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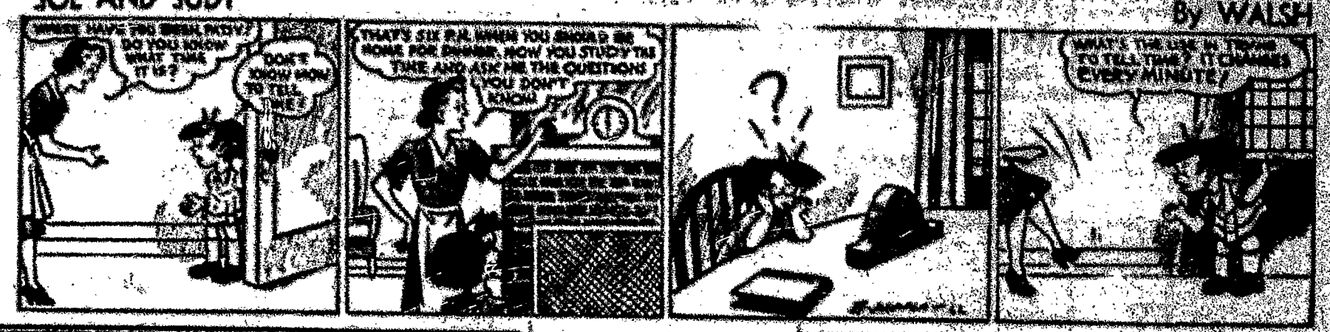

HOLLYWOOD IN FOCUS

By W. H. Mooring

W. H. Mooring

Without choking on statistics we should take a look at the Legion of Decency's report for the year ended last November.

The Legion passed on 319 feature films during the year 1945-46 and found 60 of them "objectionable in part." This compared with a total of 375 for the previous year when only 43 films were subject to objections.

The percentage of objectionable films thus rose from 11.5 to 15.35 which bore out an estimate I ventured as far back as April, 1946. At that time the rise in objectionable matter was so steep that had it continued at the same curve, the percentage for the year would have been in the neighborhood of 20 per cent.

Take Official Action

Legion of Decency officials, fully taxed with the rating of new films, do not issue interium reports showing current moral fluctuations.

When, however, in April, 1946, I pointed out that "objections" had risen in a period of five months from 11.89 per cent to roughly 16 per cent, immediate official action was taken.

As a result, Mr. Eric Johnston, of the Motion Picture Producers Association and Mr. Joseph I. Breen of the Production Code Administration directed the attention of individual Hollywood producers, to the collective effect of this ominous post-war trend, and a slight general improvement followed.

Out of 373 pictures produced in 1944-45, 189 or 50.4 per cent, were passed for adults. In 1945-46, out of a total of 391 only 176, or a percentage of 45.01 fell in the adult classification.

The five per cent decrease in "adult" films balances almost exactly the increase in the "objectionable" ones.

Legion's Big Task

As a critic who must attempt evaluation of almost 400 films every year, I recognize in the responsibility of Legion of Decency reviewers, charged with arriving at consistent official film evaluations of all these movies, a truly prodigious challenge.

It is difficult to draw a line between a film one might consider as unobjectionable for adults and one which is definitely objectionable in part. Judgment must depend upon interruptions of individual viewers. As the motion picture grows technically and artistically, it leaves more and more the individual imagination. What one person may see, and quite fairly object to, may completely elude another. Suggestiveness is so indefinably a matter of personal taste as well as of moral perception that the clean mind often seems least receptive of improper innuendo.

Then, too, an increasing number of imported films reflect moral attitudes which differ from those generally approved here. Many of these films combine accurate reporting with fine dramatic quality and if viewed objectively by the moral standards current in the countries where they originate wholesome entertainment.

It becomes more and more difficult to draw lines, placing individual films in strictly qualitative categories.

Even when the line has been drawn, it is inevitable that the moral defects of various films rated as "objectionable in part," must offer perplexing comparisons for Catholic moviegoers, whose patronage involves formation of right conscience.

Movie Guide

RKO PALACE
The Farmer's Daughter, A1
Devil Thumbs a Ride, A2
TEMPLE
Carnival in Costa Rica, B (In correct Catholic concept of civil marriage ceremony)
Decoy, A2
CENTURY
Smash-up, A2
REGENT
Stallion Road, A2
CAPITOL
My Favorite Brunette, A2
Bedelia, A2
LITTLE
Bells of St. Mary's, A1
RIVIERA & STATE
It Happened in Brooklyn, A1
Backlash, A2
MADISON & MONROE
Love Laughs at Andy Hardy, A1
Brasher Doubloon, A2
LIBERTY
13 Rue Madeleine, B (Suicide presented as justifiable)
Roll on Texas Moon, A1
DIXIE
Mighty McGurk, A1
Beginning or the End, A1
CAMEO
Sinbad the Sailor, A1
Sweetheart of Sigma Chi, A1
WEST END
Ladies Man, A2
Swell Guy, A2
LAKE
Dead Reckoning, A2
Easy Come, Easy Go, A2
TEMPLE (SCHINE)
Angel and the Bad Man, A1
I'll be Yours, A1

Larry the Leprechaun

LARRY AND THE TIGER MOTH

"Another lovely butterfly!" said Larry. "And such beautiful coloring! The top wings and the head are such a clear yellow, the rest of it such a beautiful pink — and those black streaks and spots are so well placed!"

"I'm glad you like my new outfit," said the moth. "I do, myself. But I'll have to correct you — I'm a moth, not a butterfly."

"Wrong again," said Larry cheerfully. "Well, I guess it's the best way to learn. What kind of moth?"

"A Mexican tiger moth," said the lovely creature, fluttering over to where Larry could look more closely at the patterned wings.

"I must admit I never heard of you before," said Larry. "Where do you live — besides Mexico?"

"Anywhere from Southern United States to Central America," said the moth. "We like warm country — but we're strictly Americans."

"Are you a large family?" Larry asked.

"I'm part of a family of more than 2000 kinds of moths," explained the tiger moth. "There is literally a place in the world where moths do not live. And there are many kinds of us — big and little, bright and dull colored, pretty or plain."

"Some are very great friends to man. I have heard," said Larry.

"Yes," agreed the moth. "The silkworm is the best-known, but others do their bit to help."

"And there are also some that are enemies to man," said Larry. "Those that eat his clothes, for instance."

"Eating up his clothes is nothing to what he does to moths," said the tiger moth crossly. "He kills us any time he can. We at least don't hurt him!"

"It's all in the way you look at it, I guess," said Larry.

"We really bother him very little," insisted the moth.

Larry laughed. "I guess he doesn't like the way your caterpillars behave!" said he. "I suppose you are called 'tiger moth' because of your barred wings, black and yellow, or is it because you are fierce?"

"It must be the wings," said the moth. "I can't imagine a moth being fierce enough to be named for a tiger."

ON THE AIR

With Bill Smith

Up at Saint Jerome's Parochial School, in the Bronx, there's a boy in grade 8a who already has a career in radio behind him. He's been singing for almost five years on Madge Tucker's morning show, "Coast to Coast on a Bus" (ABC Network), as well as other programs — the latest the Fred Allen Show (NBC Network) where, a few weeks ago, he did a heart-warming rendition of Irish ballads.

His name is Bobby White. He's the son of Joe White who used to be in vaudeville and was one of the first radio stars back in the days when networks were just starting. Maybe you remember the "Silver Mask Tenor" with the old B. F. Goodrich Silvertown Orchestra? That was Bobby's dad.

Bobby, thank heaven, isn't like some of the radio child actors. He is not a problem around a studio, and he is pleasant and modest to talk to. He is just a real Catholic boy.

Best of all, he can sing. His voice now sounds like John MacCormack's must have sounded when he was a youngster. Before long you're going to hear Bobby on the Catholic Hour; and you're going to hear more of him on other shows, too.

Face Lifting For Soap Operas. Most soap operas (continued dramatic serials, to you) that I've ever heard, consist chiefly of dead-pan performances by a cast which seems to spend its time in the deepest perilous of operating [illegible] or just to suffer volubly whatever may happen to be. But the harrowing experiences of these characters, and the suspense engendered about them — "Does John give back the five thousand dollars, or does Betty lose her eyesight?" — seem to have their own appeal.

The Columbia Broadcasting System, figuring that these tear-jerkers ought to do more for the audience than just worry it, has set about giving a new slant to the usual somewhat drab proceedings.

CBS is introducing on its show, "The Second Mrs. Burton," various guest experts such as marriage counselors, household economists, child psychiatrists, and others. They will chin with Mrs. Burton and tell her what is wrong with her life, and why. If this idea goes through successfully, and I hope it will, it should give some point to the usual soap-opera yarn that now bears an ironic sheen.

Citation Given Catholic Hour

Columbus — (NC) — For its "superior presentation of religious thought accompanied by the best of liturgical music," the Catholic Hour, given every Sunday from 4 to 4:30 p. m. over the National Broadcasting Company network, has received a citation from the 17th Institute for Education by Radio, held here.

The Catholic Hour is planned and produced by the National Council of Catholic Men. The continuity is done by William T. Smith, who, with Walter McGuire, is also the producer.

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DIXIE
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MIGHTY McGURK
Robt. Walker, B. Tyler
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LAKE
H. Bogart, Lizabeth Scott
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Dianna Lynn, E. Fitzgerald
EASY COME EASY GO
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