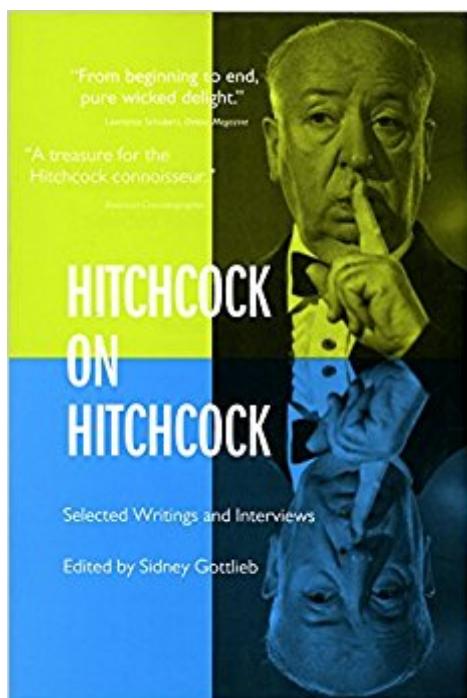


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Hitchcock On Hitchcock: Selected Writings And Interviews



Synopsis

Gathered here for the first time are Alfred Hitchcock's reflections on his own life and work. In this ample selection of largely unknown and formerly inaccessible interviews and essays, Hitchcock provides an enlivening commentary on a career that spanned decades and transformed the history of the cinema. Bringing the same exuberance and originality to his writing as he did to his films, he ranges from accounts of his own life and experiences to techniques of filmmaking and ideas about cinema in general. Wry, thoughtful, witty, and humorous as well as brilliantly informative; this selection reveals another side of the most renowned filmmaker of our time. Sidney Gottlieb not only presents some of Hitchcock's most important pieces, but also places them in their historical context and in the context of Hitchcock's development as a director. He reflects on Hitchcock's complicated, often troubled, and continually evolving relationship toward women, both on and off the set. Some of the topics Hitchcock touches upon are the differences between English and American attitudes toward murder, the importance of comedy in film, and the uses and techniques of lighting. There are also many anecdotes of life among the stars, reminiscences from the sets of some of the most successful and innovative films of this century, and incisive insights into working method, film history, and the role of film in society. Unlike some of the complex critical commentary that has emerged on his life and work, the director's own writing style is refreshingly straightforward and accessible. Throughout the collection, Hitchcock reveals a delight and curiosity about his medium that bring all his subjects to life.

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Customer Reviews

No one knew more about manipulating a movie audience than Alfred Hitchcock, the legendary master of suspense. But while many film directors have written books about their ideas and techniques, Hitchcock discussed his personal theories almost exclusively in the short articles he wrote throughout his long life. Here, for the first time, most of these hard-to-find pieces have been collected. Sidney Gottlieb's well-edited volume features Hitchcock's thoughts on actors ("they should be treated like cattle"), effective film editing, the power of the thriller, proper uses of a director's talents, and the keys to any good suspense film: sex and murder. Gottlieb's introduction and running commentary is illuminating and helpful. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Although Hitchcock worked mainly within the suspense genre he experimented endlessly with the form, and few film directors were as clear-eyed about the strengths and limitations of the medium. Every element in his films was carefully planned, with audience involvement essential to the experience. Not surprisingly, Hitchcock constantly explained himself, and this book collects interviews and essays from both his early British and later Hollywood periods. Rare and important pieces include "Why I Am Afraid of the Dark," "Why Thrillers Thrive," and a whimsical but revealing essay, "Women Are a Nuisance"?Hitch claimed men were better actors. Not nearly as entertaining as Truffaut's extended interview, Hitchcock (S. & S., 1967), this book still deserves a place in any important film collection.?Stephen Rees, Bucks Cty. Free Lib., Levittown, Pa.Copyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Great stuff. Might have been better with some editing, but they wanted to capture Hitch in all of his erudite, quirky glory. Awesome analyses of films and -- even more fun -- the techniques of storytelling and film-making.

These are articles written by Hitchcock on the subject of cinema. These articles were gathered together in one volume. The book is repetitive but considering that it is essentially a collection of articles from various sources, this makes sense. It certainly isn't an easy or enjoyable read. It IS however a wonderful resource. The articles are interesting when read by themselves. I read the book by reading an article per day for a while. The repetitive nature of the book was not so bothersome this way. I am glad to own the book and will likely return to it one of these days. Francois Truffaut's book length interview would be a more enjoyable read for the majority of

Hitchcock fans.

So few of the great directors from Hollywood's Golden Age wrote about their craft, either its theory or practice, so this collection of articles, interviews, speeches, lectures and publicity pieces from Alfred Hitchcock is very welcome, even if most were ghost-written. The volume covers his career from humble menial in 1919 to aging maestro in the 1930s, and includes his thoughts on acting, plots, the studio system, producers, production, technicians, genre audiences, Britain, and, of course, style. There are some priceless anecdotes about Hitchcock's early directing days in the haphazard British film industry, a short story parodying Poe and sensationalist horror stories; the important essay 'Why I am Afraid of the Dark', acknowledging his debt to Poe and the Surrealists; an hilarious interview with a wannabe auteurist who doesn't even know what a cut is (Interviewer: 'our magazine is for 'the intelligent motion picturegoer''. Hitch: 'Are there intelligent picturegoers!'); and an intriguing transcription of a screenwriting session for 'Marnie' with Evan Hunter. The great problem with this book is its editing. Firstly, Gottlieb's claims for the material are ludicrously disproportionate, and his lengthy introductions overstretch what is largely superficial material. Hitch's ruminations on the audience and narrative, say, do not look forward to the current interests of film studies as if he were some kind of soothsayer, but reflect the concerns of all film-makers working in the same periods. As Truffaut's book on Hitchcock proved in any case, it would be unwise to take everything the Master said at face value; and there is a typical unwillingness in these pieces to discuss the 'meaning' of his work. More seriously, there is far too much repetition of material, as we watch Hitchcock recycling the same insights, stories and examples for different readerships; no amount of editorial sophism can prevent the reading becoming tedious.

This should have been a great book. However, this collection of interviews, essays and writings from Alfred Hitchcock develops into an almost utterly incoherent mess that has no shape and is hard to get into. The editor clearly loves Hitchcock and his work, it's just a shame this love is so poorly expressed. The constantly changing, unconnected 'chapters' will leave you confused and losing interest in finishing the book. However, I endured all the way to the end. Whilst it's nowhere near the satisfying read it should be, there are a few - repeat a few - interesting tidbits of information. But unless you're a die hard Hitchcock fan you're better off avoiding this book.

Yes, some of it dragged a bit. But overall I found it very interesting indeed. There was a chapter on the making of "Rope", as well as a speech Hitchcock made at a dinner which is worth buying the

book for. His sense of humour is very humourous. It was fascinating to read all the things he had to say about filmmaking and how to please the audience. I read it straight through except that once I jumped ahead and read the chapter on *Rope*, but it's more the type of book where you read a chapter here and another there - whatever interests you at the moment. I thought it very good and I recommend it.

I'm a huge fan of Hitchcock movies and wanted read more about him. I was greatly disappointed with this book though. Like others have said, it is repetitive to the point of insanity. After I read the first half of the book I found myself just jumping ahead to parts of interest just so I could get the dang thing done with. Whoever put this thing together obviously had even less patience and regard for this book than I the reader. While there were a chapter or two that were interesting, overall it wasn't worth the time or effort.

A collection that promises much but proves repetitive and unsatisfying. The pieces were mostly aimed at a broad popular audience and contain little to interest today's more informed cinema-lovers. The account of the technical challenges posed by "*Rope*", though, is fascinating and almost worth the price of admission by itself. Most Hitchcock buffs will be better off with Truffaut's book of interviews

This book was a good entertaining read that provided fascinating information, but did not get bogged down in the process.

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