

Short Review: “Contact” (1997) by Dr. John L. Flynn



Contact (1997). Warner Brothers, color, 153 min. Director: Robert Zemeckis. Writer: Carl Sagan (novel & story), Ann Druyan, etc. Producers: Zemeckis and Steve Starkey. Cast: Jodie Foster, Jena Malone, Matthew McConaughey, David Morse, Tom Skerritt, and John Hurt.

Dr. Ellie Arroway (Foster) uses a radio telescope that scans the heavens to make contact with intelligent life elsewhere in the universe, but certain human forces, including her mentor (Skerritt) and boyfriend (McConaughey), try to take her discovery away. Later, when the aliens send a diagram of how to build a machine to allow humans to visit their civilization, Arroway makes the journey into the unknown and discovers something very personal about herself.

Thanks to Sagan’s novel, this is a serious SF film that is free from the usual look-out-here-comes-the-alien plot, though there is a subplot dealing with this real fear. “Contact,” the “2001” of its day, may cause you to think about the universe and our place in it in a totally different way.

Copyright 2016 by John L. Flynn, Ph.D.