



Like Tears in Rain: Meditations on Science Fiction Cinema

Alex Kane

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Alex Kane lives in west-central Illinois, where he works as a freelancer, plays too many first-person shooters, and blogs about culture and technology in his spare time. A graduate of the 2013 Clarion West Writers Workshop, his stories have appeared in *Omni*, *Spark*, *Digital Science Fiction*, and the YA anthology *Futuredaze*, among other places. His reviews and criticism have also been published in *Foundation: The International Review of Science Fiction*, *The New York Review of Science Fiction*, *Amazing Stories*, *Bookgasm*, and *SF Signal*. Follow him on Twitter @alexjkane.

The essays that follow were written out of a love for science fiction in all its forms: on film, in fiction, in video games, in comics. They were written neither for money nor as a means of declaring myself some kind of self-appointed expert on the genre. Many of them appeared for the first time in *Amazing Stories*, the world's very first science fiction magazine, while others are original to this volume—but each and every one of them has been revised and expanded for the sake of remaining timely. Science fiction has a hard time keeping up with the world, though, for many of us, it stands ageless and forever relevant in our hearts: a constant beacon of youthful exuberance and wonder at the full breadth of the universe.

I hope you'll enjoy my various explorations of the big-screen myths SF has given us in recent years. Imperfect though they sometimes are, I believe that seeing worlds beyond our own brought to life in a way that's both visible and readily accessible to the next generation of readers, dreamers, and creators is vital to keeping not only the written literature alive, but also to the mission of scientific discovery that is so often forgotten in this age of hardship and cynicism.

Whether or not topics like transhumanism and interstellar flight ought to be among our most immediate social concerns is something I leave up to the reader. But I will say this: Tomorrow is coming sooner than we may think, and science fiction gives us a vast canvas for exploring its various challenges and questions from the relative safety of our imaginations, long before we are forced to face them in reality.

So: if the future is Skynet, then science fiction is a kind of “T-850”—a Cyberdyne Systems Model 101, reprogrammed with a more benevolent temperament and sent back in time to warn us about the various Bradburian follies we'll inevitably make as our species advances.

(I use this last term in its loosest possible sense.)

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