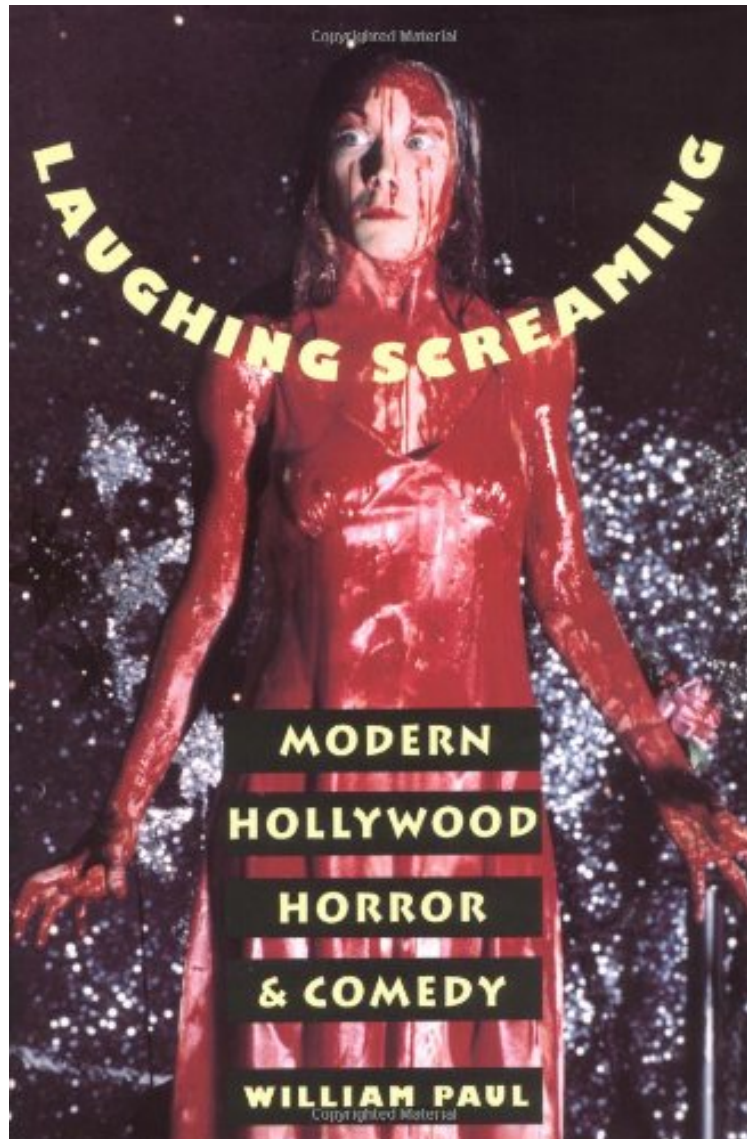


[Pdf free] Laughing Screaming: Modern Hollywood Horror and Comedy (Film and Culture)

# Laughing Screaming: Modern Hollywood Horror and Comedy (Film and Culture)

William Paul

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**William Paul : Laughing Screaming: Modern Hollywood Horror and Comedy (Film and Culture)** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Laughing Screaming: Modern Hollywood Horror and Comedy (Film and Culture):

1 of 7 people found the following review helpful. More Analysis than Lexicon - Only a few Pictures  
By Cyberbambi123  
Certainly an excellent Analysis about modern (80ties) Teencomedies and Teenhorrorfilms But if you are rather looking for a fullcolor Book with many pictures - more the lexica-type where you can look up single films - you won't be perfectly happy with it.  
German: Sicherlich eine excellente Analyse der Achtzigerjahre Teeni-Komdien und Teenislasherfilme. Stehen Sie jedoch eher auf farbige bebilderte Nachschlagewerke, wo man mal rasch was zu einem einzelnen Film nachlesen kann, ist dies leider nicht das richtige Buch

William Paul's exploration of an extremely popular box office genre - the gross-out movie - is the first book to take this lowbrow product seriously. Writing about "movies that embraced the lowest common denominator as an aesthetic principle, movies that critics constantly griped about having to sit through," Paul examines their unique place in our culture. He focuses on gross-out horror and comedy films of the seventies and eighties - film cycles set in motion by the extraordinary successes of *The Exorcist* and *Animal House*. What links these genres together, Paul argues, is their concern with the human body - and all its scatological and sexual aspects. These "films of license," as Paul calls them, embrace "explicitness as part of their aesthetic." Tracing both of these culturally disreputable subgenres back to older traditions of festive comedy and Grand Guignol, Paul finds their precursors in horror films like *The Birds* and *Night of the Living Dead* as well as comedies such as *M\*A\*S\*H* and *Blazing Saddles* that were produced under Hollywood's then recently liberalized censorship code. Moving on to mass tastes, Paul asserts that American audiences are "not without powers of discrimination." He argues that gross-out movies challenge social tastes and values, but without the self-consciousness of avant-garde art. Through interpretations of classics by Charlie Chaplin and Alfred Hitchcock, blaxploitation movies, horror films by David Cronenberg and Stanley Kubrick, and comedies starring John Belushi and Bill Murray, Paul establishes gross-out as a true genre - one that "speaks in the voice of festive freedom, uncorrected and unconstrained by the reality principle... aggressive, seemingly improvised, and always ambivalent."

From School Library Journal  
YA-An in-depth examination of two of Hollywood's most successful and enduring film genres: the horror flick and the "gross-out" comedy. The book is divided into six sections, the first of which links these genres to an entertainment tradition stretching back to the ancient Greeks. "Growing Pains" includes a chapter on sex and power. In sexually frank terms, the content of movies such as *Porky's* and *Animal House* is explored at length. Jokes are analyzed, comic scenes are dissected, and thoughtful conclusions are reached. In "Revolting Bodies," Paul explains interesting connections between upheavals prevalent in American families and other social institutions during the '70s and '80s and gross-out horror films such as *Alien* and *Nightmare on Elm Street*. Apparent throughout is the author's enjoyment of and respect for his subject. This mature and detailed analysis will serve more serious readers exploring recent film history and criticism rather than those looking for casual diversion. Two brief selections of black-and-white photographs are included. An extensive endnote section and index make the book useful as a reference tool.  
Carolyn E. Gecan, Thomas Jefferson Sci-Tech, Fairfax County, VA  
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From Library Journal  
Paul (film, Univ. of Michigan) asserts that "gross-out" films (i.e., raunchy sex comedies, violent horror films) deserve serious critical attention, but he fails to make a case in this book. Not content to offer what could be an interesting look at such films and their audiences, the author instead goes overboard in a misguided attempt at profundity. His analysis of the nude scenes in *Porky's* (1982), complete with references to Shakespeare and Freud, will test the hardest reader's patience for nonsense and is, unfortunately, typical of his overblown style. Paul's historical perspective isn't much more credible, dwelling on a handful of mainstream films (e.g., *M\*A\*S\*H*, 1970; *The Birds*, 1963) while largely ignoring the underground exploitation films that more directly impacted this genre. Most libraries can skip this.  
David C. Tucker, DeKalb County P.L., Decatur, Ga.  
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From Kirkus  
A serious, jargon-laden, and stubbornly appreciative examination of movies that, according to Paul (Film/Univ. of Michigan), "embraced the lowest common denominator as an aesthetic principle." Citing everyone from Freud to Bill Murray, and with research ranging from Oedipus to Dada to fairy tales, Paul finds not only parallels but the very wellspring of the horror film genre in the Roman circus and Elizabethan drama. Comedies such as *Animal House* and *Bachelor Party*, he claims, have roots in the Greek theater and in the later Feast of Fools and Midsummer Eve festivals. They may have "repulsed critics," but gross-out movies represent "something other than proof of America's cultural decadence." Paul credits the makers of these films with being "creative in the desire to break down inhibitions, to move away from the repression of our traditional society." Thus *Porky's* and *Animal House*, noted for raunchy, slobbering male sexuality, become "explorations of the variety of penile expression." Slasher films such as the *Friday the 13th* and *Halloween* series comprise, in Paul's view, "art that defines itself as oppositional to the dominant power structure," not as films that exploit violence and degradation. There is groundbreaking work here, particularly in tying together the historical, theoretical, and cultural perspectives underpinning the attraction of these genres. But he actually cites the women's movement (as well as other social movements) as a beneficiary of the dashing of sexual and other taboos by these films, overlooking their frequent portrayal of the victimization of women. Ultimately, this is a rationalization and justification--in dense, scholarly

prose--of viciousness and sophomoric titillation in film. -- Copyright 1994, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.