

Current Movies

"The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas" (Universal)

The popular Broadway musical about an old Texas establishment threatened by the rise of the media, which have no regard for tradition, has been made into a vehicle for Burt Reynolds and Dolly Parton, which is so lackluster that the virtues, if one can use that word in this context, of the original must remain a mystery to anyone who has not seen it, though the script is by Larry L. King, who did the book of the stage version. Dom DeLuise is a bore in the badly written role of the crusading television personality, and director Colin Higgins must have been so much in awe of his two principals that he was unable to muster the courage to ask them to do anything but stand there and be stars. What Higgins has done, however, is to work in quite a bit of nudity and several fairly graphic bedroom interludes with bit players. This, together with the heightened realism that goes with the film medium, not only gives a false note to the rollicking production numbers but makes the whole enterprise much more offensive than it might otherwise have been. Nor does the unbelievably romantic resolution mitigate the general unsavoriness. Because of this and because of the nudity and the bedroom scenes the picture has been classified O — morally offensive, by the U.S. Catholic Conference. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is R — restricted.

"The World According to Garp" (Warners)

This screen version of the critically acclaimed novel by John Irving has more depth and seriousness than most of the movies released this summer, but the competition has not been very keen. The adaptation — direction by George Roy Hill, script by Steve Tesich — is rather faithful to the original and there is some excellent acting, especially by Glenn Close as the writer-hero's eccentric but indomitable mother who inadvertently becomes the heroine of feminists of every persuasion. Tesich's script, however, falls short with Garp himself, making him far less interesting than the Garp of the novel, a failure compounded by Robin Williams's going all out to make the character into a lovable schnook. Thus the film has a vacuum at its center, and the various events of the story, especially the parade of catastrophes, seem even crueler and more arbitrary than they might have. Finally, Garp's, or Irving's view of the world, is not especially broad or profound, the main concern being a turtle-like instinct to avoid or lessen the effects of inevitable mortality. For all its flaws, however, the movie, if not gripping, is consistently interesting. Because of some incidental nudity and some graphic sexual references in the dialogue, especially one unsettling incident involving emasculation, this is very mature material, and the U.S. Catholic Conference has classified it A-III, adults. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is R — restricted.



Robin Williams as T.S. Garp is declared a winner in a prep school wrestling match in "The World According to Garp."

Recent Ratings

Following is a list of recent movies rated by the U.S. Catholic Conference Department of Communication on the basis of moral suitability.

The first symbol after each title is the USCC rating. The second symbol is the rating given by the Motion Picture Association of America.

These are the USCC symbols and their meanings: A-I, general patronage; A-II, adults and adolescents; A-III, adults; A-IV, adults with reservations (this rating is given to certain films which, while not morally offensive in themselves, require caution and some analysis as a protection to the uninformed against wrong interpretations and false conclusions); O, morally offensive. The word "recommended" in parentheses is inserted behind the titles of those films that merit such a designation.

These are the MPAA symbols and their meanings: G, general audiences, all ages admitted; PG, parental guidance suggested, some material may not be suitable for children; R, restricted, under 17 requires accompanying parent or adult guardian; X, no one under 17 admitted (age limit may vary in certain areas).

- A**
- The Amateur, A-III (R)
 - Amir — The Rise and Fall, O (R)
 - Annie, A-I (PG)
 - Atlantic City, A-III (R)
 - Author, Author, A-III (PG)

- B**
- The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas, O (R)
 - Body Heat, O (R)
 - Blade Runner, O (R)
 - The Border, A-III (R)
 - Butterfly, O (R)

- C**
- Cat People, O (R)
 - Chariots of Fire, A-I (PG) (Recommended)
 - The Chosen, A-II (PG)
 - Conan the Barbarian, O (R)

- D**
- Das Boot, A-III (R)
 - Dead Men Don't Wear Plaid, A-III (PG)
 - Death Trap, A-III (PG)
 - Death Valley, O (R)
 - Death Wish II, O (R)
 - Diner, A-III (R)

- E**
- The Escape Artist, A-II (PG)
 - E.T., the Extra-Terrestrial, A-I (PG)
 - Evil Under the Sun, A-II (PG)

- F**
- Fighting Back, O (R)
 - Firefox, A-III (PG)
 - Fox and Hound, A-I (G) (Recommended)

- G**
- Gallipoli, A-III (PG)
 - Ghost Story, (R)
 - Grease II, A-III (PG)
 - Gregory's Girl, A-II (PG)

- H**
- Hanky Panky, A-III (PG)

- I**
- I Love You (Ought to)

- If You Could See What I Hear, A-III (PG)
- I'm Dancing as Fast as I Can, A-III (R)

- L**
- Lady Chatterly, O (R)
 - A Little Sex, O (R)
 - The Long Good Friday, A-IV (R)
 - Love and Money, O (R)
 - Making Love, O (R)
 - Man of Iron, A-II (PG)
 - Megaforce, A-II (PG)
 - Mephisto, A-IV
 - A Midsummer Night's Sex Comedy, A-III (PG)
 - Missing, A-III (PG) (Recommended)

- N**
- Neighbors, O (R)
 - Night Crossing, A-I (PG)

- O**
- On Golden Pond, A-III (PG)
 - One From the Heart, A-III (R)

- P**
- Paradise, O (R)
 - Partners, O (R)
 - Penitentiary II, O (R)
 - Pennies from Heaven, A-III (R)
 - Personal Best, O (R)
 - Pixote, A-IV (Recommended)
 - Poltergeist, O (PG)
 - Porky's, O (R)
 - Private Lessons, O (R)

- Q**
- Quest for Fire, O (R)
- R**
- Raging Bull, A-III (R)
 - Ragtime, A-IV
 - Reds, A-III (PG) (Recommended)
 - Richard Pryor Live on Sunset Strip, A-IV (R)
 - Rocky III, A-III (PG)
 - Rollover, A-III (R)

- S**
- The Seduction, O (R)
 - The Secret Policeman's Other Ball, A-III
 - Sharky's Machine, A-III (R)
 - Shoot the Moon, A-III (R)
 - Some Kind of Hero, O (R)
 - Soup For One, O (R)
 - Squeeze Play, O (R)
 - Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan, A-II (PG)
 - The Story of Christiane F., A-IV
 - A Stranger is Watching, A-III (R)

- T**
- Taps, A-II (PG)
 - The Thing, O (R)
 - Three Brothers, A-II
 - Ticket to Heaven, A-II (PG)
 - Tragedy of a Ridiculous Man, O (R)
 - Tron, A-III (PG)

- V**
- Victor-Victoria, A-IV (PG)
 - Visiting Hours, O (R)

- W**
- Windwalker, A-II (PG)
 - The World According to Garp, A-III (R)
 - Wrong is Right, A-III (R)

- Y**
- Young Doctors in Love, O (R)

Recent Reading

Tomorrow's Church: What's Ahead for American Catholics, edited by Father Edward C. Herr. Thomas Moore Press (Chicago, 1982). 226 pp., \$12.95.

Reviewed by Joseph R. Thomas

In his contribution to this symposium, the conservative author James Hitchcock astutely notes that "all prognostications of the future reflect either the desires or the fears of the prophet, and as such are suspect."

And so it is with most of the 10 offerings in this volume, which covers such disparate subjects as church structure (Hitchcock's purview), the laity, the parish, priesthood, women, marriage, schools, the Hispanic and black communities, and relations with Protestants and Jews.

Thus we find one contributor pumping for the ordination of women, another expressing the conviction that it will never happen and still another speaking of it as a hope, but not necessarily as central to church life. That would be Father Andrew Greeley, who in an essay on the priesthood is his usual caustic self. But at the same time he proffers a truly original thought: the future will find the church promoting temporary exercise of ministry without sacrificing its teaching on the permanency of orders.

Of the other essays, those contributed by Msgr. Thomas A. Kleissler (on the parish), Father Edward Herr (on schools), Father Cyprian Davis (on the black community) and Martin Marty (on Protestant and Jewish relations) are by far the best.

Msgr. Kleissler, assessing contemporary developments, sees the parish of the future as built around small groups, with the priest in a leadership-formation role and committed lay people exercising greater initiative and responsibility.

Father Davis predicts the maturation of the black Catholic community if the church maintains its presence in the city. Father Herr offers a realistic appraisal of the possibilities and challenges facing the

Catholic education system. And Marty sees an expansion of choices for Catholics in a variety of areas that have a bearing on interfaith relations.

To say all of this, however, might be to take the book too seriously, in view of another Hitchcock observation: "Nothing now seems as dated as those imaginative projections of the future sketched out by optimists of 50 or 75 years ago." Amen.

Thomas is editor-in-chief of *The Christophers*.

A Church to Believe In, by Father Avery Dulles, SJ. Crossroads Books (New York, 1982). 200 pp., \$14.95.

Reviewed by Father T. Pawlikowski, OSM

There is little doubt that Jesuit Father Avery Dulles has emerged as one of the leading Catholic thinkers about the contemporary meaning of the church. This volume, a collection of essays on selected themes, further enhances his stature. While not quite on the level of his ground-breaking publication, "Models of the Church," it shows Father Dulles at his best — the theologian firmly grounded in the church's tradition, creatively applying that tradition to the new realities facing Christianity today.

This book presupposes some basic acquaintance with theological discussion. But its style and language are clear and direct enough to provide meaning for those without extensive theological training. It has possibilities for use in college theology courses and adult education programs.

"A Church to Believe In" consists of 10 chapters with a continuing discussion of the best way to describe fundamentally the faith community we call "church." The author outlines his basic view that there will be an ongoing tension between the church's more institutional and its more charismatic aspects. This tension should not be viewed negatively. It is vital for the continued health of the church.

Basic to the preservation of the church, Father Dulles

insists, is the development of a sense of discipleship and solidarity within its membership. The church needs institutional structures. But these structures alone, no matter how progressive, cannot substitute for an abiding sense of commitment that will be necessary to withstand the eroding influence of the general culture.

Father Dulles also takes up more specific questions within ecclesiology. These include the question of freedom, the relation of the Catholic Church to liberal Protestantism, the meaning of the magisterium, ecumenical dimensions of papal infallibility and the ecclesiological vision of St. Thomas Aquinas.

On the freedom question, he remains somewhat evasive. While stressing the importance of freedom within the church, he feels that the institution cannot simply adopt secular, legal models in defining it. A sense of trust between leaders and members is vital for authentic freedom to flourish. Father Dulles is correct, but incomplete in this regard. He still needs to address the issue more thoroughly and directly than he does in this volume.

On the issues of papal infallibility and the magisterium, Father Dulles' historical analysis is very good; in fact, these chapters are probably the most constructive in the book. He clearly maintains that the teaching authority of the church needs to be extended beyond the jurisdiction of the pope and the bishops. He effectively shows that the more restricted interpretation of the church's teaching authority current in some circles of Catholicism is historically inaccurate. He similarly suggests that Catholics must seriously consider whether an "ecumenical dimension" does not need to be included in the notion of papal infallibility, as some Protestant scholars have argued.

Father Pawlikowski, a Servite priest, is a professor at the Catholic Theological Union, Chicago. He is active in ecumenical pursuits and is the author of several books, including the recent "Christ in the Light of the Christian-Jewish Dialogue."