



Alien Sex: The Body and Desire in Cinema and Theology

By Gerard Loughlin

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Gerard Loughlin is one of the leading theologians working at the interface between religion and contemporary culture. In this exceptional work, he uses cinema and the films it shows to think about the church and the visions of desire it displays.

- Discusses various films, including the Alien quartet, Christopher Nolan's Memento, Stanley Kubrick's 2001: A Space Odyssey and A Clockwork Orange, Nicolas Roeg's The Man Who Fell to Earth and Derek Jarman's The Garden.
- Draws on a wide range of authors, both ancient and modern, religious and secular, from Plato to Levinas, from Karl Barth and Hans Urs von Balthasar to André Bazin and Leo Bersani.
- Uses cinema to think about the church as an ecclesiacinema, and films to think about sexual desire as erotic dispossession, as a way into the life of God.
- Written from a radically orthodox Christian perspective, at once both Catholic and critical.

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Editorial Review

Review

"Absolutely brilliant." **Stanley Hauerwas, Duke University**

"*Alien Sex* is part of Blackwell's Challenges in Contemporary Theology series, a series that has produced some of the most creative theological thinking in recent years. Loughlin's book is no exception... Loughlin's innovative method of dealing with his material is in line with the theological approach taken but also connects with the cinematic perspective. His subject matter, however, covers a wider range of interests than film and theology and delves into the realms of art history and literature. ... Loughlin's *Alien Sex* is an extremely interesting and important work." **Journal of the American Academy of Religion**

"*Alien Sex* presents Gerard Loughlin's incarnational theology in a compelling mantle of film theory... The book's three parts... display continual jump cuts between film texts, theology, and philosophy with dizzying effect, but Loughlin keeps readers from potential frustration through fascinating readings of a wide array of films... he works wonders with eclectic and appropriate juxtapositions of theological and scriptural texts."

Journal of Religion

"*Alien Sex* refuses, without coyness, to be quite the book promised by its subtitle. It is the more dazzling for the refusal... *Alien Sex* is rather an exercise in writing about incarnation under the present regime of mass images. It inter-cuts traditional Christian discourses with selections from recent films in hopes of recognizing holy bodies... Loughlin's book is not theology and film; it is theology after film - theology simply and splendidly... The final effect - despite and because of its brilliance - raises questions." **Studies in Christian Ethics**

"It is frankly difficult to see how a book with a title like this could fail to be interesting and Loughlin does not disappoint... [It is] difficult to imagine anyone other than Loughlin bringing together Christian tradition and pop culture in such a provocative and endlessly inventive way... Loughlin's work is an important revisionary reading of the role of sexuality in both theological tradition and secular modernity... I would nominate this brilliant synthesis of theology, film and cultural theory as my book of the year within the field [of religion]." **The Year's Work in Critical and Cultural Theory (2005)**

"Loughlin envisages a complete remodelling of traditional Christian ideas on the place and importance of sexual activity in life... Loughlin's subject will increasingly preoccupy intellectually, socially and morally adventurous Christians, and there will be changes in the Church's attitudes to sex in the decades to come."

Times Literary Supplement

From the Back Cover

Gerard Loughlin is one of the leading theologians working at the interface between religion and

contemporary culture. In this exceptional work, he uses cinema and the films it shows to think about the church and the visions of desire it displays.

In the figure of the alien, Loughlin finds a metaphor for that which is both most feared and desired: the body and its cravings. Secular culture follows St Augustine in thinking sex an alien force within the body. But the ancient church also found in sex the presence of a yet stranger desire that secularity forgets: the divine eros that is always other to us even as it draws us into its embrace. In God we find that which is both infinitely alien and intimate to ourselves.

Alien Sex explores the Christian tradition of 'sacred eroticism' – from Gregory of Nyssa to Hans Urs von Balthasar. Through a close reading of such films as *The Devils*, *Breaking the Waves* and Derek Jarman's *The Garden*, Loughlin shows how Christianity calls us to view sexuality from the perspective of heaven, not in order to escape the body but to encounter it more intensively. Through desire of the body we regain paradise.

About the Author

Gerard Loughlin is Senior Lecturer in Religious Studies at the University of Newcastle upon Tyne, UK. He is a founding co-editor of the journal *Theology & Sexuality*.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Dorothy Marr:

This *Alien Sex: The Body and Desire in Cinema and Theology* book is absolutely not ordinary book, you have after that it the world is in your hands. The benefit you obtain by reading this book is usually information inside this book incredible fresh, you will get data which is getting deeper a person read a lot of information you will get. This kind of *Alien Sex: The Body and Desire in Cinema and Theology* without we realize teach the one who examining it become critical in imagining and analyzing. Don't be worry *Alien Sex: The Body and Desire in Cinema and Theology* can bring whenever you are and not make your carrier space or bookshelves' turn into full because you can have it with your lovely laptop even cell phone. This *Alien Sex: The Body and Desire in Cinema and Theology* having fine arrangement in word as well as layout, so you will not feel uninterested in reading.

Colleen Harman:

Why? Because this *Alien Sex: The Body and Desire in Cinema and Theology* is an unordinary book that the inside of the reserve waiting for you to snap it but latter it will zap you with the secret the idea inside. Reading this book next to it was fantastic author who write the book in such incredible way makes the content on the inside easier to understand, entertaining approach but still convey the meaning completely. So , it is good for you for not hesitating having this anymore or you going to regret it. This amazing book will give you a lot of gains than the other book include such as help improving your expertise and your critical thinking method. So , still want to hold off having that book? If I were you I will go to the publication store hurriedly.

Jeffery Hall:

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