

[PDF] Book Of The Dead: The Complete History Of Zombie Cinema

Jamie Russell - pdf download free book

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Description:

About the Author Jamie Russell is a freelance film journalist, author and broadcaster with a PhD from London University in English Literature. His reviews and features have appeared in numerous film publications and on radio and TV. He also writes DVD film notes.

Excerpt. © Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. Few horror movie monsters are as maligned as the zombie. While vampires, werewolves and even serial killers command respect, the zombie is never treated as anything other than a buffoon who stumbles around in the cultural hinterlands messily decaying. There are no aristocrats, blue bloods or celebrities among zombies, no big name stars or instantly recognizable faces, just low-rent, anonymous monsters who usually can't

talk, can barely walk and spend most of their energy trying to hold their decomposing bodies together. Zombies are the great unwashed of horror cinema, soulless creatures that wander around without personality or purpose - a grotesque parody of the end that awaits us all. For all their lack of finesse or style, though, the living dead have been a constant presence in horror films since the 1930s. In the many ways it has been deployed in western popular culture, the zombie has slowly been transformed, signifying something much more complex than just the fear of death. Bound up with a wide range of cultural anxieties - from American imperialism to domestic racial tensions, Depression era fears about unemployment, Cold War paranoia about brainwashing, post-1960s political disenfranchisement and AIDS era body horror - the zombie has become, as we will see, a potent symbol of the apocalypse. It's a monster whose appearance always threatens to challenge mankind's faith in the order of the universe. Forever poised in the space between the traditional Western understandings of white/black, civilized/savage, life/death, the zombie is a harbinger of doom. Its very existence hints at the possibility of a world that cannot be contained within the limits of human understanding, a world in which these binary oppositions no longer stand fixed. Trampling over our cherished certain certainties, the zombie is, above all else, a symbol of our ordered universe turned upside down as death becomes life and life becomes death. In the chapters that follow, this book hopes to explain the allure of such a catastrophic occurrence, placing the development of the zombie in its socio-historical context in an attempt to understand why it is that, after all these years, we are still so fascinated with the dead that walk.

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