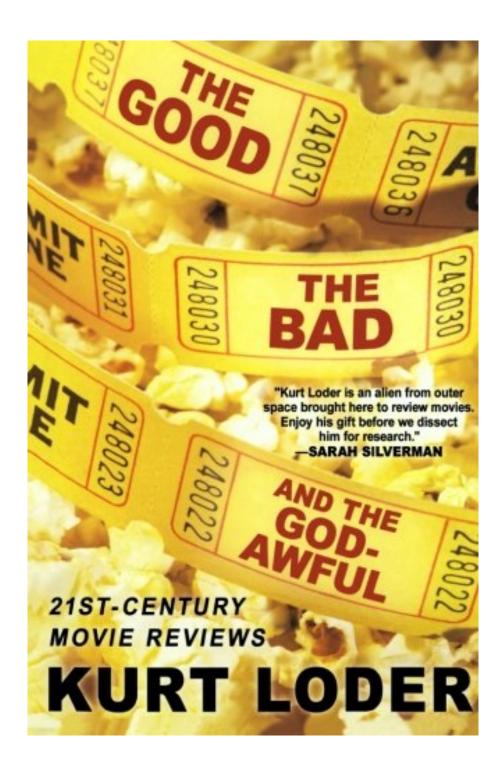


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Review

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The former Rolling Stone writer and MTV host takes off from classic Roger Ebert and sails boldly into the new millennium.

Millions grew up reading the author's record reviews and watching him on MTV's "The Week in Rock." In this collection of more than 200 movie reviews from MTV.com and, more recently, the Reason magazine Website, plus sidebars exclusive to this volume, Loder demonstrates his characteristic wry voice and finely honed observations. The author shines when writing on the best that Hollywood and indie filmmakers have to offer, and his negative reviews are sometimes more fun than his raves. This freewheeling survey of the wild, the wonderful and the altogether otherwise is an indispensable book for any film buff.

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Most helpful customer reviews

4 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Clever Movie Reviews From A Clever Rock Critic By R. W. Rasband

This fat new anthology of Kurt Loder's film criticism is a good companion to Roger Ebert's work. In the introduction Loder brings up Pauline Kael in a self-deprecating way. But I think Loder has a common-sense approach that eludes Kael. In fact, in a break from showbiz orthodoxy, Loder is now reviewing movies for the libertarian magazine "Reason". His landmark pan of Michael Moore's "Sicko" is included in this volume. And he is gratifyingly smart about pretension of all kinds. Loder also covers documentaries and foreign films. Attention to these has decreased in the past 20 years or so. Loder is doing his part to revive interest in them. It's too bad that these reviews only go back to 2004. I would like to read Loder on older films. Or a memoir about his long career would be a nice chunk of American cultural history. If you are a fan of clear, elegant prose and provocative thinking you will greatly enjoy this book.

1 of 3 people found the following review helpful.

Kurt Doesn't Waste Words

By Peter Baklava

Kurt Loder considers himself a "film reviewer" as opposed to a "film critic". Essentially that means that he chooses to review " meat and potatoes" movies instead of focusing only on esoteric films. He is a filter for the common moviegoer. He's also totally unpretentious, cheerful, tidy and slightly astringent. His reviews are neat little bundles with a witty parting line at the end--which means that if you want a quick take on his opinion, you can just fastforward to the concluding sentence.

This volume covers some two hundred odd titles from the first decade of the new century. Loder's categorizations of the movies emphasize the rather crass way that movies are marketed to target audiences. I found that I had actually viewed less than 15% of these movies, most of which had no brush whatsoever with the Academy Awards. But as I said, Loder is not an esoteric reviewer, and he gives space to all the types of movies (low and high art both) flowing through the cultural river. Read in their entirety, books like this tend to confirm the idea that we are indeed amusing ourselves to death.

One of Loder's greatest gifts is that he can reduce and make legible even the loopiest, most convoluted plots in movies, and dog knows we are now regularly subjected to movie plots that are infuriatingly obtuse. Kurt spins his spidery analytical silk and salts them away all the same, in a fastidious packet that is low on verbiage. He has a good grasp of the mechanics of the movie industry, and he can quickly diagnose just why a film succeeds or fails.

Loder reviews for "Reason" magazine, and perhaps that is why his reviews are so panoptical, as deadpan analyses of what people really watch. In addition to his familiarity with all the niches and the low appetites that collar even the most high-minded, he is cognizant of films that are increasingly worthy of attention, such as the wealth of good documentaries that are being produced.

Still, if he ever releases another book of reviews, I hope that it will be called "Kurt's Essentials". Then, his humble readers won't spend so much time wondering why these films (the bad and 'godawful' ones) were even made.

0 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Interesting collection By Ron Nutter Like any collection of reviews, there are hits and misses. It is entertaining to read, though. I enjoyed it. My computer says I need to add one more word, so I add the word "codswallop."

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