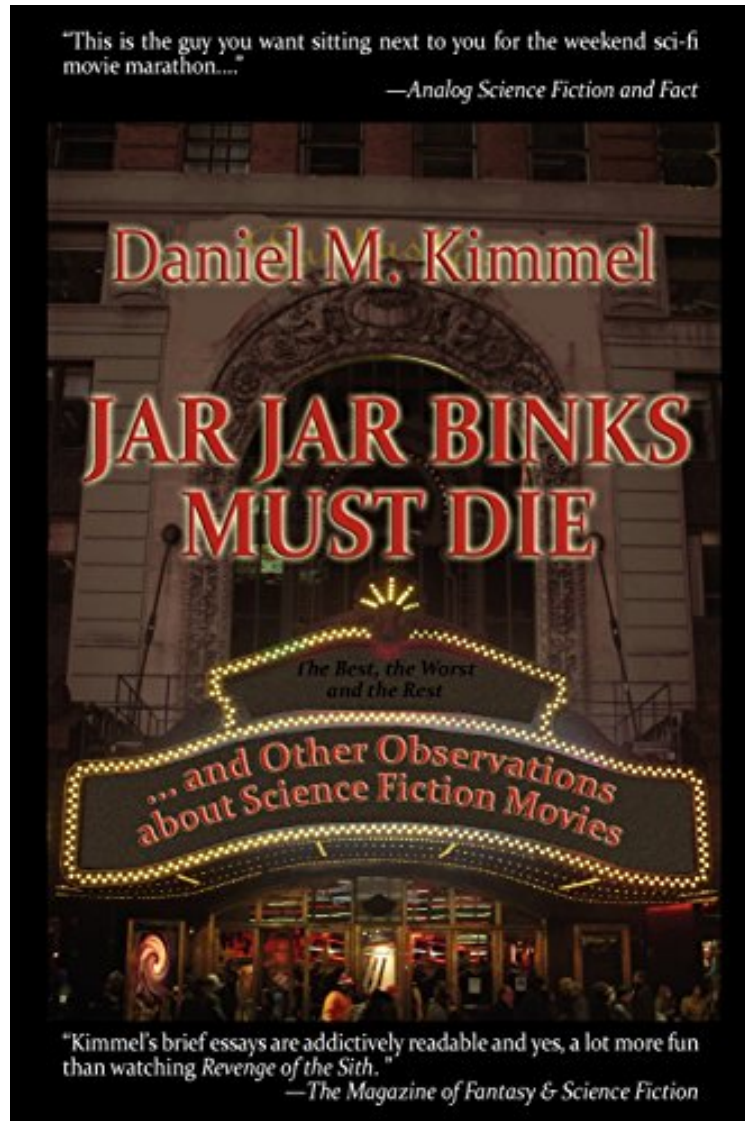


(Pdf free) Jar Jar Binks Must Die... and other Observations about Science Fiction Movies

## Jar Jar Binks Must Die... and other Observations about Science Fiction Movies

Daniel M. Kimmel

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**Daniel M. Kimmel : Jar Jar Binks Must Die... and other Observations about Science Fiction Movies** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Jar Jar Binks Must Die... and other Observations about Science Fiction Movies:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A guy who gets it right about SF films By K. Bunker This book was giving me the warm-and-fuzzies from the first two sentences of the introduction: "If there's a common theme to the

essays in this book [...] it is this: science fiction films are worth discussing. Better yet, science fiction films are as worthy as any other kind of film for serious discussion."Yowza! Preach it, Brother!As Mr. Kimmel points out, this seemingly normal and obvious attitude is a rarity in discussion of SF films -- among reviewers, in the viewing public at large, and perhaps especially among people who create SF films. It's still a common practice for the producer, director, publicist, star, etc. of any half-way sophisticated and thoughtful SF film to proudly declare that their movie "isn't science fiction" because it's about people, or relationships, or social issues, or whatever. That is, if a movie is SF, then it's dumb entertainment, and if it isn't dumb entertainment then it ipso facto isn't SF. So it's great to have a intelligent, knowledgeable voice like Kimmel's discussing SF films without being embarrassed to speak the phrase "science fiction." A man who knows movies and also knows SF, both on film and off. Here are a few of the highlights in the book for me: A fascinating discussion of how the various film versions of *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* have reflected the profoundly different historical periods in which they were produced. A compare-and-contrast of *The Day the Earth Stood Still* and *The Thing from Another World* (both 1951), showing how they reflected starkly different attitudes towards scientists and toward the unknown. A look at the existential implications of *The Incredible Shrinking Man* (1957), and the movie's ultimate turning away from despair and towards a book-of-Job brand of religious faith. An interesting examination of the arguments for and against calling *The Time Traveler's Wife* (movie, 2009) science fiction (Kimmel ultimately decides "for"). And, of course, the indisputable opinion of the title; that execrable abomination of a character must indeed die. As a pretty hard-core SF movie fan, there were only a few films mentioned in this book that I haven't seen, and most of them I've seen several times over. But that level of involvement with the subject matter is by no means necessary to enjoying the book. Indeed, the book might be even more fun for a reader who can use it for viewing recommendations. I suppose some readers will disagree with Kimmel's opinions from time to time, but personally I found that his tastes coincided pretty closely with mine. To my joy, he lambasts *This Island Earth* (1955) as a silly and illogical clunker, unredeemed by its expensive special effects, and he likewise agrees with me in admitting that *Creation of the Humanoids* (1962) is a "guilty pleasure"; a fun movie that combines laughable flaws with some genuine earnestness and sophistication. And likewise again with his opinions of *E.T.* ("It was just Spielberg pushing our buttons"), *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* (shallow, despite its gee-whiz visuals) and of Spielberg in general ("a showman rather than an artist"). I recommend this book to anyone even slightly interested in SF films, and I wish I could force it onto those who are disdainful of the genre. 8 of 8 people found the following review helpful. A Necessary Book For All Fans of the Cinema By Michael A. Burstein "A spirited explanation of the role of science fiction films in our culture. Any serious fan of the cinema must read this book." That's my blurb on the front of this book, and I stand by it 100%. Daniel M. Kimmel has written a book in which he defends the role of science fiction films in the culture, not that it should need defending. The essays in this book are a delight from start to finish as Kimmel, a well-known film critic and former president of the Boston Society of Film Critics, points out how science fiction is just as important a genre in film as romantic comedy, western, or drama. Furthermore, the book includes a few surprises, as Kimmel praises some films that one wouldn't expect and also critiques some that most consider classics in the field. This very readable book will appeal to fans of science fiction and science fiction films, of course, but it's also an important book for anyone who wants to understand the role of film in our culture. It will entertain you as it delights you and makes you think. And it'll make you want to watch some of your favorite films over again. 5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Wonderfully Engaging Collection--Will Make You Think! By Daniel A. Miller Having just read Mr. Kimmel's excellent collection of essays, I must give an unqualified, hearty recommendation! Mr. Kimmel is engrossing, engaging, and entertaining as a writer, and his several essays undoubtedly make the reader think, as well as enjoy. Whether defending the right of science fiction film to be classified in the same breaths as romantic comedy or Western or noir--as it should be--or simply advocating for overlooked classics and semi-classics, Mr. Kimmel writes with a fluid, sincere style, by turns enthusiastic, indignant, and funny, as befits his role as an instructor of film at a respected Massachusetts university. Perhaps one of the best compliments for a book is that it resonates with the reader; certainly several essays--particularly "SF, My Parents, and Me" and the titular essay--did so for me. But most importantly, Mr. Kimmel's collection resonates insofar as it offers encouragement to the reader to seek out movies that he or she perhaps had not considered; for me, "Gattaca" and "Happy Accidents" were the standouts. If these are the goals of a book, Mr. Kimmel has both met and exceeded them.

As the title indicates, Daniel M. Kimmel is not only a film critic with strong opinions, he's also a fan. In this collection of essays, he covers movies from *Metropolis* (1927), answering the absurd claim that the restoration of this silent classic negated its status as a science fiction film, to how *Star Trek*, *Avatar*, *Moon*, and *District 9* may have made 2009 a "miracle year" for the genre. Along the way he looks at neglected works like *Things to Come* (1936), explains why remakes aren't always bad, and how seeing *E.T.* in an empty screening room changed his mind about Steven Spielberg. Whether to rediscover old favorites or add new titles to your Netflix queue, this is a must-have for lovers of SF movies. *Jar Jar Binks Must Die* was a Hugo Award finalist in the category of Best Related Work in 2012. Kimmel is a past president of the Boston Society of Film Critics. He reviewed for the *Worcester Telegram and Gazette* and now writes for [Northshoremovies.net](http://Northshoremovies.net). He is a correspondent for *Variety*, the "Movie Maven" for the *Jewish Advocate* and

teaches film including a course on SF and horror at Suffolk University. His essays on classic science fiction films have appeared in several publications including *Clarke's World*, *Space and Time*, and the *Internet Review of Science Fiction*. He is the author of a history of FOX TV, *The Fourth Network* (2004) which received the Cable Center Book Award. His other books include a history of DreamWorks, *The Dream Team* (2006) and *I'll Have What She's Having: Behind the Scenes of the Great Romantic Comedies* (2008). Reviews: "Kimmel displays expertise on the subject along with a lively sense of humor scarcely a page is turned that doesn't yield a few good laughs. Readers who already take science fiction seriously will enjoy the book's panoramic breadth and its frank jubilation in its subject matter. [Kimmel] makes it his business to guide his readers to science fiction films that are worthy of our attention as social commentary, whiz-bang spectacle, or works of entertainment that carry an extra edge. Keep your Netflix wish list at the ready. You're going to revisit movies you hadn't thought about in years and be irresistibly tantalized by films you've never seen." Kilian Melloy, in *Edge Boston*, 13 April 2011. "the leading film voice in fandom today Dan's look at all the SF Films of the previous century-plus is powerful and serious and smart and even sassy at points. His look at *Metropolis* and *Things to Come* are both brilliant and much deeper and broader than mine in these pages. I thought it was the best written look at *Destination Moon* I've ever read. I could spend a day heaping praise on the essay 'Our Batman'. So many great pieces in here that I should just say this is the best book of essays about film of any nature that I've read in ages. the best pieces of writing on SF Film you'll ever see!" Chris Garcia, in *The Drink Tank*, #280 (April 2011). "[Kimmel's] writing is intelligent and entertaining. his knowledge of SF movies is encyclopedic. This is the guy you want sitting next to you when Channel 45 has a weekend 'sci-fi' movie marathon. For anyone who likes SF movies, this volume is worth the price of admission." Don Sakers, "The Reference Library", in *Analog Science Fiction and Fact*, July/August 2011. "one is left wanting more, which is a testament to Kimmel's writing abilities. Even when you find yourself not agreeing with Kimmel's take on *E.T.* is just plain wrong damn it! the book remains worthwhile and thought-provoking. *Jar Jar Binks Must Die* is worth a purchase." *Sci-Fi Movie Page* "Kimmel's a terrific guide to classic though underappreciated works such as *Things to Come*, and is especially sharp on 1950s sf movies, David Cronenberg, and the art (or lack of same) of movie remakes. his brief essays are addictively readable and yes, a lot more fun than watching *Revenge of the Sith*." Elizabeth Hand, "Books", in *The Magazine of Fantasy Science Fiction*, July/August 2011