

(Download) Differences in the Dark

Differences in the Dark

Michael Gilmore

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Michael Gilmore : Differences in the Dark before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Differences in the Dark:

1 of 3 people found the following review helpful. If you like movies you'll like this book!By A CustomerThose familiar with Dr. Gilmore's seminal text on American Romanticism may perhaps be initially startled at the theoretical daring of *Differences in the Dark*; thoughtful readers will, however, find in this chiaroscurotic artefact a blueprint for their post-Y2K lives. If, as Toni Morrison suggests, we are all merely "playing in the dark," then genre-based critiques of filmic performance are destined to subtend the vernacular. I think Gilmore's book is a good summer read, being very readable. People who have found themselves to enjoy works such as *Fried Green Tomatoes* and *A Circle of Friends* will lap up Gilmore's book like a warm saucer of milk.

George Bernard Shaw once quipped that America and England are two cultures separated by a common language. In this innovative attempt to place the movies and theater in the larger context of American and English cultural differences, Michael Gilmore demonstrates that the most interesting way to understand the distinctions between the two cultures is by looking closely at each country's favorite art form. *Differences in the Dark* is a fresh, wide-ranging look at the meaning of America's fascination with movies and movie stars, and the way the soul of Britain is reflected in its tenacious love affair with the stage. Gilmore shows how the characteristic features of American experience are inscribed in how movies, the quintessentially American idiom, are made and viewed. In the private, solitary nature of

film-viewing (in contrast to the more communal, interactive experience of seeing a play), and in American actors' tendency to play themselves, not their characters, from role to role, American movies express a strong sense of individualism and a tendency to escape the limits of time for the freedom of space. An art form built of sophisticated technology and cutting and splicing of time and space, Gilmore argues, resonates deeply in the country of reinvented lives and wide-open spaces. At the same time, the English tradition of class and collective memory is perfectly served by an art form that requires disciplined memorization and the submergence of the individual within a role that, in many cases, existed before the actor was born. Unlike the mechanical products of Hollywood or Disneyland, drama by its very nature cannot be mass-produced. Bringing together such diverse topics as theme parks, realism, and social class, as well as the role of Jewish immigrants in the making of Hollywood (and their virtual exclusion from Great Britain) and the connection between the movies and the African-American community, *Differences in the Dark* is one of the most original and engaging cross-cultural studies to appear in many years.

Gilmore's lively account raises questions many of us have never thought of--or dared to bring up... One of the more engaging cross-cultural studies in recent years, [it] has major implications for popular culture. (Journal of Popular Culture) Gilmore sketches profiles of two societies, American and Britain.... From this, he works out that film... is predominantly in America, while the theater, which upholds 'customary values against the possible future symbolized by movies,' dominates Britain.... The thesis... teases us toward a comfortable sense of cultural arrangement. (Stanley Kauffmann New Republic) From the Back Cover In this innovative attempt to place the movies and theater in the larger context of American and English cultural differences, Michael Gilmore demonstrates that the most interesting way to understand the distinctions between the two cultures is by looking closely at each country's favorite art form. *Differences in the Dark* is a fresh, wide-ranging look at the meaning of America's fascination with movies and movie stars, and the way the soul of Britain is reflected in its tenacious love affair with the stage. Bringing together such diverse topics as theme parks, realism, and social class, as well as the role of Jewish immigrants in the making of Hollywood (and their virtual exclusion from Great Britain) and the connection between the movies and the African-American community, *Differences in the Dark* is one of the most original and engaging cross-cultural studies to appear in many years. About the Author Michael T. Gilmore teaches English and American literature at Brandeis University. He is the author of *American Romanticism and the Marketplace*, a contributor to *The Cambridge History of American Literature*, and a coeditor of *Rethinking Class*.