It's the plumber...

The Plumber plays on the basic incompatibility of scholastically educated intellectuals and the blue-collar working class in the perspective of urban Australian society. There are many sexual elements in the film which put the conflict in an accepted frame. When Max first surveys the bathroom, the camera shows us in direct succession a package of birth control pills, female underwear on the shower rod, and a seventeenth-century print depicting copulation. At first our sympathies are with Max and one feels that she actually wants him to rape her, but when he denies his jail sentence and we realize his game, the scales tip back. When the bathroom erupts, he has truly become villainous.

Weir has done a remarkable job in creating a film that characteristically takes place in one confined space. The angles are well chosen and scenic composition is clean and relevant. The actors are not greatly challenged in their stereotypic roles but they seldom break out from the established molds of the characters. The believability of the story is stretched to an extent but the interaction of Jilly and Max only becomes interesting as it gives credibility to their bizarre situation.

A little bit disturbing, but constantly intelligent and interesting. The Plumber provides a good divergence from the pulp being dished out from Hollywood in recent months. Originally released for Australian in 1978, The Plumber makes its debut in New England this week at Off the Wall Cinema, 15 Pearl St., in Cambridge. Almost any film is enjoyable in the cozy café atmosphere of Off the Wall, so grab a slice of carrot cake and a cup of Red Zinger herb tea, sit back, and enjoy it if you really want that leaky faucet fixed.

Mark DeCew

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