

'Swan' fit for kids; troubling dramas target adults

NEW YORK — The following are capsule reviews of movies recently reviewed by the U.S. Catholic Conference Office for Film and Broadcasting.

'Trapped in Paradise'

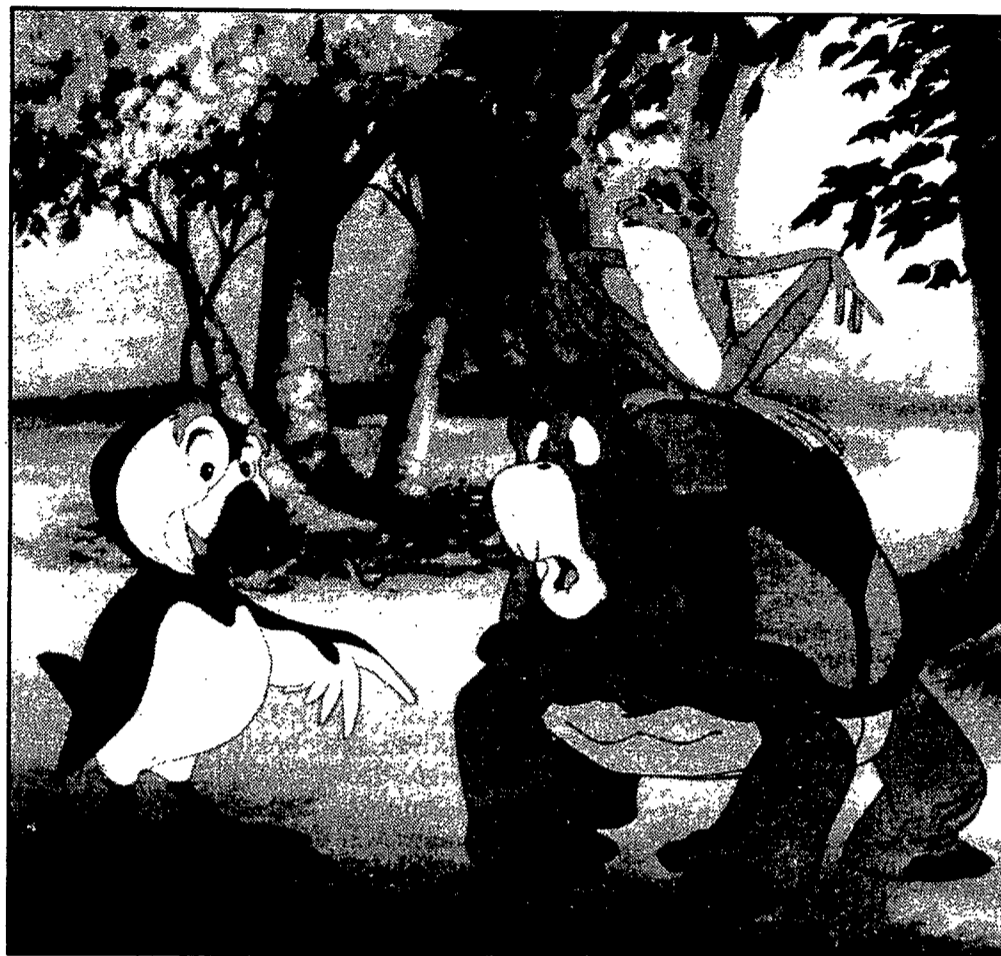
(20th Century Fox) Knuckleheaded comedy in which three bank-robbing brothers (Nicolas Cage, Jon Lovitz and Dana Carvey) can't seem to escape the kindness of strangers in the small town they've just robbed until they become so guilt-ridden they return their booty. Writer-director George Gallo stitches together a series of lame skits, a contrived romance and a frantically slapstick climax, adding up to minimal entertainment. Brief, comically treated violence with intermittent profanities and crude expressions. The USCC classification is A-III — adults. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is PG-13 — parents are strongly cautioned that some material may be inappropriate for children under 13.

'The Swan Princess'

(New Line) Animated children's tale about a beautiful princess (voice of Michelle Nicastro) changed into a swan by an evil sorcerer (voice of Jack Palance) while a valiant prince (voice of Howard McGillin) attempts to find her and break the spell. Directed by Richard Rich, the graphics are lovely and the animation in the style of Disney's "Beauty and the Beast," with the heavily romantic story helped by some lighthearted humor supplied by a frog-puffin-turtle trio in helping rescue the bewitched princess. The USCC classification is A-I — general patronage. The MPAA rating is G — general audiences.

'Cobb'

(Warner Bros.) After a sportswriter (Robert Wuhl) accepts an offer to write



New Line Cinema
Puffin (voice of Steven Vinovich), Speed the turtle (voice of Steven Wright), and Jean-Bob the frog (voice of John Cleese) come to the aid of Princess Odette in 'The Swan Princess.'

a book about pioneering baseball star Ty Cobb (Tommy Lee Jones), he spends months in the cantankerous company of the dying 72-year-old man, both fascinated with his greatness as an athlete yet repelled by his aberrant, mean-spirited behavior, until he must finally decide whether to print the truth about the man or preserve the legend of a sports hero. Writer-director Ron Shelton focuses on the growing friendship

between these completely opposite characters as well as the writer's ambivalence about revealing what he has learned as a result, though some viewers may not care to subject themselves to such detailed treatment of a sociopath's private life. Frequent outbursts of violence, sexual situations, bigoted references, much rough language and occasional profanity. The USCC classification is A-IV — adults, with reservations. The MPAA rating is R — restricted.

'Legends of the Fall'

(TriStar) Set on the sprawling Montana spread of their rancher father (Anthony Hopkins), the fate of three close brothers (Brad Pitt, Aidan Quinn and Henry Thomas) is affected by the arrival of the youngest brother's fiancée (Julia Ormand), whom all three want to marry. Directed by Edward Zwick, the melodramatic tale of family tragedy and doomed romance gains some historical sweep by tying the narrative to the young men's service abroad in World War I, the mistreatment of Native Americans and the ongoing backdrop of radically changing times for ranchers in the vanishing Old West. Some intense battlefield violence and revenge-motivated murders, brief bedroom scene with fleeting nudity and minimal rough language. The USCC classification is A-III — adults. The MPAA rating is R — restricted.

Fr. Nouwen's latest offers 'grace-filled' meditations

"Here and Now: Living in the Spirit, by Father Henri J.M. Nouwen; Crossroad (New York, 1994); 144 pp.; \$14.95.

Reviewed by Margaret O'Connell
Catholic News Service

Looking for a good book for Advent? Or a thought-provoking but easy to read spiritual book? "Here and Now: Living in the Spirit" is a book that will fill these needs and more.

Father Henri Nouwen best defines the contents of his grace-filled book as "meditations on life as I am trying to live it; examination(s) of conscience; extended personal statement(s) of faith; glimpses into the kingdom of God."

The various chapters overlap because life, especially life viewed from a spiritual perspective, is not easily categorized. It's messy. But the results are chapters which ruminate on living in the present, joy, suffering, prayer, family, relationships, and our status as beloved daughters and sons of our Abba, God.

Some gems to whet your appetite for "Here and Now:"

- "Oughts" keep us feeling guilty about the past and prevent us from being fully present to the moment." Too true.

- "Prayer is the discipline of the moment ... We enter into the presence of God, whose name is God-with-us, ... a lover whose only desire is to give us what our hearts most desire."

- "There is no reason to romanticize poverty ... Money and success are not the problem; the problem is the absence of free and open time when God can be



encountered in the present ... in its simple beauty and goodness."

- "We need to keep reading books and newspapers in a spiritual way ... (because they) help us to read the signs of our times ... (as invitations) to conversion."

- And finally, "We are called to be living signs of God's faithful presence among us. And this requires an attentiveness to one another that goes far beyond any formal obligation."

Our Abba, our Father, God, freely chose us and called us his beloved daughters and sons. Despite everything, we have an obligation to "stay in touch with our true identity ... our inner freedom." That means work. What better way to make this work enjoyable than to muse on a chapter or so a week of "Here and Now" in preparation for the great feast of God's incarnation: Christmas.

O'Connell has long been active in The Christophers and as a freelancer in other communications areas.

Available at your bookstore or order prepaid from The Crossroad Publishing Co., 370 Lexington Ave., New York, N.Y. 10017. Please add \$2 for shipping and handling.

Advertisers'

The puzzle below contains the names (or one word from the names) of 20 advertisers in this week's Catholic Courier. Read this week's advertisements to complete the puzzle. Send or deliver your entry to *Puzzle*, c/o Catholic Courier, 1150 Buffalo Rd., Rochester, NY 14624 or fax it to 716-328-8640.

If you correctly identify the advertiser's in this week's *Puzzle*, your entry will be placed in a random drawing for one of four pairs of tickets to the *Downstairs Cabaret Theatre* valued at \$42.

Prizes will be awarded by random drawing of correctly completed puzzles received by Friday, December 15th. Winners will be notified by mail and their names will be published in the following week's Catholic Courier. No purchase necessary to win. Only one entry per person, please. Employees of the Catholic Courier and their immediate families are not eligible.

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