

TELEVISION

Nikos Kazantzakis, Blasphemer or Saint?

By Henry Herz
New York (NC) — With "Zorba" eliciting from Broadway audiences today the same kind of enthusiastic response that moviegoers in 1964 gave "Zorba the Greek," it is of more than passing interest to discover the man whose novel was the original source of both versions, Nikos Kazantzakis.

Tracing the life of this author is "Kazantzakis," a documentary narrated by actor George Peppard, airing Sunday, March 25, 10-10:30 p.m. EST on PBS.

The program starts by admitting that its subject has scant recognition outside of Europe. By the time

it ends, however, viewers may find themselves wanting to know more about a writer who was controversial because he wrote seriously about spirituality.

The main facts of the author's life are quickly sketched in — born in Crete in 1883, he supported himself as a journalist until publication in 1938 of his modern version of Homer's "Odyssey."

A number of serious works and controversies followed up to his death in 1957.

Interspersed with this record are selected passages from his autobiography, not always edifying in their account of his personal life.

At the core of Kazantzakis' life and career, we learn, was the creative tension in his formative years caused by nationalistic fervor against Turkish domination and the pull of religion to an inner life.

In resolving these conflicts in later years, he turned against what he saw as the parochialism of both state and Church.

His political conversion to socialism, which some branded communism, and his rejection of the Greek Orthodox Church's "dogma" in favor of "pure spirituality," is recounted but without sufficient detail.

It is, therefore, tantalizing but fruitless to speculate on precisely what literary scholar Kimon Friar means by saying that Kazantzakis was regarded as a heretic during his lifetime but that today some Greek Orthodox leaders are arguing that he should be canonized as a saint.

Written, produced and directed by Michael Tobias, this program makes clear that Kazantzakis was a writer of talent, deserving our respect, if for no other reason than his unfashionable insistence on the primacy of the spirit over the materialism of our times.

Certainly that is the message of "Zorba the Greek," which Anthony Quinn in an interview calls more a religious than a humanistic statement.

Quinn's performance as Zorba both on stage and screen may make him less than an objective commentator.

The question, however, is not academic because Hollywood has announced plans to produce a movie based on Kazantzakis'

"The Last Temptation of Christ," a novel whose treatment of the human side of the Redeemer some consider blasphemous.

The television program, made apparently before this latest development, leaves the impression that Kazantzakis was a gadfly of the spirit and would have relished the controversy.

Whatever the intentions of his novel, the essential question is what Hollywood is going to make out of it.

CATHOLIC BROADCAST SCHEDULE

PROGRAM	CABLE COMPANY	CHANNEL	MON. (3/26)	TUES. (3/27)	WED. (3/28)	THURS. (3/29)	FRI. (3/30)
American Catholic with Fr. John Powell, S.J.	American Cable (Rochester)	5	2:00 PM			10:00 AM	7:00 PM
	American Cable (Webster)	5	8:00 PM				
	Peoples Cable (Subr. Rochester)	19	8:00 PM				8:00 PM
The Glory of God with Fr. John Bertolucci	Channel 12 West (Greece, Gates, Chili)	12				8:00 PM	
	American Cable (Rochester)	5	4:00 PM			12:00 Noon	9:00 PM
	Channel 12 West (Greece, Gates, Chili)	12				7:30 PM	

MOVIES

'Racing with Moon' Is a Fraud

By Michael Gallagher
New York (NC) — "Racing with the Moon" (Paramount), directed by Richard Benjamin from an original screenplay by Steven Kloves, is a tale of teen-age lovers in the winter of '42.

The boy (Sean Penn) is sensitive, and this sensitivity is highlighted by the insensitivity of an oafish companion (Nicholas Cage) intent on sleeping with as many girls as possible before joining the Marines.

The girl (Elizabeth McGovern) is sensitive too. He falls in love with her pretty much at first sight when he sees her working at the ticket booth of the sole movie theater in the small northern California town in which they live. He tries one clumsy ploy after another to attract her attention and finally succeeds.

Their relationship takes a more intense turn one day when they are out hiking in what happens next? If so you haven't seen many movies. Despite the above-mentioned shyness and sensitivity, not to

the woods and come upon a lovely pond. Is there anybody who has any doubts about mention the fact that it's still winter in northern California, our hero immediately begins stripping off his clothes and plunges in. And the girl, after the barest hesitation, so to speak, follows suit without a suit.

Later on there is some business about the hero and his cloddish buddy trying unsuccessfully to hustle some sailors in a pool hall in order to raise some money for an abortion for the cloddish one's unfortunate girl friend. (No need to worry about the heroine. Heroines are immune from that sort of thing in this kind of movie.)

When the boys fail, the heroine raises the money, and she and the hero go along for "moral support," when the other girl has the abortion, a sad and frightening experience for everybody.

sex outside of marriage — at least as long as the participants are sensitive and no-

Director Benjamin lays on the wartime atmosphere, but it is never very compelling, and some of the touches just don't ring true.

Because of some nudity and, more significantly, because of a benign view of

body gets inconveniently pregnant — it has been classified 'O' — morally offensive — by the U.S. Catholic Conference. The Motion Picture Association of America's rating is PG — parental guidance suggested.


Capsule Movie Reviews

"Mike's Murder" (Warners)
Tank (Universal)

Career Army sergeant (James Garner) vs. vicious Southern sheriff (G.D. Spradlin). After the sergeant chastises the sheriff's brutal deputy for assaulting a young prostitute, the furious sheriff, unable to get at the sergeant, puts his son in jail for a crime he didn't commit. The sergeant, after more reasonable methods fail, rolls out his own personal Sherman tank and rescues his son with the help of the presumably reformed prostitute. The odd trio then head for the state line, a cross-country odyssey that, predictably enough, attracts intense media coverage and stirs the sympathy of the nation. Audience reaction, however, is likely to be much less spectacular. Once the breakout takes place, credibility vanishes, and the movie becomes increasingly silly and unentertaining. Because of some violence and rough language, it has been classified A-III — adults — by the U.S. Catholic Conference. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is PG — parental guidance suggested.

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