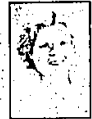


'Under the Sun of Satan:' Something got lost in translation

PASS THE POPCORN



LEANNE ROGERS

The title on the box of this video should probably have been a tip-off that something about the French film "Under the Sun of Satan" was going to be lost in translation. It offered an alternate title using "Son" although the French title read "Soleil" or sun.

Gerard Depardieu is a priest who confesses to his superior that he feels he isn't up to the duties demanded of a parish priest. Coming from a rural farming life, Depardieu feels he has only physical strength to offer God and finds it miraculous that he managed to be ordained.

When his confessor reassures

him that God isn't displeased with him, Depardieu laments he can only "weep or absolve" the people of the parish.

The priest's doubt and insecurities about his relationship with God result in the usual reader's self-amenagement—wearing a hair shirt and bloody self-flagellation.

Sandrine Bonnaire plays an emotionally disturbed and self-destructive teenager. Promiscuous with a couple adult lovers and seething with rage and self-loathing, she kills one of her lovers in an off-camera shooting. She composes herself and is next seen at the river washing blood from her shoes.

No one knew about the girl's relationship with the older man, whose death was ruled to be suicide. Like the priest, the girl is seeking redemption through abuse and punishment. She would have been

much happier charged with the man's murder than having another lover, a local magistrate, make light of her confession.

Walking in the rain to a neighboring parish to help out with services, Depardieu loses his way as it becomes dark. A fellow traveler joins him and shows him a short cut through the woods. The man claims to be a son of Satan (remember that confusion about the title I mentioned?) and the priest is faced with a crisis of faith on that dark country road.

This self-proclaimed son of Satan does most of the talking; the priest ends up exhausted and looking overwhelmed. The next day, never having completed his journey, the shaken priest returns to his home parish.

In the single interaction between

the priest and the girl, he meets her in a garden. Somehow he knows everything about her, including the shooting. He knows her remorse and is concerned about what lies ahead.

As she continues on her path of self-destruction, he knows but is unable to make a difference.

Later on, the priest apparently has acquired the gift of healing. He is reluctant to use his healing powers, which he attributes to Satan's intervention. That puts him in the position of offending God by using

the powers. It's a paradox. If he does what he should as a priest, using the tainted powers, he sins. The whole story is rather muddy and unfocused. The priest and the girl don't really relate to each other as characters or as part of the story. It's like there are pieces missing. It's a jumble of literal minded religiousness with visions and visits from the devil in human form.

"Under the Sun of Satan" is available on video cassette at local video stores.



Gerard Depardieu

SCREEN SCENE

MAGIC BAG THEATRE CAFE
22918 Woodward Ave., Ferndale.
Call 544-3030 for information. (\$4)

Burroughs double feature: "Naked Lunch" (USA — 1992) at 7 p.m. and "Burroughs" (USA — 1984) at 9 p.m. May 25-27, David



Star quality: Diego Abatantuono and Vanna Barbara star in director Gabriele Salvatore's "Mediterraneo" at the Michigan Theatre in Ann Arbor.

Cronenberg filmed the impossible — William Burroughs' novel of drug abuse, homosexuality and epic weirdness set in a drug-infested land called Interzone. Peter Weller stars. Followed by "Burroughs," an insightful documentary about the writer. Frankie Kerouac-Parker, wife of beat author Jack Kerouac, will speak on May 26 about her friendship with Burroughs.

MAIN THEATRE
118 N. Main, Royal Oak. Call 542-0180 for show times. (\$5.50)

"Edward II" (Britain — 1992). Christopher Marlowe's classic play of murder, jealousy, and doomed love as directed by Derek Jarman.

MICHIGAN THEATRE
603 E. Liberty, Ann Arbor. Call 668-8807 for information. (\$5; \$4 students and senior citizens)

"Mediterraneo" (Italy — 1991), through May 28 (call for show times). Italian soldiers during World War II find solace on a Greek island in this quirky, often charming film that won the Best Foreign Language Film Oscar this year.

"Mississippi Masala" (USA — 1992). 7:15 p.m. May 30 and 31

p.m. May 31. When a young Indian girl falls in love with a black man in the contemporary South, neither of their families approve. Mira Nair's love story is helped greatly by the winning performance by Denzel Washington as the young Romeo masquerading as a carpet cleaner.

REDFORD THEATRE
17360 Lahser, Detroit. Call 537-1133 for information. (\$2.50)

"Oklahoma!" (USA — 1955). 8 p.m. May 29-30 (organ overture begins at 5:30 p.m.) The wide screen film adaptation of Rodgers and Hammerstein's trend-setting musical stars Gordon MacRae and Shirley Jones.

STATE WAYNE THEATRE
25310 Michigan Avenue, Wayne. Call 326-4600 for information. (\$2; \$1 students and senior citizens)

"Mutiny on the Bounty" (USA — 1962). May 27-31 (call for show times). Marlon Brando and Trevor Howard star in the immortal seafaring tale of the notorious Captain Bligh and the rebellious Fletcher Christian.

— John Monaghan

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