

opinion
READER

Scorsese's god resembles director

Gary Longsine's editorial column (Daily Nebraskan, Nov. 11) maintains that "The Last Temptation of Christ" is the most sympathetic treatment of Jesus of Nazareth ever filmed. I agree.

Webster's Dictionary defines sympathy as "having common feelings." Herein lies the problem. Director Martin Scorsese has made a film which shows Christ with the feelings Scorsese would expect him to have, and in effect remakes God into Scorsese's image.

The original author of the book the movie is based on was a Greek, and was excommunicated from the Greek Orthodox Church for his efforts. For that author, the book was a very cultural Greek interpretation of Christ. Classical Greek culture was filled with the ancient gods of mythology. The problem with the Greek gods is that they were too human. They were merely glorified humans with all the human infallibilities. And as a result, they were impotent to save humanity from the frailties with which the gods themselves were beset. "The Last Temptation of Christ" is merely another attempt to define Christ in classical terms. In this sense the movie is a "sympathetic" treatment of Jesus, because he is given all of our feelings, feelings without basis in either the gospels or extra-Biblical documents.

Thus, modern man has no problem with a mixed-up martyr, as long as he dies on the cross with the victory of resurrection only a dim, unrealized future hope. This same theme can be seen in contemporary cinema. "Out of Africa" is an example. When I left the theater several years ago after watching that movie, I wondered how Meryl Streep's spity party would merit rave reviews. Then I realized that the

reviews revealed the classical bias of the reviewers, who were enamored of the "tragic hero" in the ancient Greek tradition.

The tragic hero of Greek thought was interwoven with a philosophical/religious system. The Greeks believed that fate controlled their lives, and that there was no hope for salvation. All that was left for the tragic hero was to stand firm against fate, which would ultimately batter and overcome the hero. Scorsese has fashioned Christ in a tragic hero mold without historical basis.

There is a potential danger for all of us to make a God who is just like us. But that is the essence of idolatry. In Alaska they make totem poles with the images of animals. These animals symbolize the character traits the people themselves value. So ultimately, the people are merely using the animals as a means of worshipping themselves and their values. Scorsese has done the same thing. He has made a god who would act just like him. This god admits the devil lives inside him, admits he has a confused self-image, and plays the tragic hero while being able to enjoy his sin through fantasy. Such a god is too human to help with the human condition. Only the Christ of the Virgin birth, the sinless life, the empty tomb, and now "ascended into heaven and seated at the right hand of the Father" is able to offer salvation both in this life and in the next.

Dave Forman
third-year law student
B.A. in Theology

Hoch's remarks upset DN reader

I am writing in response to Nancy Hoch's remarks in the Daily Nebraskan (Nov. 14). Believe me, my feath-

ers were more than a little ruffled.

Thank you, Nancy. I'm so relieved to hear that "our football program has earned this kind of wonderful facility." Now, don't get me wrong—I am fully in favor of the West Stadium Completion Project, but I do have to say I'm a little sick and tired of hearing how deserving the football program is. And if that wasn't enough, Hoch went on to say that "We should mirror that for our honors students."

Well excuse me for being downright mad. We non-honors students work damn hard at and for this university, too, and its about time we get a little credit. I am tired of working hard to get good grades, only to see something like this.

I would appreciate it if Hoch would acknowledge the fact that there are others of us at this university who work hard and spend a lot of money to make it what it is.

Milissa D. Johnson
sophomore
English

A complete set of instructions for the first-time smoker.
I Don't. I

letter
POLICY

The Daily Nebraskan welcomes brief letters to the editor from all readers and interested others.

Letters will be selected for publication on the basis of clarity, originality, timeliness and space available. The Daily Nebraskan retains the right to edit all material submitted.

Readers also are welcome to submit material as guest opinions. Whether material should run as a letter or guest opinion, or not to run, is left to the editor's discretion.

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