The Brothers Grim The Films Of Ethan And Joel Coen

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with landmark films such as fargo o brother where art thou blood simple and raising arizona the coen brothers have achieved both critical and commercial success proving the existence of a viable market for small films that are also intellectually rewarding their work has exploded generic conventions amid rich webs of transtextual references r barton palmer argues that the coen oeuvre forms a central element in what might be called postmodernist filmmaking mixing high and low cultural sources and blurring genres like noir and comedy the use of pastiche and anti realist elements in films such as the hudsucker proxy and barton fink clearly fit the postmodernist paradigm palmer argues that for a full understanding of the coen brothers unique position within film culture it is important to see how they have developed a new type of text within general postmodernist practice that palmer terms commercial independent analyzing their substantial body of work from this generic framework is the central focus of this book

in 1984 joel and ethan coen burst onto the art house film scene with their neo noir blood simple and ever since then they have sharpened the cutting edge of independent film blending black humor and violence with unconventional narrative twists their acclaimed movies evoke highly charged worlds of passion absurdity nightmare realms and petty human failures all the while revealing the filmmakers penchant for visual jokes and bravura technical strokes their central characters may be blind to reality and individual flaws but their illusions dreams fears and desires map the boundaries of their worlds worlds made stunningly memorable by the coens in the brothers grim the films of ethan and joel coen erica rowell unmasks the filmmakers as prankster mythmakers exploiting and subverting universal

storytelling modes to further what seems to be their artistic agenda to elicit laughs often employing satire and allegory the coens movies hold a mirror up to american society allowing viewers to both chuckle and gasp at its absurdities hypocrisies and foibles from business partnerships blood simple the ladykillers to marriage intolerable cruelty to friendship and ethics miller s crossing the breakdowns of relationships are a steady focus in their work often the coens satires put broken social institutions in their cinematic crosshairs exposing cracks in ineffective penal systems raising arizona o brother where art thou unjust justice systems the man who wasn t there a crooked corporate america the hudsucker proxy unnecessary wars the big lebowski a tyrannical hollywood barton fink and the unbridled fatuous pursuit of the american dream fargo while audiences may be excused for missing the duo s social commentary the depth and breadth of the brothers films bespeak an intelligence and cultural acuity that is rich highly topical and hard to pigeonhole

filmmaker brothers joel and ethan coen got their start in the independent film business in 1984 with their debut feature blood simple which won the award of best dramatic feature at sundance in 1985 and was hailed as one of the best films of the year by the national board of review since their early success the coen brothers have built a name for themselves and gone on to create other big name movies such as raising arizona fargo and the big lebowski this book is a comprehensive account of these four films and miller s crossing barton fink and the hudsucker proxy production information and in depth analysis and critique are provided as well as discussions on how each movie functions in the broader context of the coens work and the themes strategies and motifs often utilized by the coens

collected interviews with the quirky and distinctive writer director team of such films as raising arizona intolerable cruelty and barton fink

joel and ethan coen have written and directed some of the most celebrated american films of the last thirty years the output of their work has embraced a wide range of genres including the neo noirs blood simple and the man who wasn t there theabsurdist comedy raising arizona and the violent gangster film miller s crossing whether producing original works like fargo and barton fink or drawing on inspiration from literature such as charles portis true grit or cormac mecarthy s no country for old men the brothers put their distinctive stamp on each film in the coen brothers encyclopedia all aspects of these gifted siblings as writers directors producers and even editors in the guise of roderick jaynes are discussed entries in this volume focus on creative personnel behind the camera including costume designers art directors and frequent contributors like cinematographer roger deakins and composer carter burwell recurring actors are also represented such as jeff bridges steve buscemi george clooney john goodman holly hunter frances medormand and john turturro each entry is followed by a bibliography of published sources both in print and online from blood simple to inside llewyn davis the coen brothers encyclopedia is a comprehensive reference on two of the most significant filmmakers of the last three decades an engaging examination of their work this volume will appeal to scholars researchers and fans interested in this creative duo

for more than three decades joel and ethan coen have produced some of the most unique and thought provoking works in modern cinema in broad comedies such as raising arizona violent thrillers like no country for old men and black comedies such as fargo the filmmakers have offered brilliant takes on a variety of film genres one of the most distinctive features of their movies is their skewed view of america itself in the coen brothers america m keith booker discusses feature films produced by the pair since their 1984 debut blood simple the author focuses on how the coen brothers films engage with american cultural history and are embedded in specific

geographical settings from new york to los angeles from texas to minnesota the coens capture the essence of real locations from unusual angles which often make the films appear as if they are taking place in an alternate reality in addition many of the brothers films are steeped in america s cultural past from the deep south of the 1930s in o brother where art thou to the greenwich village of the 1960s in inside llewyn davis the coens make particularly effective use of films from hollywood s golden age producing their own updated versions of such genres as film noir the man who wasn t there the western true grit and screwball comedy the hudsucker proxy not to mention their idiosyncratic depictions of hollywood itself in barton fink and hail caesar this book also explores how the coens draw upon cultural phenomena outside of film including literature music and television approaching each film within the framework of ethan and joel s overall vision the coen brothers america provides an entertaining look at the pair s work that will appeal to scholars and fans alike

these four early works by the internationally lauded filmmaking team deal with the subject for which they are best known corruption and crime in situations that combine the real and the surreal with the hilarious of the scripts included here barton fink an intense look at the psychological ruin of a new york playwright trying to make it in 1940s hollywood is a masterful culmination of these themes

fans of fargo the big lebowski no country for old men and other modern classics will enjoy this definitive history of the coen brothers oeuvre indiewire from such cult hits as raising arizona 1987 and the big lebowski 1998 to major critical darlings fargo 1996 no country for old men 2007 and inside llewyn davis 2013 ethan and joel coen have cultivated a bleakly comical instantly recognizable voice in modern american cinema in the coen brothers this book really ties the films together film critic adam nayman carefully sifts through their complex cinematic universe in an effort to plot as he puts it some grand unified theory of coen ness with a combination of biography

close analysis and enlightening interviews with key coen collaborators this book honors the films singular mix of darkness and levity and is the definitive exploration of the coen brothers oeuvre

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an essential introduction to the world's greatest directing team the coen brothers ethan and joen coen is a comprehensive yet concise and accessible monograph including insightful texts written by some of the world's most respected specialists this guide is richly illustrated with 100 images some of which have rarely been seen before

these three short plays by oscar winning screenwriter coen explore the theme of hell both on earth and in the hereafter clever provocative and engaging these plays showcase yet another talent from one of the most celebrated contemporary writers

this anthology presents the story of modern cinema's most dynamic brotherhood duo from their debut neo noir blood simple through the lowlife comedy the big lebowski collected here are articles interviews and reviews of the coens diverse productions including raising arizona barton fink the hudsucker proxy and the oscar winning fargo

the films of ethan and joel coen have been embraced by mainstream audiences but also have been subject to intense scrutiny by critics and cinema scholars movies such as barton fink the hudsucker proxy and raising arizona represent the filmmakers postmodern tendencies a subject many academics have written about at length but is it enough to reduce their features as expressions of postmodernism or are there other ways of viewing their work not only their individual films but their entire output as a collective whole in constructing the coens from blood simple to inside llewyn davis allen h redmon looks beyond the postmodern sensibilities of every film written and directed by the coens to find an unexpected range of recurring ideas expressed in and about contemporary film in this volume redmon tackles all of the films in the coen brothers canon by examining among other topics narrative coherence in the man who wasn t there intertextuality in no country for old men and sexuality in burn after reading and o brother where art thou additional chapters look at their films through the prisms of gender studies adaptation studies and a constructivist sensibility weaved throughout their work considering the whole of the coens output as well as many of the topics being discussed in contemporary film studies this book challenges viewers to reexamine their initial responses to these movies by engaging both the familiar and foreign elements in each film constructing the coens

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limelight an analysis of the coen oeuvre through o brother where art thou 2000 the authors german film critics include a previously unpublished interview with the filmmaking brothers on their off center work in genres they both satirize and pay tribute to film noir horror screwball comedy and buddy escapade as ethan coen says we grew up in america and we tell american stories in american settings within american frames of reference perhaps our way of reflecting our system is more comprehensible to non americans because they already see the system as something alien well illustrated

in 2005 cormac mccarthy s novel no country for old men was published to wide acclaim and in 2007 ethan and joel coen brought their adaptation of mccarthy s novel to the screen the film earned praise from critics worldwide and was honored with four academy awards

including best picture best director and best adapted screenplay in no country for old men from novel to film scholars offer varied approaches to both the novel and the award winning film beginning with several essays dedicated entirely to the novel and its place within the mccarthy canon the anthology offers subsequent essays focusing on the film the adaptation process and the coen brothers more broadly the book also features an interview with the coen brothers long time cinematographer roger deakins this entertaining and enriching book for readers interested in the coen brothers films and in mccarthy s fiction is an important contribution to both literature and film studies

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this examination of the distinctive cinema of joel and ethan coen explores the theme of violence in their wide ranging body of work the brothers coen unique characters of violence spans the career of the two time oscar winning producer director team exploring the theme of violence that runs through a genre spanning body of work from the neo noir of blood simple to the brutal comedy burn after reading 2008 in chapters focusing on major characters ryan doom looks at the chaotic cinematic universe of the coens where violent acts inevitably have devastating unintended consequences the remarkable gallery of coen characters are all here hardboiled gangster tom regan from miller s crossing 1990 overmatched amateur kidnapper jerry lundergaard from fargo 1996 accidental private eye the dude from the big lebowski 1998 psychopathic assassin for hire anton chigurh from the 2007 academy award winner no country for old men and more the revised and updated edition of this pocket guide to perhaps the finest filmmakers working in america today features an introductory essay on the coens along with an analysis and discussions of each of their films including a consideration of their latest works intolerable cruelty and the ladykillers

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