As a UK-based academic, I am reminded of the Open University "academic" films that went out on the BBC in past decades. Has work been done on these? What values are espoused in these films? Do they have any artistic merit? Do they at times evidence a tension between creativity and state funded values, between a director's vision and the controlling gaze of public broadcasters and educators? Alexander has made me think.

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Ridley Scott: A Critical Filmography. William B. Parrill. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2011. P/bk 181 pp. ISBN 978-0-7864-5866-0. Price $45.00.

As with many modem filmmakers, Ridley Scott spent the early part of his career working in advertising. He formed a company with his brother Tony Scott and enjoyed great success creating commercials with a core group of other film professionals. While he graduated from London's Royal College of Art in 1963, he would not direct his first feature film until the release of *The Duellists* in 1977. Through 2012, he has directed twenty films that are noted for their visual flair and regular critical and financial success. He is also noted for revisiting his films with new versions, as well as his willingness to talk about his films in great detail.

William B. Parrill is an emeritus professor of English at Southeastern Louisiana University. He also helped found the journal Louisiana Literature and has written other critical film guides. In this book, he reviews all nineteen feature films from *The Duellists* (1977) through 2010's *Robin Hood.* He also discusses Scott's student film from 1962 (*Boy and Bicycle*), as well as some of Scott's work in television. He also includes a long introduction that reviews Scott's filmmaking process and his preparation methods for his projects. For each film, he lists the various versions available for each film and the available home video versions for them. He also briefly details each film's plot and presents the critical view of the film when released. For each film, Parrill assesses how it fits into Scott's style and method.

In the introduction, Parrill reviews Ridley Scott's career, focusing in particular with the effect of Scott's commercial work on his filmmaking. He

compares Scott's work - *Blade Runner* (1982) in particular - to Fritz Lang. He shows how each filmmaker depends on a style that often prefers visual over story. Parrill also analyzes Scott's filmmaking method, that depends on meticulous preparation and quick and precise filming. He describes how Scott's films depend on careful editing to present Scott's vision. In particular, Parrill shows how Scott is willing to change his films, with multiple versions often available on home video. He also discusses Scott's regular practice of participating in home video commentaries to tell how he created his vision of each films.

Parrill assesses *Blade Runner* as an apt example of Ridley Scott's style. He describes the film as one of the last special effects movie before computer-generated imagery (CGI) became important to filmmaking. Parrill compares the film to the works of other directors who have distinctive visual styles, including Fritz Lang and Akira Kurosawa. He shows how the film became Scott's constant companion over the years, with multiple versions and continued fine tuning.

In the final part of the introduction, Parrill reviews Scott's work in commercials and presents how his ads are similar to his feature filmmaking, including the importance of style over content, even in a medium where the message is usually most important. He briefly reviews Scott's commercial for Apple shown during the 1984 Super Bowl, which Scott created after already achieving success in feature films.

Each of the main chapters of the book lists the home video versions of each film, including differences between the released film and the revised editions. Parrill mentions whether the home video editions include commentary from Scott. Parrill devotes chapters to Scott's contributions to television, including the BBC series *Adam Adamant Lives!,* (1966), for which Scott directed three episodes.

Most of the chapters are between four and eight pages, with the chapter devoted to *Blade Runner* running the longest at fifteen. After presenting a brief plot review, Parrill discusses the source material used by Scott for each film, including why Scott chose a particular subject. Much of this information is drawn from director commentaries available for most of the films. The concluding pages of each assess how each particular film fits into Scott's overall style, pointing out where a film moves away from Scott's normal process. Parrill presents his judgment on each film and finishes

each chapter with a review of the movie's box office performance. The book also has a bibliography of works consulted for each film, and a more general list of books and articles related to Ridley Scott's career.

Clearly, Parrill recognizes the importance of Ridley Scott to narrative film. He is able to present each film in a critical fashion, showing both the positive and negative issue with each, as well as how Scott's career progressed through each movie. The book is meant to be an academic study and Parrill succeeds in showing how Ridley Scott is a filmmaker enjoying both commercial and artistic success:

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Why Americans Hate the Media and How It Matters. Jonathan M. Ladd. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012. P/bk 270 pp. ISBN 978-0-691-14786-4. Price $26.95.

Jonathan M. Ladd, in *Why Americans Hate the Media and How It Matters,* explores the reasons for the decline of public trust in the institutional news media of the USA. The author starts by giving the historical background of the problematic interaction between the American media, the government, and the two main political parties. He then brings in the public, the long-lost or usually ignored central piece of the jigsaw; the target of both the media and the US government (or governments in general in democratic countries throughout the world).

The author presents a brief historical overview of the printing press from the invention of movable type to the twentieth century, covering the journey of the media from the amateur press to professionalized modem forms, including print media, radio, television stations, and news blogs on the internet. Ladd scmtinizes how the relationship between the media and governments has changed according to various circumstances. Politicians have constantly endeavored to suppress and convert the media into a handy tool for propaganda, which has been the essential cause of troubled waters between political parties and the media. Consequently, the media are customarily viewed as biased, deliberately attempting to manipulate readers and/or viewers.