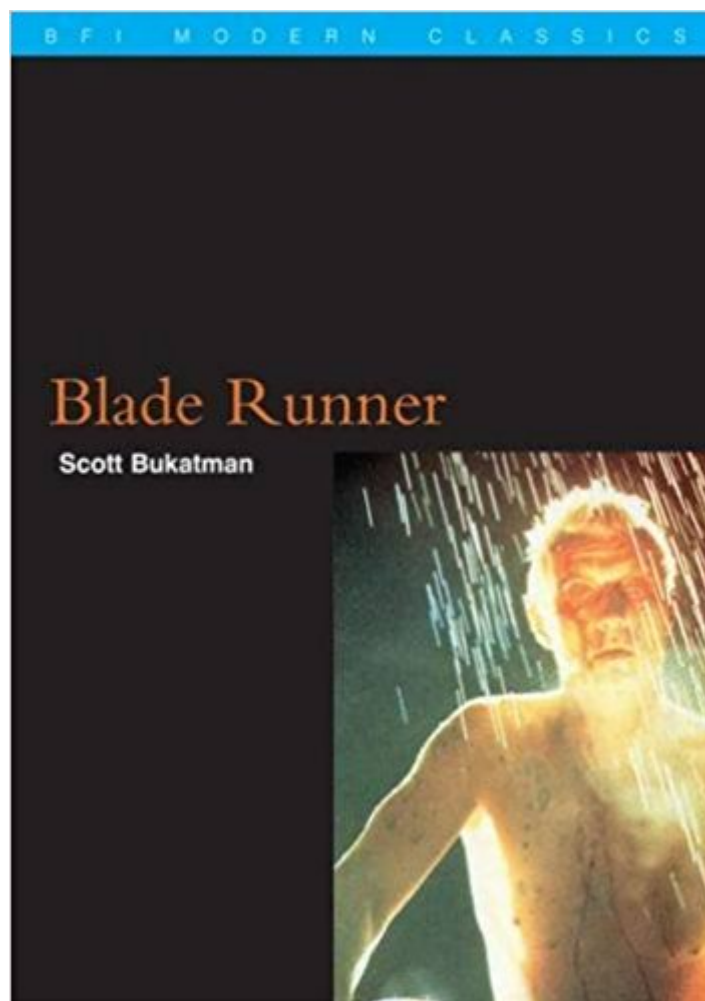


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Blade Runner (BFI Modern Classics)



Synopsis

This text details the making of Blade Runner and its steadily improving fortunes after its indifferent reception in 1982. The film is situated in terms of the debates about postmodernism which have informed the large body of criticism devoted to it.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

'There's a lot of material for such a small size so it's worthy of your consideration.' - GF Willmetts, SF Crowsnest

Scott Bukatman is Professor of Media Arts at the University of New Mexico.

Great little book about the making of blade runner. A little short, but good introduction to the film

I think that this movie is loaded with symbolism and it takes more than one sitting to catch all of the references. It definitely relays a message about government and religion, as well as human nature. I am certain that there could be an entire college course, just studying this movie. I can't say that the movie is entertaining or pleasant to watch, but it is definitely a classic.

Blade Runner is my favorite movie, and this is one of the best books on a film I've ever read. The comparisons with other sci-fi films and post-modernism are very interesting. There is also a lot of information on how the film was made.

Replicant Alert! Avoid this book if you have any affection for the movie. Except for the last couple of pages, the author has little to offer other than the usual drivel about "Post-Modernism". You will be much better off buying the Director's Cut on DVD, and watching it several times! This series of books has its exceptions, this is not one of them. Unintentionally hilarious in parts, as only the academician can be. Pretentious, ponderous cinema-scholar jargon that offers little of value or insight. Read Sammon's *The Making of Blade Runner* instead! (Nice cover, though...)

Like many movies reviewed in the British Film Institute series, *Blade Runner* did not start off strong at the box office. Coming on the heels of *Star Wars* and *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, *Blade Runner* offered movie goers a much bleaker view than they had complacently grown accustomed to in the few years preceding its release. Instead of cute aliens and a disco-inspired cantina, we got rebellious androids who kill humans and bounty hunters who hunt them down in the street of a Los Angeles that looks like the earth split open and vomitted upward. Although this dark vision of the near future might not have resonated with viewers at the time, *Blade Runner* gained its audience over time as people saw through the surface and started asking some deeper questions. This volume by Scott Bukatman addresses some of these issues as well. This book is broken down into three parts, the first of which is a general overview of the making of the movie. It is the next two sections, however, that are more interesting, although Bukatman has a tendency to digress into typical movie analysis babble that will probably be offputting to most potential readers. Fortunately, this does not undermine the better parts of this book. The second section discusses the role that cities themselves have played in cinema and how *Blade Runner* taps into and contributes to that history. For much of science fiction, cities were places of potential utopia in the perfected world of the future. Of course, darker versions existed and *Blade Runner* itself is a return to a more dystopian vision. The best is saved for last as the third section discusses replicants (the androids in the movie) and addresses the issue of what really makes humans human. This is a topic with tremendous potential to devolve into the absurd and laughable at the drop of a sentence. Thankfully, Bukatman's take is more intelligent and accessible. If the rest of the book had been this good, my rating would have been higher and I would recommend this book based on this section alone. I have read enough of the BFI monographs to have seen the gamut, with some being exceptional and others being ridiculous. *BLADE RUNNER* may not be as good as the best ones in the series I have read. But for fans of the movie, it is certainly worthwhile.

I have only one criticism of this otherwise outstanding exploration of BLADE RUNNER: it is a tad slow in getting to the best bits. While all of it is informative and insightful, the last quarter contains some of the best film criticism I've read in a considerable period of time. I love Paul Sammons's FUTURE NOIR, but it is more about the nitty gritty of making the film, while this is instead on what the movie is about. This book does for BLADE RUNNER what Bukatman's book TERMINAL IDENTITY does for cyberpunk and other novels of the eighties dealing with cyber reality.

Bukatman's reflections on BLADE RUNNER are as relevant to Philip K. Dick's books as to the film. I want to add a general comment about the target audience for the book. A number of the reviews are by people who are not among the book's target audience. I'm not sure why people would try to review a book that is outside their field. Paul Sammon's book, as excellent as it is, is for a less specialized, more general audience. Someone who recommends that book, as nice as it is, is missing the point of a scholarly assessment of a film. If you aren't in film studies or not comfortable reading scholarly discussions of cinema, you probably shouldn't be reading this book. And it is hardly a criticism of the book in calling it a film studies book when that is precisely what it is. That is like criticizing an atlas because it is filled with maps instead of photographs. This is an outstanding film criticism book. If that is what you want, you will absolutely not be disappointed.

This is indeed an excellently written "little" book on Blade Runner. I do feel, however, that the material on the film's inception is too drawn-out and that the rather more "interesting" exposition and analysis of the film remains far too cursory. BR deals with a myriad of themes and tropes, such as the recurring EYE theme. Bukatman mentions many instances where EYES occur and mentions a possible significance, but does not explore it (or many other themes) in depth, eg. its relation to SCOPOPHILIA or SPECTATORSHIP, etc. Admittedly, it is a small pocket-sized book, and it is worth the money, but if you desire an in-depth analysis of the film, this is not the book to purchase IMHO.

This is a very good resource; I used it to prepare resources for my secondary school students. It is especially good on production background, audience response and special effects as well as post modernist aspects of the film. This would be a good resource for media studies too.

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