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The Adventures of Robinson Crusoe

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"Luis Bunuel's version of the Defoe novel is free of that deadly solicitude that usually kills off classics. *Sight and Sound* selected this as the Best Picture of 1954 - 'a picture destined to give pleasure in twenty years' - and one critic described it as 'a classic of a classic.' The film is a simple, unsentimental account of Defoe's basic themes: a man alone face to face with nature; then a man terribly alone, unable to face lack of love and friendship; and finally, after the lacerations of desire, a man ludicrously alone. The great, controversial Spanish director used Dan O'Herlihy, a fine actor with a beautiful voice, and photographed him in the jungle of Manzanillo near Acapulco. In the delirium sequence, Bunuel is the same untamed director who made film history, and when O'Herlihy as Crusoe shouts to the hills in order to hear the companionable echo, when he rushes to the sea in desperate longing for a ship, loneliness is brought, in sudden shocks, to the pitch of awe and terror. Crusoe's eventual meeting with Friday (James Fernandez) changes the tone to irony."

--Pauline Kael.

• Directed by Luis Bunuel. Screenplay by Bunuel and Philip Roll, based on the novel by Daniel Defoe. Photographed by Alex Phillips. With Dan O'Herlihy, James Fernandez. (1952, 88 mins, color, Print from PFA Collection)

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