



WILEY BLACKWELL COMPANIONS TO FILM DIRECTORS

**A Companion to
Steven Spielberg**

Edited by
Nigel Morris

WILEY Blackwell

A Companion to Steven Spielberg

Wiley Blackwell Companions to Film Directors

The Wiley Blackwell Companions to Film Directors survey key directors whose work together constitutes what we refer to as the Hollywood and world cinema canons. Whether Haneke or Hitchcock, Bigelow or Bergman, Capra or the Coen brothers, each volume, comprised of 25 or more newly commissioned essays written by leading experts, explores a canonical, contemporary and/or controversial *auteur* in a sophisticated, authoritative, and multi-dimensional capacity. Individual volumes interrogate any number of subjects – the director's *oeuvre*; dominant themes; well-known, worthy, and under-rated films; stars, collaborators, and key influences; reception, reputation, and above all, the director's intellectual currency in the scholarly world.

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A Companion to Steven Spielberg

Edited by

Nigel Morris

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For Janice – *We strolled through fields all wet with rain*
And back along the lane again ...

Van Morrison, "The Way Young Lovers Do"

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The Erotic Thriller in Contemporary Cinema (2005), the first to examine the new genre, as well as books on D.H. Lawrence and visual culture, on psychoanalytic critical and cultural theory, and a second book on Lawrence in the British Council “Writers and Their Work” series. Professor Williams also co-edited *Contemporary American Cinema*, a collection of original essays by international film scholars charting the history of all forms of US cinema since 1960 (2006). She regularly contributes articles and reviews for *Sight and Sound*, has written for the *Independent* and the *Independent on Sunday*, and contributes to TV and radio programs on film issues whenever possible.

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A Note on Film Titles

To avoid repetition and redundancy, dates are not normally given in parentheses after the first mention in each essay of a Spielberg title, contrary to the practice adopted for other directors' work. A chronological list, with dates, is provided below. All titles mentioned in the book are presented alphabetically in the Film and Television Program Indexes preceding the General Index at the end.

Film and Television Programs: Steven Spielberg (chronological)

Amateur Films

The Last Train Wreck (1957)
A Day in the Life of Thunder (1958)
The Last Gun (1959)
USSR Documentary (1959)
Untitled western (1959)
Films of Ingleside Elementary School (1959)
Steve Spielberg's Home Movies (1960)
Fighter Squadron (1960)
Film Noir (1960)
Escape to Nowhere (1960/1961)
Scary Hollow (1961)
Fighter Squad (1961)
"Career Exploration Project" western (1961)
American Football (1964)
Firelight (1964)
Rocking Chair (1965)
Senior Sneak Day (1965)
Encounter (1965-66)
The Great Race (1966)
Slipstream (1967)

Professional Short Film

Amblin' (1968)

Television

- “Eyes” – segment of *Night Gallery* pilot (Nov. 8, 1969)
- “The Daredevil Gesture” – episode of *Marcus Welby, M.D.* (Mar. 17, 1970)
- “Make Me Laugh” – segment of *Night Gallery* episode (Jan. 6, 1971)
- “L.A. 2017” – episode of *The Name of the Game* (Jan. 15, 1971)
- “The Private World of Martin Dalton” – episode of *The Psychiatrist* (Feb. 10, 1971)
- “Par for the Course” – episode of *The Psychiatrist* (Mar. 10, 1971)
- “Murder by the Book” – episode of *Columbo* (Sep. 15, 1971)
- “Eulogy for a Wide Receiver” – episode of *Owen Marshall: Counselor at Law* (Sep. 30, 1971)
- Duel* (Nov. 10, 1971)
- Something Evil* (Jan. 21, 1972)
- Savage* (Mar. 31, 1973)
- “Ghost Train” – episode of *Amazing Stories* (Sep. 29, 1985)
- “The Mission” – episode of *Amazing Stories* (Nov. 3, 1985)

Feature Films

- Duel* – overseas extended theatrical version (1972)
- Sugarland Express, The* (1974)
- Jaws* (1975)
- Close Encounters of the Third Kind* (1977)
- 1941* (1979)
- Raiders of the Lost Ark* (1979)
- E.T.: The Extra-Terrestrial* (1982)
- Twilight Zone: The Movie* (Joe Dante, John Landis, George Miller, Steven Spielberg, 1983)
- Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* (1984)
- The Color Purple* (1985)
- Empire of the Sun* (1984)
- Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* (1989)
- Always* (1989)
- Hook* (1991)
- Jurassic Park* (1993)
- Schindler’s List* (1993)
- The Lost World: Jurassic Park* (1997)
- Amistad* (1997)
- Saving Private Ryan* (1998)
- A.I. Artificial Intelligence* (2001)
- Minority Report* (2002)
- Catch Me If You Can* (2002)
- The Terminal* (2004)
- War of the Worlds* (2005)

Munich (2005)

Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull (2008)

War Horse (2011)

The Adventures of Tintin: The Secret of the Unicorn (2011)

Lincoln (2012)

Bridge of Spies (2015)

The BFG (2016)

Introduction

Nigel Morris

A Companion to Steven Spielberg in part assesses the achievements and legacy of one of the most commercially successful and influential artists and entertainers (in any field) of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The collection overall is neither celebratory nor hostile but seeks to be analytical, informative, and critical. Within a rigorous academic ethos, contributors' different backgrounds, assumptions, and approaches ensure liveliness, contradiction, and passion rather than bland agreement, dry detachment, or strident uniformity. World-renowned scholars participate alongside emergent voices, offering fresh perspectives.

No other filmmaker's standing matches the career of one who has seen and lived through the 1970s Hollywood renaissance and the corporate retrenchment of the 1980s, and has adopted multiple roles through those and the ensuing decades, including director, producer, story deviser, businessman, popular historian, Holocaust memorialist, educator, and brand personification; these continue to develop within a synergistic approach that sets Spielberg apart from those contemporaries and protégés with whom he has been most often and readily associated.

While affirming that the Companion's guiding principle is to be prospective – to advance understanding and debates – it must be acknowledged that the project would have been unthinkable only a decade previously. A “landmark” international conference¹ in November 2007, enabled by six contributors to this volume, all of whom might until then have considered themselves lone voices, assembled a “remarkably wide range” of speakers who adopted an “overwhelmingly positive” tone and “largely lacked the defensiveness that only a few years earlier might have colored any such undertaking” (McBride 2009, 1–2). “The critical literature on Spielberg,” as Joseph McBride points out, “is studded with astonishingly bilious and intemperate assaults” (2). Fred A. Holliday notes that “Spielberg and his cinema are often held up as the paradigm of everything that is wrong with contemporary Hollywood and its blockbuster-driven mentality” – including “dumbing-down of American culture” and propagation of “right-wing ideologies” (2008, 91). So powerful has been this tendency that colleagues at a Society for Cinema and Media Studies conference told Lester D. Friedman that Spielberg was the “antichrist” (2006, 3)

and that writing about his work would be career suicide: “the academic equivalent of appearing in a porn movie” (2).

This Companion emphatically eschews the defensiveness such inordinate comments or politer insinuations once elicited, even if it lingers in some contributions – as a latent presence in this introduction, perhaps – given the not fully reformed context in which they are written. As McBride opines, “critical debates about his films have become more nuanced, and the remaining Spielberg haters ... seem increasingly passé” (2009, 1–2). Newfound esteem is indicated by an Irish Film Institute retrospective of Spielberg’s work in January 2012, and the British Film Institute’s use of images of E.T. in posters publicizing BFI Southbank (previously the National Film Theatre) in 2015. Nevertheless, background to the Companion includes blanket dismissal, not least by critics and academics who confuse Spielberg with other blockbuster directors. Enormous commercial appeal suggests that Spielberg’s work must be symptomatic, expressive, and reflexive of the culture it responds to and contributes toward shaping, although the exact relationship is typically a matter of presupposition. Many pundits adopt an oppositional stance, either elitist or more or less consciously political, in relation to Hollywood cinema as predictable propaganda for the American way – of which Spielberg’s output is at once one of the most salient, apparently typical, and hence, in view of its international success, most reprehensible embodiments. Spielberg’s apparent adherence to classical form is, by many critics, confused, conflated, or equated with political conservatism, not least because of the association of blockbuster filmmaking with business and marketing strategies focused on maximizing profit and thereby pleasing the largest possible audience. Such classicism nevertheless sits awkwardly alongside Spielberg’s multivocal address to different audiences, attendant stylistic range, and adoption of technological advancements in the realization of his audiovisual ambitions and his centrality to economic and industrial transformations. The latter associate him with the “post-Classical” Hollywood model of complex intersecting interests (Maltby 2003, 220), in terms of which his films are too often associated erroneously – at least, those that he has directed are – with simplistic, marketing-led, action-driven spectacle at the expense of character, narrative complexity, and thematic significance. Such assumptions are challenged and repeatedly disproven in the essays featured here.

With *Lincoln*² and *Bridge of Spies*, Spielberg has continued to consolidate a career phase in which much of his output, less characterized by blockbuster values than was always the case, receives respect although not universal admiration. Those two films maintain his lifelong exploration of, and experimentation with, cinematic form, based on or alluding to precedents both mainstream and – more than negative criticism acknowledges – sometimes notably abstruse. In this parallel concern with showmanship and artistry, based on the director’s extensive knowledge of the medium’s history and ceaseless curiosity about its function and possibilities, Spielberg echoes two of his more obvious formative influences: Alfred Hitchcock and John Ford, who, until nearly 50 years into their filmmaking, were similarly not taken seriously by arbiters of taste and quality (McBride 2011, 514).

Even at its most stately and classical, Spielberg’s filmmaking does not default to a safe, unquestioning, would-be mimetic mode but rather uses style to highlight (should the spectator be inclined to notice) its own mediation and construction. Self-consciously dialogic positioning in relation to precedents in Hollywood and alternative traditions interrogates the adequacy of *Lincoln*, *Bridge of Spies*, or indeed any cinema, to events and issues portrayed. As an example of blindness to such possibility, former *Village Voice* film critic

(and academic) J. Hoberman has reprinted in a book his original review (2004) of *The Terminal*. The unamended article follows new material that describes the same (Presidential election) year's "extraordinary pageant of Ronald Reagan's funeral" as "subsuming all political conflict in a simplified, sentimental, personality-driven narrative – ... the year's preeminent example of Spielbergization" (2012, 95). Gratuitous assumptions are made with the expectation of knee-jerk agreement, particularly offensive in that one might concur with the writer's world-view generally if reasoned evidence replaced the self-righteous harangue. Instead Hoberman glosses over the function and form of funerals, the links between personality, privilege, and the Presidency (and a particularly conservative one at that, aligned explicitly with religious groups such as the Moral Majority), the relationship between American individualism, popular fictions, and exemplary lives in politics and show business, the politics of news and the conventions of reporting, and the hegemonic connections between these important issues. The review then plunges intermittently from Hoberman's characteristic New York intellectual urbanity into an emotive and debased discourse, and logic constructed through impressionistic association and damning non sequiturs, neither of which are uncommon in hostile writing about Spielberg (Morris 2007, 4–5, 389–90), as if the author has to expend aggression to protect against contamination through enjoyment. It describes Tom Hanks's protagonist as "a real goat-fucker" who learns to speak "increasingly accomplished, cutely accented English," which in turn reminds Hoberman of certain Robin Williams roles, and thereby "more than passing resemblance to the repellingly cloying Russian immigrant ... in the Reagan-era heart-warmer *Moscow on the Hudson* [Paul Mazursky, 1984]" (Hoberman 2012, 96). Soon after, Hoberman's free association refers to "the most memorably offensive" of the multi-ethnic airport workers Hanks's character befriends, and calls them "elves" (97). The point here is not to attack any particular critic or their right to hold certain views, but rather to suggest how a pre-existent discourse – in this instance of "Reaganite entertainment" (Britton 1986) – dialogically fortified by anticipation of its audience's response, determines the argument and evidence presented.

Such negativity, damnation by association, and harsh rhetoric point to ongoing debates around popular culture and highbrow taste – entertainment versus art – as well as unresolved disputes specifically concerning ideological propensities and alleged effects of Spielberg's work. This Companion intervenes authoritatively into such tendencies. Focused primarily on Spielberg as director – as the series' remit demands – it acknowledges that his profitability in that role quickly elevated him into a major industry player whose work has considerable influence, as writer, producer, executive producer, or studio head, and in television and computer gaming, as well as the 30 feature films so far directed. Inevitably auteurist in orientation, then, the Spielberg Companion contextualizes and problematizes assumptions of that approach. It does so by recognizing the commercial author function as a marketing strategy, as pointed out by Barthes (1975) and Foucault (1977), and paying attention in some of the essays to Spielberg's early self-promotion, and subsequent reinvention of his image as a serious artist, a public figure, a celebrity, an educator, and so on. Beyond examining such attempts at consolidating preferred meanings, many of the authors are attuned to the ambiguity and complexity of Spielberg's directorial work that help make it popular across generations internationally and increasingly intriguing to criticism and scholarship.

The validity of authorship study and Spielberg's importance as a director, in terms of artistic value or, according to different criteria, as a cultural or economic phenomenon, are pragmatically taken as given. Nevertheless, from various perspectives within the now

mature disciplines of Film, Media, and Cultural Studies, contributors explore aspects of how such discourses function and are constructed. For all the shortcomings and contradictions associated with single director study – of which most writers of these pages are, as seasoned academics, aware – in practice directors are central to how cineastes and some types of fans classify movies and to how film industries promote, and reviewers judge, many of them. After all, *The Terminal* might mean something different if its director's name – evoking fixed connotations for some – did not associate it with what *Jaws* purportedly represents. Paradoxically, though, Spielberg's presence has confused perceptions of authorial provenance, due to the fact that he has sometimes written, often produced, and frequently been credited as executive producer without directing, with his name figuring at least as prominently as the director's. *Poltergeist* (Tobe Hooper, 1982) represents an extreme case in point.

Spielberg's status and significance are inseparable from the aesthetic, financial, technical, and cultural developments his image personifies – conveniently for journalism and public relations, although proper academic scrutiny demands more circumspection – irrespective of whether he is their cause or effect or, more complicatedly, their embodiment. Since *Jaws* supposedly inaugurated blockbuster production values and revolutionized marketing strategies,³ Spielberg, as an extraordinarily popular filmmaker with a formidable record, is the most visible and widely known representative of the industry other than on-screen stars. As an example, the MacRobert Arts Centre at the University of Stirling, the venue where this editor as a 1970s undergraduate immersed himself in European Art Cinema and New Hollywood movies, has had a banner near the campus gate since 2015 proclaiming, "JAW-dropping prices." Its graphics and typography evoke the movie and the preceding cross-marketed bestseller. Forty years on, the narrative image retains potent recognition value and synonymy with "cinema," significantly disavowing distinction between popular and arthouse that the location's former status as a Regional Film Theatre upheld. To the extent that Spielberg now is associated with that film, he is cinema.

The centrality of auteurism to film culture, and of Spielberg's now widespread acceptance, as well as the approach's function as a marketing tool, are reiterated by press advertisements in April 2016 that proclaimed: "We are Hitchcock. We are the Coens. We are Spielberg. We are BFI Southbank." Such recognition, together with the popular and variably acclaimed titles and eventual industry prestige that followed *Jaws*, is cause for celebration by fans – and journalism that serves them – and a public relations coup for Hollywood. As a distinguished contributor to this volume put it a quarter of a century ago, Spielberg – with his colleague, collaborator, and rival, George Lucas – was "replacing the director-as-auteur with a director-as-superstar ethos" (Schatz 1993, 20). This makes Spielberg a scapegoat for critics who hold him responsible for tendencies they bemoan.

Part of the wider background to Spielberg's career is the emergence in the 1950s of *la politique des auteurs*. This was a youthfully provocative assertion of cinephilia, fandom, and cultural rebellion in France – *la politique* meant a "policy" or deliberate attitude – that had prompted the misleadingly termed authorship "theory" in the United States in the 1960s (Sarris 1968). The two were essentially different. The first valorized freedom and individualism promoted by Hollywood cinema that had been banned under Nazi occupation. Coinciding with recriminations, shortages, and national soul-searching, an extensive back catalogue had become suddenly available as American distributors flooded a previously inaccessible market, making it possible to detect or assert thematic or stylistic continuities associated with particular film practitioners. The *Cahiers du Cinéma* critics

championed Hollywood over what they saw as staid, unimaginative productions intended to promote traditional and establishment culture; these were made initially under Nazi patronage as propaganda that French values were not under threat from the Reich, and after the liberation as expressions of national continuity. As French New Wave directors, several *Cahiers* group members went on to bend aspects of Hollywood genres to contemporary French concerns while advancing technique through devices such as jump cuts, location shooting, and freely mobile camerawork.

Simultaneously in the USA, studios were failing to satisfy exhibitors' demands for a regular turnover of feature films. The 1948 Paramount decree had made movie making less profitable. Fewer were being produced but on higher budgets than before, while expertise and resources increasingly moved to television. The new medium symbolized and in effect promoted economic and lifestyle shifts antithetical to regular movie going. Among these were suburban dwelling that entailed commuting, separation from the extended family, car ownership, trips to the sea or the countryside, shopping malls, home ownership, housework, gardening, and home improvement. However, television alone was popularly blamed for declining cinema attendances. From the late 1950s to the late 1960s more North American theatrical releases originated overseas than from Hollywood (Wasser 2010, 34). These tended to play more in urban settings close to colleges, where better-educated audiences, likely to identify themselves in opposition to the conformity associated with television, were deemed more open to cultural differences and challenging material.

Thus was born art cinema, associated with sexual frankness not permitted under the Production Code; typically lower budgets, with emphasis on performance, dialogue, and serious themes; and cinematic experimentation, rather than genre conventions, lavish spectacle, and happy endings. Need to understand a foreign language or more likely, at least, willingness to read subtitles – itself a literary connotation – encouraged definite snobbery in the case of lesser known world cinemas. These films attracted audiences of a liberal disposition, who nevertheless looked down on both television and Hollywood movies. Intellectualism meshed with countercultural values that, as Frederick Wasser explains, “despised industrial production of culture and espoused self-expression” under the “romantic notion that economic success should only be the result of the people’s embrace of the artist’s authenticity” (2010, 35). Enlightened by European trends, such audiences considered film an art with its own traditions and auteurs, distinct from mainstream entertainment and high culture alike. A good portion of foreign product entering the United States was either shot in the English language (UK productions, for example) or dubbed into English (many Italian and French films were translated thus). The influx of overseas titles was very complex in terms of its range and diversity. Alongside English-language imports on television, it also came in the form of popular genre pieces playing in drive-ins and lower prestige theaters less inclined to exhibit “non-commercial” cinema, and thus provided further competition for the beleaguered American industry to reach another part of the baby boomer youth demographic.

Yet Old World intellectuals were discoursing knowledgeably and enthusiastically on the mainstream popular medium against which art cinema as a preference and, increasingly, marketing category, defined itself. The so-called auteur theory effectively created pantheons based on taste – highly subjective, provisional, and context bound – that, without much reflection, enabled cineastes to discriminate (in all senses of the word) between products of the Dream Factory they had previously rejected wholesale but also to discuss some of them on the same lists as the work of revered international visionaries.

A journalistic novelty became an institution, valuable first for ascribing signatures to an otherwise industrial aspect of popular culture. A director's name placed "cinema," as opposed to anonymous "movies," alongside authored literature, drama, classical music, jazz, painting, and the other arts as personal expression, and increasingly it could come from anywhere. It could be respected as a manifestation of individual genius or initially an indigenous American aesthetic form, enabling it to be taught in art schools and later universities alongside practices originating in commercial calculation (such as spaghetti westerns) or revolutionary propaganda (Soviet montage) co-opted into high art. Inevitably, however, academic attention questioned romantic notions of artistry in a commercial and collaborative medium and, over half a century, nurtured other, more or less consciously political, approaches such as genre, industry, semiotics, stardom, structuralism/poststructuralism, psychoanalysis, formalism, cognitivism, negotiated and oppositional readings from various "minority" perspectives, and affect. Many of these either bracketed out or explicitly interrogated questions of taste and value.

The New Hollywood of the late 1960s and early 1970s⁴ – influenced by the spirit and formal innovations of the French New Wave as well as gradual abandonment of the Production Code, which was replaced with a ratings system – represented a relatively open-minded approach to content and marketing. Ever more desperate studios allowed filmmakers comparative freedom in response to the unexpected success of unconventional youth-oriented films, most remarkably *Easy Rider* (Dennis Hopper, 1969), which, with a \$450,000 budget (Hall and Neale 2010, 191), grossed \$60 million in three years (IMDb) – a ratio of 133,333:1. It was during that period Spielberg's professional career began. He started out, Buckland (2006) contends, as a self-conscious stylist determined to be part of the burgeoning movement. With the television ratings and critical acclaim achieved by *Duel*, in particular after it was lauded following European theatrical release, Spielberg was feted as an auteur, a reputation subsequently untarnished by disappointing box office for *The Sugarland Express*. Ironically, *Jaws* was a project to which Spielberg had no great commitment. Nevertheless, as that film symbolizes the beginning of the end of the New Hollywood, his work's continuing profitability has led to him being blamed personally or as a representative of the industry at its most commercial as if, somehow, arthouse or New Hollywood were not profit oriented. *Jaws* is remembered not just as the first movie to break the \$100 million box office barrier – erroneously, Sheldon Hall and Steve Neale point out (2010, 210), as that was *The Sound of Music* (Robert Wise, 1965) – but also as the epitome of cross-marketing, funding, distribution, test-screening, advertising, and release patterns which, Hall and Neale observe, had been used for other titles, and would have developed inevitably even if *Jaws* had never existed.

Critical theorists Stephen Heath (1976) and Fredric Jameson (1979) were aware of the cultural significance of *Jaws* very quickly, analyzing its meanings and their implications seriously and incisively – and, notably, before *Screen*, a journal whose title became synonymous with rigorous, politically inflected theory, was devoting much attention to contemporary mainstream output. Indeed Heath published his article in the *Times Higher Education Supplement* rather than a film journal. Jameson and Heath furthermore indicated no disrespect for *Jaws* as popular culture – they set out to understand rather than patronize or dismiss it. Even Andrew Britton, later one of Spielberg's most virulent critics, writing in *Movie* in 1976, analyzed the film positively and contrasted it against what he saw as the cynicism of Peter Benchley's novel. Where Britton got it wrong was in connecting the film's affect too closely with his fear of the masses: "The film is inconceivable without an enormous audience, without the exhilarating, jubilant explosion of

cheers and hosannas which greet the annihilation of the shark, and which transform the cinema, momentarily, into a temple” (27). As anyone who has analyzed the film will attest, studying it in solitude on a small screen to explain its effects indicates that these are as much to do with technique as the presence of an audience. If film going were no more than a ritual, patrons would respond accordingly irrespective of what was shown, even if the presence of others amplifies individual responses.

Spielberg’s success and longevity can partly be attributed to the fact that he has never stopped experimenting. How many thrillers have two- or three-minute extended shots, blocked out in deep focus, as *Jaws* does in the cliff-top scene involving the power struggle between Brody (Roy Scheider) and Hooper (Richard Dreyfuss) and Vaughn (Murray Hamilton)? Or scenes like Quint’s (Robert Shaw) *Indianapolis* speech, which is essentially a four-minute monologue, yet so effectively written, performed, and shot that it produces highly vivid and affecting images in the mind – a prime example of what Michel Chion calls “textual speech” (1994, 172) – and this near the climax of what is so often regarded as a relentless, visceral action flick? The movie works not just as shark attack piled upon shark attack, but by alternating light and dark, comedy and horror, action and contemplation, human drama and elemental conflict – and in a way that engrosses and startles. That is important, because even though *Jaws* exemplifies high concept, it fulfills its narrative image within the first 4½ minutes – yet keeps delivering for two hours.

Jaws is significant, too, and typical of much of Spielberg’s output, for the gravity underlying what is much more than a rollercoaster holiday movie. James Kendrick’s book *Darkness in the Bliss-Out* elaborates this aspect of Spielberg’s work: “one of the film’s most disturbing images,” he writes, “is not of a shark attack, but rather a low-angle shot in the surf of an apparently lifeless elderly man who has been trampled by fellow swimmers and is being dragged out of the water” (2014, 145). But Molly Haskell got there first, when her original review pointed out how “Spielberg delights in showing us humanity – a kind of lynch mob perennially in the making – at its worst” (1975) – hardly what would one might expect as a reaction to a popular confection.

Spielberg is unquestionably a cultural phenomenon to be addressed from a plethora of approaches, not simply derided or defended. Retrospectively, however, his work’s profitability coincided with the first inklings of the demise of New Hollywood cinema, even if it would be a few years before the financial catastrophes of the likes of *Heaven’s Gate* (Michael Cimino, 1980) and *One From The Heart* (Francis Ford Coppola, 1982) – and, indeed, Spielberg’s *1941* – heralded a definitive end to high budget maverick filmmaking. Later blockbusters confirmed the kind of business model that *Jaws* came to epitomize as much by luck as by intention, Spielberg’s or anybody else’s. His success and public recognition were simultaneous also with resurgent conservatism that culminated in Reagan’s election and second term. Spielberg’s emphasis on families, although a moment’s reflection would confirm them to be dysfunctional (a topic Linda Ruth Williams explores in her essay in this book) – even before and long after Reagan adopted the rhetoric of “family values” – made it all too easy for some commentators to dismiss Spielberg’s output. The director’s films were either unworthy of attention or crudely asserted to be causally related to, on the one hand, prevailing political trends and, on the other, the decline of “innovative and offbeat” productions that actually, Schatz explains, resulted from changes in tax laws that previously favored investment in independent films (2003, 21).

Although it was never calculated that the collection should be encyclopedic, between them the present writers cover Spielberg’s full feature output as director up to and

including *Bridge of Spies*. Prospective contributors were approached initially, a handful at a time, on the basis of existing expertise but were offered the opportunity to range outside their usual interests if they wished, to maintain freshness and originality. Some are established Spielberg scholars; others are discussing the director for the first time. The book's structure has thus evolved from a loose initial conception, adapted to incorporate each new commission, modified again retrospectively to impose some coherence on the range of essays submitted. There are doubtless other ways the material could be presented. Each essay is independent and self-contained and there is no particular order in which they should be read. Nevertheless, numerous intersections, overlaps, continuities, and complementarities appear, given Spielberg's extraordinary range of entertainment industry interests; these, while the volume overall focuses on his role as a director, constitute parallel and indeed – as several contributors explore – sometimes mutually compromising as well as synergistic careers.

The 25 chapters that follow are grouped under seven headings: “Industry and Agency,” “Narration and Style,” “Collaborations and Intertexts,” “Themes and Variations,” “Spielberg, History, and Identity,” “Spielberg in the Digital Age,” and “Reception.”

The first section comprises “Spielberg as Director, Producer, and Movie Mogul” by Thomas Schatz and “Producing the Spielberg ‘Brand’” by James Russell. Schatz disentangles Spielberg's filmmaking across distinct career phases, detecting a gap between “corporate” and “artistic” efforts, reflected in Spielberg's erstwhile uneasy relationship with the Motion Picture Academy. *Jurassic Park* and *Schindler's List*, “enormous hits” produced simultaneously, Schatz considers “utterly antithetical pictures that evinced the yin and yang of Spielberg”: blockbuster showmanship and creative artistry. These films – which, one might add, currently come halfway in Spielberg's professional filmography, numerically and chronologically – mark a watershed. They reversed Spielberg's fortunes at the one time his activities as director, producer, and mogul meshed constructively rather than coexisted in awkward tension. The two films attracted huge acclaim, together garnering 10 Oscars (including Best Picture and – a first for Spielberg – Best Director). They tempered his standing after a backlash, from which his image still suffers, that he was seen as commercially cynical, based on his executive producing of children's films. They furthermore saw him taking risks: substituting CGI (computer-generated imagery) for puppetry in parts of *Jurassic Park* (thereby redeeming his reputation as a proponent of special effects); tackling difficult subject matter in *Schindler's List*; and, for the latter, abandoning storyboards to create a more spontaneous style in partnership with Janusz Kaminski. Spielberg's Director of Photography ever since, Kaminski has worked with him on a series of darker films in the post-9/11 era, none of them a commercial hit on the scale previously associated with the director. All this Schatz documents against Spielberg's rise as a creation of the Hollywood system and his mastery of deal making and industry politics, which earned him enormous freedom yet, ironically, curbed his directing with distractions from the demands of managing Amblin and the particularly troublesome DreamWorks project.

James Russell extends and integrates different authorship approaches to examine continuities between Spielberg's earlier reputation as a children's director and his pre-eminence as an educator. Both roles help market Spielberg's image as a commercial brand, thus connecting Russell's chapter with others that deal with Spielberg and childhood and those that explore his roles not only as a director but also a businessman and a public figure. American cinema, Russell notes, increasingly creates distinct brands that are highly valuable as marketing propositions and as legal properties. Spielberg