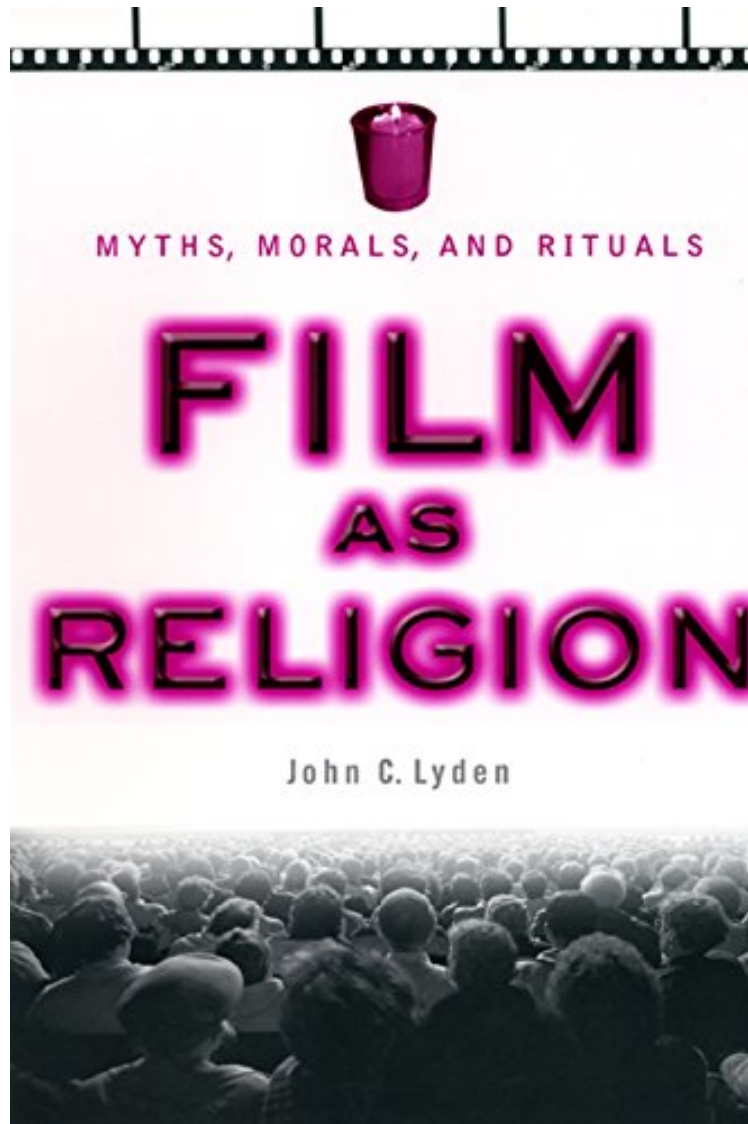


(Ebook pdf) Film as Religion: Myths, Morals, and Rituals

Film as Religion: Myths, Morals, and Rituals

John C. Lyden

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John C. Lyden : Film as Religion: Myths, Morals, and Rituals before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Film as Religion: Myths, Morals, and Rituals:

0 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Well doneBy BrittneyPerfect. The book was a little dirty and I would have appreciated it bring cleaned, but otherwise it's perfect and what I needed.13 of 15 people found the following review helpful. The power of filmBy A CustomerWell-written and fascinating! Lyden illuminates the power

of film to influence large numbers of people, providing some with a worldview, language, culture, etc. that gives them the sense of community or meaning similar to that found in traditional religion. Excellent examples.³ of 17 people found the following review helpful. Blows big time. By J. Cox This book is not a good read. Boring, inarticulate, tedious, and generally very difficult to get through.

Choice Outstanding Academic Title 2003 *Film as Religion* argues that popular films perform a religious function in our culture. Like more formal religious institutions, films can provide us with ways to view the world and values to confront it. Lyden contends that approaches which interpret films only ideologically or theologically miss the mark in understanding their appeal to viewers. He develops an alternative method which shows how films can be understood as representing a religious worldview in their own right. Lyden surveys the state of the study of religion and film, offering an overview of previous methods before presenting his own. Rather than seeking to uncover hidden meanings in film detectable only to scholars, Lyden emphasizes how film functions for its audience—the beliefs and values it conveys, and its ritual power to provide emotional catharsis. He includes a number of brief cases studies in which he applies this method to the study of film genres—including westerns and action movies, children's films, and romantic comedies—and individual films from *The Godfather* to *E.T.*, showing how films can function religiously.

From Publishers Weekly The lights dim, the voices hush and the devotees prepare for a sacred, transformative experience. This scenario does not describe a ritual in a cathedral or temple, but one occurring in another religiously charged space: the cinema. Lyden, a professor of religion in Nebraska, argues that if we define "religion" by its function—what the activity does for the people who participate in it—then movie-going is the religion of our time. Movies provide the collective myths to help us deal with our cultural anxieties and hopes, and catharsis in the form of rewarded heroes and punished villains. The book can be fascinating, if a tad theoretical and academic. Its most laity-friendly sections occur in the second half, when Lyden analyzes seven film genres (westerns/action flicks, gangster movies, melodramas, romantic comedies, children's films, sci-fi and horror). He also includes detailed discussions of several films, including the Star Wars movies, *When Harry Met Sally*, *Titanic* and the Hitchcock corpus. Throughout, Lyden does not try to dissect religious themes from various films, but attempts to understand how audiences respond to them in a religious way. Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc. John Lyden has entered into the arena of Religion and Film books with an extremely adept contender. His review of the literature on existing approaches to religion and film should be required reading by film enthusiasts and theologians alike. What his conclusions offer in terms of a new approach are solid, convincing and most promising for the future of the field. —Tony S. L. Michael, co-chair, Religion, Film and Visual Culture, AAR Lyden's book is well-written, insightful, and especially engaging for anyone who loves movies. —Religious Studies . . . offers several new perspectives on this increasingly popular and gradually more critical area. It also is well-suited for the religious studies classroom. Lyden's writing is clear, and he nicely describes some of the more difficult theories of religion in ways that are accessible to undergraduates. In fact, the next time I teach my course "Myth and Ritual on Film" I will assign *Film as Religion* because of its analogizing methods of showing how film does indeed function as religion in contemporary U.S. culture. —Journal of the American Academy of Religion Lyden offers perceptive criticisms of some of the most influential ways of talking about myth. —Crisis Magazine A very important book. Lyden urges respect for how films actually function for people who watch them. He lays out an insightful and compelling case for considering film-watching a religious activity. In so doing, he offers a major challenge to all those who discuss culture, religion and theology today. —Clive Marsh, co-editor of *Explorations in Theology and Film* About the Author John C. Lyden is Professor and Chair of the Religion Department at Dana College in Blair, Nebraska. He is the editor of *Enduring Issues in Religion*.