# TUBE YOUR ENTHUSIASM (19)

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*One of 25 installments in a* [*series of enthusiastic posts*](http://hilobrow.com/tag/tube-enthusiasm/) *analyzing and celebrating a few of our favorite TV shows from the Fifties (1954–1963).*

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**THE AVENGERS | 1961–1969**

The British “spy-fi” comedy serial *The Avengers* is a mix of style, innuendo and surrealism. A man floats upright out of the sea in a garbage bag, and the narrative doesn’t even blink. Outlandish events are met with a deadpan shrug. Emma Peel and John Steed would rather quip, flirt, and drink than sleuth. They sashay through bizarre scenarios, accepting the peculiar nature of their reality.

With karate and swordplay, Peel fights right alongside her male counterpart, Steed, who sometimes seems to be just a prop for her dazzle, someone to pour her champagne when she’s done dispatching foes. Steed is as dry as the martinis he mixes. A typical Steed moment: he peeks under a sheet covering a corpse, and needs not see the face to identify it, just the cut of the man’s cloth: “We share the same tailor.”

The empowered, crime-fighting Peel was seen as an early feminist icon, yet years later actress Diana Rigg, who played Peel, scoffed at the idea. She thought it to be a happy accident, a bit of good luck, rather than prescient design. And the iconic black leather zippered skin-tight catsuit? Rigg was relieved when the costume director traded that hot, uncomfortable outfit in for lighter, looser, colorful jumpsuits.

I’ve written both *Spider-Man* and *Batman* comics, so was delighted to stumble on a 1967 episode that contained both a wall-crawler and a man who skulked around in batwings. “The Winged Avenger,” a spoof of the *Batman* TV show, is a nasty bit of satire. It takes on the comic book creator rights battle through a neurotic writer and an egotistical artist. There are even branding jokes — when the “bat man” walks up a wall and hangs from the ceiling like a bat, Peel and Steed joke about “vertical salesmen selling vertical souvenirs, from vertical souvenir stalls.” The “winged avenger” vigilante is after a ruthless businessmen (read: Bruce Wayne). Emma Peel ends up drawn right into a comic strip (with art by fabulous real-life comic artist Frank Bellamy), complete with the high camp POW SPLAT BAM sound effects.

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70](http://hilobrow.com/2014/08/02/kern-your-enthusiasm-2/) | [TORONTO SUBWAY](http://hilobrow.com/2014/08/03/kern-your-enthusiasm-3/) | [JOHNSTON’S “HAMLET”](http://hilobrow.com/2014/08/04/kern-your-enthusiasm-4/) | [TODD KLONE](http://hilobrow.com/2014/08/05/kern-your-enthusiasm-5/) | [& 20 other typefaces](http://hilobrow.com/tag/kern-enthusiasm/). **HERC YOUR ENTHUSIASM (2013):** [“Spoonin’ Rap”](http://hilobrow.com/2013/07/29/herc-1/) | [“Rapper’s Delight”](http://hilobrow.com/2013/07/30/herc-2/) | [“Rappin’ Blow”](http://hilobrow.com/2013/07/31/herc-3/) | [“The Incredible Fulk”](http://hilobrow.com/2013/08/01/herc-4/) | [“The Adventures of Super Rhyme”](http://hilobrow.com/2013/08/02/herc-5/) | [& 20 other Seventies (1974–1983) hip-hop songs](http://hilobrow.com/tag/herc-enthusiasm/). **KIRK YOUR ENTHUSIASM (2012):** [Justice or vengeance?](http://hilobrow.com/2012/07/30/kirk-your-enthusiasm-1/) | [Kirk teaches his drill thrall to kiss](http://hilobrow.com/2012/07/31/kirk-your-enthusiasm-2/) | [“KHAAAAAN!”](http://hilobrow.com/2012/08/01/kirk-your-enthusiasm-3/) | [“No kill I”](http://hilobrow.com/2012/08/02/kirk-your-enthusiasm-4/) | [Kirk browbeats NOMAD](http://hilobrow.com/2012/08/03/kirk-your-enthusiasm-5/) | [& 20 other Captain Kirk scenes](http://hilobrow.com/tag/kirk-enthusiasm/). **KIRB YOUR ENTHUSIASM (2011):** [THE ETERNALS](http://hilobrow.com/2011/02/21/kirb-your-enthusiasm-1/) | [BLACK MAGIC](http://hilobrow.com/2011/02/21/kirb-your-enthusiasm-2/) | [DEMON](http://hilobrow.com/2011/02/22/kirb-your-enthusiasm-3/) | [OMAC](http://hilobrow.com/2011/02/22/kirb-your-enthusiasm-4/) | [CAPTAIN AMERICA](http://hilobrow.com/2011/02/23/kirb-your-enthusiasm-5/) | [& 20 other Jack Kirby panels](http://hilobrow.com/tag/kirb-enthusiasm/).