

Monkeying around with Apes

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No chimps allowed!

A monkey-see monkey-do, ape-solutely ape-ic discussion to go bananas over that is more fun than a barrell of monkeys, apes, chimps, gorillas, bonobos, orangutans, mandrills, gibbons, lemurs, baboons, rhesus...

As monster kids we have a soft spot in our hearts for ape films. These films of yesteryear are an interesting subgenre that may not be seen again. For example, no one would now take seriously the premise of someone wanting to transplant a human brain into a gorilla so producers and writers have gone on to greener pastures. As such, these gorilla brain transplant plots are now used for sitcoms and commercials. Nevertheless, let us take a closer look at some of our favorite gorilla films to better understand what did indeed happen. But first, a little background on apes so we have a clearer appreciation of what is shown in some of our favorite films. The stereotype of the ape is that of a savage beast, a killer, driven only by primitive and uncontrollable instincts; ethics have no bearing on his choices. This perception was true during our grandparents time but certainly not so now.

Charles Darwin started it all by scientific observation and published his findings in his book, *On the Origin of Species*, in 1859. His thinking, in particular, that man evolved from apes, was considered blasphemous at the time. Many religious groups and conservative people are strongly opposed to anything that has to do with evolution. Being at the top of the food chain man thinks of himself as the center of the universe in that he alone can communicate (write and talk), build, and contemplate his own existence. How dare the apes think they too can do this! And over 150 years after Darwin published his book those few proponents of intelligent design (or "anti-Darwinists") just cannot accept a non-religious explanation for evolution or that evolution is even a viable explanation at all.

In 1871, Darwin also proposed that man's earliest ancestors lived in Africa alongside contemporary chimps and gorillas and primarily ate fruit, leaves, seeds, and nuts. As soon as early man learned to obtain foods in open habitats, such as grasslands and savannah woodlands, he rapidly emerged in a separate lineage quite different from his ape ancestors, developed a more diverse diet of grasses and meats, and subsequently developed into hominids with all their unique traits.

The missing link

For many reasons humans are fascinated by the apes. Their charm and appeal seem endless. Man's fascination with the great apes has a long history and being descended from common ancestors probably has a lot to do with it. I still laugh when I think of the TV show, Lancelot Link, that featured chimps as spys in human roles so even as TV stars chimps continued to keep us humans enthralled. With opposable thumbs, the ability to use tools, and have a social order, not to mention to ability to, well, ape man all contribute to our endless curiosity about them. Frankly, apes are alluring.

In total, there are 264 species of monkeys, of which 22 are apes. Most people do not realize that the difference between the genes of man and those of the apes (the chimpanzee, *Pan troglodyte*, in particular) is amazingly small. At least 98.5% of man's genes are identical to those of the two species of chimps (chimps and bonobos, *Pan paniscus*). That means only a 1.5% difference. In addition, the average human protein is more that 99% identical to its chimpanzee equivalent. This then begs the question, which of our genes makes us human and what does that 1.5% genetic difference look like? The human genome contains about 20,000 genes and a 1.5% difference means that only about 300 genes differentiate man and ape. (I happen to know some scary humans where this difference is closer to only 50 genes or so...but I digress.) What this miniscule percent difference means is that these few genes gives us the ability to talk, write books and articles (such as this one you are currently reading), create SF films, walk upright, design cancer treatments, etc. Stating the obvious, since man does not look nor act like apes, and viceversa, then these few genes are everything. From a scientist's perspective, changing, altering, and/or mutating only about 300 genes is not that difficult of a task.

Interesting questions are what would happen if, say, the genes that control the development of the larynx, our voice box, and the cerebellum (Broca's brain area where language is centered) were genetically engineered into a chimp thereby giving him the anatomy needed for speech? Well, shades of Doctor Moreau and Planet of the Apes! Plots from some of our favorite scary films are now becoming a scientific reality.

Since Darwin effectively showed a close genetic relationship between man and ape it is no wonder Hollywood decided to make films that exploited these magical 300 or so genes. Without doubt the granddaddy of all ape films is KING KONG (1933). Over 80 years later and Kong is still the King. Ape films were a sign of their times in Hollywood because back in the 1920s to the 1950s apes were news. They were just being discovered, placed in zoos, and described, primarily through the exploits of famous adventurers like Frank "bring 'em back alive" Buck. Frank Howard Buck (1884-1950) was a hunter, actor, director, writer, and collector of wild animals. His very popular jungle adventures were described in both book form and on film and radio and many of the wild animals he brought back alive ended up in zoos for all to see and apes were a particular favorite. Back then apes were considered pop culture.

Scopes Monkey Trial

The mid-1920s were busy ones for ape news. In addition to the attention given apes by Hollywood and by those such as Frank Buck, apes also made legal news. In 1925, in a landmark legal case, Tennessee high school science teacher John Thomas Scopes (1900-1970) was convicted of teaching evolution to his class. He taught that man evolved from apes. Scopes was found guilty of breaking a newly passed Tennessee law, the Butler Act, forbidding the teaching of evolution in any state-funded school. This legal case has taken on the name of the "Scopes Monkey Trial". Though Scopes was found guilty the verdict was overturned on a technicality and he went free.

Due to the theme of the trial, the teaching of evolution, it drew intense national publicity and both newspapers and radio covered every moment of the event. What also helped to grab the headlines were the machinations of the two high-profile lawyers, William Jennings Bryan, a three-time presidential candidate for the Democrats, who argued for the prosecution, and Clarence Darrow, the famed defense attorney who defended Scopes. Though on the surface the trial was simply the State of Tennessee vs Thomas Scopes, in reality, it was the modernists, who said evolution was consistent with religion, against the fundamentalists who said the word of God, as revealed in the Bible, took priority over all human knowledge. As such, the trial was both a theological contest and one testing the veracity of modern science. The publicity surrounding the trial probably more than anything brought the science of evolution to people's attention. Since then the teaching of evolution has expanded eventhough fundamentalists continue to try to reverse this trend and keep creationism alive.

Also in 1925, Australian Professor Raymond Dart, described the fossilized skull of what has come to be known as *Australopithecus africanus*, the "Taung Child". This was the first member of the *Australopithecus* genus discovered and it certainly challenged the contemporary ideas about human evolution. All the *Australopithecus* bones discovered since then, the most famous being the hominid skeleton known as "Lucy", represent strong proof that man did indeed evolve from a common ape ancestor, a concept that was (and still is) very difficult for some to accept during the years when ape films were popular.

Hays Code / Breen Office

The early years of Hollywood films, those prior to 1922, were morally questionable and somewhat corrupt with many risqué films and off-screen scandals taking place. Political pressure was building so to clean up their act and to restore the Hollywood image the studios hired Will H. Hays in 1922 to oversee film content and serve as chief censor, a position he held for 25 years. Though initially slow to take off, as a result of his work, a censorship board, the Motion Picture Production Code, was eventually established in 1930 that defined acceptable moral guidelines in films. This code was popularly known as the Hays Code and consisted of "Don'ts and Be Carefuls" based on a consensus of

local film censor boards. The Hays Code spelled out what was acceptable and what was unacceptable for films produced for a public audience. After Hays left the first administrator of the code was Joseph Breen and his enforcing office became known as the Breen Office.

From our perspective for this article both the Hays Code and the Breen Office had two major issues: (1) films promoting Darwinism (any link between man and any other species, monkeys in particular) and (2) films with vivisection (experiments on live animals). [In the discussion below, the film, DR. RENAULT'S SECRET promotes Darwinism and has both brain experiments and plastic surgery on a living ape, clear violations at the time of the Hays Code.]

Another aspect of gorilla lore that needs to be mentioned was their popular role in the Midnight Spook Shows. During the golden age of the movie theaters, from around 1920 to 1960, for the owners to maximize their profits, they often times rented out their theaters to live shows. These late night popular nightclub acts often featured a magician, a skeleton, and other tricks of the trade, such as live special effects, and are collectively called the Midnight Spook Shows. These nightclub acts were especially popular during Halloween time and many of these spook shows had their own (man in suit) gorillas to help "scare the yell out of you"! The audiences of the day appreciated these live gorilla acts in addition to those seen in films. As TV began to dominate people's lives and audiences became more sophisticated the man in a gorilla costume no longer was effective and went the way of the dodo bird. After the apes became better known and less mysterious, and not the purported savage killer beasts they were portrayed as they ceased being something Hollywood could exploit. Jane Goodall, the famous gorilla scientist, put the final nail in that coffin with the publication of her book, *In the Shadow of Man* in 1974, thereby removing all doubt about the 'mysterious and savage' ape.

The Films

As a result of all the attention apes were getting during the first half of the 20th Century Hollywood realized there was a gold mine in films with gorillas. Early films featuring apes were straightforward and then over time the plots became more science fictional. According to some of our favorite scary ape films the plot choices available consist of turning ape into man, man into ape, injecting ape gland extracts into a human or human gland extracts into an ape, transplanting a human brain into an ape, transplanting an ape brain, or transplanting an ape head. So sterilize those syringes and sharpen those scalpels as we look for the gorilla of our dreams.

A BLIND BARGAIN (1922) – A lost Lon Chaney, Sr. film in which a human is transformed into a monkey. Based on the book, "The Octave of Claudius", by Barry Pain, and published in 1897.

Synopsis: A young author, Claudius Sandell, despondent and in desperate circumstances over his sick mother who needs an operation signs his life away blindly to a fanatic surgeon, Dr. Lamb (Chaney). The surgeon successfully performs the operation and eight days later the author must submit to his "blind bargain" with the physician. The physician's assistant, a hunchback (a duo role also played by Chaney), releases the beast man, a previous failed experiment, who attacks and kills the physician thereby releasing the author from his blind bargain.

Fuel for much of the plot came from real life events current to the production of this film. Contemporary real life scientist Dr. Serge Voronoff claimed that by surgically grafting the glands of animals into other animals, including humans, he could correct some birth defects and help prolong life. In the April, 1920 issue of *Scientific American Monthly* appeared an article titled, "Human Grafting, the Brilliant and Successful Experiments of Dr. Serge Voronoff", so the idea of grafting glands was much talked about and at the time was contemporary science. Voronoff himself studied under the famous Dr. Alex Carrell of the Rockefeller Institute who received the 1912 Nobel Prize for his work in transplant and grafting biology. Just before World War I Voronoff reported about a case in which he improved the condition of a mentally challenged child due to the atrophy of the thyroid gland by grafting upon it the thyroid gland of a monkey.

In this Chaney film reference is made to the "Steinach gland operation". Eugen Steinach (1861-1944) was a pioneer endocrinologist who, by 1912, theorized that animal gland secretions (e.g., testosterone and estrogen) were responsible for sexuality. He developed what has become to be known as the "Steinach gland operation", which using modern terms, is nothing more than a half-unilateral vasectomy. Steinach's research was aimed at the consequences of aging, reducing fatigue, and the ability to increase overall vigor, including sexual potency in men. During the 1920s research on endocrine glands, especially the sex glands, was widely thought to lead to new ways of improving human life and "glandular techniques" to revitalize the aged was quite popular. As such, early endocrine research was shaped by broader social and cultural forces and considered important contemporary topics of the day. Back then glands were considered pop culture.

The ape-man in this film, called "the hunchback", is also played by Chaney and was Lamb's first experiment. This character has deformities well played and characterized by Lon Chaney's mime and makeup skills. Note that this film was done a year before Chaney's seminal role in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*. It is interesting to speculate if this role gave Chaney any practice for his soon to be had role of Quasimodo since both characters appear to mimic the same body contortions. In addition to the hunchback, a still exists of Chaney as Dr. Lamb looking in on one of his failed experiments in a cage that, in reality, is actor Wallace Berry in an uncredited role in the film as the "beast-man", an unfortunate experiment in gland operation (which glands and where were they placed?).

For this film a promotional letter was sent to “physicians, surgeons, medical students, etc”, that the story “concerns the efforts of a great imaginative surgeon to tear back the veil of human origin and by radical experimentation to prove it is possible to alter human forms by the grafting of glands from an anthropoid ape.” An interesting letter to send out in 1922, three years before the Scopes Monkey Trial. Also, the trailer for this film further stated, “French scientists claim that by grafting the glands of an anthropoid ape to the human body they have renewed the youth of old men” (a 1922 version of viagra?).

The experiment Dr. Lamb intended to try on Claudius Sandell was the transplanting of monkey glands (at the time considered “vital organs”) into his body (which monkey? And which glands? At the time of the film’s production all monkeys were more or less seen as the same as well as all glands). Lamb’s goal was to make old men young again, to double the span of life, and to give humans eternal youth. At first Lamb experimented on animals, including monkeys. With his captive, Sandell, Lamb says, “This time I will reverse the process of transfusion. The blood in your veins shall flow in the apes!” In reality, Sandell’s blood would have very little, if any, beneficial effect on any ape.

Amusing catchlines for the film are: “The gripping story of a man who forgot his God in his love for science” and “Will the gland of the ape bring humanity eternal Youth?”

MURDERS IN THE RUE MORGUE (1932)

Synopsis. Loosely based on the Edgar Allan Poe short story, “The Murders in the Rue Morgue”, Bela Lugosi plays Dr. Mirakle, a mad scientist who runs a carnival show in 19th Century Paris and talks about the many wonders of evolution primarily from a scientific viewpoint. To create a mate for his talking sideshow ape, Erik, Mirakle abducts women and injects them with ape serum. A detective discovers ape serum in the blood of a dead female victim and ape fur in the hand of another victim which leads him to Erik and Mirakle. In the end, Erik strangles Mirakle and the ape is shot dead.

Since this film was made ‘pre-code’ and therefore, unrestricted, the word, “evolution” was mentioned as well as discussions about the evolution of man from apes. All quite blasphemous subject matter at the time. Even just a year later the plot and dialog of this film would most likely not have been approved at the time by the just established Hays Code.

The film begins with a carnival barker saying, “Erik, the ape man. The monster who walks upright and speaks a language even as you and I...the beast with a human soul.” All indicating the fascination and misunderstanding of gorillas (even close up edit cuts of Erik, actually Charlie Gemora in costume, show a live

gorilla instead of Erik's face so the producers felt the (nondiscriminating) audience would not care or notice the difference).

Once Mirakle takes the stage of his sideshow he stands in front of a large canvas illustration he calls "The Story of Man", that shows, in 13 easy to follow steps, the evolution of man from single cells in the primordial seas to man himself. As Mirakle explains, "From the slime of chaos there was seed that held and grew into the tree of life. Life was motion. Fins changed into wings, wings into ears. Crawling reptiles grew legs. Eons of ages past. There came a time when a 4-legged thing walked upright. Behold. The first man (pointing to Erik, the ape)." A member of the audience, after hearing all of this, stands up and loudly proclaims, "Heresy!" This comment more or less summed up the popular sentiment of the time. (Please note that according to the film the story took place in 1845 in Paris. Charles Darwin did not publish his evolution theories until 1859 so Mirakle's comments were remarkably prescient. As such, within the context of the film, it is tempting to speculate that perhaps Darwin himself attended one of Mirakle's shows and noted the comments on evolution and the illustration of The Story of Man and "the tree of life" and adopted all of this for his evolution theories...)

Still commenting on his The Story of Man, Mirakle continues with, "My life is consecrated to a great experiment. I tell you I will prove our kinship with the ape. Erik's blood shall be mixed with the blood of man." After hearing this the audience retorted with loud derisions and condemnations and the show essentially ended.

Mirakle kidnaps a lady of the night (Arlene Francis, later of the "What's My Line" TV quiz show), and takes a blood sample from her. In doing so he has a tourniquet on her upper left arm around the bicep and tricep muscles. Mirakle then used a surgical lance, like a scalpel, to scrape off some skin, tissue, and blood, downstream from the tourniquet, not from the cuff of her elbow but from the side of arm! Quite a painful way to obtain a blood sample and the girl did put up a fight. After obtaining the blood sample Mirakle examines it under a microscope and says, "Your blood is rotten...black as your sins...the clots, the black spots."

Medical student, Dupin, examines blood samples from the female victims and concludes, "The same foreign substance in the blood of each victim. All three died from the same cause. Some strange poison perhaps. Something introduced into their blood stream that caused their death." To make his conclusions Dupin looked at drawings of blood cells illustrating both white cells (also called lymphocytes) and red blood cells (those concave cells that are stacked on top of one another like pancakes). After further study Dupin concludes that the victims "died because the blood of a gorilla was injected into their veins." He based this conclusion solely by looking at a drawing of gorilla blood. In reality, both gorilla blood and human blood would be indistinguishable

under a microscope. A colleague challenges his conclusions and Dupin defended himself by saying that man did evolve from apes. For evolution, Dupin correctly understood the issues and stated, "we are the product of evolution." Quite forward thinking for 1845 Paris.

THE MAN WHO LIVED AGAIN (aka, *The Man Who Changed His Mind*; 1936)
Synopsis: Dr. Laurience (Boris Karloff), a famous brain specialist, developed a way to swap the thoughts between two brains. After demonstrating this on two chimps Laurience swapped his mind into the body of another man to avoid the police. A colleague switches the minds back to their original bodies just before Laurience dies.

For the film, Laurience, the "Brain Genius at Haslewood" Institute of Modern Science, is portrayed as a "wonder doctor" whose job is to "study the human brain". To demonstrate the effectiveness of the mind swap process Laurience first did his proof-of-principle experiment with two chimps. Care was taken to show that the two chimps were different, one was boisterous and just wanted to, ahem, monkey around, and the other quieter one searched in Laurience's coat pocket for some grapes. After the successful mind transfer the boisterous ape was now quiet and searched in Laurience's coat pocket for more grapes whereas the second quieter chimp was now the boisterous one. In this way Laurience proved that his apparatus worked and that he did indeed swap the minds of the two chimps. He then reasoned if the procedure worked on chimps then it should also work on humans. Mind swapping has become a popular plot in SF cinema as fantasy fulfillment.

While working at the Haslewood Institute Laurience gives a lecture titled, "The Motivating Forces of Personality" and while describing his work on swapping minds he is laughed off the lecture podium. (In my 40+ years as a professional scientist I have never seen nor heard of such an event actually happening.)

The word, "evolution" is mentioned in the film which is very rare and almost blasphemous at the time, especially in light of the Hays Code that was very much in force. This film was produced in England by Gaumont Gainsborough and their views on evolution may have been more open minded than us Yanks. In the film, discussing the blatant press on the genius of Laurience, the head of the newspaper, Lord Haslewood, himself says, "I look upon at this (i.e., excessive press) as a mission of enlightenment and we must insure its proper impact on the public. I shall wish you to write a special leader. Something on science, the human mind, with perhaps a thoughtful mention of Freud, and a reference to the part my paper plays in the furthering the process of evolution." Though this may seem like a throw away line the word "evolution" is nevertheless said. At the time a bold comment by the head of the paper and an equally bold comment by the film's producers.

One experiment Laurience did not do was swap minds between a chimp and a human. It would be entertaining to see what a chimp's mind would do with a human body not to mention the increased strength the human would have with the chimps muscular body.

THE APE (1940)

Synopsis. Dr. Adrian (Boris Karloff) uses the spinal fluids of humans to help a paralyzed girl walk again. Initially, Adrian uses spinal fluids from an ape that were shown to be effective. To obtain fresh human spinal fluid Adrian disguised himself as a gorilla to collect samples but was eventually caught and killed.

Injecting gorilla spinal fluid into a human would be an interesting experiment since the similarity between human proteins and gorilla proteins is very close. The original gorilla spinal fluid Adrian uses was enough to give him a clue that he was on the right track and the reason to proceed further with his work. As mentioned at the beginning of this article, the proteins of primates and humans are very similar so the effects of gorilla spinal fluid on humans may have some benefit, though, at best, it would only be temporary.

In the film the purpose of the spinal fluid was to cause growth of new nerve tissues that would repair damaged muscle coordination and allow paralyzed people to walk again. The gorilla was provided via an accident at a local circus and the animal's spinal serum was successful enough it gave Adrian the impetus to seek out human spinal fluid. In reality, what Adrian wanted was a protein hormone called nerve growth factor that would help stimulate nerve growth. In the search for nerve growth factor hormone this protein can be obtained from a number of cell types and tissues, and not specifically from spinal fluid. Eventhough gorilla and human nerve growth factor is similar it would be cheaper and much easier if Adrian was able to make a synthetic version.

THE MONSTER AND THE GIRL (1941)

Synopsis: Good guy Scott Webster is framed by a gang of crooks and falsely convicted of a murder he did not commit. As a result, Webster is executed in prison. Dr. Parry (George Zucco) obtains Webster's brain and transplants it into a gorilla. The Webster/gorilla then goes around and kills the crooks who framed him. After killing all the bad guys, Webster/gorilla is shot and dies.

OK, so you want to transplant a human brain into a gorilla's skull. Congratulations, you have just changed from being an annoyed scientist to becoming a genuinely mad scientist. And the authorities are on their way to take you into custody. There are many obstacles to overcome to successfully perform such a surgical procedure with the two main ones being the size of the brain itself and the incompatibility of the tissues with each other. The gorilla cranium is too small to accommodate a normal human brain so this would have to be solved in

some way either by cutting down the size of the human brain (which brain tissues would you remove?) or perhaps putting a metal skull cap on the gorilla large enough to hold all of the human brain tissues. Equally problematic is the fact of tissue rejection since the gorilla's immune system would recognize the human brain tissue as foreign and therefore reject the transplant.

Nevertheless, Parry manages to convince the prison warden to let him have Webster's body after he is electrocuted. As Parry says to Webster in prison, "For an experiment I am looking to complete I need the brain of a man. A strong, healthy brain. Believe me, your help would be of infinite importance to the human race (this was never explained and it is difficult to imagine a human brain transplanted into a gorilla body as being "of infinite importance"). In response to this unusual "favor" request Webster says, "You want my brain after I'm dead?...help yourself", thus sealing his fate.

Immediately after the execution Parry takes Webster's body to his home lab in an ambulance and along the way Parry administers injections and uses a lung machine to keep Webster alive (or at least his brain alive). The home lab/surgical suite in Parry's home is enormous and well stocked (read: he spent a fortune on all that equipment). Just before Parry and his assistant begin the brain transplant the assistant says in referring to the gorilla under sedation, "he should be proud when he wakes up with a human brain." In response Parry says, "this night's dreaming will step him up a million years in the process of evolution." First of all, when the Webster/gorilla wakes up it will be Webster waking up with a gorilla body and not a gorilla body waking up with Webster's brain as implied by the assistant. In this respect it will be a de-evolution, a step back and not a step forward. Also, gaining a million years of evolution, as stated by Parry, is another example of the incorrect linear thinking often seen in many of our favorite scary films.

The overlapping sequences showing the brain operation were well done and somewhat suspenseful. However, it should be noted that teams of physicians and attendant nursing and other support staff do such surgical work and NOT just two people, no matter how talented and knowledgeable they are.

Later, after the brain transplant we see the Webster/gorilla in a cage with a full head of hair (some would have been shaved off for the brain transplant) and Parry comments, "32nd day, no new marked developments" indicating that essentially a month after the transplant the Webster/gorilla seems physically normal, like a gorilla should. However, what is going on behind those eyes is the real story that shapes the revenge murders that occur later in the film.

THE STRANGE CASE OF DRx (1942)

Synopsis: The plot is essentially a straightforward murder mystery. A mysterious avenger known as Dr. Rx murders five men previously acquitted of various

crimes. A police inspector and a private investigator help with the case. Dr. Rx captures the investigator and threatens to transplant his brain into a gorilla. In the end, Dr. Rx is caught and exposed.

What gets our attention in this film is the threat of transplanting a human brain into the skull of a gorilla. Though this procedure was not actually carried out in the film just the mere threat of doing so qualified it for this discussion. If such an operation was successful then images of how the gorilla would communicate are raised. Would the human-brained gorilla be able to play shadads and sing like the gorilla in *BELA LUGOSI MEETS A BROOKLYN GORILLA* (see below), be frustrated beyond reason by being unable to communicate at all and trapped in a foreign body, or be something in between like the gorilla in *THE MONSTER AND THE GIRL* (see above)? Perhaps we will never know.

DR. RENAULT'S SECRET (1942)

This film is based on the 1911 book, "Baloo", by Gaston (The Phantom of the Opera) Leroux, about a scientist taking revenge using a 'missing link'. In the book Baloo is a demon baboon.

Synopsis: A man visits the home of Dr. Renault (George Zucco) to meet the girl he is engaged to. Renault's strangely deformed man servant, Noel (J. Carol Naish), is actually an experiment, an ape given the mental as well as physical characteristics of a man. A view of Renault's notebook details the experiments he performed to turn a gorilla into Noel. Renault uses a special fluid to transform an ape into the man, Noel; aka, Renault's "secret". Later, Noel strangles Renault and after a lengthy chase is caught and shot.

In this film Darwin's theories were showcased demonstrating a direct evolutionary link between ape and man (and over 70 years after this film's production we still have 'intelligent design' proponents). Renault did both brain experiments and vivisection plastic surgery on a living ape, one of the major taboos of the time of the Hays Code.

The man visiting Renault's home to see his fiance finds the hidden laboratory. In the lab the man is seen flipping through the pages of a 3-ring binder notebook with the cover embossed with "NOEL" we hear a flashback voice over explanation of Renault saying, "My experiment in transmutation...the throwback (an orangutan? obtained from the Javanese jungle) is excellent for experimental humanization...gentle at times then savage and frightening. I have undertaken glandular injections and brain surgery in an improvised operating room and laboratory. The nerve graft operation was a success (it may be somewhat surprising that audiences at the time did not laugh at the photo of a bandaged man-ape). The electroencephalogram indicates that the brain tracings are becoming more human each day (this would suggest higher cognitive abilities). I

have performed plastic surgery to give him all the aspects of a civilized human being...the speech center in the left cerebral hemisphere is now fully developed...teach how to articulate words, he learns slowly. Now my only worry is whether the higher functions of the cerebral cortex can be stimulated to recreate a sense of right and wrong." Basically, the motive here is to have mental blocks in place to prevent the "savage instincts" from taking over. Care and training can take care of some of this but certainly not all. Physically, Noel may resemble a human but mentally his ape instincts are still very much in control. An example of this is when, while driving, he "senses" a dog ahead in the road at an unseen curve and stops so he does not hit the animal.

It is unclear which changes Renault made in the creation of Noel are temporary or permanent. Though surgical changes would be permanent the "glandular injections" would be temporary events that could revert after the gland injections have stopped. After Noel let his ape instincts more or less take over causing the deaths of some villagers, the man responds to Renault with, "Your experiment has reverted to his primitive state, a savage killer", echoing the sentiment of the day that *all* apes were nothing more than savage beasts *all* of the time.

THE APE MAN (1943)

Synopsis: Dr. James Brewster (Bela Lugosi) has created an ape spinal fluid serum that transforms him into an ape-like creature. To revert back to human form, Brewster the ape kills others to obtain the necessary human spinal fluid cocktail. In the end a gorilla attacks and kills Brewster.

To describe how Brewster is transformed into an ape-like human (or a human-like ape) his colleague says, "Six months ago we made an astounding discovery. It was so far advanced from anything that's been done to date that Jim decided to be the guinea pig for this experiment himself. I tried to talk him out of it but you know how stubborn he is when he gets an idea in his head." Since it was never explained what this "astounding discovery" is we can only guess but since it involves "ape fluid injections" then what fluids (or glands) does he use? Most likely hormone related but could be serum, plasma, spinal fluids, seminal fluid extracts, etc. (this could be a long list). Also, is the ape fluid used alone or in combination with some other ingredient(s)? Since it is body fluid based then it means it is hormone based.

The morphological ape changes seen in Brewster are superficial and only those of outer appearance such as hunched shoulders to make his arms appear longer, hands bent at the knuckles, and excessive hair on his face, chest, and hands. All in all it made him look more chimpanzee like. Otherwise, he acts and talks like a human. All of this suggests temporary superficial changes and not the permanent changes implied in the film. The ape spinal fluid should work in a transient manner, like a hormone so the effects would not be long-term but in the film it was suggested that the effects were permanent. Perhaps they needed to

wait longer for the effects of the ape fluid to wear off. For permanent changes to occur then the DNA of the organism must be changed which is something different than transient hormonal changes.

During one exchange Brewster tells a colleague, "I must have human spinal fluid injected into me. It's my only chance. It's the only way to counteract the ape fluid injections". (It was never stated whether these counteractions would be permanent or temporary.) The injections are given in Brewster's lower back spine. The injection could actually be given anywhere and not necessarily the spine itself. If the human spinal fluid only works in a temporary manner then why isn't the originally used ape fluid also temporary? To keep a supply on hand Brewster has a medium-sized jar filled with "spinal fluid" and says he has enough for 6 injections (the sterility of that jar is very suspect).

After injecting himself with the spinal fluids Brewster's ape-man slouch and monkey mannerisms were eliminated though his hairiness remained (why not shave?). One has to ask if this process of reverting back to human was a physical or a mental process?

CAPTIVE WILD WOMAN (1943)

Synopsis: Famous endocrinologist, Dr. Sigmund Walters (John Carradine), is conducting experiments on gland transplants. After some failures in small animals Walters obtains a female gorilla, Cheela, from a circus and transplants human female glands into the gorilla transforming the primate into "Paula Dupree" (played by Aquanetta). Though she looks human she still has some of her animal instincts and uses them to tame a lion and tiger circus act. Unfortunately, the gland transplant is temporary and Paula reverts back to Cheela. Eventually, Cheela is shot while trying to save her trainer.

Walters is portrayed as a famous gland expert. In his office at the Crestview Sanatorium Beth Colman (Evelyn Ankers) reads from a (fictitious) medical journal, "Medicine and Surgery" (as noted on the cover, "published monthly"). Listed on the cover table of contents is an article, "Glands and their secretions" by Dr. Sigmund Walters, indicating to all that he is indeed a world expert on all things glandular. To further support this, Dorothy reads from the journal that Walters is the discoverer of (fictitious) "vitamin E2" that "determines physical characteristics of all forms of animal life..." If true it would be very potent material indeed (and probably DNA). While Dorothy and her sister are talking to Walters he comments, "most ailments are traceable to glandular disorders", though fairly broad nevertheless a reasonably accurate statement.

Later, Walters adds, "Its been proven beyond doubt that glands can transform physical matter into any size, shape, or appearance...we have here in this Sanatorium a rare case of a follicular cyst which induces the secretion of unusual

amounts of the sex hormone.” Then to his nurse, Walters says, “What’s to prevent us from transfusing these glandular extractions from a human being into a higher type of animal?” (meaning a gorilla). The nurse’s answer of “The authorities!” goes unheeded. Walters wants to transform an ape into a human being. A follicular cyst is not that rare and can form when ovulation does not occur and an ovary follicle does not rupture upon ovulation but continues to grow thereby becoming a cyst. Some cyst follicles can grow to about 6cm (2.3 inches) in diameter and their eventual rupture can cause a sharp, severe pain on the side of the ovary where the cyst formed. Usually after a few months the cysts themselves disappear with no symptoms.

Walters arranges to have Cheela the circus gorilla (“she’s almost human!” says her trainer) kidnapped (gorilla-napped?) and brought to his lab. To transform the gorilla into Paula Dupree, Walters transfuses some of the female donor’s (Dorothy Colman, Beth’s sister) blood and glands into the gorilla. In the film we see the gorilla’s left hand transform into a female human hand, meaning the hair disappears, the fingers become less round, and the flesh tone lightens. Further blood from Dorothy was transfused into the gorilla completing the transformation into Paula Dupree. It is assumed that female glands (read: estrogen, the female hormone) are what caused the transformation into a human female. It should be noted that both gorillas and humans have the same estrogen hormone so it is unclear how such a common hormone could have transformed an ape into a human.

To further complete the transformation of the gorilla into the human Paula Dupree Walters must “transplant a cerebrum...a cerebrum is essential to the success of this experiment.” In donating her cerebrum the human donor, Dorothy, would die. Walters comments to his nurse, “why should a single life be considered so important?...and she (Dorothy) will die in the advancement of science.” The transplant itself, a human cerebrum transplanted into the cranium of a gorilla, was all done by Walters himself, a procedure that would ordinarily be done by a team of surgeons, but was done by Walters in a mere 2hrs and 40min. Even so, after the transformation the nurse says, “a human form with animal instincts”, indicating even though Paula may look human the instincts are still those of a gorilla. Stating the obvious, transplanting a human cerebrum into a gorilla would have no effect. Also, the gorilla’s brain would have to be removed to accommodate the human cerebrum.

After the successful transplant Walters uses imprinting and hypnosis to have Paula control her instincts and do only what Walters commands. To test her humanity Walters lets Paula work at a circus. At the circus, Paula helps out with the lions and tigers act by using her ‘gorilla senses’ to control the animals. In helping out Paula falls in love with her trainer. Later, when the trainer and his fiancée hug and kiss Paula goes into a ‘hormonal fit’ that results in her transforming back into Cheela. As Walters comments, “One thing I hadn’t

counted on, a terrific emotion would destroy the new tissues in your gland growths...now I have to do it all over again...another brain transplant.”

Cheela eventually kills Walters and returns to the circus where, when rescuing her trainer from lions, is shot and killed. For the end of the film a voiceover intones, “...a mortal (Walters) who went beyond the realm of human powers and tampered with things no man should ever touch.”

JUNGLE WOMAN (1944)

Synopsis: In this film, a sequel to *Captive Wild Woman*, Dr. Carl Fletcher (J. Carrol Naish) is accused of murder and at a coroner's inquest relates his story in flashbacks. The ape, Cheela, was shot at a circus and Fletcher obtained the ape's body from the circus owner. Detecting a heartbeat Fletcher revives the ape, who returns to human form and is now known as Paula Dupree (Aquanetta). Spurned by a love interest that causes a jealous flare up of hormones Paula goes on a killing spree. A fingerprint analysis confirms that Paula and Cheela are one and the same. At the morgue the body of Paula Dupree is re-examined and found to have reverted in death to a half-human, half-ape monster and Fletcher is exonerated.

At the inquest, when asked how Fletcher was able to sustain the ape's life after being shot he responds with, “I injected adrenaline and probed for the bullet”. The implication being that adrenaline was able to either restart the heart beating or was able to keep it beating normally and the removal of the bullet helped to stabilize the body and restore the ability to heal.

Regarding the gorilla, Fred Mason (Milburn Stone), her trainer, says, “I found her (Cheela) on one of my expeditions into the Belgium Congo. The natives told me of a story of a doctor further back in the interior who had been experimenting with turning human beings into animals (Dr Moreau perhaps?)...and Cheela was the result of one of those experiments.” Upon hearing this Fletcher says, “There have been many efforts made in that direction as well as giving animals human qualities by means of various serums.” It should be noted that giving animals human qualities is quite different from turning human beings into animals.

When asked why Fletcher purchased the sanatorium he says, “much useful knowledge of the study of glands and their effects upon the human body” can be obtained from the patients there. Fletcher says, “We scientists sometimes play hunches too.” And “I purchased this splendidly equipped sanatorium devoted to glandular disturbances.”

In comparing finger print samples obtained from Cheela and Paula it was noted

that each of the fingerprints were the same. An investigator examines the two sets of fingerprints, Paula Dupree's and Cheela's, and concludes, "except in size (Cheela's was twice the size of Paula's) they're identical in every particular...a combination of human and anthropoid." Paula and Cheela would most likely have the same fingerprints and the gorillas may be larger than Paula's but doubtful if they would be twice the size.

The sedative Fletcher gave Paula was too much and resulted in an overdose and death. At the morgue, when the body of Paula was re-examined it had reverted back to its primitive half-human, half-ape form indicating that whatever the effects on her were they ended at her death. This suggests that her transformations were only temporary and very much depended upon her metabolic processes of being alive.

JUNGLE CAPTIVE (1945)

Synopsis: This film is a sequel to JUNGLE WOMAN and CAPTIVE WILD WOMAN. Eminent biochemist Mr. Stendahl (Otto Kruger) has been conducting experiments to restore life to animals. He has his assistant, Moloch (Rondo Hatton), steal the body of the ape-woman from the city morgue. Later, Stendahl was successful in reviving the ape woman by transfusing blood from his assistant. To go further and convert her to human form he transfuses some glandular secretions of his assistant into the ape-woman that completes her metamorphosis into the human, Paula Dupree. Eventually, Paula reverts back to the ape-woman, kills Stendahl, and herself is gunned down by the police.

The sign on the door to Stendahl's lab states, "Stendahl Biological Laboratory, Endocrine Research, X-ray, Electrolytic Research, Clinical Pathology", which is quite a bit of work for any lab. As Stendahl succinctly describes his work, "electric current plus transfusions has revived the heart". Stendahl uses electricity to stimulate the heart and keep it beating. This could be done artificially as long as the electric current was applied. Though so stated on the door it should be noted that in his lab no X-ray related machinery was visible.

Why Stendahl had the body of the ape-woman stolen from the morgue was so he could use her "to prove or disprove my theories of restoring life." If he could restore life to dead rabbits Stendahl thought he could also do so with the body of the ape-woman. Stendahl's thoughts on the ape-woman herself are that she is "a man-made creation, an experiment", meaning he has no ethical issues in working with a stolen body by which murder was committed to obtain it. As Stendahl said, "we're scientists, not sentimentalists".

The first blood transfusion into the ape-woman helped to revive her. The second transfusion was so Stendahl could get enough of his assistant's glandular secretions ("not much this time") to cause the transformation of the now revived

ape-woman into the human female, Paula Dupree. Though this does work the results are only temporary since later Paula does revert back to her ape-woman form. And since glandular secretions are hormonal based this would only be a temporary solution and not the permanent fix Stendahl was looking for.

MASTER MINDS (1949)

Synopsis: A comedy film starring the Bowery Boys. Sach develops a special tooth ache that allows him to predict the future. Slip and Gabe decide to put Sach in a side show carnival to make some money. A mad scientist sees the show and kidnaps Sach so he could transfer Sach's brain into the head of Atlas, a humanoid creature (played by Glenn Strange). Eventually, Louie brings in the police who arrest the scientist. Sach swallows his tooth so no more toothache.

For the purposes of our ape-ic discussion the mad scientist, Dr. Druzik (Alan Napier) initially creates Atlas, an anthropoid creature who clearly is a throwback (all the hair is supposed to indicate this). As such, there must be some ape genes in there somewhere, though not sure how many nor where they are. To swap the minds of Sach and Atlas (not sure who benefits the most from this), ala Karloff in THE MAN WHO LIVED AGAIN, Druzik can thank Nikola Tesla for all the electrical gizmos and sparks that fly when the mind swap occurs. After the mind swap much comedy comes from Sach acting like the anthropoid and Atlas acting like Sach. For Glenn Strange fans watching him as the anthropoid mimic the mannerisms of Sach at the malt shop are quite funny.

It should be noted that a mind swap is different from a surgical procedure to switch brains. No surgery is required in a mind swap so in principle it should be a safer procedure. However, either by mind swap or by surgery the end result is the same with each body having a different brain/mind in control.

BRIDE OF THE GORILLA (1951)

Synopsis. At a jungle plantation, Barney Chavez (Raymond Burr) kills his boss after being fired by him. An old lady witnesses the event and concocts a plant potion to transform Barney into a gorilla as a way to serve up some jungle justice. Barney marries the widow of his boss and eventually kills her when he is in gorilla form. The police commissioner (Lon Chaney, Jr.) shoots the Barney/gorilla, killing him. After death, the gorilla reverts back to normal Barney.

The use of plant extracts is almost as old as man and still the medical benefits of plants and their extracts remain a largely untapped resource. When the old lady, Pal Long, makes the plant potion that transforms Chavez into a gorilla she is seen squeezing the juices out of the plant's flowers using her bare, unprotected hands. Why didn't the plant's extract fluid seep through the pores in her skin and affect her? Perhaps she developed an immunity over time from using so much plant extract. Also, perhaps the plant extract was mostly a hallucinogen and not

a poison and appropriate verbal “suggestions” was all it took for Chavez to envision himself an ape. Transforming a man into a gorilla via a “poison” and/or a hallucinogen would require the changing of all the necessary genes and then unchanging them when Chavez reverted back to his human form. Using a plant extract to change, physiologically and morphologically, a human into a gorilla belongs in the world of fantasy.

In the gorilla animal form the senses of Chavez would indeed be heightened. At one point Chavez says, “I’m not happy here (in the house). I’m happy out there (in the jungle). Out there in the jungle, out there everything’s different. I seemed changed. My hands, my eyes. I can see further than I’ve ever seen before. The smallest leaf on top of the highest tree. I can climb it as if I had wings. I can smell a thousand smells. Flowers, plants, the animals. I’m strong, powerful. The jungle is my house. It belongs to me. I can hear voices, miles away. The animals talk to me (shades of Dr. Doolittle!). I understand them...they’re afraid of me.” Such is the power of a strong hallucinogen.

BELA LUGOSI MEETS A BROOKLYN GORILLA (1952)

Synopsis: The comedy team of Duke Mitchell and Sammy Petrillo (a very poor man’s version of Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis) are stranded on an island occupied by natives and Dr. Zabor (Bela Lugosi). Dr. Zabor is experimenting with a serum that transforms a chimp into a “lesser” old world monkey; it de-evolved to a more primitive form. Zabor then injects Duke with the serum that subsequently transforms him into a gorilla. All was righted at the end.

As explained in the film, Dr. Zabor is “a scientist working on an experiment on evolution.” After meeting him, Mitchell then naturally asks, “What kind of experiments are you making doctor?” Zabor responds with, “I’m performing a series of experiments on evolution...scientists have proven that all living things originated in a process of evolution. They also know that there is a growth force that tends to make genetic changes, physiologically and morphologically (its called, DNA). Chimpanzees and gorillas are the highest members of the ape family and are the ancestors of man. Darwin in his provisional hypothesis of pangenesis assumes that every living cell contains a gemule which is a hypothetical granular...I have found the chemical formula that simulates the growth force (read: DNA or genes). What Nature takes years I can in a matter of hours make a complete embryonic metamorphosis both physiological and morphological. Do you understand?” Zabor was saying this to both Mitchell and Petrillo and it is difficult to believe that *any* of them actually understood what was said!

To make the serum, Zabor mixes together two liquids in relatively equal proportions, swirls the mix, (non-sterily) loads a syringe with about 10cc of fluid, and then injects this into the chimp, Ramona’s, upper right arm. In a few moments the chimp morphs into a more primitive old world monkey, complete

with pre-hensile tail. At the sight of this, Zabor triumphantly exclaims, "Now I can change a man into a gorilla", which is quite a leap in both logic and faith that the experiment will work. However, the next morning Ramona is back to her chimp form and Zabor says, "Wasn't strong enough...it worked but wasn't strong enough to hold." Zabor may have changed Ramona both "physiologically and morphologically" but since it was temporary the changes were therefore of a hormonal or transient nature and not a permanent one caused by the "growth force" (i.e., DNA or genes).

Later, Zabor loads another syringe and injects about 10cc into Mitchell who subsequently morphs into a gorilla in appearance. Zabor proudly says, "Another step in my experiment." However, it appears this Mitchell-gorilla is still mentally Mitchell since he can communicate, play charades (!), and sings!! Eventually, the Mitchell-gorilla reverts back to Duke Mitchell when Sammy Petrillo wakes up from a dream.

KONGA (1961)

Synopsis: Dr Charles Decker (Michael Gough), a botanist, crashed his plane and was lost in the jungles of Uganda, Africa for a year and returned to England with a baby chimp named, Konga. While in Africa Decker witnessed a witch doctor use an extract from a carnivorous plant that accelerated animal growth. Back in his lab Decker injects Konga with the same serum and the baby chimp grew, eventually to Kong-size proportions when the military destroyed him.

While in the African jungles Decker says, "as a botanist and scientist I couldn't resist the opportunity to research the special situation...I discovered species of animal growth I had never seen before. Naturally, I was fascinated with these specimens. It made me think of the crash as a lucky accident. Where else would I get the chance to study insectivorous plants, plants with animal properties. They live on insects and small birds. They devour them completely. They need more than air, sun, and water...I'm on the verge of a revolutionary link between what grows in the earth and animal life." In referring to his baby chimp, Konga, Decker says, "That little chimp will become the first link in modern evolution between plant and animal life."

Plants synthesize hundreds of thousands diverse natural products and many of them do indeed have profound impacts on human health. Unfortunately, these natural products are mostly produced in small quantities in slow-growing plants. In describing the carnivorous plants he obtained in the jungles to his assistant, Decker says, "That's what's so unique about these plants. Centuries and nature have already worked their magic. They grow fast. And that remarkable characteristic can be transferred by me. A native witch doctor who introduced them to me explained some of their remarkable characteristics...extracts from these plants may well prove to be the link between vegetable and animal life. And extracts from these leaves when they have reached full growth and

development will contain human properties when injected into the circulatory system.”

To make the plant extract Decker places some leaves from the carnivorous plants into a press and squeezes out some fluid juice, boils it (over a Bunsen burner), and mixes in some seeds from a rare plant. After loading a syringe with about 10cc Decker injects this into Konga, who immediately grows to a larger size chimp. In noting the botanical origin of the serum Decker says, “plants are man’s greatest ally for without them we would not survive.” Very true.

In a discussion between Decker and the dean of his university about statements to the press the dean says, “making some sort of remark (to the press) about establishing a closer evolutionary link between plant life and humans” is not in keeping with university policy. Decker angrily responds with, “I shall prove conclusively that I can inject the essence of plant cells into the animal blood stream...ultimately I shall be able to change the shape of human beings.” Decker referred to this as “directed mutation”, an accurate description of his intended work. Decker wants to transfer the traits of carnivorous plants to animals, which is essentially biological engineering. As Decker describes, “I’ve bypassed normal evolution by stimulating the centrosomes, speeded up cell division, changed its basic nature, insectivorous to carnivorous.”

Decker injects the mid-sized Konga (in reality, just a large chimp) with a newly prepared serum resulting in a proportionally correct gorilla, indicating the growth was uniform on all aspects of the ape’s body. However, this ape version is more gorilla like than just a larger chimp so there were morphological changes too.

In a fit of jealousy, Decker’s lovely assistant, Margaret, injects the now gorilla-sized Konga with a larger sample, about 15cc in the upper left arm, and this time the ape grows to a proportionally correct Kong-size Konga. After the military destroys Konga the ape reverts back to his chimp size in death suggesting the excessive growth was metabolically related and temporary.

THE THING WITH TWO-HEADS (1972)

Synopsis: Dr. Kirshner (Ray Milland), a transplant specialist, experiments by transplanting a second gorilla head onto the body of another gorilla resulting in a two-headed gorilla demonstrating his procedure is successful. Due to lung cancer Kirshner is near death and only a head transplant onto another human will save him. Kirshner is a bigot and as just rewards his head is transplanted onto a black man’s body (Rosie Grier), thereby temporarily saving his life.

For this discussion our interest in this film occurs early on when we see the good doctor practicing his head transplant technique on a gorilla. His overall reasoning for such an undertaking is to preserve the minds of some particularly worthy people (who makes that decision?), in particular, Kirshner himself who

egotistically says, “my genius must be allowed to live”. With a twist to this problem Kirshner practices his transplant technique by adding a second gorilla head to the right of the head naturally on the body of another gorilla thereby making a two-headed gorilla. Kirshner reasoned that if he could successfully transplant a gorilla head then he should be able to do so with a human head since anatomically both are similar and the surgical techniques applied to one would also work on the other. A two-headed animal raises many valid concerns such as which head dominates, can both heads talk, and are the brain hormones in balance between the two? After the two-headed gorilla escapes and roams city blocks he ends up at a Sunrise Market convenience store. (With a two-headed gorilla this film features gorilla vs gorilla in kong-fu action.) Regarding which head would dominate, in the end, it was a tie since both heads were seen eating bananas in the convenience store. Food conquers all.

After the gorilla was captured and returned to Kirshner’s basement lab in his home the original gorilla head was removed and the transplanted head left on. As Kirshner explained to a colleague about the gorilla on the operating table, “that is not the gorilla’s original head. Heavily sedated now. We have achieved 100 percent total spinal alignment of a newly transplanted head...heart, lung, kidneys, arms, legs, everything is functioning properly.” Kirshner wanted to prove that he can successfully transplant a head onto a different body and have the new head and body function normally and as stated, “the transplant was a complete success”.

Kirshner shows an x-ray image of the two-headed gorilla to a colleague. (This begs the question of where was this x-ray taken since there was no sign of any x-ray machinery visible in Kirshner’s home lab. Therefore, the x-ray image was taken elsewhere, but where? If at a hospital, most likely, then how do you smuggle a two-headed gorilla into a hospital without anyone noticing? And what about the gorilla holding still long enough to actually take an x-ray?) Though indeed two heads were visible on the x-ray they were not gorilla skulls but rather altered human skulls. The neck spines (cervical vertebrae) of each head were visible and both curved (no doubt causing much neck pain to both heads) inward (!) and met into a single spine around where the cervical vertebrae becomes the thoracic vertebrae (about the 7th or 8th spinal vertebrae bone down from the base of the skull), near the junction of the C7 and T1 spinal vertebrae bones. The junction where the spinal nerves meet would have to be protected by bone and tissues to prevent nerve damage. All in all it would be a painful recovery. Since both heads were clearly connected to the central spine then which head would dominate such simple responses as walking and hand movement not to mention anything more complicated?

Regarding his gorilla patient, Kirshner further explains, “I kept the original (gorilla) body and transplanted head alive on two separate heart-lung machines (*very* expensive equipment to have in one’s home surgical lab). Total spinal alignment achieved by using matching electric currents attached to the nerve ends. I left

the two heads together for 28 days. Until the new one was strong enough to take over. Removal operation was really quite simple. I did it myself in 35 minutes” (Mord the Executioner (THE TOWER OF LONDON) could have done it in much less time with his just sharpened axe...). It should be noted that there are many, many nerve ends in the spine that would require attaching of “matching electric currents”. However, electric currents are not what are required to re-attach nerve endings.

Summary

As Dr. Zais from THE PLANET OF THE APES says, “The proper study of ape is ape.” The films discussed here represent a 50 year span and much has changed in our understanding of the great apes and evolution. In 1922, three years before the Scopes Monkey Trial, the public debate over evolution was a strong one and the producers more or less captured this drama in the Chaney film, A BLIND BARGAIN. In 1922, both Darwinism and vivisection were poorly accepted by society. Ten years later, in 1932 the word “evolution” was mentioned, a rarity at the time, and is a major plot point of the film, MURDERS IN THE RUE MORGUE. Also, vivisection was implied in the experiments of the film. After another ten years, in 1942, the year of DR. RENAULT’S SECRET, society was willing to entertain themes of man evolving from apes partly due to World War II desensitizing people to real horrors and evolution seemed tame to those at the time. And after an additional ten years, in 1952, we even have Bela Lugosi meeting a Brooklyn gorilla indicating that the gorilla themes have run their course and are now the subject of comedy. And then after 20 more years, in 1972, 50 years after the Chaney film, it was thought that a two-headed gorilla transplant was feasible.

Every now and then it is fun to just monkey around and I hope this article is something we can all go ape over. After all, that phrase, “monkey around”, came from observing apes do random, unplanned work or activities or spend their time idly. So why not us mere human anthropoid primates?

Disclaimer: please note that no apes were harmed in the writing of this article.

Thanks for reading. It’s back to the lab for me. Stay healthy and eat right.