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Rob Craig

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Rob Craig : It Came from 1957: A Critical Guide to the Year's Science Fiction, Fantasy and Horror Films before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised It Came from 1957: A Critical Guide to the Year's Science Fiction, Fantasy and Horror Films:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Interesting but flawed bookBy CustomerThe subject matter was terrific but the author went way over the top in his weird evaluations of what certain films meant. Even this was

acceptable if you took it as a joke. However, the author was offensive when he ripped into perfectly good films just to cause controversy. Still, it was a fun read. 14 of 15 people found the following review helpful. A Great Subject Poorly Handled! By Mike O'Connor I love the science fiction/fantasy/horror films of the 50s. Granted their special effects weren't always so special and the acting was sometimes pretty corny, those long-ago films had a certain charm and some have stood the test of time quite well, thank you very much. For those reasons, I was looking forward to Rob Craig's *IT CAME FROM 1957, A CRITICAL GUIDE TO THE YEAR'S SCIENCE FICTION, FANTASY AND HORROR FILMS*. Having slogged through the book, I have to say: Big disappointment! Over the course of the year, 57 scifi/fantasy/horror flicks were released in 1957. Some were classics; some were laughable Grade-Z clunkers, witness *THE ABOMINABLE SNOWMAN OF THE HIMALAYAS*, *FROM HELL IT CAME*, *THE BRAIN FROM PLANET AROUS*, *THE CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN*, *ZOMBIES OF MORA TAU*, *NOT OF THIS EARTH*, *THE MONOLITH MONSTERS*, *I WAS A TEENAGE WEREWOLF*, *THE INCREDIBLE SHRINKING MAN*, *CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN*, *THE DEADLY MANTIS*, *THE MAN OF A THOUSAND FACES* and that most wonderous cinematic treat, *THE GIANT CLAW*. Given that rich - not to say, ripe - collection of cinematic classics and clunkers, there's grist there for an informative, entertaining critique. What you get in Craig's book is a mish-mash of film criticism mixed with a big dose of political-sexual psycho-babble. For example, in the section on *ATTACK OF THE CRAB MONSTERS*, the reader is treated to the following gems: "Martha (film's heroine) doesn't express the rage of the female against a repressive phallic hegemony." What!?! And then, Craig states that "This female (crab's) existence, no doubt fraught with pain and suffering, is solely due to the reckless, highly phallic intrusion of Man's monstrous weaponry on the natural (female) world - a rape of sorts." Come again?!? *THE INVISIBLE BOY* write-up includes the following: "The resultant 'boy toy' (i.e. the robot) thus stands...as a highly fetishized emblem of the youngster's budding sexuality...a metallic 'uber-penis' that mirrors in concrete form the boy's potential psycho-sexual power on the cusp of puberty." Huh!?! Well, it's Craig's book. So he can 'read' whatever he wants into the films covered. However I picked up the book to read informed film critiques not Craig's off-the-wall ramblings on the military-industrial complex, politics, sex, etc. Usually, when I read film criticism books, I sometimes differ with the author on the quality of the films being discussed. In the case of *IT CAME FROM 1957*, I have to say I had major problems with Craig's 'calls.' While it held great promise, *IT CAME FROM 1957*, to my mind, never lived up to that promise. The basic problem of the book is too much Rob Craig ramblings, not enough straight film criticism. Not recommended. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Reading it now and really liking it! By Bonnie J. Noonan Reading it now and really liking it! Full of information. Extreme readings of the films (and I mean this in a good way) that actually work. For example, the creature in *The Giant Claw* is usually excoriated as simply being cheap and foolish, but Craig interprets it in a specific and gendered way that, whether the filmmakers intended it or not, enriches the film. Lots of photos too.

America in the 1950s was a cauldron of contradictions. Advances in technology chafed against a grimly conservative political landscape; the military-industrial complex ceaselessly promoted the "Communist menace"; young marrieds fled crumbling cities for artificial communities known as suburbs; and the corporate cipher known as "The Organization Man" was created, along with stifling images of women. The decade, huddled under the fear of nuclear holocaust, was also dedicated to all things futuristic. Science fiction was in its salad days, in magazines and novels and in motion pictures, trying every trick in the book to lure customers back from television, including reliance on monster movies. All of these forces collided in 1957, when an astounding 57 movies of the science fiction, horror and fantasy variety were shown in the United States--a record unmatched to this day. Reflecting some of the socio-political topics of the day, several are exceptional examples of their genres. This book critically discusses each of the films.

"a wonderful romp through the realm of science-fiction, horror and fantasy B-movies...many surprises are revealed...arguably better than actually sitting through all of those movies"--ProtoView; "one of the most insightful and entertaining studies of science fiction, horror, and fantasy cinema...well researched and well written book that is as entertaining as it is informative"--Examiner.com; "the critical commentary in the book is stimulating...a highly useful contribution to the film buff's bookshelf"--Crime Time. About the Author Rob Craig has been writing about cult film for more than twenty years. His work has been published in such magazines as *Videoscope*, *Scream* and *Horror-Wood*. He lives in Stevenson, Connecticut.