

but the splitting of the glaciers and the blinding, white on white snow storms raise this modest, low budget film to epic proportions.

The film is chock full of biblical references converted into Eskimo folklore. There are the non-believers praying to the golden walrus calf and the eating of unleavened whale blubber during the pilgrimage to the promised land in mukluks. But this *Exodus* of the North really exists on the level of personal human drama with Alexandra Stewart playing a moving Ruth, and John Vernon as the fiercely credible Johocifat. Intriguing as the idea is though, I'm not sure that this film will convince very many people that the Eskimos are really Jewish; but as the sun sets on the five month long sabbath and you see their ghostly silhouettes against the oil lamps, you get the spooky feeling that the great Canadian North has many secrets still to be told.

— Ron Blumer

Black Christmas

Directed by Bob Clark, Produced by Gerry Arheid, script by Roy Moore from "Stop Me...", photography by Reginald Morris (of the Paper Chase), music by Carl Zitrer.

I was relieved when I noticed the small U.S. flag sitting on the detective's desk at Police Headquarters. It made *Black Christmas* look like an American movie. Also, the kind of crowd that would go to it always bolt abruptly once the film ends; they'd never notice the combined financial credit after the titles to Famous Players and the Canadian Film Development Corporation, or that in fact this was a typical sell-out Canadian film. And they wouldn't need a U.S. flag to identify its national character either.

Robert Fulford tells us that in Barry Lord's Maoist criticism of Canadian art Lord identifies works that colonized people create to buy status and profit for themselves by helping the imperial power exploit their fellow colonialists, as "comprador" art.

That's *Black Christmas*. Politically, it's a browner's sycophantic effort to sidle up to lower U.S. taste for cheap thrills and fast cash.

As Jean Paul Belmondo said to Jean Seberg at the end of *Breathless*: "C'est vraiment dégueulasse."

The strangest thing about seeing this anti-female stock horror caper at the Imperial in Toronto was the incredible juxtapositioning of it with a reasonably clever, highly female-oriented 1972 NFB short, *L'oeuf* by Clorinda Warny, full of surreal effects and montages relating to eggs and life. Someone must



Margot Kidder in "Black Christmas"

have noticed they both dealt with the female.

The combination was about as sensitive as that ad in which a chicken encourages you to eat at Colonel Sanders.

Black Christmas is well located and photographed. It features a sorority house where, one by one, accompanied by what women prefer to think of as harmless though sick-minded obscene phone calls, all the little ladies get their comeuppance for being lovely, young, well-to-do and/or liberated. And the most suspicious male is of course artistic. A pianist.

The satisfactions of a film in which upper middle-class females, sharp and sexy, are terrorized and brutally or gruesomely destroyed can be easily seen to appeal to all misogynists, insecure and frustrated men, and a thwarted and denied working class who resent college kids, liberated women, intellectual and particularly artistic males, and, quite possibly, the expense of Christmas.

The performers came in for a shaking from Toronto critics, but actually they were quite acceptable in their roles. Abandoning any social, sexual, moral or political critical attitudes, toward the movie, the females had the edge in performance. Margot Kidder particularly gave life and vivacity to her characterization of the cynical sorority sister, while Andrea Martin (super in *Cannibal Girls*) was humorous, touching, warm, silly and sympathetic to a fault. Even Marian Waldman's guzzling sewer-mouthed house mother, wildly overdone, and American Olivia Hussey as an affected snob-sister, worked hard to try to capture both the silliness and scariness of the plot.

Canadian males shouldn't go unnoticed either. I found it sad, life does

go by so fast, to see Doug McGrath, a male who can literally reek sex, relegated to a sexless stereotyped boob-cop role. But he made it a pleasure anyhow, and with James Edmond, as a father who acts somewhat more bewildered than quite necessary (was he ever told the plot?) and Art Hindle and Les Carlson, the Canadian contingent did what they could, which was basically, lie low.

Keir Dullea played the paperback pianist with anguished sensitivity rather suitably, but finally the only performer came out on top was the heavy breathing garbled telephone voice(s), which gives you some idea of whose alter ego invented the script.

— Natalie Edwards

Child Under a Leaf

That glossy world pictured in consumer magazines and in sunny Sunday Supplements, with the fur throws, white deep pile rugs, forever green plants, and wide glass walls leading into flagged gardens; that wonder-world of buxom healthy women in impeccable white caftans sprawled contentedly among the cushions, with handsome sensitive males standing nearby holding a Chivas Regal, and maybe a baby or a cat or dog cunningly settled by the latest in porcelain fireplaces; well, that world of fad and fashion and fancy comes to a sort of life in *Child Under a Leaf*, a new semi-Canadian film by George Bloomfield.

Photographed with centre-spread skill by Don Wilder (*Paperback Hero*) the woman is Dyan Cannon (*Bob and Carol and Ted and Alice*), the lover, Donald Pilon (*The Pyx*, *True Nature of Bernadette*, etc.), the baby Julie Bullock and the husband Joseph Campanella. The emotion-nudging music is by Francis Lai, known primarily here for his work for *Love Story* rather than his many Claude Lelouch scores.

This is another CFDC backed film made blatantly for the U.S. market, calculated with such care that commercial slots and easily cut censorable scenes are practically marked with dotted lines, ready to be clipped out for TV. Unlike *Black Christmas*, it doesn't place an American flag in sight, and in fact, to satisfy nationalists, perhaps, an Information Canada sign can be briefly glimpsed in one street scene.

Other than that there is nothing to offend the American TV viewer with a sense of the foreign, especially one Micheline Lanctôt's French Canadian accent has been removed, and another