

Review: *Blindness* by Kurt Halfyard, February 1st, 2008 (<http://www.rowthree.com/2008/02/01/review-blindness/>)

Last night I had the opportunity to catch a first glimpse of Fernando Meirelles' 1. of *Blindness*, a film 2. the best-selling novel of Nobel Prize-winning Portuguese author José Saramago, and starring such 3. as Julianne Moore, Mark Ruffalo, Gael Garcia Bernal and Danny Glover. Not having read the book, my interest was quelled by the high-concept premise: imagine a 4. where all of a sudden and quite inexplicably the people around you start going blind and, like a virus, this blindness spreads in every direction leaving a society 5 crippled and in frantic want of quarantine; yet you keep your vision and bear witness to the 5. that occurs in the absence of that so vital sense in others. // The 6. is rich in philosophical implications: how much of our identity, moral code, and civil decency is dependent upon the reaffirmed belief that there is a visible world which we all inhabit? When the 7. of that world is denied the characters which populate *Blindness*, a reorientation takes place both individually and socially whereby the vestiges of the old world are undone and, as is poignantly noted in 8., people assume a kind of invisibility in their blindness, regressing to a supreme egoism and undaunted 10 exhibitionism they would not have participated in otherwise. Julianne Moore 9. a doctor's wife, a stowaway to the quarantine where her husband has been sent, and the only person untouched by the disease. Through her eyes we watch the 10. of violence that manifests itself as the quarantined victims come to terms with what entirely is lost along with their sight. // Cinema is fond of stories about moral depravity in the face of exceptional situations where the everyday 11. of society no longer apply, from *The Invisible Man*, *Lord of the Flies*, to the recent, *Das Experiment*. A large segment of *Blindness* operates within this grand tradition as the newly blind come to 15 recognize the absence of a 12. in the quarantine, and bit by bit relinquish their inhibitions to the whims and fantasies of their minds. Meirelles, to his credit, does not shy away from the depths of human cruelty this story warrants. 13. (yes plural) of rape had many women walking out of my theater. I am worried that these harsher aspects of the film will end up on the 14. floor after the 15. get their say, and while I felt there were some 16. throughout the film, the ugliness that Meirelles lingers on in this cut of the film feels entirely justified and makes the question of the innate worth of 'dignity' that much more profound. The moral ambiguity of the film, not merely of 20 character actions, is 17. for my recommendation of it. **Fill in:** 1. 'moral gaze' 2. adapted from 3. cutting room 4. dystopian scenario 5. escalation 6. external checks 7. familiar fabric 8. focus groups 9. heavies 10. pacing issues 11. pivotal 12. plays 13. premise 14. Prolonged sequences 15. rough cut 16. theatre of the absurd 17. voice-over

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