

The Future

What does the future hold? Several kinds of writers have attempted to answer this question, including both fiction writers (particularly *science* fiction) and non-fiction “futurologists” (look up Alvin Toffler or Faith Popcorn for examples). Film is perhaps the best example of a medium that explores the future, and it’s been doing it since the dawn of the medium; in films such as *Metropolis* (1927) and *Things To Come* (1936) we can see what the people of the past thought their future would look like. Some modern classics of the genre include *Soylent Green*, *Silent Running*, *2001: A Space Odyssey*, *Snowpiercer*, *Children of Men*, *Colossus: The Forbin Project*, and *28 Days Later*. In addition to these, there are also future films in which the shift and shock are those of culture as much as technology, such as *Bladerunner*, *The Stepford Wives*, *The Handmaid’s Tale*, *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, and *The Day the Earth Stood Still*. Some films even find comedy in the future, such as Woody Allen’s *Sleeper*, or the *Back to the Future* trilogy – though these are rarer.

So start with one of these – or choose your own. The only qualification is that the film must be set in what is, explicitly or implicitly, the future, from the point of view of when the film was made. This of course opens up the possibility of choosing a film whose “future” date has already arrived and passed.

Once you’ve chosen your film, watch it. Watch it closely and with full engagement, just as though you’d gone to see it at the cinema (popcorn and soda are allowed). Then put yourself into the film – into some aspect or place of the society it depicts, a specific scene or situation, or in the company of one of its characters. What sort of future do you see? What elements of the film have the most immediacy to you? And does the film suggest a truth, something about yourself, others, or society as a whole? What lesson can we learn from the vision of the future that the film suggests?

You can write freely, and in any form: fiction, screenplay, essay, or poetry (if you dare). The length should be at least four pages, but may be longer than that if you wish. **Drafts will be due via e-mail by Monday, November 28th.**