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Blade Runner (BFI Film Classics)



Synopsis

Ridley Scott's dystopian classic *Blade Runner*, an adaptation of Philip K. Dick's novel, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*, combines noir with science fiction to create a groundbreaking cyberpunk vision of urban life in the twenty-first century. With replicants on the run, the rain-drenched Los Angeles which *Blade Runner* imagines is a city of oppression and enclosure, but a city in which transgression and disorder can always erupt. Graced by stunning sets, lighting, effects, costumes and photography, *Blade Runner* succeeds brilliantly in depicting a world at once uncannily familiar and startlingly new. In his innovative and nuanced reading, Scott Bukatman details the making of *Blade Runner* and its steadily improving fortunes following its release in 1982. He situates the film in terms of debates about postmodernism, which have informed much of the criticism devoted to it, but argues that its tensions derive also from the quintessentially twentieth-century, modernist experience of the city as a space both imprisoning and liberating. In his foreword to this special edition, published to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the BFI Film Classics series, Bukatman suggests that *Blade Runner*'s visual complexity allows it to translate successfully to the world of high definition and on-demand home cinema. He looks back to the sciencefiction tradition of the early 1980s, and on to the key changes in the 'final' version of the film in 2007, which risk diminishing the sense of instability created in the original.

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Customer Reviews

Ridley Scott's dystopian classic *Blade Runner*, an adaptation of Philip K. Dick's novel, *Do Androids*

Dream of Electric Sheep?, combines noir with science fiction to create a groundbreaking cyberpunk vision of urban life in the twenty-first century. With replicants on the run, the rain-drenched Los Angeles which Blade Runner imagines is a city of oppression and enclosure, but a city in which transgression and disorder can always erupt. Graced by stunning sets, lighting, effects, costumes and photography, Blade Runner succeeds brilliantly in depicting a world at once uncannily familiar and startlingly new. ã ã In his innovative and nuanced reading, Scott Bukatman details the making of Blade Runner and its steadily improving fortunes following its release in 1982. He situates the film in terms of debates about postmodernism, which have informed much of the criticism devoted to it, but argues that its tensions derive also from the quintessentially twentieth-century, modernist experience of the city ã ã as a space both imprisoning and liberating. ã ã In his foreword to this special edition, published to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the BFI Film Classics series, Bukatman suggests that Blade Runner's visual complexity allows it to translate successfully to the world of high definition and on-demand home cinema. He looks back to the sciencefiction tradition of the early 1980s, and on to the key changes in the 'final' version of the film in 2007, which risk diminishing the sense of instability created in the original.

SCOTT BUKATMAN ã ã is a cultural theorist and Professor of Film and Media Studies at Stanford University. His research explores how popular media such as film, comics and animation mediate between new technologies and human perceptual and bodily experience.

Great addition to the film and I recommend any Blade Runner fan to read this as it provides additional information.

A reprint (and I think rewrite) of the 2008 edition, this is a detailed account of the making of, and final movie, Blade Runner and its history after release. Many of the stories are well known and, to be honest, at just over a hundred pages there seems to be very little here that you could not find in a ten minute internet search. Blade Runner is one of those films that developed a cult following well after its release and many facts have become well known. A lot of the book seems to deal with the city and its place in the future, the ethics of androids, and the landscape of science fiction in the 20th century. Which, while interesting, is not THAT interesting to a person who is already well versed in such things. This is for a person who is totally new to the film or sci-fi films in general. Otherwise I would give it a pass.

Very good product, helped me finish a term paper, so I'm grateful that it came in just a day. I definitely recommend this!

I got this book shortly after it came out in the previous edition and have read it a total of three times. How anyone could give this outstanding book only two stars is mindboggling. This is not merely a book about BLADE RUNNER, but about what it and similar films tell us about what it means to be human under Late Capitalism. It stretches the themes of the film to cover how the modern world attempts to remake us as consumers, as artifacts, as "made" (or "re-made") things, how modern society is so constructed by the tendency to objectify everything that it transforms us from flesh and blood people to culturally produced artifacts. These themes were, of course, at the heart of Philip K. Dick's novel and were some of his ongoing concerns, but few critics have written about them so eloquently as Bukatman. As an example, read this book and then read the book in the same series on THE MATRIX, which deals with similar themes. Where Bukatman's volume bristles with insight and intelligent, that other book is rather dense and lacking in insight. This is strange, given that THE MATRIX is essentially a remake in fictionalized form of Guy Debord's THE SOCIETY OF THE SPECTACLE (as an experiment, either read Debord's Marxist classic, substituting "Matrix" each time Debord writes "Spectacle," or use "Spectacle" when the film uses the word "Matrix" - the meaning is precisely the same in each instance, plus the then-brothers dropped explicit hints as to how to situate their film by putting things like Baudrillard's SIMULATION AND SIMULACRA in it as a hollowed out volume in which Neo keeps his software). As superb as this book is, it pales compared to Bukatman's TERMINAL IDENTITY, which is perhaps the premiere study of artificially created consciousness in contemporary film and literature. It is perhaps the most widely cited book on the subject in the field of posthuman studies today, with the lone exception of Donna Haraway's Cyborg Manifesto, which is, of course, an essay. Sammon's FUTURE NOIR is the premiere book on the making of the film, but the previous reviewer is wrong in suggesting that this was the point of Bukatman's book. He is focused instead on the meaning of the film. He sketches out a bit about the making of the film, in keeping with the required format of other films in the BFI Film Classics series, but that is the least interesting part of the book. To ignore the heart of the book is simply irresponsible criticism.

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