Notes and Queries

Don Larson would like to draw people's attention to J. Hoberman's article, "Bad Movies" (Film Comment, July-August 1980, 7-12). Hoberman mentions one film--Bride of the Monster--with Pynchonian overtones: Bela Lugosi struggles with a rubber octopus; the film ends with an atomic mushroom cloud. Hoberman's comments on the relation of bad movies to surrealism are provocative in terms of Pynchon's use of mass culture.

T. S. Tillotson passes along "another offering for the annotated bibliography project so admirably begun by Javaid Qazi [in PN 2]:"


This is an outstanding reference work on herbalism, originally published in 1931. It agrees with much (but not all) of the herbalistic lore presented in Gravity's Rainbow. Consider a brief portion of the entry under "Mandrake": "The plant was fabled to grow under the gallows of murderers, and it was believed to be death to dig up the root, which was said to utter a shriek . . . which none might hear and live. . . . he who would dig up a plant of Mandrake should tie a dog to it for that purpose, who drawing it out would certainly perish."