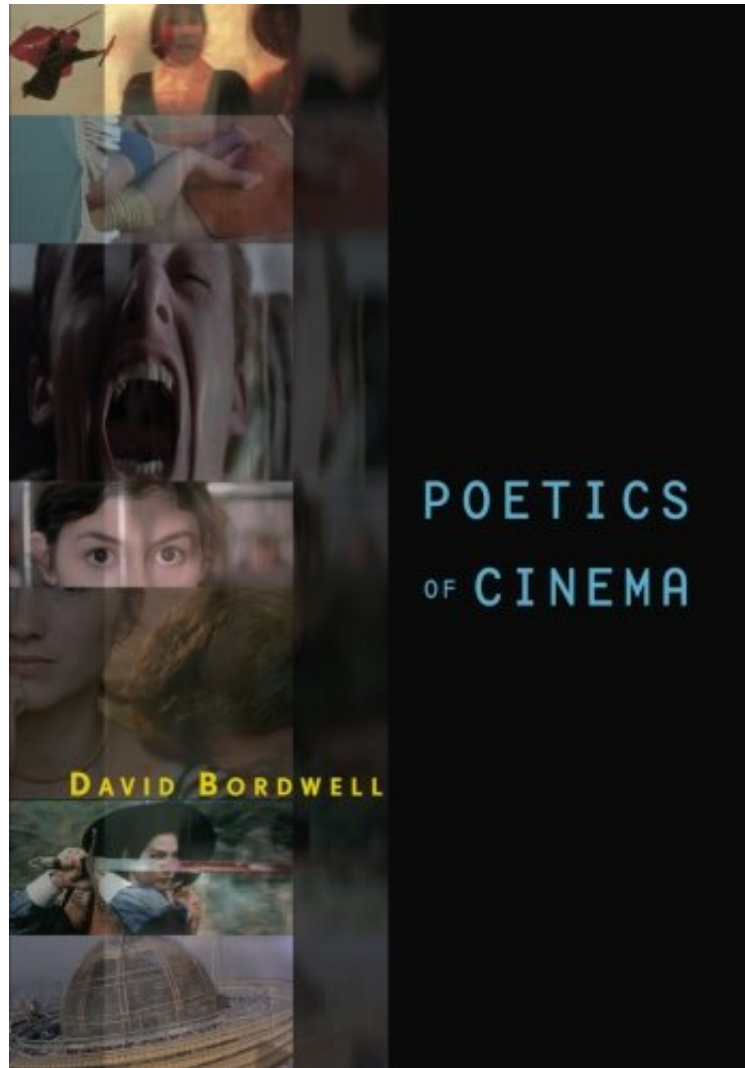


Poetics of Cinema

David Bordwell

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David Bordwell : Poetics of Cinema before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Poetics of Cinema:

10 of 10 people found the following review helpful. A Challenging Work of Film ScholarshipBy Tony WilliamsI will begin my review by mentioning the most basic problem with this book, namely it's price that may prevent it obtaining the wider circulation that it deserves. However, as the author has stated on several occasions, writers, especially those of academic texts, usually have no control concerning the prices publishers charge for their works. Hopefully, this collection of new and past essays may be available in a much more accessible form some time in the future but until then many of us must be content by obtaining it via libraries.Having said this, I will now begin by saying that this

collection represents one of the most worthwhile texts of film criticism current today and even those who may disagree with the approach taken will find it challenging and learn much from it - assuming we study it with unbiased perceptions and be ready to debate with its findings. The introductory essay defining historical poetics represents one of the best informed example of a certain type of practical criticism of its type. Among the other excellent essays, those of cinematic construction and vision, cognition and comprehension in *MILDRED PIERCE*, the three dimensions of film narrative, and the extraordinary investigation of how several classical Hollywood cinematic craft practices informed 1950s cinemascope films are extraordinary in their lucid presentation of arguments. Virtually all of the essays are informed by frames from scenes within the various films discussed. Like all of his books, *POETICS OF CINEMA* is not an easy read. It is demanding but not in the realm of obscurantist film theory of several decades before. Bordwell covers European, Hollywood, Hong Kong and Japanese Cinema in several learned essays in a cogent and disciplined manner based upon the type of logical and reasoned argument very difficult to find in most journals today. Again, I will conclude by saying that despite the different paths we may follow and various disagreements we may have with the methodology, his arguments can not be ignored or avoided. In fact, if we engage with them seriously, we may end up being better makers of meaning than before. This book is highly recommended to all serious readers whether inside or outside the academy.

1 of 11 people found the following review helpful. Another wonderful book! By Lzaro Manuel Silva
 It's always a pleasure to learn from this Master os Arts. Lzaro Silva Terceira, Azores Portugal
 15 of 18 people found the following review helpful. Table of Contents
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Bringing together twenty-five years of work on what he has called the "historical poetics of cinema," David Bordwell presents an extended analysis of a key question for film studies: how are films made, in particular historical contexts, in order to achieve certain effects? For Bordwell, films are made things, existing within historical contexts, and aim to create determinate effects. Beginning with this central thesis, Bordwell works out a full understanding of how films channel and recast cultural influences for their cinematic purposes. With more than five hundred film stills, *Poetics of Cinema* is a must-have for any student of cinema.

"It will come as no surprise to anyone already familiar with Bordwell that these essays exhibit a dazzling command of a wide range of filmmaking styles, from Japanese cinema of the Twenties through the Forties (two separate essays) to Hollywood's early usage of Cinemascope to the films of Taiwanese martial-arts filmmaker King Hu." *Film Comment*

"Film Theory, rightly or wrongly, makes most film makers cringe. We rarely see our processes, collaborations, technologies, obsessions, or underlying motivations thoughtfully examined in such writings. David Bordwell's work is radically different. Whether examining Hollywood cinema, Hong Kong, Independent, New Wave, silent or sound, high grossing or unknown, he addresses film with a clear mission -- to understand how a film works, how it's made and why -- and to discuss his findings in a direct style that embraces intellectuals and non-academic readers too. I have learned a great deal from David about film narrative, and in *Poetics of Cinema*, he carries his mission further, drawing on a lifetime's perspective to lay out some universal truths." James Mangold, Director of *3:10 to Yuma*, *Walk the Line*, and *Cop Land*

"Is there anyone who writes about the movies with more intelligence, clarity, and style than David Bordwell? With an awesome depth of knowledge, he conveys a deep love of his subject. In *Poetics of Cinema* Bordwell explains how movies can transcend, inspire, and become sublime. I feel when I read him that he starts where I leave off.." Roger Ebert

"A new book by David Bordwell is always an important event and this one is especially welcome. These wide ranging essays are an oasis of grounded analysis in a desert of parched Theory and readers will drink deep from wells of insight about form, style and context and, above all, of love and appreciation for film." Larry Gross, Professor and Director, USC Annenberg School for Communication

"Its title echoing Aristotle and the eponymous 1927 collection of essays by Russian Formalist scholars, Bordwell's *Poetics of Cinema* reminds us that cinema is not just a cultural artifact or a market commodity, but is, first and foremost, an art form. If you wish to know what makes cinema different from any other art or wonder what it takes to be an expert on film, Bordwell's book is the one to read." Yuri Tsivian, University of Chicago

"David Bordwell's *Poetics of Cinema* is a must read collection of thirty years of Bordwell's engaging inquiry into, and analysis of, cinema from around the world. Bordwell is thorough, imaginative and, yes, in his own words often mirthful in his analysis of every topic he undertakes." Andrew Horton, University of Oklahoma, author of *Writing the Character Centered Screenplay*.

"By turns suggestive and conclusive, playful and polemical, wide-ranging and to the point, *Poetics of Cinema* combines the keen passion of a cinephile and the precision of a distinguished film scholar. David Bordwell's compellingly choreographed and painstakingly

documented essays revisit, extend, and update the rich work of many decades." Eric Rentschler, Harvard University "David Bordwell's work on the poetics of cinema has been foundational for modern cinema studies, dedicated to an intense focus on the processes by which films make meaning and alert our senses. His combination of clarity and insight make him a master of the moving image, a scholar whose knowledge of the range of cinema remains unparalleled and a critic whose polemics are impossible to ignore." Tom Gunning, University of Chicago "This is a wonderfully rich and diverse collection of essays, covering a wide array of topics with David Bordwell's characteristic rigour and verve. The collection spans just about the whole of Bordwell's career, making available several important earlier essays; but because he has taken the trouble to substantially revise or update all of the reprinted material, the book conveys a vivid sense of Bordwell's current thinking. By weaving the past essays into a coherent structure with new work, the book also hints at an intellectual autobiography, showing us the history and development of Bordwell's concerns. The collection confirms that Bordwell is not only the most significant film scholar of his generation, but one of the most impressive figures in the humanities in general over the past thirty years." Murray Smith, University of Kent "Bordwell's primary interest, indeed his passion, is the film itself. Throughout his book, he writes with an infectious enthusiasm and demonstrates an encyclopedic knowledge of film, dotting the text with numerous film citations and plot synopses. Film scenes and sequences are analysed shot by shot, with extensive use of frame stills (more than five hundred). He gives close attention to the subtle details of film style, such as camera framings and the choreographed movements of actors. All this exemplifies "rational and empirical enquiry" (3). The truth is out there, he believes, though it is no doubt messy and complicated." Daniel Barratt, *The Evolutionary* About the Author David Bordwell, Jacques Ledoux Professor at the University of Wisconsin, is arguably the most influential scholar of film in the United States. The author, with his wife Kristin Thompson, of the standard textbook *Film Art* and a series of influential studies of directors (Eisenstein, Ozu, Dreyer) as well as periods and styles (Hong Kong cinema, Classical Hollywood cinema, among others), he has also trained a generation of professors of cinema studies, extending his influence throughout the world. His books have been translated into fifteen languages.