traditional exorcism narrative thrives because of its Othering of minorities, subjugation of female empowerment, and restoration of white patriarchal authority

While the authors provide a thorough analysis of gendered and cultural tensions in exorcism films, their analysis would have been strengthened by a stronger postcolonial lens, particularly when interrogating the intersections of race, gender, ethnicity, and queerness. Olson and Renhard note at the outset of their analysis that they plan to utilize feminist and postcolonial theoretical lenses; however, the postcolonial lens is used to analyze only a small handful of films. This theoretical lens would have been a fruitful avenue through which to more strongly analyze representations of minorities in exorcism films. Overall, *Possessed Women, Haunted States* is a valuable book for scholars and students interested in media studies, critical/cultural studies, gender studies, and film studies. Its multi-decade historical linkages and situating of the genre, along with its close critical deconstruction of multiple exorcism films, highlights how exorcism cinema continues to negatively construct women and minorities as threats to the existing social order that must be cured.

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Jackson, Neil, Shaun Kimber, Johnny Walker, and Thomas Joseph Watson, editors. *Snuff: Real Death and Screen Media*. New York/London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016. Print.

In 1976, Michael and Roberta Findlay's Snuff screened in theaters across the U.S. As part of a publicity stunt, promotional materials claimed that the movie contained footage of real death, that the actors' on-screen

expiration in the final scene transgressed the boundaries of fiction. This claim to authenticity sparked a month-long FBI investigation into its veracity, and despite subsequent failures to find proof of the film's existence, the public were convinced otherwise. The staging of murder in front of a camera, for commercial profit, had become an ontological fact, and reports of nefarious underground rings catering to the debased tastes of rich clienteles surfaced in the U.S. and abroad. Four decades later, the myth continues to live on, this time fueled by the Internet's penetration into all arenas of life, including death.

Featuring 15 original essays by 19 contributors, including a Foreword by *Killing for Culture* (1994/2015) author David Kerekes, *Snuff: Real Death and Screen Media* explores the symbolic meanings of "snuff" and its place within contemporary global cultures. Unlike most academic writings on the subject, which are fixated on snuff's evidentiary basis, on whether or not snuff is objectively real, this interdisciplinary collection is concerned with the origins of the myth, the evolution of the myth, and how its mythical possibility is sustained by the discourses surrounding it. Enlisting a range of theoretical approaches to examine a variety of pop-cultural artifacts, the book wrestles with several tensions and articulations at the heart of snuff—between fact and fiction, ethics and aesthetics, violence and sex, pleasure and horror, mainstream and taboo, old media and new media.

The book is divided into two parts. Part One examines the changing and unstable meanings of snuff, beginning with a chapter by Mark Petley that traces legislation and censorship debates around online images of "real-live death." Following this is an essay by Misha Kavka, who argues that snuff is sustained by its affective charge, by the joint anticipation and horror at the prospect of seeing death. In the next chapter, Simon Hobbs offers an operational definition of animal snuff—the live killing of animals in otherwise fictional texts—which is shaped by cultural attitudes toward non-human life. Clarissa Smith then examines the moral panic

surrounding the linkage of sex with horror by situating "extreme pornography" within judicial and legislative contexts in the UK. A chapter by Nicolò Gallio and Xavier Mendik analyzes the use of theatrical ambiguity in Ruggero Deodato's *Cannibal Holocaust*, a film that lays (bogus) claims to authenticity by splicing verité techniques with documentary inserts of actual atrocity news reels. In the chapter that follows, Mark McKenna returns to Michael and Roberta Findlay's *Snuff,* this time tracing the film's contested distribution history among collector cultures in the UK. Using Dead Alive Productions' *Traces of Death* series (1993-2000), Johnny Walker then unpacks the relationship between shock fandom and fans of other sub-cultural artifacts, including extreme heavy metal and 1960s mondo films. Part One ends with a chapter by Mark Astley, which looks at the politics of terror in jihadist extermination videos and their aesthetic similarities to realist horror films.

Part Two explores the myriad manifestations of snuff in television and film. It opens with a chapter by Mark Jones and Gerry Carlin, who examine films inspired by the ostensibly lost footage of the Manson Family murders to underscore the paradox of snuff as an absent referent. This is followed by a chapter by Neil Jackson that traces the changing role of the fictional snuff filmmaker and its social and historical contingency. In the next chapter, Xavier Aldana Reyes posits four categories of filmic snuff—films about snuff, faux snuff, snuff mockumentary, and serial killer video diary—and how their narrative and formal conventions differentially shape the viewer's ethical stance. Shaun Kimber then looks at how Scott Derrickson's horror film *Sinister* (2012) hybridizes snuff iconography with supernatural elements to achieve palatability and commercial success. A chapter by Linda Badley plays with the notion of cinema *as* snuff by tracing visual media's longstanding association with death— evident, for example, in German Expressionism's sublimation of art through "dissonance, hazard, terror, and pain" (245). The penultimate chapter by Tina Kendall explores how the importation of snuff motifs into

extreme art cinema can provoke a reflexive response in viewers, indicting them for their indifference to or appetite for violent spectacle. Finally, in the culminating chapter, Steve Jones uses Shane Ryan's *Amateur Porn Star Killer* trilogy of films (2007-2009) to illustrate how analyses of faux snuff can contribute to our understanding of selfhood—particularly, its narrative, phenomenological, social and embodied dimensions.

The book effectively illustrates how tightly snuff has gripped the human imagination, and how far and deep its tendrils run in global popular culture. Engaging with a diverse assortment of cultural texts, the authors do a commendable job of locating snuff at the intersection of various social, historical, economic, ideological, and sexual formations. The book also strikes a fine balance between a production perspective that is attuned to film form and style, and an audience perspective that takes into account a variety of spectatorial positions. Furthermore, it deftly escapes the trap of fragmentation that has ensnared many edited collections. By citing one another's past and present work, the contributors give the anthology a sense of unity and coherence; rather than talk past one another, they are speaking *with* each other. Lastly, the anthology looks both forward and back, honoring the body of literature that paved the path for its creation, while anticipating the horizons that lie ahead, including the impact of new and emerging technologies on our reception of mediated death.

As one of few book-length treatments of the subject, *Snuff: Real Death and Screen Media* is recommended reading for film and media scholars who are interested in the representational history of death, the ethics and aesthetics of screening death, affective responses to gruesome imagery, and the increasing saturation of our global mediascape with hyperviolent spectacle. As the contributors to this theoretically rigorous volume persuasively argue, the myth of snuff and its continuing existence in fictional narratives implicates us all. Snuff is not merely a debased cultural artifact lacking social relevance and institutional legitimacy. It is a

window through which we can apprehend our role as spectators and our relationship to death and dying, both fictional and ostensibly real.

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Cocca, Carolyn. *Superwomen: Gender, Power, and Representation*. New York: Bloomsbury, 2016. Print.

From the 1940s to the present, comic books have filled our cultural imagination with powerful, though often sexualized or sidelined, superwomen. Carolyn Cocca's book examines the history of superheroines in popular films, television, and comics, arguing that representation of marginalized groups facilitates identification across difference. Cocca's work is divided into six chapters, each of which analyzes a particular female superhero or set of superheroes, selected for their transmedia presence, prominence of comic book publisher, different kinds of heroisms, and diversity of surrounding character identities.

The first chapter of the book focuses on Wonder Woman, particularly examining the ways audiences of the character have engaged around race, class, sexuality, and, of course, gender. Cocca finds that, throughout the character's development, Wonder Woman both challenges hetero-patriarchal norms and falls into traditional femininity. Wonder Woman is a site for conflict over the very meaning of feminism. Though the chapter overviews the entire history of the character, Cocca's work is unique in her focus on the representations of Wonder Woman since DC Comics' relaunch of the character in 1987.

In the second chapter, Cocca looks at the character of Barbara Gordon, also known as Batgirl. She compares and contrasts the character with Wonder Woman, noting that Batgirl is known, not for strength, but for