

Wednesday, March 23, 2011



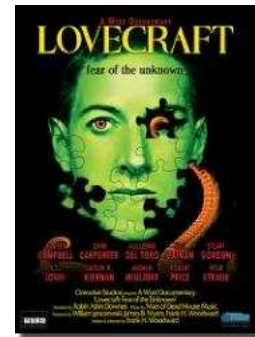
"The Woodstock of Gore"
Guillermo del Toro

We love it - BBC Radio 5 Live

It's so good it's scary - The Guardian

The Empire Cinema, Leicester Square, London 25th - 29th August 2011

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LOVECRAFT: FEAR OF THE UNKNOWN



Directed by Frank H. Woodward. Starring John Carpenter, Guillermo Del Toro, Neil Gaiman, Documentary, USA, 90 mins.

During school, even though one of my favourite subjects was English, I still found it hard to get away from a personal belief that reading was for squares - unless the books were about movies, obviously. For this reason, I spent most of my spare time watching films (why consume a story in 20 hours when you can do it in 2?). Contained within my favourite genre of film (horror) could be found numerous films based on H.P Lovecraft's stories - RE-ANIMATOR, NECRONOMICON, THE UNNAMABLE, THE LURKING FEAR.

Eventually, and partly due to the fact that I wanted to study English at University, I felt it about time that I began reading as a hobby - but what books were worthy of my time? Shakespeare was boring, so was Joyce, and Chaucer didn't even write in English. I needed to find something that I would enjoy reading - bearing in mind that I could be spending my time watching a film. Of course, my first choice surely had to be a story that had been made into a movie, so I chose HERBERT WEST: RE-ANIMATOR. A short story by Lovecraft that was eventually made into, well, I'm sure you can guess. From this starting point, I consumed more of his fantastic stories with a maniacal glee.

As I further researched his writings and subsequent filmic adaptations, I found that more and more of my favourite films and directors had been inspired or had even directly adapted Lovecraft's work - particularly one of my favourite directors, Stuart Gordon. Gordon's Lovecraft-inspired work includes RE-ANIMATOR, FROM BEYOND, CASTLE FREAK, DAGON and DREAMS IN THE WITCH HOUSE. I had no idea that Lovecraft's work so permeated the horror film genre, and I became a big fan there and then.

Since that time, I've read and watched as much of his material and related films as I can. However, I still had lots to learn.

BUT THAT WAS THEN, THIS IS NOW.

Now I'm the world's foremost expert on H.P Lovecraft (citation needed), and it's all down to LOVECRAFT: FEAR OF THE UNKNOWN, a thoroughly in-depth documentary concerning Lovecraft's work and life story.

The documentary is a feature length exploration of firstly, his life - his troubled upbringing, his interest in science-fiction and the occult, his one and only marriage and his entry into the world of fantastic fiction writing. Secondly, it proceeds to uncover the hidden meanings - both conscious and unconscious - inherent within his work. This is backed up and further analysed with the help of a host of famous faces and fans, including Guillermo Del Toro, Neil Gaiman, Stuart Gordon and John Carpenter. They offer their own thoughts on the man, but also their experiences with his fiction and the influence that he has had on their lives and work.

The documentary consists almost entirely of talking heads, interspersed with voiceover of Lovecraft's writings and various pictures of him throughout his life. It focuses on each stage in his literary career, stopping intermittently to deconstruct his most famous works and themes, before moving on to the next stage in his development as a writer. It's a thoroughly engaging hour and a half.

If there's anything unfortunate about the doc, it's that it doesn't focus on the filmic adaptations of his work - the reason I became a fan in the first place. It would have been nice to see how different filmmakers had interpreted his words on the screen, courtesy of a few well-placed clips of Herbert West running away from zombies and the like. It briefly touches on this at the end but there aren't any really interesting film snippets. You can't have it all I suppose.

Apart from that minor discrepancy LOVECRAFT: FEAR OF THE UNKNOWN is a worthy documentary about a great and interesting yet slightly confused and mysterious man, that is a must-see for anyone who considers themselves a fan in any capacity. Also, if you say you like H.P Lovecraft, you might be able to get out of reading boring stuff like Shakespeare, and if that's not worth a punt, I don't know what is.

GORE IN THE STORE
REVIEWS BY FANS FOR FANS
5 STAR FAB - 1 STAR RUBBISH

We Are What We Are
Skyline
Beadways
Age Of The Dragons
Husk
Jackass 3D
Let Me In
Let Me In - second opinion
Altitude
Savage
Saw3D
The Last Victim
And Soon The Darkness
The Lost Skeleton
of Cadavra
Bedevilled
Travellers
Game Of Death
I Survived BTK
Primal
Lovecraft
Fear Of The Unknown
The Living AndThe Dead
RED
Buried
Missing
Ticking Clock
Death Space Aftermath
The Lovers Guide - 3D
The Shock Labyrinth 3D
Deadfall
Bamboo BladeSeries 1, Part 2
Lake Mungo
Lemmy
Amer
In Their Sleep
Open Door
Zombie Town
The Hole
Outcast
Outcast(Second Opinion)
Choose
Resident Evil: Afterlife
Mirrors 2
Puppet Master - Axis of Evil
Deadly Crossing
Death Race 2
The Last Exorcism
Gore In The Store
Review Archive

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Lovecraft: Fear of the Unknown

Gary Ogden.

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