

The day the earth stood still – 1951 vs 2008

[Environment](#), [Earth](#)



“ The Day the Earth Stood Still” vs. “ The Day the Earth Stood Still”

From the 19th to the 20th century there have been many changes in film. Movies went from silent features in black and white, to color with surround sound, and now to digital 3D. One of the biggest changes occurred with special effects and the help of CGI (Computer Generated Images), which enhanced movie scenes and brought imagination to life. History has shown us that technology dictates where and how we watch movies, and it is continually evolving. In the 1950's, television started drawing people away from the movie theatres, until the introduction of technical innovations such as “ Cinerama, Cinemascope, and 3D, reversed the trend.” (Art Institute of Pittsburg Online)

Since then, digital technology has brought movies back into the living room once again, delivered on DVD to our HDTV's. These changes have had a huge impact on society, the way we view our lives, and the prospects of the future. “ The Day the Earth Stood Still” compares two versions of the same movie made 57 years apart: the original was produced in 1951, and the remake was made in 2008. The original movie is one of the first alien invasion movies ever made and has become one of the classic sci-fi thrillers of our time. The alien in this movie, Klatuu, comes to Earth to issue a dire warning about its inhabitants' aggressive nature.

He states that man's constant violent nature against one another has raised the attention of “ an alien species, which is now threatening to exterminate all of mankind.” (“ The Day the Earth Stood Still”) The premise of the 2008

movie is that humans are destroying earth at an escalating rate, so they have to die in order to save the planet. " If humans die, earth lives. If humans live, earth dies." With the melting of the polar ice caps and the threat of global warming, there are real-life consequences that give plausibility to this modern plot.

Klatuu requests a meeting with the leaders of all nations. In the older movie, this was redefined as " a meeting between the 2 super powers; the United States and Russia." In the early 1950's when this movie was produced, a meeting between the U. S. and Russia would be unthinkable. World War II had just ended and we were in the middle of the Cold War. McCarthyism was at its height and the paranoid fear of Soviet domination was an obsessive national past-time. The movie was influenced by the use of the atomic bomb and our wars against each other. In that time period, there was a test of the atomic bomb out in the Yucca Flats in New Mexico. It was believed that if one day these bombs could be strapped to rockets, it would destroy the earth. Unfortunately, there are still wars going on around the world and in our own back yard.

In the 2008 movie, the U. S. government sends a woman to represent the president and gives her full authority to act on his behalf. She immediately orders the use of restraints and with the aid of a lie-detector test attempts to extract information from the alien. In another over excessive show of force, she orders all military forces to attack and destroy the alien ship. Klatuu manages to escape through the use of mind control and a lengthy visual

display of electrical forces - alien style. In this part of the movie I found the special effects to be less than convincing.

Special effects were a very important part of the film remake, so the original story was modified in part to accommodate them. I noticed some of the differences in content are in the language and scenes. The 1951 version had more dialog and placed more emphasis on the meaning and lesson to be learned. Early era movies were more idealistic, with little to no objectionable content or language. They may have implied a situation, but didn't show anything explicit. The 1951 version had the clean-cut charm of an old "Leave it to Beaver" episode. The 2008 version had more violence and scenes that were highly graphic in nature. The close-up surgical procedures in this film are not atypical of many of today's shows and with the use of high density graphics, we get every gory detail.

Klatuu, comes to earth in human form in the 1951 movie, along with a robot that was obviously just a tall man in a rubber suit. In the newer movie, with the aid of special effects, he morphs from alien into human form right before our eyes. The robot in the newer movie is several stories high and much more compelling as an enforcer of peace for an entire planet.

The acting in the original movie seemed overly dramatized, which was a characteristic that was often used in the earlier films of this genre. Early attempts to simulate believable alien creatures and moving spaceships were crude at best. The first movie comes with a long list of revealing mistakes; wrinkles in metal and zippers in alien attire, while the space ship moving through the sky looked crude at best. The most obvious errors were in the

scenes that show the “ crowds running away in panic,” obviously created by speeding up the film. (Janson) In contrast, by 2008 special effects are widely used, portraying realistic action without the overdramatic characterization. Because special effects were not available during the earlier version, actors were much more athletic, usually performing their own stunts.

Another industry change that cannot be overlooked is budget. For example, the 1951 movie had an estimated budget of \$1, 200, 000, while the cost of the 2008 movie soared to \$80, 000, 000. This can be attributed in part to the cost of special effects, but we also have to consider that most of the earlier films were usually shorter in length than their modern counterparts. Another consideration for the rising cost in some of today’s movies is found in epic films which have crowd scenes that employ a very large number of actors at union wages.

In the final scene of both movies, Klatuu recognizes that the human race is worth saving after witnessing the heartfelt interactions between a woman and her young son. The story ends with Klatuu sacrificing himself to stop the planet’s destruction process and save the human race. This part of the story gives a human quality to the film.

In some ways, the old classic movies and today’s movies are the same. They all have a story line and are aimed at a select audience, whether it’s a particular age bracket, ethnicity, social status other special group. Some of the content in movies can also be related to one’s life, such as the relationship between mother and child, fear of the unknown, and the struggles between good and evil or the strong and the weak. Movies often

share a common theme about human nature and bring a message home to the audience that is relative to its time.

Since the making of silent films to the movies of today, the emphasis has been on entertainment, making it a favorite family pastime throughout the years. It has created a multi-billion dollar industry that serves its creators as well as the public, because it does more than just entertain. It also educates and informs, gives hope, happiness and inspiration, raises awareness in individuals and creates a higher consciousness among people of all origins.

As the movie industry gets older and wiser, it gets better at its craft. As it harnesses technology on all levels, we can look forward to future remakes of today's movies and the possibilities of tomorrow.