



Through a Lens Darkly: Tracing Redemption in Film

By Marjorie Hewitt Suchocki

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What if we ask questions concerning sin and redemption outside of the religious or theological milieu? After all, "sin" functions something like religious code language for that which is problematic in human existence. But all humans deal with our fragility and our penchant for harming ourselves or others, and all humans seek to resolve these issues. Might the religious community learn from those outside our gates? Accordingly, in this book a theologian seeks to gain insight from the way seven outstanding filmmakers of our time set up the problems of human existence and seek to resolve them over a series of their films. Explore with her how Clint Eastwood, Woody Allen, Spike Lee, the Coen brothers, John Sayles, Ang Lee, and Terrence Malick define human problems and explore resolutions; mark the overlap with Christianity, but more importantly, ponder the contrasts. You'll never watch films the same way again!

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Editorial Review

Review

"This highly enjoyable book uncovers deep spiritual themes in the works of acclaimed movie directors. In clear and vivid prose, Marjorie Suchocki helps the reader appreciate powerful threads of redemption, sacrifice, love, forgiveness, community, and sheer zest in dozens of films. Suchocki's insight shines through on each life-affirming page. You'll never watch the movies the same way again."

--Douglas Todd, journalist, *Vancouver Sun*, Vancouver

"In this stimulating book, Marjorie Suchocki provides us with an impressive theological reflection on redemption in the work of seven distinguished filmmakers. Suchocki helps readers see the genius of these filmmakers reflected in the breadth and complexity of their portrayals of redemption as traced from within stories of violence, moral ambiguity, evil and absurdity, tragedy and comedy, corruption and moral responsibility, forbidden love, isolation, and community. A tremendous resource for theologians and film lovers alike."

--Bryan Stone, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, Boston University School of Theology

"Through a lens darkened by unjust suffering, a breathtaking story unfolds. With cinematographic drama, succinctness, and beauty, Marjorie Suchocki narrates a story of the stories told of violence and redemption in the movies. Whether you have seen the specific movies or not, whether you might lead a discussion, teach a class, or just deepen your own sense of this powerful medium, whether you seek spiritual or just honest responses to the biggest questions, this wise, usable, and exciting book will leave you seeing--differently."

--Catherine Keller, Professor of Constructive Theology, Drew University --Wipf and Stock Publishers

About the Author

Marjorie Hewitt Suchocki is professor emerita at Claremont School of Theology, where she held the Ingraham Chair of Theology and also served as Dean. In addition to her teaching and writing career, she also is the founding director of the Whitehead International Film Festival, begun in 2002. She serves on ecumenical juries in places as varied as Montreal, Berlin, Washington, DC, and Miami, and often lectures on film and theology in churches, colleges, and seminaries.

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