Upgraded Fantasy: Recreating SF Film
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Abstract
In filmmaking empirical logic is seen to give way to magical thinking in film and thus, sci-fi films become less popular while fantasy films gain popularity. With CGI-generated imagery gaining more and more ground both in cinema and television film making, SF seems to demise since it cannot produce visually new material. To counter this tendency, SF film must recreate itself given the new circumstances. Instead of relying on great special effects, lately, both cinema and television productions turn inside and focus on human qualities such as the mind, emotions, identity, and personality while spicing up the story through the narrative with the combination of traditional and CGI-generated imagery. In the process, SF reconsiders some of its conventions and thus reinvents itself. We propose to explore how SF film is recreated by means of close reading of Westworld (2016-) sci-fi series against definitions of the genre by Vivian Sobchack and Susan Sontag. The analysis suggests that given its new take on narrative, SF film continues to feed on the anxieties of the present world, and in the same time, by turning the eye to the workings of the mind, its moralistic and lightweight narrative changes as well. It recreates itself by finding the middle way between old approaches and innovations.

Keywords: SF film, SF series, conventions, Westworld