

Historical Trauma in National Cinema and its Influence on Modern Horror Films

In the realm of cinema and culture, the horror genre has always held a special place. From the early black and white classics to the modern-day thrillers, horror films have continued to capture audiences' attention with their ability to evoke fear and suspense. But have you ever wondered why some horror films resonate with us more than others? Is there something deeper at play behind the scenes that shapes the themes and narratives of these movies? This article explores the concept of historical trauma in national cinema and how it influences the creation of modern horror films.

Understanding Historical Trauma

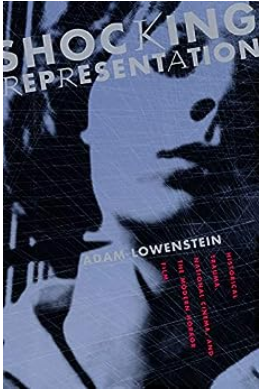
To grasp the connection between historical trauma and horror films, we must first understand what historical trauma means. Historical trauma refers to the collective psychological and emotional damage experienced by a group of people due to a significant historical event or period. These events could include war, genocide, colonization, or any other form of mass violence or oppression.

When a historical trauma occurs, it leaves a lasting impact on the affected community, passing down the pain and suffering through generations. This trauma becomes embedded in the collective memory, shaping cultural values, beliefs, and even artistic expressions such as cinema.

Shocking Representation: Historical Trauma, National Cinema, and the Modern Horror Film (Film and Culture Series)

by Adam Lowenstein (Kindle Edition)

★★★★☆ 4.4 out of 5



Language	: English
File size	: 2804 KB
Text-to-Speech	: Enabled
Screen Reader	: Supported
Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
Word Wise	: Enabled
Print length	: 270 pages



National Cinema as a Reflection of Historical Trauma

National cinema, defined as the films produced within a particular country, often serves as a reflection of the nation's history, culture, and collective memory.

Filmmakers often draw inspiration from historical events or social issues to create narratives that resonate with their audience. Through their storytelling, they aim to capture the essence of their nation and shed light on the lasting impact of historical trauma.

For example, many countries that have experienced colonization have a long history of trauma associated with that period. Films produced within these nations often delve into the themes of identity, power dynamics, and the struggle for independence. These films offer a unique perspective on historical events, allowing audiences to gain a deeper understanding of the complex emotions and experiences associated with the trauma.

Additionally, countries that have undergone war or other forms of violence often explore the repercussions of such events through their films. They use cinema as a medium to process and heal from the collective trauma experienced by their

society. By depicting the horrors of war on screen, filmmakers aim to draw attention to the consequences of violence and ensure that history is not forgotten.

The Influence of Historical Trauma on Modern Horror Films

So how does historical trauma translate into the horror genre? Horror films, by their very nature, thrive on fear and the exploration of the unknown. They tap into our deepest fears and anxieties, providing an avenue to escape or confront them. By incorporating elements of historical trauma, filmmakers infuse their horror narratives with a sense of reality and depth, making the genre more emotionally resonant and thought-provoking.

In recent years, there has been a surge in horror films that confront historical trauma head-on. These films often use supernatural or metaphorical devices to symbolize the lingering effects of past atrocities. By intertwining historical trauma with horror elements, filmmakers create narratives that not only entertain but also challenge viewers to confront uncomfortable truths and examine their own role in perpetuating or healing the wounds of the past.

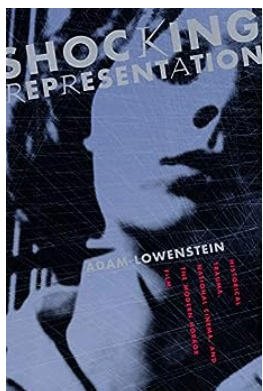
Examples of such films include "Get Out" directed by Jordan Peele, which addresses racial tensions and discrimination, and "The Babadook" directed by Jennifer Kent, which explores grief and the lasting impact of traumatic events. These films push the boundaries of the horror genre by blending social commentary with terrifying storytelling, creating a powerful cinematic experience.

The Power of Historical Trauma in Cinema

Historical trauma in national cinema and its influence on modern horror films highlights the profound impact of collective memory on artistic expression. By bringing historical traumas to the forefront, filmmakers not only entertain audiences but also educate and provoke them.

These films serve as a reminder that the wounds of the past continue to shape our present and future. They encourage discussions, empathy, and a commitment to prevent history from repeating itself. Historical trauma in cinema is not just about scaring audiences; it is about challenging societal norms, fostering understanding, and prompting healing on a deeper level.

In , historical trauma in national cinema has a significant influence on the creation of modern horror films. The exploration of past atrocities and their lingering effects allows filmmakers to create narratives that resonate on a deeper emotional level. By weaving historical trauma into horror elements, these films challenge audiences to confront uncomfortable truths and question the impact of historical events on the present. As the horror genre continues to evolve, it is essential to recognize its power as a platform for social commentary and healing.



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In this imaginative new work, Adam Lowenstein explores the ways in which a group of groundbreaking horror films engaged the haunting social conflicts left in

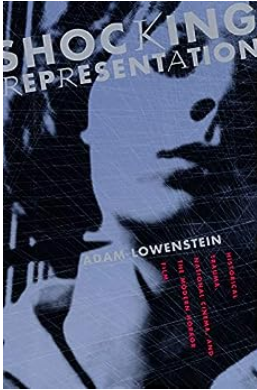
the wake of World War II, Hiroshima, and the Vietnam War. Lowenstein centers *Shocking Representation* around readings of films by Georges Franju, Michael Powell, Shindo Kaneto, Wes Craven, and David Cronenberg. He shows that through allegorical representations these directors' films confronted and challenged comforting historical narratives and notions of national identity intended to soothe public anxieties in the aftermath of national traumas.

Borrowing elements from art cinema and the horror genre, these directors disrupted the boundaries between high and low cinema. Lowenstein contrasts their works, often dismissed by contemporary critics, with the films of acclaimed "New Wave" directors in France, England, Japan, and the United States. He argues that these "New Wave" films, which were embraced as both art and national cinema, often upheld conventional ideas of nation, history, gender, and class questioned by the horror films. By fusing film studies with the emerging field of trauma studies, and drawing on the work of Walter Benjamin, Adam Lowenstein offers a bold reassessment of the modern horror film and the idea of national cinema.



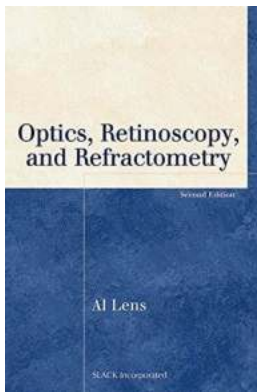
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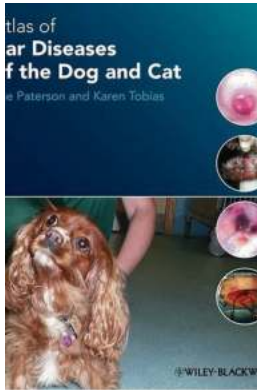
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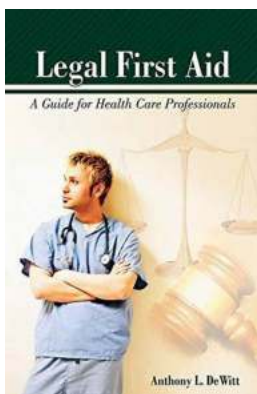
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