

(Get free) Star Wars (BFI Film Classics)

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Will Brooker

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Will Brooker : Star Wars (BFI Film Classics) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Star Wars (BFI Film Classics):

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. More Alike Than They SeemBy Dash ManchetteAs Will Brooker, the author of this British Film Institute's entry on Star Wars correctly states at the beginning, there is certainly no shortage of book on this movie. So why add another? Because all of the others, over 30 years worth, are either on the mythology of Star Wars or treat the movie as just fluffy entertainment. Intelligent commentary has so far been lacking. Like the Western for many years, it just has not gotten its proper due. And like the Western (or at least the best of them), Brooker hopes to elevate the discussion.The first chapter provides a quick review of George Lucas' early works,

both his short student films and the full-length THX 1138 and American Graffiti. Lucas always saw himself as becoming an experimental film maker and/or maker of documentaries. Star Wars seems to have been a significant turn off the rails. But as Brooker points out, this may not necessarily have been the case. Star Wars actually combines the previous two movies, with the sci-fi coldness of THX 1138 and the optimistic humanity and youthfulness of American Graffiti, and adds a third element to it: a coherent, linear story to purposefully create a mythos for a society that needed them. The remainder of the book is a fascinating examination of the relationship between the two seemingly opposite environments in the film: the creative, messy, earthy and human world primarily associated with the Rebel Alliance versus the disciplined, mechanical, orderly and linear world of the Empire. Brooker does an excellent job of demonstrating that this dichotomy, prevalent throughout much of the film, is not as exclusive to each side as first appears and, indeed, it is the crossing of the boundaries between these two worlds that ultimately leads to the Death Star's (and in later films, the Empire's) destruction. Some of this is behavioral, such as Han Solo, the personification of the disorderly and messy, running havoc against Imperial Soldiers and, in the rescue scene, displaying a total inability to adopt the language of the Empire. Some of this is intrinsic to the characters, such as Princess Leia, whose disciplined manners are more parallel to the orderly world of the Death Star but whose very presence aboard that vehicle ultimately leads to its destruction. Or C-3PO, who was created on Tatooine (as we learn in the prequels but whose own memory of such has been wiped clean) and whose appearance was designed to reflect that desert planet's appearance, but whose punctilious manner is totally out of place there (remember, Uncle Owen, when buying droids from the Jawas, initially rejected C-3PO because he had no need for a protocol droid). Further, as Brooker demonstrates, this conflict between warm humanity and the cold mechanical, is a reflection of the actual film maker himself. George Lucas wanted to create a movie with warmth and humanity, but Lucas the man is far more comfortable with things than with people. He disliked the actual process of making the film, wanted only to get the pictures in his head on to film but, of course, had to go through the messy (human) process of actually making the movie to do so. The boundaries of the two sides were at odds within Lucas as they were between the two sides in the movie. Finally, this dichotomy is shown to work the other way, as well. The final scene, with the heroes receiving military medals, displays a strict code and formality more akin to the disciplined Empire than the chaotic Rebel Alliance. And this, as Booker points out, brings us full circle. As the prequels demonstrate, the Empire did not arise outside of the former Republic, but within it. The Republic failed to see it coming because the Empire reflected the Republic's own mannerisms and customs. In the end, the two sides are not as far apart as they would seem in this, the fourth chapter but initial film, in the series. Brooker intended to bring a more serious analytic eye to Star Wars. In that, he succeeded. This is a very interesting book. 3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. More Gray than Black White By Nick Jamilla It is telling that books in the BFI (British Film Institute) classic series formally take the title of the same film which it critiques without any subtitle, for Brooker's monograph critiques Star Wars, the original blockbuster, not Star Wars: A New Hope, the first film of six viewed within an eventual 20-year context. And, indeed, Star Wars is a worthy addition to a very limited field of books and essays that critically look at the Star Wars films from an independent perspective, and not that simply of a fanboy or that of a Star Wars affiliate like [...] or a franchise like Lucasbooks or Wizards of the Coast. Brooker is not only a respected professor in popular culture, but also fan of those other popular expressions that inform modern adventure films. Things like comics, radio serials, television, as well as art, literature, and cinema. And behind him stands the British Film Institute and the proper vetting and rigor that is required for the inclusion of another addition to the BFI film classics series. Brooker's monograph looks at the original film with a particular look at George Lucas the avant-garde filmmaker and the influences that inform the rebel versus empire theme within the first movie. Unlike the many interviews Lucas has given over several decades, Lucas cannot re-interpret the influences on him and the original film. Instead, Booker looks at the visual influences on Star Wars and the pretensions of Lucas as a director and editor pre-Episode IV. His supporting evidence is so good that it even impresses the many die-hard fans that are quite familiar with the body of Lucas interviews and early critical reviews of the film. Those that are looking for a more comprehensive look at this film are directed to Rinzler's *The Making of Star Wars: The Definitive Story Behind the Original Film*, but for those who want a critical look from a particular perspective, as true academic criticism is supposed to, then researchers and Star Wars lovers alike should pick up Brooker's book and add it to their library. For those who see Star Wars as simply black white, Brooker's essay is required reading for commentary on the "gray" of the film which not only makes Star Wars a little more critically understood and not simply a modern fairy tale, but the "gray" which explains intellectually the raw feelings that make its fans love the very movie itself. 3 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Star Wars - Finally Taken Seriously (Academically) By William Hoschele A through analysis of Star Wars from an academic standpoint (something sorely lacking in terms of Lucas's film). While much of the writing about Star Wars over the past 30 years has discussed its revolutionary special effects of its blockbuster status, Brooker analyzes Star Wars in terms of what it was for George Lucas the auteur director. In his early career, Lucas longed to be a maverick, separate from Hollywood and in control of his own projects. His first two experiences with the Hollywood system (THX-1138 and American Graffiti) left Lucas with a soured perspective of Hollywood. He began Star Wars by attempting to fashion a troupe of talented people all working together to create something that would out-do Hollywood at its own game. However,

Brooker traces that in doing so, and so fiercely attempting to retain his control, Lucas's desire to create band of rebels gradually turns him into the empire itself as he must reign over and control an unruly cast, crew and special effects department. Brooker also examines Lucas's fascination with objects rather than people and demonstrates that Lucas, like the empire, prefers things that are cold and impersonal, less human, but longs for the wild improvisational spirit of creativity found in the rebels. Brooker's book demonstrates that Star Wars is a much more complex film that originally gleaned by demonstrating that Lucas, as the writer/director/editor, is identifying with both sides and while the narrative the film demonstrates a clear victory of the film, Lucas's direction does not reveal such a clear cut winner

The release of Star Wars in 1977 marked the start of what would become a colossal global franchise. Star Wars remains the second highest-grossing film in the United States, and George Lucas's six-part narrative has grown into something more: a culture that goes far beyond the films themselves, with tie-in toys, novels, comics, games and DVDs as well as an enthusiastic fan community which creates its own Star Wars fictions. Critical studies of Star Wars have treated it as a cultural phenomenon, or in terms of its special effects, fans and merchandising, or as a film that marked the end of New Hollywood's innovation and the birth of the blockbuster. Will Brooker's illuminating study of the film takes issue with many of these commonly-held ideas about Star Wars. He provides a close analysis of Star Wars as a film, carefully examining its shots, editing, sound design, cinematography and performances. Placing the film in the context of George Lucas's previous work, from his student shorts to his 1970s features, and the diverse influences that shaped his approach, from John Ford to Jean-Luc Godard, Brooker argues that Star Wars is not, as Lucas himself has claimed, a departure from his earlier cinema, but a continuation of his experiments with sound and image. He reveals Lucas's contradictory desires for total order and control, embodied by the Empire, and for the raw energy and creative improvisation of the Rebels. What seemed a simple fairy-tale becomes far more complex when we realise that the director is rooting for both sides; and this tension unsettles the saga as a whole, blurring the boundaries between Empire and Republic, dark side and light side, father and son.

'Another day, another Star Wars book, but this one does a rare thing concentrate on the film itself rather than its mythos. There's thoughtful stuff, suggesting SW continues Lucas' development as an experimental filmmaker and arguing that Lucas is rooting for both Empire and rebellion.' - Empire 'For once, a scholarly study that doesn't tut and moan about merchandising and the death of New Hollywood...Its clear, concise arguments include a taut dismissal of the prequels that doesn't resort to Binks-bashing.' - Total Film " Another day, another Star Wars book, but this one does a rare thing concentrate on the film itself rather than its mythos. There's thoughtful stuff, suggesting SW continues Lucas' development as an experimental filmmaker and arguing that Lucas is rooting for both Empire and rebellion.' - Empire 'For once, a scholarly study that doesn't tut and moan about merchandising and the death of New Hollywood... Its clear, concise arguments include a taut dismissal of the prequels that doesn't resort to Binks-bashing.' - Total Film

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