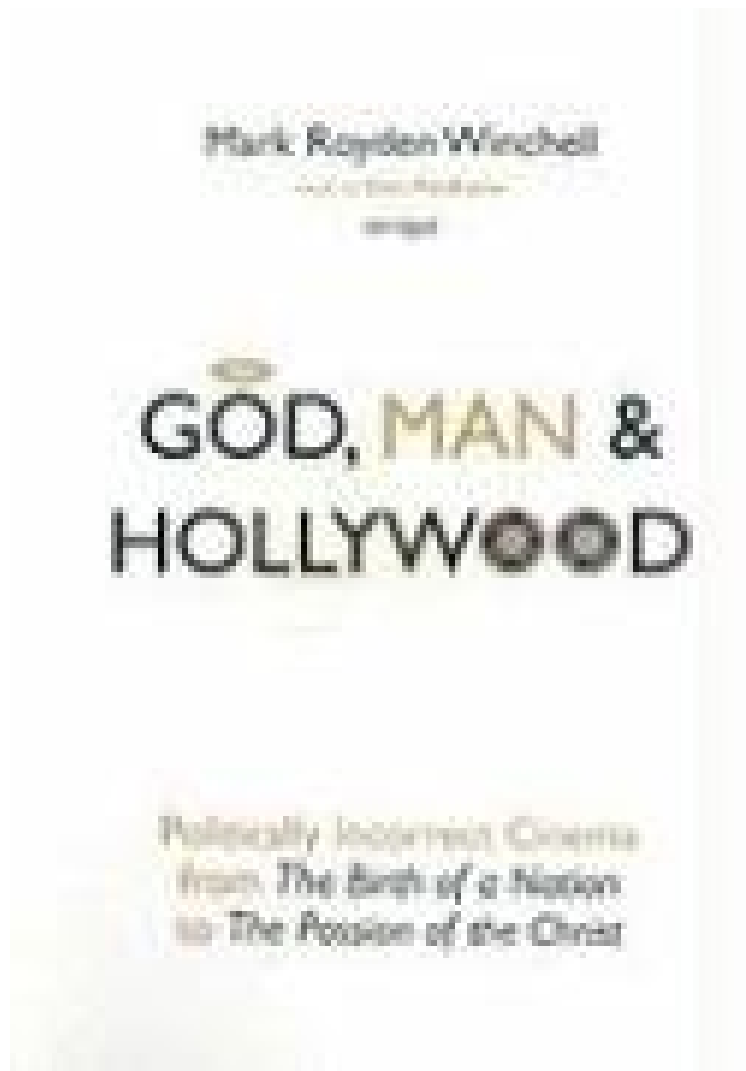


(Free and download) God, Man Hollywood: Politically Incorrect Cinema from the Birth of a Nation to the Passion of the Christ

## God, Man Hollywood: Politically Incorrect Cinema from the Birth of a Nation to the Passion of the Christ

Mark Royden Winchell

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**Mark Royden Winchell : God, Man Hollywood: Politically Incorrect Cinema from the Birth of a Nation to the Passion of the Christ** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised God, Man Hollywood: Politically Incorrect Cinema from the Birth of a Nation to the Passion of the Christ:

11 of 12 people found the following review helpful. "Into" films? These essays inform and provoke By Donald M. Bishop This book is for anyone who is "into" movies. Professor Mark Royden Winchell of Clemson University has written full essays on eighteen key films (listed below) and shorter profiles of 100 other movies. According to the

author, the movies are all "politically incorrect," though for different reasons -- their portrayals of race, war, violence, and religion among them. The author is a conservative, but not a predictable one. In the book's forward, a liberal colleague who teaches film at Clemson, R. Barton Palmer, praises Winchell as rational, informed, and passionate. He says Winchell "does not write with the single-minded and ultimately unpersuasive fervor of the true believer." There's a lot to chew on in the essays, and individuals of different political dispositions will like some of the commentaries and blanch at others. My guess is that the blanch-to-praise ratio will be higher for liberals than conservatives, but every reader will do some of both. Every reader will also encounter fresh views, especially as Winchell wrings new meanings out of individual movie scenes. There's no particular need to read the essays in the order presented, and the essay on "Ben-Hur" is a good place to start. Winchell's treatment embraces the original book by General Lew Wallace, references the popular stage plays that popularized the story, and describes and compares the silent movie starring Francis X. Bushman and the epic film with Charlton Heston. A strong point each of Winchell's essays is placing a film in the context of the times; in the case of Ben-Hur, that requires reference to 1880, 1926, 1959, and now. Every fan will learn something new and revealing in these essays. Essays on "Birth of a Nation," "Gone with the Wind," and "Song of the South" touch on the most sensitive and troubled issue in American life, race. Again, Winchell's patient explication of the films will provide much new information. In the review of "Song of the South," for instance, there's as much about Joel Chandler Harris and the Uncle Remus stories as there is about the 1946 Walt Disney film. Here the reader benefits from Winchell's background as a professor of literature. There's not room in a short review to cover the whole ground, but it's safe to say his interpretations of the films that touch on race are likely to stir controversy. He criticises monochromatic treatments of the ante-Bellum south, the Confederacy, and reconstruction that emphasize racism, and he urges more nuanced views that take into account the values, scholarship, and culture of the time the film portrays and the time it was made. He scores many points, for sure, and he is right to urge a broader evaluation, in context. But in my view, he does not dislodge the centrality of slavery and racism to secession, the Civil War, and the history that unfolded after the conflict. Many films in the past obscured it, and all who are interested in knowing the true past must untangle how it has been represented -- in the classroom, in literature, and in film -- on the way to grasping the reality. For liberals and conservatives, this book can be informative and suggestive. The Intercollegiate Studies Institute has performed a real service by publishing it.

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The films covered in the fifteen main essays of the book are: Birth of a Nation, Gone With the Wind, Song of the South, Intruder in the Dust, Ben-Hur, The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance, Patton, A Clockwork Orange, Straw Dogs, The Deer Hunter, Driving Miss Daisy, Shadowlands, Ride with the Devil, Gangs of New York, Gettysburg, Gods and Generals, and The Passion of the Christ.

It takes no great powers of observation to see that Hollywood has long been far to the left of the general American public. Even in stories that have no overt political content, the social and moral assumptions in films rated from GP to R are often at odds with the deeply held values of most of the viewing audience. But that's not the whole story, argues the literary and cultural critic Mark Royden Winchell in *God, Man, and Hollywood*. A surprising number of films articulate culturally unfashionable attitudes and it is from these movies that we learn the most about our society and ourselves. Beginning with D. W. Griffith's *The Birth of a Nation* and ending with Mel Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ*, Winchell reveals the politically incorrect notions at the heart of eighteen classic films, including *Ben-Hur*, *Intruder in the Dust*, *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance*, *Patton*, *The Deer Hunter*, *A Clockwork Orange*, *Gangs of New York*, and *Gettysburg*. Along the way, he shows how a number of filmmakers, sometimes unwittingly, have produced unconventionally honest explorations of the nature and meaning of race relations, love, family, community, worship, and other aspects of our shared human experience. Winchell ends with synoptic assessments of an additional one hundred politically incorrect films, from *About Schmidt* to *Zulu*. The result is an indispensable film guide showing that sometimes even Hollywood has done better than we typically give it credit for.