

LUGOSI IN HOLLYWOOD: A HUNGARIAN ACTOR'S RISE AND FALL AS A MOVIE STAR

KEVIN E. KELLY

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Béla Lugosi, the actor most identified with the role of Count Dracula, the Transylvanian vampire immortalized in Bram Stoker's novel *Dracula* and in countless stage and screen adaptations, fled Hungary in 1919 to escape almost certain punishment and perhaps death for his brief and somewhat naïve involvement with the socialist movement that swept the country immediately after World War I. He left Europe two years later to seek the promise of a stage career and wealth offered in the United States.

Fame and fortune he did find in the late 1920s with his portrayal of Dracula in the Broadway production of the popular Hamilton Deane-John L. Balderston version of the Stoker novel, and his star rose even further when he starred in the 1931 Hollywood film drawn from the novel and the play. Unfortunately, it would be the pinnacle of his professional career, and his stardom in the American film capital, would be brief. Years of roles in atrocious films and the ever-present shadow of Dracula would follow, culminating in near-unemployability in the years preceding his death in 1956.

While a number of Lugosi's countrymen, such as Paul Lukas and Victor Varconi, also emigrated to Hollywood and at first received starring roles as suave Continental types, they were eventually committed to character roles for the rest of their careers. Lugosi, however found to his everlasting regret that Dracula put him in a particular niche - as a star of horror films, with the resultant typecasting barring him from the varied roles that Lukas, for example, would enjoy as a supporting player for several decades. By the time Lugosi got around to making one of those classically bad movies he was bound to do, *Voodoo Man* (1944), his screen persona had been irrevocably set. At the end of the film, the screenwriter-hero of the story comes up with a novel suggestion as the lead for the script he's written. "Why don't you get that horror star... uh, Béla Lugosi? It's right up his alley."¹

In spite of this, Lugosi has endured in filmgoers' minds much longer than his more successful contemporaries. The revival of interest in the classic horror

films Lugosi made in the 1930s via television distribution vaulted him back into viewer appreciation, sometimes for the "camp" value of his passionate acting style, but more often for his unique personality and presence, "the indéniable force of his simple presence on screen, which, supported by studio publicity, made him into perhaps the only great movie villain whose existence as a villain seemed so tangible and consistent," film historian Gary Collins noted.²

The man Lugosi always considered his rival in the horror film arena, the British-born, unassuming and understated Boris Karloff, would enjoy new popularity for more than a decade after young people were exposed to his and Lugosi's films on TV in the late 1950s. Lugosi died before the revival occurred, robbed of the professional vindication he desperately sought in his later years, the final outrage in a career that became another casualty of the Hollywood mill.

"Always it is the same," Lugosi resignedly told a British interviewer in 1951 while staging a London revival of *Dracula*. "When a film company is in the red they come to me and say, 'Okay, so we make a horror film.* And so that is what we do. It is what I will always do.'"³

Lugosi's treatment by film and stage producers later in his life was even more demoralizing given his status in the Hungarian theatrical community in the first two decades of the 20th century. While biographer Arthur Lennig argues that Lugosi was not considered a "great" actor at this stage of his career,⁴ he was a busy and at times popular thespian, essaying everything from Shakespeare to commercial comedy and melodrama.

Béla Ferenc Dezső Blasko was born on October 20, 1882 at Lugos, on the Temesvár River, in the Bánát region that was at the time part of Hungary, and later, Rumania.⁵ Lugosi adopted the name of his hometown when he decided to embark on a professional acting career shortly after the turn of the century. The son of a baker who later turned to banking, Lugosi, an average if indifferent student, at first apprenticed to a locksmith but was drawn to the stage, and joined a theatrical troupe in Lugos in 1901. "In Hungary," he grandly told an interviewer later in life, "acting is a career for which one fits himself as earnestly and studiously as one studies for a degree in medicine, law or philosophy. In Hungary acting is a profession. In America it is a decision."⁶

Legend - one perpetrated by either the publicity-hungry actor or through his willing cooperation with an equally sensation-bent press agent, particularly following his success in *Dracula* - has Lugosi making his debut in Lugos as no less than the male lead in *Romeo and Juliet*, although Lennig's exhaustive research of Hungarian theatrical history while preparing his biography of Lugosi has effectively debunked the claim. The truth is that Lugosi's early stage career has been lost in the mists of time, and in all likelihood the aspiring thespian essayed small roles in the first few years of his stage period. Lennig's

research goes back to the 1903-4 theatrical season in Temesvár, when Lugosi was employed at the Franz Joseph Theater, working under the direction of Ignác Krecsányi. Krecsányi, one of the most noted theatrical technicians of his time, assigned Lugosi to small parts in his productions, but no doubt had some influence in transforming the eager young man into a serious actor. Working in repertory, Lugosi learned his craft by switching from heavy drama one night, to light comedy the following evening, and even singing in an operetta staged later in the week.⁷

Lugosi stayed only a season in Temesvár, and for several years lived a somewhat nomadic existence with other companies in other cities. Buoyed mainly by his dedication to the profession, the insecurities and small wages to be found as a provincial actor gave Lugosi cause to wonder about the actor's lot, but, seeking to improve his own situation by becoming a better actor, Lugosi found that his efforts were bearing fruit. By the time he settled in Debrecen in 1908, he began winning leading roles, such as Danilo in *The Merry Widow*, Armand in *The Lady of the Camellias*, Adam in *The Tragedy of Man*, and significant parts in Shakespeare. In 1910 his growing reputation in the provinces gave him employment in Szeged, debuting, for real this time, as Romeo, leading to more work in Shakespeare and popular entertainments of the time, such as an adaptation of *Anna Karenina*. Not surprisingly, his trouping won him fans and publicity, and a Szeged theatrical journalist gushed over Lugosi's Romeo: "He grabs the strings of the heart and stretches them to the breaking point."⁸

With this experience to recommend him, Lugosi took the next step up - in 1911 he joined the Theater of Hungary in Budapest, and was again rewarded with leading roles. But finding himself in the nation's capital among more accomplished actors reminded him of his lackadaisical attitude toward school in Lugos, and he set about to improve himself by enrolling in acting school and sharpening his knowledge of the world. With a reputation as a romantic star, Lugosi had become enamored of night life, and in Budapest he found more diversions than he had previously indulged in the provinces. At the same time, exposure to the country's political and cultural center placed him among more knowledgeable and politically active members of the profession. Although known during this period as a bit of a loner, more interested in chasing women and finding new ways of squandering his small wages, Lugosi could not have avoided discussions among his peers about the state of Hungarian theater, a stratified environment of managers, directors, stars, supporting players and technicians, and the inevitable dissatisfaction one or all of these groups would have with each other. At the same time, Lugosi was aware of his position - somehow, in spite of his experience, he was still an actor from

the provinces, not quite the same or as exalted as those who had begun their careers in Budapest with the "best" actors and directors.

In early 1913 Lugosi made his first appearance with the National Theater of Hungary. While his work with companies in Szegec and Debrecen had made him accustomed to leading roles, he had to accept smaller parts at the nation's primary stage showcase, because in the order of things, the established stars and long-standing members of the company were afforded the significant roles. The new face on the scene, now in his 30s, would have to be patient if he were to rise within the ranks. Lugosi accepted this situation, perhaps not willingly, but reminded himself that he was among the leaders in Hungary's theatrical scene.⁹

Following service in World War I - in which he was wounded and discharged after service in Serbia and Russia¹⁰ - Lugosi returned to the National Theater and starting in 1917 supplemented his income with a number of impressive roles in early Hungarian films. The theatrical training he underwent stressed giving his all to roles, and Lugosi himself preferred showy, flamboyant characterizations. If playing a passionate lead was not in the immediate future at the National Theater, they were his in the burgeoning film industry in Budapest. Acting under the name of Arisztid Olt - not so much a conceit on his part to separate his film career from his stage work, but actually to help make his films more attractive and less Hungarian-sounding in other European markets - Lugosi worked for the Star and Phoenix film companies, appearing in numerous romances and melodramas between 1917 and 1919. Significantly, in view of his later position as a star of horror films, he had the lead in *The King of Life* (1918), an adaptation of Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*.¹¹ In his later Hollywood career, the theatricalism Lugosi brought to his roles became the object of scorn from critics and impatient audiences, but his tireless, emotional trouping in some of his worst pictures provided them with a distinction they hardly deserved. "To his other roles," film historian Carlos Clarens observed, "he brought a kind of cornball, demented poetry, and total conviction."¹²

Such flamboyance carried over into his private life as well, and what money he earned in Budapest was quickly spent. The first of his five marriages was to a banker's daughter as an apparent means of resolving his debts.¹³ This, coupled with his lack of progress at the National Theater, drew him into the maelstrom of Hungarian politics following the abdication of King Charles in November 1918. Although previously uncommitted on national issues, Lugosi appears to have viewed the developing situation as advantageous for the acting profession. The idea of throwing over the established order in the theater and making all actors and technicians equals in the pursuit of their art, as

socialistic or even Bolshevik as it sounded at the time, had an appeal for one who had essentially spent nearly two decades trying to get to the top of his profession. With the characteristic enthusiasm he brought to his other endeavors, he threw himself into the cause, and with the brief rise of the Károlyi regime, Lugosi launched the Free Organization of Theater Employees to improve "the moral, economic and cultural level of the actor's society."¹⁴*

Aside from this organizing activity, Lugosi sat on the committee of the Free Organization of Theater Employees. As Lennig relates, an opposing organization, the Budapest Theater Society, sought to seize control of the movement and demanded Lugosi's expulsion. Lugosi's group instead joined workers from the Opera House to form the arts section of the Hungarian Civil Service Workers and successfully recruited many from the National Theater to participate. In keeping with the growing instability within the government, this association was dissolved, and Lugosi and friends formed the National Trade Union of Actors.¹⁵ As can be seen, Lugosi was willing to do anything to promote the dream of a national actors' union, either unaware or unconcerned about the consequences so long as the goal was reached. Such naivete may be the cause behind his support for the infamous Béla Kun after the collapse of the Károlyi government and put him further at odds not only with the theatrical establishment, but with his young bride's staid family.

So convinced was Lugosi of a change in the actor's lot, he penned an emotional piece for a Budapest journal in which he berated the "former ruling class" for keeping "the community of actors in ignorance by means of various lies, corrupted it morally and materially, and finally scorned and despised it - for what resulted from its own vices. The actor, subsisting on starvation wages and demoralized, was often driven, albeit reluctantly, to place himself at the disposal of the former ruling classes. Martyrdom was the price of enthusiasm for acting."¹⁶

Expressing some of the slight he felt for being an actor from the country kept in small roles in the National Theater, Lugosi further fanned the flames in a speech of the time calling for an end to the apparent class ranking of actors. "The actor working in the provinces should not perceive it as luck if he gets to Budapest," he said, "and the actor who goes to Budapest should not feel it a degradation if he has to work in the provinces."¹⁷

These statements and others placed Lugosi in peril after Kun's Communist-influenced reign was deposed by Miklós Horthy's more conservative administration. Imprisonment and the deaths of a number of Kun supporters forced Lugosi to flee to Vienna in the summer of 1919, and later to Berlin. Asked about the reason for his departure in an early 1930s film short, Lugosi responded tersely, and somewhat sheepishly: "Political reasons... I found myself on the wrong side."¹⁸

With his brief and impulsive trip into activism resulting in a major upheaval of his life, Lugosi returned to his previous indifference to politics - so much so that by 1931, when he became an American citizen, he renounced both the governments of Hungary and Rumania because he wasn't sure which was in charge of his hometown at the time.¹⁹ Throughout the remainder of his life, Lugosi would be nostalgic about Hungary, but after successfully establishing himself within the Hollywood community in the early 1930s, any desire to return home was never acted upon. With the Communist domination of the country in the post-World War II era, his homeland would be forever closed to him. A later associate of Lugosi's who worked with him in his final films claimed the Hungarian Communists offered Lugosi a cultural minister's post if he would return, but Lugosi declined because he was afraid "they'd send him to a gulag." Whether or not this actually happened to Lugosi has never been confirmed.²⁰

Leaving Vienna, Lugosi spent two dispiriting years in Berlin in which he worked primarily in the busy German cinema, including a role as the butler in *Der Januskopf* (1920), a version of Robert Louis Stevenson's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* directed by Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau, who one year later would helm the first known version of a popular British horror novel called *Dracula* under the title *Nosferatu*. He would soon pick up better acting opportunities in German film, and one of his more significant roles came in an authentic-looking Teutonic adaptation of James Fenimore Cooper's epic of America's closing colonial days, *The Deerslayer* (1922).²¹

But with limited theatrical opportunities and the chaotic social and political climate of postwar Berlin, Germany held little promise for Lugosi, who decided in spite of the fact he couldn't speak English that his best opportunity would be in the United States. Working his way across the Atlantic on a steamer, he eventually arrived in New York, determined not to let the language barrier prevent him from a career. Perseverance paid off in 1922 when he landed his first lead in a New York play, a romantic Apache dancer in *The Red Poppy*. His English skills hardly improved, he learned the role phonetically but carried off the stunt so convincingly he soon found himself established as a working actor.²²

For the next few years his career paralleled that of Budapest and Berlin - stage work punctuated by an occasional film role while production was still partly based in New York. While his discomfort with the language - and unwillingness to learn more than a basic understanding of it - limited him to Continental parts for awhile, he did break into some typically flashy major roles as a sheik in *Arabesque* (1925) and a Greek bandit leader in *The Devil in the Cheese* (1926). In the summer of 1927, after reportedly being suggested to

producer Horace Liveright, he read for the role of Dracula in Liveright's upcoming production of the London stage hit.²³

In spite of the notoriety the title inspires when heard, the novel *Dracula*, published in 1897, was never a financial bonanza for its author, theatrical manager and thriller novelist Bram Stoker (1847-1912).²⁴ It did, however, remain continually in print, and it was only after some convincing that British regional stage entrepreneur Hamilton Deane convinced Stoker's widow to sanction a dramatic version. The aforementioned *Nosferatu* - widely considered a masterpiece of silent cinema - had enraged Mrs. Stoker, not so much because the film turned the renamed Dracula into a metaphor for pestilence and destruction, but because the film's producers, including Murnau, ignored obtaining the book's rights from her.²⁵

Stoker's original work, a rambling, verbose and hopelessly Victorian effort, dealt with the arrival in England of an aristocratic vampire, an Anglicization of the Hungarian word *wampyr*, describing an "undead" creature that lived by night off the blood of the living, his attempts to infect the novel's leading characters, and his subsequent destruction by them and an all-knowing Dutch expert on the occult, Professor Van Helsing.

The vampire had been a fixture of western literature and theater since the early 19th century, but no one work, aside from J. Sheridan LeFanu's famed novella *Carmilla* (1871), defined the vampire in the public mind as Dracula. While the majority of the novel's background came from research and his own imagination, Stoker did base his character in part on the notorious Wallachian *voivode* Vlad Tepes (1431-76), whose relentless bloodletting during his adult career made him not just part of the historical record of Hungary, but a part of local superstition, which for years insisted that his evil influence reached out from beyond the grave. Vlad's father was known as Dracul (dragon), and in his day Vlad became known as Dracula, son of the dragon. This name, coupled with the location of Vlad's atrocities being the far-off, mysterious and exotic-sounding region of Transylvania, became, in Stoker's novel, the identifying characteristics for the most well-known vampire character in literature, the stage and film.²⁶

Deane's version of the novel did profitable business in British regional theaters, but he did not attempt a London production until early 1927. While critical reviews were hostile, the public flocked to the play. Among those in the audience was Liveright, a flamboyant American publisher and producer who knew Deane's version would be laughed off the boards in New York as it stood, but with revision, could have potential. Purchasing the rights from Deane and Mrs. Stoker, Liveright assigned London-based playwright and correspondent John L. Balderston to the rewrite, which would eventually carry

both his and Deane's names as co-authors. Lugosi, already somewhat known as a specialist in foreign types, was chosen for the role.²⁷

Dracula was Lugosi's longest-lasting theatrical vehicle - and the beginning of the end of his career as versatile actor. Over the next two years, more people than he ever imagined saw him as the demonic count, first in the original New York run and later on the road. While in the play his appearances are few, Lugosi made them count with an unusual concentration on the role, an absorption which caused him, in his own words, to work at a "fever pitch... I sat in my dressing room and took on, as nearly as possible, the actual attributes of this horrible vampire, Dracula... I was under a veritable spell which I dared not break. If I stepped out of my character for a moment... my hold on the audience lost its force."²⁸

The effort, however, paid off in excellent business for the play, raves from the critics and sudden notoriety for Lugosi, already a proven character actor but largely unknown to many audiences. Caught up in the publicity machine surrounding the show, Lugosi boasted that most of his fan mail came from women due to a certain romantic flavor - as well as the intensity - he brought to the role. "Women wrote me letters... of a horrible hunger. Asking me if I had done the play because I was in reality that sort of Thing," he gushed in one interview.²⁹ The play had been accompanied by a number of publicity gimmicks and Lugosi wasn't above joining in the hoopla if it would increase business for the show.³⁰

Dracula eventually toured the West Coast and in 1928 Lugosi made his first appearance in a Hollywood film. While American film production had started in the New York area at the turn of the century and remained based there for quite some time, the suburb of Los Angeles known as Hollywood had throughout the 1910s and 1920s replaced New York as the nation's film capital.³¹ Lugosi's first American film, *The Silent Command* (1923), and several subsequent films, were produced in New York during lulls between theatrical engagements. Sunny California seemed an unlikely place to set the shadowy, fog-shrouded atmospherics of *Dracula* - a film adaptation had been discussed as early as 1927 - but art direction, visual expertise and all of the other categories of what became known as "movie magic" were sufficiently developed by the late 1920s to make the Rocky Mountains resemble Transylvania, and a studio lot a dark London street.

Lugosi's reputation as the stage Dracula translated into some meaty parts at the major studios, and with the introduction of sound to films at the time he arrived in Hollywood, his stock was actually boosted, for his heavy accent was suitable for Continental parts as well as ethnic characterizations. Overall, his unique, portentous voice, coupled with a preference for ominous pauses in

dialogue, "created," as Carlos Clarens noted, "a barrier of unfamiliarity (and something too ambiguous to be charm) that was as effective in its way as (Lon) Chaney's silence before the Sound Era."³²

But Lugosi's subsequent stardom in the Universal Pictures production of *Dracula* was not assured. In fact, Lugosi spent a good part of 1929-30 campaigning for the role against such studio considerations as Chaney, the German actor Conrad Veidt and the equally theatrical Ian Keith.³³ Universal's reasoning appeared to be that Lugosi, although famous for the role on stage, was not known to most film audiences. But after several candidates were ruled out or uninterested, the studio decided at the eleventh hour that Lugosi was their man. Feeling the bite of the worsening economic depression, Universal could only offer \$500 per week; but after working diligently to land the screen role, Lugosi was not about to allow it to go someone else.³⁴ He accepted the money, swallowed the slight of being chosen practically at the last minute, and forged ahead to create what became his signature role in Hollywood.

The release of *Dracula* in February 1931 vaulted Lugosi into stardom and with it the promise of becoming as exalted as Chaney in essaying screen grotesques. *Dracula* initiated the first cycle of all-out horror films in America, in which the supernatural was accepted, not explained away in the closing reel as the work of human villains. In that position, Lugosi stood on the brink of solidifying his place. But the heady atmosphere and sex symbol flavor surrounding his success as *Dracula* only boosted his belief that the studios should view him as a new romantic star, not a monster. Universal, however, which sought to promote Lugosi, had an entirely different idea about his screen image.

To satisfy his expenses and craving for the good life, Lugosi played more small roles between the completion of *Dracula's* filming in the fall of 1930 and its premiere. Appropriately, one of his next jobs allowed him significant billing in *Black Camel* (1931), the first Charlie Chan detective thriller that starred Warner Oland. Flushed with the profits from *Dracula*, Universal planned to star Lugosi in a long-planned version of *Frankenstein*.*⁵ Lugosi was agreeable at first and did a test reel, but when he learned the role of the Monster called for no dialogue and an elaborate, disfiguring makeup job, he rejected the part, even sarcastically suggesting that the studio get an extra player for the role.³⁶ Lugosi preferred strong, emotional roles to emphasize his Continentalism, but none were in the offing just yet. By the fall, he accepted the lead in *The Murders in the Rue Morgue* (1932), while *Frankenstein* forged ahead with a previously-unknown character man, Boris Karloff, in the pivotal role of the artificial being.³⁷

Frankenstein was released first to audience and critical raves, while *Murders*, severely compromised by dozens of script changes and a reduced budget,³⁸

followed it into theaters a few months later to a generally ho-hum reaction. As the mad scientist who was nowhere to be found in Edgar Allan Poe's original story, Lugosi got the showy kind of role he desired and pulled out all the stops for one of his more distinctive performances. But Karloff, who had none of Lugosi's romantic pretensions, and who was frankly hungrier than Lugosi, saw the potential for a winning characterization as Frankenstein's Monster, accepted the makeup rigors and delivered a performance of stunning simplicity that captured audience attention and sympathy. Lugosi's Dr. Mirakle in *Murders* is unique, but the mad scientist was already becoming something of a cliché, and most critics felt his film was not much above basic melodrama. More than a decade later, without the options he previously had and humbled by the studio system, Lugosi would consent to play the Monster in *Frankenstein Meets the Wolf Man* (1943) - and his performance, reduced from its original length due to post-preview shortening of the film, would be listed as one of the least effective portrayals of Frankenstein's creation on record. (Lugosi's Monster had dialogue in the original version, but all of those scenes were cut.)³⁹

Through this, Lugosi's star potential had faded within a year. His name would always be good for marquee value, but through a combination of his own inflexibility and the studios' rather simple-minded approach to using him, he was soon to find himself in a rut - a well-paying, at first, but unsatisfying tangent to his career as either a villain or lead in a horror film.

At the same time, Lugosi exercised little judgment in selection of roles. A job was a job and a salary, he felt, so in 1932 marking the first step of his gradual descent into low-budget production he accepted the lead in an independently-made effort, *White Zombie*.^{*0} Lugosi reportedly accepted \$500 for the part, thereby reducing his bargaining power within the film community. *Dracula* expert David J. Skal noted that Lugosi, never a good manager of his own finances and possessed of a weaker business sense, had already proven how easy he was to buy on small terms when, in effort to please Universal in the *pre-Dracula* stage, he had offered his services free in preparing the Hungarian-language version of *The Last Performance* (1929).⁴¹ Lugosi may have viewed the action as a grand gesture on his part, but Universal - and subsequently, other studios - just saw another anxious actor in need of a job, resulting in the nearly-insulting salary he received for *Dracula*. (According to Skal, Horace Liveright got Lugosi for the stage *Dracula* for less money than he offered to Raymond Huntley, the *Dracula* of the London production.)^{*2}

White Zombie was universally dismissed upon release, but has gained a solid cult reputation over the years.⁴³ The producers used their money wisely, crafting a more expensive-looking production than it really was, and got the most out of their miniscule investment in the star. As a powerful Haitian

zombie master, radiating charm and diabolism in equal amounts for an unforgettable portrayal Lugosi towers over the amateurish acting of the romantic leads in what is probably his most accomplished screen performance. *White Zombie* represented a case in which Lugosi's aggressively old-fashioned acting style and conviction meshed perfectly with the stylized intent and look of the film.⁴⁴

For the first few years of his Hollywood existence, Lugosi nursed hopes he could break the horror film mold, and there was certainly cause for the belief. He did an excellent job in a rare comic role in the W. C. Fields vehicle *International House* (1933) and was a nicely underplayed red herring in a low-budget mystery, *The Death Kiss* (1933), which reunited him with two of his co-stars from *Dracula*, David Manners and Edward Van Sloan. During that year he also appeared again as a suspected villain in his last Broadway show, *Murder at the Vanities*.⁴⁵

But the horror boom initiated by Universal was in full swing, prompting the studio to reap another financial bonanza when it cast Lugosi and Karloff in the first of seven films they did together. The first three in the set - *The Black Cat* (1934), *The Raven* (1935) and *The Invisible Ray* (1936) are the best. In the first and third, Lugosi is quite restrained, playing slightly heroic roles to Karloff's villain, but in *The Raven* the tables were turned, with Lugosi as an out-and-out madman obsessed with Edgar Allan Poe and Karloff as his pathetic victim/assistant. *The Raven*, however, is for a number of reasons not considered a good film, Lugosi's overripe performance being chief among them. Director Louis Friedlander allowed Lugosi his head, and at times his acting is embarrassing.

German émigré Edgar G. Ulmer, who directed Lugosi and Karloff in *The Black Cat* and evidently exercised more control over his actors, pointed out the differences in the acting styles of the stars: "My biggest job was to keep (Karloff) in the part, because he laughed at himself. Not the Hungarian, of course.... You had to cut away from Lugosi continuously, to cut him down."⁴⁶

By the mid-1930s the identification with horror films was set in stone for Lugosi, and when public taste moved away from them, Lugosi found himself hard-pressed to find any work outside of an occasional stage performance in the Los Angeles area. For more than a year he was unemployed until Universal once again whetted audiences' appetite for shock with *Son of Frankenstein* (1939), Karloff's third and last portrayal of the Monster, and provided Lugosi with one of his best non-Dracula parts as Ygor, the mad shepherd who uses the Monster for his own evil ends. Aside from *Dracula*, Ygor is considered to be one of Lugosi's best performances, every bit as sinister as a bearded, scraggly societal reject as he was as the more refined

vampiric nobleman. As the Monster's "friend" who prods the new generation Dr. Frankenstein (Basil Rathbone) into resurrecting the creature, Lugosi came close to stealing the film from such veteran scenery chewers as Rathbone and Lionel Atwill. While Ygor is killed in the finale, Universal, with its typical logic and reckoning on audiences' short memories, brought him back for another sequel, *Ghost of Frankenstein* (1942), in which he was as effective as earlier.

The long layoff saw a renewed Lugosi, who tackled the role with a great deal of color, but a Lugosi who had become older, less leading man-like. At that stage Lugosi would have been thankful for character roles, but all he was offered were more horror films.⁴⁷ Lugosi had made a British film, *The Phantom Ship* (1936), which contained some thriller elements in explaining the mystery of the *Marie Celeste*, the vessel discovered adrift in 1872 with its crew and passengers vanished, and when he returned in 1939 to film *Dark Eyes of London* (released in the U.S. a year later as *The Human Monster*), he found himself in an Edgar Wallace mystery transformed into a scare picture designed to rival anything Hollywood could produce.

Although he was billed highly with Karloff in *Black Friday* (1940), Lugosi's role in the proceedings was cut down to almost nothing, and his last appearance with Karloff was in *The Body Snatcher* (1945), again in a minor part despite sharing marquee space with the man he had grown to resent over the years for usurping his brief position as the top man in horror pictures. While Karloff's career improved and remained financially solvent, Lugosi slowly sank into obscurity and near-bankruptcy. In the 1940s, to keep his head above water, Lugosi toured in the comedy *Arsenic and Old Lace*, further aggravating his sore feelings toward Karloff: the story, and its main running joke, turned on the Jonathan Brewster character played by Lugosi resembling Karloff, who had starred in the original Broadway production.*⁸ (It should be noted that the resentment was not mutual on the genial Karloff's part.)

While the major studios turned their backs on Lugosi, he found that the smaller companies were eager for his services as a horror star. In late 1940 he dusted off his mad scientist characterization for *The Devil Bat* at Producers Releasing Corporation, the newest and the least for the "poverty row" firms supplying second features for neighborhood and rural theaters. That winter, he accepted an offer from the legendarily prolific and incredibly cheap producer Sam Katzman to star in a series of films for Katzman's unit at Monogram Pictures.⁴⁹ The short-term outlook at least guaranteed employment and exposure to Lugosi; the long-term consequence was that his career was further debased by lending his name to some of the most laughable excuses for horror films to ever emanate from Hollywood.

Starting with *The Invisible Ghost* (1941), an outlandish yarn about a well-respected community figure turned into a fiendish killer by the hypnotic

control of his supposedly dead wife, each of the Katzman films became more ridiculous than the one before, culminating in *The Ape Man* (1943), arguably one of his worst films, and ending with a non-related sequel, *Return of the Ape Man* (1944).

In spite of the disadvantages, Lugosi continued to ply his craft as best he knew, and his performances in even the worst of Katzman's pictures at least offer some consolation. In *Black Dragons* (1942), as a Nazi plastic surgeon avenging himself on the Japanese agents he has transformed into Americans, and *Bowery at Midnight* (1942), playing a psychology professor doubling as a criminal mastermind, Lugosi had accustomed himself to the dismal surroundings enough to give his roles some style, but his emoting in *The Ape Man*, as the result of his character's failed experiments in heredity, is embarrassing to behold. Lugosi is honestly trying in this film to achieve some pathos as the title character, but the overall absurdity of the situation and the film itself defeat him at every turn. Lugosi, bitterly recalling his days as a star in the more artistically-inclined Hungarian film community, often wondered why he had gotten himself involved with such tawdry efforts. But the Katzman films, and a well-received touring revival of *Dracula* in 1943,⁵⁰ kept the actor solvent during the war years. The one exception to this unhappy trend was Columbia's *Return of the Vampire* (1944), in which inspired perhaps by the improved production values and better script Lugosi shone as a Dracula-type.

Lugosi's first and only color film, *Scared to Death* (1947), also proved to be the last gasp of the horror revival that had lasted nearly a decade. And again, Lugosi faced the specter of joblessness and financial insecurity. He moved to New York, where he toured in summer stock presentations of *Dracula*, and found his hopes raised again when Universal announced *Dracula* would return to the screen, albeit in the comedy *Abbott and Costello Meet Frankenstein* (1948).⁵¹ Again, however, Universal wasn't interested in using Lugosi and was reportedly leaning toward Ian Keith, one of the actors with whom Lugosi had vied for the original screen version of *Dracula*.⁵²

Only through the continual lobbying of his agent, Don Marlowe, did Lugosi don the evening suit and cape for what would be his final screen appearance as *Dracula*.⁵³ By then it did not matter that the character was being used for laughs by Abbott and Costello, the most popular comic team of the 1940s. It represented another chance for Lugosi to shine in a major studio product, to prove that he was capable of better things. Heavy makeup obscured what the years had done to the one-time romantic lead of Hungarian regional theater, but it did not stop him from crafting an excellent performance. His seriousness contrasted perfectly with the antics of the film's heroes, and *Abbott and Costello Meet Frankenstein* won Lugosi new accolades from critics and audiences.⁵⁴

The film also boosted Abbott and Costello's sagging fortunes at the box office, and as films with a horror theme had done many times before, kept Universal in operation.⁵⁵ But Lugosi's role in this success was ignored, because the film failed to launch a new wave of horror pictures, and because Lugosi's identification with Dracula, mad scientists and lurking red herrings had rendered him all but useless in a Hollywood that, like the world itself after the war, had changed forever.

In the remaining eight years of his life, Lugosi would appear in other movies but would never obtain a decent, challenging role. The need to keep working, and to support a drug dependence that began with treatment for sciatica,⁵⁶ forced him to accept whatever was offered. When money was tight, he did personal appearances and cabaret acts, but often for comic relief because a proper appreciation of his talents and past accomplishments had not yet taken root. As he later commented, he was reduced to "freak status,"⁵⁷ and the blow to his disintegrating pride became more than he could bear.

Why then, with his training and unique presence, did Lugosi become a nonentity? Many of his contemporaries noted that he never fully understood English, and even in Hollywood he felt only at home among his Hungarian friends.⁵⁸ Skal reported that Lugosi's initial experience in *The Red Poppy* - learning the role phonetically - was a habit he indulged for years, and while in rehearsal for *Dracula* he had to be directed in French.⁵⁹ (Lugosi was also fluent in German.) By the time sound films were established, Lugosi had improved his English to the point that he told an interviewer he was learning American slang. But evidently not enough to overcome the rapid-fire dialogue delivery of some of his U.S. co-stars, or the embarrassment when he was upstaged by such comics as Milton Berle and Red Skelton in radio and television sketches during the 1940s and '50s.⁶⁰

"Poor old Béla," Karloff sighed in his later years, "it was a strange thing. He was really a shy, sensitive, talented man who had a fine career on the classical stage in Europe. But he made a fatal mistake. He never took the trouble to learn our language... He had real problems with speech, and difficulty interpreting his lines."⁶¹

Secondly, Lugosi's staunchly theatrical acting style, which did much to improve the stale artistic values of the Katzman pictures, had become even more outdated than it had already been in the 1930s. Lugosi had, however, proved that he was capable of a restrained performance with his serious scientist role in *The Invisible Ray*, and he was more convincing as a family man and pillar of the community than as the dazed killer he became when he fell under the spell of *The Invisible Ghost*, his first film for Katzman. But in a Hollywood seeking more naturalism for its productions, casting the man

known the world over as Dracula to a cheery, paternalistic character role just wouldn't work for fear that audiences would not accept him in such a guise, thus undermining whatever credibility the film sought with filmgoers. Because of this, in some of his later films - the British-made *Old Mother Riley Meets the Vampire* (1952) and the preposterous *Bela Lugosi Meets a Brooklyn Gorilla* (1952) - he was forced to lampoon his screen character. And all of it went back more than two decades to the moment when he first stepped onstage as Dracula.

Plagued by the identification with the role, Lugosi was long past resigning himself to the part. Because of Dracula, "I make a living," he told a television interviewer in 1952 when he returned from a less-than-triumphant revival of the play in London. During the late 1940s he continued with the role in summer stock productions, his dislike of the role growing stronger each time.⁶² But aside from the personal appearances and nightclub work, *Dracula* was all that he was being offered, and in spite of his feelings about the role, he did nurse hopes of a comeback in a major screen version of the novel and play.⁶³

It was at this juncture that Lugosi began his association with Edward D. Wood Jr., a financially-strapped but boundlessly ambitious independent filmmaker who had worshipped Lugosi since his youth and who was more than delighted to cast the frequently-available and desperate actor in Wood's first feature film, *Glen or Glenda* (1952).

A passionate plea for tolerance of transvestitism - a personal project for Wood, who was in reality a cross-dresser - *Glen or Glenda's* main plot didn't revolve around Lugosi. Rather, in keeping with Wood's conception of the role as "a spirit, a god, a lord, a puppeteer who is pulling the strings on everyone's life."⁶⁴ Lugosi was cast as a scientist whose mostly delirious commentary on the proceedings was inserted at odd moments throughout the film.

Since his death in 1978, a cult following has grown up around Wood in spite of the condemnation his career earned from contemporary film critics and historians for making some of the worst movies ever put on celluloid, and his life is the subject of an American film biography from Tim Burton, director of the recent *Batman* films. The devotion to Wood's films stems from an affection for the almost charming awfulness of all aspects of his productions - the flowery dialogue, the amateurish acting of his casts, and the persistently low production values, placed in sharp relief by Wood's own fervent belief, to those familiar with his career, that he was creating screen art. As a writer, producer and director of exploitation films, frequently in the horror mode, his career was limited to a single decade, but during that time the six films that have won him a kind of perverse acclaim were made - three of them with Lugosi, essentially the only "movie star" with whom he was acquainted, both professionally and personally.⁶⁵

Wood remained one of Lugosi's closest friends for the next few years, and while Wood was unable to use the actor as often as he would have liked (mainly because it took Wood at least a year to raise the money for his latest production), he kept Lugosi posted on all of his plans. "Béla Lugosi was always a big part of things,*" Charles Anderson, one of Wood's later colleagues, noted. "Ed was the last director Lugosi worked with. Ed used to drive him around to this place on La Brea Avenue to get paraldehyde. Lugosi was in bad shape by this time. He had gotten past the point of being affected by liquor, so he had to drink paraldehyde. Lugosi and Ed were very interesting to work with as a pair."⁶⁰

Among other projects Wood planned, but never realized, were a television series with Lugosi as the star, as well as numerous film projects incorporating unconnected footage of the actor shot by Wood whenever Lugosi needed money. Wood even rewrote Lugosi's material for an appearance on Red Skelton's TV comedy show and helped stage a cabaret act for him in Las Vegas.⁶⁷ Eventually, Wood got up the funding for another film and then cast Lugosi in his ultimate mad scientist role in *Bride of the Monster* (1955), which, in spite of his declining health and the overall air of cheapness, contains his last grand performance in a film.

Scorned for his theories about the creation of atomic supermen, Lugosi's Dr. Vornoff has secreted himself in a "forsaken jungle hell" - actually a swamp outside Los Angeles - to perfect the idea. When urged by an emissary of his unnamed homeland to return and present his findings to its apparently Communist overlords, Vornoff delivers an impassioned speech about being driven from home and family, forced to live like an animal and to have borne the contempt of his colleagues for his daring beliefs.⁶⁸ While Wood was ostensibly re-working the standard soliloquy in which the mad scientist justifies his actions, he hit upon some autobiographical currents in Lugosi that drew an emotional response from his star. In the film Lugosi delivers the speech with a mesmerizing force, and Lugosi liked the speech so well that oblivious to the public spectacle he created he would unexpectedly, and repeatedly, recite it in public.⁶⁹

"We had to wait for a red light at the corner of Hollywood and Vine," Wood recalled. "He just stopped dead. All of a sudden in this big, booming voice, the likes of which I hadn't heard in years, he suddenly goes into the speech... And he did the whole thing on the corner. A crowd gathered and they applauded him at the end."⁷⁰

Working with Wood was not the path to financial security for Lugosi, whose drug dependency had worsened over the years and sapped his salary, savings and unemployment insurance. Not long after finishing *Bride of the Monster*, Lugosi braved a storm of tabloid headlines and negative publicity to

commit himself to a California state mental hospital for treatment of his problem.⁷¹ The indignity of going public with what was a forbidden and unsavory subject at that time in American society would have broken a lesser man, and had he allowed himself to weaken, Lugosi would have joined the ranks of other film personalities whose lives and careers were destroyed by substance abuse.

However, a strong will - backed by a persistent fear of death - took Lugosi from an emaciated victim to an exuberant recovery over a three-month period. In spite of all of the setbacks, Lugosi maintained his belief that stardom and acclaim would return. He grandly announced his intention to work again upon his release from the hospital, and told the story of his recovery to any newspaper or magazine that would listen. (Lugosi knew well the value of publicity of any kind to boost his career).⁷² At the same time he married for the fifth and last time, his young bride a disciple, like Wood, of his classic screen performances. Lennig, who had met Lugosi as a teenager, recalled that the marriage made the front page of one of the major New York dailies.⁷³

Producers Aubrey Schenck and Howard W. Koch were intrigued enough with the rejuvenated Lugosi to cast him in their production *The Black Sleep* (1956) - another horror film, low-budget by most Hollywood standards but miles above Wood's efforts, and backed with a more substantial cast that included Basil Rathbone, Akim Tamiroff, John Carradine and Lon Chaney Jr., as well as Tor Johnson, the professional wrestler who frequently played monsters in Wood's films. But a return to a more mainstream film did not bode well for Lugosi, who had an inconsequential role as a mute servant to Rathbone's mad scientist. Echoing his frustration of 25 years before when offered *Frankenstein*, Lugosi pleaded for some dialogue, so to placate him director Reginald LeBorg shot some speaking sequences for Lugosi. These, however, did not appear in the final print. A revealing publicity photo shot on the set shows LeBorg placing a reassuring hand on an obviously petulant Lugosi's arm while the other actors, with more to do in the film, remained in character.^{74*}

Lugosi's relationship with Wood remained strong - Wood even accompanied Lugosi and his new wife Hope on their honeymoon as their driver.⁷⁵ When Wood had raised some money to shoot a project tentatively titled *Tomb of the Vampire*, Lugosi accepted. About the same time, Wood handed his star a script for a short film he planned to shoot for a possible television sale called *The Final Curtain*. Both were firmly rooted in Lugosi's screen persona, and Wood planned to use some earlier footage of Lugosi in his Dracula cape. However, the deal for *Tomb of the Vampire*, like many of Wood's projects, fell through and the perpetually improvident filmmaker had to search out funding from other sources.⁷⁶

Lugosi, convinced the tide was finally turning in his favor, directed his attention to *The Final Curtain* and was reading the script in his apartment when he quietly died on August 16, 1956. Ironically, Wood found the backing to make his film, but used the money and Lugosi footage - as was his habit - to craft an entirely different production. Finally finding a distributor for what he considered his magnum opus, Wood released *Plan 9 from Outer Space* (the original title was *Graverobbers from Outer Space*) in 1959. It went on to be universally regarded as the worst movie ever made.⁷⁷ Billed as "the great Bela Lugosi's last performance," Lugosi's participation in *Plan 9* is limited to the old silent footage of his lurking in and out of a doorway and a cemetery, while an all-too-obvious double with a cape drawn over his face completed the other scenes. {*The Final Curtain* would be filmed with another actor in the role intended for Lugosi. Unable to sell it, Wood again cannibalized its footage for another one of his films, 1958's *Night of the Ghouls*.}⁷⁸

To those who had followed the last years of his life, it was perhaps fitting that Lugosi was buried in his Dracula costume, for in death his true character and the screen persona he cultivated became one. And others thought that the downward spiral of his career, ending with his final "appearance" in an Ed Wood film, was the inevitable result of missed opportunities and unwise decisions. As a dedicated actor whose only goal was to continue working in the profession that had sustained him since Hungary, it did not matter to Lugosi what he did, so long as he was working. And in the years to follow, Lugosi's career would be assessed not critically, but with appreciation and devotion from a rising number of fans who enjoyed his emoting in the darkened auditoriums of American and overseas theaters.

One year after Lugosi's death, a package of classic horror films, including his major performances in *Dracula* and opposite Karloff, were sold to television stations as *Shock Theater*. Unexpectedly, an entirely new audience of youngsters - and more than a few adults - reveled in the well-crafted thrills to be found in each movie. Film magazines entered the market catering directly to that interest, and while the facts were not always straight - serious film scholarship of Lugosi's and Karloff's careers would not gain any legitimacy until the latter 1960s - they fed the growing interest about the man who was Dracula. The disappointments, the slights, and the awful movies that plagued Lugosi were forgotten, and retrospectives of his unique position in American film appreciated what Gary Collins called "the larger-than-life quality which was very much in keeping with the basic spirit of the films themselves."⁷⁹

Although the "fanzines" kept readers "informed" with numerous accurate and sometimes blatantly incorrect accounts of his life and career, the 1970s saw two full-length biographies of Lugosi published.⁸⁰ Even Ed Wood, reduced in

his last years to writing and directing pornography, was working on a memoir of his relationship with the man with whom he had worked so closely, spurred not so much by Lennig's work being the first to hit the bookstores, but the author's hostile reaction to Wood's films.⁸¹ (Robert Cremer, another Lugosi biographer, noted that he had done several interviews with the frequently-inebriated Wood for his book in the 1970s. On what was to be their last meeting, Wood apparently became violent over Cremer's progress, "because he felt he was the person who should be writing it." Wood's manuscript on his years with Lugosi was lost after his death.)⁸²

Béla Lugosi, a Hungarian expatriate whose talents were not appreciated in his new country during his lifetime, eventually rose above the short-lived "movie star" label to become an indelible icon in film history. Perhaps, in his own emotional manner when he organized his fellow actors in Budapest in 1919, he was being prophetic when he claimed that "martyrdom was the price for the enthusiasm of acting."

Notes

1. *Voodoo Man* (Monogram Pictures, 1944), screenplay by Robert Charles; quoted in Kevin E. Kelly, "The American Horror Film," unpublished mss., 1974, 70; also in Arthur Lennig, *The Count: The Life and Times of Béla 'Dracula' Lugosi* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1974), 266, hereafter referred to as Lennig.
2. Gary Collins, "The Meanest Man in the Movies," in Ted Sennett (ed.), *The Movie Buff's Book* (New York: Pyramid Books, 1975), 20.
3. Harry Ludlam, *A Biography of Dracula: The Life Story of Bram Stoker* (London: W. Foulsham & Co., 1962), 175, quoted in Lennig, 297.
4. Lennig, 35.
5. Lennig, 25-30; also Raymond T. McNally and Radu Florescu, *In Search of Dracula: A True History of Dracula and Vampire Legends* (New York: Warner Paperback Library, 1973), 160.
6. Lennig, 29-30.
7. Lennig, 31.
8. Lennig, 33-34.
9. Lennig, 35-36.
10. Lennig, 37.
11. Lennig, 39².
12. Carlos Clarens, *An Illustrated History of the Horror Film* (New York: Capricorn Books, 1968), 62.
13. Lennig, 38.
14. Béla Lugosi, "History of the Formation of Our Trade Union," *Színészek Lapja*, May 1, 1919, quoted in Lennig, 43.
15. Lennig, 43-44.
16. Béla Lugosi, "Love the Actor," *Színészek Lapja*, May 15, 1919, quoted in Lennig, 45.
17. Lennig, 44.
18. Unidentified short subject interview, circa 1933.

19. Lennig, 112-113.
20. Interview with John Andrews in Rudolph Grey, *Nightmare of Ecstasy: The Life and Art of Edward D. Wood Jr.* (Los Angeles: Feral House, 1992), 69.
21. Lennig, 46-47.
22. Lennig, 51.
23. Lennig, 57-60.
24. David J. Skal, *Hollywood Gothic: The Tangled Web of Dracula from Novel to Stage to Screen* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1990), 38-39.
25. Skal, 43-44.
26. McNally and Florescu, *In Search of Dracula*, 31-78, also in Bob Black, "Son of the Dragon," *Military History*, June 1989, 12-13. Francis Ford Coppola's 1992 film, *Bram Stoker's Dracula*, was an attempt to tie some of the background of Vlad the Impaler to the fictional Dracula.
27. Skal, *Hollywood Gothic*, 73-81.
28. Universal press book for *Dracula*, 1931, quoted in Lennig, 70.
29. Gladys Hall, "The Feminine Love of Horror," *Motion Picture Classic*, January 1931, quoted in Lennig, 71.
30. Skal, 85-87. The most infamous of the publicity gimmicks associated with the show was the nurse in attendance at every performance to minister to the faint-hearted. The idea was carried over from Deane's London production.
31. Christopher Finch and Linda Rosenkrantz, *Gone Hollywood* (Garden City, N. Y: Doubleday, 1979), 1-3.
32. Clarens, *An Illustrated History of the Horror Film*, 62.
33. Skal, 112-113.
34. Skal, 124-125.
35. Lennig, 115.
36. Skal, 82.
37. Skal, 184.
38. Lennig, 117-118.
39. Lennig, 255-256.
40. Lennig, 126.
41. Skal, 120.
42. Hamilton Deane and John L. Balderston, *Dracula: The Ultimate, Illustrated Edition of the World-Famous Vampire Play*, edited and annotated by David J. Skal (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993), xiv.
43. Lennig, 127.
44. William K. Everson, *Classics of the Horror Film* (Secaucus, N. J.: Citadel Press, 1974), 85. The film was also a reported favorite of Lugosi's.
45. Lennig, 159.
46. Peter Bogdanovich, "Edgar G. Ulmer," in Charles Flynn and Todd McCarthy (eds), *Kings of the Bs* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1975), 389.
47. Lennig, 209-212.
48. Skal, *Hollywood Gothic*, 187.
49. Lennig, 234-236.
50. Deane and Balderston, *Dracula*, 135.
51. Lennig, 282-283.
52. *Ibid.*
53. Lennig, 284.
54. Lennig, 288.

55. Jim Mulholland, *The Abbott and Costello Book* (New York: Popular Library, 1975), 140. The pattern had been seen before at Universal when Lugosi's *Dracula* kept the company in the red in 1931. A double feature pairing *Dracula* and *Frankenstein* in the summer of 1938 also pulled Universal out of financial trouble and led to the production of *Sox of Frankenstein* later that year. Coincidentally, Abbott and Costello's first feature as a starring team, *Buck Privates* (1941), and several of their subsequent films maintained the studio's solvency.
56. Lennig, 274.
57. Lennig, 294.
58. Lennig, 51.
59. Skal, *Hollywood Gothic*, 81-32.
60. Lennig, 293.
61. Richard Bojarski and Kenneth Beale, *The Films of Boris Karloff* (Secaucus, N. J.: Citadel Press, 1974), 23.
62. Skal, 187.
63. Charles Beaumont, *Remember? Remember?* (New York: Macmillan, 1963), quoted in Kelly, "The American Horror Film," 70.
64. Grey, *Nightmare of Ecstasy*, 40.
65. *Ibid.*
66. Harry and Michael Medvéd, *The Golden Turkey Awards* (New York: Berkley Books, 1981), 260.
67. Grey, 201, 103.
68. *Bride of the Monster* (Rolling M Productions/Banner Films, 1955), screenplay by Edward D. Wood Jr. and Alex Gordon, quoted in Lennig, 307.
69. Interview with Paul Marco for *The Incredibly Strange Film Show*, The Discovery Channel, March 1991.
70. Grey, 70.
71. Lennig, 308-311.
72. Lennig, 311.
73. Lennig, 312.
74. Michael B. Druxman, *Basil Rathbone: His Life and Films* (South Brunswick, N. J., and London: A. S. Barnes & Co., 1975), 329.
75. Grey, 104.
76. Lennig, 315; Grey, 109.
77. Medvéd and Medvéd, *The Golden Turkey Awards*, 307. *Plan 9* was the overwhelming choice as the worst film of all time in the authors' informal poll of the late 1970s.
78. Grey, 206.
79. Collins, "The Meanest Man in the Movies," 19.
80. The other biography was Robert Cremer's *The Man Behind the Cape* (Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1977).
81. Grey, 127. "He was just a little *boyl*!" Wood exclaimed of Lennig's relationship with Lugosi through correspondence and occasional meetings in the 1940s. "I lived with the *man*!"
82. Grey, 122.