

Love triangle, sci-fi flicks fall short of mark

Gere, Stone can't save thin Intersection

By Gerri Pare
Catholic News Service

NEW YORK — A successful architect is torn between committing to his new love or returning to his wife in *Intersection* (Paramount).

In director Mark Rydell's glossy romantic triangle set in Vancouver, Richard Gere plays Vincent Eastman, married 16 years to his beautiful business partner, Sally (Sharon Stone), and father of their 13-year-old, Meaghan (Jenny Morrison).

Having moved in with vivacious writer Olivia (Lolita Davidovich), Vincent has drawn up architectural plans for their dream house overlooking the water.

Yet he sees Sally every day at work, they still have strong mutual feelings for each other and he misses living with his daughter.

The movie is told primarily in flashback as it opens with Vincent involved in a serious car crash just as he has decid-



Takashi Seida/Paramount Pictures

Vincent Eastman (Richard Gere) is a successful architect who must choose between his lovely and talented wife, Sally (Sharon Stone), or his equally lovely and talented lover, Olivia (Lolita Davidovich) in *Intersection*.

ed upon a course of action regarding the two women.

Gere is good at conveying his tortured emotional state and Stone finally shows a glimmer of acting talent as the vulnerable wife, but the movie fails to show convincingly why their marriage was — to use Gere's description — "just a corporation with a kid."

In fact, the three central characters come off as shallow, making their situation of indifferent interest to the audience. Vincent wants it both ways, Olivia knew he was married when they met and the wife listlessly gets involved with someone else.

Focusing solely on the static romantic triangle, the thinly written narrative lacks texture and its belabored pace shows. Only a double ironic twist at the end provides an interesting touch, but it is not enough to make the overall movie an absorbing experience or one that offers much insight into the frailties of love relationships.

Because of its theme of marital infidelities, flashes of nudity and minimal rough language, the U.S. Catholic Conference classification is A-III — adults. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is R — restricted.

'American Cyborg'

Apparently aimed at a bloodthirsty action movie audience is the ultraviolent *American Cyborg: Steel Warrior* (Cannon).

Director Boaz Davidson's outlandish plot has murderous computerized cyborgs running what is left of America's post-apocalyptic society. There are the usual underground rebels, and one, Mary (Nicole Hansen), has the distinction of carrying, ex-utero, the last human fetus, which is destined to save the human race — if she can just escape the unstoppable cyborg (John Ryan) programmed to kill her and her unborn son.

A mysterious stranger (Joe Lara) comes to her aid as the cyborg pursues them, and no matter how often (very) it is shot, bombed, stabbed and impaled, it regenerates into its killing mode, slaughtering everyone in sight for a most impressive body count.

Aside from the near blasphemous Mary/infant savior theme (at one point Mary is tied on a cross), this chase movie is nothing more than a boring repetition of violent deaths as the cyborg butchers his way through scene after scene.

The only visual relief from the body blows and bloodshed are the vapid model-faces of the couple being hunted down — an empty attraction. A thumping soundtrack tries to inject some suspense into the proceedings, but nothing can rescue this movie from what it is: a violence-drenched affair of no worth.

Due to excessive violence, crude sexual references and occasional rough language, the USCC classification is O — morally offensive. The MPAA rating is R — restricted.

Book offers keen glimpse into urban life

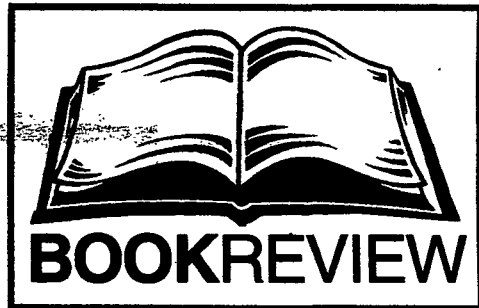
On the Edge, by Carl Husemoller Nightingale; Basic Books (New York, 1993); 254 pp.; \$24.

Reviewed by Father George V. Murry, SJ
Catholic News Service

Carl H. Nightingale takes for the title of *On the Edge* a line found in "The Message," a curious work by contemporary rapper Grandmaster Flash. The title captures, in the language of rap, the experience of poverty, alienation, racism and violence which shapes the world of many poor black children in North Philadelphia and across the nation.

Nightingale bases his work on his own experiences as a participant-observer over a period of six years during which he lived in a North Philadelphia neighborhood. That experience, combined with an extensive survey and evaluation of the urban black phenomenon in 20th-century America, lends *On the Edge* a compelling authority. Much of what Nightingale describes is not new nor unknown to those familiar with life in poor urban neighborhoods. But his contribution lies in his ability to weave a number of factors into a context which illuminates his subject.

According to Nightingale, the precipitous decline in employment opportunities since World War II has tragically contributed to the alienation of the urban black poor from mainstream American values. Black males, lacking



jobs, have limited ability to provide for their families. Single-parent households and the unprecedented increase in violence which have come to characterize black inner-city life have further weakened the fabric.

It would seem that this alienation from mainstream America might serve to create an independent existence for the urban poor. On the contrary, Nightingale argues that poor self-esteem, consumerism and violence have produced an existence much more dependent on mainstream America than previously imagined. Rather than step aside from mainstream America in order to survive, many poor blacks have adopted mainstream values and then can find no way of realizing their dream except through violence. In that sense, instead of being a great magnet, drawing people toward itself, middle-class society becomes the great expression of the forbidden land that must be taken by force.

Nightingale ends with two sugges-

tions to reshape the world of the urban black poor. His first is the more concrete. He calls for the creation of more employment opportunities in the inner city to begin to undo the desperation which destroys hope. On the philosophical plane, he challenges America to the "creation of a national culture of commitment and community that is emotionally expressive, ethnically diverse, and compelling to children and young people." Key to the success of the second is value-based education and the participation by politicians, business leaders and leaders of the African-American community in the educational process.

This book is passionately written, extensively documented and easily readable. It is valuable for anyone who wants a deeper understanding of the African-American experience and essential reading for those who want to work in the African-American community. But it is also a window into another experience of the American dream, albeit one which is unfulfilled.

If only to help us all to see, it is worth reading.

Father Murry is president of Archbishop Carroll High School in Washington.

At your bookstore or order prepaid from Basic Books-Harper & Row, Keystone Industrial Park, Scranton, Pa. 18512. Add \$2 for shipping and handling.

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