

## Short Review: “The Creeping Unkown” (1955) by Dr. John L. Flynn



**The Creeping Unkown** (aka *The Quatermass Xperiment*) (1955). Hammer Films, b/w, 82 min. Director: Val Guest. Producer: Anthony Hinds. Screenwriters: Guest and Richard Landau. Based on “Quatermass” television series by Nigel Kneale. Cast: Brian Donlevy, Margia Dean, Jack Warner, Richard Wordsworth, David King Wood, Harold Lang, and Lionel Jeffries.

The sole survivor (Wordsworth) of a doomed space expedition returns to earth with an alien organism growing within his body. Even though he survives the crash of his rocketship, he begins acting strangely as a fungus-like growth creeps over his entire body and ultimately consumes him. Imagine that. Professor Quatermass (Donlevy) is called in to save the day, and manages to electrocute the octopus-blob creature before it can spread over the entire London area. The alien spore, which infects the astronaut's body, and the “creeping unknown,” which grows in the human host, anticipate the complex life-cycle of the titular monster in “Alien” (1979). But this idea was certainly not a new one when Guest first began sketching plans for his big screen remake of Nigel Kneale's popular British television series. Pulp science fiction adventures had relied on this familiar formula for years. American actor Donlevy gives a wooden performance as the British scientist, but Wordsworth’s doomed astronaut literally makes your flesh creep.

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