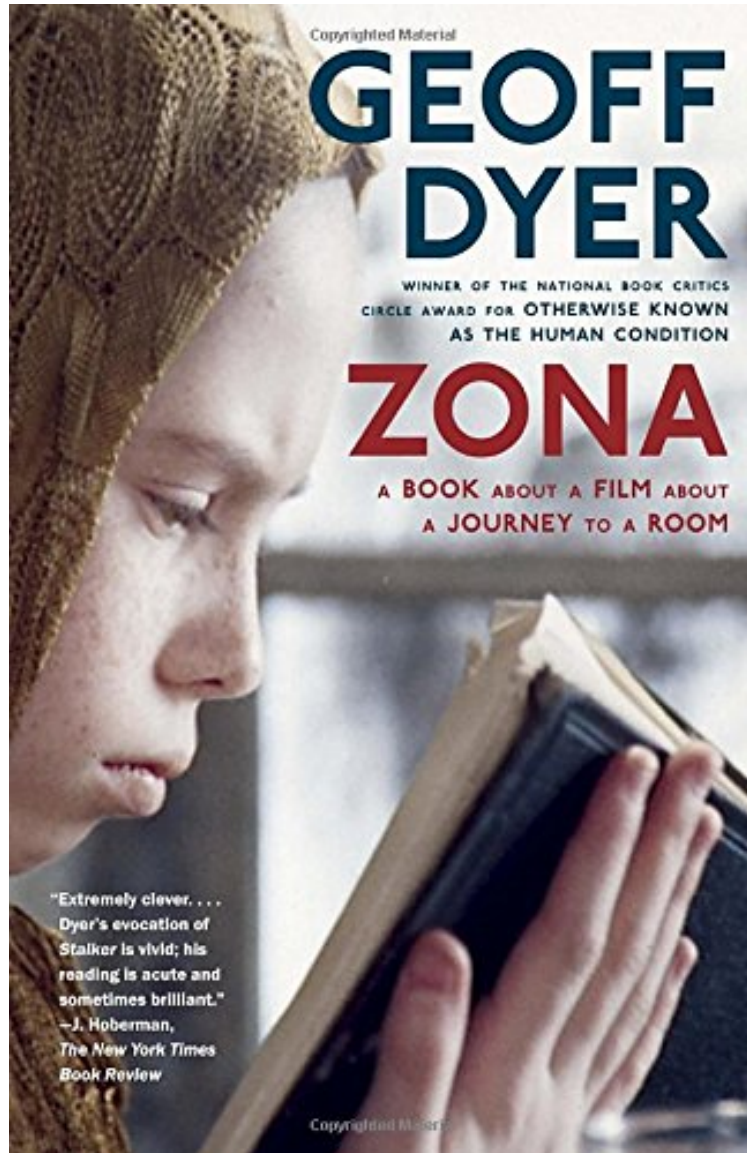


[FREE] Zona: A Book About a Film About a Journey to a Room

Zona: A Book About a Film About a Journey to a Room

Geoff Dyer

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Geoff Dyer : Zona: A Book About a Film About a Journey to a Room before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Zona: A Book About a Film About a Journey to a Room:

0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Can't get into itBy George HellandIt's on the shelf after a good try to get into it. I thought Geoff was trying too hard. Oh well.6 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Some wheat among all the chaffBy faringtonThere are some decent insights in this book, particularly about the lack of symbolism in Stalker and the crisis experienced by the characters in the film when they finally reach The Room. And there are

references to other directors and authors (Angelopoulos, William James) that will lead me to further viewing and reading. But the insights are buried in a lot of annoying flippant asides, strained humor, and pages-long footnotes about nothing. The author states that, though he finds *Stalker* to be a profoundly important film, he feels Tarkovsky is viewed with a bit too much reverence; that even Tarkovsky fell prey to this and suffered from self-reverence. So to counter this (I guess) the tone of the discussion often lapses into a sort of cynical jokiness. Describing a scene in the bar before the characters begin their journey, the author gives us: The moment the barman has stopped pouring he [the character Writer] downs it in oneattaboy! The presence of Ravels Bolero in the opening scenes starts him on a discussion of Bo Derek. When the dog makes his appearance in the Zone, the author refers to him as the doggy. He poses an interesting question (is ones deepest desire always the same as ones greatest regret?) only to deflate it with an oh-so-hip joke (my greatest regret is...that Ive never had a three-way, never had sex with two women at once.)I guess this makes me sound like some kind of moldy fig, but I watch films like *Stalker* to get away from cynicism and junk pop culture and its disappointing to wade through pages of it before reaching an intelligent discussion about the film.10 of 11 people found the following review helpful. Rather than deepening one's appreciation of STALKER, Dyer lures Tarkovsky fans to a series of rambling inanitiesBy Christopher CulverSeeing Andrei Tarkovsky's 1977 film STALKER, where the eponymous guide leads his charges to a room in the wasteland called the "Zone" (the aftermath of a meteor strike? an alien visitation?) that promises to fulfill their innermost desires, is one of the handful of experiences that has changed my life forever. Tarkovsky's slow and careful pacing that he called "sculpting in time" and the film's recognition of a human instinct to commune with the Unknowable make it profoundly moving. The writer Geoff Dyer has also been touched by the film since he first saw it as a young man in the 1970, and in ZONA gives a scene-by-scene description of the film along with the flights of fancy it provokes.While Dyer makes a few insightful remarks on Tarkovsky's work and films by other auteurs, the charm of this book ends quickly. The scene-by-scene synopsis continues, but Dyer starts getting lost in his own dull anecdotes that have little to do with the film and hold little interest on their own, such as his love of a Freitag bag, his desire for a threesome with two women and the chances he squandered in his younger days, and his mother's relationship with eating steak.A book where one skilled writer relates to an earlier cultural masterpiece could work if the insights were deep enough, but I daresay that ZONA is parasitic on Tarkovsky's work, only using STALKER to gain sales for Mr Dyer's inane observations. The kind of literature on offer is like a throwaway blog post, only to extreme proportions and sold to you for quite a price. Avoid.

A Huffington Post Best Book of the YearThere is no other writer at work today like the award-winning Geoff Dyer. Here he embarks on an investigation into Andrei Tarkovsky's *Stalker*, the masterpiece of cinema that has haunted him since he first saw it thirty years ago.

Extremely clever. . . . Dyers evocation of *Stalker* is vivid; his reading is acute and sometimes brilliant. New York Times Book "The most stimulating book on a film in year." The New Republic "We all know what it is like to feel indebted to, and inadequate before, a towering work, but few people have ever described that feeling with the ingenuity or the candor of Dyer. . . . [T]he book is not only readable, it is hard to put down." The New York of Books Testifying to the greatness of an underappreciated work of art is the core purpose of criticism, and Dyer has delivered a loving example thats executed with as much care and craft as he finds in his subject. Los Angeles Times An unclassifiable little gem. . . . Very funny and very personal. San Francisco Chronicle An engaging piece of writing that asks questions about the nature of art and provides a new way to write about film. The Atlantic Irresistible. . . . Dyer is an enormously seductive writer. He has a wide-ranging intellect, an effortless facility with language, and a keen sense of humor. Slate [Dyer] finds elements along the way that will keep even non-cinastes onboard. While he dedicates ample energy to how the movies deliberate pacing runs contrary to modern cinema, its troubled production and the nuts and bolts of its deceptively simple parts, Dyers rich, restless mind draws the reader in with specific, personal details. Los Angeles Times Geoff Dyer is at his discursive best in *Zona*. New York Times Magazine Intimate, engaging, often brilliant. Michael Wood, London of Books You can read this book in 162 minutes and come away refreshed, enlivened, infuriated, amused, thoughtful, and mystified. An invigorating mixture of responses, but this is a Geoff Dyer book. . . . The most stimulating book on a film in years. David Thomson, The New Republic If any film demands book-length explication from a writer of Geoff Dyers caliber, its surely *Stalker*. . . . Dyer is, as the book amply demonstrates, the perfect counterpart to Tarkovsky. Where the film director is stubbornly slow and obscure, Dyer is a fleet and amusing raconteur with a knack for amusing digressions. Richmond Times-Dispatch [Dyer] combines a rigorous scholarship and criticism with whimsical digressions, both fictional and autobiographical, to create the light but heady concoction thats become his signature. Time Out New York Dyer has been just under the radar for many years now, but [he] deserves the widest of audiences as he writes books that are funny, off-beat and hugely informative. This latest is ostensibly about the Russian filmmaker Tarkovsky, but its really about life, love and deathwith many jokes and painful-but-true bits along the way. Details *Zona* is an unpretentious yet deeply involving discussion of why art can move us, and an examination of how our relationship to art changes throughout our lives. Its also funny, moving and unlike any other piece of writing about a movie. The Huffington Post Dyers language is at its most efficient in this

book, conversational and spare. . . . Cultural artifacts worthy of this degree of obsession are rare and its a pleasure to read Dyers wrestling with one. New York Observer Fascinating. . . . Dyer remains a uniquely relevant voice. In his genre-jumping refusal to be pinned down, hes an exemplar of our era. And invariably, he leaves you both satiated and hungry to know where hes going next. NPR The comedy and stoners straining for meaning is always present. And, when it is rewarded, as it so often is with rich associative memoir and creative criticism in Zona, we feel complicit, we celebrate the sensation at the end of all that straining, alongside with him. The Daily Beast Fascinating. . . . Dyers unpredictable and illuminating observations delighted and amused . . . all the way through. Minneapolis Star-Tribune Wickedly funny. . . . The definitive work of an author whose work refuses definition. Austin American-Statesman [Zona] is about the power of art. It is a case study in how something created by anyone but you can seem like your creation, so deeply does it resonate with the details of your life. This is what Stalker calls the unselfishness of art and it is Geoff Dyers gift to his readers. The Millions Geoff Dyer has tricked up Tristram Shandy, cross-bred it with Lady Gaga, and come up with an insightful, audacious, deeply personal, often hilarious and entertaining approach to literature in a world which doesnt much appreciate art or even the book itself. He is one of the most interesting writers at work today in English. Wichita Eagle Dyers musings on everything from on-set disasters to his desire to join a threesome make for a rich and wacky sojourn. Mother Jones About the Author Geoff Dyer is the author of four novels (most recently Jeff in Venice, Death in Varanasi); a critical study of John Berger; a collection of essays, Otherwise Known as the Human Condition; and five highly original nonfiction books, including But Beautiful, which was awarded the Somerset Maugham Prize, and Out of Sheer Rage, a National Book Critics Circle Award finalist. He lives in London. Excerpt. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. An empty bar, possibly not even open, with a single table, no bigger than a small round table, but higher, the sort you lean against there are no stools while you stand and drink. If floorboards could speak these look like they could tell a tale or two, though the tales would turn out to be one and the same, ending with the same old lament (after a few drinks people think they can walk all over me), not just in terms of what happens here but in bars the world over. We are, in other words, already in a realm of universal truth. The barman comes in from the back hes wearing a white barmans jacket lights a cigarette and turns on the lights, two fluorescent tubes, one of which doesnt work properly: it flickers. He looks at the flickering light. You can see him thinking, That needs fixing, which is not the same thing at all as Ill fix that today, but which is very nearly the same as Itll never be fixed. Daily life is full of these small repeated astonishments, hopes (that it might somehow have fixed itself overnight) and resignations (it hasnt and wont). A tall mana customer! enters the bar, puts his knapsack under the table, the small round table you lean against while drinking. Hes tall but not young, balding, obviously not a terrorist, and theres no way that his knapsack could contain a bomb, but this unremarkable action putting a knapsack under the table in a bar is not one that can now go unremarked, especially by someone who first saw Stalker (on Sunday, February 8, 1981) shortly after seeing Battle of Algiers. He orders something from the barman. The fact that the barmans jacket is white emphasizes how not terribly clean it is. Although its a jacket it also serves as a towel, possibly as a dishcloth, and maybe as a hankie too. The whole place looks like it could be dirty but its too dingy to tell and the credits in yellow Russian letters sci-fi Cyrillic do not exactly clarify the situation. Its the kind of bar men meet in prior to a bank job that is destined to go horribly wrong, and the barman is the type to take no notice of anything thats not his business and the more things that are not his business the better it is for him, even if it means that business is so slow as to be almost nonexistent. Far as hes concerned, long as hes here, minding his own business and wearing his grubby barmans jacket, hes doing his job, and if no one comes and no one wants anything and nothing needs doing (the wonky light can wait, as can most things) its all the same to him. Still smoking, he trudges over with a coffeepot (hes one of those barmen who has the knack of imbuing the simplest task with grudge, making it feel like one of the labours of a minimum-wage Hercules), pours some coffee for the stranger, goes out back again and leaves him to it, to his coffee, to his sipping and waiting. Of that there can be no doubt: the stranger is definitely waiting for something or someone. ***A caption: some kind of meteorite or alien visitation has led to the creation of a miracle: the Zone. Troops were sent in and never returned. It was surrounded by barbed wire and a police cordon. . . . This caption was added at the behest of the studio, Mosfilm, who wanted to stress the fantastical nature of the Zone (where the subsequent action will be set). They also wanted to make sure that the bourgeois country where all this happened could not be identified with the USSR. Hence this mysterious business of the Zone all happened according to the caption in our small country, which put everyone off the scent because the USSR, as we all know, covered a very large area and Russia was (still is) huge too. Russia . . . , I can hear Laurence Olivier saying it now, in the Barbarossa episode of The World at War. The boundless motherland of Russia. Faced with the German invasion of 1941, Russians fell back on the traditional strategy, the strategy that had done for Napoleon and would do for Hitler too: Trade space for time, a message Tarkovsky took to heart.