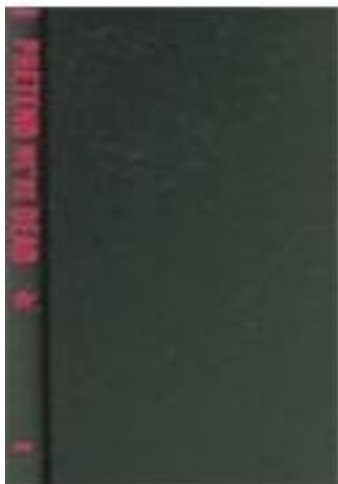


Pretend We're Dead



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In "Pretend We're Dead", Annalee Newitz argues that the slimy zombies and gore-soaked murderers who have stormed through American film and literature over the past century embody the violent contradictions of capitalism. Ravaged by overwork, alienated by corporate conformity, and mutilated by the unfettered lust for profit, fictional monsters act out the problems with an economic system that seems designed to eat people whole. Newitz looks at representations of serial killers, mad doctors, the undead, cyborgs, and individuals mutated by their involvement with the mass media industry. Whether considering the serial killer who turns murder into a kind of labour by mass producing dead bodies, or the hack writers and blood-thirsty actresses trapped inside Hollywood's profit-mad storytelling machine, she reveals that each creature has its own tale to tell about how a free-wheeling market economy turns human beings into monstrosities. Newitz tracks the monsters spawned by capitalism through B-movies, pulp fiction, Hollywood blockbusters, and American literary classics, looking at their manifestations in works such as Norman Mailer's 'true life novel' "The

Executioner's Song"; the short stories of Isaac Asimov and H. P. Lovecraft; the cyberpunk novels of William Gibson and Marge Piercy; writing about the serial killers Ted Bundy and Jeffrey Dahmer; and, movies including "Modern Times" (1916), "Donovan's Brain" (1953), "Night of the Living Dead" (1968), "RoboCop" (1987), "The Silence of the Lambs" (1991), and "Artificial Intelligence: A.I." (2001). Newitz shows that as literature and film tell it, the story of American capitalism since the late nineteenth century is a tale of body-mangling, soul-crushing horror.

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