The Rebel Hero and Social Anxieties in Selected Cinematic Representations of the Twenty-first Century Hollywood Dystopian and Science Fiction Imaginary

Samiksha Laltha

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (English Studies), in the Graduate Programme in the School of Arts at the University of KwaZulu Natal, Pietermaritzburg, South Africa.

November 2017

Supervisor: Professor Cheryl Stobie

Declaration

I, Samiksha Laltha, declare that:

1. The research reported in this thesis, except where otherwise indicated, is my original research.

2. This thesis has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.

3. This thesis does not contain other persons' data, pictures, graphs or other information, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other persons.

4. This thesis does not contain other persons' writing, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other researchers. Where other written sources have been quoted, then:

> a. Their words have been re-written but the general information attributed to them has been referenced.

> b. Where their exact words have been used, the writing has been placed inside quotation marks or shown as an indented quotation, and referenced.

5. This thesis does not contain texts, graphics, or tables copied and pasted from the Internet, unless specifically acknowledged, and the source being detailed in the thesis and in the references sections.

_____

Student Name

_____

Student Signature

_____

Date

_____

Name of Supervisor

_____

Signature

_____

Date

<u>Acknowledgments</u>

My heartfelt appreciation to my supervisor, Professor Cheryl Stobie. Thank you for your time, expertise and profound insights. It has been an honour to be under your supervision over the past years. I am eternally grateful for all the skills that you have imparted to me. I would also like to acknowledge and express my gratitude to Professor M.Z. Malaba for his unfailing support and encouragement. My deepest appreciation to my beloved parents; thank you for nurturing my dreams and aspirations. To my mother, thank you for your prayers, guidance and encouragement in all my academic efforts. To my father, thank you for supporting my ambitions, and never failing to provide me with the necessary tools required to get the job done. All praises to The Mother for bestowing me with the strength and ability to achieve my heart's desires. To my paternal and maternal grandparents, thank you for your immense and profound love. A special thank you to my brother, Milesh, for the technical assistance and constant supply of inspiration. Finally, to Mr and Mrs Pillay, thank you for being my guiding light.

Table of Contents

3. Chapter Two: "The island awaits you": Iconoclasm, Illusion and Identity in Michael Bay's *The Island* (2005)

<u>Abstract</u>

This thesis focuses on the rebel hero located within four twenty-first century Hollywood films. These films are *Equilibrium* (2002, dir. Kurt Wimmer), *The Island* (2005, dir. Michael Bay), *The Giver* (2014, dir. Phillip Noyce) and Ridley Scott's science fiction film *Prometheus* (2012). Drawing from a cultural studies perspective, this analysis focuses on heroism through rebellion, by discussing the psychological journey of the hero within each film text. The first three films focus on the male rebel hero. By contrast, Scott's film offers an analysis of the female hero (and female alien) through my employment of a feminist lens.

More broadly, this thesis explores the social, cultural, technological and psychological anxieties that utopian and science fiction films project onto the viewer. These anxieties focus on the psychological impacts of war and trauma, the use and dangers of technology, the power of totalitarian regimes and the female body, as represented by a female hero and the female alien. Utopia and its filmic representation are dependent on the lens of science fiction. The texts in this study show the capacity for the genre of utopian and science fiction film to explore trauma studies. The films that form part of this analysis are initially introduced as seeming utopias, even projecting eutopian elements. The hero at the centre of each narrative is initially compliant with the utopia. The moral awakening of the hero signals the emergence of dystopian elements in each utopia. Dissent on the part of the hero brings about an alternate utopia, one accompanied by hope for the future. Through journeying (physically and psychologically) each hero's characteristics for rebellion are revealed, which they use to transform their respective societies. In relation to heroism, this thesis ultimately draws a distinction between the psychological journey of the female hero with that of the male hero.

This study illuminates the capacity for utopian and science fiction film to act as warnings for the present and the future, drawing from dystopian elements in human history. This analysis therefore places an emphasis on history and remembering rather than on the projected future, revealing the value of utopian and science fiction film for our current time.

1. Introduction

> We live always beyond ourselves, in a quest for something better.
>
> – Ruth Levitas (2003, 4)

This thesis engages in a critical analysis of four selected twenty-first century Hollywood films which are vivid representations of the utopian and science fiction imaginary. At the centre of each film text lies a hero who emerges through rebellion. This study focuses on the rebel hero and explores the extent of his/her rebellion. Each chapter analyses the characterisation of the rebel hero which also reveals certain social and political anxieties about the utopia or dystopia represented. More broadly then, this thesis analyses the degree to which each text represents the social, political, religious and technological anxieties that are prevalent in our current globalised world. These anxieties include the use and abuse of science and technology, the effects and trauma of war (with reference to the Middle East), and the emergence of new viruses, among others. This introductory chapter will make reference to various utopian and science fiction films in order to discuss these two genres.

1.1 Preliminary Considerations

The utopian and science fiction models are dependent upon each other, and this is made explicit within each selected film. While my PhD thesis is located within the discipline of English Studies, I employ a cultural studies perspective as I engage in a textual analysis of films. Cultural studies and textual analysis share an intricate relationship with each other. Catherine Belsey (2013, 163) argues that there can never be a "pure reading" of any given text, as "interpretation" is dependent upon "extra-textual knowledge" which is gained from culture. Belsey notes that "textual analysis is indispensable to research in cultural criticism" which "includes English, cultural history and cultural studies" (160). In a chapter entitled "Film and Cultural Studies" in which Graeme Turner (2008) explores the relationship between textual analysis and film studies, he refers to films as "digitized" texts (278). He observes that the United States of America is "where film studies has had the strongest institutional presence" (270). From the 1960s onwards, "film studies in the US developed its own identity as a discipline" (270). He comments, "Literary studies, with its increasingly sophisticated mode of textual analysis and canon formation, provide a congenial disciplinary ally for American Film Studies" (270). The utopian and science fiction genres originated and thrived in the Western

world, while they made their way to other parts of the world through the popularity of science fiction films. Film texts have "begun to conceptualize [and be processed] within a wider context – social and cultural as well as canonical" (270). American Film Studies is centred upon "film texts and the processes through which we understand and interpret them" (270).

This study explores the most dominant cinema in our globalised world. The institutional presence of Hollywood has far-reaching effects for viewers and consumers around the world. When non-Americans partake in the consumption of Hollywood cinema, they enter into a world that is created, produced and controlled by America and its citizens. This makes the American dream, the American lifestyle and American ideals accessible to all who partake in the act of watching Hollywood's products. As a dominant super-power in the world, America has shaped and continues to shape the hopes and dreams of people around the world, especially when such cinema is consumed by citizens in developing counties where there is an aspiration for the American lifestyle. Hollywood is fertile ground for the study of anxieties (especially through the genres of utopia and science fiction) as well as issues of race, gender and class. The screen is where all human fantasies can be played out. Aided by technology, there are a plethora of possibilities for representations that flood the human imaginary. This study focuses on four Hollywood films in their depictions of utopia and its subtexts, including the critical utopia, and the genre of science fiction, in addition to issues such as cinematic themes and tropes, characterisation of the protagonist and antagonists and trauma, history and memory within the genres of utopia and science fiction.

The study of postmodernism is linked to the various ways in which the media and the images that it produces are "identified as a key, if not the key, reality for the modern citizen" (Hill 1998, 98). The media, while constantly in a state of flux, allows its users access to various platforms of entertainment, one of which is film. Postmodernism "designates new forms of theorization which are held to be appropriate to making sense of the new 'postmodern' condition" (96). One such form of theorisation is cultural studies applied to the postmodern condition of film (103). Cultural studies is thus a postmodern symptom which also embodies a "fascination" with "science fiction" (99). Within the academic field of cultural studies, culture is "formed through […] an assemblage of dynamic engagements that reverberates through and within individual subjects and the systems of meaning-making of which they are an integral part" (Lewis 2008, 4). Peter Ruppert (1996) discusses the importance of spectatorship to film

studies and utopian film studies, in particular. He notes that film is a "cultural experience" (146).

Turner (2008) places an emphasis on the role that Roland Barthes has played in constructing the "debates which connected Film Studies to related theoretical developments in literary [and] cultural studies" (271). Textual analysis is a "research method" which allows for a "close encounter with the work itself" (Belsey 2013, 160). Texts can be "written" or "visual" (160), and within the context of my research, the film texts are visual. All texts emerge from a specific culture and are therefore culturally inscribed. Barthes (1977, 146) says that "the text is a tissue of quotations drawn from innumerable centres of culture." Ruppert observes how signs and messages "form our consciousness, both individual and collective" (145). By reading "the culture in" my chosen "texts" (Belsey 2013, 171), I illuminate how they are understood within contemporary popular culture, propagated by the West, which is the birthplace of the science fiction genre. Krishan Kumar (1987, 69), writing from a utopian perspective, in a book entitled *Utopia and Anti-utopia in Modern Times*, notes, "Everything about America has inspired, and continues to inspire, utopianism. It is big; it is open; it is democratic".

Visual culture revolves around "visual events in which the user seeks information, meaning or pleasure in an interface with visual technology" (Mirzoeff 2002:5). Visual culture evokes the anxiety associated with "constant surveillance" (6). In order to overcome this anxiety, the "visual subject has been brought into sharp relief under the symbolic influence of globalization and digital culture" (11). Visual culture "Opens up an entire world of intertextuality in which images, sounds and spatial delineations are read on to and through one another, lending ever-accruing layers of meanings and of subjective responses to each encounter [with visual media]" (Rogoff 2002: 24).

Martin Scorsese (Online 2013) in a piece entitled "The Persisting Vision: Reading the Language of Cinema", writes about the impact of "reading" visual literacy. In his discussion he observes the importance of film to culture and in particular the human experience. He says, "Whenever I hear people dismiss movies as 'fantasy' and make a hard distinction between film and life, I think to myself that it's just a way of avoiding the power of cinema. Of course it's not life – it's the invocation of life, it's an ongoing dialogue with life" (2013). Scorsese goes on to highlight the fundamental elements that are used in the production of the art form of cinema. Among these he cites lighting and movement as integral to the film-making process.

"Light", he says, recognises the "patterns, similarities, differences, naming things – interpreting the world. Light also allows the use of metaphors which emerges when reading film, and this allows us to see one thing – 'in light of' something else" (Online, 2013). Through the act of watching cinema we become "enlightened" as "Light is at the core of who we are and how we understand ourselves" (2013). Scorsese notes that as human we have the innate "desire to make things move", and the "need to create movement is a mystical urge" (2013). Stephen Apkon (2013), in a book titled *The Age of the Image: Redefining Literacy in a World of* Screens, also discusses visual literacy and its integral relationship with movement. He observes that "The speed is part of the reason images tend to 'hit us in the gut' quicker and more consistently than the written word, and why some images are more fascinating than others" (76). Film as a medium is an important tool used in the creation of meaning making within the genres of utopian and science fiction. Marshall McLuhan (1964, 2) coined the phrase the "medium is the message". He goes on to describe the medium as an "extension of ourselves" (1), thereby giving rise to meaning. He observes, "the medium shapes and controls the scale and form of human association and action" (2).

My thesis embarks on an investigation of utopian film through utilising utopian literature as a starting point, and the emergence of dystopia as a concept, along with other related terms. The film genre of utopia is also explored, and its relationship to the science fiction canon, particularly within contemporary and popular culture. For the purposes of this study I have selected four Hollywood films. The four films are *Equilibrium (2002)*, directed by Kurt Wimmer, *The Island* (2005), directed by Michael Bay, *The Giver* (2014), directed by Phillip Noyce, and *Prometheus* (2012), directed by Ridley Scott.

This introduction engages with the genres of utopianism and science fiction, first from a literary perspective. I discuss the concept of utopia and its related terms, such as dystopia, eutopia and the critical dystopia. I then proceed to map the inter-relations between the utopian and science fiction models through a study of genre as a concept and how it is utilised within utopian and science fiction rhetoric. I then explore the film genres of science fiction and utopia, including narratives in film. Through the course of this introduction, I focus on the characteristics that constitute the utopian and science fiction genres and their representations in twenty-first century films.

My introduction is followed by four chapters which each analyse one of the selected films and the various utopian and science fiction settings that they represent. The presence of the rebel hero is prevalent in all of the films that I have selected for this study. *Equilibrium*, *The Island* and *The Giver* are unique in their representation of utopias, and by extension the critical utopia and dystopia. *Prometheus*, through its depiction of alien life forms, space travel and advanced technologies, fits into the genre of science fiction. The critical dystopia conveys "a desperate political or ecological setting that horrifies the reader with prophetic parables but resists resigning the reader to a state of despair" (Brayton 2011, 74), while Tom Moylan and Raffaella Baccolini refer to critical dystopias as works that "maintain a utopian impulse" (2003, 7). As this study illustrates the e/utopian[1] model, it will be useful to analyse a representation of the dystopian imaginary to show the specific elements which characterise this variant of the utopian model.

1.2 Methodology

The theoretical framework of this study is drawn from various theories proposed by a range of authors writing about utopianism and science fiction in literature and film. Lyman Tower Sargent (1994), in an article entitled "The Three Faces of Utopianisms Revisited", provides useful definitions of utopia, eutopia, dystopia and the critical utopia. His discussion lays the foundations for an insightful discussion into how the above terms are used in the discourse of utopia. Sargent posits that while utopia is prevalent in the West in its predominant form, it is not the only model of utopia that is present in the literary world; instead, utopia has many "manifestations" (2). Fatima Vieira discusses how a term like "dystopia" emerged out of the concept of utopia. In addition to engaging with Vieira (2010), I refer to Gregory Claeys (2010) in laying down the theoretical basis to discuss the concept of dystopia and its establishment as a literary genre. In a chapter entitled "The Origins of Dystopia: Wells, Huxley and Orwell", Claeys focuses his discussion on how the dystopia emerged and how it influenced prolific dystopian writers.

---

[1] Utopia refers to an imaginary place, whereas eutopia is a play on the word utopia and a homophone which refers to a "good" place (Miller 2014, 25). The use of e/utopia is an adaption from both the utopian and the eutopian models.

Moylan (1986), in his influential book, *Demand the Impossible: Science Fiction and the Utopian Imagination*, lays the foundations for the construction of the utopian imagination as it emerges out of texts. Moylan observes how human reality is reflected in science fiction and utopian texts. He discusses the concept of utopia, how it relates to society, and the social needs that this concept addresses. A leading American science fiction scholar, Peter Fitting (2010), discusses how social anxieties are reflected in science fiction films, and by extension, utopian films. He comments: "the intersection of modern science fiction and utopia begins with what I consider the fundamental characteristic of science fiction, namely its ability to reflect or express our hopes and fears to science and technology" (138). In an extension of this idea, I argue that the genres of science fiction and utopia express far more than just the viewer's hopes and fears in relation to science and technology, but their anxieties in relation to many other forces and factors that have come to define the globalised world. Utopian and science fiction films have taken a dark turn (Zepke 2012, 94) in the wake of natural disasters, terrorism and the emergence of diseases and viruses. Hurricane Katrina devastated large parts of the United States of America in 2005, and the world witnessed the devastation of tsunamis in 2004 and 2011. Hui-chuan Chang (2011, 17) notes, "one disaster has been superseding another in scope and magnitude"). The 9/11 terrorist attack on the World Trade Centre in the United States of America had repercussions throughout the world and led to the subsequent invasion of Iraq in 2003. The conflict in the Middle East is still rife today. The world has witnessed the outbreak of epidemics such as Ebola (outbreak of 2014) and the Zika virus (outbreak of 2015), as well as the ongoing Aids epidemic. The spread of such viruses and emergent ones are reflected through the genre of utopian and science fiction film.

Adam Roberts (2000) engages in a discussion of the origins of science fiction and the difficulty of attributing a single text as the ancestor of the science fiction genre. He discusses various possibilities such as Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818) and More's *Utopia* (1516), among others. George Slusser (2008) discusses the literary origins of science fiction, which was established by authors such as Edgar Allen Poe and H.G. Wells. He grapples with the question of establishing the defining text of the science fiction genre, and argues the case for *The Time Machine* (1895) being regarded as the founding literary text of science fiction in the English tradition (28). *The Time Machine* features what Slusser refers to as "evolutionary science" in its depiction of the Eloi and the Morlocks (34-35). Many authors have argued the case for multiple pieces of literature as the founding texts of science fiction: if a single text is heralded as the founding text of science fiction, this will have repercussions on the definition and the

factors that constitute this genre, only complicating the matter further. Lending a narrow definition to the term will exclude various texts from being characterised as science fiction, forcing science fiction to possibly loose its merit as a genre. Science fiction is attractive to its consumers and audience for its ability to represent a multitude of facets which appeal to large groups of people.

Vivian Sobchack (1999), a leading science fiction film scholar, explores the urban landscapes in Hollywood science fiction films before and after the 1950s, which was when science fiction film emerged as a genre. Sobchack also provides an overview of American science fiction film. The first American science fiction films appeared in the 1930s with titles such as *Just Imagine* (1930) and *The Invisible Man* (1933) (262). Sobchack goes on to discuss how events such as World War II and the Cold War influenced the making of many early American science fiction films (262-263), as the genre "imaginatively map[s] a spatial and temporal history of popular American consciousness and experience" (273).

Rafaella Baccolini (2004, 2007), a leading utopian and science fiction scholar, reads against the grain of utopian texts and gives prominence to the utopian subtext of the dystopia, and, in particular, the critical dystopia as a narrative form. Baccolini favours the dystopian model as she views it as being more progressive than the utopian one, taking into consideration the dystopian *Zeitgeist* the twentieth and twenty-first centuries are characterised by. In a 2007 study, she engages with the concepts of utopia and science fiction, and applies these to memory and trauma studies. Her approach is useful for this study alongside that of Aris Mousoutzanis (2013), who in an article entitled "Trauma, Memory and Information in American Science Fiction Films and Television: 1980-2010", engages with the emergence of trauma and memory studies and applies this to science fiction films such as *Vanilla Sky* and *The Matrix* trilogy. He lays the foundations for a study which has not been given much attention within the genres of utopian and science fiction studies, let alone film studies.

1.3 The Literary Origins of Utopia

In the classical period, philosophers such as Plato and Plutarch engaged in discussions of a "good" and "perfect" society through utilising Greek politics and philosophy made evident in famous texts such as *The Republic* (c. 370-360 BCE) and *Life of Lycurgus* (c. 100 BCE). Coined by Thomas More, in the Western English-speaking world, in 1516, utopia is influenced

by the imagination and thus literally translates to "no place" (Miller 2014, 24), as it can never exist. Lyman Tower Sargent (1994, 9) defines utopia as "a non-existent society described in considerable detail and normally located in time and space". Sargent's definition of utopia can be applied to Thomas More's *Utopia*. This fictional text traces the description of an island called Utopia as put forth by Raphael Hythlodaeus. Utopia is located "under the equator" and one has to travel through "dismal" and "uninhabited" lands before one can reach Utopia (More 1992 [1516], 9). This description of the location of utopia emphasises the importance of travel and exploration into unknown territory in the time period that *Utopia* was written, as the New World was only discovered in 1492. Philippe Couton and José J. López (2009) point out that "movement has been central to the utopian tradition" (93). More's imagined Utopia allowed for "the opening of geographical space [which] permitted offshore imaginings of social perfection" (101), as "over the horizon existed a society free of the evils of poverty, ignorance and war" (102) for the European explorer of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century.

Utopia, as described by Thomas More, is an ideal, and its "crescent" shape allows for commerce and trade (More 1992, 36). Many social practices that were undertaken in Utopia are frowned upon in today's postmodern world. These include slavery and Utopia's treatment of women. Sargent (1994) points out that "most sixteenth century eutopias horrify today's readers even though the authors' intentions are clear. On the other hand, most twentieth century eutopias would be considered dystopias by a sixteenth-century reader and many of them would in all likelihood be burnt as works of evil" (5). What is significant about More's Utopia, and the utopia model in general, is that utopia is not perfect and it does not embody the fundamental notion of perfection.

More's text enunciates a socio-political voice which expresses his dissatisfaction with life in England, whose government later sentenced him to death for treason (Haplin 2001, 300). More's *Utopia* led to the development of "utopianisms as a distinct literary genre" (300-301), and the establishment of a legacy. Utopia, as a concept, initially flourished in the Renaissance period where the classical models of ancient Greece and Rome were "considered the peak of [hu]mankind's intellectual achievement" on which Europeans modelled their society (Vieira 2010, 4). "Humanist logic" prevailed in this age, and human beings began to understand that their respective fates were not predestined, but rather that they had a hand in determining their purpose in life (4).

Many utopian scholars such as Vieira define the utopia as a "happy society" (15). In view of this study I utilise the definition of utopia put forth by Lyman Tower Sargent (1994) as quoted previously. Sargent emphasises that utopia is not a perfect and happy society, and maintains that in order to reflect "the reality of utopian literature" thinkers on utopianism need to move away from the idea that utopia is related to perfection, which can never be achieved because there is no such thing as a perfect person (24). Sargent calls for a rejection of utopia as a perfect place, as associating utopia with perfection feeds into the notion of utilising the term as a "political weapon" (9). Additionally, "opponents of utopianism […] argue that a perfect society can only be achieved by force" (9), and this has proven dangerous to humanity through the course of human history. This is the root of why many authors and scholars have criticised the concept of utopia for its embodiment of totalitarianism and violence.

Utopias are thus "intrinsically linked", as Levitas (2003) notes, "to the concerns and assumptions of modernity" (3). Eutopia, a play on the word utopia, is defined as a "positive" place and one which is "considerably better than the society in which [the] reader lives" (Sargent 1994, 9). The four films analysed in this analysis can be described as embodying the critical utopia, which like utopia is "a non-existent society described in considerable detail and normally located in time and space", but it is a society in which the reader should view "as better than contemporary society but with difficult problems that the described society may or may not be able to solve and which takes a critical view of the utopian genre" (9).[2] Martin Parker (2002), in an article entitled "Utopia and the Organizational Imagination: Eutopia", defines the eutopia as a "good-place" and by extension, eutopianism as "a systematic investigation of alternative principles of organization" (217). Parker, through his article, encourages the imagining and re-imagining of eutopian "organizational forms" as "life cannot be altered in ways that we have not yet imagined" (218). Like Sargent, Parker rejects the association of perfection with utopian thought and his analysis allows for the imaginary creation of alternate ways of ordering society without the fear and anxiety of totalitarianism.

According to Sargent (1994, 7), utopia is decribed as "works which describe an imaginary society in some detail". Sargent associates the concept of utopia with progress. The difficulty of this argument mirrors that which can be found in the discussion concerning utopia and

---

[2] This definition depicts the relationship that exists between utopia and eutopia. For the purposes of this study, I have chosen to utilise Sargent's definitions of utopia and its subtexts. It is for this reason that I have taken the time to quote at length the difference between utopia and its subtexts as put forth by Sargent.

totalitarianism. Progress, like perfection, is a subjective word, as "The idea of progress was also used to support colonialism, imperialism and racism" (21). Race and therefore racism are based on the ideas of progress. Colonialism was premised on ideas of race as seen through the examples of the colonisation of Ireland when the English crown claimed Ireland as part of England in 1494. Another apt example of racism in relation to progress was the Nazi regime where emphasis was placed on the creation of a "pure race", leading to mass genocide and suffering for millions of Jews in World War II. Like race, class is also defined by those in power. An example of this system is the caste system that has prevailed in India for centuries. Individuals of lower castes are still ostracised and treated indifferently because of their lower social status, to such an extent that it is believed that touching such people can bring misfortune onto individuals of a higher caste. The utopian ideal in our globalised world should be aimed at social justice for all individuals; however, among the current social and political tides (and social and political anxieties reflected through utopia and science fiction film), world peace and equality for all seems to be a utopian ideal that will never be achieved. Capitalism has also been heralded as the cure of all social and economic ills, especially since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, and the rise to power of the U.S.A. Capitalism has seen the rise of sweatshops and child labour, not to mention social and economic inequality and the damaging effect of mass-production on the environment through pollution and resulting climate change. Technology also occupies the double role of progress and ruin for the human race. This discussion will be exemplified in later discourse as technology is directly related to the genres of utopia and science fiction film. The view towards technological progress has fluctuated throughout modernity and into postmodernity as is reflected through the lens of science fiction. Technology is sometimes heralded as the saviour of the human race, while, at other times technology is what results in oppression and totalitarianism, as depicted through many science fiction films.

Utopian writing emerged out of a human response to state and world events. More's *Utopia* also emerged out of a response to state events, and such events have resulted, during the course of human history, in the ebb and flow of attitudes towards utopia. Utopian writing and depiction is a form that "is, at heart, rooted in the unfulfilled needs and wants of specific classes, groups and individuals in their unique historical contexts" (Moylan 1986, 1), and is thus a political term. In the West, "The literary utopia developed as a narrative form in times of deep change, and it has continued to thrive in tumultuous moments since the sixteenth century" (3). Utopia, as a concept, underwent many changes. Against the backdrop of the counterculture that

emerged in the 1960s and '70s the concept of utopia was revisited, "stimulated by the influence of science fiction and experimental fiction. Utopian writing was [thus] given a new life" (10).

The envisioning of utopia brings with it challenges, especially when compared with the imagining of the dystopia, due to "the dominant political culture [being] anti-utopian" (Levitas 2007, 290). The despondent attitude reflected in the twentieth century has been influenced by "World Wars I and II, Korea, Vietnam, the Middle East, Northern Ireland, the Gulag Archipelago, the rising rate of violent crimes, the Cold War, the apparent failure of the welfare state, ecological disaster, corruption and […] the upsurge of ethnic and tribal slaughter in Eastern Europe and Africa" (Sargent 26). One finds little difficulty in conjuring up a dystopia, whereas the imaginary creation of the utopia brings with it various difficulties that need to be overcome, as the critical utopia displays. It is more preferable to borrow from religious texts and visions to envisage a far-off future fraught with chaos and desolation than to envisage a utopia that has to grapple with the problems of the here and now.

The prefix *dys-* comes from the Greek *dus*, which means "bad, abnormal, [and] diseased" (Vieira 2010, 16). Gregory Claeys (2010, 107) defines the dystopia as "a fictional portrayal of a society in which evil, or negative social and political developments, have the upper hand". Dystopia as a concept was first used in 1868 by John Stuart Mill in a parliamentary speech (Vieira 16), and is a word that has its roots in criticism of socio-political inequalities. Sargent (1994, 9) defines dystopia as "a non-existent society described in considerable detail and normally located in time and space that the author intended a contemporaneous reader to view as considerably worse than the society in which that reader lived". While humans have always striven for a better world we are also conscious of a world "worse" than our own (Vieira 16).

Claeys (2010) cites Charles Drawin's *Origins of Species* (1859) as a key text resulting in a "dystopian turn" and which gave rise to "population control and socialism" (110). By the end of the nineteenth century, dystopian ideas emerged in the popular imaginary through the pseudoscience of eugenics and the horrors of the socialist USSR (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) in the American imagination (Claeys 111). In a discussion of eugenics, Mary C. Coutts and Pat M. McCarrick (1995, 163) note that by the end of the nineteenth century, "eugenics societies were created throughout the world to popularize genetic science", as terms such as 'survival of the fittest' and 'struggle for existence' "came into use". Richard Weikart (2002), in dealing with how the concept of Social Darwinism impacted on the social views of

European society, argues that "Darwinism, in harmony with the growth of materialism and positivism, helped alter many people's views on matters of life and death" (325). Leading Darwinists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century "invoked science to undermine traditional Judeo-Christian ethical values" (325). The horrors of the two world wars only nourished the dystopian model. The most famous dystopian literary authors are H.G. Wells (1866-1946), Aldous Huxley (1894-1963) and George Orwell (1903-1950).[3] Technological progress should have functioned towards the utopian ideal; however, together with "totalitarianism", it fed the dystopian model, also contributing to the "establishment of dictatorships" (Vieira 2010, 18). This influenced famous dystopian works such as George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949). In "the second half of the twentieth century […] dystopias became the predominant genre in the United States" (Vieira 2010, 18).

The concept of dystopia has been influenced by technophobia and a decline in the belief that technology can better humankind. Gorman Beauchamp (1986) discusses technology within the confines of the dystopia. He refers to a "technoptopia", which he defines as "an advanced totalitarian state dependent upon a massive technological apparatus" (54). In a discussion of the nature of technology, Beauchamp makes reference to the argument that technology has "potentially dehumanizing and destructive effects", which has been debated since the Industrial Revolution (54). A contention exists between technophiles and technophobes. Technophiles believe that technology "can be used for good or ill depending on the nature and purpose of the user" (54). Technophobes, individuals with an innate fear of technology, view it as "a creation that can transcend the original purpose of its creator and take on an independent existence and will of its own" (54). Often, in the dystopia, technology does not get misused by its rulers, but it rather becomes "intrinsically totalitarian in itself" (55).

The concept of utopia should be disassociated from the term of "perfection", as this results in associating the utopia with totalitarianism, as proposed by Sargent in his discussion of utopianism. The dangers of associating utopia with perfection lead to the utopia embodying totalitarianism at its core. An example of this discourse is explored by Frédéric Rouvillois (2000, 316), who notes that utopia cannot be found, "because it is perfect and because such

---

[3] Various films emerged out of the dystopian literature that these three men produced. Among the most notable are *The Time Machine* (1960 and 2002), directed by George Pal and Simon Wells respectively, *Brave New World* (1998), directed by Leslie Libman and Larry Williams, and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1984), directed by Michael Radford.

perfection has yet to be achieved in the here and now." This logic results in his concluding that "Utopia and totalitarianism are both engaged in a mirror game, tirelessly sending the same image back and forth as if utopia were nothing more than the premonition of totalitarianism and totalitarianism the tragic execution of the utopian dream" (316). Rouvillois attributes the "utopian aims" of utopia to the "harbingers of totalitarianism" (316). Rouvillois provides useful characteristics of the utopian model in its depiction of paternity, family organisation, intimacy and education, to mention a few. It is my assertion that if Rouvillois attributed these characteristics to the critical utopia, it would open up the utopian discourse to complementary scrutiny and possibilities while simultaneously removing the concept of totalitarianism from the equation.

The texts in this study can be classified as critical dystopias due to the hope that they each reflect at their respective conclusions. Each film represents a critical utopia at its opening. These elements are emphasised within the narrative to such an extent that they may appear to be seeming eutopias. Each text calls for critical analysis by the viewer when the dystopian enclave within each text is revealed, with the aid of the rebel hero. Sargent, in defining the critical utopia, notes that the critical utopia works to "describe that growing category of utopias that present a good place with problems that reflect critically on the utopian genre itself" (8). The science fiction film that represents the critical utopia or dystopia acts as a warning to its viewers of what could happen in the future.

In tandem with the critical utopia emerges the concept of the critical dystopia. Rafaella Baccolini, in "Finding Utopia in Dystopia: Feminism, Memory, Nostalgia, and Hope" (2007), notes that the "dystopia is traditionally a bleak, depressing genre with no space for hope" within the narrative; however, utopia is "maintained *outside*" the narrative (165). Defining the critical dystopia, Hui-chuan Chang notes that it is "open-ended, harbours a eutopian enclave and entertains some kind of hope" (2011, 3). Baccolini (2007) highlights the need for utopian scholars to "consider dystopia as a warning" so that "readers can hope to escape such a pessimistic future" (165). Hope can be found at the end of each of my selected texts as they each embody a critical eutopia or dystopia. In spite of this being connected to Hollywood's preference for happy endings, hope is the force that drives the narrative forward while simultaneously eliciting hope in the viewer. Baccolini (2004) goes on to express her preference for recent models of utopia and their subtexts compared to the utopias of the 1960s and '70s (518) which illustrate critical dystopias. Baccolini places greater importance on the dystopian

model more than on the utopian one. She singles the dystopia out as a site of "resistance" (3), as the dystopia maintains "utopia on the horizon" (2006, 3). Despite the notion that the dystopia is represented as depressing and dreary, Baccolini (2004, 520) notes that "only by considering dystopia as a warning can we as readers hope to escape such a dark future". She emphasises the importance of critical dystopias to the utopian model, noting that "By looking at the formal and political features of science fiction, we can see how these [critical dystopian] works point us towards change" (521).

Furthermore it is apparent that "utopias, written in different times and places, need to be both understood in their historical and linguistic context and for what they communicate to the contemporary reader" (Sargent 2004, 3). The interpretation of the e/utopian present requires the reader to understand the socio-political and cultural setting in which the text was created. Utopias respond to social, cultural and political anxieties that are the concerns of different periods in human history. Ruth Levitas (2007), in an analysis of the importance of utopia, argues for a shift in thinking with relation to how the concept of utopia is viewed. She notes that this shift "requires that [u]topia is understood as a method rather than a goal" (289).

1.4 The Literary Origins of Science Fiction

Science fiction, Suzanne Damarin (2004) argues, "has always been concerned with phenomena, issues, and trends of the present and has reworked them in fictional futures" (51). The genre of science fiction depicts human anxieties related to social, cultural and technological issues. After the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945, when over 200,000 people were killed, science fiction was no longer the herald of technology that would change the world in a positive manner (Fitting, 2010, 140). Technology that should have nourished the utopian ideal led to horrific acts of violence against humanity. Roberts (2000) cites the end of the nineteenth century as the period in which "the actual growth" of science fiction occurred, thus establishing science fiction as a "meaningful category in its own right" (59). This period saw the production of literary works by Verne and Wells who are considered the most influential science fiction authors.

Science fiction prominently emerged out of a magazine culture in the 1920s, where this form of writing was first referred to as "scientification" by Hugo Gernsback in the 1920s (Slusser 2008, 27). Within the 'pulp' magazine culture, *Amazing Stories* was the first English language

magazine which was dedicated to science fiction (Attebery 2003, 32). *Amazing Stories* was founded by Luxembourg-born Gernsback, who "used his editorial power to shape the development of the [science fiction] genre, with a strong preference for SF that was grounded thoroughly in science" (Roberts 2000, 68). Advances in paper making from wood-pulp in the 1880s led to cheap publishing and thus gave the pulp magazines their name (67). This magazine culture was later paralleled in the world of the comic book, which has become the staple of many science fiction films in their depictions of superheroes and villains. *Amazing Stories* was noted for its "optimistic visions of a technology-driven future" which later influenced the utopia present in *Star Trek* (1966, Roddenberry) (Booker and Thomas 2009, 7).

While different definitions of science fiction exist, George Slusser (2008, 28) offers a useful conceptualisation, noting that it is a "form that examines the ways in which science penetrates, alters and transforms the themes, forms, and worldview of fiction". Stableford (2003) comments on the nature of science fiction as a developed genre which extends to include other theories. He says, "Cosmic tours taking in all known worlds of the solar system became a hybrid sub-genre, fusing religious and scientific fantasies, usually incorporating utopian and eschatological imagery within the same framework" (16). Stableford's definition of science fiction shows the openness of the genre to accommodate not only utopia but also other themes and tropes. This contributes to expanding the genre of science fiction to include other genres. Gwyneth Jones (2008, 136) observes what is required when we 'read' science fiction texts:

> The feature that unites every kind of science fiction is the construction – in some sense – of a world other than our own. This may be another planet (or even another universe); or it may be a 'future world' in which conditions have changed in some dramatic way. But whatever new conditions apply – an alien invasion, Martian colonies, a permanent cure for the ageing process – the writer has to signal the changes, and the reader has to be able to understand the significance of these signals. […] What are we being told about the characters, the politics, the social conditions of the imagined world, through the medium of these bizarre artefacts, landscapes, relationships, industries and customs? The icons of sf [science fiction] are the signs which announce the genre, which warn the reader that this is a different world; and at the same time constitute that difference.

In similar vein, Adam Roberts (2000) discusses what is signified to readers of science fiction and how language is used with reference to the science fiction genre. He observes that science fiction "tends to signify more than itself [as it] opens[s] itself to multiple significations. This in turn suggests a characterisation of Science Fiction as a kind of meta-language, one which is

spoken more or less competently depending on how much of the symbolic and metaphoric content of the tropes is understood" (50). Readers of science fiction are required to immerse themselves into the culture of science fiction so as to understand the science and language in science fiction. The film sometimes requires viewers to engage with an imaginary or foreign language, other than the English vernacular, sometime even inventing new languages like Klingon in the *Star Trek* (1966, Lucas) franchise. A recent filmic example of the employment of foreign language in Hollywood science fiction film is *Pacific Rim* (2013, dir. Guillermo del Toro). This film opens with a dictionary page which introduces us to words from two distinct languages. The viewer is told that "*Kaiju*" is Japanese for "giant beast" and "*Jaeger*" is German for "Hunter". Science fiction, as genre, is constantly in a state of flux as it responds to "technological and other changes in the world at large" (Booker and Thomas 2009, 5).

1.5 Science Fiction from a South African Perspective

Thus far I have discussed the literary origins of both utopia and related concepts, and science fiction as it emerged within the Western world and particularly within American popular culture. This study would not be complete without touching on research within the utopian and science fiction film genres in South Africa. While the Western world and America have been the locus point of both the developments of utopian and science fiction literary and film genres, utopia and science fiction have been represented in various cultures, settings and countries around the world. South Africa is no exception to this in both the categories of literature and film.

Ralph Pordzik, writing in 2001, provides an overview of utopian and dystopian writings in South Africa from the period between 1972 and 1992. These tumultuous years of apartheid saw writings "of cross-cultural perspectives challenging earlier tendencies in the genre [of utopia] to present a uniform view of the future and to close off the utopian locus by way of a depressing conclusion" (190). In his analysis, Pordzik refers to South African texts such as Nadine Gordimer's *July's People* (1981), which explores the anxieties surrounding the demise of apartheid in South Africa and the creation of a new social order, and J.M. Coetzee's *Life and Times of Michael K* (1983), which explores the physical and psychological journey of one man in the apartheid years. Such South African texts allowed for "a widening of the thematic and linguistic scope of the utopian genre not only with regard to new modes of writing, but also with regard to the recognition of specific social and cultural formations within South African

society" (Pordzik 2001, 190). The social and cultural climate in South Africa has for decades been characterised by different races and ethnicities, highlighted by the apartheid regime and in recent times, xenophobia.

Recent critics focusing on the South African setting of utopia include Cheryl Stobie (2012), who writes about the critical dystopia and its representation in two popular South African dystopian texts by Lauren Beukes. She is one of the best known South African literary authors whose novels fall into the critical dystopian genre as seen in *Moxyland* (2008) and *Zoo City* (2010). Stobie notes the predominant mood in contemporary South Africa is characterised by "disenchantment and melancholy", and attributes social and political dissatisfactions in South Africa to the emergence of such texts, while simultaneously highlighting the rays of hope that such texts embody for the future projections of the country. In another article entitled "Dirty Alien Shadow-selves: Delving into the Dirt in *District 9*" (2012), Stobie provides a critical reading of Neill Blomkamp's science fiction film through a discussion of the alien figure as theorised by Istvan Csicsery-Ronay.

More in line with my research topic is South African critic Deirdre Byrne who, in an article entitled "The Messiah Versus the Collective Consciousness in the *Matrix* Trilogy" (2009), discusses a popular Hollywood science fiction film to reveal representations of U.S.A. culture. Her discussion is significant as the film text of my first chapter within this study draws on images from the *Matrix* trilogy. Byrne also discusses the figure of the hostile alien in Hollywood film as "other", which I amplify in a discussion in Chapter Four of this study. She also discusses the hero figure and relates this to the Christian figure of the Messiah. Byrne, in an article entitled "Science Fiction in South Africa" (2004), mentions the socio-political challenges that exist in the South African climate and holds these accountable for science fiction's unpopularity (522). In part because the gap that exists between the poor and the privileged has arguably been reduced since democracy in South Africa, the media market has recently opened up a space in South Africa for the production and consumption of science fiction film, as "South Africans aspire enthusiastically to an 'American' lifestyle" (522). Byrne characterises South African science fiction writing through "racial difference" and draws a parallel to the figure of the alien as it represents the "other" (524). In line with my topic, I also discuss the figure of the alien and the social anxieties that this figure represents in Hollywood science fiction film, and discuss the extent to which the racial other is also represented through the lens of Hollywood.

Cinema that depicts utopia has also emerged out of South Africa through the likes of Johannesburg-born Neill Blomkamp, who is famous for films such as *District 9* (2009), as discussed by Stobie, *Elysium* (2013)[4] which featured Hollywood actor Matt Damon, and most recently, *Chappie* (2015), which explores science fiction through the figure of the robot and artificial intelligence in a dystopian South African setting. These films have been screened to an international audience and have succeeded in placing South African cinema on the global cinema map.

South Africa experienced world-wide attention through *Avengers: Age of Ultron* (2015, dir. Joss Whedan), where the Incredible Hulk and Iron Man face off in the heart of Johannesburg. JeVanne Gibbs (2015, online) notes that "South Africa is becoming a leading location for Hollywood blockbusters". As two of the "good-guys" and the most popular superheroes from the comic book world battle each other, the streets of Johannesburg and its people are captured on camera as South African men and women (both black and white) are caught up in the battle. A South African ambience is further shown through the presence of the South African Police Force wielding guns to try to assist Iron Man against the rampage of the Hulk. This representation stands in contrast to the negative stereotypes that are attached to the law enforcement in South Africa. The police force has been featured in the media as incompetent and negligent, as a result of high crime rates and especially since the Marikana killings of 2012, when police opened fire on striking mine-workers, with devastating consequences. The scene in the *Avengers* film portrays the police as effective and competent, and this depicts a positive representation of the law enforcement in South Africa. In the film, the two superheroes fly over the city and destroy buildings in their wake. Such instances of South African representations in popular and successful science fiction films and franchises serve to emphasise the increasing role that the country is playing in the intentional film scene through the lens of science fiction. Having featured in such a popular Hollywood science fiction film, South Africa is likely to emerge again in other science fiction films. The utopian, and by extension the dystopian, imaginary has also made its way to the international film scene, from the African continent. Worth making mention of at this point is Ethiopian director Miguel Llansó's *Crumbs* (2015),

---

[4] Howard Hampton (2014, 56) takes a critical view of *Elysium* and states that the ending of the film "is a big self-esteem booster shot for those affluent white folks who depend on cheap immigrant labour but who feel good about themselves in the bargain." The bargain that Hampton is referring to is the notion that poverty-stricken people get access to medicine that instantaneously cures illnesses such as cancer, at the end of *Elysium*. While the setting of the film is projected as Los Angeles, the immigration problem is one that also plagues South Africa as the country emerges from the recent xenophobia attacks of 2015.

which is the first Ethiopian science-fiction full length film (Obenson), thus highlighting the impact that utopia and science fiction have had on the African continent. Such literary and film texts produced within an African setting bear "the imprint of a unique country and culture" (522). Many South Africans are consumers of science fiction film and literature, against the backdrop of local production and criticism, rendering this study timely and relevant.

1.6 The Relationship Between Utopia and Science Fiction

There is a dispute within utopian and science fiction studies as to which genre gave birth to which. Vieira (2010, 8) comments: "researchers in the field of Utopian Studies have claimed that science fiction is subordinate to utopia, as the latter was born first, whereas those who have devoted their study time to science fiction maintain that utopia is but a socio-political sub-genre". If progression is to occur within both these genres then it becomes necessary to put to rest the contention that one came before the other. While differentiation between these two genres is important, it is difficult to study one genre without the other. It is my contention that science fiction and utopia are dependent upon each other. This is made evident through the medium of film. Utopia and science fiction share many similarities with each other. The starkest connection is that they are both able to imagine worlds that are different from our own, either as a result of technology or an alternate socio-political order. Raymond Williams (1979, 54), in an article entitled "Utopia and Science Fiction", observes, "It is tempting to extend both categories [of utopia and science fiction] until they are loosely identical". This occurrence takes place in film, and the technology present in utopian settings cannot be achieved without the lens of science fiction.

While it is my intention to highlight the utopias present in my selected film texts I do this through the lens of science fiction. My contention in this thesis is to make the utopia model evident in science fiction films but to also show how science fiction is a vital key in the representation of utopia and dystopia. When these two genres come together within the medium of film, they have the ability to enrich each other through narrative styles, visual representations and unique characterisations. The utopian and science fiction genres complement each other to create powerful visual imaginaries of both utopian and dystopian settings. Ruppert (1996) maintains, "utopias […] are not so much created on screen, as they are in the imaginations of viewers" (144). Yvonne Spielmann (2003), in an article entitled "Elastic Cinema: Technological Imagery in Contemporary Science Fiction Films", observes that "Science fiction

films in particular take advantage of new technologies and create new spatial effects" which feature "the merger of cinema and computer" (56). Robert Shelton (1993) embarks on a discussion of utopian film and its emergence as a genre. He asserts with reference to the genres of science fiction and utopia, "how something works is more significant than what it can be labelled as" (19). This opens the utopian model and science fiction to myriad possibilities in a globalised world.

Tom Moylan (1986, 1) asserts that "Utopian writing in its many manifestations is complex and contradictory". The utopia critiques itself and raises issues which it proceeds to resolve or at least attempts to resolve. This characteristic of utopian writing allows for the genre of science fiction to be represented within the utopian genre through alternate ways of being and the representation of other worlds and ways of organising society. Science fiction can also alter the ways in which the utopia is represented through the use of technology and artificial intelligence. Within the literary movements of the 1970s, utopia and science fiction have converged as writers attempted to search for ways to "imagine alternatives" to their societies (Fitting 2010, 150). Peter Fitting (2010), in a chapter entitled "Utopia, Dystopia and Science Fiction", comments, "it is impossible to study the utopias and dystopias of the past fifty years or more without acknowledging the central role of science fiction" (135). H.G. Wells can be described as a writer who writes in both the dystopian and science fiction literary genres. Wellsian texts that fall into this category are *The Time Machine* (1859), *The War of the Worlds* (1898) and *A Modern Utopia* (1905), among others.

Krishan Kumar (1987) in *Utopia and Anti-utopia in Modern Times* views science fiction and utopia as necessary to each other. He notes that "The introduction of science and technology into utopia" brought this genre "into the idea of progress" (31). Science and technology have no end points, and incorporating the science fiction genre within the utopian model allows utopianism to also extend itself into the infinite, therefore utopia "cannot achieve any final rest" (31). Rafaella Baccolini (2004) writes about utopia and science fiction as one genre, without differentiating between the two. She argues with the intention of deconstructing and appropriating within the discourse of genre studies (519). Baccolini refers to science fiction as an "impure genre", one which is characterised by "permeable borders that allow contamination

from other genres" (520).[5] This represents "resistance to a hegemonic ideology" (Baccolini and Moylan 2003, 8). When applying the concept of genre to utopian and science fiction it is interesting to note how these two genres resist easy definition. Genre is after all "culturally constructed" and it rests on "the binary between what is *normal* and what is *deviant*" (Baccolini 2007, 164). In a discussion of the genre of utopia, Ruppert (1996, 139) notes that utopia "straddle[s] just about every existing genre and draw[s] on a variety of conventions and expectations".

Authors such as Fitting also occupy a complementary stance that credits both the genres of utopia and science fiction. The utopian, dystopian and science fiction cultural projects share an intrinsic relationship with each other. Fitting, in "A Short History of Utopian Studies", notes that "the revival of utopian writing [in the 1970s] was in many ways made possible by science fiction", as "science fiction provided a way to imagine and describe alternatives to an inadequate present" (2009, 121). Utopian and dystopian worlds are depicted through the lens provided by science fiction. This occurs not just on a visual and narrative level but on a production level as well. Cinematic technology such as CGI (Computer-generated Imagery) as well as three-dimensional film-making has added a visual thrill achieved by viewers of films which utilise ground-breaking cinematic technology to produce realistic cinematic experiences of science fiction imaginaries. Three-dimensional filmmaking became popular in America in the 1950s and 1980s (Sandifer 2011, 62). It re-emerged again in the twenty-first century with James Cameron's *Avatar* (2009), and some have even gone as far as to proclaim that "a fully immersive 3-D experience [is] a sort of utopian endpoint of cinema" (63).

According to Vieira (2010, 4), in terms of etymology, utopia is "simultaneously constituted by a movement of affirmation and denial". Utopia is thus a subjective conceptualisation that is able to serve the different needs of different individuals at different times in human history. Utopia and science fiction have been condemned in the popular American imagination due to their alleged impacts in our current globalised world, on human populations and peoples. Giles Foden (2002), has gone so far as to assert that Asimov's science fiction classic, *Foundation* (1951), takes on the meaning of "Al-Qaida", when translated into Arabic. *Al-Qaida* was the

---

[5] Suzanne Damarin, writing in 2004, defines the genre of science fiction as impure, just as Baccolini does. Damarin notes that this is because science fiction "borrows liberally from other literary forms to make the familiar strange and the strange familiar" (53).

military group responsible for the attack on the World Trade Centres in 2001. This extreme notion casts science fiction and utopia in a negative light. Such claims should be avoided as they directly implicate Asimov as an instigator of terrorism. After the 9/11 attack and the subsequent invasion of the Middle East by United States troops, the utopian ideals of *Al-Qaida* and Islam were and are still viewed in a negative light by a large majority of non-Muslim individuals, particularly in the West. Levitas points out that "Al-Qaida was condemned as (simultaneously) ideological and utopian" (2007, 297). By the same standards, operation 'Enduring Freedom' was launched by the United States in an effort to view this global superpower as a "good society" through the attacks on Afghanistan and Iraq (297). Levitas refers to this as "a clash of utopias" (299), where two utopian ideals bring about war and devastation in reality. The emergence of religious groups such as the militant, fundamentalist group *Isis* (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria), and their activity in North Africa and South Asia as well as the Middle East, has further resulted in the condemnation of Islam and its ideals which are deemed violent and inhumane within the popular and filmic imaginary (Shaheen 2003). Utopia through "fantasy" is based on "alternate solutions to reality" (Vieira 2010, 5), which are depicted through texts that reveal solutions, while simultaneously showing us the weaknesses that each solution embodies. The exploration of such weakness allow the reader to partake in the imaginary act of utopia-building to create a better utopia so as to overcome these flaws. Striving for the ideal within utopia is necessary to the human condition and progress. Sargent's definition of utopia is thus useful within such discussions as it denies the utopia the possession of perfection and thus opens any utopian model to critique and further scrutiny.

Much like the contention made by Fitting in relation to hopes and fears, Andy Sawyer (2005) also expresses how human anxieties are reflected through the science fiction genre. He comments that science fiction is not about "the world to come", but rather about "the here and now" (421). By stating that "Utopias and the changes they undergo both help bring about and are reflections of paradigm shifts in the way a culture views itself" (12), Sargent (1994) foregrounds the ability of the utopia to represent the human anxieties of the here and now and how society negotiates these human apprehensions. Ruppert (1996) analyses this notion from a filmic point of view. When we as spectators consume and replicate images "we are not immune to their effects: they inevitably leave behind residual traces and associations that shape our fears and fantasies" (145). H.G. Wells in *A Modern Utopia* writes with the intention of envisaging the characteristics of what a contemporary utopia would necessarily possess in order to work in reality. Wells was aware of the general dystopian undertones that characterise

each century. He took cognisance of the challenges and anxieties that each period of history was faced with. When speaking of the context that the modern utopia needs to arise from, he says, "We are to shape our state in a world of uncertain seasons, sudden catastrophes, antagonistic disease, and inimical beasts and vermin" (9).

Sargent (1994) delineates the difficulty of studying the concept of utopia in current discourse as "we are discussing living traditions which are always in process" (3). This is what makes the study of utopia interesting as it is always in a state of flux, representing different ways of being, never mimicking the same utopian model. By fusing this characteristic of the utopia with science fiction the possibilities proliferate as science fiction is not bound by pragmatism.

1.7 Aims of the Thesis and the Approach of Reading Against the Grain

This study provides an analysis of utopian and science fiction film through a judicious use of feminist utopian and science fiction studies, genre studies and trauma and gender studies. Applying such theories to the genres of utopia and science fiction is what Ruppert (1996) refers to as "reading against the grain", a mode of analysis which emerged in the 1970s by feminist and culture scholars and critics (143). Ruppert applies this theory to utopian film and proposes the usefulness of this method. He mentions that the function of this analysis is "to interrogate cinema's modes of address and to uncover potentially progressive and subversive elements in films" (143). Ruppert discusses the utopian film genre and in doing so identifies Hollywood as the central site of utopian films. He notes that Hollywood possesses "culture's powerful voice" in demonstrating that often some films are not "complicit with capitalist ideology" but rather they "offer kernels of resistance in the form of utopian fantasises" (141). The fields of utopia and science fiction are fertile grounds for the application of feminist and racial theories as well as trauma and memory studies.

The title of this thesis foregrounds the word "dystopian". This is done in an effort to read against the grain of utopian and science fiction film texts. Baccolini makes use of the term "dystopian" in titles such as "The Persistence of Hope in Dystopian Science Fiction" (2004) and "Finding Utopia in Dystopia" (2007). Baccolini uses the word "dystopian" in her titles in a discussion of both utopia, its subtexts and science fiction. Her reason for doing this is highlighted by the notion that "Utopia is maintained in dystopia" (2004, 520). She refers to this

as a "hybrid approach" (2004, 518) which allows feminist and racial discourses to feature within dystopian and science fiction texts. This is explicitly seen in Chapter Four of this study. The concept of the critical utopia/dystopia emerges through an analysis of reading against the grain of utopian and science fiction films. Interpretation against the grain of the text "results in symptomatic readings that are attentive not only to the dominant structure in the text, but also to what is omitted, repressed, or otherwise marginalized" (Ruppert 1996, 143). Ruth Levitas (2003) examines the relationship between society and the predominant dystopian mood. Utopia, through its associations with totalitarianism, paints a bleak picture of future utopian discourse; however, Levitas notes that "Utopia is squeezed into interstitial spaces, and is thus partial, fragmentary, and often temporary" and that it "might be in danger of being squeezed out altogether, were it not for the creation and re-creation of such spaces" (6).

Utilising the word "dystopian" and not "utopian", in the title of this thesis highlights how each selected text for this study harbours a critical dystopian enclave. Everything is not as it seems, despite the initial claim that it is a e/utopia. This is visible in *Vice* (2015, dir. Brian A. Miller). The word "utopia" is actually utilised within the dialogue of this film. This occurrence is a rare one, as while utopian ideals and settings have been represented in films, the word has seldom been used within the context of film. In *Vice*, the main antagonist, Julian Michaels, played by Bruce Willis, introduces his utopian model when he says at the beginning of the film, "Have you ever wanted something that's beyond your reach, an experience like nothing you could ever possess in real life? Now imagine a place where there are no laws, no rules, no consequences, where the only limits are those of your imagination. Welcome to Vice, a better reality, a world of endless possibilities, a utopian paradise where you can have or do anything you want" (Miller 2015). Like the utopian models present in this study, *Vice* represents a utopia, an ideal which when tested is riddled with flaws.

1.8 Science Fiction Film

Nowhere is the utopian and science fiction imaginary displayed more vividly than within the medium of film. Ruppert (1994) discuses cinema and spectatorship. He maintains, "Viewers […] act upon films, just as films act upon viewers, and neither is a fixed entity; we shape and are shaped by cinematic experience" (145). Cinema and the viewer thus share an intrinsic relationship with each other. The viewer depends on the cinema as much as cinema depends on the spectator. Ruppert points out that viewers attend the cinema as it is a form of "escapism"

– the viewer sits "in a dark theatre with others not easily visible", where they "are immobilized in comfortable seats" as their "attention is riveted on the screen" (145). The act of watching films is thus an immersive practice of both mind and body. Science fiction film has its roots in science fiction literature. H.G. Wells and other authors' most notable works have been made and remade into popular films with remakes, sequels and spin-offs. This tradition is an enduring one, and Ruppert refers to this as "nostalgia" on the part of Hollywood (144).

Despite the plenitude of literary science fiction texts, the science fiction genre flourished within the medium of film and television with its classics tropes of space travel, alien life forms and time travel. The media of film and television allow for the science fiction genre to thrive as it continues into the twenty-first century. *Star Trek* (1966, dir. George Lucas), *Star Wars* (1977, prod. Gene Roddenberry), *Alien* (1979, dir. Ridley Scott) and *Terminator* (1984, dir. James Cameron) made science fiction accessible to a larger audience "than ever before", fuelling the Golden Age of science fiction television (Booker and Thomas 2009, 10).

Robert Shelton (1993, 19), in an article entitled "The Utopian Film Genre: Putting Shadows on the Silver Screen", comments, "movies are arguably the commodities most central to defining this American century". Film theory examines the "relationship between film and the groups and individuals who make and view films" (Simpson, Utterson and Sheperdson 2004, 1). Film studies is not confined to a specific academic discipline. It is undertaken within many disciplines including social sciences, history and psychoanalysis (2). Science fiction is renowned for the cinematic displays of special effect which depicts other worlds and other life forms, and explores outer space as well as the bowels of the earth. These special effects conjure up spaces which humans have not yet discovered or travelled to in reality. Science fiction, therefore, pushes the boundaries of science to its very limits. Science finds inspiration from science fiction as it aims to achieve the feats depicted in science fiction. *Le Voyage dans la lune* (*Voyages to the Moon*) (1902, dir. George Méliès) has been dubbed as the first science fiction film (Milner 2004, 260).

Films that fall into the genre of science fiction are correlated and interconnected, not just in thematic concerns, but from a visual point of view. Roberts comments, "SF writers today allude to and rework the canonical texts of the past" (51). Many modern science fiction films appropriate settings from previous popular science fiction films. Ruppert (1996), in a discussion of science fiction film, notes how "the cinema provides a particularly dense system

of meaning, one that borrows from different discourses – narrative, politics, fashion, advertising – and articulates our social experience in various ways" (140). Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* (1927), one of the earliest and most influential science fiction films, has acted as the template on which other film makers have styled their science fiction films and visual narratives. Most notable of this is the use of skyscrapers in many science fiction film settings that are similar to the skyscrapers in *Metropolis*.

In the U.S.A., science fiction film emerged "as a distinctive" genre in the 1950s (Sobchack 2008, 262). The end of the 1970s saw the "convergence of the major streams of science fiction" (Csicsery-Ronay 2008, 53). Science fiction entered the academic world while at the same time the age of science fiction film fandom was born. Emerging in the latter part of the 1960s, *Star Trek* gave rise to science fiction's popularity on television and science fiction fandom. 1968 saw the release of *Planet of the Apes* which embodies "postapocalyptic" themes and space-time travel (Sobchack, 2008, 266). This franchise has successfully extended itself through the decades and into the twenty-first century. Directed by Tim Burton (2001), *Planet of the Apes* is a satirical, dystopian piece of work which depicts a reverse world where apes are superior to humans in the food chain and social order. The satire utilised by the film makes it unique in comparison with other dystopian films. This franchise plays on the social anxieties of evolution and our ancestral species of primates evolving to take over the human race. *Rise of the Planet of Apes* (2011) fuses the prospects of evolution and revolution. Experiments on a chimpanzee allow it to take over the human race after it administers the same drug to other animals within its species. In the 1980s Aids became an epidemic and this "alien disease" influenced social anxieties and the making of *E.T.: The Extra-Terrestrial* (1982) (Sobchack, 2008, 268).

A plethora of science fiction films has emerged in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. *Gattaca* (1997), directed by Andrew Niccol, functions as a critique of eugenics and genetics. The film has echoes of the philosophy formulated by Nietzsche, as one man attempts to falsify a superior genetic stance and become valid in a world where being "invalid" renders one worthless. At the heart of the film lies the theme of one individual who strives to achieve the state of the *Übermensch*.

One of the most famous science fiction franchises of the twentieth century, *The Matrix* Trilogy (1999-2003), directed by the Wachowskis, has a rebel hero at its core, much like the films I have selected for this study. Neo is "chosen" to save the human race from the computer-

generated world of the Matrix. This franchise has influenced other films to borrow from its cinematography and style. The first film to be studied in this thesis is indicative of this trend. As mentioned earlier, Byrne (2009), writing from a South African context, analyses this film, and this emphasises its importance as one of the many science fiction iconic films that have impacted on a global audience and has defined a genre.

The twentieth and twenty-first centuries have also seen the popularity of science fiction and quasi-science fiction fantasy in films such as *Gravity* (2013, dir. Alfonso Caurón), *The Martian* (2013, dir. Ridley Scott) and the popular television series *Extant* (2014-2015, prod. Steven Spielberg). *Gravity* stars Sandra Bullock as Dr Ryan Stone, who, while attempting to commit suicide while stranded in space, is visited by her deceased partner, Matt Kowalski, played by George Clooney. *Extant* explores the life of astronaut Molly, who, on a solo mission in space, is caught in a space anomaly and visited by her deceased former lover, Marcus Dawkins. Such science fiction films evoke fantasy through imagination and the conjuring of people or situations which other character within the science fiction film do not witness. Films that fit into this group display the psyche of the characters and this eclipses the novums[6] that the science fiction film uses. Such instances in science fiction films explore the human consciousness, as well as human mental experiences, in opposition to science.

The viewers of science fiction film are called upon to suspended their disbelief and enter into a world where an arena is provided for alien life forms, artificial intelligence, genetically engineered humans, cyborgs (such as depicted in the *Robocop* franchise), robots (such as those in *I, Robot*, 2004, dir. Alex Proyas), and zombies (as depicted in *I am Legend*, 2011, dir. Francis Lawrence). Films that feature robots depict the themes of evolution based on Charles Darwin's *Origins of Species* (1859). The publication of this text altered views towards humanity's destiny in the European world, and led to social anxieties about identity and humankind's place in the world. Evolution is a prominent theme in many science fiction texts. The figure of the robot appears in the film *Prometheus* which is analysed in Chapter Four of this study. Ridley Scott makes use of the figure of the replicant from his earlier, well-known film, *Blade Runner* (1982), to create an opposition between human and robot, with the robot being classified as 'more' human than Deckard.

---

[6] This science fiction term, coined by Darko Suvin, refers to "a discrete piece of information recognizable as not-true, but also as not-unlike-true" (Shippey 2008, 14). The novum "establishes the difference of the future by 'estranging' the reader from the present" (Zepke 2012, 92).

The anxiety in the robotic sub-genre of science fiction is based on the robot evolving past the evolutionary stage of humankind and thus taking control of humans and possibly enslaving the human population or even worse, replacing the human population. In 1883 *The Adventures of Pinocchio* (Carlo Collodi) was published. This story details the journey of a puppet to become a "real boy". In a similar manner the robot experiences soul-envy as it is fascinated by the concept of human emotions, such as love, anger, hatred, sadness and happiness, among others. The robot attempts to understand these feelings in the hope of attaining qualities that are unique to human beings. This uniqueness is what the robot figure desires. Beauchamp (1986) observes that such texts aspire to "keep the slave from becoming the master" (58). It is this notion that "haunts dystopia" (58) and which is a prominent feature in films such as *I, Robot*.

Isaac Asimov is most famously known for the creation of the three robotic laws which appear in his series of short stories which gave rise to the film of the same name – *I, Robot*. The Three Laws of robots "have been a staple of science fiction" (Murphy and Woods 2009, 14). *I, Robot* successfully deals with robots taking over the human race through artificial intelligence. The main protagonist, Del Spooner, played by Will Smith, has a robotic arm, after his arm was damaged in an accident. Gwyneth Jones (2008), in a discussion of the dependency of humans in the real world on medical technology, notes the creation of cyborgs and defines these individuals as "human beings entirely dependent upon machine parts inserted into their bodies" (167). Donna Haraway, a famous feminist science fiction scholar, defines the cyborg as "a cybernetic organism, a hybrid of machine and organism, a creature of social reality as well as a creature of fiction" (291). Recent years and technological advancements in medicine have shown that the cyborg is no longer a fictional character. Many individuals, especially soldiers, loose their limbs in battle and have them replaced by artificial limbs, some of which feature rotational joints. These 'cyborgs' are "dependant on machine parts" (Jones 2008, 167). As a result of this the human "worldview is bounded by the constant urge to evolve, develop, generate and advance", forcing us to "focus our undivided attention on the future" (de Sousa Caetano 2016, 30).

The three robotic laws are worth quoting as they reside at the heart of *I, Robot*, which is set in the year 2035. Robin R. Murphy and David D. Woods (2009) quote Asimov's three robotic laws. Law one reads: "A robot may not injure a human being or, through inaction allow a human being to come to harm", law two states that "[a] robot must obey orders given to it by human beings, except where such orders would conflict with the first law", and finally law

three maintains, "A robot must protect its own existence as long as such protection does not conflict with the first or second law" (15-16). Gwyneth Jones comments on the nature of the Three Laws and how and why they are so important to the science fiction genre. She says, "In Asimov's scenario the fact that the Three Laws are there to protect humans from their mentally and physically superior creations was always clear" (167). The laws also play a crucial role in science fiction texts as they demonstrate "how difficult they [are] to apply in various real-world situations" (Murphy and Woods 2009, 14).

Science fiction films that centre on the figure of the robot reveal situations where robots, while having been created by humans, rise up and became the masters of their creators. The social anxiety that this plays on is the creation of a scenario where technology rules its creators, rendering them as slaves. Another recent film that successfully deals with this trope is *Automata* (2014, dir. Gabe Ibáñez), and is of relevance as it represents the figure of the evolved robot in a nuanced and positive light. Featured at the San Sebastian film festival, the film creates a new second law which states that "a robot may not alter itself or others". Set in the year 2044, this film explores the possibility of allowing robots to alter and upgrade themselves and other robots, as this directly relates to the evolution of artificial intelligence. Evolution theory is also utilised within the context of this film. Antonio Banderas plays the role of Jacq Vaucan, an investigator for an insurance company who manufactures robots to help save a declining human population from the encroaching desert landscape which is caused by solar flares. Jacq enlists the help of Dr Susan Dupré, a clocksmith, who is involved in illegally modifying robots, to find out why robots are disobeying the second robot protocol. Jacq asks the doctor, "Why is it so absurd if somebody could find a way for a vacuum cleaner to fix themselves?" (Ibáñez 2014). Jacq is aware that this is a violation of the second robotic protocol; however, later on in the film he is responsible for assisting the robots in their evolutionary process. While this has largely been avoided in science fiction films that feature artificial intelligence, *Automata* embraces the possibility of an independent and autonomous robot race. The robots and their plight for survival are portrayed in a sympathetic light, thus the figure of the robot is not viewed as possessing malicious intentions towards the human race, but rather as a species that will inhabit and sustain planet earth after the human species becomes extinct.

The film establishes robots as evolutionarily superior to human beings, as the doctor makes reference to the fact that humans took seven million years to evolve from a "monkey [that] decided to come down from a tree" (Ibáñez 2014), while robots will be able to evolve within

seven days if they are given the opportunity. The film explores the concept of robots developing a consciousness, which the doctor refers to as "muddy waters". This term denotes the ability of the robot to blur the lines between artificial intelligence and being human. Possessing a consciousness is unique to human beings and this is what makes us different from robots. If robots were to also develop a consciousness, would we still be able to refer to them as robots? Muddy waters become apparent when a robot takes on human qualities and ceases to be a robot which follows the stringent laws that it is programmed to obey and function in accordance with. Ibáñez's *Automata* succeeds in establishing a more progressive view of artificial intelligence and an acceptance of its usage within the science fiction imaginary. The figure of the robot in *Automata* is given a platform to voice its individual autonomy. When Jacq tells one of the robots that it is just a machine, the robot responds by saying, "That's like saying you're just an ape" (Ibáñez 2014). The main theme that runs through the film is "life always finds a way". This theme becomes more significant as Jacq's wife is pregnant and these are her words. The film points out that no life-form can carry the planet forever, and this realisation prompts Jacq to help the robots gain their independence.

One of the other most notable tropes of the science fiction genre is the figure of the alien. The late nineteenth and early twentieth century saw "sober, Darwinian speculation about life and ecology on other planets" (Jones 2008, 168). Often, in fiction and film aliens invade Earth, and they are more technologically advanced than the human race. Alien beings attempt to overthrow the human race and either destroy Earth or harvest it for its resources. In most cases they come to annihilate and destroy. Aliens are our "competitors, and therefore our deadly enemies" (168). The alien is either benevolent or hostile. The alien figure in science fiction represents the figure of the "other" as "immigrants, ethnic minorities, underprivileged guest workers, [and] wily diplomatic opponents" (168). Merrick (2003, 243) observes that "The 'alien' could signify everything that was 'other' to the dominant audience of middle-class, young white Western males – including women, people of colour, other nationalities, classes and sexualities".

The *Alien* franchise "has taken on a mythic status" in popular culture due to its scenes of horror where larvae bursts out of the chest of its victims. (Cohen and Stewart 2004, 49). The alien Xenomorph occupies a significant position in popular culture where it has been viewed by over a billion people (49). Its alien biology is impossible, giving it a "frisson of terror" (49). The figure of the alien is explored in the last chapter of this thesis.

Science fiction films often portray scenarios where humans are pitted against aliens. Human intelligence or evolution often allows the success of the human race. In *War of the Worlds* (2005, dir. Steven Spielberg), the process of human evolution allows humans to defeat the invading and hostile alien forces. The film, inspired by the Wellsian text of the same name, is premised upon humans' adaption to planet Earth and the elements that constitute Earth's atmosphere, as humans are carbon-based organisms. The composition of Earth's air is what results in the poisoning of the invading alien life form as they attempt to harvest humans to fertilise their alien plants. Science fiction films such as these show how humans have always thrived and will continue to thrive into the future, despite alien invasions and even when the odds are stacked against us.

Pacific Rim (2013, dir. Guillermo del Toro), like *War of the Worlds*, depicts aliens invading Earth to take over the planet by beaming messages to their planet to rally alien forces. Like the Wellsian text, the aliens possess far greater and more technologically advanced weapons than humans. Earth's sun proves to be the weakness to the alien life in *Pacific Rim*, and the main protagonist uses this to his advantage. Fundamentally, what saves humanity in these cases is simply "being human", and the ability to recognise how different alien beings are from humans and to use that difference to conquer invading alien entities.

Oblivion (2013, dir. Joseph Kosinski) is a unique example of alien life forms and their impact on humans and Earth. The film manages to complicate the human versus alien dichotomy as aliens turn humans against other humans. The film depicts a war-torn earth in the year 2077, which has been ravaged by a war between extra-terrestrials known as scavs (scavengers) and humanity. Humans have abandoned Earth for Titan, one of Saturn's moons. Jack Harper, one of the last humans on earth, is given the task of protecting the generators that produce fusion energy from the ocean, from the scavs. It is revealed that the scavs are actually the last remaining humans on earth who form the resistance to the alien forces. They enlist Jack's help and he joins the resistance to preserve human life on earth. Jack then becomes twice the rebel hero and he is involved in defeating the alien forces twice over. The film clearly represents themes of colonisation as aliens attempt to colonise Earth for its resources and their own purposes.

Many recent science fiction films represent rebel heroes at their centres. The twenty-first century saw the release of *Ultraviolet* (2006, dir. Kurt Wimmer). This science fiction film

illustrates a dystopia while it fuses futuristic technology and a comic book effect to produce the female rebel hero, Violet Song. *Ultraviolet* shows how the genre of science fiction is in a constant state of flux, adding new techniques to its representations of other worlds and settings. The film displays vivid colours as it appears to have been lifted out of the comic book that it begins with. Science is also reflected through the genre of science fiction, through the film's depiction of hemoglophagia – a disease which the totalitarian government has used to create soldiers, but which ultimately results in their death. Like many science fiction films that depict biological weapons and viruses, *Ultraviolet* also portrays the widespread social anxieties towards Aids. Incidentally, 2006, the same year the film was produced, was also the year in which the United Nations High Level Meeting on Aids was held in New York (World Health Organization). In the film, Violet Song, a martial arts expert, rebels against the ruling elite to save Six, a young boy, whose blood may hold the key to curing the disease.

Like *Ultraviolet*, *Æon Flux* (2005, dir. Karyn Kusman) also features a female hero, played by South African born Charlize Theron. Theron plays the role of Æon Flux, a member of a rebel group who call themselves the Monicans. The film paints a utopian paradise in 2415, called Bregna, which was established after 99 percent of the earth's population was killed by a pathogenic virus. The utopia reveals itself to be a totalitarian regime and Æon Flux is given the task of revealing the government's greatest secrets by rebelling against the authority. It is revealed that the government recycles human beings through genetic engineering and that life does exists outside the confines of the utopian Bregna. This film is also an example of how human genetic engineering has come to play a pivotal and increasingly popular role in recent science fiction film. This trope is explored further in the second chapter of this study.

The dystopian film genre characteristically opens in a world that has already experienced some kind of cataclysmic event or warfare. The landscape is one of ruin and desolation. There is no technology in this world, and if it does exist it is controlled by the oppressors of the human race, either alien life forms or artificial intelligence that now controls the remnants of the human race. The dystopian genre often revolves around bringing back hope and a world state that is more hospitable to human life, growth and development. The main protagonist is often given the task of bringing about a progressive world order while defeating the existing oppressive regime.

The Hollywood dystopian genre is famous for depicting the American landscape in a state of collapse and deterioration. The monuments of America are usually shown in a state of ruin as these monuments represent the power and might of the world's most dominant superpower. This serves to emphasis the finality and reality of the dystopian world and the destruction of a world that the human race once thrived in. One of the most famous of these monuments is the Statue of Liberty which has featured in popular dystopian films such as *Planet of the Apes* (1968, dir. Franklin J. Schaffner), *X Men* (2000, dir. Bryan Singer) and *Cloverfield* (2008, dir. Matt Reeves). The Statue of Liberty represents the utopian ideals of freedom, equality and independence to American citizens. The destruction of this monument signals the destruction of the "utopian" ideals that American is founded upon. Andrew Milner in an article entitled "Urban Dystopia and Science Fiction Cinema", comments on the dystopian genre and its effect on cityscapes in films such as *Blade Runner*, and I extrapolate that his remark can be applied to other dystopian films which show cityscapes in ruins. He posits, "the architecture of the dystopian cityscape functions as a synecdoche for the wider catastrophe that has overcome the populations [...] and the prior catastrophe [is] encoded deep within [the city's] social and architectural forms" (267).

1.9 Special Effects (SFX) and Visual Effects (VFX) in Film

Hannah Landecker (2006, 129) points out, "The film medium has its own specificity when it comes to directing spectators to see or pay attention in particular ways; the ability to frame, juxtapose, move close up, and accelerate or decelerate both mimics and manipulates human attention". The analysis of the films in this study explores the technical aspects achieved through camera techniques or through CGI (Computer Generated Images).

Central to both utopian and science fiction film is the use of special effects and visual effects. Recent films see entire narratives constructed by CGI where "the only residual live-action elements are the actors" (Prince 2004, 24). CGI has "become an object of intense fascination, curiosity and scrutiny" (Pierson 2002, 3). In the digital film era, directing translates to "grabbing the live action elements needed for compositing" with CGI (30). Such films are praised for their "extremely sharp focus" (Prince 2004, 30). Digital tools are used in all aspects of film production inclusive of "set design, cinematography, editing, sound, postproduction, distribution, and exhibition" (25). Science fiction films "put the aesthetic enjoyment of its special effects at the very centre of the film's viewing experience" (Pierson 2002, 107). All the

films featured in this study employ the use of CGI and special effects. Special effects play a significant role in conjuring up the utopia, especially when the future needs to be visualised.

1.10 The Utopian Film

Science fiction scholar, Peter Fitting (2010), comments, "While there are literally thousands of science fiction films […] most people would have trouble naming more than one or two utopian films" (138). He asks, "What is utopian film?" and points out that "there is no accepted body of utopian film and no accepted definition" (1993, 1). Peter Ruppert (1996) goes so far as to claim that utopian films, as such, do not exist (139); however, he does assert that utopian scholars have "overlooked the benefits of studying film for its utopian meanings" (140). This study also charts what I define as utopian film and embarks on a study of such films. Ruppert concludes his discussion on utopian film by placing an emphasis not on defining and locating utopian film but rather on "the question of how to mobilize the critical potential of utopian desire in empowering directions" (151). Through identification and discussion of what I refer to as four utopian films, I strive to critically analyse their respective potential for empowerment by reading my selected texts for their utopian value.

Utopian and science fiction films are similar in their cinematic portrayal of their settings and content. Very often, at the beginning of a science fiction or utopian film the viewer is immediately told what year it is and we are told what setting the film takes place in. The science fiction series, *Star Trek*, is famously noted for opening with "in a galaxy far far away". Many science fiction and utopian films have to alert the reader to the situation that the film is located in. The setting could be a world after a world war, after a nuclear attack, after a cataclysmic natural disaster, and so forth.

Much like Peter Fitting, Robert Shelton (1993, 18) questions, "how has it happened that virtually no one has been trying to cluster films under the rubric 'the utopian film genre?'" In this discussion I highlight the characteristics of the utopian genre, and while the utopian and science fiction genre share characteristics with each other, I prioritise the utopian genre as the large majority of films selected for this study have a utopian model or impulse at their core. The utopia is known to "include a dystopian counterpart that is sometimes contrasted to the utopian society" (Fitting 2003, 156).

Robert Shelton maintains that "the utopian rubric has been studiously avoided by film scholars" (20). Shelton argues that the reason for this is that science fiction film as a genre coupled with special effects brings in far more paying customers to theatres around the globe than the utopian genre. The utopian model and utopianism are present in certain selected films that form part of this study. The utopian film genre differs from the science fiction genre in its representation of a utopian imaginary, concept or ideal. The utopian genre creates an imaginary world governed by a set of laws and rules; while often, technology plays a key role in the utopian representation, emphasis is not placed upon technology as is done within the science fiction genre. The science fiction genre privileges technological advancements such as state of the art weapons, transport (both public and private) that flies, advanced alien technology and superhuman powers achieved through technology; a suitable example of this is *Iron Man* (2008, dir. Jon Favreau) where a brilliant engineer, Tony Stark, creates a technologically advanced exoskeleton to fight off evil forces.

The eutopian imaginary follows a specific pattern through its representation of a perfected society. The society and its ideological foundations are praised at the beginning of the film. Sooner rather than later, the dystopian elements within each society are revealed. Sometimes they are revealed first the audience and then to the main protagonist/s. The utopian model differs from the dystopian one, in that the dystopian paradigm opens with a society that has already descended into chaos and anarchy. In utopian film, the rebel hero works to revert the utopian society to an older form of being by destroying what emerges as a fascist regime which controls the utopia. As mentioned previously, the utopia is governed by a strict set of laws, and these laws eventually result in oppression. The utopian society is thus flawed, as the same ideals that the model prides itself upon results in oppression, cruelty, tyranny, domination and often the executions of its citizens. The utopian society loses its power base through the actions of the rebel hero, and swift change serves to highlight the need for transformation and reformation. The rebel hero is given the task of revealing the innate flaws in the utopian model. The utopian paradigm aims to be a better place than the reality of the reader or viewer, with its foundations steeped in utilitarianism – the greatest good for the greatest number of people. However, this ideal is also flawed, as the concern then shifts to the individuals who are in the minority and whom the concept of utilitarianism seems to fail.

The dominant characteristic of the utopian imagination is that while society is based on the notion of "a good place" it is a notion that should be "discarded", according to Fatima Vieira,

"since it is based on a subjective conception of what is or is not desirable" (6). However, this characteristic of the utopia creates advantageous conditions for the emergence of the rebel figure. Utopias are "human centred", they are "built by human beings and are meant for them" because "utopists […] distrust individuals' capacity to live together". It is for this reason that the utopian society is premised on strict sets of rules and laws which it depends upon for its functioning.

Amidst the collapse and despair, hope is often revealed as the essence of utopia. Vieira (2010) refers to hope as "the energy of utopia" (7). The tyrannical president, Coriolanus Snow, says in the *Hunger Games*, "Hope – it is the only thing stronger than fear" (Ross 2012). What makes the concept of utopia interesting is that no one single utopian model is flawless. All utopias represented have innate flaws that are revealed as the fundamental principle that drives the rebellion and its supporters forward. Sargent (1994) intends for the story of utopia to be read as "a tale of hope, hope engendered, hope deferred, and hope renewed" (1). Baccolini (2007), in a discussion of trauma within utopian and science fiction texts, identifies "a slight suffering" as a necessary "precondition of hope" (185).

At first glance the utopian model is reflected as a positive and flourishing society. An appropriate example of this is Neill Blomkamp's *Elysium* (2013). Elysium, a terraformed paradise for the wealthy, equipped with the technology that can cure any disease, is initially depicted as a paradisiacal utopia with perfectly landscaped gardens, luxurious homes, sunshine and blue waters. Other cinematic representations of utopia involve technologically advanced cities, with high-rise glittering buildings and perfectly crafted recreational areas.

The rules that the utopian society is established upon "force the individuals to repress their unreliable and unstable nature and put on a more convenient social cloak" (Vieira 2010, 7). This "social cloak" often gives rise to mechanical behaviour by the inhabitants of utopia (as that seen in Fritz Lang's *Metropolis*, among other films), a denial of the truth that the society is based upon and an effort to enforce deception and fabrications by the government or those in power within the utopia. An automated voice often features in utopian films, either establishing and enforcing the rules that the society is governed by or advertising products that the utopian society is dependent upon.

In an advertisement for the product, soylent green, in the film of the same name, the viewer is told that it is "the miracle food of high energy plankton" (1973, dir. Richard Fleischer). In Steven Spielberg's *Minority Report* (2002) the spectator is called to "imagine a world without murder". In the 2008 film, *Death Race*, the audience is welcomed by an enthusiastic news reader's voice, to watch the brutality and death in a dystopian game-like setting. In *I, Robot* (2004, dir. Alex Proyas), the NS5 robot model is advertised as "Tomorrow's robot, today". In Jonathan Mostow's *Surrogates* (2009), it is said that "You can become anyone you want to be from the comfort and safety of your own home", through the use of surrogate machines which resemble human beings, while in James DeManaco's *The Purge* (2013) the viewer learns that "murder will be legal for twelve continuous hours". Sometimes this voice is also used to establish a capitalist agenda which is a prominent feature within the utopian and dystopian imaginary. A prime example of this is Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner* (1982), in which large screens advertising Coca-Cola can be seen towering over the city. The utopian society, as it exists in many films, attempts to sell products which allow for the functioning of the society, as in the case of *I, Robot* in which robots are advertised and sold to the public so as to achieve social and technological homogeneity.

The utopia is initially established as a good place. In the film *Minority Report*, the utopian society is premised on "PreCrime", a system that can predict crime before it happens, and its success rate is astronomical. An automated voice says, "Within a year, PreCrime effectively stopped murder". In *The Purge* (2013, dir. James DeMonaco) the film opens with positive remarks which state that unemployment is at one percent, crime is at an all-time low and violence does not exist. However, the spectator is alerted to the fact that during one night a year murder is allowed and citizens of the "New America" embark on killing sprees.

After the success of the utopian model is shown to the viewer, we become aware of the notion that not everything as it seems. The utopian model also acts to critique the flaws of the imagined community to reveal the shortcomings in their social and cultural order. *Zardoz* (1974, dir. John Boorman) is an early example of a utopian filmic mode represented through the lens of science fiction. This film can also be referred to as an early prototype of e/utopia indicated through the medium of film. An exterminator named Zed infiltrates the utopia created by the Eternals, into which he brings sexuality and death, and ultimately reveals the limitations of their utopia.

More often than not, the utopian society is the epitome of order. A filmic image of order that stands out can be found in Fritz Lang's *Metropolis*. Workers are seen, neatly arranged in lines, following one another, walking in unison, to work in the underbelly of the city. Natural products such as trees and grass look as if they have deliberately been placed in a specific order to produce a sense of unison. The utopian city or setting is often confined by high walls or a barricade that does not allow the inhabitants access to the outside world. The outside world is kept hidden and often stays hidden under the pretence that it is "inhabitable". The gates that are represented in *The Purge* and the walls around Bregna in *Æon Flux* echo this sentiment. They are strong, large and overpowering. Camera angles are effectively used to communicate the importance of security to the viewer of the utopian film. The camera angle is thus able to alter the perception of the security that encompasses the utopia. The barricade between the inside world and the outside world is often shown in a close-up shot or from a low camera vantage point to emphasise its gigantic proportions as it towers over its citizens. These camera angles serve to emphasise the importance of security and its strict enforcement. Leaving these confines is prohibited and the security acts as the first and most obvious sign of hegemony of the people who control the utopias.

In the case of the gates that are shown in *The Purge* the close-up shot places both symbolic and dramatic significance not just on the object shown but also on the rules and laws that govern the utopia. Certain utopian laws associated with security aim at protecting the citizens; however, it is later revealed that the security acts to keep something or someone out of the utopian society. If the establishment of the utopia only serves to benefit the elite then who actually has the legitimate access to the utopia? The setting that is then inferred from this is not a utopian one but a totalitarian one, premised on control. The eutopia then is an ideal. It attempts to offer a subjective image of perfection and solutions to the problems and dilemmas that face society; however, these solutions do not always work effectively and perfectly in the filmic eutopia or reality.

The utopian model works to widen the gap between the haves and have nots, and this gives rise to the resistance such as the one that emerges in *The Hunger Games* film series. The concept of utopia has proved to be far reaching in the world of cinema. The utopian model as it exists in Hollywood has seeped into the world of animated films. *Dr Seuss' The Lorax* (2012, dir. Chris Renaud and Kyle Balda) portrays a utopian world which is made entirely of synthetic

material and where oxygen is bottled and can be purchased. The natural world has vanished, and a boy sets out to rebuild it by finding a tree, which is thought to have gone extinct.

1.11 Heroism

The title of this thesis uses the word "hero" for both male and female protagonists. This is deliberate as a feminist stance is utilised to analyse utopian and science fiction film. Elizabeth Abel explores the relationship that exists between gender and literature. She maintains, "attitudes towards sexual difference generate and structure literary texts" (1981, 173). Abel employs the term "female hero" instead of the gender-biased associated term of "heroine" to describe figures such as Helen of Troy from Greco-Roman mythology (178). The use of the term "female heroes" allows "women [to] emerge [not] as a passive victims of male authorial desire but rather as powerful figures that elicit texts crafted to appropriate or mute their difference" (Abel, 174). The female hero should not be denied the same respect given to the male hero through differentiating between the gendered use of the term hero and heroine. In line with the feminist discussion put forth by Abel I utilise the term "female heroes" where appropriate to analyse my selected texts. My selected films represent both male and female heroes. A female hero is the main protagonist in *Prometheus*, while the other selected films feature female heroes who either accompany male heroes in their battles and defiance against authoritarian rule or in their pursuit of freedom and equality.

The word 'hero' is derived from Greek meaning "to serve" (Vogler 2007 [1998], 29). The main thread that runs through all my selected texts is that they each possess a rebel hero at their cores. Stories of heroism are "deep and eternal" because they "link us to peoples of all times and places" (Pearson 1991, 2). Joseph Campbell, the author of *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* [1949] (2004), maintains that the hero figure is born out of culture and mythology. The utopian tradition is steeped in myth, oral tradition and folk song (Sargent 10). Mythology features utopia which is visible in "golden ages, arcadias, earthly paradises [and] fortune isles" (10). Furthermore they "are peopled with our earliest ancestors, heroes and, very rarely, heroines" (10). The hero figure in the utopian setting is shaped by his/her surroundings. They see the problems within the "perfected society" which they inhabit, and then choose to rebel against the system. Often this rebellion is against the implementation of laws and rules that are not to be questioned. In his analysis, Campbell applies Greco-Roman, Indian and Egyptian mythology to interpret the figure of the hero in myths and legends. Campbell discusses how

the hero's journey is characterised by departure, initiation and return. The rebel hero within the utopian setting does not take on the characteristics that are indicative of the hero figure in mythology. The hero in the utopian and dystopian imaginary seldom departs from his society. Change in the utopian and dystopian society occurs from within. Departure may occur after the rebel hero has restored order to his/her respective society or has succeeded in destroying the utopian systems that the society is premised upon. The rebel figure rights the wrongs of his or her respective society through free will, which is dependent upon the human desire to survive and fight for justice in an unjust world. The rebel hero is a catalyst for change, someone who possesses integrity and valour at the outset of the text, and he or she is not required to embark on a journey, initiation and return as required by the hero figures in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*.

Following Campbell, Christopher Vogler (2007) [1998] charts the journey of the hero in Hollywood film. He maps the various stages in the hero's journey and observes that it occurs in every culture and "in every time" (4). A hero is defined as someone "who is willing to sacrifice his [or her] own needs on behalf of others" (29). Following Carl Jung, Vogler "maps the psyche" of the hero, establishing that the "hero's story is always a journey" (7). The hero is "presented with a problem, challenge or adventure to undertake" (10). The rebel heroes in this study are each faced with challenges that they have to overcome to survive and change their societies for the better. The rebel hero is given the task of restoring balance within their respective societies and worlds, often through violence, and with overthrowing the existing regime that holds the dominant power.

Rebellion is crucial to the heroes in this analysis. Rebellion signals defiance (Widmer 1962, 182). The rebel hero's view "is not just on the critical side but on the outside" (183). Furthermore, an individual has the right to rebel "on behalf of individuals or groups conceived as exploited or oppressed" (Honré 1988, 36). Rebellion almost always signals danger (41), putting the hero's life at stake. Destruction of the utopian society and its dystopian elements are significant as it "means liberation" (Kakoudaki 2002, 113). The destruction of what looks like "home is necessary in order to reaffirm what home really means. The destruction allows a new beginning, especially where the weight of the past and past political mistakes seem to have eliminated the possibility for change" (113). The hero is "propelled by universal drives, that we can all understand: the desire to be loved and understood, to succeed, survive, be free, […] right the wrongs or seek self-expression" (Vogler (2007) [1998], 30).

David Brin, in a 1997 interview for *Locus* magazine, says, "I hate the whole übermensch, superman temptation that pervades science fiction. I believe no protagonist should be so competent, so awe-inspiring, that a committee of 20 really hard-working, intelligent people couldn't do the same thing." While his contention may prove true for films from the Marvel and DC Comics productions, the films in this analysis depicted dissent by human beings who have the odds stacked against them. Their bravery, tenacity and perseverance make visible the heroes in ordinary society. At the heart of heroism lies self-sacrifice (Vogler 2007 [1998], 29). This is prominently depicted through the heroism analysed in this study.

Science fiction should not be considered without the utopian model and imaginary. Including the utopian model into the science fiction framework allows for a thorough interpretation of science fiction, and vice versa. The field of science fiction becomes open to various possibilities when analysed through the lens of utopianism. In his *The Will to Power*, Nietzsche refers to the *übermensch* as the "highest type of man" (139). Nietzsche employs a hierarchical utopian system in which humans are sectioned according to the qualities that they possess. The term *übermensch* translates to "overman" and can be applied to a state which is achieved through being superhuman (531). This concept relates to the foundations of the Nazi regime which is alluded to through mass genocide and totalitarianism in three of the four films in analysed in this study. This fascist government was based on inequality through the application of pseudoscience, which is often also reflected in the genre of science fiction film and literature, as is discussed in my following chapters.

Technology and the notion of the *übermensch* fuse to give rise to the concept of "mechanomorphism", which refers to "man himself [being] transformed into machine. The machine […] will become the measure of all things, the model for man to emulate" (Beauchamp 1986, 59). The greatest fear of technology is "not that man's mechanical creations will come to rule over him like some alien power but rather that he will so completely introject the ethos of technology that his highest aspiration will be to become the machine himself" (62).

The concept of the *übermensch* is unrealistic, much like the concept of eutopia as a perfected and paradisiacal society. The rebel hero in each text emerges through trauma, loss and suffering. He/she does not necessarily fit into the utopia and its ideals. These figure of rebellion stand out at the beginning of each selected film and they are representative of a way of life that

differs from the utopian society. They bring about change and a new social order, while simultaneously defying the authorities of the eutopias that they inhabit.

With reference to Brin's comment, it is worth noting that even Superman has the weakness of kryptonite. The rebel figures present in my selected texts are not depicted as "perfect beings", rather they are depicted as human and flawed. Their ability to question their society sets them apart from it, and as a result they exist on the margins of their societies. This differentiation from the other citizens establishes them as rebel heroes as they continue to question the powers that be. This eventually leads to their rebellion and the destruction of the purported eutopias present. Often others are incited to join the rebellion as the rebel hero brings about enlightenment to the community, making the transition to a new order of society acceptable by its inhabitants. The rebel heroes act to bring about drastic changes in their respective eutopian and dystopian settings, and they are already imbued with the necessary skills and qualities that allow them to enforce change in their societies. They see the flaws in their societies and respond to them through an awakened consciousness. The characteristics of the rebel hero work to reveal him or her as "truly human", reflecting immense humanity in the face of deranged totalitarianism and hegemony – in worlds where human beings are often treated like commodities. This is featured in many utopian and dystopian films that form part of this study.

Lilly Rothman describes what she refers to as "divergent characters" who are teenaged female heroes that have emerged out of recent dystopian Hollywood films such as *The Hunger Games* (2012, dir. Garry Ross). While teenaged girls save the world in dystopian and science fiction settings in films, teenaged girls in the real world rally behind their favourite female heroes, consuming the literature and films that feature female heroes. Rothman comments that a "new status quo" has emerged "in which girls refuse to watch the action without participating" (54). *The Hunger Games* franchise consists of four films, based on novels, which have a teenage female hero at their centre. Set in a dystopian world, the film features a main protagonist, Katniss Everdeen, who establishes a rebellion against the oppressiveness of the Capitol, a utopian place, where the rich and powerful live. This franchise is exemplary of the divergent characters that Rothman discusses. Divergent characters exist in my selected films; however, I have chosen to utilise the word "rebel" as it implies defiance and refusal to conform to the systems of the eutopia when it is used both as a noun and a verb, whereas "divergent" is utilised more as an adjective to describe the character. Feminist texts revolve around a "vibrant female

energy" (Abel 1983, 167). The heroine's journey is "a conscious cycle of development and growth" (Murdock 1990, 3).

Narratives of heroism inspire action. In reality, "many people seem to be aware that they are living in an increasingly threatened world (in which inequity and exploitation are on the rise) […] yet they remain paralyzed, unable or unwilling to act" (Fitting 2003, 157). The female hero, in her quest, "escapes from the capacity of her conditioning and searches for her true self" (Pearson and Pope 1981, 63). The female hero moves "beyond the familiar and secure life […] to discover new possibilities" in and through the self (85). Such stories of heroism "show female development as a paradigm" where both males and females can heal the fractures of society and help to "cure its ills" (Ferguson 1983, 232).

1.12 Trauma Studies and Blackness through the Lens of Hollywood

At the beginning of this chapter I referred to reading against the grain of the selected texts for this study. By applying such a technique to the texts I illuminate how the utopian and science fiction imaginary depicts people of colour, in particular those who have a history of being denigrated and subjugated. By reading against the grain of the selected text I also elucidate how memory and trauma are illustrated.

Traumatic events are more often than not related to a historical framework where certain groups of people were ostracised and often executed because of their socio-cultural situations. This trauma extends into the present. Earlier on in this chapter I made reference to technology and its importance within the genres of utopia and science fiction. I discussed the impact that technology has had on both the imaginings of e/utopia and dystopia. Technology and the fear of it has given rise to the notion that humans will lose their individualism and become machines to be "analysed, optimised and disciplined" (Mousoutzanis 2013, 327). The films that I have selected for this study represent social anxieties, not just in the present, but from the past as well. Often these anxieties emerge in our present times in various socio-cultural climates. Anxieties are also reflected through the depictions of memory and trauma. In an article entitled "Trauma, Memory and Information in American SF Film and Television, 1980-2010", Aris Mousoutzanis (2013) discusses the representation of trauma in selected science fiction films. He notes, "During the last thirty years, American sf has been increasingly preoccupied with the subject of memory, its nature, function and significance for individual identity" (327). Memory

has been in human discourse since the classical periods of ancient Greece and Rome (327). The 19060s and '70s saw the emergence of a scholarly interest in history and memory studies in the European centres of knowledge (Hutton 2000, 533). The 1980s saw increased attention being given to trauma and memory studies with the erection of the "Vietnam Veterans Memorial in 1982, followed by the Korean War Memorial, the US Holocaust Museum, the Oklahoma City National Memorial, the World War II Memorial, among others" (Mousoutzanis 2013, 329). It was also in the 1980s that the term 'post-traumatic stress disorder' "was included for the first time in the American Diagnostic Statistical Manual for Mental Disorders" (329).

The films that I have selected for this study possess clear representations of memory and trauma as they each engage with history and historical events. These historical events work in tandem with memory to produce trauma from instances such as the German holocaust and slavery in the Americas, among others. In addition to utilising Mousoutzanis for the discussion on memory and trauma I also make reference to Cathy Caruth (1991), who in an article entitled "Unclaimed Experience: Trauma and the Possibility of History", engages in a discussion of trauma and its relationship to literature, as well as its portrayal in literature. Her useful definition of trauma states that it is an "overwhelming experience of sudden, or catastrophic events, in which the response to the event occurs in the often delayed, and uncontrolled repetitive occurrence of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena" (181). Through the texts that I have selected for this study I map the traumatic events experienced by the characters in each text and discuss the intrusive phenomena that each experiences in relation to memory and history. Memory is central to the utopia imaginary, especially when it draws from dystopian elements in history. This process of recollection allows us to partake in the act of preserving the memory of those who suffered injustices. In doing so, we remember the world as it was, and hopefully make a conscious effort to ensure that we do not repeat the mistakes of the past.

Raffaella Baccolini also engages in a discussion of memory and trauma in the genres of utopia and science fiction. Baccolini discusses the ways that trauma and memory form part of the utopian and science fiction models. She notes that memory is "an important element of change" (2007, 185). She maps the usage of trauma in utopian texts and their subtexts through an analysis of memory and nostalgia. As she does with the critical dystopia, Baccolini concludes that trauma and memory are an integral part of the utopian imagination which allows for hope and progress. She also comments, "Forgetting is a necessary and vital part of memory and

Utopia" (167). To amplify her discourse on memory she employs Greek mythology. She notes that the river of Lethe

> is also the river of forgetfulness: we drink of the waters of Lethe so that once we are born, by forgetting our past life we make room for our new life and all the emotions, thoughts, and actions that will determine the quality of that life to come. The river Lethe is also connected with death and the Underworld, where shades of the dead had to let go of their earthly lives by drinking from its waters. (Baccolini 2007, 167)

Baccolini uses a mythological instance and a cultural perspective to discuss where memory emerges from in Anglo-Saxon discourses. This Greek cultural example stands in contrast to the dominant Christian religious discourse which is premised on the existence of heaven and hell after death. Greek culture and the mythology that emerged out of this culture was premised upon reincarnation. Baccolini (2007, 167) notes that "Forgetting, then, can bring relief from the painful memories of life".

In a book titled *Memory, War and Trauma* Nigel C. Hunt (2010) elaborates on the importance of trauma studies and its relationship with literature. He observes that

> We must include the social and narrated worlds in our psychological theories. In order to do this effectively, psychological research is not enough. If we are to understand the nature of war, and the impact that it has on people, then we must examine other approaches to understanding, through, for example, literature, history and the media. (3)

Hunt, through his discussion, notes that trauma is not about "scale" but rather about the "depth of human tragedy" (5). Despite the fact that the Holocaust "was the most terrible, evil series of events known to [human]kind" the Stalinist era of the USSR, the Maoist massacres in China or the ethnic cleansing in Bosnia are also significant instances of trauma and tragedy (4-5).

Through reading against the grain of my selected texts it is evident that a gendered discourse emerges. In addition to this a racial discourse is also initiated through certain texts that I have selected for this study, in particular, *Equilibrium.* Moylan and Baccolini in *Dark Horizons: Science Fiction and the Dystopian Imagination* (2003, 7), observe that "the critical dystopia opens up spaces of contestation and opposition for those 'ex-centric' subjects whose class, gender, race and sexuality, and other positions are not empowered by hegemonic rule". Science

fiction does not openly address the issues of race, but by representing individuals of colour, such films do enter into a racial discourse. Elisabeth Leonard (2003, 254) notes that "the majority of sf deals with racial tension by ignoring it", as is seen in Chapter Three of this study.

As an exception to this, Sean Brayton (2011), in an article entitled "The Racial Politics of Disaster and Dystopia in *I Am Legend*", grapples with the paradigm of race and its relationship to Hollywood cinema, in particular, the film *I Am Legend*, which stars Will Smith. "For many on the far Right", Brayton writes, "multiculturalism is nothing short of a dystopia, one in which white public spaces and political offices are 'taken over' by people of color" (66). Brayton notes that *I Am Legend* "offsets the overwhelming whiteness of SF cinema" (72). Many films have begun to address the issue of race, but mainstream analyses refuse to acknowledge such material coming out of Hollywood. Brayton, reading against the grain of texts that emerge out of mainstream cinema, cites a filmic example that portrays the figure of the African American in a positive light, through Hollywood cinema.

A racial rhetoric has been ever-present within the American socio-political imaginary, especially against the backdrops of slavery and the Civil Rights movement in America. Jannette L. Dates and Thomas A. Mascaro, in an article entitled "African Americans in Film and Television: Twentieth-Century Lessons for a New Millennium" (2005, 50), note that "Despite the gains in civil rights since World War II […] racism continues to hamstring America, limiting the nation's capacity to uplift all of its citizens". America is "the world's leading exporter of screen images" and "Cinematic illusions are created, nurtured and distributed worldwide" (Shaheen 2003, 174). These images impact on viewers from around the world. The negative portrayal of one race-group or social group of people often leads to ostracising and condemnation. Dates and Mascaro analyse race within the structures of film and filmmaking. They note that "The dominant trend in African American portraitures […] has been created and nurtured by succeeding generations of white imagemakers, beginning as far back as the colonial era" (2005, 51). The authors go on to argue that "Race is simultaneously personal, intracultural, intercultural, and inseparable, in terms of creation and consumption, from popular culture, which in the broad social context of America is not just entertainment" (50). It is commonly noticed that "multi-ethnic actors and characters often provide the 'trouble in the text' of contemporary films, as they have throughout Hollywood cinema history" (Beltrán 2005, 64).

In the 2015 and 2016 Academy Oscar Awards all nominations have been exclusively white, denying people of colour representation and recognition within this prestigious awards ceremony for American filmmaking. The 2016 Oscars did not feature any individuals of colour in all four acting categories, in spite of the fact that many African Americans such as Will Smith and Idris Elba have played significant roles in films such as *Concussion* (2015) and *Beasts of No Nation* (2015) respectively (Fisher, online, 2016). Ed Guerrero (1995), in an article entitled "The Black Man on our Screens and the Empty Space in Representations", refers to the image of King Kong atop the Empire State building "while clutching his scantily clad, blonde object of desire", which represents "a powerful, enduring metaphor for dominant society's barely repressed fears of black masculinity, sexuality, and miscegenation" (395). Guerrero notes, "Under-educated and unemployed black men are the raw material that society pays its police to contain or sweep conveniently from view" (369). The image of blackness in Hollywood cinema can still be applied to the anxieties associated with people of colour in societies where whiteness is the hegemonic ideal. Recent years have seen an increase of police brutality against black males in America. This issue has attracted wide media attention and also can also be seen reflected in Hollywood cinema through placing the American, black male in a position of inferiority. Swaine, Laughland, Lartey and McCarthy (2015) note that the "final total of people killed by US police officers in 2015 shows [that the] rate of death for young black men was five times higher than white men of the same age" in the United States of America. The authors assert that "one in every 65 deaths of a young African American man in the US is a killing by police". This statistic shows the seriousness of police brutality against African American males in the socio-political atmosphere of America.

Guerrero differentiates between two images of the black male on screen and in the media. The first image he refers to is the "grand celebrity spectacle of black male athletes, movie stars, and pop entertainers". Guerrero contrasts this with the "real-time devastation, slaughter, and body count of a steady stream of faceless black males on the 6 and 11 o'clock news" (396). Guerrero argues that the Hollywood film industry depicts a "narrow portrayal of black men" (398) as "noble Negroes" (399). The Blaxploitation films of the 1970s represented African-Americans in the roles of the "sexual rebel and outlaw" (399), which are still negative portrayals. He goes on to say that, "What is missing from Hollywood's flat, binary construction of black manhood is the intellectual, cultural, and political depth and humanity of black men, as well as their very significant contribution to the culture and progress of this [American] nation" (397). Guerrero argues for the "salvaging [of the] black male image from the dead zone of Hollywood's big

screen" (400), and thus allowing the black individual to appear in "science fiction and horror films" (398). Dates and Mascaro also engage in a racial discourse with relevance to African Americans in Hollywood cinema. The authors comment: "Stereotypes are especially suited to convey ideological messages because they are so laden with ritual and myth, particularly in the case of African Americans; but, invariably, these black representations are at odds with the realities of African Americans [and people of colour] as individuals, which is why films and television programs that counter these static, one-dimensional, monolithic images of black are notable for breaking with tradition and worthy of serious study" (52).

Elisabeth A. Leonard (2003, 253), in an article entitled "Race and Ethnicity in Science Fiction", notes that "Most English-language sf is written by whites". Leonard discusses how a text such as Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* is not referred to as science fiction because it is representative of Hindus and Muslims and it is written by an author of colour, despite the fact that the film envisages a eutopia and children with super powers (253). The challenge of applying a racial discourse to science fiction lies in the notion that "When sf writers, white or not, include racial issues in their fiction, they enter a territory bounded on one side by readers who feel that the work does not go far enough to address the social ills of the culture they write in and on the other hand by readers who think it goes too far" (254).

Adam Roberts (2000) discusses the use of race in science fiction film. He comments, "race has been one of the most important cultural and social debates in postwar American life" (118). He uses John McTiernan's *Predator* (1987) as a signifier of blackness, as the "savage alien hunter has dreadlocks" (119). The predator preys "violently and barbarically" on the 'Western' colonisers (120). Roberts goes on to note that within the film, the fear of the racial other is neutralised by the "Aryan *übermann*", Arnold Schwarzenegger (120). The *Predator* franchise (1987-2010) has endured, much like the *Alien* franchise (1979-1997). These two franchises fused to form the *Alien versus Predator* (AVP) franchise (2004 and 2007). The fourth chapter of this study explores the film *Prometheus* which can be described as a prequel to the *Alien* franchise, in which the first film was produced by Ridley Scott in 1979. Dates and Mascaro highlight the importance of cinema and film studies to social discourses. They note: "Popular culture – especially film and television – is potentially a powerful agent for change" (50).

1.13 Aims of the Thesis and Acknowledging Previous Research

Hui J.S Chen (2009) discusses vigilante justice in dystopian films created in the aftermath of 9/11. He reiterates the importance of the dystopian genre serving as a warning to humanity when he observes that films "have proven to be a force of healing and insight. The power of film can change lives and communicate the truth; it can reveal and redeem. [Films] can help viewers to see life more clearly. They can also help us emphatically understand both others and ourselves" (16). Writing in 2015, Blythe V. Chandler engages in an analysis of three dystopian and science fiction films made between 2001 and 2010, with the intention of highlighting their pessimistic futures. The text selected for this study are premised upon and promote hope for the future. Chapter Four of this study employs a feminist study of a science fiction film. Maryn C. Wilkinson (2013) in her thesis explores the representation of teenage girls in 1980s American film. In a 2002 Master's dissertation, Amanda D. Mckay engages in a gendered and racial dialogue with the hero in contemporary Hollywood cinema. She interrogates the popularised appearance of the hero as white, male and Christian. Although this study engages with race as represented in Hollywood utopian and science fiction film, my study's central focus elucidates the characterisation of the hero at the centre of each selected text.

1.14 Summary of Chapters

In the following four chapters I analyse the rebel hero at the centre of each film text. The first three films that are analysed in this thesis can be classified as films that depict a utopia. While Scott's *Prometheus* can also be classified as a utopia, through its utopian impulses, it depends on the elements of science fiction seen through the figures of the alien and the android. Each film opens with a seeming e/utopia, (in the case of *Prometheus*, the film opens with e/utopian intentions). As the films progress, the hero at the centre of each narrative becomes conscious of the fact that 'something is not quite right' about their respective societies. The analysis of each text reveals that they can also be classified as utopian films as they explicitly represent utopias at their core.

Chapter One is entitled "*Equilibrium*: Emotions, Elixir and Extremism". The film opens with a depiction of a seeming eutopia, and the dystopian element are revealed by the rebel hero. This film features a rebel hero, who through the exploration of human emotions, embarks on a psychological journey which results in an awakened consciousness. Initially depicted as an

anti-hero, the rebel hero emerges through his trauma and loss. The film makes numerous explicit references to the fascist Nazi regime which was established in Germany from 1933 to 1945. The film, through the science fiction lens used to portray Prozium, works to highlight the dependency on drugs, specifically anti-depressants. The film makes intertextual reference to T.S. Eliot and W.B. Yeats, which is elaborated on during the course of the chapter. The anxiety of war is also explored in the chapter. With reference to a film study, focusing on cinematography and the technical aspects of filmmaking, I explore metafiction and *neo-noir* as employed in the film.

The second chapter is entitled "'The island awaits you': Iconoclasm, Illusion and Identity in Michael Bay's *The Island*". The utopia depicted in the beginning of the film is presented as a eutopia. The dystopian impulses of the film emerge with the assistance of the rebel heroes. This film features two rebel heroes, who both emerge out of trauma. Following a conventional Hollywood paradigm, the first rebel hero is white and male. Reading 'against the grain', the second rebel hero is of colour. The first rebel hero has his journey shaped by escape, after which he returns to topple the powerful corporation. This chapter highlights the anxieties associated with technology, capitalism, and organ trafficking. In my analysis of the film I also contribute an original aspect by linking the theme of the film to a Christian religious paradigm centred in the Garden of Eden as e/utopia. As *Equilibrium* refers to history through the Nazi regime, *The Island* also makes reference to history through slavery and crimes against humanity. In exploring the technical aspects and camera technique present in the film, I focus on dream-mode and reverse-on-screen motion.

The penultimate chapter of this thesis, entitled "Paternal Presence, Murder and Memory in Philip Noyce's *The Giver*", has a hero who acts as an example of rebellion, *par excellence*. Like the other films in this study, *The Giver* also opens in a seeming eutopia, which later takes on the characteristics of the dystopia. The rebel hero takes on the painful responsibility of awakening his society to the "essence" of humankind: remembering. Through remembering, trauma becomes central to this analysis. The mentor to the hero also rebels, highlighting the important role of the mentorship. This chapter also makes reference to the dystopian, totalitarian impulses which the utopia harbours. The technical aspects of selective colorisation within monochromatic setting is explored during the course of this chapter.

The final chapter centres on Ridley Scott's *Prometheus*. This chapter is entitled "The Female Rebel Hero, Anxieties, Aliens and the Android in *Prometheus*" (2012). The film opens, projecting utopian impulses which have the capacity for progress for human civilisation. This science fiction film explores the social anxieties reflected by the figure of the alien and the android. This analysis draws from Scott's previous works, *Blade Runner* and *Alien*. Istvan Csicsery-Ronay Jr. (2007) provides me with the theoretical premise for human anxieties that emerge from science fiction films with an emphasis on the alien. Csicsery-Ronay employs film theory as well as a cultural studies approach in his article. He comments that the figure of the alien is the "cultural" other (6). Through the film's depiction of life and death, existentialism is explored with reference to the various charters. The chapter also engages in a technical analysis of microcinematography. This film differs from the other films in this study in its representation of a female rebel hero. This final chapter explores the differences between the male and female rebel hero through my employment of a feminist analysis.

Through reading against the grain within this science fiction text, a feminist analysis is employed. Helen Merrick (2003, 241) notes that science fiction "has in fact functioned as an enormously fertile environment for the exploration of sociocultural understandings of gender". Damarin (2004) explores the productive overlap between the concepts of feminism and science fiction. She says that "feminist science fiction brings the lives of women and all persons […] into the foreground [and] elaborates their problems and desires" (66-67). Such texts engage in "Discussions of reproduction, nurturing, and the nature/purpose of childhood" (60). Baccolini (2004, 519), in taking a feminist stance towards utopia and science fiction, notes, "An analysis of women's take on science fiction allows us to recognize a subversive and oppositional strategy against hegemonic dialogue". Veronica Hollinger (2003, 127) demarcates science fiction as being "inherently masculinist". Also discussing masculinity and science fiction, Helen Merrick (2003, 241) comments that science fiction is a "masculine field" with no "considerations of gender". This contention can be described as an over-statement as science fiction does take gender into consideration in the work of female science fiction writers such as Ursula K. Le Guin and Octavia Butler. Hollinger (2003, 125) also argues that women in science fiction texts have played "supporting roles" to men since the Enlightenment, as the social order of humans has been determined by white, middle-class males, and that science fiction has been "slow to recognize the historical contingency and cultural conventionality of many of our ideas about sexual identity and desire, about gendered behaviour and about the 'natural' roles of women and men" (126). In recent years, however, women have come to play

increasingly significant roles in science fiction films. Science fiction has been one of the few genres to depict female characters in the roles of super heroines with the likes of Catwoman appearing in the 1940s and Elektra in the 1980s. The female hero and female alien in *Prometheus* allow for the film to be analysed within a feminist framework.

1.15 Conclusion

This chapter has reanalysed the concept of utopia and its related terms. Shifting away from associating the utopia with perfection opens the utopian concept to further interpretation through utilising terms such as the critical utopia/dystopia. Associating the utopian project with the lens that science fiction provides allows the utopian model to emerge in twenty-first century film and make itself visible in world where the utopia has been deemed as dangerous. This discussion has opened the utopian model to further scrutiny in light of the social anxieties that plague our globalised world, with particular reference to American popular culture and lifestyles. Levitas (2007, 300) observes, "The advantage of utopian thinking is that it enables us to think about where we want to get to and how to get there from here". The texts that form part of this study are embodiments of the critical utopia/dystopia. The usefulness of studying the critical utopias lies in the notion that they "reclaimed the emancipatory utopian imagination while they simultaneously challenged the political and formal limits of the traditional utopia" (Baccolini 2006, 2). Science fiction has the "potential through estrangement and cognitive mapping, to move its reader to see the difference of an elsewhere and thus think critically about the reader's own world and possibly act on and change that world" (Baccolini 2004, 520). Claire P. Curtis, in "Rehabilitating Utopia: Feminist Science Fiction and Finding the Ideal" (2005, 148), highlights the importance of utopia and a utopian discourse. She observes: "Insofar as we are in any way engaged in any attempt to think creatively about how human beings with disparate aims and interests are able to live together fruitfully, or at least peacefully, then we must not give up the possibility of utopia".

2. Chapter One
Equilibrium: Emotions, Elixir and Extremism

The struggle to define real humanity evolves around emotions.

– Desser (1999, 94)

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a critical analysis of Kurt Wimmer's 2002 film, *Equilibrium*, which depicts a utopian city, Libria, after it has been ravaged by World War III. The utopia, initially represented as positive, changes into a dystopian setting characterised by mass murder and genocide. The ambience of the setting changes once again, through the actions of the rebel hero, John Preston (played by Christian Bale), who reveals a new socio-political order.

The first part of this textual analysis engages with the setting of the film and the resemblance that it shares with Berlin and World War II. During the course of this chapter, I discuss the film's evocation of the Nazi regime and its filmic associations with memory and the anxiety correlated to war and trauma. Significantly, traumatic events allow for the emergence of the rebel hero in the text. This process is aided by historical artefacts such as books and records which are signposts for memory and history.

This chapter also addresses the factors that influence the development of the main protagonist from the anti-hero to the rebel hero.[7] The main protagonist, Preston, displays many characteristics that can be associated with the figure of the anti-hero; however, compounding factors throughout the film result in his emergence as the rebel hero in the film. The rebel hero possesses different qualities from those of the anti-hero. This chapter embarks on a discussion which maps this change and discusses the figure of the rebel hero in utopian and science fiction film. The change from anti-hero to rebel hero occurs through the phenomenon of dreaming represented through Freudian psychoanalysis. During the course of analysis of the film, I address the technical aspects of *film noir*, *neo noir* and metafiction in film. A section of this chapter is also devoted to discussing Hollywood's use of the Black character, and racial

---

[7] The anti-hero is not the antithesis of a hero, but rather a "specialized kind of hero" (Vogler 2007 [1998], 34-35). The anti-hero does possess honor, and the audience is able to sympathise with him, especially since he is often withdrawn from society (35). Preston withdraws from the Tetragrammaton and his society, taking an alternate path, towards redemption.

anxieties in the detective genre. I further discuss the influence of propaganda in regimes that are characterised by dictatorship, and how the use of anti-depressants (Prozium) in the film relates to the use and abuse of drugs in reality. This chapter explores the characteristics of the rebel hero and his formation through social anxieties within the text. These anxieties play a pivotal role in the emergence of the rebel hero and his actions which shape the narrative.

2.2 Setting of the Film and Berlin (Nazi Germany)

The film is set in the year 2072 after a catastrophic war has taken place. World War III has prompted the creation of a utopia where feelings and emotions are prohibited and suppressed through a drug called Prozium. Images of history, trauma and memory are woven through the narrative. The first images of the film are those of a war-torn, broken city. This has the effect of evoking history, memory and the trauma associated with war.

In the first scene of the film, many images flash across the screen in a montage of world disasters and catastrophes from history. The first image we bear witness to is the World War II attack and bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The viewer is also shown the image of Stalin, the dictator and leader of the Soviet Union from the 1920s to the 1950s. The montage proceeds to show us a second dictator: Saddam Hussein, the president of Iraq until 2003. The film thus commences with haunting images that jar the viewer into recalling and remembering the horrors and destruction of World War II and the horrors committed against humanity by dictators. The montage serves as a means to enforce the utopian values that this society is premised on. Libria embodies the utopian ideal of world peace through the eradication of all feelings and emotions. The voice-over cites "our own volatile natures" (Wimmer 2002) as the cause of war and destruction because human beings are innately violent due to the lack of restraint of their emotions.

The dictators shown in the montage have played crucial political and social roles in world events; they have shaped and impacted our world through totalitarianism, war and destruction. These men represent the dictators of the past and present, with the effect of showing that Libria has embarked on a utopian project which emphasises the eradication of such dictators in the future. By including dictators such as these, the film interpellates the viewer into a discourse with the history and the atrocities that have faced humanity. Saddam Hussein's death was disseminated through social media with videos of his hanging on popular social video site,

YouTube, allowing many people around the world the opportunity to witness and share a part in his demise. The voice-over convinces the viewer that such men would not have had the power to control populations if they were in control of their emotions. Thus, absolute power corrupts absolutely.[8] The use of such dictators in the montage works to instil fear into the viewer and convince one that the suppression of human emotions such as hatred and revenge can result in a more peaceful world for all to live in.

The montage also shows images of a crumbling city, ravaged by war, destruction and fire. Two differing images of the city are depicted in the film: one is the Nethers (the outermost part of the city) which is characterised by decay, and the second is the inner city which is characterised by modern architecture. The height of the structures and buildings in the city is equated with the "active reach of human aspiration" (Sobchack 1999, 128). Libria, a one-state world, aspires to be the pinnacle of the success of humanity. The city centre is an important part of utopian and science fiction film as it holds the seat of power and is also indicative of civilisation and human progress and prosperity. The city that is present in *Equilibrium* is characterised by technology and development through the high-rise buildings. Cem Kiliçarslan (2007, 45) suggests that there is a relationship that exists between science fiction cinema and the architecture that constitutes the urban setting. He describes the urban landscape with its "bird's eye presentations" as a "recurring" image within the science fiction genre (45). Kiliçarslan specifically refers to *Equilibrium*'s city as possessing architecture that is reflective of "modernist urban projects" in which the city acts as a "symbol of the ruthless and emotionless system of government" (61), while Susan Ingram (2016, 4) notes the film's architectural reference to Berlin and the fascist period.

In addition to this, the city is the centre where all those who are compliant with the regime gather, whereas the Nethers harbours the criminal elements and the disobedient rebels. The destruction that characterises the Nethers is similar to the images of the cities of Berlin and Dresden, Germany, after World War II. Rubble piles are heaped at the sides of the street, and all that remains of the city are shells of buildings that once stood tall and mighty, defining the city and its centre. The collapse of this city symbolises the breakdown of civilisation and

---

[8] This phrase has been made famous by John Dalberg-Acton (1834-1902), a British politician, who first used the phrase in a letter to a bishop, detailing the notion of democracy being undermined by power struggles (Stott 2007, 128). *Equilibrium* portrays a society which denies its citizens the liberties of freedom through propaganda and oppression, under the guise of utopian ideals.

society that once thrived. The degradation and ruin of the outer city thus mirrors the destruction of social order and a halt to human progress. This physical collapse can be paralleled with the social and moral breakdown of the society which becomes evident through the narrative. The scenes of a ruined and devastated Nethers are featured throughout the narrative, and they serve to reinforce the underlying notion that something is not quite right with this utopia.

2.3 Preston and the Action Sequence of the Gun Katas

The audience is introduced to the main protagonist of the film through a scene where he is responsible for the mass killing of sense offenders (citizens who defy government laws through refusing to take Prozium). A close-up shot of Preston's face shows that he is expressionless and thus emotionless (under the influence of Prozium). Preston is accompanied by his partner, Errol Partridge, who the viewer suspects is not under the influence of Prozium, due to his expression and averted gaze. Through his facial expressions, Partridge is experiencing emotions and reacting to what is occurring in his environment. This is the first instance that sets Partridge apart from his partner and makes him worthy of a detailed discussion later on in the chapter.

Kiliçarslan links the setting of the film to the characterisation of the main protagonist. He says, "The colossal buildings disparage the individual identity and the protagonist feels he is reduced to his basic function i.e. law enforcement" (61). While it can be argued that the cityscape does advocate uniformity it also places an emphasis on patriotism and the importance of Prozium made evident through propaganda. As far as the main protagonist is concerned there is evidence to support my contention that Preston is not merely reduced to his basic function. He rather takes pride in his efforts and ability to locate and kill sense offenders. He is valued by the regime for his ability to still detect empathy even though he is under the influence of Prozium. Preston wields great power in the ranks of the Grammaton clerics and he is considered to be one of the most skilled and efficient clerics. This efficiency is highlighted through his ability to kill his partner, Partridge. Preston exceeds the limits of his ability to enforce the law as he is directly responsible for the investigation of rebels and the resistance. Preston locates the resistance and then transgresses the laws which he once abided by. This sets him up as the rebel hero who creates an alternate future for Libria.

Preston is responsible for the massacre of sense offenders in the first scene that contributes to his characterisation as not just any cleric, but one of the best. The Grammaton clerics, the "new arm of the law", work to "seek and eradicate the true source of man's inhumanity to man: his ability to feel" (Wimmer 2002). The Grammaton clerics are utilised by the authority of Libria to control and monitor human emotions and its triggers such as books, music and paintings. The first action sequence in the film is displayed through Preston's impressive use of the Gun Katas which he has mastered. DuPont, the vice-counsel, with the help of a computer simulation describes the Gun Katas and its origins. It is explained that,

> Through an analysis of thousands of recorded gun fights, the cleric has determined that the geometric distribution of antagonists in any gun battle is a statistically predictable element. The Gun Katas treats the gun as a total weapon; each fluid position representing a maximum kill zone, inflicting maximum damage on the maximum number of opponents while keeping the defender clear of the statistically traditional trajectories of the return fire. (Wimmer 2002)

Preston displays the impressive nature of this fighting technique through the cinematography of a scene in which he successfully and skilfully kills all the armed sense offenders in the dark. The darkness on screen is punctuated with light that emanates from bullets being fired out of Preston's gun. Light from the torches of the police squad irradiates the dead bodies that Preston has left in his wake. Preston leaves the room still wearing a face that is devoid of emotions, having completed his task of eliminating the "rebels". It becomes evident that the massacre produced by Preston has failed to move him in any emotional or psychological way. This scene works to establish Preston as the champion of the regime. His heroic display of the Gun Katas and his ability to conduct murders without any emotional restraint or action reveal him as the embodiment of the perfect soldier, one who is without equal.

The solution to the problem of human emotions is captured through a sequence of the Gun Katas, a form of martial arts that makes use of the gun to maximise damage and minimise injury on the person inflicting the damage. Wimmer created this fighting technique for the film (Ingram 2016, 5) by fusing Eastern and Western methods of combat. Karate and martial arts, a form that originated in Japan, have had a significant influence in the West through Kung-Fu legends such as Bruce Lee who is known as a famous exponent of karate and the catalyst for its popularity in the Western world through films such as *Enter the Dragon* (1973, dir. Robert Clouse and Bruce Lee). The gun plays a pivotal part in the history of the Western world and

the establishment of the Americas through conquest. On screen, the gun and its history are rooted in the Western world and play a significant role in showing how the West was won through the Western film era of the early twentieth century. These two combat devices are fused to create the Gun Katas, which is the prominent mode of action used in the film.

At the beginning of the film the viewer was bombarded with images of war and destruction. Human emotions were blamed for instances of war, mass genocide and destruction. After viewing these images of catastrophe we are told that human emotions will be dissolved, leading us to believe that a better world will emerge, one that is characterised by peace and harmony; however, the early scenes of the film paint a very different picture from the one that the film first enticed the viewer to imagine. Preston's ability so easily to murder innocent people at the beginning of the film establishes a dystopian setting and a morally corrupt government. Wimmer's representation of his utopia is one where the annihilation of human emotions leads to a world where demagoguery reigns.

2.4 The Cinematic Relationship between *The Matrix* (1999-2003) and *Equilibrium*

Equilibrium borrows both fashion and cinematic cues from *The Matrix* (1999). The trenchcoats and tunics which Preston dons are similar to those worn by Neo in the cult films that form the Matrix trilogy (1999-2003). The white male protagonist of these two films bear a resemblance to each other through their dress codes and slicked-back hairstyles.[9] This creates an impression of order and conformity in both filmic instances. The slicked-back hair contributes to the serious expression on both protagonists' faces in the respective films.

The trenchcoat as a fashion garment was made popular through World War I. It became a "highly desired piece of optional outwear in the British army" with epaulets which "were added during World War I to allow soldiers to display [their] rank" (Lehman 2016, Online). In *Equilibrium*, the trenchcoats and tunic delineate rank and male dominance in the regime, as only clerics are allowed to wear them. The trenchcoat became popularised in the public sphere through Hollywood's *film noir* where it became a staple for the private eye through actors such as Humphrey Bogart (Lehman 2016, Online), in films like *Casablanca* (1942, dir. Michael

---

[9] Ingram also refers to the slicked-back hair and black trenchcoat which bears resemblance to *The Matrix*. In her footnotes she observes that Wimmer had no intention of creating a similarity between his film and *The Matrix* but he does note that the costumes for *Matrix Reloaded* are similar to the costumes used in *Equilibrium*.

Curtiz). Ruth La Ferla (2003, Online), writing for *The New York Times*, notes that *The Matrix* had an influence on the fashion runways of fall 2003. The trenchcoats that are shown in both films are more sophisticated than those that are visible in *film noir*. She describes Neo's attire as "a sweeping black leather trench with an arsenal of firearms stitched into its lining" (2003). This attire is similar to what Preston and the other clerics don in *Equilibrium*. The Gun Katas, which make up the action sequences in the film, are shown through weapons that emerge out of the trenchcoats and tunics which Preston wears. *The Matrix* and *Equilibrium* display the trenchcoat with features that allow for weapons storage which also optimises the weapons' usage through allocating space for storage and change of bullet cartridges. Guns are hidden under sleeves and inside pockets specially designed for this purpose, allowing re-loading of ammunition to be done with ease and flair.

Equilibrium borrows one other filmic cue from *The Matrix* trilogy. One of the most memorable and iconic filmic moments that define *The Matrix* trilogy is when Neo dodges the Agents' bullets. This particular scene has had an impact on popular culture and it has added another dimension to the futuristic gun battles that occur in succeeding films set in the future. The gun battles that form part of *Equilibrium* are striking in their displays of action-sequences and movement. The Gun Katas allows Preston to dodge bullets throughout the film, much as Neo does in *The Matrix*. This display of heroism contributes to how masculinity is represented in these films. The male hero is given quasi-supernatural powers, and this affirms his position as the hero of the film. In both filmic instances, guns are glorified, and the ability to dodge bullets and render the weapon useless contributes to the image and establishment of the hero.

2.5 The *Mona Lisa* as a Representation of History, Memory and Trauma

The power vested in the clerics allows them not only to massacre sense offenders but also to destroy all emotional content such as paintings, books, memorabilia and music. Before Preston embarks on the killing spree of the rebels he uncovers a trove of Renaissance and Greco-Roman art, hidden by the sense offenders. Their rebellion against the utopian society entails harbouring and protecting famous pieces of artwork due to the collective memory attached to these items. These paintings form an integral part of human history through their ability to evoke emotions.

At the very top of the pile of artefacts, under the floorboards, lies the most influential and significant painting in human history. The *Mona Lisa* is verified as "authentic" with a

technological apparatus which scans the painting. The camera technique of zooming-in is used during the next scene. This technique reveals important information about the focal points in the scene. The camera zooms in on the face of the *Mona Lisa*, and this is juxtaposed to a zoom-in of Preston's face. This effect creates a face-off situation between this priceless painting and the main protagonist. The camera jostles between the faces of Leonardo da Vinci's subject and the main protagonist, Preston. A high tempo drum beat accompanies each camera frame as it zooms in on both subjects and adds tension to the scene. Preston breaks this face-off with the words "burn it" (Wimmer 2002). He thus exercises his authority and emerges victorious from the face-off between himself and the *Mona Lisa*. The cinematography of this particular scene is charged with tension as the viewer is horrified at the outcome and the conclusion of the scene as we are forced to watch this iconic piece of art burn. The flaming image of the *Mona Lisa* becomes etched into the mind of the viewer as feelings of despair and helplessness are evoked. As the painting burns, *Mona Lisa*'s famous smile distorts as a result of the heat of the flames.

This painting was created during the European Renaissance in the 16th Century. This period of human history is considered to be the peak of human achievement and progress, where individuals displayed creative genius, intellectual capabilities and human achievements (Vieira 2010, 4). As Preston takes an active role in the destruction of the painting, his actions simultaneously function to erase the collective Renaissance memory and all its associated achievements. Interestingly enough, the Enlightenment was also the period when Thomas More wrote his famous text, *Utopia*, which embodied the notion of political change and progress. Through the Renaissance and the texts that were produced, destinies were not perceived as pre-determined by a Christian God. The destiny of an individual was rather shaped through their own free will (4). This promoted a sense of individuality and the ability for humans to embark on extraordinary achievements that characterise this era. Preston actively partakes in eradicating the ideals of free will and autonomy which characterise the Renaissance period. In doing so, he also erases his ability to exercise his free will, making his complicity with the regime explicit.

Preston watches this extraordinary piece of artwork burn with the same stone-cold, expressionless face that he wore when he massacred the occupants of the house, who tried to protect this priceless treasure, among others. Preston's callousness shocks the viewer. The burning of the *Mona Lisa* and other emotional content evokes memories of the book-burning campaigns that took place in Germany in the 1930s under the Nazi regime. This regime is

representative of totalitarianism, censorship and oppression. The trope of book-burning and the themes of censorship appear again in the famous dystopian work of Ray Bradbury in *Fahrenheit 451* (1953). This celebrated text also employs the trope of destroying books as they promote thought and emotion. The burning of artworks recently emerged in the South African socio-political landscape through the Rhodes Must Fall campaign. In 2015, students from the University of Cape Town, South Africa, demanded that the statue of Cecil John Rhodes be removed as it is a symbol for white supremacy in post-apartheid South Africa. In 2106, students from the same university raided the university and burnt all paintings that depicted white people. The Rhodes Must Fall movement bears similarity to the Black Lives Matter movement in the United Kingdom and the United States (Pollak 2016, Online). The destruction of texts that depict an old order or way of life occurs in times of socio-political change, as shown through film and real life occurrences.

The utopia represented in Wimmer's text shows the defiling of artworks from the period of the European Renaissance in an attempt to create a new world order without the memory of a previous one. This society is devoid of emotions and it thrives through ensuring that the creative markers of humanity are removed and destroyed, thus changing the historical landscapes of human creative potential. The act of removing such artefacts from the history of humanity functions to emphasise the role of forgetting and memory loss through tragic and traumatic events. The destruction of such items raises the concept of forgetting and contributes to highlighting the trauma associated with war and totalitarianism.

Mihalache Delia Doina (2014) engages in a discussion of memory represented in dystopian narratives. She says in relation to totalitarian regimes, much like the one that is represented in *Equilibrium*, that "The mind of individuals is gradually replaced by the 'official' memory, which is in fact nothing else but a gross distortion of a reality, a total reinvention of it, with the purpose to serve the totalitarian doctrinaire and centralizing interests" (8). *Equilibrium* does not depict a gradual replacement of memory, but rather an overt replacement. This is depicted through the montage which groups together dictators and crimes against humanity in a single text. The montage works on a logical level, through propaganda, to justify the notion that feelings and emotions are the root of suffering. Doina is correct in asserting that the replacement or rather the eradication of memory in the case of *Equilibrium* is essential to the regime's future vision.

2.6 The Perpetuation of Propaganda

Equilibrium as a film text delineates how the machinery of propaganda is operated through and by the media. The walls of the Librian city are lined with huge television screens which all broadcast the same message at intervals. In a totalitarian state, media and propaganda are used to regulate, control and indoctrinate the population. The voice of propaganda says,

> "Libria, I congratulate you. At last peace reigns in the heart of man, at last war is but a word whose meaning fades from our understanding, at last we are whole. Librians, there is a disease in the hearts of man, its symptom is hate, its symptom is anger, its symptom is war. The disease is human emotion. But Libria, I congratulate you for there is a cure for this disease. At the cost of the dizzying highs of human emotion we have suppressed its abysmal lows and you as a society can embrace this cure; it is Prozium. Now we are at peace with ourselves and humankind is one, war is gone, hate, a memory, we are our own conscience and it is this conscience that guides us to rate EC10 emotional content, all those things that might tempt us to feel again, and destroy them. Librians, you have won against all odds, and your natures, you have survived." (Wimmer 2002)

When the speech first begins we see the flag of Libria flying in the wind. This image and the speech function to enforce a sense of patriotism in the population of Libria. The flag is also a reminder of the patriotism that Preston has so aptly displayed thus far in the narrative. The speech compares emotions to a disease which needs to be swiftly eradicated. The speech works to place this responsibility in the hands of the citizens, but the audience is aware of the fact that the citizens of Libria have no free will or autonomy.

As his speech commences, a screen from the city is superimposed onto our screen and we witness Adolf Hitler and the destruction of World War II. Such images serve to reinforce the importance and necessity of Prozium so as to ensure that men such as Hitler do not come into power in the future. The images and the speech work to venerate Prozium and enforce its usage. These images are constructed to suit the speech that is being given, and this only serves to enforce the propaganda of the regime. Images accompanying the speech reinforce the severity of what DuPont says. The images of Hitler and his infamous Nazi salute and the bombings of World War II act to brainwash the citizens who, when the "miracle cure" is named, cease their daily activities and promptly inject themselves with a dose of Prozium. Prozium ensures that Libria is a "perfectly ordered clockwork city" (Kiliçarslan 2007, 54).

It is significant that this society is told about the miracle drug, which they proceed to use and then they are told of the banning of emotional content. The propaganda used by the regime works to encourage the use of Prozium which then works to control the population and make them susceptible to manipulation. Through Preston's act of rebellion he puts a stop to the propaganda campaign as he is directly responsible for destroying the centre of communications which broadcasts the propaganda, at the end of the film.

2.7 The Cinematic use of Metafiction in *Equilibrium*

Metafiction and *mise en abyme* as cinematic techniques are evident within the film through screens from the film being superimposed onto our screens so that we are watching a screen on a screen. Patricia Waugh (1984) discusses metafiction and its narrative use. She describes it as a "term given to fictional writing [in the case of this study, film] which self-consciously and systematically draws attention to its status as an artefact in order to pose questions about the relationship between fiction and reality" (2). The technique, as used in the film, blurs the boundaries between the fiction of the film and the reality of the viewer.

In the case of *Equilibrium* metafiction emerges through the use of a television screen, a powerful media tool which is used to both entertain the citizens of Libria and enforce propaganda. Waugh goes on to observe: "metafiction […] simultaneously [creates] a fiction […] to make a statement about the creation of that fiction" (6). The first scene of *Equilibrium* uses this technique when the viewer, still grappling with the shock of the death of so many people at the hands of one man, is shown a scrambled television screen which is superimposed onto the viewer screen. This technique blurs the lines between the viewer's reality and the world of the film. The television works to also enforce propaganda which the viewer becomes critical of as the film progresses.

Metafiction allows the viewer to enter into the darkness and death of the previous scene and in turn, the world of the film. This technique appears again in the film when DuPont's speech takes place, with the aim of enforcing propaganda and the importance of Prozium onto Libria's citizens. Through the use of metafiction, the television is scrutinised for its ability to brain-wash the citizens of Libria, which draws the audience's attention to the reality of the utopia. Waugh, through an engagement with the concept of metafiction, highlights that it "does not abandon 'the real world' for the narcissistic pleasures of the imagination. What it does is to re-

examine the conventions of realism in order to discover – through its own self-reflection – a fictional form that is culturally relevant and comprehensible to contemporary readers" (18) (or viewers).

Waugh notes the use of frames as a device in metanarratives. The "concept of 'frame' includes the Chinese-box structures which contest the reality of each individual 'box'" (30). This technique is known as *mise en abyme*. The term was coined by André Gide to describe a mirroring effect which produces the Chinese-box effect referred to by Waugh. Gregory Minissale (2009) describes *mise en abyme* as a "picture-in-a-picture" (46), which literally translates to "put into the abyss" (48). He notes that this technique is characterised by "a process of representation within representation" where "the internal representation is often a duplication of the external representation in which it is contained" (49). Minissale observes that *mise en abyme* can be applied to any medium (49). The psychological effect of this technique can be characterised by "introspective consciousness" (50). The audience, seeing a screen from the film on their screens, engages in the act of introspection with relation to instances of war, oppression and genocide. The large screens highlight the indoctrination of the citizens while affecting the consciousness of the viewer.

Waugh (1984) discusses metafiction and parody. She observes that parody has potential for both "destructive" and "creative possibilities" (64-65), as the use of parody forces the viewer to "revise his or her rigid preconceptions based on […] social conventions" (67). Metafiction in the film allows the media and the propaganda that it portrays to be exaggerated, and this invites the viewer to be critical of the medium of film and television.

2.8 Partridge and Intertextuality (W.B. Yeats and T.S. Eliot)

Equilibrium as a film text makes intertextual reference to W.B. Yeats's poem, "Aedh Wishes for the Cloths of Heaven" (1899), through the characterisation of Preston's partner, Partridge. The second instance of intertextuality occurs through Partridge's evocation of T.S. Eliot's drama, *Murder in the Cathedral* (1968) [1935], which captures the events that surround Thomas Becket's death. Mikhail Iampolski (1998) discusses the traditions that particular texts embody and how they are applied to film. He notes that intertextuality is "an exit that leads to other texts" (17), and that intertextuality "superimposes text on text, meaning upon meaning"

(28). He observes the merit in the use of intertextuality in film by stating that it enriches the meaning of the film (31).

When Partridge watches the *Mona Lisa* burn he is not emotionless like his partner. There is obvious pain as he watches the iconic face alter as it burns. Partridge, unlike his partner, is feeling. He places the ability to feel emotions above the rules of the regime and thus defies the authority. He takes into his possession the emotionally laden book, *The Poetry of William Butler Yeats*, which he takes from one of Preston's victims. He pockets the book and Preston becomes suspicious when he sees the book in Partridge's possession. Preston ventures into the Nethers to find Partridge in the ruins of a cathedral, surrounded by ruin and rubble, reading the book of Yeats's poetry. Preston aims his gun at Partridge in an attempt to arrest him, but Partridge adamantly continues to read the poetry, undeterred. Partridge quotes lines from "Aedh Wishes for the Cloths of Heaven" (1899). This poem carries significant figurative weight in the film.

The cloths of Heaven in Yeats's poem evoke a Christian religious dimension. The status of God in *Equilibrium*'s utopia is given to both Father, the ruler of Libria, and Prozium. Emotions cannot be generated through science and technology, and within the film, these two forces are responsible for suppressing emotions through Prozium. It is God who imbues humans with the ability to feel and express their feelings and emotions. Emotions are what set human beings apart from robots and automata, as robots are devoid of feelings. Through the lines of the poem, Partridge equates the precious cloths of Heaven to the experience associated with feelings and emotions. Partridge quotes lines from the second half of the poem; however, a close analysis of the entire poem reveals what Partridge represents to the narrative of the film. Partridge quotes from the poem for Preston:

> "But I, being poor, have only my dreams;
> I have spread my dreams under your feet;
> Tread softly because you tread on my dreams." (Wimmer 2003)

By quoting the above lines of poetry Partridge makes a plea for gentle treatment, not from the regime but from his partner. Partridge attempts to search and bring to the surface any emotions that Preston may be feeling. Partridge makes an offering to Preston. This offering shows that Partridge willingly forfeits his right to fight back through violent means. While he draws his gun, he only does so to aggravate Preston and leave him in an emotionally compromised

65

position. Partridge's actions spur Preston into feeling emotions. Partridge's evocation of these lines openly reveals his vulnerabilities to Preston, which burdens Preston to make a decision about how he chooses the situation to play out. Dreams in the poem are personal and fragile; in the same manner the emotions and the ability to feel are also notions that are associated with human fragility. Within the film, emotions and feelings are precious commodities which people often pay with their lives for experiencing. Partridge equates dreams and dreaming with emotion as these two notions are intrinsically connected to each other though the human psyche and consciousness. Partridge's offering and plea to Preston are his last acts of expressing philanthropic love and compassion, as Preston chooses to murder his partner, treading maliciously and violently upon his dreams.

Within the context of the film *Equilibrium*, the poem by Yeats can be interpreted as one which displays the importance of feelings and emotions in this utopia. The "embroidered cloths" could also refer to emotions and feelings which this society is devoid of. Emotions can be "defined as states that comprise feelings, psychological changes, expressive behaviour and inclinations to act" (Frijda, Manstead and Bem 2000, 1). Emotions are an important component of being human, as human beings articulate feelings through words and gestures. Humans are skilled enough to imbue emotions into pieces of art, music, poetry and literature, which in turn are responsible for arousing emotions and feelings into the consumers of such materials. It has been noted that "Beliefs fuelled by emotions stimulate people to action, or allow them to approve of actions of others in political contexts" (1).

Partridge's morals and values stand in contrast to those displayed by Preston as Partridge highlights the injustices of the regime that Preston defends. At this point in the narrative Preston represents the enforcer and the upholder of the laws of Libria, while Partridge is the transgressor of these laws. Emotions drive Partridge to defy the authority of the regime, while Prozium works to enable Preston to suppress his and commit murder. Emotions, as reflected by Partridge, possess the power to "awaken, intrude into, and shape beliefs, by creating them, amplifying them, and by making them resistant to change" (5). Immediately after his quotation, Partridge asks Preston, "I assume you dream?" (2003). Partridge evokes the notion of dreaming, which becomes significant later on in the narrative through intrusive dreaming and remembering.

Preston ignores Partridge's evocation of poetry, dreaming and emotions. As Preston thinks of the physical punishment that will be inflicted upon Partridge he says, "I'll do what I can to see they go easy on you" (Wimmer 2003). Partridge declares the truth about the regime and its demagoguery when he replies, "We both know they never go easy" (2003). The regime uses its own clerics to murder its citizens and other clerics who become sense offenders. Preston apologises to Partridge, to which he replies, "No you're not, you don't even know the meaning, it's just a vestigial word for a feeling you've never felt. Don't you see Preston, it's gone, everything that makes us what we are, traded away" (2003). Partridge brings to light, once again, the reality of this utopia. Lucia Opreanu (2013) comments on Partridge's use of words such as "vestigial". She observes, "The survival of such words in the language of Libria can be regarded as a harbinger of hope" (23). By using the word "vestigial" Partridge displays the nostalgia for a world that once existed where feelings and emotions were not outlawed and punishable by death. The society that emerges through the use of Prozium suppresses even remorse or regret. The use of this word also highlights the current situation that defines this utopia, which is characterised by a lack of emotions and an absence of feelings among the population.

Words exist without feeling in this utopia; they carry no meaning or significance, much like Preston's apology to Partridge. Preston is not truly remorseful for his actions towards Partridge, and he tries to counter Partridge's argument about losing what makes Libria great by commenting on the positive notion that there is no war and murder. Partridge replies with precise words when he asks, "What is it you think we do?" (2003). Preston does not see the double standard that this utopia embodies. Murder does not take place in Libria as a result of aggravated circumstances, but rather as a means of control and annihilation of rebels who pose a threat to the power and authority of the regime. The regime is waging an active war against the rebels despite the notions of war and violence being banned in Libria.

Preston says to Partridge, "You've been with me, you've see how we can be, the jealousy, rage". To this Partridge replies, "A heavy cost, I'd pay gladly" (2003). Partridge values his ability to feel far more than he values his life. Partridge observes that feeling no emotions at all is a far worse fate than the prospect of grappling with negative emotions and feelings. He lays down his life and becomes a martyr through his actions. Partridge's words become significant later on in the text when they are repeated by Preston. Partridge moves his hand towards his gun and Preston aims his gun at Partridge. The cinematography of the scene also

ensures that the gun is aimed directly at the viewer through a close-up shot of the gun so that we stare down the barrel of Preston's weapon. The viewer momentarily takes the place of Partridge as if the viewer poses a threat to the regime for experiencing emotions. Partridge draws his book of poetry up to his face and covers his face until all that can be seen are his eyes. Preston fires his gun and murders his partner at point-blank range. The shot penetrates the book first and then Partridge, as he falls back on the cathedral bench. This scene is shot from an aerial view as the dead Partridge, lying on the elongated bench, and the poised Preston give the shot a horizontal appearance. The shot also works to align both murdered and murderer in the same field of sight, reminding the audience of the fact that they occupy the same rank in a regime which advocates the slaughter of its own law enforcement. The poetry book falls to Partridge's feet, in tatters. Not only has Preston murdered Partridge but he has destroyed the poem from which Partridge had so generously made him an offer. Preston's new partner and Partridge's replacement, Brandt, stands at the cathedral door and announces himself. The prompt replacement of Partridge serves to highlight the callous nature that the Tetragrammaton system embodies.

The second instance of intertextuality occurs through the murder of Partridge in a cathedral. The significance of utilising a cathedral as a setting for murder is symbolic and it highlights the tragedy of the scene. The cathedral is supposed to be a place of God and of sanctity; however, in this utopia there is no purpose for God as feelings and emotions are prohibited. Preston murders his partner in the house of God, and this serves to highlight the damaging effects that this utopia has on its citizens.

The act of a murder in a cathedral evokes the death of Thomas Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury, which is depicted in T.S. Eliot's verse drama, *Murder in the Cathedral* (1968) [1935]. This drama captures the archbishop's conflict with King Henry II of England in 1170. The drama is divided into two parts, with the first part detailing Becket's return from exile. Becket significantly notes, "The same things happen again and again. Men learn little from others' experience" (Eliot 1968, 25). These words are significant to *Equilibrium* as the same sentiment is echoed at the beginning of the film. The montage of destruction shows the repetitive misuses of power in human history and its consequences. A utopia thus emerges with the goal of eradicating feelings, but this also proves to be a dystopian notion.

Becket, in Eliot's drama, engages with four tempters in Part One of the play. The fourth tempter speaks of martyrdom, saying to Becket, "When king is dead, there's another king", but "Saint and Martyr rule from the tomb" (40). Partridge, by forcing Preston to kill him, also becomes a martyr. He reaches for his gun, forcing Preston to kill him. This scene is emotionally charged, and Partridge's death becomes significant as he dies with the ability to "feel". His reciting of poetry, evocation of dreaming and the drawing of his weapon allow him to die with freedom and free will; notions which Preston is unable to perceive at this point in the text.

Partridge recites Yeats's poem about the cloths of Heaven, in a similar manner to Becket's experience of a "tremor of bliss, a wink of heaven" (76), before his death. Both Becket and Partridge evoke the Christian concept of Heaven, knowing that their deaths as martyrs will allow them to enter heaven in much the same way that Christ experienced a spiritual rebirth before he ascended to Heaven (Virsis 1971, 407). Both their deaths grant them access to the realm of Heaven and unity with the divine. Rasma Virsis (405) refers to the play as a "Christian tragedy" and notes that it "does not attempt to minimize suffering" as it is a play that depicts "struggle". The subject of the play is thus the "significance of martyrdom" (407). In a similar manner Partridge's martyrdom is also reflected through the film as, despite his death, his actions and words are still relevant at the end of the text. The martyrs of each text are murdered because of their will to stand up to figures of authority, and through their respective abilities to deviate from the norm and bring about change. Becket, in Eliot's play, is killed in his cathedral by knights who carry out the king's orders, in much the same way that Partridge is killed by Preston who is Father's "instrument against the resistance" (Wimmer 2002). In both instances orders are being carried out by a political power against a threat which defies the orders of the elite.

The murder in the cathedral adds a religious dimension to the film despite the film being devoid of a religion that reveres a higher spiritual entity. The film uses this lack of religion to enforce the totalitarianism and demagoguery that the state embodies. The regime thus establishes itself above religion and God. Like Becket, Partridge adds a spiritual dimension to the film through his defiance and murder in a holy place. The power of the regime is highlighted through the notion that sanctity is not preserved even in the house of God. Partridge, through the heroism that he displays, emerges not only as a martyr but as the first rebel hero of the text. Heroism and martyrdom emerge through Partridge's characterisation as he exits the plot, only for his death to become significant later on in the text.

2.9 Partnerships and Race in *Equilibrium*

Hollywood has always shown a preference for white, male protagonists, and little screen consideration is given to the experience of persons of colour (Gates 2004, 20). The African American detective partner has become a popular sight in contemporary films such as *Men in Black* (1997, 2002 and 2012), *The A-Team* (2010) and *Django Unchained* (2012). Philippa Gates argues that "Black masculinity is regarded as a threat to mainstream culture because of its potential to be hypersexual" (21). In Wimmer's text Brandt is the Black counterpart to Preston, and although Brandt does not pose a sexual threat to Preston he does pose a professional threat. Brandt admits to Preston that he wishes to be an even better cleric than Preston. Brandt intends to supersede him professionally in rank and skill. It is for this reason that Brandt keeps such a close eye on Preston's every action. Brandt openly accuses Preston of sense offense which he tests by forcing Preston to kill while he is no longer under the influence of Prozium. *Equilibrium* represents blackness as a point of "identification for white audiences through representing black people but not addressing the issues of race or ethnicity" (22).

Partridge and Preston, two white males, are paired together for the purposes of their work for the regime. Partridge asks Preston, "How long, Preston, till it's all gone? Before we burn every last bit of it?" Preston replies, "Resources are tight, we'll get it all eventually" (Wimmer 2002). Preston's answer is premised upon destruction and annihilation. Since the utopia is premised on the complete eradication of feelings, Preston's answer is justifiable, but disturbing to the viewer, nevertheless. This interchange highlights Preston's lack of emotion and his desire to "let it all burn" (Wimmer 2002).

The relationship between the two differs from the conventional "buddy films" that are part of the Hollywood canon. Hollywood has a long history of detective and police films where the partnership between two main protagonists forms a major part of the plot. The "good cop, bad cop" routine has emerged out of this trope through popular films and franchises such as *Bad Boys* (1995 and 2003), *Rush Hour* (1998, 2001 and 2006) and *Men in Black* (1997, 2002 and 2012). The "buddy films" gave way to what Gates refers to as "The biracial buddy movie" (22). The success of such films depends on the unique relationships that is established between two partners of law enforcement. Out of this relationship, banter, humour, comedy and tension emerge, contributing a sub-plot to the main plot of "solving the case". The "partnership" that exists between Partridge and Preston comes under scrutiny when Preston murders Partridge.

This act goes against all "natural laws" that govern a partnership in filmic roles which should be based on trust and loyalty to one another. Partridge's characterisation and role in the film allow Preston's vile nature (under the influence of Prozium) to reveal itself.

The partner relationship between Preston and Brandt is based on inequality as Brandt states his desire to be better than Preston very early on in their partnership. Gates observes, "The black man is often denied the displays of action associated with heroic masculinity" (24). This is true in the case of *Equilibrium*, as Brandt attempts unsuccessfully on numerous occasions to display acts of heroism, siding with DuPont and the regime. His last attempt at heroism sees him face Preston in a final battle which he loses. Preston slices his face off with a sword, literally and metaphorically effacing the Black character, affirming his own place as the rebel hero of the film.

2.10 The Elixir Prozium

The representation of the title of the film contributes to its meaning. When the film begins, the title appears across the screen. The font of the title is not distinctive; rather it is plain and represented through capital letters, all in perfect alignment with each other. The title mirrors the meaning of the film, as equilibrium refers to a state of balance and harmony. Prozium is venerated as the miracle drug which suppresses all emotions and maintains this equilibrium. This drug, through injection, ensures the "equilibrium" of society as Libria and its citizens strive to achieve a state of perfect social and emotional balance. The inhabitants of Libria have their beliefs shaped through propaganda and Prozium, which makes them susceptible to manipulation.

The title of the film is the name of the building where Prozium is manufactured and obtained. The building towers over the rest of the city, and it is shot from a low angle, which serves to emphasise the might and power of the regime. The letters that form the word "equilibrium" appear in bold on the front of the building, similar to how they appeared in the title of the film. Frank E. Beaver (1994, 221) notes that low camera angles serve to make the subject "appear more dominant, [and] more imposing". The use of a low angle shot allows the subject to "tower over the viewer" creating a sense of its "superiority" (221). These words are also shot from a low camera angle so that their sovereignty, power and force are emphasised, not only to the

viewer, but also to Preston and the rest of the city. In a discussion of the architecture that characterises the city in science fiction film, Kiliçarslan (2007, 53) observes, "This single skyscraper is associated with the authority and the ruling class".

Prozium emerges through the lens of science fiction where medicinal technologies are used to control entire populations. It allows society to be more susceptible to compliance, thus resulting in obedience and therefore a lack of resistance to authority. Prozium is hailed as the cure for all the ills of humanity, and it is utilised to control the population's emotions and reactions. When Preston and Partridge return from the Nethers a timer goes off to remind the men that their doses of Prozium need to be administered. The cinematography that shows Preston injecting Prozium into his neck is shot in an extreme close-up, and this leads to discomfort for the audience. The viewer watches a sharp needle being placed against Preston's skin and the needle pierces the skin as the trigger is depressed. The liquid inside the syringe decreases, in this close-up shot, as the drug enters into Preston's body. The word "evening" is printed on the tube. This shows the strict and invasive measures that this regime has taken to ensure the compliance of its citizens.

The use of a medication to suppress emotions and feelings in the film interrogates the use of drugs, specifically anti-depressants in our society. Anti-depressants are used for medicinal purposes and are often abused through recreational purposes. Frances G. Pestello and Jennifer Davis-Berman (2008) discuss the social effects of pharmaceuticals and anti-depressants on users. They note, "The use of psychiatric medications has expanded dramatically in recent years" (349). With reference to the use of anti-depressants, the authors observe, "Two opposing themes have emerged in thinking about psychiatric medications emphasizing either their liberating or oppressive nature" (350). In spite of the importance given to Prozium, the negative effect of this drug are made evident through a society in which murder is advocated.

Propaganda, together with Prozium, function to control the masses. The veneration of this drug occurs on a national level within the public sphere, aimed at addressing the largest audience to create the desired effect. Pestello and Davis-Berman discuss the negative relationship between the media and the use of anti-depressants. They observe, "Advertising gives patients the message that psychiatric drugs are expeditious answer to life's problems" (350). The promotion of Prozium through the media is delivered through the many screens that exist in Libria. DuPont's voice idolises Prozium as he says,

> Prozium, the great Apenthane, opiate of our masses, glue of our great society, salve and salvation. It has delivered us from pathos, from sorrow, and the deepest chasms of melancholy and hate. With it we anaesthetise grief, annihilate jealousy, obliterate rage, those sister impulses towards joy, love and elation, are anaesthetised in stride. Accept as fair sacrifices for we embrace Prozium, in its unifying fullness and all that it has done to make us great. (Wimmer 2002)

The above propaganda cites Prozium as equivalent to opium, one of the oldest and most popular forms of analgesic. Karl Marx, in his "Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right" (1970) [1844], argues that religion "is the opium of the people" (1). Although religion does not exist in Libria, Prozium is worshipped as a religion, and the process of taking the drug is seen as a religious daily ritual as it happens at a specific time each day and it is taken by the masses. Both Marx and Wimmer use the notion of an analgesic and emotion-suppressant to show how people are indoctrinated by certain ideologies so that power can be maintained. Marx also notes that the state and the society produce religion (1). Within the film, both the state and society are responsible for the provision and success of Prozium.

Equilibrium, a product of Hollywood, serves to critique both society's conceptualisation of religion and its use of and dependency on anti-depressants. The word "Prozium" melds together the syllables from the word "Prozac" and "opium". Religion is critiqued through Libria's compliance (through propaganda) as the film points to historical instances of how ideological beliefs shaped the lives of people living in Nazi Germany, for example. This is depicted through the many images of Hitler that punctuate the text. Religion and those who are in charge of it wield immense power; as Marx notes, "man makes religion, religion does not make man" (1). The rules and laws that govern Libria are created by DuPont, a dictator, when it is revealed that Father was just a means for the machine of propaganda to operate. Psychologists Pestello and Davis-Berman conducted interviews with 32 respondents. Their findings revealed that most participants said that they felt "emotions were something that they should be able to handle themselves without the influence of medications" (350). In spite of this a plethora of pharmaceutical products and drugs are consumed in our own world.

2.11 Character Formation and the Anti-hero

This section explores the multi-faceted characterisation of Preston, who has his identity and role shaped though his own personal history and trauma. Preston first appears to embody some

of the characteristics of the anti-hero. The figure of the anti-hero predominantly emerges out of the Western European and American setting (Jonason, Webster, Schmitt, Li and Crysel 2012, 197), through the medium of film and the media (192). Of the many anti-heroes that occupy our screens (through film and television series), Dexter, from the television series of the same name, is the most discussed (Shafer and Raney 2012, Liddy-Judge 2013, Tokgöz 2016). Viewers, over time, have come to appreciate and derive delight from the figure of the anti-hero, despite their character flaw (Shafer and Raney 2012, 1028)[10], or *hamartia*. The anti-hero is characterised by his ability to experience "moral complexity" (1028). Preston's ability to slaughter the innocent for the regime is a clear indication that he is not a virtuous hero. His ability to so easily murder his partner also contributes to this character formation.

The anti-hero is defined as an alternate form of hero "whose character is conspicuously contrary to an archetypal hero" (Jonason, Webster, Schmitt, Li and Crysel 2012, 192). The anti-hero provides a "window into the dark side of human nature" (192), through characteristics such as narcissism and psychopathy (192). The latter of these two attributes allows the emergence of anti-social behaviour, low remorse, low fear, low empathy, aggression and criminality (194). Preston embodies the characteristics associated with psychopathy, and the audience loses a significant amount of sympathy for him, especially when he murders innocent people. The anti-hero possesses the "psychological disposition that allows him to kill others" (193). Preston also possesses the social disposition to kill whomever he pleases due to high rank in the Tetragrammaton. This ability to kill so easily is used against the regime when he emerges as the rebel hero. In spite of his ability to still kill after he has experienced an awakened consciousness, Preston operates as a "force of good" in the narrative (Shafer and Raney 2012, 1030). Preston's initial characterisation, through his anti-hero status, is that of the soldier. The figure of the soldier evokes a discussion of post-traumatic stress which emerges out of war. Images of war are prevalent at the beginning of the narrative and through propaganda.

When Preston is called to meet DuPont, the vice-counsel, the interchange between Preston and DuPont reveals more about the characterisation of Preston and the niche that he occupies in the regime. Dupont refers to Preston as the prodigal student because he has the ability to detect the

---

[10] Chloe Liddy-Judge (2013, 1) attributes the shift from a preference of heroes to anti-heroes to a change in the American psyche as a direct result of the 9/11 terrorist attacks in New York City. She notes that this event "created uncertainty and ambiguity about justice, criminality and governance" (1). She also describes "An increase in alienation and a decreasing sense of community" (1) as contributing factors to the growing popularity of the anti-hero.

transgression of offenders. Preston notes that he is able to sense when an offender is feeling emotions. Preston, in this exchange, describes the human emotion of empathy, while he skilfully avoids associating it with feelings. Preston seems to have a gift of sensing when people succumb to their emotions, and this makes him both valuable and dangerous to the regime. Preston is valuable as he is efficient in his job, but dangerous as he has the ability to identify emotions and feelings, and this makes him susceptible to them. From this interchange we also glean that Preston's wife was murdered for sense offence. Preston speaks of the incineration of his wife with no emotions. Preston cannot account for why he was unable to detect that his wife was a sense offender, and this works to establish Preston as committed to the regime, yet, simultaneously, it shows that he has the capacity to be deviant from the regime. Through Preston's first explicit encounter with the authority it is revealed that he embodies some characteristics of the anti-hero.

Preston undergoes a dramatic role change when he emerges as the rebel hero of the film, which is brought about through his experience of remembering and personal trauma. Although people still die by his hands, their deaths are necessary in the creation of a new world order for Libria. These killings are justified as DuPont and Brandt's deaths are necessary for the creation of a new world order. The figure of the hero is described as an individual who "acts to redeem society" (Campbell and Moyers 2011, 3). Against all odds, Preston rebels against the regime he so faithfully and ardently served. Preston places his life and future in peril for the betterment of his society. He is a rebel hero who shows no fear in the face of the powerful regime. His rebellion brings about a new socio-political order which paves an alternate future for the citizens of Libria, one in which propaganda and demagoguery have been expelled. The rebel hero is predominantly characterised by his ability to rebel. Preston's rebellion against the regime gives rise to a different characterisation in which the audience can be in full support of Preston's actions. Preston emerges from the trauma that he experiences as a changed man. The rebel hero uses the same skills which he learnt from the oppressive power to topple it. This makes his rebellion all the more defiant in nature. This is elaborated on in a subsequent discussion.

2.12 War and the Anxiety of Trauma

Trauma is woven through the narrative, and it emerges through many instances during the course of the text. The evocation of the Nazi regime through memory and historical artefacts

evokes a discussion of trauma, which is associated with mass murder, demagoguery and death. This discussion precedes an engagement with the key representation of trauma as reflected through the rebel hero. One of the most significant displays of this trauma in the narrative is displayed by and through the main protagonist. Preston displays trauma through his anxieties associated with emotions and his role in the regime.

Trauma is viewed from a negative perspective due to its direct association to a negative experience or event. Furthermore, it is probable that trauma and its psychological effects lead to depression, which can lead to self-harm and suicide. However, trauma within the film works as a catalyst for the emergence of the rebel hero who is responsible for bringing about positive change. Cathy Caruth (1991), an expert in the study of trauma and its representation, provides a useful definition of trauma which may be applied to the rebel hero of *Equilibrium*. I have already quoted Caruth's definition of trauma in the Introduction of this study; however, it is worth quoting again for the purposes of an analysis of trauma conveyed through the rebel hero. As Caruth points out, trauma is "an overwhelming experience of sudden, or catastrophic events, in which the response to the event occurs in the often delayed, and uncontrolled repetitive occurrence of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena" (181).

Preston experiences these intrusive phenomena after he murders Partridge, and he hears his dead partner's voice quoting Yeats's poem. Preston then dreams of his wife, and as the dream turns into a nightmare we are shown how she was arrested for sense offence by the state. The trauma that the dream embodies is captured through the dream sequence where Preston's wife frees herself from the clutches of the clerics and kisses her husband. Her love and expression of emotion are made evident through this act, and her last words as she is dragged away by the clerics are "Remember me" (Wimmer 2001). Prozium allows Preston to suppress the emotions and trauma associated with the death of his wife, while it simultaneously allows him to partake in the act of forgetting.

Preston first accidentally misses his Prozium doses and then does so intentionally. When he ceases his dosages, his dreams and nightmares become the "intrusive phenomena" (Caruth 1991, 181) which propel him into remembering. Caruth refers to "post-traumatic stress disorder" as a symptom of trauma (182). She appropriates the term "return of the repressed" from Sigmund Freud (1934, 93), who describes it as symptom of repression. Repression is "The state in which the ideas existed before being made conscious" (Freud 1923, 12), and "all

that is repressed is unconscious" (17). Freud proposes that the purpose of repression is to avoid pain (1934, 92), and that "the essence of repression lies simply in the function of rejecting and keeping something out of consciousness" (86). Preston suppressed the traumatic death of his wife (with the aid of Prozium). The nightmares that Preston experiences intrude on his conscious mind, creating a conflict of emotions.

Preston moves amidst the citizens in a scene where he crushes the vials of missed Prozium under his feet. This action symbolises his journey to crushing a regime he served so fervently. His actions show that he has experienced an awakened consciousness as he looks into the faces of the people that he is surrounded by, thereby acknowledging their individuality in a society that is premised upon conformity and the creation of automata. By looking at the citizens of Libria, Preston is reminded of the former shell of a person that he was. Preston gradually experiences a change in consciousness brought about by the female protagonist, and this actively brings about his rebellion against the regime.

Caruth (1991) employs the example of a soldier in her discussion of the definition of trauma. She notes, "The experience of a soldier faced with sudden and massive death around him […] suffers this sight in a numbed state, only to relive it later on in repeated nightmares". This is a "central and recurring image of trauma in our century" (181). The example of the soldier evokes traumatic instances of war in reality and in the text under discussion. Preston can be described as a soldier of Libria, among the other clerics, especially when they train in the Gun Katas and move in unison. The rebel hero's display of trauma is highlighted through the notion that Libria emerges out of Wold War III. Preston, through his compliance with and rebellion against the regime, also emerges as a soldier figure for both parties. Caruth cites war as the cause of trauma, and this is also significant for *Equilibrium* as the utopia that is represented in the film emerges out of World War III. War and trauma are inextricably linked, and the relationship that exists between the two emerges through instances of war in the twentieth century. War and trauma are the burdens that history and humanity carry through the processes of remembering and forgetting. This process is depicted through films such as *Equilibrium* which address trauma on multiple levels. In a thought-provoking discussion of war and trauma in the real world, Nigel C. Hunt (2010, 1) estimates that

> around 240 million people (give or take 50 million) [have] died as a result of […] large
> wars in the twentieth century – not counting the victims of smaller wars. Adding the

injured, that makes possibly 1 billion casualties. And that does not include all those psychologically damaged people, many of them civilians, who have had to live with their memories for the rest of their lives – memories of torture, massacres, death of family members, starvation, exile and rape.

Hunt maintains that trauma which involves "Witnessing and taking part in battle, being involved in killing, being captured and perhaps subjected to torture, taking part in being a victim of or witnessing atrocities against other soldiers or against civilians [and] destroying artefacts […] can lead to a breakdown in one's belief systems and have an impact on one's identity" (10). Hunt's description of trauma emphasises the negative impact on the subject. While Preston also experiences difficulty in processing his trauma, it allows him to emerge as the rebel hero of the film. Preston is able to process his trauma through Mary O'Brien, a sense offender, who is also responsible for acting as a catalyst for his change in consciousness.

2.13 The Female Protagonist as a Catalyst for the Emergence of the Rebel Hero

Equilibrium makes use of a female figure to bring about a drastic change in the main protagonist. After stopping the Prozium doses Mary becomes directly responsible for Preston's change in consciousness. She catapults him into effective action against the regime through asking difficult questions, in the same manner that Partridge did. Brandt and Preston invade Mary's home where Preston brutally handles her and ask her to look in the mirror. The camera zooms in on a close-up shot of Preston's face as he repeats his command. The zoom-in highlights the notion that Preston is speaking the command to himself and questioning what he has become. This is the first instance of change that we see in Preston.

Mary is a free-spirited woman who does not conform to the rules that her society has placed upon her. While Preston and Brandt invade Mary's home she rebels by attempting to take a gun from the clerics, which she points at Preston. Preston immediately has a flashback of the image of the gun that killed Partridge. When Preston turns to Partridge's belongings to investigate the underground resistance and locate them he discovers that Partridge and Mary were romantically involved. Partridge made an attempt to get through to Preston by appealing to his emotions. Mary only continues this task, and her intervention succeeds as Preston achieves an awakened consciousness.

Mary is a nonconformist, as is first made evident through her attire. Her hair is curly and unruly, which stands in opposition to the neat hairstyles of the clerics and the other citizens. A look of defiance dominates her expression, and she constantly stands up to Preston, a figure of authority. Preston interrogates Mary for information about the resistance. She, in turn, succeeds in interrogating Preston about the regime and his role in it as she asks the difficult questions about their utopia. She also passionately grabs his hand and asks why he is alive; he struggles to answer the question and then settles on premising his answer on living for the regime and the greater good of society and Libria. Mary answers her own question when she says, "It's circular, you exist, you continue your existence, what's the point?" (Wimmer 2002). She arouses Preston's curiosity with this statement and he asks her what the point of her existence is. She replies, "To feel. Because you've never done it you cannot know it, but it's as vital as breath, and without it, without love, without anger, without sorrow, breath is just a clock ticking" (2002). Mary is passionate about life, and her vibrancy captures the attention of Preston. Mary asks Preston the difficult questions and she gives the obvious answers, and in so doing she forces Preston to think critically about his role in the regime.

2.14 The Stripping Away of the Illusion through Dreaming

After Preston's encounter with Mary he has a nightmare which propels him into taking a stand against the regime. The scene which shows the nightmare and its aftermath is a scene that is characterised by the stripping away of illusions and replacing them with reality. The scene depicts how the metaphorical veil is lifted so that Preston can see the regime for what it really is. Freud (1934, 90) notes, with reference to repression, that often what is being repressed emerges through "dream-formation". The emotions that Prozium used to suppress rise to the surface and are indicated through Preston's frequent nightmares where he is forced to relive the trauma associated with the murder of his partner and his wife. Caruth (1991, 187) suggests: "The historical power of the trauma is not just that the experience is repeated after its forgetting, but that it is only in and through its inherent forgetting that it is first experienced at all".

In the same manner that Preston heard Partridge's voice after he murdered him, Preston hears Mary's voice in his nightmare of a body being incinerated. Mary's words reiterate her comment about love where she compares life to a ticking clock. The cinematography that characterises Preston's nightmare is one that is commonly seen in horror films. Clips are shown in quick succession, and this quick cutting technique allows the clips to move faster than the established

tempo of the film. The fast-moving clips succeed in disorientating and disturbing the audience through altering the initial pace of the film and creating a sense of urgency and discomfort. This cinematic effect projects the experience of the nightmare onto the viewer, leading to discomfort and terror.

Preston experiences a significant shift in consciousness after his nightmare which is symbolically reflected through his actions. He awakes from his sleep and looks out of the window, which is covered in a film of white plastic, and notices that it is raining. The bleakness that has characterised the film thus far is lifted as light shines on Preston and illuminates the scene. The *film noir* feel that has characterised the film thus far changes. Preston is drawn to the light, and his curiosity leads him to the window, where he uses his fingernails to scratch away the window-film. As his fingers desperately peel away the film over the window he becomes awestruck by the scene before him. He steps back as a breathtaking natural scene emerges, showing the sun rising as it simultaneously rains. This creates vivid hues of violet and indigo as the sun illuminates Preston. The beauty of the city is also shown through this image, which stands in contrast to the bleakness and darkness that has characterised previous images of the city and the post-war setting.

Preston is captivated and moved by the scene before him. This is the first instance in which he displays such deep emotions. The stripping away of the covering of the window is a metaphorical and emotional stripping away of the seal that Preston has been applying to his emotions. Preston stops his Prozium doses and lifts the veil over his consciousness just as he tore away the window covering. Preston, overcome with emotion, rushes to take a dose, and seeing his reflection in the mirror once again reminds him of his humanity and the importance of experiencing emotions, so he fails to take the Prozium.

2.15 The Rebel Hero, Remembering, Beethoven's Music and the Puppy

History plays a crucial role in human personal identification through the representation of artefacts that connect humanity and shared experiences through the process of remembering. The utopia represented in the text makes a progressive attempt to eradicate human history and thus transform humans to the state of automata. Through the ability of remembering, a rebel hero emerges who is directly responsible for the creation of a new world order, where the ability to feel and "be human" has been given back to humanity.

Through Mary's intervention Preston is forced to hide the fact that he is a sense offender. In the preceding raid with Brandt Preston accidentally murders one of the rebels, who looks into Preston's eyes as he dies. Preston is shocked and horrified by his actions and the physical blood on his hands, and his reaction to the situation stands in stark contrast to the mass murderer that we first met at the beginning of the film.

Preston uncovers a room belonging to a sense offender, full of trinkets and memorabilia from a world that existed before the war. He plays Beethoven's Ninth Symphony on the gramophone. This piece of music evokes an "unearthly power", and Julius Harrison observes that Beethoven's music is "beyond us" (1927, 305). Mark Whale (2015, 28) specifically discusses the effect of the Ninth Symphony when he notes, "Beethoven's music speaks to, and cultivates, some common idea of what it means to be human". This remark is significant as Preston becomes more human through his experience of music. Whale further observes, "Musical encounter demands that we step outside of our default comfort zone" (29-30). This is precisely the act that Preston engages in. His encounter with music and memorabilia forces him to face his humanity and embrace it. This piece of music reduces Preston to tears due to its high-strung dramatic and emotional tempo, as human beings associate music with memories, ideas and feelings (30). Whale associates this particular symphony with the "notions of political struggle" due to the fact that it "offers an unfolding drama" of "conflict and resolution" (32). Preston resides at the very heart of an unfolding political struggle, one in which he will become its main antagonist. It is significant that Whale associates this symphony with conflict and resolution, as Preston experiences internal and external conflict and resolution. While he struggles with his emotional and internal conflict he is forced to resolve this conflict to engage with the larger socio-political conflict which Libria projects. Whale professes that the symphony evokes associations of "freedom, civilization, empowerment and joy" (30). The symphony is responsible for evoking similar feelings within Preston, which is significant as he embarks on the act of rebellion. As Preston resides in a room full of memorabilia he is also reminded of a world that once existed, where emotional content was not banned by the state.

The gramophone becomes representative of a world that existed in the past, of feelings and emotions and of history and memory. The gramophone, through the use of the zoom-in zoom-out camera technique, also represents Preston's conscious mind. The camera zooms into the darkness of Preston's pupil and emerges and zooms out of the blackness of the gramophone

horn (which also resembles an eye) as the symphony plays. The eye is considered to be the window to the soul, and zooming into Preston's eye shows that he has experienced an awakened consciousness due to the intrinsic relationship that the eye shares with the brain. The music still plays as the camera lens zooms once again, out of a raging inferno as the room burns, and Preston watches.

This scene can be considered one of the most emotionally charged scenes in the film as it displays effective cinematography and camera techniques in its representation of the theme of destruction (of emotions). The scene also effectively coveys the importance and significance of emotions and their impact on human beings with the effect of depicting the intrinsic relationships between music and emotions. The scene is also an apt representation of a room full of memorabilia, and such rooms are scattered throughout the narrative. This room plays a key role in reducing Preston to tears, thus bringing his "human side" to the surface. In *Equilibrium*, technology does not pose a threat to Libria, rather older media such as books, records and paintings are considered to be the main threat (Rutten, Soetaert, Vandermeersche 2011, 7).

Rooms such as these contain memories and history, and they work to emphasise the trauma of situations of war and post-war and their effects on people. Salvaging what is left often allows survival and preservation of memory and history. Much in the same way that Partridge snatched a book of Yeats's poetry, Preston also snatches a *Mother Goose* book. This book relates to the notion of imagination, and a child-like innocence which Preston now possesses. Opreanu (2013) notes the function of books in the science fiction film. She observes, "the most notable common coordinate of […] various acts of rebellion against a regime whose principles [can no longer be accepted] entails an obsessive fascination with books" (17). Both Partridge and Preston become drawn to literature through their rebellion against the state. Their determination to retaliate against the regime is first expressed through their attraction towards literature.

Preston's awakened consciousness is also reflected through his interaction with animal life. This is foregrounded in a scene where the clerics massacre a pack of dogs that belonged to the "sense offenders". For each gunshot that is fired, a whimpering is heard from the dog, and a close-up camera shot of Preston's face punctuates the scene. The cinematography creates the effect of showing the emotional blow that Preston takes with each dog that is killed. This scene bears stark resemblance to an occurrence from J.M. Coetzee's novel, *Disgrace* (1999), where

the dogs are shot in their pen by intruders on a South African farm, after the demise of the apartheid regime. Coetzee is well-known for his animal rights activism, especially through works such as "The Lives of Animals" (1997). In this particular piece of work he discusses the persecution of Jews under the Nazi regime, and their treatment is compared to that of animals. He discusses the culture that animal cruelty breeds and its relationship to society. He observes that our power over helpless animals has resulted in a culture that perpetuates similes such as "They went like sheep to the slaughter" (118). Dianne George (2009), in an article entitled "Fear of Dogs/ Dogs' Fear in Coetzee's *Disgrace*" notes that the "connections between dogs and humans are intricately bound to a political place of privilege or of oppression" (70). The rebels in *Equilibrium* keep the dogs, and defy the authority of the regime in which the soldiers must kill the dogs in order to affirm their authority.

Wendy Woodward (2007, 296) maintains that the "slaughter of animals relies not only on absolute control of the defenceless animal, but on professionals remaining dispassionate and emotionally uninvolved". The soldiers of Libria are under the influence of Prozium, which allows them to kill the dogs mercilessly. Animals and in particular pets are linked to feelings and emotions through the companionship that they provide for their owners, therefore the power of the regime exerts its might to exterminate all such animals. Woodward also notes, "In taking responsibility for the deaths of the animals all the protagonists heal" (305), in the Southern African texts that she discusses. While no one takes responsibility for the death of the dogs in the film, Preston saves a puppy from being shot and killed as he is unable to watch the slaughter continue. He saves a puppy from the lot under the guise that it needs to be tested for disease after it runs to him out of fear. Scott Slovic (2014, 3) defines animality as the focus "on how humans and non-humans live, including human and non-human identities and biologies [and how they are] represented textually." *Equilibrium* highlights that the relationship that exists between human and animals, specifically man's best friend, is one that heavily relies on mutual feelings of love and trust.

2.16 Questioning the Authority

Preston, as a result of his newly awakened consciousness, questions DuPont about the murder of sense offenders without a trial. DuPont says to Preston, "It is not the message that is important, it is our obedience to it" (Wimmer 2002). The camera shows an extreme close-up view of Preston's fist which he clenches in anger. Preston becomes angered by the

demagoguery of the regime and its dictators. It slowly becomes evident that he wants no part in this dictatorship. Preston questions the figures of authority after confronting his trauma, processing his emotions and displaying them without inhibition. Preston's encounter with his trauma allows him to embark on a journey of emotional self-discovery where he grapples with his new-found capacity to feel and negotiate an emotional terrain, while simultaneously attempting to hide these emotions from Brandt and the regime. Preston's heroism is displayed when he tries to help a group of sense offenders escape. Upon failing, Brandt offers him the opportunity to massacre them in a line-up, which Preston refuses. Preston openly defies the authority and the regime. Although Brandt proceeds with the massacre, Preston plays no part in it. This act proves that Preston has a sense of right and wrong within the limits which still allow him to kill for the sake of securing Libria's future. Preston also apologises to the lifeless body of Partridge. He does so with genuine remorse, and we glean a different personality from the main protagonist who was previously so bent on killing and destroying for the regime. Preston now kills to defy and topple the regime. Through Preston's ability to apologise to Partridge he gains some redemption for the vile act.

Preston manages to locate the underground resistance and he meets Jurgen, who was a friend to Partridge. The resistance is located under the city, and the uprising of the resistance is also a physical rise from underground to the city, above.[11] Jurgen is the leader of the resistance, and like Mary he expresses the importance of emotions to Preston, also noting that "without restraint [and] control, emotion is chaos" (Wimmer 2002), and that the ability to feel whenever one wants to is freedom for Libria. Preston enquires what he can do to help and Jurgen replies, "You can kill Father" (Wimmer 2002). This act will establish Preston as a true rebel, one whom the resistance can deem to be its leader. Preston notes that the odds are stacked against him, to which Jurgen replies, "You've been training your whole life to fight these kinds of odds" (Wimmer 2002). Preston realises that the training that has allowed him to become one of the greatest clerics Libria has ever known will also allow him to become Libria's saviour and prevent a more dystopian society from emerging. The characteristics that contribute to the formation of the rebel hero arise out of this scene. Preston is still required to kill but he does so

---

[11] In Kiliçarslan's exploration of the city in science fiction film, he discusses how the strata of the city indicate class and social status. He observes how the proletariat lives on the ground while the upper classes live in high-rise buildings (53). Libria is a classless society; however, the Tetragrammaton clerics occupy significantly more power than the general populace. The rebels are considered as the outcasts who have to occupy the margins of society, and they therefore must inhabit the underbelly of the city.

to pave a new way for Libria and its citizens. Preston no longer kills for the regime; instead he kills to cause a shift in power to create a utopian society premised upon freedom.

Preston's conversations with DuPont which occur as Preston gradually gains cognisance of what is really occurring around him show that the regime increasingly takes a violent stance against its citizens, to the point where no trial is required to convict and persecute sense offenders. This confers an unreasonable amount of power upon the regime to murder as they please. Preston's ability to take on the task of killing Father sets him up as the rebel hero, as he is willing to do what no other individual will do. He will accomplish a task that no one has been able to do before. Preston, the "prodigal son" (Wimmer 2002), returns to kill Father.

2.17 Phallogocentrism and the Father-Son Dynamic

The final piece of encouragement that Preston is given in his quest for the freedom of Libria, emerges from his children, Robbie and Lisa. Robbie's adherence to the regime and its codes depict the sinister and ominous undertones of the Grammaton regime which makes children subject to its laws. In Libria, even children are required to be compliant with the laws and codes, as this ensures their compliance as adults.

Robbie undergoes training in the monastery, and this will allow him to one day become a cleric like his father. Robbie is representative of the next generation of Grammaton clerics which will ensure the continuation of the regime for generations to come, sealing the fate of humanity to inhabit a world devoid of emotions. When Preston accidentally drops one of his Prozium vials, he is ordered by Robbie to have it replaced. This specific scene depicts how children police their parents and vice versa to ensure compliance with the state laws. When he is first introduced, Robbie is seen buying into the propaganda on a television screen. His rigid body language and his expressionless face depict him as an automaton who is destined to be a greater cleric than even his father.

Libria is ruled by a figure referred to as "Father". There is no counterpart to this male entity, and the justice system represented within the film is pervaded by male dominance and masculinity, which are depicted through the violence that the Gun Katas embodies. Preston is referred to as the "prodigal son" in the text who must kill the figure named Father. This can be seen as an act of patricide which Preston must succeed in to ensure that his status as rebel hero

is concreted. Freud (1919) discusses patricide and comments on how the figure of the father is a substitute for the king (86). He notes the "impulses of hostility towards the father and the existence of the wish phantasy to kill and devour him" (265). To kill the father is an act which tempts others to follow the example (55). Preston takes on the task of killing Father, and the rebels support his plan of action by also engaging in the disruption of life in Libria. Freud points out the compulsion for "The religion of the son to succeed the religion of the father" (256).

Preston's ability to murder the figurative Father emerges through the physical father-son relationship. When the regime becomes suspicious of Preston, clerics are sent to his house to search for missed Prozium doses. Preston rushes home to find that the space behind the mirror (where he hid the missed doses) is empty. Robbie emerges with the vials in his hand and reveals that both the children have also not been taking the prescribed Prozium (since their mother's death). Robbie's pretence has matched the skills of his father and he is aware of the fact that his father now has to kill Libria's Father. Robbie encourages his father to do so with an affirmative nod. In this particular scene, father and son collude in the murder of the omnipresent Father of Libria. This scene reflects the restoration, preservation and affirmation of the relationship between a father and his children, particularly his son. Robbie admits that it is his job to know what his father is thinking. Robbie has thus functioned as his father's keeper. While the father-son relationship between Preston and Robbie has been affirmed, Preston, as the prodigal son of the regime, sets out to kill the patriarchal figure of Libria. *Equilibrium* imagines a dystopia where only a select few (such as Father and DuPont) hold power over the majority of citizens. Father functions both as the authority and a metaphorical father to the citizens of Libria. His presence simultaneously excludes the need for a God or a figure of a higher power. Since emotions do not exist in *Equilibrium*, the purpose of a parent-child relationship becomes irrelevant in the macro-political structures of this society. Father functions as the single and authoritative parent-figure to the whole of Libria.

Frank Krutnik (1991) maintains, "Men and women are not situated equally within the cultural order" (76). This is made evident through psychoanalysis as expressed in the Freudian notion of the Oedipus complex and Jacques Derrida's concept of phallogocentrism. The Oedipus complex allows the male child to identify with the "authority of the father" (78), much in the same way that Preston identifies with the Father of Libria to whom he displays his loyalty at

the beginning of the film. Robbie also identifies with Preston through his act of concealing his father's missed Prozium doses and acting as if he is taking Prozium.

Placing the Father at the social core of Libria points to a phallocentric society which gives preference to the male. This is explicitly seen through the Tetragrammaton, as no women are present within this system. Jacques Lacan proposes the notion that the phallus projects a "lack" onto the female subject as it is a "signifier" of "authority and privilege" (Silverman 1983, 188). Libria is a city that is premised upon phallogocentrism which refers to the "domination of the male discourse by the male ego" (Champagne 1995, 84). Wimmer's text, through representing Libria as a phallogocentric society, depicts the need of a rhetoric which rests on the notion of "decentralizing" the emphasis placed on "Western thinking" and its "male-dominated" stance (84).

Phallogocentrism emerges out of a cultural and gendered discourse which gives preference to the male in societal structures. René Descartes is credited with the "systematic account of the mind/body relationship" (Spitz 2005, 434; Wozniak 2002, 2). Laura Spitz (2005, 436) utilises Descartes's theory of Cartesian dualism and applies it to gender, revealing that "Men became associated with the rational mind, women with the irrational body. Over time, that oppositional association came to simply be: men are rational; women are irrational; men are reasonable; women are emotional". This discourse is relevant to *Equilibrium* as it reflects both a gendered and emotional discourse. Mary and Preston's wife are the two prominent female characters in the film, and they are both put to death by incineration, without a trial, for their ability to feel. Both these women are associated with being unable to control their emotions, thereby submitting to them and becoming sense offenders. The film perpetuates the discourse that associates women with emotion and irrationality. They are put to death so that their agency and power to enforce change onto people and society are eliminated. The life and death of both women are entangled with Preston's destiny. Mary plays a significant role in the emergence of the characterisation of the rebel hero, and through this her power as an emotional woman is shown; however, she is still punished and put to death as a result of her role in the destabilisation of patriarchy inspired by emotions and the ability to feel.

2.18 Evocation of the Nazi Regime and Trauma

Equilibrium makes numerous references to trauma through the evocation of the Nazi regime (1933-1945). In her discussion of trauma theory Caruth (991) cites the experience of Jews who were persecuted under this regime. *Equilibrium* evokes numerous references to the Nazi fascist regime through its plot and through the use of symbolism. Nazism is representative of one of the world's most significant experiments of totalitarianism and trauma. The film employs Nazi references to evoke the extent of Libria's control over its citizens, much as the Nazi regime did. The film clearly addresses the issues of trauma associated with dictatorships and totalitarian regimes. The film explicitly shows images of Hitler and the propaganda which he generated. The film makes reference to the Nazi regime through the flag of Libria which consists of four T's which are joined together to create a cross-like figure. It bears stark resemblance to Adolf Hitler's famous *Hakenkreuz*[12] flag, which was indicative of the Nazi race, its teachings and ideology. Like the *Hakenkreuz*, the flag of Libria is red, white and black. The symbols on both the flags are very similar to each other as they both converge in their respective centres.

The incineration of sense offenders in Libria bears stark resemblance to the Nazi gas chambers which were used to kill millions of Jews under Hitler's fascist regime. Destruction of bodies by fire is also a motif that furnishes reminders of the Nazi regime and its disposal of bodies. Susan Ingram (2014) engages in a discussion of films which are about Hitler and Nazi Germany where she discusses *Equilibrium* and notes its resemblance to Berlin and the trauma associated with war. She notes that the inclusion of Nazi Germany and images of Berlin (or images that resemble Berlin) evoke a visual imaginary that is associated with the horrors associated with World War II (10).

---

[12] The symbol of the Nazi swastika has ancient Indian roots and it was "modernized" to serve political needs in the German flag (Mundorf and Chen 2006, 34). Within this context the symbol stood in contrast to the cross which is a distinct feature of Christianity (34). The symbol of the swastika dates back to the Neolithic Age (8000 – 6000 BC) and the Bronze Age (3000 BC), and it has been found in many regions of the world, "etched in stone and metals, on buildings, pottery, jewelry, and household tools in Africa, Americas, China, Egypt, Europe, Greece, Indian, Japan, and Turkey" (34). The directional rotation of the symbol has differed in its various representations (34). Its German usage predates the Nazi period as it was used for religious purposes on "secular coats of arms" (35). Hitler's usage of the symbol arose from his interest in Nordic mythology in which Thor's Hammer takes on the shape of the swastika. As a symbol, it is still used by neo-Nazi groups in the twenty-first century (35).

Mary's incineration evokes the trauma associated with Preston's wife's death. When Preston watches a recording of his wife's incineration, for the first time, he is affected by it. He no longer represses the emotions associated with the event, and he uses the anger and sadness to fuel his rebellion. His inability to save either Mary or his wife drives him to rebel against a regime he once fought for.

2.19 *Equilibrium*, *film noir*, *neo noir* and the Rebel Hero

Film noir and its successor, *neo noir*, are evident in *Equilibrium*. James Naremore (1996, 12) in an article titled "American *Film Noir*: The History of an Idea", notes that this film technique emerged in America, "out of a synthesis of hard-boiled fiction and German Expressionism". Hard-boiled fiction emerged in the USA during the 1930s to the 1950s. The Great Depression brought famine and bleakness to these three decades, and out of this emerged crime fiction, which highlighted the figure of the anti-hero through detective narratives. German Expressionism emerged in Berlin during the 1920s, the years between the two World Wars. The *Zeitgeist* of this era saw creative endeavours through various modes of expression, including film. One of the most important works that emerged out of this era and which is relevant to this study of science fiction and utopia was produced: *Metropolis* (1927). In a discussion of *film noir*, Frank Krutnik (1991, 10) maintains, "the concept of *noir* served as a means of identifying various transformations within the representational parameters of the Hollywood film during the 1940s." *Film noir* served as a "critique of the values of postwar American society [which also depicted] a new 'psychological' trend in the representation of character" (10).

Neo noir, borrowing from *film noir*, repeats "certain themes and stylistic devices", and it does so "without essentializing classic noir" (Covey 2010, 41). Films that feature *neo noir* "change and respond to various social and cultural factors that match the times in which they are produced" (41). *Equilibrium*'s representation of *neo noir* is evident within the genres of utopian and science fiction film. Filmmakers such as Wimmer use *neo noir* to illustrate "some of the various social, cultural, sexual, and psychological horrors inflicted on society" (50). Janey Place and Lowell Peterson (1998), in an article titled "Some Visual Motifs of *Film Noir*", discuss the characteristics of this film style. They note that low-key lighting, great depth of field and reflections are significant characteristics of this film style (66-68). The first images that form part of the montage at the beginning of *Equilibrium* are black and white. A bleak and

dreary atmosphere is created through the post-war setting of the film, the rubble and the fact that a large number of these shots are filmed at dusk, and the images inside the clerics' headquarters are shrouded in darkness.

An analysis of the first part of Yeats's poem, which is not quoted by Partridge, reveals a line which evokes the mood and setting of the film. The line reads: "The blue, and the dim and the dark cloths" (1957, L3). This line makes reference to the colour blue which is associated with heaven. This line aptly describes the setting of the scene and the cathedral where Partridge is murdered by his partner. The scene depicts low-key lighting, and thus contributes to the stylised *noir* feel. Missing stained-glass pieces allow a blue hue of light (which could possibly be moonlight), to penetrate the darkness of the cathedral in slanted horizontal rays. Light and its punctuation of darkness in intervals is a characteristic of *film noir*. A *film noir* device is prominent before Preston shoots Partridge, as the shadow of Preston's gun is visible on the book that hides Preston's face. Susan Doll and Greg Faller (1986) discuss the relationship between science fiction and *film noir*. They add to the list of characteristics of *film noir* by including "urban landscapes, costuming, particularly trenchcoats, [and] rain-soaked environments" (91). Scenes that depict the city are often shown with rain. Preston's attire is characteristic of the *noir* style.

Great depth of field is depicted when all characters and objects in the shot are "in sharp focus" and are given "equal weight" (Place and Peterson 1998, 67). This filmic method is clearly demonstrated when Preston enters the room full of trinkets and memorabilia. Reflections of Preston in various mirrors serve to reflect the "symbolic representations" of the character's "fragmented ego" (68). The instances force the rebel hero to question his identity and stance in the regime. Preston is forced to question his humanity and his actions. This filmic device is used in many instances in the film, especially when Preston experiences emotions. Doll and Faller (1986, 91) note that *film noir* themes "frequently suggest that the characters reside in a hopeless or doomed world predetermined by the past". The film is punctuated with instances of human cruelty towards other humans and animals.

Krutnik (1991, 75) analyses the characteristics that constitute the *film noir* hero. His discussion also elaborates on the figure of the father within *film noir*. William B. Covey (2011) adapts this figure and argues that he lies at the centre of *neo noir* films. Krutnik (1991) uses masculinity and psychoanalysis proposed by Freud to discuss how "gender and identity" are regulated in

film noir. He places the hero of *film noir* into three distinct categories: the 'tough' investigative thriller, the 'tough' suspense thriller and the criminal-adventure thriller. With reference to the first category, Krutnik maintains that the hero "more overtly infringes legal procedure but, as an individual, non-affiliated professional, he nonetheless embodies the principle of law which is superior to that signified by the police force and the legal system" (92). *Equilibrium* and its representation of the rebel hero have characteristics that belong to all three categories which Krutnik discusses. The hero of the investigative thriller can be compared to Preston, as he is an embodiment of the laws of Libria and he is also its greatest transgressor. This allows Preston to commit certain transgressions (like stealing the puppy and Mary's ribbon) without being detected by the authorities of Libria. The hero of this first category also "proves himself by his ability to withstand any challenges to his integrity – and to his very status as the active hero" (92). When Preston is caught assisting the escape of the puppy, he kills every member of the police force that corners him. When he mourns Mary's death and is captured by Brandt he uses his wit to make DuPont believe that his ultimate goal is to capture the rebellion. When Preston's house is searched for missed doses of Prozium, his son plays a crucial role in maintaining and preserving his father's role as the hero of the film. Even if the *noir* hero's integrity is about to be compromised he is saved through the intervention of an ally, who is often from an unusual or unlikely source.

Krutnik proposes that the hero of the suspense thriller is often first depicted as impaired, powerless or caught in a predicament (128). Preston can be described as impaired through his explicit compliance with the regime at the beginning of the film. While he possesses power through his position as a cleric he lacks power through his absence of free will and autonomy. His rigid conformity to the regime and its laws ensure that he obeys the regime and its laws. After murdering Partridge, Preston stops taking his dosages of Prozium, and is thus placed in both a moral and political predicament. This is further complicated when he develops romantic feelings towards Mary. Krutnik notes that films that fall into category of the investigative thrillers "manifest a fascination with the process of resisting" (131). *Equilibrium*'s plot is centred on the incidents that occur which allow for Preston's rebellion. Having been placed in high regard with the regime, his resistance is given more significance when he succeeds in toppling the very regime that he swore to protect. Through his various acts of rebellion against the regime he is redeemed through his ability to bring about a new utopian order.

The third and final category that Krutnik discusses is the criminal-adventure thriller. He observes, "The hero's desire to triumph in his defiance of the law is inextricably bound up with his fear of detection and punishment" (143). This trope is made evident at the end of the film when Brandt reveals himself as DuPont's tool, used to make Preston comfortable in his position as the new leader of the resistance. Brandt was utilised to provide Preston with a false sense of security, and when this is revealed to him his fear of detection materialises. The last sequence of the Gun Katas is shown through Preston's final, but most significant, act of rebellion, as he no longer pretends to show allegiance to the regime.

Preston is a rebel hero within the context of the film viewed through the lenses of utopianism, science fiction, *film noir* and *neo noir*. *Equilibrium* represents a critical dystopia which places an emphasis on hope and positive change, seen at the ending of the film. It can be argued that the beginning of the film does depict hopelessness especially when the protagonist is bent on the destruction of the city he has sworn to protect. The protagonist that features in *film noir* is often characterised by being corrupt (8). Preston appears corrupt to the audience during the first half of the film as he colludes with the regime. During the second half of the film, his positive actions redeem him in the eyes of the audience. Preston's rebellion is visible when he defies the laws that govern his utopia. *Film noir* features "a passion for the past and present, but also a fear of the future" (11), comments Paul Schrader. He goes on to observe that the *noir* hero "dreads to look ahead, but instead tries to survive by the day, and if unsuccessful at that, he retreats to the past" (11). This comment is true of *Equilibrium*'s representation of trauma through the rebel hero. The film engages with a dialogue with past atrocities and ones that are being perpetuated and will be perpetuated in the future. The film interpellates the lens of history (through Renaissance art, the Nazi regime and the World Wars) and projects it onto the future, depicting a future that has chosen to prohibit human emotions. Preston emerges from the trauma of his past as the rebel hero of Libria. The film paints positive prospects for the future of Libria and its citizens through the rebellion of the hero. Schrader's comment makes visible a space for a discussion of trauma reflected through "loss, nostalgia [... and…] insecurity" (11), through *film noir* and *neo noir* within the genres of utopia and science fiction.

Covey's analysis of films that have *neo noir* characteristics centre on the figure of the "dangerous father" (2011, 42) who reflects "a dark side of paternity" (48). The "misguided and evil fathers" (49) is apparent in *Equilibrium*. The father of Libria functions as a dangerous entity as he does not actually exist. His presence functions to control the citizens, and he also

works to ensure that the machinery of propaganda performs its duties. Preston, at the beginning of the text, also embodies the characteristics of the father whose actions contributed to poisoning the community (49). Preston also decimated the "ideal nuclear family structure" (49), by allowing his wife to be murdered by the regime, thereby robbing his children of a maternal figure. Covey attributes such behaviour to the father's "selfish obsessions" (49). At the beginning of the film, Preston is obsessed with his duty towards the regime and the ideals that it stands for. DuPont can also be classified as an evil father figure as he is driven primarily by greed for power and control of Libria and its citizens. His death resolves the tension between the rebel hero and himself. Covey notes that *neo noir* films "reveal how dark obsessions of fathers and father figures destroy both the lives of their offspring and the communities they live in" (50). The rebel hero is thus tasked with the responsibility of creating a new way of life.

2.20 Conclusion

In the final moments of the film Preston is unrecognisable from the man that the audience met at the beginning of the film. For his audience with Father he wears only white, which stands in stark contrast to his usual black clothing. Black represented Preston and his ability to function as the right hand of the oppressor. White represents Preston as the transgressor who brings freedom to feel to Libria's citizens. Before Preston's meeting with Father, DuPont reveals to Preston that there is no Father as he died years before. DuPont reveals that he used Preston to locate the underground so that he could eliminate the resistance, and DuPont is revealed as the true dictator of Libria.

The final battle of the film pits Preston against DuPont, and they both match each other's technique of the Gun Katas. DuPont says to Preston, "Be careful Preston, you're treading on my dreams" (Wimmer 2002). These lines evoke Yeats's poem and the significance of Partridge to the text during Preston's rebellion and his toppling of the regime. The line also reflects DuPont's desire for power and control. DuPont admits that he experiences emotions and he therefore does not subscribe to the laws that he enforces. He asks Preston if he is willing to pay the price of killing someone who is not under the influence of Prozium, to which Preston replies, "I'd pay it gladly" (Wimmer 2005). Preston uses the same words that Partridge used before his death, recalling Partridge's martyrdom and Preston's willingness to also become a martyr. Just before Preston answers DuPont, he gets a flashback of Mary's face before her incineration. Her memory prompts him to blatantly answer DuPont and then shoot him.

Partridge's words echo in the final moments of the film to emphasise his importance to Preston's journey to becoming the rebel hero. The final scene of the film sees Preston leaving a trail of death behind him as he uses the Gun Katas on the clerics. The ambience of the scene is characterised by change as a storm brews. Preston has killed DuPont, and the cinematography is characterised by images of propaganda that appear at intervals to fuel Preston's rage and purpose.

The film ends with rebellion as the rebels infiltrate the centres of governance as Equilibrium clinics are bombed. The explosions that emanate from them are seen in the reflection of Preston's eye, and this is the film's final reference to the awakened and stimulated consciousness. Preston's holds Mary's red ribbon in his hand as a reminder of his reasons for rebellion. The colour of the ribbon represents the love that Preston still has for Mary. Red also functions as a symbol of rebellion and it also symbolises the lives that were lost as a result of the regime; this includes Preston's wife, Partridge and Mary. The last shot of the film is a close-up of Preston's face, as he smiles triumphantly.

Equilibrium can be classified as a utopian film through its representation of Libria as a possible utopia, set in the future. The film clearly shows social anxieties related to war, history and the loss of it through forgetting, war and trauma, propaganda and drugs, especially anti-depressants. The film also addresses the film techniques of metafiction and *neo noir*. At the heart of the narrative lies Preston, whose transition from the law-abiding citizen to the transgressor and rebel hero is shaped through and by history, war, trauma and the female protagonists.

The film speaks directly to anxieties associated with a social turn towards dystopia. During a particular scene of the film, Robbie watches propaganda being perpetrated and the voice in the video notes a "single, inescapable fact", that "mankind united with infinitely greater purpose in pursuit of war, than he ever did in pursuit of peace" (Wimmer 2002). World peace is not a priority for our reality as humans refuse to put an end to "man's inhumanity to man" (2002). This remark interrogates the state of our social, political and economic priorities in our current world, and the viewer questions if the remark has any merit. The exercise of war has both financial and human costs. The war in the Middle East has resulted in increasing financial costs for the United States of America as well as casualties on both sides of the war. The Obama administration made assertions that the troops fighting in Afghanistan would be withdrawn;

however, a war still wages on. Neta C. Crawford (2015, 1) observes that "Although the US stated in December 2014 that it would soon withdraw from Afghanistan, the war there has grown in destructiveness over the past year and the Obama administration announced on 24 March 2015 that it would keep the same level of troops in Afghanistan through 2015". American soldiers are not the only victims of the war, as data shows that as of mid-2014 there were nearly 2.7 million Afghan refugees (5).

Equilibrium proposes a plan of action to bring about a one-world government, something which is later shown to be illusory. The current and "dominant political culture" in the real world can be described as an "anti-utopia" (Levitas 2007, 290). In spite of this, Ruth Levitas notes the necessity of keeping alive the concept of utopia, which should be accompanied by the "ability to think about different ways of organising the production of out livelihoods and our social relationships" (302).

Equilibrium directly depicts the anxieties associated with totalitarian regimes and dictatorships. Such systems are prevalent in our own world, coupled with the possibility of a third world war. This can be seen amidst the violence that has erupted in many parts of the world, both in the Muslim world and abroad. On the 21st May 2016, the leader of the Afghanistan Taliban, Mullah Akhtar Muhammed Mansoor, was killed by a US drone air strike. The beginning of August 2016 saw the US bomb IS (Islamic State) targets in Libya and Syria. Militant Islamic groups have retaliated through a series of attacks in Europe. Provocations such as these fuel tensions between East and West and have repercussion throughout the worldwide community.

The cost of sacrificing all feelings in Libria comes with the guarantee that war will never occur again. This attractive ideal leads to an initial understanding of Libria as a successful model of utopia; however, war becomes necessary to bring about positive change in the future. Through Preston's rebellion, he succeeds in securing a future for the children of Libria to not only enjoy the freedom associated with autonomy, but to also experience their childhood.

The rebel hero emerges through defiance and the rebellion against a regime which holds him in such high regard. He succeeds in toppling the very regime that he so ardently serves at the beginning of the film. Partridge's murder in the cathedral evokes the murder of Thomas Becket who, like Partridge, died a martyr. Partridge's murder creates intertextuality within the film. Despite the fact that this film portrays a utopia where feelings and emotions are outlawed by

the government, it actually succeeds in evoking numerous feelings within the viewer through scenes which depict slaughter and demagoguery. The historical events and the use of images of World War II and Hitler evoke history, trauma and the act of remembering. *Equilibrium* as a utopian and science fiction film has afforded an example of how this genre allows for an engagement with literary culture (through books, artworks, and classical music). The trauma of the past events also forces us to reflect on the factors that have contributed to our current world. The dystopian genre acts as a warning to humanity for the future and we can only hope that humanity chooses differently from the dystopian model of Libria in 2072.

The rebel hero, in Wimmer's text, emerges through an awakened consciousness. His rebellious nature is highlighted through his ability to rebel against the same regime that he once served. His compliance with the regime was conveyed through his efficiency to murder for his government, and his rebellion against the regime is also articulated through his ability to kill those whose role has been instrumental in the creation of a dystopian society. Preston's ability to rebel against the regime, despite the odds being stacked against him, makes his rebellion of paramount significance. He emerges at the end of the text as a hero, one who has succeeded in the creation of a new utopia for the citizens of Libria.

3. Chapter Two

"The island awaits you": Iconoclasm, Illusion and Identity in Michael Bay's *The Island*

> If our impulses were confined to hunger, thirst and desire, we would be nearly free; but now we are moved by every wind that blows.
>
> – Mary Shelley (1994 [1818], 75)

3.1 Introduction

This chapter will embark on an analysis of Michael Bay's *The Island* (2005). The cast in *The Island* consists of Ewan McGregor and Scarlett Johansson, who play Lincoln Six Echo and Jordan Two Delta, respectively. Bay's utopia opens in the year 2019, in a safe haven: a compound that was established after a cataclysmic event which has left the world uninhabitable and contaminated. While the occupants reside in this utopia, they desire to be taken to a eutopia, a perfect paradise island, which is later proven to be illusory. Lincoln and Jordan escape into the real world, and this drastically alters their worldviews and perceptions as their seeming utopia is revealed to be a dystopia. In the characteristic manner of the utopian setting, Bay's utopia is set in the future, albeit a not too distant one.

Bay's narrative features two rebel heroes who emerge out of trauma. The primary rebel hero, Lincoln, is also the iconoclast, and I devote attention to the implications that this figure has within the narrative. In mapping this trauma, I utilise theory proposed by Susannah Radstone (2007) to discuss the trauma experienced by the primary rebel hero. Radstone premises her research on trauma theory its representation in the Humanities and its history. The second rebel hero is Albert Laurent (played by Beninese-American actor, Djimon Hounsou), whose heroism is shaped through his experience with slavery. Slavery in the narrative evokes a discussion of the unfair treatment of human beings, which is an extended theme in the text.

This chapter engages with Michel Foucault's notion of biopower and its implications for the under-class within the text. Bay's text is both compliant with and critical towards the capitalist agenda, as will be discussed during the course of this chapter. *The Island* makes use of a metaphor of change, transformation and metamorphosis which reveals itself through the main protagonist, Lincoln, as well as through the processes of science fiction and biotechnology. This metaphor of change and transformation will be analysed throughout the chapter as it

features prominently in the narrative. The discussion in this chapter centres on the social anxieties that Bay's film addresses. These include biotechnology and its use and abuse in science fiction film, the struggle between the all-powerful creator and his creation, the figure of the doppelganger in science fiction film, and the implications of pain on the human body.

The study of biotechnology within the genres of utopia and science fiction film allows an ethical discourse to emerge. Texts that represent the trope of biotechnology and science fiction address the issues of the social and technological anxieties that the field of science and technology evokes. I also discuss the social anxieties that emerge from the international dilemma of the trafficking of human organs, as the narrative relies heavily on the prospect of longevity through the use and abuse of human organs. At the heart of this chapter lies a discussion that centres on the emergence of the rebel heroes of the text, through trauma and the disruption in their respective utopias. The heroes as the centre of the narrative can be characterised through their rebellion and defiance against the systems that they obeyed, colluded with and showed loyalty to. Their heroism ultimately results in their own freedom and the freedom of the oppressed under-class.

3.2 The Compound and Foucault's Notion of "Biopower"

Bay's *The Island* portrays three distinct settings, the first being the enclosed compound, the second the illusory eutopian island and the third, the real world. The first setting is a closed and controlled environment which acts as a safe-house for the survivors of the "contamination" (Bay 2005). The compound is depicted through an exercise of "biopower" (Foucault 1978, 140). This setting is largely dependent on technology for its functioning and it is characterised by high key lighting which highlights the predominance of whiteness and brightness within the compound. The colour palette works to highlight the strict control and surveillance that occurs in the compound. The sophisticated technology, modern architecture, and high-rise glassed windows give the compound a modern feel.

The compound is initially depicted as a safe place; however, when strict measures are enforced through surveillance and monitoring, the compound takes on a sinister nature. The first instance of monitoring is characterised by invasion. When we first meet Lincoln, he awakes from a nightmare, and is greeted by an electronic screen which monitors his sleep patterns and his subconscious mind. At the onset of the film, the audience is able to gauge the extent of invasion

and monitoring that takes place in the compound. The opening scene of the film is Lincoln's nightmare, and this is worthy of discussion later on in the chapter. Another instance of invasive surveillance occurs when a screen orders Lincoln to report to the tranquillity centre for a wellness evaluation after his toilet detects his high sodium levels. The compound reflects a controlled environment where clothes are made readily available to him through an automated system. When Lincoln notices that he is missing a left shoe he peers through a camera lens to state this. The effective cinematography of the scene is shown as the camera moves to a full-screen, close up view of a room with multiple screens for monitoring. This scene is captured through the point of view of the security which functions to communicate the high level of surveillance that this environment encapsulates. An extreme close-up of Lincoln's face is then shown on one of the many screens. As the camera pans across the vast, bustling compound a close-up of the security personnel is shown. The security wear dark glasses as they monitor the inhabitants and their every move. Their black clothing stands in contrast to the white clothing worn by all the inhabitants, setting up an opposition between the security and the inhabitants.

When Lincoln and Jordan engage in a conversation for the first time they are separated by security. The compound has strict proximity rules that prevent males and female coming into close contact with each other. Victor Grech, Clare Vassallo and Ivan Callus (2015) briefly describe the lives of the clones in the compound. They note, "The sexes are not segregated but, in a unique twist, are kept unaware of sexual relations, and to further enforce abstinence and, indeed, all carnal knowledge, the sexes are not allowed to touch" (49).

The excessive surveillance in the compound evokes Foucault's notion of "biopower" (1978, 104) which refers to the "explosion of numerous and diverse techniques for achieving the subjugation of bodies and the control of populations" (140). Biopower in *The Island* is made possible on a large scale of monitoring through advanced technology represented through the lens of science fiction. Foucault observes that the development of biopower is "embodied in institutions such as the army and the schools" (140). The institutions that embody biopower are those that wield great power and influence over populations. This is done with the effect of controlling bodies and ensuring that the power remains in the hands of such institutions.

The compound is extremely health-centred, and the health of the inhabitants is constantly monitored, as was displayed through Lincoln. The compound encourages various physical activities, and the data, such as the amount of time of exposure to ultraviolet rays, are recorded

and monitored, while an automated voice in the compound reminds its inhabitants that "A healthy person is a happy person" (Bay 2005). Indoctrination and biopower are exercised to an extreme when it comes to the health and fitness of the inhabitants. The extent of this removes their free will over their own bodies. Bay's narrative depicts an exercise of biopower which is conveyed through monitoring, surveillance and intense observation. The intrusive nature depicted in this utopia is motivated with the aim of control and domination over the bodies in the compound. This utopia utilises technology primarily for the purposes of policing its inhabitants, creating a society that reflects authoritarian practices.

3.3 The Revelation and the Illusory Eutopia

The inhabitants in the compound are grouped together via their last names, which include: "Three Echo", "Six Echo", "Two Delta" (Bay 2005) and so forth. The last names exist within a culture of technoscience which indicates a connectedness between the inhabitants; however, the film establishes that blood relations are non-existent in this society. The utopia of the compound rapidly alters to depict a dystopian setting when the audience learns that the compound is actually a capitalist venture, run by Merrick Biotech, which houses clones of people in the real world. These clones are harvested (murdered) when the donor requires a replacement of organs to ensure longevity. As Lincoln and the other clones are unaware of their status, they go about their daily activities believing that they are the last known survivors on Earth.

At the centre of the lives of these individuals in the compound lies the lottery. The lottery is an embodiment of a eutopia where the winner of the lottery will be sent to live on "nature's last remaining pathogen-free zone" (Bay 2005). The lottery is advertised on huge screens many times a day through an automated female voice. The screens depicts rapidly flashing images of a paradise island, a pristine beach and blue sky. The rapidly moving images affect the viewer's consciousness, attract attention and evoke a desire to win the lottery. The moving images stop to reveal a picture of a green island, amidst a blue sea. The depiction of the island ensures that even the audience also finds it appealing and desirable. The automated voice emphasises the catch-phrase, "the island awaits you" (2005), and its repetitions function to entice the inhabitants into winning the lottery which is placed at the centre of the lives of the inhabitants.

The lottery and the island are both illusory notions where one gives rise to the other. The lottery is used to entice the inhabitants into desiring to win, preventing them from asking questions about their existence, their surroundings and the workings of their daily lives. The contamination, together with the lottery, serve as a pretence for a multi-billion dollar project which genetically engineers human beings from sponsors in the real world. When an inhabitant 'wins' the lottery, they have actually been selected to have their organs harvested for use by the donor in the real world. The "clones are sentient human organ banks with no knowledge of their ultimate fate" (Grech, Vassallo and Callus 2015, 49). The lottery, the island and the contamination are thus all exercises of biopower as they all work to keep the clones subjugated and confined to the compound. The contamination also acts as a shared memory which works to threaten the inhabitants and keep them fearful of going outside.

After Lincoln and Jordan escape the compound they run across a vast landscape in the outside world. Merrick refers to the clones as products, yet as thinking, breathing organisms, they have succeeded in escaping the compound and entering into the real world. The scene is shot from a bird's-eye view angle showing Lincoln and Jordan stopping as they reach the end of a plateau. The camera pans rapidly around the two subjects with a dizzying effect on the audience. This is done to place emphasis on the reality of the outside world and its vastness in comparison to the compound and the fabrications that surround the clones' existence. The clones' ability to function and be classified as humans is emphasised against the vast beauty of the natural world that they run through. The natural quality of the scene demonstrates their natural ability to not only exist, but thrive in the real world.

3.4 The Infantile State and Oppression

In addition to exercising biopower in the compound, another means of control through subjugation is deployed. A particular scene catches adults reading a Dr Seuss book in unison while all the television screens around the compound air cartoons. When Starkweather Two Delta is announced as the next winner of the lottery he displays childish behaviour by clapping his hands and saying, "I'm going to the island, we gonna have so much fun" (Bay 2005).Their limited vocabulary is also highlighted at various points in the narrative.

The many scenes that depict extreme childishness in adults act to disturb the viewer who, at this point in the narrative, is unaware of the cloning project. Later on in the narrative, the owner

of the cloning project, Dr Merrick, reveals that the clones are created to ensure that they do not mature and develop beyond the intellectual capacity of a child, signalling why they consume recreational and intellectual materials that are reserved for children. Their creation and existence directly contributes to their marginalised status, and their infantile state plays an integral role in their subjugation, making them susceptible to control and manipulation.

Their absence of autonomy and freedom of choice functions to foreground the injustice of their oppression as clones, by human beings such as Merrick and Tom Lincoln. The clones and their treatment as children evokes a discussion and analogy with the socio-political status of children in England during the late 18th and 19th century. This period was characterised by high mortality rates for children, who if they did survive, were subjected to harsh labour conditions (Hopkins 1994, 1). Historically, children are considered to be minority groups (Oakley 1994, 13), with "few, if any, legal rights" (Hopkins 1994, 1). Their complete lack of autonomy was reflected through the notion that they could be "bought and sold or otherwise disposed of by their parents" (1). In a similar manner, Merrick exercises full control over the clones, forcing them into servitude for his financial gain and constantly treating them in a demeaning manner.

The effect of imbuing a childlike quality and manner into the clones has the effect of placing the clones in a sympathetic light in the audience's perception, where Merrick assumes the role of the cruel, abusive parent figure. In this way, the film functions to ensure that the viewer's sympathy resides with the clones. The emergence of the rebel hero as an autonomous being, one who is able to question and think for himself, also functions to place viewer sympathy with his cause, thereby allowing the audience to view the clones as human beings despite being members of the under-class.

3.5 The Introduction of the First Rebel Hero

Unlike Preston in the previous chapter, Lincoln stands out from the beginning of the text, by his inability to conform and collude with the regulations of his utopia. At the very onset of the text, he displays his unhappiness with the monotonous routine of his daily life. While he does not collude with the oppressive forces that govern his society, he does follow the rules of the compound when he is introduced into the narrative. As the audience becomes increasing aware of biopower within the text, Lincoln displays increasing irritability and annoyance at conforming to the rules and regulations of the compound.

Lincoln's rebellion is first depicted through his request for a different colour of attire, in spite of the conformity rules with regard to apparel. His ability to break rules and insatiable curiosity functions to establish him as "different" from the other individuals in the compound. As the film progresses, so do the severity of his transgressions. In spite of knowing that he will be denied his desired breakfast at the counter, Lincoln purposefully asks for eggs, sausages and French toast with powdered sugar. Through his defiance he meets Jordan who, through her politeness, secures bacon from the woman who serves them breakfast. Jordan proceeds to give the bacon to Lincoln, who is clearly taken aback by her ability to get what she wants, in spite of the rules. It is noteworthy that Lincoln and Jordan's first meeting is characterised by transgression as they break the restrictions that apply to Lincoln's diet and Jordan's food allowances.

The rebel hero in Bay's text can be characterised through an inquiring mind and curiosity which grows incrementally as the narrative progresses. Lincoln is forced into a consultation session with Dr Merrick. When Lincoln enters the consulting room another inhabitant asks what Lincoln did wrong this time. This establishes Lincoln as a frequent transgressor and a figure who constantly clashes with the authority. Due to the invasive surveillance technology in the compound, Merrick is already aware of Lincoln's nightmares. Lincoln relates his dream to Merrick, who requests that Lincoln draw the boat from his dream. Lincoln's expert drawing skills reveal a boat named "*Renovatio*", and Lincoln says that he has no idea what it means. The doctor asks him what is troubling him, leading to the following interchange taking place:

> Lincoln: Well…it's just…alright. Tuesday night is tofu night, and I'm asking myself who decided that everyone here likes tofu in the first place, and what is tofu anyway? And why can't I have bacon? I line up every morning, and I'm not allowed any bacon for my breakfast, and let's talk about all the white, why is everyone wearing white all the time? It's impossible to keep clean and I'm walking around, I always get the grey stripe, I never get any colour, and I hand it in to be cleaned and someone does it and folds it neatly back in my drawer, but who? Who is that person? I don't know. I wanna know answers and I wish there was *more*. [Emphasis added]
>
> Merrick: More…
>
> Lincoln: More than just waiting to go to the island.
>
> Merrick: Lincoln, it's your nature to question things, but don't you realise how lucky you are, that you survived the contamination, that nature has left you a Garden of Eden to repopulate? That, Lincoln, is your purpose. (Bay 2005)

Lincoln's inquiring mind is explicitly revealed through the above exchange. He displays the tenacity to question the authority and expect an answer. He is not afraid to speak his mind and request for things to be changed with regard to life in the compound. Lincoln also questions the functioning of the compound and the workings that occur behind its scenes. He expresses his desire for more out of life outside the walls of the compound. Lincoln is able to see past his mediocre life in the compound as he asserts his desire to be more and do more. Merrick attempts to reinforce the indoctrination of the lottery and the compound when he prioritises the island and its repopulation. He further perpetuates the lie when he suggests that Lincoln should be grateful to be alive. Merrick refers to the Garden of Eden, and this evokes the connotations of a eutopia. Later on in this chapter, I amplify the connotations that the Garden of Eden has within the context of the film and show how Merrick appropriates the term for his selfish use.

Merrick runs an invasive procedure on Lincoln whom he straps to a chair. The notion that Lincoln is restrained implies that not only will the procedure hurt but it is an act that Lincoln will object to. Merrick coerces Lincoln into obliging, and he lies when he tells Lincoln that the tests are "nice" ones (2005). Merrick implants micro-sensors that enter Lincoln's body through his eye. These micro-sensors will travel to Lincoln's brain to perform what Merrick refers to as a synaptic brain scan. This procedure is shot through an extreme close-up which serves to make the audience uncomfortable as tiny sensors travel into Lincoln's eyelids. Lincoln's eye is the dominant feature on the screen and the character placement of Merrick serves to foreground his dominance as he stands over Lincoln.

Lincoln also looks directly into the camera which engages the audience directly, in his pain and discomfort. It is evident that the procedure hurts, and Lincoln expresses this sentiment. Merrick insists that it does not hurt. He patronises Lincoln by treating him like a child throughout the painful procedure. This scene sets up the unequal relationship between the clones and their creator. The procedure is yet another example of biopower and the extremes that Merrick Biotech practises. While a woman goes into labour, Lincoln uses the distraction to obtain a key-card from one of the supervisors which he uses to enter a restricted outer area of the building. Lincoln's transgressions are on the increase, and he has worked out ways to defy the authority without any detection.

The Island reveals a contrast between the inner compound and the outer compound. The inner areas of the compound lie in contrast to the outer areas which are characterised by darkness, a

lack of order and activity, as many men work to ensure the adequate functioning of the technology and sophistication on the inside. Lincoln befriends James McCord, who isn't a clone, but rather a worker and member of the populace living outside the compound. Lincoln consumes forbidden alcohol with McCord, highlighting his inability to conform to the strict health rules of the facility. Lincoln expresses his desire to know more about the world when he asks McCord, "What's it like where you live, in sector five?" (2005). McCord comments on Lincoln's inquiring nature and he tells him that he is special, to which Lincoln asks, "Why am I special?" (2005).

McCord perpetuates the indoctrination that occurs inside the compound which uses the same clichéd phrases to pacify its inhabitants and prevent them from asking any questions. These terms are insufficient in providing Lincoln with a purpose. His desire to know more drives him to escape an environment which robs him of his individuality. His yearning for more out of life sets him on a path that creates a power shift within the context of the film. Lincoln's rebellion is incited by his curiosity, and as he is the only inhabitant who learns of the true motives behind Merrick Biotech, he emerges as the rebel hero of the text when he challenges the corporation and his creator.

3.6 The Social Anxiety of Pain and the Emergence of the Rebel Hero

Lincoln experiences two instances of horror which play a pivotal role in his escape from the compound. These two experiences are communicated through pain and they have the effect of traumatising Lincoln, as the experience propels him to escape the compound. Lincoln's realisation of the horror within the compound is also a revelation to the audience as the reasons behind the clones' existence is made evident.

While in the outer limits of the compound, visiting McCord, Lincoln discovers a moth which he captures. The moth represents the wider trope of metamorphosis, in the narrative, which is characterised by personal growth, development and increased self-awareness. Lincoln connects the insect's survival to the survival of other inhabitants when he asks, "How does anyone survive? They keep finding people and bringing them here, but where do they come from?" (Bay 2005). After a nightmare, Lincoln becomes compelled to leave his residence and experiment with the moth, which leads him to witness the murder of two inhabitants. Like the rebel hero in the previous chapter, Lincoln emerges as the rebel hero through an experience

with trauma and witnessing death. The horror that Lincoln experiences acts as a catalyst for his escape from the compound which is motivated by his fear and his compulsion for freedom. His first act of heroism sees him take Jordan with him as she is the next to be harvested for her organs.

With reference to Vogler's hero paradigm, Lincoln's heroism is foregrounded in the call to adventure which he experiences. His heroic journey also requires that he return to the utopia he escaped to save the other clones. Lincoln escapes from the compound and enters into "a special world" which is "new and alien" to him (Vogler 2007 [1998], 10). The hero of the narrative is "presented with a problem, challenge or adventure to undertake" (10). Lincoln faces his fears by escaping the compound into the "terrors of the unknown" (10). Lincoln escapes into a world that is full of dangers and risks (107-108). This is foreshadowed by the venomous snake which he encounters after leaving the compound. Lincoln already possesses the necessary tools to become the hero and rebel. For him, "the seeds of change and growth are planted, and it takes only a little new energy to germinate them" (99).

The moth plays an important role in revealing the truth about the compound to Lincoln when he follows it through the compound. Lincoln first witnesses body parts being harvested from the first winner of the lottery, Starkweather, who achieves consciousness while his chest cavity is being opened in theatre. Elaine Scarry (1985, 29) discusses the implications that pain has on the human body. She notes, "Intense pain is world-destroying", and while it is severely traumatic for Starkweather it is also traumatic for Lincoln to have to witness Starkweather's escape from the operating theatre and his brutal capture. His capture is also communicated through pain and suffering as he screams while he is dragged back into the operating theatre by arrows which have pierced both his legs. His utopian desire for breathing fresh air and swimming in the ocean manifest into horror when he realises that he is being operated on. The trauma and pain that he undergoes have the potential to "destroy a person's self and world" (35). Scarry maintains that it is the "process of perception that allows one person's physical pain to be understood as another person's power" (37). Merrick Biotech holds immense power over the clones that they manufacture, where the doctors prioritise the harvesting of the organs over the physical pain of the patients. The murder of the clones highlights the power that the corporation has over the clones, and serves to emphasise their treatment as mere commodities. The horror of the scene is highlighted when the security guard casually remarks that this is not the first time this has happened. The workers in the facility collude with the twisted mentality

that the clones are not human beings. The workers inflict pain on the clones, foregrounding that there are "no two experiences farther apart than suffering and inflicting pain" (46). Starkweather's screams highlight the notion that "Physical pain is not itself resistant to language but also actively destroys language, deconstructing it into the pre-language of cries and groans. To hear those cries is to witness the shattering of language" (172), emphasising how "physical pain has no voice" (3). The scene places significant emphasis on physical pain, which can create emotional discomfort for the audience.

In addition to witnessing Starkweather's death, Lincoln also watches a woman give birth and then have her baby ripped from her clutches only to be handed to her donor, who along with her husband, happily accept their new-born baby while the surrogate clone is murdered by injection. The scene creates discomfit through showing the stark similarity that the donor and clone bear to each other. While one dies the other rejoices in the attainment of a child. Bay's utopia projects a future where the conception of children is divorced from the traditional methods of copulation and birth. The social anxiety of infertility is non-existent to those who can afford the luxury of Merrick's project. While infertility is no longer a biological and social problem, the killing of woman after they have served the function of pregnancy and birth results in human beings being reduced to the status of commodities who are discarded after they have served their purpose. Lyman Tower Sargent and Lucy Sargisson (2014) discuss sexual relations within the utopian context. They observe, "technology is often used to develop alternative methods of procreation", and this includes "reproduction without heterosexual sexual intercourse" (304), and since Merrick owns this technology, he owns the "products" of it.

In a particular scene, McCord witnesses the traumatic birth of a clone, which is referred to as "extraction" (Bay 2005). This scene is characterised by low-key lighting which casts many shadows, and this emphasises the shadiness of the operations at Merrick Biotech. A close-up view of a quasi-womb is shown, holding an adult. The doctors sever the umbilical cord and cut through the quasi-womb. A water-like substance flows out of the casing and a breathing apparatus is removed from the clone as the doctors welcome him to the world. He lies sucking his thumb as his vital signs are checked. The doctor refers to him as a "product", and to emphasise this he is branded on his wrist. The scene acts to highlight the vulnerability of the clones and it also works to foreground the unnatural notion of the birth of an adult.

The effective camera shot of the next scene is a bird's eye view of the many quasi-wombs that are housed in the compound. The aerial shot showing the artificial wombs emphasises the vast number of clones housed within Merrick Biotech. The camera then speeds up as it follows multiple tubes to reveal the work that the inhabitants undertake in the laboratory. The nature of their work is never revealed to them in spite of Lincoln's questioning where the tubes lead. The workers are actively involved in injecting nutrients for growth into the artificial wombs for the development of the agnates (developing clones), and a cyclical nature therefore exists between the clones and the agnates as their birth and existence are used to sustain and support the growth of other clones.

Lincoln emerges as the rebel hero of the text through the pivotal role played by the moth and his encounter with witnessing the brutal and inhumane death of two of his fellow inhabitants. The traumatic events act as a catalyst for his escape from the compound and his exposure to the real world. This experience, in turn, leads him to return to the compound to bring about the destruction of Merrick Biotech. The film also functions to depict the trauma in the unnatural birthing process. This trauma has a significant impact on the rebel hero which will be addressed in a subsequent section.

3.7 Capitalism and Cloning

Capitalism features within Bay's text through commodification and product placement. Capitalism is depicted through a dual lens within Bay's film. It functions to critique the entrenched greed and desire in the utopia through Merrick and the consumers, while it simultaneously feeds into the capitalist agenda displayed through Hollywood film and product placement.

After Lincoln and Jordan escape into the real world, the third utopia of the real world is represented. This utopia depicts a society that is dependent upon technology, capitalism and medical biology to bring about an increased life span. The pair enlist the help of McCord, who explains that they are "copies of people in the real world" (Bay 2005) and that without allowing the agnates to achieve full consciousness, the organs failed. However, this is kept from public knowledge. Lincoln asserts his individuality by saying to McCord, "We not asking for your permission Mac, we asking for your help" (Bay 2005). Lincoln, having been confined to the compound, was constantly being given orders. Having escaped and learnt of the truth, he asserts

his individuality and freedom by stating that he requires something instead of asking permission.

Merrick Biotech functions under the guise that it grows organs from agnates that remain in a vegetative state, leaving the public unaware of the brutal killings that occur inside the institute. McCord alerts the audience to the reality that humans beings are unable to face the repercussions of their actions despite their enjoyment of the benefits gained from their destructive endeavours. McCord uses the example of the slaughtering of animals for food products to illustrate this. He says, "Just 'cos people wanna eat the burger, doesn't mean they wanna meet the cow" (Bay 2005). McCord encapsulates the mentality of a nation driven and dependent upon a capitalist agenda. His analogy highlights the ignorance of the consumers concerning the sources of the goods that they consume. The consumers' interests lie in the end product, and they have blatant disregard for how and from what it is manufactured.

The text commodifies human life by placing a price on it. Guerra (2009, 291) notes of science fiction texts that display biotechnology: "Bodies and minds are colonized both as consumers and products" (293). She goes on to observe, "humans have worth only as products and consumers, and insofar as they do not function as either, they are expendable" (291). The narrative projects consumerism at its worst, as human beings play a key role in the creation of their clones and their demise, to the benefit of the donor. Bay's film reflects the social anxieties evoked by the capitalist system, which has attracted "an accelerating awareness, a growing anger and realization of the bankruptcy of capital to contend with the crisis it has spawned" (Kovel 2007, iv). Capitalism functions as a "colossal apparatus of production, distribution, and sales, perfused with commodities" (52). The capitalist system creates a society that is "predicated on endless expansion" (xiv).

Merrick delivers an "unwavering sales pitch" (Bullen and Parsons 2007, 135) to entice his wealthy audience into buying into his venture. The trope of advertising through enticing consumers is a staple of dystopian films which place an emphasis on capitalism. Merrick's effective sales pitch depicts how he has built an industry worth 120 billion dollars on dishonesty. Only the wealthy are able to afford the services that Merrick Biotech renders, and through the sales pitch a capitalist agenda is clearly established. Merrick says, "According to the eugenic laws of 2015 all agnates are maintained in a persistent vegetative state, they never achieve consciousness, they never think, or suffer, or feel pain, joy, love, hate. It is a product,

ladies and gentleman, in every way that matters – not human" (Bay 2005). At this point in the narrative we glean that Merrick is indeed in contravention of the laws set by this society. His description of human emotions has the effect of highlighting his deception as the audience is aware of how human the clones actually are. Merrick places emphasis on his lie that his "products" are not human, so as to ensure a comforting and palliative effect for his clients. Capitalism establishes "individual desire as the dominant model for pleasure and success" (Bullen and Parsons 2007, 135).

Capitalism is a prominent feature in science fiction and dystopian film through the display of product placement. Product placement refers to the "deliberate insertion into an entertainment film script of a product [or] its signage" (Segrave 2004, 1). Product placement is practised in reaction to consumers becoming "resistant to traditional advertising" methods (Chen and Wang 2016, 835). Product placement is "huge business in the Unites States and across the globe" (835). The iconic *Blade Runner* (1982, dir. Ridley Scott) placed a significant emphasis on product placement through the Coca-Cola brand, as it reflected a dystopian society saturated with consumerism. Sean Redmond (2016) discusses the capitalist agenda as displayed through *Blade Runner*. He says of the dystopia,

> consumerism, globalisation, corporate greed and media dumbing down and disinformation have so taken hold on the power bases of the world, and the ordering of everyday life, that freedoms have been eroded and life is given meaning only in relation to the amount of dollars it can accrue. (16)

The Island explicitly displays product placement through featuring numerous popular brands that form an integral part of popular culture. These include Puma shoes, Speedo swimwear, Apple computers and a Nokia cell phone, among others. The main protagonist is seen interacting with the above products, which only serves to draw the viewers' attention to them. Bay's film functions to critique capitalism through displaying greed and commodification while it simultaneously colludes with a capitalist agenda through product placement in popular Hollywood film. The film addresses the wider themes of consumerism through depicting how entrenched both Hollywood film and its viewers are in the capitalist agenda.

Joel Kovel (2007) discusses the two-fold nature of capitalism. The capitalist system is "true to human nature, ignoring how people are indoctrinated to play their assigned roles in accumulation", which functions to introduce "a sense of dissatisfaction or lack" which is

replaced "by sensation and craving" (53). Capitalism is directly dependent upon "technological innovation" which is the "*sine qua non* of growth" (170). Merrick Biotech is directly dependent upon biological technology for the development of the agnate which Merrick describes as "the next generation of science" and as "An organic frame engineered directly into adulthood to match the client's age" (Bay 2005). The term is generally understood to be an individual descended from the same male ancestor as another person (Hale 1966, 319).[13] The term is appropriated to fit into the dialogue of cloning and biotechnology within Bay's utopia, where it is applicable to both males and females. The usage of the term is associated with male lineage and this could possibly point towards the capitalist agenda as represented by the males in this utopia. Merrick is the embodiment of the archetypal patriarch and villain who oppresses his creation, the clones who are his children, whom he uses to attain wealth and power.

Merrick maintains the façade which allows for the flourishing of his capitalist venture. The Foucauldian notion of biopower that was discussed earlier has implicit implications for capitalism. Foucault observes that biopower "was without question an indispensable element in the development of capitalism" (1978, 140-141). Capitalism "would not have possible without the controlled insertion of bodies into the machinery of production and the adjustment of the phenomena of population to economic process" (141). The science of biotechnology and cloning raises moral and ethical questions, but "New products clearly satisfy the interest of consumers [and] this interest is often compelling enough to make moral considerations fade over the course of time" (Habermas 2001, 163). Merrick's capitalist system uses bodies to maintain other bodies while he benefits from the financial gain as he controls the means of production.

The population in the real world, particularly Merrick's clients, are unaware that they have paid for the production of their clones. Human beings are depicted as the slaves of technology, as is reflected by their inability to question where and how they attain replacement organs. Their nonchalance and vanity stand in contrast to Lincoln's ability to constantly question and interrogate the facility and the purpose of his existence. The society, therefore, colludes with Merrick and his quest for ultimate power, as is displayed by McCord, who, when revealing the

---

[13] Kenneth L. Hale (1966, 319) employs the term agnate to refer to a man "with respect to his brothers and sisters, his children, his son's children, his brother's children, his father's and paternal aunts and uncles, his father's father and paternal great-aunts and great-uncles, and so on. A woman is agnate with respect to the same kinsmen as her brother, but not with respect to her children and their descendants" (319).

truth about Lincoln and Jordan's existence, says, "Everyone wants to live forever" because "It's the new American dream" (Bay 2005). The prospects of biotechnology in Bay's utopia create an alternate society in which the conventional American dream of freedom and equal opportunity is changed into one where its citizens aspire to become immortal. Disease is no longer a factor in this utopia as body parts and organs are readily available to ensure the prolonged life of the sponsors; however, as is common in films that depict utopias that are reliant on biotechnology, this privilege comes at the expense of an under-class. The rebellion of the hero in the text functions to upset the façade created by Merrick's Biotech and his capitalist venture.

3.8 The Moth, Metamorphosis and the Rebel Hero

Bay's film is characterised by a metaphor of change, transformation and metamorphosis. While the rebel hero undergoes change and growth, the image also works through the natural entity of a moth. The moth plays an intrinsic role in the revelation of human genetic engineering to Lincoln, and this discovery facilitates his escape from the compound. The moth is the metaphorical light which leads the way for Lincoln to become consciously aware of the outside world, his purpose and the intentions that the facility has for him and the other clones.

The trope of metamorphosis and the unique nature of the rebel hero are revealed through a metaphor of change. When the notion of the agnate in stage one is introduced in the film, it bears resemblance to a pupa. The stages of development of a larva into a moth mirror the development of the agnate into a human being, and like the moth, the clones in the film are released from a quasi-womb. The moth attains freedom after its emergence from the cocoon state. This freedom can be paralleled to the freedom that Lincoln and Jordan attain after they escape from the compound. The moth's attainment of freedom can also be compared to the growing awareness which the clones exhibit in relation to their status as marginalised individuals. The clones, and in particular, Lincoln, evolve to harness the memories of their donors, and this allows them to develop beyond the childhood mentality that they are meant to possess. As a moth goes through a process of metamorphosis to attain freedom, so too does Lincoln undergo the same process when he escapes from the compound and emerges into the real world.

Lincoln, as the rebel hero of the narrative, also becomes the greatest threat to Merrick and his corporation as he shows the ability to reason, think and act, far beyond the capacity of what he was made to do. Lincoln is not only a threat because of his ability to function above and beyond his programmed cognitive ability, but also because he sets out to free the clones after Merrick decides to withdraw and kill all Six Echo models due to a flaw. Merrick says, "We predicated our entire system on predictability. Lincoln Six Echo has displayed the one trait that undermines it" (Bay 2005). This trait is human curiosity, and it functions as a defect. A mass lottery occurs in the compound with many winners being announced. The indoctrination and power that the lottery possesses over its inhabitants is clearly depicted through this scene where it is used as a pretext for murder.

Lincoln shows potential for adaptation, change and growth in the real world, and tests reveal that his brain is developing at a rapid rate. Lincoln and Jordan also share a sexual relationship despite the fact that clones are manufactured without a sexual drive. In a discussion of sexual relations in utopia, Sargent and Sargisson (2014, 301) observe, "the need to control is apparent" in More's *Utopia*, and this is also evident in Bay's utopia. Lincoln and Jordan transgress the boundaries that their manufacturer has set for them in developing beyond any conceivable possibility. Slonczewski and Levy (2003, 175), writing from the science fiction and life sciences point of view, observe that increased intelligence and the "acceleration" of "brain function" is a theme that shows "remarkable endurance" in science fiction that portrays the biological.[14]

When Lincoln does encounter his donor, Tom, he asks him the meaning of the word *renovatio*. Tom explains that this Latin phrase means rebirth, and the meaning of the word has wider implications within the context of the film. Rejuvenation and rebirth are significant when applied to the image of the moth which can be paralleled with the experiences of the rebel hero. Lincoln, like the moth, experiences two births, and his second birth and discovery of the real world is characterised by freedom. His second birth encompasses a new-found identity and purpose which are revealed through his individuality. Lincoln also plays a key role in saving the other clones from murder, and thus allows them to also experience a rebirth at the end of the film when they are set free from the compound, into the real world.

---

[14] The theme of increased intelligence lies at the core of the 2014 science fiction film *Lucy* (dir. Luc Besson). The film depicts a scenario where Lucy, the main protagonist (played by Scarlett Johansson), ingests large quantities of a super-drug which enables her to use 100 percent capacity of her brain, giving her super-human capabilities.

3.9 The Dream Sequence as Trauma for the Rebel Hero

Trauma within the text also emerges through Lincoln's dream which the film opens with. The dream functions as a future prediction for Lincoln and Jordan. The film opens with a depiction of clouds and the sky. The altitude of this shot evokes the aspirations of humankind, and Merrick in particular. The creation of human life is attributed to the power of God; however, Merrick harnesses this creative potential and establishes himself as a God within the narrative of the film when the façade is lifted. The clearing of clouds allows an aerial shot to emerge which spans the ocean and a coastline. This shot succeeds in giving the effect of travel and rapid movement across the water. The opening shot of the sky and the preceding shots of water and the ocean give the impression of openness and freedom. Jordan and Lincoln are on a boat, surrounded by the beautiful natural scenery of the blue ocean and the vastness of the coastline. These natural images also include rock formations, and stand in stark contrast to the artificial world of the compound.

The ocean often represents creative potential, and this is linked to the wider theme of the creation of life that the film portrays. Water is symbolic within the context of the film as it is one of the very first images that we are shown. Water also plays an intrinsic role in the initial development of the clones. The quasi-wombs which are full of nutrient-water are vital for their growth and development, and are thus key in giving them life. Water thus plays the role of the giver of life within the context of the film. Lincoln's dream of bliss, freedom and happiness quickly turns into a nightmare when he and Jordan drown in the ocean below them. Lincoln struggles under water with two beings who resemble humans. A voice-over says, "You're special", "You have a very special purpose in life", "You've been chosen" and "The island awaits you" (Bay 2005). These words serve to highlight the indoctrination that occurs, as these words are repeatedly utilised within the context of the film, and they serve to reinforce the lies and pretences that sustain life in the compound. Lincoln's dream mirrors the processes of his creation and birth, and its association with the nutrient-water. A montage of images flash across the screen as part of Lincoln's nightmare, and they are reminiscent of Lincoln's sponsor's life. The images flash in quick succession, giving the impression of a flashback of memories. The clone's ability to recall memories from the sponsor's life becomes the flaw in the design. Lincoln's mental development is characterised through his ability to access and retain memories that belong to his sponsor. Mousoutzanis (2013, 328) describes this as "information overload". The process of information overload is depicted through rapid moving images in

Lincoln's nightmares. Mousoutzanis notes that this overload is something that "the human psyche cannot process or integrate" (328). Lincoln's nightmares reveal some of the memories of his sponsor which he, as the clone, is unable to process.

The nightmare concludes with the water receding; however, this happens rapidly. Water moving in reverse with the same rapid motion that it moves forward creates an unnatural phenomenon. The unnatural movement of the water evokes Merrick's ability to create life through unnatural means. The beings that attempted to drown Lincoln are shown more clearly, and their image is frightening. They are hairless and have veins and arteries protruding from their bodies. It is evident that they are not fully developed. The frightening sight of the beings evokes Victor Frankenstein's monster. Mary Shelley's iconic text functions as an early blueprint of biotechnology and the creation of life.[15] Frankenstein's deranged desire to create human life manifests itself within Merrick, who is driven by a compulsion to create and destroy what he believes to be his property. Shelley's famous text details the God complex that is experienced by Frankenstein when he says:

> No one can conceive the variety of feelings which bore me onwards, like a hurricane, in the first enthusiasm of success. Life and death appeared to me ideal bounds, which I should first break through; and pour a torrent of light into our dark world. A new species would bless me as its creator and source; many happy and excellent natures would owe their being to me. No father could claim the gratitude of his child so completely as I should deserve theirs. (1994 [1818], 36)

Rather than gratitude envisaged by the hubristic creator, the horror of the monster reveals itself through Lincoln's subconscious mind when he has yet another dream directly after Jordan is selected as a winner of the lottery. The dream becomes a nightmare when a hand attempts to cover his mouth while he sleeps. This dream bears resemblance to his first dream as images of the same montage are present; however, this time the images that form the montage last longer on the screen. The audience witness Lincoln driving a racing car in which he sees his reflection in the rearview mirror. Mousoutzanis (2013, 329) observes that "recurring nightmares" are a feature of "post-traumatic stress disorder" which displays itself some time after the traumatic

---

[15] Historically, within cinema, the trope of human cloning has been depicted through horror (O'Riordan 2009, 146). This changed after the successful cloning of the sheep, Dolly, in 1996. 1997 saw the release of films that dealt with the positive side of genetics and the possibilities of creating the perfect human being. These include *Gattaca* (dir. Andrew Niccol), *The Fifth Element* (dir. Luc Besson), and *Face/Off* (dir. John Woo). M. Keith Booker and Anne-Marie Thomas (2009) discuss the progress of genetics and biotechnology. They note, "the technology for the successful cloning of human beings is clearly on the horizon" (323).

event. Also engaging in a discussion of trauma in film, Susannah Redstone (2007, 9) discusses the "unconscious drives and desires" which are a main feature of trauma. She maintains, "The inner world of the traumatized subject is characterized not by repression of unknowledgeable fantasies but by dissociated memories – traceless traces" (20). Radstone describes trauma as "catastrophic personal and collective experiences" (11). Lincoln struggles with processing the trauma of his birth which is a symptom of having the agnates born as adults. After being in the compound for three years, the trauma of his birth begins to emerge, aggravated by his rapid mental development. Memory shares an intrinsic relationship with the unconscious, where repression and fantasy are "replaced by an understanding of memory as related to brain functioning" (11). Lincoln's trauma is made visible through his recurring nightmares and he is propelled into his role as the rebel hero through the trauma of his recurring nightmares where the memories of his sponsor appear vividly as they increase in number and in the severity with which they are experienced.

The trauma of his creation and birth acts as the catalyst of the emergence of the rebel hero who rises up against the power that once dominated his life in the compound. Radstone observes how in trauma theory, it is the "event rather than the subject, which emerges as unpredictable or ungovernable" (18). Lincoln's rebellion is brought about through his trauma and his ability to take control of his circumstances rather than allowing them to control him. Although he has been helpless in his creation and birth, he does take an active stand when he becomes aware of his status as a clone.

3.10 The Camera Techniques of Dream-Mode and Reverse On-screen Motion

Lincoln's dream sequence is depicted through the cinematography of dream mode and reverse on-screen motion. The cinematic term dream-mode is employed to describe a part of the motion picture which utilises camera techniques to delve into the unconscious mind or to reveal the "workings of the mind" (Beaver 1994, 125-126). This technique is also used to capture scenes that are "derived from the imagination" (126), and it is characterised by "lack of continuity", illogicality and disconnectedness (126). These characteristics are amplified by the scene's use of reverse on-screen motion.

Lincoln's dream initially follows a chronological narrative until it changes into a nightmare. The water moves rapidly in reverse motion and this catches the audience off-guard as it deviates

from the conventional mode of filming. The reverse motion shot is achieved by "reversing the head and tail of the shot" (297). This effect creates "weird confusion" and distortion (James 1999, 10). One of the earliest employments of this technique features in *Démolition d'un mur* (Demolition of a Wall) (1895), a short black and white, silent film, created by the Lumière brothers. The film depicts workers pushing down a wall and breaking it, only to have it reappear through the reverse on-screen motion technique. *Memento* (2000, dir. Christopher Nolan) is a modern example of the use of this technique, which is visible at the onset of the film, where the development of a photograph is reversed.

The unnaturalness of reverse on-screen motion disturbs the viewer while still maintaining the story-line, and this disruption emphasises the notion of horror in the nightmare. Vivian Sobchack (2000, 135) appropriates Sigmund Freud's term of the uncanny to describe this phenomenon. Freud equates the uncanny with the German word *unheimlich* (1919 [2003], 124). He notes that this term "belongs to the realm of the frightening, of what evokes fear and dread", and creates "distress" (123). He associates the term with the "unfamiliar" (125), and this relates to reverse on-screen motion through the notion that the reversal of time is being experienced. Sobchack (2000, 135) discuss this film technique and places an "emphasis on the essential irreversibility of human temporality and physical animation, and on morality".

Reverse on-screen motion as used within Lincoln's dream sequence works to foreground the trauma of his creation, birth and function in the compound. The ocean and water present in the dream are representative of the nutrient liquid that the agnates develop in. Lincoln's dream of drowning further highlights that trauma of his birth and emergence from the artificial womb. Sobchack notes that this camera technique has a "haunting power" (135), as it alters and affects the normal perception of time as chronological and progressive. The undoing of time only serves to emphasise the trauma that Lincoln experiences through his recurring nightmares. Trauma does not conform to temporality, disrupting how a traumatic event is viewed. Trauma disrupts temporal orientation (Holman and Silver 1998, 1147), which alters the "primary context through which humans understand and make sense of their life experiences" (1146).

Sobchack discusses how this technique is employed when filming car-crashes, as it alters the chronological notion of the accident through reverse on-screen action which gives the effect of reducing "the mortal peril of human bodies performing such dangerous stunts" (135). The dream-mode technique used in Bay's nightmare sequence functions to communicate to the

audience that Lincoln's distress is not life-threatening. Reverse on-screen action is also used when depicting the trauma and devastation of the scene, and it is also deployed in films that depict time travel. Examples of science fiction films that feature this effect are *Superman* (1978, dir. Richard Donner), *Men in Black III* (2012, dir. Barry Sonnenfeld), *Lucy* (2014, dir. Luc Besson), and *Doctor Strange* (2016, dir. Scott Derrickson). With the exception of *Lucy*, these films employ reverse on-screen motion to undo a catastrophe, disaster and death, whereas in *Lucy* this technique is used to give the effect of time-travel which emphasises her limitless knowledge.

3.11 The Social Anxiety of Biotechnology (Human Genetic Engineering)

Biotechnology is a prominent theme in science fiction films. Such films have the capacity to depict the dual nature of medical technologies, to both create and destroy life; to create a eutopia or a dystopia. When a dystopia emerges, these films evoke a moral discourse with biotechnology. Slonczewski and Levy (2003) discuss the role of the life sciences within the genre of science fiction. In addition to discussing the founding work which depicts the life sciences (174), as discussed earlier, the authors assert that the "culminating novel of gene technology is Crichton's *Jurassic Park* (1991)" which was then made into a film series, with the latest film produced in 2015 titled *Jurassic World* (dir. Colin Trevorrow) (180). *Jurassic Park* details how dinosaur DNA, found within a fossilised mosquito, is used to bring the dinosaurs back to life. *Jurassic World* pushes the boundaries of biotechnology further as the "ultimate" dinosaur is created through using the DNA and desirable traits of various animals, including other dinosaurs.

Over the past decades the life sciences have featured prominently in the science fiction genre with films such as *Gattaca* (1997, dir. Andrew Niccol), *Ultraviolet* (2006, dir. Kurt Wimmer) and *I am Legend* (2007, dir. Francis Lawrence). Slonczewski and Levy note, "The quest for outer space has given way to the quest for the genome" (2003, 174). Films such as *The Island* explore the possibility of a better life on Earth, and their concern does not lie in inter-galactic and space exploration. Booker and Thomas (2009, 325) described genetic engineering as "A branch of technology dealing with the modification of human […] DNA, either to correct some perceived genetic disorder or deficiency or to produce new characteristics altogether".

Brian Stableford (2000), writing about "Biotechnology and Utopia", maintains that biotechnology was not always a feature of science fiction. Early science fiction works took their cue from Darwinian thought, which noted that "the perfection of society would have to wait for natural selection to provide the necessary evolutionary progress" (189). The leaps and bounds that science took in the early twentieth century opened up new avenues for the possibility to alter and create life through the experiments of individuals such as Alexis Carrel and Ross Harrison, among others (192). Stableford analyses biotechnology from a positive angle, noting its importance to utopia, and encouraging writers of fiction to create utopias using the biological sciences.

While Stableford champions the cause for the presence of biotechnology in literature, Jürgen Habermas (2001) provides an argument against human cloning. He discusses the notion of human cloning and its moral and ethical implications. He observes that the "normalization" of technologies that allow for human cloning to occur are influenced by the weak "moral objections that hold them in check" (163). He uses the example of the "desire for one's own child", and comments that it outweighs the ethical implications of cloning, thus allowing "faster scientific, commercial, and consumer interests" to "win out" (163).

The Island depicts human genetic engineering as a plausible possibility through visual representations of science and cloning through science fiction. Slonczewski and Levy (2003, 175) maintain, "Early sf [science fiction] treatments of biology were generally somewhat vague as to the mechanisms, largely because advances in biology lagged behind physical sciences until the discovery of DNA" in the 1950s. The year 2003 also saw success made in the scientific community as the completion of the Human Genome Project occurred, utilising earlier cloning techniques (Mueller 2010). Guerra (2009, 278) maintains, "Medical technologies have advanced beyond the imagination and comfort level of many, bringing up questions of reproduction, the sanctity of human life, human identity, and ultimate authority over the human body". Science fiction within *The Island* reveals itself through the agnates, which are clones in their primary form. In light of what Guerra comments about technology, the notion of the agnate represents a plausible notion for the prospect of human genetic engineering. The society that exists in Bay's film is dependent upon biotechnology. If Merrick is allowed to continue his deception by creating a surplus of clones then this society will possess an "inexhaustible supply" of organs (Slonczewski and Levy 2003, 181).

Gabriele Mueller (2010) explores the use of biotechnology and eugenics in two German films. She observes, "creating the perfect human being has always been part of the human imagination" (2). The genre of science fiction film allows for the "technical capabilities" of the themes of the clone or the "doppelganger" to become visible (2). Human genetic engineering cannot be depicted and discussed without the moral and ethical issues that surround this technology, as "ethical concerns and prohibitive legislation seem to prevent human cloning" (2). Furthermore, Mueller notes, "utopian thinking" and "questions of the individual's autonomy" are significant themes that emerge through human genetic engineering (3). Social anxieties surround both the creation of life and its control, which emerges through the depiction of human cloning, within the genre of science fiction. Mueller maintains that discourse of cloning in Germany centres on the "dangers of human cloning", which vacillate "between dystopian warnings of a commodification of human existence and euphoric promises of a potential to genetically erase human flaws and illness forever" (4). While Muller observes the above in relation to Nazi Germany, I argue that this is the same for the situation that emerges in *The Island*. Commodification is evident in the film through the "products" that Merrick Biotech produces. It is also significant that only the affluent can afford to "purchase" a clone from Merrick Biotech. Guerra (2009, 290) observes, "at the core of the debate about ownership lies the question: What does it mean to be human?" This question, I would argue, extends into a moral rhetorical question about the defining factors that constitute being human. The figure of the clone evokes an ethical and moral debate which centres on the autonomy of the clone in relation to its creation and purpose. Habermas (2001, 167) comments on the anxiety that human cloning displays, as it could "impinge on the fundamental symmetry of mutual relations between free and equal legal persons".

The Island interrogates the moral dilemma of cloning human beings. The film by no means depicts the killing of clones as morally justifiable; however, it does show how the prospects of clones can both save lives and result in the exploitation of the service. Sarah Jordan (Two Delta's sponsor) requires multiple organ replacements, after a car accident, which will save her life. Her tragedy is further highlighted by the fact that she has a young child, who mistakes Jordan for his mother. On the other side of the metaphorical coin, Tom Lincoln abuses alcohol and he is promiscuous, which has resulted in him suffering from cirrhotic hepatitis. He blatantly disregards his health because of his access to replacement organs. Bay's narrative successfully interrogates the ambiguities relating to the moral discourse of cloning and biotechnology.

3.12 The First Rebel Hero as the Iconoclast

Lincoln can be described as an iconoclast within Bay's text. The figure of the iconoclast is related to the acts of iconoclasm which emerged in the Byzantine Empire, particularly in the 700s BC (Pădureţu and Ion 2011, 87). Iconoclasm has emerged at different periods in human history in response to change, whether social, political, and religious or otherwise. The term iconoclasm is derived from the conjunction of two Greek expressions, namely *eikon* which means image, face or complexion and *klasma* which means to break or to crush; the term iconoclast, therefore, refers to "one that destroys images" (88). Iconoclasm was "triggered [for] political reasons" (87) as a response to Christianity's excessive veneration of icons and statues (87). Iconoclasm was "one of the most terrible anti-Christian currents that shook the very foundation of faith" (89).

The impulse behind iconoclasm is to destroy (Pădureţu and Ion 2011, 89), and this is precisely what Lincoln does when he enters the compound to save the other inhabitants. He smashes through the mechanisms that control and maintain the facility. In turn, the turbine smashes through the facility, breaking a wall, which reveals sunlight and the uncontaminated outside world to the inhabitants. Lincoln is also directly responsible for shattering the façade that Merrick Biotech portrays to the wider public. He brings about a new social order that is inclusive of the under-class (clones), through identifying them as human beings, and thus conferring the right to life onto them. The figure of the iconoclast acknowledges that "creation is also an act of destruction", for in order to "create something new, you have to tear down conventional ways of thinking" (Bems 2008, 10). For a new world order to emerge in Bay's utopia, that is inclusive of the clones as human beings, the old social order has to alter to one that is inclusive and accepting of their clones.

Iconoclasm has taken on a modern meaning, and the word is used to describe "a person who does something that others say can't be done" (6). Gregory Bems (2008) discusses the figure of the iconoclast and explores how this figure thinks. He notes, "where most people shy away from things that are different, the iconoclast embraces novelty" (8). Lincoln's capacity for rebellion is what sets him apart from the other inhabitants who are compliant with the corporation. Bems also observes how the iconoclast lacks fear (8), and "although he may still experience […] fears, [he] does not let them inhibit his actions" (9). Lincoln develops a strong sense of morality after he learns of Merrick's deception to the public. In spite of knowing the

power that the corporation has over the inhabitants, Lincoln still sets out to destroy his creator and his capitalist venture. Although both Lincoln and Jordan display fear in varying degrees when they return to the compound to free the other clones, they do not allow the fear to hamper their intentions.

Bems notes that in order for a successful transition to be made into the iconoclast, the "individual must sell his ideas to other people" (9). Lincoln implants his ideals onto Jordan, who, in turn, plays a significant role in inciting the rebellion of the second rebel hero in the text. Bems describes the modern iconoclast as an individual who "elicits change that begins with altered perceptions and ends with effecting change in other people" (9). Lincoln's actions of rebellion and escape also work to arouse curiosity within the other inhabitants. Jones Three Echo also begins to ask the security questions pertaining to his daily tasks, going so far as to question the integrity of the security when the Three Echo generation is forced into the incineration chamber. Lincoln, despite no longer being inside the compound, has succeeded in influencing other inhabitants to also question their environment and the authorities that control them. The rebel figure's influence is profound as the architect of inquiry. Lincoln rebels against Merrick and his socio-political agenda. While Bay's film projects a utopian society that is the embodiment of vanity, the political stance of this society is reflected through the notion that the president also has a clone in the facility, showing how all sectors of this society collude in Merrick's twisted desire for control.

3.13 Technology, the Garden of Eden and the Creation of a Living God

Bay's narrative is premised upon a utopia, while the film puts forth the notion of a eutopia, a paradise, creating an analogy with the Judeo-Christian concept of the Garden of Eden. Merrick emerges as the supreme power in the narrative through his God complex and his ability to create and destroy life. As much as human genetic engineering is intertwined into the present and future discourse of science and technology, it also evokes a historical debate through the theme of "corporations" which use "biotechnology to colonize the human mind and body for fiscal gain" (Guerra 2009, 282). Stephanie Guerra observes that a common theme that runs through texts which feature science fiction and biotechnology is that "wealth defines power and the powerful are licensed to exploit the minds and bodies of others for profit" (284).

Greed displays itself through the characterisation of Merrick in Bay's text. He is established at the beginning of the film as an individual who places himself above others. Lincoln asks McCord, "What's with Dr Merrick?" and McCord replies, "It's called a God complex; all doctors are like that, they think they know everything" (Bay 2005). Guerra identifies greed as one of the key themes that emerge in science fiction texts that feature biotechnology at its core (293). Merrick views himself in this light due to his ability to create and control the clones through the use of technology. Gorman Beauchamp (1986), as discussed in the Introduction of this study, draws a distinction between the technophiles and the technophobes. Merrick can be described as a technophile as he exerts his control over his creation. The fear that the technophobes exhibit comes to pass within *The Island* as Lincoln surpasses the authority of his creator when he takes control of his destiny after escaping the facility, and then returning to liberate the other clones and kill Merrick, his creator.

Merrick refers to his utopia as an Eden. This concept has biblical connotations and it also foregrounds Merrick's opinion of himself as a God. Through the façade of the lottery, Merrick creates the imaginary image of Eden which he uses to indoctrinate the inhabitants of the compound, allowing himself power and control over them. Although illusory, the island is depicted as a paradise. Jean Delumeau (2000, 3) discusses the implications of the word "paradise" which refers to the "garden of delights in which Adam and Eve lived for a short time". In a sense, Lincoln and Jordan can be modelled on Adam and Eve in Bay's narrative. The compound is introduced as the first eutopia, and paradise, where their stay is short-lived. Adam and Eve were allowed to occupy Eden for as long as they displayed obedience to God and his warnings regarding the "tree of knowledge of good and evil", where their disobedience meant death (5). Like Eve, Lincoln disobeys the rules of authority and through his transgressions both he and Jordan escape the Eden constructed for them. Their self-imposed exile is also short-lived when they return to the compound to free the other clones and kill their creator, affirming their status as free, autonomous human beings.

At the end of the narrative, they both can be seen sailing upon the *Renovatio*, fulfilling the dream that Lincoln had at the beginning of the narrative. Their reward at the end of the film is then to live in a paradise characterised by "perfection, freedom, peace, happiness, abundance, and the absence of duress, tensions, and conflicts" (6). Like Eve, Lincoln and Jordan exercise free will and create their own eutopia after destroying Merrick's eutopia, built on falsifications.

Instead of being punished for their transgressions it is Merrick, the serpent, who experiences a biblical Fall.

Biotechnology and human genetic engineering play a double role within the film. Although they are the very forces that allow Merrick to be placed on a pedestal, they also work to bring about his downfall when it is discovered that the clones are able to develop mental capabilities beyond the limits with which they are manufactured. The very force and power that have placed Merrick on a pedestal prove to also be the same force that results in his fall from the dizzying heights of his creative seat. Merrick's power and authority as a God is further highlighted when he reveals that Sarah Jordan will not survive her injuries die to brain damage, but Jordan will be harvested for her organs anyway. He refers to the agnates by saying, "they are simply tools, instruments" (Bay 2005), and he is able to view them through this lens as he created them.

Merrick's inflated ego can be directly attributed to his ability to create clones. The clones are constantly dehumanised when they are referred to as products. The process of cloning creates a shift of power in the utopian society, and this shift is depicted through inequality and the creation of an under-class. Habermas (2001, 164) points out:

> if we are to bear the burden of responsibility for our actions: no person may so dispose over another person, may so control his possibilities for acting, in such a way that the dependent person is deprived of an essential part of his freedom. This condition is violated if one person decides the genetic makeup of another.

Merrick refers to his discovery as "the holy grail of science" (Bay 2005), highlighting his pompous opinion of his project. He also says that in two years' time he will be able to cure children's leukaemia. He asks Laurent, "How many people on Earth can say that?" to which Laurent replies, "I guess just you and God? That's the answer you're looking for isn't it?" (Bay 2005). Merrick's God complex is once again revealed through this exchange. Merrick attempts to play God by creating and destroying human life as he sees fit. Merrick does not answer Laurent's question and therefore he admits that he is searching for the same recognition given to God. His hubris, lust for power and desire for control position him as Satan in the dystopia that he has created, despite his delusion of grandeur.

3.14 The Figure of the Clone (Doppelganger) in Science Fiction Film

Bay's text evokes a discussion of the figure of the doppelganger, created through the process of cloning. Booker and Thomas (2009, 322-323) observe that cloning in films "usually involves the replication of entire organisms, so that the resultant clones are exact replicas of the original organism." While Lincoln is an exact copy of Tom, their worldviews differ significantly. This is made evident through the disparity between the copy and the original. Gerald Bär (2007) focuses his discussion on the figure of the doppelganger in American science fiction films. He simply defines the doppelganger as a "double-vision presented to the reader" (90). Bär notes that the figure of the doppelganger in cinema "reveals man as a piece of art in the age of technical reproduction" (93).

Lincoln comes face to face with his doppelganger and he proves to be more successful at human relationships than his sponsor, Tom Lincoln. This success is depicted through Lincoln's ability to attain freedom through the death of his donor. When donor and clone first meet, Tom is taken aback by Lincoln's successful relationship with a woman as attractive as Jordan. Tom does not conform to the nuclear family unit as he is a bachelor, and this is communicated through the many photographs of him by himself. Bär notes that the doppelganger "appears to be the figuration of the absent, in the sense of representing repressed, unfulfilled wishes or fears of a personified 'alter ego'" (91). Lincoln experiences the memories of his donor while Tom has no knowledge of Lincoln's existence until he meets his clone. Lincoln also acquired the skills from his donor, as shown through his ability to draw the boat from his dream. Lincoln, as the clone, functions to "haunt and challenge the protagonist's internalized image of himself" (92), especially when Tom becomes aware of the relationship between Jordan and Lincoln. Bär comments that the most interesting aspect about the doppelganger is "not his similarity but rather what makes him different from the original" (96). Lincoln's characterisation as the rebel hero is affirmed through his meeting with his sponsor. Despite Lincoln being the copy, he possesses a more well-rounded character formation than his donor, and he is the more likable of the two. In spite of the trope of doubling, the viewer prefers Lincoln to his donor.

When Tom and Lincoln come face to face with each other, each believes that what they are seeing is an illusion. Mueller discusses the importance of the figure of the clone or the doppelganger. She observes, "Traditional patterns of human relationships are dissolving because they are in the way of the individual's right to ultimate self-fulfillment. The radical

solution offered to this dilemma of the human condition is the clone" (9). While Mueller views the clone as a solution to the problem of self-fulfilment, Bay's narrative depicts a society where compassion is not even felt for one's own clone. Tom's deceptive nature reveals itself when he sets his clone up for capture, as his concern lies in the money that he has spent on his "insurance policy" (Bay 2005). Habermas discusses the implications that the figure of the clone will have on its donor and vice versa. He notes that this relationship "would introduce a previously unknown form of interpersonal relationship between genetic original and genetic copy" (2001, 168). *The Island* portrays a negative relationship between donor and clone, where society is unable to acknowledge the clone as human.

Lincoln and Jordan, upon escaping from the compound, manage to successfully evade capture by Laurent, who was hired by Merrick to track them down. Laurent uses the micro-sensors to assist him with this task, and Guerra (2009, 286) comments, "technology plays a role of double betrayal, allowing both the creation and detection of these groups [clones]". Lincoln and Jordan manage to track down Lincoln's sponsor, who gains his clone's trust, and then betrays him to the authorities. The clones as the under-class in *The Island* function as tools for humans in the real world to utilise. Tom Lincoln (Lincoln's sponsor), alerts the authorities about his clone's escape, and he thus arranges for his insurance policy to be captured. This scene is charged with tension as Laurent aims a gun at both Tom and his clone, unsure which one to kill. Lincoln intelligently attaches his bracelet from the compound to Tom's hand, and imitates his Scottish accent, which results in Tom being shot and killed. Lincoln then assumes the identity of his doppelganger. Habermas (2001, 168), in a discussion of the relationship between genetic original and genetic copy, comments, "the clone" is "placed under the lifelong judgement imposed by another". Lincoln, however, uses this to his advantage.

Tom does judge his clone, but as soon as the two interact with each other it becomes evident that Lincoln, the clone, is more successful from a social perspective than his donor. Despite seeing his clone and learning that he will be killed to ensure his survival, Tom still sets up his clone's capture. This highlights the greed and indoctrination that this society embodies. Lincoln's ability to outsmart his sponsor displays his capacity for profound thought and analytical thinking. Lincoln, as the clone and the copy, should occupy an inferior position to his sponsor; however, he shows the ability not only to supersede his sponsor but also to assimilate his behaviour, and thereby his identity, and thus take on his life. Tom, by setting up

his clone for capture, colludes with the narcissism and vanity that have possessed the population within this utopia.

The use of the doppelganger allows for the "mirroring" of oneself "in the sense of extreme self-reflection" (Bär 2007, 90). Lincoln has a strong moral compass, and Tom does not, as he has spent his life wasting it away as a result of his alcoholism. Lincoln succeeds in creating a meaningful relationship with Jordan, whereas Tom has only succeeded in creating meaningless relationships throughout the course of his life. When the film first opens, Lincoln already has an established personality, and this personality differs from that of his donors. Habermas (2001, 164) observes that the "question of who we are, and who we would like to be, can indeed be explained by the fact that, in a certain sense, we already find ourselves to be a particular person". When Lincoln meets his donor it becomes clear how different they are from each other. Lincoln strives to preserve his existence, whereas Tom's negligence towards his health establishes him as an irresponsible person without the desire to preserve his life. Lincoln strives not only for the preservation of his own life but for that of the other clones as well. Tom, on the other hand, displays his selfish actions through plotting the capture of his "insurance policy" (Bay 2002).

Lincoln also successfully establishes a romantic relationship and connection with Jordan, whereas Tom leads a life devoid of meaningful relationships. The clone establishes himself as more successful at human interactions and at negotiating emotions than his donor. The audience then responds to the clone in a positive manner, when compared to Tom, and little sympathy is evoked when Tom dies. Even though the clones are supposed to have the mentality of a child, Lincoln shows his capacity to function in the real world.

3.15 The Rebel Hero and Anxieties about Organ Trafficking

The Island evokes the social anxiety related to the trafficking of human organs in response to the global demand for transplantable organs. In Bay's narrative, Lincoln witnesses his fellow inhabitants being murdered for their organs, and this horror plays an imperative role in his emegence as the rebel hero. This particular scene illusrates the harrowing images of harvested body parts and babies. The audience is unaware of the inhabitants' status as clones at this point in the narrative, and this works to place viewer sympathy with the clones. The audience draws little to no distinction between the clone and the donor, establishing the clones not as mere

copies but as human beings who desire progress, feel pain and experience emotions. We view the clones as human, in every way that matters rather than just a product.[16] The audience's sympathy lies with the subjects who are robbed of their right to life and thus their individuality and autonomy.

The Island projects a utopia in which human organs are in constant supply for the use and abuse of the wealthy citizens. The reality of the practice of harvesting organs is first witnessed by the rebel hero. The notion of readily available organs evokes a discussion of the human trafficking of organs in contemporary society and across the globe. This notion has been examined and its severity has been made evident through the deaths and damage that it causes for the humans who are forced to offer up their organs.

Nancy Scheper-Hughes (2004), an ethnographer and medical anthropologist, engages in an exploration of the trafficking in human organs. She notes that the process of trafficking human organs rests on the notion that it "harm[s] one population of bodies in order to bring vitality to another (more privileged) population of patients" (31). This unequal dynamic is played out in Bay's narrative, as only the wealthy can afford the privilege of replacing their organs. The clones are encouraged to maintain a state of health and vitality to ensure that their organs remain in good condition. Scheper-Hughes notes that the most common organs that are trafficked are kidneys, and this creates a "global 'scarcity' of the transplantable organ" (33). This scarcity in the real world provides a fictional base for Bay's film. The utopia present within the film revolves around the production and replacement of organs for humans outside of the compound.

Capitalism is seen as the driving force behind the production and consumption of human organs within the film. Scheper-Hughes discusses the implication of capitalism in contemporary society and the globe, and how it impacts the global trade of human organs. She comments that capitalism has "incited new tastes and desires for the skin, bone, blood, organs, tissue and reproductive and genetic material of others" (34). Society sees the need for these human products, and a flourishing international market has already emerged. Scheper-Hughes attributes the process of globalisation as a key contributing factor towards the spread and

---

[16] This statement lies in contrast to Merrick's business pitch. He says to his potential clients, "it is a product, ladies and gentleman, in every way that matters" (Bay 2005).

increase of the trafficking of human organs. Globalisation has resulted in "an exodus of displaced persons", and this has led to a "voracious appetite for foreign bodies to do the shadow work of production and to provide 'fresh organs' for medical consumption" (34). Merrick is actively involved in orchestrating what Scheper-Hughes refers to as "shadow work", especially when he uses the unwitting clones to sustain the agnates.

3.16 Trauma, Slavery and the Second Rebel Hero

Through the presence of the second rebel hero, Bay's narrative makes reference to slavery and its representation in the modern world through the act of branding. Initially hired to capture Lincoln and Jordan, Laurent rebels against his order from Merrick and assists Jordan in freeing the clones. Slavery as a theme in the film is evoked through Laurent's life story, and the treatment that he endured under conditions of war is paralleled to the treatment of the clones through the act of branding practised during the time of the Atlantic Slave Trade.

The Island projects a discourse that centres on the difference between the genetically superior and the genetically inferior. The film does not overtly promote a discourse with race, as heroism is exemplified by both black and white protagonists. However, race is implied through slavery and the act of branding human beings. When Laurent captures Jordan, he notices that her wrist is branded. Laurent meets with Merrick and he says to him,

> You know my father was part of the Burkinabe rebellion, and when he was killed, me and my brothers were branded so others would know that we were less than human. I've seen and done things in my life I'm not proud of but at some point, you realise war is business. So when did killing become a business for you? (Bay 2005)

Laurent shows Merrick his palm, which is branded, and he is thus revealed as a victim of war. Laurent is aware of what lies beneath the mask that Merrick Biotech hides behind. He understands the plight of the clones due to his own personal experience and the trauma that he has endured as a result of war. By delving into history and citing the Burkinabe rebellion and branding of humans, Laurent raises the countless events of violence against humans in conditions of war and conflict in the past and in the present. Laurent is a product of violence, conflict and war within the African continent. He recalls his experience of war amidst the nuanced form of slavery which Merrick Biotech has created. Historically, America has played

a key role in the perpetuation of slavery and its abolition.[17] Both Laurent and the clones evoke a discourse with slavery as they have been branded, deeming them as less than human beings.

Leonard J. Hoenig (2012, 271) defines slavery in America through race, noting that "the color of one's skin determined who was slave and who was master". Slavery in Bay's text is visible through the disparities between genetic material and not race. Habermas (2001, 164) equates the technological process of cloning with the historical notion of slavery. He also defines slavery, but unlike Hoenig who discuss slavery from a racial perspective, Habermas defines slavery in terms of social and power relations. He says that slavery is "a legal relationship signifying that one person disposes over another as property". Merrick is not only responsible for creating the clones but he also owns them, utilising them as a means to an end. Discussing slavery and branding within the American context, Hoenig comments, "The branding of African American slaves was widespread and was performed either for identification purpose or as punishment" (271). In Bay's film, the clones are branded on the wrist, after which an identification band is placed over the branded area. The clones are reduced to the status of slaves within the film, through their branded wrists, their confinement to the compound, the strict rules applied to their living conditions, and the forced labour that is imposed upon them. Their status as clones creates an analogy with slavery and the oppression of human beings, robbing them of their free will and autonomy. Referring to them as "products" only enforces the extent of their dehumanisation.

Trauma and the butchering of the human body functions as an extended metaphor through the Pablo Picasso painting that Merrick has in his office. This painting functions to reinforce the representation and manifestation of trauma within the text. The painting, *Femme Assise (Jacqueline)* (1962), depicts the exaggerated features of the human form and face. The painting shows parts of the human body pieced together in an unnatural way. The painting distorts the image of the human body, and this is indicative of what Merrick Biotech does to the clones that it creates for the harvesting of body parts. In the same way that the painting takes mismatched body parts and places them together in a piece of art, Merrick and his corporation harvest and use the clones to replenish the body parts of humans in the real world.

---

[17] Slavery was abolished in America in 1865, at in the end of the American Civil War (1861-1865) (Vorenberg 2004, 2). This civil war occurred between the North, which was opposed to slavery, and the South, which depended on slaves for agriculture. On January 1st, 1863, Abraham Lincoln, issued the Emancipation Proclamation and two years later, the 13th Amendment to the Constitution was adopted, which led to the abolishment of slavery (Hoenig 2012, 271), outlawing involuntary servitude (Vorenberg 2004, 6).

Merrick Biotech brutally murders all the developing agnates by cutting open the artificial womb. The nutrient-liquid escapes the quasi-wombs and the agnates die, highlighting their helplessness and dependency on their creators. When the more developed clones choke to death a voice-over says, "You have been chosen, you're special, very special" (Bay 2005). The voice-over serves to highlight the deranged system that the corporation functions under. The system allows the under-class to believe that they are unique and special; however, the direct antithesis is true. The voice-over amidst the murder of the clones highlights the corporate nature of the facility which is premised upon profit alone. The scene in which the gas chambers are used to get rid of the "defective product" broaches the historical Nazi regime's manner of disposing of human beings through gas chambers and mass genocide. The clones are placed in a chamber, and a close-up camera shot shows how gas is expelled into the chamber to kill them. *The Island* imagines not just a future utopian imaginary but it also succeeds in addressing crimes against humanity that are a significant part of human history. Hitler was a Social Darwinist (Weikart 2002, 323), and his ability to view some humans as genetically superior to others shares similarities with Merrick's desire to create and destroy life as he sees fit. The clones are thought of as genetically inferior as they are "copies of people in the real world" (Bay 2005); their lives are therefore less significant within the context of this utopia.

Laurent emerges as the second rebel hero of the text through his ability to defy Merrick. Laurent first presents himself at Merrick's sales pitch where he witnesses an agnate, and through working within the facility he becomes aware of the true nature of the corporation. When Laurent apprehends Jordan he notices the branding on her wrist and he is reminded of his own trauma. Laurent purposefully disobeys Merrick by assisting the clones out of the gas chamber.

Both the rebel heroes of the text find an antagonist in Merrick, and they both make a conscious decision to defy the authority that they once obeyed. Lincoln and Laurent have no contact with each other during the course of the film, yet they both display heroism that is marked by transgression. The two rebel heroes work independently from each other, although their actions function as a collective rebellion against Merrick Biotech and the principles that lie within its foundation. In spite of Laurent being tasked with capturing Lincoln and Jordan, he makes a conscious choice to assist them in their cause instead of apprehending them. Laurent rebels against Merrick as he sees the injustices committed against other human beings for the sake of profit. Laurent draws an analogy between the corporation and his experience in conditions of

war; war enslaves individuals as soldiers and Merrick enslaves the clones for a surplus supply of organs.

The two rebel heroes mirror each other in the sense that they both emerge out of traumatic circumstances which are characterised by oppression and subjugation. Even though Laurent is tasked with capturing Lincoln and Jordan, he makes a conscious decision to defy his employer and bring about the downfall of Merrick Biotech. Lincoln also makes a conscious decision to go back to the compound and free the clones, in spite of attaining his freedom. Both rebel heroes play integral roles in the freedom of the clones from the compound, as Laurent saves the clones from the gas chamber and Lincoln kills Merrick. Although the film initially sets the two rebel heroes against each other, their moral compasses are what make them so similar to each other. Merrick has power over both the rebel heroes, but their combined rebellion against Merrick brings an end to the corporation.

Lincoln, as the primary rebel hero of the text, is tasked with providing the impetus for communal awareness and dissent. *Minority Report* (2002, dir. Steven Spielberg), *Oblivion* (2013, dir. Joseph Kosinski), *The Giver* (2014, dir. Phillip Noyce) and *Passengers* (2016, dir. Marten Tyldum) are recent examples of films that feature a hero who brings about communal awareness and opposition to the ruling entities. In Bay's film, communal awareness becomes apparent after Lincoln escapes the compound. Not only do the other clones enquire about his whereabouts but they also begin to question their purpose in the compound. The clones also display curiosity when the mass lottery is announced, as they question and undermine the function of the security in the compound. Through the clones' growing awareness, their respective identities and individual natures become visible. This is displayed through the characterisation of Jones, who also enquires about the frequency of finding survivors. Lincoln's growing awareness and curiosity become visible in other inhabitants, creating difficulties for Merrick and his cloning project. Lincoln also plays a key role in crashing the turbines into the compound, which revels an uncontaminated world to the clones. They all rush towards the sunlight having realised the façade created by Merrick Biotech.

In the final scenes of the film, Merrick hunts down Lincoln and attacks him with an airbow. He calls him "truly unique", and refers to him as Six Echo. Lincoln screams, "My name is Lincoln!" (Bay 2005). In doing so, he reclaims his identity and individualism; he is not merely

a copy of a human. Habermas (2001, 171) explores the relationship between producer and produced. He comments,

> This relation of dependency deviates from all known interpersonal relationships insofar as it fundamentally resists being transformed into a relation of equals, between normatively equal partners deserving of equal treatment. The designer fixes the initial shape of his product irrevocably and asymmetrically – without the possibility for a change of roles.

Merrick makes known the power that he wields over the clones and Lincoln as he constantly draws attention to his creative potential. In spite of the immense power that he yields, his creation is the driving force behind his demise and the ultimate destruction of Merrick Biotech. Bay's utopia does embody a change of roles, and this only occurs through the emergence of the rebel hero.

Due to the imbalance of power that exists between producer and produced (the clone), the only resolution to the conflict would be a battle to the death between the two. Lincoln's transgression is highlighted by his ability to kill his creator. Lincoln strives to control his own destiny, and therefore his ability to establish himself as a rebel hero with autonomy can only occur through the death of his creator, by his hands. Merrick flexes his power through the clichéd notion of telling Lincoln that he brought him into the world and therefore has the right to take his life. Lincoln succeeds in piercing Merrick's throat with the same weapon which Merrick used on him. The explosion from Lincoln smashing through the mechanisms results in Lincoln and Merrick hanging from a bridge suspended by each other. The effective cinematography of the scene resembles the scales of justice where the pressure from Lincoln's weight suffocates Merrick, who dies due to the weight of his creation. The scales of justice thus tip in favour of Lincoln and the ideals that he represents. The natural balance is restored through Merrick's death and the clone's attainment of freedom. Guerra (2009, 290) observes, "resistance takes precedent from history when an individual or small group stands against a tyrannical regime" to bring about change in their treatment and social status through "escape".

The film concludes after having established both Lincoln and Laurent as the rebel heroes of the film. The last image of Laurent in the film is one which shows him smiling at both Lincoln and Jordan. Laurent knows that he has done the right thing by helping Jordan and the clones escape. Both Lincoln and Jordan play integral roles in freeing the other clones from the facility.

This functions as a final act of rebellion against Merrick and his corporation. By choosing a side, Laurent emerges as a hero and the only human who championed the cause of the clones (other than McCord). The last scene of the film evokes the first scene of the film as Lincoln and Jordan are seen on the boat, *Renovatio*, as they sail across the ocean. The dream that Lincoln experienced at the beginning of the film presages his destiny and his reality at the end of the film.

Lincoln, as the rebel hero of the text, shares his name with the sixteenth president of the United States of America, Abraham Lincoln. His ability to emancipate and effect change mirrors Lincoln's actions in the course of Bay's narrative. Barry Schwartz (1997, 470) has researched the various images of Abraham Lincoln in the African American mind from 1865 to the present. He notes that "Lincoln considered slavery a moral wrong and worked for its abolition" (473), although some scholars have argued that Lincoln abolished slavery for economic reasons (473).[18] Lincoln emerged in the 1920s American imagination as "slavery's enemy" (476). After the Great Depression he "remained a symbol of racial equality", especially for black leaders who advocated such a stance. Much like Lincoln from *The Island*, his actions led to the emancipation of many people who were oppressed under unfair laws. Lincoln, unlike Frankenstein's monster, expresses his desire to live, and he fights for his right to do so. Schwartz observes, "To activate Lincoln's memory through [texts] is to activate memories that include but extend beyond him" (489). *The Island*, as a film text, evokes Abraham Lincoln's popular memory through naming the main protagonist after the president. *The Island*, as a text with an emphasis on biotechnology through utopian and science fiction film genres, brings to light the social anxieties and trauma that are related to slavery and its undeniable impact on the human quality of life, and by implication, populations.

3.17 Conclusion

The Island depicts not just the ethical questions of human genetic engineering and cloning but it also addresses issues of crimes against humanity, both in a historical and present context. The value of human life is illustrated within the film coupled with the themes of equality,

---

[18] There is considerate debate that surrounds the motives behind Lincoln's emancipation of the slaves. Many authors, like Schwartz, assert that Lincoln's abolition of slavery was not aimed at addressing the inequality between blacks and whites but rather that it was simply opposed to an unjust system. Schwartz (1997, 475) observes that Lincoln was not motivated by his "love for the slave" but rather by his "hatred of slavery" and the ideology behind the system that advocated the unjust treatment of human beings.

freedom and justice. When McCord helps Lincoln and Jordan to escape to the city he offers them a piece of advice. He says, "Do not trust anyone; one thing I can tell you about people is that they'll do anything to survive" (Bay 2005). It is possible that McCord gives the naïve pair this advice as he is aware of the ruthlessness of Merrick, who will stop at nothing to get his products under his control again. McCord's warning proves significant to the film as a whole. Both Lincoln and Jordan defy the odds which are stacked against them, and not only gain their own freedom and individuality, but also manage to attain freedom for the other clones that are trapped in the compound. Lincoln first emerges as the rebel hero of the narrative through his insatiable curiosity, which leads him to embark on a journey of self-discovery culminating in the death of his creator, which signals freedom for all of the clones.

Bay's rendition of a utopia can be classified, to use Sargent's (1994) definition, as a critical utopia. This sub-genre of the utopian concept is categorised as a utopia that is represented to be "better that contemporary society but with different problems" which the society "may or may not be able to solve and which takes a critical view of the utopia genre" (9). The film interrogates the ethical and moral situation of the clone by allowing both original and copy to interact with each other. This relationship exposes the challenges that emerge through this unique and distinct relationship. While the prospect of human genetic engineering holds great potential, advancement and progress for the human race, it is a utopian ideal that is not without its flaws, as the film clearly depicts. While human genetic engineering can better the human race, it can also result in a society that is consumed by greed, vanity and superficiality, where one person can possess power over others, leading to conditions of slavery and exploitation. While appealing, the prospects of human cloning are not without moral and ethical issues, and these issues and the tension that they evoke will continue to plague both science and science fiction film.

The Island, as a film text, shows a positive side of human cloning through allowing the cause of the under-class to be championed by the viewer. The life sciences, as represented through Bay's science fiction film, do not emerge through horror, but rather are utilised in the creation of clones which pose no significant threat to humankind. This changing attitude is articulated by Grech, Vassallo and Callus (2015). The authors note:

> One should note that humanity's attitude to created beings has drastically changed over the decades. The original stance was one of outright and inevitable revulsion, as portrayed by Mary Shelley in *Frankenstein* wherein the creation was viewed with

abhorrence not only by all who viewed him but also by his own creator, to the extent that the creature remained nameless. The contemporary stance is much more relaxed and accepting, almost as if we have embraced science fiction as the paradigm upon which history is expected to play itself out. Cloned creatures, novel and genetically engineered beings of all sorts, from bacteria to animals, are all taken in stride with only token resistance from a relative minority who are tolerantly viewed as luddities by the rest. (55)

Within the text, the clones function to reveal the corrupted morality and mind-sets of the human beings in the film. The film establishes a positive stance towards the figure of the clone, especially when all the clones attain autonomy and freedom at the end of the film. Merrick's secret is let loose from its former confinement in the compound, and the audience can only hope that the clones enter into a world which is populated by civilians who share McCord's worldview, and not that displayed by Tom.

Guerra (2009), while not explicitly engaging in a discussion on slavery and trauma, makes mention of the relationship that exists between social anxieties in the real world and those that are reflected within the science fiction genre. She notes, "Frequently society as a whole is portrayed as both victim and perpetrator of the biases born of the corporate mind-set, just as men born into slavery often propagate racism. In this way, depictions of evil in corporate dystopias closely mirror the complexities of real life" (293). Guerra discusses the dangers and the dystopian society that will manifest through corporations such as Merrick Biotech in conjunction with the prospects of biotechnology. Science fiction texts which depict biotechnology warn that "the future of our nation holds bondage – slavery, even – to greed of scope hardly imaginable, embodied by corporations and enabled and enforced with tools of biotechnology" (294).

In addition to the social anxiety of biotechnology and cloning, Bay's *The Island* also evokes a discussion of the social anxieties relating to capitalism, surveillance, the trafficking of human organs and trauma, which allows for the emergence of two rebel heroes within the text. Both Lincoln and Laurent refuse to be blinded by Merrick Biotech and the pursuit of longevity. They both function to reveal the dystopian undertones that this society is premised upon. Lincoln's curiosity and Laurent's inability to turn a blind eye towards the functioning of the corporation result in them both displaying heroism. They both take on a powerful corporation which has significant socio-political influence on this society. Despite the odds, they both emerge

victorious at the end of the narrative. Their actions contribute to a society that can be inclusive of genetically created beings.

4. Chapter Three

Paternal Presence, Murder and Memory in Phillip Noyce's *The Giver* (2014)

> Memory, both individual and collective, has always played an extensive role in maintaining the core and unity of society, as it constituted the binder, the common denominator that 'glued' together a nation.
>
> – Mihalache Delia Doina (2014, 7)

4.1 Introduction

Noyce's rendition of a utopia is based upon Lois Lowry's (1993) novel of the same name. Although significant commentary has been produced on Lowry's *The Giver*, few scholars have critically engaged with Noyce's film text. This chapter will provide a critical analysis of *The Giver* and the rebel hero, Jonas, who, like the other rebel heroes in this study, emerges through trauma and the restoration of a collective and shared memory and history.[19]

Like *The Island* and *Equilibrium*, *The Giver* reflects a seeming e/utopia where the dystopian elements are soon revealed when the rebel hero becomes aware of the purpose of the rules and laws that govern his society. Although there are more similarities than differences between Lowry's and Noyce's texts, one stark difference remains the ages of the main protagonists, Jonas, Asher and Fiona. In Lowry's text, they are introduced as being on the verge of adolescence at twelve-years-old, whereas in Noyce's text, they are on the verge of adulthood. In making this change, Noyce gives priority to the romantic relationship which develops between Jonas and Fiona, which significantly highlights Jonas's rebellion and Fiona's role in it. Noyce's narrative places an emphasis on the relationship between Jonas and Fiona, whereas Lowry's narrative highlights the relationship between Asher and Jonas.

Like the other utopian films in this study, *The Giver* also broaches the Nazi regime through an exercise in tyranny, represented through the Chief Elder (played by Meryl Streep), in the narrative. Through the presence of the Giver, the film addresses the anxieties of the socio-political system of paternalism. In addition to the primary rebel hero of the text, Jonas, the plot

---

[19] This chapter utilises certain secondary sources and commentary, specifically those produced by Don Latham (2002), Carrie Hintz (2002), and Susan L. Stewart (2007), which analyse Lowry's novel; I employ these to discuss aspects of Noyce's film text which are similar to instances in the novel.

also reveals the Giver as a rebel who defies the rules and laws that his society has set for him, due to his own personal loss and suffering. The primary rebel hero of the narrative emerges when his seeming utopia is revealed to be a dystopia. The rebel hero is revealed through the characteristics of rebellion, defiance, bravery, intelligence and courage. The rebel hero of Noyce's text is discussed through the lens provided by Christopher Vogler, through the trope of mentorship and its role in inciting rebellion.

This chapter also focuses upon the anxieties of the evolving role of the father in contemporary society, while it also addresses the vulnerable position that children occupy in Noyce's utopia. The rebel hero, like the other heroes discussed in this study, emerges through trauma. Trauma and the dual worlds of colour and black-and-white feature in the film and are discussed for the camera and visual effects that they achieve. This chapter also engages in an analysis of gift-giving, foregrounding the relationship between Giver and Receiver.

4.2 The Opening of the Film and the Introduction of the Rebel Hero

As is common in the utopia genre, Noyce's utopia opens after the catastrophe of "The Ruin". Although the events that that have caused this disaster are not elaborated on, its effects have resulted in the creation of a utopia that is built upon sameness. This sameness has been achieved through the erasing of collective memory and history. Jonas, through a voice-over, establishes the basis on which his utopia is established. He says, "We started over, creating a new society, one of equality" (Noyce 2014). Like *Equilibrium*, which predicated its regime on the removal of emotions, the utopia reflected in Noyce's text is based upon an absence of memory and, by extension, emotions.

When the film first opens, Jonas describes his community as a eutopia where there is no "fear, pain, envy, hate" as these "echoes were gone to the outside of history" (2014). John J. Miller (2014, 25) describes the opening of the film which depicts a "neat and orderly society. There's no war or poverty. Everyone has a job. The weather is always nice, and bike paths go everywhere […] At the very least, it seems a pleasant place to live", and Susan G. Lea (2006, 52) describes the utopia as "seductive". Although this is indeed the case, the dystopian elements are revealed when Jonas introduces the rules that govern his community. These rules ensure that sameness and equality are enforced throughout the community. The rules include the following: "use precise language, wear your assigned clothing, take your morning medication,

obey the curfew, never lie" (Noyce 2014). While these rules are aimed at achieving sameness they are restrictive, controlling and aimed at strict conformity, leaving no room for individuality or difference. At the beginning of the film, Jonas differentiates himself from the rest of the community. This is effectively communicated in a monochromatic world, through fleeting glimpses of colour. The novel, by contrast, does not emphasise a world devoid of colour, but rather foregrounds Jonas's anxiety with regard to the upcoming Ceremony.

Jonas also notes that in addition to the above rules, there are no last names present for any members of the community. This is a direct indication of the loss of individualism and identity through reducing each citizen to a mere first name basis. The lack of a surname feeds into the notion that the community lacks a collective and shared history and therefore a lineage. Mihalache Delia Doina (2014, 7) observes, "human identity cannot be outside or in the absence of memory". The family unit in the utopia is constructed of individuals who share no biological relation with each other to ensure conformity in all family units which consist of an appointed 'mother', 'father', 'son' and 'daughter'. A family unit is thus made up of people who share no biological ties with each other. The imitation of a family unit is later critiqued by the Giver, in an encounter he has with Jonas; he says, "A dwelling is not a home" (Noyce 2014). This utopia represented in Noyce's text is one that reflects the lack of meaningful relationships and associations and in turn love.

After Jonas introduces his utopia, he reveals his place in the community. At the onset of the narrative, the rebel hero differentiates himself from the rest of his homogenous community and the other characters that feature in the narrative. He says of himself, "I always felt like I saw things differently" and "I saw things other people didn't" (2014). The characteristics of the rebel hero in Noyce's text are premised upon difference and uniqueness. Jonas is aware of his difference from the rest of his community early on in the plot. Jonas is thus marked as an outsider by the audience through his inability to be a part of the community. Jonas's ability to "see" things differently is elaborated on during the course of this chapter through the film's use of monochromatic camera techniques in colour film. In spite of acknowledging his difference, Jonas expresses a desire to conform when he says, "I didn't wanna be different, who would?" (2014). The rebel hero is introduced into the text as an individual who does not quite fit into his society; however, he expresses a desire to do so, foregrounding the degree of indoctrination grounded in the overwhelming lack of human individuality. In Noyce's text, "everyone is expected to behave as an adult and, at the same time, everyone is treated like a child" (Latham

2002, 9). The community members are embodiments of innocence, politeness and obedience, revealing a utopia where "innocence and security have been bought at a terrible price" (10).

At the onset of the film, the hero is compliant with the laws that govern his utopia. This vantage point changes when Jonas is bestowed with the task of the next Giver of his society at the Ceremony for Advancement. When Jonas learns of the truth behind his duty as the next Giver he rebels, embracing his ability to be different from the other members of his society. It is his difference that allows him to transgress the boundaries that his society has set for him, bringing an end to the dystopia which he refuses to be compliant with.

4.3 The Ceremony for Advancement, Spectacle and Tyranny

The Ceremony of Advancement acts as a microcosm for the utopia, where indoctrination, policing and tyranny are hidden under the guise of politeness, progress and advancement. The ceremony functions to assign a place and purpose to each individual in the community. Tyranny is embodied in the Chief Elder who assigns these places. The irony of the utopia is reflected through her speech when she says that the prime function of the ceremony is to acknowledge differences in various individuals. The Elders assign various positions to each individual, to whom she refers by a number, removing their freedom of choice and autonomy. The utopia never does actually acknowledge difference, but rather it enforces strict conformity to ensure that power and control remain in the hands of the Elders. The ceremony ensures the continued functioning of the utopia as individuals devote their lives in service of their appointed tasks, without any resistance.

In Noyce's narrative, the Chief Elder plays a more significant role as preserver of the utopia and its laws. She is far more vocal in the film, foregrounding her power in the narrative. Her intrusiveness is much more evident in the film than it is in the novel. The Chief Elder begins the ceremony with a speech which bears resemblance to DuPont's speech in *Equilibrium*, the subject of the first chapter in this study. The Chief Elder acknowledges a way of life that existed before the utopia that they inhabit. She praises the establishment and existence of the utopia, acknowledging the catastrophe out of which the utopia arose. She says to the community, "Beginnings: from disorder and chaos, from great suffering, great pain, from confusion, and envy and hatred, came a solution: communities: serene, beautiful places where disorder became harmony" (Noyce 2014). Through the acknowledgment of the previous state of affairs, the

current utopia and its existence are justified. Such exercises in propaganda and indoctrination give rise to the question: if the current utopia is without flaws, then why is there an inherent need to justify its existence? The speech functions to enforce the notion of the elusive eutopia to brainwash the citizens into believing that their dystopian society is in facts a eutopia. The Chief Elder wields immense power over the community, and the indoctrination that she displays serves to cement her power and authority in the utopia. Her speech guarantees that praise and appreciation are afforded to the utopia, highlighting its socio-political grandeur, its founding principles and the role of the Elders, who ensure that the rules and laws that govern the utopia are enforced.

The ceremony is a communal event in which the entire community gather. The considerable crowd was created through special effects which amplified the 400 actors who were used to create an illusion of 10,000 people in attendance (Bahr 2014, 54). The director discusses the effect which he sought to produce by creating a mass crowd. He says, "I wanted the moviegoing audience to experience the same uneasiness and deep sense of dread one feels watching Riefenstahl's celebration of the 1935 Nazi Rally in Nuremberg" (54). Like the other utopian films in this study, *The Giver* also broaches the Nazi regime as a dystopian model and embodiment of trauma. Nuremberg functions as an "iconic image of Nazi Germany [as it reflected] historical greatness, current political legitimacy and promises of future grandeur" (Hagen and Ostergren 2006, 157). Nuremberg held "gigantic, theatrically staged celebrations of Nazi unity, fanaticism and power" (157), and this is explicitly shown in the propaganda film titled *Triumph of the Will* (1935, dir. Leni Riefenstahl) which is aimed at evoking a "powerful sense of national pride and belonging" (158). This theatrical effect is achieved in *The Giver* through the large audience who interact with the Chief Elder, and her speech which evokes pride and belonging. Propaganda such as that seen in Nuremberg and Noyce's film text serves the function of evoking "intense emotional response" (175). The effect of such gatherings not only references the Nazi fascist regime but it also creates "spectacle" which is inclusive and reflective of a large following (177). This inclusion is explicitly seen in Noyce's text when the entire crowd chants Jonas's name when he is announced as the next Giver.

The ceremony is central to the film plot as not only is Jonas announced as the next Giver after much anticipation, but the current Giver makes explicit eye contact with Jonas during the course of the ceremony. The anticipation is created through the camera jostling between a close-up of Jonas and the Giver, creating tension in the scene. The viewer is therefore able to

deduce that Jonas will be announced as the next Giver and the Receiver of Memory. Jonas's role in the community is assigned last, highlighting its significance and importance. During the ceremony, when each individual is assigned a role in the community, the Chief Elder says, "Thank you for childhood" (Noyce 2014). The screenwriter of the film, Michael Mitnick, has noted how this comment by the Chief Elder (played by Meryl Streep) takes "on a very ominous tone" as a result of her acting abilities (Bahr 2014, 54). The phrase works to instantaneously force the youth to make the transition from child to adult. The notion that they are assigned as workers for the community also functions to force them into adulthood, compelling them to leave behind their childhood.

Through the course of the film the Chief Elder is established as the villain of the narrative as she is representative of conformity and compliance, which is explicitly shown through her holographic intrusions into Jonas's dwelling and her constant prying into the relationship that forms and the training that occurs between the Giver and Jonas. Although the Giver forms part of the elderly in the community, his worldview differs drastically from that of the Elders, made evident through his rebellion. Jonas stands in stark contrast to the Chief Elder as he is representative of a new order; an alternate society; a way of life that is grounded in difference, variation and remembering. Jonas is representative of change, transformation and variation.

Near the end of the narrative, the Elders gather to watch Fiona's state execution, and the Giver makes a passionate plea to stop the murder and return to the previous way of life where memory and history were shared by all members of the society. His plea is tied to the necessity of love, hope and faith. The Chief Elder replies to this by saying, "People are weak, people are selfish. When people have the freedom to choose, they choose wrong, every single time" (Noyce 2014). The Chief Elder's loss of faith in humanity drives her unwillingness to enforce change in the community. Patrick Hutton (2000, 543) notes, "Remembering is a strategy of mourning, of letting go of a particular past, but slowly, critically, respectfully of how it served us, for good or ill." The Chief Elder's attempt at justifying the sameness that characterises the utopia is juxtaposed to a scene in which the rebel hero, Jonas, exhausted, lies in the snow, having collapsed from exhaustion. Jonas, having made a choice, accepts the responsibilities of his decision to bring about a new way of life in the community. Jonas then proceeds to cross the boundary of memory, altering his utopia forever. The boundary of memory does not feature in the novel; instead, the search for 'Elsewhere' will result in the release of memory.

4.4 The Giver, his Rebellion and Progressive Paternalism

The Giver is considered the most important figure in this utopia. His role as keeper of collective memory ensures that only he is able to advise the community in accordance with socio-political decisions. The purpose of the Giver is to "provide advice, [and] guidance, to the Elders by using memories of the past, by looking back to the time when there was 'more' (Noyce 2014). By examining the History of the world, the receiver should offer wisdom, advise decision-makers and shape the future" (de Sousa Caetano 2016, 35). In Noyce's utopia, "choice is dangerous unless exercised only by the dominant who know how to make the right decisions" (Lea 2006, 56).

Through the utopia and the Giver's centrality to the narrative, Noyce's film text embodies the anxieties foregrounded in the notion of "progressive paternalism" (Miller 2014, 24). The socio-political system of paternalism refers to the relationship between state and society which resembles "The traditional father-child relationship" (Jackman 1994, 10), in which the "father authoritatively dictated all the behaviours and significant life-decisions of his children within a moral framework that credited the father with an unassailable understanding of the needs and best interests of his children" (10). Within this metaphor, the father is also allowed to "deny what the child wants, impose what the child resists, and punish what the child chooses to do" (Soss, Fording and Schram 2001, 23). Paternalism "brings authoritative direction and supervision together with moral appeals, social supports, tutelary interventions, and incentives in an effort to promote particular paths of personal reform and development" (6).

Paternalism occupies an ambiguous socio-political and moral stance due to the implications of power over people. In America, Paternalism has been employed as "a mode of poverty governance" to "regulate and reform low-income populations" (3). In spite of the good intentions that the system advocates, it has also been critiqued as a means of "social control" (4), and liberal thinkers in the realm of politics have viewed it as a "violation of individual liberty that can only be justified in exceptional cases" (24). The indecisiveness surrounding the term is foregrounded through the system's premise upon the inequality between social groups. Mary R. Jackman (1994, 10) notes how "No arrangement could be more desirable for a group that dominates another". This system is described as "a powerful ideological mold that offers the most efficient and gratifying means for the social control of relationships between unequal groups" (11). *The Giver* initially offers a practice in paternalism through the presence of the

Giver and the Elders. When the Giver rebels, he gives up the responsibility of carrying all the pain and emotional burdens of the community. He instead opts to stay behind after the memories have been released and assists the community in coping with the resultant trauma. The Giver gives up his paternalistic power and instructional capacity over the community to occupy a more liberal approach towards the problems faced by the utopia. The Giver also advises the Elders to give up their paternalistic power over the community and allow each citizen to embrace emotion. The Giver has the aim of creating a compassionate society where a dependency is created on each other, rather than depending on only the Giver and the Elders.

When the Giver transmits memory to Jonas he does so in front of a large window overlooking a sky populated by clouds. This adds a celestial feel to the scenes that depict the sharing of memory, and foregrounds the conferring as existing in the realm of the divine and sanctified. This notion is further emphasised when Jonas notices that both the Giver and Gabriel have a mark that bears resemblance to his own. The Giver and Receiver partake in an act that can be described as nearly godly where only a select few are able to give, carry and receive memory. Although Jonas is compliant with and obedient to the rules that govern his society, a drastic change in his attitude is witnessed after his encounter with the Giver, where he learns about the true nature of his utopia. Jonas receives many pleasurable memories in his initial training with the Giver. One of these is an experience of joy and fun when he rides a sled down a slope of snow. This memory becomes significant towards the end of the narrative, and I address it later on in this chapter. Through his encounter with the Giver Jonas is exposed to "genuine emotion for the first time" (Hintz 2002, 262). He also comes into contact with different races, cultures and religions.[20]

Memories teach Jonas "the textures and flavors of a world with choice and unregulated experience" (262). Susan G. Lea (2006, 56) observes, "human perception is based on recognizing contrasts. Without recognizing contrast, we lack in human perception and understanding". The narrative depicts Jonas's struggle with reconciling the memories that he receives with the world he inhabits. In addition to these positive memories, Jonas also receives

---

[20] Lowry's *The Giver* has been criticised for its lack of representation of various race groups (see Lea 2006). The utopia represented in the narrative is reflective of the utopia that H.G. Wells describes in *A Modern Utopia* (2004 [1900]). Wells explores the plausibility of utopia having a single race rather than consisting of various races (19). The film, like the novel, also reflects such a scenario, although it does make reference to other religions and alternate races through the restoration of collective memory.

memories of pain, death, violence and destruction. The injustices embodied in the utopia are revealed through such memories. The utopia present in the narrative ensures that all emotions are suppressed through the absence of memory and history. This is done in spite of the fact that the Giver places significant importance on feelings and emotions. He describes emotions as "deep [and] primal" (Noyce 2014), and he also notes that they linger. Emotions play a crucial role in both the Giver's rebellion and the hero's rebellion. This is elaborated on during the course of this chapter.

The Giver lives on the edge of the community; on the margins of society, at the edge of a precipice. Jonas travels to the Giver's lodgings to pursue his training as the Receiver of Memory. The interaction between Giver and Receiver thus also occurs on the margins of society, in spite of the task having great importance for the community and the narrative. Jonas then takes the training that he acquires at the periphery of his society to the centre of his community, where he tries to share it with his friends, Asher and Fiona. The Giver refers to the memories which he gives to Jonas as the "secret history of the world" (2014). He describes this history as belonging to a period of time when "there was *more*" (emphasis added). The notion of experiencing 'more' has echoes with Lincoln in *The Island* and his expression of desire for 'more'.

When Jonas decides to rebel against the Elders and powers that govern the community, the Giver is compliant with the hero's actions, and he even gives Jonas a map which charts the surrounding areas, beyond the community. The Giver's rebellion against the community which he is supposed to be loyal towards is brought about through his own personal trauma and loss: the murder of his daughter, and the previous Receiver, Rosemary. Rosemary failed to emotionally process the memory associated with war and she requested 'release', which is a euphemism for state-sanctioned murder. The death of his daughter brings to his attention the value and necessity of memory and history to the community. Angered and seeking revenge against the community and its Elders, the Giver assists Jonas in his rebellion. His deep-seated anger reveals itself in an interchange that the Giver has with the Chief Elder. He says, "Her name was Rosemary, she was my daughter. I loved her" (2014). He purposefully pronounces his feelings of love for his daughter, in spite of the community not having any conception of love and the emotions associated with it. Rosemary plays a far more significant role in the film than she does in the novel. The film also uses her death as cause for the Giver's rebellion, whereas in the novel, her death is not portrayed as the reason for his dissent. In the film, when

the Giver is reprimanded for his actions of rebellion (through aiding the rebel hero), he is attacked by the authority and taken into custody. Jonas has his perceptions that pertain to the community and its functioning altered through his encounter with the Giver, and at the margins of his community, he learns of a world beyond the community, one which supports his rebellion.

The Giver's role in the narrative is crucial; not only does he highlight the injustices in the utopia for the rebel hero to act upon, but he also acts in the capacity of the clairvoyant, as is made evident towards the end of the narrative. The first memory transmitted from the Giver to Jonas proves to actually be a vision of the future which entails the sensation of snow, and Jonas enjoying the thrills of a sled-ride, going down a snowy slope. When Jonas and Gabe are lost in the wilderness they stumble upon a sled in the snow. When Jonas rides the sled with Gabe the vision materialises as reality, and the pair cross the boundary of memory, returning collective memory and history to the community. The Giver's rebellion also comes to fruition through this act.

4.5 Trauma through Memory, and Digital Film

Memory is central to the narrative, as the utopia depicted in *The Giver* is steeped in the absence of memory and history. As the Receiver of Memory, Jonas is tasked with shouldering the burdens of collective memory and history for the entire community. When he is first given this task he is warned that pain accompanies it, as in addition to carrying memories of happiness, joy and love, Jonas also receives memories of pain, suffering and death. The community is spared from negative emotions such as loss, suffering and pain in addition to being denied the experience of positive emotions and sensations. The trauma of the memories "is what disrupts the hyperreal universe of simulation, what may count as 'real' in a world where everything turns into a simulacrum of itself" (Mousoutzanis 2013, 330).

The first traumatic memory that Jonas is given is one of poaching, where an elephant is shot in the head to secure its ivory. The shock is immense for Jonas as he cries after having to witness the death of the animal. The memory "utterly traumatises him" (de Sousa Caetano 2016, 36). The most traumatic memory that Jonas is given is war. After receiving the memory he understand why it was that particular memory that drove Rosemary to opt for assisted suicide. The Giver does not willingly give Jonas the memory of war. Jonas receives it by sheer accident

when the Giver is himself suffering from the trauma of the memory. The Giver, caught up in the horrors of war, is seen struggling on the floor, with the trauma of the memory controlling him. Sigmund Freud (1963 [1920], 274), in a discussion of trauma, notes that the traumatic situation is repeated in dreams. The emphasis on the trauma experienced by the Giver is revealed through the notion that he experiences trauma in a state of wakefulness. The memory as a trauma "attack corresponds to a complete transplanting of the patient into the traumatic situation" (274-275). When Jonas touches the Giver to assist him the memory is transferred from Giver to Receiver. When Jonas is given this memory he is deeply affected by it. He leaves his place of training, vowing to relinquish his position as Receiver, anticipating that it will result in his death, as it did for Rosemary. The traumatic memory of war in the film differs from the memory of war in the novel with regard to time. Lowry's text describes cannons and horses within the memory, whereas in Noyce's text, machine guns are used, foregrounding modern warfare. This is done with the effect of placing the film in a contemporary context, making it more relatable to the audience.

The trauma of the memory is emphasised through the viewpoint through which it is communicated. The Giver transmits memory through the narrative viewpoint of the Receiver. When the Receiver is given a memory, the recipient becomes an active participant in the memory. Jonas therefore experiences the trauma, horror and violence of war, first hand. In the memory Jonas is a soldier, wielding a gun, who is forced to murder in order to survive. The scene is characterised by screaming, death, horror and violence. When Jonas emerges from the trauma of the memory he says that he is not strong enough to bear the task of the next Giver of the community, to which the Giver says, "This is what we need to know so we can advise" (Noyce 2014). The Giver highlights the importance of memory, even if the memory is far too dreadful to face, emphasising the importance of the advisory role of the Giver to the utopia.

The traumatic memory of war is conveyed through colour and shots which make visible the film grain. Grain refers to bits of silver halide that are suspended in the emulsion of a film stock (Prince 2004, 31). *The Giver* engages in an exercise of switching between "grain and pixel" frames (from the utopian reality to memory), which reflects the wider transition in film from "analog (photochemical) to digital film" (Fossati 2009, 13). The "digital turn in cinema has greatly changed" the ways in which films are produced, as "digital methods now offer filmmakers greatly enhanced artistic powers compared with traditional photo-mechanical methods" (Prince 2004, 27). The practice of capturing film on DV (Digital Video) allows for

the most prominent feature of "clarity and depth [as] DV tends to record everything in deep focus and with extremely sharp focus" (30). This ensures the lack of grain (31). The general movement in cinema is towards "more finely grained stocks", and the "grainlessness of digital video represents the ideal and ultimate goal of this evolution" (31).

The "soft, grainy slightly hazy look" of the memory of war stands in contrast to the "hot, sharp, DV look" which characterises the reality in the film (33). The presence of grain contributes to the look and feel of an instant in time that is being recalled from the past. The haziness of the memory foregrounds the disorder and chaos which ensue in instances of war and conflict. Joana C. de Sousa Caetano (2016, 31-32) observes that the essence of the narrative, although "set in the future", lies in the "nostalgia for the past and their lost identities". Not only does the film reflect a nostalgia for the past but it also reflects nostalgia through the reflection of older film technique. This nostalgia is explicitly reflected in the grain that is present in the memory; although war and violence are not desired aspects they are coupled with and inseparable from the lost and forgotten sensations of love, joy and happiness. In addition to making reference to a historical moment, the colour in the memory serves to highlight the trauma, ingraining it in the conscious mind, as it affects both Giver and Receiver. While making no reference to film, Freud interestingly describes trauma and its affect as having a "colouring" that is "excessively powerful" (1963 [1920], 275). In the narrative, then, trauma is emphasised through its ability to affect the conscious mind, and through the employment of colour in an otherwise black-and-white world. I elaborate on this technique in the latter part of this chapter.

4.6 The Rebellion of the Hero, the Gifted, and the Necessity of Memory

Jonas differentiates himself from the rest of his community when the narrative first opens. The Chief Elder also differentiates Jonas from the rest of the community when she lists his attributes of "intelligence, integrity, courage and the capacity to 'see' beyond" (Noyce 2014). It is due to these attributes that Jonas is named as the next Giver and it is these qualities which also allow him to rebel. Jonas is not only able to 'see' beyond the black-and-white world of the utopia, but he is also able to see beyond the rules and laws that govern the utopia to reveal the injustices that his society embodies.

The rebel hero in Noyce's text is characterised by bravery, intelligence, selflessness and curiosity. Jonas constantly engages the Giver with many questions regarding the utopia and its

laws. His ability to "see beyond" could also be reflective of his abilities as a gifted individual. Ellen Winner (2000, 153) describes gifted children as "those with unusually high ability in one or more domain". Jonas quickly grasps the intricacies of his training with the Giver. He also passes judgement on his utopia and the stringent laws that it advocates. Winner observes three distinct features of gifted children, one of which being that they are "different from others and they don't mind being different" (76). Jonas asserts this difference at the very beginning of the narrative. He also shows significant emotional growth when exposed to the memories which he receives from the Giver. Jonas quickly adapts to the sensations and emotions which characterise his emotional and personal growth. Winner notes that a challenge faced by gifted children is that they cannot "find other people like themselves" (76). Jonas is aware of his status as 'different' from the rest of his community, and his relationships with the Giver and Gabe only develop as he notices that like him, the child and the old man also possess similar qualities. They do not quite fit into the community that they inhabit due to their heightened perceptions of the world around them. This could also be a plausible explanation for Gabe's extreme restlessness, and he only achieves a state of calm when Jonas interacts with him. Winner also observes that gifted individuals are "non-conformist" (76). Jonas's ability to rebel against conformity occurs as soon as he comes into contact with the Giver. He openly rebels against the laws of his society by attempting to share his training with Fiona and Asher.

When Jonas comes into contact with the Giver he learns that pain, suffering, fear and death co-exist with feelings of joy, love, fulfilment and happiness. In doing so, he realises the necessity of these positive emotions and their importance in spite of the fact that they are accompanied by the negative emotions, associated with death, pain and suffering. Jonas is burdened with the memories of war, death, murder, suffering and destruction. Interestingly enough, it is these negative memories that act as a catalyst for the emergence of rebellion in the hero. Attaining collective memory, Jonas remarks, "Life seems more complete" (Noyce 2014).

Jonas's training makes him privy to secrets that the community holds, and Jonas, through his rebellion, transcends the boundaries that are set for him when he decides that collective memory and history should be returned to all citizens. Collective memory is central to the narrative as "No memory is ever purely individual, but always inherently shaped by collective contexts" (de Sousa Caetano 2016, 35). The difficulty of the task that has been given to Jonas is emphasised through Rosemary's death. Having been expected to follow the same trajectory

as Rosemary, he supersedes all expectations set for him when he rebels, resulting in the demise of his utopia.

Jonas's rebellion initially begins when he is given permission to lie. He exercises this right when the prying Chief Elder intrudes on him through holographic surveillance, enquiring about the nature of his training. Noyce's inclusion of this intrusiveness has been praised by Lowry, who has said, "She suddenly appears, and it's so weirdly intrusive that I wish I'd put it in the book" (Bahr 2014, 55). Jonas's rebellion increases incrementally through the course of the narrative, and he is seen exercising his capacity for free will and autonomy, while his life becomes governed by sensations of joy, happiness and love. When Jonas misses his daily medication, which suppresses the "stirrings" which are sexual urges and desires, he encourages Fiona to do the same, resulting in a romance developing between the two. The violation of proximity laws that pertain to touching occur when Fiona and Jonas share a kiss. Jonas's rebellion reaches its height when he learns that baby Gabriel is scheduled for 'release'. His most significant rebellion occurs when he escapes from the community; however, it is not his escape that is significant about his rebellion but rather his decision to cross the boundary of memory which will result in the return of collective memory back to the entire community.

Jonas, having realised the importance of memory for the community, remarks, "If you can't feel, what the point?" (Noyce 2014), and when Jonas learns the true nature of the 'release' he says, "It's murder by a different name" (2014). Miller (2014, 26) notes how "the lies of totalitarianism sit in plain sight, from its wicked distortions of language to its utter disregard for human life". To depict the increase in his transgressions, Jonas physically assaults Asher, who attempts to stop him from escaping the community. His depiction of violence is significant as the community has no conceptualisation of the notion of anger or physical violence.

The most significant representation of rebellion in the narrative reveals itself through a memory which is transmitted between Giver and Receiver. The memory is given with the intention to inspire, motivate and encourage. The memory depicts protest, defiance and rebellion where individuals stand up to authority and oppression. The memories are shown to the audience through a montage, which concludes with the triumphant image of Nelson Mandela, who is a global symbol of protest and defiance against an oppressive regime, and a figure "whose outside standing and successful protest or protest leadership [captured] the attention of the public" (Ólafsson 2007, 438). Jonas not only justifies his rebellion but he also makes it explicit

that he is aware that his utopia embodies injustices. He says, "We've been told the Chief Elder knew everything, things nobody else did. But I learned that knowing what something is, is not the same as knowing how something feels" (Noyce 2014). Through his remark, Jonas reiterates the necessity of feeling to his community. In the novel, the Giver fails to transfer the memory of rebellion and dissent to Jonas as a result of time constraints. The memory plays a significant role in Noyce's text as is motivates Jonas in his rebellion. Lowry's novel depicts memories as transferable, where the Giver loses the memory after it is given to Jonas. Noyce's text does not place an emphasis on this exchange, highlighting the perpetual nature of memory and history to endure in spite of aggravating circumstances.

The Giver discusses the importance of utopia for the narrative when he tells Jonas, "Memories are not just about the past, they determine our future. You can change things, you can make things better" (2014). Through the above words, the Giver highlights the prime function of utopia: its ability to prevent the mistakes of the past, in the future. The rebel hero's role in the narrative is also highlighted through the Giver's words when he mentions a "better" society which can emerge only through the actions of the hero. The Giver places the responsibility of change in Jonas's hands when he says to Jonas, "I was waiting for someone like you. You are the reason we have a chance" (2014). Jonas as the Receiver and the rebel hero of the text wields the power to change his society, and this is explicitly reflected when he blames the past Givers for being unwilling to change their society.

Following Joseph Campbell, Christopher Vogler articulates the hero's journey through mentorship. This model fits in with Jonas and his moral journey in Noyce's narrative as his emergence as the rebel hero is prompted by the Giver. According to Vogler (2007 [1998], 12), the relationship between hero and mentor is of "rich symbolic value" as it can be paralleled to the "bond between parent and child, teacher and student, doctor and patient, god and man". Jonas and the Giver do indeed share a close bond, foregrounded in the expression of love shared between the two. For Vogler, the "function of the mentor is to prepare the hero to face the unknown" (12). This is precisely the function that the Giver fulfils in Noyce's narrative, especially when he encourages dissent, and gives Jonas a map of the landscape beyond the community. In keeping with the journey motif, the mentor "can only so go far with the hero", as "eventually the hero must face the unknown alone" (12). Jonas fulfils this model of the hero when his rebellion and rescue of Gabe force him to leave the community alone, after which he bravely faces the unknown, with the child in his care.

Noyce's narrative evokes the socio-political anxieties associated with protest by young individuals who have the capacity to catalyse change in society. The film, through the rebel hero, directly engages with a dialogue that associates protest with emotions. James M. Jasper (1998, 397) observes, "emotions accompany all social action", and they "pervade all social life" (398). Jasper notes the intrinsic value of emotions, for "Without them, there might be no social action at all" (398).

Jasper dissociates emotions from irrationality, especially in social movements, protest and political participation (397). He asserts, "Some emotions exist or arise in individuals before they join protest groups, others are formed or reinforced in collective action itself" (397). The rebel hero in Noyce's film text experiences emotions through his interaction with the Giver, and these emotions acts as a catalyst for his rebellion. Jasper observes, "an emotion is an action or state of mind that makes sense only in particular circumstances" (400). When Jonas learns that his society murders babies and that Gabe is scheduled for release his rebellion occurs instantaneously; he takes Gabe and leaves the community, determined to find and cross the boundary of memory, opening up the entire community to sensation, memory and history, and inevitably pain and trauma. Jasper observes, "Not only are emotions part of our responses to events, but they also – in the form of deep affective attachments – shape the goals of our actions" (398).

Jonas has his perceptions altered through his interaction with the Giver, and his exposure to emotions, sensations and feelings. The emotions that he encounters shape his identity from a compliant citizen into a rebel. When Jonas is in the process of escaping the community with Gabe, the Chief Elder explicitly refers to him as "a rebel who must be stopped" (Noyce 2014). Emotions "do not merely accompany our deepest desires and satisfactions, they constitute them, permeating our ideas, identities, and interests" (Jasper 1998, 399). With regard to protest, then, emotions are "relatively predictable, not accidental eruptions of the irrational" (402). The Giver makes a passionate plea to the Elders to return to a way of life that embraces memory, sensations and emotions. Jonas, through his rebellion, aims to bring about a society which remembers, feels and embraces its collective history. Jonas's protest and rebellion is aimed at "changing the broader culture of [his] society, including the acceptability and display of certain emotions" (407). Social movements "are themselves a distinct setting in which emotions can be created or reinforced" (417). Jonas uses the good and bad memories that he receives to change his utopia. He does not just receive the memories, but he acts on them, effecting change

in his utopia, bringing about a new way of living and being. The rebel hero becomes the embodiment of the power of emotions as these "give ideas, ideologies, identities, and even interests [a] power to motivate" (420).

Before Jonas is named as the next Giver, the Chief Elder lists the four qualities that he possesses as intelligence, integrity, courage and one which she says she cannot describe, "the capacity to see beyond" (Noyce 2014). The Chief Elder mentions these qualities as the Receiver is expected to show loyalty and allegiance to the utopia and its governing rules and laws. It is these qualities, however, that allow Jonas to rebel and which reveal his moral uprightness in returning memory to the community. As the rebel hero, Jonas is "courageous, and subversive, and rebellious, which makes this a very appealing text [especially since] he represents change" (Stewart 2007, 25). The "humanist tendency" in the narrative "culminates in Jonas and The Giver taking matters into their own hands for what they believe will benefit his community. In reality, we often label people who take matters into their own hands for some purported good of the community 'despots' or 'psychopaths' or 'fanatics'" (26). Jonas, as the rebel hero of the narrative, embodies the characteristics of bravery, in and through his rebellion. He leaves his family, home and community behind, and ventures into the unknown. At the risk of his own life he saves Gabe and embarks on a perilous journey to restore memory to his community.

Noyce's narrative, through the actions of the rebel hero, enforces the necessity of memory and emotions to the utopia. The narrative honours "dissent and agitation, and action based on prolonged and combative questioning of the society in which the protagonist" finds himself (Hintz 2002, 255). The dissent portrayed by the rebel hero reflects the centrality of young people in political action (263).

4.7 Gabriel and the Father-son Relationship, and the Notion of the Gift

Through the characterisation of Gabe in the narrative, the vulnerable status of children in the society is made evident, in spite of the significant political role that young people play (reflected through Jonas) in the socio-political arena, as the text portrays children as "complex, multifaceted individuals who display courage, compassion, and resilience in the face of adversity" (Latham 2002,12).

When Gabe is first introduced into the narrative he is labelled as "uncertain" (Noyce 2014). The bond that develops between Jonas and Gabe can be analysed according to an ideal father-son relationship. When Gabe is scheduled for release, it is Jonas who saves him from being murdered. Latham (2002, 8) notes how in the narrative, "Adults are no different from the children in that they blindly accept the roles prescribed to them". They are prohibited from engaging in sexual intercourse and procreation. Adults in the utopia also have no preoccupation with the safety and security of children, and children cannot depend on adults for protection. The narrative projects the traumatic anxieties associated with abandonment and infanticide as "Jonas' world is one in which adults do not protect the children, despite the depiction of an ideal nurturing family unit" (Lea 2006, 54). The "revelation that the community kills babies can hit like a sledgehammer" (Miller 2014, 26), and the effect is compounded for Jonas who learns and has to watch his father killing a child who did not meet the weight requirement. It is the rebel hero who takes it upon himself to protect not just Gabe but all children in the utopia. Unlike the adults, Jonas "proves to be different – much more capable, resourceful, and connection-seeking than the adults around him" (Latham 2002, 10).

When Jonas saves Gabe his rebellion is directed towards his appointed father. The father-son dynamic is revealed through the relationships that Jonas creates with the male figures in his life. When Jonas is given the memory associated with love, he asks his own father if he loves him. The father is taken aback by this question, and Jonas is reprimanded for his inaccuracy of language, as love is not an emotion that exists in the utopia. The father merely equates love with pride and joy, which highlights the necessity of fully developed emotions to Jonas and the need for change in the utopia. A father-son relationship develops between Jonas and the Giver, and the Giver even tells Jonas that he loves him, when Jonas is about to leave the community. The father-son relationship is also visible between Jonas and Gabe. Not only is Gabe the most significant catalyst for the rebellion of the hero but the relationship that develops between the two is significant for the narrative. When Jonas learns that Gabe is scheduled for release, he promptly sets about his rebellion. He says to the Giver, "When they decided to kill Gabe, they decided I was ready" (Noyce 2014). Jonas not only saves Gabe from being murdered, but he also protects the child from the harsh environment that they escape into by transmitting positive memories of love, comfort and plenitude to the infant. Jonas "displays courage and independence by taking the child and leaving the community" (Latham 2002, 11).

Noyce's text makes reference to fatherhood and the role of the father in society. Trends in the involvement of fathers with and in the lives of their children have fluctuated in accordance with the socio-economic climate. The nineteenth century saw a decline in paternal involvement in the domestic spaces as a direct result of the "emerging industrial economy" in America (Cabrera *et al.* 2000, 127). The evolution of the ideal father features the "colonial father, the distant breadwinner, the modern involved dad and the father as co-parent" (127). Child-rearing assumptions in Western society are largely matricentric (Nash 1965, 261). Noyce's narrative disrupts this assumption by placing emphasis on the relationship between father and child. This is reflective of the parental trends in the twenty-first century, which has seen an "increased involvement" of fathers with their children as the "number of single fathers with children at home has […] increased by 25% in the past three years from 1.7 million to 2.1 million in 1998" (Cabrera *et al.* 2000, 128), in spite of which "No researcher has described the paths that move boys to the practice of fathering" (131). In Noyce's narrative, Jonas's mother is revealed as the villain through her constant enforcing of the rules and laws that govern the utopia. She is constantly seen reminding her 'family' about their accuracy of language, and she instigates Fiona into Jonas's rebellion, which leads to her incarceration for 'release'. In Lowry's novel her character differs as she is less authoritarian.

The Giver, Jonas and Gabe differ from the rest of the community as a result of their intuition and sensitivity towards emotions. This is presented through the device of sharing a similar birth-mark on their hands. Jonas notices that his birth-mark bears resemblance to the Giver's, and Gabe also bears a similar mark, which draws him to the child. Jonas knows that like him, Gabe is different from the rest of the society. The bond that develops between the two is strengthened when Jonas begins transferring memories of love, joy, beauty and happiness to Gabe. The lack in the relationship between Jonas and his appointed father is highlighted through the relationship between the Giver and Jonas and Gabe and Jonas. Gabe is destined to one day be the next Giver and carry the pain for his community, but through the actions of the rebel hero, Gabe is spared this task.

Gabriel's name is significant in the narrative. The Angel Gabriel emerges out of Judeo-Christian religious doctrines where he is the messenger popularised for delivering the message of Jesus's birth to Mary. God's "intervention through the agency" (Hannah 1999, 36) of Angel Gabriel results in his being one of the most celebrated angels (97). Like his namesake, Gabe plays a significant role in the narrative. Gabe represents the future (Latham 2002, 11), for the

many communities that subscribe to the lack of memory and history. Gabe is representative of a new generation, one that embraces memory and history, and like his namesake he signals the approaching positive change. Both Jonas and Gabe lead the future communities into remembering and embracing emotions. The Giver is not just important for his ability to carry memories but also to help the rest of the community cope with the influx of memories and trauma when the boundary is eventually crossed.

The notion of the gift is a central concept in the narrative. The Giver passes the gift of collective memory and emotions to Jonas. This gift has invaluable worth, not just for Jonas, but for the rest of the community, when he decides to cross the boundary of memory and return the gift of memory and emotions to the entire community. Alan D. Schrift (1997) engages in a discussion centred on the gift and anthropology. Schrift discusses the notion of "gift-exchange" (1) in particular. This concept is important for the narrative of *The Giver* as the scenes that depict the sharing of memory take on a mystical quality. The relationship between the Giver and the Receiver is highlighted as the Giver is able to transfer memories to Jonas only, through touch. Schrift observes, "gift-exchange seeks to establish a relationship between Subjects in which the actual objects transferred are incidental to the value of the relationship established" (2). The Giver and Jonas share a special bond, characterised by the bestowing of intimate memories of love, joy, happiness, assurance and compassion. Even the traumatic memory of war functions to bring both Giver and Receiver closer as they both agree that rebellion is necessary. Schrift draws inspiration from Ralph Waldo Emerson, who, in a piece titled "Gifts" (1997 [1844]), discusses the implications of gift-exchange. An analysis of the gift reveals a focus on either "the objects given, on the relationship established between the giver and the receiver, or in the inextricable interconnections between these object(s) and relationship(s)" (Schrift 1997, 3). The relationship between the Giver and Receiver in Noyce's narrative foregrounds all of the above implications. Not only are the memories the most significant aspect of human relationships, but the memories function to create a bond of fatherly love between the Giver and Jonas. In order for the status of the gift to be valid it "must be excessive, for if it is needed, it loses its status as gift" (7). As a result of this, the importance of collective memory and history are enforced through the narrative. The "true gift" then, is one that "unites the giver and receiver", and "the gift finds perhaps its most perfect expression in the gifts of love" (7). This love is evident in the relationship between the Giver and Jonas, as through the transmitting of the gifts of memory, emotions and sensations, a bond of love is created in a community that has no conceptualisation of what love is.

The means by which memory is transferred from the Giver to Receiver in the film differs from the depiction in Lowry's novel. In Lowry's text, the Giver places his hands on Jonas's bare back. However, in the film, the pair are seen sitting in front of each other with their arms intertwined. The depiction of the transfer of memories in the film is more effective in communicating the father-son bond between the Giver and Jonas. Moreover, it highlights the imparting of a 'gift' from hand to hand. The novel's depiction of this exchange creates a sense of discomfort where an adult places his hands on the bare back of a child.

The relationship that develops between the Giver and Jonas, in the film, is depicted through the emotion of love based on nurturing. The two share a bond through the imparting of the gift of memory, and even when Jonas receives painful memories, the Giver is apologetic and regretful for inflicting pain upon the young Jonas. Through his relationship with the Giver, Jonas acquires the "knowledge and confidence needed to overcome fear" (Vogler 2007 [1998], 117), and bring about positive change in his community.

4.8 Monochromatic Technique in Colour Film and Selective Colorisation

Noyce's narrative communicates the nuanced vantage point of the rebel hero through the use of monochromatic camera technique which punctuates the narrative to achieve various effects. The medium of film effectively communicates the colourless world of the utopia and juxtaposes it to Jonas's world of remembering, colour and emotions. The film is able to capture the transition between monochromatic to colour vison through the use of camera technique, much more effectively than the book is able to, in a similar fashion to the classic, *The Wizard of Oz* (dir. Victor Fleming and King Vidor, 1939). In this film, "black-and-white equals mundane reality; color equals fantasy or spectacle" (Belton 2008, 60).

The Giver opens in monochromatic format. When Jonas sets himself apart from the rest of his community at the beginning of the film, the switch from black-and-white to colour is employed to highlight his nuanced viewpoint through fleeting glimpses of sunlight through trees. Through this technique at the beginning of the film, the rebel hero is isolated from the rest of his community through his ability to see certain objects in colour. John Belton (2008) engages in a discussion pertaining to the digitisation of cinema. He discusses the "Digital Intermediate" which refers to "the intermediate stage of post-production between the initial digitization of the original film material and final transfer of those digital files back to film" (58). Jonas

receives colour early on in the film, compared to the novel, and this can be attributed to the diegesis of the film.

Using DI, colourists are able to "isolate individual elements of the image and manipulate them without changing anything else" (59). Belton centres his discussion on what he refers to as the presence of "hybrid, monochrome/polychrome 'look' in mainstream Hollywood film" (59). Belton makes reference to colour films that insert the technique of monochrome images into the narrative through the selective colouring of certain objects in the frame which is dominated by monochrome technique. Belton notes, "Selective colorization […] can be understood in terms of the presence and absence of color" (62). This technique is used when Jonas sees the red colour of Fiona's hair. In Lowry's narrative, however, Jonas first perceives colour through a red apple. Again, in the film, it occurs after Jonas receives colour through a memory of a vivid sunset, and he sees the red of an apple in the Giver's lodgings. In the novel, colour is given to him through the memory of a rainbow. The colour red is significant as it is a "powerful marker – it is a means of graphic punctuation" (63). In Noyce's narrative red is representative of the love that blossoms between Jonas and Fiona. The pair innocently stumble upon love, being a foreign concept in their community, and they choose to embrace it, instead of suppressing it. Red, therefore, becomes representative of their ability to nurture and pursue a romantic relationship, in spite of it being against the laws of their utopia. Red is also associated with anger and therefore rebellion and defiance, which characterise the rebel hero of the text. Red amidst the mundane black-and-white world pulls the camera and with it, the viewer's awareness and attention.

Recent Hollywood films that feature the effect of selective colorisation are *Schindler's List* (dir. Steven Spielberg, 1993), Quentin Tarantino's *Kill Bill* (dir. Quentin Tarantino, 2003, 2004) and *Sin City* (dir. Frank Miller, Robert Rodriguez and Quentin Tarantino, 2005). *The Giver* contributes to this list as a film which uses monochromatic images in a colour film, foregrounding how the "film's narrative explores the disruptive potential of the violation of the image's chromatic hegemony" (Belton 2008, 59). Colour within black-and-white image ruptures "the coherence of one diegetic regime, invading it with elements we understand to belong to another" (61). A violation of the segregation of spaces occurs "by introducing color image elements into otherwise black-and white image spaces" (60). This occurs in *Pleasantville* (dir. Garry Ross, 1998) when a "black-and-white character suddenly sees a red rose on a black-and-white bush in a black-and-white garden" (60). Belton observes, "single

objects in single color within larger black-and-white images remain rare in sound cinema", and one of the most memorable examples of this is the red coat on the little girl in *Schindler's List* (60). These images, coloured in red, signal change, alterity and difference. Selective colorisation achieves the effect of isolating a single image within a frame, drawing the viewers' attention to it. The coloured image or images have significant effects for the narrative and the characters who see the chromatic quality in the selected object. The selected chromatic image signals the gradual bleeding in of a chromatic world, bringing with it change, variation and in the case of *The Giver*, insurrection.

After Jonas receives colour from his interaction with the Giver, colour in the film is seen through the viewpoint of Jonas. The "threat" of "digital discontinuity" is "resolved by the restoration of chromatic continuity – black-and-white disappears entirely, leaving an all-color, all-the-time world" (59). The switch back to monochromatic technique occurs when Jonas escapes from the community after saving Gabe. The "film [then] becomes a text *about* color, black-and-white and the relationship between the two" (60). The outside world into which Jonas escapes is depicted through vivid colours. This is juxtaposed to the monochromatic world inside the community. The shifts between the two scenes serves to emphasise the darkness within the community, a place devoid of memory, emotions and sensations. Hope therefore lies with Jonas and Gabe, in the outside world of colour, as they search for the boundary of memory. Black-and-white "footage signified one narrative world and color another – but each world functioned as a credible diegetic reality in itself – in part because of the internal chromatic consistency" (60). The "transformation of black-and-white images into color images functions as an expressive device that documents the progressive movement of characters on the path of self-discovery/self-actualization" (64-65).

Belton observes, "Color is figured as presence. Color rejuvenates" (62); it "draws the eye to it like a magnet, pulling the spectator out of the diegesis into moments of pure graphic spectacularity" (62). This is achieved when Jonas and Gabe traverse the world outside the community, experiencing different climates and terrains. For both the viewer and the rebel hero, "Color is significant in *The Giver* as representation of memory and ultimately of wisdom" (Lea 2006, 57). For Jonas memory brings "color, pleasure, the freedom to choose as well as the responsibility of those choices" (de Sousa Caetano 2016, 36), which he carries dutifully when he ensures that he crosses the boundary of memory.

DI "gives the filmmakers the possibility of penetrating traditional barriers" (61). As in *The Wizard of Oz* (1939), "Things do not return […] to the social and domestic order" of the previous black-and-white world, but rather "They change – and the characters embrace the uncertainty of the future" (65). In Noyce's narrative, Jonas crosses the boundary of memory and in doing so saves Fiona's life, as memories and collective history are returned through a montage, fuelled with heightened emotions and sensations. Colour also returns to the community, signalling a shift, once again. Selective colorisation foregrounds "heterogeneity" and "To this extent, it resembles avant-garde films in its exploration of an uncharted area in which previous codes and conventions have been left behind" (63). Changes and shifts in colouring foreground the change, not just in the characters but in the narrative. Like *Pleasantville*, *The Giver* is about "the destabilization of one 'color' regime (a chromatic black-and-white) by another (chromatic color)", highlighting an "acknowledgement of the necessity of change" (65).

4.9 Conclusion

When Jonas crosses the boundary of memory he creates a shift in power; he diminishes the power that the Elders wield in his community and returns autonomy to the inhabitants in the community. Just before collective memory is returned to the community, Fiona describes her new-found ability to experience emotions, saying that the old way of living feels as if "something has been stolen" (Noyce 2014). Fiona articulates the missing elements in the dystopian society, because, through her interaction with Jonas, she has experienced love, joy and happiness. A similar sentiment is expressed by the Giver when he pleads to the Elders to stop Fiona's 'release', observing, "We are living a life of shadows, of what was once real" (2014).

Having crossed the boundary of memory, Jonas restores collective memory and history and, in spite of the montage depicting images of famine and disaster, it is evident that the consciousness of the community members is altered as Jonas's father stops Fiona's 'release'. With Jonas's departure from the community, they will be "shocked into an even greater engagement with the past and with authentic human existence, enough to change their lives" (Hintz 2002, 263). The Giver's presence again becomes significant as he is equipped to assist the community to process the trauma and the painful ordeals that they receive.

Outside the community, Jonas and Gabe stumble across the cabin from the first memory transmitted to Jonas. The sound of Christmas carols emanates from the cabin, making reference to the meaning of Christmas for the narrative and its future projections. Gabe, like Baby Jesus, embodies hope for the future and humankind. Like Jesus's birth in a humble stable, Jonas and Gabe seek refuge in a simple cabin, which differs from the sophisticated technology and architecture of the city. Like Baby Jesus, Gabe is also representative of a new way of life which embraces emotions, particularly that of love. Gabe, with the 'gifts' of a Receiver, represents a new generation. In addition to this, Christmas carols are imbued with heightened emotions such as joy and love, foregrounding that, not only is this a place of safety and warmth, but it is also a place which nurtures and embraces positive emotions, unlike the utopia. Christmas is also associated with gifts and giving and these are central themes that run through the narrative. By crossing the boundary of memory Jonas has given his community the most significant gift of memory. He therefore becomes the Giver. Jonas, knowing the value of memory, and having found a refuge, utters the last words of the narrative: "It would lead us all home" (2014).

At the beginning of the narrative, Jonas asked the viewer to judge his actions and his rebellion, inviting the viewer into a dialogue with the utopia. The lack of memory, emotions, sensations and music in the community creates a response about "the way people think about these questions", and this in turn, says "a lot about their views on human nature and social organization" (Miller 2014, 26). The ending of the film can be received as more positive when compared to the ending of the novel. The last words of the novel refer back to the community that Jonas left, emphasising the "echo" of the place he left behind. In the film, however, Jonas justifies his rebellion, stating that he will not apologise for it. His rebellion and rebellious nature are foregrounded through his reluctance to apologise, making reference to the excessive apologising which occurred within the confines of the community. Jonas also refers to Gabe as "the future" (Noyce 2014), citing the hope that the child embodies. Gabe will grow up with memories, emotions and a collective history. Jonas's last words place an emphasis on "home", in light of the fact that he has found a new home, a place which engenders truth and hope for the future.

The Giver highlights the necessity of not just the exercise of utopia, but also the importance of collective memory and history. In doing so it foregrounds how humans are "timeful beings", and "as did our confident predecessors of the modern era" we "look for more expansive, expectant conceptions of history" through memory which serves as "our inspiration, and in the

future […] history as an art of memory will be remembered as the historiographical signature of our times" (Hutton 2000, 545). Arguably, the most significant way in which the film differs from the novel is in its representation of science fiction. The film imbues a contemporary setting into the narrative through the presence of technology and modern architecture. The surveillance, holograms and automatic bicycles revive Lowry's narrative, ensuring that it embraces and reflects contemporary and futuristic technology, through the genre of science fiction.

Noyce's narrative depicts a seeming eutopia, where the dystopian elements are revealed through interaction between the Giver and the Receiver. Through the rebel hero, the film projects the impression that young people "have the capacity to remake or revision society anew" (Hintz 2002, 263). The process of remaking and re-visioning society anew is brought about through the actions of protest, defiance and rebellion. The struggle that Jonas experiences allows him to "examine and critique his world and should theoretically set the stage for allowing readers to examine, critique and possibly change their contemporary world, which is a function of sf [science fiction] in the first place" (Stewart 2007, 32). *The Giver* engages in a dialogue with utopia in addition to addressing the moral questions that interrogate the nature of the utopia present in the narrative. The text places significant emphasis on the individual efforts of young people and their capacity to enforce change in an unjust society. The rebel hero in Noyce's text is representative of youth who take an active stand against oppressive states, regimes and bodies. Perhaps the biggest difference between the novel and the film is that in the novel when memories are transferred they are forgotten by the Giver, but in the film they endure, they are transferrable, permanent, and undying. In doing so, importance and significance are placed on memories and their necessity for the utopian future.

5. Chapter Four

The Female Rebel Hero, Anxieties, Aliens and the Android in *Prometheus* (2012)

> Each of us seeks to find a way to prove we are alive and that there is a meaning to our life […]. We live life and simultaneously watch ourselves live it, knowing that the only possible outcome is death. There is no other moment when man is closest to nature than when he recognizes his mortality [*sic*]. This is the element of truth that underpins all myth […]. Death cannot be a meaning to life, for it is its antithesis – an absence of life. Life's meaning is to be found in living. The more deeply the meaning exists within the structure of the story, the stronger the connection between the character and the reader, the closer to reality becomes its archetypal/mythological theme.
>
> – William K. Ferrell (2000, 191)

> [A]ll the aliens we know so far speak human. They speak our human predicament, our history, our hopes and fears, our pride and shame. As long as we haven't met any actual no kidding intelligent extraterrestrial (and I would maintain that this is still the case, though I know opinions are divided) the aliens we imagine are always other humans in disguise: no more, no les
>
> – Gwyneth Jones (2017, 364)

5.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on Ridley Scott's science fiction film *Prometheus* (2012). The first part of this chapter analyses the film's use of microcinematography and its depiction of science under the jurisdiction of the masculine. I then go on to explore the central rebel hero as female, depicting how, like the other heroes in this study, her heroism is also shaped by trauma. The female rebel hero differs from the male heroes in this study. The female hero is representative of hybridity in that she emerges as hero within the confines of patriarchy. I also focus on her heroism through mythology by drawing a distinction between the female hero in the *Alien* franchise.[21] In addition to this I also discuss the figure of the android and alien in science fiction film, exploring the human anxieties that they reflect. I apply a feminist analysis to the female alien in the narrative, discussing how such an analysis has the potential to favour a female gaze.

Dr Elizabeth Shaw, the rebel hero of the text, attains a limited amount of agency by the end of the narrative as a result of patriarchal power. The female hero's journey differs from the male

---

[21] The *Alien* franchise consist of *Alien* (1979, dir. Ridley Scott), *Aliens* (1986, dir. James Cameron) and *Alien: Resurrection* (1997, dir. Jean-Pierre Jeunet).

hero's journey as explored in this chapter. Shaw's ability to emerge as the rebel hero is made visible through her struggle for survival, in spite of the odds that are placed against her. Like the other rebel heroes discussed in this study, she is also shaped by and through trauma, in particular, the loss of those she loves. The discussion of the rebel hero uses analysis discussed by Maureen Murdock (1990 and 1994). The rebel hero and her characteristics are explored through the lens of mythology, following the work of Susan Yunis and Tammy Ostrander (2003), who explore the journey of the hero at the centre of the *Alien* franchise: Ripley.

I also employ a feminist analysis of the film to discuss the female alien at the heart of the narrative. The *Alien* franchise has received considerable attention from feminist scholars such as Lynda K. Bundtzen (1987), Barbara Creed (1990) and Catherine Constable (1999). Through a feminist analysis of *Prometheus*, the film has the potential to disrupt Laura Mulvey's (1999) [1975] contention that cinema favours the male gaze. Through an analysis of the female alien and her biology and sexuality, I explore the femininity in the narrative. In a discussion of the figure of the alien, I make use of commentary provided by Istvan Csicsery-Ronay (2007) as he explores the human anxieties that the alien projects.

One of the most prominent features of the science fiction film genre is the figure of the alien. This figure has been described as a "member of a nonhuman species originating from somewhere other than Earth" (Booker and Thomas 2009, 321). The study of the figure of the alien reveals social, cultural, sexual and technological anxieties, which are projected onto contemporary society. In science fiction films that feature aliens, the one characteristic that is of paramount visual importance is the form of the alien. In the *Alien* franchise, James Cameron's *Aliens* (1986) denied the audience a thorough look at the queen-Xenomorph (Bundtzen 1987, 15). The depiction of the Trilobite in *Prometheus* also does not permit the audience a proper look. Coupled with the deliberate lack of lighting in the scene that depicts the Trilobite, the scene works to amplify the anxieties that this creature projects for the audience.

The female hero, like the other heroes in this study, emerges through trauma. In addition to this, her suffering and sacrifice can be described as far greater than that of the other heroes in this study. Her ability to emerge as the female hero is further complicated by her emulation of her father, her belief in a Christian (male) God, and her suffering when she removes a parasitic alien from her body. Although aspects of her heroism are shaped by the patriarchy, she

nevertheless does embody heroism, albeit a hybrid form that is reliant on models of masculinity. Through this chapter, I explore the extent to which, as a female hero, she achieves agency.

Scott is well-known for his production of *Blade Runner* (1982), a science fiction, dystopian film set in a decaying world. The film is premised upon the relationship between humankind and machine (the Replicant). Scott extends the analysis of the relationship between android and human in *Prometheus*. In doing so, the discussion that Roy Batty, the Replicant, propagated in *Blade Runner* is extended in *Prometheus* through the android David. Erickson (2012, 100) notes the importance of *Blade Runner* to popular culture as it "was originally dismissed by critics and the public only to become to film what the first Velvet Underground album was to rock and roll". David is an important figure in the text as he is responsible for the creation of conflict within the narrative. The discussion in this chapter also focuses on the film's projection of existentialism through various characters.

Scott's *Prometheus* functions as the prequel to the *Alien* franchise (1979-1997), as the film details the origins of the alien Xenomorph, which feature prominently in the franchise. The Xenomorph has become a significant feature of popular culture, through its pharyngeal jaws, acid blood, armoured skeleton and blade-tipped tail. The vast majority of alien narratives focus on the invasion of Earth by alien species. *Prometheus*, by contrast, represents a scenario where humans invade an alien planet.

Scott's utopia is set in the year 2093 when the space exploratory ship, Prometheus, arrives at planet LV-223, in search of the progenitors of the human race. Aboard the ship are Meredith Vickers (played by Charlize Theron) and Janek (played by Idris Elba), the captain of the ship. Vickers is revealed as Peter Weyland's daughter towards the conclusion of the film, and I discuss their father-daughter relationship, in light of the relationship that the rebel hero shared with her father. The humans impose both their presence and genetic material onto the alien life that is present on the planet, with devastating consequences. This chapter also explores the extent to which science and science fiction favour the masculine in the film's representation of science, technology and religion.

5.2 The Opening of the Film, the Significance of the Film's Title and Microcinematography

Prometheus opens with the depiction of an uninhabited, primordial Earth. The opening scene is characterised by an untouched, natural landscape. The camera pans across the vast landscapes of mountain ranges, clouds and huge bodies of water with the effect of conveying pristine, untouched natural beauty. Vivian Sobchack (2012, 32) describes Scott's cinematography of the opening scene as "gorgeous, detailed and compelling".

As the scene progresses, the images become darker. The darkness of the almost black-and-white images are used to convey the arrival of a saucer-shaped alien space-ship, as it casts its own shadow over the landscape. The ship takes on the form of the archetypal saucer-shaped ship, which is a staple of science fiction films that place an emphasis on extra-terrestrial life. The composition of the scene foregrounds the use of special effects and Computer Generated Imagery (CGI) in its depiction of a huge alien being: the engineer. Vera Dika (2003, 40) discusses the use of monochrome camera techniques in film as it evokes "nostalgia" for "films of the past". The use of this cinematic technique often creates a desire for a return to the past which features older "genre, film or narrative signifying systems" (10). This camera technique functions to evoke a pre-historical era, a time before life existed. The dark hues of the scene also have the effect of contrasting the being's eyes, consumed by blackness, against his pale, white skin. The darkness of the scene also works to foreshadow the impending death of the engineer.

Sobchack (2012, 33) interprets the representation of the engineers in the film through an exploration of mythology. Sobchack proposes that the alien engineer is actually Prometheus himself, the Titan who disobeyed the Gods to ensure the progress of humankind. She observes the engineer's chalky colour and huge stature and notices how the Titans are also described as huge beings, towering over humans. Sobchack points out that the word "titan" has its etymological origins in the word "clay" or "white earth" as it was "thought that these deities covered themselves with it in their sacred rituals" (33). Sobchack also recalls how it was the mythological Prometheus who created human beings, modelling them out of clay (33). The plausibility of this assumption is further highlighted by the engineer's self-sacrifice for the purpose of creation.

167

The mythological Prometheus is also an apt illustration of the rebel hero. His rebellion and defiance against the gods led to a severe punishment. He pitched himself "against the omnipotent force of the universe", the much feared Zeus (Leeming 1973, 186), for the progress of humankind. The spaceship that carries the crew across the universe in search of the progenitors of humankind is named after the Titan, Prometheus. As the crew embark on an intergalactic mission to advance knowledge and human progress, so too did the mythological Prometheus steal fire for the progress of the human race, with the intent of improving the lives of humankind. Making another reference to the film's title, Weyland, the founder of Weyland Corporation, and the individual funding the expedition, mentions the Titan Prometheus and his defiance against the Gods, which sought to give humankind an "equal footing with Gods" (Scott 2012). Weyland speaks of how Prometheus was cast from Olympus for his transgression. In foregrounding the film's tropes of exploration and discovery, Weyland mentions that it is now time for Prometheus's "triumphant return" (Scott 2012).

The engineer stands at the precipice of a gigantic, raging waterfall. He removes his cloak, revealing a perfectly sculpted, hairless body, which bears stark resemblance to the human form. He proceeds to consume a black substance from an earthen bowl. The alien's death is confirmed as he plunges from the top of the waterfall and into the raging river below, and his body rapidly decays and disintegrates. This disturbing disintegration is shown on a molecular level as his DNA perishes as it makes contact with the water below. The viewer is then given a microscopic view of a double helix as it begins to reconstitute itself in an altered form. Cells are then shown in the process of mitosis with the effect of showing the viewer creation on a microscopic level. As the process of mitosis takes place, a single-celled organism divides to create a more complex organism.

Science is explicitly demonstrated through the destruction and creation of life on a molecular level, as one would see through the lens of a microscope. This process of microcinematography (Landecker 2006, 121), is becoming more popular within science fiction films as depicted through films such as *The Incredible Hulk* (2008 dir, Louis Leterrier), *The Island* (2005 dir. Michael Bay) and *Lucy* (2014 dir. Luc Besson). In Scott's film, microcinematography is conveyed through the use of CGI.

Hannah Landecker (2006) discusses the popularity of microcinematography to the science fiction film genre. She notes that this visual trope emerged when "early twentieth-century

biologists […] began to film very small organisms and cells" (121). Scientists explored this nuanced way of observing cells and bacteria through "tinkering with film, film cameras, microscopes, and the parameters of exposure, magnification and time" (121). This new technique impacted film positively as it now "presented the haunting possibility of capturing over time phenomena that had escaped static means of representation such as histology, photography, or drawing" (122). The importance of microcinematography to both film and the audience is foregrounded in its allowance for "opening up of the scientific gaze to other participants" (123). Scientific film not only teaches the audience about cells but also suggests a "very particular way of looking at the world" (123). Through the film's depiction of microcinematography, the viewers of the film witness Scott's fictional process of creation.

Prometheus represents an alternate, albeit fictional, theory of the creation of life. This fictional theory is further emphasised in the narrative when Darwinian evolutionary theory is debunked, which I discuss later on in this chapter. Microcinematography in Scott's film is used to convey a theory of creation through science which is a genre that is commonly associated with the masculine (Booker and Thomas 2009, 86). Creation and creative power, consonant with this stereotype, is wielded by the male engineer. The engineer's ability to create and destroy allows him to occupy the status of a God. Scott, as a male director, attributes the source of creative energy to the masculine, which is also emphasised by the film's emphasis on Christianity and by implication, patriarchy. Masculine creative potential is also foregrounded by Peter Weyland who manufactures David, the android.

In a juxtaposition to masculine creative prowess, the film represents the creative energy and power of the female alien, through the Trilobite. Scott propagates and revamps the contention of male creative power through the representation of the female alien. Through the Trilobite, female creative and destructive capacity is foregrounded. When the Trilobite defeats the engineer, towards the end of the narrative, and uses his body as a vessel for her offspring, female creative power takes precedence over the masculine association with creation, made prominent through the Christian religious doctrine, and by implication, patriarchy. The physiology of the female alien sees her impregnate a male body with her offspring, using his body to sustain her creation, countering the Christian depiction of the female body impregnated by a male God. In a feminist reading of the alien, I explore her creative potential as the phallic mother, especially when she kills the engineer to reproduce, as is elaborated on during the course of this chapter.

5.3 Trauma and the Rebel Hero

The female rebel hero of the film is introduced through her own personal trauma. While in stasis, Shaw dreams and recalls a memory of her deceased father, which is recorded by her stasis chamber. David intrudes on this dream, making the viewer privy to Shaw's subconscious state of mind. Shaw recalls an encounter with her father when she was a child, while he worked as an anthropologist conducting field work. In the background, people from an alternate culture are engaged in a funeral. The ceremony of a funeral foregrounds the centrality of death to the narrative. The interchange between father and daughter reveals the first tragedy and loss that Shaw has suffered. Shaw lost her mother at a young age. The father also highlights, for the daughter, the existence of other religions, besides Christianity. Shaw asks her father where people go when they die, to which the father replies, "Everyone has their own word, Heaven, paradise, whatever it's called, it's some place beautiful" (Scott 2012). The young Shaw is curious as to how the father knows this and he says, "'Cos that what I choose to believe, what do you believe?" (Scott 2012). Shaw repeats her father's words when she is faced with scrutiny emerging out of her theory relating to the engineers. In doing so, she appropriates her father's belief system. Although she finds evidence supporting the engineers as the progenitors of the human race, her Christian religious beliefs are highlighted throughout the course of the narrative.

Through memory and remembering, Shaw experiences the psychological trauma of the death of her parents. Aris Mousoutzanis (2013, 329), in an exploration of trauma and memory, observes, "trauma is essentially a pathology of memory". He describes "intrusive flashbacks" as a symptom of post-traumatic stress (331). Memories "are means to cope with […] loss" (332), and this is true for Shaw. Remembering constitutes an important role in Shaw's survival and in her rebellion as the hero of the text. Her heroism is shaped through her personal trauma and loss. Remembering, for the rebel hero, sees her harness her religious beliefs over her scientific standing.

Shaw inherits the cross from her father and it punctuates the narrative, becoming more prominent when she is placed in difficult situations. The cross becomes representative of the loss of her parents, particularly her father. The trauma of having lost both her parents emotionally affects her, and the cross becomes a key component to her survival. Roger Luckhurts (1998, 33), in an exploration of trauma in the science fiction genre, observes how

"Memory is split and reorganized: the forgotten controls the self". For Shaw, the memory of her father is split across the narrative as the cross appears at significant points in the narrative, which ultimately has an impact on her actions and decisions as the rebel hero. Trauma "disrupts memory, and therefore identity" (Luckhurts 2008, 1). The intrusive phenomena associated with trauma (flashbacks, recurring dreams) "repeat or echo the original" traumatic event (1).

Within the dream, the cross, as a symbol of Christianity, stands in juxtaposition to the funeral as it is representative of an alternate culture. Shaw's father reflects the autonomy that he practises in relation to his beliefs when he asks his daughter what she believes with reference to religion and God. Her gaze shifts to the funeral that is being conducted on the banks of the river, and her uncertainty is made evident as she experiences a conflict between her Christian beliefs and the alternate culture which she bears witness to. The dream also works to introduce the notion of the 'other', and this theme is extended in the figures of the android and the alien as 'other'.

The scene which depicts Shaw's memory-dream is characterised by the use of blurred pixels that form the image on the screen. The image distorts from time to time and this gives the effect of an imaginary world. The scene has the effects of a 'break in transmission' feel as it delves deep into Shaw's unconscious mind. David exercises his capacity as the caretaker of the crew in stasis and he invades Shaw's unconscious mind, thereby allowing the viewer to also trespass on Shaw's memories. This invasion by David mirrors the trope of invasion which is the larger theme of the film, made visible, later on in the narrative, through the figure of the alien.

5.4 The Rebel Hero as Father's Daughter

The female rebel hero emerges in patriarchal culture and within the masculine dominated Hollywood domain. Patriarchal culture has ensured that masculinity functions as "the social standard for leadership, personal autonomy, and success in this culture" (Murdock 1990, 29). Shaw can be described as a "father's daughter" as she "identifies with her father and imitates men in her pursuit of success" (Murdock 1994, xiv). The daughter emulates the father's qualities, "his walk, tastes, and opinions" (xiv). Like her father's worldview, her view is indicative of freedom of choice, which Shaw exercises throughout the text. Her ability to make choices becomes central to her ability to survive when she is placed in difficult situations. Following this paradigm of the father's daughter, a separation from the mother results in the

daughter receiving "a deep wound to the very core of her femaleness" (xv). Later on in the narrative, Shaw expresses grief at the loss of both her parents.

Although it can be argued that Shaw's heroism is a creation of the patriarchy, she is a model of dissent and bravery represented by a nurturing, loving and positive patriarchal figure. A father's daughter "is [also] ambitious and responsible in the world of work" (8). Shaw, being a successful academic and researcher, like her father, is determined to make one of the most significant discoveries in human history by finding the progenitors of the human race. In a psychological study of female motivation it has been observed that "successful women had fathers who nurtured their talent and made them feel […] loved at an early age" (Murdock 1990, 30). The "Approval and encouragement by a girl's father lead to positive ego development", where women "develop a positive relationship to their masculine nature" (31). This nature acts as a "support guide" throughout their lives (32). Shaw displays the positive aspects of female identity formation, having made a "healthy transition […] to greater independence in a patriarchal society" (37). She displays the "decision-making, direction, courage, and power" to "achieve success" (37), due to her encouraging and nurturing father. Shaw proves that her survival is not dependent upon the patriarchy and she is the model of the father's daughter who is "encouraged to achieve rather than to be dependant" (32).

Shaw's heroism is nuanced compared with that depicted by the male rebel heroes in this thesis. Patriarchal culture ensures that "women find themselves perceived as lacking in competence, intelligence and power" (29). Shaw emerges as a strong female hero as a result of the positive relationship she experienced with her father. The male rebel heroes simply display their heroism, whereas Shaw's heroism becomes visible through her positive relationship with her father.

The importance of a positive relationship between father and daughter is made evident through an analysis of the negative relationship that Vickers shares with her father, Weyland. He refuses to acknowledge Vickers as his daughter and instead views David as his child, openly describing him as the "closest thing to a son" he will ever have (Scott 2012), to Vickers's disdain. Vickers's only desire is to be accepted by her father, as his child.

Weyland is cold and callous towards his daughter as she can never be the son that he wanted. This establishes him as a negative enforcer of patriarchy in the text, juxtaposed to Shaw's father

who is loving, nurturing and supportive of his daughter. This results in Vickers's negative ego development and a wounded sense of her self (Murdock 1990, 38). Nothing Vickers ever does is satisfactory for her father, and even though he drives her forward, he does so with "no recognition of her longings to be loved, [or] to feel satisfied" (39). She becomes "as hard as nails" (39), "addicted to perfection" and therefore overcompensates (41). Although she is depicted as an emotionally strong woman she is left with the "gnawing sensation" that she will never be enough (42). This is communicated to the viewer at the end of the narrative when she goes into a state of panic, realising that Janek is willing to sacrifice his own life for the sake of humanity. Her selfishness is visible in her attempt to leave the planet without her crew. She fails to leave LV-223, and dies when she is crushed by the engineer's ship.

5.5 The Unnatural Creation of Life, Science and Technology

Science and technology are crucial aspects of the science fiction film. *Prometheus* depicts technology in both positive and negative terms. The film, at its inception, represents various utopian impulses, coupled with the positive use of science and technology which has the potential for the biological and intellectual progress of the human race. The inherent difficulty with this becomes evident as "humanity has 'progressed' to the point that we now possess the means of our own destruction" (Ferrell 2000, 65), as depicted in Scott's film.

As the ship makes entry into the atmosphere of LV-223 the crew notice a spherical structure with huge vertical walls. Holloway remarks that God does not build in straight lines (Scott 2012). The structure is later revealed to be a ship belonging to the engineers. Holloway is immediately drawn to the 'unnaturalness' on the seemingly uninhabited planet. His voracious ambition eventually leads to his death, by consuming the alien substance that the engineers use to create life. Within the structure Shaw discovers irrefutable proof: the decapitated head of an engineer. Fifield, a crew member, highlights the significance of her success when he says, "Congratulations on meeting your maker" (Scott 2012). David also notes that the being is "remarkably human" (Scott 2012). A violent storm approaches as the crew leave the structure which foregrounds the approaching horror that manifests at the hands of David and the alien planet.

Shaw and her team bring the head back to life through the process of electrifying its brain cells to stimulate them. The engineer opens its eyes and its head explodes, bringing about a second,

death albeit, a pseudo one. The failure of the technique highlights the crew's failure to bring about anything positive from their remarkable discovery. The human potential for destruction is made evident through science's ability to imbue a false sense of life into a creature, only to have it experience a gruesome destruction.[22] An unnatural form of life is imbued into the engineer. The horror and unnatural process of creation is highlighted by the fact that only his head is brought back to life. Through the process of imbuing life in an organism by unnatural means, *Prometheus* makes reference to Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, which, incidentally, also shares connections to *Prometheus* through its title: *The Modern Prometheus*. Shelley's text, like Scott's narrative, interrogates "the meaning of life, the nature of reality, the essence of humanity, the riddle of what-else, the conundrum of what next" (Erickson 2012, 100). Like Shelley's text, *Prometheus* acts as a warning related to the unnatural creation of life, depicted by David. This is explored in the next section of this chapter.

5.6 The Anxiety Embodied by the Android

The social anxiety towards the "other" is displayed through the figure of the android in the film. The necessity of the android to science fiction film lies in the notion that this figure is "imagined as entities which test or define the contemporary sense of human value" (Wheale 1991, 298). David is also a prime example of rebellion in Scott's text. His greatest transgression is against his creator, and more broadly, the human race. Scott extends the discourse that Roy Batty generated in *Blade Runner* (1982), into *Prometheus*.

The first indication that David is not human is communicated to the viewer when he analytically communicates that the crew have been in stasis for "Two years, four months, eighteen days, thirty-six hours and fifteen minutes" (Scott 2012). David's status as android is highlighted throughout the course of the film, reminding the viewer that he is not human, despite his appearance. Victor Grech, Clare Vassallo and Ivan Callus (2015) draw a distinction between the figure of the robot and the figure of the cyborg. The authors note that the robot is "an entirely mechanical being" (50). The authors discuss the use of the word "android" as appropriate to "denote numerous different creations including robots, cyborgs, or artificially created organic beings that closely resemble humans" (50).

---

[22] The act of bringing the head to life though electrical impulses mirrors Frankenstein's monster's awakening through a similar technique.

David, like Roy, desires to be human, which is communicated through the 'feelings' that he experiences. These feelings drive David to explore his own creative potential when he actively crafts an alien species. *Blade Runner*, through its main protagonist, Deckard, works to blur the boundaries between Replicant and human, revealing a reversal of roles between human and android, showing that the Replicant expresses more sympathy and emotion than the human beings.

Cyrus R.K. Patell (1993) focuses his discussion on androids and artificial humans in an analysis of the famous *Blade Runner*, and its depiction of the android. He observes, "the likeness between the blade-runner and the Replicants, which includes their mutual victimization", "becomes the film's overwhelming theme" (25). Scott's *Blade Runner* explored artificial life forms, through the Replicants becoming slaves to humanity. The figure of the android addresses the social anxiety of the emergence of an under-class, which can be exploited, ill-treated and exterminated at the will of its creators. *Prometheus* also addresses the subservient position that the android occupies in society. Grech, Vassallo and Callus (2015, 56) note how "moral and ethical issues of property and slavery are intentionally ignored since the foreseeable outcome of such research will be the creation of sentient beings who will be expected to labour in conditions tantamount to slavery". In *Prometheus* the entire crew's survival and safe arrival on the alien planet is attributed to David. While the humans sleep, he watches over them, maintaining their health. He ensures that their journey is safe and problem-free. David also enters into a potentially life-threatening storm to save Shaw's life. He only survives because he is not human. The crew never fear David and neither do they suspect his involvement in everything that goes wrong on the alien planet. Patell (1993, 27) observes,

> Fear of androids encompasses more, however, than anxiety about the misuse of technology: it also represents an individualistic culture's anxiety about the transfer of agency away from the individual. Androids invariably represent the cutting edge of human technology: they are intended to be the ultimate tools, created in order to free human beings from performing tasks that are repetitive, time-consuming, life-threatening, or simply beyond human ability.

David is first introduced by Weyland in his holographic presentation where he describes David as an android, stating that "unfortunately he is not human. He will never grow old, he will never die, and yet he is unable to appreciate these remarkable gifts, for that would require the one thing that David will never have: a soul" (Scott 2012). Weyland displays envy towards David's

immortality, as he himself desires to be immortal, and David expresses soul-envy towards humans. David's soul-envy is a possible motivation for his testing the limits of humans' will-power and ambition. David desires nothing more than to wield the same power of creation that Weyland possesses, as his creator. In spite of this, his experimentation with human and alien DNA reveals more about Shaw's capacity for survival than it does about the figure of the android.

David desires to be human, as is depicted through his mimicking and gesturing of Lawrence from the film titled *Lawrence of Arabia* (dir. David Lean, 1962). While attending to the needs of the crew in stasis David also learns various languages and engages with media to learn about human culture and behaviour. He watches a particular scene from *Lawrence of Arabia* which creates intertextuality within Scott's film. The scene depicts Lawrence in dialogue with his colleagues about a trick he performs with a burning match-stick, by extinguishing the flame. David quotes from the film after styling his hair to mimic Lawrence's hairstyle. Imitating Lawrence, he says, "The trick, William Potter, is not minding that it hurts" (Lean 1962). This filmic reference resonates with the wider themes of the film as the presence of fire in the film foregrounds the mythological Prometheus and his gift of fire to humankind. "Not minding that it hurts" (Lean 1962) highlights Prometheus's ability to endure the punishment which was handed down to him.[23] David's desire to rebel and his eventual rebellion can be paralleled to Prometheus's dissent as David's theft of one of the flasks containing alien DNA bears resemblance to Prometheus's theft of fire. Throughout the narrative, David strives to attain self-identification. He finally achieves this when he plays a key role in the death of his creator. His creative potential is also displayed by his interface with alien and human DNA.

Holloway constantly refers to David's status as an android. Holloway's offensive and cruel remarks centre on David's inability to be human. He demeans David by calling him "Boy" (Scott 2012), and makes a remark about David not needing breathing apparatus outside the ship. David defends his outward appearance when he says, "I was designed like this 'cos you people are more comfortable interacting with your own kind" (Scott 2012). David expresses his absence of choice in his design, and in doing so he expresses a desire to potentially have an

---

[23] Prometheus was punished for his transgressions and rebellion against Zeus. He accepted and endured the agonising punishment handed to him. By rebelling against Zeus, "the omnipotent force of the universe", Prometheus asserted a desire to be "totally free" (Leeming 1973, 186). David also expresses a desire to be free from his creator, and he is willing to endure any necessary punishment in order to attain that freedom.

alternate outward appearance. Although his appearance mimics the form of a human, he is not a human. He despises the fact that he has been produced in the image of humans in order to be assimilated into humanity, ensuring that human beings are comfortable with his appearance and presence. Grech, Vassallo and Callus (2015, 50) note, "The danger from androids is perceived to be even more acute due to their deliberate resemblance to humankind, which inevitably raises the possibility of our species being slowly supplanted by our own creations".

David's intelligence far outweighs that of the humans aboard the ship, and this allows him to experiment with alien and human DNA. He learns the language of the engineers and he is even able to use their maps to navigate through other galaxies. The danger that he embodies is reflected through his ability to place the entire crew's lives in peril, and this leads to the death of the entire crew, with the exception of Shaw. The real danger that David represents is made evident when he suggests that the pregnant Shaw wait until she gets back to Earth to have her alien-child extracted. David meddles with creation, resulting in the birth of the Xenomorph, which poses a threat to human existence. In spite of David's antagonistic behaviour, his actions cannot be equated to and judged by those of a human being, because David is not human. David completely lacks a "conscience, moral sense, guilt, and human sympathy" (Wheale 1991, 299). Despite the threat that he poses, it is possible that one is able to sympathise with David and his status as an android, especially when he becomes 'upset' by Holloway's cruel remarks.

Sobchack (2012, 34) notes that David "serves as a mediation figure between the human characters and their 'makers'". Although this is plausible with reference to David's artificial intelligence, his role in the film transgresses the boundaries of him being represented as a mere mediation figure. David takes it upon himself to 'teach Holloway a lesson' about his treatment of the android. In doing so, he creates the conflict in the narrative, as David lies at the juncture where human and alien DNA come into contact with each other. David occupies a central role in the film, and his status as android significantly contributes to him being far more than just a mediator between humans and aliens. David is directly responsible for the creation of various hostile alien species, including the Xenomorph, "the old alien [which] we've come to love" (34), and the "most famous hostile alien" of all film (Grech, Vassallo and Callus 2015, 53).

David is far more polite than Holloway, and this is explicitly seen in his interactions with Shaw. The pair share a cordial relationship with each other. Unlike Holloway, she gives David the respect that is afforded to any human being, overlooking his android status. Their relationship

is characterised by empathy, possibly because they both function within patriarchal culture, which dictates their marginal status. David is oppressed by his dominating 'father' and Shaw's heroism is exercised within the confines of patriarchy. Shaw and David discuss the prospects of freedom from domination. Their discussion yields the following interchange:

> Shaw: What happens when Weyland isn't around to programme you any more?
> David: I guess I'll be free.
> Shaw: You want that?
> David: Want is not a concept I am familiar with, that being said, doesn't everyone want their parents dead?
> Shaw: I didn't.

The above interchange reveals the conflicting desires of the pair. David desires freedom from his creator and oppressive 'father' while Shaw desires the love and affection of a family unit. David desires to be free from the obligation of looking after his creator and being in the servitude of humans. Roy, in *Blade Runner* (1982), also expresses the need for freedom and individualism. *Blade Runner* uses the "figure of the android to explore the ambiguities of late-twentieth-century American ideology and its valorization of individualism" (Patell 1993, 25). In a discussion of the film, Cyrus R.K. Patell points out, "Androids enable science-fiction narratives to pose questions that cut through the heart of individualism's internal contradictions: what constitutes an individual, a person, or a human being?" (26). Toward the end of the narrative, David attains freedom from his creator through initiating his death. David locates the engineer and revives the alien, who then proceeds to kill Weyland. In spite of having achieved his freedom, he does so at a hefty cost, as the engineer decapitates him, pulling his head from his body. Again, his status as both android and immortal are highlighted, as he does not die from the violent act.

David's rebellion against the humans on the ship is explicitly shown when he transmits the alien DNA to Holloway. David looks at it and says, "Big things have small beginnings" (Scott 2012). His power and role as creator are highlighted through these words. They also resonate with the beginning of the film where small particles form the building blocks and biological foundations of life. Before David commits the heinous act he prepares a drink for Holloway, who patronises David by telling him that he is not "a real boy" (Scott 2012). The following interchange takes place between Holloway and David:

> Holloway: Why did they even make us in the first place? [Referring to the engineer's creation of humankind.]
> David: Why do you think your people made me?
> Holloway: We made you because we could.
> David: Can you imagine how disappointing it would be for you if you hear the same thing from your creator?
> Holloway: I guess it's a good thing you can't be disappointed.
> David: How far would you go to get what you came all this way for? What would you be willing to do?
> Holloway: Anything and everything.

The above interchange reveals Holloway's egotistical and pompous nature. His crude remarks clearly have an impact on David who is affected upon hearing about the purpose of his creation and existence. The audience is able to glean David's unhappiness with his android status, from the above interchange. He desires to be human and this is reflected through his juxtaposition of his creation with the creation of human beings. When Holloway asserts that he is willing to go to any lengths to find the truth, David puts this to the test. David channels his feelings of unhappiness, distress and revenge from the encounter and watches Holloway consume the alien substance. David purposefully targets Holloway, using him to test the limits of human ambition. The results of David's actions have repercussion for the entire crew, specifically Shaw. David also experiences an existential crisis as one of the challenges of existentialism and life "is to find and make meaning, which helps provide a will to live as well as a sense of identity" (Whipple and Tucker 2012, 99). Through meddling with creation, David strives to find a purpose in his life, attempting to wield the power of creation.

David plays a pivotal role in the death of his creator, evoking the anxiety and fear associated with the creator's technology turning on him. Patell (1993, 28) notes, "the android is a person, created artificially, who is stronger than its creator". The creator takes part in a process of unnatural creation by imbuing life into a machine; the creator then, "must be punished by the illegitimate child turning on its creator", for the "reward for circumventing natural (pro)creation is a perverse child" (Schwartzman 1999, 81). Feeding into the contention that science fiction is a masculine genre, the creators of robots or artificial life "are almost invariably male" (80). The creator of the robot usurps the role of the mother, and this reveals the "very madness of the mad scientist [which] results from the obsessive devotion to the creation itself, a blind love for the creative act" (81). Weyland's desire for immortality is premised on the belief that since he loves his creation then the engineers love their creation as well. His flawed logic results in his death, and the freedom of his creation.

5.7 Feminism, the Pregnant Mother and the Anxiety of Disease

Cinema wields the potential to produce "meanings about women and femininity" (Smelik 1998, 9). In 'reading against the grain', a feminist analysis centres on a "strong sexual female" character, issues pertaining to women, or issues that "explicitly address a female audience" (15). *Prometheus* can be analysed from a feminist perspective as its main protagonist is female, and the film addresses issues of femininity. Through investigating the presence of a female hero and a female alien, I apply a feminist analysis to the film. Cinema "is a cultural practice where myths about […] sexual difference are produced, reproduced and represented" (7). Suzanne Damarin (2004) discusses one of the traits of feminist science fiction narratives. She notes that such texts show a deconstruction of "sex and gender" and the "modes of reproduction and parenting" are re-envisioned compared to "traditional forms" (57). Like Ripley in the *Alien* franchise, Shaw surpasses her male counterparts in her "ability to meet threats through conquest and destruction" (Schwartzman 1999, 85).

M. Keith Booker and Anne-Marie Thomas (2009, 95) note the importance of science fiction film and television in the creation of "the female action hero". Science fiction texts that have a female hero at their core provide "sophisticated commentary on the gender issues that shape and inform our contemporary existence" and thus make it an attractive "medium for feminist concerns" (95). Annette Kuhn (1999, 149) observes that the *Alien* franchise has "attracted considerable attention from feminist film scholars and cultural critics" due to its representation of the themes of "procreation, birth and maternity and [the] enduring female superhero".

The rebel hero undergoes trauma again when Holloway is incinerated in plain sight of Shaw, after he becomes sick from coming into contact with alien DNA. After she awakes from sedation she is confronted by David who gives her the news that she is three months pregnant. Her shock at this news is compounded by the notion that it has only been ten hours since she has engaged in sexual intercourse. David says that it is "not a traditional foetus" (Scott 2012), and he becomes adamant that Shaw should be placed back into stasis till they make the journey back to Earth, exploiting his creative potential by attempting to possibly annihilate the human race.

Before Shaw becomes impregnated with the alien, it is revealed that she is infertile, although she expresses a desire to be a mother. Grech, Vassallo and Callus (2015, 55) discuss the deliberate infliction of infertility in the science fiction genre. They note that sterility as a theme is as old as the mythology from which it draws (48). The authors go on to discuss the general theme in texts that depict infertility where "infertile humans frequently display sadness and despair because of their loss of offspring or the ability to reproduce" (55). Reproduction is the most significant way "of achieving even a small measure of immortality" (55). Analysing life from an existential perspective, and giving meaning to life, for evolutionary biologists, revolves around the prime purpose of projecting "their genes into future generations" (Barash 2000, 1012). While Shaw is denied this privilege, Weyland exploits it by creating the immortal David. Childbirth also broaches the anxiety associated with overpopulation. In response to this Yunis and Ostrander (2003, 69) note how "it makes sense that our emerging myths, like *Aliens*, would work to reverse the emotional valence of childbirth".

In the *Alien* franchise, Ripley attempts to avoid impregnation at all costs, and "In her battle with the Mother Alien, [she] is battling the undisciplined impulse to reproduce" (Yunis and Ostrander 2003, 72). Ripley is forced to kill herself when she does eventually become impregnated with the alien. What has been described as the "unthinkable horror" (Bundtzen 1987, 15) in the *Alien* franchise comes to fruition in *Prometheus*, when Shaw becomes impregnated with the alien. Shaw exercises her power as the female hero when she evicts the alien from her body, without sacrificing herself. For Ripley, the "invasion of the body by an alien" is "a violation which results in the total loss of autonomy for the female" (Yunis and Ostrander 2003, 73). Shaw projects an alternate form of femininity, one that foregrounds power over the female body and the alien. While Shaw's body does undergo violation as a result of David's actions, she reclaims her autonomy over her body by evicting the alien. Shaw chooses to remove the alien-child from her body, thus exercising her agency over her own body.

Shaw differs from Ripley in her representation of femininity, which I explore in this section. Ripley conforms to a masculine paradigm through the wielding of large guns and face-to-face combat with the aliens she encounters. When juxtaposed to the portrayal of Shaw, Shaw embraces her femininity and her female body. Shaw is married and desires to be a mother. She also exercises her power through her intellectual capacity, whereas Ripley asserts her power through her physical capacity. Shaw does not engage with the powerful aliens she encounters; instead, in an effort to survive, she sets the aliens up in opposition to each other.

Shaw, with the aid of technology, regains her power from the alien-child within her. While technology is the harbinger of death, through David, it paradoxically functions to save Shaw and give her back her agency and power. As soon as she learns that she is pregnant with an alien, Shaw heads towards Vickers's med-pod[24]. Shaw experiences pain as the alien violently moves beneath her skin, threatening to burst through her abdomen to be born. It is as if the alien-child knows, as a parasite, its eviction is imminent. Bundtzen (1987, 16) discusses how in *Aliens*, "woman's reproductive capacity is a potential threat", not just to herself, but also to "civilization [and] technological progress". Although Shaw desires a child she is aware of the threat that the alien within her poses, to herself and to humanity. For Shaw, the threat is not her reproductive capacity, but rather the aliens, as they desire to annihilate humankind, and emerge as the dominant species. Technology aids the rebel hero to take back her agency and her body.

Shaw uses the med-pod to perform an emergency Caesarean section. She places herself into the machine, and due to its limitations, the procedure is performed without any anaesthetic, highlighting the pain for Shaw and the horror for the viewer. This is compounded by a close-up shot of her abdomen as a laser sears through the layers of skin and a mechanical arm opens the wound to remove the alien-child. The horror continues as Shaw severs her own umbilical cord and the creature screams with rage. For the female viewer, the scene evokes the anxieties associated with birth, specifically through Caesarean section. Having completed the surgery, the med-pod rapidly staples the gaping hole in Shaw's abdomen together. As in the *Alien* franchise, Shaw's impregnation "pivots around a feminist *guérillère* doing battle with the premise that female anatomy is destiny" (15). Shaw exploits the only possible way to extricate the alien from her body, in doing so, she does not succumb to the power of the alien as a result of her female anatomy. She regains her power and agency through performing the surgery, taking back the ownership of her body from the alien.

The surgery scene evokes the anxiety of tokophobia, the pathological fear of childbirth. This anxiety "leads some women to dread and even avoid childbirth despite desperately wanting a baby" (Greathouse 2016, 20). Although Shaw desires to be a mother she is aware of the dangers

---

[24] The med-pod in *Prometheus*, depicted through a scientific and technological lens, plays a crucial role in the survival of the rebel hero. The med-pod is a crucial component in Neill Blomkamp's *Elysium* (2013). This advanced piece of technology serves to project the future of medicine and medical technology. In science fiction film, it creates the possibility of performing complex surgery without human aid or supervision.

that the alien-child poses to her. This anxiety can often be so profound that some women will "abort a desired pregnancy rather than experience childbirth" (20). The empowerment of women in the West has resulted in a decline in the capacity of women to have children (22). Shaw experiences "hopelessness" and "helplessness" and these are both characterised as symptoms of tokophobia (23). Some women opt for elective Caesarean section in order to overcome the fear of childbirth (20).

In *Prometheus*, birth is characterised by pain and trauma. Shaw experiences far more physical pain than the other heroes in this study. Her physical body and female anatomy constrain her heroism, and it is evident that the procedure is traumatic for her. Shaw also undergoes the surgery without proper anaesthetic, magnifying her pain and suffering. The Christian religious doctrine establishes the pain of childbirth as punishment for all women for Eve's transgressions in the Garden of Eden. Scott's narrative foregrounds this parable, for when women rebel then they must be punished.

Through the use of the med-pod the birthing process is sterile and relatively clean, compared to the bloody mess that the chest-busters create in the *Alien* franchise where "violent Caesarean birth" destroys the human host (Bundtzen 1987, 12). The procedure is painful for Shaw and difficult for the audience to watch, imbuing an element of horror into the film. Creed (1990) discusses horror in the science fiction film and its ability to create discomfort in the viewer. She observes:

> In contrast to the conventional viewing structures working within other variants of the classic text, the horror film does not constantly work to suture the spectator into the viewing processes. Instead, an unusual phenomenon arises whereby the suturing processes are momentarily undone while the horrific image on the screen challenges the viewer to run the risk of continuing to look so that the viewer unable to stand the images of horror unfolding before his/her eye, is forced to look away, to not-look, to look anywhere but at the screen. (137)

Ridley Scott, in an interview, expresses a sense of openness with regard to including a graphic Caesarean section in the film. While he does advocate placing restrictions on films, he observes that "every kid under the sun is going to see this anyway", due to the ubiquitous nature of reality television (Britt 2012, Online).

After the surgery, Shaw removes herself from the med-pod and attempts to kill her alien-child. Constable (1999, 174) observes, "Becoming the monster's mother involves a breakdown of traditional models of identity". In order for Shaw to become the alien's mother she has to be isolated from any and all human relationships, and this foregrounds the importance of her status as a widow. As a result of Holloway's death, Shaw becomes the sole parent of the alien growing inside of her. Constable, in a discussion of the female hero, notes how "these reproductive maternal figures are not represented in relation to a male partner" (177). Csicsery-Ronay (2007, 16), in a general discussion of the figure of the alien observes, "Alien-human or mixed alien partnering is a frequent background motif in every national tradition of SF". *Prometheus* depicts sexual relations between two humans, one of whom has been exposed to alien DNA, resulting in the creation of an alien-child. In *Aliens*, "Alien sex, for both men and women, always results in death", and since "Labour and delivery are horrendous, unnatural expulsions of monsters that burst, screaming, from the writhing female", "death is preferable to labour and birth" (Yunis and Ostrander 2003, 70). With the aid of technology, Shaw avoids this fate and rebels against the power of the alien and its parasitic tendencies.

Holloway is killed through incineration after he displays symptoms of exposure to contagions. When David reveals to Shaw that she is pregnant, he also makes reference to the traumatic ordeal of her father's death. While Shaw is processing the traumatic death of her husband, David reminds Shaw of the traumatic loss of her father, increasing her sense of helplessness. David reveals that Shaw's father died as a result of Ebola haemorrhagic fever, information he has gathered from intruding on her dreams. The trauma of her father's death can be paralleled to the trauma that Shaw experienced with the death of her husband. Shaw, as a child, was forced to watch her father being consumed by an incurable disease in the same manner that her husband battled contamination from alien DNA, before his death. Incidentally, Holloway's symptoms bear resemblance to those of Ebola as Holloway has red, blood-shot eyes. Like Shaw's father, there is no cure for Holloway. His death also mirrors the manner in which victims of Ebola are disposed of, through incineration.

Steven's Spielberg's *E.T: The Extra-Terrestrial* (1982) responded to the social anxieties evoked by the Aids epidemic in the 1980s (Sobchack 2008, 268). In a similar manner, Scott's *Prometheus* makes reference to the social anxieties associated with the Ebola virus which has seen sporadic outbreaks in the Western parts of Africa, and which has been receiving global attention since 2000. Infectious diseases "will assume added prominence in the 21st century in

both developed and developing nations" (Fauci 2001, 675). Infectious diseases are "the second leading cause of death" worldwide (675), and the problem of combating infectious disease lies in the "continual evolution of infectious diseases" (676), as "emerging and remerging diseases will continue to challenge us" (684).

5.8 The Rebel Hero and Mythology

Shaw, as the rebel hero of the text, overcomes the odds that are stacked up against her. When David encounters Shaw after her surgery, he says, "I didn't think you had it in you. Extraordinary survival instincts, Elizabeth" (Scott 2012). David's remark foregrounds the intent with which he acted, and he is taken aback by Shaw's ingenuity, having faced being impregnated by an alien. From Shaw's actions, David gauges the survival instincts of the human being. Shaw rebels against her imminent death as she forges her own destiny, which David attempts to shape, through his actions. Through overcoming the trauma that she is faced with, and through her continued fight for survival, her heroism becomes increasingly visible towards the end of the narrative.

Sobchack (2012, 33) critiques *Prometheus* as "being caught up in its own almost inescapable double bind: on the one side, the filmmaker's desire and demand for originality and, on the other, a huge parasitic franchise and stifling mythology". Mythology, as used in the film, creates useful points of reference to creation and the Titan Prometheus. Mythology also provides a useful lens for a discussion centred on the rebel hero. Susan Yunis and Tammy Ostrander (2003) analyse Ripley through a mythological lens. Using their framework and Maureen Murdock's psychoanalytic study of the female journey, I discuss the rebel hero in *Prometheus*, through mythology.

Shaw stands in opposition to Ripley in the sense that she survives her impregnation. Her refusal to die presents her as a strong female character, differing from the self-sacrificing Ripley who throws herself (and the alien within her) into molten lava in *Alien: Resurrection*. In a discussion of *Aliens*, Constable (1999, 197) notes how it is painful for a mother to kill her child "because it constitutes a part of herself". Shaw avoids confrontation with her alien-child at the end of the narrative, pushing the pursuing engineer into its tentacles, instead. While it is unlikely that Shaw experiences any emotional attachment to her alien-child, the Trilobite does function to deter her from her ambitious search for the 'truth'. The horror that the Trilobite embodies

causes her to renew her faith in a Christian God. The alien also causes the female hero to "showcase the indomitable human spirit in the face of dire adversity" (Stewart 2016, 106).

Shaw, like Ripley, "follows the course of the archetypal warrior hero, travelling to the lower depths, or belly of the whale, to kill the dragon and retrieve the elixir which will save her culture" (Yunis and Ostrdner 2003, 71). Shaw initially believes that her research and physical search will have a positive outcome. Her view changes when she is confronted by the horror of the aliens on the planet. Yunis and Ostrander (2003, 71) parallel Ripley's journey to Theseus's journey into the labyrinth, which is a place characterised by death. The rebel hero of Scott's *Prometheus* also travels into the structure which can be compared to a labyrinth. Shaw makes numerous journeys into the labyrinth, and it is her final journey that tests her ability for survival. Like Ripley Shaw also "travels through the world of the dead" (71). The land of the dead in mythology is represented through the innermost cave (Vogler 2007, 14). The inside of the structure is a tomb where other engineers have been murdered. The structure is representative of death, and Milburn and Fifield are also killed through oral rape, within the structure, by the phallic alien referred to as a Hammerpede. Its many narrow passages are explored by the crew, and secret rooms are accessed by David who initiates Weyland's death inside the structure.

Shaw makes a second descent into the structure after her surgery. During this descent she "goes in search of her self" (Murdock 1990, 46). She "enters the labyrinth to find what is at the centre of her self" (46). David awakens an engineer from stasis and Shaw comes face-to-face with the beings from the maps that she found. When the engineer turns hostile she "discovers her strengths and abilities", and she uncovers and overcomes her weaknesses (46). When Shaw is forced to face both the engineer and the Trilobite her task becomes "to take the sword of *her* truth, find the sound of *her* voice and choose the path of *her* destiny" (46-47).

Shaw's heroism is highlighted through her ability to save Earth and the human race, by instructing Janek to destroy the engineer's ship before it leaves the planet as it is "carrying death and its headed for Earth" (Scott 2012). Janek, along with what is left of the crew, crash Prometheus into the engineer's ship. Their selfless act stands in contrast to the selfish and hubristic nature of Weyland. Shaw travels through the labyrinth again, aboard what is left of Prometheus. It is on the ship that she encounters her alien-child, which attempts to kill her. She is also forced to confront the engineer, her creator. She neutralises herself as a threat when she

forces the engineer into the clutches of the Trilobite, creating a situation of the battle of the alien species.

Yunis and Ostrander (2003, 72) observe how Ripley's journey "accomplishes personal growth". In a similar manner, Shaw's journey and battle with various alien species also result in her personal growth. Although she is forced to face the trauma and death of her parents and husband, she expresses maturity and bravery by abandoning the planet at the end of the narrative, to embark on a new journey. Her personal growth is also visible through her actions which prevent the engineer from leaving the alien planet, with the intention of destroying Earth.

5.9 The Alien Anxiety: The Trilobite as the Phallic Mother

By the fourteenth century the term 'alien" was used to describe "a person belonging to another family, race, or nation", a foreign resident and therefore "not naturalized" (Csicsery-Ronay 2007, 2). The term "alien", Csicsery-Ronay argues, is significant for Anglo-Saxon culture, in that English designates a word for "alien", linking them to technoscience, and specifically "creatures from other worlds" (1-2), where most languages only have "terms for 'stranger' or 'foreigner'" (2). Booker and Thomas (2009, 321) also discuss the figure of the alien. They suggest that the alien and its "different cultures and biologies cause humans to view their own world differently". Science fiction's "great trope of the new is the Future; of the other, the Alien" (Csicsery-Ronay 2007, 1). The alien has its roots in adventure stories and mythology through "angels, demons, avatars, fairies [and] magical animals" (1). The figure of the alien becomes distinct from the above examples when its "existence is derived from science" (1). The engineers in *Prometheus* are communicated to the audience through their advanced alien technology. The alien encounter within the film is also brought about through science and space travel.

The Trilobite in *Prometheus* takes its name from a creature that lived approximately 570 million years ago (Levi-Setti 1995, 1), making them the oldest fossil arthropods (3). The Trilobite possessed remarkable levels of 'functional complexity', displayed through accelerated biological evolution (1). It is a befitting name for the mother-alien at the centre of Scott's narrative as she possesses the ability to grow to a grotesque size in a short period of time, reproduce with another alien species, and bring forth a new species from the union, which also occurs in a short interval of time. It can be argued that creation by the masculine, while

disturbing in the case of the engineer disintegrating, does not project the grotesque, whereas female creative power is depicted by a mammoth *vagina dentata*, orifice within orifice and through explicit vaginal imagery.

The form of the alien in the popular imaginary is influenced by animals, and "any animal form known to exist on Earth will eventually become an entry in SF's xenomorphological catalogue" (Csicsery-Ronay 2007, 13). The engineers in *Prometheus* share a similar anatomy and physiology to the human form and they represent "our Old Ones – ancestors of the human species" (6). The Trilobite bears resemblance to an octopus-like creature, with her many tentacle-arms. The octopus is a depiction of "other-worldliness here on Earth" (Seth 2016, 47). Aliens possess "strange body shapes, unusual abilities and uncanny intelligence", just like the octopus which Anil Seth refers to as "our very own terrestrial alien" (47). Seth discusses the *Octopus vulgaris* and investigates if this creature possesses a consciousness as a result of their "conscious perception" (53). The tentacles of this creature are central to the alien and the science fiction genre (54), largely because, unlike humans who have their neurons concentrated in the central brain, the octopus has its half a billion neurons in "its semi-autonomous arms which are like independent animals" (47). Amia Srinivasan (2017, Online) discusses the octopus and its ability to threaten boundaries. Like Seth, she also observes the octopus's likeness to an alien, observing that it is the closest encounter to alien life which humans can experience. Srinivasan also makes reference to a piece of artwork from 1814, created by Hokusai, which depicts a woman sexually entwined with two octopi, while one performs oral sex on the woman. This early image of art fuses female sexuality with the octopus.

The Trilobite in *Prometheus* is driven by her need to procreate and reproduce, in order to bring forth alien life. The mother-alien becomes representative of Shaw's desire to be a mother, and this desire in turn manifests within the alien-mother and her creative potential. Aliens "may be what we oppress and repress", and "They may arrive only to draw attention to our incompleteness, or they may represent our other halves, our heart's desire" (Csicsery-Ronay 2007, 3).

Lynda K. Bundtzen (1987, 14) observes that the alien-mother "literally embodies woman's reproductive powers". The Trilobite also functions to arouse "primal anxieties about women's sexual organs" as she emerges as the "phallic mother of nightmare" (14). Within James Cameron's *Aliens* (1978), the terror evoked by the Xenomoprh-queen is "grounded in

archetypal fears of woman's otherness, her alien body and its natural functions" (Bundtzen 1987, 16). These fears are nullified in *Prometheus*, for in spite of the horror of impregnation, the hero defies the natural process of birth and forces the alien-child out of her body, aided by technology. The alien-mother also represents "the Alien other in our own nature" (16); in addition to this her devouring "womb-tomb […] threatens to engulf everyone in the limitations of our bodies, our creatureliness, our biological functions" (17).

The Trilobite's orifice on her underside, which is used to implant a host species into the victim, bears resemblance to the *vagina dentata* which is modelled on the primordial image of the "vagina-with-teeth" (Raitt 1980, 415). Although the image of the *vagina dentata* is rooted in mythology (416), it became popularised in twentieth-century culture where it embodied male fears of the female anatomy (416) and the threat of castration. The terror embodied by the Trilobite evokes anxieties for both male and female audience members, emphasised by the Trilobite's lack of sexual preference in a mating partner. The aliens in *Prometheus*, like the alien that Csicsery-Ronay (2007, 3) describes, "are driven by themselves" and they "exist, whether they like it or not, for *themselves*". It is for this reason that the engineer kills Weyland with such ease, viewing himself as superior to his creation. Aliens "may even pretend to be gods shaping the course of cosmic evolution. They may appear to be masters of space and time, and demand to be human beings' master accordingly" (4).

The reference to the Trilobite and the species of cephalopoda invokes Sigmund Freud's mythological notion of the "phallic mother"; the "horror of the female genitals" and its psychoanalytical association to the arachnid (Freud 1993, 23). Freud draws a distinction between the mother and the spider, making reference to the mythological Medusa, having snakes in place of hair (23). Like the octopus, the spider also has eight limbs extending from its body. Freud links this horrifying mythological image of the spider to the fear of castration (23). Maureen Murdock (1990, 18) also uses the image of the gorgon to describe what she refers to as the "Terrible Mother" who represents "stasis, suffocation and death". She is both "womb and tomb", and in so far as she is able to give life she also takes it away (20). The Trilobite is both life-giving and death-dealing. The Trilobite, like the Xenomorph-queen, arouses "primal anxieties about women's sexual organs" as she emerges as the "phallic mother of nightmare" (Bundtzen 1987, 14). Csicsery-Ronay (2007, 4) notes, "We invoke them [Aliens] to supplement our lack, but they always arrive exceeding what we need". In Scott's film the horror and excessiveness of the alien causes Shaw to express regret pertaining to her quest.

Susan Hayward (2013, 143), applying a psychoanalytic lens to feminist film theory, observes how often in film, the Elektra Complex for the female is confirmed even when the phallic mother is present, as the female hero kills the mother and marries the father. *Prometheus* works to unsettle this contention as Shaw does not successfully kill the phallic mother, and she does not unite with the symbolic father, in fact the film establishes that Shaw lost her father at a young age and she is also tragically widowed when her husband comes into contact with alien DNA. The agency that she achieves through escaping the Trilobite as the phallic mother, killing the engineer and saving the entire human race establishes her as a powerful female figure, who does not require a union with a male counterpart. Shaw's state of maturity is achieved before her encounter with the phallic mother, as is visible through her success as a scientist.

Like the Xenomorph-queen, the Trilobite evokes the "mythological narratives of the generative, parthenogenetic mother – that ancient archaic figure who gives birth to all living things. She exists in the mythology of all human cultures as the mother-goddess who alone created the heaven and earth" (Creed 1990, 131). In a similar manner to the Xenomorph-queen in *Aliens* (1986), the Trilobite possesses both male and female organs; however, she is not androgynous, as her femininity "is confirmed by" the "graphic display of female anatomy", her "vulva and labia" (Bundtzen 1987, 12), which reside inside her cavity. In a similar fashion to the Xenomorph-queen, the Trilobite depicts "female fecundity" which is "prolific and devouring" (11). She is "juicy femaleness, nature gone wild, not technology gone awry" (15). Her biological drive and fecundity are emphasised through her attempt at killing Shaw, the mother which she was conceived from. Comparable to the Xenomorph, the Trilobite embodies "woman's reproductive powers" (14).

The aliens represented in Scott's text think for themselves, and locating the engineers is initially viewed in a positive light, for finding them will provide humanity with all the answers to their existential questions. The various alien species in Scott's text function to reveal more about human nature than they do about aliens. The rebel hero only emerges through her encounter with the alien species. Her efforts to kill the aliens highlight her heroism and ability to survive, despite the odds, and it is plausible that she has been instrumental in wiping the engineers' civilisation from existence. Csicsery-Ronay (2007, 5) points out the necessity of aliens to culture. He comments,

> Aliens are necessary because the human species is alone. The lack that creates them is an Other to whom we can compare ourselves. Many fundamental qualities of spirit/mind appear to exist only in us, so we have nothing to measure them with, to allow us to see our limits, our contours, our connections.

Shaw, representative of the human race, emerges victorious at the end of the narrative, having successfully killed the engineer. A cyclical nature is created by the various species of aliens within the narrative. The engineer is the ancestor of the human race, and coming full circle, Shaw kills her creator by forcing him into the clutches of her creation, the Trilobite. The mother-alien in turn creates another species through her union with the engineer. A "divine food chain" is thus created, one that is "cavalier if not malicious" (Erickson 2012, 98). As Creed (1990, 136) notes, the "all-devouring womb" indeed "generates horror", when her sexual interaction with the engineer gives rise to a Xenomorph.

5.10 The Female Gaze

Laura Mulvey has unravelled the ways "in which narrative and filmic techniques in cinema make voyeurism an exclusively male prerogative" (Smelik 1998, 10). Mulvey (1975, 804) attests that "maternity outside the signification of the phallus" is necessary to disrupt the male gaze in cinema. This can be achieved through representations of the vagina. Compared to the Xenomorph-queen, the Trilobite's sexual organs are more explicit in detail, with a direct echo of the female sexual organs. Csicsery-Ronay (2007, 9) observes how "The alien cannot be completely different because it is different in *significant* ways. The alien is fated to signify. It must have a mind, because if it does not, neither do we". The sexual organs of the Trilobite are excessive. In a feminist analysis of cinema, Anneke Smelik (1998, 125) observes, "visual excess is a subversive element creating other meanings, outplaying narrative structures, [and] evoking emotions". The Trilobite's sexual organs serve to place an emphasis on its femininity and desire to reproduce.

For Mulvey (1975, 810), the woman in Hollywood cinema and her "lack" of a penis implies a "threat of castration and unpleasure" for the male audience. The Trilobite has both phallic arms and a *vagina dentata*, activating simultaneously the fear of rape and castration. Considering that the engineer (as a male) is her first victim and that his capture is brought about by her multiple tendrils and oral rape, the scene evokes increasing anxieties of castration and rape for the male audience, since a male is being attacked. The mother-alien kills her victims through

"Phallic penetration" (Creed 1990, 130), and she is "reconstructed and represented as a *negative* figure, one associated with the dread of the generative mother seen only in the abyss, the monstrous vagina" (135). The "voyeuristic or fetishistic mechanisms" (Mulvey 1975, 815) are removed, making the threat of castration unavoidable. Within Cameron's film the terror evoked by the Xenomorph-queen is "grounded in archetypal fears of woman's otherness, her alien body and its natural functions" (Bundtzen 1987, 16). The Trilobite amplifies this anxiety further through its explicit and graphic display of female sexual organs. The vagina is an object of taboo to "polite society" (Smelik 1998, 161). Representations of the vagina disrupt this taboo, making female sexuality and desire visible.

Shaw and her contaminated husband produce the Trilobite, and the Trilobite and the engineer produce a Xenomorph. The "representations of alien sex confront the problem of the unrepresentability of a nonoedipal desire" (Rogan 2004, 443), as it "exists outside lack and appropriation" (444). Bracha L. Ettinger (2006, 218), using a psychoanalytic framework, discusses the notion of the "matrixial stratum of subjectivization", which places signification on the "womb" as opposed to the "weight of the phallus" (1997, 426), proposed by both Jacques Lacan and Sigmund Freud. For Freud the "Western symbolic order derives its coherence from the phallus or paternal signifier", creating a dialogue centred on "phallocentricity" (Silverman 1983, 131). For Lacan, the phallus "designates the privileges of the symbolic", where the word "lack" denotes the absence of the penis in females (139), denying them access to the power and privileges afforded by the phallus. As an alternative to this discourse, Ettinger designates that the womb functions as a "complex psychic apparatus modelled upon this site of feminine/prenatal encounter" (2001, 103). Her argument places an emphasis on "connections with female bodily specificity" (1997, 427), where the matrixial gaze "rolls into several eyes, transforms the viewer's point of vision and returns through his/her eyes to the Other of culture, transformed" (2001, 111). Such a feminist analysis of the film "evokes the desire of the spectator to return to the pre-oedipal phase of unity with the mother" (Smelik 1998, 14). *Prometheus*, placing an emphasis on the signification of the feminine, the vagina and the womb, shifts the gaze from serving the pleasures of the male to addressing issues of femininity and female power.

Mulvey (1975, 809) cites the function of woman in cinema as being expected to hold the look of the audience, play to, and signify male desire. Employing a feminist analysis to the female alien in *Prometheus* has the opposite effect, forcing the male viewer to confront a metaphorical

castration through the physical oral rape and symbolic castration occurring on the screen. In James Cameron's *Aliens* (1986) the viewers was not permitted a proper look at the Xenomorph-queen. Employing a similar tactic, the viewers of the Trilobite are not permitted a thorough look at the alien-mother. This, in addition to the intentional lack of proper lighting in the scene, functions to amplify the anxiety and discomfort for the audience. Not only is the audience denied a proper viewing, the audience may look away from the discomfort created by the explicit sexual nature of the Trilobite's orifice.

The alien Trilobite and its excessiveness evoke what Julia Kristeva (1982) describes as "abjection", the place "where meaning collapses" (2). Abjection occurs when identity systems and order are disrupted (4). The abject does not respect "borders, positions, [or] rules" (4). Kristeva observes, "the abject is perverse because is neither gives up nor assumes a prohibition", it "kills in the name of life" (15). This is exactly the act that the Trilobite partakes in. The realm of science fiction literature is "misogynistic" (Booker and Thomas 2009, 86). Contributing to a counter-discourse, the feminine alien other is "Imbued with the ominous power that many male writer bestowed upon her" and she has thus become a "tool designed to disrupt the sexual hierarchy and challenge the construction of 'woman'" (86).

5.11 Evolutionary Theory, Religion and Science in the Science Fiction Text

The film features three types of entities: human beings, David, the android, and aliens. The interaction of these three entities create conflict within the text. *Prometheus* is premised upon the notion that humans have an alien ancestry, and this stands in contrast to the dominant Christian doctrine, which also features within the text, to a significant extent. Scott's narrative addresses both the relevance of science and religion. The female hero initially places her faith in the scientific method. When the horror of the alien is revealed to her through science, she places her faith in her religious beliefs, centred on a Christian, male God, affirming her place in patriarchal culture.

Science is evoked through the film's reference to creation through evolution. Before arrival on the alien planet, Shaw explains the purpose of the expedition to the crew. One of the crew members remarks that it is "bullshit" (Scott 2012), and he recounts three centuries of Darwinism as his proof. The crew member evokes the popular and widely accepted belief in

evolutionary theory as proposed by Charles Darwin.[25] Darwin's "assertion that the origin of species had nothing to do with a creation god was stunning" (Francis 2007, 9), to the nineteenth century audience. Darwinian thought created an opposition between evolutionary science and religion. Scott's text uses both science and religion to reveal a narrative centred on survival. "Survival of the fittest" and "natural selection" are terms associated with the Darwinian Theory of Evolution and they refer to "the process that enables various forms of life to change from a particular form to a different one" (8). Various forms of the alien species emerge during the course of the text through human-alien interaction. A battle for survival ensues as the rebel hero of the text, unbeknown to her, also plays a role in the creation and destruction of alien-life forms. *Prometheus* interrogates the existential questions pertaining to the origins of human beings and it also explores a plausible answer to this question. *Prometheus* shows a clear rejection of Darwinism, and "Most of the new cults reject Darwin to make space for extraterrestrial creation stories" (Csicsery-Ronay 2007, 22).

Although Shaw's father occupies a minor role in the film, he becomes representative of Christianity within the text. His crucifix, now in the possession of Shaw, appears in the film, and it becomes more prominent as Shaw begins projecting her hope from science into religion. The cross also becomes more visible when Shaw's father mentions death and heaven in her dream. Shaw highlights her awareness in her religious faith when she questions who made the engineers. Her mindfulness of this issue raises the problem with cults that place an emphasis on the creative power of aliens. This view "moves the problem back a step; who after all, seeded the first Seeder?" (22).

The cross has dual representation within the text. It functions as both a symbol of suffering, and a symbol of hope. The cross is an explicit reference to bodily suffering through its association with crucifixion and sacrifice. Compared to the other heroes discussed in this study, Shaw endures far more physical suffering as a result of her female body.[26] After the trauma that she experiences on the alien planet (the death of Holloway and becoming pregnant with the alien), she regrets her decision to follow the map that she discovered. She says, "They aren't

---

[25] Keith A. Francis (2007) discusses Darwin's most famous piece of work, *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life* published in 1859. This text revolutionised science as we know it through challenging the religious doctrine of Christianity.

[26] Although Shaw, as a woman, suffers the horror of the impregnation by alien otherness, it is worth noting that men also experience 'impregnation' by the alien in the *Alien* franchise. The fragility of the human body is highlighted by this occurrence which almost always results in death.

what we thought they were. I was wrong" (Scott 2012). Shaw realises that the planet holds answers to questions that should never be answered. After witnessing the horror of her alien-child and the engineer's compulsion to kill his creation (humans), Shaw expresses a loss of hope. She turns towards her faith, apologising to God, saying, "I can't do it anymore" (Scott 2012). Shaw also expresses to Weyland her mistake by embarking on the mission. The female rebel hero depicts women's power differently from male power (Murdock 1994, 145), as "It is not external power or *power over*, which is linked to masculine domination, hierarchy, and control, but *power from within*" (145), which the female hero projects. The cross as a symbol of sacrifice, places an emphasis on the sacrifices that Shaw has had to endure on the alien planet. Her personal sacrifices are highlighted throughout the narrative where she emerges from her personal trauma, victorious. The cross also acts as a symbol of hope. It has been noted that "Christianity is a religion of hope" (McGrath 2008, 165). The end of the narrative projects hope for the future and the hero of the text, as she embarks on another journey.

When David attempts to remove Shaw's cross and after he delivers the horrifying news of her impregnation, he says, "It must feel like your God abandoned you" (Scott 2012). David is unable to grasp the notion of religion and its creation myths as being orchestrated by a god. He has already met his creator and expressed his dissatisfaction with Weyland. David is forced to obey his creator, lacking the freedom of choice that humans have, even while subscribing to a religious doctrine. He is fascinated by Shaw's ability to believe in God when there is no scientific and factual evidence to support her belief. David's words therefore function to heighten the despair that she is already experiencing, as he deems her faith obsolete.

For the rebel hero, the grandeur of the engineers is shattered when they are revealed to be the bringers of death, consumed by their own hubris as a result of their creative potential. After confronting the hostility and horror of the aliens on the plant, Shaw asks the decapitated head of David for her cross back. She locates her cross and places it around her neck, confirming her belief in her religion. David asks, "Even after all this, you still believe, don't you?" (Scott 2012). Religion is not a concept that David is able to comprehend. Shaw exercises her freedom to choose, as her father did, by her religious faith and allegiance to a Christian, male God. By asking for her cross back after her alien encounter, she affirms her beliefs in the Christian doctrine, highlighting that she does not require any scientific substantiation for her belief. Through the beliefs of the main protagonist, an emphasis is placed upon the power of religion as opposed to the power of the aliens.

Scott's fictional narrative, through its representation of Christianity and the engineers as the progenitors of the human race, projects creative power embodied by the masculine. In a juxtaposition to this, the film also represents female creative power through the Trilobite. The film therefore acknowledges the creative power of the masculine and feminine.

5.12 The End of the Narrative

Weyland's death at the end of the narrative confirms, for him, the inevitability of death. With his last breath he says, "There's nothing" (Scott 2012), to which David's decapitated head remarks, "I know. Have a good journey Mr Weyland" (Scott 2012). Both David and Vickers are aware of the natural order, and their awareness highlights Weyland's unnatural desire to live forever and be granted immortality. In Vickers's last moments with her father, she says, "A king has his reign, then he dies, it's inevitable, that is the natural order of things" (Scott 2012). Weyland and his characterisation in Scott's text represents a possible reason behind why the engineers desired to annihilate the human race, which they created. Weyland's greed, hubris and inflated ego can be cited as possible 'flaws' in the engineers' creation. Weyland's inflated ego is reflected through his request for immortality, as he wishes to occupy the status of the creators.

When David reveals that the engineers intended on destroying Earth, Shaw asks David why. David replies, "In order to create one must first destroy" (Scott 2012). Through this remark, David highlights the act of creation with which the film began. His remark also functions to demonstrate his own ability to create, through killing Holloway. The final scene of the film places an emphasis on David's status as android. Shaw returns to the structure to retrieve David's head.[27] Shaw apologises to David for placing his head in a duffle bag, and in doing so, she still affords David the respect given to a human. Yunis and Ostrander discuss the presence of the android, Bishop, in *Aliens*. They note how he also has a severed body at the end of the narrative, thus pointing towards emasculation (74). The film; therefore, prefers "the synthetic man to the human man" (74). Scott's film also shows preference to the synthetic man, and this is highlighted through the significant role that David plays in the film.

---

[27] The notion of the talking head of a robot first appears in the thirteenth century, when Rogar Bacon, a philosopher and Franciscan friar, constructed a metal speaking head (Lee 2017, 3).

With the help of David, Shaw and the android leave the alien planet, choosing to pursue the journey and locate other engineers to find out exactly why they were bent on destroying Earth. In the last scene of the film, David asks Shaw if the answer matters. Shaw maintains that it does, and David becomes curious as to why the answer is of importance. Shaw responds, "That's because I'm a human being, and you're a robot" (Scott 2012). Shaw's remark is her first gesture in differentiating herself from David. Her status as human foregrounds her capacity for choice, which is her greatest asset as the rebel hero of the text. The hero's final words of the narrative serve to highlight her heroism. She says, "There's only death here now, and I am leaving it behind" (Scott 2012), signalling a new beginning and a renewed faith. As Shaw leaves LV-223, she records the day and date as "New Year's Day, the year of our Lord, 2094" (Scott 2012). The beginning of a new year brings with it renewed hope for the hero. Shaw wishes to re-write the wrongs committed on LV-223, and this is highlighted through her assertion that she is still searching. The citing of the new year through a religious lens also foregrounds her fervent belief in a divine higher power.

5.13 Conclusion

Microcinematography within science fiction film functions to place an emphasis on science, specifically genetics and human biology. The "cinematic examination of the particles and cells subtending the world as seen with the unaided eye [has] become part of the discussions and representations of reality far beyond the laboratory" (Landecker 2006, 130).

Shaw, as the rebel hero of the text, rebels against her own biology and creative potential. She does not deny her ability to create, but she does not allow it to control her either. She achieves her agency, influenced by a nurturing father, when she exercises her freedom of choice. David P. Barash (2000, 1012) observes, "Lacking any essence other than our own freedom, we are forced to make choices and, in so doing, define ourselves. In a huge universe that is devoid of purpose and uncaring about people, it is the human project to give meaning to our lives by the free, conscious, intentional choices we make".

In a similar fashion to *Blade Runner*, *Prometheus* also creates a dialogue outlining the relationship between the human and the artificial, as David is 'more human' than the crude Holloway. David kills his creator, emphasising the "fear of the Frankensteinian possibility that man's creation may escape his control and supplant him, a theme echoed frequently in SF"

(Grech, Vassallo and Callus 2015, 54). David desires to be free from his creator and express his own individualism through attaining a purpose.

Scott's narrative works by placing humankind in a grander scheme of the cosmos through its reference to Darwinism, science and existentialism. Francis (2007, 88), elaborating on a discussion between the human species and survival, notes,

> Humans may seem superior to all other species, but Darwin suggests in *The Origin of Species*, and states explicitly in *The Descent of Man*, that humankind is not that much different or better than the other animals on the planet. Darwin's theories confirm that the special place of humankind is only in its skills. Compared with the long periods of time in which the Earth evolved, and the vast size of the universe, humankind is quite small.

Constable (1999, 173) argues that the *Alien* series sets "up an opposition between the human and the monstrous". While this is true for the *Alien* series, *Prometheus* successfully blurs the boundaries between the human and the monstrous, through representing the human race as descendants of alien beings. The last scene of the film depicts the birth of the Xenomorph, from the chest of the engineer. As the procreator, the mother-alien cements her place in the *Alien* franchise as the "dangerous fertile female alien" (Grech, Vassallo and Callus 2015, 49). *Prometheus*, as a film text, thus gives birth to the *Alien* franchise, with its emphasis on the Xenomorph.

Through analysis of the female rebel hero using a feminist lens, a discussion centred on femininity within the confines of patriarchy is visible. Shaw is able to attain a certain degree of agency through the positive relationship which she shared with her father. Her heroism functions within the confines of Christianity and patriarchy. It is within these masculine structures that she experiences suffering which is far greater than that experienced by the other heroes in this study. Her suffering is reflected through her personal trauma (through loss) and the physical suffering of her female body. Technology also plays a crucial role in assisting the hero to attain a certain amount of agency by the end of the film. Technology therefore works to inspire "confidence in the future" as it reinforces "the general belief that the scientific method is ultimately infallible" (55). James Cameron's *Aliens* (1987) depicted female biology as an issue which not even technology could grapple with and tame (Bundtzen 1987, 16).

Prometheus, on the other hand, embraces technology as a tool which woman can harness to achieve agency.

Scott's film is premised upon the battle of the species, where humans, represented by the rebel hero, emerge victorious. Shaw functions as the protector of humanity in a similar manner to the way that the mythological Prometheus championed the cause and survival of the human race. Using mythology to analyse the film and the journey of the rebel hero proves useful. Film and its evocation of mythology serves as a modern day parable, complying with "humanity's needs to be taught by example and by narrative" (Grech, Vassallo and Callus 2015, 54).

Alien invasion narratives are a staple of science fiction, and they "have remained popular, branching out in a variety of directions, often demonstrating an extremely sophisticated ability to deal with complex social and political issues" (Booker and Thomas 2009, 28). *Prometheus* depicts invasion, albeit humans invading an alien planet. In a single film, Scott features two of the most prominent science fiction entities: the alien and the android. The female rebel hero is a rare occurrence in Hollywood film, amidst the plethora of male heroes that the industry produces. An analysis of the female hero articulates the importance of feminist concerns through an exploration of the female hero's physical and psychological journey. Mapping these concerns carves out a niche for the female hero as the bearer of a certain degree of power.

6. Conclusion

This thesis has engaged in a critical analysis of the rebel hero at the centre of four twenty-first century Hollywood utopian and science fiction films. More broadly, this study has engaged in an analysis of the inherent social, religious, technological and political anxieties that they each reflect. Utopian film, inclusive of science fiction film, has proven fertile ground for the study of such anxieties, as such films engage with the concerns of the here and now, by evoking the past as a warning for the present and the future. This analysis has interrogated the various utopias within each of the four selected films. In doing so, progress of some form occurs at the end of each narrative, highlighted hope for the future.

Film, as a widely distributed medium that circulates easily across many cultural domains, gives insight into society, science, technology and medicine, of the present and in particular, the future. Daniel Engber and Erik Sofge (2013) investigate the plausibility of science fiction film as a useful model for technological advancements and developments. The authors use science fiction film as a template for technological progress to advance the quality of human life. Science is crucial to utopian and science fiction film. Through the lens afforded by science fiction, cinema becomes a "rich and still largely untapped source for the history of science" (Landecker 2006, 132), in an effort to project its future. Competing visions of utopia are necessary for continued exploration, debate and discussion of issues that plague our current society. In doing so it is also necessary to re-envision utopia, as its danger is made visible when one utopia is given precedence over another. This was visible in the cult group of Heaven's Gate 1997 mass suicide.

Utopian and science fiction film are fertile fields which allow for a critique of serious contemporary socio-political issues. The seeming utopias at the centre of this study reveal their dystopian elements, with the aid of the hero within each utopia. The critical dystopias then function as a warning for the present and projected future. The critical dystopia is premised primarily on hope which drives the utopian imagination (Zepke 2012, 92). Alan Clardy (2011, 47), in an exercise of envisioning future worlds, observes, "Humans need to believe in a better future. Absent that belief, they are left with despair and nihilism". Each representation of a utopia presents "competing theories of the world to come. The potential of such paradigms to influence how people understand what the future will be and inspire actions makes it imperative to understand the sources of their power to mold opinion and to develop critiques of them"

(44). Numerous scholars have argued for the inherent capacity of utopia and science fiction to "reflect critically on our contemporary attitudes towards" culture (Rutten, Soetaert, Vandermeersche 2011, 9). Various "perspective of the future" reflected in utopian and science fiction film "reveal much about the context in which these narratives are told and can therefore teach us something about cultural practices and social values" (9).

The genres of utopia and science fiction film show significant potential for the study of trauma, especially since we live in an age when "global media projects images of catastrophes all over the world as they are happening" (Kaplan 2005, 87). An engagement with trauma "invites members of a society to confront, rather than conceal, catastrophes" (87), and this might prove a useful method to cope with and better understand the world around us. Trauma features within each film contained in this study, and although difficult to grapple with, the heroes of each text are propelled into heroism by the personal trauma that they experience. An analysis of trauma within culture shows that "We have begun to translate the trauma into a language of acceptance while deliberately keeping the wound open; are learning to mourn what happened, bear witness to it, and yet move forward" (147).

In and through the anxieties that the films in this study reflect and address, the rebel hero and his/her emergence is necessary for the utopian society. The heroes' rebellion against the state, regime, corporation or community lies at the very heart of the films discussed in this study. The hero's journey (as mapped by Joseph Campbell) is adapted for Hollywood cinema by Christopher Vogler (2007) [1998]. In a discussion of the modern day hero, Campbell (2004, 359) highlights the importance of the individual as hero when he observes, "today no meaning is in the group – none in the world: all is in the individual". He makes reference to heroism and notes that it is "possible for men and women to come to full human maturity through the conditions of contemporary life" (359).

The rebel hero in *Equilibrium* (2002), first depicted as the anti-hero, emerges through trauma and the female protagonist who acts as a catalyst for his rebellion against the oppressive regime he once so fervently served. Wimmer's rebel hero undergoes a psychological journey, distancing himself from Prozium, whereby he experiences an awakened consciousness. No previous commentators have analysed the effects created by Wimmer's explicit intertextual reference to both W.B. Yeats's poetry and T.S. Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral* (1968) [1935], which evokes the trope of the martyr in this utopian and science fiction film. The rebel hero,

previously compliant with the regime, possesses the characteristics of defiance and bravery in his brazen murder of DuPont, the man who rules the utopia with an iron fist. Wimmer's utopia interrogates a world that evokes the social anxieties associated with war, Nazi Germany, propaganda and the dependency on drugs and anti-depressants. The film also engages in a dialogue with the technical film aspects of metafiction in film and *neo noir*.

Michael Bay's *The Island* (2005), the subject of Chapter Two, depicts the journey and return of the rebel hero. The hero responds to a call to adventure where he returns to the utopia to topple the corporation. The hero and his rebellious nature are made evident from the beginning of the narrative, while his transgressions against the corporation increase incrementally through the plot. The film engages with social, economic and technological anxieties related to the emergence of an under-class, the capitalist agenda, and human cloning through biotechnology. In addition to this the film addresses the sordid nature of organ trafficking. The clones and their oppression address modern forms of slavery, analysed through slavery in 17th and 18th century America. Following Michel Foucault's notion of "biopower", the analysis of the film has revealed the compound's use of excessive monitoring and surveillance to control the population. Like *Equilibrium*, the film also makes reference to the Nazi regime through the use of gas chambers. Bay's film engages with the technical aspects of camera techniques used to convey dream-mode and reverse on-screen motion which functions to highlight the horror and trauma of the rebel hero's dreams. *The Island* reveals two rebel heroes. The first hero rebels against the corporation from the inception of the film, through his curiosity and resistance to the laws that govern his illusory utopia. Lincoln, as the rebel hero, is characterised by his bravery and ability to escape the compound and to take Jordan with him, only to return to free the other clones and kill his oppressor. The second rebel hero is characterised by defiance when he goes against Merrick and helps Jordan to save the clones. Like Preston in *Equilibrium*, the rebel heroes in *The Island* emerge out of trauma. Lincoln achieves this through his incessant nightmares and witnessing the murder of his fellow inhabitants, and Laurent, through his re-encounter with the trauma of slavery, which affected him when he lived in a situation of war and conflict on the African continent. The original aspect of this chapter centres on Merrick's reference to the Garden of Eden, thereby viewing himself as a living God.

Chapter Three focused on Phillip Noyce's *The Giver* (2014), based on Lois Lowry's novel of the same name. The two narratives differ in significant ways as a result of its adaption into

film, and this is explored in this chapter. The dissent of the young hero is crucial for his dystopian society. The chapter also elucidates the importance of mentorship for the hero. The film also makes reference to the Nazi regime to foreground the totalitarianism embodied by the community and the Elders. Noyce's narrative also focuses on the notion of the gift and gift-giving, through the relationship between Giver and Receiver. The film makes use of selective colorisation and its importance for cinema in the digital age. This chapter's originality is revealed through a comparative analysis of the book and the film contributing to a discussion centred on films that use monochromic film techniques in their narratives to signal layered meanings.

The subject of the fourth and final chapter is *Prometheus* (2012), which is focused on science fiction and its representation of the alien and android as reflections of human anxieties. *Prometheus*, like the other films in this study, projects a possible future, focusing on the figure of the alien and android. Although the film features more science fiction elements than it does utopian elements, the film has at its centre a female rebel hero who projects utopian impulses through her ambition to unlock the secrets of humanity's origins. Using the lens of feminist film theory a feminist analysis is possible, focusing on the female hero and the alien as female. The presence of the female hero differs from the other heroes discussed in this study, and more broadly in Hollywood film analysis, which often features a white, male hero. The female hero emerges as the rebel within the confines of patriarchy. The physical pain that she endures is far greater than that experienced by the male heroes in this study. Her ability to attain agency is limited in spite of her heroism. Although she does attain a certain degree of agency, she does so within and with the aid of the patriarchal order.

Through the films discussed in this analysis, utopian and science fiction film prove to be fertile grounds for the emergence, discussion and engagement with trauma theory, specifically for its pertinence to the visibility and transformation of the rebel hero. The rebel heroes in this study have their heroism shaped by their personal trauma. Preston suffers from the trauma of his personal past. In addition to this he experiences the trauma that his utopia embodies when he makes a conscious choice to stop the doses of Prozium. Lincoln experiences the trauma of his present utopia when he learns of the dystopian elements within his community. Like Lincoln, Jonas also suffers from the traumatic encounter with the reality of his utopian community. Like Preston, Shaw has her heroism shaped by her past and present trauma which she is forced to confront on the alien planet. Like Preston, the second rebel hero in *The Island* is also forced to

confront the trauma of his past. Trauma and the process of remembering are integral components of identity formation and preservation. The utopian and science fiction film genres project memory (through trauma) as a necessary catalyst for change in societies. The female hero, in spite of emerging victorious at the end of her journey, suffers greater losses than those suffered by the male heroes in this study. Hollywood represents the female hero within the structures of patriarchy. The female alien, analysed through a feminist lens, has the potential to break the constraints of patriarchal culture insofar as she wields the power of the phallic mother.

The figure of the hero acts as a catalyst for change. Preston's rebellion is shaped by the intimate relationship he shares with Mary. Lincoln possesses a rebellious nature from the beginning of the narrative. His insatiable curiosity sets him on a journey of self-discovery, where he returns to topple the oppressive community, and free the other clones. Jonas, like Lincoln, also shows capacity for rebellion at the beginning of the film. It is in the opening scene that Jonas differentiates himself from the rest of his community. Shaw makes use of technology to rebel against death at the hands of the alien. Through the stories of the heroes explored in this study we are invited to "invest part of our personal identity in the hero for the duration of the experience. In a sense we become the hero for a while" as "We project ourselves into the heroes' psyche, and see their world through […their] eyes" (Vogler 2007 [1998], 30).

Utopia is necessary as it looks back into history to warn society about the paths that it chooses to take going into the future. Levitas (2007, 290) comments, "If utopia is understood as the expression of the desire for a better way of being, then it is perhaps a (sometimes) secularised version of the spiritual quest to understand who we are, why we are here and how we connect with each other. It is a quest for wholeness, for being at home in the world". Utopia and an analysis of the eutopian and dystopian elements that it possesses are necessary for an understanding of our world, which "reflects many of the classic symptoms of the wasteland kingdom: famine, environmental damage to the natural world, economic uncertainty, rampant injustice, personal despair and alienation, and the threat of war and annihilation" (Pearson 1991, 2-3). Carol Pearson creates an analogy between the mythological kingdom and our reality (2-3). Our kingdom is in need of rescue as "This is a time in human history when heroism is greatly needed" (3).

Future research on similar themes presented in this thesis could usefully focus specifically on the characterisation of female heroes in Hollywood film, where male heroes predominate, and also the representation of race. Two recent Hollywood films which fall within the utopian and science fiction genres, DC's *Wonder Woman* (2017, dir. Patty Jenkins) and Marvel's *Black Panther* (2018, dir. Ryan Coogler) have a female superhero and a cast that is predominantly of colour, respectively. These films are worthy of detailed and comparative analysis. Instances such as these provide optimism for more diverse representations of race and gender in future in globally distributed films such as those produced by Hollywood. One can hope that the future of Hollywood will include greater representation of women, people of colour, and in particular women of colour, in the cast, directors, producers and production crew.

In the introduction to the 2003 print of Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*, Neil Gaiman (2013, xi) explores the necessity of utopia: "Because we need to illuminate a path we hope or we fear humanity will take […] Because we need to warn you. To encourage. To examine. To imagine". Furthermore, texts like Bradbury's are a "reminder that what we have is valuable, and that sometimes we take what we value for granted" (xi). Wimmer's and Noyce's utopias place significant value on feelings, emotions, memory and identity, and Bay's and Scott's utopias highlight the value and importance of human life. The texts under discussion in this study succeed in placing significant emphasis on what we have, by imagining various worlds without the components that constitute our reality.

Bibliography

Abel, E. 1981. Writing and Sexual Difference. *Critical Inquiry* 8(2): 173-178. http://www.jstor.org/stable/1343158 [Accessed 29/10/2015].

Anderson, W.S.P. 2008. *Death Race*. [Film]. USA: Universal Pictures.

Apkon, S. 2013. *The Age of the Image: Redefining Literacy in a World of Screens*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Asimov, I. 1960 [1953]. *Foundation*. London: Panther Books.

Attebery, B. The Magazine Era: 1926-1960. In: James, E. and Mendlesohn, F. 2008. *The Cambridge Companion to Science Fiction.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 32-47.

Aycan, Z. Paternalism: Towards Conceptual Refinement and Operationalization. In: Kim, U., Yang, K. and Hwang, K. eds. 2006. *Indigenous and Cultural Psychology: Understanding People in Context*. New York: Springer.

Baccolini, R. and Moylan, T. eds. 2003. *Dark Horizons: Science Fiction and the Dystopian Imagination.* New York: Routledge.

---------------. Introduction: Dystopia and Histories. In: Baccolini, R. and Moylan, T. eds. 2003. *Dark Horizons: Science Fiction and the Dystopian Imagination.* New York: Routledge, 1-12.

Baccolini, R. 2004. The Persistence of Hope in Dystopian Science Fiction. *Modern Language Association* 119(3): 518-521. Available at: www.jstor.org/stable/25486067 [Accessed 09/02/2016].

---------------. 2006. Dystopia Matters: On the Use of Dystopia and Utopia. *Spaces of Utopia* (3): 1-4. [Online]. Available at: http://ler.letras.up.pt/uploads/ficheiros/3056.pdf [Accessed 07/03/2016].

---------------. Finding Utopia in Dystopia: Feminism, Memory, Nostalgia, and Hope. In: Moylan T. and Baccolini R. eds. 2007. *Utopia Method Vision: The Use Value of Social Dreaming*. Oxford: Peter Lang, 159-189.

Bahr, L. 2014. From Page to Screen: *The Giver*. *Ew.com*, 54-55. http://web.a.ebscohost.com/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=12&sid=a5cbe0bc-d4aa-44cc-9151-02a1034aac86%40sessionmgr4003&hid=4204 [Accessed 19/03/2015].

Bär, G. 2007. Perceptions of the Self as the Other: Double-Visions in Literature and Film. *Amsterdamer Beiträge zur neueren Germanistik* 63(1): 89-118. Available at: http://booksandjournals.brillonline.com/content/books/9789401205016[Accessed 04/02/2017].

Barash, D.P. 2000. Evolutionary Existentialism, Socio-biology, and the Meaning of Life. *BioScience* 50(11): 1012-1017. Available at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1641/0006-3568(2000)050[1012:eesatm]2.0.co;2 [Accessed 23/03/2017].

Barthes, R. The Death of the Author. In: *Image, Music, Text*. 1977. Trans. Stephen Heath, London: Fontana, 142-148.

Bay, M. 2005. *The Island*. [Film]. USA: DreamWorks Distribution.

Beauchamp, G. 1986. Technology in the Dystopian Novel. *Modern Fiction Studies* 32(1): 53-63. Available at: http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/modern_fiction_studies/v032/32.1.beauchamp.pdf [Accessed 26/03/2015].

Beaver, F. 1994. *Dictionary of Film Terms*. New York: Twayne Publishers.

Belsey, C. Textual Analysis as a Research Method. In: Griffin, G. ed. 2013. *Research Methods for English Studies*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 160-178.

Belton, J. 2008. Painting by Numbers: The Digital Intermediate. *Film Quarterly* 61(3): 58-65. Available at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/fq.2008.61.3.58 [Accessed 08/05/2017].

Beltrán, C.M. The New Hollywood Racelesness: Only the Fast, Furious, (And Multiracial) will Survive. *Cinema Journal* 44(2): 50-67. Available at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/3661094 [Accessed 15/02/2016].

Bems, G. 2008. *Iconoclast: A Neuroscientist Reveals how to Think Differently*. Boston: Harvard Business Press.

Besson, L. 1997. *The Fifth Element*. [Film]. France: Columbia Pictures.

---------------. 2014. *Lucy*. [Film]. USA: Universal Pictures.

Blomkamp, N. 2009. *District 9*. [Film]. South Africa: TriStar Pictures.

---------------. 2013. *Elysium*. [Film]. USA: TriStar Pictures.

---------------. 2015. *Chappie*. [Film]. USA: Columbia Pictures.

Booker, M.K. and Thomas, A. 2009. *The Science Fiction Handbook*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.

Boorman, J. 1974. *Zardoz*. [Film]. USA: 20th Century Fox.

Bradbury, R. 1967 [1953]. *Fahrenheit 451*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

Brayton, S. 2011. The Racial Politics of Disaster and Dystopia in *I Am Legend*. *The Velvet Light Trap* (67): 66-76. Available at: http://web.b.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.ukzn.ac.za:2048/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=dfede9da-1d93-4361-a4d8-d840c361dc31%40sessionmgr198&vid=8&hid=110 [Accessed 21/03/2015].

Brin, D. 1997. *Dialogs with the Future*. Locus Online. [Online]. [Available at: http://www.locusmag.com/1997/Issues/03/Brin.html [Accessed 07/03/2016].

Britt, R. 2012. Ridley Scott Explains Prometheus, Is Lovably Insane. [Online]. Available at: https://www.tor.com/2012/10/10/ridley-scott-explains-prometheus-is-lovably-insane/ [Accessed 30/08/2017].

Bullen, E. and Parsons, E. 2007. Dystopian Visions of Global Capitalism: Philip Reeve's *Mortal Engines* and M.T Anderson's *Feed*. *Children's Literature in Education* (38): 127-139. Available at: http://dro.deakin.edu.au/eserv/DU%3A30007625/bullen-dystopianvisionsofglobal-2007.pdf [Accessed 15/04/2017].

Bundtzen, L.K. 1987. Monstrous Mothers: Medusa, Grendel, and now Alien. *Film Quarterly* 40(3): 11-17. Available at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/1212458 [Accessed 20/03/2017].

Burton, T. 2001. *Planet of the Apes*. [Film]. USA: 20th Century Fox.

Byrne, D.C. 2004. Science Fiction in South Africa. *PMLA* 119(3): 522-525. Available at: http://ww.jstor.org/stable/25486068. [Accessed 09/02/2016].

---------------. 2009. The Messiah versus Collective Consciousness in the *Matrix* Trilogy. *English Studies* 48(2): 61-74. Available at: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00138390508691339 [Accessed 09/02/2016].

Cabrera, N.J., Tamis-Le-Monda, C.S., Bradley, R.H., Hofferth, S. and Lamb, M.E. 2000. Fatherhood in the Twenty-First Century. *Child Development* 71(1): 127-136. Available at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/1132225 [Accessed 20/04/2017].

Cameron, J. 1986. *Aliens*. [Film]. USA: 20th Century Fox.

Campbell, J. 2004 [1949]. *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. Oxford: University Press.

Campbell, J. and Moyers, B.D. 2011. *The Power of Myth*. New York: Anchor.

Caruth, C. 1991. Unclaimed Experience: Trauma and the Possibility of History. *Yale French Studies* (79): 181-192. Available at: https://eurofilmnyu.files.wordpress.com/2014/01/caruth-unclaimed-experience.pdf [Accessed 16/03/2016].

Champagne, A.R. 1995. *Jacques Derrida*. New York: Twayne Publishers.

Chandler, B.V. 2015. Don't Let the Future Pass You By: Iterative Dystopias on the Postmillennial Screen. PhD Thesis: University of Melbourne. Available at: https://minerva-access.unimelb.edu.au/bitstream/handle/11343/91108/Blythe%20Chandler%20Thesis%20(FINAL).pdf?sequence=1 [Accessed 07/03/2016].

Chang, H. 2011. Critical Dystopia Reconsidered: Octavia Bulter's *Parable* Series and Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake* as Post-Apocalyptic Dystopias. *Tamkang Review* 41(2): 3-20. [Online]. Available at: http://www.forex.ntu.edu.tw/en/files/writing/3115_0f648ce8.pdf [Accessed 07/03/2016].

Chen, H. and Wang, Y. 2016. Product Placement in Top-Grossing Hollywood Movies: 2001-2012. *Journal of Promotion Management* 22(6): 835-852. Available at: http://www-tandfonlinecom.ukzn.idm.oclc.org/doi/pdf/10.1080/10496491.2016.1214203?needAccess=true [Accessed 28/05/2017].

Chen, H.J.S. 2009. Vigilante Justice and Insurgent Freedom: A Post-9/11 Film Study. Master's Dissertation: Baylor University. Available at: https://baylor-ir.tdl.org/baylor-ir/bitstream/handle/2104/5371/Stacy_Chen_Masters.pdf?sequence=1 [Accessed 07/06/2015].

Claeys, G. ed. 2010. *The Cambridge Companion to Utopian Literature*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Clardy, A. 2001. Six Worlds of Tomorrow: Representing the Future to Popular Culture. - *World Future Review*: 37-48. Available at: http://wfsemail.org/Upload/PDFWFR/WFR_Summer2011_Clardy.pdf [Accessed 08/07/2015].

Coetzee, J.M. 1983. *Life and Times of Michael K*. Johannesburg: Raven Press.

---------------. 1997. The Lives of Animals. Delivered at The Tanner Lectures on Human Values held at Princeton University, 15-16 October.

---------------. 1999. *Disgrace*. South Africa: Secker and Warburg.

Cohen, J. and Stewart I. 2004. *What does a Martian Look Like? The Science of Extraterrestrial Life*. London: Ebury Press.

Collodi, C. 2002 [1883]. *The Adventures of Pinocchio: Story of a Puppet*. Vermont: Steerforth Italia.

Coogler, R. 2018. *Black Panther*. [Film]. USA: Marvel Studios.

Constable, C. Becoming the Monster's Mother: Morphologies of Identity in the *Alien* Series. In: Kuhn, A. ed. 1999. *Alien Zone II: The Spaces of Science Fiction Cinema*. London: Verso, 173-202.

Couton, P. and López, J.J. 2009. Movement as Utopia. *History of the Human Sciences* 22(4): 93-121. Available at: http://hhs.sagepub.com/content/22/4/93.full.pdf+html [Accessed 09/02/2016].

Coutts, M.C. and McCarrick, P.M. 1995. Eugenics. *Kennedy Institute of Ethics Journal* 5(2): 163-178. Available at: http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/kennedy_institute_of_ethics_journal/v005/5.2.coutts.pdf [Accessed 26/03/2015].

Covey, W.B. 2011. Péres Fatales: Character and Style in Postmodern Neo-Noir. *Quarterly Review of Film and Video* (28): 41-52. Available at: http://www-tandfonline-com.ukzn.idm.oclc.org/doi/abs/10.1080/10509200802463191 [Accessed 27/02/2017].

Crawford, N.C. 2015. Costs of War: War-related Death, Injury, and Displacement in Afghanistan and Pakistan 2001-2014. *Watson Institute for International Studies*. [Online]. Available at: http://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/files/cow/imce/papers/2015/War%20Related%20Casualties%20Afghanistan%20and%20Pakistan%202001-2014%20FIN.pdf [Accessed 08/08/2016].

Creed, B. *Alien* and the Monstrous Feminine. In: Kuhn, A. ed. 1990. *Alien Zone: Cultural Theory and Contemporary Science Fiction Cinema*. New York: Verso, 128-141.

Csicsery-Ronay Jr, I. 2007. Some Things we Know About Aliens. *Modern Humanities Research Association* 37(2): 1-23. http://www. jstor.org/stable/20479299 [Accessed 25/06/2015].

Cuarón, A. 2013. *Gravity*. [Film]. USA: Warner Bros. Pictures.

Curtis, C.P. 2005. Rehabilitating Utopia: Feminist Science Fiction and Finding the Ideal. *Justice Review* 8(2): 147-162. Available at: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10282580500082507 [Accessed 15/02/2016].

Damarin, S. 2004. Chapter Three: Required Reading: Feminist Sci-Fi and the Post-Millennial Curriculum. *Counterpoints* (158): 51-73. Available at: www.jstor.org/stable/42977349 [Accessed 23/03/2015].

Dates, J.L. and Mascaro, T.A. 2005. African Americans in Film and Television: Twentieth-Century Lessons for a New Millennium. *Journal of Popular Film and Television* 33(2): 50-55 Available at: http://dx.doi.org/10.3200/JPFT.33.2.50-55 [Accessed 15/02/2016].

de Sousa Caetano, J.C. Memories are Forever: Transhumanism and Cultural Memory in *V for Vendetta*, *Oblivion* and *The Giver*. *Via Panorâmica: Revista Electrónica de Estudos Anglo-Americanos* 3(5): 29-38. Available at: http://ler.letras.up.pt/uploads/ficheiros/14743.pdf [Accessed 08/05/2017].

del Toro, G. 2013. *Pacific Rim*. [Film]. USA: Warner Bros. Pictures.

Delumeau, J. 2000. *History of Paradise: The Garden of Eden in Myth and Tradition*. New York: The Continuum Publishing Company.

Derrickson, S. 2016. *Doctor Strange*. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures.

Derrida, J. 1981. *Dissemination*. Trans. Johnson, B. London: University of Chicago Press.

Desser. D. Race, Space and Class: The Politics of Cityscapes in Science-Fiction Film. In: Kuhn, A. ed. 1999. *Alien Zone: The Spaces of Science Fiction Cinema*. New York: Verso, 80-96.

Dika, V. 2003. *Recycled Culture in Contemporary Art and Film: The Uses of Nostalgia*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Dirse, Z. 2013. Gender and Cinematography: Female Gaze (Eye) Behind the Camera. *Journal of Research in Gender Studies* 3(1): 15-29.

Doina, M.D. 2014. The Political Role of Memory and Identity in Dystopian Societies. *European Journal of Research and Reflections in Arts and Humanities* 2(2): 7-17. [Online]. Available at: http://www.idpublications.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/THE-POLITICAL-ROLE-OF-MEMORY-AND-IDENTITY-IN-DYSTOPIAN-SOCIETIES.pdf [Accessed 06/08/2016].

Doll, S. and Faller, G. 1986. *Blade Runner* and Genre: *Film noir* and Science Fiction. [Online]. Available at: http://faculty.wiu.edu/D-Banash/eng395/bladrunnergenre.pdf [Accessed 05/04/2016].

Donner, R. 1978. *Superman*. [Film]. USA: Warner Bros.

Eliot, T.S. 1968 [1935]. *Murder in the Cathedral*. London: Faber and Faber Limited.

Engber, D. and Sofge, E. 2013. Science of Blockbusters: How Strong can Someone Get? Will Exoskeletons Ever Fly? *Popular Science* 283(1): 70-75. Available at: http://web.b.ebscohost.com.ukzn.idm.oclc.org/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid =b895e218-0c21-4c84-894f-374943bfa54a%40sessionmgr103 [Accessed 25/07/2017].

Erickson, S. 2012. "Maker's Mark". *Los Angeles Magazine*, 96-101. Available at: http://web.b.ebscohost.com/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=18d1e93f-e6aa-42a6-af9d-663d309e966a%40sessionmgr102&vid=5&hid=118 [Accessed 01/08/2017].

Ettinger, B.L. 1997. Reply to Commentary. *Psychoanalytical Dialogues* 7(3): 423-429. Available at: http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/10481889709539193 [Accessed 09/03/2017].

---------------. 2001. Wit(h)nessing Trauma and the Matrixial Gaze: From Phantasm to Trauma, from Phallic Structure to Matrixial Sphere. *Parallax* 7(4): 89-114. Available at: http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13534640110089276?journalCode=tpar 20 [Accessed 09/03/2017].

---------------. 2006. *Matrixial Trans-subjectivity*. Theory, Culture and Society. 22(2-3): 218-222. Available at: http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/026327640602300247 [Accessed 09/03/2017].

Fauci, A.S. 2001. Infectious Diseases: Considerations for the 21st Century. *Clinical Infectious Diseases* 32(5): 675-685. Available at: http://www.jstor.org/stabble/4461445 [Accessed 20/04/2017].

Favreau, J. 2008. *Iron Man*. [Film]. USA: Paramount Pictures.

Ferguson, M.A. The Female Novel of Development. In: Abel, E., Hirsch. M. and Langland, E. eds. 1983. *The Voyage In: Fictions of Female Development*. London: University Press of New England.

Ferrell, W.K. 2000. *Literature and Film as Modern Mythology*. Westport: Praeger Publishers.

Fisher, K. 2016. *The Oscars are Still So White: 2016 Marks the Second Year in a Row for All-white nominees*. E! Online. [Online]. Available at: http://www.eonline.com/news/731239/the-oscars-are-still-so-white-2016-marks-the-second-year-in-a-row-for-all-white-nominees [Accessed 23/03/2016].

Fitting, P. 1993. What is Utopian Film? An Introductory Taxonomy. *Utopian Studies* 4(2): 1-17. http://www.jstor.org/stable/20719955 [Accessed 23/03/2015].

---------------. Unmasking the Real? Critique and Utopia in Recent SF Films. In: Baccolini, R. and Moylan, T. eds. 2003. *Dark Horizons: Science Fiction and the Dystopian Imagination*. New York: Routledge, 155-166.

---------------. Utopia, Dystopia and Science Fiction. In: Claeys, G. ed. 2010. *The Cambridge Companion to Utopian Literature*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 135-153.

Fleming, V. and Victor, K. 1939. *The Wizard of Oz*. [Film]. USA: Loew's Inc.

Foden, G. 2002. *What is the Origin of the Name Al-Qaida?* The Guardian. [Online]. Available at: http://www.theguardian.com/books/2002/aug/24/alqaida.sciencefictionfantasyandhorror [Accessed 08/03/2016].

Fossati, G. 2009. *From Grain to Pixel: The Archival Life of Film in Transition*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

Foucault, M. 1978. *The History of Sexuality: Volume 1: An Introduction*. Trans. Hurley, R. New York: Pantheon Books.

Francis, K.A. 2007. *Charles Darwin and "The Origin of the Species"*. Westport: Greenwood Press.

Freud, S. 1919. Totem and Taboo: Resemblances between the Psychic Lives of Savages and Neurotics. London: George Routledge and Sons.

---------------. [2002] 1919. *The Uncanny*. London: Penguin Books.

---------------. 1923. *The Ego and the Id*. London: Hogarth Press.

---------------. 1933. *New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*. The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud. Volume XXII (1932-1936): 1-182.

---------------. 1934. Collected Papers. *The International Psycho-analytical Library* Vol. 4 (10).

---------------. 1963 [1920]. Fixation to Traumas – the Unconscious. *The Standard Edition* Vol. 16, 273-285.

Frijda, N.H., Manstead, A.S.R. and Bem, S. 2000. *Emotions and Beliefs*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Gaiman, N. Introduction. In: Bradbury. R. 2013 [1953]. *Fahrenheit 451*. New York: Simon and Schuster, xi-xvii.

Gates, P. 2004. Always a Partner in Crime: Black Masculinity in the Hollywood Detective Film. *Journal of Popular Film and Television* 32(1): 20-29. Available at: http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.3200/JPFT.32.1.20-30 [Accessed 25/07/2016].

George, D. 2009. Fear of Dogs/ Dogs' Fear in Coetzee's *Disgrace*. *Explorations in Anthropology* 9(1): 70-74. [Online]. Available at: vav.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/vav/article/download/3436/2087 [Accessed 06/03/2016].

Gibbs, J. 2015. *Avengers Put S.A On the Map – For All the Right Reason*. [Online]. Available at: http://citizen.co.za/368875/sa-film-feature-jg-2/ [Accessed 25/03/2016].

Gordimer, N. 1981. *July's People*. Johannesburg: Raven Press.

Greathouse, K.E. 2016. The 'Nightmare' of Childbirth: The Prevalence and Predominant Predicator Variable for Tokophobia in American Women of Childbearing Age. *Journal of Prenatal and Perinatal Psychology and Health* 31(1): 19-44. Available at: http://web.a.ebscohost.com.ukzn.idm.oclc.org/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid =22061a3b-ab76-4969-8e90-004a29cd339d%40sessionmgr4009 [Accessed 01/11/2017].

Grech, V., Vassallo, C. and Callus, I. 2015. The Deliberate Infliction of Infertility in Science Fiction. *World Future Review* 7(1): 48-60. Available at: http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/1946756715591166 [Accessed 02/10/2015].

Guerra, S. 2009. Colonizing Bodies: Corporate Power and Biotechnology in Young Adult Science Fiction. *Children's Literature in Education* (40): 275-295. Available at: http://web.a.ebscohost.com.ukzn.idm.oclc.org/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=f60a67 5a-70e5-4f90-aa8b-0fbb5263d157%40sessionmgr4010&vid=1&hid=4101 [Accessed 29/01/2016].

Guerrero, E. 1995. The Black Man on Our Screens and the Empty Space in Representation. *Callaloo* 18(2): 395-400. Available at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/3299085 [Accessed 15/02/2016].

Habermas, J. 2001. *The Postnational Constellation: Political Essays.* Trans. Ed. Pensky, M. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Hagen, J. and Ostergren, R. 2006. Spectacle, Architecture and Place at the Nuremberg Party Rallies: Projecting a Nazi Vision of Past, Present and Future. *Cultural Geographies* 13: 157-181. Available at: http://web.b.ebscohost.com.ukzn.idm.oclc.org/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid

=299340b6-8c15-4e24-9e80-58ec32fe464e%40sessionmgr120 [Accessed 27/06/2017].

Hale, K.L. 1966. Kinship Reflections in Syntax: Some Australian Languages. *Word* 22(1-3): 318-324.Available at: http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/00437956.1966.11435458 [Accessed 28/05/2017].

Hampton, H. 2014. Levelling the Playing Field: Class and Other American Movie Taboos. *Filmcomment*: 54-58. Available at: http://web.b.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.ukzn.ac.za:2048/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid= dfede9da-1d93-4361-a4d8-d840c361dc31%40sessionmgr198&vid=6&hid=110 [Accessed 21/03/2015].

Hannah, D.D. 1999. *Michael and Christ: Michael Traditions and Angel Christology in Early Christianity*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.

Haplin, D. 2001. Utopianism and Education: The Legacy of Thomas More. *British Journal of Educational Studies* 49(3): 299-315. Available at: http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/1467-8527.t01-1-00177 [Accessed 15/02/2016].

Haraway, D. A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology and Social Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century. In: Bell, D. and Kennedy M.B eds. 2000. *The Cybercultures Reader*. New York: Routledge, 291-324.

Harrison, J. 1927. The Strength of Beethoven's Music. *The Musical Times* 68(1010): 305-307. Available at: www.jstor.org/stable/912768 [Accessed 27/02/2017].

Hayward, S. 2013. *Cinema Studies: The Key Concepts*. New York: Routledge.

Hill, J. Film and Postmodernism. In: Hill, J. and Gibson, C. eds. 1998. *The Oxford Guide to Film Studies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 96-105.

Hintz, C. 2002. Monica Hughes, Lois Lowry, and Young Adult Dystopias. *The Lion and the Unicorn* 26(2): 254-264. Available at: https://muse.jhu.edu/article/35550/pdf [Accessed 08/05/2017].

Hoenig, L.J. 2012. The Branding of African American Slaves. *Archives of Dermatology (Jama Dermatology)* 148(2): 271.

Hollinger, V. Feminist Theory and Science Fiction. In: James, E. and Mendlesohn, F. 2003. *The Cambridge Companion to Science Fiction.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 125-136.

Holman, E.A. and Silver, R.C. 1998. Getting "Stuck" in the Past: Temporal Orientation and Coping with Trauma. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 74*(5): 1146-1163. Available at: http://escholarship.org/uc/item/0vv7s3c6 [Accessed 29/05/2017].

Hopkins, E. 1994. *Childhood Transformed: Working-Class Children in Nineteenth-Century England*. New York: Manchester University Press.

Hunt, N.C. 2010. *Memory, War and Trauma*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Hutton, P. 2000. Recent Scholarship on Memory and History. *The History Teacher* 33(4): 533-548. Available at: http://jstor.org/stable/494950. [Accessed 08/02/2016].

Iampolski, M. 1998. *The Memory of Tiresias: Intertextuality and Film*. London: University of California Press.

Ibáñez, G. 2014. *Automata*. [Film]. Bulgaria: Conracorrientes Films.

Ingram, S. 2014. Berlin: A Spectacularly Gendered Cinematic Landscape of Dystopian Devastation. *Space and Culture*: 1-13. Available at: http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/1206331214543867 [Accessed 26/08/2016].

Jackman, M.R. 1994. *The Velvet Glove: Paternalism and Conflict in Gender, Class and Race Relations*. London: University of California Press.

James, D.E. 1999. Hollywood Extras: One Tradition of Avant-Garde Films in Los Angeles. *The MIT Press* (90): 3-24. Available at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/779077 [Accessed 09/05/2017].

Jasper, J.M. 1998. The Emotions of Protest: Affective and Reactive Emotions in and Around Social Movements. *Sociological Forum* 13(3): 397-424. Available at: https://journals.lib.unb.ca/index.php/NW/article/view/22782/26458 [Accessed 04/07/2017].

Jenkins, P. 2017. *Wonder Woman*. [Film]. USA: Warner Bros. Pictures.

Jeunet, J. 1997. *Alien: Resurrection*. [Film]. USA: 20th Century Fox.

Jonason, P.K., Webster, G.D., Schmitt, D.P., Li, N.P. and Crysel, L. 2012. The Antihero in Popular Culture: A Life History Theory of the Dark Triad. *Review of General Psychology* 16(2): 192-199. Available at: http://ink.library.smu.edu.sg/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2408&context=soss_research [Accessed 20/04/2016].

Jones, G. The Icons of Science Fiction. In: James, E. and Mendlesohn, F. 2003. *The Cambridge Companion to Science Fiction.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 163-173.

----------------. Aliens in the Fourth Dimension. In: Latham, R. ed. 2017. *Science Fiction Criticism: An Anthology of Essential Writings*. New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 364-374.

Kakoudaki, D. 2002. Spectacles of History: Race Relations, Melodrama, and the Science Fiction/Disaster Film. *Camera Obscura* 17(2): 109-153. Available at: http://cameraobscura.dukejournals.org/content/17/2_50/109.citation [Accessed 16/06/2016].

Kaplan, E.A. 2005. *Trauma Culture: The Politics of Terror and Loss in Media and Literature*. London: Rutgers University Press.

Keeves, M. 2008. *Cloverfield*. [Film]. USA: Paramount Pictures.

Kiliçarslan, C. 2007. Do Tread on my Dreams: The Perception of Cityscapes in Science Fiction Films. *Journal of American Studies of Turkey* (25): 45-66. [Online]. Available at:
http://www.academia.edu/6655647/Do_Tread_on_My_Dreams_The_Perception_of_Cityscape_in_Science_Fiction_Films [Accessed 15/02/2016].

Koskinski, J. 2013. *Oblivion*. [Film]. USA: Universal Pictures.

Kovel, J. 2007. *The Enemy of Nature: The End of Capitalism or the End of the World?* New York: Zed Books.

Kristeva, J. 1982. *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Krutnik, F. 1991. *In a Lonely Street: Film noir, Genre and Masculinity*. New York: Routledge.

Kumar, K. 1987. *Utopia and Anti-utopia in Modern Times*. New York: Basil Blackwell.

Kusama, K. 2005. *Æon Flux*. [Film]. USA: Paramount Pictures.

La Ferla, R. 2003. Allure of the Trenchcoat: That '*Matrix*' Look. *New York Times* [Online]. Available at: http://www.nytimes.com/2003/05/04/style/allure-of-the-trench-coat-that-matrix-look.html?pagewanted=all. [Accessed 07/04/2016].

Landecker, H. 2006. Microcinematography and the History of Science Fiction Film. *Isis* 97(1): 121-132. Available at: https://ww.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/501105 [Accessed 20/03/2017].

Lang, F. 1927. *Metropolis*. [Film]. Germany: Paramount Pictures.

Latham, D. 2002. Childhood Under Siege: Lois Lowry's *Number the Stars* and *The Giver*. *The Lion and the Unicorn* 26(1): 1-15. Available at: https://muse.jhu.edu/article/35534/pdf [Accessed 08/05/2017].

Lawrence, F. 2007. *I Am Legend*. [Film]. USA: Warner Bros. Pictures.

Lea, S.G. 2006. Seeing Beyond Sameness: Using *The Giver* to Challenge Colourblind Ideology. *Children's Literature in Education* 37(1): 51-67. Available at: https://link-springer-com.ukzn.idm.oclc.org/content/pdf/10.1007%2Fs10583-005-9454-2.pdf [Accessed 08/05/2017].

Lean, D. 1962. *Lawrence of Arabia*. [Film]. USA: Columbia Pictures.

Lee, B. and Clouse, R. 1973. *Enter the Dragon*. [Film]. USA: Warner Bros.

Lee, J. 2017. *Sex Robots: The Future of Desire.* Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.

Leeming, D.A. 1973. *Mythology: The Voyage of the Hero*. New York: J.B. Lippincott Company.

Lehman, A. 2016. Style Defined: The Trenchcoat. *He Spoke Style* [Online]. Available at: http://hespokestyle.com/trench-coat-history/ [Accessed 22/07/2016].

Leonard, E.A. Race and Ethnicity in Science Fiction. In: James, E. and Mendlesohn, F. 2003. *The Cambridge Companion to Science Fiction.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 253-263.

Leterrier, H. 2008. *The Incredible Hulk*. [Film]. USA: Universal Pictures.

Levi-Setti, R. 1995. *Trilobites*. London: The University of Chicago Press.

Levitas, R. 2003. Introduction: The Elusive Idea of Utopia. *History of the Human Sciences* (16)1: 1-10. Available at: http://hhs.sagepub.com/content/16/1/1.full.pdf+html [Accessed 9/02/2016].

---------------. 2007. Looking For the Blue: The Necessity of Utopia. *Journal of Political Ideologies* 12(3): 289-306. Available at: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13569310701622184 [Accessed 08/06/2015].

Lewis, J. 2008. *Cultural Studies: The Basics*. London: Sage Publishers.

Libamn, L. and Williams, L. 1998. *Brave New World*. [Film]: USA: NBC.

Liddy-Judge, C. 2013. *The Television Anti-Hero*. Unpublished Master's thesis. Limerick: Mary Immaculate College, Media and Communications Department.

Llansó, M. 2015. *Crumbs*. [Film]. Ethiopia.

Lowry, L. 2014 [1993]. *The Giver*. London: HarperCollins Children's Books.

Lucas, G. 1977. *Star Wars*. [Film]. USA: 20th Century Fox.

Luckhurts, R. 1998. The Science-Fictionalization of Trauma: Remarks on Narratives of Alien Abduction. Science Fiction Studies 25(1): 29-52. Available at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/4240672 [Accessed 23/03/2016].

---------------. 2008. *The Trauma Question*. New York: Routledge.

Marx, K. 1970 [1844]. *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*. Trans. O'Malley, J. [Online]. Available at: https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/download/Marx_Critique_of_Hegels_Philosophy_of_Right.pdf [Accessed 03/08/2016].

McLuhan, M. 1964. *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*. New York: Routledge.

McGrath, A.E. 2008. *Theology: The Basics*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

McKay, A.D. 2002. Searching for the Hero's Code: Questioning (White) Hero Formation in Contemporary American Film. Master's Dissertation: Eastern Illinois University. Available at: http://thekeep.eiu.edu/theses/1408 [Accessed 07/03/2016].

Merrick, H. Gender in Science Fiction. In: James, E. and Mendlesohn, F. 2003. *The Cambridge Companion to Science Fiction.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 241-252.

Miller, F., Rodriguez, R. and Tarantino, Q. 2005. *Sin City*. [Film]. USA: Miramax Films.

Miller, J.J. 2014. A Gift for Freedom: The Powerful Critique of Paternalism in a Forthcoming Film. *National Review* 24-26. Available at: http://web.b.ebscohost.com.ukzn.idm.oclc.org/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=3&sid=442f4fae-dfbf-467e-9f99-1d28b360dfb5%40sessionmgr120&hid=115 [Accessed 07/22/2014].

Milner, A. 2004. Darker Cities: Urban Dystopia and Science Fiction Cinema. *International Journal of Cultural Studies* 7(3): 259-279. Available at: http://ics.sagepub.com.ukzn.idm.oclc.org/content/7/3/259.full.pdf+html [Accessed 08/07/2015].

Minissale, G. 2009. *Framing Consciousness in Art: Transcultural Perspectives*. New York: Rodopi.

More, T. 1992 [1516]. *Utopia*. New York: W.W. Norton and Company.

Mostow, J. 2009. *Surrogates*. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Studios.

Mousoutzanis, A. 2013. Trauma, Memory and Information in American SF Films and Television, 1980-2010. *Science Fiction Film and Television* 6(3): 327-348. [Accessed 22/03/2016].

Moylan, T. 1986. *Demand the Impossible: Science Fiction and the Utopian Imagination*. New York: Methuen.

Moylan T. and Baccolini R. eds. 2007. *Utopia Method and Vision: The Use Value of Social Dreaming*. Oxford: Peter Lang.

Mueller, G. 2010. Surviving Ourselves: Mothers, Clones, and the Legacy of 1968 in *Blueprint* (2003) and *The Elementary Particles* (2006). *German Politics and Society* 28(97): 1-18. Available at: http://web.b.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.ukzn.ac.za:2048/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=dfede9da-1d93-4361-a4d8-d840c361dc31%40sessionmgr198&vid=11&hid=110 [Accessed 21/03/2015].

Mulvey, L. Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema. In: Braudy, L. and Cohen, M. eds. 1999 [1975]. *Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings*. New York: Oxford University Press, 803-817.

Mundorf, J. and Chen, G. 2006. Transculturation of Visual Signs: A Case Analysis of the Swastika. *Intercultural Communication Studies* 15(2): 33-47. Available at: http://digitalcommons.uri.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1027&context=com_facpubs [Accessed 08/08/2016].

Murdock, M. 1990. *The Heroine's Journey: Women's Quest for Wholeness*. London: Shambhala.

---------------. 1994. *The Hero's Daughter: Through Myth, Story and Jungian Psychology: An Exploration of the Shadow Side of Father Love*. New York: Fawcett Columbine.

Murphy, R. R. and Woods, D. D. 2009. Beyond Asimov: The Three Laws of Robotics. *Institute for Human and Machine Cognition*. 14-20. Available at: http://www.inf.ufrgs.br/~prestes/Courses/Robotics/beyond%20asimov.pdf [Accessed 07/05/2015].

Naremore, J. American *Film Noir*: The History of an Idea. *Film Quarterly* 49(2): 12-28. Available at: http//www.jstor.org/stable/1213310 [Accessed 15/02/2016].

Nash, J. 1965. The Father in Contemporary Culture and Current Psychological Literature. *Child Development* 36(1): 261-297. Available at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/1126797 [Accessed 20/04/2017].

Niccol, A. 1997. *Gattaca*. [Film]. USA: Columbia Pictures.

Nietzsche, F. 1968. *The Will to Power*. Trans. Kaufman, W. and Hollingdale, R.J. New York: Vintage Books.

Nolan, C. 2000. *Memento*. [Film]. USA: Summit Entertainment.

------------. 2008. *The Dark Knight*. [Film]. USA: Warner Bros. Pictures.

Noyce, P. 2014. *The Giver*. [Film]. United States: The Weinstein Company.

O'Riordan, K. 2009. Human Cloning in Film: Horror, Ambivalence, Hope. *Science as Culture* 17(2): 145-162. Available at: http://sro.sussex.ac.uk/1723/1/O'Riordan.pdf [Accessed 04/03/2017].

Oakley, A. Women and Children First and Last: Parallels and Differences between Children's and Women's Studies. In: Mayall, B. ed. 1994. *Children's Childhoods: Observed and Experienced*. London: The Falmer Press, 13-32.

Obenson, T.A. 2015. *Crumbs* – The First Ever Ethiopian Post-apocalyptic, Surreal, Sci-fi Feature Length Film". *Shadow and Act: On Cinema of the African Diaspora* [Blog]. Available at: http://blogs.indiewire.com/shadowandact/crumbs-the-first-ever-ethiopian-post-apocalyptic-surreal-sci-fi-feature-length-film-trailer-20150130. [Accessed 30/08/2015].

Ólafsson, J. 2007. Defiance: A Comment on the Logic of Protest. *Trames* 11(4): 432-442. Available at: http://www.kirj.ee/public/trames/trames-2007-4-7.pdf [Accessed 04/07/2017].

Opreanu, L. 2013. Remembrance versus Reinvention: Memory as a Tool of Survival and Act of Defiance in Dystopian Narratives. *Literary and Cultural Studies* 3(2): 17-25. [Online]. Available at: http://ubr.rev.unibuc.ro/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/LuciaOpreanu.pdf [Accessed 02/06/2016].

Pădureţu, A. and Ion, V. 2011. Social Influence of Iconoclastic Movement. *Universitary Journal of Sociology* 1(15): 87-93. Available at: http://www.sociologiecraiova.ro/pdf/rus-numere/RUS_1_2011.pdf#page=88 [Accessed 02/05/2017].

Pal, G. 1960. *The Time Machine*. [Film]: USA: Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

Parker, M. 2002. Utopia and the Organizational Imagination: Eutopia. *The Sociological Review* 50(1): 217-224. Available at: http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1467-954X.2002.tb03586.x/abstract [Accessed 07/03/2016].

Patell, C.R.K. 1993. Screen Memory: Androids and Other Artificial Persons. *Harvard Review* (3): 25-29. Available at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/27559622 [Accessed 20/03/2017].

Pearson, C. and Pope, K. 1981. *The Female Hero in American and British Literature*. New York: R.R Bowker Company.

Pearson, C. 1991. *Awakening the Heroes Within: Twelve Archetypes to Help us Find Ourselves and Transform our World*. New York: Harper San Francisco.

Pestello, F.G. and Davis-Berman, J. 2008. Taking Anti-depressant Medication: A Qualitative Examination of Internet Postings. *Journal of Mental Health* 17(4): 349-360. Available at: http://web.b.ebscohost.com.ukzn.idm.oclc.org/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=13&sid=13c0e638-9360-49e6-885c-2d0989a3cf38%40sessionmgr120&hid=102 [Accessed 28/07/2016].

Pierson, M. 2002. *Special Effects: Still in Search of Wonder*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Place, J. and Peterson, L. Some Visual Motifs of *Film Noir*. In: Silver, A. and Ursini, J. 1998. eds. *Film Noir Reader*. New York: Limelight, 65-75.

Pollak, J.B. 2016. Black Students Burn Paintings of Whites at South Africa Protest. *Breitbart News Network*. [Online]. Available at: http://www.breitbart.com/national-security/2016/02/18/black-students-burn-paintings-of-whites-in-south-africa-protest/ [Accessed 13/09/2016].

Pordzik, R. 2001. Nationalism, Cross-Culturalism, and Utopian Visions in South African Utopian and Dystopian Writing 1972-92. *Research in African Literatures* 32(3): 177-197. Available at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/3820431 [Accessed 14/03/2016].

Prince, S. 2004. The Emergence of Filmic Artifacts: Cinema and Cinematography in the Digital Era. *Film Quarterly* 57(3): 24-33. Available at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/fq.2004.57.24 [Accessed 08/05/2017].

Proyass, A. 2004. *I, Robot*. [Film]. USA: 20th Century Fox.

Radford, M. 1984. *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. USA: 20th Century Fox.

Radstone, S. 2007. Trauma Theory: Context, Politics, Ethics. *Paragraph* 1(30): 9-29. Available at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/43152697 [Accessed 08/02/2016].

Raitt, J. The "*Vagina Dentata*" and the "*Immaculatus Uterus Divini Fontis*". *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 48(3): 415-431. Available at: http://web.a.ebscohost.com.ukzn.idm.oclc.org/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid=84d62d0e-b6fe-41e4-9b39-d5b9d36091ee%40sessionmgr4010 [Accessed 30/08/2017].

Redmond, S. 2016. *Constellations: Blade Runner*. Leighton Buzzard: Auteur.

Reifenstahl, L. 1935. *Triumph of the Will*. [Film]. Germany: Universum Film AG.

Renaud, C. and Balda, K. 2012. *The Lorax*. [Film]. USA: Universal Pictures.

Roberts, A. 2000. *Science Fiction*. London: Routledge.

Roddenberry, G. *Star Trek*. 1966. [Television Series]. USA: Desila Productions.

Rogan, A.M.D. 2004. Alien Sex Acts in Feminist Science Fiction: Heuristic Models for Thinking a Feminist Future of Desire. *PMLA* 119(3): 442-456. Available at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/25486060 [Accessed 09/03/2017].

Rogoff, I. Studying Visual Culture. In: Mirzoeff, N. ed. 2002. *The Visual Culture Reader*. London: Routledge, 24-36.

Ross, G. 1998. *Pleasantville*. [Film]. USA: New Line Cinema.

------------. 2012. *The Hunger Games*. [Film]. USA: Lionsgate Films.

Rothman, L. 2014. The New Age of Heroines: How Teenage Girls Started Saving the World. *Time* 52-54. Available at:
http://web.b.ebscohost.com/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=10&sid=44bd7704-ad07-4e56-9dd1-0c80a4fd8b00%40sessionmgr198&hid=125 [Accessed 07/05/2015].

Rouvillois, F. Utopia and Totalitarianism. In: Schaer, R., Claeys, G. and Sargent, L.T. eds. 2000. *Utopia: The Search for the Ideal Society in the Western World.* New York: New York Public Library.

Ruppert, P. 1996. Tracing Utopia: Film: Spectatorship and Desire. *Utopian Studies* 7(2): 139-152. Available at: www.jstor.org/stable/20719514 [Accessed 10/03/2016].

Rutten, K., Soetaert, R. and Vandermeersche, G. 2011. Science Fiction and a Rhetorical Analysis of the "Literature Myth". *Comparative Literature and Culture* 13(1): 1-10. Available at:

http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1709&context=clcweb
[Accessed 05/04/2016]

Sandifer, P. 2011. Out of the Screen and into the Theatre: 3-D Film as Demo. *Cinema Journal* 50(3): 62-78. Available at:
http://web.a.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.ukzn.ac.za:2048/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=4&sid=aa2142ec-ace4-40b0-8b98-9e207ed663c8%40sessionmgr4004&hid=4214
[Accessed 09/06/2015].

Sargent, L.T. 1994. The Three Faces of Utopianism Revisited. *Utopian Studies* 5(1): 1-37. Available at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/20719246 [Accessed 09/02/2016].

Sargent, L.T. and Sargisson, L. Sex in Utopia: Eutopian and Dystopian Sexual Relations. *Utopian Studies* 25(2): 299-320. Available at:
http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/utopian_studies/v025/25.2.sargent.pdf [Accessed 26/03/2015].

Sawyer, A. Gwyneth Jones and the Anxieties of Science Fiction. In: Seed, D. ed. 2008. *A Companion to Science Fiction*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 420-430.

Scarry, E. 1985. *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Schaggner, F.J. 1968. *Planet of the Apes*. [Film]. USA: 20th Century Fox.

Scheper-Hughes, N. 2004. Parts Unknown: Undercover Ethnography of the Organs-Trafficking Underworld. *Ethnography* 5(1): 29-73. Available at:
http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.915.8543&rep=rep1&type=pdf [Accessed 04/02/2017].

Schrader, P. 1972. Notes on Film noir. *Film Comment* 8(1): 8-13. [Online] Available at:
http://www.literatureoftheamericas.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Notes-on-Film-Noir.pdf [Accessed 17/07/2016]

Schrift, A.D. 1997. *The Logic of the Gift: Towards an Ethic of Generosity*. New York: Routledge.

Schwartz, B. 1997. Collective Memory and History: How Abraham Lincoln Became a Symbol of Racial Equality. *The Sociological Review* 38(3): 469-496. Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/4121155 [Accessed 15/03/2017].

Schwartzman, R. 1999. Engendered Machines in Science Fiction Film. *Studies in Popular Culture* 22(1): 75-87. Available at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/23414579 [Accessed 20/03/2017].

Scorsese, M. 2013. The Persisting Vision: Reading the Language of Cinema. *The Film Foundation*. [Online]. Available at: http://www.film-foundation.org/the-persisting-vision [Accessed 08/08/2016].

Scott, R. 1979. *Alien*. [Film]. USA: 20th Century Fox.

-------------. 1982. *Blade Runner*. [Film]. USA: Warner Bros.

-------------. (dir). 2012. *Prometheus*. [Film]: 20th Century Fox.

----------------. 2015. *The Martian*. [Film]. USA: 20th Century Fox.

Segrave, K. 2004. *Product Placement in Hollywood Films: A History*. London: McFarland Company.

Seth, A. Aliens on Earth: What Octopus Minds can Tell us About Alien Consciousness. In: Al-Khalili, J. ed. 2016. *Aliens: Science Asks: Is There Anyone Out There?* London: Profile Books, 47-54.

Shafer, D.M. and Raney, A.A. 2012. Exploring How we Enjoy Anti-Hero Narratives. *Journal of Communication* (62): 1028-1046. Available at: doi:10.1111/j.1460-2466.2012.01682.x [Accessed 27/02/2017].

Shaheen, J.G. 2003. Reel Bad Arabs: How Hollywood Vilifies a People. *The Annals of the American Academy* 588: 171-19. Available at: http://journals.sagepub.com.ukzn.idm.oclc.org/doi/pdf/10.1177/0092055X0803600419 [Accessed 14/03/2016].

Shelley, M. 1994 [1818]. *Frankenstein or the Modern Prometheus*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Shelton, R. 1993. The Utopian Film Genre: Putting Shadows on the Silver Screen. *Utopian Studies* 4(2): 18-25. Available at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/20719956 [Accessed 08/07/2015].

Shippey, T. Hard Reading: The Challenges of Science Fiction. In: Seed, D. ed. 2008. *A Companion to Science Fiction*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 11-26.

Silverman, K. 1983. *The Subject of Semiotics*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Simpson, P., Utterson, A. and Shepherdson, K.J. ed. 2004. *Film Theory: Critical Concepts in Media and Cultural Studies*. New York: Routledge.

Singer, B. 2000. *X-Men*. [Film]. USA: 20th Century Fox.

Slonczewski J. and Levy, M. Science Fiction and the Life Sciences. In: James, E. and Mendlesohn, F. eds. 2003. *The Cambridge Companion to Science Fiction.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 174-185.

Slovic, S. 2014. Introduction: Animality and Eco-criticism. *Form for World Literature Studies*, Volume 6 (1): 1-5.

Slusser, G. The Origins of Science Fiction. In: Seed, D. ed. 2008. *A Companion to Science Fiction*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 27-42.

Smelik, A. 1998. *And the Mirror Cracked: Feminist Cinema and Film Theory*. New York: Palgrave.

Sobchack, V. Cities on the Edge of Time: The Urban Science-Fiction Film. In: Kuhn, A. 1999. ed. *Alien Zone II: The Spaces of Science Fiction Cinema*. New York: Verso, 123-146.

---------------. "At the Still Point of the Turning World": Meta-morphing and Meta-stasis. In: Sobchack, V. ed. 2000. *Meta-Morphing: Visual Transformation and the Culture of Quick-Change*. London: University of Minnesota Press, 131-158.

---------------. American Science Fiction Film: An Overview. In: Seed, D. ed. 2008. *A Companion to Science Fiction*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 261-274.

---------------. 2012. Between a Rock and a Hard Place: How Ridley Scott's *Prometheus* Deals with Impossible Expectations and Mythological Baggage. *Filmcomment*, 30-34. Available at: http://web.a.ebscohost.com.ukzn.idm.oclc.org/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=977522e2-477a-4a42-aa2d-dcfef7e53eb9%40sessionmgr4006&vid=1&hid=4114 [Accessed 23/03/2017].

Soss, J., Fording, R.C. and Schram, S.F. 2011. *Disciplining the Poor: Neoliberal Paternalism and the Persistent Power of Race*. London: University of Chicago Press.

Spielberg, S. 1982. *E.T.: the Extra-Terrestrial*. USA: Universal Pictures.

---------------. 1993. *Schindler's List*. [Film]. USA: Universal Pictures.

---------------. 2002. *Minority Report*. [Film]. USA: 20th Century Fox.

---------------. 2005. *War of the Worlds*. [Film]. USA: Paramount Pictures.

---------------. 2014-2015. *Extant*. [Television Series]. USA: CBS Television.

Spielmann, Y. 2003. Elastic Cinema: Technological Imagery in Contemporary Science Fiction Films. *Convergence* 9(3): 56-73. Available at:

http://con.sagepub.com.ezproxy.ukzn.ac.za:2048/content/9/3/56.full.pdf+html
[Accessed 02/10/2015].

Spitz, L. 2005. I Think Therefore I am; I Feel Therefore I am Taxed: Descartes, Tort Reform, and the Civil Rights Tax Relief Act. *New Mexico Law Review* (35): 429-447. Available at: http://lawschool.unm.edu/nmlr/volumes/35/2/09_spitz_i.pdf [Accessed 13/08/2014].

Srinivasan, A. 2017. The Sucker, The Sucker! London Review of Books. [Online]. Available at: https://www.lrb.co.uk/v39/n17/amia-srinivasan/the-sucker-the-sucker?utm_source=LRB+themed+email&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=20171021+themed&utm_content=ukrw_nonsubs [Accessed 01/11/2017].

Stableford, B. Biotechnology and Utopia. 2000. *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy 3*(2-3): 189-204. Available at: http://www-tandfonline-com.ukzn.idm.oclc.org/doi/pdf/10.1080/13698230008403320?needAccess=true [Accessed 23/03/2016].

----------------. Science Fiction Before the Genre. In: James, E. and Mendlesohn, F. 2003. *The Cambridge Companion to Science Fiction.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 15-31.

Stewart, I. Monsters, Victims, Friends: Aliens in Science Fiction Writing. In: Al-Khalili, J. ed. 2016. *Aliens: Science Asks: Is There Anyone Out There?* London: Profile Books,103-113.

Stewart, S.L. 2007. A Return to Normal: Lois Lowry's *The Giver*. *The Lion and the Unicorn* 31(1): 21-35. Available at: https://muse.jhu.edu/article/210908/pdf [Accessed 08/05/2017].

Stobie, C. 2012. Dirty Alien Shadow-selves: Delving into the Dirt in *District 9*. *Image and Text*. [Online]. Available at:

http://www.imageandtext.up.ac.za/index.php/issues/number-20-2012 [Accessed 15/02/2016].

---------------. 2012. Dystopian Dreams from South Africa: Lauren Beukes's *Moxyland* and *Zoo City*. *African Identities* 10(4): 367-380. Available at: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14725843.2012.692542 [Accessed 09/02/2016].

Stott, R.W. Power Through Weakness. In: Knowles, M.P. 2007. ed. *The Folly of Preaching*: *Models and Methods*. Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 127-139.

Swaine, J., Laughland, O., Lartey, J. and McCarthy C. 2015. The Guardian. *Young Black Men Killed by U.S Police at Highest Rate*. [Online]. Available at: http://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2015/dec/31/the-counted-police-killings-2015-young-black-men [Accessed 07/03/2016].

Tarantino, Q. 2003. *Kill Bill*. [Film]. USA: Miramax Films.

---------------. 2004. *Kill Bill: Vol. 2*. [Film]. USA: Miramax Films.

Tokgóz, Y. 2016. *The Rise of the Anti-Hero: Pushing Network Boundaries in the Contemporary U.S Television*. Master's Thesis. Kadir Has University, School of Social Sciences.

Turner, G. Film and Cultural Studies. In: Donald, J. and Renov, M. eds. 2008. *The Sage Handbook of Film Studies*. London: Sage Publications, 270-284.

Tyldum, M. 2016. *Passengers*. [Film]. USA: Columbia Pictures.

Verhoeven, P. 1987. *Robocop*. [Film]. USA: Orion Pictures.

Vieira, F. The Concept of Utopia. In: Claeys, G. ed. 2010. *The Cambridge Companion to Utopian Literature*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 3-27.

Virsis, R. 1971. The Christian Concept in *Murder in the Cathedral*. *Modern Drama* 14(4): 405-407. Available at: http://muse.jhu.edu/article/500487/pd [Accessed 25/07/2016].

Vogler, C. 2007 [1998]. *The Writer's Journey: Mythic Structure for Writers*. California: Michael Wiese Productions.

Vorenberg, M. 2004. *Final Freedom: The Civil War, the Abolition of Slavery, and the Thirteenth Amendment.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Wachowski, L. and Wachowski, L. 1999. *The Matrix*. [Film]. USA: Warner Bros.

Waugh, P. 1984. *Metafiction: The Theory and Practice of Self-Conscious Fiction*. New York: Methuen.

Weikart, R. 2002. Darwinism and Death: Devaluing Human Life in Germany 1859-1920. *Journal of the History of Ideas* 63(2): 323-344. Available at: http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/journal_of_the_history_of_ideas/v063/63.2weikart.pdf [Accessed 26/03/2015].

Wells, H.G. 2004 [1900]. *A Modern Utopia*. Pennsylvania State University [Online]. Available at: http://www.hubertlerch.com/pdf/Wells_A_Modern_Utopia.pdf.

Wells, S. 2002. The Time Machine. [Film]. USA: DreamWorks Pictures.

Whale, M. 2015. How Universal is Beethoven's Music? Music, Culture and Democracy. *Philosophy of Music Education* 23(1): 25-47. Available at: http://www.jstor.org.ukzn.idm.oclc.org/stable/pdf/10.2979/philmusieducrevi.23.1.25.pdf [Accessed 02/02/2017].

Wheale, D. 1991. Recognising a 'Human-Thing": Cyborgs, Robots and Replicants in Philip K. Dick's *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep*? and Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner. Critical Survey* 3(3): 297-304. Available at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/41556521 [Accessed 09/03/2017].

Whedon, J. 2015. *Avengers: Age of Ultron*. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Studios Motion
Pictures.

Whipple, J. and Tucker, C. 2012. Using Cinema and Literature to Explore Existentialism.
Journal of Creativity in Mental Health 7(1): 95-106. Available at:
http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/15401383.2012.660129 [Accessed
08/03/2017].

Widmer, K. 1962. The Literary Rebel. *The Centennial Review* 6(2): 182-201. Available at:
http://www.jstor.org/stable/23737869 [Accessed 24/10/2017].

Wilkinson, M.C. 2013. Wonder Girls: Undercurrents of Resistance in the Representations of
Teenage Girls in 1980s American Cinema. PhD Thesis: University of Amsterdam.
Available at: http://dare.uva.nl/search?arno.record.id=439895 [Accessed 07/03/2016].

Wimmer, K. 2002. *Equilibrium*. [Film]. USA: Miramax.

------------. 2006. *Ultraviolet*. [Film]. USA: Screen Gems.

Winner, E. 2000. Giftedness: Current Theory and Research. *Current Directions in
Psychological Science* 9(5): 153-156. Available at:
http://www.radford.edu/~tpierce/201%20files/201%20handouts/Winner%20(2000)%
20-%20Giftedness.pdf [Accessed 04/08/2017].

------------. 2012. Ellen Winner on Gifted Children. *ParentEdge* 75-81. [Online]. Available at:
http://parentedge.in/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/Gifter-Children.pdf

Woo, J. 1997. *Face/Off*. [Film]. USA: Paramount Pictures.

Woodman, T. Science Fiction, Religion and Transcendence. In: Parrinder, P. 1979. *Science
Fiction: A Critical Guide*. New York: Longman Group, 110-129.

Woodward, W. 1997. The Lives of Animals. [The Tanner Lectures on Human Values],
Delivered at Princeton University, 15-16 October.

----------------. 2007. The Killing (Off) of Animals in Some Southern African Fiction, or "Why Does Every Animal Story have to be Sad?" *Journal of Literary Studies* 23(3): 293-313. Available at: http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/02564710701568139 [Accessed 29/07/2016].

World Health Organization. 2016. *Important Progress Seen in Tracking Aids*. [Online]. Available at: http://www.who.int/hiv/mediacentre/news60/en/ [Accessed 08/03/2016].

Woznisk, H.R. 2002. René Descartes and the Legacy of Mind/Body Dualism. *Serendip*: 1-4. [Online]. Available at: http://www.blutner.de/philom/mindbody/mindbody.pdf [Accessed 13/08/2016].

Wyatt, R. 2011. *Rise of the Planet of the Apes*. [Film]: USA: 20th Century Fox.

Yeats, W.B. 1957. Aedh Wishes for the Cloths of Heaven. In: Allt, P. and Alspach, R.K. eds. *The Variorum Edition of the Poems of W.B. Yeats*. New York: The Macmillan Company.

Yunis, S. and Ostrander T. 2003. Tales Your Mother Never Told You: "Aliens" and the Horrors of Motherhood. *Journal of the Fantastic Arts* 14(1): 68-76. Available at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/43321455 [Accessed 20/03/2017].

Zepke, S. 2012. Beyond Cognitive Estrangement: The Future of Science Fiction Cinema. *European Journal of Media Studies* 1(2): 91-113. Available at: http://www.ingentaconnect.com/contentone/aup/necsus/2012/00000001/00000002/art00006?crawler=true&mimetype=application/pdf [Accessed 06/07/2016]