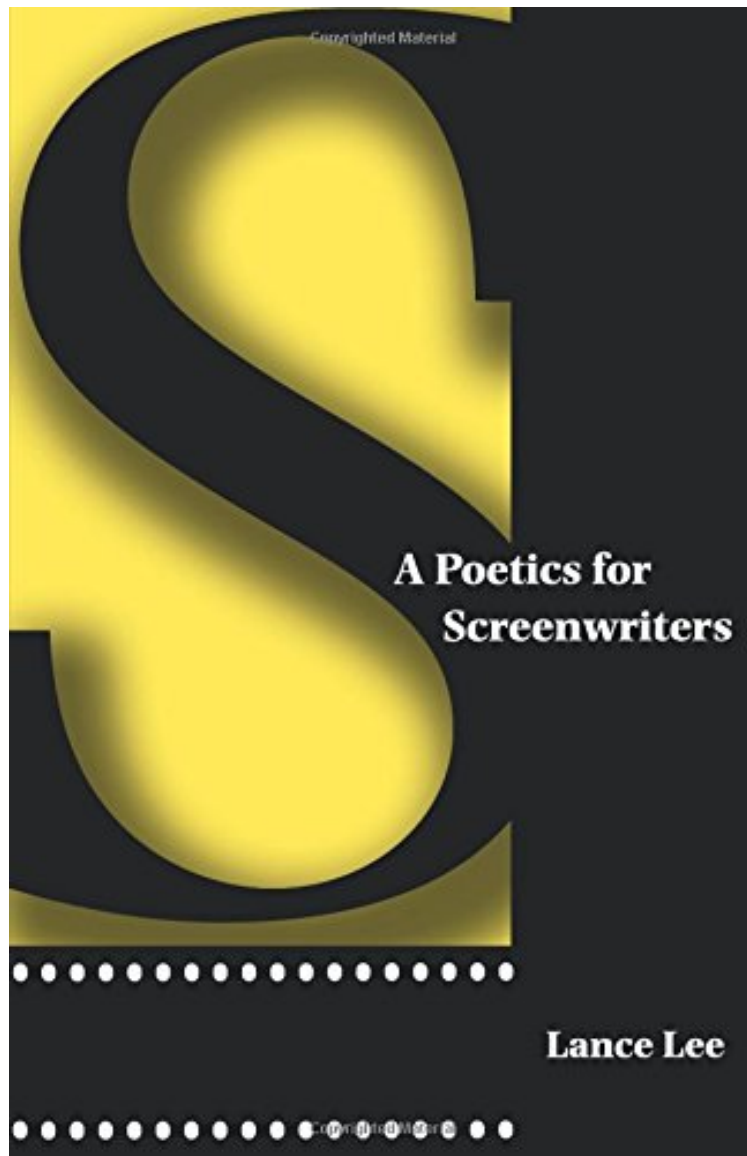


A Poetics for Screenwriters

Lance Lee

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Lance Lee : A Poetics for Screenwriters before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Poetics for Screenwriters:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. A unique and valuable learning experience for screenwriters...By Eric EdsonIn "A Poetics for Screenwriters," veteran writer and teacher Lance Lee offers aspiring and professional script writers a thorough overview of all the dramatic elements of screenplays, skillfully and with great insight tracing their origins throughout history. He takes a philosophical perspective on screenwriting and sees it as our contemporary

contribution to the craft of dramaturgy that has been developing through many centuries. Lee covers primary plot elements, dramatic reality, storytelling stance and plot types, character, moral urgency, spectacle and other elements, as well as developing and filming the story. To illustrate his points he cites relevant examples from American and foreign films including *Rear Window*, *Witness*, *The Usual Suspects*, Ingmar Bergman's *Virgin Spring* and his *Fanny and Alexander*, *The Godfather* and *On the Waterfront*, as well as stage dramas ranging from the Greek tragedies to the plays of Shakespeare and Ibsen. This historical overview of dramatic art provides a highly useful update for students and screenwriters. Lance Lee's fine work here combining ancient playwriting truths with the requirements of current day visual storytelling makes this book an enormously helpful and unique teaching tool. 3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. An incredibly thorough, coherent, sometimes dense book. A fantastic read for the aspiring screenwriter. By E. Wais

First of all, understand going into it that this book is an attempt at updating Aristotle for a modern, cinema-savvy audience of serious screenwriters. That being the case, the first third of the book is a bit dense, sometimes distractingly so. But it is necessary to introduce the reader to the themes it is going to explore in more detail, and in a more easily consumed manner, beyond. This initial density is the only thing that keeps me from giving it a 5-star rating, and the only thing that could potentially stop someone from picking the thing up and reading it straight through in a couple hours. In contrast to the common "bibles" of screenplay manuals - Syd Field's "Screenplay" and Robert McKee's "Story" - this book does not attempt to teach one how to write a screenplay. It does not have a single mention of formatting or suggestion for outlining save for a very brief, seemingly requisite blurb at the end. Instead, this book attempts to modernize Aristotle's timeless theories on the nature of drama and use them to help screenplay authors understand how to write better movies. Structure, sub-structure, sub-sub-structure, character development, thematic exploration - all of these are emphasized, their relative importances weighed. Countless examples from popular film are used alongside Shakespeare, Euripides, Ibsen, and more. It is very effective and very thought provoking. I read Aristotle in college just like everyone else who ever took a writing course, or any other type of course for that matter. I got far more out of this book than I did out of the original because it was targeted directly at the form I was writing. For me, the book's greatest value came not in helping me write my first screenplay, but in revising my first screenplay. I read this book in the lull between completing the initial draft of my first script and embarking on my first major revision. To be able to read through the various structures, the pros and cons of using certain devices, etc. and to be able to directly relate my own script to what was being described helped me form a very solid idea of what my movie was about and how/why it was structured the way it was. Anyone who has ever attempted a substantial literary endeavor knows how invaluable this "bird's eye" view of their work can be when going back to perfect it. If you want to learn how to write a movie, buy "Screenplay." If you want to learn how to write an effective, professional, powerful, relatable, GREAT movie, buy "Screenplay" and "A Poetics for Screenwriters."

Writing successful screenplays that capture the public imagination and richly reward the screenwriter requires more than simply following the formulas prescribed by the dozens of screenwriting manuals currently in print. Learning the "how-tos" is important, but understanding the dramatic elements that make up a good screenplay is equally crucial for writing a memorable movie. In *A Poetics for Screenwriters*, veteran writer and teacher Lance Lee offers aspiring and professional screenwriters a thorough overview of all the dramatic elements of screenplays, unbiased toward any particular screenwriting method. Lee explores each aspect of screenwriting in detail. He covers primary plot elements, dramatic reality, storytelling stance and plot types, character, mind in drama, spectacle and other elements, and developing and filming the story. Relevant examples from dozens of American and foreign films, including *Rear Window*, *Blue*, *Witness*, *The Usual Suspects*, *Virgin Spring*, *Fanny and Alexander*, *The Godfather*, and *On the Waterfront*, as well as from dramas ranging from the Greek tragedies to the plays of Shakespeare and Ibsen, illustrate all of his points. This new overview of the dramatic art provides a highly useful update for all students and professionals who have tried to adapt the principles of Aristotle's *Poetics* to the needs of modern screenwriting. By explaining "why" good screenplays work, this book is the indispensable companion for all the "how-to" guides.

"This is a brilliant, all-encompassing work. I cannot recall a book on screenwriting which delves so deeply into the art and antecedents of screenwriting. Aristotle himself would, no doubt, congratulate Lance Lee. However, without waiting for the great Greek's response, put me down as 'Bravo!'" (William Froug, author of *Screenwriting Tricks of the Trade* and *Zen and the Art of Screenwriting*) "This is a brilliant, all-encompassing work. I cannot recall a book on screenwriting which delves so deeply into the art and antecedents of screenwriting. Aristotle himself would, no doubt, congratulate Lance Lee. However, without waiting for the great Greek's response, put me down as 'Bravo!'" (William Froug, author of *Screenwriting Tricks of the Trade* and *Zen and the Art of Screenwriting*) About the Author Lance Lee is a professional dramatist and instructor in screenwriting.