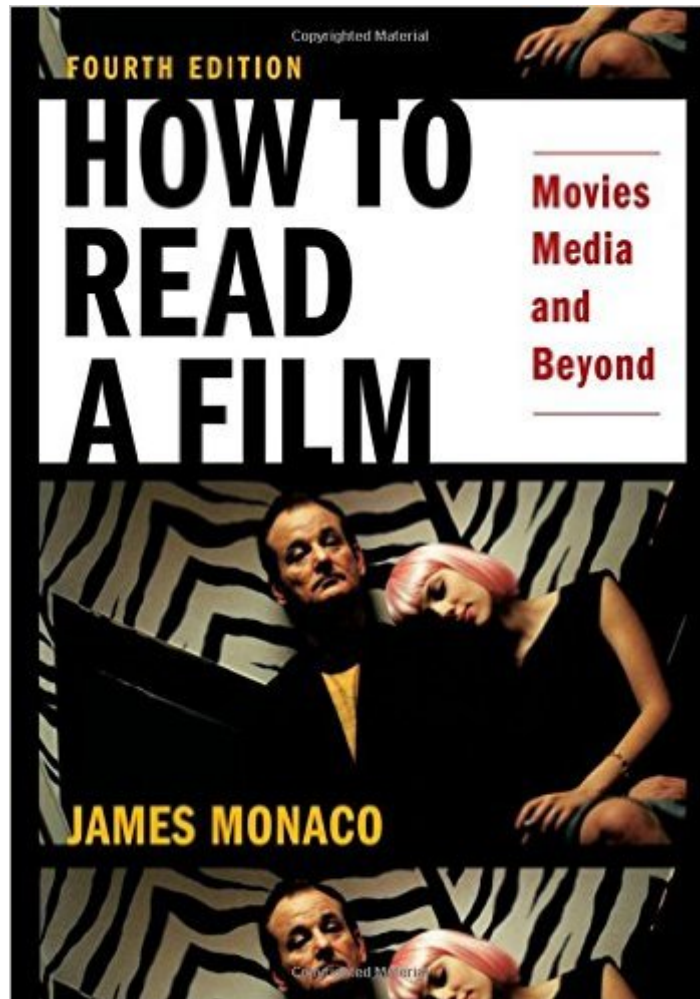


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How To Read A Film: Movies, Media, And Beyond



Synopsis

Richard Gilman referred to *How to Read a Film* as simply "the best single work of its kind." And Janet Maslin in *The New York Times Book Review* marveled at James Monaco's ability to collect "an enormous amount of useful information and assemble it in an exhilaratingly simple and systematic way." Indeed, since its original publication in 1977, this hugely popular book has become the definitive source on film and media. Now, James Monaco offers a special anniversary edition of his classic work, featuring a new preface and several new sections, including an "Essential Library: One Hundred Books About Film and Media You Should Read" and "One Hundred Films You Should See." As in previous editions, Monaco once again looks at film from many vantage points, as both art and craft, sensibility and science, tradition and technology. After examining film's close relation to other narrative media such as the novel, painting, photography, television, and even music, the book discusses the elements necessary to understand how films convey meaning, and, more importantly, how we can best discern all that a film is attempting to communicate. In addition, Monaco stresses the still-evolving digital context of film throughout--one of the new sections looks at the untrustworthy nature of digital images and sound--and his chapter on multimedia brings media criticism into the twenty-first century with a thorough discussion of topics like virtual reality, cyberspace, and the proximity of both to film. With hundreds of illustrative black-and-white film stills and diagrams, *How to Read a Film* is an indispensable addition to the library of everyone who loves the cinema and wants to understand it better.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Monaco's *How To Read A Film* is a triumph in bringing together a very wide range of theoretical, social, aesthetic, political, economic, historical, and technical information and ideas about film. In the newer editions, he has also addressed the broader range of media in general. It has been considered the "bible" by many on film history and theory for three decades. As a young film student 25 years ago, this was a required text for me then and still is today in many important schools. I learned so much from it then, and amazingly, continue to take away insights which inform my own film-making even today. Some of the comments from other reviewers here are a bit baffling, to be frank. I don't find his writing style to be irritating at all; just the opposite! I feel that one of Monaco's real strengths is his style; he deals with what could easily be rather dry material in a way that has me unable to turn the pages fast enough! He always keeps the subject very interesting and is quite economical and free of excesses and digressions in his delivery. If anything, I found myself wanting to know more at times. One reviewer states that Monaco lacks organization and drifts randomly between topics. He cannot be serious (??). Whatever you might come up with to be critical about, I don't think that anyone could possibly make that case. On the contrary, given the utterly ambitious amount of material that he is dealing with, I truly applaud him for the organizational skill and deft handling of the presentation of such a massive amount of information! I think that he brings it all together extremely well with three indexes and a remarkable bibliography to support a highly accessible and coherent structure of chapters.

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