

Short Review: "The Ape Man" (1943) by Dr. John L. Flynn



The Ape Man (1943). Monogram, b/w, 64 min. Director: William Beaudine. Producers: Sam Katzman and Jack Dietz. Screenwriter: Barney A. Sarecky. Cast: Bela Lugosi, Wallace Ford, Louise Currie, Minerva Ureal, Henry Hall, and Ralph Littlefield.

Dr. Brewster (Lugosi), a reclusive scientist who is believed to be dead, discovers and unthaws a prehistoric ape-man. He then murders his partner, purely in the interests of science, and transplants his brain into the creature's in an effort to make it more human. The transplant is only marginally successful, even though Lugosi claims that he has advanced the ape-man's mind 20,000 years in an hour. Eventually, the brain tissue begins to degenerate, in spite of the mad scientist's noblest attempts, and the creature turns on him, and the two are subsequently destroyed by fire. Twenty years later, these same themes were revisited by Joseph Stefano in the superior "Outer Limits" episode "The Sixth Finger" (1963). In that brilliant story, a scientist discovers a way to accelerate human evolution and transforms a bitter young coal miner into the "Man of the Future."

Copyright 2016 by John L. Flynn, Ph.D.