

## Week 1 Defining Science Fiction

### Science fiction:

- Origin: 19<sup>th</sup> century as literature called “scientific romance”
  - The term “**science fiction**” appeared in **1928** in “pulp magazines” which regularly publish SF stories.
- Important writers: Edgar Allen Poe, Jules Verne, Edward Bellamy, H.G. Wells (War of the Worlds 1898)—the novel
- Features: **Destruction of landmarks** (Relate to the key reading: “the aesthetics of destruction” –**Susan Sontag**)

### Science Fiction as Genre:

- Genre conventions are **rules, forms, norms** that shape genre films.
- **Subgenres**: (SF subgenres includes) alien invaders, fantastic voyages, dystopias...
- **Iconography**: recurring images, character types, situations, objects, environment
- Study genre in two systems
  - **Dynamic**: surface structure (such as plot type)
  - **Static**: deep structure (such as the icons, situation, character types)
- Genre as **Myth**:
  - Christine Gledhill recognizes the **Standardization** and **product differentiation** of genre as a way for Hollywood to organize the production and guide viewers.
  - Genre is the “**connection**” between the genres and the society. (for example, during the 50s, many cold war SFs made since it connects to the society.) –genre is **social document**
- Genre of order
  - **Hero** (individual), **setting** (contested space), **conflict**(violent), **resolution** (elimination of the villain).
  - Western, gangster, detective, horror, and **science fiction**
- Genre of integration
  - **Hero** (couple/collective), **setting** (uncontested space), **conflict** (emotional), **resolution** (integration—love and marriage)
  - Comedy, musical, melodrama

Readings: 我尽量吧 key idea 都写出来，所以可能或有些长， 但最最主要的我就把 quote 直接拿出来，方便 quote identification。 难一些的 quote 我在下面会做解释。

Key: “Definitions of Genre” Steve Neale

- **Genre**: French word meaning “type/kind”
  - **Sub-genre**: A specific tradition within a genre
  - **Cycle**: a group of genre within a time-span
- “genre movies are those commercial feature films which, through **repetition and variation**, tell familiar stories with familiar characters in familiar situations... they are

significant in establishing the popular sense of cinema as a cultural and economic institution.”

- Most genre study writing focus on American commercial films, and excluding other (International, counterculture ones).
- Genre criticism and theory in 60s and 70s
  - Christine Gledhill recognizes the **Standardization** and **product differentiation** of genre as a way for Hollywood to organize the production and guide viewers.
  -

Key: “Images of Wonder” Vivian Sobchack

Key: “poetics of sf” Darko Suvim

Key: “defining science fiction” Adam Roberts

- SF as a genre distinguishes its fictional world to one degree or another from the world we are living in, based on mostly **imagination** rather than observation (generally speaking).
- SF is wide ranging, multivalent, endlessly cross-fertilizing cultural idiom
- Defining SF in two ways: “formalist” and “historicist”
  - SF is “imaginative fictions”, but differ from other imaginative fictions like fairy tales or so.
  - SF requires material, physical rationalisation, rather than a supernatural one
  - SF requires scientific explanation to support
  - SF does not tend to have beautiful and fancy writing styles
  - SF focuses on the representation of the world but not reproduction

Screening: *Independence Day* 1996 Roland Emmerich [Alien Invasion](#)

- Plot: Worldwidely, Earth receives the signal of aliens, and they arrive at the monuments of major cities. After the attempt of friendly communication (which fails), the pilot, president, scientist fight together at Area 51 by planting virus to Alien’s spaceship. July 4<sup>th</sup>, the day the people fight together for freedom.
- **Iconography** (features that apply to most SFs)
  - Aliens, the destruction of monuments
  - Army, government, evacuation and mass destruction
  - The crazy nerd scientist
  - Landscape and spaceship.
- Characters: (features that apply to all SFs)
  - Not psychologically difficult, plot is more important than individual character.
- Plot: (features that apply to all SFs)

- **High concept:** human vs. alien
- this film is made while the global tension between Russia, US, and Iraq were high about the nuclear weapon
- science vs. military
- American individualism
- Embracing class differences
- **Novum**
  -

## Week 2 Resurgence of science fiction during the Cold War/1950s

### Alien Invasion in the 50s

- Science fictions were initially in form of **space journey** (especially to moon)
- During the 50s, the plot shifts to the **Alien invasion** instead. This cycle began with *The Thing* (1951)
  - 50s: most SFs are about monsters and invaders.
- Factors
  1. War:
    - Cold War tension, prospect of nuclear war
    - UFO Craze of the late 40s and the early 50s
    - Rocket and missile research and prospect of space travel.
    - Brainwashing moral panic during Korea War
  2. Technology
    - Technologized domestic and workspace innovation
    - Demands for types of films that exploit spectacle and color and wide-screen and special effects. ---Thus, to compete with TV.
- The SF during 50s always focus on the spectacle and large-scale destruction. ---Thus, prompts **Susan Sontag** to write "**The imagination of disaster**"

### SF as a genre

- It is always intermittent and migratory with different cycles appear in different countries and times sf 总是间歇的在不同的国家的不同的历史背景下出现
- Then different cycles deal with different plots (**syntax**) – we only study three.
  - Fantastic voyage
  - Alien
  - Dystopia
- How to define SF/ how to recognize a SF/ how to distinguish it from horror/ fantasy?
  - **Darko Suvin:** "a literary genre whose necessary and sufficient conditions are the presence and interaction of **estrangement** and **cognition** and whose main formal

device is an imaginative framework alternative to the author's empirical environment" 在已知的（实验环境）里的想象—SF

- **Novum** (nova, plural)—estrangement and cognition.
  - latin word for "new/new things"
- **Horror vs. SF**
  - **Novum vs. old**
  - Bright, shiny, futuristic, NEW vs. Ancient, dark, decrypted
- There is a scientific reason for the transformation/change – this science can be pseudo science

Reading:

Key: "Imagination of Disaster" Susan Sontag

- Introducing some typical SF script
- Divorce the film version from the novel and other media, since they are different in nature--  
**sensuous elaboration**---sounds and images
- SF is concerned of the aesthetics of destruction
- SF films are about the scale of (landscape/destruction)
- Compared the new and old SF films. The new one is more convincing and having more enlarged imagination of the destruction, yet, the hero himself, is less of human and more of strong and grimness
- Unlike horror, there are no suspects, surprise and whatsoever, it is more straight forward that it is the fear and horror of the technological view
- The SF is very moralistic-- how to use of the science
- The witness of the trauma caused by nuclear weapon and there are always people of witness.-- the fear of nuclear weapon
- SF can serve as a distraction of the fantasy towards the war film. That is to say people are able to get the same or even greater pleasure out of viewing SF than normal war film. So less wars?
- SF can be seen as thematically central allegory
- The imagination of disaster, psychologically, does not really change; but politically and morally, it does change
- Aesthetics of disaster
- SF are not about science, but about disaster
- Why focus on the aesthetics of destruction(41)
  - To differentiate the novum from the world
  - Film needed to compete with the television at the time
  - High budget SF films, the ability to create the disaster scenes.
  - 'sensuous elaboration'
  - Main attraction of the film--surround sound and the spaceship shooting laser
- Verisimilitude
  - The SF Sontag was saying eventually changes
  - They were similar, but they have to change at some point
    - What's going on in the history technologically.--catch up the tech.

- One point in a SF, people were using ipad...
  - The newer SF films should include more realistic facts than only just the visual attraction.(1960s)
  - Verisimilitude is one of the reason that SF had to change
- Design
  - Weird gimmicky/silly SF films
  - Not traditional pleasing
  - Design of the novum
    - Martian and spaceship's design, and why are they designed in a certain way
      - Seemingly believable
- Monstrosity
  - Monster are the novum, and function a particular way
  - Huge political metaphor/in ways the SF world works in its own political way. Allegorical
- Extreme moral simplification
  - Monsters are shown disgusting and bad
  - Science being linked to evil
  - Alien are more advanced, so are more close to god, but it is to the contrary
  - The end of people get protected by the god...

#### “The Eve of War” H.G. Welles

- Criticism of British smugness, imperialism, national pride
- Prediction of mechanized war (just off the heels of the Boer war despite being just before WWI)
- Disaster as expanded consciousness
- Restricted vs. unrestricted narration (one character's pov and the breaking away from the main character.)
- Film(the one we watched) uses montages as the gimmick.

Screening: *War of the Worlds* 1953 Byron Haskin [Alien Invasion](#) [centrist](#) [cooperate](#) [liberal](#)

- Pretty identical plot to *Independence Day*
  - Arrival of alien, fear of the people, hesitation of govern regulation, the **iconographies**
- Plot:
  - The Martians come to Earth eliminate human to find a new place to live. Human try to communicate peacefully (failed), but the aliens responded violently. The protagonist who is a scientist try to defeat the aliens with science (the blood test to see if there is any way to find their weakness), but people had to hide in church and pray to god. The Earth virus (the nature) kills Martians. ---promoting nature over science.
  - Scientist is the main character, and shows a fear of having science getting evil.
- **Novum**

- The Martian and the spaceship (the technological advancement), the technological eye of the alien's

## Week 3 Fantastic Voyage I, the 1950s, space travel prototype

- *Forbidden Planet*

- Some science fiction interstellar production takes its atmosphere found in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*.

○ <i>Forbidden Planet</i> 1956	○ <i>The Planet</i> 1601
○ Morbius	○ Perspero
○ Robby the Robot	○ Ariel
○ Monster from the ID	○ Caliban
○ Alta (M's daughter)	○ Miranda (P's daughter)
○ Captain Adams	○ Ferdinand, Prince of Naples
○ Cookie (the comic cook)	○ Stephano (druken sailor)

- It is the template for the *Star Trek* Franchise

- **Space Opera**

- a subgenre of Fantastic Voyage
  - It includes **time travel**, **journey to center of the Earth**, **Space Travel**, **Space opera**
  - Space travel films
    - *Impossible Voyage* George Melies 1904 France
    - *Woman in the Moon* Fritz Lang 1929 German
    - *Destination Moon* George Pal 1949 USA
    - *Rocketship XM* Kurt Neuman 1950 USA
- Stories in the pulps (1930s) leading to serials like Flash Gordon and Buck Rogers (30s and 40s)
- It is the most common and least respected for of SF – Gary West Fall
- Space opera representatives:
  - Remade: Leigh Brackett 9*Empire Strikes Back*)
  - Authors: **Ian Banks** (*The Culture*) and **James Corey** (*"The Expanse"*)
  - TV and film: *Star Trek*, *Battlestar Gallactica*, *Babylon 9*
- **Jules Verne** wrote many fantastic sea voyages and *From the Earth to the Moon*. (This is latter adopted as *A Trip to the Moon*).

- Romance and Epic (super genre)

- Talked in **Northrop of Frye's** *Anatomy of Criticism* and **Frank McConnell's** *storytelling and mythmaking*
- They are two myths
  - **Epic**: myth of foundation

- heroes are/become kings and create a kingdom, a society. The order of society **begins** with their actions and **concludes** with the establishment of a political and moral center.
- Kings are the authority, his word is law, binding on everyone but himself
- Some examples
  - Babylon: Gilgamesh
  - Israel: Exodus
  - Greece: Iliad and Odyssey
  - Rome: The Aeneid
  - India: Ramayona
- **Romance:** secondary myth
  - An extension of the **Epic** in space and in politics.
  - The hero (knight) undergoes a journey, experiences tests and trials in his quest. ---This is the origin of the Fantastic journey type.
  - The **romance** protagonist is the knight, who ventures for the in the king's name beyond the borders of the established kingdom into the wilderness or other zone of magic or chaos. These heroes live under codes and law.—Think about the protagonist (Adam, he is the captain and he represents the law compare to Morbius)
  - It does not mean love story, but it has the possibility of a love story.
- Sigmund Freud's model of the Psyche
  - **Conscious (Ego)**
    - Something that we do not actively think but can call up when we wish to, memories and skills
  - **Unconscious(ID)**
    - Repressed memories
  - **Superego**
    - The rules and laws of society and culture that repress desires and shape the ego to social rules.

## Reading

Key: "Space Opera" Gary Westfall

- **Wilson Tucker's 1941 definition:** for the hacky, grinding 刺耳的, stinking, outworn space-shop yarn, or world-saving for that matter, we offer "space opera". (similarly, westerns="horse operas", the morning housewife tear-jerkers="soap operas".)  
He suggests **3 characteristics to define space opera:**
  1. space opera involves a "space-ship", and depicts journeys through uncharted realms 未知的领域 in vessels bringing humans into contact with mysterious stuff.

(通过其他手段而非太空船的 space travel 被称为 planetary romances)

2. space opera is a “yarn” 奇谈 — an exciting adventure story. A literature of conflicts, usually with violent resolutions. (一般是人类 vs. 外星人, 并且有明显的好人/坏人的战队划分。)

3. space opera tends to become “hacky, grinding, stinking, outworn’s” like westerns and domestic dramas, it often succumbs to formulaic plots and mediocrity. 屈服于刻板的情节套路 —> 典型的看个开头就能猜到结尾...

- the work that first established and popularized was Smith’s *The Skylark of Space* (1928).
- 1930s is the golden age of **classic space opera**.
- since space was a relatively new setting for fiction, a literary frontier 文学研究的前沿 as it were, writers sensibly used familiar storylines from genres dealing with frontiers, to introduce the universe to readers in reassuring 可靠的 fashion and blaze a trail for world that would display more imagination.
- the most prominent writer of classic space opera was **Edmond Hamilton**. He is Tucker’s principal target.
- space opera had focused on conquering 战胜 the universe; but after conquest, new questions arise such as how to govern the universe or how to make a living in the universe.
- **Ruritanian 理想王国的 space operas** were distinguished by a sophisticated, ironic style and vivid descriptive detail.
- **Star Trek**, with the label of romantic space opera, and this helped to make it the first form of space opera to attract a significant female audience. It further played a role in bringing space opera into a new medium-video games- since its space battles inspired the pioneering game space invaders.
- Westfall offers a definition and survey, of books and films and TV shows, that are ground as “space opera,” a term of derision that has become a mere label. *Forbidden Planet* is a space opera. So are some recent films, like *Serenity*. As Westfall notes, there is some question whether *Star Trek* should be included.

Key: “Pods and Blobs: The other Americans (Seeing is Believing)” Peter Biskind

- 区分 30s\40s 科幻电影和恐怖电影: The vast scale of destruction differentiated sf film from the horror films of the thirties and forties that preceded them.
- *War of the Worlds* (1953) suffused with what **Susan Sontag** called the “**imagination of disaster**”.
- ever since **Susan Sontag** pointed to the fact that **the Other** in fifties sci-fi was often linked to radiation, it has been customary to equate the Other with the Bomb.
- **centrist film**: corporate-literal film, conservative film
- **corporate-liberal films**: many of monsters of 50s sf were at least partially attributable to science because scientist’s infant A-bomb 原子弹 grew like a beanstalk into a strong and sturdy H-bomb 氢弹. ==> government plays the role like army in war films, fear the technology.



- In **conservative films** 保守电影, the mad scientist who had disappeared from the labs of corporate-liberal films were alive and well. Conservative films questioned science, but they by no means rejected it wholesale. Science was fine, as long as it was under control, subordinated to traditional values.
  - E.g. in *Forbidden Planet*(1956), Robby the Robot was a servant and tool, not a master nor enemy. Robby wouldn't think of hurting a hair on a human's head because it was prevented from harming people by the "laws of robotics".
- **Centrist** 中立派 **films** are not primarily worried about the Bomb; they loved the Bomb, or at least the technology that made it possible.
  - society itself often imagined as a machine: A machine is an assembling of parts according to the law of god. When you love a machine and get to know it, you will be aware that it has a rhythm, it is in god's rhythm. (Norman Vincent Peale)
  - in films of the centre, then, pluralist 多元的 and conservative, the enemy is the natural world.
  - Nature was the most general category of Otherness. **The Other** was everything the center was not, and we can get a good idea of what the center was not, at least in its own estimation, by again examining the language of pluralism.

Biskind is a leading critic for us. He schematizes the SF films of the 1950s in political terms and provides a sort of aid to interpreting single films.

Screening: *Forbidden Planet* 1956 Wilcox **Fantastic Voyage** centrist conservative film

- **Space Opera:**
  - Romance part
  - Alta as feminine who needs protect from males and father figure
  - Explains how the technology work
- Freud
  - Every human in its unconscious is a monster that need the society to put it under control.
  - Alta and father
    - Children, their first love is their parents.
    - It is a taboo
- Position on technology and nature
  - Visual, do they value one or another
    - Human as small and powerless
    - Tour--mystery, incomprehensible scale
      - Only the measurement of the place, not really sure how everything works/functions
      - Tricks of perception
  - What is the main nova of the film
    - Something has long just been there and not really been built
    - A human who has been living here fore a long time, and only understands what they can do and what is there, and not knowing how and why they work
    - Technology is nature--monster created by the nature/id, yet through the means of the technology

## CIN211 Week 4 Review

### Fantastic Voyage 2: East German SF Film

Screening: *Der Schweigende Stern (The Silent Planet)* – Kurt Maetzig (1960)

#### Reading Notes

#### 1. Socialist in Outer Space: East German film's Venusian adventure (Stefan Soldovieri)

- *Silent Planet*, 1960 is a **co-production** b/w the German Democratic Republic (GDR) and Poland.
- It is the most expensive film DEFA has ever made.
  - DEFA: the only major film company in East Germany, state-owned and centralized.
- *Silent Planet* provides instructive illustration of multilayered influences of **Cold War politics** on the GDR (East Germany) cinema.
- Film plot:
  - Set in the not-very-distant future of 1970, a spool-like object containing a fragmentary message was found during excavations in the Gobi Desert.
  - The message is decoded to suggest a possible invasion of the earth. Unable to establish communications with the Venusians, a scheduled mission to Mars is quickly re-staffed with an international team of specialists and re-routed to Venus ← team members from: Africa, China, Germany, India, Japan, Poland and USA 欢聚一堂 😊
  - They discover the scorched remains of an advanced civilization and a sophisticated technical apparatus. Later explorations reveal the machine to be a disabled atomic weapon that had been designed to destroyed the earth but had turned on the Venusian world instead. The only signs of the planet's exterminated inhabitants are their bizarre shadows on crumbling walls.
  - Returning to earth, the remaining crew members offer a warning about nuclear war and call for continued interplanetary exploration.
- **Allegorical warning about the dangers of atomic war** had given way to unambiguous references to Hiroshima and Western militarism.
- How Eastern Germany foresaw film's politics: "The **socialist states have surpassed the capitalist states in all domains**. The principle of coexistence has prevailed... A social lunar station exists serving peace, not war... In the USA there's still a group that opposes coexistence, which owns production facilities and employs scientists and technicians to work."
- A heightened degree of Cold War antagonisms into the story's depiction of the future.
- The film is widely praised in Eastern Europe, in was also one of the few DEFA features to find commercial distribution in the West.
  - Even found its way into American cinemas, premiering on Oct.31, 1962 in an 80-min copy.

#### 2. The Cinema: American weapon for the Cold War (Pierre Sorlin)

- Cold War was not, in reality, a war: it was merely a confrontation b/w two superpowers which, while undertaking an unleashed but controlled arms race, managed to avoid a

bloody conflict.

- **Technological advances were crucial** → Devices was to make the foe, and the rest of the world, believe that one was the strongest.
- B/w 1948-1961, **the cinema** was simultaneously **a source of information and a means of modelling the public's perspective** on the contemporary world.
- It must be remembered that few film or radio companies were able to keep reporters in Poland or Hungary or even to send them there quickly. Only the Americans who had a complete network of foreign correspondents, could film easily, transfer their material to Germany, and have it immediately processed.
  - The greatest producers of newsreels – Fox, Paramount, Universal and Gaumont International – had reached all the industrial countries and their respective dependent regions by means of their networks.
- During October 1956, Hungary became a free country. A new government, formed by all the existing parties, announced that it would soon abandon the Soviet block to make Hungary a neutral space. Only a few journalists, photographers managed to cross the border.
  - Only the American cameramen filmed what was happening there. In 1958, CBC was able to put on the air a 1<sup>st</sup>-class documentary, *Revolt in Hungary*.
- Many newsreels concentrated on the arrival of hopeless fugitives, and on the demonstrations against the Soviet Union and the Communist Party which took place in all West European nations.
  - \*\*\***newsreels helped to trigger a hysterical anti-Communist reaction.**
  - \*\*\***only cinema allowed spectators to see at once the exceptional aspect of the operation and its psychological importance.**
- Historians interested in cinema consider film as primary historical sources which document the evolution of mentalities and behaviors of an era. Feature films and newsreels were able to perceive and transmit with relative immediacy. They were also potent weapon that helped to control and lead Western public opinion during the dramatic moments of the Cold War.

### Important Lecture Notes

The Silent Star

- Director: Kurt Maetzig
- Commercial entertainment, but also a political propaganda: socialist in space

The post-war & the German rocket

- 1945 – as WW2 comes to an end, Americans & allies & Russians worked to capture German rocket scientists and equipment. The most famous: Werner von Braun
- This was the start of the 'arms race' b/w the Soviets and the Western allies

The ambivalence of rockets

- On one hand, the dreams of space exploration to the Moon, Mars, and beyond. A human adventure.
- On the other hand, the desire to perfect a delivery system that could deliver nuclear weapons across continents.

- Everyone's WW3 nightmare. (The US dropped 2 atomic bombs on Japan at the end of WW2)

East Germany industry – communist half of Germany

*The Astronauts, 1951 by Stanislaw Lem – the source of The Silent Star.*

DEFA: Deutsche Film–Aktiengesellschaft

- Only major film company in East Germany
- State-owned and centralized
- Its principal studio: Babelsberg Studio, the largest, best equipped studio in Europe
- Built in the 20s by Ufa, and home to famous silent German filmmakers like Fritz Lang, who made 2 large scale SF films there, *Metropolis* and *Woman in the Moon*.

Europe: TV is not available; films are politically important

- Films can cross national borders, other media cannot.
- Propaganda context pursued.
- Control film content ideologically
- US vs. USSR – propaganda war through mass media
- Cold war is a game of influence, propaganda, missions, secrets; never became a shooting war.

Cold War – 1940s

- 1945: Yalta Conference; the Potsdam Conference
- Winston Churchill: 'iron curtain'
- Same year, US dropped the atomic bomb on Japan
- 1948: Soviet blockade of divided Berlin begins
- 1949: Mao wins the Chinese Civil War and installs his communist regime, the People's Republic of China; the US assumes 'containment' policy and the 'Truman Doctrine'.
- 1949: Soviets explode first atomic bomb
  - the atomic stand-off began.
- 1950: The Korean War begins. Sen. Joe McCarthy begins Communist witch hunt
- 1951: Federal Civil Defense Administration established
- 1953: Korean War ends
- 1953: Dwight Eisenhower becomes US president and Nikita Khrushchev assumes power in the USSR
- 1955: Warsaw Pact formed
- 1956: Nikita, Russian premier, delivers his 'secret speech' to the 20<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Communist Party, denouncing Josef Stalin
- Same year: Rebellion in Hungary crushed by Soviet forces
- 1957: Sputnik launched into earth orbit
- 1960: John Kennedy becomes US president
- 1961: Bay of Pigs – Cuba
- Same: Berlin War
- 1962: Cuban Missile Crisis

**\*\*1957 USSR launched its space satellite *Sputnik* – fantastic propaganda, beat US**

- “If the intercontinental missile is, indeed, the ultimate, the final weapons, of warfare... then at the present rate, Russia will soon come into a period during which she can stand astride the world, its military master.”

Usually in US sf, scientists are portrayed as mad, dangerous individuals

Change in attitude: very end of 1950s after *Sputnik* – fear that socialists are indeed in space.

## **CIN211 Week 5 Review**

### **Fantastic Voyage 3**

**Screening: *2001: Space Odyssey* (1968) – Stanley Kubrick**

#### **Reading Notes**

##### **1. M. Chion – The Genesis of 2001**

- “The Sentinel” was a 4000-word short story written in 1948 by Clarke for a Christmas story contest.
- In May 1964, a contract is signed b/w Kubrick and Clarke to collaborate.
- Kubrick didn’t want to directly write 2001 in the conventional form of a movie screenplay. He decided to write a novel with Clarke that would serve as the basis for making the film.
- Production began during 1965.
- In 1966 interview, Clarke said: “SF films have always meant monsters and sex, so we have tried to find another term for our film.” Before 2001, popular sf was associated with sexuality; travel to new worlds couldn’t be conceived without a beautiful creature.
- For scientific accuracy, Kubrick followed the advice of a large number of experts. He also watched ever sf film he could, as well as films of any genre that had special-effects sequences.
- The audience at the time that 2001 was made didn’t know exactly what was meant by special effects. The term was associated with ‘tricks’, naïve and puerile connotation.
- ‘Space operas’ before Kubrick inspired parody for their unconvincing models – rockets, planets and cities often brought to mind the tiny models that they really were – not to mention monsters and creatures.
  - Kubrick’s models were larger and detailed.
- 1968, the film was finished and released.
- The critical and public reception of the film was quite divided; it is intrigued and polarized.
- 2001 was nominated for 4 Academy Awards, but received only the Oscar for special visual effects.

#### **Background Context**

- The 60s mark the beginning of the slow thaw in the Cold War. Two superpowers engaged in a ‘race’ for the 1<sup>st</sup> moon landing, which was to occur in 1969, a year after the

release of 2001.

- Russian's Sputnik 1 was the first satellite into space in 1957, followed by US's Explorer 1 in 1958.
- 1969, American Neil Armstrong walked on lunar soil for the first time.
- When Kubrick began *2001* in 1965, the two global powers were accelerating the space race to ward speed, and everyone on the planet assumed it would continue.
- The 'conquest of outer space' during the 60s created, through endless TV replays, an entire repertoire of televisual imagery of space launches and 0 gravity.
  - Thus, the viewers of 1968 had seen and heard the floating astronauts that Kubrick presented to them.

### Important Lecture Notes

**Enigma:** something needs to be unfold through the plot.

- It can be minor, or be major in the plot.
- Usually a scientist will give an explanation of the enigma in the end.

### *2001*

- Kubrick and Arthur C. Clarke
  - 1948: **"The Sentinel"** first published
  - 1964: Kubrick begins collaborating with Clark
  - 1966: Kubrick and Clarke write a never-published novel, *2001*, to serve as script for the film
  - 1968: the film is completed and released
  - 1968 later: Clarke publishes his own novel of the film, *2001: A Space Odyssey*
  - 1981: Clarke, 2010: Odyssey Two
  - 1984: Peter Hymans directs screen version, *2010*
  - later, Clarke writes *2061: Odyssey Three* and *3001: The Final Odyssey*. Neither has been filmed.
- Kubrick and the 1960s Space Race
- Originally exhibited in the form of Cinerama

### TUT notes

In what way 2001 might be a departure from the status quo of previous SF films?

- ambiguity
- less structure to follow the narratives
- more realistic and advanced technology
- A.I.
- more pay attention to scientific explanation and facts
- visual effects look expensive
- any adaptation of previous SF films?
  - > spaceship novum, space opera, aliens, the monolith
  - > no big stars in the film
- dystopian universe (A.I. tech)

Trip to the moon - the 1st SF film and 1st narrative film

- think of the fantastic voyage - the subgenre

#### Connections b/w this film and Kubrick's 2001?

- both focus on spectacle rather than explaining scientific background
- both depict different vision of how a moon should be like
- both difficult to comprehend, surpassing ordinary human's capacity to understand the science
- Melies - towards a more surreal mode of films (comparing to early realistic documentaries)
- both are episodic, utilizing long takes. shots are not in causality chain.
- both involves a trip to the moon
  - > Melies: bourgeois class astronomers; humorous elements (funny aliens and how astronomers destroy them)
  - > The relationship b/w astronomers and Silken's ← colonialism, less developed community, displaying them back to the earth...
  - > Kubrick's: also bourgeois class researchers and corporates; similar humor of how people traveling in the space, trying to figure out what life would be like in 0 gravity (how to eat, how to poo...)

## CIN211 Week 6 Review

### Fantastic Voyage 4

Screening: *Star Trek – Into Darkness* (2013) by J. J. Abrams

#### Reading Notes

1. **Classicism, televisuality and post-modernity: *Star Trek* and the narrative structures of television (by Gregory)** 老头写这篇是提供一些原版 TV series 的 background, 所以我没有全看.
  - 1960s TV series production was led by a 'mass family audience' strategy that resulted in many bland or wholesome dramas.
  - The TV networks also operated a system of self-censorship which not only excluded sexual and overtly violent incidents, but also excluded any material that might cause any kind of controversy.
  - One episode must be fitted into standardized timeslots imposed by advertisers → increasing formulaic and predictable plots.
    - A series like *Star Trek* must fit roughly 45 minutes of footage into an hour-long slot. Each episode follows TV's classical format of 4 'acts', preceded by a short pre-credits 'teaser', interspersed with lengthy commercial breaks.
  - The original series of *Star Trek* presents unchanging characters who solve whatever crisis they encounter within a 45-mins show → this allowed any 'casual viewers' to entry into the 'world' of the programme at any point in a series, demands that each episode should be a self-contained drama.
    - It is rare for characters to refer to incidents in previous episodes, and there is little sense of the passage of time.



- In Roddenberry (the writer)'s **future Utopia-Earth**, war, poverty, disease and nation-state have been eliminated. Money doesn't exist. The Federation itself is an ideal of liberal democracy – a voluntary organization of like-minded worlds. In this society, racial and sexual differences and all forms of biological diversity were seen as positive elements to be celebrated.
- Roddenberry attempts to **cast blacks and women** in prominent roles were often opposed by the network. But he succeeded in doing so.
- In the 3rd season one of the episodes featured an onscreen kiss b/w Kirk and Uhura (black woman), which was the **1st time a white man kissing a black woman** in an American TV series → the series **was canceled**.
- **Returned to television in 1987** as *The Next Generation*– coincided with the rise of cable and satellite TV and spread of VCR → the supremacy of the networks had been weakened.
- A TV series was no much more likely to include implicit comment on serious social issues or to express a political viewpoint. Censorship rules on the presentation of sexual material had also relaxed, and multi-racial casting had become generally acceptable.
- Star Trek now presents an entire 'parallel universe' with its own political, economic and social system, ranging from euthanasia to disability to abortion to genetic engineering.
- Evolution of Star Trek in the 80s and 90s into a **multilayered and self-referential 'web' of narratives**. Its contemporary Star Trek episodes tend to assume audience already possesses considerable knowledge of its 'universe'.
- The 'time shift' effect is reflected in many series, including *Star Trek & The Next Generation* (TNG). It gave rise to the notion that by travelling into the past an individual could affect the future, so that what we now think of as the past might have 'never existed' sets up the notion of an infinite number of possible 'time lines'.
- Much of the **pleasure of audiences of the new Trek series comes from recognition of allusive references within individual episodes to various aspects of its own history**.

## 2. Creating and Comparing Myth: *Star Trek*(ST) and *Star Wars*(SW)

- ST uses myth intelligently; it adapts its stores to incorporate familiar mythical paradigms that figure centrally within our own society, history, and culture.
- **Myth** as 'the primary language of historical memory: a body of traditional stories that have, over time, been used to summarize the course of our collective history.' They also assign ideological meanings to that history.
- Both ST and SW appear to have the same basic creative foundations – both were designed to speak to Americans in need of social and moral guidance.
  - ST's serialized nature allowed it to keep up with contemporary social issues.
  - Conversely, SW franchise continues to rely upon the mediation of ancient myth to address American problems rather than being overtly influenced by newsworthy topics.
- They have taken a postmodern approach to looking back at the past to learn about the present ← indicates a cultural engagement with nostalgia.
- SW's battle b/w good and evil, young heroes and ancient sorcery; while science



fiction like ST has a stronger functional parallel with older myths, because its futuristic setting entails a more serious kind of truth claim.

- What is striking about both of them is the enormous amount they represent contemporary trends and tastes is just as significant as what histories and myths they use to create their own versions of an alternate reality.

### 3. Star Trek at 50 (by Gerry Ganavan)

- The new *Star Trek* universe – crafted by JJ Abrams was something else entirely. Roddenberry's utopia was replaced by a paranoid and militaristic Federation, scarred and traumatized by loss, seeing space as a site of horror, threat and murder rather than wonder.

#### Lecture Notes:

Star Trek: The original series (1966-1969)

- There's a Black actress in the series
- All cast members became famous and recognizable by fans

Creating movies that are continuous Star Trek TV show – a continuous timeline

The Next Generation (1987-94)

The rise of quality television and VCR

- Audience could view TV shows and movies again and again.
- Appointment television – The Next Generation TV shows attracted male audiences and let them sit down in front of TV at certain time.

TV shows became more cinematic, more visual effect (like comparing The Next Generation with Game of Thrones)

- Named “televisualnality”

Space is not quite empty in Star Trek original

- Every episode has one problem in the space
- Captain Kirk solves problems
  - Easily focused and straightforward
  - Utopian future earth rooted under US control
  - Kirk as “universal ideals”, guiding audience idea of liberal America
- Nothing like explosion of the entire planet, it's not allowed

#### TUT Notes

Star Trek reflects our own social and political context

- A utopia, the space is boundless
- Top-tier special effects rather than actions.

Characteristics of the ‘universe’

- Morality: Kirk supposes to kill Khan at once, but he didn't. Trial him first.

- A futuristic tale
- Use old actors and characters
- Intertextual moment with history and future
  - 本周电影里 Kirk 和 Spock 去大上司办公室要求出任务抓 Khan 时，有个很长的 pan 把从前出现过的所有飞船都拍出来了，一个 *evolution* 的变化
  - 把本周中最大的飞船放在 foreground ← a foreshadow
- Terrorism – Khan orders someone to place a bomb in the city.
- Khan's wonderful gene – connect to Nazi's Darwinism, white supremacy

Star Trek could take advantages during 1960s-80s

- WW2 just ended
- Cold War
- Decolonization movements

A warning telling us what we do now would effect the future.

## Week 8 Aliens 1 The day the Earth Stood Still

Lecture

Biskind's Political Schema

four positions with corresponding labels. These are laid out in two sets.

**Centrist** – corporate liberal

**Centrist** – conservative

**Radical** – right wing radical

**Radical** – left wing radical

Centrist Liberal and Corporate

- *Centrist*: government & the military, the town, etc. are coded as heroic. Everyone must rally to the centre.
- *War of the Worlds* and *Independence Day* are centrist films
- Typical of the *corporate liberal centrist film*, the protagonist is a professional (scientist, doctor) or military man or policeman, as in both these films
- His/her *role* is defined by his profession and his profession links him to the centre

Right-Wing Radical Film

The individual is an average community member. Hero initially experiences no estrangement from society. Estrangement is caused by plot developments, as in *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1956) and *Invaders from Mars* (1953).

Left-Wing Radical Film: The individual is exceptional, socially estranged and independently minded. He may be a genius or perhaps a scientist but *he is not a government-licensed* agent or corporate-designated professional. He is an amateur, like John Putman in *It Came from Outer Space* (1953).

SF Film as Allegory: Allegory is a type of story that puts a concept, an idea, as a political or religious doctrine in narrative clothing so that we can see a point-for-point correspondence between concept and story.

## Reading

Peter Biskind "Friends in High Places":

- Right-wing film like *Body Snatchers*, the center, the scientist and police, the guardian of the community are dumb bunnies with their heads in the sand. We are firmly behind John because we know that in a film like this one, people whom the authority regard as crazy are liable to be same
- Like right-wing sci-fi, left wing sci-fi polarized the center into a conflict between the individual and community. The heroes of these films who saw the space ship land or shook hands with little green men were also estranged from society, but the difference was that right-wing heroes were just average joes.

## WEEK 10 *Body Snatchers*

### Reading

Peter Biskind "The Russians Are Coming, Aren't They? Them! and The Thing"

- Those humans that Americans regarded as antlike, which is to say, behave like a mass, loved war, and made slaves, were, of course, Communist. But Sci-films rarely present Communist directly, the analogy was usually oblique, but so close to the surface as to be just below the level of consciousness. => To corporate liberals, Russians in turn stood for the eruption of primitive aggressive behavior.
- Centrist films feared the eruption of nature within culture and were therefore afraid of sex and mistrusted women, particularly sexual women. In *Forbidden Planet*, we recall that the Skipper made Alta exchange her skimpy tennis dress for a long gown and put an end to her promiscuous kissing. The monster from the id, nature within, was provoked by Alta's burgeoning sexuality.

## Biskind's Schema

Centrist		Radical	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invasion starts in heartland/moves to cities</li> <li>• Helps flows from national to local ⇒government likely effectual</li> <li>• Positive view of science/technology ⇒robots/computers not generally dangerous</li> <li>• Culture over nature</li> <li>• Other (alien/monster) often natural world; primitive</li> <li>• Present over past</li> <li>• Technology not usually at fault</li> <li>• Anti-utopian: utopia to be found at home (i.e. USA); immanent (in the everyday)</li> <li>• Town over country</li> <li>• Community over individual</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Both scientists/soldier vilified</li> <li>• State/federal government bad/ineffectual</li> <li>• Nature over culture/technology⇒technology betrays people; man over machines</li> <li>• Tolerant of utopianism: utopia to be found elsewhere (i.e. not USA)</li> <li>• Alien destroyed by citizens</li> <li>• Country over town</li> <li>• Individual over community</li> </ul>	
Corporate Liberal (Left)	Conservative (Right)	Left	Right
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scientist over soldiers (but science in cooperation with military)</li> <li>• Science may cause problem BUT also solves it</li> <li>• Permission over repression</li> <li>• Science over religion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Soldiers over scientist</li> <li>• More suspicious of science v left ⇒therefore include mad scientist trope</li> <li>• Science questioned but not rejected ⇒fine as long as subordinated to traditional values</li> <li>• Repression over permission</li> <li>• Religion used to “chastise” science</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More ambivalent about science/technology v. right</li> <li>• In many culture over nature</li> <li>• Utopia to be found in nature</li> <li>• Future over present</li> <li>• Alien neutral/benevolent; victims ⇒Anti-paranoia</li> <li>• Favored appeasement of aliens</li> <li>• elite hero</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Robots/machine-like aliens dangerous</li> <li>• Nature over culture</li> <li>• Past over present; primitive over modern</li> <li>• Alien as mechanical/technological</li> <li>• Utopia to be found outside society</li> <li>• Alien regarded with fear/paranoia</li> <li>• Average hero</li> </ul>

## Week 11 Close Encounter of the Third Kind

### Lecture Note (Linda)

*Close Encounters of the Third Kind*--Steven Spielberg 1977

- Special edition---
- *Fahrenheit 451*--
- 3 issues
  - 1 Film analysis and interpretation
  - How to provide a description of a sf
  - Narrative and style?
  - 2 how to join it to the concept around the sf/director/ film
  - 3 how to assess/judge filmmaker to an individual film
    - Description, Conceptualization, interpretation in essay

Final *Alien invaders*---this film

Historical context--1970s

Contrast with the 1950s-- part 1

The non-specialists directors who direct sf films in the 50s

Biskind schema does not fit in these later films

1. 50s are directed by filmmakers like Robert Wise, Don Siegel---they are not invested in sf as a genre--they are handling the topical issue merely.
  - a. They are filmmakers went on making different things. Not into the specialized in sf
2. 70s, directors
  - a. Specialist directors of sf films in 70s
    - i. John Carpenter, *The Thing*
    - ii. James Cameron, *Terminator I and II...*
  - b. Steven Spielberg is one of these filmmakers
  - c. *Close Encounters*--20s years later than the other ones we learned. A new product of the new HOLLYWOOD
3. New Hollywood
  - a. Phase 1: late 60s to the early 70s
    - i. Young directors as auteurs
    - ii. Kubrick, Coppola, Scorsese, Polanski, Altman, Friedkin
    - iii. They shape film with their intentions
    - iv. The reinvention of the horror film
    - v. They take critical view of the film and the American society during the time
    - vi. They reinvented several film genres--like horror film
      1. The Ecocritic
  - b. Phase 2:
    - i. Late 70s: Spielberg & Lucas and the **genre blockbuster**

- ii. The new sf cycle-- star wars, close encounters of the third kind
  - iii. These blockbuster were never genre film
  - iv. Jaws take the genre film into a blockbuster film--commercial film
  - v. The arrival of the new phase of the new Hollywood
  - vi. They have personal stake in the genre.--s and I come back to sf (special effects and more...)
  - vii. S wrote close encounters
  - viii. These two revise sf, remade it a popular genre in 70s
  - ix. They create a sf cycle has great economic effect in modern days
  - x. Early 1970s, dystopian sf were mostly made
    - 1. Was 10 years on a comparable scale---2001 space oddysay
  - xi. *2001: Space Odyssy*
    - 1. Early 70s dystopian sf: Planest of the apes, THX 1138
  - xii. Close encounter is a risky shot
    - 1. Spielberg only made 3 film
  - xiii. Commercial situation of genre has changed in new Hollywood changes
    - 1. Late 1960s, routine genre films are the norm, and they are much more expensive
    - 2. They are successful or they fail.
    - 3. Genre are blockbuster flims. Now
    - 4. You used to buy a year round as the block, now you only have one films to be a blockbuster films.
4. No Biskind, then what?
- a. From political reading to religious interpretaion of sf--grid of hour tendencies
  - b. J.P.Telotte "the sf film as Marvelous text"
  - c. Our main critic
    - i. Retain what sf is as a genre
    - ii. Novum still works
  - d. The main consensus holds on what sf is as a genre
    - i. Expectation of spectacle and novum
    - ii. Subgenre: fv, ai
  - e. What concept is important in the late 70s and after?
  - f. Are they interpreted in the same way?
  - g. What are relations
  - h. The status of the genre changes, from modest cycle to mainstream predominance
  - i. What concepts an d
  - j. What are the relation between the government/ military/science/ordinary people?
    - i. Same arrange of the charater will appear
  - k. Are these relation the same as biskind analyses in 50s sf?
    - i. Where do we find political dimension in close encounter?
  - l. Or as some critics claim, they find religious thesemes in close encounters.
    - i. Ideas of religion rather than politics.
    - ii. What is going on the politics? What change in Americna politics from 50s to 60s?
  - iii. History--America-politics
    - 1. Dis illusionment

2. Geo-political thing during 50s
3. 70s: cycle of sf in that period reveal the features
4. Government engage and plot against its citizens.
5. Tone of close encounter--the ending--till the end of the decade--mournful film-- before spielberg and lucas film--they change to fitted to religious interpretation
6. Ranging to the 90s
7. Ai is becoming friendly and helpful
8. Disilysionment with politics
  - a. After Nixon and Watewgate scandal and the end of the Vietnam war
    - i. The pentagon papers
    - ii. Watergate scanal
    - iii. Rechard nixon resignation
    - iv. End of viewnam war
  - b. *The parallax view*
  - c. *Three days of the condor*
  - d. *All the president's men*
  - e. *Jaws*
9. Sf variations
  - a. *Soylent Green*
  - b. *The man who fell earth*
  - c. *Videodrome*
10. Government in America is not trusted by the people
11. Watergate etho in jaws to a beach town.
12. Close encounter--government form appear
13. Question: what is the role of the government and the military in close encounters?--
14. The scientist figure in the film
15. Two protagonist--common Roy Neary and Dr. Claude Lacombe(he is argued as the second protagonist)
  - a. Lacombe should be a protagonist too. since close encounter is a parallel plotted film
  - b. Two narrative lines
16. For biskind: protagonist is either move to centre or they go to the margins.  
This film: scientific inquiry , and the journe to the...
17. Religious term
  - a. Expense through alien
  - b. Alien as ritually
  - c. What is this relgion turn American toawar?
  - d. What stylistic mean deploy to show religion
5. Religious idea with/ without thinking about film carefully/ Telotte & critical consensus
  - a. Close encounters solves political disilysionment by means of religious illumination
  - b. Question: what does religion meanin this film, and what does that illumination actually do?
6. The day the earth stood still
  - a. Klaatu as a type of Christ

- b. Klaatu delivered his message in the end
  - c. His speech is not religious, but the reason
  - d. Klaatu is harsh when he address humanity
  - e. 50s, alien as contemporary problem.
  - f. 70s , religious are more appropriate
7. Klatuu vs. Starman
- a. Alien as politically charge in 50s to helpful redempt figure/ spiritual figure in 70s
  - b. Close encounters and the star wars
  - c. Close encounters different form the early sf films.
  - d. Ameircan religious history--why alien final arrival swip away every paranoia that builds up.
8. Religious readnngs
- a. "close encounters/// plays on the sorts of emotions evokes by religious miracles: confusion, amazement, far, wnder and awe" Andrew M. Gordon
  - b. "close enocunter initiates a new iconography of beatific human wonder... heads tilted , eyes gazing upward with childish openness and unfearful expectancy-- this is the human face of teanscendence..." (vivaian Sbchack)
9. Invasion of the body snatchers plot like close encounters
- a. Things in the sky, then you don't have answer to the end of the film
  - b. Mostly suspended

### Reading Notes TBD

The Science fiction film as marvelous Text—*Close Encounters of the third kind*---Tolotte

- In fantasy/sf: it “offers its alternative version of everyday experience or calling into question the rules that would seem to govern that everyday world”—it fantasizes us.
- The otherness in the film always is disorienting to **both characters and viewers**. —think about **Roy Neary** is fantasized by the alien which eventually drives him crazy.
  - Film: while he tries to find out the problem about what he has experienced in the car, he cannot even find himself.
- *War of the Worlds* and *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*—expand the scope of our knowledge, especially the **knowledge of our own nature**.
- *Close Encounters of the third kind*
  - Steven Spielberg
    - Mysterious activations of machinery, official denials of alien existence, alien contact with a select few humans, unnatural behavior by those few.
  - “we find a story of belief, acceptance, and quasi-religious affirmation that humans are not alone in the universe, not really “lost”, as the film’s Roy Neary initially fears.” **Close encounter** is thus different from the “imagination of disaster by Susan sontag, also different from the contemporary *Star Wars*.
- **Marvelous** is precisely where **Todorov makes room for science fiction narratives** in his fantastic schema.
  - **Instrumental marvelous** as categorized by Todorov.
    - Stories that circumscribe their events in a rational vantage, even as they describe the operation of “laws which contemporary science does not



acknowledge” —sf 的一种 narrative plot, 把故事架构在 rational 的基础上, 哪怕它故事之中的 operation 是真实的 science 所企及不到的。

- “Alien-encounter films are ultimately about a causality that transcends the human, that pills us out of the everyday experience of the real, every bit as much as if they were testaments about a spiritual experience.” -- key thoughts
  - which blurring the boundaries between the world of science and technology/ the traditional ground of science fiction, and the spiritual world. —for example, *Star War*: it posits “the force” as a kind of spiritual underpinning for all existence and demonstration of its power over even the greatest technological accomplishments of the Empire.
  - This is the extreme use of the “**marvelous impulse**” which makes the audiences believe without really believing” —to have the **possibility of future sets in the present**.
- *The day the Earth Stood still* and *Independence Day* all situates in the recognizable world but different world from ours.
- *Close Encounter of the third Kind*:
  - It is **quasi-religious**
  - It is a **purified, disneyized version of religion.**
  - “**Follows a long tradition of marvelous narratives** that from the outset and in many different ways seem to present otherness within a context of “supernatural qualities”
  - marvelous
    - the alien figure:
      - the presentation/look of the other is related to the “**style of thought**”—外星人的样子表现出的是”how we desire to see”
    - **the invasion narrative, always reflect a conservative ideology. — the suspicion and the fear of the other.** Like in *War of the Worlds*, *The body Snatchers*.
      - These films vision aliens as **non-human**.
    - To the contrary to the conservative films, the **liberal** films which depict a benevolent alien like *Star Wars*, require thinking about the aliens as **style of thought**” and think about what “the other” represents?
  - *Close Encounter* is a film that takes both ways. (liberal and conservative
    - **Traditional alien invasion**: the horror genre: how the mother (Jillian) is worried about her 4-year-old Barry, and how our protagonist Roy is possessed by alien force--- **lead to construct a particular view of the aliens.** (at this point-We expect to see their physical threat later)
      - their **unseen presence** speaks to **the fear of unknown**.
    - Finally, aliens appear: the light-show-like manifestation of Roy’s and Barry’s innocent delight – all suggest **receptivity rather than fear**. 笔记恐惧, 从两种和外星人的接触中, 感受到的是“接受”

- The appearance of alien in **the final sequence**:
  - Shift of the other:
    - in order to prepare us for the final sequence (the real sense of “otherness”), the film works through a “shift”: **from** the aliens **to** the government and its forces who work to “protect” the people by covering up the visitors’ presence. → this transfer **frees** the expectation and **opens** other possibilities for alien’s appearance (a non-violent appearance)
    - The aliens are **creatures of innocence**, they bring a light of understanding to humanity. A different “**Style of thought**” from the beginning.
  - Shift of the self:
    - The “self” as the aliening → signifying a different sense of our own nature.
    - The **childish** of Roy: playing with Toy Train, Pinocchio... → these makes him the most open person to receive aliens’ message!!!
- Andrew Gordon:
  - The film draws from “this **child imagery** an important sense of what the encounter with the other (both alien and “other” self) might entail”.
  - This makes to rethink about ourselves
    - For example, government has itself become a kind of protective parent: controlling what we should know, explaining UFOs as sightings of military aircraft... -- government doing all it can to keep people in a **childish state**.
    - Then, this **abnormal childishness** is eventually dangerous and traps (his wife who cannot take the pressure and his child who is not capable of growing up.)
    - This film offers “a kind of growth through the innocent and open vision of the child.” –the aliens “come here to observe growing up in the twentieth century”
- Learning through a vision like a child
  - The experience of Roy exemplifies this
    - He is only interested in play, and his family begins with a sense of “lost” (everyone screams). Then he is singled out (marked by the sunburn), and he notices people around him who shares the same experience and joins them. He then steps out of the suburban subdivision and go across the country. By the end, he steps into a journey. **“it is a journey that represents humanity’s**

own growth into something like cosmic adulthood, and one that begins, appropriately enough, with these aliens who look very much like children.”—only through such **innocent & open attitude /marvelous** (which is opposed to the government’s) the growth of the species begins.

- This growth represents a broader cultural intent, the **species to find itself in the vastness of the universe**.
  - And this is achieved through **repeated dislocation**.
- “stop trying to rationalize” motif
  - this film takes on this theme: the effort at calling into question a single-minded rational world view.
  - **Lacombe**, the French Scientist, is casted by **Truffaut** and he is known for his sympathy for children, thus, differentiates himself from other “atomic bomb” type of scientist. Like **Roy and Barry**.
    - he is never directly involved with science
      - he keeps avoiding the harm to the alien
      - only his interpreter speaks the truth of science—thus, he is more a **shaman** than laboratory worker.
      - Thus, he is key to produce **marvelous atmosphere**.
      - He is moved by wonder, is dedicated to knowing through whatever methods will avail.
      - He is opposite to **government**
        - Government: hide truth, is the force of rationalization
        - Lacombe: find new way of understanding.
  - The film presents us “in the best tradition of fantasy, with a challenge to how we usually see the world and how we fit those perceptions into our normative categories, how we account for this new vision of things.

The Science fiction film as marvelous Text—*Close Encounters of the third kind*---Tolotte

- In fantasy/sf: it “offers its alternative version of everyday experience or calling into question the rules that would seem to govern that everyday world”—it fantasizes us.
- The otherness in the film always is disorienting to **both characters and viewers**. —think about **Roy Neary** is fantasized by the alien which eventually drives him crazy.
  - Film: while he tries to find out the problem about what he has experienced in the car, he cannot even find himself.

- *War of the Worlds* and *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*—expand the scope of our knowledge, especially the **knowledge of our own nature**.
- *Close Encounters of the third kind*
  - Steven Spielberg
    - Mysterious activations of machinery, official denials of alien existence, alien contact with a select few humans, unnatural behavior by those few.
  - “we find a story of belief, acceptance, and quasi-religious affirmation that humans are not alone in the universe, not really “lost”, as the film’s Roy Neary initially fears.” **Close encounter** is thus different from the “imagination of disaster by Susan Sontag, also different from the contemporary *Star Wars*.
- **Marvelous** is precisely where **Todorov makes room for science fiction narratives** in his fantastic schema.
  - **Instrumental marvelous** as categorized by Todorov.
    - Stories that circumscribe their events in a rational vantage, even as they describe the operation of “laws which contemporary science does not acknowledge” —sf 的一种 narrative plot, 把故事架构在 rational 的基础上, 哪怕它故事之中的 operation 是真实的 science 所企及不到的。
  - “Alien-encounter films are ultimately about a causality that transcends the human, that pills us out of the everyday experience of the real, every bit as much as if they were testaments about a spiritual experience.” -- key thoughts
    - which blurring the boundaries between the world of science and technology/ the traditional ground of science fiction, and the spiritual world. —for example, *Star War*: it posits “the force” as a kind of spiritual underpinning for all existence and demonstration of its power over even the greatest technological accomplishments of the Empire.
    - This is the extreme use of the “**marvelous impulse**” which makes the audiences believe without really believing” —to have the **possibility of future sets in the present**.
  - *The day the Earth Stood still* and *Independence Day* all situates in the recognizable world but different world from ours.
- *Close Encounter of the third Kind*:
  - It is **quasi-religious**
  - It is a **purified, disneyized version of religion.**
  - “**Follows a long tradition of marvelous narratives** that from the outset and in many different ways seem to present otherness within a context of “supernatural qualities”
  - marvelous
    - the alien figure:
      - the presentation/look of the other is related to the “**style of thought**”—外星人的样子表现出的是“how we desire to see”

- **the invasion narrative, always reflect a conservative ideology. – the suspicion and the fear of the other.** Like in *War of the Worlds*, *The body Snatchers*.
  - These films vision aliens as **non-human**.
- To the contrary to the conservative films, the **liberal** films which depict a benevolent alien like *Star Wars*, require thinking about the aliens as **style of thought** and think about what “the other” represents?
- *Close Encounter* is a film that takes both ways. (liberal and conservative)
  - **Traditional alien invasion:** the horror genre: how the mother (Jillian) is worried about her 4-year-old Barry, and how our protagonist Roy is possessed by alien force--- **lead to construct a particular view of the aliens.** (at this point-We expect to see their physical threat later)
    - their **unseen presence** speaks to **the fear of unknown**.
  - Finally, aliens appear: the light-show-like manifestation of Roy’s and Barry’s innocent delight – all suggest **receptivity rather than fear**. 笔记恐惧，从两种和外星人的接触中，感受到的是“接受”
  - The appearance of alien in **the final sequence**:
    - Shift of the other:
      - in order to prepare us for the final sequence (the real sense of “otherness”), the film works through a “shift”: **from** the aliens **to** the government and its forces who work to “protect” the people by covering up the visitors’ presence. → this transfer **frees** the expectation and **opens** other possibilities for alien’s appearance (a non-violent appearance)
      - The aliens are **creatures of innocence**, they bring a light of understanding to humanity. A different “**Style of thought**” from the beginning.
    - Shift of the self:
      - The “self” as the aliening → signifying a different sense of our own nature.
      - The **childish** of Roy: playing with Toy Train, Pinocchio... → these makes him the most open person to receive aliens’ message!!!
  - Andrew Gordon:
    - The film draws from “this **child imagery** an important sense of what the encounter with the other (both alien and “other” self) might entail”.
    - This makes to rethink about ourselves
      - For example, government has itself become a kind of protective parent: controlling what we should know, explaining UFOs as sightings of military aircraft... --

government doing all it can to keep people in a **childish state**.

- Then, this **abnormal childishness** is eventually dangerous and traps (his wife who cannot take the pressure and his child who is not capable of growing up.)
- This film offers “a kind of growth through the innocent and open vision of the child.” –the aliens “come here to observe growing up in the twentieth century”
- Learning through a vision like a child
  - The experience of Roy exemplifies this
    - He is only interested in play, and his family begins with a sense of “lost” (everyone screams). Then he is singled out (marked by the sunburn), and he notices people around him who shares the same experience and joins them. He then steps out of the suburban subdivision and go across the country. By the end, he steps into a journey. **“it is a journey that represents humanity’s own growth into something like cosmic adulthood, and one that begins, appropriately enough, with these aliens who look very much like children.”**—only through such **innocent & open attitude /marvelous** (which is opposed to the government’s) the growth of the species begins.
    - This growth represents a broader cultural intent, the **species to find itself in the vastness of the universe**.
      - And this is achieved through **repeated dislocation**.
  - “stop trying to rationalize” motif
    - this film takes on this theme: the effort at calling into question a single-minded rational world view.
    - **Lacombe**, the French Scientist, is casted by **Truffaut** and he is known for his sympathy for children, thus, differentiates himself from other “atomic bomb” type of scientist. Like **Roy and Barry**.
      - he is never directly involved with science
        - he keeps avoiding the harm to the alien
        - only his interpreter speaks the truth of science—thus, he is more a **shaman** than laboratory worker.
        - Thus, he is key to produce **marvelous atmosphere**.
        - He is moved by wonder, is dedicated to knowing through whatever methods will avail.
        - He is opposite to **government**
          - Government: hide truth, is the force of rationalization
          - Lacombe: find new way of understanding.

- The film presents us “in the best tradition of fantasy, with a challenge to how we usually see the world and how we fit those perceptions into our normative categories, how we account for this new vision of things.

## Dystopias

### Speculative Dystopia

***Fahrenheit 451* (France Francois Truffaut, 1966), *THX 1138* (USA, George Lucas, 1971).**

**Readings:** M. Ryan and D. Kellner

Vivian Sobchack

Utopia: fictional depictions of ideal societies as the author imagines them.

Ideally organized, intentional. Myths of golden age.

Most are rural societies, balances society w/ nature.

- Thomas More's *Utopia*, 1516
- Utopia means “nowhere” in Greek, meaning it is not possible and wouldn't exist.
- Tommaso Campanella, *City of the Sun*, 1623
- Francis Bacon, *The New Atlantis*, 1677

### Dystopias/Anti-utopia:

Worst on all levels: social, political or economic.

Socially critical. Conflict-driven. Taking a social trend to extreme under cloak of fantasy.

Most are set in cities. Urbanism is dehumanizing.

Urban lives are industrialized and engineered.

Sex is detached, controlled by the state.

Sex is intimate, private, against the law.

Sexual desires are paradoxically the cure to waking up.

Sex represents human nature that leads to emotional connection.

Government's always ideologically formed, following the ideologies/guiding rules it sets for itself.

People have no sense of security.

Medical emergencies: infertility, zombie-making viruses, etc.

Protagonist can be some1 born and raised in this system, who then is made aware of dystopia by sexual awakening.

- George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty Four* (1948);
- Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World* (1932);
- *Handmaid's Tale* (Margret Atwood 1985)
- Karel Capek, *RUR* (1920): 1<sup>st</sup> ever set design for robots.
- Ray Bradbury *Fahrenheit 451*

Genre 1<sup>st</sup> emerged in France, French new wave.

**Dystopia as Satire (Northop Frye):** law established in romance and epic disappears into tyranny, satire is serious (for it remembers the law) and frivolous (as it is irresponsible and offensive).

Panopticon: Architectural design of prison. Comes from Michel Foucault's Discipline and Punishment.

Both utopia and dystopia imagine a closed, isolated system.  
Both are spatial genres.

**THX1138:** shares similarities w/ New Wave. Montage, sound and image. Technophobic (Lack of privacy, center's control, security cameras everywhere).  
Extreme, consumerism, popo beating people.

#### **Fahrenheit 451:**

- Satire: psychological effects.
- SF elements are toned down in this film.
- Authority as an extreme
- Censorship. Books are making ppl unhappy. But by eliminating it, provides a reduced access to knowledge.
- Replacement is television: interactive, its invasive, always there. Home is built around TV.
- "what do you think Linda?" TV is becoming interactive.
- Only way social interaction is based on is TV. "Oh look, We're all one big happy family"
- Characters are flattened.
- Less sex in this film than in THX 1138. What stands in for it?  
The books!! But this is way more abstract. Ppl in this film forget how to feel. They suffer from minor memory loss. Books stand in for memory, suggest that human nature is situated in books, meaning in culture.

Dystopia: born in 20s in books and theatres.

Popularity in post war era: anti-utopian sentiment. Calling someone utopious is dangerous bc US is the utopia that already exists. We don't need to look anywhere else. Distrust of utopia values.

We didn't get dystopian films til tail of 50s.  
Film trend also started in Europe.

This film: nice and colorful, not as extreme as 1138. Uniformity. Everybody's exactly the same. Consumerism, commercialism. TV. Haircutting (police's control)

In a future totalitarian and oppressive society, where books are forbidden, Guy Montag is a fireman. The mission of firemen in this society with fireproof houses is to burn books at 451o F,



the temperature of combustion of paper. Montag is married to Linda, a futile woman that joins "The Family" through the interactive television. When Montag meets Clarisse, she asks him if he has ever read a book - Montag becomes curious. He decides to steal and read a book, twisting his view of life. He enjoys reading the books which is an illegal act. He starts to feel for people who read books and becomes a book collector himself. One day he meets with Clarisse who almost gets caught by reading books, she tells him about the book people. Montage decides to resign but is convinced to go on one last mission. Which turns out to be at his house. Montag's wife leaves him as she cannot stand his behavior anymore. Montag kills captain, escapes and find the book people.

\*\*\*\*\*Ryan and Kellner\*\*\*\*\*

- SF as political allegory.
- 70s SF: technology=a metaphor for everything that threatens natural social arrangements and conservative values
- Conservatives & Technophobia  
Tech is mechanical and regulated, nature is spontaneous and free.  
Tech represents modernity and that nature maybe reconstructed.  
Fear of technology. Technology is smtg always addressing you, always there. Constantly speaking to you.
- Early 70s technophobia films: THX 1138 (1970). Right wing. People were monitored, deprived of individuality and sexual desires. THX escapes into freedom and nature as sun shines on him.
- An alternative representation of Tech: *Blade Runner* (left)  
Man marries a machine (replicant), offering a mediation b/w tech and human values.
  - Oppressive core of capitalism: Tyrell inventing replicants to have more pliable force, turning humans into machines. (similar scenario in *Metropolis*)
  - German expressionism. Color contrast: pink neon light on billboards vs. dark street of underworld (urban poverty).
- We can read SF as a split b/w LEFT and RIGHT, NATURE and TECHNOLOGY
- mid 70s: fear/resentment against corporations.
- Late 70s and early 80s: left-liberal and radical dystopias negatively represent basic tenets of capitalism.

### *Dystopias (2)—Replicants and Cops*

Topography of a Phantom Postmodernist City.

*Blade Runner* (USA, Ridley Scott, 1982.)

**Readings:** Wong Kin Yeun,  
Vivian Sobchack,  
David C. Ryan

Four androids, known as replicants, who look and act like humans, rebel against their human creator, the Tyrell Corporation, and police officer Deckard, played by Harrison Ford is called out

of retirement to hunt and kill them. He ends up falling in love with an advanced replicant, Rachel, who strongly desires to hold on to her humanity and individuality, and escapes the city with her after battling the rebellious androids.

Long takes. Special effects supervisor Douglas Trumbull also worked for 2001: Space Odyssey, hence the long takes.

The layered look

Blade Runner and Metropolis: Tyrell building looks like Mies van der Rohe in Metropolis

Blade Runner vs. the shiny modern (THX 1138, Things to come, 2001 Space Odyssey). Film doesn't have the shiny, shiny modern outlook. Instead, the film setting looks.....

Retrofitting

- *Retrofitting*: in building construction, adding on to what is already built, fitting it to a past structure, like an exterior staircase or air conditioning system
- In describing *Blade Runner*, “retrofitting” was used as a metaphor, originally by the filmmakers
- *Blade Runner*’s urban postmodern design:
  - postmodern pastiche (adding new to the old, hence the layered look),
  - updating film noir which has a distinct dark and shadowy look. Film noir plotting retrofitted on to a dystopian futurist environment
- A city in permanent decay but not a city in crisis
- The twisting plot that simply exhausts itself without resolving anything basic about the city or society

Philip K. Dick

*Blade Runner* source novel: Philip K. Dick, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* (1968)

Cyber Punk films

Highly stylized subgenre

Features advanced technology and science together with a typically crumbling society.

Normally it is set in the not-so-distant future, mostly dystopias, and focuses on “high tech, low life”.

Heavily borrows from film noir as they often take a post modernistic outlook on the flaws of a technological society.

Antihero protagonists, who are often outcasts, mistaken criminals, misfits, visionaries and rebels.

They are mostly manipulated by ranking members of society and controlling government.

Tutorial

Blade Runner

- Carried by visuals, not narrative.
- Some narrative questions never got answered. What is the off-world?
- Architecture: streets, and buildings.
- Usually characters arrive at a location, long takes on building to introduce it.

- Design of the city: film noir.  
Different from THX 1138  
Crowded streets, dirty, glassy police office.  
Retrofitted: its not a building built from scratch. Things are added onto other things.  
different styles, eras, one culture added on by another. A postmodern pastiche.

Motifs of the eye: The unknown eye reflects the city

- To determine if ones a replicant or human
- Roy's speech is about all the beautiful things he sees. He is visionary.
- Multiple characters either wear glasses or cover their eyes, referencing to eyes.

In most dystopias: ppl are constantly being watched by ppl at the top. Here people are undetectable. Film is abt detection and to find ppl who aren't real ppl. No central political power in this film??

\*\*\*\*\*Sobchack\*\*\*\*\*

spatial architecture provides plot.

Space is expanded thru action. Characters wander so we can look at space (long takes).

Continuum: depiction of city changes in each era.

The question of whether this film is really dystopia is up to debate. For replicants it is. Their lives are v controlled. For others they are just living life. No sexual repression or anything. Streets are grungy and dirty but not dangerous. It is run-down, but not necessary bad. All middle class left for off-world so dt apartments must be really cheap.

### 蟹蟹 anna ! Vivian Sobchack – Cities on the Edge of Time: The Urban Science SF Film (F 451 和 Blade Runner 都要求读这篇)

- The sf film city's spatial articulations provide the literal premises for the possibilities and trajectory of narrative action, giving that fantasized world a significant and visibly signifying shape and temporal dimension.
- Cities in 30s sf films concretely construct 'modernity' in an architecture of 'aspiration' that has commerce with the 'transcendent'. These images emphasize the vertical, lofty and aerial quality of the city rather than its pedestrian and base horizontality.
  - Equating 'height' with the active reach of human aspiration, the 'loftiness' of the city stands concretely as its most aesthetically significant social value.
  - Cultural geographer Yi-Fu Tuan: "Vertical element...evoke a sense of striving, a defiance of gravity..."
- Traditionally, American's spatial mythology has privileged the non-urban and has been, indeed, anti-urban (the paradise of the New World symbolically located in the garden, the West, the frontier, the wilderness, the suburbia)
- During the 50s, this decade is marked by nuclear fear and Cold War tensions; by a growing dependence upon electronic technology; by the emergence of new global information and communications systems; and by increasing consumerism and

**suburbansim**. American sf films, more often than not, poeticizes the city through what Sontag has called the **'imagination of disaster'**.

- Articulating a loss of faith in previous utopian and futurist visions of the modern city as the architectural and transcendent embodiment of human aspiration.
- As aspiration and 'highness' are lost or neutralized, so too is the sense of future.
- Constitute an 'aesthetic of destruction' whose beauty is found in 'wreaking havoc, making a mess.' The city's aspiring verticality and 'highness' is debased in a mise-en-scene that is bustling with contemporary activity and traffic and emphatically temporalized as 'now'.
- Another image of the failure of the aspiring city (during 50s) is that those originally positive and transcendent value of architectural **'highness'** **becomes dominated by the negative and nihilistic value of 'emptiness'**. Highness remains an ideal value but now has little to do with human beings.
  - Iconography of **emptiness and imagination of the post-holocaust city** in the 50s until mid 70s.
- **From the late 60s to 1977** (the year that marks the release of both *Close Encounters* and *Star Wars*), the sf city poeticized neither highness nor fullness as positive values. Rather, both were imagined negatively – and turned in on themselves to become lowering **oppressiveness** and **overcrowdedness**. Sf city during this period is **dystopian** and perceived as **asphyxiating**.
  - The late 60s and most of 70s – a 'diminishing fear of nuclear apocalypse' and **'a growing concern with domestic, terrestrial issues** – most of which are related to **totalitarian government control** of people's lives or over-population, food shortages, pollution, and ecology.'
- **By the 80s**, the idealized and lofty science fiction city is imagined as completely decentered and marginalized. **The citizens of dominant bourgeois culture are either 'offworld' in outer space or in the suburbs.**
- The old imaginary and centered sf metropolis is totally resigned to its ruination, its displacement to its own edges, its concrete transformation from **city as center to city as inner, from aspiring city to city dump**.
- But the junked, the dump edges of town are culturally reinscribed as an exotic urban space that eroticizes and **fetishizes material culture**, that is valued for its expansive capacity to accumulate, **consume 'things'**, and its success of material production.
- Within the context of this new **urban exoticism and its erotic of commodification and consumerism**, two new images of sf city emerge.
- 1) **Blade Runner (1982)**. The imaginary Los Angeles is concretely constructed from **'layers of texture' – visual information** is imparted in every square inch of screen.
  - Despite the skyscraper, the visual experience of this LA has little to do with verticality and lofty aspiration. Rather, our attention tends to stay grounded – fascinated by the city's ruins, its 'spaces and objects whose original purposes has been lost due to overinvestment brought about by constant recycling.
  - Industrial pipes and ducts figure prominently in the mise-en-scene.

之后讲的所有电影和我们今年学的都无关了(一直到 90s 电影中的 city), 我就不看啦 !

*Dystopias — Robots and Workers*

**Lecture:** *Topography of a Phantom Modernist City*

**Screening:** *Metropolis* (Germany, Fritz Lang, 1927).

**Readings:** Han Gunther Pflaum, Ludmilla Jordanova. Shits too much, I cant.

This film is footnote for many films like Blade Runner

It still has popular culture influence til this day. Bowie, Madonna.

Exceptional visual design betrayed by politicized narrative.

Huge production but was a box office failure.

Was remade into many versions. Most successful being the colorized version by Giorgio Moroder.

Narratively incoherent?

German Weimar. Stimmung: mood or atmosphere.

Visuals over plotting. Expressionist cinema, exploring the horror and fantasy.

Mise-en-scene: futuristic city. 3 spaces.

Upper city: elites.

Worker's city: workers

Catacombs: level below where workers live.

Kracauer:

Dystopian SF films. 1920s German films. *Metropolis*: Nazi totalitarian ideology, and is one of Hitler's fav film.

Fritz Lang after *Metropolis*: *Woman in the Moon* 1929, *M* 1931, *Dr. Mabuse* 1933

Moloch: mechanical god.

Collision of the medieval and modern. Kracauer: thinks its ideology subconsciously is craving for a master. Nazis reacted to this childish German's desire for a father figure.

Film introduces and ends Ambiguity and confusion.