



Screening Torture: Media Representations of the State of Terror and Political Domination

Michael Flynn, Fabiola Salek

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Since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, scenes of brutality and torture have appeared in mainstream comedies, dramatic narratives, and action films, for little other reason than to titillate and delight. In these films, torture is devoid of any redeeming qualities. It is represented as an exercise in brutal senselessness carried out by authoritarian regimes and institutions.

Before 9/11, films outside of the horror/slasher genre that addressed torture depicted the practice in a variety of forms. In most cases, torture was cast as the act of a desperate and often depraved individual, and the viewer was more likely to identify with the victim rather than the torturer. This volume follows the significant shift in the representation of torture over the past decade, specifically in documentary, action, and political films, and it compares the development of this trend in films from the United States, Europe, China, Latin America, South Africa, and the Middle East. Featuring essays by sociologists, psychologists, historians, journalists, and specialists in film and cultural studies, this collection addresses the representation of torture in film and television from multiple angles and disciplines, connecting its aesthetics and practices to the dynamic of state terror and political domination.

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