



# Projected Fears: Horror Films and American Culture

By Kendall R. Phillips

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**Projected Fears: Horror Films and American Culture** By Kendall R. Phillips

Movie audiences seem drawn, almost compelled, toward tales of the horrific and the repulsive. Partly because horror continues to evolve radically?every time the genre is deemed dead, it seems to come up with another twist?it has been one of the most often-dissected genres. Here, author Kendall Phillips selects ten of the most popular and influential horror films?including *Dracula*, *Night of the Living Dead*, *Halloween*, *The Silence of the Lambs*, and *Scream*, each of which has become a film landmark and spawned countless imitators, and all having implications that transcend their cinematic influence and achievement. By tracing the production history, contemporary audience response, and lasting cultural influence of each picture, Phillips offers a unique new approach to thinking about the popular attraction to horror films, and the ways in which they reflect both cultural and individual fears. Though stylistically and thematically very different, all of these movies have scared millions of eager moviegoers. This book tries to figure out why.

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## Projected Fears: Horror Films and American Culture By Kendall R. Phillips Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #608503 in Books
- Published on: 2005-04-30
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.25" h x .55" w x 6.13" l, .85 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 240 pages

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

"The book is sensible, highly readable, and concise....[t]his book will best serve as an introduction to the horror genre. Recommended. Lower-/upper-division undergraduates; general readers." - **Choice**

"[E]xplores the relationship between 10 classic horror films and the cultures they reflect." - **US States News**

"Phillips analyzes ten landmark horror films, including *Dracula*, *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, *The Silence of the Lambs* and *The Sixth Sense*, to discover the ways horror films reflect their cultural contexts and the audiences' fears. In addition to his analyses, Phillips provides a synopsis of each film and describes its production history, contemporary audience response and cultural influence. Although Phillips incorporates the work of other film and cultural critics, he writes for a general audience." - **Reference & Research Book News**

"Fans of horror and horror movies who wish an intellectual examination of links between horror films and American culture will find professor Kendall R. Phillips' *Projected Fears: Horror Films and American Culture* to be most intriguing." - **MBR Bookwatch**

#### Review

"Kendall Phillips explores the cultural resonances and rhetorical form of American horror films of the 20th century. He takes us from *Dracula* (1931) through **Psycho** (1960), *The Exorcist* (1973), *The Silence of the Lambs* (1991), and other films that have shocked and horrified us, in a lucid account of the cultural contexts that gave them birth and influenced their reception. His lively and wide ranging account will certainly send readers back to the films for another look." (Thomas W. Benson, Edwin Erle Sparks Professor of Rhetoric, Penn State University)

"Phillips has provided deep and probing insights into the relationship between ten classic horror films and the cultures they reflect. This is a challenging but rewarding read for serious fans, film buffs, and filmmakers, as well as scholars. Even the writers and directors of these classics stand to be enlightened by learning of the impact, scope, and significance of their realized concepts." (A. John Graves, Professor Emeritus of Mass Communication, Central Missouri State University)

"*Projected Fears* goes well beyond being exemplary film and media criticism. Kendall Phillips provides an intriguing and cogent synthesis of visual, textual, and cultural analyses that present a unique, useful, and welcomed reframing, retelling, and reinterpretation of human history and memory through the lens of one of our most important and popular forms of artistic expression--not to mention a genre that has long been a focus of public fascination--the horror film." (Charlton McIlwain, Assistant Professor of Culture & Communication, New York University, and author of *When Death Goes Pop: Death, Media & the Remaking of Community*)

#### About the Author

**Kendall R. Phillips** is Associate Professor in the Department of Communication and Rhetorical Studies at Syracuse University. His essays and reviews have appeared in such journals as *Literature/Film Quarterly* and *Philosophy and Rhetoric*.

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#### **Donald Lewis:**

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