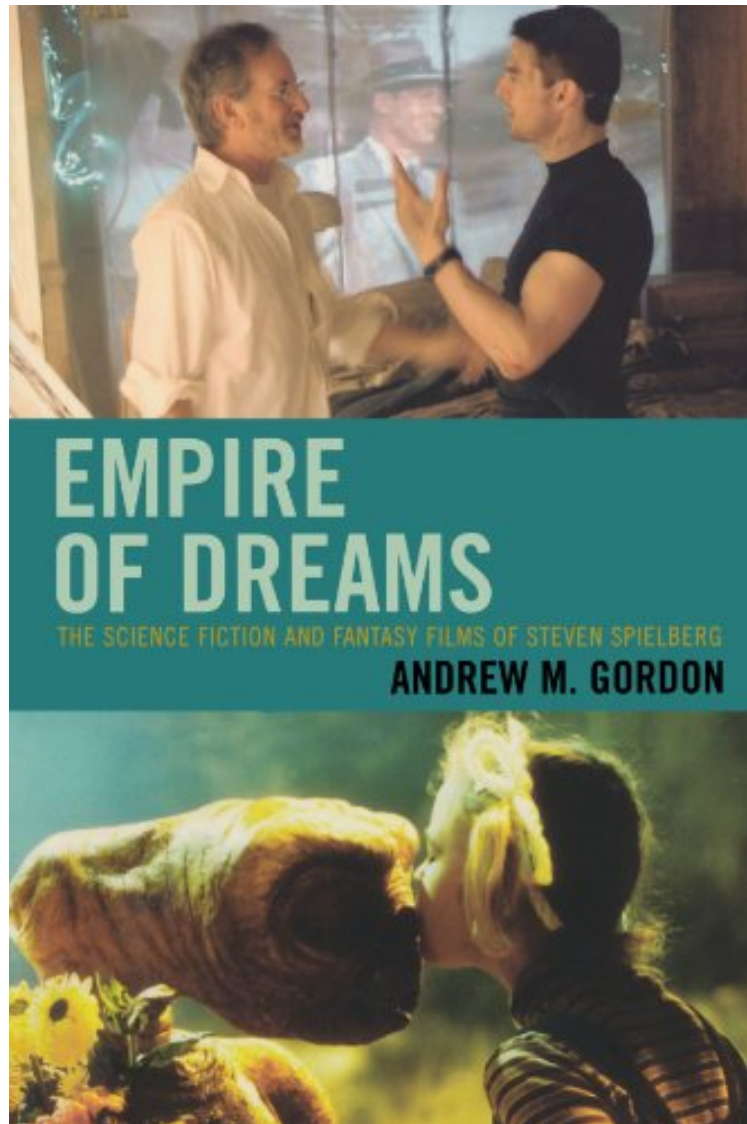


Empire of Dreams: The Science Fiction and Fantasy Films of Steven Spielberg

Andrew M. Gordon

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Andrew M. Gordon : Empire of Dreams: The Science Fiction and Fantasy Films of Steven Spielberg before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Empire of Dreams: The Science Fiction and Fantasy Films of Steven Spielberg:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. If I was a film professor, this would be required readingBy Michael JollsAlthough I'm personally not prone to sci-fi specifically, Andrew Gordon does a stellar job analyzing and

debunking. The book is never too intelligent for the reader, while incorporating complicated themes such as Freudian views, literature subtext, and sociological concerns. Gordon pins "Close Encounters of the Third Kind"; "E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial"; and "Poltergeist" as three versions of the same story. He correlates Indiana Jones and the original Star Wars trilogy perfectly, and horror of "Duel"; "Jaws"; and "Jurassic Park". Personally, my favorite element of Gordon's excellent book was the attention given to "Hook", which the film and its themes often gets neglected in Spielberg narratives. This is easily one of the best Spielberg books out on the market. 0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Try another book about Spielberg -- and let me know what it is By Shopper This book is a disappointment. It is a series of essays on each of Spielberg's movies, with the essays ranging in quality from OK to bad. There is a fair amount of Freudian analysis that really seems beside point. The fantastic movie "Minority Report" gets only a short essay that summarizes the Dick short story on which the movie is based and then lobs in some parallels to the Oedipus story that are strained and don't lead anywhere. In addition to the substantive shortcomings, the writing is pedestrian. 3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Spielberg Explained, with Brilliance and Cinema Scholarship By Tom Marema Steven Spielberg is, without doubt, one of the most gifted and imaginative filmmakers of his generation. To my mind, he has few, if any equals in making films that can profoundly move an audience, excite and enlighten anybody watching truth flicker by at the requisite 24 frames per second. You walk out of "Jaws," as many of us did, knowing you've been frightened half to death, yet also knowing that you've seen great filmmaking at work, the best of the medium, a pure "movie movie," as it was once called when I was kicking around Hollywood in my early days as a writer and journalist. It was all there, of course, early on, if you want to go back in film history and check out his first feature "Duel." And it's been an amazing ride ever since, from "Jaws" and "ET" to "Indiana Jones" and "Schindler's List" and beyond to "Minority Report" and "War of the Worlds." Spielberg never ceases to amaze and dazzle the audience with his command of the medium. Now Andrew Gordon has explained, in great detail, why and how. In his masterful, brilliant study of Spielberg's career, Gordon provides an in-depth look at each of the several dozen or more films that comprise the master's work. The various pieces of Spielberg's career and the critical responses to his movies are woven together in a rich tapestry of film scholarship. Gordon has done his homework in spades. His insights into the Spielberg canon are both illuminating and astute. This is no easy task, given the range of emotions that each Spielberg movie appears to evoke. Gordon steps both forward and back in assessing how he reacted to each picture, and how others reacted. In particular, I liked Gordon's chapter on Spielberg's "A.I.," the movie he finished for Stanley Kubrick. Although not a great commercial success, and one that certainly divided the critics, I still remember parts of the film with greater recall and emotional resonance than other Spielberg creations. Gordon, again, explains why, digging with psychological clarity into the various themes of the lost child expressed in the story. The beauty of Gordon's book is that he is able to connect the various and complex themes that run through Spielberg's work from film to film; we see continuity, interrelationships, the struggle of the artist at work, the hits and misses, and ultimately, the ways in which we always, seemingly, happen to return to the world of Spielberg's boyhood home in suburbia, to all the hopes and promises of the American dream itself. If you're a film scholar, this book is must reading; if your interest in Spielberg is casual and curious, you'll find the text to be highly informative, with penetrating insight into the artist and his remarkable style of filmmaking.

Empire of Dreams is the first definitive look at all of the science fiction (S.F.), fantasy, and horror films directed by Steven Spielberg, one of the most popular and influential filmmakers in the world today. In the 1970s and 1980s, along with George Lucas, Spielberg helped spark the renaissance of American SF and fantasy film, and he has remained highly productive and prominent in these genres ever since. S.F., fantasy, and horror films form the bulk of his work for over thirty years; of the twenty-six theatrical features he directed from 1971 to 2005, sixteen are of these genres, a coherent and impressive body of work. His films have become part of a global consciousness and his cinematic style part of the visual vocabulary of world media.

Andrew Gordon has produced an exhaustive investigation of this major part of Spielberg's oeuvre appreciative but also critical, finding the complexities inside films that superficial critics have dismissed as childish or manipulative. It's very rewarding to mentally rewind and watch them again with Professor Gordon's insights playing along. (Joe Haldeman, author, The Forever War, Camouflage, and The Accidental Time Machine) This is a highly desirable book on a highly necessary topic. Such a major cultural force requires a major study. Well, here it is... (Brian Aldiss, author of Super-Toys Last All Summer Long and Other Stories of Future Time (2001)) Eminently readable and including good photographs, references after each chapter, and a detailed index, this book should have a broad readership... Recommended. All readers, all levels. (CHOICE, April 2008, Vol. 45 No. 08) Gordon's book is... engagingly written... Gordon seems able effortlessly to transform any Spielberg film into an example of the logic of any particular psychological or psychoanalytical framework he finds at hand a number of passages would... provide undergraduates with a clear sense of how mutually to understand a theoretical structure and a film narrative. (Science Fiction Film and Television, November 2008) Offers the most comprehensive review of the critical receptions and readings of Spielberg's sf, fantasy, and horror films. His chapters can be easily excerpted for film students. Gordon's

book is both intelligent and fun to read. It is worth a read. (The Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts) It was a pleasure to have a 'close encounter' with this take on Spielberg's science fiction and fantasy oeuvre. I simply could not put it down! Gordon's adroit use of insightful research coupled with an engaging, accessible writing style and solid organization makes this book useful to readers who range from the general public to the academic expert to students. In short, Gordon boldly goes where no critic has gone before in relation to Spielberg. (Marleen S. Barr, author, *Oy Pioneer!*: A Novel, *Feminist Fabulation: Space/Postmodern Fiction*, and *Lost in Space: Probing Feminist*)

About the Author: Andrew M. Gordon is associate professor of English at the University of Florida and director of the Institute for the Psychological Study of the Arts. He is the author of *An American Dreamer: A Psychoanalytic Study of the Fiction of Norman Mailer*, co-editor (with Peter Rudnytsky) of *Psychoanalyses/Feminisms*, and co-author (with Hernn Vera) of *Screen Saviors: Hollywood Fictions of Whiteness*, and has many articles and reviews on contemporary American fiction and film, particularly science-fiction film.