

Encountering the Beast Within: Location and the British Werewolf Film

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British cinema has played an important part in the emergence and growth of the werewolf film, from cult classics such as Hammer Films' *Curse of the Werewolf* (1961) and the perhaps lesser known seventies outputs such as *The Beast Must Die* (1974) and *Legend of the Werewolf* (1975), through to Neil Jordan's iconic *The Company of Wolves* (1984) and Neil Marshall's *Dog Soldiers* (2002), to name but a few. Beyond this, Britain as urban and rural place and space (and 'Britishness' in all its social, regional and cultural guises) also features in many of the major American werewolf film productions and US/UK co-productions, for example, in *Werewolf of London* (1935), *The Wolfman* (1941 and 2010), and – with an added degree of good humour and parody – *An American Werewolf in London* (1981). In this array of diverse films, Britain and the people that inhabit it are conveyed as both familiar and strange, as an uncanny phenomenon – whether werewolf encounters take place amidst the flashes of red buses and phone boxes on London's busy streets or within the darkened London cinema auditorium, on windswept moors or in dense Scottish woodlands. This paper considers the distinctly 'British' attributes of British werewolf films and Britain in werewolf films, focusing specifically on the significance of place, identity and geographical and cultural location, looking at the key role location plays in determining notions of the split self; 'othering'; 'them' and 'us'; civilization and wilderness; rational and irrational drives and the return of the repressed.

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