Whose Future? *Star Wars, Alien,* and *Blade Runner*

The science fiction film, as a construction somewhat removed from everyday reality, is a privileged vehicle for the presentation of ideology. Because it is less concerned than other genres with the surface structure of social reality, science fiction can pay more attention to the deep structure of what is and what ought to be. In practice, this means that science fiction films vividly embody ideological positions, and that comparing science fiction films of the same era becomes an analysis of conflicting social visions. Such visions cannot, however, be reduced to a simple, discursive message. Instead, the total semiotic output of a film—images, sounds, textures, relationships—is a carrier of ideology.

As a test of this hypothesis, consider three popular films from the years around 1980: *Star Wars* (1977), *Alien* (1979), and *Blade Runner* (1982).[1] These films have much in common. All three are key moments in the renaissance of science fiction film stretching from the late 1970s to the present. And all three films are renowned for the quality of their visual design and special effects. However, *Star Wars* creates an ideologically conservative future, whereas *Alien* and *Blade Runner* create futures linked to liberal and socially critical ideas.

What factors account for *Star Wars'* overwhelming success with the public? Certainly the film's narrative provides a partial answer. *Star Wars* is a modern quest narrative, blending such sources as Arthurian legend, *Paradise Lost, Lord of the Rings,* the Western, *The Wizard of Oz,* and the meta-discourse of Joseph Campbell's *The Hero with a Thousand Faces.*[2] Young, naive Luke Skywalker sets out on an adventure both physical and spiritual, which involves saving the princess, defeating the evil Empire, and establishing a more just government. The story has a mythic or fairy-tale dimension, but also a lightness of tone; Luke (Mark Hamill), Princess Leia (Carrie Fisher), and Han Solo (Harrison Ford) wisecrack their way through difficult situations. There are some weak points to the narrative. One would be a problem with character development, particularly apparent in the minor roles—e.g., Uncle Owen and Aunt Beru. Another would be the lack of emotional response to destruction of an entire inhabited planet! (Wyatt 609-10) However, the quest narrative of *Star Wars* has proved sufficiently compelling and resilient to support two film sequels (with more in process), numerous authorized novels, and a great deal of fan activity.

A second explanation is that *Star Wars* owes much of its popularity to a richness of audiovisual invention that is rare in science fiction or any other genre. Space ships, space wars, planetary ecology, alien beings (not one species of intelligent aliens, but perhaps a dozen)—George Lucas and his collaborators deserve much credit for creating such a sweeping and detailed science fiction universe. John J. Pierce calls this level of invention "world

creation," and notes that it is a prized aspect of science fiction novels but hard to find in science fiction films. Such worldbuilding requires a sweeping imagination that is also disciplined and thorough (Pierce 201, 209). An example from *Star Wars* would be the distinctively realized look, sound, and behavior of the two droids, R2D2 and C3Pio. These two robots are original, detailed, and consistent; they may be the most interesting characters in the film. The created world in *Star Wars* is both packed with audiovisual information and given an imperfect, lived-in quality. For example, the sound effects generally start from complex natural sounds (e.g., a movie projector as the basis for the hum of the light sabers) rather than simpler, cleaner synthetic audio. Ben Burtt, the film's sound designer, explains that "The sounds of the real world are complicated and kind of dirty. They simply cannot be duplicated on a synthesizer" (Pollock 178).

John Seabrook, writing in the *New Yorker*, gives a more technical explanation of *Star Wars'* success. According to Seabrook, the film's "secret" is its control of the kinetic aspects of movie-making: "The first *Star Wars* movie is like a two hour image of raw speed." Lucas is not a particularly gifted director of actors, but his control of "editing and pace" creates a feeling of "pure kinetic energy which has become a part of the world's visual imagination." "Every time a studio executive tells a writer that his piercing and true story needs an "action beat" every ten minutes, the writer has George Lucas to thank" (45, 50). This explanation seems to me far too simplistic. It leaves out *Star Wars'* most original use of kinetic filmmaking, which is genre-based: science fiction film can use the whole film frame to invent new kinds of motion. Lucas is very good at doing this, and he is a fine editor, but he does not deserve credit for singlehandedly changing the emphasis of American cinema. To take just one example from among Lucas's contemporaries, William Friedkin in *The French Connection* (1971) and *The Exorcist* (1973) is every bit as visual and kinetic as George Lucas in *Star Wars.* Yet no one would posit Friedkin as the sole inventor of contemporary film style. The increased emphasis on action and pace is undoubtedly a group creation, influenced as much by television (including commercials) as by film.

Star Wars is conservative, though not extreme right wing or Fascist, in its ideological underpinnings. Men are active heroes, Princess Leia is a damsel in distress, good and evil are clearly separated, and Luke is guided by the benevolent father figure Obiwan Kenobi. The film is very consciously a break from the anti-heroes and anti-genres of many films of the early 1970s. According to Dale Pollock's biography of Lucas, the film's return to family entertainment and traditional morality was a conscious decision by its writer-director.

> Lucas wanted to present positive values to the audience. In the 1970s traditional religion was out of fashion and the family structure was disintegrating. There was no moral anchor. Lucas remembered how protected he had felt growing up in the cocoonlike culture of the 1950s, a feeling he wanted to communicate in *Star Wars.* (143)

Pollock lists the values of the film as "Hard work, self-sacrifice, friendship, loyalty, and a commitment to a higher purpose." Lucas himself comments, "I mean, there's a reason this film is so popular. It's not that I'm giving out propaganda nobody wants to hear" (140).

Star Wars has often been discussed as a harbinger of the renewed American conservatism of the Reagan presidency. It is certainly part of the move toward simple, optimistic genre films in the late 1970s. The clean-cut, well-spoken White youths of the film seem to come out of an idealized version of the 1950s, and the clear division between good and evil governments suggests the Cold War. Indeed, some phrases borrowed from the film became key ideological points of the Reagan years: "Star Wars" (meaning a futuristic missile defense system), "the Evil Empire" (meaning the Soviet Union). More recently, the name "Jedi Knights" was used by a U.S. Army group planning the Gulf War (Meyer 99). Lucas is not responsible for the uses politicians and governments make of his film. But the ease with which his ideas were put to political and military ends shows something about the Manichaean quality of the story.

Though *Star Wars* is part of a shift in film entertainment, away from socially critical work and toward optimistic genre films, that shift was neither simple nor complete. An alternate science fiction vision of the period can be analyzed in two films directed by Ridley

Scott, *Alien* and *Blade Runner*. Both films are developments on George Lucas's combination of mythic storytelling and detailed "world creation" of the future in *Star Wars*. Ridley Scott is excellently suited for this type of science fiction filmmaking, because he is both a gifted director and a world-class art director.[3] In *Alien*, Scott takes on one part of the *Star Wars* legacy by creating an intricate and haunting portrait of a starship—the ancient *Nostromo*. He also develops a stunning variant on a 1950s science fiction cliche—the malevolent alien creature. In *Blade Runner*, Scott puts together a more complex version of *Star Wars*' worldbuilding project by creating a physically and emotionally convincing Los Angeles of the year 2019. *Blade Runner*, like *Alien*, draws on other influences as well, e.g., the look of 1940s *film noir* and the odd science fiction novels of Philip K. Dick.

The narrative premise of *Alien* is eminently simple: the monster attacks. Robbie Robertson has shown that the alien being with its savage survival logic has antecedents in science fiction literature, for example in the work of A.E. Van Vogt (175-76). Other antecedents would be science fiction films of the 1950s, including the Japanese *Godzilla*. Looking to mythology, the story relates to myths of the dragon, of the sea monster, of Jonah and the whale. In each case, human heroes are threatened by powerful, mysterious creatures which exaggerate the traits of known animals. In *Alien*, the monster designed by Surrealist artist H.R. Giger is reptilian, and thus related to fear of snakes, dinosaurs, and sea creatures.

Though simple, the premise of *Alien* is also trans-generic, a blend of science fiction and horror. One borrowing from the traditional horror film is a stretched-out anticipation of the monster's attack. Several scenes use silence and false cues to play with the moment of attack; this might be called the "haunted house" motif of horror film. As Scott Bukatman notes, *Alien* also presents a more contemporary (perhaps Postmodern) horror motif: the link between the monster and the human body (262-67). The alien creature in *Alien* does not merely kill humans, it uses them as hosts for a process of reproduction. This is terrifyingly shown in the scene where a small alien bursts from an astronaut's chest, killing him as a byproduct of "birth." Like the vampire, the werewolf, the zombie, the alien is thus a threat to the integrity of the human body. But in the 1979 film, the threat is more visceral, the body more subject to transformation than in classic horror films. The eruption of an alien from a human body could be seen as a disguised version of "monstrous" processes that are normally hidden, such as birth and sexuality.

Alien is unlike *Star Wars* and *Blade Runner* in that it deals with a restricted space. The main set is the human spaceship, with a few minutes spent on an uninhabited planet and in the alien ship. In the limited environment of the *Nostromo*, Ridley Scott and his collaborators present in a matter-of-fact way the organization and technology which make the ship work. Hibernation coffins, hospital room, airlock, gallery, control room, escape module, ship-controlling computer: all are presented simply and effectively. The ship also has a variety of hidden or "waste" spaces—vents, crawlways, corridors—and this becomes important in fighting a creature which exists apart from human spatial and conceptual logic. A particularly useful future technology invented by Scott and crew is a motion sensor that can indicate the distance of a moving object but not the direction or location.

In *Star Wars* the future is clean (though not shiny and new), wholesome, and morally clear. *Alien* reverses all three points. The starship in *Alien* is dank, dark, and messy. It is an old freighter owned by a large corporation, and therefore is maintained for utility rather than pride (compare the Millenium Falcon, *Star Wars*' version of a beloved hot rod). The unknown planet is a fiercely inhospitable environment, with strong winds and swirling gas clouds. The alien ship's scariest feature is an uncanny mixture of organic and inorganic forms. The walls and corridors of the ship seem also to be the skeleton of an organic creature, with spines and ribs and dripping mucous. Threat-as-body is thus part of the film's visual design in ways that go beyond the blatant threat of the monster itself.

Discussion of the ideological differences between *Star Wars* and *Alien* requires that we return for a moment to George Lucas's film. I have labeled *Star Wars* conservative, but it does present itself as a rebellious act. The rebels of the story have risen up against an oppressive Empire. Further, the main representative of the Empire is Darth Vader, a lightly

disguised version of "Dark Father." So, *Star Wars* is a revolt against the father. However, the Rebel Alliance itself seems to be hierarchical and perhaps even authoritarian; it celebrates victory with an ending scene weirdly quoted from Leni Riefenstahl.[4] One should also remember that *Star Wars*' rebellion in no way challenges gender, race, or class relations. White male humans are "naturally" in positions of authority. The boy Luke grows up and takes his place as a responsible male leader. As Robin Wood says, the film's dominant tone is reassurance; things change so that they can return to a comfortable norm (162-65).

Alien presents a more significant challenge to authority. In this film the "Company," boss and organizer of the crew, turns out to be an evil force, the malevolent twin of the monster. The Company is represented on board by "Mother," the controlling computer; the nickname indicates the crew's dependence on the Company-programmed machine. The Company is also represented by Ash (Ian Holm), the science officer, who (unknown to other crew members) is an android. Ash's secret orders are to capture and bring back the alien; the crew is expendable. These orders are based on the commercial and military potentials of the alien creature. The Company responds to profit, and puts little value on human life. Superficially, the theme is reminiscent of *The Poseidon Adventure* (1972), where the ship owners have neglected needed repairs and put passengers and crew at risk. But in *The Poseidon Adventure* this theme seems perfunctory, a way to start the action; the film concludes with a powerful defense of patriarchal authority. In *Alien*, on the other hand, the Company's action is part of a pervasive pattern of oppression and paranoia. The film sympathizes with the outsiders on the crew, the proletarian engine mechanics and the independent-minded Ripley (Sigourney Weaver).

Blade Runner is designed around two intersecting myths. First, there is the *film noir* detective fighting crime and corruption in the decaying city. The detective is a version of the medieval knight, someone who embodies right values in the struggle between good and evil.[5] A complication of *film noir* is that good and evil may be hard to ascertain in the modern city. Further, the damsel-in-distress may not want to be saved. A second mythic plot in *Blade Runner* involves four "replicants"—androids of superior strength and intelligence—who have made their way to earth. At one level, these replicants are the villains of the narrative. Deckard (Harrison Ford), the hero, is a "blade runner"—a specialized assassin hired to find and terminate replicants. But the replicants are also angels fallen to Earth; human-like beings with their own histories, needs, emotions, and morality. The link to angels is made explicit by a near-quote from William Blake uttered by Roy Batty (Rutger Hauer), leader of the replicants: "Fiery the Angels fell, while thunder roared around their shores, burning with the fires of Orc."[6]

As the conflict between the two myths suggests, Deckard's job as a blade runner is brought into question. Is he killing "skin jobs," i.e., non-human criminals? Or is he killing angels, i.e., human-like or more-than-human beings whose differences are to be respected? The film suggests that the replicants, despite differences of genesis and history, are emotionally and morally human. This point is made by the character of Rachael (Sean Young), a replicant who does not know her origins and is therefore completely human in behavior. It is reinforced when Roy Batty, who seems to be *Blade Runner*'s arch-villain, ultimately saves Deckard's life in a Christ-like gesture of compassion. The theme of android and human mixing and merging in unforeseen ways has its roots in the source novel for *Blade Runner*, Philip K. Dick's *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*

In visual design, *Blade Runner* catapults us not into an idealized 1950s, but into the darkness of 1940s *film noir*. Fashions are part retro-1940s, and part futuristic. The chiaroscuro lighting of *film noir* mixes with enormous electronic billboards of the future. The film is set in an overpopulated, highly polluted Los Angeles in the year 2019. The climate has changed drastically, so that it rains all the time (convenient for *film noir*). Smoke and smog mask the city, and many residents wear gas masks outdoors. Asians, Hispanics, Blacks and Eastern Europeans swarm the streets; most Caucasian Americans seem to have departed for off-world colonies. A paramilitary police force maintains order, and enormous corporate headquarters dominate the skyline. Clearly, this is not the best of all possible worlds.

Although *Star Wars* presents a dozen alien races, it assumes pre-eminence of humans. Both the Empire and the rebels are led by humans; most of the aliens are relegated to the "freak show" of the spacefarers' bar. Even Chewbacca, the one alien among the small group of heroes, is shown as Han Solo's sidekick. In this film, man is the measure of all things. *Blade Runner,* on the other hand, entertains ideas of "not-quite-human," "different-than-human," even "more-than-human." The elusive border between machine and human is shown visually in the scene where the replicant Pris (Darryl Hannah) hides among a bunch of animated toy figures maintained by the lonely J.R. Sebastian (William Sanderson). Sebastian's toys talk and move and seem to be emotionally attached to their owner. Though Pris can hide among the toys, she is different from them because of superior intelligence and strength plus an independent spirit, a will to live. In some ways replicants are superior to humans, not just to toys. But they are limited by a built-in four-year lifespan. Because of the short lifespan, replicants can be childlike at one moment, adult and philosophical the next (Morrison 3). The film ultimately affirms the validity of replicants as thinking, feeling beings, notably via the love affair between Deckard and Rachael. It thus makes an eloquent statement for acceptance of the Other.

Part II
Both *Alien* and *Blade Runner* project a future of oppressive institutions, and therefore continue the socially critical American cinema of *Chinatown* (1974), *Nashville* (1975), and *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (1976). They are far different in ideological hue from the optimistic, Norman Rockwellish vision of the future in *Star Wars.*7 The first part of this essay has presented an overview of the films' conflicting approaches. The second part turns from this general exposition to discuss one aspect of the science fiction film: sex.

Vivian Sobchack, in her fine essay "On the Virginity of Astronauts," suggests that the American science fiction film is characterized by an absence of women and sexuality. Astronauts are primarily male, they wear unisex coveralls and spacesuits, their environment is technological and asexual. But, says Sobchack, if the signifiers of women and sex have been omitted from the science fiction film on the surface level, they return in the deep (subconscious) layer. Space travel is often presented as a penetration; both spaceship and space itself are wombs; alien threats are often sexual, and female.

Before applying Sobchack's model to the three film examples, I would like to consider an exception to Sobchack which proves the rule. The prize-winning science fiction writer C.J. Cherryh (Carolyn J. Cherryh) has paid considerable attention to how sex and reproduction could be handled in starship-based cultures. For example, in a culture of family-operated merchant space ships, where everyone on board is likely to be blood kin, both sex and the reproduction of the culture are made possible by "dockside sleepovers." Cherryh sketches out a pattern of sexual exchange and conventions protecting the greater social good. One example of the controlling social conventions is that children take the mother's name and stay with the mother's ship. The remarkable thing about Cherryh's approach to a spacefaring culture is that almost no one, in science fiction novels or films, has considered similar questions.8

Let us return to our film examples. In *Star Wars* there simply is no sex. The society of the film is primarily male, or technologically neuter (the droids). The one prominent female character, Princess Leia, does not appear in sexual terms. According to Sobchack, Leia is "simultaneously protected and desexed by her social position (princesses are to fight for, not to sleep with) and by her acerbic and pragmatically critical attitude" (106). Dale Pollock quotes Marcia Lucas (ex-wife of George Lucas) as saying that *Star Wars* was conceptualized as a movie that would appeal to ten-year-old boys (142). *Star Wars* is a movie coming out of the latency period, a movie which elides the adult problem of sexuality. This is curiously confirmed by the eventual revelation in the *Star Wars* trilogy that Leia is Luke's sister.

Star Wars does not, however, strongly support Sobchack's observation that sexuality repressed on the conscious level will return in subconscious symbolism. The film is not

haunted by womb imagery or female monsters. Perhaps the pre-adolescent tone is so strong that it mutes such condensed or displaced signifiers. And, of course, audiences of all ages welcomed this tone, using it to escape current malaise and to return to a simpler, more conservative time. Only two scenes in *Star Wars* suggest to me the displaced sexuality described by Sobchack. First, there is an odd scene, peripheral to the main action, where several characters are caught in a disposal chute/compactor, and they are attacked by a tentacled creature. This scene, played for laughs in *Star Wars*, nevertheless presents the threat of bodily functions and unknown organic antagonists. It thus anticipates *Alien*. Second, in the final attack on the Death Star, the one-man fighters penetrating the sphere could certainly be a representation of human reproduction, with the combination of sexual and mechanical imagery recalling *Dr. Strangelove*.

Unlike *Star Wars, Alien* is very specifically about a female, sexual threat. The alien creature is associated with darkness, rounded spaces, eggs, slime. Its temple-like ship has doors in the shape of vaginas. The alien's offspring may be male and phallic (e.g., the thing which springs into life from a male astronaut's chest), but the original threat is female. This is made even more explicit in *Aliens* (1986), the sequel to *Alien*, where the human expedition confronts an enormous, egg-laying alien Queen.

In a reversal of the common practice of science fiction films, the protagonist in *Alien* is a female. Ripley, one of two female astronauts, is the toughest, most suspicious, most resourceful of the *Nostromo*'s crew. She, and not the captain or the male crew members, becomes the focus of audience hopes for human survival. Is this reversal incidental, or does it have important ideological consequences for the film? Sobchack notes that Ripley was originally scripted as a male, and that for most of the film "She is not marked as either a woman or sexual" (106). In other words, Ripley is an asexual astronaut among asexual astronauts. However, at the end of the film she strips down to her underwear (preparing for a mechanically aided hibernation), and becomes clearly and challengingly a human female. Sobchack comments as follows: "Ripley no longer represents a rational and asexual functioning subject, but an irrational, potent, sexual object—a woman, the truly threatening alien generally repressed by the male-conceived and dominated genre" (107). Here I partially disagree with Sobchack. I agree that this scene reveals the irrational and sexual side of the main character, but not that it suggests an equivalence with the alien monster. Rather, the revelation is that the primary conflict of *Alien* is not technological vs. primitive, or any variation on that theme, but rather species vs. species, irrational vs. irrational. The irrational side of Ripley's character is further brought out by her determination to save the cat—not a rational calculation, but a motherly instinct. The cat represents Ripley's animal nature, and her instinct for self-preservation and the preservation of those she loves.[9] In this film, such instincts are positive, whereas the rational calculations of the Company are shown as thoroughly negative. Ripley in her underwear is affirmed as a complex human individual, not presented as "the true threatening alien."

In *Blade Runner*, the representations of femaleness run all through the *mise en scène*. Los Angeles, 2019, is a dank, dark place, with smoke swirling and rain constantly falling. The *Nostromo* and the alien ship, both ancient and womblike, have as their equivalent an entire city. Only the occasional corporate headquarters (e.g., Tyrell Corporation) have the clean, clear lines of technological masculinity.

As noted earlier, *Blade Runner* combines elements of two male-oriented genres, science fiction and *film noir*. The combination is important to our current thread of discussion, because *film noir* commonly includes rather direct, though threatening, images of female sexuality, whereas science fiction represses such images. *Blade Runner* generally follows the *film noir* paradigm in presenting the three female replicants, Pris, Zhora (Joanna Cassidy), and Rachael. Zhora the snake-charmer has a threatening sexuality, and Pris, despite her childlike side, is threatening as well. Rachael, though she looks like the raven-haired fatal woman of *film noir*, is a little different. Raised in ignorance of her replicant status, she is a mediating character between the decaying human society and the new, artificially constructed super humans. The human hero Deckard's continuing love affair with Rachael is, despite

her mediating status, a break with *film noir* and science fiction convention and a major statement about diversity. *Blade Runner* is *film noir*/science fiction with the woman as alien *not repressed.*

This theme of acceptance of diversity receives an added twist via the Director's Cut of *Blade Runner,* released in 1992 and now the most readily available version of the film. In this re-edited version, Ridley Scott provides a clue that points to Deckard himself being a replicant. In an added scene, Deckard, seated at the piano in his apartment, has a brief vision of a unicorn moving through a natural landscape. This links up with a moment late in the film when Gaff (Edward James Olmos), another blade runner, leaves an origami of a unicorn in front of Deckard's door. The suggestion is that Gaff knows Deckard's visions because Deckard is programmed, Deckard is a replicant. From one point of view, the message of humanness being defined by behavior rather than by external categories gets lost here, because Deckard is now no different than Rachael. But another point of view would be that the audience's identification with Deckard in itself proves that humanness is not a matter of categories such as natural/synthetic birth (or racial, sexual, national, or political identity).

Blade Runner's theme of replicant as more-than-human brings with it some other sexual/ideological possibilities. One, unfortunately, is the possible connection between large, blond Roy Batty, played by Rutger Hauer, and the Nazi theory of an Aryan master race (Wood 187). Another, far more positive line of speculation, is that a more-than-human character can break sexual boundaries. Roy, stronger and smarter than a human, is a fiercely burning Blakean angel with a maximum four year life span. He overrides human cultural limits in a variety of ways, one of which seems to be bisexuality. He kisses his creator, Tyrell, fully on the lips, and his final duel with Deckard has a strong sexual as well as violent content. Significantly, after Roy saves Deckard and dies himself, the original release version of *Blade Runner* concludes with a voiceover of affirmation: "They just wanted what everyone else wanted. Answers to the basic questions: Who am I? Where did I come from? Where am I going?" A violent/sexual combat here melds into understanding and empathy.

Alien and *Blade Runner* are clearly descendents of *Star Wars,* works which build on the revelation that audiences would support mythic, world-creating science fiction films. But the two Ridley Scott films do not follow George Lucas's political line. Whereas *Star Wars* advocates a return to heroism and traditional morality, the Ridley Scott films show a distrust of authority and an openness to characters outside traditional definitions of heroism (e.g., Ripley and the replicants). When looked at together, these three films present a kind of debate about the (imagined) future. George Lucas sees the future as a revision of the past, as a chance to get basic moral precepts right this time. The legend of King Arthur can be replayed in a possible future. For Ridley Scott and his collaborators, on the other hand, the future provides a way to look at other issues: the place of women in society, the threat of an unexamined rationalism, the acceptance of the Other, the merging of humanity and technology. In simple terms, George Lucas is backward-looking and traditional, i.e., conservative. Ridley Scott is forward-looking and accepting of diversity, i.e., liberal. Audiences drawn to these films are thus, among other things, experiencing an ongoing political dialogue.

Peter Lev
Towson University

Notes

[1] Unless otherwise noted in the text, my analysis refers to the film *Star Wars,* not to the *Star Wars* trilogy. Similarly, I will be discussing the film *Alien,* and not its sequels, with any exceptions specifically noted in the text.

[2] On the literary roots of *Star Wars,* see Wyatt and Collins.

[3] See Sammon 71-75 for a description of how Ridley Scott's art direction skills transformed the script for *Blade Runner.*

[4] Every army presents medals with pomp and ceremony, but the music used here recalls *Triumph of the Will.*

[5] The connection between Raymond Chandler's literary detective and the chivalrous knight is outlined in Durham.

[6] The lines from Blake begin "Fiery the angels rose" (*America: A Prophecy,* lines 115-16). For interpretation of this near-quote, see Wood and Morrison.

[7] After writing these words, I learned that George Lucas collects Norman Rockwell's work! Rockwell's paintings hang prominently on the walls of the Skywalker Ranch, Lucas's business headquarters. See Seabrook 43.

[8] See, for example, Cherryh's 1982 novel *Merchanter's Luck.*

[9] Thanks to Rebecca Pauly for suggesting the importance of Jonesy the cat.

Works Cited

Bukatman, Scott. *Terminal Identity.* Durham: Duke UP, 1993.

Cherryh, C.J. *Merchanter's Luck.* New York: Daw, 1982.

Collins, Robert G. "*Star Wars*: The Pastiche of Myth and the Yearning for a Past Future." *Journal of Popular Culture* 11:1 (1977): 1-10.

Durham, Philip. *Down these mean streets a man must go.* Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1963.

Meyer, David S. "Star Wars, *Star Wars,* and American Political Culture." *Journal of Popular Culture* 26:2 (1992): 99-115.

Morrison, Rachela. "*Casablanca* meets *Star Wars*: The Blakean Dialectics of *Blade Runner.*" *Literature /Film Quarterly* 18:1: 2-10.

Pierce, John J. "Creative Synergy and the Art of World Creation." *Retrofitting Blade Runner.* Ed. Judith B. Kernan. Bowling Green: Bowling Green Popular Press, 1991.

Pollack, Dale. *Skywalking: The Life and Films of George Lucas.* Hollywood: Samuel French, 1990.

Robertson, Robbie. "The narrative sources of Ridley Scott's *Alien.*" *Cinema and Fiction: New Modes of Adapting, 1950-1990.* Ed. John Orr and Colin Nicholson. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1992.

Sammon, Paul M. *Future Noir: The Making of Blade Runner.* New York: HarperCollins, 1996.

Seabrook, John. "Why is the Force Still With Us?" *New Yorker* 6 January 1997.

Sobchack, Vivian. "On the Virginity of Astronauts." *Alien Zone.* Ed. Annette Kuhn. London: Verso, 1990.

Wood, Robin. *Hollywood from Vietnam to Reagan.* New York: Columbia UP, 1986.

Wyatt, David. "*Star Wars* and the Productions of Time." *Virginia Quarterly Review* 58 (1982): 600-15.