

■ **Forgotten film**

Forget-Me-Not: 'The Brood' should not be overlooked

In a genre that can easily become washed up, David Cronenberg takes a unique stab at filmmaking

BY RYAN NYBURG
PULSE EDITOR

There are few things more entertaining for a film critic than analyzing a David Cronenberg film. Most of his films can be classified as horror, a genre that works through the deep inner turmoil of humankind's fears and obsessions, all which makes for some thoughtful viewing. To top it off, he is a solid craftsman and a thoughtful filmmaker. Bad horror films are so easy to make that the genre tends to be dominated by hacks and clowns with no sense of timing, psychology or suspense. In that context, Cronenberg's dark vision of human nature seems almost refreshing.

While better known for his mid-1980s work ("Scanners," "The Dead Zone" and "The Fly"), Cronenberg's most influential films are his first three features, "Shivers" (also known as "They Came From Within" and "The Parasite Murders" depending on which country you're in), "Rabid" and "The Brood." Of these, "The Brood" is probably the least known, although it stands out both stylistically and thematically.

Both "Shivers" and "Rabid" deal with the idea of sexual repression as expressed through disease outbreaks. In "Shivers," a parasite slowly takes over an apartment complex, sending each of its victims into a sexual frenzy, causing them to spread the parasite to whomever they come in

contact with. "Rabid" dealt with a woman who becomes the unwitting carrier of a bizarre, sexually transmitted disease that causes people to randomly attack others. On the surface, both films seem to be commenting on the dangers of sexual promiscuity, leading some to label Cronenberg a Christian moralist. But Cronenberg was working on a deeper level with both films, slyly but effectively commenting on sexual repression and how sexual urges are an integral part of every human's psychological makeup.

"The Brood" also deals with repression, but its dominating theme is divorce. In the film, a married couple with a young daughter is separated when the wife enters an intensive psychiatric program larded over by Dr. Raglan (Oliver Reed). After picking up his daughter from a visit with her mother, the father finds welts and bruises along the girl's back. He bars the visits. Later, the wife's parents are killed by what turns out to be a deformed, child-like creature. The father begins to suspect a relationship between the killings and his wife's bizarre treatment. What he discovers is that his wife's anger about her life has taken the physical form of freakish, sub-human creatures. Fueled by her rage, the creatures attack people she resents. Her parents were killed because she believes her mother beat her as a child and her father did nothing to stop it.

The obvious (read: false) subtext is

in the form of a diatribe about the dangers of divorce and broken homes. But throughout the film, darker themes keep emerging. Our repressed aggression takes form no matter how much we try to hide it. We invent persecution in our minds to make ourselves feel victimized, thus justifying the harm we do to others. It's a Freudian view of human nature and one that Cronenberg milks for all it's worth. One of the film's most striking images is of the horde of freakish children slowly moving toward its victim, their faces showing nothing but stupid rage and contempt. It's a frightening testament of what parents can so unwittingly cause their offspring to become.

This is pretty abstract stuff for a horror film to be dredging through, but Cronenberg backs it up with some excellent suspense. His film makes use of the eerie quality of such a small thing being so malevolent, something the "Child's Play" films would soon pick up on. What truly makes the film stand out is its intelligent design and well-thought-out subtext. The film makes a statement, something rare for a genre usually representing nothing more than the expression of knee-jerk morality. (What more do you need to understand the Reagan era than a hockey-mask-clad archangel punishing sin with a machete?)

"The Brood" doesn't simply transcend its genre, it sets a standard by which films in the horror genre should be judged. That more films don't meet this standard is a sign of how easy it is to go wrong.

ryannyburg@dailyemerald.com

■ **Movie review**

Metallica documentary brings on 'some kind' of headache

The band's documentary tries to bind fans closer but is ultimately an unsympathetic portrayal of spoiled musicians

BY RYAN MURPHEY
PULSE REPORTER

There are many ways to make two hours feel like two years. You could play nude twister with Dick Cheney, crawl on your hands and knees through broken glass or listen to Carrot Top talk about anything. If none of these sound appealing, try watching the new Metallica documentary, "Metallica: Some Kind of Monster," the most recent step in Metallica's admirable effort to alienate everyone.

"Some Kind of Monster" documents Metallica during the making of their first studio album in five years, "St. Anger." The directors, Joe Berlinger and Bruce Sinofsky, followed the band around for more than three years and shot more than 1,200 hours of footage. Spending three years with Metallica is the only thing I can imagine being more painful than watching the actual film.

Metallica's longtime bassist, Jason Newsted, has left the band to pursue his side-project, Echobrain, and out of fear for the band's future, its management team has enlisted a therapist to help the band work through its personal and professional challenges. The relationship between vocalist/guitarist James Hetfield and drummer/founder Lars Ulrich is similar to that of a 12-year-old sister and her 10-year-old

brother on a long car trip. Their bickering is constant and places the viewer in serious danger of an aneurysm. The majority of the movie is more or less a group therapy session peppered with cameos, temper tantrums and sidebars about the band members' personal lives.

Throughout the course of the film, the directors provide snapshots of the band members' outside interests. Hetfield likes driving hot rods and riding motorcycles, Ulrich collects art and Kirk Hammett, the now-sober guitarist, enjoys surfing and hanging out on his ranch. A profile begins to develop for each member. Hetfield is the gruff, smoldering bad-boy who can't effectively communicate his feelings. Ulrich is the faux-bohemian Swede who would like to think of himself as intellectual and artsy but is really just the drummer for a band especially popular among rednecks and football players. Hammett, with his stoner drawl and sincere attempts at conflict resolution, comes across as a nice kid stuck in the middle of a messy divorce. Hammett is by far the most likable member of the band. He tries his best to keep his ego under control and only really gets upset when Ulrich suggests that guitar solos are outdated.

The drama peaks when Hetfield storms out of the recording studio after an intense argument with Ulrich

over one of Hammett's guitar lines. Unexpectedly, Hetfield checks himself into a rehabilitation center for his alcoholism, putting the future of the forthcoming album, as well as the band, in question. Predictably, he returns after several months, clean-cut and highly regimented, ready to write lame lyrics for the lame album that his lame band is putting out.

The documentary then wraps everything up in a tidy little bow with the auditions for a new bassist. Perhaps the most entertaining part of the film, the audition montage features astonishingly poor attempts by the former bassists of Marilyn Manson, Alanis Morissette, Nine Inch Nails and more. In the end, they decide on Robert Trujillo, a bassist who has played with the likes of Infectious Grooves, Suicidal Tendencies and Ozzy Osbourne.

I'm sure that the band's original intent for this film was to pull in fans, involve them personally and bounce back from all of the negative publicity that resulted from Ulrich's attack on Napster. The reality of the film is that it will probably solidify the opinions of those who already think of Metallica as whiny divas whose glory days are far behind them and push stalwart fans away by destroying their last shred of faith in the band's credibility. Ulrich told Rolling Stone in an interview that the film was not about Metallica, but about relationships. The fact is, no matter how you slice it, this movie is about Metallica and how washed up they really are.

ryanmurphey@dailyemerald.com

WE BUY USED TEXTS AND OTHER
GOOD BOOKS ALL YEAR LONG

SMITH
FAMILY
BOOKSTORE



CAMPUS – East 13th and Alder
DOWNTOWN – East 5th and Willamette

TARARIN THAI CUISINE

- Vegetarian Selections • Dine In or Carry Out •
- Lunch Specials • 100 Menu Items •
- Mother's homemade recipes •
- More than 20 selections of beer and wine •
- A short walk from campus •
- Large Free Parking Area •



1200 OAK ST. EUGENE, OR • (541) 343-1230
MON.-FRI. 11-3PM LUNCH, 5-10PM DINNER • SAT.-SUN. 12-10PM

2004 Emerald City Fall Bridal Show

Oct. 16 & 17, 2004 • Lane Events Center • 796 W. 13th Ave.
Admission \$6 (\$5 with coupon)

Show hours:

Sat. 10 am–5 pm

Sun. 11 am–5 pm

Fashion Shows:

Sat. 11 am & 2:30 pm

Sun 12:30 pm & 3 pm

• Over 70 local bridal businesses

• Brides register to win two honeymoons
to The Bahamas or Jamaica

• Sponsored by:

Springfield News

The Register-Guard



Bring this coupon for

\$1.00 off

General Admission

pre-register at: www.oregonweddingshows.com