Tony Shaw. *Cinematic Terror: A Global History of Terrorism on Film.* New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2015. 328 pp. $29.95 (paper), ISBN 978-1-4411-9620-0.

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In *Cinematic Terror: A Global History of Terrorism on Film,* Tony Shaw explores how portrayals of terrorists in movies evolved over the twentieth century. He finds a âclose rapportâ between the two, in part due to the âhighly optical characterâ of terrorist actions (pp. 287, 2). The book examines the relationship by utilizing fourteen films as case studies. The films span over a century of cinematic history and Shaw pulls movies from the global film industry, rather than just focusing on Hollywood. Each chapter begins with a description of a pivotal scene in the movie under review, before then pulling back to provide greater historical context. The narrative then ties this context into production and filming, and to explore how the public responded to themes explored in the films. The result is an engaging book that serves to highlight the changes in how terrorists pursued their objectives, and in how the world at large viewed their actions.

Shaw notes that the definition of terrorism is ânotoriously elastic,â and as a result uses a broad conception of what defines a terrorist act (p. 3). This expansive view serves *Cinematic Terror* well. The inclusion of films about eastern European resistance fighters during World War II and Zionist groups in the immediate postwar era challenge contemporary notions of terrorism. Shaw effectively forces the reader into consideration of differ-

ent viewpoints through his broad definition and the far-reaching geography of the book. Doing so also allows for a more meaningful and in-depth examination of terrorism and its relation to popular culture and the public at large.

The work also delves into the role of government in shaping historical memory. The official involvement of Israel in *Exodus* (1960) and *Operation Thunderbolt* (1977), Algerian officialsâ participation in *The Battle of Algiers* (1966), and Irish financial support for *Michael Collins* (1996) demonstrate the importance many nations attach to popular culture. Movies have a strong capacity to shape how the public remembers and interprets its history. They are likely to reach a broader audience than official proclamations, and that audience is also more likely to prove receptive to the themes and messages contained in the film. When a film embraces a narrative friendly towards a governmentâs favored version, then, it is unsurprising that the government would demonstrate a willingness to support the project both financially and through public statements.

Early in *Cinematic Terror*, Shaw argues that âterror has taken on a highly optical character in the early twenty-first centuryâ (p. 2). He then speculates that the

âimmediacy of 24-hour televisionâ and âglobal access to the internetâ fueled the visual nature of terror attacks. However, much of the book undermines this assertion, as it also reveals a remarkable continuity in the type of attacks performed by terrorists throughout the twentieth century. Shaw notes that the first suicide bombing in cinema came in 1911, and the 1936 Hitchcock thriller *Sabotage* depicts a terror group using a child to carry out a bombing on a bus. He then argues that this shows that filmmakers placed a âpremium â¦ on the visually spectacularâ actions of terrorists even in the earliest days of cinema (p. 25). The sort of attacks he describes from the earliest days of cinema are still prominently employed by modern terror groups. The result is that *Cinematic Terror* demonstrates that many of the tactics of terror groups are constant, shared across groups and generations. Rather than showing that groups became more visually focused, *Cinematic Terror* instead shows how responses to terrorism changed over time. The book traces terrorist evolution from ânaÃ¯ve foolsâ to âgood terroristsâ to the âsuper entertainers of our timeâ (pp. 23, 77, 123). It is this battle for popular opinion, either through winning converts to the cause or exhausting the will of foes, that is central to the success or failure of a terror campaign. Shaw captures this struggle over the public will well. Each chapter devotes significant attention not just to the movie and the groups portrayed, but also to how the public received the movie and responded to terror groups. The final movie analyzed, *Cloverfield* (2008), takes this further and looks at the role of cinema in aiding the healing process after a terrorist attack. The inclusion of this and the examination of communal post-traumatic stress is welcome, and offers a particularly interesting vein for future study.

The pairing of film analysis, historical discourse on terrorism, and examination of the public will creates a compelling and important narrative. *Cinematic Terror* fully engages the reader and offers a remarkably succinct, but useful, examination of the relationship between terrorism, the media, and the population at large It is an important contribution to the growing body of scholarship on the subject, and its unique approach helps set it apart from the field. The embrace of nuance and complexity found in *Cinematic Terror* makes it a must-read for those interested in studying the impact of nonstate actors or the relationship between culture, the public, and policy.

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