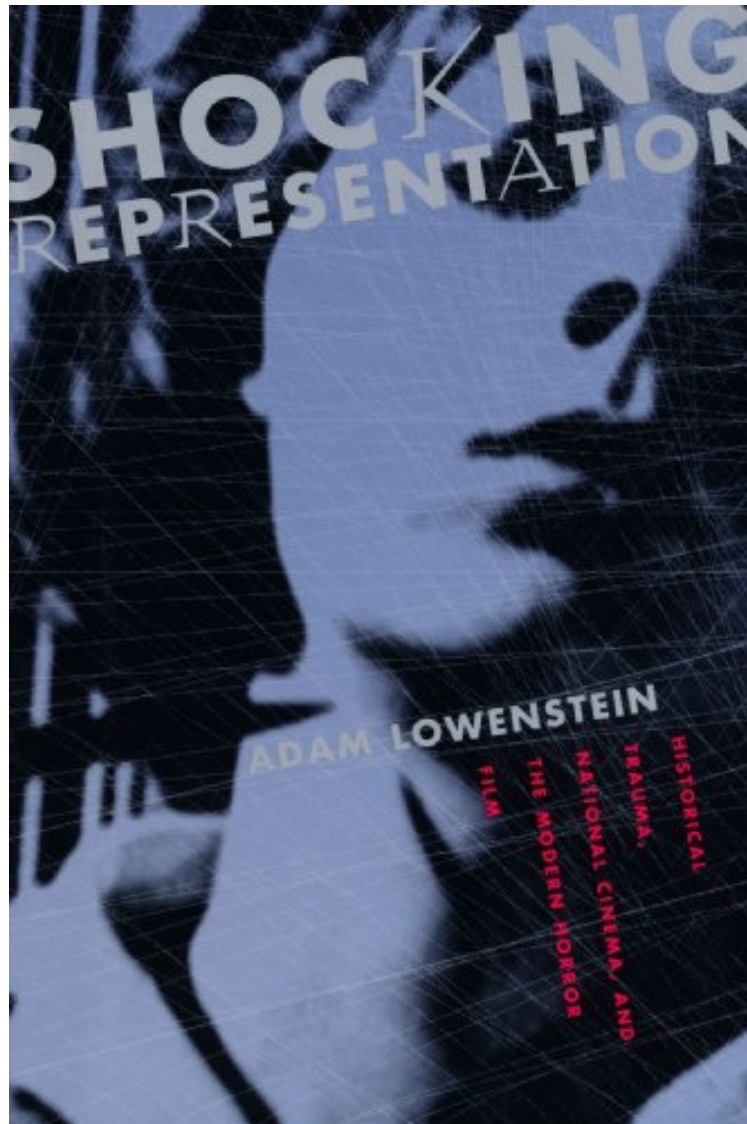


(Online library) Shocking Representation: Historical Trauma, National Cinema, and the Modern Horror Film (Film and Culture Series)

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

Adam Lowenstein

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Adam Lowenstein : Shocking Representation: Historical Trauma, National Cinema, and the Modern Horror Film (Film and Culture Series) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Shocking Representation: Historical Trauma, National Cinema, and the Modern Horror Film (Film and Culture Series):

8 of 23 people found the following review helpful. Not an easy read, but very well written. By Stefan Isaksson Adam Lowenstein, associate professor of English and film studies at the University of Pittsburgh, has written a book where he analyses different horror movies by different directors from different countries, for example Wes Craven's *Last House on the Left*. However, *Shocking Representation* isn't a book made for the everyday horror fan (which obviously doesn't mean a horror fan will be unable to appreciate the book). No, this is a book that first and foremost other devotees of film studies will enjoy. Because what Lowenstein does is that he analyses different movies from different eras and countries, and bases his analysis on how the construction of the movies, their themes, advertisement, script, and so on are characterized by and reflects upon such immense social conflicts and traumas as the end of World War II, the nuclear bombing of Hiroshima, and the Vietnam War. Using movies from countries such as France, England, Japan, and the U.S. Lowenstein shows how the directors design their movies in ways based on the traumatic experiences the movie crowd in one way or another has experienced. Complicated? Yeah, pretty much so. Especially when Lowenstein uses old black and white movies I've never even heard of, much less seen myself. Fact is that I've not seen or heard of the majority of the movies analyzed in the book - except *Deliverance* and *Last House on the Left* - and due to this it was really very little of the book I could truly understand and appreciate. Because, after all, movies (including the horror genre, even though some movie critics refuse to see the horror genre as anything but brainless entertainment of the worst quality imaginable) often deliver sharp social critique and/or reflections of the particular society where the movie is made; but this is often missed by the general viewer. Which both sucks and is too bad, because it's often very clever critique. But this also means that it can be great fun learning from someone highly skilled in film studies. And this I did from time to time. For instance, I've seen *Deliverance* before, but I'll have to do it again, soon, and this time think about all the references to the Vietnam War I'll see on the screen. *Shocking Representation* isn't an easy book to read, and you really do have to know your film history in order to fully appreciate what Lowenstein says, but at the same time, even though you only know a few titles - like I did - you can still find some interesting facts.

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.

[Lowenstein] has placed the study of cinematic horror on a whole new level. (Scott Preston *The Communication*) An attentive and careful reading of various films that straddle the borders of the horror and art genres... (Eyal Tamir *Kritikon Litterarum*) " *Shocking Representation* is an original and convincing study of how history shapes the modes of cinematic horror and fantasy. Through sensitive critical analysis, Lowenstein shows how specific historical traumas are expressed both consciously and unconsciously in a variety of films; in the process he enables us to see these films in a new way, and he repeatedly deepens our appreciation of their artistry." -- James Naremore, Indiana University, author of *More Than Night: Film Noir in Its Contexts* About the Author Adam Lowenstein is associate professor of English and film studies at the University of Pittsburgh. His essays have appeared in *Cinema Journal*, *Critical Quarterly*, and *Post Script* as well as the anthologies *Hitchcock: Past and Future Trauma* and *Cinema: Cross-Cultural Explorations*, and *British Cinema, Past and Present*.