



CENTREE

The Movies Part II



THE DRINK TANK



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THE MOVIES PART 2

We enter into the sound era with this issue dedicated to the years of the Depression, the War, the Boom, and the 60s. It's a great time for film, and some good stuff!



FILM FINDS ITS VOICE

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“Academia is the death of cinema. It is the very opposite of passion. Film is not the art of scholars, but of illiterates.”
Werner Herzog

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Chapter 1

BEFORE THE WAR

The Early talkies were fascinating, and many of them stand-up today to close scrutiny. Not all, mind you, but many!



Section 1

THE 1930S: MY FAVOURITE MOVIE DECADE BY VANESSA BUTTINO



Whenever someone is brave enough to ask me what my favourite decade of movie-making is, my brain automatically conjures up images of black and white fairytale lands in which Fred pursues Ginger and Hepburn seduces Grant with the aid of a charming leopard called Baby. Can't guess which decade I'm referring to? Well, you definitely shouldn't be here then (*shame on you!*).

The films of the 1930s have always been my favourites. *No question. No contest. No what-ifs.* It all started when my Aunt Grace introduced me to DRACULA (1931) and THE WIZARD OF OZ (1939) when I was barely ten years old (I was six or seven, actually). Since then I've always had a big, fluffy soft spot for movies produced in the '30s. I prefer them over films from any other decade - although, the stuff produced in the 1940s was almost just as good - and if it came right down to it, they'd be the ones I'd rescue from a fire (please God don't let it come to that).

MY FAVOURITE MOVIE DECADE

Here are the things I admire most about films from the 1930s:

Nineteen thirty-nine // *I mean, do I even need to explain myself here?* Nineteen thirty-nine is considered Hollywood's Golden Year. A year in which a veritable shitload of amazingly outstanding films was released and literally had the movie-going public lining the streets at all hours of the day and night, clamoring to get into cinemas nationwide just so that they could get their fill of what has now become legendary Hollywood product.

My favourite Hollywood stars came into their own in the 1930s // The majority of my favourite actors and actresses graced the screen in the '30s, making names for themselves and climbing the ladder to stardom one film at a time. People like Clark Gable, Greta Garbo, Jean Harlow, Barbara Stanwyck, Bette Davis, Joan Crawford, Fred Astaire, Ginger Rogers, Norma Shearer, Robert Taylor, William Powell, Myrna Loy, James Cagney, Spencer Tracey, Gary Cooper, Cary Grant, Marlene Dietrich, and Katharine Hepburn all achieved enormous success in the '30s and it was thanks to them that I got turned on to classic film in the first place. I might get beat up for saying this, but can today's actors *really* compare to the ones I just mentioned here? *I fucking think not.*

The violence // We have the Warner Bros collection of gangster films to thank for the majority of the violence that graced the screen in the 1930s; films like *THE PUBLIC ENEMY* (1931), *LITTLE CAESAR* (1931), and *ANGELS WITH DIRTY FACES* (1938) lit up the screen with the rat-a-tat-tat of spitting machine guns and wailing sirens of police cars, not giving a damn about Hollywood censorship or the frail sensibilities of movie viewers. Films from the '30s were raw and gritty and ultimately paved the way for the film noir genre that clawed its way to the forefront during the 1940s and '50s.

The sensuality // This is where pre-Codes come in, I think. I went to a Catholic elementary school (and high school, for that matter) when I was younger so the very idea of discussing sex during class was unthinkable. Our teachers preached abstinence until they were blue in the face and we all just accepted it, thinking sex was immoral, tasteless, and basically the work of Satan. I had nothing to go by and until I started watching pre-Codes, I had *no* idea what actually happened before, during, and after sex. Loretta Young, Warren William, Jean Harlow, Chester Morris, and Barbara Stanwyck taught me the ins and outs (heh) of sex and what it meant to *want* somebody until your blood boiled. Films from the early '30s served as my sexual education and I'm sure the same is true for many other younger classic film fans.

Every film of the early 1930s seemed like an experiment // From the early talkies to the machinations of Busby Berkeley, virtually every film produced in the early 1930s was an experiment in what could be accomplished with a set, some paint, and a camera. As time progressed, films got glossier and more fairytale-like, differing in style and tone from their early '30s predecessors. This was the decade in which Hollywood really developed and matured creatively, coming into its own and surpassing everyone's wildest dreams. It's no wonder, then, that the Golden Year of 1939 happened, is it?

So, tell me, what's *your* favourite film decade?

VANESSA BUTTINO





Section 2

IF YOU DARE: FIVE REASONS TO LOVE EDGAR ULMER'S THE BLACK CAT



During the Halloweens of the early and middle 1970s, I fell into the habit of imposing my own curfew for trick-or-treating. I could return home no later than 9 PM. From house to house, my speech was always the same: “Yes, thank you for the candy, and I’m glad that you like my costume, but I must get home at 9 PM for Bob Wilkins and *Creature Features!*” To this day, I honor Bob Wilkins not only for introducing my generation to the best and worst horror films, but also for acting indirectly as a babysitter when the parents of my neighborhood wanted to drink and play cards. “Whose turn is it to host cards, and where are we parking the kids for *Creature Features?*” No worries then. They could supply us with pop corn and soda, and leave us to sit mesmerized through a double feature, interviews, maybe a serial episode, until finally we drifted off in our sleeping bags. How’s that for effective babysitting? Wilkins kept us in line via television. He didn’t even have to show up, and the folks never had to pay him.

At that time, Wilkins also hosted the annual *Creature Features Halloween Special* during which he played the Universal classics, *Frankenstein* and *Dracula*, and hence my self-imposed curfew. Nine o’clock and not a minute later! How rare were the opportunities to view Karloff and Lugosi in their defining roles. Now I can fire up the DVD player at my whim, but back then the chance to further memorize scenes and dialogue arose only occasionally. Those cinematic treats satisfied more than even full-

sized Nestle Crunch bars. Still, the Nestle bars went down quite well as I watched my two favorite actors in what were then my two favorite films.

Even in middle-age, I hold these dark wonders in high esteem, but I no longer rank them as my favorites from that period of Universal Horror glory. Life experiences, education, and maturity slightly have shifted the fascination I held for shambling lab creations, vampires, and other supernatural beings. I vividly remember more than once moaning with displeasure whenever Wilkins played “non-monster” movies. For example, the seven-year old Chuck wailed whenever the *TV Guide* announced that Saturday night’s feature was *The Black Cat*. No monsters, no makeup, just Karloff with a creepy hairdo and Lugosi tossing a knife at a cat! We don’t even get to see Lugosi skin Karloff once he’s got him strapped to that table! And now forty years later, I am among the greatest supporters of *The Black Cat*, considering it the finest collaboration between the two actors, and the finest film in the Classic Universal Horror library. My childhood self possessed no ability whatsoever for appreciating what I now see as five reasons for loving *The Black Cat*.

Boris Karloff and Bela Lugosi

Karloff and Lugosi shared the screen in eight productions, the first, of course, being *The Black Cat*, released in 1934. Ostensibly based on Edgar Allan Poe’s short story of the same name, the narrative employs little having to do with it or the other source from Poe, *The Fall of the House of Usher*. On *Mysterious Universe*, a website dedicated to horror films, Michael Rose opined, “The horror-movie industry has perhaps never seen a greater pair of rivals than Boris Karloff and Bela Lugosi.” In an often cited interview, Lugosi himself took credit for discovering Karloff for *Frankenstein* after deciding he didn’t want the role for himself:

I made up for the role and had tests taken, which were pronounced okay. Then I read the script and didn't like it, so I asked to be withdrawn from the picture. Carl Laemmle said he'd permit it if I furnish an actor to play the part. I scouted the agencies and came upon Boris Karloff. I recommended him. He took the tests, and that's how he happened to become a famous star of horror pictures. My rival in fact.

Lugosi’s wife, Lillian, later reiterated this claim, dubbing Karloff “an extra,” but many question this view of events. Toward the end of his life, Karloff admitted that Lugosi had been underappreciated and perhaps hadn’t achieved more success due to his sub-proficient English. The clearest account of their relationship remains Gregory William Mank’s *Bela Lugosi and Boris Karloff: The Expanded Story of a Haunting Collaboration*.

In *The Black Cat*, viewers witness virtuoso performances from both actors, regardless of any grudges between the two. Lugosi plays Vitus Werdegast, a physician bent on revenge against Karloff’s Hjalmar Poelzig, an architect and former prison commandant who had sold out Werdegast and others to the Russians during “the war.” We’re told that Poelzig somehow caused the death of Werdegast’s wife and daughter as well. As a child, I failed to appreciate the malice flowing between the two actors on screen. I failed to marvel at Lugosi’s subtle trembling as he describes the betrayal and war crimes that grossly warped his character, a physical sign emphasizing how an otherwise good man has degenerated to obsession with vengeance and his psychological breaking point. As for Karloff’s delivery, I now gasp at the soft-spoken lines that highlight the malignant creepiness of his character, a high priest of Satan and serial killer who very possibly has committed at least one instance of pedophilia.

These two cornerstones of horror weren’t best friends, but who cares? If they did hate each other perhaps that influenced how they developed the animosity between Werdegast and Poelzig. In the end, however, I prefer to credit them for extreme professionalism in delivering such great onscreen chemistry. Accolades must also go to their director, Edgar G. Ulmer.

Edgar G. Ulmer

Born in 1904 in what is now the Czech Republic, Edgar G. Ulmer entered the United States along with a wave of Eastern European and German professionals hoping to succeed here when situations in Europe made it difficult for them to practice their art. These directors, writers, and cinematographers had been steeped in the German Expressionism popular throughout early twentieth-century Europe. Hitler and Goebbels ended that movement, however, labeling it as degenerate. So these prodigies came to Hollywood, lending their collective influence to both the horror and noir genres.

That Ulmer studied under F.W. Murnau clearly becomes evident in *The Black Cat*. The chiaroscuro, the play of light and shadow that so elevated *Nosferatu* to legendary status is evident, as is the dreamlike quality, the missing plot details that encourage viewers to fill in the gaps, to create their own horrors in their own minds. Rather than resorting to concrete narrative and exposition, Expressionism relies on exaggerated symbolism to inspire strong emotions in individuals. The end product, then, leaves us uneasy, because it suggests more than it dictates. Both Ulmer and screenwriter Peter Ruric fully understood how to employ this methodology. As set designer, albeit uncredited, Ulmer also understood the value of physical space in establishing mood.

It's So Very Pretty

The enormous mansion that Poelzig designs and builds on the site of the prison camp where he'd tortured Werdegast and others stands as a testament not only to Art Deco, but also to the macabre, disjointed angles and crooked paths prominent in German Expressionism – weird, but so very pretty. At one point, the female lead, Joan Alison played by Julie Bishop, succumbs to hallucinations due to the sedative Werdegast administers after treating her for wounds received after their transportation crashes in the woods. We too as the audience are experiencing hallucinations. Why the women entombed in glass cases along the hallways, grotesque and yet so beautiful? Poelzig among other things is a serial killer as well? Then we have the medieval torture chamber and satanic temple directly contrasting the modern appurtenances seen in the rest of the house. In fact, the temple and the chamber represent Poelzig's true nature. It's as if we've traveled through a dreamscape to reach the final nightmare within. As with character and plot, the setting, that house in the Hungarian woods with all its contradictions and haziness, inspires more unease and horror than the most descript, in-your-face films that hand-feed viewers, leaving them no room to experience the dread of feeling unsure.

From the room in which Werdegast and Poelzig play chess to decide the fate of the young honeymooners unexpectedly entangled in their antagonism, to the altar where Poelzig intones in twisted Latin to honor the dark of the moon, to the torture chamber upon which Werdegast straps Poelzig to skin him alive – it's so very pretty, all of it, and how frighteningly so. For example, the audience hears the screams when Werdegast, in a state of complete frenzy, cuts into Poelzig for revenge, but it sees only shadows. Our minds are left to fill in the blanks, and thus we join those newlyweds in becoming unwittingly exposed to a terror we don't fully comprehend. And then when Werdegast destroys the house, we, like that couple, wonder what the hell just happened?



*A clammy and excessively
ghoulish tale of hi-jinks in a
Hungarian horror salon*
New York Times Review, 1934





Peter Allison: I don't know. It all sounds like a lot of supernatural baloney to me.

Dr. Vitus Verdegast: Supernatural, perhaps. Baloney, perhaps not. There are many things under the sun.



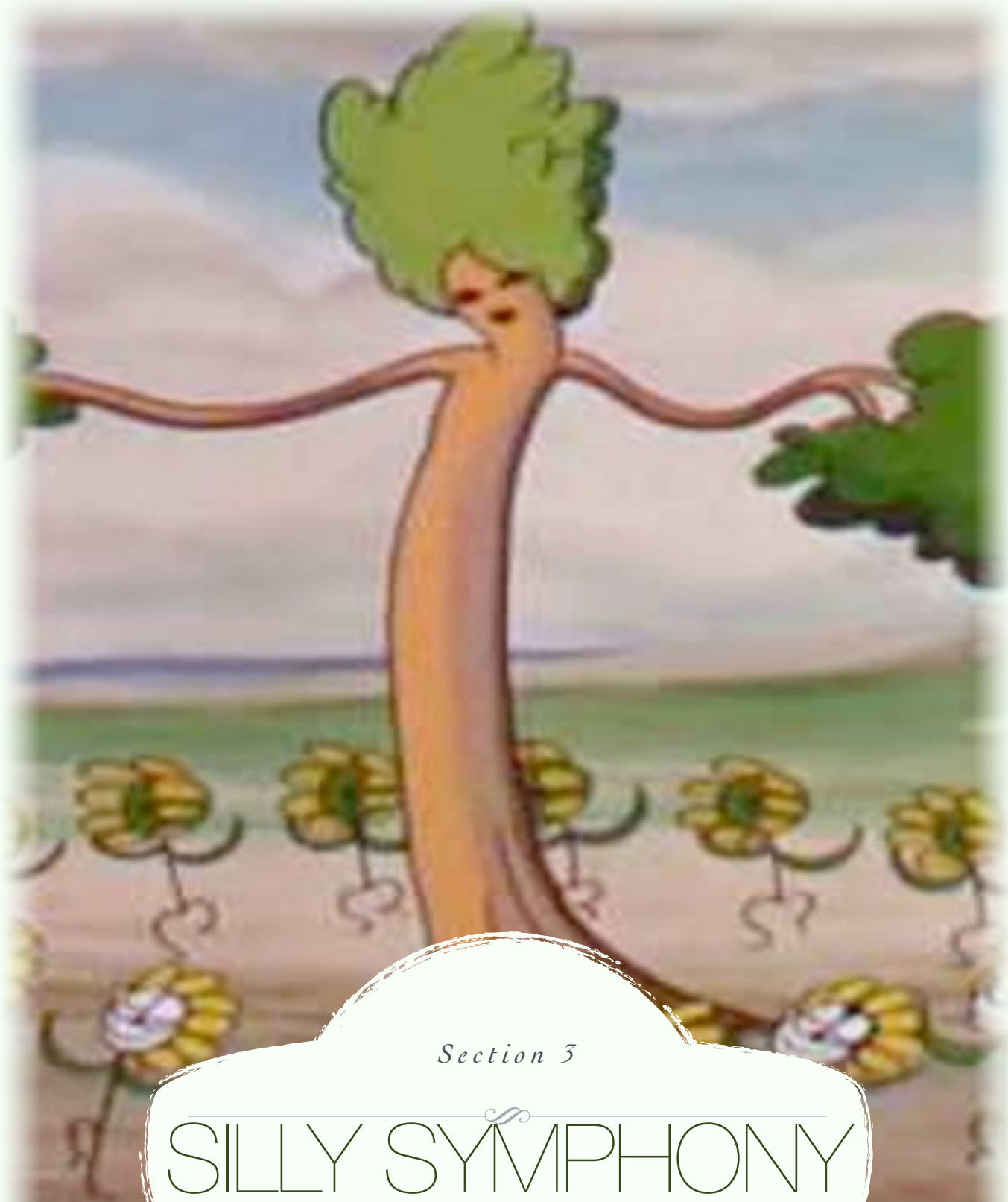
The Hays Code

In 1930, the Motion Pictures Producers and Distributors of America (MPPDA), later known as the Motion Pictures Association of America (MPAA), put into place the Hays Code, also called the Motion Picture Production Code, a set of rules defining acceptable and unacceptable content for movies. However, MPPDA didn't begin enforcing these standards until 1934, meaning *The Black Cat* slipped on to screens right before the hammer fell. With its Satanism, implied pedophilia and serial murder, women encased in glass tombs, and violent revenge scenarios, Ulmer's vision never would have reached theaters, at least not without serious reworking. I include this section only to thank the Hays people for delaying enforcement of their system until this hallmark of cinema made the can. The industry abandoned the code in 1968, and I'm thankful for that as well.

We Are the Monsters

Finally, what young Chuck failed to understand back during the 1970s has evolved into my final reason for adoring *The Black Cat* now. Everything I've discussed above blends together to reveal that humans are the worst monsters. War, pedophilia, serial killing, betrayal, revenge – these unfortunately occur in the human sphere, not so with corpse reanimation or vampirism, although human minds formulated those concepts as well. Humans either perpetuate atrocities like Poelzig's, or we're the victims, prepared or not. German Expressionism greatly exploits this existential dread, the inability to control or clearly perceive what's occurring in our surroundings. Ulmer, a student of the movement, illustrates this condition much more stridently by eschewing supernatural monsters, because aren't the real ones exponentially worse?

Most children prefer linear plots, fully explained characters, and blatantly obvious monsters, ones that don't belong to our species. They lack the development to appreciate the subtleties presented in avant-garde cinematography and screenwriting. I see now what I couldn't see then, and while I still adore the foundational masterworks I used to rush home from trick-or-treating to view, I now seek out *The Black Cat* to celebrate classic Universal horror. As an adult, I realize the real monsters in *Frankenstein* were played by Colin Clive and Dwight Fry, not Boris Karloff. However, *The Black Cat* distills our inherent nightmares without vampires and without the direct, fully depicted violence that contemporary slasher movies gratuitously exploit. It brings us closer to the ultimate terror. It speaks to us as adults who can visualize what's implied, who have enough inside to fill in the gaps ourselves, making us the worst victims, ones forced to dredge up and coalesce our own aversions. Do you dare to love *The Black Cat* for the reasons I do? If so, I applaud your courage and your maturity.



Section 3

SILLY SYMPHONY

by Chris Garcia





It would be easy to write about the Mickey Mouse cartoons everyone remembers. I've got my favorites (Mickey's Polo Team, Plane Crazy, The Brave Little Tailor), but it's not the Mickey cartoons that really interest me. It's the Silly Symphony cartoons. To me, Mickey was the popular one, working within a context of a Celebrity-driven set of stories, while the Silly Symphony cartoons were more artistic, free to experiment and explore. No, they're not High Art, though some explore that space. They're better expressions of what makes Cartoons so wonderful. They're about the meeting of movement and music, in a Surrealistic setting.

And that's what they were designed to be – Music-driven pieces that explore imagery and movement. Silly Symphony films were amazing, and they were often the most innovative films Disney made. Without the Silly Symphony shorts, Snow White would not have happened. The innovative features like *Dumbo* and *Pinocchio* made use of the techniques that were invented for use in the Silly Symphony.

These are my favorites, the ones I remember from when I was a kid enough to have to re-experience them as an adult, and still found amazing.

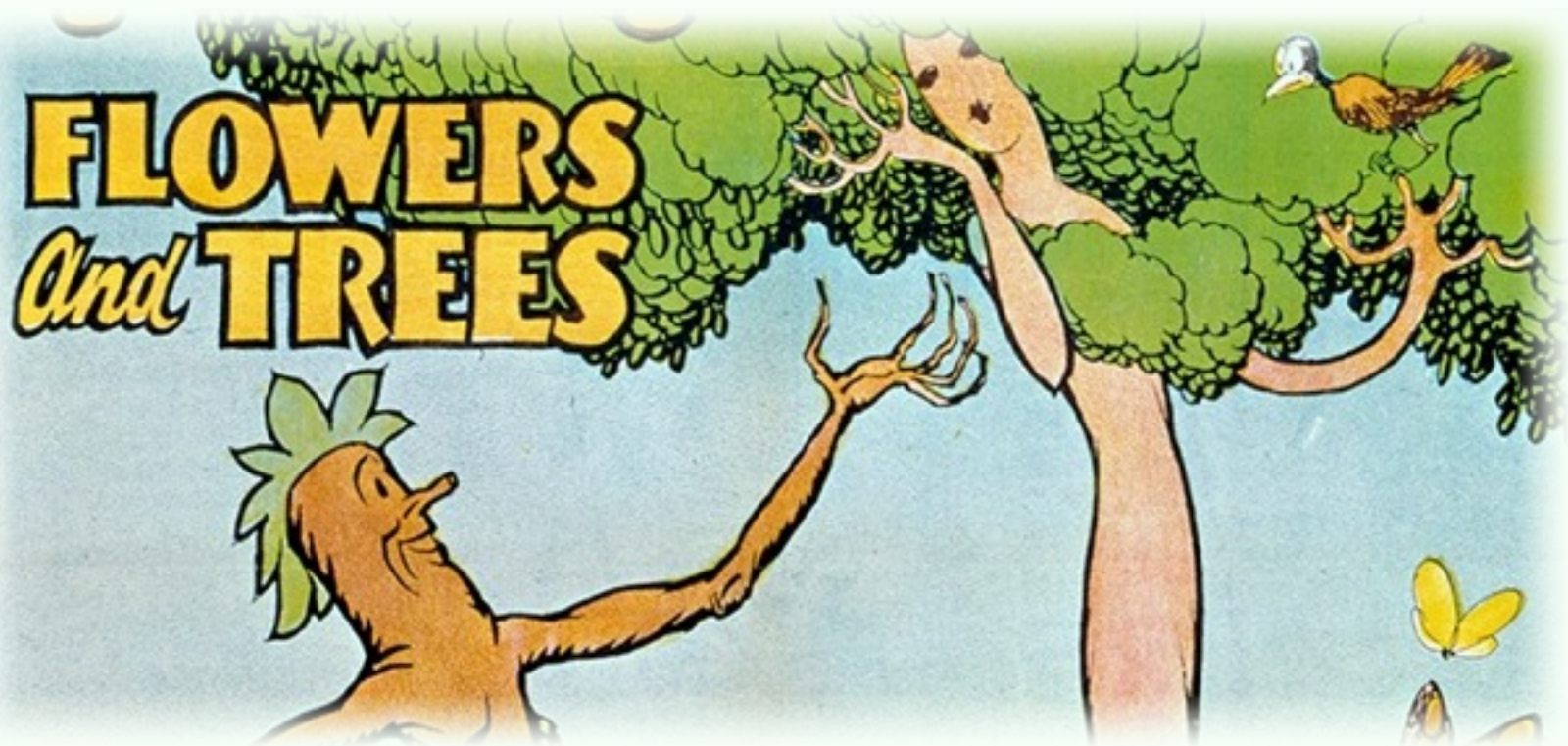
The Skeletons Dance (1929)

The first of the series and one of the most memorable. This one's been referenced over the years in dozens of other projects, from Tim Burton's *Corpse Bride* to *Ghost Rider*. It kinda hurt to type that. It's a lovely, and Surreal, and it perfect sets up what the *Silly Symphony* ideal will be – less a story than a series of bits strung together to music. There's no recognisable character, unless a dog in the middle is actually supposed to be Pluto, but it's so much fun watching the skeletons jump around and play each other like xylophones. It's a simple film, not a lot to it, but it's a joyous expression of the concept and an excellent exploration of what was possible in animation.

Hell's Bells (1929)

This one is really interesting from the point of view of 80 years hindsight. This black and white classic shows Hades in all it's glory! We're introduced to all variety of devilish beasts, including Old Scratch himself!

The music's the impressive thing here. Synchronization to the music has always been important, and you can see it in *The Skeletons Dance* as well, but here, it's more impressionistic. The dangling spider's legs aren't reacting to sounds, or creating them even, but they are setting a tone that is reflected by the changes in the music. We see an imp walk into a jaggy wall. His entire



body becomes jagged, which leads to some wonderful sound play. The principal music for the short is March of the Marionette by Charles Francois Gounod. It's most recognisable as the theme from *Alfred Hitchcock Presents*.

The film is one of the best of all the *Silly Symphony* shorts, and it doesn't get the recognition it deserves for some reason.

Egyptian Melodies (1931)

You can tell that the *Silly Symphony* shorts were the place for experimentation when they put out a film like *Egyptian Melodies*. It starts out with our little spider-y friend walking through a pyramid all stealthy, and the camera follows him in a tracking shot. It's way ahead of the curve, as most live-action films didn't do that sorta thing in the early 1930s! The short does go back into the typical song and dance bit, with Mummies doing a fun little dance. Our spider-friend also has a great call out to Al Jolson, as he falls to one knee when the wrapped inhabitants of the pyramid awaken, throws his hands wide and says "Mummy!" HA!

Flowers and Trees (1932)

In 1932, Technicolor was still a novel thing. Two-strip Technicolor had been in use for years, but the three strip, with its true color look was new. Walt Disney, who was always up on the technical happenings in the world of film, locked-up the tree-strip process for cartoons until 1935.

Flowers and Trees was a great short, and it helped make the *Silly Symphony* shorts far more commercially successful. This one won the Academy Award for Best Animated Short film! The image of the forest waking up from a night's slumber is what I always remember about this short. The way the grumpy old tree yawns and bats fly out was somewhat terrifying. In a way, this was a visual fugue, and a stunning piece of animation. You can see where *Fantasia* grew out of the *Silly Symphony* shorts.

Three Little Pigs (1933)

The entire reason to love this short is the fact that it gave us the song "Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf" which became a cultural icon. The short is lovely, and while it's never been one of my personal faves (I liked the *Silly Symphonies* that were more Impressionistic), it's a lovely bit of work and it really turned the *Silly Symphony* concept into a big money maker! This one won the Academy Award, and is on the National Film Registry.



The Goddess of Spring (1935)

If you're looking for a short that shows that Disney was working towards *Snow White*, it's *The Goddess of Spring*. A beautiful short, with the Goddess herself doing a dance that reminded me of *Joie de Vivre* and expressionistic dance, followed by birds and other animals crowning her. Then, we get a visit from Hades, and an infestation of Imps on the Spring. It is, of course, a take on Persephone and Hades, and we spend half the short in Hell with them, but it's so beautiful, and the music so well-done that it never feels heavy or oppressive. It's so well-done.

Who Killed Cock Robin (1935)

This one is also based on a fairy tale, but more importantly, it shows how much evolution was happening in the Disney camp. This one, with birds as caricatures of well-known Hollywood stars like Mae West and Bing Crosby, uses multi-site movement to great effect, and not only that, it uses cross-fades and tight editing to amazing effect. This one sticks with you, and it's a court room drama! I loved this one as a kid, and the bird that reminded me of Foster Brooks (who I don't think was doing his drunk routine in 1934) and the one who was obviously Harpo, were my faves!

The Old Mill (1937)

If any of the *Silly Symphony* shorts shows the technical daring that Disney was rightfully lauded for, it's *The Old Mill*. This was the first use of the multiplane camera, and instead of anthropomorphic animals, they're presented naturalistically. The behaviours many be more human, but they aren't Disneyfied animals. *The Old Mill* is a mood piece, and a beautiful one. The argument that this was the film that most pre-saged *Snow White* has some merit.

Mother Goose Goes Hollywood (1938)

This is the last *Silly Symphony* short to have the starter plate saying 'Silly Symphony', though there were two more in the series. It's a lot of fun, with the stars of the day turned into characters from Fairy Tales. Donald Duck also appears. It's a bit troubling because there's a scene for "Four-and-twenty blackbirds" and it's a bunch of Jazz musicians poking their heads out of a pie. That sort of thing was not even commented on as strange at the time, and it effected me when I re-watched, but the rest of it was so much fun, and celebrated an era of Hollywood I've always loved dearly.

Section 4

A REVERENT IRREVERENCE - THE MUMMY (1932) BY BOB HOLE



Staring Boris Karloff (Imhotep); Zita Johann (Helen Grosvenor); David Manners (Frank Whemple) [played John Harker in Dracula]; Arthur Byron (Sir Joseph Whemple); Edward Van Sloan (Doctor Muller)

Directed by Karl Freund

Written by John L. Balderston; from a story by Nina Wilcox Putnam & Richard Schayer

"The Amazing...Incredulous...Unbelievable...story of the nameless horror! The Mummy" – from the original theatrical trailer

The plot is a simple one, and basically similar to *Dracula* (1931). Boy meets girl, becomes ancient undead creature, meets reincarnation of girl, occultist gets in way, girl meets living boy who also gets in way, undead creature fights and loses, undead turns to dust.

The film was inspired by the finding of King Tutankhamun's tomb in 1922, and the associated rumors of a curse. It was the first of the original Universal Studios great monsters, followed by *The Wolf Man* in 1941.



Boris Karloff was so famous from playing Frankenstein's monster that the advertising posters for *The Mummy* simply listed him as "Karloff", which was apparently already enough to denote "scary". He is credited as playing Imhotep, though through most of the film his character uses the name Ardeth Bey.

Karloff played the role only once. He apparently felt the eight hours of makeup to get into the bandages for the opening scenes was somewhat excessive. Or in his own words "the most trying ordeal I ever endured".

According to IMDB (imdb.com) the role of Imhotep has been recreated 19 times since, plus two films that used archive footage from this film.

The name Imhotep is real enough. The original was an tomb architect, and the sole commoner in ancient Egypt to be raised to godhood. He lived c. 2650–2600 BC and was an architect that served the Third Dynasty Pharaoh Djoser (see *Ghost Busters* [1984]).

The film's Imhotep lived a little later, 3700 years ago, the time that roughly coincides with the transition between the 12th and 13th dynasties. During the film, Ardeth Bey says the Scroll of Thoth is from pre-18th dynasty, which started about 2500 years ago, and that he can't read it.

The Mummy makeup is fantastic. It was done by Jack P. Pierce (1889-1968). He also did the makeup for such classics as *The Man Who Laughs*, *Dracula*, *Frankenstein*, *Bride of Frankenstein*, *The Invisible Man*, and *The Wolf Man*. IMDB lists 158 credits up to

THE MUMMY (1932)

and including 104 episodes of Mr. Ed. He was the subject of the documentary "*Jack Pierce: The Man Behind the Monsters*" (2002). His final work was on the "Mister Ed" television show.

The dried, desiccated look of Ardeth Bey (Imhotep) really evokes the age of the Mummy, and the desert. One of the cool recurring images of the film is a solo head-shot of Karloff, with crinkled skin and glowing eyes. This is shown whenever he exerts his Dracula-like power of mind. It really plays up the makeup.

The film opens in 1921, with Sir Joseph Whemple and Ralph Norton (Bramwell Fletcher) in Egypt having just dug up Imhotep and a strange box, which Ralph gets overexcited about. Dr. Muller, an occultist, is also there, and reading the inscription on the box strongly argues against opening it. Oh, if only the people in movies would listen to good advice.

Muller and Whemple go off for a bit for a chin-wag and Ralph, an Oxford student that apparently has the attention span of a four year old, opens the box and finds the Scroll of Thoth, which gives the secret to the power of life and death. He transcribes a bit of the scroll and begins reciting it over and over. Of course, while he's distracted, he doesn't notice that this is exactly the part of the scroll that awakens Imhotep, the Mummy.

Poor Ralph is scared out of his mind and dies offscreen.

Cut to 1932 (present day for the film's release), and now Frank Whemple, son of Sir Joseph, is in Egypt following up on his father's work.

Enter Karloff as Ardeth Bey, a sinister looking character if I ever saw one. He looks elegant in this robe and fez. And again, that makeup is excellent.

Bey, who is of course really Imhotep, the Mummy, gives Frank a clue to the location of Imhotep's long dead love, the Princess Ankh-es-en-amon, who died 3700 years earlier.

Dr. Muller, the occultist, apparently is also the guardian of Helen Grosvenor, who just happens to be the reincarnation of Imhotep's love.

Helen is played by Zita Johann, a believer in reincarnation, who was picked for the part by director Karl Freund. I don't know if she was a replacement, but Freund was only assigned to do the film two days before shooting started. It was the first of only 8 films he directed in America, but he was a huge success in his native Germany, having directed films like *Metropolis*, and *The Golem*.

BY BOB HOLE

He was, however, apparently given the job as director based on his photography of *Dracula*.

As a side note, Freund is credited with developing the three-camera set up used for sitcoms. He first used it while directing "I Love Lucy."

The acting in *The Mummy* is rather stilted, or perhaps better stated as "magisterial". It is for the most part, very slow and deliberate. Of course the studios were still working on the transition from silent to sound, and they were dealing with a master director of silents.

A lot of the story is done by looks, camera angles and such, in addition to the dialog. The dialog they do have is not sparkling. However, on the part of Karloff, the deliberateness with which he speaks and moves works wonderfully well. It gives a creepy power quality to his words and action that serves well to make the character really stand out.

There is a flashback scene, back to the time of the living Imhotep and Princess Ankh-es-en-amon. During the flashback, which is done only with Karloff's voiceover, is done with what I'd call silent-movie overacting, plus a flickering camera. This adds well to the story in giving it a "old time" feel, making it feel more truly like the vision in a pool it was supposed to be in the film.

The flashback was supposed to be, and was filmed to be, much longer than it is. As it stands it only covers the Egyptian first-life of Princess Ankh-es-en-amon. The longer version, now lost except for some production stills, included her reincarnations down the ages.

Toward the climax Dr. Muller outs Ardeth Bey as Imhotep fairly easily, with just a photograph and some inferences, and makes Sir Joseph believe very quickly. Imhotep even admits it rather quickly. Probably not believable in a script today.

But it works pretty well to wrap up this film and draw it to the final battle where Frank and Muller rescue the girl, and kill Imhotep.

Or do they?

There have been, according to IMDB, 19 remakes, or sequels, or other appearances of Imhotep as *The Mummy*. And that doesn't include any of the written word spin-offs. As with all good monsters, this one may never die.

HEROES FOR SALE (1933)



BY JUDY GEATER

Richard Barthelmess might be best known as a star of silent films, but I think he was equally good in early talkies, when his boyish looks were starting to fade. He was great as a tormented wartime aviator in Howard Hawks' *The Dawn Patrol* (1930) – and he gives another powerful performance as a drug-addicted veteran of the First World War in William Wellman's *Heroes For Sale* (1933). For me this is one of the strongest offerings in the Forbidden Hollywood Collection Volume Three, though it possibly goes off the boil for a bit in the middle.

This film, one of a number which Wellman made focusing on the Great Depression, follows Barthelmess' character, Tom Holmes, from the trenches of France through to a peacetime battle in America, a march by the “forgotten men”, war veterans desperately seeking work. Both the opening in the trenches and the march of the unemployed men near the end are set amid torrential rain, which features in so many early Wellman films and seems to express the overwhelming forces bearing down on his heroes.



The original working title of the film was *Breadline*, but it was changed to the more dramatic and bitter *Heroes For Sale*, underlining the theme of war veterans who can't make a living in peacetime. However, the film isn't just sympathetic to old soldiers, who are not particularly romanticised, but to everyone struggling in the Depression, and the hard years leading up to it.

There are similarities with both *Les Miserables* and *I Am A Fugitive From a Chain Gang*, as, in this film scripted by Robert Lord and Wilson Mizner, Barthelmess plays a man who is hounded from one place to another and can't escape his past. James Van Trees' cinematography is excellent throughout, especially striking in the dark, shadowy rainy sequences at the beginning and (almost) the end of the film.

The opening follows a confusing, desperate operation in the war, where Private Holmes and another soldier from his hometown, Lieutenant Roger Winston (Gordon Westcott), are ordered to capture German soldiers as prisoners in a raid. However, there have been signs that Roger's nerve is cracking, and under fire he huddles in a foxhole, leaving it to Tom to carry out a heroic raid on his own, capturing a prisoner – but being badly injured in the process. Assuming that Tom is dead, Roger takes the credit for his actions, allowing himself to be hailed as a hero and promoted.

Meanwhile, Tom is taken prisoner, and treated by the German military doctors for his injuries – becoming hooked on morphine which he is given for pain relief. It would be interesting to know how often this happened in real life – I've read that Humphrey Bogart's father was addicted to morphine initially given for pain relief, and there was also a silent film star, Wallace Reid, who died of morphine addiction after his studio gave him the drug so he could carry on working with a back injury.

Drug addiction is one of the subjects that became taboo under the Hays Code, but this pre-Code film tackles the issue quite frankly. Tom travels home with other wounded veterans – watch out for silent film star James Murray, who starred in Wellman's *Frisco Jenny* and here has a small but telling part as a blind soldier. On arrival in the US, Tom meets up with Roger, the man who took his honours. He doesn't bear a grudge and accepts a job in the bank run by Roger's dad. However, even when Tom's injuries heal, he can't break free of his addiction and his work suffers. There is a harrowing scene where a doctor refuses to prescribe him morphine, and, when Tom warns that he might be driven to steal as a result, the doctor's answer is to ring up his employer and reveal his problems. Roger's father (Berton Churchill) self-righteously sacks Tom, expressing pious horror at his drug addiction – and he is carted off to a "drugs farm".

After finishing his rehab, Tom doesn't want to go home again, and heads off to Chicago, where he takes a room above a cheap restaurant-cum-soup kitchen run by the kindly Mary Dennis (Aline MacMahon) and her Pa (Charley Grapewin). He falls in love with fellow-lodger Ruth Loring (Loretta Young), and goes to work at the commercial laundry where she is employed. Soon Tom is catching the boss's eye and being promoted – then he marries Ruth and they move into a house and have a baby.

Young has much less scope in this movie than in Wellman's *Midnight Mary*, and is largely a presence in the background, although she does the most she can with the lines she has. This whole central section runs rather slowly (even in a movie which is just 76 minutes long) and is not really up to the standard of the rest of the drama. The kindly laundry boss and happy workers pictured with gleaming white sheets at times seem more like a dream than reality (though I see from a very detailed TCM article that real laundry workers, and real homeless people, were used as extras in this film.) There is also an awful lot of heavy-handed humour involving eccentric German inventor Max Brinker (Robert Barrat), who has one or two annoying verbal tics which I don't find quite as hilarious as Wellman seemed to.

"This is also bracingly egalitarian, attacking the hypocrisy of communists and capitalists alike."

Chicago Reader



If you haven't seen the film you may want to stop reading here, as I'm going to discuss the whole plot in this next bit.

Brinker is a fervent Communist (he quotes whole lines of Marx) who suddenly becomes an even more fervent capitalist after making his fortune by patenting a new type of washing machine. At first the workers are enthusiastic about the machines, believing they will improve their working conditions, but this all changes when the kindly boss dies – and a new management takes over, laying off most of the staff to save money. The pace of the film picks up again as a desperate group of workers stage a Luddite-style riot, vowing to smash the machines. Tom, trying to remonstrate with his colleagues, is picked out as a ring-leader and taken off by police – while Ruth, trying to find Tom, is knocked down by a cop and killed. There is a haunting shot of Loretta Young lying dead in the street.

After this, Tom is allowed home briefly to bury his wife and say goodbye to his toddler son, who is entrusted to Mary, before he has to go to jail to do five years of hard labour. What I found disturbing here is the astonishing quality of acting by the child (unnamed in the credits as far as I could see), who looks about two years old. This small child strokes Barthelme's face as he weeps silently (Howard Hawks claimed in an interview that Barthelme couldn't cry on film, but he does so here) and also has a number of lines, which he delivers very convincingly, asking about where his mother has gone and who will look after him now, and wailing to his father not to leave him. I've noticed quite a few small children giving good performances in early talkies, but this must be one of the youngest children I've seen speaking actual lines. A five-year-old, Ronnie Cosby, is listed at the imdb as playing "Young Bill Holmes", but I'm guessing he is more likely to be the slightly older child taking over the part after Tom comes home from prison, who has rather more lines and scenes.

Almost as soon as Tom comes home, two FBI agents call round to run him out of town as a "Red". Some of the most powerful scenes in the whole film ensue, as he is seen wearily marching with other men through apparently endless rain and darkness, driven on by police whenever they stop for rest or shelter. "We are ex-servicemen!" shouts Tom in one scene. "Well, maybe you are and maybe you aren't," comes the reply, "but you can't stop here." Ironically, he meets up with Roger, the man who stole his honours all those years ago, and who has served time in jail himself for fraud when his bank collapsed. The two men now find a sort of uneasy comradeship again, just as they did in battle.

Amid all the rain and darkness, there is one jarringly positive scene where Tom suddenly starts to praise a speech by Roosevelt and predict that America will fight back from the Depression and be strong again. John Gallagher's commentary on the DVD says that Darryl Zanuck told Wellman he must include a scene like this, and he actually shot two versions, with Tom reading the speech in a newspaper in the take which wasn't used. I can see why it was thought a good idea to include something more hopeful amid all these dark scenes which were so close to the real lives of many people watching the film – but it doesn't seem in keeping with the rest of the movie at this point. I prefer another more understated hopeful moment when Tom smiles wryly and says "Well, there's some good news – it's stopped raining."

That is actually his last line in the film, but it is followed by a scene showing young Bill and mother figure Mary at the soup kitchen, dishing up food paid for by Tom's money – all his share of the takings from the washing machines, which he relinquished. There is a sign on the wall quoting the text "Give us this day our daily bread" and giving not only the Biblical reference, but also Tom Holmes' name – pointing out that he is the one providing the bread, and making it almost explicit that he is to be seen as a secular Christ figure, suffering on behalf of others. This ending shows that people are carrying on and supporting one another – though there is no certainty about whether Tom will ever go home again.



Section 5

LIFE'S ILLUSION
BY R.R. CHAND





Jean Renoir's film presents us with an irony: the martial elites of France and Germany needed the war to vouchsafe their very identities, and yet that conflict would prove their undoing. Whatever side won, the hoi polloi would gain the upper hand. - Eric Stewart



While watching carjackers drive off with Hank Moody's sole copy of his freshly-written novel on a Netflix episode of *Californication* the other day, it struck me how fragile and fleeting is the medium through which we express art. It's a wonder so much artwork is created to begin with given the social and economic pressures imposed on students to choose profit over passion. Luckily for us all, some choose to walk a different path and to create for the melodies on our iPods, movies on our tablets, and murals beneath our freeway overpasses. That art finds a way in our capitalist society is incredibly fortuitous but the efforts made by fans to preserve it are equally astonishing. How many great pieces of art are stored away carefully in archives for the sake of preservation? And, on the flip side, how quickly do paperbacks waste away in the sandy, humid bunks of backpacker hostels across the globe? The physical aspects of art are so delicate that, before the digital age, conscious effort had to be made to preserve it or else it would quickly be smothered by those who loved it or burned by those who did not. Given this gentle, temporary nature of art, is it any wonder then to hear that perhaps the greatest film ever made was nearly lost forever? And ironic too, that a film about war might have become one of war's many victims, had it not been for the sympathy of a German film archivist, who spared a single negative from destruction after the film was seized during the German occupation of France. The movie to which I am referring is none other than *La Grand Illusion* by director Jean Renoir (son of famous painter Pierre-Auguste Renoir).

The original negative was seized by Nazis under order of Joseph Goebbels himself in 1940 and went missing for 50 years. At one point in 1960 Renoir cobbled together a copy from prints but it was barely passable as the original film. Other prints existed and were restored and re-released at various points. Meanwhile, the negative had been first hidden away in Berlin where it was presumed destroyed in an allied bombing, later taken to Moscow, and then, remarkably, passed back to France in a film exchange between a Russian archive and the Cinémathèque of Toulouse in the 1960s. Once back home in France, the original negative of *La Grand Illusion* sat quietly in storage before finally being rediscovered in the early nineties and re-released in all its former glory.

So, what is this great film all about, anyway? It is about war, but that is only on the surface. At the second layer, it is about the class differences and the change that beset Europe as the proletariat shifted into power and the purpose of aristocrats began to wane. And, at its third and deepest layer, the film is about relationships that stretch across geographic, political and religious boundaries and beyond strict military and socioeconomic hierarchies. The film shows how the expression of honor, respect and duty may change over time but the core tenets remain if one sticks to the most basic rules of conduct in relating with others. These universal values transcend all differences in religion, ethnicity, military or social status.

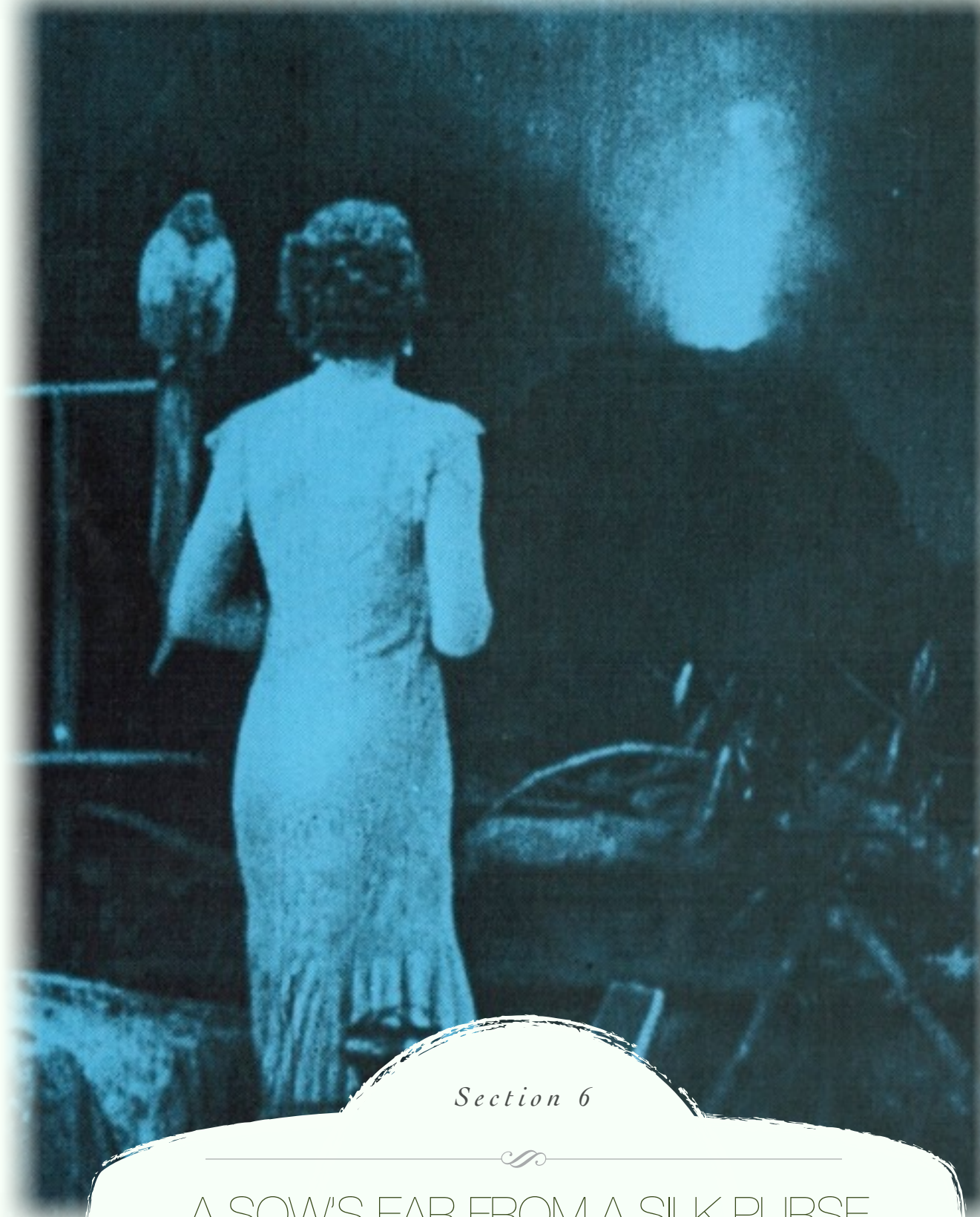
The movie opens with von Rauffenstein (played by actor/director Eric von Stroheim) shooting down two French aviators. He requests a soldier to check if there are any officers and, if so, to invite them to lunch. Captain de Boeldieu (Pierre Fresnay) and Lieutenant Marechal (Jean Gabin) join von Rauffenstein. Marechal is a fellow officer but he is not of high social standing like von Rauffenstein and de Boeldieu. The two aristocrats chat about mutual acquaintances, revealing that they travelled in similar social circles before the war. The scene reveals an early theme in the movie about relationships that cannot be confined by borders, politics or war.

The two Frenchmen are then taken to a prisoner-of-war camp where they cooperate with other captives to dig an escape tunnel. The focus of the film shifts from intangible confinement to tangible imprisonment but the message is the same. Human relationships cannot be contained by borders nor by prison walls. Unfortunately, just before the tunnel is completed, the French prisoners are transferred to another camp. Marechal tries to tell the incoming British prisoners about the escape tunnel but language differences prevent them from understanding his message. After many transfers and escape attempts, the French prisoners arrive at Wintersborn, a camp inside a medieval fortress, where they are reunited with fellow prisoner Rosenthal (Marcel Dalio), a wealthy Jewish lieutenant from the first camp and with the German Captain from the opening scenes. Von Rauffenstein has been appointed as commander of Wintersborn after sustaining war injuries. He now wears a neck brace which enhances his stiff and formal nature. The relationship between de Boeldieu and von Rauffenstein is challenged when de Boeldieu sacrifices himself by distracting the guards so that Marechal and Rosenthal can escape from camp. Von Rauffenstein reluctantly shoots de Boeldieu, aiming for his leg but hitting him in the stomach. As von Rauffenstein sits solemnly at the bedside of his dying friend, he utters this famous line: "For a commoner, dying in a war is a tragedy. But for you and I--it's a good way out." In a way, both aristocrats have acknowledged that there is no place for them in the changing world. De Boeldieu, especially, understands this as he has chosen to sacrifice himself so that two commoners may escape back into a world that now belongs to them. In the final chapter of the movie, Marechal and Rosenthal take refuge in a German war widow's home, where Marechal overcomes his enmity towards the German people by falling in love with the widow, Elsa (Dita Parlo). Eventually, Marechal and Rosenthal decide they need to leave Germany and Marechal vows to return for Elsa and her son when the war is over. While tromping through deep snow, they are spotted by a German patrol who begins shooting at them. But the patrol ceases fire when they suddenly cross an invisible line and enter Switzerland.

La Grand Illusion is a fantastic piece of cinema that reveals the human side of war and the strength of relationships. It is worth noting that the title of the film comes from a book of the same title written by British economist Norman Angell. The author reasoned that war is futile because of the common economic interests of all European nations. Renoir's film was based around events of World War I and released on the eve of World War II but this war movie is ultimately about peace. As Rosenthal himself mentions in the film, the grandest illusion of all may be that war can be used as a political tool to make the world a better place.

R.R. Chand blogs about new music and artists and sometimes other things.

Follow her to read more at <http://newmusicmonthly.wordpress.com>



Section 6



A SOW'S EAR FROM A SILK PURSE
JOSEPH CORNELL'S *ROSE HOBART* & ME



by Chris Garcia





There's a story, a good one, and it might even be true. Joseph Cornell, one of the most interesting figures in 20th Century Art, was screening his new film at the Julien Levy Gallery in New York. All sorts of significant figures from the Art World were there, and sitting next to the projector was the master of Surrealism, Salvador Dali, who was in town for the first major Surrealist exhibit at the Museum of Modern Art. Cornell started the film, and dropped the needle on a record player, and off it went. Dali sat there watching, growing more and more irritated. After several minutes, he shot up, kicked the projector and tromped out of the room.

Dali was that jealous of what Cornell had managed.

"He stole it from my subconscious!" Dali screamed as he stomped.

Cornell seldom exhibited his films for the next thirty years because of Dali's outburst. He was a shy creature, and the film had brought him the kind of attention he hated. The film was *Rose Hobart*, and it's a masterpiece in 1930s avant-garde film.

It's a strange little film, all 18 minutes of it. Cornell took a print of a jungle adventure film called *East of Borneo* and re-edited it. I've seen *East of Borneo*, and it's kinda fun, but nothing special. He bought a copy of the film at a second-hand shop and brought it home. He found it tedious, and since he figured he'd be watching it often, he'd better snip it into a shape that was pleasing to him. He cut it into a new shape, added some new footage from nature documentaries, and focused the whole thing on the lead actress, played by Rose Hobart. He was obsessed, it seems. She was lovely, true, but the way he cut the film, including just duplicating shots and showing them several times over, was much like you'd see in a fanvid on YouTube today. He put this all together and played a bossa nova record while it was going, and projected the whole thing through a piece of colored glass. Initially blue, but at later screenings, purple or rose-coloured.

The film is the cinema equivalent of one of Cornell's more famous Shadowboxes. They are assemblages of found objects that were once beautiful, but completely divorced from their traditional surroundings, and thus are taken out of their context and placed in a new context, which may be completely without meaning beyond the aesthetic of the image that is created by the adjacencies. This concept often creates objects where a viewer encountering it with no idea what they're seeing can form only a brief outline of an opinion, and often it's laughter.

Rose Hobart is no different.

“Cornell was also one of the most original and accomplished filmmakers to emerge from the Surrealist movement, and one of the most peculiar. Just as the ascetic and introverted Cornell himself held Surrealism at arms length, borrowing only those elements that suited his interests and temperament, his films superficially resemble those made by other Surrealists, they are in truth sui generis.”

Brian Frye, sensesofcinema.com



“Joseph Cornell, mostly known for his shadow boxes, also made surrealist films. UbuWeb carries some dozen of them, including the rightfully famous Rose Hobart, the only movie to screen publicly during his lifetime — it sent Salvador Dalí into fits of rage, which sent Cornell’s cinema into hiding.”



Cornell took images from a couple of sources and put them together next to each other. He then put a completely unrelated piece of music over top of it. There is no connection to them at all, though our brains try and make the connection. There may be some thread that it can pull together, but often the frustration we feel from finding none makes the viewing painful. Such is the case with *Rose Hobart*, but if approached as a Surrealist piece, gathering image from the subconscious, then it becomes much more fascinating. It makes sense that it is a series of barely connected images, so you would experience it in a dream. They are images of a woman Cornell would have fantasized about, and they are disconnected images as you might recall when you woke up. This is the heart of Surrealism.

For someone watching it with no introduction or idea what it is they're about to see, it's an almost unwatchable film. I showed it to Evelyn once, I think she had just turned 5 or 6 and we'd watched *The Life and Death of 9413: A Hollywood Extra* and a few Man Ray shorts which she enjoyed. I showed her this one, and she wandered off to play with her Simpsons books. I get that reaction, it's not a film that rewards a viewer with pleasure... unless they're big fans of Bossa Nova from the 1930s. Still, I watched with rapt attention, because I was taking in the ideas that I knew were around it and I was dissecting it. That made my viewing pleasurable where Evelyn was only confused and angry.

Cornell's work has always hit me. It's the removal of the work from the context that makes me so interested. I dive deep, and I find things I never thought I'd find. I've done art for much of my life. Sometimes it's not conscious art, and it's seldom any good, but I do it anyhow. When I look to create a work with intent, I often look for non-congruous adjacencies. I believe in the accident, the incidental, the odd. Putting things that don't necessarily belong together, but exist in the same world and exhibit some form of continuity. This idea, combined with my absolute love of placing things outside of their intended meaning, leads me to love Cornell, and when I tried to do a piece for a local arts festival, I had his work in mind.

I wanted to create a box, in this case a solid base with a plexi cover, and a piece of wax paper along the back. I would then project YouTube videos from a random playlist, without the sound. In the box, in front of the wax paper screen, would be a pair of speakers and a Discman playing a continuous loop of people reading a series of haiku that I created by taking random pieces of text from Wikipedia. I'd then have an iPad laying on the bottom of the case not propped up at all, running a slideshow of Facebook images of Scarlet Johansson. It would then have a bunch of LiveJournal posts talking about art. It would then be left alone, and placed in such a way that anyone could easily accidentally knock the projector.

I called it *Prose Hobart*.

THE PHILADELPHIA STORY STORY
BY BOB HOLE



The Philadelphia Story

Released December 26, 1940 (limited release); general release January 17, 1941

Directed by George Cukor

Starring Cary Grant, Katharine Hepburn, James Stewart (Oscar for Best Actor), Ruth Hussey, John Howard

Written by Donald Odgen Stewart, based on the play by Philip Barry, additional dialog by Waldo Scott

This is my favorite film. It is one I've watched repeatedly, including for this article, and will watch it many more times. It's one of the few films that I will try to watch whenever it comes on TCM (Turner Classic Movies), have recorded on my DVR, a DVD copy, and will play whenever I need a pick-me-up.



From the opening scene of Cary Grant pushing Katharine Hepburn to the ground, this film is pure comedy. Yes, comedy. The opening is the only piece of real physical comedy in the film and really done to hilarious effect. [No, violence is not a laughing matter, including violence against women, but in this context it is funny. Hepburn shows she's quite able to knock a man down in return, again comedically, just a few moments later.]

George Cukor, the film's director was worried about that opening scene, but finally decided that Cary Grant, and possibly only Grant, could get away with pushing Hepburn. He decided that any less suave or more "rough" actor couldn't pull that off without seeming a brute, but Grant could.

Clark Gable was Katharine Hepburn's original choice for the roll, but he was unavailable. Personally I can't imagine the film without Cary Grant and I don't think Gable could have pulled that opening off. Spencer Tracy was supposed to play James Stewart's roll, but also in my opinion, would not have been nearly as good. He too was working on another project. The film was filmed in 6 weeks beginning in April 1940.

The rest of the movie is a drawing room comedy. I would liken it to *The Importance of Being Earnest*.

The basic story is boy (Grant) loses girl (Hepburn), girl gets other boy (John Howard), nonsense ensues (involving Stewart, Howard, and supporting characters) and the logical twist happens at the end.

Hepburn recreates the stage roll she originated, Tracy Lord, the self-unaware snobby daughter of a very wealthy Pennsylvania family. Her mother describes her as "... (she) sets exceptionally high standards for herself and other people aren't always quite apt to live up to them." This is Tracy's problem (and the main obstacle of the plot) that she's got no tolerance for frailty and believes she shows none.

Tracy was first married to C. K. Dexter Haven (Grant), who she split with in the opening scene.

She is about to be remarried to an up-and-comer, a "man of the people" type who has political ideas.

Stewart and Hussey work for a gossip magazine ("Spy"), and are snuck in based on some minor magazine blackmail based on Tracy's philandering father, to infiltrate the wedding at the Lord estate. Stewart plays a "man of the people", a reverse angle snob in his own right. He's the reporter, Hussey is the photographer.

Stewart, who won his only Academy Award playing the reporter, is also a short story writer, and according to the film a good one. He complains at one point that writers must eat, and can't sell books "...as long as there's a library around."

In addition to playing the lead, Katharine Hepburn had invested in the play, forgone her stage salary, and bought the film rights. She had been labeled as box office poison a couple years earlier, and this roll was to be her comeback. And it was. It broke box office records at Radio City Music Hall, bringing in over \$600,000 in six weeks.

The script is witty and in spots very fast paced. As a drawing room comedy it relies on verbal wit rather than physical comedy (with the exception noted above). There is quite a bit nonsense, some non-sequiturs, and switching of identities.

Particularly fun to me is the aftermath of the pre-wedding party. There's a great ball given in the honor of Tracy which ends with a very drunken Stewart visiting Grant, and them working out a way to get out of the blackmail the editor of *Spy* magazine is pulling.

This is followed by some interesting scenes taking place the morning-after, back at the Lord's in the hour or so preceding the wedding. These scenes include my favorite line in the film, delivered by the hung-over Tracy, "I'm standing here, solidly, on my own two hands and going crazy."

That line is really a turning point in the film, where Tracy begins to realize that she remembers some possibly outlandish behavior on her part following the party due to her over-imbibing, but it's only partly remembered. This begins the real break down of Tracy's wall around herself, the resolution of the film comes from that breakdown.

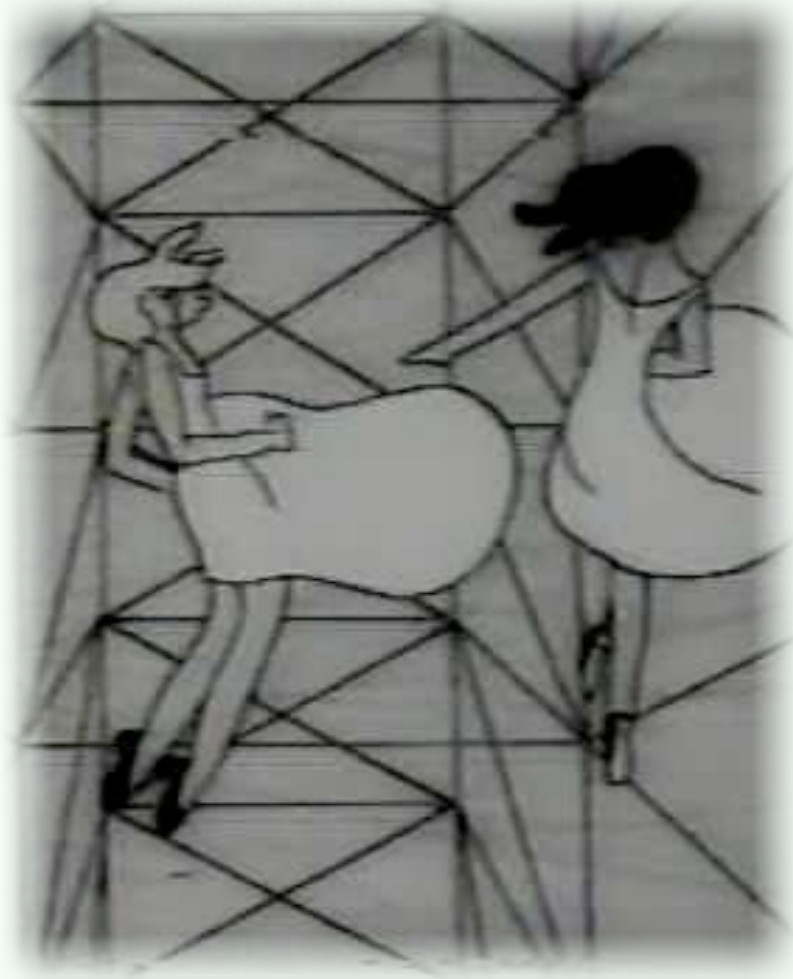
The film even has a moral of sorts in addressing class directly in several veins. Or rather it addresses snobbery. It shows how a snob can be of any class, and be snobby in any direction. Hepburn's snobbery gets taken down a peg, but so does Stewart's.





Section 7

JOIE DE VIVRE – ANIMATED DANCE OF THE GROTESQUE
BY CHRISTOPHER J GARCIA



I love short film. Not just current stuff, but classics as well. One of the most important things for the Silent Film issue was to cover *The Life and Death of 9413: A Hollywood Extra*, an avant garde masterpiece. It's one of those films that moved me to look deeper into the American Avant Garde film movement. What I didn't cover nearly as much as I'd have liked to was animation in the silent era. From *Gertie the Dinosaur* to *The Original Movie* to the earliest Walt Disney cartoons. I wish I had gone into it more, but alas, what can you do?

One of the reasons I love animation is it has always been able to do things that you could not do in reality. Look at Mickey Mouse. You could not film a Mickey Mouse short film live action in the 1920s. If you watch *Steamboat Willie*, or my favorite *Mickie's Polo Team*, you can see the levels of abstraction that have to be achieved to make the films work. Talking animals aside, the way things operate in the world of cartoons is fundamentally different. Not only the look, but everything from the physics to the colors.



“Over these nine minutes, that feel like only a couple, you get the impression that the girls don’t want to be caught because that would mean the end of the fun.”
Wonder in the Dark



And that's why we can experiment so much more wildly in animation than in live action. In a way, you can make it the comparison between mainstream mimetic fiction and genre. In one, you are bounded by the real world, by the limitations of the physical world in which we all live, and in the other, you are only bounded by what you can convince people of within a world of your creation. That doesn't hold true once you consider effects or editing, but just stick with the concept. The idea that you're able to do more with a world in animation is certainly true.

And thus, the lovely film *Joie de Vivre!*

There is a tradition, going back to the days of Edison, of using film as the medium to capture dance. There are hundreds of descriptions of dances dating back to Ancient Egypt, but it wasn't until film was invented that people could experience a dance without being present. Some of the earliest films documented dances, including some of the Serpentine dances that Edison filmed, or the dancing of Loie Fuller.

When animations started to pop-up, they were often like Music Videos, with dancing characters moving across the screen to some piece of music. If you think of *Fantasia*, the images conjured up are of ballet dancing hippos. The *Silly Symphony* films made this kind of thing popular and proved that there was a market for work that was this abstract. The idea of animating dance is old old old, and the abstraction that has to take place to make it believable by being unbelievable enough to register properly is impressively difficult. It can't be REAL (the Uncanny Valley is always waiting to catch those who walk too near that cliff) and if it's too abstract, well those are the films that make people say they hate abstract films.

The work of Anthony Gross and Hector Hoppin is amazing. They have taken a stand on the abstract by presenting us a pair of lovely young ladies walking in lock-step across a geometrical, industrial city. The image of their long, soft bodies marching across that landscape provides an amazing counterpoint; almost as if it is a statement on modernism itself. These are primitive images, almost variations on Beardsley's grotesques, and they are walking through what is a landscape of soulless symmetry. After a bit of synchronized walking, the pair break into dance, at first realistically, just taking skips and leaps on the sidewalk, but eventually becoming more and more unreal. Their arms and legs, stretched beyond the possibility of human dimension, form impossible angles and bend in impossible directions. The pair find themselves dancing among the powerlines, drawing the electricity from them. At this point, the only realism left is that of rough, recognisable forms – the power station, the placement of limbs on the human figures, the bicycle of the plant's guard. We are presented with abstract butterflies and a whirlwind. These are understandable, real world phenomena, but they are also desperately

artifed. This world is one of an artist's vision.

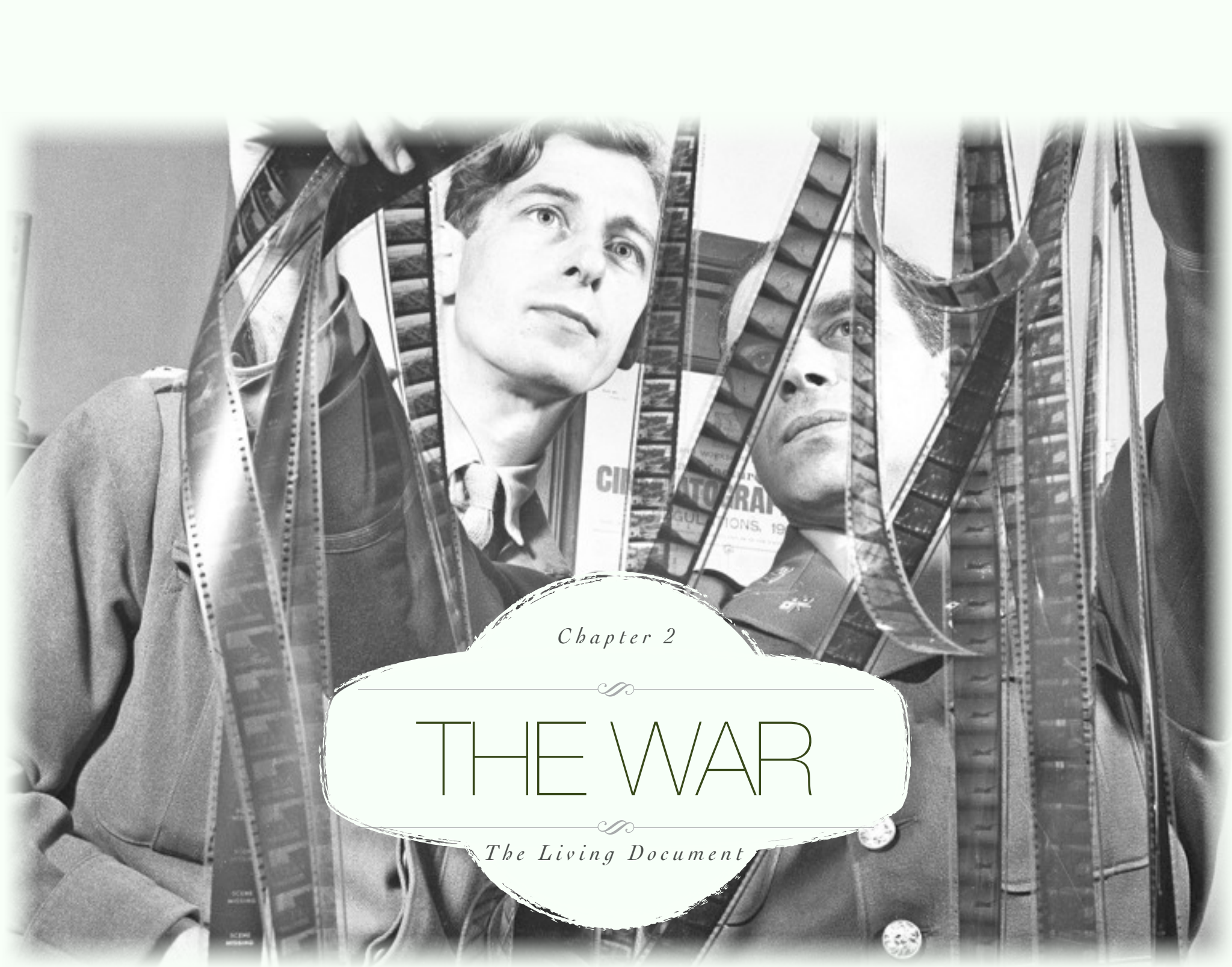
And perhaps that is the ultimate statement. This is a vision of a created, impossible world, but one where the rules have some sort of logical progress. The pair of women find a cool pool to swim in; they strip off their clothing and dive in impossible arcs. Here, the animation becomes painterly: less precision is applied. The romping in the spring is almost certainly meant to bring us to the idea that nature is not what the art of the moment. The film was made in 1934, just at the beginning of transformation of the Art World to less naturalistic forms to biomorphism and harsh geometry. This return to nature in the film, and the accompanying change to style that hints at Impressionism and Romanticism, instantly points out that these are seen as Higher Forms than the harsh industrialism of the opening shots. An eventual return of the Guard with his bicycle and a flight away on the bike by the three of them brings it all together, sends us away. All the flying birds and

butterflies of the film seem to be beckoning them towards an abstract Heaven of some sort, and in the end, that seems to be where they fly towards.

The music, by the incomparable Tibor Harsanyi, is remarkable. It's got this whole Stravinsky meets Copeland thing going on, which I guess makes sense considering the time. It's not overly joyous, but at the same time, it gives a kind of sweetness that pulls you along with these two dancing nymphs.

Is it a dance film? Yes. Without question. The essence of dance is movement and the definition of forms using the body. Here, that's exactly what we are seeing. The angles of the backgrounds are the canvas on which the animated bodies create their forms. Dance is, but it's very nature, abstract. This cartoon, which is every bit about music and hijinks as an episode of Disney's *Silly Symphonies*, is done in a form that is much more serious. It doesn't simply give us this situation and then allows us to be amused. It draws us in and forces contradictions of form on us, while still allowing us the pleasurable construct of the dance. That is what the best dance films do.





Chapter 2

THE WAR

The Living Document

It feels strange to say it, but there was nothing better for the art of documentary filmmaking than World War II. It was a MASSIVE filmmaking boom. Directors, screenwriters, producers, cameramen, even actors were brought into service to create films, almost all of them docs, covering the war, training, inspiring, and sometimes even annoying. The films of the War made by units of the Army and Air Force were incredible. Some, like the Battle of San Pietro, or Let There Be Light, were officially disavowed by our government. Others were deemed unfit for American consumption. There is no denying that they are an important part of the story of WWII.



FIRST IN FLIGHT - THE FIRST MOTION PICTURE UNIT BY CHRIS GARCIA



World War II was the single most documented war in history. Yes, Vietnam and the Gulf War were both excessively covered, but not with the kind of depth that WWII received. A large part of that was the effort by the US military to film EVERYTHING. They produced millions of feet of film dedicated to everything from reconnaissance and training, to flat-out propaganda. It was an amazing time to be a filmmaker, and there was work for filmmakers within the military. The most prestigious unit was John Ford's Photographic Unit of the Office of Strategic Services. Ford led his team into fire, including onto the beaches of Normandy during D-Day. They also produced documentaries that were directed by people like Ford, John Huston. The Air Force had their own unit: The First Motion Picture Unit.

Technically a part of the Army, the Air Force had made a deal to have films made by Warner Brothers for the War effort. Jack Warner, who for all his faults was a patriot, They made some movies, mostly shorts and documentaries, including *Winning Your Wings*, in which Jimmy Stewart worked to try and convince viewers to enlist in the Air Force. It won the Best Documentary Oscar, but more important, it was effective in getting young men to enlist. They made others, and among the actors who worked on the films were Burgess Meredith and Ronald Reagan. The unit won another Oscar for Best Short Film for the film *Beyond the Line*



The legacies of the events of WWII live on because these moving images exist. As the veterans of WWII become fewer in number these reels will live on to tell the story of that era as only moving images can.

Audrey Amidon



of Duty. *The Rear Gunner*, starring Ray Enright, Reagan, and Meredith. It's an excellent film, one of the best Warners put out in that period, and it's exactly the kind of film that helped get young men to sign up for the Army.

Warner was pretty much over-whelmed, and the Air Forces wanted a lot more movies, especially training films, and thus, the First Motion Picture Unit, or FMPU, was born as a part of the Air Forces of the Army. The unit was first headquartered in the old Vitagraph Studios. It wasn't a great place, as no one had really been keeping the place in shape, and thus the FMPU was on the move. Hal Roach, the Superstar producer behind the *Little Rascals*, among many others, was called up at the age of 50. He offered up his studios to the FMPU, and the project was headed up by Paul Mantz. The place was referred to as Fort Roach, and on the lot you'd likely find Alan Ladd, Reagan, William Holden, or Clark Gable. The entire lot was turned over to producing films for use by the Air Force, most specifically recruitment and training films. The training films were specifically singled out as being a significant part of why the US was able to gain air superiority so quickly. They understood how to use film for education and training, which gave their recruits a faster track towards quality flying. Name stars helping doing the recruiting also helped draw a lot of new folks to the service.

What may be most amazing is the quality of the films no matter what they were being used for. The excellent *Three Cadets* is a Sex/Ed film that told the story of venereal disease and flyboys. It's really well-done, a story told smartly with a lot of good dialogue. It's not what I'd have expected from a division of the US Army! Other films made by the FMPU included *Wings Up*, where Ronald Reagan narrated a little film directed towards young men explaining how the Officer's Training Program worked, and how it had to be sped up. *Recognition of the Japanese Zero Fighter* was another really good one. FMPU contracted with Disney who created animations for it. This one showed how smart the Unit was. It was an entertaining short at the same time as being educational. The concept of Infotainment wasn't exactly new, but at the same time, this was the first time it had been applied to military purposes. There's an amazing feature doc called *Resisting Enemy Interruption*. It's exactly what you think it's gonna be, but it's so well made, engaging, and it was nominated for an Oscar. That's the thing that got me; these weren't just training films. They were big-budget productions that happened to have been made for the War Effort. *The Last Bomb* was another Oscar nominee, and it was about the conventional bombing of Japan. It was a strong effort, and it wasn't just the subject matter. It was the entire mise-en-scene. The cinematography was great, and even the titles were solid.

Many of the FMPU's films are lost. They made more than 400 movies, and a whole bunch of others that were never completed. There was one, called Special Film Project 186, that may be the most interesting film never seen. It was hundreds of hours of film shot of Europe after bombing. There was a lot of footage, some of which has been seen, but to edit it would have cost upwards of a million dollars, and that sort of expense took Congressional approval. The footage was also seen as a bit too graphic, as the American Public might not have been ready to accept the level of damage that the US had caused to Europe during the war.

The ones that survive are really good, and you can find them on the Internet Archive, or on various DVD sets. There was some footage from the Sex/Ed films included in the great documentary *Sex/Ed*. This was what the American military thought was important. They recognised the power of film as a training tool, as a recruiting tool, and most importantly, as a tool for putting out a clear and concise message. Too many of the films they produced are lost to really say if the Unit had much of an effect on the evolution of filmmaking. It's possible that young servicemen who encountered these films were driven towards movie-making after the war because of them. It's also possible that many of the films that we believe are lost still exist in archives, and possibly in great numbers.



Section 2



PRIVATE SNAFU



by Chris Garcia





"Each cartoon is approximately three minutes long and in black-and-white. The cartoons utilized all of Warner's cartoon directors and voice artists [Mel Blanc as Snafu and Robert C. Bruce as the narrator] and Carl Stalling's music."



It's easy to get caught up in the stereotypes. The images of the buck-toothed Japanese are really offensive today. Long ago we recognised that, and that's one of the reasons that the Private Snafu films have had such a limited distribution for most of the last 50 years. They are unabashedly racist at a time when very troubling attitudes towards the Japanese were not only wide-spread, but widely accepted. Watching the shorts today, they're brilliantly constructed and timed, which makes sense as they were basically put together by the greatest team in the history of animation.

The US Army wanted propaganda films to entertain the troops and teach messages like the importance of keeping your big trap shut, or practicing safe sex. The shorts were directed by Chuck Jones, Fritz Freleng, Bob Clampett, and various others. Those are some of the most important names in the history of Animation. The voice of Private Snafu was provided by the legendary voice of Mel Blanc. The writing? Dr. Seuss, P.D. Eastman and Munro Leaf, all masters of youth literature. That line-up shows the importance of these shorts to the US Army.

And why not? The purpose was to teach lessons to under-literate recruits and draftees. Private Snafu, a dope who messed up all the time, was the star and he was also a feature in a series of comic books as well. These were brilliantly made animated shorts, but they were also instructive. We miss that part because today, we're not learning these lessons; all we're doing is laughing at the boys getting the chance to work a little blue. There's some swearing, some more risque material, and a lot of fun stuff.

Still, it's a product of it's time and that doesn't often translate to present comfortable viewing. In this case, the way 'Tojo' is presented is really hurtful today. If you were offended by Mickey Rooney's portrayal of a Japanese gentleman in *Breakfast at Tiffany's*, you'll be offended by *Private Snafu*.

Still, there's a lot that's being said in the shorts. Private Snafu is the worst-case scenario. He's what we most fear our soldiers are. They're not, of course, and that's good. It makes me somewhat sad that Dr. Seuss would write pieces so blatantly racist, but it was the times. It does make several of the films difficult to watch, but at the same time, everything works so well that you can't help but enjoy them.

THE BATTLE OF SAN PIETRO
BY CHRIS GARCIA



These days, World War II has a glow about it. Every time I think of it, the images I conjure up seem to be shot by the cinematographer for *Watchmen*. It's odd, because it was a war, and war is never pretty, but somehow, the two generations before me have given us this idea that everything was slightly sepia-toned with an aura around them. That is the image today, but there's a way to break yourself of that, to bring yourself around to discover what WWII really looked like. It's a single viewing of the greatest War Documentary ever created – *The Battle of San Pietro*.

John Huston is quite possibly the greatest American film director in history. I'll stack his accomplishments up against any of the masters and I'm certain he'll come out on top. His films range from classic Noirs like *The Maltese Falcon* and *Key Largo*, to gritty dramas like *The Asphalt Jungle*, to the brilliant *Treasure of the Sierra Madre*. Those three alone are worth a place in the pantheon of directors, but before any of those, he worked for the US Army.

Huston had only directed a couple of features before the war, though he was well-known throughout Hollywood as a screenwriter, actor, and among artists for his broad range of talents. The US Army Signal Corps wanted to document the war and to show the folks back home what we were fighting for. This idea had led to the creation of John Ford's series of docs called *Why We Fight*, but it also led several other filmmakers being hired to make films. Huston would make three documentaries – *Report*

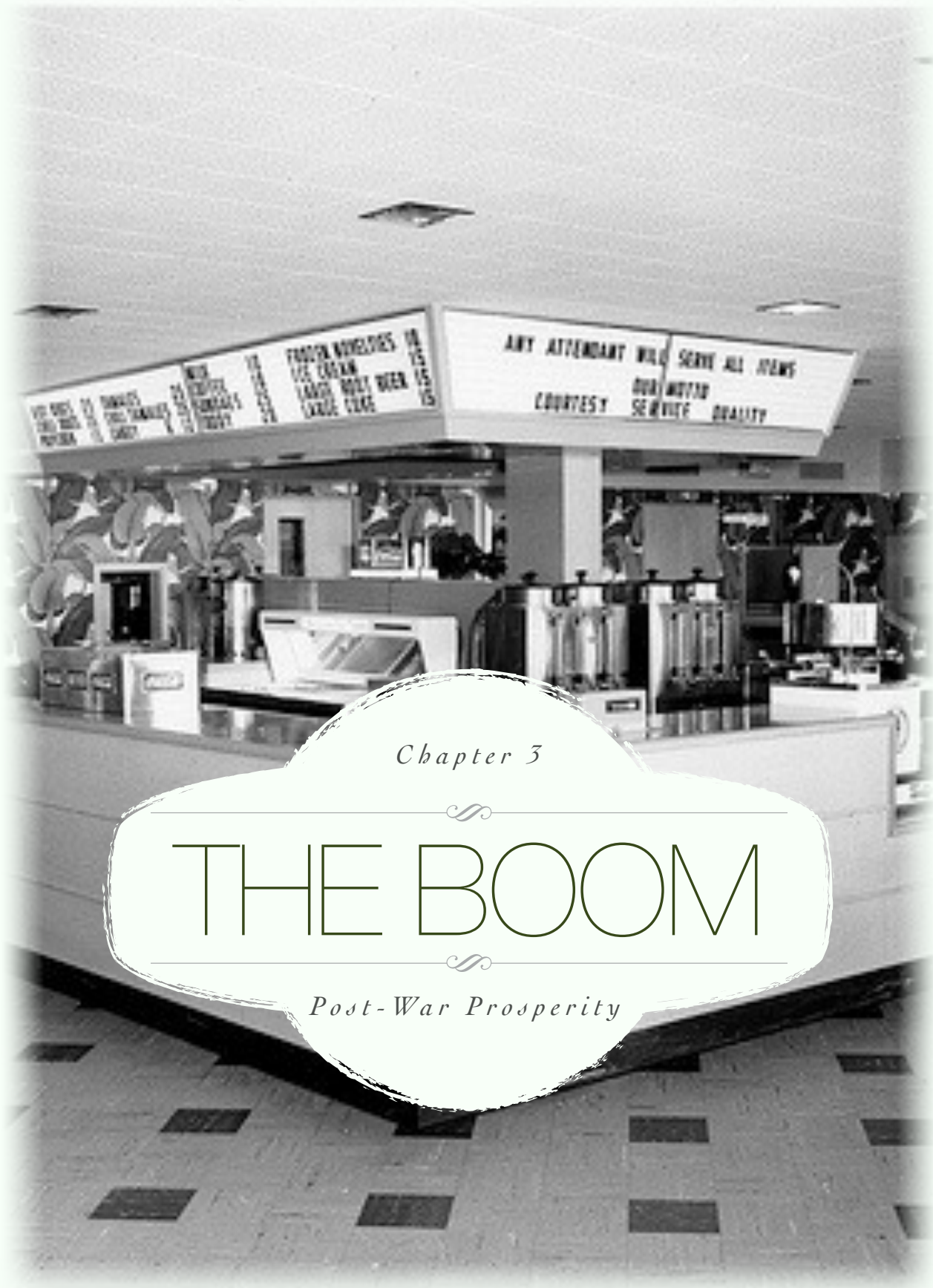
THE BATTLE OF SAN PIETRO

from the *Aleutians*, *Let There Be Light*, and *The Battle of San Pietro*. These three films were all magnificent examples of what war docs can be. They show not only combat footage, but also the daily life of soldiers, the troubles of their lives following the war. These are not three rah-rah-rah pieces of propaganda, but composed, sometimes lyrical, films that present war to us as something that happens and must be dealt with. *Let There Be Light* is the story of what happens after war. It's the look at what damage can be done mentally and how it is dealt with. This was seen as demoralizing and the film wasn't released for years after it was finished, but it has become widely-praised for its content and style.

The film that I contend is the best depiction of what combat is has to be *The Battle of San Pietro*. The film is as visceral as a documentary can be. It shows the actual outcome of battle – deaths. There are close-ups of fallen soldiers, taken by Huston's crew, and there is an air of heavy death and peril. It's a powerful film; one of the few that seems to use the power of the documentary form to turn a viewer against war without being manipulative. It simply does so by presenting war for what it is – death.

Perhaps it is this point that is so important. *The Battle of San Pietro* is not a memorial to the glorious dead or an entreaty to young men to come and give their lives in defense of their country. It is an anti-war film. Huston's commanding officers accused him of making an anti-war film, to which he responded, "if I ever make a pro-war film, I should be shot."

Of course, when your producers order a pro-war film, it's best for your career to give them what they want. Huston, on the other hand, could have cared less. Eventually, the Powers That Be discovered what Huston had really done; he had created an amazing document of the war, of the lives, and the sacrifice, of the soldiers who died in the Battle of San Pietro. I truly believe that the reason there was no World War III was because documentaries allowed War to become more than just a tale told to us by our Grandfathers. Film allowed us to experience it, to understand war, and *The Battle of San Pietro* is probably the best example of a film that brought that took the idea of preventing future wars by presenting the brutality and made it work. It is a work of art, a powerful piece of filmmaking, and in the years that followed the war it proved very influential on those filmmakers who took it in. *The Battle of San Pietro* was somewhat suppressed, but it did get a limited release, after the war. It was selected for the National Film Registry. You can see it at https://archive.org/details/battle_of_san_pietro

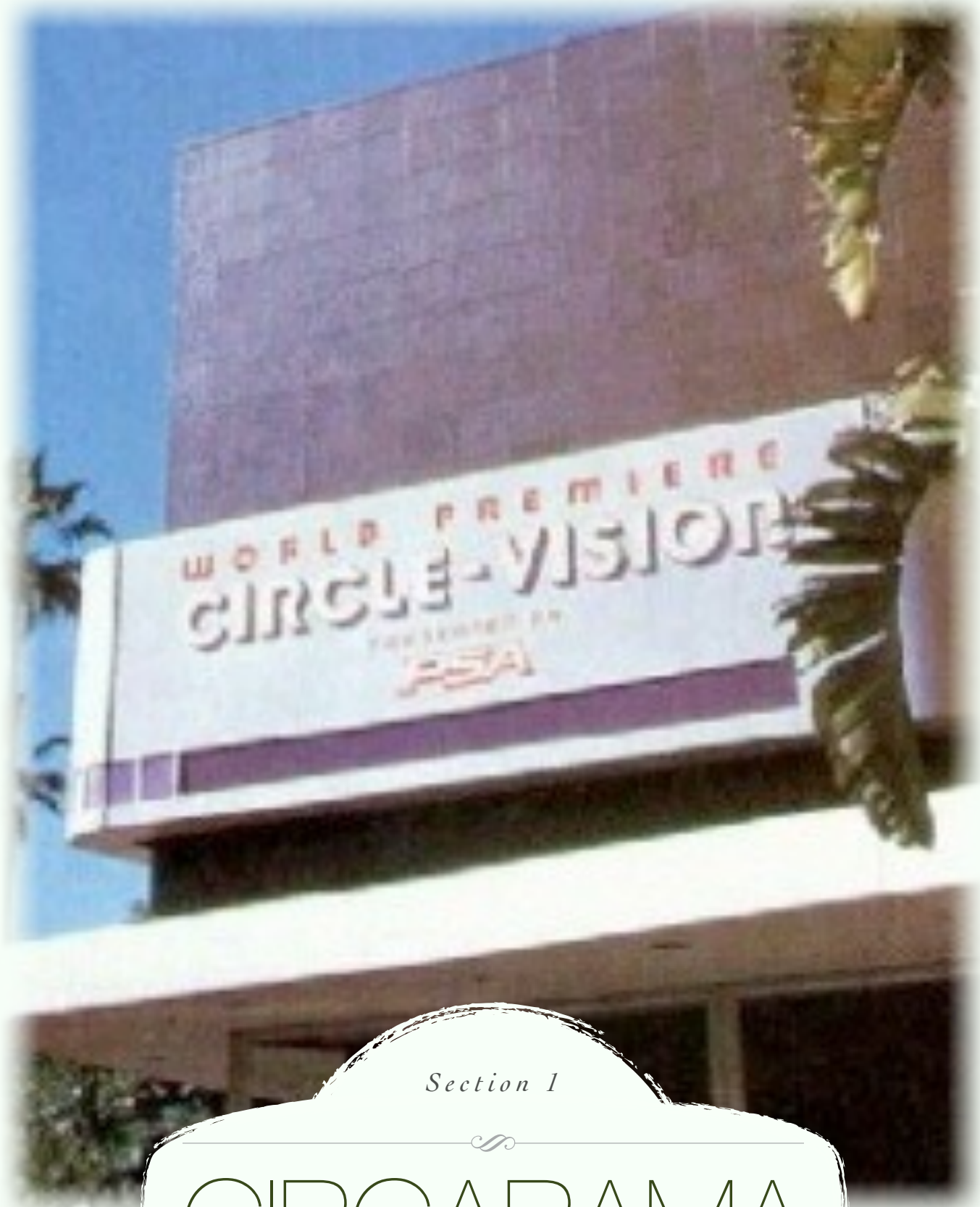


Chapter 3

THE BOOM

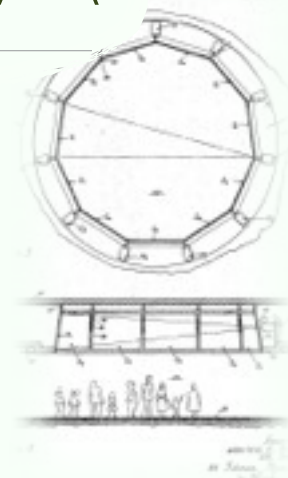
Post-War Prosperity

Television threatened Hollywood's livelihood, and cinema fought back with gimmicks (3D, Cinerama, William Castle) and produced some amazing films.



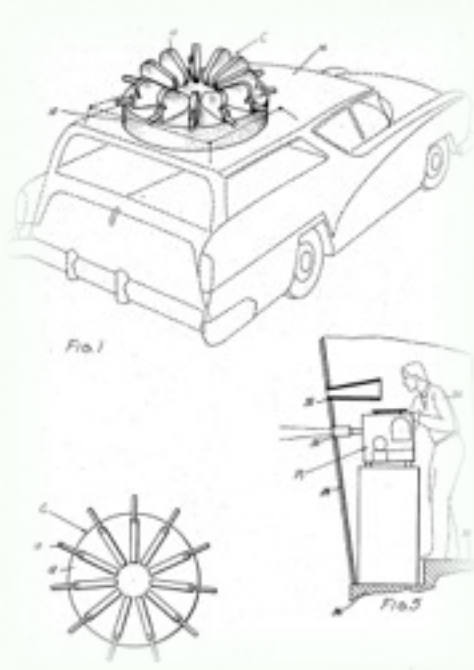
Section 1

CIRCARAMA





The Circarama survived as Circle-Vision 360 for a couple of more decades. The final film, The Timekeeper, incorporated Audio-Animatronics.



Going to the movies used to be a cultural experience. It was akin to going to the Opera, or to see a play. It was something that you did to experience culture in a community setting. Once films moved from the Arcade setting of the 1890s, they became a significant cultural event.

And then the 1950s happened.

You see, there were a series of events that changed everything. The first was television. No longer was going to the movies a day-long event. The idea of the B-movie, which had always been around, became far more important. The Drive-in got people to see films without having to interact with other people, which made it an ideal place for kids to make out. All of these turned the Film-going process into something other than a cultural event, into a pass time. And, believe it or not, that freed movies.

You see, once you've taken the high-brow away, you've opened up the possibility of turning film into something new. You saw this first with theatre, in which you brought it out of the traditional setting and made it into a Pleasure Park idea. Performers would wander the parks, interacting with the attendees. It was a neat idea, and it happened with film as well. While most folks familiar with Disneyland can point to Captain EO, and the real Disneyland Deep Cut fans can point to A Tour of the West, which was a film that opened with the park. Neither of these really had the innovation of Circarama.

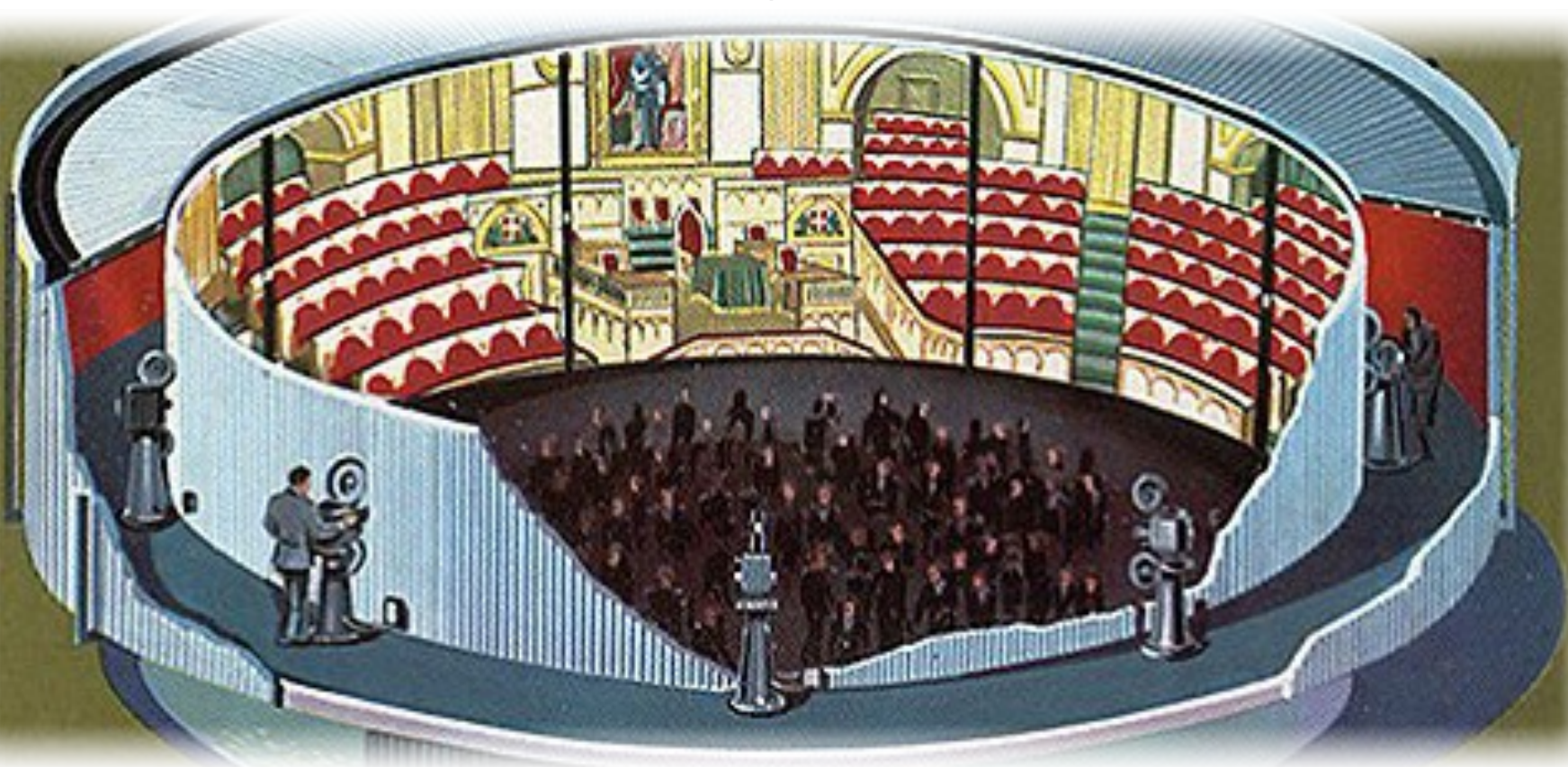
Let's go back to the World's Faire in Brussels, 1958. Disney would have a huge role to play in the World's Faire in 1964, but they had been a part of several international expositions ahead of that. At the Brussels faire, Disney first displayed their new film concept – Circarama. It wasn't just a film, it was a process. Take a bunch of 16mm cameras and arrange them so that they cover a 360 degree field of vision. Take the camera set-up and go around the country, filming moments and places that are utterly American; the perfect stuff for a World's Faire to display what America is. Then, in a specially-designed room where the audience stood below the screens and looked up, 11 projectors showed the film.

This concept meant several things. First, you couldn't really do a feature film. Asking people to stand for two hours would not be kind. At the same time, you had what is easily the most sensory experience that film had ever attempted. It wasn't just 146 degrees of film, like Cinerama, it was a full circle. No human could see it all at once. You had to move your head within the environment to see different fields of vision. The fact that Disney did it in color certainly helped, but at the time, Circarama was the most immersive cinema experience in history.

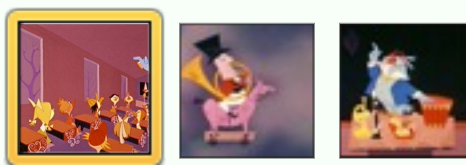
I never saw the original *America The Beautiful*. The dozens of times I went to Disneyland, we stopped to see what was showing at Circle-Vision 360, which was the replacement for Circarama. It used 9 cameras, and did a lot of different things, like having 9 different images at a time. I can remember seeing two great films in Circle-Vision 360: *Reflections of China* and *American Journeys*, which was a re-make of *America The Beautiful*, though not the 1955 version; the 1967 version which was the remake of the 1955 version. It was gorgeous, and I really wish the National Film Registry would recognise the importance of the way films are presented as attraction. Putting *America The Beautiful* or *Captain EO*, or even The classic Imax film *Speed* would really show that the world of film has changed. If you look at the spectacle film today, they are closer related to the movies that have invaded amusement parks than the classics that thrilled filmgoers in the 20s and 30s.



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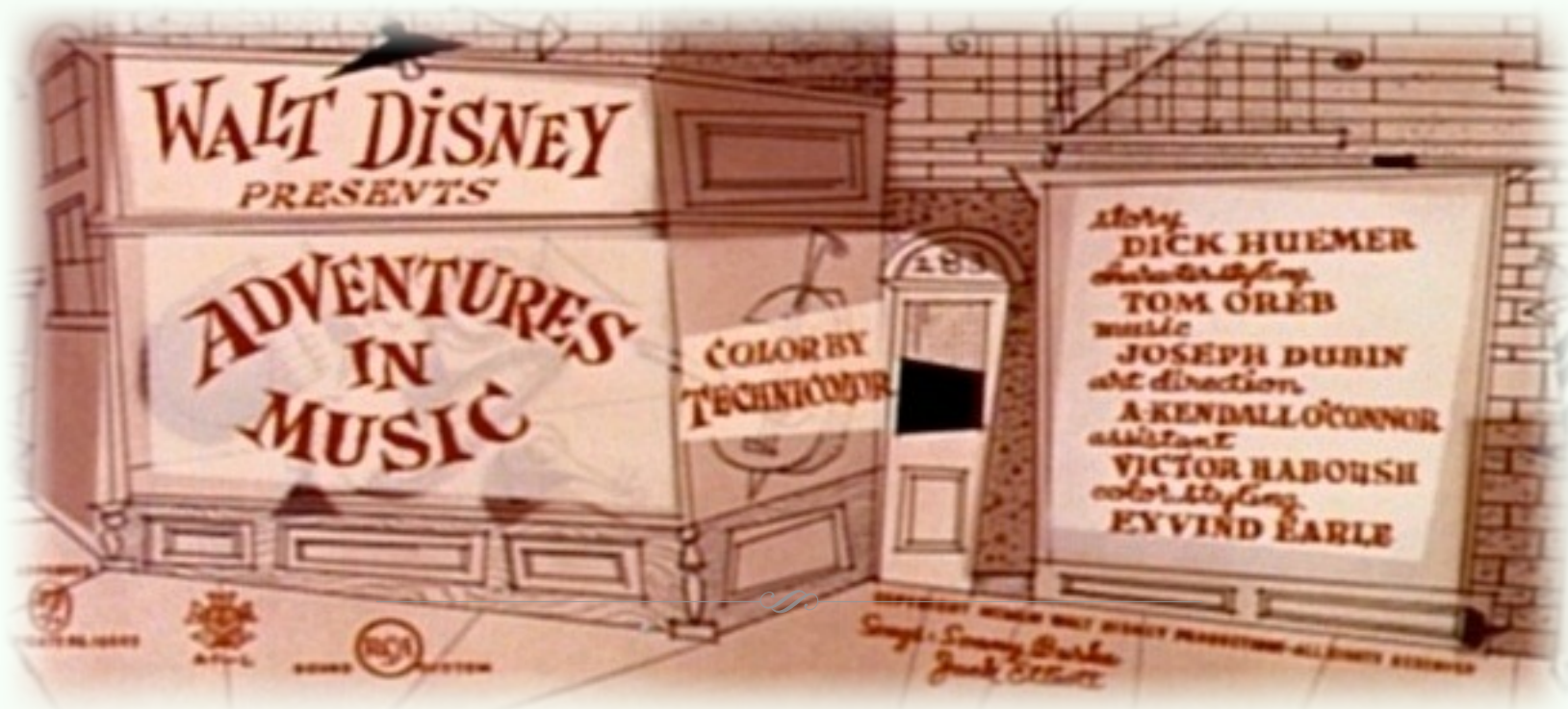
"TOOT, WHISTLE, PLUNK AND BOOM"



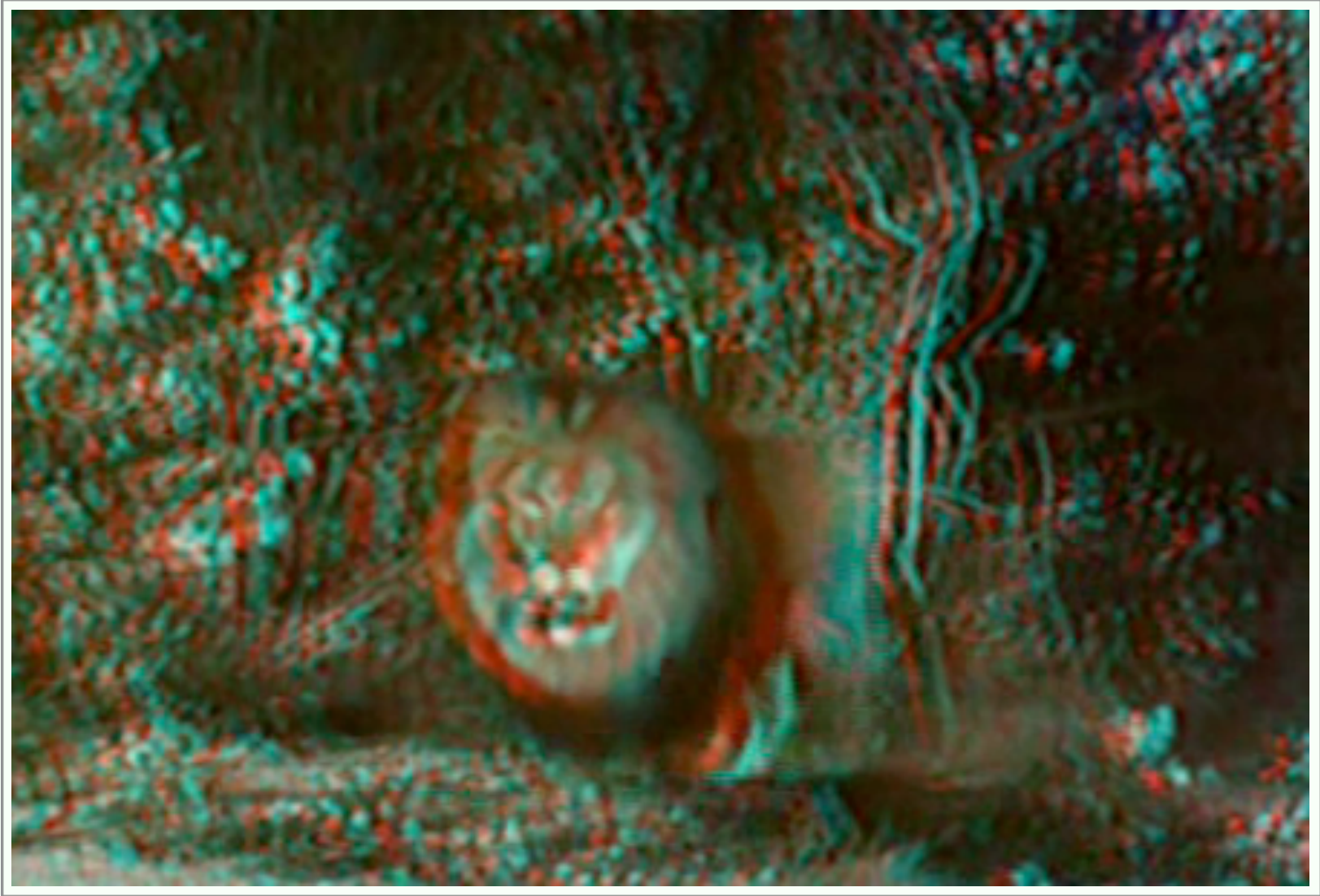
I LOVED THE DISNEY CHANNEL SHOW DONALD DUCK PRESENTS

They always showed cartoons from the Disney vault, and sometime they were amazing. My favorite were the lesser-known ones, like the two Adventures in Music shorts. The best of those won the Academy Award - *Toot, Whistle, Plunk, and Boom*.

It was an educational short, telling us about music, how it's created and in ten minutes of the most incredible animation it taught me everything I needed to know about music. It was the first Disney cartoon in CinemaScope, and the flat version's nowhere near as good as the original. Mostly done by the legendary Ward Kimball, it's worth seeing.



BWANA BEAST



BY TODD LIEBENOW OF [FORGOTTEN FILMS](#) CAST

Growing up in the Chicago area, my family often visited the Field Museum. That was the place to see dinosaurs, and when I was about 6 years old I was really into dinosaurs. I also remember going to see King Tut there sometime around 1977 and I remember visiting room after room of taxidermy exhibits. I didn't realize it at the time, but I probably viewed the two lions at the center of today's movie at the museum several times...the Tsavo maneaters, or as we've come to know them in recent years, The Ghost and the Darkness. Before you get the wrong idea, the 1996 film starring Val Kilmer and Michael Douglas is not the subject of this review. We're taking a look at the 1952 film "Bwana Devil," which was also based on the story of the Tsavo maneaters. The film does have some historical significance, as it is considered to be the first 3-D movie ever released.

The year is 1898, and the British are building a railroad across Kenya. Among them is the very un-British Jack Hayward (Robert Stack). Most of the workers on the project have been brought over from India, with Hayward and Dr. Angus Ross (Nigel Bruce) overseeing the operation. But shortly after Hayward arrives, he learns that the workers are scared as a man-eating lion

*It is the worst movie
in my rather faltering
memory, and my
hangover from it was
so painful that I
immediately went to
see a two-dimensional
movie for relief.
Hollis Alpert of The
Saturday Review*



has become the water cooler topic of the camp. At first, Hayward tries to convince the workers that there is no lion...but the leftover lion num-nums found around the camp end up being a bit of a giveaway. Thus, many attempts to trap and kill the beast follow, with less than stellar results.

Eventually, Hayward learns that there are actually two lions that have somehow developed a taste for man flesh and are working together to slowly pick off the railroad workers. News begins to spread that a few measly lions have halted the might of the British empire and some top game hunters are dispatched to solve the problem, with Hayward's wife Alice (Barbara Britton) accompanying them on the trip down to Africa. But the hunters end up...well, the hunted, and it's up to Hayward to bring down these "devils."

It goes without saying that the film plays it loose with the historical details...but who's going to argue since even the actual details of this man vs lion story are a bit hazy. John Henry Patterson, the man who actually killed the lions and wrote the book on the incident, claimed that the lions feasted upon at least 135 men. But, thanks to research I could never understand, scientists at the Field Museum, who have studied the remains of the animals, figure that number was probably closer to 35 deaths. Whether or not Patterson's account is true, it seems all that mattered to the filmmakers is that we have a railroad construction project and that it's attacked repeatedly by two lions. All the rest was open to interpretation.

The movie is fun, in a goofy sort of way. It is obvious that the filmmakers were quite limited in their resources. What is supposed to be a massive railroad building project looks about as big as a Cub Scout pack camping out in their den mother's back yard. The budget didn't seem to allow for the most ferocious lions money could buy either. To be honest, the lions spend most of the movie lumbering around, casually pawing at the 3-D cameras, and looking drugged. Only one sequence in which a group of natives form a circle, surrounding one of the lions, manages to create any tension.

The film also suffers from some dumb storytelling choices, chief among them is bringing in the character of Mrs. Hayward about three-quarters of the way into the movie. Most likely some producer decided that the lead character needed a love interest, but she adds nothing to the story. Honestly, she might have done the story more good had she become a lion snack, creating a bit more drama in the process.

The final showdown between Hayward and one of the lions also ends up being a bit over-the-top. Now I could say SPOILER ALERT here, but I've already told you that the lions currently reside in a museum in Chicago...so quit the whining. But having Stack's rifle jam after wounding the lion, leaving him to resort to beating the animal with the stock while shouting "You Devil" is unintentional comedy of the highest degree.

I can't call "Bwana Devil" a good movie, but it is fun to watch and an interesting curiosity considering it's place in 3-D movie history. I'd watch it again over the 3-D penguins of "Happy Feet 2" any day.

Section 2

MARS AND BEYOND



We were supposed to have been to Mars by now. Walt Disney told us so. In the 1950s, Walt's program *Disneyland* on ABC was one of the most important parts of bringing the idea of manned space travel to everyone's living room. Several episodes focused on the concepts of space and space travel, the best of which were primarily directed by Ward Kimball, one of Disney's Nine Old Men animators.

The episode *Mars and Beyond* takes a look at what we conceived of Mars at the time, and what it would take to get us there and how we would survive. This was hugely important in that the generation that grew up watching these shows were the ones who were coming of age just as the Space Race was heating up. The interest in science and technology we discovered in the 1960s had to come about at least partially from the reaction to piece like *Mars and Beyond*.

The animation style is gorgeous, oscillating between Kimball's unmistakable style and what could be described as Bonestalian illustrations of Mars, space ships and stations. This makes the episode so much more memorable because it presents it as both science education and science fiction.

The first time I saw much of this was on the Disney Channel in the early 1980s. They would show clips from these shows as a filler, and this was one that made an impact on me. I must have seen it three or four times, and I sorta filed it away, only bring-



ing it up once I saw a snippet at *The Animation Show* put on by Mike Judge and Don Hertzfeld in 2003, just before the episode was released on the Walt Disney Treasures DVD set. Yes, I know this is technically television, but it really does say a lot about Disney's philosophy towards film. Walt saw a much bigger picture than just entertainment or traditional documentary (though they also did plenty of those) and *Mars and Beyond* fills that role. It's infotainment, sure, but it's so good. It's the kind of stuff that we thought would change the world, get kids interested in science, advance the state of the art, actually make the things they showed happen.

And maybe it did all that.



20,000 LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA BY CHRIS CHRISTOPOULOS



20,000 Leagues Under the Sea - A fine live-action adventure that brings Jules Verne's classic sci-fi tale to vivid life

Director: Richard Fleischer

Producer: Walt Disney

Screenplay: Earl Felton

Story: Based on Jules Verne's novel

Music: Paul Smith

Cinematography: Franz Planer

Editing: Elmo Williams

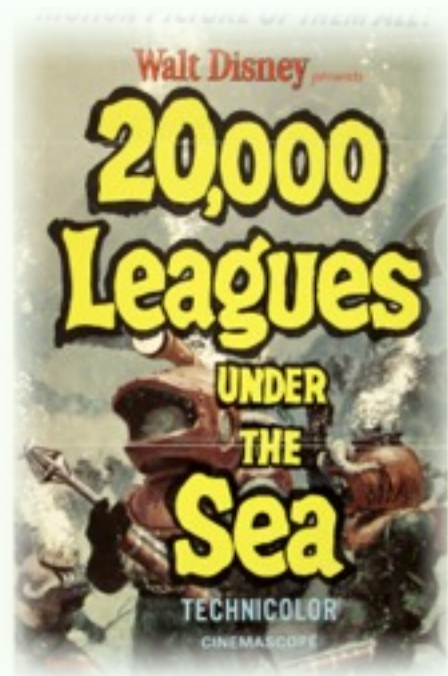
Studio: Walt Disney Productions

Distributor: Buena Vista Distribution

Running time 127 minutes

Budget: \$5,000,000

Box office: \$28,200,000



“The natives over there are cannibals. They eat liars with the same enthusiasm as they eat honest men.” Captain Nemo



Cast

Kirk Douglas: Ned Land
James Mason: Captain Nemo
Paul Lukas: Professor Pierre Aronnax
**Peter Lorre: Conseil **
Robert J. Wilke: Nautilus's First Mate
Ted de Corsia: Captain Farragut
Carleton Young: John Howard
J. M. Kerrigan: Billy
Percy Helton: Coach driver
Ted Cooper: Abraham Lincoln's First Mate
Fred Graham: Casey

The Disney film, *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea* was the first foray into the science fiction film genre by Walt Disney Productions and is the best-known adaptation of the book of the same name by Jules Verne.

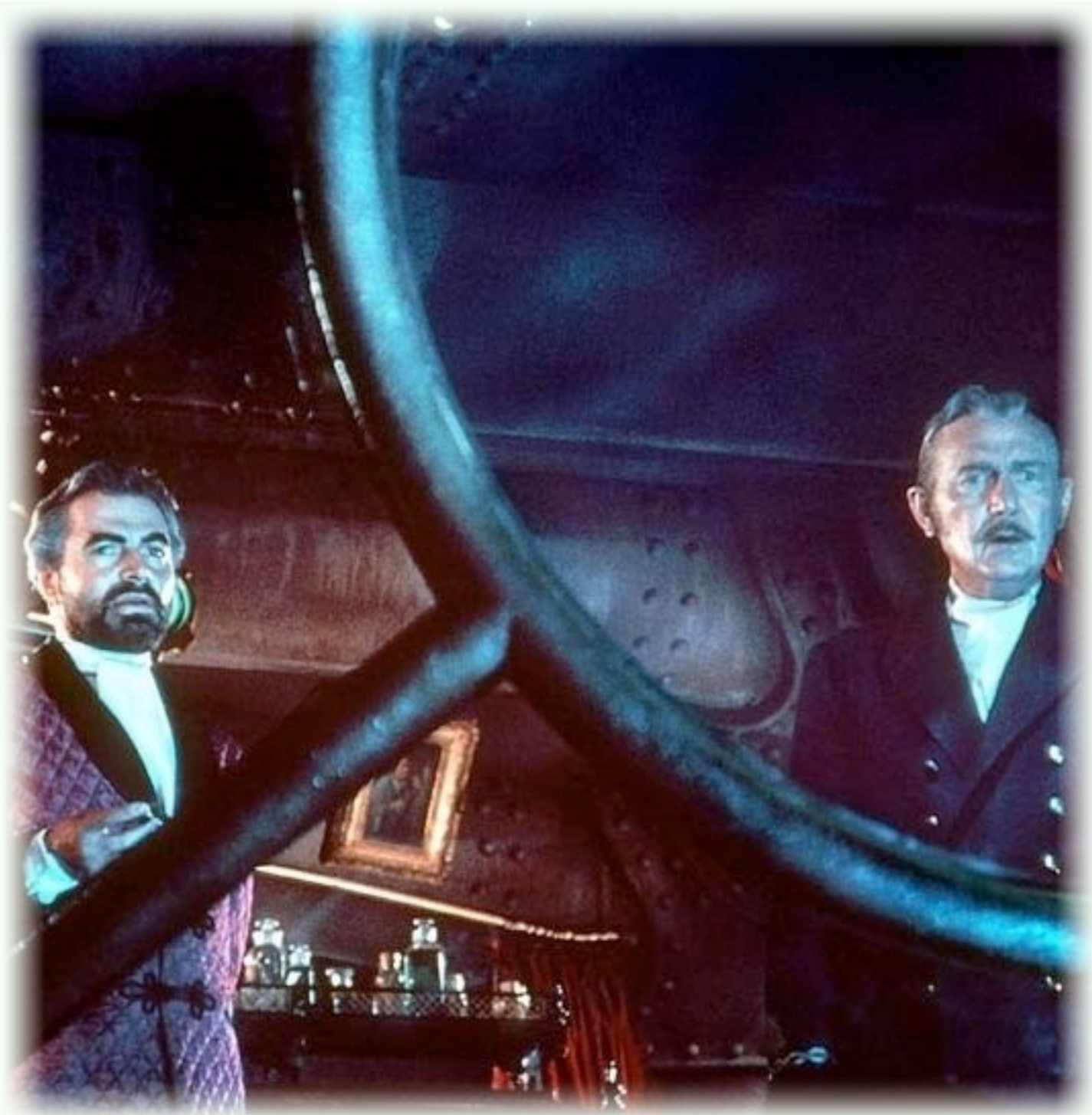
How often are we confronted by images and reports of death and destruction around the world due largely to the activities of political, tribal or sectarian groups and organisations, as well as countries and individuals motivated by personal greed, ideology, fanaticism and the need to gain and wield power and control over others? More often than not we see the results of such base and criminal human instincts and desires in the form of millions of our fellow human beings lying dead or dying from the ravages of war and disease; being uprooted from their homes and forced to seek refuge in other lands; having to wonder where their next meal is coming from and futilely seeking work in order to sustain themselves and scratch out some kind of basic human dignity. And so the world sits idly by and allows this to happen, deaf to the pleas of the many who cannot make themselves heard above the din of the gunshots and explosions of militaristic savages; the blustering, cacophonous arguments and counter-arguments of posturing, face-saving political leaders; and the mentally unstable ranting of dogmatic religious and political ideologues.

As onlookers to this human travesty, it is no wonder that we can feel so utterly helpless in the face of forces that seem to be way beyond our control. If only we as individuals had the power to right the wrongs, to redress the inequalities, to strike a blow once and for all for human freedom and liberty, to wipe from the face of the earth those who would cause millions upon millions of people to live in fear for their lives.....

In the film we are about to consider, *20,000 Leagues Under The Sea*, one man did indeed move beyond the realm of “If only...” to actually realizing that understandable but seemingly fanciful wish to exercise the kind of power that would bring the world to its senses. But by being able to bring the world to its knees in the face of such unimaginable power, what would be the cost to the one exercising that kind of power and ultimately to the rest of the world?

The film, *20,000 leagues Under The Sea* opens with a cover of Jules Verne’s work and the opening words to the first chapter of his book. The film’s origins and Verne’s legacy is established for us.

We then move to a shot of a ship powered by both sail and steam; an example of a fusion of “old” and “new” technologies in an era that was moving from wind / sail power to steam power; the engine of the industrial revolution. Suddenly, like a shark moving in for the kill, a mysterious sea vessel heads toward the ship. This vessel is almost other-worldly with its luminescent green light and incredible swiftness as it stealthily slices its way to-



wards its sitting duck prey. The technology exemplified by the 19th century vessel is in an instant rendered into a debris field of floating bits of flotsam and jetsam.

It is 1868, and rumours abound of a sea monster attacking ships in the Pacific Ocean causing apprehension and fear among sea-farers, as well as wreaking havoc upon vital shipping lanes.

The United States government calls upon Professor Pierre M. Aronnax and his assistant, Conseil to join an expedition in order to “confirm or deny certain rumours.” Initially, Aronnax was to embark on an expedition to the orient but this plan fell through.

Months pass when finally, what appears to be the “monster” is spotted. The ship opens fire with its cannons, but to no avail as the “monster” rams the ship. Ned, a brash and cocky harpooner, and Aronnax are thrown overboard, while the loyal and trusty Conseil



20,000 Leagues Under the Sea
was filmed at various locations in
Bahamas and Jamaica.



jumps in after Aronnax.

The three men drift in the ocean away from the stricken, burning and helpless warship. They eventually stumble upon a deserted, strange-looking metal vessel, which they conclude is a man-made submerged boat and is in fact the dreaded "monster" that they have been pursuing.

The submarine crew return to the vessel after conducting an undersea funeral and capture the three intruders. They are soon introduced to Captain Nemo, master of the Nautilus. Nemo intends to dispose of Ned and Conseil, but acknowledges Aronnax for his work and research and offers him the chance to stay. When it becomes obvious that Aronnax would rather die with his two companions, Nemo relents and permits Ned and Conseil to stay on board the submarine.

Later at the penal colony island of Rura Penthe, where Nemo and many of his crew were once prisoners, they observe current prisoners loading a munitions ship with a "cargo of death." Nitrates and phosphates are taken from the island to be used for munitions. Nemo uses the Nautilus to ram the ship, destroying its cargo and killing the crew.

Nemo, although in a state of anguish over his actions, rationalizes his decision as having been taken in order to save thousands of people from death in war. Personal vengeance has also played a part as this "hated nation" had tortured his wife and son to death in an attempt to force him to reveal the secrets of his work.

Meanwhile, Ned has uncovered the coordinates of Nemo's secret island base, Vulcania, and comes up with the idea of placing messages in sealed bottles, which he will cast into the ocean in the hope that somebody will find them and free him from his predicament.

A while later, just off the coast of New Guinea, the Nautilus becomes stranded on a reef. Ned is allowed to go ashore with Conseil to collect specimens, but he is more intent on locating ways and means of escaping. While on a path to possible freedom, Ned finds himself confronted with a number of human skulls on stakes. This is an island of cannibals! Ned hurriedly rushes back to re-join Conseil and both men are pursued back to the Nautilus by the cannibals. The cannibals board the Nautilus but are repelled from the ship by electrical discharges on its hull. For his disobedience, Ned is confined to the submarine's brig by a furious Nemo.

As the Nautilus evades a hostile approaching warship, it falls into the clutches of a giant squid. An electric discharge fails to repel the monster, so Nemo orders the submarine to surface so that he and his men can try to dislodge the squid. While doing battle with the giant marine creature, Nemo is caught in one of its tentacles, but Ned jumps to Nemo's rescue and saves his life. This experience seems to have produced a change of heart in Nemo who now declares that he wants to make peace with the surface world.

Nearing Vulcania, the Nautilus finds itself surrounded by warships while marines are converging on his hideout. After going ashore, Nemo plants a bomb in his hideout, but receives a mortal gunshot wound to the back as he was returning to the Nautilus.

Nemo is eventually able to navigate the submarine away from Vulcania, and declares that he will be "taking the Nautilus down for the last time". His crew are also determined to accompany their captain in this last voyage of the Nautilus.

Nemo instructs The Nautilus's crew go to their cabins while Aronnax, Conseil, and Ned are confined to their cabins. Ned, however breaks free from his confinement and manages to resurface the Nautilus, causing it to strike a reef and to begin flooding. Nemo's last image in this life is of his beloved ocean world through the Nautilus's viewing window.



Film Facts
20,000 Leagues Under The Sea
won two Academy Awards
Best Art Direction – Color
Best Special Effects *The film*
was also nominated for one
more; Best Film Editing



As Aronnax attempts to retrieve his journal containing an account of the voyage, he is knocked unconscious by Ned who carries him out and away from danger. Vulcania is destroyed in an explosion and the Nautilus slips out of sight beneath the waves. We are left with Nemo's last words to Aronnax:

"There is hope for the future. And when the world is ready for a new and better life, all this will someday come to pass, in God's good time."

The names that Verne used in his story have some interesting allusions and origins. Take Captain Nemo's name for instance. Here we have an allusion to Homer's Greek epic poem *Odyssey*, in which Odysseus during one of his wanderings meets the cyclops, Polyphemus who asks Odysseus his name. Odysseus tells him that his name is "Utis" ("No-man" or "No-body"). In Latin this translates as "Nemo" ("No-man" or "No-body"). Nemo like Odysseus is fated to wander the seas in exile and to suffer torment.

The name of the submarine, "Nautilus" is taken from one of the earliest successful submarines, built in 1800 by Robert Fulton, whose submarine was named after the paper nautilus because it had a sail. Prior to writing his novel, Jules Verne studied a model of the newly developed French Navy submarine *Plongeur* at the 1867 Exposition Universelle, which provided him with inspiration for his own fictional version.

The name of the penal colony island Rura Penthe in *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea* is also the name of a fictional penal colony in Siberia in the 1869 Tolstoy novel *War and Peace* and the Klingon penal asteroid planet in *Star Trek*.

The famous giant squid attack sequence was shot twice: originally filmed as taking place at dusk and in a calm sea and again, at night and during a huge gale in order to increase the drama and conceal the mechanical components of the animatronic squid.

The Vision

Jules Verne seemed to have foreseen the atomic submarine powered by "the dynamic power of the universe" of today. In 1954, such a concept would have been very intriguing even for mid-20th century audiences. It was in fact, in 1954 that the world's first operational nuclear-powered submarine, the United States Navy's USS Nautilus (SSN-571) was launched. Some say it was named for Verne's fictional vessel but was also named after another USS Nautilus (SS-168) that served with distinction in World War II. It wasn't until the advent of specially-purposed submergence vehicles such as bathyscaphe *Trieste* in 1960 and DSV *DeepSea Challenger* in 2012 that we began to realize much of Verne's submarine world vision.

Verne seems to have also foreseen the potential military applications of submarines. Considerer, for instance the danger which German U-boats later posed to the Royal Navy and other ships during the First and Second World Wars of the 20th Century, in the very same waters where Verne predicted it would take place.

Nautilus

When Captain Nemo constructed his Nautilus on Mysterious Island, the iron riveted ship was cutting-edge technology in ship building. No doubt even in the 21st century, the appearance of the Nautilus complete with its rivets, spines, internal workings and overall shape would be appealing for those who are fans of retro technology and steampunk.



As for the appearance of the Nautilus, it exudes a combination of sleek beauty and menace possessing as it does the features of both the shark and alligator, replete with pointed nose, menacing dorsal fin, sleek streamlined shape, distinctive tail and riveted alligator-like outer-skin. With the addition of its protective sawtooth spline, it seems that nothing can withstand its destructive ramming power when it decides to come in for the kill and take a bite out of its prey.

Characters

Nemo

James Mason is well cast as Captain Nemo who he convincingly portrays as a tragic hero so far ahead of his time. On the one hand, he is misunderstood by a cruel and violent world that can only see him as being a monster to be hunted down and killed with harpoons and cannons. On the other hand, the flaws in Nemo's character, together with the overwhelming and corrupting power of the technology he has developed has contributed to his becoming a kind of vengeful, sadistic and despotic monster.

Our first impression of Nemo is that he is a man who instantly commands respect. After the capture of Ned and his companions, Nemo enters and everyone stops moving and talking. He is a man who has "done with society" and as he states, "I do not obey its laws." Nemo has the kind of almost megalomaniac personality that allows him to rise above the moral constraints of mere mortals. This obsessed and fanatical character jealously guards the secrets ("secrets that are mine alone") of his power in the bony embrace of his vengeful hatred toward what he sees as the evils of humanity. It is up to others (and humanity) to prove their worth to him as Professor Aronnax was to find out when Nemo tested his loyalty and "love for fellow man" when given the choice to stay on board while his two companions drowned or join them and share their fate.

Captain Nemo may seem to be, as according to Ned, "cracked" and like a "mad dog," but he is also a complex character. On the one hand, he is a product of ill-treatment and injustice considering what happened to him and his family within an unjust surface world replete with hunger, fear, fighting and unjust laws. How often in our history have such conditions given rise to sociopathic individuals and movements who have assumed and used power under the guise of combating injustice and inequality only to perpetuate even greater suffering among those who are subject to that power. On the other hand, Nemo's mind and soul has been corrupted by the power he wields which in turn is fed by "the power of hate (that) can fill the heart as easily as love can."

Nemo in his delusion can declare, "I am the avenger!" but the personal price he is paying for this is illustrated while he plays the organ prior to attacking the ship and its cargo of death. The organ music seems to reflect the inner anguish of this tragic hero as it echoes throughout the Nautilus: his ship, his world, his being.

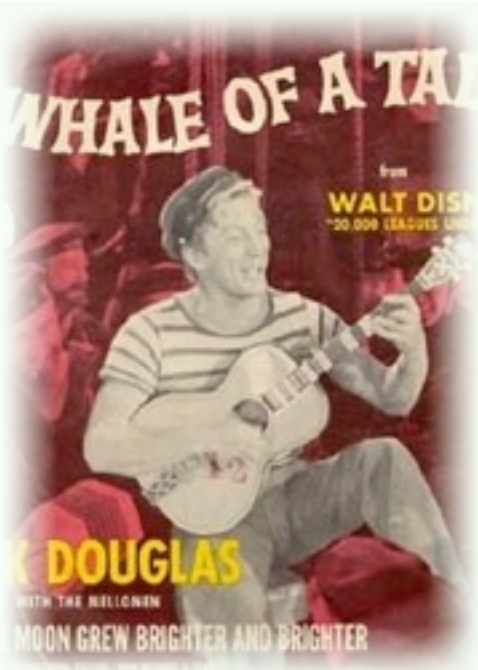
With Nemo, we have a man who ardently believes he can use the power he has "to lift mankind from the depths of hell" and raise it to the heights of heaven. However, when he was rescued from the giant squid by Ned he needs to ask him, "You saved my life? Why?" At this point Nemo could have been saved not only physically but also in a sense spiritually, but as Aronnax stated, "It would undo all his faith in Nautilus to admit to human goodness." Still that one act did produce a change in Nemo.

And so we leave this character puzzling over someone who has the capacity to lead a civilized apparently Christian burial service to honour a dead crew member, while knowing full well that had he been in Ned's place, he would not have tried to save him.

"I am not what is called a civilized man, Professor. I have done with society for reasons that seem good to me. Therefore, I do not obey its laws."



*Got a whale of a tale to tell ya,
lads, a whale of a tale or two,
'bout the floppin' fish and the
girls I've loved on nights like this
with the moon above. A whale of
a tale and it's all true, I swear by
my tattoo. There was Typhoon
Tessie; met her on the coast of
Java. When we kissed, I bubbled
up like molten lava. Then she
gave me the scare of my young
life. Blow me down and pick me
up, she was the captain's wife!*



Ned

Lying between the extremes of the Nemo character and the optimistic, kind-hearted man of reason in the form of Professor Arronax, we have Ned Land: the wise-cracking, womanizing man of action who is at home in the world of harpoons, winds and currents. Although bearing little resemblance to Verne's character, the film version reminds us of the carefree spirit that resides in each of us or which we might yearn for. A woman on each arm, a bit of 'biff' on the noses of those in authority or those who try to take us for a ride and of course, a "whale of a song": all very appealing to any man on some level!

Ned is definitely in Nemo and Aronnax's bourgeois eyes an uncultured slob who uses his knife as you would use a fork and talks with his mouth full of food. But, he knows enough to distinguish between "guests" and "prisoners" and it seems to be obvious which category he and his two companions fall into.

It was this simple sailor, Ned Land, who not only saved Nemo from the monster from the ocean's depths, but who almost in a sense was poised to save Nemo from another kind of monster-himself!

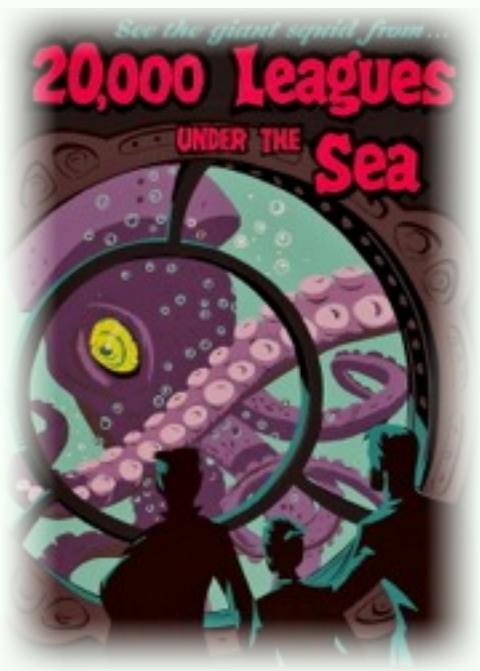
Conseil

Although 20,000 leagues under the sea is an excellent adventure movie, it does contain quite a lot of humour. This humour often arises from the antics of Ned and Conseil. Take for instance, Conseil who dismisses Ned's message-in-a-bottle idea with, "That went out with Robinson Crusoe! This is the nineteenth century!" Not to mention seeing Peter Lorre being poked in the backside by a seal's nose! Both Ned and Conseil manage to bounce off each other with very funny bantering and both make a fine comedy duo.

The presence of the character Conseil is far more than that of providing comedy relief. He serves as a kind of brake to Aronnax's unbounded and optimistic scientific curiosity with his combined qualities of steadfast loyalty and considered caution. Contrast, for example, Aronnax's wonder at Nemo's submarine with Conseil's warning that it might prove to be an "engine of destruction." Nor is Conseil's role merely one of unquestioningly assisting and supporting Aronnax. When he later realises that the professor has gone too far in his determination not to antagonise Nemo, Conseil tells him point blank that he values his own life above that of scientific achievement.

Aronnax

Professor Aronnax is full of wonder and scientific curiosity about the achievements of Captain Nemo. He even manages to convince himself and his companions that he will attempt to learn as much as he can in order to win Nemo's confidence. What he doesn't realise is that by seeming to acquiesce to Nemo's terms and conditions, he is running the risk of becoming a willing defender of and participant or collaborator in Nemo's world view. When Aronnax declares that the world has use for someone like Nemo, it is Conseil who sarcastically replies with, "Whatever you say, Captain!" In Conseil's eyes, the professor has become indistinguishable from his captor, Captain Nemo. How often have we heard of captives and prisoners eventually closely identifying with their captors (Stockholm syndrome). How often throughout history have tyrannical and despotic regimes flourished because so many choose to acquiesce and collaborate out of fear or personal gain while instinctively knowing that they are really supporting something that is inimical to human rights, liberty and dignity. How easy it is for us to rationalise the choices we make no matter how detrimental to ourselves and others they may be.

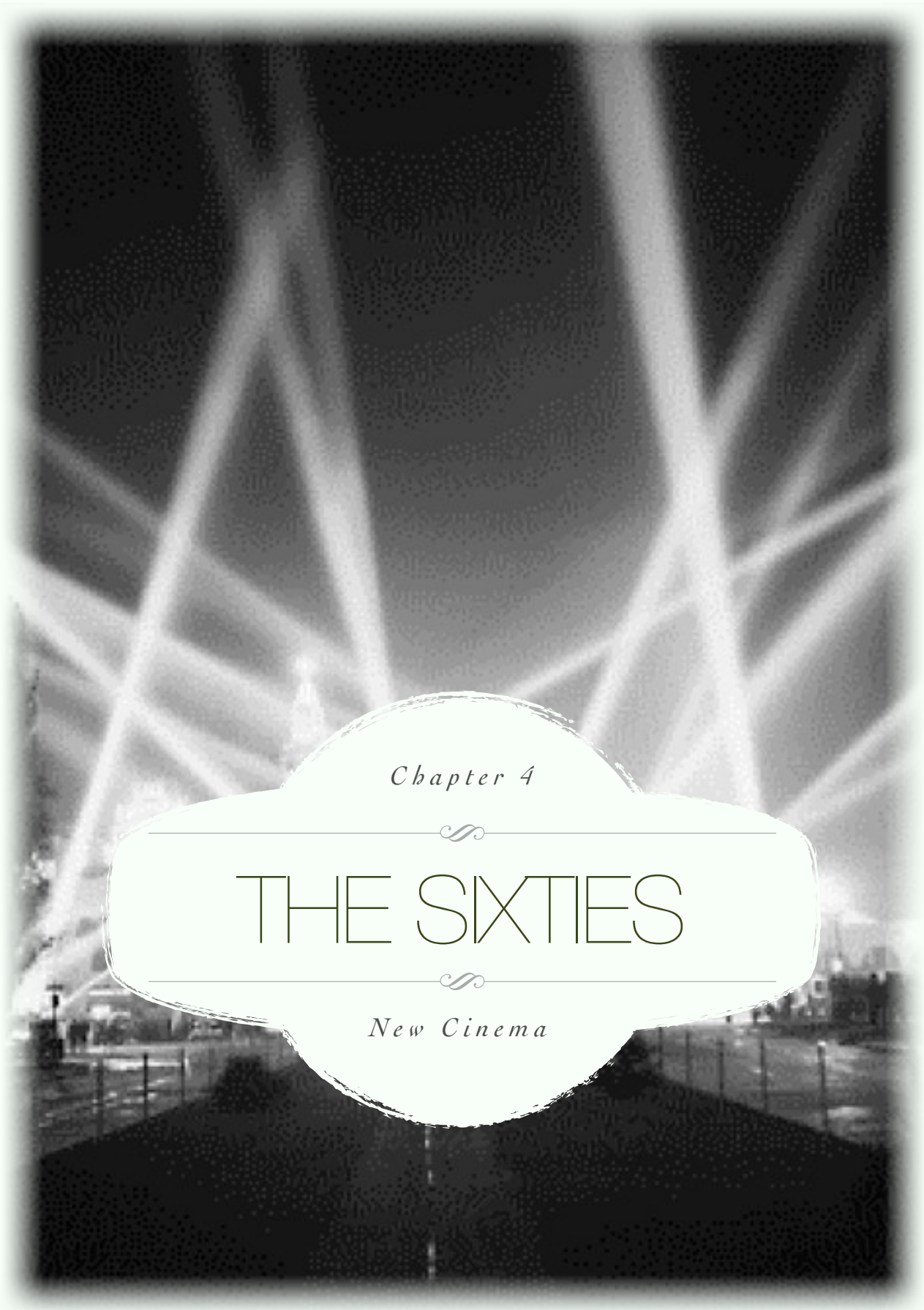


There's one thing you ought to know, Professor: Nemo's cracked. I've yet to see the day you can make a deal with a mad dog. So while you're feeding him sugar, I'll be figuring a plan to muzzle him.

The matter of personal choice is an important one and is alluded to in *20,000 Leagues Under The Sea*. We are presented with the optimistic line;

"There is hope for the future, and when the world is ready for a new, better life, all this will come to pass in God's good time."

One has to wonder whether the world is in fact ready, even in this 21st. Century. I suppose once each of us (like Ned) are unreservedly prepared to leap into the jaws of danger to save a fellow human being (friend, relative, stranger, enemy) then we might be ready. Once we can instinctively know the answer Nemo's question, "You saved my life. Why?" if we were ever asked, then we might be ready.....



Chapter 4



THE SIXTIES



New Cinema

The Sixties, in many ways, are my least favorite of all the decades of film. Sure, you've got some great stuff, but it doesn't have the glow of the 30s, the grit of the 50s, the shine of the 80s and 90s. Still, some powerful images!

Section 1

MEREDITH WILSON'S THE MUSIC MAN
(1962) BY BOB HOLE



Directed and produced by Morton DaCosta (he also directed the stage version)

Written by Marion Hargrove (screenplay), in collaboration with Franklin Lacey, based on Meredith Wilson's "The Music Man" (musical play)

Starring Robert Preston (Harold Hill); Shirley Jones (Marian Paroo); Buddy Hackett (Marcellus Washburn); Ron Howard (Winthrop Paroo); Patrick Cassidy (uncredited, as the bump on Marian's belly – b. 1/4/62)

Choreography Onna White (who also did Oliver!, 1776, Mame, others)



It's an old plot. Boy con artist meets girl prude, boy gets a conscience, girl becomes his shipooopi, town gets a boy's band, and everybody parties.

Like many musicals, this one started out on the stage. Writer Meredith Wilson toiled over it for eight years before his mentor, Frank Loesser, brought it to the Broadway stage. It was an instant hit. It played from 1957-1961, for over 1300 performances. Warner Bros. bought the rights to the film version shortly after it premiered on the stage.

The film was critically acclaimed and one of the biggest hits of 1962. In 2005 picked as being "culturally, historically, or aesthetically significant" and preserved in the United States Film Registry by the Library of Congress (2005).

The music here is almost entirely well integrated into the story. There are a couple "stage" numbers here like in many musicals, but they spring more naturally from the story than in many of the MGM musicals where there is always someone putting on a show somewhere.

The film starts off with a great train-rhythm number, and moves into a love song to Iowa, the movie takes place in July 1912 in River City, Iowa ("cigarettes illegal in this state"). The film, within the musical fantasy constraints, does an excellent job at recreating the small town Midwest where Meredith Wilson grew up.

Robert Preston stars in the roll of Harold Hill, which he originated Broadway. Frank Sinatra and Cary Grant were up for the roll, but Meredith Wilson insisted on Preston, and Cary Grant even said "nobody could do that role as well as Bob Preston." Having seen some other productions of the show, Grant was right.

His almost prancing delivery of the minimal choreography assigned him by Onna White (who also did the stage play) really brings Harold Hill to life as a marching band leader, and sly character.

It was the breakthrough roll for Preston, who found himself an overnight "A" lister after over 30 years as a background player.

There are some real treats here, including The Buffalo Bills doing some old barbershop quartet numbers as the town council, and a wonderful song and dance in the library ("Marion the Librarian", any song that includes the word carrion is for me) which pops in and out of fantasy (and a librarians nightmares).

Buddy Hackett (as Marcellus Washburn) even gets a great dance number "Shipooopi". Onna White was asked about the choreography for that number and said she'd turned a man who couldn't dance into a dancer, and she did.

Shirley Jones, however, was the real film star in the movie. She'd already been the lead in the film adaptations of Oklahoma!, and Carousel. Here she's definitely second fiddle to Preston. Her songs are ballads, and she does a good turn at them, but she is a bit wasted on this part. But then, like Preston, I can't imagine someone else in the part. I think she shines best in the "Lida Rose/Will I Ever Tell Him" duet with The Buffalo Bills.

Ron Howard, by the way, has a whole song ("Gary, Indiana"; reprise) and parts in a couple other songs. He was already a film veteran by this time, and

"Nobody could do that role as well as Bob Preston" Cary Grant





“Marge vs. The Monorail”, which many insiders point to as the best of all the episodes of The Simpsons, was based on The Music Man, with Phil Hartman in a Henry Higgins-esque role



was only a couple years before getting the part of Opie in the Andy Griffith Show.

Something I think is overlooked in this film is Timmy Everett's (Tommy) performance as Tommy, or rather his dancing. He's energetic and absolutely perfect as the band's drum major. This was Everett's only film role, though he had several small TV parts. He retired in 1963.

The stage play got the Tony award for best musical, and the film received the Oscar for Best musical Score (adaptation). Additionally, it got five other nominations, but lost all: Best Picture [Lawrence of Arabia won]; Best Costume (color) [The Wonderful World of the Brothers Grimm won]; Best Art Direction (color) [Lawrence of Arabia won]; Best Film Editing [Lawrence of Arabia won]; Best Sound;

There is, of course, a big finish number, a reprise of "76 Trombones" featuring a huge parade like the one sung about. This parade featured the USC marching band ("The Spirit of Troy"). Junior high students from around Southern California filled in the rest. It took 8 hours shooting over two days to film the scene. The instruments were specially made for the film, then refurbished and sold without noting their part in the movie.

This is one of the more fun rides in Musical Theater, and I suggest that if you haven't, give Iowa a try.

*Shipooopi - a girl who waits for a kiss until the third date. A word made up and defined in the song by Meredith Wilson.

THE ZAPRUDER FILM



THE MOST IMPORTANT FILM OF THE 1960S

What the Zapruder film gave us isn't open to debate - it's the best document of the assassination of JFK. It is also the most debated film ever made. It said something really important that I think we have all missed. This was the first great news story of the post-Newsreel era, and it was pre-24 Hour News Cycle. This, more than anything else, was the best example that anyone could capture history if they have the right tool, and in the case of Abraham Zapruder, that was an 8mm camera. Nothing predicted the rise of YouTube documentary culture better than the Zapruder film.

Though today it is widely available, for more than a decade it was owned by Life magazine and almost never shown. It was referenced in the hearings, Life published stills, but it wasn't the important piece of our collective American Identity that it is today. It also had impact on the arts, as much of Oliver Stone's work contains qualities derived from the Zapruder film.

EL SANTO VS THE VAMPIRE WOMEN



By Todd Liebenow of [Forgotten films](#) cast

My friends, the time has come for you to meet the greatest of all Mexican Luchadors...the one and only Santo. In the world of Mexican wrestling, Santo is a legend. He was hugely popular, so it only makes sense that he would make the transition to the movies. On movie screens he was also a huge success, appearing in 52 movies. Perhaps the most famous outside of Mexico is our film today... 1962's *Santo vs the Vampire Women*.

As our story begins, a swarm of vampire women led by the lovely Tandra (Ofelia Montesco) has risen from their 200 year sleep. In order to restore themselves completely they, of course, need blood. They also need to get their hands on a young woman named Diana (Maria Duval) who is the descendant of someone who escaped the clutches of the blood suckers ages ago. This is all so they can perform a bizarre ceremony that will allow their vampire queen (Lorena Velazquez) to get to hell and marry the devil...or something like that.



Diana's father, Professor Orlof (Augusto Benedico), however, is quick to catch on to the vampire babes' plan. Lucky for Diana, her old man is good friends with Santo. With the famous wrestler on the case, those vampires don't stand a chance. Still, there are three vampire dudes that have been sent out to cause trouble for the legendary luchador. Santo even ends up having to do battle with one of them in the ring. When he unmasks his opponent. He turns out to be a werewolf! Now is that awesome or what?

Eventually, the vampire women do get their hands on poor Diana. Now Santo has to come to the rescue before it's too late. Somehow the vampires manage to get the jump on Santo, chaining him to a table. Fools, that can't stop Santo! He manages to bust out and bring fiery end to their blood sucking ways.

Ok, this may all be a wee bit silly, but I just couldn't resist this movie. It's just plain fun! In many ways, this is a wonderful mash-up of a B-horror film and superhero movie. Remember, Santo is Luchador...they wear masks. To have one's mask removed is a dishonor, as I understand it. We never see Santo without his mask, so he definitely takes on those mysterious superhero qualities. Plus, there's the simple fact that this guy was an actual wrestler and is an imposing figure to say the least. His skills in the ring are well on display here, as well, especially in the sequence where he fights the werewolf.

The film also manages to be quite stylish in its look. Sure, you can see the wires on the bats, forget about that for a moment. The lighting and the sets are very effectively done in the tradition of the great Universal horror films. Though Hammer was just rising to prominence with their horror films around this time, this film seems to also pull a page from their playbook. The cast is full of gorgeous ladies who would be the envy of any Hammer casting agent. When they take on a more monstrous form, these vampire women are also effectively creepy.

I admit, when Santo first comes bounding into the movie to assist Dr. Orloff, I let loose with a bit of a chuckle. After a few moments, though, it's not hard to get on board with the fun spirit of this movie. Sure it's goofy at times, but *Santo vs the Vampire Women* has some great atmosphere, some sexy and scary monsters, and a superhero to save the day. What more could you want in a vampire wrestling movie?

1960'S ROMEO AND JULIET



I hate Shakespeare. I really do. I never have any idea what it is that they're saying. It just makes no sense. The greatest playwright in the English language, August Wilson, all his stuff makes sense, because it's plain, it's not fanciful, it's not flowery. The second greatest playwright, Tennessee Williams, understood humanity, and the inhuman things humans do, so much better than any other writer. These two are the greatest writers ever, yet with the exception of *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, movies from their plus seldom work. Shakespeare, his works adapt so well. Whether it's *10 Things I Hate About You*, or *Strange Brew*, the Bard manages to adapt wonderfully, mostly to a modern setting. I typically hate the period pieces, though the Mel Gibson *Hamlet* was a lot of fun. The 1960s brought us two *Romeo & Juliets* - the best of all adaptations and the best period version ever.

In 1961, the great Robert Wise directed a musical version of *Romeo & Juliet* called *West Side Story*. One of the most infectious of all the adaptations of Shakespeare. The music, written by Leo Bernstein, is absolutely mind-bogglingly great, blending everything from mambo to early Bop. The lyrics, by Stephen Sondheim, are among the best of the 1960s. The show, which originally opened on Broadway in 1957, and at that point was probably a year or two ahead of the curve. There weren't a lot of musicals at that point that took you down to street level. You had things like *Guys and Dolls* which existed in a world that as far to glistening and star-filled; it was the sort of Street Thuggery that you hoped existed. *West Side Story* was the story of street gangs, knife-



But for the poetry, and the fine archaic dignity of Romeo and Juliet, the story could be taking place next door. It is the sweetest, the most contemporary romance on film this year. *New York Times 1968*



wielding kids who were left behind for various reasons. Tony and co. were far more realistic than Harry the Horse or any of the other hoods who inhabited the Runyon-built New York. Add to that the fact that it was the story of Puerto Ricans in New York at a time when they were still seen as a sort of pest infesting Brooklyn, Queens, and The Bronx. This sort of inflection point in American theatre made it easy to transpose the Montague-Capulet rivalry upon. While other attempts to make these sort of changes have often failed, notably the semi-successful Baz Luhrman Romeo + Juliet, what happens here is the perfect combination of Shakespeare near-moronic concepts (especially the ending) with a somewhat grittier, and certainly more realistic, presentation.

The acting is top-notch, and while Tony and Maria, our Romeo and Juliet, are played by the great Richard Beymer and Natalie Wood, their voices were dubbed. Despite this, it hits so well, as the acting is incredible. The secondary cast, including Russ Tamblyn and Rita Moreno, are so damn good. There is not a single wasted moment in the film, and when we get to the end, when we see the Sharks and Jets carrying Tony out together, led by Maria, it's incredibly powerful. The score is one of the finest of the 1960s, and the songs are so well delivered, particularly with Marni Nixon doing playback for Natalie Wood's Maria. She brings incredible amounts of emotion to every song.

It's Wise's direction that really sets West Side Story apart from other musicals of the period. The camerawork is really good, but Wise lets his actors have enough space to inhabit their characters fully, but not too much that they overwhelm the script. Wise would later direct The Sound of Music, though it lacks the impact of the wonderful script he had to work with here. Wise, perhaps the finest director of genre working at the time (The Day the Earth Stood Still being enough of an example), knew how to make

Franco Zeffirelli was known for his adaptations of Shakespeare that took place in the period of Shakespeare. Well, the 1960s version of what we thought the Tudor period looked like. He wasn't exactly a studious director, but it was near-enough to give us an idea. The idea was to present Shakespeare in a setting that audiences of the time would understand as being of the time of Shakespeare. That way, he could present his scripts of Shakespeare to the audience without that pesky post-modernist thing happening.

Of course, he also chopped up the Bard's words. He kept much of the text, but many of the longer speeches, and a lot of the incidental dialogue.

That concept managed to keep the words of Shakespeare fresh, largely by taking the material that people had become familiar with and placing it in a sort of field of lushness. The costumes are what sell his films, especially for a film like Taming of the Shrew where the visual impact has to compete with some massively bombastic acting. Zeffirelli tackled Romeo and Juliet in 1968, with a cast that was far younger than most would have gone with. We know, from the text, that Juliet is supposed to be a little over 14, but typically, they'll cast someone in their 20s. Or, if you're Sarah Bernhardt, in their 40s. Zeffirelli cast Olivia Hussey as Juliet, and she was magnificent. As wonderful as Natalie Wood was as Wise's Juliet-called-Maria, Hussey was the perfect blend of radiant youthful beauty and petulant childishness. I feel in love with her so hard. She looked almost exactly like the young woman I was dating at the time.

Zeffirelli's Romeo was Leonard Whiting, a young British actor who was being touted as the next Olivier. It didn't quite work out, but he was really good playing the part of the impulsive young Montague. He plays him even only-more in-the-moment than most, and his speeches are so well-delivered. Hussey plays off of him very well, and you'd almost believe that they're a young couple stupid enough to try and pretend their dead in order to run off together.



Zeffirelli seems to have his actors on a shorter leash than Wise, and that makes sense. Wise had a modern setting to work with, but Zeffirelli had to make sure that they were delivering the lines in a proper slant. Michael York as Tybalt delivers his stuff with an alacrity that is almost stiflingly prepared. He hits every mark, and while Hussey's really good with her read, Whiting's a little stilted. The result is not a bad thing, as Whiting's performance makes him seem even dumber, as if he's trying to be a gentleman in a world he's totally not prepared to be a part of. Sometimes, a weakness becomes an significant part of the meaning of a piece.

Where the two differ is in their reverence for the material. It's not like *West Side Story* is completely dismissive of it's source, but it isn't exactly playing it tight along the line. The story is roughed up a bit, and that makes it far more relatable to an audience of the early 60s. Zeffirelli, despite taking scissors to the text, gave a lot of weight to the traditional interpretations and the look. Adapting Shakespeare to new time periods might even pre-date Shakespeare writing his plays, but it was something of an eye-opener to see a modern director taking as much reverence for the time period. Maintaining the language, even if not ALL of the language, shows far more dedication to the tradition.

So, the two best versions of *Romeo and Juliet* both happened in the 1960s; one was a late example of the Golden Age of Musicals, and the other an excellent example of a more traditional Shakespeare. The power of 1960s film was the ability of film-makers to experiment in new film forms, and still retain the mainstream audience.

Section 4

ONE GOT FAT



Probably the best-known of all Bike Safety films, *One Got Fat* uses a very smart storytelling technique to get across the various dangers of bicycling and also entertains. The story borrows from the 'Ten Little Monkeys' songs we'd sing when I was a kid. There are ten friends, all kids in Monkey get-ups, who are all out riding their bikes together. One by one, they all fall to various incidents, all implied to be fatal until the end.

It's fun and it's funny, and yeah, if I was a kid, I'd learn something. The title is how one of the monkeys, the SMART monkey, ends up with everyone's lunch, and thus gets fat. That's a message you couldn't get away with today, but back then it was OK.

This one is the kind of film that sticks in a kid's head. Watching safety films like this when I was a kid is part of what got me interested in filmmaking, and it's part of what I love about film in general. There is an educational power to film, as proved during World War II, that is very difficult to deny.

MY NAME ISN'T PRETTY PRETTY, IT'S BARBARELLA



© **BY MORTEFINA CELESTE**

There are many lenses through which one can view the sci-fi cult classic *Barbarella*, both for its inherent camp, but also lasting impression in pop-culture, namely through the 80s band Duran Duran. One perspective, however, is not immediately obvious: its representation of the changing role of women and second-feminism in the late 1960s.

Of course the film leaves a lot to desired to the modern day feminist: Barbarella is consistently the damsel in distress, is highly susceptible to the persuasive powers of men, and additionally, the women of the film (including Barbella) wear highly sexualized clothing. Because of these points it is easy to dismiss the moments of feminism that are peppered throughout the film but are reflective of the transitioning role of feminism in our culture. This shifting ideology can be found most notably in the descriptions of Barbella's home world, her individualism and ownership of her sexuality.



“What's that screaming? A good many dramatic situations begin with screaming...” Barbarella



Barbella's world is described at the beginning of the film as the 'mother planet.' One that encourages a "loving union with universe" and also has no armies or police forces. Additionally, the antagonist of the film, Dr. Durand Durand, must be stopped from his "primitive state of neurotic irresponsibility," or desire to inflict war upon what is clearly a peaceful and stable universe. This plot construction depicts the importance of non-violence and stability in this universe. More importantly though, this relates to the feminist ideology that has been the focus of sociological studies pertaining specifically to matriarchal societies that focus on gender equality, value peace and trust amongst all participants of both genders. (See *Societies of Peace: Matriarchies Past, Present, and Future*, ed. Heide Goettner-Abendroth)

Our first introduction to Barbarella as an audience is that of her floating in zero-gravity and completely undressing specifically for the camera's, and thus the audience's, gaze. While this is not the progressive image that most feminists would hope for, one thing is quickly established in this scene, and ultimately important to the feminist, is that Barbarella is a female traveling the galaxy alone. She pilots her own craft and is solely responsible for the mission to stop Durand Durand. Given how rare it is to see female characters in positions of authority in modern science fiction, this detail is remarkably progressive, especially for its time. As a point of comparison, the first portrayal of a female captain in the Star Trek franchise did not occur until 1995 with Captain Kathryn Janeway, a remarkable fact given the equitable ideology of the *Star Trek* universe.

As a character, Barbarella is also very much in control of sexuality, exploring both the new (to her) aspects of sexual relationships, seeking out multiple partners and lastly, destroying the Excessive Machine. The viewer learns that sex has been reduced to a scientific, pill-enhanced action lacking physical intercourse on Barbarella's homeworld when she meets a man interested in the "natural" method. She negotiates and then engages in this activity as an equal partner. As she meets more men and continues to initiate and negotiate intercourse, she is clearly an equally consenting party in these activities throughout the film. Towards the end she is taken captive by The Great Tyrant (another powerful female figure in the film) and subjected to Dr. Durand Durand's Excessive Machine - a machine that will pleasure Barbarella to death. The fact that Barbarella, rather than being pleased to death, is able to experience so much pleasure and ultimately destroy the machine reinforces her ownership of her sexuality and pleasure response. This ownership of her sexuality throughout the female being another corner-stone of feminist theory. (See *The Body as Property: A Feminist Re-vision* by Rosalind Pollack Petchesky)

Given the modern perspective of feminism, a strong, independent woman, who is capable of rescuing herself and not forced to rely on others, Barbarella both as a character and a movie leaves much to be desired. For its time at the heart of the second wave feminist movement and just a few years after the publication of *The Feminine Mystique*, she represents an important transitional figure in the way women were portrayed, especially in science fiction. By declaring simply that she was not simply "pretty" but enforcing her name and identity as Barbarella she establishes and reinforces the shifting attitudes in regards to women and society.

BIGFOOT'S GREATEST HIT



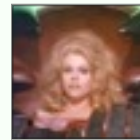
THE MOST IMPORTANT FILM OF THE 1960S

The Patterson-Gimlin film provides one of the most widely-known still images of the 1960s - a Sasquatch, looking towards the camera, mid-stride, arms swinging. That image has become the second most iconic image for all of Cryptozoology (behind the Surgeon's photos of Nessie) and one of the most debated images in history.

One of reasons this image is so so widely known is that the film is so widely known. I've seen a first generation copy of the film, and it's incredible. The thing being shown moves so strangely, in an almost hypnotic way. It's not a human movement; it's not an ape movement. It's something else, and that's so tantalizing.

I've seen a lot of Bigfoot videos, and this is the only one I feel has to be real because it feels so real. There's almost nothing here but a cryptid out for a walk, and that has so much more power than something more involved.

CRECITS ROLL...



THE DRINK TANK 391 - J. BACON, V. APPLGATE, C GARCIA - EDITORS

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