

# LUCY (2014)

Risk Society and Global  
Connectivity



# OUTLINE

A. Introduction (1): Director Luc Besson & Film Genre  
(2): Risk Society

B. Discussion Questions

C. Analysis

(1) Lucy: Characters

(2) Lucy's Changes

(3) Lucy vs. the Scientists and Gangsters: Their Theories & Messages

(4) Image Presentation: Cell Fusion and Nebulous Cloud vs. Chaos

(5) "fabricated uncertainties"

a) Taipei vs. Paris

b) Jang & gangsters

# LUC BESSON

- Cinema du look\*
- The Big Blue
- Know for his action films such as
  - *Nikita* (1990); *Léon: The Professional* (1994); sci-fi action film *The Fifth Element* (1997)
  - Violence aestheticized and “embodied” rather than verbalized
- *Lucy*: different because of its narration



Image source:  
[Wikipedia](#)

# LUCY, DR. STRANGELOVE & GLOBAL GANG

- It is said that we use only 10% of our brain
- **Dr. Strangelove & Nootropic drug**
  - The drugs we use (True Science of Lucy 4:45)
  - → Lucy brain expands after it reaches 20%, with obstacles falling “like domino”; she is “colonizing [her] brain”
  - → When she reaches 40%, her body starts to disintegrate.
- **Another example:** disease-free designer baby ([ref](#))
- **Gangsters:** The far reaches of the gang and their drug (C.P.H.4): for “kids in Europe,” Berlin, Paris, Rome, and another city (Lucy is supposed to go to).

# RISK

- **Anthony Giddens on Reflexive Modernity**

- two disembedding mechanisms – symbolic tokens and expert systems, both expanding and impersonal, and thus involving trust and risk.
- Risk: **anticipated danger**; sometimes institutionalized (e.g. insurance policy; alternative plan for an activity);
- different from danger, because danger is a threat to desired outcome, while one who risks courts danger
- Security: balance of trust and **acceptable risk**

- **Ulrich Beck on Radicalized Modernity**

- Risk: anticipated **catastrophe** or **fabricated\*(1)** uncertainties (unpredictable, unmanageable)
- “What signifies the risk society are **manufactured uncertainties** which tend to be intangible to our senses.
- 3 characteristics of **global risks**: delocalization, uncalculability, and non-compensatability.
- Examples of predicting the wrong risks:\*(2) 1) H1N1; 2) September 11 attack 3) 311 Tohoku, Japan earthquake and tsunami

# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1.

Sharon How does Lucy change or evolve in the film? How are her changes presented?

2. Jessica What kinds of social relations are presented in this film? Do they form **a kind of hierarchy** or not? Does Lucy subvert it?

- a. Lucy, her friends (Richard & roommate) & her mother,
- b. the policeman Del Rio,
- c. Prof. Norman (& the other scientists),
- d. Taipei city dwellers – gangsters, Mr. Jang, taxi driver & doctor

3. Lea” Analyze the dominant images in this film (**of brain, or of animals**) or the film’s **aesthetics of violence**.

4. Darren: What do you think about **the ending**? And **Lucy’s narration**?

5. Eilleen: How are Taipei & Paris presented in this film, esp. in terms of their flows and connectivity? Any differences and similarities?

6. Cathy: What are **the risks as “fabricated uncertainties”** shown in the film Lucy?

# CHARACTERS

Film

Lucy the narrator

Protagonist

Del Rio

Lucy

Prof. Norman

Jang

Minor Characters

Policemen

Richard

Roommate

Colleagues

Gangsters

Order?

Money & sex

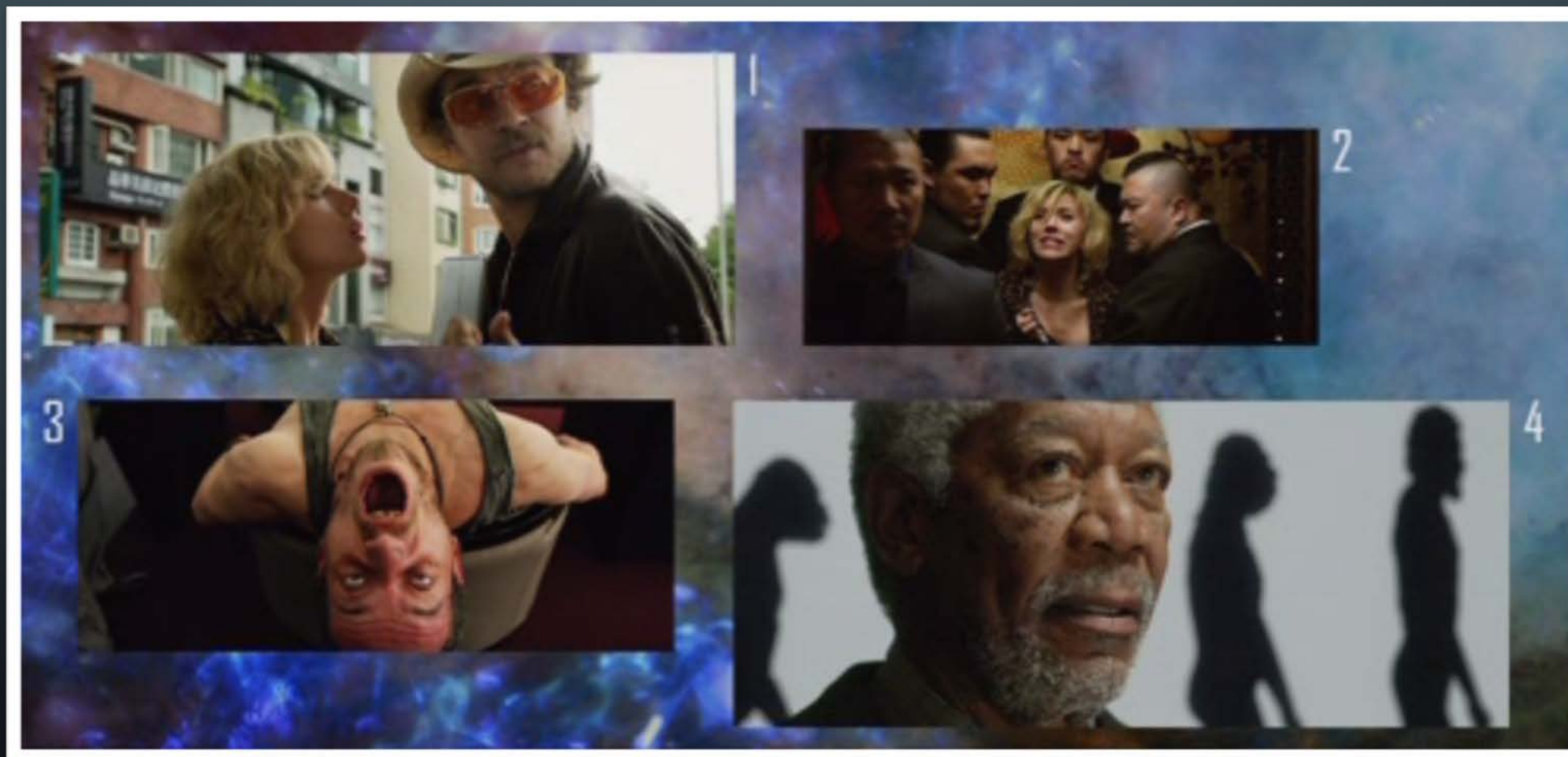
innocent

Knowledge?

Money & sex

# LUCY'S DEVELOPMENT (1)

1%



10%-  
50%



# LUCY'S DEVELOPMENT (2)

20%



# LUCY'S DEVELOPMENT (3)

28 %



40-50%

# LUCY'S DEVELOPMENT (4)

60  
%

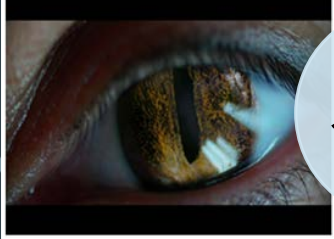


# LUCY'S DEVELOPMENT (5)

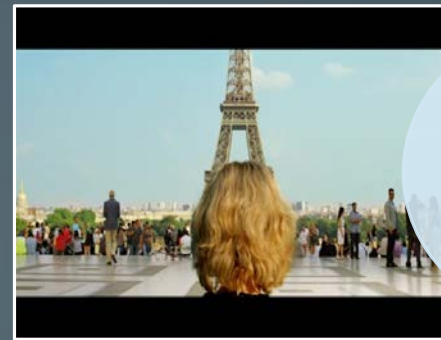
90%

100 %

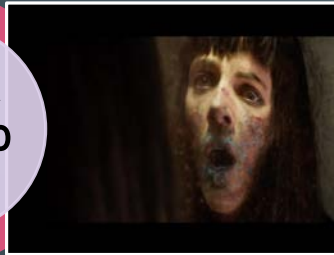




50%



90%



40%

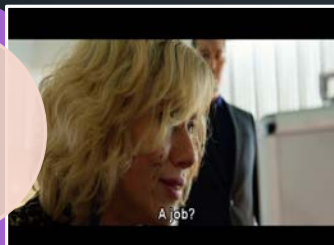


80%



20%

# LUCY'S CHANGES



1%



70%

**100%**



**Where is she?**

# INCREASE OF LUCY'S ABILITIES & KNOWLEDGE

## 1. 20% Control of one's body

- Physical strength; enhancing audio and visual senses (greater range of hearing, seeing more & comprehending faster)
- no pain; memory enhanced; telepathy; learning a language in an hour; diagnosis by touch; reading all of Prof. Norman's papers in one evening
- change of hair color

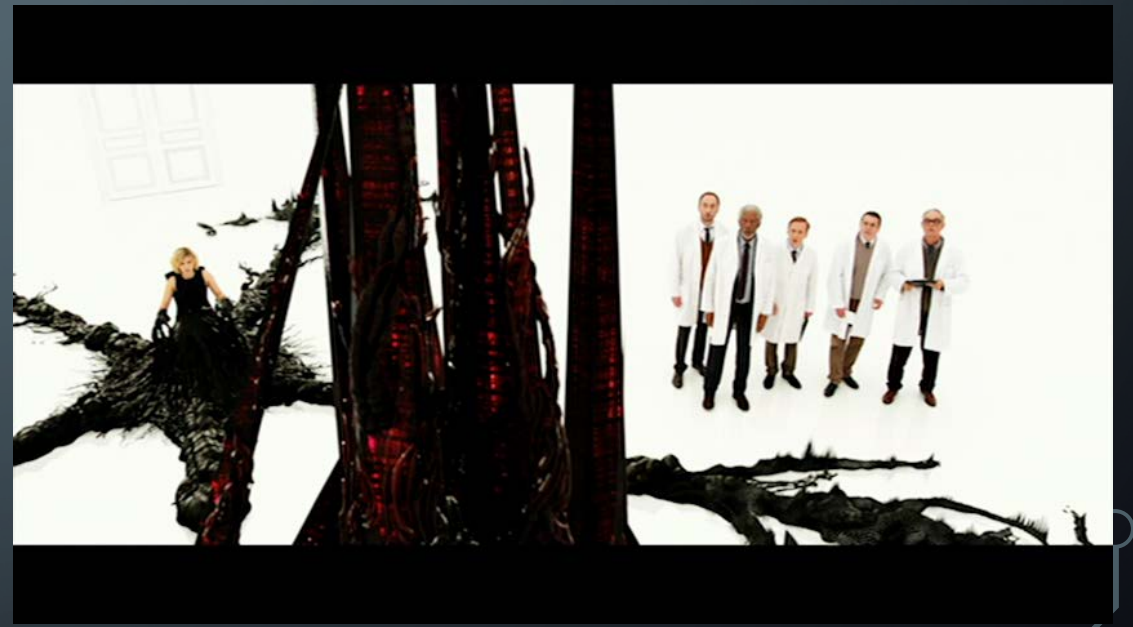
2. 50% Control of others' bodies; seeing the flows of info. in the air.

3. 70% Connecting with other matters and energies (like internet); a new kind of computer

4. 90% Time travel (like reading from a computer), cosmic view

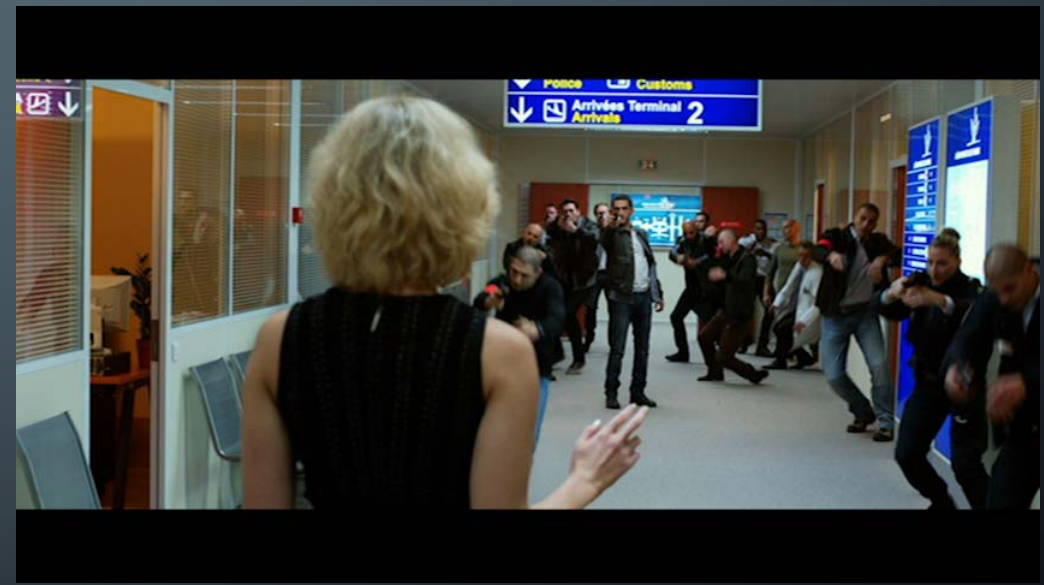
5. 100% Death or self-transformation into ubiquitous computing

# GREED VS. KNOWLEDGE





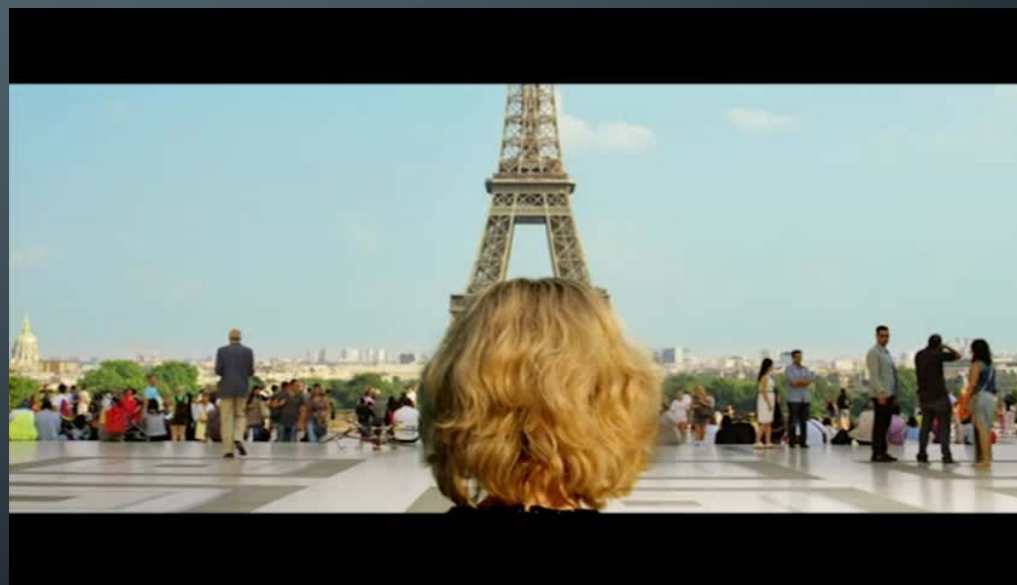
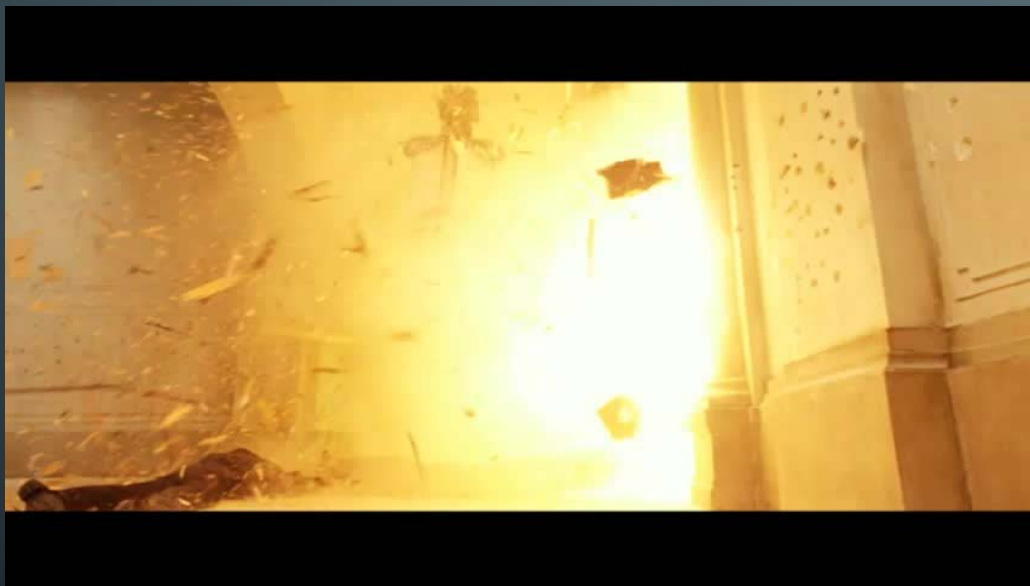
# POLICEMEN IN PARIS



# GANGSTERS: DESTRUCTIVE BUT ALSO PUSHING LUCY ONTO HER TIME TRAVEL



# LUCY: TIME TRAVEL (I)



# LUCY: TIME TRAVEL (2): HISTORICAL TO COSMIC VIEW



# PROF. NORMAN & LUCY – SHARING OF KNOWLEDGE



# PROF. NORMAN'S THEORY

- Three main ideas:

- 1) We use 10% of our brain capacity;

- dolphin 20%; if we use 20%, we can control our body;
- 40% control other people; 50% control the matter (the realm of science fiction); after that, he does not know.

- 2) We primitive beings focus on gaining time, either through procreation or self-sufficiency.

- 3) Humans humans are concerned more with having, than being.

- 4) There are more connections in the human body than there are stars in the galaxy. One cell passes down knowledge to the next.

# LUCY'S THEORY

- 1) To Norman: "It's a little rudimentary, but you're on the right track."
- 2) She knows things thru' **electric impulses**. Cells talk to one another: "Every cell knows and talks to every other cell, ...**forming a giant web of communication**"
- 3) We are not unique. "All social systems we've put into place are a mere sketch."
- 4) Share knowledge. Ignorance leads to chaos, not knowledge.
- 5) **Time is the only true unit of measure**. It gives proof to the existence of matter. (1:09) →???

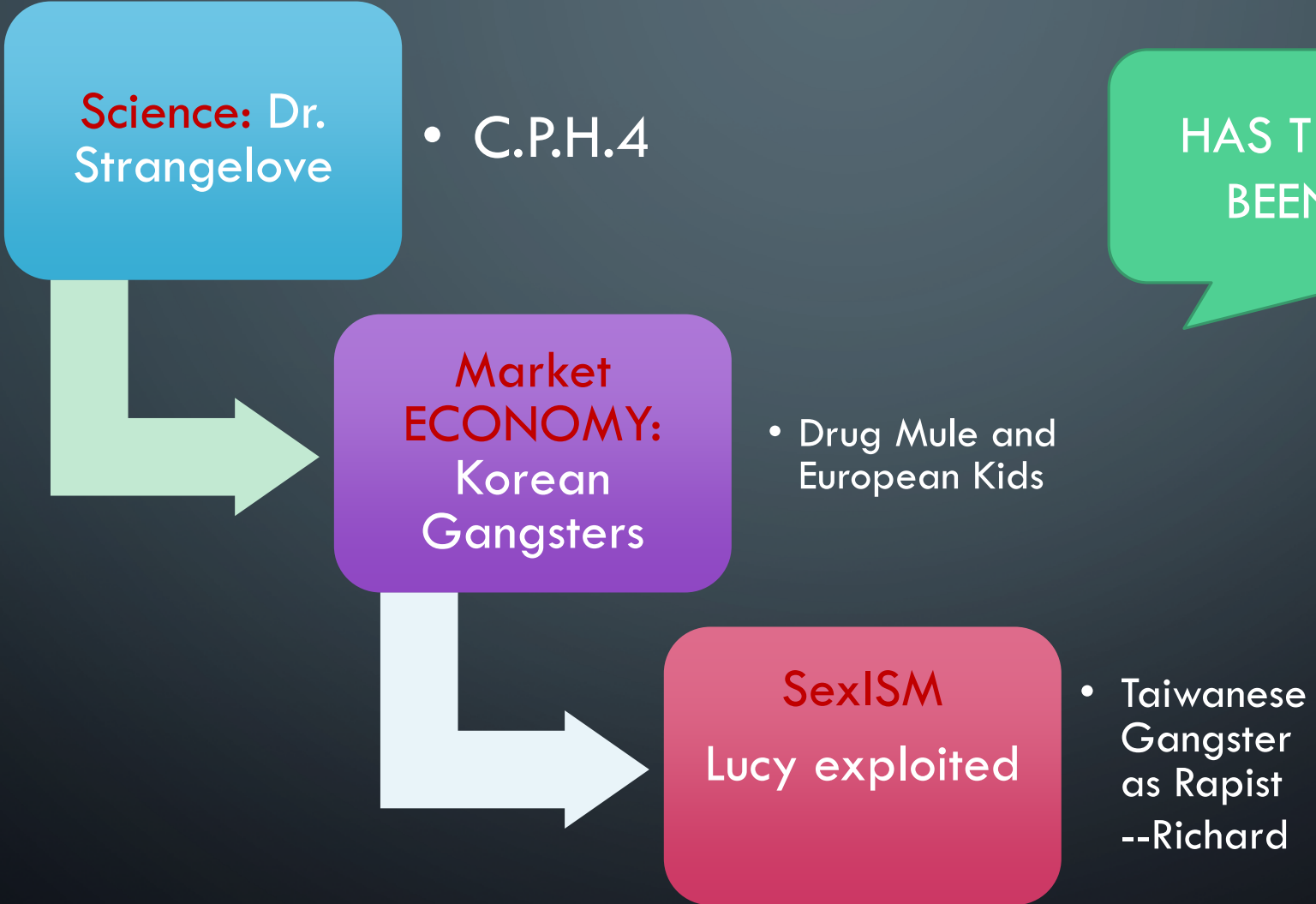
# WHAT KNOWLEDGE IS SHARED?

Global Connectivity,  
Risks & Orientalism





# RISKS AS FABRICATED UNCERTAINTIES



HAS THIS STRUCTURE  
BEEN CHANGED?

# GENDER STRUCTURE REVERSED

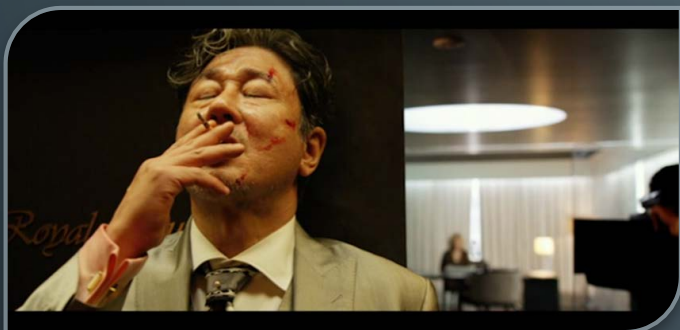
- But not racial structure
- the two rape attempts



# JANG (KOREAN) & DEL RIO (EGYPTIAN)

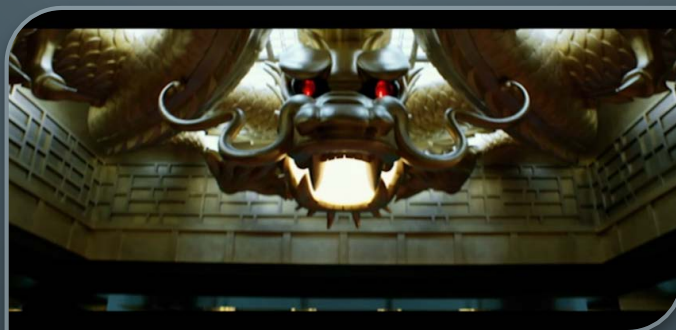


# MR. JANG



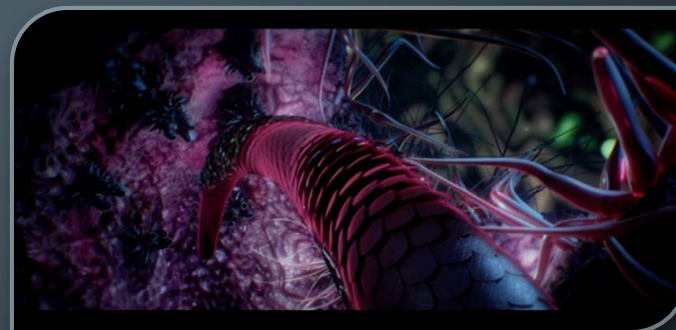
## BLOOD-STAINED & SMOKING

WHEN LUCY OPENS THE TRUNK



## HIS ROOM

SIGNS OF EVIL



## HIS BRAIN

SIGNS OF EVIL

# LUCY'S CELLS



Opening



FUSION



ONENESS



**JANG:**  
MIXTURE OF CLASSIC MUSIC, DEATH & FEMININE PLEASURE

# TAIPEI: MIXTURE OF DIFFERENT SIGNS



NATIONAL FLAGS



FOODS



MOTORBIKES

Also, doctor, taxi driver,  
complicit hotel receptionists & Jang's men

# PARIS: CENTER OF KNOWLEDGE





# WORK CITED

- Beck, Ulrich. “World at Risk: The New Task of Critical Theory.” *Development and Society* 37.1 (June 2008): 1-21.