

Notice: This material may be protected by copyright law (Title 17 U.S. Code).

Not to be used for any purpose other than private study, scholarship, or research.

Horror Studies
Volume 6 Number 1

© 2015 Intellect Ltd Article. English language. doi: 10.1386/host.6.1.101_1

BEN KOOYMAN

The University of South Australia

‘Gotta keep the customer satisfied’: Puppeteers as director-surrogates in *The Cabin in the Woods*

ABSTRACT

The postmodern horror comedy The Cabin in the Woods by Goddard (2012) depicts the heavily engineered ritual sacrifice of a group of college students on a recreational getaway. The chief orchestrators of this sacrifice – dubbed ‘puppeteers’ by the film’s protagonists – are Sitterson and Hadley, who in the film clearly inhabit the role of horror director-surrogates. While the parallels between their work and the film-making process have been widely noted, little has been said about what their on-screen representation actually has to say about horror film-makers. This article identifies four key premises on which the narrative hinges – that Sitterson and Hadley are journeyman directors rather than auteurs, that the directorial process is collaborative rather than auteur-centred, that horror directors must work with a prescribed number of finite formulas, and that their work is of considerable societal value – elucidating within The Cabin in the Woods a dialectical dialogue around the role, value and function of contemporary horror film authorship.

KEYWORDS

auteurism
authorship
horror
film
journeyman
director

The Cabin in the Woods (Goddard, 2012) centres on a group of college students who travel to an isolated cabin for a fun getaway. Their getaway is disrupted

by the Buckners, a ‘zombie redneck torture family’ they conjure back from the dead. However, this conjuring is not entirely inadvertent: the Buckners are props employed by an organization that coordinates annual ritual sacrifices to higher beings to ward off the destruction of the Earth. Much of the film focuses on this organization – housed in a facility deep beneath the cabin – in particular the characters Sitterson (Richard Jenkins) and Hadley (Bradley Whitford), who are dubbed ‘puppeteers’ by the film’s protagonists and are at the coalface of the operation.

While the parallels between the puppeteers’ operation and the craft of horror film-making are obvious, little has been said about the film’s depiction of horror film-makers. While no horror film-makers feature in the screen story in any literal sense, Sitterson and Hadley, the film’s chief puppeteers, are clearly director-surrogates, enabling the film-makers to posit a number of observations and pose a number of questions about horror film authorship in the twenty-first century. This article elucidates four key premises about contemporary horror film-making and film-makers which, I contend, *The Cabin in the Woods*’ narrative hinges upon. With reference to scholarship on the genre and its authorship – including Bernardini (2010), Hendershot (2011), Maddrey (2004), Wood (1986) and Zinoman (2011) – this article examines each of these premises in detail and identifies how they correspond to or digress from the contemporary horror film climate.

HORROR FILM-MAKERS: CRETINS WITH HERPES?

Before exploring how horror film-makers are depicted in *The Cabin in the Woods*, I first wish to consider more generally the notion of horror auteurism today and how horror film-makers are viewed in popular culture. Regrettably, it is not entirely flattering. The horror film has long been one of the most routinely maligned of genres. Horror scholars have noted – some with relish, others with regret – its clichéd status as the ‘most disreputable of Hollywood genres’ (Wood 1986: 77), the ‘black sheep of film types’ (Muir 2000: 239) and the ‘domain of pimply, sexually frustrated adolescent boys’ (Hendershot 2011: 146), among other labels. So too are the genre’s practitioners routinely maligned: Wes Craven notes that horror directors are denigrated as ‘a bunch of cretins who have crawled out from under a rock’ (Shapiro 1999: 67), while George A. Romero compares his status as a horror director to ‘having herpes [...] it’s one of those things that you don’t want to admit’ (Wiater [1992] 2011: 119). Of course, both Craven and Romero are uncommon success stories: horror film-makers who have attained cult status and moderate respectability by virtue of seniority, career longevity and pop culture omnipresence. However, even if we grant Craven and Romero the boon of brand recognition, their chequered Hollywood career trajectories – frequently punctuated by commercial woes and droughts in activity – testify to the challenges facing directors associated predominantly with horror. Indeed, as I have noted elsewhere, in those rare instances where directors of horror films achieve major success and subsequently wield mainstream clout – i.e. Tod Browning, James Whale, William Friedkin – that clout is generally short-lived (Kooyman 2014).

However, among aficionados, scholars and commentators of the genre there is great support for and investment in the notion of the horror auteur. Auteur theory emerged in the 1950s in France and gained its widest exposure in America via Andrew Sarris’s *The American Cinema: Directors and Directions, 1929–1968* (1968). Over the next decade the American film-makers who

rose to prominence – Francis Ford Coppola, Martin Scorsese, George Lucas, Steven Spielberg, Brian De Palma, Peter Bogdanovich and others comprising the Movie Brats and American New Wave – were able to fashion themselves as artists in light of auteur theory. So too were the horror film-makers of this era. Those advocating for auteurism in the horror genre have routinely turned to the American horror cinema of this period – the period that produced *The Last House on the Left* (Craven, 1972), *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* (Hooper, 1974), *Halloween* (Carpenter, 1978) and *Dawn of the Dead* (Romero, 1978) – for ammunition. Robin Wood called this the 'great period of the American horror film' (1986: 133), and the directors who shaped horror in that era – Romero, Craven, Tobe Hooper, John Carpenter, David Cronenberg and, across the Atlantic, Dario Argento – are frequently evoked as exemplary figures of horror auteurism. The 'New Horror', as it is dubbed by Jason Zinoman (2011), continues to cast a formidable shadow over the genre and its conception of authorship, and affection for and investment in the horror auteur is arguably greater today than ever before. This is partly a consequence of the media and home entertainment revolutions of the 1990s and 2000s, which Craig Bernardini credits with 'fix[ing] the auteur in the minds of more American moviegoers than at any time since the theory was first espoused' (2010: 162) and 'giv[ing] directors a greater opportunity than ever before to become the custodians of their legacy' (2010: 165). Yet the ways in which horror auteurism circulates and materializes in popular culture are even more diverse. These include documentaries on the genre like *The American Nightmare* (Simon, 2000); the commemoration and canonization of veteran horror film-makers in the Showtime series *Masters of Horror* (2005–2007); the recruitment of directors like Rob Zombie and Eli Roth to create marquee horror attractions for Universal Studios' Halloween Horror Nights, and Roth's creation of a Las Vegas-based horror attraction called Eli Roth's Goretorium; and loosely biographical feature films based on horror directors or the making of their films, such as *Ed Wood* (Burton, 1994), *Gods and Monsters* (Condon, 1998), *Shadow of the Vampire* (Merhige, 2000) and *Hitchcock* (Gervasi, 2012).

Of course, this broader dissemination of the horror film-maker in popular culture does not necessarily make the figure of the horror auteur any less disreputable. If one based their perception of horror film-makers solely on their depictions in the quartet of biographically tinged films cited above, it would only reinforce the notion of the horror auteur as social outcast. All four subjects are eccentrics outside of their society's norms: Ed Wood is a blatantly terrible film-maker, and Wood and James Whale were transvestite and homosexual, respectively, in more conservative eras when these orientations were frowned upon; F.W. Murnau is depicted as hiring a vampire as his star and permitting it to feed on his cast and crew in his hubristic pursuit of authenticity; and Alfred Hitchcock is depicted as harbouring sexually predatory urges. Entirely fictitious depictions of horror film-makers also err towards these stereotypes: for example, films as disparate as *Cannibal Holocaust* (Deodato, 1980) and *Diary of the Dead* (Romero, 2007) depict young film-makers detaching from reality and going to extremes, ala Murnau, in pursuit of great footage. While these personality traits are consistent with damning depictions of film-makers in other genres – such as *The Stunt Man* (Rush, 1980) and *White Hunter Black Heart* (Eastwood, 1990) – the heavy concentration of these character portraits around the horror genre is illuminating. In short, these negative depictions and others perpetuate the stereotype of horror film-makers as social outcasts, as noted earlier by Romero and Craven. Even Craven's appearance as himself

in *Wes Craven's New Nightmare* (Craven, 1994), while distinctly lower-key and milder-mannered than those mentioned above, casts him as a haunted figure who communicates with dark forces in his sleep.

Given the predominantly unflattering representations of horror film-makers discussed above, one might expect the two key directorial figures in *The Cabin in the Woods* – who, not to put too fine a point on it, annually orchestrate the ritual slaying of twentysomethings – to be similarly unsavoury. However, director Drew Goddard and co-writer Joss Whedon portray Sitterson and Hadley in a largely positive, nuanced manner, even as they recognize the darker attributes of their work. More interestingly, they consciously gravitate away from the notion of the horror director as auteur, a motif prevalent in much contemporary genre media and scholarship. This is not to suggest that Whedon and Goddard are anti-auteurist – indeed, Whedon himself has a marked authorial signature and a legion of admirers who hail him as an auteur – but rather that their interests lie elsewhere. I contend that there are four key premises on which *The Cabin in the Woods'* meditation on horror film-makers and film-making rests. These premises will be elaborated on in the sections that follow.

Premise 1: Horror film-makers are journeymen

The audience's introduction to Sitterson and Hadley, before the thrust of their work is properly established, is deliberately innocuous and misleading. After a series of mythological images of slaughter and sacrifice over pre-title credits set to ominous music, the film cuts to Sitterson and Hadley in office attire in the blandest of locations: a brightly lit, seemingly normal office kitchen. As they prepare their beverages and move out into the architecture of a modern office complex, their conversation – centring around Hadley's bemusement at his wife childproofing their house in preparation for a prospective newborn – establishes a sense of normalcy, even of the mundane, around these two characters. When co-worker Lin (Amy Acker) attempts to update them on recent events in Stockholm and the fact that the United States and Japan are the only countries left in the competition, she could well be talking about business ventures and high financing. Hadley assures her 'We know what we're doing Lin. We have it written down ... somewhere'. His insistence on their professionalism and experience – tinged with self-deprecation – conveys the confidence and cockiness of a seasoned veteran in the field, whatever that field may be. It is only a little further into the film when they go to their control suite that we fully understand their role in proceedings and the stakes of said competition.

This exercise in misdirection at the film's beginning is important on a number of levels. While the metaphor for these puppeteers as 'film-makers' emerges and crystallizes over the course of the film, it is not transparent at the outset. What is established, however, are the archetypes of these characters and their working relationship: Sitterson is the older and more laconic of the pair, Hadley the younger and more flamboyant, yet both are seasoned professionals for whom this job, abnormal by most standards, is business as usual punctuated by opportunities for comic levity. They are, simply put, nobody and nothing special, which is the point of the opening. As actor Richard Jenkins reflects:

We wanted to keep it as [...] you know, a day at the office. The beginning of it, for example [...] Bradley is talking about how they childproofed all the drawers in his house. And, you know, these two guys have worked together for a long time. They are friends, they have families, and that's

really all you need to know about them. You really don't need to know anything else.

(Giroux 2012)

In the most literal reading of their job, Sitterson and Hadley would probably be defined as project managers: they orchestrate and coordinate operations, guide their unwitting VIPs (the occupants of the titular cabin) through the necessary motions, oversee the behind-the-scenes crew, and so on. This label is certainly consistent with the office atmosphere suggested by the film's opening. Yet these project management attributes are easily transferable to the role of film-maker, and they fulfil the exact same functions as a horror director would: orchestrating a horror film scenario using the inherited grammar and narrative formulas of the genre and a team of subordinates.

Moreover, on closer inspection of the film's opening a number of subtle parallels emerge between their seemingly innocuous office-speak and the culture of modern American studio horror production. The discussion of the US's ongoing competition with Japan can be read as an allusion to the J-horror film (an allusion which becomes all the more apparent later in the film), which for a period in the 2000s was a major contender in the international horror arena and furnished US producers with a number of films to remake and film-makers to poach.¹ In addition, Sitterson and Hadley make fun of Lin and the fact that her cohort – the chemistry department – was responsible for glitches in their operation back in 1998. This casual condescension of Lin, and the equation of her with a more feminine industry pursuit (chemistry as a synonym for make-up), reflects the marginalization of women directors in the film industry – in 2008, only 9 per cent of directors in Hollywood were women (Cochrane 2010) – and in the horror genre. Indeed, one need look no further than the aforementioned television series *Masters of Horror* – which canonized no women film-makers, only men, despite the genre boasting a number of formidable working women directors (including, to name a few, Mary Lambert, Mary Harron, Jennifer Lynch, Holly Dale, and Jen and Sylvia Soska) – for evidence of the inherent phallogentrism of both studio and genre film-making. The Anglocentrism of *Masters of Horror* – the canonized film-makers were largely white, with only one black and two Asian film-makers, again despite a number of non-Caucasian directors excelling in the genre – is also reflected in the film, with the white Sitterson and Hadley managing the enterprise while women, black and Asian characters, with one notable exception, work in crew, security or craft capacities.

It is evident, then, that Sitterson and Hadley are director-surrogates, providing authoritative figureheads that the whole crew reports to at the coal-face of the operation. But what kind of directors precisely? As noted in my recent book on directorial self-fashioning in the horror genre, three types of horror film-makers are commonly found in the public limelight: auteurs such as Craven, Romero, Cronenberg and others of New Horror stock; impresarios such as the late William Castle; and auteur-impresarios in the vein of Hitchcock, Lloyd Kaufman and Eli Roth (Kooyman 2014). In the case of Hadley and Sitterson, I would equate them with a fourth type of horror director, albeit one that exists largely outside the limelight: namely, the journeyman. This term is routinely used – sometimes affectionately, sometimes disparagingly – to refer to those film-makers who execute their work in a business-like manner and create solid, polished products without imposing an artistic signature or personal philosophy on their work. Sitterson and

1. Michael J. Blouin (2015) contemplates the broader thematic implications of this competitive intercultural working relationship in his essay on the film.

2. Christopher Lockett (2015) notes that their working stiff normalcy is also 'evocative of the banality of evil', an accusation that could be levelled at many a lesser journeyman director.

Hadley fit this mould. They are neither romanticized as artists nor demonized as sadists or ghouls. Simply put, they are working stiffs. Their journeyman status is consistent with my earlier comparison of them to project managers, while the gendered nature of this title is consistent with those aforementioned industry gender prejudices and stereotypes.²

The journeyman orientation of Sitterson and Hadley is a departure from the common representations of film-makers – horror or otherwise – in popular culture discussed above. They are not respected auteurs like Hitchcock or Murnau, misunderstood or compromised visionaries like Wood or Whale, or temperamental artists like Peter O'Toole's character in *The Stunt Man* or Clint Eastwood's approximation of John Huston in *White Hunter Black Heart*. Nor are they the film-maker-cretins or film-makers-with-herpes alluded to by Craven and Romero. If pressed for a pre-existing on-screen equivalent to Sitterson and Hadley, it would undoubtedly be Roscoe Dexter (Douglas Fowley), the exasperated hired hand director of Don Lockwood/Lina Lamont star vehicles in *Singin' in the Rain* (Donen and Kelly, 1952). Roscoe directs according to a stable commercial formula, must problem solve and come to grips with new technology (sound) when it is first introduced, and is ultimately anonymous and sidelined in the creative process by the star of his production and studio head after it is decided his latest film will be converted into a musical. Sitterson and Hadley likewise work to an established formula, do not impose their personality or pretension on the material, report to a higher authority – The Director, played by Sigourney Weaver, a title which reinforces their status as hired hands and lower case 'directors' – and are sidelined in the process when their sacrificial lambs fight back. The fact that Jenkins, Whitford and Fowley are all working character actors rather than movie stars accentuates these correspondences as well as their journeyman statuses.

The decision by Goddard and Whedon to depict these director-surrogates in this distinctly journeyman light raises the question of whether or not they are denigrating horror film-makers and the notion of horror auteurism. I do not think so. While a literal reading of the narrative – essentially, directors are cast as middle management serving higher-ups (i.e. producers, executives, harsh critic-Gods) rather than artists – would suggest otherwise, *The Cabin in the Woods* shines a positive light on the professionalism and resourcefulness of these journeymen helmers, particularly their ability to cope under pressure. Goddard elaborated on these pressures in a promotional interview:

My friend Matt Reeves, who directed *Cloverfield*, described the film-making process as 'all day long people are shooting bullets at you and hitting you and your job is to not die'. I think that's exactly right; that's the best description of the directing process anyone could give.

(Fischer 2012)

Sitterson and Hadley contend admirably with the multiple pressures they face – such as when the ritual's participants do not act according to plan or when their technology malfunctions – and with the considerable weight of their work's importance upon them.

Their journeyman status and working stiff personas also speak to a pragmatic view of authorship in the horror genre, which historically has proven resistant to artistic pretension. For example, John Carpenter publicly derides what he perceives to be former friend and colleague David Cronenberg's pretentiousness:

David Cronenberg *used* to be horror, but now he considers himself an artist, so he's a little bit above us [...] David and I used to be friends in the old days, and now, I don't know. I'm a little low class for him [...] But we're all bums. He's still a bum, even though he gets good reviews!
(Yamato 2011, original emphasis)

Interestingly, Carpenter views and fashions himself as an auteur in the Howard Hawks tradition, as a classical Hollywood director making mainstream films across a variety of genres but with an indelible authorial stamp (Muir 2000: 2). While they are not Hawksian auteurs, the journeyman status of Sitterson and Hadley is accentuated by their working environment, which is a throwback to Old Hollywood studio film-making prior to the popularization of auteurism. Various signifiers allude to classic Hollywood craftsmanship. Sitterson and Hadley's office attire – business shirts and ties – evokes not only the clinical office environment but also visions of Hollywood directors commandeering their cast and crews on soundstages. While Sitterson and Hadley's chosen 'stars', or more precisely victims, toil above the surface in what is ostensibly an isolated real-world location, it is essentially an elaborate soundstage, with the director-surrogates guiding the action from behind the scenes at a remove from the performers in their high-tech control room outfitted with multiple monitors, screens, and technological bells and whistles. Sigourney Weaver's Director, meanwhile, as chief executive of operations removed from the actual production process, provides a contemporary spin on old studio moguls in the Selznick, Mayer and Warner tradition. Interpreted in this light, Sitterson and Hadley are journeymen of Michael Curtiz's stock, hired hands who excel in their field without imposing the stamp of their own authorship on proceedings. On an extratextual level, the film's origin as an MGM production also ties it to Old Hollywood, while its distribution by Lions Gate, one of the few modern studios with a distinct factory mentality – as evidenced by its churning out of film series like *Saw* (Wan, 2004) and its sequels and *Madea's Family Reunion* (Perry, 2006) and its offshoots, with high levels of consistency among cast and crew between instalments – enhances these correspondences. This centrality of teamwork and creative collaboration forms the basis of the next premise to be discussed.

Premise 2: Horror film-making as collaborative

As mentioned earlier, there is considerable investment in notions of auteurism among horror fans and commentators, arguably more so than other genres (e.g. comedies, action films). The canonization of the Masters of Horror and idolization of the Splat Pack – Eli Roth, Rob Zombie, Neil Marshall and others – in the 2000s testify to the impulse to brand film-makers as auteurs in the interest of celebrating and legitimizing the genre. Indeed, it is probably easier to be branded an auteur in horror than elsewhere: as Craig Bernardini notes, 'Today, a director who makes one or two moderately interesting horror films is quickly labelled a "horror auteur" [...] and compared to the 1970s patriarchs' (2010: 163). Bernardini cites Larry Fessenden as an example: others of recent vintage would include Ti West, Adam Green, Joe Lynch, Tim Sullivan, Adam Wingard, and Jen and Sylvia Soska, all interesting and talented film-makers still in the early days of their careers.

However, despite this preoccupation with the romantic figure of the auteur, the horror genre and its fans and commentators are also uniquely

democratic in recognizing creative contributions across all facets of production, as evidenced by publications like *Fangoria* (1979–) which interview not only directors, producers, actors and scribes but also camera operators, make-up artists, costume designers, editors and composers. This preoccupation with behind-the-scenes personnel is consistent with Isabel Cristina Pinedo's contention that 'awareness of artifice' is 'an essential ingredient of recreational terror' (1997: 55). There are thus two marked impulses in the genre community: to perpetuate and venerate individual authorship and auteurism, and to celebrate the spirit of collaboration underpinning the film-making process.

Auteurism and collaboration are by no means antithetical. Indeed, setting aside the fact that most types of film-making would be impossible without collaboration, many auteurs have repeatedly worked with the same key collaborators, helping them to develop their authorial signatures. Nonetheless, in the popular consciousness auteurism often translates to viewers thinking of directors as sole authors of a film: for example, a Quentin Tarantino film is generally thought of exclusively as a Quentin Tarantino film, disregarding the contributions of producer Lawrence Bender, cinematographer Robert Richardson, editor Sally Menke and others. *The Cabin in the Woods* eschews this mentality by illuminating the collaborative dimension of film-making and the horror genre. Rather than depicting Sitterson and Hadley, the film's director-surrogates, as the driving creative forces behind their operation and thus perpetuating the myth of the lone auteur(s), the film shows them in constant collaboration, both with multiple personnel across their complex operation and with each other. In doing so, and in conjunction with their journeyman statuses, the film explicitly rejects the romantic and impractical attributes of auteurism as it is perceived in the popular consciousness.

Sitterson and Hadley's most important collaborators are each other. There is undoubtedly a hint of self-portraiture here on behalf of co-writers Goddard and Whedon. As noted repeatedly during publicity for the film, they wrote the script in close proximity and close quarters. Whedon has described their writing process as 'ridiculously fun. Drew and I got a bungalow in a hotel in Santa Monica. He had the upstairs, I had the downstairs' (Leader 2012). Goddard elaborates:

we spent months working on the outline and getting it ready, which was very much our process at *Buffy* and *Angel* [...] We will work the story over and over and over until we get a structure that's right. We found writing TV, we'd spend months on an episode, but then you'd only get two days to write it. But you didn't need it. If the story was right, it wrote very quickly. And that was the case with *Cabin*. We worked on it really hard, and we just had this goal to lock ourselves in the hotel room and say, 'We're not allowed out of this hotel room until we have a finished movie', and that's what happened.

(Phipps 2012)

Goddard also alludes to sharing a 'hive mind' and 'shorthand' with Whedon based on their previous collaborations (2012b). This portrait of long-time collaborators planning their project over an extended period of time before swiftly and efficiently executing it under considerable time constraints, whilst still managing to have 'ridiculous' fun, mirrors Sitterson and Hadley's

on-screen duties. The upstairs/downstairs motif of their writing operation also echoes the film's setting.

Goddard and Whedon further compare their writing process to their necessarily fast-paced experiences of writing for television in the film's DVD extras (Goddard 2012b). Their television history similarly informs their depictions of Sitterson and Hadley. Television directors are tasked with executing projects under greater time constraints than standard feature films. They also work in service of someone else's – usually a showrunner's – material and storyline, except in those rare instances when they double as showrunner, as Whedon has done on several series. Hence even when major directors tackle television assignments – whether it be Martin Scorsese on *Boardwalk Empire* (2010–2014) or horror directors like Rob Zombie on *CSI: Miami* (2002–2012) or Neil Marshall on *Game of Thrones* (2011–) – they are servicing the programme's identity and imposing their own voice in very limited ways. Consequently, because they are working in service of someone else's material, television directors are often considered 'just one notch above technicians', as noted by Heather Hendershot (2011: 147). There are clear parallels between these television director qualities and *The Cabin in the Woods'* director-surrogates, who work under considerable pressure, service the material of others rather than content they originated, and are several rungs below the top of the power hierarchy. While further analysis is warranted identifying further correspondences between Sitterson and Hadley and television directors – as well as correspondences between the horror scenario they construct for their victims and reality television – this research is outside the parameters of this study.

In some respects, Sitterson and Hadley are mildly contemptuous of their lower-level staff. In a telephone conversation with the Harbinger, a stock player whose role is to foretell doom at a gas station on the road to the cabin, they put him on speaker phone against his wishes and mock his longwindedness. They also, as mentioned earlier, make fun of Lin's chemistry team as well as maintenance – joking 'If they were creative they wouldn't be maintenance' – and Hadley flatly tells an intern agonizing over a decision that 'More than anything I just want this moment to end'. Yet they also work closely with Lin and her team, and their interactions with her, which include mild sexual innuendo and involving her in the mocking of the Harbinger, signify a hospitable working environment. They also help orient new security officer Truman to their operation and endorse different team recreation and morale-building activities like placing bets on the theme of the operation and throwing a party – not unlike the wrap party for a film – when the operation supposedly ends.

The distinctly collaborative bent to *The Cabin in the Woods'* depiction of horror film-making is unique, especially given the continued cachet and resilience of the auteur figure and the number of texts and commentators that continue to romanticize auteurism. As suggested above, this approach stems partly from Goddard and Whedon's own history of collaboration, their history of working in television where directors are rarely considered auteurs and are commonly labelled hired hands, and the pragmatic view of the realities of production, which these experiences have fostered. But it is also arguably tied to the next two premises to be explored: that horror films are simply minor variations on a select number of types rather than works borne of individual artists, and that horror films carry mythological baggage and social importance that transcends the efforts and accomplishments of their individual directors.

Premise 3: Horror film-makers must service a prescribed number of formulas

John Carpenter once noted that when viewers sit down to watch a sequel they essentially want ‘the same movie again’ (quoted in Clover 1992: 10). While there are enough failed derivative sequels to contest this observation, Carpenter’s comment nonetheless reflects a number of themes: the post-modern cliché that originality is dead, that all worthwhile stories have been told already, and all that’s left is to recycle existing stories; the film industry’s conviction that sequels, remakes and reboots are preferable to original content; and the horror film’s inherent tendency towards repetition.

From a purely economic perspective, this conviction makes sense. In 2013, only two of the top ten grossing films of the year were original works – space survival thriller *Gravity* (Cuaron, 2013) and Disney animation *Frozen* (Buck and Lee, 2013) – with the rest being superhero, fantasy, action and animated sequels (Box Office Mojo 2014). The top-grossing horror films of 2013, meanwhile, conveyed a similar story. Two of the three most successful horror films of the year, *World War Z* (Forster, 2013) and *Insidious: Chapter 2* (Wan, 2013), were derived from existing properties: Max Brooks’s bestseller and the first *Insidious* (Wan, 2010), respectively. While that year’s horror juggernaut, *The Conjuring* (Wan, 2013), was ostensibly an original work, it was based on the work of real-world paranormal investigators associated with the Amityville mythos, was steeped in classic horror imagery and 1970s aesthetic, and is itself currently being mined for sequels and spinoffs (Schaefer 2013; Sneider 2014), thus initiating its own cycle of recycling. Moreover, original and acclaimed properties like *You’re Next* (Wingard, 2013) were outgrossed at the box office by remakes and sequels like *Evil Dead* (Alvarez, 2013), *Carrie* (Peirce, 2013) and *Texas Chainsaw 3D* (Luessenhop, 2013) (Box Office Mojo 2014), three films which embody the same ‘cynicism, conformity, and mechanized anonymity’ identified by Nathan Lee in *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* (Nispel, 2003) remake of a decade earlier (Lee 2008: 25). Lee is one of many commentators to chronicle and critique the phenomenon of horror remakes: others include Kermode (2003) and Church (2006).

This remake culture, with its inherent conformity and anonymity, is where a number of journeyman horror directors – often music video and advertising alumni eager to extend their credentials – have thrived. Directors of this ilk include, but are not limited to, Marcus Nispel (*The Texas Chain Saw Massacre; Friday the 13th*, 2009), Andrew Douglas (*The Amityville Horror*, 2005), Rupert Wainwright (*The Fog*, 2005), John Moore (*The Omen*, 2006), Simon West (*When a Stranger Calls*, 2006) and Samuel Bayer (*A Nightmare on Elm Street*, 2010). However, within today’s industry paradigm a number of the current auteur horror directors have likewise handled remakes and sequels – to both their own films and others – including Rob Zombie (*Halloween*, 2007; *Halloween 2*, 2009), Eli Roth (*Hostel Part II*, 2007), Alexandre Aja (*The Hills Have Eyes*, 2006; *Mirrors*, 2008; *Piranha 3D*, 2010), Darren Lynn Bousman (*Saws II–IV*, 2005–2007; *Mother’s Day*, 2010), James Wan (*Insidious: Chapter 2*), Greg McLean (*Wolf Creek 2*, 2014), Ti West (*Cabin Fever 2: Spring Fever*, 2009, which he subsequently disowned) and Jen and Sylvia Soska (the forthcoming *See No Evil 2*, 2014). Moreover, genre pastiche and homage – especially to New Horror and slasher films – permeates the ‘original’ works of directors like Roth, Zombie, West, Adam Green and Adam Wingard, among others.

Before lamenting the state of the genre, it should be stressed that this inclination towards recycling in horror cinema is not just a contemporary commercial concession or a by-product of twenty-first-century creative ennui. Indeed, it is consistent with the mythological and archetypal nature of the horror genre, the idea that each film provides just another variation on a prescribed number of established formulas. This is the thesis underpinning Carol J. Clover's influential *Men, Women and Chain Saws* (1992). Clover analyses the horror genre in a harsh anthropological light, dissecting horror films as collective cultural artefacts rather than the works of individual directors. She argues that the young audiences who flock to horror films do not discriminate between the films they see, and implies little distinguishing authorship on the part of film-makers. This is no doubt symptomatic of Clover's training and scholarly experience in dissecting antiquated and largely authorless Icelandic and Anglo-Saxon literature, yet also speaks to the inherently formulaic nature of horror cinema, in particular the 1980s slasher era, which provides key fodder for Clover's analysis. The slasher sub-genre, frequently derided by critics, commentators, fans and film-makers as 'pandering to the lowest common denominator' (Kerswell 2010: 12), especially lends itself to charges of anonymous authorship, given the high levels of similarity across its products and the fact that few film-makers – bar those like Carpenter, Craven and Sean S. Cunningham who established or tweaked its conventions – were rewarded with distinction during their time in its trenches.

The Cabin in the Woods likewise depicts the genre as offering a finite number of prescribed formulas that directors must service, which complements its portrait of Sitterson and Hadley as journeyman hired guns tasked with executing their work as efficiently and anonymously as possible. Sitterson and Hadley are firmly linked to the ranks of Nispel, Wainwright, Moore, West and other journeyman purveyors of remake culture. While it is hard to imagine Sitterson and Hadley directing music videos or Nike commercials in their downtime, like these directors they are tasked with taking on a pre-existing scenario from a select catalogue of prescribed scenarios, recycling that material with minor variations, and in doing so harnessing and utilizing the established grammar of the genre. The anonymity of their direction, or more precisely puppeteering, while reflecting their journeyman ethos, also reflects to some extent Goddard and Whedon's television backgrounds, given that television directors, as noted earlier, are routinely tasked with deferring their authorial voices to the identity of the programme they are directing. Hadley's repeated lamentations that his operation will never feature a Merman as its main antagonist reflects this: like the journeyman film-maker remaking an established horror property or a television director working on an ongoing series, he is a slave to the material and formulas he is assigned.

The formulaic nature of the genre is reiterated numerous times over the course of the film, but a few key examples will suffice here. Each year the theme of the operation is decided by the people (or puppets) chosen to play the victims. After arriving at and settling into the titular cabin, they are lured down to the cellar where they are confronted with a multitude of props, each associated with a particular type of antagonist and horror film scenario: a locking device in the shape of a ball, which conjures a sadomasochistic Pinhead-esque monster, a sea shell that conjures the aforementioned Merman, and so on. Whichever prop they choose becomes the basis of the horror scenario that follows. Truman comments that these creatures and scenarios are 'like something from a nightmare', to which Lin responds 'No, they're something

nightmares are from'. In other words, all the different monsters in their collection are the ancient raw materials from which human nightmares developed, and those nightmares in turn formed the basis of horror cinema. Sitterson, Hadley and their operation are thus working not just with the grammar of horror cinema, but the mythological and archetypal grammar of horror itself, which in turn informed that of horror cinema. The film asserts that it is important for the protagonists to 'choose what happens in the cellar', i.e. to choose which horror icon will be the agent of their demise, which provides a means for Sitterson, Hadley and co. to alleviate themselves of the responsibility of actual murder. This also creates the illusion of free choice and agency for the protagonists (which two survivors make literal and seize upon at film's end, with disastrous and apocalyptic consequences), but it remains heavily orchestrated. This also taps into the motif of horror cinema hinging upon repetition-with-variation: while the horror film scenario that follows their choice will vary depending on the antagonist selected, the outcome will remain the same, namely the death of the victims and optional survival of the Final Girl.

In this iteration of the ritual, the prop selected is the journal of Anna Buckner, which conjures the Buckners, a 'zombie redneck torture family'. Consequently, the operation unfolds along the lines of a *Friday the 13th*-esque supernatural hillbilly slasher horror, with the Buckners gruesomely executing the protagonists and Sitterson and Hadley manipulating them behind the scenes to ensure everything goes according to formula. This is where 'production' really begins. Until this point, the puppeteers have been in 'pre-production' mode, with all the ingredients being put into place for the main event; now that the operation's monster has been selected, Sitterson and Hadley are tasked with responding to the players and scenario as efficiently as possible, complementing and building on the work done during pre-production. For example, the five protagonists were chosen based on their similarities to existing victim archetypes: the whore, the athlete, the scholar, the fool and the virgin. However, as human beings rather than simple movie archetypes, these characters are more nuanced than their types suggest: as The Director notes when Dana (Kristen Connolly) protests that she is not a virgin, 'We work with what we have'. Part of this process involves manipulating the players to conform more closely to type. For instance, in order to transform Jules (Anna Hutchison) into the whore, the chemistry team put toxins into her blonde hair dye to dumb her down into the dumb blonde mould. They also increase Curt's (Chris Hemsworth's) testosterone to turn this scholarship student into a macho athlete. This takes place during the pre-production stage, and is built upon during production: to direct Jules and Curt towards the sexual encounter that will, in the slasher film vernacular, ensure their demise, Sitterson and Hadley adjust the temperature and lighting outside the cabin and pump pheromone mist into the setting. When Truman questions the ethics of this – and Sitterson and Hadley's prodding of Jules to expose her breasts – Sitterson responds 'Gotta keep the customer satisfied', alluding both to the bloodthirsty and libidinous entities they are sacrificing these characters to and the bloodthirsty and libidinous horror fanbase demanding titillation amidst bloodshed.

Ultimately, both this operation and the others taking place simultaneously across the world fail, suggesting that the genre and its stock scenarios are becoming too familiar and, consequently, ineffectual. Yet the film also revels in its stable of scenarios and creatures, most notably in its final scenes, when Dana and Marty (Fran Kranz), after penetrating the underground base, unleash the large and diverse stable of horror icons upon the organization that wields

them. This stable of monsters let loose includes a shrieking spirit, a child ballerina with teeth for a face, winged creatures, giant snakes, zombies, masked killers, torturers, killer scarecrows, a killer unicorn, and, most memorably, the Merman. Goddard has described his film as 'a love letter to all horror cinema, but [...] not a movie about references' (2012b). These final set pieces demonstrate this: for example, while there is a killer clown, a long-haired Japanese ghost girl dressed in white and a werewolf, evoking *It* (Wallace, 1990), *Ringu* (Nakata, 1998) and *An American Werewolf in London* (Landis, 1981), respectively, they are not direct imitations. This approach – which differs from a work like *Scream* (Craven, 1996) where precursor films and film-makers are intentionally namedropped – heightens the sense that these creatures are not plucked from specific films, but rather are the raw materials that circuitously spawned these films and represent the shared grammar that horror film-makers can draw upon. As director-surrogates, Sitterson and Hadley are working professionals drawing upon this existing horror grammar and servicing a prescribed number of formulas. This middle managerial work is invested not only with a mythological dimension – as is the horror genre – but with a lofty social function.

Premise 4: Horror filmmaking is of great societal value

The final premise to be discussed concerns the social necessity of horror films and film-makers. The value of horror cinema has been stressed repeatedly by numerous commentators, ranging from Robin Wood (1986) to Joseph Maddrey (2004). Prior to *The Cabin in the Woods*, perhaps its most succinct on-screen dramatization was in *Wes Craven's New Nightmare*. In this postmodern meta-film ostensibly taking place in the real world, the on-screen character Craven contends that his earlier *A Nightmare on Elm Street* (Craven, 1984) ensnared an ancient demon in the on-screen form of Freddy Krueger and bottled it up, but with the diminishment and eventual cancellation of the series the entity was released. Consequently, Craven must now write and direct a new *Nightmare* film to recapture it. In weaving this story, Craven depicts horror film-makers – or more precisely himself – as storytellers capable of ensnaring and warding off evil, thus fulfilling a vital societal function.

In *The Cabin in the Woods*, the beings that threaten the world are the Ancient Ones, described as 'the Gods that used to rule the Earth' or, more informally, 'Giant evil Gods'. Like Craven in *New Nightmare*, Sitterson and Hadley are tasked with protecting the Earth from these Lovecraftian entities and warding off evil. However, they do so with distinctly less pretension than Craven, and rather than defeating and containing these entities they do so through annual ritual sacrifice, entertaining the Ancient Ones by re-enacting the same story – the slaying of innocent twentysomethings with variations in monster and scenario – again and again. The Ancient Ones thus embody Carpenter's contention that audiences desire 'the same movie' again and again (quoted in Clover 1992: 10). They are further equated with audience members when Sitterson pays tribute following the first sacrifice, stating 'This we offer in humility and fear for the blessed peace of your eternal slumber'. The use of the term 'slumber' evokes the hypnogogic dream-like state that audiences slip into when viewing a film theatrically.

The distinction between Craven seeking to defeat evil in *New Nightmare* and Sitterson and Hadley working to keep it at bay is a telling one, and taps into a key political distinction between the horror auteur and horror journeyman. Commentators like Wood (1986), Maddrey (2004) and Jason Zinoman

3. As mentioned earlier, the Ancient Ones that obliterate the Earth at film's end are Lovecraftian beings. Christopher Lockett (2015) identifies various threads of Lovecraft running throughout the film and aligns the agenda of the top secret organization with the author's conservative, puritanical inclinations.

(2011) routinely note the radical and revolutionary spirit of New Horror, as do its directors. In the documentary *The American Nightmare*, Craven describes his early work as 'films of a young man who had much more rage than he ever realized', while John Carpenter reflects that in his early work he 'wanted something savage to happen' (Simon 2000). George A. Romero, long a proponent of horror as a platform for political commentary, contends:

Horror is radical [...] it can take you into a completely new world, new place, and just rattle your cage and say, wait a minute – look at things differently. That shock of horror is what horror's all about [...] Which is really why we are doing this in the first place. We don't want things the way they are or we wouldn't be trying to shock you into an alternative place.

(Barker and Jones 1997: 245–46)

The attitudes and intentions of the New Horror auteurs are markedly different from the director-surrogates of *The Cabin in the Woods*. While Craven, Carpenter and Romero advocate for subversion and protest, Sitterson and Hadley are working towards control. Where the 1970s New Horror was counter-cultural, Sitterson and Hadley are working for, not to put too fine a point on it, 'The Man'. Although both sides are technically committed to helping society, one contingent, the auteurs, do so at the radical end of the spectrum while the other, the puppeteers, do so at the conservative end. Hence Sitterson and Hadley, despite their similar investment in protecting and improving society, are much closer to the anonymous slasher and remake specialists of the 1980s and 2000s than the dangerous auteurs of the 1970s, endorsing and upholding conservative, reactionary values and corporate culture through their work rather than challenging and destabilizing hierarchies. Their journeyman orientation, veneer of middle management, and commitment to set formulas accentuate this fundamental ideological difference.³

Goddard's childhood provided a source of inspiration for this particular take on horror film-making. The director grew up in Los Alamos, where at the Los Alamos National Laboratory nuclear weapon research is conducted and the Manhattan Project was undertaken. Goddard observes that the film was

very much influenced by what I saw every day [as a child], which is some of the smartest men and women in the world going about their lives in just the simple and most mundane way [...] going to work every day to make weapons that would destroy the world.

(2012b)

This notion of treating the creation of weapons of mass destruction in the interests of national security as a nine to five job is reflected in Goddard's portrait of Sitterson and Hadley – and by extension other horror film-makers – as individuals who enact horrifying scenarios of murder, dismemberment, torture and rape in service to society as a nine to five job whilst living relatively normal and conventional lives. Once again, the key difference is that auteur directors like Craven and Romero do this to challenge the status quo, while the efforts of Sitterson and Hadley, like those of the workers at the National Laboratory, are in service to dominant culture. Moreover, the works created by the National Laboratory and Sitterson and Hadley, unlike those of Craven and Romero, do lead to the deaths of innocents, a fact that invests their witty

banter and outwardly normal social interactions with darker hues, suggesting these serve as reflex denial and defence mechanisms.

CONCLUSION

At film's end, confronted with the truth that he and his friends have been part of a ritual sacrifice and that he must die to prevent the end of the world, Marty rejects The Director's ultimatum, and following her demise he and Dana share a cigarette as the Ancient Ones emerge to destroy the Earth. This finite act of agency and individualism can be interpreted in multiple ways. It may be read, as suggested earlier, as an admission of the increasing strain on horror cinema to accomplish and fulfil its societal function, due to exhaustion of formula via repetition and corporate culture watering down and numbing the impact of horror. More reactionary readings may label it an affirmation of the idea that horror films are the harbinger and cause of the end of civilization, a sentiment well known to anyone who endured the British video nasties era. And some may read it as symbolically extending a middle finger to formulaic corporate horror and the sequels and remakes that have bogged the genre down in repetition: by closing off all possibilities for sequels with its apocalyptic finale, the film makes a compelling case for this interpretation. Yet for the creatively minded, *The Cabin in the Woods* could well be a gift that keeps on giving: viewers can re-interpret the classics that informed it like *Friday the 13th* (Cunningham, 1980) and *The Evil Dead* (Raimi, 1981) – not to mention other past, present and future horror films – through its meta-filter, imagining Sitterson and Hadley orchestrating events behind the scenes as Bruce Campbell's Ash takes his umpteenth pounding from a Deadite and Betsy Palmer takes a swing at Adrienne King. Whatever the interpretation, Sitterson and Hadley are by this point long gone, the former stabbed by Dana and the latter devoured by his very own fetish creature, the Merman. This is fitting: the horror film scenario they engineered involving the protagonists and the Buckners has ceased, and the hired hands are no longer required.

As this article has illustrated, *The Cabin in the Woods* gravitates away from standard pop culture depictions of horror film-makers as eccentric, unsavoury or sadistic, as well as gravitating away from overly romantic notions of horror auteurism, no doubt bolstered by Goddard and Whedon's experiences of collaborating and working in television. By doing this, and in depicting Sitterson and Hadley as director-surrogates, the film hinges upon four key premises about horror film-making: that horror directors are essentially journeymen, that their work is primarily collaborative, that they are servicing a prescribed number of established formulas rather than imposing their own vision or authorship, and that their work carries an important societal value. These premises are both positive – recognizing the efficiency, intuition, and intelligence of horror directors and celebrating rather than denigrating journeyman film-makers – but also problematic in that the social value of their work rests upon the murder of innocents. Goddard and Whedon do not posit these premises as authoritative statements on the genre or their film as an exhaustive manifesto on horror today; nor do they necessarily provide answers to the questions they raise. Rather, the film's value resides in its generation of these questions, in providing a launching point for dialectical dialogue around the role, function, and value of authorship in today's horror cinema.

REFERENCES

- Aja, Alexandre (2006), *The Hills Have Eyes*, Los Angeles: Fox.
- (2008), *Mirrors*, Los Angeles: Fox.
- (2010), *Piranha 3D*, New York: Dimension.
- Alvarez, Fede (2013), *Evil Dead*, Culver City: Sony.
- Barker, C. and Jones, S. (1997), *Clive Barker's A-Z of Horror*, London: BBC Books.
- Bayer, Samuel (2010), *A Nightmare on Elm Street*, Los Angeles: New Line.
- Bernardini, C. (2010), 'Auteurdämmerung: David Cronenberg, George A. Romero, and the Twilight of the (North) American Horror Auteur', in S. Hantke (ed.), *American Horror Film: The Genre at the Turn of the Millennium*, Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, pp. 161–92.
- Blouin, Michael J. (2015), '"A Growing Global Darkness": Dialectics of culture in Goddard's *The Cabin in the Woods*', *Horror Studies*, 6: 1, pp. 83–99.
- Boardwalk Empire* (2010–2014, United States: HBO).
- Bousman, Darren Lynn (2005), *Saw II*, Santa Monica: Lions Gate.
- (2006), *Saw III*, Santa Monica: Lions Gate.
- (2007), *Saw IV*, Santa Monica: Lions Gate.
- (2010), *Mother's Day*, Beverly Hills: Anchor Bay.
- Box Office Mojo (2014), '2013 worldwide grosses', <http://boxofficemojo.com/yearly/chart/?view2=worldwide&yr=2013&p=.htm>. Accessed 12 February 2014.
- Buck, Chris and Lee, Jennifer (2013), *Frozen*, Burbank: Disney.
- Burton, Tim (1994), *Ed Wood*, Burbank: Touchstone.
- Carpenter, John (1978), *Halloween*, Burbank: Warner Bros.
- Church, D. (2006), 'Return of the return of the repressed: Notes on the American horror film (1991–2006)', *Off Screen*, 10: 10, http://www.offscreen.com/index.php/phile/essays/return_of_the_repressed/. Accessed 14 November 2011.
- Clover, C. (1992), *Men, Women and Chain Saws: Gender in the Modern Horror Film*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Cochrane, K. (2010), 'Why are there so few female film-makers?', *Guardian*, 1 February, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/film/2010/jan/31/female-film-makers>. Accessed 10 May 2012.
- Condon, Bill (1998), *Gods and Monsters*, Santa Monica: Lions Gate.
- Craven, Wes (1972), *The Last House on the Left*, Beverly Hills: MGM.
- (1984), *A Nightmare on Elm Street*, Los Angeles: New Line.
- (1994), *Wes Craven's New Nightmare*, Los Angeles: New Line.
- (1996), *Scream*, New York: Dimension.
- CSI: Miami* (2002–2012, United States: CBS).
- Cuaron, Alfonso (2013), *Gravity*, Burbank: Warner Bros.
- Cunningham, Sean S. (1980), *Friday the 13th*, Hollywood: Paramount.
- Deodato, Ruggero (1980), *Cannibal Holocaust*, Los Angeles: Grindhouse Releasing.
- Donen, Stanley and Kelly, Gene (1952), *Singin' in the Rain*, Beverly Hills: MGM.
- Douglas, Andrew (2005), *The Amityville Horror*, Beverly Hills: MGM.
- Eastwood, Clint (1990), *White Hunter Black Heart*, Burbank: Warner Bros.
- Fischer, R. (2012), 'The Cabin in the Woods: Exclusive interview with Director Drew Goddard, and behind the scenes Blu-ray Clip', *Slash Film*, <http://www.slashfilm.com/the-cabin-in-the-woods-exclusive-interview-with-director-drew-goddard-and-behind-the-scenes-blu-ray-clip/>. Accessed 9 February 2014.

- Forster, Marc (2013), *World War Z*, Hollywood: Paramount.
- Game of Thrones* (2011–, United States: HBO).
- Gervasi, Sacha (2012), *Hitchcock*, Los Angeles: Fox.
- Giroux, J. (2012), 'Cabin in the Woods Star Richard Jenkins talks getting bloody and which of his characters deserved to be killed', Film School Rejects, <http://www.filmschoolrejects.com/features/cabin-in-the-woods-star-richard-jenkins-talks-getting-bloody-and-which-of-his-characters-deserved-to-be-killed.php>. Accessed 9 February 2014.
- Goddard, Drew (2012a), *The Cabin in the Woods*, Santa Monica: Lions Gate.
- (2012b), 'We are not who we are: Making *The Cabin in the Woods*', *The Cabin in the Woods*, DVD, Santa Monica: Lions Gate Films.
- Hendershot, H. (2011), 'Masters of horror: TV auteurism and the potential of a disreputable genre', in M. Kackman, M. Binfield, M. T. Payne, A. Perlman and B. Sebok (eds), *Flow TV: Television in the Age of Media Convergence*, New York: Routledge, pp. 144–63.
- Hooper, Tobe (1974), *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre*, Bryanston Pictures.
- Kermode, M. (2003), 'What a carve up', *Sight and Sound*, 13: 12, pp. 12–16.
- Kerswell, J. A. (2010), *Teenage Wasteland: The Slasher Movie Uncut*, London: New Holland.
- Kooyman, B. (2014), *Directorial Self-Fashioning in American Horror Cinema: George A. Romero, Wes Craven, Rob Zombie, Eli Roth, and the Masters of Horror*, New York: Edwin Mellen Press.
- Landis, John (1981), *An American Werewolf in London*, Universal City: Universal.
- Leader, M. (2012), 'Joss Whedon interview: *The Cabin in the Woods*, *The Avengers*, Shakespeare and more', Den of Geek, <http://www.denofgeek.com/movies/18968/joss-whedon-interview-the-cabin-in-the-woods-the-avengers-shakespeare-and-more#ixzz2TuZqs4CC>. Accessed 9 February 2014.
- Lee, N. (2008), 'The return of the repressed! risen from the grave and brought back to life: Horror remakes from *Psycho* to *Funny Games*', *Film Comment*, 44: 2, pp. 24–28.
- Lockett, C. (2015), '"We are not who we are": Lovecraftian conspiracy and magical humanism in *The Cabin in the Woods*', *Horror Studies*, 6: 1, pp. 121–139.
- Luessenhop, John (2013), *Texas Chainsaw 3D*, Santa Monica: Lions Gate.
- Maddrey, J. (2004), *Nightmares in Red, White and Blue: The Evolution of the American Horror Film*, London: McFarland.
- Masters of Horror* (2005–2007, United States: Showtime).
- McLean, Greg (2014), *Wolf Creek 2*, Chatsworth: Image.
- Merhige, E. Elias (2000), *Shadow of the Vampire*, Santa Monica: Lions Gate.
- Moore, John (2006), *The Omen*, Los Angeles: Fox.
- Muir, J. K. (2000), *The Films of John Carpenter*, London: McFarland.
- Nakata, Hideo (1998), *Ringu*, Tokyo: Toho.
- Nispel, Marcus (2003), *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, Los Angeles: New Line.
- (2009), *Friday the 13th*, Hollywood: Paramount.
- Peirce, Kimberly (2013), *Carrie*, Beverly Hills: MGM.
- Perry, Tyler (2006), *Madea's Family Reunion*, Santa Monica: Lions Gate.
- Phipps, K. (2012), 'Interview: *The Cabin in the Woods* director Drew Goddard', A.V. Club, <http://www.avclub.com/articles/the-cabin-in-the-woods-director-drew-goddard,72362/>. Accessed 10 February 2014.
- Pinedo, I. C. (1997), *Recreational Terror: Women and the Pleasures of Horror Film Viewing*, Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Raimi, Sam (1981), *The Evil Dead*, Los Angeles: New Line.

- Romero, George A. (1978), *Dawn of the Dead*, United Film Distribution Company.
- (2007), *Diary of the Dead*, New York: Dimension.
- Roth, Eli (2007), *Hostel Part II*, Santa Monica: Lions Gate.
- Rush, Richard (1980), *The Stunt Man*, Los Angeles: Fox.
- Sarris, A. (1968), *The American Cinema: Directors and Directions, 1929–1968*, New York: Dutton.
- Schaefer, S. (2013), 'Rumour: *The Conjuring 2* will send the Warrens to 1970s England', Screen Rant, <http://screenrant.com/the-conjuring-2-sequel-plot-setting/>. Accessed 13 February 2014.
- Shapiro, M. (1999), 'Scream Goodbye?', *Fangoria*, January, no. 189, pp. 26–29, 67.
- Simon, Adam (2000), *The American Nightmare*, Rome: Minerva Pictures.
- Sneider, J. (2014), 'New Line's *Conjuring* spinoff *Annabelle* casts its leads (exclusive)', The Wrap, <http://www.thewrap.com/new-lines-conjuring-sequel-annabelle-casts-leads-exclusive/>. Accessed 6 February 2014.
- Soska, Jen and Soska, Sylvia (2014), *See No Evil 2*, Santa Monica: Lions Gate.
- Wainwright, Rupert (2005), *The Fog*, Culver City: Columbia.
- Wallace, Tommy Lee (1990), *It*, Burbank: Warner Bros.
- Wan, James (2004), *Saw*, Santa Monica: Lions Gate.
- (2010), *Insidious*, Santa Monica: FilmDistrict.
- (2013), *Insidious: Chapter 2*, Santa Monica: FilmDistrict.
- (2013), *The Conjuring*, Burbank: Warner Bros.
- West, Simon (2006), *When a Stranger Calls*, Culver City: Screen Gems.
- West, Ti (2009), *Cabin Fever 2: Spring Fever*, Santa Monica: Lions Gate.
- Wiater, S. ([1992] 2011), 'George A. Romero', in T. Williams (ed.), *George A. Romero Interviews*, Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, pp. 111–21.
- Wingard, Adam (2013), *You're Next*, Santa Monica: Lions Gate.
- Wood, R. (1986), *Hollywood: From Vietnam to Reagan*, New York: Columbia University Press.
- Yamato, J. (2011), 'John Carpenter on his decade away from filmmaking, the problem with today's horror, and *The Ward*', Movie Line, <http://movieline.com/2011/06/14/john-carpenter-on-his-decade-away-from-filmmaking-his-return-with-the-ward-and-his-bloody-future/>. Accessed 7 June 2012.
- Zinoman, J. (2011), *Shock Value*, New York: Penguin Press.
- Zombie, Rob (2007), *Halloween*, New York: Dimension.
- (2009), *Halloween 2*, New York: Dimension.

SUGGESTED CITATION

Kooyman, B. (2015), "'Gotta keep the customer satisfied": Puppeteers as director-surrogates in *The Cabin in the Woods*', *Horror Studies* 6: 1, pp. 101–119, doi: 10.1386/host.6.1.101_1

CONTRIBUTOR DETAILS

Dr Ben Kooyman graduated from Flinders University with a Ph.D. in English in 2010. He recently worked as a Language and Learning Adviser at the University of South Australia. His research interests include horror cinema, film, and Shakespeare. His first book, titled *Directorial Self-Fashioning in American Horror Cinema: George A. Romero, Wes Craven, Rob Zombie, Eli Roth, and the Masters of Horror*, was published in 2014.

Contact: Academic Development Office, Australian College of Physical Education, 8 Figtree Drive, Olympic Park, 2127, New South Wales, Australia.
E-mail: bkooyman@acpe.edu.au

Ben Kooyman has asserted his right under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act, 1988, to be identified as the author of this work in the format that was submitted to Intellect Ltd.

Intellect books

publishers of original thinking | www.intellectbooks.com

Zombies in the Academy

Living Death in Higher Education

Edited by Andrew Whelan, Ruth Walker, and Christopher Moore

ISBN 978-1-84150-714-9 | 312pp
£19.95, \$30.00 | 2013
Paperback | 230x170mm
eBook available

Zombies in the Academy taps into the current popular fascination with zombies and brings together scholars from a range of fields, including cultural and communications studies, sociology, film studies, and education, to give a critical account of the political, cultural, and pedagogical state of the university through the metaphor of zombiedom. The contributions to this volume argue that the increasing corporatization of the academy – an environment emphasizing publication, narrow research, and a vulnerable tenure system – is creating a crisis in higher education best understood through the language of zombie culture: the undead, contagion, and plague, among others. *Zombies in the Academy* presents essays from a variety of scholars and creative writers who present an engaging and entertaining appeal for serious recognition of the conditions of contemporary humanities teaching, culture, and labour practices.

Andrew Whelan teaches sociology at the University of Wollongong, Australia, where Ruth Walker teaches academic writing. Christopher Moore is a lecturer in media communication at Deakin University, Australia.



We are here to support your ideas and get them published. To send us your new book or journal proposal, please download a questionnaire from www.intellectbooks.com.



To view our catalogue or order our books and journals visit www.intellectbooks.com

Intellect, The Mill, Parnall Road,
Fishponds, Bristol, BS16 3JG

Tel: +44 (0) 117 9589910
Fax: +44 (0) 117 9589911

Copyright of Horror Studies is the property of Intellect Ltd. and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.