid Text of Unas" warned against, when it said, "It is ... wrong to go about in darkness not seeing of upside down."

Through the European educational system of white supremacy, Dr. Carruthers helps us understand that, "The conspiracy was facilitated by

the fact that the Europeans had not only militarily subjugated the African people but also by virtue of the fact that they had placed African culture itself into captivity."

Carruthers says, "The most outstanding example of that tyranny was the monopoly secured by the European scholars and intellectuals over the memorial of the Nile Valley Civilization which was a great repository of the evidence of African Deep Thought."

Continuing on this point, he says, "The European fabrication which resulted spawned a group of African thinkers, who in their embarrassment over the apparent weakness of Africa to defend itself, agreed that Africa indeed had no deep thought before the European invasion or at least no deep thought worthy of rescue."

This is the problem that African Centered thinkers have been working on for more than 200 years.

"Mdw Ntr Divine Speech" represents the collective research that Carruthers has been engaged in, with his colleagues, in the Kemetic Institute (that he founded in 1978). It is through the institute, and its members that the genius of Carruthers was able to flourish.

The institute "takes its name from the name of ancient Egypt.

The people who lived along the Nile River 5,000 years ago and developed the world's first civilization, called their country Kemet which means the Black city

or country and called themselves Kemites which means "Black people."

"Mdw Ntr Divine Speech" is a book that all serious students, teachers, lay people and scholars in the African Centered Education

Movement should read, study and discuss. It has provided us with an intellectual breakthrough in the process of recovering "African Deep Thought."

So, make this Kwanzaa season a meaningful one, and

step into the new millennium ready to reclaim and restore Africa to her rightful place on the world stage, and reclaim the African mind.

Conrad Worrill is the National Chairman of the National Black United Front.

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