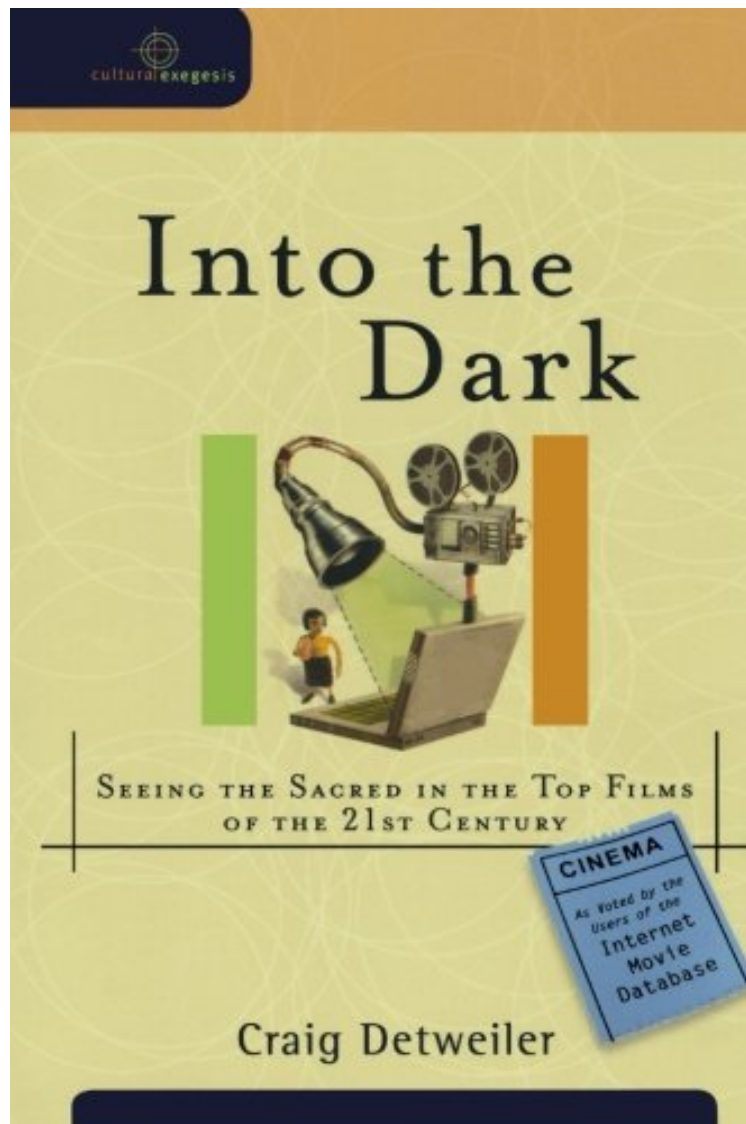


Into the Dark: Seeing the Sacred in the Top Films of the 21st Century (Cultural Exegesis)

Craig Detweiler

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Craig Detweiler : Into the Dark: Seeing the Sacred in the Top Films of the 21st Century (Cultural Exegesis) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Into the Dark: Seeing the Sacred in the Top Films of the 21st Century (Cultural Exegesis):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Great ResourceBy Anna MaeGreat resource for folks who want to see the Sacred in films.5 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Opens A DialogueBy John Winterson

Richards Christians need to get back into the mainstream media if they are to avoid locking themselves up in a cultural ghetto. Instead of focussing on producing Christian films and television shows that are seen only by other Christians, they need to consider how Christian values can be communicated to mass audiences, in accordance with Jesus' command to preach to the whole world. Dr Detweiler shows how this can be done by illustrating how Christian themes are already found in recent blockbusters. In doing so, he also shows that Christian values are far more deeply entrenched in our culture - even in the very secular culture of Hollywood - than most people realise. Christians can build on this if they can get into the media. Of course, the great danger for Christians engaging with the secular mainstream is that they may be tempted to compromise too much. If any criticism can be levelled at this book, it is that Dr Detweiler lays himself open to that danger: an admirer of Jurgen Moltmann, he is perhaps too inclined to compromise in his theology and his politics, and also perhaps too eager to see Christian themes in films where there are none. That said, he deserves great credit for taking the first steps in the right direction; other Christians should follow.

8 of 11 people found the following review helpful. Helpful Considerations for Christian Engagement with Film

By Wendy MCraig Detweiler is involved with the Reel Spirituality Institute and the Brehm Center, both affiliated with Fuller Theological Seminary in southern California. In these efforts Craig has established a solid track record in interacting with contemporary cinema from an evangelical Christian perspective. In his previous book, *A Matrix of Meanings* (Baker Academic, 2003), which he co-authored with Barry Taylor, Craig helped lay a theological foundation for a Christian engagement with popular culture. With *Into the Dark* Craig builds upon this foundation to consider contemporary cinema. Evangelicals will likely find Craig's interaction with various genres of film most interesting as he seeks to see and hear God speak through what many evangelicals might consider the most unlikely sources for hearing God's voice. While Craig's insights on the theological aspects of film are indeed interesting, for me the most helpful aspect of this volume is his discussion of a methodology and foundation for Christian engagement with film. As Craig develops his methodology he moves beyond the all too frequent evangelical tendencies toward wholesale dismissal or unqualified embrace. This book represents an accessible yet well thought out engagement with film that is faithful to both cinema in its own right, as well as evangelical theological considerations, thus providing a balanced consideration of one of the more popular forms of pop culture in the 21st century. Three additional facets of Craig's methodology are worthy of reflection. First, Craig is not only interested in a rational consideration of cinema, but begins with a theological aesthetic that is aimed at reuniting beauty, goodness and truth, and he seeks to do so in this order. While Craig appreciates the rational emphasis of evangelicalism as it connects with modernity, he also recognizes that this has at times been unbalanced to the neglect of aesthetic considerations that are especially important in late modernity/post-modernity. Second, Craig emphasizes a neglected aspect of Protestant theology, that of general revelation, God's revelation in culture in all of its facets. Without due consideration of general revelation, Craig wonders whether many have missed "the transcendent, revelatory possibilities of film" as a result. Third, Craig brings theology into dialogue with culture, two spheres often kept in unfortunate isolation from one another, and this facet of his methodology results in "an audience-driven, receptor-oriented methodology." One of the ways in which this methodology manifests itself is Craig's choice of interacting with the top films chosen by the Internet Movie Database, rather than those selected by the American Film Institute. In Craig's thinking the IMDB likely represents a "new canon" of the most popular films that more accurately reflects a democratized and global source of critical film opinion of rank and file viewers, something not found in the opinions of professional film critics represented by institutions like AFI and its membership. Evangelicals are often behind the times in responding to cultural trends, but with this volume Craig Detweiler has demonstrated that evangelicals are actively involved in the theological engagement with film as one of the more popular expression of pop culture. Evangelicals will benefit from this book in a variety of uses, whether individual reflection, a source of pastoral preaching, or small group study.

In this book, Craig Detweiler examines forty-five films from the twenty-first century that resonate theologically--from the Lord of the Rings trilogy to Little Miss Sunshine--offering groundbreaking insight into their scriptural connections and theological applications. Detweiler writes with the eye of a filmmaker, leads Hollywood and religion initiatives at Fuller Seminary, and even came to faith through cinema. In this book, he unpacks the "theology of everyday life," exploring the Spirit of God in creation, redemption, and "general revelation" through sometimes unlikely filmmakers. It's the first authoritative book that dissects up-to-date movies selected by the popular Internet Movie Database. This book is recommended for teachers, students, pastors, film fans, and those interested in the intersection of Christianity and culture.

From the Back Cover *Reel Revelation*

In *Into the Dark*, respected film expert Craig Detweiler examines forty-five twenty-first-century films that resonate theologically--from The Lord of the Rings trilogy to Little Miss Sunshine--offering groundbreaking insight into their scriptural connections and theological applications. Detweiler uses the IMDb, the wildly popular Internet Movie Database, to select today's most influential contemporary films. He dissects the theology of everyday life, exploring the work of the Spirit of God in creation and redemption to discuss "general revelation" through cinema and sometimes unlikely filmmakers. *Into the Dark* opens up lively discussion topics,

including anthropology, the problem of evil, sin, interconnectivity, postmodern relationships, ethics, fantasy, and communities in crisis."Craig Detweiler is right when he says that film is a source of divine revelation. Into the Dark takes readers on a journey to discover how God is helping us understand our true identity, community, and divine history within popular culture. No Christian scholar, student, or film buff should be without this book."--David Bruce, webmaster, Hollywood Jesus"Soak a brain in billions of digital bytes of filmic splendor and an equal amount of dynamic theology, awaken it to the 'sudden and miraculous grace' available at the intersection of faith and film, and you've got Craig Detweiler's tour de force. A brilliant, timely, and useful piece of work from the only brain that could have produced it!"--Dick Staub, author, The Culturally Savvy Christian and Christian Wisdom of the Jedi Masters, and host of The Kindling's Muse"Craig Detweiler provides a refreshingly open-minded engagement with Hollywood, insisting on an integrative approach to general revelation wherein the cinematic 'good, true, and beautiful' are broadly defined and broadly discovered. It is uncommon to hear Christians speak of mass entertainment as 'a form of Mass, a common grace,' as Detweiler does, but such a perspective is sorely needed and appropriately provocative."--Brett McCracken, film critic for Christianity Today and RelevantAbout the AuthorCraig Detweiler (PhD, Fuller Theological Seminary) is professor of communication at Pepperdine University in Malibu, California. He previously served as codirector of the Reel Spirituality Institute at Fuller Theological Seminary. Detweiler has written scripts for numerous Hollywood films, and his social documentary, Purple State of Mind (www.purplestateofmind.com), debuted in 2008. He has been featured in the New York Times, on CNN, and on NPR and is the coauthor of A Matrix of Meanings.