The Hermeneutical Analysis of the Soviet Fantasy Genre of the 1950s – 1960s and Its American Screen Transformation in Media Studies in a Student Audience

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Abstract. The main outcome of the media education hermeneutical analysis of the Soviet fantasy genre of the 1950s – 1960s and its American screen transformation in media studies in a university classroom is not just the audience's understanding of historical, political, social and cultural contexts and the stereotype formation mechanisms of the epoch, but also the development of the audience's perception of media culture, analytical and interpretative skills applied to media texts, critical thinking development.

Keywords. Hermeneutical analysis, fantastic films, genre, media education, media literacy, media competence, universities, students, Soviet films of the 1950s-1960s, USA, USSR.

Introduction

The hermeneutic analysis of cultural context stands for study of the media text interpretation process, of cultural and historical factors that may have an impact both on the media texts authors/agencies and the audience's viewpoint. The hermeneutic analysis is connected with the comprehension of a media text by matching with the cultural tradition and reality; penetration into the logic of a media text; media text analysis based on artistic images comparison in the historical and cultural contexts. The objectives of the audience's media education in this case are the following: development of the audience's media culture; their apprehension, analysis and interpretation skills applied to media texts; critical thinking.

Since nearly all modern universities are equipped with networked multi-media one can make the best use of e-libraries and web-archives in media studies. Among them we can name the American non-profit Internet archive founded in San Francisco in 1996 [www.archive.org]. Its aim is to provide anytime access for researchers and the public at large to various digital historic artifacts (print, visual and audiovisual texts). As the great bulk of media texts presented in the Internet Archive is open and free, it is very convenient for educational aims.

We offer a study guide for using fantasy genre media texts in teaching the media. The teaching methods used at such a lesson are based on the combination of the hermeneutic analysis with the structural, narrative, ethical, ideological, iconographic/visual analyses, the analysis of media stereotypes and media texts characters. We thought it interesting to pursue the transformation of such a typical (and archival) fantastic media text as *Planet of Storm* produced by P. Klushantsev (1961) in the American films – *Voyage to the Prehistoric Planet* (1965) by C. Harrington and *Voyage to the Planet of Prehistoric Women* (1968) by P. Bogdanovich.

The comparative analysis of these media texts will enable us to touch upon not only the socio-cultural, historical, and ideological contexts but also the urgent problem of copyright infringement and counterfeit media products.

A. Silverblatt, an American scholar and media teacher [Silverblatt, 2001, pp. 80-81], developed the following set of questions for media text hermeneutic analysis in the historical, cultural and structural

contexts. In accordance with this scheme we have developed a method of constructing a lesson in media studies for university students.

A. Historical context [Silverblatt, 2001, pp. 80-81].

1. What does the media text tell about the time of its creation?

a) When did the premier of this media text take place?

b) How did the events of that time affect the media text?

c) How does the media text comment on the events of the day?

2. Does the knowledge of the historic events contribute to the media text understanding?

a) media texts created during a certain historic event:

- What events occurred when the media text was being created?

- How does the understanding of these events contribute to our understanding of the media text?

- What are genuine historical allusions?

- Are there any historical references in the media text?

- How does the understanding of these historical references affect our understanding of the media text?

P. Klushantsev's *Planet of Storms* was produced in the age when the topic of space was extremely popular thought the world. Hence arose scores of fantastic novels, stories, strip cartoons, sci-fi films about faraway planets, intergalactic flights and extraterrestrial civilizations. It was connected not only with the definite progress in space exploration (in the late 1950s the first Earth satellites were launched, some of them with animals on board) but also with a stiff competition between the two antagonistic state systems – the USSR and the USA – both in the world domination and space leadership.

A year before the shooting of the film *Planet of Storms* – on May 1st of 1960, a spy plane of the American pilot F.G. Powers was shot down in the USSR airspace. On April 8, 1961, the then leader of the USSR N.S. Khrushchev sent a note of protest to the USA President J. Kennedy concerning the anti-Castro landing of troops in Cuba. On August 13, 1961, the Kremlin ordered to begin the building of the infamous Berlin Wall. In 1962 (the year of the beginning of successful distribution of *Planet of Storms*) the USSR started the deployment of missiles in Cuba, and in response to this the USA declared a blockade of the island. That led to the politically tense Cuban Missile Crisis which forced the USSR to withdraw the rackets from Cuba in exchange for the promise of the USA to abandon the occupation of the 'Liberty Island'. And namely in the year when the film *Planet of Storms* (1961) was produced – the Soviet Union triumphantly took the lead over the USA on 12 April – for the first time in the world history a ship with a man on board (it was Yuri Gagarin) was put into orbit. Americans managed to launch a spaceship with their astronaut (A. Shepard) only on 5 May of 1961. On 6-7 August of 1961 G. Titov became the second Soviet cosmonaut to fly in space. In 1962 (the year when the film *Planet of Storms* was released) 5 more people flew into the outer space.

It goes without saying that the political developments of that period could not fail to influence the plot of the media text. As the story unfolds, the crew of the first starship was joint – a Soviet astronaut lands on the surface of Venus together with an American colleague and his robot. The authors' of the film *Planet of Storms* never intended to depict the American character as a greedy and malicious product of the capitalist world: Prof. Kern was presented as a pragmatic person who did not believe (at first) in friendship, but generally as a likable character. That is why we would not insist that the incident with F.G. Powers or the Cuban events affected *Planet of Storms* directly. Most likely, the film of P. Klushantsev and his scriptwriter – A. Kazantsev – the author of numerous sci-fi novels, was a sort of commentary to the general political and socio-cultural context of the late 1950s – early 1960s in the framework of the so-called 'peaceful co-existence' of the two ideologically irreconcilable systems that was officially proclaimed by the USSR. On the tide of the USSR's space advancement *Planet of Storms* was bought by dozens of countries including the USA. As regards the re-edited version of *Planet of Storms* which was shown in the USA under the title *Voyage to the Prehistoric*

Planet (1965) it got to the transatlantic screens in the different epoch – after the US President J. Kennedy was killed (November 24th, 1963) and before (since August 2nd, 1964) America began the interminable war in Vietnam…

By that time the first woman – V. Tereshkova (1963) and about a dozen of Soviet and American cosmo/astronauts had already been in the outer space. The relations between the USSR and the USA were far from optimistic, and numerous American outer-space flights had already smoothed the initial shock caused by the Soviet priority in astronautics. That is why it does not seem surprising that the authors of the re-edited version of *Planet of Storms* – film director Curtis Harrington (mentioned in the credit line under the pseudonym of John Sebastian) and producer Roger Korman – by simple renaming and dubbing-in into English transmuted all the characters of the film *Voyage to the Prehistoric Planet* into people of the Western world. No Russians: only Americans plus a Frenchman and a German. G. Zhyonov, Y. Sarantsev, G. Teykh, G.Vernov were mentioned in the credits under Americanized pseudonyms so that American spectators might not guess that the movie used to be Soviet.

However, they went behind renaming and dubbing-in and removed direct visual hints at the Soviet origin of the movie by re-editing, though some of such clues nevertheless remained in the film (for example, the Russian inscription 'Sirius' on the cassette recorder), they also cut some episodes that made the action slow (such remarks as: 'We assure the Soviet government, our communist party, all Soviet people that we shall justify the trust…'). And, contrariwise, the American authors added some new episodes (the scenes with an orbiting station 'borrowed' from another Soviet sci-fi film – *The Heavens Call* (1959) and the scenes shot in addition at R. Korman's studio now with true American actors involved). It is hard to tell why the American cinematographers disliked K. Ignatova acting as astronaut Masha. But in the American version of 1965 American actress F. Domergue replaced her and played a similar part of American Marsha Evans instead of Russian Masha.

As a result, the American spectators of 1965 saw the 'American' movie *Voyage to the Prehistoric Planet* about the 'American' flight to Venus.

However, *Voyage to the Prehistoric Planet* (1965) was not a big hitter and, apparently, discouraged the producers. In 1968, Roger Korman made a decision about remaking (of C. Harrington's version this time), having entrusted this mission to American film critic Peter Bogdanovich who was popular then. As the majority of his colleagues, critic Bogdanovich could not brag of million incomes, that is why he willingly accepted R. Korman's modest offer of $6000…

P. Bogdanovich did not only remove the elements prolonging the movie (in particular, the by-plot of Masha/Marsha was completely cut) and re-edited it but also added (under the pseudonym Derek Thomas) several huge 'Venusian' scenes to the movie involving some sex-appealing females. That is why the movies deservedly got the enticing title *Voyage to the Planet of Prehistoric Women* (1968).

P. Bogdanovich's version appeared on transatlantic screens a year prior to the American landing on the Moon (though after 1965 another dozen of earthmen flew to space), but almost simultaneously with the invasion of the Soviet troops into Czechoslovakia that nearly returned the relations between the USSR and the USA to the level of the Cuban Missile Crisis. It is quite logical that in this situation the characters of *Voyage to the Planet of Prehistoric Women* kept on having western names and speaking English.

As for the general reason why Americans had an opportunity to alter *Planet of Storms* as they wished, it was quite simple – before 1973 the USSR persistently rejected to sign the Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works. That is why the people who purchased Soviet artistic products could use them at their option. On the other hand, the Kremlin enjoyed the same right before 1973. Though western films did not contain additional scenes they were frequently re-edited, cut and mutilated in the Soviet Union.

B. Cultural Context [Silverblatt, 2001, pp. 80-81].

1. Media and popular culture: How does the media text reflect, strengthen, suggest or create cultural:
a) relations, b) values, c) conduct, d) concern; e) myths.

Depending on the analysis of the chosen media texts in the course of debate students can come to a conclusion that *Planet of Storms* (though within the conventional framework of the fantastic genre) aimed to mirror the relations, values and conduct of Soviet characters taken from the so-called 'code of communism builders'. Whereas C. Harrington's and P. Bogdanovich's versions represented everything in the pragmatic context promoting at the same time the team spirit. In addition, P. Bogdanovich's version presented the mythology of existence of extra-terrestrial civilizations more brightly and obviously (with an accent on mysticism). And, certainly, in every case the authors were concerned about a hypothetical problem of crash of various worlds.

2. Outlook: What world is shown in the media text? [Silverblatt, 2001, pp. 80-81].

When answering the question of the 'cultural context' section the students can be offered to fill in Table 1:

Table 1. Philosophy and Outlook of the World Pictured in Media Texts of the Soviet Film Fantasy of the 1950s – 1960s and Its American Screen Transformation

Key questions to media texts	Planet of Storms (1961)	Voyage to the Prehistoric Planet (1965)	Voyage to the Planet of Prehistoric Women (1968)
What is the ideology of this world?	Communist 'peaceful' ideology (USSR, Soviet characters) Pragmatic philosophy (American characters)	Pragmatic ideology	Pragmatic ideology
What outlook does this world represent – optimistic or pessimistic?	Optimistic	Optimistic	Optimistic
What is the hierarchy of values in this outlook? What values can be found in the media text?	Patriotism – communist values – friendship – professionalism – science – family	Pragmatism – professionalism – science – family	Pragmatism – professionalism – science – family
What does it mean to be a success in this world? How does a person succeed in this world? What kind of behavior is rewarded in the world?	It means to be a patriot, a skillful and courageous explorer of the cosmos, a true friend and a family man. All the characters without exclusion are stereotypic; their individual traits are feebly presented.	It means to be a skillful and courageous explorer of the outer space, a good professional. All the characters without exclusion are stereotypic; their individual traits are feebly presented.	It means to be a skillful and courageous explorer of the outer space, a good professional. All the characters without exclusion are stereotypic; their individual traits are feebly presented.
Are there any supernatural phenomena in this world?	Yes	Yes	Yes

Table 2 will enable the students to better analyze the typology of the characters of the media texts and justify their answers.

Table 2. Typology of Media Texts Characters of the Soviet Film Fantasy of the 1950s – 1960s and Its American Screen Transformation

	Gender signs	Male and female characters
Descriptio n of the category	*Age of the character*	25-50 years of age (men), 25-30 years of age (women)
	Race of the character	White
	Appearance, clothing, constitution of the	Earth's male characters, as a rule, strong-built, dressed in costumes of cosmo/astronauts, people at the space station are dressed in traditional

	character	civilian clothes. Shapely Venus female inhabitants are dressed in something resembling swimsuits made of marine shells and fall trousers. The only woman-astronaut looks quite ordinary in outward appearance.
	Educational level, occupation of the character	The earthmen, apparently, have higher education. The Venus females – spontaneous.
	Marital status of the character	The earth dwellers are married or single. The Venus females, apparently, do not need men…
	Social position of the character	The earth dwellers are astronauts, research scientists. The Venus females seem to live in the primitive-communal system.
	Character traits	Strength, inventiveness, energy, optimism, boldness, purposefulness (earth characters). Beauty, purposefulness, mystical capabilities, vindictiveness, religiosity (Venus characters)
	Value system (ideological, religious, etc.) of the character	Patriotic, communist values (Soviet characters), pragmatic, bourgeois values (western characters), religious values (Venus characters).
	Acts of the character, his/her methods of the conflict resolution	Acts of the characters depend on the development of the media text plot. Right after the landing on Venus the earth characters demonstrate their best professional qualities. The Venus characters show their ability to cause spontaneous storms trying to resolve the conflict with the aliens who killed their god (pterodactyl) with their help.

It is also possible to use the iconographical analysis of a typical scene of media texts by means of Table 3.

Table 3. Typical Iconographical Scene Codes in Media Texts of the 1950s – 1960s and Their American Screen Transformation

Conventional codes of a typical scene in media texts	Visual characteristics of these codes manifested in media texts
Habitat of characters	They show only the characters' habitat in the space – at the station and on shipboard: control cabins with panel boards, compartments, mess rooms, berths. Everything corresponds to the technology of the 1960s though the action takes place in the distant future.
Space stations and rockets	Outwardly they look rather ingenious, especially the space stations (there is a version that S. Kubrick used this design in his fantastic film *2001: A Space Odyssey*, 1969).
Venus	Something resembling a petrous semi-desert with fleshy plants like cactuses, with dinosaurs of various sizes, the sea, gross vegetation and manifold underwater world. In P. Bogdanovich's version Venus is populated by half-naked sex-appealing blond sirens that use telepathic communication and mystical faculty.

In the last decade the activities of media teachers of different countries are being consolidated due to the usage of the generalized scheme of key concepts of media education given below (Table 4) which is based on the works of C. Bazalgette, [Bazalgette, 1995, p. 48], J. Bowker [Bowker, 1991] and A. Hart [Hart, 1997, p. 202].

Table 4. Key Concepts of Media Education

№	*Kew question:*	*Key concepts of media education*
1	Who is communicating what and why?	Media Agencies
2	What type of text is it?	Media Categories
3	How is the text produced?	Media Technologies
4	How do we know what the text means?	Media Languages
5	How does the text present its subject?	Media Representations
6	Who receives the text, and what sense do they make of it?	Media Audiences

As a result, depending on these key concepts and the viewed and studied material students can build a generalized structure of stereotypes characteristic of the Soviet film fantasy of the 1950s – 1960s and its American screen transformation.

The Stereotypes Structure of the Soviet Film Fantasy of the 1950s – 1960s and Its American Screen Transformation

Historical period, scene, genre: relatively far future, the USSR, the USA, Venus. Genre: space sci-fi adventure film. Thematic examples: 'Planet of Storms' (1961), 'Voyage to the Prehistoric Planet' (1965), 'Voyage to the Planet of Prehistoric Women' (1968).

Setting, household objects: functional habitat and household objects of the earthmen, unitized structure of the space objects – bases, cabins and compartments of space crafts. The Venus dwellers have no possessions. They are environed by fleshy plants resembling cactuses, dinosaurs of various sizes, the sea (the underwater world of Venus is rather manifold).

Representation of reality: life of the earthmen (predominantly, astronauts) is shown, as a rule, relatively verisimilarly and always positively. The Venus dwellers are every time presented with some mystical gauze (visual and musical). Venusian dinosaurs and the carnivorous flower behave rather aggressively and incessantly attack the astronauts.

Characters, their values, ideas, morality, clothing, constitution, lexicon, mime, gestures: among the earth dwellers there are no negative characters but their values depend on whether it is a Soviet film ('Planet of Storms') or its American versions. In the Soviet version USSR astronauts propagate communist values and friendly mutual assistance; in the American ones the western astronauts are pragmatists to the backbone. The American professor from 'Planet of Storms' is at first an earnest and consistent pragmatist but after the Russians pull him out of the fire he begins to value the significance of friendship and mutual assistance. The Venusian females in P. Bogdanovich's version have mystical and religious values.

The male characters, as a rule, have a strong constitution and are dressed in space costumes and are presented in the positive way: they are purposeful, active scientists and explorers with a commercial lexicon, restrained gestures and facial expressions. Certainly, the characters of the personages are given only in outline, in all the cases without any penetration into their psychology. All the characters speak (for the convenience of the target language audience) either only Russian or only English. However, in the American versions the astronaut who became a Frenchman pronounces the word **voilà.**

A special character – "crazy robot 'Iron John' is the envy of Hollywood cinematographers (a real articulated robot actually plays in the film – you won't meet anything like that even in American movies of the 1940s-1960s!" [Kharitonov, 2003].

Significant change in the plot of the media text and the characters' life: the earthmen land on the surface of Venus after a preliminary preparation and discussing their action plan.

Incipient problem: because of the aliens attacks (dinosaurs and the carnivorous flower), volcanic eruptions the lives of the positive characters are under the threat.

Search for solutions to the problem: a struggle of the positive characters with aggressive alien creatures and the elements (with the help of the robot and go-anywhere vehicle and without).

Problem solution: killing of the aggressive Venusian creatures, overcoming the aftereffects of the raging elements (caused by sex-appealing Venusian females in P. Bogdanovich's version), and a successful flight of the astronauts back home…

Students can make a more detailed splitting of the media texts into subject units using Table 5 (see the Appendix).

Conclusions

The principal result of the media education lesson is not only the audience's comprehension of the historical-political, social-cultural contexts and mechanism of propagandist stereotypes formation in sci-fi space movies in the USSR and the USA, but also the audience's media perception, analytical and interpretation skills, development of critical thinking.

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Filmography

The Heavens Call. USSR, 1959. Dovzhenko Film Studios. Film premiere: September 12, 1959.

Film Directors: A. Kozyr, M. Karyukov. Screenwriters: E. Pomeschikov, A. Sazonov, M. Karykov. Cameraman N. Kultchitsky. Composer Y. Maytus. Art director Y. Shvets. Actors: I. Pereversev, A. Shvorin, K. Bartashevitch, G. Tonuts, V. Chernyak and others.

Battle Beyond the Sun. USA, 1962.

Film director Francis Ford Coppola (under the pseudonym Thomas Colchart).

Actors: L. Barrett, F. Farley and the actors from the film *The Heavens Call*.

American version of the film *The Heavens Call* (1959).

Planet of Storms. USSR, 1961. Leningrad Film Studio of Science Films. Film premiere: April 14, 1962.

Film director Pavel Klushantsev. Scriptwriters: A. Kazantsev, P. Klushantsev. Cameraman Klimov. Composers: J. Admoni, A. Tchernov. Art directors: V. Aleksandrov, M. Tsybasov.

Actors: V. Yemeljanov, G. Vernov, G. Zhzhenov, K. Ignatova, Y. Sarantsev, G. Tajch and others.

Voyage to the Prehistoric Planet. USA, 1965 (the first American version of the film *Planet of Storms*). Film premiere in the USA – August 1, 1965.

Film director and scriptwriter Curtis Harrington (under the pseudonym John Sebastian). Producers: G. Edwards, R. Corman. The cameraman of the American additional scenes V. Lapenieks. Actors: B. Rathbone, F. Domergue, the leading actors from *Planet of Storms* under Americanized pseudonyms (except for K. Ignatova).

Voyage to the Planet of Prehistoric Women. USA, 1968 (the second American version of the film *Planet of Storms*).

Film director Peter Bogdanovich. Producers: Norman D. Wells, R. Corman. Scriptwriter H. Ney. The cameraman of the American additional scenes F. Olsen. Actors: M. Van Doren, M. Marr, P. Lee, the leading actors from *Planet of Storms* under Americanized pseudonyms (except for K. Ignatova).

Aknowledgment

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Appendix

Questions for the hermeneutic analysis of media stereotypes in Soviet sci-fi films of the 1950s-1960s and their American screen transformation in media studies with university students [Berger, 2005; Fedorov, 2004, pp. 43-51; Fedorov, 2005; Fedorov, 2006, pp. 175-228; Buckingham, 2003, pp. 54-60, Silverblatt, 2001, pp. 107-108 and el.]:

Media agencies:

Who creates media texts? Who is responsible for creating media texts? What is the purpose of creating media texts? Does the creating of media texts involve some implicit function?

What is the route of a media text – from the author's idea to the audience?

What is the key objective of the media text? To what extent is this objective attained? What feedback from the audience do the creators expect? Does the media text answer the suggested questions or do they remain unanswered? Who supervises the production and distribution of media texts?

Could you name stereotyped functions of a media agency (in this case – in the film industry)?

Media/media text categories:

Are there any other ways of classifying media texts except for genre? If yes, what are they?

What is the difference between live-action (fictional) and documentary media texts?

How do conventions and codes function in these sci-fi media texts?

Is here a predictable genre formula? How does your understanding of this formula contribute to your perception of this media text?

What is the function of the genre formula/composition of a media text?

How do media text genres affect cultural relations and values, cultural mythology, somebody's outlook?

Is it possible to trace the evolution of some definite genres, subjects?

What do these genre/subject alterations tell of the cultural transformations in the society?

What stereotyped plots, conventions are characteristic of definite genres/topics?

What does the introduction tell us about the media text? Does it predict the following events and topics of the media text? What is the effect produced by the introduction on the media text?

Could you define the stereotypes of introductions for stereotyped genres/subjects of sci-fi films about the outer space?

Media technologies:

How do technologies affect media production?

In what way can the stereotype character of technological solutions become apparent in these media texts?

Media languages:

Why did the authors of the media text construct this or that scene in this particular way?

Why are certain objects (including the characters' clothes, etc.) depicted exactly so? What do these objects tell us about the characters, their life style, and their attitude to each other?

What is the role of dialogues, the characters' language/speech in the plot development?

Who relates the events in the scene of the media text? (Who is the narrator?)

How are people and objects shown in this or that scene? Are there moments in the media text when the implied viewpoint promotes the feeling of danger or surprise?

What is the role of lighting, sound, and music in the media text?

Can there be stereotypes of artistic representation in a media text? If yes, where particularly do they become apparent in these films?

Can there be stereotypes of the sound solution in a media text? If yes, where particularly do they become apparent in sci-fi films?

Could you describe stereotypes of visual codes of the fantasy genre about space (space opera)?

Media representations:

Is there a specific world outlook in media texts? Are there moral or political values?

How can the media sharpen social, political contradictions or, vice versa, facilitate their solution?

How do the media represent certain social groups? Are these representations accurate indeed? What political, social and cultural stereotypes are reflected in these sci-fi films?

What did the authors include in (exclude from) these media texts? Why?

How do they represent in these media texts: class, gender, life on a different planet, etc.?

What are the key episodes/scenes of the media texts? Why do you consider them so important?

What was selected to make such a shot, do you think? What is the correlation between various subjects that we see in the picture?

Is there an opportunity to insert additional scenes in the media text, do you think? If yes, what scenes? Where exactly can they be added in the media text?

What changes in the character and situation representation contribute to the action development in the media text?

In what scenes and in what way are the conflicts revealed in the media text?

Whom does the author sympathize with? How does he make the audience realize it? Why did you come to this conclusion?

Are there scenes of violence in the media text? If yes, how do they differ from the representation of violence in other media texts familiar to you?

Are there any events in the media text which mirror each other?

Could this story finish earlier? What would have changed in our perception of the media text then? What is the significance of the actual dénouement of the media text?

Media audiences:

What is the target audience of the media text? Is it addressed to one or many types of audiences?

How does the choice of the audience affect the strategy, style and the plot of the media texts?

How do the strategy, style and the plot affect the audience's comprehension of them?

What stands for the primary/target audience in media production? How do the media attempt to affect it? What assumption of the audience do the media producers have? What characters does this or that agency want to associate you with? What ideology/philosophy do these characters advocate?

Why does the audience accept some stereotyped media representations as true and reject the others as false? What was the reaction of the audience of the 1960s on these media texts, do you think?

Can there be different interpretations of stereotyped media texts and their characters? Or does the stereotype character initially suggest similar interpretations of media texts?

Do the stereotyped media representations affect our opinion of certain social groups or problems?

What social groups are more liable to influence of media stereotypes? Why?

Is it possible to get rid of the influence of media stereotypes on the society? Give your arguments.

What types of enjoyment does the audience derive from media texts? What values, experience or perspectives are accepted by the audience? Do these common values, experience or perspectives affect the audience's comprehension and interpretation of media texts?

What is the role of gender, social status, age and ethnic origin in the audience's media perception?

How, in what way do we comprehend a media text? How can media information affect our decisions? How does your life experience influence your interpretation of media texts?

How (wherefore) does the audience usually choose/purchase media texts, in your opinion? What helps you choose a media text when you are going to read/watch/listen to a media text? What are the reasons for the popularity of the hits with the audience of late (genre, subject, the system of emotional jump, usage of mythology, happy end, reckoning on maximum coverage of the audience's media preferences, etc.)

How is the audience' interest in the narrative of a media text supported and encouraged?

Can you see how our attention grows from episode to episode?

What aspects (political, social, moral, philosophical, artistic, etc.) should be taken into account when appraising media texts?

What is the typology of the media audience? What typical indicators of media preferences can help one differentiate the audiences?

What skills should one possess to properly analyze media texts?

Table 5. Comparative Plot Structure Analysis of the Basic Parts of the Film 'Planet of Storms' (1961) and Its American Screen Transformation

Basic parts of the plot	Planet of Storms. USSR, 1961	Voyage to the Prehistoric Planet. USA, 1965	Voyage to the Planet of Prehistoric Women. USA, 1968
1	**Prologue: the report of TASS on the Soviet spaceships flight to Venus. One of three Soviet spaceships on the way to Venus suffers a wreck catastrophe and is lost …**	**Prologue. The American space station. The spaceship is lost after its collision with an asteroid.**	**Prologue: the chronicle of outer-space flights accompanied by the speaker's text. The information about the failure of the maiden flight from the Earth to Venus in 1998: the spaceship was lost. Half a year later…**
2	The crews of the remaining two vessels decide to land on the surface of Venus. Takeoff and landing on Venus of the first spaceship in a special capsule (two astronauts and a robot). The Venus landscape – a stony surface, igneous rocks, water, plants resembling cactuses.	The crew **of the American spaceship and the administration of the space flight-control center** consider a possibility of landing on Venus. Some members of the crew (two astronauts and a robot) land on the surface of Venus. The Venus landscape – a stony surface, igneous rocks, water, plants resembling cactuses.	**The American space flight-control center 'Marcia'.** Takeoff and landing on Venus of the first spaceship (two astronauts and a robot). The Venus landscape – a stony surface, igneous rocks, water, plants resembling cactuses.
3	The contact with the first crew is lost. The second spaceship with three astronauts decides to land on Venus. Only one astronaut remains on the Venus orbit – Masha.	The contact with the first crew is lost. The second spaceship with three astronauts decides to land on Venus. Only one astronaut remains on the Venus orbit – Marsha.	Following the first crew the second spaceship with three astronauts decides to land on Venus. **All the members of the crews are men, there are no women aboard**.
4	The second spaceship lands on the Venus surface. The astronauts hear odd howling sounds.	The second spaceship lands on the Venus surface. The astronauts hear odd howling sounds.	The crew of the first spaceship is attacked by dinosaurs of the human height. The astronauts defend themselves by shooting.
5	Landing of the second crew of the astronauts on the surface. Something like a huge carnivorous flower with tentacles tries to capture one of the astronauts. The rest of the astronauts manage to rescue him.	Landing of the second crew of the astronauts on the surface. Something like a huge carnivorous flower with tentacles tries to capture one of the astronauts. The rest of the astronauts manage to rescue him.	The second spaceship lands on the Venus surface. The astronauts hear odd howling sounds.
6	The crew of the first spaceship is attacked by dinosaurs of the human height. The astronauts defend themselves by shooting.	The crew of the first spaceship is attacked by dinosaurs of the human height. The astronauts defend themselves by shooting.	Landing of the second crew of the astronauts on the surface. Something like a huge carnivorous flower with tentacles tries to capture one of the astronauts. The rest of the

			astronauts manage to rescue him.
7	The crew of the second spaceship starts out to search for the first crew on the air-cushion go-anywhere vehicle. They come across a gigantic dinosaur on their way and take its blood sample.	The crew of the second spaceship starts out to search for the first crew on the air-cushion go-anywhere vehicle. They come across a gigantic dinosaur on their way and take its blood sample.	The crew of the second spaceship starts out to search for the first crew on the air-cushion go-anywhere vehicle. **They come across a gigantic dinosaur on their way, but they pass it by – they should not be sidetracked from the purpose….**
8	The crew of the first spaceship falls ill with a fever because of the damaged costumes. It starts raining. The astronauts and the robot hide themselves in a cave.	The crew of the first spaceship falls ill with a fever because of the damaged costumes. It starts raining. The astronauts and the robot hide themselves in a cave.	The crew of the first spaceship falls ill with a fever because of the damaged costumes. It starts raining. The astronauts and the robot hide themselves in a cave.
9	The captain of the second spaceship radios form the cabin of the go-anywhere vehicle the command to the robot: to give medicines to the astronauts. The robot executes the command.	The captain of the second spaceship radios form the cabin of the go-anywhere vehicle the command to the robot: to give medicines to the astronauts. The robot executes the command.	The crew of the spaceship hears strange sounds…
10	A flying reptile attacks the go-anywhere vehicle. The astronauts shoot at the pterodactyl. The go-anywhere vehicle sinks into the sea.	A flying reptile attacks the go-anywhere vehicle. The astronauts shoot at the pterodactyl.	**Young half-naked blondes sleep on the Venus sea coast. Then they wake up… they communicate non-verbally – by telepathy.**
11	**Astronaut Masha who is on the Venus orbit reflects on how to act: whether to stay or to fly in search of her colleagues. From the Earth comes the command to stay on the orbit.**	**Astronaut Marsha who is on the Venus orbit tries to contact the astronauts. Then she negotiates with the administration of the space station.**	The crew of the go-anywhere vehicle discusses the possibility of life on other planets and the existence of extra-terrestrial civilizations.
12	The astronauts of the second spaceship discover an octopus, a sculpture of a dragon with a ruby eye, and a rock in a cave underwater.	The go-anywhere vehicle sinks into the sea. The astronauts of the second spaceship discover an octopus, a sculpture of a dragon with a ruby eye, and a rock in a cave underwater.	**The blonds sail on the sea waves, catch fish by hand, and eat them straight away**… A flying reptile appears in the sky…
13	The astronauts of the first spaceship recovered. **The robot switches on its radio – American jazz sounds.**	The astronauts of the first spaceship recovered.	The captain of the second spaceship radios from the cabin of the go-anywhere vehicle the command to the robot: to give medicines to the astronauts. The robot executes the command.
14	The go-anywhere vehicle gets ashore. The astronauts light a campfire and discuss the possibility of life on other planets and the existence of extra-terrestrial civilizations.	The go-anywhere vehicle gets ashore. The astronauts light a campfire and discuss the possibility of life on other planets and the existence of extra-terrestrial civilizations.	A flying reptile appears in the sky… It attacks the go-anywhere vehicle. The astronauts shoot at the pterodactyl. The go-anywhere vehicle sinks into the sea.
15	The crew of the first spaceship fetches up at the flow of igneous volcanic longwall. The astronauts climb onto the robot for it to carry them to a safe place. The robot starts to overheat and tries to throw off its riders. They manage to switch it off.	The crew of the first spaceship fetches up at the flow of igneous volcanic longwall. The astronauts climb onto the robot for it to carry them to a safe place. The robot starts to overheat and tries to throw off its riders. They manage to switch it off.	**The blonds see the dead flying reptile ashore. It happens to be their Godhood. The blonds are determined to take revenge for their killed God.**
16	The crew of the go-anywhere vehicle rescues the astronauts. The robot perishes in the burning	The crew of the go-anywhere vehicle rescues the astronauts. The robot perishes in the burning	The astronauts of the second spaceship discover a sculpture of a dragon with a ruby eye and a

The Hermeneutical Analysis of the Soviet Fantasy Genre of the 1950s – 1960s and Its American Screen Transformation in Media Studies in a Student Audience

71

	longwall.	longwall.	rock in a cave underwater.
17	The astronauts have a short talk. **One can hear a bravura Soviet song about the planet of storms.**	The astronauts have a short talk.	**The blonds mourn over the pterodactyl in front of its stone sculpture.**
18	The go-anywhere vehicle approaches the spaceship. The astronauts listen to Masha's radiogram in the spaceship. They suspect that she violated the order and decided to land on Venus.	The go-anywhere vehicle approaches the spaceship. The astronauts listen to Marsha's radiogram in the spaceship. They suspect that she violated the order and decided to land on Venus.	One of the astronauts sees an octopus underwater. **Two blondes watch it all from their hiding place unobserved.**
19	An earthquake and rain start. Masha radios that she is still on the orbit.	An earthquake and rain start. Marsha radios that she is still on the orbit.	**The blonds bury the pterodactyl in the sea. They learn that some odd creatures in strange costumes and headpieces were noticed underwater.**
20	One of the astronauts incidentally discovers a female bas-relief in the cracked rock (found by him earlier underwater).	One of the astronauts incidentally discovers a female bas-relief in the cracked rock (found by him earlier underwater).	The go-anywhere vehicle gets ashore. The astronauts light a campfire and talk about extra-terrestrial civilizations.
21	The space rocket with the astronauts flies away.	The space rocket with the astronauts flies away.	**The blonds seeking revenge use their magic to cause a volcanic eruption.**
22	**The camera shows the dull Venus surface. Unexpectedly a reflection of a young woman similar to the image in the stone bas-relief discovered by the astronauts appears in the water. Mysterious music sounds…**	**The camera shows the dull Venus surface. Unexpectedly a reflection of a young woman similar to the image in the stone bas-relief discovered by the astronauts appears in the water. Mysterious music sounds…**	The recovered crew of the first spaceship fetches up at the flow of igneous volcanic longwall. The astronauts climb onto the robot for it to carry them to a safe place. The robot starts to overheat and tries to throw off its riders. They manage to switch it off.
23		**Epilogue. The voice-over sounds.**	The crew of the go-anywhere vehicle rescues the astronauts. The robot perishes in the burning longwall.
24			The astronauts have a short talk.
25			**Again the blonds sleeping on the seashore. Having woken up they discover the remains of the robot.**
26			The go-anywhere vehicle approaches the spaceship.
27			**The blonds pray and sand rain on the aliens to kill them.**
28			One of the astronauts incidentally discovers a female bas-relief in the cracked rock (found by him earlier underwater).
29			The space rocket with the astronauts flies away. **The blonds follow it with their eyes.**
30			**Having realized the uselessness of the former godhood that failed to kill the aliens with the longwall and rain the blonds**

			destroy the sculpture of the dragon and replace it by the remains of the robot – their new godhood.
31			Epilogue – an astronaut's monologue.