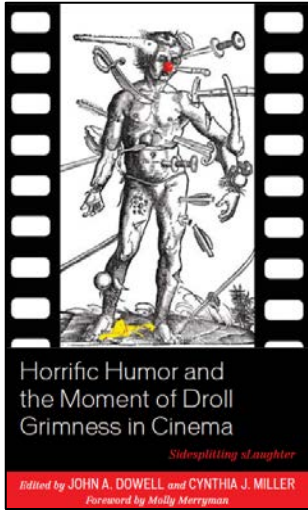




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HORRIFIC HUMOR AND THE MOMENT OF DROLL GRIMNESS IN CINEMA SIDESPLITTING SLAUGHTER

Edited by John A. Dowell and Cynthia J. Miller

Foreword by Molly Merryman

Contributions by Ben Betka, Thomas Britt, Iain J.W. Ellis, Moritz Fink, Ann Larabee, David Misch, William Quiterio, Don Tresca, Ben Urish, and Colin Yeo

John Dowell and Cynthia Miller's collection of essays, *Horrific Humor and the Moment of Droll Grimness in Cinema: Sidesplitting sLaughter*, is one of the finest examinations of the horror genre published in the past decade. The theory of the intersection of horror and humor in popular film is transcendental in its profundity. For the scholar of film or for the general reader who loves to watch horror films, the book absolutely deserves a place on your shelf.

— Gary Hoppenstand, Michigan State University

Only recently the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists moved the Doomsday Clock to two-and-a-half minutes to midnight, the closest it's been to heralding a man-made global catastrophe since 1953. Our popular culture abounds with dark and sardonic narratives, with stories and fictions that oscillate uncannily between the shocking perspectives of literary realism and the uncontrollable emotions that erupt in laughter, leaving us with the uncomfortable realization we find what is horrifying is simultaneously humorous and enjoyable. Here Dowell and Miller have collected a seminal series of essays that explores the typology and mechanics of that dark underside of popular culture that we love to laugh at from the comfort of our post-truth reality. If the real function of humor is in speaking the truth to power, then this volume offers insight into the critical import of popular culture in all our contemporary lives; sLaughter speaks a truth of the human condition!

— Steve Webley, Staffordshire University

ABOUT THE BOOK

Horrific Humor and the Moment of Droll Grimness in Cinema: Sidesplitting sLaughter presents the first focused look at the moment in audience reception where screams and laughter collide. John A. Dowell and Cynthia J. Miller bring together twelve essays from an international collection of authors across the disciplines. The volume begins with an examination of the aesthetics and mechanics of the sLaughter moment, then moves closer to look at the impact of its awkward friction of humor and horror on the individual viewer, and finally, broadens its lens to explore sLaughter's implications for the human condition more generally. The chapters discuss such box office hits such as *A Clockwork Orange* (1971), *Fargo* (1996), *The Dark Knight* (2008), and *The Cabin in the Woods* (2012), as well as cult classics such as *The Toxic Avenger* (1984) and *Dead Snow* (2009).

Horrific Humor and the Moment of Droll Grimness in Cinema will be of great interest to scholars of both humor and horror, as well as to those working in reception studies and fans of cult cinema.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

John A. Dowell is an independent scholar. He is also the Technology Specialist for Michigan State University's Neighborhood Student Success Collaborative.

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