



American Cinema of the 1980s: Themes and Variations (Screen Decades: American Culture/American Cinema)

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During the 1980s, American cinema underwent enormous transformations. Blockbusters like *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, *E.T.*, and *The Empire Strikes Back* grabbed huge revenues for the studios. At the same time, the growth of home video led to new and creative opportunities for independent film production, resulting in many of the decade's best films. Both large- and small-scale filmmakers responded to the social, political, and cultural conditions of the time. The two-term presidency of Ronald Reagan spawned a new Cold War with the Soviet Union, which Hollywood film both embraced and critiqued. Also during this time, Hollywood launched a long-awaited cycle of films about the Vietnam War, exploring its impact both at home and abroad. But science fiction remained the era's most popular genre, ranging from upbeat fantasies to dark, dystopic visions.

Bringing together original essays by ten respected scholars in the field, *American Cinema of the 1980s* examines the films that marked the decade, including *Ordinary People*, *Body Heat*, *Blade Runner*, *Zelig*, *Platoon*, *Top Gun*, *Aliens*, *Blue Velvet*, *Robocop*, *Fatal Attraction*, *Die Hard*, *Batman*, and *sex, lies & videotape*.

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