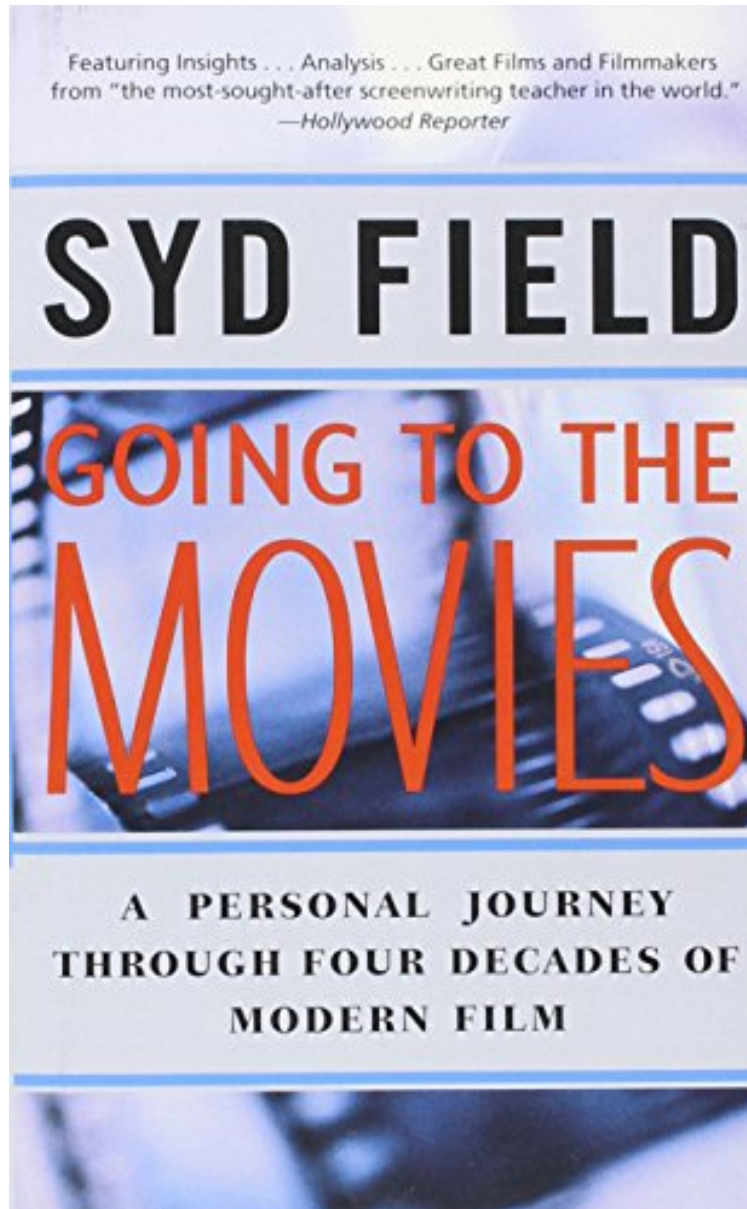


(Ebook pdf) Going to the Movies: A Personal Journey Through Four Decades of Modern Film

## Going to the Movies: A Personal Journey Through Four Decades of Modern Film

*Syd Field*

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#1354782 in Books 2001-10-09 2001-10-09 Original language: English PDF # 1 8.24 x .73 x 5.20l, .61 #File Name: 0440508495312 pages | File size: 79.Mb

**Syd Field : Going to the Movies: A Personal Journey Through Four Decades of Modern Film** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Going to the Movies: A Personal Journey Through Four Decades of Modern Film:

0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. *A Life in Film and A Screen Writers Guide* By Aco This is a pretty good book. While Field has been touched by beneficial timing, and influential relationships, he has developed through diligence a perspective and vision for film, screenplays in particular. While the book begins as an autobiography: school, wanderings, discovering film, school, early work, etc., it develops into a book of analysis and technique. In that way it went from good to okay. His working at Wolper Productions, his relationship with Jean Renoir and Sam Peckinpah all are interesting views of film making and film makers. I wish there was more of that. In fact, after a half chapter plus on *Citizen Kane*, in a following chapter Field talks about working at Wolper on a series hosted by Joseph Cotton. But there is no regarding of Cotton's involvement in the most influential of films. Through script reviewing at Wolper Productions he develops a style and level of efficiency which begins to translate itself into a writing career. He survives off of optioned scripts for several years before he begins teaching. From this point on he becomes more of an advisor, and leads up to his place today as a formidable screenplay expert. Within this arc, from autobiography to technical manual there is interesting and insightful writing on film, it's brilliance, influence, form and power. A decision on whether or not to make this a technical book about writing a screenplay or a memoir about a life in the film business would have improved this book.

3 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Simple, yet oh, so revealing. By C. D. Reynolds Let's start by saying this book is not for everyone. Going to the Movies is the story of how and why Syd Field learned to analyse scripts. As such, it's introspective at times and personally revealing at others. I especially loved two things about this book. First, Field's honesty is quite endearing. He discusses his failures as well as his triumphs, and writers need to see failures, too. It's how we all learn. Second, I loved the tips I got from this book. Field discusses the importance of midpoint--how to hang your story around a centerpiece event. Later he explains closed and open stories. In the former, the protagonist knows what's happening (like *Chinatown*). An open story is when the audience understands what faces the protag., but the protag. doesn't (*Hitchcock* movies, usually). And Field reminds us that a good story isn't a good story unless it's executed properly. One thing annoyed me a bit. Field has an "Uncle Sol" who helped him get started by finding him jobs in Hollywood. Well, frankly, I sure wish I had an Uncle Sol. BUT--in fairness--Field did his own homework, worked hard, and learned important lessons which he shares with us. Uncle Sol or no Uncle Sol, Field understands what makes a script great. He deserves his success. You don't have to be a screenwriter to learn from this book. I'm a novelist, and what he says about story works regardless of medium. I think beginning writers will probably learn more than advanced writers, but that may or may not be true. I've been writing a long time and still picked up invaluable tips. So, this book may not be for everyone, but you'll love it if you sincerely want to learn basic techniques for better writing.

0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Good teacher. By Bakari Chavanu I started reading this book yesterday and found that the clarity of the writing and the insight and experiences the author brings to understanding movies have kept from hardly putting this book down. Field's book is useful for both developing screenwriters and avid movie watchers. Because movies are really the popular literature of the 21st century (despite the number of bad flicks produced every year), it's important that we gain a better appreciation of how the movies tell stories and how they affect us. Field in his own journey to understand movies provides some very good insight. By chapter 12 of his journey he shows his talent as a teacher, script reader and writer, and a lover of movies. In this chapter he breaks down the classic film "*Chinatown*," showing how what he calls Plot Points are used to set up and move dramatic parts of a movie along. By understanding the form and structure of movies, we can gain a better understanding of a film's narrative and also appreciate when a screen writer and director have produced a well crafted movie. Using Field's insight, we as movie goers get beyond it was a great movie because its action, star appeal, or drama. We begin to critically reflect on how the actions, words, and images tell the story in a film. We can appreciate what the writer and director do to the set up the context for the story and take us through the middle (what Field calls the confrontation) and the end (the resolution) of a film. (The rest of the book goes how to examine contemporary films like *Pulp Fiction*, explaining how Tarantino creates such memorable characters.) Now when I happen to see video or DVD more than once, I can apply what I'm learning from Field to better appreciate the art of a film. I think I'll think also read his other popular book, *Four Screenplays*, for futher insight.

Featuring insights ... analysis ... great films and filmmakers from the most-sought-after screenwriting teacher in the world (*The Hollywood Reporter*). *A life in film*. An extraordinary career. An unforgettable story from noted lecturer, teacher, and bestselling author Syd Field. What makes a great movie great? ... An actor legendary? ... A screenplay extraordinary or just ordinary? Syd Field has spent a lifetime seeking answers to these questions. His bestselling books on the art and craft of screenwriting have become the film industrys gold standard. Now Syd Field tells his own remarkable story, sharing the insight and experience gleaned from an extraordinary career. Using classic movies from the past and present from Orson Welles *Citizen Kane* to Andy and Larry Wachowskis *The Matrix* Field provides a guided tour of the basic elements common to all great films. Learn what makes *La Grande Illusion* a groundbreaking, timeless classic ... how *Casablanca* teaches one of the most important elements of creating memorable characters for the screen ... why *Pulp Fiction* might be one of the most influential films of our time. Discover the legendary filmmakers, films, and stars who shaped Fields understanding of the medium.... Meet Jean Renoir, the great French director who steered his young Berkeley protg away from medicine into film.... Watch a dazzling young Francis Ford

Coppola as he directs his thesis film at UCLA.... Spend an amazing summer with Sam Peckinpah as he shares the screenwriting techniques behind his classic western *The Wild Bunch*. Rich in anecdote and insight, *Going to the Movies* will both entertain and inform, deepening every moviegoer's appreciation of the magic behind the silver screen.

From Publishers Weekly Watching a movie is easy. But it's hard to figure out how its structure, images, acting, camera work and scripts can make us respond so powerfully. Writing in a chatty, informal manner, the author of several popular screenplay-writing manuals (including *Screenplay*, which is used in numerous college courses) turns to autobiography to meditate on what makes a movie great. Whether he is addressing his friendship with the great French director Jean Renoir, whose masterpiece *La Grande Illusion* Field considers one of the foundations of modern cinema, or about his classes with the great feminist film director Dorothy Arzner, Field conveys an enormous amount of technical and practical knowledge. Often delivering fascinating, miscellaneous bits of information (e.g., Jim Morrison named his band the Doors after Aldous Huxley's book about drugs, *The Doors of Perception*), Field centers his theoretical ideas on specific films and actors. He notes, for example, that the films of John Garfield almost always follow the mythic structure described by Joseph Campbell. His odd comparison of Resnais's obscure *Last Year at Marienbad* with the predictable Hollywood romance *An Affair to Remember* illustrates the difference between a subjective and an objective position in a film script. As head of the story department at Cinemobile, Field has read "more than two thousand screenplays and more than a hundred and fifty novels" and has worked with or known almost everyone in the industry since the late 1950s. Although cloaked in modesty, his illuminating, consistently entertaining memoir displays enough wit, intelligence and empathy to inspire a host of great films. Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc. From *Library Journal* "What makes a great movie experience?" asks Field (*Screenplay: The Foundations of Screenwriting*) in this account, which traces his own lifelong involvement with the film industry as a documentary filmmaker, film critic, studio executive, screenwriter, and lecturer on screenwriting. Field attempts to isolate the underlying elements common to all "great" films by reflecting on some of his favorites which include *La Grande Illusion*, *The Wild Bunch*, and *Chinatown* and influential works like *Pulp Fiction*. His recollections and insights are worthwhile and occasionally moving as when he recounts his meetings with Michelangelo Antonioni. Field's passion for cinema shines throughout, and it helps to propel readers through encounters with a variety of types of film. The end result will likely please movie buffs and belongs in public libraries with film collections. Neal Baker, Earlham Coll., Richmond, IN Copyright 2001 Reed Business Information, Inc. From *Booklist* Field began teaching the art of screen writing in the early '70s at the tiny Sherman Oaks Experimental College and went on to lecture and conduct workshops around the world. He believes all great screenplays assume a rough three-act form, with plot changes and major climaxes at pretty much the same points; the same basic structure undergirds films as different as *Chinatown*, *An Unmarried Woman*, and *Annie Hall*. Field has written other books detailing that structure, and he elaborates his theories again here. But what really makes this book is how well he conducts us on his journey from confused college student, majoring in literature before finding his true love for the movies, to Hollywood professional and friend to such luminaries as directors Jean Renoir and Sam Peckinpah. En route, he lets us glimpse the less glamorous, 9-to-5 side of Hollywood: in his days as a script reader, he estimates that he slogged through thousands of scripts, most hopelessly flawed, to find the 50 or so he eventually passed on to his bosses. Jack Helbig Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved