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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.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

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).

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