

# Cinematic version of novel lacks appeal in plot, acting

**LIGHTS! CAMERA! REACTION!**

**DANIEL BROWN** Staff Writer

**THE ISLAND OF DR. MOREAU**  
★★½ (out of four stars)

Stop me if you've heard this one before—brilliant scientists allow rapid advancements in biological technology to skew the course of nature on an isolated island paradise.

Sounds like "Jurassic Park," huh? But no, it's just John Frankenheimer's ("The Burning Season," "Bird Man of Alcatraz") latest adaptation of H.G. Well's classic novel "The Island of Dr. Moreau."

David Thewlis ("Naked," "Dragonheart") plays Edward Douglas, a plane crash survivor who is discovered floating adrift in the South Pacific by a mysterious scientist named Montgomery (Van Kilmer. "Heat," "Batman Forever").

The shifty Montgomery delivers his guest to a seemingly peaceful island, where the Nobel prize winning geneticist Dr. Moreau (Marlon Brando. "The Godfather," "Don Juan Demarco") has secretly been gene-splicing animal and human tissues to create a non-aggressive breed of humans.

After Montgomery savagely kills an animal, the laws that govern Moreau utopian society begin to unravel, and Douglas must escape the island or be forced to be the victim of the deluded doctor's experiments.

While H.G. Well's theme of non-aggression is prevalent throughout Frankenheimer's film, the director patronizes his audience with Oliver Stone-esque violent images to drive his point home.

Frankenheimer's outright expression of the film's theme displays his own concern that the movie's disjointed plot does not fulfill its central topic.

This flaw, however, falls under the cinematic adaption of Well's novel rather than the novel itself.

Brando gives his audience a satisfying glimpse into the warped mind of Dr. Moreau, while his costars give only generic



Special to The Gamecock  
**Marlon Brando stars as Dr. Moreau in New Line Cinema's sci-fi thriller, "The Island of Dr. Moreau."**

performances.

Val Kilmer, a talented actor who holds the title of being the youngest student ever to be accepted into the Julliard drama institute, graces this film with nothing but a shell of a character.

Kilmer projects a figure of enigmatic motives whose hyped-up Hollywood status becomes nothing more than a tool to drive fans into the theater.

Thewlis' performance also does nothing to enhance the plot of the movie. Halfway through the film, I found myself wondering, "would the death of the film's hero get any emotional response from the audience?" The answer is no.

Thewlis' near-lifelike portrayal of Edward Douglas is simply a two-dimensional study of what should be a dynamic character.

Despite all of "Moreau's" faults, there are still enough factors to warrant its two-and-a-half star rating.

H.G. Well's storyline upgrades the film's status. His underlying comparison of Moreau's island to the Garden of Eden gives the movie an intriguing intellectual

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Daniel Brown, reviewing "The Island of Dr. Moreau."

subtext that seduces the audience.

The film also gains points for its visual appeal. Talented makeup artists and special effect technicians perform miracles with the droves of mishappen creatures that inhabit the island. These often less-appreciated members of the film crew take the helm as their monsters shock the audience into a trancelike attraction to the thriller.

Frankenheimer's clever interjection of modern scientific technology into H.G. Well's novel gives the old story an altered resurrection, and ultimately overcomes the movie's faults and thrills the masses.



Special to The Gamecock  
**Lo-Mai (Mark Dacascos) is one of Dr. Moreau's experiments in New Line Cinema's sci-fi thriller, "The Island of Dr. Moreau."**

Regrettably,  
all sections  
are full this  
semester for

Remedial  
**Nuclear**  
Thermodynamics

