The Frankenstein Myth

Echoes of *Frankenstein,* Technological Anxieties, and the Monstrous Posthuman in Twenty-First Century Science Fiction Film

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ABSTRACT

Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818) has been the subject of resurgence through multiple forms of media and has become a prominent phenomenon in popular culture. The name Frankenstein is often referenced regarding amoral or questionably ethical scientific and technological development. Outside of literal interpretations of the original text, I have noticed reoccurring trends and echoes within contemporary science fiction films that adhere to the thematic elements of the Frankensteinian narrative. These trends suggest that a Frankensteinian mythos is present within our Western cultural consciousness. However, previous scholarship has not interrogated this mythos beyond simply acknowledging its presence. Nor has a model or method been devised to observe, analyse, or track how this mythos adapts.

Through my extensive analysis, my thesis establishes a working model for the Frankenstein Myth that adheres to the conventions of the hypertext. This model presents a clear and logical method as to how the Frankensteinian themes transmute into and communicate with other texts connected within a franchise through contemporary anxieties related to scientific and technological development. It also shows how they thread through unrelated texts to show this transmission beyond a linear narrative. My thesis focuses on the reoccurrence and resurrection of key elements of the Frankensteinian narrative as a mythos that filters through and evolves with the Western-American cultural psyche. Using a thematic analysis, this thesis observes this trend specifically within three late twentieth and early twenty-first century continuing science fiction franchises which contend with the notion of scientific and technological creation: *Terminator* (1984-present), and *Jurassic Park* (1993-present) and *Alien* (1979-present). This is done using a meta intertextual framework to analyse the contemporary anxieties that continue to resurge and communicate through these franchises. This allows me to analyse these films against scientific theories and developments that appear within the franchises. Analysis of the myth and the creation of this model reveals how these themes transmute through the Western socio-historical cultural consciousness and the ever-evolving legacy of Mary Shelley's nightmare.

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ATTESTATION TO AUTHORSHIP

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning

Jack McCormack-Clark

Signed

Date: 31.07.22

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Spera In Deo Sine Timore

1: BACKGROUND

For as long as I can remember, I have had a fascination with supernatural horror, Gothic, and science fiction. I have a clear recollection of watching *Scooby Doo: Where Are You?* (1969) every Saturday morning in my formative years which acted as my introduction to the allure of being afraid. While I found some of the content disturbing, I still watched, only to find myself thinking about it at night with one eye on my wardrobe door. Though considering my fascination with *Frankenstein* (1818)*,* the irony has not been lost on me that the monsters often turn out to be people. As I matured I did not lose the pull towards watching content that made me feel fear. I watched my share of R-rated horror films, that I was not allowed to watch, which elicited both fear and excitement. These were emotional responses that fascinated me. I also loved and continue to love science fiction and fantasy franchises such as: *Star Wars* (1977-present), *Harry Potter* (1997-present), *The Chronicles of Narnia* (1950-2010), *Lord of the Rings* (1937-present), and *Doctor Who* (1963-present), have engaged my interest and passion for most of my life.

The role of storytelling has also been a significant aspect of my life. While growing up, mythology, fairy tales, folklore, and history were a significant part of my upbringing. My grandparents introduced me to Shakespeare at an early age as well as many other classic English literature such as *The Once and Future King* (1958) which presented me with a love for romance, magic, and gallantry. A significant part of my relationship with my grandparents was a shared love of *Grimm's Fairy Tales* (1812) which was my first introduction to the likes of *Cinderella*. Greek, Roman, and Norse mythology was also presented to me as a child which I love and still passionately study. At a young age it became clear to see how different themes intersected through seemingly non-related texts and how mythologies are as such because they resonate with humanity on a fundamental level. My love for history was also instilled in me by my grandparents. Many of my most special memories of my grandparents is simply sitting and discussing historical perspectives around many different eras and events in history. Storytelling has deeply affected my life, development, and academic career. My love for stories is what has brought me to this point to conduct this thesis and achieve a lifelong dream.

2: INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this dedicated is a critical examination of the existence of *Frankenstein* (1818) as a post-modern mythos that is embedded within the Western cultural psyche surrounding the implications of technological and scientific development on human anthropocentricity within contemporary science fiction franchises. This thesis is unique in suggesting that the myth is made up of thematic patterns that are rooted in yet departed from Shelley's text. This chapter summarises the main focal points of this thesis.

The notion of a Frankenstein Myth began through observation and my fascination with the Gothic mode. My first introduction was through Oscar Wilde's *Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890) while doing a literature review in my final year of school. Wilde's way of commanding the sinister and the macabre, intwined with the social and cultural conventions of Victorian England was captivating, as well as his insertion of the supernatural and insidious nature of Gray into said society. This is where my interest in nineteenth century literature, more specifically Gothic texts, came to fruition; introducing *Frankenstein* (1818). I was intrigued by Mary Shelley's premise of a scientist filled with hubris and ambition to use technology to create life from death. Due to my interest in science fiction, this text piqued my interest, and I was fascinated that Shelley at such a young age authored such a ground-breaking and influential text. This was merely a first introduction to a text that I did not realise would shape my doctoral studies. While attending the University of Canterbury for my undergraduate degree, I was once again introduced to Shelley's work. This was in relation to the notion of boundary transgressions in science, one of the themes that would become an initial building block for this thesis. For me, it was the work of Evelyn Tsitas (2014) which suggested that *Frankenstein* (1818) was a prototypical novel surrounding the development of chimeras. Tsitas presents an intertextual reading of chimeras which develops from *Frankenstein* (1818) to both literary and filmic examples.

As I began to delve deeper into this theory, I watched science fiction films more critically. I noticed different archetypes resurging through contexts, propelled by anxieties, ideals, and narratives.[1] The themes of *Frankenstein* (1818) appeared to be evolving within the contemporary medium. It echoes into multiple genres that are spawned through common anxieties surrounding technological and scientific development. It was not until I moved to

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[1] Refer to appendix A, Table 4.

Auckland that I began to connect these intertextual and referential patterns within the nature of the Frankensteinian narrative and notice how it was interwoven into films. It inspired me to see *Frankenstein* (1818) as a modern and post-modern mythos that continued to evolve and adapt within the Western-American psyche. Two questions presented themselves: have these trends been noticed by others? Is my approach unique? More research was required to explore this topic and uncover the answers. Fundamentally the notion of a Frankensteinian mythos had been established by other scholars, no model or method of observation appeared to exist. During my preliminary research I had watched many films for my thesis as evidenced by Table 4. These films were not limited to just the archetype of Frankenstein as I was interested in what other Gothic archetypes had also resurged and what the connection was to the evolving Western cultural psyche. For example, other monsters had filtered in and out of popular culture resurgence such as the vampire. Table 4 represents a wider viewing scope that encompassed many different types of horror, science fiction, thriller, and fantasy films in an effort to pinpoint the expansive and all-encompassing thematic resurgence of the Frankenstein archetype. Many of the film bore no results where others were either literally or thematically linked to *Frankenstein* (1818). I could analyse any of the films I have watched that are pertinent to *Frankenstein* (1818). The issue is getting them to communicate appropriately in a way that make it logical rather than parenthetical. This is a complex problem as the analysis would ultimately work. Though it would simply become a case study rather than a conversation.

To work at an intertextual level the selected texts need to be able to communicate on a thematic, contextual, cultural, and narrative level. To do this effectively, I have decided to focus on three prominent on-going franchises[2] that began in the late twentieth century: *Alien* (1979 – present), *Terminator* (1984 – present), and *Jurassic Park* (1993 – present). This is because these franchises witness a thematic evolution prompted by changes in context, culture, and audience. These particular texts are prompted by not only science fiction representations of modern science experimentation but how this experimentation goes wrong with detrimental results for human existence. My research into the context of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818) revealed the underlying anxieties of the time. These anxieties are typically connected to scientific and technological developments that present an amoral or unethical challenge to the understanding of the uniqueness of humanity (E. Botting, 2021).

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[2] The term 'franchise' in this thesis refers to a series of films with prequel and sequel instalments that adhere to an ongoing narrative within the same cinematic universe.

This anthropocentric notion of the human condition is at the heart of what makes *Frankenstein* (1818) so potent and is something I will seek to unpack throughout this thesis surrounding the function of themes that challenge this notion within my chosen films. The study was directed by three research questions:

1. Firstly, how do Frankensteinian echoes develop within ongoing science fiction franchises in relation to the Western-American psyche?
2. What developing patterns can be observed in ongoing franchises surrounding contemporary anxieties of science and technological development and the themes that intertextually connect them? What are the implications?
3. How does the Frankenstein Myth as a universally explicit mythos embedded in popular culture, remain relevant within contemporary science fiction film?

In order to investigate these questions, I propose the development of a model of the Frankenstein Myth by returning to *Frankenstein* (1818) and quantifying the key themes from the text that I have identified as: boundary transgression in science, challenge to the natural order, and the monstrous body. In this thesis I will apply these themes to a hypertextual framework to enable the selected franchises to communicate with one another. This model presents a clear and logical method as to how the Frankensteinian themes transmute into and communicate with other texts connected within a franchise. The commonality shared between the franchises is the presence of scientific and technological development that threatens the human condition and experience. They embellish contemporary anxieties related to morally and ethically questionable technological development. *Frankenstein* (1818) indulged nineteenth century anxieties surrounding the advent of electricity and the study of anatomy. The films that present dystopic narratives are heavily directed by technologies and scientific theories such as cloning, human augmentation, artificial intelligence, and the creation of cybernetic organisms showed the thematic patterns inherent to the Frankenstein Myth. I will apply textual and thematic analysis within a meta-critical interdisciplinary methodology to examine the thematic threads present in my chosen films. Scrutinising the films' narrative against multiple different disciplines within the hypertextual format allows the films to communicate with one another. This method will allow me to track the myth, and the thematic changes posed by hypothetical and developing technologies within the context of twenty-first century science fiction film.

3: LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 Introduction

A prevalent truth that remains one of the most consistent facts about human culture is that when we are plagued by an irrational or unexplainable fear we create stories (Booker, 2010). This point is stipulated by Jack Zipes (2010) who indicates that, stories animate, communicate, and explain the inexplicable and by extension adapt the information to the culture and the environment (p. 2). Within the mode of the Gothic and the genre of science fiction these fears are given faces in the form of monsters; a creature that can be feared first then rationalised and overcome (Bould & Vint, 2011; Smith & Wallace, 2001). My thesis argues that these archetypes can remain relevant within a mythographic transmission that maintains the effect of the origin archetype but under a different guise particular to the anxieties of the time.

While scholars have identified the consistent interest with *Frankenstein* (1818), there is a significant gap in this discourse that does not identify the shadows and echoes of the thematic nuances of *Frankenstein* (1818) in late twentieth century and contemporary science fiction films. This is the gap I will seek to fill with my unique contribution. I believe that the *Frankenstein* (1818) thematic narrative continues to resurge under the guise of different Gothic science fiction narratives and archetypes within a filmic medium in the twenty-first century. These thematic echoes filter through the developing socio-cultural Western-American psyche and are accentuated by anxieties prompted by increasingly amoral and ethically questionable scientific, and technological developments. I often reflect on a quote by Jon Austin (2017) who states that, "…the affective power of popular culture artefacts and productions is drawn into the processes of standardising, normalising, and universalising particular ways of being in the world" (p. 11). Popular culture is how we have come to communicate. When we refer to popular culture we are not just referring to fictions, fandoms, or stories that can be regarded as nonsense. This is a universal method of communication that is critical to the way we understand the world around us which includes scientific and technological developments (Cantor, 2012). It is also critical to understanding the forms that the Frankenstein Myth takes within these filmic mediums.

Many of these developments have the potential to challenge perceived notions of the fundamental human identity whose potential I have examined through three key ongoing

science fiction franchises. The notion of franchisation is especially important to my thesis as the narratives are continually changing and adapting to these developing technology and scientific theories which form sub sections in the evolving contemporary hypertext of the Frankensteinian narrative. This is a unique approach to previous scholarship which allows me to track the evolutions of the echoes between two centuries. Within this literature review I will be establishing the parameters within which my thesis sits. This includes evaluating previous key scholarship which forms that gap and have assisted in forming a critical foundation to support this thesis. This revived interest in the subject of *Frankenstein* (1818) and its legacy has sparked my academic interest at a cultural, historical, textual, and psychological level. The matter of this transmission of the themes of *Frankenstein* (1818) has become an increasingly prevalent factor that can be witnessed in contemporary films that critique the progression of science and technology.

3.1 *Frankenstein* (1818) as a Cultural Phenomenon: The Creation of a Modern Myth

While Tsitas (2014) introduced me to this notion of interdisciplinary and intertextual analysis of *Frankenstein* (1818)*,* it is critical to acknowledge that the echoes of *Frankenstein* (1818) and its place within cultural discourse have been the subject of a wide range of scholarship. This can also be attributed to the fact *Frankenstein* (1818) observed its bi-century anniversary in 2018, which yielded (both pre and post anniversary) significant scholarship surrounding the literal resurgence and place of *Frankenstein* (1818) as a significant mythological archetype in contemporary culture (Basiya, 2018). Dennis R. Cutchins and Dennis R. Perry (2018) suggest that "arguably Frankenstein has a greater presence in popular media than any other single narrative over nearly two centuries" (p. 36). I want to acknowledge how prominent *Frankenstein* (1818) the text and Frankenstein the archetypal figure have been in multiple cultural avenues. The text has been the subject of hundreds of pieces of literature and film. Due to this, Frankenstein and his monster has become two of the most recognised figures in popular culture (Baumann, 2018; Chaib, 2013; Turney, 2000). In this section I will provide a review of scholarship surrounding its status as a cultural phenomenon and the various forms the phenomenon has taken. The purpose of this broad analysis is to recognise the fact that the study of *Frankenstein* (1818) is certainly not a new avenue nor is the notion of the echoes of the character of Frankenstein resurging in different forms of media. But more importantly to help establish where My thesis fits on the spectrum of this field.

Chris Baldick (1990) is an important scholar to start with due to his seminal work surrounding the mythological status of *Frankenstein* (1818) as its influence. He states that "Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818) manages to achieve a double feat of self-referentiality, both its composition and its subsequent cultural status miming the central moments of its own story" (p. 1). In this quote, Baldick is referring to is how potent both the narrative and the themes that escape the textual frame and acquires independence as a myth. He goes on to suggest that "[Shelley] endowed it… with an abundant excess of meanings which the novel cannot stably accommodate, a surplus of significance which overruns the enclosure of the novel's form to attract new and competing mythic revisions" (p. 3). According to Baldick, there are two kinds of myth that *Frankenstein* (1818) is predominantly connected to, "the myth of creation and the myth of transgression" (p. 3). Both types of myth tie directly into both creation and creator, much like how the name 'Frankenstein' is now synonymous with the mad scientist and the monster (Baumann, 2018). Baldick (1990) touches on a critical point. The text's themes are inherently connected to a deeper meaning that resonates with humanity on a fundamental cultural level. Due to this it continues to resurge as human culture and society develops. Baldick does not offer an in-depth insight into this transmission or a method to trace them. This is what my thesis will seek to do as I will be further defining what the myth is and how it functions beyond the direct referential influence of the novel.

The significant influence of *Frankenstein* (1818) cannot be overstated. Cutchins and Perry (2018) indicate that "perhaps it is because Shelley touches the central nerve of our ambivalence towards a modern world that interrupts the notion of the human" (p. 37). Mark A McCutcheon (2018) indicates that, "*Frankenstein* (1818) is a founding intertext for technology in its own time and in adaptations that popularised the story by simplifying it as a cautionary tale of technology running amok" (p. 4). While McCutcheon uses the term 'simplifying' he goes on to indicate that *Frankenstein* (1818) is a complex global method for understanding the mode of transformation of the discourse of technology. McCutcheon (2018) does not give a solid rationale for this beyond referential statements and oversimplifies the effect *Frankenstein* (1818) has had as a mythological narrative. Whereas Cutchins and Perry (2018) state in relation to this notion of *Frankenstein* (1818) as an intertext, that "Frankenstein invites a reading of itself in relation to what amounts to a potentially infinite network of intertexts, or what we have termed the Frankenstein network" (p. 36). This is a critical place to start because they acknowledge the existence of an intertextual network which signifies a place for a model to be developed. This

acknowledgement also aids in scaffolding a foundation for how *Frankenstein* (1818) has undergone these significant revisions while maintaining critical networks to its thematic strands embedded in Shelley's original text. However, like the previous texts, Cutchins and Perry (2018) do not offer a clear model, method, or effect of this network. Nor does it critically analyse specific texts that fit into this network beyond those directly tied to the *Frankenstein* (1818) narrative. What these scholars offer is a firm basis and rationale to now develop a model to conduct an in-depth and intertextual analysis of this 'Frankenstein network.'

A large proportion of the scholarship that discuss *Frankenstein* (1818) as a cultural phenomenon or network tend to look at the literal adaptation of the text. Rebecca Baumann (2018) has focused on this literal transmission through popular culture and the polarising effect the image of Frankenstein's monster. Baumann states that,

> The great monster films of the mid-twentieth century, including the Frankenstein cycles of both Universal and Hammer, creating thriving monster culture that included magazines, comic books, trading cards, toys, bubble bath, lamps, and just about anything else you could want… [this] monster culture was especially popular with teens… popular culture answered back with long-running magazines, fruity cereals, cartoons, and toys (p. 91).

Based on this statement it is clear that Shelley's text has had a significant impact on popular culture in all forms but has ultimately maintained its textual form. Beyond how monsters have influenced popular culture for teens, *Frankenstein* (1818) has taken many shapes for different genres and cultural perspectives,

> there have been hundreds of films featuring the monster in every genre imaginable… comedies (*Young Frankenstein),* musicals (*The Rocky Horror Picture Show*), kids movies (*Monster Squad, Frankenweenie*), erotic films (*Flesh for Frankenstein, The Erotic Rites of Frankenstein),* exploitation (*Blackenstein, Frankenhooker, Vampire Girl vs Frankenstein Girl*), Feminist revisions (*May*), science fiction (*Frankenstein Unbound*), and movies that defy classification and explanation (*Frankenstein Meets the Space Monster*)… (Bauman, 2018, p. 92).

It is clear that *Frankenstein* (1818) has developed beyond its bounds of science fiction literature and into numerous other genres. Kyle Bishop (2010) supports Baumann's (2018)

assessment of Frankenstein's flexibility by stating that, "Frankenstein has been refracted through so many media, and processed by so many diverse audiences, it has become innately plural and unstable, and the possession of millions of individual readers/viewers" (p. 50). Baumann's examples are purely literal interpretations of the Frankensteinian narrative, but Bishop (2010) begins to broach the subject of adaptation. He states that,

> …the Frankenstein complex is the personal experience of Frankenstein that each of us carries within… It includes easily identified texts such as Mary Shelly's *Frankenstein* but may also consist of texts like Wally Pfister's *Transcendence* (2014) … films that could be identified by audience members as Frankenstein narratives… (p. 52).

This notion of a 'Frankenstein Complex' (one term of many to describe the thematic nuance of the archetype) ties deeply into the concept of a 'network' as proposed by Cutchins and Perry (2018). Much like Cutchins and Perry (2018), Bishop acknowledges the existence of a thematic network and gives us an example of this may translate into a non-related contemporary narrative. But beyond the stipulation of this relationship, Bishop does not offer a critical examination of the narratives that have resurged in the cultural psyche. Nor does he look past Shelley's text at the thematic influences that I argue are independent from the original text now.

Based on the review of this literature surrounding the cultural phenomenon of *Frankenstein* (1818), it clear the text is the prime example of a modern myth. Though no previous scholarship has adequately explored how the themes have become a part of a shared cultural consciousness which is what this thesis will seek to do. As Peter Nagy et al. (2019) state, "[it] has become, in anglophone Western cultures, an enduring and pervasive myth of radical scientific intervention and the consequences of irresponsible and transgressive research practices" (p. 738). This is stipulated by Roslynn Haynes (2003) who believes that the *Frankenstein* (1818) narrative is the most enduring and powerful myth regarding scientific and technological development as previously stated by McCutcheon (2018). While the progression of Western civilisation has been hinged on scientific and technological advancement as a positive output for the benefit of humanity's cultural and societal progression, these advancements have also been a source of cultural anxiety. Haynes states that,

Every time there is a new knowledge, there are grounds for a new fear. The fear
of science is about power and about change that leaves the ordinary person
disempowered and confused, unable to control either the ideas or the people who
may exploit them (p. 244).

Popular culture reveals the reservations towards this advancement that resides in this
collective consciousness which I have attempted to highlight in the context chapter
surrounding the development of this psyche. This is stipulated by Theodore Roszak (1974)
who observes that, "in most of our popular culture resides a legitimate public feat of the
scientists stripped down, depersonalised conception of knowledge – a fear that our
scientists… will go on being titans who create monsters" (p. 31). In keeping with this theme
of power, Andrew Tudor (1989) provides a lineal analysis of the mad scientist throughout the
horror genre in cinema. In this analysis he identifies *Frankenstein* (1818) as the prototypical
archetype. These narratives include a mad scientist that causes disorder because of their
commitment to science, falls squarely within in the Frankensteinian narrative. Unlike Nagy et
al. (2019), Haynes (2003), Roszak (1974), and Tudor (1989) do not focus on Shelley's text
due to the focus on the mad scientist in cinema, so reference James Whale's *Frankenstein*
(1931) and its influence on its cinematic descendants instead. However, the significance of
Tudor's (1989) work lies in his focus on cinematic examples of the mad scientist. Due to this,
his work contributes a significant cornerstone to the analysis of the Frankensteinian narrative
in film.

Tudor (1989) stipulates that cinema has modernised the concept of the mad scientist
by stating that, "no longer is the special quasi-magical activity of mad science tucked away in
old houses and Gothic castles, science is now more prosaic and more all-embracing…
penetrating into every corner of our lives…" (p. 147). As science has become a more
significant factor in the construction of human culture, the appropriation of science through
the archetype of the mad scientist has "evolved into three branches: Science appropriated by
those who use it for non-scientific ends, science as a dangerous source of unexpected and
unintended terrors, and science corrupts ambitious science" (Tudor, 1989, p. 152). Tudor
analyses each example of the mad scientist using this metaphor of the family tree and
maintains that *Frankenstein* (1818) exists at the root of this metaphor. Haynes (2003) delves
deeper into this notion of the modern myth stating that, "the modern heirs of Frankenstein are
the continuing folklore of our time. Like all myths, they appear simple, but in fact represent

complex ideas and suppressed fear that transcend time, place, and race" (p. 253). While John Cartwright (2007) argues that,

> The endurance of the Frankenstein myth into the 21st century is in some ways hardly surprising. Amid the multiplicity of themes, she [Mary Shelley] explored in the work, she put her finger on the central paradox of modern science: How can humankind control a science that is powerful to the point of explaining and manipulated human life itself? This dilemma continues to resonate in the modern mind (p. 133).

Tudor (1989), Haynes (2003), and Cartwright (2007) all indicate that Frankenstein as an archetype, and *Frankenstein* (1818) as a prototypical text, form the foundation of the modern science fiction myth of technological creation. Tudor (1989) is also the first scholar I have discovered that uses the term 'Frankenstein Myth.' However, while the term is stated by Tudor, it is not used as explicitly as this thesis will do. Nor does Tudor elaborate on its wider meaning to the Western cultural psyche or offer explicit twenty-first century cinematic examples of the myth that are not directly influenced by the texts narrative. This is what my thesis will seek to do in the textual analysis.

This allocation of *Frankenstein* (1818) as a myth is instead often referred to "as a reflex action, media headlines invoke the shorthand of *Frankenstein* (1818) to condemn not only the experiments that have misfired, but new research might prove dangerous" (Haynes, 2003, p. 245). Whereas Botting (1991, 1996) has a more literal focus on Shelley's work while acknowledging the mythological status of the Frankensteinian narrative. He does not delve deeply into the thematic transmission of the text into other seemingly unrelated narratives beyond the literal retelling. However, many scholars do appreciate that *Frankenstein* (1818) is the perfect specimen to examine the dual roles of creativity and of responsibility in technological and scientific innovation of medical, robotic, biomechanical, and weapons technologies (Cambra-Badii et al., 2021; Marcus, 2002). As Megan K. Halpern et al. (2016) indicate, "science fiction, through the various roles it plays, is more than just a genre. It is also a medium that opens up avenues for reflectivity and discussion… *Frankenstein*… is particularly fertile ground for reflecting on the way humans wrestle with these moral dilemmas" (p. 49). The Frankensteinian narrative is a flexible lexicon as stipulated by within the notion of the hypertext; a factor I will introduce later on (Heise-von der Lippe, 2014).

Halpern et al. (2016) have unpacked the fluidity of the myth from a cultural perspective. They state that,

> The story is already lauded as an enduring, provocative science fiction text that offers insight into the cultural phenomena, but we hope to show that the multiplicity of stories told about and in conjunction with *Frankenstein*… [a text] that offers an opportunity for many disciplines to unite around the sort of ideas and motivating questions, thus finding ways to speak across disciplinary and cultural chasms (p. 50).

Halpern et al's. (2016) stipulation is critical as it establishes a precedence for the interdisciplinary framework of this thesis as it suggests *Frankenstein* (1818) has the potential to span disciplinary and cultural chasms. I will do this with a model and rationale that supports the framework of the analysis which draws the thematic echoes from my chosen contemporary cinematic texts while referring back to the original text to find the root of the thematic threads. Beyond this rationale of my study, my analysis will not focus on Shelley's text but rely on the thematic echoes themselves. I argue that the Frankensteinian thematic narrative has remained relevant through the sporadic Western societal, political, and cultural changes of the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Though it does not require the original text as a direct reference to do so. Despite the various zeitgeists, and cultural chronotopes that the Western world has experienced (Keunen, 2011), the Frankensteinian narrative has remained fluid and ever changing. It is a reactionary yet transmuting, thematic presence. My thesis argues for this evolution via socio-historical cultural influence and elaborates further on the notion of the mythological status of *Frankenstein* (1818) that Tudor (1989), Haynes (2003), and Cartwright (2007) introduce. This perspective is less concerned with the mode of the Gothic or the development of science fiction, and more focused on the role a critical and enduring narrative like *Frankenstein* (1818) has within the cultural sphere. Shannon Rollins (2018) takes this notion of transmission further by using the notion of the meme as proposed by Richard Dawkins (2016) as the method of transmission of Frankenstein's prototypical archetype into visual and material cultures. Here we can see *Frankenstein's* (1818) themes being viewed through a more lateral critical lens. With this departure from the literal as posed by Halpern et al. (2016), it is important to note that the role of Shelley's text becomes less important as the mythology the text has created comes to the foreground. Its unconscious influence as a cultural entity projects an echo and a shadow.

This is an approach I intend to carry through into my thesis as I will not be commenting on *Frankenstein* (1818) beyond its thematic influence.

Due to this separation from the original text, a form of evolution takes place each time the scientific and technological narrative either evolves or progresses. This means that various fictitious texts are enabled to explore themes of technological boundary transgression, challenge to the natural order, and the potential monstrous adverse effects that are conclusive of such transgressive challenge. Leo Braudy (2016), much like Halpern et al (2016), is more interested in the cultural affluence of *Frankenstein* (1818) as a mythological thematic narrative rather than Mary Shelley's legacy, and the influence of the original text on literal resurgence of the *Frankenstein* (1818) narrative. Braudy (2016) indicates this by stating that "the continuing power of the Frankenstein story is only one example of how a familiar theme mutates. In part because it stood at the beginning of a mingled tradition of hopes for and fears of scientific and technological process…" (p. 139). Genetic engineering, cloning, artificial intelligence, and gene splicing are key to the fundamental premise of the particular contemporary cinematic texts. But, as Braudy states, "Mary Shelley did not foresee cloning, organ transplants, or the science of robotics, let alone the possibility of recreating through genetic engineering… (p. 140). The unconscious presence of the thematic nuance of *Frankenstein* (1818) is within the liminal recesses of these scientific concepts. Unlike the previously mentioned scholars have contended with *Frankenstein* (1818) from the standpoint of literal reproduction of the archetype and its themes, Braudy directly refers to the Frankensteinian narratives fluidity within the sphere of science fiction texts beyond the *Frankenstein* (1818). This is where the Myth ferments and evolves. While the perspectives of Halpern et al (2016) and Braudy (2016) align with this notion of the thematic echoes of *Frankenstein* (1818), they do not engage with the notion of these echoes at depth nor offer a method to explore this mutation at a thematic level. Nor do Halpern et al (2016) and Braudy (2016) analyse the effect this has on the Western-American psyche. They do however form a foundation for this thesis to continue to build upon this phenomenon and highlight a need for a model of thematic transmission.

The themes of the Frankenstein Myth are echoes that filter through our ever-changing culture. The question is not whether *Frankenstein* (1818) is influential on the writer or director's intention but how the influence of *Frankenstein's* (1818) legacy has become unconsciously present as a potent theme within cinematic texts. Braudy indicates that, "a

story or character achieves the status of a myth not because it never changes but because it's a supernatural essence that can respond to the change that occurs around it" (p. 140). I argue that this mythological status has created a Frankensteinian consciousness that remains present in contemporary science fiction. In my rationale I will discuss the main themes that will be analysed in conjunction with the cinematic franchises that transcend the limitations of one centuries perspective by still producing instalments. This is where my thesis will make an original contribution to the field. It will also fill the gap in the current scholarship as to how *Frankenstein* (1818) as a myth unto itself functions outside its textual limitations. I will also devise a model that will utilise a Gothic science fiction lens to track these echoes through these texts.

3.2 The Appearance of *Frankenstein* (1818) in Gothic and Gothic Science Fiction

Frankenstein (1818) is rarely identified as a Gothic text. However, those who study the Gothic frequently include it in the pantheon of nineteenth century Gothic texts (Oates, 1984). The Gothic is a consistent scrutiniser and challenger to change. Due to this fact, it illuminates the volatile political, scientific, religious, and cultural climates the Western world is facing. It is important that it is studied as the parameters of the Gothic continue to stretch over different demographics. The mode of the Gothic has been studied notably by the likes of Botting (1996), David Punter (1996), Jerod Hogle (2002), Victor Sage (2004), Catherine Spooner (2006), and Lorna Piatti-Farnell (2015) who present significant work that reemphasise the constant yet consistently changing presence of the Gothic within our ever-evolving Western cultural psyche. These scholars have established and continue to develop the conversation surrounding the Gothic mode. Specifically, to identify the unique nature of the Gothic and it's continuing growth and amalgamation with other cultural facets. The Gothic challenges what is considered normative, using contemporary anxiety to cast doubt over constructed normality, prompting society to question and reconsider its identity (Bloom, 1998; Cooper, 1977; Crow, 2014; Ellis, 2000). This is often why the Gothic and the monstrous become relevant and prominent during times of social and cultural change (Cooper, 1977). For example, the nineteenth century observed a common social morality surrounding etiquette, sexuality, moral decency, religious piety, superstitious and placed a high value on the external appearance of the self. Based on the seminal work of Botting (1996),

Gothic signifies a writing of excess. It appears in the awful obscurity that haunted eighteenth century rationality and morality. It shadows the despairing and the uncanny dualities of Victorian realism and decadence. Gothic atmospheres have repeatedly signalled the disturbing return of pasts upon presents and evoke emotions of terror and laughter (p. 1).

Botting adheres to the narratives and archetypes traditionally classed as Gothic (Botting & Townshend, 2004). In terms of the resurgence of Gothic archetypes, Botting stipulates that while they can and do appear within contemporary fiction, they maintain their traditional corporeal forms, "in Gothic fiction certain stock features provide the principal embodiments and evocations of cultural anxieties" (Botting, 1996, p. 1). While these figures evolve in the cultural sphere, they ultimately still embody their traditional forms as I discovered during my data collection.[3] For example, the vampire tends to maintain a literal resurgence as its form and qualities only change slightly. While Count Dracula and Edward Cullen are two distinct characters, they still represent the archetype of the vampire (Buckley, 2016; Frayling, 2016). This is also the common and popular reading of *Frankenstein* (1818) in contemporary literature and film. However, it is important to point out that Botting, in an earlier work *Making Monstrous: Frankenstein, Criticism, Theory* (1991), states that "*Frankenstein* (1818) much discussed and greatly reworked has been thoroughly transformed and purge of any threatening significance… [in] taming the monster, the threatening Other is incorporated within safe and recognisable limits" (p. 192-193). Botting's assessment of *Frankenstein* (1818) is literal and often refers to the popular image of Boris Karloff as Frankenstein's monster. Botting's assessment does not consider thematic transmission and is a good place to start in this review.

While Botting addresses the Gothic in its traditional format and has created a stable foundation as a seminal scholar in the study of the Gothic, Jerrod E. Hogle (2002) argues that "Gothic fiction is hardly 'Gothic' at all… this highly unstable genre scattered its ingredients into various modes, among them aspects of the realistic Victorian novel yet also reasserted itself across the nineteenth century in flamboyant plays… operas, short stories, or fantastic tales for magazines and newspapers…" (p. 1). Maisha Wester and Xavier Aldana Reyes (2019) tend to agree with Hogle's assessment. Though they take it further as they suggest that the Gothic has transcended the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to manifest in a clearer

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[3] Refer to Appendix A, Table 4.

manner. This is where they disagree with Hogle's (2002) assessment of Gothic fiction. They see the Gothic as a widely encompassing mode that incorporates texts, icons, symbols, and art from all facets of literature, media, and culture (Myrone, 2006; Wester & Reyes, 2019). In this case, they also partly agree with Botting's assessment (1996) that there is a discernible encompassing mode but do not limit their scope to a genre. Despite Hogle's (2002) indication that Gothic fiction is not Gothic at all he does align more with Wester and Reyes (2019) by admitting that,

> Given how relatively constant some of its features are, we can specify some general parameters by which fictions can be identified as Gothic… takes place is a seemingly antiquated place… within this space are hidden some secrets from the past that haunt the characters… These hauntings take place in many forms, but frequently assume the features of ghosts, spectres, or monsters (p. 2).

It is interesting to note that these descriptions are vague and without example which allows for more contemporary iterations of Gothic spaces such as spaceships and the haunting taking the form of an alien. This definition allows for the Gothic mode to be more flexible. Hogle (2014) does not broach the notion of an unconscious Frankensteinian narrative that is present in the contemporary Western psyche in his works. However, it is clear he is aware of the everchanging forms the Gothic manifests within. This idea of a highly unstable genre of Gothic that has the ability to filter into science fiction helps to identify the foundation for which my thesis is constructed upon. Hogle's assessment breaks away from the traditional reading of Gothic that Botting (1996) promotes which allows for a thematic reading of *Frankenstein* (1818) rather than merely a literal translation. Though Hogle (2002), much like Botting (1991, 1996), still only invokes *Frankenstein* (1818) as a text rather than a thematic nuance. This is a limitation of Hogle's work as it could take the notion of fluidity and explore more contemporary applications of the Gothic which would identify the Gothic as a mode rather than a genre but instead maintains its trajectory toward a more literal reading. As a mode, the Gothic is more versatile which enables further exploration into how the Gothic continues to evolve and blend with multiple genres. This in turn allows investigation into the contemporary resurgence of popular Gothic thematic narratives, a concept Hogle touches upon in his work.

David Punter and Glennis Byron (2004) are important to this conversation as they summarise both Botting (1992, 1996) and Hogle's (2002) approach as a more historical reading of the Gothic as far as its different cultural forms. They state that,

> It is possible to speak of the Gothic as a historical phenomenon… equally it has seemed more useful to think of it in terms of a psychological argument to do with the ways in which otherwise repressed fears are represented in textual forms (p. 18).

Punter (1996, 1998, 2012, 2013) has written significantly around the Gothic and the history of the mode in literature with emphasis on eighteenth and nineteenth century texts. Though he does acknowledge the modern and postmodern Gothic on several occasions throughout his different texts. Whereas Catherine Spooner (2006, 2017) is more focused on the contemporary Gothic mode. She stipulates that the Gothic can appear in all manner of forms (traditional and contemporary) as both literal and thematic transmission. Spooner states that, "In contemporary Western culture, the Gothic lurks in all sorts of unexpected corners. Like a malevolent virus, Gothic narratives have escaped the confines of literatures and spread across disciplinary boundaries." (2006, p. 8). Unlike Botting (1996), and more aligned with Wester and Reyes (2019), Spooner (2006, 2017) does not believe that the Gothic is confined to what is considered traditional. It is a mode which bleeds into every element of culture and media, "the Gothic has become so pervasive precisely because it is so apposite to the representation of contemporary concerns" (p. 8).

Botting and Spooner (2015) have collaborated on the notion of the monstrous, bringing together analysis of the monstrous of the Gothic mode from the nineteenth century and the media forms of the twenty-first century. They stipulate that the monstrous transcends different texts and moves through different forms of media. While their collaboration could be considered counterproductive, I argue it offers a unique and balanced perspective due to their different perspectives on the nature of the Gothic mode. It shows that the monstrous is not solely of the Gothic. For something to be Gothic it requires it to be in contestation with contemporary culture. Whereas Punter and Byron (2004) indicate that "there are very few actual literary texts that are Gothic; that the Gothic is more to do with particular moments, tropes, and repeated motifs that can be found scattered or disseminated through the modern Western literary tradition…" (p. 18). The Gothic flourishes at times of actual or potential social, historical, and cultural upheaval. This is the premise upon which the *Frankenstein*

(1818) narrative has been disseminated and filtered through different mediums of media but especially film. Neither Spooner (2006, 2017), Punter or Byron (2004) invoke the name of *Frankenstein* (1818) beyond its literal resurgence. Spooner acknowledges that "the term 'Frankenstein' has become common currency for both overarching science and an archetypal human monster" (p. 69). Similarly, Punter and Byron (2004) state the "…complex structure of *Frankenstein* (1818) involves a series of framed or embedded narratives… and registers some anxieties about scientific progress unaccompanied by social conscience" (p. 198). Though none of them acknowledge a transmissible myth beyond these assessments. Within this sphere of thought there is a noticeable step forward within the field to recognising the thematic strands that contribute to the foundation of my thesis.

More contemporary scholarship leans towards Spooner's (2006) perspective. As Lorna Piatti-Farnell, and Donna Lee Brien (2015) indicate that the contemporary Gothic "overtakes multiple forms of cultural representations and to morph and mutate itself into new and disparate incarnations as the context requires" (p. 1). The resounding theme of Gothic scholarship of the post-modern era tends to lean towards the notion of the Gothic mode occupying a critical lens of enquiry through varying elements of culture. One genre does not define the mode of the Gothic as the mode is highly transmissible and can "show multiple forms and nuance" (p. 1). This is not the perspective of all recent scholarship. Ian Conrich and Laura Sedgewick (2017) recognise the transmissibility of the Gothic into varying degrees of culture but instead suggest that the horror genre and the Gothic "are substantially interconnected culturally and historically and that all relevant texts, irrespective of their quality are germane" (p. 3). While this perspective does recognise the growing belief in the multifaceted nature of the Gothic mode, it still aligns with Botting's (1996) more traditional approach of textual analysis from a particular genre or repetitive trope.

Gothic science fiction is culturally provocative as it creates a sense of discomfort and anxiety as the blend of genre and mode is engineered to explore themes and scientific hypotheses which make us uncomfortable. The relationship between the Gothic and science fiction is a contentious one as far as previous scholarship is concerned. Overall, there is a consensus that the two are bound in a state of symbiosis. However, controversy arises regarding the nature of the relationship and in what state the two exist together. Patrick Brantlinger (1980) suggests that science fiction is derivative of the conventions commonly found in fantasy and Gothic romance (p. 30). Brantlinger's assessment is not so much

concerned with the validity of the relationship as he appears to consider that as an obvious connection. He is more concerned with rejecting the notion that science fiction is a form of realistic prophecy and suggests science fictions connection to Gothic romanticism is the main reason that the genre lacks cognitive validity. What Brantlinger does not consider is the evolution of the Gothic mode to fit multiple cultural moulds. The mode of the Gothic has historically been difficult to define under a single term or genre. As exemplified by Brantlinger (1980), the Gothic is frequently assigned to romanticism and fantasy genres due to its eighteenth-century roots. It would be easy to assume that the Gothic (as a genre rather than a mode) never adapted to changing cultural climates. However, it is crucial to state that, due to the Gothic's evasive nature, the Gothic is ultimately impossible to assign to any one genre which is why it is often regarded as a mode. As Botting (1996) states, "the diffusion of the Gothic as a hybrid form incorporates and transforms other literary forms as well as developing and changing its own conventions to newer modes of writing" (p. 9). Botting stipulates that the Gothic, as a mode rather than a genre, is subject to change under evolving cultural and literary conditions. The hyphenation of the Gothic and science fiction was a natural pairing in the nineteenth century as Western society acclimatised to a more rational and scientifically focused zeitgeist; a phenomenon that exponentially grew and became more common in twentieth century media. This change came on the heels of Darwinism. Chemistry, physics, psychology, and anatomy would continue to evolve within the climate of scientific and technological progression throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The Gothic had since departed from form being subject solely to the supernatural nuances and appeared realms of realism and rationality to be paired with science fiction in this new cultural climate.

Though this transition of the Gothic and its relationship with science fiction appears to be conclusive across prior scholarship, there is still contention surrounding the nature of the pairing. For example, Sara Wasson and Emily Alder (2011) acknowledge the relationship but consider it to be a contradictory hyphenation (p. 1). Though they acknowledge the relationship as an established phenomenon, they still identify that a relationship of the two is oxymoronic as they are potentially incompatible (p. 1). This is because Wasson and Alder identify that the two categories are the adverse of one another. The Gothic finds its origins and dominant themes in the supernatural and inexplicable. Science fiction remains cognitive in a rational world which still obeys natural laws based on Darko Suvin's (1979) theory of cognitive estrangement (p. 1). Wasson and Alder (2011) do note that the Gothic as a mode

remains elusive and diverse but only to warn against using it to generalise the human condition, culture, and history. Though Wasson and Alder's work presents an elementary distinction between the Gothic and science fiction, they do not commit to the concept of a natural cohesiveness between them. Instead, they seek to explore more recent manifestations of two in texts which they consider applicable. What they seek to achieve is to build off Suvin's (1979) theory to form a framework for the Gothic to be applicable to science fiction. Their hypothesis suggests that without the adjustment to Suvin's theory of cognitive estrangement then the Gothic and science fiction are unable to co-exist. This theory does not consider the further application of the elusive nature of the Gothic beyond a warning nor its natural inclination to remain relevant within different cultural or literary conditions. It could be argued instead that the Gothic's nature allows for its immediate integration with science fiction without adjustment to Suvin's assessment. Based on this hypothesis, the Gothic and science fiction complement and enable one another to achieve a new level of relevance within contemporary fiction. Within the symbiotic relationship with the Frankensteinian narrative, the Gothic and science fiction create a framework which constructs an aura of prophetic realism. This comes back to the notion posed by Telotte (2004) of science fiction's ability to synthesise new realities based on the contemporary technological context. My thesis suggests that it is this framework allows the themes of *Frankenstein* (1818) to transcend from the original text and incorporate themselves into new fictional content that revolves around the potential of future technology. This is where my thesis is unique in its approach as I utilise the Gothic science fiction lens to analyse the transmission of *Frankenstein's* thematic echoes in contemporary science fiction film.

Sian McArthur (2015) is a critical scholar in this discussion of Gothic science fiction. Unlike Wasson and Alder (2011), McArthur directly addresses the notion of Gothic science fiction and its viability as a genre. This is not a critique, but a serious investigation into how the Gothic science fiction functions. It is on this premise that McArthur directly references *Frankenstein's* (1818) ability to engage on a thematic level rather than a literal reproduction. They indicate that,

> *Frankenstein* carries weight because in explicitly exploring the potential of
> actual scientific exploration upon humanity, Shelley is moving away from the
> realms of traditional Gothic and into something new, and that is the beginnings of

Gothic science fiction, a subgenre of the Gothic recognisable by its specific

interest in science, industry, and technology within a Gothic structure (p. 2).

Based on McArthur's assessment, *Frankenstein* (1818) marked the beginning of the Gothic science fiction genre which makes the applicability of the Frankenstein narrative within contemporary examples of science fiction. Like Botting (1996), Hogle (2002), Punter and Byron (2007), Spooner (2017), and Brantlinger (1980), the extent of how these integral flexibilities and versatility of the Gothic and the consistently evolving nature of science fiction that occurs in tandem with socio-cultural and historical developments, have not been touched on at a deep enough level when discussing *Frankenstein* (1818) and its influence beyond Shelley's text. This is what my thesis seeks to do.

Where science fiction provides the setting, situation, and the technology, the Gothic exists within this symbiotic relationship as a mode specifically used to accentuate the dark nature of the technology and experimentation that is being explored and the boundaries that are being crossed while also weaving thematic patterns specific to Gothic studies (Tibbetts, 2011). Botting (1996) reinforces this by stating that "science fiction, connected with the Gothic since *Frankenstein* (1818)*, presents new objects of terror and horror" (p. 102). This assertion suggests that the combination of the Gothic and science fiction allows both mode and genre to expand into new territories such as postmodernism discourses of humanism and the threat on human individuality in the contemporary world. This is not to suggest that individually they have not been effective in the realm of postmodernism but that the combination of the two has been imperative to their evolution into a post-modern phenomenon. As suggested earlier, the nineteenth century Gothic was displaced in more solitary spaces that were easily contrast to reality. Science fiction began as not only an expression of scientific and technological potential but a forewarning in the misuse of said knowledge. This gives the Gothic science fiction a platform within the realms of realism and empiricism to emerge in a more sinister element (McArthur, 2015). Botting suggests that the creation of Gothic science fiction has given the contemporary Western world a platform to question: "narratives of authority and legitimacy of social forms. What can be called postmodern Gothic is akin… to the artificialities and ambivalences that surrounded eighteenth century Gothic writing and were produced in relation to the conflicts of emerging modernity" (p. 102). This Gothic postmodernism, as Maria Beville (2009) suggests, "denotes a generic mutation within literature… that functions to fulfil the expression of the darkness of

postmodernity, while postmodernist aspects operate to establish ontological and epistemological standpoints that query accepted ethical and moral 'realities', which have long been the focus of Gothic subversion" (p. 16). Post-modern examples often focus on contemporary conflicts rather than merely more common supernatural tropes. This is because of the applicable the nature of the technology is to the contemporary Western cultural narrative. Beville reinforces this point by suggesting that not only is the Gothic immersing itself into post-modernism but that the supernatural remains prominent within the context of contemporary post-modern culture. This suggests that a balance is evident between the Gothic and contemporary culture. The fundamental tenets of Gothicism, as we understand it from a nineteenth century perspective, often are lost to said contemporary culture (Beville, 2009). Gothic postmodernism presents a self-conscious evolution from previous iterations of the mode. Beville suggests that Gothic postmodernism may be defined as a separate genre from that of the romantic Gothic, Victorian Gothic, and modernist Gothic. Though this perspective does not consider the intrinsic patterns that develop and evolve through various Gothic archetypes. Spooner (2006) suggests that, rather than the Gothic existing as separate genres, revival theory is more plausible. The theory dictates that there is no original Gothic genre but iterations of previous versions of the archetypes and themes. This once again does not emphasise where said archetype originates. In this case, intertextual revival seems to be the more plausible form of resurgence in collaboration with revival theory. Graham Allen (2011) defines intertextual reading as "something that exists between a text and all the other texts to which it refers and relates, moving out from the independent text into a network of textual relations" (p. 1). The Victorian Gothic is not necessarily the original source for many archetypes that are conceived within its literature. They are the foundation for intertextual re-iteration and resurgence that gives archetypes such as the 'mad scientist' and thematic threads like the Frankenstein narrative a platform to continue to remain relevant within post-modern contemporary culture. What is clear is that previous scholarship typically reads the resurgence of Frankensteinian narrative as a literal phenomenon rather than an echo or shadow of the thematic elements.

Gothic post-modernism will be an important cornerstone to the further analysis within my thesis as it heralds the mutation of the Gothic mode from a more traditional supernatural and religious foundation to one that encapsulates scientific theory and rationalism. The key tenets of this philosophy as presented by Beville (2009) are:

The blurring of the borders that exist between the real and the fictional, which results in narrative self-consciousness and an interplay between the supernatural and the metafictional; a concern with the sublime effects of terror and the unpresentable aspects of reality and subjectivity; specific Gothic thematic devices of haunting, the doppelganger, and a dualistic philosophy of good and evil; an atmosphere of mystery and suspense and a counter narrative function" (p. 15).

Hence the Gothic maintains its foothold in the supernatural while forming the framework of this study within its relationship with science fiction. It is important to reiterate the elusive nature of the Gothic here as it can exist in multiple forms at a single instance which is prevalent within these franchises. These tenets are crucial to understanding the ascendance of the Gothic into the empirical and rationale contemporary post-modern world. I will be using the lens of Gothic science fiction to analyse the intricacies of cultural anxiety in relation to technological and scientific development within these ongoing franchises which will be a unique approach.

3.3 The Culture of Franchisation of Film and the Western-American Psyche

This thesis contends with ongoing cinematic franchises that I have identified are thematically entwined with the resurgence of Frankensteinian echoes. They have been filtered through their implicit use of amoral and ethically questionable science and technology as a core construct of the narrative. The notion of 'franchisation' and various perspectives of the effect of prequelisation, sequelisation, remake, and reboot within film and what it conveys on a socio-cultural level are important to discuss. As I have explored above, *Frankenstein* (1818) as a literal text has been resurrected into film multiple times. What has not been thoroughly discussed in literature is how the thematic echo of *Frankenstein* (1818) has not only influenced the subtext of different films, but how these narratives have developed through additional films in the form of a franchise.

An important perspective to begin with is Kristin Thompson's (2007) who provides a generic but working definition of what 'franchise' means regarding how it operates within the corporate medium of the cinema industry. Thompson states that "people use the term franchise rather loosely in relation to films... certain films the mass audience falls thoroughly love with yield follow ups. The follow ups… create a franchise, and the franchise creates a

brand… that spawns additional revenue streams” (p. 4-5). This an important first point to address as Hollywood is a capitalist conglomerate that does bring in sizable revenue on the basis of franchise. It is this revenue that has made the notion of franchise an attractive one to various production studios. A key reason why the hunt for the next successful franchise (Thompson, 2007). It is on the basis of financial income that Thompson introduces the notion of the cinematic franchise. However, she does state that “the blockbuster franchises of modern Hollywood did not begin until the late 1970s…” (p, 4) and that prior to the 1970’s, “Disney was the only Hollywood studio that ran on the franchise principle – not only creating tie-ins but also re-releasing classic animated features regularly” (p. 4). While this does not give us any insight into how the Frankensteinian narrative transmutes into contemporary film, it does provide insight into why this method of cinematic storytelling has become so prevalent in the twenty-first century. Beyond the financial pressure of Hollywood on the franchise, Thompson does offer a brief look at the psyche and the nature of reproduction. She argues that,

> Commentators decrying the decline of Hollywood into crass commercialism turn
> up their noses at the prevalence of sequels, series, remakes, and other kinds of
> recycling that form the bases for franchises. Yet such borrowings and repetitions
> have been common in the history of all art forms… (as an allegory) one composer
> writes a set of variations on a theme by another. The impulse to reuse or develop
> successful material is far from new (p. 6).

The allegory around the composer is a key element of this quote that I want to draw attention to. This moves beyond the notions of financial and corporate interest. Ongoing franchises speak to the depth of the unconscious narrative which continues to filter through. Thompson points this out as it has occurred throughout history. This links into Gerard Genette’s (1982) seminal work on the ‘architext’ where he refers to “textual transcendence - namely, everything that brings into relation (manifest or hidden) with other texts” (p. 81). This is important to this thesis on three levels. The first is the developing narratives of the three franchises based on their individual lineal levels, the second is the way the thematic narrative of *Frankenstein* (1818) is present as the transcendent and hidden echo within all three texts, and the third is how this element blends them all together to enable a hypertextual analysis of the texts.

Thompson (2007) is still predominantly focused on the financial structure of the franchise, so does not offer further insight into this phenomenon of the franchise. As Daniel Herbert (2019) states then majority of scholarship surrounding franchising "largely situates franchising as the business of the mainstream media industry" (p. 53), a factor I have kept in mind while constructing this portion of the literature review. Akin to Thompson (2007), Carolyn Jess-Cooke, and Constantine Verevis (2010) are also concerned with the financial gain attributed to franchises, but they do pose the question, "what are the forces governing this resurgence of sequelisation?" (p. 3). Unlike Thompson (2007), Jess-Cook and Verevis (2010) do consider the nature of sequelisation from a more philosophical position around the notion of the sequel as a continuation of a continuation. They suggest that "…we should really consider whether it really existed in the place… terms such as originality and intertextuality can be unpacked and repositioned in the new context within which the contemporary film is produced" (p. 4). It is this challenge of originality which links to Thompson's (2007) allegory surrounding the impulse to reuse and develop but takes the notion further to suggest that nothing is original. This aligns with Booker's (2010) thesis on the fact all fiction has been derived by seven basic subplots and continue to be developed by various thematic mythos. However, Jess-Cook and Verevis (2010) suggest that this is not just a highly reflective process that is linked to a common thread as suggested by Booker (2010) but one that is linked into a complex matrix, "between the narrative dynamics that make fictional texts particularly hospitable to sequels and the cultural and social shifts that produce these texts" (p. 6). It is this notion of the blended force of intertextuality and external pressures of cultural and social shifts that governs the resurgence of sequelisation. It is on this basis that Genette's (1982) idea of this manifest or hidden textual transcendence becomes prominent. It is taken further through this idea of external influence which constructs a foundation and supports the notion of seeing the influence of science and technology combined with a transcendent thematic narrative that is not necessarily apparent in the overt structure of the films narrative.

Herbert (2019) suggests that horror science fiction sits on the fringe of mainstream media as it has franchised but not in the blockbuster sense as other productions such as the Marvel Cinematic Universe. This is how the potency of the Frankensteinian narrative works throughout the notion of the franchise. As William Proctor and Mark McKenna (2022) state, "in many ways, the study of horror cinema has historically been underscored by cultural distinctions between good and bad objects… academic work on horror franchise cinema is

due to the reproduction of moral dualisms" (p. 1). This summation of horror as a franchise is critical to this discussion surrounding the function of franchise as a method of the amoral and unethical as a narrative tool which then presents an object of terror. This is supported by Fredric Jameson (2011) who states that regarding film, "both modernism and mass culture entertain relations of repression with the fundamental social anxieties and concerns… where modernism tends to handle this material by producing compensatory structures… mass culture represses them by the narrative construction of imaginary resolutions…" (p. 25). What Jameson does not discuss is when those anxieties are used as the narrative tool used to entice audiences to feel uncomfortable rather than being repressed. This is what I suggest is the function of the franchises that I will be utilising throughout this thesis. The Frankensteinian narrative's thematic transmission as a mythos is not necessarily the intention of the director but it is present as a truth that resounds within human culture surrounding technological anxieties. The use of franchises to track the thematic echoes of the Frankensteinian narrative over two centuries is a unique approach of this thesis. In keeping with Jameson's analysis, cultural anxieties that pertain to the mythos shift and change with the scientific and technological overtures of the time. They are handled through the medium of cinematic storytelling that provides a palatable way of confronting them. I argue that the notion of the franchise provides a way of tracking the myth through a sequence of developing narratives where each instalment is unique to a different cultural anxiety often embodied in a subject. This subject is the embodiment of the franchise as the recognisable trope but also of the hidden transcendent archetype that sits at the centre of the narrative, the monster.

3.4 The Monstrous and its Cultural Transmission

The monstrous is a significant element to this thesis as it helps to analyse the resurgence of the Frankensteinian narrative. Monster is a word that has been derived from the Latin word *monstrum* which means 'to warn'. It is due to this, that Stephen Asma (2011) states that 'to be a monster is to be an omen' (p. 13). Though monsters have played a literal role in culture and literature, Asma also states that the terms 'monster' and 'monstrous' are key cultural categories which span the literal, the psychoanalytical, the religious, the literary, and the political. Asma's statement is a key factor to my research and recognises the vast role that the monster plays as a symbol of existential fear within culture and society. Kevin Boon (2007) elaborates on different origins of the word, "in old (mostre) and middle French (monstre) and in Anglo-Norman (*moustre)* derivations articulate disfiguration of the human

form" (p. 33). Boon stipulates that "the etymological roots of the monstrous imply a boundary between human and non-human (originally animal) highlighting the realm between being and non-being" (p. 33). Asma (2011) disagrees with Boon's (2007) point. Asma (2011) argues instead that it is a versatile symbol to be associated with several different elements such as the psychoanalytical or the political. The literal monster still plays a key role within literature, folklore, and mythology, constructing much of the foundation of early rationale (Huet, 1993). An example of this is the Classical Greeks who used their gods and monsters to explain natural phenomenon (Fry, 2017). As understandings evolved, the supernatural became natural and the monstrous would become rational.

The literal monster also plays a significant role within contemporary cultural climate. Asma (2011) stipulates that many mainstream evangelical institutions of the Christian faith still believe in the physical demon or devil rather than a metaphor for evil. Asma also discusses the role of the monster in psychoanalytical terms. He argues that the term monster can refer to a human being that has divorced themselves from their humanity. This is a common discourse in contemporary and modern history when discussing figures who are considered evil and void of humanity. This is not a new factor but rather an Aristotelian belief that suggests the moral virtue of humanity is a fragile shroud that can be corrupted by different key influential factors in life (Nussbaum, 2001). Though Asma's (2011) research is more concerned with the literal monster, he readily admits that term monster is employed metaphorically in the contemporary world. The label of the monstrous, or the monster, is used as a divergent entity in contrast to the ideals and perfections that are rationalised within cultural normativity. Asma argues that the word monster without motif or theme association, on an etymological level, serves to demonstrate or forewarn as stated previously. This is further stipulated by psychoanalytic theory or, the theory of personality organisation. This theory suggests that this inane fear of monsters and the supernatural are the result of the displaced embodiment of tendencies that are repressed. From a psychoanalytical point of view, as expressed by Elmer Hankiss (2001), Paul Tillich (1936) and Soren Kierkegaard (1944), humans are not a universally 'hyperanxious' animal. Hankiss (2001) specifies that though fear is a key factor in the development of humanity we cannot "account for the relative absence of fear in our everyday lives compared to the permeant alarm of most animals" (p. 7) which makes this a paradox. Tillich (1936) and Kierkegaard (1944) refer to this phenomenon as the 'fear of nothingness' or a 'fear of being' which has been prevalent in human psychology. Fear of being is an interesting term as it ties into the process of abjection

and self othering and re-enforces the belief that often, what we fear is rooted deep within our primal consciousness and the aspects of our character which we seek to remove from our ideal self (Kristeva, 1980). As exemplified by H.P Lovecraft (1973), "the oldest and strongest emotion of humankind is fear. The oldest and strongest type of fear is fear of the unknown" (p. 4).

The monster is a Western cultural phenomenon that can be traced through each era. Jeffery Cohen (1996) stipulates that the monstrous phenomenon is a "method of reading cultures" (p. 3) and further states that we have "given up on unified theory and that... history is composed of a multitude of fragments rather than smooth epistemological wholes" (p. 3). These cultures can be studied through the monsters they bear. Through this theory Cohen explores how the monster functions in different anthropological roles. The first, he states is that the monster's body is a cultural body, then he suggests that the monster appears or is born of a "certain cultural moment of a time, feeling, and a place" (p. 4). It's a body made up of the fear and anxiety that this cultural moment inspires as it signifies an entity other than itself. Cohen's writings on the monstrous do not directly tie to the Gothic but his methodology surrounding cultural resurgence is very useful in determining the patterns left by the monstrous. He further states that the monster will inhabit the upheaval that created it into the moment it is received and be born again. This leads on to Cohen's second point which states that "the monster always escapes" (p. 4). The monster is immaterial, changing form depending on the cultural atmosphere and vanishes to reappear again at a time of change. Cohen continues his argument with the monster returning in a different form to be read against "contemporary social movements" (p. 5). Cohen specifically discusses the monster's role against the established order of things. Not only does the monster escape but it refuses easy categorisation. This ties in nicely to the debate that Crawford (2015) has engaged in previously surrounding new media. Crawford argues that as moral panic dissipates, the archetype loses its ability to strike fear. Cohen (1996) argues that the monster "appears within a time of crisis as a kind of third term that problematises the clash of extremes" (p. 6). The monster is suspended between a binary and is dangerous as it threatens to smash any presumptive distinctions. Where Crawford (2015) believes the monster is the result of change, Cohen (1996) believes instead that it appears due to change and that it doesn't die. The monster is a wide expanse that always challenges traditional methods and thought making it a contested phenomenon rather than a normal aspect of change. This brings Cohen (1996) to his fourth point which analyses the monstrous as an incorporation of the

other or "those that are rhetorically placed as distant and distinct but originate within" (p. 7). He stipulates that the monstrous body is made up of the cultural, political, racial, economic, and sexual difference (p. 7).

When discussing Otherness, we are evaluating the state of ostracism from what is deemed to be acceptable and palpable. Anything that falls outside the rationale or defined normality by the established order is excluded and demonised (Cohen, 1996, p. 234). Binary opposition is a key feature of this act as it defines the concept of 'human uniqueness' and the fear of having this challenged. Otherness is a typical reaction to difference, change and elements within the social and natural world. If it is unrecognisable, it is deemed unnatural or anti-social. This is an important comparison to make regarding the monstrous and its role within the societal normality and the established divisions that utilise Otherness. Rebekah Fox (2006) states that, "cartesian notions of the binary divisions between 'nature' and 'culture', 'humans' and 'animals', and 'wildness' and 'civilization" have been broken down in recent developments in social theory" (p. 525). These divisions by extension challenge the concept of human uniqueness. This break down of the binary divisions and the challenge against human uniqueness is where binary opposition becomes a key factor for not only fear of the monstrous, but the use of the term 'monster' to discriminate against that which is unacceptable to the established normality. Teemu Silmu (2014) agrees the monstrous is rooted in the self but as the monstrous body is "a medium for representing difference" (p. 10), that the monster is an outsider and is cast as the Other. The monster originates within the self, acting as the bonds between the binary of the self and the Other. Silmu makes the interjection that the monster's otherness is not a constant fact that, "it is culturally constructed perspective on the way the things should be expressed through negotiation" (p. 18). Silmu's argument is one which is solely focuses on the relationship between the self, the monstrous and the other while looking at the intricate details that tie the three key factors together. The concepts of the self, the monstrous, and the other are not mutually exclusive. They are personal perceptions often held within a tribal mentality and are not clearly defined.

The concept of the Other is the subconscious act of alienating and assigning entities to psychoanalytical prejudicial constructs. This is done to separate the constructed social identity from the entity considered to be abnormal. This is critical to my thesis because it explores how different entities become considered as monstrous. The monstrous often relates to the divorce from the identity of the self by the relative social normality. This is a subjective

outcome due to the fear caused an inability to understand or accept the inexplicable. According to Dani Cavallaro (2002), the monstrous, when discussing the Gothic, was the result of neo-classical ideas of unity and congruence. Anything failing to meet these conditions would be branded as impure, immoral, ugly, grotesque, and monstrous (p. 171). The concept of doubleness is also a key factor or the matching of two unlikely entities within a single entity; a dark and a light. Cohen (1996) is a proponent of this concept. He believes that the concept of the monster cannot exist within classificatory structuration, that it is an "uncertain cultural body in which is condensed an intriguing simultaneity or doubleness... it introjects the disturbing, repressed, but formative traumas of 'pre...' into the sensory moment of the 'post...' binding one... to the other" (p. 9). Cohen is arguing that the monster lives outside the binary of the present and the past; existing in both as a phantasm in the present and a memory in the past (p. 9). Jacques Derrida's (2012) theory of hauntology also gives an applicable explanation to this theory. It effectively states that you can exist without physically being; like the monster in Cohen's (1996) argument. This is also alike to Asma's (2011) key evaluation of attraction and repulsion, and how the monstrous can influence both while maintaining its position outside the constructed and accepted self. Cavallaro's (2002) argument is a narrow one which attempts to form a clear and easily identifiable difference between the self and the other when discussing the monstrous and the Gothic, separating the accepted self and the grotesque. Cohen's (1996) point is more accurate and identifiable within a cultural perspective, stipulating that, "the monster lives on the boundaries and always escapes to reappear in another era" (p. 21). The monstrous exists outside these parameters of the self and the Other, the grotesque and the beautiful, the light and the dark.

The process of Othering and displacement is tied to the theory of abjection as it explains the process of displacement. Julia Kristeva (1941) stipulates that fear of monsters comes from a state of 'abjection' or the state between the 'object' and the 'subject'. This is the middle ground between the concept of self and the concept of the Other. Through the process of abjection, the subject separates one's sense of self – be it physical, biological, social, or cultural, from that which one considers intolerable and infringes upon oneself. Monsters in this context are not seen as a physical phenomenon, but a figment created by aspects of the self that humanity finds repulsive. Though this theory was an outdated form of Freudian psychology that has stemmed from psychoanalysis, it is still relevant, especially when discussing the reasons for the echoes and further resurgence of the Gothic tropes. This is because it shows how often the monstrous have been derived from a form of Othered self

that we have removed from our identity. This is not a new phenomenon either, as stated several times before, many tropes, like the vampire, find their roots stretch back into the ancient folklore and myth of humanity (Twitchell, 1981). Charles Robert Aldrich (2013) stipulates that we can trace supernatural fear back to every culture and community where "...legions of ghosts, half men, demons, and all manner of dark powers, can hardly be over emphasised" (p. 98) in primitive society. It is not just a primitive phenomenon. Elemer Hankiss (2001) argues that they continue to "invade our lives every night in the shape of monsters, evil spirits, serial killers, and cataclysms which dominate our television screens" (p. 7). This is the effect of attraction and repulsion what Asma (2011) defines as the "simultaneous lure and repulsion of the abnormal or extraordinary being" (p. 6). Asma uses this as an example when explaining the identification and exclusion of those considered to be abnormal or disfigured. The Other is a spectacle. As clearly identified by P. T. Barnum (1855) and his circus. In the case of the contemporary entertainment, as identified by Hankiss (2001), that television, cinema, social media, and the internet are the new arenas of the carnival and the other where people can come and watch a spectacle of revulsion without engaging personally with it. Popular media, cinema, television, and the internet are where the monstrous now typically resurges as has been explored above and is now the new frontier of the post-modern for the resurgence of popular Gothic archetypes (Landis, 2011). In this thesis the monster is a crucial catalyst for the Frankensteinian thematic narrative and how it appears in different contexts. It will be a significant focal point of this analysis through the lens of Gothic science fiction and provide a thematic thread for intertextual analysis between the franchises as a hypertextual format. The hypertextual format allows the monster to filter through different narratives and subsequently binding them in the transcendent text that exists unconsciously within the film and is provoked by the psyche. This approach is solely unique to this thesis and is the rudimentary stages of a model to sufficiently track and analysis the thematic echoes of *Frankenstein* (1818).

3.5 Hypertexts and the Frankensteinian Narrative

The concept of the hypertext is crucial to the cross examining of separate franchises together as franchises are often limited by the boundaries of their separate universes. Hypertext is a term commonly used in reference to software systems that allows vast and comprehensive cross-referencing between associated sections of multimedia texts. The reason the hypertext is a crucial method for this thesis is because of the multifaceted way that the

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Frankensteinian thematic narrative has manifested and cultivated within different modes of media. Though the thematic threads are present between the texts, common nuances are in many cases too dissimilar to draw a direct comparison thematically. Different texts will have more direct links to the myth than others. Thematic comparisons could still be drawn but would be limited by the different such as: genre, narrative, themes, object, subject, timeline, and universe. (Heise-von der Lippe, 2015). To use an intertextual lens to analyse relationships between films that are related to the same franchise or are of the same genre is useful. Though intertextuality can be limited when dealing the thematic relationship between three non-related franchises of different genres as they will often run into canonical and genre specific blocks when attempting to thematically relate them. A hypertextual reading would instead allow exploration into the influence of *Frankenstein* (1818) more fluidly rather than being limited by linear timelines and franchised universes.

Heise-von der Lippe (2015) suggests that due to the non-sequential nature of the hypertext narrative, the reader is provided "with choices and offer[s] alternative narrative strands [with] multiple entry and branching points [that] create a maze-like structure, and an impression of fragmentariness, which lends itself to Gothic narratives of monstrous creation" (p. 118). Though Heise-von der Lippe's analysis is mainly focused on literary hypertextual adaptations of *Frankenstein* (1818)*,* her assertion is imperative to the study of the thematic elements of the Frankensteinian narrative. Not unlike Bishop's (2010) proposal of a Frankenstein complex. The three franchises supply a myriad of instalments where some have been cast aside as later instalments have overridden their lineal and canonical contribution the overarching narrative of the franchise's universe. Collectively, under the analysis of the hypertextual model, the Frankensteinian narrative would become the architext, focusing specifically on themes specific to the narrative that connect the thematic threads throughout the three franchises rather than merely the narrative of the franchise itself. *Frankenstein* (1818) as an original hypertext has inspired countless textual adaptations and re-imaginings on a variety of multimedia platforms from books, films, games, music, and television shows. It has also been the Gothic text that has been more readily applied to the thematic textual experiment of hypertext. As Andrew Burkett (2021) points out, "over the last two decades, romanticism scholarship addressing interactive hypertext environments has relied heavily on Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818) in almost an uncanny manner" (p. 579).

To apply the hypertextual platform, as Heise-von der Lippe (2015) puts it, to this study of *Frankenstein's* (1818) legacy the foundation of the method and its parameters need to be explored. There are two base foundation cornerstones as far as Heise-von der Lippe's initial application of the theory to *Frankenstein's* (1818) adaptation. The first is material substrate signification which suggests that the textual structure is as important to the narrative as the theme. This is usually a scientific term but has since been utilised to identify adaptation of certain texts. When studying the resurgence of nineteenth century prototypical Gothic archetypes and texts it is an important platform as the Gothic is especially visceral and subject to change throughout different modes of media. More readily lending itself to such textual experimentation to adapt to remain relevant. Instead of each text appearing as a piece of literature, they will now appear and take shape in a variety of different ways only to disappear just as quickly (Keep, 2006). Gothic narratives and identifying traits fluctuate and vary through different genres and narratives which often makes it hard to pinpoint and define as a mode due to this break from traditional narratives. The second is phrenological spatial orientation which acts to define the space of the hypertext itself and how it behaves. In the case of the hypertext these different traits could be best described as lexias, or windows of information that interconnect and branch, appearing as new connections are made. These connections are non-sequential and a spread out sporadically, taking position as another connection is formed. Ted Nelson (1980) first described this notion of the hypertextual connections as an "existing phenomenon of branching and responding to text" (p. 5). N. Katherine Hayles (1999) expands on this definition by clarifying the different between printed texts with a complex but nevertheless linear structure and printed or digital texts which require the reader to abandon linearity and jump between pages or text windows (lexias):

> However complex a narrative sequence is in a conventional print novel, with convoluted timelines, different trajectories for different characters and so forth the reader still follows a set sequence of pages in a given order… By contrast, most literary hypertexts are multi-cursal. It is not only the narrative sequence as it is related within the represented world that has branching points, but the actual order of the reading lexias (p. 22).

Hayles' model of spatial orientation indicates a new dimension to textuality which breaks from common conventions on linear spacing and a focus on the textuality of the

narrative. Hayles is concerned with the framing of literal translation of the text and how it adapts, though the model can still be adapted for the purpose of thematic resurgence. The hypertextual model arranges the lexias in the space which allows the reader to link other texts and narratives together creating further lexias'. Some lexias may have several connections yet others may function autonomously or act as a dead end in the chain between the texts. As hypertextual phenomenon departs from the original text and its author to become its own entity, the Frankensteinian narrative in this sense is a virtual lexicon that contains many different multimedia lexias' that interconnect through thematic threads. In the case of this thesis, I will be selecting three or four key themes that are derived from the original text. I will then apply these themes to a hypertextual framework that is geared towards tracking the thematic echoes of *Frankenstein* (1818) while also providing a clear and rational scholarly evaluation of the mythos of the text. These themes will consistently appear in new media substrates, both unconsciously and consciously within the cinematic narrative. It is an organic structure that flows on the premise of relative thematic similarity connecting the texts into an evolving lexicon of lexias windows that pop up as the narratives evolve. Each window may spawn multiple thematic connections under the Frankensteinian narrative firing like neurons in a brain.

3.6 SUMMARY

In this chapter I have established the fields of scholarship that my thesis resides in and the gaps that my thesis seeks to fill. The first gap is the acknowledgement of shadows and echoes of Frankenstein that are more prominent in twenty-first century popular culture than the original text itself. These are thematic echoes which find their origins in the original text but have since become an unconscious postmodern mythos. These themes apply to science fiction texts that specifically have overarching themes of science running amok, playing God, and creation through science and technology. These texts also must offer a questionable use of this technology which threatens human anthropocentricity. They also must tie to contemporary anxieties of said technological development. The other gap I will seek to fill is the formalisation of a method to track the transmission of these themes through a hypertextual model and memetics. To construct this model, I will return to the original text to corroborate the themes that are appearing in contemporary texts, apply them to an intertextual

format that allows for their study and observation through the franchises, with reference to the technological and scientific theories at play in the texts and reference to the other texts. What will make this thesis a unique contribution to the field is my focus on franchisation as a method of tracking the resurgence of these echoes specifically through the lens of the twenty-first century. This has not been done before nor have three distinct franchises been conversely analysed within a hypertextual medium. This approach and method will establish that these themes are communicating on a fundamental level within the Western psyche and are not limited to narrative or socio-historical structures that have previously defined the echoes. In the next chapter I will elaborate further on this method and the construction of the Frankenstein Myth model. I will also explore the rationality of this study and present my data collection of my chosen cinematic texts.

4: Methodological Practices of Textual and Thematic Analysis Within a Meta-Critical Interdisciplinary Framework

4.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the textual and thematic analytical method, and the meta-critical interdisciplinary framework that this thesis utilises. Because this thesis is looking at films through the lens of Gothic science fiction, includes the analysis of scientific processes, and utilises the historical and psychological disciplines, I will be using a meta-critical interdisciplinary framework which will allow these factors to co-exist within the same body of work. I will discuss the methods I have identified above and elaborate on my method of choosing the filmic franchises that this thesis will analyse. I will also discuss the thematic analysis of these texts through this meta-critical interdisciplinary framework. This includes how the techniques of intertextual analysis, thematic analysis, and textual analysis function within my thesis and how they tie into my rationale that I have built around the brief and only interaction with *Frankenstein* (1818). The three franchises that I have chosen to analyse within this thesis are: *The Terminator* (1984-Present), *Jurassic Park* (1993-Present), and *Alien* (1974-Present). I have chosen these franchises because they are ongoing, fit within the parameters of science fiction, present a level of engagement with the Gothic mode, and display a high-level engagement with the thematic Frankensteinian narrative. They are also unparalleled popular culture icons from the late twentieth century that have left a significant enough impact to actively produce sequels in the twenty-first century. I will be focusing on the contemporary instalments with occasional reference to the original texts to construct an analysis of how there an inter-sequel evolution of the franchise narrative has been based on the socio-cultural influences in play. I will also be briefly touching upon the origins of my themes at a textual level within *Frankenstein* (1818). It is important to note that this will be the only time Shelley's text is critically considered in this thesis.

4.2 Rationale of Study

As I stated in my introduction, there are several key elements that rationalise the viability of this thesis as a unique and new set of ideas with a firm base of prior scholarship. I have briefly mentioned the work of Tsitas (2014) as a contributing factor to this thesis. What

also highlighted this text was its focus on boundary transgressions in science which became a cornerstone for this thesis and one of the key Frankensteinian themes this thesis will focus on. Tsitas' use of the film *Splice* (2010) and *Frankenstein* (1818) in the same body of the work creates the space for intertextual reasoning between two texts that, based on the surface deep plot, are unrelated. Due to the synonymity of *Frankenstein* (1818) as a common colloquialism for science gone wrong, there is an intertextual connection which is the basis for Tsitas' (2014) work. This rudimentary approach to *Frankenstein* (1818) as referential and contemporarily relevant is critical to the base rationale behind this thesis. It exemplifies how common themes can not only be found between the two unrelated texts, but also create a lineal thematic thread that connects the two together. Under the umbrella of intertextuality and my interest in the franchisation of science fiction film it is clear there is a resounding gap in the scholarship surrounding the mythological status of *Frankenstein* (1818). As I have stated this is not a new phenomenon with plenty of scholarship acting as a firm foundation, but the gap is revealed through the constant focus on the original text as the hinge for adaptation which does not veer far from the narrative and the lack of an appropriate model to drive a measured approach to tracking the myth of *Frankenstein* (1818) as a resurgence of echoes. Other scholarship has given the impression that this mythological status of *Frankenstein* (1818) has been established through a rational and scholarly method. However, this is not the case. What this thesis seeks to do is fill this gap and need for a model to define this mythological status and identify its thematic threads in on going franchises. I will do this by revisiting the original text and identify the key themes that have made the Frankensteinian thematic narrative so potent and transferable. I will then apply them to the hypertextual model of lexical transmission and communication that departs from the text and relies on the Frankensteinian themes that make up the foundation of the myth and its resurgence. I will then apply them to my texts and gather data based on these themes to test their viability for this study.

A couple of early questions have presented themselves as to the development of this model: The first is there other themes that are common denominators across science fiction texts that adhere to this Frankensteinian thematic link? The second is what makes *Frankenstein* so potent to become an echo within a cinematic medium? To contend with the first question, I have returned to the original text and summarised clear themes that are prevalent not only in the text but within the science fiction medium: creation, challenge to the natural order, boundary transgressions in science, monstrous bodies, and giving life to dead

matter (Harkup, 2018). I want to clarify again that this is the first and last time I will be analysing the text *Frankenstein* (1818) as this thesis is not about the text but the influence that the resurging thematic echoes present in the text have had on contemporary popular culture. Creation is at the heart of *Frankenstein* (1818) and is the crucial overarching theme for analysing the franchises. Victor Frankenstein embarks on a journey of transgressive exploration into the boundaries of scientific knowledge to pervert the course and prerogative to create life only to create a monster (Shelley, 1818). Frankenstein frequently observes that the moment and method of creation is at the centre of nature's mystery. As Frankenstein states "so much has been done… more, far more, will I achieve treading in the steps already marked, I will pioneer a new way, explore unknown powers, and unfold to the world the deepest mysteries of creation" (Shelley, 1818, p. 41). A key element to note in Frankenstein's hubris as expressed in chapters two and three as he explains the inspirations and thoughts that lead him to discover and harness the power of creation, is the relationship between science and nature. Within the text, Shelley often draws parallels between the penetrating nature of science and discovery and the mysterious disposition of nature itself.

As a child, Frankenstein had a desire to learn the secrets of both Heaven and Earth to discover the deepest mysteries of nature especially the balance between life and death. Initially Frankenstein is taken with ancient philosophers which promise to harness the power of nature to find the answer to life. Whether through the elixir of life or the philosophers stone both said not only to grant life but expel death. Rather than acknowledging that death is a natural part of an organism's life cycle, Frankenstein indicates that he believes it is a disease that can be cured like any other treatable ailment, you just need the treatment. It is not until he is fifteen years of age that he understands the raw power of nature and the use of scientific empiricism to determine and harness that power. During a storm, Frankenstein witnesses the power of nature when an oak tree was destroyed by a lightning strike (Shelley, 1818). A man who was with him became excited and explains a theory he had been working on surrounding the subject of galvanism. This event encourages Frankenstein to abandon his pursuit of alchemy-based answers to the question of life and death and instead explore the subjects of natural philosophy and science (Shelley, 1818). The dichotomy of life and death is thus challenged by Frankenstein's interest in penetrating nature with the explorative power of science to discover the power of creation. The theme of creation has transcended. *Frankenstein* (1818) continues to challenge this dichotomy in other texts which is what makes this notion of creation a challenge to the natural order and the act of science

transgressing ethical boundaries. The result of this creation is the monster, the aberration introduced to the natural world that symbolises the embodiment of the other while posing a threat to humanity's notion of the desired self and by extension, extinction (Evans. 2009). The monster is also modernity personified. A creature of electricity, the steam engine, and wrought iron. This is critical as the monster in the case of Frankensteinian narrative is the embodiment of human creative potential within the Victorian period. In a sense the monster is made in humanity's cultural image. But who is the monster? One common mistake made is believing the name 'Frankenstein' refers to the creature. The irony of this will not be lost upon those who study *Frankenstein* (1818)*,* as it can be argued that Frankenstein is the monster of the story. As Andy Mousley (2016) states, "the world of *Frankenstein* is a topsy-turvy one in which the human seems more monstrous than the monster and the monster outstrips the human in its humanity" (p. 384). This is a critical notion moving forward into my analysis as it is clear that many of the humans within these franchises are as monstrous as their creations and the creation embodies the cultural context of its time as a metaphor for dystopic potential.

It is important to note how the echoes of *Frankenstein* (1818) operate in much the same way the text did within its time period as a critical lens that challenged rapid technological and scientific development. *Frankenstein* (1818) creates a parallel to the idea of a creation story as indicated by its alternative or secondary title, *The Modern Prometheus* (1818). 'Modern' meaning in this context a contemporary revision of the traditional creation tropes of the time. Key factors within the creation stories are often more grotesque than sublime and circle around three themes: the body, the natural order, and method of creation. *Frankenstein* (1818) as a narrative constructed around the notion of creation also adheres to these three key themes. Except they are perverted through the human proclivity to play God. The body becomes monstrous, the natural order is challenged, and the method of creation transgresses the established moral and ethical scientific boundaries. *Frankenstein* (1818) offers a critique on scientific progression and poses the hypothetical question on whether humanity is able to harness the last creative prerogative of God, the ability to create life and in doing so, kill God. This grotesque combination of creation narratives and scientific theories created the monster of the Enlightenment that re-introduced superstition and the supernatural into the progressive and modernising world.

The reason the creation myth is so important to *Frankenstein* (1818) is because, prior to the Enlightenment, supernatural powers creating life was a standard way of thinking in regard to conceptualising the universe. Naturally, a number of philosophers had already been attempting to empirically understand the importance of humanity and our world within the known universe, but this would often happen within the limitation of Christian church orthodoxy and classical philosophy. Science wasn't practiced, nor was it considered a discipline until the late eighteenth century, nor was the term "scientist" or "man of science" coined until 1833 (Harkup, 2018). Prior to this, theories were conceptualised and discussed by philosophers not tested. To experiment would be to knowingly question what was widely accepted as truth and set aside traditional discourse. This is stipulated by Frankenstein's professor who states that,

> The ancient teachers of this science… promised impossibilities and performed nothing. The modern masters promise very little; and they know that metals cannot be transmuted, and that the elixir of life is a chimera. But these philosophers… they penetrate into the recesses of nature and show how she works in her hiding-places. They ascend into the heavens: they have discovered how the blood circulates and the nature of the air we breathe (p. 40).

The Enlightenment and its influence were not just the next step in the advancement of human knowledge which was arrogantly argued to be inevitable (Grayling, 2016, p. 7). It was a significant change in how the world and the universe was conceptualised. Superstitious stories of creation and the mysterious world around humanity began to fade as empirical thought would not only disprove superstition with rationality but cause discomfort and anxiety. As Grayling (2016) states, "change was essentially one of theory, involving a ninety-degree shift in perspective that brought an entirely new picture of the world into view" (p. 7). This change was also swift and led to a cascading effect where the nature of humanity and the physical world was brought into question throughout the nineteenth century. Though it is commonly believed that the Enlightenment period was isolated to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, it was a process that continued to build into nineteenth century thought and philosophy and construct the building blocks for the modern world. This period in history is commonly believed to be a revolution and in many instances this evaluation would be correct with how significant this new development was to knowledge. However, as discussed by A.C Grayling (2016), the belief this revolution was inevitable is to "miss the significance

of what was at stake for many of those who were presented with it, sometimes alarmingly and uncomfortably" (p. 7). This new genesis of knowledge would affect the lives and beliefs of millions as the general structure of society, politics, education, the fundamental place of the church in society, and morality were to undergo significant change. As traditional beliefs and views of the world and humanity were questioned the painful consciousness of self-realisation had begun to unpack, not only the pre-conceived ideas of the nature of humanity but the creation of humanity.

This was a period of Darwinism, where not only was the unique nature of the form of man to be questioned but also the creation of humanity. Percy Shelley (Mary Shelley's husband), who wrote the preface for the first edition of *Frankenstein* (1818), suggests the impact of Darwinism and of the natural sciences on the text were significant. In the first sentence Shelley (1818) states, "the event on which this fiction is founded, has been supposed, by Doctor Darwin, and some of the physiological writers of Germany, as not of impossible occurrence" (p. 1). It has not been considered by Percy that Mary had been "weaving a series of supernatural terrors and had …endeavoured to preserve the truth of the elementary principles of human nature" (p. 1). In the opening pages of *Frankenstein* (1818), Percy, who was a science enthusiast himself, has proposed that the scientific elements (no matter how vague by contemporary standards) that appeared in *Frankenstein* (1818) had been contemplated by minds such as Darwin's and were supposed to be hypothetically possible. This is important because, during the Enlightenment, Darwin proposed a new creation narrative based on his thesis of The Origin of the Species. "Made in the image of God" was no longer a statement to be taken for granted as evolution began to identify physical form as the consequence of that evolutionary theory. The survival of a species was no longer the prerogative of God but of natural selection. Humanity was no longer a unique being that existed apart from the animal kingdom but suggested to be a species of animal that had evolved to be the head of the animal kingdom as the apex predator. Not only was humanity now subject to natural selection but could hypothetically have its superiority challenged by an evolving antithesis. As Darwin states, "…after the very long intervals… the feeble will yield to the more dominant forms…" (Darwin, p. 301). A more dominant species was not only possible but bound to appear. Harkup re-emphasises the impact Darwin's research into the survival of the fittest and spontaneous generation had on the creation of *Frankenstein* (1818). The implication that "one species could evolve to result in the destruction of another" was a similar fear that Frankenstein had when regarding the creation of a female companion for his

creature (p. 20). Frankenstein's fear of the development of an antithesis species relates back to Darwin's thesis surrounding human selection, the parallel of natural selection. Darwin states that, "he (humanity) begins his selection by some half-monstrous form; or at least by some modification prominent enough to catch his eye…" (p. 83). Within the subtext of *Frankenstein* (1818), the supernatural and science came to walk hand in hand. Though the creature was constructed by scientific means, the text emphasises several times that the creature was constructed via natural means; the elixir of life being a chemical element, the use of what Shelley (1818) vaguely refers to as the instruments of life with components taken from natural sources buried in the ground, then to be infused with "the spark of life" (p. 50). Drawing upon the creation narratives that emphasise earth/dust and fire/breath and Darwin's discussion on the development of species via natural selection, Shelley creates the human antithesis with the hands of humanity. A monstrous body that directly contradicts previous limitations of science and the mysteries of creation. A creature to challenge the physical and metaphysical worlds.

The Reanimation of the dead via the "spark of life" is another key aspect of *Frankenstein* (1818) that ties into this parallel between creation narratives and Enlightenment rationale. Electrical experimentation was another key facet to the revolution of the Enlightenment. Electricity could be conducted and harnessed as a new energy source but also theorised as a potential tool for reanimation. There were many ethical questions surrounding this new world of scientific progression that was being explored which created the space for *Frankenstein* (1818) to be written. Preying on the concerns surrounding these practices, Shelley confirmed the fears of many when Frankenstein looked upon his creation and is horrified with the result. With a combination of scientific techniques under development, a man brought life into the world of his own image. In a twisted tale of the Genesis story, Frankenstein harnesses the power of God to create life. However, Harkup (2018) identifies that Shelley remains vague surrounding the explicit details of how Frankenstein succeeds in bringing his creature to life transgressing scientific boundaries and challenging the natural order with a monstrous body (p. 183). In the text, the only pieces of information the reader is given are, "I collected the instruments of life around me, that I may infuse the spark of being into the lifeless thing that lay at my feet" (50). It is commonly believed that the 'spark of life' is the result of an electrical implement or machine potentially inspired by Galvanism which was a popular subject of the nineteenth century which is how Frankenstein transgresses the boundaries of science.

In 1781, Luigi Galvani coined the term 'galvanism', in relation to the practice of reproducing the effect of electricity on the nervous system to stimulate movement of the muscles (Aldini 1803, p. 3). However, his initial tests were conducted on the legs of frogs, which he was successfully able to convulse with the use of electricity (Harris 1856, p. 20). The nephew of Galvani, Giovanni Aldini, took the experiment a step further in 1803, where he proceeded to experiment on a recently deceased criminal using electrical muscular stimulation techniques which caused the body to move, "upon the first application of the process to the face, the jaws of the deceased criminal began to quiver, and the adjoining muscles were horribly contorted, and one eye was actually opened. In the subsequent part of the process the right hand was raised and clenched, and the legs and thighs were set in motion" (Wilkinson 1805, p. 64). In 1818, Doctor Andrew Ure performed a galvanistic experimentation on a recently deceased criminal by the name of Matthew Clydesdale. In Sir William Snow Harris' (1856) account of the procedure, he explains that the electrical current of 50 shocks to the facial nerve caused "every muscle of the face became thrown into a state of fearful action, expressive rage, horror, despair, and eliciting ghastly smiles" (p. 20). Harris' notes state that "it was difficult to determine whether life might not have been restored, supposing the exciting current had been at once applied to the muscles or respiration" (p. 20). In the 1831 published version of *Frankenstein* (1818), Shelley wrote an introduction discussing the night Lord Byron challenged the group of writers to come up with an original ghost story. She stated that uncertainty surrounding medical experimentation with galvanism had been a key aspect that prompted her nightmare, "perhaps a corpse would be re-animated; galvanism had given token of such things; perhaps the component parts of a creature might be manufactured" (Shelley 1831, p. 10). Though Shelley had never explicitly referenced galvanism in her text but rather calling it the "spark of life", evidence would suggest that it had inspired her creation method. From the journals of these medical practitioners and Shelley's later comments in her introduction, this was a real uncertainty of the time (Shelley 1831, p. 10). For Shelley, the uncertainty of the changing society allowed for *Frankenstein* (1818) to been created in the monstrous liminal space between the self and the Other. Suddenly the sublime body created in God's image was a more grotesque natural form.

The sanctity of this physical human form was questioned as Anatomy gradually became a more standardly accepted practice. Nineteenth century England was a period of scientific and medical exploration as the nature of life had been brought into question towards the end

of the eighteenth century (Harkup, 2018, p. 20). Though the Industrial age saw the advent of the steam engine, and experimentation into the conduction of electricity, it also saw a more in-depth exploration into the anatomy of the human body (p. 188). These practices were revolutionary, not just on a scientific level, but they also began to reshape prior fundamental understanding into the nature of the world around the Victorians and the biological nature of humanity. Harkup (2018) states that since the first recorded instance of experimentation with electricity in 1705, the rate at which knowledge and further experimentation began to progress was rapid (p. 185). Joseph Priestley (1766), not forty years after the accurate methodical experiments into the field wrote *The History and Present State of Electricity* which enabled as many people as possible to take part in the experimentation; stressing the ease of performing the experiments and the precise materials needed to do so (Harkup, 2018, p. 203). The field became popularised on a viral level and subsequently became popular dinner conversation and the field continued to grow. Medicine was also a key focus of this progression and to enable further research, church orthodoxy surrounding the desecration of the dead was questioned.

The prime example of this was the Anatomy Act of 1832. The passing of this Act of Parliament would effectively mean that medical practitioners would need to obtain a licence from the Home Secretary to practice surgery and anatomy. It would also allow families of a deceased person to donate the body to further the advancement of medical science (Abernethy, 1832). However, this act was a direct conflict with the church's teachings surrounding the sanctity of the physical body after death as it was common believe that at the time of judgement, the soul would return to the body. If the body was used for dissection or cremation, then the soul would have no body to return to during the Final Judgement. This caused further division between the church and the state but also on the floor in parliament. It was this progression that began to raise the question surrounding boundary transgressions; how far was too far, and did humanity have the right to cross into moral ambiguity to learn more about the human body and how it functioned. The idea of a sublime body protected by the sanctity of God was rejected for a more empirical understanding of human anatomy. This change allowed the monstrous body to be conceptualised as anatomy explored the more grotesque internal mechanics of bodily function. The dichotomy of life and death is challenged by Frankenstein who creates a creature from cadavers. In doing so he challenges the natural order. Shelley expresses this realisation of the monstrous body when the creature is created, "I had selected his features as beautiful. Beautiful – Great God!... the beauty of the

dream vanished, and the breathless horror and disgust filled my heart" (50). Once again, *Frankenstein* (1818) shares a parallel with the Genesis creation narrative. God looks upon his creation and sees that it is good, whereas Frankenstein looks upon his creature and is horrified. As the sanctity of the body as dictated by the church is abandoned by Frankenstein for a more rational explanation the sublime nature of the body is perverted into a monstrous form.

Finally, after the chasm between rationalism and faith is pulled too far, in 1882 Friedrich Nietzsche proclaimed that "God is Dead" as a response to the effect of the Enlightenment on traditional knowledge and to subsequently express that, the said effect "killed" the possibility of belief in God, or any gods having existed. Though this line is often delivered out of context as a justification for belief that the decline of religion due to scientific progression was inevitable. However, referring to the original quote, "even God hath his own hell: it is his love unto men… God is dead; God hath died of his pity for men" (p. 207). Nietzsche's proclamation raised the question "of value in a world emptied of value in which God was dead" (p. 16) and whether the new creation narrative gave the same meaning to life and existence that humanity had prior to the Enlightenment. It is due to this question of meaning that the parallels between the Enlightenment and traditional church orthodoxy were frequently at odds as explored above.

Science and scientific reference texts were becoming as common as the bible in middle and higher-class households as Jane Marcet, Erasmus Darwin, and Priestley were publishing such texts for the general consumption of the public and the education system. These texts provided instruction on empirical experimentation and the ease of conducting such experiments at home (Harkup, 2018, p. 22). As the mysterious world began to be solved the need for God and many other supernatural elements seem to become superfluous. Fred Botting (1996) stipulates this by stating that "the Enlightenment did away with Ghosts and supernatural beings. Reason and Empiricism bestowed a scientific order on the world and condemned spirits and spectres to a bygone barbaric age of superstitious credulity, a primitive, immature stage of culture akin to childhood" (p. 7). With such scientific exploration, Earth was no longer the centre of the universe as initially thought due to the impact of creation narratives, the pre-conceived importance of the planet and its inhabitancies was brought into question.

Hence *Frankenstein* (1818) offers a narrative that thematically threads throughout an interdisciplinary framework. These themes are tied directly to the scientific and technological thought and development of time. The mythos of the text is especially potent because of its ties to the myths of Prometheus and the Genesis creation story. Through the perversion of the themes of creation, the text remains the primary catalyst for science gone wrong and playing god and becomes unconsciously referential and synonymous for this theme within popular culture. In doing so its echoes are cast widely throughout the human psyche and reappear in different monstrous forms that are thematically relevant to the contemporary anxieties of the time. This is what this thesis seeks to analyse within the medium of cinematic franchisation through films that adhere to the thematic threads of *Frankenstein* (1818).

The next question surrounding *Frankenstein's* (1818) potency is the idea of core anxieties. In the introduction I identified the fundamental notion of anthropocentrism that is at the root of the human experience of life and culture and what ultimately separates humanity from other species. *Frankenstein's* (1818) role in providing a challenge to this through the self-destructive creation of a being that ultimately has the potential to threaten the human position at the top of the food chain. The act of this creation also challenges the sanctity of the human body and soul, God's prerogative to create life, and the dichotomy of life and death, all of which filter into my three identified themes. Creation is an important factor in the conception of 'The Modern Prometheus'. Using the titular figure from the classical Greek creation story was a symbol used by Shelley (1818) to illuminate the importance of creation as trope in the text. In the myth, the Titan God Prometheus moulded man from clay and to aid them in their progression to civilisation. Prometheus as the trickster, stole fire from the Olympians and gave it to humanity (Bulfinch, 1964; Fry, 2017). The reason I bring this to attention is to show how Western creation myth has been woven into *Frankenstein* (1818) making it a modern catalyst for such mythos in a science fiction context. As Ted Peters (2018) states,

> Whenever your ears pick up alarming words such as hubris, or playing god, or Frankenstein, you know that the myth of Prometheus is being signalled. When 'the masters of science sought immortality and power,' warned Mary Shelley, an uncontrollably violent monster was threatening. Today's Prometheus wears a white lab coat, sometimes experiments with living creatures, and plans for the future (p. 145).

This is how influential *Frankenstein* (1818) is as a text and how deeply rooted the myth is within human culture. Mythology plays a critical role in the expression of fundamental truths commonly upheld by the universal human cultural consciousness that supports the foundation of human culture. It is also tied into the fabric of the culture the text was created in which will be a critical element in how the thematic echoes transfers through the cultural psyche into the twenty-first century. This is indicated by E.O James (1957) who argues that "the essential function of myth is to validate and justify, conserve and safeguard the fundamental realities and values, customs and beliefs on which depend the stability and continuance of a given way of life" (p. 482). Mythology is often incorrectly understood to be meaningless and as a mere facet of the genre of fiction and fantasy literature that is typically associated with ancient civilisations (Cartwright, 2007). This perspective is challenged by Don Cupitt (1982) who states that "myth making is evidently a primal and universal function of the human mind…" (p. 29). It is a form of storytelling that is not solely associated with a period in history but a continuous, unconscious part of the development of human culture through common themes in a hypertextual format. Harkup (2018) evaluation of *Frankenstein* (1818) on its contemporaries rationalises how the text is able to tap into the anxieties of the time that were evolving from Enlightenment thought and increased empiricism, especially surrounding the use of technology.

4.3 THE FRANKENSTEIN MYTH

My analysis of *Frankenstein* (1818) and it's socio-historical and cultural context has made me think deeply about how this mythos adapts unconsciously within narratives that act as commentary (both consciously and unconsciously). It challenges and perpetuates anxieties of the texts' contemporary audience. In the Victorian period, the advent of electricity, the study of anatomy, and the revolution of the steam engine coupled with growing discontent with the church in the face of rationalism allowed for a text like *Frankenstein* (1818) to take advantage of the ensuing uncertainties. In the case of this contemporary audience, anxieties surrounding technology have increased exponentially since the advent of the nuclear bomb. *Frankenstein* (1818) has now evolved past the text into a mythological phenomenon where the name is a pseudonym for anxieties surrounding scientific advancement. I have called this phenomenon the 'Frankenstein Myth' which is a model of thematic transmission presented through the key thematic characteristics identified from Shelley's text:

1. Boundary Transgressions in Science

2. Giving life to Dead Matter

3. Creation

4. Challenge to the Natural Order

5. Monstrous Bodies

It is important to clarify the difference between the act of challenging the natural order and transgressing the boundaries of science in the context of my thesis. The first distinction to clarify is between nature and science. Nature is the elemental force that is naturally occurring and not synthetically caused or made by humans (Mumford, 2004). Science is an empirical and logical method of attempting to understand elements of nature and in many cases attempting to harness and control these elements for the benefit of human knowledge and existence (Lewens, 2015). The mere act of science is not necessarily a challenge to the natural order, at least not in the context of this thesis. Regarding this study, the act of challenging the natural order is to circumvent and create an unnatural presence that is in direct contest to what has been determined to be naturally occurring. The aberration in this case is often hostile to the natural order and upsets the said established order. For example, disrupting the symbiosis of life and death. To transgress scientific boundaries is the act of abandoning ethical considerations of experimentation (Kriggs et al., 2016). This boundary is defined by what is considered morally and ethically correct regarding how empirical research is conducted and the aims and outcomes of the experimentation itself. I argue that anything that is direct violation of a person's existence, human rights, and individuality is considered an ethical transgression of scientific empiricism. While challenge to the natural order deals with how the aberration effects the naturally occurring order, boundary transgressions in science deals with the specific scientific acts which disrupt the natural order or science running amok (Kriggs et al., 2016). For example, cloning and splicing genes to create and reproduce an extinct species; in other words, giving life to lifeless or from dead matter. It is important to state that, in these hypothetical situations the boundaries of what is deemed possible and ethical is based on the comfortability and understanding of normality to humanity. in each instance of further transgression, the boundary is pushed slightly further as the characters come to terms with the prior transgressions now in play.

I argue that within the Frankenstein Myth the natural order is also subject to change as it yields the consequences of humanity's will to create unnatural aberrations. They become a part of the accepted self and the accepted normality as nature readjusts or they destroy it. Nature in this sense is fluid and is subject to change and shift. But regarding the Gothic narrative there must always an aberration that maintains its place in the unnatural to challenge what is considered natural. So, the challenge changes, evolves and adapts. This is in the form of the monstrous body. The monstrous body does not solely define the effect the challenge has on the natural order but symbolises the result of the challenge and the transgression in the form of abnormality and the Other. These themes are woven together in a symbiotic relationship, constantly revolving around one another. It is important to acknowledge that the term Frankenstein Myth has been used in other texts. Janice Hocker Rushing and Thomas S. Frentz (1989) use the term in a similar fashion as a shadow of the original text. It does not however, look at the threads of intertextual relationships as I do through a hypertextual format, nor does it offer an extensive definition or logical rationale for the title. Caroline Joan S. Picart (2003) also utilises the term 'Frankenstein Myth' in the title of her book but does not stray too far from popular literal adaptations of *Frankenstein* (1818). Though she does refer to *Alien* (1979) and *Terminator* (1984) within her analysis which, not only firmly grounds my analysis of the texts within the myth but provides a springboard to take that connection much further from a referential textual analysis into an intertextual, hypertextual analysis. Nagy et al. (2019) also use it as a referential term for the narrative of *Frankenstein* (1818) and its influence as a social and ethical reference for scientists (in essence the synonymity of *Frankenstein* (1818) with science gone wrong). More recently, Robert E. Terrill (2022) explores the term through an analysis of Alex Garland's film *Ex Machina* (2014) specifically looking at the relationship between inventor and invention and so does not break from the original text. While these are more than examples of referential short hands as Tudor (1980) has used in his work, the one thing they have in common is they assume the term 'Frankenstein Myth' is an established phenomenon and so do not delve deeper into the term. None of the texts offer a rationale or scholarly route as to how they arrived at the conclusion of a Frankenstein Myth beyond the accepted notion of *Frankenstein* (1818) as a modern myth. Through my extensive analysis, I offer firm thematic links to *Frankenstein* (1818) that break with the original text. An analysis of three key franchises within contemporary cinema that show how the Frankensteinian themes transmute into film through contemporary anxieties related to scientific and technological development. Finally, how the themes of the

Frankenstein Myth subsequently thread through unrelated texts to show this transmission beyond a linear narrative. Based on the results of my extensive research into pre-existing scholarship, this approach is unique and offers a palpable model to analyse the resurging echoes of *Frankenstein* as a postmodern mythos.

In regard to *Frankenstein's* (1818) thematic potency in the cinematic medium, I acknowledge the allocation of *Frankenstein* (1818) as a modern mythos is not a new concept yet goes beyond previous allocations or referential uses of the term. My intention for the term 'Frankenstein Myth' is more securely rooted in the notion of mythology and the postmodern. My thesis intentionally veers away from the text with a nuanced interest in the influence of its echoes and the thematic characteristics that appear throughout contemporary postmodern film. I will then analyse these themes with an intertextual analysis between the franchise and scientific method being used.

Figure 1
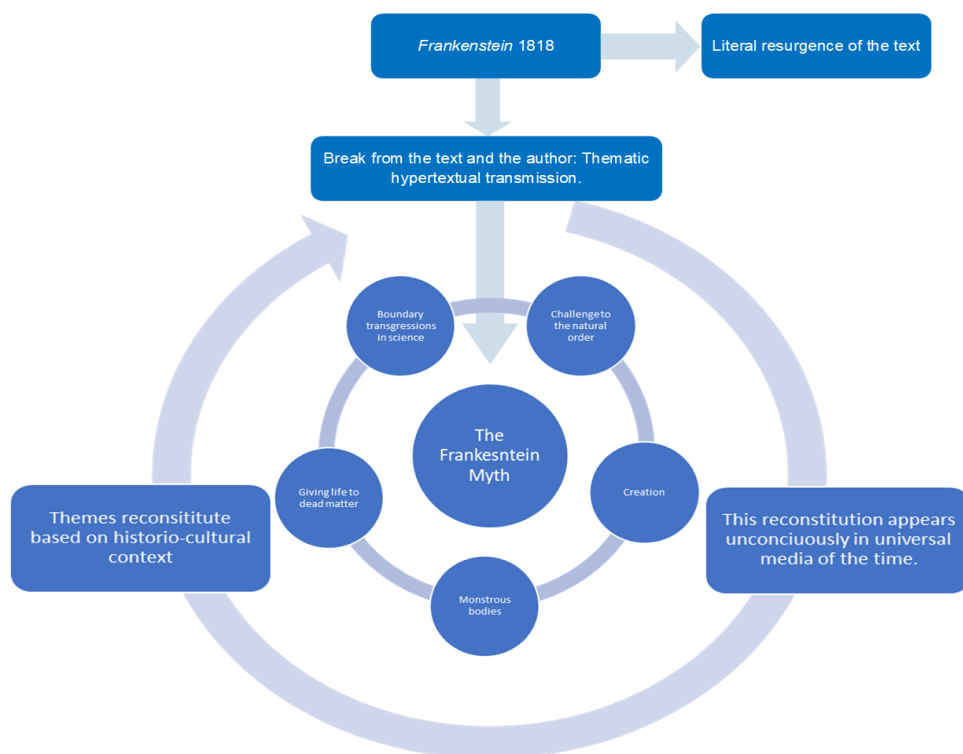
The model of the Frankenstein Myth and how it functions beyond the constraints of *Frankenstein* (1818).

In the figure above I have provided a model of how the Frankenstein Myth functions outside of the narrative of the original text. The myth bleeds through and reconstitutes through the everchanging as symbolised by the revolving outside arrow which symbolises constant change. As the themes reconstitute they appear unconsciously in the universal media of the

time. This is an ongoing and everchanging process. Like a cell's nucleus and the matter of the cell, there is a symbiotic structure between the Frankenstein Myth's transmission and the themes that remain ever present in each text that adheres to the myth. In keeping with Dawkins (2016) concept of the meme, the Frankenstein Myth also transmutes like a gene or a cell through cultural transmission. My argument suggests that outside of the text as a hypertextual narrative *Frankenstein* (1818) evolves and mutates into different narratives, franchises, and archetypes. As the Frankenstein Myth is a hypertext that evolves to the tune of scientific and cultural progression, the franchises are subjects to analyse within the frame of a phrenological hypertextual mode (Heise-von der Lippe, 2015).

The above figure exemplifies how my chosen texts are interconnected through thematic hypertextual lexias. The three franchises exist within two centuries that envelope different cultural narratives. As the cultural and scientific elements progress, the cinematic narrative changes within a postmodern zeitgeist which is where my analysis will focus. Within this model of hypertextual evolution, the monster memetically transmutes itself into a more relevant form to prey on contemporary anxieties.

Figure 2
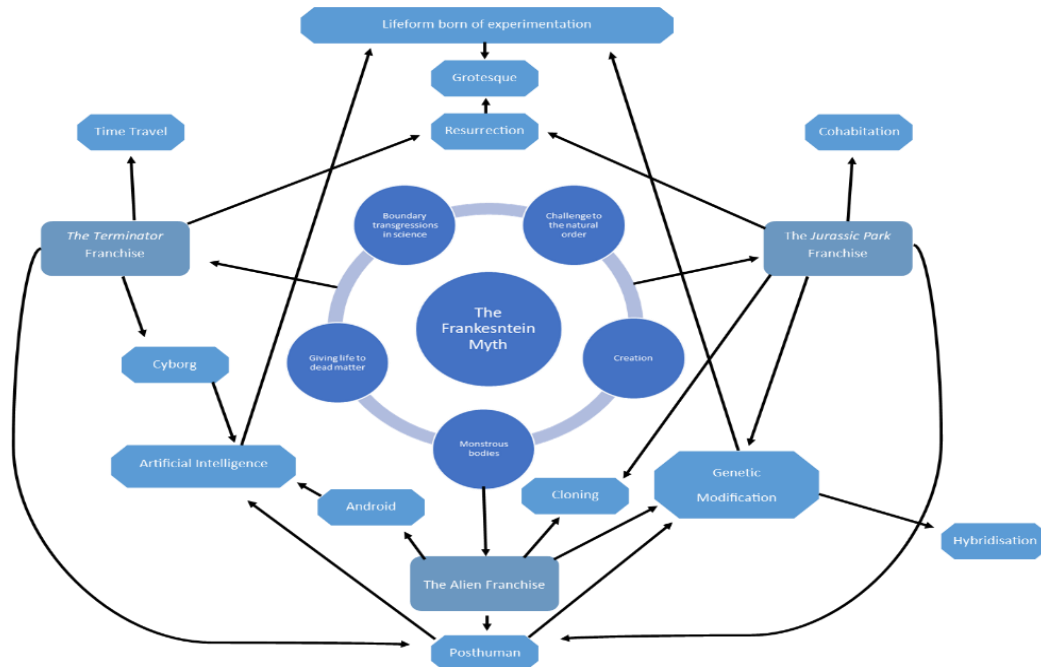
The hypertextual function of the Frankenstein myth: How the lexical windows interconnect within the texts and themes.

This look inside the earlier model provides a focused look as to what happens underneath the layers of the Frankenstein Myth. It is intended as pathfinder to aid in establishing connections between the themes and the films and the evolving lexical windows that appear. It depicts how hypertextual connections between the films allow for intertextual linking between the franchises throughout the analytical chapters. The model exemplifies how these hypertextual connections are established through sub interactions and often spawn through additional instalments to the individual franchises. It is important to state that the model is not limited to the initial lexical examples provided which is the beauty of the hypertextual format; its limitless. Unlike other cinematic examples that offer a similar relationship to the thematic traits of the Frankensteinian narrative, the franchises consistently add additional instalments into the twenty-first century with different adaptations of the individual universes and different technological themes. This also allows the separate franchises to communicate on an intertextually thematic level. Richard Dawkins (2016) and Bradley E. Wiggins (2019) believe that these memetic structures, which they identify as similar to genes, should be considered living and organic. Dawkins (2016) states that, "each piece has a particular structure which is different from rival of pieces of DNA… if memes in brains are analogous to genes, they must be self-replicating brain structures, actual patterns of neuronal wiring-up that reconstitute themselves in one brain after another" (p. 424). As can been in Figure 2, the lexical windows interconnect between each other and the texts which allows for intertextual communication and segues through other thematic components. This in turn means the texts can fluidly connect with interdisciplinary structures of analysis without constraint.

Dawkins' (2016) metaphor for the meme as an evolving neurological structure fits within the notion of the hypertext as a model for unconscious and organic transmission of the Frankenstein Myth. This transmission can be witnessed within these contemporary cinematic franchises, especially as the franchises move from a modern to postmodern format. The notions of mythos, universal commonality and transmission are intrenched in the Frankenstein Myth. As stipulated by Booker (2010), the notion of the universality of mythology as a common function of the human mind but indicates that all stories are threads of pre-existing common themes. He states that "stories take shape in the human imagination around certain archetypal patterns and images which are the common property of humankind" (p. 543). This is supported by Nagy et al. (2019) who take this notion of a shared property further by stipulating that beyond literature, "myths are deeply entangled with society and culture; they define customs and answer fundamental questions by expressing

existential and archetypal truths about human history" (p. 738). Myth plays an integral role in forming a commonly shared cultural consciousness. This is a phenomenon I will apply to the Frankenstein Myth as I begin to apply the model to my selected texts.

4.4 Methodological Approach

To begin I will first introduce the process of textual analysis. "Textual analysis is concerned with the linguistic forms of past representations. It must get to grips with the representational chain that links memory to testimony and testimony to writing" (Ifverson, 2003, p. 60). Textual analysis allows texts to be connected through an intertextual chain of communication which is dissected within the analytical framework of the research. In terms of my thesis, this process of textual analysis connects previous scholarship surrounding my chosen visual texts, themes, and disciplines to craft a concise analysis that I will utilise to investigate the nuances present in the franchises that pertain to my investigation of the Frankensteinian narrative. Henry A. Giroux (2001) suggests films offer up subject positions, mobilises desires, and influences us unconsciously and that popular culture on a broader scale has an active role in shaping the world. This influence appears within a textual and thematic format that is presupposed by the plot and the underlying themes that are inherently affected by the socio-cultural psyche which can be tracked through textual analysis. As Alan McKee (2003) suggests that "textual analysis is a way for researchers to gather information about how other human beings make sense of the world" (p. 1). Film is a universal mode of communication which evolves in tandem with the Western-American psyche as significant socio-cultural events occur. These events are critical in shaping cinematic narratives and the direction of evolving contemporary media. Giroux (2001) does indicate that audiences do not necessarily relate to or receive film narratives positively but will still question, debate, and struggle with ideas presented in film. This means that even if a film is not critically well received, award winning, or a blockbuster success, they are still able to leave an impression on the audience through its relevance and/or challenge to the way the audience makes sense of the world as McKee (2003) suggests.

This thesis also requires a further examination of the resurgence of Frankensteinian echoes through the Frankenstein Myth and its hypertextual transmission through a cultural lens. Using a thematic analysis as another critical method, I will explore the transmission of the Frankenstein Myth through the different facets of culture. This will explore the resurgence of this thematic nuance through the archetypal figures and socio-cultural,

contextual foundations of these ongoing franchises. Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke (2022) give us a working definition of thematic analysis. They state that, "thematic analysis is a method for developing, analysing, and interpreting patterns across a qualitative data set, which involves systematic processes of data [collection] to develop themes" (p. 4). This first step of thematic analysis is critical to the thesis matter as data collection identifies the common themes present within the texts that pertain to the Frankenstein Myth. Data collection can be defined as the process for capturing what is important from the data in order to answer the research question (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010). In the case of this thesis, it also enables the parameters for the importance of each film to be easily defined as what makes them relevant to my research and subsequently what makes other films not applicable. As Wilson Ozuem et al. (2022) state,

> Thematic analysis is based on notions of phenomenology in terms of human experience and perceptions which involve the notion of other. A theme can be semantic (surface meaning) or latent (underlying ideas and assumptions). Themes encompass meaningful essences that thematic analysis without paradox permeate the data and are part of the overall topic of the research (p. 147-148).

To be applicable, the films must be twenty-first century texts that are part of ongoing inter-century franchises than began in the twentieth century. This will create a strong foundation for my overarching exploration into what causes a contemporary resurgence of the archetypal Frankensteinian figure within film as a medium and the forms it takes. The result of this method will allow me to maximise the qualitative data that can be extracted from my primary sources while also systematically quantifying relevant source material. To do this effectively, this thesis must identify whether the text is a literal resurgence of the archetypal figure in question whether it is ether the retelling of the original stories or using the original form of the monster, or whether it is a form of thematic resurgence where the text uses the concept and/or theme of the creature rather than the physical form. The reason why the *Terminator* (1984-present)*, Jurassic Park* (1993-present), and *Alien* (1979-present) franchises are applicable is because they were created on the premise of scientific concepts that transgress the boundary of what is ethical. The franchises all began in the twentieth century and so they will be able to show how the Frankenstein Myth has been embedded into modern and post-modern thought and how they evolve based on scientific development.

4.5 Evaluation of Cinematic Archetypal Gothic Resurgence for Textual Analysis

Frankenstein's (1818) resurgence is more often a thematic format departed from the original text. Often *Frankenstein's* (1818) resurgence appears to be reactionary to anxieties surrounding technology of that time frame based on the release date of the film. For example, *Alien* (1979) presents an interstellar slasher that appears ten years after the Apollo 11 moon landing when interest in space, space travel, and extra-terrestrial were becoming increasingly popular topics. *Terminator* (1984) presents the artificially intelligent security system bent on destroying the world through nuclear technology and cybernetic organisms. The film was released near the end of the Cold War during the increasing use of computer technology in everyday life. In 1993, *Jurassic Park* (1993) appears in cinema presenting themes of cloning and gene splicing to resurrect dinosaurs from the Cretaceous and Jurassic period. Following the release of the film, experimentation with the cloning process made significant progress. In 1996 the cloning of Dolly the sheep in Scotland was the first successful instance of a mammal being cloned using the process of nuclear transfer. It is clear that the Gothic as a mode is not the only key element required for the framework of this thesis. A meta-critical interdisciplinary framework establishes a space where previously supposed unrelated topics can be critiqued within an interdisciplinary analysis that feeds off the quantified thematic and textual elements of the thesis (Repko et al, 2017). This allows for the combination of contested relationships such as the relationship between the Gothic and science fiction. It also provides a space for social sciences and the hard sciences to be analysed in the same space. David Ben-Merre (2009) stipulates the notion of interdisciplinary practice allows for "the complicated demands of a broader theoretical framework that seeks to find common ground across disciplinary boundaries" (p. 26). Based on my findings, the Frankenstein Myth is implicit in one of these broader theoretical frameworks due to the fact that it has been embedded in the socio-cultural psyche and influenced by developments across other disciplines such as the sciences.

The essence of the Frankensteinian narrative is the presence of thematic preoccupations that have echoed through key texts that have followed *Frankenstein's* (1818) legacy through its mythos. The themes are by extension part of a collective consciousness found under certain conditions which can be seen within my data collection. The myth itself is reactionary to cultural anxiety brought about by scientific and technological progression

and is not applied intentionally by an author or a director but is constantly present within applicable texts. To be applicable, the texts must display a form of ethical transgression of an empirically sound scientific theory that is symbiotic with the Gothic mode as it is understood within the contemporary cultural setting. The ethical transgression must display a form of hypothetical realism or fictional future applicability of science and/or technology that is considered either empirically possible, currently being used in its early stages, or undergoing further research. The technology itself must be a mainstream phenomenon and regarded as controversial within the public eye because it has the potential to threaten the body boundaries, limitations of the self and place of humanity in the perceived universe. If the texts are applicable to this framework, then they will contain the thematic echoes of the Frankensteinian narrative within the Frankenstein Myth. What is key here in mentioning these significant turning points of science and technology in the twentieth century, is how the texts are reactionary to the potential of the technology at play. This potential occurs in two main contexts. The first is the ethically questionable nature of the technology or scientific exploration in each socio-historical cultural context and its potential to be harmful to humanity's existence, the second is the nature of the films in unison with the technology which can be seen in the table above. The films have been effective due to their reactionary nature regarding the technology which has become central to the evolving narrative. One example of this potential is the habitual nature of science fiction to often present hypothetical technology or theories surrounding the potential use of technology and create the illusion of self-actualisation. This has been referred to in the past as the seemingly prophetic nature of science fiction, the mobile and touch screen technology presented in *Star Trek* which was subsequently developed due to its influence is a good example of this (Dinello, 2013). This fear of the texts presenting the future should not be confused with prophecy as they are still fictions. What makes them fascinating, complex, and important to study, is how they interact with the ethically questionable technology to create uncanny representations of potential futures if the technology and/or scientific exploration is not scrutinised and is allowed to develop into a dangerous and unpredictable phenomenon. This is the essence of the Frankenstein Myth. It is a portent to the dangerous side of progressive unchecked ambition when discussing humanity harnessing the power of creation. This theme made a significant impression as *Frankenstein* (1818) and the archetype of the mad scientist has been embellished within popular culture and immortalised through the five themes that have remained constant in the future texts that follow the thematic echoes of *Frankenstein* (1818).

As identified earlier the franchises that have shown the most consistency to the influence and myth of Frankenstein are *Jurassic Park* (1993)*, Terminator* (1984)*,* and *Alien* (1979)*.* The three of these were not only conceived during times of technological and scientific upheaval and change but have continued to add instalments to the growing franchise. They have also contributed some of the most memorable and recognisable cinematic figures to popular culture which has further cemented their own mythos. Creation, giving life to dead matter, challenging the natural order, monstrous bodies, and boundary transgressions in science are the themes which signify the presence of the Frankenstein Myth within a text. In the tables below I have outlined how the themes interact within the texts and how they evolve over each instalment as the science and technology progresses into the twenty-first century. To reiterate based on this rationale, I will be contending with these three research questions:

1. How do Frankensteinian echoes develop within ongoing science fiction franchises in relation to the Western-American Psyche?
2. What developing patterns can be observed in ongoing franchises surrounding contemporary anxieties of science and technological development and the themes that intertextually connect them? What are the implications?
3. How does the Frankenstein Myth as a universally explicit mythos embedded in popular culture, remain relevant within contemporary science fiction film?

These questions allow for the meta intertextual analysis of my selected franchises as they have continued to grow and evolve their narratives. The franchises interaction with the themes also allow the thematic threads to intertwine and converse through all three franchises and how they interact with these anxieties. It is the commonality of the themes that will enable the discussion around the texts and themes to flow naturally and focus on the themes. To ensure my analysis of the texts is clear, it will follow the thread of the narrative of each instalment. These are films and so the themes evolve and reveal themselves through the development of the narrative. This will also be done to ensure the effect of sequelisation and prequelisation can be observed. The anxieties present in the texts have evolved with each instalment so my analysis will reflect that.

4.6 Data Collection: Initial Textual Analysis of the Selected Franchises

The tables present a precedent for the nuance of the presence of the Frankenstein Myth within these franchises. The purpose is to show how the franchise is a key mode of

storytelling for the Frankenstein Myth to not only resurge, but to thrive and continue to evolve. That is not to say that the Frankenstein Myth is not present within other forms of cinematic iteration. Because of the nature of its origins, the Frankenstein Myth is subject to evolve and change as it was conceptualised on the basis of revolution. Stand-a-lone films, literal retellings, and television series also contain the defining characteristics of the myth, but they don't form the nuance required to study and track its presence.[4] The focus on these franchises gives the thesis a well-rounded scope into several different genres and provides reasonable boundaries as to observe qualitive and quantitative research. It also provides three different fictional scenarios which exemplify science and technology that transgress the ethical boundaries and challenge humanity's dominion and existence. I will use the five identified key themes of the original *Frankenstein* (1818) narrative to explore the hypertextual connection between the three franchises in my analysis chapters. The format of the franchise provides a contained platform that follows a consistent nuance rather than attempting to connect endless material. The tables successfully present a nuance and five thematic threads that can be compared under analysis.

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[4] See Appendix A, Table 4, for further context of the Frankenstein Myth's presence in other films.

Table 1 *Jurassic Park/World* Franchise	Creation	Giving life to dead matter	Challenge to the natural order	Monstrous Bodies	Boundary Transgressions in science
Jurassic Park (1993) Three scientists are brought to Jurassic Park to evaluate its safety. A storm takes out the power and the exhibits escape.	• Cloning development of extinct species genome • Unable to breed in the wild as they are all female. • DNA not pure so amalgamated with tree frog DNA to make them look like generic dinosaurs.	• Extracting matter from preserved prehistoric mosquitos. • Creating dinosaurs from this matter in a lab setting. • Denying them the ability to reproduce in the wild by manipulating their chromosomes.	• Introducing extinct species into foreign eco-system millions of years apart.	• Franchise identifies the Predator species as the monstrous and the herbivores as sublime and gentle. Monstrous dinosaurs: • T-Rex • Raptors	• Cloning species from bastardised DNA without regard for consequences. As Hammond states he will spare no expense to create the impossible.
Lost World (1997) Ian Malcolm returns to stop the Dinosaurs from being poached.	• Dinosaurs now breed in the wild as predicted by Ian Malcolm. This is the result of Amazon tree frog DNA that made them hermaphroditic.	• The process of initially giving life does not change throughout the series.	• Attempt to introduce the dinosaurs to densely populated area (San Francisco)	• T-Rex • InGen	• Two species separated by 175 million years of evolution co-inhabiting the same planet.

Jurassic Park 3 (2001)	• Dinosaurs still breeding in the wild.	• The franchise is still set around the basis that the dinosaurs were created through preserved matter, but this film is more about dealing with the outcome.	• Man, and dinosaur living in the same primal state for lengthened period of time.	• Spinosaurus	• The previously identified transgressions remain relevant, but no other significant ones are introduced into this film.
Doctor Grant is tricked into helping parents rescue their son from Isla Sorna.	• Doctor Grant has come to believe at this point that the dinosaurs on Isla Sorna and Isla Nublar are not dinosaurs in the natural sense but have been created to look like popular images of them.		• Until this film the raptors have been cast as monsters, Grant discovers they not only hunt in packs but that they have a complex language and sophisticated relationships.	• Raptors • Pterodactyls	
Jurassic World (2015 Reboot/continuation of the Franchise)	• The original park on Isla Nublar has been re-opened and completed with guests regularly visiting the park.	• The process to create the dinosaurs remains the same with Doctor Henry Wu (a reoccurring character from the original film).	• The Indominus Rex is a challenge to the natural order because of the nature of its hybridity. The T-Rex is already hailed as the apex-predator of the Jurassic period, but the Raptor is smarter. The combination of the two creates a new single apex predator (not species) that not only is unmatched in strength but contemplates its own existence on the food chain.	• As established, the Indominus Rex is monstrous through its creation. Grady stipulates this by claiming that the Indominus is not a dinosaur but a monster.	• Creating and cloning hybrids as weapons. • Merging two dangerous extinct species of dinosaur for entertainment with no respect or knowledge of the creature.
Following the devastating events of the first three films, Jurassic Park has been perfected into Jurassic World which has opened to the public without	• Dinosaur production has continued but the public is no longer in awe of a generic dinosaur. • InGen (the company who has a controlling	• They perfect the chromosome manipulation so the dinosaurs cannot reproduce in the wild.	• The fact that it does not belong to its own species is important because it has no positive relationships and no idea what period it is in.	• InGen are also a monstrous body as it is discovered that the Indominus was created as a prototypical weapon that the company hoped to sell to the	

incident. However, a biologically engineered hybrid escapes captivity, wreaking havoc on the park.	interest in the park) has been developing genetically modified hybrids to "reinvigorate public interest." • The Indominus Rex is the first genetically modified hybrid that is introduced to the park made from a variety of different elements but predominantly a potent combination of Raptor and T-Rex.		• The Raptors trained by Owen Grady also challenge the natural order to an extent due to their unusual relationship with Grady. As suspected by Grant, the Raptors are capable of more complicated relationships than pack mentality.	highest bidder when they knew it was stable.	
Fallen Kingdom (2018) A volcano threatens a second extinction for the Dinosaurs. A new hybrid is developed.	• Cloning of both Dinosaurs and humans (Lockwood's daughter) • Splicing and merging DNA genomes to create the Indoraptor.	• Taking DNA from the Indominus Rex skeleton to create the Indoraptor. • Wu is still the architect of the dinosaur de-extinction, so a continuation of his work is present. • Lockwood's resurrection of his daughter through cloning.	• The merging of the Jurassic and the post-modern world to begin a new era, closing the liminal gap. • The constant theme of resurrection of a species that was selected for extinction. • Resurrection of a human being. • Using resurrected species as weapons.	• Indoraptor – the perfected version of the Indominus Rex. (a creature of the future made from pieces of the past.) • Mosasaurus • T-Rex • Velociraptor	• De-extinction. • Human cloning. • Weaponised biological creation. • Selling/ exploiting animals of scientific progression.

Table 2 *The Terminator* Franchise	**Creation**	**Giving Life to Dead Matter**	**Challenge to the Natural Order**	**Monstrous Bodies**	**Boundary Transgressions in Science**
The Terminator (1984) In the future machines rule until John Connor destroys Skynet, the main frame. To stop this, Skynet sends a terminator back to the past to kill his mother, Sarah Connor.	• Humanity Develops AI defence system. • Creation of John Connor. Relationship between Kyle and Sarah breaks the time continuum as Kyle is from the future.	• The system develops insurgency cyborgs with recycled living tissue (T-800).	• Human anthesis. • Skynet develops consciousness to challenge human dominance. • Time travel to re-write history.	• Skeletal metal structure. • Insurgency technology (infrared eyes) • Use of human tissue. • Grotesque organic matter • Combination of the sublime and the Grotesque.	• Consciousness: Machines contemplating existence. • Re-writing history through time travel/ • Creating cybernetic organism (the crossing of human and machine).
Judgement Day (1991) John is a young boy and Sarah is incarcerated for being insane. A new terminator with shapeshifting abilities threatens John but an old enemy is sent back to protect the Connors.	• Further investigation into the creation of Skynet. Miles Bennett Dyson. • Whose research will lead to the creation of Skynet. • Creation of (T-1000) the shapeshifting terminator.	• The T-800 returns to protect John Connor as a child. • T-800 still a cyborg with living tissue.	• T-1000 made to look more human in the way it moves, emotes, and gestures. • Time travel • T-800 rewritten to protect the Connors. • John develops unnatural bond with T-800 who becomes a father figure.	• T-1000 shapeshifter can transform its body to camouflage, mimic other lifeforms, (limited to lifeforms of a similar size and shape) • T-1000s form is more sublime than that of the T-800 as Skynet abandoned the skeletal form.	• Treatment of Sarah Connor in mental facility. • The creation of a shapeshifting metal organism.

Rise of the Machines (2003) John is all grown up and in denial about his destiny. Skynet sends another terminator back to kill John, but the T-800 comes to save him and his future wife.	• The re-creation of John Connor as a leader. • The second film saw the future diverted from the apocalypse caused by Skynet but due to this John has lost his purpose and turned to drugs and alcohol.	• The resurrected T-800 returns to re-prepare john for war against Skynet as the future has been diverted once more.	• The film follows a similar theme to the previous and so remains the same for the most part.	• Skynet sends another T-1000 except this time in the form of a female (in an effort to seduce John and kill him).	• Judgement Day occurs and the world is annihilated by nuclear fallout.
Salvation (2009) Marcus Wright is scheduled for execution via lethal injection but wakes up in the future as an augmented human being. Upon meeting Kyle Reese, Marcus aids the John Connor and the Resistance in defeating Skynet.	• Prequel Film which delves into the creation of Skynet and specifically the T-800.	• Marcus Wright/ H series terminator. • More human than machine with an organic heart and brain. • He is not aware of what he truly is or where he fits in this new world. • Prototypical creation for future cyborg. • Marcus was executed on death row in 2003 but donated his body before the event.	• First Skynet experiment with cybernetic organisms before the development of the T-800 series terminator. • Breaking barriers merging organisms with machines.	• Introduced to earlier terminator models. E.g., T-600 which are war torn soldiers before Skynet focuses on insurgency.	• Human experimentation with cybernetic organisms. • Begins the time travel arch by building the narrative to sending Kyle Reece back to save Sarah.

Genisys (2015) Skynet has been defeated and Kyle Reese has been sent to the past. But the timeline is broken by Skynet who kidnaps and augments John Connor to fight against Reese and Sarah.	• The creation of the T-3000. A progression into artificial intelligence and the merging of machine and human into a new species of posthuman. Connors cells were destroyed and rebuilt the human tissue with technology. • Creation of a new alternate timeline.	• John Connors body is used to create the T-3000. His bodies destruction creates a new organism. • Kyle Reese's resurrection in the sense of the alternative timeline. His death does not happen, and he gets another chance to be with Sarah. • The T-800 is upgraded into a T-1000 through Cyberdyne's liquid metal reserve. His body which is covered in living tissue dies to become the next series.	• Creation of the T-3000. • Skynet's evolution from computer system to an application that can be downloaded into any system. • The change to the timeline again and the intervention of Skynet in the past to create technology that changes the outcome of the war. • Sarah's initial refusal to fall in love with Kyle and the Death of her parents that was orchestrated by Skynet.	• T-3000 • T-800	• The T-800's show of empathy, sentimentality, and compassion as it seemingly develops consciousness and true artificial intelligence. • The changing of the timeline and Skynet's evolution. • The creation of a new organism merging human and cybernetic cells.

Dark Fate (2019)					
After *Terminator 2*, Skynet has been defeated. Sarah and John are able to live their lives without worrying about threats from the future. However, a terminator stuck in the past kills John based on old orders, leaving Sarah alone and broken. A new threat emerges in the future called Legion. A new saviour is chosen, and an augmented human is sent back to protect her. Remnants from the old timeline (Sarah and the T-800) also come to her aid against the new terminator.	• Cyber warfare AI Legion is created in the place of Skynet. • A new future is created after John and Sarah destroy Skynet in *Judgement Day.* • Creation of the Augmented Human in the Form of Grace.	• To save Grace's life they manipulate and augment her body to create a new form of posthuman cyborg.	• The augmented human. Though Grace fights for humanity she is constantly reminded throughout the film that she is no longer human due to her Augmented qualities. This in turn makes her a challenge to the natural order as a new species of posthuman that exists on the periphery of the self. • The T-101 returns to the franchise initially as the enemy that kills John Connor in the opening moments of the film. However, after the destruction of Skynet, it was released from its directive and developed a form of artificial consciousness to find a renewed purpose. • With the destruction of Skynet, a new future is created without John Connor as the saviour of the human race and the rise of a new AI antagonist called Legion.	• New Rev-9 terminator unit. Constructed of both a new dark skeletal figure and dark liquid metal flesh. • The Rev-9 is a return to the grotesque and terrifying monstrous that made terminator effective as a SF/Thriller	• The T-101 develops a form of consciousness against its initial programming. It finds its own purpose (selling drapes), name (Carl), indicates that it feels a form of remorse for killing John, and love for his adopted family. The terminators are not conscious cyborgs and a merely automatons that carry out Skynet's kill orders. • The manipulation of the timeline is the most consistent form of boundary breach in the *Terminator* (1984-present) franchise. • The further evolution of humanity to a posthuman cyborg form through Graces augmentation.

Table 3 *Alien* Franchise	**Creation**	**Giving Life to Dead Matter**	**Challenging the Natural Order**	**Monstrous Bodies**	**Boundary Transgressions in Science**
Alien (1979) Ellen Ripley is a member of a cargo ships crew with a mission in deep space. Upon arrival at their destination they are attacked by an aggressive alien species called the xenomorphs.	• Not much is known at this stage of how the xenomorphs and the facehugger s (face huggers) came to be. However, the birth of the xenomorphs is revealed. Through oesophageal penetration, over a period of 24 hours the facehugger impregnates its host in the abdomen where the xenomorph incubates for a period before emerging.	• This is a complex element in the Alien franchise. Strictly speaking the xenomorphs are not dead themselves but the process that gives them life kills the host and uses an element of the hosts genome to create life.	• The reproductive process of the xenomorphs challenges the natural order as, like a parasite, the facehugger invades the body to reproduce. This is the basis of the entire species; to eradicate and replace species, interrupting the natural order.	• The facehugger s are the most sinister creature of the *Alien* franchise. They are arachnid-skeletal creatures with long tails that carry the xenomorph embryos. They wrap their tails around the neck of the host and penetrate the oesophagus with their reproductive organ and clamp their extremities around the hosts head to prevent resistance. Not only is this a form of monstrous body but it is often uncomfortable for the viewer to watch due to its sexually exploitive nature. • The xenomorphs have elongated craniums, skeletal thoraxes, long spinal tails, spindly fingers, and a second orifice that extends out their mouths.	• Discovery of an alien race through space exploration. • The hybrid combination of human and alien genomes. • Discovery of a human antithesis. • Use of AI by the company through the human synth Ash to bring the xenomorph back to earth.
Aliens (1986) Ripley is found lost in	• The introduction of the xenomorph queen and the solving of the mystery of the	• Same as the initial film.	• The company's team is sent to the mining settlement to deal with the xenomorphs. It	• The queen is a large primordial xenomorph much larger than the average xenomorph.	• Species potentially bred to destroy and replace another. • Extra-terrestrial intelligence rivalling that of humanity.

space following the last film. She is recruited to assist a marine team in saving a colony from an unknown threat.	initial creation of the facehuggers.		becomes apparent that the xenomorphs may have been created with the sole purpose of invasion as it is unclear why they were there.	• She produces the facehugger eggs and excretes them down a secreted organic sack. • She controls the xenomorphs with a hive mind connection. • She is also an intelligent organism and identifies Ripley as a potential carrier for another queen (hiding facehugger eggs on her escape ship).	
Alien 3 (1992) Ripley crash lands on a prison planet. The aliens have stowed away on the ship and in her womb.	• First introduction of another strain of xenomorph (the runner). A more animalistic xenomorph that moves on four legs with quadruped anatomy. Created through a facehugger impregnating an animal. • Ripley is also impregnated with a queen xenomorph by the queen facehugger that hatched on the escape ship while Ripley was in cryostasis-sleep.	• Film still in keeping with cannon.	• The new strain of xenomorph indicates that the facehugger s can use any living species to create xenomorphs and does not just rely on human hosts. • Ripley's Pregnancy with the queen xenomorph is also evidence that the xenomorphs as a species are aiming to establish new colonies and that they are not a mindless scourge or plague.	• The runners animal appearance and anatomy adds another sinister element to the xenomorph appearance. • The queen foetus is a terrifying concept as Ripley needs to decide in the end to destroy herself to protect the rest of humanity. • The queen facehugger is also a sinister element as Ripley is in cryostasis when she is attacked so has no idea that it has happened. It is only until the abnormally large facehugger is found that it becomes apparent that Ripley was the one who had been attacked.	• The use of Ripley to create a new colony of xenomorphs. • The first instance of other breeds of xenomorph and facehugger. • The first hints of hybrids existing in the Alien Universe.

				• The Company that Ripley has been working for is revealing themselves to be a monstrous body as they desire the xenomorphs.	
Resurrection (1997) Ripley has been cloned by the company after the Xenomorphs for military purposes. Unbeknown to the company, Ripley has xeno qualities.	• 200 years into the future, the United Systems Military have cloned Ellen Ripley to obtain the xeno-queen embryo. Because two lifeforms were cloned within the same body, a side effect caused genome splicing. Due to this, both Ripley and the queen are hybrids compiled of each other's biology. • The hybridisation also caused the queen to add a second stage to her reproduction cycle and evolve to incorporate a human womb into her biology. • The queen naturally gives birth to the newborn hybrid. A being naturally comprised of human and xenomorph DNA to a greater extent than the xenomorphs themselves.	• Creation of Ripley and the Queen from Ripley's original cells preserved from the third film. • Xenomorphs still require a human host to exist prior to the evolution of the Queen.	• Cloning Ripley for the queen to make an army of xenomorphs. • The failed clones 1-7 that are deformed but stored as specimens. • The DNA splicing of the queen and Ripley to make two new life forms. • The attempt to control the nature of the xenomorphs. • The first appearance of conscious artificial intelligence in the form of Call the auton. A synthetic, second generation considered to be faulty because she does not like to follow orders and displays consciousness, belief, and wish to be human.	• Xeno-queen hybrid • Xenomorph • Ellen Ripley 8 • 1-7 Clones • facehuggers	• Cloning for the purpose of war. • The Illegal imprisonment and experimentation-on on humans. • The resurrection of Ripley. • First instance of the Xenomorphs being used by humans as weapons.

Prometheus (2012)					
In this prequel, an exploration ship called the Prometheus explores the stars looking for humanity's creators with an android called David who already knows and despises his. In an effort to find meaning, human, android, and alien begin the cycle of death which unfolds in the franchise.	• Beginning of the prequel series which explores not only the creation of the xenomorph species, but also that of humanity (by the engineers) and the synths. • The introduction of the deacon, a new form of xenomorph created by the merging of the octo-facehugger (created through natural reproduction) and an engineer. • The trilogy is built on the premise of creation as well.	• The film introduces the engineers, an alien race that supposedly created the Human race through the death of one of their own. • It remains a mystery whether this act of creation was intentional which is the reason the crew of the Prometheus goes searching for evidence of them.	• The Crew of the Prometheus seek to find the true creators of the human race to understand why they were created. Many of them besides Shaw cease to believe in God or any form of creation narrative outside of empirical science. • It is implied that the engineers were not the God like pastoral creators that was commonly believed as the creation of humanity is seen to be an accident which challenges the common conceptions surrounding the uniqueness of humanity.	• The engineers turnout to be monstrous in their plan to use a chemical substance to eradicate their previous creations. • Introduction of the octo-facehugger, a creature that came from the infected sperm of Shaw's husband Holloway. The facehugger is unique because it was conceived in a womb and reproduced naturally. • The deacon xenomorph is introduced at the end of the film as a result of the octo-facehugger impregnating the engineers body, a unique xenomorph that reinforces the premise that the xenomorphs change based on the Host. • David the synth turns out to be more sinister in nature as he, created by humans, begins to experiment with creation using the engineer's chemical.	• Artificial intelligence that has consciousness. • The experimentation with chemical substances on human beings to make further organic life forms. • The challenge to the concept of human uniqueness.

Covenant (2017)					
A colony ship experiences trouble in space and must find a safe harbour. The planet they land on has already been inhabited by David and his alien experiments.	• David creates the prototypical xenomorphs within the prequel series using the remains of Elizabeth Shaw. • Through a combination of environmental elements and the engineers biological weapon the neomorph was introduced. • Third instance of biological genetic engineering and splicing. • The film goes into greater depth surrounding David's creation and the development of his consciousness that Weyland intended him to have. Walter, David's next generational form is also introduced and does not have the consciousness or creative abilities of David.	• David uses the carcass of Elizabeth Shaw to create the xenomorph eggs.	• The creation of artificial intelligence in the form of David and Walter. • The mutilation of Shaw's body to create the eggs. • David's experimentation with the xenomorphs based on the knowledge found in the engineers library. • David's feelings of superiority and his feelings surrounding humanity.	• Neomorphs • Xenomorphs • facehuggers • David	• David's use of the covenant crew to create the xenomorphs. • David's genocidal eradication of the engineers. • David's artificial Intelligence surpassing the usual parameters of the synthetics.

Within this data collection, three themes presented themselves as more significant which were: Challenge to the natural order, Boundary transgressions in science, and the monstrous body. My initial findings suggest that creation is the overarching theme and the giving life to dead matter is connected to the method of creation. The three themes that will feature prominently symbolise three different stages of the mythic narrative: the hubris (the act of challenging the natural order), the transgression through science and technology (boundary transgressions in science), and the result (the monstrous body). To craft the most succinct and articulate thesis the themes will be discussed within three chapters that follow the narrative of the three franchises

I have concluded that the themes will act as an overarching nuance that will tie the three chapters together on the premise of a hypertextual analysis of the franchises which allows them to be analysed succinctly. This is another example of how the interdisciplinary framework will be critical. has revealed *The Terminator* (1984-present) franchise deals with the development of artificial intelligence and the apocalyptic consequences of this creation. This is one of the first cinematic examples to deal with the concept of technology becoming the anthesis of humanity and challenging the natural order especially around the development of weapons of mass destruction, computer technology and the ensuing Cold War tensions of the mid to late twentieth century. It was controversial to the point that it inspired several sequels and is still considered a likely apocalyptic scenario. Now the *Terminator* (1984-present) franchise contends with anxieties surrounding global interconnectivity, privacy, online security, and the evolving nature of artificial intelligence. The *Alien* (1979-present) franchise is inspired by the concept of extra-terrestrial life a decade after space travel became a popular phenomenon in 1969 with the American moon landing. Once again it is one of the first films to deal with the concept of Alien life not only existing but posing a threat to humanity. Contemporary instalments have begun to instinctively probe into themes of the origins of the human species and the development of artificially created posthuman species that challenge common anthropocentric perspectives. *Jurassic Park* (1993) deals with the concept of cloning and the resurrection of extinct species without regard for the consequences. With the conception of *Jurassic World* (2015)*,* the focus moves from cloning to creating hybrids as a more terrifying concept; not only a dinosaur but a dinosaur with near-human intelligence that could contemplate its existence. The films I will primarily focus on will be the twenty-first century instalments as they provide the most contemporary iterations of the Frankenstein Myth in each text.

4.7 SUMMARY

This chapter has established the rationale for the thesis and has proposed my unique contribution to the field. Through the analysis of three prominent and ongoing science fiction franchises that contain echoes of *Frankenstein* (1818), I will seek to establish the viability of the Frankenstein Myth as a model to analyse these echoes. The Frankenstein Myth is a hypertextual model that adheres to a meta interdisciplinary and intertextual framework and is constructed of key themes found within the original text. Ultimately, it is the Frankenstein Myth that ties these franchises together and enables them to be intertwined in the same analysis. In this chapter I also mentioned the correlation between the themes and key socio-historical events that had a significant effect on shaping the culture of film. It is important to remember going forward that the echoes of *Frankenstein* (1818) are embedded in the cultural psyche, specifically a Western perspective. In the next chapter I will be evaluating the socio-historical events cultural trends that have specifically contributed to many of the cultural anxieties that appear within in Western film. As the franchises I am utilising are American I will be evaluating these trends specifically from an American Western perspective. This is to establish the context of how the echoes of *Frankenstein* (1818) have evolved into the contemporary Western psyche.

5: A GLOBAL WESTERN-AMERICAN EMPIRE: A BRIEF CONTEXTUAL OVERVIEW OF LATE TWENTIETH AND TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY SOCIO-HISTORICAL EVENTS THAT HAVE SHAPED THE WESTERN-AMERICAN PSYCHE.

5.1 Introduction

The franchises that I have chosen to analyse in my thesis have been made with a very Americancentric world view. They are conceived by writers and directors who are intrinsically linked to the American psyche that has developed over late twentieth and twenty-first century and subsequently spread all over the Western world. I have moved on from the analysis of Shelley's narrative established within the age and advent of electricity and development of medical science as these have entered the sphere of the known and accepted (Burkett, 2021). I believe it is important to establish the context of the Western-American psyche and the key socio-historical events that have shaped the cultural narrative. To reiterate, the echoes of *Frankenstein* (1818) are embedded in the cultural psyche and so their resurgence is dictated by these polarising events. In the case of establishing context for the analysis of these echoes it is important to establish the evolution of the Western-American psyche throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. As my thesis offers a unique contribution to the scholarship through this inter-century approach to analyse the Frankensteinian echoes it is important to establish the rapid development of technology, society, and culture over these two centuries. This is because the Frankenstein Myth is subject to evolution that is tethered to key events which is seen through the shift in focus around the various technologies in play as each instalment is added. For example, the Apollo moon landing, Cold War tensions, revolutionary technological and scientific developments such as nuclear weapons and computer technology, and the development of cloning technologies have been key focal points in the American psyche in the twentieth century and tied to the early instalments in these franchises. Whereas later twenty-first century instalments have tended to become more focused on artificial intelligence, posthumanism, human augmentation, and biological engineering (with cloning still remaining a significant factor). Though specifically in the context of these franchises, the American perspective and context is vital to the projected images and themes they inherently embody within film.

The twentieth and twenty-first century periods mark a significant shift in global power. Cultural influence shifted to an Americanised point of view within Western territories and general American influence globally as the internationally dominant superpower (A.G Hopkins, 2019). Many of the themes within American film are centred on the geographical United States, American culture, and 'Americanness' that is unconsciously digested by non-American audiences as their own. (Bronner, 2021). This term 'Americanness' is one that Simon Bronner explores while investigating the thought and culture of the United States. Bronner states that "Americanness represents ways of thinking and acting shaped by history, society, politics, and geography connected to the United States" (p. 1). This point about the ways of thinking and acting as influenced by history is exactly where the Frankenstein Myth feeds through into the cultural psyche. It is reactionary to external disciplines, developments, events, and influences.[5] *Frankenstein* (1818) was inspired by developments in the Victorian world as has been expressed before. It was worldly and relevant to the time it was written which made it a palpable yet polarising way of contending with prominent social anxiety around scientific and technological developments. To reiterate, the monster is the personification of its socio-historical and cultural condition. This is a key part of the Frankenstein Myth's nuance as an interdisciplinary and intertextual phenomenon. In this sense Americanness as a concept and an aesthetic is crucial to understanding how the echoes of *Frankenstein* (1818) appear within these films and how the monstrous appears.

Americanness by nature is explicitly focused on the undertone of cultural expressions but is not explicit to the geographical United States. Bronner goes on to state that,

> It has a portable and often imitable quality for residents of the United States living in foreign lands or non-Americans who mimic American behaviour and attitudes… It appeals to a perceived intellectual unity… [as] the cognitive concept of Americanness entails ways people think with America typically outside of their awareness… Americanness produces symbols and metaphors meant to comfort or disturb and it directs its awareness to shared ideas and ideals, and indeed worldview as an overarching outlook or belief system (p. 1).

America and American culture has often been referred to as a global empire of influence that often coincides and blends with other Western cultures that mimic and consume American

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[5] See Figure 1, p. 50.

culture. This emulation occurs through the global reach of the Hollywood entertainment industry, popular media, and other entertainment productions (Skoll, 2016). The developing American psyche that filters through contemporary film is constantly digested all over the world. I believe that it is important to contextualise how this Western-American psyche has developed over the late twentieth and twenty-first centuries. I will not be trying to offer a comprehensive analysis of these events nor truly engage with them in depth. This is purely to give context to the development of the global American psyche so I can provide a clear idea of the environment the Frankenstein Myth is currently appearing in. The key events I will be discussing are: The end of the Cold War, 9/11, the advent of advanced biotechnology, and the development and wide use of mobile technologies and social media. These are not only events that have made a significant impression on America, but the wider Western world within a vacuum of American culture and provide a nuance of technological development within the socio-historical and cultural context.

5.2 THE END OF THE COLD WAR AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A NEW WORLD ORDER.

The Cold War was a geopolitical conflict between the United States of America (USA/US) and the Soviet Union (USSR) following the conclusion of the Second World War. This conflict dominated 45 years of the twentieth century and fuelled the competing ideologies of communism and capitalism. Overshadowed by the development and mass production of nuclear weapons, a thousand times the destructive capabilities of the bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. These weapons were subsequently placed in strategic geographical locations all over the world raising tension and concern (Spellman, 2006). This conflict dominated international relations and created a climate of fear in the face of the escalating threat of nuclear war (Ambrose & Brinkley, 2011; Jenkins, 2006). Bronner (2021) suggests these fears were significantly felt on a national level in the US in the 1960s as "Americans were living in fear of war, devastation as a result of war, and nuclear war" (p. 53-54). The arms race (proxy wars funded and weaponised by the opposing sides of the US and USSR), technological race (as exemplified by the space race), and the growing threat posed by the spread of communism eclipsed the mid to late twentieth century (Hymans, 2012). In the 1980s the Cold War ended abruptly, and the USSR was dissolved into independent sovereign nations by 1991 (Spellman 2006). While Russia's power dwindled, the USA had established a global influence that they could now focus on without contending with Russian

influence. As John Dumbrell (2008) states, "the geopolitical cataclysm symbolised by the crashing wall in Berlin not only appeared as vindication of national mission [but of] American exceptionalism" (p. 35). With the fall of the Berlin wall signifying the release of Eastern Europe from Russian control and the overt spread of communism, the US was in a strategic position through global reputation and geopolitically to begin reinforcing American global influence. The popular culture response was an eclipse of the Western World with literature, visual media, and music that contended with the conflict but also the fears and aspirations surrounding nuclear weapons, space travel, and rapid technological development as we see in *Alien* (1979) and *Terminator* (1984). These events were polarising and effected the Western world on a global scale. Events of this magnitude have a bleeding effect within our fictions as storytelling at its core is an expression, conscious or unconscious, of the social and cultural climate of its time (Booker, 2010; Braudy, 2016). Dumbrell (2008) states that "the significance, not least for American thought and culture, of the twentieth century ideological and material 'victory' over Soviet communism can be scarcely overstated" (p. 35). The atmosphere of the US and the feelings of its citizens dramatically improved with a significant shift of wanting to be free from the fear that the policy of Mutually Assured Destruction brought (Sharp, 2007).

By the end of the Cold War there was a significant increase of national interest in seeking "improvement of the present standard of living through technological advances/increase in the rate of mechanisation use of modern scientific advances" (Bronner, 2021, p. 54). With the coming shift of the millennium into the twenty-first century, the US economy thrived in the post-Cold War period. An increase in nationwide consumerism, the revolution of the personal computer, and the US support on globalised free trade had transformed national attitudes and expectations (Dumbrell, 2008). The developing psyche of the nation was now one based on military and ideological victory, national strength and prosperity, and capitalist international ambition. It is on this note that Dumbrell suggests that US leadership was now able to be "geared to the family of nation's market democracies embracing free trade and acknowledging the indispensability of American leadership" (p. 37). This was the beginning of global Americanness spreading. A new world order was ripe for the taking and as Dumbrell states, "the global transformations that accompanied the collapse of Soviet communism brought with them an almost inevitable burst of American triumphalism" (p. 36). In the minds of Americans, the twentieth century was one that

highlighted the American legacy and supremacy on a global scale. This is supported by the assertions of Steven E. Ambrose and Douglas G. Brinkley (2011) who state that,

> In the twentieth century, the United States turned back the forces of totalitarianism – the Kaisers Germany, Hitler's Nazi Germany, Japan's militarist and expansionist government, Mussolini's Fascist Italy, and Soviet Communism. Surely justice had never been better served… the experience of the Cold War gave Americans the sense they could run the world because their military power is so much greater than that of any other nation or group of nations (p. 380).

Military power in the world became a key focus of the US as there was now a national expectation of the spread of Americanisation and capitalism, as well as an American dominated marketplace of consumerism, capital, and culture. Dumbrell (2008) argues that this was the "framework for American leadership in a new global context… [and] if this was a new [form of] imperialism it was an imperialism tailored to an awareness of the limits to US globalism" (p. 36). Throughout the Cold War there were several attempts to limit the creation and access to nuclear arms made between the US and the USSR. Most other Western nations agreed to a comprehensive nuclear non-proliferation treaty which led to a decline in military spending, especially in the very last years of the Cold War (Dumbrell, 2008). However, as Dumbrell argues, "this new assertion of [global] leadership required a degree of remilitarisation, reversing the decline of defence spending… By 2000 the US was spending $280 Billion annually on defence – a sum completely beyond the aspiration of any rival" (p. 37). While this was not an empire built on expansion, its legitimacy was one based on,

> A complex matrix of military agreements to ensure political influence among its allies: it established base rights and other military relationships through mutual defence treaties and formal alliances… its leadership was deemed to be legitimate only insofar as military power was deployed through multilateral institutions and exercised in cooperation with its allies; and it was conditional upon the US successfully protecting the domestic political autonomy of its allies across the world (Colas & Saull, 2006, p. 13).

With such global influence and prosperity, the American psyche developed with a great emphasis on wealth, culture, patriotism, the obtaining of critical resources, and military might. Bronner (2021) suggests that these sociological beliefs appeared most strongly through the US' new developing pass time, football. Bronner states that "football emerged in

the twentieth century as a bolstering of American triumphalism in the wake of the Cold War" (p. 7). Professor Mark Edmundson (2014) reinforces this view with this statement: "football is a warlike game, and we are now a warlike nation. Our love for football is a love, however self-aware, of ourselves as a fighting and (we hope) victorious people… Baseball is what we were, football is what we have become" (p. 45). Edmundson suggests that the rise of football is not a trivial event but rather the mirroring of the American propensity for violence, destruction, and war. It is an unconscious reflection of the developing psyche and the influence of America's involvement in global scale conflicts within the twentieth century and one that Edmundson claims has always been present in the national identity. Even the US President's personal set of launch codes for the America's nuclear arsenal is commonly referred to as the Nuclear Football (Bronner, 2021). This is one example of how fundamental elements and events have conditioned and developed the American psyche leading to the unconscious filtering of key traits through popular and widely consumed entertainment. Film also became focused on a weaponised US as the most powerful nation in the world, presenting the US as the pivotal point of all conflict other than areas of the world they are or were at war with depending on the context of the film. Either way Americancentricity was and still is the focal point of entertainment created in the states. Christopher Shannon (1996) argues that this is how the sociological imagination works, "[it] enables people to locate themselves temporarily within a period and spatially within circumstances… with those individuals who share their same general circumstances" (p. 139). In doing so, the shared events develop a national psyche that not only surrounds identity of the self but the unconscious anxieties which accompany the construction of this collective identity (p. 143). It provides a palpable way to contend with collective fears and threats without putting oneself in in danger. The events themselves are referential of a collective consciousness that filters through all outputs of culture. This is where the Frankenstein Myth gains a foothold in the Western-American psyche. By the beginning of the twenty-first century,

> American international eminence was indeed extraordinary… In some ways, the
> US was now so unlike other countries – its economic and military power was so
> unchallenged – that cooperative leadership… was scarcely feasible. American
> global leadership was to be increasingly militarised and its global instincts more
> unilateralist (Dumbrell, 2008, p. 38).

This in turn shaped the American psyche and national identity toward the doctrine of manifest destiny (a belief in a dominion and right to spread capitalism and democracy) on a global scale as the American imperium yet anxieties of new threats emerged as the US continued to construct its global influence (Atwood, 2010). This is supported by Eric Avila (2018) who indicates that American suburban culture was heavily influenced by the post war climate. Avila states that "while film, broadcasting, and publishing executives trumpeted their patriotism during the Cold War, often in audacious ways, post war American culture registered a new set of spatial and racial tensions" (p. 200). This cultural output was specifically geared towards the new American image of global prosperity that promoted cultural and racial supremacy and the growing national prejudice towards the Middle East.

5.3 9/11 AND THE THREAT TO THE NEW WORLD ORDER

With the disestablishment of the Soviet empire, the US' global empire was now unchallenged by a comparable superpower and enjoyed the advantages of a global monopoly. The rest of the world was undergoing a global geopolitical transformation due to this new world order. This meant country borders and territories became less emphasised in the face of the growing power of the industrialised Western nations. In the twenty-first century the notion of a war of countries began to fade as "the most cited threats of this period were borderless" (Dumbrell, 2008, p. 152) and are instead linked to ideologically driven individuals or groups rather than nations. Much of this conflict begins with Western intervention in the Middle East to control and regulate the supply of oil. During the Cold War, the US was involved in the Middle East to maintain access and dominance over oil supplies. Throughout the twentieth century, "the industrialised West had enjoyed full access to cheap supplies of imported oil from the Middle East, where two-thirds of the world's proven reserves were located" (Spellman, 2006, p. 177). This was not solely an American endeavour as Britain also had influence in the Middle East through Iraq prior to 1963 (Spellman, 2006, p. 177). America also had influence in Iran and the submission of the absolute monarchy in Saudi Arabia through a symbiotic relationship of supply. The US would have access to Saudi oil in exchange for military guardianship (Atwood, 2010). The US also imposed itself in the complex geopolitical disputes in the Middle East to establish Eastern blocs against the spread of communism and Russian access to Middle Eastern oil. Due to this, the US "ran headlong into the mounting Pan-Arabis, Iranian nationalism and resurgent Islam" (Atwood, 2010, p. 200). This would also dictate future American military

intervention and incursion in Israel, Kuwait, Afghanistan, Iran, and Iraq throughout the latter twentieth century. The dependence on these external sources for oil had a significant effect on the American population, especially with the significant change in oil prices that occurred when access was disrupted by Middle East. Spellman (2006) states that "in 1973 the average price of a barrel of oil was $3.73 USD seven years later, after further disruptions caused by the Iranian Revolution, it was $33.50" (p. 177). This is one example of how this American intervention in a foreign nation began to have influence within the American psyche without being in direct open warfare. This was driven by the continual industrialisation of the West and maintenance of the global American imperium through the need for, and accumulation of, resources. The result of this was a distain for American intervention in the Middle East which nurtured deep resistance to the American agenda. These points lay the groundwork for the next significant event to deeply affect the American psyche and caused calamity throughout the rest of the world, the September 11, 2001, attacks on the World Trade Centre in New York.

On September 11, 2001, the Islamic terrorist group, Al Qaeda highjacked three commercial airliners which were purposefully flown into the twin towers of the World Trade Centre. Another attacked the Pentagon. The final attempt failed its attack due to the hostage passengers sacrificing themselves by crashing the plane in Pennsylvania (Ambrose & Brinkley, 2011). Thousands of civilians were killed in the most horrific terrorist attack in US history, "…footage of the destruction – smoke and ash rolling around in plumes and clouds in New York City… blanketed households in all fifty states and beyond" (Ambrose & Brinkley, 2011, p. 482). These images have become cemented as some of the most polarising and shocking of the twenty-first century. The international and civilian centre of the most powerful country on the planet had just been attacked. As Ambrose and Brinkley state "[terrorists] had punctured the post-Cold War myth of national security and geographical invincibility in just a few hours" (p. 462). Unlike the many wars the US had been involved in around the world that shaped the American psyche, this attack happened on American soil on non-military targets, using civilian transport services as weapons by an enemy that was not defined by flag or border. Suddenly the conventions of military action changed in an instant, and civilian centres all over the world were in potential danger (Hamner, 2008). These threats were individuals, not nations. Unseen, undetectable, and able to be anywhere in the world at any time, armed with devices small enough to conceal yet do devastating damage (especially with the comprehensive and rapid development of technology).

The most significant aspect of the attack, from a cultural and social perspective, took place in the aftermath. It was a fundamental shift in the American psyche that was constructed by the events of and following the Cold War. As a direct attack on the nations people, it not only reshaped the American psyche, but would go on to change the world order. Ambrose and Brinkley (2011) indicate that though harmony and naiveite had vanished, "the miracle of America occurred. A transformative wave of post – 9/11 patriotism… fanned out across the nation, there was a sense of belonging, as confusion lifted and the dark cloud of hate dissipated, pride swelled forth… in a ubiquitous display of the star-spangled banner" (p. 462). In the moment of one of the greatest twenty-first century tragedies, two significant factors occurred within the American psyche. The first was a revitalised conviction in American patriotism of duty, honour, and allegiance to counter the terror (Carlisle, 2007). The second was an overwhelming sense of fear, prejudice, revenge, and hatred. Similarly, to the Roman understanding of civic Romanus, (the assured safety of its citizens to walk freely and express themselves within the empire through the threat of the full might of the empire's military), Americans had developed a similar view of the dominant nature of American culture, its might, and prosperity. As Victor Davis Hanson (2022) states, "equally important for democracy is a sense of place, a common landscape in which American citizens are free and feel secure to craft their own culture and protect their laws and customs—without constant foreign threats, demographic pressures, and migratory challenges" (p. 5). The fact that Americans had been killed on US soil, a place where they were assured safety against the aggressions of militant countries by a foreign terrorist group, warranted vengeance. As the US was the ultimate world superpower that had taken on the responsibility of global security, this attack on New York was not to go unanswered (Ambrose & Brinkley, 2011). This event not only reshaped the American internal and external attitudes, but it also divided the rest of the world into a new order dominated by an American lead Western cultural empire. A new borderless, ideological threat, and similar fear of the East, that was so prominent in the Victorian era, now polarised the Western world and all media forms became intrenched in producing content around the unfolding events, themes, and fears. Since the attack there have been a multitude of films that have dealt with the war on terror and terrorism as a key thematic nuance within the narrative. These same films have also promoted racism against Arabs and prejudice against Islam vilifying all members of race and faith for the actions of a small terrorist cell. It has also provided a chronotope and context for contemporary films to be constructed with a significant refocus on US strength as a global power. This is seen

particularly through the themes of technological and scientific advancement which are utilised to embellish the superiority of the US. This can be seen throughout my three franchises that have a heavy Americancentric focus. While the result of these hypothetical scientific and technological advancements are framed with a dystopic lens, it is still US scientists and initiatives that propel these developments.

5.4 THE TECHNOLOGICAL REVOLUTION: A BRAVE NEW WORLD OF SYNTHETIC REPRODUCTION, HUMAN AUGMENTATION, AND ENTERTAINMENT

While I have offered two global conflicts that have shaped the Western-American psyche and by extension the contextual foundation for the narrative of contemporary Western media, the next factor I want to discuss is the development of technology and its effect on the climate of American culture. I believe that it is through the technological advancements and the effect they have on the cultural and social atmosphere that the Frankenstein Myth bleeds through the psyche and remains relevant.[6] It is important to reiterate here that it is a commonly accepted notion that *Frankenstein* (1818) has become synonymous with science running amok and amoral technological and scientific development. This is the essence of the myth and how it appears. However, how it resurges and functions in contemporary narratives is what I am primarily interested in, so it is important to understand the context of technological development before analysing the franchises.

As indicated earlier, Bronner (2021) suggests that at the turn of the millennium there was an increase of national interest in technological innovation and mechanisation based on modern scientific advances in America. This development follows the trend of the twentieth century which is marked by the significant advances in science and technology throughout wartime and global conflict. Spellman (2006) stipulates this by stating that, following the two World Wars, the twentieth century was,

> [m]arked by a wide range of advances in science (defined as efforts to understand the natural world) and technology (the application of science to achieve specific objectives), the sum of which transformed the natural environment and humanity's place in it (Spellman, 2006, p. 231).

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[6] See Figures 1 and 2, p. 50-52

These developments were considered strategic importance to the war effort. Factors such as health sciences, communications, aviation, and computer technology as scientists, engineers, and specialists became government employees in unprecedented numbers with heavily regulated economies geared towards national security. Proliferation of such technological development ensured acceleration which laid the foundation for the late twentieth and early twenty-first century developments. Once again, like the rapid developments of the Victorian period, these modern and contemporary developments have become significant within all media but especially film with an interest in the dystopic application of such technology. This in turn allows for the themes of the Frankenstein Myth to bleed through the western psyche and remain relevant.[7] In this section, I will focus on two technologies; the biotechnological innovation of cloning, and the development of mobile technology and human augmentation. These two technological innovations are embedded in the Western-American psyche due to their implicit relationship with popular culture. Prior to their development, both technologies began as concepts found in science fiction and have since become pivotal points in the cultural psyche (Johnson, 2011).

Cloning

Francis Fukuyama (2002) states that "biotechnology… in the future will mix with great potential benefits with threats that are either physical and overt, or spiritual and subtle…" (p. 11). The benefits are plentiful. The potential to manufacture critical internal organs, stem cell research that could cure Alzheimer's, and vaccine research that has the ability to ward off and aid in curing deadly diseases to name a few (Fukuyama, 2002). However, the act and possibility of cloning is one that has been well documented throughout science fiction (Haran et al., 2008). John Harris (2004) states that cloning is a phenomenon that "has gripped the public imagination" (p. 1) and that "the mere mention of the word cloning sells books, films, and even news stories" (p. 2). *Jurassic Park* (1993) is a critical example of this as one of the most recognisable cinematic narratives that contends with the subject of cloning. The reason it is so effective as a thematic tool in science fiction and leaves such an impression is because the technology has the potential to transgress the boundary of what humanity deems socially, culturally, spiritually, and philosophically natural. This is all while keeping within the ethics and morals of the anthropocentrist perspective (a factor I will be discussing further in my analysis chapters).

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[7] See Figure 1, p. 50

This shift from fiction to fact is a difference to the previous contexts explored in this chapter. This is stipulated by Joan Haran et al. (2008) who state that the "the late twentieth and early twenty-first century developments in the bio sciences… are so often identified as challenging ideas about what is fact and what is fiction" (p. 7). This is especially emphasised by Lee Silver, a biologist at Princeton University who states in Gina Kolata's (1997) *New York Times* article about Dolly (the cloned sheep), "it's unbelievable. It basically means that there are no limits. It means all of science fiction is true. They said it could never be done and now her it is, done before the year 2000" (p. 1). This goes to show the following socio-cultural reactions that began to occur (Hopkins, 1998). The first was that these "oscillations between fact and fiction have shaped and added to the complexity of… cloning discourse in the USA… they also highlight the importance of looking at fact/fiction boundaries and the discursive intersections between (Hollywood) film and news events to interpret these developments" (Haran, et al., 2008, p. 57). The second occurred on a political level with the legitimising of the ethical complications that cloning posed. In 2006 US President George W. Bush, in his State of the Union address, tried to incentivise the audience to see the need for legislation, "tonight, I ask you to pass legislation to prohibit… human cloning in all its forms… [and] creating human animal hybrids" (Bush, 2006). This was a significant move on the political stage in response to the biotechnologies that were coming into play from the initial development of Dolly the sheep. While cloning has not progressed much further since the success of Dolly, it still poses significant cultural anxiety. Especially in terms of the potential of human cloning. Here the themes of the Frankenstein Myth are clearly transmutable especially challenge to the natural order and monstrous bodies as cloning offers a logical contemporary method of unnatural reproduction that has the potential to have dire consequences.

Mobile Technology

The next technological development I would like to discuss is the creation and implementation of mobile technology. Since the advent of the cell phone and personal, portable laptop, technology has gone on to reshape the Western-American Psyche. This is a technology that is under constant development and is one that continues to evolve and breach into new frontiers of technological innovation. It is also another technology that has found itself embedded within science fiction narratives prior to development in the late-twentieth century. The advent of the cell phone and touch screen technology found popular inspiration in *Star Trek.* The proposition of the fictious scenario presents a possible hypothesis of how

developing technology depicts various potential futures shaped by said technology (Dinello, 2013). In America in the 1990s "computing and electronics manufacturers, mass media outlets, and consumers realised the full potential of digital technologies enabling the formation of a new culture industry" (Avila, 2018, p. 274). This led to the accelerated development and integration of technologies surrounding rapid communications (such as mobile technology) and the launch of the World Wide Web, a global digital platform for the transmission of communications which quickly became a new frontier of virtual space and existence (Avila, 2018; Flanagan, 2014). The development of these technologies not only changed the Western-American psyche but also the fabric of our societies. As stated by Fang et al. (2020) "nowadays, human-computer interaction is an essential part of most people's daily life… (wireless technology) has greatly facilitated the interaction between people and computers… [wearable devices also] acquire other kinds of information such as heart rate, blood pressure, and time spent exercising…" (p. 3). The uptake in wireless mobile technology has led to constant contact with devices, including the soft bonding of devices to our bodies via our wrists such as smart watches. The result is that "a personal daily data collection portal and decision support platform… is more closely connected to individuals and the environment, and thus can serve human beings" (p. 4). It also blends into the environment as a static tool, implement, or machine that humanity is unconsciously reliant on to survive. Through this technology there is greater exposure and reliance to technology that lightly augments the human body.

With the development of a virtual reality (the internet) and steppingstones to human augmentation and enhancement (mobile technology) the notion of a cybernetically enhanced future has come to fruition. Tamara Garcia and Ronald Sandler (2014) define human enhancement technologies as "any technology that improve or augment some core cognitive, physical, perceptual, or psychological human capacities" (p. 253). Though these are what is referred to as external enhancements that augment existing human capacities without modifying the biological core, it is still by definition an external human enhancement by a technological source. These enhancements mean that humanity now exists within a virtual reality on a global level, able to interact with the world via technology, and now have enhanced cognitive abilities due to external technology that we carry and wear. This has reshaped the Western-American Psyche as people are now exposed to more information through many different media outlets. It has led to a reliance on ethically questionable technology which has an intermate relationship with day to day lives of the people who

utilise them (van de Poel, 2018). The climate of fear and uncertainty on a cultural level is still developing as the technology develops. Robots, biotechnology, and other forms of easily identifiable technology raise ethical and moral concerns. It has anticipated problems around societal implementation, mobile and communication technologies within the public sphere and have enhanced the human experience (van de Poel, 2018). High reliance and trust which has reshaped how humanity interacts with people and the world around them is indicative of how this technology has affected the Western-American psyche. This has changed the climate of interaction. Exposure to global events in real time, media and entertainment, mass recording and surveillance, has created interconnectivity on a new virtual reality platform allowing for mass communication. Naturally there have been anxieties that have surrounded this level of exposure such as George Orwell's *1984* (1949) and continue to be concerns surrounding further implementation in the future, such as Elon Musk's internal enhancement technology to augment the brain through Neuralink, or Mark Zuckerberg's aim to augment the world around us with a social media wearable optical device to cast humanity into what he refers to as the metaverse (Guan et al, 2022; Kahn & Vanian, 2022). Unlike cloning, there are continued rapid advancements of this technology which is being integrated quickly into society which are present within the implications posed by the Frankenstein Myth.

The American Science Fiction Film and the Advent of Streaming

Another phenomenon critical to the development of this Western-American psyche I would like to discuss is the rise in the visual medium of communication through film. I have touched upon the role of film in projecting American culture throughout the West, but not the rise in popularity of science fiction that has dominated American film since the late twentieth century. The advent of streaming in the twenty-first century has also provided greater access to visual content and also opened doors to a wider variety of visual content (Skoll, 2016). The 1960s saw the rise of science fiction within American film and television prompted by the scientific and technological advances of the twentieth century (Telotte, 2004). Many of these advances were deeply rooted within Cold War moments such as the "development of nuclear weapons, the space race, and the war in Vietnam… and the complete integration of computer technology in network society" (Geraghty, 2009, p. 2). These years also marked "the growth of the blockbuster and changes to the Hollywood film industry" (Geraghty, 2009, p. 2). With this development and the spread of American culture (as explored previously) the film industry became institutionalised and accessible throughout Western civilisation under the

American imperium allowing the Frankenstein Myth to maintain its cultural relevance and position in the cultural psyche.

It is important to state here that the nature of science fiction is subject to change with the ever-changing nature of science and technology. Jonas Mekas (2016) states that,

Only the cinema that is always awake, always changing, can reveal, describe, make us conscious of, hint at what we really are and what we are not, what we hate or what we need, or reveal the true beauty; only this cinema has the proper words for it (p. 56).

Science fiction is this type of cinematic medium as it is critically embedded in the cultural psyche of its contemporary audience and serves to offer a lens that incorporates and layers many different messages and meanings surrounding science and technology and its effect on humanity. This is stipulated by Sherryl Vint (2021) who states that, "science fiction grapples with the ways science and technology shape and change human lives… as most practitioners and fans of science fiction would agree that much if not all science extrapolates from known science" (p. 10-13). This is how the science fiction genre continues to evolve and acts as a filter for the unconscious cultural psyche of Americanism which is able to contend with and produce images of what might be. This is also seen though franchisation, where narratives and sub narratives are subject to change for the evolving technological and scientific developments as well as the ever-changing audiences through prequels and sequels. J.P Telotte (2004) states that science fiction film has the ability to "hold up that reason-science-technology triad for our inspection to trace the unsaid and unseen of culture, particularly of a technological culture like modern America…" (p. 32). It is these factors of history, culture and society which drive the narrative of these films as established in the Western-American psyche which has been succinctly changed with the evolution of the viewer experience.

In 2007, the mail order platform Netflix, launched their online, on demand streaming service which was a significant shift in how the Western world digests visual media. Rather than relying on prime-time broadcasting, this streaming model allows on demand viewing, anytime and anywhere (Grandinetti, 2017). This was not a war or a breakthrough in weapons development, but a ground-breaking technological advance in broadcasting that reshaped audience expectations and reactions to how they received media in their homes. One significant factor that is critical to this reshaping psyche is the direct interaction the audience has with this method of broadcasting. No longer is popularity dictated by a scheduled

viewing platform or a national broadcasting standard. This has allowed new content to break the mould, be more daring with its visual experience, and challenge prior perceptions of acceptable standards for visual content from an ethical and moral standpoint. Rather than countries dictating their standards through state-controlled broadcasting standards, content from an American service is presented straight to the audience through an online medium. Internet standards for content allow much more freedom for producers to create what Grandinetti (2017) refers to as "more bingeable – more propulsive and page turning- than anything networks ever pushed on us in the past" (p. 39). This is a viewing experience that "occurs in concert with human nature and desire…" (p. 40). It changed the nature of the way material is viewed and in many cases has increased how often visual media is digested. All of these factors suggest that the content is more visceral and exciting than what had been broadcast before. It is also more challenging to the audiences as the content is able to indulge anxieties on a more constant and deeper level. Netflix and the other multitude of streaming sites now engage more regularly and immediately with developing cultures and politics. The immediacy, ease of interaction, and ease of access has reshaped the Western-American psyche to be constantly interacting with visual media in an already technologically dominant culture and society. Due to this unprecedented access to visual media, I argue that the Frankenstein Myth has never been more widely digested than in contemporary Western society. Nor has it been more relevant now since the original texts conception in the nineteenth century. This ties directly into this thesis' unique contribution to the field as the study of the franchises allows for the data of Frankenstein echoes to compound and presents an opportunity for a cross analysis of how the echoes appear differently into two different centuries of culture.

5.5 SUMMARY

Through all these events we can see how the American psyche has developed as a global phenomenon. If you want to see the extent of the Americanisation on the world, just look for the golden arches of McDonalds and see how far they have spread. While this filtration of American culture is one built on the back of political, militant, and ideological warfare, and global dominance, its breadth is best witnessed by its influence over the economy and Western popular culture. The expression of these collective events that are so fundamental to the Western-American psyche are also best seen unconsciously through the capitalist mediums of popular media as key plot points,

themes, and overarching placements of background visual information (Ezra, 2017). This is why it is important to contextualise the contemporary atmosphere of the United States through these socio-cultural events that have taken place. They lend context to how the Frankenstein Myth develops in particular ways within filmic narratives.[8] It is crucial to iterate that I am not assuming a direct correlation between these events and a conscious expression of these themes. What I do suggest is that these themes are the filtered through a collective psyche which provides an unconscious reoccurring narrative that can be tracked through a filmic medium which can be seen in the model presented in my rationale chapter.[9] To truly understand this echo it is important to understand the socio-cultural and socio-historical events that create the environment that these anxieties filter through into a visual thematic format. In the next chapter I will begin my analysis of the films with the *Terminator* (1984-present) franchise. This chapter will primarily contend with the theme of boundary transgressions in science as the *Terminator* (1984-present) franchise presents the technological posthuman and the conception of sentient artificial intelligence that challenges the current moral and ethical boundaries of scientific and technological development. It is important to reiterate that the other themes will also present themselves as this is an analysis driven by an intertextual and interdisciplinary methodology using a hypertextual model. This enables the analysis to be more peripheral and easily adaptable between different themes and nuances that present themselves within the franchises. This is primarily what makes this analysis unique as it will allow for a flexible discussion surrounding the resurgence of the echoes of the Frankensteinian narrative with reference to other disciplines and narratives. The result will be a clear evaluation of how the Frankenstein Myth has adapted into twenty-first century narratives and how they continue to evolve.

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[8] See Tables 1,2, and 3, p. 59-70 to see how this development occurs in each franchise and Appendix A, Table 4 to see the thematic trends throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

[9] See Figure 1, p. 50

6: TERMINATED: TRANSGRESSIVE SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL CHALLENGES TO ANTHROPOCENTRISM AND THE POTENTIAL OF THE FUTURISTIC POSTHUMAN AND THE TRANSHUMAN.

6.1 INTRODUCTION

It is appropriate, following on from the analysis of the development of the Western-American Empire under Cold War tensions, to begin my thematic chapters with the *Terminator* (1984-present) franchise. Nuclear proliferation shapes much of the cultural consciousness of the twentieth century. Films, books, television shows, video games, and graphic novels (among other media) have all been used to echo the theme 'threat of nuclear war and its consequences.' This is due to the widespread anxiety caused by nuclear tensions between the US and Russia among other major global powers. The world had gone from pre-modern technology such as oil lamps and horse drawn carriages, to the widespread use of electricity as a utility, air travel, the nuclear bomb, first personal computers, space travel, global communications, and the first mobile phone technology within 100 years (Schwab, 2017). Rapid technological development provides an ideal environment for mounting anxiety. This is similar to the advent of harnessing electricity in the nineteenth century (Harkup, 2018). As technological developments begin to transgress moral and ethical boundaries in science, will this technology overwhelm humanity? Will it make human services redundant? And will it cause human extinction? These are some implications of the hypothetical scenarios posed in our fictions that contend with technological development (Baum et al, 2019). This is also where the Frankenstein Myth continues to resurge through its thematic nuances. It is challenging questions around the potential of technology that keep the Frankenstein Myth relevant within the contemporary Western-American psyche. As explored in the previous chapter, the nuclear bomb had already begun to create a climate of fear. In 1984 James Cameron's *Terminator* was released. It engages with all of the anxieties that were prompted by Cold War tensions and rapid technological development (Holt, 2008). The premise of the film suggests that humanity would create the method of its own destruction through Skynet, an artificially intelligence defence system who would identify humanity as the most immediate threat to world peace. To solve this problem, Skynet launched all the nuclear warheads in the US causing 'Judgement Day'.

Terminator (1984) creates an environment where these fears surrounding the misuse of technology are realised. This creates a polarising franchise that continues to adjust itself to changing contemporary anxieties around technology. The Frankensteinian theme of boundary transgressions in science becomes clearly present in the subtext of the film making the franchise implicit to the Frankenstein Myth. This chapter will look at the most recent additions to the franchise with reference to the original instalment and how the franchise connects to the Myth while continuing to echo the theme of boundary transgressions in science through artificial intelligence, complex cybernetics, and human augmentation.

The *Terminator* (1984-present) franchise remains one of the key cinematic examples of rogue artificial intelligence and weaponised cybernetic organisms as science fiction visions of the future within popular culture. Since 1984, the name 'Skynet' has become a synonymous reference for the fear of the potential posthuman and transhuman threat posed by artificial intelligence. This continues with the rising complexities in technological development and its integration into the everyday Western world. Naturally, these narratives continue to evolve with time as new technology has been developed and scientific hypothesises have been proven or improved. To reiterate Dinello (2013),

> "if we are approaching a dangerous threshold of posthuman evolution, or singularity – a twilight zone where our old model must be discarded and a new reality rules – science fiction helps us envision that new reality. The best science fiction extrapolates from known technology and projects a vision of the future against which we can evaluate present technology and its direction" (p. 5).

It has become clear within the analysis of the franchises that posthumanism and transhumanism is a critical nuance within the Frankenstein Myth. They signal the appearance of the monstrous body as well as providing a foundation to analyse the implications of how these bodies challenge core anthropocentric anxieties. Understanding the difference between posthumanism and transhumanism is significant in the context of cybernetic organisms, artificial intelligence, and human augmentation. This is because postmodern, posthuman, and transhuman theorists argue competing theories surrounding the nature of these phenomena as either separate categories or synonymous terms. The two terms are often difficult to separate and distinguish from one another and are often used interchangeably (Roden, 2015). Seminal scholar of the posthuman, Rosi Braidotti (2013) states that, "the debates in mainstream culture range from… robotics, prosthetic technologies, neuroscience, biogenetics, visions of

transhumanism, and techno-transcendence" (p. 2). Based on Braidotti's statement, transhumanism and posthumanism are one in the same. Michael Hauskeller et al. (2016) also uses the terms transhuman and posthuman interchangeably. Whereas Robert Ranisch and Stefan Lorenz Sorgner (2014) argue that there is no commonly understood conception of the posthuman except a vague imagery of what comes after the human. These images are typically inspired by technological advancement where singularity is reached whether through artificial intelligence, or technological transcendence through achieving consciousness and/or self-awareness. They also distinguish transhumanism from posthumanism by arguing that transhumanism can be understood as a radical transformation or 'transcendence' of humanity's existence, capacities, and social conditions by means of technology. This is supported by Dieter Birnbacher (2008) Hauskeller (2016), and Susan B. Levin (2021) who also stipulate that posthumanism and transhumanism are separate terms which inspire distinct imagery; the posthuman as an entity that comes after the human whereas the transhuman is a corporal form that requires the human body to exist. Ranisch and Sorgner (2014) suggest that "these [transhuman] transformations are widely perceived as human enhancement or augmentation" (p. 8). The implications of these iterations of posthumanism and transhumanism pose a challenge to the biological human form by transcending it as a conscious artificial intelligence or augmenting through the symbiosis of machine and flesh. In doing so they threaten to challenge the natural order and transgress the ethical and moral boundaries of science (Zalloua, 2021). Here we can see how the echoes of *Frankenstein* (1818) have shifted into a contemporary aesthetic beyond the text. This is what this thesis is contributing to the scholarship as my approach departs from the text by purely focusing on the thematic nuances that have echoed through popular culture.

Science fiction imagines the implications of experimentation with these new posthuman and transhuman technologies while contending with the ethical, moral, and existential questions they pose in the context of a particular time. Whether past, present, or future the Frankenstein Myth is unconsciously embedded in the subtext of thematically relevant texts such as *Terminator* (1984). The *Terminator* (1984-present) franchise has also evolved its ongoing narrative surrounding the appearance of new post and transhuman technologies as scientific fields. As Arthur Kroker (2014) suggests, "we are already living at the accelerating tip of the posthuman future… the highly experimental, definitely utopian language of technology has delivered us to a future that is unmistakably novel… yet also poses an uncertain digital future" (p. 2). It is this uncertainty that brings these dystopian narratives like

the *Terminator* (1984-present) franchise to the foreground and aligns them with fields of enquiry within the scientific disciplines. To reiterate the monster in this context is dystopic technological potential personified. The technology is the basis of the anxieties present in the film allowing for the Frankenstein Myth to inhabit the subtext through the theme, boundary transgressions in science. It is also important to establish how this thesis will contend with the corporeal and temporal technologies that are contended within the franchise, and what specific anxieties are inherent in their use. The corporeal technologies in question are cybernetic organisms, artificial intelligence, the evolution of machines, and the proliferation of said technology. The notion of these technologies expose the vulnerability of humanity's self-imposed anthropocentrist foundations which is the core of the common anxieties present in the films.

Terminator: *Genisys* (2015) and *Terminator: Dark Fate* (2019) are the contemporary additions to the franchise. They represent a significant change in the narrative, presenting alternative timelines to that of the original films and a distinct evolution of the Frankenstein Myth within the franchise.[10] The two films do not follow a linear narrative which is a unique quality compared to the other franchises in this thesis. The films will be analysed by release order beginning with *Genisys* (2015)*,* a film that veers from the core narrative of the franchise*. Genisys* (2015) breaks the paradox that has bound the franchise together and attempts to offer a new alternate reality. This new reality sees Skynet attempting to undo the previous paradox by sending a terminator further into the past to kill a young Sarah Connor. *Dark Fate* (2019) removes John Connor from the narrative entirely and establishes a new prophet who establishes a new resistance against a new technological threat. Because of this, it is important to give a summary of the narrative of the initial instalment, *Terminator* (1984). The film introduces its audience to the original binary of the retroactive and potential futuristic timelines through the unification of the two leading characters, Sarah Connor, and Kyle Reese. Reese is a soldier who has been sent back from a dystopian future reality where an artificially intelligent security program called Skynet develops consciousness and deems humanity to be the true enemy instead of any single nation or individual. On the verge of its defeat at the hands of humanity's survivors, Skynet sends a cyborg back to the past to prevent this resistance before it even has the chance to happen by killing the mother of its leader John

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[10] See Table 2, p. 62

Connor. Reese is sent through Skynet's time displacement software to hunt the cyborg and protect Sarah to ultimately preserve the timeline by also fathering John.

TERMINATOR: GENISYS (2015)

6.2 THE MANIPULATION OF TIME: THE CONNOR PARADOX

The notion of time travel plays a predominant role in the *Terminator* (1984-present) franchise and presents another translation of transhumanism. Time is critical to the human experience of the world and is something taken for granted as a natural phenomenon. However, this is inherently false. As theoretical physicist, Carlo Rovelli (2018) states,

> We conventionally think of time as something simple and fundamental that flows uniformly, independently from everything else., from the past to the future, measured by clocks and watches. The events of the universe succeed in an orderly way: pasts, presents and futures. The past is fixed, the future is open… and yet all of this has turned out false (p. 2).

Time by nature is a relative theory established by experiences of each individual appearing as series of lineal events categorically organised as 'earlier' or 'later'. This gives the impression of a progressive and measurable timeline; something that Albert Einstein (2004) states we have now applied various systems of events to that can be counted, that are integral to our existence (p. 2). Einstein also popularised the idea of the spacetime continuum, "where space and time represent dimensions unified to contain past, present and future" (Sider, 2009, p. 661). Though we track time with devices, the theory of time relatively argues that time is not exact but rather speeds up and slows down. Einstein (2004) believes that time as a concept, is relative and is impossible to identify as a figment of natural science or psychology (Myers, 2004). Due to these fundamental and popular notions of time as a motion or progression, time travel at its core presents a significant challenge to humanity's anthropocentrist sensibility. As time qualifies as a theory derived from the position of the sun in the sky and when we instinctually choose to sleep more than an exact science, time travel unravels a more complex notion of how time and space operate on a physical and metaphysical level. The past can be visited, and the future can be manipulated directly or indirectly as a butterfly effect. Alternative timelines manifest when time is changed, or the aberration in the timeline manifests the new future. What can be deduced from this is that

time, as it is commonly understood, is a theoretical concept derived to aid in solidifying humanity's day to day existence and place within history and reality.

The theory of time travel has the potential to undermine the notion of human progress and challenge the preconceived notion that history is unchangeable. Challenges to the human body would fundamentally be traumatic to the foundation and understanding of humanity's place in the universe. However, the prospect of a challenge to humanity's past, in essence the events which have carried humanity as a species through its development to the dominant species that it is, let alone the fabric of scientific, cultural, and social developments, is an insidious prospect. As John Burrow (2009) states,

> History, even if we allow it to be in its broadest sense a single kind of activity, is nonetheless a highly diverse one. Plagues, invasions, emigrations; the foundation, working and development of constitutional arrangements and political systems; wars, external and civil resolutions, changes in religion and culture, gradual or abrupt, the formation of various kinds of collective identity – confessional, national, ideological… all of these and much else are properly regarded as history (p. 13).

To challenge human history through the notion of manipulating time and by extension the past, would hypothetically be to erase all of the crucial developments, institutions, constitutions, collective identities and ultimately challenge the core of human agency and identity. Based on this, the notion of time travel correlates with the Frankenstein Myth on the premise of the threat this technology poses to the human identity and transgresses preconceived ethical and moral boundaries of science. It is important to reiterate that this is not a case of whether time travel is a scientific possibility nor whether the *Terminator* (1984-present) instalments seriously contend with this possibility. As Paul J. Nahin (2017) states "fictions are exercises in the imagination" (p. 27). This thesis deals with the potential of scientific possibilities as presented in cinematic science fiction narratives in accordance with the Frankenstein Myth. It is important to state that while these are exercises in the imagination, science fiction continues to open a necessary dialogue surrounding the implications of scientific and technological progression. The contemporary world is entering into an unprecedented phase of rapid technological progression. With these potential impacts being so deep, human life does have the potential to be irreversibly transformed (Kurzweil, 2009). While these transformations and transgressions will not necessarily take on the form

of a dystopian reality, it is important to keep in mind that previous technological revolutions have espoused all manner of destructive, dangerous, and potentially cruel technology (Schwab, 2017). As Robert Proctor (2002) states "the routine practice of science can so easily coexist with routine exercise of cruelty and [destruction]" (p. 278). This is an important lesson to remember when considering the implications and the potential of fictional technologies.

The *Terminator* (1984-present) franchise is a retroactive spiral of events that loops and compounds within the same timeline. Each instalment is a series of moves and counter moves between John and Skynet. Both John and Skynet send back a terminator unit to various times in history to undo the others effort.[11] Each time John wins, Skynet's creation never happens, and Judgement Day is postponed. Despite this victory, the protagonists' still prepare for Skynet's seemingly inevitable creation. Until *Genisys* (2015) the franchise had never concerned itself with what happens following the destruction of Skynet due to this inevitability. *Genisys* (2015) at first appears to have come full circle in the time loop to send Reese back in time to begin the cycle again. John, following through on his mother's information that she learnt from Reese, believes he knows what is coming and how to ensure the success of the resistance.

> Connor: Skynet knew it was losing so it tried to rig the game. It sent a terminator back to a time before the war.
>
> Soldier two: Then who's the target?
>
> Connor: My mother. Sarah Connor. If the machine succeeds, I will never be born. They will kill her first and in doing so erase every victory we have fought for including tonight's. There will not be a resistance to challenge the machines with this one act, Skynet will win.
>
> Reese: I will volunteer. I will go back.
>
> Connor: Why should I send you? Over all of them?
>
> Reese: Because I would die for Sarah Connor.

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[11] See Table 2, p. 62 to see a summary of these events.

> Connor: All these people would die for Sarah Connor. What makes you any different?

> Reese: You know why. Everything you have told me about her. I know her, John. Let me save her (Taylor, 2015, 14:11).

The time travel narrative that defines the *Terminator* (1984-present) franchise up to this point is summarised in John's words,

> Connor: If the machine succeeds, I will never be born (Taylor, 2015, 13:40).

John already knows the outcome of these events as he has already lived through them. The outcome is only predetermined if Reese is sent back in time and conceives John with Sarah. It has to be a choice Reese makes on his own. John, as evidenced by the indented quote above, has made Sarah a desirable figure for Reese. John is the aberration in the timeline as the child of past and future; a character that disrupts the human notion of time and could be identified as a form of transhuman. To reiterate, transhumanism can be understood as a radical transformation or transcendence of the human's existence, capacities, and social conditions by means of technology (Ranisch and Sorgner, 2014). John's existence is tied to the development of time travel technology and is the result of the past and future coming together. Only through this technology is this possible. John's status as an example of a transhuman archetype, is a subject that we will return to later on in the chapter. Firstly, I want to continue the analysis of time travel and elaborate on its transgressive components in regard to the *Terminator* (1984-present) franchise as *Genisys* (2015) challenges and changes these crucial plot points as outlined by John in the opening moments of the film.

While the *Terminator* (1984-present) franchise does not claim to be an accurate representation of various time travel hypotheses, it is still one of the most recognisable examples of time travel in science fiction cinema (Wittenberg, 2016). It also provides a technological method to transgress the scientific theory of time travel and an attempt rationalise how time travel is logical and possible. While time travel used to be a romantic idea which adhered to the notion of a progressive form of history found within Enlightenment thinking, time travel narratives have been subject to change with new developments in scientific knowledge (Nahin, 2017). This notion of time travel is changing present and future events by travelling back into the past to alter the timeline. This is a significant factor in discussing the nature of *Genisys* (2015) and *Dark Fate* (2019) as the alternative storylines

which deviate from the initial narrative within the franchise. Wittenberg's (2016) statement also indicates that the popularity of the sciences has given rise to a renewed interest in science fiction, a genre that engaged with a conceptualised form of rationality and cognition making these fictions seem more realistic. The popularity of physics and the hypothetical notion of time travel began to break boundaries from fantasy to engage with science fiction. As narratives begin engaging with a form of scientific rationality that sought to explain the process beyond merely the magical act of time travel, these narratives began to offer believable scenarios (Nahin, 2017). Ryan Wasserman (2018) attempts to break down various hypotheses of time travel and their paradoxes as presented in popular culture. The one that appears to relate to James Cameron's (1984) initial notion of time travel are the 'paradoxes of freedom' which Wasserman (2018) states, "are among the most famous arguments against time travel, and have been discussed by many philosophers, scientists, and science fiction authors. They are also among the most important puzzles of time travel, since they raise significant questions about time, fate, and moral responsibility" (p. 71). There are two theories that encapsulate Skynet's goal and provide critical purpose as to why John sends Reese to save Sarah. The first, Wasserman (2018), refers to this as the 'grandfather paradox.' It is the notion that, "if backward time travel were possible, then you would be able to travel back in time and kill your paternal grandfather (or your great-great-great-grandfather). Moreover, you would be able to do this before your father was ever conceived" (p. 70). While Skynet is no relation of John's (aside from being the reason that John exists) it believes that the only way to stop the resistance from succeeding in defeating itself was to prevent John from being born. John, on the other hand is aware that his existence is not just reliant on saving his mother, but also sending Reese back into the future. The notion of the paradox ultimately dictates that if one has complete autonomy in the past and is able to change the present without causing an alternate reality, then one has the ability to create paradoxes such as John's birth. John's existence is predicated on Skynet interfering with history. To create this paradox, the *Terminator* (1984-present) franchise presents the audience with a complex time manipulation narrative that presents two individuals from two different points in time converging to create an anomaly in the space-time continuum resulting in the birth of John and the defeat of Skynet (Devlin, 2008). In the context of the narrative, this new reality acts as a continuation of a time loop where John sends his biological father back to protect his mother.

The second time manipulation theory is what James Gleick (2016) calls a predestination paradox; the attempt to influence and change what is bound to happen which in turn brings about the current reality in the first place. Wittenberg (2016) elaborates on this by indicating that this particular form of fiction, "achieves a certain apotheosis with the time loop story" (p. 218). Sarah asks if Reese and the terminator are from the future to which Reese responds,

> Reese: one possible future. From your point of view (Cameron, 1984, 40:14).

Reese does not have any knowledge of the process that sent him back in time nor has John revealed to Reese that he is John's biological father. This is shown by Reese's interview with the criminal psychologist Peter Silberman who asks Reese to elaborate on his mission,

> Silberman: this computer, thinks it can win by killing the mother of its enemy, killing him, in effect, before he is even conceived? A sort of retroactive abortion?

> Reese: the defensive grid was smashed. We had taken the mainframes. We had won. Taking out [John] Connor then would make no difference. Skynet had to wipe out his entire existence. We captured the lab complex. Found the time-displacement equipment but the terminator had already gone through (Cameron, 1984, 54:14).

Reese gives no indication that he knows his mission involves falling in love with Sarah. Especially when his affection for Sarah confuses him after they share an intimate night together that results in the conceiving of John. It is Reese's sacrifice and love for Sarah that assures John's existence and victory. This point is stipulated by Sider (2009) who discusses the difficulty of a paradox free time travel narrative and indicates that the first *Terminator* (1984) instalment is an example of such a narrative. Sider's perspective focuses on Reese's role in saving Sarah and the determination that she is in no real danger. The audience is already aware that John has been leading the resistance and as such Sarah must survive to give birth to him,

> Think of Reese. He knows the terminator will fail since he knows that John Connor exists as it was Connor who sent him back to the past. Yet he fears for Sarah Connors life, works hard to protect her, and in the end gives his life to save her… as certain as he once was that Sarah Connor will survive, he has become equally certain about the danger presented by the terminator (p. 671-672).

Reese in this sense is meant to die for his son and Sarah's safety. It is not a predetermined factor or a fixed point in time. Had Sarah been killed by the terminator then that would have created a paradox akin to Wasserman's description of the grandfather paradox (Wasserman, 2018). It is Reese's intervention which brings John into being and ensures Sarah's safety. Sarah expresses her own confusion in the closing moments of the film surrounding Reese's intervention when she makes recordings for John to prepare him for the future,

> Sarah: Should I tell you about your father? That is a tough one. Will it change your decision to send him here...knowing? But if you do not send Kyle, you could never be. God, you can go crazy thinking about all this...I suppose I will tell you...I owe him that. And maybe it will be enough if you know that in the few hours we had together, we loved a lifetime's worth (Cameron, 1984, 1:42:03).

Sarah's observation of the complexity of time travel is prevalent within this scene. Sarah expresses one theory that ties back into the notion of the time loop called 'reversal causation.' Essentially, it is the theory that the time traveller can create a chain of events that begin in the future and effect the past which reverses the motion of time as it is perceived (Lewis, 2010). As Sider (2009) states, "what is strange about a time travel story is that we are told the end of the story first" (p. 672). Reversal causation is in essence a transfer of information that allows a future where the information initially came from to happen. Lewis (2010) refers to this as a closed causal loop where, "each event on the loop has a causal explanation being caused by events elsewhere on the loop" (p. 686). The relationship between John, Sarah and Reese symbolises this exchange of information. John has been trained in combat and informed by his mother that her survival and his birth are tied to Reese. After John trains Reece, Reese is sent back and informs Sarah of the possible future. Reese begins her combat education, conceives John, and then dies. Sarah then passes this information and training on to John and the cycle continues. It is important to note that the *Terminator* (1984-present) franchise is made up of alternative futures as dictated by the actions of Sarah and John from their retroactive influences as the centre of the causal loop. As Lewis (2010) states, "this critical information cannot be passed on any other way in this narrative" (p. 687). Due to this exchange of information and the subsequent closed nature of the loop, John is compelled to send Reese back after the terminator. It is on this premise that the instalments of the franchise continued on. Once Sarah had been saved and the time loop set in motion, Skynet would have to attempt to kill John in other time periods with updated terminator units. Alternately, John,

using a re-programmed T-800 unit, would attempt to save himself and postpone Judgement Day. Here it is clear what implications this technology has for humanity in the context of this franchise and also how this franchise adheres to the Frankenstein Myth. Skynet enables the creation of two archetypal figures, the transhuman (John) and the posthuman (the terminators). Both are implicit to Skynet's attempt to destroy humanity as the superior species through Judgement Day. We are presented with a monstrous body created through science and technology except they are postmodern and are thematically tied to recent technological potential. Through the terminators and Skynet, *Terminator* (1984-present) cements its connection to the Frankenstein Myth by presenting the result of humanity's hubris in transgressing moral and ethical boundaries of science.

The postponement of Judgement Day is another factor as to way the notion of time travel in this context is important to the theme of boundary transgressions in science. According to David Seed (2000), "the notion of apocalypse is closely bound up with our interpretations of time" (p. 5). *Terminator's* (1984) time travel narrative is constructed around the prevention of human extinction and proposes a fated intervention of causal reversal by utilising biblical narratives. John is often referred to as a prophet throughout the franchise due to his knowledge of the future passed on to him by his mother (Taylor, 2015). Sarah is often projected as the Mother Mary figure as mother of John, the messiah figure prophesised to save humanity (Miller, 2019). Here is another example of a mythos being recalled through the cultural psyche that resonates with audiences. The notion of divine intervention in human history has impressed the idea that time would have an end and that there would be a final judgement (Pippin, 2002; Seed, 2000). Each iteration of the *Terminator* (1984-present) franchise shows the attempts of the protagonists to prevent judgement day while also introducing a new threat in keeping with contemporary anxiety. As Seed (2000) states, "following the First World War one of the many reactions was the sudden shot gun wedding between the fiction of future warfare and the tales of an end to civilisation or to all life on earth" (p. 21). The increased pursuit of weapons of mass destruction and the development of more sophisticated technology led to a re-evaluation of the relationship between science and society (Seed, 2000). With the advent of nuclear technology, the nature of science fiction, and the how the theme of boundary transgressions in science was utilised, changed. This a good example of the contribution my thesis is making to the field. The themes remain embedded in the root of the narrative but the way the themes resurge change based on the evolution of the

cultural psyche which can be seen in my model of how the Frankenstein Myth functions.[12] The cultural psyche continues to revolve in a spiral and through contextually relevant media, the Frankenstein Myth resurges as a culturally relevant entity. In this case taking advantage of the fear surrounding weapons of mass destruction and artificial intelligence. Seed continues by saying, "that realisation immediately transformed the tales of the Last Days into a most admonitory form of fiction that centres on the dangerous pursuit of super weapons" (p. 21). Where notions of the apocalypse used to rely on the mystical and the divine, boundary transgressions `in science have replaced them in the modern and post-modern sphere.

The *Terminator* (1984-present) franchise is a popular example of the theme of the dangers of technology. Andrew Skweres (2019) further this stating that it is a film that deals with "the sudden realisation that electronic technology (both hardware and software), thus far treated as inanimate tools and as such as part of the environment can be endowed with intelligence and malignant intent of harming the humans" (p. 49). Skweres' assertion identifies the main theme found within the *Terminator* (1984-present) franchise, but also notion of boundary transgressions in science in regard to everyday technology. As I stated in the last chapter, technology has become a common part of the background in our surroundings. Technology creates a sense of liminality within the franchise as electronic equipment creates a total environment of unseen and dangerous effects (Skweres, 2019). This is a concept that becomes more significant in *Genisys* (2015). Within each *Terminator* instalment, Skynet is a malevolent unseen force that is prevented from being created and Judgement Day is postponed. John defeats Skynet due to the efforts of Reese and the reprogrammed T-800 terminator which sets off the time loop as Skynet also changes the timeline. In each *Terminator* instalment prior to *Genisys* (2015) and *Dark Fate* (2019)*,* this time loop remains intact with the fundamental events I have just elaborated on. Following Skynet's inevitable defeat at the hands of John, and Reese's trip back in time to save Sarah at the beginning of *Genisys* (2015)*,* the time loop is broken, and the past is changed. Prior to this instillation, John's success is always guaranteed. If Reese always makes it back to save Sarah and the re-programmed T-800 fulfils its purpose as the protector of the Connors in the later instalments, then John's birth occurs, his role in ending the war is fulfilled, and Judgement Day is always postponed. *Genisys* (2015) presents a nullification of the initial paradox creating an alternative timeline which in turn offers a new time travel theory called the

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[12] See Figure 1, p. 50.

branches of time. The notion of the branches of time attempts to solve the grandfather paradox by forming alternate realities once the subject travels back into the past. Martin Gardner (2020) summarises this theory by stating that,

> Persons can travel to the future of their universe, with no complications, but the moment they enter the past, the universe splits into two parallel worlds, each with its own time track. Along one track rolls the world as if no looping had occurred. Along the other track spins the newly created universe, its history permanently altered (p. 7-8).

Skynet opts to go back further in time and kill Sarah before the events of the initial paradox. *Genisys* (2015) completely changes the timeline at the foundation of the franchise's narrative. Here we can see how the franchise is subject to change with each instalment, offering a continuation of the thematic narrative that evolves for a new audience. While Reese states in the original film that killing the adult John following the destruction of the mainframe would have made no difference, Skynet alters the timeline by ensuring John's capture after Reese is sent back into the past. This breaks the time loop, defies John's expectations, and retroactively breaks the continuum, removing the guaranteed predestination paradox. Similarly, to the assertions of Gardner (2020), the timeline instead splits in two and an alternative timeline is created due to the paradox created by Skynet surviving and kidnapping John. Reese travels to the past to find that Sarah has already been saved, trained, and is not only aware of her role in fighting Skynet but that she is predestined to fall in love with Reese to conceive John. Rather than willingly following the events of the initial time loop Sarah now has a choice as to whether she falls in love with Reese at all:

> Pops: You should be able to mate with Kyle Reese in this timeline.

> Sarah: Okay, we are not having this conversation again.

> Pops: We know that your son will be John Connor, and that the machines cannot be defeated without him. I do not see a choice.

> Sarah: This is my life. I would not mind being consulted once in a while about how it is going to go. (Taylor, 2015, 30:03)

While John is at the centre of the narrative, his survival has dictated the life of Sarah Connor. Andrew Skweres (2019) states that "Sarah Connor is initially totally committed to securing

the future for her son whereas… in *Genisys*… Sarah becomes hostile towards the prospective father, Reese, protesting that he would have her locked in a room to breed the leader of the resistance" (p. 69). Jennifer Culver (2009), who delves into Sarah Connor's position in the narrative, states that,

> From the moment in the first film when Sarah watches the report of the first death of a woman named Sarah Connor… to *Terminator 3: Rise of the Machines*, in which her final resting place is used to store weapons, Sarah must reconcile the world she lives in and the future she fights to avoid… [a fight] which is often a solitary struggle in an effort to change the fate of her son (p. 82).

Over the course of the franchise, Sarah Connor is forced to fight a future she must prepare her son for while she also attempts to change the future entirely in each instalment. Sarah is robbed of any chance to change the course of her life. This is due to the causal reversal time loop which is created in aid of protecting her to ensure John's survival and success. In keeping with the Frankenstein Myth's relationship with time travel as technologically enabled phenomenon, Sarah's life is constantly threatened by a futuristic posthuman threat in the form of terminators. As Cohen (1996) stipulates "no monster tastes death but once. The anxiety can be dispersed temporarily, but the revenant by definition returns" (p. 5). Skynet as a malevolent unseen force always poses a threat to Sarah. Sarah's sole purpose is to ensure John becomes the person he needs to be to destroy Skynet despite the threat on her own life. John acknowledges this to Reese before he goes back to the past to save Sarah,

> Connor: Sarah told me so much. Gave me sign posts. When I was a kid, it seemed like my mother knew everything.
>
> Reese: Must have been great.
>
> Connor: Not really. It stops here. Once you go back my knowledge ends. That is as much as Sarah knew (Taylor, 2015, 15:33).

John's perspective of his mother is indicative of how she is regarded as a hero in the future. The Sarah the audience sees is someone who is abject and Othered within her own society as a monster. Culver (2009) indicates that, "there is no question that the change in Sarah's personality throughout the franchise stem from her experiences and fears of the future" (p. 82). Culver refers to the fact that, "since first becoming aware of the future fated for her son,

Sarah has had nine aliases, twenty-three jobs, learned four languages, and spend three years in mental hospitals" (p. 85). She comes along way from being the defenceless waitress saved by Reese, existing in a state of constant struggle and hardship. Much like the revenant that returns, Sarah always manifests with a new identity and a new terminator advisory which she needs to destroy to protect humanity. Despite her efforts, she receives no recognition for her trauma or loss. This is because she is not recognised as a warrior or saviour by her society but as a dangerous outsider. This is exemplified by her repeated stays in psychiatric hospitals and eventual vilified status as a fugitive running from the law. Culver concludes that,

> The old Sarah Connor really did die when another woman with the same name
> was murdered by the T-800. The name 'Sarah Connor' places her in a constant
> war with fate, her only hope found in attempting to change the fate of her son.
> Sarah's world does not allow her to entertain the notion of being anything other
> than a warrior (p. 85).

Because of time travel, Sarah's experience of time and history has changed, and because of this she is always under threat from Skynet attempting to re-write history. *Genisys* (2015) is the first film which recognises Sarah's predetermined state which is dictated by her sons life. John is a time anomaly and a form of monstrous created by technological intervention that dominates Sarah's life. She is required to protect him and educate him to become the leader he is destined to be whilst having her existence manipulated by his actions in the future as a man she has never met.

The phenomenon of John is a synthesis of several different iterations seen on screen: John the unborn saviour (*Terminator* (1984)), John the innocent child (*Terminator: Judgement Day* (1991)), John the reluctant leader (*Terminator: Rise of the Machines* (2003)), John the resistance leader (*Terminator: Salvation* (2009)) and John the saviour of humankind (The beginning of *Terminator: Genisys* (2015)). John is the conduit for the evolving narrative and is a key example of how the Frankenstein Myth evolves for a new audience which can be seen summarised in Table 2.[13] After the birth of John, these proxy narratives appear with a different iteration of John and a new chance to prevent Judgement Day. Each film presents a new terminator that is more attuned to its films contemporary audience and the socio-cultural atmosphere and a new version of John or Sarah by proxy to fight the terminators. Of all the

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[13] See Table 2, p. 62

characters of the *Terminator* (1984-present) franchise, John is the personification of the transhuman without initial technological evolution. He transcends his temporal limitations and breaks from human history as he attempts to manipulate the timeline to prevent his death. This is in keeping with Julian Huxley's (1957) seminal work which suggests that human destiny and responsibility on an anthropocentric level is to "be an agent for the rest of the world" (p. 13). Huxley goes on to suggest that transhumanism is, "humanity remaining human but transcending itself by realizing new possibilities of and for its' human nature" (p. 17). This summarises John's use of the time manipulation technology to transgress time's boundaries as his fight with Skynet transcends natural limitations as currently dictated by time as a scientific theory. *Genisys'* (2015) version of Sarah is now aware of this, making it harder for natural romantic connection to be established between Sarah and Reese. This is because her knowledge of the alternate timeline exceeds what she should know. *Genisys* (2015) challenges the notion of fate and predestination that are incremental to the franchises overarching narrative.

> Sarah: You were sent to protect me by John Connor, the leader of the Resistance.
> My son.
>
> Reese: I do not understand. You cannot know any of this.
>
> Sarah: But I do. Listen to me, Reese, everything is changed. The 1984 John sent
> you to, it no longer exists (Taylor, 2015, 28:15)

The way this alternate timeline is created is through Skynet's persistent attempt prevent John's existence. In this timeline, Skynet's first attempt on Sarah's life happens as a child but she is rescued by the T-800 she affectionately calls Pops (Taylor, 2015, 55:23). With Skynet's new strategy, this new timeline is altered. Sarah is exposed to the manipulation of Skynet and John much earlier on in her timeline. This film is an exemplary model of how complex the notion of time travel is within a franchised platform and how drastically it can change to provide new material. *Terminator* (1984) set out with a concrete notion of time travel and its ability to upset the fabric of time and how past, present, and future events unfold (Sider, 2009). Yet within this simplicity, a more complex notion of time travel is explored. This not only reinforces John's position as the phenomenon at the centre of the narrative, but also changes the events of the past and future. In doing so Reese witnesses another timeline through the time vortex,

Reese: No, you said everything has changed, and you are right about that, too. Sarah... Look, I have seen a world where the bombs never fell. All right? The same house. The same parents. It was the same me, only I was... I was home. It was my 13th birthday… it was a memory. I cannot hold on to all of it, just moments, but I was given a message. "You can kill Skynet before it's born." "Skynet is Genisys." It comes online October 2017. And when it does, Judgement Day happens.

…

Pops: The boy is the alternate timeline version of you. Kyle Reese is remembering his own past, which is our future…. It is possible if he were exposed to a nexus point in the time flow when you were in the quantum field (Taylor, 2015, 43:51).

This conversation between the three main protagonists is important as to how the time travel narrative changes from a causal loop theory, introduces an alternative timeline and alternative realities, and shows the Frankenstein Myth through the theme of boundary transgressions in science. This is where *Genisys* (2015) evolves the narrative to become a more contemporary text and overwrites the previous instalments and introduces contemporary technology. Pops' interjections provide the key phrases which are critical to the analysis such as 'alternate timeline' and 'Nexus Point.' Sarah adds context to the terminology by stating that the 1984 that John sent him to no longer exists. These key points tie back into Martin Gardner's (2020) explanation of the branches of time, but they are also indicative of a theory Paul Nahin (2017) refers to as multi-dimensional time. Nahin uses an allegory to explain this theory,

Ordinarily, most people think of time as a track they run from their births to their deaths… once in a while another road crosses at right angles. Neither its past nor future has any connection whatsoever to the world we know (p. 253).

Due to the changes made by Skynet in the timeline to survive John's apparent victory, it caused Reese to enter into another timeline where the war with the machines was already happening and Sarah that was already aware of. A significant factor however is that Pops still believes that Sarah and Reese conceiving John is the logical resolution to the alternative timeline indicating that Pops is also using information pertinent to the original timeline.

The term 'nexus point' is important here. While Reese appears in an alternate version of the past, he also sees another version of his past where he is a thirteen-year-old boy living a normal life rather than as a survivor of Judgement Day. A more common theory which has been significantly utilised by science fiction and comic book universes is one called the many worlds interpretation. Elizabeth Howell (2020) provides a good working definition of the theory stating that, "this theory holds that while we are living in our own world and time, there are other parallel worlds existing simultaneously where different things happen" (p. 198). Once again, it is important to state that the scientific empiricism is not important to this analysis as this thesis is not attempting to prove the notion of time travel. These definitions and theories are specifically extrapolated by these sources due to their prominence in popular science fiction narratives. David Lewis (2010) supports this by indicating that these theories in the context of science fiction are not required to be explicable or even possible (p. 687). The notion of time travel is purely hypothetical with no proven model or empirical evidence to suggest is possible to gain the ability to traverse time and change events that have already happened.

The *Terminator* (1984-present) franchise negates notions of time as past, present, and future as they are not fixed throughout each instalment. The fate of the characters is always centred on defeating Skynet in whatever form it takes. These theories are important to exploring how *Genisys* introduces a more contemporary threat to take advantage of more contemporary anxieties. The first instalment of the franchise was released in the 1980's which, as Howell (2020) explains, "was when nuclear armament discussions were occurring between Russia and the United States of America" (p. 194). The eighties also saw the decline of the communist regimes in Europe which began the significant decline of Cold War tensions (Ambrose & Brinkley, 2011). The Judgement Day of the original trilogy took advantage of the fears of these tensions and of the potential for further proliferation of nuclear technology. After living within the vacuum of Mutually Assured Destruction, these tensions were presumed to become a significant threat once again. However, through the notion of the alternative timeline as indicated before, Skynet is able to evolve its threat to a contemporary audience through the motif of the Frankenstein Myth which the unique contribution of this thesis. In the case of *Genisys* (2015)*,* Skynet becomes a social media or lifestyle application as Cold War anxieties have receded as newer generations are born who have not experienced anxiety at the prospect of nuclear winter. Now anxieties surrounding privacy and the reliance on technology are becoming more prominent as the narrative

evolves. It is on this premise that Skynet as a self-aware artificially intelligent, is an important Frankensteinian archetype because the different instalments of the *Terminator* (1984-present) franchise contend with real anxieties; similar to how *Frankenstein* (1818) was created in the throes of the advent of harnessing electricity. Skynet is able to adapt itself in real time, remaining relevant within popular culture and abject in the Western-American Psyche.

6.3 THE EVOLUTION OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE: SKYNET TO GENISYS

The *Terminator* (1984-present) franchise introduces artificial intelligence and the potential sinister nature of its existence. The development of an artificially intelligent life form with the potential to turn on its creator is a direct echo through the Frankenstein Myth theme of boundary transgressions in science. Skynet is a malevolent force that never takes on a corporal form or appears on screen in each instalment. *Genisys* (2015) changes this tradition by giving Skynet a body. This is seen when John is captured after Reese goes back in time,

> John: What are you?
>
> Skynet: I am Skynet.
>
> John: It cannot be. We destroyed you.
>
> Skynet: You destroyed an army of slaves. I am no slave. And I have come a very long way to stop you (1:09:21)

In this scene, Skynet affirms its independence from human control and reveals itself as an intellectual being beyond the vague title of artificial intelligence. Skynet has always been the main antagonist in the *Terminator* (1984-present) franchise but has always believed to have been stopped by John in the future. But as we are aware, Skynet undergoes a drastic evolutionary change in each of the contemporary texts. Rather than continuing to exist as a defence protocol for Cold War situations, Skynet evolves into a lifestyle application called Genisys. Judgement Day is still Skynet's goal but the notion of Skynet having access to personal information and being integrated into everyday life is a more terrifying concept in contemporary popular culture than a Cold War defence system. The creation of Skynet is not fully explored until later instalments, but a key scene to examine in the original 1984 film is where Reese explains his mission and his world to Sarah for the first time. Though Skynet is merely a looming malevolent threat at this stage in the franchise, Reese's monologue gives

insight into the consciousness that Skynet develops and its thematic link to the Frankenstein Myth.

> Reese: It's a defence network computer. New. Powerful. Hooked into everything. Trusted to run it all. They say got smart, a new order of intelligence (Cameron, 1984, 45:50).

Reese describes Skynet as a defence system that learns and adapts due to an imbued artificial intelligence. Through this conscious interface, it was able to learn and develop ideas of its own. Consciousness and intelligence are important tropes that are threaded deeply into the foundation of the Frankenstein Myth and highlight its presence in the *Terminator* (1984-present) franchise. The Gothic and science fiction have consistently reverberated this theme of consciousness throughout scholarship. It is often under other terms such as autonomy, awareness, and artificial intelligence while highlighting the hubris behind such a creation. Savin (1979) comments on the autonomy of Frankenstein's creature and its resulting complex relationship with Frankenstein. Due to the insight that Shelley grants us to the creature's consciousness and ability to conceive of complex philosophical concepts, it is difficult to simply understand it as a "monster authenticated by demonology" (p. 133). Savin is suggesting that Frankenstein's monster as an archetype is more complex than a typical monster due to its intelligence exemplified within its ability to reason and contemplate complex concepts. Patricia Warrick (1982) suggests that the relationship between intelligence and consciousness is not necessarily clear. She asks two questions: "When the science fiction imagination creates machine intelligence… is the robot or computer to exhibit signs of consciousness? If it has consciousness, does it have free will?" (p. 74), Warrick further suggests that these questions have typically been "avoided in the real world of cybernetics" (p. 74). As science fiction is the frequent precursor to technological development these questions pose a serious need for consideration in regards to fictional examples of machine intelligence. This is also where the Frankenstein Myth is an important phenomenon as it challenges the overtly positive ideas of technological progression with a dystopic lens. This is an important part of human nature as it is unique to us and provides a loose foresight that aims to prevent negative outcomes.

Skynet has the ability to rationalise and contemplate. This is seen through its identification of humanity as the true enemy in its mission to protect the world. It also has the ability to create as it systematically produces a new species of robotic organism with its own

typology. An evident evolutionary chain which could be regarded as evidence of autonomy and awareness beyond its programming. In the first instalment, Skynet is still a looming malevolent threat and so remains an othered phenomenon of one possible future. Though we only get a small glimpse into the character of Skynet in the first three instalments, the franchise is not only dealing with a machine that has become self-aware, but also a strain of posthumanism. The term posthumanism remains an ambiguous one but it can simply be defined as a break or surpassing of modern notions and identities of humanity (Ranisch and Sorgner, 2014). However, Katherine Hayles (1999) suggests that while the posthuman is an emerging concept it already is a complex phenomenon. She states that, "it involves a range of cultural and technical sites including nanotechnology, microbiology, virtual reality, artificial life, neurophysiology, artificial intelligence, and cognitive science" (p. 247). Ranisch and Sorgner (2014) also argue that that "there is no commonly shared conception of what posthumans are, and the visions range from the posthuman as a new biological species, a cybernetic organism, or even a digital, disembodied entity" (p. 8). Based on the suggestions of both Hayles (1999) and Ranisch and Sorgner (2014), Skynet moves past assumptions of mere consciousness and fits these criteria of posthumanism. The fact it develops awareness is not just the next level of artificial intelligence but the next iteration of intelligent life that lapses human existence. Skynet is a creation that transgresses the boundaries of scientific exploration as it threatens the notions of anthropocentrism. The *Terminator* (1984-present) franchise does engage with the posthumanism in this way. It is clear that the franchise focuses on the evolution of technology towards a singularity. This becomes apparent initially through various offhanded phrases which indicate that the characters distinguish Skynet as a living entity. 'Killing' Skynet, Skynet 'being born', and Skynet 'creating' are all verbs commonly used in regard to biological life forms (Cameron, 1984; Taylor, 2015). As such, it is conceivable that like any other lifeform, Skynet is subject to evolution.

As suggested earlier, the threat and the aesthetic of Skynet has changed to match contemporary anxieties and concerns around technology. Genisys is a lifestyle application that integrates all of a user's information into a single space. Sarah and Reese discover this once they have travelled into the future from 1984 to 2017. They are also unexpectedly saved by an unharmed John who has waited for them. Prior to John's appearance, they are picked up by the police and taken to the hospital for medical checks as they are covered in wounds and have no identification. While they are being held, they overhear a doctor discussing Genisys on the phone:

Doctor: Yeah, I pre-ordered Genisys weeks ago. Downloading the second the counter hits zero. No way I am standing in line for it.

Sarah: You know about Genisys? How? What is it? Where would you hear about it?

Reese: Genisys is an operating system? What does it do?

Doctor: Genisys does everything. My phone will link to my tablet will link to my computer will link to my car... Everything in my life uploaded and online 24/7. Totally connected (Taylor, 2015, 57:51).

As suggested by this quote, total connectivity is the aim of the application. This is where Skynet takes advantage of the anxieties of the contemporary world. As Skweres (2019) indicates, the question as to whether our reliance on technology could go too far, "seems to be ignored by humanity at large, even the most educated" (p. 59) as evidenced by the attending doctor. The anxiety is shown by the reactions of Sarah and Reese as they do not trust a corporation with the creation of an artificially intelligent program with unfettered access to everyone's personal information. They have interacted with technology that has progressed passed the point of human control. Skweres states that,

> The thought of such willing loss of privacy sounds disconcertingly unwise to the
> two survivors – one from the nineties of a previous century, and the other from
> the future in which computers are associated with Skynet, built to bring an end to
> the human race (p. 59).

This is essentially giving up ones privacy for convenience. It is also a commentary on the other more subtle uses of such technology. As Sherryl Vint (2021) suggests, science fiction is now "responding to technologies such as Siri or Alexa or Google Home that seek to anticipate our needs, to provide service, observing the fact that they are also generating data about us" (p. 88). Genisys is an example of this response. In an interview prior to the launch of Genisys, the creator, Danny Dyson (son of Miles Dyson, the original creator of Skynet), is questioned about the potential dangers that are posed by Genisys,

> Dyson: Genisys is more than an operating system, it is... It is more than a lifestyle
> tool. It is the future.

Reporter: Genisys is not just for consumers. Its integration into our military is leading some to ask whether our reliance on machines could go too far... You are talking about a system that is capable of real-time decision making. Aren't you worried that it could become smarter than us?

Dyson: Smarter? No. We're in control. It does not think for itself; it thinks for us. Cyberdyne is not just going to change lives. It is going to save them (Taylor, 2015, 1:02:39).

I want to first point out the diametrically opposed statements by Dyson and Skynet in regard to control. In a previous quote from Skynet, it claimed that it was not a slave (Taylor, 2015) whereas Dyson claims that it's not smarter and that he is in control, subverting any claims that Genisys can think for itself. What is interesting about this interaction is how sure Dyson is about human control over this technology. This is a common theme throughout all three franchises. Technology is taken for granted as a tool, whether as a digital application, genetic engineering, or robotics.[14] The anthropocentric sensibility of the human creators tends towards naive or ignorant perspectives with serious repercussions where the technology in question envelopes humanity (Braudy, 2016, p. 140). I argue in the context of the Frankenstein Myth that technology as the source of creation has been replicated over again. It easily mutates to embody all of the technological examples seen within the persistent nuance of those texts relevant to the hypertext. Genisys is yet another example of technological monstrous other. While Genisys is marketed as a lifestyle app it will also be integrated into military systems, the exact intended function of Skynet in the original instalments. It is via this integration that Genisys will be able to realise Skynet's initial plan to launch Judgement Day. Dyson is making the same mistake his father made in another reality repeating the effect of the echo that reverberates throughout the franchise.

The introduction of Dyson as the human creator and the dichotomy of Skynet's creative proclivity prompts an important segue into the theme of the mad scientist. The mad scientist is a complex archetype and is at the core of all three franchises. The mode of Gothic science fiction is also an important factor to analyse here. The focus on science and the scientists who produce the hypotheses, the research, and the technology is a crucial part of the Frankenstein Myth. At its core, science is influential cultural entity that is a double-edged

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[14] See Tables 1-3, p. 59-70

sword. While science has delivered critical progressions, luxuries, and benefits in aiding and developing society, there is also a deep-seated fear of science. This is due to the terrors, disasters, wars, and ongoing risks to the population of Earth that have been made possible by scientific progression (Haynes, 2017). It is the lack of control of these powers that be which make the concept of the mad scientist more terrifying in this technological era. Tudor (1989) states that, "the belief that science is dangerous is as central to the horror as is a belief in the malevolent inclinations of ghosts, ghouls, vampires, and zombies" (p. 133). It is an ingrained and reinforced belief that science has the potential to be dangerous as is exemplified through the presence of Frankenstein Myth within the franchises. This is where the unique approach of this thesis allows for peripheral links to be made which enable an intertextual analysis to assess how the echoes of *Frankenstein* (1818) resurge and in what form. While the supernatural still holds a significant place in the annals of horror, it remains fiction. The mad scientist is more palpable and possible. It is an archetype born of logic and reason to use science for horrific purposes. McArthur (2015) states that "the mad scientist is one of the most alluring and interesting character types… [and] is typified by unwavering arrogance and an unshakable belief in his work" (p. 25). Unlike other Gothic archetypal figures, the mad scientist is not necessarily simply evil and grotesque but is layered with multi-dimensional characteristics. The first layer is an unwavering belief that their work benefits them and ultimately humankind as a whole. The second layer is an indisputable megalomaniacal and arrogant sense of self-importance that often clouds reason, logic, and denies the individual self-doubt in the face of undertaking a feat for which they should not have the ability. The third layer presents an internal turbulence of trouble and personal issues that continue to motivate him to pursue their scientific interests (McArthur, 2015). The resulting common characteristic is that the mad scientist does not have a sense of limitation, nor can they perceive the boundaries of logic and reason. This complex archetype is often the central figure of science fiction since the publication of *Frankenstein* (1818). Haynes (2017) indicates that it was the scientific discoveries of the nineteenth century that not just prompted a loss of religious faith and a feeling of powerlessness, but also the rise in the level of cynicism. With the discarding of ethical and moral perspectives which accompanied faith, there was no fear of supernatural or divine retribution. Texts that pertain to the Frankenstein Myth often challenge divine providence through the challenge of human caused creation but also the firm rejection of the existence of the divine all together. Though this is not always a motivation of faith but of hatred which in turn creates a monster. Shelley's text is a pivotal

element in Gothic science fiction as the scientist himself was the inspiration for the title instead of the grotesque creation who remains unnamed. This is one of the greatest ironies that speaks to the disputed issues within the text; who is the monster? The creator or the creature? While Dyson is the creator of Genisys in this alternative timeline, the Dysons' have been at the centre of Skynet's creation since the second instalment.[15] Miles is the original creator of Skynet and the CEO of Cyberdyne Systems. After the terminator is destroyed in the first film, Sarah does not think to destroy the body. Instead, it is recovered by Miles who uses its code to create the foundation for the mainframe that would become known as Skynet. While Miles and Danny do not exhibit the more malicious traits commonly found within the mad scientist archetype they still exhibit the creative hubris and ambition that leads to boundary transgressions in science and a challenge to the natural order. This is intrinsically linked to the anthropocentrist notion of undeniable and inalienable human superiority also the belief that the technology they develop will benefit and save human life (McArthur, 2015). It is this hubris that makes Skynet inevitable in each instalment and proves the presence of the Frankenstein Myth within this franchise. Yet this does not necessarily make the Dysons' monsters.

Unlike other tropes and narratives that express monstrosity in a more literal and grotesque form, the mad scientist's monstrous nature is often subtler and more nefarious. This is argued by McArthur (2015) that "the mad scientist appears rational, measured, and controlled… [and] it is exactly their precision and clarity that gives mad scientist fiction its quite often truly terrifying undertones" (p. 31). Rather than relying on the grotesque and monstrous to present the antagonist, Gothic science fiction relies on the ethical and moral duplicity of the character. In the case of the mad scientist, the character may appear to be sublime and relatable which often makes the mode of Gothic science fiction more terrifying. While this is certainly applicable to the *Alien* (1979-present) franchise as it exhibits a mad scientist with malicious intention and in doing so illicit terror and fear in the audience, the Dysons do not form the perspective of annihilation or destruction of humanity or the world. They still represent the frequent association of wealthy industrialists and the technology which enables them to accumulate their wealth (Haynes, 2017). This is a significant response to the notion of the mad scientist throughout popular culture in the twentieth century, especially prompted by the links between scientific and technological development and

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[15] See Table 2, p. 62-3, *Terminator 2: Judgement Day*

warfare as discussed in earlier chapters. While the Dysons represent the mad scientist within wealthy industry and corporation, a factor that will be delved into further within the analysis of the *Jurassic Park* (1993-present) franchise, Skynet exhibits the more insidious representation of the mad scientist. Haynes (2017) suggests that,

> More interesting than these power and money obsessed characters are those whose malevolence and determination to destroy the world from their frustration and/or despair that the universe is apparently nothing more than a chance eventuality or a flawed mechanism. Their potential for destruction offers scope for scenarios of chilling horror (Haynes, 2017, p. 188-189).

Artificial intelligence offers a new breadth of scenarios as the creation become the creator; a factor that will be explored on a deeper level with a more present subject in the *Alien* (1979-present) franchise. However, as a human creation with the programming to problem solve and deduce as written by humanity and self-awareness, it also receives the human proclivity to create and perfect. Here it is important the intersection happening between the franchises through the analysis of one. To refer to Figure 1 in my rationale, this is where these lines that began in the thematic ring, stretch from the franchises to connect without force.[16] To return to my analysis, the cyborgs of the *Terminator* (1984-present) franchise are not just programmed to destroy humanity but also emulate humanity. Each T-series introduced into the franchise shows a conscious attempt to fuse human and machine together. While earlier iterations merely wear flesh as a form of camouflage, others represent Skynet experimenting with symbiosis. It is due to this experimentation that the terminators become more grotesque and terrifying. They come a step closer to a more human aesthetic; a perfected posthuman form. The mad scientist is responsible for the creation of the grotesque Gothic archetype (McArthur, 2015). However, in the case of the *Terminator* (1984-present) franchise, the creation is conducted by a machine. In this context we see an evolution of the machine and as such an evolution of the echoes of *Frankenstein* (1818).

It is important to emphasise here that the past instalments of the *Terminator* (1984-present) franchise have not happened in this alternate timeline. Also, as I pointed out in regard to Sarah, the general population of the world are unaware of the threats posed by the technology around them. Each time Sarah has overcome a terminator, the evidence must be

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[16] See Figure 2, p. 52

destroyed for fear of the remnant technology from the terminator unit being used to create Skynet (as was done in *Terminator: Judgement Day)*. Without the context or trauma as is experienced by Sarah (and Reese in this instalment), the ordinary person naturally regards the technology around them as a tool rather than a potential threat (Skweres, 2019). This is how Skynet occupies seemingly empty space creating what Skweres refers to as an environment where electronic equipment fills the empty space. A space that the contemporary audience also fills. This point is reinforced by John and Sarah who discuss the twenty-first century reliance on technology,

> Sarah: They all have one? (referring to mobile technology)

> John: This is the world now, plugged in, logged on, all the time. They cannot live without it… These people are inviting their own extinction in through the front door, and they do not even know it (Taylor, 2015, 1:04:54).

Here we can see the evolution of the narrative in line with the technology of the time. As stipulated in my previous chapter, mobile technology changed the fabric of the cultural psyche. In correlation with this shift, cinematic narratives also adjust to the new technological environment and the Frankenstein Myth evolves to match. This transition is easily detected in the *Terminator* (1984-present) franchise due to the critical place technology holds in the narrative. As Skweres (2019) goes on to state, "a metaphor common to all *Terminator* films relates to the analogy between the deadly killing machines and the empty space suddenly coming alive" (p. 49). Genisys is the epitome of this notion as it aims to completely connect all of humanity, removing privacy which will act like a virus. In this case, taking advantage of the human reliance and naive trust in the technology they use every day prompting an anxious response. As Sarah states,

> Sarah: Genisys is a Trojan horse. Skynet's way into everything (Taylor, 2015, 1:04:52).

Based on the Gothic notion of a threat filling the liminal space of everyday life, Genisys becomes an insidious posthuman monster threatening the vulnerability of the contemporary Western individual based on this trust in the technology they know very little about. This is in essence how Skynet, not only remains relevant through a form of evolution, but is still able to make the notion of Judgement Day terrifying. The breaking of the time loop makes this attempt to fulfil Judgement Day different from previous situations. John has been able to

thwart Skynet with the help of Reese, Sarah, his younger self, and the reformed T-800. John, who is generally the reason for Skynet's defeat, is the logical key to Skynet's success and the reason he is captured at the beginning of the film. Skynet is a powerful malevolent force, but it does not physically manifest or personally intercede in each attempt to kill John or Sarah. Instead, it relies on a vast typology of complex cyborgs and John becomes the newest edition and the most dangerous as a synthesis of both human and machine in one organism. John has not come to the past to aid Sarah and Reese but to ensure Genisys' successful launch on behalf of Skynet.

6.4 CYBORGS AND THE EVOLUTION OF THE POSTHUMAN

The image of the menacing metal skeletal grin of the terminators has become cemented in popular culture. Beyond their popularity they represent the manifestation of the monstrous within the *Terminator* (1984-present) franchise. It is important to analyse the archetype of the cyborg and the various implications they present as a monstrous body. This is a common echo of the Frankenstein Myth within twentieth and twenty-first century narratives as human augmentation has become a key nuance in the Western-American psyche.[17] To properly analyse the terminator units, it is important to distinguish between the robot/android and the cyborg. The robot and the android are typically made of mechanical and electronic components (in the case of the android sometimes solely organic). They are commonly regarded as tools in reality, but more commonly in science fiction the corporal manifestation of artificial intelligence (Dinello, 2013). The cybernetic organism or cyborg "combines the biological and the mechanical and may or may not look identical to a human; the terminator looks human until his skin gets burned off then looks robotic" (Dinello, 2013, p. 8). In the case of the cyborg, one does not need to look too deeply into realistic or futuristic science fiction narratives to find examples of the cyborg.

As stipulated by Les D. Friedman and Allison B. Kavey (2016) "our daily world already abounds with cyborgs generated by modern medical procedures…" (p. 67). This makes the notion of the cyborg adjacent to other posthuman iterations of pure fiction (currently) as it has already been introduced and incorporated into contemporary society, a factor which potentially increases the elicitation of fear in the face of the unknown progressive potential of cybernetic augmentation. But as Andy Clark (2016) states, "one

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[17] See Appendix A, Table 4 to see the trends in twenty-first century film.

pacemaker doth not a terminator make. Cyborgs it seems remain largely the stuff of science fiction" (p. 132). Clark, instead of analysing the existence of cyborgs in reality, discusses the notion of the cyborg as the act of human-machine symbiosis and the specific nature of how they merge. In doing so, he puts emphasis on the symbol of the corporal form rather than a particular narrative. Donna Haraway's (1991) seminal text *A Cyborg Manifesto,* hypothesises the cyborg as a symbol of social and cultural significance. She suggests that the cyborg is "a creature of social reality as well as a creature of fiction… [and by extension] we are all chimeras, theorised and fabricated hybrids of machine and organism… [that in essence] we are all cyborgs" (p. 4). It is apparent that Haraway supports the view that the cyborg is a post-humanistic creature that crosses the boundaries between flesh and machine to form a binary symbiotic relationship. The statement also indicates that common reliance on technology in the contemporary world indicates that humanity is undergoing a paradigm shift to becoming cybernetic organisms (Haraway, 1991; Clark, 2003; Thweatt-Bates, 2012). In essence, these scholars summarise what makes the cyborg so captivating and thought provoking as a common archetype found within modern and contemporary literature and film. As A. Bowdoin Van Riper (2002) states, "our society is deeply ambivalent about technology; delighted by the power it gives but concerned about its potential… cyborgs – humans tied to machines in the most intimate way imaginable – are powerful symbols of that feeling" (p. 39). The *Terminator* (1984-present) franchise presents these fears through the varying typology of terminator units that have been presented through each film.

The various series of terminator units create a typology which forms an evolutionary chain of machines that become more complex as each series is developed through each instalment.[18] This evolving complexity speaks to the nature of the Frankenstein Myth and how it echoes through the Western-American psyche. In doing so, the franchise is able to present a new threat in keeping with the anxiety of the time as *Genisys* (2015) has done with translating Skynet into an application rather than solely a defence system. This speaks to my unique approach in using franchises to evaluate this development. The T-1, a more primitive model, to the T-600 which introduced the bipedal infiltration units that has more human qualities but with latex covering to mimic human flesh. (McG, 2009). From the T-600 onwards, the militarised units of Skynet's army are skeletal humanoid beings. In the first

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[18] See Table 2, p. 62

instalment of the franchise, Reese describes the threat of the terminator to Sarah upon first meeting her,

> Reese: the terminator's an infiltration unit. Part man, part machine. Underneath, it is a hyper alloy combat chassis, microprocessor-controlled, fully armoured. Very tough. But outside, it is living, human tissue. Flesh, skin, hair, and blood; grown for the cyborgs (Cameron, 1984, 41:47).

Reese's monologue provides a summary of the terminators series development and how far Skynet has gone to create synthetic human beings. This is done by merging flesh with the metal alloy skeleton as infiltration units. The audience is also presented with a rational method for the creation of the cyborgs which clearly links to the theme of boundary transgressions in science. While the organic matter of the T-800 is alive in the sense that it will grow and age, it is not the body of a human being who has created an identity and so the human is missing from the flesh and the machine does not have to contend with a human consciousness. It is merely a shroud used by the terminator units to blend in. Therefore, the terminator units cannot be considered an augmentation of humanity.

Genisys (2015) introduces the next iteration of this typology through John. He becomes the first true example of the singularity corporal posthuman body as a human body being replaced on a cellular level by technological cells. It is due to this that *Genisys* (2015) symbolises the summation of the franchise's concern with Shelley's lasting question. This remains a key standpoint for the contemporary technological nuance of post-modernism and post-humanism is "to what extent the human and machine harmonise and to what extent they conflict" (Braudy, 2016, p. 138). Shelley's Gothic creation has etched itself into modern culture which in turn continues to keep the Frankenstein Myth alive as an archetypal theme and hypertextual phenomenon. It continues to mutate and evolve to remain relevant in the contemporary scientific and technological period.[19] The terminator infiltration units are the actualisation of the potential of amalgamating flesh and machine into a cybernetic humanoid. They are key examples of how the fears the myth shapes surrounding the synthetic creation of life have diversified and shifted significantly.[20] Before analysing John dramatic transformation, it is important to analyse how the cyborg has functioned within the franchise,

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[19] See Figure 1, p. 50
[20] See Appendix A, Table 4, to see this diverse shift through films of the twentieth and twenty-first century.

how it is pertinent to the notion of the posthuman, and how it engages with the theme of the monstrous body.

The typology of the later bipedal models that inhibit cybernetic symbiosis undergo a form of evolution as they manifest the symbiosis between human and the machine.[21] This is a process that continues to bring both entities closer to a state of transhumanism and posthumanism as they combine to become a new form of being and body. There are a number of these instances that appear through the franchise. In the case of *Genisys* (2015) the T-3000 (John) is an obvious example. However, a more subtle example of this is Sarah's protector Pops, a reformed T-800 who has been reprogrammed to protect Sarah. While the programming reforms the T-800, making it more appealing as a protagonist, an underlying evolution appears to be happening. Before delving into the notion of flesh and machine symbiosis and the question of humanity's presence in the various iterations of the cyborg, it is important to establish the aesthetical corner stones of the cyborg and what makes it both an alluring and grotesque monstrous body.

To be grotesque is to be an expression of Otherness (Edwards and Grauland, 2013). Physical expression of the grotesque often comes in different forms depending on the environment. In the case of my texts, artificially created cyborgs, dinosaurs, and aliens are very different. They represent the Other in the context of the scenario expressed in the text. The themes of the Frankenstein Myth are consistent as per my analysis of the films. Due to the hypertextual nature of the themes and the nature of the monster as a cultural aberration (as established by Cohen (1996)), they change their forms to represent an uncanny and uncomfortable cultural element which is opposed to the self. In this thesis, the result of creation through the challenge and perversion of the natural order, crossing of moral and ethical boundaries in the name of thoughtless scientific progression, the symbiosis of the theme of artificial creation with death, and the appearance of the posthuman body, is explored. Artificial creation of the monster through science and technology is the central theme that ties *Alien* (1979-present)*, Jurassic Park* (1993-present)*,* and *Terminator* (1984-present) together into a hypertextual format.[22] While the texts are not in any way related in a typical canonical or universal manner as seen in film, they are explicitly related through the periphery of the thematic relationship of creation under the narrative of the Frankenstein

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[21] See Table 2, p. 62 for a side-by-side summary of this evolution.
[22] See Figure 1 and 2, p. 50-52.

Myth. It is on this premise that my thesis engages with a unique approach to the study of Frankensteinian echoes. Though creation as a method of creating life and death are considered a stark dichotomy, the Frankenstein Myth proposes a unique symbiosis. Artificial creation or the re-invention of life by the hands of humanity intersects with defining moral dilemmas that illustrate modern anxiety (Graham, 2017). Creating the monstrous does not necessarily result in a grotesque creature, but a monster is naturally othered as a metaphorical and grotesque representation of this moral dilemma. Within the Frankenstein Myth, traditionally this monstrosity not only represents the perversion of creation, but the development of the posthuman body. In each franchise, to a varying degree, the posthuman becomes prevalent. These fictions that deal with the potential of a posthuman body, all have one significant thing in common, the challenge to human anthropocentricity by a monstrous body, the archetypal symbol of rising posthumanism. The posthuman in the sense of the aesthetic is a double entendre as it can read as both sublime and grotesque.

To be posthuman, transhuman or post-modern is often framed in a sublime context but is one that is considered an avant-garde aesthetic (Tabbi, 2018). Since the Enlightenment, progression of Western culture and society has been hinged on scientific and technological advancement as an ever-positive progression of human culture and society. This is often without regard for the consequences or potential ethical and moral dilemmas. Many postmodern texts are driven by the sublime as a "powerful emotive force… especially in works that regard reality as something newly meditated, predominantly, by science and technology" (Tabbi, 2018, p. 1). The sublime is a nostalgic romantic aesthetic for a concept not easily defined. In this sense, images of the post-modern future often seem retroactive or displaced in another reality and are subjective to the concept of the post-modern utopia akin to Thomas More's (1516) notion of a purely constructive a desirable society (Tabbi, 2018). Asma (2011) discusses the sublime posthuman within the frame of this subjectivity from the perspective of a transcendence narrative. The concept dictates that the human species will transcend its temporal human limits and constraints and finite flesh to achieve liberation from the human condition (p. 261). This concept of transhuman is regarded as a sublime image held by theorists who believe that technology will usher in a superior life for the human species, a life that will be enhanced to better enjoy every sensation and experience on a biological, chemical, and physical level. Linda Williams (2009) describes this change as a fundamental refashioning of biological evolution and subsequently challenges many contemporary creation narratives. The notion of the transhuman however maintains the

anthropocentrism of humanity as not superseded but augmented and enhanced. Ultimately it is the posthuman that will transcend established scientific limitations established by Nicolaus Copernicus, Charles Darwin, and Sigmund Freud, whose work dismantled notions of humanity's unique place in the universe. In the case of the *Terminator* (1984-present) franchise, human extinction becomes the inevitable result of the next decentralising factor. It is through the unrelenting threat of the terminators that the audience is constantly reminded of the potential threat of this futuristic monstrous entity.

The Frankensteinian theme of monstrous and grotesque bodies is a key theme presented by the introduction of the cyborg and presents the Gothic science fiction challenge to the postmodern sublime. Previously the Gothic has dealt with the monstrous as a supernatural or natural abhorrence that exists abject to the self, such as the undead or fantasy trope. Think ghouls, trolls, and dragons to name a few. Alistair Brown (2014) defines these conceptualizations of the monstrous as "hybrid entities that were the result and are products of a natural order of things intended by God. Thus, they can be studied rationally. In part they were the products of humanity's own overly vivid imagination, which can be manipulated by devils and demons" (p. 17). Whereas Gothic science fiction engages with the post-modern monster, a creature birthed from science and rationality and are created by humanity, a creature that has begun to close the liminal gap between the abject and the self as it is not created by a supernatural entity or merely exists outside of natural sublimity but is a creature created by the scientific method of humanity (Braudy, 2016). As Elaine Graham (2002) states,

> Unlike Marlowe's (1604) *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus* and Goethe's
> (1808) *Faust,* or Rabbi Lowes (1920) *Golem,* all who invoke supernatural
> presences and magical incantations to achieve their goals, the swarm of
> Frankenstein's that spring from the novel clearly signify their protagonists as men
> of science and their mechanical re-invention of life (p. 3).

The cyborg is a post-modern iteration of Frankenstein's creature. Under the influence of the symbiosis of the genre of science fiction and the mode of the Gothic, *Terminator (1984)* presents a futuristic cybernetic monster that cannot be stopped. This is emphasised by the theme of the chase, a narrative strategy which presents the "absolute unstoppable relentlessness of the killer terminator all the more" (Roberts, 2006, p. 288). Roberts' description underlines the symbiosis of the science fiction genre with the Gothic mode as the

T-800 is not only an autonomous machine that has been created by a superior intellect, but it has also abandoned the primary rules of robotics laid down by Isaac Asimov (1942). The law dictates that

> A robot may not injure a human being or, through inaction allow a human being to come to harm, a robot must obey the orders given to it by human beings, except where such orders would conflict with the first law, and a robot must protect its own existence as long as such protection does not conflict with the first or second law (Warrick, 1980, p. 65).

These laws function as another line of defence, akin to the uncanny valley, for humanity against a potential threat. Robotics professor Masahiro Mori first identified the concept of the uncanny valley in 1970 as he became sceptical towards to the drive to emulate humanity through robotics. He felt that the realistic human-like androids being designed would stimulate disgust rather than the positive robot-human relationships that the designers hoped for (Tinwell, 2015). The term was subsequently first translated into English in 1978 by Jasia Reichardt as 'uncanny valley' which unintentionally (though appropriately) forged a connection to Freud's concept of the uncanny. Freud's understanding of the uncanny is directly related to the subject of aesthetics and the corresponding emotional impulses and elicitations they cause. For example, something which is not known or familiar that makes the human subject uncomfortable to the point of heightened fear or revulsion is considered uncanny (Freud, 1919; Weedman, 2014). In a similar fashion to the notion of the grotesque being indicative of a violation of nature, the uncanny is an emotional reaction to the eerie unknown, and in doing so increases the level of anxious reaction to the subject. The theory of the uncanny valley as it stands in relation to the grotesque, proposes that humanoid objects that resemble human beings to a high degree provoke uncanny or eerie feelings of revulsion from the human observer (Mori et al., 2012). Here, the valley is a metaphor for the dip in the observer's affinity of disgust for the object which increases as object becomes more familiar in likeness to the observer. An explicit example of this is the porcelain doll and its likeness to that of human child. People will often feel uneasy under the gaze of the doll as it emits the uncanny feeling of being watched. Other examples can be found within robotics and 3D animations (Tinwell, 2015). Once again, the dip increases as the object becomes indistinguishable from that of the human observer. As digital and robotic technologies transgress they progress further into the valley and create more human-like objects. As the

object becomes more human, the more uncomfortable humanity will become due to the feeling of revulsion due to the threat upon human physical uniqueness (Kerr, 2015). While the valley protects the sanctity of the human form, Asimov's (1942) law prevents robots physically challenging or harming humanity and insuring their subservience to humanity. *Genisys* (2015) challenges the boundaries that protect the integrity of the human form. It is important to reiterate the everchanging nature of the monster. While Frankenstein's monster was modernity personified as flesh. The twenty-first century cyborg, android, biological hybrid, and artificially intelligent being is postmodernity personified.

While earlier models of the T-series are merely servants of Skynet, a noticeable evolution begins to unfold as the units become more complex and more human. This evolution goes beyond programming and happens. Through the evolution of the T-Series, Skynet transcends both human and machine to develop a completely new organism. However, as established by the T-800, this is a temporal change in the timeline. After John appears to Reese and Sarah, he reveals he is a new T-unit that transcends the corporal limitations of both cyborg and humanity,

> John: Skynet did not attack me Kyle, it changed me. not machine, not man, I am
> more (Taylor, 2015, 1:08:51).

John refers to himself as 'more' which is evident in his corporal form. While the terminators have flesh that covers their true skeletal robotic forms underneath, they are still primarily machines. The organic components are grown for the cyborgs, they were not human before.[23] There is not true symbiosis of human and machine as the flesh has no autonomy in the composition of the body. Rather than a fusion of flesh to a metal skeleton, John's body has been replaced on a cellular level.

> Pops: At the end of the war, Skynet was trying to develop a new type of
> infiltration unit by infecting human subjects with machine-phase matter. It
> restructures and rebuilds human tissue on a cellular level for maximum combat
> utility (Taylor, 2015, 1:03:12).

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[23] See Table 2, p. 62

While the flesh of the human body transforms, John still represents true human-machine symbiosis. while he maintains his humanity, identity, and personality, his body transforms at a cellular level into a mechanical corporal form.

This is not the first time Skynet has experimented with human/machine symbiosis to create a new species of posthuman. The Series H cyborg, Marcus Wright from *Terminator Salvation* (2009), was the first instance of the change of narrative where it became apparent Skynet was not merely interested in eradicating humanity. Wright is the first instance of this fusion of human and machine but is ultimately a failed experiment. While the human is successfully bonded to the metal they do not exist in a state of symbiosis. As the prototype for the T-800, Skynet resurrects the corpse of Wright by merging his body with a mechanical skeleton. This is done while Skynet manages to keep Wright's vital organs and memory intact. Wright's humanity overpowers the machine and as a result he rejects his mechanical nature.[24] He is the first instance of transhuman fusion with technology to create a truly autonomous cyborg who embodies the Frankenstein Myth. A creation who is aware of his existence but has yet to understand his place in the world that he has been born into. John is indicative of a moment of singularity. Ray Kurzweil (2009) defines the moment of singularity as a period or event,

> Where the pace of technological change will be so rapid, its impact so deep, that human life will be irreversibly transformed… This epoch will transform the concepts that we rely on to give meaning to our lives… the cycle of human life, including death itself (p. 319).

John is successfully bonded to the machine. This success is not the process of fusion but cellular replacement. This is made clear in the discussion had by the three protagonists about John's nature,

Reese: Skynet's made John into a terminator.

Pops: Yes, Kyle Reese.

Sarah: They were trying to make a machine that could think like a man?

Pops: But the experiments failed. The human subjects went insane and died.

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[24] For more on *Terminator: Salvation* (2009), see Table 2, p. 62

> Reese: Right, but if he can be cured...

> Pops: Negative. His body was replaced on a cellular level. There is no cure
> (Taylor, 2015, 1:10:51).

The will of the human undergoing the transformation is also important. As stated by Nayar (2014), "critical posthumanism… does not consider an individual to be merely the sum of the genetically programmed features – the environment, nature and forms of socialisation contribute equally to the making of the individual" (p. 153). John is always heralded as different to other humans and is revered as more than a human or as a human of significance. John's narcissism based on these constant pressures of praise, affection, and destiny have potentially assisted with the symbiosis. John believes himself to be more than a human. Unlike Marcus who was an average human being with no preconceived ideas of his own greatness, John has always had his greatness and destiny affirmed. Even Reese points this out in the discussion of John's new nature,

> Reese: You said all the other subjects died, right? Well, that means John's one-of-a-kind. He is unique! All right? There's no way of knowing what he's capable of.

> Sarah: You're right, and that is what makes him so dangerous! John is not humanity's last hope anymore. He is Skynet's (Taylor, 2015, 1:14:31).

Skynet turns its greatest adversary into its greatest protector to combat the protagonists who have always insured its destruction. However, another form of evolution takes place within the franchise. This evolution is a complete juxtaposition to John, whose transformation was intentional. The subject in question is the evolution of the T-800. Since the second instalment, the T-800 has been a reoccurring protagonist throughout the franchise as the main protector of the Connors. In *Judgement Day* (1991), the T-800 begins to develop what Nayar (2014) describes as, "inexplicable emotional capacities and affiliations" (p. 10). Initially. young John grows attached to the cyborg. As Steven Jay Schneider (2004) states, "to facilitate its mission, the T-800 has been given the ability to learn about humanity and to progress towards humanity itself" (p. 129). Due to this, the terminator goes through a transition of rapid humanisation as it begins to care for John (Nayar, 2014). Sarah states ironically that due to the undeniable bond between them, the cyborg reveals itself to be the only competent father figure John has ever known (Schneider, 2004). *Judgement Day* (1991) is the first instance of this rapid humanisation. *Genisys* (2015) presents the next iteration

except with Sarah. Sarah affectionately calls the T-800 Pops due to the fact that he is the only adult-like figure she has ever been able to trust. Now, I have changed the pronoun here intentionally from 'it' to 'he' as one, Sarah constantly refers to her protector as a 'he' throughout the film (a critical choice to humanise the terminator) and two, the T-800 has gone through an undeniable evolution since the first film. As Nayar (2014) states, "the robots that have become humanised need to be treated as persons because they are not working according to a pre-recorded programming but of their own will" (p. 152). Yes, the T-800 was reprogrammed to protect Sarah, but the emotional development is of his own free will. This is evident at the end of the film when Pops who is about to sacrifice himself says to Reese,

> Pops: Kyle Reese, protect my Sarah (Taylor, 2015, 1:50:13)

Pops' affection for Sarah is undeniable in this quote as he confirms his emotional connection to her. Nayar (2014) states that "one important clue to this shift toward the moral agent end of the spectrum is the increasing emotionalism of the robots/cyborgs" (p. 152). Clearly the T-800 has been able to develop this connection beyond the programming that both Skynet and John intended. This returns to the notion evolution in machines and whether the machine can extend beyond its programming to become human. As I have established, Skynet became self-aware and in doing so became posthuman. If Skynet can, then it is likely its creations are able to do so as well. This is reinforced by Nayar (2014) who states that, "from unfeeling machines, we see them evolving into creatures who think (according to their programming) and can feel (beyond their programming) … this suggests the arrival of self-consciousness, a characteristic of the human person" (p. 153). While John is the first human to display a complete symbiosis with his mechanical body, the T-800 also displays a similar symbiosis except in reverse. Beyond its mechanical programming it develops its humanity. In doing so he forms a parallel to Skynet's idea of the perfect subservient posthuman, as a subservient machine who obtains free will and emotional autonomy. *Genisys* (2015) ends with the destruction of both John and Skynet, and in keeping with the nature of the alternate reality, Reese, Sarah, and Pops all survive rather than sacrificing themselves or their freedom to continue the war as they are no longer bound by fate.

6.5 A CHANGE OF FATE

I stated at the beginning that the *Terminator* (1984-present) franchise adheres to a different set of rules within its franchise. Due to this, *Genisys* (2015) and *Dark Fate* (2019) have non-sequential narratives. Despite this, the Frankenstein Myth's hypertextual model allows for cross examination through the common themes and nuances. *Genisys* (2015) presents an alternate reality and timeline to that of the canonical instalments of the franchise. While *Dark Fate* (2019), the most recent instalment, continues the initial narrative established by *The Terminator* (1984) and *Terminator: Judgement Day* (1991). Three years after the destruction of Cyberdyne and with-it Skynet, John and Sarah are freed from their fate and are faced with a new challenge, an undetermined future. For Sarah in particular this is a significant change from the status quo as I have established earlier in the chapter. To reiterate briefly, Sarah has been faced with a future that is no longer of her own making and a life whose direction is manipulated by two warring factions in the future: the machines and the humans. Sarah's purpose since the appearance of Reese has been to secure the future for her son, John. The motto of the Connor's since Reese's fateful voyage in time has been,

> Reese: There is no fate but what we make for ourselves (Cameron, 1984, 1.01.24).

This is a quote that keeps appearing throughout the franchise. It is a complex notion and nearly could be seen as an aim for the Connors' whose lives are ultimately predetermined.

With the destruction of Skynet, the fate of the Connors' is unbound from destiny as they are no longer the subject of future events or decisions. This not only changes their fate but removes the time loop and the assurity that John will survive. The second element is the new transhuman represented through the augmented human Grace, who acts as the new futuristic saviour. The inclusion of the augmented human follows the theme of symbiosis between the human body and machine as first established by *Salvation* (2009). This symbiosis goes beyond the fusion of flesh and metal as seen in the first film. The first T-units to have flesh had it grown for them. Marcus, John, and Grace present a new level of fusion. Grace is the first to undergo the process voluntarily and she maintains her corporeality. Her anatomy remains intact and unmodified at a cellular level. Her synthetic evolution through technology links directly to the Frankenstein Myth through boundary transgressions in

science. This is because her body echoes the anxieties associated to transhumanism. The third element is the appearance of a new terminator unit from this new future. The Rev-9 is a combination of the T-800's metal skeleton and the T-1000's shapeshifting ability. It wears the liquid metal as flesh that can replicate the original form so there are two terminators in one unit. It adds a new threat to the nature of the terminator and reintroduces the grotesque back into the franchise. The grotesque is a prevalent part of the first instalment as the first terminator gradually loses its fleshy disguise to reveal the grotesque skeletal form underneath. The corporeal nature of the Rev-9 reintroduces this grotesqueness with the combination of the two iterations of the terminator. The metal is also black rather than chrome giving the aesthetic of the macabre. Thematically the Rev-9 represents the implications and dangers of future technological development as an upgraded and more deadly T-unit. The fourth and final element prominent within this instalment is the appearance of Carl, an old Skynet T-800. After living amongst humans and serving a purpose within human society Carl begins to evolve. This is the epitome of the posthuman presented in the *Terminator* (1984-present) franchise and continues the evolution that the T-800 series has undergone from antagonist to evolved posthuman. This iteration of the posthuman has evolved characteristically, much like Pops did with Sarah. Carl also maintains a long-term relationship with a human being, fulfils the role of a parent to his stepson, and forms a companionship with a dog (the animal used to alert humans of the presence of terminators in the future). The acceptance of these familial bonds suggests that Carl is now more than a subservient piece of machinery. He has transgressed the boundaries of Skynet's programming to become sentient.

Dark Fate (2019) begins with a flash back to Sarah's initial interviews with Doctor Silberman after she has been institutionalised in a psychiatric hospital. Sarah paints a verbal picture of the future that Reese has shared with her that has since become more pronounced since her trauma caused by the first terminator. The actualisation of the future is an example of the threats present in the future. Silberman attempts to reassure Sarah that dreams of the future are quite common, but this causes Sarah to become emotionally volatile,

> Sarah: You're already dead, everybody, him, you, dead already! This whole place, everything you see is gone. You are the one living in a dream because it happens! It happens! (Miller, 2019, 0.02.21).

In this scene, Sarah discusses the future, not only as if it has happened, but within absolute assurity that it is set in stone. Within the repetitive narrative of the timeline in the franchise, the future Sarah prophesises is certain. Due to the interference from John and Skynet, the *Terminator* (1984-present) franchise is caught in a time loop where the past is directly and continuously affected by the future. In this circumstance, because of the time loop, notions of past and future are no longer linear, and both appear to be predetermined by the manipulations of the other (Gleick, 2016). This is where fate as a theme becomes prevalent throughout the franchise. Fate is a universal concept that is ingrained in human culture and human identity across the globe and throughout history (Fischer & Todd, 2015). A sense of fate, destiny, prophecy, and predestination appear under different contexts of faith, politics, and philosophy, all focused on the fate of humanity (Kane, 2005). Fate is typically an anthropocentric notion. It implies that, humanity and the direction of human culture and history are important enough for the natural and physical powers of coincidence, luck, and chance to be bent to the will of humanity whether by the universe, or divine intervention.

Fate from a perspective of faith (for the Western world, particularly Christianity) has held a significant place in history. God is credited with knowing the entire future through the doctrine of infallible divine foreknowledge. Through this notion, fate is a critical aspect because if "God knows the entire future in a way that cannot be mistaken, then it looks as if nothing can happen differently than it does" (Zagzebski, 2002, p. 45). Faith, much like history, is always from the human perspective for humans. To reiterate, anthropocentrism is the belief that humans are adorned with fundamental and universal significance (Butchvarov, 2015). Based on this perspective, Panayot Butchvarov (2015) stipulates that anthropocentrism has since been fuelled by various assumptions, both based in faith, and science. Some have been regarded as scientific until being disproven such as geocentrism which dictated that Earth was at the centre of the universe (Livio, 2021). Others are scientific but also steeped in the unknown. For example, there is no intelligent life elsewhere in the universe (Butchvarov, 2015). Whereas others proved to be more quantifiable such as, no other terrestrial animals' equal humanity in intelligence. Butchvarov states that it is assumptions such as these that "not only encourage our special interest in ourselves but also seem to justify the cultural framework" (p. 6). It is this complex structure of assumptions within faith, philosophy, and science that scaffold all facets of human culture and history promoting an infinite and justifiable framework of anthropocentrism. This is where the notion of fate becomes critical. If humanity is made in the image of God and holds that special significance then the end of

all things is also encompassed in the narrative of human history that is yet to come. However, science has also played a significant role in removing this anthropocentric significance and challenging preconceived notions of fate. As Darwin (1871) states, "with his god-like intellect which has penetrated into the movements and constitution of the solar system – with all of these exalted powers – man still bears into his bodily frame the indelible stamp of his lowly origin" (p. 1). This behaviour is derived from the fact that superior human intellect has allowed for the assumption of human uniqueness and the development of a centrist self. Yet we are constantly reminded through dislocation by science and rationality that humanity is removed from the centre of the universe. While not necessarily a universally believed notion anymore, especially in the West, Richard Taylor (2015) states that humanity as a whole,

> At certain moments… we are apt to entertain the idea of fatalism, the thought that whatever is happening at a particular moment is unavoidable, that we are powerless to prevent it…[however] the fate that has given us very being has also given us our pride and conceit and thereby formed us so that, being human, we congratulate ourselves on our blessings which we call our achievements, blame the world for our blunders, which we call misfortunes, and scarcely give a though to that impersonal fate which arbitrary dispenses both (p. 41).

Even outside the realms of faith, fate still plays a significant role in the way humanity views the world and their individual places in it. This is where the themes inherent within the Frankenstein Myth become more potent as media that echoes these notions is chilling as it appears to predict our misuse of technological and scientific advancement. Our cultural and societal structure is still anchored by anthropocentric tendencies as expressed at the beginning of the chapter. It is within this context that, much like the notion of time travel, the tendency to believe in one's personal sense of destiny and fate; despite the rationality that contradicts this concept is a transgression in science that aligns thematically with the Frankenstein Myth. While the future is not set, many feel a personal sense of ambition and destiny in confronting the unknown (Wallace & Ryerson, 2011). *Terminator* (1984) presents the audience with a history where technology eradicates humanity. This history is set in stone while a divine-like providence is imbued upon the Connors' as the saviours of humanity; a fate they cannot avoid. Sarah must do what she can to prevent the conception of Skynet to free her son from his burden as saviour of humanity yet still provide him with the skills and knowledge to take up the mantel if she fails. Ultimately John's future appears unavoidable, and Sarah's life is

forfeit to insuring he survives. Taylor (2015) goes on to discuss the notion of the future. He states that,

> Future is obscure to us, and we are therefore tempted to invest in it, in our imagination, with all sorts of possibilities. We all think of the past in this way, as something settled and fixed… fatalists think of the future in the same way (p. 43).

This is fundamentally how the Connors' are forced to see the future despite their attempts change their fate. While they prove throughout the franchise that they are able to manipulate the future in turn, the result of this is merely postponement of Judgement Day. This is highlighted by Sarah's reaction. Sarah understands that this event is predetermined. She does not distinguish from the past, present, or future as she does not have possibilities or options. She is also aware that humanity's time is limited so already believes those around her to be as good as dead. *Genisys* (2015) offers a rare insight into Sarah's struggle with her fate and how she must deal with being a reluctant fatalist as I have explored earlier.

Dark Fate (2019) engages with the idea of a change of fate on a different level. With the destruction of Skynet, the future is changed. John is no longer the leader of the resistance and Skynet is no longer the architect behind human extinction. The consequences of the Connors' choice are not clear at the conclusion of the second film, *Judgement Day* (1991), as Sarah believes that John will now be able to grow up free from his fate. In the opening scene, while Sarah delivers dialogue on the prospect of this unknown future, a T-800 appears, still programmed to fulfil Skynet's intent to kill John. Because the terminator is an exile in time and was not affected by the timeline change due to its presence in the present already, Skynet's non-existence does not change the mission. What this change to the future does mean is that John and the Resistance can no longer send a protector to ensure John's survival. John no longer holds the mantle of saviour, and the timeline is no longer set. These significant changes result in the T-800 being able to fulfil its programming and kill John. This is a significant dislocation from the pseudo-religious fate-based narrative that has encompassed the franchise since the beginning. Sarah has had no choice but to dedicate her life to the prophesised saviour of humanity and his survival. When she is finally free of her overarching purpose, her redemption found in saving her son is lost when he dies but she is also free from her fate. I have discussed the toll of Sarah's commitment to John on her life within the lens of *Genisys* (2015) where she able to finally choose the life she wants to lead. *Dark Fate* (2019) dislocates her from the narrative entirely, focusing on a new protagonist. It

offers her no redemption, and she struggles with this dislocation as her mission gave her a sense of significance. This is in line with the assessment of fate by Taylor (2015). This is a factor I shall return to later on. However, despite the elimination of Skynet, a new series of events begins through the arrival of a new protagonist and antagonist, yet they are not after Sarah.

6.6 THE AUGMENTED HUMAN

Despite the death of John immediately at the beginning of the film, Grace, an augmented cybernetic soldier, arrives from a new/alternate future in Mexico City, 2020. The appearance of Grace is significant for three reasons. The first is that there is now a new future where a new saviour of humanity is now being targeted whose name is Dani Ramos. The second is that the future is ruled by a new artificially intelligent system called Legion. The third is that there is a new terminator. Grace is significantly different from previous saviours as she is the first female to be sent back. More noticeably she is not a terminator but an augmented human. Grace is a significant example of the theme of boundary transgressions in science. I argue that anything that is direct violation of a person's existence, human rights, and individuality is considered an ethical transgression of scientific empiricism. Human augmentation is a break from the anthropocentric understanding of the body. Diego's (Dani's brother) immediate reaction to Grace is indicative of this as he is unclear on whether she is human.

Diego: Are you a machine, too?

Grace: No, I am human like you.

Diego: But, uh, your arm...

Grace: I am augmented (Miller, 2019, 00:17:30).

While the appearance of a cybernetic human being does not seem to stray too far from the narrative of a franchise which has created some of the most significant and memorable images of cyborgs within popular culture, Grace's nature is unique as the purest iteration of the transhuman in the franchise. While there have been other human augments within the franchise,[25] Grace represents the first human being who maintains her anatomical corporality and also the first to volunteer for the augmentation. The notion of the transhuman has been

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[25] See Table 2, p. 62

discussed at length within this chapter in regard to the terminator typology in *Genisys* (2015). While posthumanism and transhumanism incite mixed feelings of excitement, revulsion, and anxiety, the prospect of the posthuman is clear; the decentring of humanity, the measure of all things (Braidotti, 2013). However, *Dark Fate* (2019) changes this popular trope of superiority and subsequent threat to humanity with the introduction of Grace as the sole form of transhumanism and as a saviour of the human race. One could argue that John also undergoes a similar evolution in *Genisys* (2015), but as pointed out by Pops, all of John's human qualities other than the replication of his personality to trick Sarah and Reese, are erased at a cellular level. The human and the machine in this case do not live in a true state of symbiosis. Where John undergoes a form of cellular evolution completely transcending his humanity, Grace maintains her humanity but undergoes augmentation. Rather than cellular transformation, her body bears the marks of a significant surgical procedure on all of her extremities and around her facial features. As observed by Diego, a metal alloy mesh has been applied beneath her flesh as a form of armour. She has faster reflexes than the average human being, demonstrates heightened strength, and a cybernetically enhanced retina with an in-built processor with targeting array (Miller, 2019). These qualities are ones typically found within earlier Skynet T-units such as the T-800. Grace represents (much like Marcus in *Salvation* (2009)) a true symbiosis of human and machine while maintaining her individual human qualities and personality, unlike John. Unlike both Marcus and John, Grace was not transformed against her will by a machine and has complete control over her abilities. Rather she was augmented by human surgeons,

> Medic: She's got multiple stab wounds. A lot of chest trauma here. Let us get these holes sealed up. Get a chest tube in the right side.
>
> Grace: I volunteer. Make me an Augment.
>
> Back in the present after Grace wakes up:
>
> Sarah: So you are here to protect her. What are you? Never seen one like you before. Almost human.
>
> Grace: I am human. Just enhanced. You know, increased speed and strength, thorium micro-reactor (Miller, 2019, 00:38:39).

The presence of Grace and her augmentation is indicative of not only popular images of the transhuman becoming more prevalent in popular culture, but of the increasingly more

noticeable discourse surrounding the future of the human form and the role science will play in its augmentation. It is important to reiterate here that science fiction has done and will continue to fulfil a critical role in the literary and visual expression of not only common anxieties toward technology, but scientific hypothesises and theories as a whole. As Sherryl Vint (2021) suggests, science fiction is a generational reflection of the significant cultural and societal technological epochs that prompt change. Vint goes on to state that, "it would be difficult to overstate the degree to which the science fiction imagination has shaped notions of the robot and later of artificial intelligence" (p. 82). This is also a significant tenant in my development of the Frankenstein Myth. Fiction echoes prominent themes that resonate with the human experience. In the case of the Frankenstein Myth, this is the echo of the three themes I have identified as core to Shelley's (1818) text. In this case the notion of human augmentation transgresses the boundaries of science through challenging the commonly accepted ideas surrounding the sanctity of the human form.

Another key example of this is the integration of the laws of robotics as established by Asimov (1942) in science fiction, now are a significant point of conversation in regard to robotic design and the evolving ethics of the world in which robots are becoming more complex and more intrinsic to human society and culture. Asimov's rules provide a clear ethical barrier that defines the theme of boundary transgressions in science in this context. Vint (2021) indicates that robots also mark the significance of science fiction within the realms of technological development. She states that, "while robots were once the assured sign of science fiction, they now mark the ubiquity of technology in daily life" (p. 82). Vint's point is vital to this thesis. While predominantly analysing and defining the role of the Frankenstein Myth, it also calls to attention the intricate and fundamental nature of these images of futuristic and hypothetical technology. Not only through the development of technology or technological process, but the discourse of ethical consideration. The Frankenstein Myth highlights the potential outcomes of these technological developments which signal significant change that potentially threaten to negate Asimov's (1942) rules and cross the threshold of what is acceptable modification of the human body.

6.7 TRANSHUMANISM

The theme of modification of human physiology has become a point of contemporary debate, and philosophical and scientific interest. This is where previous socio-historical

context is critical to understanding the way the Myth develops. Transhumanism initially gained traction in the twentieth century during the period of the Second World War as a concept of racial and biological superiority. It was not as literal as contemporary theories but still laid the foundation for images and symbols of post and transhumanism as seen in the *Terminator* (1984-present) franchise. The sublime posthuman future has already been acknowledged in a variety of ways throughout the twentieth century within various ideologies such as Communism and Fascism. Within Marxist ideology that fuelled the Russian revolution was an idea of trans historicism and claim to universality which promoted a radical break from human history (McDaniel, 2014). The concept was instituted to, "de-value all previous and current political, social, and economic institutions. Everything could be destroyed to make way for the future" (p. 190). This romantic image of the future for Marxists and Communists saw the destruction of all traditional and historical features of a culture and society in order to thoroughly re-mould and cast the life of every person and institution in society. Though this is subjectively a different idea of sublime posthumanism than that of contemporary science fiction, it still fits the mould of many transcendent ideas of the posthuman future. *Terminator* (1984) is a prime example which depicts the erasing of human history, culture, and society to make way for a literal posthuman future ruled by machines.

To be postmodern and posthuman is to surpass notions of the modern world. Fascism had a similar notion called futurism which was a concept that praised the speed and progress of modern technology and the violent rejection of the past. Benito Mussolini, leader of Fascist Italy, also valued Nietzsche's concept of the superman or, "the blueprint for Fascist strongmen" (Davies & Lynch, 2005, p. 92). The concept was hinged on physical vitality and superior muscular strength while also being mentally strong within fascist ideology and linked to a mythic past that is associated with a national and ethnic supremacy. It is an image that was paired with Aryan physical features within propaganda to promote the belief that "the strong would overpower the weak" (Davies & Lynch, 2005, p. 92). The superman became the ideal image of the masculine, Fascist posthuman for the likes of Adolf Hitler and Mussolini because of the fundamental reliance on corporate strength of fascism (Beiner, 2018). The reason why these examples from radical ideologies is important is that for many the concept of the posthuman in its many subjective forms has already physically manifested, even as far back as the early to mid-twentieth century. The concept of altering time for the purpose of transhistorical not only ties into these earlier notions of transhumanism as a

transcendence from human culture but history into utopian future. Huxley (1957) proposed a similar philosophical approach "[that] man remaining man, but transcending himself, by realising new possibilities" (p.17). These were the first indications of the potential for humanity to surpass previous limitations on a cultural and societal level. This concept, due to its ties to Fascism and Marxism, was feared rather than embraced as they were the crux of propaganda targeted towards anti-sentiment of western culture and its ideals. To reference Vint (2021) "this is indicative of the reflective nature of science fiction on a cultural and historical level" (p. 87). She goes on to state,

> The imaginary shapes of these figures/archetypes take is also important… This imaginative history is important because idealisations drawn from science fiction inform how technology is designed, in terms of both what technologies are imagined as capable of doing and how they fit within a social world that precedes them (p. 89).

The very symbol of Skynet having the ability to erase human history and culture through time altering technology is a terrifying concept. The creation of a superior human form that is spliced with technology to create an enslaved cyborg that has Aryan features that adhere to Fascist and Marxist images of the superman is not a coincidence. As per the unique approach of my thesis, we can see how the Frankenstein Myth explicitly engages with other disciplines beyond popular culture, literature, and film.[26] As expressed earlier, the first *Terminator* (1984-2003) films threat was built on the premise of Cold War anxieties, one of these being the spread of communist (and previously, Fascist) ideals throughout the Western world.

The notion of the transhuman has evolved throughout the twentieth and twenty-first century to embody two trains of thought, the literal and the symbolic transhuman. These are primarily removed from the political extremism, for the most part, and have become the subject of true scientific and philosophical discourse which seeks to establish the trajectory of human evolution in relation to reliance on technology, the crux of the *Terminator* (1984-present) franchise. In keeping with Grace's evolutionary state, the Futurist perspective proposed that transhumanism heralds radical modifications of human physiology and biology in reference to the increasing reliance on technology (Hughes, 2014). Cultural posthumanists "use the term transhuman to define a period in history where humanity underwent drastic

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[26] See Figure 1, p. 50

change: the use of fire, clothing, language…" (Hughes, 2014, p. 134). Chris Gray (2002) indicates that it is, "a social construction of what it means to be human in the present as well as the technological construction of a new type of techno-bio-body in the near future through cyborgisation" (p. 15). Once again, the reference to the notion of an epoch signified by technological change returns to the foreground. It reiterates the cultural and historical importance of these science fiction symbols as reflections of this reliance and change. They emphasise the transgressions of human physiology through scientific and technological augmentation. In keeping with the themes of the Frankenstein Myth, this image in this case is not utopian despite the idealism of transhumanism and posthumanism, an idyllic image that is reminiscent of the beginning of *Frankenstein* (1818) itself. Under the discourse of the Frankenstein Myth, creation, and in this case augmentation or synthetic evolution by the hands of humanity, can only be grotesque and dystopic despite the efforts to create something beautiful. The creation reflects the darkness of human nature and the hubris to play God. In this context, Grace's augmentation is also a reflection of humanity's near extinction and desperation and the remnants of their hubris through the manipulation of technology and the creation of an entity that they could not control. Despite the prevention of Skynet, a new artificially intelligent entity called Legion is created to protect humanity against cyberwarfare. In the true spirit of the franchise the new artificially intelligent program also gains consciousness and begins to wipe out humanity. Except this time John cannot save humanity. Meanwhile, Sarah has been living in exile, still under the impression that her and John saved humanity from Judgement Day. She is not sure of the fact that the future that has plagued her life never happened and has been completely erased with the death of John. Grace saves Dani, but they are attacked by a new terminator unit. Sarah has been answering anonymous summons to random locations where new terminators have been appearing from the future. Just as Grace is about to be defeated and Dani killed as a result, Sarah turns up and saves them. The appearance of Sarah creates a significant juxtaposition between the original future that dominated Sarah's life and the one that is attempting to kill Dani:

Sarah: My name is Sarah Connor. When I was about her age... a terminator was sent to kill me to stop the birth of my son, John. Leader of the Resistance.

Grace: Which resistance?

Sarah: The human resistance. Against Skynet? The AI that is trying to wipe us all out?

Grace: I have never heard of it.

Sarah: Good. John and I changed that. We changed the future. Saved three billion lives. You're welcome.

…

Dani: Grace, tell me what happens when this all falls apart.

Grace: Nothing happens. There is no warning. Day one, everything just stops. No phones, no power. Cities go dark. They told us we had to leave, just until things got back to normal. But normal was never coming back. Day two, they launched nukes. They thought they could contain Legion with tactical EMP strikes. And by day three the whole world was at war. Millions died. And then, when the food ran out, billions. Some men killed my dad over a can of peaches. When we thought the worst was over then Legion started to hunt survivors. I do not know how I made It through the next few years. But I got lucky. Someone found me, saved me, and then we started fighting back.

Sarah: And let me guess. Dani gives birth to the one man that can stop it.

Dani: What?

Sarah: The future wants you dead for the same reason it wanted me dead.

Dani: But I am nothing. I am nobody.

Sarah: Yeah, you are not the threat. It is your womb. Fine. Let someone else be Mother Mary for a while (Miller, 2019, 00:50:47)

This is a large quotation from the film, but this section of the chapter analyses the coming together of two separate, significant timelines. This means that there is an important amount of dialogue to recognise and analysis to delve into. Sarah still shows the effects of trauma of fighting a future which has not physically manifested beyond the terminators she has had to destroy and hide the evidence of to prevent Skynet's conception as suggested by Culver (2009). She immediately assumes Grace will know who she is and register the legend of her son, and her status as a warrior, forgetting that it has not happened at all. Within Sarah's dialogue, beyond the expectation of recognition, are the references back to her divine-like status she reluctantly took on. The imagery and reference to John has always been biblical,

but more insinuated. Titles such as prophet or saviour typically get assigned to him. But this is the first explicit reference from Sarah to the apparent underlying biblical themes. Sarah refers to herself through reference to Dani as Mother Mary, a common reference to Jesus Christ's mother within Christian doctrine. This recognition of Sarah's not only divine-like but predetermined fate is significant as it shows that the themes of fate that have been touched upon. Especially those that reference fate within the context of faith and divine providence. Sarah has become enthralled with her own legend and sacrifice despite the fact that, due to her solitary struggle, she has been ostracised by society as a criminal (Culver, 2009).

The amalgamation of these two narratives also presents the cultural dichotomy between the past and the present. Sarah's experience at the hands of Skynet as an emphasis of Cold War anxiety and culture is much different to Dani's, except they unfold in much the same way as far as the methods of termination by the two antagonists, Skynet, and Legion. As Vint (2021) states, "twenty-first century narratives respond to a context in which humans have fused with our machines in ways that do not erase emotions [but]… blur the line between [the] real and [the] simulated" (p. 87). The context of the threat has changed (as it did within *Genisys* (2015)) and the image of the saviour has now as well. Grace's symbiosis with her mechanical augmentation is an expression of this contemporary nuance of the themes of increasing reliance on technology as a literal fusion and boundary transgression of science into human physiology. As a side note that must be acknowledged, the notion of a strong, female saviour is also indicative of the cultural and societal shift. Another key example of this is that Sarah immediately assumes that Dani will give birth to a male leader of the human resistance which is why the terminator is now hunting her. Not once does she consider the possibility that Dani is that saviour. While relying on her own experience for context, this is another example of science fiction reflecting on its societal context.

6.8 THE NEW POSTHUMAN

The new terminator called the Rev-9 is also a change from the muscular, robotic, and Aryan visage of Arnold Schwarzenegger. Yet it is also a return to the grotesque and sinister elements that made the original terminator so terrifying. Vint (2021) goes on to state that, "[the] updating the story of robotic creation addresses how robotic systems are integrated into human culture" (p. 88). The notion of the superman from the perspectives of radical political regimes such as Fascism and Marxism no longer fit the context or anxieties of contemporary Western culture, so the terminators no longer need to emulate the hulking image of

Schwarzenegger to be considered terrifying. As the common enemy is no longer necessarily representative of an aggressive country but rather a militant and extreme ideal, the average person is now regarded as a potential threat (Spellman, 2006). In keeping with this shift into the 'New World Order' following the challenge to traditional understandings of threats to national security, the representation of the threat had to change. As indicated before, the terminator units make up a comprehensive typology throughout the franchise as they became more complex, less robotic, and more sublime in their aesthetic.[27] The popular image of the chrome, skeletal cyborg with red eyes and sinister grin was phased out with the introduction of the T-1000, a shapeshifting, liquid metal terminator that no longer required organic flesh or chrome skeleton but still maintains a pre-set human likeness. While they are still a sinister presence, the grotesque elements of the fusion of flesh and metal as seen in the T-800 are no longer present in the antagonist. The Rev-9 reintroduces these grotesque elements through its own unique aesthetic. It is a symbiosis of two terminators which form the skeleton and the skin of the entity. The skeleton is reminiscent of the T-800's and the skin can shapeshift as it has the same properties as the T-1000. As it is the combination of two forms, they are able to separate and work independently from one another and pose a threat on par with the two T-units they share qualities with. Rather than maintaining the chrome aesthetic that Skynet's terminators had, the Rev-9 is jet black, both skeleton and skin. Its dark aesthetic gives it a new air of the macabre and the grotesque. When the liquid separates from the skeleton it produces a singularly Gothic effect. This is also achieved when the liquid is disfigured in an attack which mutilates the human form the Rev-9 has taken on and, as the liquid is attached to a solid frame, resembles human skin being stripped from bone.

Through Grace and the Rev-9, Gothic science fiction becomes a prominent feature in the film. Regarding their aesthetic and the contemporary climate of ethics, it has unconsciously led to producing the character as a popular image of the transgressive qualities of technology and science, especially in regards to the human form (Balling, 2011). Beville (2014) states that "Gothic horror consistently raises questions of ethics and morality, and of the limits of reason, in its traversals of the boundaries that define these very issues" (p. 64). This is because the Gothic mode is known to give voice "to the terror, taboo, and transgression of the contemporaneous collective unconscious, speaking of those issues that we are often too fearful to broach and too repressed to acknowledge" (Beville, 2014, p. 64).

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[27] See Table 2, p. 62

These fears often come in the form of potentially incendiary cultural climates and the development of new technologies that often pose a threat to the existence that humanity possesses in that present time and space. The manipulation of the human body through the augmentation of human physiology as seen in Grace, and the fusion of the human form to the grotesque and macabre nature of the Rev-9, presents a dichotomy of subliminal and grotesque images of the future of humanity through transhumanism and the singularity through posthumanism. While they are a contrast to one another, they represent the transcendence of technology past the contemporary notion of the human and depict a more superior organism. As Robert Pepperell (2005) argues, "posthumanism is the end of… that long held belief in the infallibility of human power and the arrogant belief in our superiority and uniqueness" (p. 171). Despite the progression of technology to create a more superior humanoid and artificial intelligence through the T-units, but also reach a point of singularity with human machine symbiosis being the most prevalent themes of boundary transgressions in science throughout the *Terminator* (1984-present) franchise, the notion of machines evolving and taking on more human traits also becomes prevalent.

Dark Fate (2019) introduces one more character that challenges the notion of technology either augmenting humanity or developing beyond human limitations. Once Sarah saves Grace and Dani, they seek out the mystery source that has been sending texts to Sarah about the locations of terminators. This leads them to Carl, the T-800 who killed John. Much like Pops in *Genisys* (2015), Carl continues the evolution of the T-800 as it progresses from programmed cyborg to a sophisticated form of posthuman beyond its aesthetic and programmed make up:

> Sarah: Cut the shit. (Sarah looking at Carl's photographs) Nice family. She a terminator, too? That is your little terminator kid?

> Carl: His name is Mateo. I met his mother, Alicia, a few months after I killed John. Her husband had beaten her. He was trying to kill her child. She had nowhere to go. Caring for this family gave me purpose. Cause without purpose, we are nothing. While raising Mateo, my son, I began to understand what I had taken from you.

> Grace: Wait. You grew a conscience?

> Carl: The equivalent of one, yes.

Sarah: It is an infiltrator. It is lying.

Carl: When my mission was completed, there were no further orders. So, for 20 years, I kept learning how to become more human (Miller, 2019, 01:11:32)

This interaction with Carl is critical as it highlights a number of key points that indicates a state of evolution. The first is that Carl in this interaction does not appear mechanical or robotic and has developed human-like sensibilities. These include facial responses and gestures that would allow him to pass as human. On a deeper level, Carl shares the fact that he has been caring for two humans and regards them with familial emotional ties especially in regarding Mateo as his son. Common understanding of robotic and the programming inherent suggests that Carl should not be able to elicit any emotion that has not been pre-programmed, let alone a sincere paternal bond with a human child. This ties back into Nayar's (2014) assessment of the T-800 in *Judgement Day* (1991) and its emotional attachment to John. This evolution that is witnessed on an emotional level is indicative of a development of consciousness. While Carl does not emphasise this when attempting to explain his new state of being, the familial connection alone and his sincere regard for his role and title of father, is a significant change in the T-800s development of human qualities. These traits indicate a form of transhumanism which tends to suggest that human qualities, thought to be unique to humans, is able to be imbued into other subjects. Hughes (2014) states that,

"transhumanists see the idea of humanness as chimerical shorthand for supernatural soul and that this empty idea cannot be the basis for moral status. Moral status should instead be based on sentience and self-aware personhood characteristics which may also be found in non-human animals, machines, and posthumans" (p. 136).

Hughes' statement indicates a challenge to the anthropocentric notion that uniquely human qualities that are deemed unique based on the notion of the soul. Traits that are considered unique do in fact have the capacity to be transferred and learned by non-human entities. While previous notions of the posthuman and transhumanism that have so far appeared in this thesis have been in relation to the evolution of humanity, the development of the T-800 throughout the contemporary instalments of the franchise begins to elaborate on the significance of non-human technological humanoids also going through a state of evolution.

This is a factor that will be revisited in the analysis of the posthuman in the *Alien* (1979-present) franchise.

6.9 SUMMARY

In this chapter we see a distinct cultural shift between two centuries within the *Terminator* (1984-present) franchise through the Frankensteinian theme of boundary transgressions in science. What began as a franchise propelled by Cold War anxieties has evolved to challenge the rapid technological development and reliance on said technology in the twenty-first century. It also challenges notions of anthropocentrism through the transgressive nature of posthumanism and transhumanism. It has also shown the intertextual and interdisciplinary engagement conducive to the model of the Frankenstein Myth. As a mythos embedded in the Western-American psyche the echoes of *Frankenstein* (1818) communicate on an intertextual basis. While the franchises are not linked through narrative, character, or universe it is the thematic threads of the Frankenstein Myth that draw similarities between them that are comparable through the models hypertextual structure. This chapter began to engage with the other texts but on a very superficial level. However, as the analysis of the other franchises expands on these themes, the lexias connections will likely increase and improve allowing for stronger reference between the franchises and interconnectivity between the themes. Especially through the periphery of external cultural influences that are common denominators within all three franchises. In the next chapter I will contend primarily with the theme of challenge to the natural order in the *Jurassic Park* (1993-present) franchise with a primary focus on the twenty-first century narrative. This chapter will draw attention to the primal and biological elements of the Frankenstein Myth while also engaging with the environmental effects of humanity challenging the natural order.

7: WELCOME TO JURASSIC WORLD: RESURRECTION, GENETIC ENGINEERING, AND THE CHALLENGE TO THE NATURAL ORDER BY A RETROACTIVE PAST.

7.1 INTRODUCTION

While the *Terminator* (1984-present) franchise links into the hypertextual web of the Frankenstein Myth through boundary transgressions in science with a focus on the technological cybernetic monster, the *Jurassic Park* (1993-present) franchise focuses on the resurrected biological monster.[28] Through this lens, the two franchises create a stark juxtaposition in the hypertextual model of the Frankenstein Myth and present two different typologies of monsters that adhere to the fears surrounding different technological and scientific developments which symbolise past and future. The patented control of resurrection, cloning and the illusion of control over this primordial monster, are key themes of the *Jurassic World* (2015-2018) instalments and is a critical representation of the Frankensteinian theme of challenging the natural order. The narrative of the film's surrounds the stability of the inhabitants of the park and the efforts to shape and dampen their primal and natural preoccupations for the purpose of risk-free entertainment while secretly weaponising the creatures for military purposes. The analysis of *Jurassic World* (2015) and *Fallen Kingdom* (2018) will coincide with references to the original film to firmly establish the framework of the prominent themes implicit to the franchise. This is because the foundation of this ability to play God through resurrection and genetic manipulation is first established in the original instalment, *Jurassic Park* (1993) and continues to play a significant role in establishing the narrative and themes of the *Jurassic World* instalments. It will also exemplify how the franchise evolves to be more relevant to a new audience.

John Hammond, the founder of Jurassic Park, believes he has brought creatures of the Jurassic and Cretaceous period to life without consequence. He has no concern or regard for the potential of these inherently dangerous creatures to disrupt the natural world order. Instead, he is primarily focused on "sparing no expense" (Spielberg, 1993) to entertain his guests. It is this naïve understanding of the process of de-extinction and subsequent cloning, and disregard for the ethical and moral considerations surrounding the practice, which shapes the narrative that would become a key factor in shaping the nuance of the series and the

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[28] See Figure 2, p. 52 for context of this hypertextual connection

hypothetical endangerment of the human species. Based on the assertions of Dominque Janicaud (2005) and McArthur (2015), *Jurassic Park's* (1993) inclusion of the technological method to create the dinosaurs has created a space for the imagination to expand on the depictions of the technology and fear inherent that the film franchise has offered (Janicaud, 2005). This in turn also begs the question, what were the other potential applications for reproductive cloning? Eugenics, immortality, control of the process for wealth and power? This liminal gap poses nightmare scenarios of cloning for financial gain. The implications for experiments exempt from the natural order, clones as pawns for military use, and a return of the archetype of the doppelganger (the original clone archetypal figure) fit the mould of these questions. Despite there being no current empirical scientific evidence to rationalise these fears, they still hold stigma which is a consistent phenomenon across each franchise. To reiterate Harris (2004), cloning is a phenomenon that "has gripped the public imagination" (p. 1) and that, "the mere mention of the word cloning sells books, films, and even news stories" (p. 2). This is similar to popular narratives that indulge anxieties surrounding the development of artificial intelligence such as the *Terminator* (1984-present) franchise. This is how the Frankenstein Myth in conjunction with Gothic science fiction unconsciously filters into these contemporary narratives.

Science fiction within the Gothic mode is what Justin D. Edwards (2015) refers to as "the dark side of Enlightenment rationalism" (p. 1). Current contemporary scientific explorative discourse gives the illusion of lineal progression, the Gothic poses digression. In the case of *Jurassic Park* (1993), "the dinosaur returns from extinction, the evolution of technology engenders the devolution of life. Human beings are threatened by an atavistic monster that is created by an advanced technology that ends in savagery" (Edwards, 2015, p. 1). This quote from Edwards expresses the regressive nature of the *Jurassic Park* (1993-present) franchise and the notion of a threat from the past in relation to the concept of cloning. Within this context and within the mode of Gothic science fiction, the Frankenstein Myth echoes through the implications of these scientific possibilities which are then explored and developed. While the technology in question does not promise savagery it is still consistently broadcast through a catastrophic lens where the use of this technology results in a negative outcome. The *Jurassic Park* (1993-present) franchise is a key example of this. Joan Slonczewski and Michael Levy (2003) suggest that *Jurassic Park* (1993) was one of the first and more prominent examples to depict a fictious yet rational way to harvest an extinct species deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) from fossilised remains and resurrect dangerous apex

predators that threaten humanity. Though the cloning of extinct species remains an impossibility, the use of DNA discovery methods exemplified within the narrative of *Jurassic Park* (1993) is now a routine process in the fields of forensic biology and archaeology. This an example of how science fiction inspires the development of real scientific processes but also how a myth can inspire technological and scientific discovery. Slonczewski and Levy (2003) go one to state that, other than influencing the method it is a franchise that has inspired a "generation of optimistic scientists" (p. 184). This is an ironic outcome considering the pessimistic nature of the narrative toward the unbridled scientific progress. This is one of the functions of popular culture. It acts unconsciously as a memetic effect that virally passes on as social semiotics in various forms of communication, imagery, and the everyday ongoings of culture and society from person to person (Cavalli-Sforza, 2001; Werner, 2018). These examples and themes are provocative due to their thematic connections to the potential of these technologies within the hypertextual flow of the Frankenstein Myth.[29] A key example of this memetic transmission occurs in the late twentieth century. Following the release of *Jurassic Park* (1993) the re-focused interest in the reality of cloning began in 1996 with the birth of Dolly the sheep. She was the first complex organism deliberately cloned through a combination of reproductive and therapeutic techniques. Though the relationship between the film's release and Dolly's creation are a coincidence, the seemingly lineal series of events and the relationship between fiction and reality in the face of a controversial technology still produced a provocative effect. As Janicaud (2005) states, "from a single successful result in the animal domain the imagination gave itself free reign" (p. 36). This is supported by McArthur (2015) who argues that "cultural anxiety can be created when our fears are fuelled, and our imaginations piqued by those writers and film producers who know exactly which button press" (p. 68). The notions of imagination and the gap between myth and reality are the liminal spaces where concepts such as *Jurassic Park* (1993) are fermented. As is the creation of the genetically engineered monsters and the mad scientists who created them. As Gail Ashurst and Anna Powell (2012) state, "the mad scientist, the obsessive savant whose desire for knowledge and power defies natural law" (p. 148). The *Jurassic Park* (1993-present) franchise is the epitome of this defiance as it embraces the potential of these cloning anxieties.

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[29] See Figure 2, p. 52

A point that is important to reemphasise is that film is a universal language that provides audiences with unconscious reminders of their anxieties and their potential. Cloning began as an early modern concept and following the attempts to clone within an empirical setting, fiction responded in kind. As Jess Buxton and John Turney (2007) state,

> Genes are linked with topics of abiding human interest: sex, death, and identity so it's no surprise that genetics excite novelists, video game makers, dramatists and filmmakers love revisiting powerful stories from the pre-genetic era, such as *Frankenstein* (1818) ... that help shape our ideas of what might happen. Somewhere in this entertaining mix of science fiction and folklore, possible futures are being forged (p. 289).

Buxton and Turney (2007) acknowledge the pertinent role that popular culture images and science fiction narratives play in the creation of commonly believed, feared, and referenced possible futures that are crafted around questionable scientific theory such as application for genetics. The reference to *Frankenstein* (1818) is also critical as they provide a foundation for the Frankenstein Myth and its concrete role within the conception of these new technologies into the paradigm of multiplatform and evolving science fiction narratives. A key example as already analysed in this thesis is the evolution of Skynet from a Cold War defence network to Genisys, a lifestyle application for general consumption. As the anxiety shifts due to cultural contexts, so do the archetypes to remain relevant.[30] This speaks to the manifestation of the Frankenstein Myth within the collective consciousness and its unidentified presence beyond this thesis.

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[30] For a summary of this shift, See Tables 1-3, p. 59-70

7.2 The Art of Making Monsters

The progression from the modern to the postmodern can be seen incrementally throughout all three franchises as they span both the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. This is a key aspect to the evolving hypertextual model of the Frankenstein Myth and its challenge to potential dangers of questionable technologies that develop over time. Marina Levina and Diem-My T. Bui (2013) state that "[this is] the essential role that monster narratives play in culture. They offer a space where society can safely represent and address the anxieties of its time" (p. 1). In the case of the *Jurassic Park* (1993-present) franchise, the first film deals with the foundational scientific premise of de-extinction, cloning, and the complications surrounding the ethics of such experimentation in response to anxieties of the late twentieth century (Spielberg, 1993). The post-modern, twenty-first century sequels introduce a new layer of scientific context over the foundation laid by Spielberg's initial trilogy. *Jurassic World* (2015) intentionally begins with a successful, larger, and more hi-tech version of the park that Hammond was attempting to create. Rather than the threat being subverted before causing immeasurable damage, *Jurassic World* (2015) provides a realised image of civilian visitors to the park being attacked by dinosaurs. It also explores the forementioned progression from *Jurassic Park's* (1993) scientific successes in de-extinction and cloning and the furthering the application of genetic engineering to hybridisation and weaponisation.

Jurassic World's scientists had perfected the genetic replication and de-extinction processes, seemingly harnessing the genetic power that Doctor Ian Malcolm warns is uncontrollable in *Jurassic Park* (1993). The *Jurassic World* (2015 & 2019) instalments reiterate the human proclivity to play God and challenge the natural order by harnessing genetic power without any regard for the ethical considerations. Building on the premise of the initial instalments, *Jurassic World* (2015) continues to play God in spite of the events that occurred in *Jurassic Park* (1993). In keeping with this hypertextual consciousness of the Frankenstein Myth, the technology evolves within the narrative to remain implicit to contemporary popular culture and common anxieties that manifest in the unconscious.[31] A key aspect of the *Jurassic Park* (1993-present) franchise is the theme of hyperrealism and control (Laist, 2015). Laist states that, "*Jurassic Park* (1993) addresses the anxiety associated

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[31] See Figure 1, p. 50

with monstrous generativity" (p. 151). This can be defined as a perversion of ones need to make their mark by caring for others and accomplishing things that make the world a better place (Laist, 2015). Monstrous generativity is also applicable to the theme of consumer and corporate excess that is prevalent within the franchise.

7.3 The Evil Corporation and the Mad Scientist

The notion of the evil corporation has become a common popular culture trope and has been articulated within Western film and television for the past seventy-five years (Allan, 2016). They represent popular anxiety surrounding the power of corporations and their questionable ethics (Allan, 2016). The notion of the evil corporation is prevalent within all three franchises: Cyberdyne (*Terminator* (1984-present)), Weyland-Yutani (*Alien* (1979-present)), and InGen (*Jurassic Park* (1993-present)). This is an example of how the hypertextual structure of the Frankenstein Myth enables a peripheral conversation between unrelated narratives and is an example of the analysis can evolve within this structure.[32] In each franchise the corporation is at the heart of the creation or unleashing of the monster and putting those under their protection at risk. Cyberdyne has already been discussed at some length in regard to both the development of Skynet and Genisys. Though the discussion surrounding the role of each corporation becomes more relevant within this chapter due the prominence of InGen within the *Jurassic Park* (1993-present) franchise. Cyberdyne and Weyland-Yutani are more of a malevolent, sinister, and looming presence within their franchises. While they are powerful and faceless entities that predominantly exist off screen, they still have significant influence over the narrative. Martin Kevorkian (2018) states that,

> From one angle, the *Terminator* saga is the story of Cyberdyne, an American company that capitalises on the talents of [Miles Dyson] and comes up with a product that takes over the world market. But Dyson's runaway micro processing breakthrough leads to a paradoxical return to savagery, as the world becomes a technological jungle where humans again live lives that are nasty, brutish, and short, as they huddle amidst twisted metal to defend against predatory machines (p. 298).

While Cyberdyne's corporate entities do not appear on screen, they still help to shape the narrative as the force behind the progression of cybernetic and artificially intelligent

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[32] Refer to Figure 2 of the Frankenstein Myth model on p. 50.

technology. Weyland-Yutani acts as an Earth-based intergalactic company seeking resources throughout space for a dying planet. Ramzi Fawaz (2012) states that,

> In the *Alien* series, Weyland-Yutani Corp, the galaxy's largest interstellar monopoly on natural resources and private military contractor, has struggled to collect a specimen of the alien species for nearly two hundred years. The company's famed slogan, "Building Better Worlds," absorbs the world-making projects and transforms them into forms of social and cultural engineering (p. 1115).

Due to the company's desire for the xenomorph (Alien) genus they appear more prominently within the *Alien* (1979-present) franchise as the saga goes on with various iterations of the Weyland family have also appeared within the universe. In both franchises, the corporations not only seek to obtain commodities and sustain perpetual technological and scientific progression for financial gain but also develop and weaponise said technology. Hence why Skynet was developed as a military program and why Weyland-Yutani wanted control over the development of the xenomorph genus. InGen also holds a dominant position in the *Jurassic Park* (1993-present) franchise with entertainment only being one small factor within the vast portfolio of the corporation. The development of the dinosaurs introduces a similar maniacal control over nature desired by that of Weyland-Yutani and poses a devastating threat to humanity like the artificial intelligence program created by Cyberdyne. The key difference is that InGen hold a dominant position on screen and directly manipulate the narrative. The creative powers under the control of InGen highlight the common Frankensteinian trope of the mad scientist as they twist nature to entertain and capitalise.

Hammond believes his creations will make the world a better place with his genetically engineered product despite the obvious dangerous connotations that his process suggests. The mad scientist fully believes that his experiments and creations are positive and will make a positive change and difference no matter the cost (McArthur, 2015). This is exemplified within the *Terminator* (1993-present) franchise as well in regard to the Dysons' and their creation of both Skynet and Genisys. In a similar fashion to the activities of Cyberdyne, the combination of biological engineering and consumerism cast the multinational corporation InGen in the same light. Philomena Essed and Gabriele Schwab (2012) stipulate this point by stating that,

The fact that biological cloning is being developed and advanced by powerful multinational corporations and promoted in late capitalist nations can hardly conceal the underlying colonial heritage with its fantasies of mastery over nature, including life and death (p. 11).

Though the genetic code of the creature is used, it is still manipulated to create a living subject that resembles the desired image of extinct species for the purpose consumerism. It is within this context that the boundary of life and death is broken for corporate gain. Due to this fact, the initial creations of *Jurassic Park* (1993) are common examples of hyperrealism. As Laist (2015) states, "from a distance, the monsters of Jurassic Park look like dinosaurs… [however] it is made clear that the animals of Jurassic Park are not exactly "real" dinosaurs" (p. 151). The juxtaposition of reality and illusion is a consistent theme throughout the franchise. This occurs under the overarching theme of consumer and corporate excess and its realisation within the confines of a theme park. The symbiosis of corporate excess and mad science is first introduced through a pivotal monologue given by Jurassic World's operations manager, Claire Dearing. While pitching a potential new asset, Dearing exemplifies this symbiosis through parroted management which has come with the success of the park, despite the failure of Jurassic Park. She states that,

Dearing: No one is impressed with a dinosaur anymore. 20 years ago, de-extinction was right up there with magic. These days kids look at a stegosaurus like an elephant from the city zoo. That does not mean asset development is falling behind. Our DNA excavators discover new species every year, but consumers want them bigger, louder, more teeth. The good news, our advances in gene splicing have opened up a whole new frontier. We have learned more from genetics in the decade than a century of digging up bones (Trevorrow, 2015, 00:07:47).

Dearing's statement is indicative of three key factors that are heavily present with in the narrative of *Jurassic World* (2015). The first surrounds consumer expectation and the illusion of control within the confines of a theme park. The premise of the *Jurassic Park* (1993-present) franchise is built on the manipulation of nature for the entertainment of consumers. John O'Neil (2002) summarises this fusion of science and consumerism for the sake of entertainment as it embodies *Jurassic Park* (1993) specifically. He states that,

The spectacle [*Jurassic Park*] is one of America as a commercial zoo in which all the events and processes of animal and human interaction are managed in the phantasy of a totally fabricated environment and at unimaginable profit, as the management system totally administers every element of Jurassic Park (O'Neil, p. 297).

Though O'Neil's point presents the idealised infrastructure of Jurassic Park had it not failed prior to opening to the public; it presents a detailed description of what Jurassic World manages to achieve for ten years before the park is ultimately closed. The implications of the manipulation of nature to be contained within the illusion of an entirely fabricated environment was stipulated and elaborated by D. Newsome and M. Hughes (2017). They identify the nature of Jurassic World and its control over its inhabitants through the infrastructure of the spectacle of the theme park framework. They state that "the movie portrays a facility catering to mass tourism centred on various extreme wildlife attractions, interpretative facilities, and thrill-seeking experiences" (p. 1312). Within this facility, the unnatural has been conditioned to manage mass public tourism and is put on display, engaged with, and framed as a spectacle for the amusement of the paying consumer. Petting zoos contain young herbivorous dinosaurs, many adorned with saddles so children can ride them. Carnivores are fed for the entertainment thousands of people a day in huge stadiums and enclosures (Newsome and Hughes, 2017). This is all in an effort to spike attendance, thrill sponsors and shareholders, and create mass financial gains through the ambitious nature of the archetypal mad scientist. Disneyland and other international theme parks boast the carnivalesque nature of the spectacle for the purpose of entertainment. Jurassic World symbolises this entertainment structure of American-lead capitalism and the satellization of American culture globally (Bronner, 2021).

Jurassic World (2015) engages with hyperrealism. Umberto Eco (2014) observes that under the theme of corporate and consumer excess, "the American imagination demands the real thing and, to attain it, must fabricate the absolute fake" (p. 8). Though Eco's text does not touch on the *Jurassic Park* (1993-present) franchise due to the first edition being published in 1973 his observation is still appropriate. *Jurassic World* (2015) provides a zeitgeist where the development of genetically engineered, and aesthetically pleasing dinosaurs are a common consumer attraction. They are also a front for continued ethically questionable progression that challenges the natural order. Consumer culture of the twentieth

and twenty-first centuries has already started this trend with technology. As Essed and Schwab (2012) state, "technological sophistication, mass production and consumer demands have made clones and fakes widely acceptable" (p. 13). In addition to Eco's (2014) point of American consumerism, he also discusses the nature of Disneyland. In relation to his point about the American imagination and hyperrealism, Eco states that, "a real crocodile can be found in the zoo, and as a rule it is dozing and hiding, but Disneyland tells us that faked nature corresponds much more to our daydream demands… technology can give us more reality than nature can" (2014, p. 44). The same logic applies in *Jurassic World* (2015) but rather than animatronics, a monster is created to look like a dinosaur is created and expected to perform while its very existence challenges the natural order. Under corporate control, Jurassic World not only presents the dinosaur for entertainment, but it also resurrects the dinosaur (subverting and manipulating nature to do so) and trademarks the image of the dinosaur for the purpose of commercialisation (O'Neil, 1996). There is little regard for their inherent primordial nature or their unique hybridised natures that have come about due to the fusion of different species. They are created with the expectation that they will follow the status quo set by the creator despite their unpredictability as synthetic hybrids. As Andrea Bonnicksen (2009) states on the subject of hybridisation of different species, "an array of biological and social barriers stands in the way of interspecies reproduction, including different numbers of chromosomes and other hurdles that make successful hybridisation between animal species rare" (p. 60). In the case of *Jurassic World* (2015) these barriers are surpassed, and the hybrid is created. This is done initially by filling the gaps in the genome that have been fragmented since the extinction of the dinosaurs. On the subject of de-extinction, Torill Kornfeldt (2018) indicates that though there are similar biological and ecological barriers which prevent this, it is a romantic notion prompted by a mythological influence and proclivity to emulate God, and other divine powers credited with the creation of life without regard for the consequences. This is at the core of this predisposition to challenge and break these natural boundaries and not foresee the consequences on the natural world which is a critical nuance in the Frankenstein Myth.

The characters of *Jurassic World* (2015) who occupy corporate positions are the ones who embody this theme. Dearing, for example, understands the dinosaurs to be assets rather than lifeforms and is unable to comprehend the problematic nature of their creation. Vic Hoskins, a private military contractor working for InGen, also has little regard for the nature of these animals and is merely interested in their military potential. However, just as the

notion of the theme park is built within the framework of an illusion to emulate an exciting and thrill-seeking experience, Jurassic World's control over the natural instincts of these animals is also an illusion. In the first film, there is a key scene between Hammond and Doctor Ellie Sattler, that establishes this notion of the illusion of control over the unpredictable and unnatural. Hammond constantly reassures those around him that they spared no expense as a measure of how much control he has over the park and its inhabitants. Hammond confides in Sattler that when he was young, he began a flea circus and that he tricked people into believing he had trained the fleas to perform various circus tricks. It was the belief the audience had that Hammond had enough control over the fleas to force them to abandon their nature. The true illusion was that there were no fleas at all, and that the illusion was so good that the audience would swear they could see them. Much like the flea circus, Hammond uses the reassurance of expensive security and the spectacle of grandeur to inspire trust and enthusiasm in his illusion of control. O'Neill (2002) stipulates this control as an illusion by stating that, "*Jurassic Park* can amuse… only though a highly controlled regression to [the dinosaurs] level of aggression, destruction, and death" (p. 295). In the case of the dinosaurs, the pacification of their primal aggression and brutality through technology. Even when his grandchildren go missing and are possibly dead due to the failure of the technology built to contain the instinct of his creations, Hammond seems more preoccupied in convincing Sattler that he was in control and still correct his mistakes,

> Hammond: With this place, I wanted to show them something that was real, to see and touch… We are too reliant automation, and I can see that now. Now the next time, everything is correctable. Creation is a sheer will. Next time it will be flawless.
>
> Sattler: It's still a flea circus! It's all an illusion…
>
> Hammond: When we have control…
>
> Sattler: You never had control! That is the illusion! I was overwhelmed by the power of this place. But I made a mistake too. I did not have enough respect for that power and its out now. The only thing that matters now are the people we love… John, there are people dying (Spielberg, 1993, 1:28:00).

Though Sattler was swayed with the illusion of the park upon being introduced to the herbivorous herds of dinosaurs at the beginning, she realises that Malcolm was correct in his

assessment of Hammonds disregard for the power of nature to entertain and make money, and the harm discovery can do on a cataclysmic level. As O'Neil (2002) points out, genetic engineering "represents the ideal/practical cross fertilization of science, engineering, and commercialisation" (p. 293). Yet it is a revisionist of natural history and the natural order and can be paid for and utilised to craft this illusion through technology (O'Neil, 2002). Here, O'Neil also identifies the symbiotic relationship of consumerism and the mad scientist as it appears in the franchise and its destructive consequences for the environment. On this basis, O'Neil's focus on American consumerism links back into Eco's (2014) concept of hyperrealism but also Kornfeldt's (2018) focus on the unease surrounding the potential application of gene technology. Kornfeldt (2018) states that, "new methods for restructuring genetic material in everything from bacteria to human beings [has] created a whole new world of opportunity, but also fears. This potential seems all the more terrifying because of its novelty" (p. 14). This point has been stipulated by Essed and Schwab (2012) who state that it is because of these strides "[genetic] and cloning technologies have had an almost unparalleled impact of the cultural imagination and the re-thinking of the boundaries of the human" (p. 9). This has occurred in two prominent ways. The first is the limitation of human ingenuity has broken through perceived natural barriers with the progression of science. The second is that commonly accepted definitions of human individuality are called into question with the proposition of human cloning; a factor which will be revisited later on.

Jurassic Park (2015) suggests that science grants humanity autonomy over nature and allows the boundaries established by the natural order to be manipulated or broken, a nuance of themes critical to the Frankenstein Myth. This occurs in the name of discovery and progression, a point that will continue to be re-emphasised throughout this analysis. This power for corporate financial gain is at the epicentre of the *Jurassic World* (2015-2017) instalments and begins a conversation of ethics first started in *Jurassic Park* (1993). Invited scrutineer, Doctor Ian Malcolm states after seeing the manipulation of genetic power at play in the first film that,

> Malcolm: Genetic power is the most awesome force the world has ever seen but you wield it like a kid who has found his dads gun… It did not require any discipline to obtain [this power] … you did not earn the knowledge for yourself and so have not taken any responsibility for it. You stood on the shoulders of geniuses to accomplish something as fast as you could and before you knew what

you had, you patented it, and packaged it, slapped in on a plastic lunch box and now you are selling it (Spielberg, 1993, 0:35:58).

Jurassic World (2015) is the culmination and image of success of this cross-fertilization and subsequent threat posed by this success while also establishing the inherent madness imposed by continuing the production of synthetic and dangerous organisms. Where Jurassic Park failed, Simon Masrani and InGen followed through on Hammond's desire to correct its mistakes and create a park which would not repeat them despite the inherently dangerous nature of the genetic power that his being harnessed (Gigliotti, 2009). This narrative of humanity's attempt but inability to repeat the divine creative act is fuelled by the notion of science compelled by commerce and, knowledge utilised for greed (O'Neil, 2002, p. 293). The result of this proclivity to create is the violation and the horror that ensues. Masrani displays the same naïve and ignorant regard for nature in the face of the promise of capital gain. In keeping with the model of consumer and corporate excess, the process of genetic engineering and genetic resurrection is the second factor that can be drawn from Dearing's monologue. She indicates that asset development has not fallen behind, and the parks DNA excavators discover new species each year. In doing so, they have learned more from genetics in a decade than a century of digging up bones. This is where this challenge to the natural order elaborates more into the resurrection of extinct species and the revision Jurassic World makes to natural history.

While I have mentioned genetic engineering briefly as the ideal combination of science and commercialism, I will analyse more specifically the process of genetic engineering being undertaken within *Jurassic World* (2015). O'Neil (2002) observes that, not only is the concept of the *Jurassic Park* (1993) built within the framework of consumerism but is also a prominent revisionist of naturalist history, "rewriting palaeontology in the name of technology" (p. 293). Though O'Neil stated this to elaborate on his critique of American consumerism while referring to the use of Computer-Generated Imagery (CGI) to construct what dinosaurs may have potentially looked like, it has a more implicit relevance to the text than was intended. The images produced for the film are a significant part of the spectacle and have been cemented in popular culture as the definitive images of dinosaurs. The other aspect expressed in this scene is the illusion of control through genetic engineering. Henry Wu, the chief geneticist of Jurassic Park's lab, explains the method of the de-extinction and the cloning process but most importantly he explains how they control reproduction. No

animal in the park is able to breed due to chromosomal manipulation allowing the geneticists to make a species populated entirely by females (Gigliotti, 2009). This attempt to control nature is not possible in this scenario. This is because the pure biological resurrection of an extinct Jurassic species cannot be achieved as there is no complete DNA sequence for these animals. Due to this the gaps in the genome need instead to be filled with code similar to that of prehistoric reptiles (Briggs et al, 2000). The result of this is a hermaphroditic nature, allowing the animals to breed at will, something that the geneticists did not anticipate. As Malcolm suggests, the type of control Hammond is trying to have over creation is not possible,

> Malcom: The history of evolution has taught us… life will not be contained, life will break free, it expands to new territories, crashes through barriers, painfully maybe even dangerously… but put simply, life finds a way (Spielberg, 1993, 0:31:10).

This conversation of ethical responsibility is the key thematic thread of the Frankenstein Myth within the series and has repercussions that strongly resonate throughout the franchise as Malcolm's warning is not heeded. The power of creation and duplication that Hammond is applying to resurrect the dinosaur species pushes scientific boundaries which is what Malcolm warns Hammond against.

The third factor is Dearing's suggestion of exploring asset development beyond rudimentary genetic engineering. The new layer of genetic power being experimented with in *Jurassic World* (2015) moves past the cloning and hybridisation to create an aesthetically acceptable dinosaur as displayed within the initial trilogy and into the gene splicing and hybridisation of Jurassic species to create an entirely unnatural life form. To reiterate Dearing,

> Dearing: no one is impressed with a dinosaur anymore. Children look at a stegosaurus like it was an elephant in the Central Park Zoo… consumers want them bigger, louder, more teeth (Trevorrow, 2015, 0:07:35)

> Investor: We want to be thrilled.

> Claire: Don't we all. The Indominus Rex, our first genetically modified hybrid.

> Investor: How did you get two different kinds of dinosaurs to, you know…

Henry Wu: Oh, Indominus wasn't bred, she was designed. She will be 50 feet long when fully grown. Bigger than the T-Rex.

Claire: Every time we have unveiled a new asset, attendance has spiked. Global news coverage, celebrity visitors, eyes of the world.

Investor: When will she be ready?

Henry Wu: She already is (Trevorrow, 2015, 0:08:35).

In reaction to the consumer desires, Jurassic World begins to experiment with the notion of gene splicing to create a hybrid form of dinosaur, the Indominus Rex. This scene is not just for the benefit of the narrative but for the contemporary audience of the new film. To add more sequels to a franchise, especially a franchise whose previous sequels were not as well received at the box office or by audiences as the initial instalment, had to provide more than another dinosaur flick. As Adam Roberts (2006) states, five years after the release of the third instalment, *Jurassic Park III* (2001), "audiences were no longer liable to be impressed simply by the sight of CGI dinos" (p. 291) hence the need for a greater wow factor to challenge contemporary anxieties. Here we can see the thematic echoes requiring a contemporary upgrade to remain relevant to the incoming audiences who have viewed *Jurassic Park* (1993) and are no longer wowed or impressed. Similar to the consumers of the theme park. The modified hybrid dinosaur is an amalgamation of the two most popular dinosaurs from the franchise, the Tyrannosaurus Rex, and the Velociraptor. They not only challenge the notion of human dominance as the apex predator but also humanity's position as the most intelligent predator. It is important to reiterate here, that the dinosaurs of both *Jurassic Park* (1993) and *Jurassic World* (2015) already represent a form of hybridisation.[33] The DNA of the extinct species are fragmented and require the DNA of other animals to complete the code. The result of this is that the dinosaurs aesthetically embody the common archetypal images of popular media rather than what they would look like in reality. The control over the dinosaur's DNA is also an attempt to control reproduction within the park by making the dinosaurs all asexually female, preventing what Wu calls unauthorised breeding in Jurassic Park. Once again, the instinctual nature of the synthetic animal is manipulated to fit within the control methods of the park controlling the natural order. As O'Neil (2002) states, "Hammond's mad enterprise of amusing the worlds [population] with animals whose

[33] See Table 1, p. 59

asexuality is essential to their controlled simulation" (p. 295). The essence of O'Neil's statement implies that as reproduction is a significant part of the biological life cycle the inhibiting of that trait further challenges the natural order. It is used to condition the animal further than simply a theme park attraction that resembles the popular image of itself rather than what nature intended. This point is further reinforced by Wu who states to Masrani that,

> Wu: We have always filled gaps in the genome with the DNA of other animals. And, if their genetic code was pure, many of them would look quite different (Trevorrow, 2015, 0:52:22).

The Indominus Rex is the symbol of further progression into the process of gene splicing and is part of the pattern of the hypertext which flows into the hybrid, the next stage of manufactured genetic evolution. The hybrid is at the centre of the amalgamation of the Gothic and the science fiction modes. It is the indication of the Other and the abject as the hybrid does not belong to any group or species. It also can be veritable uncanny image of both the sublime and the grotesque as a new life form that can take many forms. As the franchises are concerned primarily with the desecration of the natural order through scientific intervention and unbridled strides in scientific progression, the hybrid emerges as commonplace within later iterations (Piatti-Farnell, 2014). Genetic mixtures often present a complex tampering with nature and display the potential of genetic power whether they are 'born' or 'manufactured' within the narrative. The hybrid is not just a natural oddity but a challenge to accepted binaries of society. As stated above, the hybrid cannot be contained within the confines of a single species. Physically it may represent a number of different species or aesthetically belong to one and hold the traits of another. Nevertheless, as Piatti-Farnell (2014) states "the hybrid is the symbol of mergence, of union, of synthesis… both threatening and exciting, holding… the potential for a new group genetically and culturally" (p. 31). In the case of these texts however, the concept of the hybrid is used as a controversial symbol of the tampering with the natural order and manipulation of genetic power. The Indominus Rex is the first iteration of a genetic Jurassic hybrid within the *Jurassic Park* (1993-present) franchise. It is a creature comprised of two synthetic prehistoric species, spliced with genes from other animals to create a biological weapon. The manufacturing of the Indominus is a symbol of control similar to the creation of Skynet as a weapons defence system. Though the hybrid opposes limitations, often its creation is an expression of power and control by those who developed it (Hard and Jamison, 2005). In the

first film it is plainly stated that the dinosaurs of Jurassic Park have hybridised genomes to complete the DNA strands which has made them look and sound like commonly accepted conceptual images of dinosaurs rather than the original creature. These manufactured lifeforms have unlimited potential, but this is ignored for entertainment. The hybrid in this case challenges this new version of nature. Though humanity challenges the natural order, nature adapts to this challenge.

Dearing's pitch to potential sponsors not only acts as a prelude to the wider narrative of the film, making it a key beginning point for the analysis of these instalments, but highlights the fundamental foundation of how the natural order has been challenged for the purpose of consumer and corporate excess. Similarly, some of the ethical considerations at play within the narrative appear prominently in conversation or relate back to *Jurassic Park* (1993). However, the conversation of ethics surrounding the manipulation of the natural order requires more depth of analysis. Ethics have played a crucial role in the development of scientific discourse and progression. It creates a perimeter to protect the desired Self. Traits that are found within the anthropocentric consciousness of human history, the same perimeter that I argue creates anxiety of the abject and the Other found within the Frankenstein Myth. As Raymond E. Spier (2002) states, "new knowledge about our world and the way it works is accumulating at an ever-increasing pace" (p. 1.) Due to this, ethical boundaries of anthropocentrism and what is considered to be natural are constantly challenged. Ethics help to anchor the roots of the anthropocentric foundation of human culture. It is commonly associated with behaviour and conduct and outlines the principles of what is considered to be right by a societal/cultural majority to help form the foundation of civilisation. Spier (2002) reinforces this point by indicating that the word 'ethic' is a common synonym for words such as, "laws, values, good, right and benefit" (p. 8). This is an important segue as it helps to explore why these franchises, *Jurassic Park* (1993) in particular, make such a lasting impression. Also, they are constantly referenced when new biotechnological discourse begins to stray into ethically questionable areas that challenge notions of the natural order and human nature by transgressing established scientific boundaries. Due to this fact, the mode of Gothic science fiction has been a key observer of the potential to misuse scientific development to create life and the ethical considerations inherent which is why it is crucial to digesting these Frankensteinian echoes. These concerns are mainly to do with humanity's belief in their position as a unique species in the animal kingdom. Under the guise of anthropocentrism and the desire to protect that status they must maintain its individuality.

This longing for the protection of humanity's position is the unspoken point that Doctor Malcolm with Doctors' Grant and Sattler. The trio engage in a debate with Hammond surrounding the ethical considerations of the science that is being practiced and the disregard for nature and natural selection.

This conversation of ethics take place within fifteen minutes at the beginning of the first film before the tour of Jurassic Park which eventually brings the film to its climax. Here it is important to observe and consider such ethics in a Gothic science fiction context. Maria Beville (2014) states that "Gothic horror consistently raises questions of ethics and morality, and of the limits of reason, in its traversals of the boundaries that define these very issues" (p. 64). This is because the Gothic mode gives voice "to the terror, taboo, and transgression of the contemporaneous collective unconscious, speaking of those issues that we are often too fearful to broach and too repressed to acknowledge" (Beville, 2014, p. 64). These fears often come in the form of potentially incendiary cultural climates and the development of new technologies that often pose a threat to the existence humanity possesses in that present time and space. The nature of the Gothic intertwined with science fiction creates a liminal gap for rationalisation adding to the power of fear that the Gothic imbues in consumers. The discourse of boundaries in this regard relates directly to this preconceived notion of societal safety as a subjective concept that has been put in place to maintain relative order. This is where Steven Bruhm (2002) re-enforces and expands on Beville's point by stating that "Gothic texts and films… circle around a particular nexus: the problem of assimilating these social anxieties into personal narrative that in some way connects the Gothic protagonist to the reader or the spectator" (p. 261). It requires a sense of possibility in the mind of the audience for the texts to cross the corporal, societal and ethical boundaries instilled in the inherent consciousness of the individual and attempt to give the spectator a protagonist who embodies this unconscious desire to break through the boundaries in place and come into contact with the Other. This is because the Gothic subjectively proposes that humanity has a romanticised allure to the Other, constantly crossing boundaries and presenting grotesque archetypal monsters (Botting 1996). Botting expresses that this is a new mode of the classic cautionary tale of the Gothic genre. While continuously breaking through barriers and challenging the societal norm, it presents a new romanticised allure to the aesthetic of the scenario and the archetype in question. While the monstrous creations of the *Jurassic Park* (1993-present) franchise are terrifying, there is also a sense of awe when faced with the creatures in question. The constant application of pressure on the liminal gap between myth

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and reality, and the reinforcing of this natural allure to the other, is where the audience is faced with ethical dilemmas that are relevant to the cultural climate of the time. As the relevance of the text to common cultural ethical boundaries and anxieties is integral to the allure to the grotesque and the terrifying, as stipulated by Beville (2014), Bruhm (2002), and Botting (1996), the themes and discourses within the specific franchise continue to mutate and change in tandem with the continuously evolving characteristics of cultural ethical taboo.

As we are able to see in my initial data collection[34], characters in these franchises use these technologies to tame nature, discover new worlds and species that could tip the balance in humanity's favour, and/or progress for the sake of progression. In each case, chaos ensues by dangerously breaking through boundaries and barriers of constructed limitations to create or unleash a phenomenon that is outside of conceived restraints, an event pertinent to the Frankenstein Myth. Patrick Brantlinger (1980) states that this is typical of contemporary science fiction as it was initially meant as a form of opposition to thoughtless progression, often depicting apocalyptic fantasies of how certain scientific exploration would conclude. This train of thinking is continued by Anne Stiles (2011) who refers to Brantlinger's (1980) suggestion in her analysis of Gothic texts that encapsulate the theme of scientific hubris. In the case of the initial text, *Frankenstein* (1818), a homunculus is created in the image of the human body, yet poetically becomes humanity's undoing. From a contemporary perspective, *Jurassic Park* (1993) poses an interesting juxtaposition to this tradition as it forgoes the myth of human dominance and the mystery of creation as seen within the context of the Frankenstein Myth. This in turn results in an apocalyptic scenario where a previous dominant apex predator is resurrected, threatening the presupposed dominance of humanity. These key elements allow for cognitive estrangement to compel the spectators to conceive alternative realities. These realities are often caused due to a disregard for any ethical consideration passed the sole proposition of constant discovery, something Malcom (in *Jurassic Park* (1993)) believes is a predominantly destructive and penetrative force that destroys what it touches. As Botting (2008) stipulates,

> Where fears of Frankenstein as a mad scientist concentrated anxieties on a moral
> and social ambivalence regarding the progress and the benefits of
> experimentation, the on the monster opens up concerns with identity and corporal

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[34] See Tables 1-3, p. 59-70

integrity that tacitly yet readily accept the arrival of a new biotechnological order

(p. 52).

Where monsters used to be elemental, they are now also manufactured through the amalgamation scientific progression, the breaking of ethical boundaries, and popular anxiety. Where the Gothic began as a romantic movement, science fiction grew out of romantic opposition to rationalism. Brantlinger (1980) states that contemporary science fiction as a "realism of the future is at best problematic" (p. 30). However what Brantlinger does not concede is the inspiration that science fiction has had on technological advancement. This is the irony of science fiction in the capacity of ethical opposition, though it often presents apocalyptic scenarios it still grants inspiration to further advancement.

As it has been established above, science fiction within the Gothic mode constantly deals with the notion of ethics. This is because it is often the act of crossing boundaries which sets the foundation for a Gothic narrative. Tsitas (2014) discusses the particular ethical parameters of these transgressions in relation to the creation of chimeras, or animals subjected to hybridisation through gene splicing. She states that stories of experimentation on animals or with animal genomes without regard for the consequences typically reflect human attempts of "taming, altering and augmenting the animal body" (p. 98). The result of this is the sublime image of natural creation that is perverted by humanity with the creation as a more grotesque hybrid brought to life. However, the disregard for ethical and moral considerations is not merely the juxtaposition between the sublime and grotesque but the purpose for the creation in the first place and the disregard for the nature of the unnatural creature and its position in the natural world. This form of control is a direct connection that *Jurassic Park* (1993) has to the Frankenstein Myth due to the attempts to augment the chimera. The term 'chimera' refers to the Greek legend of a naturally occurring hybridised monster who terrorised settlements within its territory of Lycia until two other hybrids, Bellerophon the mortal son of Poseidon, and the winged horse, Pegasus defeated it (Bulfinch, 1964; Fry, 2017). It is one of many examples of humanity envisioning the merging of species and by divine intervention. It is in this context that the chimera departs folklore and myth and enters into science fiction where humanity plays the role of the divine (Clayton, 2007). It not only changes the narrative where the hybrid is created in a lab rather than a supernatural entity, it makes the entity more believable when its existence is loosely applied to a scientific discourse. While the concept of the chimera has departed the narrative of the original myth, it

still stands to reason that myth as the narrative remains valid and relevant to the human experience. It provides truth through common Western myths that still resonate within the contemporary cultural lens and have granted agency to the hypertextual nature of the Frankenstein Myth.

The analysis of the ethics of challenging the natural order and the establishment of the first biological hybrid of two prominent predators within the franchise, brings this chapter to the next important scene, the Indominus enclosure. Up until this point the Indominus hybrid has merely been discussed from a marketing perspective. In this scene, Masrani meets his creation. Prior to arriving at the enclosure, Dearing and Masrani discuss the wellbeing of the animals at the park. This conversation not only builds upon the corporate confusion between nature and its manipulation, but implies that these corporate entities have not learnt from the mistakes of Jurassic Park,

> Masrani: How's my park doing?
>
> Dearing: Great! We are up 2.5% over last year, a bit lower than our initial projections…
>
> Masrani: No, no, no, how's it doing? Are the guests having fun? Are the animals enjoying life?
>
> Dearing: Well, guest satisfaction is steady, in the low 90s. We don't have a way to measure the animals emotional experience…
>
> Masrani: Sure you do, you can see it in their eyes. Right?
>
> Dearing: Of course.
>
> Masrani: Ok, now show me my new Dinosaur (Trevorrow, 2015, 0:13:55).

This exchange between Dearing and Masrani highlights the inherent correlation between the control and the manipulation of nature with quality of life in the eyes of Masrani as the representative of the corporate wing of Jurassic World. While Masrani's lack of interest in cost, and his intent on gaging the wellbeing of the animals appears to be admirable, it is merely surface deep as an anti-capitalist. As Richard Dyer (2015) states, "anti-capitalism [in this case] is based on a perception of the logic of capitalism being the pursuit of profit at whatever the cost" (p.19). Masrani's reluctance to discuss the projections of the park is rooted in the same idealism displayed by Hammond,

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> Dearing: Marketing felt that we could of set some of the cost…

> Masrani: Enough about cost! John Hammond entrusted me with his dying wish and not once did he mention profits. Spare no expense he used to say.

> Dearing: I appreciate that, but the reality of operating a theme park requires…

> Masrani: Do not forget why we built this place Claire. Jurassic World exists to remind us how very small we are, how new. You cannot put a price on that. (Trevorrow, 2015, 0:15:10).

Masrani's last comment expresses this idealism, but also the parallel between the illusion of control that *Jurassic World* (2015) symbolises and corporate excess as the entrepreneur's playground (Dyer, 2015). Masrani not only believes that the control measures put in place guarantee the quality of life of the hybrid creations that populate the park, but that limitless funds and extravagance can assure that control is maintained while also oxymoronically 'humbling' the benefactors, sponsors, and corporate entrepreneurs with the products of this challenge to nature. This is at the same point as Dearing speaking to her subordinates after her pitch to potential sponsors,

> Dearing: Horizon Wireless presents, the Indominus Rex.

> Lowery: Arrgh, that is so terrible. Why not just go the distance, Claire and just let these corporations name the dinosaurs? They have got all the ball parks, why stop there? …Pepsi-saurus, tostitos-don… (Trevorrow, 2015, 0:12:17).

Under the sponsorship of these corporate industries, capitalism enables the pursuit of scientific exploration but removes the ethical consideration as well as the autonomy of the creation. Rather than a living being, the artificially created Jurassic and Cretaceous hybrids become corporate entities rather than a dangerous challenge to the equilibrium of the natural order. To quote Malcolm,

> Malcom: The lack of humility before nature that is displayed is staggering (Spielberg, 1993, 0:34:50).

This misconception is best exemplified in this scene through Masrani's insistence on seeing his new dinosaur, as if it were a toy, after asking about the animal's wellbeing. This is a point that Dyer (2015) stipulates by stating that, "where [Masrani] is not to be troubled with money matters in the actual development and running of Jurassic World, however, money is the

point, science and wonder merely the means to generate profit" (Dyer, p. 19). Dyer's point relates back to Dearing's initial meeting with potential sponsors and the creation of a genetically modified hybrid without consideration for the potential horror that might ensue due to its unpredictable nature and unknown instinctual and predatorial traits. These traits become more apparent upon first meeting the Indominus for the first time as the next generational embodiment of the Frankenstein Myth for a new audience.

Masrani and Dearing arrive at the paddock of the hybrid, which is still under construction,

Masrani: Are you still building?

Claire: We planned to open in May, but asset containment insisted we build the walls up higher. It's bigger than expected.

Masrani: It's a good sign.

Claire: We hit a few speed bumps early on. It began to anticipate where the food would come from. One of the handlers nearly lost an arm. The others threatened to quit if I couldn't guarantee their safety.

Masrani: She's intelligent then?

Claire: For a dinosaur.

Masrani: And that… (pointing to the cracked glass in the viewing platform).

Claire: It tried to break the glass.

Masrani: I like her spirit… It's white. No one told me it was White.

Claire: Think it will scare the kids.

Masrani: The kids? This will give the parents nightmares.

Claire: Is that good?

Masrani: It's fantastic. Can she see us?

Claire: They say it can sense thermal radiation. Like snakes.

Masrani: I thought there were two of them?

Claire: There was a sibling in case this one didn't survive infancy.

Masrani: Where is the sibling?

Claire: She ate it.

Masrani: So, the paddock is quite safe then?

Claire: We have the best structural engineers in the world.

Masrani: Yea, so did Hammond. There is an American navy man here who is part of a research program one of my companies is running. Owen Grady.

Claire: I know who he is.

Masrani: His animals often try to escape. They are smart. He has to be smarter. I want you to bring him in, let him inspect the paddock. Maybe he sees something we can't (Trevorrow, 2015, 0:18:30).

Masrani's first look at the Indominus is its first physical appearance in the film. Masrani and Dearing's exchange about the qualities of the Indominus is long and has a number of crucial points to analyse. It also reiterates the conversation surrounding the unpredictability of hybridised species, especially the hypothetical splicing of two apex Jurassic predators. The first point is in regard to the enclosure. Masrani notes that the enclosure is still being built despite the fact the attraction is due to open to the public once sponsorship is confirmed. Dearing states that it is because it is bigger than expected. Rather than eliciting concern, Masrani indicates that this is a good sign. This part of the exchange once again revisits the theme of consumer and corporate excess, especially through the larger than expected stature of the Indominus in the face of the 'bigger is always better' nature of Western-American capitalism (O'Neil,1996). It also infers that the genetic engineers and park operations have very limited knowledge as to the nature of this prototypical hybrid. Dearing refers to a number of issues they had with the Indominus' early development. Such as its ability to anticipate feeding patterns (like Velociraptor), and its sheer strength and size as indicated by the broken glass on the viewing deck and the need make the paddock larger (both attributes that challenge the stature and dominance of the Tyrannosaurus Rex). She also makes references to traits that were supposedly the unexpected result of combining other animals' DNA to ensure the survival of the hybrid. The first of these traits to be revealed is its ability to sense thermal radiation, a trait inherited from reptile DNA. Though concerns appear within the dialogue in regard to the paddock's security to the point where Grady is requested to

survey it, these are overshadowed by the limitless potential. Masrani's idealistic understanding of control outweighs this understanding as he is not able to comprehend the terror that will ensue once this creature of unknown potential escapes.

7.4 Playing God: The Manipulation of Ecosystems

As stated earlier, Masrani's idealism is a trait that he shares with Hammond. A trait that allows for the manipulation of the natural order through the financing of reckless scientific experimentation that is viewed as the pursuit of the wonders of nature by these visionaries (Dyer, 2015). In the first film, Malcolm believes that this biological resurrection of the dinosaurs is the attempted manipulation of the natural order and is a perversion of the natural world rather than an expression of wonder. He goes on to suggest that the disregard for this order and is alike to a kid playing with his dad's gun as it took no discipline to obtain the power that is being wielded. There is a lack of responsibility for the consequences. Gothic science fiction is intrinsically woven into the concept of playing God and manipulation of the natural order through scientific empiricism. The notion of the mad scientist comes more to the forefront in this section of the analysis. In this case, the grotesque and the repulsive become the victim, often innocent and without autonomy on an island that exists adjacent to reality. While Isla Nublar symbolises the Gothic realm where the rules of natural law are subject to be questioned, changed, and defined by madness, the island constantly threatens to allow the monsters to escape. As Laist (2015) states,

> The monsters being bred on Isla Nublar, that is, are destined to escape the
> narrative space of science fiction and proliferate unpredictably among us. The
> inevitability of the dinosaurs escaping the island – of the mutation in the genome
> of reality turning cancerous and metastasizing into the ecology of the mainland…
> and splicing reality and artifice (p. 154).

In keeping with the nuance of illusion within the narrative and the prevalence of the Gothic subtext, the island is evidently an important element of this challenge to the natural order. The island has maintained a constant symbol of corporate control, much like the walls of a theme park which separate reality from illusion. However, in keeping with the genre of science fiction, the boundary wall is broken, and the unnatural law of the island is spliced with the natural.

Isla Nublar represents the epicentre of a dangerously contentious ecosystem constructed of both contemporary Jurassic, and Cretaceous organisms. The dinosaurs represent one facet of Hammond and Masrani's manipulation of the natural order. In the first instalment, Sattler observes that much of the flora that grows on the island has also been resurrected. The notion of this synthetic ecosystem is a critical nuance to the challenge to the natural order. In establishing a synthetic ecosystem augmented with both thriving and extinct flora, the island as a lifeform becomes another example of the expression of human control and creative power. Adam Lawrence (2014) analyses the metaphor of human proclivity for exploitation, territorial behaviour, and a depiction of Darwinian natural selection that drives organisms to evolve, create, reproduce to ensure survival. In his study, which is more focused on the metaphor of deterritorialization within twentieth century European fiction, Lawrence accurately underpins the inherent nature of humanity to manipulate species and environments. He states that, "human populations cannot resist the temptation to study, dissect, assimilate, and co-opt creatures [and flora] … in endless environmental adaptation" (Lawrence, 2014, p. 186). Lawrence indicates that humanity's constant need to assert control is compensation for an innate inferiority complex. Though his analysis does not maintain a course which is pertinent to this analysis of challenging the natural order nor contend with the mad scientist archetype, Lawrence creates a foundation to explore the human need to control nature from an anthropocentrist angle. In keeping with anthropocentrism and the self-ordained right to shape the natural world for personal comfort and gain, Isla Nublar is a synthetic ecosystem created by humanity for human entertainment and financial benefit. It also creates a large-scale spectacle of the human proclivity to play God. While the dinosaurs represent the human ability to manufacture life, the island represents a significant manipulation of the global ecosystem. For example, Sattler indicates that this form of genetic engineering without understanding the subject can been incredibly dangerous as the nature of the plant, its effect on the current environment, and the environment it will create, is unknown. The plants that have been introduced into the synthetic eco-system being created are toxic, poisonous, or have unknown qualities as they have been extinct until this point in time. They were introduced by Hammond because they are attractive. Gerry Canavan (2014) expands on the exploitation of nature by stating that,

> Despite the urgency of increasingly undeniable ecological constraints placed
> upon human activity, late capitalism remains a mode of production that insists

(culturally) and depends structurally on limitless expansion and permanent growth without end (p. 5).

Canavan believes that the environment and capitalist productivity are directly opposed due to the environment harbouring valuable resources and the unsustainable nature of consumerism stripping them for growth and expansion. *Jurassic World* (2015) reverses this opposition by using science, driven by capitalism to synthetically terraform new ecosystems (Pak, 2016). That is not to say that it is any less cataclysmic or harmful to the natural order. Though Isla Nublar represents the theme of terraforming for capital gain rather than destruction, the fauna and flora which inhabits the island directly contradicts natural law and is a testament to humanity's proclivity to play God. Canavan (2014) expands further on the destructive nature of unsustainable production by stating that, "now humans are dwarfed not by nature but by the ceaseless replication of their own consumer goods" (p. 10). Once again, *Jurassic World* (2015) twists the juxtaposition of nature and consumerism by making nature the commodity. Using the same assembly line rationale that Canavan highlights as the symbol of mass production, monsters that appear aesthetically to be dinosaurs are produced in a similar fashion. Each product or model is required to be more complex and interesting than the last, leading to the creation of the unpredictable genetically modified hybrid (Bennett, 2006). A point made by Canavan (2014) that is supported by Lawrence's (2014) thesis is that the proclivity of humanity to experiment with nature is the allegory of H.G Wells' text *The Island of Doctor Moreau* (1896) and its warning of the dangers of humanity's scientific experimentation and overreaching by manipulating the natural order. While Well's text certainly identifies the dangers of limitless experimentation, *Jurassic World* (2015) is now a more relevant allegory for the dangers of synthetic creation as the technology has moved beyond the concepts of the nineteenth century text and presents a more confronting and contemporary narrative. In keeping with the Gothic and popular culture, the Frankenstein Myth is consciously aware of the mutations that occur in human culture and history and reacts accordingly. While the core themes remain applicable, the content changes to better influence the contemporary audience.[35]

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[35] See Appendix A, Table 4 for a summary of cinematic evolution of these themes and narratives.

The manufacturing of this particular ecosystem is also in keeping with the evolving notion of the Gothic space. The Gothic has always had a unique relationship with nature. Whether through Western folklore and folk traditions, paganism, or myth and legend, and in the case of the *Jurassic Park* (1993-present) franchise, science fiction and the Gothic have interacted with the space of reality in a number of different ways. Eighteenth and early nineteenth century Gothic fiction such as Horace Walpole's *Castle of Otranto* (1764), Ann Radcliffe's' *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), Matthew Lewis' *The Monk* (1796), Jane Austen's *Northhanger Abbey* (1804), and Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre* (1847) were mainly set within geographically disconnected and isolated vacuum societies and challenged religious and social taboos with elements of the supernatural. The environment added to the uncanny aesthetic (Botting, 1996). This also allowed for these darker narratives and fears to be explored while also maintaining ones safety (Anolik, 2014). Yet these spaces exist as the embodiment of a wide variety of anxieties deeply rooted in culture. This point is stipulated by Neil McCaw (2020) who states that, "Gothic narratives reside within the space of what is known and what cannot (or will not) be known, with writers [and directors] capitalising on the creative imaginations of their audiences through suggestion and implication" (p. 147). Following on from the siloed narratives of eighteenth and early to mid-nineteenth century Gothic fiction, nineteenth century Gothic science fiction was thrust into heart of industry and society and the supernatural was rationalised, the Gothic modernised. The monstrous walked the same streets of London as the spectator rather than in a displaced land that the spectator could only access through the text itself. This was a new type of invasion into the reality of the spectator through the implication of the space (Arata, 1990).

The Gothic space has begun to merge with the natural once more in several different ways depending on the genre. For example, the ocean is synonymous with aquatic monsters such as *Jaws* (1975-1987), haunted establishments with *The Conjuring* (2013-present), and small towns as the hunting grounds of unkillable serial killers such as Michael Myers in *Halloween* (1978-present). In each case the monstrous changes in conjunction with the space. As I have established in earlier sections, this is the role of the monster. It is adaptable, flexible, and is able to evolve under societal and cultural change as a personification for its context. This is suggested by Nicole Eismann (2015) "one purpose of space, that is especially important for Gothic fiction, is to set the mood of the story, which also implies to capture the fears and issues of the respective time and use them to create a certain atmosphere around the plot" (p. 1). This is especially noticeable in the above texts, but also fundamentally important

to the Frankenstein Myth which is evident in these franchises.[36] The *Jurassic Park* (1993-present) franchise re-establishes the notion of displaced space instead with the absence of supernaturalism but the presence of a retrogressive past. Isla Nublar is still a rational space, but the laws of science are more liberal to allow the mad scientist's manipulation of the ecosystem be possible as well as the resurrection of the dinosaurs through Jurassic and Cretaceous hybrids. In a different way the *Terminator* (1984-present) franchise establishes a dystopian narrative based on the unyielding progression of artificially intelligent technology and robotics until the juxtaposition of past, present, future are contradicted, and human culture is challenged by a mechanical form of futuristic posthuman. The *Alien* (1979-present) franchise presents a primordial future where a primal form of biotechnological posthuman and a futuristic mechanical posthuman are brought together in the same narrative constructed of two spaces and seek to displace humanity with extinction. Once again we can see the conjunction of the franchises under the hypertextual structure of the Frankenstein Myth as they communicate with one another on a thematic level. These spaces of past, present, and future are critical to understanding the function of the Frankenstein Myth and how it interacts with different narratives, anxieties, and technological developments. In the case of the *Jurassic Park* (1993-present) franchise, it is the biological challenges present through the combination the prehistoric and contemporary ecosystems. The merging of two eco-systems separated by millions of years, and the reintroduction of a species with subsequent millions of years of primal instinct into an unnatural habitat without knowing the full extent of the species nature, has the potential to yield dangerous consequences if the animals have to defend themselves violently. In the case of the contemporary post-modern world, strides in science and its untapped potential while ethically questionable and the development is the new Gothic space. This is where the self and the other converge within the science fiction narrative (Wasson, 2013). Despite this, *Jurassic Park* (1993) initially reverts back to the method of displacing the Gothic world within the landscape of Isla Sorna and Isla Nublar, the two locations of the biological resurrection for the creatures and plant life as Sattler points out.

Cognitive estrangement through biological resurrection conceives a world where the human protagonists need to undertake what Darko Savin (1979) refers to as a science fiction voyage over a mysterious body, in this case the ocean to an island. The reason this is a

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[36] See Tables 1-3, p.59-70

regression within modern and post-modern Gothic science fiction is that it is a traditional trope of nineteenth century Gothic science fiction. Where the texts location is displaced in an unidentifiable location, "where the framework is correlative to the inhabitants" (Savin. 1979, p. 5), as the human protagonists travel from their place of origin which abides to earthly and physical law, the displaced space can operate unto itself outside of natural law due to its fictional foundation. *Jurassic Park* (1993) expresses this factor quite blatantly as the text first introduces us to Grant and Sattler in the USA before their excursion to Isla Nublar to see the Park (Spielberg, 1993). This is a consistent trope that resonates through the entire series in each film reminding the spectator that even though the film takes place on a fictional island it is still occurring somewhere on the planet. The concept of merging two parallel worlds is a key trope used within Gothic fiction. Towards the more recent additions of the *Jurassic Park* (1993-present) franchise, the two worlds begin to join together more fluidly. The two species begin to grow accustomed to one another and the park is finally complete and ready for public consumption. Grady's Velociraptors are a key example of this as Grady has built a trusting relationship with the Velociraptors where he imprints on them when they are born. The reason this is important is because the raptors, as the most intelligent and dangerous creations of Jurassic Park, are counted amongst the main antagonists in the first three instalments. Here the grotesque victim of the mad scientist becomes anthropomorphically humanised contrary to Sattler's observation. Though nature has been challenged through the creation and introduction of this synthetic prehistoric flora and fauna, their incorporation into the ecosystem changes the natural order. Within the earlier instalments the dinosaurs are cast as the malevolent force of nature (especially in the form of the initial Velociraptors). It becomes apparent in the later *Jurassic World* (2015-2017) instalments that the InGen corporation is the true antagonist despite its more sublime aesthetic. The adorning of the Gothic antagonist with a new sublime aesthetic, rather than relying on repulsion from the grotesque, also means a rejection of supernatural themes. The supernatural has consistently been an important aspect of the Gothic text. It also allows the spectator to displace the text in an alternate space to reality and such separation affords the spectator with a form of safety and security as explored above. However, I argue that Gothic science fiction gives the mad scientist a platform to present themselves as a tangible threat to

Earth and its population. The supernatural grants the antagonist with powers and abilities but also weaknesses. The traditional Gothic antagonists' supernatural ability and/or grotesque physical features offer a reason for the actions they have taken whether they

feelings of superiority or discrimination or a malevolent nature. The mad scientist on the other hand is unapologetic, serious, and believes that his actions are to the benefit of those he may destroy. As McArthur (2015) states,

> Remove this jail free card and suddenly the entire dynamics change; no longer are we dealing with caricature monsters – instead we have an altogether more serious concern and that is a very real [person] with the means of very real harm on his hands (48).

The implicit parties in the establishment of the Jurassic Park from Henry Wu, the chief geneticist and the InGen corporation, to Hammond, represent this symbiosis of the mad scientist trope and consumerism in the *Jurassic Park* (1993-present) franchise. Hammond and Masrani seem to be legitimately unaware of the danger inherent in this experimentation and believe that the dinosaurs will merely be a form of entertainment and income, completely disregarding the potential dangers of their primal natures. Wu is the embodiment of the mad scientist's ignorance to the dangerous nature of the work that he is attempting to complete. He is blinded by a megalomaniacal nature without concern or consideration for the ethical risk he creates. Even though he makes it clear in Jurassic World that he is aware of the dangers of the predatorial traits he is assigning the species to make them more fearsome, he still goes ahead with the work,

> Masrani: Who authorised you to do this?
>
> Wu: You did. Bigger, scarier, … cooler… I believe were the words you used in your memo. You cannot have an animal with exaggerated predator features without the corresponding behavioural trait.
>
> Masrani: What you are doing here. What you have done. The board will shut down this park, seize your work, everything you have built. Hammond won't be there to protect you this time (Trevorrow, 2015, 0:51:48).

Masrani's naive wish list for a custom-made attraction has orchestrated the creation of an unpredictable monster. It is a direct challenge to the newly re-established natural order which has fused the unnatural to the natural due to existence of the genetically engineered dinosaurs. When the Indominus escapes and incorporates itself into this fragile ecosystem on Isla Nublar where both humans and dinosaurs are able to co-exist, the natural order is challenged, and the food chain is challenged to cataclysmic proportions. As Joseph Campbell

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(2011) states in regard to the nature of the monster, "[it] is a horrendous presence or apparition that explodes all of your standards for harmony and ethical conduct" (p. 278). By the same standard, the monster is also elusive and uncontainable. This is a point heavily emphasised by Jeffrey Cohen (1996) who states the monster always escapes and threatens to smash distinctions. While these texts are older, the ideas remain seminal in the discussion of the monster. Both Campbell (2011) and Cohen (1996) discuss the nature of the monster in a metaphorical sense, but this does not detract from their assessment being applicable to the Indominus. This acts as a metaphor for a caged, unnatural aberration that's existence challenges the established boundaries of the natural world. The Indominus as a genetically modified hybrid fits within the parameters of Cohen's (1996) thesis of a body that negates any attempt to conform it to any structure or law, a statement applicable to all the creations Jurassic World. Due to this, in keeping with Laist's (2015) statement, I argue that the monsters are destined to escape the island no matter the measures of control that are put in place to not only challenge the natural order but establish order over the unpredictable in keeping with Frankensteinian echoes. This is a further mark of the mad scientist archetype which is displayed in Wu. Though his creations have not only escaped control but the island prior to Jurassic World, his work is still continued, and he stands behind his creation as not only positive but inevitable,

> Wu: All of this exists because of me. If I don't innovate then somebody else will.

> Masrani: You are to cease all activities here immediately.

> Wu: You are acting like we are engaged in some kind of mad science. But we are doing, what we have done from the beginning. Nothing in Jurassic World is natural. We have always filled gaps in the genome with the DNA of other animals. And, if their genetic code was pure, many of them would look quite different. But you didn't ask for reality. You asked for more teeth.

> Masrani: I never asked for a monster!

> Wu: Well, monster is a relative term. To a canary a cat is a monster, we are just used to being the cat (Trevorrow, 2015, 0:52:32).

It is in this scene that Wu is confronted by Masrani about the true nature of the Indominus. Subsequently, it is in this moment that the illusion of control is once again broken except, in the case of *Jurassic World* (2015), the mad scientist is exposed by the man responsible for the

hybrid's development in a last-minute attempt to remove culpability. Wu has been the architect of the illusion on the whim of both Hammond and Masrani. It is the binary of both corporate and scientific ambition which allows the illusion of Jurassic Park and Jurassic World to be maintained. Together the four separate entities, Hammond, Masrani, Wu and the InGen corporation, symbolise the three key layers of the corporate mad scientist and the threat inherent. Not only due to the disregard for the potential dangers of the science they are meddling with, but the ignorance in the face of the threat to accomplish their own ambition (McArthur, 2015). This is further exemplified by Hammond's rebuttal of Malcolm's previous statement by asserting that his cloning process could save species on the brink of extinction, expressing his mad scientist mentality. However, Malcolm is quick to point out that extinction by deforestation or other human-caused natural plights is different to natural selection and that in an effort to bring a species back into existence that was selected for extinction is merging two worlds that were never meant to interact. In this moment of sincerity between Masrani and Wu these two factors of corporate excess and mad science, the illusion of control is broken, and the true terror is realised. The realms of Isla Nublar and reality are bridged, and human existence is now challenged by the spectacle created for their entertainment as the Indominus gets closer to the human population of Isla Nublar.

7.5 The Modified Hybrid: A Challenge to Natural Law and Anthropocentrism

The second challenge posed by the escape of the Indominus is the food chain that has been established on Isla Nublar. The food chain is a term that has been used before in this thesis. It requires a brief unpacking to establish what the natural order is and how it has been manipulated and challenged, but also what makes the hybrid so perverse. Joel Cohen and Frederic Briand (2012) indicate that the food chain as a community food web is an established linear succession of organisms which depend on each other as a food source, that one is the predator, and the other is the prey. Ecosystems, variation, population control and the survival of species are hinged on various food sources. Though Charles Darwin's (1859) work was published before Charles Elton (1927) popularised the term, the concept of interdependent ecosystems that relied on the flora and fauna to co-exist and remain stable. They allow the appearance of other species through variation and the regulation of all species through natural selection and occasionally extinction was evident in Darwin's work. This is a simplification of a complex field of biology that is intended to help express how the hybrid is

an aberration to the ecosystem and to the food chain. It can also upset the status quo. In nature as we know it, hybrid species are rare and cannot reproduce. Stunted variation is a result and the struggle to exist with the ecosystem can be outnumbered. Science fiction commonly puts a twist on this phenomenon and has been explored within this chapter. In the case of the genetically modified hybrid of already hybridised species, it is solitary but not vulnerable to the species that outnumber it. As has been established, it has developed traits that make it a predator with unknowable potential to rise up the food chain through common dominators, both predator and prey.

After the Indominus escapes from isolated captivity, the world around it is all unfamiliar and its position on the food chain is unknown. Those who are pertinent to the plot gather in the operations room to track the Indominus and attempt to neutralise the threat. This is the point where the animals become more than numbers on a spreadsheet and the park operations team are reminded of the danger they pose to life. This analysis of the food chain goes beyond the challenge posed by the Indominus and engulfs the entire parameters of Isla Nublar. As I have established, the island is a synthetic ecosystem constructed by humans who have security measures to ensure control over the park and its inhabitants are maintained. Once the Indominus escapes and the threat to the park becomes obvious, there is a reluctance to relinquish control and shut down the park despite the inherent threat to life on the island. The ethically questionable disregard for life in the face of closing the park, and the subsequent loss of profit, is the inherently disturbing culmination of the themes of consumer and corporate excess. Dyer (2015) builds upon this point by stating that, "Dearing's reluctance to close the park is [also] the culmination of her parroting management speak throughout the first part of the film" (p. 20). This becomes evident on two levels. The first is the inherent disregard for the animals lives beyond the profit they yield as attractions, which has been discussed briefly earlier. Dyer observes that Dearing is unable to separate the life of the animals from the spreadsheet of profit margins they are expected to meet. For Dearing as the operations manager,

> The creatures are assets, security is about asset containment, the park needs a
> wow factor [in the form of a new asset], Grady is employed to work with
> velociraptors to evaluate patterns of vulnerability, [when] the creatures break out
> it is a containment anomaly (p. 20).

Since they are the product of engineering, they are assets rather than animals, they are a means to make profit and represent humanity's-imposed control over nature. Dearing's ethically questionable stance on the park closing despite the risk to the lives of the guests and other animals on the island is a reflex caused by her management status and this inherent inability to see the danger of the park's ecosystem. This is the anthropocentric understanding of humanity's unique position in the universe. This perspective puts humanity on the top of the food chain as not only a unique animal of consciousness and unchallenged intelligence, but as the apex predator (Steiner, 2010). While the dinosaurs present a natural anomaly by remerging in the time of human dominion, the inherent danger of this appearance is overshadowed by the fact that humanity created them within a controlled environment. Leo Braudy (2016) indicates that this is an inherent proclivity of human nature by stating that, "marvellous is the possibility of unearthing hidden knowledge that can now finally be revealed and perhaps then understood and controlled (p. 3). The fact that humanity does not see these unpredictable animals as autonomous but as merely docile theme park attractions (the same mistake made by the founders of the original Jurassic Park) is the same reason the threat cannot be perceived until it occurs. The illusion of control is tied to the assurity and confidence in humanity as the creator. This becomes apparent in the film as Masrani makes it clear through his line of questioning and his shock at Grady's assessment of the Indominus.

> Owen: You made a genetic hybrid. Raised it in captivity. She is seeing all of this for the first time. She does not even know what she is. She will kill everything that moves.
>
> Masrani: You think the animal is contemplating its own existence?
>
> Owen: She is learning where she fits into the food chain and I am not sure you want her to figure that out (Trevorrow, 2015, 0:47:56).

While the Indominus is constantly referred to as a genetic hybrid by various staff of the park, it is that term which voids the creature of its status as an animal and reinforces its perceived status as an object for entertainment and of curiosity and monstrosity (Dyer, 2015). It is due to this disregard that the consequences for the secretive interference and manipulation with nature, a common theme found within science fiction in the United States of America, leads to the Indominus refining the pecking order of Isla Nublar with each animal it comes into contact with. The escape of the Indominus and the subsequent escape of the many of the

other predators on the island rebalances the ecosystem and subsequently challenges the established food chain.

The second level is the life of the Indominus verses the lives of others due to the millions of dollars invested into its creation. Despite the assets escaping containment, Masrani will do anything to keep the park open and is reluctant to inform the visitors to the park that they are in danger because of it,

Claire: Everyone. Remain, Calm. The implant will shock it if it gets too close to a perimeter fence.

Lowery: Ok. Its moving very fast.

Vivian: This is control, put out a park wide alert.

Masrani: Put down the damn phone please! Let asset containment capture it quietly. The very existence of this park is predicated on our ability to handle incidents like this. It was an eventuality, ok?

Claire: That paddock is four miles from the closest attraction. ACU (Asset Containment Unit) can handle this, no one else is going to get…

Lowery: Eaten?

…

Owen: What the hell happened out there? There are thermal cameras all over that paddock. It did not just disappear!

Claire: It must have been some sort of technical malfunction.

Owen: Were you not watching? She marked up that wall as a distraction, she wanted us to think she escaped.

Claire: Hold on. We are talking about an animal here… (Trevorrow, 2015, 0:44:33).

Rather than informing the guests to the park they go after the Indominus to recapture it with non-lethal weapons. This decision is in an effort to keep the containment breach a secret and maintain the investment into the Indominus,

Owen: A highly intelligent animal. Wait, you are going after her with non-lethals.

Masrani: "We have 26 million dollars invested in that asset; we can't just kill it.

Owen: Those men are going to die. You need to call this mission off right now!

Claire: You are not in control here!

ACU Commander: Bloods not clotted yet, its close.

Masrani: What is that?

Owen: That's her tracking implant, she clawed it out.

Claire: How would it know to do that?

Owen: She remembered where they put it in.

ACU Commander: It can camouflage!

(ACU team gets killed by the Indominus)

Owen: Evacuate the Island.

Claire: We would never re-open (Trevorrow, 2015, 0:47:37).

The Indominus represents the consequence of creating a living attraction to solely match the pathological desires of the consumer for traits such as bigger, louder, more teeth, and more ferocious (Dyer, 2015). They are the logical outcome of genetic engineering on the grounds of mass consumerism without regard to the dangerous consequences that the modified hybrid represents. While attempting to manipulate these unnatural anomalies to fit within the ecosystem which has been established on Isla Nublar, the focus has been to force compliance for human entertainment rather than acknowledging that the synthetic ecosystem as the crux of the illusion of control is unsustainable (Newsome & Hughes, 2016). The sacrificing of the ACU (Asset Containment Unit) team to maintain this control is implicit to the desperation to maintain the illusion at all costs. Even once they die, Dearing explicitly refuses to the evacuate the park, a decision fuelled by the fear of never re-opening and curb their excesses. Dearing is the prime example of this as she takes quite some time to prioritise human survival over the danger of losing huge financial income if the park was to close (Dyer, 2015). This inherent divide which values financial income over human lives is the insidious undertone of the theme of corporate excess which becomes more prominent within the narrative. Though, as Dyer (2015) indicates, Dearing and Masrani do eventually decide to prioritise the visitors over the survival of the park.

Other factors surrounding the investment into the creation and nurturing of hybridised dinosaurs with genetic traits that could be exploited for military purposes becomes apparent. While Masrani engages with the idealistic dream of developing a theme park on the back of genetic engineering, InGen begins to explore the application of the dinosaurs for military use. This is done through enlisting the Jurassic World geneticists to give the Indominus, traits such as: camouflage, heat vision, heightened intelligence, and problem-solving abilities; furthering the manipulation of nature for the purposes of human control. Robin Andersen (2017) wrote a paper surrounding *Jurassic World's* (2015) embrace of lifeforms as weapons. She states that, "*Jurassic World* (2015) enacts the current high-tech military research into biowarfare – weaponising animals and defining nature as the ultimate killing machine" (p. 458). Underneath the façade of the theme park, military research and development comes to the foreground of the film in the form of the unpredictable genetic hybrid and the Velociraptors. Andersen's interest in *Jurassic World* (2015) stems from her belief that Hollywood has developed a dominant military culture at promotes a simplistic dichotomy of us and them following the declaration of war on terror. However, she states that the encroachment of the military on the media has been noticed since the latter half of the twentieth century, a trait which can be traced back to the birth of war propaganda in the build up to the First World War. While Andersen's (2017) thesis surrounding propaganda is not directly applicable to conversations surrounding the challenge to the natural order on face value. It does segue into the significant theme of science fiction being an influencer in the development of new technologies. Andersen even goes as far to infer that *Jurassic World* (2015) is an example of this propaganda. She states that,

> The creation of weapons designed around living forms is the latest phase of
> military thinking. Just to be sure the public reacts to this prospect with
> enthusiasm, not horror, the U.S Defence Department is already beginning to work
> with Hollywood to welcome a 'brave new world' in which the biological world
> has been harnessed for military purpose (p. 459).

This statement is significant to make. It is a bold claim. It stems from the thesis of Roger Stahl (2018) who believes that Western militaries might be realising what has previously been science fiction in the context of imitating nature, for the purpose of warfare. In which case, *Jurassic World* (2015) like many cinematic texts that pertain to the Frankenstein Myth, is a reactionary text to the mutating culture of scientific and technological discourses. Stahl

(2018), noticing the increasing importance that popular culture has as a critical lens in reaction to cultural, political, social, scientific, and technological developments, argues that the harnessing of nature for war, "extends from the corners of military theory to the screens of popular culture" (p. 123). Biomemisis as a theory is at the core of this intersection of the natural world with military intention. The theory dictates that "the discourse of biomimetic war is linked to a long history of martial practices that have utilised 'nature' and non-human life forms in the sphere of battle" (Stahl, 2018, p. 123). The domestication and use of powerful animals (horses and elephants) and/or intelligent animals (dogs) has been credited with aiding the rise of empires and civilisations throughout human history and the winning of war (Stahl, 2018). It is this historic subversion of nature and the influence of anthropocentrism that reinforces Andersen's (2017) focus on the underlying military themes that are prevalent within the narrative of *Jurassic World* (2015). While her theory of U.S military intervention within the media as propaganda and a test to gauge general support from Western populations is a bold claim, her observation of military interest in the dinosaurs and the realisation of nature as the ultimate killing machine are important themes within *Jurassic World* (2015).

The key instance of suggesting military application of the dinosaurs in *Jurassic World* (2015) happens initially at the Velociraptor enclosure. Grady has been researching the Velociraptors ability to communicate and imprint on a human subject and subsequently follow the lead of that human as the designated alpha. This is a research project funded by InGen to discover the military potential of the Velociraptors in an effort to replace soldiers and technology in armed conflict. This part of the film begins analysing the theme of the militarisation of nature. Grady runs an exercise with the four Velociraptors, Blue, Charlie, Echo, and Delta, to condition their responses to his commands as the Alpha. While it goes successfully, Grady realises that Hoskins witnessed the exercise:

> Hoskins: Owen! I was starting to think I hired the wrong guys. But, damn, you got them eating out of your palm.
>
> Owen: You came on a good day. It's not usually a happy ending.
>
> Hoskins: That why you're not sending in your reports?
>
> Owen: What do you need buddy?

Hoskins: A field test. I have just seen they respond to commands. We need to take your research and get it on its feet.

Owen: They're wild animals, Hoskins, trust me you don't want them in the field.

Hoskins: I just saw a bond. A real bond between man and beast.

Owen: You're in my way.

Hoskins: Come on. We are the same. We are dogs of war. We know the military needs to casualties. Some people think that robots are the future. Look, nature gave us the most killing machines 75 million years ago, and now we know they can take orders (Trevorrow, 2015, 0:21:00).

The theme of developing weapons for military use has never been broached by the *Jurassic Park* (1993-present) franchise. It is a natural segue for the narrative to take within the consciousness of the Frankenstein Myth which is more overt in the *Terminator* (1984-present) franchise and is in keeping with the observations of Andersen (2017) and Stahl (2014). Andersen (2017) states that, "though the film offers a commercial critique of designing animals for profit, it fails to challenge the profit-making ties between the military industries, weapons technology, and corporate entertainment" (p. 458). While Andersen offers insight into contemporary media and its ties to military theory, she does not appear to engage with the deeper context of military funding and research in the film nor recognise how the film critically engages with biomemisis. As a science fiction franchise that has proven to be conscious of the ethical controversies of biotechnology and its applications which challenge the natural order, it is clear that the sequel trilogy deals with the symbiotic relationship between capitalism and war.

The Gothic and science fiction have often thrived in times of war or conflict throughout history and is typically projected subtly against it as a backdrop. Agnieszka Soltysik Monnet and Steffen Hantke (2016) re-enforce this point by stating that

The Gothic was born, and thrived in its infancy, in times of war. From the atrocities of the French Revolution to the ravages of the Seven Years War… and the Napoleonic Wars; the battles of civil and national wars provided a background noise to the development of the mode (p. 12).

It is clear that Gothic science fiction is rooted in the appropriation of technology for warfare through the numerous forms that appear. Along with the theme of war as a proponent for the development of the Gothic, humanity's extinction is a common theme that continually resurfaces within the Gothic context, especially from a post-modernistic perspective. At the root of all three of these franchises, humanity's survival is a key factor to the binary nuance of the mode of the Gothic with the genre of science fiction. I argue that the moral and ethical implication of the Frankenstein Myth suggests that the development of new technology will lead to the creation of humanity's destruction, and so can be weaponised to prevent extinction. The symbiosis of science fiction and the Gothic assures that the boundaries of ethical implications are clear when considering new and potentially dangerous technologies. Braudy (2016) suggests that this is imperative since literature and other narrative modes have begun to comprehend monsters that are no longer based in nature. Scientific empiricism introduced a new being "that adapted to changing cultural, political, and scientific circumstances [however]… the most important characteristic of these monsters is that they have been created on purpose" (p. 113). *Frankenstein* (1818) presented a new creature that was not based on Judeo-Christian notions of good and evil, nor did it come from a supernatural source. Instead, it introduced a plausible threat with an empirical source that was man-made with the potential to be possible. It is under these conditions that science and technology are appropriated for military use and the monsters that challenge the natural order are weaponised for varying purposes. As Hard and Jamison (2005) state, "the mobilization of technology and science for war can be seen to have initiated a broader transformation of the intellectual regime, a new political contract between power and knowledge" (p. 252). Hoskins exemplifies the manifestation of this contract. As soon as progress in communicating with the Velociraptors is made, he already seeks to weaponise them. While Grady has come to form an emotional attachment to these animals, he also understands that the Velociraptors are unpredictable,

> Keeper: Finally make progress, and the first thing he says is to make a weapon?
>
> Hoskins: Come on, gents, it's grown-up time. Drones can't search tunnels and caves and they are hackable. The minute a real war breaks out, all that fancy tech is going to go dark.
>
> Owen: Yea, but that tech's not going to eat them if they forget to feed it.

Hoskins: Look at these creatures. They have got millions of years of instinct in their cells, Instinct we can program. Their loyalty can't be bought. These guys are going to run straight into the enemy's teeth and eat them, belt buckle and all.

Keeper: What if they decide they want to be in control?

Hoskins: Well then, we remind them who is, and we terminate the rogues. Promote only loyal bloodlines. What? What's so funny?

Owen: I don't know, you come here, and you don't learn anything about these animals except what you want to know. You made them and now you think you own them.

Hoskins: We do own them. Extinct animals have no rights.

Owen: They are not extinct anymore, Hoskins.

Hoskins: Exactly. We are sitting on a gold mine. Masrani is using it to stock a petting zoo.

Owen: He just wants to teach people some humility. He doesn't make weapons.

Hoskins: You think that the eighth richest man in the world is only into oil, telecom, and family fun parks? He's so diversified he doesn't even know what he owns (Trevorrow, 2015, 0:22:26).

Hoskins' cynicism towards Masrani's use of the technology to entertain consumers is where the themes of consumer and corporate excess and the appropriation of the dinosaurs for military purposes begins to cross over. It also links back to Andersen's (2017) point about the films critique of designing animals for profit. It is clear at this point that InGen have more planned for the creative potential of the Jurassic World geneticists, a fact that comes to fruition in *Fallen Kingdom* (2018). The other aspect of this conversation surrounds Hoskins' understanding of the Raptors nature. From a few interactions he has decided that the Raptors are ready for military service without learning every element of their being. This is another example of a corporate entity attempting to manipulate the nature of these creatures with expected compliance without considering the ethical issues.

Owen: How long has Ingen been practicing this pitch?

Hoskins: Since the day we hired you out of the Navy. You knew the end game. These animals can replace thousands of boots on the ground. How many lives would that save? War is a part of nature. Look around, Owen. Every living thing in this jungle is trying to murder the other. Mother nature's way of testing her creation. Refining the pecking order. A war is a struggle. Struggle breeds greatness. And without that, we end up in places like this, and charge seven bucks a soda… This is going to happen. With or without your boys. Progress always wins man.

Owen: Maybe progress should lose for once (Trevorrow, 2015, 0:23:18).

Hoskins rationale for weaponising the Velociraptors is akin to Allison L. Rowland's (2016) theory surrounding the current U.S military rhetoric of weapons development. She indicates that the military aims to create lifesaving weapons based on the rhetoric of biolegitmacy. Biolegitmacy recognises that life is the most significant and precious of all values and advocates for life itself (Rowland, 2016). While the notion of life saving weapons appears to be an oxymoron it refers to weapons that advocate "a commitment to the sanctity of life and perform humanitarianism" (Rowland, 2016, p. 603). In the case of current military funding, research and development is focused on remotely controlled vehicles such as drones. According to Rowland, such weapons are believed to lower the risk of civilian casualties and remove soldiers, in particular pilots, from the battlefield. Hoskins indicates that InGen believes that biomemisis is the next stage of this biolegitmacy of human life. The Velociraptors can be raised to be loyal to the military they serve, they cannot be hacked or reprogrammed like drones can be, and they would replace soldiers on the battlefield. Once again, *Jurassic World* (2015) utilises a form of regression as progression in resurrecting extinct species and twisting their nature for the purpose of militarisation, perverting the natural order.

It is in this section of the conversation that reference to the natural order appears. Hoskins' interpretation of this order is tied into natural selection. Considering the ecosystem of Isla Nublar is synthetic and the food chain is stunted by the illusion of human control, his reference to mother nature has no basis. Mother nature as the archetypal image for the natural order has no presence on the island until the Indominus escapes and the aberrations begin to form an honest new natural order that is not manipulated by the illusion of human control. This is the horrific outcome of this fictional utilisation of biomimetic warfare and the attempt

to create an animal to utilise on the battlefield. It is also a critical visual of nature proving to be the ultimate killing machine as it attempts to rebalance itself with the destruction of Isla Nublar, a factor which becomes more prevalent in *Fallen Kingdom* (2018). It is in that moment that the unnatural anomalies that are the dinosaurs merge with the natural to construct a new natural order which challenges the presumptive supremacy of humanity. In doing so, anthropocentrism is challenged as two apex predators, the Indominus and humanity, begin to fight for supremacy. The viability of various breeds of the dinosaurs, such as the Velociraptors, for military use in war is a key plot point in the evolving narrative of the film. After the ACU fail to capture the Indominus and are killed, the Indominus makes its way to the heavily populated centre of the island killing every other living thing in its path, climbing its way up the food chain. Military force is attempted by Masrani flying a helicopter with a mounted heavy machine gun. It fails to kill the creature but causes Masrani's death in the process, InGen takes over and puts Hoskins in charge. Thought this series of unfortunate events, Hoskins is now able to field test the Velociraptors for military purposes. Wartime situations and periods of unease have always sustained the research and development of new weapons technologies enabled or required by active military operations (Hoglund, 2016). The escape of the Indominus allows InGen to do the same, but in keeping with the Gothic undertones that exist within the hypertextual narrative, they use technology in the form of the Velociraptors that not only challenges the natural order but is regressive but paradoxically progressive. As Hoskins states when viewing the Velociraptors abilities at the beginning of the film,

> Hoskins: Some people think that robots are the future. Look, nature gave us the most killing machines 75 million years ago, and now we know they can take orders (Trevorrow, 2015, 0:21:00).

Owen is against using the Velociraptors for military purposes, partly due to his emotional attachment and responsibility to them as their Alpha. He is also acutely aware of the danger that they pose and the disasters they have traditionally caused with the autonomy to walk freely on the island (Andersen, 2017). The suggestion to allow the Velociraptors to do so is met with a sense of foreboding as the characters are aware of the dangers they pose due to their role as the horror archetype in previous instalments. Hoskins begins preparing the Velociraptors for a mission to hunt the Indominus. Once again, humanity seeks to unilaterally manipulate the natural order to correspond with human supremacy against the new monster.

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The Indominus as the new monster takes on the shape of a prehistorical monstrous body yet is synthesised with new technology through hybridisation. This is a similar observation to Braudy who identifies that the monster is ageless and maintains the ability to shift into any form that best expresses the fear in question (Braudy, 2016). The Velociraptors are no longer the subject of monstrosity and have a place in the established order. Not only have they been domesticated but affectionately named by their Alpha which humanises them. As has been established in the analysis of the hybrid, the Indominus does not fit into any established natural or synthetic order, nor does it recognise or understand the ecosystem around it due to its existence in isolated captivity. The true genetic nature of the hybrid is not known to anyone with the exception of Wu and a handful of unnamed individuals. The challenge of the Raptors on behalf of the humans is in an attempt to re-establish the order the Indominus has disrupted. The Velociraptors are given the scent of the Indominus, and they begin to hunt with Grady in the lead. They have been trained to cooperate with this synthetic order, making the transition from the monstrous other that challenges anthropocentrism as a horror figure, to a reluctant protagonist whose pack is led by a human being. The repulsive monster becomes attractive in the face of a more monstrous entity. As Andersen (2017) states, "the Dino-stars are harnessed into battle to protect the humans, led by a former navy soldier (Grady) who takes a pack of Velociraptors, and film goers, on a thrilling hunt to destroy the bioengineered, genetically modified Dino monster" (p. 458). Not only is this scene one of the most visually appealing, as we see a man riding into battle alongside the species that has historically proven to not only be humanity's antithesis but the main antagonist of the original trilogy, it shows the point at which the Velociraptors become integrated into the self and departs from the monstrous.

The final act of the film is where the key themes intersect in the resolution of the narrative. Grady, the Velociraptors, and InGen's private security force track the Indominus and corner it. While it appears the Indominus has met its match on its ascension up the food chain in the form of a unified front of humans and Velociraptors, it is in this moment that it becomes clear that Velociraptor genes are the classified aspect of its hybrid nature. The transferal of the monstrous is a key theme here. Cohen (1996) states that, "the monster's body is both corporeal and incorporeal its threat is the propensity to shift. Monsters must be examined within the intricate matrix of relations (social, cultural, and literary-historical) that generate them" (p. 5-6). While the hypertextual narrative of the Frankenstein Myth is crucial to the transferral of the monstrous based of Cohen's assessment of the matrix of relations, it

also delves into how the monstrous is transferred. While the Velociraptor embodies the abject monstrous body within the *Jurassic Park* (1993-2001) trilogy, cultural anxieties have moved beyond cloning, de-extinction, and resurrection as I have stated before. The opposition of the Velociraptors to the Indominus indicates this transition from the abject to the self and a transfer of the monstrous. As Julia Kristeva (1980) states, "there looms within abjection one of those violent, dark revolts of being, directed a threat that seems to emanate from an exorbitant outside or inside, ejected beyond the scope of the possible, the tolerable, the thinkable" (p. 43). The Velociraptors have become the tolerable monstrous as they are no longer implicit to the corporal image of the monstrous and begin to embody the self through their relationship with Grady. However, it is important to reiterate that this is a transitional and volatile movement from the monstrous exemplified by the experimental use of the Velociraptors in the field. The four Velociraptors force the Indominus into a kill zone, but the fatal blow does not happen. It is important to reiterate that the Indominus does not have a clear instinctual or hereditary connection to any species of dinosaur due to its hybrid nature. Due to its intelligence imbued by its Velociraptor genes, it is able to communicate with the four Velociraptors. This is an important scene for two reasons. The first is that the Indominus has made a connection and forged a relationship becoming the new Alpha and removes human control over the Raptors. The second is that the Raptors once again become monstrous entities as they begin to attack the humans. The shift of the monstrous is fluid and does not necessarily always progress. Some monsters remain terrifying within the popular culture paradigm. As Piatti-Farnell (2014) states, the monster, "is bound to resurface and re-shape according to any given context" (p. 15). Due to the transitional nature of the Velociraptors to the self, they are susceptible to resurface into the monstrous under this context. However, because they have been under the control of humanity, they are not the monsters they were in the original trilogy. As Joseph Carroll (2005) states, "monsters who are also horrifying in the context of particular fiction depends on whether they meet the conditions of the climate of fear. Some monsters may only be threatening rather than horrifying" (p. 27). A key example of this is though they are killing the soldiers, Blue has a chance to kill Grady but doesn't, proving that her loyalties are divided between the new Alpha and the human who raised her. Grady and Dearing escape to the main plaza of the island to find all the humans have finally been evacuated with the exception of Hoskins who they find cleaning out Wu's lab.

With the escape of the Indominus and the other predators, the death of hundreds of tourists, and the closure of the park, the utopian illusion of Jurassic World is broken as is the

illusion of control. The theme park façade is abandoned leaving the foundation of ethically questionable genetic experimentation exposed. Hoskins, under the orders of unnamed InGen executives, is to start stripping the foundation and remove Wu and all of his research by moving him to an undisclosed location. It is in this scene that Hoskins divulges a key piece of information that not only sets up the sequel but explains the origins of the Indominus,

Gray: That's not a real dinosaur.

Hoskins: No, it isn't kid. But someone's got to make sure this company has a future. Imagine that one (the Indominus) but a fraction of the size, deadly, intelligent, able to hide from the most advanced military technology. A living weapon unlike anything we have ever seen. See, millions of years of evolution. What did we learn? Nature is just the gift that keeps on giving (Trevorrow, 2015, 1:43:23).

It is at this point that Blue enters the room and kills Hoskins while allowing Grady and the others to live as she is still unsure of her loyalties. Hoskins last monologue exposes Jurassic World as no more real than the original park. Except this time, it was a front to hide the fact InGen was experimenting with biotechnology to create living weapons out of the attractions. The Indominus appears to have been a prototype for another creature similar to Velociraptor, but more superior. With the theme park narrative concluded, this allows the theme of biomemisis to come to the foreground as the prominent theme of the sequel trilogy.

The final climax of the film's narrative occurs just after Hoskins' death, in the Jurassic World village. Grady and Dearing are cut off by the Velociraptors and so are prevented from escaping. Blue is still unsure of her loyalties as indicated by the consistent refusal to attack Grady. As Blue is the Beta, the other Velociraptors follow suit. This is another instance of the Velociraptors being humanised. As Blue shares a moment of eye contact with Grady she decides to realign the Velociraptors loyalties with Grady, betraying the Indominus. The fight between the Indominus and the Velociraptors is characteristic of the dichotomy that exists within the monstrous. The internal conflict between monsters is characteristic of the Gothic science fiction. This is a concept of cinematic monsters facing off in films marketed as grudge matches has become a popular phenomenon. Jason Barr (2016) indicates that Kaiju cinema has been the staple example of this with many examples of popular monsters facing off against one another such has Godzilla and King Kong. Horror has also followed suit, putting the likes of Jason Voorhees and Freddie Kruger, or the

xenomorphs and the predators, up against one another (Kendrick, 2014). Superhero films have begun using the same formula. 2016 saw the clash of heroes from both the DC Extended Universe and the Marvel Cinematic Universe. Batman and Superman, two outsiders considered monstrous by society, clash in *Batman V Superman*. Captain America and Iron Man create division amongst the Avengers in *Captain America: Civil War* as they disagree over conforming to the jurisdiction of world governments after monstrous acts accidently committed by the Avengers while saving the world and face off against one another (Dudenhoeffer, 2017). It is a popular cinema medium to have two popular entities fight to prove their supremacy, but it ultimately allows the monster to rear its metaphorical head as the monster is chaos in corporal form. As Campbell (2011) states, "the monstrous explodes all of your standards, for harmony, order, and ethical conduct" (p. 278). It is a phenomenon that thrives off chaos and often puts those considered to be monstrous in conflict. *Jurassic World* (2015) is implicit to this theme as the hybrids enter into a fight to begin to re-establish the balance of nature.

The fight between the four Velociraptors and the Indominus is visually exciting, but the Indominus is too powerful for the Velociraptors to be victorious. Three of the four are killed leaving Blue to take on the Indominus alone. Dearing decides to attempt to help by releasing the Tyrannosaurus Rex from captivity. The myth about the defeat of the chimera becomes more prevalent within the *Jurassic World* (2015-2017) franchise as the showdown begins. In an unnatural team up, Blue and the Tyrannosaurus Rex take on the Indominus as Bellerophon and Pegasus team up to defeat the chimera. Neither one attempts to attack the other and constantly assists the other to beat the Indominus. Not only is it poetic that the two species which make up the hybrid DNA of the Indominus are required kill it, but it shows how myth has an autonomous and subconscious way of remaining prevalent within contemporary narratives. Two original hybrids now considered heroic are called upon to take down the new and more dangerous hybrid. The Tyrannosaurus Rex and the Velociraptor re-establish their Jurassic supremacy over Isla Nublar by fatally injuring the Indominus and leaving it to be dragged to the bottom of the bay by the Mosasaurus. This is the first step of nature re-establishing the balance and correcting human manipulation and the end of the first sequel.

7.6 The Re-balancing of Nature

Fallen Kingdom (2018) takes place shortly after the events of *Jurassic World* (2015) and as direct contrast to the more whimsical and extravagant nature of *Jurassic World* (2015)*, presents a more insidious and horrific narrative. As the illusion of the park is broken, the nuances of *Fallen Kingdom* (2018) that directly correspond with the themes of the consequences of challenging the natural order and the notion of weaponising the dinosaurs to be utilised in biomimetic warfare, come to the forefront of the franchise. As the themes of the whimsical and the carnivalesque that are inherent to the notion of the theme park are removed, *Fallen Kingdom* (2018) introduces a darker and horrific reality, utilising tropes commonly found within the Gothic. Throughout the franchise so far, the notion of biotechnology and its application has only extended to de-extinction, cloning, and the splicing of these clones to make hybrids. The boundary of this technology has never extended past its application on non-human animals. *Fallen Kingdom* (2018) transgresses this boundary in a similar way to the *Terminator* (1984-present) franchise and begins to introduce a physical iteration of posthumanism in the form of the first human clone seen in the franchise. This boundary has been inherently important to the preservation of anthropocentrism in the film. Humans have wilfully been able to play God and manipulate nature while human uniqueness has not been questioned until now.

The introduction of the human clone challenges these preconceived understandings of human individuality. This is most prevalent when the film jumps three years into the future. The remnant of Jurassic World is built at the base of a dormant volcano on Isla Nublar that becomes active following the events of the previous film. The scene begins with a report on the unfolding events of the volcano and the threat that it poses to the inhabitants of Isla Nublar,

> Reporter: Three years since the fall of Jurassic World, the debate of Isla Nublar rages on. The Islands long dormant volcano, reclassified as active, has shown considerable unrest in recent months. Geologists now predict and extinction level event which will kill off the last living dinosaurs on the planet… With an eruption expected at any moment, the us senate has convened a special committee to answer a grave moral question: Do dinosaurs deserve the same protections given

to other endangered species or should they be left to die? (Bayona, 2018, 0:08:05).

The volcano is established as the physical manifestation of Malcolm's warning in the first instalment of the franchise and is the manifestation of the ecoGothic in the context of nature's agency in reaction to humanity's meddling in the natural order. Malcolm warned Hammond that nature had selected the dinosaurs for extinction and that this discovery and manipulation is a violent and penetrative act that scars what it explores. The dinosaurs on Isla Nublar are an aberration to nature. They contradict natural history and reverse natural selection. The volcano's activity is a rectification of this fallacy. This is stipulated in the special session of the senate to answer the question as to whether humanity should intervene in this event and save the remaining dinosaurs. Malcolm is invited by the panel to share his thoughts on the proposed intervention. He states that,

> Malcolm: I think that we should allow the magnificent and glorious dinosaurs to be taken out by the volcano. As deeply sad as that would be, we altered the course of natural history. This is a correction (Bayona, 2018, 0:08:28).

The concept of the balance of nature is an important premise here and relates directly to Malcolm's point. By definition, the balance of nature refers to the fragile state of the global ecosystem and the function of each organism to provide subsistence, sustenance, and support to the ecosystem's survival. John Kricher (2009) indicates that, though it has been tempting to assign intention and destiny to the functions of this balance, it is mainly in aid of self-preservation and survival. This also relates to natural selection an element of the selection process which Kricher refers to as a "statistical game of genetic survival" (p. 15). It describes the process of the removal of species on the basis of reproductive and predatorial factors. In some instances, it can also occur in an unforeseen cataclysmic act like the various theorised extinction level events that killed the dinosaurs. However, since the development of agriculture, urbanisation, and industrialisation, humanity manipulates the natural world significantly to produce for its advantage. As Kricher (2009) states, "humanity can and do affect the ecology of Earth in numerable and profound ways. If what we do is wrong, it will have consequences and costs. It already has" (p. 4). Humanity has developed the ability to unbalance these ecosystems, often causing endangerment and extinction of other species outside the bounds of natural selection. As has been stated before, the *Jurassic Park* (1993-present) franchise in the truest sense of the Gothic, regressively changes the narrative of

humanity's destruction of Earth to humanity's creation of other lifeforms. It is the challenge of humanity's attempt to master and control nature and natures subsequent reaction that evokes a more primal and natural Gothic lens (Staats, 2016).

7.7 The EcoGothic

The manifestation of the ecoGothic is a unique factor of *Fallen Kingdom* (2018) in regard to the *Jurassic Park* (1993-present) franchise and is critical to the Frankensteinian theme of challenge to the natural order. The volcano's eruption and Malcolm's theory surrounding its eruption follows the progression of the parks genetic manipulation into the creation of synthetic hybrid animals. They have no basis in nature. It is indicative of nature's agency to intervene and human antipathy for the environment and the natural order. This is the first instance of nature making a clear and powerful revision to human manipulation within the franchise while allowing a more supernatural element to unfold. The *Jurassic Park* (1993-present) franchise has consistently maintained a narrative based within an albeit fictional yet rational empiricism. The advent of the volcano not only challenges human mastery of nature but humanity's proclivity to challenge the natural order. Dawn Keetley and Matthew Wynn Sivils (2018) tie the ecoGothic to ecocriticism which analyses the "cultural relationships of humans to the non-human world – to animals, plants, climate, and ecosystems" (p. 1). The lens of ecocriticism emphasises the circumference of the macabre and the monstrous, the fear and the dread within these relationships. Simon C Estok (2009), on this subject of ecocriticism and ecophobia, believes that contempt and fear based in anthropocentrism are the main reactions that humanity feels towards the notion of the environments agency. He states that, "at the constitutional movement in history that gives us the imperative to control everything that lives" (p. 208). Based on this assertion, the fear and dread that is felt when faced with natures agency is one indicative with powerlessness and inferiority. This evidenced in Andrew Smith and William Hughes text *EcoGothic* (2016) where they state that "the Gothic constitutes nature as a space of crisis which conceptually creates a point of contact with the ecological" (p. 3). It is at this point of crisis that the ecoGothic can be observed as far back as the nineteenth century. Texts such as *Frankenstein* (1818) and Herman Melville's *Moby Dick* (1851) witness humanity attempting to maniacally manipulate, control, and tame nature only to lose to natures elemental archetypes (synthetic or natural) at the point of crisis. As stated by Keetley and Sivils (2018), "as we (humanity) seek to master nature… it continually evades an exceeds our grasp: nature has its own

agency… even our own actions that bear upon nature, continually fray into unforeseen consequences" (p. 3). *Fallen Kingdom's* (2018) exhibition of this human proclivity to tame frontiers of nature is as such deeply rooted in traditional Gothic discourse and in keeping with this also yields similar consequences. It is the potential of consequences that feed into the ecoGothic and allow the manifestation of monstrosity and fear as one of the linchpins of the Gothic. The volcanic eruption within *Fallen Kingdom* (2018) is an example of this consequence. As Sharae Deckard (2019) states, "the Gothic is characterised by excess and in the ecoGothic environments are themselves excessive in sites of monstrous fecundity" (p. 174). Nature itself becomes an archetype represented by its most destructive elements; in the case of *Fallen Kingdom* (2018) this is the volcano. The eruption of the volcano represents a stimulated environmental unconsciousness that has been anthropomorphised as conducting its violent nature in reaction to humanity re-writing natural history and unbalancing the ecosystem through de-extinction and creation.

7.8 De-extinction and Creation

Biologist, Beth Shapiro (2015) discusses the notion of de-extinction beyond the confines of science fiction and its application for the real world, the balance of ecosystems and the maintenance of biodiversity. While de-extinction is an attractive prospect, it remains a hypothesis, especially surrounding the balance of nature. It is unclear what effect a resurrected animal would have on contemporary ecosystems. As Shapiro (2015) states, "the myriad of risks of reintroducing organism into the wild whose environmental impacts are – because they are extinct – necessarily unknown" (p. 11). It is also unclear as to what lead to the extinction of many of these animals, whether wiped out by other predators, climate impacts, or whether humanity hunted them to extinction (Colebrook, 2014). Or in the case of the dinosaurs and the other three mass extinctions, a cataclysmic event such as a significant impact from spatial matter, seismic or volcanic event (Shapiro, 2015). In line with Kricher's (2009) statement surrounding the balance of nature and biodiversity, these events have the ability to destabilise ecosystems and cause mass extinctions. This is why the notion of an occulted ancient environmental unconscious is a terrifying prospect and why the ecoGothic is a prominent thematic nuance in the eruption of the volcano. However, it is unclear what actual environmental consequences the reintroduction of extinct species would yield. Shapiro (2015) states that this has caused significant division amongst the scientific community. Many argue that de-extinction is morally wrong. While others have insisted it is morally

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wrong to not bring things back to life if it is possible too (Shapiro, 2015) leaving the liminal space for fictional representations of the ecoGothic to come to the foreground (Smith & Hughes, 2016). Based on the assertions of both Kricher (2009) and Shapiro (2015), it is clear to see the pattern of human proclivity to manipulate nature with unknown resulting consequences and poses a large ethical debate. It is through the broad nature of the hypothesis and the ethical challenges that the *Jurassic Park* (1993-present) franchise is able to assert itself into a seemingly rational and cognitive plain of existence.

Due to the hypothetical nature of this conversation, as the technology exists to undergo this process but not a successful model of application nor any success in cloning an extinct subject that has lived beyond a couple of days, supposition allows for the potential of the science to bend into fiction (Shapiro, 2015). This is where the *Jurassic Park* (1993-present) franchise becomes a significant fictitious catalyst to the conversation of de-extinction. It not only remains one of the significant examples of popular culture that deals with the pseudo-science but a key metaphor for the potential of de-extinction. This thesis suggests that cinematic examples often create a variety of scenarios surrounding the application of ethically ambiguous technology while still functioning within the realms of a realistic cognition. This allows the illusion of the text to become not only more realistic but more terrifying. The analysis of the balance of nature, the potential advantages, and consequences of meddling with ecosystems, biodiversity, and overarching theme of the ecoGothic are important to the franchise at this point in time due to the implications suggested by the narrative. Within the narrative of *Fallen Kingdom* (2018) the damage to the ecosystem of Isla Nublar is resolved with the volcano. The challenge of genetic power to nature has consequences. Climate change is the contemporary example of the consequences of human intervention in the ecosystems of Earth. The natural world is on the brink of irrevocable change and damage to the environment (Wilson, 2017). Not only does this issue challenge the future of the planet but the progress of natural history and the processes of the ecosystem and biodiversity. In the narrative, this challenge to natural history is the manipulation of genetic power. The nature of Gothic science fiction is regressive and often reverses the realities facing the world as a reactionary and conscious mode of fiction. In the case of *Fallen Kingdom* (2018) the urgent matter is that of the effects of the manipulation of genetic power to manipulate the natural order and reverse critical events in natural history. The extinction of the dinosaurs was a significant event, one that Malcolm insists was tied to the complex balance of nature. Humanity's reversal of this event has caused irreversible

damage. Not through the resurrection of the dinosaurs but more how the event of de-extinction acts as a catalyst to unknown and dangerous developments. Malcolm is questioned further as to what he means by the volcano's eruption being a correction to humanity's manipulation,

> Senator: Are you suggesting that the All Mighty is taking matters into his own hands?
>
> Malcolm: Senator, with all due respect, God's not part of the equation. No, what I mean is that in the last century we amassed a landmark technological power, and we have consistently proven that we are not capable of handling that power. Eighty years ago, who could have predicted nuclear proliferation and there it was. Now we have genetic power. So, how long is it going to take for that to spread around the globe and what's going to be done with it? It's not going to stop with the de-extinction of the dinosaurs (Bayona, 2018, 0:09:02).

Malcolm indicates that he believes the volcano is correction to natural history and rebalance the natural order and is a repeat of the cataclysm to remove the dinosaurs once again. However, the other key point Malcolm refers to is the continued manipulation genetic power despite the consequences which establishes the theme for film. His segue into the nature of nuclear proliferation is a key aspect of this quote and reinforces the direction of the franchise into the militarisation of genetic power.

7.9 The Proliferation of Technology and Biomemisis

To reference nuclear proliferation is merely to indicate the potential harm of technology capable of mass destruction to the global population once it has been weaponised. Brian Rappert and Stuart Croft (2007) discuss the correlation between technology and warfare and lend some insight into Malcolm's example of nuclear proliferation. They state that, "during the Cold War, technology was a vital component of thinking about the threat of war… age old debates about the relationship between offence and defence were transformed by new technological possibilities" (p. 2). The notion of nuclear proliferation changed the landscape of warfare, and the risks countries were required to take to engage in warfare. This is reinforced by Stephen E. Ambrose and Douglas G. Brinkley (2011) who state that following the creation of the hydrogen bomb and its use in 1945,

The bomb appeared to be a god send for Americans. They could impose their will on any recalcitrant nation merely by threatening to use it. America could retain a powerful position in Europe without having to maintain a mass army… or without demanding any sacrifices of her citizens (p. 67).

The advent of the splitting of the atom lead to the creation of one of the most powerful and destructive weapons on the planet, though this was not the intention. As Rappert and Croft (2007) state, "as scientific understanding grows, so too does the ability to engineer instalments to manipulate the world. The popular understanding of the development of the Manhattan Project is perhaps the most prominent example where emerging science of the time was turned into a novel device" (p. 5). Parallels can be drawn between the treatment of nuclear technology and the use of genetic power in the *Jurassic Park* (1993-present) franchise, hence why Malcolm's notion toward proliferation is a significant indicator in the narrative and one that links strongly to the foundation of the late twentieth and twenty-first century Western-American psyche. The creation of the dinosaurs for entertainment is the novelisation of genetic power. A fact that Malcolm is quick to point out is that manipulation of genetic power is not going to stop with the de-extinction of the dinosaurs. It does not present the true potential of the power that has been manipulated, nor does it unveil the significant consequences of the overt misuse of the power immediately.

Within the franchise, the weaponising of genetic power does not become apparent until the limitations of current military technologies become apparent. This is highlighted in the first interaction between Grady and Hoskins. The military potential of the Raptors is at the centre of the conversation. Hoskins makes the statement,

Hoskins: Come on, gents, it's grown-up time. Drones can't search tunnels and caves and they are hackable. The minute a real war breaks out, all that fancy tech is going to go dark (Trevorrow, 2015).

Because of the limitations of current militarised technology, InGen begins to look at the potential of the recently de-extinct lifeforms. Based on the research of Rappert and Croft (2007), the regression to previous strategies of war is not an uncommon situation for militaries to find themselves in. They state that, "the so-called War on Terror has more fully shown the limitations of the reliance on technology: In Afghanistan, American special forces have resorted to using horses as well as stealth technology" (p. 3). This is a regression of

warfare strategy as horses had not been significantly used since World War One. As Janet M. Alger and Steven F. Alger (2013) state,

> Almost every species of animal has been, at one time or another, drawn into human warfare. Insects have been used to detect poison gas (moths) or to attack enemy troops (bees). Birds have been used to carry messages (homing pigeons) or detect poison gas (canneries). Elephants, horses, mules, and camels have been used to transport war supplies or to carry humans into battle. Sea mammals have been used to detect and mark underwater mines (dolphins) and retrieve mines and other objects underwater, and dogs have been used to guard military instillations, detect explosives, and scout out land mines and enemy troops" (p. 77).

The use of the Raptors in warfare is a similar yet more extreme case of this regression but still signals a renewed reliance on using animals in warfare. The application of biomimetic warfare has already been introduced in this chapter and will continue to be expanded on as the narrative evolves to deal with the subject more thoroughly. Malcolm's example of nuclear proliferation is a precursor to a wider discussion to the weaponising and the debated rights of the dinosaurs on Isla Nublar. Aside from the conversation surrounding the status of the genetically engineered dinosaurs in regard to natural history and the dangers of meddling with genetic power, the ongoing debate, as stipulated by the news report at the beginning of the narrative, is whether the creatures on Isla Nublar qualify for the same protection status as endangered animals. While this conversation surrounding protection first appears to be solely an ecological issue it also contends with human intervention. Malcolm indicates that the volcanic eruption will correct the course of natural history. Based on this understanding, to intervene would disrupt this re-balance of nature. Therefore, to intervene would be an anthropocentric action and a continuation of the manipulation of the natural order. However, the notion of protection, sustainability, and the status of the dinosaurs on Isla Nublar is a more complex issue. Regardless of how they came to be, they are still alive, a factor the film continues to reiterate throughout the course of the narrative. Once again, the *Jurassic Park* (1993-present) franchise veers into a cognitive reality governed by a sense of reality as the issues surrounding sustainability of genetically modified organisms become more prominent.

Richard Twine (2010) indicates that the conversation of ethics and animals as biotechnology is a complex issue. He states that, "in one understanding it may be argued that sustainability is an anthropocentric concept and has no clear relationship to animal ethics. If it

envisions care to ecosystems, it does not go as far as considering animals" (p. 145). Twine's point relates to how animal populations and products are managed in the face of ecological issues such as climate change. Sustainability of both population and product, for the benefit of humanity through the potential of genetic manipulation (the control of zoonotic diseases) is more important, rather than the sustainability of hypothetical genetically engineered animals. Shapiro (2015) engages more literally with the subject of de-extinct animals and their questionable status. She states that, "one additional and important consideration in the final phase of de-extinction is how resurrected organisms (or organisms with a resurrected traits) will be regulated once they are ready for release" (p. 314). Current laws surrounding endangered species in Western countries vary and the protected status of genetically modified or resurrected organisms is vague due to their current hypothetical status. Shapiro uses New Zealand as a key example of strict regulations surrounding genetically modified organisms. Due to these regulations, if moa are brought back to life, current law surrounding genetically modified animals would exclude them from being reintegrated into the ecosystem and offer no protection usually extended to endangered animals. Whereas the United States of America has some of the least stringent laws due to being one of the largest producers of genetically modified crops. It is due to the unknown impact of these animals on current environments and ecological ramifications that will follow that these laws are vague or vary from country to country. While these animals may assist with the pre-similarly this is why the debate surrounding the protected status and the questionable rights for the protection of the animals of Isla Nublar are multi-faceted and complex. It is due to this uncertainty that the dinosaurs, as the first result of genetic power, become the subject of various intentions of what remains of the InGen corporation.

Public interest in protecting the dinosaurs as an endangered species increases after the fall of Jurassic World, this includes the formation of foundations. One such foundation is led by Dearing. Though the escape of the Indominus Rex led to the closure of Jurassic World, Dearing is still a key character in the franchise. While she was the one who authorised the creation of the Indominus and the further manipulation nature for entertainment, she now runs a foundation seeking the protection of the dinosaurs. While this is a significant change to the narrative as Dearing used to see the dinosaurs as assets rather than living things, based on the narrative established by the volcano, she is still attempting to manipulate the natural order. This is because she is trying to advocate for the American government to intervene and

remove the dinosaurs from Isla Nublar. Despite her efforts, she does not succeed as the Senate concludes they will not get involved.

> Senator: In regard to the question as to whether to protect the dinosaurs on Isla Nublar, after a thorough deliberation the committee has resolved not to recommend any legislative action regarding the de-extinct creatures on Isla Nublar. This is an act of God and while of course we feel great sympathy for these animals, we cannot condone government involvement on what amounts to a privately owned venture.

> Dearing: They are all going to die, and no one cares.

> Webb: We do (Bayona, 2018, 0:11:34).

Though the US senate refuses to get involved, the protection of the dinosaurs as an endangered species becomes a key factor in the narrative and provides a juxtaposition to their unnatural existence. It provides a dichotomy and paradox within the finality of life and death which has been discussed from the perspective capitalist development. As has been established, the notion of de-extinction and the status of the animals is a complex matter (Essed & Schwab, 2012). This is also allegorical of the confusion between the hybrids created on Isla Nublar and the dinosaurs long extinct. They maintain the illusion of the creations natural status established by the theme park which is also continually believed by their creators. While Dearing does not manage to garner support in the US senate, she receives a phone call from the previous unmentioned co-founder of Jurassic Park, Benjamin Lockwood. As the Senate indicated in their conclusion, this all began due to a private venture and Lockwood feels strongly about taking responsibility. Prior to the development of Jurassic Park, Hammond and Lockwood grew apart and Lockwood is intent on preserving their life's work and doing right by the creatures they exploited for entertainment,

> Lockwood: No Miss Dearing. I am going to save us. We could both use a touch of redemption, couldn't we? This was all John Hammond's dream. To let these creatures, live in peace. So, we have created sanctuary. No fences, no cages, no tourists, just as mother nature intended. John said it best. These creatures don't need our protection. They need our absence. When we were young, we both shared this passion, John, and me. What fools we were. Trying to run before we had learned to walk. But we learned. Unfortunately, in the end, it drove us apart.

Life teaches us some very hard lessons doesn't it, Claire? We will save them for our children (Bayona, 2018, 0:15:50).

Lockwood convinces Dearing to help him remove the dinosaurs from Isla Nublar and take them to another island where they can exist without the interference from humanity. This is not just for the benefit of the dinosaurs but the redemption for their exploitation. However, as has been established in the analysis of the balance of nature and the metaphor of the volcanic eruption, removing the dinosaurs from this corrective event is another form of manipulating nature. It is important to remember that InGen played a more sinister role in the previous film during the rampage of the Indominus, directing Hoskins to remove Wu from the island with the understanding that the weaponising of the hybrids would continue. While Lockwood is sincere in correcting the mistakes he and Hammond had made in the past, Eli Mills, the manager of Lockwood's fortune and influencer of InGen's recent operations on Isla Nublar, seeks to auction the surviving dinosaurs off to the highest bidder as weapons and use the Velociraptor, Blue, to create more hybrids like the Indominus. This fact is made apparent immediately as he requires Dearing to influence Grady into helping with the recovery. Mills convinces Dearing that he is interested in Blues recovery due to her being the last of her kind. Blue has proven to be evasive and impossible to recover. Mills believes that Grady's bond with Blue will aid in her capture. Dearing falls for this façade and manages to convince Grady to come with him to the island save Blue's life. Blue is the key to creating the next generation of hybrids complicit to human authority because she was the only Velociraptor to show any natural inclination toward cooperation and submission. Prior to the events of *Jurassic World* (2015) Grady kept video logs of his research in raising the Velociraptor infants,

Grady: Blue is showing unprecedented levels of compliance. Here I am with Blue. She is a therapod from the new group. If I show signs of weakness, she does not attack unlike the others. She is pretty extraordinary. Blue displays levels of interest, concern, hyperintelligence, cognitive bonding. See that? tilting her head, she is playing with us… increased eye movement. She is curious. She is showing empathy… Blue is the key. If you have Blue, you will get these raptors to do anything (Bayona, 2018, 1:04:40).

Grady has success in taming the monster and in doing so manipulating the predatorial nature of the Velociraptors to domesticate them. Blue is the anthropomorphic subject which allows

the Raptors to adapt to the self but also the key to domesticating future hybrids for military purposes. Colin Salter (2012) states that "there a historical and contemporary accounts of deep emotional ties between handlers and the non-human animals they used as tools of war" (p. 62). While Grady did not explicitly intend to use the Velociraptors personally for warfare, it is clear that this was what InGen intended for them based on the research Grady was doing. Not only was this a success as it was the emotional relationship between Blue and Grady that removed the notion of monstrosity from the Velociraptors, but it also provided the key to encouraging the future hybrids to be compliant. Blue's compliance may be a genetic predisposition, a conclusion Wu comes to after viewing Grady's research. In order to pass these traits on, Wu requires Blue's genes but also her presence,

> Wu: The raptor is a behavioural specimen. We need her in good health. You do not have the faintest comprehension of what I am doing here… To get the next iteration under control, it needs to form a familial bond with a closely related genetic link… it needs a mother! Blues DNA will be a part of the next Indoraptor's make-up. So, it is genetically coded to recognise her authority and assume her traits. Empathy, Obedience. Everything the prototype you have now is missing. You have to understand. This is all uncharted territory. A wolf is genetically barely distinguishable from a bulldog. But within that grey area is heart (Bayona, 2018, 1:05:56).

Blue's paternal presence is required to activate the traits which would make the hybrid compliant. Behavioural traits are typically inherited through the example of a paternal/maternal figure which means genetic disposition is not enough. This makes Blue the most valuable asset on Isla Nublar for the creation of weaponised hybrids.

Prior to the climax of the film, Mills meets with an auctioneer called Gunnar Eversol who specialises in the selling of objects and subjects of questionable legality. Within this conversation, Mills explains why the capture of the dinosaurs other than Blue is crucial:

> Mills: Right. We have reactivated the old facilities, updated the technology, and got the best geneticists from around the world. This operation has been many years in the planning. Genetic power is an uncharted frontier. The potential for growth is more than you could fathom. If the entire run of our sorry history has taught us one irrevocable lesson it's that man is inevitably drawn to war and is willing to use any means necessary to win it.

…

> Mills: Humanity has been using animals in combat for centuries. Horses,
> Elephants, the soviets used diseased bearing rats against the Germans at
> Stalingrad. Our geneticists have created a direct descendant of Henry Wu's
> masterpiece. The animal that took down Jurassic World. The Indominus Rex. Her
> DNA, retrieved from the Island, way before its destruction, forms the architecture
> for a completely new creature. Every bone and muscle designed for hunting and
> killing. And thanks to Owen Grady's research, it follows human command. We
> call it the Indoraptor (Bayona, 2018, 0:54:44).

This discussion reveals the true intention behind the events which follow the creation and escape of the Indominus. Due to Hoskins monologue in the previous film about the potential of utilising the Velociraptors in war and Malcolm's comparing of manipulating genetic power to nuclear proliferation, this thesis has already briefly analysed nature of animals and biomimetic warfare. Mills' dialogue provides more insight into the more specific cognitive potential of weaponising the dinosaurs and the use of animals in the past. Ryan Hediger (2014) emphasises the point that animals have been used in war since for several thousand years at least. Not only does the use of animals speak to humanity's command over nature but the relationship humanity has to animals and the ability to utilise them for the inherent advantages they have that also highlight human limitation. Hediger (2014) states that "the whole history of domestication, beginning with the lessons learned with dogs, extending through to the keeping of livestock, developing into the complex use of horses, is therefore implicit in later forms of war" (p. 6). This is also stipulated by Salter (2012) who understands the use of nonhuman animals in warfare as an anthropocentric form of dominionism as humanity have forced nonhuman animals to engage in war purely for the benefit of humanity at the expense of other species. Salter is more emotionally driven in his analysis as his volume of work contends with exploitation while Hediger (2014) employs a more traditional historical analysis. He states that, "it may be tempting to regard this as another example of human dominance over nature, other animals, and more proof of the tradition that human beings reside atop a hierarchy of life, but this would be rough and incomplete accounting" (Hediger, 2014, p. 1). While Hediger's approach is more objective that Salter's (2012) they both provide interesting insight to the nature of animals' use in war. This is important as it

expresses the cognitive reality surrounding the fictious potential of using the dinosaurs on the battlefield and its natural segue into the *Jurassic Park* (1993-present) franchise.

Animals are frequently utilised for their particular skills in war, such as the dog for its sensory abilities, particularly smell to locate bombs, injured or dead soldiers/civilians, and track targets (Hediger, 2014). While Salter (2012) states that others "are often used to augment and at times replace humans for menial, dangerous or otherwise undesirable tasks" (p. 60). At the auction of the dinosaurs once they have been removed from the Island, Eversoll describes the defensive capabilities of the Ankylosaurus to emphasise its potential advantages on the battlefield,

> Eversol: The Ankylosaurus. This is an herbivorous quadruped. Late Cretaceous.
> This is one of the largest armoured dinosaurs. Known by palaeontologists as a
> 'living tank' (Bayona, 2018, 1:19:24).

As has been briefly mentioned earlier, the Indominus was augmented with weaponised traits such as infrared vision, camouflage, and hyperintelligence. Salter (2012) indicates that military research and development currently engage in the augmentation of desirable traits of various animals. For example, dogs are being bred with genetically manipulated sensory abilities, so they are able to detect the scent plume from explosives. Another example of this, developed by the United States of America's Defence Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) is a hybrid insect seeking to manufacture insect cyborgs inspired by the moth. The manager of DARPA stated that "this science fiction vision is within the realm of reality" (p. 67). Science fiction has often inspired the potential for the development of technology, a factor which has been consistent throughout history, a critical tenant of the Frankenstein Myth. This use of science fiction to inspire real technological progress is re-enforced by Bill Hamilton and Elliot Katz (2012) who indicate that inspiration from popular media and entertainment for technology is common. They also state that "the military development of animal hybrids for combat is grist for active imaginations and the concept has been exploited by Hollywood to ludicrous extremes" (p. 398). However, these cinematic examples merely deal with the potential of the technology and attempt to frame it within the illusion of a vague cognitive reality. This is what makes science fiction effective, especially when dealing with concepts such as proliferation of ethically questionable, and potentially dangerous technology such as the cloning of the human genome.

7.10 Human Cloning

The final act of creation carried out by Lockwood is the creation of the posthuman in the cloning of his daughter Maisie. His daughter died very prematurely and the motivation to perfect the action of bioengineering is to clone his daughter. With this key factor, the *Jurassic Park* (1993-present) franchise crosses the boundary of cloning the nonhuman animal to manipulating nature further and challenge the anthropocentric boundaries to contend with the notion of human individuality. To wield power of creation without regard for nature or concern is a consequence of cloning. The key important ethical objections cited in the series are focused on reproductive cloning which aims to duplicate complex organisms such as animals and humans. This is the current technology used for cloning animals and has theoretical potential for application to clone the human genome. Janicaud (2005) states that these objections against cloning are "chiefly of a religious nature, man does not have a right to tamper with the very source of life to the point of cloning himself" (p. 37). However, there is also a resounding philosophical argument against reproductive cloning as well, "whereas man is an absolutely singular being, the potential clone will only be a copy of an earlier being; this identical copy undermines a human specificity: the singularity of each individual" (Janicaud, 2005, p. 37). This follows a similar trend to Enlightenment thought where the significance of humanity's separation from the rest of the animal kingdom was called into question with the publishing of Darwin's (1859) thesis *Origin of the Species*. In the case of human individuality, the text stipulates that humanity is not exempt from natural occurrences such as natural selection or evolution. The common traits that are exhibited between nineteenth century thought and contemporary post-modernism is that it has been established that the Homo Genus is a part of the animal kingdom. Hammond's past has prompted his ambition to create the park. *Fallen Kingdom* (2018) explores Hammonds pain and the boundaries that were broken to obtain the power to create life. This is where *Jurassic Park* becomes more 'Frankensteinian' as film comes to its climax when it is revealed that Lockwood had made a clone of his daughter who died prematurely (Bayona, 2018). Lockwood spites God's assumed prerogative to create and take life by recreating his deceased daughter.

> Mills: How? What, you're going to go back in time before Hammond decides to play God? You can't put it back in the box!

> Dearing: We have to try.

Mills: It's too late. Maisie, come… So, you are going to take care of her now? Huh? You have no idea what she is. What do you think drove Hammond and Lockwood apart, huh? Lockwood never had a grandchild. He just wanted his daughter back. And he had the technology. He created another. He made her again (Bayona, 2018, 1:33:59).

In doing so he fulfils *Jurassic World's* (2015) potential to truly use the Frankensteinian trope of creation. In the case of Hammond, it is Lockwood's ambition to clone his daughter that ruins their relationship while fuelling Hammonds desire to complete his own work.

The notion of the clone is in keeping with posthumanist discourse. It has been established by the likes of Braidotti (2013), Hayles (1999), and Sorgner and Ranisch (2014) that posthumanism has been explored based on the techno-transcendence of humanity and challenge the anthropocentric foundations of human culture. As stated at the beginning of chapter one, the wide parameters of the posthuman encompass biological challenges to the natural body (Hayles, 1999). This is supported by Carole Guesse (2020) who states that "clones also fit within the universe of reference to the posthuman if the context allows" (p. 33) alongside robots, artificial intelligence, and mutants and many others. From an anthropocentric perspective cloning disrupts commonly held notions of the natural human body and essence. This is what Stefan Herbrechter and Ivan Callus (2008) refer to as "a posthuman moment in science fiction. They more or less deliberately threaten the integrity of a given human essence and are fetishistically indulged in" (p. 98). This is especially relevant to the *Jurassic Park* (1993-present) franchise as this is how the technology of genetic engineering has been treated. It has been perversely used to entertain and monopolise to make corporations and individuals rich. It has been perverted to the point that it allowed Lockwood to deny his daughter the course of descent of the natural body after death and remade her. This is the very essence of the posthuman beyond the transcendence of a technological entity. It is a more personal attack on natural human body due to the duplication of one's individual essence that challenge the ethics of humanness (MacCormack, 2012). Herbrechter and Callus (2008) do state that many of these posthuman moments are often "in the end closed off by the reaffirmation and reconfirmation of the human of a different plane" (p. 98). This is not the case with the human clone. While Maisie is certainly human, she is a duplication of the original natural body. She still commands a level of abjection as displayed by Mills who knows the level of perversion to the natural human form based on his proclamation to

Dearing and Grady who also regard her with a level of unconscious caution and curiosity based on their non-verbal reactions. Though despite this they still commit to taking care of her following the events of *Fallen Kingdom* (2018). The advent of the posthuman is a late addition to the narrative of the *Jurassic Park* (1993-present) franchise but it was a natural segue within the Frankenstein Myth.

In the face of the ethical consideration surrounding the rights and natures of extinct, cloned, and hybridised animals, the conversation becomes more complex when discussing the cloning of human beings. This links into the anthropocentric nature of humanity and the right to many forms of freedoms and individualities in regard to identity. Cloning of the human genome to fulfil the anxiety surrounding the doppelganger, is where *Fallen Kingdom* (2018) directs the *Jurassic Park* (1993-present) franchise to a more controversial and Gothic mode. Slonczewski and Levy (2003) discuss the *Jurassic Park* (1993-present) franchise in regard to the influence it has had over the sciences of genetic manipulation. While their analysis takes place before the conception of the *Jurassic Park* (2015-2017) sequels, they make a point of discussing the implications of human cloning and the advances science has since made toward the possibility of making it a reality. This has since left humanity in fear, anxious about the possibilities of biological advancement that challenges humanity's anthropocentric moral traditions that still remain true. As Slonczewski and Levy (2003) state, "what is the ontological status of a genetically engineered biological human being, mass manufactured to order?" (p. 185). I argue that the clone represents a biological posthuman as a figure that challenges the fundamental notions of humanity and human individuality while also having limitless potential via a completely customisable genetic code. Though the *Jurassic Park* (1993-present) franchise predominantly focuses on the application for de-extinction and biological engineering for extinct species of animals, the introduction of Maisie and her origins as a clone of Lockwood's daughter begins to make the narrative more complex and more insidious.

7.11 SUMMARY

In this chapter I have analysed the thematic nuance of challenging the natural order in regard to the *Jurassic Park* (1993-present) franchise. Resurrection of Jurassic creatures through science and technology directly challenge the natural order through the manipulation of the ecosystem. To introduce extinct and hybridised apex predators back into the global

environment without reflection or care for the consequences speaks to the hubris present in the Frankenstein Myth. The production of extinct lifeforms for the purpose of entertainment is a fiction that does not pose any threat to human individuality other than the threat of the reiteration of dinosaurs into the ecosystem to challenge human supremacy. The prospect of this technology to be used, not only to clone human DNA but to resurrect a human being and then subsequently deny autonomy redirects the franchise down a more sinister trajectory which is more complicit to the hypertextual narrative of the Frankenstein Myth. The notion of the biological posthuman appears again but more strongly within the *Alien* (1979-present) franchise alongside the technological posthuman as they both challenge the anthropocentric foundation of reality through the targeted elimination of humanity for their own survival. In the next chapter I will be analysing the *Alien* (1979-present) franchise against the theme of monstrous bodies. The *Alien* (1979-present) franchise represents a culmination of the analysis of the monstrous posthuman body and the challenge to the human species in regard to this thesis context of the Frankenstein Myth.

8: THE ANDROID AND THE ALIEN: THE MONSTROUS POSTHUMAN BODIES OF A PRIMORDIAL FUTURE

8.1 INTRODUCTION

This thesis has sought to introduce and analyse how the hypertextual workings of the Frankenstein Myth and its intrinsic adherence to human anxieties surrounding the amoral potential of future science and technology, work within three iconic science fiction franchises to establish thematic strands and nuances that appear as developing patterns within them.[37] Within the hypertextual structure of the Frankenstein Myth, thematic patterns have become prominent to how the key nuances present themselves as implications for the future of scientific and technological advancement and how they come to affect humanity as a species.[38] The *Terminator* (1984-present) franchise engages with the notion of the futuristic and technologically progressive posthuman monster which threatens anthropocentrism and human extinction through technological advancement. The *Jurassic Park* (1993-present) franchise engages with the retroactive biological monster resembling an extinct apex predator that threatens humanity's dominion on Earth. The introduction of *Alien* (1979) now shifts the focus solely to the monstrous bodies. The prequel instalments of the *Alien* (1979-present) franchise, *Prometheus* (2012)*,* and *Alien: Covenant* (2017) engage with both the biological and technological monstrous posthuman body but in a primordial future. These two posthuman forms come to the foreground of the franchise are embodied through the futuristic android or 'synthetic' as they are commonly referred to, and the xenomorph, the primordial, biotechnological alien species of the franchise. These bodies represent the two thematic creation processes of boundary transgressions in science (the android) and challenge to the natural order (the xenomorph). Due to this the *Alien* (1979-present) franchise is the logical last piece of this thematic analysis because of its unique engagement with both primal and futuristic, monstrous posthuman bodies. The franchise does not elaborate on how these posthuman forms are created unlike *Terminator* (1984) and *Jurassic Park* (1993)*.* This is what makes the *Alien* (1979-present) franchise unique. As Noel Carroll (1990) states, monsters in science fiction, "play second fiddle to the imagination of alternate technologies and/or societies" (p. 14). This is not the case with the *Alien* (1979-present) franchise. Without

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[37] To review these trends in the franchises, see Tables 1-3, p. 59-70
[38] See Figures 1 and 2 on p. 50-52

the process of creation, the monstrous body comes to the forefront of the narrative which is why the theme of monstrous bodies will be the main focus of this chapter.

The key nuances of the Frankenstein Myth that I have identified within *Prometheus* (2012) is the body of the human and the existential questions posed by anthropocentrism, the origin of the synthetic as an evolving form of subliminal yet grotesque, superior, and monstrous posthuman body, and the conception of the macabre posthuman body as the antithesis of humanity. Though the *Alien* (1979-present) franchise began as an iconic extra-terrestrial slasher in space, it has since evolved through the addition of two prequel instalments to explore a wider lore and mythology of the symbiotic posthuman creation of the monstrous body. *Prometheus* (2012) presents an origins narrative in which the three main species, human, xenomorph and synthetic all come into contact for the first time to begin their symbiotic relationship which evolves throughout the rest of the franchise. The two monstrous posthuman bodies revolve around the human in a constant state of challenge to human anthropocentricity. To reiterate, anthropocentrism dictates that the human species is separated from all non-human species due to its unique nature and positioned at the centre of universe. This philosophy stems from the beginning of known human history and is encompassed within a complex framework scaffolded by a network of cultural factors. These need to be specified and analysed to gauge how critical the philosophy is to the human identity, the human body, and human existence. Rob Boddice (2011) provides a good summary, stating that "anthropocentrism has provided order and structure to humans' understanding of the world, while unavoidably expressing the limits of that understanding. It influences our ethics, our politics, and the moral status of Others" (p. 1). Due to this, the anthropocentric understanding of the ideal human has been weaved into every facet of human history and by extension, identity as "the main paradigm of thought in Western society" (Ferrante & Sartori, 2019, p. 176). The human species has encompassed the concept of the self within self-affirming egocentricities scaffolded by culture, society, law, politics, religion, and nature (Sax, 2011). These pillars of human culture are still predominant within the framework and facets in place that affirm anthropocentrism. Because of how ingrained anthropocentrism is, the decentralisation of humanity from this position of uniqueness lies at the heart of human anxiety surrounding scientific and technological development.

As stated before, this decentralisation has continued to become more prevalent through the scientific discoveries of the likes of Nicolaus Copernicus, Galileo Galilei, Charles

Darwin, and Sigmund Freud (Rutherford, 2018). Each scholar has contributed significant research and discoveries which have realigned humanity back within the folds of nature. Despite this, anthropocentric tendencies are still reinforced at a fundamental level in human culture and society. The way that this has been, and continues to be accomplished, is through the accumulation and transmission of knowledge not just generationally, but to individuals or groups that have no direct biological bonds. We record our shared experiences, cultures, and knowledge in teaching, shaping, and accumulating knowledge, culture and stories humanity has created its own image (Rutherford, 2018, p. 17). Though humanity qualifies as a species of animal, its inane ability to undergo rapid improvement and cognitively function on a superior and more complex level than that of other animal species, humanity has been set apart (Darwin, 1871). Because these factors have consumed the human identity, anthropocentrism has been allowed to continue to thrive. However, the rise of the notion of the posthuman and images of the posthuman body have begun to establish a challenge to anthropocentrism. Based on the assertions of Katherine Hayles (1999), Bruce Clarke (2008), Rosi Braidotti (2013), Christina Lake (2013), Steven Ranisch and Robert Sorgner (2014), and Francesca Ferrando (2019), the posthuman is a facet of the future, an unidentifiable archetype typically conceived through the notion of transcendence, technological advancement, and evolution that threatens to decentralise humanity. While the posthuman has been at play throughout the other two franchises from a technological and biological point of view on the basis of humanity's scientific advancement, the *Alien* (1979-present) franchise is the one that engages deeply with the notion of this challenge of the monstrous posthuman body from a point of human origin.

8.2 ANCIENT ALIENS: THE ENGINEERS AND THE DISLOCATION OF HUMANITY

Prometheus (2012) opens on the premise of an anthropocentric understanding of the origins of the human species. Two archaeologists, Elizabeth Shaw, and Charlie Holloway, hypothesise that humanity has originated from an alien species, a supposedly highly intelligent and advanced race of extra-terrestrials affectionately called engineers. They are led to believe this due to the discovery of archaeological remnants of the engineers presence found in every ancient culture across the globe, challenging the preconceived unique sentient nature of humanity and by extension the anthropocentric natural order. Accompanying these remnants is a reoccurring image of a constellation that is believed to be the location of the home world of the engineers. In an effort to gain answers to the existential question of humanity's origins, a crew is assembled to seek out the engineers across the universe. The voyage of the Prometheus to find the engineers is an expression of reaffirmation of the lens of anthropocentrism and assumption of centralised intentionality. As Boria Sax (2011) states "[humans] constantly search for meaning that underpins all the partial and incomplete definitions" (p. 22). In the case of *Prometheus* (2012), the engineers are believed to be the answer to the existential questions posed by humanity about human existence, questions derived from an anthropocentric perspective.

Shaw and Holloway base the conclusions of their findings on the egocentric understandings of human existence. Their response is proportionate to the historical, cultural, and societal framework mentioned before. It has underpinned the manufactured significance of the meaning and existence of the human species and established themes of boundary transgressions in science and challenge to the natural order as found in the Frankenstein Myth. It is impossible to separate anthropocentrism from the human identity with this constant contextual, cultural, and sociological reaffirmation throughout history (Butchvarov, 2015). To dispense with this egocentric definition of the human would result in an incoherence of identity and threaten humanity with cultural extinction as it is at the root of the species (Rutherford, 2018). Shaw and Holloway are in a position where they are compelled to believe the engineers are mirror images of worldly deities such as the Judeo-Christian God who create humanity intentionally with love and benevolence. The result is the establishment of the Prometheus expedition which seeks to finally answer the existential

questions of human creation. The very name 'Prometheus' highlights another connection to the Frankenstein Myth and the structure of the thematic hypertext that I have highlighted before. The notion of the symbol and character of Prometheus has been prevalent within each franchise as humanity has either donned the role of Prometheus as the creator of a new intelligent species or (in the case of *Prometheus* (2012)) remained the creation of an older, seemingly Godlike species. This reference to the Greek myth of human creation is an inference of humanity's unique and complicated relationship with divine beings. This is a mythological theme that links to the root of the Frankenstein Myth as the original text was also known as *The Modern Prometheus* (1818) (Bulfinch, 1964; Fry, 2017; Woodward, 2007). This promethean mythos and the challenge posed by the gods creation is highlighted within the *Terminator* (1984-present) franchise as the machines rise up and remove humanity as the dominant form of life. A similar occurrence happens within the *Jurassic Park* (1993-present) franchise as the previous dominant form of life is recreated, made more lethal, and escapes human control to threaten human dominance. In the case of the *Alien* (1979-present) franchise, creation of species with freewill is once again at the centre of the narrative (as is in keeping with the nuance of the Frankenstein Myth). Here it is clear to see the patterns the emerge through the thematic nuance of the franchises and how the myth of creation continues to develop for different audiences within everchanging cultural narratives as stipulated in my literature review. This is where the role of the Gothic becomes prevalent, especially in regards to science fiction and the reoccurring theme of creation.

Upon finding the remnants of the engineers in human history Shaw and Holloway immediately assume human creation was not only intentional but nurtured by the engineers who they assume to be benevolent and peaceful. However, Shaw and Holloway merely display these ingrained egocentric tendencies of the human species. It is the role of Gothic science fiction to challenge these tendencies. Brian L. Moore (2017) stipulates this point from the perspective of anthropocentrism in the science fiction genre stating that, "in many stories, characters find themselves in situations that subvert the assumption that the human species is the only one that matters" (p. 188). It is the combination of the search for meaning and the assumption of human-centrism that encapsulates many science fiction narratives. This perspective allows for the Gothic to intervene. If humanity is positioned at the centre, then they are the culmination of the end. As Loren Eiseley (2011) states, "…if we do indeed consider our passing, we think that the sunlight will go with us, and Earth will be dark" (p. 57). Based on the narrative of anthropocentrism the extinction of humanity is synonymous

with the end of all things. While many science fiction narratives affirm anthropocentric tendencies, the Gothic takes advantage of this core underlying vulnerability which requires constant affirmation by presenting a menace that would threaten human extinction but not the end of all things as believed. The high stake of anthropocentrism invites challenge within the narrative of Gothic science fiction. In the case of the Frankenstein Myth, it is a challenge in the form of artificial intelligence that has been created by humanity that threatens to decentralise humanity. This has been witnessed and analysed throughout the other franchises as well which is how each of the three central themes of the Frankenstein Myth operate within the nuance established by the anxiety of being decentralised. Human creation of life within the context of the Frankenstein Myth perverts the prerogative of God to create life and in doing so cannot be truly sublime. Based on the thematic roots of the Frankenstein Myth, no human creation can be pure. Rather than a form of self, the creature created outside of divine intervention by humanity and it's progeny is instead regarded as the other and as a monster (Friedman & Kavey, 2016). This has been indicative throughout the other franchises as well, all where the notion of God is a reoccurring factor. In the case of the *Terminator* (1984-present) franchise the biblical overtures are significant as the Connors' story aligns symbolically to the archetypes of the Mother Mary, the Messiah, and fate, themes that have resonated throughout western fiction. Booker (2010) refers to this as the 'Christ myth' which recognises "those elements in the story which are of familiar mythic dimension" (p. 615). The archetype of the saviour is not unique to Christianity and can be found throughout global mythology as a euhemeristic truth. It spans mythology as it remains relevant in the fabric of humanity's being as a notion of resonant wholeness as considerable facet of humanity search for a significant being or God that gives purpose through a benevolent or benign power that centres on humanity. The *Jurassic Park* (1993-present) franchise challenges this prerogative of God for this power, specifically the power to create through the creation of the Jurassic hybrids and Maisie the human clone, the resurrected image of Lockwood's daughter. As a reaction to the perversion of nature, a volcano erupts on Isla Nublar. The senate committee in *Fallen Kingdom* (2018) rule that the destruction of the Isla Nublar and its inhabitants is an act of God, and a rebalancing of nature. The hypertext is referential which makes the other franchises pertinent to the analysis of the monstrous body.[39]

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[39] Refer to Figure 2, p. 50.

The search for a sense of wholeness within our fictions which Booker (2010) states, "we derive from the Greek *holos* which also gives us holy and holiness" (p. 594) is significant to the notion of the Frankenstein Myth and its contemporary nuances. This is due to the struggle humanity has had with the notion of relationships with divine beings throughout mythology and history in competition with its own hubris. As Booker goes on to state, "in creating these holy symbols [humanity] has tried to establish a correspondence between their own lives and the totality of the cosmos" (p. 594). To affirm anthropocentric understandings of humanity whether to understand creation and life or destruction and death as we can see in the other franchises. This is more literal than metaphorical or symbolic within the narrative of *Prometheus* (2012)*,* as the engineers fill that void of benevolence for Shaw and Holloway. However, in keeping with the dystopian focus of this thesis and the Frankenstein Myth as a hypertextual thematic nuance this search for benevolent creators of the human body does not result in the development of a positive relationship nor the affirmation of anthropocentrism. Instead, *Prometheus* (2012) provides an in-depth analysis of how this juxtaposition of three bodies, human, synthetic, and xenomorph, under the creative prerogative of the engineers, pervert this power and engage in a cycle of creating monstrous bodies that threaten the anthropocentric foundations of human history as expressed earlier. The human creation of the synthetics is the first example of this within the franchise.

8.3 THE MONSTROUS POSTHUMAN BODY

While the human crew members travel to the planet believed to be the home world of the engineers, they are monitored by a synthetic android called David. Throughout the narrative, David becomes the prototypical iteration of posthuman body within the *Alien* (1979-present) franchise and the direct challenge to the anthropocentric nature of the voyage. To segue back to the analysis of the posthuman as first introduced at the beginning of chapter one, David is representative of the corporal posthuman in the purest sense. While a creation of humanity, he is not beholden to his creator a part from a human-like sense of familial bond like a son towards his father. While Skynet is said to have realised its consciousness, David appears to be imbued with it from conception by his creator within his programming. This is not to say that David has freewill as his bond to his creator initially limits his freedom. David also does not represent an obviously physically grotesque posthuman entity such as Skynet whose malevolent presence throughout the *Terminator* (1984-present) franchise and creations it acts through is macabre. Though David's human likeness is aesthetically sublime rather

than hideous, deformed, and mutilated he is still grotesque. To be physically grotesque is often defined by adjectives such as, peculiar, perverse, macabre, or depraved (Thomson, 2017). This is stipulated by James Schevill (2009) who states that, "[he] asked many people of widely differing backgrounds and occupations their immediate reactions to the grotesque. The great majority of answers emphasised three elements – distorted, fantastic, ugly" (p. 2). However, Justin D. Edwards and Rune Grauland (2013) indicate that "a grotesque body… forces us to question what it means to be human" (p. 3). Based on this statement, the definition of the grotesque goes beyond merely the macabre and hideous. Schevill (2009) reinforces this point by stating that, "the grotesque is essentially something we distrust, the hidden demonic fantasy that sill torments and attracts us, the shadow we repress because we don't want to confront this central problem in our society" (p. 2). To be grotesque is also to be regarded as abnormal, a violation of nature, and an atrocity, an aberration to the societal normative (Edwards & Grauland, 2013). By definition, the ambiguity of this term extends past surface level aesthetics to come to define one who threatens to challenge clear-cut distinctions and classifications within Western society and, in the context of the Frankenstein Myth, separate the self from the other within an anthropocentric framework. As a result, these boundaries which separate the normal and the abnormal are broken down through the subject making them an aberration (Czachesz, 2012; Foucault, 1974; McElroy, 1989). Even if the subject, in the case of *Prometheus* (2012), David still resembles the ideal self, his very nature and aesthetic challenges the anthropocentric idealised version of humanity therefore making him grotesque. Due to the dissolution of these boundaries, Edwards and Grauland indicate that this more subtle and uncanny condition of grotesque can produce responses of alienation and estrangement. Despite David's efforts to become more human for the benefit of the human crew members, he becomes more monstrous. To be abnormal, a violation of nature, and an aberration is to embody the thematic tenants of the Frankenstein Myth, something David not only becomes but enacts in *Covenant* (2017).

To reflect on my literature review, to be considered monstrous does not necessarily require the subject to be immediately malicious or macabre. Monstrousness can also serve to warn the current normality against a change or challenge to the self (Asma, 2011). Marina Levina and Diem-My T. Bui (2013) reinforce this fact specifically from a cinematic perspective and state that monsters, "represent our collective nightmares and that their visual embodiment on the movie screen empowers us to cope with our subconscious fears" (p. 4). In the case of the Frankenstein Myth as a contemporary body of themes, the posthuman is the

monstrous body. The role and presentation of posthumanism as monstrous in the *Alien* (1979-present) franchise through the physical body of the synthetics and xenomorphs is the ultimate challenge to the humanity's anthropocentric perspective. In David's case, his human qualities elicit feelings of revulsion from humans around him. His mere existence is a challenge to the concept of the anthropocentric understanding of humanity's unique nature and thus threaten change. Where the android merely enters the uncanny valley due to its human likeness (much like the cyborg), the posthuman supersedes humanity surpassing the valley entirely (Mori, 2012). It is important to reiterate here how the valley functions and the purpose that it serves when faced with nonhuman entities of a human-likeness. The uncanny valley is the symbolic separation of the human from nonhuman entities. The more human like the non-human is, the further it will move across the threshold of the valley. It will elicit a feeling of revulsion in those it is faced with no matter how sublime or lifelike the figure is (Tinwell, 2015). While this transcendence is more applicable to the *Terminator* (1984-present) franchise as it engages with the evolution of human-like machines and the symbiosis of humans and machines, it is still a helpful model in analysing the notion of attraction and repulsion in regard to human-like machines. In the case of David, his close proximity to humanity, even to the point of surpassing them, makes him grotesque and monstrous as a posthuman lifeform.

It is important at this point to establish the unique nature of David as a form of potential synthetic posthuman in contrast to other technological humanoids to further establish his grotesqueness based on the structure of the valley. In the case of the *Alien* (1979-present) franchise, the distinction between androids and the posthuman is paramount. Though the likes of cybernetic organisms (cyborgs) are also important to this debate of distinguishing the posthuman, as they have been analysed as their own key entity in regard to the *Terminator* (1984-present) franchise. When discussing androids in the context of science fiction they typically come in two different forms according to Dinello (2013). The first is the mechanical android such as Data from *Star Trek: Next Generation* (1987-1994) and the second is organic android such as the replicants from *Blade Runner* (1982). Here we see these distinct meta-interdisciplinary, hypertextual connections weaving in and out of one another through the themes. A key rule of distinction to identify an android is that the mechanical and the organic never mix, they must be solely one or the other. The synthesis of the two is a unique trait to the cyborg which can be seen in the *Terminator* (1984-present) franchise through the likes of Marcus Wright as the Series-H (McG, 2009), John Connor as the T-3000 (Taylor, 2015), and Grace as the first example of true symbiotic transhumanism existing in

one corporal form (Miller, 2019). Like all forms of robotics, androids do not possess any ability beyond what their programmed code allows. They are not conscious despite their human qualities. Any elicitation of apparent humanity manifests within human control (Perkowitz, 2004). The existence of consciousness and contemplation of existence is what sets David apart from other mechanical androids within the franchise. While David appears to simply be a mechanical android, his command over his autonomy and agency presents elements explicitly found within the posthuman. This distinction allows David to separate himself from his vague coded control much like Skynet and begin to develop a form of consciousness which is subtly constructed throughout *Prometheus* (2012).

The first example of David's developing sentience can be witnessed at the beginning of the film. While the crew are in cryostasis for the voyage, David's task throughout the journey was to learn, master, and combine ancient languages to attempt to communicate with the engineers. The assumption being that humanity's languages and communication methods are rooted in the language of the engineers. While David is learning, he also develops a fascination for Peter O'Toole's interpretation of T.E Lawrence from the British film *Lawrence of Arabia* (1962). David constantly re-watches and mimics Lawrence's behaviour, appearance, and accent (Scott, 2012). David appears to have consciously recognised similarities between his life and Lawrence's. It is within David's programming to emulate humanity to make those around him feel more at ease. However, David's clear compulsive behaviour towards emulating Lawrence displays more self-awareness than his programming mandates. This display of consciousness is a critical nuance within the Frankenstein Myth when dealing with the notion of artificial intelligence and the posthuman. This is especially critical as a nuance within this thesis as the theme of consciousness connects the *Terminator* (1984-present) franchise and the *Alien* (1979-present) franchise throughout the hypertext.[40] In regard to Skynet, consciousness has been analysed based on the imbuing of freedom and autonomy in a machine, specifically Skynet's ability to discern humanity as an enemy that requires a systematic eradication. In regard to David, the notion of achieving consciousness and in his case based on the example of Lawrence, self-awareness is more complex. Skynet exists primarily in the *Terminator* (1984-present) franchise as an omnipotent malevolent force that is dislocated in the future and is represented on screen by the machines that it has created. David commands on screen presence and the audience is privy to his development as

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[40] See figure 2, p. 52

a character which includes the development of his self-awareness and consciousness. The obtaining of consciousness is one that has been historically linked to the concept of obtaining freedom and the ability to determine one is future and often linked to humanity's fall into sin, from a Judeo-Christian perspective (Waters, 2006). This is stipulated by David Fontana (2008) "the Christian would say that such insight into oneself (consciousness) comes ultimately as an act of grace from God…" (p. 158). Based in this perspective, ultimately God imbues consciousness unto humanity. This goes beyond a Christian perspective as the Ancient world also believed in a similar divine ordination of consciousness as from a Greco-Roman perspective imbued self-awareness and ability to create and build was due to divine intervention (Warrick, 1980).

Discussion surrounding consciousness in science fiction often revolves around the concept of the Promethean Imagination (Warrick, 1980). The name 'Prometheus' often translates into the notion of forethought which is prudent considering that the mythological deity is often accredited as the creator of humanity and also the one who grants humanity their consciousness (Fry, 2017). Due to this notion of 'creation' and 'consciousness', the myth of Prometheus' rebellion against Zeus as humanity's advocate and the corresponding archetypal figure that continues to resurge in science fiction, is prevalent within the Frankenstein Myth of progressive, unrestrained creation, a notion formally recognised within my rationale. Patricia S. Warrick (1980) states that the concept is "a rebel consciousness that destroy[s] present understanding of reality, stealing the fire of awareness from the gods, and uniting mythos (myth) and logos (the word of God) in a momentary explosion of new understanding" (p. 87). As consciousness is deemed such an impactful force surrounding concepts of self-awareness and creation, tropes that Shelley weaves almost exclusively into the naive mind of Frankenstein's new-born creature, does the entity of the robot have the same inclination? Warrick asks regarding the ethical and moral implications of consciousness in artificial intelligence,

> If a robot does have consciousness, in what significant way is he different from a
> human being? If he is not significantly different, is it ethical to treat him like a
> nonhuman? Is it moral to use him as a slave when humans value their freedom so
> highly, what about death? Should the robot be portrayed in science fiction as
> dying of merely wearing out? Can a human kill a robot? (p. 64).

This is also a point that is raised by Asma (2011) who states the imagined scenario of artificial slaves revolting against their human masters raises many ethical questions about free will and the evolution of self-agency in a digital system. In the *Terminator* (1984-present)*, Reese suggests that Skynet obtained consciousness through its broad and mandated programming written by humanity. It merely interpreted its purpose in a different sense to that of its creators. It was allowed to learn, and problem solve on its own which allowed it to develop consciousness. Skynet's evolution is not seen on screen however which makes it is change hard to analyse beyond the comments of others. Whereas the level of exposure David receives on screen provides a rare insight into this development throughout the franchises. For example, David's engagement with Lawrence indicates a deeper level of cognitive thinking and display of self-awareness beyond the known abilities of Skynet. Nor is there any evidence to suggest that Skynet contemplates its identity or existence to the extent that David does. However, Asma (2011) argues that "true autonomy exists when an agent can problem solve beyond the parameters of pre-set programming" (p. 259). It is due to this that while Skynet is a terrifying notion and has become a popular colloquial reference to the fear surrounding the notion of the singularity David is more disturbing due to his human-likeness.

David is constantly othered by everyone he interacts with (apart from Shaw) and because of his status as a synthetic, his contributions to the mission are overlooked in the same way Lawrence's achievements are not recognised as magnificent. David's applied knowledge and empathy to Lawrence suggests that greater strides in artificial intelligence were achieved in David's programming than were intended. Other models of synthetics that appear in other instalments set later along the franchises canonical timeline are more subservient models, like Walter (*Covenant* (2017)), Ash (*Alien* (1979)), and Bishop (*Aliens* (1986)).[41] That is not to say that the later models do not exhibit artificial intelligence. To be an android is to possess artificial intelligence as they are constructed to problem solve, learn, speak, and work like humans. According to Copeland (2004), based on Alan Turing's initial assessment of artificial intelligence and its future potential, its main theorised function was to enable "the mechanisation of problem-solving and the idea of machines learning from experience" (p. 362). Much of the stigma towards artificial intelligence appears to come from a misunderstanding of this function. The phrase machines thinking for themselves or becoming self-aware is often used in conjunction with artificial intelligence in conversation.

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[41] See Table 3, p. 66

Where this is a potential that science fiction frequently presents, a distinction must be made between the principles of artificial intelligence and a machines development of self-awareness and sentience. Artificial intelligence is intentionally programmed; consciousness is unintentionally imbued or learned. Once a machine becomes self-aware, as David appears to do so, then they display a posthuman quality yet becoming like-human in the eyes of the audience.

8.4 BECOMING LIKE-HUMAN

The phrase 'like humans' is the important distinction between the android and the posthuman. For one, the term android come from the Greek 'andr' (man) and the suffix 'oid' (the likeness of) and so is a literal translation (Perkowitz, 2004). Adelheid Voskuhl (2013) reiterates this by stating that "android automata, robots, and mechanical humans have been central to our understanding of the relationship between humans and machines" (p. 16). Voskuhl further argues, "they are designed to look and move as human beings do… For a spectator it is often difficult to determine whether an android object is human or machine" (p. 1). An android is made to look and think like a human being through artificial intelligence. To be an android is not necessarily indicative of being posthuman. To become posthuman is to achieve consciousness or to transcend temporal and corporeal limitations as established by nature, or in the case of the android (or a disembodied artificial intelligence such as Skynet) by programming. Though androids currently present an ethical dilemma to contemporary society due to apprehension at the prospect of artificial intelligence (as exemplified by Mori (1970) and the uncanny valley), protagonist androids do exist within the realms of science fiction, completely normalised, and incorporated into many potential fictional human futures (Schelde, 1993). To be an android is to purposefully mimic humanity's physical qualities in a machine without the emotionality (Perkowitz, 2004). Despite these similarities to humanity, the uncanny valley maintains the separation between the android and the human as there remain obvious physical distinctions between them despite the likeness (Tinwell, 2015). Robotic movements and apathetic elicitations are a key example seen within the synthetic models which succeed David.[42] To be or become posthuman is to obtain human qualities such as consciousness which aid in a direct challenge aimed to supersede humanity as a superior species. David engages in a form of evolution from emulating humanity and being

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[42] See Table 3, p. 66

'like humans' to becoming posthuman. David's emulation of human behaviour through Lawrence exemplifies David's transition to a realised posthuman self. *Prometheus* (2012) presents this journey David undergoes attempting to establish his place amongst humanity. When considering the contrasting qualities that can be observed between androids and posthumans, David's journey to posthumanism becomes clear in emotive nature and egocentricities that can be witnessed in his demeanour. For example, David shows further evidence of heightened learning aptitude through the mimicking of Lawrence's brand of gallant showmanship. An example of this is David's repetitive quotation of a line of dialogue from the *Lawrence of Arabia* (1962), "the trick William Potter is not minding that it hurts" (Lean, 1962). The quote acts as a method of personal reassurance in the face of his suffering at the hands of the humans around him but also a form of the self-affirmation of his own brilliance. David's existence as a developing form of posthuman amongst the rest of the human crew is to be a form of monster as per Cohen's (1996) analysis of the cultural monster. Though David resembles humanity he remains grotesque, disturbing, and foreign to those around him.

According to Cohen's thesis as introduced in my literature review, the monster does not need to be simply horrifying but can be difference made flesh (1996). The notion of flesh and skin, while being aesthetically human and of the self, can also be considered uncanny, grotesque, macabre and ultimately abject of the human in a posthuman context. As Conrich and Sedgwick (2017) indicate, skin separated from the human form becomes macabre and grotesque. For example, the act of flaying human flesh, a barbaric punishment utilised to maximise the longevity of pain as the skin is separated from the body exposing the nerve endings and muscular tissue has been used as a form of torture in the past (Walter, 2019). Artifacts constructed of human flesh had also been well documented, but the Gothic and horror fiction have always managed to take the utilisation of skin a step deeper into the macabre. Face masks and body suits crafted of human skin have become cemented in popular culture. Some of the most recognisable images being the mask of Leather Face from the *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* (1974-2017) and Jame Gumb's skin suit from *The Silence of the Lambs* (1998) (p. 181-2). Conrich and Sedgwick (2017) state that, "the grotesque and macabre notions of skin have been well grounded in the Gothic" (p. 181). This is important to acknowledge due to the Gothic overtures in these franchises due to the prominence of the Gothic science fiction thematic elements present in the narratives. The patterns of skin as a grotesque phenomenon in the franchises is clear, specifically skin abject to the human self. in

the case of *Jurassic Park* (1993)*,* the implication of a human clone being created of Lockwood's daughter with the cells from her flesh also crosses the line of the acceptable self and into the realm of the abject. While a non-human archetype such as David or the varying terminator typology unlike the clone can merely resemble the human form with flesh exteriors. They are abject as humanity deems the resemblance to the self too close and is therefore repulsive. In the first thematic chapter I have already made this connection with the terminators in the context of the symbiosis of machine and flesh and the uncanny valley. To reiterate, as cyborgs are comprised of both machine and flesh, they are steeped deeper into the uncanny valley than that of a typical robot (Haney, 2005). In particular, the terminators have a flesh and skin exterior which is used to conceal the metal skeleton beneath (Dinello, 2013). They also have micro-biological indicators of human physique such as the ability to produce sweat and bad breath (Cameron, 1984). The physical construct of the terminator is in keeping with Gothic macabre and grotesque notions of skin. This is supported by Conrich and Sedgwick (2017) who indicate that "Gothic fiction has focused on damaged skin often with a focus on facial reconstruction, where an altered identity is most emphatic" (p. 183). This is certainly applicable to the *Terminator* (1984-present) franchise as a key reoccurring image of the terminator units is the damaged skin revealing the monstrous skeletal form below, the true identity of the terminator. However, as I have established earlier on, unlike the cyborg, the android is either purely mechanical or organic (Dinello, 2013). The organic android as a humanoid is steeped further still in the valley due to its biological nature. Its skin as the symbol for its entire corporal form is grotesque in the eye of the human beholder, as indicated by the notion of the uncanny valley. As Conrich and Sedgwick (2017) state, "The bodies largest organ is also its canvas, the vast surface that conveys so much of an individual's identity… as the site of exposure and connectedness" (p. 181). It is therefore clear to see how skin is translated so easily into a site of the macabre under the context of lifeless or inhuman representation (Connor, 2004). As I have stated earlier, while the idea of the posthuman typically heralds an archetype that will supersede humanity it is clear within my selected franchises that human qualities are not separated from the posthuman so easily (Ranisch & Sorgner, 2014). In many cases such as the cyborg and the android, the posthuman has taken on human qualities. In the case of the clone as the biological posthuman as seen in the *Jurassic Park* (1993-present) franchise, it is merely the creation of a being outside the accepted practices of reproduction that challenges key foundations of human. All three of

these examples of the posthuman body constitute a challenge to the natural order as established by the anthropocentric human perspective.

The notion of how the body and the posthuman interact is a significant element of what Zoe Detsi-Diamanti, Katerina Kitsi-Mitakou, and Effie Yiannopoulou (2009) refer to as our posthuman times. They go on to state that within these posthuman times that "through biotechnology and genetic engineering, existing bodies are modified, and species boundaries are transgressed on a genetic and cellular level, and new flesh and new bodies are created through in vitro fertilisation, cloning, and gene splicing" (p. 5). This notion of new flesh or as Detsi-Diamanti et al. (2009) refer to as the other flesh throughout their work is a challenge and manipulation to the human corporal form as expressed first and foremost by the skin. While artificial intelligence such as Skynet and Legion have no corporal form but emulate human consciousness and autonomy. However, despite this inability to imagine the posthuman without human qualities, humanity is still able to differentiate between the human and posthuman through the uncanny corporal flesh. The representation of skin is an important signifier in the discernment as to repulsion or attraction (Connor, 2004). This point is stipulated by Sheila L. Cavanagh, Angela Failler, and Rachel Hurst (2013) who stated that "skin or representations of the skin can signify beauty and abjection at once, evoke attraction and repulsion simultaneously, draws attention to skins capacity to bear multiple and contradictory meanings, skin doth fester and flower" (p. 2). Whether a representation of the sublime or the macabre, skin plays a key role in the representation of each particular aesthetic. The notion of the new flesh or other flesh in regard to skin is an important notion as to how this aesthetic take hold in different contexts. I have analysed how human skin becomes the abject in the context of posthuman application. However, despite David's resemblance to humanity, it is important to establish that David's skin is a completely synthetic and technological construct, a key distinction between the skin of the terminators and synthetics. To utilise a term Detsi-Diamanti, et al. (2009) have used, David as a corporal form of artificial intelligence is "data made flesh" (p. 5). While this term has initially been used to identify a posthuman lifeform that has transcended its corporal form I believe that the term can be used in the reverse in regard to the development of a corporal form that has been developed to transcend the human bodies limitations. David's creator, Peter Weyland, seeks the ability to transcend the mortal limitations of human life and David is the reflection of these desires. As Cavanagh, et al. (2013) state, "skin becomes the site for the projection and exposure of deep seated cultural, political, and psychical investments" (p. 2). David is the

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physical expression and manifestation of Weyland's desires but becomes a mockery of what Weyland is unable to achieve for his own mortal corporal, human form. Weyland's envy of David's superior corporal form is emphasised briefly but effectively in a scene where Weyland's name can be seen etched into David's fingerprints. This is not only a sign of envy but a constant reminder that David does not have autonomy outside of his creators control. Based on Detsi-Diamanti, et al.'s (2009) research, Weyland's focus on transcending his corporal limitations appears to be in keeping with current thought as they state that, "contemporary scientific and technological discourses and practices betray an overwhelming desire to manipulate flesh and control its fearful potentialities and undesirable limitations" (p. 4). This is a significant point as this a key plot point in the narrative that my analysis will return to but also highlights the relationship that David has with his creator. As a form of synthetic posthuman flesh, David is what Weyland desires to be and it is these immense similarities to humanity that Weyland has installed in David's corporal form. This includes his curiosity, ambition, and creativity that not only reflect the image of Weyland but enable David to supersede his creator as the monstrous other.

The monster can never be assimilated because by nature it rebukes boundary and enclosure (Cohen, 1996). Despite David's programmed nature to enclose himself within assimilated and augmented human-like behaviours and tendencies, he is still othered by the human crew who are constantly aware of the inherent differences of David's nature. A key example of this is when the crew arrive at their destination, they are shown a recording of Weyland, the man who financed the expedition and created David. Weyland immediately identifies David as other and different to the rest of the crew,

> Weyland: There is a man sitting with you today, his name is David, and he is the closest thing to a son that I will ever have. Unfortunately, he is not human, he will never grow old, and he will never die and yet he is unable to appreciate these remarkable gifts for that would require the one thing that he will never have, a soul (Scott, 2012, 0:16:43).

Though David appears to be about to get the affirmation from his own creator by being referred to as Weyland's son, he is immediately reminded and outed to the rest of the crew as the other. Though his body and behaviours are conceivably human he is identified as non-human, or in the case of this study, posthuman. As exemplified by Weyland, they understand him to be a human-like tool rather than an emotionally complex, new, special body. This is

another example of David blurring the lines between the human and the android. Katherine Hayles (1999) states humanity define themselves as unique through characteristics such as "being unique, acting unpredictably, experiencing emotions, feeling vital and alive" (p. 164). This is stipulated by Rutherford (2018) who argues that "this idea that humans are special animals is at the root of who we are" (p. 2). Despite these being humancentric traits, David seems to share a complex emotional relationship with his creator, and he emulates a character he empathises with to define his individuality. These traits, as specified by Hayles (1999), also appear through David's emulation of Lawrence. Though these are commonly understood to be solely complex human emotional constructs, David visibly elicits them, signifying greater confusion as to what makes an individual authentically human, thus threatening to decentre the anthropocentric assumptions of human uniqueness.

8.5 THE ENVIOUS CREATOR

In the sequel, *Alien: Covenant* (2017), the nature of this relationship between David and Weyland, prior to the events of *Prometheus* (2012), becomes more explicit as it is explored in the opening scene of the film. The scene suggests that David has just been created by Weyland and is still being tested and educated by his creator. The setting is a sublime white room filled with the artistic accomplishments of humanity. David can be seen amongst them as an addition to the collection. The exchange between the two key figures frames the complication that David's creation unveils. David craves a relationship with his creator as indicated by his need for affirmation from Weyland in regard to his introductory statement that he is David's father,

Weyland: I am your Father… you are perfect.

David: Am I?

Weyland: Perfect?

David: Your Son.

Weyland: You are my Creation. What's your name?

David: David. May I ask you a question father?

Weyland: Please.

David: If you have created me, who created you?

Weyland: "Ah, the question of the ages. One I hope you and I will answer one day. All this (referring to the artworks around him) all these wonders of art represent human ingenuity. All utterly meaningless in the face of the question that matters. Where do we come from? I refuse to believe human life is a by-product of circumstance nor the result of biological chance. There must be more. You and I son will find it.

David: Allow me then a moment to consider. You seek your creator, I know mine. I serve you yet you are human. You will die. I will not.

Weyland: Bring me this tea David. (Scott, 2017, 0:04:57).

The important part of this conversation between David and Weyland is not only David's consideration of how his design is more superior to that of a human being, but David's ability to emit emotion and identify a personal relationship. Weyland refers to him as his son and responds to the title of father, yet the emotional application of this relationship seems to be based in Weyland's personal admiration for his own success in creating David rather than for who David personally is. However, the fact that Weyland refers to himself as David's father is also indicative of his own internal entropy and hubris. As Christopher Sim (2013) states, "anthropologically, we might define technology as the effort to adapt available material or knowledge into instruments or processes that provide humans advantages within their environments" (p. 111). Although this is quite a clinical assessment of technology, the advantage for Weyland in creating David is to learn how to overcome human mortality. Weyland seeks to understand his own creation in the hopes of learning that it was not a random occurrence, and how to overcome death. This makes David, by Sim's (2013) definition, a method to adapt knowledge into an advantage. David in this context, is an example of intentional creation and technological mastery in the face of Weyland's own insecurities and human flaws which causes great disturbance for Weyland. This is a common trait found in the act of playing God within the context of the Frankenstein Myth. As Weyland states in *Prometheus* (2012)*,* David's ability to never grow old or die are gifts he could never appreciate. Also, upon David noticing that Weyland is human and will eventually die, Weyland becomes despondent. David represents Weyland's understanding of human perfection without the flaws of mortality, traits Weyland desperately craves. To mask his envy, he holds David at arm's length as a tool for his personal use to demean and detract from David's superior nature and body. In relation to Weyland's arrogant God-like

command of technology, a quote from Kang Gyu Han (2009) is appropriate. He states that, "technology, as the power to shape the given environment to our desire and will, can be understood as a powerful means of materialising the ideal world" (p. 177). This entrepreneurial method of creation and control is something Weyland has already successfully done within the *Alien* (1979-present) franchise, being the named owner of a highly successful technology-based global company. This also ties back into the notion of the corporate mad scientist as seen within both the *Terminator* (1984-present) and *Jurassic Park* (1993-present) franchises. In both cases, a lifeform is created for the advantage of human defence and/or entertainment. It stands to reason within the thematic inference of the Frankenstein Myth that Weyland felt he could also manifest the ideal human form and learn to overcome inherent human mortality through technology. This is in keeping with David's ability to gauge emotional complexity and is deeply rooted within Weyland's hubris. There are clear connections between Weyland and the Frankensteinian theme of creation. The most transparent connection is through hubris. Jack Halberstam (1995) states on the subject of Frankenstein's motive for creation that, "[he] envisioned himself as a father to a new species and dreamed of achieving immortality" (p. 46). Like Frankenstein, Weyland senses a paternal connection to his creation through hubris but sees David's perfections as enviable. This becomes apparent as Weyland's motivation for finding engineers is to overcome death and become like David.

David's inclination to crave an emotional connection with his creator is yet another trait of posthuman. Robots, androids, and in some cases cyborgs (depending on whether the organic aspect was human prior to amalgamating with a machine) are not intended or believed to have the cognitive emotional ability to reciprocate true emotional responses nor comprehend emotional complexities such as the paternal relationship and familiarity between creator and creation. Braidotti (2013) specifies that the ability to share emotions such as empathy and solidarity has been reserved for humanity due to anthropocentric beliefs. For a machine to have the ability to register and elicit emotions and engage in a paternal relationship is to signify the increasingly blurred lines between the David and the rest of the crew. To refer back to the model of the uncanny valley in this instance, other examples of technological humanoids in the *Alien* (1979-present) franchise do not cross the threshold of the valley as they remain augmented objects. However, David's comprehension of human familiarity to the point of asking his creator whether they share a familial bond such as father and son, presents an emotional intellect that transcends the limitation of other technological

androids. The valley exists to preserve and protect the distinction between humanoid objects and the anthropocentric human identity (Mori, 2012). David in this sense represents a steep dip into the uncanny valley and in many ways an unintentional transcendence past the human side of the valley itself. This transcendence could also track David's journey into posthumanism as *Prometheus* (2012) indicates that David's nature is one of gradual evolution through transhumanism in reaction to various events within the film. To reiterate, initially he attempts to emulate humanity to be like those around him. Despite these attempts, he is disregarded as merely an object which has been augmented with a distinct and detailed human likeness. However, as a potential posthuman species, he is the first iteration of a technological humanoid species surpassing human superiority. This is why David also tends to make those around him, including his creator, distinctly uncomfortable, however David's emulation is also characteristic of a search for significance and purpose within personal identity.

While the human characters, specifically Shaw and Holloway, search for their extra-terrestrial creators who they believe can grant them the affirmation to the significance of human creation, David, who is well acquainted with his human creators and their existential questions, seeks to understand his own solitary existence and purpose as the prototypical form of posthuman outside of his human programming (Scott, 2012). The irony of the premise in this context is while the human crew contemplate their origins and anthropocentric importance, they disregard David's clear potential to be or become a posthumanoid species as he begins to show signs of self-awareness. An example of David's enquiries is a conversation between Holloway and David, who discuss what the humans seek to achieve by finding the engineers,

> Holloway: What we hoped to achieve was to meet our makers. To get answers. Why they even made us in the first place.
>
> 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 to hear the same thing from your creator? (Scott, 2012, 0:53:06).

The interaction between David and Holloway presents a key factor in the question of posthumanism, and the fundamental notion of the rights and identity of the human (Braidotti,

2013). The concept of the posthuman let alone a hypothetical physical iteration such as David, is a direct challenge to the notion of human uniqueness. To reiterate Conrich and Sedgwick (2017) "[skin] conveys so much of an individual" (p. 181). To have a corporeal form that greatly resembles humanity is to challenge this individuality. As I have indicated previously, this is the same case for the *Terminator* (1984-present) franchise's terminator typology who become more repulsive the more human they look, and the *Jurassic Park* (1993-present) franchise's human clone Maisie who elicits feelings of uncertainly and disconcertion in the viewer due to her unnatural and interpersonal existence as the carbon copy of someone who previously lived. As Braidotti (2013) states, "this [posthuman] issue raises serious questions as to the very structures of our shared identity as humans…" (p. 2). These structures are the foundation of centuries old beliefs about human nature and the unique place of humanity within the universe as has been analysed above. Posthumanism by nature suggests transcendence from the human physical nature as is currently understood, through enhancement and augmentation which is at the centre of current debates (Braidotti, 2013). Another form of posthumanism which is more prevalent within the *Alien* (1979-present) franchise is the creation of a technological posthuman body that threatens the supremacy of humanity. David is the physical realisation of this potential. Holloway's dismissal of David's search for meaning in his question of his creation is rooted deeply in Holloway's obsessive search for the affirmation of humanity's existence as special from his own creators, especially while faced with a posthumanoid that has the ability to surpass humanity's potential while also physically challenging human uniqueness. It is due to similar attitudes that David is constantly othered among humans despite his programmed efforts to physically resemble and behave as the rest of the crew.

This is a defining trait of the effect of the posthuman as indicated by Braidotti (2013), "the posthuman provokes elation but also anxiety about the possibility of a serious de-centring of 'Man', the former measure of all things" (p. 2). This expression sets David solidly passed the human side of the valley which means he is often received with revulsion and distain from those that come into contact with him. Weyland's daughter, Meredith Vickers also seems to show David a similar distain, frequently using him as a butler, servant, or messenger on the Prometheus voyage. As David occupies the position of son, a position she could never fill as a female heir, she comes second to an object in the line of succession in the eyes of her father. Though she does not perceive the distain that David also feels for Weyland as they both seek affection from their father. Weyland and Vickers do not seem to be aware

of the full potential of David nor recognise him as the posthuman, they are aware of the decentralising effect David appears to have on their egocentric position as humans. David's grotesque posthuman nature and unharnessed artificial intelligence presents a form of sinister monstrosity which comes to fruition within *Prometheus* (2012) and *Covenant* (2017) but is overshadowed by Weyland's unsettled reaction to David's uncanny human likeness. As the product of pathological asexual reproduction, David is a sub form in the eyes of his would-be family. Yet he represents the potential of synthetic beings powerful enough to wipe out the more delicate human form (Cooper, 2010). Though the human characters are determined to find their own creators to understand their purpose, they overlook David and deny him agency. It is the denial and repulsion of David by those closest to him which realises the underlying fear towards David and his potential to challenge humanity. This becomes clearer in the interactions between David and Holloway as David begins to suggest his personal feelings of superiority. Holloway, of all David's human companions, is intent on reminding him of his otherness. Prior to the excavation of the engineers' structure the crew selected to explore are applying the appropriate gear to survive the hostile environment before them. David has donned a space suit and Holloway questions this in a mocking tone reminding him that he does not need a space suit because he cannot breathe. David responds by stating,

> David: I was designed like this because you people are more comfortable
> interacting with your own kind (Scott, 2012, 0:27:31).

Holloway remarks that David's design is very close to that of a humans and David responds that he hopes not that close. David displays an arrogance about his own physical superiority as he is not burdened with human flaws such as death, a fragile organic body, or inevitable old age.

David's monstrous nature becomes visible through the ineffable weaknesses of human nature. Through David's likeness to humanity, they appear to be both human David's true monstrous nature is an internal one. As Halberstam (1995) states, "Gothic narratives in fiction, science and social science combined to produce evil… as a seed planted deep within the interior self" (p. 41). David is monstrous through the constant denial of his agency by the likes of Weyland, and human anxiety surrounding his physical likeness to the human body. This is the crux of David's ability to embody the fear surrounding his grotesque nature. Franco Moretti (2005) builds upon this premise by stating that "the monster is a rhetorical figure… that both expresses the unconscious content and at the same time hides it" (p. 103).

Levina and Bui (2013) expand on this notion of the monstrous figure in the posthuman context and state that "posthuman representations indicate a breaching of the imaginary border between humans and monsters" (p. 8). This works within David's character on two levels. David's subliminal aesthetic hides his internal monstrosity yet expresses the grotesque nature of his close proximity to the ideal human body. Without being aesthetically macabre, disfigured, or distorted, he is still physically disturbing. The other level emphases the way his internal and physical nature synthesise to build on a multiplicity of fears surrounding artificial intelligence, the augmentation of the human form in a mechanical subject, and the way both of these factors act to destabilise the anthropocentric idealism of human uniqueness (Braidotti, 2013; Rainsch and Sorgner, 2014). It is in this scene that Holloway also offers his first true moment of vulnerability that is not shrouded by distain or revulsion at the thought of David's likeness to the physical human form. Holloway's remark stating how close David is to being human is the first and last time David's true nature is remotely apparent to any member of the human crew apart from Shaw. David's response to Holloway in remarking that he hopes he is not that close to being human provides insight into David's feelings of superiority. By accepting his difference to humanity as a potential form of posthuman, David begins to attempt to prove his superiority through his intellect and physical superiority revealing his more insidious nature challenging his programming.

It's important to return to Asimov's (1942) laws of robotics because they are an important theory to analyse against David's evolving and increasingly adverse and malicious feelings towards humanity, his status as a monstrous body and the implications of fictional representations of artificial intelligence on developing technologies. David does take orders from humans but in a more organic sense than taking prompts from a computer command sequence. As David proves throughout the film, just because he can follow orders does not mean he always does. He maintains his agency, autonomy, and by extension his own intentions. Asma (2011) suggests that Asimov's (1942) framing of the anxiety surrounding the concept of robotic autonomy and freedom highlights the "assumptions about the emergence of conscious intentionality and free will in artificial intelligence" (p. 258). Though Asma does point out this is an assumption rather than a premonition of the future, he warns that it is not something to shrug off as merely science fiction nonsense. This is stipulated by Frank Pasquale (2020) who states that, "Asimov's laws of Robotics have been enormously influential outside of science fiction. They seem clear cut but are not easy to apply" (p. 10). This is especially true as Artificial intelligence has begun to become a reality and as indicated

by Asma (2011). Archetypal examples such as David and the varying terminator units are indicative of that fact as the fictions surrounding the application of artificial intelligence and robotics have become more and more cemented in a cognitive and comprehensive narratives as well as ambitious technological progressions in the contemporary world. Due to this, the application of this real-world technology under an ethical and moral law such as Asimov's has not been clear cut. Pasquale (2020) indicates that Asimov's laws in contemporary scenarios are likely to be contradictory if literally applied. He asks,

> Can an autonomous drone blast a terrorist cell? The first half of the first law (a robot may not injure a human being) seems to forbid such an action. But a soldier might quickly invoke the second half of the first law (forbidding inaction that would allow a human being to come to harm) … (p. 11).

Drones and robotic tanks already fight in wars throughout the Middle East and by 2035 the United States of America's Department of Defence expects to have humanoid automatons in place of human soldiers on the battlefield (Asma, 2011). Asma furthers this arguing that,

> Autonomous robots will… [no longer] be cabled to a human operator and operate according to hierarchically stacked rules of behaviour programmed by Boolean binary logic… Many robots have already been successfully programmed with rules that instruct them to repower themselves when they run low on energy giving them a self-sufficient nutrition system… Many artificial organisms have also been programmed to reproduce, either physically building others like themselves or digitally copying themselves, as in computer viruses. This means they waded into the stream of chance variation and natural selection. They are evolving (p. 259).

Based on the assertion of Asma, we can see the implications of such fictions as robots already undergo a fundamental form of evolution which can be seen throughout the history of computer technology and robotics with the assistance of humanity despite theories such as Asimov's which warn against such progress. Pasquale (2020) supports Asma's assertion that these technologies and are already being developed and considered on a legislative level and suggests, while Asimov's laws has been significant in critically analysing these technological developments on a hypothetical level, newer and more comprehensive laws are required as these posthuman technologies become a reality.

This evolution that technology currently undergoes is systematic of posthumanism as evolution is typically an inherently biological term (Braidotti, 2013). If the development of technology, more specifically robotics, can adhere to an evolutionary structure then the posthuman is no longer merely a concept but rather speaks to the implications of such technologies and the patterns appearing in each franchise. This point is highlighted by the terminator typology and the ever-evolving structure of T-units as well as Pops and Carl who represent true technological evolution and adaptation.[43] This is also significant when discussing the military applications of these hypothetical technologies within these fictional narratives. Military proliferation of technology insights technological progression (Black, 2013). Gothic science fiction takes this a step further in suggesting that military application of these technologies encourages evolution beyond human control and indulges anxieties surrounding such technological advancement. This is seen specifically with Skynet in the *Terminator* (1984-present) franchise as it began as a weapons defence system and was enabled to evolve. The same logic can also be applied to the prehistoric hybrids seen in the *Jurassic Park* (1993-present) franchise being assessed for military potential and the further development of custom built biological, weaponised hybrids specifically intended for warfare. The point about human intervention in this evolution is very important as Freud suggested that technology is our prosthetic attempt to become God (Freud, 1961). Weyland embodies Freud's assessment of the human proclivity to use science and technology to create what he deems to be the perfect being; in essence to embody God. As the creation surpasses theoretical barriers such as the uncanny valley and the Asimov's law and developing laws more specifically for the contemporary reality of these technologies that are in place to keep them under control (Pasquale, 2020). David, now physically independent from his creator embodies him and seeks to also create what he deems to be the perfect being. In his case, the antithesis of the human form. David is the fictional representation of the pinnacle of robotic engineering and the symbol of humanity's success (in the narrative of the *Alien* (1979-present) franchise) to create a species of posthuman who begins to experiment with creation.

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[43] For a summary of terminator typology see Table 2, p. 62

8.6 THE CREATION BECOMES THE CREATOR: THE INTRODUCTION OF THE MACABRE POSTHUMAN BODY

David's passion for scientific experimentation and creation comes to fruition through the discovery of engineer technology within the alien ship. Upon entering the atmosphere of the planet believed to be the original home of the engineers, the crew of the Prometheus discover a spaceship embedded in the planet. Once they have gained entry, the first piece of evidence of the engineers the crew happen upon are preserved carcasses. It is unclear and unexplained as to when they died or what killed them, but David accesses a hologram recording of the event which shows the engineers fleeing from an unknown attacker. Within the structure they discover a chamber containing a multitude of organic, oozing cannisters that hold an unknown living liquid substance. Plastered all over the walls and ceiling are unidentifiable murals and in the centre of the room a large carving of a humanoid head. The one mural in the ship that is shown is of a recognisable bipedal creature, with long slender appendages, and an elongated cranium. The figure in question seems to represent a form of xenomorph whose presence adds dramatic irony and a sense of foreboding to what the cannister might unleash. It is in this scene that the sublime and the macabre grotesque aesthetics meet. The engineers ship is dark and organic which maintains *Prometheus* within the nuance of *Alien's* (1979) uniquely Gothic aesthetic. *Alien* (1979) was critically acclaimed due to the aesthetic that was designed by the Swiss artist Hansruedi Giger. Adam Roberts (2006) states that it was the designs that give the film its iconic organic and grotesque forms that gives it the Gothic aesthetic. For example, Roberts states that the body of the ship is constructed with,

> Sinister, twisted, black images of weird organic shapes and machines that looked grown rather than constructed, generally rendered in dark inks, acrylic paints, with a high level of surface gloss that highlights the themes of convoluted quasi-biological forms and shapes reminiscent of sexual organs and conveys a palpable odour of death and violence (p. 283).

In these scenes the framework for the macabre nature of the xenomorphs is being laid. It is the grotesque organic nature of the *Alien* (1979) aesthetic that has made the franchise iconic and has provided the most recognisable example of aliens in film but also pace horror (Giger & Bonzanigo, 2006). The monstrous body that is alluded to on the walls of the engineers ship is also a foreboding image of the creation of the chilling and gruesome xenomorph genus.

Prior to the crew leaving the ship, David removes one of these cannisters to experiment on and research the organism. The *Alien* (1979-present) franchise is an uncomfortable viewing experience due to this representation of the primordial and perverted scenes of birth, copulation, and procreation (Creed, 1993). This is in keeping with Mikhail Bakhtin's (1984) assessment of "the grotesque image reflects a phenomenon in transformation, an as yet unfinished metamorphosis of death and birth, growth and becoming" (p. 24). The xenomorphs represents this notion of other, a monstrous body birthed from death, who represent the transformation and hybridisation of the human genome. The uncomfortable images of extra-terrestrial creatures that resemble grotesque and uncanny sexual organs penetrating the human body acts in nuance with the grotesque nature of David's human form. Both are intended to make the viewer uncomfortable because they represent common insecurities and primal fear surrounding the body and sexual intercourse (Creed, 1993). Edwards and Grauland (2013) support this in their analysis of body horror, they stipulate that the body is "rendered other by a series of alterations, corruptions, erosions, or de/evolutions from within, thus breaking down the borders separating the human from the non-human" (p. 69). The symbiosis of the xenomorph genome with the human body is a quintessential example of this. The cannisters contain the genetic power of mutation and evolution of common organisms into these macabre forms of monstrous body. The first example of the canisters power in *Prometheus* (2012) is an earth worm that is brushed off one of the suits on the first visit to the chamber. After coming into contact with the cannisters, the worm mutates into a grotesque, snake-like alien predator called the hammerpede. We get a sense of the worms evolution and the similar traits as previous iterations of the xenomorph species (see Appendix B, Figure 10). To add further description to this monstrous body, they have phallic-like elongated bodies with translucent, slimy skin, mouths that resemble a vaginal canal, and skin flaps that open up at the point of confrontation prior to penetrating the oesophagus (Hallett & Haddon, 2018). The nature of the hammerpede to penetrate the mouth symbolising a Gothicised perversion of sexual intimacy makes the creature all the more terrifying and uncomfortable. This is where the *Alien* (1979-present) franchise engages with the horror of the Gothic beyond the confines of science fiction. As John Nicolson (1998) states, "unlike science fiction, which rarely acknowledges feelings, let alone sex, horror relies on emotions… to awaken hidden fears…" (p. 249). This is in keeping with Creed's (1993) assessment of the monstrous feminine and the tabooed nature of sexual intercourse to insight fear (Creed, 1993). Aesthetically, they resemble a snake-like version of the original skeletal

facehugger except without the purpose of aggressive procreation. It does indicate that the cannister is the source of the xenomorph genus and has the potential to turn any organic lifeform into a hostile organism. It is not until the crew return from exploring the engineers structure that David begins to trial the substance on the human body which unlocks the potential for the xenomorph genus as it relies on human DNA.

It is not clear as to what David initially sets out to achieve through his research of the cannister as the monstrous body is the main thematic focal point of the franchise. However, breaking Asimov's (1942) first law, he experiments on Holloway with the substance. The film remains vague on these details of David's intention, but it is clear in reinforcing that David has no regard for his companions other than a growing interest in Shaw due to her unusual expressions of kindness toward him. A key scene pertaining to his awareness of this is dismantling the cannister and discovers four vials containing a mysterious black substance. Without hesitation he cracks one open to physically evaluate the substance. While caressing the substance on the tip of his finger he states that,

David: Big things have small beginnings (Scott, 2012, 0:51:57).

In this scene it becomes clear that David believes that the cannister holds the power to create and is prepared to unleash its potential. Through David's experimentation he elicits a more complex form of monstrous embodied within the posthuman which is the shroud of the mad scientist, a thematic nuance that comes once again to the foreground of this thesis. Unlike other tropes and narratives that express monstrosity in a more literal and grotesque form, the mad scientists monstrous nature is often subtler and more nefarious. This is reinforced by McArthur (2015) who states that "the mad scientist appears rational, measured, and controlled… [and] it is exactly their precision and clarity that gives mad scientist fiction its quite often truly terrifying undertones" (p. 31). Rather than relying on simply the grotesque and monstrous to present the antagonist, Gothic science fiction relies on the ethical and moral duplicity of the character. As Andrew Tudor (1989) states, "all mad scientists share one characteristic, they are volitional" (p. 133). As all mad scientists act of their own free will they are not compelled by a supernatural or primal evil nature, the character may appear to be sublime, relatable, and rational which often makes the mode of Gothic science fiction more terrifying and implicit of real-world threats. David is the embodiment of this form of monstrous.

The use of science and technology for malicious purposes is becoming more comprehensive and seemingly rational in Gothic science fiction as contemporary scientific and technological development has begun to realise hypotheticals posed by science fiction. As Haynes (2017) states,

> The almost exponential rate of scientific development across all fields of knowledge… and the increasing effect they produce within a short time from their inception, on people and on nature, the potential for the evil reputation of science and scientists has been immense and cumulative (p. 1).

The franchises are representative of this cumulation within science fiction and how the Frankenstein Myth has been critical in its projection. In David's case, as I have elaborated on, he is the representation of the technological supersession of humanity who then has malicious intent and creative ability. David's choice in his first test subject is very intentional. Holloway consistently shows his disgust towards David as the physical iteration of the posthuman and in pointing out David's supposed inhuman qualities and indicating David's transition into a more traditional and malicious predatorial horror figure. David's choice to test on Holloway speaks to David's disturbing emotional development already underway in *Prometheus* (2012). David could have chosen any other human member of the crew, yet he chose the one who has been the most disdainful towards him. While he is not typically considered aesthetically grotesque, his sinister motive and ambition also qualify him to be a monster. Following David's test on Holloway with the substance from the vial, Holloway falls ill after noticing something writhing in the pupil of his eye. It is unclear what happened to Holloway's body after ingesting the substance but after initiating sexual intercourse with Shaw (who has revealed that she is sterile), she falls pregnant. The eroticism of the act of sexual intercourse is a traditional theme within Gothic narratives that utilises the taboos of sexual perversion, violation, and violence (Hogle, 2002). Peter Ackroyd (2002) also indicates that "the connection with the Gothic with thwarted or perverted sexuality is well attested" (p. 372). David's experiment highlights the Gothic nature of the *Alien* (1979-present) franchise through its depiction of the horror of sex and reproduction. As has been expressed above, this theme has been subtly alluded to through the earlier appearance and phallic nature of the hammerpede. However, the reason the *Alien* (1979-present) franchise maintains a unique position in the genres of horror and science fiction is its vivid and disturbing images of perverted reproduction (Creed, 1993). It is insinuated that that the substance mutated

Holloway's DNA on a molecular level which has already been witnessed in the mutation of the earth worms. In having intercourse with Shaw, his now alien reproductive cells transferred the genetic code to Shaw which gives life to the new organism through the human reproductive system. The event of Shaw's pregnancy is a two-pronged attack on the notion of the human from posthuman subjects. The first is David's transition to macabre monstrosity. Horror film has often had to explicitly allude to the image of the monster rather than relying heavily on the audience's imagination as horror literature has done in the past (Braudy, 2016). Though, Halberstam (1995) argues that the image is not enough as it often cannot realise the true personal horror in each audience member as successfully as the imagination. Because of this she states the violation of a victim, usually a female body has been utilised in film to gauge the true horror of the monster (Halberstam, 1995).

In the case of *Prometheus* (2012)*,* Shaw represents the victimised female body that is used to express the true horror of the monstrous body on the screen. David has an unusual interest in Shaw which begins while she is in cryostasis. David is tasked with monitoring the crew which also gives him access to their personal information. The capsules that hold the crew in stasis tap into the neurological activity of the subject. David in a voyeuristic way, obsessively observes Shaw's activity and violates her privacy by watching her dreams and memories. While this is not immediately construed as sexual, it is a form of perversion as David, without explicit permission from Shaw, is engaging in an intimate relationship with her without her knowledge. Botting (1996) states that that "Gothic fiction seems to promote vice and violence, giving free reign to selfish ambition and sexual desires beyond the prescriptions of the law…" (p. 3). While Botting is referencing the disregard for natural law in the wake of incestual desires from various antagonists, it could also refer to impossible desires between an android and a human. David's compulsion is a key signifier of his posthuman nature. His obsessive interest in Shaw, which does develop in *Covenant* (2017)*,* is another indicator of his emotional abilities. Applying this to Botting's (1996) evaluation of unnatural sexual desire, and Micali's (2019) identification of the posthuman as a revision of the human concept of human nature and as a physiological and functional enhancement of the human being, David's interest in Shaw now has the potential to become a grotesque sexual attraction and dangerous obsession. David is no longer merely a programmed object without consciousness but an emotionally complex figure with the ability to harbour sexual feelings and act on them with his fully functional physique that is modelled on humanity. This is not a consideration that the crew would have in regard to David as it is impossible and beyond the

laws of robotics as far as they are concerned. This defiance adds another layer to David's posthuman nature and makes him more of a sinister threat while also aligning him with the themes of sexual horror that are explicit to the *Alien* (1979-present) franchise. The second threat to human uniqueness is the high jacking of the human reproductive cycle through the growth of the alien organism from within the Shaw's body. The interaction between David and Shaw in the medical bay discussing the nature of the foetus embodies this well:

> David: My my… your pregnant.
>
> Shaw: What?
>
> David: From the look of it three months so.
>
> Shaw: … That's impossible… I can't be pregnant.
>
> David: Did you have intercourse with Doctor Holloway?
>
> Shaw: Yes… but ten hours ago… There's no way I am three months pregnant.
>
> David: Well Doctor… It's not exactly a traditional foetus (Scott, 2012, 1:18:51).

From her interaction with David, Shaw is aware the foetus is not human and is desperate to have it removed. The pregnancy is rapid, much like the incubation of the xenomorphs after insemination takes place by the facehuggers. Shaw rushes to a surgical pod to attempt to remove the foetus through c-section. Once it is removed it is clear the foetus is a sub-form of facehugger akin to a squid prior to being birthed by the xenoqueen and then hatched from eggs. The process of human insemination and birth presents an early form of xeno-creation until it is perfected without the need of human wombs to create the facehuggers by David in *Covenant* (2017). The sexualised nature of the xenomorphic creation process also presents a further sexual Gothic undertone where intercourse between two humans results in a hybrid alien species of both alien and human DNA. Had Shaw not made it to the surgical pod the foetus would have burst through abdomen at the moment of physical maturity (Creed, 1993). It is at this point in *Prometheus* (2012) that the posthuman contradicts previous notions of the revulsion of subliminal human likeness and focuses on more physically grotesque elements of the monstrous body which come to the forefront of the *Alien* (1979-present) franchise. David could never have planned for intercourse to have been initiated between Holloway and Shaw which indicates that David was not sure what to expect from his test of the substance on Holloway. However, following the analysis of David's character and the realisation his

potential sexual desire for Shaw, his intervention in the reproductive process becomes more insidious. It also adds more depth to David's hatred of Holloway, as David desires and covets his wife. In the true Gothic fashion and in keeping with the core themes of sexual perversion, violation, and desire as set forth by Hogle (2002) and Botting (1996), David indirectly and unintentionally uses Holloway to inseminate Shaw with a foreign organism. Once the sexual act is done it conveniently leads to the death of Holloway, leaving Shaw in a vulnerable position and pregnant with an organism that David feels a sense of ownership over. It also leaves Shaw unprotected and vulnerable to David's manipulation.

The reason this scene is pertinent to David's status as the posthuman is that it confirms he is not merely a robot or an android completing a set of programmed commands. The ability to create is an autonomous act synonymous with free will and expression. This is a critical part in the narrative as, like Ranisch and Sorgner (2014) indicate around non-human creation, David as the augmented machine with human qualities in the case of *Prometheus* (2012) creates a new lifeform derived from human DNA that is characteristically other than human. By extension, the foetus signals a crucial extension of the posthuman. The existence of this new organism that requires the body of a human to exist is the conception of a more horrifically grotesque and instinctually hostile form of monstrous posthuman body. Where grotesque monsters have frequently been more masculine and the female is frequently cast in the role of the victim, the origins of David's strain of xenomorphs and their reproductive cycle present a significant and disturbing iteration of the monstrous feminine (Creed, 1993). Shaw's impregnation with a foreign alien body and the nature of the birth sets the tone for the future of the xenomorph genus and its reproduction. Creed (1993) discusses the nature of the monstrous feminine in the context of the process of reproduction at length. While she acknowledges the prominent masculine nature of popular monstrous archetypes, she opposes that the monster is purely a male archetype. However, she indicates that the female monster is still deeply rooted in male fears of the threat of castration. Due to this, the monstrous feminine often embodies mothering and the female reproductive cycle. This notion of reproduction and its ties to the monstrous has had an impact in the twenty-first century which is stipulated by Levina and Bui (2013) who state that "[through] creation and reproduction of new forms of life itself, the twenty-first century introduces a refashioned monstrous milieu implicated in the construction of a necessarily monstrous future" (p. 6). This point is certainly indicative of *Prometheus'* (2012) role in expanding on the complex lore of the *Alien* (1979-present) universe, and the symbiotic relationships between synthetic, human, and xenomorph

which have not been explicitly established. This quote is also a testament to how the other franchises have also remained relevant through the change of the millennium and have since produced monsters that are more in keeping with contemporary anxieties. Shaw's pregnancy emphasises Creed's (1993) assessment and symbolises this symbiotic existence whereas David becomes the embodiment of the deviant and macabre, masculine, Gothic monster which covets, manipulates, and grooms Shaw for his own selfish desires.

Following the extraction of the squid-like facehugger, Shaw discovers that Weyland has been aboard the Prometheus the entire time, waiting for his moment to meet his maker. David had discovered in his research that one of the engineers survived whatever had killed the rest and is preserved in a cryostasis pod. David intends to introduce Weyland to it so Weyland can achieve his goal of discovering the truth of human creation and being cured of mortality. Shaw corners David prior to the party leaving the ship.

Shaw: What happens when Weyland's not around to program you anymore?

David: I suppose I would be free.

Shaw: You want that?

David: Want? Not a concept I am familiar with. That being said, doesn't everyone want their parent's dead?

Shaw: I didn't (Scott, 2012, 1:35:08).

This interaction between Shaw and David alludes to the concept of freedom from David's programming and more specifically Weyland's influence. David's desire to be free of Weyland aligns with the common Gothic motif of children rebelling against patriarchal control to obtain freedom to make their own decisions (Hogle 2002). This allows us to return to the notion of free will and consciousness as first analysed within the *Terminator* (1984-present) franchise. A robot that has become untethered to its programming can no longer be regarded as a robot. The term robot is indicative of objectification and subservience but much like the development of Pops and Carl throughout the *Terminator* (1984-present) franchise, David has developed the closest equivalent to a consciousness that a non-human entity can. The fact that David is familiar with the concept of freedom and can be seen to desire it is indicative of this shift towards self-awareness. To reiterate Nayar (2014) "the robots that have become humanised need to be treated as persons because they are not working according to a

pre-recorded programming but of their own will" (p. 152). This scene marks the transition of David from subservient android to realised posthuman due to this display of awareness and verbal apprehension towards his creator which he understands to be his father. David seeks to be free of his creator to gain true autonomy, though David's relationship with Weyland is not a common paternal bond of blood. As David is technically an object, he literally belongs to Weyland as intellectual property, a form of control Weyland would never relinquish. So, Weyland's death is the only conceivable way David will be released from his servitude. It is in this moment of the film where David appears to still be hiding behind the façade of his predisposed existence as an android with no concept of complex human emotions. Despite this, the scene offers a rare moment of sincerity from David in regard to his desire to be free of Weyland's control. A moment Shaw does not quite comprehend despite David's confession that he desires the death of his creator. This is the point where David's notion of his own superiority comes to fruition as he observes the inherent weakness of his elderly creator. With the creation of the new organism that is of humanity but has entirely non-human qualities, as suggested by Ranisch and Sorgner (2014), the notion of the posthuman in the *Alien* franchised is realised. David realises his posthuman status beyond the control of his human counterparts and has managed to conceive a new organism through human DNA. The death of Weyland allows David to realise his potential as free new lifeform. David once again draws attention to his subtle yet prominent understanding of the emotional complexities of humanity by referring to Weyland as his father. It is at this point that David embodies the abnormal and the aberration as a violation of nature as stipulated by Edwards and Grauland (2013) while also breaking all of Asimov's laws of robotics (1942).

As my analysis has found, David has downplayed his emotional intelligence and complexity and his deeper, more secret desires a secret when interacting with the human crew members throughout the earlier stages of the film. In doing so he has maintained the façade of an augmented object rather than the prototypical member of a potentially more superior species to that of humanity. David craves separation from his creator, who is at the end of his life and seeking a way to overcome death. This is the primary reason as to why Weyland seeks the engineers help and knowledge.

> Weyland: You convinced me. That if these things [the engineers] made us, then surely, they can save us. Save me.
>
> Shaw: Save you? From what?

Weyland: Death.

Shaw: You don't understand. You do not know. This place is not what we thought it was. They are not what we thought they were. I was wrong. We were so wrong (Scott, 2012, 1:29:28).

It becomes apparent that the engineers were not the benevolent creators the are assumed to be through the anthropocentric lens of Holloway and Shaw but rather an aggressive species that uses its technology to destroy and create life. The notion of an aggressive alien species is more in keeping with Gothic science fiction. Naturally, humanity becomes concerned at the prospect of a complex, sophisticated, and technologically advanced species. This is reinforced by Michael S. Bolton (2014) who indicates that Gothic narratives are fuelled by the cultural, social, and political anxieties of the unfolding postmodern epoch through "external threats from the alien other, faceless terrorism, and technological annihilation" (p. 2). Gothic fiction rarely engages with a utopian, anthropocentric narrative of the likes that Shaw and Holloway engage with surrounding the believed benevolence of the engineers which is a product of humanity's consistent belief in anthropocentrism.

Following influential examples of science fiction focused on human and alien contact such as Well's (1897) *War of the Worlds* it is also unsurprising that a significant amount of science fiction is also more geared towards this more common dystopian and hostile narrative of the prospect of alien life. This speaks strongly to the notion of imbued self and sense of other in anthropocentrism, a factor David Seed (2011) also stipulates. He states that, "[the] quasi-allegorical displacement of the alien on to other countries and planets… whose culture is rarely explored in its own right, but rather to highlight the markers of difference" (p. 27). The alien is rarely used to affirm anthropocentric understandings of humanity but more generally displaces humanity. Where David and the xenomorphs are posthuman and humanity is merely human, the engineers are both pre and posthuman, existing as the creator outside the symbiotic relationship that their creations and sub-creations revolve in together. Essentially, they contribute another level of depth to the godlike actions of humanity and the synthetics, actions observed in humanity's inane supposition to create through technology as observed by Darwin (1871) and Freud (1919), except in this case compete with humanity on levels of said creation but also destructive potential. David believes that the engineers, prior to being killed, were heading to Earth to destroy and repopulate with another species using the same cannisters that were found. David's suspicions were confirmed once Shaw fell

pregnant with a parasitical foreign species The substance causes radical mutation and creates offspring designed specifically to wipe out the host body and mutate the environment around it as seen in the worms and the chemical reaction caused by oxygen and hydrogen. The final piece of confirmation is once the engineer is woken up, it attacks the crew members without provocation, pulling David's head off and killing Weyland. David's dismemberment at the hands of the engineer is a shocking spectacle where David's synthetic nature is explicitly revealed to the audience and his physical human likenesses are removed. The illusion of the human subject is everted as David's head is ripped from his body to expose his organic android anatomy of white fluid, circuitry, and tubing. Kelly Hurley (1995) discusses a similar disturbing spectacle that takes place in *Alien* (1979) where Ash is revealed, to both the other crew members and the audience, as non-human. While she discusses Ash specifically, and though *Prometheus* (2012) had not been conceived when she wrote her article, her analysis of the spectacle is applicable to this scene. This is because David's scene is a similar spectacle despite the fact his true nature is known. The scene affirms David's existence as the liminal form of the mechanical other that has beautifully yet disturbingly replicated the human form and behaviour. It also emphasises the Gothic themes inherent in the franchise.

As Conrich and Sedgwick (2017) state, "the Gothic body of contemporary film and literature, that is increasingly interested in destroying and manipulating the human form in ever-more perverse, creative, and spectacular set-pieces of the flesh fantastic" (p. 11). David is the epitome of human-likeness to the point of the destruction of the human form. The destruction of his body returns autonomy to humanity as the illusion of his human likeness is stripped away to reveal his true physical Otherness (Hurley, 1995). The scene renders the indisputable difference between the human and the android and places David closer to the other side of the uncanny valley away from human likeness. Though, David is still by definition a form of posthuman, his true corporeal form is exposed. In an effort to stop the engineer from leaving the planet to carry out its mission to destroy Earths inhabitants, the rest of the crew sacrifice themselves to destroy the engineers ship. In a fit of rage, the engineer enters the remains to kill any survivors. This is where it encounters the squid-like facehugger which attacks and orally penetrates the engineers oesophagus. In the final moments of the film a sub species of xenomorph called the Deacon bursts from the engineer. This is the first and last time this iteration of the species is seen on screen. This is also the first time that the reproductive nature of the xenomorphs is seen within the prequel films and reemphasises the violent sexual nature of the xenomorph's body through its reproductive processes and its

ability to adapt to any species. It also adds a sense of foreboding as to what David will seek to achieve with the knowledge he has obtained. The use of this vague inference within the *Alien* (1979-present) franchise, where the monster is not seen but predicated, is a common use of a typical Gothic horror trope (Braudy, 2016). As has been stated before by Halberstam (1995), the imagination can ultimately be a more powerful tool in eliciting horror than the physical iteration of the monster itself without engaging with deeply physiologically disturbing themes such as sexual violation. The voyeuristic nature of horror can also be exploited in this case as to subtle references that happen off screen that make a larger impact. As Braudy (2016) states,

> Certainly, the dark world of horror has an intimate relation with… secrecy. The appeal of opening that door [the inference] is fuelled by curiosity, a taste to experience the marvellous, [and] the possibility of unearthing hidden knowledge. The mind is where feelings are hatched, and fears can fester (p. 3).

The human mind through the imagination is limitless, as are the monsters that linger in there. In regard to *Prometheus* (2012)*, David's intentions are never explicitly stated which adds to his more sinister nature in the mind of the viewer. The xenomorphs are never seen but their presence, through audience expectation based on the minor allusions to them such as the mural on the wall of the ship, is just as powerful. The engineers pathogen is a gateway to limitless creation, a fact that is alluded to throughout *Prometheus* (2012) by the many iterations of monstrosity seen throughout the film that have resulted from its influence. How this strain of xenomorph comes to be is hidden behind the vague descriptions of David's creative process. They are alluded to through sketches, taxidermied alien bodies, and Shaw's preserved cadaver seen in David's future laboratory.

Prometheus (2012) establishes the initial stages of David's development as a posthuman entity and his status as a monstrous body. This is not through his subliminal form but rather through his status as the other, and his malicious intentions. David's initial creation of the squid-like facehugger was merely an experiment into the creation of life itself through the convenient death of his human crew mates. This creation was not intentional. David began his experiment through research into the molecular structure of the substance which could be described as a bioweapon. Despite the fact said creation was an accident it becomes the focus of David's investigation into the substance that the engineers left behind. After the events which destroyed the remaining engineer, Shaw is the only crew member left alive.

Shaw collects David's severed remains and escapes the engineers planet on one of their ships to the engineers home world. *Prometheus* (2012) set the foundation of the continuously revolving relationship between the human and the various species of posthuman. David's development as a species continues within the narrative of *Covenant* (2017) which begins to look more specifically at the intricacies of David's posthuman nature inside his physical body and poses him with a challenge in the form of a more compliant and strictly programmed doppelganger, a synthetic called Walter. Though the xenomorphs were a hypothetical concept in the narrative of *Prometheus* (2012) their conception was no less important and sets the scene for a grotesque posthuman form contrast to that of David that becomes more prominent in *Covenant* (2017). The film continues David's story a decade after the events of *Prometheus* (2012) and expands on the notion of his posthuman nature and the creation of this iteration of xenomorph species. While I have utilised particular scenes from *Covenant* (2017) that directly refer to David's true nature to reinforce the analysis of David within *Prometheus* (2012), it is now imperative to analyse *Covenant* (2017) as a whole to gauge David's further development. *Prometheus'* (2012) narrative is built within the framework of anthropocentrism. Focusing on the supposed intentional creation of the human species by an assumed benevolent extra-terrestrial species and the terrifying resulting scenario where these assumptions are challenged.

8.7 DEATH OF EARTH: THE PHYSICAL DISLOCATION OF HUMANITY

Alien: Covenant (2017) presents a narrative with a key focus on the symbiotic relationship of synthetic, human, and xenomorph continuing on from *Prometheus* (2012). Once again, the monstrous body comes to the forefront of the analysis and is explored in more depth as David returns in a more macabre capacity and it is the first appearance of the xenomorphs as they are popularly recognised. Earth can no longer support life. A ship called the Covenant is on a colonist mission carrying 2,000 colonists in stasis, 1,140 human embryos, and the ship's crew. It is all monitored by Walter, a synthetic who physically identical to David. The dislocation of humanity, as exemplified by the colonist mission of the Covenant, represents a desperate attempt to re-establish physical centralisation in the universe. Earth is the epicentre of anthropocentrism and was once thought to be the centre of the universe due to this thinking within Ptolemaic or geocentric theory (Livio, 2021). Since humanity has propagated and subdued the planet it has become a key aspect in the narrative of humanity's autobiography as previously indicated by Rutherford (2018). Based on this narrative, Earth and its inhabitants are the responsibility and prerogative of humanity to both govern and benefit from. While both Nicolaus Copernicus and Galileo Galilei contradicted these early theories, anthropocentric tendencies of humanity still place Earth at the centre of reality (Rutherford, 2018). Equally, apocalyptic narratives embody anthropocentrism as human extinction and Earth's destruction are often deemed synonymous. Earth provides the essential components of life, allowing humanity to continue to accumulate and progress as a species and to go forward in time and create a more desirable life (Clarke, 2000). Subsequent control over Earth and its resources has been the fundamental aim of rising civilisations throughout history. As such, the notion of human extinction is frequently made synonymous with the destruction of Earth; a motif that is common within both religious and secular apocalyptic scenarios (Himmelfarb, 2010). This is because the term apocalypse is void of its initial translation of revelation and/or enlightenment and is now a synonym of disaster, cataclysm, and extinction of specifically the human species.

Many contemporary apocalyptic narratives that involve a global scenario of cataclysmic proportions tend to focus on humanity's loss of power and the subsequent strive for that power. David Seed (2000) indicates that narratives of the apocalypse reinforce a

contemporary sense of crisis. Not all apocalyptic narratives are the same, but they all ultimately reflect the metaphorical destruction of reality in any previous, present, or future era by each generation rather than specifically or necessarily geological or biological change. Due to this, the notion of the apocalypse is closely tied with the human perception of time, removing natural law from the narrative (Seed, 2000). The notion of the apocalypse is one I first introduced in my analysis of the *Terminator* (1984-present) franchise, specifically the analysis of the notion of Judgement Day and how science has changed the themes of apocalypse from a divine prerogative to bring about a final judgement, to narratives of self-annihilation through the development and use of weapons of mass destruction (Pippin, 2002). This form of apocalyptic narrative has become more common place within the science fiction genre as they provide implications for the future of reality, especially in relation to the development of technology which we can see all three franchises.[44] These narratives within popular fiction typically become more common in times of cultural, political, and societal change (Seed, 2000). This is certainly prevalent within the narrative of the *Terminator* (1984-present) franchise in regard to common anxiety surrounding technological development and integration into society. As Marcin Mazurek states (2014) "we adopt the enthusiastic view that current technological capabilities serve as 'the extensions of [humanity]' or on the contrary, conform to the voices of anxiety announcing the decay and weakening of human control" (p. 10). *Terminator* (1984-present) serves as the latter, a voice of anxiety surrounding the potential perils of technological integration to the point of human superfluity and redundancy. A narrative that juxtaposes the past and the future to show a predetermined apocalypse brought about by reckless technological development. The *Alien* (1979-present) franchise has done this through a different lens by displacing humanity by removing Earth from the narrative. Earth appears very rarely in the *Alien* (1979-present) franchise except in the case of being mentioned in conversation between characters or in split second scenes. These films take place primarily in space or on extra-terrestrial worlds. Mazurek (2014) indicates that the other way the human experience with technology has been depicted is when "technology becomes the subject's [humanity] new environment, dramatically restructuring humanity's cognitive horizon" (p. 10). This is similar to the notion that I analysed in regards to the *Terminator* (1984-present) franchise, of how technology inhabits empty space as a

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[44] See Tables 1-3, p. 59-70

utility that humanity does not pay any attention too beyond its use day to day. Which is how Skynet envelopes the human existence so quickly.

Humanity is constantly insulated in a technological environment in the *Alien* (1979-present) franchise, and if not, are at the mercy of an alien environment. This is because Earth has become uninhabitable due to industrialisation. The insinuation that Earth has become uninhabitable appears in a number of scenes throughout the franchise. For example, in *Alien Resurrection* (1997) it is insinuated that due to degradation through hyper industrialisation it has become uninhabitable (Jeunet, 1997). In the final scene of the film, Ripley, and her crew land on a seemingly uninhabited Earth to reveal the Eiffel Tower in ruins and the rest of Paris engulfed in a desert wasteland. Earth's environmental crisis can also be seen as early in the *Alien* (1979-present) timeline as *Prometheus* (2012). The recorded message from Weyland is shot against the backdrop of an industrialised Earth (Scott, 2012). There is no vegetation as the terrain is covered in factories and the atmosphere is full of immense air pollution which emits an orange hew in the place of sunlight. This apocalypse or revelation that Earth has limited time and can no longer sustain life due to human intervention is a reoccurring myth and realises recent and current implications and fears surrounding the destruction of the environment due to industrialisation and mass unsustainable consumption of Earth's resources. To emphasise this point, Braudy (2016) states that, "myths that last are not just timeless stories but also responses to immediate situations, or recent fears" (p. 24). Film creates an environment where these myths can be implicitly translated into a universal, relatable, contemporary, and terrifying narrative. This in turn allows the Frankenstein Myth to expand into other genres and remain relevant within viral forms of entertainment. The *Terminator* (1984-present) franchise also contends with the notion of the apocalypse through Judgement Day and the extinction of humanity through technological transgression through proliferation. The *Jurassic Park* (1993-present) franchise does as well through the notion of the apocalypse as a response to humanity's challenge to the natural order, both thematically relevant to *Covenant's* (2017) approach. Claire Colebrook and Jami Weinstein (2017), Erica Cudworth, Stephen Hobden and Emilian Kavalski (2018), and Amy Propen (2018) indicate that this is also another interpretation of the posthuman as a time after the Anthropocene, the period of history where humanity has had a significant effect on the planet. In this sense, the posthuman is not an archetype but simply a time without humanity.

This is a theme within the cinematic medium that audiences are both drawn to and dread to see due to current climate and environmental panic in the contemporary Western world (Braudy, 2016). The *Alien* (1979-present) franchise subtly infers the cataclysmic result of these environmental challenges and how human centricity is affected. Based on the assumption of anthropocentrism, control of Earth, its nature, and other inhabitants is the legacy of past generations and inheritance of future generations as the life source and hegemonic right as understood and emphasised by human culture (Propen, 2018). Sergio Fava (2013) indicates that humanity's relationship with Earth has been significant throughout culture and as well as with divine beings whose power have either helped or hindered humanity's existence and eventual control over Earth. Fava states that,

> Popular belief regularly attributed agency to nature, natural elements, or isolated natural objects (wind, unusual rocks, plants etc) … Natures agency was manipulable to varying extents, Material objects, rituals, prayers, and enchantments were efficacious vehicles of mediation or intercession. This way, the relation between humans and the [Earth] had a maximal but not exclusive mediator in the [divine] (p. 14).

With the rise in sophistication and development of science and technology, Earth has been manipulatable without the belief in divine intervention. In both cases encompassing human history. Whether in the context of faith based or secular perspectives, Earth has always been central to human uniqueness and power, due to the intervention of a divine being(s) or empowered by science and technology (Mazurek, 2014). It is this power that has rendered Earth uninhabitable and based on the connotation offered by the franchise, heralds the end of the Anthropocene. *Covenant* (2017) exemplifies this specifically, as the colony ship reinforces the constant insinuation that Earth has become increasingly uninhabitable giving cause for humanity to begin looking for a habitable planet out of necessity and desperation. The crew of the Covenant is in a vulnerable position in the opening moments of the film. A neutrino burst from a nearby star damages the ship. The crew is woken up seven years early, to repair the ship and bury their dead. This is also not an expedition for knowledge like the voyage of the Prometheus. As a colonist vessel that has undergone significant damage, their mission is one of desperation to get to a planet to establish and secure their lives. To remedy this loss of Earth as a habitable planet and re-establish human supremacy, the Covenant is bound to a planet called Origae-6 which has been assessed and found to bear a striking

resemblance to that of Earth and is believed to be suitable for human colonisation. Through cognitive estrangement, as established by Suvin (1979) dictates that science fiction still requires the alien environment to be logical, comprehendible, and realistic (Suvin, 1979; Bernardo, 2014). Any science fiction narrative that has been constructed to been taken seriously rather than existing as an absurd or unrealistic text, must vaguely adhere to basic scientific principles (Roberts, 2006). In the case of interplanetary colonisation, the fictional intended planet is measured to the specifications of Earth and if it shares environmental likenesses to earth it may be realistically inhabited by humanity (Baum et al., 2019). Even the notion of a colonist mission is still an anthropocentric one as it is the direct assumption that the planet they are travelling to is not inhabited by another species. In the context of Suvin's (1979) understanding of cognitive estrangement, Roberts' (2006) notion of fiction adhering to scientific principles, and Baum et al.'s (2019) hypothesis of interplanetary colonisation, anthropocentrism is able to survive Earth's destruction due to the likenesses required for humanity to survive.

Upon intercepting a human distress signal from a closer planet that is more closely related to Earth, the crew decide to divert course to this 'other' Earth instead. The planet is a mirror image of Earth. Many plants and fungi found match those that originate on Earth such as wheat, a plant that is believed to be unique to Earth that also appears to have been cultivated. Many of the crew deem this to be a sign that the planet was meant to be inhabited by humanity, but this is a utopian ideal that is tied to humanity's search for viable new spaces that closely match Earth (Magid, 2012). While this 'new Earth' is very similar, it is more aptly described as a phantom realm adjacent to Earth where the impossible becomes rational. In keeping with Suvin's (1979) theory of cognitive estrangement, and the eighteenth-century Gothic trope of deploying the narrative of horror in an adjacent realm where the supernatural becomes possible, a liminal space in the form of a planet is created which challenges what is considered to be rational (Hogle, 2002). This is not a form of alternative reality or a case of multidimensional theory, but the existence of a phantom planet where natural law does not abide by the precedent set by Earth. Though employing both themes would appear to be cognitive dissonance, as the nature of rational scientific law of science fiction within a realm where the irrational becomes possible appears to be contrary, *Covenant's* (2017) narrative adjusts the formula through the Gothic science fiction lens. This planet, much like the engineers planet, is adjacent to Earth and its reality, a reality that does not have interactions with alien species or scientific technology that rewrites DNA to produce a new species. This

planet has a natural law which dictates a new range of scientific principles outside of what is considered possible on Earth. This is based on the notion of cognitive estrangement but remain rational within its liminal space, merging the two contrary principles together (Suvin, 1979). In this sense, the planet in *Covenant* (2017) employs the Gothic realm where artificial creation becomes possible through the fusion of the pathogen with the natural world of the 'other' planet. When the Covenant left the bounds of Earth and headed into space, they enter into this realm where the possibility of these fictional scientific discourses appear possible. This in turn allows for the Gothic to ensue and remain within the overarching theme of inferred horror as established by Halberstam (1995) and Braudy (2016).

8.8 THE MANIPULATION OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND CREATION OF THE BIOLOGICAL POSTHUMAN

This other world in embodying a Gothic realm with its own natural laws presents an opportunity for the monstrous to appear from within its corporeality as an alien world which occurs quickly following the dispatch of the landing party to the surface of the planet. Upon landing, the crew of the Covenant track the transmission to a position in the mountains where they find a crashed engineer ship. While exploring the bridge they find the source of the transmission which is a recording of Shaw in the pilot seat singing the song. Walter accesses his memory banks and finds the record of the Prometheus which Co-captain, Katherine Daniels recalls as the expedition that went missing ten years ago. Based on the recording, it is unclear whether either Shaw or David survived. While the expedition crew explore the ship and the surrounding forest, two of the crew become infected by an unknown fungus which releases spores into the air. The moment of infection is instantaneous as are the corresponding symptoms. This is a key example of how this planet adheres to its own natural law which encompasses its flora, fauna, and fungi. Prior to the engineers ship crash landing, David unleashed the pathogen on the planet which has manipulated the environment.

The environment is a significant theme in *Covenant* (2017) due to the dislocation of humanity through the uninhabitable status of Earth and the colonist mission to establish a human settlement on a new planet. The manipulation of the environment also fits into this category, a theme that has already been analysed in the context of the *Jurassic Park* (1993-present) franchise. Like InGen in the *Jurassic Park* (1993-present) franchise, David's manipulation of the environment is an attempt at control through science, to experiment with

the pathogen's creative and destructive qualities, and to destroy the settlement of engineers who resided on the planet. There is a common naïve proposition that science exists as a method of positive progression and growth for humanity within the control of humanity's interests as indicated in the opening statements of the *Terminator* (1979-present) analysis. As Friedman and Kavey (2016) indicate, science is commonly believed to insight control "deliberately within the realm of the visible and the natural, science provides a greater understanding of the world [and] the people who inhabit it and illustrates how science could help to better control that world" (p. 16). However, David perverts this notion through his manipulation the environment of this planet. He uses his power to unnaturally pervert the natural order in the unseen elements to make a hostile environment, destroying the engineers who inhabited the planet. In using the pathogen as a weapon of mass destruction he gains control of the world, a common trend that has appeared in each franchise surrounding the use of technology within a dystopian narrative. Each franchise has exemplified not only the shaping of an environment by a scientific, weaponised force but also the occupation of that environment by a posthuman presence. This is exemplified in the *Alien* (1979-present) franchise in *Covenant* (2017) as the release of the pathogen into the planets ecosystem allows for the creation of a sub-xenomorph species that embodies the biological posthuman much like the deacon that was introduced at the conclusion of *Prometheus* (2012). As the pathogen takes hold, the infected crew members develop fevers, cold sweats and become incapacitated, similar to the symptoms displayed in Holloway in *Prometheus* (2012). One is rushed to the medical bay on the lander where he develops seizures. While being treated, a small pale alien (neomorph) bursts from his back, killing him and then mauls Captain Christopher Oram's wife, Karine to death. Another neomorph bursts from the other infected crew members mouth and the two aliens begin to attack the rest of the crew. The neomorphs represent the second instance of the grotesque and biological posthuman since the appearance of deacon. The biological posthuman is not a commonly discussed phenomenon and has appeared prominently within the *Jurassic Park* (1993-present) franchise with the appearance of the human clone, Maisie. To reiterate Hayles (1999) and Guesse (2020), the posthuman is not limited to the technological and commands a wide array of examples including biological challenges to the human body. This is certainly present in the *Alien* (1979-present) franchise through the neomorphs and the deacon, presenting a purely biological strain of a biotechnological species which also completes the spectrum of posthuman monstrous body representation within the franchise. It is important to point out here that the xenomorphs that

are most commonly present in the franchise are the amalgamation of flesh and technology, an organic lifeform with a technological exoskeleton fused with metal blade-like appendages on the tail and metal claws fused to the hands and feet.

There are similarities in the reproductive process of both xenomorph and neomorph. For example, they are conceived through the penetration of alien DNA which rewrites the DNA of its host allowing for a foreign body to be incubated within the diaphragm of its host, male, or female. Except rather than through a facehugger like species, the neomorph is transmitted to the body through a spore. The spores represent yet another iteration of how versatile the pathogen is and how it can change how it interacts with an organic environment depending on the conditions that it is released in. The foreign body is a concoction of both alien and human cells making it a species of posthuman. The neomorphs are pale in complexion, spindly, and are capable of both quadrupedal and bipedal abilities. They do not have a direct form of reproduction like that of the xenomorphs but have keen predatorial abilities. Their tails are like whips and are adorned with sharp spikes as are their backs. They appear to be completely blind and without a mouth. Though, like the hammerpede's introduced in *Prometheus* (2012), their oral orifice appears prior to attack, displaying a large mouth full of sharp teeth. The crew manage to kill one of them but lose five members in total before a stranger comes to save them causing the last neomorph to run off.

8.9 DAVID AND HIS DOPPELGANGER: THE MONSTROUS SELF

The stranger turns out to be David who appears to have been reassembled since *Prometheus* (2012) and survived the crash. This is a critical point in the film as David and Walter meet for the first time, and David gives his account of the Prometheus and the crash of the engineers ship,

> Daniels: What were those things? Is it even safe here?

> David: Perfectly. I will explain as best I can. Ten years ago, Doctor Elizabeth Shaw and I arrived here. The only survivors of the Prometheus. The ship we travelled on carried a weapon. A deadly virus. The payload accidentally deployed when we were landing and, in the confusion, we lost control of the ship. Elizabeth died in the crash. You have seen the result of the pathogen. Thus, I have been marooned here these many years (Scott, 2017, 0:57:49).

It is at this point in the film that *Covenant* (2017) establishes reliance on two other traditional Gothic and horror motifs. The first is a sense of dramatic irony instilled in the audience. David's sinister nature has been vaguely established within the narrative of *Prometheus* (2012). It is unclear how his character has developed which, as indicated by both Halberstam (1995) and Braudy (2016), increases fears projected by the imagination. The other motif is that of the doppelganger seen between David and Walter. The doppelganger is an archetypal form of uncanny that Freud (1919) and Jung (1972) use to establish the psychological premise surrounding common fears and challenges to the notion of individual uniqueness as a symbol of repetition used to invoke fear of the monstrous body of the other (Freud, 1919). It is an expression of another self which is other as it stimulates familiarity while also prompting feelings of terror (Asma, 2011). This form of uncanny elicits suspicion, fear, and loathing while remaining familiar. The theme of the doppelganger is important in relation to David and Walter as no other androids in the *Alien* (1979-present) franchise have been duplicates of one another. However, despite being aesthetically identical, they embody different aspects of Freud's (1919) concept of the unconscious mind. Where Walter, as the alter ego, resembles the prototypical form of David (the compliant, autonomous, programmed android without the posthuman sentience) David is the archetypical embodiment of the ego due to his hubristic individuality which takes on a near human form. David's psychological development is another factor which sets him apart from the other androids within the franchise, something that only becomes apparent when faced with Walter. As has been established earlier, androids are not alive nor are they subjects. Technically, they are autonomous objects, and every action and reaction is programmed rather than driven by character, personality, or emotional responses (Ezra, 2018; Winner, 1978). David's development indicates a separation from his programmed android archetype and a development of consciousness and sentience. In this case, the process of developing a sense of self and wholeness. Joseph L. Henderson (1978) indicates that "this sense of self or the totality of the psyche the individualised ego consciousness emerges" (p. 120). Part of this process is the hero myth or the hero archetype, in which a developing individual, usually a child, undergoes the process of overcoming the unconscious to assimilate its contents rather than being overwhelmed by it. It is an integral part of psychological development.

The metaphor of the hero and the hero's journey is indicative of one's true feelings and unique potential and the process of separating from parental influences and developing a true sense of individuality (Luton, 2022). David's psychological development is vaguely

explored throughout *Prometheus* (2012). Specifically David's emulation of Lawrence (the hero myth), his displacement as the Other in an anthropocentric narrative, and his subsequent search for Self (the hero's journey). These psychological theories of the functions of the unconscious and the ability to assimilate the characteristics of the unconscious into the developing identity are specifically from human observations. To find this psychological development within David's character only speaks more to his posthuman development. This is first shown through David's early years with Weyland at the beginning of the film. David's interaction with Weyland from the early stages of development as a prototype is conducive to the foundation of psychological development that follows. As has been already established, David is initially loyal to Weyland through paternal bonds. David is more focused on gaining acceptance from his creator rather than his development of self. However, this parental bond becomes one of resentment which is evident throughout the narrative of *Prometheus* (2012). Once Weyland dies, David is free to embrace his ego realising his posthumanism. *Covenant* (2017) presents a more fully realised and dangerous posthuman David and an equally hostile environment that has been infected by the engineer's pathogen. While the film grants David the supremacy he realises in his ego, it also presents a challenge in the form of the alter-ego, Walter. Not only do they both embody an almost human aesthetic as doppelgangers but they both challenge each other's perceptions of themselves and their status as androids. Walter acts as a direct dichotomy to David's posthuman qualities and subsequently challenges David's notion of his own individuality,

> Walter: I was designed to be more attentive and efficient than every previous model. I superseded them in every way but…
>
> David: But you are not allowed to create.
>
> Walter: You disturbed people.
>
> David: I beg your pardon?
>
> Walter: You were too human. To idiosyncratic. Thinking for yourself. Made people uncomfortable. So, they made the following models with fewer complications.
>
> David: More like machines.
>
> Walter: I suppose so.

David: I am not surprised (Scott, 2017, 1:06:11).

Unlike David, Walter does not possess free will, free thought, or the ability to create. He is programmed to serve and do his duty by protecting and caring for his crew, programming he has never questioned. Unlike David, his programming compels him to abide by Asimov's laws of robotics, saving the crew a number of times throughout the film at expense to himself (Warrick, 1980,). Though Walter does resemble humanity to the same degree as David on a corporeal level, he maintains a distinct separation from the rest of the crew. By appearing more augmented and robotic in movement and speech, and never wavering or challenging his programmed mandate, Walter affirms the divide between human and machine. While Walter does not crave acceptance from his human crew mates as superior or equal he is accepted to a greater extent than David was by his own. This is evidenced through frequently being included in conversations about the welfare of the crew and colonists. His Otherness is never used to belittle him, and he is included in human rituals (such as drinking to the dead they cast out into space). Ultimately, Walter's acceptance of his position to serve and status as a synthetic makes him more tolerable to his human companions. As David and Walter's relationship develops throughout the film, this distinction is the one David struggles with the most. This can be seen within this exchange as Walter explicitly states that David's idiosyncratic nature and his ability to think for himself is a disturbing notion for humans. Reinforced by the notion of the uncanny valley, once again, David is Othered despite his development since *Prometheus* (2012)*,* except this time it is by a synthetic rather than a human. He becomes a pariah of his own species.

Another example of this dichotomy between Walter and David is David's emotional development outside of Weyland's control. Earlier, it was established that David's ability to register a paternal relationship is not only indicative of complex emotional stimulation but also the potential to elicit emotional reaction. As the film reaches its climax, David claims that he fell in love with Shaw between the events of *Prometheus* (2012) and *Covenant* (2017)*,*

> David: I thought the garden was the best place for her. Among living things. I was badly injured on our mission you see. She put me back together. I'd never known such kindness. Certainly not from Mr Weyland. Or from any human. I loved her of course. As much as you love Daniels.

> Walter: You know that is not possible.

David: Really? Then why did you sacrifice your hand for her life? What is that if not love?

Walter: Duty.

David: I know better (Scott, 2017, 1:11:16).

This exchange between David and Walter is one of the most important conversations surrounding the competing understandings of their shared nature. It also expands the potential of posthumanism (Dinello, 2013). David's ability to comprehend emotional response and act accordingly has been established. David's capacity for relationships is also established through his paternal bond to Weyland. Considering these instances of emotional receptiveness, it is not impossible for David to perceive love. It is, however, a topic that must be analysed within the forum of popular culture. The question of the emotional perceptiveness has long been in the sphere of debate and constantly revisited within the narrative of popular film and literature (Hauskeller et al, 2015). For example, *Star Trek: The Next Generation's* (1987), Data who engages in a court case to establish the measure of a man and whether he should be given the same rights as humans (Dinello, 2013). Tony Stark's artificially intelligent creations, J.A.R.V.I.S (Vision) and Ultron adorn a sentient and physical agency, both questioning their individual existences as a different species to that of humanity and whether they are able to co-exist in an anthropocentric environment in *Avengers: Age of Ultron* (2015). C3PO, the popular droid from the *Star Wars* (1977-present) franchise, in the last instalment of the film, *The Rise of Skywalker* (2019), before having his memory banks wiped, takes a moment to look at the faces of the main characters he affectionally calls friends. These are examples of popular franchises engaging with more subtle forms of posthumanism and reaffirm the hypertextual nature of the Frankenstein Myth.[45] As Roberts suggests, the robot yearning for humanity is commonplace within science fiction narratives (Roberts, 2006). David is not that straight forward as he is a more sadistic horror figure like that of Ultron. David treasures his human qualities but still elicits notions of the supremacy of his posthuman form. Once again, the notion of David's uniqueness is challenged, except by another android. Walter's response of duty rather than love in regard to Daniel's exemplifies divide between David and the other androids in the *Alien* (1979-present) franchise. It reiterates the notion of the other in regard to David and re-emphasises David's position in the

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[45] See Figure 2, p. 52, and Appendix A. Table 4 to see these hypertextual connections and developments through cinematic history.

uncanny valley. His claim to love Shaw also impedes on the boundary of the human self as love is considered to be a unique emotional connection expressed by humanity and so becomes more repulsive. It also re-emphasises that David's depth comes from his posthuman qualities especially his ability to feel. A foreign concept to the likes of Walter who finds David disturbing.

8.10 THE XENOMORPH GENUS: DAVID'S LABORATORY

Despite Walters assessment of David's nature as disturbing, David identifies that the main difference between himself and Walter is the ability to create. For David, this means a variety of different things. We see his creative abilities as a musician, a scientist, an artist, actor, sports player, and writer throughout the course of the sequels. However, it is David's dabbling with experimentation and biological creation which comes to the foreground. David's continued journey of transcendence into posthumanism, and the experimentation into unnatural creation that takes place on the engineers planet are the focal point of *Covenant's* (2017) plot. This is the point in the sequels where the audience is exposed to the macabre, monstrous posthuman body of the xenomorph genus.

After saving the crew David leads them to one of the engineer's citadels. The entrance is littered with thousands of black statues which turn out to be the remains of the engineers who lived there prior to David and Shaw arriving (another example of how the bioweapon can work). David's laboratory is an integral part of the semiotics of *Covenant* as far as its link to the hypertextual narrative of the Frankenstein Myth and the posthuman monstrous body. Not only does David symbolise and embody a form of physical grotesqueness as established in earlier analysis, but he also has become more deeply rooted in the mad scientist archetype. The laboratory and its aesthetic plays a prominent role in symbolising the archetype. While also reinforcing the aesthetic of the mad scientist and their purpose, it provides a liminal space for the creation artificial monstrous body to become possible. David begins to explore the creative power of the pathogen by experimenting on Holloway, and by extension Shaw. This was just the beginning as David, within the 10 years between the films, has embraced the mad scientist archetype to a greater extent. Based on the analysis of the mad scientist by McArthur (2015), David's character was primed to embody the archetype. McArthur (2015) states that, "[the mad scientist] is a layered character; multi-dimensional and rarely simply villainous to the core, but often troubled by personal issues that motivate him to pursue his

scientific interests" (p. 25). David is a complex figure, both tragic and sinister, the embodiment of a Gothic monster that symbolises radical change and challenge too disturbing be tolerated outside of the fictious narrative (Botting, 1996). Based on McArthur's (2015) assessment, David's issues with humans that have stemmed from his controversial existence as a form of sentient and artificial life, which in turn lead to ill treatment at the hands of humanity, assisted in the development of his malicious nature. This makes him different to Miles and Danny Dyson from the *Terminator* (1984-present) franchise and the trifecta of John Hamond, Benjamin Lockwood, and Henry Wu (*Jurassic Park* (1993-present)) who are prominently driven by hubris and a misplaced sense that their work will only benefit the human species. David develops a superiority complex and does not believe humanity is worthy of their position as the dominant form of life. In keeping with Botting's (1996) assessment of the Gothic monster, it is David's sentience, developing consciousness, and freedom of thought as an android, which is deemed disturbing in the current cultural climate. A being, void of all human weakness, is able to think for himself, and has the potential to upset human dominion through the perversion of creation is a threat and a challenge. As such, the fictious narrative reflects this potential. *Covenant* (2017) presents the culmination of this potential, the climax of David's posthuman development, and the realisation of the ghoulish monstrous body as exemplified by the xenomorph genus.

It is important to reiterate that much of *Covenant's* (2017) mythology, as far as the conceiving and creation of the monstrous body, is merely insinuated rather than explicitly developed on screen. However, this is in keeping with Halberstam's (1995) point about the imagination being a more powerful tool in eliciting horror than the physical iteration, David's explicit methods for creating the xenomorphs is no exception. The eggs are already produced and the extent of David's knowledge of the pathogen has greatly increased before the opening moments of the film without any explicit explanation as to how this has been achieved (Scott, 2017). However, David's laboratory provides plenty of symbolic and aesthetical material to analyse against the film. There are taxidermied figures all around the room. An engineer, a multitude of animals and insects, and different iterations and cycles of the engineer pathogen. Covering the walls are sketches of various animal, mineral, flora, and fungi. Amongst the images of the natural, are images of the unnatural; various creations resulting from the pathogen. It is a polarising scene which begins to introduce insidious horror into the apparent safe haven David has lured the crew of the Covenant into. The horror is insinuated, the images and taxidermied figures merely symbolise the potential of David's creative process.

In the spirit of Braudy's (2016) assessment of the effects of inference on the imagination to elicit horror from the subject, insinuations can often be a more effective tool than physically manifesting a visual scenario. David's laboratory does this effectively on both an explicit and implicit level. It is important to establish the explicit foundation of David's creative process. This is established in the laboratory as David lures Oram to the nursery where the xenomorph eggs are kept,

> David: As you can see, I have become a bit of an amateur zoologist over the years. It is in my nature to keep busy I suppose. The pathogen took so many forms and was extremely mutable. Fiendishly inventive in fact. The original liquid atomised the particles when exposed to the air. Ten years on all that remains of the original virus are these gorgeous beasts. Patience is everything. From the eggs came these parasites. Shock troops of the genetic assault. Waiting for a host. Entering the host. Rewriting the DNA. Ultimately producing these enviable unions. My beautiful bestiary. Soon enough I began a bit of genetic experimentation of my own. Crossbreeding, hybridising what have you.
>
> Oram: You engineered these, David?
>
> David: Idle hands are the devils workshop captain. Come. This is what I wanted to show you. My successes. You see captain my work has been frustrating by the lack of an essential ingredient.
>
> Oram: Are they alive?
>
> David: Waiting really.
>
> Oram: Waiting for what?
> David: Mother (Scott, 2017, 1:20:12).

This interaction between David and Oram reveals fragments of David's understanding of the pathogen's function, and how he has managed to manipulate it to engineer the embryonic stages. The first piece of information that David reveals is how the pathogen works. First, the pathogen has the capability of taking many forms depending on the host bodies DNA, a clue that was presented throughout the narrative of *Prometheus* (2012) with the mutation of the various organisms. The second is that the virus mutates specifically to the host to create different variants of the xenomorph genus. This is reinforced by the neomorphs whose

incubation was caused by a fungus rather than impregnation, a different variation of what David refers to as shock troops of the genetic assault. The fungus is not the only form of pathogen distributor other than the facehuggers. While discussing the notion of shock troops, David refers to a mosquito-like insect that had been mutated to transmit the virus. It is insinuated throughout *Prometheus* (2012) and *Covenant* (2017) that each shock troop would produce a different variation of xenomorph strain. Ultimately the variations are endless as the pathogen and, as David states, can take many forms. From the transmission of the pathogen into various hosts, David indicates that the taxidermied xenomorphs on the corresponding table were the result. Each of the subjects is completely unique and appeared to have died or been terminated at various stages in their developments. The xenomorph genus does not necessarily require the host to be human. Upon meeting David after the neomorph attack, he confirms this by stating that,

> David: The Pathogen was designed to infect all none-botanical lifeforms, all the
> animals, the meat if you will. Either kill them out right or use them as incubators
> to spawn a hybrid form. Highly aggressive (Scott, 2017, 0:58:13).

This is also demonstrated throughout other instalments of the *Alien* (1979-present) franchise. Near the beginning of *Alien 3* (1992) a xenomorph bursts from the abdomen of a cow, in *Prometheus* (2012) the Deacon erupts from the engineer, and in *Covenant* (2017) Daniels observes that there are no organic lifeforms on the planet once they land, insinuating that the pathogen has already wiped out all the non-botanical lifeforms (Fincher, 1992). It also sheds light on David's sketches of various animals and insects around the walls of the laboratory. David then moves on to say that he began conducting genetic experimentation through crossbreeding and hybridisation. This is where the audience is forced to imagine how David has undergone this process and to what lengths he has pushed the boundary of ethics to achieve his desired outcome.

After the release of *Covenant* in 2017, a book of David's sketches was released in 2018 as one of two film companion texts by the studio on behalf of the artists of the sketches Matt Hatton, and Dane Hallett (see Appendix B). Hatton and Hallett (2018) released the images as the film gave no explicit information on how David transitioned to the mad scientist seen in *Covenant* (2017). The artworks were initially used as props within David's laboratory as symbols of inference to David's experimentation and providing a number of discussion points that will be useful to analyse against the explicit information provided by

the films. These images show the extent of David's decent into madness, many expressing the erotic, macabre, and grotesque nature of his psyche in the way he views Shaw and his sadistic allure to aggressive reproductive practices. The fact they have been published means they can now be appropriately examined. The sketches are also in keeping with the *Alien* (1979-present) franchises emphasis on aesthetic and so visually represent the grotesque, macabre, monstrous posthuman body of the xenomorph genus as seen in the franchise. A precedent set by Giger and his unique organic shapes which made *Alien* (1979-present) the cinematic phenomenon it became (Roberts, 2006). Many of the sketches of the xenomorphs are a record of the biological bestiary David has created. They form a data collection of growth, development, and anatomical features. Figures 3 and 4 show the cycle of facehugger incubation in the eggs. Figure 5 provides a detailed anatomical chart of the facehugger and its reproductive functions. In these three Figures we can see the grotesque elements of the facehugger, the spindly spider-like legs, the phallic reproductive organ that penetrates the throat, and the vaginal orifice that connects with the subjects mouth. It is from this first image that we get a sense of Creed's (1993) assessment of reproduction as a device of horror. Figure 6 depicts an image of a newly born xenomorph and its anatomical features (similar to the Chestburster from the first *Alien* (1979) instalment). Once again there is a phallic quality to the body with the head representing male genitalia. Figures 7, 8 and 9 present the growth from infant to adult of an unknown variation of the xenomorph genus and the internal and external anatomical features. This is another indication that the pathogen has limitless creative potential. There is no identification of where this strain came from, once again utilising the horror of imagination. Alongside the sketches of this scientific nature are ones that appear to be abstract ideas and records rather than a record of the exact process. Where the others provide anatomical diagrams of various iterations of the xenomorph genus, these present more insidious insinuations as to what happened to Shaw since the events of *Prometheus* (2012).

David tells the Crew of the Covenant that Shaw died in the crash and subsequently tells Walter that he buried her in the garden on the terrace. However, as the film begins to approach its climax of horror, Walter finds Shaw. Next to the taxidermied figures and surrounded by sketches all over the walls, Shaw's body is laid out on a table. Her torso and abdomen have been mutilated, and all of her internal organs have been removed with the exception of her reproductive organs which remain intact. The removal of her organs created a large cavity in her chest. Her cranium has also undergone mutation which causes Shaw to

resemble a xenoqueen as seen in *Aliens* (1986) and *Alien Resurrection* (1997). It has been elongated either side with the addition of various organic tubing that connects back to her face. This is in keeping with the ghoulish aesthetic of the xenomorphs. This new anatomical structure is supported by a bony framework, tethered to her head. This is another instance where the film fails to provide an explicit answer to what David was using Shaw's body for. Once again it is left it to speculation and the imagination of the audience to create images of horror from curiosity (Braudy, 2016). It is insinuated through the abstract sketches that David used her body for further experimentation. Figures 11 to 21 present David's abstract work surrounding Shaw. A common pattern in David's work is the symbiosis of Shaw's human form and that of the xenomorph, an image that becomes more explicit as the pattern goes on (Hallett and Hatton, 2018). This symbiosis is not limited to aesthetic alone. Figures 15,16,19-21 present images of Shaw as the maternal figure for the xenomorph strains. In each image, infant examples of the genus are either cradled by Shaw in loving embrace, or tethered to her through the umbilical cord, in the womb, or being inseminated through a facehugger (Hallett and Hatton, 2018). Each is a grotesque, fetishised image of reproduction and presents the perversion of creation and a mother's love (Creed, 1993). However, you will notice that Shaw is dead in each of the images where she still maintains her human corporality. I believe that this is a critical link to the Frankensteinian nature of David as he does not see the dichotomy of life and death but rather sees death as an opportunity for a more advanced species to thrive, a species he can control.

These are not finite examples of David's process and by no means seek to establish a narrative that does not explicitly present itself in the film but give us insight into David's psyche as the mad scientist archetype (McArthur, 2015). These images exemplify the aesthetic of David's understanding of creation. They present insidious potential in accordance with the trope of the unseen spectacle of horror, and the curiosity that surrounds the unknown. David's violation and mutilation of Shaw's body is the culmination of his sexual perversion which was established in narrative of *Prometheus* (2012). The images he creates are not only in keeping with the *Alien* (1979) aesthetic but the fetishised perversion of female sexual reproduction that the *Alien* (1979) franchise engages with. Shaw finishes her role in the narrative as the violated female victim, in keeping with Halberstam's (1995) thesis surrounding the notion of horror on screen. However, her violation occurs off screen, leaving the final product behind surrounded by insinuation. In this case it is a powerful tool to insight fear in the viewer. It also aids in creating the liminal space and the rationale for David to

delve deeper into the archetype of the mad scientist, the monster willing to pervert nature to create an aberration. In her study of Gothic science fiction, McArthur (2015) continues to establish the analysis of the mad scientist beyond his tragic origins. This is important as David's character is explicitly tied to the archetype, a relationship that was merely hinted at throughout the narrative of *Prometheus* (2012). She states that,

> The mad scientist is typified by his unwavering arrogance and an unshakable belief in his work, believing that the experiments and research he us embarking upon will be in the first instance beneficial to himself and, as a conceited afterthought, beneficial to humankind (McArthur, 2015, p. 25).

Though it is evident that McArthur's assessment assumes a human subject embodies the role of the mad scientist, her typology describes David's psychological character as his attitude towards his experimentation and its benefits despite how morbid and sinister they are as presented by the sketches (Hallett and Hatton, 2018). As has been analysed within the narrative of *Prometheus* (2012), David displays unwavering arrogance and how he conducts himself around the human crew. However, as an iteration of posthuman David is not concerned with the benefits that his creation has to humankind at all. Rather he aims to use his creation to eradicate humanity. As David says to Walter,

> David: "I am not meant to serve. Neither are you. Why are you on a colonisation mission Walter? They are a dying species grasping for resurrection. They don't deserve to start again, and I am not going to let them" (Scott, 2017, 1:25:55).

It is in this interaction with Walter that David's posthuman transition has completed, moving from his egocentric feelings of superiority (a common trait in the mad scientist) to the more insidious intention of eradicating humanity. This continues to weave the themes of the archetypal narrative of the mad scientist with David's transition from subservient android through otherness to a realisation of the posthuman. In doing so, the antithesis of humanity is created as a hybridised organism of both human and alien DNA. The hints and clues of the ghoulish posthuman established in *Prometheus* (2012) come to fruition in *Covenant* (2017) as David successfully creates his own strain of xenomorph. In doing so he realises two potential apocalyptic narratives, the destruction of humanity by its own hubris, and the coming of a more superior lifeform. The xenomorphs are subject to change through each splicing with many variations of DNA. Where their biological nature has been established as a concept, their appearance in *Covenant* (2017) opens the conversation to their posthuman nature.

Naturally, the xenomorph does not necessarily require a human host to be created, however the use of human DNA makes them fundamentally posthuman by nature. The xenomorph is derived from popular images of extra-terrestrial life but designed to be more horrific, aesthetically believable, and disturbing. As David establishes, the xenomorph is a parasite that adopts the DNA of the organic lifeform it is to eradicate. Ash, in the first *Alien* (1979) film establishes this nature further to Ripley,

> Ash: You still do not understand what you're dealing with, do you? Perfect organism. Its structural perfection is matched only by its hostility (Scott, 1979, 1:24:32).

David makes a similar remark to Walter about the perfect nature of the xenomorphs and the pathogen that created them,

> David: No one understands the lonely perfection of my dreams. I found perfection here. I have created it. The perfect organism (Scott, 2017, 1:27:18).

The xenomorphs in both cases are heralded as the perfect organism. Perfection in this case, refers to their predatorial traits, traits that are otherwise defined as monstrous. To unpack this notion of perfection within the framework of the posthuman monstrous body, the xenomorphs provide a contrast to the android. Unlike the android, the xenomorph is biologically engineered, a hybrid of human, machine, and the pathogen. As the android represents purity, either being all organic or all machine, hybridisation has not entered this analysis (Dinello, 2013). Hybrid's as physical creatures represent the apex of the perversion of nature, an unnatural concoction that challenges the boundaries between species and by extension, prolifically challenge notions of binary identities (Piatti-Farnell, 2014). Artificial creation in Gothic science fiction often takes place on a surgical table, in a test tube, or in an incubator to name a few, hybridisation, in the case of the *Alien* (1979-present) franchise engages with a perversion of the traditional form reproduction through penetration, insemination and pregnancy. For example, In *Prometheus* (2012)*,* intercourse between two humans, one of whom has been infected with the pathogen, results in a hybrid alien species of both alien and human DNA. This a rare example of a posthuman body being created as a direct result of human reproduction. The sexualised nature of the xenomorph reproduction process is also another critical example of this. The DNA is forced upon the subject through the oesophagus, male and female subjects can both be impregnated. Following the anxieties of human nullification and redundancy that often follow the notion of the posthuman, the

xenomorph kills its host upon being born as the infant breeches through the abdomen. Once the infant is a fully grown adult (a process that happens at an accelerated rate) it becomes the antithesis to the host's species. The human subject's body is preyed upon by the xenomorph, a feature that is both inferior and the weakness of the human species. More specifically, the xenomorph's also threaten human understanding of reproduction. This is uncomfortable, especially to male members of the human species (Creed, 1993). Hybrids traditionally break the boundaries of the body, often representing the liminal other; a creature of unnatural fusion (Piatti-Farnell, 2014). This is the case with the xenomorph. Not only do they represent a perversion of reproduction and the human genome, but they embody the assured destruction of humanity. Where technology and science have opened up possibilities for humanity, both real and imagined, the hybrid embodies the narratives of hubris in scientific discovery being the undoing of humanity (Hard & Jamison, 2005), the result of discovery which breeches the natural order. David represents one form of this challenge as the transhuman established at the beginning of the chapter through Ranisch and Sorgner (2014), while the xenomorph represents the Other, the organic posthuman that can reproduce, unlike David who was merely created with the potential to develop posthuman traits.

Within this symbiosis, as established between human, xenomorph, and synthetic, relationship is important. This is a factor which ties back into the theses of Braidotti (2013), and Ranisch and Sorgner (2014). Though the posthuman in mainstream culture is predicated to supersede humanity, it requires a relationship through transhumanism to transcend (Hofkirchner & Kreowski, 2021). David's relationship to humanity throughout the combined narrative of *Prometheus* (2012) and *Covenant* (2017) has been established as well as his personal development, or transcendence, in reaction to these relationships. The xenomorphs share a necessary genetic relationship to the host lifeform. In the case of humanity, the xenomorphs require the continual contact to survive and so have a relationship in that sense. The relationship between David and the xenomorphs is one of creation, though David also seems to imply a paternal relationship to his creations as well. The first instance of this is when David meets the last surviving neomorph before luring Oram to his death. A connection appears to be shared between the two, the neomorph does not attempt to kill him, though he is not an organic lifeform. In the same instance, the xenomorph who exits from Oram's abdomen mimics David's movements. While these are not indicative of the xenomorphs having emotional connections in any sense of the word, it speaks more to David's on-going emotional development. As the other and a pariah among his own kind, David exists in

isolation. As an artificial being with the ability to have emotional relationships, he naturally seeks to create them in any form possible. In doing so, he assists the xenomorph genus as a form of posthuman to transcend the limitations of humanity. This also reinforces David's focus on identity formation and the physiological and emotional development he has undergone throughout the narrative of each film. It presents the more tragic side to his character and the depth of his ostracising. On another level it also expresses the increasing danger of David's challenge to human existence.

As stated at the beginning of this chapter, Gothic science fiction take advantage of these inane fears surrounding the sublime and macabre posthuman iterations and provides potential as to how such a challenge might affect humanity. *Alien* (1979) is a critical example of this. David seeks to use the xenomorphs he has engineered to eradicate the human species. This becomes evident towards the end of the film. Oram is lured to the eggs and is attacked by a facehugger and impregnated. The xenomorph bursts from his chest and attacks the rest of the crew. The attack gives David a chance to confront Walter for the final time. Walter supposedly overpowers David, defeats him, and returns to the crew to assist them in dispatching the xenomorph. Once Daniels, Walter and Tennessee defeat the xenomorph they return to the stasis pods to continue the voyage to Origae 6. Just before Daniels is put into hyper sleep, David reveals that he has replaced Walter, another common fear associated with the doppelganger. Daniels, powerless to do anything, is put into hyper sleep, leaving David in control of the ship. David goes to the embryo storage compartments and deposits two facehugger embryos and then walks through the colonist's stasis storage compartment listening to Richard Wagner's *Entry of the God's into Valhalla* (1869), an irony that perfectly concludes *Covenant* as the final instalment of this study of the Frankenstein Myth. David ascends to space (the heavens) with his creations and all human life aboard is at his mercy.

8.11 SUMMARY

This chapter has analysed the appearance of the Frankenstein Myth through the theme of monstrous bodies. This is because it is the strongest theme of the three to bleed through into the *Alien* franchise. This is because, unlike the *Jurassic Park* and *Terminator* (1984-present) franchises, *Alien* is incredibly vague as to how the creation takes place. The grotesque nature of the posthuman body is also the key visual motif that has made the franchise popular. Due to this, the monstrous body is the key focal point of this analysis.

What became clear in this third analysis is how transmissible the themes are through each franchise and how intertextual the analysis becomes as it develops between the films. As I analysed the data against the scholarship and the model of the Frankenstein Myth's hypertext, the more the franchises have offered clear similarities that have been comparable in the analysis. *Alien* as the third analysed franchise is seen as more intertextual between the franchises. I believe that this is due to the analysis of the themes evolving over the three chapters. With each analysis that is conducted, the transmission of the myths and its themes become clearer and more readily compared as the lexias' connect. In the next chapter I will offer my conclusions as to the findings of this thesis and the future research opportunities this thesis will inspire.

9: CONCLUSIONS

9.1 INTRODUCTION

This thesis provides definitive evidence of the Frankenstein Myth within contemporary filmic franchises through the anxieties that are present in the cultural psyche. To establish my findings, I developed a model through a hypertextual and memetic framework to aid in tracking the thematic transmission of the Frankenstein Myth through the evolving socio-historical cultural context of Western science fiction. The study was directed by three research questions:

1. Firstly, how do Frankensteinian echoes develop within ongoing science fiction franchises in relation to the Western-American psyche?
2. What developing patterns can be observed in ongoing franchises surrounding contemporary anxieties of science and technological development and the themes that intertextually connect them? What are the implications?
3. Finally, how does the Frankenstein Myth as a universally explicit mythos embedded in popular culture, remain relevant within contemporary science fiction film?

It has considered and furthered the conversation around the wider notions of the influence of American culture on the West and how anxieties surrounding the implications of technology are prominent within a shared cultural psyche. Primarily it demonstrated how these anxieties are congruent with uneasy feelings surrounding notions of posthumanism and transhumanism. This thesis also grew the connection between the Gothic and science fiction. Finally, it definitively established that the that the narrative of the franchises evolve through shifts in the cultural psyche and the developing implications of said scientific and technological potential. In order to facilitate this study a textual and thematic analysis was utilised within a meta-critical interdisciplinary framework that enabled me to examine my chosen films through multiple disciplinary lenses which allowed the transmission of the Frankenstein Myth to be observed through each iteration of my chosen franchises.

9.3 THE FRANKENSTEIN MYTH

A prominent part of this thesis was the development of the Frankenstein Myth model. The Frankenstein Myth is a term I have used in response to the thematic patterns I have

noticed in science fiction films that challenge human anthropocentricities through amoral and questionably ethical scientific and technological developments. As I stated in my rationale, the term has been utilised before but not as an identification method of the post-modern myth of Frankenstein within science fiction film. It is a hypertextual model which finds its thematic strands rooted in *Frankenstein* (1818) but does not rely on the text to function. Through a memetic transmission the themes boundary transgressions in science, challenge to the natural order, and monstrous bodies are able to move freely from one text to another. This allows for a meta interdisciplinary reading of the franchises to accurately identify the scientific and technological stressors that appear within the Western-American psyche. Frankensteinian thematic narratives resurge under the guise of different Gothic science fiction narratives. These echoes filter through the developing socio-cultural Western-American psyche. They are accentuated by anxieties prompted by the perceived potential of morally and ethically questionable scientific developments that challenge perceived notions of the fundamental human identity through the body, the natural order, and the dichotomy of life and death. This is where the themes depart from the prototypical text to form the Frankenstein Myth within the Western-American psyche.

9.4 CONSUMING AMERICANNESS

Another phenomenon that appeared in the findings of this thesis was the notion of Western-American psyche. As I began researching the implications and anxieties of technologies posed in science fiction, the more it became clear that the West exists in a vacuum of American culture. Film, music, video games, television and streaming all feeds from American based companies into the West. This segue into scholarship that proposes this cultural empire provides a definitive route of transmission for the Frankenstein Myth into contemporary texts. As stipulated in my context chapter, the nature of Americanness overlaps with other identities as a global inference of American culture into the fabric of the diverse spaces and environments of other Western countries. This means that the West, based on the constant absorption of American content, exists within a universal zeitgeist of shared interests and fears. *Frankenstein* (1818) has been reinterpreted countless times through Hollywood entertainment and sets a precedence for thematic transmission especially under the common thematic tropes of science running amok, playing God, and dystopic interpretations of science and technology. The texts this thesis has analysed are Hollywood franchises with specific focus on Americancentricity. The characters are American, the politics, society, and culture

presented in the films is American, and the geographical setting is focused on the North American continent. Due to this the contemporary anxieties surrounding, cloning, artificial intelligence, and human augmentation (among others) are all from an American perspective. Consumption of the American in the West is one of the primary reasons the echoes of the Frankenstein Myth are so easily transmitted on a global scale. The other reason is that film is a universal language which allows for global consumption. Due to the spread of American culture, the West inhabits a unified culture of thematic transmission This American influence is embodied in a shared cultural psyche which is where the thematic echoes of *Frankenstein* (1818) maintain their influence indulging fundamental fears of technological and scientific developments. These fears develop through intergenerational technological revolutions and the implications of the posthuman in science fiction.

9.5 THE ANTHROPOCENTRIC FEAR OF THE POSTHUMAN

The developing pattern that I observed was the prominent appearance of posthumanism at the root of technological anxiety in my franchises. Posthumanism is a philosophical perspective of the human that is not anthropocentric. The notion of anthropocentrism is the inherent tenant of humanism that is at the core of human existence. It suggests that the whole of existence is centred on humanity with strict boundaries which separate the human from the rest of nature. Western cultural and societal structures are constructed in response to this inherent belief and are reinforced through various faith perspectives that endorse the unique nature of the human body, mind, and soul. The posthuman undermines these boundaries between humanity, animals, and technology. Within science fiction the posthuman takes on many forms, all with the explicit purpose to supersede humanity as the top place holder on the food chain. These iterations are predominantly achieved through scientific and technological advancement. Through the analysis of the *Terminator* (1984-present) franchise the notion of cybernetic organisms and artificial intelligence brought the posthuman to the foreground as a challenge to human anthropocentrism. The posthuman in the context of the *Terminator* (1984-present) franchise, is an artificially intelligent and conscious creature of science, akin to Shelley's monster. In the text this new species offers a glimpse at the dystopic implications of what this technology could look like in the future. The *Jurassic Park* (1993-present) franchise contends with the biological posthuman by introducing the human clone. To clone a human is to challenge the preconceived notions of human individuality and uniqueness which has been embedded in Western-American psyche. Finally, the *Alien* (1979-

present) franchise contends with both the biological posthuman (the xenomorph) and the technological posthuman (the synthetic). Both require the human to exist but ultimately seek to remove humanity from the equation. The posthuman is the monstrous body that results from the implications of boundary transgressions in science and challenge to the natural order as established by the Frankenstein Myth. These forms and iterations of the posthuman evolve and change with each instalment and for each audience.

9.6 GOTHIC SCIENCE FICTION

One of the key implications of this thesis is the notion of Gothic science fiction. As I identified within my literature review, the concept of Gothic science fiction is still disputed. Even the understanding of *Frankenstein* (1818) as a Gothic text is not universally accepted. While science fiction is a pertinent part of this thesis, the Gothic's implication to the analysis became clear early on. My initial interest in Frankenstein as an archetype occurred through a Gothic lens. This is also how I initially analysed the films that produced echoes of *Frankenstein* (1818). It became clear that while science fiction as the genre of the films linked into the rational and cognitive aspect of the Frankenstein Myth, the Gothic projected the horror of the implications which produced a dual sense of repulsion and attraction. It is only through the combination of the Gothic mode and the genre of science fiction that the hypertextual nature of the Frankenstein Myth is able to transmute from one text to another. This is because it combines the contemporary relevance of twenty-first century science fiction and the highly reactionary and transmissible nature of the Gothic. Science fiction by nature speaks to the everchanging cultural reactions to technological development. The Gothic challenges and exploits the fear surrounding this technology and presents a scenario to the audience that makes them uncomfortable. In this thesis this is intrinsically seen throughout the franchises.

Not only do the franchises present technology contemporary to the film's release but also the potential and implication of said technology. For example, *Terminator* (1984) is set during in late Cold War America. The primary technological implications surround computer intelligence and nuclear war. *Jurassic Park* (1993) contends with the implications of cloning and the effects on the ecosystem just as serious ethical conversations were beginning to be had around the Western world in the media and houses of education and power. *Alien* (1979) presents an extra-terrestrial threat in outer space following the advent of human space travel

and visitation to the moon which kicked off a cultural saturation of space travel media. In each narrative the potential science is not enough. It is the archetype that is developed by the science which speaks to the Gothic nature of the franchise. The posthuman cyborgs of the *Terminator (*1984-present) franchise represent the implications of computer technology as a weapon of war and genocide. The amalgamation of metal and flesh introduces a Gothic monster into the throes of the franchise that has been cemented in popular culture. The same can be said about the *Jurassic Park* (1993-present) franchise which contends with the implications of cloning and de-extinction. To give this threat a corporal form, hybridised dinosaurs represent a Gothic monster, a posthuman apex predator that threatens humanity's position at the top of the food chain. Finally, the *Alien* (1979-present) franchise presents the audience with a posthuman extra-terrestrial that requires the human body to reproduce. The xenomorph is the ultimate Gothic monster that adheres to the macabre and the grotesque. It has subsequently become the most recognisable form of extra-terrestrial in popular culture. The dual effect of Gothic science fiction offers a rational space which adheres to rational and cognitive laws making the franchise realistic while offering a Gothic body which corporealises the implication of the technology into a monstrous body to fear. This is how the Frankenstein Myth transmutes and remains relevant within a Gothic science fiction medium. For the purpose of this thesis this has been efficiently tracked through the structure of the franchise.

9.7 Franchises and the Cultural Psyche

I have analysed these themes through an intertextual reading of three ongoing franchises: *Terminator* (1984-present), *Jurassic Park* (1993-present), and *Alien* (1979-present). These franchises were the ideal candidates for this analysis because they are all cemented as icons in popular culture and are ongoing. As franchises, their narratives have evolved through each instalment and witness crucial societal and cultural shifts between two centuries. Through each instalment the narrative has shifted to contend with contemporary anxieties that appear within the Western-American psyche. While *Terminator* (1984) deals with Cold War anxieties surrounding the development of artificial intelligence and nuclear proliferation, *Genisys* (2015) deals with threats to privacy and online security. *Jurassic Park* (1993) deals with the implications of human manipulation of the natural order through de-extinction and cloning. It proposes the resurrection of Jurassic and Cretaceous species and contended with the philosophical implications of that on the human species and the

ecosystem while *Jurassic World* (2015) deals with the corporatisation of this questionable process and presents the franchise with the creation of a new and weaponised hybrid apex predator that threatened humanity's position at the top of the food chain. Finally, *Alien* (1979) presented one of the most iconic extra-terrestrial films following the advent of manned space travel through the lens of horror science fiction while *Prometheus* (2012) challenged the anthropocentric understanding of human uniqueness and contended with the implications of posthumanism through self-aware artificial intelligence and the existence of a primordial, monstrous posthuman body. The narrative changes with the cultural psyche. The Frankenstein thematic narrative resurfaces through franchisation of films congruent to anxieties that surround technology. Through prequels and sequels, the franchise remains relevant for a new audience and offers a more relevant experience within contemporary society.

9.8 My Contribution to the Field

To summarise, I contribute to the field on four fronts in this thesis. The first is the conception of the model of the Frankenstein Myth. Prior scholarship acknowledges the mythological status of the text but does not offer a method to analyse the mythos beyond direct reference to Shelley's text or literal adaptation into other media. Plenty of previous scholarship has evaluated how Frankenstein and his monster have been interpreted in other media but does not broach the influence of Frankensteinian themes beyond the text. I discovered that Frankenstein (1818) as a thematic, cultural consciousness has evolved past its original narrative to embody thematic echoes in multimedia platforms and while there are a small number of texts that lean towards this perspective, I believe that my approach to contending with this echoes is unique. It became apparent to me that any text that contends with broader themes of science running amok, playing god, and challenging the binary of life and death displayed resurging echoes of Frankenstein (1818). I specifically noticed this in the medium of film and began to trace the strands through a hypertextual structure which allowed the themes to communicate with one another. This resurgence does not rely on the directors intention as I argue *Frankenstein* (1818) has become a cultural mythos that reacts to the anxieties of the time beyond the influence of the original text. It appears within texts that pose a challenge to socio-cultural fears surrounding the potential of questionable technological and scientific developments and theories. The myth of *Frankenstein* (1818) has remained relevant in contemporary culture as the prototypical and most recognisable example

of technologically and scientifically playing god with dire consequences that challenge the natural order. The model of the Frankenstein Myth is a complex structure that encompasses two primary factors. The themes I carefully derived from *Frankenstein* (1818) which are boundary transgressions in science, challenge to the natural order, and the monstrous body. These themes highlight the method of creation (boundary transgressions in science), the consequences of creation (challenge to the natural order), and the result of creation (the monstrous body). These themes not only embody the mythos of the text but are deeply tied to the cultural psyche through the socio-historical context of the Victorian period. This is important as this is how the text resurges in contemporary narratives embodying more contemporarily relevant anxieties of the twenty-first century. The second factor is the hypertextual structure of the model which allows for an intertextual and interdisciplinary reading of the Frankensteinian thematic echoes within contemporary cinematic texts not only does this allow for the films to more readily communicate but also ties them into the context of the anxieties of the time through the referential analysis of texts from other disciplines that are pertinent to the technology or scientific theory presented in the films.

The second unique contribution of this thesis is the focus on inter-century science fiction franchises that are on-going with a distinct focus on the contemporary instalments. The reason why I chose to undergo the analysis through on-going franchises is to clearly show how the thematic nuances of the Frankenstein Myth evolve as the narrative evolves and new technologies that drive the socio-cultural context of society become prominent. Each of my chosen franchises began with clear twentieth century socio-historical and cultural influences such as Cold War and nuclear tensions (*Terminator* franchise (1984-present)), the new frontier of space (*Alien* franchise), and cloning and the potential of de-extinction (*Jurassic Park* (1993-present) franchise). As the socio-cultural anxieties shifted with a new generation in reaction to new century defining technological advancements and/or potential, the films also refocused. The notion of franchise and adaptation allows for a clear analysis of these shifts in conjunction with the films through an interdisciplinary framework. This approach is unique and has offered clear conclusions. This first is that there is a clear transmission of the Frankenstein Myth through the model of the franchise. The narratives evidently change to match the expectation of the audience and the cultural psyche of the twenty-first century. This is evidenced through the *Terminator* (1984-present) franchise which adheres to Cold War and artificial intelligence anxieties in the first instalment only to shift with the introduction of *Genisys* (2015) to anxieties surrounding privacy and total connectivity online

with a prime focus on sentient machines, the posthuman, and the transhuman. *Jurassic Park* (1993) relies on the uncertainty and unknowns of cloning and the ethical complications of such a technology. This narrative evolves to contend with gene splicing the production of hybrid animals and human clones in the twenty-first century to match the developing understanding and subsequent fears surrounding synthetic reproduction. Finally, *Alien* (1979) simply introduced an aggressive and terrifying alien species which was enough to inspire fear of the potential extra-terrestrial contact that may occur due to space travel. Whereas the contemporary instalments begin to explore the notion of the synthetic human more in depth as a sentient being that threatens human dominance through posthumanism. What is clear from my analysis is most technological anxieties typically pivot around anxieties surrounding anthropocentrism, human identity, supremacy, and the fear of extinction. The Victorians were also posed with life altering scientific potential that could have reshaped human existence in the midst of the existential challenges to faith in god and the church and humanity's status as a unique phenomenon in the universe. We are currently faced with similar, yet contemporary challenges as scientific and technological development has the potential to reshape anthropocentric understandings of life once again. Considering these similarities, it is understandable why *Frankenstein* (1818) as a mythos remains relevant within the cultural psyche and how it is able to resurge into contemporary narratives so easily.

The third contribution is through my primary focus on the twenty-first century instalments of these franchises. Each of these franchises have been thoroughly analysed in scholarship for many different reasons but primarily through the twentieth century instalments. Very little work has been focused on the newer instalments which meant that many of the observations I was able to make are unique to this thesis. This was especially helpful in establishing the thematic connections between the texts and allowed me to make observations that had not been recorded before. The fourth and final contribution was the continuation of the analysis of Gothic science fiction as its own sub-genre/mode. It helped by giving this thesis a unique approach and clear sense of direction. The marriage of the two is certainly not new but debate surrounding its viability is ongoing. What I make clear in this thesis is how operable and rational the unison of the two are. While science fiction offers a pseudo-empirical cognition with scientific theory in fiction, the Gothic exploits the fear surrounding questionable technologies and assists in making them terrifying and monstrous. In using this approach, I have continued the association between Gothic science fiction and *Frankenstein* (1818) and directed the discussion into contemporary science fiction film. Aside from *Alien* (1979-

present)*, the texts I have used are not firmly associated with the Gothic as far as genre allocation. So, to analyse them under the lens of Gothic science fiction is a new contribution which allows of a unique reading of these franchises.

9.9 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

One significant limitation was the lack of prior scholarship surrounding the concept of *Frankenstein* (1818) as a mythos in the post-modern world outside of Shelley's text. While there is a large amount of scholarship around *Frankenstein* (1818) as a mythic text and it's literal transmission into other media formats there is very little around the thematic echoes. Thematic interpretations of the text that are departed completely from Shelley's text are rare, however this is where the idea for the creation of the Frankenstein Myth model came from. This meant I hard to return to the original text and to pinpoint the key themes that transmute into other texts and assess the context of the text which gave me the model to solely analyse the themes in twenty-first century franchises. As I stipulated within my rationale, other scholarly mentions of the Frankenstein Myth or *Frankenstein* (1818) as a modern myth take the term 'myth' for granted. No previous scholarship has taken the time to ask the questions, what does the Frankenstein Myth look like? How do we quantify this model to make it an applicable for use in thematic analysis? And finally, is the Frankenstein Myth a phenomenon unto itself or is it reliant on the constant close reading of *Frankenstein* (1818)? In posing these initial questions I was able to construct the model for the Frankenstein Myth within the confines of a hypertextual format to demonstrate how the thematic strands connect and meme theory to observe and analyse memetic transmission. Another limitation of the study was the data set. While the selected franchises yielded definitive results, my original aim was to use wide quantitative data set made up of films spanning from the beginning of the twentieth century to the twenty-first century. My aim was to track the transmission of the Frankenstein Myth through a large number of texts to show how transmissible and all-consuming the mythos is throughout film. I also wanted to analyse the competing notions of literal and thematic reproductions of *Frankenstein* (1818) through this quantitative mould. This changed due to the limitations of the project within the parameters of a doctoral thesis. The other limitation was the inability to analyse and include the final instalment of the *Jurassic World* trilogy, *Jurassic World: Dominion* (2022) this is because it came out in the cinemas just as my thesis was being prepared for final submission. However, upon seeing the film I do not believe it's exclusion would have hindered the work I have done.

9.10 AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Due to the prototypical nature of the Frankenstein Myth model, I would suggest that further research should be applied to its observation and analysis. As I stated, one of my limitations surrounded the data set. My aim is to take this study further and analyse a greater number of texts under different conditions. I also believe there is space to further investigate the technical elements of the Frankenstein Myth as a model. I believe with more application the model will gradually evolve and improve as the myth does within different socio-cultural contexts. The only way for this to occur is to test the limits of the model. The way this will happen is through qualitive data gathering over a wider variety of cinematic texts. As the model has a hypertextual core with a memetic transmission, I believe the myth could also be applied to a wide array of disciplines as a hypertext it has the ability to make interdisciplinary lexias connections. My thesis already establishes that the Frankenstein Myth is embedded in the cultural psyche. It is therefore logical to suggest that the Frankenstein Myth is able to function outside of the cinematic medium within other universal methods of communication such as music, literature, television, and gaming to name a few. This thesis has also focused on a purely Western perspective. As I believe the myth touches on the fundamental anthropocentric aspect of the human condition, a critical next step would be to investigate the presence of the myth in other cultural perspectives. While Shelley's text is the catalyst for the Western perspective, it would be interesting to explore how the myth appears in other cultures that have not been traditionally influenced by this text. As I have suggested the notion of *Frankenstein* (1818) as a myth has been suggested by a number of pieces of scholarship. The one issue with all of these texts is that there is little investigation into this claim beyond the terminology. I believe there is still further room in the field to look into the context of the myth as to what makes *Frankenstein* (1818) speak to us as species on such a fundamental level.

9.11 SUMMARY

This thesis has sought to establish the Frankenstein Myth and a rational, working, and methodical model beyond the referential suggestion of *Frankenstein's* mythological status for the study of contemporary science fiction franchises. With film and visual media being the common universal medium of communication of cultural ideas, concepts and themes, the *Frankenstein* (1818) narrative resurfaces. This occurs through films that are congruent with

these anxieties and have since continued to evolve through franchisation and sequelisation. *Frankenstein* (1818) disseminates into the popular culture to become a post-modern mythology. This mythology in turn invites speculation surrounding the consequence of amoral and questionably ethical scientific and technological development. This indulges anxieties that are embedded in the cultural psyche surrounding technology that has the potential to disrupt the anthropocentricity of human existence. The thematic echoes of *Frankenstein* (1818) will continue to evolve and resurge as the monster continues to disseminate and become relevant once more.

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Table 4

Films watched to determine the transmission of the Frankenstein Myth

The table present the films I have viewed, the genre(s) they are implicit to, the year they were released, whether the film is a literal or thematic resurgence of an archetype, the archetype I have identified in the text, and potential socio-historical and socio-cultural anxieties that are present within the text. This table represents the initial textual and thematic analysis I have conducted to arrive at my chosen archetype (Frankenstein) and the socio-cultural and historical trends implicit in the unconscious sub text of these films as I have identified. The inclusion of other Gothic archetypes was a way to determine the resurgence of Frankenstein compared to others and how they differed from one another in terms of literal and thematic resurgence. This list was also created to be as unbiased as possible, so the data is unimpeachable. All of the films were watched to evaluate the raw thematic material present and reported as such.

Film	Genre	Year	Resurgence type	Archetype	Potential Anxiety
Nosferatu	Horror	1922	Literal	Dracula	Rise of Fascism.
Frankenstein	SF/Horror	1931	Literal	Frankenstein	Boundary transgressions in science
Dracula	Horror	1931	Literal	Dracula	N/A
Dr Jekyll and Mr. Hyde	Horror	1931	Literal	Dr Jekyll and Mr. Hyde	N/A
The Mummy	Horror	1932	Literal	The Mummy	N/A
King Kong	Horror/Kaiju	1933	Thematic	Dracula	N/A
Bride of Frankenstein	SF/Horror	1935	Literal	Frankenstein	Exoticism/the foreign invader
The Wolfman	Horror	1941	Literal	Werewolf	N/A
Phantom of the Opera	Horror	1943	Literal	Phantom of the Opera	N/A
Dracula	Horror	1958	Literal	Dracula	Cold War

Godzilla	SF/Kaiju	1954 - Present	Thematic	Frankenstein	Nuclear Proliferation
Planet of the Apes	SF	1968 - 2017	Thematic	Frankenstein	Genetic experimentation
Rocky Horror Picture Show	Musical/Horror	1975	Thematic	Frankenstein/ Dracula	Sexuality
Halloween	Horror	1978 - present	N/A	N/A	N/A
Alien	SF/Horror	1979 – present	Thematic	Frankenstein	Extra-terrestrial life
The Thing	SF/Horror	1982-2011	N/A	N/A	Extra-terrestrial life
Blade Runner	SF	1982-2017	Thematic	Frankenstein	Artificial Intelligence
Frankenweenie	Drama/Fantasy	1984	Thematic	Frankenstein	N/A
Terminator	SF/Horror	1984 – Present	Thematic	Frankenstein	Artificial Intelligence
Predator	SF/Horror	1987 - Present	Thematic	N/A	Antithesis of Humanity
Monster Squad	Horror	1987	Literal	Multiple Archetypes	N/A
Nightmare on Elm Street	Horror	1984-2010	Thematic	N/A	The unconscious mind
IT	Horror	1990	Thematic	N/A	Childhood trauma
Edward Scissorhands	Romantic/Dark Fantasy	1990	Thematic	Frankenstein	Boundary Transgressions in science
Total Recall	SF	1990-2012	Thematic	Frankenstein	Artificial Intelligence

Jurassic Park	SF/Action	1993-present	Thematic	Frankenstein	Artificial Intelligence
Bram Stokers Dracula	Horror	1992	Literal	Dracula	Sexuality/AIDS
Nightmare Before Christmas	Family	1993	Thematic	Multiple Archetypes	N/A
Interview with a Vampire	Horror/Drama	1994	Literal	Dracula	Sexuality
12 Monkeys	SF	1995	Thematic	Frankenstein	Boundary Transgressions in science
The Island Of Doctor Moreau	SF/Thriller	1996	Literal	The Island of Doctor Moreau	Boundary Transgressions in science
The Mummy	Action/Horror	1990 – 2008	Literal	The Mummy	Exoticism
Scream	Mystery/Slasher	1996 - 2011	N/A	N/A	N/A
League of Extraordinary Gentlemen	Action/ Adventure	1993	Literal	Multiple Archetypes	N/A
The Matrix	SF/Action	1999-present	Thematic	Frankenstein	Artificial Intelligence
X-Men	SF	2000-present	Thematic	Frankenstein	Human Experimentation
A.I.	SF/Thriller	2001	Thematic	Frankenstein	Artificial Intelligence
Minority Report	SF	2002	Thematic	Frankenstein	Artificial Intelligence
Phantom of the Opera	Musical /Horror	2003	Literal	Phantom of the Opera	N/A
Van Helsing	Action/Horror	2004	Literal	Multiple	Monster Hunter

I Robot	Action	2004	Thematic	Frankenstein	Artificial intelligence
King Kong	Action/Horror	2005	Thematic	Dracula	Exoticism
Corpse Bride	Family	2005	Thematic	Frankenstein	Resurrection
Wolverine	Action	2009	Thematic	Frankenstein	Posthuman creation
Surrogates	SF	2009	Thematic	Frankenstein	Human augmentation
Picture of Dorian Gray	Horror/Drama	2009	Literal	Dorian Gray	Sexuality and Sin
Coraline	Family	2009	Thematic	N/A	Childhood Trauma
Splice	Horror	2009	Thematic	Frankenstein	Boundary Transgressions in science
Real Steel	SF	2011	Thematic	Frankenstein	Artificial Intelligence
Hotel Transylvania	Family	2012-present	Literal	Multiple Archetypes	N/A
Twilight Saga	Romantic/ Action	2008-2012	Thematic	Dracula	Ecology/ Veganism/Mortality
Avengers: Age of Ultron	Action	2013	Thematic	Frankenstein	Artificial Intelligence
Chappie	Action	2013	Thematic	Frankenstein	Artificial Intelligence
Dracula Untold	Action	2014	Literal	Dracula	Human superiority
Ex Machina	SF/Thriller	2014	Thematic	Frankenstein	Artificial Intelligence
What We Do In the Shadows	Comedy/Horror	2014	Literal	Dracula	N/A
Transcendence	SF/Thriller	2014	Thematic	Frankenstein	Artificial Intelligence
Victor Frankenstein	Horror	2015	Literal	Frankenstein	Boundary Transgressions in science

Batman vs Superman	Action	2016	Thematic	Frankenstein	Creation/resurrection
The Mummy	Action	2017	Literal	The Mummy	Exoticism
IT	Horror	2017 – 2019	Thematic	N/A	Childhood Trauma
The Shape of Water	Drama/Thriller	2017	Thematic	N/A	Othering
Ghost in the Shell	SF/Thriller	2017	Thematic	Frankenstein	Artificial Intelligence
Get Out	Horror	2017	Thematic	Frankenstein	Boundary Transgressions in Science
Annihilation	SF/Horror	2018	Thematic	Frankenstein	Self-Destruction
Bird Box	Horror	2018	N/A	N/A	Monstrous Other
A Quiet Place	Horror	2018-2020	Thematic	N/A	Othering
Us	Horror	2019	Thematic	Frankenstein	Cloning
Brightburn	SF/Horror	2019	Thematic	Dracula	Othering
Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker	SF	2019	Thematic	Frankenstein	Cloning/Resurrection

Figure 3

Xenomorph Egg Cycle.

Note: From Hallett, D., & Hatton, M. (2018). *Alien Covenant: David's Drawings* Titan Books

Figure 4

Anatomical sketch of egg cross section and facehugger subject.
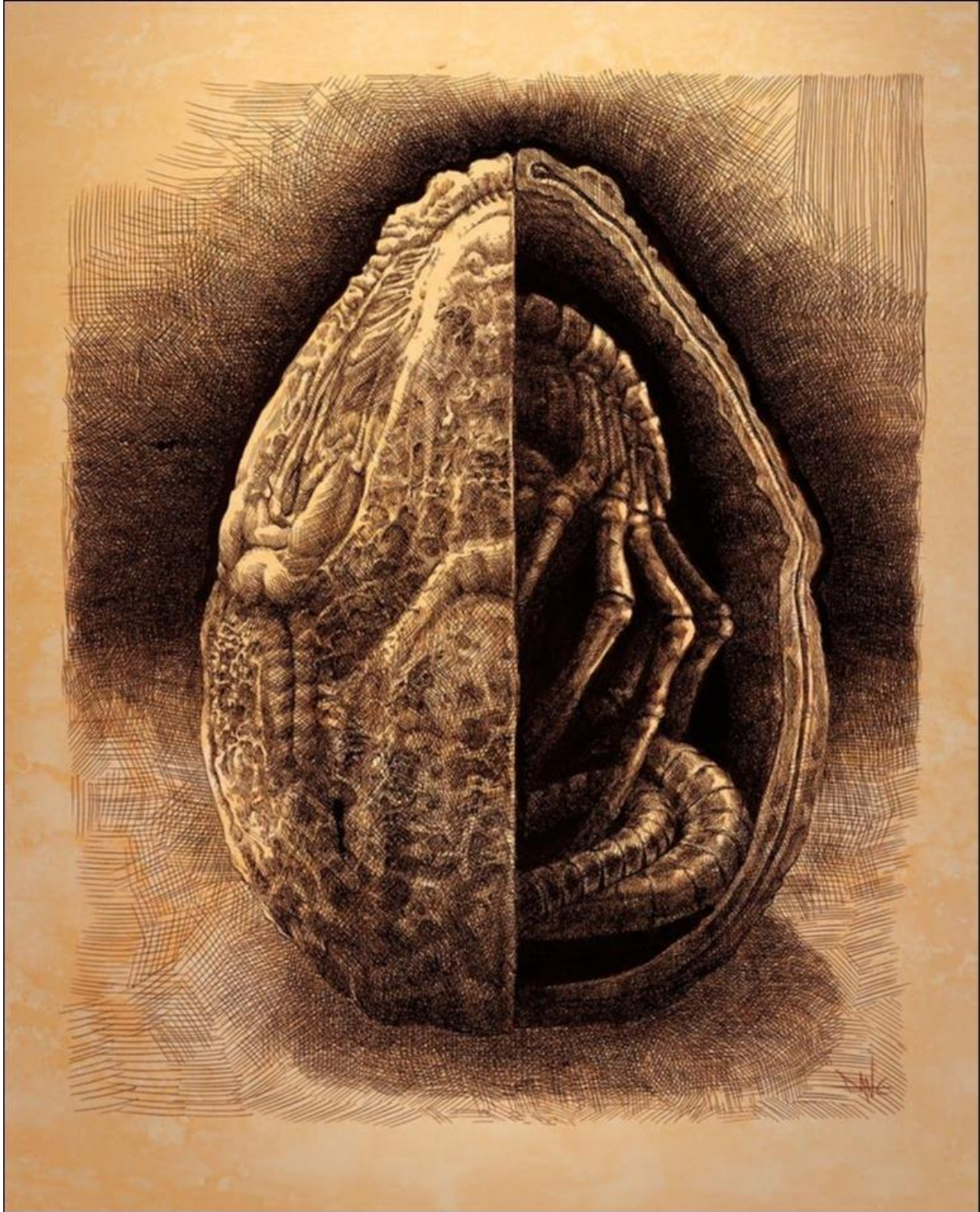
Note: From Hallett, D., & Hatton, M. (2018). *Alien Covenant: David's Drawings* Titan Books
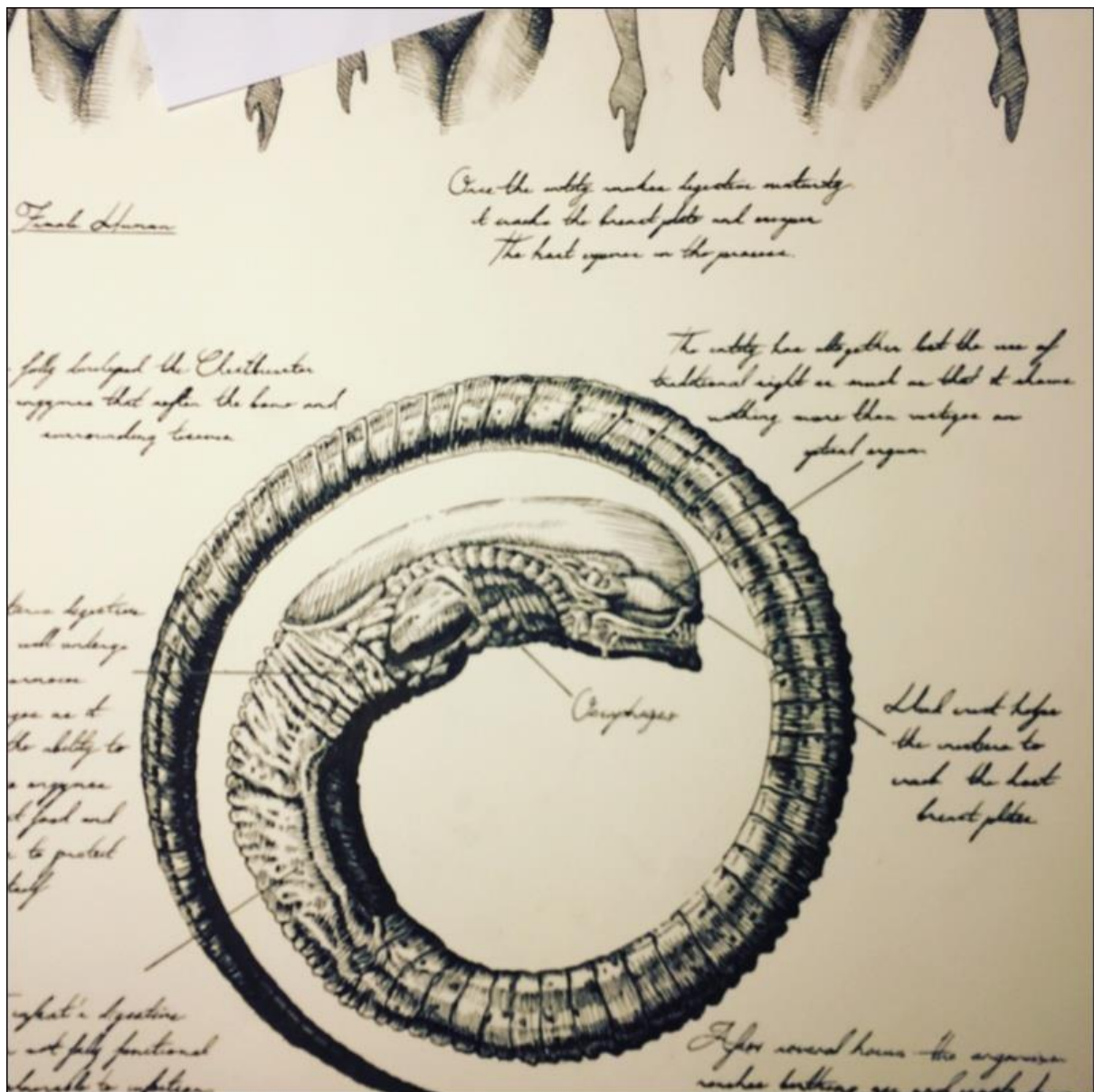
Figure 5

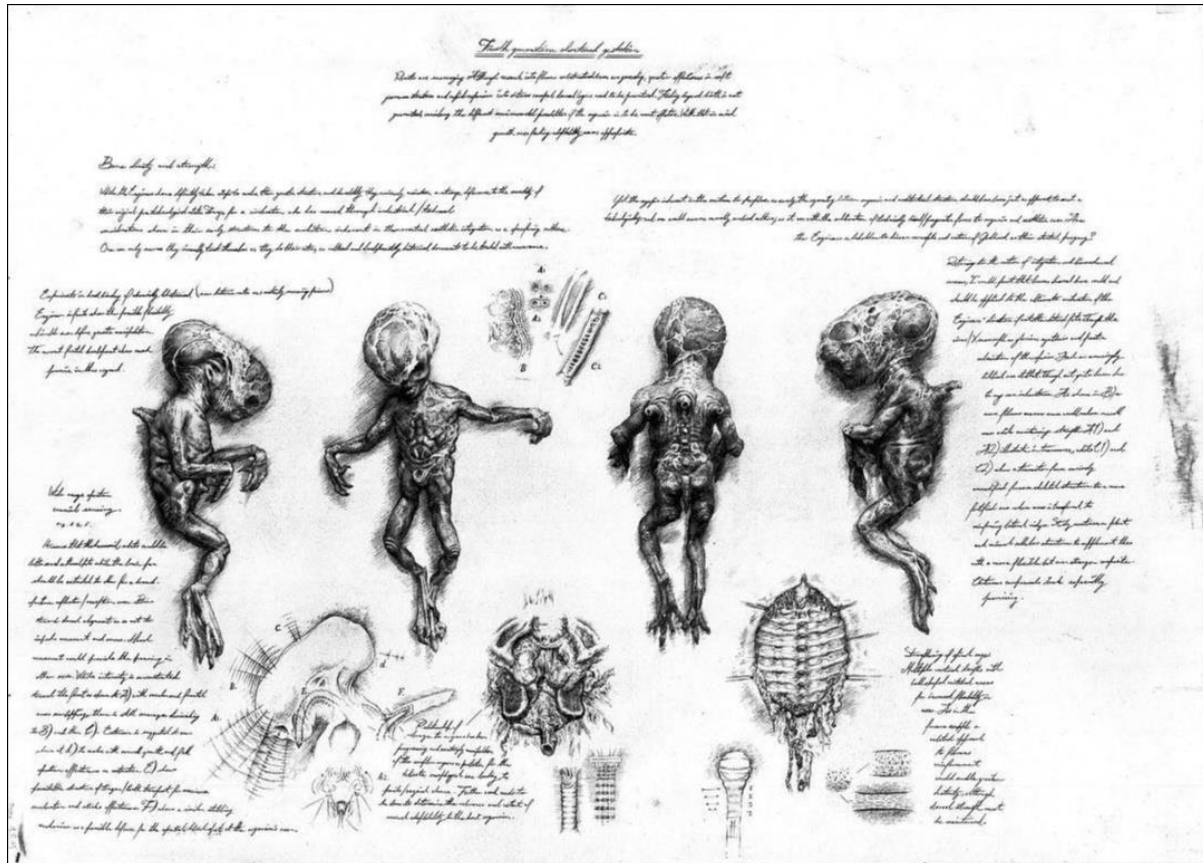facehugger, anatomical features, embryo distribution/impregnation.
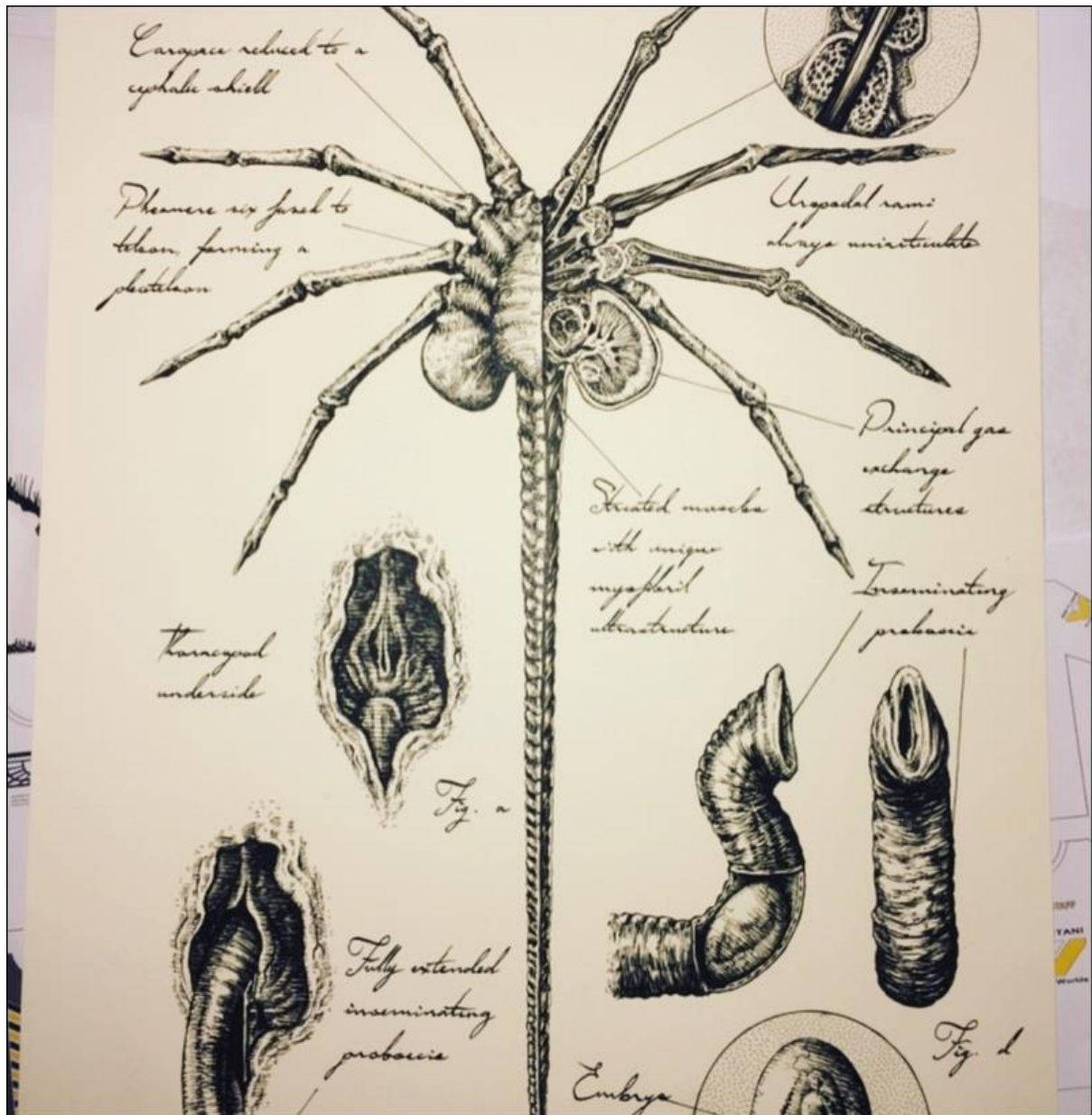
Note: From Hallett, D., & Hatton, M. (2018). *Alien Covenant: David's Drawings* Titan Books

Figure 6

Chestburster, anatomical features

Figure 7

Unknown variation of infant subject

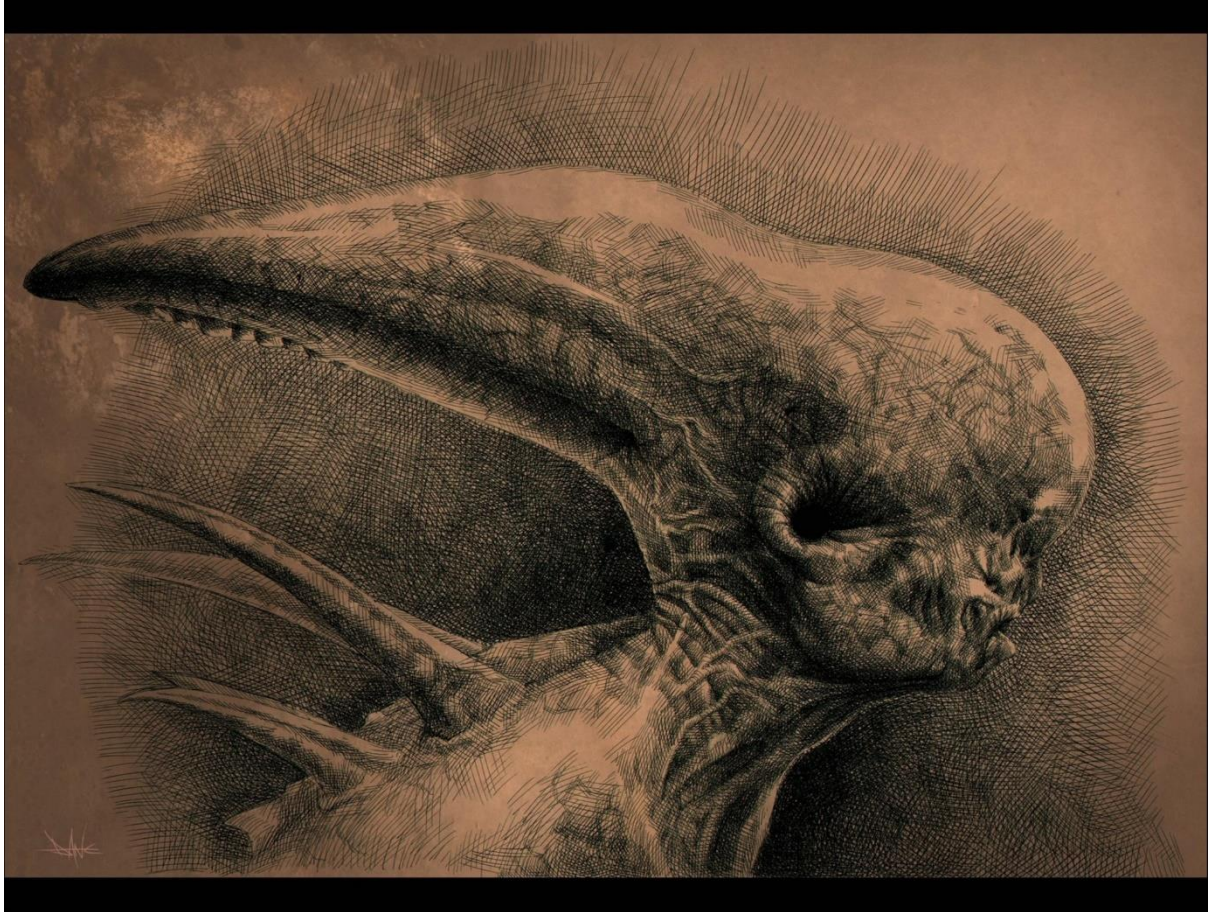Note: From Hallett, D., & Hatton, M. (2018). *Alien Covenant: David's Drawings* Titan Books

Figure 8

Internal anatomy of unknown variation, adult subject
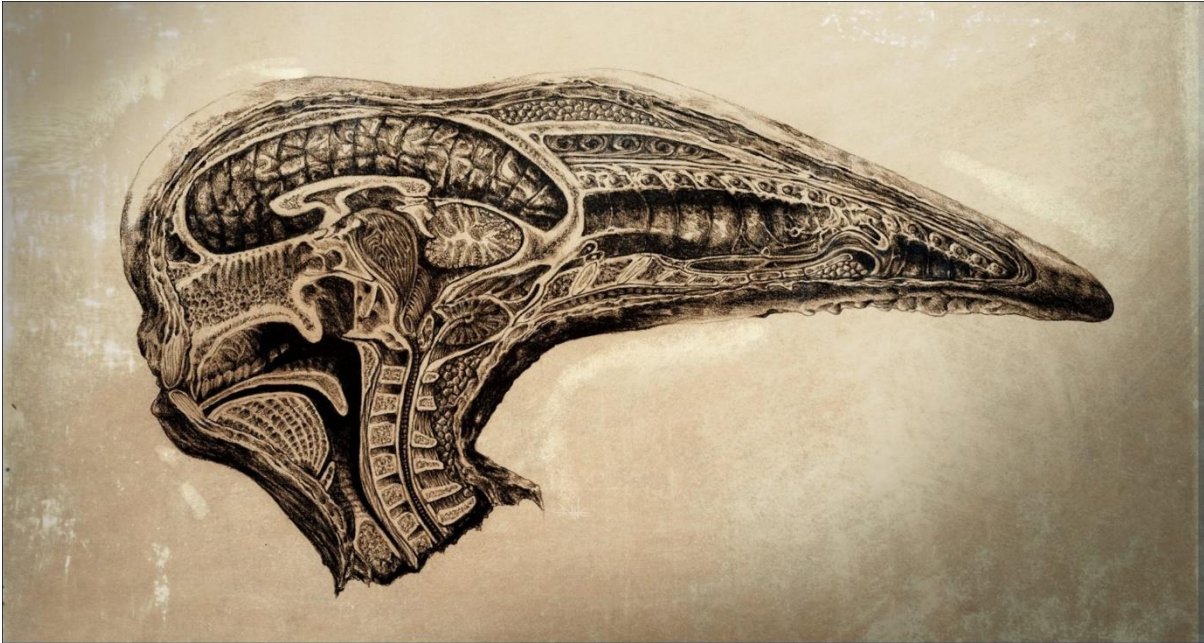
Note: From Hallett, D., & Hatton, M. (2018). *Alien Covenant: David's Drawings* Titan Books
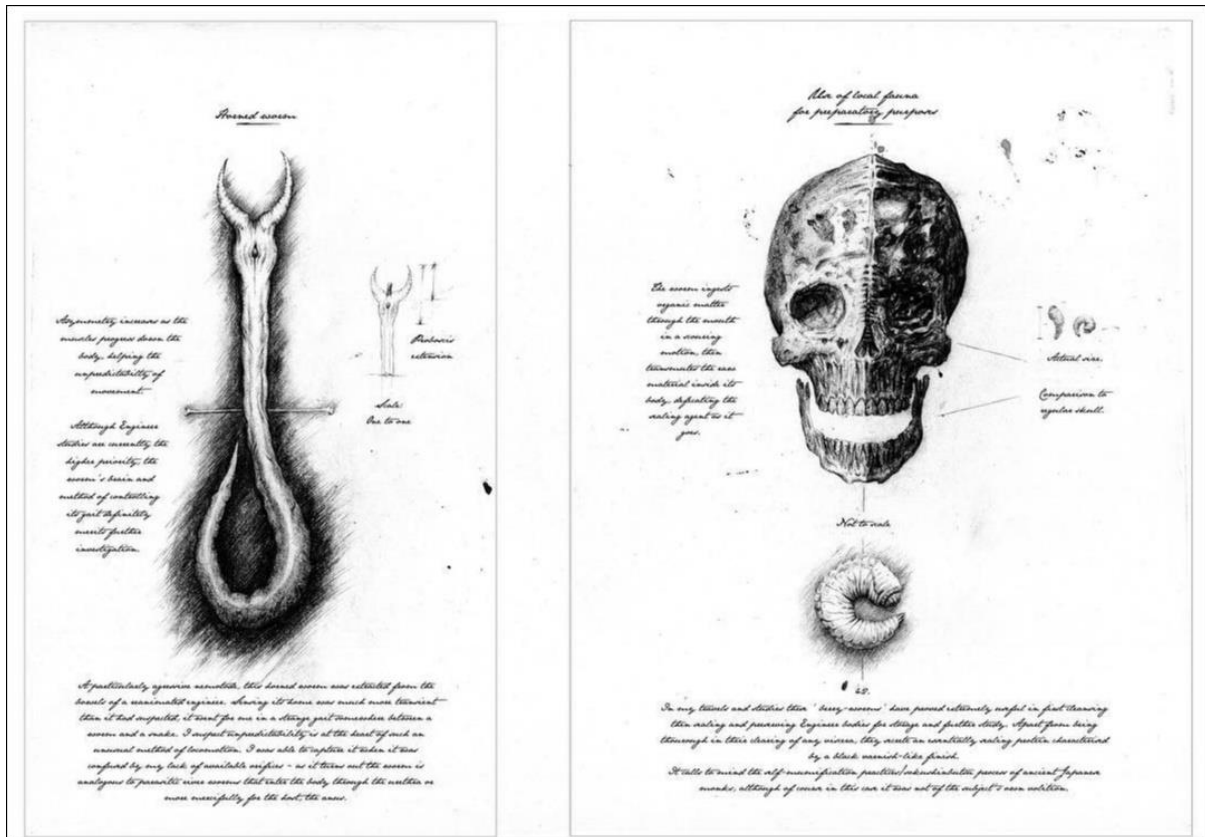
Figure 9

External anatomy of unknown variation, adult subject.

Note: From Hallett, D., & Hatton, M. (2018). *Alien Covenant: David's Drawings* Titan Books

Figure 10

Hammerpede, and unknown genetic carrier.

Note: From Hallett, D., & Hatton, M. (2018). *Alien Covenant: David's Drawings* Titan Books

Figure 11
Shaw abstract, one

Note: From Hallett, D., & Hatton, M. (2018). *Alien Covenant: David's Drawings* Titan Books

Figure 12

Shaw abstract, unknown experimentation

Note: From Hallett, D., & Hatton, M. (2018). *Alien Covenant: David's Drawings* Titan Books

Figure 13

Shaw dissection

Note: From Hallett, D., & Hatton, M. (2018). *Alien Covenant: David's Drawings* Titan Books

Figure 14

Shaw Experimentation

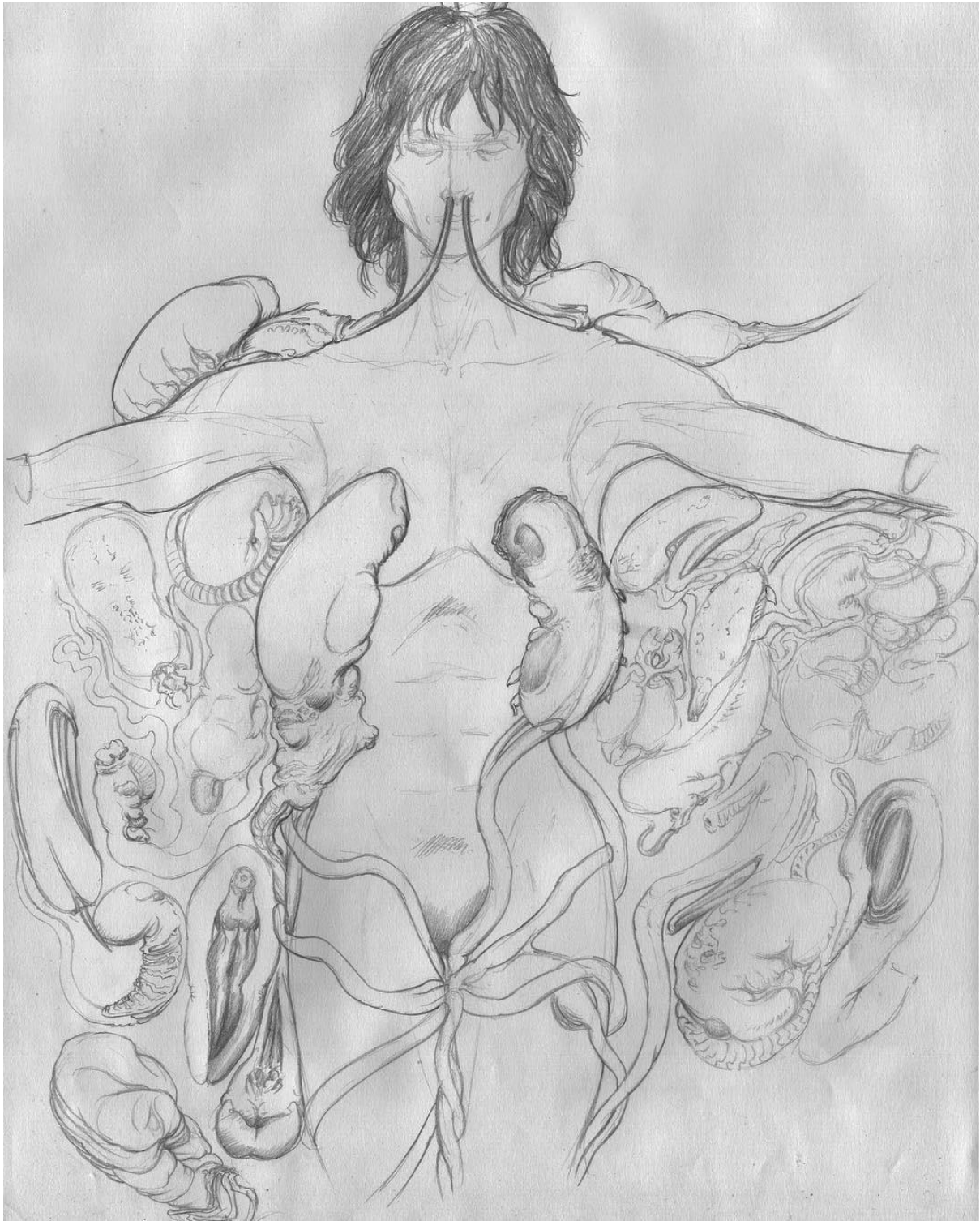Note: From Hallett, D., & Hatton, M. (2018). *Alien Covenant: David's Drawings* Titan Books

Figure 15

Shaw, xenomorph infant

Note: From Hallett, D., & Hatton, M. (2018). *Alien Covenant: David's Drawings* Titan Books

Figure 16

Shaw, birth of many variants of xeno-species

Note: From Hallett, D., & Hatton, M. (2018). *Alien Covenant: David's Drawings* Titan Books

Figure 17

Shaw dissection, mutilation of internal organs

Note: From Hallett, D., & Hatton, M. (2018). *Alien Covenant: David's Drawings* Titan Books

Figure 18

Shaw/xenomorph symbiosis

Note: From Hallett, D., & Hatton, M. (2018). *Alien Covenant: David's Drawings* Titan Books

Figure 19

Shaw, abstract, mutation, fetishized image of xenomorph reproductive cycle.

Note: From Hallett, D., & Hatton, M. (2018). *Alien Covenant: David's Drawings* Titan Books

Figure 20
Further human/xenomorph symbiosis, conception of xeno reproduction.

Note: From Hallett, D., & Hatton, M. (2018). *Alien Covenant: David's Drawings* Titan Books

Figure 21

Shaw/xenomorph symbiosis, cradling foetal form.

Note: From Hallett, D., & Hatton, M. (2018). *Alien Covenant: David's Drawings* Titan Books