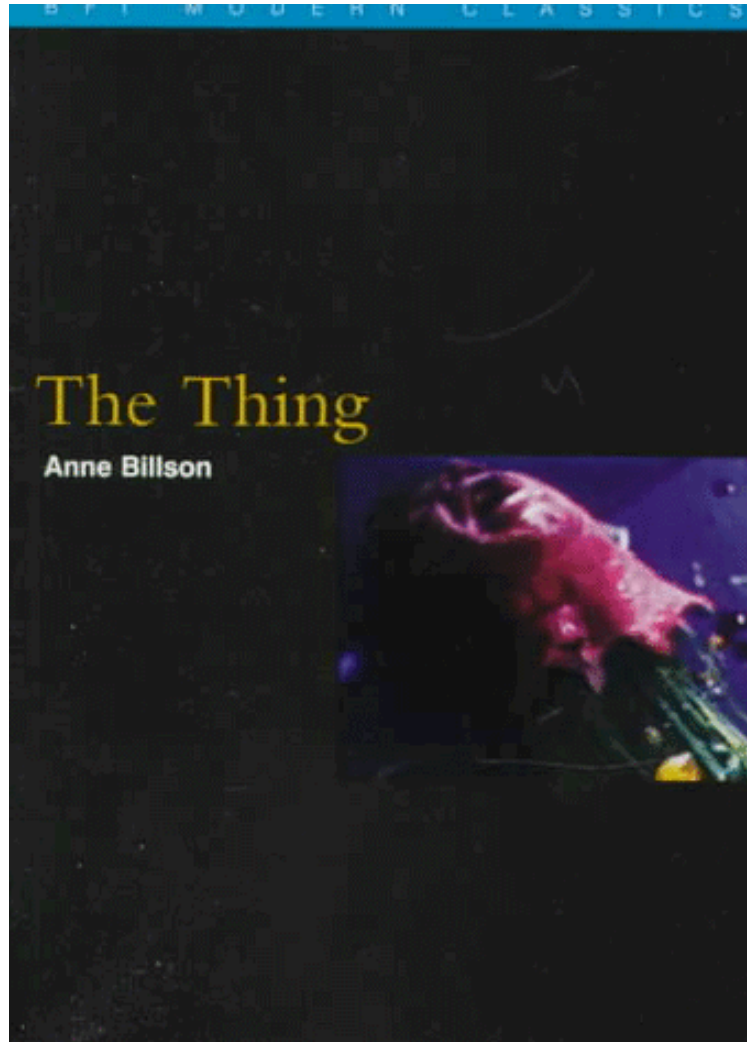


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NA NA : The Thing (BFI Modern Classics) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Thing (BFI Modern Classics):

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. A breezy read, though not terribly deep By John S Harris Bilson is obviously a fan of the film. This isn't one of the more in-depth or scholarly analyses in the BFI series, but it does make a good companion piece to the film (and to the 1952 "The Thing From Another World" film version of the short story - "Who Goes There?" - that Carpenter's 1982 film is based on). In a nutshell, Bilson asserts that the film critics who panned the film upon its initial release completely missed the boat and the point. This film was original in so many underappreciated ways, and it remains to this day a standard-bearer. The author explores the idea that the titular Thing may as well be, for all intents and purpose, female. That, and that Carpenter and screenwriter Bill Lancaster

were both very brave and correct to dodge conventional Hollywood wisdom by casting the film with all-male and mostly lesser-known actors, and that the timing of the making of the film thankfully preceeded the political-correctness period that now practically mandates a Rainbow Coalition of skin colors. Clearly, Carpenter was focused solely on the story, and kept all other interferences at bay. One of my favorite assertions that Billson makes, and I am certainly in agreement with her, is that if the AFI list of Greatest Film Quotes of All Time allowed for profanity, "The Thing" would be well-represented! This isn't the most thought-provoking BFI entry, but it is affectionately written, for sure, without being kissy-kissy. I still love this book series, however. I always ask for a BFI book for my birthday. Next BFI books up for me: "The Shawshank Redemption", "Crash", and "The Thin Red Line". Stay tuned.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Wonderful
By Morph94I bought this book for a term paper in my English class, and trust me, I was not disappointed. It's absolutely fantastic- I recommend it highly. Billson has done her research into the world that is The Thing, and provides not only background information, but scene-by-scene analysis of the movie that includes many different viewpoints and interpretations. Truly a masterpiece.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Man is the warmest place to hide.
By S. Michael WilsonAs part of the BFI Modern Classics series, film reviewer and novelist Anne Billson dissects (an apt description considering the source material) John Carpenter's The Thing. As Billson points out early on, The Thing is one of those films that was a financial and critical failure when released, but is now considered a landmark in horror/sci-fi cinema and an unrivaled masterpiece. It's only fitting that it receives the film historian treatment. In a departure from some of the more academic entries into the BFI series, Billson essentially walks the reader through the film from beginning to end, describing what is happening on the screen as it occurs, and pausing to introduce historical context or critical analysis where appropriate along the way. In a way, this format results in an unintentionally dismissive presentation that feels as if we are watching the movie while someone (Billson) talks over it. Then again, it is a welcome change of pace from some of the more overly clinical BFI books crammed full of frame-by-frame screenshots and charts tallying camera angles. One could argue that treating The Thing in this fashion implies that genre films shouldn't be taken seriously, but one could also argue that this is how genre fans take their films seriously. The important thing is that it works. Billson is obviously a fan of both the film and the genre, and her insights are both genuine and intriguing. One of her more interesting approaches is the idea of the titular Thing as the sole female character of the films otherwise sausage-fest cast, and while some in the men's rights movement might take offense to Billson's allusions to fragile male egos and castration metaphors, but those secure in their manhood will have no problem with her Freudian analysis. The Thing is a film intentionally designed to invite interpretations, and Billson provides the reader with much to think about. The Thing is a film with multiple origins, including the original sci-fi film The Thing From Another World and the novella it was based on, Who Goes There?, and Billson discusses not only those influences, but the influences that The Thing has had since its release, including comic book spin-offs thematic overlaps in future films. I was personally gratified that this resulted in her referencing the British sci-fi series Red Dwarf, not once, but twice. Overall, this is a great entry into the BFI series, and a worthy tribute to Carpenter's legend that fans of the film (and genre films) will appreciate and enjoy.

An alien entity that can take any living form invades an isolated scientific research station in the Antarctic. John Carpenter's "The Thing" is best known for some of the most startling visual effects - surreal, lurid, shocking perversions of the human body - ever committed to celluloid. At London's National Film Theatre in 1995, Quentin Tarantino named "The Thing" as one of his favorite films. Yet when it was released in 1982, it fared badly against another alien encounter movie, "E.T.," and critics panned it. But "The Thing" has aged well, and its influence can now be detected in everything from "Seven" to "Red Dwarf" and "The X Files." In her elegant and trenchant study, Anne Billson argues that "The Thing" has never been given its due. For Billson, it's a landmark movie that brilliantly refines the conventions of classic horror and science fiction, combining them with humor, Lewis Carroll logic, strong characterizations and prescient insight. The idea of an alien species mutating and inhabiting humans resonates all too chillingly with the mad cow disease crisis and today's new and ever more powerful genetic technology.

"A stunning account of the facts and theory behind Carpenter's classic yuckfest." -- Empire
From the Back Cover
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About the Author
Anne Billson is the Sunday Telegraph's film critic. She is the author of the novels Suckers and Stiff Lips as

well as several works of nonfiction.