

New Look at Nightclubs

A Catholic newspaper published in one of the nightclub capitals of the world has urged a "Christian re-appraisal of the nightclub" as an ideal starting point for an up-dating of the theology of leisure and pleasure.

"Moralists have never taken the risk of grappling with the world of nightclubs," said "The Nevada Register" in an extensive report that included two full-sized pages of text. "They were easier to dismiss than discuss, but meanwhile, patrons have been torn between what they were told were 'occasions of sin' and what they thought were legitimate desires."

"The task now," said the paper, "is to make a re-appraisal of the nightclub, for their sake, of course, but even more, for the balance of Christians everywhere who are seeking to give expression to human desires through pleasure."

Published in Reno but also circulated in Las Vegas and Lake Tahoe, the paper said it was not condoning the "great deal of trash in nightclubs" everywhere, but insisted that "the positive aspects of the industry have been completely neglected in the moralists' rush to point out the lawdry."

"Nightclubs, as surely as any other expression of art, are invested with the power to elevate the human spirit," the Catholic weekly continued. "The meeting in the nightclub, the community that is temporarily established there, can be one of those rare instances described by Walter Kerr as a meeting 'where one knows he is in the right place and the world fits him, and he is pleased.'"

"Nightclubs are frequently thought of as models of entertainment shot through with snobbery, inanity and commercial cunning, polluted with pretense and sham. The caricature is unfair. The finest commentaries on modern man's social diseases are documented by circuit comedians, and some of the most sensitive exhortations for closer fellowship among men are urged upon us by nightclub performers."

Value of Pleasure

Turning to the need for a deeper theology of leisure and pleasure, "The Nevada Register" led off with Walter Kerr's comment that "The nightclub is a case in point of my argument about the decline of pleasure. Because most of us have lost our capacity for pleasure we tend to discredit everything that is pleasurable—this is probably the chief reason why something like the nightclub has never really received a hearing from the so-called Christian community."

The "Register" attributed this neglect to what has been termed the "Catholic neurosis" concerning pleasure. "We speak of how the Christian must love life, but yet repeat the Gospel formula about how he who loves his life too strongly shall lose it as a capital sin, yet rarely fully explain that matter has been redeemed."

A theological re-assessment of pleasure is necessary, said the "Register," because "this is the area of the future. What men will do for their pleasure will

New Film Ratings

Following are the titles of films reviewed recently by the National Catholic Office for Motion Pictures.

Class A, Section 1
Clambake

Class A, Section 2
Operation Kid Brother
Robbery
Thirty is a Dangerous Age, Cynthia

Class A, Section 3
Tale of the Cock
Journey to Shiloh
Tony Rome

Class A, Section 4
A Maiden for a Prince

Observation: Based on an historical incident, this bawdy and earthy Italian comedy in which the virility of a prince is put to an absurd test by his prospective in-laws in a multi-barbed satire on Renaissance manners and morals. Some viewers, however, will not find this subject matter particularly amusing or appropriate for screen entertainment.

Class B
The Champagne Murders—Objection: Low moral tone; suggestive treatment.
A Man Called Dagger—Objection: Suggestive costuming and situations. This classification is applicable only to prints shown in U.S.A.

Class C
The Trip
Objection: The social responsibility of this exploitation film about the psychedelic experiences of LSD is open to serious question. It presents a very one-sided, excitement-laden view of the drug's effects which serves, not to enlighten but to expose impressionable viewers to the temptation of dangerous experimentation. In addition, a major portion of the film's very derivative treatment is thinly disguised pornography.

The Penthouse—Objection: This film's attempt to make a moral statement about hypocrisy in society fails because of its convoluted and melodramatic treatment and also because its excessive and pointless sadism can only sicken the normal viewer. Reflections in a Golden Eye—Objection: This film adaptation of the novel by the late Carson McCullers presents a story of twisted relationships and abnormal inclinations (homosexuality and voyeurism) culminating in a homicide.

Unfortunately, the film's treatment of its afflicted characters communicates almost no human insight which would lead a viewer to respond to them with compassion rather than with morbid curiosity and thus raise the story above the level of a merely sordid recital of a police blotter report on murder.

Moreover, the nude treatment, both male and female, which has been employed in developing the theme of homosexuality and voyeurism, is as unnecessary as it is ludicrous. In theme and treatment, this is an exploitation film manifestly unworthy of the talents of the finest cast assembled—and particularly of their director.

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Friday, Oct. 27—Representative of Rochester Catholic Adult Club.

Saturday, Oct. 28—Mass will be celebrated.

Sunday, Oct. 29—Thomas Grodonia, St. Thomas the Apostle, accompanied by Rochester General Assembly, 4th Degree Knights of Columbus.

Monday, Oct. 30—Michael Macaluso, St. Augustine's.

Tuesday, Oct. 31—Rev. Mr. William Gall, St. Augustine's.

Thursday, Nov. 2—Michael Tomaino, St. Thomas the Apostle.


The Church's main contribution in the coming world of leisure may well be, said the Catholic weekly, to "comfort men who have tasted the bitterness of hard times and who have found all-of-a-life-a-bore, and then like Zorba the Greek at the movie's end, she must take them by the hand and teach them all to dance." (Catholic Press Features)

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COURIER-JOURNAL, 13A
Friday, Oct. 27, 1967

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