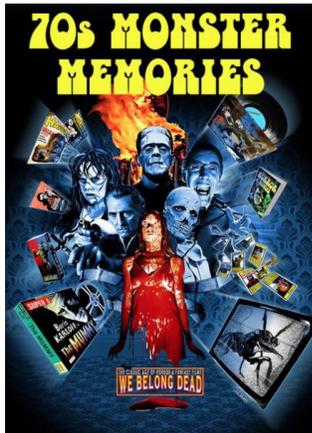


## Book Review: *70s Monster Memories* edited by Eric McNaughton

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McNaughton, E. (ed.) (2015) *70s Monster Memories*.  
400pp. Buzzy Kroteck Productions.  
Available at: <http://www.weloblongdead.co.uk/product/70s-monster-memories/>

It seems that a particular desire for cultural nostalgia has been increasingly noticeable throughout the decades, and perhaps more so now than ever before it is seriously big business. The box office beast that is *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* (Dir. J.J. Abrams, 2015), the eagerly anticipated return to the small screen of *The X-Files* (Fox 1993-2002, 2016-), and the ongoing revival in vinyl sales—which shows no signs of abating—are prime examples of the power of nostalgia and fandom equating to significant financial rewards in the entertainment industry. Aside from the aforementioned re-emergent cultural juggernauts, publications such as *70s Monster Memories*, edited by Eric McNaughton, have tapped into more niche and/or genre specific retro cultural interests. McNaughton's fanzine *We Belong Dead* (1993-1998), which initially ran for five years in the 1990s, itself dealt in nostalgia for classic horror and fantasy films. With pleasing irony and symmetry, *We Belong Dead* was resurrected as a full colour magazine in 2014 and has now spawned *70s Monster Memories*, which is both a celebration of classic horror and fantasy films and of the cultural paraphernalia that surrounded them.

A raft of horror and fantasy books, magazines, posters, comics, model kits and soundtracks that became available to the youth market in the 1970s are fondly reflected upon in McNaughton's mammoth 400 page edited collection, which features over 70 chapters written by over 50 contributors. Drawing from the worlds of academia, film criticism and the entertainment industry, McNaughton has brought together a passionate and knowledgeable selection of writers whose individual personal memories help to create a well-rounded picture of the theme and era in question. The essays are very entertaining, tackling a diverse range of subjects. Daz Lawrence, for instance, explores horror-themed confectionary in 'Horror Food'; Steve Gerrard's 'Zoinks!! (Or How I Would Have Got Away With It If It Wasn't For You Meddling Kids!)' analyses the hugely popular *Scooby Doo* cartoon series; and Ryan Brennan gives an account of '1970s Horror Vinyl: Releases in the U.S.'. Clearly a labour of love for McNaughton and all those involved, *70s Monster Memories* has the feel of a scrapbook created by and belonging to those 'in-the-know'—which is in no way a negative comment—

stuffed full of recollections, insights and hundreds of colour images.

Clearly the primary target demographic for McNaughton's book will be readers who share memories of the film, television and ephemera of the era. Beyond that, *70s Monster Memories* is the type of reference book perfect for dipping in and out of when required by students and horror or fantasy fans in general. However, while I am generally positive about the book, a couple of elements did somewhat dampen my enthusiasm. As well as some grating typos that missed being ironed out, the near lack of female voices—only two by my count—is a real shame and does leave an impression of the project being something of a boys-own club.

Neil Mitchell is an independent scholar and film critic based in Brighton, UK. He is the author and editor of a number of books including *Devil's Advocates: Carrie* (2013) and *World Film Locations: London* (2012) for Auteur and Intellect Books respectively. He has written for *Total Film*, *Little White Lies*, *Electric Sheep* and *The Guardian*. His work is regularly featured on the BFI's website and in 2015 Neil was the Film Co-ordinator for the Australia & New Zealand Festival of Literature & Arts. His areas of speciality include British and Antipodean cinema and the horror and science fiction genres.