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Inhuman

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An abstract of
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Abstract

Inhuman
By Bailey Tyler

In a world where clones have just been recalled due to a malfunction, a girl and her clone set out to prove that clones are not the issue. Unaware of which one of them is actually the clone these two girls must race to find their lost adoption papers before they are caught by the agents searching for them.

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Acknowledgements

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The purpose of this paper is to take an in depth look into the academic merit behind my film, *Inhuman*. I will discuss the place of *Inhuman* regarding the science fiction genre and explain where in that genre it fits, and also where it deviates. I will give a broad overview of science fiction as a genre and then focus more specifically on the specific subgenre in which *Inhuman* best fits. From there I will begin my discussion on the narrative of *Inhuman*. I will explain how the themes and ideas presented in the story are related to narrative conventions seen in specific directors' scripts as well as relevant to my philosophy minor. I will then conclude by talking about how the visual style of this film was derived from specific directors in a way to best display my understanding of the science fiction genre as well as the theory and philosophy behind the film's narrative.

Genre: Science Fiction

Science fiction is first and foremost a genre. However, genre is not a simple matter, and is often hard to identify because "genre in the Hollywood context often combine or borrow from each other" (Telotte 198). Therefore, a convention that is traditionally associated with a drama can easily pop us in a comedy film without making that film into a drama. This fluidity is important to note because of its common occurrence in films. Yet, despite this fluidity, films are still divided into specific genres. A genre is "a set of codes that are recognized and understood by both the spectator and the filmmaker via a 'common cultural consensus'" (Doll and Faller 89). These codes cover narrative, aesthetic, and thematic trends within films. Each genre has different codes that are associated with it as well as different levels of significance of what type of patterns emerge however, all genres are connected by the fact that conventions or codes are "often connected to deep-rooted human or societal fears and concerns" (Doll and Faller 89).

These fears and concerns manifest themselves in science fiction in thematic conventions more than the other types of codes associated with genres.

Science fiction as a genre began to gain popularity around the turn of the 20th century when the industrial revolution was fully underway. The genre existed beforehand however, it was the ideas and themes surrounding the industrial revolution that molded science fiction into what it is today. The ideas of technology and control over nature are two of the most common themes within the genre. These themes stem from "the industrial revolution when technology allowed man to subvert nature and bring about changes in his environment" (Doll and Faller 92). The theme of man's ability to control nature leads to the inherently ethical nature of the questions within the narratives that are raised by the genre. The ethical questions that stem from science fiction fall into two categories. The first being questions that ask if the technology itself is monstrous. The other being questions that ask if society is monstrous. The questions, regardless of which category they fall into are then encased in either spatial or temporal displacement. Spatial displacement meaning the film is set in some place other than earth, often a spaceship or temporal displacement, meaning set in a different time.

My film, *Inhuman*, falls into the category of temporal science fiction. Temporal science fiction is science fiction that takes place in a different time then the present. This can either be in the past or in the future, but the themes of these film are the same. Temporal science fiction "reflects a fear of life in the future, particularly a fear that we are destroying ourselves through science and technology or losing control of aliens or machines" (Doll and Faller 92). It is this fear of what technology will bring with it that motivates "the science fiction genre['s] attempts to balance the use of technology with the preservation of nature" (Doll and Faller 97). In the case of my film, it is a fear and exhaustion that stems from a society over saturated by capitalist demands

that ultimately leads to the rash and unethical decision to create clones as a solution to the problems presented by the ultra-extended work hours. The clones in my film are not only created by a future society deeply controlled by capitalistic demands, but also are feared by the same society that created them, because the humans no longer have control over the action of the clones. The decision to recall the clones in my film is one that is motivated by a fear of technology. The government and Duovitus do not pause to look at the situation the clones live in in order to understand the clone's violent behavior. Instead the government and Duovitus fear the clones' behavior and try and squander it without a look into how humans themselves could be negatively impacting the lives of the clones. I chose to interweave into my dialogue moments that hint at the poor treatment of clones as a way to force the audience to hear how the violent nature was caused by the humans and not the clones themselves. However, I chose to incorporate this exposition in non-essential elements such as a radio story or the man and his clone in the dive bar as a way to place the audience in the same position as the members of society in the film. This allows the audience to either decide to hear the real problem, or just ignore it and instead choose the easy solution by believing that it is the clones, and not the humans, who have a flaw. This idea of the ethical nature of humanity is the main question at the heart of my film. It is this ethical question that positions my film in a specific subset of science fiction, rather than *Inhuman* being a generic broad science fiction film.

It is the ethical questions raised by a science fiction film that traditionally place it within a specific decade's trends of the genre. The types of issues raised in science fiction films tend to lean in one particular direction depending on the political climate at the time a film was made. The significance of the ethical issues raised in science fiction is that these films "not only reflect the beliefs of a culture on a specific topic or set of topics; [they] also help to articulate and codify

those beliefs" (Klein 262). This enables a science fiction film to allow a society to take a removed look at itself and see where it stands on the ethical issues raised in the film. These issues in turn are only raised because of their relation to the current society in which the film was made and produced. It is because of the fictional settings of science fiction films that "science fiction looks inward at the factual society of the present. In watching these stories, the audience, often subtly, gains a better understanding of contentious topics debated within their current culture" (Klein 263). Not only does science fiction allow for a more removed look into a culture, but it also allows for a more in depth understanding of current politics and the reasoning behind specific sides of a debate. The contemporary cultural concerns associated with science fiction additionally allow the genre "more freedom for social commentary than most other genres, sometimes even skating a bit close to the edge of permissible dissent" (J.P. Telotte 97).

The political and societal nature of science fiction films is something that I have to be ultra-aware of within my own film. Since science fiction is a vehicle in which one can look at a society from a removed standpoint, I had to make sure that the views presented in my film reflect my own. With that in mind, I set out to create a futuristic society that I believe reflects where the current society of the United Stated has the potential to go. The society that I created is hyper saturated in a non-stop capitalist state that demands more if its citizens then they are physically able to give. This is reflective of the fact that the Republican Party is in charge of the majority of the United States government and endorses the upper-class capitalist agenda. The society of *Inhuman* additionally highlights the workaholic nature that I myself have experienced, and have partaken in, in corporate America. Not only did I make my future saturated in an unhealthy form of capitalism, I also make it a society that takes all of its technology for granted.

Clones in my film's world are only seen as a means to an end and the ethics behind even creating them in the first place is never taken into consideration. This disregard to the ethics and consequences of new technology is based on the fact that Stephen Hawking continually warned about the dangers of Artificial Intelligence up until his death in early 2018. Not only does my society not come to heed the warning of Stephen Hawking, it also ultimately comes to fear the clones that it created. However, the main purpose of my film was not to look at the ethical implications of artificial intelligence, but rather to look at the ethical makeup of humankind. The script explores the idea of what it means to be human in multiple contexts depending on which character the viewer believes is the human. This discussion of humanity fits very well in the context of science fiction, which is often heavily peppered with political meaning and reflections of those who make up a current society.

If you look at my characters, they are written in such a way that there is no visible difference between the two. While one may not have been born in the traditional way a human is born, they both are able to empathize to humanity by equally understanding each other and understanding the repercussions that disposing of clones will have for the future of society. Willow shows this understanding of the future of their society by her desire to use the adoption papers as a way of proving to the world the equality between her sister and her despite one being a clone. Laurel on the other hand shows her humanity thought her ability to understand and empathize with Willow. Laurel is the most viscerally upset by the news that clones are illegal, and she is also the one who is most concerned with their safety, from suggesting that they leave the house because there are agents outside watching them to being weary of going to get food and potentially giving themselves up. By giving each of these characters characteristics that, the audience as humans can recognize as factors they themselves possess, I call on them to decide

for themselves whether or not what characteristics, specifically empathy and thought for the future of society are characteristics that are only applicable to humans or if these are characteristics that should be extended to the idea of a clone or some form of artificial intelligence.

Another way in which my film falls into the history of science fiction is thought its homage to the depiction of the scientist in the mid-80s as "a figure who works with others within society, particularly members of the government" (Klein 265). The role of the government in these films is not the benevolent entity that represents the normal and good of society that was depicted in the science fiction films of the 1950s but instead is something that need to be overcome. In these films, "The scientist, often the victim of governmental conspiracies, must become the hero of the film by subverting the evil designs of a shadow government bent on the control of nature" (Klein 265). The scientist who falls victim to the government in my film is the character of Jason, the father. He fits into this role of the victim scientist turned hero because he is one of the members who helped to created cloning technology yet turned away when he saw what the technology was being used for. It is because of his decision to clone his daughter that Jason is able to be transformed into the hero of the narrative, even though he is not the main character of the film. It is his decision to clone his daughter that allows Laurel and Willow to act thought the rest of the film as living proof that it is impossible to tell a difference between a human and clone, and thus prove that the original use of the cloning technology as nothing more than an extra set of unequal hands is in fact an improper use of the technology. It is important to note that along with the use of the victim turned hero scientist the 1980s is also the decade that Cyberpunk becomes a more common subgenre within science fiction films.

Cyberpunk is a subgenre that I believe Inhuman is most closely associated with. Cyberpunk "deals specifically with the implications of the changes brought about in society by the use of technology" (Klein 257). This subgenre fits into the larger context of science fiction in the 1980s because it is critical of how governments handle immerging technology. The word punk in cyberpunk is significant because it is "a way of signifying the need for resistance to norms and authority" (Klein 257). The heroes in cyberpunk are therefore similar to the way scientist as a whole are portrayed in films of the 1980s because like the scientist, the heroes of cyberpunk are fighting against a larger system that is oppressing them in some way. The themes of cyberpunk rely heavily on resistance, and specifically a resistance that involves "the coalescing of power in the hands of a few" (Klein 270). The resistance aspect of cyberpunk is readily apparent in my film. Not only does the film begin with an ex-employee of a cloning facility cloning his daughter in a rebellious act against the treatment of clones, but the film also focuses on proving that the government made a mistake and it is unethical to kill the clones. The resistance seen in my film is limited to a single family, however, I allude to a larger movement. I do this though news clips that show the protests that are taking place as a way to give more weight and significance to the ideology that clones are in fact equal to humans.

The significance of "Cyber" in cyberpunk is that the thing or behavior that is being resisted in a cyberpunk movie is always tied to a type of technology. The aspect of technology in "cyberpunk focuses on computers and information systems and accompanied by breakdown in social order" (Devi). This theme is one that aligns with the fear of technology that underlies every science fiction film. This is apparent in *Inhuman* when the technology that was created to help humanity turned against humanity and thus resulted in the government recalling clones which in turn lead to an even greater breakdown of social order that caused chaos, fear and

destruction. Additionally, the cyber elements of these films create a cyberspace, where the technology exists and lives. This "Cyberspace is inevitably associated with the corporate hegemony and economic activity" (Devi), which ties into the government distrust that is apparent in the films of the 1980s. This economic activity is apparent in my film in the form of the increased full-time hours. The society is so concerned with economic production that it no longer takes the humanity of employees into consideration.

In addition to its association with corporate enterprises, Cyberspace also relates to the idea of parallel worlds. Parallel in this sense means the existence of a thing and something else that is not that thing. Frequently this parallel world is based in technology where "the boundary between 'real' and virtual world is blurred at the interface through which they plug in. As both the worlds co-exist together, cyberpunk explores the idea of being" (Devi). This conflict of worlds sets the foundation for the "ontological question explored in cyberpunk…multiple belonging and dispersal of subjective" (Devi). As well as being a physical and technological clash of identity these questions are also raised about the environment in which most cyberpunk films are set. The setting of these films is often heavily inspired by eastern Asia. This then brings another layer of conflict into the world because "the multi-cultural street scenes dominated by East Asian imagery and sense suggest the underclass and economically less fortunate suburb. It also suggests immigration and the fear of foreign threats to an American way of life" (Devi).

While my film does not fit neatly into the definition of cyberpunk, I do believe that it is heavily layered with cyberpunk tendencies. *Inhuman* does not deal directly with the conflict of eastern Asian influence, but it does touch on the fear of foreigner threats in the form of the clones. My film also deals with the idea of the parallel in the form of clones. The idea of identity is also the central theme of my film since neither sister knows which one of them is a clone and

therefore, must live a life of conflicting identities. Additionally, Jason clones his daughter in the first place because of his attempt to grapple with his identity after having worked to create and start the company that produced the clones who, ultimately, were forced to live miserable and subhuman lives.

The two main sub genres within the idea of ethics in science fiction are derived from two classic science fiction novels. The first of these two novels is *Frankenstein*. Science-fiction films that follow the footsteps of the novel *Frankenstein* are films in which the society sees the technology as a monster. These films deemed "monster in society" contain the theme that "the mere existence of a clone will upset the natural order of society" (Klein 258). These films are concerned with the negative outcomes that technology itself will produce. The society that creates the technology in these films is not to blame for the disastrous and monstrous outcome of the technology. These films offer a warning of a "science without supervision or boundaries" (Klein 261). Examples of Science fiction films that are "monster in society" include *Godzilla* (Honda 1954), *Metropolis* (Lang 1927), and *Ex Machina* (Garland 2014). For example, in *Ex Machina*, Ava ultimately escapes her creators' home and, in the process, kills her creator and entraps the innocent bystander who was brought in to test her humanness. In this film it is not the society that corrupts Ava, but her own nature. It is the technology that is powering her Artificial intelligence that makes her place her own freedom and safety above that of what she would consider her captors. Even though she is programmed based off of human interaction taken from social media and cell phone data, the film makes the claim that it is the technology that has the monstrous effect, and causes people to become more selfish that leads to Ava's destructive nature and not the people who participate in it. Society, in this case, is not at fault, however in the second subgenre of temporal science fiction society is always to blame. The ending of my

film is left intentionally vague so that the audience themselves has to decide which clone is the human and then look internally so see what the ramifications for that decision have for their own world view. If my film is read as Laurel being the clone, then my film falls into the monster in society film. It no longer matters that Laurel and Willow were raised equal in the end, the clone will always betray the human for the sake of self-preservation, and therefore society is correct to view clones as dangerous and fearful. However, if my film is read as Willow being the clone, then the film falls into a different category, the category of society as monstrous.

Society as the monstrous is the second sub-category of temporal science fiction. This theme is based on the novel *Brave New World*. This sub-category "speculates that the technology of cloning will change the nature of society. Society changes because the culture accommodates this new technology, eventually incorporating it and naturalizing it" (Klein 263). These films place emphasis on the people themselves who create a technology. In this case it is not the product of the technology that is bad but instead the society that enables its creation that is the true monster. This emphasis on the ethical questions raised by these films falls on the creation of the technology itself rather than the product of the technology. It is because of this shift that the predominant theme in these films "reflects the growing influence of technology on society" (Klein 259). These films also "demonstrate what happens when society regulates everything" (Klein 261). "Society as monster" movies are pessimistic about the current affairs of a specific culture and society and how it is using technology, however they often have optimistic views of human nature. *Inhuman* falls into this category if read as Willow being the clone. In this case, it is not the technology of cloning that should be feared, since Willow never attempts to turn in her sister. It is instead the high demands required by longer working hours as well as the unethical decision of Duovitus that create a society in which humans are molded to mistreat their clones in

an inhuman fashion which untimely results in clones being forced to use violence to get out of harmful and unethical situation.

   A motif that is common in "Society as Monster" films is what J.P. Telotte calls the "Kiss and Tell" motif. This motif exemplifies the fact that many science fiction films "lodge a sense of our humanity in feelings, passion, desire-and not in the atmosphere of reason and science that would seem to dominate the world of science fiction" (Telotte 21).   This motif is the idea that science can only take humanity so far, it is only with emotion and other inherently human qualities that the answers can truly be known. This is an important motif because it is what causes science to ultimately fail, because it fails to account for emotion and feeling and only looks at logic and reason. It is in films that display society as monsters that this apathetic look towards technology is usually employed. This motif is one that reinforces into a film the importance of the human touch and the importance of certain human characteristics that might sometimes be seen as flaws. According to "kiss and Tell" it is only humans who can have reason as well as emotions and feelings, and therefore they are better than the technology they create because all that technology can have is reason. *Blade Runner* (Scott 1982) is a good example of the "Kiss and Tell" motif because replicants are made without emotion, yet it is seen in the end that emotion is what the climax of the film revolves around. Some other films that fall into this category of society as monstrous include *Equals* (Doremus 2015), *Moon* (Jones 2009), and *Robocop* (Verhoeven 1987). In all of these films, the thing created by technology, whether is a clone an android etc. all end up in contact with human emotions during some part of their journey. It is also in this camp that my film falls.

   While my film can be read as either "monster in society" or as "society as monster" depending on which sister the viewer believes is the clone, the overall society of my film is

presented as monstrous, regardless of if clones are monstrous or not. The society of my film focuses only on the malfunction of the cloning technology and does not stop to consider the ethics behind eliminating thousands of clones. To this society the clones are nothing but a byproduct of a technology, but through my narrative I show the unethical nature of a society that does not think past the existence of the technical aspect of a technology. Just like most "society as monstrous" films incorporate a "kiss and tell" motif to highlight the importance of human emotion and nature, my film places emphasis on the inability to determine which sister is a clone because they both exhibit normal human emotions. My film shows human emotion in association with clones in a way that causes the viewer and the society of the film to really think about what it means to be human and if human qualities can be truly shared by a product of technology. The ending of my film causes the viewer to take a step back and look objectively at the society of the film. The reveal of which sister is a clone as well as the outcome of the supreme court case are both left unanswered at the end of the film as a way to cause the viewer to take a serious look at the society that encases this film. It is up to the viewer to see the monstrous ways of this society and to decide for themselves whether or not it is a society that can or even would want to right its wrongs, or to continue to keep existing as a monstrous entity continually producing new versions of clones with deadly consequences.

Narrative Inspiration

In recent years this fear of technology and how it effects or is affected by the society that is present in science fiction films has begun to see a shift, from something that can be overcome in the end, to, like my film, something much more pessimistic. The films of Alex Garland, in particular, signify this change between a world that can balance its technology with nature and one

in which the balance cannot be achieved. I want to place my focus on the way in which Garland structures his themes and narratives, how his style is forging a new path for science fiction films, and how Garlands new path of science fiction is depicted in my film as well.

The most prominent characteristic of an Alex Garland film is that he withholds information from the audience so as to raise more questions than his films answer. He does this in *Ex Machina* (2015) when he "he coyly avoids the issue of whether and how the movie portrays gender… Thus, he raises the question only to avoid answering it." (Alpert) This ambiguity again appears in *Annihilation (2018)* and the purposefully short snippets of context that are given to the audience where "clues are provided along the way, but the heart of the adventure reveals itself in time. Garland's choices in editing refuse to allow the viewer too much context at once" (66 Laurer). Garland's method of raising rather than answering questions is his way to increase audience engagement. It is because only some things are revealed or because too many questions are raised without explanation that Garland is able to use his films as a way of engaging the audience with the themes and the messages of his films. For example, in *Ex Machina* the audience interaction is encouraged because for Garland the point of the film, the question of whether or not Ava is human is "whether the audience (and presumably also the male characters about whom he claims ultimately not to care) can fall in love with Ava. (Alpert) This method of causing the audience to make their own assumptions to try and answer the questions is something that is additionally employed in my film. As I have mentioned previously in this paper, my own film attempts to withhold information in this same sense, by never revealing which sister is actually the clone. I have written the film in such a way that I give subtle hints to wheather or not clones are equal to humans, but this does not definitively spell out the answer. It is my intent that these subtle hints will lead to more questions rather than cause the viewer to

become a passive spectator. Ultimately it is up to the viewer to decide who they think is the real clone.

Not only are Garland's films intentionally vague to cause this increased audience reaction, but this vague nature also leads the movies to be able to be interpreted in multiple ways with different content. *Annihilation,* for example, is not a straight forward science fiction film. It has many different genre elements in it, which allow the viewer to interpret the film in the context they want. As Lauer explains in his essay "If the ending is read as horror rather than thriller in its release, the message shifts slightly to imply something new entirely. It's all up to the viewer's interpretation, and I'm sure that's part of why Annihilation really divides audiences and critics" (70). It is the audience engagement that allows personal biases and reactions to a certain theme to become present that is one of the main reasons Garland's science fiction films are seen as the beginning of a new type of films within the science fiction genre. My film follows in the same vein, since it was written with not only science fiction convention in mind, but also thriller conventions, as a subtle homage to Hitchcock, who was the director that made me want to pursue filmmaking. *Inhuman* can be read as a thriller with nothing more than the tension and entertainment value taken into account. In this case the viewer would not be invested in the ethical questions functioning behind the explicit narrative of the film and instead would be concerned solely with the search for the adoption papers. However, alternately *Inhuman* can be read from a more traditional science fiction perspective where the political and ethical interpretation are the crux of the film's narrative. It is in this interpretation that the ethical questions of what it means to be human and whether or not a clone could ever be fully human are the factors that motivate the audience's engagement.

The main change Garland's films make to the science fiction genre is that they use their themes and ambiguity to educate the world about itself and its conceptions. The choppy timeline and bizarre creatures in *Annihilation* lend the film to be read in a way that makes a statement about global warming, and the way the film does this is by "setting a new precedent for sci-fi as a genre and eco-horror as a way of using art to educate about the world" (66 Lauer). Eco-horror in this case means the elements of horror that surround the nature and the animals within the main location of the film, the Shimmer. This emphasis on using film to educate the world about itself is part of the new shift within science fiction where "science fiction has increasingly taken on the burden of our times in exploring the ways in which we seek to adjust to a global culture that prizes quantification and efficiency over qualitative values and the sheer pleasure of duration, favors enlightenment to the exclusion of romanticism" (1 Alpert). Garland's films do this, particularly in *Ex Machina,* where he places an emphasis on technology that is soon to come. This idea that humanity will be replaced with something else is not new to the science fiction genre, but the way in which the non-human is successful at the end of the film is new to the genre. While the original *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (Siegel 1956) film "included a studio-forced ending in which humans prevailed, *Ex Machina* celebrates, in effect, as a happy ending the triumph of the pod people in Philip Kaufman's far darker remake in 1978" (Alpert). This trend to a more cerebral and thought-provoking ending is what is allowing science fiction to make more statements about the culture that is watching the film than it once was able to when the genre was nothing more than loosely political escapism that inevitably ended with a happy ending regardless of what the political landscape was at the time. As Alpert writes, "Ava, the femme fatale, prevails. There is no Hollywood ending" (Page 1). It is this demise or doom of humanity in these films that signals the shift that Garland is leading with his filmmaking.

I personally am a fan of this new dismal lens of science fiction filmmaking and wanted to make full use of it in my film. While my film ends with ambiguity over whether or not society comes to reconcile its wrongs in relations to its treatment of clones, my film does not end in ambiguity in terms of the protagonist Laurel. Laurel in this case is clearly in pain and suffering from her mistake of giving up her sister. While I do not reveal whether Laurel is the human or the clone, I do show the negative impact that her own decisions had on her own life, thereby implying a sense of doom over her own life. I wanted to incorporate this bleak ending because I knew I wanted to cause a cerebral response from the audience that causes them to take a collective look at their own society around them and see where we all are in society as a whole. In the same vain that Garland uses eco-horror in *Annihilation* to warn a society about a current issue within culture, I wanted to use a dismal ending to cause a separated and more objective look at the current society around the spectator as a way for them to understand why they came to the decision they did about which sister they believe is the clone.

Before I move onto talking about the directing style of my film, I want to mention briefly one other narrative inspiration for *Inhuman*. Alfred Hitchcock is the director that made me want to pursue filmmaking. The Hitchcockian trait that I placed into my film is one that I learned in my first ever film course in college: The idea that the protagonists of Hitchcock films are all ordinary people that get placed in extraordinary situations which leads to the suspenseful nature of the rest of the film. Laurel and Willow are both ordinary people. They are raised with an ordinary life and have a normal life up until the announcement that clones are being recalled. It is that one moment where their otherwise ordinary life suddenly comes crashing down on them that the suspense of the film is presented. By forcing my protagonists into a situation in which they

have no other option, I am able to elevate them and the rest of the story to something that is able to carry the legacy of Alfred Hitchcock.

Directing and Film Analysis

The main issue I knew I was going to have with this film from the beginning was the use of clones. I knew that I was going to be able to composite some images to make them both appear on the screen, but I also knew that from a time standpoint I could not shoot every single shot as a composite shot because I did not have that much time to shoot, and that would have caused my edit time to be more than doubled. Therefore, I had to figure out how to create a cohesive visual story with only limited double shots. That led me to look into filmmakers that employ single character shots in their films, specifically in shot reverse shot sequences. The directors that I ended up going to for this inspiration were the Coen brothers. The films of the Coen brothers traditionally utilize wide angle lenses and place an emphasis on the environment of the film. A good example of this is the desert in the film *No Country for Old Men* (2007). In this film, the desert is a main focal point because it is what sets the tone and mood of the entire film. In order to give the desert its significance in the film, the Coen's not only shoot establishing and wide shots with a wide angle, but they also utilize their shot reverse shot to give more significance to the location. In an early scene when Anton escapes police captivity in a police car and then pulls over an unexpecting driver, the single shots of the driver in his brief exchange with Anton all have the desert in the background in focus. This focus on the background as well as the foreground with the character who is about to die helps to lend a sense of helplessness and isolation to the man in the car. The viewer already knows how dangerous Anton's character is, but the extended focus to the background of the desert heightens the sense of just how inescapable Anton's character is when he is on a mission to kill.

Looking at how the Coen's are able to utilize a simple shot reverse shot to add more depth to a simple scene inspired me to use a similar method to film dialogue between my clones. One of the main narrative elements in the film is that Laurel ultimately gives up her sister to save herself. I wanted this to be a surprise to the audience, so I did not include an obvious hint in the dialogue, however I did want to depict the gradual separation between the two sisters. I did this by using the Coen's method of deep focus, wide angle singles. The climax of *Inhuman,* the scene directly after Laurel makes the call to turn her sister in from the dive bar, is shot with wide angle singles as a way to emphasize the distance between the two. Not only are they each alone in the shot, but they are also surrounded by the woods, with Willow being backed by water signifying that she is literally trapped by the distance created by her sister in front of her. There is no way for Willow to go but towards Laurel, which Laurel already having distanced herself from Willow, would not allow. These wide-angle singles continue up until the moment when Willow finds out her sister's betrayal. It is this moment that I decided to go against the Coen's use of wide-angle singles by instead using a telephoto dolly back that causes the background to blur and Willow to be pushed back into the compressed background as a way to display her world caving in on her.

As well as looking at the Coen brothers as a visual inspiration in regard to using singles as a narrative technique rather than a necessary evil of the technical limitations of my film, I also looked at Damien Chazelle as an inspiration for how to best enhance my narrative themes though use of my direction. I knew I wanted to create a claustrophobic world while simultaneously creating distance between the two sisters. I chose to look at the films of Damien Chazelle for this issue because of the way he specifically directs his films based on what will best enhance the themes of his narratives.

David Bordwell describes the difference between two of Chazelle's most well-known films by stating that "Whiplash was all right angles, La La Land is all curves; Whiplash is short, kinetic punctuation, and percussive"("New Colors to Sing"). This use of short and harsh shots in the film *Whiplash* (2014) not only adds an element of tension because it forces the film to drive forward faster since shorter shots demand a faster editing, but it also adds upon the themes of the film. *Whiplash* is about an aspiring drummer and the film focuses heavily on the actual practice of drumming. Therefore, it makes sense to have shots that match the short percussive nature of a drum. However, if you look at Chazelles film *La La Land* (2016), the directing style is almost completely opposite, with many tracking and crane shots that add a sense of floating and dancing throughout the film. The extreme difference between these two directing styles shows that for Chazelle, it is not a cohesive directing style that is most important, but rather a consistency with what is best for a particular narrative. After looking at Chazelle's use of directing in each of these films, I decided to take a more in depth look at my own script and see what elements I wanted to highlight with my direction and see how I could take those elements and make a cohesive visual style that is best for emphasizing the themes of the film.

After looking at my script I realized that a good way to create the space between characters yet have a sense of claustrophobia in the world would be to use the Coen's version of wide angel singles in combination with Chazelle's idea of shorter shots and rapid cuts in *Whiplash.* Chazelle uses short and fast shots in *Whiplash* to move the pace along and not only to add suspense to the pressure placed upon the protagonist but also to highlight the fast-passed tempo and structure of the music being played in the film. I was able to take this structure and mold it to fit with the narrative needs of my own film. When I wanted to highlight a moment of heightened tension in my film, I decided to use the short shots that Chazelle uses in *Whiplash* to

create the film's tempo. Additionally, for my film, these short shots also are close ups because not only do they add to a quickened pace and therefore heightened tension, but they also induce the sense of claustrophobia that the characters themselves are feeling at that particular moment in the film.

The final thing that my research of Chazelle brought to my film was that fact that Chazelle believes in the importance of the imperfections. In fact,

> "he exploited the imperfections: "We're not doing a ton of post work to smooth out moves or eliminate hitches. Sometimes there'll be a hint of a bump or sway, but to me that's beautiful. If you look at the old dream ballets of Singin' in the Rain or An American in Paris, they're filled with that stuff and it gives a sense of humanity which really helps when you're doing giant, spectacular sets." (SCHRUERS)

The ability to not only not mind hiccups in the production process, but to use some of those within a final cut shows a maturity to Chazelle's style that truly grounds his films in reality and makes the stories much more compelling and relatable. I know that as a student filmmaker there were inevitably going to be mistakes made on set that might not be caught in time. And there were. I ran into some audio issues, with a few scenes having audio that peaked, but was not caught because the mixer was incorrectly attached to the camera. However, reading about Chazelle talk about how a few mistakes can add humanity to a film made me realize that a mistake is not the end of the world. As my film is completely intertwined with the notion of humanity and what it means to be human, it does add a subtle nuance that the mechanical nature of my film does have some human errors attached. While these errors were unplanned, they do

allow my film to come into greater communication with the central questions of my film: What does it mean to be human and can something not entirely human ever be considered human? I believe that my message will be more pertinent if I am able to make the world of my film more believable. If Chazelle was able to make a musical set in modern-day Los Angeles believable and realistic despite the spontaneous breaking out into song and dance on the freeway then I should be able to add a more realistic depth to my film with the simple hiccups that naturally occur on any set.

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