



# Joel and Ethan Coen (Contemporary Film Directors)

*R. Barton Palmer*

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## **Joel and Ethan Coen (Contemporary Film Directors) R. Barton Palmer**

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 trans-textural references. In *Joel and Ethan Coen*, R. Barton Palmer argues that the Coen oeuvre also 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 on this book.

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