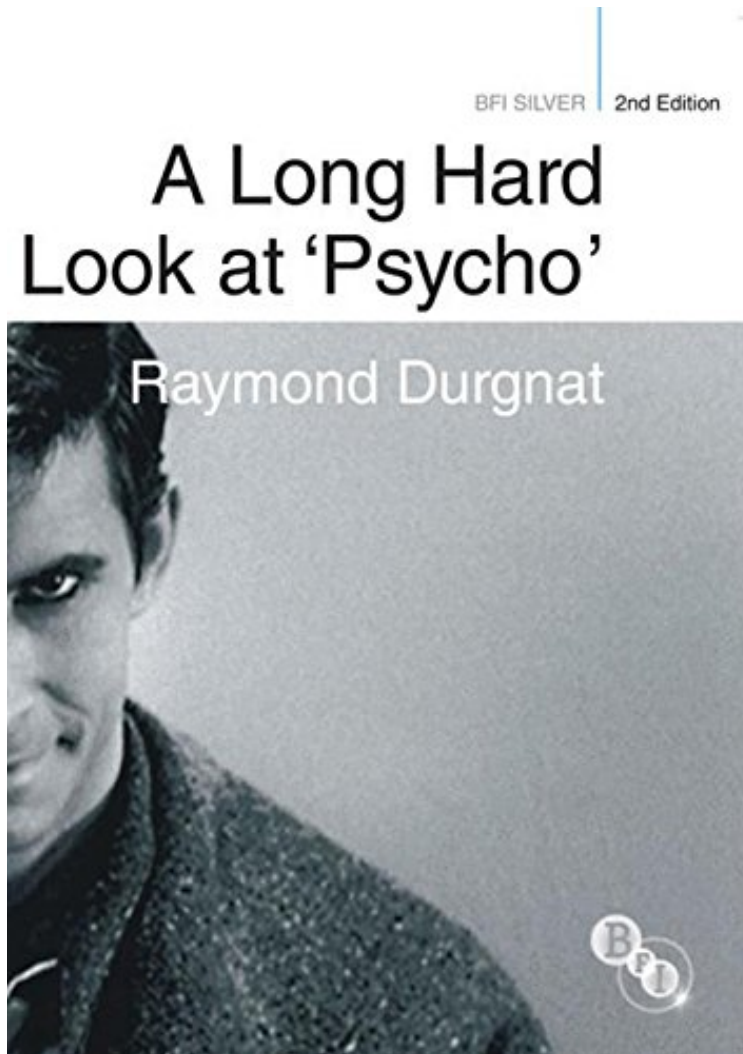


[Online library] A Long Hard Look at 'Psycho' (BFI Silver)

A Long Hard Look at 'Psycho' (BFI Silver)

Raymond Durnat

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Raymond Durnat : A Long Hard Look at 'Psycho' (BFI Silver) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Long Hard Look at 'Psycho' (BFI Silver):

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A book about a film and about filmBy EgglestonIf you want to really understand a film, and by understanding one film, get a glimpse at all film, this is an excellent book. It goes deep. And it explores wormholes and channels of meaning and history and film theory without getting bogged down in jargon. This is about a film that we all know, or think we know that is, until one opens the book and begins reading.Being about such and accessible and popular film, it makes the going easier for those who are newcomers to film theory and history. Well written by someone who knows this film. Well worth it.

Upon its release in 1960, Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho* divided critical opinion, with several leading film critics condemning Hitchcock's apparent encouragement of the audience's identification with the gruesome murder that lies at the heart of the film. Such antipathy did little to harm *Psycho*'s box-office returns, and it would go on to be acknowledged as one of the greatest film thrillers, with scenes and characters that are among the most iconic in all cinema. In his illuminating study of *Psycho*, Raymond Durnat provides a minute analysis of its unfolding narrative, enabling us to consider what happens to the viewer as he or she watches the film, and to think afresh about questions of spectatorship, Hollywood narrative codes, psycho-analysis, editing and shot composition. In his introduction to the new edition, Henry K. Miller presents *A Long Hard Look at 'Psycho'* as the culmination of Durnat's decades-long campaign to correct what he called film studies' 'Grand Error'. In the course of expounding Durnat's root-and-branch challenge to our inherited shibboleths about Hollywood cinema in general and Hitchcock in particular, Miller also describes the eclectic intellectual tradition to which Durnat claimed allegiance. This band of amis inconnus, among them William Empson, Edgar Morin and Manny Farber, had at its head Durnat's mentor Thorold Dickinson. The book's story begins in the early 1960s, when Dickinson made the long hard look the basis of his pioneering film course at the Slade School of Fine Art, and *Psycho* became one of its first objects.

From the Back Cover Upon its release in 1960, Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho* divided critical opinion, with several leading film critics condemning Hitchcock's apparent encouragement of the audience's identification with the gruesome murder that lies at the heart of the film. Such antipathy did little to harm *Psycho*'s box-office returns, and it would go on to be acknowledged as one of the greatest film thrillers, with scenes and characters that are among the most iconic in all cinema. In his illuminating study of *Psycho*, Raymond Durnat provides a minute analysis of its unfolding narrative, enabling us to consider what happens to the viewer as he or she watches the film, and to think afresh about questions of spectatorship, Hollywood narrative codes, psycho-analysis, editing and shot composition. In his introduction to the new edition, Henry K. Miller presents *A Long Hard Look at 'Psycho'* as the culmination of Durnat's decades-long campaign to correct what he called film studies' 'Grand Error'. In the course of expounding Durnat's root-and-branch challenge to our inherited shibboleths about Hollywood cinema in general and Hitchcock in particular, Miller also describes the eclectic intellectual tradition to which Durnat claimed allegiance. This band of amis inconnus, among them William Empson, Edgar Morin and Manny Farber, had at its head Durnat's mentor Thorold Dickinson. The book's story begins in the early 1960s, when Dickinson made the long hard look the basis of his pioneering film course at the Slade School of Fine Art, and *Psycho* became one of its first objects. About the Author RAYMOND DURGNAT (1932-2002) was the author of many groundbreaking books about the cinema, among them *Films and Feelings* (1967), *A Mirror for England* (1970), *Sexual Alienation in the Cinema* (1972), *The Strange Case of Alfred Hitchcock and Jean Renoir* (both 1974), and a study of *WR: Mysteries of the Organism* (1999) in the BFI Film Classics series. HENRY K. MILLER is a film critic and historian who has contributed to numerous publications including *Film Comment*, *Cinema Scope*, *Vertigo* and *Sight Sound*.