

Editor's Note

Horror cinema has always held a strange place in the mainstream. On one hand, it is reviled by the moral majority and seen as a tool for corrupting impressionable youth, and on the other, it is a source of ritual enjoyment bound up in nostalgic memories of drive-in theatres and Saturday night viewings with friends. Perhaps it is this dichotomy that makes horror films such a guilty pleasure for so many of us; despite their often misogynistic and gruesome elements, they're just so damn enjoyable on the most basic of levels.

This issue of *Cinephile* explores the ways that more recent horror films have attempted to break free of established conventions and mirrored elements of their own cultural surroundings, and attempts to explain some of the shifts these films have taken in modernizing and localizing horror's tropes. Coming from a genre that has provided so many clichéd and stereotypical conventions (the one-dimensional character archetypes of slasher cinema, the killer's P.O.V. shot, and so on) the modern horror film needs to fight an uphill battle if it wants to leave an impression on audiences. One might think that with so many successful horror features being remade as we speak, there is little left that has not already been done. I would argue that there is limitless potential for horror cinema to recycle itself, perhaps no more evident than in the topic of the first article, Bruce McDonald's 2008 film *Pontypool*.

Steen Christiansen's opening article explores the ways in which the film transposes the site of horror from the visible to the aural, using the recent (although contentious) torture porn cycle to discuss how the film utilizes a critical approach to the cycle, perhaps initiating a new critical turn in horror cinema. From a more sociological perspective, Gregory Vance Smith explores the ways in which horror's "murderous child" changes throughout history to reflect the cultural traumas of its time, using both historical and modern examples. Keeping it in the horror family, Lindsey Scott focuses on the changes that occurred in the American remake of Hideo Nakata's *Ringu* (1998), examining how the genre has shifted in its representations of motherhood. Matt Hills covers the shifts in horror on television using BBC Wales' *Torchwood* as a case study, and discusses the many articulations of the series across multiple platforms and incarnations. Caroline Verner examines French New Extremism, and the ways in which the globalization process can have an effect on cultural artifacts, using Alexandre Aja's *Haute Tension*, Julien Maury and Alexandre

Bustillo's *À l'intérieur* and Pascal Laugier's *Martyrs*. Finally, Joshua Ferguson takes a look at two of David Cronenberg's films not typically considered horror cinema, *M. Butterfly* and *Eastern Promises*, and theorizes that their horror comes from the queer embodiment of gender and sexuality.

I must admit, I take a great deal of pleasure in the inclusion of a veritable cornucopia of video covers in the centerfold, mostly for the awareness of simply how many horror films have been made (many of which you will likely never have heard of). The term "ad nauseam" in the issue's title specifically refers to this, remembering horror cinema's recent past as an easy-in for burgeoning young VHS distributors and as a cheap buy for video stores looking to fill their shelves with costly but attractive looking product. While the majority of these films have had little impact on the contemporary horror film, their dominance through the sheer number of films produced on the viewing public has left quite a mark on the consensus of what defines the horror genre. In fact, while you may not have seen a great number of the films shown throughout the issue, there is a good chance you will at least recognize many of their covers.

Horror's recent past, both good and bad, still serves as a site of authenticity (modern films are constantly compared to the "classics" of the 1980s). While this issue examines the more recent changes in horror cinema, it does so with one foot firmly planted in the past, hoping to expand upon the already established field of horror cinema studies. As the old saying goes, "you can't know where you are going until you know where you have been."



-Dax Sorrenti