



Alien Scene-by-Scene

John David Ebert

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In this new book by cultural critic John David Ebert, the 1979 classic science fiction film *Alien*, directed by Ridley Scott, is analyzed in a scene-by-scene breakdown. Ebert introduces the concept of the “metaphysical vulva” as a counter concept to Lacan’s “phallus” as the film’s central hidden signifier. Ebert demonstrates that the film concerns a battle for possession of this “metaphysical vulva” by two separate sign regimes: that of the scientific-industrial complex, which wishes to use it for cloning, genetic engineering and the creation of artificial life; and that of the more ancient, mythic (and biomorphic) “Gigerian” sign regime of Titans, Furies and serpent monsters repressed by the techno-industrial regime during the rise of the metaphysical age. The crew of the *Nostromo* inadvertently stumble upon the very underworld of the mythic-matriarchal consciousness to which Olympian gods such as Zeus or Apollo banished the Titans and Furies of the matrilineal sign regime by deprivileging it as it constructed the great signifiers of the logocentric / metaphysical era that led to the development of ever higher and more advanced forms of technology. Ebert explores all of these themes and more in this intricate analysis of Ridley Scott’s *Alien*.

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