

Thesis Title : Postmodern Apocalyptic Visions Of The Future:
Arthur C. Clarke, Science Fiction Film and the Quest for Final
Meaning.

Candidate : Naadira Jadwat

**Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of
Masters Artium (M.A.English) to the Department of Literary
Studies, Media and Creative Arts in the Faculty of Arts.**

University Of Kwa-Zulu Natal (Westville)

December 2005

Supervisor : Dr. D.J. Garside

Contents Page

Acknowledgements

Declaration

Abstract

Chapter 1

1.1 Millenarian Fear Syndrome	1
1.2 Science Fiction Genre – Transformation and Meaning-making.	8
1.3.Science Fiction and the Postmodern Genre	12
1.4 Postmodern Culture’s Infiltration into Society	17
1.4.1 Jameson’s View on ‘Consumer Culture’	20
1.4.2 Baudrillard on ‘The Ecstasy of Communication’ and Other Thoughts.	21

Chapter 2

2.1 The theme of the Apocalyptic.	27
2.2 <i>2001 – A Space Odyssey</i>	33
2.2.1 <i>2001</i> in context	33
2.2.2 Time and Space in <i>2001</i>	36
2.3. Arthur C. Clarke’s Visions of the Future	50

Chapter 3 : Dystopian Film

3.1 Popular Culture, Transcendence and the Cinematic Experience.	60
3.2 Dystopian Machines in <i>The Matrix</i> , <i>Dark City</i> , <i>Terminator 2</i> and <i>Bladerunner</i> .	65

Chapter 4 : Space and Self Discovery in *Event Horizon* And *Sphere*

105

Conclusion	120
------------	-----

Bibliography	123
--------------	-----

The financial assistance of the National Research Foundation (N.R.F) and the Ernst and Ethel Erickson Trust towards this research is hereby acknowledged. Opinions expressed and conclusions arrived at are those of the author and are not necessarily to be attributed to the National Research Foundation or the Ernst and Ethel Erickson Trust.

I would also like to acknowledge the encouragement of my supervisor, Dr. D. J. Garside (Senior Lecturer, Culture, Communication and Media Studies Dept. U.K.Z.N), friends, family as well as colleagues at D.I.T (towards my research).

The invaluable encouragement and assistance of Ms. Deirdre Pratt, Senior Lecturer in the English and Communication Dept, Durban Institute Of Technology (Steve Biko), towards this thesis in terms of language editing and proof-reading is also acknowledged.

DECLARATION

The Registrar (Academic)
University Of Kwa – Zulu Natal (Westville)

Dear Sir


I, Naadira Jadwat

Reg No. : 9401065

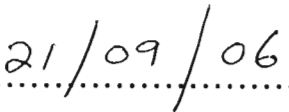
Hereby declare that the dissertation/thesis :

***POSTMODERN APOCALYPTIC VISIONS OF THE
FUTURE: ARTHUR C. CLARKE, SCIENCE FICTION
FILM AND THE QUEST FOR FINAL MEANING.***

Is the result of my own investigation and research and that it has not
been submitted in part or in full for any other degree or to any other
University.


.....

Signature


.....

Date

ABSTRACT:

This thesis articulates theoretical views on science fiction in relation to our world as viewed from a postmodern perspective. Inherent herein, is the exploration of the ambivalent nature of the theme of the apocalyptic and its pervasive influence in contemporary science fiction texts, in particular the selected canonical works of Arthur C. Clarke and contemporary film.

The pertinent idea inherent in these texts is its concerns regarding the future of humanity. The social anxieties of our postmodern age are foregrounded thereby bridging the intersection of apocalyptic narrative with the concept of the postmodern. Of particular significance is the presentation of social degeneration, the collapse of civilized society through advanced technologies as well as the ending and transcendence of human time.

This study sheds important light on the need and search for meaning in a world plunged by chaos and incoherence. This is imbued in the way science fiction texts mirror and develop such concerns in our postmodern period. In an attempt to construct meaning it thereby renders an exploratory examination of our postmodern world in relation to its dreams, visions and anxieties.

CHAPTER ONE

1.1 Millenarian Fear Syndrome

‘Everything is determined, the beginning as well as the end, by forces over which we have no control. It is determined for the insect as well as for the stars. Human beings, vegetables or cosmic dust, we all dance to a mysterious tune, intoned in the distance by an invisible piper.’

Albert Einstein (Ash, 1976:8)

Einstein ominously echoes the fragility of the status of all life forms. Just as there was a beginning of all human existence, surely there is going to be an end. Society has often concerned itself with fears of the end of time as we know it. Questions have often been raised as to the exact time when human existence is to cease. A ‘millenarian fear syndrome’ appears to emerge each turn of the century. The history of the past two thousand years suggests, according to Damian Thompson’s book *The End Of Time* (1999), that ‘people who believe that their world is moving inexorably towards a total and miraculous transformation ... will react along similar lines.’ (Thompson, 1996:2) Hence, for example, we would find that millenarian groups would steer towards extreme, fanatical behaviour patterns that are intimately connected to their beliefs. Damian Thompson maintains that millenarianism does not mean quite the same thing as apocalyptic belief, a belief that humanity is ‘nearing the end of the world as we know it but does not necessarily imagine a sudden or violent change.’ (1996:4)

All millenarianism is apocalyptic (from the Greek word meaning ‘to unveil’), but all apocalyptic belief is not millenarian : far from it. (1996:4) Classic millenarians are often described as obsessive and fanatical in nature exhibiting paranoid behaviour patterns in

their belief in an imminent end of the world. However, as I will illustrate this is not the exclusive concern of the prophets of doom, but reflects a concern that has infiltrated into our postmodern society.

Belief in the end of time and the religious fears associated with this has been a preoccupation of medieval societies dating back many centuries. For example, Thompson states that: 'In the third century B.C, the Babylonian astrologer, Berossus popularised a version of the doctrine in which the universe is eternal but periodically destroyed and recreated every Great Year.' (1996:6-7) The Babylonians and Greeks together with many civilizations throughout history, felt that historical cycles would be endlessly repeated. The Hebrews believed in a single cycle. However, they shared the assumption of numerous other societies that history moved through a pre-determined process of birth and decay, with a flood taking place towards the beginning of the cycle and fire towards the end.

Disaster, whether in the form of war, flood, exile or cosmic destruction as markers for the end of civilization haunts all religious cultures from antiquity. The medieval world's conception of the end of time, and of the supernatural forces that would initiate this process, often appears to be remote from the contemporary understanding of time and evil, but they are linked.

Icons of the medieval notion of apocalypse are often encountered in the form of art from the end of the period in the form of paintings, statues and woodcuts of terrified

mortals cowering before the Last Judgement. No one during the middle ages doubted that the world would end after a terrible earthly confrontation between the forces of good and evil. The makers of such predictions were of several varieties – religious prophets of warning, mystic prophets, seers and scientific interpreters of trends and likely possibilities of doom, who indicate through evidence of astronomy, geology, meteorology and even economics, an even more complete destruction of the world.

According to Berlitz, author of *Doomsday 1999*, legend, prophecy and general expectation of the millennium led the Christian world to anticipate that at midnight on December 31st 999 A.D, the world would end. As the year neared its end, a sort of mass hysteria took hold of Europe. All activity became affected by the spectre of impending doom. When December arrived, mass psychosis and fanaticism emerged. A wave of suicides arose as people sought to punish themselves in advance of doomsday or simply could not stand the pressure of waiting for Judgement day. It is expected that not long after the moment of suspense passed, life resumed its normal medieval rhythm.

The scientific prophets of today foresee the eventual destruction of the earth's potential through uncontrolled industrialization, general famine resulting from overpopulation and food distribution breakdown, disastrous climatic variation and flooding through the hothouse effect of excessive carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, the poisoning of the oceans and the destruction of the sea's ability to renew life. A great number of people in the general population expected a possible Doomsday towards the end of the second millennium – the year 2000, from the results of thermonuclear warfare. These ever-

present eventualities, while they may or may not cause the world to end, have contributed to the increasing neurosis of human beings with the nearing of each millennium.

According to Damian Thompson's book *The End Of Time*, as the end of the second Christian millennium approached, humankind was on the verge of an astonishing transformation, one for which all of human experience until now has been little more than a preparation. Every historical cycle known to man is entering a new phase – some cycles reflecting positive change whilst others are imbued with negativity. According to Thompson (1996:191) we are living in the dying days of the Kali Yuga, a period of 6480 years in which Hindus believe is the last and most degenerate stage of a recurring cycle in which mankind slowly descends from light to darkness. We are also in the twilight of what the Greeks referred to as the 'Age of Iron', a new 'Age of Gold' beckons. The calendar of the ancient Maya, the most mysterious of the civilizations of pre-Columbian America, is about to run out: extending millions of years into the past, it comes to a sudden end on 22 December 2012. Meanwhile, the age of Pisces, which has dictated the violent content of history for two millennia, is scheduled to give way to the age of Aquarius, a millennium of wisdom and light, shortly after the year 2000.

The above time cycles provide the basis of an outline of a single scenario devised in the early 1990's by the couturier and new age guru Paco Rabanne in a book called *Has the Countdown Begun?*. (Thompson, 1996:192)

With this shift in time-scale contemporary society is said to have approached a 'New

Age', whose fear of the end of civilization has infiltrated through popular theories which combine science fiction, scientific theory and mystical religion. The public at large in ever increasing numbers have been purchasing books about prophecy and the paranormal. Any title which includes the sixteenth century French seer Nostradamus seems to sell, and so does anything with an alien spacecraft on the front cover. In America and Europe, according to Damian Thompson,

'...the hunger for books and films on esoteric subjects has been matched by a striking increase in reports of near-death experiences and alien abductions...all this is bound up, somehow, with radical new approaches to the living organisms of the planet and human body, and an unexpected passion for cds of chanting monks and American Indians.'
(Thompson, 1996:193)

The term 'New Age' dates back to the late 1960's, when it surfaced amongst a range of American groups which sought to combine Eastern wisdom with the occult. The sociologist of religion Robert Ellwood has described the New Age as 'a contemporary manifestation of a western alternative spirituality going back at least to the Greco-Roman world.' (Thompson, 1996:194) It had infiltrated from Renaissance occultism of the so-called 'Rosicrucian Enlightenment', eighteenth century Freemasonry, and nineteenth century Spiritualism and Theosophy. What's striking is that the New Age is apocalyptic: it believes in an End-time. On another level, New Age beliefs seem to be held with a new intensity as the year 2000 approached. The non-appearance of a new world has led a minority of believers to intensify their hatred of the outside world, resulting in mass suicide attempts. A famous example here is the mass killing and suicides of the Order of the Solar Temple, based in Switzerland and Canada. According to Thompson, in September 1994 members of the Order lit a great fire which was regarded as an apocalyptic fire to purify the Order's elect. On the floor lay twenty- two bodies,

arranged in a circle round an altar bearing a chalice; nineteen of them had been shot in the head, while the others were hooded with black plastic bags. Documents left behind by the group headed 'Transit to the future', revealed that they wanted to escape a fate of destruction, awaiting the whole world in a matter of months, if not weeks. It appears that the leaders of this cult were so frustrated by their lack of success in bringing about the New Age that they resorted to murder and suicide. If so, their behaviour is roughly in line with other millennial groups who have felt the need to bring on their own apocalypse.

Similarly, Thompson reports that thirty nine members of the San Diego-based UFO cult, Heaven's Gate, committed a mass suicide believing that in so doing they had not only ascended to a higher level of existence, but escaped a terrifying apocalypse, in which the whole earth would be destroyed. The bodies of eighteen men and twenty-one women covered by a purple shroud were discovered (it was the beginning of Holy week, when Catholic churches were draped in purple).

All the members were dressed in black and left videotaped messages explaining happily why they had killed themselves, that a better world awaited in another galaxy to which they would be transported by a spaceship. Most of its members were Internet buffs, many who designed websites setting out their fantastic cosmology. The thirty-nine individuals were so convinced of their destiny that they consumed apple sauce with phenobarbital and in some cases placed plastic bags over their heads.

The similarity of the Solar Temple and Heaven's Gate suicides does not point to

apocalyptic suicides all following a similar pattern. However, the striking similarity between these particular groups points to the emergence of a new science fiction apocalypticism, in which UFO's assume a sinister new significance. Heaven's Gate members looked to feature films and television for inspiration rather than diversion.

According to one source, in a video testimony, members of the cult watched many *Star Trek* and *Star Wars* episodes. To them it was just like 'training on a Holodek', and they felt that it was time to practice what they had learnt. The inter-textual interplay of life and art, as witnessed by the members' imitation of film text, mirrors the juxtaposition of text and world. The mysteries of science fiction, i.e. alien abductions, UFO's and extra-terrestrial species appears to provide the machinery for the onset of apocalyptic transformation.

In the light of postmodern theory this thesis will focus on meaning and how this notion is explored in various ways through science fiction texts. I will not attempt to examine all aspects of postmodernism as this exceeds the scope of this thesis. I will rather examine the selected science fiction texts as encompassing human fears of apocalypse and the connection between these and their link to the postmodern. Inherent herein is my belief that cultural conflicts are emerging which are more dangerous than at any other time in history. A new model of coexistence is thus needed, based on humanity transcending itself.

1.2 SCIENCE FICTION GENRE –TRANSFORMATION AND MEANING

MAKING

The science fiction genre can be viewed as a field that is closely linked to the notion of apocalypse. Visions of world cataclysm, according to *The Visual Encyclopedia of Science Fiction* (1977), constitute one of the most powerful and mysterious of all the categories of science fiction, and in their classic form predate modern science fiction by thousands of years. There appears to be no limit to humanity's need to devise new means of destroying the world we inhabit.

The chapter entitled 'Cataclysms and Dooms', however points to the fact that the catastrophe story in the science fiction genre does not necessarily view apocalyptic transformation in a negative light. Instead, it represents a constructive and positive act by the imagination rather than a negative one, in an attempt to 'confront a patently meaningless universe by challenging it at its own game'. It represents 'an attempt to dismantle the formal structure of time and space which the universe wraps around us at the moment we first achieve consciousness.' (Ballard, 1996:209) The writer uses his imagination to describe the infinite alternatives to reality which nature itself has proved incapable of inventing and in so doing celebrates the possibilities of life which is at the heart of science fiction. Science fiction as a genre, then, provides an ambivalent notion of apocalypse – on the one hand indirectly inspiring cult observers to bring on their own version of world annihilation, whilst on the other hand providing the vehicle for an alternative view of reality which is not necessarily a negative vision.

Science fiction as a genre appears to fulfill different meanings for writers of science fiction. Brian Aldiss is a case in point. In his text *Billion Year Spree* (1972), he identifies the connection between science fiction and the Gothic novel. The terror, mystery and horror which he connects with the sublime evokes a sense of helplessness and terror when humans realize their frailty and small size in conjunction with the might and magnitude of the universe. His conception of science fiction evokes the dark side of apocalyptic meaning, with its sense of the sublime: mountainous scenery, vast deserts, thunderstorms and the starry sky which has a forbidding undertone. This can be paralleled to a hell-on-earth scenario, or a post-holocaust scenario where all of humankind is annihilated and nature is left in a bare, barren and ominous state.

According to the text *Future Tense – the Cinema of Science Fiction* (1978) by John Brosnan, one of the main causes of the boom in science fiction which took place at the start of the 1950's was the second world war. Not only did the war induce a great technological leap forward, particularly in the field of weaponry and rockets, but more significantly, it gave birth to the atomic bomb. Almost overnight the assumed permanency of life on earth had vanished, and people were forced to live with the traumatic awareness that total, worldwide obliteration was a strong possibility in the near future. This came as a shock to most people, but science fiction readers had been entertaining such concepts for years. This gave rise to speculation in some spheres. In 1944, for example the editor of *Astounding* magazine, John W. Campbell Jr., was questioned by the F.B.I after publishing a story by Cleve Cartmill called *Deadline*, which dealt with the development of the atomic bomb, a description that came a little too

close to reality.

The public's attitude towards scientists also changed swiftly after the war. In the 1930's people who experimented with rockets and talked of one day firing them were previously regarded as harmless, but with the development of the V2 rocket, they were regarded as dangerous. The Cold War, an extension of the second world war, helped to create a climate that generated interest in science fiction. It also produced an atmosphere of anxiety and paranoia : anxiety mainly caused by the ever present possibility of atomic war between the two super- powers – U.S.A and Russia – and the resulting global destruction; paranoia caused by fear of communist subversion, an invasion from people who looked like ordinary Americans but who were actually pawns of an alien power.

Another factor in the climate of paranoia that existed in America during the late 1940's and the 1950's was the 'flying saucer' scare that began in 1947. Whether this was a genuine cause of the paranoia or merely a psychological side-effect of the Cold War remains a matter for debate. As a result of the fears of world annihilation amongst the general public during this time, most of the science fiction films of the 1950's reflect a number of basic themes : the atomic bomb and its after-effects, the result of atomic radiation, alien invasion and possession by aliens, as well as world destruction. To Darko Suvin, in his text *Metamorphosis of Science Fiction* (1979), the notion of aliens - utopians, monsters or differing strangers – 'is a mirror to man just as the differing country is a mirror for his world. But the mirror is not only a reflecting one, it is also a transforming one.' (1979:5) Suvin raises an important notion in the science fiction

genre about transformation. By this he means that the genre has always been wedded to a hope of finding in the unknown the ideal environment, tribe, state, intelligence or other aspect of the supreme good or to a fear of or revulsion from its contrary.

Suvin links science fiction to the European utopian tradition : not only is science fiction sometimes specifically within that tradition, but both science fiction and utopia share these two features – estrangement and cognition. Estrangement involves presenting readers or the public with something jarringly different from their own experiences. Science fiction to Suvin is also distinguished by cognition, the process of acquiring knowledge and reason. The idea of utopia is also pertinent to science fiction in the sense that it presents near perfect worlds that millenarians aspired towards or dreamt of. In terms of the Heaven's Gate and Solar Temple suicides, for example, the cult members through irrational means aspired to transcend into 'better' worlds. Suvin also introduces another useful term, the *novum* : Science Fiction is distinguished by the narrative dominance or hegemony of a fictional novum. (1979:25) A novum is a deliberately introduced change made to the world as experienced by author and readers. In consequence, science fiction is just as much about history as it is about science. Science fiction writers have to construct new histories, of our own world or of others, to set their novums in context and to discuss its impact upon individuals of society as a whole. In constructing such histories one inevitably also looks at threats as well as dreams of humanity's future and mankind's destiny.

Science fiction thus has a crucial bearing on the notion of the theme of apocalypse, in

terms of how it presents worlds, incorporates themes, speculates about the possibilities of the human species (and its place in the universe) as well as how it speculates about transformation of the human environment. Such themes appear to recur and may be loosely divided into those of biological origin – non-human beings and problems of race and sex – and those of physical origin – the themes of time and space. A pertinent aspect of the vision of science fiction is the desire to transcend normal experience. The population of imaginary universes with forms of non-human intelligence is the primary biological manifestation of this urge. Its primary physical realization is through the presentation of characters and events that transgress the conditions of space and time as we know them. It is primarily only in science fiction that issues such as overpopulation, nuclear warfare, sexism, pollution, poverty and human destiny are raised. Such issues have an apocalyptic undertone in terms of the fate of humanity, which science fiction dares to extrapolate and to speculate on.

1.3 SCIENCE FICTION AND THE POSTMODERN GENRE

Science fiction has become the pre-eminent literary genre of the postmodern era, since it alone has the generic protocols and thesaurus of themes to cope with the drastic transformations that technology has wrought on life in the post-industrial west. New technology has created a crisis in culture. Science fiction has helped to invent metaphors to express the hopes and fears of the Machine Age, the Nuclear Age, the Space Age and now the Information Age. Science fiction writing in particular has constantly fed the imagination with images and scenarios of our impending global extinction. The issues that I will highlight with regard to the intersection as well as the differences between

science fiction and the postmodern genre are not meant to be a summary of the genre features but aspects which bear some significance to my central concern regarding the apocalyptic nature of selected film and texts. These will be explored in greater detail in relation to the selected texts which incorporate these concerns.

Science fiction and the mainstream postmodernist fiction share strategies and motifs which are designed to raise and explore ontological issues, by this I mean questions concerning the nature of reality. Science fiction as with postmodernist fiction, is governed by an ontological dominant, both raise and explore issues of epistemology, and are thus governed by an epistemological dominant. According to the text *Constructing Postmodernism* (1992) by Brian McHale, epistemologically-oriented fiction e.g. (modernism, detective fiction) is pre-occupied with questions such as : What is there to know about the world? Who knows it, and how reliably?. Ontologically – orientated fiction, on the other hand (postmodernist, science fiction) is pre-occupied with questions such as: What is a world?, How is a world constituted?, How do different worlds and different kinds of worlds differ, and what happens when one passes from one world to another? To explore such ontological issues that McHale refers to, both science fiction and postmodernist fiction naturally use and adapt the resources common to all varieties of fiction, in particular the fictional resource of virtual space. The difference, however is that science fiction and postmodernist fiction foreground and exploit the spatial dimension to a greater extent than other fictional texts. The exploration of space is an important element in both these genres.

Science fiction as a genre in particular developed a number of micro-worlds – domed space colonies, orbiting space-stations, subterranean cities, ‘cities in flight’ and so on recur in this genre. These micro-worlds can be regarded as revisionist or parodic, glamorous showcases of high technology, exhibiting a postmodern essence. These microworlds differ not only in the ways that nations differ in our world – in terms of language, culture and political systems, but they also differ in much more basic ontological ways in features such as light, gravity, temperature, strains of bacteria. They differ, in other words, as worlds differ, and their differences heighten the world-modelling function of these enclosures. Another important aspect which postmodernist fiction and science fiction raises concerns the nature of the self. Fragmentation and the dispersal of the self occurs in postmodernist fiction at the levels of language, narrative structure and the material medium, rather than at the level of the fictional world where postmodernism has figurative representations of disintegration. Science fiction texts, cyberpunk texts in particular, project fictional worlds which includes fictional objects and phenomena illustrating the problematics of selfhood for example human-machine symbiosis, artificial intelligences, biologically engineered alter-egos, and so on. McHale also feels that science fiction was ‘one of the places where elite/art fiction interfaces most actively with popular/entertainment fiction in the postmodern period.’(1992:12) This is particularly pertinent in terms of the film narratives which will be shown through my analysis of selected film at a latter part of this thesis.

Another important aspect which science fiction and postmodernist fiction is concerned with is the use of time. According to the text *Science Fiction and Postmodernist Fiction*

A Genre Study (1992) by Barbara Puschmann – Nalenz, science fiction uses time as a phenomenon in two different functions whose importance can vary from text to text. The first is the use of time as a topic or as the main reason for the evolutionary changes that are described, and the second is 'time as a structuring element of the narrative process.' (Nalenz, 1992: 103) In contrast to the rigid chronology of our sequential concept of time, a leap into the past, the future or into simultaneous time sequences are feasible in science fiction, as well as an inversion of the continuity of time. The exchange of fiction and reality in two opposed worlds is another variation in the motif of time, so that from the reader's point of view the non-real world becomes the real, and the real, the fictional. There is also the cyclical concept of time in some novels, where instead of the linear and evolutionary process we find a return to a former stage of development : a nuclear disaster followed by the Middle Ages, for example. Beside these conceptions of the dynamics of time we also find examples of a complete standstill of time in science fiction

- the portrayal of a static world where there is never any change or anything new.

Science fiction and the postmodern novel are both heading in the direction of the dissolution of an irreversible, continually progressing time concept. They differ significantly though with regard to their aims and methods of achievement.

Postmodern fiction often leads to a mingling of fiction and reality. This is achieved by breaking through the conventional conception of time and replacing it by a subjective and psychologically realistic time. This is demonstrated through an insight into the psyche of a character in order to reveal an interpretation of the present reality to the reader. This differs in science fiction, where time as a component of the narrative is

treated in science fiction in analogy to other components. Whereas in the postmodern novel time is mainly an instrument of narrative technique, in science fiction it is primarily an element in the plot or material of the story. Another important intersection between science fiction and the postmodern genre is its inter-textual nature. According to Brian McHale's text – *Constructing Postmodernism* (1992), science fiction constitutes a particularly clear and demonstrable example of an inter-textual field, one in which models, materials, images and ideas circulate openly from text to text, and are conspicuously cited, analyzed, combined, revised and reconfigured. It differs from mainstream postmodernism only in the openness and visibility of the process. McHale points to the inter-textual nature of science fiction as visible to readers, whilst postmodern texts uses the device of inter-text more covertly.

McHale also cites that the ultimate ontological boundary is the boundary between life and death, being and non-being. However, in relation to the theme of apocalypse I will illustrate the sense of transcending such boundaries to be true. In terms of Clarke's text *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1990), where Bowman undergoes the transformation in the final scenes, he does not die to emerge as the Starchild – rather he goes beyond the unknown, pinpointing the sense of uncertainty and irrationality that postmodernism as a theory is concerned with.

In terms of the apocalyptic, the theme of nuclear holocaust has also been a preoccupation with both science fiction and postmodernist texts.

‘For the first time in history human beings feel threatened with ‘double death’ : inevitable personal extinction as always, but also the probable global self-destruction of the race and its posterity through nuclear war (or, alternatively, some ecological disaster).’ (McHale, 1992:262)

Malcolm Bradbury states regarding the term postmodernism that :-

‘The phrase was then a marker of the sense of global anxiety and absurdity that followed the war, when news of the Holocaust pervaded intellectual consciousness, when the nuclear age had begun, when the increasingly totalitarian political and ideological directions of the first part of the century changed into their cold war shape. It sought to express the ideological schizophrenia of the early post-war world.’ (Prospect, 1995:36)

Such a preoccupation will be further explored in terms of how the medium of cinema and popular culture in particular renders such anxieties. McHale’s theories as well as those issues mentioned in the light of the stated theorists in essence project the idea that science fiction provides the site for the exploration of our postmodernism. Science fiction has certainly permeated our culture. It is not about predicting the future, but about projecting imaginative futures in which traces of our present can be seen and scrutinized.

1.4 POSTMODERN CULTURE’S INFILTRATION INTO SOCIETY

‘Today we find ourselves in a paradoxical situation. We enjoy all the achievements of modern civilization that have made our physical existence on this earth easier in so many important ways. Yet we do not know exactly what to do with ourselves, where to turn. The world of our experiences seems chaotic, disconnected, confusing. There appears to be no integrating forces, no unified meaning, no true inner understanding of phenomena in our experience of the world. Experts can explain anything in the objective world to us, yet we understand our own lives less and less. In short, we live in the postmodern world, where everything is possible and nothing is certain.’ (Havel, 1994)

Havel’s statement projects the essence of what this thesis tries to explore in terms of postmodernism and its permeating effect on contemporary lifestyles. The sense of our

search for meaning in a chaotic world is inherent in our lives as well as projected on to science fiction texts and film that appear to mirror this concern.

In our modern society it is said that a single daily edition of the newspaper contains more information than the average seventeenth century person needed to know in a lifetime. This points to the emergence of an information overload, which can be seen to contribute to both the sense of disorientation and suspicion of information that is at the heart of the turn from modernism to postmodernism. Society tends to rely on the visual media, especially the television, for information and entertainment to such an extent that the line between the two has become blurred. Everything in contemporary society has emerged as being simulated so that all sense of uniqueness has become tainted. The excessive time spent with mass media has contributed to the doubtfulness of knowing anything for certain. There is also a corresponding loss of confidence in the accuracy of political statements and the news media, where people often need to read between the lines to ascertain any information. This too is part of the postmodern turn.

David Harvey in his text *The Condition Of Postmodernity*, highlights a significant aspect:

‘The mobilization of fashion in mass (as opposed to elite) markets provided a means to accelerate the pace of consumption not only in clothing, ornament and decoration but also across a wide swathe of lifestyles and recreational activities (leisure and sporting habits, pop music styles, video and children’s games, and the like).’ (Harvey, 1990:285)

This points to the fact that our society has shifted into an era of mass consumption.

Coupled with this has been an acceleration of the consumption of services, not only

personal, business, educational and health services, but also those of entertainment.

Fashions, products, production techniques, labor processes, ideas and ideologies, values and established practices are constantly in a state of flux, where nothing remains rooted in certainty. Harvey highlights this fact by stating :-

‘In the realm of commodity production, the primary effect has been to emphasize the values and virtues of instantaneity (instant and fast foods, meals and other satisfactions) and of disposability (cups, plates, cutlery, packaging, napkins, clothing etc.). The dynamics of a ‘throwaway society’, as writers like Alvin Toffler (1970) dubbed it, began to become evident during the 1960’s.’ (Harvey, 1990:286)

This means more than just throwing away produced goods (creating a monumental waste-disposal problem), but also being able to throw away values, lifestyles, stable relationships and attachments to things, buildings, places, people and received ways of doing and being, which are the foundation of a stable society.

According to Malcolm Bradbury this emergent change in society has contributed to postmodernism becoming an open definition. He states that,

‘By the 1980’s this view of postmodernism, as an all-inclusive definition of a cultural epoch typified by stylistic glut, pluralism, parody and quotation, the disappearance of traditional cultural hierarchies and the randomisation of cultural production, has become commonplace.’ (Bradbury M, 1995:37)

The term embraces ‘architecture, food, fashion, design, movies...and defines the entire world of virtual reality and shopping, of nothing existence in a style-glutted world.’

(Bradbury M., 1995: 37)

1.4.1 JAMESON'S VIEW ON CONSUMER CULTURE

Jameson in his influential essay on 'Postmodernism and Consumer Society' highlights his belief that 'the emergence of postmodernism is closely related to the emergence of this new moment of late, consumer or multinational capitalism.' (1994:125) He argues that we have moved into a new era since the early 1960's in which the production of culture has become integrated into commodity production generally; the frantic urgency of producing fresh waves of ever more novel-seeming goods (from clothes to airplanes) at ever greater rates of turnover. The constant production of new products as witnessed in contemporary society is in keeping with Jameson's theory of the desire to produce goods that seem innovative or more advanced than the former. Yet this is coupled with market tactics to lure society into a cycle of frenzied spending. Thus Capitalism, according to Harvey (1990:63), in order to sustain its markets has been forced to produce this desire that Jameson highlights and so titillate individual sensibilities as to create a new aesthetic over and against traditional forms of high culture.

Jameson points to the nature of contemporary society as in essence one of consumption. The 'frenzied life-style of financial operators whose addiction to work, long hours and the rush of power make them candidates for the kind of schizophrenic mentality that Jameson depicts.' (Harvey, 1990:287) This also points to the cyclical nature of consumer capitalism with the resultant loss of individualism and identity. Coupled with this is a loss of a sense of history and tradition and a reversion to images of a lost past (hence the importance of museums, mementoes and ruins). Our entire social system has begun to lose its capacity to retain its own past. We have begun to live in a perpetual present and

in a perpetual change that obliterates traditions of the kind which all earlier social formations have had in one way or another to preserve. (1994:125) This highlights the cyclical nature of human existence.

Jameson also points to the notion of the dominance of pastiche as the key postmodern mode of artistic creation, where other earlier styles and forms are imitated or incorporated. All that appears to be left is the recycling of dead forms and an imitation of dead styles. (Jameson, 1995:115) A typical example of this is the creation of theme parks like 'Jurassic Park' to relive an imitation of the dinosaur era, or the adornment of clothing from the Victorian Era for the purpose of theatrical performances. Here we relive the dead past and styles that Jameson highlights. Nothing is rendered as unique. The postmodern world that Jameson highlights is one without depth – without a sense of time or history. This sense of imitation that Jameson depicts will be seen as closely to Baudrillard's discussion on the simulacra which forms part of my next discussion.

1.4.2 BAUDRILLARD – 'ON THE ECSTASY OF COMMUNICATION' AND OTHER THOUGHTS

Jean Baudrillard depicts postmodern culture in very negative terms. Commodity producers, who seek an increase in wealth, are dependent upon the needs and capacity of others to buy. Producers, in turn, have permanent interest in cultivating an imaginary appetite of need to such an extent that this need is replaced by fantasies of desire.

According to the text, *Baudrillard : A Critical Reader*, edited by Douglas Kellner, the author believes that advertising and publicity projects the idea that we need everything

to such an extent that the term 'needs' becomes devoid of any meaning. We are faced with an 'unlimited necessity'. (1994:323) In other words he projects Baudrillard's idea of needs emerging as simulated desires, rather than true needs. This is particularly true of contemporary society where brand-names like Versace and Calvin Klein attract consumer spending.

According to Baudrillard, in his essay –'The Ecstasy Of Communication' (1981), we live in a simulated world, where the images, symbols, signs and concepts which are ordinarily regarded as mediating reality have become self-sufficient. In other words, they no longer refer to an object or a world, but comprise a 'hyper-reality' of simulation in which we are trapped as in a closed, endlessly self-referential, self-stimulating or self-replicating circular process. That which people still mistakenly regard as 'real' is manufactured from memory banks, command models and miniaturized units. Baudrillard is also concerned about the duplicating of information, since 'what is lost in the work that is serially produced is its aura, its singular quality of the here and now.' With duplication, the meaning of information decreases. In the world everything is simulated and duplicated and hence our lives have become a routine, mundane, circular existence, devoid of any real meaning.

Baudrillard's concern with sign systems and imagery, which are important aspects of the postmodern condition, needs to be considered in more depth. To begin with, advertising and media images have come to play a greater importance in the growth dynamics of capitalism. According to Harvey's interpretation of Baudrillard's work, 'advertising is no

longer built around the idea of informing or promoting in the ordinary sense, but is increasingly geared to manipulating desires and tastes through images that may or may not have anything to do with the product to be sold.' (Harvey, 1990:287) Images have in a sense become commodities. This phenomenon, according to Harvey, led Baudrillard (1981) to argue against Marx's analysis of commodity production because capitalism was now more concerned with semiotics rather than the actual commodities.

Images have also become important in competition, not only through the recognition of name brands but also through various associations of respectability, quality, prestige, reliability and innovation. The acquisition of an image (by the purchase of a sign system such as designer clothes and the latest car models) become a singularly important element in the presentation of self in labour markets, and, by extension, becomes integral to the quest for individual identity, self-realization and meaning. The materials to produce and reproduce such images, if they were not readily to hand, have themselves been the focus for innovation – the better the replication of the image, the greater the mass market for image making could become. This has a bearing on Baudrillard's idea of the role of the 'simulacrum' in postmodernism, that is the state of such near-perfect replication that the difference between the original and the copy becomes impossible to discern. It can be viewed at work in the realm of politics as the image makers and the media assume a more powerful role in shaping political identities. It can also be viewed in what Daniel Bell, according to Harvey (1990:290) calls the 'cultural mass', those transmitters of culture who work in higher education, publishing, media, theatre and museums, who influence the production of popular materials for the wide mass-culture audience.

According to Harvey,

‘Mass television ownership coupled with satellite communication makes it possible to experience a rush of images from different spaces almost simultaneously, collapsing the world’s spaces into a series of images on a television screen. The whole world can watch the Olympic games, the World Cup, the fall of a dictator, a political summit...while mass tourism makes a wide range of experiences of what the world contains available to many people.’ (Harvey, 1990:293)

This results in the image of places and spaces becoming open to production and use as any other. The general implication is that through the experience of everything from food, to culinary habits, music, television, entertainment and cinema, it is now possible to experience the world’s geographical complexity as a simulacrum. The interweaving of simulacra in daily life brings together different worlds (of commodities) in the same space and time. It does so in such a way as to conceal any trace of origin, of the labour processes that produced them, or of the social relations implicated in their production. This echoes Jameson’s concerns of society being caught up in a circular ritual of mass production and consumption, to such an extent that all sense of individuality is lost.

According to Harvey’s interpretation Baudrillard also argues in his article entitled – ‘The Precession of Simulacra’ (1984), that ‘mass media has neutralized reality for us and it has done so in stages : first reflecting, then masking reality, and then masking the absence of reality, and finally, bearing no relation to reality at all.’ (Harvey, 1990:223) This he argues is the simulacrum, the final destruction of meaning. Postmodernist writers however, view Baudrillard’s theory as too neat, as resolving tensions which are ongoing and, which I would agree, are unresolvable. Baudrillard does however, make an

important observation in his essay on 'The Ecstasy of Communication' that 'consumer society lived also under the sign of alienation, as a society of the spectacle.' (p130)

'We are no longer a part of the drama of alienation, we live in the ecstasy of communication. And this ecstasy is obscene.' (p130) Baudrillard views the universe of communication as transparent and obscene and thus devoid of meaning. This sense of the ecstasy of communication being obscene is echoed by Douglas Kellner's text entitled: *Baudrillard : A Critical Reader* (1994), where he speaks of the obscenity of the media and its incursion into all forms of communication at various levels of society. (1994:318)

Both Baudrillard and Jameson highlight views which are in keeping with postmodern culture's infiltration into society. These views reflect on a world where barriers and boundaries are collapsing, and where the ideological, political and economic bases of society are starting to disintegrate. Life has become devoid of any real meaning, such that everything leads to speculation. Nothing emerges as rooted in certainty in contemporary society. Bradbury sums this thought process quite succinctly when he states:

'Like those who lived through the ends of other millennia, we feel caught at the moment of uncertainty; world relations are changing fast around us, but we find it hard to look onward. The dissolution of cultural and moral standards has left us open to the onward march of fashions and to ever-shifting winds of influence.' (1995: 39)

To take Malcolm's point further, although he feels that we as a society are emerging in the final days of a cultural movement, he believes that powerful energies, systems and historical processes are beginning to take command. He states :

‘We are certainly not short of styles, we consume them avidly. But we have yet to enter a new age of style : a style that embraces our sensibility, consciousness and philosophical awareness – as over time, and in almost every department of experience, modernism internationally embraced the early twentieth century, or certain forms of postmodernism the sensibility of the cold war era.’ (p39)

Bradbury argues that we are surely ‘post-postmodern’ with the changes emergent in our global society in all spheres. However, rather than interrogating this aspect of Bradbury’s definition any further, my interest is to highlight the idea that human society needs a sense of transcendence, a new sensibility and a spiritual awakening to avert the apocalyptic sense of where we are headed, through our own rapid technological advancement.

CHAPTER TWO

2.1 THE THEME OF THE APOCALYPTIC

Apocalyptic thinking can be viewed as having emerged in response to differing, cultural and socio-economic conditions of the world. Harold Bloom in his text – *Omens of the Millennium* (1996), raises a key idea in terms of the apocalyptic quality that is ingrained in American culture. He states:

‘Our popular obsessions with angels, telepathic and prophetic dreams , alien abductions and ‘near-death experiences’ all have their commercial and crazed debasements ...we are flooded by a violent America that already suffers from too many apocalyptic obsessions.’ (1996:226)

He points to the idea that the theme of the apocalyptic can lead to cultural misinterpretations as well as its exploitation for commercial gain. In effect it emerges as part of a frenzy in some spheres that points to a lack of imagination rather than a deeply religious theme.

Frank Kermode in his text *The Sense of An Ending* (1967) offers a different perspective: he argues that there must be a link between the forms of literature and other ways in which to quote Erich Auerbach , ‘we try to give some order and design to the past, the present and the future. One of these ways is crisis.’(1967: 93) He further states that ‘ours is the great age of crisis – technological, military and cultural’, and that crisis, ‘however facile the conception, is inescapably a central element in our endeavours towards making sense of our world.’ (1967: 93)

Implicit in this state of affairs, is society’s historical position. The changes that the world

has undergone since the latter half of the nineteenth century to the present have been of such a condition that the western world perceives itself as being at the end of an epoch, or as Kermode states : ‘ it is the peculiarity of the imagination that it is always at the end of an era.’ (1967:96) This echoes an apocalyptic sense of where society was viewed as headed – towards an end of time and existence, due to the state of our world, through rapid secularization, industrialization and urbanization.

Due to the common belief through the ages that the end was near, an apocalyptic world-view was formulated. According to Paul Boyer in a review article entitled – ‘The Resiliency of Apocalyptic Belief’, the apocalyptic message has enormous power. The vision of the future embedded in the apocalyptic world view is depicted as frightening. Yet, combined with this fear, there is a sense of meaning and a sense of personal redemption which contributes to the strength of this belief system. This, coupled with the theme of the destruction and recreation of the cosmos is a widespread religious motif which has recurred throughout history in many religious scriptures. They collectively point to the culmination of a struggle between good and evil, where good ultimately prevails.

Mary-Anne Thompson in her text, *Future Tense : An Analysis of Science Fiction as Secular Apocalyptic Literature* (1985), highlights important motifs of the apocalypse (as defined by Koch and Yonina Talmon) that provide a useful base for characteristics of apocalypse as a concept. Some of the characteristics as defined by Koch are:

- * urgent expectation of the end of earthly conditions in the immediate future,
- * the end as a cosmic catastrophe,
- * activity of angels and demons,
- * new salvation, paradisiacal in character and the,
- * manifestation of the kingdom of god.

Yonina Talmon raises a slightly different set of characteristics, the essence of which are the conception of salvation as total where a complete transformation occurs, perfect time as accompanied by perfect space, and the belief that a mediator endowed with supernatural power will bring about this salvation between the human and divine.

These characteristics serve as not a summary of what apocalypse as a concept means, but rather serves as a useful guide to understanding its nature. It also provides links to an understanding of a postmodern reading of the world we live in. Postmodernism, like apocalyptic thinking, depicts an inversion of prevailing orders of society, where leaders and those who are led occupy an inversion of roles, where leaders become the led or the oppressed are set free.

Notions of time and space are inverted, such that it reflects the possibility of a new order, a new heaven and a new earth. Apocalypticism does this by disrupting the present time and transcending it, so that the future becomes now. It mythically re-enacts the future in the present. This paradoxical sense of time, according to Douglas Kellner's view on Baudrillard's texts, of inversion and reversal, of histories written before their events

projects Baudrillard's claim that the future has already happened (1994:316) in terms of 'simulation'. In the case of postmodernism which focuses on dystopia, there is a depiction of chaos and crisis in the world – a sense of confusion in terms of where humanity is headed. Postmodernism, like apocalypticism, also raises questions of meaning, and assists in making sense of the world. Whilst, postmodernism raises questions of ontology, apocalypticism shapes our belief in the ending of the world. Transformation features as one of the key concepts of postmodernism as well as apocalypticism in terms of the inversion of world orders. The apocalyptic vision systematically inverts the prevailing order, and displaces the old order through a mythic replacement of a new order, inverting both the groups and places they occupy in the world. This has a bearing on our historical conception of the world, in terms of how we order our past, present and future.

The recurring elements of the apocalyptic pattern in literary fictions are best summed up in the words of Frank Kermode as those of 'transition, decadence and renovation.' (1967:114) Transition involves the desire/search for the new such as a new world order. Decadence is usually associated with the hope of some kind of renovation. Kermode also succinctly speaks of fictions of the 'End ' as a fact of the imagination, working out, from the middle, the human crisis:

'As the theologians say, we 'live from the End', even if the world should be endless. We need ends ... even now, when the history of the world has so terribly and so untidily expanded its endless successiveness. We recreate the horizons we have abolished, the structures that have collapsed, and we do so in terms of the old patterns, adapting them to our new worlds. Ends, for eg., become a matter of images, figures for what does not exist

except humanly.’ (1967:58)

Kermode highlights an essential feature of the worldview in terms of apocalyptic thinking, as reflected by literary fictions – the fact that we need endings. As critical thinkers, we need perspectives and a sense of routine in life, in order to function. Literary fictions echo our patterns of existence- it reflects how structures collapse and how human-beings reconstruct and relentlessly pursue goals and needs set by themselves, and adapt to new contexts. Fictions of the end allow one to have a perspective on life in terms of where we are headed.

Kermode also raises another crucial essence of apocalyptic thinking that there are two orders of time – an earthly end of time where human existence ceases as defined by a human conception of time, and secondly the universe of time which is eternal. Fictions tend to work on ‘concords of the past, present and future, as humans have constructed, to defy time, but do not deny that time is eternal.’ (1967:89)

An important genre which shares concerns of apocalyptic thinking is science fiction. Science fiction can be viewed as a reflection and response to changes in society, in different historical contexts. The late nineteenth century and early twentieth century writers of science fiction responded to rapid industrialization, secularization and urbanization, and their writings depict these changes. The nineteen twenties to the end of the Second World War depicted the crisis of society due to the impact of the war.

The writings of the nineteen fifties to the present raised fears of nuclear power and computer technology. Due to the rapid social and economic changes through scientific progress, human worldviews have been relocated, and fears of an impending apocalypse have come to haunt humankind.

Mary Anne Thompson draws an important conclusion with regard to science fiction's appeal to the popular imagination, as having provided 'the functional equivalent to religious apocalyptic myth, in order that the population could make sense of the changes which were occurring in society at the time, and so that the crisis of the modern world could be weathered.'(1995:41) It seems clear that science fiction attempted to shape the meaning of life, which was called into question due to the crisis of our modern world. It also carries the innate message that humanity must always look critically at the present, in order for stagnation and decay not to occur.

A science fiction writer who did look critically at our modern world was Arthur C. Clarke, who is regarded as the 'colossus of science fiction '. This is particularly due to his prophetic ideas on space travel, and his speculations on the possibilities of intelligent life in other worlds, communication, as well as the development of space and time travel.

He was particularly prophetic in his writings about humans landing on the moon. The actual moon-landing shortly afterwards symbolized a turning point in history as well as appearing to re-enact Clarke's speculations about space travel. It was apocalyptic in the sense that the human conception of space had changed and, in a sense, the future

subsequently emerged as the present. Mere scientific fantasy had become a reality.

2.2 2001 – A SPACE ODYSSEY

2.2.1 2001 IN CONTEXT

Arthur C. Clarke gained wide recognition in 1968 with his novelization of the film *2001*. Both the film and the novel are based on Clarke's short story 'The Sentinel' (1951). The film version of *2001*, in which Clarke collaborated with filmmaker Stanley Kubrick, is widely regarded as a landmark in science fiction cinema. It is generally praised for its symbolism, its lush images of space and technological gadgetry, as well as Kubrick's deliberate mystification of themes.

It is useful to look at the context in which *2001: A Space Odyssey* was written. 1968 was the year before the moon landing, and the world was undergoing rapid changes in all spheres, whilst still in a sense frozen in a Cold War between the U.S.A and U.S.S.R. Protest movements were escalating against the war in Vietnam. Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy, icons of hope for a dispossessed sixties generation, were assassinated the year *2001* was released. Space technology and efforts to accomplish a successful landing on the moon were the preoccupation of United States administrations. The government was hopeful that the moon-landings would restore the sense of national pride and optimism in the U.S.A. *2001* is imbued with the same anxiety and hope as those times.

Reactions to the film version of *2001: A Space Odyssey* were ambivalent. Some critics described it as confused, pretentious, disjointed, boring, baffling and dull. The chief

complaint was that it was difficult to understand. Yet, to any regular reader of science fiction most of the film was clear, and it was younger audiences, more familiar with science fiction, who first appreciated *2001*, forcing many critics to re-examine their opinions. In a *Playboy* magazine interview, when Kubrick was asked about the message of *2001*, he replied :-

‘It’s not a message that I ever intend to convey in words. *2001* is a non-verbal experience : out of two hours and nineteen minutes of film, there are only a little less than forty minutes of dialogue. I tried to create a visual experience one that bypasses verbalized pigeonholing and directly penetrates the subconscious with emotional and philosophical... You’re free to speculate as you wish about the philosophical and allegorical meaning of the film...but, I don’t want to spell out a verbal road map of *2001* that every viewer will feel obligated to pursue or else fear he’s missed the point.’ (Brosnan J, *Future Tense : The Cinema of Science Fiction*, 1978:179)

It is clear that Kubrick intentionally wanted to create a film that was vague, in order to allow audiences to speculate on the meaning that it conveys, and not to reveal his idea or message in such a way as to cloud diverse interpretations of the movie. Gerald Jones in ‘The New York Times Book Review’, stated, in support of Kubrick’s claim, that both the book and movie of *2001* drew much of their power from this ‘artful vagueness’. One of the great themes of science fiction, he reiterated, is the confrontation with superhuman or non-human intelligence. To be convincing, the depiction of the non-human must be kept vague, since anything readily comprehensible by the human mind would seem, by definition, to fall short of the truly non-human. (Jan 23, 1983:24)

Kubrick believed that ideas have to be discovered by the audience, and their thrill in making the discovery makes these ideas all the more powerful. What is significant to

Kubrick is that film should communicate its concepts as subtext, obliquely, so as to avoid all pat conclusions and neatly tied up ideas. (Nelson, *Inside A Film Artist's Maze*, 1982:10) This points to Kubrick's mythical intentions in the film version of *2001*, that he created a visually ambiguous work of art that defies any attempts at an absolute, final interpretation. It is significant that Kubrick raises typically postmodern ontological questions such as 'Where do I come from?', 'Where do I go?' and 'What is my place in the universe?' Our perception of the world is thrown open in terms of meaning. Kubrick also raises the moral and spiritual message of the film as he states:

'Man must strive to gain mastery over himself as well as over his machines. Somebody has said that man is the missing link between primitive apes and civilized human beings. You might say that that idea is inherent in *2001*. We are semi-civilized, capable of cooperation and affection, but needing some sort of transfiguration into a higher form of life. Since the means to obliterate life on Earth exists, it will take more than just careful planning and reasonable cooperation to avoid some eventual catastrophe. The problem exists, and the problem is essentially a moral and spiritual one.' (Nelson, *Inside a Film Artist's Maze*, 1982:99)

Kubrick's view of humans as 'semi-civilized' incensed some science fiction writers, as they viewed his message in *2001* as condescending, implying that for all the advances in technology, humans are still ape creatures playing with our toys, and that we have not developed one iota in the cosmic sense. However, the majority of reactions to *2001* have been optimistic, as it reinforces Kubrick's aim to allow audiences to re-examine their own perceptions of the universe. It also – overwhelmingly – creates a sense of awe and wonder which is at the heart of science fiction. This sense of wonder at the mystery of the universe produces a feeling of vague optimism. Kubrick also acknowledges humanity's ability to destroy itself as he points out that the means to obliterate life on

earth exists, and that careful planning is needed to avoid a catastrophe. This points to his warning of the inherent danger in humanity's capacity to destroy itself, which raises an apocalyptic undertone. (Brosnan, 1978:177)

The novel and film version of *2001* can thus be interpreted from multiple perspectives, which has evoked ambivalent reactions from readers and viewers. My concern will focus on a postmodern, apocalyptic and religious reading of its narrative, and the message inherent in it.

2.2.2 TIME AND SPACE IN *2001*

Central to an apocalyptic and postmodern reading of *2001* is how the novel and film uses time and space in the narrative of the written text and the plot of its film version.

Throughout the novel Arthur C. Clarke combines evocations of exploration and wandering amidst the lonely expanses of space with a substructure of explanatory material. The film, by contrast is more open-ended, relying less on narrative background and more on the free-play of images and ideas. Whilst Clarke builds clear connections between the six parts of his novel, the film compresses the action of the novel creating in effect a series of ellipses. The audience is forced to provide the visual connections and to fill in the gaps. An example of this is the match cut between bone and satellite, which spans four million years of film time. Clarke concludes his first section (Primeval Night) with a chapter that briefly outlines the 'Ascent of man' and his tools following the alien visitation, and only then proceeds to the year 2001 and Floyd's trip to the moon.

Kubrick doesn't title this part of the film, and through the visual association of Pleistocene bone and twenty first century space hardware, starts a doubling pattern which has no source in the novel. The novel maintains its linear and connective structure when it moves from the moon excavation scene to the Jupiter mission. At the end of part two, Clarke explains how signals from the monolith are picked up on the side of Mars and goes to part three 'Between Planets' and the journey of Discovery towards Saturn. Kubrick, by contrast, cuts from the piercing sounds by the monolith to a title on a black screen that identifies part three of his *2001* as 'Jupiter Mission : Eighteen months later'. He thus leaps over time into space (the darkness behind the titles, into which Discovery moves from screen left) and in an image of conjunction reminiscent of 'The Dawn of Man' continues to build an associative rather than strictly logical visual structure. The film does not explain the purpose of the monolith until the end of part three. In this way, Kubrick enlarges the role of the monolith on a symbolic level beyond that of the novel.

In the last part of the film Kubrick uses a similar abrupt transition between parts two and three. He shows Bowman suspended in the space inside Hal's brain room, observing a small screen and listening to an 'explanation' for the mission. The film then cuts to the blackness of space both behind the titles and in a shot that precedes the camera's downward tilt to reveal another conjunction-between Jupiter, its moons and a huge monolith in orbit, while we hear the sounds of Gyorgy Ligeti's unearthly music. Finally, when Kubrick moves Bowman out of an eighteenth century enclosure at the end of the film, he repeats the music from Richard Strauss's 'Thus Spoke Zarathustra' – associated earlier with planetary conjunction, the monolith, and an important evolutionary moment –

and pushes the camera through the blackness of the monolith and back into space as we witness the Star-child's journey toward earth. The film thus turns the familiar (i.e. the room) into the surreal and transports the viewers into a world where the ordered memories of time oppose the mysteries of space.

When Kubrick directs his audience towards a visual rather than verbal definition of the film's complex structure, Clarke works in a medium that requires that even the notion of mystery be circumscribed within a system of temporal and verbal logic. What distinguishes the film version of *2001*, as mentioned previously, is its assault on the traditional conventions of narrative film making, where assurances of a normal perspective are inverted. The idea of inversions to displace what is commonly perceived as normal lies at the heart of the postmodern and apocalyptic concept.

In terms of themes that have a bearing on space and time in *2001*, one persistent idea that recurs is the use of language. After about thirty minutes into the film during which four million years have passed, *2001* picks up language in a state of decline. Floyd's empty ritual of sounds in the company of Soviet scientists hardly has any more value as communication than Moonwatcher's grunts of bewilderment or screams of triumph. The decay of language to empty phrases reflects Baudrillard's view of the universe of communication as being transparent and thus devoid of meaning. Kubrick shows that battles for territory and tribal dominance persist even in the rarefied air of space. We learn that the moon, a dead and arid world, has been divided into American and Soviet sectors and that language, in its political and social functions, has evolved into a polite

and banal mask (a cover story), for Pleistocene struggles. The ideological bases of this arid world emerge as disintegrated.

Ironically, as Floyd goes ‘up’ to Clavius, Smyslov (Leonard Rossiter) and Elena (Margaret Tyzack) go ‘down’ to Earth, where she tells him her husband works on ocean floors (underwater research in the Baltic) whilst she travels in space. They thus comment on the wonder of their spatial environment or imply that it has stimulated an exploration and expansion of inner and outer worlds. The flight stewardess’s responses – ‘Here you are, sir’ and Floyd’s ‘See you on the way back’ illustrate the kind of time-bound and linear vocabulary repeatedly used by the characters of *2001*; they ignore the fact that in space directional terms like ‘forward’ and ‘backward’ or ‘up’ and ‘down’ no longer have the same meaning as they do within earth’s gravity. Throughout the film, where all the spoken utterances are concentrated, characters persist in the illusion that the verbal contours of earth can chart a journey through the infinitude of space.

Nelson (1992), observes one scene in particular which illustrates how language in *2001* works in opposition to visual communication which constantly rearranges spatial perspective and relationships. At Clavius, the American moon base, Floyd holds a briefing with other members. For this scene, he deliberately uses a small and sparsely decorated room to complement a sense of verbal and moral regression, as Floyd’s verbal responses to the mystery of the monolith fails to communicate any new visual information. Kubrick later punctuates the scene when he links the death of machine intelligence with the last words in the film, appropriately spoken by Floyd in another

‘briefing’, this time on a tiny screen in the narrow confines of Hal’s defunct brain, before Bowman’s speechless gaze: ‘Good day gentlemen. This is a pre-recorded briefing...total mystery.’

According to Nelson (1992), patterns of psychological doubling, as mentioned before, reappear throughout the film- the metamorphosis of Moonwatcher into Floyd, pairing Bowman and Poole, and their symbiotic relationship with Hal and his twin on earth – as Kubrick explores inner worlds that shuttle between extinction and renewed vision. Repeatedly characters engage in ritual activities and inhabit settings that double back on the past and point to a new future in space, namely (1) the celebration of birthdays in a primeval earth, and on screens and ships in space, (2) in the evolution and regression of eating from first, an act of survival (the primate as vegetarian) and relish (the ape-man as carnivore) on an African wasteland to spaceships of the future and lastly the ironic reversion in the eighteenth century formalism of Bowman’s last meal, and (3) in the development of those patterns of sleeping and awakening mentioned earlier, particularly the hominid’s terrified gaze into a waking nightmare, and Bowman’s ‘awakening’.

Shapes of the past tends to merge with and comment on shapes of the future. In the shots with the planets one notices that they appear to be enclosed circles within other circles and that each occupies a place in a boundless darkness. Moonwatcher’s bone goes up in space only to descend. Whilst a bone-shaped satellite orbits in circles, spaceships create the gravity of earth within large centrifuges, which provides a treadmill for Poole’s jogging, as well as ‘wombs’ for hibernators in the twenty first century. These futuristic

machines externally resemble the fossil remains of an ancient race's technological and psychic evolution. Recurrence of the eye imagery creates within the wider screen frame an impression of screens within screens. *2001* invites the audience to 'see' beyond the earthbound (and film-bound) limits of time and space.

Within the four-part structure of *2001* Kubrick associates planetary conjunction with narrative doubling in parts one and two. According to Thomas Allen Nelson in the text *Kubrick – Inside a Film Artist's Maze*, these conjunctions can be viewed as creating a maze of visual and narrative motions that develop this paradoxical tug of war between centripetal (collapsing) and centrifugal (expanding) forces. (1982:114) Incidents in *2001* which points to this are:

(1) The prologue behind the title of the film showing the vertical alignment of Planets (moon, earth and sun) and Strauss's Zarathustra not only anticipate an evolutionary event but provides a cosmic perspective that both looks 'up' (the camera tilt) and descends to Earth (the Dawn of Man).

(2) In the 'Dawn of Man' scene, Kubrick shows a vertical image of the monolith, moon and sun: from a reverse angle, earth is pictured as 'down' and the moon as 'up', just as the narrative declines in time only to advance in space. The monolith and its blackness become part of a vertical symmetry that points towards the darkness of space and opposes the horizontal and static contours of a ravaged African landscape.

Part two concludes with a repetition of both Ligeti's music, including sounds of alien 'voices' and a second vertical alignment of monolith, sun and earth, as the film comes full circle, significantly demonstrating that a regressive evolution is the theme of this scene. Four million years in film time, according to Nelson, after that initial tilt-shot on the moon, Kubrick shows Floyd and his generation doubling back on Moonwatcher, weaving concave circles of time in the convexities of space.

Part two of the film prompts the audience to recall the film's reflection on its own past and its vision of things to come. Not only does the match cut from bone to satellite stimulate such a reaction, but also other associations, as it reveals a visual alignment of the sun, earth, moon and satellite, whilst complemented by 'The Blue Danube'. The bone and satellite are not only artifacts but extensions of humans in time and space respectively. Floyd's trips to Hilton Space Station Five aboard the Pan Am shuttle (the Orion) and to Clavius Moon Base aboard a spherical spaceship (the Aries) provide two additional sequences in part two where images of conjunction reinforce the film's early emphasis on visual and narrative circularity.

In the first, according to Nelson : Moonwatcher's bone assumes a more streamlined and expressive shape in Orion's arrow-like and phallic movement towards a conjunctive rendezvous with another ancient tool duplicated in space ...the rotating wheel of the space station...(1982:116) Secondly, the Orion completes another 'harmonic trinity' of artifacts and celestial bodies. Kubrick then returns the film to space and conjunctive visions complicated by temporal and psychological disorders : initially, one notices how

the spaceship *Aries* resembles a planet as it keeps company in a single shot with the sun and moon, whilst, inside, Floyd re-enacts the ancient cycle of sleeping, eating and elimination.

Through the use of screens and windows, according to Nelson, Kubrick develops a conflict between on the one hand, temporal inversion and spatial reduction and on the other....seventy millimeter visions of harmony and expansion. (1982:117 The space travellers in the early scenes are depicted as confined in a series of enclosures that prevents them from having direct access to space itself. They inhabit spaceships, space stations, moon buses and spacesuits that frame through window screens the infinity of space. It serves to make humans appear insignificant in relation to the vastness of space. The scene recalls Baudrillard's theory of humanity being in a sense trapped in an endlessly 'circular' process – one that is 'self-replicating'. The space travellers are representative of icons of society caught up in a circular entrapment, to such an extent that their lives are devoid of meaning.

This idea is reinforced by the pervasive theme of loneliness that emerges in *2001*. Many of the physical compositions of the frame are based on isolating one figure (ship, computer, human-being, child). Although the earlier prehistoric scenes appear violent, all relations are physical, 'bunched up', tight and close. All latter glimpses of humans are set against cold, sterile, often near-blinding white backgrounds that contrasts a lone figure with its/his expansive surroundings. This is seen in the Poole jogging scene, the astronaut's trip on the moon bus, and the shot of Floyd in what resembles an antiseptic

cage – the picture-phone booth room.

In the first half of the film Kubrick's primary emphasis was ironic and time-bound, but parts three and four focus on interior and exterior space. The latter half of the film illustrates how Bowman and Poole become extensions of Moonwatcher and Floyd. Visually, 'inside' enclosures dominate 'outside' worlds, and the use of subjective camera angles signifies the presence of an internal struggle. Images of circles and corridors convert the interior of Discovery into a well-lit womb of death where hibernators are aborted, and one character (Bowman), from the darkness of space, gains re-entry to destroy the tool-turned-Doomsday machine and begin a new evolutionary cycle.

The conceptual complexity of this section is revealed through its evocation of shapes and images. Throughout, eyes and shapes of eyes complement themes of visual blindness and perceptual awakening, as mentioned previously. In relation to the theme of space Orion's imitation of a phallus and Aries' of a head/planet (with glowing white eyes) gives form to Kubrick's futuristic vision of technological humanity filling the lonely expanses of space with artifacts. Hal is seen as the ultimate tool for human exploration of space – he opens and closes doors, operates pods and keeps the spaceship on course with an ideal mathematical precision. Instead, Bowman and Poole serve as Hal's tools, servants to his omniscience and, like Moonwatcher's bone, nothing more than artifacts to be tossed into space once their functions have been fulfilled. The outer space of *2001* represents a mirror universe in which humanity shrinks infinity to the measurements of mechanical form.

Through visual and dramatic associations Kubrick both doubles Bowman and Hal and recalls the pairing of Moonwatcher and Floyd. Bowman is first seen as a revolving and distorted reflection in Hal's eye (as he descends and rotates from the ship's hublink) and each experiences a journey into memory at the moment of death: one ends with a song called 'Daisy' and the other on a green and gold bed in an eighteenth-century room. Symbolically, Hal re-enacts Moonwatcher's primitivism and Floyd's blindness when he becomes the first 'Cain' in space and denies knowledge of the monolith. Bowman, by contrast transcends the earthbound limitations of Floyd's vision.

Distortions of angle and Hal's fish-eyed lens define interior spaces and give visual shape to latent psychological disturbances, and the symmetry outside Discovery reinforces the ambiguity of spatial darkness. Kubrick characterizes space travel as a frightening and mysterious equivalent for the monolith itself. Rather than visions of planetary conjunction or images of other worlds, only a surreal spaceship or occasional meteor is shown moving through a black universe. In the three extravehicular pod trips, the film takes its characters into a spatial context. Each trip begins with a shot of the pod emerging and rising over Discovery's enormous head. In another scene of spatial exploration, when Bowman tries to rescue Poole, his face changes colour and his eyes are framed in light as he searches the darkness and becomes the first character in the film to look through a window/eye in an act of spatial exploration. The scene demonstrating Hal's disconnection serves as a backward journey for the film (Floyd listening to the pre-recorded briefing), as well as a return to Moonwatcher's legacy, one that not only reverses but nullifies time.

The last scene of the film depicts Bowman's escape from earthbound forms through a repetition of images. Bones, satellites, spaceships and the previous predominance of black and white are superseded by slit-scan corridors of light and the sensation of rapid movement. Time and space acquire a plasticity not realized before, just as Bowman's face, through a series of freeze-frames, undergoes a radical transformation. Like the surface of an oversized camera lens where the refractions of inner and outer space intersect, a world of perception and 'seeing' unfolds. Whilst the sequence of seeing represents the meaning of the Stargate, understanding what is seen defines the ambiguity of the film's last sequence.

Pleistocene waterholes and twenty-first century space stations become indistinguishable from a nostalgic eighteenth century *mise-en-scene* which encloses the astronaut Bowman in the primal and ritualized processes of human time, from awakening and sleep (large bed), to eating (formal table setting), cleansing (bathroom) and a contemplation of self (Bowman's aging mirror twin). *2001* brings humans to the limits of their growth, through a compression of time. The Starchild penetrates the blackness of the monolith, escapes through a room without windows or doors and moves through space as a world onto himself. The final images of the film pictures the moon before it tilts down to reveal earth, reversing the upward movement of the camera in the opening titles-suggesting the start of a new cycle. The Starchild, a 'humanized monolith' enters the frame from the left to create the film's only conjunction between human beings and planet.

Time and space can thus be viewed as central elements in an apocalyptic and postmodern

engagement with the narrative of *2001*. What is also significant to the narrative is how the recurring themes of *2001* impact on a postmodern interpretation of western society. The themes which I will be examining are as follows: food, bones, waterhole, language, sleeping/waking and artifact).

The theme of food or consumption prevails in the narrative of *2001*, where the astronauts consume pastes of differing synthetic ‘foods’ in contrast to primitive humans who had to hunt for food (e.g. Moonwatcher and the rival tapirs). Contemporary society can be viewed as one that has degenerated to ritualized meal times: breakfast, lunch or supper. The growing chain of food stores, restaurants and take away outlets with labels such as MacDonald’s, Nando’s and Debonair’s to name a few, mark the growth of the commercialization of ‘human consumption’ in relation to a growing population. One wonders whether this would eventually lead to a commercialization of ‘synthetic pastes’ for western society as seen in *2001*, as food is constantly marketed, labelled and sold to meet the needs of a working world which requires so-called ‘convenience foods’ to fit in with hectic work schedules.

As seen in the bone-motif of *2001*, in relation to a postmodern world, one can recognize the growing mechanization of public and private life. The personal computer has become a must in every home along with other convenience machines: food processors, dishwashers, microwaves and televisions, to name a few. It is not long before picture-phones will invade our living spaces and render our push-button telephones obsolete.

The theme of the waterhole in *2001* can be seen as a symbol of competition in the market economy, in which getting ahead of – or even eliminating- one’s competitors is one’s key to success. The fight for predominance on the market is seen through advertising: in *2001*, labels such as ‘Bell Telephone Labs inc.’, ‘Boeing Company’, ‘Chrysler Corporation’, ‘Douglas Aircraft Company’ and ‘Pan –American Airlines’ are perpetuated as trade marks. These can be compared to labels such as Goutier and Nike in the fashion world of contemporary society or in the ‘BMW’ and ‘TOYOTA’ car models of today. This recalls Frederic Jameson’s notion of contemporary society as one of a ‘consumer society’, where all the modern needs and luxuries are reduced to labels in a greedy, competitive market engaged in the ritual of commercialization. Kubrick’s vision of the regression of family ties with a simultaneous progress in telecommunication echoes his theme of the paradox of progress. This is seen in Western society where factors like ‘urgency’ or ‘importance’ have lost all value in the transmission of information, as the Internet allows worldwide information transfer in seconds. Cyberspace cafes and chat rooms (allows one to engage) with international audiences, for which we do not even have to leave our living rooms.

The Louise-seize room symbolically stands for not only the end of the ancient regime but a pre- or proto-industrial era. The industrial revolution had a major impact not only on manufacturing industries but also on the socio-demographic conditions at the time. Kubrick shows that the psychological development of humans has not kept pace with technological progress. In a modern context, it warns humans of the detrimental side of technology, and that we must be prepared psychologically as technology develops into

more complex systems.

Lastly, with the ambiguous monolith, Kubrick presents us with a mirror of our own ideology in that everyone can see in the rectangular slab what they want. Simultaneously, Kubrick shows that all metaphysical and religious schools can be brought to a common (universal) denominator, the belief in a 'higher power' that governs us. This idea of plurality, of many religions but one divine power, emerges as a powerful postmodern metaphor which is linked to the theme of 'awakening' that Kubrick appears to project.

The latent idea is that humanity needs a spiritual awakening to understand the dangers of scientific technology taken to such an extreme that it can precipitate our own annihilation.

Finally, the circle of themes can be viewed collectively as the search for the meaning of life. Kubrick stated in a *Playboy* interview:

'If man really sat back and thought about his impending termination and his terrifying insignificance and aloneness in the cosmos, he would surely go mad, or succumb to a numbing sense of futility. Why, he might ask himself, should he bother to write a great symphony, or strive to make a living, or even to love another, when he is no more than a momentary microbe on a dust mote whirling through the unimaginable immensity of space?'

This points to my previous point that humanity needs a sense of routine which is clearly embodied in the circular themes of *2001*. Without the routines of consumption, competition, money-making and worshipping we certainly would breach the brink of insanity and see life as futile. If everyone questioned the fact that humans are just a momentary microbe in an eternal universe, we would surely not strive to attain any

‘goals’ nor would we ‘construct’ any aims in our lives.

In our contemporary postmodern society (with information super highways coupled with the decadence and chaos of humanity’s progress) lies the paradox of *2001*, that our progress, whilst having its merits technologically, is also one of a decline. The fact that we are ‘momentary microbes’ in the infinity of space points to the apocalyptic message inherent in *2001*, that humanity cannot deny the pervasiveness of death, whilst simultaneously it offers a sense of hope and renewal for humankind, which is best summed up in the words of Kubrick :

‘The most terrifying fact about the universe is not that it is hostile but that it is indifferent, but if we can come to terms with this indifference and accept the challenges of life within the boundaries of death – however mutable Man may be able to make them – our existence as a species can have genuine meaning and fulfillment. However vast the darkness, we must supply our own light.’

2.3 ARTHUR C. CLARKE’S VISIONS OF THE FUTURE

Arthur C. Clarke raises significant questions of mankind’s future and place in the universe. His establishment as a hard science extrapolator is due to the fact that many of his extrapolations have become self-fulfilling prophecies. Examples hereof includes oral contraception and DNA testing (from *Childhood’s End*) and moon landings as well as space exploration in *2001: A Space Odyssey*. Clarke’s work contains intricate descriptions of technology and science, of how a totally self-contained city such as Diaspar might function in a sterile world in *The City And the Stars*, the effect of Einstein’s theory of relativity on the time dilation of Jan Roderick’s flight to the Overlord’s home-world in *Childhood’s End*, life and work aboard the space shuttle

Discovery on the way to Saturn in *2001: A Space Odyssey*, and the mysteries of the alien craft Rama in *Rendezvous With Rama*.

Images and themes which recur in *2001: A Space Odyssey* are also evident in other works by Clarke such as *Rendezvous with Rama*, *Childhood's End* and *The City and the Stars*. The broader themes that have a bearing on my thesis are the themes of “awakening”, “time and space”, “apocalyptic symbols”, “landscape”, “messiah figures” and the “technological paradox of progress”.

In terms of the theme of awakening, as with Bowman of *2001: A Space Odyssey*, Norton, the central protagonist of *Rendezvous With Rama*, experiences a similar sense of revelation as revealed in the text : And History could never take from him the privilege of being the first of all mankind to gaze upon the works of an alien civilization. (1973:39)

The awesome nature of the alien landscape as Norton experiences it allows him to see beyond the limits of human civilization. This vision on a physical level is in turn related to the physical journey of awakening by Alvin and Hilvar in the text *The City and The Stars*. Their journey resembles a form of pilgrimage and voyage of discovery. It is not solely a physical journey but a spiritual quest that allows each protagonist to derive meaning from each other's perspectives on life. Intertextually it recalls the evolutionary awakening of humankind as depicted in the film version of *2001: A Space Odyssey* (Kubrick) as we witness Bowman's individual development and quest for meaning which is symbolic of the development of universal humankind.

The scale of time and space as witnessed recurringly in *2001: A Space Odyssey* also emerges in *Rendezvous With Rama*. This is observed as Norton and his crew venture out to explore Rama, They are forced to abandon the spatial dimensions of earth and space in order to orientate themselves to the alien landscape. The crew's demarcation of the alien surface using earth's names such as "London", "Paris", "Northern Hemisphere", and "New York" points to man's use of the known to cope with the unfamiliar and unknown. The cold atmosphere of darkness and the sense of abandonment adds to the forbidding and timeless nature of the Raman world. The scale of time and space is felt in terms of the vastness of the alien world. The fact that no signs of wear and tear exist on Rama adds to the ominous nature of its landscape.

The immensity of space is also depicted in *Childhood's End* as Karellen associates humans with 'ants attempting to label and classify all the grains of sand in all the deserts of the world.' (1953:137) Perhaps the most vivid representation of space is seen at the end of the novel as the human race is depicted as undergoing a metamorphosis in conjunction with physical space. Time is depicted as estranged and individuals seem to possess powers which transcend space and time. The unnatural state of this change points to its projection of an apocalyptic surge.

Apocalyptic symbolism as mentioned in the examples above is also recurrent in Clarke's texts. In *Rendezvous with Rama*, the purpose of Rama is viewed as that of a cosmic ark, symbolizing a second judgement. Like the monolith slab of *2001: A Space Odyssey* which is used as a consistent icon of religious symbolism (amongst other interpretations),

Rama remains an enigma, a puzzle on a grand scale. This uncertainty points to the idea that humanity cannot unveil all the mysteries of the vast scale of our universe, and that to do so would unveil mysteries that are beyond human comprehension.

The collective “landscapes” of Clarke’s texts are largely alien. Underlying the awesome spectacle of Rama is the sense of the prevalence of an alien consciousness. The physical landscape of Rama appears uncharted and dangerous. The world within Rama is depicted as a self-contained universe where the alien creature society (Biotis) maintains its territory. It is also depicted as an estranged landscape, “Other” to human society in postmodern terms. Humanity as symbolized by Jimmy is ignored by the alien life-form on Rama and thus displaced, pointing to man’s inability to feel at home in an alien environment. Similarly Karellen, in *The City and The Stars*, argues that the “stars are not for man”, warning humans to remain on their own territory, thereby marginalizing humans as being unable to fit into a world that remains alien to human comprehension. Likewise, humanity’s venture into space in *2001: A Space Odyssey* leads to the death of crew members that are at the mercy of an alien consciousness. This recurrent theme points to the alien landscapes of Clarke’s texts as a magnanimous threat to human survival and which is best left untampered with. Clarke inherently warns humanity that technology should not be used to such an extreme that it results in our demise.

The theme of the ‘messiah’ figure is also recurrent in *Rendezvous with Rama* and *2001: A Space Odyssey*. Boris Roderigo of the former text, in his attempt to salvage the Raman world, is viewed as a redeeming figure. His ability to disconnect the bomb

on behalf of the Cosmo-Christians in effect salvages Rama, as it was believed to be the symbol of a second judgement. Boris can be intertextually paralleled with Bowman of *2001: A Space Odyssey* as a messiah figure, as Bowman undergoes the transformative awakening on behalf of human civilization. His sacrifice allows humans to see beyond the confined nature of our own selfish existence. The emergence of Bowman as the Starchild can be paralleled with the protagonist Alvin of *The City and the Stars*, both being representative catalysts of change. This theme will also be shown to be recurrent in selected science fiction film later on in this account.

Humanity's inherent ability to destroy itself through the irresponsible use of technology is one of the central arguments of this thesis and is a theme that is foregrounded in Clarke's texts. In *2001: A Space Odyssey*, the advanced computer Hal destroys human life and reverses the paradigm of humans as creator-figures and machines as tools, a mark of irresponsible science. In *Childhood's End* it takes an alien (i.e. Karellen) to critique human civilization in order for us to acknowledge our own capacities to self-destruct. Inherent in this lies the paradox of progress, as our own technological advancement leads to our decline. Powerful symbols emerge at the end of this novel that support this paradox.

Jan, the last homo-sapiens on earth, offers a human perspective on earth's demise. Karellen's final observation, as he watches from a darkened screen, points to the Overlords as both a prospect of the possibilities of technology and as figures of tragic limitation mediating between the stages of progress. They further serve as figures that

represent an apocalyptic twist to the novel as they are visually depicted as devil-like guardians of humanity. The tone throughout the novel hints at a sense of impending doom, as a resigned acceptance is witnessed through the characters Stormgren, George, Jan and Karellen. Stormgren knows that he will never see the Overlords, George knows that humanity has lost its future, Jan knows that he cannot survive cut-off from humankind, and Karellen knows that he will never find the kinds of answers he seeks. Each figure in the novel bears testimony to the sense of futility in which technological progress results. This mirrors the idea of technological progress leading to stasis.

The ultimate sense one has of this paradox of progress/stagnation is witnessed in *The City and The Stars* as Alvin the central protagonist desires to escape the sterility of his world. This is observed as Alvin gazes upon the aesthetic nature of the artwork in his city and views it as a form of escapism. This desire of escapism from a near technological utopia bears testimony to the fact that humanity cannot survive in a society that has reached a dead-end on a technological level. It is further significant, as this in turn would lead to society's demise as witnessed in the text. The machines and memory banks of Diaspar, if destroyed, would mean that the city itself would cease to exist, as there would be no means to continue the procreative cycle and ensure the survival of its citizens.

An apocalyptic sense of transcendentalism emerges in Clarke's texts which is central to this thesis and merits further exploration. This theme of transcendence is biologically evident in terms of the first contact with alien races. In Clarke's essay 'When the Aliens Come', in *Report on Planet Three and other Speculations*, Clarke states:

‘...perhaps the most important result of such contacts (radio signals) might be the simple proof that other intelligent races do exist. Even if our cosmic conversations never rise above the ‘Me Tarzan-You Jane’ level, we would no longer feel so alone in an apparently hostile universe.’ (1972:106)

Such a view echoes the horror felt during the decades at the turn of the century when science revealed that humans dwelt alone in an alien universe. This is why the apocalyptic moment of first contact is so central to Clarke’s work as it resolves the feeling of cosmic loneliness. The physical realization of this sense of transcendence is witnessed through the presentation of mystic entities such as the Overmind in *Childhood’s End* and Vanamonde in *The City and the Stars*.

Childhood’s End further exemplifies Clarke’s metaphysical interests, and, in the depiction of the alien life force of the Overlords who visit earth to further the evolution of human intelligence, Clarke achieves a transcendent end. This is portrayed through the last generation of human children as they transcend their material existence and become part of a universal intelligence known as the Overmind. It is also portrayed through the first child’s psychic journey beyond the range of the Overlord’s ships and the journey to an alternate universe lighted by the six coloured suns.

Similarly, in *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968), astronaut David Bowman undergoes a physical and psychological change that has repercussions for the transfiguration of the entire human species. Images of transcendence are evoked through the portrayal of universes beyond the perceptibly material. In the *Odyssey* texts, two contending relationships emerge which is at the heart of Wellsian ambiguity as there is evolution and

entropy. (George Edgar Slusser, *C.L.C.* Vol. 13:152) Clarke's works illustrates this, as the central protagonists journey to contact the unknown and come across the possibility of transcendence and the limits of their humanity. This is balanced by a homecoming where the voyager is confronted by the mysteries of the universe.

'Out there, man is absorbed in human vastness, in here, he reawakens new meaning in the Everyday world, humanizing some microcosmic part of that greater nature. This is not linear advancement but oscillation, a form of perpetual motion.' (Slusser G, *C.L.C.* Vol 13: 152)

This homecoming leads to a new voyage of progress/stasis/progress. In skeletal form *2001: A Space Odyssey* develops the same interplay of progressive and regressive elements as *Childhood's End*. The structure suspends the protagonist between transcendence and return. *Rendezvous With Rama* also develops this suspension of the human, and depicts humanity's helplessness before the mysteries of the universe.

Here too, humans oscillate between progress and stasis whilst the ending of the text culminates in a sense of stasis where the mysteries of the alien intelligence remain closed to human comprehension. Significantly, the one certainty about Rama is realized by Dr. Carlisle Perera after he awakens from a restless sleep with the message echoing in his subconscious that 'the Ramans do everything in threes.' This points to a transcendent understanding of the alien intelligence through the protagonist's subconscious levels. In keeping with the theme of transcendence the ending of *Rendezvous With Rama* is left open to interpretation, a format that is repeated in all Clarke's novels.

In Clarke's visions transcendence cannot be attained through technological progress alone. Technological progress leads to a kind of stasis, like the non-progressive city of Diaspar in *The City and the Stars*, where the citizens are dependent on an omnipotent computer but have forgotten the skills that went into making it. What emerges then is a postmodern sense of dystopia as there is no way to avoid the enslavement to technology. Clarke thus tries to project humanity beyond this apocalyptic doom by postulating an evolutionary breakthrough to a race of super-people through a sense of transcendence.

According to Hannah's essay entitled 'Where do we go from here?- Extrapolation versus Mysticism in Arthur C. Clarke's Fiction'

(<http://members.tripod.co.uk/hannahdeepfieldspace/clarke.html>), Clarke's use of the artistic device of transcendence creates the problem of reconciling transcendent evolution with technological progress. She questions what comes before the transcendence and after the technology. In *2001: A Space Odyssey* technology is discarded once Bowman enters the Star Gate. Similarly, no communication exists between the parents and their transformed children in *Childhood's End*, or between the empire and its former universe home in *The City and the Stars*. The transcendent leap is achieved with the help of alien entities. Hannah significantly raises the point that Clarke's awareness of reaching the infinite wonders of the cosmos is not through technological progress alone, but that transcendence is needed to reach comprehension of the cosmos yet maintain the tension between extrapolation and mysticism inherent in his work.

The mysticism is veiled through Clarke's sense of wonder in lyrical descriptions of the

cosmos and man's present or future achievements. It is also imbued in the awareness of God's existence through awe and humility which all beings find themselves in as they contemplate the vastness of the universe. Coupled with this awe is the awareness that in the final reckoning even the Overlords are helpless and overwhelmed by the complexity of the galaxy. The implication of this for postmodern, human society is that we are engulfed by technological progress to such an extent that it has led to our own decline. We fail to acknowledge the temporary nature of existence, and fail to appreciate the wonders of our universe. Only a sense of our own transcendence through an apocalyptic surge would bring about a sense of renewal for all existence. This idea is central to Clarke's texts and I will illustrate this to be true in relation to selected science fiction film.

CHAPTER 3 : DYSTOPIAN FILM

3.1 Popular Culture, Transcendence and the Cinematic Experience

In my discussion of selected science fiction film, I wish to illustrate the intersection between Arthur C. Clarke's broader apocalyptic themes in terms of the medium of cinema. In my analysis I will draw on how cinema perpetuates meaning-making in terms of an apocalyptic depiction of future realities and parallel worlds which is directly postmodern.

Science fiction raises such postmodern concerns as dystopias, time paradoxes, future colonizations, humans assuming the form of hyperintelligent computers and finally electromagnetic radiation. Such dreams of virtual reality dismantle our beliefs in the difference between the real and illusory. This encompasses popular culture with science fiction as its medium of expression, its popularity exerting tremendous influence on the imagery of advertising, film and television, on pop videos, paperback covers and more contemporarily the internet and computer-simulated games which have a bearing on the youth.

Many science fiction films create particular kinds of fictional worlds, worlds which present themselves as "Other" or outside everyday reality, that is as deep space, the inner geography of spacecraft and the contours of alien planets. According to Kuhn the idea of the spectacle emerges as an end itself where spectacular visual effects and sounds temporarily interrupt the flow of the narrative, inviting the spectator to contemplate with awe and wonder, the vastness of deep space or the technological

miracles of future societies. The idea of the spectacle is directly postmodern and recalls Jean Baudrillard's idea of the simulacrum as pointed out earlier on in this thesis. Baudrillard believed that through the experience of everything from food, to culinary habits, music, television, entertainment and the cinema it is now possible to experience the world's geography as a simulacrum. He further highlighted that the interweaving of simulacra in daily life brings together different worlds (of commodities) in the same space and time. (Harvey, 1990:300) However, in turn it conceals any trace of origin of the labour processes that produced them. Baudrillard felt that the simulacra could in turn become a reality, that cinema is a pervasive influence everywhere – that 'reality flickers' in Baudrillard's perceptions of our postmodern world.

What emerges from Kuhn's idea of the 'spectacle' and Baudrillard's concept of the 'simulacrum' is that the boundaries between the real and the imaginary have become blurred. Themes involving the 'birthing' of human substitutes by corporations rather than by mad scientist villains of earlier films as encompassed in the films *Alien* (1979) and *Bladerunner* (1982) illustrate this shift. Other themes such as the opposition of human and non-human are also transformed when boundaries between the one and other become blurred, and the human body itself is constituted as Other or as potentially monstrous, for example in *The Thing* (1982) and *The Fly* (1986). Other themes that are reworked in science fiction film include the structure and organization of future and other societies : power in these fictional worlds are illustrated to be invisible and institutional rather than personal, and corporate rather than governmental (*Aliens*, 1986). Science fiction cinema through its themes clearly expresses the universal fear all men possess of the unknown and

inexplicable. As a medium this lies firmly entrenched therein.

Frederic Jameson in the text – *Postmodernism In The Cinema* (Degli:1998:86) makes a significant point on postmodern American youth film and its effect on society, in terms of how viewers of these films and shows are assumed to be as dislocated from their social and personal experiences as the characters they watch. They face a dilemma as they try to identify with familiar but incomplete characters. The only sense of completion they possess seems to come from an assimilation of consumer culture into one's sense of self, whereby young people can be identified in comparison to the commodities around them. He calls for the need to acquire a great number of critical skills in order to challenge the postmodern nature of contemporary media.

Whilst Jameson speaks specifically about postmodern film and its influence on youth, this can be extended to that of science fiction. This is witnessed as cinema audiences which are largely comprised of the youth tend to identify to larger degrees with popular superhero icons such as 'Superman', 'Batman' or 'Spiderman'. They tend to emulate these figures and are excited by the visual bombardment of futuristic images that provide a sense of escapism from reality. Science fiction film in particular provides this visual sense in terms of the computer-generated special effects that are portrayed in the medium itself.

Whilst science fiction to greater degrees influences youth cultures, it also draws older audiences by its appeal to more profound and serious issues which it extrapolates. The end of the 1960's marked this shift in science fiction. It encompassed the idea

that humanity now possessed the science and technology potentially allowing us to shape the planet according to our needs and desires, yet these forces existed as alien powers which humanity itself had created. This resulted in the bursting forth of the apocalyptic imagination into film with images of catastrophe projected from the possibility of thermonuclear holocaust to extrapolations of the human race being overcome by alien forces or extra-terrestrial beings. Images of destruction of the world by earthquakes, tornadoes, floods and killer bees were seen as part of nature's growing offensive against advanced technologies. Such catastrophic ends were blamed on various forms of human behaviour – including terrorism, pollution, nuclear war, communism, DNA research, religious sects, the European Common Market, Red China and Black Africa. The fundamental contradictions of urban societies were visibly blatant, where high above the pot-holed streets, decayed public transport, dilapidated businesses and squalor soar the vestiges of science fiction wonder cities in terms of banks and corporate buildings in the image of futuristic skyscrapers. This anti-utopia as encompassed by science fiction cinema can be seen as directly postmodern.

My analysis of selected science fiction film will further portray how the aesthetics of science fiction interface with the postmodern in terms of an apocalyptic theme.

Recent science fiction films portray fears that civilization has run amok and is about to destroy itself, and the individual's consequent sense of despair and inability to find coherent meaning in the modern world emerges from this. Often a messiah figure is invoked with superhuman qualities to offer humanity solace in a postmodern environment suffused with the chaos of modern technology.

According to the text *Alien Zone* (Kuhn), chapter two, entitled 'The Alien Messiah' by Hugh Ruppersberg, offers a significant interpretation of the idea of a messiah figure. It is stated: In whatever form, the messiah is an expression of transcendence, from the first stage of vulnerability and closure to the second stage of transcendence and openness. And it is the desire of popular audiences for transcendence that these films seek to satisfy. (1992:34) This excerpt raises important points of enquiry into the nature of contemporary science fiction cinema as on the one hand being formulaic in its evocation of a superhuman entity to function as a saviour to mankind; on the other hand however, it is a covert expression of the human innate desire to find renewal through apocalyptic transcendence. It also serves as a warning to humanity against the danger of not using one's technology with sufficient care. As seen in my previous analysis on Arthur C. Clarke's *2001 : A Space Odyssey* and in film's such as *Close Encounters Of The Third Kind* and as will be seen in my analysis of *Terminator 2* the irresponsible use of technology is the implied theme. In *Close Encounters Of The Third Kind*, a close association is observed between technological advancement and religious exaltation. The aliens, exalted by their technological sophistication, are paralleled to divine entities who fulfill the messianic cause. In *The Matrix* Neo is represented as one of the strongest messiah figures in contemporary apocalyptic film owing to the religious image associated with his status. His messianic cause evokes the characteristic secular, cinematic apocalypse as seeking new relevance in redefining the end through science and human effort. The need for transcendence, whether in terms of divine intervention on a religious scale or alien super-human intervention, science fiction cinema perpetuates the idea of renewal through a transcendent apocalypse.

Whilst it is evident that science fiction film evokes the need for transcendence, millennial writings also elicit such an impulse. This is vividly observed in the text *Apocalypses – Prophecies , Cults and Millennial beliefs throughout the ages* , in which author Eugen Weber quotes from a sermon and pamphlet of 1829 entitled ‘The Last Days’, where a sense of societal dislocation is pointed to be collective signs that threaten the end of the world. More importantly,

Society was (described to be) sick, rotten , rotting, the Western World weakened with age. And the more troubles its people thought they faced, the more hopes they heeded about some miraculous or catastrophic resolution (1999: 18-19).

The desire for renewal through catastrophe parallels the ideas inherent in this cinematic science fiction, which follows the apocalyptic trajectory. It also reinforces the sense of realism inherent in science fiction cinema as perpetuating human fears and desires, with regard to the sense of where society is headed and fears of humanity’s demise. Such anxieties with regard to global catastrophe as well as desires of attaining transcendent reasoning will be explored in my subsequent analysis of science fiction films which bear such questioning qualities.

3.2 Dystopian Machines in *The Matrix*, *Dark City*, *Terminator 2* and *Bladerunner*

The films *The Matrix*, *Dark City*, *Terminator 2* and *Bladerunner* project a postmodern, apocalyptic nature. The motifs which are common in relation to these film texts are what I have identified as postmodern features namely : the manipulation of space and time, intertextuality and recurring metaphors, as well as apocalyptic features, namely: mysticism and religious icons, reversal of roles, transformation and transcendence.

In the film entitled *The Matrix*, space and time are manipulated via freeze frame and gap commercial camera techniques, as well as the audience needing to discern the difference between real and virtual reality. The freeze frame and gap commercial camera techniques are observed at two central points in the narrative. The first being when Trinity is depicted through slow motion photography fighting off the police whilst the camera freezes and rotates around the room, then real time snaps back in. The latter is when two of the three remaining survivors back at the rebel Base, Trinity and Neo, prepare to save Morpheus. Their black leather attire, black shades and loaded guns complementing the cinematic techniques utilized in the film. The shoot-out scene in the marble foyer portrays the directors combination of old standards of American action film, the acrobatic grace of Hong Kong action cinema, and visual flourishes of Japanese combat techniques. The slow motion acrobatic techniques mirror the balletic effects of the awe surrounding the film version of Clarke's *2001: A Space Odyssey*.

With the fast paced action music featuring 'Prodigy', 'Meat Beat Manifesto', 'Rage Against the machine', 'Marilyn Manson' and 'Lunatic Calm', complementing Neo and Trinity's rescue mission, the audience is mesmerized by the cinematic spectacle of visual combat. As Neo and Trinity battle against the Agents at the top of a building we view a camera shot of Neo dodging bullets – the scene beginning at regular speed, the camera swerving around them and everything slowing down as a still shot that looks like a 3-D picture examined from every angle emerges. The use of such freeze frame techniques appears to slow down time, which complements the dual realities featured in *The Matrix*, as we are presented with worlds that can

freeze in an instant and pirouette through space and time.

In terms of the theme of the real versus the actual the film exploits this quite effectively . The opening sequence which displays the Matrix computer code as a series of cryptic icons rendered as computer text, from which the virtual world is created and the real hidden, is a first indicator of this as having a profound bearing on how the film foregrounds this theme as central to its narrative, in conjunction with the manipulation of space and time.

This is initially evident in Trinity's flight from the secret service men as she leaps across the roofs of two buildings, covering an impossible space in the leap. The concept of space and time is further projected as Trinity reaches her extraction point, a lone phone booth allowing her to travel from a present time to an alternate reality.

A pertinent point of the narrative that highlights this theme of the virtual versus actual reality, is witnessed when Neo opens a thick hollowed-out version of the text *Simulacra and Simulation*, one of the canonical works of postmodernism by Jean Baudrillard, which he uses as a receptacle for discs of contraband information that he sells to seedy acquaintances. In the original article of the same title (1981), Baudrillard suggests that modern reality is little more than a series of items and experiences which are replicas of all that has come before, that ours is a reality comprised of resemblances. He further argues that whereas in the past, simulations represent reality, perhaps with some distortion, nowadays simulations

have become simulacra, which either mask the absence of any reality behind the simulation or create an entirely new reality that is given to us as the real, for example, Disney's *Main Street USA*, which purports to represent an archetypal small town downtown, leading us to believe that such places do exist. Baudrillard further pointed out that Capitalism benefits most from this ambiguity as it is easier and cheaper to produce logos and symbols than actual products. *The Matrix* mimics Baudrillard's ideas on the simulacra – as the film announces that it is an exercise in replicating what has gone before, both within the narrative in terms of its intertextuality and within the science fiction genre. Further, Neo's use of the text by Baudrillard to gain profits alludes to the theoreticians idea of capital gains but in an illegal light.

Neo's surreal interrogation by the Agents further emphasizes the parallel worlds of cyberspace and reality, as he awakens as if the interrogation was a nightmare only to find that it is real. Neo's subsequent meeting with Morpheus foregrounds his perception of reality. Through a literal and metaphoric transformation he is physically and spiritually awakened. Physically he undergoes an embryonic metamorphosis as if he is literally reborn with metallic fluid engulfing his vulnerable naked body and scalp. The theme of transformation is apocalyptically alluded to in the film, as it is through Neo's physical and spiritual change that he is able to distinguish the real world from the virtual one. On a literal level the film projects a post-apocalyptic dystopia of human existence, as it is revealed that the year is not actually 1999, but closer to 2099, the real world being a post-apocalyptic wasteland, harbouring the simulacrum of the Matrix.

At this point in the film narrative, the audience as well as Neo experience an imbalance, as the question is raised about our sense of reality versus the illusion. Nothing that was perceived to be real remains as such. Even the laws of physics are portrayed as undergoing an inversion as nothing which seemed physical applies. Everything centres on how much the mind can disbelieve, as witnessed later in the film narrative, when Neo is taught mind control in order to transcend the illusion, so that he can leap across buildings. As the jump programs are literally plugged to Neo's brain, he observes a mirror projection of himself and the narrative depicts the themes of the real and virtual world entwined. The nature of reality is foregrounded for the audience, and it is forced to distinguish the real world from the virtual one. The message inherent in terms of the postmodern concept of space in *The Matrix* is that the line between reality and virtual reality is growing too thin and cyberspace is intruding on our personal space, as humanity has become too reliant on machine technology, such that we have become enslaved by it.

Time and space are also manipulated in *Dark City*. Time is portrayed as having undergone some form of manipulation which heightens the sense of foreboding which is created at the start of the film. In order for memories to be created and replaced, all activity suddenly comes to a standstill at midnight. Manipulation of time is also found in Clarke's novel *2001: A Space Odyssey*. Bowman is portrayed as rapidly moving through the physical stages of birth to death with a sudden transformation to a spiritual state. The accelerated motion of time is witnessed as he undergoes a physical journey through a time-loop. The Strangers in *Dark City* conduct tuning rituals where a giant, iron clockface is

foregrounded pointing to time being reconfigured. Through this manipulation the city transforms and in a cinematic spectacle buildings literally shoot out of the ground like concrete daisies, twisting and filling the skyline. The eighteenth century context which is subsequently evoked points to the extent of this reconstruction of time and space, as a parallel world is featured. Real and virtual reality is problematised for viewers as the audience is forced to discern the real world from the virtual one created by *The Strangers*.

Perhaps the most vivid metaphor of space is contained in the scene where the police and Murdoch break down the walls behind the poster of Shell Beach, and a large void is observed leading to the realm of space. This signifies a moment of conceptual breakthrough that dominates the film, the moment when Rufus Sewell breaks through the walls of the world to see what is behind. It further signifies his desire for escape from a false reality. A panoramic visual reveals the constructed city towering against the realm of space, revealing a dark, postmodern world of towering skyscrapers.

In terms of time and space, both *The Matrix* and *Dark City* question where we should draw the line between reality and dreams, the real world and the virtual world. Dr. Daniel Shreber in *Dark City* poses the question of whether we are more than our memories during an exposition scene. This question resonates on the issue of human individuality which has plagued human thought for centuries. The answer that *Dark City* alludes to is that our lives are something we construct. The protagonist of *Dark City*, John Murdoch, eventually transcends the artificial nature of his surroundings by constructing reality for

himself.

Terminator 2 also highlights the postmodern feature of the time-loop as two terminators travel through time to the year 1995 from 2029. The film's exploitation of the classic science fiction time-loop is a very postmodern play on the idea of the relationship between present and future time. In the film the future leader of the resistance is fathered by a protector sent back through time by himself to protect a cyborg assassin sent by Skynet back into the past in order to reverse time (by assassinating the leader, thus preventing the future insurrection of humans against their machine overlords). A relationship of reciprocity or circularity thus emerges that seems alien to our everyday experience of time as a linear continuum.

Much later in the film's trajectory, as Sarah experiences the terrifying, hallucinatory nuclear Armageddon imagery, she acts decisively to avoid it. Instead of impotently accepting the fate of the earth, she carves the words 'No fate' with a knife on a table top just before she sets out to find Dyson. In so doing she in effect chooses to rewrite history as she goes along, thus facing her own ethical dilemma and her own day of Judgement: her pre-emptive bid to avert the nuclear catastrophe of August 1997. Her desire to change history is a postmodern feature of the film, as Sarah chooses to change the future.

Emergent in the knowledge of the potential threat of Dyson's research is a circular paradox which is pointed out by Olivier in his citation of Nietzsche's

theoretical view on a “work of art giving birth to itself”. He states:-

‘Dyson is one of the factors in the seemingly inexorable march towards a ruthless future technocracy, but the products of that future (i.e. the remains of the first terminator) function as incentive for his research, thus assisting in giving birth to the very future they represent.’ (1992 Nov, *Literator* 13, No 3:21)

In effect he cites Nietzsche’s theory with regard to the future as operative in creating itself, despite the fact that it is the extension of a past where humans surrendered their power to machines in the form of computers. This can be paralleled to the science fiction time-loop concept as pointed out earlier on in this analysis. Dyson’s retort that they were blaming him for things he has not yet done raises the fact that, being human, he is limited in time and space, and therefore cannot share the foresight of the machine.

Ridley Scott’s *Bladerunner* (1982) also problematizes the connections between time, space and history in significant ways. A quotation by theorist David Harvey which appeared in an article by Bert Olivier entitled ‘*Postmodern Cinema and Postmodern culture: Information – Communication, Otherness And History in Wender’s Himmel uber Berlin (Wings of Desire)*’ illustrates this (1992 Nov, *Literator* 13, Vol.13, No 3 :1). Here it is stated that:

‘Spaces of very different worlds seem to collapse upon each other much as the world’s commodities are assembled in the supermarket and all manner of subcultures get juxtaposed in the contemporary city. Disruptive spatiality triumphs over the coherence of perspective and narrative in postmodern fiction , in exactly the same way that imported beers coexist with local brews, local employment collapses under the weight of foreign competition , and all the divergent spaces of the world are assembled nightly as a collage of images upon the television screen. ’

This sense of cultural and personal fragmentation as captured by Harvey

pertains to the film *Bladerunner* (1982), and will be progressively explored in conjunction with the former films I have cited in this research.

Embodied in the post-industrial city of *Bladerunner* is its interchangeable structure as icons of advertising, films, text and culture are juxtaposed in narrow spaces, representing different time frames. The resultant language can be described in terms of the postmodern concept of ‘pastiche’ as a mixture of Japanese, Spanish and German. Oriental culture pervades these explicit icons, leading to this imitation of dead styles. ‘A Society of the Spectacle’ emerges, to borrow Baudrillard’s term, where existence is pervaded by advertising and commercial exploitation. This is witnessed in the flying billboards, which constantly hover over the city, flashing various slogans, and loudspeakers blaring out commercial advertising. The neon signs constantly ‘flicker’ (Baudrillard’s term) which reveals the complexity of this society and the rich intertextual signs that pervade the narrative are postmodern in terms of the way these signs are weaved together like a tapestry of cultural symbolism representing parallel connections between present and past time as well as cultures in a narrowly defined space.

The concepts of time and history are closely linked to the replicants’ search for identity. In a significant scene of the film, when *Bladerunner* (Deckard) speaks to Rachel, she attempts to assert her identity by producing photographs. When she refuses to believe that they were mere manufactured implants borrowed from Tyrell’s niece, Deckard himself is uncertain of his own past. This raises the ambiguity of Deckard’s role – of whether he himself is a replicant, as the

only link to his past is depicted through photographs. Later on, Rachel is shown trying to imitate a hairstyle she had seen in *Bladerunner's* photographs and playing the piano as if she knows what home meant. It is her willingness to search for identity, home and, in effect, history that ultimately leads to her survival from 'retirement'. Much later in the narrative Deckard discovers a whole range of photographs in Leon's possession, presumably meant to document that he has a history too. What emerges here is the significant role of photographs as a postmodern emblem of history which merits further exploration.

In a review article of July 1998, it is stated with regards to the connection Bukatman cites between Replicants and their construction of history that the value of the photographs in *Bladerunner* is that it makes us unreal – we are forced, or at least encouraged, to confront our own constructedness, and by confronting ourselves to remake them. (1998 July, [http://www.depauw.edu/sfs/reviews-pages/75,htm](http://www.depauw.edu/sfs/reviews-pages/75.htm), p9) This insight by Bukatman raises a crucial postmodern point of examining our dual nature, which pinpoints the nature of the Other in reference to our dualism. This is exhibited in terms of the Replicants' exhibition of photographs to assert their sense of identity, and, in effect, a history.

A connection is also raised in relation to the 'mother-figure' as crucial to the link in terms of a sense of history. Earlier on, in the narrative it was witnessed that Leon killed his inquirer when questioned about his mother. The idea inherent here being that the mother is necessary to the claiming of a history, to

affirm an identity over time. By emphasizing the thematics of the visual, of photography and as will be analyzed later, the eye theme, *Bladerunner* raises the important contention of our sense of being, our constructedness – the “I” over time.

Space and time are problematized as Pris asserts her identity to Sebastian and illustrates this through reverse somersaulting. She states: ‘I think Sebastian, therefore I am,’ intertextually quoting Descartes’ philosophy of existence. She thereafter cinematically reverse somersaults, gaining increasing momentum and, in effect, defying gravity. Later on in the film’s trajectory, in a close-up shot, Pris is depicted as lunging forward, propelling into space, and like a human missile, somersaulting in accelerated motion. The force of her somersault, in effect, reconfigures space and time.

As with *The Matrix* and *Dark City*, the theme of ‘the real versus the copy or illusion’ is explored in *Bladerunner*. The Replicants are depicted as beings virtually identical to humans with the capacity to develop human emotions. Named Leon, Zhora, Pris and Roy, they can be viewed as ‘simulacra’ of humans, to borrow Baudrillard’s term, depicting a convergence of genetics and linguistics. They mimic totally authentic reproductions indistinguishable in almost all respects from human beings. Each character reflects some aspect of humanity or human existence. Their representation of commodities such as Combat Models and Pleasure Models evokes not only a critique of the decadent, broken society in which they were created but leads one to speculate on the essence of reality versus the Copy (or Other) in postmodern terms. Pris illustrates this aspect when

she seems like a waxwork figure in the museum, and even though in close-up her eyes momentarily follow Deckard it is hard to discern whether her eyes are real or artificial.

From an apocalyptic perspective the indistinguishability of the simulation (i.e. the Replicant) and its dangerous resemblance to human beings, serves as a critique of genetic engineering as an advanced form of technology bearing destructive potential. Rachel is a case in point. It takes the complex analysis of verbal responses and bio feedback using the Voight Kampf machine to distinguish the artificial from the copy of her. This distinction is so pervasive that even Rachel herself is unaware that she is not human.

It is evident that the texts under discussion utilize space and time as central features of postmodern, apocalyptic thought in terms of the estrangement of time, wide spaces that depict the awesome nature of the universe, camera techniques that project space and time obscurely as well as the juxtaposition of the real versus the copy. Another central postmodern feature of the texts under discussion are their intertextual nature. This is projected in terms of their dark thematics and elements borrowed from other texts.

In terms of the dark, dystopian nature of *The Matrix*, it is evident that the film borrows elements from *Dark City*, *Terminator* and *Alien* in terms of the underworld that is projected with flashing green tones, grimy sewer system, and the later contrast with polished corporate offices. The dark theme is ever-present in the film. The Agents are dark suited characters – Agents Smith and Jones

who appear to be a parody of Baudrillard's theory of the simulacra. Intertextually, they mirror *Men In Black* figures and wear dark mirror shades. Similarly, the renegade group are leather-clad, with dark shades that hint at the theme of illusion versus reality.

Light and shadow foreground the world of the Matrix as a bleak cyberpunk interpretation of our modern day world in which ominous silhouettes and claustrophobic paranoia lurk on every corner. The paranoid fantasies projected in the film through its synthesis of nineties pop culture, as well as its dark atmosphere as witnessed by the metallic tones, recurring torrential rain and absence of sunshine, reflect the postmodern dystopia of this futuristic world.

Dark City continues the ominous, dark tones of forbidding as witnessed in *The Matrix* as the film's voice-over narration intones at its beginning :-

'First there was darkness, then came the Strangers, they were a race as old as time itself, they had mastered the ultimate technology, the ability to alter physical reality by will alone...'

From the start of this film's trajectory, as viewers we are plunged into the chaos of this nocturnal city, with large noisy skyscrapers mirroring a dystopian, futuristic, postmodern version of Los Angeles with darkened city streets, an emblem of chaos and confusion. This is evidently so when the doctor plays with a mouse in a maze parallel to Murdoch's exposure to a chaotic city, as if he, like the mouse, is trapped by his surroundings.

The Strangers mirror The Agents in *Dark City* and *The Matrix* respectively, as creatures that resemble man and possess supernatural powers. They further resemble 'Men In Black' figures in black attire, with the Strangers appearing to harbour a ghostly, white visage. Both the Agents and the Strangers act as a mirror projection of man as 'Other' figures in postmodern terms. Each set typifies icons of an apocalyptic theme, as the Agents serve as a means to sustain machine control using humans as an energy source, whilst The Strangers conduct experiments using human minds as the key to their species' survival. The netherworld of The Strangers, overshadowed by the melancholy tone of Mrs Murdoch's singing, is further testimony to the dark theme which pervades the film. As memory banks are manipulated by the mixture of a dash of an unhappy childhood and a tragic death, the scene evokes that of a witches' carnival as the eerie nature of their dark world is foregrounded.

In *Terminator 2*, the opening pre-holocaust scenes of Los Angeles continue the dark theme that pervades the films under discussion. The daily rhythm of life, symbolized by the passing traffic and children playing on swings in a sunlit playground, is suddenly and tragically destroyed by a blinding white apocalyptic light that vaporizes everything. The effects of nuclear war is driven home. As the title card fades on 'Los Angeles 2029 A.D', the camera pans over horrific images of potential death and destruction, that is blackened cars and a darkened wasteland. The camera lingers on charred remains of toys, swings and slides – symbols of human existence subjected to a cataclysmic end. The dark side of technology is foregrounded through these images as the voice-over of Sarah Conner states:-

Three billion lives ended on August 29th, 1997. The survivors of the nuclear fire called the war Judgement Day. They lived only to face a new nightmare, a war against the machines.

The dark theme associated with nuclear holocaust emerges throughout the film and is highlighted in the scene at Pescadero Hospital, where Sarah describes her recurring nightmare, about Judgement Day. She states –:

‘ It’s like a giant strobe light, burning right through my eyes, but somehow I can still see...The children look like burnt paper, black , not moving. And then, the blast wave hits them and they fly apart like leaves...I know the date it happens ...on August 29th 1997, it’s gonna feel pretty f---kin real to you too! Anybody not wearing two million sunblock is gonna have a real bad day, get it ?....You think you’re safe and alive. You’re already dead. Everybody, him, you, you’re dead already. This whole place. Everything you see is gone. You’re the one living in a f---kin training cell with me. Because I know it happens. It happens! ’

Sarah’s incarceration in the mental institute is illustrative of society’s denial of the truth. Her subsequent further confinement to isolation and denial of the ability to see her son points to the idea that one has to be paranoid to see where society is headed. Sarah’s hysterical comment that we are all ‘dead already’ serves as a poignant reminder to present societies of the dangers of a technologically controlled society. Paranoia is equated with truth. The dark thematics associated with the pre-holocaust visuals in *Terminator 2* can be paralleled with the decadence that is a recurring metaphor in *Bladerunner*. As the title card –‘Los Angeles - November 2019’ emerges, a decadent industrial wasteland is projected appropriately accompanied by the melancholy musical soundtrack from Greek composer Vangelis. Physical and psychological decay is prevalent.

The dystopia associated with advanced technology is foregrounded by the opening panoramic long shot of fire belching from oil refinery towers and factory

smokestacks in the industrial overgrowth. Mist swirls as rubbish piles up and infrastructures are depicted in a state of disintegration. Empty warehouses are abandoned and industrial plants drip with leaking rain. Above this street-level decadence and interior chaos the city is contrasted with a high tech world of flying transporters, advertising and familiar images of corporate power, that is Pan Am, Coca Cola and the massive pyramidal building of the Tyrell Corporation. On a third level the city is infused with small-scale production. The streets are typically multiculturally arranged with Chinese and Asiatics predominant.

Nuclear war appears to have poisoned earth's atmosphere, as represented visually by the decrepit city, which reveals the sense of dystopia embedded in the narrative. This is portrayed in two ways. One is that the huge clouds of dust prevent any sunlight - a symbol of hope - from infiltrating. Perpetual rain falls on the city, providing further obscurity to the film which is shot in near darkness. The second is that no one smiles during the entire film, providing a grim tale about grim people. This dark theme seems to reflect the postmodern city as exposing the dark side of technology as well as a process of disintegration. Juxtaposed with the hi-tech, is its fall-out waste, which will be seen at several points in the narrative.

Apart from the dark theme that emerges as an intertextual motif in the texts under discussion, the films reflect elements from other texts. *The Matrix* also uses comic book references to *Alice In Wonderland*, William Gibson's *Neuromancer*, the film *Men In Black*, Jules Verne's writing on *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under The Sea* as well as mythological and religious allegories, coupled with martial arts

techniques, amongst other references. In terms of the allusion to Lewis Carroll's tale of *Alice In Wonderland*, *The Matrix* reflects the latter work at the beginning of the film when the computer screen in Neo's room flashes the words -:'follow the white rabbit', and later, when Neo is offered the choice of the red or blue pill. As he undergoes the physical transformation of his 'rebirth' he is intertextually paralleled to the character of Alice tumbling down the waterhole, to emerge in another reality. The crew have names like Trinity, Tank, Cypher, Mouse, Apoc and Dozer who cruise about in a hovercraft entitled the Nebuchadnezzar which alludes to the writings of Jules Verne's text *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under The Sea* .

As Neo undergoes a series of physical training sequences in which he is taught to bend the rules of existence, he becomes initiated in a messianic way which is highly ritualized. This is achieved through Neo's training in martial arts and mind control which brings an eastern, religious element into its context. Coupled with the religious allusion is the intertextual referral to Hong Kong fantasy and western genre. Whilst Hong Kong fantasy films frequently rely on popular folk legends, *The Matrix* draws its inspiration from the world of computers. Bound by no earthly laws, it surges from one outlandish scene to the next with gravity-defying acrobatics and steely-blue set designs that evoke films like *Eraserhead* and *Bladerunner*. In this way the film cuts across several genres.

In *Dark City* the constant use of chase scenes in this film projects its intertextual nature, with its combination of film noir elements. A blend of genres is used in terms of murder, detectives, mystery and intrigue, as well as surreal science fiction elements.

The Strangers mimic villainous creatures in terms of their long tapered coats and ghostly visages, as well as their commonplace names such as Mr Book, Mr Hand, Mr Wall and Mr Rain, which appears to be the only way to distinguish the one from the next. The use of such commonplace names parallels the use of the mythical names in *The Matrix*, such as Morpheus, Tank, Oracle, Cypher and Neo, signifying their specified roles and function in the plot of the film.

At one key point in *Dark City*, during tuning activities, a 1940's atmosphere is evoked where props and sets are combined with futuristic elements. This disorienting blend of futuristic elements also suggests Victorian objects (the syringes), art deco objects (the clock) or medieval objects (much of the underground environment). The city itself is reminiscent of the dark Gotham City as portrayed in Batman comics. *Dark City* has many parallels to *The Matrix* and harbours ideas from *2001: A Space Odyssey*. Both films foreground the world as a manufactured lie and a computer simulation respectively, raising the question of the meaning of human existence.

Dark City mimics a vast noir-metropolis which seems to exist in an alternate time-line with elements of the past and present combined. It also portrays a dark, gothic atmosphere of a city composed of night and shadows. The film is influenced by the Expressionist genre of film Noir C, a French term for dark American movies of the forties and fifties as it presents a stereotypical detective character. The name 'Dr. Daniel P. Shreber' is also an intertextual

reference to the neuropath Daniel Paul Shreber whose disturbed 'Memoirs' were analyzed by Sigmund Freud in 1911 (Richardson, *Freud Walks Through the Dark City*, 2002:2). The manner in which the doctor explains the conspiracy that constructed *Dark City*'s reality mirrors the neuropath's written 'Memoirs' persuading the authorities of his sanity.

The film is viewed as self-reflexive in postmodern theory, as it constructs an alternate universe parallel to our own pop culture and draws attention to its own artificiality with two-dimensional looking sets and a time-warped setting. However, the director Alex Proyas subverts the formula by using elements of the film Noir genre to orientate the viewer then introduce an element of uncertainty. As viewers we have to align ourselves with John Murdoch (possibly mad) and believe Dr. Shreber (an unbalanced character) to accept the narrative resolution which is equally ambivalent. Alex Proyas puts the audience as well as the protagonist of *Dark City*, (as with the protagonist of *The Matrix*) through the same experience. The plot is slowly unravelled and unbalances our expectations, leaving unanswered questions at the end. In keeping with the open-ended, non-resolution endings typical of postmodern texts.

In *Bladerunner* Deckard wears a large brown trench coat (typical of detectives in classic film noirs and reflected in *Dark City*). In the same way, *Terminator 2* and *Bladerunner* have recurring images and metaphors that can be traced in *The Matrix* and *Dark City*, pointing to its intertextual nature. Such texts remain open to interpretation and reflect elements of other texts. This aspect will provide the point of departure for further explanation.

In *The Matrix* there is constant reference made to dark shades, which hints at the themes of perception versus reality. Constant reference to eye imagery via sunglasses and mirror shades emphasizes a world based on deception. The dark atmosphere of the underground bridge where Neo is debugged suggests dystopian images which emerge at several points in the narrative. Intertextually the eye images recall that of the deceptive machine Hal in *2001: A Space Odyssey* as well as the terminator's red eye/laser as will be explored later on in the film *Terminator 2*. The recurring use of the eye images emphasizes the Super-human perceptiveness of machine intelligence, developed to such an extreme that it threatens human existence, and in terms of *The Matrix* hints at the dubious nature of reality. The dark tone of *The Matrix*, a film which questions our perceptions, parallels that of the film *Dark City*, which questions our memories.

In *Dark City* recurring images of Shell Beach, first in terms of a postcard, thereafter a card which the prostitute held, and also as a sign on a large billboard, persistently haunt the protagonist. Circular patterns in blood are further recurrent clues to the attackers' whereabouts. Harry Lewensky, mentally affected by the strangeness of the city, also draws circular projections, identical to the circular bloody patterns found on the dead prostitutes. These recurrent images reinforce the underlying circular thematics of technology which will be looked at in more depth.

In *Terminator Two*, the red glowing eyes of the metallic endoskeleton at the beginning of the film can be viewed in relation to the red glow of the protector

Terminator's laser-gun. Whilst the eye images in the latter film reflect the deceptiveness of the machine entity Hal, in this context they are depicted as alert and menacing as well as an icon of the dark side of technology, reflective of the bloody nuclear chaos surrounding it, as well as the initiator thereof. The image of the red laser light recurs when Sarah targets Dyson, aiming a weapon reflecting a red target dot on his head, but is significantly unable to pull the trigger. In effect, the gun as an emblem of technology is not projected as the solution to nuclear war, yet Sarah curbs the perpetuation of violence through the use of destructive weapons.

At several key points in *Bladerunner*, the smiling face of a Japanese woman that advertises the Coca-Cola drink emerges, signifying the corporate, capitalistic world in juxtaposition with the middle and lower levels of society. These three levels are tied together by multi-levelled walkways, flying cars, elevators and propaganda designed to persuade people to move off-world.

Embedded herein lies a huge, disembodied eye that stares unblinkingly at the city stretched before it, reflecting back the city and a fiery smokestack in its clear surface. References to eyes recur throughout the film in terms of eye symbolism, vision motifs, glowing replicant eyes, Tyrell's magnifying glasses that emphasize his eyes, the Voight-Kampff empathy test that focuses on the subjects eyes, the owl's wary eyes, the gouging of Tyrell's eyes, and Pris's darkened eyes as she stands camouflaged by a white veil in Sebastian's macabre museum. The eye theme as embodied here recalls its vivid appearance in the film version of *2001: A Space Odyssey*, where its recurrence symbolized the deceptive nature of the

computer Hal as an icon of technology. This very theme is encompassed in this narrative as vision does not guarantee certainty and truth for the viewer.

Many simulations or fake icons pervade the narrative in terms of photographs, memory implants, artificial animals and manufactured replicants. The recycling of these images and their recurrence is intertextually linked to the decadent circular thematics of technology as witnessed earlier on in this thesis in the exploration of the film version of *2001: A Space Odyssey*. Whilst the clue of origami art, like that of Shell Beach in *Dark City*, recurs, it is significant that the Chinese man produces eyes, genetically revealing the influence of advanced technologies as having intersected all levels of society – from street-level up to the powerful headquarters of Tyrell.

Apart from such recurrent eye images, there is the recurring image of decay linked to the dark theme underlying the texts under discussion. It is significant that Pris awaits J.F. Sebastian standing next to a pile of garbage. He is portrayed as an empty shell left to disintegrate, the perpetual corrosive rain veiling the landscape and wearing things away. His skin is decrepit and wrinkled, caused by Methuselah's syndrome – a condition of advanced aging. The city itself mirrors this sense of decay. The replicants are subjected to "retirement" – an inevitable death, this being the culmination of a decaying existence. The recycling of such images of decay project a postmodern chaotic underworld harbouring a sense of fragmentation and inevitable death.

The Tyrell Corporation creates the ambience of an Egyptian pyramid. Its fusion

of Art with Egyptian elements renders a sense of pastiche in postmodern terms, in other words the imitation of dead styles, adding to the theme of decay as paralleled by the scenic world of the street. The nature of the 'Other' in postmodern terms is also a recurrent metaphor pertaining to the films under discussion, and will be explored in conjunction with the relevant apocalyptic themes cited in this chapter.

Mysticism and religious icons, role-reversal , transformation and transcendence are what I have identified as key apocalyptic features of the films under discussion. In *The Matrix*, religious themes of faith, enlightenment, messiah, miracles and resurrection are foregrounded in the narrative and the cast themselves mimic mythological names and roles. Neo's mythical and visual transformation leads to his discovery of his symbolic role of a messiah figure (the supposed One) an anagram of his name who is relied on to bring salvation to the world's doomed human race. This points to the religious allusions of this film, as Neo is treated as a Messiah figure who is to join a band of rebels headed by Morpheus, who can be compared to John the Baptist .

The crew symbolically possess mythical and religious names which points to their role of saving humankind. The selected crew, with the ability to move between reality and the manipulated world are depicted as having hacked their way out of the Matrix to form a colony called Zion, a biblical allusion meaning 'heavenly city'. Neo and the rebels are forced to join in battle against the Agents who are guardians of the ruling machine class and are depicted as intelligent programs that manifest themselves in the dream-world of the Matrix as stiff government officials whose mission is to hack into the Zion mainframes and get rid of the last of

humanity.

Morpheus's proclamation of Neo as the one he has been awaiting, referring to him as 'a slave born into bondage', points to the prophesy of the one who will return and lead the remnants of human society sheltered in Zion, to defeat the artificial intelligence running the Matrix. Hence, the film narrative unambiguously situates Neo as a virtual Messiah figure, a saviour from (and of) the hyper-real. Arguing from a millenarian viewpoint, Mick Broderick in his article entitled 'The Matrix And the Millennium' describes Neo's observation of the Matrix with its sublime terror and awe, whilst a fellow rebel remarks: 'You're no longer in Kansas, Dorothy.' This undermines Neo's incomprehensible removal from his virtual dream state whilst at the same time accentuating the hallucinatory frisson of revelation he (had experienced).

(<http://web/earth.net/~postmodm/matrix.htm>) This emphasises Neo's acceptance of his role as a messiah figure and prepares him for the subsequent playing out of his role as a saviour to the human race.

Mysticism and prophesies play a large role in the freedom fighters' world view. Everything they believe is based on what the Oracle says. Her mystic powers are trusted without hesitation. The crew's visit to the Oracle, reveals the mysticism surrounding their mission. The film however, ironically debunks our expectation of the mystic woman, as she is revealed to be an ordinary woman of colour in a conventional looking kitchen, baking cookies. The only sense we have of her spiritual power is her anticipation of Neo knocking over a glass vase, which she

foretells. A number of gifted ones occupy the woman's abode including the boy who teaches Neo that "it's not the spoon that bends, only yourself", pointing to the spiritual essence of the film's narrative. The only sense viewers have of Neo being "the One" is the feeling of déjà vu that he experiences, after his visit to the Oracle.

The final sequence of the film further highlights Neo's messianic role, and the heightened mysticism implicit in the film. Through the resurrecting love of Trinity, Neo is able to regain his strength and thus destroy the Agents. His ability to stop bullets in mid-air and to cause the disintegration of the Agents fulfils his messianic role as a saviour of mankind against the artificial intelligence. The closing revelatory sequence is rendered cinematically by Neo's ability to "see" the Matrix code in real time, thereby shattering the illusion of the virtual. Neo's perception of his environment as streams of computer code and his absolute mastery of the Matrix in terms of his immunity to bullets and even death, signals the apex of his enlightenment.

In *Dark City*, Murdoch (like Neo in *The Matrix*) serves as a messiah figure at the end of the film altering the physical world around him. A sense of renewal emerges as water engulfs the city and the sun shines on this nocturnal city. In a revelatory ending John reveals to the alien (as the 'Other' figure) that what makes us human is not in our minds, but in the existence of our inner souls. The allusion to humans having souls raises the spiritual essence of human nature. As Murdoch moves the city towards the sun, the scene is juxtaposed with the reunion with his

wife, symbolic of hope for humanity.

In *Terminator Two* mysticism and awe are evoked through the opening pre-holocaust visuals of Los Angeles. The ritual movements of daily life and the innocence of children playing is contrasted harshly with the sudden destructive, apocalyptic white light that envelopes the scene and vaporizes everything. The subsequent fiery images of mass destruction reflect the apocalyptic quality of the film's trajectory.

The Tyrell headquarters in *Bladerunner* also evoke a mystic quality through the vivid use of white tones and backgrounds associated with heavenly purity. As Roy Batty enters the highest level of Tyrell's pyramid he is depicted as stepping into the heavenly realms of a room illuminated by the white light of candles that reflect white drapes and surroundings. The leader of the corporation is depicted as adorned in white robes mirroring the stature of a bishop. Tyrell further plays out the role of Creator by remarking that Roy is the prodigal son returning to his father. An underlying sense of horror emerges in this scene when Roy squeezes Tyrell's eyes till they burst, which is comparable to the horror of the pre-holocaust visuals in *Terminator Two*. This scene bears further religious parallels (in Christianity) with Roy as a Judas figure, a betrayer. An apocalyptic reversal is thus witnessed as the role of the Creator and Creation is reversed – Tyrell is murdered by his own scientific creation – the Replicant. Other religious allegories that emerge are Roy's crucifixion and the symbolic flight of the dove at the end of the film which will be highlighted at the relevant part of my analysis.

Aside from mysticism and religious allegories which I have identified as an apocalyptic trait of the texts under discussion, one of the key themes is that of reversal. This is observed in terms of humans (creators of technology) versus machine technology (creatures). In *The Matrix* the theme of enslavement to technology is witnessed throughout the film narrative. It is seen at the beginning when Neo is awakened by his computer, illustrating the idea that he has become a prisoner in his own dank apartment, and thereby subservient to technology. This is evident as the computer controls when he awakens, which subverts the dichotomy between humans (as Creators of technologies) and the computer (as a tool of technology created to aid humans). In this instance the computer controls the human (Neo).

It is further vividly represented in the scene where machines are pictured as having outsmarted man by 'breeding humans' to serve them rather than wiping out the race. The dismal, gloomy early twenty-first century where machines have won the battle against man and decimated the world as we know it is juxtaposed with the last remaining human city which is depicted as the only place of warmth in contrast to the cold post-apocalyptic world of the Matrix. Towering robots, fleets of sentinels and electronic monsters that physically appear as neon-tinged jellyfish project a world that is Other, in postmodern terms, and feeds our imaginations with a futuristic nightmare of an extrapolated world.

This theme is further represented when Agent Smith interrogates the captured Morpheus and states: 'humans are a virus, a disease that has infested this planet, and we are simply the cure...' He further points out that the initial

simulation where everything was perfect has been rejected by humans, therefore conflict is inevitable. This scene is significant as it sustains the theme of reversals which are key ideas linked to the concept of apocalypse. In terms of these reversals, machines have assumed the status of authority figures. Intertextually this mirrors Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, where the theme of reversal between Creator and Creation is played out. The religious allegory evident in this scene is that of The Garden of Eden, where man's existence was perfect, but through evil temptation was doomed to an alternate reality – life on earth, the price of disobedience to the creator.

In *Dark City*, a similar theme emerges as the futuristic nature of the city is depicted and we witness the construction of a restaurant which uses technology to replace human assistants and waiters. Food is instantaneously available through a press-button type of food system. The instant availability of food through the use of technology, continues the apocalyptic theme of reversals as technology replaces human labour.

The Stranger's ability to manipulate human memories can be paralleled to the machines in *The Matrix* as possessing the power to manipulate humans for use as an energy source. A significant scene in *Dark City* where John's memories are implanted into one of the aliens raises the idea of the alien being the alter ego of John, taking over his identity but projecting the reverse character. John being subjected to such manipulation is a significant part of the film, reinforcing the theme of creature versus creator.

In *Terminator 2*, the theme of reversal is vividly observed at the beginning of the film's context. As the panorama of the post-apocalyptic battlefield is revealed, a metal foot from a high-tech figure crushes the skull from above with a bone shattering sound. The camera pans up to reveal a metallic terminator endo-skeleton holding a massive battle rifle, highlighting the conflict between the humans and machines.

The shiny, menacing nature of the terminator is representative of machine technology as having assumed control over human existence. This theme is recurrent throughout the film narrative. It is further observed when the global time machine delivers the figure of the naked, first terminator (Arnold Schwarzenegger) with a muscle-bound frame and tough exterior. The machines highly advanced nature is encompassed in its ability to scan its surroundings without emotion, whilst registering a digitized, electronic scan of the Harley-Davidson motorcycles outside the biker's hangout.

The postmodern concept of the Other figure is raised as the human customers emerge as shocked by the new, that is the terminators superhuman strength, and the ensuing action sequence as he demonstrates his physical strength by breaking the bikers arm, throwing the man's pool partner out of the window and heaving the cigar-smoking biker into the kitchen. The scene further evokes the ambivalent quality of technology. On the one hand technology is glorified as the audience is mesmerized by the machine's capacity; on the other hand, it is presented as a vile, destructive entity. The strength of the machine is thus

foregrounded as superior to that of humans, reinforcing the theme of reversal I have identified between man (Creator) and machine (Creation). The theme of reversal also emerges through John Conner's openly defiant nature and extensive police record of trespassing, shoplifting, disturbance of the peace and vandalism which bears testimony to a chaotic postmodern society where authority figures are undermined, and children who are robbed of their innocence revert to crime as a pastime.

Sarah's innate human nature is illustrated in one of the institutional, bare brick cubicles of the high security wing, as she physically grunts and sweats whilst doing pull-ups on the upturned frame of her bed. Her tough physical nature portrays the theme of reversal as she is presented as a woman who is forced to survive in a male-dominated environment. She shatters the idealized feminine qualities of subservience and subtlety, thus reinforcing the nature of the postmodern. The rhythmical machine-like motion of her body as she exercises, adds to the technological thematics of the film in terms of the body as a machine, harbouring a terrifying mechanical quality. The fears of becoming machine-like emerge as a subtext which highlights the theme of the Other in postmodern terms. Sarah appears machine-like: she is viewed in relation to a masculine machine, representative of her alter-ego or Other nature. Her masculine qualities are also observed later in the film's trajectory where she is clad in army-style clothing, significantly stocking up on weapons in readiness to rebel against the impending chaos of a postmodern technological world. She openly reverses the accepted categories of feminine qualities as pointed out earlier in the narrative by wearing army attire and using weapons which are akin to a

male-dominated environment.

A significant way in which the theme of reversals is consistently used in *Terminator Two* is through the depiction of technology as a symbol of power, which to a certain degree undermines human power. This is observed when Dyson visits Cyberdyne Systems – a large corporate company where the blue hues of the security area and the silvery, reflective light of the artifacts exude cold, harsh tones reflective of a dark, technological underworld. The pervasive quality of technology highlights its infiltration into society as it is viewed as an icon of control and power by the corporation and simultaneously serves as a potential threat to all life-forms.

This theme also emerges through the attire of the terminators. Ironically, the T1000 model terminator is up to this point attired in a policeman's uniform driving a vehicle with the emblem – "To Protect and Serve", and the T800-model terminator dons biker clothes, which seems to reflect their personalities. In a neat role-reversal, it emerges as clearer to the audience that the T800-model terminator is actually the protector figure and the T1000 model Terminator the destructive terminator.

Juxtaposed with the dark nature of technology is the more redeeming side of it which is observed as the protector cyborg learns from John to respect human life. As the terminator is initiated by John into social life, he gains more insight than humans. He states (as he observes two children fighting) that humans have the innate capacity to destroy themselves. The child reinforces this statement by

inferring that humans won't 'make it'. Such significant insight is central to the theme of *Terminator Two* in terms of the apocalyptic trajectory of this thesis which warns humanity against the misuse of technology. Ironically, a machine has this foresight, which reinforces the theme of reversal, due to the fact that the very product of technology (the Terminator) warns its creator (man) against its own potentially dangerous capacity. As the Terminator learns why humans cry, it is significant that Sarah muses that he would be more of a father- figure to John, thereby reinforcing the insightful nature of the machine as more humane than humans themselves.

The final and most significant scene in terms of the theme of reversal occurs when Sarah interrogates the protector cyborg and learns that the machine would become self-aware. The terminator states :-

'Cyberdyne will become the largest supplier of military computer systemsThe system goes online on August 4th 1997. Human decisions are removed from strategic defence. Skynet begins to learn at a geometric rate. It becomes self-aware at 2:14am. Eastern time, August 29th.In the panic they try to pull the plug.'

At this point in the narrative the destructive capacity of technology is revealed in full force as 'human decisions are removed'. It marks the symbolic surrender of humanity to the mastering capability of technology. The accepted machine-human dichotomy undergoes subversions as all shortcomings and mistakes are blamed on 'human error' and the idea that machines could decide our fate as 'extermination' recalls this parallel theme as witnessed in Arthur C. Clark's film version of *2001:A Space Odyssey*, where the computer Hal controls the space

vessel and crew onboard to detrimental effect.

In *Bladerunner* when Tyrell is questioned, he quips with the gleam of a Capitalist: 'Commerce - More human than human is our motto'. Tyrell in effect embodies the icon of a postmodern usurper of wealth through capital gain at the expense of human existence. Creating potentially harmful replicants who could embody their own emotion would result in an apocalyptic world where humans could emerge at the mercy of their own technological creations. Such a possibility is intertextually related to the apocalyptic theme of reversal as inherent in my previous analysis of the films *The Matrix* and *Terminator Two*.

The final themes of transformation and transcendence which I have cited as apocalyptic features of the texts under discussion merit further exploration.

In *The Matrix*, Neo's transformation is observed both physically and spiritually, as the truth about the real world and virtual reality is revealed. His messianic transcendence as revealed in the closure to the film when he speaks to viewers in real time, shows that anything is possible in our world and that our future lies in our own hands. Neo's physical flight above to the sky reveals the hope of humanity's transcendence of the apocalyptic impulse and hope of transformation to a balanced world order.

In *Dark City* John Murdoch is also awakened when he physically appears naked in a bath tub, which symbolically parallels Neo's awakening when he undergoes the transformation in *The Matrix*. Murdoch's awakening is reflected

in a birth-like image as he is plunged into a chaotic world he doesn't understand. As with Neo, who tries to understand and discern the real world from that of virtual reality, Murdoch has to discern why the city appears different in terms of its architectural structures, and its citizens so estranged.

The most vivid metaphor of transformation is evident at the end of the film where Murdoch finds that he has the power to "tune" (unearthly telekinesis). In the thrilling apocalyptic battle that ensues, Murdoch's literal transformation of the city emerges in a cinematic spectacle, and hope for humanity prevails through the city's emergence into light from darkness.

In *Terminator Two* Sarah's transcendent understanding and the morphing ability of the T1000 evokes the theme of transformation. Sarah's transcendent understanding emerges as she admits her love for her son for the first time. Hardened by prison-life, she emerges slowly out of her cocooned retaliative nature. She expresses her wrath against men who create destructive tools (i.e. the Hydrogen bomb) and are ignorant of feminine insight into how life grows inside one. In effect, she finally liberates herself by expressing her love and anxieties. The newly liberated future is captured in Sarah's narration accompanying their trip to Cyberdyne Systems under the guidance of Miles Dyson to destroy the fateful microchip and mechanical arm. Her words signify this transition and is spoken in a sub-text in the narrative:

'The future, always so clear to me, had become like a black highway at night.... We were in uncharted territory, making up history as we went along.'

A sense of transcendence is witnessed at this point in the narrative as history

is reconstructed in the hope of a better future for humanity. This transition emerges as typically akin to a transcendental apocalypse. It also points to the fact that we cannot live in a predetermined future as it would destroy all hope for human existence.

In terms of the morphing quality of the T1000, the terminator appears menacing as it is composed of a 'mimetic poly-alloy', a liquid metal which allows it to imitate any human form. It's capacity for imitation makes it much more threatening to the ontological status of the human than the cyborg proper (i.e. the T800). Mark Dery in the text *Escape Velocity-Cyberculture at the End Of The Century* (1996), specifies the nature of this threat :-

'The T1000's quicksilver quality speaks loudly...of Mercury, a lunar, mutable element associated with androgeny and hermaphroditism. The robot is indeed polygendered : in its original state it is unequivocally male, resembling an elfin-eared Oscar or a Bauhausian Dildo, but it can assume any sex.'
(1996:103)

The threatening quality of the T1000 model terminator and its unusual dual nature as pointed out by Mark Dery is seen at several points in the narrative. In run-down Los Angeles, where it emulates the policeman, it literally emerges from the explosion scene as a silvery, viscous liquid-metal figure that morphs into the policeman identity-figure it is imitating. Subsequently in the next action scene it once again morphs into the figure of John's foster mother and kills his father. These sequences consist of a succession of images that merge into one another in such a way that their very sequentiality demonstrates the lethal capabilities of the machine – sometimes via the

incongruity between the form it adopts (i.e. that of the foster mother) and the manner in which it relentlessly pursues its goal (i.e. to destroy John Conner).

In such scenes where these transitions or morphing techniques are observed, a powerful 'affect' is generated by the special effects technology. According to James Sey in his journal article entitled – 'The Terminator Syndrome : Science Fiction Cinema and Contemporary Culture' (Nov 1992, *Literator* 13, No.3:13) this might be seen to have two causes, one being the potent illusion of reality achieved by cinema through its fundamental technology, that is twenty four frames of celluloid running through a light shooting through a lens, its effect being to make what is represented on the screen apparently occur in the same dimensions and space-time frame as reality.

The second cause of the powerful affect of the morphing technique is science fiction's commitment to making the possible actual. These techniques illustrate that we should not mistake a simulated reality for human reality. The terminator simulates everyone that it has 'sampled' so perfectly that it's impossible to discern the difference. It thus presents the seductive nature of technology as well as its danger, which raises an important paradox in the film's context – that a film such as *Terminator Two* with technology as a pervasive theme is itself a product of the most advanced film technology. In other words, to borrow Bert Olivier's phrase –: 'In parodic fashion, it presupposes and uses the very thing it criticizes.' (Nov 1992, *Literator* 13, No 3:28) This hegemonic nature of technology features prominently in Heidegger's critique of technology, the further exploration of which work lies beyond the scope of this thesis.

Another significant scene occurs when the black and white chequered floor of the hospital rises up, and the T1000 morphs into the security guard who has just walked over him. The T1000 savagely kills the guard and assumes his identity. The self-reflexive essence of technology is thus highlighted. In the subsequent scenes the seamlessness of technology and film art is reflected as the T1000 model terminator relentlessly pursues John, Sarah and the T800 protector terminator. It's ability to seep through the elevator with razor-like hands portrays the fluid nature of technology as breaking categories, emerging as a seamless infiltrator which typically represents the dark side of technology as a threat to human existence.

The final action sequences where the T1000 breaks into the helicopter cockpit shell highlights the visual images of intelligent humanoid machine (T1000), riding machine (motorcycle) and flying machine (helicopter).

The spectacle created in this scene (both in the helicopter and its re-emergence after freezing in liquid Nitrogen) with the morphing quality of the T1000 raises Baudrillard's idea on the 'Culture of the Spectacle'. He expresses a negative view of our culture as having lost all sense of the real. Everything according to Baudrillard has become an image or a copy. His ideas are relevant in conjunction with the figure of the shiny, silver liquid-metal terminator that mimics and bears the capacity to imitate solid objects. This raises the idea of the use of machine technology as part of the culture of the spectacle.

Terminator Two ends in a transcendent way, potential disaster being averted as the chip that could have destroyed the world is eliminated. The T800 heroically

sacrifices itself in a messianic ending so that John and Sarah may live. The humane nature of the T800 'protector' terminator is fore-grounded as it endures the ultimate sacrifice for the sake of humanity. In a postmodern sense it disrupts our perceptions of it by performing a self-sacrifice equivalent to that of a human tragic hero. Its destruction holds out the possibility that human survival will be meaningful and not permanently obscured by technology. In a transcendently apocalyptic way hope emerges for human existence at the end of the film as Sarah intones at the end :-

'The unknown future rolls towards us. I face it for the first time with a sense of hope, because if a machine-a terminator-can learn the value of human life, maybe we can too.'

The reflective blue road image in particular pertinently expresses the sense of a postmodern (uncertain), yet transcendent (affirmative) path into the future.

Terminator Two thus projects the idea that the misuse of technology in terms of the creation of weapons of mass destruction could result in the annihilation of all life forms. The redeeming qualities of technology are also juxtaposed with its destructive capacities, harbouring the innate idea that machines can also be harnessed for the benefit of humankind.

The postmodern quality of the film is reflective of our modern society which is bombarded by a 'spectacle culture' (to borrow Baudrillard's term), where our very surroundings project everything as subjected to being a copy of something else, which lends one to question the nature of reality. The apocalyptic essence of the narrative is harboured in the final action sequences where a sense of

transcendent hope for humanity is embodied in the protagonist's final words, which depart from the anxieties that the context of the film projects throughout the narrative.

In *Bladerunner* a sense of transcendence emerges through Roy's literal crucifixion which dramatically transforms the replicant's character. He holds a white dove, a symbol of divinity and peace, in turn rescuing Deckard. Roy's death as he states that everything gained in terms of his life experience will be 'lost like tears in the rain', is significant as it points to the inhuman machine gaining a sense of humanity. Roy's reconciled nature (as a symbol of machine technology) emerges in a poignant display of affection and value for human life. Not only is he depicted as having embodied emotions but as having learnt the value of his own memories.

Rachel and Deckard are transformed in terms of their character – Deckard's progressive character is inferred by the recurring origami symbols, the inherent idea being Deckard's transcendent acquisition of humane qualities. The fact that Rachel is spared from 'retirement' and embarks on a future with Deckard, ambiguously points to both the dangerous similarity between humans and machines and the possibility of collusion and communion. The idea that the Replicants have been created to fulfil human desires such as entertainment, companionship and relief from labour warns against the rendering of humans as superfluous.

What emerges from the metaphorical allusions (in respect of dark themes,

isolation, disintegration and fragmentation) is a warning against the dangers of arrogant science and the negative ramifications of humans playing God. The meaning of human existence is projected as fragile, where humans struggle for a sense of identity and, in essence, question our own innate selves as projected in a postmodern light by our machine doubles – the Replicants. The transcendent apocalyptic ending captures the essence of life and humanity as something to be valued and preserved, not subjected to the incursion of advanced technologies to such an extent that the boundaries between humans and machines are traversed.

The films I have thus far analysed in terms of their postmodern, apocalyptic quality project worlds which are reflective of dystopia as a result of the irresponsible use of technology. The dark themes as cited by all the films under discussion in this chapter serve as a warning of the inherent danger of machine technology usurping control over humanity. A transcendent, apocalyptic ending however emerges in each text, which serves as a redeeming quality of hope for human civilization, pending human awareness of the dangers inherent in the exploitative use of machine technology.

CHAPTER 4

SPACE AND SELF DISCOVERY IN *EVENT HORIZON* AND *SPHERE*

In this chapter I will focus on how space is contextualized in *Event Horizon* and *Sphere*, as well as the sense of self-discovery which emerges within the protagonists on a physical as well as spiritual scale. I will further intertextually link the parallel connections between these films in relation to Clarke's *2001: A Space Odyssey* at the relevant points of my analysis.

The vast, forbidding nature of space emerges in the opening shots of *Event Horizon*. Flying remains of a watch, book, a human corpse and an alien creature sets the context of the film and highlights the past crew members orphaned effects as well as the forbidding nature of the doctors nightmarish past. Droplets of water are amplified, which adds to the ominous nature of space. The deliberate amplification of sound and flying remains projects the idea that when humanity is faced with the vast realm of space on a physical scale, we are then vulnerable to an environment that remains alien in our failure to comprehend it. From a postmodern perspective *Event Horizon's* defiance of space and time emphasizes the human being's advanced capabilities to the point where we are capable of shattering the boundaries of a realm formerly conceived of solely in spiritual terms. The ability to manipulate time and space is extrapolated, thereby projecting the

possibility of travelling vast distances not reachable or conceivable in a human's lifetime, as well as defying the accepted universal laws of relativity.

To highlight the sense of vulnerability of humans in space, the crew members of the USSA-Lewis and Clark are placed in enclosed, capsule-like pods, which recalls the opening sequence of *Aliens* (James Cameron). At the intertextual level, it draws parallels with crew member Bowman's departure in a space capsule to repair the supposed inconsistencies of his vessel that the deceptive Hal conjured up in the film version of *2001: A Space Odyssey*. Each of the crew member's enclosures, in turn, are similar to incubator pods.

However, instead of the innocent nature of creation, here the vulnerability of the members is foregrounded as they each are manipulated by the evil destructive force.

The crew are further vulnerable in the later scenes where they attempt to enter the spaceship Event Horizon. The vessel reflects the outer-surface of the spaceship in the film version of *2001: A Space Odyssey*, and appears to resemble a menacing, fossilized image of a primitive creature with the dark atmosphere around the vessel hinting at its sentient nature. The vulnerability of the three suited astronauts reaches a climax when the crew discover the horror of the strewn human remains. Significantly, one of the crew members exclaims that the place resembles a tomb, whilst a glove brushes against him in response to this claim. From the eerie nature of the cross-shaped vessel and

the horrifying discoveries of the crew on their initial encounters with the Event Horizon (i.e. the strange, abnormal readings and human remains), it is evident that the vessel mirrors the likes of an unearthly, Gothic cathedral in space.

The sense of vastness, silence and the deserted nature of the vessel adds to its dark, Gothic mood. The discoveries by the crew members of snaking corridors and containment chambers reflects the nightmarish nature of their surroundings. A combination of Gothic and futuristic elements is portrayed as the engine room projects a central locus of horror through its resemblance to the inside of an iron orb, with spikes radiating from its ever-rotating gyroscopic core. The sounds that emanate from the motion of the core reflect the eerie nature of space.

In *Sphere*, a similar sense of vulnerability emerges. However in this instance the crew in *Sphere* are submerged deep in the ocean, symbolic of a spatial realm hostile to humanity. The film powerfully exploits the imagination and portrays the Sphere as an alien medium that is too advanced for human civilization. Both deep space in *Event Horizon* and the depths of the ocean in *Sphere* project realms of a spatial terrain in which human civilization is vulnerable, as we remain limited in our physical capacity to explore all dimensions of these terrains. Science fiction capitalizes on this notion and as is evident in *Sphere* and *Event Horizon* projects the perils of human exploration in an environment we have yet to comprehend.

In *Sphere*, the eerie aspect of the crew's discovery is that their sonar had detected a low-level humming sound, indicative of an unknown life-force's prevalence. The crew's feelings of anxiety as they face the unknown can be paralleled to that of the crew of the spaceship *Lewis and Clark* as they venture out to meet the vessel *Event Horizon*. The element of fear that these films harbour portray humanity's innate nature in terms of confrontations with their latent Other in postmodern terms, or the unknown.

The cut to the intertext entitled 'The Spacecraft' portrays the crew members entrance into the umbilicus of the vessel. Their vulnerable nature is like that of a newborn infant at birth as their breathing patterns echo this notion. As the camera pans the deep, the crew venture forth into a tunnel/ coral pipe which can be compared to *The Heart Of Darkness*, intertextually linked to Joseph Conrad's novel of the same title where the explorers are faced with the dangers of the African landscape. In *Sphere*, the crew are faced with the perils of the most toxic creatures that dwell in this watery habitat. The rotation of the airlock doors to the vessel resembles that found in *2001: A Space Odyssey*, where the mundane focus of human endeavour in terms of the progress of technology is foregrounded. Here, the crews venture into the alien craft is a futile reflection on humanity's inability to deal with alien intelligence.

The claustrophobic, steamy chambers, grids, catwalks and plumbing in *Sphere*

can be compared to the snaking corridors and containment chambers aboard the *Event Horizon*, as well as evoking the nausea and fear associated with these images. The subsequent discovery of a severely fractured human skull and a corpse holding a packet of snack food appears more gruesome as it brings to bear the inevitability of death in an alien environment. The apex of the crew's discovery is the luminous golden sphere which parallels the Lewis and Clarke crew's initial discovery of the engine room in *Event Horizon*. The sphere and the engine room similarly function as the central locus of horror.

Space is thus contextualized in both *Sphere* and *Event Horizon* as a realm that is awesome in terms of its vastness. However, humanity cannot venture forth into such landscapes without confronting our fears of the unknown. The crew in both films are subjected to an exploration of their physical and spiritual resilience in conquering the unknown. The dark theme associated with the way space is contextualized is continued through the sentient nature of each vessel.

The last voice-recordings before the Event Horizon's disappearance, recorded in Latin as 'liberate me' and translated to 'save yourself' pinpoints the inherent danger associated with the vessel's unknown disappearance and the sentient nature of the vessel. The dark nature of the Event Horizon is foregrounded, when the sudden explosion in the engine room forces the crew to clamber into its derelict quarters but offers no stable refuge. Instead, the vessel appears to radiate a sinister, sentient penumbra that emerges slowly through the

manipulation of the guilt-plagued consciences of the crew members. The slow transformation of the vessel appears through individual crew members' experiences that have a nightmarish quality. It begins through the suctioning of the engineer, Justin (Jack Noseworthy), into a void that opens up in the engine room, his subsequent coma and the resultant explosion which creates an excess of carbon dioxide. The vessel thereafter singles out Sam Neil, who appears to be obsessed by the vessel, which echoes the intertextual theme of the creature figure rebelling against its creator in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. The vessel further plays on Peter's guilty conscience on her inability to spend time with her son, as it projects a horrific vision of him with physically deformed legs harbouring sickly legions.

The subsequent violent recording observed by the crew of bloody figures screaming in terror is the climax of the sentient nature of the Event Horizon. It mirrors the sentient nature of the computer Hal in *2001: A Space Odyssey*, not only in terms of a ship with a mind of its own but also in terms of the parallel play on the word 'Hal' and depicting 'hell' for the crew of the vessel in *2001: A Space Odyssey*. Further, the focus on the close-up of the deceptive eye of the computer Hal in *2001: A Space Odyssey* parallels the close-up of the Captain's (Laurence Fishburne's) fixation on the observation of the 'core' of the Event Horizon which is the heart of the deceptive vessel.

In *Sphere*, the Hal-like computer awakens after the crew's gruesome discovery

of the corpse, revealing its controlling influence on subsequent events. The Sphere appears to have no entrance points and seems to reflect everything but the crew observing it. The fact that the Sphere reflects everything but them is indicative that the curious object chooses what it reflects, indicating its sentient nature. Similar to the crew of *Event Horizon*, a Pacific Cyclone cuts off the crew of *Sphere* from surface contact. The crew are then trapped in their claustrophobic habitat, confined to a nightmarish underworld and subjected to the evil manipulation of the alien entity “Jerry” aboard the vessel.

The sentient, intervening nature of Jerry emerges through the crew members’ strange behaviour after contact with the luminous sphere. The alien projects the crews’ fears, and this is evident when Fletcher is smothered by jellyfish, when Harry voraciously consumes eggs and absentmindedly reads *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea*, the projection of the giant squid, and in later scenes, the electric eels. This, coupled with the random influx of numerical sequences and the death of Ted and Barnes evokes the sustained intervention of the alien- Jerry’s presence. The climax of Jerry’s intervention is its ability to hear the crew’s discussions and its refusal to be omitted from these discussions. Its deceptive, child-like innocence can be paralleled intertextually with the deceptive nature of the computer Hal in *2001: A Space Odyssey*, which sings a child-like ditty when subjected to disconnection.

It is evident from the narrative exploration of *Sphere* and *Event Horizon* on a

physical level, that what emerges from the texts is the sense of awe and wonder, as well as the perils of deep space and the depths of the oceans. The second way in which the narratives of the films intersect is through the way it projects the innate self-discovery of each crew member.

In *Event Horizon*, the powerful nature of the core infiltrates the vessel and affects the crew. This is observed through the vibration of Justine's body, the captain and crew's nightmare visions that is Peter's hallucinations of her son. Weir's visions of his suicidal wife and the Captain's vision of a friend who had burned to death. The recurring nature of these visions reflects the self-reflexive quality of the film. The alien, representative of the alter-ego to the human crew, projects the crew's nightmarish past, highlighting the latent dark nature of humans.

In *Sphere* the crew have unstable characteristics - Goodman is indecisive, Halperin paranoid and suicidal, Fielding insecure and Adams strange. Their unstable nature parallels and adds to the strangeness surrounding them and, as is later evident, lends to the psychological angle the film explores. The luminous sphere projects the crew's fears. Their recurringly strange behaviour is attributed to the alien entity. Harry is revealed to be a central link to the strange events aboard the vessel. In conjunction with his strangeness is the repeated use of Jules Verne's classic text, *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under The Sea*, which serves as a metaphor that defines the strange paranoia

surrounding the survivors.

Sphere and *Event Horizon* offers two sources of exploration, that is the discovery of the physical world and the human subconscious. Whilst in *Sphere* the film on a physical scale plays on the themes of infinite water and ultimate confinement, in *Event Horizon* the perils of deep space emerges, challenging the crew to cope with the claustrophobia of their habitat. Each set of crew members in the respective films are subjected to being cut off from reality and susceptible to the perils of deep, spatial terrains. On a subconscious level both these films question whether humans are mature enough to handle the secrets of the universe, or whether we are but an infant species whose fears and phobias prevent us from reaching a mature sense of enlightenment.

In terms of human self-discovery, what is perhaps submerged in the film narratives is the fact that, as humans, we are our own 'Frankenstein' monsters bearing the power to destroy, but not possessing the capacity to stop our destructive tendencies. For humanity to achieve the power to create reality, we need to attain spiritual purity and insight. Without such a capacity, what is created will be as dangerous as the monsters of *Sphere*. On a literal scale, our distrust and fear of one another has throughout history caused us to use our creative skills to produce weapons of mass destruction. If at our present capacity we are granted the power to manifest deep, unconscious desires, then

we can only imagine the destruction we would cause. This brings to bear the apocalyptic tone inherent in the film, that humanity needs a sense of transcendence to bring about renewal in our lives.

Finally, it is significant to explore *Event Horizon* and *Sphere* in terms of its intertextual links with other texts, but more specifically Arthur C. Clarke's film version of *2001: A Space Odyssey*. I have foregrounded intertextuality as a key postmodern feature, as postmodern theorists view discourse as text. The parallel connections between the texts I have cited collectively project their postmodern, apocalyptic quality.

Event Horizon shares intertextual connections with the film version of *2001: A Space Odyssey*, *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under The Sea*, *Alien*, *Contact*, *Sphere* and other horror hybrids like *The Shining* and *Nightmare On Elm Street*, the film version of *Frankenstein* as well as the dark undertones of *Dark City* and *The Matrix*. The name of the Event Horizon alludes to Stephen Hawking's bestselling introduction to quantum physics entitled -: *A Brief History Of End Time* where the term 'event horizon' is encountered. The meaning is significantly stated as the border of a black hole, the region of known (and knowable space), the boundary of the region of space time from which it is not possible to escape. (Rosenburg, S, <http://www.salon.com/aug97/entertainment/event970815.html>.)

The film mirrors *2001-A Space Odyssey* on many levels. In terms of the lighting of the vessel, when illuminated with the computer running, it resembles *2001* as a vast, modern spaceship. During scenes when the lights are off, it projects the dark, sentient nature of the vessel which recalls the sentient nature of the computer 'Hal' in *2001: A Space Odyssey*. With regard to the sound effects, it departs from '*2001: A Space Odyssey*' as it amplifies sound to such an extent that even a lone drop of water seems menacing, whereas in *2001: A Space Odyssey* the silence of space foregrounds the sense of awe and wonder at its vastness. The end of *Event Horizon* also parallels the end of *2001: A Space Odyssey* in terms of the floating corpse of Weir which is similar to Bowman's anticipation of evolutionary transformation to a mystic, alien or 'Other' creature in postmodern terms. The sense of transformation Bowman and Weir in particular undergo merits further exploration in terms of the Nietzschean categories of the Dionysian and Apollonian. (Kaufmann, 1982)

As discussed in the chapter on *2001: A Space Odyssey*, the Nietzschean idea has its origin in Darwin's theory of natural selection with the idea that the evolution of humans would travel through three stages that is primitive human (ape), modern human and ultimately super-human. The character of Weir in *Event Horizon* acts out the transition from modern human (Apollonian) as obsessive and irrational to a 'super-human', that is back to the Dionysian state (led by instinct). Like Moonwatcher who develops a sense of 'masterdom' after the aggressive act of killing another, Weir achieves the 'superhuman' status through acts of violence, and literally evolves as a super-human creature

figure.

In *2001: A Space Odyssey*, Nietzsche's (1982) allusions to his choice of music being 'also Sprach Zarathustra', signals the centrality of his view of evolution as a spiritual/intellectual one. In *Event Horizon*, Nietzsche also bears relevance to the film's transformative function in the character of Weir as well as the innate nature of the space vessel. However, Nietzsche's theory serves as a contrast to the theory of postmodernism which projects a technologically dead-end society, a society where any form of transcendence is denied. *Event Horizon*, however, does conform to a sense of apocalyptic transcendence with hope on the one hand for the salvation of humankind, bearing in mind that evil still manifests in reality. What *Event Horizon* foregrounds in terms of the postmodern is its psychological journey as each of the crew are forced to confront their fears. The ultimate confrontation with the transformed Weir evokes the crew's sense of facing their fears on a literal scale.

Event Horizon also works on an intertextual level in terms of its parallels with Ridley Scott's *Alien* as the crew members in both films project a military image. The film also bears the dark, organic look of *Alien* with its requisite sense of ominous foreboding. In terms of its intertextual connections with *Contact* and *Sphere*, the core in *Event Horizon* can be juxtaposed with the transport mechanism in *Contact* which creates a space-time wormhole, and the spherical structure in the film *Sphere* which projects the crew's fears.

In terms of the intertextual design of the *Event Horizon*, it projects that of a crucifix hanging above Neptune as the model designer David Sharpe screened the thruster pods from the tower of Notre Dame. The production designer Bennett drew elements from Tibetan, Medieval and Renaissance design as well as modern technology. The final visual of the vessel serves as a beacon of hope for human salvation through a sense of apocalyptic renewal.

At the intertextual level, *Sphere* evokes scenes from *2001: A Space Odyssey*, *Contact*, *Event Horizon* and the writings of Jules Verne. In terms of *2001: A Space Odyssey*, the computer entity Hal directly parallels the sentient, child-like nature of the computer entity Jerry in *Sphere*. *Sphere* intertextually compares with the film *Contact* in that both films are about alien contact and prejudice. *Contact* projects the view that alien contact can offer the possibility of a consciousness, expanding entry into a wider universe, but that to accept it we need to overcome small-mindedness. *Sphere* is somewhat more pessimistic holding the end view that humanity, given the miraculous ability to wish anything into being, will only manifest its deepest, darkest fears and that we are better off without such a gift. *Sphere* and *Event Horizon* project a pseudo-Miltonic 'hell is within us' theme which foregrounds the dark side of human nature, as well as the use of the entity – the Sphere – as paralleled to the core of *Event Horizon*, being a central locus of horror. Further, *Sphere* also uses Jules Verne's classic text *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under The Sea* as a recurring metaphor as explored in the narrative, and the squid attacks seem to

be a hybrid of the same text.

Sphere also uses title-cuts within the narrative of the film, which breaks conventional ground in terms of filmmaking. The film emerges as a series of mind games. Each answer the scientists unravel in the narrative leads to further questions. Each time they believe they understand what is going on, something else proves they do not, such as initially believing the ship to be an alien craft, but their investigation revealing its American origins.

Finally, *Sphere* evokes science fictional hybrid themes of black holes, time travel, U.F.O s, dreams, fears and perceptions of reality, which are inter-textually embedded in the narrative, offering a new twist on the alien being. It is not depicted as a predatory monster that can be physically conquered or a wide-eyed entity. It is rather a crafty manipulator which capitalizes on human psychological weaknesses and literally challenges humanity with it. This is depicted through the crew's discovery that the greatest obstacle is themselves, their human flaws and insecurities, their fears and weaknesses and how they let them get out of control.

The intertextual links I have cited in the texts under discussion are not meant to be a summary of all the links between the films. Rather, I have cited the pertinent connections between these texts and the film version of Clarke's *2001: A Space Odyssey*, in light of the fact that it cuts across the high and low

cultural barriers of the postmodern.

Space and self discovery are also pertinent themes that I have foregrounded in this chapter. Space emerges as a vast uncharted spatial terrain that humankind is yet to comprehend. In the film texts, and the novels of Arthur C. Clarke, humans are viewed as an infant species that is subjected to contemplating the awe and wonder of space – whether deep space or the ocean depths. In terms of the theme of self-discovery, implicit in the texts is the need for physical, spiritual and psychological awakening and enlightenment within human civilization in order to avert future catastrophe, which may be brought about through the irresponsible use of technology.

CONCLUSION

'It stands to reason that, if history begins with arbitrary creation, it is bound to end with arbitrary destruction.' (Weber E, 1999: 237)

'By defining human suffering in cosmic terms, as part of a cosmic order that contains an issue, catastrophe is dignified, endowed with meaning, and hence made bearable.' (Weber E, 1999:235)

The words of Eugen Weber articulate some of the central concerns of this thesis. It projects the idea of the inevitability of death and, as I have attempted to prove, the fragility of human existence. In our media saturated postmodern context, the social anxieties of the world are projected in a profound way, through contemporary cinema and texts such as the canonical works of Arthur C. Clarke. The awe and wonder of the universe as depicted by Clarke can be viewed in the light of Weber's idea of the definition of meaning and creation in cosmic terms as well as in conjunction with catastrophe.

In terms of science fiction cinema apocalyptic renderings of the ending of human existence is projected in terms of disaster films which attribute our demise to fires, floods, plagues, monsters and space alien invasions. Endowed with this is the projection of the world as plunged by decay and darkness. As witnessed in my exploration of the texts and film what is clearly rendered is the chaotic nature of a technologically-driven society, where nothing is coherent any longer. This sense of incoherence, of chaos, of media-saturation and projections of reversal in terms of time and space as reflected by film are postmodern concerns. Fears of nuclear war, overpopulation and genetic

engineering taken to an extreme fuel social anxieties of man being rendered obsolete in a world suffused with modern technology. Douglas Kellner in *Baudrillard : A Critical Reader* (1994:324-325), projects Baudrillard's view on this dangerous quality of technology as well as our fascination with it. The danger of technology is projected through the bombardment of simulated apocalypses (i.e. artificially contrived endings of the world). In other words simulation technology fascinates society through video games and flight simulators that project ways of ending human civilization. These projected 'ends' as well as society's obsession with the quest for instantaneity or simultaneity – to be anywhere without travelling in 'real' space or to use 'real' time, places humans in a vulnerable position of subservience to technology.

However, as witnessed by the latter chapter of this thesis the concept of apocalypse is viewed in an ambivalent light – not only does it project endings but it offers a sense of hope for human existence in terms of the themes of transformation and transcendence as articulated in conjunction with the texts and film. Embodied in the idea of transcendence is the fact that humans are instrumental in changing the future. As with the protagonist Neo of *The Matrix* a belief in ourselves, as well as an appreciation of the wonders of creation as depicted by Clarke's texts, through the need and search for spiritual meaning are key factors in evoking a positive sense of transformation.

In an incoherent world plunged into degeneration and dislocation – as witnessed from the canonical texts of Clarke to that of contemporary film - the need for the transcendence of humans to an apex of physical, spiritual and psychological enlightenment is a channel to enforce positive change in society. The mystery and uncertainty of life as well as the need for positive human endeavour is best captured in the words of Sarah Conner at the end of the film *Terminator Two : Judgement Day* (1991) as she states :-

‘The unknown road lies ahead, I face it for the first time with a sense of hope...for if a Terminator can learn the value of human life, perhaps humans can too.’

Bibliography

Primary Texts

Clarke A.C. , *2001 – A Space Odyssey*, Arrow Books, Great Britain, 1996.

Clarke A.C. *Childhood's End*, Pan Books Ltd., London, 1990

Clarke A.C, *Rendezvous With Rama*, Harcourt Brace, London, Gollancz & New York, 1973.

Clarke A.C, *The City And The Stars*, Corgi Pubs, London , 1974.

Primary Film Source

2001 : A Space Odyssey , Based on Arthur C. Clarke's short story – The Sentinel, Producer/ Scriptwriter/ Director Stanley Kubrick, Metro-Goldwyn, Mayer, Great Britain, 1968.

The Matrix, Written and Directed By Andy and Larry Wachowski, USA, 1999.

Dark City, Writers : Alex Proyas, Lem Dobbs & David S. Goyer, Directed by Alex Proyas, Producers : Andrew Mason & Alex Proyas, USA, 1998.

Event Horizon, Director : Paul Anderson, Producers: Lawrence Gordon, Lloyd Levin & Jeremy Bolt, US Distributor Paramount Pictures, 1997.

Sphere , Director : Paul Anderson, USA, 1997.

Alien Resurrection, Written by Joss Whedon, Directed by Jean Pierre Jeunet, Twentieth -century Fox Producers, USA, 1997.

Terminator 2, Written by James Cameron & William Wisher, Directed by James Cameron, Producers Warner Bros., USA, 1991.

Bladerunner, Director : Ridley Scott, Producers : Warner Bros, USA, June 1982.

Secondary Texts

Books

Ash Brian, Who's Who in Science Fiction, Elm Tree Book Pubs, Great Britain, 1976.

Ballerd J.G., A User's Guide To the Millenium, London, 1996.

Baudrillard J, The Ecstasy Of Communication in Hal Foster's ' The Anti - Aesthetic : on Postmodern Culture', Pluto Press, London & Sydney, 1981: 126-134.

Berlitz Charles, Doomsday 1999, Granada Pubs. Ltd, London, 1982.

Bloom Harold, Omens Of The Millenium: The Gnosis of Angels, Dreams & Resurrection, 4th Estate Ltd. Pubs, Great Britain, 1996.

Broderick Damien, Reading by Starlight – Postmodern Science Fiction, First pub. By Routledge Pubs, London, 1995.

Brosnan John, Future Tense – The Cinema of Science Fiction, MacDonald & Janes, New York, 1978.

Calinescu Matei & Douwe Fokkema, Exploring Postmodernism, Selected Papers, John Benjamins Pub. Co., Philadelphia, 1987.

Clarke A.C, Of Time and Stars – The Worlds of Arthur C. Clarke, Puffin Books, Middlesex, 1972.

Clarke A.C, Report on Planet Three and Other Speculations, Corgi Books, 1972.

Clarke A.C, The Best of Arthur C. Clarke 1937-1971, Sphere Books Ltd, London, 1973.

Clute John & Peter Nicholls, The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction, London, 1993.

Dery Mark, Escape Velocity – Cyberculture at the end of the Century, Hodder & Stoughten Pubs., Great Britain, 1996.

Dowling David, Fictions of Nuclear Disaster, 1987.

Dyson A.E, The Romantic Imagination – Casebook Series, MacMillan Press Ltd, London & Basingstroke, 1977.

Esposti, Christina Degli, Postmodernism in the Cinema, Berghahn Books, New York, 1998.

Harvey David, *The Condition of Postmodernity*, Blackwell Pubs, Oxford, 1990.

Hill, John Spencer, *The Romantic Imagination – A Selection of Critical Essays*, The MacMillan Press Ltd, London & Basingstroke. 1977.

Hutcheon Linda, *A Poetics of Postmodernism : History, Theory, Fiction*, *Routledge Pubs*, London & New York, 1988 : 307-325.

Hutcheon Linda, *The Politics of Postmodernism*, London : Routledge: 1989.

Jameson F, *Postmodernism & Consumer Society in Hal Foster: The Anti-Aesthetic : Essays on Postmodern Culture*, Pluto Press, London & Sydney, 1985.

Kellner D, *Baudrillard : A Critical Reader*, Blackwell Pubs, Oxford, U.K. and Cambridge, U.S.A, 1994

Kermoele Frank, *The Sense of An Ending – Studies in the theory of Fiction*, Oxford Univ. Press, U.S.A, 1967.

Kuhn Annette, *Alien Zone – Cultural Theory & Contemporary Science Fiction Cinema*, Verso Pubs, London & New York, 1990.

Langan John, *College Writing Skills*, Third Edition, McGraw Hill, Inc, 1992.

McHale Brian, *Constructing Postmodernism*, Routledge Pubs, London & New York, 1992.

Nelson Thomas Allen, *Kubrick – Inside A Film Artist's Maze*, Indiana Univ. Press, Bloomington, USA, 1982.

Nierop Van Leon with Norman Galloway, Tascoe Luc De Reuck, *Seeing Sense on Film Analysis*, J.L. Van Shaik Pubs, Pretoria, 1998.

Pushmann Nalenz Barbara, *Science Fiction and Postmodern Fiction – a Genre Study*, American Univ. Studies, New York, Series XiX, Vol 29, 1992.

Suvin Darko, *Metamorphoses Of Science Fiction : On the Poetics & History Of A Literary Genre*, Yale Univ. Press, New Haven & London, 1979.

Thompson Damian, *The End Of Time*, Vintage Pubs, Random House, London, 1999.

Walker Alexander, Taylor Sybil & Ulrich Ruchti, *Stanley Kubrick : Director – A Visual Analysis*, Weidenfeld & Nicholson Pubs, London, 1999.

Walter Kaufmann, *The Portable Nietzsche*, The Viking Press Inc., New York, 1982.

Weber Eugen, *Apocalypses*, Hutchinson Pubs, London , 1999.

Wingrove David & Brian Aldiss, *Science Fiction Film Source Book*, Longman Pubs, England, 1985.

Encyclopedia Volumes

Bryfonski Dedria, *Contemporary Literary Criticism 13*, 1980.

Ethridge M. James & Barbara Kopak, *Contemporary Authors*, The Book Tower, Detroit 26, Michigan, Gale Research Co. Pubs, Copyright 1962, Vols 1-4.

Gunton R. Sharon, *Contemporary Literary Criticism 18*, 1981.

Marowski G. Daniel, Roger Matuz , Jane E. Neidhardt, *Contemporary Literary Criticism 35*, Gale Research Co., Detroit , Michigan, 1985.

Riley Carolyn, *Contemporary Literary Criticism 1*, Gale Research Co., Detroit, Michigan, 48228, 1973.

Article

Supernatural's Back, You Magazine, 17 Feb. 2000, p66.

Speech

Havel V, [http: //www.worldtrans.org/whole/havelspeech.html](http://www.worldtrans.org/whole/havelspeech.html), Philadelphia, July 4th, 1994.

Journals

Bradbury Malcolm, *From Here To Modernity*, Prospect, Dec 1995, p34-39.

Olivier Bert, *Postmodern Cinema and Postmodern Culture : information – communication, Otherness and History in Wender's Himmel uber Berlin (Wings of Desire)*, *Literator* 13, Nov 1992, Vol 13, No.3, p1-11.

Olivier Bert, *Time, Technology, Cinematic Art & Critique in The Terminator and Terminator 2: Judgement Day : a philosophical Interpretation*, *Literator* 13, Nov. 1992, No.3, p21.

Sey James , *The Terminator Syndrome : Science Fiction, Cinema & Contemporary Culture*, *Literator* 13, Nov. 1992, No 3, p13.

Theses

Thompson, Mary Anne. Oct 1985. *Future Tense : An Analysis of Science Fiction as Secular Apocalyptic Literature*. Master of Arts, Univ. Of Cape Town, South Africa.

Web Sources

Apocalypse – related Research

Brook, Wes Howard , *Apocalypse Soon?* , *Sojourners Magazine*, Jan – Feb 1999, [http : //www.sojourners.com/soj_990122.html](http://www.sojourners.com/soj_990122.html), (Accessed 1/09/02)

Cherry Matt, *God, Science & Delusion*, *Free Inquiry Magazine*, [http: //www.ian~andrew.co.uk/Clarkereligion.html](http://www.ian~andrew.co.uk/Clarkereligion.html), Vol 19,No 2, p1-3, (Accessed 14/10/01)

Disch, Thomas M, *Thinking Big*, *Sunday Book Review* , [http: //www.calenderlive.com/top/1,1419,L-LATimes-Print-X.ArticleDetail-19945,00.html?](http://www.calenderlive.com/top/1,1419,L-LATimes-Print-X.ArticleDetail-19945,00.html?), (Accessed 18/10/01)

Jones Gerald, *Science Fiction, Sunday Late City Final Edition*, Jan 23rd 1983, Section 7, Col. 3, p24.
<http://www.nytimes.com/books/97/03/09/reviews/clarke-two.html>, copyright 1998, The New York Times Co. (Accessed 4/09/01)

Ostwalt Conrad, *Journal of Religion & Film : Armageddon at the Millennial Dawn*, Vol.4, No.1, April 2000,
<http://www.unomaha.edu/~wwwjrf/armagged.htm>.(Accessed 12/01/02.)

Pilkington Mark, *Screen Memories, UFO Mythology and Science Fiction Films*, <http://www.hedweb.com/markp/ufofilm.htm>,
(Accessed 27/08/02)

Tabor James, *Frontline :Apocalypse : Apocalypticism Explained*,
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/apocalypse/explanation/jerusalem.html>, 1999, (Accessed 1/09/02)

Prophecies on The end of the Millenium, <http://members.tripod.com/~Fabio001/Prophen-htm> . (Accessed 14/10/01)

Apocalypse Now?, Oct 1994, <http://www.deoxy.org/thetruth.htm>,
Oct 1994, p1-3, (Accessed 1/09/02)

Hannah's deep field space : sf.essays/science fiction and the Western Bias, <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/Users/fap40/sfhumanrace.html>.

Clarke – Research on 2001

Ciment Mike, *Kubrick and The Fantastic, The Kubrick Site*
Kubrick & the Fantastic.htm, p1-13, Accessed 9/07/00.

Dirks Tim, *2001: A Space Odyssey*(1968), <http://www.filmsite.org/twot.html>., Accessed 30/08/00

Munro LRC, *Off the Shelf : City on Fire*, <http://www.scifi.com/sfu/issue37/books.html>, copyright 1997, 04/10/01

Schellenberg James, *2001 and All the Years After : Reviews, 1999*, <http://home.golden.net/csp/reviews/2001.htm>,
(Accessed 04/10/01)

Zimny Claudia, *2001 and The Motif of the Voyage*, The Kubrick Site Claudia Zimny on '2001' htm, (Accessed 07/07/00)

2001-A Space Odyssey (1968)
<http://us.imdb.com/Title?0062622>
Accessed (30/08/00)

2001: An Ambient Legacy , Korova Multimedia,
<http://Korova.com/kmr.95/kmr5025.htm>.
Accessed 30/08/00

Other Clarke Works - Research

Paulos, John Allen, Space Jam, March 9th, 1997,
<http://www.nytimes.com/books/97/03/09/reviews/970309.09paulot.html>.

Arthur C. Clarke's The City and the Stars, Additional Resources,
http://www.adherents.com/lit/bk_Clarke_CityStars_char.html.
 Accessed 14/10/01

Rendezvous With Rama,
<http://www.angelfire.com/ky2/arpeggio/Rama.html>.
 Accessed 12/10/01

Bois, William Du, Childhood's End,
<http://www.nytimes.com/books/97/03/09/reviews/clarke-childhood.html>

Ian Andrew, A Look at Individualism in Childhood's End,
<http://www.ian-andrew.co.uk/Review-childhood.html>
 Accessed 29/08/01.

Film Research **The Matrix**

Adams Sam, The Matrix,
<http://www.citypaper.net/movies/m/matrix.shtml>
 Accessed 12/01/02

Barlow Joe, The Matrix (1999),
<http://reviews.imdb.com/Reviews/176/17644>
 Accessed 14/01/02

Blackwelder Rob, Lofty Intentions, Low Brow Results
<http://www.splicedonline.com/99reviews/matrix.html>
 Accessed 05/02/02

Blunt Emily, Matrix,
<http://www.bluntreview.com/reviews/matrix.htm>
 Accessed 4/02/02

Brien Harvey, The Matrix(1999),
<http://indigo.ie/~obrienh/mat.htm> Accessed 14/01/02

Broderick Mick, The Matrix and the Millennium,
<http://web.1earth.net/~postmodm/matrix.html>
 Accessed 12/02/02

Brundage James, The Matrix (1999),
<http://reviews.imdb.com?Reviews/176/17613>
 Accessed 14/01/02

Campbell Ian, The Matrix,
http://www.24framespersecond.com/reactions/films_m/matrix03
 Accessed 10/02/02

Choi David, The Matrix (1999),
<http://www.insane.nu/kult/matrix.htm>
 Accessed 14/01/02

Dean Mike, The Matrix(1999),
<http://www.jiminycritic.com/review.asp?ReviewID=3>
 Accessed 5/02/02

Dequina Micheal, The Matrix (1999),
<http://reviews.imdb.com/Reviews/174/17491>
 Accessed 14/01/02

Dudek Gregory, The Matrix (1999),
<http://reviews.imdb.com/Reviews/175/17553>
 Accessed 14/01/02

Frith Walter, The Matrix (1999)
<http://reviews.imdb.com/reviews/176/17639>
 Accessed 14/01/02

Goldberger M, The Matrix,
http://www.film.u-net.com/Movies/Reviews/Matrix_The.html
 Accessed 14/01/02

Henderson C, The Matrix-Spirituality Fiction,
<http://christianity.about.com/library/weekly/aa042099>
 Accessed 12/02/02

Irvine Don, The Matrix,
http://infoculture.cbc.ca/archives/filmtv/filmtv_04061999
 Accessed 10/02/02

Larsen John, The Matrix,

<http://www.lightviews.com/matrix.htm>

Accessed 14/01/02

Norton James, The Matrix,

<http://www.flakmag.com/film/matrix.html>

Accessed 14/01/02

Sterritt Dave, The Matrix: weirdly compelling,

<http://www.csmonitor.com/durable/1999/04/02>

Accessed 14/01/02

Suarez Vincent, The Matrix,

<http://filmfreakcentral.net/screenreviews/matrix.htm>

Accessed 10/02/02

Dark City

Delapp Bill, Syracuse News Times: Film Review,

<http://newstimes.rway.com/films/darkcity.htm>,

Accessed 28/04/02

Gaiman Neil, Neil Gaiman on Dark City,

<http://www.obsessive.thegod.net/Other/Screamweavers>

Accessed 28/04/02

Lee Patrick, On Screen Dark City,

http://www.sci.com/sfw/issue_64/screen/html

Accessed 28/04/02

Makrozhopoulos Chris, Plot Summary For Dark City,

<http://us.imdb.com/Plot?0118929>

Accessed 28/04/02

Richardson Jason, Freud Walks through Dark City,

<http://www.obsessive.thegod.net/Other/Screamweavers/>

Accessed 28/04/02

Event Horizon

Berardinelli James, Event Horizon,

<http://movie.reviews.colosus.net/movies/e/event.html>

Choo Jack, Event Horizon is dreadful horror,

<http://inkpot.com/film/eventhorizon.html>.

Eisner P, Review of Event Horizon,
<http://www.home.golden.net/~csp/reviews/event.htm>

Epsicokhan J, The Reel Deal On line :Event Horizon,
<http://userpages.umbc.edu/~peck1/films/event> horizon

Hladik Tamara I, Event Horizon,
<http://www.scifi.com.sfw/issue52/screen.html>

Rosenburg S, <http://www.salon.com/aug97/entertainment/event970815.html>.

Savlov M, The Austin Chronicle Movie Guide,
<http://www.auschron.com/film/pages/movies>

Sphere

Atcheson N, Sphere
<http://www.pyramid.net/natesmovies>

Brundage J, Sphere,
<http://www.filmcritic.com>

Kong Steve, Sphere,
<http://boiled.sbay.org/boiled/>

Redman M, Sphere,
<http://www.bvoice.com>

Wilcock D, Sphere (1998),
<http://wilcockmovie.home.ml.org>

Terminator 2

Terminator 2: Judgement Day, The wolf reviewer,
http://www.insideout.co.uk/films/t/terminator_2
 Accessed 31/03/02

Terminator 2 : Review, The Reel Image Features
http://www.thereelimage.co.uk/reviews/terminator_2
 31/03/02

Terminator 2 (1991),
http://www.filmsite.org/term_2.html 31/03/02

Terminator 2 (1991),
<http://us.imdb.com/Title?0103064>

Dirks Tim, Terminator 2,
<http://www.filmsite.org/term2.html>

Emerson Jim, Terminator 2,
<http://www.cinepad.com/reviews/t2.htm>.

Bladerunner

Bladerunner (1982)
<http://us.imdb.com/Title?0083658>

Review Article : Bladerunner (1998:9)
http://www.depauw.edu/sfs/reviews_pages/r75.htm
accessed 28/04/02