

At the movies

Between laughs, 'Project X' full of deeper meaning

It's a chimp's life!
Ask Virgil in the movie "Project X." Abducted as a baby chimp from his mother in the wilds of Africa, he finds himself

subject of her thesis. Over the next three years, she teaches Virgil sign language and other practical tasks, essentially becoming his surrogate mother.

Life looks grim again, until Virgil meets Jimmy (Matthew Broderick), a young pilot who has borrowed one too many Air Force planes and has been grounded until he learns his place.

Being in the same boat, so to speak, Jimmy and Virgil are swift to strike up a friendship and soon become a formidable team in the training room, where chimps are taught to operate Air Force planes and take them on simulated flights.

Life is looking up. Then Jimmy finds out what happens to the chimps when they "graduate" from the program; they are taken to another flight simulation chamber and subjected to massive doses of radiation. The object of this cruel scenario is to see if human pilots would be able to fly long enough to drop their bomb loads on targets in the Soviet Union.

These experiments are, in the Air Force's eyes, "necessary." But to Jimmy, it is murder.

Soon Virgil will "graduate." Jimmy must choose between sacrificing the chimp or trying to save Virgil.

Broderick gives a surprisingly subdued and thoughtful performance as the cocky smart aleck, ultimately forced to mature through his contact with the chimps, and Hunt is equally fresh and convincing as the warm-hearted psychologist.



Courtesy Photo

Jimmy Garrett (Matthew Broderick), a young Air Force pilot, becomes involved in a suspenseful adventure with a highly intelligent chimpanzee named Virgil in "Project X."

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Gerlinger Lounge

April 23, 1987 9:30 to 5:00

- 10:00 Page DuBois, University of California, San Diego, Feminist Rethinking of Greek Classics.
- 11:00 Mary-Kay Gamel, University of California, Santa Cruz, This Day We Read Further: Why Feminist Interpretation is Necessary.
- 12:00 Lunch break.
- 1:30 Judith Stacey, University of California, Davis, Can There Be A Feminist Ethnography?
- 2:30 Naomi Scheman, University of Minnesota, The Engendering of Philosophical Problems.
- 4:00 Panel discussion with the above speakers.

A lot of sex found in 'American Empire'

If you're looking for a bawdy comedy to stimulate your mental erogenous zones, see "The Decline of the American Empire," a French-Canadian

release.

This film depends primarily on continuous explicit dialogue by two groups of intellectuals about their varied sex lives, with detours into expressions of their feelings and discussions of their socio-historical interests.

wouldn't have been possible without depth.

The filmmaker presents a believable situation, often poking fun at the love webs human beings sometimes weave around their lives, and sometimes presenting poignant realities of the human condition.

The women complain of men's preoccupation with their organs, the men complain that trying to make a woman achieve an orgasm is like "looking for a needle in a haystack." And Pierre tells his friends he can't fathom being married because after two years "the compromises begin."

The photography is absorbing and contributes to the medium pace of the script by including leisurely strolls into the environment, which depict times like sunrise and winter in the lives of the players.

The filmmaker makes compelling use of tracking, rack focus and close-ups throughout the movie.

After an opening sequence, the credits are folded up over a long tracking shot down an immense, tiled university hallway. Later, the camera focuses between Diane and Dominique as they talk and work out. Perpendicular close-ups reveal anxieties and reactions of the players.

People who find sex objectionable in films should avoid "The Decline of the American Empire," but those who don't mind it will probably enjoy this witty romp into the mating habits of a rather promiscuous group.

**Review by
Jackie Barry**

The story jumps back and forth between a group of women and a group of men, all friends, who meet for dinner midway through the film.

The women spend an afternoon at a health club working out and talking about their sex lives, past and present. Their sexual niches range from the masochistic Diane to the subserivent Louise.

After Diane's friend, Dominique, asks her about a series of welts on her rear end, Diane confides she has a new boyfriend, Mario. She says she fears her own newfound desires more than Mario's sadistic behavior, because he will do anything to her that she wants. "The power of the victim is incredible," Diane says.

This is shown in contrast to Louise, who's only sexual indiscretion throughout her 15 year marriage was to sleep with a man at an orgy because it made her husband, Remy, happy.

The richly woven script presents strong characters for the audience to judge. One feels a definite dislike for several of the characters, something that

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