

FILMS

Obtuse triangle

SUNDAY BLOODY SUNDAY
Directed by John Schlesinger
Screenplay by Penelope Gilliat

Traditionally, if two men and a woman figure in a love triangle, we assume it's the woman being shared. Not so in Sunday Bloody Sunday, a film that defiantly shatters such romantic manner of thinking. In this case, it is the young man that's the hypotenuse—or the side common to the other two.

The story seems simple enough. Daniel Hirsch (Peter Finch), a prosperous middle-aged Jewish doctor, and Alex Greville (Glenda Jackson), a divorcee in her thirties, share a common interest: Bob Elkin (Murray Head), young sculptor dabbling in kinetic art. The young man is happy enough to be shared. His lovers don't like the situation, but being mature, try to make the best of it without making undue demands. Later, he

leaves them to go to America. They are crushed, but we know they will survive.

Penelope Gilliat's script advances the plot through a series of scenes designed to reveal the characters not through actions but through dialogue which in itself is more expository than dramatic. Their words ring true because no emotions are repressed and nothing is concealed; nerves are bared at their rawest. Tension is created not by any explicit conflict among the characters, but from within them.

Finch, playing Hirsch, once more displays his talent for precise, coherent, and credible acting. There is nothing in him that is effeminate, affected, or guilty—homosexual stereotypes that would have bogged down a less competent actor. He seems simply to have accepted his homosexuality the way a man would have accepted a preference for tennis to golf. This acceptance is without passions or regrets, and is exactly what arouses our sympathy. He is all too human and vulnerable. The scenes wherein he ministers to his patients, comforting them in their moments of doubt and depression are the most effective, giving him the dignity and identity that make him respectable in our eyes. It is the most important role in the story, and the most interesting.

If Finch has the best scenes, the

picture remains Jackson's by sheer force of her performance. For, if Hirsch does not seem exciting, the woman, Alex, is Jackson played with vibrance and vitality, suppressed passions and anger. Her scenes are always tense and alive, vivid with explosive jealousy, frenzy and doubt. She gives us a disturbing picture of today's tormented, confused woman who struggles to avoid any compromise in her life. She doesn't want to settle for the domestic life her mother managed with; she doesn't want to share her lover; she doesn't like her job. Unfortunately, this lack of willingness to compromise does not propel her to do anything about her life, so wrapped up is she in the idea of sharing some blissful moment with her lover.

Murray Head playing the role of Elkin, the coveted young man, is the weakest point of the movie. He seems too shallow and selfish to arouse any sympathy. The passion of two intelligent people for him is irreconcilable with his colorless personality. He seems uncommitted to either and escapes to one or the other at the slightest sign of any emotional conflict or hassle. His person seems best explained by one of his lines: "Don't push it. Please don't push it." This is said when Alex mentions the doctor. The ultimate squaring of the trian-

gle is left to Peter Finch who, in a soliloquy of sorts in the end, summarizes the bleak desolation of the abandoned lovers' landscapes in the end, and how eventually, in real life, "there is no whole thing."

For those who didn't quite catch what he was saying, here is the monologue, in which the doctor, wounded by his loss, turns patient and looks to us to heal him:

"When you're at school and want to quit, people say you're going to hate being out in the world. Well, I didn't believe them and I was right. When I was a kid and couldn't wait to be grown up and they said childhood was the best time of my life and it wasn't. Now I want my company and people say, what's half a loaf, you're well shot of him; and I say, I know that, I miss him that's all. They say he'd never have made me happy and I say, I'm an happy apart from missing him. You might throw me a pill or two for my cough. (pause)

"All my life I've been looking for someone courageous and resourceful, not like myself, and he's not it. (pause)

"But something, we were something. You've no right to call me to account. (pause)

"I've only come about my cough." ZENAIDA SEVA ONG

BOOKS

Point of reference

THE NEW CONSTITUTION: CRISIS & REFORMS
By Antonio R. Tupaz

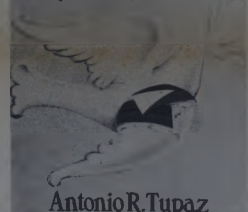
Published by the Superior Management & Investment Corporation

This 375-page book is the first to be published on the new Constitution since its approval by the delegates to the 1971 charter meet in November 1972 and its ratification by the Filipino people, through the citizens assemblies, in January 1973.

What makes the book authoritative on the events and issues that went into the framing of the charter is the fact that the author was a member of the Constitutional Convention, an active participant in its deliberations, and co-chairman of the 16-man special ad hoc committee of the steering council that prepared the official working draft of the new Constitution.

The author devotes the first chapter to a discussion of the "Marcos Doctrine: Constitutional Authoritarianism," giving the reader a background on the rationale for the proclamation of martial law and the institution of the new society by President Marcos. Martial law, Philippine style, the author emphasizes, is basically the prosecution of reforms and because of its adherence to non-violence and the constitutional process, it is even more difficult to execute than its stringent form tried in some other countries. The new Constitution, the author says, is the "final legal completion of the Marcos doctrine and the New Society." In effect, it also provides the "legal framework for the philosophy

The NEW CONSTITUTION: CRISIS & REFORMS



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and goals" of the reform movement now going on in the Philippines.

Woven into the different chapters are the major problems of Philippine society to which the framers of the new charter anchored the reform measures that went into the provisions of the Constitution.

Of importance to the researcher is a whole chapter analyzing the various committee reports which became the basis of the contents of the new charter.

The first-hand accounts contained in the book can prove significant in the interpretation of the various provisions embodied in the Constitution, giving the reader a clear perspective of the controversial and polemical discussions in the convention hall and in the committee meetings.

The book can serve as a starting point for those who may later write about the trials and tribulations that attended the birth of the new charter. As Diosdado Macapagal, president of the Constitutional Convention, noted in the foreword: "For researchers, chroniclers, and historians, this work will be a valuable point of reference whose utility will be enhanced and completed by reading the subsequent up-dating volumes by the same author."

DANCE

Folkloric charm

KISLAP '73

Direction & Choreography
By Leonor Orosa-Goquino

That Leonor Orosa Goquino stands unchanged when it comes to interpreting Philippine life, legend, and lore in dance was affirmed once more after a viewing of Kislap '73, the 12th anniversary presentation of the Filipinescas Society, Inc. Through tastefully theatricalized translation of village and ritual dances, ancient tribal tales, and festivals, she gave new life and meaning to cherished historical, cultural, and literary traditions.

Her choreography of the "Legend of Creation" was exquisite in its virtuosity of movements: the quarrelling sea and sky, the bird, the islands, the first man and woman all coalesced into a symphony of undulations with the most sensuous grace.

With clever innovations and spirited improvisations, "Tribal Story" and "Morolandia" were saved from being banal renditions of the familiar Mountain Province and Muslim folk dances. In "Tribal Story," the male dancers displayed muscular and rhythmic prowess in fabulous acrobatics and ceremonial leaps accompanied by haunting chants; in "Morolandia," the women glided with elegance of steps and teased the males with flexible hips and flirtatious eyes, their hand batting overhead with a plastic gear that seemed like a hundred butterflies fluttering.

While the "Morolandia" suite captivated with its usual staleness and color, the desired effect, however, seemed to have been marred by the

lack of tonal ranges in the gongs that accompanied it. Also, the Christianization scene with its play on velvet candles seemed to have relied more on such visual gimmicks instead of the purer art of dance and movements.

In the second portion, "Cuadros Filipinos," excellence suffered some confusion. The flagellation scene was memorable enough in its agonizing writhing, wrestling, and thrashing about, the movements conveying suffering and penitence, if not the fanatic's zeal. The cockfight, a classic of over 15 years, had retained its original charm. However, the Maria Clara Asalto scene (another Goquino classic of almost 20 years) seemed to have grown bland and tasteless with age. It lacked incisiveness and theatrical tension, sometimes descending to pure kitsch.

This weakness extended to the harvest suite of the last part. Despite some absolutely beautiful movements, some dances seemed unresolved and unfinished, terminated before they reached their depth of adventurousness. Some steps were repetitive and tedious, prolonging the dance unnecessarily. It was not until the number of the tilking birds (tinkling with the difference that the dancers are costumed as yellow birds) that this portion gained back its originally intended momentum.

Aside from such lapses in direction and dramatic timing that tarnished an otherwise glittering performance, Kislap '73 was a heady experience in viewing a people's myths and legends embodied in a rich palette of movements and dances. ZSO