



# Symbolism, humor again from Bunuel

Ever since Luis Bunuel shocked the movie public with his literal "eye-opener" in "An Andalusian Dog" in 1928, audiences have expected shocks and jolts from the great Spanish director.

In "That Obscure Object of Desire," his 34th film, he continues to live up to our expectations. The film abounds with the wit, anarchy and surrealism that are the mainstays of his cinema. One should also add that it displays a flawless technique, so smooth as to be unnoticeable.

Fernando Rey, who has moved with ease through several Bunuel films, contributes to the effortless course of this one. He appears as Mathieu, an impeccably attired, well-mannered and wealthy French businessman.



Conchita is enigmatic.

This solid paragon of capitalist enterprise and conservative politics falls madly in love with an attractive Spanish housemaid. She resists his advances but intensifies his desire.

AT THE BEGINNING of the film, we see Mathieu at a railway station pouring a bucket of water over a girl's head. He then takes a seat in the train compartment among the polite though astonished strangers.

He senses the curiosity of his traveling companions and gentleman that he is, inquires if they would like to know the story behind his loutish actions. Thus, the story begins, and the audience is as entranced as the passengers while we learn of his obsession with Conchita.

He zealously pursues her; she staunchly refuses, or worse yet, she acquiesces and then abruptly stops him—all the while reminding him of her correct upbringing and her virginity.

In one fiendishly funny scene, he is about to possess her when he is confronted by the world's most complicated corset. It has more ties and knots than a macramé drape. Again he is frustrated.

The object of Mathieu's desire is so elusive that not even her identity is certain. Sometimes Conchita is one person (played by Carole Bouquet), sometimes another (played by Angela Molina), and her voice is that of a third actress.

DURING THE farcical pursuit, terrorists explode bombs, issue threats, disrupt the civilized world, but Mathieu skates untouched through the revolutionary mindfield.

We hear and read about the various militant organizations. They have names like P.R.I.Q.U.E. and R.U.T. One, which proposes to unite the others under its banner, is R.A.L.F. (Revolutionary Army of the Infant Jesus).

However, the attacks on Mathieu's elegant, if absurd, world are not just external; there is decay from within. His servant casually removes a dead mouse from Mathieu's posh apartment. A waiter removes a wine glass with a dead fly in it. The fashionable Mathieu goes for a walk carrying a rickpacker's dirty sack.

There are so many symbols and illusions in this movie that the full meaning may be as obscure as Mathieu's desire for an enigmatic woman. Bunuel tantalizes the audience with symbolism and surrealism as much as Conchita tantalizes Mathieu.

"That Obscure Object of Desire" is not as darkly humorous as some of Bunuel's earlier films, for example, "Viridiana." At 77, the crafty anarchist is less acerbic, but still audacious.



Businessman pursues ever-changing female in "That Obscure Object of Desire."

# Glimpses

- NEW RELEASES**
- CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND (PG).** Steven Spielberg's megabuck epic about contact with extra-terrestrial beings. Special effects make this another treat for sci-fi fans.
  - EQUUS (R).** Intense, realistic film of prize-winning play with Richard Burton as the self-doubting psychiatrist treating a boy (Peter Firth) who has blinded six horses.
  - THE GAUNTLET (R).** Clint Eastwood as tough cop battling against the mob and other police in reason-defying film.
  - THE GOODBYE GIRL (PG).** Neil Simon comedy of set-up situation and laughs when an actor (Richard Dreyfuss) moves in with a twice-dumped, actor-hating hooter (Marsha Mason).
  - HIGH ANXIETY (PG).** Mel Brooks tips his hat to Hitchcock in this low-budget romp at the Psycho-Neurotic Institute for the Very, Very Nervous. Literal visual "quotations" from Hitchcock in this low-budget.
  - THE LACEMAKER (R).** Sensitive love story of beauty shop assistant and university student. Fine acting by Isabelle Huppert. In French with English subtitles.
  - THE ONE AND ONLY (PG).** Zany romantic comedy with Henry Winkler pursuing Kim Darby and getting gussied up as a wrestler called "The Lover."
  - PETE'S DRAGON (G).** Combination of animation and live action in Disney adventure about desperate boy helped by friendly dragon.
  - SATURDAY NIGHT FEVER (R).** John Travolta (of Kojak's swagbucks) is the main man in film with plenty of disco action.
  - SEMI-TOUGH (R).** Self-improvement schemes and football take equal lungs in comic but raunchy film with Zart Reynolds and Kris Kristofferson.

**MOVIE RATING GUIDE**

G General audiences admitted.  
 PG Parental guidance suggested. All ages admitted.  
 R Restricted. Adult must accompany person under 18.  
 X No one under 18 admitted.

# Hotline receives new name

The What's Line (259-1911) is a recorded phone message of Detroit area entertainment information updated daily in the Metropolitan Detroit Convention and Visitors Bureau offices. The 60-second recorded announcement covers sports, nightlife, theater and special events and runs 24 hours a day.

The recorded entertainment message was developed in 1975 to encourage delegates to get out of their hotel rooms and enjoy Detroit while they were in the city for conventions.

Billboards advertising the original service, called the Visitors Hotline, were posted at both Metropolitan Airport and City airports, so that visitors and delegates would be greeted with a "friendly voice on the phone" and given a first impression of the city that was alive and inviting. The Hotline number was also included in informational materials given to delegates when they registered.

It became apparent that an increasing number of area residents were also calling the Visitors Hotline, even though there was little attempt to publicize it locally.

BECAUSE OF this local interest, and to encourage metropolitan Detroiters to think even more positively about the city, the Convention Bureau decided to change the name of the phone service to the "What's Line" and make a concerted effort to let more Detroit-area residents know about it.

To help publicize the What's Line service to residents and the more than 380,000 delegates who may be tuning in to TV or radio in their hotel rooms during the coming year, the bureau and WJL-AM-FM-TV have prepared a series of six radio and seven TV public service announcements.

Helping the bureau announce the new service, "Super Max" Kinkel, CKLW disc jockey who also does an entertainment segment on WJL-TV newscasts each week, recorded the kick-off What's Line message.

The red-and-white What's Line logo will be posted at Metropolitan and City Airport terminals to welcome visitors upon arrival. The bureau is also working with cab companies to display What's Line stickers in metro area cabs. What's Line table tents and counter cards will soon be appearing in hotel rooms, airline ticket offices, and on restaurant tables throughout Greater Detroit.

Even downtown police officers will be distributing What's Line materials, along with Visitors Guides and Visitors Maps, in response to informational inquiries.



# Jeepers creepers

John Boothe (Timothy Bottoms) pushes a jeep carrying Jill (Marilyn Hassett), left, and Linda (Gretchen Corbett) from their trap in a stream in "The Other Side of the Mountain-Part 2." Universal's sequel to the film of Jill Kimmont's life will have a first-run release beginning Friday at metropolitan area theaters including the Birmingham Theatre.

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# Southfield Arts Council offers Hilberry Theatre Adventure

The Southfield Arts Council still has a few reservations for its "Hilberry Theatre Adventure" Saturday, Feb. 18.

The evening will begin at 7:45 when the charter bus will leave the Southfield Public Library for the theater. The price will cover the bus transportation, a ticket to the play, "The Amorous Flea" and a wine and cheese afterglow with the cast after the final curtain.

The cast has also agreed to participate in a question and answer period with afterglow guests.

For reservations, call Grace Schwartz or Madeline Adinoff, 357-2194, 559-1679.

house in New York City in February 1964.

FOR THIS PRODUCTION, the Hilberry is using the musical version of Moliere's play "The School for Wives." The members of this year's acting company demonstrated so much musical ability in the fall auditions that the Hilberry directors decided they should do something musical during the season.

Under the title, "The Amorous Flea," this musical version of the comedy opened at the 78th Street Play-

The book was written by Jerry Devine and the music and lyrics by Bruce Montgomery. Critic Judith Crist called it "Nonsense in the classical vein . . . and stylish as all get-out . . ."

It is a play in three acts. Curtain time is 8:30 p.m.

The Southfield Library is on the south side of the Southfield Civic Center on Evergreen at Civic Center Drive between Ten and Eleven Mile.

# How to send news items

News releases, photographs or other information can be mailed to Elbel Simmons, entertainment editor, at 1225 Bowers, Birmingham 48012, or delivered to the Birmingham, Southfield or Rochester offices of the Observer & Eccentric. The phone number of the Birmingham office is 644-1100.

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