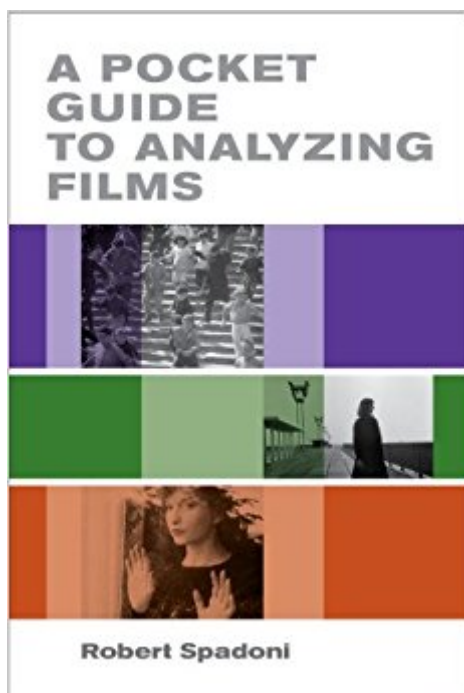


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A Pocket Guide To Analyzing Films



Synopsis

The perfect concise guide to the formal analysis of film. Designed to be used by readers at many levels of knowledge, this book moves systematically through the elements that make up most films, focusing on aspects of the art of cinema that are common across history and national cinemas. From form and narrative to mise-en-scène and cinematography to editing and sound, Robert Spadoni introduces and explains the principles and conventions of film in engaging, straightforward language. In addition to illustrating film techniques with almost 200 images; most of them in color; the book explains ways to find patterns and meaning in films through such concepts as motifs, development, and motivation. Thumbnail readings of exemplary films further lay out the essentials of formal analysis. Film illustrations include frame enlargements from Stagecoach, Psycho, Jeepers Creepers, Persepolis, Groundhog Day, Take Shelter, and more. Modestly priced and packed with images, *A Pocket Guide to Analyzing Films* is ideal for students in a wide range of film courses who are looking for an easy-to-read guide to film analysis to accompany and enhance their course materials.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This book made me want to go out and watch movies and think about them and then go watch them again and think about them some more. This is not a "Movies for Dummies" kind of book. It's a very sophisticated, detailed overview of how to analyze - and write about - how movies construct and convey meaning. At the beginning, Spadoni suggests reading the entire book and then going back and analyzing each of the parts. This is a really good suggestion because for a pocket guide,

this is an incredibly dense, complex book - it's concise, but it's the opposite of superficial. The book's approach to analyzing films also suggests watching and considering a movie as a whole and then examining various elements closely - very very closely - to understand how it makes meaning, within the movie's own context and in a bigger cultural context. Spadoni really helps you understand the difference between film and literary analysis by going beyond characters and plot and dialogue and by considering how any given film draws on - or contradicts - conventions from other movies (explicitly or otherwise). He also shows why it's important to go beyond the intentions of film directors and look at the elements of a film itself to understand how it might create various meanings. I think his explanation of the difference between a film "review" and a film "analysis" is very useful, and he gives a lot of advice and suggestions about writing in an analytical, as opposed to a critical way. I really liked this - because it's one thing to learn how to watch a film analytically and another thing to know how to convey your analysis persuasively in writing.

Spadoni's book fills a need in film studies: a broadly applicable text for formal analysis that provides a cohesive overview of film terms and concepts. Per its title, *A Pocket Guide to Analyzing Films* delivers concision rather than in-depth explanation. As such, it serves as both an approachable introduction to film analysis and a quick refresher on the subject. Ultimately, the book features the rapid-reference benefits of a film-term glossary as well as the formal-analysis context of a traditional film-intro text (in addition to an introduction and conclusion, organizing chapters include "Film as Form," "Film Narrative," "Mise-en-scène," "Cinematography," "Editing," and "Sound"; each of these has detailed subsections). Further elevating it beyond a glossary is the abundance of stills -- *A Pocket Guide* includes numerous images, providing a visual framework to ensure better understanding and retention; nearly all of the terms and concepts have corresponding screen captures, and many have more than one in order to capture a multiple-shot effect of editing, for example. *A Pocket Guide to Analyzing Films* is written in a clear, conversational style that engages the reader rather than repelling him or her through opaque jargon. The book also achieves approachability through the inclusion of popular blockbusters -- serving, too, as an appropriate validation of their worth as objects of analysis -- alongside a diverse selection of classic, international, and experimental films, as well as print and television advertisements. Films by Spielberg, Soderbergh, and Abrams sit comfortably alongside those of Brakhage, Maddin, and Resnais. Another key element of the book's accessibility is its price, especially considering the glossy pages and number of images, many of which are in color.

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