

Howard Suber's understanding of film storytelling fills the pages of this wise, liberating book. Much of it is surprisingly contrary to what "everyone knows." A remarkable work.

— Francis Ford Coppola

For years students in Howard Suber's legendary classes at UCLA begged him to write a book. Now that he has delivered it, filmmakers, scholars and anyone else with a serious interest in film can rejoice. A fascinating and thought-provoking work.

— Alexander Payne, Director/Screenwriter, *Sideways*, *About Schmidt*

What Aristotle did for drama, Howard Suber has now done for film. This is a profound and succinct book that is miraculously fun to read.

— David Koepp, Screenwriter, *War of the Worlds* (2005), *Spider-Man*, *Mission Impossible*, *Jurassic Park*.

William Goldman, who said "nobody knows anything" about Hollywood films, probably never took a class from Howard Suber. Put this book on the shelf between Aristotle's "Poetics" and your O.E.D.; Professor Suber knows more about what's important about film storytelling than anyone I've ever encountered, and he presents it here in an incredibly clear, useful, and provocative way.

— Dan Pyne, Screenwriter, *The Manchurian Candidate* (2004), *The Sum of All Fears*, *Any Given Sunday*.

*The Power of Film* is destined to become a classic. People will return to it again and again because it is useful -- not just for those learning their craft, but for seasoned veterans who face specific problems in developing stories and characters. Suber's ability to distill his wisdom, insight, and experience with such succinctness and wit provides an added bonus -- this book is a joy to read.

— Gil Cates, Director/Producer; former President, Directors Guild of America; Producer, Academy Awards

Suber understands the alchemy of movies. *The Power of Film* captures his unique ability to demystify the process of filmmaking, beginning with the epiphany of the artist to the eureka of the audience. It's not a "how to" book but a "how come" movies get made.

— Peter Guber, former CEO, Sony Studios; CEO, Mandalay Pictures; Producer/Executive Producer, *Midnight Express*, *Missing*, *The Color Purple*, *Batman*, *Rainman*

Each of the nearly 300 entries in this book is an exquisitely written essay on a particular aspect of the film making art. Each is insightful, historical, helpful and delightful to read. This is a wonderful book for filmmakers and anyone else interested in the art of film.

— Fred Roos, Producer, *The Godfather: Part II*, *The Godfather: Part III*, *Apocalypse Now*, *The Conversation*, *The Black Stallion*

Suber knows the industry, the creative process, and the audience. This book comprehensively analyzes the elements of film storytelling, and is especially useful for understanding the psychological processes at work in popular films.

— Joe Roth, founder, Revolution Studios; former Chairman, Twentieth Century-Fox and Walt Disney Studios

In my thirty-five years in the motion picture industry I have met many people who know a great deal about the business. Others are steeped in the knowledge of film history, or the principles of storytelling. Rarely have I known someone who has the in-depth knowledge of both the creative and business workings of this tight-knit community *and* has such an in-depth knowledge of film history and film storytelling. Suber is that rare one, and this a rare and immensely valuable book.

— Tom Sherak, Partner, Revolution Studios; former Chairman, Twentieth Century Fox Domestic Film Group

When I was a student at UCLA, I wanted to know as much about film as Howard Suber did. When I got my first job in the industry, I still didn't know as much about film as Howard did. Now that I've been working in the film business for over twenty years, I have reached the conclusion that I will never know as much about film as Howard Suber and should abandon all hope that I ever will. He is everything you wish for in a teacher and author. *The Power of Film* confirms his status as one of our most profound film chroniclers.

— Terry Press Marx, Marketing Executive, Dreamworks SKG

Just because you can spell, doesn't mean you can write. Be thankful you have Howard Suber's book from which to learn the principles of storytelling.

— Stefani Relles, Vice President, Fox Broadcasting Company

When I first received Howard Suber's book, I was in the middle of producing a movie but I thought I could speed-read the entries at random between takes. After reading the first one, I e-mailed it to a director I know who was struggling with a similar aspect of the creative process. After reading the second one, I scribbled a note to myself that I should rethink part of a screenplay I'm developing. After reading the third one, I walked across the set and showed it to the cinematographer to settle an argument we'd been having about Russian cinema. This isn't good. I don't have time for this book. It's too interesting. I may have to give up producing.

— Lindsay Doran, former President of United Artists; Producer of *Dead Again*, *Sense and Sensibility*, *Nanny McPhee*, and *Stranger Than Fiction*

Studying with the brilliant Howard Suber radically liberated the way I think about movies and gave me crucial tools for understanding how/why films work (or don't). How wonderful that his profound insights into patterns of storytelling, human psychology and the history of cinema are finally accessible to all! His contagious spirit of inquiry and elegant conclusions will provoke and inspire film artists, executives and cinephiles for generations to come.

— Caroline Libresco, Senior Programmer, Sundance Film Festival; Independent Producer

Nothing left to say about film? *Au contraire*. Here's Howard Suber, exploding with originality. ...We don't know of another book like it. Demand for it will be permanent.

— Arden Heide, Samuel French Theatre & Film Bookstores

The notes I took in Suber's classes years ago have grown dog-eared over the years as I've referred to them again and again in preparing to direct both independent and mainstream films. The distillation of his wisdom into concise and entertaining essays makes *The Power of Film* a book that will enlighten—and liberate—filmmaker/storytellers around the world. I will be keeping the volume on my desk where I know I'll be reaching for it daily.

— Charles Herman-Wurmfeld, Director, *Kissing Jessica Stein*, *Legally Blonde 2*

I spent twenty years as a writer/producer in Hollywood, and yet Howard Suber was able to teach me more than a thing or two when I came back to sit in his class at UCLA. It would cost you a fortune to learn what's in this book the "hard" way, by trial and error. Sit back and enjoy learning it the pleasurable way. Professor Suber has for many years been a mentor to countless people who want to understand great films—especially *why*, from the psychological standpoint, they are great.

— Judy Burns, Television Writer/Producer, *Star Trek*

Evoking Roland Barthes' playful *A Lover's Discourse*, Howard Suber's *The Power of Film* is a rousingly profound and loving set of meditations on the movies. Indeed, it's hard to stop reading: the entries are wise, witty, practical, illuminating, and often very, very funny! Whether one makes movies, studies them, or just loves to see them, this is a book for film lovers everywhere.

— Vivian Sobchack, former President, Society for Cinema Studies; *author of Carnal Thoughts: Embodiment and Moving Image Culture*, *The Address of the Eye: A Phenomenology of Film Experience*, and *Screening Space: The American Science Fiction Film*

Clearly, over forty years of inspired teaching have taught Professor Suber that accessible, articulate prose and examples mean more than pedanticism and verbosity. This crowning work is wonderful!

— Frank Manchel, Author of *Film Study: An Analytical Bibliography*; Professor Emeritus, University of Vermont

If UCLA is the Camelot of screenwriting schools — which it is — Professor Howard Suber is its Merlin. For over four decades, students have entered his classroom to see the secrets of screen magic revealed — not only how movies work, but why they affect us so deeply, and how we can apply those secrets to our own concoctions. Here it is at last, a witty A-to-Z of the raw ingredients out of which the magic of film is spun. From now on Prof. Suber's book will sit on the screenwriter's desk, next to the dictionary and the thesaurus.

— Robin Russin, professor of screenwriting, University of California, Riverside; co-author of *Screenplay: Writing the Picture*

As a psychotherapist who has specialized in dealing with artists, I look for works I can recommend that will liberate their creativity, not constrict it. This book does exactly that. Suber has obviously thought long and deeply, and everywhere demonstrates a clear understanding of the creative and commercial processes involved in popular movies. He says his writings “deal not so much with style and technique as with the psychology of storytelling, which ultimately is the psychology of human beings.” He is absolutely right. Like the films he discusses, this is a memorable work.

— Roberta Degnore, Psychotherapist; Independent Director/Writer

I'm a screenwriter who used to teach poetry and philosophy. Howard Suber has taught generations of screenwriters, and he's *both* a poet and philosopher.

— Adam Kulakow, Screenwriter

Nowhere else can one find a concise compilation of the crucial elements that make up the emotional content of films. What makes a movie memorable? What themes recur in popular films over and over again? Suber has the answers. In an easy to read style, Suber de-bunks the mystery of popular film and hands the goods to us on a silver platter.

— Diane Ambruso, Screenwriting Professor, California State University, Fullerton, former Program Acquisition Executive, DirectTV

Suber has influenced generations of film students and the film industry itself. This book is not merely the summation of a lifetime's work — it is a guarantee that his work will live beyond him.

— Steve Montal, Founding Associate Dean, North Carolina School of Filmmaking

No matter where you're from in the world, no matter how much experience you've had as a filmmaker, storyteller, or member of the audience, read *The Power of Film* and reconsider. Howard Suber's book is more than a provocative guide to filmmaking, more than an analysis of film audiences, more than the ultimate reference for creative persons. It's really about the forces that drive our craving for stories and our lives. Suber is concerned with memorable films. Well, this is a truly memorable book.

— Cyril Tysz, French Writer-Producer

I packed my New Delhi life into two suitcases and flew half way across the world to study with Howard Suber. We all have many teachers in life, but gurus are rare. I am one of a large number of people who have found this man to truly fit that role.

— Akshat Verma, Screenwriter

Instead of another “how to” book on film that offers up tried but not necessarily true rules, *The Power of Film* provides an immense treasure trove of sparkling creative ideas about the nature of film. With the humor and natural ease of a sage, Howard Suber explains the psychological and emotional mechanics of film in simple terms – and the alphabetical structure makes it wonderfully accessible. Suber bases his conclusions on a wide range of American popular films that have been proven over time to have worldwide appeal, but I know from experience that his ideas and insights apply, not just to American films, but to those of the rest of the world as well. This is a profound work!

— Frank Suffert, German Director/Screenwriter

Ever since I took his screenwriting seminar for FIND (Film Independent, formerly Independent Feature Project, West), Howard Suber's ideas have guided my career in Latin America and the USA. As an independent filmmaker, I look for books that are not simply focused on getting rich and famous in Hollywood, but are concerned more with creativity and using film to say something meaningful about our lives. The *Power of Film* is that book.

— Patricia Cardoso, Director/Screenwriter, *Real Women Have Curves*, *The Water Carrier*

I have learned more about film, and I think about life, from Howard Suber than from anyone else. The wisdom in this book is all about the power, beauty and compassion of film storytelling that lasts.

— Dirk Dotzert, Film Consultant, Berlin, Germany

As a Chinese film producer, I know that there is a real need for a book like this, which will be well-received in China and have an important influence on the development of its film industry. Although Professor Suber uses America's greatest films as the basis for his conclusions, the principles he derives from them have universal application.

— Yennie Hao, Chinese Producer

I am the farthest thing from a Hollywood filmmaker on the planet, and my films might even be said to be in opposition to what Hollywood stands for. But I find so many of Suber's insights totally applicable to third world and independent films. This work is amazing for its breadth and depth.

— Jorge Preloran, Argentine filmmaker

This book is a collection of absolute gems from Howard Suber's legendary film courses at UCLA. Dip in anywhere and find something profound or provocative (or both at the same time). The insights Suber offers are fresh and original and will change forever how you look at movies. This is a must-have book for anyone who cares passionately about stories and storytelling in cinema.

— Laurie Hutzler, Screenplay Consultant; Screenwriting instructor, UCLA Professional Screenwriting Program.

We all know the films we love, but can anyone ever explain *why* we respond to them the way we do? Howard Suber can. Memorable films have made Hollywood a global industry that both defines and is defined by American culture. Read this book from cover to cover, for *The Power of Film* is nothing less than an analysis of the underpinnings of American values — and much of the world..

— Yoshi Nishio, Producer & International Media Financier

I was an experienced fifty-year-old writer when I first encountered Howard Suber, and thought I already knew what I needed to know. His ideas changed the way I thought about stories because he helped me see that the principles used to construct memorable films are the same principles we use — if we're wise — to create meaningful lives. What a gift that was!

— Murray Suid, screenwriter/producer

Not since Aristotle's *Poetics* has anyone made such a comprehensive analysis of storytelling. A must-have work for anyone anywhere who cares about film.

— Isobel Gardner, Swedish Producer/Screenwriter

A cornucopia of Suber's film wisdom over his long and productive career, one that any screenwriter, filmmaker, or movie-goer will treasure for decades to come. This book distills in clear, precise language what makes great films great, and simultaneously offers fresh insights to aspiring and experienced filmmakers.

— Cecilia Fannon, Screenwriter/Playwright

Howard Suber is the bright star that guides us through the dark nights of the cinema.

— Chuck Bigelow, MacArthur Fellow; former professor, Stanford University; Screenwriter

Howard Suber defines why popular American films work with amazing clarity, thankful simplicity and memorable wit. This is a brilliant must-read for anyone and everyone who takes pleasure in watching, analyzing, or making memorable feature films.

— Hammad H. Zaidi, Producer

A highly readable lexicon covering what every movie-lover needs to know

— Jason Squire, Professor, University of Southern California Professional Writing Program; editor, *The Movie Business Book*.

Like a great many of Howard Suber's former students, I've saved every note I ever took in his classes, and there isn't a smeary page I haven't gone back over many, many times. Now, all that wit and wisdom is distilled into one handy A to Z guide, a Rosetta stone than can be used to unlock the secrets of memorable film storytelling. *The Power of Film* is not remotely about screenplay formulas — from the moment Howard challenges the idea of “acts,” you know you're off the reservation. But where you are is far more exciting. You're in the world of the “essential,” the fundamental principles that so many popular films share — and if you get this part of the story right, everything else falls into place. This book is filled with truly memorable writing from one of the world's most memorable film teachers.

— Rita Augustine, Screenwriter

*The Power of Film* is the most insightful book I've read since the *Kama Sutra*. Filmmakers can apply Suber's ideas to their own work and parrot them in meetings and pretend they thought of them themselves. Ordinary people who love movies will have to settle for wowing their friends with their brilliance.

— Eric Barker, Screenwriter

Suber pulls back the curtain and shows the art, commerce, philosophy, and culture behind cinematic storytelling. This groundbreaking work goes well above and beyond Hollywood films — every word in this book rings true universally for the independents and ethnic driven films. In my own works dealing with Asian and Asian American themes, I've applied Suber's principles religiously. I consider it the bible of modern screenwriting and a mandatory text for anyone who creates or just loves film.

— Weiko Lin, Assistant Professor, Screenwriting and Playwriting, University of California, Riverside

If all films were destroyed by a war of the worlds and only one book survived to recall the glory that was once Popular American Cinema, I would hope it would be *The Power of Film*.

— Kris Young, Screenwriter

Howard Suber's insights into film have guided me to find cohesive narrative stories from the most chaotic bodies of disorganized, raw footage imaginable! Moreover, I have found that the principles he discusses apply to all forms of filmmaking: documentaries, music videos, commercials, art films, shorts, and writing in general. Suber never says the work is easy, or that you can follow some formula, but what he offers has helped me immensely. This is required reading for all storytellers!

— Doug Pray, Director, *Hype, Scratch, Infamy*

Suber's study of storytelling applies not only to live action but to animation. It is profoundly insightful, which is why I apply his ideas on a daily basis to my own work in animation.

— Margaret Dean, Producer, Warner Bros. Animation

Try this experiment: read Howard Suber's book, then go back and watch your all-time favorite movie — the one you've seen twenty times and know by heart. You'll be absolutely astonished at how much you notice for the very first time. *The Power of Film* will change the way you look at movies. It may even change the way you look at life.

— John Wray, Screenwriter/Animator