

ON DECEMBER 25, 1983 FROM MY HOLLYWOOD, FLORIDA BUNGALOW, I RANG GREGG TURNER IN LOS ANGELES TO GET WHAT I CONSIDER TO BE EXPERT VERIFICATION OF FACTS FOR A HORROR PIECE I WAS FINISHING UP FOR FANGORIA. WHAT ENSUED WAS A JEW TO JEW FULLY RECORDED 9 HOUR CHIT-CHAT ON HORROR FLICKS. BELOW IS A SINGLE-BREATH EXCERPT OF GREGG TURNERS', PULLED FROM ABOUT THE 413th MINUTE. OTHER THAN A FEW UH-HUH'S, I LISTENED SILENTLY FOR THE DURATION OF THIS EXCERPT.

It's impossible to dissect the lineage of different sub-genres of horror movies. It's so mixed up that it's too hard to do. It's like factoring a number. You factor 21 and you get 3x7. Well you go as far as 3 and 7 which are prime numbers. It's the something with these movies. If you factor all their components into what's a prime number you wind up with alot of different things for each one. I don't think there's any that are so unique in one particular vein that uh...another words in any way they're so aesthetically pure in terms of mining one aspect of something that's been handed down. I think they're all so mixed up and cross pollinated that it would be rare to find something that's unique.

Take for instance the strictly gratuitous graphic endeavors that've popped up. Those have been a species unto themselves in terms of their propagation for financial success, like all the "Friday the 13ths". They've some shlock shock value, but not much else. Like "Maniac". "Maniac" was a guy that scalped woman and basically was a maniac. The whole point of the movie was the graphic adventures of dismemberment and violence. That doesn't excite me much. They have their place I guess but I'd rather see a snuff movie than those. I wouldn't go out of my way to see one but were the alternatives present I'd rather see the real thing and get really turned on.

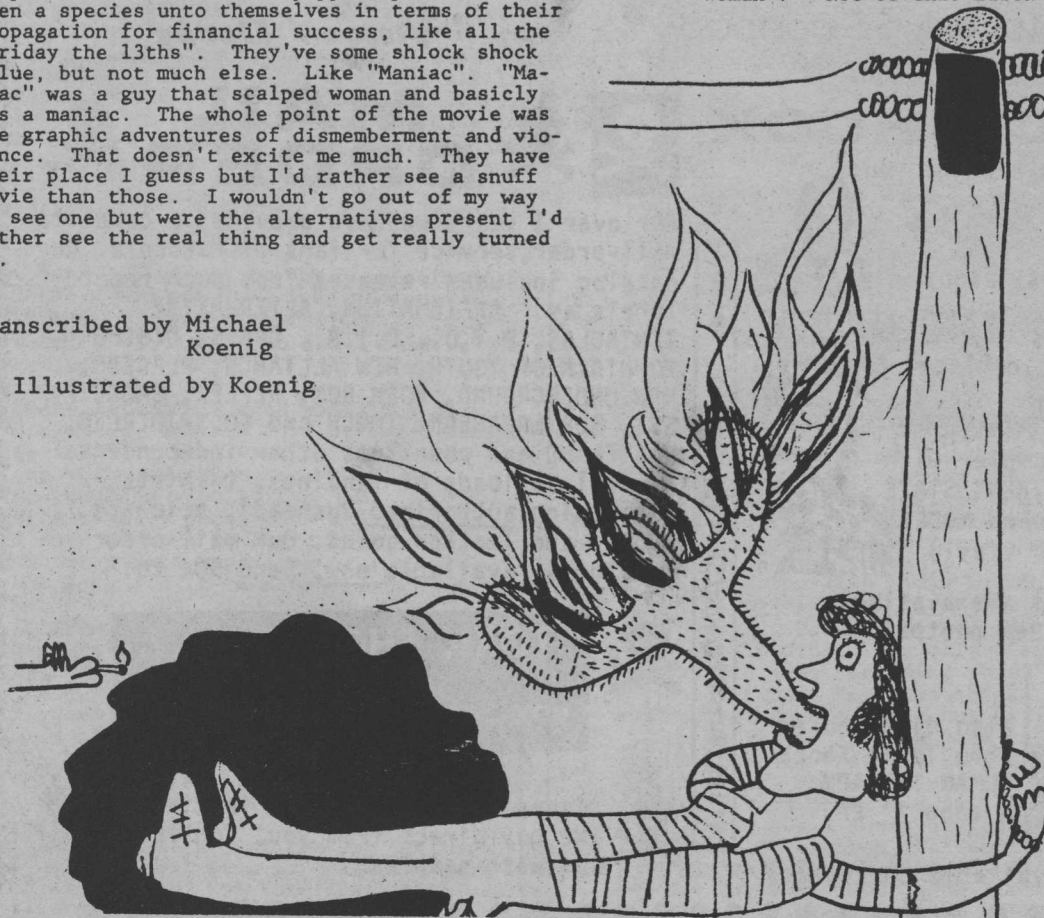
That stuff squeaked out of the woodwork sometime in the 70's. But I personally like the real cheezy stuff from the late 1950's that were either inept splatter movies or the ill-conceived attempts where nothing was thoughtout, nothing makes sense throughout the whole movie--just a series of non-sequiturs.

The whole--pardon the verbiage--"dada" theme in alot of these movies is what I got off on. A theatre of absurd type of outrage. They could be any one of a sequence of Edward Albee plays transformed using the main character as monsters and letting each sub-plot unravel. In "Hideous Sunbeam" that seems to me to be what it's all about; whether that was the idea or not, that seems to be the end product.

Another example is "The Attack of the 50 Foot Woman". "Not of this Earth" is definately one

Transcribed by Michael  
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I WANNA HANDCUFF YOU TO A TELEPHONE POLE, RAM A CACTUS DOWN YOUR THROAT THEN SET YOU ON FIRE.

of the best. Most early Corman films too. "Not of this Earth" was just incredible cuz it was the ultimate way of not spending alot of money to make something look terrifying, mean and alien. It just mixed up alot of ideas: vampires, monsters, aliens and threw it into one bag, shook it up and it unraveled as if they were spinning dice and that's what came out: a weird permutation of alot of familiar topics. Paul Birch played this alien and he has this weird accent that never makes any sense. So I guess they figured if he's playing an alien he should have this laconic accent or drawl, and he sure enough did. He wore those Lou Reed wrap around shades and goes around like an insurance salesman on acid, attacking people and siphoning blood into milk bottles. The best part is at the end, where Beverly Garwind plays a nurse that's being chased by him--she, in the car ahead of him. His thing throughout the movie is if he takes off his sunglasses and you look into his eyes, you'll drop dead. This chase scene at the end is recycled seven times, it starts at his house and goes to the end of the block by a phone booth. Then its cycled back to the beginning and they keep doing this loop over and over. All the while she won't look into his eyes through the rear-view mirror and he cracks up.

If you were to construct a thesis as to what propels horror movies to make money or the impetus for putting up the movies to begin with, you'll trace it back to the early 30's where you had a werewolf strain, you had a mummy, you had a Dracula and you had a Frankenstein. There were four of those going into independent directions. Ostensibly back then it scared people; the idea of scaring people on film was a primitive idea. Well, by the time the 70's, 80's came along people were getting pretty jaded, just by the nature of the fact it had been done alot and you have to either be very original in terms of the idea of scaring one or very graphic in terms of showing people something they've

never seen. So you come along with "Texas Chainsaw Massacre" which isn't as graphic but through the camera angles puts you in a very personal experience, as if you are ten feet away in the movie witnessing what's going on.

That was new in some respects. But then there are those that are totally unoriginal. I saw "Dr. Butcher" a few years back which was excellent. And that was a total ripoff of "Zombie", an Italian film dubbed poorly in English, that incidently, has a great musical score. "Zombie" was an inversion--I mean they didn't even spare the story line and the sets looked exactly the same. The whole point being I think you have to score certain points for movies that have a lack of ingenuity. A movie that goes so little out of its way not to replicate something else that wasn't particularly good in the first place definately has a high priority as something someone should see.

Anotherwords an absolute null set of creativity is just as intrinsically or aesthetically worthwhile as something that has alot of things going for it.

Problem is alot of people can't buy that rationale for judging the merits of a film. There are no intrinsic ingredients for anything that is happening here that's different from any other type of film. I think a Peckinpah movie is fifteen times more violent and grotesque, bloody and graphic than 95% of the horror movies I've seen. Horror films aren't done for any violent sake or getting some quotient of sado-masochism out of it. I think it just happens. In alot of the cheap horror movies its just more prevalent. It's definately alot more manifested; you can find more rampant stupidity and things that don't make sense and don't add up, just for the expediency of putting the movie together and having a plot, a beginning and an ending that you can, in say, a suspense movie or a comedy. It's hard to watch a bad comedy, it's boring; but not so for a bad horror film. There's alot of substance to pure junk, ya know?

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