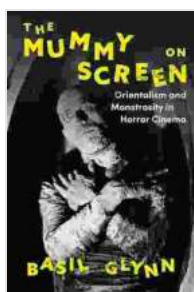


# Orientalism and Monstrosity in Horror Cinema: Exploring the Deep-Rooted History and Impact of Cultural Stereotypes

Horror cinema, with its ability to tap into our deepest fears and anxieties, has long been a fertile ground for the exploration of social and cultural issues. One particularly striking aspect of horror films is the recurring trope of the monstrous Oriental, a figure that has been shaped by centuries of Orientalist discourse.

Orientalism, as defined by Edward Said in his seminal work "Orientalism," refers to the Western construction of the East as a mysterious, exotic, and inherently inferior other. This construction has its roots in centuries of colonialism, during which Western powers sought to justify their domination of non-Western societies by portraying them as backward, uncivilized, and even monstrous.



## The Mummy on Screen: Orientalism and Monstrosity in Horror Cinema by Jeremy Hunsinger

★★★★☆ 4.3 out of 5

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In horror cinema, the Orientalist monster often embodies these stereotypes. They are frequently depicted as inscrutable, threatening, and possessed of supernatural powers. Their appearance is often exaggerated and grotesque, with exaggerated features and exotic costumes. This serves to reinforce the idea of the Orient as a place of strangeness and danger.

One of the most iconic examples of the Orientalist monster in horror cinema is Dracula. Created by Bram Stoker in 1897, Dracula is a Transylvanian count who travels to England in search of new victims. He is depicted as a charismatic yet sinister figure, with pale skin, sharp fangs, and a hypnotic gaze. Dracula's association with the East is further reinforced by his use of Eastern European folklore and his ability to transform into a bat, a creature often associated with the Orient.

Another classic example of the Orientalist monster is The Mummy. Created by Universal Studios in 1932, The Mummy is an ancient Egyptian priest who is revived from the dead by a group of British archaeologists. The Mummy is depicted as a ruthless and vengeful creature, with a scarred face and a shuffling gait. His association with the East is further reinforced by his use of Egyptian hieroglyphics and his ability to control the undead.

In more recent years, the Orientalist monster has continued to appear in horror cinema, albeit in more nuanced and complex ways. For example, in the 1998 film "The Ring," the monstrous figure is a Japanese schoolgirl named Sadako. Sadako is depicted as a tragic figure, driven to commit suicide by the abuse she suffered as a child. Her ghost is able to curse anyone who watches a cursed videotape, causing them to die within seven days.

The portrayal of Sadako as a monstrous figure is problematic in a number of ways. First, it reinforces the stereotype of the East as a place of mystery and danger. Second, it perpetuates the idea that Asian women are inherently weak and vulnerable. And third, it ignores the real-world issue of violence against women in Japan.

However, it is important to note that not all Orientalist monsters in horror cinema are negative figures. In some cases, they can be seen as sympathetic or even heroic. For example, in the 2014 film "Godzilla," the titular monster is depicted as a benevolent force that protects Japan from other monsters. Godzilla's association with the East is further reinforced by his design, which is based on traditional Japanese kaiju monsters.

The portrayal of Godzilla as a heroic figure is significant in that it challenges the stereotype of the Oriental monster as inherently evil. It also shows that it is possible to create an Orientalist monster that is both sympathetic and powerful.

The representation of Orientalism and monstrosity in horror cinema is a complex and multifaceted issue. On the one hand, these representations can reinforce negative stereotypes about non-Western cultures. On the other hand, they can also challenge these stereotypes and offer a more nuanced and complex view of the East.

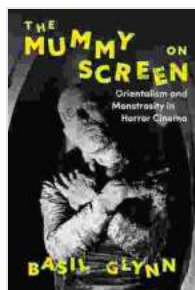
It is important to be aware of the potential dangers of Orientalist representations in horror cinema, but it is also important to recognize their potential for subversion and critique. By understanding the history and impact of Orientalism, we can better engage with these representations and challenge the stereotypes that they perpetuate.

The relationship between Orientalism and monstrosity in horror cinema is a deep-rooted and complex one. Over the years, Orientalist monsters have taken many different forms, from the sinister Dracula to the tragic Sadako. These monsters have served to reinforce negative stereotypes about non-Western cultures, but they have also been used to challenge these stereotypes and offer a more nuanced and complex view of the East.

It is important to be aware of the potential dangers of Orientalist representations in horror cinema, but it is also important to recognize their potential for subversion and critique. By understanding the history and impact of Orientalism, we can better engage with these representations and challenge the stereotypes that they perpetuate.

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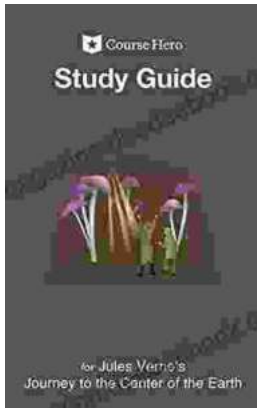
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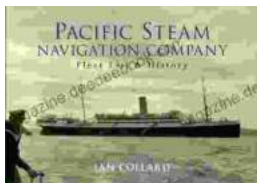
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