



Cinema in an Age of Terror: North Africa, Victimization, and Colonial History (France Overseas: Studies in Empire and D)

Michael F. O'Riley

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Cinema in an Age of Terror looks at how cinematic representations of colonial-era victimization inform our understanding of the contemporary age of terror. By examining works representing colonial history and the dynamics of spectatorship emerging from them, Michael F. O'Riley reveals how the centrality of victimization in certain cinematic representations of colonial history can help us understand how the desire to occupy the victim's position is a dangerous and blinding drive that frequently plays into the vision of terrorism.

Films such as *The Battle of Algiers*, *Days of Glory*, *Caché*, and recent works by Maghrebian filmmakers all exemplify, in different ways, how this focus on victimization can become a problematic perspective—one in fact seeking to occupy ideological territory. Their return of colonial history to our contemporary context, although frequently problematic, enables us to see how victimization is very much about territory—cultural, spatial, and ideological—and how resistance to new forms of imperialist warfare and terror today must be located outside these haunting images from colonial history. Although such images of victimization ultimately only return as spectacular acts that draw our attention away from the cyclical contest over territory that they embody, those images nonetheless have the last word.

Michael F. O'Riley is an associate professor of French and Italian at Colorado College. He is the author of *Francophone Culture and the Postcolonial Fascination with Ethnic Crimes and Colonial Aura* and *Postcolonial Haunting and Victimization: Assia Djébar's New Novels*.

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