POLITICS IN POPULAR MOVIES

RHETORICAL TAKES ON HORROR, WAR, THRILLER, AND SCIFI FILMS

* * *

JOHN S. NELSON

สำนักหอสมุด มหาวิทยาลัยเชียงใหม่ ชิ / 6678445 `๑ / 2 5 * 6944 | 226 * 6365

POLITICS IN POPULAR MOVIES

RHETORICAL TAKES ON HORROR, WAR, THRILLER, AND SCIFI FILMS



OHN S. NELSON





Contents

Acknowledgments		
Chapter 1	Film Takes: Rhetorical Appreciations of Popular Politics (Featuring 2001, Blade Runner, 1984, Brazil, and The Matrix) What Are Film Takes? 2 Where Are Movie Politics? 5 Which Takes Do What? 8 Why Start with Science Fiction? 10 Might Films Prefigure Our Futures? 13	1
	Part One: Popular Genres	
Chapter 2	Politics in Conventions: Conspiracy as a Cinematic Trope for System (Featuring <i>Bob Roberts</i> , <i>From Hell</i> , and <i>Three Kings</i>) Conspiracies Personal and Literal versus Political and	18
Chapter 3	Figural 19 Two Kinds of Political Conspiracies 20 Conspiracies as Devices of Resistance 21 Politics in Subtexts: Horror Movies as Facing Political Evils in Everyday Life (Featuring <i>Phone Booth, The Ring,</i> and <i>The Mothman Prophecial</i> Political Subtexts 25 Everyday Evils 26	24 es)
Chapter 4	Communication Examples 28 Politics in Innovations: Fractal Films as New Rhetorics for Nonlinear Politics (Featuring <i>Babel</i> , <i>Crash</i> , and <i>Cloud Atlas</i>)	31

	Confounding Disorders? 33 Natural Experiments 34 Nonlinear Genres 35 Fractal Films 43 Hyperactive Aesthetics? 47 Quick Codas 53	
Cl	Part Two: Political Experiences	
Chapter 5	Emotion and Empathy: From Sins and Pains to Bodies and Deeds in Horror Movies	56
	(Featuring <i>The Passion of the Christ</i> and <i>Se7en</i>)	
	The Sensing of Sin 58	
	The Body in Pain 62	
	The Movement to Act 66	
Chaper 6	Character and Community: From Contracts to Contacts in	
	Science-Fiction Films	69
	(Featuring Contact and Close Encounters of the Third Kind)	
	From Manipulation to Myths? 70 From Truth to Tropes? 71	
	From Revelation to Communications? 72	
	From Rule to Principles? 73	
	From Evidence to Experiences? 75	
	From Communication to Revelations? 76	
	From Contract to Contacts? 80	
Chapter 7	Atmosphere and Argument: From Vicarious to Virtual	
	Experience in War Movies	82
	(Featuring Apocalypse Now, Platoon, Saving Private Ryan,	
	and The Thin Red Line) Wars 83	
	Contentions 84	
	Ethoi 86	
	Experiences 91	
	Devices 92	
	Voices 97	
	Visuals 98	
	Versions 101	
	Arguments 103	

	Fart Three: Chiematic Terrors	
Chapter 8	Movies Prefigure Politics: How Thrillers Anticipated	
	Terrorist Attacks on America	106
	(Featuring The Siege, The Peacemaker, and Patriot Games)	
	Myths and Genres 108	
	Tropes and Politics 111	
	Plots and Acts 118	
	Heroes and Villains 123	
	Thrillers and Settings 126	
	Grievances and Responses 129	
	Movies and Lessons 136	
Chapter 9	Movies Disfigure Politics: How Vampire Hunters Pursued	
	the War on Terror	138
	(Featuring Blade and Bram Stoker's Dracula)	
	Cheney as Cowboy 140	
	Bush as Blade 142	
	Saddam as Dracula 144	
	Rumsfeld as Van Helsing 146	
Chapter 10	Movies Configure Politics: How Horror, Dystopia, Thriller,	
	and Noir Shape Terrorism	150
	(Featuring Fight Club, Spy Game, and Swordfish)	
	Terror and Meaning 153	
	Horror and Evil 154	
	Dystopia and Totalitarianism 158	
	Thriller and Conspiracy 160	
	Noir and Sophistication 166	
Chapter 11	Conclusion: Political Styles in Popular Movies	173
	(Featuring Elysium, In Time, Upside Down, and	
	The Hunger Games)	
	Movies as Memories 174	
	Persuasions as Politics 175	
	Genres as Generalizations 177	
	Styles as Sensibilities 179	
	Perspectivism and Populism in SciFi Films 182	
A Gloscam +	or Analyzing Politics	189
	or Analyzing Louis	106

x Contents

Notes	203
Index	238
About the Author	244