Monster flick proves three heads better than one

By CHARLES DEMITZ

The latest sample of Oriental Camp to reach Houston is "Ghidrah the Three-Headed Monster," a first-run and since-departed feature at the Majestic. This cinematic monster mash brings every miscreature west of the Aleutians home to roost.

In Tokyo a girl in Emmett-Kelly attire appears, claiming Martian citizenship and predicting doom. A plainclothesman, errant takes interest and investigates.

His sister, employed by the news Media, strikes an acquaintance with a scientist who is studying a peculiar meteorite in the nearby boondocks.

Aha! we cry, a real potboiler in the works. Everybody knows everybody else, just like the old Ellery Queen mysteries.

Danger Flags

The danger flags go up when the detective's family plops down for a session with the idiot tube. A mutt-and-jeff duo of emcees rocks into an Asiatic "You Asked For It," sans Art Baker and Skippy Peanut Butter.

The studio audience asks to see two singing sprites, six inches tall, from some isle of the blest. They appear, singing in echo chamber tones of the Great Catapillar God MORTRAH, who guards the island's happiness quotient, keeps the celestial spheres greased, and maintains the general welfare. Cut to the shot of happy-time god Mothra, who is weeping.

Hmmm.

Plot Thickens

The plot thickens: the Martian is really a political refugee fleeing from a nearby Ruritania where her father (the King? you betcha, the King) has been foully done dirty, lethally in fact.

Amnesiac Martian-Girl, Japan's answer to Moon-Maid, predicts danger around this quiescent volcano-type locale. The crowd poopooos her. Saay, this place looks familiar... rumble, crash, and RODAN'S BACK! Hah, you foolish earthlings.

The two fairy-sprites' ship is about to sail; but wait — the Martian again says no. Gruff ship captain brushes her off and sails.

Comes the night, our balsa mockup is bravely battling the waves, and HOOOHAAA, ole buddy GODZILLA, king of the monsters, breathing a fiery ray of hallucosis, incinerates our hapless tars. Rodan's noisy stunt flying overhead has roused him from his deep dream of peace.

Egg or Meteorite?

Settling back with our popcorn, we happily await the inevitable. Sure enough, the meteorite — remember the meteorite — starts acting up. One fine night, the egg (it's not just a plain meteorite, it's an egg that fell from the sky, see) opens up and WHOOSH it's ...

GHIRAH THE THREE-HEADED MONSTER, spreading joy and tractor beams from (Continued on Page 3)
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its three, count 'em, three mouths.

With its winged-dragon body, and its domicile gilt paint (man, it shore does shine,) Ghidrah, bless his mean l'il heart, jest plumb whipped the old crowd on Mars, destroying a civilization far in advance of our own. This information courtesy Miss Mars.

**Heavyweight Crown**

Hot dog! Keen fun! Assassins attempt to murder the Martian possessed amnesiac princess. Godzilla stomps through the tulip beds of the greater Tokyo area. Rodan, being perhaps tethered, flies in circles. Ghidrah is Ghidrah.

Rodan and Godzilla see each other and attack. Whup, and Godzilla goes down for six, neatly clipped in the windpipe by a wing. Wham, and Rodan reels in the air, fouflly breathed upon by colgateless Godzilla.

The fight is a slapstick masterpiece. Rodan battles on the ground, buffeting Godzilla and keeping him away with his great wings. Godzilla replies by kicking soot and ashes, boulders even, at Rodan. They get up some nifty volleyball with a tennis rock. Rodan mugs for the camera. Godzilla grandstands, gives belly laughs, and generally cuts up.

Can humanity be saved? Will Ghidrah be stopped? The fairy sprites provide the answer: if Mothra persuades them, Rodan and Godzilla might join it in stopping Ghidrah. So, tootling hell-for-leather across the Fuji foothills, we soon see Mothra the Caterpillar God, Defensor Fedei and general mother-figure to mankind.

Mothra intervenes. They argue nosily. Cut to spectators: "I don't understand monster-

talk. What are they saying?" Will Rodan and Godzilla help save the world? No, they cry. Then, in a moment fraught with pathos, Mothra marches off alone to fight awesome Ghidrah for the sake of puny humanity.

In the end, of course, the earth monsters unite to drive the alien monster off their turf. Life has fewer more soul-satisfying sights than a full-color shot of the south end of a Ghidrah flying north. Bravo, Toho Film Company. A monstrous good show.