

...cont'd from previous page: "UTOPIAN"

A fatal table dance

Two reviews of the latest Tarantino flick

FILM

From *Dusk Till Dawn*

Directed by Robert Rodriguez
Screenplay by Quentin Tarantino

From *Dusk Till Dawn* stars Quentin Tarantino and George Clooney as Richard and Seth Gecko, two bank robbers who hijack a motor home driven by an ex-minister (Harvey Keitel) and his daughter (Juliette Lewis) in order to get across the Texas border. Once safely in Mexico, they drive to a biker bar where they are scheduled to meet with their partners. Everything seems pretty normal, at least for a place named the "Titty Twister," until the star exotic dancer of the night turns into one of the creatures from Jabba the Hut's palace. Unbeknownst to all the patrons, the bar is run by vampires whom Clooney & Co. must fend off until dawn.

Tarantino wrote *FDTD* four years ago based on a rough outline by FX company president Robert Kurtzman. It was the first script he was paid to write, for which he received \$1,500 and assurances that the FX company would do the make-up on a project he had in mind called *Reservoir Dogs*. Four years later, Tarantino had an Academy award under his belt as a screenwriter and Kurtzman had himself the rights to one hell of a valuable script. However, the dialogue is not as clever and the characters are not as interesting as you would expect from Tarantino after *Reservoir Dogs* and *Pulp Fiction*.

Clooney does his best to shed his image as ER's Dr. Ross by adorning a mean-looking tattoo and growling his bad-ass lines. Unfortunately for him, it doesn't work. After years of guest appearances on "The Facts of Life" and starring in such memorable blockbusters as "Return to Horror High," it appears that his critically acclaimed work on ER will hamper his future job prospects unless he can leave the lingering mood of Dr. Ross behind. Tarantino, sporting a Clooney-style hair cut, slips comfortably into his role as an anti-social, sexual deviant. Keitel, unfortunately, isn't given much to work with. His character is so dull and his dialogue so tiresome that we think Keitel should carefully read the next script Tarantino gives him before sign-

ing on. Lewis, who will probably be able to slip into the role of a teenager until sometime in her late forties, is similarly bogged down in a weakly-written character. Fans of Cheech and Chong should keep an eye out for Cheech Marin, who plays three different roles throughout the film.

If you venture out to see *FDTD* hoping that Tarantino has included as many violent and gruesome scenes as in his previous films, you will be pleasantly surprised. The number of decapitations and severed limbs gives this movie a body count that would rival any old Schwarzenegger flick. Most of the violence is of the horror type along the lines of *Evil Dead* or the 1990 remake of *Night of the Living Dead*. If you're into these kinds of movies, then you might want to catch *From Dusk Till Dawn* on a cheap night, but don't expect too much.

LUKE MERRIMEN & ARIZ DAVID

I have never seen a bad Harvey Keitel movie. Never, that is, until now.

Okay, here it goes. Our man Quentin and his buddy rob a bank, kill people, rob a liquor store, kill some more people, and generally bad-act their way to Mexico. Then happens the vampire shit.

The acting, the editing, and the script were bad enough before that. But unbelievably, it got worse. If there's one good thing I could say about this movie, it is that I actually liked Quentin Tarantino's acting. George Clooney, on the other hand, was just bad. Juliette Lewis was terrible. The script was absolutely laughable. The editing was shoddy. Harvey Keitel was abominable as a priest who is doubting his faith.

This movie was bad. This is quite simply put, the worst movie that I have ever seen. I have walked out of better movies. This movie was worse than *The Jewel of the Nile*; it bit worse than *Reality Bites*. Ladies and gentlemen, this movie was worse than *Cool Runnings*.

I heard Don Irvine's review on *Definitely Not the Opera* on the weekend, and he put it thus — "I wouldn't say it was the worst movie of the year, as it is only January. But it's the worst one I've seen for six-and-a-half years, and that means about 800 films."

As a friend lamented to me on the way out of the auditorium, "If only I had been nearer to the aisle..."

MILTON HOWE

Saul suspicious of group identity



How did legitimacy shift from the individual to the group? Saul sees it as part and parcel with the twentieth century's "addiction" to ideology — absolute markets, absolute national self-determination, the social engineering of future utopias. Ideology has made us unconscious by hijacking our language of criticism. We are unable to approach political, social, and economic problems using common sense because it has been taken away from us.

Disinterested and citizen are the key words for Saul. For him, the jury is the model of disinterested action. In a jury, an individual acts impartially

for the greater good of society instead of for their own gain. In public life, then, the individual's obligation is to act disinterestedly. From this, non-ideological equilibrium will occur.

It all sounds so easy, doesn't it?

After setting the book down, though, something feels amiss. Today's world is indeed permeated by professional associations, political parties, nationalisms, and other group attachments which incite blind conformism. The importance of citizenship as opposed to individualism has been lost in contemporary discussion. Ultimately, it is not Saul's central ideas of neo-corporatism or the individual's unconsciousness which seems implausible. It is his penchant for polar oppositions (ideology versus humanism; language versus propaganda) and all too simple solutions to the world's ills which sit uncomfortably.

The Kantian presumption made by Saul that all people on earth have fundamentally equal needs, rights and responsibilities is out of vogue. The opinion of culture and nation is fully accepted by mainstream opinion. Saul's call for a solution based on a universalist conception of citizenship bucks this trend. Whether you approve or reject his argument hinges on this point.

The *Unconscious Civilization* is a clearly written book filled with many seductive arguments. Even if you reject John Ralston Saul's solutions, it is difficult to contest his characterization of the problem.

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