

A Violent New Film -- 'Oedipus the King'

Catholic Press Features

New York — With movies going the way they are, it's not surprising that they've made another film about incest, murder, self-mutilation and suicide. They've titled it "Oedipus the King."

The release of a new film version of Sophocles' 2000-year-old classic has stirred typical disagreement among critics.

"Scholastic" magazine gave it its Bell Ringer Award. "Newsweek" said the director couldn't make up his mind about which style to use: contemporary, Elizabethan, epic, intimate or Greek—the critics have raised some questions about whether a classic like "Oedipus," dealing with fate, oracles and one-time shocking events, can have much effect on today's audiences.

The film version, shot in an amphitheatre in northwestern Greece, stars Christopher Plummer as Oedipus, king of Thebes and husband of Queen Jocasta (Lilli Palmer), who had been widowed when the previous king, Laius, was slain. A plague had fallen upon the city and, prompted by the city elders (played by a black-robed Greek chorus), Oedipus seeks to discover the identity of Laius' murderer in hopes that the angry gods will be appeased.

A blind prophet (Orson Welles) tells an unbelieving Oedipus that Oedipus himself slew the king and that he is in fact married to his mother by a set of tragic circumstances that Oedipus, unwillingly investigating, revealed as true, fulfilling an earlier prophecy made to him by the Oracle at Delphi. Jocasta, Oedipus' wife-mother, hangs herself and Oedipus gouges his eyes out in repentance.

But the days of prophecy



Christopher Plummer as the self-blinded "Oedipus the King" surrounded by a Greek chorus of city elders in a new film version of Sophocles' classic tragedy.

and fate are gone, said critic Joseph Gelmis of Long Island's "Newsday."

"This is the accidental century, and Sophocles' notion of a deterministic universe is out of fashion. Does anyone really believe that the Kennedys were keeping their predestined appointments in Samarra? I think not. Both were victims of meaningless murders, cut down by assassins who weren't even motivated by central issues but absurd personal, private ones. How, then, are we supposed to sympathize with Oedipus, or feel purged, as the ancients reputedly were by 'Oedipus the King'?"

Besides, he added, the public "has become so inured to shock that incest in plays and movies is no longer the unspeakable crime that 'Oedipus the King' make it out to be."

The people who made the new film version of "Oedipus the King" would have been better advised, he added, to do it in contemporary terms, as "West Side Story" did with "Romeo and Juliet" or as Orson Welles' Mercury Players did when they presented "Macbeth" in modern dress as a gangster story.

Director Philip Saville said "Oedipus the King" is basically a story about pride and

that the story is "terribly contemporary."

"If you look around you today at Oedipus' counterparts, the ruling heads of states, even politicians, industrialists, heads of corporations, you'll see elements of the same thing: men who don't trust others, whose lives are based on doing things completely themselves.

"Men with such delusions of grandeur, who repress what they don't want to know, as Oedipus does, must eventually fall. They may, like Oedipus, fall dramatically, or they may fall quietly within themselves when no one knows, but they fall."

NCR Editorial: 'Will Continue as Catholic Paper'

Kansas City, Mo.—(RNS)—The National Catholic Reporter in an editorial reply to Bishop Charles Helmsing of Kansas City-St. Joseph said here that it "intends to go on being a Catholic paper" despite the condemnation issued against it by the prelate.

The lay-edited, national weekly published here, had maintained editorial silence on the statement for two weeks. The bishop had said that he felt bound in conscience to condemn the paper and suggested that it drop the name "Catholic" from its heading.

The NCR editorial conceded that "the paper has not contributed as much as it might have to help readers think about God and about how to live as a Catholic."

"The deficiencies of the NCR in this regard," it said, "reflect a deficiency in the whole movement of renewal—

we can't print what nobody has written."

"We intend to go on being a Catholic paper," it concluded, "concerned with Catholic activities, values and ideas, trying also to be present to the world."

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How to Help Kids Choose Movies

By James Arnold

Parents are always frightened by what their children are doing, or else they wouldn't be parents. One of the several things frightening parents today is the kind of movies they are seeing.

The calmest reaction is perhaps cool panic. But what can a parent really do, besides constantly rolling the eyes and reading the garments?

Fact one: The new movies are not really as bad as they seem. The advertising makes them all sound like Sodom and Gomorrah. There is, of course, a far-out fringe of pornographic films, but these are easy to spot, and most kids have only rare access to them.

The real worry is the steady diet of popular movies that have no naked ladies or torture scenes but are loaded with slick materialism and stupidity.

Fact two: Even if a youngster should see a bad film, it won't shock him very much. He lives in a more harrowing and brutal environment than kids of previous generations, and of necessity he builds defenses against it—just as adults manage to ignore or sling off the hundreds of a dozen commercials that bombard them each day, a barrage of propaganda and erotic suggestion that might have driven grandfather to cutting paper dolls.

Fact three: Whatever influence films have in molding character, they are, even as a group, only one influence among a multitude.

The home environment is a thousand times more crucial, the child, in fact, uses the teaching and example of his parents to help him evaluate and interpret all his experiences, including films. If a movie tells him it's an awful world, he won't believe it if all he has learned at home tells him otherwise. Unfortunately, it works the other way too: if it's a terrible world at home, the terrible movies will be doubly convincing.

Fact four: The parent who functions only as censor is doomed to fail. A loud and blunt "no" may, in extremes, be necessary, but as routine procedure is self-defeating.

Fact five: Very few modern parents go to movies, discuss them, or read intelligent comments about them. They often are forced into authoritative statements about a subject they know much less about than their sons or daughters.

Suppose an adolescent wants to see a questionable film. It is obviously not hardcore pornography; all the other kids are seeing it. What do you do? The best alternative may be to let him go.

But you ought to see the film, too, and then have a family discussion about it. Calmly, coolly, bring whatever common sense and influence and maturity you have to bear. It might help to discuss such questions as these:

Was the film really well acted, written, photographed, directed? (Be specific, give examples.) Was it better or worse than other films you have seen on similar subjects? Why? Did the film depict evil actions? (In this area, don't get hung up on sex alone.) Were these scenes necessary to the point of the film? How does the film make you feel about these actions, e.g., do they repel you, or do you want to rush out and participate?

Ask the same questions about good actions that may have been in the movie. What kind of people were the hero or heroine? Would you want to be like them, or have them for friends? Did you hate the villain, or feel sorry for him? What did the people in the film want out of life? Were these the right sort of goals? If the film was a comedy or satire, what kind of people or things were being made fun of? Did they deserve it?

A discussion starting with such questions may end up with people throwing crockery. But it is inexpensive family entertainment. And it might be enlightening. For everyone.

(Reprinted from the St. Anthony Messenger.)

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Adviser to Nuns Faces Jail Term

Washington, D.C.—(RNS)—The attorney general's financial adviser for the Sisters of the Divine Savior faces the possibility of a sentence of 9 to 90 years in prison or a fine of \$9,000 after being found guilty on nine charges of larceny.

The Sisters accused him of using \$1.5 million they had entrusted to his care as an investment for his own financial purposes.

The dispute over the nuns' funds was part of a much larger charge pressed in a civil suit by the Securities Exchange Commission against Orsinger, saying the real estate entrepreneur had led various religious orders into thinking they were investing money through him.

Instead, SEC said, about \$10 million of \$16.5 million involved was invested in his own Parkwood Real Estate firm.

Aquinas

Coach Bob Rosmarino and his Aquinas football stars win their grid season Sunday afternoon when the Little Irish take on the Bishop Kearney Kings at Aquinas Memorial Stadium. Game time is 2 p.m.

The Kings, coached by ex-Aquinas football star Jim Coughlin, will be out to avenge last year's 18-0 defeat. Aquinas will hope to even its season record at 4-4.

Playing one of its finest games of the season, Aquinas rolled over stubborn Auburn 28-14 last Friday in Auburn. The Little Irish, forced to full throttle by a defensively sharp Maroon eleven, had to fight feverishly for every inch of

McQuaid

A 7-6 halftime lead wasn't enough to withstand a second-half passing barrage by Prep's Pat Steenberge last Friday night, and McQuaid's football Knights came away from Penryn with a 19-7 loss, their second in seven games.

The Knights have this weekend off, then go after their first Catholic League football crown in the season finale against Cardinal Mooney on Nov. 17.

McQuaid was rocked back by a quick Eric drive from the opening kickoff but got organized and controlled the ball for most of the first half. Steenberge, after his opening flurry of completions, had been held reasonably well in check, and

Mooney

Anyone who regards cross-country as a rather predictable sport had his notion shattered last Saturday at St. John Fisher campus where a determined Cardinal Mooney squad upset three Catholic League rivals to capture its first diocesan championship.

The Cards had lost all three dual meets in CL competition, 24-32 to Kearney, 26-31 to Aquinas, and 22-35 to McQuaid. They had little or no chance to take the crown away from all three of their conquerors. But Brother Donald's up-and-coming runners did just that, pinning Aquinas and McQuaid, 46-45C and finishing far ahead of league champion Kearney's 76 points.

Signaling the Cards' upsurge was the first-place finish of sophomore Bill Robinson, who reversed an earlier defeat this season by second-place Mike D'Errico of Kearney. Robinson's time for the windy 2 1/2

Kearney Bo Season; Re

The Bishop Kearney soccer team best Aquinas 3-2, and lost to Churchillville-Chili, 2-1. In Eastridge, I.O., as it finished its season with a 6-0 record in the Catholic League to take the title, and a 12-4 overall record.

Against Aquinas, Dave Terretto made a direct kick good at 5:38 of the first quarter. Jerry Kilzak scored at 7:10 assisted by Paul Williams and Ray D'Agostino. Tribestone narrowed the margin with a direct kick that sailed over the Kearney defensive wall into the net at 7:36 of the third quarter. Jerry Kilzak scored his second tally of the game at 14:35 of the third quarter. Dave Terretto and Rocky Meyers received assists. Kearney goalie Len Schantz was replaced in the first quarter after making two saves, by Dick Rohde. Rohde stopped 11 shots.

At Churchillville-Chili, CC's MacDonald scored at 2:27 of the first quarter. Larry Rogers tied

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