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**Course Name: Science Fiction Film**

**Tutorial time: Wednesday 5-6pm**

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**Title: Analysis of *The Interstellar***

**Summary**

*Interstellar* was released in 2014 by Director [Christopher Nolan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christopher_Nolan" \o "Christopher Nolan). It is not only an extremely magnificent, emotional film based on physical theory, but also an excellent space adventure science fiction film which is full of twists, turns, and suspense. Without any doubts, *Interstellar* is a different film from Nolan’s past films. It is a new attempt and a new beginning for [Christopher Nolan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christopher_Nolan)’s film and I can say that it is the “*2001: A Space Odyssey* ” in our era.

**Keywords: Space Adventure,** [**Christopher Nolan**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christopher_Nolan)

**Plot**

At the beginning of the film, the earth is covered with yellow sand, wheat and other basic crops have been extinct because of Fusarium wilt. Meanwhile, instead of looking up at the stars and indulging our imagination and inspiration as the human did before, the human is lost in the dust storms every day and count the few days that remain. Cooper, a former astronaut who works as a farmer, discovered strange gravity phenomena in her daughter Murphy’s room. And then he is informed that there still exists an unknown area where former members of NASA were implementing a secret plan to save human future. He is told that NASA sent several astronauts to distant galaxies to search habitable plant through the mysterious wormholes that appeared near Saturn years ago. Moreover, persuaded by the Professor Brand, Cooper, and other three experts make an expedition to the three most hopeful planets. They encounter unimaginable troubles during the expedition. Finally, Cooper saves the earth by telling formula secret to his daughter Murphy through unknown intelligence in the black hole and Amelia Brand builds a new home for human in a new planet.

**The Perfect combination of science fiction, emotion, and realism.**

Films under the same genre share some common element.[[1]](#footnote-1) In film *Interstellar,* it combines science fiction, emotion and realism perfectly.

In term of realism, with the help from theoretical physicist Kip Thorne[[2]](#footnote-2), the plot of *Interstellar* bases on physic law, especially the relativity and its inference. For example, when the crew uses a lander to investigate Miller’s planet where time is severely dilated. After landing on the planet, a gigantic tidal wave kills Doyle and waterlogs the lander’s engine. By the time the lander’s engines restart and they go back to the spaceship, they discover that 23 years have elapsed for Romilly who is always in the spaceship. The plot of this part reveals the cruelty when people have to face the universal truth and I was shocked at this point when the first time I saw this film. In other words, due to the only one extra hour caused by the gigantic wave in Miller planet, Romilly who is in the spaceship has to spend 23 years to wait. It is the cruel physic law that enhances the sorrow atmosphere when people face the first failure in their adventure expedition.

In term of emotion, Cooper and Brand are not only the teammate in the space exploration, they also share more similarities. This film mainly expresses the love between Cooper and his daughter. And it also includes the love between Brand and her father. However, there is a huge difference between these two pairs of father and daughter. For Cooper and his daughter, the goal for Cooper’s galaxy expedition is to save the human, especially for his daughter Murphy. Compared to Cooper, the Professor Brand, the father of Doctor Brand, sends her daughter to the expedition to keep her survival. With the development of the plot, some people die for Amelia Brand and Cooper sacrifices himself for saving Amelia Brand and humanity’s future. From this perspective, this is a happy ending for Professor Brand. He successfully completes his wish that Amelia Brand survives and builds a new world in a new planet even though it abandons all human people in the earth. Besides, since Cooper passes the formula solution to her daughter by the hyper-dimensional space, it is also a happy ending for Cooper and his daughter. In summary, the love between Cooper and his daughter is the main storyline of the whole film. And the setting between Professor Brand and Amelia Brand is the branching story of the whole film which enables the film plot to be more attractive and complex. Additionally, the appearance of robots Tars and Case adds humor element to the film.

**Comparison to *2001 A Space Odyssey***

If Peter Kramer says that *2001 A Space Odyssey* is the benchmark for SF films[[3]](#footnote-3), there is no doubt that *Interstellar* is the benchmark that [Christopher Nolan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christopher_Nolan) makes for our era. Obviously, both *2001 A Space Odyssey* and *Interstellar* share same film theme that describes the relationship between universe and life, same obscure movie language, same perspective that is beyond their own time, similar space scenes and same deep meaning behind the film.

There are also much difference between these two films, Kubrick emphasizes more fast and significant evolution about human, especially in technological view. Ebnie Brown even indicates that Kubrick’s 2001 might be taken as a kind of solemn reminder that there can be a darker side of innovation [[4]](#footnote-4). However, in film *Interstellar*, innovation seems no longer important as before. In other words, for 2001 A Space Odyssey, as its subtitle states, it is about an odyssey, a quest that centers on the desire to know, to find out something like who push the evolution.[[5]](#footnote-5) However, in *Interstellar,* it describes more human love when people face a crisis. Although *2001 A Space Odyssey* has a huge influence in *Interstellar*, director Nolan indeed paraphrases this film by his unique ways as well, including Nolan-style nonlinear narrative, Nolan-puzzle-style film ending, and his own wild imagination. As Kubrick’s film resonates strongly with the ideas of the Romanticism, an intellectual and artistic movement in that period[[6]](#footnote-6), director Nolan also expresses his thinking about human future in film *Interstellar.*

**Conclusion**

As William Whittington says in his book, Science fiction offers an artistic and intellectual space to speculate about what could be or what might potentially influence the real world of both the present and future[[7]](#footnote-7). In the film *Interstellar,* it shows the environmental problems that we may encounter in future and it also points out that the importance of love when we face incredible problems. Besides these straightforward illustrations, Christopher Nolan also leaves some deep questions to the audiences, such as what is the relationship between human and universe? Who makes the hyper-dimension space and what is the purpose of the space? In summary, *Interstellar* is an excellent science fiction film which combines science fiction, human emotion, and physic realism together. Director Nolan expresses his own thinking about human relationship and the human future in this film. It not only inherits 2001 A Space Odyssey but also explores new perspective in our time background. The only thing *Interstellar* needs to be a milestone in science fiction film history is the test of time.

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2. Krämer, Peter. 2001: a space odyssey. London: BFI, 2010.
3. Ednie-Brown, Pia. 2013. "The Ethics of the Imperative." Architectural Design 83, no. 1: 18-23. Art Full Text (H.W. Wilson), EBSCOhost (accessed December 5, 2017).
4. Scheurer, Timothy E. "Kubrick vs. North: the score for 2001: a space odyssey." Journal Of Popular Film & Television 25, (Winter98 1998): 172-182. Art Full Text (H.W. Wilson),
5. ROWE, CHRISTOPHER1. 2013. "THE ROMANTIC MODEL OF 2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY." Canadian Journal Of Film Studies 22, no. 2: 41-63. Art Full Text (H.W. Wilson), EBSCOhost (accessed December 5, 2017).
6. William Whittington, Sound Design & Science Fiction, 5

**Appendix**

release date: 2014

director: [Christopher Nolan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christopher_Nolan)

cinematographer: Hoyte van Hoytema

screenwriter: Jonathan Nolan and Christopher Nolan

main characters-actors: Matthew McConaughey and Anne Hathaway

production company: Legendary Pictures, Syncopy and Lynda Obst Productions

1. Grant, Barry Keith. 2007. Film genre: from iconography to ideology. London: Wallflower. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
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6. ROWE, CHRISTOPHER1. 2013. "THE ROMANTIC MODEL OF 2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY." Canadian Journal Of Film Studies 22, no. 2: 41-63. Art Full Text (H.W. Wilson), EBSCOhost (accessed December 5, 2017). [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. William Whittington, Sound Design & Science Fiction, 5 [↑](#footnote-ref-7)