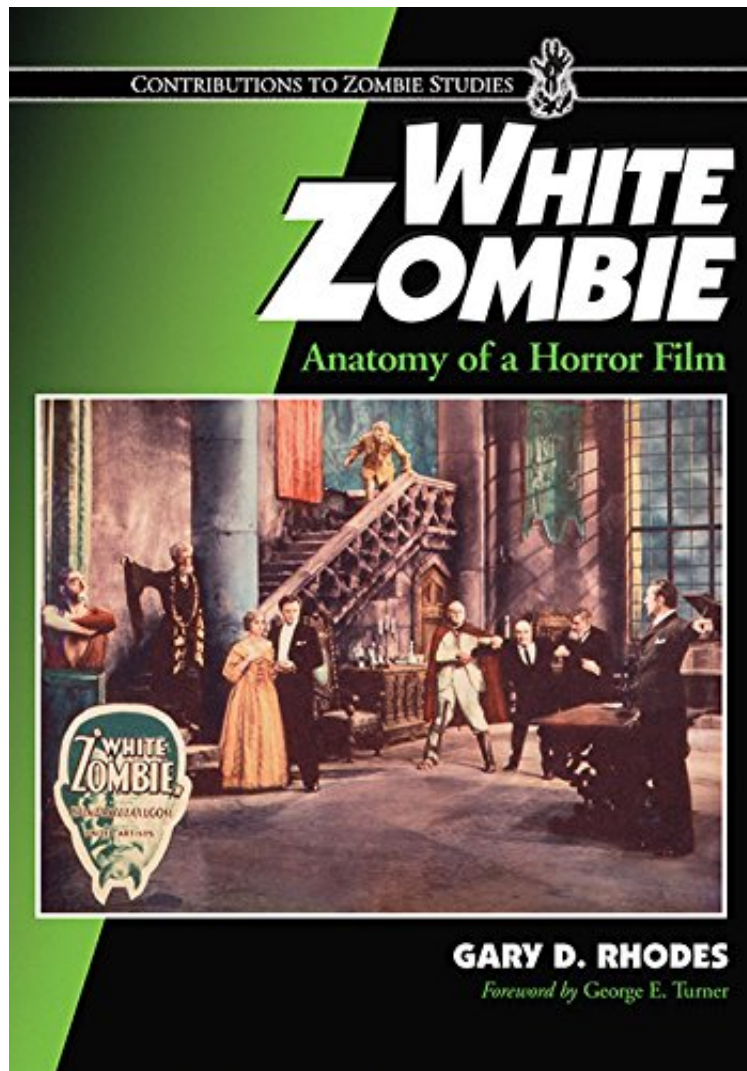


White Zombie: Anatomy of a Horror Film

Gary D. Rhodes

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Gary D. Rhodes : White Zombie: Anatomy of a Horror Film before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised White Zombie: Anatomy of a Horror Film:

4 of 7 people found the following review helpful. The Zombies are Loose! By Brad Baker "Holy baloney, Batman! The Joker is Loose!" I don't know about the Joker, but all the Zombies are loose in this all-comprehensive memorial to 1932's cult classic "White Zombie". Everything you wanted to know (and a 120 things you could pass on..) about this minor gem are wrapped up in "White Zombie", written by Gary Don Rhodes. I found many an interesting passage, some remarkable photographs, and several pages that improved my sleeping problems in this weighty tome. All-in-all a must-have for the Bela Lugosi fan. 5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Quite amazing By Gary Mark

Morris In the cinephile's ideal world, every film would get the deluxe treatment McFarland has given to *White Zombie* in Gary Rhodes' book. It's hard to imagine why this 1932 horror film, a primitive but atmospheric Gothic directed by Victor Halperin, was chosen, but we're not complaining. Rhodes is aware of the film's dubious rep ("Many lovers of classic movies agree with what many critics said in the beginning, that this is a silly, badly played example of penny-dreadful filmmaking"), but is determined to rehabilitate it by examining it from every possible angle from the historical to the sociological to the analytical. Rhodes is persuasive in outlining the film's attractions. There's the contribution of the inestimable Bela Lugosi ("leaner and more wolfish than in any of his other pictures"); the fantastic mishmash of sets (from *The Cat and the Canary*, *Dracula*, *Frankenstein*, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, and others) that together make for a compelling otherworldly atmosphere; the chiaroscuro cinematography; the film's foreshadowing of the mood-drenched Val Lewton B films ten years later; and the film's standing, in the author's words, as "an important work of 1930s cinema, of independent filmmaking, and of the horror film genre." Rhodes thoroughly investigates the evolution of *White Zombie* from a myriad of sources classical (Faust), popular (Trilby), and exploitative (the 1929 nonfiction voodoo book *The Magic Island*), through preproduction, postproduction, and finished film to its purportedly wide influence on "subsequent voodoo and zombie related books, articles, films, and plays." Rhodes deserves kudos for seeking out a wide range of original sources, including the director's widow who supplied him with biographical information on Halperin missing from all other accounts. A series of detailed appendices cover everything from reviews of the film to box-office grosses to pressbook reproductions. If the author's (freely admitted) obsession with *White Zombie* sometimes carries him over the edge -- the "Victor Halperin Family Scrapbook Photographs" is nice but is it necessary? -- it's easy to forgive him considering the breadth and depth of this obvious labor of love. Included in the feast are 244 images and photographs. 14 of 16 people found the following review helpful. "There IS No Other Way" By Michael H. Price Gary Don Rhodes' take on "White Zombie" is keenly akin to those of Pauline Kael on "Citizen Kane" or George E. Turner on "King Kong": Each author's fascination with a focused topic yields a book of intense purpose and value beyond mere interest in one particular motion picture. Each of us has such a film in our picture-going experience, one overriding favorite that informs the way we regard all other movies, and such authors as Kael, Turner and Rhodes show us how a deeper understanding of that one film can enrich the viewing experience across-the-board. Rhodes' scholarship (on practically any topic) is meticulous to the point of obsession. In "W.Z.: Anatomy of a Horror Film" he puts this fact-finding mania to compelling use, not only sharing the raw materials he has unearthed but also interpreting them to demonstrate how and why "White Zombie" -- an "unlikely classic," as George Turner and I once termed the film in an article for "American Cinematographer" -- has remained relevant over the long stretch. Painstakingly researched and assembled, Rhodes' book was in preparation all during and beyond the mid-1990s period when George Turner (since deceased) and I were assembling our 20th anniversary edition of the more generalized book "Forgotten Horrors," on whose research Rhodes helped out considerably. George and I beefed up considerably our own book's chapter on "White Zombie," but we also left it to Gary Don Rhodes to get in the final say on that film's significance. Our trust has proved well placed, and the resulting volume is a fusion of style and substance worth cherishing.

The 1932 horror film *White Zombie* starring Bela Lugosi has received controversial attention from film reviewers and scholars--but it is unarguably a cult classic worthy of study. This book analyzes the film text from nearly every possible viewpoint, using both academic and popular film theories. Also supplied is an extensive intellectual history of the predecessor works to *White Zombie*, as well as information on the significance it carried for subsequent books and films, its theatrical release around the country, its modern cultural influence, and the attempts to restore the film to its original state. Other noteworthy features of this work include an in-depth biography of *White Zombie* director Victor Halperin, the first complete study of his life and career, and 244 images and photographs.

"Exhaustive...[a] massively documented work...deserves to be emulated as a model for single-film scholarship in the future." --CRL News "This text represents one of the most important contributions that this publisher often provides to the academic world...a fascinating wealth of thoroughly researched evidence." --Film Quarterly "Detailed superbenned with enthusiasm and complete authority benefits from some exceptionally rare stills and promotional items fascinating...impossible to imagine how this could be bettered." --Film Annual About the Author Gary D. Rhodes, a documentary filmmaker, is a professor at the Queen's University, Belfast. He is also the author of *Docufictions* (2006), *Horror at the Drive-In* (2002) and the definitive *Lugosi: His Life in Films, on Stage, and in the Hearts of Horror Lovers* (1997).