MIDNIGHT MARQUEE

PRESENTS

A TRIBUTE TO HAMMER FILMS

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Universal Film S. A. présente

LES MAITRESSES DE DRACULA

BRIDES of DRACULA

PETER CUSHING

YVONNE MONLAUR · FREDA JACKSON · MARTITA HUNT

DAVID PEEL

RÉGIE: TERENCE FISHER

HAMMER PRODUCTION

Universal International

MIDNIGHT MARQUEE

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FRONT COVER: Michael Kronenberg's striking rendering in oil of Peter Cushing confronting his soon to be re-resurrected creation from the gothic horror film that launched Hammer Studios, *THE CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN*; **BACK COVER:** Michael Kronenberg's colorful oil rendering of David Peel seemingly enjoying the cult of evil from *BRIDES OF DRACULA*.

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MARQUEE MUTTERINGS

BY GARY J. SVEHLA

Welcome to the first specialty issue of *Midnight Marquee*, our 47th issue totally dedicated to the artistry of Hammer Film Productions, the creators of the second great wave of horror cinema. While *Midnight Marquee* never devoted an entire issue to one theme, we thought the time was ripe to devote an issue to Hammer because of the resurgenance of the interest in Hammer films (the recently announced remake campaign inaurgurated by Warner Bros., Richard Donner Productions, and Hammer Film Productions) and the enthusiasm given to FANEX 8: HAMMER HAS RISEN FROM THE GRAVE being held in Baltimore to coincide with the release of this issue of *MidMar*. If interest warrants, we may once again do theme based issues. But this direction will only be taken if the readers both desire and support the efforts. Reader sales are always the final barometer.

Being a 44-year-old "baby boomer" having been raised on Hammer, Hammer Films became the classic horror films I discovered as a child in theatera while at the same time at home I made my mother go outside during the dead of winter and adjust our ground-mounted outdoor antenea so I could watch Shock *Theater* on television. What a cinematic childhood it was: seeing Horror of Dracula in 1958 at the now defunct Colony Theater in suburban Baltimore with my father. The terrifying effects this classic movie had on me has already been detailed in this and other magazines, so I will only say that *Dracula* hooked me on horror forever. The climatic confrontation between ultimate good and evil, in the human persona of dashing Peter Cushing and decadent Christopher Lee, forced me to look at the illuminated Technicolor screen behind clenched fingers covering my sweaty face. Within a few years *Brides of Dracula* followed, as did all the classic (and not so classic) Hammer films which pranced across the screens until the mid-seventies. Towards the bitter end, I drove with a buddy to faraawey Annspolis (about a two-hour ride) to see *Frankenstein and the Monster From Hell* which never played Baltimore theatrically. At this point I realized the end was in sight, but in this era before videocassette, one did what one had to do to see these Hammer horrors on the screen. I was eight years old when I first saw *Horror of Dracula* on screen (I would wear a white sheet and parade around our cherry tree protected yard pretending I was the Prince of Darkness, my coffin being the elongated wooden picnic table bench: oh, what the neighbors probably thought of me then!) and I was 24 years old when I drove to Annapolis to see the diminishing light which was Hammer. Hammer films occupied many of my formulative years, all for the better (I trust!).

It is impossible to capture that essence of how we first responded to movies as a child once we grow beyond adolescence into adulthood. Simply stated, what Hammer films meant to me, seeing them all first hand theatrically, in huge theaters with attentive audiences, is radically different from how members of the ill-fated Generation X/Twentysomethings must feel having first caught Hammer classics on Saturday afternoon/evening TV or by viewing bootleg copies of third-generation tapes. In fact, to both prepare to do this Hammer issue and the FANEX convention, I saturated myself (Sue joined in too) by rewatching every Hammer title I owned or could borrow on video or laser trying to contrast my childhood memories to my adult perspective. I wish I could say that all the Hammer Films held up extraordinarily well, that they played as well to the eyes of a 44-year-old adult as they did to the eyes of an enthusiastic child. But the sad truth is that many did not hold up well.

Of course, the best of the Hammer stable—*Horror of Dracula, Brides of Dracula, Hound of the Baskervilles, Enemy From Space, The Creeping Unknown*—did not suffer hardly one bit in the ensuing 35 year gap. But many Hammer Films went limp artistically/emotionally, while other titles which I never truly enjoyed before went up a few notches and actually improved with age (*Frankenstein and the Monster From Hell* and *The Reptile* being the best examples). I know, I know, you can never go home again, and perhaps one shouldn't try, but I will never forget the absolute charisma which Christopher Lee and Peter Cushing exuded as I sat transfixed, slumped down in the cushy theater seat, covering my eyes with my hands. Nothing, absolutely nothing, can diminish those thrills and chills that only exist in childhood. And watching Hammer horror films was the chief occupation of my misspent youth.

Thus, this tribute to Hammer Films issue serves a two-fold purpose. First and foremost, it is a love story from members of my generation (mostly) who fondly remember being raised upon Hammer Productions whereby Peter Cushing almost became a surrogate father, a role model to whom we aspired. But the second purpose is to put the work of Hammer Films into a historic and critical framework, to separate the enthusiasm of our youth from the artistry which must stand the test of time (or like Lee's disintegration sequence from *Horror of Dracula*, crumble to dust and blow away, a victim of our high expectations).

This issue of *Midnight Marquee* does not attempt to tell the history of Hammer Films or document once again all the classic Hammer movies which have already been covered to death. Our perspective, I told our writing staff, was to come up with new insights, new reflections. I encouraged writers to write about all those *other* Hammer Productions which have been unfairly neglected or to shine a new, startling perspective on those often covered classics. Thus, our *Tribute to Hammer Films* is by no means definitive: we would need much more than 100 pages to do Hammer justice. Look at this as our staff's desire to confront Hammer Films in the nineties, looking back fondly, critically, peering backwards with fresh eyes and new insights.

As I confronted these gems from my youth within the past months, I amassed a journal of 15 essential truths about Hammer Films. These, of course, are my own opinions, some old and cherished, some new-founded. But remembering the Hammer of my childhood and looking at Hammer with the not-so-fresh eyes of being a-mid-fortysomething, these are the truths on which I have been reflecting these last three months. Your comments and opinions are encouraged!

15 TRUTHS ABOUT HAMMER FILMS

1. Contrary to our misconception as kids, it was Peter Cushing and *not* Christopher Lee who was Hammer's "Most Valuable Player."
2. While Terence Fisher wes the most recognizable and beloved of Hammer's directors having helmed some of the studio's best films, special recogniztion most also go to directors such as Val Guest whose Quatermass entries and *Abominable Snowman of the Himalayas* contain superior direction equal if not superior to Fisher's. Directors

such as John Gilling, Seth Holt, and Freddie Francis must also be noted.

3. Contrary to popular myth concerning Hammer having invented the Technicolor horror film (which it did *popularize* almost singlehandedly) and only *then* becoming a creative force with which to reckon, it must not be forgotten that the studio's *earlier* black-and-white efforts are amongst their finest creative efforts.

4. Even though Hammer's latter efforts such as *Vampire Circus*, *The Vampire Lovers*, and *Captain Kronos, Vampire Hunter* have their supporters, the truth be known that none of these latter efforts can hold a candle to the best Hammer efforts produced between 1956-1961, the golden years.

5. While Hammer studios is singlehandedly responsbile for having invented the modern concept of Scream Queen, and while they did introduce some beautiful actresses to the screen, it is a damn shame that Hammer scripts never allowed the ladies the opportunity to act and to really display thespian talents (which many of the actresses possessed). What Barbara Shelley (in *Dracula, Prince of Darkness*), Jacqueline Pearce (in *The Reptile*), and Veronica Carlson (in *Frankenstein Must Be Destroyed*) only hinted at should have been more fully explored and developed. Talk about wasted opportunities! Shame on Hammer!

6. Hammer's stock company of capable supporting players—actors such as George Woodbridge, Richard Wordsworth, and most of all Michael Ripper—were the true saviors and shining lights of many a great and not-so-great Hammer production. Seen repeatedly, these stock players brighten many a Hammer production.

7. Even though Hammer hit financial paydirt in the late sixties and early seventies having moved from the small, quaint Bray Studios to the more elaborate Pinewood and MGM Borehamwood Studios, the Hammer look captured at the economical Bray studios has never been equaled, let alone surpassed, by the larger, more generic studios.

8. Even though fans sing (deservedly so) the prasies of Hammer directors such as Terence Fisher, Seth Holt, Don Sharp, John Gilling, and Freddie Francis, the final creative outcome of most Hammer films is due to the collaborative efforts of the director, production manager Bernard Robinson, photographer Jack Asher/Arthur Grant, editor James Needs, and the wonderful costume designers who produced perhaps the most stylish wardrobe in low budget filmmaking history.

9. Terence Fisher was never, repeat, never a "pedrestrian" director. Fisher avoided the now currently popular overpowering visual style and instead allowed his camera to simply tell the story in a relatively straightforward manner whereby the actors, sets, production design, and costumes are dominant. Instead of being concerned with evoking a Terence Fisher style, Fisher was more concerned in the thematic devices of good vs. evil, the pathos inherent in the monster/villain, and the ostracization of the anti-social hero in the wake of the power wielded by the mediocre close-minded masses. In darlngto be purposedly low-key, Terence Fisher created a distinct style all his own.

10. The Hammer scores written by James Bernard and often orchestrated by Phillip Martell are among the finest motion picture scores ever composed.

11. The chief flaw of many Hammer films is their leisurely pacing too often focusing upon carriages riding through the woods, people walking through corridors or sitting at the dinner table, etc. And sometimes this means that the climax is rushed and speeds too rapidly toward its conclusion.

12. Hammer's special effects and makeup team, never state-of-the-art being limited by time and budget, surprisingly did better in its earlier days (the monsters and makeup in the Quatermass films, the climax of *Horror of Dracula*, the werewolf of *Curse of the Werewolf*) than it did later on (with *Evil of Frankenstein*, *Frankenstein and the Monster From Hell*, *The Gorgon*, *Quatermass and the Pit*, etc.).

13. Though often a limited and very stiff actor, Hammer icon Christoper Lee was the best Count Dracula to ever appear on screen and *Horror of Dracula* is the best Hammer film ever produced.

14. The American movie posters for Hammer Films were generally some of the least attractive poster art ever executed. With few exceptions, the Hammer Films became huge money-makers in spite of often inferior poster art and promotion. Foreign posters for Hammer Films are superior in every way.

15. And even though it is stated inside these very pages, I must protest and declare that it is absolutely not a fact that Hammer's *The Mummy* is infinitely superior to the Universal/Boris Karloff original.

Gary J. Svehla greets Veronica Carlson and husband Sydney at a recent FANEX.

A very happy Richard Svehla is embraced by the lovely Hammer actresses Veronica Carlson (left) and Ingrid Pitt (right) at a recent convention.

EVOLVING WORLDS OF HAMMER'S BARON FRANKENSTEIN

by Gary J. Svehla

After making their mark upon the world of science fiction cinema with the Quatermass series (*The Creeping Unknown* and *Enemy from Space*) and *X, The Unknown*, Hammer Film Productions decided to now try to reinvent the cinematic world of Gothic horrors made so popular by Universal Studios during the 1930s, this time by adding deep saturated doses of color and English gentility.

When *Curse of Frankenstein* was released upon American shores in 1957, Hammer had hit its financial and creative stride with a franchise series that would stretch well into the 1970s. *Curse of Frankenstein* began the collaboration between Hammer superstars Peter Cushing and Christopher Lee, teaming the acting team with director Terence Fisher and screenwriter Jimmy Sangster for the first time.

Since the Hammer Frankenstein series has been analyzed to death in print, my focus here is *not* upon the merits or meaning of the series, it is *not* to contrast Freddie Francis' directorial style to Terence Fisher's. It is *not* to compare the relative creative opulence of the studio (utilizing minimal budgets for maximum results), its sets and budgets, during the Bray Studio period, compared to its more expensive but generic look toward the end. It is not even to compare the Hammer series to the Universal series.

No, the focus of this article is to document the evolution of what I consider to be the quintessential Hammer character, Baron Victor Frankenstein, Peter Cushing's supreme cinematic triumph and obviously the characterization of his career, as portrayed in six films produced by the studio between 1956-1974. By focusing upon Peter Cushing's performances in each of the series' entries, we see not necessarily the betterment of the series over the years, but we see the metamorphosis of Peter Cushing's Baron Frankenstein into a classic movie role that stands the test of time, a persona so much a part of his humanity that Cushing often transcended the limitations of the scripts and budgets to produce a *tour de force* performance in each of the Hammer entries. Artistically, Peter Cushing's performance as the Baron is one of the principle reasons why the reputation of Hammer has transcended the "B" horror market. Let us examine why.

"I always had a brilliant intellect!"— THE CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN (1957; Screenplay by Jimmy Sangster; Directed by Terence Fisher]

Jimmy Sangster's script immediately establishes the emphasis in the Hammer series upon the character of monster-creator Baron Victor Frankenstein, instead of focusing upon the Monster, as Universal did 25 years earlier. However, the script of *Curse of Frankenstein* spends too much time recasting the dominant elements from the Universal series (the obsessiveness of the doctor, the conflict between monster-creator and assistant, the blind hermit in the woods sequence, the damaged brain, the climax occurring on the eve of the Baron's wedding, the interference caused by the doctor's fiance, etc.) that it seems afraid to break out of this set pattern (although Universal's copyright for the Karloff makeup caused Phil Leakey to concoct a new monstrous look for Christopher Lee's Creature). Indeed, as written, the script casts the role of Baron Frankenstein as an almost one-dimensional obsessed scientist who dares to defy society's rules and the laws of nature. But Peter Cushing struggles to make the role so much more.

The script cleverly tells its story in flashbacks, a priest coming to visit the Baron in prison before his execution. Addressing the priest, the Baron Frankenstein states he asked for him because, "I could think of nobody else... people trust you. Just listen. Tell me you'll stay!" The Baron's aristocracy begins to take over as his tone changes from gentle pleading to one of demands, even firmly planting his hand upon the priest's shoulder and soon both hands are clutching his neck. Threatening to leave the presence of this lunatic, the priest receives an apology from the Baron, "I won't forget myself again. I always had a brilliant intellect..." and tells of his childhood "where it all began."

As rewritten in the Hammer cannon, Baron Victor Frankenstein lost his father at age five and there gained his title. Ten years later, his mother dies and Victor inherits the family fortune. An aunt who is dependent upon the mother's monthly check to support herself and her daughter, Elizabeth, is concerned that the young Baron will discontinue this financial support. It is also understood that the young Elizabeth, the Baron's cousin, will someday wed the Baron. The Baron gladly agrees to continue the financial support. But what he needs now is a tutor to feed his ever inquisitive mind. Thus, enters Paul Krempe (Robert Urquhart), a man who is surprised that the teenaged Baron is conducting his own affairs with such sophistication. In voice over, the Baron confides that Paul was "an admirable tutor" but that he learned all Paul had to teach in only two years. Cocky, self-assured, arrogant are phrases which categorize our earliest looks at the Baron.

Paul and his student work intensely in the Frankenstein laboratory bringing life to a dead dog. Here the Baron's obsessive one-dimensionality is made clear by Cushing's intense performance. While work-

ing, Cushing is always serious, he feverishly looks down at gauges, waves demandingly for Paul to cut off the machinery at a precise second, wipes his brow with his handkerchief. His blue eyes widen as he listens for the reanimated heartbeat of the now revived dog. Smiling for the first time, he exclaims, "Paul, it's alive. We've done it!" Cushing's energetic eccentricity makes the Baron's inquisitive nature crystal clear. But it is this linear obsession which dominates Cushing's performance throughout.

Soon the differences between pupil and tutor soon become clear. Paul, wishing to present their scientific findings to a scientific board meeting next month, is immediately shot down. "We won't! We mustn't share it yet. We must move on to the next stage!" This attitude becomes an essential quirk in the Baron's character; in Shakespeare's universe, it becomes the Baron's tragic flaw. Once he has conquered knowledge at one level, instead of publishing his findings or presenting his new-found knowledge to his medical peers, the Baron simply wishes to negate the first findings by immediately going on to the second stage. In other words, instead of putting his scientific knowledge to practical use, he has an insatiable thirst to move onward, to discover knowledge for its own intrinsic sense, *not* to benefit humanity. Thus his quest for knowledge is more neurotic than self-satisfying, since he cannot obviously enjoy his accomplishments at any stage. He must constantly move onward. Simply stated, he is a driven man.

The Baron announces to Paul it is not enough to bring the dead back to life; thus his goal: "We must create a human being!" When Paul protests calling such work a "revolt against neture," the Baron counters with the ironic, "Paul, you haven't shown scruples up til now!" The manner in which Cushing delivers this line, a slight all-knowing smile on his face, that evil glint in his eye, transforms the up-to-now one-dimensional character to new levels of insight. Throughout the movie, Cushing delivers similar lines with the same gusto. Looking at the rotting corpse snatched from the gallows, the Baron looks at the huge hands and states, "Clod-hopping. No wonder he was a robber. He couldn't do anything else!" After cutting off the rotting head and thinking about replacing the hands, the Baron tells Paul, "Let him rest in peace, while he *can*!" Soon Paul refuses to aid the Baron in his experiments claiming moral outrage. However, he does not leave the house because of another primary interest.

It seems the sudden, unexpected arrival of cousin Elizabeth (Hazel Court) complicates matters. She tells Paul (who at first she oustakes for the Baron), "I've come to live with Victor," announcing her mother's recent death. The Baron plans to proceed with his experiments with or without the presence of Elizabeth, and Paul's obvious attraction to Elizabeth establishes him as her great protector. Elizabeth, unable to care financially for herself, only too well understands the ramifications of her pre-arranged marriage to the Baron and his wealth.

Peter Cushing's Baron Frankenstein grabs for the pistol with which he will shortly shoot the unfortunate Elizabeth, from CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN.

However, the Baron is already engaged in another affair, passionately kissing Justine (Valerie Gaunt), the household maid, who herself has her sights set on the Baron. She is more than a little threatened by the presence of Elizabeth in tha household and states she is tired of meeting the Baron in dark corridors. The Baron is smart enough to see through this ruse. "What makes you think I'd marry you!" And in another double-entendre orders, "See to her [Elizabeth's] every need as thoroughly as you've seen to ouine." Again, Cushing is embellishing these lines with nuance of a sly sexual nature. Again, he is saddled by the script that tries to keep his performance one-dimensional, but he tries to bring something special to the role. It seems Cushing utilizes every opportunity he can to imbue his character with underlying motives or nuance that deviate from the literal translation of the script.

Soon the Baron is toying with Paul's outrage pretending he could continue with his unnatural work alone. "This will end in evil," Paul proclaims. The calm Baron responds, "Oh, I just rob a few bodies, but what doctor has not done that? How will we ever learn. . . My creature will be born with a lifetime of knowledge." But that leads to the question of a brain, and the Baron desires the brain of a great intellect.

Enter brilliant Professor Bernstein, the gracious dinner guest who is soon sadistically pushed off the balcony to his death. Referring to the earlier quirk in the Baron's personality, the wise old professor warns that scientists are "too concerned with discovery" and grow bored so easily that they too soon "go back into the darkness" of discovery instead of using thet new-found knowledge to help mankind. Reinforcing Elizabeth's fear that the Baron spends entirely too much time in his laboratory, the Professor states that time slips away until "one is too old to enjoy life."

After the murder of Bernstein, Paul sees the Baron open the professor's coffin and remove his brain, stating, "I *can* stop you from using his brain." The Baron nonchalantly replies, "Why? He has no further use for it!" After a struggle, whereby the brain is injured, the Baron screams, showing his violent rage, "Get out of here, get out!!!" Thus, Cushing's performance gravitates from aristocratic self-control, with an air of arrogance, to one of unhinged temper tantrums of uncontrolled anger and frustration.

Paul tries to warn Elizabeth one more time. She shows no inclination to leave, instead asking are you saying Victor is "wicked or insane." Paul hits the nail on the head by saying, "Neither. He can't see the consequences, he's so wrapped up in his experiments!"

But the Baron, frustrated in work-

(Top): The idealistic Baron eager to conquer the world; (Bottom): The defeated Baron near the end, both from *CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN*.

ing alone, pleads with Paul to again help him. "I want you to help me. I'd thought I could work it myself—I can't." Soon the arrogance and aristocratic insolence returns: "You will help me Paul, whatever you say!" Paul agrees to help if the Baron promises to destroy his creation after he proves his experiments. The Baron agrees. But by manner of Cushing's delivery, the viewer can almost imagine the crossed finger held secretly behind the Baron's back.

Soon the Baron confronts the bandaged monster in his laboratory who promptly picks the scientist off the ground by his neck, choking the life out of the insignificant human. Cushing, portraying a throttled victim better than anyone else on screen, plays the strangulated, bug-eyed, semi-conscious victim to the hilt. He will repeat this same physical talent in both *Horror of Dracula*, *The Mummy*, and *Brides of Dracula*. After being rescued, the Baron, wild-eyed, shouts, "I did it Paul!"

Soon the Creature escapes into the woods, confronts a blind hermit, and is shot dead by eager-to-destroy Paul. Together they bury the corpse. "I don't think I will ever forgive you for what you've done, Paul!"

Soon the exhumed corpse is seen hanging from a hook suspended in the Baron's laboratory. With grim, quiet determination, the Baron obsesses and whispers, "I will give you life again."

Justine now confronts the Baron with news that she is pregnant and that "you promised to marry me." To which the Baron only insensitively laughs. "Pick any man in the village, it's probably him [the father]! Get back to your work!" he callously orders. When Justine threatens to expose the Baron to the authorities, the Baron grows intense and serious, "Proof, that's what authorities want!" He then orders her out of the house by morning.

Of course to get proof, she must investigate the laboratory and the small storage room in back of the lab. There, the reanimated Creature lies in wait as the conniving Baron follows her footsteps closing and locking the door once she enters that storage room. Amid her screams the Baron records an unnerving look of absolute relief. Formerly seen as simply being obsessed and committed to science for its own sake, the Baron is now revealed to be callous, evil, and manipulative. He murders in cold blood to save his own prestigious reputation.

Eager to now outrage Paul by showing him his revived patchwork creature, the Baron demonstrates to Paul that his Creature now obeys by responding to short commands like sit down and stop. Paul insults the Baron by asking, "Is *this* your creature of *superior* intellect?" The Baron, outraged and defensive, responds, "There you see the result of *your* handiwork. This is *your* fault Paul (referring to the bullet in the head that Paul fired). You won't win Paul. I will carry on, get another brain, and then another!!!"

This being the final straw, Paul threatens to go to the authorities. But the Baron counters with, "You're as much a part of this as I am." And based upon his upcoming actions, Paul does indeed understand the truth of these words.

Soon the Creature escapes from the lab, stalks the rooftop, and lumbers toward the innocent Elizabeth on the eve of her wedding night ("We're not sentimental young lovers," the Baron reminds Elizabeth earlier that evening.). Frantically racing to rescue his bride-to-be, the Baron gets a pistol from a glass case and fires at the monster who lunges at Elizabeth. Unfortunately, the bullet finds Elizabeth (who survives) and the Creature approaches an uncharacteristically cowardly Baron who whines, "Get away from me" as he throws a lamp igniting the creature into a blazing inferno. The pain-riddled creature falls through the skylight into the acid bath below. The Baron is arrested for the murder.

While Elizabeth waits outside, Paul visits the Baron in jail as the priest looks on. The Baron, eyes wide and excited, is eager for Paul to validate his incredible story. Paul stands by mute, refusing to lift a finger to confirm the facts. The Baron sensing Paul's real motive for refusing to help, suddenly lunges at his former childhood tutor and tries to strangle him, "Paul, you've got to save me. I'll make you . . . " The Baron's arrogance returns one final time. Paul, by refusing to confirm the truth, allows the Baron to be seen as a simple insane murderer who must now face the guillotine. Outside Paul returns to the waiting arms of Elizabeth. As the Baron must now realize, Paul may have committed the most vile, evil act of the movie by remaining silent so that the Baron will be out of the way so that he can have Elizabeth all to himself.

Thus, sticking to a script which revamps the 1931 Universal script rather than returning to Mary Shelley's original novel, Peter Cushing creates a distinct persona of the obsessed, aristocratic, and arrogant Baron. As enacted in *Curse of Frankenstein*, Cushing's Baron is depicted as ruthless, self-serving, and emotionally cold. He is truly a one-dimensional villain, a true "mad" scientist oblivious to those around him. Only in the film's final minutes do we feel a glimmer of sympathy for the Baron because Paul's actions are ultimately even more evil than the Baron's.

"He cuts 'em up, alive!"—THE REVENGE OF FRANKENSTEIN [1958; Screenplay by Jimmy Sangster; Directed by Terence Fisher]

After the success of *Curse of Frankenstein* and *Horror of Dracula*, sequels were inevitable. However, Hammer's sequel to *Curse* was superior in every way, simply because screenwriter Jimmy Sangster felt free of the Universal Pictures' formula and created his own version of the *Frankenstein* mythos. Also, the sequel was better able to embellish the character of the Baron, and actor Peter Cushing was, as always, enthusiastic to reveal far more of the subtleties inherent in the mad doctor's inner soul. Thus, while the first Frankenstein collaboration between Fisher, Sangster, and Cushing was creatively stilted and confining, this first sequel allows each of these gifted artists the opportunity to let down their hair, creatively.

While the Baron was primarily

obsessed, aristocratic, and cruel in the original entry, here the Baron displays the compassion which is necessary for the audience to care about his character (since *he* is the returning icon, not the Creature!). Having escaped the gallows, the Baron's conspirators execute and bury the priest in his place. Going incognito, the Baron moves to another village and assumes the identity of one Dr. Stein, a mysterious doctor distrusted by the town's Medical Council but loved by its citizenry. It seems Stein, a loner, refuses to join the Council. As one member intones with a degree of agitation, "Three years ago, when he first came, no one here heard of him, no one knew his background. Now he is the most popular doctor... who steals patients from us!" The verdict: Dr. Stein must be *made* to join this elite group.

Dr. Stein has become doctor to the upper-class as he attends to the Countess and her daughter. The reticent yet lovely daughter is manipulated by mother who insists the girl is ill. Mother complains she has "no vitality" and orders the doctor to "overhaul" her. Complaining of palpitations and dizziness, she desires the doctor to listen to her daughter's heart by placing his ear against her bosom. "You are a man, you can do a great deal for her. I have money..." The Countess' implications are crystal clear.

The doctor uses money earned in this manner to finance a Poor Hospital for the underprivileged and needy, more often inhabited by criminal elements. There the Baron is seemingly sympathetic to the needs of the underclass yet his true nature cleverly shines through. Examining a patient and inspecting his tattooed arm, the doctor announces, "You have to have it off." The arm is seemingly healthy, but the Baron is readying the perfect body to once again create life and this is the arm of a pick-pocket, a man whose fingers are nimble and especially skilled. The doctor's advice after breaking the grim news to his distressed patient, "Find another trade or use your other hand!" The Baron's cruel humor is still intact! The haughty members of the Medical Counsel, an investigative group of three, are shocked by the squalor in this free clinic. One intones, "The stench is enough to kill me." The Baron is wise enough to realize craving off the limbs of the rich would not get him far, but who really cares about the needs of the underprivileged! Thus his seemingly humanitarian efforts are in reality self-serving and cruel. But this time the Baron is unable to operate as himself, so he must create a gentile and highly cultured persona, the external personality of a dashing, almost romantic *god* of science.

His plan is to reward the paralyzed crippled assistant Karl by transferring his brain into his new unborn body, thus curing Karl of his physical infirmaries. The Baron is forced to take Dr. Hans Kleve (Francis Matthews) into his confidence as the young doctor, a member of the Council, recognizes Dr. Stein as Baron Frankenstein from having attended the funeral of the late Dr. Bernstein. Hans' motives are honorable, "I am in search of knowledge. I want to be the pupil of the finest medical brain in the world." The Baron, flattered by such devotion, replies, "I am not an easy man to work for. I wonder if I can trust you... Uncertainty is part of life!" Showing his young study his former wine garden laboratory located in the cellar of a building, young Hans slightly trips as the duo go down the steps. "It would be a pity to loose you!" The intent here is ambiguous: does the Baron feel backmailed and manipulated or does he welcome the opportunity to become a tutor to another inquisitive mind much like Paul Krempe was once his tutor. The Baron soon lectures Paul gleefully as resident "professor" showing him disembodied eyes and hands floating in beakers and bottles, sharing his proud secrets with his eager student. Thus, another kind side of the Baron is revealed.

The Baron lectures Paul (Francis Matthews) gleefully as resident "professor" showing him disembodied eyes and hands, from *REVENGE OF FRANKENSTEIN*.

Soon revealing the inner demons which fuel his passion to continue his experiments, the Baron, greatly distressed, cries, "I made it to be *perfect*. If it wasn't damaged, the name of Frankenstein, my work, would be considered a genius of science! I swore I would have my revenge!" Then showing him the big secret behind the curtain in his lab, the upright bandaged body of the future Creature (Michael Gwynn), the Baron beams with pride, "This is something I am proud of... this time he is perfect!"

Once basic change occurs in the Baron's character. now in public view as Dr. Stein, he now hides his sarcasm and criticism under the cloak of polite manners. His tongue is just as critical but subtle and thinly veiled. For instance, when the Council members confront the Baron and tell him they have elected to have him join their prestigious order, the Baron displays his loathing for them. One Council member introduces himself, "I am the President of the Medical Council." To which the Baron responds, "Congratulations," smiling politely. Once he is offered the opportunity to join the medical group, the Baron turns angry and vicious. He claims when he first came to this town to set up his practice three years ago, he was met "with firm resistance" by the Council whose sole purpose, according to the Baron, is to "eliminate competition." insisting he has "grown accustomed to working alone" and that he "enjoys it," he rebukes their oppressive invitation.

The Baron, except for his occasional sexual fling in *Curse of Frankenstein*, is married to his work and has little time nor patience for women. The obnoxious female in this chapter is named Margaret (Eunice Gayson), the daughter of the town minister who insists she volunteer her time by working in the Poor Hospital. The Baron dare not insult the minister, a leading citizen, so he must put up with her intrusions. But he

makes his intentions perfectly clear to her, "Margaret, I must ask you to keep out of the ward when I'm on duty." Here wonderful Richard Wordsworth (tha victim of *The Creeping Unknown*) plays the sweeper, sort of the titular leader of the underprivileged hospital patients always eager to impress Margaret. Warning her, "He cuts 'em up, alive! Brought a new one in the other day. Locked up in the attic; I have a master key!"

This "new one" is the latest creation of Frankenstein, the result of the brain transplant between poor physically-challenged Karl and the new unborn bits-and-pieces "perfect" body. As the Baron told Hans, Karl is "a very sound brain in that unfortunate body." The Baron's warning, "The brain will take time to adjust to the new body—this is only the beginning of our work!" If the brain is jarred or damaged before it has time to heal, the personality of the kindly Karl will change. These same experiments, attempted only *upon* Chimp Otto earlier, resulted in the vegetarian Chump resorting to cannibalism: eating meat, against its natural nature.

Of course, such is to be tha fate of reborn Karl when the naive Margaret, given the key to the locked bedroom door, allows the still-healing human to be let out of his scraps and free to get dressed and flee. Unfortunately, assistant Hans needlessly frightens Karl by telling him of the Baron's future plans, putting Karl and his old body on display for the scientific world to question and study. Thus, once free, the first thing Karl does is return to the laboratory, burn his old body, and get sadistically pummeled by the janitor. After repeated blows to the face and head, Karl turns monstrous and chokes the bully to death. But the damage has been done. Soon the Baron and Hans discover their experiment has flown the coup, Hans questions, "How did he undo the straps?" The Baron, challenging the limited thinking of his assistant, yells "Why, always why!!!" But Hans tells the Baron he told Karl of the Baron's future plans, the Baron immedistely understanding the psychological implications, retorts with his customary, "You fool!" Then the Baron aggressively states, "Sooner or later he'd need my help. Go back to the ward. Do as I tell you!"

Later attending a society party, at the invitation of the Countess and her daughter, tha Baron and Hans are introduced, tha Baron smiling and turning on the charm that only Dr. Stein could exude. Soon the drooling, crippled maniac that Karl has become crashes through the French windows and, recognizing Dr. Stein, blows his cover by holding the party-goers spellbound, "Frankenstein! Frankenstein!!! Help me!" after which he collapses and dies.

The war between Dr. Stein and the Medical Council now escalates with the announcement that Dr. Stein is in actuality Dr. Victor Frankenstein. As one Council member mutters, "This is the chance we have been waiting for!"

Hans, afraid for the Baron's life, pleads with him to flee town, to start afresh somewhere else But the Baron's pride won't allow him to run away. After being "ordered" to appear before the Medical Council, the Baron plays his innocence by lying through his teeth, all with customary believability and expertise. "Gentlemen, I deny lt absolutely. There are dozens of Frankensteins. I *am* a Frankenstein. But I did not want to be handicapped by that name so I changed it. . . I think a little proof instead of a lot of gossip would be advantageous."

However, returning to his Poor Ward, the Baron is greeted with utter silence, looks of hatred, and suspicious eyes from those patients who before loved and trusted the good doctor. The Baron inquires of one patient, "How's the head?" The man replies, "Keep your murdering hands off me, Frankenstein. Murderer! Murderer!!" Soon bottles fly at the Baron flung by unknown hands from behind him. He is knocked unconscious when a wooden crutch beans him over the head, again from behind. Then the mob of patients swarm around the bloodied Baron kicking and stomping him to near death. Hans intervenes and carries the broken, lifeless body back to the laboratory.

"Hans, lt's no good. . . You know what to do!!" the Baron deaperately states.

Conveniently, the Baron has stitched together an exact replica of himself, ready for brain transfer in the event that ha needed a new body (complete with tattooed arm no less). Thus, during the middle of the operation when the police and members of the Council arrive, Hans produces the dead body of the original Baron to the satisfaction of all. "The body must be buried In unhallowed ground!" Once they leave, Hans continues the operation, "Pray hesven I have the skill to do this."

The scene changes to London as the mobile camera enters the clinic of one Dr. Franck, the now mustachioed Peter Cushing, again dressing debonairly putting a flower in his lapel. Opening the door to his study, he turns on his charm and welcomes the latest aristocratic patients. The Baron to Hans, "You are an excellent pupil. This scar will hardly show."

Before, in *Curse*, Cushing was all pout and attitude. His character was consistent and clearly defined, unchanging, the same above as below the surface. Cushing's genius and exuberance elevated his performance well beyond a mad stereotype, but as written, the script limited his ability to expand upon the characterization. Here, in *Revenge*, Jimmy Sangster's much-improved script allows Peter Cushing the latitude to subtlety expand upon the Baron's character. We have the Baron pretending to be either Dr. Stein or Dr. Franck, respected, polite, and mannerly member of affluent English society. But underneath the surface, we have a not quite so mad scientist who still believes the ends justify the means. A doctor who

The Baron and Hans confront the obnoxlous female lead, Margaret (Eunlce Gayson), from *REVENGE OF FRANKENSTEIN*.

devotes his time to the free clinic for the poor, seemingly out of a sense of humanity but in reality out of the need to dissect and amputate perfectly healthy subjects for their body parts. The Baron loathes humanity both in the larger sense (he hates the pomposity of the Medical Council, the status quo dictators of the norms of society) and the smaller sense (his disdain for Margaret, his manipulation of the Countess, the cruel mutilation of the tattooed-armed patient). Instead of immediately telegraphing his every thought and impulse, the more subtle character of the Baron is revealed through exposing and contrasting his *false* (debonair) external self to his *true* (cruel and heartless) internal self. At last, with *Revenge of Frankenstein*, the character of Baron Frankenstein was coming into its own.

"Why can't they ever leave me alone!"—THE EVIL OF FRANKENSTEIN [1964; Screenplay by John Elder (Anthony Hinds); Directed by Freddie Francis]

The image of Baron Frankenstein near the end of Hammer's *The Evil of Frankenstein* casts Peter Cushing in dashing Indiana Jones-style grandeur. After escaping cleverly from prison by tricking the prison guard, Cushing steals a horsedrawn carriage, and using a whip to motivate the horse, rides the carriage standing up, the wind blowing through his disheveled hair. Is this the image of villain?

Earlier, returning to his family chateau after ten years in exile, the Baron becomes outraged to learn that all his family heirlooms, furniture, carpets, etc. have been cleared out and apparently sold. Later seeing his ring on the Burgomaster's finger, the Baron causes quite a scene in a local pub by yelling for the police to "arrest that man!" while his new assistant Hans (this time played by Sandor Eles) spirits the fugitive scientist out of harm's way.

But later that evening, the Baron triumphantly invades the elegant Burgomaster's home, seething with frustration over the fact that he himself is in desperate need of money for his research and that the above-the-law Burgomaster is living in high style off ill-gotten gains. "I've come for my property. . . my ring!" Looking around the home, the Baron's eyes bug half way out of his head as he sees half his possessions here! "My desk, my carpet—even my bed!" which at the moment is occupied by the Burgomaster's wife, a buxomy blonde who seems more than a little "in the mood." In dashing rogue hero style, the Baron escapes from the bedroom by tying a blanket to the end of the brass bed climbing rapidly outside the window, stopping momentarily to give the Burgomaster's sexy wife an all-knowing wink.

Yes, the image of the Baron has changed remarkably since his last incarnation. The screenplays by Jimmy Sangster have been replaced by John Elder's, and director Terence Fisher has been replaced by former cinematographer Freddie Francis (supposedly Hammer was upset at Fisher since his last Hammer horror, *The Phantom of the Opera*, was not a smash hit). Compared to the original conception of the Baron in *Curse*, Cushing here plays an outlaw hero where all authority figures surrounding him are more loathsome and despicable than he ever was. Sure the Baron dabbles in dead bodies and grave stealing, but ethically this is small potatoes compared to the grand larceny of the Burgomaster and the abuse of power dictated by the Chief of Police. The bottom line is that the Baron is a man of dignity and determination.

And if the Burgomaster and Chief of Police aren't villain enough, enter Zoltan (Peter Woodthrope), the greedy, maniacal hypnotist. After the Baron reanimates his pathetic (both from the viewpoint of makeup execution and character) monster (this was the first Hammer Frankenstein film released by Universal, so for the first time the Monster could dare to approximate Karloff's monster concept), the Baron disappointedly discovers that the creature's brain has been so damaged that he needs the help of the hypnotist to reach the creature's subconscious to bring him back. The manipulative Zoltan realizes the power he can wield if he keeps the monster under *his* own control and not under the Baron's. Threatening to leave the creature in a dormant state, the Baron, against Hans' wishes, agrees to Zoltan's terms.

Of course, Zoltan, who has just been run out of town by the Chief of Police, wants a little old-fashioned revenge and this allows him to put the monster under his direct control at night sending out the fiend to steal gold and kill his enemies. Thus, for the first time Hammer's resurrected "creature" becomes a zombified killing machine who under direct command of the evil Zoltan blindly maims and destroys in the stereotypical Frankenstein Monster manner.

Unlike the more imaginative Jimmy Sangster who was moving the series further and further away from the Universal forties' image of the monster, John Elder embraced all the weak qualities of both the Hammer and Universal series to meld this, the most disappointing of the entire Cushing series. However, Cushing's Baron Frankenstein has been fine-tuned by the enthusiastic thespian to the point that his characterization no longer needs direction or an effective script. Cushing's Baron brilliantly survives the transition to a new (inferior) director and script writer. And instead of portraying the insidious villain, Cushing's Baron here becomes the self-sacrificing hero.

Peter Cushing, as the underdog, misunderstood man of scientist, gains the sympathy of the audience from the opening reel. The film's best sequence, a pre-credits prelude, involves the mourning for a re-

The "hell and brimstone" county priest invades the Baron's laboratory and is about to smash the tank containing the reanimated human heart, from the beginning of *EVIL OF FRANKENSTEIN*.

cently dead peasant, laid out on a large wooden table at dusk. Suddenly, a large window near the table flies open, the raging wind instantly blowing out the illuminating candles near the body. Suddenly, mysteriously, someone pulls the body across the table swiftly out the window. We then see the smiling face of a graverobber, throwing the corpse over his shoulder, quickly arriving at the laboratory of Baron Frankenstein. The graverobber tells the Baron the obvious, that he has brought a body for his research, to which Cushing dryly states, "So I've observed. . . and so will half the county if you don't get it inside!" During the movie's credits the physically intense Baron removes the corpse's heart declaring, "He doesn't have any more use for it" (paralleling a similar line from *Curse*).

Frankenstein orders the much younger and more virile assistant Hans to "start the wheel," the youth grunting and straining to physically start a huge wheel turning. Hans has no luck until the Baron almost pushes him out of the way and, utilizing all his strength, gets the wheel turning mostly by his own power and force of will. Thus, the movie quickly establishes the Baron as a man of dedication, perseverance, and strength, values that movie *heroes* frequently display.

And to firmly establish the Baron's heroic underdog image, in the midst of his experiment the laboratory is invaded by the county priest, a stereotypical "hell and brimstone" variety clergyman. "Get rid of them Hans." However, the priest and his mob storm the lab, the priest yelling words of blasphemy and damnation, using a cane to break beakers and lab tanks, one containing the recently rejuvenated human heart. Baron Frankenstein, with a look of outrage, cries, "You realize you are trespassing, you are interrupting my work." Seeing the damage already done, the Baron has to be physically restrained by Hans. "Destroyed! They always destroy *everything*!"

The Elder screenplay even establishes the priest as symbolizing the blind hatred and fear inherent in the members of society who destroy what they do not understand, assuming new knowledge to be evil knowledge. For a change we see the priest as villain and scientist/explorer as rogue hero. And actor Peter Cushing seems energized by this ever-evolving complexity.

Throughout *Evil of Frankenstein*, the Baron constantly states, "Anything that doesn't conform. . . they have to destroy. They haven't beaten me. I won't let them beat me!!!" Sadly, at movie's end, after the Baron's chateau explodes, the Baron apparently dead inside, Hans bemoans, "They beat him after all."

Zoltan (Peter Woodthrope) becomes the movie's chief villain (out of a wide variety of villains) by virtue of his manipulative and self-centered urges. Both the Baron and Zoltan are ostracized from the community, but Zoltan is a profiteer, thief, and ultimately a murderer while the Baron displays loftier virtues. Simply stated, the Baron here is displayed as a man of honor and dignity. After forcing the Baron to accept his deal that only Zoltan controls the monster, Zoltan extends his hand and says, "Let's shake on it." Frankenstein, disdaining the opportunist hypnotist, simply replies, "No need. . . I've given my word."

The Baron and his latest creation (Kiwi Kingston) in the very Universal-looking laboratory from *THE EVIL OF FRANKENSTEIN*.

At the film's explosive climax, after Zoltan is savagely speared by the Monster and dies, the Creature drinks a bottle of chloroform, becoming violently ill, catching the chateau on fire. The Baron immediately tries to attend to the needs of the Creature telling Hans and the mute servant girl to "get away from here." Displaying the best aspects of the self-sacrificing hero, the Baron wishes to save the young innocents and would rather die in the fiery inferno rather than see his creation suffer or harm anyone. One of Cushing's final sequences involves the dashing scientist swinging Errol Flynn style across his lab on a chain, contradicting the standard image of mad scientist as a crotchety old man who toddles around the laboratory. No, as *Evil of Frankenstein* establishes, the Baron, formerly the evil monster maker, is here shown to be the romantic, charismatic monster destroyer and ultimately the film's hero.

"Bodies are easy to come by, souls are not!"—*FRANKENSTEIN CREATED WOMAN* [1966; Screenplay by John Elder (Anthony Hinds); Directed by Terence Fisher].

Continuing with a screenplay by John Elder and returning Terence Fisher to the director's chair, *Frankenstein Created Woman* is an improvement over *The Evil of Frankenstein*, boasting one of the most offbeat scenarios of the entire series; John Elder, following the lead of Jimmy Sangster, creates a story which moves far beyond the Universal mythos, his major failing the first time around. Unfortunately, while the aging Peter Cushing looks wonderful as the Baron, his character has been reduced once again to being one dimensional and his screen time has also been clipped.

Also, for the first time in the series, the subplot, this time involving the love relationship between a deformed girl, Christina (Susan Denberg), and the Baron's assistant, Hans (this time played by Robert Morris), detailing how Hans (the son of a guillotined murderer) is framed for the murder of Christina's father by three rich louts, overrides the Baron's tale. While the story is novel, creating a strong sense of pathos, it leaves little for the Baron and his new doctor/assistant Dr. Hertz (sympathetically played by Thorley Walters in one of his best roles) to do except restore the executed Han's soul into the resurrected Christina's body (now recreated as a blonde centerfold playmate) and watch as the soul of Hans, com-

manding the actions of Christina, seeks revenge on the three louts who never paid for the murder of Christina's father.

This entry does contain some wonderful sequences with the Baron, especially the film's novel beginning which establishes Baron Frankenstein as the continually resurrected star of the series (unlike the Universal series where the Monster was constantly being *reborn*). Here, in a tense sequence, Dr. Hertz is counting down the minutes until *exactly* one hour has passed. The elderly, dazed doctor yells for a drink from young assistant Hans, who hands Hertz the entire bottle. Suddenly, the ice chamber door is opened and a huge metal coffin is wheeled out onto a conveyer rack. The crate lid is opened to reveal the deathlike, crystalized Baron Frankenstein. Quickly, wires are attached to the Baron and then to a huge metal grid overhead. Soon electrical charges are being blasted into the Baron, quickly reviving the scientist who had been dead for one hour. "See Hans, he's alive," Hertz proudly announces. Smelling salts bring the frozen doctor to consciousness.

"Of course I'm alive. For one whole hour I was dead. It was an hour, *wasn't* it? Why has my soul remained. . . *why!*"

In a dramatic twist of convention, the Baron is literally resurrected, brought back to life from the dead, in the film's first few minutes. By now, with this fourth entry in Hammer's Frankenstein series, it has been established that Cushing's Baron is the entire reason for being.

Once again the quaint town and its close-minded citizens become the villains, the enemy of the man of science. "He's some sort of monster in league with the devil himself," a citizen proclaims. Hans, who defends the Baron and his work, responds, "If it is a choice between him and they, I would pick *him* every time."

The other more visible villains are three young rich punks, sons of the elite of the community, who spend all their time dressed as fancy dandies drinking, partying and yet somehow they always come up short when it is time to pay their bill. The arrogance and callowness of the rich elite make this Frankenstein entry very class conscious. The Baron and Hertz are shown to be poorer than poor (with all their available cash going into the cost of their scientific apparatus) failing to even come up with the money needed to buy a simple bottle of champagne. Finally, the Baron sends Hans to go to the local Inn and tell the landlord to put the champagne on his charge. Later journeying to the pub for a meal, the Baron cleverly tells one of the louts who has been wounded in a knife fight with Hans, who was protecting the honor of Christina, that Dr. Hertz will

Baron Frankenstein confronts the forces of authority as assistant Thorley Walters (far right) looks on, from *FRANKENSTEIN CREATED WOMAN*.

render first-aid for a "slight charge," just enough to pay for the meal. Thus, the Baron, who was depicted as the epitome of aristocratic arrogance in the premiere entry, is now reduced to being one of the common folk to contrast his noble endeavors to the shallowness of the rich elite.

Unfortunately, Cushing's Baron here resembles Sherlock Holmes (Rathbone style) and Walter's Dr. Hertz resembles Dr. Watson (Nigel Bruce's doddering old fool). The wizened Baron is very impatient with those ordinary people who fail to immediately comprehend his work. "Haven't you grasped anything I've been doing these last six months?" to which the diligent, dedicated Dr. Hertz humbly responds that he is just a drunken old muddle-head. But the truth remains that the Baron's hands have been damaged (a possible tie-in to the explosive finale to *Evil of Frankenstein*?), a fact made clear by the black gloves the Baron wears. When carrying a coffin late in the film, the Baron grunts and grimaces in pain. Earlier, while working in the lab, the Baron is unable to twist a dial and needs assistance. During the all-important surgery, Hertz admits, "The hands were mine; the skill was his!" While Cushing is constantly reminding the kindly Dr. Hertz what he doesn't know and how ignorant he is, the fact remains that the Baron depends upon Hertz's medical skills and steady hands to carry out *all* his work. And the Baron's cold, cruel self-centeredness makes Hertz all the more lovable.

When his young assistant Hans is on trial for a murder he did not commit, Cushing speaks on his behalf in court, politely compassionate yet looking annoyingly at his watch as if precious time is being wasted. "I am a doctor of medicine, law, psychics," and when he is accused of witchcraft, declares that he would have a degree in that too if one were offered. When the court sarcastically accuses him of being a clever man, the Baron proudly retorts, "Yes I am." The Baron quickly sputters out that Hans has been "trustworthy, diligent, quick-witted," etc. and that as a scientist he would conclude, "it is extremely unlikely that he could commit murder." When countered with the question: "Impossible?", the Baron glumly responds, "No, *not* impossible."

As soon as Hans is convicted upon circumstantial evidence, instead of mourning the fact, the Baron is almost exuberant, "This is our chance!" To which Dr. Hertz asks, "Is it right?" To which the Baron states, "What is right" explaining he plans to capture Han's soul in his apparatus. As he cheerfully tells Hertz, "Bodies are easy to come by, souls are not!"

The Baron's theory is a simple one: that the human soul doesn't leave the body at the instant of death. If the soul can be contained while the body is repaired, the soul and body can later be united after the body has been "fixed." The arrogant doctor declares, "This is not supposition, it's a fact!" to which he finally summarizes, "*I* have conquered death!" The Baron's ego has not seen this amount of inflation since *Curse of Frankenstein*.

Peter Cushing, never looking better as Baron Frankenstein, strikes a sinister poise (notice the black gloves) from *FRANKENSTEIN CREATED WOMAN.*

Later, when Christina murders two of the young louts who framed Hans for the murder of her father, the town citizenry begins to suspect the Baron's witchcraft being at the cause of this violent murder spree. "Is this why you interrupt my work! For this fantasy!!" When the police announce they might have to take steps, the Baron indignantly responds, "You mean you will *burn* me!" instantly calming himself, he now speaks to reason. "What can I do to convince you that you are wrong. . . How can I make you understand? The murderer will strike again unless I get to her first. . . It seems you beheaded the wrong man!" The police respond, "You take us for fools!" to which the Baron quickly and honestly says, "Yes!!!"

During the sixties, the elderly Baron's disdain for authority made him a hero to the youth who purchased the tickets. Today, his pompous self-importance seems less heroic. Yet, even with all his pomposity and posturing, the audience still sides with the often too demanding Baron.

In an abrupt finale, the Baron once again utilizing a horse-drawn carriage to catch up to the murdering Christina/Hans creature (she carries the head of her decapitated lover in her hat box and his spirit gives her murderous commands), the Baron arrives a moment too late, finding the stabbed-to-desth corpse of the third hoodlum as Christina is told by the head that she can now rest, which means a suicidal leap into a raging river. The Baron slowly walks away in disgust.

While Cushing's performance is kinetic, verbally sharp, and comfortable (for the Baron must now seem like an old pair of broken-in slippers to Cushing), the script once again lessens his importance and reduces his characterization to a one-dimensional stereotype. At least *The Evil of Frankenstein*, a far inferior film, kept the Baron front and center and pivotal to the story. Here, in *Frankenstein Created Woman* we once again yearn for the complexities of character which the last three entries introduced and developed.

"Stupidity does bring out the worst in me!"—FRANKENSTEIN MUST BE DESTROYED]1969; Screenplay by Bert Batt (from an orginal story by producer Anthony Nelson Keys and Batt); Directed by Terence Fisher]

After two screenplays by Jimmy Sangster where Baron Frankenstein's character was primarily evil and two screenplays by John Elder whereby the virtuous and heroic qualities of the character emerge, now the screenplay by Bert Batt invigorates the series with Hammer's finest Frankenstein script yet. Developing Sangster's conception of Baron Frankenstein rather than Elder's, Bert Batt restores the Baron as an inherently evil personality, a person more loathsome than Karloff's Frankenstein Monster could ever hope to be. And finally, Hammer has the budget to produce an "A" quality production, again directed by Terence Fisher, which features Peter Cushing in practically every scene, the major flaw with *Frankenstein Created Woman*. Many consider *Frankenstein Must Be Destroyed* to be the finest entry in the series, and while some may still prefer *Revenge of Frankenstein*, this production highlights Hammer at its creative peak.

Just as the James Bond films became famous for pre-credit sequences which had little to do with the ensuing movie, Hammer here has fun with resurrecting Baron Frankenstein one more time. The movie unfurls with a closeup on another hat box (a carryover image from *Created Woman*) and another ghastly decapitation. An intruder breaks into Frankenstein's subterranean laboratory (a reference to the lab in *Revenge of Frankenstein*) and gasps as he sees an "unborn" body hanging suspended in a glass case (another reference to *Revenge*), the intruder is surprised by the sudden appearance of a horrible looking fiend who carries the hat box containing the severed head. The two struggle, damaging the lab in the process, until the intruder runs off. Suddenly, the fiend pulls the fake rubber mask from his face, revealing the dashing features of Peter Cushing. Once again, this rather silly premise of having the Baron wear a Halloween mask as camouflage when committing murder becomes a strong visual image to introduce the returning Baron, almost intended as a *wink* to Hammer fans of the series.

But from this point, the film be-

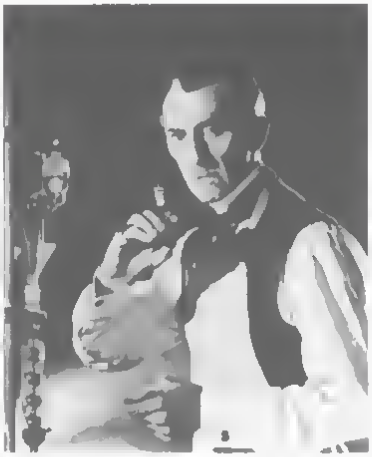
comes very somber and ultimately depressing, establishing a far darker, realistic tone to this entry.

The youth interest is supplied by handsome Simon Ward (Dr. Karl Holst) and lovely Veronica Carlson (Anna), pawns in the manipulative game of Frankenstein. Fleeing his laboratory at the film's beginning, the Baron rents a room at the boarding house of Anna, single, who runs the establishment alone, using all her money to pay for expensive hospital bills for her critically ill mother. Financial help comes from Dr. Holst, Anna's finance, who claims, "Illegal drugs are one market where money does not dry up." in charge of drugs at the mental hospital where he works, Holst changes the records to hide his illegal activity, all the profit going to pay for Anna's mother's medical expenses.

Unfortunately, the Baron overhears this conversation while he is just outside the front door. Holst, inside, realizes he dropped a box of cocaine on the doorstep, now conveniently found by the Baron who, smiling politely, returns the box to Holst. "I found this on your doorstep... it's cocaine, isn't it?" Holtz and Anna excuse themselves, but the Baron charges to the door, turns, and declares, "*Neither* of you are going anywhere tonight. Both of you are involved in very *illegal* business!" The young doctor thinks the Baron wants blackmail money, but instead, he announces "I want your help."

The first favor immediately occurs when the Baron has Anna eject all four of the guests staying in the boarding house. The night before, the tenants were describing the Baron as "damn surly" and as one who hardly ever manages to say one word to the others Enter the Baron who immediately goes to his own corner of the parlour sitting at a desk with his back to the others. They discuss "the worst madman of the decade, Dr. Frederick Brandt" who five years earlier caused "such a furor" in the medical world with the "devilish notion" of transplanting brains. They also mention another doctor who shared the same Idea, Baron Frankenstein from Bohemia. "Ran him out of his country as well." Both are referred to as "the devil's disciples."

The Baron, listening to all this talk, calmly and politely interjects, "Excuse me, I didn't know you were doctors!" The tenants immediately announce they are not. "Ah, I thought you knew what you were talking about... stupidity brings out the worst in me... fools like you." The pompous guests all express outrage and declare their new guest to be extremely rude. Debating the use of the word "progress" as the Baron uses it, the Baron draws a parallel for them. "Man is given to invention and experiment. If that were not true, we would still be eating in caves, stringing bones about the floor, and



A striking publicity pose depicting the aging Baron as he appeared in *FRANKENSTEIN MUST BE DESTROYED*.

wiping our fingers on animal skins. in fact, your lapels do look kind of greasy... Good night!!" Of course the Baron cannot continue his experiments with these closed-minded gentlemen around.

When the Baron announces who he really is, Karl Holst proclaims, "I thought the world has seen the last of you!" And then the Baron announces his plans: to rescue Dr. Brandt from the mental hospital, cure his insanity, and learn Brandt's theories on transplanting the human brain, the work of which the Baron adouts has progressed further than his own. And since Karl works as a doctor in the hospital, the Baron needs his assistance to supply floor plans, supply entrance to rooms, and aid in sedating other patients during the kidnapping.

The Baron's self-professed righteous cause is preserving the brains of the great minds of the world. He claims their bodies get sick and die, the bodies are buried and rot while the mind is at the peak of its development. Brain transplants would allow the bodies to be fixed and the brain to be returned, just as his theory of capturing the human soul while the body was being repaired was established in the last entry.

Of course, after the kidnapping of Brandt from the hospital, Brandt suffers a heart attack and will die unless the Baron transplants his brain into a new body immediately; the ideal choice is one Dr. Richter, one of the chief doctors who works in the mental hospital. Karl realizes one life would have to be sacrificed: "That would be murder!" The Baron, smiling, states, "You're use to that by now." (referring to Karl's earlier murder of an elderly night watchman in the drug supply storage room).

Very interesting Is Frankenstein's relationship to the beautiful Anna, a person the Baron seems to enjoy terrifying. Assisting the Baron in examining Brandt after he is first kidnapped, Anna is cleaning up the superficial cuts on his face as the doctor listens to Brandt's heart. Finishing up and walking away, the Baron screams at her, "I'm not done yet!" Constantly, throughout the movie, the Baron demands that Anna make him coffee. But Karl claims the Baron does not need Anna and demands he let her go, but he calmly counters, "I need her—to make coffee." The ultimate outrage occurs when Anna la preparing for bed in her room, her sensuous form silhouetted under her night gown by the lamp light as the Baron passes by her room and stops. "Please leave my room," she implores. The Baron locks the door from the inside, and she demands firmly that he give her the key, holding her robe up to cover her scantily clad figure. He holds out his hand with the key in it, but as Anna pensively approaches him, he throws the key on the bed, to which she races. There the Baron animalistically attacks Anna, ripping apart the back of her gown, throwing her down on the bed, he on top of her. As the passive Anna squirms and screams, the Baron cruelly satisfies his sexual appetite.

The Baron's debonair and outwardly aristocratic attitude, always calm and under control when interacting in public, sometimes less controlled internally or when around people such as Holtz who know the real personality, can best be seen in the sequence involving Brandt's wife recognizing the Baron on the streets as he buys a flower for his coat lapel. Following Frankenstein to the boarding house, she knocks on the door and inquires, "Is Baron Frankenstein staying here?" Thinking cleverly and rapidly on his feet, the smiling and charming scientist breaks to the front door and states, "It was my intention to call on *you* this evening. Your husband is here. It was the only way I had to save him," referring to the fact that if he had asked to experiment on her husband, she would have definitely denied him access.

Taking this woman who has been in contact with the police seemingly into his confidence, he continues, "It was within my power to help him. He's downstairs—he Is safe." The Baron, very accommodating, very helpful, leads Mrs. Brandt into the cellar and shows her the bandaged form of her husband (unknown to her, his brain now in another man's body). There the Baron allows her to ask her husband questions which he can answer with a simple yes or no using his left hand. The Baron smiles, "He's cured!" Showing Mrs. Brandt upstairs, he insists, "You must never speak of this to *anyone*. You

may come here anytime to visit. In one week you and he can begin a new life."

Showing the satisfied Mrs. Brandt to the front door and slowly closing the door behind her, the Baron frantically turns and shouts, "Pack! We're leaving." In other words, we once again see the difference between the cultured gentleman persona which the Baron easily assumes and the cutthroat, manipulative, cold persona within. And Cushing plays this ambiguity with such craft and energy.

Several sequences throughout the movie show the majestic Baron sitting most elegantly in his padded chair, smoking a cigar, snipping on delicate cup of tea/coffee, propped up in front of the fireplace. Contrasted to this elite comfort, being waited on hand and foot by Karl and mostly Anna, the beast in the Baron, lurking just below the surface, often emerges showing his savage side. Planning an escape by stealing the carriage from the stables, the Baron surprises Karl's plan when he mysteriously appears and says, "What are you doing, Karl!" The two immediately fight, and while the Baron must be twice as old as the youthful Karl, the physically adept Baron wins the slugfest. Anna, inside, is confronted by the now conscious and freely walking Richter/Brandt creature. In fear, wielding a scalpel, Anna stabs the misunderstood resurrected man and, in a daze, sits on the stairs holding the bloody instrument. Returning, the Baron hears from Anna's own lips what she has done (the stab wound was not severe) and in immediate rage plunges the knife into Anna's lower chest killing her instantly. Never has the evil of the Baron been delivered quite so callously and in such a cold manner.

At the film's again fiery climax, the disappointed Brandt, not happy with being reborn in another man's body, plots a fitting end for the Baron. Pulling out his notes which he realizes is the Baron's only reason for keeping him alive, he places the papers on his desk and places oil lamps all around the house pouring kerosene throughout. Once the Baron arrives, Brandt plays a game of cat and mouse, "I fancy I am the spider and you are the fly," setting the house ablaze and challenging the Baron to find the room where the papers are before everything goes up in smoke. Just barely finding the brain transplant notes in time, racing frantically out of the house, the Baron is tripped by the just-arriving evenging Karl who is struck unconscious by Brandt who drags the Baron, kicking and screaming, back into the flaming inferno to both their supposed deaths.

In sharp contrast to the dignified, eccentric yet highly likeable Baron of the John Elder scripted movies, Bert Batt reconstructs Baron Victor Frankenstein esa pompous, self-centered, manipulative, cruel bastard, a role performed brilliantly by Peter Cushing. Many Hammer fans sometimes wish the Hammer series had ended here on this artistic high note, but one more Frankenstein film was to follow, the final film directed by the aging Terence Fisher.

The debonair Baron leads the distressed Mrs. Brandt down to see her husband. "He is safe," the Baron declares, from *FRANKENSTEIN MUST BE DESTROYED*.

Ten days! If I've succeeded, every sacrifice would have been worthwhile!"—*FRANKENSTEIN AND THE MONSTER FROM HELL* [1974; Screenplay by John Elder (Anthony Hinds); Directed by Terence Fisher]

By the mid-seventies, Peter Cushing looked older than his years, his body too thin, his face hollow and gaunt, obviously wearing a curly-haired wig for his final performance as the Baron. And while the aging Terence Fisher would never again direct another film (he would die in 1976), this also spelled the final major performance for Peter Cushing in e Hammer Film. And while most critics easily dismiss this film's importance, it is e wonderful, fitting finale to an important series.

Once again John Elder (Anthony Hinds) submits the screenplay, his finest entry in the series, again returning the Baron to more sympathetic, heroic proportions, although not the dashing romantic hero of *Evil* nor the one-dimensional obsessive seeker of knowledge of *Created Woman*. John Elder finally got the complexities of the Baron right, submitting a script that allows Peter Cushing to add a new dimension to his faithful old friend the Baron. And while Hammer's faltering budget was beginning to show somewhat, Terence Fisher mounted a wonderful production with a creepy asylum set and superior acting by even the bit players. Though unjustly maligned and viewed as fluff when compared to *Must Be Destroyed*, *Frankenstein and The Monster From Hell* is one of the best entries in the series, both from the point of view of overall story, acting, and Cushing's always impressive performance. The film is only compromised by the horrible execution of the Monster (here played by Dave Prowse) which rivals the ineptness of the monster in *Evil*.

By this time the Baron's work has been published and copied by eager epprentices, in this case Dr. Simon Helder (Shane Briant), a man who pays for corpses from graverobbers. Unfortunately, the police are able to trace these nefarious affairs to Helder's home laboratory where a policeman finds the stolen corpse and a jar of human eyeballs. Panicking, the officer spills the eyes to the disgust of the doctor—"You bloody fool. If only you could eppreciate the difficulty in getting specimens like these!" Calmly admitting he plans to "stitch them [body parts] together to create a new man," the doctor is arrested for "sorcery" and sentenced by a lenient judge to five years in the State Asylum for the Criminally Insane. Young Helder protests, "I am e doctor, you know. I've been involved in research... for the good of mankind," but the judge is not impressed reminding the young doctor that he sentenced,

years ago, a Baron Frankenstein to the same asylum for similar offenses. At this point Simon's eyes light up.

Arriving at the medieval appearing asylum, the cruel guards give the cooperative surgeon an "initiation" whereby he is bathed with a fire hose which bloodies him and knocks him unconscious. As all the inmates stand around enjoying this sadistic entertainment, the festivities are brought to a somber conclusion by the sudden appearance of the resident physician at the asylum, Baron Victor Frankenstein!

"Go back to your rooms. It's all over. Quietly, don't rush." To the guards, he snaps in a firmer tone, "You will follow me..." The Baron quickly leads them to the office of the Asylum Director, a quirky, nervous sort who talks too much as though to hide his insecurity. At this point the Baron catches the Director with a half-dressed girl, obviously an inmate with whom he has been having intimate relations. "Don't act like an animal toward my patients!" the Baron yells. "If thet happens again, I'll leave this place. The Baron is dead, remember? As resident doctor I can leave." Demanding the Director reprimand the guards for their cruelty, the Director immediately obeys the Baron's demands as Frankenstein is obviously running the asylum, a fitting metaphor for the lunatica taking over the asylum. The Baron complains to the Director that he has been unable to pick up his special medical supplies because past bills have not been paid. The Director agrees to rectify the situation immediately after the Baron reminds him that the asylum's budget for library books does not include rare collector's items such as the ones on the Director's desk. It is apparent that the clever Baron has dug up enough dirt on the Director thet he can now call the shots. After at first refusing the brandy the Director offers, the Baron now says, "I'll take that brandy." The Director, smiling, assumes the Baron will drink with him here in his office. "No, I'll take it with me. I have work to do!!" the Baron snaps.

The Baron and his female assistant Sarah, a mute girl called the Angel by the inmates because of her charitable, nurselike nature, sees to Simon's wounds. Helder of course recognizes the Baron and announces thet he has read his published works and has been trying to duplicate his experiments, without much success. The Baron needs an assistant to carry out the demands of attending to the needs of the inmates because he requires "more time to devote. . . to my own private work" and immedlately forces the Director to sign the papers making the Simon his new assistant with all privileges. As the Baron tells the Director, "He is no more insane than you or I" and the irony here is that both men, the Baron and Director, are of questionable mental health. The two main points the Baron stresses to Simon is thet the Baron is dead, buried in the courtyard out back, and thet before he passed on, "the Baron collected some notes on how this establishment is run" putting him in a position of power. At the asylum, the Baron is known as Dr. Carl Victor.

The Baron makes the medical rounds with Simon telling the young apprentice that these will be his duties tomorrow. We meet a man who believes he is God, standing against his cell wall with his arms outstretched. The Baron declares, "He's not the first man, nor will he be the last man, who thinks he is God." Of course the obvious analogy to the Baron makes the viewer question the so-called genius or insanity of the Baron himself. Soon the Baron points out a special corridor section claiming these are his very special patients that he will continue to care for himself. The first cell is empty, the thick metal bars twisted and torn. The Baron claims the inmate committed suicide by jumping thirty-feet and still refused to die. The Baron notes his "pure animal strength," calling the inmate a "throwback, more animal than human." Then they call upon the Professor, a man who loves playing and composing music for the violin, of which he composed a song called *The Angel* for Sarah whom he claims "is more beautiful than music." A student of pure mathematical theory, formulas are sprawled all over the walls, he claims math is "almost as beautiful as this one here," referring to Sarah. The Baron calls the Professor a genius, but claims when roused he becomes as savage as a cat (and has savagely attacked the Director in the past). Another inmate curves beautiful statues, one of an angel he gives to Sarah (the Angel). "See those hands. . .Would you think it possible for those hands to do this sort of work!" the Baron announces to Simon. Slowly it becomes apparent that the Baron uses patients in his special ward, much like his Free Ward in *Revenge of Frankenstein*, as a reserve for body parts needed in future experiments. However, he subtlety disguises this fact for some time. Fisher's direction of the individual inmates is interesting and a highlight of the film. The twisted turnabout of having the anti-societal Baron running the insane asylum, his position of power juxtaposed to all the kindly, misunderstood, and sympathetic "lunatics" locked inside, the obviously perverted and unbalanced Director a pawn in the Baron's pocket, is more than just a tad ironic. Elder's script seeks to have the audience question the concept of insanity and who really here in the asylum is insane; the answer is not easy nor obvious.

Simon, discovering a secret entrance by which Sarah exits, enters to find a beastly monster contained in a locked steel cell. Obviously the man who fell thirty-feet to his death did not stay dead. He also notices the hands of the sculptor have been crudely sewed to the monstrous hairy limbs of this "throwback." The Baron proudly declares, when Simon notices these hands, "It is an accomplished fact, something I hope you appreciate."

The Monster (Dave Prowse) from *FRANKENSTEIN AND THE MONSTER FROM HELL* is about to run amuck at the asylum.

Peter Cushing in his final appearance as the Baron, obviously wearing a wig, takes new assistant Shant Briant on a tour of the asylum, from *FRANKENSTEIN AND THE MONSTER FROM HELL*.

Speechless, Simon slowly utters, "I've heard you were a *brilliant* surgeon," to which the Baron answers, "I was, still am, in here" pointing to his head. Still wearing the black gloves from the last John Elder scripted *Created Woman*, the Baron slowly peels off the gloves to reveal burned, deformed hands. "They were burned in the interest of science." Thus, Sarah's crude surgery accounts for the piecemeal monster before them. Simon excitedly announces he is not just a doctor but a surgeon, and for the first time in a long while, the Baron's eyes light up.

During an operation which Simon performs, the elder teacher watches Simon like a hawk ("No, never use a dirty instrument!") and is impressed as new eyes are added to his creation. At the conclusion the Baron, with an air of anticipation about him, says, "In one hour we will see!" To which Simon smiles and retorts, "Let us hope it is he who sees!" For the first time, the Baron repeats the obvious joke, laughing out loud. "I like that!" Thus, a very human, low-key moment erupts from the formerly rigid, humorless Baron. Little touches such as this one add a layer of humanity to the stuffy old Baron's character.

The only thing left, as the Baron declares, is a brain, "preferably the brain of a genius." Simon immediately fears that the Baron intends to kill the kindly old professor for his brain. "I'm not a murderer, Simon," the Baron indignantly utters. However, the next morning the Professor is found dead, having hanged himself with his violin strings. The Baron coolly proclaims, "The question of a brain has been settled." Only later does Simon find a medical record note in the Professor's violin case which claims the Professor is "incurable." Simon obviously understands why the Baron allowed the note to fall within reach of the professor. The Baron defends himself stating, "I was unable to cure him—could *you*!!! Then. . he was incurable." Thus technically the Baron is correct when he stated he wasn't a murderer, but he is guilty of orchestrating the ultimate depression which led the Professor to kill himself, bringing the same practical results as cold-blooded murder would have produced.

Unfortunately, although the brain transplant is successful, the desired results are not. The Baron Frankenstein of Bert Batt's *Must Be Destroyed* script would never share credit or act humbly, but the Baron of Elder's script is quite willing to give credit where due. Immediately after the operation, the Baron states, "Simon, thank you! Ten days. . . If I've succeeded, every sacrifice would have been worthwhile." To which Simon says, "You've done it!" To which the Baron corrects, "No, *we've* done it, the *three* of us," even crediting Sarah. However, during the monster's convalescence, the beast becomes frustrated while groping for his violin which he smashes in his depression. The Baron loses patience demanding, "You must learn to use them [his hands]. You will learn You must practice coordination!"

Finally, the Baron admits defeat claiming, "We failed, Simon. At least I failed. . . the body is rejecting the brain; the man will become a cabbage and die." Simon tells the Baron he must be patient. Soon the monster reverts to his old brain mentality (before the transplant), picking up shattered pieces of glass which he uses as a weapon (something the Professor never did). Once when Simon is being threatened by the glass wielding fiend, the Baron, in classic Cushing style, smashes a bottle of sleeping gas containing its potent vapors within a cloak, jumps upright upon a table, and dives onto the monster's back pulling the cloak over the monster's head, rendering the fiend unconscious as it struggles to throw the pest from his shoulders much like a bucking bronco desires to throw a cowboy to the dirt in a rodeo. At over sixty years of age, Cushing still displays his kinetic vigor of old.

"We were both right and wrong. The body is taking over the brain. . . there is still a way to succeed!" the Baron proclaims. His bizarre plan is to "capture the essence of the man, that a new version of the man is born." This will be carried out by mating the monster with Sarah, an idea which does not please Simon. Simon warns, "You cannot divorce science from humanity," displaying the fact that Simon is a youthful mirror image of the Baron, but a mirror image with a soul and conscience, the tragic flaw missing in the Baron's character. Adding sexist drivel, the Baron declares, "Her real function as a woman could be fulfilled." The Baron warns Simon, "Don't do anything stupid." Of course he, the concerned protector of Sarah, does!

Attempting to stab and destroy the *beast* before it savages its *beauty*, Simon is momentarily distracted by the Angel herself and the monster grabs his wrist escaping. Soon the Director and inmates see the fiend digging up graves in the courtyard, apparently having a desire to see where his second-hand body parts originated. After killing the Director by slitting his throat with a broken piece of glass, the monster slowly ambles down into the lower inmate cell area. The guards fire pistols and double the monster over in pain, the sympathetic Angel offering her out-stretched hand for support. However, the inmates fearing that Sarah will be attacked, brutally attack and kill the beast. Entering the scene, the wounded Baron takes control. "Silence! Go back to your rooms. It's all over now. All over." Turning to the guards, he smugly utters, "*Now* you can use your hose. Make this place clean."

The final sequence is impressive, displaying a very energetic and invigorated Baron speaking to Simon. "We have a lot of work. Too much reliance on surgery, not enough on bio-chemistry. He was of no

more use to us or himself. This was the best thing that could have happened. But next time! We shall start afresh!!!" With that twinkle in the eye and hope in the future, the Baron, having only lost one small battle, prepares to win the war. Never discouraged, never defeated, he eagerly prepares to begin his work anew. Unfortunately, Hammer never continues the series but at least the final screen appearance of Baron Frankenstein displays exultstion and childlike enthusiasm at the thought of continuing his work, no matter how realistic these goals may be.

For somehow, this final impression of Cushing as the Baron is sad. By now everyone in the theater realizes that the show is over for the Baron, that the escape of the monster, the murder of the Director, and the spectacle observed by the inmates themselves cannot be easily swept under the carpet and forgotten, as the Baron assumes it can. The jig is obviously up. Investigations would expose the obvious fact that an inmate is running the asylum and that the Baron's secret position of power would be exposed. Even though he earlier threatened to simply walk out and leave the asylum, and now he expresses a similar desire to continue his work, the fact remains that the Baron, no matter how clever he might be, is reacting in an unrealistic manner. In basic terms, intelligent or not, much like the kindly Professor whose violent rages got him locked away forever in an asylum cell, the Baron is obviously insane and acts out a dream fantasy. After a lifetime of fighting society and its confining, conservative mores and laws, the combatant Baron has finally cracked under the pressure. No longer viewed as cruel nor cold-blooded (at least as the earlier Bert Batt script depicted him), the Baron finally becomes an object of our pity, a sad, pathetic broken man who never achieves his cherished goals of a lifetime. On this note, the Hammer series concludes.

We must always bear in mind that the Hammer Frankenstein series was never concocted as a continuing series from its conception. Hammer Films, much like Val Lewton films decades before, were sold on titles, star appeal, and monster/name recognition. Just as lack of continuity often marred the Christopher Lee Dracula films, the Frankenstein/Cushing series only contained one constant, Peter Cushing. The screenplays revolved between Jimmy Sangster, John Elder, and Bert Batt. The director in five films was Terence Fisher, but Freddie Francis directed the fourth entry. Thus, when speaking of the evolving character of Baron Victor Frankenstein (aka Dr. Franck, Dr. Stein, Dr. Victor, etc.), we are not speaking of one artistic vision written and directed by tha same team or same person. Instead, we are speaking of the dedication and vision of one talented thespian to imbue craft, caring, and passion into a "B" film characterization that rises far above and beyond the parameters of low-budget filmmaking. Working with a variety of writers, more than one director, constantly changing casts, weaker or stronger scripts, the talents of Peter Cushing shine brightly and serve as a unifying artistic beacon which merges all the disparate components of the series into a unified whole. No small feat!

Whether dealing with the Baron's aristocracy and single-minded determination of Jimmy Sangster's initial script, through the creation of the dichotomy of character inherent in Sangster's second entry (whereby the gentile public-persona Baron is contrasted to the actual self-serving butcher of the underprivileged in *Revenge of Frankenstein*); whether dealing with Jimmy Sangster's vision of the Baron as dashing romantic hero or obsessive (yet somehow lovable nonetheless), self-absorbed scientist; whether dealing with Bert Batt's conception of the Baron as someone ultimately evil and cold-bloodedly cruel, committing whatever acts necessary to achieve his goals; or whether dealing with John Elder's final script whereby the Baron, obviously out of touch with reality, eagerly looks forward to the continuation of his work even though his ruse of being the resident doctor at the State Insane Asylum has been exposed; the one constant force which melds all these contrasting elements together is Peter Cushing, an actor who spent his entire career proving that low-budget movie acting, while not Shakespeare, could be just as serious, emotional, expansive, and ultimately *moving*. Whether playing the Baron as a hero or as the personification of pure evil, Cushing made the viewer care about his persona and respond accordingly. Whether committing murder, portraying the dashing romantic hero of the boudoir, or lecturing on the stupidity of the common citizen, Peter Cushing made Baron Victor Frankenstein coherent, consistent, and believable, even if the opposing and oftentimes contrasting character changes in each successive script did not. For one rare time, an acting talent solidified the artistic vision of a movie series much more so than did even the writers, producers, and directors involved. Meshing separate pieces from different puzzles, to use an analogy, the superlative talents of Peter Cushing allowed him to create a cohesive whole, an artistic vision that satisfied, where everything somehow fit, amazing as this might sound. He forged this vision by tha sheer determination of talent and will. Peter Cushing was more than simply the ace up Hammer's sleeve; he was, quite simply, the entire franchise.

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Why isn't your name in this box above? You too can contribute to the *Midnight Marquee* family. We need all sorts of articles on topics you find interesting. Have any ideas, write to the editor. You can be writing for *MidMar* as soon as next issue. Why wait. Oh yes, we also need art as well. We are a non-profit publicabon, but after 31 years, we do offer prestige and longevity.

THE HAMMER FACTORY

HAMMER FILMS, CORMAN STYLE

By Fred Olen Ray

When people think of cost-cutting practices in the Motion Picture industry, they invariably think of the low-budget antics of Roger Corman. Time and time again Corman pulled every trick in his repertoire to get films produced as quickly and economically as possible. Eyeing the potential profits as he careened recklessly through filming, he established a solid cast and crew that sped from picture to picture with dependable skills and just the right glib attitude to pull off the seemingly impossible.

Always looking for the deal, Corman spearheaded several haphazard filming techniques that were rarely imitated, or even successful, when used by other filmmakers.

One of his most often used techniques was the filming of more than one picture on the same sets or locations as another film. Sometimes the financing for the first picture would come from outside, and when completed, Corman and his entourage would linger on for another week and shoot an even cheaper picture thet he, himself, would own.

This happened when Corman made *She Gods of Shark Reef* (1956) for a private group of investors and followed it up with his self-financed *Naked Paradise* (1956). While in South Dakota he shot *Ski Troop Attack* (1960) and *Beast From The Haunted Cave* (1960) back-to-back with the same cast; in Puerto Rico they made three consecutive pictures: the color *Last Woman on Earth, Battle of Blood Island* (featuring a cast of two), and *Creature From the Haunted Sea* (all 1960).

Dementia 13 (1963) was made during breaks in the filming of *The Young Racers* (1963) and so forth. As sometimes happens, the quality varied amongst the different projects, but undoubtedly, money was saved.

One of the foremost companies to try their hand at such a procedure was Hammer Films. In the 1966 they attempted to produce two sets of movies utilizing the same sets and some of the same personnel in an effort to economize and perhaps increase the speed with which films were released into the marketplace. The movies were *Dracula, Prince of Darkness* and *Rasputin, The Mad Monk*, both starring Christopher Lee and Barbara Shelley, followed by *The Reptile* and *Plague of the Zombies*. Like Corman the subterfuge was disguised by sending the pictures out co-billed in a mixture of the two groups, thus *Dracula* went out with *Plague* and *Rasputin* with *The Reptile*. Corman had co-billed the Dakota lensed *Ski Troop Attack* with the Puerto Rican *Battle of Blood Island* with the same basic idea: don't get caught.

Thus the re-use of the sets was less likely to be noticed by the movie-goer. In some instances they tripped themselves up—i.e. The Tsarina's Palace exterior in *Rasputin* (aka Dracula's castle in *Prince of Darkness*) looks suspiciously like the remote country home thet Rasputin is lured to at the climax. Even the churchyard in *The Reptile* looks like Dracula's castle revamped.

The re-use of the sets withstanding, the pictures must be seen as individual efforts and stand or fall on their own merits. I, personally, have always *wanted* to like *The Reptile*. The combination of elements seemed like such a sure-fire winner: Foreign curse, mystical religious overtones, large-breasted reptile monster, Cornish village setting, and Noel Willman. Can't beat it? Well, maybe . . .

The Reptile, like its partner-in-crime *Plague of the Zombies*, seems to lay bare some deep inner dread and loathing for the non-British cultures thet torment them. The English seem to be punishing themselves for their attempts to subjugate people and their religious beliefs in distant lands.

While the East indian influence is still quite thick in the UK, they do seem to be very wary of their actual culture and customs, beyond a good lamb biriyani, mind you. The same creeping guilt also manifests itself in Tyburn's *The Ghoul* in which Peter Cushing's son is cursed by Indians to be the flesh-eating Ghoul of the title and the British lensed *Oblong Box*. What are the English so afraid of?

In *Plague of the Zombies* it is a Haitian problem that haunts the same little Cornish village. It's almost as if the under-trod are coming back to get their persecutors in the form of ethnic monsters—literally turning members of the local populace into beasts that represent their various cultural backgrounds. In each of the two films the town is plagued by a strange illness, equating death. In *The Reptile* it's the *Black Death*, in *Plague*, well, they just don't know, but the villagers are dropping like flies.

In both films they dig up their dead to have a second look-see. In both films Michael Ripper does some digging. Coincidence? I think not. In both films the evil originates in a far off country and centers its current activities in a large manor house decorated with art objects from that far-off country. Both films end in a big fire with the monster(s) getting their licks in on the responsible party.

The make-up for the Reptile is barely passable. In fact, it really doesn't extend down beyond the girl's cheeks. In a darkened cellar room or a quick cut it looks

Above: *RASPUTIN, THE MAD MONK*, with Christopher Lee, is the runt of the litter; Bottom: *THE PLAGUE OF THE ZOMBIES* lays bare deep inner dread and loathing for the non-British cultures.

okay, but still photographs show it for what it really is: a sort of half-done job. Whenever confronted with a question about the quality (or lack of it), makeup maestro Roy Ashton has always side-stepped, artfully pointing out that the fangs really dripped venom!

The *Plague* zombie makeup is much better, though inconsistent. The masks worn by the flaming stuntmen at the climax are laughable, but overall the work is effective (never mind that the film's most dramatic use of the undead is in a dream sequence that takes place out of context with reality).

By comparison *Plague* is probably one of the liveliest Hammer films ever made. Stuff actually happens in the movie with some regularity. John Carson makes an excellent villain and for once a true feeling of horror is squeezed out of the viewer. Like most Hammer films, tha audience is way ahead of the people in the movie, waiting patiently for the film's characters to catch up with the rest of us. It's passable in *Plague* and unbearable in *The Reptile*. During the tedious course of *The Reptile* the audience almost feels like wising up the characters on screen. The audience knows everything within the first fifteen minutes and must now wait, thumbs a'twitter, while the heroes sort it all out in the slowest possible fashion. If only they'd seen the *Coming Attractions* . . .

The one aspect left to our imagination is what the Reptile girl looks like, but thanks to the movie's poster, we're ahead on that game as well. It has always amazed me that filmmakers go to such lengths to keep the monster's appearance a matter of mystery and then the distributors splash its image all over the advertising materials.

And let me remind you—I really do *want* to like *The Reptile*. It's just *soooo* hard. At one point the young hero walks into the local pub and, by God, they're actually singing *Shenandoah!* Unbelievable!

Of the four films being discussed *Dracula, Prince of Darkness* and *Plague* probably work out best, although *Dracula* plods along at a snail's pace. What probably salvages the films are a sort of twisted, kinky weirdness that lies just below the surface of good taste.

Obviously, zombie master Clive Hamilton (John Carson) lusts after Jackie Pearce, and who wouldn't? She's inconsistently (with most Hammer heroines) non-virginally sexy and stacked (even lying flat on her back dead in the morgue she's giving that shroud a good straining). And as one of the few holdovers between the two films, Pearce goes from being monster-girl in *The Reptile* to being monsterbait in *Plague*. I think she may have been dating some Hammer exec at the time. In both films she gets killed.

Dracula, likewise, has some nasty bits up his sleeve and serving up his own blood via an open chest wound certainly must have seemed rather perverse at the time. Blood, in fact, flows freest in these films and the Black Death is nothing to sneeze at either. In *Plague* it seemed like everyone wants to get laid. A further confession of the British loathing of foreign cultures?

Most Hammer villains were at least slightly noble (Hammer treated Egyptians somewhat better), here they wallow in their own decadence, corrupted by their exposure to non-British customs.

Rasputin, however touted, is the runt of the litter. It attempts to take on such a grandiose historical saga that it cannot hope to succeed. The sets are uncomfortably small with the actor's heads nearly scraping the ceilings in many cases. The Tsarina's palace is a barren place devoid of guards or servants or any sense of majesty for that matter. The story is noticeably scaled down to where every budgetary seam leaps out at the viewer. They dare not attempt to portray the great cities of Russia.

The presence of Christopher Lee, so uncharacteristically upbeat that it becomes humorous, is the film's only highlight.

Of the four films discussed here, *DRACULA, PRINCE OF DARKNESS* is one of the best two, though it plods along at a snail's pace.

***THE REPTILE*: featuring a foreign curse, mystical religious overtones, and Noel Willman (pictured above on top).**

Whether he's brooding or dancing a jig, Lee does not imbue the character with any of the complexities required to flesh out such a deviously calculating figure. Rasputin's motivations are murky and his control over the royal family is not explored. Tsar Nicholas does not even appear in the film —perhaps Michael Ripper was ill that day (too much digging?).

The picture fails miserably as a historical drama and worse as the horror picture as which it was advertised. Rasputin's supernatural healing powers are tossed off without so much as a hi-de-ho and his death scene was not nearly as dramatic as the real character's was said to be. The producers say they went to the trouble of having one of the (then still living) assassins sign off on the authenticity of the script, but they needn't have bothered. *Rasputin, The Mad Monk* could have easily been retitled *Rumplestilskin, The Mad Spinner* with equal success. It is fun, however, to watch Lee strut around like the *cock-of-the-walk*, thrilled silly to be anything but Dracula. It would be a wild guess, but I ought be convinced that *Rasputin* was the cheapest of all the four films and certainly the least enduring.

Even in death Lee lands on the ice that cracked the skull of the young Tsar earlier (although they are supposed to be two entirely different locations), and it is the same ice that gets him nilly-willy at the conclusion of *Dracula, Prince of Darkness*.

What order the films were shot in is still hazy as conflicting reports from the actors, directors, producers, and crew members vary. I suppose it really doesn't matter. The pictures achieved the desired result of cranking out a multiple package of films in record time at below normal cost and then foisting them onto Hammer-hungry fans when the monster cycle of the sixties was in bloom. Lucky boys and girls even received free *Dracula Fangs* and *Zombie Eye Protectors* when attending the promoted shock-fest. One can only wonder if the fangs dripped real venom . . .

Some call *Plague* and *Reptile* the *Cornball* (. . . er, Cornwall) *Classics* and perhaps they are on the basis of their wildly divergent storylines and approaches (Hammer would not stray this far from home for some time to come); *Dracula, Prince of Darkness* and *Rasputin, The Mad Monk* . . . well, they filled the other half of the bill and had Hammer's true bona fide star, Christopher Lee. Shouldn't that be enough?

In 1970 the Hammer boys would give it one more shot with *Scars of Dracula* and *Horror of Frankenstein*. Filmed back-to-back on the same cramped sets, the illusion evaporated quickly with their release in the States on the same double-bill. Oops. At least we still got Chris Lee as part of the bargain and, while still dull in a way only Hammer could make them, they were not bad pictures entirely. At least *Scars of Dracula* gave the viewer what he paid for—a movie in which Dracula was actually an integral force as opposed to the moveable prop he had become. The return to co-filming seemed again to be one of monetary consideration, but this time instead of trying to capitalize quickly on a hot trend, Hammer seemed to be gasping their last, trying to get a shaky foothold on that same tricky ice that their monsters were always slipping under.

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UPCOMING IN *MIDNIGHT MARQUEE* #48 (and beyond!!!), available in early 1995: Paul Naschy: The Saga of Waldemar Daninsky, "Tomorrow You'll Be One of Us": The Evolution of the Alien-Doppelganger Film, *Deliverance*: The Quest for Identity, The Most Violent Sequences from Film Noir, The *Re-Animator* Saga: It's Alive!, Horror Cinema from a Humanistic Perspective, *Dr. Jekyll/Mr. Hyde* reevaluated, *Night of the Living Dead* Remembered, plus our regular movie, laser, and book reviews, *Forgotten Faces of Fantastic Films*, etc. Don't dare miss this most exciting next issue!

SUBMIT TO GRAVE DIGGINGS: Our letter column has been growing and growing in recent issues of *MIDNIGHT MARQUEE*. We hope to see letters expand even more each and every issue. The letter column is a forum to voice concerns about any aspect of movies, not only the issue at hand. I wish to see more and more readers contribute to this reader's forum. Please write us!

HARLOTS, HEDONISTS, AND HEROINES:

THE WOMEN OF HAMMER FILMS

by Susan Svehla

Hammer Studios loved women... they loved to victimize them, rape them, undress them, exploit them, and generally use them as plot devices or attractive set decoration. In another article in this issue Dick Klemensen quotes Michael Carreras on Jeanne Roland's role in *The Curse of the Mummy's Tomb*: "I thought she was quite pretty. She had never acted in her life. I used her as an ornamental piece...That is all she was meant to be, more or less." This attitude could explain the reason Hammer fandom is mostly made up of males, much like the James Bond following.

From past Hammer viewing experiences, I had found little to like about their films. However, in watching numerous titles for this article, I was pleased to discover a few lesser known gems. Their strong female characters were not forced into the typical one-dimensional parts so prevalent in other films from the studio.

This is not a totally unbiased piece. I admit I don't like the way women were presented or treated in many of Hammer's films, and unlike other Hammer lovers or even haters, I did not grow up watching these films. But I did try to be objective and view these films from a different point of view than other writers.

Many of the main female characters of Hammer were rarely developed (although many of the stars were overdeveloped). Except for the obligatory nightgown clad, bosom heaving scenes, women often served no purpose in the films other than providing a lovely image for teenage boys with raging hormones, the most frequent customers of movie theatres and drive-ins.

Whether this was due to unenlightened screenplays or machismo on the part of directors and producers is not known.

What I find strange is the fact that except for the major players such as Cushing and Lee, Francis and Fisher, and one or two standout character actors such as Michael Ripper and Andre Morell, it's the women's roles that are most remembered, most talked about, and most written about.

HARLOTS

"You're behaving like a common whore..."
from *Rasputin the Mad Monk*

Often Hammer Studios almost seemed to be preaching a bizarre sort of morality in their productions. The aristocracy is usually portrayed as vile and decadent, causing misery and grief to the downtrodden masses before meeting a gruesome fate. Loose women are usually dealt with in the same manner.

In *Curse of Frankenstein* (1956) Baron Frankenstein's (Peter Cushing) naive fiancee comments it has always been her deepest desire to marry Victor, just as it has always been his deepest desire to marry her. Immediately after she utters this pitiful speech we see Frankenstein in a passionate embrace with the pretty maid Justine (Valerie Gaunt). The maid later threatens to expose his experiments to his fiancee and the authorities if he does not marry her, and she vows to find evidence. That night (of course clad in a filmy nightgown) she sneaks into the lab where Frankenstein locks her in with the monster.

Obviously neither Frankenstein nor screenwriter Jimmy Sangster hold her in high esteem for only an incredibly stupid woman would threaten a man as obsessed and dangerous as Frankenstein.

In *Revenge of Frankenstein* (1958) a young woman leaves her suitor in the bushes because "he won't get on with it" and meets her death at the hands of the latest incarnation of the monster.

Zena (Barbara Ewing), a buxom, randy barmaid in *Dracula has Risen from the Grave* (1968) faces the same fate as other brunettes in John Elder (Anthony Hinds) screenplays, always being rejected for the innocent blondes. It's interesting to note that this is an about face from films of the '30s and '40s where brunettes were always the wives or good girls and blondes such as Jean Harlow, Mae West, and Barbara Stanwyck were the bad girls or *other* women.

Zena falls into the typical lusty

TOP: Evil seductress Cecile Stapleton (Marla Landi) ready to let loose the hound of hell, from *HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES*; BOTTOM: Zena, from *DRACULA HAS RISEN FROM THE GRAVE*, faces the same fate as other brunettes in John Elder (Anthony Hinds) screenplays, always being rejected for the innocent blondes.

Hammer bad girl mode. She serves drinks as a reveler gleefully informs her "your dumplings are boiling over," leering down her low-cut blouse. She gaily laughs and answers "your fly is open."

Zena, summoned to Dracula's (Christopher Lee) presence, smiles rapturously clutching her neck. He orders her to bring Maria (Veronica Carlson) to him, which leads her to jealously demand to know why he wants her. Dracula, enraged, knocks her to the ground. A scene oft repeated in Elder scripted films.

Why, she wants to know, does he desire Maria when he can have her? It appears Dracula, like most men, doesn't mind amusing himself with the bad girl, but it's the good girl he wants to take home to the castle. He reaches for Zena who gazes at him with anticipation, until she realizes his true intent.

Hound of the Baskervilles (1959), one of the best Hammer productions, again casts women in the victim and evil seductress roles. At the beginning of the film the evil Lord Baskerville, with vile intentions, has the daughter of a servant imprisoned. He tortures her father and then tells his drunken friends they may have their way with the defenseless girl. Meanwhile she has managed to climb out a window and flees across the moor. Baskerville, infuriated, loosens the hounds then follows her to a ruined Abbey where he viciously kills her (in the novel she died of fright). Thus the curse is brought down upon him and his descendants.

Many years later Dr. Watson (Andre Morell) accompanies the new heir, Henry Baskerville (Christopher Lee), to Baskerville Hall. Henry meets Cecile Stapleton, the daughter of a neighbor. He is instantly attracted to her. Cecile (Marla Landi) is portrayed as a wild Gypsy type, while the novel describes the character as Stapleton's sister, not daughter, and we are told she has a perfect figure, a proud and finely cut face, and is most elegant. Certainly, not a type with enough sex appeal for Hammer. Henry falls in love with her and, despite the warning of Holmes (Peter Cushing) and Watson, allows her to lead him to the ruined Abbey. When he tries to kiss her, she slaps him and screams she is also a Baskerville and after he is dead she and her father will get what they deserve. Stapleton loosens a frightening hound that attacks Henry. Holmes shoots the dog who then turns and mauls Stapleton. Cecile falls into the mire and drowns.

I suppose screenwriter Peter Bryan felt the need to spice up the Conan Doyle novel by changing the fact that Cecile (whose name was Beryl in the book) was really the wife of the villainous Stapleton. She tries to warn Henry of the danger throughout the story. When she refuses to lead Henry to his doom, she is beaten by her husband. The novel ends with Stapleton drowning in the mire and Henry taking an ocean voyage to overcome his experiences. In the novel, as in the film, Henry doesn't get the girl. Of course, in both, he no longer wants her.

A prostitute, with her seductive and wanton lust, causes Oliver Reed to turn into a werewolf in *Curse of the Werewolf* (1960) and is torn to shreds for her wicked ways.

Barbara Shelley seemed to present a problem to Hammer. With her auburn hair and deep voice she did not fit the typical Hammer Barbie doll mold.

In *Rasputin the Mad Monk* (1966)

Shelley portrays Sonia, a lady in waiting to the Czarina of Russia. While attending an elegant court ball with her friend Vanessa (Suzan Farmer) and their brothers, Sonia declares she is bored and convinces the men to take them to a bar where there is more excitement. At the bar Sonia disdains champagne and orders vodka which she knocks back with a gasp, emitting an unladylike belch. She and the surrounding patrons find this hilarious and carry on uproariously disturbing the egotistical Rasputin (Christopher Lee) as he performs a Russian folk dance. Approaching her menacingly he says, "You will come to me and apologize."

The next day she returns to the bar, inquiring of the owner where Rasputin can be found. He warns her to be careful. "I'm perfectly capable of taking care of myself," she replies. Sonia locates Rasputin and offers her apology. He commands her to kneel before him which she unquestioningly does. Rasputin slaps her viciously (John Elder again) before discovering she is the Czarina's lady in waiting. Learning this, he abandons violence for seduction.

Elder asks us to believe this feisty independent woman would fall under this evil man's spell so readily. He takes her into his arms, and her clothes fall into a heap around her feet.

Like in *The Evil of Frankenstein*, Elder expects us to assume women would flock to seek the services of this sadistic woman-hating man, implying he could charm the pants off all women (literally) as they overflow his waiting room. Elder also follows his tried and true trend of rejection and jealously when Rasputin becomes bored with dark haired Sonia and avows he desires the lovely, innocent blonde, Vanessa. Sonia goes berserk, maliciously attempting to kill him. He glares into her eyes, telling her to destroy herself. Her brother finds her lying in a pool of blood, her wrist slashed. Sonia pays a high price for her sexual abandon.

A young woman poses topless for her artist boyfriend. She begs to know when they can be married. The man tells her he must make a name for himself. She then informs him she is pregnant. He rushes from the house to see her father to "take responsibility for his obligation." The girl runs after her lover, warning him her father will kill him. We see her scream and the next day her body is found, turned to stone. Hammer and *The Gorgon* (1964) strike down another tart.

The young daughter of the Burgomeister in *Vampire Circus* (1972) falls under the spell of the strange animal tamer, Emil, and meets her death in the un-fun house of mirrors.

In *She* (1965) Ursula Andress is Ayesha, She Who Waits. She is waiting for the return of her long dead lover. The reason she had to wait so long was because she jealously killed him upon finding him with another woman. It never occurred to her, he'd do the same thing again, and again, and again. But She looked great in the elaborate costumes and Peter Cushing was fabulous portraying a drunken leach at the beginning of the film.

Repressed and forbidden sexuality plays a part in both *The Nanny* (1965) and *Die, Die, My Darling* (1965). Both films are dominated by their forceful stars: Bette Davis and Tallulah Bankhead. Unfortunately, except for their over-the-top performances, there is little else to recommend either film. Bette Davis as a stereotypical spinster nanny in *The Nanny* gleefully tears up the scenery as she tries to kill her young charge, Joey. We latter learn the Nanny had an illegitimate child which she abandoned to care for other peoples' children. One day she was called to her daughter's side as the girl lay dying, the victim of a botched abortion. She leaves her young charges home alone. The adorable little girl, Suzy, accidently falls into the bathtub and subsequently drowns. Joey is blamed by Nanny for pushing the child in. Both deaths drive the Nanny into madness as she terrorizes Joey and later kills his aunt. In *Die, Die, My Darling* Tallulah Bankhead portrays a Bible thumping lunatic who speaks to her dead son, almost as a lover, and tortures his fiancee, hoping she will repent her evil ways and be able to join Steven in heaven. At one point in the film she calmly tells Patricia (Stefanie Powers) she has the best of both worlds; she was married to Steven and can still die a virgin. In her deranged mind Patricia, once engaged to Steven, is now *his* for life.

Barbara Shelley and Christopher Lee from *RASPUTIN, THE MAD MONK*: Elder asks us to believe this feisty independent woman would fall under this evil man's spell. . . her clothes falling into a heap around her feet.

Hammer and owner James Carreras weren't worried about sending messages, only in providing entertainment and making a few bucks. But in any form of entertainment, messages are sent and received by the audience. Hammer's message to women seemed to be: look beautiful, follow orders, and stay pure.

HEDONISTS

"Strange love. . ." from *Lust for a Vampire*

What society often considers a fate worse than death for a woman, old age, is explored in *Countess Dracula*. It's hard to decide if this film is so offensive because it's incredibly sexist or merely because it is such a godawful film. Its only saving grace was the performance of Ingrid Pitt, who goes from depravity to madness quite convincingly.

As the film opens Countess Elizabeth (Ingrid Pitt) has just buried her not-so-dearly departed husband.

The film has none of the lavishness of the earlier Hammer films. The dull colors of brown and gray match the mood of the film. Except for the innocent daughter, Ilona, all the characters are portrayed as decadent and detestable. The costumes feature a bizarre clash of European cultures with a few exotic dancing girls thrown in for good measure.

As the Countess prepares to bathe, a serving girl cuts herself splashing blood into the face of the Countess. She discovers the blood has made her younger and orders her nurse, Julie, to bring her the girl. The next morning the sobbing mother of the girl asks where her daughter could be. "Try the whorehouse," she is advised.

The now young and beautiful Countess dances joyfully around the room. She orders the Captain of the Guard, Dobi (Nigel Green), to arrange for highwaymen to kidnap her daughter. She then impersonates Ilona and tantalizes a young friend of her husband's, Imre.

The Countess, in a wildly erotic embrace with Imre, sees herself in the mirror. An old face stares back. She has lost her youth and beauty and runs screaming from the room. Dobi tells her she can't go on this way, each time the blood wears off she gets uglier.

He and Imre celebrate the upcoming marriage by getting sloshed at the local pub. Dobi asks, "Why should a man be a slave to one woman when he can have the pick of many?" He pays a barmaid to accompany them back to the castle. The Countess has once again lost her comeliness and hysterically storms around her room. Dobi drags her to see Imre with "the cheapest whore in town." The Countess forces Dobi to bring the girl to her. As she bathes in the blood it has no affect. They find a book in the library on blood sacrifices and discover the blood must be from a virgin.

The next day in the village the Captain visits a slave market. He spies a plain girl sitting with a goat. Asking the slaver if she has ever been with a man the slaver answers, "Who'd want her?" He tells Dobi he can have the girl for free but the goat must be paid for. The girl is barely shown, treated as undeserving of the audiences' pity because she is not as desirable as the other victims.

The Countess knows nothing of love, she only desires youth and beauty, in herself and her lover. She orders Dobi to

TOP: Mircalla (Ingrid Pitt) from *THE VAMPIRE LOVERS* seduces the governess (a brunette) who falls victim of the Hammer curse of losing her love to a lovely, younger woman, in this case, Emma; BOTTOM: Martine Beswicke from *DR. JEKYLL SISTER HYDE:* Sister Hyde is usually frustrated in her amorous adventures, turning back into Jekyll at the most inconvenient times.

bring her another virgin and later has her nurse search the castle to make sure her wishes have been obeyed. At the top of the stairs Julie finds the virgin, the Countess's own daughter, Ilona. Elizabeth once again ages during her wedding ceremony and rushes for her daughter, the virgin, trying to stab her. Imre saves Ilona but is stabbed by the deranged Elizabeth.

Elizabeth, much like many women today, would do anything for beauty, although most women would not try to kill their daughter to obtain it, at least I hope not.

Speaking of awful, *Prehistoric Women* (1968), brought to us by director Michael Carreras and screenwriter Henry Younger (Carreras's pen name), gives new meaning to the word, although many of the reviews I have read refer to it as intentional camp, something I find hard to believe. Martine Beswicke is wasted in a role that casts her as the evil leader of a group of nasty brunettes with bad hair who keep a group of sweet, lovable blondes as slaves. Our hero (Michael Latimer) is captured by natives and, after having a wildly seductive watusi performed before him, touches the immense horn of a stone rhinoceros and travels back in time. He helps release the beautiful slave girls and their men (who for some reason are all old, dirty, and ugly). Kari (Beswicke) lashes Latimer with a whip but he grabs it, pulls her toward him, and proclaims, "You will never rule me." Later, after falling instantly in love with Saria (Edina Ronay), one of the generic blondes, he agrees to be Kari's lover to help the blondes escape. The brunettes force the blondes to grovel on the ground for food. When one objects, Kari battles her (men just love those cat fights) and, thrusting her ample chest forward, impales the girl on a wooden shaft. Later Kari sacrifices Saria to the devils. Saria is decked out in flowers and feathers and placed on the back of the giant stone rhino. All the blondes bow to her in farewell which allows the audience to get a good look down their bikini tops and at their scantily covered rear ends. Latimer leads a revolt of the men who discover the devils are nothing more than horny neighbors. Kari meets her fate on the rhinoceros horn and we won't bother with the implications in that scene.

Erotic, sensuous, arousing. These are all words I have heard used to describe the Karnstein series of *Vampire Lovers*, *Lust for a Vampire*, and *Twins of Evil*. However, the one word that really applies to this series is pathetic. The series is discussed in detail in another article in this issue, but here are a few thoughts on the first two films.

In *Vampire Lovers* Ingrid Pitt portrays Mircalla, the houseguest from Hell, who manages to move in with Emma (Madeline Smith) who is easily seduced by the vampire. Emma falls ill. Mircalla then seduces Emma's governess (a brunette) who falls victim to the Hammer curse of losing her love to a lovely, younger woman, in this case Emma. Carmilla decides to take Emma with her to her coffin when the governess (Kate O'Mara) jealously protests. Carmilla approaches the woman who stares at her with excitement that soon turns to horror when Carmilla kills her with a ferocious bite.

Martita Hunt, the ultimate hedonistic woman from Hammer, the mother of Baron Meister from *BRIDES OF DRACULA*.

Little challenge is offered any of the cast especially the women who scream, remove their clothes, and appear seductive. Obviously, enough for Hammer Studios.

Like *Vampire Lovers*, the little character development allowed the actors in *Lust for a Vampire* creates an assortment of perverts, whiners, shrews, and a stupid, fickle leading man.

Mircalla (Yutte Stensgaard) is enrolled in a girls' school, and for our first glimpse of the school, we see the front lawn filled with over-aged and over-endowed "schoolgirls" wearing flimsy gowns and doing some type of ancient Greek dance.

Richard LeStrange (Michael Johnson) manages to secure a position at the school and immediately falls in love with the new student, Mircalla. Meanwhile the fitness instructor, Janet Playfair (Suzanna Leigh), sets her sights on Richard.

Richard and Mircalla fall in love and sneak time together (these vampires are quite at home in the daylight). He declares his love for her and they make love to the tacky pop tune, *Strange Love*. This must be one of the most boring lovemaking scenes ever filmed.

Janet, who is sort of the heroine of the film, is so clueless she does nothing even after Mircalla tries to attack her and never realizes the police inspector sent to investigate the school is missing. Mircalla is killed in the burning castle when a beam falls and impales her.

Unfortunately or fortunately, depending upon how you look at it, my pain threshold wasn't high enough to watch *Twins of Evil*.

I find it amusing most men love these vampire lesbian films but cringe at male homosexuality onscreen. They tell me men together is sick but two women together, now, that's hot.

A promising premise falls into exploitation and mediocrity in *Dr. Jekyll Sister Hyde* (1971).

Jekyll (Ralph Bates), searching for an anti-virus, decides he will not live long enough to complete his research and vows to prolong his life for the good of humanity, no matter what the price. He does this by injecting female hormones obtained from the bodies of prostitutes. However, there is one little side effect, he turns into the seductively beautiful woman, Mrs. Hyde (Martine Beswicke), who introduces herself as Jekyll's sister.

The film begins with wonderfully moody sets and detailed period costumes. However, it soon deteriorates into a kill and kill again plot with Jekyll needing more hormones as Sister Hyde begins to dominate him. Hyde is enthralled with his new body and sensuously rubs his/her hands over

him/herself. One interesting, if kinky, note has Jekyll beginning to fall in love with his neighbor Susan (Susan Broderick), while Sister Hyde seduces Susan's brother, Howard (Lewis Flander). Sister Hyde is usually frustrated in her amorous adventures, turning back into Jekyll at the most inconvenient times. Screenwriter Brian Clemens missed a chance to show the experiences Sister Hyde faced acclimating herself to her new body (other than sexually) and the trials he would face as a woman in early London; instead he went for pure schlock appeal. Beswicke had little to do other than caress her body and seduce men, which, I suppose, is not a bad job if you can get it.

A woman (Adrienne Corri) leads a young child into a castle, another victim for the evil Count who resides there. He bites the little girl as the woman watches in ecstasy. The villagers led by the local schoolmaster storm the castle. The naked, wayward woman is his wife. The villagers force her to watch as her lover is staked. She manages to escape. So begins *Vampire Circus* (1972).

Scriptwriter Judson Kimbers and director Robert Young combined two horrors, the circus, which I have always found terrifying, and vampires into a different approach for the vampire film. *Vampire Circus* shows the marks of Hammer's declining years but has acquired a loyal following. The dreary colors and sets give credibility to the fact a plague is wiping out the village. The circus arrives to "brighten" their lives but it isn't long before they realize the vampires have returned to seek their revenge.

The Gypsy woman (Corri is billed in the credits as such) is the mother from hell as she abandons her husband and daughter early in the film for the sexual power of the count. She returns with the circus and her two incestuous vampire twins who attempt to lure her daughter and their sister to her doom, using her blood to give life to their beloved Count. Corri is not a vampire, but she is used by them for chores they cannot accomplish such as ripping the cross from her own daughter's neck. in the end she cannot allow the girl to be killed and meets her own death at the hands, or fangs, of the vampires.

The film also shows the murders of the little girl and later two young boys who are all bitten by the vampires. Strong stuff even for the early seventies. Child killing was basically taboo.

Watching this film with factors of both nudity and violence, leads one to ponder the difference between the way British and U.S. audiences view these films. in the United States the nudity and sex were usually the scenes cut and these uncut versions are the ones eagerly sought by fans. However, in Britain, the sex and nudity is ho-hum stuff and the violence is censored or given the "X" rating. I'm sure those are the uncut versions most desired by British fans. Which is more offensive and destructive? I don't know, but the fact that many parents in the United States allow their children to view incredible acts of violence in films but freak when these same children see nudity or sexuality on the movie screen or television scares me.

Madeline Smith, as Sarah, from *FRANKENSTEIN AND THE MONSTER FROM HELL*, is traumatized by John Elder's script: she is an inmate in a mental institute, forced to visit patients, forced to perform surgery, raped by her father, desired by a huge monster, and she is unable to speak.

The ultimate hedonistic woman from Hammer is not a decorative beauty but the mother of a vampire from *Brides of Dracula* (1960). Martina Hunt turns in a chilling performance as a decadence loving woman who encourages her equally degenerate son in his quest for thrills. This lifestyle backfires on her when the son is inflicted with a social disease, vampirism. She cannot bear to destroy her son, so she chains him in a suite of rooms and lures young girls to the chateau to feed his hunger. The Baroness meets her destruction when a silly girl she has brought home as dinner for the Baron (David Peel) releases him. He is not happy with his mother, viciously and incestuously turning her into a vampire.

Van Helsing (Peter Cushing) discovers the Baroness at the chateau. She confesses she is to blame for the evil her son has done. Filled with remorse, she tells him there is no escape for her, she must do her son's evil bidding for eternity. However, there is an escape, and when the sun rises, Van Helsing drives a stake through her heart.

Hammer's hedonists, like their harlots, always met a bad end, even though some of them may have repented at the last minute: Carmilla who really loved Richard in *Lust for a Vampire*, the mother in *Vampire Circus*, and the Baroness in *Brides of Dracula*.

While the bad girls of Hammer were guaranteed a face-to-face meeting with the grim reaper, the good girls didn't have an easy time of it either.

HEROINES

"...You've got a brain in that pretty little head of yours..."
from *Phantom of the Opera*

Good girls certainly had a rough go in the Hammer films. The bad girls were always more fun and much more interesting characters while the good girls were often an easy way to forward the plot, usually by doing something amazingly inane.

There could be two reasons for Hammer's treatment of women in its films: either they were faithfully portraying women's lot in life during those times when women were mere chattel facing a life of servitude whether to a father, husband, or employer, or they were a proper lady who is practically sold to prominent husbands and were allowed no rights. They could not have bank accounts, own property, or vote. On the other hand, perhaps Hammer Execu-

tives were just using their stable of Hammer beauties as sure fire moneymakers.

Hazel Court is lovely as Elizabeth in *Curse of Frankenstein* (1957). Unfortunately screenwriter Jimmy Sangster does not give her a great deal to work with storywise. Elizabeth elegantly floats from scene to scene in stunning gowns but has very little impact on the film.

In the beginning of the film, Victor Frankenstein and his aunt have just returned from his mother's funeral. As he ushers her and the young Elizabeth out, the Aunt informs Victor her daughter is a good girl who will grow up to be s good wife, basically selling the young girl.

Years later the grown Elizabeth, engaged for many years to Victor, arrives to await their wedding, naively believing Frankenstein loves her as he cavorts with his pretty maid. Frankenstein bemoans womanhood with "women, how cleverly they twist their words to meet their own ends."

Frankenstein's assistant, Paul (Robert Urquhart), tries to convince Elizabeth she is in grave danger but she, of course, refuses to listen.

The eve of the wedding she decides to investigate the lab, and hearing something on the roof, goes to see what it is. Not a very smart move as the monster grabs her. Frankenstein rushes to the roof, shoots at the creature, misses, and hits Elizabeth. However, as obsessed as Frankenstein is, perhaps, he really wanted to hit the woman and save the monster.

Elizabeth recovers and Victor is imprisoned for killing the maid. Paul tells her Frankenstein is quite insane and there is no hope. Supposedly he will be her new benefactor.

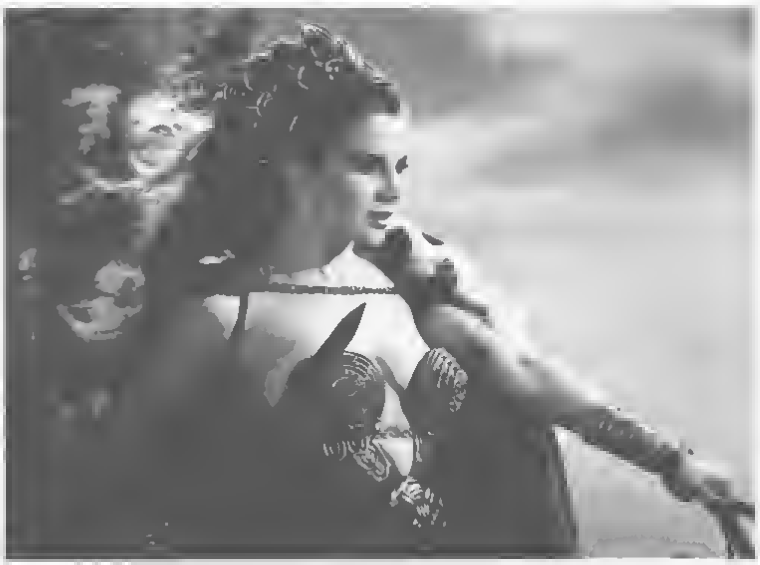
Eunice Gray as Margaret, heroine in *Revenge of Frankenstein* (1958), as written by Sangster, seems little more than an afterthought. She is a minister's daughter but shows up the first day in a beautiful red gown, something proper ladies would never do. She does little else other than free the monster, setting up the climax of the film.

Frankenstein (Peter Cushing) has set up a medical practice under the name Dr. Stein. His reception room is filled to overflowing with robust mothers and daughters, the script implying the patients have been seduced away from their regular doctors by Dr. Stein's charm. This is a little hard to believe since he is as charming as the plague. A mother insists her voluptuous and obviously quite healthy daughter is so tired she is barely able to stand and urges Dr. Stein to listen to her heart palpations. The young lady thrusts her lacily clad bodice toward the doctor. He tells the mother there is nothing he can do for the girl. The mother replies, "You are a man, doctor... you can do a great deal for her."

Frankenstein is amazed to find a minister's daughter, Margaret, has come to work in the charity ward he keeps. He is using the patients as body parts for his new creation. A janitor informs Margaret the doctor cuts up his poor patients alive and one of his victims is at the top of the stairs. She sneaks into the room where Carl, Frankenstein's latest work, is resting. Carl tells her the straps holding him are hurting him and she compassionately loosens them which allows him to escape and wreak havoc.

Katy Wild in *The Evil of Frankenstein* (1964), written by John Elder, has possibly one of the worst women's roles in any of the films. She portrays a beggar who cannot speak. No problem with learning her lines. In fact she is listed in the credits as, Beggar Girl—Katy Wild. Certainly a well thought

TOP: Maureen Connell, like Barbara Shelley, plays a strong woman in Val Guest's *THE ABOMINABLE SNOWMAN OF THE HIMALAYAS;* BOTTOM: Valerie Spalding (Jennifer Daniel) is courageous and sensible but here at the climax to *THE REPTILE*, as she is about to be attacked by Anna, she must be rescued by a male.



Carita, as *THE VIKING QUEEN*, leading an army against the Romans, looks stunning in her designer armor.

out role

Her main duty seems to be leading the Baron and his new assistant around, a device used to forward what little plot there is. Wild sweeps up the castle and looks after the monster. An evil hypnotist tries to rape her, but after tearing her blouse, decides he shouldn't be bothered with such trash.

When the girl sees the monster in pain she gives him wine. The monster goes berserk, destroying himself, the lab, and Frankenstein (until the next film that is).

Veronica Carlson turns in one of the best performances by a woman in any Hammer film as Anna in *Frankenstein Must Be Destroyed* (1969), written by Bert Batt. Anna is a complex character appearing both strong and weak at the same time.

Anna doesn't approve of her fiance stealing drugs from the asylum where he works and selling them, helping to pay for her mother's medical bills, but she can think of no other course of action. Frankenstein (Peter Cushing) discovers what they have been doing and blackmails them into helping him with his despicable plans He treats Anna as a servant, often ordering her to bring him coffee.

Frankenstein kidnaps a scientist, removes his brain, and buries the body in Anna's backyard. Later he enters her bedroom, locks the door, and rapes her. Both Veronica and Cushing were upset about the filming and inclusion of this controversial scene. The scene was not necessary and made little sense. It was subsequently cut out of American prints, which in no way hurt the film.

Anna's stronger side is displayed when a water main breaks exposing the grave of the victim. Sobbing, she drags the body through the spraying water and mud to hide it in the bushes before the public works men arrive. Later, the monster approaches Anna for help, but mistaking his intentions, she stabs him. He flees, and Frankenstein discovering what Anna has done, murderers her.

Also turning in a nice performance as a resilient woman is Maxine Audley as Mrs. Brandt, the wife of the man Frankenstein has murdered. Although her husband has been in an asylum, she obviously still loves him and conducts a search for him when he disappears. Seeing Victor on the street she follows him to Anna's home. Knocking on the door she asks to see Frankenstein who leads her to her husband who is heavily bandaged. Of course this is only her husband's brain in another man's body. When she returns the next day they have disappeared. The creature returns to his home to explain to her but she is unable to comprehend and reaches for a gun. He finally convinces her and she goes to the police for help.

Screenwriter John Elder (Anthony Hinds) whose respect for women knows no bounds, probably couldn't think of any more ways to traumatize Madeline South as Sarah in *Frankenstein and the Monster from Hell* (1974). She is an inmate in a mental institute, forced to visit the frightening patients, forced to perform surgery, raped by her father, desired by a huge monster, and she is unable to speak. What a role.

Sarah is called Angel by the inmates. She cannot speak because of a severe trauma. When Frankenstein's newest assistant, Simon (Shane Briant), comments on Frankenstein's crude surgery, the Baron explains Sarah performed the operation since his hands were destroyed in a fire. He explains there is no physical reason Sarah cannot speak. Her father had attempted to rape her; after this experience she never spoke again. Her father is the depraved head of the asylum. Frankenstein intends to mate Sarah with his new creation, a hulking Neanderthal. The monster kills Frankenstein and Sarah's father.

Yvonne Furneaux as Isobel in *The Mummy* (1959), as written by Jimmy Sangster (who seems to have a difficult time creating good female characters), contributes little to the film other than window dressing

The Mummy is brought to England to revenge the desecration of his love's tomb and only halts his attack on John Banning (Peter Cushing) when the Mummy discovers his wife Isobel (Furneaux) resembles the princess of the tomb, his long lost love.

The Mummy's Shroud (1967) has two very interesting women's roles probably due to the fact John Gilling both wrote and directed. Elizabeth Sellars portrays Barbara Preston, married to the vulgar and abrasive man who financed the expedition. She is much like a typical Hitchcock heroine: beautiful, blonde, and cold. Her attitude of quite amusement as her husband frets over the deaths of those members of the party that entered the tomb is chilling. Of course he's not worried about saving anyone else's skin, not even his son's. Maggie Kimberley is Claire (another cool blonde), a member of the expedition and in love with Preston's son. Claire is the one who figures out the cause of the mysterious deaths and goes to the museum to ask the Mummy for forgiveness for desecrating the tomb.

Hammer's science fiction films, often overshadowed by the horror entries, are perhaps the best films Hammer ever made, and while their female characters are not given a great deal of screen time, they are all women who, rather than wringing their hands, take action, whether right or wrong.

Barbara Payton turns in a very good performance in *Four-Sided Triangle* (1953) directed and co-written by Terence Fisher. Lena (Payton) at first is described as hard and cynical having failed at everything she has ever attempted. However, after becoming assistant and mother-hen to her two brilliant childhood chums: "she became the most wonderful thing in the world, a woman

who is also a companion and comrade to her men-folk."

The film is still original, even when viewed today, although extremely slow and having the look of a teleplay.

Two brilliant boyhood friends conduct experiments with a duplicating machine. Finally they succeed. Robin (John Van Eyssen) and Lena announce they are to be married. Bill (Stephen Murray), the other friend, is devastated; he is also deeply in love with Lena. He perfects the machine so it can duplicate living beings and persuades Lena to allow him to duplicate her, a copy of her for his very own. Lena, madly in love with Robin, still is a good friend to Bill and, hoping to ease his pain, agrees.

The copy is made, an exact duplicate. Bill calls her Helen and they go away on holiday. At first everything is wonderful, but soon Helen is depressed and tries to commit suicide. What Bill and Lena did not realize is, Helen is exactly like Lena, even in her love for Robin. Bill begs Lena to help him erase Helen's memory. Before the equipment is placed around her head she tearfully whispers, "goodbye Robin." The lab catches fire and Bill and his duplicate do not survive.

The Creeping Unknown (1955) is basically a two man and one monster show. Rather than women being ignored, the lack of their presence seems more an indication of the times when women weren't involved in scientific work. The only woman, Margia Dean as Judith Carroon, portrays the wife of an astronaut who is slowly turning into a blob. Judith, fearing Quatermass's intentiona toward her husband, hires a private investigator to help her kidnap him from the hospital. Carroon sucks the life from the investigator and joins Judith outside where she puts him in the car. As she is driving she notices his hand which is turnng into an oozing plantlike mass. She screams and Carroon runs away. Quatermass, hearing what happened, says, "Stupid idiot trying to take the whole thing into her hands." She is found behind the wheel of the car starring at nothing. Again we see the woman only used as a device to loosen the monster on mankind.

Barbara Shelley turns in another fine performance for Hammer, this time in the third Quatermass entry, *Five Million Years to Earth* (1967). She plays Barbara Judd, the assistant to Dr. Rooney. Rooney is the archaeologist investigating skeletons found while digging a new subway.

Barbara tramps through muck and mire with the men and never flinches when working with or photographing the grisly finds. She also helps Quatermass with the investigation of ghostly sightings, providing him with material and information. When presenting their information to the Minister of Defense he implies Barbara is a hysterical woman with a vivid imagination. Unfortunately, Barbara, like most of the other residents of London, is affected by the alien signal.

Yvonne Romain portrays a jail-keeper's daughter, unable to speak, who is viciously raped by a beggar she had befriended, from *CURSE OF THE WEREWOLF*.

Maureen Connell, like Barbara Shelley, plays a strong woman in Val Guest's *Abominable Snowman* (1957). As Helen Rollason she helps her husband, John (Peter Cushing), collect botanical samples in a remote Himalayan village. Never complaining of the harsh conditions, she only protests when she learns her husband, recovering from a climbing injury, is planning to search for the Yeti.

Helen sees the guide return without her husband's party and goes to the High Lhama (Arnold Marle) for help. He tells her no one can help the group. She decides to go after them herself and arranges for a group to accompany her. When they camp for the night she awakens when she hears a strange cry. Running into the raging blizzard she finds John propped against a slope.

Director John Gilling consistently provided some of the better women's roles in his films for Hammer.

The Reptile (1966) is one of the pleasant discoveries I spoke of earlier. The film with its influences of a mysterious Eastern religion and secretive family reminds one of a classic Sherlock Holmes story. Anthony Hinds writing as John Elder presents Valerie Spalding (Jennifer Daniel) as a courageous and sensible woman, although her compassionate side is also shown.

Harry Spalding (Ray Barrett) and his new wife Valerie have just moved to a cottage left to them by Harry's brother who has died under mysterious circumstances. They are warned away by the local barkeep (Michael Ripper in an excellent performance). Harry tells Valerie they can leave, but Valerie, showing she is not afraid replies, "It's our home and we're staying."

One night a man taps at their window, his face black and swollen. Harry takes him inside and Valerie, unlike the usual Hammer heroines, neither faints nor screams. She sets about seeing to the dying man's comfort.

Valerie and Harry, invited to dinner at the mysterious Franklyn residence, find the daughter Anna is not at supper, she is being punished. After dinner the girl is allowed to join them. She comes downstairs wearing a red sari and begins to play a sitar. Anna begins to play more intently, becoming more defiant with each note. Her father becomes agitated and smashes the instrument.

Later Harry finds a note from Anna begging for help. He goes to the house and is attacked by a snake-like creature. Staggering home, he tells Valerie to get a knife and cut him on the neck which she quickly does, then takes him upstairs. Valerie makes him as comfortable as possible and then goes into the night for help. Again she is presented as a strong woman able to make her own decisions. Later she finds the note and decides to go to the house to rescue the girl. A gutsy

but not well thought out move. She enters through a window and follows Dr. Franklyn to the basement where he struggles with a servant overturning a lamp causing a fire. He picks up a sword to kill the snake woman, his daughter, when Valerie screams. Chasing her into the library, he locks them in.

Smoke begins coming under the door but Franklyn refuses to allow her to leave. As Anna is about to attack Valerie, Tom breaks the window and Anna dies from the cold air. Harry leads Valerie outside as the house is engulfed in flames.

Dr. Franklyn could be compared to the Baroness in *Brides of Dracula* who goes to any length to protect her child. A real little gem from Hammer.

Gilling also brought us *Plague of the Zombies* (1966) written by Peter Bryan. The women, the focus of the film, seem little more than attractive victims, kidnapped and turned into zombies by a decadent member of the aristocracy who is using the zombies as cheap and dispensable laborers for his mines. The film never explains why the two small women were chosen as victims rather than strong young men.

Jacqueline Pearce as Alice has little more to do than appear pale and sickly. She is married to the local doctor who writes to Sir James Forbes (Andre Morell) for help in combating a strange plague. Forbes's daughter, Sylvia (Diane Clare), a friend of Alice, accompanies him. Sylvia realizes something is wrong and follows Alice. She loses sight of her and is surrounded by a group of rich thugs (another recurring theme in Hammer films) who take her to the home of Squire Hamilton (John Carson). They select cards, the winner to have Sylvia. Hamilton orders them to leave and she indignantly requests he escort her home. He refuses. On the way back she runs into a zombie who drops the dead Alice at her feet.

Hamilton calls Sylvia to him during a voodoo ceremony and makes her walk to an abandoned mine where a zombie picks her up and carries her to a sacrificial alter. She is saved by her father

John Gilling contributed the screenplay to *The Gorgon* which was directed by Terence Fisher. Barbara Shelley stars as Carla, a woman torn between her love of Paul, her duty to Dr. Namaroff, and her fear of The Gorgon. She is also haunted by an unknown fear.

The brother of a murdered artist is summoned by his father to help find the answers to his brother's mysterious death. Carla (Shelley), Dr. Namaroff's (Peter Cushing) assistant is, the only person to show any compassion to the murdered man's father at the inquest. The father is lured out of the villa by a strange singing. He manages to write a letter to his son, Paul (Richard Pasco), before completely turning to stone. Carla warns him the Gorgon is real, to leave, or he'll be found like all the others.

Christina (Susan Denberg) from *FRANKENSTEIN CREATED WOMAN* begging her lover to "love me, love me," as her tormentors sing outside her window, "You'll stay a virgin till you're dead," the supposed fate of unattractive women.

She finds Paul digging up his father's body. Paul wants to take her away but she insists she cannot leave although she is unable to give him a reason why. Professor Meister (Christopher Lee) arrives to help Paul and immediately suspects Carla.

The lovers meet at an abandoned castle. Paul enters and spies Carla sitting on a throne with regal bearing. She tells him she will go away with him but it must be right away. He has to stay to find what befell his family. Carla sadly tells him later will be too late. We still do not know if Carla is aware she is possessed.

On the night of a full moon at the ruined castle Paul and Namaroff fight as the Gorgon looks on. Namaroff tries to cut off her head but looks at her and is turned to stone. Paul gets up and sees her in the mirror. He turns toward her, watching in horror as Meister picks up the sword and cuts off her head. We see Paul slowly turn to stone and the head of the Gorgon turns into Carla.

The Gorgon didn't run true to form for Hammer. Even in their grimmest films the good guys usually survived; however, in *The Gorgon*, our two lovers both die. In fact, almost everybody dies.

Shelley also starred in *Shadow of the Cat* (1961) as a young woman trying to find her missing aunt who was done away with by the Aunt's money-grubbing husband (Andre Morell) and not-so-dedicated servants. She is constantly being told by the men of the family they will take care of her, while the entire time they are planning to murder the poor girl. A great little mystery directed by John Gilling and written by noted mystery writer George Baxt. A pleasant surprise from Hammer well worth tracking down.

A not so pleasant surprise is to be found in the extremely rare *The Viking Queen* (1967). Sometimes there is a reason films are hard to find and this one is a perfect example. Romans with British accents oversee downtrodden British villagers lead by "The Viking Queen" (Carita) who speaks with an European accent Most men would probably enjoy the public flogging scene of the queen as her dress is torn off and she is beaten by the evil Roman leader while the good Roman leader she loves is off fighting Druids. She leads an army against the Romans looking stunning in her designer armor. Meeting her lover on the battlefield, she kills herself rather than go to Rome for trial. Carita probably wanted to kill herself during the first twenty minutes of filming this bomb.

John Elder in *Curse of the Werewolf* (1961) again uses women to forward the plot. One woman gives birth to the cursed child, two women love him (keeping the wolf at bay), and one's promiscuity turns him into a wolf. Yvonne Romain portrays a jail-

After some handiwork by Baron Frankenstein from *FRANKENSTEIN CREATED WOMAN*, the deformed dark haired girl is transformed into a healthy beautiful blonde, ready to seek revenge.

keeper's daughter, unable to speak, who is viciously raped by a beggar she had befriended. She is found in the woods and taken in by a kind man, Alfredo (Clifford Evans). He and his servant Teresa (Hira Talfrey) care for her. She has a baby on Christmas day and dies. Teresa loves the boy like a mother, even though she fears he is cursed, as indeed he is. His lycanthropy is kept in check by the love of Alfredo and Teresa. When he grows to manhood he leaves them for a job in a winery. Leon (Oliver Reed) falls in love with the owner's daughter, Cristina (Catherine Feller). She tells Leon she cannot marry him because her father has arranged a marriage to someone she does not love, but she must obey her father. This drives Leon to a local bar where he loses control amid the drinking and debauchery and becomes a werewolf, killing a prostitute. When he returns Cristina stays with him all night and he awakens to find their love for each other has kept the curse away. She agrees to go away with him but before she returns he is arrested by the police. Leon begs she be allowed to stay with him but the priest and Alfredo take her away. Cristina and Teresa watch in horror as Leon is chased over the rooftops by a mob of villagers trying to destroy him. Alfredo climbs a tower and shoots his son as Cristina and Teresa stand in the street, alone with their grief.

Another unhappy ending. Like *The Gorgon*, true love did not conquer all in *Curse of the Werewolf*.

The Devil's Bride (1968) looked wonderfully promising with a script by the great Richard Matheson based on a novel by Dennis Wheatley and directed by Terence Fisher. It was prooising until the point in the film where the foursome fighting the evil Mocata (Charles Gray) are stupid enough to leave the couple's young daughter alone in her room while they are protected by a magical circle. Surprise! The daughter is kidnapped by the devil worshipers. It is impossible to believe any mother would leave her child in such danger.

The premise of a deformed woman made beautiful and able to take her revenge on the men who have tormented her rapidly descends into just another man-controlling-woman tale in *Frankenstein Created Woman* (1966).

Christina (Susan Denberg), daughter of the local innkeeper, has grown up with a damaged left side, her arm and leg virtually useless. A horrible scar mars her face. Christina tells her lover, Hans (Robert Morris), her father never liked to be seen with her when she was young

She is constantly taunted by "three louts" with whom Hans has a fight. The louts stand outside her window and sing "fair Christina fair of face, you'll stay a virgin till you're dead," putting into crude words the supposed fate of unattractive women, the same theory used in *Countess Dracula*. Hans wants to again confront them but she pulls him back saying, "Love me, love me."

The louts murder her father; Hans is accused of the murder and sentenced to die. Christina knows nothing of these events, having left for a doctor's appointment in another city. She returns by coach only to see Hans being guillotined. The distraught woman throws herself from a bridge. Her body is taken to Frankenstein (Peter Cushing) where he installs Han's soul into her body. When the bandages are removed the deformed dark haired girl is now a healthy beautiful blonde. Certainly the secret dream of many men, not to mention many women who will do anything to be beautiful.

During the day Christina is the picture of innocence. At night she turns into a seductress who leads the three louts to their deaths, a feat the audience hardily approves. Unfortunately, we are asked to believe Hans is controlling her and forcing her to commit these murders. After the final murder we hear Han's voice saying, "You have done what you had to do, you may now rest." Christina, asking Frankenstein to forgive her, jumps into a raging river.

The woman was not even allowed the satisfaction of destroying these killers herself, but had to be instructed by Hans. It's also hard to accept the fact that Hans, who loved Christina dearly, would force her to go against her principles by inducing her to murder.

The tortured woman, seeking justice and revenge herself, would have made a much more interesting film.

Vampires, and Dracula in particular, were given sex appeal by Hammer Stu-

dios who felt women would not be able to resist a tall, dark stranger, and turned the heretofore fairly dull vampire's bite into a "vampire's kiss" filled with sexual intensity and innuendo. Our heroines were bewitched by the seductive strangers but usually managed to survive the experience.

Sweet and innocent Lucy (Carol Marsh) and happily married Mina (Melissa Stribling) succumb to the deadly charms of Dracula in *Horror of Dracula* (1958).

Dracula desires Lucy for his new bride since her fiance, Jonathan Harker, destroyed the old one. Lucy, lying in bed growing weaker, resembles the innocent Judy Garland in *Wizard of Oz*. Her lovely dark hair is in braids, she is wearing a pale blue nightgown, her face a vision of innocence and purity. When her brother Arthur (Michael Gough) and sister-in-law, Mina (Melissa Stribling) leave, Lucy rises, locks the door, opens the window, and removes the cross from around her neck. She breathes heavily with excitement as Dracula (Christopher Lee) enters the room. Van Helsing (Peter Cushing) instructs the family to place garlic flowers in the room and to keep the windows locked. Lucy begs a servant, Gerta, to take the flowers away, telling her she cannot breathe. The next morning Lucy is dead.

Later, Gerta's little daughter, Tania, tells them she has seen Lucy in the woods. That night Lucy calls Tania to her, telling the girl she is taking her someplace quiet to play. Arthur sees her leading the child to the cemetery. Lucy spies Arthur and says, "come, let me kiss you," as the horrified Arthur watches her advance upon him. Van Helsing sticks a cross in front of the new vampire which burns its shape into her forehead. She screams and runs into the crypt. Van Helsing tenderly places his coat and a rosary around the little girl before entering the crypt, driving a stake into Lucy's heart. He forces Arthur to gaze upon Lucy; she is released from the curse and is once again the innocent, beautiful girl she was before Dracula "spoiled" her.

Dracula, still needing a bride, lures Mina to a meeting. She enters an undertaker's shop thinking she is to meet Arthur. A coffin lid slowly moves aside.

The next morning she comes in holding a cloak tightly around her neck. She listens intently as Arthur and Van Helsing plot Dracula's demise. Her husband forces her to take a crucifix for protection. She gingerly takes it, screams, and faints. The cross leaves a burn mark in her palm.

They keep watch outside the house, knowing Dracula will come for Mina. She opens the bedroom door, Dracula is standing at the bottom of the stairs. She steps back into the bedroom, her lips quivering. Dracula grasps her face and kisses her before biting her neck. While Arthur and Van Helsing search for the coffin, Dracula carries Mina away to his castle. He digs a grave and unceremoniously dumps her in it, covering her with soil. Van Helsing destroys Dracula; as he dies the cross disappears from Mina's hand which Arthur tenderly picks up and kisses.

Dracula Prince of Darkness (1966) presents Barbara Shelley as Helen, a woman who appears forbidding and repressed, but when seduced by Dracula, loses her inhibitions and repression, much like the old "she only needs a good man" routine.

Two couples on a sightseeing trip are forced to stay in a strange castle when their coachman abandons them. Where have we heard this before? The young couple, Charles (Francis Matthews) and Diana (Suzan Farmer)—perhaps Hammer knew something other royal watchers didn't—appear gay and adventurous while the older brother is made to appear dull and stodgy. Helen is stern and frightened and appears quite unreasonable. To show the severity of her personality, Helen's mandatory nightgown is a dull gray.

That evening her husband hears a noise and investigates. He is hung above the coffin of Dracula, his throat slashed. The blood pours into the coffin and once again Dracula is resurrected. A servant goes to Helen's room. She is told something has happened to her husband and she rushes downstairs, ignoring her fear. Helen stares in horror at her husband's body as Dracula approaches her. Even today this is a horrifying scene.

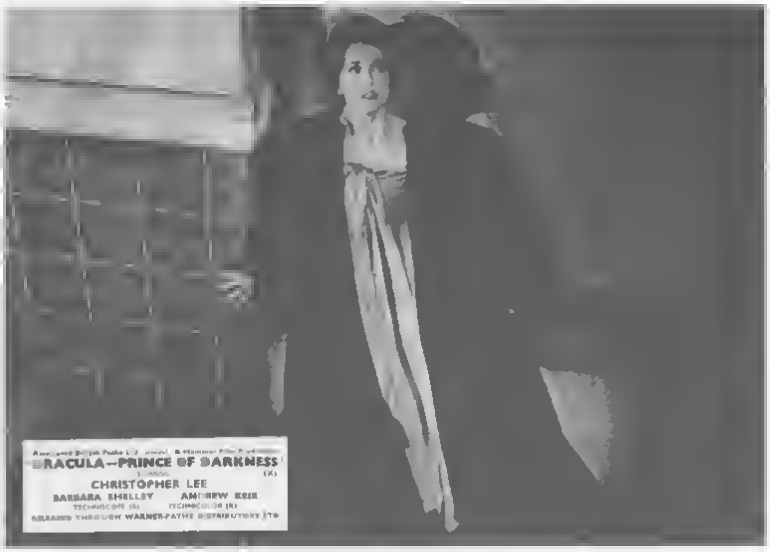
Helen, her long hair hanging free and her nightgown flowing behind her, approaches her sister-in-law. Diana demands to know where Charles is. "You don't need Charles now," Helen answers (a brief hint of the Hammer lesbian vampire films to follow). The young couple manage to escape and are taken to a monastery by a priest. Dracula desires Diana, the lovely young blonde.

The priests find Helen hiding in a barn and take her to the monastery, a stake is driven into her heart. The priest explains to Charles that Helen is already dead, her body is just a shell for the demon. When she is staked she once again is at peace and beautiful. This is another recurring scene in the Hammer vampire series.

Dracula takes Diana and heads toward his castle (also a recurring theme). She is locked in Helen's coffin and only escapes when the carriage crashes causing Dracula's coffin to slide onto ice. Charles, attempting to drive a stake into the heart of the vampire, waits too long and the sun goes down. Dracula rises and attacks him. Diana, grabbing a rifle from the priest, fires a shot causing water to run near the feet of the struggling men. The priest takes the rifle back and shoots a circle into the ice forcing Dracula to slide into the water. Vampires cannot cross running water, which doesn't explain why the castle was built near water in the first place.

Kiss of the Vampire (1963) receives high marks for originality by many critics.

Lucy, lying in bed growing weaker, resembles the innocent Judy Garland in *The Wizard of Oz*. Her lovely dark hair is in braids, she is wearing a pale blue nightgown, her face a vision of innocence and purity, from *HORROR OF DRACULA*.



DRACULA, PRINCE OF DARKNESS **presents Barbara Shelley as Helen (TOP), a woman who appears forbidding and repressed, but when seduced by Dracula, loses her inhibitions and repression. (BOTTOM): Barbara Shelley after her transformation, her long hair hanging free, her nightgown flowing behind her, right before a stake is driven into her heart at the monastery.**

However, the film only progresses slightly faster than a snail's pace. Marianne is the focus of a battle between good and evil as Ravna tries to turn her into a vampire while her husband and a drunken professor use white magic to combat the evil.

A young couple, this time on their honeymoon, are forced by circumstances to stay at a remote village inn. The only other guest is an alcoholic professor. They are invited to dine with Dr. Ravna (Noel Willman). Ravna is quite taken by Marianne (Jennifer Daniel) and invites them back to a masked ball. She is drugged and lured to a room where she is locked in with Ravna. He gains control of her by gazing into her eyes. Marianne walks toward the bed and lies down. Ravna kisses her. Meanwhile, her husband Gerald (Edward De Souza) is also drugged. A group of white robbed zealots gather as Ravna presents their newest member, Marianne.

Gerald returns to the inn and secures the help of the drunken professor (Clifford Evans). He explains Ravna is leader of a decadent cult of vampires. Much like *Brides of Dracula*, vampirism is considered a result of a hedonistic lifestyle.

Gerald goes to the chateau, finds Ravna and Marianne, only to have her gaze with rapture at Ravna and declare her undying love for the vampire. Ravna orders her to prove it. She crosses the room to her husband and spits in his face. Gerald manages to escape with Marianne, and with the help of the professor, defeats the vampire cult.

Another Marianne is desired by a vampire in *Brides of Dracula* (1960). This time she is a young French student teacher traveling to a girls' school. She is left at another remote inn by her coachman. The Baroness Meinster (Martina Hunt) invites her to dine.

I must confess that the character of Marianne annoys me more than any other woman in a Hammer film. She has supposedly been hired to teach French and deportment but certainly doesn't practise what she preaches. She comes across as bitchy, spoiled, and just plain stupid. Leaning out the coach window she yells at the coachman for traveling too fast, ignores the warning her hostess gives her about the Baron, snoops around the chateau, allows herself to fall under the spell of the evil Baron (David Peel), sets him free, and after seeing his effect on the mad servant knowing the Baron has killed his mother, she still agrees to marry him! I truly despise this character.

Anyway, Van Helsing (Peter Cushing) manages to rescue her and kill the Baron.

Dracula has Risen from the Grave (1968) stars Veronica Carlson as Maria, the beautiful niece of a Monsignor. Maria does not fit the typical Hammer good girl mold. She disobeys her mother and uncle She undresses her boyfriend Paul to put him to bed, and then spends the night. She also seems quite at home in the pub, patrons easily recognizing her. However, Maria also exudes goodness and purity and is seen clad mostly in white throughout the film.

The doors of Dracula's castle have been locked by a huge cross placed there by the Monsignor (Rupert Davies). Dracula (Christopher Lee) seeks his revenge on the priest by seducing Maria.

After Maria is ordered not to see her boyfriend, Paul, again, he gets roaring drunk and is comforted by barmaid Zena who leads him upstairs and begins to unbut-

ton his pants. Maria, having climbed out her window and over the rooftops to Paul's room, demands to know what is going on and grabs Zena's hand away from Paul.

Maria tucks the blankets around the partially undressed man and kisses him; we see him caress her back. She leaves him around sunrise. Climbing in through her bedroom window she falls onto the bed and hugs her doll, a sign of her childlike innocence although directly in contrast to the previous scene.

That night, Maria stands at the window of her bedroom and pulls her robe closer. She covers her breasts and steps back when Dracula appears. Staring into his eyes she lies back on the bed and pulls the white robe open. The vampire bends to her, kissing her face and eyes as she raises her neck willingly. We see her hand clutch the doll and release it in ecstasy. The doll falls to the floor, a symbol of Maria's lost innocence.

The next night Maria rises and opens the window. She eagerly pulls her nightgown open, awaiting the deadly kiss of her dark lover. She is saved by the Monsignor who bursts into the room.

Later, Dracula, after evading Paul, meets Maria on the rooftop commenting, "Now my revenge is complete."

Maria, in her bare feet and white nightgown, rides by Dracula's side in the carriage as he heads toward his castle.

She follows him through the forest, a frail white ghost trailing the dark menace. He carries her up the side of the mountain, and arriving at the castle, throws her to the ground and demands she remove the cross barring his way. She obeys, throwing the cross over the cliff.

Paul and Dracula struggle; the vampire falls over the cliff and is impaled on the cross.

The Phantom of the Opera (1962), written by John Elder from a story by Gaston Leroux, and directed by Terence Fisher, is so different from most Hammer entries, it is hard to believe it is from the same studio. It's tragic the film was not a financial success and convinced Hammer not to try anything new or different.

Bernard Robinson, possibly the most important person ever employed by Hammer, outdid himself with his art direction.

Heather Sears, as the ingenue opera star, Christine Charles, is wonderful as the heroine. Talented, compassionate, independent, and unafraid, she faces the perils of the opera house with strength and courage.

When the temperamental diva of the opera company's new production of *St. Joan* is frightened away, Christine auditions for the lead. Producer Harry Hunter (Edward De Souza, whose role is much more

Maria (Veronica Carlson), in her bare feet and white nightgown, a frail white ghost trailing the dark meance, from *DRACULA HAS RISEN FROM THE GRAVE*.

defined than most Hammer second banana roles) is immediately charmed and hires her.

As Christine visits the dressing room, a deep voice tells her he will teach her to sing, "only for me."

Lord Ambrose D'Arcy (Michael Gough in a wonderfully sleazy performance), the supposed composer of the opera, is also charmed by Christine and offers to give her "private lessons." He takes his new star to dinner, becomes quite drunk, and insists she accompany him to his home. "You're a delicious little thing. I'm going to enjoy teaching you." It's obvious Christine knows what the notorious leach has in mind and does not want to go with him, but she is not sure how to get out of it and still keep her new job.

Christine spies Hunter entering the restaurant and asks him to attend the "lesson," begging with her eyes he understand. Hunter, always happy to stick it to D'Arcy, agrees.

D'Arcy changes his mind and tells Christine to take a cab home. Harry escorts her home and on the way she tells him of the voice in the dressing room, and he speaks of the mischief that has occurred at the Opera House. They return to the Opera House and enter the dressing room. The lights slowly go out and a deep voice warns Hunter to go away, to leave Christine behind; of course he refuses.

The next day D'Arcy sends a note to Christine dismissing her and later fires Hunter.

Harry goes to see Christine telling her he too has been sacked and they are going to celebrate. While she is getting ready, her landlady tells Harry of a boarder, Professor Petrie, who wrote music but was killed in a fire. Hunter and Christine investigate, managing to fall in love along the way. Late that night Christine returns to her room full of joy. However, her happiness is short lived, she is kidnapped and taken to the underground lair of the Phantom.

The Phantom (Herbert Lom) beckons her closer. "I am going to teach you to sing, Christine. You will be the greatest singer the world has ever known."

He rehearses her unmercifully, slapping her when she cries she cannot go on (remember John Elder adapted this).

Harry discovers Christine is missing and follows a trail through the sewers to the hidden lair. Entering the cavern, he tells the Phantom he knows the whole story. The Phantom, Professor Petrie, begs Christine to allow him to teach her to sing. She does not have to say a word. Her compassionate expression telling the Phantom, as well as the audience, her answer.

She debuts as Joan of Arc to a standing ovation, glancing with appreciation to the Phantom, watching from a box. He notices a piece of equipment falling toward Christine and swings onto the stage pushing her aside. The Phantom dies for her.

While the make-up of the Phantom

Talented, compassionate, independent, and unafraid are words used to describe Heather Sears, as the ingenue opera star Christine Charles, in *THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA*.

is perhaps the film's weakest link, the story and performances make this a first-rate film.

These films do not readily fall into any specific categories, although some comparisons are immediately evident.

Jimmy Sangster seemed to have a difficult time dealing with female characters in his scripts often downplaying their roles. This is evident in *Curse of Frankenstein*, *Revenge of Frankenstein*, and most notably in *The Mummy*. However women are the central focus of *Horror of Dracula* and *Brides of Dracula*. Sangster, along with co-writers Peter Bryan and Edward Percy, rates high marks for creating two of the best female character parts Hammer would ever see: the Baroness Meinster and Greta (the mad servant) in *Brides of Dracula*. Kudos must also be given to actresses Martina Hunt as the Baroness and Freda Jackson as Greta. Director Terence Fisher equally deserves praise for the beautiful look of the scenes with Mina and especially Lucy in *Horror of Dracula*.

Writer Nigel Kneale and writer/director Val Guest had little use for any woman in *The Creeping Unknown* and *Enemy from Space*. However, they then gave us two important women's roles in their following films. Although the role of Helen Rollason is small in *Abominable Snowman*, it is never the less quite important. Barbara Judd in *Five Million Years to Earth* is an integral part of the story and Barbara Shelley does the role proud.

Writer/director John Gilling's female characters tended to be strong and compassionate. Claire (Maggie Kimberly) in *The Mummy's Shroud* investigates the mysterious deaths plaguing the camp while John Elder's script and Gilling's direction has Valerie administering to her husband and then trying to rescue poor Anna in *The Reptile*. Even though, like most Hammer heroines, she needed to be rescued in the end, her character was more assertive than most. Carla in *The Gorgon* is a sympathetic heroine/villainess who is terrified but does not know why, seeming to realize underneath she is the cause of the terror in the village. Even Sylvia in *Plague of the Zombies* (written by Peter Bryan) is adventurous and follows Alice into the forest, although Sylvia is the weakest character in the Gilling series.

Michael Carreras and Tudor Gates, to me, seemed to merely be exploiting the new sexual freedom of the times in their screenplays for *One Million Years B.C.*, *Prehistoric Women*, *Vampire Lovers*, *Lust for a Vampire*, and *Twins of Evil*, although I must admit they are the films that still seem to capture fans' imaginations as well as libidos.

Other writers occasionally contributed scripts to Hammer and don't readily fall into any certain generalizations. Brian Clemens' *Dr. Jekyll Sister Hyde* and *Kronos*; Jeremy Paul's *Countess Dracula*, Richard Matheson's *The Devil's Bride* and *Die! Die! My Darling!*, Judson Kinberg's *Vampire Circus*, Peter Bryan's *Hound of the Baskervilles* and *Plague of the Zombies*, and Bert Batt's *Frankenstein Must Be Destroyed* were different and original with diverse female roles; but in certain ways each can still be easily recognized as Hammer productions.

Then there is John Elder, Anthony Hinds's pen name. He wrote some of the best as well as some of the worst screenplays Hammer produced.

Curse of the Werewolf, *Phantom of the Opera*, *Rasputin, the Mad Monk*, *The Reptile*, and *Dracula Has Risen from the Grave* are all well received films with interesting female characters who usually manage to hold their own against the more assertive and defined male leads. Of course, he also wrote *Kiss of the Vampire*, *Evil of Frankenstein*, *Frankenstein Created Woman*, and *Frankenstein and the Monster From Hell* which were not exactly the greatest roles ever created for women. Even in the good films he had a tendency of allowing his heroines to be beaten, raped, or slapped around. However, to his credit, this action may have been one of the ways he tried to show how truly despicable the villains really were.

Hammer may not have presented women in a politically correct manner, but they certainly gave us something to talk as well as argue about while bringing viewing pleasure to millions of moviegoers. They are still doing so today thanks to video and laser disc. Long may their mayhem reign.

Thanks to: Amy Bryne, Jim Clatterbaugh, Gene Crowell, John Stell, George Stover, and Dick Vincent for the kind use of their tapes for this article.

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HAMMER STUDIO'S KARNSTEIN TRILOGY

THE LESBIAN VAMPIRE AND THE DESIRING FEMALE

By Gary W. Harner

The myth of the vampire has a rich and varied lineage, traceable in recorded history at least as far back as the Middle Ages when it was used as one possible explanation for the plague, or Black Death, that was decimating Europe. Vampires have subsequently proved fertile ground for exploitation in English-language literature, making tentative appearances in works as diverse as Coleridge's *Christabel*, John Polidori's *The Vampyre*, and Percy B. Shelley's *The Cenci* before reaching full-blown maturity in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*. Appearing in 1897, Stoker's tale was the most fully articulated vampire story to date, becoming a phenomenal success as well as a cause célèbre, and was destined to serve as the foundation on which *most* subsequent dealings with the legend of the vampire would be based.

Concurrent with the publication of *Dracula* the world was also witnessing the blossoming of the new artistic medium of cinema, and the eventual convergence of the macabre subject matter of vampire lore and the visual properties unique to the cinema was probably inevitable. The vampire was brought to the screen in such vehicles as F. W. Murnau's *Nosferatu* (1922), Tod Browning's *Dracula* (1931), Carl Dreyer's *Vampyr* (1932), and Lambert Hillyer's *Dracula's Daughter* (1936). However, while the vampire film was a richly-mined subgenre of horror movies during the 1930s, it appeared to have exhausted itself as an innovative art form by the early 1940s and went into decline. This relative absence of the vampire from the film world was to last nearly two decades, until the United Kingdom's Hammer Studio's release of *Horror of Dracula* in 1958.

The studio's emphasis on Gothic atmosphere (including the requisite eerie castles, graveyards, etc.), the additional bold use of color (the better to appreciate the copious blood-spilling), and the obvious sexual allure of a dashing count (complemented by a parade of buxom women in revealing gowns) made the film a tremendous success and brought the vampire back with a vengeance, helping the movie to sire six sequels. Christopher Lee supplanted Bela Lugosi in the public's mind as the personification of the suave count, and Peter Cushing became the very embodiment of all that was good in his upholding of the noble Judeo-Christian universe. However, like its predecessors of the 1930s, by the seventh film of the series this cycle of films was beginning to stagnate, and by 1969 Hammer was desperately looking to "inject some new blood" into the beleaguered genre. The studio turned to a literary work that had already served as an unacknowledged source for several vampire films—by 1969, due to the confluence of diverse socio-cultural factors, the time was ripe for the full exploitation of bringing this text to the screen.

"My strange and beautiful companion would take my hand and hold it with a fond pressure, renewed again and again; blushing softly, gazing in my face with languid and burning eyes, and breathing so fast that her dress rose and fell with the tumultuous respiration. It was like the ardour of a lover; it embarrassed me; it was hateful and yet overpowering; and with gloating eyes she drew me to her, and her hot lips travelled along my cheek in kisses; and she would whisper, almost in sobs, 'You are mine, you shall be mine, you and I are one for ever.' Then she has thrown herself back in her chair, with her small hands over her eyes, leaving me trembling." The female narrator of Sheridan Le Fanu's *Carmilla*

Joseph Thomas Sheridan Le Fanu, an Irish journalist and writer of fiction, wrote his novella *Carmilla* in 1871. The tale is related by its protagonist, Laura, from the vantage point of the age of 27 and looking back to events that unfolded when she was but 18. Laura tells us that she was born into the aristocracy, living in a castle overlooking the abandoned village, church and tombs of the Karnsteins. Her mother having died in Laura's infancy, the family household consists of: her father (retired from "the Austrian service"); Mme. Perrodon, a governess; and Mlle. De Lafontaine, a "finishing governess." Laura is a lonely girl, surrounded by this small coterie of individuals, when the possibility of excitement suddenly comes into her life—following a carriage accident near her castle, a young woman named Carmilla is left to recuperate with Laura and her father. Laura welcomes this new-found friend of like age and looks forward to the prospects of establishing a lasting friendship.

As the passage cited above suggests, Carmilla proves to be a more than attentive companion for Laura, not shy in her physicality with her new acquaintance and arousing uncertain feelings within Laura—throughout the text one comes across *numerous* encounters that leave Laura feeling both aroused and confused:

"She held me close in her pretty

arms for a moment and whispered in my ear, 'Good night, darling, it is very hard to part with you, but good-night; to-morrow, but not early, I shall see you again.'

"She would press me more closely in her trembling embrace,and her lips in soft kisses gently glow upon my cheek.

"I experienced a strange tumultuous excitement that was pleasurable, ever snd anon, mingled with a vague sense of fear and disgust. I had no distinct thoughts about her while such scenes lasted, but I was conscious of a love growing into adoration, and also of abhorrence. This I know is paradox, but I can make no other attempt to explain the feeling."

Laura is strangely attracted to this vivacious young girl, and yet seems to possess an intuition that all is not as innocent or as "natural" as it seems.

"The ambiguity felt by Laura is of course representative of the very dichotomies embodied by the lesbian vampire who functions as a destroyer of innocent young women while simultaneously offering the possibility of sexual liberation for the female caught within the constraints of patriarchal society and its limited definitions of the feminine." (Peter Hutchings, *Hammer and Beyond: The British Horror Film).*

Laura's premonition is, of course, correct. Soon she is experiencing eerie dreams and strange nightly visitations, one involving a "sooty-black animal that resembled a monstrous cat." She says:

> "I felt it spring lightly on the bed. The two broad eyes approached my face and suddenly I felt a stinging pain as if two large needles darted, an inch or two apart, deep into my breast. I waked with a scream."

Carmilla is likewise beginning to betray some idiosyncrasies ss she shocks Laura's father when he reverently remarks that we are all in the Creator's hands: she virtually rants as she exclaims "Creator! *Nature!*... And this disease that invades the country is natural. Nature. All things proceed from Nature—don't they? All things in the heaven, in the earth, and under the earth, act and lives as Nature ordains? I think so." Something is distinctly amiss in this aristocratic household.

Laura is taken ill and becomes bedfast, feeling weak and lethargic; she increasingly experiences dreams of something animal-like descending on her in bed, smothering her. However, at other times she experiences sensations that are not at all unpleasant—one recurring feeling resembles "that pleasant, peculiar cold thrill which we feel in bathing, when we move against the current of a river... the flow of an icy stream agsinst [the] breast." A doctor is finally called in and, most concerned with her sensation of two needles piercing the skin, instructs her:

> "You won't mind your papa's lowering your dress a very little. It is necessary, to detect a symptom of the complaint under which you have been suffering."

No further elaboration is made in the text, but the erotic (and incestuous) connotations are inescapable as we have a father lowering the dress of his eighteen-year-old daughter.

Two small puncture marks are revealed and the doctor, a man of metaphysics as well as a physician, has his suspicions confirmed—Laura has become the recurring victim of a vampire.

Moved to action immediately, Laura's father, the physician, and a world-weary vampire-hunting old general track the attacks to Carmilla: she is the current incarnation of Countess Mircalla Karnstein (vampires traditionally rearranging their names from one generation to another via anagrams, thus Carmilla/Mircalla/Millarca). Finally tracking Carmilla to the decrepit tomb of Countess Mircalla Karnstein in the abandoned Karnstein abbey, they lift the lid from the coffin, finding Laura's house guest in peaceful repose. There is but one way to permanently dispatch a vampire and the crew of men obligingly proceed to drive a stake through the woman's heart and sever her head from her body. Laura has enjoyed a complete recovery, committing her tale to paper for our benefit.

Ingrid Pitt, star of Hammer's *THE VAMPIRE LOVERS*, somewhat alters the tone of the film: in the book Carmilla is 18 and slender; Pitt is obviously in her mid-twenties and has a sturdy torso and large breasts (left).

Even such a cursory synopsis of Le Fanu's novella as appears above readily reveals the debt owed to this story—appearing a quarter of a century before Stoker's *Dracula*, many of the tropes found in subsequent vampire literature, and certainly the motifs found in most vampire films, are in evidence here. Stoker himself was heavily influenced by the story.

"Drawing on both the literary vampire tradition and the folklore tradition, *Carmilla* in turn helped to shape *Dracula* (1897), by Le Fanu's fellow Dubliner, Bram Stoker (1847-1912) . . . Stoker had signalled his debt to *Carmilla* in what was intended to be the opening chapter of *Dracula*, deleted because his publisher thought it revealed the vampire theme prematurely." (Robert Tracy's introduction to *In a Glass Darkly.*)

The text served as the obvious origin of the *female* vampire that was to appear in such films as *Vampyr* and *Dracula's Daughter* already mentioned above.

"One of the earliest classic vampire films, Carl Dreyer's *Vampyr* (1932), is a very free sdaptation of *Carmilla*, purged of all suggestions of lesbian sexuality. *Dracula's Daughter* includes a muted lesbian encounter between a reluctant vampire-woman and a servant girl..." (Bonnie Zimmerman from *Planks of Reason: Essays on the Horror Film*)

However, the tale was obviously constrained by the times in which it was written, and while many of the "juicier" parts have been singled out for quotation above, it should be noted that these phrasings

In the bedroom scene of *THE VAMPIRE LOVERS*, Carmilla (Pitt, left) is telling Emma (Madeline Smith, right) to borrow one of her dresses, but first to take everything off underneath.

concerning raunchy (or at least risqué) encounters are but a small part of a novella full of florid Victorian prose.

The time of the novel's writing may be additionally significant in performing a thorough interpretation of the work, for while the tale may be seen as an obvious battle of clearly defined dichotomies (i. e. the battle between the forces of good and evil), such a reading proves overly facile when the socio-historical context of the place and time of Le Fanu's writing is taken into account. Carmilla's pursuit of Laura and its accompanying sexual anxieties may be read as an expression of contemporary Irish social anxieties, embodying the economic and socio-political turmoil that Ireland was experiencing as Le Fanu was creating his fable. At least one literary critic, Robert Tracy, has noted:

"Leura, the destined victim of *Carmilla*, is troubled when she is suggestively embraced and kissed by Carmilla, more troubled when she begins to sense that she is the target of some mysterious and uncanny agency. Both reactions are plausible. But perhaps these anxieties at once suggest and mask Le Fanu's deeper anxieties. These anxieties are neither supernatural nor primarily sexual, though sex and a troubled religious faith play their part. They are primarily social and political, aroused as the Catholic Irish begin to assert themselves, especially in terms of the central issue in nineteenth-century Ireland, the ownership of land. Political issues can be rephrased in supernatural terms when religion is intermixed with politics. They can be rephrased in sexual terms when racial tension is added. Both factors were abundantly present in nineteenth-century Ireland, to be encoded in Carmilla's pursuit of Laura."

in the threat that Carmilla poses to Laura, we can see a fear of female sexuality which reappears in *Dracula*. The tale also represents Le Fanu's anxiety about the future of his own class as Catholic Irish nationalists began to assume a dominant role, and reveal a new militancy. In tha late 1860s his letters show an increasing fear of Catholic power; in 1868 he described Anglo-Ireland as resting upon a "quaking bog." He was also anxious about money. The family fortune, never very large, did not recover from losses sustained during the Tithe Wars. He was worried about mortgages, which swallowed the income from the little land that was left, and even about his inability to pay the rent of his own Dublin house. These political, social, and financial anxieties—the latter connected with the loss of land and home—have some bearing on Carmilla and the threats she represents, as Le Fanu turns his anxieties into myth.

in the following pages, as we examine the complex negotiation of bringing Le Fanu's text to the screen, we must thus keep in mind that the work will represent a complicated intertwining of factors traversing at least three socio-historical planes: that of Le Fanu's time, and the fact that the tale/movies can be read as an allegory or metaphor of Anglo-Irish relations; as a turn-of-the-century shift (with *Dracula* appearing in 1897) in society's deeming what was permissible in female relations; and in light of the times in which the films themselves were made (the late-1960s and early-1970s), an era which grappled with the changing role of female sexuality made possible by the sexually-liberated '60s and the burgeoning women's movement of the '70s.

By 1970 Hammer's *Dracula* series was losing steam while the gradual relaxation of censorship laws was making realistic depiction of sex and violence on the screen possible. Hammer struck on the ides of taking maximum advantage of the new sexual permissiveness by injecting explicit nudity in its vampire product, and an adaptation of Le Fanu's *Carmilla* seemed to offer the perfect opportunity/justification for such an enterprise. The idea was not an entirely novel one—as already noted, *Vampyr* and *Dracula's Daughter* had already taken tentative steps in the portrayal of female vampires. More significantly, some more recent films (*Blood and Roses* and *Black Sunday*, both of 1961) had begun to tackle the subject matter of lesbians somewhat more frankly.

However, the horror genre could not have anticipated the bold leap that the Hammer films were about to make with their depiction of explicit lesbian seduction coupled with copious amounts of female nudity.

Some of the social and economic factors leading to this spate of exploitation films were unique to Britain, where the films were made. British films were experiencing a sharp decline in attendance in the home market, and the U. S., once a dependable source of revenue for British films, was likewise beginning to prove fickle in its acceptance of product from the U. K. If the audiences were tired of the same old fare, the Industry reasoned, why not give them a reworking of tried-and-true formulae made more topically up-to-date via the injection of sex. Tudor Gates, the screenwriter of Hammer's "Karnstein Trilogy," has even admitted to the pornographic appeal of the movies and concedes that these films were made as a direct challenge to the British Board of Film Censors. In *Little Shoppe of Horrors*, Gates has elaborated even further on the subject: "I went to see a number of Hammer films. While I enjoyed them, the one thing that struck me was that they were terribly outdated, at least for the modern cinema-going public. That was the time over here when the floodgates of censorship opened. I felt that the thing to do was to bring Hammer Films up to the seventies. So I deliberately threw in all the nudes and all the lesbians and all the rest of it."

One of the ironies of the emergence of these lesbian-vampire films is that they raised relatively little concern among the censors—the main reason for this no doubt is that while their allure was firmly rooted in pornography (through their employment of nudity, blood/gore, and much titillation), they were nonetheless being presented in the "safe" fantasy structure of the horror genre. As film historian David Hogan in *Dark Romance: Sexuality in the Horror Film*, has remarked: "The film's goings-on are outrageous, even offensive, if one is easily offended. But Hammer banked on the fact that horror films, a genre both despised and taken too lightly, would be able to get away with it. The studio was correct. *The Vampire Lovers'* [the first film in the Karnstein trilogy] parade of bare breasts, blood, and lesbian soul-kissing would have been censored to ribbons if presented in a 'realistic' context. . . Hammer's incautiousness, then, was so blatant that the censors could not perceive it."

As an aside, it should likewise be noted that these films appeared just as the porno industry was beginning to emerge from darkened back rooms and attain a certain degree of recognition and legitimacy. In the year 1970, the film *Mona: The Virgin Nymph* became the first hard-core pornographic film to see wide-release in commercial theatres in the U.S. Shot in 16 mm, it was the first hard-core film to be filmed in color with synchronized sound. Within two years, *Deep Throat*, *The Devil in Miss Jones*, et. al. would follow.

The studio began with a remarkably straightforward adaptation of Le Fanu's *Carmilla*, which it was to call *The Vampire Lovers*.

The film is faithful in its recreation of Le Fanu's text with two notable exceptions: the opening and closing sequences present the narration of the tale from the vantage point of one of the *male* vampire hunters, and the images on the screen are far more explicit than anything Le Fanu would have been able to convey in his time. The framing structure is a significant deviation from the book in that the narrative is now positioned within patriarchal authority's point-of-view which, within the context of what we will be seeing on the screen, will effectively serve as a dimunition of the female power/aggressivity via appropriation by male vision.

The casting of Ingrid Pitt in the role of Carmilla also somewhat alters the tone of the film as opposed to that created in the book. In the book, Carmilla is described as being 18 years old and slender of build; Pitt is obviously in her mid-twenties, with a sturdy torso and large breasts. Madeline Smith, as Emma, Carmilla's victim-target in the movie, contrasts nicely with Pitt: porce-

Carmilla (Ingrid Pitt) is as much a victim as a victimizer. She speaks unhappily of the "cruel love" she must endure, and claims that she is forced to prey upon young women in order to maintain her youthful form.

lain-pale and slender of waist, she nonetheless is extremely buxom, a further indication that beauty and breast-size were undoubtedly key considerations in the casting of these female leads.

Since the story and plot of the movie fairly faithfully follow that of the novella, there is no need to reiterate a further synopsis here (see above); however, close examination of a key sequence in the film will illustrate the lengths that the filmmakers have gone to to exploit the sexual permissiveness of the times. Andrea Weiss in *Vampire and Violets: Lesbians in Film* accurately lays out Carmilla's initial seduction of Emma as follows: "Emma comes into Carmilla's bedroom while Carmilla is taking a bath. First we see Carmilla in a medium shot, eyes averted off screen and naked from the waist up in the bathtub. Her large breasts are center screen and dominate the shot. Then she turns as she rises, and we have a view of her entire torso from the back just as she drapes a towel around her. . . Carmilla walks to the mirror and sits so that her back is to the camera; we simultaneously see her naked back and, in the mirror reflection, her face, nerk, shoulders and breasts (the standard myth that vampires lack a reflection is dispensed with here in the service of prurient interests).

"In this bedroom scene, Carmilla is telling Emma to borrow one of her dresses, but first to take everything off underneath. Emma's hesitancy, 'What will my father say?' and Carmilla's reassurance, 'He will enjoy it, as all men do,' further speaks to the pleasures of the male spectator and establishes the context in which to view what follows. A half-naked Carmilla chases a half-naked Emma around the room, and they land conveniently on the bed. We see them embrace, and then for a moment a lamp in the foreground obstructs our view. . . The bulbous, symmetrical shape of the lamp at once shields our view of the women and symbolically recreates the fetishized breast imagery in the foreground of the shot." Weiss's only significant omission here is the passing over of *Emma*'s disrobing. Having been instructed to remove everything underneath, Emma rather shyly removed her blouse and undergarment, revealing *her* breasts to the viewer. Thus it is by no means solely Pitt's/Carmilla's body that is put on display here for the viewer-voyeur.

A seduction scene occurring later in the film is even more bold in that it goes beyond the mere presentation of nudity to actually depict what is quite clearly a lesbian encounter. Carmilla is comforting a troubled Emma, who is sitting up, clothed, in bed. Gently stroking her cheek and shoulders, she begins to kiss Emma on her cheeks as her hands quietly remove the dress off of Emma's shoulders. As Emma's dress falls to her waist, Carmilla lowers her initiate's head to the pillow, kissing her all the while. Carmilla's kisses gradually travel down Emma's nerk and collarbone as she simultaneously begins to grasp Emma's breast in her hand. As Carmilla begins to kiss Emma's breasts the camera cuts to an extreme close-up of Emma's face, which somehow manages to simultaneously convey innocence, bewilderment, and ecstasy. The encounter ends on this close-up, as an abrupt cut moves us forward into the film's narrative. The sequence is astonishing in its power of suggestion: while the nudity is indeed explicit and the kissing soft and seductive, the viewer is left feeling (s)he has seen far more than has actually been enacted—part of the reason for this is that so little room is left for doubt as to what transpires after we take our leave of the two women; it is quite obvious that a lesbian sexual encounter has been consummated. Part of the power of *The Vampire Lovers* rests in its ability via nudity and suggestion to *imply* hard-core sexual acts.

One important aspect of the film is the relative softening of the female vampire's earthly predicament: unlike Dreyer's female vampire, Carmilla is not merely the sexual juggernaut and victimizer as described above, but also a *tragic* figure. As David Hogan has noted: "Carmilla is as much a victim as a victimizer. She speaks unhappily of the 'cruel love' she must endure, and claims that she is forced to prey upon young women in order to maintain her own youthful form. Carmilla is a tragic figure because she is aware that each misdeed further erodes her slender humanity. She struggles to resist the dark forces that urge her on, but cannot."

The tone of the film is true to Le Fanu's novella in its capturing of Gothic atmosphere: castles, manor houses, graveyards shrouded in eerie mists, and the world of the aristocracy are all convincingly conveyed—what the Hammer Studio lacked in budgets it more than made up for by the judicious use of miniatures and the innovative use of lighting to cover the relative cheapness of its sets. Indeed, the setting among the aristocracy is of key importance in that it conveys a distinct class bias on the *vampire*'s part, for while Carmilla lovingly *seduces* the aristocratic Emma—one may even say "courts" her—other victims (servants, peasants, etc.) are quickly dispatched in her blood-lust. A countess herself, of the once noble Karnstein lineage, Carmilla establishes "relationships" only among the gentry of like stations in life.

Through its unrestrained use of nudity and graphic female-on-female sex, *The Vampire Lovers* may be read as a *visual* reworking of Le Fanu's *sympathetic* lesbian vampire into a male pornographic fantasy. Naked women are prominently put on display and the engagement in lesbian sexual acts, only coyly depicted here, has become a requisite trope of all subsequent hard-core pornographic films. However, if the film plays to male fantasies it also raises some disturbing questions concerning the patriarchal order: if Carmilla can so easily seduce (and by implication satisfy) her female initiates, is this not threatening to the role of the male in the sexual hierarchy? If this woman

While Carmilla (Pitt) lovingly seduces the aristocratic Emma, other victims (servants, peasants, etc.) are quickly dispatched in her blood-lust.

can fulfill her female partners' sexual needs, where is there any need for the *male* in this sexual universe?

One possible answer is that the threat to the male order is alleviated by the very genre in which the film is presented. The sexual encounters are not in reality between two *women*, but rather between a woman and a supernatural being—this permits a certain distantiation for the male viewer and involves a softening of the perceived threat of the female in possession of the phallus (i. e. vampire fangs as phallus capable of penetration, etc.): "By showing the lesbian as a vampire-rapist who violates and destroys her victim, men alleviate their fears that lesbian love could create an alternate model, that two women without coercion or morbidity might prefer one another to a man. . . When the lesbian is also a vampire, [the man] also has an added explanation for the attraction one woman might have for another. It is not he who is inadequate; he is competing with supernatural powers. A man who offers his woman life through his sexual potency (symbolized by sperm) cannot compete with the vampire who sucks away her life (symbolized by blood). Instead, he must destroy the vampire—the lesbian—who threatens male power through sexual attacks on women." (Bonnie Zimmerman in *Planks of Reason*.) Needless to say, *The Vampire Lovers* ends with the males forcefully reappropriating the phallus (in the guise of the stake to be driven through the female vampire's heart) and vehemently thrusting it into the deviant woman. This aberrant being, unable to endure the male's penetration, ultimately succumbs and dies. The mixture of thanatos and eros is especially appropriate in this instance: in Elizabethan times "to die" was used as a euphemism for orgasm, and the French still occasionally refer to sexual climax as "la petite mort." With the male's sexual supremacy thus reestablished and the patriarchal order successfully restored, the film ends with things once more "as they should be," at least according to the prevailing religious and social mores of the era in which the movie is set.

The Vampire Lovers was hugely successful and the Hammer Studio realized tremendous profits from this inexpensively made film—the vampire genre had seemingly experienced a new lease on life and, needless to say, a sequel was called for. Having already exhausted the Carmilla story by remaining so true to Le Fanu's text in *The Vampire Lovers*, the subsequent films soon abandoned all pretense of faithfulness to their literary origins and instead concentrated on what had made the first film so successful—the female nudity and the overt sexuality of its protagonist.

In the climax of *THE VAMPIRE LOVERS* Peter Cushing is able to stake the helpless Carnilla (Ingrid Pitt); symbolically, the males are forcefully reappropriating the phallus and vehemently thrusting it into the deviant woman.

The first of the two sequels, *Lust for a Vampire*, at least managed to retain the principal character of Carmilla, descendant of the Karnsteins. The film opens with the resurrection of the deceased Mircalla, one of Carmilla's anagrams, by two of her devotees: a buxom village lass has been abducted for sacrifice to bring Mircalla back from the dead. Laid atop Mircalla's coffin, her throat is slit with the ensuing flow of blood channeled inside the casket, seeping through the burial shroud covering the desicated corpse. As the blood soaks through the gauze and into the corpse's mouth a gradual transformation takes place: whereas we had only previously been able to discern skeletal remains beneath the cloth, a body now slowly takes shape—first the veins fill out with the flow of life's blood, then the muscular tone of an actual human form develops, and finally the full substance of an entire body is in evidence. As the body slowly rises from its prone state into a sitting position, the blood-soaked shroud slowly falls away, first revealing the head and finally exhibiting the entire naked torso of the occupant. What we are confronted with has become one of the most famous images in recent horror film history: a beautiful blond woman, with blood dripping from her fanged mouth and trickling down to cover her bare breasts.

After this shocking introduction, we next see Mircalla in a girls' finishing school situated near Karnstein castle—the situation is almost comical in its obviousness, since the presence of nubile young women now affords the filmmakers *numerous* opportunities to confront us with females in various states of undress and nakedness as they bathe in the evening, etc. Mircalla seems especially attracted to one female student, seducing her more through a calm presence and nobility of carriage than anything else. As the camera takes us through the girls' living quarters at night (with the girls getting ready for bed, which of course involves disrobing and washing at basins), we come across Mircalla and her roommate. Mircalla seems quiet and subdued, and when asked if anything is wrong she replies she has a mild headache. Her companion replies that she knows just the remedy and stands behind Mircalla, gently massaging the back of her neck and shoulders; as the shoulder straps of Mircalla's nightgown fall off her shoulders and down to her waist (exposing her breasts), her roommate tenderly kisses her cheek and neck and coos into her ear that they'll slip out for a moonlight swim later. The interlude is disrupted as the assistant headmistress sweeps through announcing lights out—only then do the two girls break away from one another.

While the midnight rendezvous does indeed take place, with the requisite nude swim, it comes as no real surprise to the viewer when the body of the comely roommate is later found with bite wounds on her

LUST FOR A VAMPIRE differs from *THE VAMPIRE LOVERS* in that Mircalla is nearly saved or redeemed by the love of a man, Richard Lestrange (Michael Johnson), one of the instructors at her school (right).

throat and breast. The rest of the film fills itself out with the expected array of male and female victims, culminating with the true identity of Mircalla/Carmilla eventually exposed and her meeting a fiery death (with stake in heart) amid the burning ruins of Karnstein castle. What makes the film most noteworthy is the way it deviates from its predecessor in two key respects: the lesbian-vampire is *far* more passive here as the actress, Yutte Stensgaard, exudes a cold, aloof beauty (but still with a distinct preference for females); ("Stensgaard is blonde and blank-faced... Sangster's jackhammer approach to perverse sexuality could have been disgusting if not for the curiously detached quality actress Yutte Stensgaard brought to her interpretation of Mircalla" (David Hogan)) and the significant fact that Mircalla is *nearly* saved or redeemed by the love of a man, Richard Lestrange, one of the instructors at her school who is entranced by her beauty. Mircalla actually makes love with the man in an elaborately choreographed lovemaking sequence (privileging *her* nude body, of course, not his) that is accompanied by the ballad, *Strange Love*, on the soundtrack. The addition of the song, the time accorded the sequence, the obvious pleasure Mircalla is experiencing, (the fact that she reaches orgasm is conveyed through the image of what has since become a cliche' we are given a shot of her hand clutching the grass upon which she is laying. The hand gesture *here* of this female vampire plays as an interesting inversion on the typical motif of the vampire's clawing hand, but as S. S. Prawer has noted in *Caligari's Children: The Film as Tale of Terror*, "The link between vampiric and coital delights has been brought out more and more openly by the facial expression and bodily contortions of the actors and actresses who have portrayed vampires and their victims in the last twenty years. The motif of the clawing hand—the archetypal image of menace in terror-films of the 'silent' as well as 'sound' period—has thus assumed a more openly sexual meaning than the older movies dared to give it."

The fact that she *doesn't* bare her fangs and bite him in the neck (which is what the viewer is anticipating, after all) signals this as a key moment of the film. Mircalla's ability to enjoy sex with a man, and seemingly even falling in love with him (something inconceivable for Carmilla in *The Vampire Lovers*), is consonant with her more passive demeanor throughout the film—while she had already seemed *visually* less threatening than Ingrid Pitt's aggressive characterization, her physical menace has now been significantly diminished. Rendered susceptible to masculine domestication via the phallus, her nude body, so often put on display throughout the film, has now been clearly coded as a site of male voyeuristic objectification.

Lust for a Vampire was enough of a box-office success to warrant another sequel, and later in 1971 Hammer released *Twins of Evil* . Except for the character Baron Karnstein, who is the principal vampire in the film, all associations with the Le Fanu text have been removed. The very fact that the lead vampire of this film is *male* signals the movie's nearly complete dissociation from its predecessors. The plot revolves around the conflict between the debauchery of Baron Karnstein and an extremist Puritan group led by Gustav Weil (Peter Cushing). Weil has two nieces staying with him, played by the identical twins Madeleine and Mary Collinson—the Collinson twins had earlier attained a degree of notoriety by becoming *Playboy* magazine's first *twin* "Playmates of the Month." By employing twins who had already become famous for discarding their clothes for pictorials in a mass-marketed periodical, the Hammer Studio was clearly signalling to the audience that the emphasis in this movie would be less on the supernatural and more on the lascivious.

The two twins possess very different personalities and natures: the one, chaste, demure and acquiescent; the other, strong-willed, assertive, and far more liberal. The "bad" twin is bitten and vampirized, and in the village's subsequent determination to put an end to the Karnstein curse once-and-for-all, the innocent twin is arrested and nearly burned at the stake. Saved in the nick of time, the *evil* twin is beheaded and Baron Karnstein himself meets his demise. As has been noted by numerous writers, the film marks the epitome of the Karnstein series' unqualified objectification of the woman in its : 1) utilization of more nudity than ever before in the trilogy, 2) near absence of lesbianism (although a fondness for biting the female breast continues), and 3) plot that heavily emphasizes patriarchy.

In *Hammer and Beyond: The British Horror Film* Peter Hutchings comments, "The fact that the rebellious, independent twin is presented as unequivocally evil while the obedient twin, the one who in effect knows her place, is virtue personified immediately lends a misogynist tone to the proceedings... Both (Weil and Karnstein) seek to dominate women in various ways... It is significant that Carmilla herself makes only a fleeting appearance and that the lesbianism which previously had signalled, albeit in a compromised fashion, a female desire separate from male definitions has been almost entirely removed."

While the movie did respectably well at the box-office, it did not live up to the studio's expectations and it was becoming clear that the novelty of the female-vampire genre was beginning to wear thin. *Twins of Evil* was to be Hammer's last lesbian/female-vampire film and the studio itself was soon to leave the scene entirely.

"Outside of male pornography, the lesbian vampire is the most persistent lesbian image in the history of the cinema."

The very fact that the principal vampire in *TWINS OF EVIL* is a male signals the movie's nearly complete dissociation from its predecessors. Here Count Karnstein (Damlen Thomas) finds a willing convert in the guise of Madeleine Collinson.

(Andrea Weiss)

Sheridan Le Fanu's *Carmilla*, appearing in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, was rich in subtexts and themes submerged just below the surface—whether this was done intentionally or subsconciously by the author is, of course, open to debate. What is *not* debatable is the fact that all works of art are the result of complex factors—social, historical, economic, personal, etc.,—that have come to bear on the artist who is producing the work. The possibility that *Carmilla* could be read aaa metaphor for the state of Anglo-Irish relations and the changing perceptions as to what was considered acceptable regarding intimacy among female friends towards the end of the nineteenth century was no doubt more obvious at the time of its writing than it is to today's reader—by the time the novella was transformed into *The Vampire Lovers*, the audience was largely oblivious to such historical traces encoded within the film. However, just as Le Fanu's novella was a reflection of numerous cultural factors of 1871, so was Hammer's "Karnstein Trilogy" a representation of the state of Anglo-American society a full century later.

The frank representation of female sexuality in all three movies would not have been possible a mere five years earlier but is rather the result of these specific films being made at a crucial juncture in the evolution of western society—namely, at the moment of convergence of the sexual liberation of the late 1960s and the birth of the nascent women's movement of the early 1970s. The more liberal attitudes of these times led to a candor in films that heretofore had been undreamed of: with films such as Antonioni's *Blow Up* of 1966 and the Swedish film *I Am Curious—Yellow* of 1967-68, nudity and explicit sex scenes had begun to make inroads (and even achieve a degree of respectability) in mainstream filmmaking. This development directly led to the downfall in the U.S. of the Production Code in 1968 and the implementation of the ratings system in its stead. The intertwining of these two movements is one of the most significant developments in the annals of history: with the sexually liberated late-sixties (and the accompanying "free love" attitudes, etc.,), women were able to acknowledge their sexual impulses openly for the first time; with the birth of the women's movement in the seventies, women went beyond merely acknowledging their sexual needs to demand equality with men, as well as explicitly demanding sexual gratification (the point being made that women could likewise experience, and were now demanding, orgasms). It is perhaps in light of these developments that *The Vampire Lovers*, *Lust for a Vampire* and *Twins of Evil* can most fruitfully be examined.

While such developments undoubtedly marked great strides forward in the cause of women's rights, they were also accompanied by an increase in anxiety on the part of the *males* in society: having established cultures firmly grounded in the belief of the superiority of the male (i. e. patriarchy), men now found themselves being threatened both as the unquestioned leaders of civilization as well as the dominant members (pun intended) in sexual transactions. As if that were not enough, another alternative was also beginning to come to light during the course of the women's movement, namely that some females were openly opting for lesbian relationships both for sexual gratification and emotional nourishment.

These historical developments make any reading of lesbian-vampire films made at the turn of the decade problematic since they were produced when the sexual liberation of the '60s was in full bloom but the women's movement of the '70s had not yet (arguably) seen its fruition. Even feminist critics with much at stake in the issue cannot agree on how to interpret the films, ergo: "Since feminism between 1970 and 1973 was not yet perceived as a fundamental threat, men could enjoy the sexual thrill provided by images of lesbian vampires stealing women and sometimes destroying men in the process. The creators of those images—like the pornographic filmmakers who appeal to male fantasies with scenes of lesbianism—must have felt secure enough in their power and that of their primary male audience to flirt with lesbianism and female violence against men." (Bonnie Zimmerman) While, writing about the same time period of 1970 and specifically about the film *The Vampire Lovers*, Andrea Weiss writes: "Strengthened by participation in consciousness-raising groups, many women across the United States and in Europe demanded sexual pleasure and sexual equality with their husbands and boyfriends, and many more left these men and proclaimed their lesbianism. Under such circumstances, men understandably felt their dominant social position to be dangerously threatened."

While these readings of the lesbian-vampire films may appear to be contradictory, they are not necessarily mutually-exclusive, and a psychoanalytic examination of the films and their presentation of the lesbian theme reveals an uneasy coexistence of these two interpretations.

Common tropes can be found in all three films that are indeed symptomatic of male fears and anxieties in relation to the aggressive female. Perhaps the most obvious is that of the fear of female bonding to the point of exclusion of the male—the need for the male becomes, if you will, redundant. As already noted above, males themselves had already become aware of the "dangers" of close female companionship and by the end

of the nineteenth century had started to redefine such relationships as deviant in an effort to contain them and reassert male authority. Lesbian relationships call into question the matter of male supremacy on at least two fronts—that of the sexual, as well as societal-authoritarian leadership. If women can find sexual gratification without the benefit of the male, then obviously the entire system of social norms as established within the patriarchal construct is in danger of being replaced by this sexual-social alternative. In this light, Carmilla/Mircalla represents a definite threat to male supremacy in her ability to seduce and sexually satisfy the women in her orbit. Such "aberrant" desires clearly represent, by extension, the female's wish to usurp male power and authority and to dissociate herself from the male world.

The most obvious source of sexual gratification between women is the mouth, and the vampire film, by its very definition, emphasizes the primacy of the mouth. Given thet the vampire in question here is *female*, a whole other set of issues comes into play. As Carol Clover has observed: "...The vampire film... through its symbolic displacement of 'real' or genital sex onto mouths or necks, with which women and men are equally well endowed, allows for a full set of transgressive gender exchanges." (Carol Clover, *Men, Women, and Chain Saws: Gender in the Modern Horror Film.*) The allure of the *mouth* as the primary site of erotic experience in the lesbian-vampire films has been remarked upon by most writers on these films and it presents a double problematic for the viewer: as an inviting orifice it represents a duplication of the vagina by the female, and via its penetrating fangs/teeth it also embodies the phallic potency usually attributed only to the male. Thus, if the lesbian-vampire is sexually threatening to the male as a viable means of displacing him as a necessary sexual partner for other women, she is likewise a source of male anxiety regarding the castration complex—with her fanged mouth she is the vagina dentata, capable of both penetration and castration. It is in this light that the final decapitation of the vampire is so important: by severing the head and its all-too-active mouth, the vampire has been effectively castrated, (significantly, Carmilla can only be destroyed in *The Vampire Lovers* once she is located at rest and unresisting in her coffin—thus the theme of male inadequacy that is present throughout the film carries over even into the lesbian-vampire's death, with patriarchal victory [represented here by decapitation/castration] achieved only through the total passivity of the threatening female) permitting "normal" male society to reassert its authority as sole possessor of the "legitimate" phallus. The importance of the phallus, penetration and castration-anxiety

An extremist Puritan group led by Peter Cushing commits acts of debauchery just as bad as those acts committed by the vampires. Here, a woodman's daughter (Kirsten Kindholm) is an innocent victim who is burned at the stake, from *TWINS OF EVIL*.

also brings up an important subtext of these lesbian-vampire films, namely the role of bodily fluids. To briefly address but a few takes on the matter: "The vampire's thirst for blood and the association of blood with menstruation makes mocking reference to female life-giving capacities, inverting them into life-taking ones"—Andrea Weiss. "A nightly visit from a beautiful or frightful being, who first exhausts the sleeper with passionate embraces and then withdraws from him (her) a vital fluid: all this can point only to a natural and common process, namely to nocturnal emissions accompanied with dreams of a more or less erotic nature. In the unconscious mind blood is commonly an equivalent for semen... in the Vampire superstition... the simple idea of the vital fluid being withdrawn through an exhausting love embrace is complicated by more perverse forms of sexuality," —Ernest Jones, *On the Nightmare*. "The vampiric act of sucking blood, sapping the life fluid of a victim so that the victim in turn becomes a vampire, is similar to the female role of milking the sperm of the male during intercourse"—Linda Williams, *When a Woman Looks*.

If the issues raised above actively represent the male's fear of the aggressive female in these lesbian-vampire films, it must likewise be noted that there are numerous efforts to deflate the danger that these beings present to the male order. One way in which the lesbian-vampire's threat is subtly diminished is in her persistent portrayal as being narcissistic: male patriarchy has long rationalized one woman's physical and emotional attraction to another as being based in self-infatuation and narcissism, i. e. *unnatural*. While the Hammer trilogy is already dealing with the vampire as a supernatural being, it further emphasizes the unnaturalness of the *lesbian* aspects of these relationships by its playing up of the narcissism of the vampires via several striking visual images—in *Twins of Evil* the bold use of identical twins in the two key roles makes the point fairly explicitly; in *The Vampire Lovers* the imagery is somewhat more subtle as, following the initial seduction described above, Emma does indeed dress up in one of Carmilla's dresses, and as the two descend the staircase to go to dinner, their similar looks have become quite marked. The similarity is all the more significant since up to this point the *differences* between the women had been emphasized: Carmilla, olive-skinned, sturdy, somewhat older, and Emma, being of fair complexion, more slight of build, and younger. The initiate-lover has indeed been made over into her partner's image, and the male rationalization that lesbians are actually only capable of loving themselves has been effectively introduced, thereby partially neutralizing the male anxiety of the lesbian as a viable competitor for the "normal" female.

A further effort to offset the fear of lesbian love is evident in the films' constant emphasizing of the female breast as the locus of activity—abundantly put on display for the (male) viewer, the breast is likewise the central point of contact for the vampire and her initiates throughout these films as the vampires not only caress the breasts in seduction but also demonstrate a penchant for *biting* their female victims on the breast. By having the lesbian-vampire so breast-fixated, the lesbian sexual attraction is clearly being defined as infantile in nature and associated with a pre-Oedipal phase of development. "Both solid and fluid, and representing mother and lover, breasts—like the vampire's mouth—symbolically embrace contradictions... In *Twins of Evil* the breast imagery creates a kind of visual spectacle... defined by male spectatorial pleasure." (Andrea Weiss). With the supposedly threatening females thus rationalized as being retarded in their sexual development, male anxiety at the possibility of inter-female lovemaking as a viable alternative to heterosexuality has been effectively assuaged and the female bodies displayed on the screen are now available for male pleasure as non-threatening objects for the male gaze.

Finally, these lesbian-vampire films may be read as reworkings of the classic love triangle found in so many traditional narratives, with the variation being that here we have a man and a female vampire battling for possession of a woman. Readily recognizable as a conventional narrative format,

the male viewer finds himself on familiar terrain in regards to basic plot structure—yet another means of reducing the threat to the male in such a potentially subversive film genre. Male fears are also lessened by the means in which the women of these films—both the vampires and their victims—are visually represented: no attempt is made to make these women look "butch" or otherwise coded as being outside the traditional heterosexual universe. On the contrary, the women are very much the physical embodiment of the typical male's conception of the perfect woman.

". . .The lesbian vampire is still visually coded as feminine. she has long hair, large breasts, pale white skin, and wears floor-length, translucent dresses. . .The lesbian vampire fits the stereotype, not of the mannish lesbian, but of the white, feminine heterosexual woman." (Andrea Weiss)

While it could be argued that such physical attributes *add* to the vampire's threat by enabling her to "pass" as heterosexual and being neither lesbian nor vampire, the visual aspects of these women nonetheless make them less monstrous to males and, seemingly, more easily conquerable. The seduction of Mircalla by Lestrange in *Lust for a Vampire* and the evil twin's attraction to Baron Karnstein in *Twins of Evil* are examples of the desiring female's susceptibility to male prowess.

The final dilution of the lesbian-vampire's potential threat to male superiority rests in the fact that she is not, of course, merely another woman—she is an agent of the *supernatural*, and it is never really a question of the male being supplanted by a female but rather of fighting an unnatural or monstrous being. This places the male protagonists of the films firmly within the classical trajectory of the male hero coming to the rescue of the helpless female. Not *really* attracted to another woman but rather falling under the curse of an inhuman being, the heroines of the films are released from their spells as the male heroes reappropriate the phallus (the stake), forcefully thrust it into the aberrant female, and reassert their dominant role in society.

"The masculine subject can accept the image of woman's pleasure only on the condition that, having constructed it, he may inscribe himself within it, and thus reappropriate it even at the cost of its (or her) destruction." (Raymond Bellour, *Camera Obscura*)

The Hammer Studio's "Karnstein Trilogy," *and* Sheridan Le Fanu's *Carmilla*, embrace many of the motifs and signifiers common to the modern horror film. one readily recognizes the presence of Noel Carroll's notion of horror as a combination of fear and disgust (note the quotation cited where Laura exclaims: "I experienced a strange and tumultuous excitement that was pleasurable, ever and anon, mingled with a vague sense of fear and disgust" created by the monstrous (the monstrous being something which can't be rationally explained and also defined by its impurity, i. e. the breaking of cultural boundaries); one is also presented with the combined tropes of the figuration of the monstrous as feminine *and* the figuration of the female as the privileged victim of the monster; and in the films inspired by Le Fanu's work, one sees a *literalization* of horror that certainly was not possible within the Victorian strictures within which Le Fanu was writing. However, the question of patriarchy and the nuclear family in these works, either in its presentation or in its relative absence, while less obvious, is also of central importance.

The "absent mother" is a theme common to all the works: in Le Fanu's *Carmilla*, Laura is motherless and surrounded by ineffectual surrogates in the form of governesses; *The Vampire Lovers* finds Emma likewise without a mother and overseen by a (largely) ineffective father; the females at the girls' school in *Lust for a Vampire* succumb to Mircalla's charms because they are controlled not by loving mothers but rather by domineering headmistresses; and the twins in *Twins of Evil* are staying with their aunt and uncle, their own father and mother's absence left unexplained.

It is thus the absence of the mother figure, coupled with the relative weakness of paternal authority, that enables female power to become bound up with the *maternal*, permitting the temporary collapse of patriarchal order and the ascension of the powerful-threatening mother figure. The lesbian-vampire fills a void for many of her victims, making them easy prey for her feminine wiles. If such a thematic is in itself a transgression of usual societal norms, it should come as no surprise that such subversive behavior is not ultimately permitted to win out in the end since the texts *themselves* were created by a male writer and filmmakers working patently within the traditional patriarchal construct. Toying with the possibility of the collapse of the patriarchal structure and permitting the rise of the desiring and active female is one thing—allowing them to ultimately reign victorious and endure is quite another. As one writer has expressed it

"The Karnstein. . . films from the 1970s, which do tend to push aside. . . figures of patriarchal authority, are far more challenging to pre-existing generic structures and conventions in their positing of a desiring, active female subject. . . It is a challenge which is quickly contained and neutralised. Female desire in *The Vampire Lovers* is made increasingly subject to a male authority as

Both Weil (Cushing) and Count Karnstein seek to dominate women in different ways: here the innocent Maria (Mary Collinson) defies a member of a fanatical band sworn to destroy witches and vampires, from *TWINS OF EVIL*.

that mini-cycle progresses, while the power of the mother is even more tentatively presented. What these films offer then is a definite rupture within British horror, a moment of potential change, a partial moving away from an objectification of the female, which is quickly closed down." (Hutchings)

Flirting with potentially volatile, even revolutionary, subject matter, the films are in reality just that—flirtations, or teases. By the end of the movies, threatening women have been put in their places (indeed, killed off), and patriarchal order has been restored. The possibility of a desiring female subject has been employed solely as a justification to indulge in some soft-core pornography—the nude bodies put on display, in lesbian embrace or otherwise, are indeed there to attract (and hold) the male gaze and play to his fantasies. The porno films that were to emerge a year or so later would obligingly contain more explicit sequences of lesbian sex for the male viewer's delectation, thereby forever destroying any connection of lesbian eroticism with the idea of it potentially being *art*. But for a couple of fleeting years at the beginning of the seventies, male viewers could sit in a darkened room and witness a Gothic world of castles, graveyards, aristocrats, voluptuous women, and vampires unfold before them, seduced by the illusion of a sexy, artistic experience.

Carmilla (Ingrid Pitt) represents a definite threat to male supremacy in her ability to seduce and sexually satisfy the women in her orbit. Such "aberrant" desires clearly represent the female's wish to usurp male power and authority.

SURVIVING THE LOST WORLDS OF HAMMER

BY JOHN PARNUM

Beginning in 1957, Hammer Studios of Great Britain chilled audiences around the world by remaking many of the black and white Universal horror films of the thirties and forties. Frankenstein, Dracula, the Wolf Man, the Mummy, and the Phantom of the Opera were some of the classic monsters resurrected from that Golden Age of Horror that were given Hammer's new color treatment. They pried open the vaults of other studios also in their search for exciting ideas: *The Man Who Could Cheat Death* was a Technicolor remake of Paramount's *Man In Half Moon Street* and *House of Fright* (or *The Two Faces of Dr. Jekyll*) was an unusual updating of the Jekyll and Hyde theme so brilliantly produced several decades before by Paramount and MGM. Even the 1939 *Hound of the Baskervilles* from 20th Century-Fox was adapted by Hammer, with Peter Cushing providing the definitive portrayal of Sherlock Holmes. And these adaptations always meant intelligently produced thrillers decked out in glorious color with the added never-before-beheld realism of blood, gore, discreet sex, and, later, more blatant nudity.

Then in the mid-sixties, while searching around for different storylines, Hammer rediscovered the lost world theme. Their first foray into unknown lands was a remake of the oft-filmed *She*, the story of Ayesha . . . that beautiful ruler of a mythical kingdom who remained young for 2000 years until the reincarnation of a former lover returned to her. The first version of the film was made in 1899 by that extraordinary Frenchman George Melies, and the 65-foot long short has been labeled one of the screen's first science-fantasy films. Other silent adaptations followed, but the first talking *She* was produced by Merian C. Cooper who gave it the same flamboyant treatment he did for his classic ape flick. Helen Gahagan portrayed the wicked queen and, later when she ran for Congress, tried to buy up all the RKO prints which she considered an embarrassment to her. So when Hammer's Michael Carreras produced *She* in 1965, the tale may have been quite an imaginative departure for younger audiences not acquainted with the 1886 novel by H. Rider Haggard.

Carreras chose Ursula Andress for the title role of Ayesha, or She-Who-Waits, and relative film newcomer John Richardson as the sun-tanned adventurer Leo Vincey for whom She awaits. Tossed in for good measure are Hammer stalwarts Peter Cushing as Leo's fellow traveler Major Holly and Christopher Lee as Billali, Ayesha's traitress high priest. These two veteran actors are perhaps the most believable in the film, outshining the wooden Richardson and the beautiful but talentless Andress. Just watch Cushing awaken from a deep sleep when Richardson shows him a treasure map . . . his excited gestures for this simple feat are entertaining and truly professional.

The opening credits of *She* are exceptionally jarring, alternating between shots of lush tropical foliage with a seductive score from James Bernard and screaming natives on the warpath. It then shifts to Palestine where Leo and Holly and their valet Job (played for comic relief by Bernard Cribbins) sit in a market cafe watching the sexual writhings of an exotic bellydancer. Leo is seduced by the lovely Ustane (Rosenda Monteros) who as Ayesha's handmaiden has been charged with kidnapping the adventurer. Ustane ultimately regrets her mission since she has fallen in love with the rugged Leo, but it is too late and he is taken before Ayesha who tells him she has been waiting for him and that he must follow her to the ends of the Earth. Returning to Holly and Job with a map and medallion bearing his image, Leo convinces the others to cross the Desert of Lost Souls to the Mountains of the Moon where they ultimately hope to locate the hidden city of Kuma—a dream of both Leo and Holly that appears may very well come true. But Leo is having different kinds of dreams also and he continually hears the voice of Ayesha calling to him: "Will you come to me again? Everything you desire will be yours. Power. Riches." Leo asks the seductive vision, "And you?" Ayesha repeats: "*Everything* you desire!"

Enroute across the desert they are attacked by bedouins. Their camels are stolen and water bags slashed. But Leo is convinced that the Mountains of the Moon are very close. And sure enough, just over the next dune they appear. It is still several days' trek and, tired and thirsty, they stagger toward the mountains. All three drain the last drops from their canteens and toss them on the burning sands, a totally ridiculous and uncalled bit of action since the utensils would again be useful once water was located.

The three are rescued by Ustane who has followed them from Jerusalem, and she takes them to her people, a primitive tribe dwelling in the Mountains of the Moon. Even though Leo is wounded, the natives are fearful of him because of his resemblance to Killikrates, a former lover of Ayesha. Ustane's father and leader of the tribe Haumeid (Andre Morell) is slowly losing authority over his people who plan to sacrifice Leo. Just as a native prepares to pierce Leo's heart with a dagger, Ayesha's high priest Billali arrives and takes the group to Kuma. In his delirium, Leo continues to hear Ayesha's seductive promises amidst a background of violins and harps.

Leo recovers and Ayesha tells him that she has waited 2000 years for him to return to her. In his former incarnation as her lover Killikrates, he was unfaithful to her and she stabbed him to death in a jealous rage. In order to remain young and beautiful until his return to her in a new reincarnation, Ayesha bathed in the Flame of Eternal Life. Now, since he has passed the tests set forth

Loana (Raquel Welch) of the shell people and Tumak (John Richardson) of the Rock Tribe join forces in *ONE MILLION YEARS B.C.*

by her on their journey to Kuma, Ayesha is assured that Leo is really Killikrates and invites him to bathe in the flame and join her in immortality.

But Leo and his friends soon become aware that She-Who-Waits is also She-Who-Must-Be-Obeyed and they are forced to watch the 15 natives involved in Leo's near sacrifice hurled into a pit of molten lava. Despite her cruelty, Leo is seduced by She's power, and poor Ustane realizing that she is a discarded love, tells Leo that she is returning to her people. In his last charitable act, Leo kisses Ustane goodbye, but they are observed by Ayesha who sees it as her lover's second act of unfaithfulness in 2000 years. Leo, Holly, and Job are invited to the ceremonial center once more where they are shocked to see Ustane imprisoned in a wooden cage above the lava pit. When Ayesha tells Leo that he can save Ustane by plunging a dagger into her (She's) heart, he cannot do it and Holly says, "We've lost him."

As mentioned earlier, Hammer in past films was notorious for emphasizing violence and bloodshed. *She*, however, is another story . . . a love story, albeit a rather strange and fanciful one. We can be thankful that the lovely and enticing Ustane is not shown being lowered into the conflagration. It is enough for our sensibilities when Bellali tells Haumeid that he is returning his daughter to him and then hands the shocked father a jar of ashes. This, of course, precipitates the obligatory rebellion.

In the interim, Ayesha tells Leo that it is time for him to bathe in the Flame of Eternal Life. A fiery comet plummets from the sky to the burning source, turning the flames blue and cold. Leo says he is afraid and Ayesha tells him they will enter the flames together. In other versions of *She*, Ayesha tells Leo that she will enter first and disrobes, with Leo horrified to learn that a second bathing in the flames takes away her youth and beauty, with Ayesha reverting to a 2000 year-old corpse. In the Hammer version, Andress does not undress when she and Leo step into the flames together. Ayesha does the aging bit, of course, finally crumbling to dust at Leo's feet. And Leo, to his dismay, now finds himself immortal. The cool blue flames turn hot and red again and no longer hold their mystical powers. Holly assures Leo that the comet will return some day. "When, Holly, when?" Leo pleads. Holly reminds him that he wanted immortality at any cost, but Leo has a change of heart and promises, "When it comes back, it will find me waiting." And wait he does . . . at least until 1968 when Hammer filmed its tepid sequel, *The Vengence of She*

Watching a woman age in the matter of a few seconds is always an intriguing premise and is usually the moment eagerly awaited for in such films as *The Lost Horizon* (1937) and *The Mummy's Ghost* (1944). This is probably a selfish desire of audiences to see immortals put in their places and relieving them of their gift of eternal life. In the Hammer *She*, Andress ages by degree until she finally ends up a pile of ashes. It is interesting to note that as a victim of the fire, she not only withers away but seems to burn . . . with the flames turning her fair body black as if the blue coolness were ineffective in protecting her from the heat. But then again, the Flame of Eternal Life has perpetrated other astonishing feats. In an earlier version of *She*, the flame ages Ayesha regressively by returning her to an ape reincarnation.

For the withering of Ursula, famed Hammer make-up artist Roy Ashton reported in the Al Taylor / Sue Roy book *Making a Monster* that Andress was only used in the early stages of the aging process. Since growing old is usually accompanied by shrinkage, emaciation, and shriveling, older actresses of diminishing stature who could remove their dentures replaced the statuesque Andress.

Michael Carreras passed on the production of *Vengence of She* which was given instead to Aida Young who had been associate producer of *She*. Loosely based on H. Rider Haggard's *Ayesha*, *Vengence of She* is practically a retelling of the original with most of the characters interchanged. Instead of Leo's reincarnation of Killikrates being drawn to the lost city of Kuma by Ayesha, the uninspired plot involves Carol, the supposed reincarnation of Ayesha, being drawn to Kuma by Killikrates (once again played by John Richardson). Carol (voluptuous Czechoslovakian starlet Olinka Berova), instead of seeing lovely visions and hearing a seductive voice whispering "Everything you desire will be yours," is lured to Kuma by a series of noises in her head . . . hardly a believable motivation considering all of the dangers she encounters during the journey. High priest Men-Hari (Derek Godfrey in the Christopher Lee role) is the evil influence enticing Carol to Kuma, but is thwarted by yacht-owner George (Colin Blakely) and lady friend Sheila (Jill Melford), both in comedy relief parts, and their psychologist ship guest Philip (Edward Judd) who naturally becomes enamored with Carol.

After much roughhousing and romantic interludes, Carol and Philip arrive in Kuma where Philip is imprisoned and Killikrates tells Carol to enter the Flame of Eternal Life and join him in immortality. However, Killikrates has also promised eternal life to Men-Hari as a reward for bringing Carol to him. Former high priest Za-Tor (Noel Willman) helps Philip escape with the inevitable confrontation at the Flame between Killikrates, Men-Hari, and Philip over the fate of Carol. Once Killikrates realizes that Carol is not the reincarnation of Ayesha, he kills Men-Hari and jumps headlong into the fire. As it did once before, the Flame steals Killikrates' youth and he reverts to his true age . . . probably close to a hundred. The kingdom of Kuma is then destroyed by an

earthquake.

Of the two films, *She* is decidedly the classier. The imaginative screenplay by David Chantler moves briskly along under Robert Day's subdued direction. *Vengence*, on the other hand, suffers from Peter O'Donnell's totally uncreative storyline. Both, of course, have beautiful and sexy female leads to send males into ecstasy, with John Richardson doing a similar job for the ladies.

The thrillers of H. Rider Haggard were immensely popular with movie audiences, especially the oft-filmed *King Solomon's Mines* in which safari leader Allan Quartermain and company find a lost tribe of Africans guarding a fabulous treasure. Michael Carreras showed a great deal of enthusiasm for a project called *Allan Quartermain Esq: His Quest for the Holy Flower* in which the intrepid adventurer travels to the kingdom of the Pongo People who worship a giant white gorilla. The idea was dropped when Carreras was unable to find a partner to help him with financing.

The tribes that lived in the ruined city of Kuma and surrounding areas of the Mountains of the Moon could be considered a highly advanced civilization compared to the Rock Tribe and Shell People who inhabited the primitive landscapes of Hammer's 100th film, *One Million Years* B.C. Filmed in 1966, this prehistoric epic was a virtual remake of the 1940 *One Million B.C.* which starred Victor Mature as Tumak and Carol Landis as Loana. While the prehistoric denizens of this first film consisted mostly of altered reptiles and animals (lizards with fins attached and elephants fitted in shag with curved tusks to represent wooly mammoths), the Hammer version was blessed with the expert craftsmanship of Ray Harryhausen whose realistic stop-motion animation has given life to some of the screen's most fanciful creatures.

Both versions were filmed virtually without dialog, but the Hammer flick which was released by 20th Century-Fox showcased that company's new-found cover girl Raquel Welch who had created such a stir in Fox's *Fantastic Voyage* earlier that year. Raquel, as Loana, belonged to the gentle shell people and rescues Tumak (John Richardson again) of the brutal Rock Tribe after he has been booted out by his father Akhoba (Robert Brown essaying the part of the tribal leader played by Lon Chaney, Jr. in the 1940 version). Tumak, having also lost his girlfriend Nupondi (Martine Beswicke), is naturally receptive to Loana's charms, but is mystified by the Shell People's peaceful ways.

Adapting somewhat to the tribe's gentleness, Tumak is finally able to display his macho image when he takes on

Prehistoric jealousy abounds as Loana (Raquel Welch) confronts the dark-eyed, seductive ex-girl friend (Martine Beswicke) of Tumak, from *ONE MILLION YEARS B.C.*

singlehandedly an allosaurus. Using a spear belonging to Ahot (Jean Waldon), leader of the Shell People, Tumak punctures the creature, catapulting it head over heals in a remarkable *tour de force* of animation. As the victor, Tumak feels he is entitled to Ahot's weapon, but the youthful leader objects. The Shell People stop Tumak from killing Ahot and then banish him from their tribe. Loana decides to leave with Tumak.

Meanwhile, back at the Rock Tribe, Akhobs is wounded in a fight with a wild boar, and his first son, Sakana (Percy Herbert)—Tumak's brother—assumes leadership. Tumak and Loana make their way back to the Rock Tribe, surviving an assault by cannibalistic ape men and a couple of Harryhausen's dinosaurs. While fleeing from a triceratops and a ferocious ceratosaurus (two creatures which actually did not exist in the same time span), Loana runs smack-dab into Sakana who lustfully attacks her. Hearing Loana's call for help through the conch horn, Tumak engages Sakana in a desth struggle, wounding his brother. But Tumak has learned the value of an act of mercy and spares the astonished Sakana who himself is then banished.

Tumak and Loana then teach the Rock People many practical thungs, such as the art of making stone-tipped spears. But while bathing in a nearby pool, Loana is carried off by a bat-winged Pteranodon (often mistakenly referred to as a Pterodactyl) in one of Harryhausen's most amazing sequences. An extensive system of invisible wires was required to stabilize the model, and this was made more complicated when the Pteranodon carrying Loana is attacked by a second winged reptile, a Rhamphorhynchus. The wings, head, body, and a stop-motion figure of Loana had to be moved one frame at a time in perfect synchronization. Especially time-consuming was the scene where the Pteranodon swoops down and grabs the fleeing Raquel Welch and scoops up a realistic animated model without a break in continuity. The result is one of the most exciting and smooth transitions of actress and model ever filmed and was so successful that Harryhausen repeated the action in the 1968 *Valley of Gwangi* when a Pterodactyl grabs a small boy off a running horse.

During the airborne struggle between the two reptiles, Loana falls into the sea, and Tumak, seeing the marauding Rhamphorhynchus cannibalizing the Pteranodon's nest, assumes that his love has been eaten and gives her up for dead. Loana is rescued from the sea by her tribe, but knowing that she cannot live without Tumak, she persuades Ahot and others to lead her back to the Rock Tribe. The joyful reunion with Tumak is interrupted when Sakana, now leader of a new tribe, attacks. Sakana carries off Loana once again, but is speared by Tumak, just as the ground begins to shake and volcanos spew forth burning lava. Though many in the tribe are swallowed up by the earthquake, Tumak and Loana and a few others survive to rebuild the human race.

Of course, other than Raquel Welsh to set male hormones raging, the chief attributes of *One Million Years B.C.* are Ray

Harryhausen's dinosaurs. Interestingly enough, the first dinosaur the audience sees is one of those blown up, doctored iguanas . . . the kind that ran rampant in the 1940 version and which have been used in stock footage in so many grade Z lost world films that followed. in his oft-reprinted book *Film Fantasy Scrapbook*, Harryhausen said, "I have never favored using real lizards pretending to be dinosaurs, but in the remake of *One Million B.C.* we felt it might add to the realism if the first creature we saw was a living specimen. I think it worked well, although there has been much criticism from animation fans." A real tarantula, greatly enlarged, was also tossed in for good measure. But the animation of the giant Archelon ischyros, on the other hand, was so realistic that some fans felt that a real tortoise had been used.

Sometimes all the delicate time-consuming work that goes into the detailed creation of a realistic model is for naught. Stills and production sketches of a brontosaurus confrontation whetted the appetites of animation fans everywhere, but because production time was running behind schedule, it was decided to drop this dinosaur . . . a real shame too since next to Tyranosaurus rex, the brontosaurus is everyone's favorite guy. The production of *One Million Years B.C* was filmed on location on the island of Tenerife in the Canary archipelago. This macabre setting with its barren landscape peppered with endless craters and three-mile-high volcano seemed an appropriate world in which the Rock Tribe and Shell People could frolic among the dinosaurs. Carreras once again produced and wrote the screenplay consisting of grunts and unintelligible mutterings.

Raquel Welsh, of course, went on to greater glories, and so for their next prehistoric epic Hammer remembered Martine Beswicke, the dark-eyed, seductive ex-girlfriend of Tumak in *One Million Years B.C.* Beswicke, a sultry Jamaican actress, hauntingly resembles Barbara Steele in both stature and looks and, interestingly enough, both are very close friends in real life. Hammer felt that Martine would be perfect as the heartless tigress queen of a lost race of Amazon women in darkest Africa in their 1968 production of *Slave Girls*. Released in the United States as *Prehistoric Women*, the film bore no resemblance to the 1950 movie of the same name in which Laurette Luez and other nubile cave women search for mates and try to ward off the advances of a nine-foot tall ape man played by Johann Peturrson.

The Hammer *Prehistoric Women* for one thing is set in the present day and concerns the adventures of hunting scout David Marchant (Michael Latimer) who follows a wounded leopard far into the African jungles where he discovers a tribe of hostile natives worshiping the statue of a white rhinoceros. He is captured and about to be killed when he falls against the horn of the rhinoceros, causing the walls of the cave around him to rumble and dust flashes of lightning and which finally open up like something out of Ali Baba. There he discovers a tropical paradise of magnificent flora and colorful birds. But also in this Garden of Eden he finds Saria (Edina Ronay), a beautiful blond trying to escape from a race of Amazonian women who have held her people captive since prehistoric times (hence the title). Both David and Saria are caught and taken before Queen Kari (Beswicke).

The remainder of the film is a series of rebuffs and ruses. David spurns the advances of Queen Kari who throws him into a dungeon where he discovers the male members of the kingdom, chained and reduced to slovenly wimps. David plays up to Kari, trying to gain freedom for himself, the other men, and Saria with whom he has fallen in love. He is imprisoned once again but is able to rout the others for their escape. They overthrow the Amazons and rescue Saria just as she is about to be sacrificed to the rhinosarus god.

In a rather peculiar ending, Saria tells David that she cannot leave with him but pledges her everlasting love. He returns to camp and wonders if it has all been a dream. Then he sees a new safari arriving and among them is Saria in modern dress. Could this be the old reincarnation theme surfacing once more? Was David really in prehistoric times and did Saria keep her promise to return to him . . . only millions of years later? The mind boggles.

Prehistoric Women did have a rather silly story by Henry Younger, but it certainly wasn't the stupid turgid bore that its 1950 predecessor was. Technical values were excellent and Michael Carreras, in addition to producing, also directed, giving the film all the care of past Hammer achievements. *Slave Girls* was perhaps a more fitting title since fans expected a few dinosaurs in a film called *Prehistoric Women* (although from my memory of fifth grade history books, dinosaurs and humans never co-existed in the same era). Devoid of the superb animation that made *One Million Years B.C.* so enjoyable, *Prehistoric Women* did showcase the talent and sexuality of Martine Beswicke, and her performance alone makes the film worth viewing.

Fans, however, had only to wait another two years for the lost world denizens to be reinstated in Hammer's second stop-motion animation prehistoric flick, *When Dinosaurs Ruled the Earth*. The Canary Islands were once again picked as the locale and producer Aida Young chose the Isle of Fuertaventura for shooting since the virgin territory had never before been used in a motion picture. Val Guest's screenplay was laced with touches of humor in this violent tale of humans at the dawn of time. It consisted of only 27 words and audiences were

Hunting scout David Marchant (David Latimer) ventures across a tribe of hostile natives worshiping the statue of a white rhinoceros from Hammer's *PREHISTORIC WOMEN.*

handed fliers so they could interpret the primitive language. Whether intentional or not, some of these words were used in the original *One Million B.C.*, only with different meanings. For instance, Neecha in *Dinosaurs* meant "Stop! Come back!" but in the '40s film referred to a dinosaur. Wandi meant "Where? What? Where are you?" but was the name of the child thought to have perished in the climactic lave flow in the first *One Million B.C.* The many definitions of Akhoba (from "Help" to "Forgive me" to "Greetings") was the name of the Lon Chaney and Robert Brown cavemen leaders in both versions of *One Million*.

Despite the often confusing dialog, a narrator sets the scene for *When Dinosaurs Ruled the Earth*: "It was a time of beginnings . . . a time of fear. Man's fear less the sun should leave him . . . leave him in utter darkness. A time when the color of a woman's hair condemned her to a sacrifice to the sun. A time when there was no moon." Yes, the truth be it known, blondes had less fun in those days as Sanna (*Playboy*'s 1968 playmate of the year Victoria Vetri) of the Rock Tribe was to learn when she and several other fair-haired lasses find themselves about to be offered up to the sun god just as a piece of Old Sol breaks off to form the moon. In the resulting cyclone and confusion, Sanna flees into the churning sea and is rescued by Tara of the neighboring Sand Tribe . . .a rather peaceful group of Neanderthals resembling the Shell People in *One Million Years B.C.*

They are quite resourceful too, for when the film opens they have just captured an angry Plesiosaurus. The interaction between the beast and the humans is a masterpiece of stop-motion animation by Jim Danforth, equaling, if not surpassing, the achievements of his mentor Ray Harryhausen. The animal's lifelike movements are smoothly controlled, especially when it breaks loose and is finally incinerated by the Sand Tribe.

Tara (Robin Hawdon looking very much like Ringo Starr's Atouk in the 1981 spoof *Caveman*) falls for Sanna but his jealous girlfriend Ayak (Imogen Hassall) causes a hassle of her own and turns the tribe against Sanna when Tara is off on a fishing trip. Kingsor (Patrick Allen), leader of the Rock Tribe, still blames Sanna for the disturbance in the heavens, and visits the Sand People in search of her. Feeling unwanted and threatened by both tribes, Sanna flees into the jungle where she endures such dangers as a giant serpent and a woman-eating plant. To escape the latter, she must cut off her golden tresses.

Delegates from both tribes search for Sanna and encounter a prehistoric Chasmosaurus which gores Kingsor. Tara tricks the beast and it plunges off a precipice. Then Tara is carried off by a Rhamphorhyncus who drops him in its nest of hungry young in a scene reminiscent of Raquel Welch's kidnapping by a Pteranodon in *One Million Years B.C.* Jim Danforth wanted to duplicate Harryhausen's animation of the giant winged reptile swooping down to pick up a live actor without stopping the film. Unfortunately, because the scene was shot at the base of a cliff, the Rhamphorhynchus would have smashed into the rock wall and so that idea of film magic had to be discarded.

Tara kills the creature and finds Sanna's shorn locks and assumes she has been eaten by the plant. Sanna, however, has taken refuge in the shell of a dinosaur egg and is oustaken by the mother for one of its own. This turns out to be the "cute" phase of the film as Sanna plays happily with the babies and is encouraged to eat a full grown deer that the mother has killed for her. Danforth decided to create a new breed of dinosaur for this family and did not base the models on any known prehistoric reptile.

Tara and Sanna are finally reunited and she grabs him by the spear (how symbolic can you get?) and leads him away to her idyllic Eden to the accompaniment of Mario Nascimbene's haunting five-note motif (he did the memorable score for *The Vikings*). But all is not well in Paradise and their romantic trysting is interrupted when the Rock Tribe captures Tara and sets him adrift on a burning raft. He escapes when a seagoing Mosasaurus capsizes the raft.

The Rock Tribe continues to pursue Tara and Sanna who stealthily try to avoid some of those doctored up lizards that appeared to have escaped from the 1960 remake of *The Lost World*. Matters become repetitious as they are recaptured and Sanna is rescued by Mama dinosaur who still hasn't accepted Tara as a dutiful son-in-law, thus leaving him behind tied to a stake for sacrifice. But the gravitational pull of the newly formed moon causes the tide to ebb, releasing savage giant crabs who pluck up and devour as many tribespeople as they can. Tara sees a monstrous title wave approaching and is freed by Sanna. Together with another couple they steer a raft directly into the oncoming wave and escape the thundering wall of water. The others are drowned, and the waters rise over the forests in a scene recreated from Paramount's deluge in the 1951 *When Worlds Collide*. When the waters recede, the two couples head toward the mountains to start life anew.

Victoria Vetri is pleasing to look at and Robin Hawdon turns his caveman Tara into a real gentleman, even though at times when he grins it appears as if he is having a bowel movement. Originally considered too young for the role, Hawdon plastered a beard on his face and went back for a second casting interview and was accepted. There are some nice touches throughout the film, like the mothers of the Rock Trib trying to darken their fair skinned daughters' blond hair so they won't be offered up to the sun when they reach sacrificial age. In addition to writ-

Sanna (Victoria Vetri) of the Rock Tribe and several other fair-haired lasses find themselves about to be offered up to the aun god, from *WHEN DINOSAURS RULED THE EARTH.*

Prehistoric love blooms: Tara (Robin Hawdon) falls for Sanna (Victoria Vetri) but his jealous ex-girl friend causes a hassle for all concerned, from *WHEN DINOSAURS RULED THE EARTH*.

ing the screenplay, Val Guest also directed the prehistoric yarn with a deft hand, and *When Dinosaurs Ruled the Earth* is probably the most satisfying of the titles discussed in this article.

As in *One Million Years B C.*, time and money prohibited Danforth from creating some really exciting sequences. There was to have been an attack by giant prehistoric ants that had to be omitted even though shots of the fleeing cave people had already been filmed. Also discarded was a flock of Pterodactyls being buffeted about in the wind and sent crashing into cliffs. But what is included is probably the most realistic animation of a dinosaur film to date and even equals the computer-generated behemoths of *Jurassic Park*. As Don Leifert observes in an article in the premier issue of *Movie Club*, when the Tyranosaurus rex rips down the museum banner proclaiming *When Dinosaurs Ruled the Earth*, it's almost an acknowledgement of director Spielberg's feeling threatened by Hammer's artistic achievements.

For their fourth prehistoric epic, Hammer pressed the salient qualities that had distinguished their Gothic remakes of classic horror films to the limits, namely, shock value and extreme violence. Audiences who had been stunned to see ample bloodletting, decapitations, smashed brains, and seductive semi-nude vampiresses in the late fifties and sixties were now treated to the most violent stone age film yet in the 1971 *Creatures the World Forgot*. The cave people in this outing were cruel, ugly, filthy folks, far removed from the semicivilized bikini-clad sweethearts and jock-strapped hunks of *One Million* and *Dinosaurs*. The tone of this bleak somber film differed considerably from the tongue-in-cheek comic book action of *Prehistoric Women*. In fact, some reviewers consider *Creatures the World Forgot* the most realistic of the four films produced. Michael Carreras, who had written and produced *One Million*, and Don Chaffey, who had directed that film, each had similar responsibilities on *Creatures*. They threw in enough gruesome details of early man's struggle for survival, enhanced by Hammer's top notch production values, to create a believable and exciting story for audiences. The problem is that they threw out all of the creatures. Well, the Columbia marketing gang reinstated one in their advertising "SEE the sensational new star Julie Ege. She's a creature you'll never forget!"

Oh, there is some animal life in the film: a huge bear and a mad wildebeest that gores Mak (Brian O'Shaughnessy), leader of the Rock Tribe. And then there is the climactic struggle between Nala (Swedish bombshell Julie Ege) and a giant serpent portrayed by a rather docile python. Otherwise the plot involves two brothers Toomak (a variation on a rather common stone age name) played by Tony Bonner and Rool by Robert John. Both vie for Nala's attentions and end up forming separate tribes. The film is a succession of bloody battles and near rapes of Nala, thereby branding *Creatures* with an R rating. A tamer version of the film shows up occasionally on television with some of the nudity trimmed and the violence toned down. In order to save on time and expenses, Carreras and Chaffey incorporated clips from One Million Years B.C. for the film's volcanic eruption.

Three additional dinosaur flicks were considered at one time by Hammer. The studio talked with Ray Harryhausen about a remake of *King Kong*, but at that time RKO was adamant about keeping the copyright to their classic ape film. Then, ever since the late '60s, animator David Allen had envisioned an incredible story titled *Raiders of the Stone Ring* with a World War I zeppelin blown off course near Greenland and attacked by Pterodactyles from a kingdom of lizard men. Allen asked Danforth to begin work on the lizard creatures but the special effects wizard was called to England to animate *When Dinosaurs Ruled the Earth*. Learning about Allen's project from Danforth, Hammer became interested in the property, changing the title to *Zeppelin V. Pterodactyles*. But as Jim Danforth's animation went into overtime, Hammer became disillusioned with the process and abandoned all stop-motion in future films. This also eliminated the making of a sequel to *When Dinosaurs Ruled the Earth*, which would feature the mother creature that had befriended Victoria Vetri. This third project was to have been called *Dinosaur Girl*.

Perhaps the most bizarre of Hammer's lost worlds was filmed in 1968 and released as *The Lost Continent*. Based on the novel *Uncharted Seas* by mystery thriller writer Dennis Wheatley, the film depicts what happens to a boatload of misfits when their craft gets tangled in the Sargasso Sea and they discover not one but several lost races. Earlier that year, one of Hammer's most acclaimed movies, *The Devil's Bride* from Wheatley's supernatural chiller *The Devil Rides Out*, had been released and eight years later Hammer brought his *To the Devil . . a Daughter* to the screen.

Hammer's *Lost Continent* bore no resemblance to the 1951 film of the same name in which Cesar Romero, John Hoyt, Hugh Beaumont, Whit Bissell, *et al.* are led by native girl Acquanetta up a remote island plateau to retrieve a lost missile and discover dinosaurs at the top. In the Hammer version, once again produced and directed by Carreras, the story begins on board the deck of a rusty freighter adrift in a sea of derelict ships with a funeral in progress. In attendance are armored conquistadors, capuchin monks, busty damsels, a jazz pianist, and the survivors of a hurricane that has swept them into the Sargasso Sea. The captain of the freighter, a once-prominent navel officer named Lansen (Eric Porter) who has sunk to

Considered by many to be the moat realistic of their prehistoric dramas, *CREATURES THE WORLD FORGOT* featured the climactic struggle between Nala (Swediah bombahell Julie Ege) and a giant serpent portrayed by a rather docile python.

carrying illegal explosives on his dilapidated old tub, the Carlita, tries to fathom how they ended up in this strange situation. And thus their story is told in flashback.

In addition to the volatile cargo which will bring him a fortune when sold on the black market, Captain Lansen harbors as motley and unpleasant a batch of passengers since those who crossed the ocean in Stanley Kramer's 1965 *Ship of Fools*... no, make that more like the misfits who found themselves aboard *The Sea Wolf* captained by Edward G. Robinson in 1941. First there's Eva (German actress Hildegard Knef), mistress of a foreign dictator and who is fleeing from the police. She is unknowningly being tailed by Ricaldi (Benito Carruthers), a secret agent of the dictator who wants to recover stolen securities from Eva. There is a deported Doctor Webster (Nigel Stock) who will commit any malpractice for the right price and his promiscuous daughter Unity who will throw herself at any available man. A hopeless alcoholic piano player named Harry Tyler (Tony Beckley) is probably the least offensive character on board, especially since he goes on the wagon later after taking the blame for Dr. Webster's demise when the latter is gobbled up by a shark. Good old Hammer veteran Michael Ripper is a nasty sea lawyer who confronts Captain Lansen about the mysterious cargo labeled Phosfor-B.

The first half of *The Lost Continent* deals with the interrelationships of these disagreeable people Unity throwa herself at Harry Tyler... Eva makes a play for Captain Lansen. As unpleasant as the passengers and crew are, the audience is intrigued by their character developments, a plus for screenwriter Carreras using the pseudonym of his gardener Michael Nash. Then as a hurricane approaches and Captain Lansen refuses to change his course, the crew learns that the deadly cargo Phosfor-B explodes on contact with water and they scurry like rats into a lifeboat and are lost in the fury of the storm. The captain and his passengers also abandon ship where they weather out the waves but can't quite seem to dispel the growing tensions among themselves.

Their lifeboat eventually drifts back to the freighter Carlita which has not blown up but has become ensnared in man-eating seaweed of the Sargasso Sea. It is here that *The Lost Continent* really goes off the wall and turns from a psychological study of outcasts to a rousing adventure story of misplaced medieval inquisitions threatened by some of the most outlandish monsters that ever graced the Hammer studios.

The seaweed has clogged the engines of the Carlita and strangely enough seems to have a life of its own... wrapping its writhing tendrils around Captain Lansen's leg and pulling an unfortunate crewman into the sea. The ship is then carried forward through the nasty weed to a sea of lost ships. On board the Carlita, the man-hungry Unity makes a play for Ricaldi but is attacked by a giant octopus that pops up from the side of the boat. Ricaldi chops away at the tentacle, freeing Unity, but is devoured by the beast, showing that Unity wasn't the only man-hungry creature in the area. Next, an alluring young woman, Sarah (17-year-old Dana Gillespie) approaches the ship... her bountiful breasts equaling in size the helium balloons used to transport her across the nefarious seaweed. She informs them that her pursuers want to enslave her, and sure enough, these ancient Spanish conquistadors attack the ship.

The pirates are defeated and return to their king who rules from one of the derelict ships. He is a young lad called El Diablo (Darryl Read) and a descendant of the shipwrecked Spaniards. Under the evil influence of his chief advisor, the Ku Klux Klan garbed Inquisitor (Eddie Powell), El Diablo has become a tyrant bent on enslaving the other gentle inhabitants of the Sargasso Sea.

By this time, the now sober Harry Tyler has been smitten by the mysterious Sarah, and with two crew members, Pat (Jimmy Hanley) and Chief (James Cossins), pursue her when she slips overboard to return to her people. Pat is eaten by a giant snail crab which in turn is done in by a scorpion crab. Sarah and her rescuers are captured and prepared for sacrifice to giant clam monsters. Captain Lansen arrives in time with explosives and a rousing battle ensues. El Diablo tries to escape the hypnotic hold of the Inquisitor who stabs the boy, thereby ending the flashback and returning the story to the opening funeral. Lansen's Phosfur-B is used to destroy the Hellhole of the Spaniards and burn up the living seaweed as the small band of survivors return to their now freed ship, presumably wiser and better persons for their adventures.

Despite the highly imaginative story, *The Lost Continent* was a commercial failure. The monsters, who many felt were cumbersome and unrealistic, were devised by Robert Mattey from the Walt Disney studios. The entire film takes on an unrealistic atmosphere which is part of the charm of *The Lost Continent*. The acting is on a par with the professionalism of other Hammer films and the cast is persuasive in their psychological differences and their belief in the monsters when they finally appear. Most of all, *The Lost Continent* can be enjoyed on two levels: a drama involving complex characters and an all-out fantasy finish highlighted by some of the most outlandish prehistoric mutations ever to appear in a Hammer production.

The ultimate lost civilization film was considered by Hammer in 1971 as a joint production with American International. Filmed at least three times previously, *Dante's Inferno* describes the exploita of a sadistic

(TOP): *THE LOST CONTINENT* really goes off the wall and turns from a psychological study to a rousing adventure story featuring some of the most outlandish monsters that ever graced the Hammer studios; (BOTTOM): The young El Diablo (Darryl Read) rules with the Klu Klux Klan garbed Inquisitor (Eddie Powell), again from *THE LOST CONTINENT*.

millionaire and what awaits him on his journey through Hell. At this period of time, Hammer was infamous for depictions of explicit sex, sadism, and violence, and did not shy away from extensive nudity. Given the subject of Satan presiding over a world whose inhabitants suffered the tortures of the damned, Hammer's discarded *Dante's Inferno* would have made a Hell of a motion picture.

The author gratefully acknowledges the following sources for clarification of some of the information appearing in this article.

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VAL GUEST AND NIGEL KNEALE: HAMMER'S DYNAMIC DUO

BY DENNIS FISCHER

A film comedy writer-director of fantasy short stories and occasional teleplays, both of whom strove to be actors when they were young, seems an odd choice of figures to launch a company into making some of the most beloved horror films of all time, but Val Guest and Nigel Kneale's production of *The Quatermass Experiment* (U.S. title: *The Creeping Unknown*) in 1955 got Michael Carreras and his father James, the owners of Hammer Films, thinking about Frankenstein, leading to the production of *The Curse of Frankenstein* and the full start of the Hammer horror cycle. While Hammer had tried a few marginal science fiction features before—*Stolen Face* (1952), *Four-Sided Triangle* and *Spaceways* (both 1953), all directed by Terence Fisher—*The Quatermass Experiment* was the first to combine science fiction and horror for the soon-to-be world famous company.

Val Guest, who was born in London in 1911, was a frustrated actor (*Innocents of Chicago*, 1931) who turned film journalist, first in England and then in Hollywood where he worked for *The Hollywood Reporter* and *The Los Angeles Examiner*. He returned to England and became an expert comedy man for Will Hay, Arthur Askey, the Crazy Gang, and others. He started scripting films beginning with *No Monkey Business* in 1935, and became a writer-director in 1942 with the short *The Nose Has It*. He married Yolande Donlan who has starred in many of his films. He became a producer-director with *Penny Princess* (1952) and *The Runaway Bus* (1954), but didn't become a full-time producing hyphenate until *The Full Treatment* (aka *Stop Me Before I Kill*) and *The Day the Earth Caught Fire* (1960 and '61 respectively).

His first genre project was a minor comedy known as *Mr. Drake's Duck* (1951), which starred Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., Yolande Donlan, and future Dr. Who Jon Pertwee in the story of a duck which lays eggs that are almost pure uranium. Soon the government is all over the Drake farm to discover which duck laid the atomic egg. The level of the film's coy humor may be judged by the fact that the hero's name is a corrected for gender version of Donald Duck.

Guest's first Hammer film was a comedy, *Life with the Lyons* (1953), which was followed by *The Lyons in Paris* and *Break in the Circle* (both 1954). However, it wasn't until Hammer decided to adapt a popular 1953 television serial by a talented Manx writer, Nigel Kneale, whose creation of the Quatermass series has long been celebrated by science fiction and horror fans.

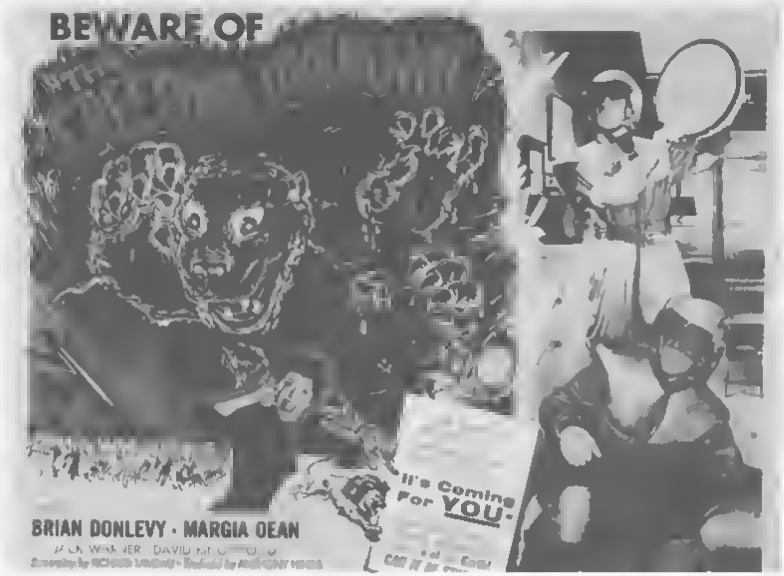
Nigel Kneale was born Thomas Nigel Kneale in 1922 and attended the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art and was working as an actor when he began writing short stories and won the Somerset Maugham Literary Prize in 1950. He specialized in fantasies, many of which were collected in *Tomato Cain and Other Stories* (1949).

The Quatermass Experiment was written and produced in the summer of 1953 as a six-part serial, with each part supposedly running a half-hour, but given the exigencies of live television, each part ran from five to ten minutes over its alloted time and was the first science fiction piece to be put out on British television. The production was directed and produced by Rudolph Cartier and starred the late Reginald Tate as the amiable middle-class scientist Bernard Quatermass. Unfortunately, due to the BBC's economy measures of the time, it is believed that the tape of the original production was erased subsequently, though both Penguin Books and Arrow Books have published editions of the screenplay in England, the later includes photos from the production. Kneale revealed that he was still in the process of writing the last episode when it started on the air, and that he himself "played" the final creature by sticking his vegetation covered rubber gloves through a photo blowup of Poets Corner in the final episode, and that he had selected Westminster Abbey for the finale because it would be familiar to viewers who had just watched the Coronation a few weeks earlier.

Kneale went on to a much complimanted but little seen serial adaptation of George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* starring Peter Cushing in 1954, and Cushing also starred the next year as Dr. John Rollason in *The Creature*, which was later adapted into *The Abominable Snowman* (U.S. title. *The Abominable Snowman of the Himalayas*). Kneale then devised the first Quatermass sequel, *Quatermass II*, starring John Robinson as the stalwart scientist in October to November of 1955. When Hammer bought the rights to the Quatermass serials, they assigned Guest and American writer Richard Landau to condense Kneale's sprawling epic into a tight 83-minute feature.

Wisely, the pair concentrated on action and suspense, and this being a film, they didn't have to incorporate bridging scenes that would allow the live television actors to change costumes and switch to a different set. Also wise was the decision to alter the talky ending of the original in which Quatermass literally talks the space creature to death (by appealing to its assimilated humanity to destroy itself before it propagates and destroys the whole world).

When a tax on imported films was repealed in England in May of 1948, that opened the floodgates to American productions which quickly knocked British productions out of competition, while the new law required that a high percentage of American profits in Britain be reinvested in British film



***THE QUATERMASS EXPERIMENT* was an above average piece of science fiction melodrama with good narrative pacing, mood photography, etc.**

activity, which ended up bringing more Americans into the British film industry to take advantage of these "frozen" assets. In 1950, the government set up the British Production Fund to administer a pool of money derived from taxing cinema tickets for the purpose of subsidizing production, but with competition from television, attendance was declining at an alarming rate.

Disastrous as the situation was for British cinema as a whole, it did lead to some notable and successful Anglo-American productions such as Raoul Walsh's *Captain Horatio Hornblower*, John Huston's *The African Queen*, *Moulin Rouge*, and *Moby Dick*, David Lean's *Summertime* and *Bridge on the River Kwai*, and Disney's *The Story of Robin Hood* and *Treasure Island*. It also got United Artists to pick up *The Quatermass Experiment* for U.S. release and got Hammer the services of American actor Brian Donlevy, notable for his performances as heavies, especially in *Beau Geste*, *The Great McGinty* (in which he played the title role, which he reprised for a cameo in the classic *The Miracle of Morgan's Creek*), *The Remarkable Andrew* (in which he played Andrew Jackson's ghost), *The Glass Key*, and *The Big Combo*.

Kneale was outraged that his sedate, middle-class British scientist was played by a forceful, dynamic, authoritarian American actor notable for his drinking proclivities and his bad toupees. (For more on Donlevy, I highly recommend Greg Mank's book *The Hollywood Hissables*). His primary concerns were providing realistic characterization (unlike most of the science fiction films he had seen), making the reality of future spaceflight believable (this was pre-Sputnik), and taking British over-confidence down a peg or two. The Quatermass of the teleplay is a far more likable, less driven character who feels guilty about the consequences of his project, and ends the play exhausted.

Contrast that with the film's Quatermass who ends the film undaunted and unbowed, acknowledging that there are risks but that they must be taken, and launching a second rocket into space. Small wonder that Kneale abuses the Guest productions every chance he gets, but as an impartial observer, I admire Kneale's genius for storytelling while preferring the changes that Guest wrought. He and Landau eliminated much of the scientific discussion of the feasibility of spaceflight in favor of launching the film with the memorable scene of a necking couple (in the usually sexless British cinema) whose late night session is interrupted by the rocket's crash and an immediate concern for the inhabitants' safety. Along the way several minor characters were jettisoned, tightening the story further.

Although the subsequent Quatermass films would top it, *The Quatermass Experiment* was an above average piece of science fiction melodrama with good narrative pacing, moody monochrome cinematography by Walter Harvey (the night scenes are far superior to the typical American day-for-night material of the period), and a sparingly used but effective score, the tense violins of which are reminiscent of those in *Horror of Dracula*, by an uncredited James Bernard, who had won a British Academy Award for the 1950 gem *Seven Days to Noon* (directed by John Boulting), the story of a British scientist who tries to hold the world hostage by threatening to blow up London with an atomic bomb.

A number of sources list the British title of the film as The Quatermass *Xperiment*, as that was the title on the film's poster, used to emphasize that it was given an "X" rating by the British board of censors; however, having seen a British print of the film, I can attest that the actual title used was *The Quatermass Experiment*. Four minutes were trimmed from the film for its U.S. release, perhaps for gruesomeness, though it seems quite tame nowadays and lacks any of the gore which Hammer would be notable for in later productions.

One aspect of the teleplay that was obscured in its translation to the screen is that the astronauts aboard the ship passed through something that caused their minds to meld into one and then assimilate whatever else with whom it comes into contact. While three astronauts went up in the ship, only Victor Carroon (Richard Wordsworth) returns, though with fingerprints that aren't his own (Kneale is quite adept at coming up with mysterious clues that become significant later and further hook or intrigue audience interest). The remains of the other astronauts are discovered as jelly in the bulkheads.

The film's only direct connection to this idea comes when Victor goes into a chemist's or druggist's shop and mixes up a potion which, while deadly to humans, acts as a catalyst for his transformation into the inhuman thing he becomes. Victor knew no chemistry, but, remembers Quatermass, one of the other astronauts did.

Also memorable are Victor striking a cactus and ending up with a hand that is part human and part cactus, a scene where he literally drains the life out of a man in a hospital elevator, leaving a withered and emaciated corpse, something which Tobe Hooper borrowed from for *Lifeforce*, his adaptation of Colin Wilson's *Space Vampires*, which also borrowed heavily from *Quatermass and the Pit* (U.S. title: *Five Million Years to Earth*), and most especially the archetypal scene where the tormented monster meets the innocent young girl, vaguely reminiscent of Karloff's scene in *Frankenstein* to which it is often compared. The young girl was played by Jane Asher, who would grow up to become Paul McCartney's girlfriend and star in *The Masque of the Red Death*, *Deep End*, and *The Six Wives of Henry VIII*.

In *The House of Hammer* #9,

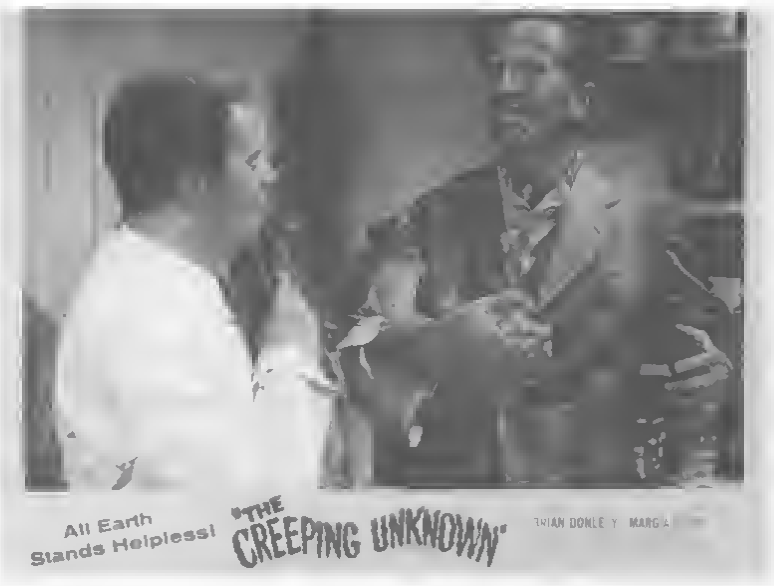
Wordsworth recalled, "The cactus bit was great fun. My face was covered with rubber solution and I had spikes growing out of my arm. Jane Asher played the little girl the monster meets. I had to lurch at her and knock the head off her doll. As soon as the scene was finished, there she was crying. Naturally I knelt down to say, 'There, there,' and everybody started yelling at me, 'Get back, you fool!' Of course I was terrifying her. I'd quite forgotten what I looked like."

Wordsworth's mime performance, while not in a league of Karloff's in *Frankenstein*, is still well worth noting. His emaciated body and tormented, expressive face limn suffering well, and when he shambles to his feet, one does get the sense of a man fighting for control and losing. This especially comes mut in the scene with the girl where to prevent the monster from assimilating and destroying her, as he has seen it do to others, he scares her away by knocking off the head of her doll, a moment which greatly adds to the pathos of his character.

The Quatermass Experiment was a great success, proving for the first time that audiences would pay to see a film version of what they had already seen for *free* on television, something which producers learned to coin into boxoffice gold frequently in the '80s and '90s. Naturally, Hammer manufactured a quick spin-off, the underrated *X—The Unknown* scripted by Jimmy Sangster, Hammer's other premiere scriptwriter, who would later adapt Peter Key's awful Kneale imitation, *The Trollenberg Terror*, which would appear on these shores as *The Crawling Eye* (1958).

Although *Experiment* was a good film, the collaboration between Guest and Kneale was not a happy one. Guest made extensive, though intelligent, changes, dropping one major character, Leo Pugh, who was played by Hugh Griffith in the teleseries, an old friend of Quatermass' who almost betrays him in the final episode, a sequence which was dropped from the film and replaced with an unmanned atomic rocket wiping out the source of the alien invasion; and he also combined some characters into the character of Inspector Lomax, who in the second film was played by John Longden, instead of Jack Warner who had the part in the first film.

Donlevy, whom Kneale described as a "bawling bully," became the only actor to play the Quatermass role twice. Though there are reports that he was severely affected by alcoholism, such a condition is not apparent in the finished film. Instead, Donlevy simply seems intensely driven and dedicated, balling out his subordinates at the beginning of the film, for which he later apologizes, explaining that the funding for his atomic rocket and moon colony projects



Richard Wordsworth recalled: "The cactus bit was great fun. My face was covered with rubber solution and I had spikes growing out of my arm."

have just been cut. Once more he is quite believable as a scientist who makes things happen (and in this film he doesn't mispronounce his own name or the word "metabolic" as he did in the first film). Kneale's script switches from a lone monster stumbling about to an isolated Quatermass who must get past officialdom's barriers to uncover the horrible truth.

Kneale's story involves aliens who control seemingly normal human beings, a basic theme in *Invasion of the Body Snatchers, Invaders From Mars*, and *It Conquered the World* as well as the subject of Robert Heinlein's 1951 novel *The Puppet Masters* which formed the unofficial basis for Bruno DeSota's *The Brain Eaters*. As Kneale wrote his teleplay before *Body Snatchers* and *Quatermass 2* was released to the states afterwards, the two works didn't influence each other, but it is interesting to note the cultural differences between them.

The prime figure of British films of the mid-50s is that of the professional male authority figure, usually a doctor, soldier, or pilot as evidenced by the top-grossing domestic films of the period (e.g. *The Cruel Sea, Doctor in the House, The Dambusters, Reach for the Sky*) These professionals were to be respected, serving on the front lines of the Cold War, separated from the world of the Welfare State, family, women, emphasizing their heroic masculinity. In the first two Quatermass films, Lomax and Quatermass are these types, however, in *Quatermass 2*, the world of authority has been subverted, invaded by a malignant force that has taken control and is adept at covering its machinations up. Quatermass finds himself in a world where authority can't be trusted, and even Lomax realizes that he can't rely on the head of Scotland Yard because he too has the imprint of control on his wrist. Who is left to mobilize to beat this treat?

The workers of the town of Winnerden Flats, naturally, who have been helping build the facility that feeds the invaders and helps them learn to accommodate themselves to our atmosphere are unsuspecting collaborationists with the invaders, which gives the film a proto-Marxian political twist. Quatermass is only allowed into the ahens' facility through the assistance of Vincent Broadhead (Tom Chatto), a crusading Opposition MP who is trying to force a public inquiry into the cover story that the facility is producing artificial food. The cover story proves to be true, but the ammonia-based artificial food is for the invaders, not for humans, and in one of the most memorable moments from the film, Broadhead emerges after having fallen into the food and finds that it burns him like acid, expiring as Quatermass looks on in horror.

in the United States where Sen. Joseph McCarthy had created widespread paranoia that Communists had infiltrated the government, however, *Invasion of the Body Snatchers, Invaders from Mars*, and *It Conquered the World* have the aliens controlling only local authority figures and not infiltrating the higher levels of government. The

concern in all these films is how the aliens have drained off the emotions and humanity of their charges. In *Body Snatchers*, the hero once more is a doctor who was originally intended to take his story to the people, but the tacked on frame story implies that once the authorities have confirming evidence, the FBI will take care of the problem (*Body Snatchers* was particularly effective as it appealed to both sides of the political spectrum. Critics saw the pod people as representing either Communist dupes or soulless mass consumers and conformists. One of my favorite tributes to the film comes in the delightful children's book by D. Manus Pinkwater called *Lizard Music* in which the pod people are those who exhibit artificial emotions on TV talk and game shows).

Consistently, *Quatermass 2* hammers out the then out-of-fashion theme that authority can't be trusted, rendered most hornfically in the scene where the invaders (who mysteriously bark their commands over the loudspeakers in English) entice some of the Quatermass rebels to give up their strike and win concessions only to be used as "human pulp" to block the pipe that's pumping deadly oxygen into the aliens' sealed environment, a fact discovered when the pipe bursts from the pressure and blood drips out.

In his introduction to the script for *Quatermass II*, Kneale commented:

"It was 1955, an unconfident time. There was much public concern about a new brand of bureaucracy, which manifested itself in the form of secret establishments: giant radars reputed to endanger human life and concealed in huge plastic pods, germ-warfare establishments behind barbed wire; atom-proof shelters for chosen administrators."

All these concerns are apparent in Kneale's screenplay, as is concern for the Empire when Anthony Eden took on Nassar at Suez in a misguided attempt to replay World War II on a smaller scale what underlies Kneale's screenplay of John Osborne's *The Entertainer*, which equates the pathetic, fading glories of the British Music Hall tradition with the crumbling of the Empire itself.

Quatermass, the crusading scientist, is working on problems in the film that still haven't been solved, safe atomic transportation, reusable rockets, and the establishment of a colony on the moon. His model for a lunar colony looks conveniently like the Shell refinery in Essex, which was used as a location in both the teleseries and the film, starting the tradition of setting science fiction films in old factories to give them an inexpensively achieved technological look. However, I have always found it improbable that the model and alien base would look so much alike even given that they share certain design principles and the aliens have set up a colony on our world which is hostile to them.

Like the plague of vampirism, once Quatermass' unmanned rocket has destroyed the orbiting alien base, the controlled humans return to normal, though improbably all signs of their possession (i.e. the entry points for the takeover of their nervous systems) immediately disappear. It is amusing to note that the aliens P.R.O. (Public Relations Officer) is played by John Van Eyssen, who would next year play Jonathan Harker in the classic *Horror of Dracula*. Hammer fans will also enjoy seeing long-time Hammer bit player Michael Ripper in a typical part. Future director Bryan Forbes, who directed the delightful *The Wrong Box*, *Seance on a Wet Afternoon*, *The Stepford Wives*, and *The Slipper and the Rose*, appears in the small but key part of Marsh, Quatermass' assistant who gets taken over by one of the alien components after picking up the meteorite it arrived in and who later leads the attack on Quatermass' facility in an effort to prevent the launching of the atomic rocket, shooting his former comrades down.

One of the ironies the film plays on is that possessed humans, referred to as "zombies" by the villagers, make good guards but aren't considered suitable as workers and builders, hence, the workers are bought off into collaborating by being given decent pay and benefits. When Quatermass tells them the truth, that they are manufacturing poison and supporting a deadly threat, he initially becomes the object of their wrath until a cliched Cockney barmaid (one of Guest's additions) becomes possessed, and the aliens, with their neurotic insistence on secrecy, over-react and send in masked guards to quell things and kill a drunken reporter (again altered by Guest) whom Quatermass and Lomax brought with them in order to raise the alarm over the controlled channels of government.

Guest's direction keeps things lively. Once more he starts things with a bang as Quatermass' car is almost run into by a speeding couple, a young girl driving her injured lover to casualty after he was hit by a "hot" rock. Guest smartly wastes no time in getting his narrative going, the credits coming after this opening has already slammed us into the story. Though refineries aren't often interesting places to be, Guest shoots the refinery from a number of interesting angles, many of which emphasize Quatermass entrapment in an elaborate and hostile environment.

His cinematographer, Gerald Gibbs, who also did excellent work on X—*The Unknown*, gives the film an appropriate bleak, grey look with ominous, overcast skies, littered landscapes, and oppressive dark figures. In some effective shots the large white domes that hide the alien menace become a shadowy, towering black with dwarfed human figures walking towards what appears to be certain doom. The scenes of the an-

Richard Wordsworth as Carroon from *THE CREEPING UNKNOWN*. His mime performance, while not in a league of Karloff's in *FRANKENSTEIN*, is still well worth noting.

gered workers taking on the well-armed fascistic guards are given an almost documentary feel that believably captures the exploding violence and anger that the confrontation entails.

Though *Quatermass 2* was a success, Guest wasn't happy with it either, and he was even less happy with his next Kneale collaboration, *The Abominable Snowman*, adapted by Kneale from his teleplay *The Creature*, partly because Guest lacked the funds to make it more convincing by filming on location. The film retained Peter Cushing as Dr. John Rollason from the television version, but replaced Stanley Baker with Forrest Tucker, who played the ironically named Tom Friend. The theme of the story had to do with exposing man's lack of humanity by contrasting the ruthless and unscrupulous plans of Friend to exploit the Yeti by capturing one to put on exhibition to the gentleness of the supposed "monsters" themselves.

Gary J. Svehla detailed the production very will in *Midnight Marquee* #29 (see elsewhere for back issue information) and astutely notes the intelligence behind Nigel Kneale's screenplay. However, compared to its predecessors, *The Abominable Snowman* is slow and ponderous, concentrating more on characters' philosophical outlooks and motivations than on action, suspense, or excitement. (The best Kneale scripts combine both).

The Tibetan Lhama (played by Arnold Marle) is depicted in the cliche, *Lost Horizon*-style of the serene religious leader with a penchant for prescient powers (he's aware of who is coming up the mountain long before they are in sight). Much is made of the British expedition's racism and condescension towards the Tibetan people, except for Rollason and his wife, but such cliched and unrealistic portrayal simply provides condescension of a fawning rather than condemning kind.

My father recently returned from a trip to Tibet where he enjoyed its natural scenic beauty, but he proclaimed that the best thing the Communists ever did for the Tibetan people was kick out the Dalai Lhama and limit the number of monks. The reason for this is simple: Tibet is a harsh environment where next to nothing growe. It is difficult to eke out an existence there—one of the primary fuels is yak dung, and perhaps its primary export was the yak hair used to create Lon Chaney's Wolf Man. Monasteries of hundreds of praying monks that had to be fed and maintained were a tremendous drain on the not-too-abundant local economy. The beauty of the handcrafted temples remains and the spiritual philosophy developed over hundreds of years hasn't vanished, but the basic people are bouyed more by their own efforts now that there are fewer Buddhist brothers in the temples.

Val Guest directing a scene from *ENEMY FROM SPACE* [aka *QUATERMASS 2*] on location.

The Abominable Snowman was stupidly advertised by 20th Century-Fox in the United States with a poster proclaiming: "Demon-prowler of mountain shadowe . . . Dreaded Man-beast of Tibet . . . The Terror of all that is human!" and included a box in the ad which reads: "We dare you to see it alone! Each chilling moment a shock-test for your endurance!!" Of course, Kneale's sensitive psychodrama hardly fulfills any of these promises, leading to inevitable viewer disappointment and poor word of mouth. Additionally, Fox trimmed six minutes from the film's original running time.

In John Brosnan's *Future Tense*, Guest commented:

"We did all right with it . . . but it wes never really a big success. It was too subtle and I also think it had too much to say. No one was expecting films from Hammer that said anything, but this one dld—it had a message. Nigel had put in a lot of good stuff about man's supposed superiority over other species. . . but audiences didn't want that sort of thing. . .

"For a Hammer film of that period it was quite lavish. It wes more expensive than normal because of all the location shooting. We went and shot a lot of that in the French Alps—about 8,000 feet up we worked, and all roped together a lot of the time. It wes something of an adventure making that picture. The rest we shot at Pinewood Studios. We used the Studio's biggest stage and built an enormous set consisting of rock, snow, and a cave. There wasn't enough space to do it at Bray, though I shot some small stuff there, and we also built the Tibetan temple set at Bray, or part of it anyway—the rest wes matted in together with the scenery."

Like the other Kneale projects before it, the shots of the "monster" were wisely kept to a minimum, though one close-up of a Yeti's eyes and brow suggesting in Rollason's words the creature's sadness and wisdom is most people's favorite shot in the film, conveying much with a short, expressive visual. The cinematographer this time wes Arthur Grant, who supplanted the superior Jack Asher as the regular lighting cameraman on much of Hammer's horror fare. (Asher's technicolor photography was superb and is ill-served by the Warner Video & Laserdisc releases that feature faded prints of his work; however, Hammer decided his rich colors and textures took too much time and decided to rely on the speedier and more economical Grant). Grant went on to photography such Hammer classics as *The Curse of the Werewolf* (1961), *The Terror of the Tongs* (1961), *The Phantom of the Opera* (1962), *Captain Clegg* (1962, U. S. title: *Night Creatures*), *The Damned* (1963, U. S. title: *These Are the Damned*, his best black & white work), *The Plague of the Zombies* (1966), *The Reptile* (1966), *The Old Dark House* (1966), *The Witches* (1966, U. S. title: *The Devil's Own*); *Frankenstein Created Woman* (1967), *The Mummy's Shroud* (1967), *Quatermass and the Pit* (1967, U.S. title: *Five Million Years to Earth*); *The Devil Rides Out* (1968, U. S. title: *The Devil's Bride*); *Dracula Has Risen from the Grave* (1968), *Frankenstem*

***QUATERMASS 2* hammers out the then out-of-fashion theme that authority can't be trusted.**

Must Be Destroyed (1969), *Taste the Blood of Dracula* (1970), *Blood From the Mummy's Tomb* (1971), *Fear in the Night* (1972), and *Demons of the Mind* (1972).

Guest, probably due to his background in comedy, knew the value and importance of keeping things moving and having a good set-up, and he applied these lessons very effectively to his Hammer filmwork. Still, even he was not able to entirely rein in Tucker's brash, overbearing qualities, and yet the film is a serious and ambitious effort that is not without its charm, much of it provided by Cushing's portrayal of a man of dedicated intelligence and sensitivity who learns that it is sometimes wiser not to pursue certain *truths*.

Guest went on to film more mainstream product for Hammer such as *Yesterday's Enemy* (1959) starring Stanley Baker and Leo McKern in s story set in 1942 Burma where a British officer shoots two hostages to expose a spy, and *The Full Treatment* (1960), where a psychiatrist tires to drive an international racer mad by making him think he strangled his wife. [This latter film was produced by Hilary-Falcon, with Falcon being a Hammer Subsidiary.]

Kneale pitched the idea of a building contractor coming across a spaceship to Rudolph Cartier, who had produced and directed the previous two Quatermass teleseries, and thus *Quatermass and the Pit* was born, airing from December of 1958 to January 1959. Instead of an invasion that was just starting as in the first one, or one that had been established for a year as in the second, the third invasion takes place five million years in the past when no resistance was possible. The key discovery in the story is that Quatermass is fighting his own heredity. Andre Morell played the latest Quatermass, someone Kneale approved as being civilized and debonair. The result was Kneale's greatest triumph and one of the sharpest science fiction scripts ever written, which we'll deal with when we get to Hammer's superbly realized film adaptation, the only one which Kneale expresses satisfaction with.

Kneale began working outside the genre when he got caught up in the Angry Young Man trend by adapting two classic John Osborne pieces into impressive films: *Look Back in Anger* (1959) and *The Entertainer* (1960). Osborne launched the trend with his play *Long Back in Anger* in 1956, which tackled themes of modern alienation and the frustrations of the working class, as well as provided an increased frankness about sex, class, money, and position, hitherto often seemingly taboo subjects. This led to a spate of films such as *Room at the Top*, *A Taste of Honey*, *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner*, *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, and *This Sporting Life*.

Both the Kneale adaptations can be considered cinematic classics, though the dramatic demands of their stories ensure that they are seen far less often than the genre material I've been discussing. In *Look Back in Anger*, Richard Burton provides one of his finest film performances as Jimmy Porter who rails against colonialism, the class system, segregation, and other topics, who would like to go somewhere but can't think of any place to go that wouldn't ultimately corrupt him. It also marks the beginning of a persistent Knealean theme: that the cause of humanity is a lost one.

The Entertainer falls into the same mold, with an even finer performance by Laurence Olivier as Archie Rice, who soldiers in on his role of music hall entertainer and general rotter despite his utter despair and the pain he brings to others. England's decay is echoed in his desperation as the traditional roles can no longer satisfy. Not too surprisingly, many people found the film dismal and depressing, but there is no denying the powerful intimacy of the film's performances nor the brilliant way Kneale reveals character through dialogue.

Guest returned to the genre with *The Day The Earth Caught Fire* (1961), a non-Hammer project which he had been trying to launch for a number of years based on the idea of Earth's climate changing due to Earth's axis shifting after atomic explosions, but no one was willing to risk money on a film about the bomb until Steven Pallos finally agreed with Guest also contributing money and producing. Guest had very successful collaboration with Wolf Mankowitz on *Expresso Bongo* (1960), a satirical story about musical fads starring Laurence Harvey and Cliff Richard, and so Guest asked him to write the dialogue for the film. The result is one of the wittiest and most adult science fiction films of the '60s, though one that is very infrequently viewed.

Guest was able to get access to the offices of the *Daily Express* by casting the paper's editor, Arthur Christiansen, as the editor in the film and by getting Lord Beaverbrok's permission. The story is filtered through the viewpoint of Peter Stenning (Edward Judd in a fine performance), a reporter now on the skids after his wife and child have left him and now assigned as the assistant to the science reporter, Bill Maguire (Leo McKern), who covers for him when he's out on a binge. By and large, the newspaper business is depicted very realistically, and we only know what the reporters are able to discover for themselves about the disaster. Indeed, verisimilitude is one of the film's strongest points, aided by Guest's insistence that it largely be shot on location.

Perhaps the main reason the film is not celebrated and acclaimed more is that it eschews spectacle, though the effects by Les Bowie are the best of his career (assisted by Brian Johnson who would work on *When Dinosaurs Ruled the Earth*, *Alien*, *The Empire Strikes Back*, and *Dragonslayer*). In contrast to the more juvenile "end of the world" films of the time, *The Day The Earth Caught Fire* is far more adult and subdued. One of Guest's

In one of the most memorable sequences from *ENEMY FROM SPACE*, Broadhead emerges after having fallen into the food and finds that it burns him like acid, expiring as Quatermass looks on in horror.

more interesting touches, a yellow tinting suggestive of heat in the opening and closing scenes, is missing from most modern prints of the film, which still works fine without it. Bowie uses a few matte paintings to show the Thames dry and creates a heat mist that covers Battersea Park (an effect which upset the Queen who was opening the nearby Chelsea Flower Show), but the essence of the story is more how the characters cope with an increasingly impossible situation than in dazzling audiences with apocalyptic visions.

There is also a nicely done and surprisingly sexy love story that develops between Stenning and Jeanne Craig (Janet Munro), who in "meet cute" terms slaps him for his rudeness on the telephone at their first meeting. However, the bitter Stenning shapes up and shows Craig more respect at subsequent encounters, leading to a believable romance complicated by feelings of betrayal when Craig reveals the secret her bosses have been covering up and Stenning feels obligated to report it to the public, a justifiable invocation of the public's "right to know."

in addition to believable workday humorous banter, provided mostly by McKern who is quite adept at delivering it, the film offers some nice touches. For example, as the apparent end of the world approaches, a large group of youths rebel by deliberately wasting water wherever and whenever they can [The beatnik music accompanying these scenes was written by Monty Norman, who composed the famous *James Bond Theme*]. Cars are altered with some kind of compartment on their tops which is never mentioned and can be surmised to provide either needed air conditioning or an alternate cooling system for the engine.

The ending of the film leaves the resolution of Earth's fate in God's hands, as Guest pans from a *Citizen Kane*-like pair of headlines prepared at the *Express* declaring "World Saved" and "World Doomed," to the cross on St. Paul's Cathedral to the accompaniment of church bells. The film was slightly altered by its American distributor Universal, who cut the film from 99 minutes to 90 minutes. Actor Michael Caine appears in a bit part.

In 1963, Kneale returned to the genre with the television production of *The Road*, directed by Christopher Morahan. Set in 1770, the Age of Reason, Sir Timothy Hassall (James Maxwell), a country squire and an irresponsible amateur scientist, seeks scientific proof of ghosts while accompanied by Gideon Cobb (John Phillips), a sub-Johnsonian iconoclast who is a sensualist and a bigot who believes that machines will lead mankind to a Utopian idea. Kneale's point is that the kinds of thinking represented by these two men are what lead to the horrors of our time. The play climaxes as Sir Timothy becomes an earwitness to air-attack sirens, the sounds of cars crashing, and voices while Cobb is given a vision of a road of the future and a thermonuclear blast.

The following year Kneale co-scripted with Jan Read an adaptation of H.G. Wells' *First Men In the Moon* (1964) for director Nathan Juran and special effects expert Ray Harryhausen. The film features one of the best scripts of any Harryhausen production, although the lying, cheating hero played by Edward Judd is ultimately despicable; however, in terms of enjoyable effects, it ranks far behind *7th Voyage, Jason and the Argonauts*, or *Mysterious Island*. It was Harryhausen's only widescreen project, one which poorly mixed men-in-costume Selenites with more intriguing stop motion ones.

The most ingenious aspect about the production is the way that Kneale kept the story from becoming dated. A modern day United Nations moon landing uncovers evidence of a British moon landing in 1899, leading them to Bedford (Judd) who tells reporters the story of the invention of an anti-gravity paint called Cavorite, after its inventor Professor Cavor (a delightful Lionel Jeffries), and their trip to the moon. The story ends up as *War of the Worlds* in reverse, with mankind as the invaders and the moon men as the victims of inadvertent germ warfare. The film is enjoyable, but it's played as a light-hearted adventure, a far cry from Wells' more serious intentions to use the Selenites to depict an alternative society. [Look for Peter Finch's uncredited cameo as an evicting inspector.]

Kneale's next genre project, returning him once again to Hammer, *The Witches* (U.S. title: *The Devil's Own*, 1966), which Kneale adapted from Peter Curtis' novel *The Devil's Own*, must be accounted a fascinating failure. Director Cyril Frankel, perhaps best remembered for *Never Take Sweets from a Stranger* (1961), lacks Guest's visual acuity and ability to build suspense scenes. While a far cry from Kneale's best screenplay, it is intelligently written, and with its plot of a secret society planning a virgin sacrifice, could have been an inspiration for *The Wicker Man* and *Dark Secret of Harvest Home*.

The film, which has been mostly ignored by most commentators despite Kneale's screenplay, opens with a prologue set in Africa where Gwen Mayfield (Joan Fontaine) runs a small school and discovers a fetish inside and is warned about witchcraft that will "eat your soul," when a witch doctor in a giant mask breaks down the door, causing Gwen to have a breakdown.

A while later, Gwen is back in England and applies for a position in a small private school in Heddaby, a small village in the country, where she becomes taken with the "nice, simple people." Kneale includes a lot of little touches to underscore the idea that things are not what they seem, beginning with the fact that Alan Bax (Alex McCowen) interviews her wearing a clerical collar, though he later admits he's not a priest or vicar. While searching for the town's rectory or its chapel, Gwen hears the sounds

of a church organ but learns that it is only Bax's tape recording and that the town has neither.

It's apparent that the town keeps an eye on Linda Riggs (Ingrid Brett) and disapproves of Ronnie Dowsett (Martin Stephens of *The Innocents* fame) courting her. Ronnie passes along his belief that Linda's grandmother is cruel to her, injuring her hand by putting it in the manglers (wringers) of her old-style washing machine. And indeed, Granny (Gwen Ffrangcon-Davies) does believe, "The old ways swerved when there were no doctors, and they're still the best," trying the film into feminist myths about women witches being natural healers with great herbal lore.

Mayfield discovers that Ronnie is gifted, if backward, and recommends he be given special tutoring. Alan Bax is willing to foot the bill for boarding school, thus separating Ronnie from Linda, but is disappointed when Mayfield convinces Ronnie's father that he would be better off getting tutored by her. Shortly afterwards Ronnie ends up in a coma and Ronnie's father ends up drowned in a nearby pond after passing along gossip about Granny Riggs' casting spells.

A key scene has Gwen going to the pond and discovering the footprints of several other people near Ron's father's, but she is then terrorized by some sheep who obliterate the tracks with their own. While sheep are convincing animals to have in such an area, they simply are not scary, and the scene would have played far better if the area had been overrun by hunting dogs, or better still, wolves.

Gwen goes to Stephanie Bax (Kay Walsh), a writer of Sunday articles and sister to Alan, with what she's learned about witchcraft in the village, and Stephanie does nothing to deny it, instead suggesting that they collaborate on an article about it. However, while staying at her house, Gwen suffers a relapse of her breakdown and remains in a coma herself for a year

She awakens in a nursing home and is attended to by ferret-faced Dr. Wallis (Leonard Rossiter from *2001: A Space Odyssey*, *The Pink Panther Strikes Again*, and *Britannia Hospital*) who prescribes a trip to another home in Cornwall. Instead, Mayfield escapes and hitches a ride back to Heddaby with butcher Bob Curd (Duncan Lamont) where she quickly learnes that Stephanie is the actual leader of the cult who insists on initiating Gwen and reveals her plans to sacrifice Linda in order to extend her own life, a ritual in which she expects Gwen to assist. Gwen learns that the victim must be a maid of less than 15 and that no blood must be spilled or the forces of evil will turn against the summoner. Stephanie smiles in contemplation of the instruction: "After the blow is struck, give me a skin for dancing in," clearly indicating that the victim is to be skinned Ed Gein-style.

Unfortunately, the ineptly staged witches' sabbath which climaxes the film is more risible than wrenching, with badly choreographed villagers writhing on the floor after slurping some disgusting substance. After the warnings, it's all too easy to guess the resolution, though the sight of Walsh in her flamboyant regalia with her antler headdress lit up by birthday candles suggests a Gloria Swanson gone to seed more than something satanic and yet is an indelible sight, though for all the wrong reasons. A horror film is truly in trouble when it turns silly instead of sinister, and *The Witches* is no exception.

Once the fell influence of Stephanie is gone, the villagers quickly return to normal, and all their past doings and allegiances are conveniently forgotten about. *City of the Dead* (aka *Horror Hotel*) covered similar ground in a far superior fashion a few years earlier. Hammer would perfect the witchcraft thriller when Richard Matheson adapted *The Devil Rides Out* (1968) for them, one of the four best Hammer films.

Another of those films was Kneale's next Hammer project, *Quatermass and the Pit* (U.S. title: *Five Million Years to Earth*, 1967), one of the greatest science fiction epics of all time. [For the record, the other two topline Hammer films, in my opinion, were *Horror of Dracula* and *Frankenstein Must Be Destroyed*, though there are plenty of very good films that compete for the second tier]. This time Andrew Keir, the studio's sometime Cushing substitute, assayed the role of Quatermass, caught between the stiff-backed officiousness of Col. Breen (Julian Glover) and warn intelligence of Dr. Matthew Roney (James Donald), who is ably assisted by the ever attractive Barbara Shelley.

Kneale provided his own condensation of his own story, quite satisfactorily, and production designer Bernard Robinson once more demonstrates his flare for getting the most out of minimal budget. The spaceship uncovered is far more attractive and sleek than the bell-like design from the teleseries, the Hobbs End Underground station is very convincing, and the wretched up London street of the finale maintains its believability on limited resources. (The only thing that fails to come off are the videos of mental images of the Martian "locusts" in action which clearly look like the stick puppet figures they are).

Roy Ward Baker does a brilliant job of generating ever increasing mystery and tension while getting effective performances from all the principals. [For more on Baker's career, I offer a shameless plug and refer you to my own book, *Horror Film Directors: 1930-1990* , McFarland 1991].

The Bowie Films effects are also quite impressive and effective from objects flying around a telekinetic man, shaking tiles off the walls, to the ground undulating alarmingly under an affected individual. The spaceship gives off an unearthly glow with

Brian Donlevy, whom Kneale described as a "bawling bully," became the only actor to play the Quatermass role twice, here from *ENEMY FROM SPACE*.

suggestions of capillaries to convey the idea that the ship itself is a living presence, something which Quatermass himself hints at when he notes the apparent lack of instrumentality. The arthropod aliens suggest both locusts and the "horned one" (aka the devil), especially in the giant energy image that Roney helps to destroy by simply grounding it.

What really fascinates is how Kneale builds his seemingly simple mystery into an elaborate line of speculation that ties in the origins of man, evil, and prejudice in the world, coming up with the idea that the Earth might have been colonized by proxy a few years before von Daniken helped to popularize the notion. By genetically altering man's simian ancestors to have greater intelligence, these aliens set the course for man's evolution. Unfortunately, these insect-like beings have regular purges of those beings who do not conform to the norm and so inculcate mankind with a hereditary fear and hatred of all who are *different* in some way.

Kneale's script also suggests that telekinesis and other psi powers are latent potentials in all human beings, instilled for the purpose of purging nonconformists from the hive, and thet images of evil beings common to cultures all over the world are simply phenomena thet have been improperly observed and are in fact vestiges of clairvoyant faculties *gifted* to us by alien ancestors.

Interestingly, the true hero of the piece turns out not to be Quatermass but Dr. Roney, the excited archaeologist who also represents restrained intelligence. Even the brilliant Professor Quatermass succumbs to the power of the mob at one point, is pulled out and brought back to normal by Roney, who reminds him that it is an act of will not to give in to hysteria and thet intelligence can defeat conditioned programming. Roney ultimately sacrifices his life to save mankind.

Kneale has brilliantly provided explanations and rationalizations for things considered unexplainable; however, under all the intellectual play, he has a serious point to make: that it is only through knowledge of ourselves that we can destroy the ancient, destructive urges within us, which grow more deadly with the expansion of our knowledge and technology. War crises, witch hunts, race riots, and purges are all things we must guard against, our heritage of hatred, and if such things cannot be controlled, then the "Martians" will have created a second dead planet—Earth.

Naturally, this Baker-Kneale collaboration has proven influential, and its influence is particularly noticeable in Dan O'Bannon and Don Jakoby's adaptation of Colin Wilson's *Space Vampires*, *Lifeforce*, which aliens prove to be the source of all vampire legends, and Stephen King's novel *Tommyknockers*, which Tommy Lee Wallace recently turned into a TV miniseries and provided readers with a big dose of *deja vu* with its story of someone unearthing a spaceship and falling under its malign influence.

Meanwhile, Guest was assigned the task of having to tie together the desperate segments of an overblown comedy, *Casino Royale* (1967), which tried to elaborately send up the Bond films while basing it (loosely it must be admitted) on one of Fleming's works, the rights to which were secured by Charles Feldman who beat Broccoli and Saltzman to the negotiating table for it. John Huston directed the first 25 minutes of the film, Robert Parrish covered the Baccarat game between Orson Welles and Peter Sellers, and Joseph McGrath, Kenneth Hughes, and Val Guest all made contributions. The first cut ran an ungainly three hours and was turned into a misshapen, though occasionally funny, 131 minutes.

The movie meant to contrast the book's James Bond (played with Old World charm by David Niven) with the films' sexy and sadistic Bond. When it is discovered thet SMERSH has infiltrated M5, the British intelligence agency, all agents are redesignated 007, even the female ones, and a Baccarat expert, Evelyn Tremble (played by Peter Sellers), is also assigned to be James Bond so he can beat Le Chiffre (Welles) who has been gambling with SMERSH funds.

The film really only finds its footing after Daliah Lavi is kidnapped by a mounted guardsmen who takes her aboard a flying saucer which has landed in Trafalgar Square and takes her to the nefarious mastermind behind SMERSH, none other than Jimmy Bond (Woody Allen), James' neurotic nephew, who plans to unleash a bacillus that will make all women beautiful and destroy all men taller than four-foot-six. Jimmy has also been replacing world leaders with android duplicates and invented an atomic Contact capsule, which he is made to swallow, which sets off little exploding hiccups ending in one gigantic explosion that puts a merciful end to this often so-bad-it's-fascinating film. Guest deserves kudos for being able to salvage anything of this muddled all-star mess, which of course went on to be a big hit of its time.

In July of 1969, the BBC broadcast one of Kneale's finest and least known teleplays, *The Year of The Sex Olympics*, starring Leonard Rossiter, Tony Vogel, and Suzanne Neve, directed by Michael Elliott. Despite the racy title, the play has less to do with sex than speculation of the "if this goes on" type. Kneale creates a future where everything is run by "high drive" personalities who create diversions to keep the otherwise unoccupied "low drive" lumpen proletariat pacified.

Ugo Priest (Rossiter) is a co-director who remembers the old ways and is terrified of "tension," the force he feels that had almost destroyed the world. However, test audiences have become increasingly unresponsive to the diet of sex shows and game shows—canned applause and cheering having to be added to the soundtrack.

Director Val Guest (left) discusses a scene with his Quatermass, Brian Donlevy, on the set of *ENEMY FROM SPACE*.

The purpose of the sex shows is to show sexual athletes who are so good at making out that the average viewer, who cannot hope to attain their level of attractiveness and expertise, forgoes the act itself in favor of simply viewing it. Similarly, there is a game show based on overeating as a substitute for consumption. Machinery has made it unnecessary for most people to actually work, so they live their lives out on the dole watching TV. (Anyone who can't see clear parallels to today's world simply isn't paying attention).

Taking a leaf from Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, Kneale inserts into the narrative an artist, Kin Hodder (Martin Potter), who wants to bring his disturbing images to the masses and gum up the works. His death, however, brings a response of laughter, the first emotional response the audience has exhibited in some time (demonstrating that the audience can be shown something disturbing without creating tension, so long as what is shown is not happening to them).

This sets Nat Mender (Vogel) and his mate Deanie (Neve) thinking of creating a new TV show based on dropping out of society and living like their ancestors, in secret hopes of a more fulfilling life for them and their child and prompting the masses to think about doing likewise. However, the network, to keep things interesting for the viewers, stacks the cards against them. Still, even in despair, Nat is alive in a way that the high drives of society are not, but this realization escapes most people and things continue as they have been. This is a daring, bitter satire, the likes of which have not been seen on American television.

Its vision of television as numbing rather than rousing seems right on target, as are the leads' apparent fear of the future and willingness to give it up in favor of a bleak but at least comprehensible Dark Age to which they return, entirely ill-prepared, which reflects an anti-technological bias in much of our society. Also telling are the hints of the addictive power of the medium and how it can be used for apathy control, though Kneale does ignore the countervailing force of the have-nots being exposed to what the haves have and the social unrest that that situation can create (Some suggest that what brought the Soviet Union down is European television showing Communists the good life they weren't enjoying under the then current system). Such thoughtful drama is entirely too rare on our airwaves.

Despite a collaboration with science fiction writer J. G. Ballard, Val Guest's next s-f project was the entirely brainless *When Dinosaurs Ruled the Earth* (1969), which Spielberg recently paid homage to in *Jurassic Park*. This "boobs and bronter" is more noticeable for Victoria Vetri's cleavage and Jim Danforth's painstakingly achieved special effects than for any other apparent qualities.

Val Guest was unhappy with *THE ABOMINABLE SHOWMAN OF THE HIMALAYAS* because he lacked the funds to make it more convincing by filming on location. Here star Peter Cushing and crew meets with the Tibetan Lhama.

One shot of a village trying to capture a pleiosaur deserves its reputation as a landmark in stop motion effects as Danforth created a "reality sandwich" by putting live actors in both the background and the foreground and by having the saurian interact with the two via restrain ropes. It is a technical marvel, but it is also over with very quickly.

The film is built around the idea that once upon there was no moon circling the Earth, which is created in the cataclysmic climax. Instead, blondes were sacrificed to the Gods, but chosen daughter of the Sun, Sanna (Vetri) escapes her fate and falls for Tara (Robin Hawdon), a starcrossed lover from another tribe. Along the way there is an overly lengthy and dull chase sequence between effects sequences and a cutsey bit where Sanna adopts a baby dinosaur that follows her around like a faithful puppy.

Naturally, to eliminate dubbing in foreign markets, everything is presented in simple caveman speak and Vetri mostly runs around in an inexplicable Stone Age bikini. Four minutes of nudity were trimmed from the British release so that the film could get a "G" rating for its U.S. release, the version still presently available from Warner Bros., though the curious can get an idea of the missing material by examining pages 82-3 of *The House of Hammer: The Story of Hammer Films* edited by Allen Eyles, Robert Adkinson, and Nicholas Fry.

Vetri is a fetching female, making her film debut under the *nom de thesp* of Angela Dorian in Roman Polanski's *Rosemary's Baby*, where she plays the young starlet who claims everyone outstakes her for Victoria Vetri (!) before she dies so that Mia Farrow and John Cassavetes can rent her apartment. She subsequently starred in the overlooked "B" gem *Invasion of the B Girls* (1973), co-written by Nicholas Meyer, before her life took a tragic turn when she failed in an attempt to become a rock singer, was assaulted in her apartment, and became something of a recluse. Still, her pin-up poster from *When Dinosaurs Ruled the Earth* became one of the most popular of the early '70s and remains the image most fans would like to have of her, that of a would-be Raquel Welch who never hit the big time.

Guest's next project, 1970's *Tomorrow*, is better known as an Olivia Newton-John musical before *Grease* than as a silly science fiction musical in which bad music beamed into space somehow invigorates the music of the spheres, apparently by transmitting certain vibrations that they lack "up there." (One would think that the celestial regions could do without the mediocre musical ramblings of the pert Australian and her band's homemade moog synthesizer, but apparently not).

Guest himself put an injunction against showing the film when it opened because he hadn't been paid. The project is one which well deserves its obscurity. While Guest hoped to tackle such projects as Richard Matheson's *I Am Legend*, which he scripted, and Jules Verne's horror tale *The Carpathian Castle*, neither came to fruition. His last work for the genre has been for the *Hammer House of Mystery & Suspense* TV series (syndicated in American as *Fox Mystery Theatre*), for which he directed three episodes: *In Possession*, in which a couple starts seeing images of an Edwardian murder; *Mark of the Devil*, in which Dirk Benedict murders a pawnbroker-tattooist and starts becoming covered with tattoos; and *Child's Play*, in which a family is trapped behind a seemingly impenetrable wall.

Kneale worked with Hammer director Peter Sasdy (*Taste the Blood of Dracula, Countess Dracula, Hands of the Ripper*) in 1972 on *The Stone Tape* in which an electronics think tank, hoping to come up with an invention to beat the Japanese, run up against supernatural phenomena in an empty building, the important female lead being Jane Asher, the girl from *The Quatermass Experiment*. Kneale wrote it as a Christmas ghost story and its main idea is that the stone walls of a building can record a person's soul like the metal filings on audio tape record music. Asher's character Jill Greeley loses her life and has her ghost imprinted on the "stone tape" in the thrilless climax. Lacking in complexity and depth, this is a pretty soulless production that doesn't invite re-viewing.

Kneale returned to the Quatermass series one last time with Thames Television's 1979 production of *The Quatermass Conclusion*, directed by Piers Haggard (*Blood on Satan's Claw* aka *Satan's Skin*). While *Quatermass and the Pit*'s title punned on the idea of Prof. Quatermass confronting a "pit" as in excavation and the "pit" as in Hell, *The Quatermass Conclusion* is a double entendre in that "conclusion" is meant both as the end of a logical progression of though and the concluding episode of the series.

The Quatermass Conclusion appears to be the work of an embittered man with a dark view of society and social collapse. Unlike the persevering optimist of the Donlevy Quatermass films, John Mills plays a Quatermass who is embarrassed that he had anything to do with space travel after seeing millions wasted on a joint U.S.-Soviet space venture and rails against the "diseases" (economic, political, social, and otherwise) spread by the superpowers who overwhelm smaller countries in their wake. Quatermass' only concern is locating his long-lost granddaughter who ran away sometime before.

Writer/Director Val Guest discusses artistic decisions with Hammer's Executive Producer, the late Michael Carreras.

As the ouniseries begins, we are introduced to a future world where the social order has broken down and the youth of England have all seemingly gone mad. Quatermass is horrified to see dead bodies lying in the streets of suburbs and is accosted by some hooligans who want to smash in his teeth. He is saved by Dr. Joseph Knapp (Simon MacCorkindale), a Jewish astronomer who drives up in a van covered in steel mesh.

Together they appear on a TV program about the "Hands in Space" U.S.-Soviet space project, which Quatermass blasts and then makes a plea to receive help in finding his granddaughter. There is an inexplicable disaster in space and Knapp rushes Quatermass out of the city to the relative safety of his country observatory where he lives with his wife (Barbara Kellerman), two children, and two assistants.

Along the way, they pass some Planet People, a group of young people dressed in Flower Children outfits (or castoffs), who have formed a weird religion around the idea that the Earth has been poisoned (Quatermass concurs) and they will be beamed to another planet which will be their Utopia. They follow people with pendulum-like dowsing sticks to find sacred sites such as Stonehenge, from whence they expect to make their interplanetary journey. Unbeknownst to Quatermass, his granddaughter is one of their number.

One of these sites, Ringstone Round, is nearby, and Quatermass and the Knapps are shocked to see a tremendous beam of light come down and reduce the Planet People to ashes, except for one small girl who was too far outside the circle and is merely blinded and burned.

Eventually, Quatermass solves the twin mysteries as to the increased craziness of youth and the secret behind ancient sites marked with monoliths. Five thousand years in the past, an alien machine sampled some Earthlings and found some aspect of them to be tasty. A circle of stones were erected wherever these sites were to serve as a warning. An alien machine, theorizes Quatermass, sends a signal that affects the young, lures them together in one spot, and harvests them. With a team of elderly scientists, Quatermass prepares to lay an atomic trap designed to give the faraway aliens (not invaders this time) a case of nuclear indigestion.

The climax comes as the trap is set, only to have some leftover Planet People parade to the site. Quatermass sees his granddaughter among them and suffers a fatal heart-attack before he can trigger the device, but the oblivious granddaughter sees what the old man is trying to do and pushes the trigger during the few key seconds that the alien beam is on.

However, *The Quatermass Conclusion* lacks the intensity and interest of *Quatermass and The Pit*. Kneale approved of John Mills as the now aged Professor, but when a 105 minute condensation of the teleseries was prepared, he lamented that while he had written it to be condensed

(TOP): Coven leader Kay Walsh, from *THE DEVIL'S OWN*, is about to sacrifice Ingrid Brett: "After the blow is struck, give me a skin for dancing in!"; (BOTTOM): Joan Fontaine from Nigel Kneale's scripted *THE DEVIL'S OWN*: A horror film is truly in trouble when it turns silly instead of sinister.

"here, here and here," the producers and editors decided to condense it "there, there, and there," throwing off the arc of his story. Kneale did novelize his full story for Arrow Books in 1979 while the condensed version was released by Thorn EMI/HBO Video, but the production is still little known by most American fans.

Kneale was later hired to write a screenplay for a remake of *Creature from the Black Lagoon*, but Universal axed the project in favor of making *Jaws 3-D*. He also scripted the original version of *Halloween III: The Season of the Witch* (1983), but his story was totally rewritten by Tommy Lee Wallace. The film retains a few Kneale elements: an Irish toymaker (beautifully played in the film by Don O'Herlihy, who is the only good thing in the film), resentful of the commercialization of Sam Hain as Halloween, exploits that commercialization to sell Halloween masks that will turn the brains of America's children into a mass of bugs and creepy-crawlies by using the ancient Celtic magic trapped inside the rock of Stonehenge. Wallace added such elements as android workers undetectable from human beings despite the inability of modern technology to provide such a wonder, let alone produce it in mass quantities to run a toy factory.

When I interviewed John Carpenter, I asked him why the original Kneale script was rejected, and he explained that it was full of the same kind of bitterness evident in *The Quatermass Conclusion* and he didn't think it would have been commercial. However, neither was the resulting nonsensical video nasty that Wallace created which exploited the Halloween name without delivering Mike Myers to a disappointed and resentful public. (Carpenter did pay tribute to Kneale later by attributing his pseudonymous screenplay for *The Prince of Darkness* to Martin Quatermass).

One shouldn't expect an artist to achieve tremendous success every time he tries. *The Quatermass Conclusion*, while disappointing in relation to the finest science fiction film series ever produced, is still an intelligent and interesting film. What we remember Val Guest and Nigel Kneale for are their tremendous successes and the pleasures that their works have given us. If a Val Guest writes a film as unintentionally risible as *Another Man's Poison*, he also achieves both dignity and humor in the excellent *The Day the Earth Caught Fire*. If Kneale's excellent short stories such as *Jeremy in the Wind* and *The Pond* are largely forgotten and rarely anthologized, *Quatermass and the Pit* remains one of the all-time great science fiction films.

Both men are serious creative artists, and together they created the films that launched Hammer horror, paving the way for the greatest horror studio of the '60s with intelligent science fiction dramas that had their gory elements but never exploited them gratuitously, usually building their stories up in a logical and involving fashion. Few writers of science fiction films are as adept at characterization, social criticism, and carefully laid out fantastic speculation as Nigel Kneale, and yet to most film reference books he is entirely unknown and unlisted. Val Guest is often noted as a journeyman director, but in his science fiction films he proves he can be effective without being distractingly flashy, and that science fiction films can be vehicles of substance rather than simply dismissable kiddie fodder. While many of the dramas of the past have been praised and forgotten, many of Guest's and Kneale's films will continue to be revived and praised by succeeding generations, their appeal unforgettable and unmistakable.

HAMMER DECLARES WAR

By Tom Johnson

"We hate message films. We make entertainment."
James Carreras,
Films and Filming, October, 1959

From 1957 to 1959, when Hammer first burst upon the international scene, the company acquired a well-deserved—and sought-after—reputation as the *House of Horror*. Certainly, the horror movies were there, and good ones, too—among the *best ever* made. However, what is often overlooked is that, at least until the early '60s, Hammer was making a highly diversified group of films with horror only a part of its output. That output included mysteries, comedies, science fiction, musicals, shorts, and war.

If we pulled out a calculator, we would find that during the above period, just about 30 percent of Hammer's pictures could be considered *horror*. Almost half had a military background. Some of these were, admittedly, comedies, but the fact remains that the company was not simply concentrating on grinding out horror movies to the exclusion of all else. War films were as important to Hammer as any other type.

Hammer's first three *serious* war movies—*The Steel Bayonet* (1957), *The Camp on Blood Island* (1958), and *Yesterday's Enemy* (1959)—were unusual for their time, and more closely resemble those made during and after Viet Nam when disillusionment with the military set in. What ties these three films together is their lack of conventional John Wayne-style heroics. There are few clear-cut *good guys*. Not only does the *right side* not necessarily win, **no one** really wins. Due to their bleak outlook, the trio could be called "war noir."

The protagonist in each movie is not a young, dashing Errol Flynn sort, but a weary, beaten man, in *way* over his head. Two of the three *heroes* die—by their own choice. Hammer at war is not the stuff of recruiting posters, but then, neither is the real thing.

THE STEEL BAYONET
"What are you worrying about rations for?
We'll all be dead tomorrow."
—The Sergeant

THE STEEL BAYONET
Released June 3, 1957 (U.K.); (U.S.A.); 85 minutes; black and white; Hammerscope; Length: 7652 feet; A Hammer Film Production; A United Artists Release; Director: Michael Carreras; Producer: Michael Carreras; Associate Producer: Anthony Nelson-Keys; Screenplay and Original Story: Howard Clewes; Director of Photography: Jack Asher, Music: Leonard Salzedo; Musical Director: John Hollingsworth; Editor: Bill Lenny; Art Director: Ted Marshall; Makeup: Phil Leakey; Special Effects: Sid Pearson; U.K. Certificate: A.

CAST:
Leo Genn (Major Gerard), Kieron Moore (Captain Mead), Michael Medwin (Lt. Vernon), Robert Brown (Sergeant Major Gill), Michael Ripper (Pvt. Middleditch), John Paul (Lt. Col. Derry), Shay Gorman (Sgt. Gates), Tom Bowman (Sgt. Nicholls), Bernard Horsfall (Pvt. Livingstone), John Watson (Corp. Bean), Arthur Lovegrove (Pvt. Jarvis), Percy Herbert (Pvt. Clark), Paddy Joyce (Pvt. Ames), Jack Stewart (Pvt. Wentworth), David Crowley (Pvt. Harris), Barry Lowe (Pvt. Ferguson), Michael Dear (Pvt. "Tweedle"), Ian Whittaker (Pvt. Wilson), Michael Balfour (Pvt. Thomas), Raymond Francis (General), Anthony Warren (Wounded German), Rolf Carston (German NCO), Gerard Green (German CO), Wolf Frees (German Staff Officer), Jeremy Longhurst (German Sniper), David Ritch (Mahomet), Abdul Noor (Arab), Victor Platt (Sentry), John Trevor (Captain).

SYNOPSIS:

C Company is completely exhausted after a running battle with the Nazi Afrika Tank Korps. While they are awaiting replacements, Colonel Derry orders them to take control of a farmhouse which is to be used as an observation post. Led by Major Gerard, they must keep this occupation a secret so that, from the farm, they can direct artillery fire. To preserve this secret, Gerard orders the killing of a German patrol that he would ordinarily have ignored. Captain Mead, atop a windmill tower, directs the fire by radio but is spotted by German scouts. Gerard calls for an all-out attack—one that his weary men cannot carry out. The outmanned British are overwhelmed and evacuation orders are given. The tower is hit by a shell and bursts into flames, killing Mead and pinning Gerard beneath. He radios for a barrage on the farmhouse, destroying both the enemy and himself.

The Steel Bayonet was the first feature film to be directed by Michael Carreras, usually more at home as executive producer. The movie is certainly his best, which could be considered faint praise when considering less than brilliant efforts like *Maniac* (1963), *The Curse of the Mummy's Tomb* (1964), and *The Lost Continent* (1968). These not withstanding, *The Steel Bayonet* is a terrific first try and it's a shame that Carreras' career as a director never came to much.

Carreras wanted *The Steel Bayonet* to be different from the typical British war picture—he wanted to avoid their "tendency for understatement." Carreras admired the American style war movie for its more realistic approach to violence and wanted his film to reflect this.

Many of those involved in the making of *The Steel Bayonet* were well qualified to know the realities of war. From Carreras to star Leo Genn to the crew members, most were veterans of World War II (Genn had received several medals for his wartime he-

Michael Carreras' directorial debut, *THE STEEL BAYONET*, was an attempt to approach the more realistic violence to be found in American war films.

roics). Carreras felt that, since most of the cast had military training, his job was made easier by not having to teach them how to act like soldiers.

Filming began in the summer of 1956 at the Aldershot tank proving grounds. This area stood in admirably for North Africa. Due to a flareup of hostilities in the Suez Canal, the British military was on alert, and tanks that had been promised to Hammer were withdrawn. The company then obtained from a scrap dealer four tanks which were modified to *play* both British and German vehicles.

The Steel Bayonet ended production on September 20 and was released in London on June 3, 1957. Reviewers were more impressed by Hammer's approach than by its execution. *The London Times* (May 14), following the trade show, called the film "grim, but there is something about the whole thing that does not. . . ring true."

While some of the *realism* does seem a bit contrived, *The Steel Bayonet* is still far from the cliche-ridden propaganda movies that emanated from *all* sides of the conflict in the 1940s. Perhaps the fact that the war had been over for a decade gave *The Steel Bayonet* a perspective that something like, say, *Sahara* (1943) lacked.

One unique touch was to have the German soldiers speak German with English subtitles. While this was probably not the first time this was done, it was nevertheless a bold move for a low budget film.

The Steel Bayonet is by no means a classic, or even a great war movie. It's the weakest of the three films being covered here, but it's certainly no worse than some of the better-known and more highly praised American and British nonsense that preceded it.

With a big star in the lead, *The Steel Bayonet* might have been a success, but Hammer apparently felt that was out of the question. It's a good thing, too, because the film's lack of star names added to its sense of reality.

Hammer's next war movie would be too real for some. It was the company's most controversial film—and one of its greatest financial successes.

THE CAMP ON BLOOD ISLAND
"This brutal film should not be shown."
Reynolds News, April 20, 1958

THE CAMP ON BLOOD ISLAND
Released April 1958 (U.K.); September (U.S.A.); 82 minutes, black and white, Hammerscope; length 7380 feet; A Hammer Film Production; A Columbia Release; Filmed at Bray Studios; Director. Val Guest; Producer. Anthony Hinds, Executive Producer: Michael Carreras; Associate Producer: Anthony Nelson-Keys; Screenplay: Val Guest, Jon Manchip White (from his story); Director of Photography: Jack Asher; Music Composed by Gerard Schurrman; Musical Director: John Hollingsworth; Production Manager: Arnaold Brettell; Art Director: John Stoll; Editor: Bill Lenny; Supervising Editor: James Needs; Camera Operator: Len Harris; Sound Mixer: W.H.P. May; Sound Camera Operator: Michael Sale; Sound Camera Maintenance: Charles Bouvet; Draughtsman: Don Mingaye; Property Master: Tommy Money; Makeup: Tom Smith; Production Secretary: Cynthia Maugham; Assistant Director: Robert Lynn; Second Assistant: Tom Walls; Third Assistant: Hugh Harlow; Continuity: Doreen Dearnaley; Focus: Harry Oakes; Boom: Jim Perry; Hairstylist: Henry Montsash; Wardrobe: Molly Arbuthnot; Stills Cameraman: Tom Edwards; Publicity: Douglas Rallton; Cashier: Ken Gordon; Studio Manager: A. Kelly; Construction Manager: Mick Lyons; Chief Electrician: Jack Curtis; Master Painter: Lawrence Wren; Master Plasterer: Arthur Banks; Transport Drivers. W. Epps, Wilfrid Faux; Grip: Albert Cowland; Property Buyer: Eric Hillier; Certificate X.

CAST:
Carl Mohner (Van Elst), Andre Morell (Colonel Lambert), Edward Underdown (Major Dawes), Walter Fitzgerald (Beattie), Barbara Shelley (Kate), Phil Brown (Lt. Bellamy), Michael Goodliffe (Father Anjou), Michael Gwynn (Shields), Richard Wordsworth (Dr. Keiller), Edwin Richfield (Sergeant Major), Ronald Radd (Col. Yamamitsu), Marne Maitland (Capt. Sakamura), Wolfe Morris (Interpreter), Milton Reid (Executioner), Geoffrey Bayldon (Foster), Lea Montague (Nangdon), Peter Wayn (Lt. Thornton), Michael Brill (Lt. Peters), Barry Lowe (Corporal Betts), Max Butterfield (Corporate Hallam), Jack MacNaughton (Prisoner), Howard Williams (Prisoner), Michael Dea (Prisoner), Michael Ripper (Driver), Anthony Chin (Sentry), Takai (Patrolman), S. Goh (Radio Operator), Jimmy Raphael (Soldier), David Goh (Soldier), Don Lee (Soldier), Mary Merrall (Mrs. Beattie), Lillian Sottane (Mala), Grace Russell (Woman), Jsn Holden (Nurse), Betty Cooper (Prisoner), Ann Ridler (Prisoner), Jacqueline Curtiss (Jennie).

SYNOPSIS:
Japan has been defeated by the Allies, but the brutal overseers of the Prisoner of War camp on Blood Island are not yet aware of it due to s broken radio. British Colonel Lambert is concerned that Colonel Yamamitsu will kill all of the prisoners when he discovers the truth. Lt. Bellamy, an American airman, parachutes near the camp and is captured, but sizes up the situation and keeps silent. Dr. Keiller has escaped to see his wife in the nearby women's camp, but is machine-gunned before her eyes st the fence. Bellamy and Van Elst escape in an attempt to free Mrs. Keiller, who knows a route to safety when the killing starts. Van Elst is shot, but Bellamy manages to elude the guards. When Lambert explains the situation to the men, Beattie goes mad. Under the pretense of giving information, he enters Yamamitsu's

office—with a hand grenade. When the grenade explodes, the camp does, too, as guards begin firing from watchtowers. Shields climbs a tower to kill a sniper but Lambert, who was distracted, lofts a grenade, killing his friend. The prisoners eventually take control of the camp. . . those few still left alive.

Hammer had great plans for *The Camp on Blood Island*, which was highly publicized as the company's fiftieth production. The company hoped that the film would put their name before the public. That certainly happened, but in a way Hammer had never expected.

Jon Manchip White, who in the '50s managed the Lyric Theatre, had been a P.O.W. "He had kept notes scribbled on lavatory paper," Val Guest said. "He eventually gave Hammer the notes. I was called in, we looked them over, and I said, yes, it's going to be a hell of a movie!"

It *was* a hell of a movie, but it was a story that many felt was better not being told. While Hammer almost certainly played down the actual violence and brutality of the situation, the company was assaulted by critics for showing as much as they did. The prevailing attitude seemed to be, "Yes, things like this happened, but let's pretend that they didn't, because it won't do any good to stir things up."

Although *The Camp on Blood Island* was a huge financial success, it was instrumental in creating Hammer's *bad reputation*—even more so than the similarly vilified *The Curse of Frankenstein* and *Dracula*.

Filming began on July 29, 1957, at Bray Studios and Black Park—both looking remarkably like Southeast Asia. The production ended on September 11, and *The Camp on Blood Island* premiered at the London Pavilion on April 18, 1958. After an extraordinary seven-week run, the film went into general release where it broke records previously set by *The Curse of Frankenstein* (and would later be smashed by *Dracula*).

Although audiences were lapping it up, most British critics were horrified by the film's brutality. The opening scene set the tone of the horrors to follow: While his friends look on from behind a barbed wire fence, a P.O.W. digs a grave—his own. When he finishes, he is machine-gunned at point blank range and topples into the open pit.

The London Times (April 21, 1958) stood alone in its praise: "Whatever the rights and wrongs of the matter, the central situation is an intensely dramatic one. The acting is workmanlike and sincere." Other papers took a less enlightened approach. *The Reynolds News* (April 21): "the most shameful and destructive picture of the year." *The Star* (April 17): "an orgy of atrocities." *The Sunday Times* (April 20): "appalling." *The Observer* (April 20): "an abomination."

"This brutal film should not be shown," said the *Reyonds News*, about Hammer's war film, *THE CAMP ON BLOOD ISLAND*.

Normally, Hammer might have been pleased by the vitriolic attacks since they usually translate into audience curiosity and box office success. But this was different. Plans were being made to ban the film in the Far East, which might have been expected. What was not expected were noises to prohibit the showing of *The Camp on Blood Island* in the United States. Most of these noises were being made by Shiro Kido, the chairman of the Motion Picture Association of Japan. He felt that the film should definitely not be shown in Los Angeles, due to the city's large Asian population.

Fortunately, the reaction in the U.S was far less extreme than in Britain—perhaps due to the lingering memory of Pearl Harbor. Following *The Camp on Blood Island*'s American release, *The New York Herald Tribune* (September 9, 1958) called it "a straightforward and expert melodrama." *The New York Times* (September 18) felt it was "directed and acted quietly to lend an air of credulity." *Variety* (April 23) caught the film in London, and laid it on the line: "It will jerk out of complacency any person who now tends to regard the Japanese as not being as bad as thought."

When comparing the British and American reviews, one wonders how they can be discussing the same movie. The *controversy* ended by the end of 1958 when *Variety* (December 31) reported that Eric Johnston, chairman of the British Motion Picture Association, said he didn't think it was proper to "make films that bring back memories of detestable experiences of World War II," and that he hoped "they would not be produced again." Why not? Shouldn't we be reminded of these things so they *won't* be tolerated?

Eric Johnston's slap on Hammer's wrist had, naturally, little effect. Hammer's next war film would be an even more searing indictment of wartime atrocities—this time committed by *both* sides.

The Camp on Blood Island's basic situation was carried on to a more subtle—but more horrific—end in *King Rat* (1965), a brilliant filming of James Clavell's 1962 novel. No one felt that this film was improper—it got excellent reviews and launched George Segal's career. Perhaps Hammer deserves credit for stretching the limits of what had previously been accepted on the screen. This works both ways, of course, resulting in as much garbage as art, but—just perhaps—a movie like *Schlindler's List* might not have been produced had Hammer and other companies making similar movies not opened the door in the '50s.

Audiences, naturally, couldn't have cared less about the negative reviews and lined up for blocks. *The Camp on Blood Island* joined Hammer's *Dracula* and *Up the Creek* in London's prestigious West End, giving the company an incredible triple success during the summer of 1958.

The film, as did *The Curse of Frankenstein* and *Dracula*, grossed over $4 million

world wide—big money for the late '50s. *Variety* (October 28, 1958) called Hammer "one of the world's foremost suppliers of successful, modest budget entries." Columbia was so delighted by the performance of *The Camp on Blood Island* that an agreement was reached for Hammer to release 25 films through the distributor over the next five years. Columbia also become a 49 percent owner of Bray Studios—the first such arrangement between British and American film companies.

When one watches *The Camp on Blood Island* almost 50 years after the war's end and 35 years after its release, it's possible to judge it as a *movie* and forget the baggage it initially carried. What one finds is that it's pretty good. Andre Morell is, as always, excellent and fronts a cast of Hammer "regulars" including Barbara Shelley, Michael Gwynn, Richard Wordsworth and Michael Ripper. Bray Studios and Black Park ably—and incredibly—suggested the Far East, and just *looking* at Jack Asher's gloomy photography makes one sweat. The film is nasty and brutal—even today—and is even more so due to the realism of its subject. Prisoner of war camps, one suspects, were not like *Hogan's Heroes*.

Val Guest's unobtrusive, matter-of-fact direction gives the picture an almost documentary-like feel—a talent that made even fantastic subjects like *The Quatermass Experiment* seem real.

The Camp on Blood Island is not in the same league as, say, *King Rat* or *The Bridge on the River Kwai*—two of the great P.O.W. films—but, for its budget and exploitative subject matter, it's a minor classic. *The Camp on Blood Island* was a huge financial success but perhaps Hammer paid too high a price. From this point on, Hammer would be associated with the seamier side of filmmaking—an undeserved reputation that would haunt the company forever.

When Hammer's next war film debuted to excellent reviews, the company's name was missing from most of them.

YESTERDAY'S ENEMY

"Now that you are not fighting spears with guns, you want a code of conduct. This is total war—no quarter asked, no quarter given."
—Yamazaki

YESTERDAY'S ENEMY

Released September 17, 1959; 95 minutes; black and white, length 8550 ft., A Hammer Film Production; Released through Columbia (UK and US); filmed at Bray Studios/Shepperton Studios; Director: Val Guest; Executive Producer: Michael Carreras; Screenplay: Peter Newman; Director of Photography: Arthur Grant; Editors: James Needs, Alfred Cox; Camera Operator: Len Harris; Focus: Harry Oakes; Clappers/Loader: Alan McDonald; Grips: Albert Cowlard; Sound Recordist: Buster Ambler; Sound Cameraman: Jimmy Dooley; Boom: Peter Dukelaw; Sound Maintenance: Eric Vincent; Production Designer: Bernard Robinson; Assistant Director: John Peverall; Continuity: Cheryl Booth; Technical Advisor: Peter Newman; Assistant Art Director: Don Mingaye; Make-up: Roy Ashton; Wardrobe: Molly Arbuthnot; Hairdresser: Henry Montsash; Stills: Tom Edwards; Publicist: Colin Reid; Production Buyer: Eric Hillier; Special Effects: Bill Warrington, Charles Willoughby; Casting Director: Dorothy Holloway; Construction Manager: Jack Bolam; Electrical Engineer: S. F. Hillyer; Master Painter: S. Taylor; Master Plasterer: S. Rodwel, Master Carpenter: E. D. Wheatley; Property Master: Frank Burden; Floor Props: T. Frewer; Production Supervisor: TS Lyndon Haynes; Production Secretary: Doreen Jones; UK Rating A.

Director Val Guest says that *YESTERDAY'S ENEMY* is "one of my four favorite films out of over ninety I've written and directed. This was a labor of love."

CAST:

Stanley Baker (Capt. Langford), Guy Rolfe (Padre), Leo McKern (Max), Gordon Jackson (Sgt. McKenzie), David Oxley (Doctor), Richard Pasco (Lt. Hastings), Russell Waters (Brigadier), Philip Ahn (Yamazaki), Bryan Forbes (Dawson), Wolfe Morris (Informer), Edwina Carroll (Suni), David Lodge (Perkins), Percy Herbert (Wilson), Barry Lowe Turner), Alan Keith (Bendish), Howard Williams (Davies), Timothy Bateson (Simpson), Arthur Lovegrove (Patrick), Donald Churchill (Elliott), Nicholas Brady (Orderly), Barry Steele (Brown).

SYNOPSIS:

A group of weary British soldiers make their way through the Burmese jungle, separated from their company. Captain Langford is in reluctant command, due to the Brigadier's injuries. The Padre and Max, a war correspondent, are in disagreement with Langford's style of leadership. They take a village previously held by the Japanese and kill a high-ranking officer in possession of a mysterious map. A captured Burmese—a probable collaborator—refuses to divulge the map's secret, so Langford makes an unpopular decision. He orders two innocent villagers to be shot to frighten the Burmese into talking. It works—he tells Langford that the map outlines a major invasion. Then, following the Captain's orders, Sgt. McKenzie kills him. Langford decides to move out—leaving the wounded behind—to get the information to headquarters, but Japanese troops soon arrive and capture the British. Langford is questioned by Yamazaki about the missing map—and the officer. When Langford refuses to talk, Yamazaki orders Lt. Hastings to be shot. Langford, now out of options, makes a clumsy attempt to use the radio, purposely drawing his guards' fire. Yamazaki wearily orders the remainder of Langford's men to be executed.

Although James Carreras was, at least in print, opposed to "message pictures," *Yesterday's Enemy* was a very painful one to give. With the critical assassination of *The Camp on Blood Island* still fresh in the memory, one wonders why Hammer chose to tread on ever more sensitive ground—wartime atrocities committed by the British.

Like so many earlier Hammer films, *Yesterday's Enemy* was based on a BBC play. Peter Newman's controversial story moved audiences to both assent and anger. One of its many viewers was Michael Carreras, who was so impressed that he immediately put Val Guest on the project of turning it into a movie. "*Yesterday's Enemy*," said Guest, "is one of my four favorite films out of over ninety I've written and directed. This was a labor of love."

It's no wonder that Guest feels so strongly about the picture—it's excellent on all counts. Unfortunately, the film's lack of a superstar in the lead and its unpalatable subject matter will always prevent it from being embraced by a mass audience.

Yesterday's Enemy began production at Shepperton Studios on January 12, 1959, and moved to Bray on February 19. Since Bray lacked the space, the village set was built on a Shepperton sound stage, and Hammer's usual base was used for the swamp set.

An additional problem was created by a language barrier, since most of the actors playing Japanese soldiers were, in fact, Japanese. Most of them had recruited from London's Oriental restaurants, and actor Philip Ahn had to interpret Val Guest's direction.

Yesterday's Enemy was trade-shown on June 5, 1959 to an enthusiastic press corps, and premiered at the Leicester Square Empire on September 17. Many military men who had served in Burma were present and were impressed by the movie's accuracy and honesty. Val Guest sat next to the highly decorated Lord Mountbatten who "recognized" areas of the swampland... not realizing that those scenes were shot at Bray. Adding to the film's realism was the total lack of a musical score. Only jungle sounds were heard—a stipulation insisted upon by Guest.

Following its exceptional engagement at the Empire, *Yesterday's Enemy* went into general release on October 19, 1959. Reviewers were impressed. *The London Times* (September 21): "a well written film that stimulates argument." The British Film institute's *Monthly Bulletin* (September): "Something of a surprise for those who associate Hammer Films with horror." *The Saturday Review* (October 3): "Serious if not downright philosophical." *The New York Times* (March 4, 1960): "It is the first entry from Hammer Films... that manages to be haunting in the right way."

Stanley Baker, not yet a big star, was well cast as Captain Langford. With command thrust upon him, the character was forced to make choices that are easily criticized, but someone had to make them. Certainly a "real hero" like John Wayne would have followed a stricter code of behavior but, as Yamazaki pointed out, in war there *is* no code.

While having the British suffer the same fate that they inflicted earlier upon the enemy is a bit contrived, it works on screen far better than it reads, due to the skillful acting and direction. In a standout group of supporting actors, Richard Pasco stands out as Lt. Hastings, tied to a stake, wanting to be executed. If that scene doesn't shake you up, nothing will.

The film makes its point quietly, but does not back away from making it and it would be difficult to find another movie of this vintage that is so critical of its own armed forces. This type of introspection would be more common a decade later, but for 1959, *Yesterday's Enemy* was on the leading edge.

Unfortunately, *Yesterday's Enemy* was one of the last "serious" films Hammer would make in any genre. After *Never Take Sweets from a Stranger* (1960—talk about controversy!), *Hell is a City* (1960), and *Cash on Demand* 1962), Hammer settled into an array of horror, science fiction, and exotic adventures. Certainly, many of them were good movies, and a few like *Frankenstein Must Be Destroyed* (1969), were excellent. Nevertheless, it's too bad that the company strayed so far from the diversified films it was making in 1959.

With the release of *Yesterday's Enemy*, Hammer may have reached its peak. *The Curse of Frankenstein*, *Dracula*, and *The Camp on Blood Island* had been huge worldwide money winners, with *Up the Creek* (1958) and *Further Up the Creek* (1959) more than holding their own. *The Hound of the Baskervilles* had just left the London Pavilion after a tremendous four-week premiere engagement. *The Man Who Could Cheat Death* was doing well on the ABC circuit and *The Mummy*, then in post-production, would soon be shattering records.

Never again would Hammer have so many financial and/or critical successes on its hands and it's just possible that, with a few more movies like *Yesterday's Enemy*, Hammer's stock might have risen appreciably with the critics.

Taken as a group, this trio of war films shows Hammer in a way that many fans would find surprising. Lacking Technicolor, Victorian sets, Peter Cushing, and low-cut gowns, they are light years away from the *typical* Hammer production. Unavailable on home video, and seldom shown on television, they are fairly difficult to see ... but well worth the search.

[Information for this article came from, in addition to the credited sources, Dick Klemensen's *Little Shoppe of Horrors*, Val Guest, Randy Vest, and Tom Weaver.]

Unfortunately, *YESTERDAY'S ENEMY* was one of the last "serious" films Hammer would make in any genre.

HAMMER FILMS UNEARTH THE MUMMY

By Richard Klemensen

Things couldn't have looked rosier for Hammer Film Productions Ltd. as 1959 rolled around. After the local success of the two Quatermass films—*Curse of Frankenstein* in 1956 and *Horror of Dracula* in 1957 had set the film world on fire. Christopher Lee says that the head of Universal Pictures told him and other Hammer honchos that *Horror of Dracula* saved Universal from bankruptcy. With this money rolling in (although not always into their own bank account), Hammer was in demand. The last two years had seen their productions going out with Paramount, RKO, Columbia, Warner Bros., and other U.S. majors. Universal, still basking in the glow of the huge success of the Dracula subject, basically opened up their coffers and offered Hammer carte blanche to do any film from their library, so it was only natural that after a Frankenstein and Dracula film, the next one in line would be *he Mummy*.

The Mummy (1959)

Director: Terence Fisher, Producer: Michael Carreras, Screenplay: Jimmy Sangster, Associate Producer: Anthony Nelson Keys, Music Composer: Franz Reizenstein, Musical Supervisor: John Hollingsworth, Director of Photography: Jack Asher B.S.C., Camera Operator, Len Harris, Production Designer: Bernard Robinson, Art Director: Don Mingaye, Supervising Editor: James Needs, Editor: Alfred Cox, Sound Recordist: Jack May, Sound Editor: Roy Hyde, Production Manager: Don Weeks, Assistant Director. John Peverall, 2nd Assistant Director: Tom Walls, Make up: Roy Ashton, Hairstylist: Henry Montsash, Wardrobe Mistress: Molly Arbuthnot, Continulty: Marjorie Lavelly, Special Effects: Bill Warrington/Les Bowie, Technical Advisor: Andrew Low, Egyptian Masks by Margaret Carter (soon to be Margaret Robinson, wife of Bernard Robinson).

A Hammer/Universal Release. 88 minutes. Technicolor. Certificate X in the U.K. produced Feb. 25, 1959. Released November 1, 1959. Distributor: Rank (U.K.)/Universal (USA). Original 2nd Features: *Bed Without Breakfast* (U.K.)/*Curse of the Undead* (USA).

Cast. Peter Cushing (John Banning), Christopher Lee (The Mummy/Kharis), Yvonne Furneaux (Isobel/Ananka), Felix Aylmer (Stephen Banning), Raymond Huntley (Joseph Whemple), Eddie Byrne (Inspector Mulrooney), George Pastell (Mehemet Akir), Michael Ripper (Poacher), George Woodbridge (Police Constable), Harold Goodwin (Pat), Dennis Shaw (Mike), Gerald Lawson (Irish Customer), Willoughby Gray (Dr. Reilly), John Stuart (Coroner), David Browing (Police Sergeant), Frank Sieman (Bill), Stanley Meadows (Attendant), Frank Singuineau (Head Porter), John Harrison (1st Libation Priest), James Clarke (2nd Libation Priest).

The character of *The Mummy* is the least interesting of the big three (Frank and Drac). A speechless pile of bones and bandages, it is your basic "one note" idea. Yet Universal, after the original 1932 film with Boris Karloff (moody but *oh so* slow and boring), did four definitely grade "C" sequels in the early 1940s.

Under normal circumstances, this would have been an opportunity for Hammer's resident "Gothic" producer, Anthony Hinds. Hinds, son of one of the co-founders of Hammer, Will Hinds (also known as Will Hammer on the British variety stage—and the source of the Hammer name), and a 48% owner of Hammer now since his father's death in a cycling accident, had produced Hammer's other Gothic winners. But he had no real interest in the Mummy subject, and while involved in a United States trip to trumpet a new Columbia production deal (see the section on *Curse of the Mummy's Tomb*), basically did *not* want to do the film. As Michael Carreras (son of Hammer's chief, and major stockholder, James Carreras) said: "I think you'll find—in a way—that it was Tony (Hinds) *not* wanting to do it rather then me *wanting* to do it..." Michael Carreras did not care for the Gothic horrors himself, and was more comfortable with the war films and crime melodramas that were also Hammer's forte during this period. 1959 would find Carreras personally producing five of the eight films made that year, and he had already completed *Yesterday's Enemy* when he went on the floors at Bray Studios on Feb. 25th with Hammer's own *The Mummy*.

Carreras: "This was my first Gothic. But it was the one Gothic that had that sort of 'pretty' element—this Egyptian bit. I think I like that more than the horror aspect. I've never been into the Gothic; that was Tony... but this was one that fascinated me. I wanted to work with Terry (director, Terence Fisher), too—I liked Terry very much... and I don't think *The Mummy* appealed to Tony. The only thing I thought was that we ought to spend a bit more on the parade, the funeral procession. I wanted a bit more of the Egyptology. And the razzmatazz...!!"

Terence Fisher. Is there any name

more associated with Hammer? Any director that drawa such divergent opinions on his skills? There are those who would make him an "auteur" of his films (he wasn't). And a "ney-sayer" group that consider him nothing more than a "journeyman" and the one person least responsible for the success of Hammer films he directed (but how wrong they are!). Fellow Hammer director, Val Guest, puts it best when ha calls Fisher "an old time pro— he knew *what* ha was doing. . ." Fisher's ability to draw the most from a script (Although he seldom had much input into any of the scripts ha filmed, he just knew he would go out and make the best film he could with the materials at hand), many that had only the berest bones of an idea to work from, was brilliant. One only has to look at other directors who tackled similar subjects with less than pleasing results (*Evil of Frankenstein, Lust for a Vampire*, etc.,) to make one appreciate Fisher.

Egypt, 1895. After opening the tomb of Princess Ananka, Stephen Banning suffers a breakdown and is committed to an asylum, in England. Three years later, he recovers to warn his son John that the tomb was protected by a living Mummy. A mysterious Egyptian arrives with crates of artifacts; one of these is lost in a swamp. Mehemet reads from the Scroll of Life, and the Mummy rises from the mud. It breaks into the asylum and kills Banning senior. John Banning now recounts tha legend of Ananka, and realizes that tha Mummy has been reanimated in order to kill the defilers of the tomb. His uncle dismisses the idea and is killed by the Mummy. The police are called, but they refuse to believe John's story. The Mummy attacks again, but John is saved by his wife Isobel, who bears an uncanny resemblance to Ananka. He decides to pay Mehemet a visit. The Egyptian is surprised to find that John has escaped death and once more dispatches the Mummy. Confused by Isobel's appearance, it kills Mehemet instead and carries Isobel to the swamp. Armed with shot guns, the police surround it. John tells Isobel to order the Mummy to release her. It does—and is destroyed in a hail of gunfire.

Terence Fisher: "Our Mummy never set out to be a remake of the original. Our Mummy was based upon the original idea of tha actual curses. The art detail was tremendous; the hieroglyphics in the tomb— we hired technical experts. They were all historically accurate and were exact copies of the original thing. We took tremendous pains over it and it came off very well. . ."

Fisher on Shooting: "I've had my call sheet. I know what scenes are to be shot—I know what they mean. I've thought about them within context—it could be one of the last scenes in the picture, but it could be the most important. On every day of

One of the keys to the success of Hammer's *THE MUMMY* was the beautiful sets designed by Bernard Robinson.

shooting, I've sometimes made a complete overhaul of our story, so you go on the floor and you know what to do. I know exactly how many shots I've got to do, where I'm going to put the camera. In other words, once that I find if the actor has tha overall picture and the overall movement of the character, I then have my first physical rehearsal. I can never understand directors who say six shots from this scene, and so and so will move from there to there to keep them in, and virtually have in their mind's eye what they think they are going to do before physical rehearsal. . . treating actors as puppets then manipulating them One of the gravest mistakes is to pre-plan to the point where an actor merely becomes a mechanical puppet with movement. . . it's *playing* the scene and *feeling* the scenes and movements you could not think of. You can guide actors sometimes and stop them from doing the wrong thing, but they have got to have their heads to start the chemistry of the thing going."

With a budget of around 100,000 Pounds (tha original Dracula cost 83,000 Pounds, and one year after *The Mummy*, *Brides of Dracula* would cost 120,000 Pounds), Carreras and Fisher began to put their crew together. *The Mummy* was the first of the "made-to-a-price-for-outright-sale" pictures under a concordant with Universal. Many of the same people that had made the first two horrors successful were once again on board.

Jack Asher—the king of Hammer's lighting cameramen. They said he "could paint with light." Arthur Grant and others, although very good at what they did, never matched the beauty of an Asher-lit scene. Harry Oakes was a camera assistant on many of these films: "I think Jack Asher's photography was really marvellous. They look good, even today when we see them on television. It was one thing to work for two years on a film and win an Oscar, but another thing to work as fast as he did for such consistently good results."

Jack Asher: "I did bring extra colored gelatin lighting into play, especially in the tomb scenes. I also introduced a form of air cleaning; because we were shooting on a large background for the sky, the back spotlights would immediately pick up any smoke or haze. The studio air plant was completely ineffective in clearing this. We had the painter take his high pressure air gun filled with water into tha overhead catwalks. Immediately before each shot, he would spray tha air at the top of the studio. The fine particles of water would descend, bringing the smoke particles with them, leaving the atmosphere crystal clear."

Len Harris (Jack Asher's camera operator on all the great early Hammer horrors): "How would I compare the lighting of Jack Asher against Arthur Grant? They had different styles, really. I would say that Jack's lighting used a lot of little lamps pinpointing lights here and there, highlight here, highlight there. Arthur's was more of a general kind of lighting. They were both very easy going in many ways. They didn't battle with the director, which is an important thing. Jack would use a gelatin film and put it over a lamp to shine on a certain part of a set to very good effect. Sometimes, ha would say to me, 'I hope you are getting that effect.' He tended to paint the set in light and color. Where blood was featured, he would try to get a red glow into it.

"Jack Asher, after lighting a set, would come over and look through the camera. His favorite saying was 'What are you getting this time?'

"On *The Mummy*, Bray had a very good pit (a stage where the floor boards could be lifted out and water put in, as the bog sets for *The Mummy*). Ymu couldn't get underneath, but it was quite a good one."

Harry Oakes has two stories of the filming:

"We were doing tha first shot of the film. Felix Aylmer wes concerned that the glasses he wore might cause glare problems. It was suggested to him to tilt his head forward and look over tha top of the frames. Felix then said ha thought he should ask, since they were only empty frames with no glass in them at all. Jack Asher didn't speak to him for days afterwards.

"Later we were going to do a scene with Peter Cushing where he was going to blow up the tomb. Because we were at a major studio (Author's note: because of the size of the sets, Hammer used a soundstage

at the larger Shepperton Studios), we had a couple of effects chaps with us. Normally, for a reaction shot of an actor to a loud noise, you clap your hands or bang something like wood together. Well, for this one they set off a real charge and it was deafening. Our ears rang for several minutes afterwards. Later on, toward the end of the shoot, when we were back at Bray, we were in Don Weeks' (Production Manager) office and he showed us the bill from a Harley Street specialist. It said, 'For examining Peter Cushing's ears—20 Guineas'—which was quite a bit in those days. A Guinea was equal to one pound and one shilling."

One of the keys to the success of any Hammer period film—and *The Mummy* was no exception—were the beautiful sets designed by Bernard Robinson. Robinson had joined Hammer for the second Quatermass film and had stayed on to be the guiding light on most of their films until his untimely death in 1970. Since most of the scenes, except a few such as the Mummy striding through the countryside, were shot on soundstages, his contribution was even more important. Robinson had impeccable taste in dressing his sets (and locating the odd bits and pieces to make them look attractive). Considering he and Art Director (the man who would convert his plans into physical reality, along with the production manager) Arthur Banks had only about 15-20,000 Pounds to work with, the results were very beautiful. This may be the most visually appealing of any Hammer.

Robinson's wife-to-be, Margaret, designed many of the Egyptian setpieces and accessories under the guidance of Andrew Low, the resident expert on Egyptian antiquities. A very persnickety man, his taste and efforts towards authenticity made the film even more interesting (Low had a strong desire to do much of it himself, but British trade union laws forbid it. . . and the union just waited for him to touch something. . .). This was also a time when Hammer was building a number of new standing sets on the Bray backlot. Much of the original Dracula set still stood at this time (it would not be leveled until the end of the year). Robinson had a structure called "the Mound" built. Rectangular shaped, about 70 foot long, 10 feet high, and 20 feet wide, it first appears when the horse-drawn cart with the Mummy's crate comes racing along and the crate tips off and ends up in the bog. It would stand for another 10 years and is best noticed as the lead into Dracula's castle in *Dracula, Prince of Darkness* (1965).

Obviously, one of the most important areas was the script. Jimmy Sangster, again, was the obvious choice, having done most of the previous Gothics.

"I don't remember seeing the Universal scripts. I must've seen the pictures, but I don't remember." Well, *someone* at Hammer saw the previous Universal series. As Denis Meikle points out in his upcoming book *A History of Horrors: The Rise and Fall of Hammer Film (1947-1979)*: "The scenario married the first half of *The Mummy* (unrequited love that spans the centuries) to the center-section of *The Mummy's Tomb* (revenge from beyond the desecrated grave: 1942), and topped it off with the climax to *The Mummy's Ghost* (1943)." A good portion of the narration to the flashback was scripted by Michael Carreras and Andrew Low.

Carreras: "The narration—it would have been a combination (of Carreras and Low). . . I think Andrew's was probably a bit highfalutin. . . I'm sure I would have collaborated with him on that." The script though is functional, plays to the action well, but it is probably the least successful (and important) ingredient in the success of the film."

Roy Ashton, Hammer's resident make-up man, in charge since 1958, was given the task of creating his own version of the Mummy.

Ashton: "I did a great deal of research first. I consulted the usual books on Egyptology and also paid a visit to the British museum, where they have a mummy in a great big case. you can examine the quality of the skin and everything really guided me. In those days there was a considerable interest in the subject, since there had been an exhibition of Egyptian works in London. I think they had discovered another pharaoh in some remote grave or something. Consequently, there was quite a bit of literature available about it, with many reproductions in color. I tried to create the effect on Chris Lee's face. I cast his head in plaster, so that whatever you made on it would fit because you invariably got the exact dimensions. I started off with a zip fastener that I fixed on the model and built up from there outwards. I fabricated something I could pull in to the zipper, like a sock covered up with stripes of worn-out rag. An old handkerchief torn into shreds resembled the windings. I had to apply them one by one, until the whole head was clothed. Then, with rubber and plastic skin, I shaped the face. This operation lasted about one and a half hours.

Christopher Lee was described as being most patient and cooperative by members of *THE MUMMY* crew.

"Lee was most patient and cooperative, even though his mask didn't have holes underneath the nose to breathe. It didn't occur to me that anything down there would scarcely be visible anyway, so he had to inhale through his eye holes, which was not very comfortable for him. When we were busy on his face he needed something to write on, as he wasn't able to talk. He was an excellent man to work with. . . "

The haunting musical score was composed by Franz Reizenstein, born in Nornberg in 1911 and died in London in 1968. Since the original 1932 *Mummy* used only stock classical music, this was the first film of its type to have an original score to capture the mood. With the use of a large orchestra and chorus, it did just that. It was beautiful.

Then we get to the most important part of all. The players. Peter Cushing was an obvious choice. Since his success as Baron Frankenstein, he had done four more of Hammer's period films and was right at home here. There has often been a bit of interest in his limp (from a so-called accident during the excavation): was it simply contrived for the film or had he actually hurt his leg prior to filming? Who knows? Cushing joked in a later day interview about the poster showing the flashlight shining through Lee's body, and that it was Cushing's idea to add the thrust of the spear through Lee during the confrontation in his home—to justify the poster. None of this seems to make a lot of sense, but it is a good story.

Christopher Lee was once again buried under lots of make-up and had a not-very-good-time as Kharis. In his book, *The Films of Christopher Lee*, Lee remembers the pain of the whole thing. "With the bandages and make-up I could hardly breath except through the holes for my eyes. Physically, the most arduous picture I've ever done (until *The Three Musketeers* in 1974). The things I had to do in *The Mummy* were almost beyond belief, physically—smashing through doors and a window that was real glass, dislocating my shoulder and pulling all the muscles in my neck and shoulder, carrying beautiful girls (who were dead weight because they were unconscious) in the mud and swamps, sometimes as far as 87

yards. The Mummy was an unstoppable automaton, but in many ways very human in his reactions, especially meeting the reincarnation of his beloved princess. A very beautiful looking picture."

I don't think there could be much argument among *any* fans that there has never been a more effective presentation of the Mummy than that of Christopher Lee. Not Karloff, not Chaney, not Tom Tyler.

The Christopher Lee book also points out the following about the fine character actor George Pastell and his performance: "One scene that must be mentioned is that in which Cushing and Pastell verbally duel, each of them knowing that the other sees through his pretense. The elaborate hypocrisy of the scene is worthy of Oscar Wilde at his choicest." And choice Sangster—although he was not always good at dialogue (Cushing did *not* like Sangster's scripts as a rule and would change the dialogue).

Yvonne Furneaux (Isobel/Ananka) makes light of her work in the film, but her husband points out it is the film she is most often asked about (and she has a copy of it on video). Furneaux barely remembers producer Michael Carreras (or so she says) but Margaret Robinson remembers how difficult she was to apply headpieces to because "she wanted to look beautiful for Michael." However, it should be pointed out (so as not to ruin any marriages) that Tony Hinds says it was James Carreras who was more interested in the French cuties at that time.

Furneaux is not too kind to Terence Fisher: "Peter Cushing was the one behind it. Cushing was the one that really directed that film, between me and you. He was the brains behind it. Cushing was adorable, a gentleman, and a real charmer. Not exactly Lord Byron to look at is he. And yet you'd die for him, he is so sweet.

"Christopher Lee—I came across him because he had to pick me up, and he said 'my God, you're heavy!' and he dropped me (laughter). I thought the film was real rubbish and I'd never see it again (laughter). Unfortunately, they've returned to haunt me. . . "

Regarding Ms. Furneaux's opinions on the work of Peter Cushing and Terence Fisher, they had worked on four previous films together, they knew each others' working methods, and they appreciated Fisher's willingness to accept suggestions from his performers. And knowing Peter Cushing, he would not have tolerated an incompetent director for five films. He respected Fisher as a talent and as a man and would go on to work with him in seven more films. As Fisher says about Cushing: "I think with Peter we have that kind of rapport. We can almost read each other's thoughts which I've never experienced with anybody else."

This threesome were ably supported by Felix Aylmer (who had worked in such major films as *Henry V*, *Hamlet*, and *Quo Vadis*) who would later that year appear in Hammer's superb study of child molesting, *Never Take Sweets From a Stranger*. Raymond Huntley, also on board, had played Dracula on the London West End stages in 1927 (at the age of 22). Michael Ripper had his normal bug-eyed role as a poacher, and Lee claims he didn't dare even look at Ripper or he (Lee) would burst out laughing. George Pastell had another strong ethnic role in the previous year's *Stranglers of Bombay*.

Before it reached the final audience, the film underwent some editing and censoring, as Michael Carreras points out: "Was there a topless scene included in it? Every time I go to any festival or anything, that's the one question that they always want to know about—as if I've got a drawer somewhere full of cut-out bits! But I think you are right about that parade (in the flashback): I think we had a lot of colored ladies. Maybe I might have denied it over the years where that kind of thing might have happened, but I think we *did* do it. But it just never worked—we never had a request from distributors, where they said 'we won't distribute it unless it's nude. . .' It was just a general trend and we would also have cautiously been 'having a go.'

"The tongue cutting. Yes, I remember that. We did do that. There was this awful three-pronged instrument; that was a censor cut. But if you were to ask me to summarize this whole thing about Hammer and 'did we do this, did we do that or the other,' the answer would be no, we never did. We shot what we shot, and we weren't allowed to show what we weren't allowed to

Christopher Lee on his characterization of *THE MUMMY*: "The Mummy was an unstoppable automaton, but in many ways very human in his reactions."

Christopher Lee, while in The Mummy makeup, had to carry beautiful girls through the mud and swamp, sometimes as far as 87 yards.

show. It was never a case of 'we will shoot a foreign version.' I can't believe that even that parade contained more than what was finally shown: we shot it like that—but we took a 'protective' with the clothes on. At the time, we might have gotten away with it We didn't. Often we had material cut, which would appear later, and was then *interpreted* as *additional* material shot."

I guess it is not a big surprise that with all these factors working to its favor, *The Mummy* would be both a financial ("The All Time Chiller is Hot, Hot, Hot at the boxoffices all over the country. Breaking the all-time U-I (Universal-International) record at the Pilgrim Theatre in Boston and is topping *Horror of Dracula*. . . etc.) and a critical success (something Hammer was not having a lot of at that time). It is a haunting film (a term used again and again in reviews). With so little to work with story wise, Michael Carreras, Terence Fisher, Peter Cushing, Christopher Lee, and crew had created a true milestone in the genre. Not perfect as a film—but the perfect Mummy film.

The Curse of the Mummy's Tomb (1964)

Producer/Director: Michael Carreras, Screenplay: Henry Younger (Michael Carreras/Alvin Rakoff), Associate Producer: Bill Hill, Music Composer: Carlo Martelli, Music Supervisor: Philip Martell, Director of Photography: Otto Heller, B.S.C., Camera Operator: Bob Thompson, Production Designer: Bernard Robinson, Supervising Editor: James Needs, Editor: Eric Boyd-Perkins, Sound Recordist: Claude Hitchcock, Sound Editor: James Groom, Assistant Director: Bert Batt, 2nd Assistant Director: Hugh Harlow, Make-up. Roy Ashton, Hair Stylist: Iris Tilley, Wardrobe: Betty Adamson/John Briggs, Continuity: Eileen Head, Casting: David Booth, Technical Advisor: Andrew Low.

A Hammer/Swallow Production. 80 minutes. Technicolor/Techniscope. Cert X in Great Britain. Produced Feb. 24th, 1964. Released October 18, 1964. Distributor. BLC (Great Britain. Stands for British Lion-Columbia)/Columbia in USA.

Cast: Terence Morgan (Adam Beauchamp/Be), Ronald Howard (John Bray), Fred Clark (Alexander King), Jeanne Roland (Annette Dubois), George Pastell (Hashmi Bey), Jack Gwillim (Sir Giles Dalrymple), John Paul (Inspector Mackenzie), Bernard Rebel (Professor Dubois), Michael McStay (Ra-Antef), Dickie Owen (The Mummy), Jill Mai Meredith (Jenny), Vernon Smythe (Jessop). Also Michael Ripper, Harold Goodwin, Marianne Stone.

Although during the late 1950s, early 1960s, Hammer is generally remembered for its colorful Universal-International releases like *Curse of the Werewolf* and *Horror of Dracula*, it should be noted that the vast amount of Hammer product from 1957 on was made for and released by Columbia Pictures. Through his involvement with Variety Club International (noted, in public, for its charitable endeavors, but a behind-the-scenes hotbed of deal making in the entertainment industry), James Carreras became friendly with Mike Frankovich, head of overseas production for Columbia Pictures. After the success of *Curse of Frankenstein*, Columbia was eager to get their hands on the next Frankenstein—*Blood of Frankenstein* as it was known at the time. Carreras used his leverage on that film, and in September 1957, Columbia and Hammer signed a three picture deal that included *Revenge of Frankenstein* (the renamed *Blood*), *The Snorkel*, and *Camp on Blood Island*. This involvement also lead to the "dead-at-birth" deal with Columbia's Screen Gems television arm and *Tales of Frankenstein* (ugh). in October 1958, Columbia had expanded its Hammer involvement with a deal that allowed them a one million dollar buy-in of Bray Studios (giving them a 40% share) and a deal that allowed for at least five Hammer films a year over three years.

Which leads up to *Curse of the Mummy's Tomb*. By early 1964, the Columbia/Hammer relationship was about over. While Hammer had continued to produce an occasional film for Universal-International, that was also about to end (*The Secret of Blood Island* would call the contract to a close. Universal would not release another Hammer film until the 1972 paring of *Hands of the Ripper* and *Twins of Evil*, part of an arrangement with Rank that Universal was about to sever—which explains the lacklustre release). Producer Anthony Hinds has said that the Universal deals were the most lucrative for Hammer, where they knew they would get their money up-front (making a 100,000 Pound film . . on delivery they would get 150,000 Pounds, etc.).

It is hard to say just how interested Columbia was in their Hammer affilistion by this time. While some of the swashbucklers like *Pirates of Blood River* had been money makers, the majority of the Hammer releases were not of much interest to Columbia and most were not major successes. Perhaps by this time, seeing the success Universal was having with the true Gothics like *Brides of Dracula* and *Kiss and the Vampire* (but forgetting the failure of *Phantom of the Opera*), Columbia was in the mood for some out and out "Hammer Horrors." They got that in spades in Terence Fisher's stylish *The Gorgon* (1963). And *Curse of the Mummy's Tomb* delivers the goods as an all out monster fest.

Producer Michael Carreras had left Hammer on a permanent basis in July 1961 after finishing up the production on *These Are the Damned* (while nominally credited to Anthony Hinds, but Hinds detested the director Joseph Losey and literally disappeared from the film. Carreras stepped in and finished it up). Often at odds with his father, James, Michael had felt the last straw break when his father personally cancelled Michael's *The Inquisitor (The Rape of Sabena)*, then putting out a story about it being can-

celled because of pressure from the Catholic League. *One More River*, another pet Michael C. project, never got off the ground. So Michael left, using his own production company, Capricorn, to launch a teen musical and one of the first Westerns shot in Spain.

However, as would be his fate in later years, Michael found it very difficult to raise the necessary finances for further films. Still having friends within the Hammer organization (company business manager Brian Lawrence and Anthony Hinds himself; Hinds now forced more and more into the role of executive producer at the company's Wardour Street offices, rather than being on the floor of the studio making films himself. By 1964, Hinds was to produce his last film, *Fanatic*, aka *Die, Die My Darling*, before giving over the producer's reins to Anthony Nelson Keys and others), he would come to depend almost totally on Hammer for his film projects.

Budgeted at 103,000 Pounds, or just 3,000 more than *The Mummy* had cost almost five years earlier, Michael Carreras (using the tongue in cheek pseudonym "Henry Younger"—his poke of fun at Anthony Hinds' own "John Elder") worked with director Alvin Rakoff to fashion a script with a lot of comic touches, but it was still a basic rehash of the "monster on the loose" that was the real "Mummy's Curse" of plotlines.

An archaeological expedition has uncovered the sarcophagus of Ra-Antef, which American showman Alexander King intends to put on exhibition to a paying public. On the opening night, the Mummiform coffin is found to be empty. Soon, those involved start to fall victim to the vengeance of a living Mummy, who appears to be enacting the curse of the pharaohs in search of the pieces of a medallion inscribed with the secrets of life and death. The mysterious Adam Beauchamp is also after the medallion, and it transpires that he is actually, Be, brother of the Mummy and himself cursed to eternal life! Having restored the medallion, Adam kidnaps Annette Dubois, daughter of one of the archaeologists; he intends that she should join him in immortality. The Mummy will not strike the fatal blow, however, and when Adam makes for the sewers with Annette, Ra-Antef brings the roof down on himself and his brother, and Annette is able to escape into the arms of her fiance.

It should also be noted that according to British Film Union rules, Michael Carreras would not be allowed credit for three positions on a single film, another reason for "Henry Younger" since Carreras was also producing and directing.

Shooting began on February 28th, 1964 at the MGM Studios at Borehamwood. Once Michael began doing films as an independent for Hammer, he would never again use the company owned facilities at Bray.

Particularly effective are the two scenes where the Mummy bursts into the professor's home. . . the French windows are reminiscent of those at Bray Studios, from *THE CURSE OF THE MUMMY'S TOMB*.

Planned as the back-up feature for *The Gorgon*, Michael still found the film idea interesting (as we already know, he was the only one at Hammer with any affection for the Mummy character). "The story had a lot of comedy in it. That wonderful Fred Clark. The circus—the banging of the drum. It was different and I liked it. The whole thing felt like fun."

Not wanting to have all the day-to-day problems of producing and directing, he brought in Bill Hill to handle the dirty work. "The budget was so small. Bill Hill was a friend of mine, but a good producer. I said, Bill, I want to direct it, I don't want to have the production chores. But it's got to come in on schedule, so you have to push me hard as far as the schedule is concerned. But I don't want to hear a figure, I don't want to know anything about cost. Once we'd cast it and put it to bed, 10% of everything saved under the budget was his (Hill's). And if it's more than 10%, he got a case of champagne as well."

As an independent, Carreras often used non-typical Hammer personnel. Case in point was lighting cameraman Otto Heller (with many major films and photographic prizes under his belt). Outside of Michael Ripper, the crew was definitely not typical Hammer. Still, old faithfuls like make-up man, Roy Ashton (who had to literally tear apart the Mummy make-up at the last moment, to make it look more massive and imposing, leaving a very patched up look). Ashton has a story about the film: "Dickie Owen had to walk around through an underground sewer and a whole lot of debris had to fall on his head. I warned the first assistant that they had to be aware of the extreme danger of letting that man flounder around in water that was fairly deep: he could loose his footing and drown. 'That will be all right,' he said. However, I stood quite close there with a pair of scissors in my hand. And sure enough, when all the stuff came bashing down, he couldn't keep his balance and fell over. I leapt straight in and removed everything so that he could breathe freely again. He already had water in this throat..."

Art Director Bernard Robinson ("I can't say that Bernie felt more at home at Bray than on this picture at MGM, but Bray was his home. . . he knew where every nail was. . . " said Carreras) was used. And Editor-in-Chief, James Needs (whose in-house editing shop at Hammer disappeared several years later amid scandal of a sort) came on board.

Lead actor Terence Morgan had achieved some fame in the 1957 film *The Scamp* as a sadistic stepfather and in the early 1960s' television series *Sir Francis Drake*. But as Michael said later, "I *liked* him. I had never worked with him. He seemed right and was a sort of name and wasn't going to cost a lot. I think he had retired in a way and was living in Brighton and had done a bit of theater."

Ronald Howard's main claim to

fame was his father, Leslie Howard (Ashley Wilkes in *Gone with the Wind*, among many notable roles). Not exactly father-like-son, but Howard was competent in his male/lead/hero role. He had also played Sherlock Holmes in a 1950s' British television series.

Poor "Jeanne Roland," pushed as another of the Hammer "French Cuties," was actually a Burmese born model named Jean Rollins. Carreras had met her at a party and thought she had a wonderfully old-fashioned face. "I thought she was quiet pretty. She had never acted in her life. I used her as an ornamental piece. I said stand here and smile. If I wave to you from behind the camera, blink, or turn left, or some such. I thought she was ornamental. That is all she was meant to be, more or less. And I thought she did it very well." To add insult to injury to her short acting career, Roland/Rollins was also revoiced (joining Norma Marla, The Rhodesian-born actress, in *Two Faces of Dr. Jekyll*).

Fred Clark was the obligatory American imposed on the production, who actually spent only two weeks on the film. But Carreras was very fond of him and felt he gave the film a bit of pizzazz. Clark, who had been doing supporting roles in both comedies and dramas for years, was especially good in Jerry Lewis's *Visit to a Small Planet*. Clark met his filmic doom here, throttled by Mummy Dickie Owens, in a very atmospheric scene shot on the fog-covered steps of a London side street (Owen, in the major role of his career, had just appeared in *Zulu*. He even got to speak as well as kill natives).

For budget reasons, outside of a stock shot on the desert sands that starts off the film, the whole production was done on soundstages. No exteriors.

Carreras: "It was intentional, written for that, and done for economics." And like all previous Carreras directed films, it was shot in the wide-screen process. "I must say I had never directed anything with conventional lenses. From the very first thing I directed, we were testing out Hammerscope lenses, and one day somebody said to me something about lenses. And I said don't speak to me about that, I've only got two, one's a 75 and the other's a 50. *Maniac* was the first time they gave me a whole box of lenses. I thought, what am I going to do with this? It was quite ridiculous. All the musicals I did were in Cinemascope. *The Steel Bayonet* was in Hammerscope. You have to be more careful in getting the setups particularly when we had to shoot five or six minutes a day. I found that easier, if you move your camera about, you can bring 20 different people into frame in the same shot."

Carreras and musical director Philip Martell brought in a new name for the film's music in the person of Carlo Martelli (forget the Italian sounding name, he is British born and bred). Originally, Anthony Hinds had sent a letter to Carreras saying if they used Franz Reizenstein's score from the first film, they wouldn't have to commission a new one. As it was, Carreras did approve a full orchestral piece. Composer Martelli remembers: "When I first saw the roughcut of *Curse of the Mummy's Tomb*, I was of course told that for the flashback sequences in the middle of the film, which I think lasts about three minutes, Reizenstein's music would be used. But I was not in the remotest degree influenced by him in my score, as should be obvious to anyone who isn't tone deaf. And it didn't save money, whatever Anthony Hinds may have intended. I was paid 350 Pounds (about 3,700 Pounds in present day money) for the job, exactly as I would have been paid had Reizenstein's music not been needed. The sessions were expensive too as I was encouraged to use a large orchestra." Martelli later went on to score the underrated *Witchcraft* which Don Sharp directed for Lippert, starring Lon Chaney.

Hammer had been recently trying to tone down the horror in their films after painful experiences with the censors over *Curse of the Werewolf*. Soft-peddled horrors like *Phantom of the Opera* or the more restrained *Kiss of the Vampire* were the order of the day. Still, Anthony Hinds turned over three pages of British censors' instructions for Michael to take note. Scenes showing the severing of the hands and the various deaths were called into question. Hinds recommended eight minor deletions but basically implied crushing of one man's skull with a blunt object and the Egyptian servant's head being smashed like an eggshell by the Mummy's foot. A severed hand starts off the film in grisly fashion. By the standards of 1964, it was still pretty strong stuff and pleased the audiences of the time. Perhaps it would be interesting to look at the censors' letter to Hammer about this film, dated February 10, 1964. The secretary at the British Board of Film Censors directed it to Pamela Anderson (who was Anthony Hinds' secretary), but copies got to James Carreras, Anthony Hinds, Anthony (Brian) Lawrence, Michael Carreras, and Bill Hill.

"I am now in a position to send you our comments about the script for *The Curse of the Mummy's Tomb*. This should be basically acceptable for the "X" category provided that it is in line with previous Hammer Productions of this kind, but there is one thing which worries us a good deal. An important point in the story is that at various points people's hands are cut off, and, according to the script, we are to see this. This is not at all a nice idea, and the most that we would accept would be the cutting off of the hands by suggestion or implication; we would not want to see trick shots which convey the impression that the hands are actually cut off, or shots of the results. My comments on points of detail are as follows: (Page 3, Scene 17). Here we have Dubois killed with a knife in the stomach. This may be all right provided that we do not see the knife going in. The script suggests that we are to see blood coming from his mouth. We

The police's ineffective (but highly visual, with rope nets) attempts to capture the Mummy are really fun to watch, from *THE CURSE OF THE MUMMY'S TOMB*.

would not like this. (Page 3, Scene 19). Here we have the first occasion on which we are apparently to see the hand cut off. The script direction reads. 'Suddenly the leader's knife enters frame and with a mighty blow severs the hand from the wrist. Blood spurts from the wrist as the dismembered hand topples to the sand. Camera pans with the dismembered hand as the leader raises it and holds it before him. He slowly and painstakingly begins to pry the clenched fingers open, one by one.' This does not appeal to us at all. Could you do this scene in some other way which is less unpleasant and nauseating? (Page 4, Scene 21 & 22). Here we still have trouble with the severed hand. My previous comments apply. We appreciate that in Scene 22, the shot will be under the titles, but it may well be troublesome. (Page 4, Scene 23). The shot of the beetle on the roast pig sounds a bit disgusting. It may pass, but it seems unnecessary for the incident to appear at all. (Page 9, Scene 34). We would not want any nasty shot of Dubois' body. The script direction says 'It is not a pretty sight. The severed arm is visible.' We would not want the arm to be visible unless it was something that nobody would object to. (Page 12, Scene 46). Here we have 'the bloody stump of Professor Dubois' hand, its fingers crooked upwards.' My previous comments apply. We do not like this idea. If we have to have it, it should be in long shot and very brief. (Page 21, Scene 63). The costume of the dance of the Arab dancer is not described. This should not be censurable. (Page 25, Scene 68). In this scene we are apparently to see 'the twisted body of the nightwatchman lying across an opened packing case. From the position of his head it is apparent that his neck has been broken.' This suggests that we may have a very unpleasant shot. Great care should be taken. (Page 30, Scene 78). The description of this scene suggests that we may have a violent low blow. This should be svoided. (Page 36, Scene 93). Care should be taken with shots of the body being pulled aboard, when 'a mixture of water and blood spreads out from the body.' This could be very unpleasant and macabre. The shot of the body itself in Scene 94 should be reasonable. (Page 46, Scene 114). In this scene we have another hand being cut off in flashback. My previous comments apply. We would not want to see it done, or to see shots of spurting blood of the unpleasant results. (Page 78, Scene 182). If the Mummy is no worse than its predecessors we should have no trouble with it, but care should be taken not to make it too unpleasant. (Page 79, Scene 189-190). We never like close shots of people being throttled. The script direction reads 'his eyes bulge, his tongue protrudes. . . ' etc. This is the kind of thing that worries us. Care should be taken with this. Would it not be possible for the Mummy to hurl the King down the steps and kill him in this way, without throttling coming into it? (Page 79, Scene 191). It seems unnecessary for the man to hit the child as described, and I think you could get rid of it. (Page 84-5, Scene 112). We would not want a really unpleasant shot of the mummified flesh sealing itself 'as if it were oozing mud'. This seems a bit nauseating. Nor would we want Sir Giles killed in this way. The breaking of his back, with the effects on the sound track, would be more unpleasant than we would like. Surely there is some more conventional way in which these scenes can be shot. (Page 85, Scene 213). Not too much screaming please! (Page 90, Scene 232 and following). Annette is to be seen wearing a negligee which is described as 'disarranged.' Since she has been subjected to violence by the Mummy we would not want any shot which suggested that there has been some sexual impulse in the violence. (Page 95-96, Scene 258-260). We would not want to see Hashmi's head being squashed under the Mummy's foot. Nor would we want to hear any nasty reactions from him, or to see much of the reactions from the bystanders. (Page 103-104, Scene 275-278). These scenes, as described, are very unpleasant. We would not want s close shot of Adam's hand trapped in the door, nor of him writhing in agony; nor would we want to see the hand falling to the floor 'bleeding profusely and jerking spasmodically as the nerves play out their final convulsions.' This goes far beyond what we would accept. Adam wrenches the remains of his crushed arm from the crack and falls backwards screaming into the whirling waters of the sewers. I hope you will find some other way of dealing with Adam in this situation, in a way that is more acceptable for the cinema screen. We could have an indication of what happens with some groans, but we really do not want to see hands coming off, bleeding stumps, etc. In this kind of scene horror film material goes into disgust. (Page 106-107, Scenes 288-292). Again these scenes are very nasty. We would not want any shots of the torn arm waving about during the drowning. Surely the wretched man could be tipped in and left to drown. The script suggests that we are to see the corpse floating about among a lot of filthy debris. I would think that most cinema audiences would object to this, but would accept the sort of sewer we had in *Les Miserables*. (Page 108, Scene 297). We would not expect any great trouble with the Mummy's hand, but reasonable care should be taken."

Censor's note: "Annette is to be seen wearing a negligee which is described as disarranged. . . we would not want any shot which suggested that there has been some sexual impulse in the violence" [caused by the Mummy], from *THE CURSE OF THE MUMMY'S TOMB*.

Well, and we wonder how *any* Hammer films with even a hint of action *ever* got made. It is interesting that as mentioned above, Hinds suggested eight deletions and two more to be considered. Can you guess which ones they were?

In the final analysis, there is not s

lot for which to either commend or condemn this film. The Mummy scenes are well staged particularly since many of them play without music background and are very effective for it. London fog hides the fact that some of the sets are rather threadbare and underdressed. But it is very colorful, nicely constructed film. Contrary to Michael Carreras affection for Fred Clark, I find him a pain and an annoyance and was glad to see him disappear in the Mummy's grip halfway through the film.

Particularly effective are the two scenes where the Mummy bursts into the professor's home. The French windows are very reouniscent of those at Bray Studios—and both the throttling of the professor and the police's ineffective (but highly visual, with rope nets) attempts to capture the Mummy are really fun to watch.

The final scenes in the sewer are nicely realized. Like most Carreras directed films, it is better appreciated in a letterboxed widescreen version. The scenes with the Mummy, Terence Morgan, and Jeanne Roland play best when you can see all that was captured by the camera.

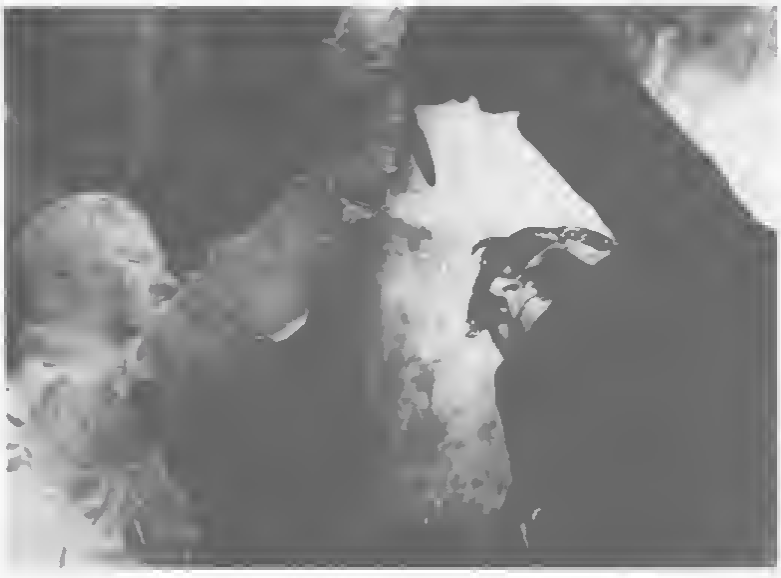
It is not a bad film of its type. Nothing special (and grist for the mull for the anti-Hammer clique of Tom Weaver and friends when they are putting down the Hammer product). But you'll like it if you don't set your standards too high. And in tandem with *The Gorgon*, must have been a fun double-feature in 1965.

The Mummy's Shroud (1966)

Director: John Gilling, Producer: Anthony Nelson-Keys, Screenplay: John Gilling from an original story by John Elder (Anthony Hinds), Music Composer: Don Banks, Musical Supervisor: Philip Martell, Director of Photography: Arthur Grant B.S.C., Camera Operator: Moray Grant, Production Designer: Bernard Robinson, Art Director: Don Mingaye, Supervising Editor: Roy Hyde, Production Manager: Ed Harper, 1st Assistant Director: Bluey Hill, Make-up: George Partleton, Hairstylist: Freida Steiger, Wardrobe Mistress: Molly Arbuthnot, Wardrobe Master: Larry Steward, Continuity: Edith Head, Casting: Irene Lamb, Special Effects: Bowie Films Ltd.

A Hammer-Seven Arts Production. 90 minutes. Technicolor. Certificate X in U.K. produced Sept. 12, 1966 Released June 18, 1967. Distributor: Warner-Pathe (UK)/20th Century Fox (USA). Original co-feature: *Frankenstein Created Woman*.

Cast: Andre Morell (Sir Basil Waldon), John Phillips (Stanley Preston), David Buck (Paul Preston), Elizabeth Stellars (Barbara Preston), Michael Ripper (Longbarrow), Tim Barrett (Harry Newton), Maggie Kimberly (Claire), Richard Warner (Inspector Barrani), Roger Delgado (Hasid Ali), Catherine Lacey (Haiti), Eddie Powell (Prem, the Mummy), Dickie Owen (Prem, in flashback), Bruno Barnabe (Pharaoh), Toni Gilipin (Pharaoh's wife), Toolsid Persaud (Kah-To-Bey), Andrease Malandrinos (The Curator), William Russell (narration).



The Mummy (Dickie Owen) and Terence Morgan struggle in the sewers at the climax of *THE CURSE OF THE MUMMY'S TOMB*.

By this time in 1966, the face of Hammer had, once again, undergone drastic changes. In July of 1965, Hammer, represented by James Carreras, Anthony Hinds, and Brian Lawrence, had gone to New York to sign a massive 11 picture deal with Seven Arts Productions, 20th Century Fox, and Associated British. What this meant was that after ten years of depending on different companies for backing and distribution, Hammer was putting all its eggs into one basket. Seven Arts, under the guidance of Eliot Hyman and his son, Kenneth, had been the silent partners and backers for Hammer going back to *Curse of Frankenstein*. And in their attempt to become major players in the film business (which would culminate in their acquisition of Warner Bros. in 1968... again taking Hammer with them), they were initiating a number of film deals both in the USA and Great Britain. Eliot Hyman made sure his friend, Jimmy Carreras, was involved.

At first, the films were *very* successful, represented by *The Nanny* (with Bette Davis), *One Million Years B.C.*, and the duos of *Dracula, Prince of Darkness/Plague of the Zombies*, and *Rasputin, the Mad Monk/The Reptile*. But by 1967, the dew was off the lilly and tastes were changing. *B.C.* took in a fortune but *Prehistoric Women/The Devil's Own* lost money, as did *The Viking Queen* (a major failure). *The Anniversary* was a disappointment as was *A Challenge for Robin Hood*. *The Lost Continent* and *Vengeance of She* were major flops in the U.S.A. (Hammer had high hopes for the *She* sequel. Originally signing Ursula Andress, the star of the original, then, later, Susan Denberg. But Denberg's descent into the drug culture of America found her dead by the end of 1967). The first of the Fox released features, *The Devil's Bride*, again, did poor business in America. (Hammer's business manager, Brian Lawrence, says that by this time Fox just didn't care about these films...)

In 1966, Hammer was in need of a second feature to go out with *Frankenstein Created Woman*, which had started shooting on July 4th. Four weeks after it finished, and using most of the same exterior sets, *The Mummy's Shroud* was in production.

We can say right up front that *The Mummy's Shroud* has a terrible reputation. Along with *The Evil of Frankenstein*, it is often used as an example of the poor filmmaking that was to be Hammer's latter day fate (or so the ney-sayers say). The story is very mundane and not very interesting in and of itself, but the setpieces with the Mummy and the various deaths were brilliantly conceived and executed by John Gilling, who considered the film "one of my worst" but gave it his all.

1920, and an expedition has been

financed by Stanley Preston. Archaeologist Sir Basil Waldon has discovered the tomb of the boy Pharaoh, Kah-To-Bey. But the tomb has a guardian, and using the sacred shroud, Hasmid calls the Mummy of Prem to life to destroy the members of the expedition. One by one, they meet a horrifying end at the hand of the Mummy, until only two remain: Paul Preston and Claire. Suspecting who is behind the deaths, Claire investigates but finds herself trapped in a museum with the Mummy. When Paul and Inspector Barrani arrive, Prem attacks. He is impervious to bullets and blows form a fire-axe, but during the fracas, Barrani shoots Hasmid. With his death, the Mummy of Prem crumbles to dust.

This synopsis leaves out the fact that the reading of the scroll of life really brings about the death of the Mummy, but you get the general idea. In his (brilliant) upcoming book on Hammer, Denis Meikle has this to say about what makes *The Mummy's Shroud* eminently watchable and enjoyable.

"With little but the obligator series of set-piece murders to build upon, Gilling stages each of them with stunning visual invention: The Mummy's appearances are presaged by a variety of perceptive tricks, in the manner of the literary master M.R. James—this is evidenced in a trail of eons-old dust, spotted as a shadow on an alley wall, shown reflected in a crystal ball or in a tray of developing solution, or even as a blur in the myopic vision of Michael Ripper's Longbarrow. And the killings themselves are staged with equal aplomb: Sir Basil's skull is cracked open like an egg in a giant's hand—Stanley Preston is smashed on a wall to leave its imprints in blood—the photographer, Barrett, is baptized in acid and fire—and the mild-mannered Longbarrow is hurled from an upstairs window, his body shattering against the side of an ornamental pool to stain the waters scarlet."

This film delivers the goods. Budgeted at 160,000 Pounds, it has the sad and unique distinction... to be the last film made by Hammer at their Bray Studios. With the involvement of Associated British in the Seven Arts/Hammer deal, ABPC insisted that Hammer use their Elstree Company Studio. So by the end of 1966 when this film finished, Hammer would start the task of vacating Bray. For so many of the studio personnel it must have been a bittersweet time. Wardrobe mistress, Rosemary Barrows, would end up marrying the Mummy—Eddie Powell. Make-up supervisor, George Partleton, who replaced Roy Ashton at the end of 1965, would only make it through one year and three films before the doors closed. Anthony Hinds always said that firing all these people was the hardest thing he ever had to do.

The Mummy (Eddie Powell) gets a touch-up from the seamtress from Hammer's *THE MUMMY'S SHROUD*.

For one viewing, *Shroud* is really fun. Certainly for the viewers of the time it must have seemed a lot more action-packed than the intelligent, melancholy (and slow moving) *Frankenstein Created Woman*. But *Shroud* does not hold up well to repeated viewings. Once you've seen the murders, you've really seen the whole basis for the film.

Director John Gilling, in his last film for Hammer, ended a wonderful career with the company. The previous year he had directed, back to back, *The Reptile* and *Plague of the Zombies*. His work in the 1960s for Hammer had seen the script for *The Gorgon* and some of their best action films like *Pirates of Blood River*. Gilling was a tough man to work for (Hammer Production Manager, Hugh Harlow, called him a bully. Oliver Reed thought that a head injury Gilling suffered during World War II might have had something to do with his moods). I corresponded with Gilling during the last years of his life and found him to be an intelligent, funny gentleman. He *looked* like a lumpy farmer, but he had the heart of an artist. Gilling had accepted the direction of *Shroud* to get away from television, which he was doing in bunches at the time (*The Saint*, *Department S.*, etc.). Gilling talked about the film to me.

"I wasn't very proud of *The Mummy's Shroud*. It was a rather worn out theme. I agree with you about Michael Ripper's performance (I raved about his Longbarrow). I think Michael is a very neglected artist. I cast him with a view of introducing some lighter touches into the movie and I think these may have saved it from being a total disaster." (Actually, Ripper's Longbarrow is a sad and pitiful character that adds depth to the movie. But I accept Gilling's views on Ripper).

Ex-debutante Maggie Kimberly played the well-endowed Claire and the next year would achieve her last bit of fame when she is burned at the stake in Michael Reeve's *The Witchfinder General*.

It is probably not good to dwell on *The Mummy's Shroud* at too much length. It was what it was—a programmer to support a more popular Frankenstein subject. While the Frankenstein village sets occupied one end of the Bray Studios lot, the other end had the Egyptian sets of *Shroud*. Exciting to a point, but *not* a film you would want to watch over and over. And it gives the melancholy feeling that we have seen the end of an era with Hammer's departure from Bray.

Former Dr. Watson, Andre Morell, is his normal wonderful self, after his fine role in 1965's *Plague of the Zombies*. John Phillips as the bad guy is a little too mean to be believable. Elizabeth Sellars had worked for Hammer/Exclusive in the early 1950s. David Buck attained some fame as a writer and playwright and was married to Hammer actress Madeline Smith, before his death a few years ago. And Lord, how many people shuddered when the drool ran down the lips of old Catherine Lacey. Dickie Owen, who was the Mummy in *Curse of the Mummy's Tomb*, had a human role as the non-Mummy Prem in the prologue of the film. Mummy #2 Eddie Powell would end up covered up again as the grand inquisitor in Michael Carreras's *The Lost Continent*—and a small role as "The goat of Mendes"—"The Devil Himself"—in *The Devil Rides Out*.

***Blood From the Mummy's Tomb* (1971)**

Director: Seth Holt and Michael Carreras, Producer: Howard Brandy, Screenplay: Christopher Wicking based on *The Jewel of the Seven Stars* by Bram Stoker, Music Composer: Tristram Cary, Director of Photography: Arthur Grant B.S.C., Camera Operator: Neil Binney, Production Designer Scott MacGregor, Assistant Art Director: Don Picton, Editor: Peter Weatherley GBFE, Sound Recordist: Tony Dawe, Production Manager: Christopher Neame, Assistant Director: Derek Whitehurst, Make-up: Edith Knight, Hairdressing Supervisor: Rosemary Burrows, Wardrobe Mistress: Diane Jones, Continuity: Betty Harley, Special Effects: Michael Collins, Construction Manager: Bill Breen, Production Supervisor: Roy Skeggs.

Hammer, 93 Minutes. Technicolor. Certificate X in the U.K. Produced January 11, 1971. Released November 7, 1971. Distributors: MGM-EMI (UK)/American International (USA). Original co-feature: *Dr. Jekyll Sister Hyde* (UK)/*Night of the Blood Monsters*

(USA).

Cast: Andrew Keir (Fuchs), Valerie Leon (Margaret/Tera), James Villiers (Corbeck), Hugh Burden (Dandridge), George Coulouris (Berrigan), Mark Edwards (Tod Browning), Rosalie Crutchle (Helen Dickerson), Aubrey Morris (Doctor Putnam), David Markham (Doctor Burgess), Joan Young (Mrs. Caporal), James Cossins (Older Male Nurse), David Jackson (Young Male Nurse), Jonathan Burn (Saturnine Young Man), Graham James (Youth in Museum), Tamara Ustinov (Veronica).

The face of Hammer had continued to change. The Seven Arts/20th Century Fox deal had finished with *The Lost Continent* in 1967. Hammer had gone big-time with a 1968 television series for ABC called *Journey to the Unknown*. The series, while being a failure that only lasted one year, would prove a turning point for Hammer—with producer and Hammer co-owner Anthony Hinds deciding to leave the company. Long dissatisfied that executive duties kept him from actively producing films, he now found himself seconded to American producer Joan Harrison (Alfred Hitchcock's long time secretary) on the TV series. Having been told he did not have the experience to produce for television, Tony found he hated being demoted and working for someone else. At the end of 1968, when the series finished, he resigned his membership in the Unions (not a little affected by the fact that the trade unions had refused to allow needed overtime on the last days of the shooting of the television series). Although his resignation did not officially take effect until May 1970, for all practical purposes, Tony Hinds—producer of Hammer's classic Gothics—was now a thing of tha past at Hammer.

This left company head, James Carreras, in a quandary. His strength was not in the active shepherding of the projects from inception to finished product. But in the wining and dining of the money men—the back slapping—bringing the funds to Hammer and then turning it over to Michael Carreras or Anthony Hinds to bring to fruition. But it was now 1970, and Hinds and Carreras were gone. Anthony Nelson Keys, the top producer for almost seven years, was also off on his own. The people still on board, Brian Lawrence, Roy Skeggs, etc., were businessmen, accountants, not filmmakers. To add to his problems, James Carreras' long time partnership with Eliot Hyman was at an end. After a year of owning Warner Bros., and losing a lot of money, Hyman and his Seven Arts Group had sold out to tha Kinney Corp. and Ted Ashley was now the man calling the shots at Warners. Hammer finished up their Warner contractual schedule for 1969 (*Frankenstein Must Be Destroyed*, *Moon Zero Two*, *Crescendo*, and *Taste the Blood of Dracula*). Except for an occasional "one-of" project, their days as Hammer's "sugar daddy" were done.

Most of the other American money was fast leaving the British film industry. Totally British productions either lost lots of money or, at best, broke even. A changing face in filmmaking (and filmgoers) saw *Night of the Living Dead*, *Easy Rider*, etc. as tha wave of the future. The British industry was a dead horse as far as most American distributors were concerned, and they were through flogging it. For Jimmy Carreras, it was time to call in a lot of favors. His long-time friendship with Bernard Delfont of ABPC (soon to be EMI) saw a long-term contract starting in 1970 with *Horror of Frankenstein*. Rank, which had never had much luck as an actual producer, also handed over the keys to the vault to Carreras, and the first film was *Countess Dracula* in 1970.

Hammer now had tha real money in the industry, and with no Hinds or M. Carreras to create in-house projects, every independent producer in London beat a path to Hammer's doors at 1123 Wardour Street. One such producer was Howard Brandy. It started as an ad in December 1970 issue of *Variety*. "Howard Brandy, publicity director for the Ben Fisz-Bob Goldstein Independent, Benmar Productions, has been given leave to bow as a producer. It's for Hammer Films under its tieup with EMI, and the feature is *Blood From the Mummy's Tomb*. . . "

Howard Brandy: "I found the Bram Stoker story. I wasn't a big horror fan before. I just sent a letter to Sir James (Carreras), who I knew, and we met and that was it. He moved very fast on this. God, they loved it. . . I just verbally told him the story; it's a Mummy movie with a pretty girl, and he immediately said yes. They had a package deal going at the time with EMI, and this became part of that package. American-international (AIP) picked it up in the states. What I wanted to do, what appealed to me, was doing a Mummy movie without someone stumbling around in sheets and bandages. You see the film and you'll notice that the only "mummy" is tha very last shot, where the girl is wrapped in bandages."

What *is* strange is that in April of 1970, while Hammer had been trying to develop another Mummy project, Anthony Hinds wrote a letter to writer/director Jimmy Sangster on April 17th. "Jim Carreras has asked me to write a Mummy script. I gather that Hammer is pleased with your performance as a director; if you have been bitten by the bug and fancy doing some more of it, maybe you'd like to work on the script with me. You will appreciate I have no influence at Hammer anymore, so this is not a contract."

But by April 22, it was all a mute point when James Carreras wrote to Sangster and Hinds: "I have today told Tony Hinds that there is very little interest in a Mummy subject. Under the circumstance, therefore, we will have to forget it." Such was life at times. But by later in the year, things had definitely changed.

With a starting date of January 11, 1971 on tha soundstages of EMI's studios at Elstree, the crew on hand was certainly not (again) typical of Hammer. Brandy, along

The setpieces of the Mummy from *THE MUMMY'S SHROUD* were brilliantly conceived.

with Fine and Style (the Carmilla films), were among the first of the "hired guns" producers coming along to do the films Hammer once did all by itself. Seth Holt, a fine director of such Hammer hits as *Scream of Fear* and *The Nanny*, hadn't worked in two years and was eager to do something special with his first "horror" film. Christopher Wicking was brought on board with Holt to script his first film for Hammer after several projects for AIP-British and Amicus. Wicking talked about his involvement in the project with Kim Newman in *Shock Xpress*:

"It was one of the very last films that the Colonel, Sir James Carreras, actually personally brought into the stable. He said, 'Of course, we can't call it *The Jewel of the Seven Stars*, we have to call it something else.' I was pleased to be getting the deal. He (Carreras) did something I'd once seen Tony Tenser (of Tigon Pictures) do, like putting down all the words that would be right for the title. So we put down all the words to do with the mummy pictures, you know, "blood" and "tomb", and it all turned into *Blood from the Mummy's Tomb*, and we really didn't think anyone would use it. But they did. We should have fought for the original title. It became more and more like a Mummy film as it went along Then Seth Holt got involved, and he and I worked on it every day for months, and when it went into production, it was supposed to go in March. Something else had dropped out of the production line and they said to us, could we go in January? We said we didn't want to, but we thought they might cancel it altogether if we didn't go now, so we'd worked on maybe two-thirds of the screenplay that Seth had seen I then had a falling out with Howard Brandy, the producer, and was barred from the set, so I'd work with Seth in town after he'd finished work, about what he'd shoot tomorrow. And the idea was that after he'd finished shooting he'd get together with Ossie Hafenrichter, who'd cut all Seth's films, and put it together The system at Hammer is that they were cutting it together as they went along, and a week after the film was finished you'd have a rough cut. But they weren't doing that because that wasn't the way Seth worked, and he died a week before the end of shooting. So there were piles of meaningless, to anyone else, footage I might have known what some of it was supposed to be, but I wasn't asked to come and look at it. But the shape of it was different in the end. We weren't having any flashback, but undoubtedly it's got a very strange atmosphere. I felt very guilty (when Holt died) since I suggested him.

"Michael Carreras, who shot the extra week, said he was sitting there on the first day wondering what in heaven's name to do, and it was as if the ghost of Seth came by and suffused him with the vision of what it was supposed to be. I don't know if that's true."

Catherine Lacey watches as her agent of doom, The Mummy, dispatches Andres Morell, from *THE MUMMY'S SHROUD*.

Producer Brandy has a differing opinion of Wicking's involvement: "We tried to get the script in shape; he (Seth Holt) rewrote most of it. We had a writer named Christopher Wicking on that who was entirely unprofessional. He turned in a very sloppy draft which was unusable. It was zero, nothing (it was my idea to call the hero Tod Browning as an in joke; Wicking, the writer, refused to do that). And he'd say, 'I won't do that' when we asked for changes. Seth said 'Don't worry. I'll rewrite it.' So he did—he gave it (the script) whatever merit it had. Wicking was just unavailable. We tried calling his flat and he'd pulled the plug on the phone."

Time and tides affect people's memories, and what was obviously a difficult situation between Wicking and Brandy affects both views. Perhaps Holt was trying to smooth over the two's feelings and would spend his evenings working with Wicking, bringing the script in to Brandy each morning. Michael Carreras, on taking over as Managing Director of Hammer on January 4th, 1971 (more on that later), had taken Holt to dinner because he found the script confusing. 'Tell me the story' (I said to Holt) which he did. I had reservations but I had complete faith in him so I said 'Go ahead.' He went ahead with the project and died. . . "

Professor Fuchs has discovered the burial tomb of Tera, Queen of Darkness—her mummified body flesh, right hand severed at the wrist. On the hand is a ruby ring: the Jewel of the Seven Stars. And in the tomb are other strange objects: the statue of a snake, a mummified cat, and the skull of a jackal. The artifacts are brought to England and divided among the members of the expedition who each go their separate ways. Fuchs enshrines Tera's body in the cellar of his home, and gives the ruby ring to his daughter Margaret. When she wears it, she feels a psychic affinity with the dead Queen for whom she is a living double. The other three members of the team suddenly fall victim to some supernatural force. In the meantime, Margaret has come under the influence of Corbeck, an evil schemer who had designs on the power trapped in Tera's tomb; Corbeck plans to conjure Tera's spirit in Margaret's body. As he reads from the scroll, Fuchs tries to intervene. A struggle ensues, and in the confusion, Margaret plunges a dagger into Tera's heart. The vault collapses in on them all, and Margaret alone survives. Or does she?—as she lies swathed in bandages, only the eyes are visible.

With a director and a script (sort of) on hand, production designer Scott MacGregor set about putting together his materials. Never quite the stylist of Bernard Robinson, MacGregor was still a consummate craftsman. He made a bee-line for Bray Studios, now vacated by Hammer, where he picked out some of the architecture and statuary that had been created for the original *Mummy*, saving a lot of money. He also revamped some of the interior Elstree sets that were initially built for *Taste the Blood of Dracula* in 1969 and had been used in different forms for the four 1970 productions at EMI, starting with *Vampire Lovers* and ending with *Lust for a Vampire*.

As we said before, Michael Carreras was once again on board, officially, as Hammer's Managing Director, doing the day to day work that had once been the domain of Anthony Hinds. Having first refused the role of Executive Producer, he was surprised when his father gave him this opportunity to influence the direction of Hammer. One of Carreras's first moves was to appoint Roy Skeggs as Production Supervisor. He cancelled Hammer's contract with Jantale Films (who would do *Twins of Evil* to complete the Carmilla trilogy and had *Vampire Virgins* on tap for a fourth in the series) in April 1971, along with another prehistoric epic (and a project by Josephine Douglas, producer of *Dracula A.D. 1972* and James Carreras' mistress at the time. Which did nothing to cement father/son relationships).

Next came casting the film. Howard Brandy: "Seth and I had cast Amy Grant as the girl. She'd played with the Royal Shakespeare company, was a wonderful actress, and really had something about her. Beautiful, brilliant actress. And I get a call from Sir James—'Who is Amy Grant?' I

explained and he said, 'You don't quite understand. We need someone larger than life for this. He meant Valerie Leon. . . We had tested Valerie Leon and we didn't think she was going to work out. We'd tested the actresses with one of the speeches from the script, which we gave them beforehand to memorize as a courtesy. In the meantime, because we were seeing so many, Seth had cut the speech down, taken some lines out during the reading. When Valerie read, she invariably went back to the original speech. She couldn't seem to adjust to the shortened version.

"Now, I just saw her on TV; they ran the James Bond film *Never Say Never Again* and she looked fabulous. But Seth and I, at the time, didn't think she could do the part. We told Sir James we just didn't think Valerie could do it and he said, 'You guys are the movie geniuses here—*you* make her an actress!' He felt very strongly that she had star appeal. In Valerie's defense, she was a lovely, lovely girl who worked very hard. in the end, we had to revoice her completely. Even then, the bad luck that plagued us on the movie kept up. This sweet, middle-aged lady, a voice actress, came in to redo Valerie's part, sat down in a chair, and the chair collapsed! We couldn't get away from it. Another accident. Just bizarre."

The casting problems continued. Peter Cushing wes given and did the first day of filming. Valerie Leon remembers: "Peter Cushing and I actually worked together, we did shoot a scene. We shot the scene when he gave me the ring right at the beginning of the film. It was really sad when he had to drop out. Not only is he a very nice man, but obviously better known than Andrew Keir."

After that first day, Cushing went to producer Brandy: "It was a ouiracle that *Blood From the Mummy's Tomb* makes any sense at all. All the stuff added up, it was just one problem after another. Peter Cushing came to me just in tears. His wife, who he loved and adored, was very ill. He had to leave. I think she died the next day or something. So of course we had to replace him. Andrew Keir was cast by the fellow who's now the owner of Hammer, Roy Skeggs. He was the heart of the film as far as I'm concerned; he helped put it together. Keir was very quick and talented."

Michael Carreras ended up ringing Keir on a Friday night, saying that they were in trouble. Keir told him to leave the script at the studio gate. As Keir was living in Wales, he travelled overnight, learned the script, and started on Monday. Keir felt the script was written for Cushing and didn't work for him.

But troubles or no troubles, the film was underway. With a typical budget of the times of 200,000 Pounds (around $400,000), it was a very nice looking picture. If not as an actress, Leon was perfect physically for the part. And I think James Carreras' views on the larger than life qualities needed were born out. Leon is Tera. I haven't a clue who Amy Grant is, but it is hard to visualize anyone other than Leon in the part.

Mark Edwards was another unknown—who had to be tall since Leon is something of an Amazon at six-feet tall. They didn't need an "Alan Ladd clone" to be her boyfriend. One other bit of sad info, the excised from the American print (to get a PG rating for AIP) shot of Leon getting out of bed with Edwards, and exposing her bare bottom as she runs across the room, is not her, but one of the three doubles who stood in for her during the filming. You can get a much better look at the fine Leon body in the awful *Zeta One*, made in 1969, with Leon and only some pasties and small pantie bottoms (and a totally nude Yutte Stensgaard).

But five weeks into the filming, another disaster. Seth Holt, who had secretly amused the crew with a constant case of hiccups, suddenly died of a heart attack. Howard Brandy: "Seth Holt died halfway through the filming. That was a shock, and it was very eerie to watch the dailies afterward and hear his voice on the track giving directions."

Michael Carreras was left with the task of picking up the pieces. He arranged two days of shooting pickup shots, etc., for director of photography, Arthur Grant. And he started going over what had already been shot.

Brandy: "Seth didn't keep editorial notes, he had it all in his head. He's shooting certain things and I'd ask him, 'Why are you shooting that?' He'd say, 'don't worry, I know what I'm going to do with that. I can't wait to get my hands on this in the editing room.' (Note: Holt was a brilliant editor who had cut many of the great Ealing comedies of the 1950s).

"So when he died, it was a mess. Michael Carreras and I looked at the dailies, a rough assembly, and there seemed to be things missing and things that were shot that didn't seem to fit. Seth was the only one who knew how he was going to put it together and he was gone. Brian Hutton, the director, is an old friend, another New Yorker. He came in when we were looking at the dailies and said, 'Boy, you're in a lot of trouble.'"

Michael Carreras: "On the sequences I inherited, he (Holt) had done no intros or exits, but had gone instead straight into the master sequence. There was a blockage. I had to take over the picture from a man for who I had enormous regard and had to assemble the material myself. I read the script and the Production Office crossed out the scenes that had supposedly been shot. I came in on one Sunday night—Seth had died on a Saturday—ran all the material and made several decisions as to how to re-edit it. When the sequences were finally all put

Left to right: Valerie Leon, Executive Producer Michael Carreras, and Producer Howard Brandy on the set of *BLOOD FROM THE MUMMY'S TOMB*.

Sir James Carreras said to Seth Holt and James Brandy when they voiced reservations about casting Valerie Leon: "You make her an actress." In the end, her voice had to be revoiced, from *BLOOD FROM THE MUMMY'S TOMB*.

together, I ran them through the following day and then went in on the Monday and said to everyone that the picture must go on regardless of what happened. I spent most of the time in the cutting room; when we put the sequences together, everything was done in the master scene and there was all the coverage you could want *in the scene*, but nobody ever came in or went out. So, in addition to taking over the picture and finishing all the scenes that were not filmed, I also had to pick up the three dozen or so scenes and make them work."

It was not Carreras's idea, originally, to direct the film. He struggled to keep production going through what should have been the sixth and final week. He offered Don Sharp the chance to direct it, with the provision that he could start over again if he decided to accept. Sharp turned it down, and by week seven Michael had no choice but to do it himself. He was also having some problems with the crew. Firing editor Oswald Hafenrichter, and replacing him with his own editor, Peter Weatherly, he also found some of the crew members turning in their resignations. Holt had created a fierce loyalty in them. With the pressure of time, even star Valerie Leon was not allowed to go to Holt's funeral: "I had worked with him back in 1967. He was an extraordinary man and very helpful. I remember distinctly the day of his funeral, I was not allowed to go, and I remember being quite tearful." All the pressure caused Valerie Leon to become sick herself at one point.

Brandy. "We had to use her double; that's not Valerie in the scene where her father is standing over her and she's seen on the ground."

Michael Carreras was finally forced into the director's chair: "I looked at the material and couldn't find anything that tied in with what he (Holt) had told me, but there was one marvellous sequence with an elderly lady with a cat, that was a scene that told the whole story for me. So all I actually did was to try and relate all the material that had to be shot with that one scene."

Brandy: "All the stuff, the editing. I'm very proud of. All these little touches. We used everything we could. There were three people who get killed in the story, and we had footage of two of the three of them. So we integrated it all."

What is amazing when all is said and done is that the film *did* turn out fine. Comparisons were made at the time of release between it and the films of Val Lewton. The cast was fine—Keir and Leon turned in good performances. James Villiers made a career out of the sneering upper- crust British villain. The music by Tristram Carey was moody and effective, making up for his debacle on *Quatermass and the Pit* in 1967 (where stock music and bits and pieces from other composers covered up the fact he couldn't handle the job).

AIP turned out a nice double-feature. As with *Dr. Jekyll and Sister Hyde*, both films took some severe editing. Besides the aforementioned "nude/not nude" shot of Valerie Leon's butt, there were slashed throats and other bits of gore that hit the cutting room floor (no exposed Martine Beswicke's breasts in *Dr. Jekyll Sister Hyde*). Like many, if not most of the EMI backed Hammer films of the 1970s, it probably did not make a lot of money. Certainly, Brandy didn't come out of it rich: "It took a year out of my life to do this, start to finish. As this editing was going on and on, I went to Brian Lawrence (Hammer's business manager) and asked, 'How about a little more money? This is going on a lot longer than I'd planned.' He said no. He was right, of course. We'd made a deal for a certain amount. But I didn't think it'd take a year to make the movie."

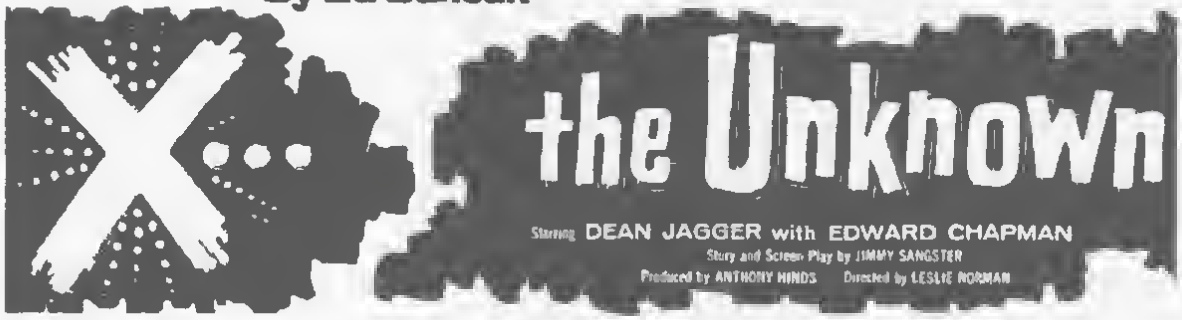
In looking at the Hammer product of the '70s, *Blood From the Mummy's Tomb* was one of their better films. So thinks Brandy: "I think it's a good movie, for all the problems. Bob Solo, whose a buddy and a fellow New Yorker, who made a big remake with Charlton Heston (*The Awakening*) and said to me, 'Boy, is your picture a stiff.' I laughed and said yeah, well, I'm not even going to watch yours!"

Brandy's main claim to fame today is as the publicity man for the legendary cartoon producer, Jay Ward (*Rocky and Bullwinkle*, etc.). He continued to push projects in England and once had Hammer interested in *Victim of His Imagination*, a story based on the life of Bram Stoker. A poster for this project, painted by Roger Dean (around 1970 & 71) appears in *The Hammer House of Horrors* book from Lermmer Press (recently released for the 4th time to cash in on renewed interest in Hammer in the U.K.) As an aside, Dean was commissioned by Brandy to do a series of drawings for other projects. According to the book *Roger Dean—Views*, he was asked to depict the characters in *Victim* as Donald Pleasance and Christopher Lee, but as they had not agreed to be involved, Dean couldn't make them too realistic! Dean did not like the style and stopped designing posters.

Hammer's Mummy never received the respect that the Frankenstein and Dracula series did. And actually it did not deserve it. But *The Mummy* is the best film of its type ever done and that includes the old Universal series. The other three deliver what they promise, in varying degrees. *Curse* and *Shroud* are programmers but very lively. *Blood* takes an entirely different (and successful) approach. For a guilty pleasure, you can't go too far wrong here.

. . . with special thanks to Michael Carreras and Howard Brandy. A special note of thanks to Denis Meikel for providing the synopses, cast, and credits.

By Ed Bansak



"Originality" is seldom the first word that springs to mind when we think of Hammer's catalogue of monsters. Given their numerous revamps of classic menaces from Hollywood's golden age of horror, we are prone to overlook the studio's major *original* contribution to cinema's gallery of nightmares: that oozing, amorphic mass of creeping terror that we have affectionately come to call *the blob*. In fact, Hammer gave SF cinema—in quick succession—its first blob movies: 1955's *The Quatermass Experiment* (U.S. release June 1956, as *The Creeping Unknown*); 1956's *X the Unknown* (U.S. release July 1957); and 19S7's *Quatermass* 2 (U.S. release September 19S7, as *Enemy From Space*).

True, *The Quatermass Xperiment*, the first of this blobish trio, did not offer a species that could travel through screen doors (that distinction came with *X the Unknown*), but Victor Carroon's harrowing transformation into a creeping monstrosity—via Richard Wordsworth's marvelous mute performance, Phil Leakey's chilling makeup, and Les Bowie's wonderfully restrained special effects—surely had a significant impact upon the genesis of the prototypic *blob* movie (its "contaminated man" motif being repeated in such 1950s' subgenre offerings as *The Blob*, *Caltiki*, and *First Man Into Space*.

On the other hand, *Quatermass* 2 offered a more definitive blob menace (a chainlink fence means nothing to this rascal), but it was relegated to the film's final few minutes, providing just enough time for three misbegotten masses of gelatinous matter to galumph about the set before being sent to blob heaven. Despite *Quatermass* 2's marginal qualifications as a *Blob* movie, it is, more accurately, a near-brilliant British cousin to Don Siegel's alien-doppelganger film, *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, with gestalting *blobbettes* (if you will) substituting for pods.

If the excellent Quatermass adaptations have long been given their due, the overshadowed *X the Unknown* remains an ill-begotten child in the eyes of even some of the studio's staunchest admirers, as if it were of the same humdrum quality as Hammer's desultory SF efforts of the previous season, *Spaceways* and *The Four-Sided Triangle* (both 1954). Not only is *X the Unknown* an above-average SF entry of the mid-1950s, but it also has the historic distinction of being the first film to feature an ambulatory *blob* as its central—rather than peripheral—plot gimmick.

Of course, the blob was nothing new to horror literature. Earlier examples of this specialized form of menace could be found in the stories and novels of English fantasy writer, William Hope Hodgson (1877-1918), who was known for his tales of maritime horror, many of them featuring porcine, slug-like menaces (*The Boats of Glen Carrig* [1907], *The House on the Borderland* [1908]) and/or ravenous masses of man-eating fungus (the genuinely nightmarish *Voice in the Night* [1907] being his most memorable short story in this vein). Hodgson's brand of slithering horrors would prove to have a profound influence upon America's own H. P. Lovecraft (1890-1937), a writer whose body of work is not bereft of its own foul assortment of ooze-ridden monstrosities. Perhaps the most significant blob story of American pulp fiction, however, was Theodore Sturgeon's *It* (1940); not only did *It* have an impact upon future examples of the blob-story subgenre (Joseph Payne Brennan's 1953 novelette, *Slime*, being one prime example), but it also served as a model for scores of stories in early '50s' horror comics, including those produced by William F. Gaines under the E.C. banner (aside from the *straight* E.C. variations, a parody of Sturgeon's story, featuring a creature called "the Heap," appeared in an early issue of *Mad*). Rather ironically, it was only after killer blobs were banished from the pages of comic books—via 1954's horror comics moratorium—that they began to creep into the world of cinema, courtesy of the three Hammer Films mentioned above.

Taken together, *X the Unknown* and the Quatermass pair were vital in paving the way for a vicious wave of other such blobbish entertainments, including 1957's *The Unknown Terror* (where fungoid bubblebaths inhabit a mad scientist's cavernous basement), 1958's *The Blob* (whose titular character, cherry red and gummy, never falls to bring on a hankering for another box of Dots), 1958's *The Flame Barrier* (where a cluster of extra-terrestrial marshmallows becomes fused to a U.S. satellite), 1958's *Space Master X-7* (with something like burnt pizza-topping—Hold the anchovies!—running amuck aboard an airflight), 1958's *The H-Man* (where Japanese gangsters are transformed into fully-clothed puddles of rubber cement), 1959's *Caltiki* (in which throbbing mounds of oily linen, dating back to the ancient Mayans, begin reproducing like rabbits), 1959's *First Man Into Space* (where an astronaut's entire NASA wardrobe is ruined by an oozing alien skin rash), 1964's *The Creeping Terror* (lead non-actor, Vic Savage, being savagely victimized by a ambulating throw-rug), and 1965's *Mutiny in Outer Space* (which dares ask the perennial question, "Is there a fungus among us?"). [NOTE: Okay, I adoit that I love all of the aforementioned films—easy targets all—and that I would rather watch *any* of them for the umpteenth time than be exposed to the latest Full Moon offering from Charles Band, but it is difficult to write about *Blob* movies without developing an occasional case of Gene Shalitosis (or could it be Forry Ackermania?). My apologies.]

X The Unknown, the only film in cinema history to actually include the question "How do you kill mud?" as part of its dialogue, was Hammer's unabashed attempt to follow up their surprise 1955 British hit, *The Quatermass Xperiment*, with a film of similar kind. Very similar kind. The earlier production, directed by Val Guest and based

on writer Nigel Kneale's tremendously successful 1953 BBC television serial (*The Quatermass Experiment*), provided the most significant turning point in Hammer film history. David Pirie, in *A Heritage of Horror*, tells us, "Within a few months[of *Xperiment*'s release] Hammer had drawn up a completely new production schedule for 1956, throwing out the long-planned *King Charles and the Roundheads* in favor of two more horror/science fiction subjects *X the Unknown* and *Quatermass 2*, and opening negotiations for the Frankenstein character. It was the beginning of a quiet cinematic revolution."

Using the Quatermass teleplays (the second of which had been aired on BBC in 1955) as his models, neophyte screenwriter Jimmy Sangster fashioned an intelligent SF thriller in the Nigel Kneale mold. No doubt Sangster had heard that Kneale would soon be working at Hammer, collaborating with Val Guest on the screenplay of the second Quatermass film [Note: Kneale had not had a hand in the screen adaptation of the first Quatermass teleplay, which was co-scripted by Richard Landau and Val Guest.] Also on the horizon was a future collaboration between Kneale and director Guest, this time a film version of Kneale's BBC-produced 1956 (sans Quatermass) teleplay, *The Creature*, a fresh, intelligent and altogether mystical interpretation of the Yeti legend (destined to be released by Hammer in 1957 as *The Abominable Snowman of the Himalayas*). Clearly, by 1956, the Hammer execs had seen the future of the British SF film and his name was Nigel Kneale.

But even while the latter's arrival was being eagerly awaited, it could be said, given the derivative nature of Jimmy Sangster's original story and screenplay for *X the Unknown*, that the spirit of Nigel Kneale had already found active employment at Hammer's Bray Studios. Sangster, whose screenwriting debut this was, rose to the occasion and turned *X the Unknown* into an often ripping-good Quatermass facsimile.

True, the film has its share of flaws and is, admittedly, not of the same superior caliber as *The Quatermass Xperiment* (or its sequel, for that matter); *X the Unknown*'s second half is seriously marred by the on-screen appearance of its peculiarly depersonalized menace, and while Dean Jagger's nice-guy scientist, Dr. Adam Royston, may be more convincing than Brian Donlevy's gruff and ill-humored Professor Quatermass, his character is also far less compelling. Such drawbacks aside, *X the Unknown* is an intelligent, atmospheric, and well-acted SF thriller, one that is refreshingly adult in its approach.

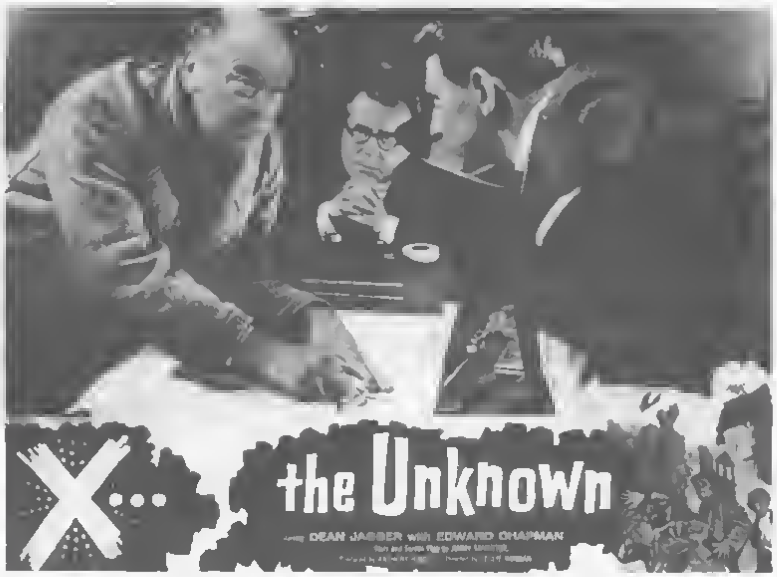
Much of the credit for the film's strong first portion goes to director Leslie Norman who joined the production (in early January 1956) when its original director, Joe Walton, contracted pneumonia after a few days shooting at Gerrards Cross, Scotland. Norman, whose auspicious directorial debut had been 1954's acutely paranoid *The Night My Number Came Up* (a must-see for *MidMar* readers), strove to recreate, in *X the Unknown*, some of the same dark magic that had been integral to the success of *The Quatermass Xperiment*. Like its Quatermass predecessor (which would soon play in America as the similarly-titled *The Creeping Unknown*), *X the Unknown* makes superior use of its natural locale, in this case offering several memorably-eerie passages set amid an oppressively barren Scottish landscape, a place that would give anyone the creeps—day or night. Shot with an expressionistic bent by cinematographer Gerald Gibbs (whose camerawork would soon grace *Quatermass 2*), the film's best scenes—a scary walk-in-the-woods by two boys, a man's dark descent into an earth fissure, and two soldiers' encounter with X on a desolate marshland—make strong use of the "undisclosed horror" approach that had also proven vital to *Xperiment*'s success. The terrifying results speak for themselves.

***X, THE UNKNOWN*'S best sequences, including a man's dark descent into an earth fissure, make strong use of the "undisclosed horror" approach that had proven vital to *XPERIMENT*'s success.**

Compared to some of the puerile SF efforts coming from Hollywood at the time, *X the Unknown* warrants a certain admiration. As Bill Warren tells us, in *Keep Watching the Skies Vol. I*, "Though the idea on which it's based is moderately preposterous, the film is made with such a strong, realistic style, featuring understated, naturalistic performances, that it remains convincing throughout."

The opening credits are unusually captivating, with some imaginative lettering effects (a black, oily pool metamorphosing into the titular *X*); instead of a sweeping orchestral soundtrack in the grand old SF/horror tradition, there is absolute silence until . . . we begin to recognize the plaintive calls of some manner of wildfowl, an eerie aural accompaniment to the haunted wasteland that is unwinding before us. A cleverly placed camera tracks a soldier's progress along a barren, puddle-infested expanse of saturated terrain, giving us our first look at the locale that is as spooky as it is provocative. The fact that it appears to be midday, does not make this area any less forboding. In *A Heritage of Horror*, author David Pirie refers to the setting's ". . . atmosphere of dreary desolation. . . a sombre, impenetrable greyness which evokes muted hysteria and despair." As the camera pulls back, we see a division of soldiers engaged in a "hucklebuckle beanstalk"-like military exercise involving Geiger counters and previously placed radioactive samples. When one soldier discovers an aberrant source of radiation coming from the soaked ground underfoot (where no sample has been placed), a fissure opens and belches up a deadly dose of radiation. As two radiation-burn casualties, soldiers both, are rushed to the hospital, so begins the series of inexplicable deaths upon which the film's mystery is based.

X the Unknown, like so many science fiction films of its era, is structured as a



X, THE UNKNOWN is structured as a mystery and, as in most early fifties' SF films where scientists play detective, the mystery at hand is not a "whodunit" but a "whatisit."

mystery and, as in most early-fifties' SF films where scientists play detective (*The Thing, Phantom From Space, It Came From Outer Space, The Magnetic Monster, Them, The Quatermass Xperiment*, many more), the mystery at hand is not a "whodunit" but a "whatisit." Because of the nature of the mystery, it is not uncommon for such films to keep their menaces off-screen until the closing reels and, of course, *X the Unknown* is no exception. Such a plot formula opens the door for any number of horrific scenes, the most typical employing tried-and-true combinations of spooky settings, ominous sounds, and unseen intruders. As Robert Bloch once said, in an article in one of the early issues of *Famous Monsters*, most SF films of the 1950s were "horror films in science fiction disguise." As a horror film, *X the Unknown* holds up its end of the bargain exceptionally well.

One radiation expert, Dr. Adam Royston (Dan Jagger), is brought into the picture, an ingeniously chilling transition ("let's not conjure up visions of nameless horrors creeping around in the night," says one of our protagonists as he drives off in his car, leaving the audience behind) plants us in a nearby section of woods where, there in the dark, we spy two children, one of them daring the other to approach the "haunted" tower in the forest, as was previously agreed upon, in order to catch a glimpse of the old hermit rumored to live there. With considerable trepidation, the boy approaches the stark building, his crunching footsteps accenting an atmosphere ripe with apprehension, and finds himself confronted by... some terrifying presence. A static-like crackle fills the air just before the youth breaks into a run, the unseen menace presumably nipping at his heels.

Because of its "undisclosed horror" approach, *X the Unknown*'s boys-in-the-woods sequence is a terror gem. Outside of its quotient of chills, it is disturbingly adult in its use of juvenile characters. After all, although the boy narrowly escapes, the damage has been done; he is destined to die the next day in a hospital bed, the victim of radiation burns. (In Hollywood films, the likelihood that a child would be killed by a monster was virtually nil, and had been that way since the controversial drowning scene in James Whale's *Frankenstein*.) Aside from its grim outcome, the aforementioned terror sequence is so well-staged, its darkly provocative use of natural locale so fully realized, that it demands the admiration of any horror film fan. Cinematographer Gibbs wisely chose to shoot this on-location sequence during actual night (as opposed to day-for-night) and the extra trouble was well worth it; the baleful atmosphere of this startling, albeit brief, sequence, anticipates the look and mood of those marvelous spooky-forest passages in Jacques Tourneur's British-produced *The Night of the Demon* (released in America as *Curse of the Demon* when, in 1958, it played the bottom half of a double-bill with Hammer's *Revenge of Frankenstein*).

The child's death brings the authorities to the fore. Joining Dr. Royston is a police official named McGill (Leo McKern). The dead boy's parents blame Royston, thinking his experiments in radioactivity are somehow the cause of the tragedy. Soon, other incidental characters become victims of the unseen crackling menace and, courtesy of the military, the town is put under a state of emergency. Of particular note is one surprisingly graphic scene where a hospital intern's face melts away from his skull, the result of his proximity to the unknown menace. The scene where two soldiers on watch (one of them played by Anthony Newley, no less) are confronted by the creature's nocturnal approach is satisfyingly gripping; moreover, its impact is not diminished by its admittedly lame provision of comic relief. Also good is the sequence where Peter Elliot (William Lucas), the obligatory younger-and-more-athletic-adult-hero, is lowered into a fissure to investigate the source of the radiation; the shots of his descent are especially claustrophobic and his unexpectedly panicky reaction to the radiation-hungry monster is so convincing that we almost get ropeburns trying to help pull the poor fool up the the surface. Unfortunately, this effective set-piece is nearly ruined by Sangster's ill-advised decision to have his surviving eyewitness hero spout, "I don't know what it was. It was something out of a nightmare!" Elliot's preposterously vague (and utterly unscientific) report becomes risible once we see the menace; odd as this species of monster may be, it is hardly beyond the reach of facile description. Meanwhile, Royston surmises that the radioactive creature, whatever it looks like, must come from the earth's molten core.

Alas, once we get a glimpse of the mysterious creature, the film takes a pedestrian turn. Clearly, the creature's appearance doesn't jibe with the petrified reactions of its previous victims, all of which have misled us to expect something much more horrific than mud-on-parade. Despite the inherent silliness of the concept, the special effects for the mud monster are nicely executed by Hammer technicians, Les Bowie and Jack Curtis, both of whom was likely inspired by volcanic lava sequences from films like 1935's *Last Days of Pompeii* or 1940's *One Million B.C.* (by 1956, the latter film had already found itself spliced into the finales of numerous B-movies and simply refused to lay dormant). The only problem was that *X the Unknown*'s radioactive mudflows, however nicely rendered, were not nearly as frightening as good, old-fashioned molten lava. Having grown up in the 1950s, with eyes glued to that wonderful showcase for old movies called television, I can plainly

remember three of my greatest cinema-inspired childhood fears: molten lava, quicksand, and atomic radiation. Considering that the potential was there to exploit all three such *Cinephobias*, the creature from *X the Unknown* is curiously unfrightening (a regular stick-in-the-mud, as far as screen monsters go).

According to Hammer executive James Carreras (as quoted in John Brosnan's *Horror People*), "We found that the 'thing'... in *X the Unknown* frightened nobody. They are only really terrified by something they are likely to meet in the dark on the way home from the cinema." Although director Norman makes a last-ditch attempt to generate some suspense by mimicking the save-the-beby-from-the-lava scene from *One Million* B.C. (which, for reasons already noted above, had long become a cliche), the film's climax is largely disappointing, with Dr. Royston finally disposing of the monster through the use of "electronic rays."

If *X the Unknown* is not everything it could have been, it is decidedly better than it might have been. Phil Hardy, in his *Science Fiction* sourcebook, calls it "a superior example of the sober, realist tradition of British Science Fiction." Aside from its being the first "authentic" *blob* movie, the Norman/Sangster collaboration was also the first of a long line of decidedly horrific British-produced Quatermass facsimiles. Leslie Norman's direction—at least in the first half of the film—exhibits a style reminiscent of the Val Lewton films of the previous decade. Of course, the same could be said of Norman's model; *The Quatermass Xperiment* also championed the less-is-more approach to terror exemplified by the Lewton films. [Note: *Xperiment*'s wonderfully atmospheric zoo scene, as subtle as it is frightening, could easily have been a nod to *Cat People*; in fact, *Xperiment*'s entire approach to the genre has often led me to wonder if its director had ever considered the fanciful notion of billing himself: Val ("Lewton") Guest.]

Without question, Hammer established the reigning trend in British science fiction cinema and the two Quatermass films, sandwiched around *X the Unknown*, ushered in a "man vs. menace" SF formula that was actually the cinematic equivalent of a British literary tradition founded by H. G. Wells and, during the time of the three Hammer films' respective releases, carried on by such authors as John Wyndham, J. G. Ballard, Brian Aldiss, and John Christopher. Ironically, Nigel Kneale, the writer who had a more profound impact on British SF cinema than any of the aforementioned, neither read much science fiction nor considered himself a writer of the genre. John Brosnan, in *Future Tense*, calls Kneale "a writer with an uncanny knack for combining contemporary SF themes with both mythology and traditional elements of the supernatural to produce stories that tend to bypass the forebrain and work directly on unconscious fears."

Although British SF films were not proliferate in the decade to follow, those that were produced displayed an uncanny loyalty to the literate and subtly terrifying standards established by the Nigel Kneale films and their most immediate facsimile, *X the Unknown*. As a result of this influence, Britain's subsequent SF offerings—at least for the next ten years—were usually more adult than their Hollywood contemporaries. Such 1956 stateside entries as *World Without End*, *Earth Vs. the Flying Saucers*, *The Beast from Hollow Mountain*, and *The Mole People* displayed Hollywood's ever-increasing tendency to pander to the juvenile trade. By the time of *X the Unknown*'s 1957 American release (on a double-bill with Hammer's *Curse of Frankenstein*), Hollywood's juvenile bent was no less apparent, what with films like *Beginning of the End*, *The Giant Claw*, *Invasion of the Saucer Men*, *20 Million Miles to Earth*, *The Land Unknown*, *The Black Scorpion*, *The Invisible Boy*, and the infamously-titled duo, *I Was a Teenage Werewolf*/*I Was a Teenage Frankenstein*. By 1958, with rock 'n' roll firmly entrenched in the collective psyche of America's youth, the trend only escalated.

It is no secret that the "X" used in the titles of both *The Quatermass Xperiment* and *X the Unknown* was Hammer's way of flaunting the strictly enforced adult rating ("X for Horror—under 17 not admitted") that the British censorship board reserved for all horror films; consequently, British SF/horror films, unlike their American counterparts, were fashioned for an adult market. [Note: In Britain, *X the Unknown* shared a double-bill with Henri Georges Clouzot's horrific (and equally X-rated) French thriller, *Diabolique*, and the combination proved to be boxoffice gold.]

Subsequent British science fiction films that owed some degree of debt to tha adult approach pioneered by Hammer include such (non-Hammer) efforts as *Fiend Without a Face (1957)*, *The Strange World of Planet X (1957*, aka *Cosmic Monsters*), *The Trollenberg Terror* (1958, aka *The Crawling Eye*, screenplay by Jimmy Sangster), *Satellite of Blood* (1959, aka *First Man Into Space*), *Behemoth, the Sea Monster* (1959, aka *The Giant Behemoth*), *Village of the Damned* (1960, based on John Wyndham's *The Midwich Cuckoos*), *The Day the Earth Caught Fire* (1961, directed by Val Guest), *Children of the Damned* (1963, a sequel to *Village*), *The Day of the Triffids* (1963, another John Wyndham property), *Unearthly Stranger* (1963), *The Earth Dies Screaming* (1964), *Crack in the World* (1965), *The Night Caller* (1965), *Island of Terror* (1966), and *Night of the Big Heat* (1967). This chronology brings us full circle, as 1967 also saw the release of Roy Ward Baker's *Quatermass and the Pit* (American title: *Five Million Years to Earth*), Hammer's belated adaptation of Nigel Kneale's 1958 BBC-produced teleplay.

As is readily apparent to anyone familiar with the preceding list, British SF films tended to be more thoughtful, more sober, and often more imaginative than their

Dr. Royston (Dean Jagger) looks on (from left) one of two radiation-burn casualties, a soldier, from *X, THE UNKNOWN*.

Hollywood contemporaries; even the more exploitative British outings—*The Crawling Eye*, *Fiend Without a Face*, *The Giant Behemoth*, *First Man Into Space*—were characterized by earnest direction, intelligent performances, and sharply-written screenplays. [Note: In retrospect, it makes perfect sense that Stanley Kubrick's benchmark SF films, *2001*, *A Space Odyssey* (1968) and *A Clockwork Orange* (1971), would be British productions adapted from the works of British writers (Arthur C. Clarke and Anthony Burgess, respectively).]

Unlike so many of the SF films made in Hollywood, Britain's genre offerings were usually thankfully free of mawkish romancing scientists. Where our movie scientists (those played by Richard Carlson, John Agar, Richard Denning, Peter Graves, Hugh Marlowe, Arthur Franz, Rex Reason, Gene Barry) seemed to be forever distracted by curvy heroines, their British-film counterparts (Brian Donlevy, Dean Jagger, Peter Cushing, Andre Morell, George Sanders, John Neville, Edward Judd, Gene Evans, Ian Hendry, Dana Andrews, Andrew Kier)—even when played by aging American actors—exuded the kind of no-nonsense attitude that precluded roving eyes and the use of smarmy pick-up lines. Certainly, Donlevy's Professor Quatermass and Jagger's Dr. Royston are far cries from the amorous "Hollywood" scientists epitomized by John Agar in *Revenge of the Creature* (1954), *Tarantula* (1955), *The Mole People* (1956), and *The Brain from Planet Arous* (1958). The only thing Dr. Adam Royston flirts with is radioactivity, his favorite pick-up techniques requiring lead-lined suits, and the only curves he's really interested in are those charted by his laboratory instruments.

British SF films also put a higher premium upon the establishment of a provocative atmosphere; compare Britain's *The Giant Behemoth* with Hollywood's *The Beast From 20,000 Fathoms* (1953), two dinosaur films directed by the same hand (Eugene Lourie's) and you'll see what I mean. *Beast* may be far superior in the special effects department, but *Behemoth* is a richer film, pictorially, with horrific touches that put it squarely in the tradition of *X the Unknown*. [Note: Notice that, exactly like *X the Unknown*, the first half of *The Giant Behemoth* is primarily a number of spooky episodes (often shot in atmospheric, natural locations), all of which chronicle the progress of an offscreen menace whose proximity to incidental characters results in deadly radiation burns. Director Lourie was happy to shoot the third film of his dino-trilogy, *Gorgo* (1961), in Britain as well.]

This British preference for provocative on-location settings is just one more carry-over from the blueprint established by Hammer in the mid-1950s, a blueprint the studio quickly discarded once Technicolor revisionist horror films became a more lucrative venture. After 1957's Val Guest/Nigel Kneale collaboration, *Abominable Snowman of the Himalayas* (released in the wake of *Curse of Frankenstein*), Hammer washed its hands of the SF film genre, continued building period sets that would look good in color, and told aging American actors to get lost. Although *Famous Monsters of Filmland* would repeatedly announce Hammer's forthcoming adaptation of *Quatermass and the Pit* (even including a still or two from the television serial), it became increasingly apparent that the project was destined to remain in limbo with other on-again/off-again productions (remember *The Martian Chronicles* and *When The Sleeper Wakes*?) that were reported in the magazine. And so Hammer's *Quatermass and the Pit* remained on the shelf. For the next ten years, the studio's only throwback to the Quatermass series would be Joseph Losey's ill-fated *The Damned* (1961, aka *These Are the Damned*) which, oddly enough, starred aging American actor, MacDonald Carey. Says Phil Hardy (in his *Science Fiction* sourcebook): "Despite being butchered by its producers (and its release being delayed for some two years), *The Damned* remains, with the Quatermass trilogy, the highpoint of the first wave of the British postwar Science Fiction film." Although a critical success, this black-and-while 1963 release proved to be boxoffice poison, reinforcing the studio's decision to stick with more colorful subjects: vampires, mummies, werewolves, and man-made monsters.

When Hammer finally got around to bringing *Quatermass and the Pit* to the screen, nearly a decade had passed since its original 1958 BBC production. The times had changed and the studio with it. By 1967, with more than two dozen profitable horror films under its belt, Hammer's ever-increasing reliance upon period sets had resulted in a string of lush, if somewhat studio-bound, productions. By that time the studio had settled into a production formula that was often as stagy as it was sumptuous. Although Hammer made good use of exterior sets, its films had become more microcosmic in their scope, their disproportionate number of indoor scenes giving them a theatrical edge and making them feel not unlike adaptations of stage plays. [Note: Compare Hammer's 1968 *The Devil Rides Out* (aka *The Devil's Bride*) with Jacques Tourneur's similarly-themed, but less stagy and more cinematically dynamic, *Curse of the Demon* (1957), and the "microcosmic" limitations of the latter-day Hammer formula, however well-managed, becomes readily apparent.] Even Hammer's interesting batch of modern thrillers (most of them scripted by Jimmy Sangster, borrowing freely from both *Diabolique* and *Psycho*) were characteristically confined to a small geographic radius—usually in-and-around a wealthy estate—with an occasional 1960s' automobile substituting for a 19th century horse-drawn vehicle. Whether for better or worse, it was evident that the studio was no longer interested in the on-location documentary-like scope that had given an air of authenticity to *X the Unknown* and the original Quatermass duo. Consequently, although 1967's *Five Million Years to Earth* was graced with an intelligent, thought-provoking script and solid, credible performances, its all-color/all-studio approach seemed curiously wrongheaded to anyone enamored of the first two Quatermass entries. As excellent as the film may be (and there are those who consider it the best of the lot), its artificial look sets it so far apart from its earlier blood relatives that, ultimately, it is *X the Unknown* that today seems the closer approximation of the spirit and style of the original Quatermass films.

X the Unknown may not be a classic of the first order (in the long run, *Five Million Years to Earth* is the much better film), but this Knealesque excursion helped Hammer pave the way for a series of intelligent, briskly directed (and often very frightening) British-produced science fiction films. Aside from providing the world with one of the earliest *blob* movie prototypes, *X the Unknown* also proved a significant testing ground for the writing talents of Jimmy Sangster, whose momentous next project would be preparing a screenplay for *Curse of Frankenstein*. Formerly an assistant director, Sangster would pen the scripts for many of Hammer's most important films, including *Horror of Dracula*, *Revenge of Frankenstein*, *The Mummy*, *The Man Who Could Cheat Death*, *Brides of Dracula*, *Scream of Fear*, *Maniac*, *Paranoiac*, *Nightmare*, *The Nanny*, and several others.

In its own unpretentious way, *X the Unknown* is an important piece of the Hammer puzzle. If, like me, you prefer the first two Quatermass films to 1967's third installment and 1979's fourth installment (*The Quatermass Conclusion*), then a screening of *X the Unknown* will feel like a nostalgic visit with a dear old friend.

Your reactions to this, our first Specialty issue of *Midnight Marquee*, are welcome. We have purposedly created a very book-like edition of *MidMar* with each article becoming another chapter. We are very proud of the final product. However, the future of such Specialty issues lies in the hands of the readership. What do you think? Please write!

HAMMER MEMORIES

[GRAVE DIGGINGS]

The first pleasure I thought of when reminiscing about Hammer is my husband whom I met twenty-two years ago at the first British convention of the Christopher Lee International Fan Club, our twentieth wedding anniversary was this Christmas past and our love for Hammer has continued over the years, through two fanzines (*The Horror Elite* and *The Hammer International Fan Club Journal*), and through innumerable friends gained via our love of Hammer. Between us we have been privileged to meet some of Hammer's greatest treasures and we thought we'd share some of their words with you.

We met Terence Fisher in 1975 and were privileged to be friends until his death. I remember sitting with him, watching Jesse Franco's *Count Dracula* and asking him what he thought of it. "Well my dear, for the first ten minutes I thought, my god . . it's better than mine . . and then I thought. . . no it's not!" I remember his kindness in watching a fan's amateur film with patience and then spending two hours talking to him about it, his delight at seeing Melissa Stribling again after twenty years, and his unfailing humor when surrounded by fans. The world is poorer for his not being here. . . so let's share some of his words.

Fisher on Directing:

"I wanted to go into film, to edit films which is the start of directing because no one can direct a film without knowing how to edit. I was a slow starter, a very slow starter! I didn't really start until I was 28 years old. The films we made at Hammer had pretty small budgets and you had to use glass shots and all the tricks of the game, but that's not the important thing. The important thing is what comes out at the end . . whether it catches the audiences' imaginations or not and that is the *only* thing that matters.

"You go to see films to be emotionally moved in one form or another . . . to be entertained is a loose word, but to be emotionally moved, I think, is the most important word about a film that is presented to you. Being an editor first was tremendous because it gave one a chance of analyzing, day by day, everything which the director had done, and as an editor you always attempted to edit, within the material you were given, the greatest expression of what the director was trying to say. You know? Action, reaction, where to cut to, not the person who was expounding on what they felt but upon the reaction of the other person. It also gave you a chance of saying, in a subconscious way, if I'd been the director of this film, I'd have done this scene differently. Of course, it was the most wonderful opportunity of analyzing a director's work and trying to take everything he'd shot and make it into the best possible form. That's the fun of the game isn't it, and it helped develop one's intuition. You see, I don't work analytically, I work intuitively and emotionally.

"As a director, I cut in the camera most of the time. Except in certain emotional moments when I get a chance of a cross-cut of reaction as opposed to what's being said to them. Yes, I'm an economical shooter but I will give the editor the emotionalism of presenting the final thing. I don't worry about handing it over to an editor because we discuss it all. Well, we all knew each other in those days. It was a good association, you didn't have to talk a lot. We knew each other so clearly that you only had to say a few words and the others would know what you were talking about. It was a mental thing, between person and person, and that was wonderful."

Fisher on *Dracula* and *Frankenstein*:

"Dracula is the personification of evil. Frankenstein is a man of idealism who has been tempted by the Devil and eventually decided that he is God himself and can do better than God. Dracula is a sad character who is not the beginning of evil at all but a victim of someone else and has evolved into this thing. Frankenstein, of course, the creator, started with the greatest Idealisms in the world, of curing a certain amount of physical ills. In the end he came to the mountain, tempted by the Devil and decided, as he said in one film, 'I am the creator of man,' so he is the greatest evil of all. Dracula is to be pitied. The only one you cry for in a Frankenstein film was the victim of what he tried to create and can't. 'I am the creator of man' and he never bloody does! He creates something that is going to fail and will always fail because he's creating as a god-like figure. My dear old friend Peter Cushing won't agree with that, and he's quite wrong of course (laughing). I told him on the last one I directed, I said, 'Peter, really, in this one you're the most ruthless and self-seeking. . . you're a god. . .' Peter looked at me out of that blue eye of his and said, 'I think you must be right. . .'"

Fisher on Period Pieces:

"I'm not interested in working in anything that is contemporary in experience: there are enough people making pictures about contemporary emotions and violence. I like a borderline fantasy. I'd like to do a modern day vampire story . . but not Dracula walking along the King's Road . . You can make a contemporary vampire film which is allied to the cultivation and following of Black Magic, and anything else—they're all mixed up together. You can take the cult of vampirism and put it into modern day. After all, where did the superstition of vampirism come from? I was told Transylvania. that's rubbish. You can go back to the first chapter of Genesis where the first vampire is the serpent in the Garden of Eden. When I say vampire, I mean the first personification of evil as such. The serpent had long teeth. You see, vampirism is nothing new, it goes back to Genesis. It's a fable about evil and the Bible is only a fable anyway and the fable goes back a long time, passed by word of mouth, person to person.

"*Horror of Dracula* is a satisfying film, it has survived. I love it because everything was right about it. Very nearly a love story but not quite."

We miss Terry so much.

On another occasion, Colin my husband, Keith, and some other friends visited Ms. Ingrid Pitt: she was immensely kind and charming to them and when he came home my normally monosyllabic spouse was raving. So when we both had a chance to have tea at her home, I was intrigued to meet her. Of that meeting I wrote, "It may sound fulsome to say it, but she is five times lovelier than any films or photos show her. She is also kind, friendly, funny, a fantastic cook, helpful to interviewers who dry up whilst gazing at her, acidly witty, fiercely loyal to her friends, and altogether stunning. You sit, fascinated, listening to that delicious voice, amazed at the variety of languages that drop into conversation if they happen to express exactly what she wants to say, totally unconscious of time passing as she weaves her spell, like an enchantress of legend." I have never had reason to change my mind. Let me share with you Ingrid in a playful mood...

Ingrid on the Best and Worst of Filming *The Vampire Lovers*:

"The most enjoyable was coming home in a Rolls Royce and the worst was going back at dawn in a vile mood."

On Having a Mask Made and Being Shut in a Coffin:

"The great thing about claustrophobia is that it can be exorcised by a few noughts at the end of your payslip. I just lay there and thought of a trip to France I had planned as soon as shooting was over, and it all seemed worthwhile. I had straws up my nose to breathe and I got. . . well, you know. . . stuck in one. I didn't know whether to sniff or blow to get rid of it! Mind you—sometimes it can be a bit heavy. When I was doing *The House That Dripped Blood* some jokers shut my coffin lid and went off to lunch. My insecurity showed in that I wondered if they were trying to tell me something!"

On Being Complimented on the Strength of Characters of Carmilla and Countess Dracula:

"Well, that's all down to the writer and the director. I think it was Noel Coward who said, 'Just learn the lines and try not to bump into the furniture.' I'm so busy learning my lines and not bumping into the furniture that if anything else comes across up on the screen, I blow a kiss in the direction of the director and thank God for someone who can write a few decent lines! Those ladies. . . some people, because of their will-power, trigger off events that happen to other people in their own surroundings. All the time it's the doers and the done; the trick is to 'do' before you can be 'done.'"

On the Difficulties of Working with a Virtually All-Female Cast:

"It's more difficult working with a virtuous female cast!"

On other occasions she can be serious and perceptive about films, but you've probably read all those interviews.

Oh, I almost forgot a spell-binding afternoon with James Bernard and Phillip Martell. I'd like to copy all the conversation, but here a just a few snippets:

Martell on the Musicians:

Terence Fisher directing Christopher Lee on the set of *THE MUMMY*.

"If you came to a session—it's a staggering. Raymond Cohen comes in with a Stradivarious. Nesbitt who plays with Ricci has a Strad. When they go out for tea it's terrifying—they leave the instruments propped up against chairs. What I think the public don't know at all is the sheer standard of musicianship that you have for a film score, that you have the cream of the world practically. They're better than any symphony orchestra because no orchestra could afford them or keep them. They are the top of their speciality. The sound is unbelievable—it wafts you to heaven. It's the only thing that makes the sweat worthwhile."

On Music for Film:

"When we start on a film we have a synopsis of the story, we've seen the script, and we've already seen a rough cut of the film. That's when we call Jimmy in. He can see anything he likes, anytime he likes, preferably as often as he likes. I try to go down and see the film at the end of each week's shooting. We spend lots of money on the phone and we sort of somehow agree where the music's going, and what it's going to do and what sort of orchestra we are going to have. Then he sits back, or goes to the West Indies, and I go to the studios and fight. I go and have a fight with the Director or Producer to see how much money they're going to give me for the orchestra, and while I'm doing all the nonsense and the orchestra's being engaged, we come to the day when the rough cuts are available and we both look at them and talk. By the end we will have pretty much agreed. Then we wait for the fine cut which is usually a matter of two weeks. And then we watch the fine cut with the producer and director. Often the marvellous thing with Hammer was that Michael Carreras used to stay behind and so did Tony Hinds; they both had very good taste and were very considerate people with whom we got on and could work with very well."

On the *Dracula* Theme:

J.B.: "It came very easily from the name. That came straight away—it was very simple."

P.M.: "Yes, but that was only the top line notes. It's what you do with it, how you build it, what harmonic structures you give it that makes it sound like Dracula. Think about the music over the credits—it's comparable to the overture to an opera. You're setting the mood and atmosphere for what is to follow. And that's where I think he has a great sense of drama."

J.B.: "Another thing, with horror films you need to synchronize the music and action carefully. You can't be subtle because it doesn't work with Gothic horror. There are times though, aren't there Phil, when you can play music through, like a romantic scene, then you just have a pretty tune going."

P.M.: "I think one of the liveliest things we ever did—you wrote it Jimmy, I just waved the piece of wood in the air—was on the long shot of Ursula Andress in *She* where the sixty piece orchestra came in with such a whisper that you had to strain your ears to hear it and then it grew and grew and it was really fantastic. Raymond Cohen led the orchestra. I remember saying to him when we'd got it down to a whisper: 'Raymond look, what I'm getting now is forte, now can we have a pianissimo?' He said, 'You can't.' But we got it: it was a shimmer of sound. That's the fun, when you feel it worked it's terribly exciting. You feel exhilarated by it."

And we were by them, may Philip rest in peace, making music with the angels.

Sue and Colin Cowie,
England

Decadence.

It can be something as simple as eating chocolate. Or something not so simple, like Hugh Hefner's lifestyle.

Or it can be spending a lazy afternoon watching a movie that has been pilloried or overlooked. Something as wonderfully awful as *Mesa of the Lost Women*, perhaps, or something underrated by the critics like *Somewhere in Time*.

Everyone (well, maybe not Tom Weaver) agrees that Hammer Films such as *Horror of Dracula*, *Brides of Dracula*, *Curse of the Werewolf*, *Kiss of the Vampire*, *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, and all the Quatermass films are classics. But what about the virtues of John Gilling's critically panned *The Mummy's Shroud*? The sublime campiness of *Prehistoric Women*? The psychological underpinnings of *Demons of the Mind*?

There are some Hammer Films that have been given a bad rap. But then, when *Phantom of the Opera* originally was released in 1962, it too was a critical and financial failure. Only in recent years has the film been reassessed—John McCarty in his book *The Modern Horror Film* (St. Martin's Press) even goes so far as to say it may be the best version of the tale on film.

Perhaps, then, movies such as *Horror of Frankenstein* were just a bit before their time. Here, then is my list of "guilty pleasures"—although I must confess I never really feel guilty about liking these movies. But to many Hammer fans, These are the Damned.

Horror of Frankenstein (1970)—This film gets a bad rep mainly because Peter Cushing is not on hand to play Baron Frankenstein. True, Cushing could never be replaced in the role, but the late great Ralph Bates never tried to replace him. Jimmy Sangster got it into his head that he wanted to do a black comedy remake of *Curse of Frankenstein*, and that's exactly what he did. Hammer purists seemed to take umbrage at this. All I can say is, any movie that makes me laugh at a drive-in around 3 a.m. must be doing something right.

Bates is actually terrific as Baron Frankenstein. Witty, wry, sardonic—a blatantly heterosexual Oscar Wilde. Veronica Carlson does just fine in the old Hazel Court role, and Kate O'Mara falls out of her dress at every opportunity as the salacious maid of the household.

Dave Prowse, as the monster, looks like a giant hairless baby. But isn't that rather appropriate? After all, he only lives to be a few days old.

The New York Times was very kind to this film, comparing it to *Kind Hearts and Coronets* (1949) and even noting that the star of that film, Dennis Price, steals many of the scenes in *Horror of Frankenstein*. When the Baron commissions him to find "undamaged goods" for him (i.e., corpses), Price replies, "Of course you have to understand, they're all damaged in a little way—or they wouldn't be dead, now would they?"

This film's undeservedly poor reputation is probably a result of fan expectation. Hammer aficionados wanted to see a "serious" Frankenstein film, not the dry spoof that the ever-iconoclastic Sangster gave them. The humor is dark and sophisticated. It won't make you guffaw but it will make you smile. And we Hammer fans should lighten up and be able to take a little joke. Bear in mind, Sangster wrote *Curse of Frankenstein* too, so he's making fun of himself as well. *Horror of Frankenstein*'s humor will endure.

The Terror of the Tongs (1961)—Christopher Lee's first go at playing an Oriental mastermind predates his first Fu Manchu movie by four years. And it's considerably better than any of those were.

Lee plays Chung King (believe it or not), a sadistic Tong leader who controls the docks of Hong Kong with an iron fist. Geoffrey Toone is the stolid hero, out to get the gang that killed his daughter—in a scene usually cut from most American prints, her fingers are cut off.

Directed at a breakneck pace by Anthony Bushell, *Tongs* clips along like an early James Bond movie, helped enormously by the excellent music score by Hammer's premier "horror scorer" James Bernard. Yes, a lot of Occidentals play Orientals, but that's part of the fun of British films of this era. Resident Hammer *foreigner* Marne Maitland (*The Stranglers of Bombay*) plays Chinese (he was actually of Indian descent) and Brits such as Charles Lloyd Pack and Ewan Solon try to convince us of their Chinese ancestry.

The best supporting player is Yvonne Monlaur, fresh from her starring role in *The Brides of Dracula*. At least this French actress was allowed to be Eurasian, which isn't quite as much of a stretch. She creates a very likable character, a refreshing touch of sweetness in a film loaded with surly types. One of my favorite bald-headed bad men, Milton Reid (*Night Creatures*), gets the axe in one of the film's better action scenes.

Lee is convincingly inscrutable, evil, and sadistic. His line to Toone: "Have you ever had your bones scraped?" was quoted by Fred Olen Ray in his movie *Armed Response*.

These are the Damned (1963)—One of Hammer's most unusual films, directed by "art-house" filmmaker Joseph Losey (*Modesty Blaise*), this is a movie with a lot of interesting ideas in it. If some of those ideas seem underdeveloped, it's because the film was shorn of some ten minutes in its American release from Columbia. What remains, though, is fascinating stuff.

This movie might have been called *When Worlds Collide*: it's essentially the story of the collision between "normal" society (represented by MacDonald Carey), the world of violent "punks" (Oliver Reed and Shirley Anne Field), and an underground world of radioactive children who are being prepared to survive in an upcoming atomic war, courtesy of paranoid professor Alexander Knox.

These disparate elements all tie in together in Evan Jones' screenplay, which was based on the sci-fi novel *The Children of Light* by H. L. Lawrence. The scenes involving the motorcycle gang

come complete with a rock and roll song composed by James Bernard with lyrics by Losey himself. *Black Leather Rock* foreshadows the punk rock movement of nearly twenty years later in its refrain, "Black leather, black leather, kill, kill? kill!" There are elements of *A Clockwork Orange* and *Village of the Damned* and a number of other movies, yet somehow this film remains unique. Read is especially good in it, and yet this truly original item got sloughed off in this county on a double bill with Hammer's *Maniac*. The film's haunting ending, with the children crying out for help as the boat carrying the protagonists drifts out to sea, is unforgettable.

The Mummy's Shroud (1967)—The reputations of director John Gilling' aother Hammer Horrors, *Plague of the Zombies* and *The Reptile* (both 1965) only grow as the years pass, but the same cannot be said of the *The Mummy's Shroud*. Inconceivably given a "bomb" rating in Leonard Maltin' abook, this mummy movie has a lot going for it.

Yes, the story is basically the same as in all other mummy films, but Gilling's direction makes this one a cut above. The appearances of the mummy Prem (played by stuntman Eddie Powell) are always startling and original. suddenly, there he is, reflected in liquid—and once, out of focus, when his intended victim can't find his glasses.

The murder scenes are quite novel too, with a photographer burned to death by his own chemicals, and the most original, when Michael Ripper is wrapped up in his bedsheets like a mummy himself and then callously tossed out a window, smashing his skull on the stones below.

It is Ripper, in fact, who steals this movie. He plays a timid little yas man to the leader (John Phillips) of the archaeological party. Ripper once told me thet this was his favorite role of all the parts he played for Hammer because, despite the character's total lack of backbone, we feel great pity for him when he's killed. Ripper's performance alone lifts this movie out of the "bomb" category.

So do a lot of other things, though, including the fact thet it takes an intelligent woman (Maggie Kimberly) to dispose of the mummy this time, and Lee Bowie's resultant disintegration scene ranks as one of his best. Nicely scored by Don Banks and featuring Arthur Grant's usual slick photography, *The Mummy's Shroud* is one John Gilling movie thet deserves to be rediscovered.

The Lost Continent (1966)—Speaking of silly movies, *The Lost Continent* has it all. man-eating plants, weird vaginal-looking monsters, oversized breasts (even for Hammer), and refugees from the Spanish inquisition living in whet looks like the Sargasso Sea. And wouldn't you know it, this was also directed by Michael Carreras (and written by him too, this time under the name Michael Nash) at a pace so breakneck you barely have time to realize how insane it all is.

Loosely bassd on Dennis Wheatley's book *Uncharted Seas*, *The Lost Continent* follows a group of neurotics into, well, uncharted seas where all the weirdest creatures and people from all over the world seem to heve congregated. Led by Captain Eric Porter (before *Upstairs, Downstairs*), the cast includes Hildegard Knef, Suzanna Leigh (from Amicus' a *The Deadly Bees* and soon to appear in Hammer' a *Lust for a Vampire*), and the incredibly endowed Dana Gillespie (who, as ahe so delicately put it in an interview, always played "the tits girl")

One of Hammer's wildest films, this even has a title song ("I found the Lost Continent. . "), some really interesting special effects and production design, and some over the top performances to match the over the top cleavege. It may not be as intelligent as, say, Hammer's *Abominable Snowman of the Himalayas* (1957), but it sure is fun.

Demons of the Mind (1972)—One of Hammer's trickiest and densest films, it's also one of the few to have been filmed in a real castle (in Kent). Essentially, it' a atory of a family gone bad. A brother and sister (Shane Briant and Gillian Hills) are in love with each other while their father (Robert Hardy) agonizes over his wife's murder. Meanwhile, other people around the village are being murdered, and rose petals are always found scattered around their bodies. Someone from the castle is doing it—but who?

Essentially a Gothic whodunit with heavy Freudian overtones, *Demons of the Mind* lives up to its title' it' s a Teutonic psychological thriller that was perhaps a bit too obscure and high-minded to catch on with the *horror* crowd of the time. Christopher Wicking' ascreenplays have always been a bit obtuse, but this one is actually clearer than most.

The first film directed by Peter Sykes (*To the Devil a Daughter*), *Demons of the Mind* is stylish, always intelligent, and never speaks down to its audience. Unfortunately, there was very little audience for this film when it was released. it can be found in some video stores, and it' a rich, fascinating film thet' a definitely worth tracking down.

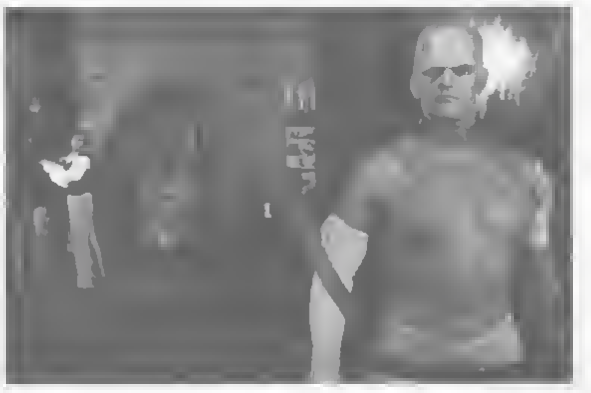
The Satanic Rites of Dracula (1973)—i'm not here to defend *Dracula A.D. 1972*, which is certainly the nadir of the series. But *Satanic Rites* is a considerable improvement over its predecessor in just about all departments.

Although made by exactly the same team as *A. D. 1972*, the sequel seems to have found the right formula for a modern-day Dracula film. a touch of mystery and a little Peckinpah-inspired violence, not to mention a little more sex than was evident in the previous film. And there's not a rock band in sight, thank God.

Peter Cushing is on hand as Van Helsing (his penultimate performance in the role) and it's always a pleasure to watch him work. Christopher Lee as Dracula doesn't heve a scene with Cushing until midway through the picture, when wa discover thet a Howard Hughes type called D.D. Denham is, in fact, the old count himself.

Joanna Lumley replaces Stephanie Beacham from the previous film as Van Helsing' agranddaughter (or niece, depending on *which* movie you're watching) Jessica. The future *New Avengers* star does a good job in a poorly written part. The scene in which she finds herself in the basement of the old house where Dracula makes his home and is attacked by a bevy of vampire women is one of the best in the film.

Once again, special effects ace



Ralph Bates (as the Baron) and Dave Prowse (as the Monster) from *HORROR OF FRANKENSTEN*.

Les Bowie comes through with a splendid disintegration scene at the and—a fitting swan song for Lee as Hammer' a Dracula.

Again, *Satanic Rites* is no classic, but it's better than most of the other "modern-day" seventies' vampire films by a wide margin.

And there you have 'em, my guilty Hammer pleasures. The company thet made such good horror films, even the *bad* ones were good. Now thet Hammer has risen from the grave, i look forward to future guilty—and not so guilty—pleasures.

Bruce Halienbeck, New York

Where were you when you saw your first Hammer film? Perhaps it was in a darkened theater where the shadowy atmosphere helped intensify the experience of seeing a first-run horror extravaganza. Or maybe it was a late night showing on television where the eternal battle of good and evil raged as the clock struck the witching hour. Better yet, maybe your first taste of Hammer horror was at your neighborhood drive-in as the on-screen fiends cast their spell against the backdrop of a sultry, summer night. For those of us who came of age in the late '50s, '60s, or early '70s, the era of Hammer was a time when the world of the macabre was vividly and memorably brought to life via the magic of a motion picture screen.

But, as always, magic is in the eye of the beholder. Critics, who often look askance at such morbid material, were deplored at the stylings of this upstart English film studio, the garish color schemes, implied sexual overtones, and disturbing depictions of carnage and bloodshed were predictably met with scorn by film reviewers (who felt far more at ease with the sanitized thrillers of yesteryear). With the passage of time, however, the reputation of Hammer as a significant force in cinema macabre has not only endured, it has been firmly cemented in place. Indisputably, Hammer helped bring film horror kicking and screaming into the modern age.

Fright film devotees have much to rejoice over when looking back at the Hammer years. The establishment of horror icons Peter Cushing and Christopher Lee (perhaps the last great genre stars we shall ever see) surely ranks high upon the list. Also of importance was the new approach which Hammer brought to screen terror; by transforming time-honored, Gothic chillers into action-filled melodramas, Hammer provided an essential link between the horror formula of earlier decades and the modus operandi of today's fright masters. And then there are those moments. , classic, shock-filled scenes which reverberate in the darkest corners of our cinematic imaginations. Long after the final credits rolled by, these vignettes still live on, illuminating hidden fears and awakening secret fantasies. The realm of my psyche still carries a mark from the many times I was struck on the head with the Hammer of horror.

For the pinnacle moment in Hammer's illustrious horror film history, my mind harkens back to the climactic confrontation from *Horror of Dracula*. With Peter Cushing in the role of benevolent Van Helsing and Chris Lee starring as the heinous Count, this adaptation of Bram Stoker' a classic can arguably be described as the finest vampire film of its era. Audiences were thrilled and captivated as these mythic symbols of good and evil locked horns in a battle of stirring proportions. So exacting and effective is this finale, I submit that it is one of the golden moments in all of horror film history.

Dracula's coach tears back to the safety of his castle with Van Helsing in hot pursuit. The undead menace has a sizeable lead and, as Van Helsing well knows, should he reach the protection of his castle walls, he and his intended vampire bride will escape forever. But the vampire fighter is also aware that he has one important allay ... . the rays of the morning sun will soon be creeping over the horizon.

As Van Helsing arrives, Dracula is burying his potential victim in a freshly dug grave. His courtship ritual interrupted, the night stalker returns to the shelter of his ancient abode with Van Helsing following a few steps behind. Dracula races up the stairway and sprints through a maze of rooms as Van Helsing keeps ap the chase. Suddenly, a moment of uncertainty; Van Helsing pauses as he reaches a second stair passage. Which way did his archenemy go? Following his instincts, he turns back and detours to the right. There he spots the vampire king,

just as he is about to disappear into the subterranean chambers below.

Dracula goes on the attack, grabbing Van Helsing in a vigorous chokehold. The nefarious nobleman easily outmatches his human opponent and pins him to the floor. Seeing that his human facilities are no match for the powers of darkness, Van Helsing feigns unconsciousness hoping to catch his adversary offguard. The ploy works, Dracula relaxes his deadly grip and Van Helsing breaks free, perilously close to becoming another of the vampire's bloodless victims.

For a suspenseful moment, they stand facing each other in a protracted game of bat and mouse. Dracula's eyes radiate pure evil as Van Helsing searches for a weakness. Then, an inspiration. Seeing the dawn light through a break in the curtain, Van Helsing bolts to the window and yanks away the heavy drapedes. The purifying light of day pours into the room. Dracula shrieks, his leg, directly exposed to the sun's potent rays, shrivels to the bone. Determined not to let his spiritual adversary get away, Van Helsing uses a pair of candlestick holders to form the sign of the cross. Dracula's face registers an expression of fatalistic terror. Caught between a rock and a hot place, the undead Count recoils from the holy symbol. Leaning backward to catch his balance, his hand disintegrates in the scalding rays of the morning light. There is no escape now. Dracula struggles in vain as the makeshift crucifix renders him powerless. Falling to the floor, his body now becomes fully exposed to the lethal effects of the morning sun. Van Helsing watches transfixed as the vampire's face blisters, his skin cracks, and his century-old bones crumble to dust.

The master of evil has been destroyed. ... until next time.

In the real world, evil hides in its many shadowy disguises. The films of Hammer made these forms tangible by presenting them as monsters, ghastly beings which represent the dark side of human nature. For a young person hungry to learn the chronology of horror film history, Hammer is an excellent place to start. For older film fans who were there when it all happened (or who may have missed it the first time around), the treasure trove of Hammer waits only as far away as your local video store.

Sometimes in the dead of night, the movie theater of my mind begins to operate and the legacy of Hammer lives on. There in darkness, the twin sisters of sex and death work overtime in my subconscious to act out the passion play of mortal existence. On a very good night, these demons ask me to join them in their seductive dance of ecstasy and damnation. Helplessly, I watch as the daughters of darkness leap from my dreams and slip into the bed where I sleep, just waiting for an opportunity to rip the living flesh from my exposed and vulnerable throat.

Now, that's what I call good entertainment!

Steven Thornton, Michigan

It's typically said of some misunderstood genius or another—generally posthumously—"they were born ahead of their time." I had often felt I was born *after* my time. While typically a D-history student, I so often wondered what it would have been like to enter childhood around the turn of the Twentieth Century. What would it be like, psychologically, to have been witness to the advent of the phonograph, the radio, the telephone, the horseless motorcar, the aeroplane, *et. al.*? To see WWI as a young man, WWII as an adult, watch the country grow through the industrial revolution from coal to nuclear energy.

My grandfather owned the first motorcar in my hometown. And I was never able to comprehend his feeling of dread and horror while we sat awake in the wee hours watching TV's live broadcast of the first lunar landing. Why *horror* rather than awe or wonder or delight? I couldn't understand it back then, when I was so much younger. It was shortly before the birth of my first daughter, Sherry, who's older now than I was then, and via nearly fifty years of slow enlightenment (and some small percentage of my grandfather's wisdom), I believe I now understand why his prevailing sense at humanity's progress was increasingly one of horror.

That's one heck of a long-windad introduction into the subject at hand and admittedly subjective sermonizing. But I owe generally all of my personal growth, character development, and social/political awareness to the cinema. From my earliest childhood years I had submerged myself into the film world of artistic make-believe. And no one can convince me I've not become a far better person because of it.

As far as Hammer Films, I was born at exactly the right moment. The previous summer, I'd seen my first double-feature at a drive-in. *The Black Sleep* and *The Creeping Unknown*. Afterward I refused to sleep for nearly a week and I'm told that for a solid month or two thereafter, I had nightmarish fits regularly awakening the entire household with screaming bouts in the wee hours. It would be the only time I would ever see a horror film with my parents. But it didn't matter, the die was cast and horror was now in my blood, part of my soul.

The next summer, 1957 I believe, I was ready. Indeed, I'd spent the preceding school year preparing, routinely pocketing lunch money in anticipation of a summer marathon of movies. Admission was a dime back then, and one could stay in the plush theater palaces from 10 a.m. until closing. (One need only crawl beneath the seats when the police routinely swept the theater for the early evening juvenile curfew.)

People seem to remember the late Fifties as a sort of monster movie junkie's paradise. But even for the inmated imaginative resources of my seven-year-old mind, I found the pickings slim and often highly disappointing. For example, while the thought of a detached eyeball was decidedly full of repulsive promise, none of the *Million/Crawling/Giant Eye* movies lived up to expectations or colorful poster-art promises. The movies generally seemed under-developed, they were often filmed so darn dark! And those stupid long-winded conversations between two people (obviously given the task of stretching the story to feature-length but sadly without any of the talent necessary for the task)!

I loved the monster premise so much I routinely saw each and every local newcomer, but had to wonder why the regular movie actors, like Kirk Douglas, Robert Mitchum, Burt Lancaster, and Sophia Loren, why weren't *they* ever in a monster movie? Why weren't the monster movies filmed like other Hollywood major films? Where were the vibrant colors, the expansive sets? And who was writing this garbage?

Primarily, my fondness for the genre field grew not out of the pre-Hammer *famous* fifties' monster movie trend but aided almost singularly by Roland's late night weekend vintage horror *fests* on TV. I watched them faithfully at a friend's house who had an antenna which could receive nearby Philadelphia. He lived about a mile's walk down a dirt road by a long creek banked by woods on both ends (I'm not making this up!), and I don't know how many times I ran home madly, heart pounding in my throat, stifling the welling scream within.

Thanks to Roland—later known at Zacherley—I knew the difference between a dark murky film and a moody atmospheric forboding night scene. Karloff, Simon, Clive, Barrymore, Mariners—nearly all of these early monster stars and co-stars could genuinely act.

Subsequently, Roland's blessing was a curse as well, for I could not find the frights I coveted through the modern entries. I mean, at the beach I was terrified when I first saw a live crab moving so alien-like, skittering along the sand sideways. But we laughed aloud at Corman's giant crab invasion on the screen. And although I had an unreasonable fear of bugs, the giant bug invasions on the local theater screens were never as scary as when a real-size praying mantis jumped on your arm.

All my fellow fear friends were elated when *Godzilla* burst into the local theater. But I could only think of Roland's *King Kong* and *Mighty Joe Young* and wonder. Finally, when *The Giant Claw* came to town, I laughed so hard I burst a blood vessel in my nose. Things were grim. Then, "Coming Soon," a new neat movie poster appeared, with a severed head and a promise *this* movie would "haunt you forever." It was, of course, *The Curse of Frankenstein*, playing on a double-feature with *X, The Unknown*. Gradually, we began to see the actual previews as it moved into the "Next Attraction" slot. And we were waiting with baited breath, in line hours early on the opening of the first day. (School? What school?)

Inside, there was just something about the way the title rolled into view, the threatening thrill of the music, the vivid colors. And then the stellar talents of Cushing and cast led us down the road of belief and acceptance, while the plush velvet drapes, cushioned furnishings, and elegant costumes all somehow lent the proceedings an air of credibility.

That tightly wrapped body floating in the giant tank—the vials and tubes and conduciors—the sound of crashing glass and the opening of the laboratory's door to reveal the creature standing so uncannily tall—with the slightest of wobbly unsteadiness, the camera looms in at an uneven pace on an angle off norm at just the right touch—and the thing jerks its arm upward to face level, takes hold of the bandages, and rips them away.

God, what a scene. My seven-year-old mind had found the frightening horror it had eagerly sought. Indeed, my seven-year-old mind had found quite a bit *more* than it had sought.

Actually, you see, I missed the unmasking scene. Repeatedly. Head bowed, my hands were solidly pasted to my eyes which were firmly squeezed tightly shut. And it was nothing to be embarrassed about—no one in our group of twelve had watched the scene. No one.

I still recall the proudness I felt, along with the pounding fear, when I was eventually able to confront the scene with my head unbowed. Eyes still firmly shut, mind you, and hands closed over. But I hadn't bowed my head, and that alone felt like such a giant victory of courage and bravery.

My oldest brother kept count. It was the sixteenth time I watched when I was able to see it fully unobstructed. We haunted that movie theater every weekend, all day and all night, repeatedly transformed by a dream come true, a monster come to life, a true film of merit which finally vindicated our precious preoccupation with horror, at last, we had a film we could proudly boast of.

"Have you ever had your bones scraped?"—Christopher Lee from *TERROR OF THE TONGS*.

And we never made fun of our two companions who sat through each performance with us, but who never, ever, not even on the final closing day, were able to lower their guard and watch their scene.

I dearly love Karloff's expert portrayal, but also extend plaudits to the often under-rated Creature as portrayed by Christopher Lee. Lee presented a lumbering awkwardness which I found far more fearful than Karloff's. The latter would roar with anger and attack; Lee's Creature would stand silently behind a wall, watching you unknowingly approach with an insidious curiosity. No roars of rage and warning, it would simply suddenly be there. The deadliest killer dog is the dog which lies in wait, silently refusing to bark.

Typically, the early Universal Frankenstein monster would kill purposefully; Hammer's monster would simply seem to kill without the capacity to give the matter any thought. The fullest difference between the two is captured in the comparison child death scenes. Karloff accidently kills the little girl, thinking she could float like the pretty flowers. Lee, on the other hand, has more than apparently killed the little boy in the forest: the monster has *eaten* him as well!

Does the film still carry that impact today? Most of us would be quick to say no, but interestingly my daughter Kelly (7, same age as I when I saw *Curse*) wanted to see the movie.

She had already seen a slew of contemporary horror films, and earnestly loves them. *Fright Night*, *The Lost Boys*, and a host of others are a feast for her (and she loves Karloff's monster.) So I put the film on for this contemporary jaded fan and indeed she was bored by the slow beginning. But come the crashing glass and the opened door, she was upright with attention. Until Lee unmasked. For the first time during any horror film she saw, she leapt a solid six inches off the floor. (No mean feat, considering she was sitting with her legs crossed at the time!) One more bounce and she was on her feet, running out the room shouting: "Bad monster! Bad monster!"

Naturally, I was in the proverbial doghouse for days for having showed it to her as Mommy imposed a strict ban on all horror films. Likewise, after I'd seen *Curse*, my mother had fits as well. I'd wake up routinely, screaming and trembling uncontrollably from some new nightmare. And, true, despite my desire to be scared at the theater, I never developed much appreciation for my nightmares. They were too solid and too strong, and too typically defeating. Often, I would awaken only after the monster had physically caught and attacked me, and I would awaken with all the accompanying hurt wherever I had been struck in the nightmare.

They certainly proved to provide the basis for a powerful imaginative ability. And I have to wonder if that has played an important part, years later, when I broke my neck and spine and entered into the world of chronic pain. Were they the foundation for my ability to overcome through mindfulness, imagery, yoga, and meditation? I almost believe so, seeing as how the genre film basically taught me the value of morals and the honor of character, along with the evils of ignorance and prejudice.

As far as 1957 was concerned, however, my mother had determined that enough was enough. I was warned and punished repeatedly "not to see any more of those damn monster movies." Now, if mom could be've found the mason jar in the rotted tree where I kept my movie money stash, she could have truly changed my behavior patterns. As it was, she had to settle for my perjurious claims of claiming to go see whatever new Disney film was opening while ending up "you-know-where." Bless her heart, she never could understand how the concept of "flubber" managed to give me nightmares.

As powerful as the Creature's unmasking scene was, I did *not* find it the most frightening scene in the double-feature. A full year before *The Blob* would scare the crap out of me, I was mesmerized by *X, The Unknown*. The concept alone was frightening enough—I mean, how do you kill mud? How do you stop mud? Worse of all, how can you find it? At night, it can hide virtually anywhere. But even in the day, how do you know the't's only dirt you're walking on, waiting until you pass over it unaware only to rise up silently behind you with an embrace to engulf and smother.

There was a particularly unforgettable scene when the mud was approaching a medical facility. Two personnel fooling around in a closed off area, a noise. Automated mechanical x-ray arms begin a slow dance of movement all on their own as the male approaches to investigate. You never see what he sees, you only hear the radioactive ticking of something to which he reacts in horror. He backs away in sheer obvious fear, but with the slowness of someone fighting off shock. . and then he falls to the hard polished hospital floor. The ticking intensifies and to our horror wa watch as the skin on his head begins to blister and bubble and liquify, draining off to reveal the hideous internal structures of the eye and nose sockets, jaws and teeth and skull.

None of us had ever seen anything so graphic before. And, indeed, it was part of the initial public uproar against Hammer. The original movie theater scene was long and intense, subsequent TV viewing and re-releases show only a vastly scaled down version. It was unforgettable, one of those true moments which certified the daringly unique Hammer style.

But that's *still* not the scene which frightened me most.

Remember I'd mentioned I lived off a dirt road near the woods? Well, the path homeward from downtown involved no other route than walking through those woods in their entirety. And for an 7-year-old kid, already frightened out of his mind by some horror film, that long walk in the midnight blackness was the scariest part of the adventure.

But *X, the Unknown* brought new dimensions to the fear. I am referring to the scene when two very young boys must make their way through their woods at night in response to some dare. The braver of the two is encouraging the smaller, who is obviously timid and frightened. But the little guy continues on—until, ever so faintly, you begin to hear that radioactive ticking.

Finally, the child notices something amiss and stops his progress. The ticking intensifies while he appears frozen in fear. He finally breaks free from his fear and begins to run back, but the ticking is following as something unseen to all but he pursues rapidly.

The braver of the two, who had hung back, has been yelling for his friend to stop, asking what he saw, turning to look and straining to hear, walking slowly backwards until he as well is in full flight on a flat-out run.

You see, it no longer mattered if you were alone because now there was no safety in having a companion along on the walk. Neither of the kids in that scene was alone.

Likewise, it no longer mattered that some creature had to be purposefully stalking you. X wasn't really *after* those kids, they simply had the bad luck to accidently stumble into it.

For about the next five years, I never came through that woods at night without thinking of that scene. No matter I was now in junior high, if the night air was still and the crickets and locusts harmonized just right to replicate that radioactive ticking.

Topping it all off, our one-room shack in the woods had the outhouse located away from the house right at the end of the clearing, right at the edge of the woods. You can imagine the nights spent struggling to hold everything in, and the chilling fear of making that long trip at two in the morning. While the adults and everyone else was sleeping, while you were completely and truly alone and at your most vulnerable. Even without the summer noises, there seemed a definite eeriness with the silence of the snow and the howl of wintry wind.

Fortunately, tha fear of those woods passed completely when I entered the 8th grade. It passed, however, only because we moved away and into an apartment downtown.

That's when city life created a whole in me that made me yearn for those panicky childhood years and the fear of those woods.

You see, no matter how great that childhood fear, it was an adventure always. It was an adventure because there was no real danger. It was an adventure because, however subconsciously, you always arrived home alive. You might have been out of breath, soaked in a cold sweat, but you were finally always safe at home.

The poverty of life in the downtown slum taught me something new to fear. There didn't need to be thick rows of trees to produce a jungle. And those smooth paved sidewalks and city streets proved far more dangerous than childish imaginations. This danger was real. Ever-present. Day or night. And just as with *X, The Unknown*, you didn't need to do anything more than simply be in the wrong place at the wrong time.

And worse of all, even when you're finally home, you're never really truly safe. I think that's what my grandfa-that had known all along.

The monsters out there are clothed in human skins and walk about freely. And sometimes, most unexpectedly of all, we discover the monster has been lurking inside ourselves.

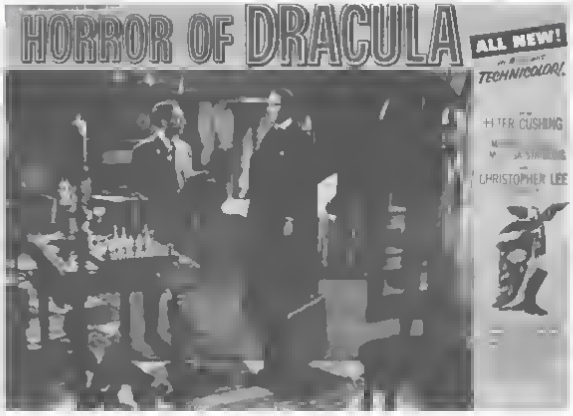
Terry Roark, Pennsylvania

The first horror films I ever saw in a theatre were Hammer films in the late '60s. I saw them in old, slightly run-down single screen cinemas in my native Brooklyn, New York. These were charming old places, not unlike the theatre in Joe Dante's *Matinee*. *Dracula Has Risen from the Grave*, *Taste the Blood of Dracula*, and *Frankenstein Must be Destroyed* were seen at the Mayfair Theatre on Avenue U. The theatre is now a McDonald's.

The Vampire Lovers, *Countess Dracula*, and *Vampire Circus* were seen at the Marboro Theatre on Bay Parkway, which had a beautiful mural of the sky on it's ceiling. The theatre is now a quad, the mural gone. *Horror of Frankenstein*, *Scars of Dracula*, *Lust for a Vampire*, *Dr. Jekyll & Sister Hyde*, *Twins of Evil*, *Hands of the Ripper*, and *Frankenstein and the Monster from Hell* were all seen at the Century Sheepshead on Sheepshead Bay Road. It is now a skating rink. Ah, memories, of the way were were.

Going to the movies used to be so magical. It's still fun, but much of the magic is gone. That feeling of magic, so brilliantly re-created by Joe Dante in *Matinee*, will for me always be those Hammer films I first saw as a teen in the late '60s/early '70s. The cold, plastic multi-plexes

THE OLD HAMMERONIANS REUNION: (left to right) Kenneth Hyman, Brian Lawrence, Richard Klemensen, Anthony Hinds, Michael Carreras, and Jimmy Sangster.



The pinnacle moment in Hammer's illustrious horror film history: *HORROR OF DRACULA*.

of today will never be places of awe and wonder like the cinemas of yesteryear. How sad that today's teens will miss out on all of that.

David Nahamod, New York

"The Old Hammerontans." A name to conjure memories when you know the people associated with that name. Tuesday afternoon, April 5, 1994, was the day when some of Hammer's greatest names came together for a luncheon in the honor of Michael Carreras, producer, writer, and former owner of Hammer. Michael's health had been variable the last few months and many of his friends wanted to get together to pay tribute to their friend. Arranged by Denis Meikle, author of the upcoming authoritive history of Hammer, on hand were Anthony Hinds, who along with Carreras, produced most of Hammer's classic horrors. Hinds also was co-owner of the company and scripted many of the best films under his pen name, "John Elder." Jimmy Sangster (with his lady friend, Mary Peach, who when reminded of her role in the 1965's *The Projected Man*, buried her face in her hands, with a laugh) also attended. Sangster as scriptwriter was the man who gave us *Curse of Frankenstein*, *Horror of Dracula*, *The Mummy*, and many more. He was later to produce and direct for the company. Brian Lawrence (and his wife) was also there, one of the powers behind the throne. After Sir James Carreras would make the deals, Brian would come in to do the dirty work of contracts and deals. And always the loyal lieutenant of the Carreras family was attendee Kenneth Hyman, who with his father Eliot, was also another power behind the throne at Hammer, involved in financing many of their early films, and with the Hyman's Seven Arts Productions, actively involved from 1965 on. Hyman cut his producer's teeth on *Hound of the Baskervilles*, *The Stranglers of Bombay*, and *Terror of the Tongs* before moving on to major films like *The Dirty Dozen*, *The Hill*, and *Whatever Happened to Baby Jane*. Hugh and Pauline Harlow—two long time Hammer and Bray Studios regulars—Pauline as a continuity woman and Hugh a production manager (currently working on the new *Gerry Anderson Space Police* at Pinewood studios, Harlow took me to lunch there along with his friend, Eddie Powell—*The Mummy's Shroud*, *The Last Continent*, etc.—Christopher Lee's long time stunt double) Ian Lewis, another Carreras confidant and production manager on many of their '60s films like *Quatermass and the Pit* and *The Devil Rides Out* was there, as was Frank Godwin, who produced the Carreras favorite, *Demons of the Mind*, in 1971.

Michael's wife, Jo, was also on hand. Their marriage is approaching 50 years, she was Enrique Carreras's secretary (Michael's grandfather and founder of Hammer/Exclusive Films).

For a Hammer fan like myself, it was like being a little boy turned loose in a candy store. To honor these people who have created this bit of filmic history was a great day.

Richard Klemensen, Iowa

[Editor's Note: Unfortunately, this intimate party became a final good-bye to Michael Carreras who, a few short weeks later, died from the recurring bouts of cancer that had plagued him so in the last several years. Looking forward to attending FANEX up until the end, Michael's spirit never left him. We all mourn his lost.]

Plaudits on the concept of a FANEX Hammer Film Convention and a like-themed issue of *Midnight Marquee*. Perhaps the following might prove of interest regarding same?

On my last trip to London, always looking for some non-tourist haven to savor, I came across the book *The Perfect London Walk* by Roger Ebert and Daniel Curley (Catto Press, London). The book centers around a section of London about four inches off the top edge of most tourist maps which remains typically unknown to even sophisticated vacationers.

What particularly caught my attention therein was the final destination of the walk, a place called Highgate Cemetery. Ebert writes, "There was sporadic use of the site as a location for Hammer horror films, look for Peter Cushing and Christopher Lee on the late show, creeping among the gravestones."

Nothing in my sense of anticipation could have prepared me for the awe. A maze of winding paths, rising terraces, tombs and catacombs, it is truly a Necropolis, a City of the Dead, an otherworldly dimension of eerie atmospheric horror.

One of Britain's *first* cemeteries, it began deteriorating after WWI, until the giant iron gates were closed and padlocked in bankruptcy. Felix Barker's book *Highgate Cemetery Victorian Valhalla* (Pub John Murray Ltd., 50 Albermarle ST, London W1X 4BD, England, U.K.) describes its subsequent indignities:

"There was an outward and visible sign of the rot within. Cracks appeared, stonework fell down, windows were smashed with buddleia and fern sprouting from crevices, the half-ruined buildings began to look like a Gothic folly.

"In the autumn and winter of 1970, vaults had been broken into, coffins pried open, even bodies taken out. Statues were vandalized and occultism, voodoo, and witchcraft began to flourish.

"The setting, unfortunately, was all too perfect. It is not difficult to imagine these graveyards wring at midnight and vampires returning before the first rays of sun. Alarming reports circulated of desecration and weird nocturnal ceremonies. It was even said that stakes were driven though the hearts of the dead."

A few Highgate residents rallied to save the ravaged historic landmark and preserve its wild romantic beauty. Forming a non-profit group, the Friends of Highgate managed to purchase the cemetery in 1981 for $100. Relying on volunteers and donations, the group now lovingly tends and maintains the cemetery, conducting informative and informal guided tours for the public.

Happily, the undergrowth has been tamed rather than removed and Highgate remains something of a wildlife preserve for the foxes, hedgehogs, badgers, birds, willows, evergreens, brambles, and the miles of twisting ivy which thrive there among the tombs.

Likewise, the overgrowth maintains more than a mere air of mystery. Through the huge gates one feels they have crossed a doorway into another world, another time, an unreal dark place which truly overwhelms the visual senses.

Highgate Cemetery is the film world of Hammer incarnate. Consider this description from Nairn's London.

"An anthology of horror . .

"This is the creepiest place in London; no Dickensian stretch of the river can match this calculated exercise in studio horror, now itself decomposing. The entrance is well downhill in Swains Lane, and at first the landscape is ordinary. But as you wind up the hill it becomes more overgrown, choked in winter by dead fronds with an unnerving resemblance to Spanish moss. Then, with a shock like a blood-curdling scream, the Egyptian entrance shows up. Beyond it, the Catacombs, a sunken rotunda lined with stucco-faced vaults, gently deliquescent, crumbling away. Inside them, coffins on ledges. Nothing seems real but death at its grayest and clammiest. The cemetery closes well before dark, and a good job too."

From London, the cemetery may be reached via the Underground Archway Station. The Friends conduct daily guided tours and operate a small gift shop of stunning photographic journals, et. al. Inquiries should include an international Reply Coupon and donations may be sent via: The Friends of Highgate Cemetery, 5 View Road, Highgate, London NG 4DJ, United Kingdom (Phone 011-44-340-1834 from the U.S., or, in London, 081-340-1834).

And, yes; one may *still* elect to be buried there!

Paul Berke, Pennsylvania

For Hammer's production of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* (1959), the choice of an actress to play the small but memorable part of the terrified servant girl who is chased down and murdered by Sir Hugh (David Oxley) presents an interesting example of the sometimes odd world of casting.

On July 3, 1958, in Canterbury Cathedral, Dr Geoffrey F Fisher, Archbishop of Canterbury, convened the ninth Lambeth Conference of Bishops of the Worldwide Anglican Communion, the central body of Anglican churches. Hundreds of bishops and other church representatives gathered from all over the world to deliberate and recommend mandates and to support the hope of achieving world peace and unity among churches. Dr Fisher had invited to the conference the controversial exiled Cypriote religious and nationalist leader, Archbishop Makarios III. Makarios had been exiled from Cyprus, a British colony at that time, for his involvement with underground guerrilla revolutionists who waged violent, deadly attacks against the British government there. Although Makarios declined the invitation, the appropriateness of the invitation in itself was questioned by some British.

On the second day of the conference, a man disguised as an Anglican bishop successful infiltrated the meeting and publicly denounced Dr. Fisher's invitation to Makarios. A young man and a 17-year-old girl accompanied this interloper; all were members of a right wing group called League of Empire Loyalists.

The next day, Hammer producer Anthony Hinds opened his newspaper and saw their pictures. Immediately the girl struck him as having the "look" he wanted for the small part of the servant girl. Presumedly, she possessed a certain youthful vulnerability in her appearance that would contrast perfectly with Sir Hugo's wanton sexuality and violent demeanor, and thus maximize the horror of his hunting her down with his hounds and then stabbing her to death on an alter in some abbey ruins. After a successful screen test, the girl, Judi Moyens, won the part.

Many hopefuls attend expensive drama schools, study acting techniques, and train for years without ever winning a break into films. To quote Joseph Addison, "T'is not in mortals to command success."

Mark A. Miller, Ohio

The response to our Hammer issue of *MidMar* has been tremendous. Thus, not all the articles could be published. But all missing/edited articles will be published in the FANEX 5 Program Book, copies of which are available for $3.00 from us.

WARNER BROS.-SEVEN ARTS présente/stelt voor

une PRODUCTION HAMMER FILM L.T.D

LE CAUCHEMAR de DRACULA

HORROR of DRACULA

avec

PETER CUSHING
CHRISTOPHER LEE