



TEACHERS' NOTES

This study guide is aimed at students of GCSE and A' level Media Studies and GNVQ Media: Communication and Production. It looks at the 'Star Trek' phenomenon, conventions and development of the science fiction genre and the marketing of the film.

BEFORE VIEWING 'STAR TREK: FIRST CONTACT'

If possible students should view at least one of the 'Star Trek: The Next Generation' episodes (preferably 'Descent' Parts 1 & 2) listed in APPENDIX before starting this section.

SYNOPSIS

The Borg, a powerful race of advanced, cybernetic humanoids are losing their war with Starfleet in the the 24th Century. Led by the Borg Queen, they travel through time into earth's past to prevent 21st Century scientist Zefram Cochrane from developing his Warp Drive, thereby eliminating Earth's entry into the United Federation of Planets and winning their future war. Captain Picard and his crew, aboard the new starship USS Enterprise NCC-170-E, must follow the Borg into the past in order to stop them from changing not only Earth's future but the future of the known galaxy.

'Star Trek: First Contact'. Dir. Jonathan Frakes. UK release date December 13th, 1996.

RESISTANCE IS FUTILE

The celebration of the 30th anniversary of 'Star Trek' has generated an enormous public awareness of the 'Star Trek' phenomenon. As the eighth 'Star Trek' - film and the first to feature exclusively the cast of 'Star Trek: The Next Generation' - the film will be eagerly anticipated by Trekkers ('Star Trek' fans) everywhere. Paramount Studios will be keen to attract as wide an audience for their film as possible though the film is certain to attract a huge audience of Trekkers, starved of any new 'ST:TNG' material for several years. Though 'ST:TNG' consistently held the number one spot for a first-run syndicated drama series, the Paramount Television Group decided to stop making the series after its seventh season and concentrate on feature films starring the 'ST:TNG' cast.

Bearing in mind that there are two successful spin-offs 'ST:TNG' series ('Deep Space Nine' and 'Star Trek: Voyager') still being produced for the TV audiences, why do you think Paramount decided to concentrate on using the 'ST:TNG' characters in feature films?

INITIAL RESEARCH

TASK

Discuss with fellow students their 'Star Trek' awareness. Are students serious 'Star Trek' fans (Trekkers)? Are any of them hostile towards 'Star Trek' or science fiction in general? How will advertisers target this latter group? Can you think of ways in which 'Star Trek: First Contact' could be marketed which does not involve emphasis on (a) the fact that it is a 'Star Trek' film (b) the fact that it is a science fiction film?

TASK

Visit your local newsagent or bookseller and see which magazines or periodicals would be most likely to carry advertisements for 'Star Trek: First Contact'. Is there a particular type of magazine or periodical which you believe will carry advertisements for 'Star Trek: First Contact'? When the film's British release date gets nearer you will be able to confirm your findings. -

'Star Trek: First Contact' has been directed by Jonathan Frakes, the actor who plays Commander William Riker. Frakes has directed several 'Star Trek: The Next Generation' episodes for TV and whilst he is now an experienced TV director this is the first feature film he has directed. Frakes has jokingly claimed that he is in the director's chair for 'Star Trek: First Contact' because Ridley Scott and John McTiernan weren't available.

TASK

Why should Frakes have mentioned these two directors in connection with a 'Star Trek' film rather than, for example, Nicholas Meyer or Leonard Nimoy, both of whom have directed 'Star Trek' movies? Does Frakes' reference to Ridley Scott and John McTiernan suggest something about the sort of Star Trek movie that you are going to see?

YOU WILL BE ASSIMILATED

Paramount want to develop the 'Star Trek' franchise without alienating the traditional 'Star Trek' audience. Jonathan Frakes is keen to assure his audience that Star Trek. First Contact will be true to the spirit of 'Star Trek' and its creator, Gene Roddenberry. Frakes states that he has adopted "a very anti-racist, anti-sexist approach" to the film. The notion is offered here of an unusually close relationship between the audience and the filmmakers which Frakes is keen to sustain. The makers of 'ST:TNG' and its spin-off programmes have always been eager to develop the loyalty of a TV audience who will follow 'ST:TNG's' characters into the cinema.

Frakes observes that,

"There's a very healthy moral statement at the end of each TV episode and certainly at the end of the movie, and those are some of the elements Gene [Roddenberry] insisted on."

TASK

After you have watched an episode of 'ST:TNG' see if you can summarise briefly what ' the episode's moral statement is. After viewing 'Star Trek: First Contact' you should consider what moral statements the film is offering the audience. How are you made aware of these moral statements in the film? How effective do you believe a blockbuster science fiction movie can be as a vehicle for moral statements?

MARKETING 'STAR TREK: FIRST CONTACT'

Your research will have given you a fair idea of the audience who will be interested in the film 'Star Trek: First Contact'. You can now consider developing an advertising campaign for the film, based on your findings.

The marketing of a film develops in the following way:



ADVERTISING

A good advertising campaign can help enormously to make a film successful. The advertising campaign must give some idea of what the film is about, what type/genre of film it is and offer a potential audience persuasive reasons for wishing to see the film. Because different people have different interests, a film distribution company first identifies the markets for the film. A distribution company's Publicity Department, working closely with an advertising agency, targets the market. It designs and places its publicity to reach and appeal to this potential audience the target audience.

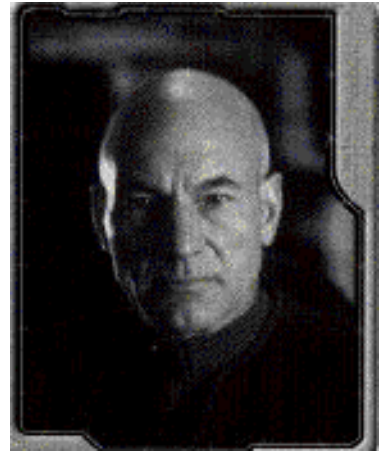
The actual audience for 'Star Trek: First Contact' will be composed of two groups, one of which will certainly contain enthusiastic Trekkers. The Trekkers may have a particular fondness for 'ST:TNG' but may hearken back to the original 'Star Trek' TV series or they may have shifted their allegiance to the two other spin-off TV shows, 'Deep Space Nine' or 'Star Trek: Voyager'. The other group will not be familiar with the 'ST:TNG' television series.

TASK

Design an information pack for a preview audience for 'Star Trek: First Contact'. The pack should contain some information about the following characters:

- CAPTAIN JEAN-LUC PICARD
- COMMANDER WILLIAM RIKER
- LIEUTENANT GEORDI LA FORGE
- LIEUTENANT COMMANDER DATA
- LIEUTENANT COMMANDER WORF
- COUNSELLOR DEANNA TROI
- DR BEVERLEY CRUSHER

You can use your viewing of 'ST:TNG' videos as your principal source of information but there is a wealth of additional information readily available. Be brief and to the point - just a couple of lines per character. Assume that since some of the audience may be unfamiliar with the characters of 'ST:TNG' they will need some basic information about the crew of Enterprise.



ADVERTISING 'STAR TREK: FIRST CONTACT'



There are two principal methods of advertising a film:

1. Above the line - this is advertising which is directly paid for. For instance, advertising in magazines and newspapers, on advertising boardings, the radio, TV and at the cinema.

2. Below the line - this is 'indirect' advertising which spins-off from competitions, sneak previews, give-aways, promotions, notes on Internet bulletin boards, merchandise and radio/TV appearances by stars of the film.

If you have access to a computer with a modem, <http://www.startrek.com> will take you to the official 'Star Trek' Website on the Internet.

ADVERTISING ON THE INTERNET

Paramount recognises the importance of the Internet for marketing a film such as 'Star Trek: First Contact'. Like other film companies, Paramount learnt from the success of the film 'Stargate', the first film to be publicised on the Internet. In 1994 the US trailer for 'Stargate' was made available to computer users through the Internet. This approach is thought to have attracted millions of teenage boys who then gave the movie word-of-mouth recommendations. More than 40 million homes in the US now have computers and the majority of these are on the Internet. When 'Stargate' was released in the UK only about 500,000 homes in the UK had computers with modems, but now that many more homes are 'on the Net', an Internet advertising campaign will certainly generate UK interest in 'ST: First Contact' and assist the word-of-mouth campaign which is already underway here.

TASK -

Look at the illustration above and design the layout for a 'Star Trek: First Contact' Web- page. In essence this is just a single page advertisement but a Website can include icons which if clicked play a brief extract from the film, a piece of music, a soundbite or an interview with one of the stars of the film. Your Web-page should be eye-catching and interesting -just enough to rouse a netsurfer's interest in the forthcoming release.

TEASER

Prior to the release of 'Independence Day' in the UK a series of teaser posters appeared in the press and on boardings. One featured the alien spaceships approaching earth. Another poster featured an alien spaceship hovering over New York. Both of these teaser posters were designed, with appropriate taglines, to generate interest in the film and a certain degree of audience familiarity with the film's content. This meant that the tag-line on the main 'Independence Day' poster - 'Prepare For Impact' - made perfect sense to an audience already waiting for a film which they know deals with an alien invasion of Earth.

TASK -

Design four posters for 'Star Trek: First Contact'. Two of them must be teaser posters, designed differently to the one on the front cover. The third must be the main poster for

the film which should be entirely different from the teaser posters and the fourth must carry some extracts from reviews of the film. The first two posters could, through the images and wording you select, build up to the film's main poster. The fourth could be a variation, with added reviews, of the third poster.

THE CONTINUING STORY

Because 'Star Trek: The Next Generation' is a weekly TV series, which has soap opera aspects to it writers have been able to gradually develop characters and build relationships. For example, in the final TV episode of 'ST:TNG' we learn that Counsellor Troi and Lieutenant Commander Worf have been dating yet there is no reference to their developing romance in the film. On the other hand, Picard's previous experience of the Borg in the TV episodes 'Best Of Both Worlds' (Parts 1 & 2) are not only referred to in the film, but are essential to parts of the plot of 'Star Trek: First Contact'.



Let us look again at the second group of people mentioned in the 'Initial Research' section (page 1), those members of the audience who will have little prior knowledge of the 'Star Trek' world. They may have read your information pack and know a little about the crew of the Enterprise but what additional information do you think they will need to have in order to be able to fully appreciate the film? Initially, it's taken for granted in the film that the audience will be aware that Picard has some particular knowledge and prior experience of the Borg.

How much additional knowledge of the characters and situations of 'ST:TNG' do you think is needed by an audience for 'Star Trek: First Contact'? What other relationships or situations from 'ST:TNG' are important to 'Star Trek: First Contact'? You could consider, for example, the characters of Worf and Data, Riker's relationship to Picard, the Holodeck or Geordi's blindness.

PRESS PACK

Members of the press, film reviewers, etc. are usually presented with a press-pack at film previews. These press-packs often contain quite detailed information about the cast, the director, producer and key members of the film's production team. The packs may serve, in part, to advertise the film through their enthusiastic display of information and glossy/gimmicky presentation.

TASK

Design a folder for a press-pack for 'Star Trek:First Contact'. Remember though, it is just a container for information about the film. You should try to make your folder visually interesting or unusual and ensure that its design is connected with the film.

ORIGINS OF THE BORG

Science fiction writers have long shown an uneasy fascination for the ruthlessly efficient and relentlessly active communities of insects. HG. Wells' 1905 short story 'The Empire of the Ants' is an early manifestation of this interest; the Selenites in his novel 'The First Men in the Moon' are organised like a huge hive. Science fiction writers as diverse as Arthur C. Clarke, Robert A. Heinlein (in his 'being filmed at the moment' - 'Starship Troopers'), Murray Leinster, Frederic Brown and Frank Herbert have explored the notion of a society where each creature's individuality is sacrificed in order to produce a powerful and complex group-mind. Menacing ants, bees or wasps, of all sizes, have made frequent appearances in science fiction films and stories.

"Restless aggression, territorial conquest, and genocidal annihilation..., whenever possible... The colony is integrated as though it were in fact one organism..., that constrains behaviour as it also enables it... The physical superorganism acts to... optimise its energy economy... The austere rules allow of no play, no art, no empathy"

This extract is taken from a review written by Philip Morrison which appeared in the Scientific American magazine. The review was for the book 'Journey to the Ants: A Story of Scientific Explorations' (by Bert Holldobler and Edward O. Wilson) and, though the writer is referring to the world of ants, his description fits what we see of the Borg's civilisation remarkably well.

NEW SERIES, NEW THREAT

The 'Star Trek: The Next Generation' writers had intended to have the Ferengi as the new alien threat to the Federation for the series but their greed, short stature and big ears made them comical rather than menacing and so the Borg were created as the new regular 'Star Trek' baddies a role that the Klingons had fulfilled in the original 'Star Trek' series.

The Borg were originally conceived as an insect race but budgetary constraints forced the studio to rethink and only the Borg's collective consciousness and inexorable desire to assimilate remained from the original concept. Despite numerous compromises and assistance from the makers of steel suits for the films 'Dune' and 'Batman', the first Borg episode of 'ST:TNG' went \$50,000 over budget and a day of live shooting had to be cancelled. The distinctive cube-shaped Borg space ship was put together in a fortnight using anything the effects team could lay their hands on, including toy soldiers, R2-D2 (from 'Star Wars') and plastic model train rails.

RED BORG

In the period following the Second World War (frequently referred to as the Cold War) Americans were persuaded that Russian communism offered a horrifying and dehumanising society organised along the lines of the hive or the ants' nest. Communists were frequently depicted in the media as cruel, godless, emotionless, inhuman and un-American. Many Cold War battles of the fifties were won, metaphorically speaking, on the big screen in films which reflected the American's fear of an undercover invasion by Russian communists. The film 'I Married a Communist' (1950) was given the sort of lurid, sensational publicity that was usually reserved for science fiction films.



Along with this fear of an alien political system in which individuality was irrelevant or forbidden was an anxiety about the dehumanising effects of an increased dependence of humans on technology. The Borg are the ultimate manifestation of this recurring nightmare.

THE BORG TRADITION



The Borg are the most frightening and complex representations of the emotionless aliens tradition which was begun by the science fiction films of the 1950's. Loss of identity, dehumanisation were recurrent themes in fifties science fiction films such as 'Invaders from Mars' (1953), 'It Came From Outer Space' (1953) and 'I Married a Monster from Outer Space' (1958). Human beings would be taken over or replaced by alien invaders. A sure sign that a character had been taken over was an absence of human emotions and this lack of essential humanity was frequently detected at first by pets or children,

prime representatives of the irrational or the innocent.

In Don Siegel's classic 'Invasion of the Body Snatchers' (1956) the following exchange takes place between the hero, Miles, and a psychiatrist who has been replaced by an alien pod creature:

Psychiatrist: "There's no need for love."

Miles: "No emotions? Then you have no feelings - only the instinct to survive. You can't love or be loved, am I right?"

Psychiatrist: "You say that as if it were terrible. Believe me it isn't. You've been in love before. It didn't last... it never does. Love - desire, ambition, faith without them, life's so simple, believe me."

Compare this with an exchange between Picard and the Borg in an early 'Star Trek: The Next Generation' episode:

The Borg: "Strength is irrelevant. Resistance is futile. We wish to improve ourselves. We will add your biological and technological distinctiveness to our own. Your culture will adapt to service ours."

Picard: "We would rather die."

The Borg: "Freedom is irrelevant. Self-determination is irrelevant ...death is irrelevant." .

AFTER VIEWING 'STAR TREK: FIRST CONTACT'

THE GOOD, THE BORG AND THE...

Are the Borg that bad? Surely there's a great deal we could learn from their culture. Problems which concern us in 1996 are alien to the Borg. Love, desire, ambition, faith may be irrelevant to the Borg but everyone will be welcome in the Collective. There can be no prejudice in the Collective since they will assimilate any civilisation. They treat the disabled or handicapped positively and will even assimilate injured enemies, as they do Hawk and Porter, the ensign from Engineering. Presumably, there are no homeless on the Borg's planet, no hatred, no suicide.

TASK

What makes the audience hostile to the Borg? Why do we never doubt that they are the villains of 'Star Trek: First Contact'? You should consider the appearance of the Borg as well as their actions. How are they filmed? What sort of music accompanies their actions?

TASK

Why do you think that the Borg have become one of 'Star Trek's' most popular villains?

TASK

Create a new adversary for the Federation. You will have to invent a race that is different to 'the Borg, the Ferengi, the Romulans or the Cardassians and still unusual and menacing enough to represent worthy opponents for the crew of the Enterprise.

ANCESTORS OF THE BORG

In the 1960's, school playgrounds all over England were filled with children, one arm stuck out in front of them, rushing about shouting "You will be exterminated" in mechanical voices. They were imitating the Daleks, the arch villains of BBC's long running science fiction series, the recently revived 'Dr Who'. In its low budget way, 'Dr. Who' was an aspirational series, partly due to its notoriety. The Daleks had originally been humanoids but had evolved into bizarre mechanical creatures which resembled malevolent pepper pots. Like the Borg they were an aggressive, militant race, which enslaved (rather than assimilated) any race they conquered. Their battle cry of "You will be exterminated" bears comparison with the Borg's "You will be assimilated".

It is interesting to note that the other popular, recurring villains of 'Dr Who' were the Cybermen, who are certainly ancestors of the Borg in as much as they were humanoids who had replaced most of their body parts with machinery and in doing so had lost all touch with their humanity. Like the Daleks they had become a race of conquerors, devoid of human feelings and utterly ruthless.

TASK

Is it possible that the Borg can repeat the success of the Daleks? Design some Borg-related merchandise specifically for young children.

DATA VERSUS THE BORG

In the 'Star Trek: First Contact' episodes 'The Best of Both Worlds' (Parts 1 & 2) it was originally intended that the Borg would abduct both Picard and Data who would then be fused into a single Borg creature. Certainly, in 'Star Trek: First Contact' the Borg show that they have not lost interest in Data. He represents a benevolent alternative to the Borg in as much as they are organic creatures, with cybernetic additions, working together to achieve a mechanical harmony. Data is striving, as an artificial life form, to achieve a degree of individual humanity. It is this desire to be human which the Borg Queen plays upon.

TASK

Through displays of Data's superhuman abilities and, at one point, his ability to regulate his emotions, the film makes clear the android's inhumanity. How does the film retain our sympathy

MAKE IT SO

Picard's experience as Locutus of Borg gives him the knowledge which causes the destruction of the Borg cube. Initially, however, the Federation are uncertain about Picard's reliability as a Starship captain. Despite the Federation's suspicions, Picard succeeds in retaining the loyalty of his crew.

TASK

How does the film show us that Picard is a good leader? What qualities does he display that make him one of the film's heroes? The Borg also have a leader, a queen bee at the centre of the collective. But she offers a model of leadership which is in marked contrast to Picard's.

TASK

How does the film make clear to us, through her actions, the way in which she is filmed and through the music which accompanies her appearance, that the Queen Borg is evil?

THE FUTURE IS NOW

Though it may be set in the future most science fiction is concerned with the here and now and science fiction films will often reflect contemporary anxieties. Along with a fear of the emotionless aliens, science fiction films of the 1950's displayed a sceptical, sometimes a fearful, attitude towards science and its applications. This fear of science and how it can affect us is embodied in 'Star Trek: First Contact' by the Borg. As half-machine, half-organic humanoid aliens they represent (as surely as the Terminators from the films 'Terminator' and 'Terminator 2: Judgement Day') the chilling possibilities that could await us in a future where scientific development is encouraged but humanity and morality are ignored.

TASK

To what extent does 'Star Trek: First Contact' address contemporary fears about the future? Consider, in particular the exchange between Lily and Picard, concerning Earth's future, and Data's observations on the origins of the Phoenix.

THE FUTURE IS INEVITABLE

'Star Trek: First Contact' offers us two visions of the future: the horrific future that Lily and Cochrane are surviving, a 21st century future that features "Radioactive weather fronts ...fractured ecosystems ...six hundred million dead" and the future of the 23rd century represented by the Enterprise. This is a future which has a culture that still appreciates Shakespeare, Strauss and Stravinsky, and where technology is not a dreadful threat but an obedient servant and support. If • humanity can survive or avoid this Second Dark Age (caused Picard implies by an atomic war) then eventually, helped by our j contact with the Vulcans, we can reach for the stars. Provided the Borg do not bother 'v us, we can live happily ever after as members of the Galactic Federation.

- One of the things that Picard and his crew are trying to ensure is that the Earth's future develops in a particular way. Clearly the crew of the Enterprise share an optimistic faith in their future. "We're screwed up...always will be" is Lily's sardonic view of humanity.

Picard corrects her cynicism with a rousing speech: "You're wrong. We're more than just the sum of our flaws, our petty conflicts, our historical mistakes. I have seen the future, I know what we're capable of. We can be a compassionate caring, and noble race."

One of the things which has helped to ensure 'Star Trek's' enduring popularity is a desire that the future will be "pretty cool", as Lily puts it. Lily is particularly voicing the hopes of many of 'Star Trek's' female fans.

TASK

What aspects of 'Star Trek: First Contact' do you believe will be particularly attractive to a female audience?

CONTACT

It is not until near the end of the film that we realise that the 'First Contact' refers to the first contact with the benevolent Vulcans, rather than the Borg.

TASK

Why do you think that the Vulcans were selected as the 'First Contact' race rather than some other life forms from the 'Star Trek' universe such as the Klingons or the Romulans?

IT'S A FUNNY OLD WORLD

Cochrane: "Let me make sure I understand you correctly Commander. A group of cybernetic aliens from the future has travelled back through time to enslave the human race ...and you're here to stop them."
Riker: "That's right."
Cochrane: "God, you're heroic. Can you fly, too?"

This exchange sums up the basic story of 'Star Trek: First Contact' whilst poking good natured fun at it. Cochrane's remarks effectively deflect all criticism of the film's complex plot. The exchange also demonstrates one of the film's main strengths - its sense of humour. This humour is used both to relieve the tension in the film - an audience can only be kept on the edge of their seat for so long and to further humanise Cochrane, Lily and the crew of the Enterprise. We are drawn closer to Picard and his companions because they are still able to make light of their desperate situation. The Borg are devoid of humour ...though the Borg Queen occasionally lapses into sarcasm when dealing with Data.

TASK

Can you find other examples in the film where humour is used to lighten the mood after a tense incident or where it is used to enhance our sympathies for a character?

APPENDIX:

SUMMARY OF KEY BORG EPISODES OF 'STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION'

Q Who

The meddlesome superbeing Q confronts the crew of the Enterprise with the Borg, a race of cybernetic beings which exist as a group mind, intent only on gaining technology through conquest or destruction.

Best Of Both Worlds (Parts 1 & 2)

Part 1 - the final episode of 'ST:TNG's' third season, the Borg kidnap Picard and borgify him so that he becomes 'Locutus of Borg'. The opening sequence of 'Star Trek: First Contact' makes direct reference to Picard's horrifying experience and it's clear in the film that his assimilation by the Borg has had a profound effect on him.

Part 2 - the opening episode of the fourth ST:TNG' season Picard is rescued and Data uses him to tap into the Borg collective consciousness in order to defeat them.

I, Borg

The crew of the Enterprise humanise an injured Borg whom they name Hugh (As in 'Hugh am I?')

Descent (Parts 1 & 2)

Data confronts his evil twin, Lore, who is leading a band of renegade Borg. We learn that they have been infected by Hugh's sense of individuality.

SUGGESTED VIEWING

The traditional Trekker view is that the even numbered 'Star Trek' films are better than the odd numbered ones. I'm inclined to agree ...but 'Star Trek: Generations' is probably the most useful 'Star Trek' film to watch in comparison with 'Star Trek: First Contact' since it features both the old and 'The Next Generation' crews of the Enterprise.

'Independence Day' (1996) makes an interesting comparison to 'Star Trek: First Contact'.

Of the fifties paranoid/red menace movies I have mentioned one film is essential viewing: 'Invasion of the Body Snatchers' (1956). Though clumsy in places and with a studio imposed voice-over and happy ending the film still makes for rewarding viewing. Concerning their lack of emotions and attitudes to human feelings the film's pod people have a great deal in common with the Borg

BIBLIOGRAPHY

'The Star Trek Encyclopaedia: A Reference Guide to the Future' by Michael Okuda, Denise Okuda and Debbie Mirek (Simon & Schuster 1994).

'Star Trek' (monthly magazine). Though this is really for serious fans of all aspects of 'Star Trek' it does contain a wealth of information for anyone studying the 'Star Trek' phenomenon.

'The Aurum Film Encyclopaedia: Science Fiction', edited by Phil Hardy (Aurum 1995). An opinionated and authoritative treasure trove of information, especially since it does not confine itself to English language films.

'Seeing is Believing (How Hollywood taught us to stop worrying and learn to love the fifties)' by Peter Biskind (Pantheon 1983). Contains useful information/ideas on science fiction films of the fifties.

'The Encyclopaedia of Science Fiction' edited by Peter Nicholls & John Clute. This is available on CD-ROM as 'The Grolier Multimedia Encyclopaedia of Science Fiction' (1995) and is an exemplary CD-ROM version of a reference work, i.e. the multi-media aspects of it are not mere gimmickry.

'SFX Magazine'. An excellent monthly magazine which carries in-depth interviews and articles about forthcoming science fiction films. I'm sure that the November or December edition will have a great deal of helpful information on 'Star Trek: First Contact'.

The November issue of 'Sight & Sound' magazine includes a lavishly illustrated supplement grandly entitled 'The Chronicle of Science Fiction Film and Science Fact' which promises to look at 'the key films and cinematic events against a compelling history of scientific, medical and technological invention'. Sounds interesting!

It's worth looking at 'Death is Irrelevant: Cyborgs, Reproduction, and the Future of Male Hysteria' (the chapter by Cynthia J. Fuchs on the Borg) in the 'Cyborg Handbook' published by Routledge (1995). Fuchs deals, in part with the origins and implications of the Borg.