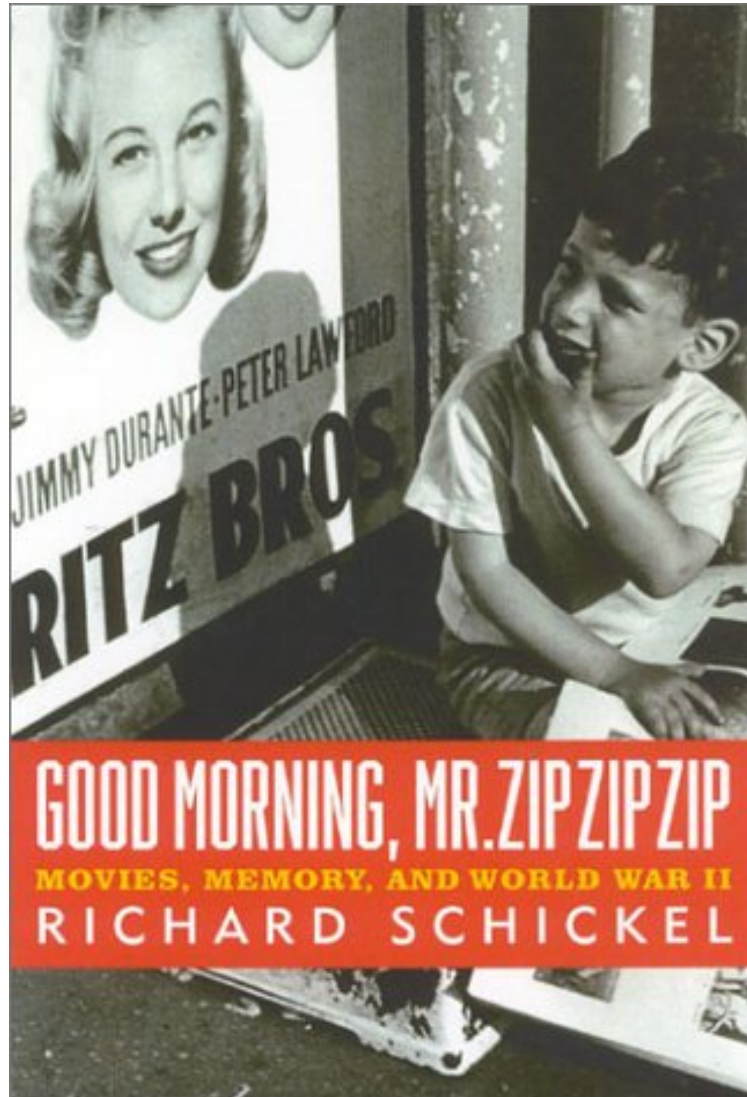


Good Morning, Mr. Zip Zip Zip: Movies, Memory and World War II

Richard Schickel

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Richard Schickel : Good Morning, Mr. Zip Zip Zip: Movies, Memory and World War II before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Good Morning, Mr. Zip Zip Zip: Movies, Memory and World War II:

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Fascinating! But is it too limited? By enubrius Richard Schickel's memoir of life and movies during WWII, is a book that not "only a film scholar could write", but one that only THIS film scholar could write. To those of us of, as they say, a certain age, it offers a fascinating re-evaluation of the films

of WWII, as well as a compelling portrait of growing up in America at the time. Indeed, if the book has a flaw for those of us old enough to remember the films in their original release, it is the lack of precise dates of release of many of them. HOWEVER, one does have to ask (and my rating of 4, rather than 5, stars offers my answer), who, besides me, Schickel, and our co-age group, is the book for? While his insights into all the films he cites are meticulous, the vast majority of them are not only obscure to most film goers, but DESERVEDLY so. The writing is, as one would expect, always compelling; the portrait of America, film, and the intertwining of the two to an impressionable public, is flawless. Indeed, the subject not only should have been covered, but needed to be. But, will the average film buff, let alone the average reader, be as enthralled as I was? Alas, I tend to doubt it, but I'm grateful it was done, anyway. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Thank you, Mr. Schickel

By Michael Samerdyke There are many books about American films made during World War II. What sets this book apart from most of those is that Schickel focuses on the movies he saw at the time of the war as a child, giving us a double perspective: the child watching the film then and the adult watching the films again now. Thus there are some gaps. The young Schickel, unsurprisingly, avoided the Preston Sturges comedies, and so these do not play a big part in the book. However, what we do get is a believable and convincing look at how the public perceived these films (*Hangmen Also Die*, *The Human Comedy*, *Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo*) at the time. A nice thing is that Schickel, although he makes it clear he finds some of these movies mendacious, never takes a snide, wise guy attitude but remembers his childish delight in these films, while as an adult he can pick out the flaws. The book is not just a look at films of 1941-5. It is also a memoir, so there is material about growing up and becoming a film critic. I found this interesting, as Schickel is one of my favorite critics. (His book on D. W. Griffith is superb.) However, people only interested in wartime films, and not also in Schickel, might be advised to get it from the library. 2 of 17 people found the following review helpful. Review without Reading!

By Ted Cardiff I heard an interview with R. Schickel on Public Radio and am quite interested in buying and reading his book. I grew up in the same Wisconsin suburb - Wauwatosa, WI and most likely the same time period that he did and am interested in his depiction of that time and place. I'm most interested in how he covers the question of Hollywood not dealing with the WW2 persecution of European Jews. Subject matter which was not publically known in the US until about March 1945, two months before the end of that war. I rated this 3 stars because I couldn't submit a review without it.

In this book the celebrated film critic and biographer turns to a story of his own life during the years of World War II. Richard Schickel's engaging memoir is not a fashionable tale of childhood abuse, but it does chart the growth of one addiction: a boy's attraction to the movies, which was to become a lifelong passion. In the dark movie palaces of his youth, Mr. Schickel confesses, he surrendered a great deal of his imaginative self and found the romance and heroic adventure so lacking in the serene and placid little world he inhabited. Looking back now, he finds that much of the drama in his young life was covered in silence, duplicity, and misdirection—a happy middle-class fiction that evaded the harsher facts of life. And so did Hollywood. It showed us fantastic possibilities and made them plausible, but in so doing it profoundly misled us about the nature of the war, our soldiers, our government, and the home front. Good Morning, Mr. Zip Zip Zip is Mr. Schickel's effort to set the record straight about that view of the war promoted by our popular culture, and he does it by illuminating the meaning of wartime films set against the background of his own growing up. It's a wonderful reading experience.

From Publishers Weekly Schickel, a 20-year film critic for Time, analyzes his obsession with movies vis-a-vis his own life. He discovered the seductive allure of cinema at age five and was hooked. Schickel's is a touching memoir of a smalltown boy whose life was shaped by WWII and the myths shrouded in the greatest generation, a notion he takes to task. His universe is Wauwatosa, Wis., where he leads a safe, middle-class existence, recalled in extraordinary detail. Clever at reading and hopeless at math doubtless the source of my profession is to be found here Schickel remains restless. He longs to escape this placid, Sinclair Lewis-style burb and finds release in films. Be it the adventures of Errol Flynn or Gary Cooper, he's transported. And therein lies the appeal of criticism: its assertiveness, its ability to subvert the sometimes pompous, often expensive, object under review. This is the era of radio shows, blood drives and rationing. It's also a time when Hollywood and the War Office conspired, in Schickel's view, to present a distorted view of war. The Japanese were always brutal, while movie Germans often possessed civility, hiding hidden truths and creating political distortions that linger to this day. Most shameful, he says, films ignored the suffering of European Jews. Throughout his narrative, he pierces holes in American complacency: democracy prevailed onscreen; ethnic disdain and anti-Semitism raged offscreen. Schickel intercuts personal reminiscences with film synopses, subjecting both to his critical gaze. Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Booklist The movie bug bit film reviewer and historian Schickel just in time for World War II, which began when he was six, and his childhood memoir counterpoints recollections of family and milieu with those of the movies he saw. After sketching his situation in the Milwaukee suburb in which he grew up, he proceeds to his first movies, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* and *The Wizard of Oz*, which put him off fantasy for life. Thereafter, his theme is his growing consciousness of the war and how it was mediated by the movies. He didn't then question such anomalies as the representation of the Japanese

as much more evil than the Germans, who, except for strident Nazis, were rendered sympathetically. Now, of course, he sees the racism underlying that discrepancy and understands its acceptance by white-preferring 1940s America. Nor did he see the discrepancy between his family's status-consciousness and movie scenarios in which wartime Americans easily embraced one another as equals; such brotherhood may have been what the communist hacks who wrote so many wartime movies wanted, but it never happened--a point many poems in the outstanding *Poets of World War II* [BKL Mr 15 03] confirm. Although more socially oriented than Mary McCarthy's *Memories of a Catholic Girlhood* (1957), Schickel's memoir is little inferior to it as a reconsideration of personal myths. Ray Olson Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved Film critics memoir of growing up during the war and his lifelong passion for movies. (Indianapolis Star)Recalls the many movies written by the soon to be black listed that offered romanticized visions of American and Russian societies during the Second World War. (Andrea Thompson *The New Yorker*)Intercuts a personal reminiscences with film synopses, subjecting both to his critical gaze. (Publishers Weekly)Having written a small library of film biographies, not to mention countless reviews for *Time* magazine, Schickel turns to the story of his own life in *Good Morning, Mr. Zip Zip Zip*. In addition to explaining his lifelong passion for film, Schickel explores how Hollywood myth-making industry misled us profoundly about the nature of war, security and government. (Globe and Mail)Schickel's moving and trenchant memoir of growing up and going to the movies during the war in Wauwatosa, Wis., is a strange and, in its way, quite remarkable book a story about what movies meant in America when, arguably, they meant the most as well as a story about a Mid-Western WASP family ensnared by failures and secrets "right in the middle, socially as well as geographically" of its middle-class community. (Buffalo News)On "the cusp of old age," he discusses the "shimmer and sheen" of movies in his youth, weaving through a narrative of his coming of age in Milwaukee before and during World War II. (Library Journal)Discussion of "the stars" of mass entertainment still conveys, even if one deplors it, an undeniable thrill, and Schickel is a master at interpreting the mystery. (Los Angeles Times)Through all these years, he has been a consistently sturdy, perceptive and when necessary dissenting observer of American culture as revealed in the movies. Now, in this fine memoir, he performs the same service while looking back on his own life. (*Of Higher Education*)His account of his obsession with Hedy Lamarr's legendary nude swim in *Ecstasy* is pungent fun. (Kevin Riordan *Courier Post*)His childhood memoir counterpoints recollections of family and milieu with those of the movies he saw. (Booklist, Starred)One brilliant insight after another. (Robert Towne)This astute film critic takes the measure of his own life, with a calm, probing honesty, a hard-won modesty and dignity that are rare and touching qualities in contemporary memoirs. (Phillip Lopate)Charming and evocative...a testimony to joy...a wise volume, lacking menace. (Jonathan Schwartz)Stylish and insightful.... Told with a beguiling writer's grace and a critic's unflinching directness...a marvelous memoir. (Eric Lax)He knows the psychological landscape of the movies better than almost anyone. A sagacious and fiercely independent-minded observer. (Daphne Merkin)A fascinatingly well-researched and resonant film history, an invaluable remembrance of things and movies past, and an exhilarating debunking of Tom Brokaw's nostalgic idealization of the World War II generation. (Molly Haskell)Wonderfully successful...a fascinating and often hilarious meditation on what nobody at the time recognized as our great national art form. (Richard F. Snow, editor, *American Heritage*)An engaging and entirely original anti-memoir.... A wonderful, provocative book. (John Dunne)Schickel's movie critiques are admirably comprehensive.... He goes beyond the surface analysis of action to nuances of cinematography and production. (The Weekly Standard)Intelligent.... These films inspire some of Schickel's most entertaining writing. (Chicago Tribune)A welcome antidote...refreshingly down to earth... a pleasure to read....an insightful critique...brilliant. (The New York Times)Brutally honest and gracefully written...an important book and a necessary one. (Martin Scorsese)