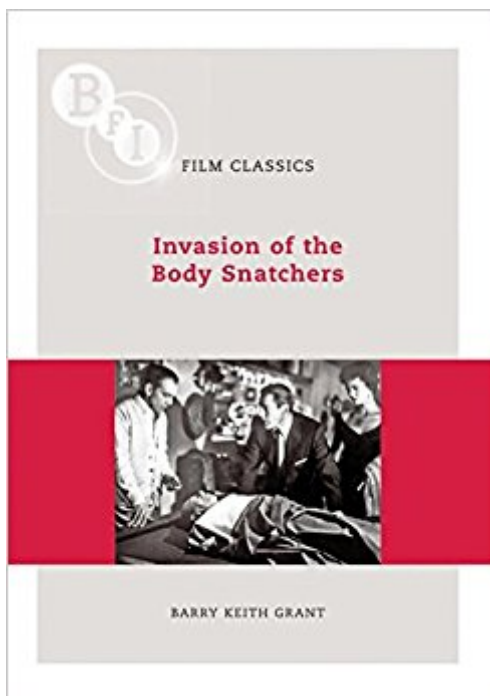


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Invasion Of The Body Snatchers (BFI Film Classics)



Synopsis

Upon its release in 1956, Don Siegel's *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* was widely perceived as another 'B' movie thriller in the cycle of science fiction and horror films that proliferated in the 1950s. Yet the film addresses numerous issues brewing in post-war US society, including the Cold War, McCarthyism and the changing dynamics of gender relations. In the fifty years since the film's release, its reputation has grown from cult status to become an acknowledged classic of American cinema. With its narrative of emotionless alien duplicates replacing average folk, *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* was the first post-war horror film to locate the monstrous in the everyday, thus marking it as a pivotal moment in American horror film history four years before *Psycho*. In this first comprehensive critical study of the film, Barry Keith Grant traces *Invasion's* historical and generic contexts to explore the importance of Communism and conformity, post-war modernity and gender politics in order to understand the film's cultural significance and metaphorical weight. He also provides an account of the film's fraught production history and offers an extended discussion of the distinctive contributions of the production personnel. Concluding with a consideration of the three remakes it has inspired, Grant illustrates how *Invasion of the Body Snatchers'* enduring popularity derives from its central metaphor for the monstrous, which has proven as flexible as that of the vampire and the zombie.

Book Information

Series: BFI Film Classics

Paperback: 96 pages

Publisher: British Film Institute; 2010 edition (March 1, 2011)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1844572781

ISBN-13: 978-1844572786

Product Dimensions: 5.3 x 0.3 x 7.6 inches

Shipping Weight: 7 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 stars 2 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #247,346 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #217 in Books > Humor & Entertainment > Movies > Genre Films #495 in Books > Textbooks > Humanities > Performing Arts > Film & Television #721 in Books > Humor & Entertainment > Movies > History & Criticism

Customer Reviews

Upon its release in 1956, Don Siegel's *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* was widely perceived as another 'B' movie thriller in the cycle of science fiction and horror films that proliferated in the 1950s. Yet the film addresses numerous issues brewing in post-war US society, including the Cold War, McCarthyism and the changing dynamics of gender relations. In the fifty years since the film's release, its reputation has grown from cult status to become an acknowledged classic of American cinema. With its narrative of emotionless alien duplicates replacing average folk, *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* was the first post-war horror film to locate the monstrous in the everyday, thus marking it as a pivotal moment in American horror film history four years before *Psycho*. In this first comprehensive critical study of the film, Barry Keith Grant traces *Invasion's* historical and generic contexts to explore the importance of Communism and conformity, post-war modernity and gender politics in order to understand the film's cultural significance and metaphorical weight. He also provides an account of the film's fraught production history and offers an extended discussion of the distinctive contributions of the production personnel. Concluding with a consideration of the three remakes it has inspired, Grant illustrates how *Invasion of the Body Snatchers'* enduring popularity derives from its central metaphor for the monstrous, which has proven as flexible as that of the vampire and the zombie.

BARRY KEITH GRANT is Professor of Film Studies and Popular Culture at Brock University, Ontario, Canada. He is the author of *Film Genre: From Iconography to Ideology* (2007), *Voyages of Discovery: The Cinema of Frederick Wiseman* (1992), co-author with Steve Blandford and Jim Hillier of *The Film Studies Dictionary* (2001), co-author with Jim Hillier of *100 Documentary Films* (2009) and editor of *The Dread of Difference: Gender and the Horror Film* (1995).

Although much has been written about "Invasion..." in the past, this is the first book to draw all the disparate sources together into a "summary statement" of the film as a whole. Thank you, Professor Grant, for distilling the essence of previous commentary/research and presenting it in clear, succinct prose. This may sound like something that any competent literary craftsman could pull off, but this book constitutes more than a mere precis. Professor Grant has so internalized his source material that he comes to conclusions swiftly, painlessly, and convincingly. (My only reservations in this regard occur in Chapter 6 which deals largely with gender role interpretations. I may not be convinced here, but I can see his points.) You will save yourself hours by consulting this volume first before any other. Being intimately familiar with the film and a fair amount of the commentary/criticism, I had the pleasure of learning new information as well as solidifying older

ideas that hadn't really taken root previously. An eminently readable and informed look at a classic film.

Nice book illustrated with interesting scenes from the Body snatchers films. the over emphasis on the communist scare of the 50's gets a bit old after a while. I usually view these movies as less than political, and watch them for their scares. All in all, another great BFI book, highly recommended.

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