

Hollywood's American Tragedies

Mandy Merck

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Mandy Merck : Hollywood's American Tragedies before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Hollywood's American Tragedies:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Fantastic Film History and MoreBy Jennifer DoyleThis is old-school-is-new-school film history, taking a well-worn genre in film studies (adaptation studies) and turning it inside out by looking closely at Hollywood's multiple attempts at turning Theodore Dreiser's unwieldy novel 'American Tragedy' (which forecasts much about today's reality TV celebrity tabloid culture) into film - everybody, it seems, took

this story on - most famously in 'A Place In the Sun.' Merck's is the sort of book that you can't put down - the engaged and engaging prose of 'In Your Face' and 'Perversions' is directed here at a behind the scenes history of politics and film production. This book is packed with great storytelling - about the film-makers, studio executives, and jaw-dropping details about Dreiser himself. A must read for film historians, for Am Lit folks interested in the collision of writing film-making, but also just a great read for film buffs!

Theodore Dreiser's dissection of the American dream, *An American Tragedy*, was hailed as the greatest novel of its generation. Now a classic of American literature, the story is one to which Hollywood has repeatedly returned. Hollywood's obsession with this tale of American greed, justice, religion and sexual hypocrisy stretches across the history of cinema. Three attempts by some of cinema's greatest directors--Sergei Eisenstein, Josef von Sternberg and George Stevens--have been made to bring this classic story to the screen. Subsequently, both Jean-Luc Godard and Woody Allen have returned to the story and to these earlier adaptations. This is the first detailed study of this extraordinary sequence of adaptations. What it reveals is a history of Hollywood--from its politics to its cinematography--and, much deeper, of American culture and the difficulty of telling an American tragedy in the land of the American dream.

'Rigorously researched and told with a perceptive eye for human and cinematic detail, Mandy Merck's book provides a fascinating insight into behind the scenes Hollywood as well as a unique, historical, account of the creative processes and institutional problems involved in novel to screen adaptation.' Laura Mulvey
About the Author Mandy Merck is Professor of Media Arts at Royal Holloway, University of London. She has edited the film and television journal *Screen* and the Channel 4 television series *Out on Tuesday*. Her books include *Perversions: Deviant Readings*, *In Your Face: Nine Sexual Studies*, *The Art of Tracey Emin* (co-edited with Chris Townsend) and a new collection of critical studies, *America First: Naming the Nation in US Film*.