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Moloch's Children: Monstrous Techno-Capitalism in North American Popular Fiction

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Graduate Program in Comparative Literature
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Abstract

Deriving from the Latin *monere* (to warn), monsters are at their very core warnings against the horrors that lurk in the shadows of our present and the mists of our future – in this case, the horrors of techno-capitalism (i.e., the conjunction of scientific modes of research and capitalist modes of production). This thesis reveals the ideological mechanisms that animate “techno-capitalist” monster narratives through close readings of 7 novels and 3 films from Canada and the United States in both English and French and released between 1979 and 2016. All texts are linked by shared themes, narrative tropes, and a North American origin. Since the corpus emerges from the home of the current techno-capitalist hegemony, it reveals the fears of those who benefit from the system yet are still terrified by its potential. The inclusion of Canadian texts nuances the analysis by taking into account the internal hierarchy of the North American capitalist empire.

The thesis is primarily interested in how texts from three different cultures in the corpus construct their plots, characters, and settings to perform similar kinds of ideological work, that is, the work of representing and critiquing capitalist ideology. Special attention is paid to repeated motifs used to reveal and represent the monstrousness of the techno-capitalist system. The study of these motifs is divided into three sections. The first explores techno-capitalist monsters as personifications of the worst excesses of contemporary consumer culture. The second focuses on the fusion of science and capitalism as dramatized through the figure of the corporate mad scientist. The third reads the corpus as a collection of environmental narratives that comment on the techno-capitalist exploitation of nature. The ideological analysis of the corpus favours a socio-economic hermeneutic but also addresses issues of ethnicity and nationality. A Marxist theoretical approach is privileged throughout, with reliance on Baudrillardian concepts such as *the code* and *the hyperreal*.

Keywords: Techno-capitalism in fiction, Monsterology, Scientific horror fiction, Mad scientist, North American literature, North American cinema, *MaddAddam* trilogy, Biotechnology in popular culture, Eco-fiction, Technophobic fiction, Québécois horror fiction

Summary for Lay Audience

Deriving from the Latin word *monere*, which means to warn, monsters are at their very core warnings against the horrors that lurk in the shadows of our present and the mists of our future. This thesis is especially concerned with the monsters created by techno-capitalism: the worrisome alliance of science and capitalism. Through detailed analysis of 7 novels and 3 films from Canada and the United States in both English and French, this study reveals the ideological mechanisms that animate “techno-capitalist” monster narratives. All 10 works studied are linked by shared themes, narrative tropes, and a North American origin. Since the novels and films analyzed emerge from the home of the current techno-capitalist superpower, they reveal the fears of those who benefit from the system yet are still terrified by its potential.

In three chapters, this study explores how American and Canadian novels and films released between 1979 and 2016 construct their plots, characters, and settings in order to represent and critique capitalist ideology. It pays special attention to repeated motifs used to reveal and represent the monstrosity of contemporary consumer society, for-profit science and uncontrolled exploitation of natural resources. These motifs include, but are not limited to, cannibalism, mad scientists, theme parks and human/animal hybrids.

Using concepts created by well-known philosophers like Karl Marx and Jean Baudrillard, among others, this thesis highlights the socio-economic subtext behind popular monster stories while also touching on issues of ethnicity and nationality. The result is a unique and nuanced analysis that explores the seldom-studied internal hierarchy of the North American capitalist empire by studying its worst nightmares.

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Table of Contents

Abstract.....	ii
Summary for Lay Audience.....	iii
Acknowledgments	iv
Table of Contents	v
List of Figures.....	vii
Introduction.....	1
0.1 – Genesis.....	1
0.2 – Monster Zones	6
0.3 – Roll Call.....	9
0.4 – Silver Bullets.....	16
0.5 – Here Be Dragons.....	19
0.6 – A Note on Translation.....	19
Part I: Capitalism, Cannibalism and Monstrous Consumerism.....	21
1.1 – Introduction.....	21
1.2 – The Economic Uncanny of the Code.....	24
1.3 – Nonconsumption and Identity.....	43
1.4 – Excessive Consumption and the <i>Homo Economicus</i>	50
1.5 – When Hunger Leads to Violence.....	69
1.6 – Anti-Consumerism as Nationalist Discourse.....	88
1.7 – Conclusion	99
Part II: The Mad Scientist in a Corporate World	100
2.1 – Introduction.....	100
2.2 – Mad Scientists and Intertextuality.	104
2.3 – The Capitalist Answer to the Mad Scientist.	115
2.4 – The Scientist as CEO	119

2.5 – The Mad Scientist as Proletarian.	128
2.6 – The Cult of Practical Science.....	141
2.7 – More Machine than Scientist.	158
2.8 – The Corporation as Scientist.....	185
2.9 – Madness and Control	189
2.10 – Conclusion	199
Part III: Monsters as Natural Resources.....	202
3.1 – Introduction.....	202
3.2 – The Promethean Discourse and its Discontents.....	204
3.3 – The Divine Commodification of Nature.....	213
3.4 – The Illusion of Nature.....	221
3.5 – Resource Extraction, Workers, and the Corpse Economy.....	244
3.6 – Globalization and the Colonial Ancestry of Monsters.....	255
3.7 – Importing Monsters: Capitalism and Nationalism.....	264
3.8 – Conclusion	272
Conclusion	273
Works Cited.....	281
Appendix A: List of Original French Quotations	293
Curriculum Vitae.....	314

List of Figures

Figure 1 – <i>Dans le ventre du dragon</i> . (00:50:30)	35
Figure 2 – <i>Dans le ventre du dragon</i> . (01:13:27)	156
Figure 3 – <i>Dans le ventre du dragon</i> . (00:24:55)	177
Figure 4 – <i>Dans le ventre du dragon</i> . (01 :07 :11)	181
Figure 5 – <i>Splice</i> . (00 :06 :18)	244
Figure 6 – <i>Alien</i> (01:14:24).....	253
Figure 7 – <i>Alien</i> (01:46:22).....	254

Introduction

*What sphinx of cement and aluminum bashed open their skulls and ate up their
brains and imagination? [...]*

*Moloch whose mind is pure machinery! Moloch whose blood is running money!
[...]*

*Moloch whose eyes are a thousand blind windows! Moloch whose skyscrapers
stand in the long streets like endless Jehovahs! Moloch whose factories dream
and croak in the fog! Moloch whose smoke-stacks and antennae crown the cities!
Moloch whose love is endless oil and stone! Moloch whose soul is electricity and
banks! Moloch whose poverty is the specter of genius! Moloch whose fate is a
cloud of sexless hydrogen! [...]*

*Moloch! Moloch! Robot apartments! invisible suburbs! skeleton treasuries! blind
capitals! demonic industries! spectral nations! [...]*

—Allen Ginsberg, “Howl” (1956).

0.1 – Genesis

When I first encountered Allen Ginsberg’s “Howl” towards the end of my wild undergraduate years, not only was the name Moloch familiar to me, but it was already connected to technology in my mind. One of the staples of my teenage pop culture diet was *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, whose first season contained an episode named “I Robot, You Jane.” This episode opened with a demon named Moloch the Corrupter getting imprisoned in a book in fifteenth-century Italy. Flash forward more than five hundred years and the book ends up in the possession of the Sunnydale High School’s library. Before the viewer can start wondering why such an old and valuable tome would end up in a high school rather than a museum, the school’s computer science students scan the book, unleashing the demon Moloch inside the computer. After corrupting some students through chatrooms and e-mail interfaces as dated as the show’s fashion sense, Moloch has a robotic body built for him and looks poised to spread his evil over the world once more, only to be stopped by the titular Buffy and a well-placed electrical surge box. “I

Robot, You Jane” is not a very good episode of *Buffy*, to say the least, but it nonetheless stuck with me because it introduced me to a concept I had not seen before – the union of supernatural evil and modern technologies.

Thus, when I read “Howl” for the first time about a decade later, the image of the cheesy demon robot from *Buffy* is what first came into my mind. In Ginsberg’s words, however, Moloch was not so cheesy anymore. I realized that the monsters born of the marriage of the demonic and the technological could actually be scarier than the purely hellish demons of old, because one could not so easily dismiss them as dated superstitions. This is as far as my insight went at the time – I had other classes to take, other papers to write, and other parties to attend. Thus, I moved on.

Once out of the undergraduate fire and into the graduate frying pan, I happened upon Ginsberg’s poem again. Digging deeper into the text, I realized that the reason Ginsberg’s Moloch scared me more than *Buffy*’s ever did was not just because of Ginsberg’s poetic talent, but also because this Moloch had layers that the other lacked. This Moloch was the demonic spawn of supernatural evil, modern technologies...and capitalism. Ginsberg wasn’t describing monstrous technology; he was describing monstrous *techno-capitalism*. Once I realized this, the idea of a techno-capitalist monster did not leave my mind. I could not help but wonder – if the idea of a machine-demon could be found in both a Beat poem from the fifties and a teenage soap opera about vampires from the nineties, could it be found anywhere else? Were there enough children of Moloch running around to structure an entire research project around them?

The text you are holding in your hands is the answer to this question. An answer that turned out to be a very loud “YES!” So much so that I had to limit the scope of my inquiry to be able to deliver a work of manageable length. After rummaging through a mountain of scholarship on monsters, the most interesting as well as the most neglected aspect of the topic turned out to be the intersection of science and capitalism.

Consequently, I decided to limit this research to stories that feature monsters created through the intersection of science and capitalism and that use these monsters to criticize, comment on, or warn against that very intersection. No supernatural horrors will be found

in these pages – no vampires, no demons, and, sadly, no demonic robots. Only the products of human nightmares given life by our own hands.

Once I knew what to look for, I started building a corpus. This task was initially more difficult than I had anticipated, as the techno-capitalist monsters I was looking for proved elusive. During this process, I learned a fundamental lesson: “monsters are everywhere and nowhere” (McNally 2). Born in North America in 1988, I grew up under the influence of a certain neoliberal ideology (‘Reaganomics’) we still struggle with today, which means that I have been surrounded by techno-capitalist monsters all my life yet did not see them because

[t]he very insidiousness of the capitalist grotesque has to do with invisibility, with, in other words, the ways in which monstrosity becomes normalised and naturalised via its colonisation of the essential fabric of everyday-life [sic], beginning with the very texture of corporeal experience in the modern world. What is most striking about capitalist monstrosity, in other words, is its elusive everydayness, its apparently seamless integration into the banal and mundane rhythms of quotidian existence. (2)

This power of concealment works both inside and outside of fiction. Techno-capitalism has a vested interest in staying invisible and in letting debates around science be articulated only in terms of pro- and anti-science positions detached from any economic or class-based concerns. For a relatively recent and close to home example, let me take you back to May 2013, when the Canadian government – then led by Stephen Harper’s Conservative Party – restructured the National Science Council “into an agency for the scientific support of business R&D” (Amend 20). Government-appointed NSC president John McDougall justified the change with the following statement:

We have shifted the primary focus of our work at NRC from the traditional emphasis of basic research and discovery science in favour of a more targeted approach to research and development. [...] Impact is the essence of innovation. A new idea or discovery may in fact be interesting, but it doesn't qualify as

innovation until it's been developed into something that has commercial or societal value. [...] We will measure our success by the success of our clients. (Canadian Press, n.p.)

This decision was unsurprisingly controversial, with many critics citing the change as yet more evidence of the Conservative government's "quiet legislative and administrative war on science" (Turner, n.p.). However, as commonly lobbied as the charge of anti-science has been against Stephen Harper and his government,

describing the Harper government as "anti-science" thus fails to account for the Canadian state's substantial, ongoing investment of public funds and strategic attention in the science and technology sectors, and does not adequately describe the character of its priorities and actions in this area. Any residual anti-science sentiments that might have lingered in certain corners of the Conservative mindset were eclipsed by a pro-capitalist imperative that demanded the mobilization of science and technology as forces of "innovation" in the service of commercial and industrial development – a role (though certainly not the only role) science has played for at least as long as there has been a capitalist economy. (Amend 20-21)

Ascribing a hatred of science to the Harper government is to miss the forest for the trees. The Harper government was all for scientific research and technological development, but only if they were in "conformity with the priorities of market ideology and capitalist industry" (Amend 20). In the pursuit of this goal, "certain types of scientific practice suffered collateral damage, while others were supported, mobilized, and promoted [...] as a condition of Canada's competitiveness in the global capitalist economy" (26). The motive behind the modification of the NSC's mandate was not to eliminate science, but to fuse science and capitalism into one unified system: techno-capitalism.

Looking back now, I cannot help but shake my head at the naivety of my younger self (on this and on many other subjects). I completely missed the role that capitalist imperatives played in the NSC's restructuring; how its new mandate was part of a larger campaign to "orien[t] the Canadian economy, political culture, and state toward accelerated capital

accumulation, unfettered resource extraction, privatization, securitization, commercialization of knowledge, and personalization of responsibility for market failure” (26). I was not the only one, of course. As a rule, the popular critical discourse of the Conservative government’s behavior towards scientific research was that they were “anti-science” (see Amend 10 for a list of examples of such criticism). As damaging as the Conservatives’ actions were, the labelling of these actions as anti-science rather than as pro-techno-capitalism did its share of damage as well. Labelling the Harper government this way “not only directs us away from what that government was and did; it also primes us for policy responses that will go unquestioned because they are proof of enlightenment by comparison. It also leaves many of the most important questions about science unasked” (28). The most powerful power in the techno-capitalist monster’s arsenal is invisibility. This is not a new insight. Marx himself “regularly reminded us” that

the essential features of capitalism [...] are not immediately visible. To be sure, many of their effects can be touched and measured. But the circuits through which capital moves are abstracted ones; we are left to observe things and persons – boxes of commodities, factories full of machines, workers straining inside the sweatshop, lines of people seeking work or bread – while the elusive power that grows and multiplies through their deployment remains unseen, un-comprehended. (McNally 6)

My research, therefore, is not just about analysing how techno-capitalist monsters are used to criticize or comment on the socio-economic hegemony we live in. It is also about shining a light on scientific monsters and illuminating the capitalist forces that are pulling those monsters’ – and their creators’ – strings from the shadow of the everyday. To paraphrase Charles Baudelaire (among others), “the finest of all [of Moloch’s] tricks was persuading you that he doesn’t exist!” (61).¹ The present work is all about reminding you that Moloch does exist, and he is closer than you think.

¹ The phrase is usually attributed to Baudelaire but has appeared in various wordings both before and after Baudelaire. The most famous version in English today is probably the one spoken by Kevin Spacey in the 1995 film *The Usual Suspects*: “The greatest trick the Devil ever pulled was convincing the world he didn’t exist.”

0.2 – Monster Zones

Before we can start catching some of Moloch’s monstrous children to dissect and study, I need to delineate the hunting grounds, in both space and time. The widespread diffusion of techno-capitalist values and structures, especially since the Second World War, means that techno-capitalist monsters truly walk the Earth. No corner of our planet is free from them. They take different forms in different places, of course, but ultimately, they are all the same evil entity, reproduced *ad infinitum*. That does not mean that their different forms are not important – quite the opposite. For example, political scientist David McNally chooses to focus on “environments in which bourgeois relations are still experienced as strange and horrifying [...], most manifestly when commodification invades new spheres of social life” such as 19th-century England and contemporary sub-Saharan Africa. He is thus able to study how the violence that characterizes the first arrival of a techno-capitalist system in a society gets exorcised through tales of zombies, vampires, and evil spirits (2). Unlike McNally, I decided to avoid looking at the “amazingly creative efforts by subaltern groups to map just what is happening to the very corporeal and social fabric of their life” (15). Although these monster stories are interesting in and of themselves, I am even more interested in the equally creative efforts of resistance that tales of techno-capitalist monsters can muster within an already well-established techno-capitalist hegemony. I will thus explore the fears of those who benefit from the system yet are still terrified by its potential, fears I believe to be as worthy of analysis as the those of their victims. This means that I wanted to select works emerging from the home of the current techno-capitalist hegemony – North America – and in particular from the United States.

American techno-capitalist monsters have been studied before. In fact, the majority of what has been published on capitalist monsters (techno- or otherwise) focuses on American monsters. However, by focusing only on American texts – to the point of sometimes including Canadian texts without distinguishing them from the rest of the American corpus – the existing scholarship occults the internal hierarchy of the North American capitalist empire and the economic and cultural inequalities built into it.

Therefore, when selecting my corpus, I decided to study American works not in isolation, but in comparison with texts from two other cultures: English Canada and Quebec. The addition of a second and third national context allowed me to produce a more detailed analysis of North American techno-capitalism and provide insights into texts that are rarely, if ever, discussed in this context. Broadening my analytical context to include a larger portion of North America (both literally and figuratively) will also benefit the scholarship on American works about capitalist monsters by illuminating aspects of them that can only be seen through comparison with other literatures.

Selecting a period of study was much more straightforward. My area of expertise is the second half of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first, so this is where I chose my examples from. After some research, I focused on works produced since the eighties in order to get a more manageable corpus. Even then, my corpus covers almost forty years of culture, during which the capitalist system underwent significant changes. Simply put, this period corresponds to the hegemony of a form of capitalism commonly known as post-Fordism and its transformation into communicative capitalism. To summarize very briefly Rob Latham's lengthy explanation, post-Fordism can be defined at the level of both production and consumption. On the production side, it is a regime of "increasing social and global mobility of capital that has permitted it to radically restructure labor markets [. . .] and to begin to transform industrial organization, de-emphasizing assembly-line production of identical commodities in favor of 'batch production' of more specialized and differentiated consumer goods" (18). On the consumption side, post-Fordism "is characterized by a transition from a stable and expanding mass market to rapidly shifting niche markets" (18). This describes very well the sort of consumer capitalism found in North America in the eighties and the early nineties. However, with the rise of the internet and global telecommunication networks in the mid-nineties, capitalism underwent radical changes to 'keep up' with the technological ones. According to Jodi Dean,

[t]he concept of communicative capitalism designates the strange merging of democracy and capitalism in which contemporary subjects are produced and

trapped. It does so by highlighting the way networked communications bring the two together. The values heralded as central to democracy take material form in networked communications technologies. [...] Instead of leading to more equitable distributions of wealth influence, instead of enabling the emergence of a richer variety in modes of living and practices of freedom, the deluge of screens and spectacles coincides with extreme corporatization, financialization, and privatization across the globe. Rhetorics of access, participation, and democracy work ideologically to secure the technological infrastructure of neoliberalism, an invidious and predatory politico-economic project that concentrates assets and power in the hands of the very, very rich, devastating the planet and destroying the lives of billions of people. (22-23)

Communicative capitalism is the direct evolution of post-Fordism and in particular of its emphasis on the proliferation of niche markets, to which communicative capitalism now sells ideas as well as goods.

As far as my corpus is concerned, however, the differences between post-Fordism and communicative capitalism matter little. This is a study of how techno-capitalism is represented in fiction. All representations – monsters included – are by nature simplified copies of their referents, holographic projections that highlight salient traits and eliminate differences. While those differences should be kept in mind, I am more interested in what they have in common than in what distinguishes them. The object of this research is to understand how monsters of varying shapes and origin can all be read as different manifestations of a single horrifying phenomenon – techno-capitalism – that has been haunting our society for decades without yet having been exorcised. The techno-capitalist monsters of post-Fordism and those of communicative capitalism may look slightly different, but the fears they create – fears of commodification, exploitation and alienation – are the same and should thus to be studied together. Ginsberg's Moloch is not gone. He has simply changed his name.

0.3 – Roll Call

So, what are techno-capitalist monsters exactly? How can we recognize them if they constantly change their appearance alongside capitalism itself? One would reasonably expect that when creating a corpus of monster stories, the starting point would be a unified definition of the word ‘monster.’ The problem is that, like renowned monster scholar Stephen T. Asma, I do not believe such a definition exists. Rather, I think it is more productive to consider the monster in terms of what Asma, following Austrian philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein, refers to as “prototype theory.” The main conceit of prototype theory is that

most things were not connected by a common definition, but instead shared overlapping similarities. [...] When I say or think *bird*, some more or less determinate bird comes into my mind’s eye; it looks more like a robin than an albatross or a penguin. For many people, a robin-like bird is the conceptual prototype of *bird*, and other birds are closer or further away from that prototype. The duck, falcon, and ostrich can be conceptually mapped in varying distances from my prototype image of a bird. Each bird fulfills some of the criteria of bird (e.g., has feathers, flies, is oviparous and beaked), but none of them fulfills all the criteria. There is no *definition* of bird that wouldn’t eventually leave some bird out. (Asma 282)

Just like the word ‘bird,’ the word ‘monster’ refers not to a rigid essence of monstrosity but to a loose collection of properties and qualities that makes a being monstrous. Prototypically, “monsters cannot be reasoned with. Monsters are generally ugly and inspire horror. Monsters are unnatural. Monsters are overwhelmingly powerful. Monsters are evil. Monsters are misunderstood. Monsters cannot be understood” (283). Some of these qualities contradict each other because, like all linguistic and conceptual constructs, the monster form is protean and historically determined. “Each time the grave opens [...], the message proclaimed is transformed by the air that gives its speaker new life. Monsters must be examined within the intricate matrix of relations (social, cultural, and literary-historical) that generates them” (Cohen 4). That is not to say that every aspect of the

monster is equally fluid: “certain aspects of monsters are historically provincial and relative, irrevocably situated in context, but some show perennial existence” (Asma 283). The only constant is ugliness, though even that has some flexibility to it. Some monsters are physically ugly while others hide their ugliness behind either apparent beauty or outward normalcy and averageness.

In many ways, not having a strict definition of ‘techno-capitalist monster’ is a boon. I strongly believe that the very ambiguity of the term monster is part and parcel of what makes monsters so well suited to being allegories of capitalism. The difficulty in defining what is and is not a monster mirrors capitalism’s “elusive everydayness, its apparently seamless integration into the banal and mundane rhythms of quotidian existence” (McNally 2). “What does a techno-capitalist monster look like?” is a question for my research to answer in the following chapters rather than a prolegomenon to it.

With that said, any coherent research endeavor needs an internally coherent foundation. In accordance with my chosen prototypical approach, I have selected my corpus according to a few distinctive qualities. As with birds, not all the monsters in my corpus fulfill every single one of these criteria, but all fulfill the majority.

First, techno-capitalist monsters are created by science and their creation is a for-profit endeavour. This is the most basic criterion for inclusion in the corpus, but some works adhere to it less literally than others. In Dean Koontz’s *Midnight*, for example, the main goal of the villainous Thomas Shaddack is to create monstrous man-machine hybrids in a bid for world-domination rather than to make money. Wealth is not a goal for Shaddack, but the main tool he uses to reach his goals. His monsters therefore comment directly on techno-capitalism even though their creation is only facilitated, rather than motivated, by profit. Likewise, while mad scientist Crake in Margaret Atwood’s *MaddAddam* trilogy is not after profits, the corporations who bankroll him are, and without their funding, Crake would not be a danger. At first glance, Ridley Scott’s *Alien* seems to meet neither criteria, because the monster the film is built around – the xenomorph² – is not created by science.

² Taken from a single line of dialogue in *Aliens*, where it was meant as a generic term for an unknown lifeform, xenomorph (from the Greek *xeno* – foreign – and *morph* – shape or form) has ironically

While this is true,³ the xenomorph is not the only monster in *Alien*. At about the halfway point of the film, Ash, the ship's science officer, is revealed to be an evil android who was programmed to protect the xenomorph at all costs so that "the Company" can study and monetize the creature. Thus, not only does *Alien* feature a monster exploited for techno-capitalist reasons (the xenomorph), it also features one straightforward techno-capitalist monster (Ash).

Second, techno-capitalist monsters are either non-human creatures created artificially through scientific procedures (*Jurassic Park*, the *Maddaddam* trilogy, *Splice*, *Alien*) or 'normal' humans transformed by a scientific experiment (*Anita*, *Cédric*, *Dans le ventre du dragon*,⁴ *Midnight*). The first tend to be visibly monstrous, while the others tend to look like average human beings on the outside, though exceptions exist in both cases. Even when the monstrosity is not visible, the monstrous characters tend to be explicitly referred to as monsters regardless, which helps justify their inclusions.

Third, techno-capitalist monsters are the progeny of mad scientists. The mad scientist can play a variety of roles in a narrative and be specialized in a variety of fields: "Sometimes essentially a demiurge figure (a creator of life), he also periodically plays the role of an adventurer, a technician or a hypnotist. He is proficient in biology, chemistry, medicine, psychology (hypnotism), pseudoscience (such as mesmerism), engineering, etc." (Després 21). To create or study techno-capitalist monsters, mad scientists may use genetic engineering (*Jurassic Park*, *Splice*, the *Maddaddam* trilogy), robotic engineering (*Midnight*), pharmacology (*Anita*, *Cédric*), pseudoscience (*Dans le ventre du dragon*), and even vague, unspecified 'science' (*Alien*). In addition, many creators of techno-

become the common way for fans of the *Alien* franchise to refer specifically to the titular and otherwise nameless monster. Most academic works on the films prefer to use generic terms like "the monster," "the creature" or simply "the alien." However, since I will be talking about many monsters, such an approach is impractical. Therefore, I will be using the term "xenomorph" because it is short, specific and will prevent confusion between the title of the film and the creature itself.

³ The latest movie in the franchise, *Alien: Covenant* (2017), reveals that the xenomorphs are actually artificial creatures created by the android David – himself the product of human science – by mixing human DNA with that of other already-existing alien creatures. However, since this 'origin story' contradicts multiple facts from the original *Alien*, I have chosen to ignore it, even though *Covenant* was also directed by Ridley Scott.

⁴ *Dans le ventre du dragon* translates into English as *In the Belly of the Dragon*. Since I am using the original title of every other film or novel in the corpus, I will use the original title throughout.

capitalist monsters are demiurge figures. Whether through resurrecting extinct lifeforms (*Jurassic Park*, *Alien*),⁵ modifying extant lifeforms (*Midnight*, *Dans le ventre du dragon*, *Anita*, *Cédric*) or designing entirely new lifeforms (*Splice*, the *Maddaddam* trilogy), their primary goal is the creation of life.

In this manner, stories about techno-capitalist monsters rehearse a very old fear in “[t]he idea that science could penetrate the mystery of life itself and then manipulate it for its own end,” an idea which “transformed from exciting to frightening almost immediately” after humanity thought of it (Asma 152), which was presumably on the eighth day.

Indeed, humankind has sacralized the act of creating life almost from the beginning. In Hellenistic mythology, the titan Prometheus stole fire from Zeus and gave it to humans. In this myth, the stolen fire symbolizes the source of technological progress. By passing it on to humans, Prometheus gave them the gift of knowledge and civilization – what we would today call science. Later myths strengthened the symbolic association between fire and humanity’s ability to reason and create by describing Prometheus as the creator of humanity, whom he shaped out of clay. Having a single mythological being responsible for both creating life and creating knowledge established a belief that has survived for centuries: that creating life was a form of knowledge which could be learned like any other.

The divine origin of life is part of most – if not all – religious traditions throughout history. In parallel to those traditions, however, inquisitive minds have never stopped trying to repeat Prometheus’ exploit and to steal the knowledge of life creation from its divine owner(s). In medieval Europe, alchemists were fascinated by the concept of the *homunculus*: a “little man” created through artificial means. The idea was first promulgated in the *Homilies* of Clement of Rome (ca. 250 CE), which described the alleged conjuring of such a being by the sorcerer Simon Magus. By the early sixteenth

⁵ *Alien* heavily hints that the crashed ship inside of which the crew of the *Nostromo* finds the xenomorph eggs is ancient. The giant fossilized pilot with a hole in its chest implies that the eggs are equally ancient, laid by whatever killed the pilot. That would mean that by introducing human hosts, The Company allows the eggs, which have until then been lying dormant for years (centuries? millennia?), to become active again, thus ‘resurrecting’ the xenomorphs.

century, Paracelsus⁶ claimed to have a precise recipe for the physical generation of a *homunculus* from a mixture of semen and blood without need for a female uterus (Haynes 17), and the concept has reemerged periodically since then. Today “on the homunculus front we have cloning, in vitro fertilization, artificial intelligence, donor eggs and sperm, surrogate parenting and genetic engineering to produce the offspring of our choice. All have been greeted with a combination of fear and hope” (25).

Techno-capitalist homunculi differ from their ancestors in that they are a product of greed, not hubris. Which brings me to the fourth and final prototypical quality of the techno-capitalist monster: it is used by the narrative as a warning. This quality is the only one all the works in my corpus possess in equal measure. If there is any one essential quality of the monster, it is to embody a cautionary tale. The term monster “derives from the latin *monere* (to warn).⁷ Amongst other things, monsters are warnings – not only of what may happen but also of what is already *happening*” (McNally 9). The monster, therefore, is a means of communication, a way for authors to embed messages of varying subtlety into their fictions. Monsters can convey truths – or, more objectively, what the author considers to be truths – that readers would prefer to ignore.

The uncomfortable truths that monsters can reveal are as numerous as the shapes they can take. Although techno-capitalist monsters can vary slightly in their message, in general their effect is to “disturb the naturalisation of capitalism – both of its social relations and the senses of property, propriety and personhood that accompany it – by insisting that something strange, life-threatening, is at work in our world” (5). Techno-capitalist

⁶ Theophrastus Bombastus von Hohenheim, known as Paracelsus, was a Swiss physician and alchemist. Among other accomplishments, Paracelsus “was the first to use the word *chemistry* to express the formulas and techniques of his treatments, which involved chemical drugs rather than the herbal medicines hitherto in favor” (Haynes 16). The respect accorded to Paracelsus by his contemporaries means that while his recipe to create a *homunculus* appears to our modern eyes as nonsense, back then it would have been considered credible.

⁷ Barbara Creed gives the same etymological definition but identifies the Latin root as *monstrare* rather than *monere* (ix). According to Lewis and Short’s Latin dictionary, *monstrare* comes from *monere*. McNally thus follows the etymological trail further than Creed does, but both are technically correct. See the entries for *moneo*, *monstro* and *monstrum* (Lewis and Short 1161-3).

monsters act like ultraviolet light, revealing the blood that techno-capitalism has spilled and that the naked eye cannot see.

Not all narratives containing techno-capitalist monsters are intended primarily as warnings against techno-capitalism. Some works (*Jurassic Park*, the *Maddaddam* trilogy) are more blatant than others, but in most cases

[t]he ‘capitalist’ part of capitalist monsters is usually a subtext and may not even be the most important part of a narrative. It lurks in the background, shaping events and infecting the plot line. And it must be contained, figured, talked around, repressed. Stories where economic concerns rise to the surface and become overt are generally marginal affairs, embraced only by audiences of the highly educated or hardcore fans. (Newitz 3)

The immediate fear caused by the monster helps hide the uncomfortable truths of which they are the harbinger, allowing for these truths to be revealed only once the reader or viewer is already hooked by the story’s thrills and chills. Such a deception is necessary because “cultures often repress and deny the most profound warnings of monstrous happenings” (McNally 9). The visceral fear caused by monsters not only hides the message, it gives it gargantuan strength. “So normalised has capitalism become in the social sciences, so naturalised its historically unique forms of life,” says McNally, “that only images with explosive power can break the web of mystification” (5-6). Monsters are useful because, while they can hide themselves, once revealed, they cannot be ignored. Once made visible, techno-capitalist monsters command the attention and attract all eyes to themselves, which makes them “especially compelling in an age in which capitalism has become as invisible as the air we breathe. In their insistence that something not-quite real is at work within global capitalism, some occult process of exploitation that conceals itself, these tales carry a *defetishising* charge” (15). I’m keeping the discussion of fetishism for later, but I like to imagine the monster as a silent but deadly missile whose explosive ‘charge’ shatters all illusions on impact. The paradox of the usefulness of the monster as a critical tool – subtle yet obvious, invisible yet eye-catching, silent yet loud – finds its perfect metaphor in the film version of *Jurassic Park*,

where the Tyrannosaurus Rex can sneak up on the protagonists or make the ground shake with her every step, depending on the needs of the plot.

Once I had determined my basic criteria, I investigated the literature and film production of the three selected cultures. I focused my investigation on popular novels and films because works designed to reach a wide audience tend to represent most clearly the ideological, social and cultural zeitgeist of their era. “Capitalist monsters are found in literature and art film as well as commercial fiction and movies” (Newitz 2), but popular works, in my opinion, offer the best snapshots of how capitalist monsters function as part of a larger cultural discussion around capitalism, science and the consequences of their interaction. Within the established parameters, there were more choices for American texts than for Canadian ones, and a lot more than for Québécois texts. While works that criticize capitalism abound in Québécois fiction and works that criticize science are not uncommon, very few of these texts feature monsters. I hypothesize that this absence of capitalist monsters in Quebecois texts may come from an absence of such monsters in the local visual imagery, namely cinema. However, both horror fiction and horror cinema have become more and more popular in the last ten to fifteen years (Freitag 183) and I was thus able to find a couple of novels and one film that fit the bill. Ironically, the film I ended up choosing is not from the new crop of horror films but one of the rare movies preceding this boom to feature both monsters and mad scientists.⁸

For ease of reference, my corpus of analysis is composed of the following works:

- **Quebec**
 - *Anita*, by Marilou Addison, 2014.
 - *Cédric*, by Alain Chaperon, 2016.

⁸ Whether or not *Dans le ventre du dragon* can be considered horror is a matter of debate. Freitag and Loiselle argue that the only French-language horror movie made in Quebec before 2000 is Jean Beaudin’s 1972 film *Le Diable est parmi nous* (*The Devil is Among Us*) and that any other films that borrowed horror tropes – like 1996 vampire film *Karmina* – were comedies “seek[ing] to amuse rather than scare, shock and disturb their audiences” (Freitag 190). While *Dans le ventre du dragon* is certainly comedic for a good portion of its runtime, I would argue that, unlike *Karmina*, it plays its more suspenseful elements straight rather than for laughs. Thus, while it may not be a straightforward horror movie, I think the film deserves to at least be called a horror-comedy.

- *Dans le ventre du dragon (In the Belly of the Dragon)*, directed by Yves Simoneau, 1989
- **Canada**
 - The *MaddAddam* trilogy (*Oryx and Crake*, *The Year of the Flood*, and *MaddAddam*), by Margaret Atwood, 2003, 2009 and 2013.
 - *Splice*, directed by Vincenzo Natali, 2010.
- **United States**
 - *Midnight*, by Dean R. Koontz, 1989.
 - *Jurassic Park*, by Michael Crichton, 1990.
 - *Alien*, directed by Ridley Scott, 1979.

0.4 – Silver Bullets

Now that we know what, where, and when to hunt, all we need to do before moving on to the hunt proper is to review our armament. Just as one cannot hunt a vampire without a wooden stake or a werewolf without a silver bullet, one has no hope of catching and subduing techno-capitalist monsters without the right weapon. The main weapon in my arsenal is, unsurprisingly, Marxist theory. After all,

[n]umerous commentators have noted Marx's propensity to enlist images of monsters to depict how capitalism operates. [...] Typically, formulations of this sort are seen as mere rhetorical flourishes; rarely has their strategic-theoretical purpose been divined, nor its connection to the theme of corporeal dismemberment. As Marx searched for a means of depicting the actual horrors of capitalism, [...] he reworked the discourse of monstrosity that emerged with the rise of capitalism. Pillaging popular and literary imagination, from vampire-tales to Goethe's Faust, he cast capitalism as both a modern horror-story and a mystery tale, each inexplicable outside the language of monstrosity. (McNally 13)

Since Marx's insights about the predatory nature of capitalism and its mechanisms made him the first theorist to link capitalism and monstrosity, it makes sense to lean on him. As his work is still the best way to understand the horrifying capitalist machinery hiding

behind the veil of normalcy, I will go back to it often. The capitalist monsters that Marx is discussing, however, are from a different, older breed than the ones I will be dealing with. To account for this difference, I will turn to Baudrillard's postmodern contribution to Marxism. Specifically, I intend to exploit Baudrillard's concepts of *the code* (Section 1) and of *the hyperreal* (Section 3). Baudrillard's writings have often been accused of being too 'apocalyptic' in nature. I do not disagree, but in the case of my subject matter, an apocalyptic tone is quite appropriate. The word 'apocalypse' originally means revelation, and what is the purpose of revealing the end of the world if not to warn against it? Case in point, Baudrillard's 'apocalyptic' vision of scientific progress – genetic engineering in particular – could be applied to this study as well:

But perhaps we may see this as a kind of adventure, a heroic test: to take artificialization of living beings as far as possible to see, finally, what part of human nature survives the great ordeal. If we discover that not everything can be cloned, simulated, programmed, genetically and neurologically managed, then whatever survives could truly be called "human": some inalienable and indestructible human quality could finally be identified. Of course, there is always the risk, in this experimental adventure, that nothing will pass the test—that the human will be permanently eradicated. (*Vital* 15-16)

By imagining the monstrous potential of the convergence of science and capitalism, my corpus performs such an "experimental adventure" inside the realm of the imaginary, thus avoiding the risk "that the human will be permanently eradicated." Monster stories allow a society to confront head on the dangers of techno-capitalism – dangers Baudrillard himself wrote about – and to imagine what might result from this confrontation.

As may be obvious by my choice of primary theory, I will first and foremost perform an ideological analysis of the texts in my corpus. I am primarily interested in how these texts construct their plot, characters, and setting in order to better reveal and represent the monstrousness of the techno-capitalist nature, in both literal and figurative forms. Since this is a comparative analysis of multiple works from three different cultures, special

attention will be paid to repeated motifs used by many of the works in my corpus to perform similar kinds of ideological work, that is, the work of representing and critiquing ideology. These motifs could be read as what Fredric Jameson named “ideologemes,” or the smallest possible unit of ideology. Like Jameson, I believe that

the ideological analysis of [...] cultural products requires us to demonstrate each one as a complex work of transformation on that ultimate raw material which is the ideologue in question. The analyst's work is thus first that of the identification of the ideologue, and, in many cases, of its initial naming in instances where, for whatever reason, it had not yet been registered as such. (87-88)

In other words, I aim to demonstrate how the texts in my corpus use different narrative and rhetorical elements as tools to expand the reach or strengthen the power of their ideological work.

One of my favorite tools with which to perform ideological analysis is the hierarchy of discourses. First defined by Marxist structuralist thinkers, this concept divides a text into *histoire* and discourse.⁹ The *histoire* “narrates events apparently without the intervention of a speaker” while “discourse, on the other hand, acknowledges a voice” (Belsey 66). A specific text has multiple discourses, most often attached to particular characters. The *histoire* is superior to these discourses; it is a “transcendent position of knowledge constructed for the reader, a position which is in itself non-contradictory” (77). In other words, the *histoire* carries the ideological “truth” of the novel and attempts to lead its readers to agree with that truth. In order to reject that truth, a reader must “make a deliberate and ideological choice” (77). According to this theoretical structure, narratives also tend toward a moment of “closure” (69) in which key discourses will converge into or become ideologically inseparable from the *histoire*. Therefore, the discourses which are ideologically closer to the *histoire* are the ones that are hierarchically privileged. The

⁹ This concept was first created for the analysis of “classical” or “expressive” realist texts narrated in the third person, but it can be used to perform an ideological critique of most kinds of texts. For more details, see Belsey 7-13 and 52-77. I decided to retain the original term *histoire* rather than use the English translation ‘history’ to preserve the double meaning of the French word (story and history).

hierarchy of discourses is a useful concept because it can reveal how apparent contradictions in a narrative are, by way of their subordinate position to other discourses and to the *histoire*, actually reinforcing the ideology or ideologies privileged by the *histoire*.

That is not to say, however, that genuine, irresolvable contradictions or paradoxes will not be addressed throughout this thesis. Due to the nature of monsters as “figures of liminality or in-betweenness [...] at the same time charged with the insoluble task of resolving real social contradictions and with the function of inventing symbolic solutions to imaginary contradictions” (Uebel 266), such contradictions are not only expected but also unavoidable. I would even go so far as saying that these contradictions are the very reason why monster stories are such a perfect fit for critiquing and deconstructing technocapitalism.

0.5 – Here Be Dragons

Medieval cartographers had the habit of filling the uncharted areas of their maps with all manners of sea serpents and winged lizards. The goal was to warn of danger and convince sailors not to venture into these areas. I, on the contrary, am sailing full sail towards them. I invite you to join me on this journey into the monster zones of science and capitalism, which will prove to be as perilous as the most inhospitable regions of Earth. I can promise that you will come out of it alive, but I cannot promise that you will come out of it unchanged.

0.6 – A Note on Translation

Some of the French language texts used in this research – *Dans le ventre du dragon*, *Anita*, *Cédric*, the *Chapitre final* that accompanies these last two, and a number of secondary sources – have no existing English translation or dub. *Dans le ventre du dragon* is subtitled in English, but the subtitles do not reflect the dialogue accurately. Rather, they simply communicate the general ideas conveyed by the characters. As a result, I have personally translated all quotations from these sources in the body of the

text. The original quotations are listed in Appendix A. For French-language sources that have previously been translated in English, I have simply quoted the published translation.

Part I: Capitalism, Cannibalism and Monstrous Consumerism.

Would you like a Cadillac car? Or a guest shot on Jack Paar?

How about a date with Hedy Lamarr? You gonna git it!

If you want it, baby.

Would you like to be a big wheel? Dining out for every meal?

I'm the plant who can make it all real! You gonna git it!

I'm your genie, I'm your friend! I'm your willing slave.

Take a chance, just feed me and...

You know the kinda eats, the kinda red hot treats,

the kinda sticky licky sweets I crave!

Come on, Seymour, don't be a putz!

Trust me and your life will surely rival King Tut's!

Show a little initiative, work up the guts, and you'll git it!

— Levi Stubs as Audrey II, *Little Shop of Horrors* (1986)

(00:41:05)

1.1 – Introduction

McNally describes the anxieties and fears expressed in monster narratives since the early days of capitalism as a series of “persistent body panics” which “thro[w] light on the troubled relations between human bodies and the operations of the capitalist economy” and “underline the profound experiential basis for a capitalist *monsterology*, a study of the monstrous forms of everyday-life [sic] in a capitalist world-system” (2). In dramatizing these body panics and making visible the mechanisms that underlie them, the

monsters of the market operate on each side of body-panic, as both perpetrators and victims. In the former camp, we have those monstrous beings – vampires, evil doctors, pharmaceutical companies, body-snatchers – that capture and dissect bodies, and bring their bits to market. In the camp of the victims, we find those disfigured creatures, frequently depicted as zombies, who have been turned into

mere bodies, unthinking and exploitable collections of flesh, blood, muscle and tissue. (McNally 4)

For McNally, the monstrous world of capitalism is a bipartite one with a firm boundary between the monstrous aggressor (capital) and the monstrous victim (proletariat). This is in accordance with Marx's classic description of capital as a "vampire-like" entity possessed of a "werewolf-like hunger for labour" and "vampir[ic] thirsts for the living blood of labour" (Marx qtd. in McNally 13). Another commentator notes that "[f]or Marx, the capitalist factory system is a regime of avid vampirism whose victims are transformed into undead extensions of its own vast, insensate, endlessly feeding body," a regime under which "[t]he worker essentially becomes a cybernetic organism – a cyborg – prosthetically linked to a despotic, ravening apparatus" (Latham 3). McNally's bipartite "capitalist monsterology," I argue, is too narrow for current techno-capitalism as it expresses itself in its North American seat of power. Many works in my corpus prove the existence of a third creature of the market, one that is neither purely perpetrator nor purely victim but a mix of both. A monster who feeds on bodies and on whose body capitalism also feeds: the monstrous consumer.

It is not that McNally ignores the existence of the monstrous consumer. On the contrary, he is well aware of this particular capitalist monster, but he is dismissive of his importance to any serious critique of capitalism:

By repositioning zombies as crazed consumers, rather than producers, recent Hollywood horror-films [sic] tend to offer biting criticism of the hyper-consumptionist ethos of an American capitalism characterised by excess. But this deployment comes at the cost of invisibilising the hidden world of labour and the disparities of class that make all this consumption possible. As a result, contemporary zombie-films, at their best, tend to offer a critique of consumerism, not capitalism – one that fails to probe the life destroying, zombifying process of work in bourgeois society (260-261)

McNally's prioritization of the too-often occluded depredation of capital on the inhabitants of the developing world who produce the commodities the inhabitants of 'developed' nations consume on a constant basis is a valid and even necessary choice. I disagree, however, with his claim that a critique of consumerism is something distinct from a critique of capitalism. Rather, I believe that "[c]onsumerism is not an ahistorical trait of human nature, but a specific product of capitalism" (Schor 117). Consequently, any critique of consumerism is in and of itself a critique of capitalism, simply presented in another form, a form better adapted to narratives hailing from the centre of the hegemony rather than its periphery. In the North American context my corpus hails from, "[t]he ability of the socioeconomic system to instill consumer demand, moreover to delude consumers into conceiving these demands as their own autonomous expression, is the very motor of contemporary capitalism, the new source of its self-valorization" (Latham 7). Techno-capitalism's ultimate goal is to subdue the entirety of cultural life under the purely economic logic of the market. To achieve this goal, techno-capitalism needs to encourage consumption, since "consumption is *the* social activity which, above all others, unites economy and culture" (Lee xiii). It is therefore no surprise that some of the monsters that populate my corpus can be understood only through the lens of consumption. Specifically, monsters like the cold-blooded, inhumane killers of *Anita* and *Cédric* and the savage, animalistic New People of *Midnight* reflect the fear and anxieties linked to "the contradictory promises and dangers inherent in consumption as a mode of social integration and personal expression" (Latham 10). The horrific bodily and mental transformations these monsters undergo act as representations of "the libidinal-political dynamics of the consumerist ethos to which young people have been systematically habituated during the contemporary period" (1). The overarching ideological narrative unearthed in this section is one in which the techno-capitalist apparatus of control twists consumers' bodies and minds, leaving behind monstrous shapes as a warning to the readers, themselves consumers "defined by [their] ensnarement in the norms and ideologies of consumption" (1).

1.2 – The Economic Uncanny of the Code

Though they do it in subtly or markedly different ways, all the tales explored in this section warn against “a certain logic of capital which *requires* that human needs change over time” (Lee xiii). Baudrillard’s concept of “the code” is one theorization of this logic that proves extremely relevant when dealing with my corpus. Baudrillard’s code is “a dictatorial system that precedes and structures human expression” in a consumerist society (Latham 9). The code is what happens when the economic logic of exchange-value present in early capitalist society transforms into and is supplemented by the logic of sign value. This phenomenon causes the commodity, an object “with the status of a common name and implement,” to become

an object specified by its trademark, charged with differential connotations of status, prestige and fashion. *This* is the “object of consumption.” It can just as easily be a vase as a refrigerator, or, for that matter, a whoopee cushion. Properly speaking, it has no more existence than a phoneme has an absolute meaning in linguistics. This object does not assume meaning either in a symbolic relation with the subject [...] or in an operational relation to the world [...]: it finds meaning with other objects, in difference, according to a hierarchical code of significations. (Baudrillard, *For a Critique* 64)

For example, a car is a commodity, but becomes an object of consumption when it starts to signify a status or a set of values. A Mustang does not signify the same thing as a Toyota, even though they are both cars, and the Mustang only signifies luxury, wealth and virility when compared to – in difference to – the Toyota. Baudrillard himself gives us another clear – if a little dated – example of the code at work when he points out that “neither the long skirt nor the mini-skirt has an absolute value in itself – only their differential relation acts as a criterion of meaning. The mini-skirt has nothing whatsoever to do with sexual liberation; it has no (fashion) value except in opposition to the long skirt” (79). This creation of significance through the interplay of multiple commodities as signs forms what Baudrillard calls “[t]he logical processes of fashion” and it “can be extrapolated to the dimension of ‘culture’ in general – to all social production of signs,

values and relations” (79). As an amalgam of “the general mechanisms of consumer society” such as “advertising, product design, [and] the fashion system” (Latham 7), the code is the very result of this extrapolation.

Consumerist ideology, like any capitalist ideology, is based on the notions of supply and demand or, put differently, on needs and the meeting of these needs. Baudrillard, however, sees these notions as a lure:

consumption does not arise from an objective need of the consumer, a final intention of the subject towards the object; rather, there is a social production, in a system of exchange, of a material of differences, a code of signification and invidious (*statuaire*) values. The functionality of goods and individual needs only follows on this, adjusting itself to, rationalizing, and in the same stroke repressing these fundamental structural mechanisms. (*For a Critique* 75)

From this passage, one could understand that the purpose of the code is to convince the masses that only objects of consumption can fulfill their needs. Consumerism, under such an interpretation, creates a “critical historical rupture between labour and needs. Under capitalism, labour needs have become detached and isolated, and each is now displaced into the independent spheres of production and consumption respectively” (Lee 6). From a Baudrillardian point of view, this understanding is valid but incomplete since the very concept of needs is a consumerist fabrication. Therefore, needs cannot be conceived of as an

innate, instinctive power, spontaneous craving, anthropological potentiality. Rather, they are better defined as a function induced (in the individual) by the internal logic of the system: more precisely, *not as a consummative force liberated* by the affluent society, but *as a productive force* required by the functioning of the system itself, by its process of reproduction and survival. In other words, there are only needs because the system needs them. (*For a Critique* 82)

The code, therefore, is an instrument of double persuasion – Its function is to legitimize both the existence of a need and the obligation to fulfill that need. Even more important than this double act of persuasion, however, is the act of obfuscation, in which the code acts as a logical extension of the logic that undergirds all of capitalism:

In the commodity [...] we perceive the opacity of social relations of production and the reality of the division of labour. What is revealed in the contemporary profusion of sign objects, objects of consumption, is precisely this opacity, the total constraint of the code that governs social value: it is the specific weight of signs that regulates the social logic of exchange. (65-66)

The code has a vested interest in propagating the myth of needs as an *a priori* element of human essence, because only by doing so can it guarantee its continued survival as a hegemonic mode of economic and social production. The works in my corpus argue, as does Baudrillard, that in contemporary North American society, the code is nearly invisible and almost intangible but nonetheless subliminally omnipresent. Narratives about techno-capitalist monsters are, at the level of text, subtext, or both, an attempt to bring the code into the realm of human perception, to make it visible in all its monstrousness. This, of course, is the function of the consumerist monster.

However, before the monsters themselves appear, a few of my selected works set the stage for their arrival by creating an atmosphere that alerts the reader or spectator to the strange character of the code they take for granted. This is an example of the defetishising charge of monsters, thanks to which the familiar is defamiliarized in an attempt to force the audience to reconsider what they usually ignore.

Dean Koontz's 1989 novel *Midnight* focuses on the Californian coastal town of Moonlight Cove, the headquarters of tech giant New Wave Microtechnologies. As the novel begins, FBI agent Sam Booker and documentary filmmaker Tessa Lockland arrive in Moonlight Cove to investigate strange murders and disappearances that have been occurring in the town in the last few months. What they find is that the town has been used as an experimental testing ground by New Wave Technologies' maniacal CEO

Thomas Shaddack. By injecting Moonlight Cove's unsuspecting citizens with nano-computers, Shaddack 'converts' them into New People – emotionless and obedient human drones loyal only to him. Once he finishes converting Moonlight Cove, he intends to convert humanity as whole, subjugating it to his will. Unfortunately for him, the conversion process leaves the New People psychologically unstable while also giving them the unexpected power to reshape their own body to the whims of their subconscious. This results in two kinds of monsters roaming the streets of Moonlight Cove. The first, called "regressives," are New People who unconsciously choose to trade intellect for the purely instinctual life of a beast, and transform into more animalistic forms resembling traditional depictions of werewolves, prehistoric humans, reptilians, and other similar hybrids. The second, unnamed, are New People who decide, similarly unconsciously, to become beings of pure intellect by melding with the electronics around them and becoming monstrous cybernetic amalgams of flesh, metal, silicon, and cables. Sam, Tessa, and two locals who have escaped from the conversion process – an adventurous eleven-year old girl named Chrissie Foster and a wheelchair-bound Vietnam veteran named Harry Talbot – must race against the clock to defeat Shaddack, stop the rampage of his monsters, and prevent the few normal citizens who remain in town from being converted.

As soon as they arrive in Moonlight Cove both Booker and Lockland are surprised by the economic situation of the town. Strolling along the town's main commercial artery for the first time, Booker is surprised by the absence of activity around him:

He knew that Moonlight Cove was prosperous, that unemployment was virtually nonexistent – thanks to New Wave Microtechnology, which had headquartered there ten years ago – yet he saw signs of a faltering economy. Taylor's Fine Gifts and Saenger's Jewelry had vacated their shops; through their dusty, plate-glass windows, he saw bare shelves and empty display cases and deep, still shadows. New Attitudes, a trendy clothing store, was having a going-out-of-business sale, and judging by the dearth of shoppers, their merchandise was moving sluggishly even at fifty to seventy percent off the original prices. (Koontz 21)

As he walks around town some more, Booker's matter-of-fact description of the incongruous economic situation of the town takes a sharp turn into the realm of the fantastical and the macabre:

A single moving car was in sight, three blocks away, and at the moment Sam was the only pedestrian. The solitude combined with the queer light of the dying day to give him the feeling that this was a ghost town, inhabited only by the dead. As the gradually thickening fog seeped up the hill from the Pacific, it contributed to the illusion that *all* of the surrounding shops were vacant, that they offered no wares other than spider webs, silence, and dust. (21)

Even though it “always had been a quiet little town, shunning the tourist trade that other coastal communities so avidly pursued” (9), Moonlight Cove was still a town fully immersed within techno-capitalist imperatives, and thus fully programmed by the code of consumption. Without that code to animate them, the consumerist zombies that inhabit Moonlight Cove complete their slow march towards death and become ghosts. Zombies are partly alive physical beings and thus still need to consume to survive. Ghosts, by contrast, are immaterial echoes and consequently have no need of anything. Objects of consumption have no more intrinsic value to ghosts than dust and spider webs. By disturbing the logic of fashion that permeates contemporary society, the seemingly nonsensical economic situation of the town reveals to Booker that “everything in monopoly capitalist society – goods, knowledge, technique, culture, men, their relations and their aspirations – everything is reproduced, from the outset, immediately, as an element of the system, as an integrated variable” (Baudrillard, *For a Critique* 87). What disturbs Booker in this passage is not the illusion of vacant shops but the realization that consumer society is the real illusion. The bizarre economic situation of Moonlight Cove allows for the return of the repressed but very real truth of techno-capitalist consumer society. As such, this economic situation is not bizarre, it is *uncanny*.

A psychoanalytical concept, the uncanny is “concerned with the strange, weird and mysterious, with a flickering sense (but not conviction) of something supernatural. The uncanny involves feelings of uncertainty, in particular regarding the reality of who one is

and what is being experienced” (Royle 1). The uncanny is scary but not obviously so. The uncanny is the fear that comes not from the *certainty* that something is wrong but from the *intuition* that something is wrong. It is not simply the fear of the unknown but rather the fear of the “peculiar commingling of the familiar and the unfamiliar”(1), of the tense coexistence of the known and the unknown. The uncanny “can take the form of something familiar unexpectedly arising in a strange and unfamiliar context, or of something strange and unfamiliar unexpectedly arising in a familiar context” (1), such as an entire street of stores going out of business in a town where the unemployment is virtually nil.

In disturbing techno-capitalist conformity, monsters “describe the metamorphosis of the familiar into the unfamiliar [...]” (Creed 7). It is this link to the familiar that makes the monster a perfect warning sign. By disturbing the familiar surface of things, the monster forces us to look beyond that surface and confront the danger it conceals:

The monster is, in a sense, veiled or cloaked by shadows and darkness so that a feeling of mounting horror accompanies its revelation, which usually occurs at the end of the narrative. German philosopher Friedrich Schelling, in his definition of the uncanny, wrote that the uncanny was ‘the name for everything that ought to have remained... secret and hidden but has come to light’. Thus the meaning of ‘monster’ (to warn or show) relates directly to the uncanny (to bring to light what should have remained hidden). (Creed ix)

This feeling of mounting horror that Creed refers to is the uncanny nature of the monster leaking out, tearing off bits of reality as it ripples through it and exposing what lies beneath. As *Midnight* demonstrates, the techno-capitalist monster itself need not appear for its defetishising power to be enacted – its sole creation is enough to disturb the familiar and leave traces of economic horror that must then be engaged. In fact, the techno-capitalist monster is at its most horrific when only glimpsed, since it then cannot be comprehended. Lockland’s experience of the uncanny nature of *Midnight’s Cove* resembles Booker’s, except she is more aware of the horrors signaled by the economic status of the town:

She also saw reflections of the corruption of local authorities in the physical appearance of Ocean Avenue, where too many storefronts were empty and too many businesses were suffering, which was inexplicable for a town in which unemployment was virtually nil. She had noted an air of solemnity about the people she had seen on the streets, as well as a briskness and purposefulness that seemed odd in a laid-back northern coastal town where the hurly-burly of modern life hardly intruded.

However, her awareness of the patterns included no explanation of why the police would want to conceal the true nature of [her sister] Janice's killing. Or why the town seemed in an economic depression in spite of its prosperity. Or what in the name of God those nightmare things in the motel had been. Patterns were clues to underlying truths, but her ability to recognize them did not mean she could find the answers and reveal the truths at which the patterns hinted. (122-123)

Because of her awareness of the patterns – i.e. her awareness of the economic uncanny – Lockland is better able to glimpse the monsters than Booker, but her inability to fully comprehend these monsters only heightens the terror into which she is plunged. Koontz' novel is at its most horrific in this early period, where the monstrousness of Shaddack's techno-capitalist experiments has yet to be fully understood by both the protagonists and the readers. Once the eerie lack of consumption is revealed to be a side-effect of the transformation of the townfolks into nanite-infected New People with no emotions, and thus no desires to be abstracted into needs, the uncanny atmosphere disappears, to be replaced by visceral body horror that makes explicit the monstrous nature of techno-capitalism.

I will cover these flashier horrors later in the section, but I must emphasize how important the initial uncanny atmosphere is to the ideological work of the novel. By highlighting the seemingly inexplicable economic devastation of the town, the novel underscores how vital consumption is to the techno-capitalist society. In a pithier way, techno-capitalism in *Midnight's Cove* is conspicuous by its absence. Like most consumers, Lockland and Booker are familiar with ghost towns and economic busts, but

this particular ghost town disturbs them because it seems to be in such a sorry state in spite of – instead of according to – the rules of techno-capitalism as they know them. The uncanny lack of consumption in Midnight's Cove also acts as a reminder that capitalism contains the seed of its own destruction. This is not a new idea – Marx himself noted that capitalism was an unsustainable system, whose success could only bring forth its own fall. Consumption itself, in fact, can be seen as a way through which capital tries to escape the Marxist prophecy:

During the phase of industrialization, the last pennyworth of labour was extorted without compunction. To extract surplus value, it was hardly necessary to prime the pump with needs. Then capital, confronted by its own contradictions (over-production, falling rate of profit), tried at first to surmount them by totally restructuring its accumulation through destruction, deficit budgeting and bankruptcy. It thus averted a redistribution of wealth, which would have placed the existing relations of production and structures of power seriously in question. But as soon as the threshold of rupture had been reached, capital was already unearthing the individual *qua* consumer. He was no longer simply the slave as labour power. [...] And in bringing it off, capital was only delivering up a new kind of serf: the individual as consumption power. (Baudrillard *For a Critique* 84-85)

The struggling stores of Moonlight Cove are signs that the cycle is repeating anew – if consumption was once the savior of techno-capitalist hegemony, the cancerous effects of its uncontrolled growth have now transformed this salvation into the prophesied doom once more. The means by which consumption is transformed into a mechanism of self-destruction is an iconic reversal of the very process of abstraction that transforms an object of desire into an object of consumption. In the same way that

concrete work is abstracted, little by little, into labour power in order to make it homogenous with the means of production (machines, energy, etc.) and thus to multiply the homogeneous factors into a growing productivity – so desire is abstracted and atomized into needs, in order to make it homogenous with the

means of satisfaction (products, images, sign-objects, etc.) and thus to multiply consummativity. (Baudrillard *For a Critique* 83)

Through such abstraction, techno-capitalism cuts off humans' emotional (i.e. symbolic) relationships with things.¹⁰ By exorcising emotions out of his New People, Shaddack is attacking "the essence of any materialist phenomenology, [which is] that humans are enmeshed in an object-world shaped in and through their practical activity" (McNally 266-267). Shaddack's attack is not, as it may seem at first glance, an invasion, the insertion of a new, foreign and hostile system into the status quo of consumer society. On the contrary, it is capitalism itself which "inserts the market as forced mediator in our relations to such things" (267). It is capitalism which "wraps objects in the straight-jacket of the capitalist value-form. And, in so doing, it empties them of their concrete, sensible features, turning them into mere repositories of exchange value" (267). Rather than invent a new hegemonic "regime of accumulation" (Latham 10) to replace that of techno-capitalism, Shaddack is simply pushing the logic of consumerism to its logical end, subverting and using techno-capitalism as a weapon in order to impose his own hegemonic status quo.¹¹

Dans le ventre du dragon shares with *Midnight* this belief that techno-capitalism is its own worst enemy. This 1989 film by director and co-writer Yves Simoneau centers on Lou, a restless young man with a pessimistic view of the future. In an attempt to escape his socio-economic status and his dead-end job as a paperboy, he signs up to be a guinea pig for Sciences et Recherches, a pharmaceutical corporation with an unimaginative but innocent and deceptively straightforward name. Lou is motivated by the significant payout the company promises in exchange for his services. Unfortunately for him, instead of participating in the more mundane clinical trials on offer, he falls into the clutches of Dr. Lucas, whose posthuman experiments wreak havoc on Lou's body but leave him with vague psychic powers. The transformation Lou undergoes is among the least obviously

¹⁰ As McNally points out, the verb 'to abstract' comes from the Latin word *abstrahere* (to draw away) and consequently has for literal meaning "to separate, detach, cut off" (14).

¹¹ I further explore Shaddack's usage of and debts to techno-capitalism in Part II (see pages 119-123).

monstrous, both in appearance and behaviour. He mostly ages rapidly and unevenly while his anti-authority streak becomes more pronounced and aggressive. However, the film makes sure to describe Dr. Lucas's experiments and their potential results in explicitly monstrous terms. Furthermore, a general anti-capitalist subtext underlies the entire movie, and not just the portions dealing with Dr. Lucas and Sciences et Recherches. For example, in response to his boss telling him that "Sky is the limit!" (in English), Lou responds that "That ain't true anymore, sky is the limit. That just ain't true anymore." The boss, unperturbed, tells him to "Think positive!" – once again in English – to which Lou responds: "Open your eyes and look around. The machine's too big. It's about to blow up. I'm no pessimist, I'm a realist." (00:37:25- 00:37:50). What Lou is exhorting the boss to see is the uncanniness of the society he lives in. Unfortunately, Lou is the only one who sees the real danger of consumerism. In response to Lou's assertions, his colleague Steve tells Lou: "You ain't a realist, you're depressed. That's how the system wants you to be. That's what we need to change."¹² Lou insists: "There's no point, it would just move the problem around. We need to start from scratch." After advocating for a do-over, for a complete socio-economical reset, Lou states, to the befuddlement of his boss and older colleagues: "I believe that I'll die young and that I won't be the only one" (00:37:51-00:38:30). For Lou, the repressed truth of consumer society is as deadly as the monster that gives the film its title.

All throughout the movie, Lou makes similar snarky comments that point out to the viewers the thin nature of techno-capitalism's disguise. When Lou first applies to be a guinea pig for Sciences et Recherches, he must get bloodwork done. Or, as he says, he must donate "[f]resh blood for the vampires" (00:23:10). The vampire is a frequently used symbol of capitalism. Marx himself described capitalism as "the vampire [that] will not let go while there remains a single muscle, sinew or drop of blood to be exploited" (qtd. in McNally 114). Likewise, Bram Stoker's *Dracula* can be read "as a parable about

¹² Steve's original line is "T'es pas lucide, t'es déprimé." The accurate translation of "déprimé" is "depressed", as in my translation. However, the official English subtitles for the movie use the decidedly more Marxist term "alienated" instead. Interestingly, another instance of "déprimé" later in the same scene is correctly translated as "depressed," which seems to point towards the choice of "alienated" being deliberate rather than a mistranslation.

the dangers of monopoly capitalism, constituted by Stoker as an external threat in the monstrous, predatory, acquisitive, and above all utterly foreign figure of the count” (Grady 225). In more recent times, the vampire has been repurposed as “an insatiable consumer driven by a hunger for perpetual youth” (Latham 1), a new form best exemplified by Anne Rice’s *Vampire Chronicles* novels, whose vampires “exist at the boundary and represent [...] this formerly secret marriage of capital and culture. Their monstrous nature, however elegantly manifested, derives from their blurring of those previously sacred boundaries” (Grady 231). As a multinational corporation which uses and discards workers to create new objects of consumption (namely pharmaceutical ones), *Sciences et Recherches* plays the first metaphorical role of the vampire much better than the second – the role of consumerist monster is to be played much later in the narrative by Lou himself rather than by the vampire he gives his blood to. Lou’s observation is thus a classic Marxist observation, another example of his ability to see the uncanny nature of the system. The line itself is given additional weight in the film by the appearance of the orderly, whose make-up is done in such a way as to emphasize her lips against her pale skin, as well as by the score, which consists solely of the sinister repetition of two drum beats, heightening tension and contrasting starkly with the near-absence of score in the scenes immediately preceding and following this one.



Figure 1 – *Dans le ventre du dragon*. (00:50:30)

While Lou is extremely aware of the economic uncanny, as his dialogue evidences, *Dans le ventre du dragon* knows that a picture is worth a thousand words and does not hesitate to show the viewers how uncanny techno-capitalism really is in a way that the characters themselves cannot experience. Whenever the exterior of the corporate research centre is shown, the film switches from live-action sets to an animated background (Fig. 1).

Considering the extremely science-fictional architecture of the building, this is likely as much a budgetary choice as a creative one. Nonetheless, the use of animation in an otherwise live-action film reinforces the strangeness of the building and, by extension, of the activities that take place therein.¹³ Indeed, animation is a great way to defamiliarize reality since

[e]very aspect of animation, from its images to its sounds, is constructed by humans and is a representation of what we perceive our world to be. What separates animation from live-action cinema [...] is the accessibility of real world

¹³ Of course, today's films are full of animations, often more than we realize. However, this kind of animation is made specifically to blend with the live-action parts to the point of being (almost) indistinguishable. This is not the case here, hence why I believe this specific use of animation to be worth discussing.

objects. For example, when a tree or dog is needed on set, live-action filmmakers go and find a tree or a dog. Filmmakers working in animation are forced to calculate and evaluate what a “tree” or “dog” should look like in the world they are creating, making sure the object aligns itself with the audience’s expectations of that world. (Whealy 2)

Animators may even decide, as they clearly did in *Dans le ventre du dragon*, that the animated object needs to defy the audience’s expectations rather than align itself with them. When that happens, the sudden shift from the mundane contemporary live-action setting of Lou and his co-workers’ proletarian world to the surrealist science-fictional headquarters of Sciences et Recherches’ techno-capitalist elites becomes “an experience of disorientation, where the world in which we live suddenly seems strange, alienating or threatening,” which is another definition of the uncanny (Collins 1).

Be it through Lou’s one-liners or through surrealist animation, *Dans le ventre du dragon* is filled to the brim with moments that defamiliarize the familiar and expose its exploitative underbelly, creating an uncanny atmosphere of tension and uncertainty in what is essentially a light-hearted comedy for most of its running time. Even before Lou starts undergoing terrible transformations at the hands of corporate mad scientist Dr. Lucas, the film endeavors to tear down the paper walls of the system to reveal the fire-breathing monster living behind. This flight of fancy on my part is inspired by Lou himself, who describes the frustration of his job as a paperboy in similar terms: “Walls of paper. It’s insane. Paper’s all I’m seeing anymore. I go to sleep thinking about it, I wake up thinking about it, even my clothes smell like paper. This is going nowhere; I need to find another job” (00 :36 :08). As hinted at by the last sentence, Lou, despite his ability to see the uncanny nature of techno-capitalist institutions like Sciences et Recherches, cannot resist the siren lure of consumerist society and its construction of needs. Wanting more money in order to be able to leave his dead-end job behind – a job that is itself part of the reproduction process of the consumerist system – Lou signs up as a guinea pig, a decision that will transform him into a living personification of the uncanny he could see so well, yet let himself be blinded by anyway.

An individual in economic need signing up as a guinea pig for a powerful pharmaceutical conglomerate is a premise shared by all three of the Québécois works in my corpus: *Dans le ventre du dragon*, *Anita* and *Cédric*. The last two are part of a multi-author series of seven novels titled *Cobayes (Guinea Pigs)*. The series is about a clinical trial conducted by pharmaceutical company Alphalab for a mysterious (fictional) drug named Chlorolanfaxine. Eight men and women in their twenties sign up for the trial, attracted by Alphalab's false claims about the product's purpose and the sizeable sum of money offered. The title of the series reflects the callous way Alphalab treats their test subjects. Each book is named after one of the guinea pigs, is told from that character's perspective, and is written by a different author.¹⁴ The novels were published over a period of two years but are not sequels to each other. Rather, they recount different stories occurring concurrently, and can therefore be read in any order. At the center of each novel is the various side-effects inflicted on the protagonist by the Chlorolanfaxine. In *Anita*, the anorectic protagonist discovers a new hunger for meat, the fresher the better.¹⁵ Desperate attempts to calm this hunger leads Anita to a series of increasingly violent acts, culminating in her killing and cooking her own nephews. In *Cédric*, the lazy, apathetic slacker protagonist becomes ambitious and determined thanks to the Chlorolanfaxine. Thanks to newfound desire to 'be somebody,' Cédric quickly become rich and famous as well as a narcissistic serial rapist and murderer. Both novels end with Alphalab taking out the now-uncontrollable guinea pig: Anita is locked in an insane asylum and Cédric is shot in the head.

The motivation of the titular protagonist of *Cédric* is, like Lou, primarily monetary. The same cannot be said of the protagonist of *Anita*, who signs up with Alphalab because of a pathological desire to lose weight, a desire linked to her anorexia and her own uncanny feelings about her body. The promised monetary compensation is simply icing on the cake. As the novel is narrated in first person by Anita herself, it is littered with physical

¹⁴ The second novel of the series features a couple instead of a single protagonist, and is thus titled *Sarah et Sid*, after both characters.

¹⁵ Following Joan Jacobs Brumberg's terminology, I use the noun *anorectic* to designate someone suffering from anorexia and the adjective *anorexic* to qualify behaviors associated with anorexia.

descriptions made uncanny and uncomfortable by Anita's disordered perception. This passage is only one example among many:

At five foot and nine inches, I feel so huge, so repulsive. [...] I need... I need to lose all this weight... and right now!!! I can't, I can't weigh that much! Panicked, I start pulling on my already thin hair. I could cut them! A single hair is so heavy... Out of desperation, I caress my temples and my forehead. I look at the mirror and all the flaws of my thick frame are instantaneously made visible. I'm about to vent my distress on the reflective glass and insult this girl staring back at me with her crazy eyes when the door behind me slowly creeps open. (Addison 17)

For context, in this scene, Anita weighs only one hundred and eight pounds, which is extremely low for her height. The divergence between Anita's perception of herself and reality is revealed through Anita's propensity for bruises (since she has no body fat to absorb impacts) and the various Alphalab reports about her.¹⁶ One in particular notes: "The patient does not seem to notice her weight gain. She instead seems obsessed with an imaginary weight loss" (184). This delusion is broken at the very end of the novel, before she commits her ultimate act of monstrous cannibalism:

Before lowering my chin towards the number on the display, I chance a brief look at the mirror in front of me. Where did the fat go? Under my arms? In my thighs? Around my waist? Yes, the latter seems thicker, almost as big as my hips.

I don't even bother looking at the number displayed on the scale. The proof is right before my eyes. Right there in this mirror, mocking me... (295)

What is dramatized in this passage is the precise moment where a hidden truth comes back to light, thus creating an uncanny feeling. Unlike Booker, Lockland, or Lou, however, Anita is unable to cope with this uncanny revelation and opts for self-mutilation

¹⁶ Cédric's perception of her in his own novel also give us a glimpse of the real Anita: "She looks like she came right out of a documentary on Ethiopia. You would have to pay me to go out with skeleton like that." (Chaperon 33).

instead, which leads her deeper into her drug-assisted transformation into a monster. Anita's skewed perception of weight is not limited to her own body either. She constantly judges other people based on their weight. Of her mother, she states that "her one hundred and fifty pounds are so disgusting that I don't EVER want to look like her" (12). She also describes her nephews through allusions to pigs, such as calling them "tiny sausages on legs" and describing their "upturned noses that make them look piggish" (14, 285). All these descriptions result in a queasy atmosphere in which no one looks 'right,' defamiliarizing moments that should be familiar – like a family dinner – and alerting us to the hidden truths in Anita's past.

It is tempting to see Anita's anorexia as constructed by techno-capitalism, and especially by the consumerist code it produces and reproduces constantly. Such an interpretation would however be simplistic and extremely reductive, not only with respect to Anita's anorexia, but to anorexia in general. The disease known medically as *anorexia nervosa* is absolutely shaped by the code – especially through marketing – but only partially. To blame the disease on that single factor "fail[s] to explain why so many individuals do not develop the disease even though they have been exposed to the same cultural environment" (Brumberg 39). Therefore, before Anita's anorexia can be analyzed in terms of anti-capitalist critique, I must first acknowledge that the hidden truth behind her anorexia is not explicitly linked to techno-capitalism but rather to a Freudian narrative of repressed trauma. From its very beginning, the novel makes clear that Anita has negative feelings towards her father that she does not like to dwell on but thinks about constantly anyway (Addison 10). Dr. Williams from Alphalab even speculates that her father might have been sexually abusive (50). This turns out to be false; Anita's particular trauma is actually related to her ambivalent feelings about her father's corpulence and gluttonous eating habits as well as to her guilt over having witnessed him die of a heart attack when she was a child and thus unable to do anything to help (308-309). She also accuses him of feeding her against her will, but the novel remains ambiguous over whether or not he was indeed forcing her to eat or if she was willingly eating with him (288-291). In any case, when establishing the causes of Anita's anorexia, the novel fully embraces the psychoanalytical model, which sees anorexia as "a pathological response to the

developmental crisis of adolescence” (Brumberg 29). The entirety of Anita’s characterization, especially before she is experimented on by Alphalab, follows the psychoanalytical profile of the anorectic drawn by Hilde Bruch, who,

in the spirit of Freud and his early followers, considered the contemporary anorectic unprepared to cope with the psychological and social consequences of adulthood as well as sexuality. Because of the anorectic’s paralyzing sense of ineffectiveness and anxiety about her identity, she opts, furiously, for control of her body. [...] She experiences a disturbance of “delusional proportions” with respect to her body image and she eats in a peculiar and disorganized fashion. [...] Simultaneously, she ruminates about calories and exercises frantically, all the while dwelling on images of the very food that she fears. These preoccupations can become excessive and involuntary. Patients usually are stubborn, rigid, and strongly defensive about their behavior, and they espouse elaborate and highly intellectual theories about food and exercise. (Brumberg 30)

This description fits Anita perfectly, with the possible exception of the comment about an inability to cope with her own sexuality. However, while the novel does not mention any problems in Anita’s sex life, it does emphasize that Anita’s sexuality has been supercharged by Alphalab’s experiment, just like her appetite:

Manu and I made love like crazies all week-end. And numerous times during the week as well. Each of these intercourses, initiated by me, ended with a huge orgasm for both myself and Manu. And that’s unusual for us. Oh, I do come often with him. Every one out of three times, I’d say. But not every time, like now. And not this intensely. (Addison 135)

By establishing this link between hunger for food and hunger for sex, *Anita* once more displays its adherence to the psychoanalytical model of anorexia, which sees “eating, like all appetites, [as] an expression of libido and sexual drive,” and thus avoids making any explicit connections between Anita’s hunger for food (or sex) and consumerist hunger for commodities (Brumberg 30).

However, the pressures of consumerist society cannot be entirely divorced from anorexia and its fictional representations. This means that while *Anita's* depiction of the heroine's anorexia and body dysmorphia is firmly anchored in the genre of psychological horror, the very choice of anorexia as the incentive that leads the protagonist into the clutches of a corporate mad scientist like Dr. Williams gives the novel an undercurrent of economic horror. Like all diseases, anorexia "is no absolute physical entity but a complex intellectual construction, an amalgam of biological state and social definition" (Rosenberg 5). This is not to say that anorexia is a 'fake' disease, a simple cultural delusion with no psychological or physiological components. Rather, "there are certain historical moments and cultural settings when a biological substratum could be activated by potent social and cultural forces. In other words, patterns of culture constitute the kind of environmental pressure that interacts with physiological and psychological variables" (Brumberg 41-42). In the particular case of anorexia, these "patterns of culture" are intrinsically linked to techno-capitalism. The disease "emerged during the throes of industrial capitalist development and was nurtured by central aspects of bourgeois life: intimacy and material comfort, parental love and expectation, the sexual division of labour, and popular ideas about gender and class" (6). To be clear, anorexia is not a 'capitalist disease,' and even less a 'consumerist' one. In fact, "[a] historical perspective shows that anorexia nervosa existed before there was a mass cultural preoccupation with dieting and a slim female body" (6), which justifies *Anita's* exclusively psychological depiction of the disease. However, the same historical perspective also shows without the shadow of a doubt that in recent decades "broad social and cultural forces, particularly the intensification of messages about the female body, have promoted the urgency of appetite control and generated a new experience of the disease" (8). In consequence, while "anorexia nervosa used to be an isolated and idiosyncratic disorder," under the current techno-capitalist system "it has become both more familiar and more formulaic, and its physical symptoms are now more acute" (8). Baudrillard's code, on which consumerism depends to survive, is, if not entirely, then significantly to blame for transforming isolated cases of anorexia into an 'epidemic':

The modern visual media (television, films, video, magazines, and particularly advertising) fuel the preoccupation with female thinness and serve as the primary stimulus for anorexia nervosa. Female socialization, in the hands of modern media, emphasizes external qualities (“good looks”) above all else. [...] To wit, our society’s exaltation of thin, weak women expresses the inner logic of capitalism and patriarchy, both characterized by the sexual division of labour and female subordination. In response to these brutal economic and cultural imperatives, women turn to an excessive concern with food as a way of filling their emptiness and dealing with their fear and self-hate. (Brumberg 35)

Anorexia is a complex disease, and while the socio-economic system plays a definitive role, it is only one factor among many that contribute to an ‘outbreak’ of anorexia. As Brumberg rightfully points out, not every woman who is exposed to the code becomes an anorectic – a combination of factors is required (39).¹⁷ However, Brumberg also agrees that “capitalism seems to generate a peculiar set of human difficulties that might well be characterized as *consumption disorders* rather than strictly eating disorders” (266, my emphasis). Consequently, I consider *Anita*’s depiction of anorexia as a form of the economic uncanny. Even though the novel only discusses the disorder through a psychological lens, it cannot prevent the economic and cultural connotations of anorexia from seeping into the narrative in the form of Anita’s online activities. Indeed, the advent of social networks and other products of communicative capitalism has made it easier than ever for the cultural pressure of marketing to spread and reproduce itself. Throughout the novel, but especially at the beginning, Anita makes references to the various pro-ana websites where she learns “tons of weight-loss tricks, each one more creative than the last” while sharing her own tips and tricks (Addison 10; for additional examples, see 11, 14, 16, 25).¹⁸ This peer pressure is so strong and so important for Anita

¹⁷ When talking about anorectics in the following pages, I will refer to them as women, because the vast majority of them are women. However, I must note that the disease is not *exclusive* to women. Men do sometimes suffer from anorexia as well, though in much smaller number and with slightly different symptoms (Brumberg 15).

¹⁸ “Pro-ana” and “pro-mia” is the name given to online communities catered specifically to anorectics and bulimics, respectively (many websites are both). While some provide a safe space and peer support to otherwise isolated anorectics, others promote anorexia as a lifestyle choice rather than a disorder.

that, when she believes she has gained three pounds in one day, her first preoccupation is that: “Nobody will talk to me on the chat sites now. All the girls will laugh at me!” (17). Coupled with her certainty that “every girl dreams” of weighing a hundred pounds (17), the importance given by Anita to her social standing among other women shows how her anorexia, while not originating from the code, has nonetheless been absorbed by the “totalitarian logic” (Baudrillard, *For a Critique* 81) of the code and become one of its mechanisms. The associated peer pressure experienced by Anita is a way in which “a system of productivist growth” like techno-capitalism “produce[s] and reproduce[s] individuals as elements of the system” (Baudrillard, *For a Critique* 86). Expanding on that point, Baudrillard rhetorically asks: “Is loss of status – or social non-existence – less upsetting than hunger?” (81). For Anita, the answer is a resounding *yes*. The techno-capitalism context that surrounds Anita is not *generative* of her uncanny perception of her body, but it is *formative* in that it shapes Anita’s warped perception into the “historically-specific [...] disease of modernity” that is *anorexia nervosa* (Brumberg 6).

1.3 – Nonconsumption and Identity

Even though I have so far discussed anorexia mostly as a pathological relationship to the code – especially as it pertains to advertisement and fashion – it should not be forgotten that, at its core, anorexia is a pathological relationship to *food*. While this later pathological relationship can develop outside of the boundaries of the code, it is nonetheless shaped by techno-capitalism and, specifically, by the process of *commodification* of food. In contemporary North American society, “[t]he imperatives of an expanding capitalist society have generated extraordinary technological and marketing innovations, which in turn have transformed food itself, expanded our repertoire of foods, and affected the ways in which we consume them” (Brumberg 256). Most of the food available in American and Canadian grocery stores today are “homogenized, mass produced” commodities. The result is that

For the curious reader, see the article by Udovitch, in the Works Cited. Note that while pro-ana websites are real, the specific ones mentioned in the novel are entirely fictional.

[i]n a capitalist society, eating, appetite, and taste are all extremely complicated. As a consequence of overstimulation, we are faced with an abundance of food, which, in our obesophobic society, necessitates ever greater self-control. On a daily basis many of us struggle with an essential contradiction in our economic system – that is, that hedonism and discipline must coexist. Middle-class Americans feel this tension most acutely in the realm of personal eating behavior. (257)

This contradiction is also stressed by Latham, though he associates its most salient manifestation with the concept of youth rather than food (12). Both food and youth are mobilized by *Anita* and *Cédric* to dramatize allegorically this “powerful tension [...] between an ascetic ethos of production and a hedonistic ethos of consumption” that both Latham and Brumberg identify as inherent to techno-capitalism as a system of socio-economic organization (Latham 12).

The titular main characters of *Anita* and *Cédric* both make “nonconsumption the perverse centerpiece of [their] identity” (Brumberg 267). In Anita’s case, this is obviously accomplished by her anorexia. Despite the various attempts of her family to get her to eat (i.e., consume), Anita keeps steadfast in her refusal and paints these well-intentioned attempts to help her in a very negative light. When her boyfriend Manu tells her that he will break up with her if she does not start seeing a therapist, Anita complains about “this completely overblown ultimatum from Manu! We’ve been together long enough for him to know I won’t change. Nobody can truly change. And I need to lose more weight” (Addison 20). As she tries to find a way to break her promise to seek professional help without Manu noticing, Anita stumbles onto Alphalab’s classified ad, which promises a generous sum of money in exchange for her participation in clinical trials. However, it is the ad’s small print that attracts Anita’s attention. Specifically, her eyes bore in on the alleged possible side-effects, which include weight loss. “Could it be? Have I finally stumbled upon THE way to finally lose all my extra weight?” she wonders without realizing the supreme irony of the situation (22). In her quest to avoid consumption of food-commodities, Anita sees her participation in the process of production of another

commodity (the drug) as her salvation. She replaces one kind of consumption with another which, as the events of the novel subsequently demonstrate, is much, much worse.¹⁹

While Anita refuses consumption symbolically and implicitly through her anorexia, Cédric's refusal of the same is literal and explicit. Describing his day-to-day life, Cédric states:

I live in a modest single-bedroom apartment. I have a bed, a colour tv, a boombox, a kitchen table with non-matching chairs, a couch, a recliner, two chests of drawers, a microwave oven, a fridge, an oven and a bookcase. I'm not lacking for anything. What I have is already more than two-thirds of the planet can afford. What reason do I have to complain? Because I have less than others? What others? Those who waste, who hoard, who try to one-up their neighbors? I'm not competing against anyone. (Chaperon 7-8)

As evidenced by this excerpt from the very first pages of the novel, *Cédric* is incredibly upfront about its ideological critique. Unlike Anita's, Cédric's refusal of consumption is no pathological behaviour. Cédric is instead engaging in a premeditated act of cultural resistance, a conscious reaction to a consumerist environment he feels no attachment to. In Cédric's opinion,

everybody is way too stressed nowadays. Personally, I'd love to experience the Costarican *Pura Vida*, but alas I was born in North America. This very same North America that runs on ambition. Which I don't have. Except for the money I make as a guinea pig, I survive mostly thanks to welfare. Not very glorious, you

¹⁹ Turning to an addictive drug to lose weight is not unheard of in the real world as well. Whether anorexic or simply weight-conscious, many women turn to tobacco as a mean to lose weight. According to a 2016 study on the subject, about 1 in 20 American teenagers smoke to control their weight and nearly half of all teenage girls who smoke in the USA do so in the hope of losing weight (Cawley 15). The tobacco industry has long "exploited the fact that consumers consider smoking to be an appetite suppressant by devising advertising campaigns to promote that belief and adding appetite suppressants (such as tartaric acid) to cigarettes" (9). For example, an infamous 1930 ad for Lucky Cigarettes promised women that by "reach[ing] for a Lucky instead, you will thus avoid over-indulgence in things that cause excess weight and, by avoiding over-indulgence, maintain a modern, graceful form" (qtd. in Brumberg 195).

say? Of course, but I've never been interested in glory. On the contrary, I'm the poster-boy for what not to do. If we paid the thinkers and the dreamers, though, I'd be Bill Gates. (Chaperon 19)

Unlike Anita, Cédric does not have a warped perception of himself and his role in society. He simply refuses to play the role that the code is trying to impose on him, at least to a point. Indeed, while Cédric parades his non-participation in consumer society proudly, he does boast about his “hundreds of books, which I have usually paid less than 5 dollars for, a hundred or so movies and my girlfriend, Mary Jane” (7). Cédric does consume, but he does so in ways that circumvent “the unique imperatives of *market-compulsion* in which owners and labourers have no means of reproducing themselves other than by selling and buying” (McNally 37). Cédric buys his commodities second-hand or on the black market, thus subverting, but not escaping, the logic of capitalist market-compulsion. Likewise, while participating in clinical drug trials is technically selling one's body in exchange for a salary, the ratio of money made in contrast to labour-power spent is heavily skewed in favor of the ‘worker.’ This is entirely contrary to the logic of capital, which suits Cédric just fine. “‘Guinea pig’ is thus my ‘job,’” he claims. “I do it because I hate working. It's such a huge pain in the ass. I tried, if only to be like everyone else, but I did not like it” (Chaperon 21). Cédric has no interest in maintaining the strenuous balance between productivist discipline and consumerist hedonism. Not only does he fully embrace the latter, he also takes every opportunity to minimize his consumerism and maximize his hedonism.

Anita's anorexia and Cédric's slacker lifestyle are two different forms of the same nonconformist refusal to consume. Their nonconsumption, however, cannot be tolerated by the contemporary economic system in which both characters are enmeshed. Corporate mad scientist Dr. Williams expresses this very disapproval when he describes twenty-seven-year-old Cédric as “a teenager who refuses to grow up” and condescendingly mentions that he “suspects that he [Cédric] is volunteering for this study solely for the money” and not (like Anita) for the fake therapeutic effects listed in the recruitment ad (28). The association of Cédric's slacker tendencies with adolescence is a long-standing

cliché that uses teenagers as a scapegoat for techno-capitalist problems. As Latham puts it,

contemporary teens have been increasingly identified throughout the popular media as a ‘baby bust’ generation of disgruntled, indolent slackers. But really, their alleged ‘slackness’ is only the mirror image of postindustrial capitalism’s lean-and-mean ‘flexibility’ – a sullen inertia balancing the eager vigor of the system that exploits them. (167)

By using this equivalence to delegitimize Cédric’s prior lifestyle, Dr. Williams reveals that while the literal goal of his experiments is to create a drug that can create amoral super-soldiers, their symbolic goal is somewhat different. Through Alphalab’s experiments, science is conscripted to force both Anita and Cédric to consume anew. It is no coincidence then that, in both novels, the first thing the protagonists do after receiving their first dose of Chlorolanfaxine is to renege on their vow of nonconsumption.

One of Cédric’s first stops on his way back home from the lab is the closest book and record store. However, instead of browsing the used section in search of the 5 dollars-or-less deals he usually adores, Cédric’s narration lets the reader know that “I promised myself I’d buy first-hand stuff for a change: new books and new records. As I’ve already said, I’m somewhat of an old soul, so yes, I do like buying CDs and feel the textured pages of a book between my fingers” (Chaperon 35). Cédric’s ‘promise’ comes as news for the reader, as nowhere before in the novel had Cédric mentioned any intention to jump from the secondary to the primary market, from partially circumventing to fully embracing the logic of market compulsion. This embrace becomes stronger as Cédric receives more injections, to the point that he starts looking down on consuming practices he previously prided himself on: “Let’s not forget that the only ones who buy CDs nowadays are old farts unable to handle new technologies, even common-place ones like buying songs online or pirating them” (80). The change here is not that Cédric now associates buying physical media with old age, since he was already making this link before the start of the experiment. Rather, what has changed is that Cédric no longer romanticizes this connection – hence why “old soul” becomes “old fart” – and instead

buys wholeheartedly into the connection between new technologies and youth. In other words, Cédric now adheres to the idea that youth is “a cultural commodity available for exchange” (Latham 13). This shift reaches its paroxysm a few chapters later when Cédric is suddenly “possessed by a wild desire to spend some money” (Chaperon 105). Among his stops on this shopping spree is “an electronics store. I make small talk with the clerk and get my hands on an iPod. I know perfectly well that I’m behind on the latest trends, but better late than never” (105). The reference to fashion trends here is interesting when we consider that Cédric’s newfound need to consume is closely linked to his increasing insanity. For Baudrillard, fashion “impos[es] and legitimiz[es] the irrational according to a logic deeper than that of rationality” (*For a Critique* 79). Following this logic, then, Cédric’s realignment to the dictates of fashion can be read as another manifestation of his techno-capitalist-induced madness, a more subtle but no less significant step in his slow transformation into a consumerist monster than the rapes and murders.

As with Cédric, the first thing that happens to Anita after the first injection is the return of her previously suppressed need to consume. ‘To consume’ here should be understood in its “original negative meaning ‘eat up, devour, waste, destroy’ ” (Schor 138) rather than its new meaning under techno-capitalist hegemony. Anita’s hunger is a literal hunger for food, but that literal consumption, I argue, acts somewhat paradoxically as a metaphor for consumerist consumption. The very first night of Alphalab’s experiment, Anita is woken up by an extremely painful acid reflux, and her first thought to cure it is quite uncharacteristic of her – she decides to eat (i.e., *consume*): “The plate of cookies left on the coffee table immediately attracts my attention. It is with unabashed pleasure and relief that I jump on the cookies and gobble down the whole plate without even noticing. Contentment spreads through my throat and my chest. I’m almost walking on clouds” (Addison 80). More accurately, Anita does not just eat, she *gobbles*, which is extremely jarring coming from the same character who a week earlier reacted to her boyfriend having food on his cheek by categorically stating that “imagining myself kissing this same cheek tonight is beyond me. Even if he showers, even if he wipes it off thoroughly, something will remain. A morsel, a crumb... That I cannot, must not, ingest. I gain weight so easily” (15). This is the same reversal of tastes and consuming behaviours that

Cédric experienced but in regard to a different commodity. Anita's newly acquired need to consume develops more quickly than Cédric's does, seeing as she binge-eats again only a few hours later, this time with even more animalistic abandon:

I cannot hold back my hands; they excitedly rush toward the tray quicker than I can open my eyes again. Here I am, devouring everything in sight, without bothering to chew or taste anything. A real glutton. It doesn't even taste good... It's totally lacking in seasoning and, to make matters worse, it's cold! I don't care, I indiscriminately swallow everything anyway. (87)

At this early stage, Anita's identity is still strongly tied to her efforts of nonconsumption, so both episodes of loss of control are followed by intense remorse and a panicked need to throw up. Interestingly, however, she notes that she is still hungry despite the fact that "I've just gobbled the same amount of food I usually eat in a month. What's going on with me?" (91). What is going on is that "satisfactions gained from consumption are often short-lived. For many, consumption can be habit forming. Like drug addicts who develop a tolerance, consumers need additional hits to maintain any given level of satisfaction" (Schor 124). In concordance with this logic, Anita's addictive hunger, just like Cédric's equally addictive ambition, keep rising until both characters commit monstrous and depraved acts of violence to assuage their newfound, artificially induced *needs*; acts that their nonconsuming selves would never have envisioned. The two monsters that result from this forced consumption must thus be interpreted as warnings against the code and its propensity to create needs that masquerade as natural impulses. Both novels end similarly as well, with both protagonists losing control of their hunger (literal for Anita, metaphorical for Cédric), dying, and being written off by Alphaslab as failed experiments.²⁰ This tragic ending is the result of trying to force a square non-consuming peg into the round hole of consumer society.

²⁰ Technically, Anita is still alive at the end of the novel, only confined to a mental hospital. However, not only is she totally disconnected from reality and prone to auto-cannibalism, but Alphaslab is shown multiple times throughout both novels to be extremely good at making incriminating evidence disappear. Consequently, I think it is safe to assume to Anita will soon die as well, either from her self-destructive behavior or with some 'help' from Alphaslab.

1.4 – Excessive Consumption and the *Homo Economicus*

Significantly, in both *Anita* and *Cédric*, the protagonists meet their ignominious ends because Alphalab, the techno-capitalist institution behind their newfound hunger, loses control of the very hunger it created. Dr. Williams laments the fact that “[d]espite a promising start, the treatment was not successful. [...] This all remains to be confirmed but, at this time, patient B37-WESA925623 [Anita] is a complete and utter failure” (Addison 315), while his colleague Dr. Morrow expresses a similar sentiment about Cédric, explaining that he had to eliminate the man because of “his ambition, which was seemingly never fulfilled, [and] his self-absorption, which had too significant an impact on his personality. Despite our agreement, he leaked some information about our research on his blog and we were worried he would leak even more” (Chaperon 315). In its attempt to transform nonconsumers into consumers, Alphalab has inadvertently created ‘hyperconsumers,’ creatures of runaway needs that threaten the system. In other words, Alphalab has transformed Cédric and Anita into consumerist monsters.

Economists have traditionally called the consumerist monster *homo economicus*. An economic man,²¹

the most important personality trait of *homo economicus* is that he can never be satiated. He will always prefer more to less. Although he can become tired of any particular good, there is never a point at which having more goods overall will make him worse off. And because more will always make him better off, his desires are infinite. (Schor 136)

The *homo economicus* is a creature of infinite needs. He is unaware of the artificiality of these needs and spends every waking hour trying to fulfill them, always in vain. The pitiful, self-cannibalizing monster that Anita ultimately devolves into is an apt metaphor for this condition. Lost in her own world, all Anita can understand now is her need: “I

²¹ Technically, *homo economicus* translates to ‘economic human.’ The use of male pronouns (he/him) in the following quotation should thus be read as pertaining to human beings (as in traditional uses of ‘mankind’). For the sake of clarity and consistency with the secondary sources I quote from, I will also use he/him when referring to *homo economicus* in general and not of a specific character.

shake my head. I growl. I pull the meat off the bone. It hurts. But I'm so hungry" (Addison 315). So great are her needs that Anita is willing to sacrifice parts of her own body to fill them. This kind of sacrifice is such a common idea that it has become an oft-used idiom: "to cost an arm and a leg."²² Anita's lack of control over her hunger is expressed throughout the novel, making her the most explicit representation my corpus has of the lack of satiation that characterizes *homo economicus*. In one notable scene, she jumps into a dumpster, attracted by the smell of rotting meat. Once inside, she starts frantically eating the discarded meat:

I devour everything in mere seconds. Soon, there is nothing left between my fingers, which I am licking hungrily. My hands start shaking again. I need more.

More...

Voraciously, I dive back into the garbage, looking for ever more meat to chew on. I don't care how rotten it is, how wretched it tastes or how rancid it smells.

I need more, always more, period! (233)

Anita's last sentence is the motto of every *homo economicus*. In other words, all 'economic humans' are, at their core, ravenous eaters with endless appetites. Anita furiously eating garbage – the inevitable by-product of consumption – is no more or less mad than the spending frenzy of mallgoers on Black Friday. The feeling of disgust we have towards Anita's act of irrational consumption is an *uncanny* feeling provoked by the return of three repressed truths. The first truth is that consumption is gross, messy and disgusting, a fact that the code works very hard to hide. The second truth is that human beings are no more immune to being commodified and consumed than pigs or cows. Literally or metaphorically, in a capitalist system, cannibalism is inevitably the end point of consumption. The third and final truth is that "modern consumerism is learned behavior, rather than a trait of nature equally applicable to primitives and peasants" (Schor 137). Anita's natural hunger, the one she demonstrated through her anorexia

²² Québécois commonly uses a similar idiom in French: "couter un bras."

before the experiment, is a completely different beast than the artificial hunger that leads her to eat rotting meat and, ultimately, human meat. That hunger, the infinite hunger of *homo economicus*, is a creation of science wielded by a corporation in the name of profit. The forced transformation into a monster undergone by Anita warns and reminds readers that capitalist consumption has the same potential to eat up, devour, waste and destroy as literal consumption of food does.

Midnight's New People and their creator, corporate mad scientist Thomas Shaddack, are somewhat contradictory examples of *homo economicus*. In fact, at first glance, neither Shaddack nor his creations seem to fit the profile at all, since they reject commodities. Shaddack is a cold, calculating man who is “convinced that a man whose body was ruled by his emotions could not be a totally healthy man and never entirely clear-thinking” (Koontz 183). Emotions, in this novel, are correlated with needs, with the satisfaction derived from consumption often referred to as “feelings.” This correlation is explicitly stated towards the very end of the novel as part of the revelation that Shaddack

had never been an adult, really, but a boy whose emotional development had been forever arrested at the age of twelve. [...] On one level, he had always known this about himself, and had considered it to be his great strength, an advantage over those who had put childhood behind them. A boy of twelve could harbor and nurture a dream with more determination than could an adult, for adults were constantly distracted by conflicting needs and desires. (337-338)

Shaddack's rejection of needs and desire is a subject I discuss in detail in Part II (see pages 168-171), as it relates to the novel's commentary on science and scientists. Therefore, I will not pursue this line of questioning further for the moment. For the purpose of this section, suffice it to say that Shaddack, despite being rich, is no hyperconsumer. He has no interest in fashion (137-138) and the few objects of consumption he does have, such as his office “plushly carpeted in beige Edward Fields originals, impressively furnished in plump Roche-Bobois leather couches and brass tables with inch-thick glass tops” and decorated with “a painting by Jasper Johns—an original, not a print” (279) are there to demonstrate his power and wealth rather than feed his

oversized needs. When Shaddack decides to create the New People, sharing his rejection of emotions and desires constitutes the core of his techno-capitalist experiment. As he explains to the main New People character in the story, police chief Loman Watkins:

The microsphere computer within each of the New People monitored every organ in the body. When it detected the production of various amino-acid compounds and other chemical substances that were produced in response to strong emotion, it used electrical stimuli to override the brain and other organs, shutting off the flow, thus eliminating the physical consequences of an emotion if not the emotion itself. At the same time the microsphere computer stimulated the copious production of other compounds known to repress those same emotions, thereby treating not only the cause but the effect. (183)

As we've already seen, one result of this transformation was a complete abandonment of consumption. Once converted into techno-capitalist monsters, the citizens of Moonlight Cove are no longer

interested in movies, for one thing. The theater closed. And they're not interested in luxury goods, fine gifts, that sort of thing, because those stores have all closed too. They no longer get a kick from champagne. [...] The barrooms are all going out of business. The only thing they seem to be interested is in food. And killing. (144)

In *Anita*, the savage consumption of food stands as a metaphor for the supposedly more rational consumption of commodified goods. In *Midnight*, by contrast, literal hunger and economic hunger seem stark opposites of one another. When one of the earliest New People to be created tries to transform back into a human from its monstrous, animalistic, hybrid form, the narration emphasizes this very opposition:

He had fed tonight, sweeping through the woods with the confidence of an inescapable predator, as irresistible as the darkness itself, but whatever he had consumed must have been insufficient to empower his return to the form of

Michael Peyser, software designer, bachelor, Porsche-owner, ardent collector of movies on video disk, marathon runner, Perrier-drinker.

So now he ate the ham, all two pounds of it, and he snatched other items out of the refrigerator and ate them as well, stuffing them into his mouth with both tine-fingered hands [...]. (98)

Following this passage is a long description of Peyser voraciously and messily binge-eating, not dissimilar to Anita's actions in the dumpster. The difference, however, is that Anita devoured food because she had been transformed into a monstrous *homo economicus*, while Peyser devours food in a panicked attempt to go back to being an economic man defined mostly by the luxurious commodities he owns.²³ In light of this difference, the passage is easily interpreted as a promotion rather than a denunciation of the *homo economicus*. The status of *homo economicus*, the novel can be read to say, is the only thing that keeps humans from regressing to a monstrous, atavistic form. In simpler words, economic consumption is a marker of civilisation. According to this hermeneutic logic, the creation of the New People by Shaddack is thus not a criticism of consumerist culture, but a criticism of how the abandonment of pure capitalist imperatives (profits) in favor of an irrational desire for power can destroy the consumerist system, which would lead to disaster.

Such a reading is certainly valid. Of all the works in my corpus, *Midnight* is the one whose critique of techno-capitalism is the most tempered and ambivalent. The novel sees the flaws in the system but puts the blame on the individuals who exploit those flaws, rather than on the system which allows those flaws to exist in the first place. This point is summarized in the most efficient way in the following conversation between the three heroic protagonists of the novel: Sam Booker, Tessa Lockland and Harry Talbot. Booker starts the conversation by positing that: "The greatest problem of our age [...] is

²³ While movies on video disks might not seem luxurious today due to the omnipresence of the extremely cheap DVD format, one should keep in mind that the novel was written in the late eighties. Consequently, the video disks the novel refers to are Laser Discs, a much more expensive format whose ownership, as a result, was limited to truly devoted and relatively wealthy cinephiles.

how to keep technological progress accelerating, how to use it to improve the quality of life—without being overwhelmed by it,” to which Tessa responds

Sometimes we have a blind trust in machines, a tendency to believe that whatever a computer tells us is gospel. [...] Sometimes, when we get data or analyses from computers, we treat it as if machines were all infallible. Which is dangerous because a computer application can be conceived, designed, and implemented by a madman, perhaps not as easily as by a benign genius but certainly as effectively.”

Sam said, “Yet people have a tendency – no, even a deep desire – to *want* to depend on the machines.”

“Yeah,” Harry said, “that’s our sorry damn need to shift responsibility whenever we possibly can. A spineless desire to get out from under responsibility is in our genes, I swear it is, and the only way we get anywhere in this world is by constantly fighting our natural inclination to be utterly irresponsible.” (285-286)

The notion of individual responsibility will be familiar to anyone who has read or heard any arguments in favor of neoliberalism and is part and parcel of the concept of *homo economicus*, whose “behavior is cool and rational, unlike psychoanalytic man (who is driven by compulsion) or sociological man (who is confined by social norms). *Homo economicus* is an individual, acting alone, who does what he does because he believes it is the course of action that will bring him the most utility” (Schor 136). For Talbot, blaming techno-capitalist invention is to scapegoat a neutral object for the use that was made of it. Or, to put it otherwise, techno-capitalism does not kill people, people kill people.

Reading deeper into this discussion and the novel as a whole, however, a second interpretation emerges, one that partly contradicts the first but nonetheless coexists more or less peacefully with it. The passage above may seem to exonerate the system, making isolated madmen the problem, but a more careful reading reveals that the real problem the characters are protesting is not madmen exploiting the system, but people trusting the

system and allowing themselves to depend on its products – on commodities. One should never trust a computer, the novel says, because a computer is a commodity, and one should never fully trust a commodity. What is important is the meaning we give to commodities, not the commodities themselves, which are devoid of meaning in and of themselves, as Watkins explains:

Yeah, I still taste a piece of chocolate when I eat it. But the taste gives me only a tiny fraction of the satisfaction that it did before I was converted. [...] Before conversion, when we ate chocolate, the taste had thousands of associations for us. When we ate it, we subconsciously remembered the first time we ate it and all the times in between, and subconsciously we remembered how often that taste was associated with holidays and celebrations of all kinds, and because of all that the taste made us feel good. But now when I eat chocolate, it's just a taste, a good taste, but it doesn't make me feel good any more. I know it should; I remember that such a thing as 'feeling good' was part of it once, but not now. The taste of chocolate doesn't generate emotional echoes any more. (Koontz 191)

Shaddack's experiments are horrifying not only because they destroy desires but also because they reveal that those desires were never actually fulfilled by commodities. Commodities only fulfilled *needs*: commodified forms of desires created by techno-capitalism to encourage consumption. In Marxist terms, what *Midnight* criticizes is the consumerist myth that commodities "are the eternal form of human wealth when in fact they represent only its capitalistic instantiation" (Wendling 51), a myth often referred to as *commodity fetishism*. For Marx, the definition of a commodity rests on "Aristotle's definition between use-value and exchange-value. Use-value is the enjoyment of a thing that we use, a concept [one can] also refer to as 'material wealth.' Exchange-value is an abstract calculation of what can be returned for a thing when we exchange it for other goods, a concept Marx also refers to as 'bourgeois value'" (52). What Watkins mourns is the disappearance of chocolate's use-value, which is a hidden yet undeniable fact of techno-capitalism. Since, in such a system, "the very form of what we are allowed to use must have been profitable," then it is inevitable for "use-value and material wealth [to be]

progressively eliminated” (53). Commodity fetishism, therefore, is the way in which techno-capitalism hides the elimination of use-value. As Wendling explains: “Fetishism is a kind of idolatry of the human essence, implanted by human objectification. In alienated capitalist production, this objectification is misunderstood. Human essence is seen as a property belonging to the commodity rather than to its creator” (54).²⁴ Watkins and the other residents of Moonlight Cove don’t stop consuming because they are New People. Rather, they stop consuming because, as New People, they are no longer able to pretend that commodities have any essence in and of themselves. Unfortunately, the needs instilled in them by the code are still there. The New People simply no longer have the means to fulfill those and are thus overcome by them. Peyser is unable to transform back into his normal self not because he has lost the desire to consume but because he is unable to conceive of that normal self as anything other than a *homo economicus*. In other words, he cannot describe himself in terms other than the commodities he owns, which thus become a fetish for his identity as an individual. However, since these commodities are empty of meaning, so is the identity he is trying to reconnect to, hence his inability to reconnect with it. *Midnight*, therefore, exposes commodity fetishism as what it really is: a lie, a capitalist illusion devoid of meaning.

Most *homo economicus*, however, cannot cope with the revelation that more is not better. Their desire only feels infinite because they keep trying to fill it with commodities that are in and of themselves empty vessels for a human essence that comes from the consumer himself, not what he consumes. Watkins realizes that the emptiness he now feels has to do with the destruction of his human essence. The fear brought by this realization (263; 353) is what keeps Watkins from giving in to his needs long enough to hunt down and kill the capitalist responsible for his condition. The other New People are not so lucky. They do not understand why the commodities they depend on have stopped fulfilling their infinite hunger, which they now feel more acutely than ever before, nor do they know who to blame for this condition. “Shaddack had coined a term for their

²⁴ For Marx, objectification is not a negative term. It simply refers to the notion that when humans create an object, that object becomes a representation of them, a testament to their existence and their lives. I discuss this concept in more detail in Part II, pages 133-135.

condition: metamorphic-related psychosis” (61), a term which is quickly revealed as a misnomer. The metamorphosis is simply a symptom: the real cause of the psychosis is the consumerist illusion of needs being broken and shattered by the very same techno-capitalist apparatus that promoted it. Unable to accept this disillusionment and unable to make sense of their bottomless hunger, the New People have two choices. The first is to reject consumption altogether but not to create a new mode of socio-economic organization that would allow for the unshackling of desires to the logic of the code. Instead, the New People quasi-literally become the code, fusing entirely with the machinery of production and reproduction that it animates. Alone in his patrol car, young police officer Neil Penniworth

began to see the terminal screen not as a cathode ray tube on which information was displayed, but as a window into another world. A world of facts. A world free of troubling contradictions...and responsibility. In there nothing could be felt; there was only the known and the unknown, either an abundance of facts about a particular subject or a dearth of them, but not feeling; never feeling; feeling was the curse of those whose existence was dependent on flesh and bone. (294)

No longer able to abdicate his responsibilities through the life of a *homo economicus*, Penniworth chooses to “enter the world of electronic thought and magnetic memory, of knowledge without fleshy desire, of awareness without feeling” (295), proving Booker right by opting for total dependence on machines. Not just any machines, but the very machines that Shaddack bought for the police department as a way to gain power over it (85). Furthermore:

From adolescence, Neil had been interested in computers, though he had never become a hacker. His interest was less obsessive than that. He’d started with computer games, of course, but later had been given an inexpensive PC. Later still he had bought a modem with some of the money earned at a summer job. Though he could not afford much long-distance telephone time and never spent leisurely hours using the modem to reach far from the backwaters of Moonlight Cove into

the fascinating data nets available in the outside world, he found his forays into on-line [sic] systems engrossing and fun. (293-294)

Penniworth has a fondness for computers, but only as commodities. Now that he can no longer fulfill his infinite hunger by buying commodities, the *homo economicus* that is Penniworth decides to become one with those commodities. When the last remnant of his human essence realizes the horrific nature of this decision, it is already too late:

It felt like scores, then hundreds, then thousands of ice-cold spiders scurrying over the surface of his brain, burrowing into it.

Suddenly he remembered that Dorothy had found Oz to be a living nightmare and ultimately had wanted desperately to find her way back to Kansas. Alice, too, had found madness and terror down the rabbit hole, beyond the looking-glass. . . . (296)

As horrific as it is, Penniworth's plan – to escape the frustrated desires and lack of fulfillment that characterize his life as one of the New People by eliminating his desires entirely – does work, as should be expected. After all, the poisoned apple itself is never hungry.

Instead of abandoning consumption to give themselves entirely to the machinery of production, some New People try to quell their ever-increasing hunger by overconsuming the few objects that still carry use-value:

Now that their emotional life was no longer rich, [New People] tried to compensate for that loss with pleasures of the senses, primarily food and sex. However, without the emotional factor, every experience was... hollow, and they tried to fill that emptiness by overindulgence: A simple meal became a feast; a feast became an unrestrained indulgence in gluttony. And sex degenerated into a frenzied, bestial coupling. (153)

What Watkins describes in this passage is a peculiar feature of relationships between people and things under hegemonic techno-capitalism. Through the transformation of

objects of desire into objects of consumption, “capitalism inserts the market as forced mediator in our relations to such things. It wraps objects in the straight-jacket of the capitalist value-form. And in so doing, it empties them of their concrete, sensible features, turning them into mere repositories of exchange-value” (McNally 267). The transformation that Shaddack forces the citizens of Moonlight Cove to go through can be read as an allegory for this process: Shaddack (through his company) inserts nanocomputers as forced mediators in the relations between New People and the things they used to enjoy. As a result, the accumulation of “mere vessels of phantom-objectivity (value)” becomes the only way to replace a lost “world of concrete objectivity” (McNally 267). We can also see this phenomenon at work in *Anita*. She does not care for the taste, smell or quality of the food she ingests – all that matters is the quantity.

Previously, I called *homo economicus* a creature of runaway need, and no monster in my corpus expresses this more explicitly than *Midnight*'s New People. Unable to satisfy their needs through commodities anymore, New People become prisoners of their hunger and, as a result, many of them devolve into animalistic, bestial monsters reminiscent of the prehistoric Neanderthal or the mythical werewolf. In this state, the only thing these New People can express is their uncontrolled need. When Lockland is hiding from some of these regressive New People,

[t]he public corridor beyond her door was filled with harsh wolflike growls, murderous snarls, shrills and excited squeals, an icy keening that was the essence of blood and other less describable sounds, but worst of all was that those same inhuman voices, clearly belonging to beasts, not men, nevertheless also spat out a few recognizable words: “... *need, need ... get her, get ... get, get ... blood, bitch, blood ...*” (Koontz 113)

Fragmentary utterances like this last line are scattered throughout the novel – while the exact words differ depending on the situation, the word “need” is almost always present (53, 158, 171, 173, 232, 361). Not that the New People need to speak to convey their hunger. Eleven-year old Chrissie Foster describes her newly converted father as

filled with a strange urgency, and edgy tension. Hungry. Yes, that was it: Daddy seemed hungry ... consumed by hunger, frantic with hunger, starving ... but for something other than food. She did not understand his hunger but she sensed it, a fierce *need* that engendered a constant tension in his muscles, a need of such tremendous power, so hot, that waves of it seemed to rise from him like steam from boiling water. (20)

Mr. Foster's hunger is not a literal hunger, but the metaphorical – though no less real – hunger of capitalist consumption, now stripped of all code-induced camouflage.

While Anita's monstrous transformation into a *homo economicus* stops at the "animalistic cannibal" stage, three of *Midnight's* New People go even further. Due to the destruction of their human essence, New People no longer see commodities as individual objects with individual meanings, but as *abstract* quantities of fuel to feed the ever-burning furnace of their hunger. Abstraction – the process by which different objects or actions are made equivalent – is an integral part of techno-capitalist society, since it allows for the exchange of disparate goods according to the sole logic of exchange-value, with no regard to use-value:

When we equate coats, linen and gold, therefore, we are equating weaving, spinning and mining – each of which is a qualitatively distinct work-process. We are saying that each of these unique labour-processes, however much they differ concretely as productive activities creating distinct use-values, has produced the same intangible thing: a certain quantity of value, measurable by money. The capitalist market must abstract, therefore, from all of the qualitative features of these work-processes in order to equate them as quantities of the same thing, homogeneous and interchangeable labour. What capitalism does, therefore, is to construct the values of products of labour on the basis of an unseen and intangible property they share as *commodities* (but not as use-values), that of being general products of human labour abstracted from the concrete work-processes involved. (McNally 123)

In addition to abstracting commodities and the workers who make them, techno-capitalism also abstracts the consumers that buy commodities. The entire function of fashion and the code, as defined by Baudrillard, is to agglomerate individual consumers into abstract, homogenized groups to facilitate the marketing and selling of commodities. These groups are known in marketing jargon as “demographics” or “target audiences.” In other words, abstracted labour creates abstracted value-forms, the buying and selling of which create abstracted consumers. *Midnight* dramatizes this transformation in a monstrously literal form through the gradual transformation of three New People into one single consuming entity. As with many of their compatriots, both Chrissie Foster’s parents as well as Tucker, a high-ranked employee of New Wave, first try to satisfy their infinite needs by devolving into a savage, sub-human state. Caught by the cold rains after a night spent hunting and too far gone to revert to human form, the three hybrids start looking for shelter. On their way to that shelter, “Tucker studied his two companions for a moment and realized they had changed during their night adventures. [...] By unspoken mutual agreement, Tucker had become the leader of the pack. Upon submitting to his rule, his followers evidently had used his appearance as a model for their own” (Koontz 207). At the beginning of their regression, all three New People took on a different form – lupine for Tucker, feline for Mrs. Foster and insectile for Mr. Foster. By the time they reach the shelter they are looking for, all three are now predominantly lupine. That shelter, not incidentally, ends up being the cellar of “the old, abandoned Icarus Colony – a dilapidated, twelve-room house, barn, and collapsing outbuildings – where a group of artists had tried to establish an ideal communal society back in the 1950s. Since then it had been a horse-breeding facility (failed), the site of weekly flea market and auction (failed), a natural-food restaurant (failed), and had long ago settled into ruin” (108). Safe in the dark, damp cellar with the Fosters, Tucker soon starts longing to become “one aspect of a single shadow, one extension of a larger organism, free from the need to think, having no desire but to *be*” (262). The nanomachines that Shaddack forcefully injected in his blood respond to his desire and Tucker, alongside the other two hybrids, starts changing form once again. In a parody of the communal ideal that led to the creation of the Icarus Colony, the three start “devolv[ing] beyond the primal ape, far beyond the four-legged thing that labouriously had crawled out of the ancient sea

millennia ago, beyond, beyond, until he was but a mass of pulsing tissue, protoplasmic soup, throbbing in the darkness of the Icarus Colony cellar” (262). The site of multiple failed attempts to either partially subvert or circumvent the logic of consumerism, the Icarus Colony becomes the perfect breeding ground for the ultimate consumer, a being who “lived only for the moment, unthinking, unfeeling, uncaring. It had one need. To survive. And to survive, it needed only one thing. To feed” (285). This protean creature is a passive consumer, unable to move and hunt for its sustenance. Instead, the creature, like the code of consumer societies, lures its prey with a siren song emanating from “a score of lipless, toothless mouths” (290). After a few failed attempts, the creature finally finds the perfect frequency for its luring call – in other words, the perfect marketing campaign – and the various animals who live in the abandoned hippie commune start making their way towards the building’s basement, where

the creature’s many mouths had connected, forming one large orifice in the center of the pulsing mass.

In swift succession the bats flew straight into that gaping maw like black playing cards being tossed one at a time into a waste can. They embedded themselves in the oozing protoplasm and were swiftly dissolved by powerful digestive acids.

An army of mice and four rats [...] swarmed down the steep cellar step, falling over one another, squeaking excitedly. They fed themselves to the waiting entity.
(292)

The New People started regressing in an effort to quell insatiable needs artificially given to them by corporate science. Unsurprisingly, the endpoint of their regression is that of a giant stomach, waiting only for bats, rats and mice to eagerly feed themselves to its giant, all-consuming maw, like those Black Friday shoppers feeding themselves to their local Wal-Mart.

Unfortunately, unlike Wal-Mart, this formless monster of unrestrained consumption is no longer leashed to a human system of economic production. The techno-capitalist mind behind the New People no longer holds sway over the needs he created in others.

Shaddack purposefully programmed his company's computer to send an auto-destruct signal to all New People if he was ever to die, ensuring that his creations could not survive independently of the technological system he created. However,

[t]hat inner computer could no longer function in the radically altered substance of the creature, and in turn the beast had no use any more for the biological assistance that the microspheres had been designed to provide. Now it was no longer linked to Sun, the computer at New Wave. If the microwave transmitter there sent a death order, it would not receive the command—and would live.
(284)

And so, like the killer at the end of a slasher movie, the ultimate consumer reappears once the climax of the story is over and the protagonists feel safe again. As reporters and federal agents swarm over Moonlight Cove to take stock of the damages inflicted by the now-dead Shaddack and his equally dead creatures,

[t]he protean creature in the basement of the Icarus Colony was in the grip of need. [...]

Need.

Its need was so intense that it pulsed and writhed. This need was more profound than mere desire, more terrible than any pain.

Need.

Mouths had opened all over its surface. The thing called out to the world around it in a voice that seemed silent but was not, a voice that spoke not to the ears of its prey but to their minds. (378)

This voice is that of the code, the alluring promise of consumer society that all your needs can be fulfilled. One receptive victim describes the call as “a feeling that there was a place he must go to, a special place, where he would never again have to worry about anything, a place where all would be provided, where he would have no need to worry

about the future” (377). A place where one can forgo responsibility and become entirely dependent on commodities. From a Baudrillardian perspective, the alluring amoeba-monster gives monstrous form to the perils of contemporary techno-capitalism and its consumerist “matrix of acquired traits that, today, clones us culturally under the sign of monothought – and it is all the innate differences that are annulled, inexorably, by ideas, by ways of life, by the cultural context. Through school systems, media, culture, and mass information, singular beings become identical copies of one another” (Baudrillard *Vital* 25). Since George Romero’s 1978 film *Dawn of the Dead*, zombies have been the go-to metaphor for what Baudrillard describes. Zombies are human beings stripped of all individuality, now content to be part of an enormous, impersonal horde of “creatures of *consumption*, brazenly mobbing stores and malls and consuming human flesh” (McNally 270). Zombies are in a way the purest form of *homo economicus* – dead men concerned only with consumption. *Midnight* takes the concept of the zombie horde further, removing even more individuality from its members while keeping the hunger for flesh and the danger of contamination.²⁵ The result is a new, even purer kind of *homo economicus*, one that is no longer human at all, but a monstrous abstraction made flesh and *only* flesh.

Meanwhile, the entire narrative of *Cédric* is woven around the transformation of the main character from a slacker to arguably the most straightforward example of *homo economicus* in my corpus. The most interesting traces of this transformation are these moments where Cédric’s pre-injection statements are contradicted by perfectly opposite statements made by his post-injection self. The first and last of Cédric’s blog posts exhibit this *uncanny* symmetry. In his first post, Cédric counters the techno-capitalist status quo that the code is trying to impose on him:

²⁵ *Anita* can also be said to offer a new twist on the zombie. By the end of the novel, the protagonist has lost any traces of her former self and only cares about her hunger, a hunger she can only satisfy by eating human flesh. The only difference between Anita and a zombie is that Anita is still technically alive.

To those who want to know where the hell's my ambition, I say: "And you, where the hell's your well-being?" Usually, they stammer a few words and I understand by them that they've postponed it. Because first, they need:

- money (and a job);
- a husband/wife;
- a car;
- a house;
- a retirement plan.

And people say I'm the one wasting my time. (Chaperon 7)

With these words, Cédric rejects the "the economic view [that] satisfaction comes from increasing what one has" and instead endorses "the 'Zen' path to happiness," which "asks for renunciation, not necessarily of material goods, but of materialism. [...] The key is to keep desires low" (Schor 137). By contrast, in the last blog post he writes before being killed by Alphalab, Cédric confidently states that

everyone is a whore on some level. Those who say otherwise are bloody liars. Either that, or they say it to attract the sympathy of those still lying to themselves. Almost everything we do is in hope of gaining something in exchange: some want more love, others more fame, yet others more money. [...]

Right now, even I am a whore. I am a pharmaceutical company's bitch, as I have often been. This time, however, I'm not only getting money out of it. I can't say much more [...] but I will admit that I find it to be a most enriching experience, which leads me to wonder: who is bitch of whom? [...]

I've been a whore long enough. Now the roles are reversed.

You should do the same. Being on top is fucking hot. (Chaperon 295-6)

By the time he writes these words, Cédric has completely given in to the addictive materialism he previously warned against and glorifies the selling of his labour. He is caught in what Schor calls the work-and-spend cycle:

As people became accustomed to the material rewards of prosperity, desires for leisure time were eroded. They increasingly looked to consumption to give satisfaction, even meaning, to their lives. In both the workplace and the home, progress has repeatedly translated into more goods and services, rather than more free time. [...] Consumerism traps us as we come habituated to the good life, emulate our neighbours, or just get caught up in the social pressures created by everyone else's choices. Work-and-spend has become a mutually reinforcing and powerful syndrome—a seamless web we somehow keep choosing, without even meaning to. (112)

To drive the point home, Cédric couches his support of consumerist society and the work-and-spend cycle in terms of *commodified* sexual pleasure (prostitution) and in the context of an unequal economic transaction. Cédric's belief that he is the stronger party in this transaction is of course a delusion and Alphalab is quick to reassert its dominance over him. The tragic and ironic ending proves that while Cédric, the character, may have stopped warning against the economic view of pleasure, *Cédric*, the novel, has not.

While this section is concerned mostly with consumers and consumerist monsters, the cycle of work-and-spend is only functional if the consumer both works and spends, that is to say, is both a producer *and* a consumer. It follows then that in order to force Cédric to consume, Alphalab's experiment also needs to force Cédric to produce. It is no coincidence then that, shortly after his second, more potent injection of Chlorolanfaxine, Cédric announces that “[t]oday, I've made an important decision: I'm going to get myself a job! A real one! Something that will prove my worth, that will make me feel like something more than a pill-gobbler or an arm to stick needles into” (Chaperon 67-68). This is the first instance in the novel of Cédric buying into the techno-capitalist narrative of work as a measure of worth, but it is not the last. It is, however, the least, as Cédric's confidence in the capitalist system and its valorization of profits only grows from there.

In another early example of his transformation into a *homo economicus*, Cédric looks up his former classmates from college, and their socio-economic success brings forth a depressive episode: “I’m about to puke. I haven’t done shit for the last ten years. [...] Until recently, I had never thought about having a real job, never understood the joy of accumulating money” (70). What this last sentence exhibits is a shift in Cédric’s sense of his own value. Understood in Marxist terms, Cédric used to prioritize “self-actualization, undertaken in freedom from physical needs” (Wendling 16). Now, he measures his self-worth only in terms of his productivity; that is, in terms of how much “value,” understood as “the objectification, or the material embodiment, of abstract labour which manifests itself under the form of exchange-value” (Lee 10), he can extract from his own labour. This shift in personality dramatizes how, “[i]n the choice between income and leisure, the quest for relative standing has biased us toward income. That’s because status comparisons have been mostly around commodities [...]” (Schor 123). To be successful, one needs money, and to have money, one needs to work. Every minute spent not working is a minute spent not making money that can then be used to buy more commodities, and thus increase one’s status. Consequently, the free time Cédric used to enjoy is, according to this logic, naught but wasted time with no exchange-value. The next time Cédric brings up his newfound desire to work, he has completely internalized this exaltation of exchange-value: “Today I’m going back to a normal life. I’m becoming an economic agent again. I am starting a new job” (Chaperon 94). Through this sentence, Cédric normalizes the status of *homo economicus* as “an adequate representation of human beings in all societies, at all times” (Schor 136). In doing so, he becomes part of “a working class, which by education, tradition, habit, looks upon the conditions of that mode of production [capitalism] as self-evident laws of Nature” (Marx qtd. in Wendling 17). To sell one’s labour to the market, Cédric comes to believe, is “a normal life” rather than a historically specific model of socio-economic organization.

Later, Cédric upgrades from clerk in a record store to in-house writer at *QG*, a prestigious men's fashion and culture magazine.²⁶ There, he boasts about “working my ass off. First, because that's what one must do and, second, because I happen to like it” (Chaperon 170). For this new Cédric, being a *homo economicus* is not only normal (and enjoyable), it is also a duty. It logically follows, then, that anyone who chooses not to be an economic man, like Cédric did before being unwittingly modified by techno-capitalism, is guilty of dereliction of duty and obstruction of productivity. As Cédric explains to a shock jock, “it's easy to spew bile against politicians, ‘evil’ pharmaceutical companies and entrepreneurs, but these people *act*. They build, they create, they decide. If you keep fomenting anger and hate against those who act, you'll create a society of jealous whiners who'll never do shit. You're a threat to progress, sir” (79). This is not the only time Cédric will defend the capitalists and justify their exploitation of workers. In his first article for the *QG* magazine, an article that his boss (a fellow *homo economicus*) describes as “full of truths” and “extremely provocative” (188), Cédric discusses “the hatred our culture has for businessmen. Answer: you envy them – they have balls and you don't. Solution: stop hating them and start acting like them” (179). The message is clear – the only way to get an egalitarian society is for everyone to become a *homo economicus* and give in to their desire, their *needs*.

1.5 – When Hunger Leads to Violence

The proliferation of *homo economicus* desired by the new Cédric (and the techno-capitalist system that created him) is however a dangerous one. “The problem with *homo economicus*,” warns Schor,

is that nonsatiation shades too easily into dissatisfaction. [...] If more is better, discontent will not be far behind. Discontent is relieved, over and over again, by acquiring more. Where desires are infinite, the process of acquisition will become infinite itself. Such a process has serious ramifications. We are committed to

²⁶ An obvious reference to *GQ*, a men's lifestyle and fashion magazine. In other words, a perfect example of a component of Baudrillard's code. Not content to embrace consumption, the monstrous new Cédric is also trying to spread it.

perpetual growth, yet the world has finite resources. They are already stretched to the danger point, as we pollute our air, land, and water. (137)

An entire society of *homo economicus*, therefore, can only lead to ecological devastation. In Part III, I discuss this idea and its various dramatizations. The danger *Anita*, *Cédric* and *Midnight* warn about, however, is not an environmental one, but a much more visceral danger, that of the *homo economicus*' murderous potential for violence. Indeed, all three novels dramatize the transformation of normal people into perpetually hungry *homo economicus* as an escalation of violence. The consumerist monster starts and never stops killing as a way to fulfill these new needs. This association between consumption, unfulfilled need, and repeated murder is a common pattern in fiction:

Serial killers, in true crime and in Hollywood, often seem trapped in [...] the 'treadmill' effect of consumer capitalism, where the American Dream is dominated by a frantic desire to work hard enough to maintain it. For these serial killers, the murderous act is a result of their inability to stop working and consuming. They kill after reaching a point when they confuse living people with the inanimate objects they produce and consume as workers. (Newitz 31)

Cédric and *Anita* both fit this description perfectly. The parallels between Newitz's description of serial killers and Addison's novel may not be obvious at first. However, a close reading of the novel reveals that as Anita's psyche disintegrates under the effects of the drugs, she starts seeing other people the same way Alphalab sees them: as commodities. This is at its most extreme at the very end of the novel, when Anita complains that "I need to eat something, anything. Why didn't they let me finish my plate? It was only meat?" (Addison 313). The meat she refers to are her two young nephews, which she killed, cooked and was about to eat before being interrupted by her sister and her brother-in-law. While Anita displayed "a certain lack of empathy" and a "typical anti-social personality" even before the experiment (49-50), these tendencies are worsened by the side-effects of the Chlorolanfaxine. Her monstrous consuming self no longer allows her to think of human beings in concrete, individual terms. Instead, she *abstracts* her nephews to sources of meat, similar to how pigs are abstracted to pork and

cows to beef. So similar, in fact, that the ending reveals that “these enormous T-bones I found in my fridge” (283) she served at a family dinner were in fact the remains of her boyfriend Manuel, whom she previously killed in another fit of murderous hunger. To emphasize this point further, the last few dozen pages are littered with scenes where Anita eats her victims, whether they be Manuel, a dog (275-277), a stranger who propositions her for sex (240-243) or the would-be victim of another serial killer (246-248), but only describes those victims in abstract terms: as a “really thick steak, quite badly carved” or a “hard piece of meat to cut because of all the gristle and sinews” (270, 276). Now a *homo economicus*, Anita sees all animals, including humans, as fulfilling the same artificially-induced need and therefore having the same exchange-value as beefsteaks or pork chops.

As Anita’s perception of others becomes more and more abstractive, her perception of herself becomes more and more dissociative. In a desperate bid to keep intact her identity as a non-consumer, Anita’s mind rejects the murderous *homo economicus* that Alphalab created. This dissociation is at its most severe in a scene set at a police station. While her boyfriend discusses with a policeman about Anita’s vandalized car, Anita’s gaze falls onto the

composite sketch of a woman. She has medium length hair, is almost 6 foot tall. Very thin. Has hollowed cheeks despite her prominent jaw, which is almost too big for the rest of her. [...] She is wanted for the murder of a homeless man behind the *Poulet Presto* restaurant. That’s right downtown! [...] I do not want to cross paths with this psycho! I can handle myself, but if she’s as dangerous as this poster says...I may not know how to react. (217-218)

That “psycho” is of course none other than Anita herself, who is blind to her true nature, like most *homo economicus* are – hence why so many of *Midnight’s* New People desperately try to escape their condition once their eyes are opened. Anita’s denial is however true, from a certain point of view – she did not kill that homeless man, the monstrous *homo economicus* created by Alphalab did. In a way, Anita is not transformed into a *homo economicus*, she is murdered by one, another victim of the hyperconsuming

serial killer. This reading is strengthened by a later scene of murder. When Anita is approached by a man who mistakes her for a prostitute, she reflects that: “If I had a say in this, I’d start running the other way and wouldn’t look back. Beforehand, though, I’d slap him with all my strength. I am not a whore! Alas, I am once again helpless against the demon eating me from the inside. This demon decides for me and says, smiling: Your price will be mine” (240). It is no coincidence that this demon takes over Anita’s body in the middle of a transaction, because this particular imp does not come from Hell, but from a needle in the hands of a corporate scientist. He is a creature of techno-capitalism, an invisible mechanism of the code that makes “*homo economicus* confus[e] himself with a commodity” (Newitz 40). By selling Anita’s body, this spawn of Moloch not only acquires an abstracted commodity (the man’s penis, once again described in terms of meat) but also Anita’s soul, since Anita no longer expresses any moral struggle over her actions after this scene.

Another thing that changes about Anita’s murders after this particular encounter is that her victims become mostly members of her own family, namely her boyfriend and her two nephews. Furthermore, while her other murders are animalistic and impulsive, when she kills her own family, Anita becomes as methodical as any other fictional serial killer. With her nephews, she drugs them before killing them, implying that even her demonic *homo economicus* self is now in control enough to plan ahead and buy the necessary drugs in prevision of the night she is supposed to babysit her nephews. While Manu’s murder is not as premeditated, she nonetheless stabs him “with a sudden and nervous – but also precise and *almost surgical* – gesture” (258, my emphasis). Anita’s shift towards a more traditional serial killer behaviour – clinical, deliberate, mechanistic – at the same time as her choice of victims becomes narrower heralds that the

ideals of the marketplace have fully invaded the home. Rules which are intended to regulate economic exchange serve to regulate socialization in the family. For example, the individual who must aggressively compete with other individuals ‘works’ within the economic sphere, but within the domestic sphere a ruthless pursuit of autonomy and promotion disrupts family life. Violence erupts in the

serial killer narrative when family life resists complete assimilation into economic life. (Newitz 38)

By killing Manu and the two nephews, the *homo economicus* now in control of Anita's body not only satisfies its infinite hunger but also forces these three individuals to assimilate and take their rightful place in the techno-capitalist system: that of abstracted meat-commodities.

From the very first page, *Midnight* echoes this link between economic exchange, erosion of the family, and violence. The novel opens with the murder of Tessa Lockland's sister; in other words, the first victim of Shaddack's experiment is Lockland's family. Likewise, the first named group of New People is Chrissie Foster's parents; the very first victims of regressive New People were "the four members of the Mayser family [...]: Melinda, John, and their two children, Carrie and Billy" (Koontz 80); Loman Watkins is first introduced after the murder of a child named Eddie Valdoski forces Watkins to convert the boy's family earlier than scheduled. Whenever Shaddack's techno-capitalist creations invade the family home, that family is killed or otherwise fractured.

The disruptive impact of consumerist ideals on the family are not limited to Moonlight Cove and Shaddack's little experiment; Sam Booker's own family is in shambles because of those "ideals of the marketplace." Indeed, Booker states that after losing his wife to cancer, he lost his son Scott as well, not to a fatal disease this time but to the consumerist society which has invaded their home. While Sam initially tries to blame his son's anti-social behaviours on the music he listens to,²⁷ he quickly realizes that he

himself had been sixteen when the Beatles and Rolling Stones were coming on the scene, and his parents had railed against that music and predicted it would lead Sam and his entire generation into perdition. He'd turned out all right in spite of John, Paul, George, Ringo, and the Stones. He was the product of an

²⁷ Specifically, Scott listens to black metal, which Sam describes as "heavy-metal music with a twist of satanism" (Koontz 239). The arguments made against black metal are standard for the era: it promotes amorality, hedonism, nihilism, etc. (Koontz 49).

unparalleled age of tolerance, and he did not want his mind to close up as tight as his parents' mind had been. (49)

While one could certainly dispute Sam's claim that the baby-boomer generation was an age of 'unparalleled tolerance', it is nonetheless interesting that, despite *Midnight* being more conservative in outlook than the rest of my corpus, the novel rejects the facile Satanic panic of contemporary American society and digs much deeper to find the real source of the conflict between Sam and his son Scott. "You know what he said to me once?" Sam asks Tessa Lockland:

He said to me, "People aren't important. People don't count. Only *things* are important. Money is important, liquor is important, my stereo is important, anything that makes me *feel* good is important, but I'm not important." [...] That's what he says. That's what he tells me he believes. He says it's all true. He says next time you see a bunch of people standing around a Porsche, admiring the car, look real hard at their faces and you'll see that they care more about that car than about each other. They're not admiring the workmanship, either, not in the sense that they're thinking about people who *made* the car. It's as if the Porsche was organic, as if it grew or somehow made itself. They admire it for itself, not for what it represents of human engineering skills and craftsmanship. The car is more *alive* than they are". (240)

Scott's materialist screed here is as blatant an example of the way the mind of a *homo economicus* works as can be. Like the other *homo economicus* we have seen so far, Scott defines people – including himself – entirely by the commodities they own while paradoxically refusing to define those commodities by the people who made them.

Unlike previous *homo economicus*, Scott was not forced into this state by a needle full of nanites or experimental drugs. Instead, he was moulded entirely by the commodity fetishism encouraged and promoted by the techno-capitalist hegemony under which he lives, a fetishism he has adopted as his own. Indeed, in Marxist terms, what Scott is preaching is that

the commensurability of goods, their capacity to operate as repositories of value in a world of commodity-exchange, does not reside in any of their material properties – if it did, then they could not exchange with those that lacked these properties. [...] It is only their property as products of human labour in the abstract, labour stripped of all material specificity, which makes commodities commensurable. [...]

When we fetishise commodities, therefore, we attribute extraordinary powers to an immaterial substance. However much we may confuse the value of things with their material being (which results in the crude materialism associated with commodity fetishism) we are, in practice, bowing down before something ‘phantom-like,’ something supra-sensible. (McNally 206)

For Scott, money, liquor, a stereo or a Porsche are all fetishes: products of abstract labour worshipped not because of their function, but because of properties of human essence that are mistakenly attributed to them. The car is neither alive nor organic but feels that way to Scott because “the concrete labour without which commodities would be impossible is invisible to the capitalist society, which operates scientifically but perceptually. For this society, magical properties inhere in commodities along with abstract labour, and the society thus projects the powers of the creator onto the created” (Wendling 53). Scott is as much a *homo economicus* as the New People are. Despite being “physically alive and mentally alive,” Scott is as “emotionally dead, burnt out in his heart, cold, so damned cold inside” as Shaddack’s guinea pigs are (Koontz 239). The only reason he has not yet given in to violence is that he has not yet had his fetishistic illusions stripped from him by the mad machinations of techno-capitalism. His blindness to the emptiness of commodities prevents him from devolving into the panicked frenzy of overconsumption like so many of the New People have. And while Scott “likes computers and computer games and television” like Officer Penniworth did (239), he has not yet been tempted with the ability to commodify himself, to become one with those all-important ‘things.’

Unfortunately, Watkins’ son Denny is not as lucky as Scott and becomes the monstrous poster boy for the disastrous consequences of “attempting to organize the family by

economic principles” (Newitz 39). These economic principles are once again here represented by the nanites coursing through the New People’s veins and the dulling of emotion they create. After running a number of errands for Shaddack, Watkins returns to his

modest, two-story, three-bedroom, Monterey-style house, white with pale blue trim, nestled among conifers.

He stood for a moment in the driveway beside his patrol car, studying the place. He had loved it as if it were a castle, but he could not find that love in himself now. He remembered much happiness related to the house, to his family, but he could not feel the memory of that happiness. A lot of laughter had graced life in that dwelling, but now the laughter had faded until recollection of it was too faint even to induce a smile in remembrance. (Koontz 149-150)

In this passage, the house acts as an obvious synecdoche of Watkins’ relationship with his wife and his son. This foreshadows Watkins’ previously-cited speech about chocolate, in which he advocates that *all* objects are synecdoche and only synecdoche. Thanks to this synecdoche, a three-bedroom house becomes a castle; without it, it is only a pile of construction materials skillfully arranged into a house-like shape. In accord with the logic of synecdoche, Watkins’ new indifference to the house itself mirrors his indifference to the house’s inhabitants. Between Watkins and his wife Grace, there is no more tenderness, affection, or love. Their relationship has not soured, nor turned to hate – it has just been emptied of all significance. As a result, “they didn’t make love any more. They had sex” (153). Likewise, Loman Watkins

had always been proud of Denny. Now, at his son’s side, staring down at him, Loman tried to resurrect that pride but could not find it. Denny had not fallen from favor; he had done nothing to earn his father’s disapproval. But pride, like so many other emotions, seemed an encumbrance to the higher consciousness of the New People and interfered with their more efficient thought patterns. (150)

Efficiency, of course, is an economic principle of supreme importance to techno-capitalism and a driving force of abstraction and commodification. It is not a coincidence that Watkins and Shaddack bring back the notion of efficiency multiple times throughout the novel when discussing the New People, their capabilities and their barren emotional landscape. Shaddack even goes so far as wonder “if he would ever be able to perfect the New People to the point at which future generations functioned as smoothly and reliably as the average IBM PC” (186). When this logic is introduced into the family structure, the result is a destructive abstraction of familial bonds. Loman, Grace, and Denny Watkins are no longer a family – they are simply a meaningless collection of people who happen to live in the same building.

So meaningless is Watkins’ marriage now that his wife Grace is never seen again after this scene. Presumably, she died alongside all of the New People when Watkins killed Shaddack, but this is not explicitly mentioned. The same cannot be said for Denny – the relationship between Watkins and his son is at the centre of Watkins’ character, and the tragic end of that relationship is the final push Loman needed to turn against Shaddack, track him down, and kill him. “Even before the Change, Denny had been a computer fanatic,” just like Penniworth and Scott. Unlike them, however, Denny was “one of those kids who called themselves hackers, to whom computers were not only tools, not only fun and games, but a way of life” (150). The hacker subculture was in full bloom when *Midnight* was published in 1989, so its appearance here is not surprising. Like many of its contemporaries, *Midnight* inscribes hackers in a double logic of *prosthesis*. “From one point of view,” the hacker is the victim of “a violent dismemberment of the natural body and an emptying out of human agency” by computer and other commodities (Seltzer 157), just like Penniworth was. From another point of view, the hacker can achieve “a transcendence of the natural body and the extension of human agency through the forms of technology that represent it” (157). According to the logic of prosthesis, technological “systems enable fresh skills and self-sufficiencies in teenage consumers” (Latham 138). Fiction about hackers from the ‘80s and ‘90s that follows this logic features stories where “teenagers become not only figurative but often literal cyborgs, their bodies adapting to consumer technologies in ways that augment and transform their physicosocial [sic]

capacities” (138). At first, *Midnight* seems no exception to this rule, presenting the transformation into New People as an opportunity for Denny to interface with the computer-commodity in a fashion never before possible:

As Loman stood beside his son, voluminous data flickered across the terminal screen. Words, number, graphs, and charts appeared and disappeared at such speed that only one of the New People, with somewhat heightened senses and powerfully heightened concentration, could extract meaning from them.

In fact, Loman could not read them because he had not undergone the training that Denny had received from New Wave. Besides, he had neither the time nor the need to learn to fully focus his new powers of concentration.

But Denny absorbed the rushing wave of data, staring blankly at the screen, no frown lines in his brow, his face completely relaxed. Since being converted, the boy was as much a solid-state electronic entity as he was flesh and blood, and that new part of him related to the computer with an intimacy that exceeded any man-machine relationship any of the Old People had ever known. (Koontz 150-151)

Thanks to the “new powers of concentration” his status as a member of the New People (i.e., a *homo economicus*) grants him, Denny gains “a spatial articulation, as well as potential control over, the enmeshing grid of high speed data” (Latham 224). Unlike many of its contemporaries, however, *Midnight* does not see the hacker’s newly acquired ability to “gain direct prosthetic access to the corporate machineries of consumption” as an “act of consumer revolt” (233). When it comes to the “ambivalent linking of exploitation with empowerment in the realm of computer technologies” – a linking that “has its roots in Marx’s dialectical conception of industrial automation as at once the ‘undead’ objectification of human labour and the protocybernetic enhancement of its historical capacity” (138) – *Midnight* embraces only the first half of Marx’s conception of automation. Denny’s hacking abilities and genius-level intellect are enhanced only because of his new affiliation with New Wave Microtechnology. It is only “after the conversion [that] his intelligence and high-tech expertise were put to use by New Wave.

He was provided with a more powerful home terminal and a modem link to the supercomputer at New Wave headquarters” (Koontz 150), not for his own self-realization, but so he can eventually “join the task group at New Wave that was endlessly refining the software and hardware related to the project, working to make each generation of New People superior to – and more efficient than – the one before it” (151). In other words, while *Midnight* acknowledges that intellectual and technical prowess are full of enormous potential for humanity,²⁸ the novel

also register[s] the deep-seated imperatives of capital that yoke this potential to a regime of objectified, alienated, ‘dead’ labour. Thus, even though the figure of the cyborg seems to promise an unprecedented expansion of the scope of youthful fantasy and action, it also remains bound to a vampiric socioeconomic regime that drains its liberatory energies. As a result, youth’s fresh powers seem to turn against them even as they are mobilized and activated. (Latham 139)

Denny’s ultimate fate – the same monstrous cybernetic fate that befalls Agent Penniworth and many other employees of New Wave – is a perfect illustration of how cybernetic potentiality can easily be undermined by techno-capitalist domination.

Denny’s hybrid machine form is viewed by Shaddack and the economic regime he represents as an ideal, elevated, utopian state, by comparison with the overconsumption of the *homo economicus*. The novel’s *histoire*, however, favours the discourse of Watkins, who

was certain that Denny’s drooling, silver-eyed incarnation was not a higher form than ordinary human existence, neither cleaner nor purer. In its way it was as much a degeneration as Mike Peyser’s regression to a lupine shape or Coombs’s descent into apelike primitiveness. Like Peyser, Denny had surrendered intellectual individuality to escape awareness of the emotionless life of a New

²⁸ At the end of the novel, Booker is specifically said to be “taking immense satisfaction in using high technology to bring about the downfall of Thomas Shaddack, New Wave, and the Moonhawk Project” (344). For a more detailed analysis of *Midnight*’s view on technology and its morality, see Part II, pages 156-158.

Person; instead of becoming just one of a pack of subhuman beasts, he had become one of many data-processing units in a complex supercomputer network. He had relinquished the last of what was human in him – his mind – and had become something simpler than a gloriously complex human being. (Koontz 254)

In other words, both the amoeba monsters and Denny's cybernetic form are abstracted states of being. While the amoeba monster is consumption at its most abstract, Denny's mode of abstraction echoes Cédric's in that it migrates into the sphere of production. Through consumption, both young men become commodities that are then used as alienated labour by techno-capitalism. The manner of each man's death differs, however. Cédric is disposed of by the very corporation that commodified him once he has outlived his purpose. Denny, however, is killed by his own father out of fear, not compassion. Himself prisoner of economic imperatives such as efficiency, Watkins "knew he should feel something if he was going to kill his only child, something more than fear, but he no longer had that capacity. To hold fast to whatever remained of the human being in him, he ought to be able to squeeze out one tear, at least one, as he squeezed off the shot from the Smith and Wesson, but he remained dry-eyed" (Koontz 255). Both Loman and Denny Watkins are caught in a spider web of consumerist and productivist paradigms of social organization that they cannot escape from, which leads to the eventual disintegration of the ideal middle-class family that the Watkins symbolized. By contrast, Sam Booker remains uncorrupted by economic imperatives, which allows him to save his son from those same imperatives, something Watkins could not do. After he trashes Scott's valued records and posters – Scott's *commodities* – Booker hugs his son and tells him that together, they are "going to get the damn machine out of you" (383). The reference to a machine here is obviously a reference to the New People, who had literal machines inside them. It also brings to mind the concept of machine fetishism. Like commodity fetishism,

[m]achine fetishism is a product of alienation. Not only do workers use means of production that seem to operate by mystical and occult properties incomprehensible to the workers themselves, these machines increasingly display the very functions of which the worker is progressively deprived: mobility,

diversification of task, and skill. The alienation expressed by commodity fetishism in the sphere of exchange is expressed by machine fetishism in the sphere of production. In both cases, the occult qualities ascribed to objects result not from the objects themselves, especially considered from the perspective of their use-values, but from the specific illusion that results when their exchange-values determine the use-values and the form and amounts in which they are produced. (Wendling 57)

The New People are the extreme consequences of both instances of fetishism. The New People who ‘choose’ to devolve into animalistic forms (like Michael Peyser) are monsters born of commodity fetishism. Those who instead ‘choose’ to meld with machines are creatures of machine fetishism. Scott is ensnared in both kinds of fetishism, but not yet in a literal sense. Since his consumerist tendencies have not yet become “a system of cybernetic control” (Latham 139), the novel hopefully concludes that it is not too late for Scott if, and only if, Booker finds a way to break the yoke of techno-capitalist consumption and fetishising programming that has begun to infiltrate his family before violence becomes the only option.

Outside the familial sphere, *Midnight* dramatizes the link between violence and *homo economicus* mainly through the New People and their regression into bestial forms. However, towards the end of the novel, Shaddack also starts behaving in a much more violent way, and this change of behaviour is correlated to an increase in his desire to consume. Shaddack is originally presented as the obverse of a *homo economicus* – a man with no desires or needs beyond power, and thus with no attachment to commodified forms, be they objects or people. As I explained earlier, in Freudian terms, all appetites correspond with each other, hence why a refusal of consumption is often associated with a refusal of sex or a lack of sexual drive. Initially, Shaddack seems to fit this Freudian conception, but this change is soon revealed to be a red herring:

Shaddack felt his manhood swelling, hardening. He was not aroused by Loman Watkins, because he had no tendency whatsoever towards homosexuality; he was aroused not by anything in Watkins’s physical appearance but by awareness of the

terrible authority he wielded over the man. Power aroused Shaddack more fully and easily than any sexual stimuli. [...] If a woman looked at him with undisguised fear, he found her infinitely more appealing than if she regarded him with desire. And since he reacted more strongly to terror than to lust, his arousal was not dependent upon the sex or age or physical attractiveness of the person who trembled in his presence. (140)

Shaddack *does* have sexual and consumerist urges – it is just that these urges do not involve him solely as consumer but also as owner of the machineries of consumption. What excites Shaddack is the fact that he owns the means to commodify everyone, to abstract them into “one great hive, buzzing industriously, serving his vision. As he [Shaddack] daydreamed, his erection grew so hard it began to ache dully” (303). Shaddack does not care about the sex, gender, age or appearance of those that excite him sexually because he is excited by them not as persons but as abstract sexual labour that he can put to work for his benefit. When he briefly gets the upper hand on Tessa Lockland and Cassie Foster,

Tommy Shaddack shoved the muzzle into her [Tessa’s] belly and almost blew her guts out, almost wasted her, before he realized how pretty she was, and then he didn’t want to kill her anymore, at least not right away, not until he’d made her do things with him, do some things to him. [...] Then he saw the girl beside her, a pretty little girl, only ten or twelve, and she excited him even more. He could have her first, and then the older one, have them any which way he wanted them, make them do things, all sorts of things, and then hurt them, that was his right, they couldn’t deny him, not him, because all the power was in his hand. (359)

Shaddack feels entitled to the woman and girl’s sexual labour because he owns the control over the economic apparatus, at least in Moonlight Cove, “by reason of his wealth, because he was the primary employer in town, because he gripped the reins of the political system, and because of the Moonhawk project [...],” which is to say his creation of the New People (139). As his socio-economic control increases, so do his desires and, most importantly, his ability to satisfy these desires. Like Watkins, Shaddack has long

prevented himself from feeding the infinite hunger and need that burns through his veins. Unlike Watkins, however, he did not do it for a noble purpose, in an effort to resist transforming into a monstrous *homo economicus*, but simply

because, had he acted upon those needs, he would have been hunted down by the law and made to pay a heavy price. All those years of denial had created a tremendous internal pressure that he desperately needed to relieve. He had sublimated his antisocial desires in his work, focused his energies into socially acceptable endeavours – which had, ironically, resulted in discoveries that would make him immune to authority and therefore free to indulge his long-suppressed urges without fear of censure or punishment. (141-142)

The most extreme *homo economicus*, the most hyper of all hyperconsumers, is the techno-capitalist himself. The only difference between Shaddack and the New People is that he controls the flow of commodities and needs, and thus can control the pace of his own degeneration, but only up to a point.

Past that point of control is where violence erupts and the *homo economicus* regresses to a form that better suits the insatiable consumer he really is. Shaddack's giving in to his desires and letting his hunger rule him is indeed a degeneration and a regression similar to the one experienced by the New People. The regressed state sought by Shaddack, though, is not a bestial one. Rather, "[a]s he drove through his domain, impatient for midnight, which was still five hours away, Thomas Shaddack had largely regressed to a childlike condition" (337). Thomas Shaddack's regression into "Tommy" Shaddack is a sudden and torrential return of consumption. For the young hyperconsumer Tommy Shaddack,

Moonlight Cove was a huge toy, and in a few hours, when midnight struck, when this dark eve ticked over into the holiday, he would be able to have so much fun with his marvelous toy. He would indulge in games which he had long wanted to play but which he had denied himself. Henceforth, no urge or desire would be

denied, for despite the bloodiness or outrageousness of whatever game he chose, there would be no referees, no authorities, to penalize him. (317)

To understand the depth of the regression Shaddack experiences, a comparison with the first – and only – act of murder he committed before the events of the novel is necessary. When Shaddack kills his own parents and his mentor Runningdeer,²⁹ he does so by following economic principles to the letter, planning “the three murders with the coolness of a computer and execu[ting] them with machinelike determination and efficiency. He felt nothing. Emotions had not interfered with his actions” (228). Once again, we find the intrusion of the all-important economic principle of *efficiency* at the root of familial violence. Paradoxically, it is this same principle that prevented Shaddack from killing anyone else until his regression. Shaddack “never killed anyone again – because he never needed to. [...] With but rare exception, murder simply was not an *efficient* method of solving problems” (228). It is only once he unleashes the desire-driven *homo economicus* inside him that his violence becomes uncontrollable. Note that in this regard, Shaddack is different from most of the fictional serial killers he otherwise closely resembles. As Newitz notes, fictional (and fictionalized)

serial killers appear as people who long desperately to appear ordinary on the outside: they are intriguing because they *succeed* at seeming normal while engaging repeatedly in highly deviant, antisocial acts. [...] The serial killer wishes to be looked upon as if he had nothing to hide, as if his normal image conceals nothing, so that he may do his “work” as efficiently as possible. (Newitz 42)

Usually, in serial killer narratives, efficiency is the principle that drives the killings. In *Midnight*, efficiency is instead the principle that stops those same killings. It might be tempting at this point to interpret this difference as another example of the partial and ambivalent nature of *Midnight*'s critique of techno-capitalism. As I said before, such an interpretation is perfectly valid, but in my opinion too simplistic. Coming back to Shaddack's vision of Moonlight Cove as his toy that he can play with at his leisure, the

²⁹ For details on Runningdeer, see Part III, page 122.

paragraph that follows this fantasy compares this orgy of perverse blood play to explicit transactional consumption: “And like a child sneaking into a closet to filch coins from his father’s coat to buy ice cream, [Shaddack] was so completely transported by contemplation of the rewards that he had virtually forgotten there was a potential for disaster” (317-318). On display here is obviously hubris, of two kinds. The first is scientific hubris, a common trope, while the second is capitalistic hubris: Shaddack is so confident in the rewards/profits his techno-capitalist experiments will procure him that he blinds himself to reality, like a cartoon character with dollar signs in place of pupils. These ocular dollar signs predictably lead him to his ultimate doom.

Cédric is also a tale of hubristic techno-capitalist violence that erupts because of a *homo economicus* whose perverse sexual needs rest entirely on consuming his victims as abstract sexual commodities. However, this theme is much more explicit in Chaperon’s novel than in *Midnight*. The biography of the author found at the very end of the novel reveals that “[t]o write this new instalment of the *Cobayes* series, Alain [Chaperon] started from the idea that aggressiveness and ambition made a perfect team”.³⁰ Like Anita, Cédric’s transformation into a *homo economicus* reawakens his sexual urges. Before the injection, Cédric’s love life was, by his own admission, a “romantic dry spell... Five years of nothing but mirages” (Chaperon 18). After the injection, Cédric’s libido increases gradually but significantly. And while this libido is at first linked to romantic feelings towards an older actress (see pages 96-98), Cédric quickly dissociates the two, and sex quickly becomes solely about fulfilling his own needs: “Scorching kiss. Ten seconds later, my pants are down, and she is already sighing with desire. The old slut won’t be disappointed. Today, I’m not making love to her. I’m fucking her...even if I hurt her a little” (98). As the last line of this excerpt announces, Cédric’s sexual urges not only increase thanks to Alphalab; they also take on a more sadistic form. What starts with rough sex escalates to murderous rape in the span of less than week. Like Shaddack, Cédric’s main turn-on becomes control rather than physical attractiveness – as he himself puts it in a previously-cited passage, “[b]eing on top is fucking hot” (296) – and his

³⁰ This passage can be found on an unnumbered page after the main text (which ends on page 315) alongside ads for the other books in the series.

desire for control and deviant sexuality lead him to commodify his conquests/victims. In a blog post unimaginatively titled “Good to Fuck?”, Cédric opines: “Since the beginning, man has always preferred the beautiful to the ugly. We always choose the best-looking fruits, leaving the least appealing to the last suckers to enter the store. Woman is a fruit, except that she has, usually, the luxury of choosing who gets a bite of her” (182). Fruits and women, in this analogy, are both commodities you buy. Since consumerist hierarchy is based on the one who can afford the best commodities, “we want to make the neighbor jealous and be seen, at least once in our life, with a goddess on our arm” (182).³¹ The woman-commodity here succumbs to the logic of the code and becomes a woman-sign, interchangeable with other similar signs. After the murder of his older lover – his first murder – Cédric demonstrates this logic plainly and cruelly, stating that at “twenty-seven, I am not made for cougars. I’m attracted to the freshness of the meat, not its fame” (Chaperon 136). Interestingly, the choice of vocabulary strengthens the link between capitalist consumption and violence established not only in this novel, but also in *Anita*. The monstrous disease of consumption that infects both characters is the same; *Cédric* simply manifests it through a more obviously anti-capitalist narrative. The ideological bent of the novel becomes even more obvious as it progresses and Cédric’s murders go from unplanned acts of (corrupted) passion to premeditated transactional activities. After a professional setback, Cédric goes for a walk “red with anger. I want to hurt. I want to kill. I want to fuck too. I need to unload my rage somewhere” (Chaperon 218). He ends up doing so thanks to a literal transaction – he pays a prostitute, consumes her in the agreed manner (i.e. has sex with her), but then overconsumes and kills her. The fact that he performs such a kill as a way to assuage work frustrations is no coincidence. From a Marxist standpoint,

one of the basic and painful contradictions a worker must face is that his source of social power is also the source of his degradation as a subject. His work may give him power, but the price he pays is the ‘death’ of his subjectivity, or various parts of his subjectivity over time. When this contradiction becomes too much for him

³¹ For more on consumerist hierarchy and the social pressure to consume, see Schor’s discussion of what she calls the “Keeping up with the Joneses” syndrome (122-125).

to bear, he may develop a psychopathology which compels him to literalize Marx's metaphoric notion of "dead labour" by killing people who represent it. (Newitz 34)

If we interpret "work" in Cédric's case as referring to his job as a test subject for the pharmaceutical industry – not a far-fetched interpretation, since a test subject is given a salary in exchange for labour measured in abstract units of time, like any other worker – then the above description applies word for word to Cédric. The Chlorolanfaxine, which he can only obtain thanks to his job as a test subject, gives him social power – wealth, fame, ambition – first as a trendy blogger, then as a magazine columnist, and finally as an actor, a profession he jumps into only for the wealth and fame it provides (Chaperon 215). The same Chlorolanfaxine also destroys his personality, emptying him of all warmth and humanity as thoroughly as Shaddack's nanomachines empty the New People. When this emptiness begins to override every other need he has, he kills other workers, sexual workers in this case, leaving them as literal dead labour. Strengthening my reading is the fact that the techno-capitalist system helps Cédric in his killings. Alphalab assigns him a personal 'bodyguard' (nicknamed alternatively Igor and Boris) whose role is to clean up any and all evidence he leaves behind, going so far as to bribe or kill law enforcement officers who get too close to him (152-154). Alphalab's 'generosity' is of course self-interested – if Cédric is caught, then Alphalab risks getting caught as well – but it is certainly appreciated by Cédric, who starts to become overly dependent on the system to cover his tracks (262).³²

More than just covering for him, the techno-capitalist system *encourages* Cédric in his killing. It is only because of the feeling of security provided by the presence of Igor/Boris that Cédric's killings become "a pathological form of recreation" (Newitz 37). Shortly after his move to France to act in a movie, Cédric kills another sex worker simply because "I was bored to no end, alone in my hotel room" (238). Though boredom was the sole impetus for the murder, Alphalab's protection was instrumental in transforming this

³² Alphalab also protects Anita from detection by cleaning up after her messy murders (Addison 144,185). Unlike Cédric, however, Anita never notices Alphalab's interventions. Alphalab is also a lot sloppier in *Anita*, failing to get rid of a police composite sketch (230) or to prevent her arrest (315).

impetus into action. “Of course,” says Cédric, “Igor was shadowing me every step of the way. He gave me confidence” (238). Igor/Boris, however, works for Alphalab’ first, not Cédric. Both Cédric and the reader are reminded of that fact when Igor/Boris stops Cédric from killing a sexual partner in a BDSM club.³³ Alphalab is comfortable letting Cédric become a “recreational killer” (Newitz 37) but only when this recreation respects economic imperatives. Thus, when Cédric decides to kill outside of the bounds of the transactional laws of the market, Alphalab’s chaperone steps in and reminds him that “This is not the place” (Chaperon 265). Somewhat surprisingly, Cédric immediately complies. Cédric takes the lesson to heart and, in his last murder of a sex worker before the end of the novel, is the one who enforces the laws of the market. After telling him to slow down his thrusting, his victim reminds him that “I am not a piece of wood you can hammer nails into,” i.e., she is not a commodity. This makes Cédric extremely angry: “Is she trying to tell me what to do? Has she forgotten that the laws of the market are clear: the client is king?” (289). Her refusal to be commodified is a defiance of the consumerist law to which a *homo economicus* fervently ascribes; it cannot, therefore, be tolerated. As punishment, Cédric reminds her of her role in the techno-capitalist world by literally pushing nails into her. That this murder is more graphic and gruesome than all the other scenes of murder in the novel put together speaks to the severity Cédric ascribes to the sex worker’s offense. Once he is finished, Cédric condescendingly spits out that “you ain’t worth any more than a piece of wood, you dumb slut!” (291). With this line, Cédric not only equates the abstracted exchange-value of a human being with that of an object, he also reaffirms his power, as a wealthy consumer, over this particular human commodity.

1.6 – Anti-Consumerism as Nationalist Discourse

Unlike Anita and the New People, whose murderous tendencies are the manifestation of their “failure to escape economic identity” (Newitz 37), Cédric “makes no attempt to free

³³ BDSM refers to an ensemble of erotic practices also commonly known as ‘bondage’ or ‘kink’ as well as to the subculture and community that has developed around these (often marginalized) practices. The term is an amalgam of three older abbreviations: B/D (bondage and discipline), D/s (dominance and submission), and S/M (sadism and masochism).

himself from his work as a consumer” (36). Rather, he embraces his newfound consumerist identity despite its obvious monstrosity. It’s through this embrace that one of the most interesting aspects of *Cédric* is revealed – it’s enmeshing of a critique of consumerism into a larger nationalist discourse. The novel directly correlates Cédric’s transformation into a *homo economicus* with the gradual rise of his contempt for Quebec and its inhabitants. The slacker Cédric from the beginning of the novel is associated with Quebec, while his *homo economicus* persona is associated with foreign empires.

Associating the corporate world with foreigners – and especially English-speaking foreigners – is not an uncommon trait in Quebec culture. Félix-Antoine Savard’s 1937 novel *Menaud, maitre-draveur* (*Boss of the River*), is a significant early example. The narrative of this novel centers on a farmer and log-driver who campaigns against the American and English-Canadian businesses buying and exploiting Quebec’s natural resources for their own profit rather than that of the Québécois who work and “own” the land.³⁴ For example, the novel describes Québécois log-drivers as

Lead[ing] a dog’s life, exhausting themselves by day, shivering all night as might outcasts under the whip.

If only they were decently paid for this work! but – no –.

Fifteen or sixteen hours of it at a stretch – work that breaks the back of a man – especially when he has for a bed only the earth, damp and cold, only some branches of spruce that by morning have imprinted their signature in his flesh.

And only the strangers pocketed the profits of this hardship! As Menaud put it, they had hooked their grappling irons over everything, and like a sigh of lamentation there passed through the entire country a sort of wind of suffering that now and then one heard breathed when a man was alone in the evening, a sort

³⁴ Note that while I am using the term Québécois here for the sake of clarity and consistency, Québécois as a term of identity only started to be widely adopted in the late-sixties to early-seventies. Beforehand, including in works like *Menaud, maitre-draveur*, the term Canadiens-français was the accepted identifier. For more on the change of terminology and its political causes, see Desbiens-Brassard 22-24.

of far-off voice like that which murmurs in the convolutions of a conch. (Savard 26-27)

The “strangers” are aided in their efforts by Délié, an ambitious Québécois who is more than willing to work against his own people. Trying to convince Menaud’s own daughter to marry him, Délié boasts that

[s]oon he would be master of all this – here he indicated the mountain whose blue walls made a rampart behind the fields and green city of the woods – the strangers would lease this domain, and he himself have charge. Ah! Here he began to smile, to show already the teeth of a watchdog, and – rascal that he was – his hair bristled while, mouth wide open, he barked his wrongs against the whole tribe of his own folk:

Also, in the autumn when everyone took his own trail to open his hunting lodge – he – Délié – would be there to say, “Get out!” As to those who scattered to the trapping grounds that in virtue of the law of the jungle were handed down from father to son, there again he would be to say, “Outside you go! This belongs to thee no more, the strangers are masters in the territory that once thou held in spacious and venerable right.” (69)

Délié in this novel embodies the very common archetype of the ‘traitor’ or ‘collaborator’: a Québécois character who sells his own people to foreign capitalists in exchange for wealth and/or power. A somewhat more recent example of the same is the iconic character of Elvis Gratton. The star of the 1985 film *Elvis Gratton: Le king des kings* and played by actor Julien Poulin, Bob ‘Elvis’ Gratton was conceived as a rather mean-spirited satire of federalist Québécois by hard-line sovereigntist Pierre Falardeau.³⁵ Gratton is thus an American-loving, uneducated, small-time ‘entrepreneur’ who craves

³⁵ *Le king des kings* is actually a feature-length re-release of three shorts that were previously released separately between 1981 and 1985 but are no longer available individually. The popularity of the character would net him two sequels (in 1999 and 2004) as well as a television show (2007 to 2009). All of them starred Julien Poulin as the main character and all but the series were written and directed by Falardeau.

money and fame. He exhibits the same kind of craven, traitorous ambition as Délié, as demonstrated by his catchphrase: “Think big, sti!”³⁶

In my own corpus, *Dans le ventre du dragon* makes a very clear association between the ‘rat race’ of consumerist society and English-speaking Canada and the United States through the figure of Lou, Bozo and Steve’s boss. Referred to and credited only by this English epithet, The Boss is a character cut from the exact same cloth as Elvis Gratton. A small-time ‘entrepreneur’ as well, he operates a flyer distribution business and owns his own truck, something he is extremely proud of: “I started from scratch. I distributed my share of flyers. And now I got a truck. The system better not blow up, I broke my back enough” (*Dans le ventre* 00:38:02). The first time The Boss appears on screen, he forces his employees to distribute a week’s worth of flyers in a couple of days, even ordering them to work nights if necessary, because “there’s a big sale at Eaton’s this Thursday. Consumption can’t wait, boys. The entire capitalist system needs our flyers. Get that through your skull, Steve, and you’ll go far” (00:08:05). The conjoined mention of the Toronto-based retailer Eaton’s and “the capitalist system” establishes pretty concretely that the movie associates the consumerist apparatus with English-speaking “foreign” interest. This link is only strengthened by the boss’s habit of peppering his dialogue with English phrases and idioms, such as “All aboard!” (00:08:33), “Time is money” (01:03:14), “I’m the boss” (00:38:15), “Sky is the limit!” (00:37:27) and “Think positive” (00:09:20). These verbal tics (especially the last one) and The Boss’s love for the techno-capitalist system cannot help but bring to mind Elvis Gratton, who was already a well-known character in Québécois culture by this point in time. However, *Dans le ventre du dragon* does not have a political axe to grind. As a result, the movie is much nicer to The Boss than any of the Elvis Gratton movies are to their protagonist. In one scene, Steve tells us that The Boss “is fine, all things considered. He’s a small boss,” as opposed to a

³⁶ Gratton’s catchphrase is not translated here. “Think big” is uttered in English, and “sti” is a profanity derived from the word ‘hostie,’ the host used in the Christian ritual of the eucharist. There is no standardized spelling for this word – I am using ‘sti’ because it is the spelling used by merchandise featuring the character.

“big boss with his big car and his big house” (00:15:37). In another scene, we are even meant to sympathize with The Boss as he mourns the loss of

the St-Joseph Boulevard run. Three years I’ve been waiting for it. St-Joseph Boulevard, boys. A beautiful long stretch of tiny houses, with tiny doors on them. And a few big buildings too. A goldmine of a street, boys. A real gold mine. I deserved that street, didn’t I? We live in a rotten world. No recognition, no remorse. A rotten world. Rotten to the core. (00:30:34)

While Steve does tease the boss over this loss – telling the boss to trust the system, an ironic reference to something the boss had told Steve in an earlier argument (00:17:56-00:19:34) – the overall attitude of the characters and the film towards the boss is that he is ultimately as *sympathetic* as he is pathetic.

What distinguishes *Cédric*’s own nationalist subtext from that of *Dans le ventre du dragon* is that the main foreign target is France rather than English Canada or the United States. Very early in the novel, slacker Cédric demonstrates a firmly negative – and somewhat clichéd – opinion of the French, and of Parisians in particular. In a blog post titled “They Think the Sun Revolves around Them,” Cédric laments that during the one month he spent in Paris seven years before, “Parisians were impolite, rude and condescending towards me (and, as a rule, towards all of my countrymen). They respect no one: not the disabled, not the foreigners, not the homosexuals, not even themselves. Only exceptions: dogs and Americans. Which, if we’re being honest, is pretty much the same thing” (Chaperon 66). As one can see, while the novel does not focus its nationalist undertones on a hatred of Americans, it does not let the United States off the hook either. Not only does the novel depict the French and Americans as allies in rudeness, it also essentially calls Americans ‘dogs,’ which is as much an insult in French as it is in English. Furthermore, when Cédric is presented with a number of offers to star in French films, the film he chooses is not that of famed French director François Ozon (229), but rather a co-production directed by American director Wes Anderson and starring both French and American actors, though the only real-life actor mentioned as part of the production is an American (Harvey Keitel). Thus, while *Cédric* seems at first to eschew

the anti-American subtext underlining a lot of Quebec nationalist discourse in favor of attacking France, in reality, the novel portrays both France and the United States as a single techno-capitalist system, a single ‘dragon’ that needs slaying. Even Alphaslab’s contact in France has an anglicized name, a fact I explore in more detail in Part III (see pages 265-269).

As Cédric’s monstrous transformation progresses, his view of the French quickly changes. It is a Frenchman, Sylvain de la Symbiose, who recruits him as a writer for *QG*. “Sylvain,” according to Cédric, “is the kind of guy who likes ambition. He’s French. Here, we’re wary of those with ambition. We prefer the humble ones. Pff! I’m no longer one of those” (Chaperon 185). Here, Cédric distances himself explicitly from his Québécois roots by associating these roots directly with a lack of ambition. He had made a similar association at an earlier stage of his transformation into a *homo economicus*, a transformation he himself described as going from the “sweet dreamer to the wide-awake realist, more conscious than ever of the problem that haunts the heart of his countrymen: smallness. From now on, this will be my chosen battlefield: I will fight against smallness and weakness. Against the small and the weak, if needed. I won’t kick the weak in the balls, but I will kick them in the ass (137). The tone of that previous admonition of his countrymen is much softer however – he wants to improve his fellow Québécois, not leave them to their mediocrity. This magnanimity is rapidly dropped as Alphaslab’s drug takes hold of Cédric’s psyche. After he is outed as the writer behind the infamous *Blogue du Cobaye*, Cédric notes that: “He [Sylvain] also suggests that it would be smart of me to prioritize French media. I agree. I have no intention of spending my life in a country without pride nor ambition. If I can get away from here, it will be a boon for the spread of knowledge” (211). Once again, Cédric brandishes his French boss as the model to follow, in stark contrast with the beginning of the novel.³⁷ More importantly, there is no longer any sympathy for Quebec and its inhabitants, but rather pure condescension. This

³⁷ Beyond the blog post against Parisians, Cédric also notes that his last girlfriend, who left him after cheating on him in a cruel (and somewhat unbelievable) way, was French. Surprisingly, the novel never explicitly connects the way she treated him with the fact that she is French. The scene where Cédric gives the details of their break-up (53-55) does not mention her French origin in any way. It is up to the reader to make the connection with an earlier mention of a French girlfriend (19) and realize it is the same person.

condescending view will seem extremely familiar to many Québécois readers since it taps into an old idea that has been circulating since at least the 1960s, when the discourse of decolonization became popular in nationalist and sovereigntist circles. This idea has coalesced over the years into a common idiom – “né pour un petit pain”³⁸ – which is used to describe a national feeling of inadequacy compared to the North American capitalist powers that are English Canada and the United States. Writer and intellectual Hubert Aquin explored this idea in depth in a 1962 essay: “Is it necessary, in this context, to catalogue all the psychological implications caused by the awareness of this minority position: self-punishment, masochism, a sense of unworthiness, ‘depression,’ the lack of enthusiasm and vigour – all the underlying reactions to dispossession that anthropologists refer to as ‘cultural fatigue?’” (Aquin 35). Aquin’s vocabulary is more refined than Cédric’s, but the sentiment is the same – Quebecers have an inferiority complex that leads them to call

for renunciation and determination in the same breath. If anyone needs to be convinced of this, he need only read the articles our great nationalists have written—profoundly ambiguous speeches in which one can scarcely distinguish exhortations to revolt from appeals for constitutionality, revolutionary ardour from willed obedience. French-Canadian culture shows all the symptoms of extreme fatigue, wanting both rest and strength at the same time, desiring both existential intensity and suicide, seeking both independence and dependency. (42)

Aquin’s tone here is that of mid-transformation Cédric. They criticize their countrymen not out of hatred or disgust, but out of a real desire to improve the life of their fellow Québécois. Their goal is not to put down their culture, but to elevate it to new heights. As the transformation worsens, however, Cédric turns away from this kind of reformist mentality and towards genuine hatred, exhibiting a discourse closer to the one attributed to Aquin’s contemporary ideological opposites, namely federalist intellectuals like Pierre Elliot Trudeau. According to historian Denis Monière, Trudeau and his peers believed that: “Culturally, economically, intellectually, and spiritually, the French-Canadian nation

³⁸ Which would translate roughly as “born for small things”

was too impoverished to meet the challenges of separate existence. The assumption behind all this was that French Canadians were congenitally weak and inferior” (Monière 249). Once his artificial *homo economicus* persona has fully taken hold, Cédric exhibits this harsher, more condescending position instead of the gentler one he previously shared with Aquin.

While Monière’s historical analysis is rigorously researched and of immense value, it is vital to note that it is not neutral. Monière is unapologetically antipathetic to the federalist ideology of Trudeau *et al.* and therefore may not be describing it as fairly as he could. Accurate or not, Monière’s perception is interesting *as a perception*. It demonstrates that the discourse attributed to Cédric in the latter parts of the novel is the same discourse that has long been attributed by Quebec nationalists to their ideological opponents. Such a discursive borrowing is evidence that the novel’s *histoire* does not condone that discourse but, on the contrary, tries to shine a light on its monstrosity. Cédric’s transformation into a vicious, cold-blooded killer is directly correlated with his adoption of the belief that Québécois are ‘weak’ and ‘inferior,’ a belief that goes beyond the self-criticism of a Hubert Aquin and becomes pure hatred of one’s own people.

The monstrosity of this belief is especially obvious in the novel when Cédric decides he wants to do cinema – not because he likes acting, but because he wants the wealth and fame a film star commands:³⁹

By nighttime, still nothing. I have yet to receive a single call from any of those assholes in the local film industry. Fucking idiots! They don’t deserve me. I’ll go make a killing in France. They’ll regret it soon enough and then they’ll beg me to star in one of their big movies. To them, I’ll say “No, you should have called me

³⁹ This basic premise is similar to that of the third Elvis Gratton film, establishing another tenuous link between Cédric and that famous character. The notion that wealth and fame are somehow incompatible with a love and appreciation for Quebec’s culture can also be seen in the song *I Want to Pogne (I Want to be Famous)* from popular comedy group Rock et Belles Oreilles (RBO). The song includes the following lyrics in purposefully clumsy English : “I know the mathematic/America is a big market/If there is more public/There is more money in my pocket/I want to pogne/I want to pogne/ I am the Judas of the French Canada/I want to pogne” (Rock et Belles Oreilles 00:00:48-00:01:06).

earlier. You didn't believe in me, so screw you all! Eat shit and go fuck yourself. That's all I have to say to you!" (217-218)

Cédric's verbal violence towards his fellow countrymen because of their refusal to let him act in their movies completes a rupture that began with a terrifying act of sexual and physical violence towards a local actress. As I alluded to before, Cédric's first girlfriend after his first injection of Chlorolanflaxine is a fifty-two years old actress famous for hosting a children's television show: "Inside *Disques Records*, in-between two racks of romance novels, is Marie Eiken. I cannot believe my own eyes! Marie Eiken, who starred in *Touche-à-tout*, my favourite childhood show. To be honest, she was the first woman I truly fell in love with" (36). The name Marie Eiken is a not-at-all subtle allusion to Marie *Eykel*, a real-life actress famous for playing the lead role in a popular children's show called *Passe-Partout*. To call *Passe-Partout* popular is an understatement – the show was a cultural juggernaut, defining the childhood of Quebec's youngsters from 1977 to 1993. Marie Eiken is thus a somewhat allegorical character – when Cédric kills her, he also kills an important part of the culture that raised and moulded not only him, but thousands of Québécois from what has been called the "*Passe-Partout* generation" (Cauchon n.p.). As he rapes and strangles her, the *homo economicus* side of Cédric takes over the narration:

It's *Touche-à-tout* who made me weak and immature for so long. I was a child for twenty-seven years because of Marie Eiken! [...] Because of you, men today are no longer men: you taught us how to cry, not how to act, not how to be strong! Through me, a whole generation finally gets its revenge! You deserve to die!" (123-124)

For readers who recognize who Marie Eiken stands for, this graphic act of sexual violence cannot help but elicit a "queasy feeling caused by the perversion of an iconic character from our childhood and of the actress who played her" (Bonin n.p.). That queasy feeling, of course, is exactly the goal of the author, leaving some readers with the impression that "Chaperon was attempting to shock and disturb readers at every turn, with no deeper literary intent" (Bonin n.p.). Beyond the shock value of this murder,

though, is a political subtext, a condemnation of a certain anti-nationalist discourse inextricable from capitalist exploitation. Indeed, *Passe-Partout* was not just a show for children – it was part of a state-funded and state-managed initiative called “Operation Renewal, which wanted to give children from low-income households access to part-time kindergarten. Among the ideas brought up during this operation, the least expensive was to produce a television show (relative to the creation of kindergarten classes all over province). This idea was ultimately the one selected by the government” (Cauchon, n.p.). *Passe-Partout*’s primary goal was not to entertain children for the profit of a private television network.⁴⁰ Rather, it was a part of the public education curriculum, made to palliate a lack of resources in some sectors of Quebec’s education system. When Cédric denounces the fictional *Touche-à-tout*, he also metatextually denounces the socio-economic vision exemplified by *Passe-Partout*, namely state intervention into social concerns such as education. Mid-way through the novel (and thus, his transformation), Cédric publishes the following screed on his blog:

The laws of nature demand that we get rid of any useless moochers. Another proof that we are straying away from our true nature. [...] If we forced men to give before receiving, thousands of these social parasites would get off their fat ass, shake off their countless cobwebs, find a job and get to work. Man was not created to give; we condition him from birth to receive. Mommy will provide. Hence why men created governments: to create new mummies for themselves. (Chaperon 173-174)

Beyond the irony of Cédric making a scathing attack on “the welfare queens: those who can work, but won’t” (173), a group to which he used to belong very proudly, this passage also reveals a very condescending attitude regarding social programs. The comparison made between government and motherhood connects *Touche-à-Tout* and

⁴⁰ The show was eventually made by a private production company, but it was fully financed by the Ministry of Education and aired on the state-owned network Télé-Québec. A revival of the show started airing on Télé-Québec in February 2019 with new actors playing the same characters but seemingly no official partnership with the Quebec government beyond the usual tax credits and subsidies. The end credits of that new version, however, do mention that it is “Based on an original idea from Quebec’s Ministry of Education.” The show can be seen online at <https://zonevideo.telequebec.tv/a-z/832/passe-partout>.

Marie Eiken specifically with state intervention within the narrative of the novel, even if one does not understand the metatextual connection with *Passe-Partout*. Indeed, Cédric first starts manifesting disgust towards Eiken after she complains that he was too rough during sex and then leaves in haste by pretending she has to call her mother. “What a weak excuse. My own mother already gets on my nerves, hers better not start as well,” rages Cédric internally (88-89). Cédric then describes his mother as a smothering, over-caring presence, something he accuses Eiken of being when she starts worrying about his changing personality (due to the drugs). “You don’t seem well. I’m worried about you,” she says, to which Cédric responds internally: “There we go: after *Touche-à-Tout*, she’s now playing Mother Teresa. What in Satan’s name did I do to deserve this?” (116-117). For the *homo economicus* that Cédric has become, social programs become synonymous with smothering motherhood, which in turn becomes synonymous with Marie Eiken/Eykel and *Touche-à-tout/Passe-Partout*, which are themselves both cause and symptom of what Cédric sees as the congenital weakness of the Québécois relative to more ambitious people like the French and the Americans. Through this complex semantic chain, the novel inscribes Cédric’s monstrous and violent transformation into a *homo economicus* into a common nationalist depiction of those Québécois who choose to work with foreign capitalists as “a fine race of dogs/of limping uncles of smiling bellies of speakwhite lackeys of two-bit "moderates" who pretty soon will put a people on the auction block of history chanting the love-thy-neighbor of/cooperative banditism” (Chamberland, qtd. in and trans. by Reid 122).⁴¹ It is no coincidence that after Cédric murders Marie Eikel, the novel comes out and states what I have been endeavoring to prove so far: “Have I become a monster?”, wonders Cédric. “Maybe I have... I probably have... Yes, I have... ...So what?” (Chaperon 128). “So what?”, echoes consumer society. “So what?”, repeat the techno-capitalists who transformed Cédric, Anita, and the inhabitants of Moonlight Cove. “So what?” indeed.

⁴¹ This evocative passage is taken from the poem “L’afficheur hurle” by Paul Chamberland. The poem was written in 1965 and is one of the most significant texts of this era of Quebec nationalism. As the poem loses some of its power in translation, I have included the original in Appendix A.

1.7 – Conclusion

“Proletarian monsters,” says McNally, “are, by definition, monsters of the body” (257). The monstrous consumers explored in this section are equally monsters of the body, since their transformation from average consumers or non-consumers into monstrous *homo economicus* is always accompanied by physical changes, be it Anita’s slight weight gain (294-295), Cédric’s make-over from long-haired, bearded slacker to well-dressed, clean-shaven and muscle-bound Adonis (94, 105,156), or the explicit physical metamorphosis endured by the New People in *Midnight*. As fellow monsters of the body, these characters are the logical extension of the proletarian monsters found in the developing societies that McNally studied. The equation is simple: on one hand the proletarian monster is a monster of the body, and on the other hand “the monstrous body is pure culture” in that it “quite literally incorporates fear, desire, anxiety, and fantasy (ataractic or incendiary), giving them life and an uncanny independence” (Cohen 4). Logically, then, the proletarian monster is a monster of culture. Furthermore, the proletariat is an economic class, making the proletarian monster an *economic* monster of culture. Because consumption is what links both economy and culture, as I stated at the very beginning of this section, the phrase ‘economic monster of culture’ can be boiled down to single word – consumer. Consumers are the new monsters of the body in North America, as indicated by the transformation since the middle of the twentieth century of McNally’s favorite proletarian monsters – the zombie and the vampire – into new consumerist equivalents: the “flesh-eating ghouls” (McNally 260) and “the ‘yuppie’ vampire” (Latham 21), which Anita, Cédric and the New People all resemble to some degree. That is not to say that there are no more proletarian monsters in North American tales of techno-capitalist monsters. There are, but they are no longer mainly monsters of the body. Indeed, since the advent of globalization has shipped most material production overseas – a phenomenon I will come back to in Part III (see pages 261-270) – the new proletarian monsters come largely from the ranks of white-collar workers, making them first and foremost monsters of the *mind* rather than the body. Part II explores a particularly popular monster of the mind: the mad scientist, now evicted from his Gothic castle and forced or seduced into corporate servitude.

Part II: The Mad Scientist in a Corporate World

The one part that's become very clear to me is that Moreau's going to be funded by corporate money, rather than being an isolated, obsessive individual.

— Richard Stanley, first director hired for
The Island of Doctor Moreau (1996).

(Quoted in Collin n.p.)

2.1 – Introduction

Nietzsche famously warned us that “[w]hoever fights with monsters should see to it that he does not become one himself” (69). The works in my corpus have a similar warning to deliver: Whoever *creates* monsters should see to it that he does not become one himself. The first part of this study looked at the monstrous products of techno-capitalist consumer society and its systemic commodification of desires. My focus now shifts to the means of production and producers of monsters. In fiction, there are two major means of producing monsters: magic and science. The distinction between the two is often blurry. Any sufficiently advanced science is indistinguishable from magic, as Arthur C. Clarke famously put it, and thus it follows that sufficiently explained magic is indistinguishable from science. More often than not, the difference comes down to one of vocabulary choice, of simple aesthetics. That aesthetic choice is *significant*, however, in the sense that it *has meaning*. The magic wand in *Harry Potter* and the sonic screwdriver in *Doctor Who* may be functionally identical – both are stick-shaped objects that a character can wave around to do whatever the plot demands – but they conjure up very different images, tropes and intertextual references in their audience. Despite the apparent superficiality of the differences, the ideological work of a text is simply not the same if its monsters are magical in nature rather than creations of science gone haywire. In other words, there is a marked difference between stories featuring monsters created by mad wizards and the stories in my corpus, where the monsters are created by mad scientists.

The mad scientist has been a common figure in Western fiction since at least the era of gothic horror. A gestalt of two genres – gothic fiction and horror fiction– gothic horror

emerged in the late eighteenth century with *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) and lasted at least until the end of the nineteenth century through works such as “The Fall of the House of Usher” (1839) and *Dracula* (1897). Some scholars, however, identify Gothic DNA in many contemporary films, novels and short stories, including the writings of H.P. Lovecraft, Stephen King and Clive Barker, “the horror/thriller *Silence of the Lambs*,” and even *Alien* (Bloom 12).⁴² While gothic fiction and horror can exist independently of each other, the two are often connected. So much so, in fact, that “it was gothicism, with its formality, codification, ritualistic elements and artifice [...] that transformed the old folk tale of terror into the modern horror story” (3). Through horror, the gothic is able to transcend its fascination with the supernatural horrors of a repressed past and

dea[l] in the inexplicable whether from the realms of the supernatural or of the scientific; horror is the product of a demonization in either the material or non-material realm. Indeed, horror fiction based on scientific progress (radiation and mutation) is almost always apocalyptic in tone and plotting, its rationale the unforeseen disturbance caused by scientific interference in the natural processes bringing about changes which cannot themselves be rationally explained. (Bloom 12)

The need for a source for such “scientific interference” is what led gothic horror to reinvigorate old tropes going back to the medieval alchemists, henceforth creating the mad scientist, whose definitive Gothic manifestation is of course Mary Shelley’s Doctor Victor Frankenstein. Usually male (Haynes 304), the mad scientist can be found under many guises in a vast array of novels, films, comic-books and videogames. The mad scientists of my corpus are, like the stitched-together creatures they often create, cobbled together from parts of other characters. A complete survey of all possible exemplars of the mad scientist figure is beyond the scope of this thesis. Fortunately, Elaine Després has already done such work magnificently, and her conclusions summarize the essential characteristics of the mad scientist:

⁴² In my corpus, *Dans le ventre du Dragon*, *Splice* and *Midnight* also have an obvious filiation with gothic horror.

[A]ll scholars acknowledge that the mad scientist descends from the medieval alchemist, the “foolish” or “stupid” 17th century virtuoso, and the 18th and 19th centuries chemist and doctor. These figures from the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, and the Modern era – whose mutations are closely linked with those of science – are the ancestors of the modern mad scientist. Furthermore, all agree that Victor Frankenstein is the first true mad scientist in literary history and the model for this character type, which soon became widespread in 19th century European literatures (especially in France, England and Germany). Also widely noted is a wide divide between real-life scientists and their imaginary counterparts. Finally, all see the mad scientist as a personification of the fear of science and nature. (20-21)

Mad scientists are such common figures because they embody the primordial, universal fear of “specialized knowledge and the authority that powerful knowledge confers on the few, leaving the majority ignorant and impotent” (Hayes 2). If knowledge is power, then it is only logical that the lay person often harbors the same feeling about scientists as the powerless do towards the powerful: envy, contempt and fear.

Before going further, I should note that when I call the mad scientist a figure, I am using Bertrand Gervais’ definition of the word to refer to an object (person, thing, location) in a narrative that acts as a sign for a multitude of meanings contained within the reader’s own imagination:

The figure is an enigma. It triggers the imagination of the subject which, in a single gesture, seizes the object and defines it wholly, attributing to it a meaning, a function, even a destiny. The figure, once noticed, is at the center of an imaginary construction. It is not static; rather, it is always being interpreted, and through these interpretations the subject both tries to understand the figure and gets lost in its contemplation. (Gervais 16-17, my translation)

The figure is a narrative object that triggers the reader’s imagination along well-delineated pathways, enabling the reader to quickly recall “a vast array of knowledges” in

order to interpret the figure's multitude of meanings. "When we attempt to understand a figure," says Gervais, "we put it in relation with other symbolic forms, we integrate it into our imaginary, we interpret it through our encyclopedic and lexical knowledge, our personal experiences, our worldview" (32). The mad scientist is a figure specifically because he triggers this kind of thought-process in the reader at the merest sight of his lab coat or his wild hair.⁴³

A figure can come about in a variety of ways, including through the addition of a symbolic dimension to a single character (Gervais 165). The mad scientist as we know it today owes its existence to this process. The mad scientist figure is an abstracted, symbolic appropriation by audiences of a single character: Victor Frankenstein. Frankenstein is not the only foundational mad scientist; in fact, he is only one of three. While "there is no stable corpus, even for the 19th century, there is a consensus on a few works: *Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus* by Mary Shelley, *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* by Robert Louis Stevenson and *The Island of Dr. Moreau* by H.G. Wells" (Després 21). Of those three pioneers, however, *Frankenstein* was undoubtedly the most influential work, having become a

journalistic shorthand for any experimentation popularly perceived as dangerous or likely to backfire. Whether in developing viruses for germ warfare, delivering genetically modified vegetables ("Frankenfoods"), cloning sheep, or growing new organs from embryonic stem cells, we can be sure that, in the media reports, Frankenstein will be implicated. (Haynes 26)

It is no surprise, then, that the scientists in many of my works are 'post-modern Prometheus,' acknowledged as direct descendants of Victor Frankenstein not only by critics but also by the texts themselves. By establishing such intertextual relationships, critics and authors acknowledge and ground the texts in the wider cultural discussion about knowledge, power and the limits of human capabilities. Since they contextualize

⁴³ When talking about mad scientists in general, the male pronoun will be used in a gender inclusive way, since most mad scientists are male. Exceptions exist, however, including in my corpus (*Dans le ventre du Dragon*, *Splice*).

the critique of techno-capitalism that is unique to more recent works, I feel it relevant to first examine in detail these historical references and relationships before exploring how throwing techno-capitalism into the mix distinguishes the new generations of mad scientists from the previous ones.

2.2 – Mad Scientists and Intertextuality.

The *Maddaddam* trilogy has been consistently described or analyzed through the prism of its similarities with *Frankenstein*. In particular, the first instalment of the trilogy has been described by Hilde Staels as “a parody, an ironic inversion of Mary Shelley’s novel. In *Oryx and Crake*, the unhappy, alienated monster is the protagonist, rather than Crake’s manufactured children. In Atwood’s novel, “a ‘monstrous’ human being replaces the human monster as a victim of society” (438). This reading is supported by an intertextual allusion to *Frankenstein* in the novel itself. After reflecting on how monstrous his “reeking, hairy, tumescent, leering” self must appear compared to the genetically-engineered ‘perfection’ of the Crakers, the protagonist screams “Crake! [...] Why am I on this earth? How come I’m alone? Where’s my Bride of Frankenstein?” (Atwood, *Oryx*, 169). Here, Jimmy is re-enacting Shelley’s novel, with himself as the monster angry with his creator’s refusal to make him a mate. Crake meanwhile plays the dual role of Victor Frankenstein and God, becoming henceforth a paradoxical fusion of the atheist mad scientist and the disinterested divine creator, a satirical play on Crake’s depiction as a demiurge figure. Crake, of course, did not ‘create’ Jimmy, as Staels points out (438), but he did create the world Jimmy lives in and did manipulate Jimmy into his current position as a prophetic figure named Snowman. Having done so, Crake does deserve to be called, if not Jimmy’s, then at least Snowman’s creator.

On the subject of Crake, Sharon R. Wilson sees the mad scientist at the center of the trilogy as a stitched-together creature itself, at least on an intertextual level:

Crake resembles the many mad scientists of film, such as the numerous *Frankensteins* featuring Boris Karloff (1931) and their parodies, *The Invisible Man* (1993), *The Island of Lost Souls* (1933) and two remakes, *The Island of Dr.*

Moreau (1966, 1977), *Forbidden Planet* (1956), and *The Fly* (1958, 1986), whose Faustian efforts to rival God inevitably spell disaster. [...] Crake is even a kind of Dr. Jekyll whose Hyde personality, his dark double, remains hidden behind computer screens and technological experiments (see Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* [1886] and the many films based on it). He is also a Dr. Strangelove (*Dr. Strangelove: Or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb* [1963]), whose "strange love" is his attraction to extinction. (401, second and third square brackets in the original)

This lengthy family tree is less an intimation that "Crake is indeed modeled after all these characters [and that] he is to be read as a direct intertextual reference to all these previous works" than a proof that Crake is "a figure, that of the mad scientist, built by 19th century fiction and changing its shape throughout the history of science. It's not that Crake borrows from Morbius [from *Forbidden Planet*], Hoenikker [from Kurt Vonnegut's *Cat's Cradle*,] or Strangelove, but that all four of them are avatars of this one figure" (Després 435). In other words, Crake is not a new stitched-together creature, but simply the newest incarnation of the same creature that has been terrifying us since at least the Middle Ages.

While he does resemble a large number of characters to varying degrees, Wilson argues that Crake "most closely resembles Shelley's Dr. Frankenstein" (401). While I disagree a little bit with this assertion – and will explain why below – the trilogy certainly seems to encourage such a reading with a number of explicit allusions to *Frankenstein*. I've already quoted one of these, and another one can be found in the last book of the trilogy, when the Crakers are dismissively referred to as "Frankenpeople" (Atwood, *MaddAddam* 19). A third, much more interesting reference appears once again in *Oryx and Crake*, when Jimmy is interrogated by the CorpSeCorps – the private police/military force used by the various corporations who run Atwood's neoliberal dystopia – and shown various videos of anti-establishment protesters and militants in the hope that he will recognize his activist mother. One of those videos happens to be a "riot scene Jimmy recognized from a movie remake of *Frankenstein*. They always put in a few tricks like that to keep him on his toes" (*Oryx* 257-8). The riot scene in the first cinematic adaptation of *Frankenstein* is

almost as iconic as the monster himself and certainly helped give rise to the imagery of mobs carrying torches and pitchforks. Equating such a scene with the real anti-capitalist protests happening in the novel also equates the object of each protest: Victor Frankenstein and the ruling mega-corporations, respectively. If Victor Frankenstein was playing Prometheus, then Cryojeenyus, Genie-Genomes, RejoovenEsense, OrganInc Farms, HealthWyzer, and all the other corporations named in Atwood's trilogy are playing Frankenstein.⁴⁴

In addition to making references to *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (Koontz 19, 94) and the works of American horror writer H.P. Lovecraft,⁴⁵ *Midnight* makes a major allusion to *Frankenstein* in its last few pages.⁴⁶ In the aftermath of the disaster created by New Wave's experiments with nanotechnology, the outside world is trying to understand what happened in Moonlight Cove. Deprived of actual facts by the government, many newspapers start coming up with their own theories. The novel responds to one such theory – “Secret Pentagon Experiment Behind Mysterious Disaster” – by explaining that:

the Pentagon was a favorite Boogeymen in some circles, almost beloved for its real and imagined evils because believing it was the root of all malevolence made life simpler and easier to understand. To those that felt that way, the Pentagon was almost the bumbling old Frankenstein monster in his clodhopper shoes and too-small black suit, scary but understandable, perverse and to be shunned yet

⁴⁴ Many of the protests depicted in the novel are against genetic modifications done by agricultural corporations (Atwood, *Oryx* 178-9) and as such were probably inspired by the real-world protests that are regularly organized against the very real corporation Monsanto. I come back to this point in Part III, page 226.

⁴⁵ For example, Watkins compares Moonlight Cove to “a Lovecraftian world of primal and cosmic forces, where human beings were reduced to little more than cattle, where the Judeo-Christian universe of a love-motivated God had been replaced by the creation of the old gods who were driven by dark lusts, a taste for cruelty, and a never-satisfied thirst for power” (Koontz 332).

⁴⁶ On page 116, I discuss another reference to *Frankenstein* found in *Midnight*. In addition, Koontz has recently (2004-2011) written a five-book series collectively named “*Dean Koontz's Frankenstein*” that casts Victor Frankenstein as a villain and follows his Creature's quest to stop him after he resurfaces in the present day.

comfortably predictable and preferable to consideration of worse and more complex villains. (375-6)

The worse villain is, of course, Thomas Shaddack and New Wave Technologies, the real sources of the monsters that terrorized Moonlight Cove. In Koontz's novel, the simple and straightforward threat posed by the monster is superseded by the diffuse and complex threat posed by the scientist and techno-capitalist who created the monster.

Although *Jurassic Park* does not contain any direct references to *Frankenstein*, it has, like *Oryx and Crake*, been identified as a direct descendant of Shelley's novel. Cultural historians Lester D. Friedman and Allison B. Kavey have classified *Jurassic Park*⁴⁷ as a "translation" of *Frankenstein*, a category they define as containing "tales about hybrid creations and once-dead organisms brought back to life resulting in biological mutations" in works "that do not use Shelley's characters or settings" (147). Here, Friedman and Kavey are using translation in the sense of Benjamin, who believed that "the task of the translator consists in finding that intended effect [*Intention*] upon the language into which he is translating which produces in it the echo of the original" (Benjamin 177, brackets in the original). In the case at hand, language should not be interpreted literally – as English, French, German, Spanish, – but as a mode of expression relying on shared cultural signs and signifiers. *Jurassic Park*, therefore, translates *Frankenstein*, originally written in the mode of expression of England in 1808, into a new mode of expression, that of the United States in 1990. Taken in this sense, translation has nothing to do with the fidelity to the words, setting or plot of the original. Rather, "a translation, instead of resembling the meaning of the original, must lovingly and in detail incorporate the original's mode of signification, thus making both the original and the translation fragments of a greater language" (179). What *Jurassic Park* translates from *Frankenstein* is not its narrative, but the deeper "poetic significance" of the text (178), that is to say, the warnings it conveys about science, madness and the transgression of natural laws and divine boundaries.

⁴⁷ Like most scholars writing on the topic, Friedman and Kavey are analyzing the film, not the novel, but their observations can most of the time apply to the novel as well.

Friedman and Kavey identify two sources of poetic significance shared by both *Jurassic Park* and *Frankenstein*: “a scientist who becomes obsessed with an audacious research project that falls outside the boundaries of traditional of scientific investigation” and “events [that] occur within reasonable extensions of recognizable settings and everyday realities” (167). While they only discuss *Jurassic Park*, I posit that their analysis could apply to my whole corpus. In other words, all works under study in this thesis share these elements and can therefore be considered “translations” of the *Frankenstein* narrative. While the obsessed scientist is easy to point out in every work, the emphasis on a “recognizable” and “everyday” setting is more difficult to identify with only a cursory glance, and thus deserves some attention.

Cloning dinosaurs may seem far-fetched, but *Jurassic Park* takes pains to make its narrative seem plausible, with an introduction that interlaces real developments (such as the foundation of Genentech)⁴⁸ with the fictional events of the novel. This blurring of the fictional and the factual, as well as the Introduction’s claim that the subsequent story is based on witness accounts collected from “the principal figures in the ‘InGen incident,’” bear a resemblance to the preface of *Frankenstein*, which also mixes real events with fictional ones to give the novel an air of authenticity. Atwood’s novels, though set in the future, also endeavor to make their setting as familiar as possible, since a dystopia needs to be similar enough to the readers’ present reality for its cautionary message to be heard. Atwood herself has used the fact that the *Maddaddam* trilogy “invents nothing we haven’t already invented or started to invent” – in other words, nothing a reader would not be at least somewhat familiar with – to argue that her dystopian novels were not science-fiction (*Moving* 330). Even *Alien* was made to look and feel “recognizable and ‘everyday.’” *Alien* does not reflect contemporary reality but nonetheless ‘feels real’ to the audience because it exhibits *verisimilitude*. Verisimilitude is the effect created by the various generic conventions, modes of characterization and signifying strategies used in

⁴⁸. Genentech is one of the first biotechnology corporations. As the novel accurately describes, it was founded in 1976 by two men, venture capitalist Robert Swanson and biologist Herbert Boyer. The company still exists today as a subsidiary of Roche, a Swiss healthcare conglomerate. Genentech’s earliest and most well-known claim to fame was its creation of “chemically synthesized genes for human insulin,” which are now used in the treatment of diabetes instead of the animal-derived insulin used previously (“Herbert” n.p.).

fiction to convince readers or viewers that what is being depicted is real, even though they know full well that it is not. As film scholar Christian Metz puts it, the audience

“knows” that the screen presents no more than a fiction. And yet, it is of vital importance for the correct unfolding of the spectacle that this make-believe be scrupulously respected (or else the fiction film is declared “poorly made”), that everything is set to work to make the deception effective and to give it an air of truth (this is the problem of *verisimilitude*). Any spectator will tell you that he “doesn't believe in it,” but everything happens as if there were nonetheless someone to be deceived, someone who really will “believe in it.” (I shall say that behind any fiction there is a second fiction: the diegetic events are fictional, that is the first; but everyone pretends to believe they are true, and that is the second).
(70)

This pretense of belief is commonly known as the ‘suspension of disbelief.’ Thanks to this phenomenon, a movie set on a spaceship and involving extraterrestrial lifeforms can still feel real to the audience if care is put into making the deception work. In the case of *Alien*, most of this work fell to set designer Rob Cobb, who is very vocal about how he “was always pushing to do some interesting but believable speculations about how such a ship might really look or how it would function.” This “idea of a very realistic spaceship, a very believable spaceship design, was important” to Cobb since he saw it as a way to “suck the audience in” (Cobb qtd. in Salisbury 32).

Among the Québécois texts, *Anita* and *Cédric* are a little more removed from the traditional *Frankenstein* narrative, since they contain neither hybrid creations nor once-dead organisms brought back to life. However, they do contain an obsessive scientist who transgresses the boundaries of traditional science and is ultimately punished for it in the person of Dr. Williams, as well as a setting which, while never named explicitly, can easily be deduced as being Montreal by any reader with a passing knowledge of the

city.⁴⁹ For this reason, I consider these texts to be descendants of *Frankenstein* as well or, at the very least, closely-related cousins. The case for *Dans le ventre du dragon* being a translation of *Frankenstein* is much more easily made. Dr. Lucas is clearly and indubitably a transgressive scientist. The fact that her ‘forbidden’ research is about increasing the power of the human mind rather than creating a hybrid creature or resurrecting the dead hardly reduces her connection to Shelley’s character and narrative. Especially since one could argue that her goals are very similar to those listed above. Wanting to create a new race of post-human can be interpreted as creating a hybrid creature, one that is part human, part ‘something better.’ In a similar vein, modifying the human body so it can cure itself of all illness may not be resurrection, but it is definitively another way to cheat death. In addition, Dr. Lucas’s death is an explicit punishment for her experiments, confirming that she is indeed a scion of Victor Frankenstein. In addition, all three Québécois texts heighten their verisimilitude through their very premise of someone volunteering to be a test subject for clinical testing. Indeed, the fact that all three of my Québécois texts use the same mode of monster creation – clinical trials – is not a coincidence, but a reflection of the fact that

Montreal is the clinical testing capital of North America. It is so thanks to a confluence of favourable factors—comparably low salaries, generous tax breaks from various levels of government, industry-friendly federal laws governing clinical trials, not to mention one of the largest per-capita student populations on the continent. The city [...] is the cheapest place to research, test and market a drug, and pharmaceutical companies have taken note: nearly 33 per cent of “healthy patient research” conducted in North America happens in Montreal. (Patriquin n.p.)

This state of affair has been true since at least 1965 and has become a normalized part of the city’s business milieu. As the CEO of one company conducting clinical trials in Montreal puts it, “Here in Quebec, it’s the kind of work that is known and understood.

⁴⁹ While *Anita* is vaguer on its setting, *Cédric* is as explicit as possible without saying the word ‘Montreal.’ The novel mentions both the subway (71) and “*Le Journal de la Métropole*” (17), a thinly veiled reference to the real-life *Journal de Montréal*.

It's nothing new. It's been demystified. People are comfortable with it" (Louis Caillé, qtd. by Patriquin n.p.). And it is specifically because Montrealers are so comfortable with the clinical trial industry that *Dans le ventre du dragon*, *Anita* and *Cédric* work as cautionary tales, as warnings against an industry whose oversight "is largely arbitrary and shrouded in secrecy, compromising the quality of research and endangering the safety of the 'volunteers' on which the industry depends" (Patriquin n.p.). If Montreal were not the "clinical testing capital of North America", then these texts would lack verisimilitude. They would therefore not function as monster narratives, in the same way that *Midnight* would not function if California were not host to a vast quantity of technological companies both and inside and outside of its (in)famous Silicon Valley.

Thus, while the works in my corpus may at times stretch the definition of "everyday" and "recognizable" or may have their scientists work in fields less obviously related to resurrection or the creation of hybrid creatures, I believe they nonetheless count as translations of *Frankenstein* because they all feature a scientist character that mirrors Shelley's and they all work very hard to make the setting eerily familiar. To be clear, I am not saying that any of the texts of my corpus use eerily familiar settings with the express intention of imitating *Frankenstein*. Rather, I am suggesting that the texts in my corpus pay particular attention to the verisimilitude of their settings for the same reason *Frankenstein* did: because doing so heightens the uncanny nature of the setting, and thus the horror potential of the work as a whole. In my corpus, such verisimilitude also has the benefit of giving increased urgency and importance to the critique of techno-capitalism.

Frankenstein is without a doubt the most well-known ancestor to the narratives discussed in this thesis, but there is another nineteenth-century English novel to which my corpus owes as much, if not more, than *Frankenstein*: H.G. Wells' *The Island of Doctor Moreau*. I could not find a work on the evolution of that novel's narrative as complete and detailed as Friedman and Kavey's work on *Frankenstein*, but I do think their concept of "translation" in the Benjaminian sense can easily be adapted to H.G. Well's novel. If a translation of *Frankenstein* is a tale "about hybrid creations and once-dead organisms brought back to life resulting in biological mutations" in a work that "do[es] not use

Shelley's characters or settings," then a translation of *The Island of Doctor Moreau* could be defined as a tale about hybrid creations and fusions of humans and animals resulting in biological mutations in a work that does not use Wells's characters or settings. Obsessed, transgressive scientists and familiar, recognizable settings would also be part of such a translation since both narrative elements are shared between *Frankenstein* and *The Island of Doctor Moreau*.

The changes I made to adapt Friedman and Kavey's wording to a different source text are so minute that most of what I've just said about my corpus being made of translations of *Frankenstein* applies here as well. Unlike with *Frankenstein*, however, few of the works under study have ever been extensively compared to *The Island of Doctor Moreau* and there are no explicit references to Wells' novel in any of them, with the major exception of *Midnight*, where *The Island of Doctor Moreau* serves as the main intertextual support for the story. Early in the novel, Watkins establishes a lengthy parallel between Shaddack and Wells' titular Doctor:

He thought of Thomas Shaddack out there in the big house on the north point of the cove, overlooking the town where beasts of his creation roamed the shadows, and a terrible bleakness overcame him. Because reading for pleasure had been his favorite pastime since he was a boy, he thought of H. G. Wells' Dr. Moreau, and he wondered if that was who Shaddack had become. Moreau reincarnate. Shaddack might be a Moreau for the age of microtechnology, obsessed with an insane vision of transcendence through the forced melding of man and machine. Certainly, he suffered from delusions of grandeur, and had the hubris to believe that he could lift mankind to a higher state, just as the original Moreau had believed he could make men from savage animals and beat God at His game. If Shaddack was not *the* genius of his century, if he was an overreacher like Moreau, then they were all damned. (Koontz 95-6)

The comparison between Shaddack and Moreau is repeated multiple times throughout the novel. At one point, Loman tells Shaddack himself that he has "not created new and better men any more than Hitler's policies of genetic breeding could've created a master

race. You're not God, you're Dr. Moreau" (185). By throwing Hitler into the mix, *Midnight* creates a three-way equivalence that further highlights the "mad" part of the mad scientist figure that both *Frankenstein* and *The Island of Doctor Moreau* have contributed to popularizing.

Another notable feature of this excerpt is that a lot more details are given about the plot and main character of *The Island of Doctor Moreau* than in similar references to *Frankenstein* or even *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. This preoccupation with explaining the parallels in detail extends to all references to Wells' story, including the following: "He was the puma-man, on the prowl, and Moreau was out there in the island jungle that was Moonlight Cove" (290). Instead of trusting the audience to understand that the mention of the puma-man is another reference to Wells' novel, *Midnight* takes pains to 'spoon-feed' that information to the reader. While this may annoy the more well-versed reader, it does speak to the lesser degree of cultural omnipresence enjoyed by *The Island of Doctor Moreau* compared to his predecessors. Shelley's and Stevenson's novels have become part of the common vernacular. From a semiotic standpoint, they have become *signs* of the mad scientist figure and,

since the reader's encyclopedia is already full of these signs – who cannot predict that the appearance in a story of a character similar to Frankenstein is going to be followed without fail by the creation of some monster or by some other scientific experiment running out of control? – writers can often get by with nothing more than simple evocations of varying degrees of vagueness and trust the reader to quickly fill in the gaps. (Després 25)

Midnight cannot do that with *The Island of Doctor Moreau* because it has not attained as high a semiotic status as its other two contemporaries. Giving such details also has the benefit of highlighting the references to *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, making those references – and the negative connotations given to them – stand out among the other intertextual references peppered throughout the novel.

The Island of Doctor Moreau's relatively low semiotic status also explains why the *MaddAddam* trilogy is almost exclusively compared to *Frankenstein* when the much closer parallel is Wells' novella. Like *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, the trilogy features cruel experimentations on animals (and humans), human/animal hybrids like the Crakers (human-looking composites of different animal features) and the Pigoons (pigs with human brain tissues),⁵⁰ and its very own "mad" scientist who tries to artificially evolve one form of life into another and is ultimately deified by his creation. Finally, Jimmy, the protagonist of the trilogy, is left behind after the mad scientist's death and falls into the role of prophet for the new 'god,' a character arc similar to that of Edward Prendick, the protagonist of Wells's story.

By making intertextual references and parallels to emblematic examples of the mad scientist figure, my corpus delivers a lot of information about its attitude towards science and those that practice it in a very limited amount of time or words. The centuries-long endurance of the mad scientist character, not only as a figure but also as specific cultural touchstones, highlights the unchanging constant in fictional depictions of scientists and intellectuals in general. Victor Frankenstein is still mentioned today because he is still considered relevant, and he is still considered relevant because the fears he embodies linger still.

More accurately, *some* of the fears the figure embodies are universal. Indeed, like the monsters they create, mad scientists embody both universal fears and historically specific ones rooted in the culture that created them. The difference between the mad scientists of the past and those of today, thus, rests in that portion of the figure that is culturally mutable and specific. Our current techno-capitalist society has made the universal fear of mad scientists even more potent because "we've arranged a global civilization in which most crucial elements [...] profoundly depend on science and technology," yet "we have also arranged things so that almost no one understands science and technology." This "combustible mixture of knowledge and power" has always been present, but techno-

⁵⁰ The Pigoons are a particularly noteworthy bit of intertextuality because their prominence in the trilogy (especially in *MaddAddam*) echoes the prominence of Pig-Men in Wells's stories (Wells 46). The Pigoons also bring to mind George Orwell's *Animal Farm*, likely on purpose as well.

capitalism has caused the situation to deteriorate and created a serious fear that “sooner or later,” this “mixture...is going to blow up in our face” (Sagan 26). And so, just as the works in my corpus build onto a long line of mad scientists to create new villains and new narratives that address problems and fears unique to a society controlled by hegemonic techno-capitalist forces, my analysis will build onto this brief overview of the traditional mad scientist to explore its techno-capitalist variant: the corporate mad scientist.

2.3 – The Capitalist Answer to the Mad Scientist.

Beyond Gothic horror (*Frankenstein*) and early science-fiction (*The Island of Doctor Moreau*), the works in my corpus also take inspiration from the much more recent literary genre of cyberpunk. Popular in the eighties, cyberpunk was, among other things, preoccupied with the increasing power wielded by technological conglomerates in the latter half of the twentieth century. For cyberpunk,

Frankenstein is "Humanist" SF. *Frankenstein* promotes the romantic dictum that there are Some Things Man Was Not Meant to Know. There are no mere physical mechanisms for this higher moral law – its workings transcend mortal understanding, it is something akin to divine will. Hubris must meet nemesis; this is simply the nature of our universe. Dr. Frankenstein commits a spine-chilling transgression, an affront against the human soul, and with memorable poetic justice, he is direly punished by his own creation, the Monster. (Sterling n.p.)

In contrast, in a hypothetical cyberpunk reworking of *Frankenstein*,

the Monster would likely be the well-funded R&D team-project of some global corporation. The Monster might well wreak bloody havoc, most likely on random passers-by. But having done so, he would never have been allowed to wander to the North Pole, uttering Byronic profundities. The Monsters of cyberpunk never vanish so conveniently. They are already loose on the streets. They are next to us [...]. The Monster would have been copyrighted through the new genetics laws and manufactured worldwide in many thousands. (Sterling n.p.)

The various elements cyberpunk author Bruce Sterling highlights as constitutive of the cyberpunk monster – the takeover and cultivation of mad scientists by global corporations, the corporate control over the laws that regulate the products and vast reach of science, and the insidiousness of techno-capitalism and, thus, of its monsters, who could be anywhere – transcend the borders of this narrow genre and are characteristic of the techno-capitalist monster narrative in general. This short passage from *Midnight*, for example, connects the same dots between corporations and *Frankenstein* that Sterling does: “So much for your clumsy kites, Dr. Frankenstein, so much for the need for storms and lightning; these days we just plug monsters into the wall, give them a jolt of the juice direct, courtesy of Pacific Power & Light” (273-274). Likewise, Sterling’s assertion that “in the moral universe of cyberpunk, we *already* know Things We Were Not Meant to Know” also applies to narratives about techno-capitalist monsters in general. In my corpus, the simple fact of learning these things we might not have been meant to know is more often than not portrayed in a neutral manner; the horror of the techno-capitalist narrative comes instead from the misuse of forbidden knowledge not by individuals but by money-driven, amoral, and inhuman companies. By shifting the blame for the creation of techno-capitalist monsters from the mad scientist himself to the corporation that employs him, the techno-capitalist monster story becomes as much a critique of a socio-economic structure that has vested the control of science into the hands of private interests as it is a critique of scientific hubris.

By both conforming to traditional narratives about ‘mad’ scientists and differing from them in important ways, the works in my corpus dramatize the takeover of science by corporations. To talk in monstrous terms, my corpus warns of the dangers inherent to science being “assimilated into the institutional structure of capitalist society” and becoming “part of the repressive apparatus of the big corporations, of the military and the state” (Tudor 156). When this kind of assimilation occurs, when science becomes enmeshed in the “technocratic certainty” of the capitalist mode of production (156), the mad scientist becomes the metaphorical (and in one case, literal) cybernetic entity known as the corporate mad scientist. To obtain the phrase ‘corporate mad scientist,’ I simply added an adjective to an already well-understood common phrase. Likewise, to obtain a

character that fits the mould of the ‘corporate mad scientist,’ one simply has to take a ‘classic’ mad scientist and give him a new employer.

By introducing techno-capitalism into the narrative, an author forces “a move from the individual mad scientist working alone and for his own ends to the scientist in the pay of corporations, doing their bidding and ignoring the potential for disastrous mistakes” (Haynes 276). Whether such a move makes the corporate mad scientist a new manifestation of the old figure or simply a sub-category of this figure can be debated. Not only do I personally tend toward the first option, I believe the second option unfairly diminishes the importance of the corporate mad scientist in contemporary fiction and of the warning he sounds about our current techno-capitalist society. I hold such an opinion for three reasons. First, reading the corporate mad scientist as a sub-category encourages an ahistorical analysis of the character which focuses on how the sub-figure deviates from the main figure but ignores when and why those deviations occurred. Viewing corporate mad scientists as a sub-group with no historical specificity makes it easier for capitalism to argue that this subcategory has always been there alongside the main figure. Therefore, its existence is simply the ‘natural’ state of things and should not particularly alarm or interest us. Viewing the corporate mad scientist as the current way of modeling the mad scientist and the anxieties he embodies, however, highlights how historically specific the ‘corporate’ dimension is and prompts questions about why this addition was made. These questions force us to look at the larger context in which these new characters exist and reveal the changes that techno-capitalism has wrought on society in the last century and taken great pains to conceal. When considered as the manifestation of the mad scientist under techno-capitalist conditions, corporate mad scientists, like the monsters they create, act as warnings against these very conditions.

Second, viewing the corporate mad scientist as a subcategory reduces the importance of the transformation undergone by the figure. Worse, it denies that a transformation has happened at all, suggesting instead that the corporate mad scientist is simply an isolated case and that the real threat is still individual mad scientists, not the system that funds and empowers them. Considering the corporate mad scientist as a subcategory of the mad

scientist rather than the way this figure manifests itself in our current society encourages the perception that the dangerous scientist is still most often a relatively poor individual conducting illicit experiments in his dingy basement laboratory rather than a member of a well-paid team working in a state-of-the-art laboratory located on the top floor of an equally high-tech office tower.

The reality, however, is that the individual mad scientist is more and more difficult to find in popular fiction. For example, while the film adaptation of *Jurassic Park* toned down the novel's anti-capitalist critique, its most recent sequels – *Jurassic World* (2015) and *Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom* (2018) – feature villains who want to make money by selling dinosaurs, recast Wu as an amoral scientist willing to work for the highest bidder, and kill the well-intentioned Hammond figure in both films. Hammond himself, by contrast, survived the first two films (but died in the novel, where he was significantly less well-intentioned). Other examples include the recent film adaptations of videogames like *Rampage* and *Assassin's Creed*⁵¹. In both cases, the corporate villains alluded to in the games' fragmentary backstories have been made into the main antagonist of the film and have had their role sizeably enlarged as a result. These examples hint that the current popular expression of the mad scientist figure is the corporate mad scientist. The 'traditional' mad scientist figure has all but disappeared, not because it was supplanted by an offshoot but because it has evolved alongside society.

Third, the notion of subcategory implies a limited reach. Since a subcategory is by definition a more limited set of characteristics than the main category it derives from, it follows that the corporate mad scientist seen through this lens would appear as a very limited character, with few variations possible in terms of appearance, behaviour, socio-economic status and the like. Therefore, only a number of characters and works would fit under the umbrella of the corporate mad scientist, once again pushing the idea that the corporate mad scientist is a minor threat. By conceptualizing the corporate mad scientist as an evolution rather than an offshoot of the mad scientist figure, the field of research

⁵¹ The game *Rampage* was first released in 1986 and adapted into a film in 2018. In the case of *Assassin's Creed*, the series is still ongoing, with new instalments released regularly, but the 2016 film adaptation was mostly based upon the original game released in 2007.

widens and reveals that the corporate mad scientist can take on multiple disguises, some less obvious than others. Some corporate mad scientists are not even scientists per se, but capitalist entrepreneurs who have usurped the scientists' place as monster-makers. Indeed, in narratives about corporate mad scientists, corporate executives are the ones that, through funding, give the scientists the means to create monsters. From a certain point of view, these corporate masters are the real creators of the monsters since, without them, corporate mad scientists would never create anything, much less monsters. In the current expression of the mad scientist figure, corporations and the capitalists who control them are the ultimate sources and owners of the horrors unleashed by misused science, not the Victor Franksteins and Henry Jekylls they employ.

2.4 – The Scientist as CEO

No longer an obsessive individual shunned by his peers and working in a dim-lit castle, the techno-capitalist mad scientist is now a cog in a vast machine. This can be represented in several ways, one of which is to make the corporate mad scientist figure and the capitalist employer one and the same. This can be accomplished either by having the scientist be the owner of the corporation (*Midnight*) or by having the capitalist administrator take the role of the mad scientist in the narrative (*Jurassic Park*).

At first glance, *Midnight*'s take on the corporate mad scientist seems to exonerate both capitalism and science (i.e. both components of techno-capitalism). Despite Thomas Shaddack being both a mad scientist and the CEO of a successful tech company, it is his individual deranged self that is blamed for the horrors that happen in Moonlight Cove, not New Wave Microtechnologies:

“We’re entering an age when we make our own reality, aren’t we? Science is giving us that ability, bit by bit. Used to be only madmen could do that.”

Sam said nothing.

Harry said, “Maybe making our own reality isn’t wise. Maybe the natural order is the best one.”

“Maybe. On the other hand, the natural order could do with some perfecting here and there. I guess we’ve got to try. We just have to hope to God that the men who do the tinkering aren’t like Shaddack. You okay, Harry?” (Koontz 367-368)

This excerpt is taken from a discussion between Talbot and Booker. It is Booker who delivers the last few lines, which together form the clearest expression of the main ideological thrust of the novel when it comes to science: scientific progress is a net benefit to humanity as long as it is not being guided by mentally disturbed individuals, like Shaddack. Talbot brings up the idea that (corporate) science has now given everyone the capabilities to create monsters, capabilities once reserved to isolated mad scientists, but Booker shoots down the idea. According to him, science is, and has always been, neutral at worst. Now, as before, the problem is a singular madman and not the system or tools he uses.

However, a deeper examination reveals that New Wave Microtechnologies is rarely blamed for the horrors plaguing Moonlight Cove, not because the novel wants to protect the corporation’s innocence but because the novel does not make a distinction between New Wave and Thomas Shaddack. The corporate mad scientist is often portrayed as working for corporate masters but in *Midnight* the relation is much more intimate. *This* corporate mad scientist is his own corporate master. Like many of his more famous mad scientist predecessors, Shaddack lives and works alone in his isolated ‘castle’ that towers over the surrounding city (138). Rather than a symbol of isolation and disconnection from society, however, Shaddack’s ‘castle’ is a symbol of his domination over the town lying below. He achieves this domination over Moonlight Cove partly because of his skills as a mad scientist but primarily because of his wealth and hierarchical position of superiority in the capitalist system. The root of Shaddack’s power is found in his dabbling with capitalism, not in his dabbling with forbidden knowledge. In an earlier passage, Watkins similarly reflects how Shaddack’s power stems from capitalist resources manifested through technological advancements:

[Watkins’] department boasted state-of-the-art technology not because the town’s treasury was overflowing but because New Wave – a leader in mobile

microwave-linked data systems, among other things – had equipped his office and cars with their in-development hardware and software, updating the system constantly, using the Moonlight Cove police force as something of a proving ground for every advancement that they hoped ultimately to integrate into their line of products.

That was one of the many ways Thomas Shaddack had insinuated himself into the power structure of the community even before he had reached for *total* power through the Moonhawk Project. At the time Loman had been thickheaded enough to think New Wave's largesse was a blessing. Now he knew better. (85)

Through Watkins' inner thoughts, the novel makes it clear that Shaddack was already controlling Moonlight Cove before transforming its inhabitants into slaves with his scientific experiments. The Moonhawk Project is as much the brainchild of an individual mad scientist as it is a product of the capitalist system that gave that mad scientist the tools to complete the project in the first place. It is only through his personal capital – and through the system that allows him to amass this capital – that Shaddack can get anywhere near making his maniacal fantasies a reality.

Furthermore, Thomas Shaddack himself is the creation of capitalist society. His genius may be innate, but his madness is hinted as being more nurture than nature. The first information given to the readers about Shaddack's backstory is that his

family had not been wealthy, though solidly upper middle-class, and that position on the economic ladder, combined with the prestige of a judgeship, gave James considerable stature in his community. And power. Throughout his childhood and adolescence, Tom had been fascinated by how his father, a political activist as well as a judge, had used that power not only to acquire material benefits but to control others. The control – the exercise of power for power's sake – was what had most appealed to James, and that was what had deeply excited his son, too, from an early age. (139)

Shaddack's obsession with power and domination comes directly from his father's, whose power came directly from his class status. Note how, when describing the causes of James Shaddack's social privilege, his "position on the economic ladder" is what is emphasized rather than his job as a judge, which is relegated to a parenthetical, and thus secondary, clause. During his 'apprenticeship' with the Native American gardener Don Runningdeer, Thomas Shaddack's fascination with his father's economic and social power becomes true homicidal madness. Runningdeer shoulders the brunt of the blame for this transformation, both implicitly and explicitly. It is Runningdeer who kindled Shaddack's megalomaniac belief that he is the child of the Moonhawk, which in Runningdeer's and Shaddack's personal mythology meant that Shaddack was "to have tremendous power and be invincible. Invincible!" (223). Don Runningdeer is to Thomas Shaddack what Thomas Shaddack is to Loman Watkins: the Moreau to whom he owes his current monstrous condition. Shaddack used a combination of science and capitalism to create his monsters; Runningdeer uses a combination of the latter and an unspecified psychotropic drug. Once Runningdeer has made the boy's mental state pliable and suggestible with his drug-laced candies, he uses the lure of techno-capitalist success to encourage the teenage Shaddack to kill his own father by justifying the emotional void needed to commit such a murder as necessary to the boy's survival in a techno-capitalist society:⁵²

"The white man puts great faith in machines," Runningdeer said. "He thinks machines are ever so much more reliable and clever than people. If you want to be truly great in the white man's world, Little Chief, you must make yourself as much like a machine as you can. You must be determined in your goals, allowing no desires or emotions to distract you." (224)

Midnight posits that the corporate world of late twentieth-century techno-capitalism, to which Runningdeer refers in racial rather than economic terms, is a world in which insanity is exalted and sanity derided, a world favouring emotionless corporate mad

⁵² The novel strongly implies – without ever stating it outright – that James Shaddack is the judge who dismissed the case against the rich young white men who killed Runningdeer's brother and sister-in-law (Koontz 225).

scientists over good-hearted and sane people. Shaddack, as both a CEO and mad scientist, is therefore as much a creature of techno-capitalism as his creations. Runningdeer may have started the fire, but that fire was only allowed to become an inferno because Shaddack

was the sole heir of his father's estate, which was fattened by large life-insurance policies; therefore, he was guaranteed a first-rate education and plenty of capital with which to start out in life after graduation from the university. The world lay before him, filled with opportunity. And thanks to Runningdeer, he had the additional advantage of knowing beyond a doubt that he had a great destiny and that the forces of fate and heaven wanted him to achieve tremendous power over other men. (229)

Runningdeer gave Shaddack a warped vision of the world but only the boy's position of privilege in the techno-capitalist social structure could help him make this vision manifest. Worse, this position helped Shaddack indulge his maniacal delusions without raising suspicions. Interviewed on the relationship between sub-criminal psychopaths and the business world, Canadian psychologist Robert Hare explains that

[t]he world of unfeeling psychopaths is not limited to the popular images of monsters who steal people's children or kill without remorse [...]. After all, if you are bright, you have been brought up with good social skills, and you don't want to end up in prison, so you probably won't turn to a life of violence. Rather, you'll recognize that you can use your psychotic tendencies legitimately by getting into a position of power and control. What better place than a corporation? (qtd. in Hilpern n.p.)

While Shaddack's social skills are disputable, he otherwise fits this description to a T. With this character, *Midnight* offers us a great example of a corporate mad scientist in whom the corporate part overrules and dominates the mad scientist part.

In its dramatization of the ever-narrowing gap between techno-capitalism and scientific research, *Jurassic Park* goes a little further on the path taken by *Midnight* and presents us

with a character that fulfills the role and possesses all the characteristics of the corporate mad scientist but is not an actual scientist. Many critics identify John Hammond as the rightful scientific heir to Victor Frankenstein rather than the park's chief geneticist Henry Wu. Hammond, of course, is not a scientist but a

wealthy entrepreneur [who] falls within a long tradition of literary and cinematic Frankenstein figures who tamper with the natural world only to reap the dire consequences. Hammond disrupts the endless cycle of creation and destruction, of survival and extinction, best left to natural selection, species evolution, or pure chance. His reasons, like Victor's, are complex and, at times, contradictory. (Friedman 168)

Haynes also recognizes Hammond as embodying the common tropes of the mad scientist figure. "He may not have a prosthetic hand," she says, "but Hammond is disabled in other ways and walks with a cane; he has the amoral, uncaring attitude commonly ascribed to scientists, but his motive is not discovery: it is money" (276).⁵³ Likewise, Frayling describes the character in very similar words (Frayling 210) while Kim Newman argues that

[t]he current archetype of the scientist is Richard Attenborough [i.e., John Hammond] in *Jurassic Park* who of course isn't a scientist. He is the man who paid for the science. In the film we don't know who actually cloned the dinosaurs – is it that Chinese-American character we barely see? We see a couple of computer guys and some security people but Richard Attenborough has just said 'make it so' and other people have done it for him. He has taken the credit and he has taken the money. . . . So maybe we're looking at a Bill Gates figure as the avatar of our scientist now. Bill Gates – not so much a scientific genius as the

⁵³ The prosthetic hand is most likely a reference to Doctor Strangelove from Stanley Kubrick's movie *Doctor Strangelove: or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb*, which Haynes covers extensively in her book. Another popular example of a mad scientist with a prosthetic hand is Doctor Julius No from *Dr. No*. This movie – the first in the James Bond franchise – actually precedes *Doctor Strangelove* by two years.

man who has a genius for marketing. (qtd. in Frayling 209, the ellipses are Frayling's)⁵⁴

Newman here is obviously talking about the movie version of Hammond and not the novel version. So are Friedman and Kavey as well as Frayling, while Haynes seems to be conflating the two versions – the amoral, uncaring attitude is from the book, the cane is from the movie. As Newman points out, Wu is in the movie only very briefly (his entire screentime totals about three minutes) and he is never identified as the park's chief geneticist. As far as the movie tells us, Wu is just the scientist who happened to be the closest to the protagonist when they started asking questions. The argument is easily made, then, that Hammond takes over Wu's role of corporate mad scientist only as part of the adaptation process from novel to film. While this is an interesting interpretation in its own right, I believe that the observations these scholars make can all be applied to the novel's version of John Hammond as well. While Wu has a larger role in the novel, he has little to no agency. Whether in the novel or in the movie, Hammond is the one who comes up with the idea to clone dinosaurs and he is the one who obsessively and blindly works to make the idea a reality. In short, he acts exactly like a corporate mad scientist even though he does not have the skills usually associated with the figure.

Despite having been first written regarding the movie, Friedman, Kavey, Haynes, Frayling and Newman's analyses are all supported by the novel itself and, in particular, by its introduction. Indeed, the novel opens on a warning about the elision of science and scientist under "a multinational corporate perspective funded by untold wealth that values increased profits over communal safety and moral responsibilities" (Friedman 169). According to *Jurassic Park*, as a consequence of this shift, genetic engineering has caused a mass extinction of its own, that of "university scientists free of contaminating industry ties" (Crichton, *Jurassic* xi). Notice the environmental metaphor of contamination that the author uses to describe the introduction of capitalist interests into the realm of "pure" science. By using a word closely tied to pollution, the novel

⁵⁴ Newman's comments come from a BBC Radio 4's series called *Celluloid Scientists*. Unfortunately, I was unable to track down a copy of the series. The same series is also quoted in Haynes (276).

establishes very early that capitalism *does not belong* in the realm of science and that its incongruous presence poisons and weakens the whole scientific enterprise. By couching the influence of corporations on science in environmental terms early on, the novel makes it clear that it does not consider capitalism as a valid part of the scientific method, but as an intruder that defiles science, just like its characters see Hammond's – and specifically Hammond's, not Wu's – techno-capitalist enterprise as a “rape of the natural world” (318). Hammond is the intruder here, so he is the one who is ultimately responsible for the ensuing disaster. Wu is only the Igor to Hammond's Frankenstein. Their respective death scenes – both exclusive to the novel – is another proof of this hierarchy of blame. Wu dies very quickly and only after acknowledging that he was nothing more than a cog in the system. Hammond, however, goes out in a very typical, even clichéd, way. Like many mad scientists before him, Hammond dies after confronting his creatures, being cruel to them and succumbing to their attack. As life exits his body, his last thought is “that nothing was wrong. No error had been made. Malcolm was quite incorrect in his analysis” (441). John Hammond does not *need* scientific skills. All he needs is a mad vision and an obsessive and psychopathic enough personality to pursue that vision. His capital can buy him whatever commodity he needs to accomplish his goal, including science.

Before moving on and exploring the corporate mad scientist as an employee rather than a CEO, I want to briefly discuss Crake from the *MaddAddam* trilogy. As a mad scientist, Crake works for the corporations and attains a position of power within one of them but never actually assimilates into the corporate hierarchy. He resists the pressure to become yet another proletarian drone, even a powerful one, and becomes instead a kind of interstitial character, halfway between an employee and an employer. Crake does not own the means of production; Paradise, his personal research complex, is technically the property of the RejoovenEsense corporation, who funded it in its entirety. What Crake owns is his own skills, which give him value as a worker, and this value in turn gives him the authority to dictate how his labour will be used. In recognition of his value, RejoovenEsense allows Crake to act as an individual mad scientist, alone in his isolated laboratory. Crake is consequently free to embrace one quality of the classic mad scientist

that tends to be atrophied in his corporate incarnation: a deep-seated sense of superiority. This delusion of grandeur manifests itself both against his subordinates – “Crake ruled with an iron hand [...] and he was so dogmatic: he didn’t want to hear about any possible improvements apart from those he thought up himself. And he sure as hell didn’t want his prize experiment ruined via the introduction of possibly inferior segments” (Atwood *MaddAddam* 139) – as well as against his superiors:

Nobody was allowed out of the complex. Or almost nobody. Crake could go out, of course. He was the liaison between Paradise and the Rejoov top brass, though he hadn’t let them in yet, he was making them wait. They were a greedy bunch, nervous about their investment; they’d want to jump the gun, start marketing too soon. Also, they’d talk too much, tip off the competition. They were all boasters, those guys. (*Oryx* 303-304)

Interestingly, Crake’s low opinion of his corporate masters is echoed in *Jurassic Park*. While the sentiment can be found in almost all of Ian Malcolm’s monologues in the novel, nowhere is it more succinctly and clearly put than in a very quotable line from the same character in the film adaptation: “You stood on the shoulders of geniuses to accomplish something as fast as you could, and before you even knew what you had, you patented it, and packaged it, and slapped it on a plastic lunchbox, and now [slams his hand on the table repeatedly], you’re selling it, you wanna sell it” (*Jurassic Park* 00:35:47). In both cases, the goal of the quoted passage is to distance the scientific world from the corporate one, to isolate the former from blame when the naked greed of the latter leads to catastrophe. However, since the sentiment is uttered in Atwood’s novel by a corporate mad scientist rather than a “good” university scientist, the passage from *Oryx and Crake* unexpectedly diminishes the responsibility of the corporation rather than highlighting it. Indeed, by stating explicitly that “Paradise had been his [Crake’s] concept” and that Crake had “made that a condition when he agreed to actualize it: he didn’t want a lot of heavy-handed ignoramuses poking into things they couldn’t understand” (Atwood *Oryx* 297), the novel shifts the blame for the eventual apocalyptic results of that project onto Crake’s shoulders and in so doing exonerates

RejoovenEsence. The Crakers and the humanity-killing plague wasn't RejoovenEsence's fault, it was Crake's, who purposefully kept RejoovenEsence out of the loop. This causes a contradiction in the novel's ideological work. It is obvious that the novel wants to condemn the hegemony of corporations and their monopoly on scientific research. Any sceptic only has to glance at the blurb on the back cover of *Oryx and Crake*, which describes the novel's setting as "a lush wilderness that was so recently a great city, until powerful corporations took mankind on an uncontrolled genetic engineering ride." This phrase seems to say that corporations destroyed human civilization, but this is not what actually happens in the novel. Crake is the one who destroys human civilization, not the corporations. They, for their part, are entirely in the dark about Crake's true goals with the Paradise project. Despite its intention, it is very easy to read the trilogy as stating that the problem is a singular madman rather a critically flawed system.

This reading is admittedly a bit harsh. A more generous interpretation of this distance created between Crake and the corporation would be to see it less as a contradiction of one of the novel's main theses and more as a comment on the interrelation between science and capitalism. RejoovenEsence needed Crake's skills to fulfill their goal (profit) and Crake needed RejoovenEsence's money to fulfill his (wiping out humanity). The apocalypse after and before which the novel is set could never have been created by science or by capitalism alone. Only the union of both, i.e. techno-capitalism, could lead to such a catastrophic outcome. The union of Crake and RejoovenEsence, however, is fragile and incomplete. There is no true fusion of capitalism and science here, but rather a marriage of convenience. While such a marriage is no less dangerous than a fusion, it does mean that, as a corporate mad scientist, Crake is a very different beast (monster) than Shaddack and Hammond. However, as an individual with his own deviant goals, he remains closer to them in terms of narrative and ideological roles than the more or less anonymous scientific proletariat behind many techno-capitalist monsters.

2.5 – The Mad Scientist as Proletarian.

The classic mad scientist was characterized as a loner and an original. That is why he was called mad – because his "arrogance, desire to usurp divine authority," and need to prove

the height of his genius to those who doubted him make him unable to work in ‘normal society’ (Haynes 209). While some corporate mad scientists are lucky (or wealthy) enough to work for their own sake, many others no longer have that luxury. Instead, they do the bidding of their employers in exchange for a salary. This means that they need to work in a team. As a result, the corporate mad scientist is no longer an individual, independent scientist-labourer, but a scientist-proletarian, referred to only as part of a mass. In other words, the corporate mad scientist is often an *abstracted* mad scientist.

In Marxism, abstract labour is labour whose goal is not to produce use-value for the labourer but to produce exchange-value for the capitalist that hires the labourer. Abstract labour is also “partial and does not produce a complete use-value” (Wendling 52), that is to say that each labourer only creates part of a useable thing. Henry Wu may have been the main scientist on the Jurassic Park project, but he did not create the dinosaurs alone. Indeed, he had multiple teams of scientists working on the project. So much so that while he is a brilliant geneticist in his own right, “for the last two years, Wu had been primarily an administrator, supervising teams of researchers and banks of computer-operated gene sequencers. Administration wasn’t the kind of work he relished. It wasn’t what he had bargained for” (Crichton, *Jurassic*, 140). Here, in addition to lamenting the changes that capitalist imperatives have forced upon his role as an employee and a scientist, Wu puts the “teams of researchers” and “banks of computer-operated gene sequencers” on the same level, equating one with the other. This equivalence highlights that, for techno-capitalism, “workers are nothing but machines themselves, fixed capital to be maintained alongside other forms of fixed capital, though cheaper to use than other forms of fixed capital” (Wendling 144). The scientist-proletariat of Jurassic Park, of which Wu is the face, is only another tool contributing to the Park’s day-to-day operations, operations whose sole goal is to make profits for InGen. The film adaptation of the novel gives us a chilling image of this reality. In an early scene, the protagonists are being explained the science behind the creation of the Park’s dinosaurs through an amusement park ride. At one point in the ride, the protagonists are placed in front of a window that looks onto a lab and the scientists working inside. At this point, greedy lawyer Gennaro asks Hammond: “Are those characters auto...erotica?” (*Jurassic Park* 00:27:21). The word

Gennaro is looking for is animatronics, or robots designed to look and move as realistically as possible. They are most often used in films and in theme parks, which means that Gennaro's interrogation is perfectly natural and likely not a comment on how "fake" the (actually real) scientists looks.⁵⁵ However, the fact that Gennaro immediately jumped to that conclusion underscores that for capitalists like him, the scientists behind Jurassic Park are no more than commodified means of production themselves, like all the machines that surround them in their lab.

In *Jurassic Park*, the corporate mad scientist-as-employee is encountered both as an abstracted scientific labour force as well as an individual character. This is a doubling that can be seen in most of the works I am analyzing. *Midnight*, the *MaddAddam* trilogy and the *Cobayes* series all dramatize the corporate mad scientist in both abstracted and individual, or concrete, forms. Two readings can be made of this pattern. In one, the doubling is seen as a hold-over from a previous iteration of the mad scientist figure, a characteristic that is too entrenched in the popular imaginary to fade away entirely. As such, this doubling is a sign of both the timelessness of the figure and its resistance to complete subsumption into a techno-capitalist paradigm. In another reading, featuring both a scientist-proletariat and an individualized scientist-employee appears as a way for the text to touch upon the problem of technological alienation caused by capitalism while still giving capitalism an out, since the blame for the monsters that invade the text ends up being attributed to the individual mad scientist rather than the system and its scientific proletariat.

This is most obvious in *Midnight*, where the description of Shaddack, the grandstanding, over-the-top mad scientist CEO of New Wave Microtechnology, stands in stark contrast with that of his employees, whose "pale faces floated like disembodied spheres in the dark interiors of their cars, so expressionless that they might have been mannequins or robots" (Koontz 201). The reason for this uncanny mien is, of course, their conversion

⁵⁵ The movie itself is considered a landmark use of animatronics in film. While the movie also pioneered the use of many now-widespread techniques of computer-generated imagery (CGI), many of the film's most iconic moments – such as the first attack of the Tyrannosaurus Rex – were done using animatronics. I have chosen to read a deeper meaning in this line, but one might argue that it was simply there as a clever joke at the movie's own expense.

into New People, which is already complete by the time the novel opens. Their lifelessness is also a perfect literal representation of the Marxist metaphor of capital as dead labour:

Of course, the accumulation of wealth does not literally mean the death of laborers, although often it does; more importantly, capitalist work implies a symbolic death. It is the death of individual freedom, of pleasurable, rewarding activity, and of a rich social life. In short, it is the transformation of “life-time into working time.” Capitalism, as its monsters tell us more or less explicitly, makes us pretend that we’re dead in order to live. This pretense of death, this willing sacrifice of our own lives simply for money, is the dark side of our economic system. (Newitz 6)

The New People, whether as consumers or producers, personify this metaphor perfectly. The image of Moonlight Cove as a necropolis overrun with machines comes back frequently in the novel. In one instance, the city is described as resembling “a ghost town. Its living rooms, bedrooms, and kitchens might have been peopled only by moldering corpses – or by robots that posed as people during the day and were turned off at night to save energy when it was not as essential to maintain the illusion of life” (Koontz 135). In another, Tessa Lockland tells Sam Booker that

[s]ometimes it [Moonlight Cove] seems more like a morgue than a town, peopled by the dead, but then [...] in spite of the silence and the stillness, you can feel the energy of the place, tremendous pent-up energy, as if there’s a huge hidden machine just beneath the streets, beneath the ground... and as if the houses are filled with machinery, too, all of it powered up and straining at cogs and gears, just waiting for someone to engage a clutch and set it all in motion. (147-148)

This passage is both a metaphorical and literal description of what is happening in the little seaside town. There is no hidden underground machine per se, but there are literal tiny machines in most of the inhabitants’ blood, machines that connect them all to the vast machinery of techno-capitalism and to its local owner, Thomas Shaddack. This

connection is made even more literal a little later when Watkins notes that all of the townspeople “lived within the effective reach of the microwave broadcasting dish on the roof of the main structure” of the headquarters of New Wave Microtechnology (276). In a similar movement from the metaphorical to the monstrously literal, the symbolic death of the New People as labourer becomes at the end of the novel an *actual* death when that broadcasting dish sends a signal that causes all citizens of Moonlight Cove to perish alongside Shaddack, minus the few that had not yet undergone the conversion process. In a cyclical twist on the typical mad scientist’s demise, the creature (Watkins) kills his creator (Shaddack) who then kills his creatures (Watkins and all the other New People) through the same technology he used to make them. This cycle of death echoes the work-and-spend cycle I discussed in Part I. The one thing that doesn’t die in this vicious cycle is the techno-capitalist system itself, which emerges undamaged from the collapse of Shaddack’s personal techno-capitalist fiefdom. By having a mass of proletarian scientists, *Midnight* can critique techno-capitalist’s commodification of scientific labour, but this critique’s reach is ultimately circumscribed by the presence of an individual corporate mad scientist, of a scapegoat who can shoulder the blame for all the monsters he unleashes with the help and tacit approval of the system at large.

Henry Wu is the only scientist hired by Hammond who can be called a character in the novel. Unlike in the film version, in which he disappears with the rest of the park’s scientists after the scene where he explains how the dinosaurs were made, Wu is a major presence throughout the novel and as such is on the receiving end of a good part of the novel’s criticism of the park.⁵⁶ Wu’s characterization in the novel insists on his lack of care for whatever is not his immediate job. For example, when Ian Malcolm asks Wu how many species of dinosaurs Jurassic Park has, the latter replies that he is “not exactly sure” and must ask the marketing director of the park for confirmation, to Malcolm’s

⁵⁶ Interestingly, Wu being in the movie for only a very short time reinforces the idea of the corporate mad scientist as an abstracted proletarian mass, giving the novel’s critique of corporate scientists more focus. Was this an attempt to make up for diluting this critique in the adaptation process? Either way, the two most recent sequels have walked back on this choice by once again featuring Wu and giving him a bh bigger and more villainous role than he had in the original film.

astonishment (124). Wu then gets proven wrong time and time again by the protagonists, even though he is supposed to be the expert in the room.

The classic mad scientist was obsessed with his work and would not have taken such reprimands and upstaging for very long before launching into a rant about how everyone would soon pay for underestimating his genius. Wu, however, remains passive and demonstrates an alarming lack of passion for his work. In this, Wu is the perfect exemplar of the Marxist figure of the alienated worker. The Marxist conception of human activity is built on the notion of objectification, which in this context

involves the mixing of human force with passive matter, with human force and passive matter conceived as absolutely differing in kind. In this process, humans produce nature and elicit its implicit rationality. We make objects that bear the human imprint, and the fact that these objects are not immediately available for use is the hallmark of “conscious life activity.” (Wendling, 14-15).

Take for example a palm-sized rock. This rock is passive matter – it was created by nature and now exists and will continue to exist as a rock forever (or, at the very least, a very long time). It cannot change its form on its own. Now imagine that a prehistoric woman found this rock and beat it with another rock until our palm-sized rock has become a rudimentary palm-sized knife. The knife created by the beating process is an object that bears the mark of our hypothetical prehistoric woman; it is her essence, her identity as a human being or “species being” (15), concretized and materialized into an object, hence the word “objectification”. Thus, to Marx, objectification is not a negatively connoted term. On the contrary, objectification is the process by which humans, when freed from material necessity, can perform “self-actualization” and celebrate their “human creative essence” (17). This process is central to Marx’s utopian vision of “a world in which things operate according to different principles of distribution of both the spoils and the means of production, and also in which human activity can be conceptualized outside labor’s iron cage” (17).

In a techno-capitalist system, however, this objectification is twisted by the fact that the worker does not own the result of his activity. The knife that the modern factory worker creates is as much an objectification of his human essence as the knife created by a prehistoric woman, but that object is then snatched from his hands and sold to the sole benefit of the capitalist who owns the means of production and hires the worker. As a result,

the object that labour produces – labour’s product – confronts it as *something alien*, as a *power independent* of the producer. The product of labour is labour which has been congealed in an object, which has become material: it is the *objectification* of labour... Labour’s realisation is its objectification. In the conditions dealt with by political economy this realisation of labour appears as *loss of reality* for the workers; objectification as *loss of the object* and *object-bondage*; appropriation as *estrangement*, as *alienation*. (Marx 69)

It is important to note that when Marx wrote this passage, he was thinking primarily of factory workers whose labour was physical – those we would today call blue-collar workers. The accompanying notion of white-collar or intellectual workers would not emerge until much later. However, Marx’s ideas can be quite easily applied to intellectual workers such as scientists. The only difference is that instead of physical labour, intellectual workers “sell to an employer [...] their ability to think and have ideas” and, as a consequence, “are put into a position where they literally do not own portions of their own minds for those parts of the day when they are on the job” (Newitz 55).

Wu is alienated because the genetically-engineered monsters he created – the very embodiment of his creative essence – are not his. They are InGen’s property and so are the thoughts and ideas he contributed to the project. Thus, he cannot take pride in his achievements, hence his passivity and his seeming disinterest in his work. Wu himself acknowledges his own alienation in a rare moment of self-awareness:

He had done what nobody really believed could be done, at least in so short a time. And Henry Wu thought that he should have some rights, some say in what

happened, by virtue of his expertise and his efforts. Instead, he found his influence waning with each passing day. The dinosaurs existed. The procedures for obtaining them were worked out to the point of being routine. The technologies were mature. And John Hammond didn't need Henry Wu anymore. (Crichton, *Jurassic*, 140).

This passage uses no Marxist terms yet nonetheless dramatizes Marxist ideas around alienation and objectification with precision. What Wu calls "his expertise and efforts" can be summarized in a single word – labour. Wu sold his labour and the product of this labour – which not only includes the dinosaurs, but also the way to make new dinosaurs – to Hammond, for whom Wu is now obsolete.

In other words, John Hammond made the same equivalence between Wu and the DNA sequencers that Wu made himself earlier: both are *commodities*. Reducing Wu to a commodity impacts not only his own depiction in the novel but also the depiction of his death. The classic mad scientist more often than not perishes not only at the hands of his creation, but also in a fit of mania, refusing to the very end to admit fault in any way. His death is always dramatic and climactic. By contrast, Wu's death, while gory and graphic, is also quite quick. Unlike in the deaths of Ed Regis, the marketing specialist (236-242), Dennis Nedry, the greedy, two-faced technician (215-219), or Hammond himself (438-441), the dinosaurs do not 'play' with their food first. Wu's death is quick and, unlike the others, does not get its own chapter. Rather, it takes place in a longer chapter and is confined to two pages. He opens a door, and a raptor jumps on him in a fraction of a second. His last pre-death thoughts are also much more ambiguous than the self-congratulation of the classic mad scientist. While he does see the disastrous fact that the raptors can breed as "a tremendous validation of his work" (375), this boast is tempered by how he compared this work to that of a "modern workman" only a few lines before (374). If the classical scientist died with a bang, the corporate mad scientist, when presented as employee, dies with a whimper while recognizing his own position as "the most wretched of commodities," that of the worker (Marx 67).

Bill Barlow from *Splice* is another character who combines managerial powers with scientific skills. A Canada-France coproduction, *Splice* is the story of a scientific power couple, Clive and Elsa, whose pioneering work on DNA splicing – namely the creation of Ginger and Fred, two artificial lifeforms made from the DNA of multiple animals – hits a roadblock when their corporate sponsor, Newstead Pharma, denies them the funding necessary to attempt their latest project: the creation of a hybrid lifeform genetically engineered from a mix of animal and human DNA. Refusing to bow down to the whims of their employer, Clive and Elsa clandestinely go ahead anyway, resulting in the creation of a peculiar child-like creature they end up naming Dren (‘nerd’ spelled backwards). As Dren matures into a beautiful but unpredictable young woman, Clive and Elsa clash on the best way to ‘raise’ her while their corporate supervisor becomes ever more suspicious. The film culminates in a deadly confrontation with a rage-filled, unexpectedly mutated and sex-changed Dren. The film ends with Clive dead, Elsa pregnant after being raped by a now dead Dren, and Newstead Pharma eager to acquire the baby and continue the experiment, hinting that the horror is far from over. As the intermediary between the two rebellious geniuses and the corporation which employs them, Newstead Pharma, represented in the film by its CEO Joan Chorot, Barlow takes to his managerial duties better than Wu, though he is no better regarded for it by the *histoire* than Wu. His first appearance in the movie is as somewhat of a comic relief, a tired, frustrated corporate suit trying futilely to keep up with Clive and Elsa’s secrecy and teasing. In the meeting with Chorot that follows his introduction, Barlow is painted as a risk-averse worrywart who, once again like Wu, gives in too easily to the wishes of his corporate masters. Unlike Clive and Elsa, Barlow is not “frustrated by the company’s focus on the bottom line and its desire to reign in any experimentation on humans in order to maintain its public image” (A. Miller 333). On the contrary, when Elsa proposes to incorporate human DNA into their next batch of genetically engineered creatures, Barlow is quick to side with Chorot against Elsa’s plan: “Elsa! We all know that can’t happen right now. The moral outrage would be completely out of control. I mean, regulators and politicians, they would tear us to pieces” (*Splice* 00:08:52). His paternalistic smile as he says those words contrasts with the visible shock he expresses

when Elsa first mentions human DNA. This early scene shows Barlow as being an employee first and a scientist second.

Barlow also resembles Crake in that he is a scientist who presides over other scientists, running the lab in person while his corporate superiors tend to their larger business obligations. After a presentation for investors goes awry because Clive and Elsa were too distracted with their forbidden side-project to notice crucial details about their previous creations, Barlow is the one sent by the Newstead to take over the lab's operations and make sure the scientists accomplish the goals set by Chorot: isolate a protein in their hybrid creations that they can then patent and market. Unlike Crake, Barlow uses his position not to establish his own little fiefdom but to ensure that the 'rock star scientists' under his supervision fully comply with the corporate plan. His first act in this new role is to berate Clive and Elsa for their lateness before handing them white lab coats and telling them that, from now on, "You will observe protocol. That's the only way we're gonna beat this thing. Thank you. Shall we, hmm, get to work?" (00:56:39). Clive and Elsa, who are used to being left alone and who, in traditional mad scientist fashion, follow security protocols as loosely as they can, are visibly dismayed at this new assembly-line approach to scientific research. The lab coats in particular are heavy with symbolism – by wearing them, Clive and Elsa become identical to all the other labourers in their lab. No longer scientific rock stars, Clive and Elsa have been proletarianized, just like Barlow himself.

Unfortunately for him, Barlow's newfound power over Elsa and Clive proves to be limited. Even after having seemingly taken her down a peg with the symbolic lab coat, Barlow's attempt at calling out Elsa on her lack of professionalism quickly backfires:

ELSA: Bill! You're early.

BARLOW: Let me get this straight. You stay home because you're sick and now I find you sneaking around while no one's here.

ELSA: Making up for lost time.

BARLOW: Well, it's too late for that. They won't extend the deadline. It's over. You... You screwed us all. In fact, while you're here, why don't you clear out Clive's desk.

ELSA: I don't think so.

BARLOW: Well, no one *cares* what you think, anymore. You're an embarrassment to this company. It's gonna take us years...

ELSA: The protein's been synthesized. It's in the fridge. When some real scientists get here, have them take a look. (01:16:38-01-17-25)

After smugly delivering that last line, Elsa leaves and the camera holds for a few seconds on Barlow's somewhat hilarious expression of dismay. His next – and last – appearance in the film ends even worse for him. Right after Clive and Elsa finish burying their seemingly dead human-animal hybrid Dren, Barlow arrives and confronts the couple about the synthesized protein Elsa condescendingly handed him earlier:

BARLOW: You think I'm stupid. The samples you gave me had human DNA content. They didn't come from Ginger and Fred, they came from something else, something that's still *alive*. And to think you did it on my watch. Now let's see this thing. It doesn't belong to you.

CLIVE: *It* doesn't belong to anyone.

BARLOW [screaming]: Then where is it! [The film cuts briefly to a shot of Dren's grave then back to Barlow] Fine. I'm calling a forensic team.

ELSA: She's already dead. It's over.

BARLOW: I don't believe you.

ELSA: No? Well, see for yourself. [Elsa hands Barlow a shovel.] She's buried behind the barn. (01:29:07-01:29:57)

Barlow does not need to dig to find Dren because Dren emerges from the makeshift grave in an even more monstrous (and male) form at this very moment and kills Barlow. Similar to Wu's death, the flyby attack that kills Barlow happens extremely fast – in 2 to 3 seconds, to be precise. We do not even see the attack; we just hear Barlow scream and then see his mutilated body loosely hanging from a nearby tree. Once again, the mad scientist who capitulates to capitalist pressure dies with a whimper, not a bang, as befitting of a pawn.⁵⁷

Wu dies after both acknowledging his proletarian position and resisting that same proletarianization by reminding himself of the quality of his labour, despite its alienation. Barlow, by contrast, spends his last few moments reminding Clive and Elsa of their proletarian status and that, as proletarian scientists, the product of their labours does not belong to them. Dren is not a living, thinking being for Barlow, but a commodity, a congealed form of abstract labour. And since that commodity was made with resources (laboratories, equipment, genetic material, employees) belonging to Newstead, then it is only logical that it too belongs to Newstead. In his last scene, Barlow tries to reaffirm his authority, an authority he derives from his collaboration with the techno-capitalist hegemony, over the 'real scientists' who constantly mocked and humiliated him throughout the movie. For this, he gets punished, just like Wu was. Even in his final moment, Barlow's scientific skills are downplayed while his corporate servitude is highlighted, another proof of the film's negative view of corporate science. April D. Miller reads Barlow as being "castrated by his boss, CEO Joan Chorot, for he is repeatedly mocked by Elsa and Clive and struggles to maintain control of his rogue scientists and largely lets Chorot run the show" (351). This "castration" of Barlow is the same proletarianization I have previously described in regard to Wu, only viewed through a gendered lens instead of an economic one. Regardless of the angle from which one looks at Barlow, however, the character, despite the managerial powers he wields – or

⁵⁷ While I give ideological weight to the fact that Barlow's death is too fast for the viewer to see, I acknowledge that the choice of having Barlow's death happen offscreen may have been made simply to avoid the need for one more expensive special effect.

thinks he wields – is no more than a serf and an employee, one more commodity in Newstead Pharma’s inventory.

The *MaddAddam* trilogy takes this idea of scientist-labourers as commodities to its logical extreme by building a world where scientists reside in gated communities that are wholly owned, governed and defended by a corporation. This means the corporations own everything that answers the worker’s basic needs: the houses they live in, the schools they send their children to, or the stores where they buy their food. This state of affair is basically synonymous with one where the corporations own the workers themselves (Atwood, *Oryx* 26, 54). The scientist is a commodity in the trilogy’s world because “he or she owns nothing but labor to sell, and thus can be bought” (Wendling 50), such as when Jimmy’s father “was headhunted by NooSkins and hired at the second-in-command level – the Vice level, Jimmy’s mother called it. Ramona the lab tech from OrganInc made the move with him; she was part of the deal because she was an *invaluable asset*, said Jimmy’s father; she was his right-hand man” (Atwood, *Oryx* 53, my emphasis). By calling his co-worker (and possible mistress) an “asset,” Jimmy’s father, even though he is a scientist-labourer himself, falls into the trap of labour commodification. He talks of Ramona through the prism of her exchange-value, which is her only value as far as the techno-capitalist system in which they both reside is concerned. If the exchange-value of the worker is high enough, then this worker can be bought, like any other commodity. However, the calculation can also go the other way around: if a worker’s exchange-value is considered too low, other commodities might be prioritized before him. Jimmy’s father went through the first type of transaction, but Frank, the father of *The Year of the Flood*’s protagonist Ren, was not so lucky. He was “kidnapped by a rival Corp somewhere to the east of Europe” and his kidnappers

sent back a DVD of him in a drugged-looking state, confessing that HelthWyzer had been sticking a slow-acting but incurable gene-spliced disease germ inside their supplements so they could make a lot of money on the treatments. It was blackmail pure and simple, said Lucerne – they’d trade Frank for a couple of the formulas they wanted, most notably the ones for the slow acting diseases; and, in

addition, they wouldn't make the incriminating DVD public. But otherwise, they'd said, Frank's head would have to kiss his body goodbye.

HelthWyzer had done a cost-benefit analysis, said Lucerne, and they'd had decided the disease germs and formulas were worth more to them than Frank was. (Atwood, *Year* 292-293)

For HelthWyzer, the situation described here is not a hostage situation but a business transaction. Frank's life is abstracted into numbers in an equation and subsequently discarded in favour of better numbers. In addition to dramatizing the extreme to which a society that commodifies workers can go, this scene also acts as an ironic punishment for Frank, who was described by his wife as someone "who ought to have married an equation" (120). Frank is not really a character in the novel. He only gets a few passing mentions, and as such we do not really know if he fits the mould of a corporate mad scientist. In any case, he undoubtedly fits the mould of the proletarianized and commodified scientist-labourer, of (now literally) dead intellectual labour.

2.6 – The Cult of Practical Science

Closely related to the problem of corporate assimilation of mad scientists is the notion of 'pure' versus 'applied' or 'commercial' science. As part of their criticism of the techno-capitalist control of science, three of the works in my corpus ask the question of whether scientific research should be undertaken for its own sake or only as a means to produce commodities. In *Jurassic Park*, this question is framed as a concern about the lack of "university scientists free of contaminating industry ties" (Crichton, *Jurassic* xi). I have already explained the ideological importance of the word "contaminating," but I also want to highlight how the novel's ideal disinterested scientists are specifically university scientists doing research for research's sake rather than monetary gain. Some commentators have accused *Jurassic Park* (film and novel) of being an example of "an anti-science rebellion (that) has spread through popular culture like a virus" (Park 48) or of having "as its subtext this continuing portrait of the scientist who, having made an unholy pact, unleashes all manner of evil upon society" (Palmer 43). In truth "*Jurassic*

Park never posits scientific and technological developments as intrinsically evil but fears the motivations of those who bankroll them” (Friedman 170). To call *Jurassic Park* anti-science is to ignore the fact that the three protagonists of the novel are scientists themselves. For example, when pressed by Grant about whether he had used frog DNA in fabricating the park’s dinosaurs, Wu exhibits a very cavalier attitude to DNA manipulation:

He still wasn’t clear about why Grant thought frog DNA was important. Wu himself didn’t often distinguish one kind of DNA from another. After all, most DNA in living creatures was exactly the same [...]. This innate conservatism of DNA emboldened Wu to use whatever DNA he wished. In making his dinosaurs, Wu had manipulated the DNA as a sculptor might clay or marble. (Crichton, *Jurassic* 233)

Rather than manifesting the rigorous precision and caution one might expect from a scientist, Wu used DNA haphazardly, a decision that made him unable to recognize the danger frog DNA posed to his attempt at creating infertile dinosaurs. The novel implies that if Wu had had oversight in the form of a “steering committee,” a “department chairman” or “the university resources committee” (139) rather than a boss only interested in results, such sloppiness could have been avoided.

Wu’s characterization is not positive, but it appears downright flattering when contrasted with the characterization of Lewis Dodgson, a scientist from Ingen’s rival company Biosyn. Dodgson appears in two scenes at the beginning of the novel. In one he tries to convince Biosyn executives to greenlight his plan to steal Ingen’s dinosaur embryos, and in the other he hires Nedry to commit the theft.⁵⁸ Despite his brief appearance, the novel makes sure to inform the reader of how despicable a man Dodgson is. The very first time he is named, Dodgson is said to be, “[d]epending on who you are talking to,” either

⁵⁸ The film includes the latter scene with Nedry and Dodgson but omits the meeting with Biosyn’s executives – the rival company Dodgson works for is never named. Dodgson is also completely absent from the film adaptation of *The Lost World*; his role in the narrative is greatly reduced and what remains is given to Hammond’s nephew Peter.

the most aggressive geneticist of his generation or the most reckless. Thirty-four, balding, hawk-faced, and intense, he had been dismissed by Johns Hopkins as a graduate student for planning gene therapy on human patients without obtaining the proper FDA protocols. Hired by Biosyn, he had conducted the controversial rabies vaccine test in Chile. Now he was head of product development at Biosyn, which supposedly consisted of “reverse engineering:” taking a competitor’s product, tearing it apart, learning how it worked, and then making your own version. (71-72)

In other words, Dodgson’s job is to steal other scientists’ ideas and copy them, ideally at a cheaper cost. Dodgson is only in the novel long enough to be vilified for privileging corporate interests over scientific ones, once again hammering home the novel’s central criticism against corporate science. He does reappear in *The Lost World* as the primary antagonist, but since I chose to not add *The Lost World* to my corpus, I will not discuss the details of his portrayal in the sequel novel. Suffice it to say that by describing Dodgson as a “tireless self-promoter” who “lacked the ability to do original research” (Crichton, *Lost* 94) and having him be chosen as Tyrannosaurus Rex food instead of the university scientist he was next to (372-3), *The Lost World* follows in its predecessor’s footsteps of vilifying and punishing corporate scientists.

Since *Jurassic Park* is preoccupied not with science but with the misuse of science by corporate interests, the main difference between, on the one hand, Wu and Dodgson and, on the other, the trio of Alan Grant, Ellie Sattler and Ian Malcolm, is the fact that the latter three have never given up their university affiliation. Wu, by contrast, was greedy (and prideful) enough to be convinced by Hammond’s argument that

[u]niversities are no longer the intellectual centers of our country. The very idea is preposterous. Universities are the backwater. Don’t look so surprised. I’m not saying anything you don’t know. Since World War II, all the really important discoveries have come out of private laboratories. The laser, the transistor, the polio vaccine, the microchip, the hologram, the personal computer, magnetic resonance imaging, CAT scans – the list goes on and on. Universities simply

aren't where it's happening anymore. And they haven't been for forty years. If you want to do something important in computer or genetics, you don't go to a *university*. Dear me, no. (Crichton, *Jurassic* 138-139)

Such a discourse, which presents a viewpoint contradictory to that of the novel's *histoire*, is not included in the novel in the interest of presenting a genuine debate between two equally valid sides. The novel is not concerned with "fair play," but with making a point. Hammond and Wu are allowed to express their views on the benefit of privately-funded science only because their subsequent failure and death help delegitimize these views and bolster the trust the novel places in universities and the allegedly disinterested scientists they employ.

Despite clearly siding with them morally, *Jurassic Park* does not entirely leave university scientists off the hook. In order to emphasize how much scientific objectivity is in dire straits, the novel blurs the boundaries between academia and the corporate world by revealing that the protagonists have themselves been 'contaminated' by techno-capitalism. Grant and Sattler's research, while conducted under the purview of the University of Denver, has been partially funded for the last five years by John Hammond, as was the research of other paleontologists (37-8). Grant and Sattler also worked directly for Hammond at some point in the previous five years, helping him with the construction of the park. They did it unwittingly, having been told that Hammond was creating an as-accurate-as-possible paleontological museum.⁵⁹ Therefore, when Hammond invites them to the island, they have no idea that it contains live dinosaurs – they think they are being invited to inspect a museum. Nonetheless, it is not a sense of duty towards scientific accuracy that pushes Grant to accept Hammond's offer to visit the 'museum' after protesting for two pages that he is too busy. It is cold, hard cash:

⁵⁹ In the movie adaptation, Grant and Sattler meet Hammond for the first time when he comes to their digging site to invite them to the island. While it is still money that motivates them to accept Hammond's invitation, there is no mention that Hammond has been funding their research or that they are indirectly involved in the creation of the park. This was likely a choice made simply to cut into the large amount of exposition Crichton frontloads his novel with, but it does have the side-effect of downplaying the complicity of Grant and Ellie with Hammond's transgression.

“Let’s just say that I’m a little under pressure here, and I’d like you to look at this island for me. Give me your opinion. I’ll be paying you your usual week-end consultant rate of twenty thousand a day. That’d be sixty thousand for three days. And if you can spare Dr. Sattler, she’ll go at the same rate. We need a botanist. What do you say?”

Ellie looked at Grant as he said, “Well, Mr. Hammond, that much money would fully finance our expeditions for the next two summers”. (53)

My academic readers, who are well aware of the difficulty of obtaining funding, will argue that Grant and Sattler were not really in the wrong in accepting money from a corporation, since they were planning to use it for a good cause (continuing their research).⁶⁰ The novel is also aware of those difficulties and mentions that “[a]lthough many fields of science, such as chemistry, had become federally funded, paleontology remained strongly dependent on private patrons.” Neither Grant nor Sattler likes “to wait on the money men,” but they have both come to accept that it “goes with the job” (69). But seeing as their trip to the island quickly devolves into a nearly-fatal waking nightmare, it can be inferred that the novel does not see their combination of nobly intentioned greed and defeated pragmatism in a very good light.⁶¹ As the novel states from the outset, “everyone has a stake” when it comes to genetic engineering (x). In other words, when it comes to scientists and scholars, *Jurassic Park* takes the ideological stance that there is no such thing as ethical consultancy under capitalism.⁶² Even though their ultimate resistance to capitalist imperatives does save their life in the end, unlike those characters who fully embraced the idea behind the park (Wu, Hammond, Nedry, Regis and Arnold), it is not enough to spare them the horrific experience of Jurassic

⁶⁰ Interestingly, in *Jurassic Park III*, money to fund his digging expedition is once again used to lure Grant onto the island, even though he knows all about the dangerous dinosaurs this time.

⁶¹ The argument could be made that Sattler and Grant are innocent victims rather than being punished for their pragmatism. I do not disregard the possibility but considering the moralistic nature of all the deaths in the novel, I think it more appropriate to interpret Sattler and Grant’s circumstances within the same moral framework. The innocent victims, in such a framework, would actually be the children, who are the only ones who do not actively choose to go to the island.

⁶² I am here paraphrasing a trendy online phrase: “There is no such thing as ethical consumption under capitalism.” I was unable to find the origin of the phrase, but it is commonly used in left-leaning social media communities.

Park.⁶³ Following this moral logic, one could see the park's prehistoric monsters as delivering the same warning to Grant and Sattler that the novel as a whole wants to deliver to its readers: that scientists must cease to rely on corporate funding. Notably, the novel does not go into what happens to Grant and Sattler's field activities once InGen files for bankruptcy after the events of the novel, likely so as not to muddle its message with the harsh and complex reality of modern academia. *The Lost World* touches slightly on Grant and Sattler's activities after their Costa Rican trip, mentioning that "the individual scientists had been bound by nondisclosure agreements, abetted later by generous grants to continue their silence" (12). In other words, the sequel confirms that Grant and Sattler continued to be financed by corporate interests, muddying the message in a way the previous novel had avoided.

While on the subject of characters' deaths and of protagonists being polluted by capitalist pressures, I should briefly address the character of Ian Malcolm. Unlike in the movie, the chaos-obsessed mathematician dies in the novel.⁶⁴ This might sound surprising since, according to the chastising logic that the novel seems to follow with its killings, Malcolm has no more transgressed the border between science and capitalism than Grant and Sattler. In fact, since it is never made clear if Gennaro promised Malcolm a consultant fee to come to the island as Hammond did with Grant and Sattler, the implication is that he has transgressed a little less than even they did.⁶⁵ Ian Malcolm is not visiting the park for the money but to prove his theory that the island is unworkable and to smugly boast about being right (80-84). And he *is* proven right – no sooner is the park restored to full functionality than its systems undergo a second, even worse crash, leading to a sudden

⁶³ This moral underpinning to the deaths in this story is the reason why Gennaro dies in the movie and not in the novel while Hammond does the opposite. The movie strips Hammond of his amoral capitalist outlook and transfers it onto Gennaro, making him the unrepentant capitalist that needs to be punished instead of Hammond.

⁶⁴ Or at least he does until the sequel revives him with a handwave, claiming that he was "only slightly dead" (Crichton, *Lost 3*). This was probably done because of the popularity of the Jeff Goldblum's interpretation of the character in the film adaptation (which came out before the second novel). As I am concerned only with analysing *Jurassic Park*, I am working on the assumption that Malcolm dies in the novel.

⁶⁵ *The Lost World*, however, clarifies that Malcom also received monetary compensation for what happened on the island – in his case, InGen paid his medical bills. Once again, the sequel muddies the message of the first novel and in doing so shines a spotlight on how that first novel was constructed to be as ideologically coherent and uniform as possible.

collapse of the whole park, an outcome the novel refers to as the “Malcolm Effect” (273-4). Shortly after this second crash, John Arnold, the park’s chief engineer who had earlier dismissed Malcolm’s warning as “a nice mathematical model” made by “just another theoretician,” is eaten by an escaped Velociraptor (276-7). It is not a coincidence or an accident of fate that the park collapses exactly as Malcolm said it would – unless fate’s real name is Michael Crichton. The novel is deliberately structured so that Malcolm “is vindicated when his dire predictions about Jurassic Park come true, a confirmation whose effects are not isolated to the disaster at Isla Nublar but which redounds upon the world inhabited by the consumer of best-selling techno-thrillers” (Laist 219).

Why then does Malcolm die, in terms of the ideological work of the novel? If Malcolm’s discourse is the closest to the message the *histoire* wants to convey, why does he die alongside characters with competing discourses? The most likely reason is that by dying, Malcolm becomes a martyr. He dies to bring us the truth about genetic engineering and the danger it – and by extension, all of science – poses if it stays in the hands of private companies motivated only by the accumulation of capital. Bolstering this interpretation is the manner of Malcolm’s death. Unlike Nedry, Regis, Hammond, Arnold or Wu, all complicit in the capitalist crime that is Jurassic Park, Malcolm does not die violently in the jaws of a cloned prehistoric monster. His death contains none of the graphic details of Nedry’s (Crichton, *Jurassic* 219), the drawn-out length of Regis’s (241-2) or the suddenness of Wu’s (375). Instead, Malcolm’s leg is badly injured when the Tyrannosaurus Rex first attacked after the power cut out for the first time (210), and he spends the rest of novel laid up in the park’s control center, commenting on the ensuing disaster while high on morphine. When he finally succumbs to his wounds, the novel aims for serene and peaceful rather than violent and shocking:

Harding sighed. Despite all efforts, Malcolm was rapidly slipping into a terminal delirium. His fever was higher, and they were almost out of his antibiotics.

“What don’t you care about?”

“Anything,” Malcolm said. “Because...everything looks different...on the other side.”

And he smiled. (431)

Notice the vagueness of the last line, which concludes both the scene and the chapter. Unlike with all the other deaths in the novel, Crichton decides to be coy here, giving the character some privacy as he expires. No descriptions of bloody entrails ripped out of their confines to be seen here, only respectful reverence. Malcolm’s death is not punitive but a way to further the ideological truth of the novel by giving to Malcolm’s discourse the weight of martyrdom while at the same time leaving the door open to a resurrection if his wisdom was needed once more.

Jurassic Park’s trust in universities also extends to governmental institutions. Ultimately, it is the Costa Rican government and its (entirely fictional) military that destroy both the island and the threat posed by the dinosaurs (except for the few who found a way off the island beforehand). The United States’ Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is also presented in positive terms at the beginning of the novel, when an EPA agent interrogates Grant about his connection to Hammond and shows great concern over Hammond’s actions (35-45).⁶⁶ Even more meaningful is a discussion between Hammond and Wu where Hammond explains why he chose a theme park as the best way to achieve his goal of “us[ing] the newly emerging technology of genetic engineering to make money. A lot of money” (222). In what becomes more and more of an angry capitalist rant as it goes on, Hammond explains that the entertainment industry, compared to the pharmaceutical industry which pioneered the use of genetic engineering, has few, if any, regulations and thus is a much more economically viable use of genetic engineering, since one can charge any price for entry to a theme park, unlike with new drugs (222-223). When Wu challenges Hammond on this topic and points out that, just like pharmaceutical

⁶⁶ Interestingly, Crichton would advocate the opposite view of the relationship between government and scientists in his controversial 2004 novel *State of Fear*. According to *State of Fear*, global warming is not supported by science but made up by government-controlled institutions like the EPA. By forcing their scientists to alter their data, the novel posits, these institutions intend to use the fear created by the so-called climate change as a tool for social control.

companies, he may face pressure from scientists who might want to constrain or stop him, Hammond angrily replies:

“Well, they *can't do that*,” Hammond said. He shook his finger at Wu. “You know why scientists would try to do that? It’s because they want to do research, of course. That’s all they ever want to do, is research. Not to accomplish anything. Not to make any progress. Just do *research*. Well, they have a surprise coming to them.”

“I wasn’t thinking of that,” Wu said.

Hammond sighed. “I’m sure it would be *interesting* for the scientists, to do research. But you arrive at a point where these animals are simply too expensive to be used for research.” (225-226)

Hammond’s dismissive and contemptuous approach to scientific research illustrates very well how Crichton’s novel is not anti-science, but rather specifically against *corporate* science. If the fundamentals of nature need to be tampered with, if forbidden knowledge needs to be studied, says *Jurassic Park*, then it should be done so by institutions preoccupied with knowledge itself (universities) rather than profit (corporations).

Atwood’s trilogy follows *Jurassic Park*’s assertion that “there are very few molecular biologists and very few research institutions without commercial affiliations” (xi) to its logical conclusion and describes a world where universities have become nothing more than wholly-owned subsidiaries of corporations. When Jimmy visits his friend Crake at the Watson-Crick Institute, a highly-funded and well-respected STEM-focused university, it takes him only a few seconds to realize he is in corporate territory, despite the attempts by the Institute to hide that fact: “The security going into Watson-Crick was very thorough. [...] There were dozens of CorpSeCorps men, complete with spray guns and rubber clubs; they had Watson-Crick insignia, but you could tell who they really were” (Atwood, *Oryx* 200). Once inside, it becomes readily apparent to Jimmy – and the reader – that Watson-Crick as a whole is focused on developing new products for the corporations rather than creating new knowledge. While showing Jimmy around, Crake

points out that “the students at Watson-Crick got half the royalties from anything they invented there. Crake said it was a fierce incentive” (203). Not an incentive to do research for research’s sake, like the university scientists that Crichton described have, but an incentive to create new products to be sold. Even universities that teach subjects that do not directly lead to the creation of scientific products still orient their curriculum towards the creation of a scientific climate that is most receptive to such profit-oriented endeavors. An example of such a university is the religious “Spindletop U.,” which teaches subjects such as “PetrTheology, Homiletics and PetrBiology; this last, as far as Zeb could see, required you to learn biology in order to disprove it” (*MaddAddam* 120). All these subjects are aimed not at creating products but at shaping cultural and religious norms to the benefit of the petroleum industry, which will eventually make it easier for this industry to divert scientific research towards the development of technologies useful to them.

Not only is the *MaddAddam* trilogy’s outlook on university-affiliated scientists and researchers much more cynical and negative than *Jurassic Park*’s, so is the novel’s view of the pharmaceutical industry. In *Jurassic Park*, capitalists strayed away from pharmaceuticals, deeming them “a very poor use of new technology” (Crichton, *Jurassic* 222) and a bad investment. Atwood’s novel also presents this argument through a thought experiment of Crake’s: “Axiom: illness isn’t productive. In itself, it generates no commodities and therefore no money. Although it’s an excuse for a lot of activity, all it really does moneywise is cause wealth to flow from the sick to the well. From patients to doctors, from clients to cure-peddlers. Money osmosis you might call it” (Atwood, *Oryx* 210).

To strengthen his argument, Crake provides the example of a new mouthwash containing genetically engineered bacteria that had come out an unspecified number of years beforehand and had forced many dentists out of business. John Hammond’s solution to this problem was to abandon pharmaceutical pursuits, but Crake offers a different solution: to stay in business, pharmaceutical companies could create new diseases to cure.

When Jimmy expresses incredulity at the thought that any company would ever dare do such a monstrous thing, Crake reveals that pharmaceutical giant HelthWyzer has

been doing it for years. There's a whole secret unit working on nothing else. Then there's the distribution end. Listen, this is brilliant. They put the hostile bioforms into their vitamin pills – their HelthWyzer over-the-counter premium brand, you know [...]. Random insertion, of course, and they don't have to keep doing it – if they did they'd get caught, because even in the pleeblands they've got guys who could figure it out. But once you've got a hostile bioform started in the pleeb population, the way people slosh around out there it more or less runs itself. Naturally they develop the antidotes at the same time as they're customizing the bugs, but they hold those in reserve, they practice the economics of scarcity, so they're guaranteed high profits. (211)

Jurassic Park's approach to the conflict between the capitalist imperative to produce commodities for sale and the utopian ideal of scientific knowledge pursued for its own sake is a Manichean one. University scientists are universally good and corporate scientists are universally bad. While this approach is somewhat simplistic, it serves that novel's ideological agenda very well. *Oryx and Crake*, by contrast, presents a much more complex view of the conflict by eliminating the academic safe space used by *Jurassic Park*. In the world of the *MaddAddam* trilogy, capitalism has reached the apex of its hegemony and thus there are no 'good' scientists who devote themselves only or primarily to pure research. In fact, *Oryx and Crake* never actually brings up the subject of pure scientific research. In this dystopian world, the ideals of pure research just do not exist in science anymore, one more extinction the novel explicitly blames techno-capitalism for.

Pure research is gone because scientists are not in charge of science anymore – capital is. Just like the film adaptation of *Jurassic Park*, the *MaddAddam* trilogy credits the products of genetic engineering – monsters such as the ChickieNobs (see Part III, pages 227), the wolvogs (rabid wolves who look like friendly dogs) and snats (horrifying hybrids of snakes and rats) – not to individual scientists but to the corporations who

employ them. In this world, the scientist figure, mad or not, is no longer an individual with questions but a mass of people with orders. Even the Crakers, despite being named after their main creator, were created in part by a group of anonymous scientists. These scientists are anonymous not because they are never named, but because the corporations ‘generously’ “offered to destroy their so-called real identities and all records of their previous existences” (Atwood, *Oryx* 299). “So-called” because for corporations like RejoovenEsense, scientists are only real as commodities, as resources for them to exploit. They no more need a name than a computer needs one. In place of names, these scientists are only referred to by nicknames referring to extinct animals,⁶⁷ nicknames which in the narrative were created specifically to preserve anonymity as a defense against RejoovenEsense and its fellow mega-corporations. This did not work, obviously, since they all ended up integrated into the techno-capitalist system and stripped of everything but the anonymous patronyms they once used as shields. This loss of identity is so profound that even when the scientists are free of the corporations and given individual personalities in *Year of the Flood* and *MaddAddam*, many of them are only referred to by their nicknames, even though they have no reason to keep being anonymous any longer. This narrative choice highlights the alienating and dehumanizing nature of techno-capitalism and the lasting damage it can inflict on a human being.

Since there is no pure research and no non-corporate scientists in its dystopian world, the *MaddaAddam* trilogy cannot show in details the contemporary debate around this subject and the tensions and anxieties that such debate generates *Jurassic Park* does. Instead, the trilogy opts to transfer the debate into the field of art. When describing the Watson-Crick institute, *Oryx and Crake* simply focuses on its current productivist side and does not draw parallels to a hypothetical past where Watson-Crick’s activities were purely scientific. Its description of the arts-focused Martha Graham Academy, however, does

⁶⁷ To be precise, the nicknames are from animals that are extinct within the setting of the novels, not necessarily in real life. Most of the nicknames, such as Black Rhino and Indian Tiger, are taken from animals that are currently considered threatened by extinction to some degree, but not extinct (yet). Others, such as Thickney (Jimmy’s nickname) and Crake, refer to animals that are currently categorized as “Least Concern,” or not threatened by extinction (yet). For the curious reader, the International Union for Conservation of Nature keeps a frequently updated list of species and their conservation status (see Works Cited).

spend a significant amount of time contrasting the state of art education in the past and present of the novel's setting. A strong contrast is drawn between the original curriculum of the Academy and the one now offered to Jimmy. The former included "the Performing Arts – acting, dancing, and so forth" as well as "Film-making" and "Video Arts" (186-7). These subjects, Jimmy informs us, are still taught, unlike any non-commercial applications of science, which seems to be totally absent from Watson-Crick's curriculum. However, like "Latin or book-binding," these subjects are considered more of an intellectual curiosity than activities with any relevance or importance. By the time Jimmy enters the Academy,

the curricular emphasis had switched to other arenas. *Contemporary* arenas, they were called. Webgame Dynamics, for instance; money could still be made from that. Or Image Presentation, listed in the calendar as a sub-branch of Pictorial and Plastic Arts. With a degree in PicPlarts, as the students called it, you could go into advertising, no sweat.

Or Problematics. Problematics was for word people [...]. Spin and Grin was its nickname among the students. Like everything at Martha Graham it had utilitarian aims. Our Students Graduate with Employable Skills, ran the motto underneath the original Latin motto, which was *Ars Longa Vita Brevis*. (188)

This original motto, "Art is Long, Life is Short," is borrowed from the ancient Greek philosopher Hippocrates. It is usually interpreted to mean that "learning one's craft takes so long that a lifetime may not be adequate" (Merriam-Webster n.p.). Its replacement by a much more utilitarian promise is a clear sign that the once-idealistic Martha Graham Academy has now been reduced to a simple factory, moulding students into white-collar cogs for the ever-hungry capitalist machine. In lamenting the 'utilitarianization' of the arts, The *MaddAddam* trilogy extends *Jurassic Park*'s warning about "contaminating industry ties" to the entirety of human knowledge, predicting even more dire consequences from this capitalist pollution.

Despite this virulent critique of the union between capitalism and science, the *MaddAddam* trilogy treats corporate scientists less as villains (like Dodgson) than as victims of the techno-capitalism system they work for (like Wu). The corporate scientists in *MaddAddam* are not vile opportunists, but people whose only sin was to accept the hegemonic system without a fight. Jimmy's father is a good example of a corporate scientist that has accepted his role as an obedient worker, as this heated exchange between him and Jimmy's mother demonstrates: “‘Don't you remember the way we used to talk, everything we wanted to do? Making life better for people – not just people with money. You used to be so... you had ideals, then.’ ‘Sure,’ said Jimmy's father in a tired voice. ‘I've still got them; I just can't afford them.’ A pause. Jimmy's mother must've been mulling that over” (Atwood, *Oryx*, 57). What Jimmy's mother is mulling over is the vicious circle of morality under capitalist hegemony. Having morals and ideals, Jimmy's father is saying, is only for the rich but, as the novels prove over and over, those who are rich do not have morals or ideals anymore because they had to shed them to become rich in the first place. Just like Crake genetically engineers his Crakers to be docile, the corporations he works for economically engineer their workers to be obedient, no matter what is required of them.

Dans le ventre du dragon has a lot of similarities with *Oryx and Crake*. It shares the latter's critique of the capitalist commodity fetish and of its emphasis on the products of scientific research rather than on research itself. In both works, pharmaceutical companies prioritize their ability to sell new drugs over actually improving the health of their fellow human beings. *Sciences et Recherches* goes nowhere as far as intentionally creating and distributing new diseases, like HelthWyzer did, but the head of the company does dismiss a promising scientific leap that could help patients cure themselves. As he reminds his chief scientist: “The primary goal of this facility, Dr. Lucas, is not to enable the sick to cure themselves. It is to put new drugs on the shelves” (*Dans le ventre* 00:12:01). Unlike *Oryx and Crake*, however, the film does allude to a past where the merits of pure research were recognized: “Yet it's in this *minor* facility that Wells created Renovor. And it's to his *minor* cure for headaches that you owe your consortium. When he started, Wells believed in research!” exclaims Dr. Lucas. The head of the company

remains intractable. “And we dedicate 5% of our budget to research. A tremendous sum,” he argues, another example of the ruthless calculations behind the techno-capitalist system (00:11:42). However, while *Dans le ventre du dragon* seems to at first exalt Lucas as a research-focused scientist, it soon becomes apparent that the film sees her research not as an opportunity to transcend the techno-capitalist system, but as a tool the system can use to extend its domination. At the beginning of the third act, Lou, armed with an axe and looking like a typical mad scientist himself thanks to Dr. Lucas’s monstrous experiments (Fig. 2), confronts the woman:

LOU: I’ve come here to cut the dragon’s head off, before it swallows everyone up. I know how far this can go, and it scares me.

Dr. LUCAS: Why? On the contrary, you shouldn’t be scared. We need to continue, it’s the only way to know. Imagine if we succeeded in gifting a newborn baby with the entirety of human knowledge. He would have his whole life to discover, learn, become better, perfect. A new race! You need to help me, I need you. (1:13:27-1:14:31)

Dr. Lucas’s pleas fall on deaf ears, however, and Lou raises his axe. Dr. Lucas raises her arms in defense, but the dragon Lou came to kill is not her – it’s her equipment, the same equipment she used to twist his body and mind into their new form. The same equipment Sciences et Recherches – and the techno-capitalist system they stand in for – can use to bring about the terrible future Lou saw during Dr. Lucas’s experiment.⁶⁸ Importantly, Dr. Lucas is not defending the techno-capitalist system when she tells Lou to not be afraid of the dragon. She is simply misunderstanding what Lou is saying, thinking that the ‘dragon’ is scientific progress. So focused is Dr. Lucas on pure research that she is unable to realize how the product of her own labour can easily be commodified for

⁶⁸ It is not too clear what happens during Lucas’s experiment. My reading is that by telling him to believe he was 133 years old and activating the full power of his brain – the film uses the debunked yet still widespread myth that humans only use 10-20% of their brain – she gave Lou the ability to actually see the future. He describes being a survivor of some unspecified catastrophe, probably related to his belief, explored in Section 1, that the current socio-economic system is about to blow up and that many people his age will not survive that destruction.

destructive purposes. This makes her as much a danger to humanity as the people she works for.



Figure 2 – *Dans le ventre du dragon*. (01:13:27)

In the conflict between scientific research and scientific production, *Midnight* is the exception in my corpus. Koontz's novel buys fully into capitalism's commodity fetish and only considers science in its applied sense. Unlike *Jurassic Park*, for whom "[e]ven pure scientific discovery is an aggressive, penetrative act," and "always a rape of the natural world" (318), *Midnight* sees scientific discovery as an inherently virtuous pursuit. The ethical problems come not from science itself, but from the men behind the science. In *Midnight*, science is presented as a tool and, like all tools, it can be used for good or evil. Importantly, science is not a morally neutral tool, but a positively connoted one, since science cannot be used by a mad scientist "as easily as by a benign genius" (Koontz 285). Thomas Shaddack is shown as villainous precisely because he rejects the utopian ideal according to which "the purpose of technological progress was to improve the lot of humanity, lift the species up from the mud and carry it, eventually, to the stars" (Koontz 303). Unlike other corporate characters in my corpus, Shaddack does not reject this ideal for monetary gain, but rather because he believes that

the sole purpose of technology was to concentrate power in his hands. [...] If they knew what he had undertaken and what dream of conquest still preoccupied him, virtually all other men of science would say that he was bent, sick, deranged. He didn't care. They were wrong of course. Because they didn't realize who he was. The child of the moonhawk. [...] Other scientists would misunderstand him because they could not know that all of existence centered around him, that the universe itself existed only because he existed, and that if he ever died – which was unlikely – then the universe would simultaneously cease to exist. He was the center of creation. He was the only man who mattered. (Koontz 303)

Unlike Hammond, the heads of Helthwyzer, or the director of Sciences et Recherches, Shaddack's cardinal sin is not greed but pride. Shaddack's delusions of grandeur and of world domination do not stem from techno-capitalism itself. *Midnight* is not really preoccupied with whether or not techno-capitalism is diverting science away from its original purpose (the advancement of knowledge) in order to make commercial products. Rather, it is preoccupied with whether or not techno-capitalism makes it too easy for ill-intentioned men to use science for their own dark ends. Applied science is not the issue here, but what techno-capitalism allows science to be applied to. For example, after a harrowing encounter with human-machine hybrids, Sam Booker reflects on the concept of the cyborg, which the novel describes as

a person whose physiological functioning was aided by or dependent on a mechanical or electronic device. People wearing pacemakers to regulate arrhythmic hearts were cyborgs, and that was a good thing. Those whose kidneys had both failed – and who received dialysis on a regular basis – were cyborgs, and that was good too. But with the Coltranes the concept had been carried to extremes. They were the nightmare side of advanced cybernetics, in whom not merely physiological but mental function had become aided by and almost certainly dependent on a machine. (275)

In this passage, the production of cyborgs itself is not considered wrong or immoral but some of the uses this process of production can lead to are. The distinction in *Midnight* is

consequently not between science done for the sake of knowledge and science done for the sake of production but between science that produces things that help people and science that produces things that harm people. Techno-capitalism is not criticized for producing commodities, but for allowing the wrong people to produce the wrong commodities.

2.7 – More Machine than Scientist.

“Madness” is a vague and potentially problematic term, since the word is “charged with centuries of political, social, religious, medical and personal assumptions” (Feder 5). Even if real-world preoccupations are evacuated and the concept studied in a purely literary sense, any tentative definition of madness is subject to such a preponderance of subjective assumptions that it cannot be universal. Madness, as a literary and cultural object, is a constructed concept that, from a Foucauldian perspective, both defines and is defined by the culture that gives it birth. When it comes to defining who is sane and who is insane,

sociologists and ethnologists have a simple, self-evident answer: the mad are the maladapted, the deviants, those who act differently from everyone else. This answer is quite convenient. Unfortunately, it is also quite incomplete, because it fails to take into account the very different and very specific ways by which various cultures define madness.

If the sociologists were right, then madness would be naught but a tamer, weirder version of criminality. [...] Yet even the most primitive of societies take great pains to distinguish the mad from the criminals. The mad always fulfill a social function specific to them and no others. (Foucault 965, my translation)

As Foucault has proven throughout his writings on the subject, madness is not universal; it can only be defined by its expression in a particular cultural moment in space and time. Any analysis of “recurrent literary representations of madness” such as the mad scientist figure therefore

constitute[s] a history of explorations of the mind in relation to itself, to other human beings, and to social and political institutions. The madman, like other people, does not exist alone. He both reflects and influences those involved with him. He embodies and symbolically transforms the values and aspirations of his family, his tribe, and his society, even if he renounces them, as well as their delusions, cruelty, violence, even in his inner flight. (Feder 4-5)

In light of the cultural nature of madness, it is no surprise that “there is no consensus on the madness and morality of mad scientists: some see the mad scientist as essentially immoral, others diagnose him with clinical insanity, and yet others see him as a chronic narcissist or a victim of his obsession” (Després 21). Madness is as protean as the scientist it afflicts, as exemplified by this reflection of Atwood on *The Island of Doctor Moreau*:

The story has taken on a life of its own, and [...] has acquired attributes and meanings not present in the original. Moreau himself [...] has drifted toward the type of the Mad Scientist, or the Peculiar Genetic Engineer, or the Tyrant-in-Training, bent on taking over the world; whereas Wells’ Moreau is certainly not mad, is a mere vivisectionist, and has no ambition to take over anything whatsoever. (Atwood, *In Other Worlds*, 150)

Atwood’s claim that Wells’s Moreau is not a mad scientist is guaranteed to raise some eyebrows and is indeed hard to understand unless one has read a short piece she wrote on Jonathan Swift and the Royal Society. In this piece, Atwood reveals that her own conception of the mad scientist figure strictly follows the conventions of

the B-film double bill. Presented with a clutch of white-coated men wielding test tubes, we viewers knew at once—being children of our times—that at least one of them would prove to be a cunning megalomaniac bent on taking over the world, all the while subjecting blondes to horrific experiments from which only the male lead could rescue them, though not before the mad scientist had revealed his true nature by gibbering and raving. (194)

For Atwood, a scientist character needs to possess the same traits as the raving maniacs of B-movies in order to qualify as mad. Moreau does not exhibit such traits and, consequently, she does not consider him to be mad. Interestingly enough, the same can be said about her own character Crake, the main mad scientist figure in the *MaddAddam* trilogy. Crake does not exhibit the “excesses of the wild-eyed B-movie scientists” (Atwood, *In Other Worlds* 195) and is therefore not mad. Després herself admits that “Crake is neither schizophrenic, nor paranoid” (442). However, I posit, along with Després, that “Crake is undoubtedly a mad scientist” (436) and so was Moreau. Atwood errs in that she only considers fiery mania as a mark of madness. But icy coldness is also a form of madness, and it just so happens to be the one most often used in representations of the corporate mad scientist, Atwood’s included.

It is not uncommon for the mad scientist to be associated exclusively with his more cartoonish aspects, such as bulging eyes, wild hair, maniacal laugh or a tendency to ‘chew the scenery.’⁶⁹ Many studies conducted in the West have demonstrated the endurance and prominence of these visual and behavioral signifiers, especially but not exclusively among younger individuals (Frayling 12-18, 219-22). As with the rest of the mad scientist archetype, these characteristics have a long history. The “precursors of the modern scientists,” namely “the alchemists, the Faustus stereotype, or the Restoration virtuosi,” were all “depicted as passionate, inspired, even religious in their zeal” (Haynes 211). The corporate mad scientist, however, tends to favour the opposite form of emotional and mental abnormality. Instead of being ruled by his passion, he experiences a dearth of passion. Instead of “a state in which unconscious processes predominate over conscious ones to the extent that they control them and determine perceptions of and responses to experience that, judged by prevailing standards of logical thought and relevant emotion, are confused and inappropriate” (Feder 5), the madness of the corporate

⁶⁹ Some of these cartoony aspects, in particular the wild hair, are a direct reference to the public persona of Albert Einstein, who “still has the highest recognition factor worldwide of any scientist of the modern era. A survey of American academics, across the spectrum, in the year 2000 placed Einstein as the second most significant world figure of the Millennium, after Gutenberg. His playful and awe-inspiring public image – plus photos of his creased face, shock of white hair and domed forehead – [...] have come to stand for the good mad scientist who may be incomprehensible but who is somehow doing good for us all. [...] Einstein’s public image neatly combines the two great popular stereotypes of the scientist in one: the unworldly saint and the dotty sinner. (Frayling 20-21)

mad scientist manifests as logical thought superseding and controlling any and all conscious or unconscious emotions. This form of madness is not without a long history of its own, having first appeared

after Newton's celestial mechanics eliminated much of the awe and mystery from man's perception of the universe and Enlightenment philosophy elevated the cultivation of objectivity as the precondition of the scientific method. The English Romantics certainly ascribed this diminished respect for the emotions and subconscious states to the culture of scientific rationalism, and twentieth-century writers have extended this Romantic stereotype of the scientist who has sold his emotional soul for scientific prestige. (Haynes 211)

The emotionally deficient scientist is therefore not a creation of techno-capitalism and not exclusive to the corporate mad scientist, but the deficiency is much stronger in this iteration of the figure than in any other past, for two reasons. First, because the development of ever more complex and sophisticated machines has led to the rise of an entirely new field of metaphors to dramatize this kind of madness. Robots, computers, cyborgs, cybernetics, and countless other words have made it possible to talk about emotionless scientist with a vocabulary that no Romantics could have imagined. Second, because the scientific rationalism the Romantics denounced is part and parcel of the techno-capitalist society we live in today:

Capitalism denigrates and demoralizes human prominence ideologically as well as materially. Humans become a calculable resource like any other within the economy. Within this economy, resources are all subjects of exchange value, and must therefore be made calculable in terms of one another. An ontological leveling occurs within capitalist conceptuality in order to make this possible. Forces previously separable by kind are seen as similar. Human force must be quantifiable and exchangeable. Scientific materialism and its empiricist and positivist companions, with their proud inattention to conceptuality, metaphysics, or teleology in shaping human perceptions of scientific facts, offer such a framework. (Wendling 4)

The logical chain is thus easy to follow: techno-capitalism is more hegemonic now than ever before, which means that scientific materialism and rationalism are more predominant than ever, which leads to an increase in the number of fictional characters that illustrate this fact. My corpus includes three such major figures – Crake, Thomas Shaddack and Ash from *Alien*.

Even in his physical appearance, Crake is a perfect example of a corporate mad scientist whose madness resides in his lack of emotions and interpersonal skills or interests. While Crake's appearance definitely adheres closely to a stereotypical 'nerd' aesthetic – thin and shabbily dressed – it greatly downplays the usual indicators of madness such as wild hair, crazy eyes or “the equation scientist = disability” (Frayling 29). In *Oryx and Crake*, Crake is described as “taller than Jimmy, about two inches; thinner too. Straight brown-black hair, tanned skin, green eyes, a half-smile, a cool gaze. His clothes were dark in tone, devoid of logos and visuals and written commentary – a no-name look. He was possibly older than the rest of them, or trying to act it” (72). In the sequel, Crake is similarly described as “thin and dark-haired and tall, and he wasn't wearing the sort of clothes the affluent wore. Just plain black” (*Year* 145). In both instances, there is a disarming normalcy to Crake's nondescript appearance, a lack of identifying characteristics; he looks like pretty much anyone. Despite this, there is something *weird*, something *off*, about Crake. In the words of his best (only?) friend, Crake “generated awe – not an overwhelming amount of it, but enough. He exuded potential, but potential for what? Nobody knew, and so people were wary of him. All this in his dark laconic clothing” (*Oryx* 75). Crake is as intrinsically unnerving as the B-movie mad scientist of yesteryear. For those characters' outlandish mania, Atwood substituted the other extreme: a total lack of social charisma, of outward emotional displays. Crake is at various times called “a cold fish” (*Year* 306), “flat and wooden” (227), “so cool he was practically frozen” (227), “like a cyborg” (228), and “physically remote” (*Oryx* 313). Time and time again, Crake is described less like the warm-blooded mammal he is and more like a computer on legs. On one occasion, *Oryx and Crake* goes even further, detaching the character completely from the material world of flesh, blood and circuits: “Crake lives in a higher world. [...] He lives in a world of ideas. He is doing

important things. He has no time to play” (313). It is fitting that this statement is uttered in the novel by Crake’s only known lover, Oryx, since nowhere is Crake’s pathological lack of emotions more obvious than during discussions of sexual and romantic relationships.

Crake is not asexual per se. He originally hired Oryx for the express purpose of satisfying sexual urges (*Oryx* 207-208). He has sexual desires, but these “sexual needs were direct and simple.... Not fun, just work” (314). Crake views love and sex entirely from a practical, biological perspective: “Falling in love, although it resulted in altered body chemistry and was therefore real, was a hormonally induced delusional state, according to him. As for sex per se, it lacked both challenge and novelty, and was on the whole a deeply imperfect solution to the problem of intergenerational genetic transfer” (193). In another discussion between Jimmy and him, Crake floats the theory that humans would be happier and less violent if sex were “cyclical and inevitable, as in the other mammals” (166). From Crake’s scientific materialist point of view, such a method of reproduction would lead to “no more prostitution, no sexual abuse of children, no haggling over the price, no pimps, no sex slaves. No more rape” (165) as well as “no more jealousy, no more wife-butcherers, no more husband-poisoners” (169). It is no surprise then that Crake chose to implement this very method of reproduction in his genetically-engineered Crakers, with whom he intends to replace humanity.⁷⁰ When Jimmy protests that Crake’s suggestion would transform humanity into “a bunch of hormone robots,” Crake replies that we already *are* hormone robots, “only we’re faulty ones” (166). Crake and his views are described through mechanistic metaphors, each one pushing Crake further and further away from the realm of the human and into the realm of the machine. This effect is further highlighted when Jimmy notes that throughout the discussion, Crake’s “tone was one of detached but not very strong interest, as if he were conducting a survey of people’s less attractive personal habits, such as nose-picking” (167). Whenever the topic of sex or

⁷⁰ Interestingly enough, while the Crakers’s method of reproduction does eliminate any sexual competition and sexual abuses between Crakers, it also leads them to rape human women, since these women always register to male Crakers as in heat and thus willing to fornicate. In this way, as in many others, Crake’s plans only partially succeed.

love comes up, Crake is always presented as a cold, detached observer who sees intimacy only in terms of problems and solutions.

Art is another field through which Crake's emotional deficiency is made clear. Crake is dismissive of the arts for the same reason he is dismissive of love or even sex. Because of his scientific materialist point of view, Crake is unable to see anything from a standpoint other than practical evolutionary uses. When his friend Jimmy accuses him of having a bias against art, Crake denies it and responds that "people can amuse themselves any way they like. If they want to play with themselves in public, whack off over doodling, scribbling and fiddling, it's fine with me. Anyway it serves a biological purpose" (167). When pressed for an explanation of this last sentence, he gives the example of male frogs using drainpipes as amplifiers so that their voice will sound deeper, since female frogs are attracted to deeper voices, which supposedly denote stronger males. His conclusion is that for the (male) artist, art is "an amplifier. A stab at getting laid" (168). Interestingly, Crake's inability to comprehend emotions, and thus their expression through art, leads him to contradict himself a bit, since in the same discussion he both dismisses art as frivolous and highlights its importance to the reproductive process (and thus the survival of a species). This initially creates an ambiguity in Crake's position, but this ambiguity is ultimately done away with and replaced with an absolutist position against art: "*Watch out for art*, Crake used to say. *As soon as they start doing art, we're in trouble*. Symbolic thinking of any kind would signal downfall, in Crake's view. Next they'd be inventing idols, and funerals, and grave goods, and the afterlife, and sin, and Linear B, and kings, and then slavery and war" (361). For Crake, art is nothing but trouble, which cements his characterization as an icy-cold, emotionally-impaired corporate mad scientist.

Interestingly, despite all the efforts Crake put into removing "what he called the G-spot in the brain" (157), his peaceful and naïve Crakers eventually create their own religious rituals and icons. This is the most obvious sign that the trilogy's *histoire* considers Crake's scientific materialism to be wrong and misguided – in other words, mad.

This moral judgment is important, since neither asexuality/demi-sexuality nor a disdain for art is enough to qualify as a corporate mad scientist. There also needs to be

condemnation of these behaviours on the part of the text, an acknowledgement that these behaviours are mad and thus worthy of criticism. In addition to proving wrong Crake's claims of having done away with religion and arts, the *Maddaddam* trilogy exhibits a negative moral judgment of Crake in two other ways. The first is through his relationship with Oryx. Initially, this relationship, seen as love by Jimmy (309, 313), seems to humanize Crake. After watching Crake and Oryx have sex at a bordello, Ren points out that "he could have sex all right, just like a human being" (*Year* 306), implying that Crake is not a human being or, at least, that Ren was not convinced of that fact until she saw he could have sex. Ren seemingly considers sex and the intimate feelings traditionally linked with it as a quintessential component of what makes humans human and, since she is not only a protagonist in the series, but also a narrator, one of the few survivors of the Crake-engineered plague, and a sympathetic character, it is not a great leap to say that the trilogy's *histoire* also shares that view. Crake's deficiency in that field is therefore presented to the reader as a deficiency of his humanity.

On the surface, then, Crake's relationship with Oryx seems to indicate a more sympathetic approach to the character than the trilogy otherwise employs towards Crake. However, even this shred of humanity is cast in a dreadful light at the very end of the first novel, when Crake's feelings for Oryx lead him to murder her. This event is foreshadowed by Crake first in the form of a question to Jimmy – "Would you kill someone you loved to spare them pain?" (*Oryx* 320) – and later as a definitive statement, once again to Jimmy: "'If I'm not around, Oryx won't be either,' said Crake. 'She'll commit suttee? No shit! Immolate herself on your funeral pyre?' 'Something like that,' said Crake, grinning. Which at the time Jimmy had taken both as a joke and also as a symptom of Crake's truly colossal ego" (321). In a way, this is indeed what that statement is – a testimony to Crake's delusions of grandeur, one of the traits of the classical mad scientist that the corporate version does did not shed entirely. Most importantly, however, it is also proof of a homicidal, even pathological approach to love. Crake's possessive, egoistical love for Oryx does not disprove Crake's emotional

deficiency, but rather confirms it.⁷¹ Crake is unable to love like all the other human protagonists in the trilogy; as a corporate mad scientist, he is either too “brain damaged” or possesses too great “a deviousness” to be capable of such a feat (320).

The other, and in my opinion somewhat problematic, way the trilogy emphasizes the mad part of the corporate mad scientist is by placing Crake on the autistic spectrum.

Admittedly, the novel never explicitly states that Crake is on the spectrum. When asked if he is a neurotypical, Crake ignores the question. But his potential neuroatypicality is heavily hinted at in a flashback about Crake’s time at a prestigious university:

Watson-Crick was known to the students there as Asperger’s U. because of the high percentage of brilliant weirdos that strolled and hopped and lurched through its corridors. Demi-autistic, genetically speaking; single-track tunnel-vision minds, a marked degree of social ineptitude – these were not your sharp dressers – and luckily for everyone there, a high tolerance for mildly deviant public behaviour. (193-19)⁷²

The biggest hint that Crake is to be read as somewhere on the spectrum is not in the trilogy itself, but in an intertextual parallel suggested by the trilogy. Crake’s real name, Glenn, was given to him by his father “after a dead pianist, some boy genius with two n’s” (70). While never named in the trilogy itself, Atwood has confirmed that this pianist and boy genius is none other than Glenn Gould, a Canadian pianist as famous for his music as he was for his eccentricities, which included an avoidance of physical contact with others (Bazzana *et al* n.p.). Atwood, like many writers and medical professionals, has speculated in the past that Gould likely had Asperger’s syndrome: “I bet, I’ll just bet, that Gould had Asperger’s even if they didn’t diagnose it back then. Want to know a factoid I learned after I wrote the book? When he was 10, Gould wrote an opera where all the people died at the end, and only the animals survived. That gave me a chill” (qtd. in

⁷¹ Jimmy cites as ‘proof’ that Crake was in love with Oryx the fact that Crake, who was usually averse to physical contact, “liked to have a hand on Oryx: on her shoulder, her arm, her small waist, her perfect butt. *Mine, mine*, that hand was saying” (*Oryx* 313).

⁷² Note also in this excerpt the reference to clothing and the use of the loaded term “deviant” to describe the behavior of prospective scientists.

Bethune 46; see also Wilson 402, Després 436, Bouson 145). Note that not everyone agrees that Gould suffered from Asperger's. While he did manifest traits often associated with the disorder, at least one health professional has pointed out that those same traits "can all be attributed to common phobias and an obsessive personality" (Merson n.p.). Whether or not the real Glenn Gould had Asperger's or not does not matter, however. What matters is that Atwood believes he did and wrote her own Glenn in accordance with this belief.

Likewise, when considering Crake as a corporate mad scientist, the fact that he is implied as neuroatypical matters less than the way in which Atwood characterizes this neuroatypicality as a defect and a disability. Since we only see Crake from the point of view of other characters, he can at first glance seem to be a stable, calculating mastermind in perfect control of his psyche. However, scattered here and there are glimpses of his inner life that show very clearly how damaged Crake actually is. When Jimmy goes to visit Crake in college, he is awakened every night by Crake's wordless screams, the only visible sign that his purely emotional subconscious is suffering. Unfortunately, Crake never remembers his dreams, signaling that his neuroatypical, overly rational brain prevents him from admitting, confronting, and coming to terms with his own suffering (Atwood, *Oryx* 218).

Another revealing sign of Atwood's negative opinion of autism appears in the final book of the trilogy when Zeb, a character who was abused as a child, performs this armchair psychological evaluation of Crake: "There must have been a *they* in the life of young Glenn, or maybe an *it*: something that was haunting him. [...] Though Glenn had no scars, no bruises, and no difficulty eating his meals, or not that Zeb could see; so what was the haunting entity? Nothing definite, perhaps. More like a lack, a vacuum" (*MaddAddam* 236). In describing Crake's coldness and ultra-rationality as a cruel "lack" of something essential – emotions, empathy, compassion, or simply *feelings* – the *histoire* implies a negative moral judgment of Crake's neuroatypicality. Not simply an alternative way of seeing the world, Crake's Asperger's – the very source of his view on sex, relationships and art – is presented in the *MaddAddam* trilogy as a handicap, a crippling

lack of something that all ‘normal,’ ‘healthy’ humans supposedly have. In other words, the trilogy depicts neuroatypicality as a form of madness.

The corporate scientist of *Midnight*, Thomas Shaddack, can at first seem more in line with the B-movie mad scientist than the corporate one. Indeed, like those B-movie scientists, Shaddack’s madness is a fiery mania, and his inner thoughts are clearly presented as abnormal from his first appearance onward (Koontz 37-9). His sexual deviances and appetite for violence I explored in Part I are all manifestations of this abnormal psyche.

Shaddack is obviously mad, and his madness is demonstrated to us both through an inner and outer fiery mania. Unlike Crake, who looked and sounded cold and indifferent, “Shaddack looked and sounded insane” and his “short-circuiting” mind is visible to all onlookers (362). The obvious conclusion would thus be that Shaddack is an outlier in my corpus, a mad scientist who, despite running and profiting from a corporation, is closer to non-corporate iterations of the mad scientist. Shaddack’s madness, however, is much more complex than that of the traditional mad scientist. It is fiery on the surface, yes, but icy cold below. Koontz’s corporate mad scientist resembles Atwood’s as much as he differs from him. For example, Shaddack and Crake are both described as wearing dark and unadorned clothing, with no regard for aesthetic qualities:

He seldom wore anything but sweat suits these days. He had more than twenty in his closet—ten black, ten gray, and a couple navy blue. They were more comfortable than other clothes, and by limiting his choices, he saved time that otherwise would be wasted coordinating each day’s wardrobe, a task at which he was not skilled. Fashion was of no interest to him. Besides, he was gawky—big feet, lanky legs, knobby knees, long arms, bony shoulders—and too thin to look good even in finely tailored suits. Clothes either hung strangely on him or emphasized his thinness to such a degree that he appeared to be Death personified, an unfortunate image reinforced by his flour-white skin, nearly black hair, sharp features, and yellowish eyes. (137-8)

Despite the similar lack of interest in fashion, a similar silhouette and similar hair, the descriptions of both characters create a very different effect in the reader.⁷³ Whereas *Oryx and Crake* emphasizes the impersonal and anonymous character of Crake's clothing, *Midnight* uses the same generic dark clothes to highlight the character's strange, even monstrous appearance: "Gaunt, long-faced, pale enough to pass for an albino, with those yellowish eyes, in his dark topcoat, the man looked like a visitation, perhaps Death himself" (193). Shaddack's madness, unlike Crake's, manifests visibly and obviously on his body.

However, while Crake's and Shaddack's madness take different forms, it nonetheless derives from the same source – their emotional deficiency. Just as with Crake, Shaddack's cold-blooded nature is oft-noted by other characters, both with and without mechanistic metaphors. Shaddack, for example, is described as "a cool evangelist [...] whose message did not involve the hot passion of religious conviction but the icy power of logic, reason" (147) and as "Jim Jones with a silicon heart and tightly packed semiconductors between the ears" (193). Shaddack's emotional deficiency and obsession with scientific materialism also colour his experiments. When explaining the results of the alterations he made on the inhabitants of Moonlight Cove, Shaddack explains that "long ago I became convinced that the basic problem with the human animal is its extremely emotional nature" (182). The novel then elaborates:

Strong emotions – hatred, love, envy, jealousy, the whole long list of human sensibilities – regularly destabilized the biological functions of the body. Medical researchers had proved that different emotions stimulated the production of different brain chemicals, and that those chemicals in turn induced the various organs and tissues of the body to either increase or reduce or alter their function in a less than productive fashion. Shaddack was convinced that a man whose body

⁷³ Interestingly, Ian Malcom – a good, sympathetic scientist – also wears the same nondescript black (or grey) clothes on a regular basis and for the same reason as Shaddack does: "I believe my life has value, and I don't want to waste it thinking about *clothing*. . . . I don't want to think about *what I will wear* in the morning. Truly, can you imagine anything more boring than fashion? (Crichton 80).

was ruled by his emotions could not be a totally healthy man and *never* entirely clear-thinking. (182-183)

Shaddack may not adhere to the Platonic ideal of the exclusively rational man as closely as Crake does, but he *aspires* towards it a lot more, to the point where he seeks to force all of humanity to adhere to it. Crake wanted to replace humanity with a gentler, more environmentally-friendly species; Shaddack wants to replace it with New People who would “functio[n] as smoothly and reliably as the average IBM PC” (186). Crake thought of human biology as defective compared to animals; Shaddack “found all biological odors unusually repellent, perhaps because they were a reminder that human beings were far less efficient and clean than machines” (184). Shaddack’s madness is techno-capitalism given pathological form, as this excerpt on art evidences:

What happens to artists in the new world coming? Loman wondered.

But he knew the answer. There would be none. Art was emotion embodied in paint on a canvas, words on a page, music in a symphony hall. There would be no art in the new world. And if there was, it would be the art of fear. The writer’s most frequently used words would all be synonyms for darkness. The musician would write dirges of one form or another. The painter’s most used pigment would be black. (279)

Unlike Crake, Shaddack does not truly aim at the elimination of art. Rather, as a techno-capitalist madman, he aims at the commodification and homogenization of art. His end goal is that art becomes no longer positively objectified labour through which the labourer can show his self-worth but rather a commodity in accordance with the basic techno-capitalist principles of efficiency and death (as in, dead labour).

Midnight passes moral judgment on Shaddack’s discourse in the same way the *MaddAddam* trilogy does, by having the scientist ultimately fail at his goals and therefore being proven wrong. However, while Crake actually dies before his Crakers start manifesting the very aspects he tried to remove from their genetic makeup, Shaddack is still very much alive when his supposedly exclusively rational New People start

regressing into atavistic forms. Readers are therefore privy to Shaddack's reaction to his failure, a reaction which first takes the form of denial. Shaddack "had not foreseen the problem of the regressives, and he refused to believe they constituted more than a minor anomaly in the otherwise beneficial conversion of the people of Moonlight Cove" (141). Later, when he finally understands what causes the New People to regress, Shaddack's denial morphs into self-congratulation. No longer a failure, the regressives are now a "stunning accomplishment," a proof that Shaddack "had done far more than he had hoped to do with the Moonhawk Project" (189) and was consequently a bigger genius than even he thought. However, as much joy as it provides, this development also fills Shaddack with an "escalating fear" of losing control of his creations (189). This prophetic fear primarily emerges from his inability to understand

why the regressives have all chosen a subhuman condition. Surely you have the power within you to undergo evolution rather than devolution, to lift yourself up from mere humanity to something higher, cleaner, purer. Perhaps you even have the power to become a being of pure consciousness, intellect without any physical form. Why have all these New People chosen to regress instead? (189-190)⁷⁴

When Loman Watkins tries to explain to him that "for a thinking creature of high intellect, there can be no pleasure separate from emotion" (190) and that "[a] life that's *only* intellectual isn't tolerable" (191), Shaddack dismisses the whole notion as nonsense and insists that humans do not need emotions (apart from fear) and that not having emotion is freeing. There is never a sign that Shaddack begins to understand what Watkins is telling him because, like all corporate mad scientists, he is mentally more machine than man now. The ultimate condemnation of Shaddack, therefore, comes when this machine-like dismissal of emotions leads him to underestimate Watkins, which leads directly to his death.

⁷⁴ While some of the New People do eventually assume what Shaddack considers a "higher, cleaner, purer" form by merging with their computers, Shaddack never learns of these cybernetic monstrosities. In other words, the novel denies him the pleasure of knowing that he did partially achieve his dream.

If the typical corporate mad scientist can be identified by his lack of emotion and by his metaphorically mechanistic nature, then it logically follows that the ultimate example of a corporate mad scientist would be one that is *literally* mechanistic. Somewhat ironically, Ash, the ship's robotic science officer in *Alien*, behaves more like a human being than Crake or Shaddack ever do. These men's emotional deficiencies – some of them, at least – are easily recognizable by anyone they interact with. Ash, by contrast, can imitate emotions, including compassion. Early in the film, heroine Ripley refuses to let fellow crewmember Kane back into the ship after the latter has been attacked by an alien parasite that is now attached to his face. Ripley insists on following quarantine protocols and keeping any risk of potential biological contamination outside the ship, even if that means condemning a friend to certain death and defying a direct order from her captain. Interestingly, the language she uses to express her refusal – “No. I can't do that” (00:32:06) – is eerily similar to the villainous HAL 9000 iconic response of “I'm sorry Dave, I'm afraid I can't do that” when asked to open the ship's door in *2001: A Space Odyssey*. Even if the similarity was unintentional, it was unlikely to be missed by the audience, who would consequently associate Ripley with robotic behaviour. By going over Ripley's head and opening the doors to let Kane in, Ash fools the crew – and most importantly the audience – into thinking that he is sensitive and emotionally reasonable, in contrast to the ultra-rational Ripley. This perception is reinforced when, only a few minutes later, Ripley confronts Ash over his actions:

RIPLEY. You also forgot the science division basic quarantine law.

ASH. No, that I didn't forget.

RIPLEY. Oh, I see. You just broke it, huh?

ASH. Look, what would you have done with Kane? Hmm? You knew his only chance of survival was to get him in here.

RIPLEY. Unfortunately, by breaking quarantine, you risk everybody's life

ASH. Maybe I should've left him outside. Maybe I've jeopardized the rest of us, but it was a risk I was willing to take.

RIPLEY. That's a pretty big risk, for a science officer. It's, uh, not exactly out of the manual, is it?

ASH. I do take my responsibilities as seriously as you, you know. You do your job and let me do mine, yes? (00:39:33-00:40:10)

By insisting on the fact that, as a scientist, Ash should have been cold and emotionless, that he should have followed 'the manual' without thinking, Ripley only makes Ash look better for being willing to break rules to save a friend. The revelation of Ash's true nature as an emotionless robot loyal to the company serves as a warning that the corporate mad scientist can hide his madness as well as techno-capitalism can hide its monstrosity.

Anita and *Cédric* carry a similar warning about the corporate mad scientist's ability to hide his cold-blooded and emotionless nature. Dr. Williams, the main corporate mad scientist of all seven *Cobayes* novels, appears perfectly normal on the surface. Like Ash, no trace of emotional deficiency can be detected in his appearance or behaviour. Dr. Williams is "a stout, bald man with sparse eyebrows, full cheeks and a pointy nose. His eyes radiate confidence and his smile, serenity" (Chaperon 24). Both Anita and Cédric note his irritating affection for corny jokes and Cédric acknowledges that these very jokes, bad as they may be, make Dr. Williams a sympathetic character:

His biggest flaw: he can't shut up. He's especially fond of cracking the corniest jokes possible, all of which he himself finds hilarious, of course. That said, of all the doctors I have met in operations like this, he is the only one who likes laughing. That makes him immediately more likeable. A real breath of fresh air compared to the run-of-the-mill stuck-up physicians I'm used to. (Chaperon 24; see also Addison 42, 143)

Not only does Cédric like Dr. Williams, he likes him because he is the exact opposite of a cold, emotionless scientist. Between the descriptions given to us in *Anita* and *Cédric*, Dr.

Williams reads therefore not as a “run-of-the-mill” scientist but as a *mononcle*, a stock comedic character that would be familiar to any Québécois reader.⁷⁵ Overweight, middle-aged, licentious and somewhat annoying, the *mononcle* is a mostly harmless figure inspiring mockery and laughter rather than fear or anxiety.

Similar to Ash, however, Dr. Williams’s apparent niceness is but a lure. While he exhibits neither the cold-blooded madness of many of his fellow corporate mad scientists nor the fiery mania of the B-movie mad scientist, the two novels are chock full of subtle hints that something is not quite right about Dr. Williams. These hints are small, scattered and easy to miss, but create an overall feeling of uncanny dread even for the least attentive readers. In her first meeting with Dr. Williams, Anita admits that “I have a funny feeling about this doctor. I seem to be unable to take him seriously, what with all his weird mannerisms” (Addison 41). Later, Dr. Williams uncharacteristically whispers some details about what he and his team are really doing:

He gets close to me and whispers, giving me an earful of his slightly rancid breath in the process:

— Ok, so this stays between us, alright? I probably shouldn’t tell you this, but I’m sure you won’t tell. You see Ani – I can call you Ani, right? – some of our guin... I mean, some of our patients have had a significantly worse reaction to the treatment than you. So much we had to stop with the injections... Anyway! Don’t mind any of this! Ani, you are one of our best subjects, if I may say so! he says while laughing heartily. (142-143)⁷⁶

⁷⁵ *Mononcle* is first and foremost a term of endearment in Quebec. It is a variation on ‘mon oncle’ – my uncle – but pronounced slightly differently. For example, ‘Uncle Daniel’ would translate to ‘Mononcle Daniel.’ The term can however also be used pejoratively to refer to a ‘dirty old man,’ as I am doing here.

⁷⁶ The ease with which he tells Anita about the other cases contrasts with how much he insists on keeping Cédric in the dark, warning multiple times that Cédric is catching on to what Alphas is doing to him (Chaperon 152, 197). Since *Cédric* was written after *Anita*, it is difficult to know whether this difference of behavior between the two novels is meaningful or simply a side-effect of a multi-author series.

The sudden physical closeness and foul breath of the doctor give the scene some sinister undertones that were not present in Anita's previous interaction with Dr. Williams. Of note is this word which he begins before catching himself and rephrasing. That word is obviously "guinea pigs" ("cobayes" in the original), a revelatory slip of the tongue that shows that Williams, for all his affability, does not see the patients as people, but as guinea pigs for him to experiment upon.⁷⁷ In *Cédric*, Dr. Williams drops some more hints of his sinister side when he introduces himself to both the protagonist and the audience by announcing "Good morning Mister Labonté! It's me, the mad scientist!" (Chaperon 24). It is a joke, of course, but one that reveals more than intended about the jokester. However, the protagonist is too apathetic and naïve to see through this charade at first, mistaking the doctor's intrusive questions for a sign that Williams and his team "are simply nicer and more concerned than elsewhere" (25). Cédric's naiveté allows him to state proudly that Dr. Williams "might be pretty ugly (I love this phrase) and have the face of a contract killer, but he nonetheless seems trustworthy to me" (33). On a subsequent visit, the drug starts to make Cédric's senses sharper and consequently he starts worrying about the "two hulking brutes straight out of *Men in Black*" standing guard in the lab. When Dr. Williams lies about all labs having such men, Cédric notes how Williams is "as convincing as a Chihuahua pretending to be a St. Bernard" (58). In addition to its obvious meaning – that Dr. Williams is a bad liar – this simile also implies that he cannot entirely conceal his darker side, here represented by the alleged aggressiveness of the Chihuahua, behind the amiable and slightly goofy façade often attributed to the St. Bernard. Finally, when the now murderous Cédric gets angry at Dr. Williams during an injection, the reaction of the doctor makes Cédric uncomfortable despite his new delusions of grandeur: "I grab his wrist and start crushing it. I want him to drop his needle. Shockingly, his confident smile stays pasted on his face. I believe there's even a flicker of excitement in his eyes, as if he was happy to have to deal with me. As if it pleased him to see me this angry" (146). The calm and joy he demonstrates in

⁷⁷ In the original French, the unfinished word is clearly "cobayes". Another interesting stylistic twist of the original that was impossible to translate was the switch from the professional pronoun "vous" to the more informal "tu." In so doing, the bald man's language mirrors his physical gesture, invading Anita's personal space on every level. My translation tries to convey this by having him use her first name instead, though I admit it does not have quite the same impact.

the presence of his now aggressive guinea pig is the only time we get a ‘live’ glimpse of the true nature of Dr. Williams, a nature that can otherwise only be perceived by the patient reports peppered throughout both novels. In these reports, Williams seems both incredibly detached from and incredibly excited by the awful acts that his experiments cause his patients to commit, describing each murder and clean-up prosaically, all the while noting how happy he is that the patients committed these crimes. This last fact is not surprising considering what readers learn in *Chapitre Final*. Released online⁷⁸ alongside the rest of the *Cobayes* series, *Chapitre final (Final Chapter)* is a short codicil created, as a representative of the Éditions de Mortagne explained to me, because “we really wanted the books to be readable in any order, so we could not spoil any major twist in any of the novels. That is when we got the idea of writing a ‘final chapter.’ Its content, however, was decided much later, after a few of the novels had already been published” (Jeannotte, n.p. My translation.). Said content includes the revelation of Chlorolanfaxine’s true purpose: to create obedient and amoral super soldiers that will execute even the cruellest of orders without hesitation. Williams’s reports are consistent with this goal. For example, Dr. Williams’s final report in *Anita* is more concerned with the impact of Anita’s murders on his experiment than with the victims: “Patient WESA is a severe disappointment. We were not able to prevent her jailing. Police officers found her eating her two nephews” (315). What preoccupies Williams is that the police found Anita, not that Anita has killed and eaten two young boys. His priorities reveal the true extent of his ruthlessness. The way he refers to Anita by a code rather than her name only further highlights the uncaring, unfeeling man hiding behind the jovial façade. Williams’s cold-hearted attitude toward the protagonists is close enough to the emotional deficiency seen in characters like Shaddack, Crake or Ash that he needs little justification to be categorized alongside them as a corporate mad scientist.

⁷⁸ The only way to access *Chapitre Final* is to download it from the publisher’s website, but that download can only be unlocked by entering a seven-letter code found in the novels – each volume includes one letter. Furthermore, I have not mentioned any author for the codicil, because none are credited. The publisher told me it was planned collectively and then written by one of the seven authors who contributed to the project but declined to specify which one.

By contrast, *Dans le ventre du dragon* and *Splice* feature scientists characterized as too emotional rather than not enough, which can make one question whether they belong in this study. Dr. Lucas, for example, comes across as manic and constantly stressed out. She fidgets constantly and is almost never seen without a cigarette in her hand, which irritates her assistant Mireille:

MIREILLE: Let me remind you that we make an excellent cure for tobacco addiction.

DR. LUCAS: It's for my nerves, for my nerves!

MIREILLE: If you say so. (*Dans le ventre* 00:47:32-00:47:39)

Mireille is this film's equivalent of *Splice*'s Barlow. She has scientific skills of her own, at least enough to help Dr. Lucas during her experiments, but her real role is to keep an eye on the corporate mad scientists and make sure they stay on the path delineated by their capitalist sponsor.



Figure 3 – *Dans le ventre du dragon*. (00:24:55)

When asked by her superior “Why do smart people always have to have behavioral

problems?”, Mireille responds that Dr. Lucas is “smart, but too emotional” (00 :12 :24). The director then reassures Mireille that her assignment as Dr. Lucas’s assistant is not a demotion. Rather, it is a show of trust from a corporate hierarchy dissatisfied with the traditional mad scientist’s unpredictability. In a way, the role of the corporate mad scientist is played in this film by both Dr. Lucas and Mireille, in tandem. Lucas brings the fiery madness while Mireille brings the corporate coldness. This colours their individual approaches to science:

DR. LUCAS: Do you think we could immediately jump to Phase Two?

MIREILLE: You have not told me much about Phase Two yet. But it seems to me that there are still a lot of unknowns in your hypothesis...

DR. LUCAS: The unknown has always been a part of scientific research!

MIREILLE: True. You should still fill me in a little more. I could better help you that way. (00:24:27-00:25:06)

Dr. Lucas responds to Mireille’s offer for help with a weirdly tense smile (Fig. 3), demonstrating that she does not trust Mireille and suspects she has ulterior corporate motives. Dr. Lucas is, of course, absolutely right, since Mireille ends up not believing the doctor’s breakthrough with Lou and calls on her superiors to put a stop to Dr. Lucas’s experiments. In fact, Mireille is dubious of Lou’s ‘potential’ from the beginning, while Dr. Lucas, on the other hand, immediately falls in love with him as an experimental subject:

MIREILLE: Gifted with remarkable powers of concentration. However, his behavioural analysis is less stellar: introverted, stubborn, undisciplined, has a problem with authority, is a dreamer...

DR. LUCAS: He might be interesting. Remarkable powers of concentration. Funny name that, Lou. (00:23:56-00:24:20)

Note that this last line from the doctor is said in an affectionate whisper and is preceded by a dreamy smile. The contrast between the two women's attitudes towards Lou establishes a conflict between the sterile hyper-rationality of the corporate mad scientists and the lyrical, quasi-mystical eccentricity of the traditional mad scientists. This difference in point of view becomes even clearer when the two scientists analyze the results of the experiment that gave Lou his monstrous new form and powers:

DR. LUCAS: That's what I thought. We have reached maximum usage of the brain. But I know where I erred before. I understand now. I always thought that pure intellect was the key, but no! Look: at the beginning, both sides of the brain are working in equal measures. But then, the right side lights up much more furiously. That's the imagination taking over for the rational. He even succeeded in creating another reality that I saw. I saw pictures created solely by his imagination, Mireille, I saw them! From now on, no more adult test subjects. We will work when the imagination is at its strongest and purest. Yeah. That's the key Mireille! Imagination! We need to work with children. Maybe even with newborns. Yeah, it would work even better with newborns. That's when the imagination is at maximum purity. [Lucas points to an electroencephalogram displayed on a monitor] This is the soul. It appeared right before he blacked out.

MIREILLE: What? This is an electromagnetic glitch, nothing more.

DR. LUCAS: No. No, it's the soul. We've captured a picture of the soul.
(00:59:21-01:00:50).

Dr. Lucas was once exactly like Mireille, believing only in pure intellect and discounting the role of symbolic thinking. But while she is able to turn around and accept faith-based ideas like the soul, Mireille, being more ensconced in scientific materialism, cannot. While Dr. Lucas is explaining her theory, Mireille cannot do anything but look at her with a bewildered expression, shocked that Lucas is entertaining such irrational ideas. When she finally speaks, it is only to express a belief similar to Crake's own belief that "God was a cluster of neurons" (Atwood, *Year*, 228).

This stark divide in both behaviour and beliefs is also visible in both women's look (Fig.3). The doctor's frizzy blonde hair is always loose, while Mireille wears her dark hair in a tight, slicked back bun. Dr. Lucas wears white throughout the movie, while Mireille wears black. The two women do have something in common, however, and that is their lack of empathy for those they use as test subjects. Both Mireille and Dr. Lucas believe that the end justifies the means and are willing to commodify, use and then dispose of others to reach their goal. When Mrs. Coté – an old woman who is later revealed to have been Lou's age and presumably one of Dr. Lucas's friends before the latter used her as a test subject – attacks Lucas in revenge, Mireille responds to Lucas's cries of help only to stand right outside the door, out of sight, hesitating for a long moment before finally deciding to rush in and help. We are never privy to Mireille's exact thoughts, but a reasonable assumption would be that she is coldly calculating whether or not Dr. Lucas still has any use-value worth saving. She makes a similarly cold calculation regarding Mrs. Coté right after the attack, telling Dr. Lucas: "Maybe it's time to admit she is no longer useful to your experiment. She is becoming impossible to control" (00:47:06). Mireille's commodifying view of both Dr. Lucas and Mrs. Coté is mirrored by the doctor's own willingness to use newborn babies for her experiments, despite knowing full well that those experiments can prove fatal, as proven by the rows of unnaturally aged corpses she keeps in the building's basement.

This kind of cold-blooded madness is of no concern to Mireille, however. What she cannot accept, what makes her ask her corporate superiors to stop Dr. Lucas, is the latter's rejection of scientific rationalism and capitalist materialism. After hearing the other woman wax poetic about the soul, Mireille initiates a videoconference with her boss:

THE DIRECTOR: I have read your report. Do you see anything salvageable from her experimentations?

MIREILLE: No. I did not see what she said she saw. Her interpretation of the results is far from rational and impossible to verify.

THE DIRECTOR: What you are telling me is that she's out of control?

MIREILLE: Correct. I believe her to be dangerously deluded. And I've found some irregularities in her research methods. (01:06:20-01:06:41)

Beyond the dialogue, the way this videoconference is presented is quite peculiar (Fig. 4). Mireille stands in a pitch-black room, illuminated only by the three large tv monitors surrounding her, each screen filled with the same menacing close up of her boss's face, giving the whole affair a distinctly 'Big Brother' feel. Unlike the original, this Big Brother is not an embodiment of state power, but an embodiment of corporate power, of the techno-capitalist system that controls science. After hearing Mireille's report, the head of Sciences et Recherches reinforces that hegemony by giving her full control of the facility and directing her to eliminate Lucas'sss wasteful (because unprofitable) project. Just as in *Splice*, corporate power is willing to let mad scientists run free if it benefits them but is equally willing to reassert its cold-blooded authority if needed.



Figure 4 – *Dans le ventre du dragon*. (01 :07 :11)

Indeed, *Splice* also features a conflict between supposedly overemotional scientists and a ruthless corporate hierarchy trying to reign them in. It is no coincidence that an early meeting between “high-minded idealists” Clive and Elsa and their corporate sponsor

plays almost beat for beat like its equivalent in *Dans le ventre du dragon*: “Hoping to build upon the success of their first animal hybrids, Fred and Ginger, Clive and Elsa present their next scientific vision, rather naïvely assuming that their employers will leap at the chance to be at the frontlines of DNA research designed to improve the human condition” (A. Miller 344). When Newstead Pharma’s CEO Joan Chorot denies their request, wanting them instead to focus on the profitable but mundane labour necessary to extract commercially-viable proteins, Elsa, like Lucas, “responds with outrage that, though it is certainly fueled by her belief that Newstead is stymieing science that would help better humanity, is also evidence of her own scientific hubris” (345). Chorot’s response to this show of emotions is however somewhat friendlier than the one Lucas receives: “*La passion. C’est ça la jeunesse*. Look, we’d love to go there. Shoot for incredible medical breakthroughs! Of course we would. You put a viable livestock product on the shelves, then we will talk about a twenty-year plan to save the world. Right now, we need to start phase two, and you are the only ones who can do it” (00:08:55).⁷⁹ While Mireille and her boss uttered blanket condemnations of Lucas as too emotional, Chorot admires Elsa’s emotions but firmly believes they have no place in corporate scientific research. Her reasoning, in fact, is eerily similar to John Hammond’s assertion that “[f]rom a business standpoint, [...] helping mankind [is] a very risky business. Personally, I would *never* help mankind” (Crichton, *Jurassic* 223). In short, Hammond and Chorot offer the same “capitalist conception of biotechnological research projects that substantiates the worst fears of transhumanism’s skeptics:” saving the world just does not generate enough exchange-value to be worth the effort (A. Miller 345). Enraged by this state of affairs, Clive wants to quit and try their luck with another pharmaceutical company, but Elsa reminds him that: “Newstead owns our patent. We’d lose everything” (00:09:30). In other words, Elsa reminds Clive that as scientific

⁷⁹ I would translate Chorot’s first line as “Ah, the passion of youth.” There does not seem to be any particular reason why Chorot switches to French for a few words, especially since the sentence is not subtitled and she never does it again for the rest of the film. Even the closed captions only indicate that she is speaking French without giving any more details. My best guess was that it is there to please French studio Gaumont, who partially financed the film, and was not intended to be understood by the movie’s English-speaking audience.

labourers in a techno-capitalist economy, they do not own the fruits of their labour, and are therefore prisoners of the system.

The dynamic between Joan Chorot and Elsa is thus very similar to that of Mireille and Dr. Lucas in *Dans le ventre du dragon* – two women with scientific skills, one dedicated to science and another dedicated to profit, who together play the role of the corporate mad scientist played elsewhere in my corpus by a single character. The conflict is the same in the two films, but the result of the conflict is very different. In *Dans le ventre du dragon*, the tensions between the two women’s opposite viewpoints cause Mireille to move against Lucas and remove her from the equation. In *Splice*, by contrast, Elsa and Chorot end up on the same side, with Elsa accepting to give New Wave the ownership of the baby she is carrying from her rape by Dren in exchange for an undisclosed but apparently vast sum of money. When Chorot shows a momentary glimpse of humanity and empathy, telling Elsa that “[n]obody would blame you if didn’t do this. You could just put an end to it and walk away,” Elsa responds with a defeated: “What’s the worst that could happen?” (01:39:50). A. Miller reads Elsa’s response as “suggesting she has learned very little from the violent outcome of her earlier rogue experiments,” (336) but I think she errs in her reading. A. Miller seems to forget that Elsa’s line was originally uttered by Clive when, earlier in the film, he tried to convince Elsa to have a child with him (00:17:29). Her uttering the same line after Clive’s death in reference to the product of her rape by her artificial offspring is not a sign of her inability to learn from her errors, but a sarcastic admission of her failure and of its grave consequences. Elsa in this scene is no longer the passionate firebrand she used to be, the one who was willing to perform forbidden, possibly illegal experiments because “[m]illions of people are suffering and dying with no hope. We might be sitting on the key to saving them” (00:13:35). Instead, she is now an emotionally drained scientist with seemingly nothing to look forward to but monetary gain, like her boss. To highlight the transformation of Elsa from traditional to fully corporate mad scientist,

[t]he film cements their [Elsa and Chorot’s] unified stance in a final long shot of the two women, again shown in silhouette, standing side by side, Chorot firmly

gripping Elsa's shoulders. Framed by the large floor-to-ceiling windows, the two women appear under dark clouds that hang ominously over the expansive cityscape and a microscope showcased in a bell jar just to the right of their bodies, a small reminder of their common scientific interests. (A. Miller 336)

In *Dans le ventre du dragon*, techno-capitalism triumphs over Dr. Lucas by killing her; in *Splice*, techno-capitalism triumphs over Elsa by proletarianizing her, convincing her to value her scientific labour in terms of its exchange-value rather than its use-value. The jury is still out on which outcome is worse.

The corporate mad scientists of *Dans le ventre du dragon* and *Splice* exhibit a notable lack of the cold madness characteristic of the rest of my corpus. As a result, they appear less dangerous and more sympathetic than the other corporate mad scientists in this corpus. The operative word here, however, is 'appear.' These characters *are* dangerous but, like the dangers of the techno-capitalist system they warn about, they are insidious, pernicious, and extremely good at disguising their dangerous nature:

Compared with mad or evil scientists, amoral scientists are less readily identifiable as evil; they do not pursue science for power or wealth, but merely for the apparently modest reward of solving an abstract intellectual problem [...]. Compared with the barons of industry, they may even appear figures of wisdom or innocence. Shades of the Curies hover around them, as Bacon and Newton stand benignly in the background. But although the evil is less obvious, it is no less dangerous. By achieving respectability, even fame, these scientists influence others to dismiss ethical concerns as irrelevant, even inimical, to science and hence to the development and prosperity of society. Whether explicitly or implicitly, these characters adopt the principle that doing X because X is possible is a prerequisite of science. (Hayes 235)

The scientists in *Dans le ventre du dragon* and *Splice* differ from the amoral scientists Hayes analyzes (mostly nuclear physicists) in that while they may fight against "the barons of the industry" and their profit-driven requests that divert or halt scientific

progress, they nonetheless work for them willingly. Despite their more rebellious personality, Dr. Lucas and Elsa end up as commodified dead labour anyway, just like all the other corporate mad scientists in my corpus.

2.8 – The Corporation as Scientist

So far, I have analyzed instances where the assimilation of scientists by corporate power is dramatized as a question of social and economic structure. Free-willed individual scientists still exist and still have the ability to reject corporate domination, at least in theory, but the system they are ensconced in makes such rejection unattractive at best, fatal at worst. Grant and Sattler accepting to go to Jurassic Park despite their misgivings in exchange for a big fat cheque is an example of the best. What happens to Crake's father is a good example of the worst. As Crake reveals to Jimmy during the latter's visit at Watson-Crick, Crake's father had found evidence of HelthWyzer's plan to inject diseases into their vitamin supplements and

was going to do some whistle-blowing through a rogue Web site – those things have a wide viewership, it would have wrecked the pleebland sales of every single HelthWyzer vitamin supplement, plus it would have torched the entire scheme. It would have caused financial havoc. Think of the job losses. He wanted to warn them [his family and friends] first. [...] He thought Uncle Pete didn't know. (Atwood, *Oryx*, 212).

But Uncle Pete did know and was a good corporate drone, so he betrayed Crake's father and had him killed. Many of the works I have explored in this chapter have a similarly bleak view of the usefulness of such acts of resistance against the unholy matrimony of science and techno-capitalism, but they allow for the possibility of such acts. The techno-capitalist system in these works is not an alien, disembodied entity but a form of economic organization created and operated by humans. Therefore, it allows for the unpredictability of human nature and desire.

By contrast, *Midnight* and *Alien* go one step further and literalize the commodification of their scientist-labourers and their assimilation by corporate power. They borrow the

philosophical idea that “corporations can be full-fledged moral persons and have whatever privileges, rights and duties as are, in the normal course of affairs, accorded to moral persons [human beings]” (French 207) and, through the freedom allowed by the science-fiction genre, transform it into a material state of being. In these two texts, capitalis, fully integrates the means of production, be they biological or mechanical, into its being, leaving only a freestanding system.

In *Midnight*, New Wave Microtechnology’s ultimate goal is to transform humanity into an autonomous system in which “all men would be equal, [...] as equal as one machine to another, with the same goals and desires, with no competitive or conflicting needs” (Koontz 86). In this techno-capitalist utopia, techno-capitalist values like “efficiency and expediency and maximum performance would be the only moral absolutes” (61). Thanks to Shaddack’s inserting nano-computers into its residents, the town of Moonlight Cove is slowly converted into obedient New People and many of these New People ‘choose’ to push the machine-human integration even further and meld with their computer terminals. All such terminals, of course, were given to the New People by New Wave Microtechnology “as a sort of testing ground for their own systems and software” (Koontz 102). It comes as no surprise, then, that New Wave itself becomes a microcosm of this new, perfect world through these computers. In the novel’s most harrowing scene, a New Wave receptionist checks on her co-workers only to discover that “all of the computers and people of New Wave had somehow linked into a single entity and that the building itself was swiftly being incorporated into it. [...] A moment later they plugged her into the network” (310). This transformation is only the logical pinnacle of a conversion process that had already made New Wave’s employees into a perfect, obedient proletariat for its capitalist master:

Though the official quitting time was five o’clock, a lot of workers put in hours at home, on their own PCs, so no one strictly enforced the eight-hour office day. Since they’d been converted, there had been no need for rules, anyway, because they were all working for the same goal, for the new world that was coming, and

the only discipline they needed was their fear of Shaddack, of which they had plenty. (309-310)

This engineering of the proletariat performed by New Wave Microtechnology and its CEO is at its core the same process used by the corporations that inhabit the world of the *MaddAddam* trilogy to dehumanize their employees to the point that they are willing to betray and kill one another for their employer's bottom line. The only difference is that the former engineer bodies and minds, while the latter engineer societies. Tellingly, such engineering of bodies and minds is presented as a more horrific effect of Shaddack's experiment than its transformation of ordinary people into anthropomorphic predators. After killing his son, Watkins states clearly that "[h]e was no longer afraid of Shaddack's rage or of dying. Well . . . not true. He was afraid of Shaddack and of death, but they held less fear for him than the prospect of becoming something like Denny had become" (Koontz 289). By using concrete technological forces instead of disembodied economic ones as a catalyst for the assimilation, the monstrous physical forms of *Midnight's* machine-human hybrids embody the anxiety surrounding the techno-capitalist exploitation of the scientific workforce. The fact that, apart from the CEO, none of New Wave's scientists are ever developed into real characters before their total absorption by the literal corporate structure only compounds these anxieties, making the novel's warning even more potent.

While Shaddack was obsessed with the power and efficiency of machines, he ultimately only went as far as creating human/machine hybrids. The Company in *Alien* pushed the corporate assimilation of the scientific workforce to its logical conclusion by removing human beings from the equation entirely and replacing its ships' medical officers by entirely cybernetic beings. I say officers, plural, because the *Nostromo's* voyage to Earth and back was not intended to encounter any alien lifeforms until The Company learned of the xenomorph bug intercepting distress signal. The *Nostromo* is sent to investigate the signal simply because it happened to be the closest ship to its origin that The Company had. This means that Ash was inserted into the crew long before The Company knew he would be needed to retrieve the xenomorph. I could interpret this simply as a minor flaw

in the script, especially since we never really learn who sent the signal or how the company learned it was connected to an alien being. However, I think it is more interesting to read it as an indication that putting undercover androids on ships is a regular practice of The Company, likely in order to ensure total control over all their ships during their transit. That they chose the science officers to do this job is significant, because it represents the ultimate wielding of scientific and corporate power. No longer satisfied with transforming scientists into commodities, The Company now transforms commodities into scientists. Commodities that were, of course, built by scientists themselves. In *Alien*'s world, there are no more Dr. Franksteins, only Dr. Monsters.⁸⁰

While Ash the android scientist is The Company's main agent on the Nostromo, he is not the only agent. On the ship, The Company is officially (and openly) represented by the ship's computer named Mother. Despite its name, Mother is not humanoid like Ash. It is a room-sized computer bank, a combination of screens and flashing lights. As such, it is reminiscent of HAL 9000 from *2001: A Space Odyssey*, except that Hal actually has a voice. Mother, by contrast, only communicates through text displayed on relatively small CRT monitors. Therefore, the crew of the Nostromo cannot interact with their employer as human beings. They have to adopt a mechanistic mode of communication (typing on a keyboard) to interact with a mechanistic interface behind which hides capital.

Ash and Mother are the only two representatives of The Company seen in *Alien*. At no point in the film do we meet a human representative of The Company such as an executive or a lawyer. The fusion of technology and capital is so far gone in *Alien* that the two have become inseparable. There are no more capitalists per se in the film's depiction of humanity's future because capital is now a self-sufficient machine and its agents – the scientists who build the machines – are themselves machines. This frightening disembodiment, this dramatization of alienation at its most extreme, is exclusive to the original *Alien*. Among other additions that change the themes of the previous movie, *Aliens* introduces a human representative of The Company named Carter Burke and

⁸⁰ The most recent *Alien* film, *Alien: Covenant*, delves fully into the notion that androids like Ash are the descendants of Frankenstein's monster by peppering the film with quotes from and visual allusions to Mary Shelley, Percy Shelley and Lord Byron.

makes him the vehicle for corporate greed. In addition, the android is one of the surviving protagonists this time around. All the other sequels and the first prequel have similar human representatives.⁸¹ Only in *Alien* does the title of the film apply as accurately to The Company as it does to the extraterrestrial star of the franchise. *Alien Resurrection* even jokes that The Company “went under decades ago [...]. Bought out by Walmart. Fortunes of war” (00:17:02), nullifying the threat as thoroughly as possible.

2.9 – Madness and Control

By removing the human element from the equation, the techno-capitalist hegemony dramatized in *Alien* becomes, at least where science is concerned, the apogee of what Deleuze calls a “societ[y] of control” (3). In such a society,

[t]he family, the school, the army, the factory are no longer the distinct analogical spaces that converge towards an owner – state or private power – but coded figures – deformable and transformable – of a single corporation that now has only stockholders. Even art has left the spaces of enclosure in order to enter into the open circuits of the bank. The conquests of the market are made by grabbing control and no longer by disciplinary training, by fixing the exchange rate much more than by lowering costs, by transformation of the product more than by specialization of production. Corruption thereby gains a new power. Marketing has become the center or the “soul” of the corporation. We are taught that corporations have a soul, which is the most terrifying news in the world. The operation of markets is now the instrument of social control and forms the impudent breed of our masters. (6)

For Deleuze, the societies of control are the societies we live in currently, societies where the code and other techno-capitalist mechanisms have utter dominance over daily life.

⁸¹ The second prequel, *Alien: Covenant*, dispenses with The Company or similar capitalist institutions entirely. This is especially notable due to the fact that the film opens very similarly to *Alien*, with the crew of a spaceship waking up from hibernation earlier than planned and going to investigate a distress signal coming from on a nearby alien planet. In *Covenant*, however, the early awakening is a pure accident and the crew decides on their own to investigate the distress signal, without any company prompting.

What is presented in *Alien* is a more extreme version of this contemporary society, in which the corporate mad scientist is entirely *under control*. The Company is the sole corporation in my corpus to have reached this stage, the end point of the corporate takeover of science.

The other corporations in my corpus still employ (or are led by) human scientists. Consequently, no matter how well integrated these scientists are into the corporate system, the struggle for control continues and, while the corporations certainly have the upper hand, they cannot claim to have ultimate control over science. This leaves the corporations vulnerable to unpredictable elements, such as the obviously mad scientists they try to commodify and proletarianize. Just like these mad scientists tend to lose control of their creations and to die at their hands, so do tech corporations tend to lose control over their corporate mad scientists and be destroyed by those scientists' own fall.

The phenomenon I am describing here is not simply that the corporations lose control of the products made by their hired corporate mad scientists, but rather that the madness of the scientists overwhelms the corporation's ability to control and, most importantly, commodify them:

Yet it is striking how often the madness of the doctor [...] is a kind of defense against going prole. As long as the doctor remains mad, he isn't a part of the mental labor force doing somebody else's work, thinking somebody else's thoughts. Madness, then, becomes a way to figure professional success and autonomy, while sanity represents proletarianization and a fall from privileged class status. (Newitz 79)

Splice offers us a perfect example of scientists whose irrational obsession with a forbidden experiment is an act of resistance against the corporate yoke. Clive and Elsa are denied the funding necessary to continue their work on DNA splicing. Instead, they are forced, as Elsa puts it, to "spen[d] the next five years digging through pig shit for enteric proteins" (*Splice* 00:09:37-00). What Elsa is complaining about is having to do fastidious, understimulating, repetitive drudge work for the sole gain of Newstead

Pharma. The fact that this kind of work is devalued by Elsa is significant, since “anxieties about a proletarianized professional class tend to create formal connections between madness and professional success, and simultaneously between routinized mental labor and manual labor” (Newitz 79). Thus, by defying Chorot’s orders and creating Dren, Clive and Elsa resist the proletarianization and alienation of their mental labour. Earlier, I referred to Clive and Elsa as ‘rock star’ scientists, and I insist on the accuracy of this description. Elsa and Clive treat their science as a method of self-expression – in other words, as an artform – and are consequently more interested in creating something “[t]o be sure we really did it. To know for sure” (00:13:22) – to create art for art’s sake – than to create commodities with exchange value. Read this way, Clive and Elsa are closer to Jimmy than they are to fellow corporate scientist Crake. In fact, they signed up with Newstead Pharma expressly because they were promised total creative control, a promise that was quickly reneged upon when other techno-capitalist priorities reared their head:

BARLOW: Elsa couldn’t make it?

CLIVE: She’s at the lab, holding things together.

BARLOW: She’s not very happy with the new directive, is she?

CLIVE: It was our facility. We were supposed to have autonomy.

BARLOW: I know. And I am sorry. Truth is, if we don’t start projecting profits, big profits, soon, Newstead’s in serious trouble. We need capitalization if we’re gonna move forward, which means Phase 2 is not just an option, it’s all we’ve got. If you guys don’t hit a homerun at the shareholders’ presentation with Ginger and Fred, we may not even have that.

CLIVE: We won’t let you down. (00:33:28-00:34:10)

Clive and Elsa do let Barlow down, however, which leads Newstead to take even more of Clive and Elsa’s creative freedom away. This reduces them even more to the rank of proletariat and Barlow is eager to remind them of that fact:

BARLOW: Elsa not here yet?

CLIVE: Not feeling well.

BARLOW: Oh you got to be kidding me.

CLIVE: People get sick. It happens.

BARLOW: A lot of people just suck it up, you know, rise to the occasion? You guys are not some special case... anymore. [Barlow leaves]

CLIVE: Fucking idiot. (01:02:26-01:02:44)

Despite Barlow's insistence that they sacrifice themselves for their techno-capitalist master, Clive and Elsa keep finding ways to resist complete proletarianization – even minor ones, like petty insults – and continue their 'mad' experiment.

In short, being mad leaves scientists, no matter how corporate, free to act in accordance with their individual obsessions and desires, even if these obsessions or desires do not align with – or even directly oppose – the corporation's interests. According to most works in my corpus, no matter how hegemonic the techno-capitalist system might be, no matter how tight its stranglehold on science, the combination of madness and science cannot be controlled fully and will always erupt in the most (self) destructive way possible.

The filing for bankruptcy and dismantling of Ingen in *Jurassic Park* (xii) is a good example of what I am *not* discussing. The failure of the park is a direct consequence of a loss of control of scientific products, not over the scientists themselves. The bankruptcy acts as a warning against using science for profit-oriented goals rather than as a warning against the futility of trying to integrate a mad scientist into a corporate structure. Neither Wu nor Hammond acts in any way out of order with the goals of the project (making a lot of money). The kind of escape I am talking about happens when the scientist thrashes about in his corporate prison, weakening its walls in the process. This thrashing comes as

a direct consequence of being a scientist and pursuing scientific goals under masters who only have profit-oriented goals:

Divided from himself, forced to sell his own thoughts on the open market, the mad doctor is a monster not because he deviates from professionalism but because he embodies it. The horrors he imposes on other people – experimenting with their bodies, subjecting them to clinical violence – are the inevitable result of losing his mind to professionalism. Perhaps because his monstrosity and livelihood are indistinguishable, the mad doctor has no constructive avenue of escape. His very consciousness is the factory floor. To revolt, he must destroy himself. (Newitz 87)

This drive towards the immolation of both the self and the corporate system under which the self labours is shown most clearly in the *MaddAddam* trilogy, namely through the character of Crake, who is the exact kind of corporate mad scientist that the corporations running the world of the trilogy want to cultivate. However, from the very beginning, Crake worked against the corporations that educated and hired him. He fell in with eco-terrorists and anti-corporate activists as a young child and never allowed himself to become a drone like Jimmy's father did. In its attempt to profit from Crake's genius, the techno-capitalist system created its own downfall. It is no coincidence that Crake chose to distribute his plague through the BlyssPluss pill. Beyond the practical benefits, this mode of distribution mirrors the scheme used by HelthWyzer to distribute diseases for which they then sold the cure – the same scheme Crake's father was sentenced to death for trying to expose. The death of his whistleblower father caused Crake to start working, even before he was a teenager, to bring down the whole system. We know this because both Uncle Pete and his mother, the two people Crake's father confided in before going through with his whistleblowing plan – and thus the only two people that could have sold him out – are the first to die from a plague very similar to the one Crake uses to wipe out most of humanity. "Trial runs," as Jimmy says (Atwood, *Oryx* 343). After the plague, the survivors try to put together why Crake did what he did:

“The question is more *why* than how,” says Ivory Bill, gazing up at the sky as if Crake really is up there and could send down a thunderous answer. “Why did he do it? The lethal wipeout virus in the BlyssPluss pills? Why did he want the human race to go extinct?”

“Maybe he was just very, very messed up,” says Manatee.

“For the sake of argument, and to do him justice, he might have thought that everything else was,” says Tamaraw. “What with the biosphere being depleted and the temperature skyrocketing.”

“And if the Crakers were his solution, he’d have known he’d need to protect them from the likes of us, with our aggressive if not murderous ways,” says Ivory Bill.

“That’s what megalomaniac fuckers like him always think,” says Manatee.

“He’d have seen the Crakers as indigenous people, no doubt,” says Ivory Bill.

“And *Homo sapiens sapiens* as greedy, rapacious Conquistadors. And, in some respect...” (*MaddAddam* 140, ellipsis in the original).

While their hypotheses all have some merit, the truth is that, at its very core, Crake’s master plan was nothing more than an icily cold main course of revenge. A revenge the corporations did not, *could* not, see coming because in order to do so they would have had to treat their golden boy corporate mad scientist as a human being rather than as an alienated commodity and means of production, reducible to a simple exchange-value.

Even as Crake’s plague is destroying the entire world, one corporate executive calls Jimmy and demonstrates how one-track the corporate mind can be. “Listen, whoever you are, I have an idea what sort of scam that creep’s up to and when I lay my hands on him I’m going to break his neck. I bet he’s got the vaccine for this and he’s gonna hold us up for an arm and a leg. [...] So he sold us out, the little shit. Hawked it deliberately to the competition. That would figure. That would absolutely figure” (*Oryx* 338-339). This obvious satire of the corporate mindset, which is only able to see things through the lens of profit, is a double-edged rhetorical sword, however. Indeed, while it does the

ideological work of criticizing the techno-capitalist system that funds corporate mad scientists like Crake at their – and the rest of humanity’s – expense, it also mitigates the urgency of this warning by showing that, ultimately, the corporate mad scientist will triumph over the corporations, that techno-capitalism contains in itself the seed of its own destruction, and that as such, its failure is inevitable. A more generous way of interpreting this final ambiguity about who is to blame – the corporations or the mad scientist – is that while the novel does acknowledge that no empire lasts forever, it does ask its reader: Do you really want to pay the price necessary to get rid of a total techno-capitalist takeover of scientific institutions? Or is prevention not worth a thousand cures?

A similar ambiguity is found in *Midnight*, even though it may not appear to be so at first glance. Since New Wave Microtechnology and Shaddack are narratively the same entity, one could argue that New Wave cannot ‘lose control’ of Shaddack in the same way that RejoovenEsence loses control of Crake. However, in both cases, it is the techno-capitalist system as a whole that loses control of the corporate mad scientist and is damaged by his actions. The difference is simply that the corporations in the *MaddAddam* trilogy *are* the system, while New Wave Microtechnology is simply part of the larger system. Either way, the system exists wholly independently from the corporate mad scientist, even if that scientist is also a CEO. The techno-capitalist system can therefore be in conflict with the corporate mad scientist despite having previously assimilated him into its structures. In *Midnight*, therefore, this loss of control is shown by how Shaddack’s scientific takeover of Moonlight Cove starts countering the economic effects of his corporate takeover of the same town, creating the economic downturn discussed earlier. Like Crake, Shaddack is a byproduct of the techno-capitalist system. It is only thanks to this system that he can create the horrors that now damage the system. However, as in the *MaddAddam* trilogy, the satire of techno-capitalism’s ability to create its own undoing, while effective, also paradoxically absolves the techno-capitalist system of responsibility. In Part I, I mentioned how one could read the novel’s moral view of techno-capitalism as putting the blame entirely on individual abuses of a system that is otherwise neutral at worst. Following this same logic, one could see the fact that the first signs of villainous activities are damages to consumer society as implying that consumer

society, and thus the techno-capitalist system that underpins it, is as a whole a good thing that should be preserved intact. However, once again, a deeper reading of the novel shows this interpretation to be overly simplistic. I mentioned that the first victims of Shaddack's monsters were a the Mayser family. While this is true, the first victims that the FBI was alerted to were "three National Farmworkers Union organizers – Julio Bustamante, his sister Maria Bustamante, and Maria's fiancé, Ramon Sanchez" (Koonz 78). Moonlight Cove's police force – entirely converted and loyal to Shaddack by this point – so obviously mishandled the case that "[t]he Bustamantes and Sanchezes were suspicious of foul play, but the National Farmworkers Union was convinced of it. On September 12, the union's president sought the intervention of the Federal Bureau of Investigation on the grounds that antiunion forces were responsible for the deaths of Bustamante, Bustamante and Sanchez" (79). The FBI send investigators but "[b]ecause Moonlight Cove had no agricultural industry, they could find no one interested in the farm-union issue let alone angered by it, which left them short of people motivated to kill union organizers" (79). While the investigators returned from Moonlight Cove empty-handed, their investigations still turned up enough suspicious facts for the FBI to send protagonist Sam Booker undercover to investigate, kickstarting the novel's plot. In light of this, it appears that it is not the techno-capitalist system that *Midnight* is positing as good and worthy of preservation, but rather the delicate balance between pro- and anti-market forces. Shaddack's mistake was not that he hurt techno-capitalism and the consumer society but that, by hurting union organizers, he tipped the balance too far in the pro-market direction and gave techno-capitalism *too much* control.

Like the *MaddAddam* trilogy and *Midnight*, my Québécois texts also feature corporate mad scientists who rebel against the corporate masters that fund them and the techno-capitalist system that nurtures them. Both Dr. Williams and Dr. Lucas threaten to overwhelm their respective companies with their science and their madness. The huge difference is that in these texts, those threats are swiftly quashed. In both *Dans le ventre du dragon* and the *Cobayes* series, the corporate mad scientists' revolt against their corporate masters fails and they are punished for their defiance. The ending of *Dans le ventre du dragon* is, likely both voluntarily and because of budgetary concerns, vague

and somewhat confusing. One thing that is mostly clear, however, is that the head of Sciences et Recherches, angered by his discovery of a horrifyingly vast mass grave filled with Lucas's past guinea pigs, decides to do away with Dr. Lucas in the same way she presumably did away with her guinea pigs: euthanasia. This is never explicitly stated – all we see is a nurse injecting a strangely placid Dr. Lucas with something and the doctor subsequently closing her eyes – but the fact that a sheet is then pulled over Lucas's whole body and face leaves little room for imagination. Dr. Lucas is thus punished for not one, but two acts of hubris. The first is her attempt to create a post-human being, the second is her biting of the hand that fed her by disobeying her funders and using their resources for experiments they did not approve of. The harshness of this punishment may appear surprising, especially in contrast to how the corporation that funded the whole thing gets away more or less scott free. On one hand, the headquarters of Sciences et Recherches in Montreal is blown up, and presumably the head of the company with it. On the other hand, the Montreal operation was implied to be relatively small, despite being where Sciences et Recherches started. The company itself is now “the most important pharmaceutical consortium in North America” and is headquartered in New York (*Dans le ventre* 00:11:28). In all likelihood, the company will survive, unlike InGen, New Wave Microtechnology, RejoovenEsence, HelthWyzer and the others.

Likewise, Alphalab seems pretty healthy when we catch up with it in *Chapitre final*. Five years after the events of the novels, Alphalab has seemingly perfected Chlorolanfaxine and is selling it to various armies all over the world as a drug that can create emotionless super-soldier killers. The codicil also reveals that Dr. Williams' individual scientific curiosity is to blame for every time one of the test subjects went rogue or started becoming trouble for the company. “Williams disappeared five years ago,” says his chief assistant – which had never been mentioned in any of the previous novels –

yet the ghost of this idiot still hovers around me, even in Scandinavia. I would hate him even more than I already do, if that was at all possible. He was so drunk with power as the head of the clinic that he forgot the goal of the project. He only did what he pleased, constantly increasing and diminishing the doses to be

injected, just so he could see what would happen. Because of him, many of our test subjects slipped through our fingers: dead, on the run or imprisoned...

I'm sure AlphaLab has something to do with his disappearance. But I'm not about to start asking any questions about it. In this rotten world, the less you know, the better you are. (*Chapitre Final* 3-4)

While the involvement of AlphaLab in Williams' disappearance is only a hypothesis (maybe to leave room for a potential sequel?), in light of the callous indifference to human life that Alphalab employees demonstrate in both this codicil and the seven novels, it is a very believable hypothesis. Both Alphalab and Sciences et Recherches will be inconvenienced by the failure of what they believed was an absolute control over their commodified scientist-labourer, but no lasting damage was inflicted. In my Quebecois texts, therefore, the hegemony of the techno-capitalist system is criticized, but cynically and pessimistically never challenged.

Splice is similar to my Quebecois texts in that the techno-capitalist control over science is re-established at the end of the story and the rebellious mad scientists either die (Clive) or finally accept proletarianization (Elsa). While Newstead has lost some assets in the process (Barlow, Clive and Clive's brother), it ends the movie in a much better position than it was at the start. Where *Splice* differs is in its ambiguity over the morality of Newstead Pharma. Earlier, I mentioned that Elsa's accepting Chorot's logic of scientific exploitation was a tragic ending. While this is true, I cannot discount the fact that Newstead Pharma can also be read as the reasonable party protecting us from mad scientists like Elsa. After all, Elsa and Clive created Dren in direct defiance of Newstead's orders. It logically follows, then, that if Clive and Elsa had followed Chorot's and Barlow's orders, if they had been the obedient proletarian scientists the system required them to be, then they would never have created any monster, and there would never have been any deaths. A. Miller sees Elsa's pregnancy as a punishment for having "frequently expressed her unwillingness to bear children" (336), but I argue that this pregnancy could also be read as a punishment for having frequently expressed her unwillingness to prioritize work with a high exchange value rather than work that she

personally wanted to do. *Splice* is a film that, at least partially, presents the proletarianization of scientists as a rampart against mad, uncontrolled science. Partially, because while Newstead's actions would indeed prevent the creation of monsters, the intent behind these actions is never so noble:

ELSA: We can recreate them [Ginger and Fred]. There's no reason not to start over.

CHOROT: [Violently slamming the table] No more monsters. We don't have time for that. We need the gene that produces CD356 and we need it now. Do you understand? (00:49:56-00:50:09)

Chorot is not against monsters because monsters are dangerous, but because their exchange-value is too low to be worth the investment. In *Splice*, capitalism may be a shield against the folly of a mad scientist, but it is a brittle glass shield with a tendency to shatter into pieces and hurt its wielder.

2.10 – Conclusion

The biggest difference between the classic mad scientists of yore and the corporate mad scientists of today is that the 'mad' or 'scientist' part no longer elicits the most fear – the corporate part does. The texts in my corpus dramatize not only a new kind of mad scientist, but a new kind of world in which the hegemony of techno-capitalism has allowed these scientists to get madder, more numerous, and more dangerous. The world of *Midnight* is a world in which Thomas Shaddack can boast that: "If you were a genius in your field, people expected you to be eccentric. And if your personal fortune was in the hundreds of millions, they accepted all eccentricities without comment" (Koontz 138). Likewise, in the dystopian world of the *MaddAddam* trilogy, "cognitive normalcy is not desirable; rather it is derided. Crake, the ultimate mastermind of this new world, takes pride in his near-autistic qualities. [...] The study of genetics is left to those selected for their chromosomal uniqueness; the selling of products designed to make up for flawed genetics is ironically left to those who lack aberrant DNA" (Chivers 389). Thomas Shaddack, Crake, Henry Wu and all the other corporate mad scientists in my corpus are

able to exist because – and *only* because – of techno-capitalism. The mad scientist has always been a dangerous figure, but one with limited reach. Frankenstein’s and Moreau’s experiments are no less dreadful than those in my corpus, but they ultimately only hurt a handful of people. When Moreau is driven out of England, he becomes a pariah in society at large and is forced to continue his experiment in secret and isolation, significantly limiting his capacity to endanger others. In the techno-capitalist world, the mad scientist’s unethical or psychopathic tendencies are encouraged and rewarded, which leads to the potential for catastrophe being multiplied tenfold. *Jurassic Park*’s dinosaurs may have been blown to kingdom come, but many of the very dangerous raptors have escaped the supposedly isolated island and continue to sporadically threaten the Costa Rican coast.⁸² Shaddack kills nearly an entire Californian coastal town and planned on taking over the entire world next. By using the resources of powerful, extra-national corporations, Crake manages to eliminate nearly the entirety of the human race. Dr. Lucas’s and Dr. Williams’ body counts are smaller but can still be measured in dozens of victims, especially if you consider that Alphalab has access to a global network of mad scientists contributing to the same horrible experiments. All these examples demonstrate how “corporate avarice can pose a menace far beyond the capabilities of a single human being, even if that lone researcher is Victor Frankenstein” (Friedman and Kavey 170). In short, if the lone mad scientist or alchemist of the past was considered a danger to humanity despite his limited range, then the assimilation of that learned madman into a corporate hierarchy obsessed with profit over the advancement of mankind poses an even greater threat.

Like a good number of mythological, literary, and cinematic monsters, the corporate mad scientist is a hybrid, a creature born of two worlds – techno-capitalism and scientific research. The fears he elicits are consequently also hybrid, combining the scariest aspects of both forbidden science and reckless capital in a single potent mixture. When Kim

⁸² In addition, *The Lost World* reveals the existence of Site B, another island owned by Ingen and now populated by free-ranging wild dinosaurs. In the film adaptations of both novels, neither island is destroyed. The latest sequel, *Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom*, does destroy the original island, but many dinosaurs are saved beforehand. They are subsequently brought into the United States and escape into the wild at the end of the film. This escape is presented as apocalyptic in nature even though the dinosaurs could easily and quickly be dispatched with modern weaponry.

Newman argues that “we are no longer worried about Frankenstein creating a monster, but we’d be worried about the Frankenstein Corporation mass-marketing franchise monsters on every street” or when Spencer Weart tells us that “many of the fears about science and technology [in the cinema today] are not actually fears about science and technology itself—they are concerns about the social system, expressed by people who feel they do not have control over the decisions being made” (both qtd. in Haynes 276, square brackets are Haynes’s), they are assuming that one fear suppresses the other.⁸³ As this section has endeavored to prove, however, our fear of unfettered capitalist greed adds to rather than replaces our fear of uncontrolled technological progress. The works in my corpus dramatize both the fear that techno-capitalism will use science to create monsters in its blind pursuit of profits, and that science will use techno-capitalist resources to pursue a scientific materialist project that denies the human being as much as capitalism does. The goal of this section was to show the various ways my corpus warns about what it sees as the serious threat posed by the amalgam of science and capitalism. In the next section, I will explore how the same works criticize and dramatize science’s and capitalism’s shared promethean view of the world that allows the imagining of such an amalgam in the first place.

⁸³ The quote from Weart appears in the same radio series as the quote from Newman. See footnote 54 for details.

Part III: Monsters as Natural Resources.

You don't understand. I've got proof. They need proof. I've seen it! I've seen it happening. They've got to tell people. [...] The ocean's dying, the plankton's dying. It was people. Soy lent Green is made out of people. They're making our food out of people. Next thing they'll be breeding us like cattle! For food! You gotta tell 'em, you gotta tell 'em! [...] You tell everybody. Listen to me Archer, you gotta tell 'em! Soy lent Green is people! We gotta stop 'em, somehow!

— Charlton Heston as Detective Frank Thorn, *Soylent Green* (1973)
(01:33:26)

3.1 – Introduction

Up until now, I've focused on techno-capitalist monsters and monster makers as human-born elements evolving in a socio-economic environment created and managed by humans. This anthropocentricity has been an inevitable by-product of my decision to interpret the works in my corpus as critiques of human institutions such as science, capitalism and consumerism. But the impacts of techno-capitalism are felt by more than just humans and, for that matter, by more than just living beings. Accordingly, works like *Jurassic Park* and the *Maddaddam* trilogy, among others, extend their critique of techno-capitalism – and their use of monsters as vehicles for that critique – to the natural or environmental realm. They dramatize how the hegemonic techno-capitalist system uses its total control over scientific pursuits to take control of nature (animals, land, weather, etc.) and shape it into monstrous forms that maximize profits over any other concerns.

This section will explore such dramatizations and the ideological work they perform. The monsters in this section will be read as metaphors for natural resources and the extraction of such resources. Under scrutiny in the following pages are the ways in which my corpus dissects and criticizes the techno-capitalist view of nature and its monstrous environmental and human costs.

Before going further, some preliminary questions need to be addressed. Namely, what exactly *is* nature? The answer may at first seem obvious, but when we stop to think about it, our grasp on it starts to slip. In discussions about the non-human world that surrounds us, “contests over meaning are ubiquitous, and the way we think about basic concepts concerning the environment can change dramatically over time” (Dryzek 6). In other words, the answer depends on which natural discourse one subscribes to. As a result, many environmental terms and concepts commonly in use “are problematic in that they vary widely in usage within and between disciplines” (Johnson *et al* 581).

For my purpose, this absence of strict definitions is not a problem needing to be corrected, but a locus of opportunities through which my corpus performs its ideological work. Indeed, the very haziness and protean character of the environmental vocabulary is of utmost importance to this section. Through this haziness, through this blurring of discursive boundaries, uncertainties and anxieties about the impact of techno-capitalism on the world beyond human systems and institutions seep in. This last part of the research focuses on works that warn of leaks in the walls that separate the ‘natural’ from the ‘artificial’ and of the negative impact such leaks can have on where we live and on what shares that living space with us.

For example, this definition of “natural environment” created by contributors to the *Journal of Environmental Quality* in an effort to standardize the use of environmental terms in all fields of studies highlights the fragile nature of environmental terms:

A natural environment is one relatively unchanged or undisturbed by human culture. It follows that a nonnatural [sic] environment is one that is relatively changed, modified, disturbed, or created by our cultural activities. We humans as an organic species are natural, but the environmental effects of our unique, rapidly evolved, advanced, and artificial culture are not. By this reasoning, if one urinates in woods it is natural, but if one chops down the woods with an ax, or burns the woods with a match, lighter, rubbing sticks, or other technology, it is nonnatural. (Johnson *et al* 582)

By putting front and centre the conflict between what is natural and what is not, this attempt at definition only reveals the arbitrariness and the contradictions of such conflict. If the human species is natural, then would our actions not be, by definition, natural? What exactly is the difference between breaking off a branch from a tree with my bare hands and sawing off that same branch? In both cases, the damage to the environment is the same, so why is the former considered natural and the latter non-natural? It is this very line of questioning that is at the centre of works such as *Jurassic Park* and the *MaddAddam* trilogy. Rather than simply give those questions arbitrary answers, both works explore the various conflicting answers that can be and are given to such questioning and attribute these answers to different environmental discourses, which they then connote positively or negatively according to the ideological work the novels are intended to perform.

3.2 – The Promethean Discourse and its Discontents.

In many ways, the social discourse around nature is similar to the social discourse around scientists.⁸⁴ At any point in time, a specific discourse is dominant, but nevertheless coexists with other, secondary discourses, some contradictory, others complementary. Over time, the social discourse evolves, and a secondary discourse can become the new dominant one. To illustrate this process in action, Dryzek uses the example of whales, which were once “regarded as sources of food and other useful products such as oil and baleen [whalebone.] The idea that whales were sentient creatures with a right to flourish free from human interference would have been laughable. Yet this view is now globally dominant to the point whalers can act like an oppressed minority resisting the weight of

⁸⁴ I am here invoking Marc Angenot’s concept of social discourse, which he describes as “simply everything that is said or written in a given state of society; everything that is printed or spoken about and represented today through electronic media” (3). My approach to literary analysis shares Angenot’s belief “that literary texts (and others) should be approached and analyzed as intertextual apparatuses that select, absorb, transform and rediffuse certain images, maxims and notions that migrate through the sociodiscursive network” (16). In Angenot’s terms, Part II was an exploration of how the social discourse around scientists in North American society “legitimizes and publicizes certain views, tastes, opinions, and themes, while repressing others as chimerical or extravagant,” (6) and this chapter aims at doing the same thing with nature rather than science as object of analysis.

world opinion” (4).⁸⁵ What Dryzek describes here is a shift from a conception of nature as a source of product – the environmental corollary of the ‘applied science’ approach seen in Part II – to a view of nature as an ensemble of living beings that have their own sets of needs and rights that must be respected. The various permutations of the character of John Hammond throughout the *Jurassic Park* franchise illustrates this shift perfectly. The Hammond of the novel is a poster boy for the first view, caring for the health and safety of ‘his’ dinosaurs only in so far as each animal represents a significant investment of capital he’d rather not lose. This is particularly visible in a scene where Gennaro – a sympathetic character in the novel – asks two employees of the park about the possibility of a dinosaur escaping. Arnold responds: “These are expensive animals, Mr. Gennaro. We take very good care of them. We maintain multiple barriers.” When Gennaro presses the matter further, Muldoon, the game warden, further explains that, if ever a dinosaur were to escape, “[w]e’d go out and get the animal back. [...] We have a lot of ways to do that – taser shock guns, electrified nets, tranquilizers. All non-lethal, because, as Mr. Arnold says, these are expensive animals” (Crichton, *Jurassic* 145-6). While having fences and the means to catch the animals if those fences fail are common sense for any zoo, notice that the primary reason given for taking care of the animals is not because the dinosaurs deserve to be cared for, but rather because they cost a lot of money to make. In fact, at multiple points in the novel, Muldoon’s attempts to adequately address the threat posed by the dinosaurs is made harder by Hammond’s refusal to lose any of the “expensive animals.” For example, Muldoon’s plan to remove the poisonous glands from the Dilophosaurus is thwarted by Hammond’s refusal to allow a Dilophosaurus to be autopsied in order to locate the glands inside the animal’s body (164).⁸⁶ While tracking the escaped Tyrannosaurus Rex, Muldoon is constantly reminded that “the tyrannosaur’s our main tourist attraction” (322) or that it is “a valuable animal” (334). In one scene, an

⁸⁵ Dryzek fails to mention that some of those whalers *are* in fact oppressed minorities, namely Native people trying to preserve their traditional way of life against the weight of colonial assimilation.

⁸⁶ Interestingly, this procedure is presented as vital for the health of the park’s ecosystem but contrary to capitalist imperatives. In real life, the opposite occurs, at least with snakes. Removal (or other alterations) of poison glands is extremely controversial in real life, where it is mostly performed on snakes to attract consumers who want the thrill of owning a dangerous animal without the dangers that come with it (J. Miller n.p.). Since the procedure is illegal in many countries, venomoids (snakes with removed or altered poison glands) are more valuable on the (black) market than their ‘natural’ counterpart (Bielli 46). Removal of poison glands is thus performed mostly for capitalist purposes.

exasperated Muldoon gets a pyrrhic victory over Hammond when the latter's commodifying worldview endangers the very investments it sought to protect: "It's your park, Mr. Hammond. You didn't want anyone to injure your precious dinosaurs. Well, now you've got a rex in with the sauropods, and there's not a damned thing you can do about it" (280). Hammond's own greed puts both his life and his capital in jeopardy; the jury is still out on which one he values the most.

By contrast, the cinematic adaptation of *The Lost World* ends with its version of John Hammond arguing for the second view over idyllic images of dinosaurs: "These creatures require our absence to survive, not our help. And if we could only step aside and trust in nature, life will find a way" (*The Lost World* 02:01:09). The shift of perspective Dryden identifies never happens in the narrative proper. In the novel, Hammond never changes his view before his death, while in the movie Hammond never really advocates for a product-oriented view of nature in the first place. The shift is nonetheless perceptible by the audience through their interaction with the franchise as a whole and is thus interesting to consider when placing the novel in its cultural context.

If we take the novel only on its own terms, however, it becomes apparent that it, alongside *Alien* and the *MaddAddam* trilogy, is not so much interested in dramatizing a shift from the first to the second environmental discourse as it is in criticizing the product-oriented view of nature and warning against its dangers. Dryzek calls this conception of nature the Promethean discourse, the mythical Titan being as central to the social discourse around nature as he is to the one around science. In my introduction, I explained how the myth of Prometheus gifting humanity with the secret of fire is associated with the pursuit of knowledge (i.e., science) and the creation of life. It's on the basis of this myth that Dryzek calls the environmental discourse that has "unlimited confidence in the ability of humans and their technologies to overcome any problems—including environmental problems" the Promethean discourse (52). Like any political discourse, the Promethean discourse rests upon a moral framework carefully created to foster an interpretation of facts that justify the discourse's claims. In this case, this moral framework is based upon "a hierarchy in which humans (and, in particular, human minds)

dominate everything else. This domination does not need to be organized, or consciously maintained; it just exists. In their more extreme moments, Prometheans believe that a total control of nature is within our grasp” (Dryzek 61). Conscious or not, this belief that humans have a divine right over nature and are thus allowed to use it as they wish is a necessary assumption that Prometheans must make in order to morally justify their actions. In addition to the theft of fire, the mythological reference to Prometheus can also be justified by another myth that demonstrates and justifies humanity’s right to nature’s bounty. In this other, less well-known myth, Prometheus brokers a deal to settle conflicts between mortals and immortals. He presents two sacrifices to Zeus and enjoins the divine patriarch to choose which sacrifice he would accept from the humans not only in this instance but also in any future sacrificial ceremony. The sacrifices, however, are deliberately set up to be misleading: one consists of meat stuffed inside an unappealing ox’s stomach and the other is made of bones hidden under delicious-looking fat. Zeus, of course, chooses the superficially attractive one, leaving the nourishing, valuable meat to humans (Auger 64).

If we consider animal meat as a natural resource, then this second Promethean myth can be interpreted as justifying the point of view that animals (and, by extension, all natural resources) belong to humans rather than to a higher power (be it Zeus or ‘Nature’). Accordingly, we can derive from this myth a divine right to extract and use all that resides on this planet alongside us. This ‘right’ cannot be fairly revoked as it is part of the ‘covenant’ between mortals and the divine, to borrow a term from the much younger Abrahamic faiths, which also expressed belief in this Promethean pact. The clearest and most well-known example of the Promethean discourse in is the Bible, in Genesis 1:26, where God intones: “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.” Various modern Christian churches also interpret God telling Abraham “And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God” (Gen. 17: 8) as a general right to all land and, by extension, its resources (Bowler 96-97).

Like the figure of the mad scientist, the Promethean discourse is much older than techno-capitalism and thus cannot be seen solely as a construction of this system. However, the current iteration of the Promethean discourse, like the current iteration of the mad scientist figure, is closely related to techno-capitalism. So closely related, in fact, that Dryzek sees Promethean discourse as an integral part of capitalism and one of the reasons the latter succeeded in attaining hegemony:

Promethean discourse flourished alongside capitalism and the Industrial revolution, with its unbounded faith in the ability of humans to manipulate the world in ever more effective fashion. Such was human progress. Thus the first place to look for the impact of the discourse would be in our dominant institutions: a capitalist economy geared to perpetual economic growth, and a political system whose main task is to facilitate the conditions for that growth. Discourse and institutions co-evolved. (64)

As a result, the Promethean discourse exalts the same kind of socio-economic agent as techno-capitalism does: not citizens, workers, nor even scientists but the “people going about their business, pursuing their selfish interests” (61). These capitalist heroes are the ones who “will together ensure a bright environmental future. This is an application to resource and environmental issues of the ‘invisible hand’ working in the market system, first celebrated by Adam Smith in the late eighteenth century” (61). So integral is the Promethean discourse to techno-capitalism that, as Dryzek states, “even those who looked forward to a future beyond capitalism, notably Karl Marx, applauded technological progress, economic growth, and the conquest of nature” (53). For Dryzek, this last fact is proof that environmental discourses “can be so ingrained and taken-for-granted that it would never occur to anyone to mention them” (52), not even when criticizing the socio-economic system that profits from and spreads such a discourse. This interpretation is certainly valid. Marx, unlike some other thinkers of his time, “perceives the machine destruction called for by the Luddites, among others, as a form of romantically driven false consciousness. Capitalist life is already a step, if treacherous, towards liberation. Marx’s explicit thought, therefore, in no way points to a return to the

norms of feudal labor” (Wendling 9). However, one could also see in Marx’s ‘applause’ of technological progress a recognition of the importance of such progress to the techno-capitalist apparatus. As Wendling argues, Marx made a point to critique capitalist society using only the terms and concepts belonging to this society: “In *Capital*, Marx attempted to reveal those forms of life peculiar to capitalist alienation from within the norms established by this alienation.” Therefore, “[b]ecause Marx tries, in *Capital*, to stay within the conceptual framework offered by the capitalist world to better explain the concepts of this world, the formulas he offers must be understood with recourse only to the capitalist world” (4). Read this way, Marx’s seeming adherence to the Promethean discourse becomes a deliberate use of Promethean tools to subvert that very Prometheanism, rather than the uncritical devotion to an underlying cultural assumption that Dryzek characterizes it as.

In some of the works that make up my corpus, the combined Promethean and techno-capitalist emphasis on the self-sufficiency of humanity, the potential of science and progress, and the divine right of humanity over the non-human is presented as blind arrogance. The old story of the alchemist defying the God-given nature of things is once again remixed here. In this new adaptation of the story, not only does the man of knowledge want to change the laws of nature, the man of money also wants to control these natural laws. There is a doubling of hubris here, and thus a doubling of consequences. Towards the end of *Jurassic Park*, Hammond, exasperated by Malcolm’s more or less repeating “I told you so” with each new proof of the park’s failure, tries to reason with Malcolm by pointing out that

at heart what we are attempting here is an extremely simple idea. My colleagues and I determined, several years ago, that it was possible to clone the DNA of an extinct animal, and to grow it. That seemed to us a wonderful idea, it was a kind of time travel – the only time travel in the world. Bring them back alive, so to speak. And since it was so exciting, and since it was possible to do it, we decided

to go forward. We got this island, and we proceeded. It was all very simple.
(342)⁸⁷

For a Promethean techno-capitalist thinker like Hammond, if humanity does not possess the solution to a problem, given enough time, dedication, resources, and capital, it can simply *make* one. *Jurassic Park* demonstrates this attitude through Hammond's unwavering belief that his business is at heart simple and that any problems he encounters are minor glitches that can be fixed, even though events keep proving the opposite over and over again:

The sun was out now, and Hammond took it as an omen. Say what they would, he knew his park had promise. And even if that impetuous fool Gennaro decided to burn it to the ground, it would not make much difference.

Hammond knew that in two separate vaults at InGen headquarters in Palo Alto were dozens of frozen embryos. It would not be a problem to grow them again, on another island, elsewhere in the world. And if there had been problems here, then the next time they would solve those problems. That was how progress occurred. By solving problems. (427)

To “step aside and trust in nature,” as the cinematic incarnation of John Hammond suggests at the end of the sequel film, is unthinkable for Prometheans such as the novel's version of Hammond. Rather, it is humans who need to be left alone and trusted since “Prometheans believe that humans left to their own devices will automatically generate solutions to problems—and that an invisible hand guarantees good collective consequences” (Dryzek 69). The flipside of this is that when things do not work out, the blame is thrown onto the humans that proved themselves unworthy of the trust placed in

⁸⁷ In hindsight, Hammond's mention of time travel in this excerpt foreshadows a later novel by Crichton in which a greedy entrepreneur uses time travel in order to create the most historically accurate medieval theme park ever made. Called *Timeline* and released 9 years after *Jurassic Park*, the novel's structure is eerily similar to that of its dinosaur-filled predecessor, featuring a team of heroic university researchers being put in mortal danger by a wealthy CEO and the reckless scientists who brought his crazy idea to life. *Timeline* did not enjoy the success of its dinosaur-filled predecessor, however, and both the novel and its terrible cinematic adaptation have been mostly forgotten.

them. Consequently, after he is done dreaming about a new, better Jurassic Park, Hammond goes on to blame every single named employee for the problems of the park – Wu had been sloppy, Arnold disorganized, “Ed Regis had been a poor choice, too. Harding was at best an indifferent choice, Muldoon was a drunk...” (Crichton *Jurassic* 428). By blaming everyone else, Hammond avoids confronting the reality that the Promethean maxim, according to which strategic application of capital at the right places can give one control over nature, is but an illusion.

Interestingly, while the novel lets Hammond’s death serve as condemnation of his attitude that blames systemic problems on individuals, the film adaptation renders explicit the condemnation through a dialogue between John Hammond – much less Promethean and therefore much more likeable in this version – and Ellie Sattler. When Hammond reflects on his reasons for building the park, Sattler reminds him that “you can’t think through this one John, you have to feel it,” which leads to the following exchange:

HAMMOND. You’re right, you’re absolutely right! Hiring Nedry was a mistake, that’s obvious. We’re over-dependent on automation, I can see that now. The next time, everything’s correctable. Creation is an act of sheer will. Next time it’ll be flawless.

SATTLER. It’s still the flea circus. It’s all an illusion!

HAMMOND. When we have control again –

SATTLER: You never had control, that’s the illusion! (01:27:09-01:27:37)

It’s a rare instance when the critique of Promethean hubris is more explicit in the film than in the novel. Despite the difference in execution, the point made by the novel and the film is the same: Hammond’s biggest mistake was to consider the problems of the park as flaws to be corrected rather than the symptoms of an inherently wrong-headed project: “You get the engineering correct,” Hammond tells a worried Arnold, “and the animals will fall into place. After all, they are trainable” (Crichton, *Jurassic* 157). Hammond’s death at the hands of a horde of *Compsognathus*, the smallest and least obviously

threatening of the animals, is the ultimate denunciation by the novel's *histoire* of "his attempt to domesticate chaotic nature, resulting in a violent conflict between his own program and that of the animals" (Laist 232).

In its own exploration of the intrinsic anthropocentrism of the Promethean discourse, the *Maddaddam* trilogy is particularly interested in highlighting the evacuation of the mythical origin of the discourse by the ever-growing hegemony of techno-capitalism. The corporate mad scientists that staff HelthWyzer, RejoovenEsence, OrganInc Farms, Genie-Gnomes and other bio-engineering corporations do not feel entitled to use nature as they wish because a deity gave them the right to do so. On the contrary, they feel entitled to nature's bounty because there is no deity to take away this right. As in *Jurassic Park*, the Promethean discourse's emphasis on the power of the human genius is seen as arrogant; the *Maddaddam* trilogy simply pushes this arrogance to the extreme. As a child, Crake discusses a mutual sick friend with Ren, telling her that "illness is a design fault" and that as such "it could be corrected." In response to this most Promethean of Promethean claims, Ren gets curious: "'So if you were making the world, you'd make it better?' I said. Better than God, was what I meant. All of a sudden I was feeling pious, like Bernice. Like a Gardener. 'Yes' he said. 'As a matter of fact, I would'" (Atwood, *Year* 147). Crake does not just want to play God, he wants to create an even better game. An evolution of the Prometheans described by Dryzek, Crake believes that human ingenuity can not only fix environmental problems but also improve on the environment itself. This belief is why his ultimate solution to repair the ecological damage inflicted on Earth by humanity is not to wipe out humanity and let nature recover by itself but to replace humanity with improved human beings of his own design who will take much better care of nature than the human beings created by evolution did. His aggressive antitheism is manifested in his collection of fridge magnets, which all bear phrases like: "The proper study of Mankind is Everything" (*Oryx* 209); "To stay human is to break a limitation"; and "Where God is, Man is not" (301). All of these phrases reiterate the unalienable right of mankind to study, modify and improve on their natural environment, including their own human body. The last phrase is particularly telling

because it carries within itself its obvious corollary – Where Man is, God is not – which summarizes perfectly the form of Promethean thought to which Crake subscribes.

Elsa and Clive in *Splice* are likewise revealed as Promethean thinkers when they are quoted by a magazine as asking: “If God didn’t want us to explore his domain, why did he give us the map?” (*Splice* 00:07:07). This “bumper sticker wisdom,” as Elsa calls it, expresses a sentiment similar to but less extreme than Crake’s magnets. Like the magnets, this quotation reaffirms humankind’s right to “play God,” but rather than justify this right through the absence of God, it justifies it by a belief that God has given his permission *in absentia* through the map he left us. That “map” is presumably DNA, a ‘natural resource’ that Wu, Crake and the protagonists of *Splice* all see as theirs to do with as they see fit.

3.3 – The Divine Commodification of Nature.

One might object that while that the criticism of Prometheanism presented so far is not actually a criticism of techno-capitalism but the same old criticism of scientists dealing with things they should not, only couched in words more legible to readers from hegemonically capitalist societies. Indeed, so far, I have emphasized mostly the anthropocentric aspect of Promethean discourse rather than the economic one. I have done so because the belief that humankind has dominion over its environment is the narrative which the techno-capitalist discourse of resource exploitation and land accumulation both builds upon and hides behind. In *Jurassic Park*, the underlying connection between Promethean discourse and techno-capitalism imperatives can be brought to light by changing the analytical focus from the novel’s dramatization of Promethean discourse to the novel’s dramatization of its counter-discourse. Such counter-discourse can be witnessed implicitly in the progression of the narrative. The destruction of Jurassic Park and the death of all those who adhered to the Promethean logic that birthed and sustained the project offer in and of themselves a potent counter-discourse to Promethean arguments and a proof that such arguments are not borne out by reality (or at least not by the reality of the novel). Counter-discourse can also be uttered explicitly in the form of a character’s own discourse which is then recuperated by the *histoire*. For

example, in reaction to Hammond's assertion that Jurassic Park was, at its core, a very simple project, Malcolm gets extremely angry, offering a counter-discourse. Malcolm first reacts to Hammond's claim by calling him "a bigger fool than I thought you were. And I thought you were a very substantial fool" (Crichton, *Jurassic* 342). He is not content with only insulting Hammond, however, and immediately launches into a long-winded screed against the hubris and recklessness of scientists. "You create new life-forms, about which you know nothing at all," shouts Malcolm,

[y]ou create many of them in a very short time, you never learn anything about them, yet you expect them to do your bidding, because you made them and you therefore think you own them; you forget that they are alive, they have an intelligence of their own, and they may not do your bidding, and you forget how little you know about them, how incompetent you are to do the things you so frivolously call *simple*. (342)

At first, this rant sounds exactly like the traditional dressing down given to every classic, non-corporate B-movie mad scientist. The words "playing God" do not appear explicitly in the text, but their meaning certainly does. The rant takes a turn when Malcolm compares science to inherited wealth and uses this simile as a springboard for an attack on the techno-capitalism that undergirds Hammond's Promethean worldview. For Malcolm,

scientific power is like inherited wealth: attained without discipline. [...] There is no humility before nature. There is only a get-rich-quick, make-a-name-for-yourself-fast philosophy. [...] You don't exactly know what you have done, but already you have reported it, patented it, and sold it. And the buyer will have even less discipline than you. The buyer simply purchases the power, like any commodity. The buyer doesn't even conceive that any discipline might be necessary. (343)

Malcolm is no longer only chastising Hammond and his scientists for being fools but is also blaming the consumers for "buying nature" as if it were a commodity. His critique

here goes beyond the bounds of Jurassic Park (and of *Jurassic Park*) and condemns the entire techno-capitalist system that ensures that this Promethean view is distributed widely as a pacifier among the consumers on which it feeds. The marriage of the Promethean discourse with the techno-capitalist mode of production, as outlined by Malcolm and, through him, by the novel, creates a vicious circle, the result of which is a society where both producers and consumers wield science “like a kid who found his dad’s gun” (*Jurassic Park*, 00:35:22). Because it is passed from producers to workers to consumers, the Promethean view of nature as just another form of commodity is itself a commodity, the only commodity that techno-capitalism has no qualms about distributing equally among all.

We have seen that Crake keeps a moral distance between himself and the techno-capitalist system, and thus his Promethean discourse is somewhat removed from (though definitely encouraged by) the corporate power structure. Mirroring Crake’s secular Prometheanism, however, is a second sort of Promethean discourse that place the religious and spiritual undertones of the discourse to its forefront. This Evangelical Prometheanism, so to speak, is absent from *Oryx and Crake*, which is mostly concerned with Crake’s secular Promethean discourse. Rather, it is detailed in *MaddAddam*, the third volume of the trilogy, through the exploration of Zeb’s childhood. Zeb’s abusive father (nicknamed “the Rev”) was the head of the Church of PetrOleum. *The Year of the Flood* had already presented a new religious movement, the “God’s Gardeners”, who hid political and socioeconomic activism behind pious devotion to a new and somewhat parodical theology. However, despite their secret abhorring of corporate dissenters and other covert acts of political resistance, the Gardeners – created by none other than the Rev’s other son Adam – exhibit a real degree of religious devotion and faith despite the sometimes parodic nature of their teachings. The Church of PetrOleum, by contrast, is never described as anything more (or less) than

the way to go in those days if you wanted to coin the megabucks and you had a facility for ranting and bullying, plus golden-tongued whip-‘em-up preaching, and you lacked some other grey-area but highly marketable skill, such as derivatives

trading. Tell people what they want to hear, call yourself a religion, put the squeeze on for contributions, run your own media outlets and use them for robocalls and slick online campaigns, befriend or threaten politicians, evade taxes. (*MaddAddam* 111).

The Church of PetrOleum is not the only new-fangled for-profit Evangelical congregation that Atwood introduces in her trilogy, but it is the only one whose inner workings are exposed in depth. Other denominations mentioned include “the somewhat more mainstream Petrobaptists” (111) and “the Known Fruits, who claimed it was a mark of God’s favour to be rich because *By their fruits ye shall know them*, and *fruits* meant bank accounts” (*Year* 288). The reference here is to the conclusion of Jesus’ sermon on the Mount and in context reads:

Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them. (Matt. 7:15-20)

As made clear by the surrounding verses, “them” refers to false prophets and not the people whom God favours. If “fruits” mean “bank accounts,” then it would follow that rich people are to be viewed as false prophets, not worshipped. For readers who understand this context, the use of this specific verse by the Known Fruits to justify the accumulation of wealth quickly becomes farcical, an obvious example of Atwood using the parodic mode to emphasize the greedy and dishonest nature of the congregation’s teachings. The Church of PetrOleum uses a similarly twisted interpretation of a verse from the Gospel of Matthew to justify its teachings, namely: “And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matt. 16:18). The Rev’s interpretation of this verse as “a prophecy, a vision of the Age of Oil” rests entirely on his spurious claim that “*Peter* is the

Latin word for rock, and therefore the real, true meaning of ‘Peter’ refers to petroleum, or oil that comes from rock” (*MaddAddam* 112). Once again, the parodic mode – here highlighted by Zeb’s lover incredulous cry of “He really preached that?” and uncertainty about whether she was “supposed to laugh or not” (112) after Zeb tells her about his childhood – is used by the *histoire* to cast the joining of Promethean-like religious anthropocentrism and techno-capitalist motives in an unambiguously negative and absurdist light.

In their twisting of Biblical verses into apologia for the accumulation of material wealth (i.e. capitalism), the Known Fruits and the Church of PetrOleum are both reminiscent of the real-life “prosperity gospel,” a peculiar strain of American Christianity that came to prominence in the second half of the twentieth century and reached its golden age in the seventies and eighties. Preached mostly by celebrity preachers and televangelists, the prosperity gospel is known under a number of different names, including “Health and Wealth,” “Name it or Claim It” and “Word of Faith” (Bowler 3). Due to its heavy use of “agricultural imagery” such as notions of “abundance” and “harvest,” it is also often called “seed faith” (64). While there are as many variants of the prosperity gospel as there are televangelists preaching it, there are four core themes that undergird every variant, namely

faith, wealth, health and victory. (1) [The prosperity gospel] conceives of *faith* as an activator, a power that unleashes spiritual forces and turns the spoken word into reality. (2) The movement depicts faith as palpably demonstrated in *wealth* and (3) *health*. It can be measured in both the wallet (one’s personal wealth) and in the body (one’s personal health), making material reality the measure of success of immaterial faith. (4) The movement expects faith to be marked by *victory*. Believers trust that culture holds no political, social or economic impediment to faith, and no circumstance can stop believers from living in total victory here on earth. All four hallmarks emphasize demonstrable results, a faith that may be calculated by the outcome of a successful life. (Bowler 7)

The ‘prosperity’ at the heart of the prosperity gospel is a material one that draws “a straight line between life circumstances and a believer’s faith. Faith operate[s] as a perfect law, and any irregularities meant that the believer did not play by the rules” (97). These rules are simple: Pay your tithes, and God will make “financial miracles an everyday prospect” for you (Bowler 98).

The prosperity gospel is extremely Promethean in that it emphasizes the believer’s right to “reach into God’s treasure trove and pull out a miracle” (7). Wealth (and good health) is not only a reward for one’s devotion, proven in the form of cash payments, it is also a right given to humans by God, lost after the fall of Eden, and regained through Jesus’ sacrifice on Golgotha. For prosperity preachers,

Jesus’ death and resurrection abolished not only sin and disease but also poverty. [...] Poverty took on spiritual dimensions as a demonic force that separated people from their godly inheritance. Poverty – as an evil spirit – required a spiritual solution. Jesus reclaimed dominion over the Earth from Satan when he took on the spiritual debt of poverty on the cross. [...] As a result, believers could claim wealth as one of their rights and privileges in Jesus’ name. (Bowler95)

If you have enough faith and you have sowed enough ‘seeds’ (tithes), says the prosperity gospel, then God *owes* you a bountiful harvest later. Seed faith rethinks Jesus as a sort of Prometheus, who negotiates on behalf of humanity to guarantee humanity’s right to the divine bounty. The circumstances of the negotiations are very different and no trickery is involved, but the result is the same for the prosperity gospel as it was for the myth of the ox’s sacrifice: a contract between humanity and God where God *has* to fulfill his end of the bargain if a human fulfills his or hers. In the words of prosperity preacher Joyce Meyer,

the Bible says “giving and *receiving*” but [...] another way to say that word is *receipting*. The word receiving means receipting. [...] When you give, you get a receipt in Heaven. When you have a need, you can then go with your receipt and

say: “You see, God, I have got my receipt, from my sowing, and now I have a need, and I’m cashing in my receipt!” (qtd. in Glass, 00:53:14 – 00:00:54:00)

In Meyer’s account, the covenant between God and mankind becomes a commercial transaction in which a capitalist God – through his agent, the televangelist – amasses capital by selling miracles to consumers. As in Crake’s secular Promethean discourse, techno-capitalist greed is justified by a Promethean belief in human dominion over resources and commodities, only this time this dominion takes its sources in the presence rather than the absence of the divine. As an obvious stand-in for prosperity preachers, the Known Fruits imply a Promethean discourse similar to that of its real-world counterpart; a discourse centered on the individual right to individual prosperity. In fact, the movement is first (and last) mentioned in the context of a discussion about an individual joining the faith, emphasizing the limited reach of what one could call ‘prosperity Prometheanism.’

The Church of PetrOleum is more interesting because it takes the Promethean discourse of prosperity beyond the realm of the individual and into that of the environmental, transforming the individual’s ‘right to wealth’ into humanity’s ‘right to Earth’s wealth.’ For the Church of PetrOleum, the sign of God’s favour is not only wealth and health, but also access to natural resources:

My friends, as we all know, *oleum* is the latin word for oil. And indeed, oil is holy throughout the Bible! What else is used for the anointing of priests and prophets and kings? Oil! It’s the sign of special election, the consecrated chrism! What more proof do we need of the holiness of our very own oil, put in the earth by God for the special use of the faithful to multiply His works? His Oleum-extraction devices abound on this planet of our Dominion, and he spreads his Oleum bounty among us! (Atwood, *MaddAddam* 112)

Note here the use of the Bible as a repository of promotional testimonies for the importance of oil. The Rev’s sermon becomes a sort of infomercial for oil in which “priests, prophets and kings” – all categories to which the Christ is said to belong – are

paraded as examples of the benefits of the product. This is an argument the prosperity gospel also uses as a Promethean justification of the right to wealth. One prosperity preacher even once pointed to one of the Rev's own examples, namely Jesus's "expensive anointing oils," as evidence that "Jesus possessed great wealth, and it followed that his devotees should also" (Bowler 96). Due to the similarities in the argument, this part of the Rev's sermon is a great example of how the *MaddAddam* trilogy dramatizes and cautions against the ever-increasing power and reach of the already existing Promethean view of nature baked into the current techno-capitalist system and its many manifestations, including for-profit religions.

Using an environmental Promethean discourse rather than an individual one also allows the trilogy to make explicit connections between the Church of PetrOleum and corporate power. While today's prosperity preachers tend to focus their commercial efforts on selling their own products (books, video and audio recordings, seminars, etc.)⁸⁸, the Rev is more than happy to serve as a spiritual PR firm for the oil industry. For example, the Church demonizes that industry's enemies with pithy teachings like: "'Solar Panels Are Satan's Work ;' 'Eco Equals FreakO ;' 'The Devil Wants You to Freeze in the Dark;'" "Serial Killers Believe in Global Warming" (Atwood, *MaddAddam* 117). The Rev is also happy to let oil magnates hawk their wares directly to the believer-consumer, inviting "a lot of top Corps guys [to] turn up at the church as guest speakers, [where] they'd thank the Almighty for blessing the world with fumes and toxins, cast their eyes upwards as if gasoline came from heaven, look pious as hell" (111). Also like prosperity preachers, oil-based religions like the Church of PetrOleum and the Petrobaptists have their own

⁸⁸ One notable exception is Kenneth Copeland, arguably the richest and most famous televangelist and prosperity preacher currently active. I cannot say for certain if Atwood was aware of Kenneth Copeland when creating the Rev, but the similarities between her character and Copeland are quite numerous. In addition to their success as profit-oriented preachers, both were equally successful in the oil business. While the Rev is described as having "done well out of his oil stocks" (Atwood, *MaddAddam* 115), Copeland owns several oil and gas wells on his 1,500 acre tax-free parsonage, a piece of land that was given to him "by a rich oil baron named Paul Pewitt" (Keteyian n.p.). As with other parts of the world Atwood created for the trilogy, the Church of PetrOleum is just a slight exaggeration of contemporary reality.

university, Spindletop University (mentioned briefly in Part II).⁸⁹ With a mission to mould a new generation of preachers, Spindletop University's curriculum – which, as a reminder, includes subjects such as “PetrBiology” where you are required “to learn biology in order to disprove it” (120) – is shaped more by commercial than religious biases. Finally, the connections between the Rev's church and oil corporations go both ways: “There's quite a few Petrobaptists on the [CorpSeCorps] force, and there are a number of OilCorps heavies on the Church board. There's a lot of overlap because of the benefits to both parties” (125). In a manner consistent with the rest of the trilogy's ideological work, the power created by this overlap between the techno-capitalist system and Promethean churches is not put to good use in the novels but used to silence any resistance to the system and cover up any of the system's or church-members' mistakes, up to and including murder.

With the Church of PetrOleum, the *MaddAddam* trilogy brings the prosperity gospel to the heights it reached in the eighties not only to better satirize it but also to warn against the likely possibility of a return to those heights if the Promethean discourse remains “taken for granted,” as it has been since “the Industrial Revolution produced technological changes that made materials close to home (such as coal and later oil) into useful resources” allowing “capitalist economic growth [to] be taken as the normal condition of a healthy society” (Dryzek 53). The Church of PetrOleum also shares a subtle connection with Hammond's Jurassic Park. Both serve as a warning against the even worse possibility that the reach of the Promethean discourse might become even longer, to the point where soon Prometheanism will not simply define our relationship with nature but will also define what nature itself actually *is*.

3.4 – The Illusion of Nature

Nature is a construct of culture, just like madness, needs and monsters. Therefore, “the world people see outside [...] is a reflection of the cultural representations of nature that

⁸⁹ For example, extremely influential prosperity preachers Kenneth Hagin and Oral Roberts created the Rhema Bible Training Center and Oral Roberts University, respectively, both of which counted many of the biggest televangelists of the eighties as alumni (Bowler 87-89).

they have internalized. People's ideas about nature and even their conceptualization of nature as a category of experience set apart from civilization are defined in large part by semantic networks of texts and images," which could also be called social discourses (Laist 23). Paradoxically, in some environmental discourses the construction of nature involves the very acknowledgement of the constructed 'nature' of nature. Prometheanism is one such discourse, brandishing the fact that nature is a human construct as proof that "natural resources, ecosystems, and indeed nature itself do not exist" (Dryzek 59). That does not mean that adherents of the Promethean discourse deny the existence of trees or deers, but rather that they see nature as nothing more "than a store of matter of energy" (59) ripe to be *used* and *exchanged* by and through the entities that Prometheanism does recognize, namely "people, markets, prices, energy, technology" (60). The Promethean discourse uses this construction of the construct of nature for two purposes. The first, obvious, one is to justify the exploitation of natural resources by Promethean entrepreneurs. The second, more insidious, purpose is to deny the very existence of such a thing as a 'natural resource' outside of the sphere of human activity. In the Promethean discourse, "the premise that global resources are created by nature and thus fixed and finite is false" since

[n]ot a single material resource has ever been created by "nature." Human knowledge and technology are the resources that turn "stuff" into useful commodities. What we think of as resources are actually certain sets of capabilities. [...] Two hundred years ago petroleum was just a useless ooze that actually drove down property values. Human creative endeavor, knowledge and technology, however, turned the ooze into a valuable resource. (Taylor 378)

To the chicken-and-egg question of whether resources or their exploitation came first, the Promethean answer is the latter. Indeed, the Promethean paradigm is not finder-keeper, it's finder-creator. "Nature is, indeed, just brute matter" to Prometheans (Dryzek 59), and it is only through transformation by way of human technology that this brute matter gains (exchange) value. The mosquito frozen in amber that the movie version of Hammond carries everywhere is of value only insofar as it allows for the creation of dinosaurs (and,

likewise, is of value to the plot only insofar as it justifies the diegetic existence of the dinosaurs).⁹⁰ Once again, the techno-capitalist apparatus reduces agents (here, animals, plants and minerals; previously, scientists) to tools, resources and, ultimately, commodities.

This is the aspect of Prometheanism that Crake from the *MaddAddam* trilogy gravitates toward: all the riches of the Earth were not put there by God for humans to find, they were created by the humans who found them through the very process of finding them. There is therefore no difference between a natural resource and an artificial one, a fact which confuses and surprises Jimmy during his visit to the Watson-Crick Institute:

“So, are the butterflies – are they recent?” Jimmy asked after a while. The ones he was looking at had wings the size of pancakes and were shocking pink, and were clustering all over one of the purple shrubs.

“You mean, did they occur in nature or were they created by the hand of man? In other words, are they real or fake?”

“Mm,” said Jimmy. He didn’t want to get into the *what is real* thing with Crake.

“You know when people get their hair dyed or their teeth done? Or women get their tits enlarged?”

“Yeah?”

“After it happens, that’s what they look like in real time. The process is no longer important.”

“No way fake tits feel like real tits,” said Jimmy, who thought he knew a thing or two about that.

⁹⁰ The embryos stolen by Nedry and hidden inside a can of shaving cream are likewise of value only because they can be transformed into dinosaurs. Once the can falls into the mud at the start of the second act, it loses its value both diegetically (the embryos are no longer viable) and narratively (the existence of the can no longer affects the plot of this story, nor any of the sequel novels or films.)

“If you could tell they were fake,” said Crake, “it was a bad job. These butterflies fly, they mate, they lay eggs, caterpillars come out.”

“Mm,” said Jimmy again. (Atwood, *Oryx* 200)

In response to Jimmy’s concern about authenticity, Crake argues, along with Umberto Eco, that true authenticity “is not historical, but visual. Everything looks real, and therefore it is real; in any case the fact that it seems real is real, and it is real even if, like Alice in Wonderland, it never existed” (Eco 16). What the trilogy dramatizes, in this scene and elsewhere, is not simply the Promethean principle of the non-existence of nature, it is the end result of this principle pushed to the extreme. When the corporate mad scientists of Watson-Crick create huge pink butterflies,

it is no longer a question of imitation, nor of reduplication, nor even of parody [of a butterfly]. It is rather a question of substituting signs of the real for the real itself; that is, an operation to deter every real process by its operational double, a metastable, programmatic, perfect descriptive machine which provides all the signs of the real and short-circuits all its vicissitudes. (Baudrillard “Simulacra” 170)

Jimmy has the right idea when he couches his question in terms of temporality rather than authenticity, because the butterflies are neither real nor fake. The world in which Crake and Jimmy live is one of constant simulation, where ‘natural’ and ‘artificial’ are indistinguishable from each other, in major part thanks to genetic engineering, or “genetic miniaturization”, which is

the dimension of simulation. The real is produced from miniaturized units, from matrices, memory banks and command models – and with these it can be reproduced an indefinite number of times. It no longer has to be rational, since it is no longer measured against some ideal or negative instance. It is nothing more than operational. In fact, since it is no longer enveloped by an imaginary, it is no longer real at all. It is a hyperreal: the product of an irradiating synthesis of combinatory models in a hyperspace without atmosphere. (170)

The manufactured pink butterflies are neither real nor fake, they are *hyperreal*. They are manufactured from precisely curated cells and DNA strands, they can reproduce and be reproduced ad infinitum, and they possibly replace the real butterflies they simulate because those butterflies have been pushed to extinction by the very techno-capitalist power that has created these pink simulacra.⁹¹ Similarly hyperreal technological simulacra with the same power of replacement abound in the trilogy. Jimmy's childhood home, for example, was "a large Georgian centre-plan with an indoor swimming pool and a small gym. The furniture in it was called *reproduction*. Jimmy was quite old before he realized what this word meant – that for each reproduction item, there was supposed to be an original somewhere. Or there had been once. Or something" (Atwood, *Oryx* 26). The capitalism of the *MaddAddam* trilogy is no longer a capitalism that produces goods, but one that *reproduces* goods. Technological innovation has birthed its own obsolescence, since now the system only regurgitates what it has already reproduced. "The other production, that of goods and commodities [...] no longer makes any sense of its own, and has not for some time," says Baudrillard. "What society seeks through production, and overproduction, is the restoration of the real which escapes it. That is why contemporary 'material' production is itself hyperreal" ("Simulacra" 183). Replacing the real with its hyperreal simulation is a thriving industry in Atwood's dystopia, and its products can be found in fields as varied as pornography, food and even hair styling and skincare. The sex market proposes three-dimensional VR simulations that promise "true, stimulating flesh-on-flesh sensations! Say goodbye to faked screams and groans, this is the real thing!"⁹² (Atwood, *MaddAddam* 117), a marketing slogan which doubles as a testament to the extent to which "[t]he 'completely real' becomes identified with the 'completely fake.' Absolute unreality is offered as a real presence" (Eco 7). Beauty salons offer to replace your real hair with equally 'real' human hair, except that this hair comes from genetically modified sheep called Mo'Hairs. These sheep come in all the

⁹¹ The extinction of butterflies is not explicitly stated in either of the three novels, but, considering how many currently extant species the trilogy presents as extinct, it is reasonable to assume that at least some species of extant butterflies are extinct in the dystopian setting in which the trilogy is set.

⁹² A near-identical example of hyperreal sex can be found in the American movie *Demolition Man* (1993), which is also set in a highly satirical future. It is possible Atwood knew of this movie when she wrote *MaddAddam*, but it is equally likely that she is drawing on the same cultural sources as the movie such as Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*. For more on *Demolition Man*, see Auger 279.

shades human hair does. They also come in many shades hair does not – blue, green, pink, purple – because “hyperreal entities strive to improve upon what they simulate” (Laist 219). The marketing of the product even emphasizes the hyperreal character of the simulation by pretending that the object of the simulation is not ‘real’ hair, but the shiny simulacra of hair seen in shampoo commercials, exemplifying what Baudrillard calls “precession of simulacra” (“Simulacra” 169). “Onscreen, in advertisements,” states the novel, “their hair had been shiny – you’d see the sheep tossing its hair, then a beautiful girl tossing a mane of the same hair. *More hair with Mo’Hair!*” Unlike the ‘fake’ hair of shampoo commercials, however, the hyperreal Mo’hair was “not faring so well without their salon treatments” (Atwood, *Year* 238). Like the butterflies, the simulated hair has all the characteristics of human hair, including the necessity of frequent salon treatments to keep its fake shine and not fall into the snarls and split-ends of the real. Similar hyperreal procedures can also change your skin tone, your voice and even your eye color, though the last one is not yet perfected, and thus imperfect fakes like contact lenses – prostheses rather than simulations – are preferred (261).

However, it is in the field of food that we find the most fascinating and the most critical example of hyperreality in the trilogy. In the last few decades, GMOs (Genetically Modified Organisms) have been a prominent object of concern in the discourse around food. The trilogy dramatizes such concerns in the same way it dramatizes many other things: by exaggeration. Therefore, protests over genetically modified fruits and vegetables become fully fledged wars over the genetically modified Happicuppa coffee bean “designed so that all of its beans would ripen simultaneously, and coffee could be grown on huge plantations and harvested with machines. This threw the small growers out of business and reduced both them and their labourers to starvation-level poverty” (*Oryx* 179). Once again, this event is simply a more advanced instance of a process that was already ongoing when the novel was written. Indeed, Monsanto and other similar companies have been “breeding a proprietary corporate signature into [the] genomes” of genetically engineered seeds in order “to determine, for example, which specific soybean plants were grown from their patented seeds (and thus claim remuneration from any farmers who have used such seeds illegitimately)” (Franklin *et al.* 16, note 13). Note

how, in this fictionalization, the novel warns against the ways in which the techno-capitalist system can abuse the hyperreal product (in this case the bean) in order to further consolidate its economic power. This warning only grows louder as the future in which Jimmy and Crake live progresses, finding its strongest expression a few chapters later with the introduction of the ChickieNobs.

ChickieNobs are genetically modified chicken in which “all brain functions that had nothing to do with digestion, assimilation and growth” as well as any body parts that cannot be eaten were removed, resulting in a “large bulblike object that seemed to be covered with stippled whitish-yellow skin. Out of it came twenty thick fleshy tubes, and at the end of each tube another bulb was growing” (Atwood *Oryx* 202).⁹³ This “animal-protein tuber” or “chicken hookworm” (203) is the very embodiment of the Promethean view of natural resources, as it is a brand-new source of chicken – not of the animal, but of the foodstuff – created by humans, not nature. Thanks to genetic engineering “you get chicken breasts in two weeks – that’s a three-week improvement on the most efficient low-light, high density farming operation so far devised. And the animal-welfare freaks won’t be able to say a word, because this thing feels no pain” (203). The ChickieNobs is thus a hyperreal commodity that not only replaces real chicken but also improves on the original by giving more foodstuff faster at a lesser cost, all while its very nature as a simulation bypasses the moral obstacles that real chicken faces.⁹⁴ ChickieNobs do not look like chicken, but they *taste* like chicken, and that is enough for them to substitute for the real, as the novel goes on to demonstrate. Indeed, while Jimmy initially sees the “horrible” ChickieNob as a “nightmare” and assures that “he couldn’t see eating a ChickieNob. It would be like eating a large wart” (202-203), he later admits that “the

⁹³ As with hyperreal sex, there is at least one cultural precedent for the hyperreal chicken which Atwood may or may not have been aware of. In the fantasy novel *American Gods* by British author Neil Gaiman, the protagonist recounts how a fellow inmate once told him that “they changed the name from Kentucky Fried Chicken to KFC because they don’t serve real chicken anymore. It’s become this genetically modified mutant thing, like a giant centipede with no head, just segment after segment of legs and breasts and wings. It’s fed through nutrient tubes. This guy said the government wouldn’t let them use the word *chicken*” (211).

⁹⁴ Of course, an argument could be made that the real chickens replaced by the “ChickieNobs” are already a simulated manmade commodity since chickens, like all farm animals, have been selectively bred over the centuries to favor certain characteristics that make them better sources of commodity and make them look quite different than their wild ancestors, i.e. the true ‘real chickens.’

stuff wasn't that bad if you could forget everything about its provenance" and becomes a regular consumer (242). Through the monstrous ChikieNobs, the trilogy warns that the real danger of the hyperreal resides in its ability to make you forget that it is but a simulation. A warning that Jimmy willfully blinded himself to, just like he willfully blinded himself to the real nature of his techno-capitalist society and thus failed to recognize in his best friend the monster that this society engendered.

Techno-capitalism has a vested interest in replacing the real with the Promethean hyperreal because it is this techno-capitalism itself that created the conditions necessary for the hyperreal to emerge. Indeed, it is capital

which shattered every ideal distinction between true and false, good and evil, in order to establish a radical law of equivalence and exchange, the iron law of its power. It was the first to practice deterrence, abstraction, disconnection, deterritorialization, etc.; and if it was capital which fostered reality, the reality principle, it was also the first to liquidate it in the extermination of every use of value, of every real equivalence, of production and wealth, in the very sensation we have of unreality of the stakes and the omnipotence of manipulation.

(Baudrillard "Simulacra" 182-183)

The "reality principle" here refers to techno-capitalism's tendency to use the 'reality' of a product or a need as a selling point for its wares (and itself). Thanks to hyperreality, techno-capitalism can develop new sources of capital while continuing to appear as a self-evident, 'natural' system in order to conserve its hegemonic status. The above examples from the *MaddAddam* trilogy exemplify how hyperreality can be made synonymous with commodification: sexual intercourse between two individuals is replaced by a coin-guzzling booth in a mall; replacement parts for the human body can now be bought from beauty salons; patented amalgams of breasts and thighs are substituted for sentient animals. Despite their artificiality, all of those products are sold as 'the real thing.' Techno-capitalist societies, however, do not liquidate the 'natural' real in favor of the 'artificial' hyperreal as much as they mediate a constant struggle between the

real and the hyperreal, between the natural and the artificial, a situation nowhere better dramatized in my corpus than in *Jurassic Park*.

Most scholarly works on hyperreality in *Jurassic Park* focus on the film adaptation and on how its animatronic and computer-generated dinosaurs were received by the public as ‘real’ dinosaurs, to the point where museums and other scientific institutions could only teach paleontological facts through the prism of the movie.⁹⁵ Even Baudrillard used the film as a metaphor for simulation, comparing Western society at the cusp of the new millennium as “a bit like the last scene of *Jurassic Park*, in which the modern (artificially cloned) dinosaurs burst into the museum and wreak havoc on their fossilized ancestors preserved there, before being destroyed in turn. Today we are caught as a species in a similar impasse, trapped between our fossils and our clones” (*Vital* 39). However, I am less interested in the hyperreal ramifications of the movie’s special effects technology than I am in exploring how the novel fictionalizes and dramatizes these concerns about hyperreality, the Promethean view of nature, and the man-made character of natural resources. The dinosaurs – or “hypersaurs” (Laist 220) – that interest me are not Spielberg’s digital and robotic creations but Crichton’s literary monsters and the warning against the dangers of hyperreality that they embody.

One particularly masterful scene in *Jurassic Park* summarizes the entire struggle between the real and the hyperreal that occurs within the bounds of techno-capitalism. This scene is a discussion between Hammond and Wu, two techno-capitalists whose disagreement sheds light on the ontological confusion techno-capitalism inflicts on himself. The scene begins when Wu suggests to Hammond that they should kill and replace all of the animals on the island with a new, better batch, as they have done in the past. When Hammond asks “Why? What’s wrong with them,” Wu responds “Nothing [...] except that they’re real dinosaurs” (Crichton *Jurassic* 135). When Hammond expresses confusion at that, Wu elaborates that “the dinosaurs we have now are real [...] but in

⁹⁵ As a child when the movie came out, I can personally and anecdotally attest to this reception as well as to the impact the movie had on the perception of paleontology and dinosaurs in general. There was an explosion of kid-friendly books and magazines discussing paleontology after the release of *Jurassic Park*, both with and without the official movie license.

certain ways they are unsatisfactory. Unconvincing. I could make them better. [...] For one thing, they move too fast. [...] People aren't accustomed to seeing large animals that are so quick. I'm afraid visitors will think the dinosaurs look speeded up, like film running too fast" (136). When Wu ends his argument by offering to breed more easily domesticated dinosaurs, Hammond shoots down the idea:

"*Domesticated* dinosaurs?" Hammond snorted. "Nobody wants domesticated dinosaurs, Henry. They want the real thing."

"That's my point," Wu said. "I don't think they do. They want to see their expectation, which is quite different." [...] "You said yourself, John, this park is entertainment," Wu said. "And entertainment has nothing to do with reality. Entertainment is antithetical to reality." (136)

What Hammond and Wu are arguing about is "the new ontological configuration represented by the creatures to which Wu has given birth" (Laist 216). They are trying to define the nature of the Real and the reality of Nature. Hammond's view is that of an old-school capitalist, for whom the "reality principle" is still the most potent of selling points. His last line in the excerpt above echoes almost word-for-word Eco, who stated that "the American imagination demands the real thing and, to attain it, must fabricate the absolute fake; where the boundaries between game and illusion are blurred, the art museum is contaminated by the freak show, and falsehood is enjoyed in a situation of 'fullness,' of *horror vacui*" (Eco 8). Eco pronounced this judgment in a travelogue recounting his journey across the United States and its (then) innumerable number of historical reconstructions, wax museums and galleries of artistic reproductions, places where one could encounter copies of everything from Michelangelo's *David* to an early nineteenth-century farm to the chariot race from *Ben-Hur*.⁹⁶ For Eco, these various instances of hyperreality are proof that

⁹⁶ While I could not find information on every single location Eco mentions, many of the ones I could find information on do not exist anymore – one of them actually closed before the American edition I am using was published, as a handy note from the editor informs us (21).

there is a constant in the average American imagination and taste, for which the past must be preserved and celebrated in full-scale authentic copy; a philosophy of immortality as duplication. It dominates the relation with the self, with the past, not infrequently with the present, always with History and, even, with the European tradition.

Constructing a full-scale model of the Oval Office (using the same materials, the same colors, but with everything obviously more polished, shinier, protected against deterioration) means that for historical information to be absorbed, it has to assume the aspect of a reincarnation. (6-7)

In his discussion with Wu, Hammond stands in for the average American as Eco understands him, who seeks to reconstruct the past in order to sell it back to consumers. Like the men who built the Oval Office in Eco's example, Hammond will accept adjustments and improvements that maximize his profits and preserve his investment – patentable genes, lysine dependency, accelerated growth – but only as long as the dinosaurs can still pass as dinosaurs in the eyes of the credulous and very rich public. Wu, by contrast, is a Promethean thinker who understands that there is a difference between “reincarnation”, as Eco puts it, and ‘resurrection.’ To resurrect is to come back to life in one's original body. To reincarnate is to gain a second life in a different body. Hammond's problem is that he confuses the former for the latter, which Wu tries to explain, in vain:

He paced the living room, pointed to the monitors. “I don't think we should kid ourselves. We haven't re-created the past here. The past is gone. It can never be recreated. What we've done is reconstruct the past—or at least a version of the past. And I'm saying we can make a better version.”

“Better than real?”

“Why not?” Wu said. [...] “Why not push ahead to make exactly the kind of dinosaur that we'd like to see. One that is more acceptable to visitors, and one that is easier for us to handle. A slower, more docile version for our park?”

Hammond frowned: “But then the dinosaurs wouldn’t be real.”

“But they are not real now,” Wu said. “That’s what I’m trying to tell you. There isn’t any reality here.” He shrugged helplessly. (Crichton, *Jurassic* 136-7)

Wu, like Crake, is not interested in resurrection, only in reincarnation, in the possibility of creating better saurian bodies than evolution ever did, just like Crake tries to do with humans.⁹⁷

Interestingly, in promoting and defending reincarnation over resurrection, Wu contradicts his own position. He starts the discussion by complaining about the dinosaurs being real dinosaurs but finishes it by insisting they are not real. This confusion proves that the “mode of being characteristic of these creatures is one that is inherently slippery and hybridized, partaking of both nature and culture, both illusion and reality, both invention and discovery” (Laist 216). Wu’s hypersaurs are hard to ontologically pin down because they are “mediated entities, figures at one remove from the world human beings think of as real. These creatures are unique among media entities, however, in that they are imaginary figures with real fangs and claws, stomping through the real world with their undeniable physical bulkiness and devastating lethality” (216-217). Furthermore, Wu errs in his belief that “the essence of the argument is technical” (Crichton, *Jurassic* 137). This discussion between Hammond and Wu is not technical, nor is it “a matter of aesthetics,” as Wu also puts it (135). It is a matter of ontological transition between two forms of techno-capitalism: one obsessed with the commodification of the real, the other with the replacement of the real by commodities. Hammond wants to sell animated fossils while Wu is hawking clones. Ultimately, however, both visions are proven wrong, because both belong to the Promethean discourse, an ideology to which the novel’s *histoire* is fundamentally opposed, to the point of centering the entire narrative on the slow destruction of the ultimate end-product of Promethean vision – the theme park.

⁹⁷ Interestingly, the movie adaptation does not include this scene or any acknowledgement that the dinosaurs are only reincarnations but does have Hammond justify the creation of dinosaurs by comparing it to resurrecting endangered condors. These lines, created entirely for the film, further cement the confusion between the two concepts, and thus between the real and the hyperreal.

When Wu is pleading with Hammond in support of improving the dinosaurs, he is exhibiting the same logic that underpins the design of theme parks such as Disneyland, which “not only produces illusion, but – in confessing it – stimulates the desire for it: A real crocodile can be found in the zoo, and as a rule is dozing or hiding, but Disneyland tells us that faked nature corresponds much more to our daydream demands” (Eco 44). Hammond’s idea for the park is that of a dinosaur zoo. The zoo is an older, incomplete form of nature commodification and Promethean thinking that still maintains a high degree of unpredictability in order to preserve enough real for the zoo to be commercially viable. The employees of Jurassic Park are much more aware of what Hammond is really creating here – a theme park, an absolute simulation, an oasis of hyperreality floating in the Pacific Ocean. This state of affairs is taken for granted by the park’s crew, but it takes the visitors by surprise:

“Wait a minute,” Grant said. You’re going to have rides? Like an amusement park?”

Arnold said, “This is a zoological park. We have tours of different areas, and we call them rides. That’s all.”

Grant frowned. Again he felt troubled. He didn’t like the idea of dinosaurs being used for an amusement park. (Crichton, *Jurassic* 147)

Grant’s ambivalent reaction to finding out Jurassic Park’s real purpose reflects and models the contemporary reader’s anxiety toward the rapidly increasing hold of hyperreality on contemporary society. This hold, the novel warns, is neither an accident nor a necessity. In Jurassic Park as in Disneyland, “when there is a fake – hippopotamus, dinosaur, sea serpent – it is not so much because it wouldn’t be possible to have the real equivalent but because the public is meant to admire the perfection of the fake and its obedience to the program” (Eco 44). Wu *can* make a real dinosaur (maybe), but he does not *want* to. Wu wants to make perfect attractions, perfect products to be sold. He wants to prove that “technology can give us more reality than nature can” (Eco 44) and even then, he is restraining himself.

Indeed, Lewis Dodgson proposes to engineer dinosaurs for Biosyn that are even more hyperreal than what Wu actually proposes:

If InGen can make full-size dinosaurs, they can also make pygmy dinosaurs as household pets. What child won't want a little dinosaur as a pet? A little patented animal for their very own. InGen will sell millions of them. And InGen will engineer them so that these pet dinosaurs can only eat InGen pet food [...] The zoo is the centerpiece of an enormous enterprise" (Crichton, *Jurassic* 74).

Like Wu, Dodgson recognizes that Jurassic Park is an amusement park, a total simulation, but he also recognizes that "Disneyland is there to conceal the fact that it is the 'real' country, all of 'real' America, which is Disneyland. [...] Disneyland is presented as imaginary in order to make us believe that the rest is real, when in fact all of Los Angeles and the America surrounding it are no longer real, but of the order of the hyperreal and of simulation" (Baudrillard *Simulacra* 175). InGen can sell genetically engineered theme park attractions such as tiny dinosaur pets beyond the bounds of Isla Nublar itself since the whole world is a theme park, and thus craves the hyperreal in all things. Jurassic Park's own lead engineer, himself a former "imagineer" who helped built Disney World in Florida, recognizes that the whole world is slowly becoming as lacking in reality as Jurassic Park: "Arnold contended, only half jokingly, that the entire world was increasingly described by the metaphor of the theme park. 'Paris is a theme park,' he once announced, after a vacation, 'although it's too expensive, and the park employees are unpleasant and sullen'" (Crichton, *Jurassic* 155).⁹⁸ The novel calls this perception "a somewhat skewed view of reality" (155), evidencing the novel's ideological bent away from the Promethean discourse and the belief in the natural as a purely human construct. For the novel, Jurassic Park is, as all theme parks are, an isolated, fully mediated hyperreal world where the real has no purchase. Arnold himself reiterates the artificial

⁹⁸ "Imagineers" is Disney's own term for the men and women who design their park and attractions. As Disney themselves are happy to explain, "the name 'Imagineering' combines imagination with engineering. Building upon the legacy of Walt Disney, Imagineers bring art and science together to turn fantasy into reality and dreams into magic" ("About Imagineering", n.p.). This research project's scope is too narrow to accommodate any in-depth discussion of the concept of 'imagineering,' but the implications of this description and its blurring of the boundaries of the real and the imaginary are fascinating to contemplate.

ontology of the dinosaurs with even more conviction than Wu. In a discussion with Grant about the park's dinosaur counting systems, Arnold mentions that the "version number" assigned to each dinosaur

"is like software, in a way. As we discover glitches in the DNA, Dr. Wu's labs have to make a new version."

The idea of living creatures being numbered like software, being subject to updates and revisions, troubled Grant. He could not exactly say why—it was too new a thought—but he was instinctively uneasy about it. They were, after all, living creatures. . . .

Arnold must have noticed his expression, because he said, "Look, Dr. Grant, there's no point in getting starry-eyed about these animals. It's important for everyone to remember that these animals are *created*. Created by man. Sometimes there are bugs. So, as we discover the bugs, Dr Wu's labs have to make a new version. And we need to keep track of what version we have out there." (144)

For Arnold, the animals inhabiting Jurassic Park are not actually animals, but human-made commodities. Therefore, in accordance with Promethean logic, he feels justified in doing with them whatever is needed to make them "better" products, including killing them if necessary. In this sense, the park is emphatically *not* a zoo, because

"[z]oos don't re-create nature," Malcolm said. "Let's be clear. Zoos take the nature that already exists and modify it very slightly, to create holding pens for animals. Even those minimal modifications often fail. The animals escape with regularity. But a zoo is not a model for this park. This park is attempting something far more ambitious than that. Something much more akin to making a space station on earth. [...] Except for the air, which flows freely, everything about this park is meant to be isolated. Nothing gets in, nothing out. The animals kept here are never to mix with the greater ecosystems of earth. They are never to escape." (101)

But escape the dinosaurs do; both the prologue and the epilogue show some of them roaming Costa Rica. What this escape means for the ontological relationship between Jurassic Park and the outside world, however, is a complicated question.

Hammond's theme park was a bad idea doomed to failure. That much is made clear very early on (84). What is less clear is whether this failure is to be read as a victory for the hyperreal or the real. For example, when pressed on the possibility of a dinosaur escaping to the mainland – a possibility he vehemently denies – Wu explains that the animals have been made unable to manufacture lysine, an amino acid necessary to their survival. As a result,

unless they get a rich dietary source of exogenous lysine—supplied by us, in tablet form—they'll go into a coma within twelve hours and expire. These animals are genetically engineered to be unable to survive in the real world. They can only live here in Jurassic Park. They are not free at all. They are essentially our prisoners. (126-127)

The eventual escape of the dinosaurs despite this precaution raises the question of why the precaution failed.⁹⁹ At the level of plot, this question is easy to answer – the dinosaurs can survive on the mainland because of the availability of lysine-rich foods like agama and soy beans (448). Hermeneutically, however, the question is more complex. Can the dinosaur survive in the outside world because the entire world is now a theme park, a realm of simulation and the hyperreal, as John Arnold posits? Or can they survive because the Promethean ideal of a world of complete simulation is impossible, and the dinosaurs' escape survival is the proof that the real always infects even the most hyperreal of places, even the most secure of Disneylands?

⁹⁹ In my analysis of the lysine dependency, I am taking for granted that the idea of making the dinosaurs lysine-dependent is theoretically sound, as the novel does, and thus that Wu's failure was in the execution, not the premise. Scientifically speaking, however, lysine is considered an essential amino acid for humans and animals, that is to say an amino acid "whose carbon skeletons cannot be synthesized or [is] inadequately synthesized *de novo* by the body relative to needs and which must be provided from the diet to meet optimal requirements" (Wu 5). No living animal synthesizes their own lysine, and thus it is highly unlikely that dinosaurs would, even before genetic modifications.

Laist is a proponent of the former. For him, the dinosaurs can survive outside of the simulated hyperreality of Jurassic Park because the outside world is also a hyperreal simulation. Since there is no ontological difference between the controlled world they were born in and the outside world of humanity at large,

the monsters being bred on Isla Nublar [...] are destined to escape the narrative space of science fiction and proliferate unpredictably among human beings. The inevitability that the dinosaurs will escape the island – that the mutation in the genome of reality will turn cancerous and metastasize into the ecology of the mainland – reflects the phenomenon Baudrillard described as ‘the virulence of the code’. (Laist 220)

Laist here interprets Baudrillard’s code as the “social software” (Latham 8) through which techno-capitalism aims

to reconstruct a homogenous and uniformly consistent universe – an artificial continuum this time – that unfolds within a technological and mechanical medium, extending over our vast information network, where we are in the process of building a perfect clone, an identical copy of our world, a virtual artifact that opens up the prospect of endless reproduction. (Baudrillard, *Vital* 7-8)

As reproductions of a long-gone past – or rather, as reproductions of cultural representations of this past – the dinosaurs of *Jurassic Park* are fictional embodiments of the code, and their ability to reproduce and multiply in the wild is an allegorical representation of this “prospect of endless reproduction” of the past (rather than the creation of the future) that Baudrillard warns about. Laist sees *Jurassic Park* as Crichton’s pessimistic reply to Baudrillard’s question of

whether it is possible for postmodern human beings to resist digitization of reality in all its forms. Is there any way to put the brakes on hyperreality or to set up an oppositional dislocation? In Crichton’s novel, the answer is obviously no. The recombinant hypersaurs, the monstrous embodiment of computational, genetic

and capitalist codes, take on a life of their own and undermine all the efforts of human beings to contain their ramifications. (232)

To my eye, however, the textual evidence seems to contradict Laist's interpretation. As I have pointed out in previous sections, the *histoire* of *Jurassic Park* favours the discourse of Ian Malcolm, and therefore Malcolm's objections to Hammond's project can be read as the novel's own. Laist himself acknowledges that "Crichton the novelist obviously identified with Malcolm, the hipster-geek who is always right and whose deep understanding of the physics of reality provide the structural frame for the book's narrative" (Laist 228). When reading Malcolm's criticism of the Park, however, it becomes apparent that Malcolm's problem is not the dinosaurs themselves or their authenticity, but the attempt "to make an isolated world where extinct creatures roam freely" (Crichton, *Jurassic* 101). Malcolm did not warn Hammond of the impossibility of containing the hyperreal; he warned him of the impossibility of containing the real. Or, to put it in Malcolm's own famous words, "the history of evolution is that life escapes all barriers. Life breaks free. Life expands to new territories. Painfully, perhaps even dangerously. But life finds a way" (178-179). Here and elsewhere in the novel, life and nature are to be read as synonymous with the real, in opposition to the hyperreal artificial environment that is Jurassic Park. This is in opposition to Baudrillard, who associated death with the real, and life – in the sense of immortality – with the simulation, the copy and the clone: "After the great revolution in the evolutionary process – the advent of sex and death – we have the great involution: it aims, through cloning and many other techniques, to liberate us from sex and death" says Baudrillard (*Vital* 8). In other words, the real and natural world is "the revolution of death, as opposed to the infinite survival of the same," which is what cloning and other mechanisms of the simulated techno-capitalist future promise (9).

Malcolm however sees all living things as both real and natural, no matter if they were conceived by and born from living beings or grown in a test tube. Whether this comes from a profound disagreement with the Baudrillardian view of cloning or from a failure to anticipate all the ramifications of cloning is impossible to make out based solely on the

novel's text. What is clear however is that Malcolm – and thus the novel itself – engages in a process of “renaturalisation.” Part of a “processual model for understanding how nature is used to ground cultural meanings and practice” alongside “naturalisation” and “denaturalisation” (Franklin *et al.* 19), renaturalisation is a way in which “cultural” or ‘artificial’ practices are discursively rewritten as ‘natural’ or ‘essential’ ones. Since the dinosaurs in *Jurassic Park* are examples of “how new life forms become commercial property, and indeed how new forms of commercial property are engendered life forms” (9-10), it follows that Malcolm’s view of them as living beings that exist independently of humans, in defiance of the Promethean ideology embodied by the park, is an example of how “nature becomes a technique in the reproduction of the new life forms of the global [and of how] it does so in such a way that, far from undermining its authority, re-establishes it. For nature and culture are neither polar opposites, nor are they simply changing places” (10). Rather, with the advent of bioengineering, cloning and similar technologies, nature and culture have become “isomorphic” according to Franklin *et al.* That is, they have both acquired the ability to stand for the other, often without anyone noticing. This isomorphism is well dramatized in *Jurassic Park*. Thanks to the work of Dr. Wu and his team, “the definition of ‘life’ [...] has literally been unzipped in the context of its highly visible instrumentalisation, to become life itself, which has both displaced traditional ideas about the domain of the natural, and become the locus, and means of expression, for new forms of cultural production (including biological ones)” (Franklin *et al.* 191). In *Jurassic Park*, “life itself” – the denaturalised product of cloning and genetic engineering – is renaturalised, becoming once again simply ‘life’ in the discourse of Ian Malcolm, who sees the dinosaurs’ success in breeding and escaping the island as the triumph of natural processes – in this case reproduction – over artificial (i.e. cultural) mechanisms of control such as bioengineering:

The basic event that has occurred in Jurassic Park is that the scientists and technicians have tried to make a new, complete biological world. And the scientists in the control room expect to see a natural world. As in the graph they just showed us. Even though a moment's thought reveals that nice, normal distribution is terribly worrisome on this island. [...] Based on what Dr. Wu told

us earlier, one should never see a population graph like that. [...] Because that is a graph for a normal biological population. Which is precisely what Jurassic Park is not. Jurassic Park is not the real world. It is intended to be a controlled world that only imitates the natural world. In that sense, it's a true park, rather like a Japanese formal garden. Nature manipulated to be more natural than the real thing, if you will. (Crichton, *Jurassic* 149)

In this passage, Malcolm first establishes the hyperreal – or denaturalised – status of Jurassic Park in the clearest way possible only to immediately renaturalise it by pointing out that the dinosaurs do have a population curve for a natural, non-manipulated population of wild animals. Malcolm's words here warn against forgetting the difference between the real and the hyperreal, between the world of facts and the world of simulation. Malcolm's warning echoes similar warnings by both Baudrillard and Eco. However, the two philosophers meant theirs as warnings against the fragility of the real, which they saw under constant assault by the hyperreal-producing machinery of technocapitalism. Malcolm, by contrast, renaturalises the products of simulation as real, and as a consequence sees the hyperreal as the fragile ontological state. In *Jurassic Park*, it is the order of simulation which is inherently unstable and always threatened by a metastasizing of the real into the ecology of the unreal.¹⁰⁰

How, then, to reconcile these two contradictory interpretations of a single event – the eventual and inevitable escape of the dinosaurs from the island? Is this escape a victory for the hyperreal or for the real? To my mind, the only valid answer to this question is that there is none, because the novel itself does not know the answer. Indeed, to give the victory to either side would necessitate determining the ontological status of the dinosaurs with certitude, something the novel itself never achieves. Like Wu, the

¹⁰⁰ The tragic death of a two-year-old at Disney World in Florida in 2016 serves as a grim real-world example of how the real can barge into the fortress of the hyperreal at any moment. While walking on the shoreline of an artificial lake created by the resort, the boy was snatched and eaten by an all-too-real alligator. This occurred in spite of wildlife officials "work[ing] very closely" and on a regular basis "with Disney to remove nuisance alligators as they're observed" (Luscombe, n.p.) This attack is eerily similar to the one that happens at the beginning of *Jurassic Park* (and the beginning of the sequel's movie adaption) and carries the same message – that absolute safety from the absolute real does not exist, even when ensconced in the absolute fake.

novel states both that “the dinosaurs we have now are real” and that the dinosaurs “are not real now.” In the second of the sequel films, Alan Grant declares with confidence that “what John Hammond and Ingen did at Jurassic Park is create genetically engineered theme park monsters, nothing more and nothing less” (*Jurassic Park III* 08:49:20), but the original novel never takes any such firm position. By alternating between denaturalising and renaturalising the dinosaurs seemingly at will, *Jurassic Park* allows the ontological status of the dinosaurs to shift to meet the needs of the novel’s ideological work at any particular moment. Laist himself acknowledges that “Wu’s own comprehension of the novel implications of mutant ontology is still itself undeveloped” (217) but fails to point out that in this, Wu acts as a synecdoche of the entire novel. *Jurassic Park* criticizes the Promethean view of nature as entirely controllable and of natural resources as the sole product of human ingenuity but never fully disputes the last point because doing so would mean establishing a clear delineation between the real and the hyperreal, something the novel is unable – or unwilling – to do. The dinosaurs of *Jurassic Park*, like all monsters, “dwell[1] at the gates of difference” (Cohen 7), troubling boundaries and resisting assimilation by either side of the gates they have just smashed. “[T]he monster arises at the gap where difference is perceived as dividing a recording voice from its captured subject; the criterion of this division is arbitrary, and can range from anatomy or skin color to religious belief, custom, and political ideology” as well as, in our case, ontological status: natural versus artificial, real versus hyperreal. “The monster’s destructiveness is really a deconstructiveness: it threatens to reveal that difference originates in process, rather than in fact (and that ‘fact’ is subject to constant reconstruction and change)” (14-15). Once the real and hyperreal have been hybridised, there is no turning back, no more pretending that there is a clearly delineated barrier between these two states. Wu’s dinosaurs are roaring reminders that simulation and reality are fluid concepts coexisting in a fragile equilibrium that even a tiny amount of techno-capitalist meddling can shatter into a thousand pieces.

At first glance, *Jurassic Park* is the only work in my corpus that pushes the idea of hyperreality to the logical extreme of the theme park. *Jurassic Park* is indeed the only work in my corpus that *centres* its narrative on the theme park, but the *MaddAddam*

trilogy also uses the metaphor of the theme park when discussing the techno-capitalist propensity for simulation. In *MaddAddam*, protagonist Zeb mentions that the reverend of the Church of PetrOleum (his father) “liked to theme-park everything” (Atwood, *MaddAddam* 114). Zeb’s description of his father’s megachurch as “all glass slabbery and pretend oak pews and faux granite” (111) supports this stance, as the church is all simulation, just like Jimmy’s childhood house in the corporate compounds. The Church of PetrOleum is a theme park because everything about it is simulated, from its physical premises to its “nailed together” theology created for the sole purpose of “rak[ing] the cash” and “coin[ing] the megabucks” (111-112) to its founder’s attachment to simulated sexual violence (118). The use of the theme park metaphor might also have been intended as a subtle reference to Heritage USA, a genuine Evangelical theme park in South Carolina. Founded during the glory years of the prosperity gospel movement by televangelists Jim and Tammy Faye Bakker, the park was 10 times the size of Disneyland and 20 times that of the Magic Kingdom portion of Disney World. While never quite as popular as those parks, Heritage USA could still boast the title of third-most-visited theme park in the United States (Johnson n.p.; Bowler 77) before it closed in 1989, a little over a decade after its opening, in the midst of an enormous scandal that saw Jim Bakker being defrocked for sexual misconduct and convicted for various financial crimes and frauds (Bowler 107-110), an end similar to the one an adult Zeb and his brother threatened the Rev with if he ever came after them.

What is especially interesting about Heritage USA is that it was, just like Jurassic Park, an attempt to “re-create” an “environment from the past” (Crichton, *Jurassic* 101). Rather than the jungles of the Jurassic era, Heritage USA was trying to recreate “the nation and its past” through “a pastiche of iconic Americana, from ‘Fort Heritage’ to a stylized ‘Main Street’ lined with pastel restaurants and old-timey shops, including Susie’s Ice Cream Parlor, the Noah’s Ark Toy Shoppe, and a ‘General Store’” (Johnson n.p.). *MaddAddam* never indicates if the Rev has ever gone that far, but it does suggest the connection to such a project of simulation by underlining the religious con man’s talent and skill for ‘theme-parking’ anything, down to the names of his very own children. And since the Rev and his church are a blatant example of the Promethean discourse in action,

it is clear that the theme park here symbolizes the same thing it symbolizes in Eco, Baudrillard and Crichton: the endgame of simulation, techno-capitalism's hyperreal utopia. Or rather, as far as Atwood is concerned, techno-capitalism's hyperreal *dystopia*.

While Midnight does not really deal with concepts like the theme park and the hyperreal, it does discuss the closely related theme of *mind over matter*. While not his initial intention, the Promethean villain Shaddack ends up giving his New People the power to change their bodies according to their subconscious desires. "There's a theory that form is a function of consciousness," explains Shaddack to Watkins, and this theory

holds that we are what we think we are. I'm not talking pop psychology here, that you can be what you want to be if you'll only like yourself, nothing of that sort. I mean *physically*, we may have the potential to be whatever we think we are, to override the morphic stasis dictated by our genetic heritage. [...] Mind over matter. The metamorphosis is mostly a *mental* process. Oh, certainly there are physical changes. But we might not be talking complete alteration of matter... only of biological structures. The basic nucleotides remain the same, but the sequence in which they're read changes drastically. (Koontz 187-188)

The process Shaddack is describing may not seem to have a lot in common with cloned dinosaurs or living chicken breasts factories on legs but nonetheless belongs to the same ontological and scientific order as those projects. What is happening inside the New People's body is genetic engineering taken to a whole new Promethean level. Here, the human mind and ingenuity is not just able to shape the natural world, but also its very own bodily essence. All it needed was a little boost from Shaddack's nanites, a little taste of Prometheus' stolen fire. In *Midnight*, the mind offers two main options to escape the "morphic stasis" of one's material body: atavism or cybernetic transformation. What is especially interesting about the former is that in addition to taking the form of animals and mythological creatures, the atavistic New People can also transform into monsters from popular culture, including one from my corpus. Trapped within the house of Father Castelli, young Chrissie Foster is forced to watch as the man "was becoming something startlingly familiar: the creature from the movie *Alien*. Not exactly that monster in every

detail but uncannily similar to it. She was trapped in a movie, just as the priest had said, a real-life horror flick: no doubt one of his favorites” (232). This passage is a perfect dramatization of the passage from the real (the human body) to the hyperreal (a fictional creature made flesh) through the domination of the code (advertisement, product design, entertainment and other techno-mechanisms of reality-production). So entrenched in the code is Father Castelli that his subconscious chooses to assume a form of techno-capitalist simulation rather than that of an animal or legendary creature. Becoming a xenomorph also has the benefit of announcing clearly to the world what Father Castelli and all of the monstrous New People are for Shaddack: natural resources to be exploited

3.5 – Resource Extraction, Workers, and the Corpse Economy.

Indeed, the result of the Promethean view of nature as a construct made by and for man is that the monsters created by man from base natural matter will inevitably be seen as resources like every other by the techno-capitalist system. The works in my corpus dramatize both this Promethean view of monsters and the terrible means to which Prometheans will go to extract and transform said resources into exchange-value.



Figure 5 – *Splice*. (00 :06 :18)

The clearest, most straightforward allegory for the exploitation of natural resources is to be found in Fred and Ginger, two genetically engineered lifeforms made from hybridized animal DNA by Clive and Elsa from *Splice*.¹⁰¹ Unlike other monsters in my corpus, Ginger and Fred have no other *raison-d'être* than to be sources of protein and enzymes with which to create new drugs. Thus, when Clive and Elsa propose to create more hybridized lifeforms just to see if they can, Joan Chorot instead instructs them to focus on phase two, “the product stage”, wherein the scientists and their team are expected to shift from splicing DNA (thus creating new monsters) to isolating the genes and proteins in Ginger and Fred that can produce “medicinal proteins for livestock” (00:07:38 – 00:09:32). To drive the point home, the proteins are illustrated in Clive and Elsa’s visual presentation to investors as caplets stamped with a cow silhouette bearing Newstead Pharma’s logo, emphasizing the proteins’ exchange-value over their use value. The fact that her scientists have created a brand-new species does not interest Chorot – all she cares about is the fact that her scientists have created a brand-new source of pharmaceutical resources. As a result, there is little to no attempt at simulation with Fred and Ginger, who end up looking like two shapeless sacks of flesh (Fig.5). By contrast, the Pigeons from the *MaddAddam* trilogy, which were also created only as a source of product – in this case, organs – to be harvested, still looked and behaved like pigs, albeit “much bigger and fatter” ones (Atwood, *Oryx* 25). Even the nightmarish ChickieNobs simulated the texture and taste of actual chicken. The hybrids of *Splice*, despite being products of genetic engineering, do not exist on the order of simulation because the capitalism of *Splice* is an older form of capitalism still concerned with material production and the reality principle. In other words, Joan Chorot is John Hammond without a Henry Wu to point out the ontological ramifications of her company’s actions. Even when the corporate mad scientists under employ attempt simulation – in this case, the simulation of parenthood through the creation of the hybrid child Dren¹⁰² – Chorot

¹⁰¹ If the presentation Clive and Elsa give to Joan Chorot is to be believed, Fred and Ginger share DNA with horses, kangaroos, and snails as well as with some unspecified kind of bird, fish, lizard, and plant.

¹⁰² That Dren is intended to provide a simulacrum of motherhood for Elsa is only revealed when Clive realizes towards the end of the second act that the human DNA used in the girl’s creation is Elsa’s, and accuses her of never having wanted to make Dren “for the betterment of mankind” but rather because she “never wanted a normal child because [she was] afraid of losing control [like her own abusive mother].

brings this simulation back to the realm of material production. For Chorot, Dren and the offspring (s)he created by raping Elsa after a sudden sex change is nothing but a better, improved version of Fred and Ginger. Talking to a heavily pregnant Elsa, Chorot joyfully explains that

Dren turned out to be a cauldron of unimaginable chemical mysteries. Aside from the intense concentration of [the marketable protein] CD356 in her system, she was filled with a variety of completely unique compounds. We'll be filing patents for years. Of course, we are extremely excited that you're willing to take us to the next stage, especially in light of the personal risks. We think the figure we've come up with is very generous. (01:38:30)

In *Jurassic Park*, the monsters' sex change is the ultimate proof of techno-capitalism's inability to keep either (or both) the real and the hyperreal in check. In *Splice*, the same phenomenon of sex change is more hermeneutically complicated, since it happens twice, with two different results. In the first instance, Ginger changes into a male without anyone noticing, resulting in a catastrophic presentation in which she (now he) and Fred violently massacre each other on stage in front of prospective investors. As in *Jurassic Park*, this sex change signifies the simulation's inevitable and disastrous escape from techno-capitalist's control. Even though Fred and Ginger are not themselves attempts at simulation, neither Clive nor Elsa noticed Ginger's sex change explicitly because they were too engrossed with their actual attempt at simulation, Dren. Thus, while the chain of events in *Splice* is not as straightforward as it is in Crichton's novel, in both cases, the simulation overwhelms the scientists and techno-capitalists who created it, leading to both their and their enterprise's doom. The second sex change lends itself to the opposite interpretation. When Dren changes sex, she does temporarily escape her creators' control and eventually kills one of them (and rapes the other), but this moment of escape is fleeting. Instead, Dren's sex change ultimately becomes the moment where the techno-capitalist system clamps down on the simulation and commodifies it, bringing the

But an experiment, that's something else" (01:23:04). For more on how Dren is a way for Elsa to experience motherhood on her terms, with disastrous consequences, see A. Miller 333-337 and 347-348.

monster back to the world of the real, the material, the *profitable*, the *marketable*. *Splice*'s "final image of the two women signing up for such unethical, commerce-driven manipulations of reproduction becomes just as abhorrent as the ill-defined contours of Dren's infant body. Elsa and Chorot become monsters themselves, yet another example of the horror film's monstrous feminine" (A. Miller 337).¹⁰³ Life, in *Splice*, does *not* find a way. Rather, it is techno-capitalism which finds a way, a way to petrify life and transform it into an object, into a "cauldron" boiling with alchemical concoctions of unimaginable mercantile potency.

In this, the ending of *Splice* parallels that of *Cédric*. Chaperon's novel ends like Natali's film: the techno-capitalist monster dies but passes on his monstrosity by impregnating the story's main female character. Alphalab, like Newstead Pharma, recognizes the exchange value of this sexually transmitted monstrosity and makes a plan to acquire it:

Docteur Dupras had told us that Ms. Chaplin [Cédric's girlfriend] believed herself to be pregnant. The agent who heard the woman confirm her pregnancy decided to spare her. He has our thanks. Indeed, this is great news for us, as it will allow us to study the product's effect on a foetus conceived by a patient under the influence of Chlorolanfaxine. (Chaperon 315)

While their goals are similar, Alphalab is painted in a slightly more sinister light than Newstead Pharma. Despite the horror created by the film's last scene, Newstead Pharma does at least honour the fetus's exchange value by offering money to the fetus's 'owner' in a *bona fide* capitalist transaction. Alphalab prefers to use its hegemonic power to take the baby by force and consigns Cédric's girlfriend to the same psychiatric hospital where it disposed of Anita, thus equating the commodity producer that is Rebecca with the failed commodity that is Anita. This equation is strengthened further when the scientist writing the report warns his colleagues that once the baby is born, "a decision will then need to be taken about the mother's fate" (315). With these final words, *Cédric* becomes yet another instance of my corpus dramatizing the process of commodification of the

¹⁰³ While I purposefully avoid in-depth discussion of gender issues in this study, I do briefly mention some of them in the Conclusion (see pages 278-279).

worker – a process by which a worker can quickly, like a commodity, become obsolete and be consequently discarded. By contrast, Chorot in *Splice* offers Elsa the possibility of aborting the baby instead of bringing it to term for the company’s benefit, adding that no one would hold it against her if she chose to do so. While the proletarianization of scientific workers is a major issue in *Splice*, the film does not concern itself with the next step in that direction: their commodification and potential obsolescence.

The main difference between *Splice* and *Cédric* – between *Splice* and the rest of my corpus, in fact – resides in this very absence of commodification and disposal of the worker. *Splice* is the only work that does not inscribe the exploitation of monstrous resources into “a *corpse economy* in which human bodies, increasingly commodified in life, assume in death the status of commodities pure and simple” (McNally 52). McNally coined the term “corpse-economy” to refer to a historical period in eighteenth-century England where, for the benefit of wealthy scientific and medical institutions, human corpses were *literally*

bought and sold, [...] touted, priced, haggled over, negotiated for, discussed in terms of supply and demand, delivered, imported, exported, transported, [...] compressed into boxes, packed in sawdust, packed in hay, trussed up in sacks, roped up like hams, sewn in canvas, packed in cases, casks, barrels, crates and hampers, salted, pickled, or injected with preservative, [...] carried in carts and wagons, in barrows and steam-boats; manhandled, damaged in transit, and hidden under loads of vegetables, [...] stored in cellars and on quays, [...] dismembered and sold in pieces, or measured and sold by the inches. (Richardson 72)

My use of the term here is obviously not in reference to these historical events, which are far removed from the social, geographical and economic circumstances my corpus originates from and depicts. Rather, a corpse-economy is for my purpose a handy image and shorthand to refer to a way in which my corpus – with the aforementioned exception of *Splice* – represents and criticizes a socio-economic structure in which workers are routinely sacrificed so that their bodies can be used to feed and/or gestate new monstrous resources for capital to exploit. McNally himself posits that “the corpse economy thus

became a symbolic register of all that was objectionable about emergent capitalism, of its demonic drive to exploit human life and labour, of its propensity to humiliate and demean in both life and death” (58). My argument then, is simply that what was true for the emergent capitalism of the eighteenth century remains true of the hegemonic technocapitalism of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Corpse economy is therefore as useful now as a “symbolic register” to criticize a process in which workers are commodified and then used as tools to produce more commodities as it was in the eighteenth century. Capitalism has obviously changed shape multiple times since those days and the fear and anxieties it creates among the populace have followed suit. Nonetheless, the same “demonic drive to exploit human life and labour” undergirds capitalism then and now, and it is this drive that both eighteenth-century fictions such as *Frankenstein* and contemporary fictions such as the works in my corpus denounce and deconstruct through the symbolic register of the corpse economy. The corpse economy depicted in my corpus is no longer one in which human corpses are literally packed in crates and sold by the inch, but the basic idea of the proletarian body as a resource and commodity is preserved. No work in my corpus dramatizes this new form of corpse economy better than *Alien*.

Alien has most often been studied and discussed as a work of psychological horror while its potential for *economic* horror has often been ignored or dismissed as secondary to its psycho-sexual charge. Even the promotional leaflet accompanying the 2003 *Alien: Quadrilogy* DVD set describes the film as a “psychological thriller” and describes the Company’s actions in the film as “plans for bringing an alien back to Earth for study” – as academically rather than economically motivated. This occultation of the Company’s true motive is perhaps unsurprising in promotional material written by a for-profit movie studio, but the relative lack of academic attention given to *Alien* as a narrative about the exploitation of resources and workers is both unfortunate and strange given that the movie is not exactly subtle about its allegorical charge. Indeed, *Alien* starts by showing the following text:

Commercial towing vehicle ‘The Nostromo’

crew: seven

cargo: refinery processing 20,000,000 tons of mineral ore

course: returning to Earth (00:02:00)

This text is displayed for a few seconds in front of the mentioned refinery. The *Nostromo* itself – the main setting for the movie – is barely visible among the refinery’s giant towers. From the very beginning of movie, the capitalist mode of production that employs the film’s characters and regulates their lives is presented as looming, overbearing and much more powerful than those characters whose ‘home’ it dwarfs. Significantly, the movie establishes the proletarian nature of its crew before we even meet them. It does so not through filmic language or dialogue, but through text, as if the director wanted to make sure that the audience absolutely understood the power structure at play before the story began in earnest. In the film’s earliest moments, we get proof that economic horror is as, if not more, important to the film’s ideological work as psychological and sexual horror.

The proletarian nature of the film’s characters is further underlined in the scene that first introduces the crew to us. Here, two members of the crew, Parker and Brett, argue with ship’s captain Dallas over wages and class inequality within the crew itself:

PARKER. Before we dock, I think we oughta discuss the bonus situation. Brett and I, we think we oughta... We think we deserve full share, right baby?

BRETT. Right. You see, Mr. Parker and I feel that the bonus situation has never been on an equitable level.

DALLAS. Well, you’ll get what you are contracted for, like everybody else.

BRETT: Yes, but everybody else gets more than us.

[Something starts beeping in the mess hall]

ASH: Dallas, Mother wants to talk to you. (00:06:09 – 00:06:24)

On first viewing, this scene seems to set up a conflict between Brett and Parker and the rest of the crew. Once the real nature of Ash is revealed, however, it becomes clear that the real conflict at the center of both the scene and the film is between the Company's mechanical agents and the hired human crew. When watching the scene with Ash's true nature in mind, one notices that Mother interrupts the crew's socializing at the precise moment where some members express dissatisfaction over the poor exchange-value attributed to their work and that Ash the android backs up his fellow corporate machine in her attempt to distract them from the subject at hand. Strengthening this reading of the scene is another eerily similar exchange that happens only a few minutes later. When Dallas tells the crew that they have been woken up earlier than scheduled by the Company and ordered to investigate a distress signal, Parker once again brings up the question of monetary compensation:

PARKER: I hate to bring this up, but this is a commercial ship, not a rescue ship. And it's not in my contract to do this kind of duty. Now what about the money? If you wanna give me some money to do it, I'll be happy to oblige.

BRETT: The man's right.

PARKER: Let's go over the bonus situation.

[Ash and Parker start talking over each other]

ASH: [Addressing Dallas:] I'm sorry, can I say something? [Dallas nods.]

BRETT: Let's talk about the bonus more!

ASH: There is a clause in the contract that specifically states: Any systematized transmission indicating a possible intelligent origin must be investigated. [...] On penalty of total forfeiture of shares. [Whispering] No money.

(00:09:55 – 00:10:22)

Once again, Parker and Brett bring up their dissatisfaction with their low wages and, once again, Ash is the one who cuts the discussion short by interrupting them. The similar

structure of these scenes and the similar role Ash plays in them both reinforce the feeling of overbearing and omnipresent techno-capitalism that oozes from this film. Whenever the proletariat threatens to weaken their bonds, the machinery of capital intervenes to firmly but insidiously get them back to work.

So strong is the proletarian coding of the crewmembers that one of the film's producers referred to the cast as "truck drivers in space" (Ivor Powell, qtd. in "Truckers in Space" 00:02:16). The choice of label here is significant. Since the *Nostromo* tows a refinery, one could easily assume that the *Nostromo*'s crew are refinery workers, i.e. workers who create commodities out of natural resources. The refinery, however, turns out to be an automated commodity autonomously making further commodities. The *Nostromo*'s crew only drive this giant worker-factory, spreading "capitalism into deep space" and consequently "verify[ing] the insight of Marx and Engels in *The Communist Manifesto* about the inherently expansionist tendencies of capitalism, which for them by its nature must continually mutate and grow like a contagion in order to survive, gobbling up everything in its path" (Booker 151). By choosing truck drivers as its proletarian representatives, *Alien* emphasizes the *propagation* of techno-capitalist imperatives, just as it emphasizes the propagation of the xenomorph rather than its creation.

When taking the crew's proletarian coding and Ash's techno-capitalist nature into account, it is easy to see that *Alien* is not just a film about astronauts encountering an aggressive alien monster on a strange planet, like so many science-fiction movies and shows before it. It is certainly that, but the film is also the story of blue-collar workers sent to a dangerous locale on behalf of their employer to extract a resource for the sole monetary benefit of the employer. In other words, *Alien* is a space-bound allegory for the callousness of corporations and their willingness to sacrifice their workers to obtain more capital. The main mystery of the film is not where the monster comes from or what it wants, but why the *Nostromo* was rerouted to its nesting place.¹⁰⁴ This answer is provided in the form of special instructions given by Mother to Ash and reads as follows:

¹⁰⁴ Audiences would have to wait until 2017's *Alien: Covenant*, also directed by Ridley Scott, to learn where the xenomorph came from. Whether or not the answer is satisfying, or even makes any sense, is a matter of personal taste.

“Nostromo rerouted to new co-ordinates. Investigate Life Form. Gather Specimen. Priority one: insure return of organism for analysis. All other considerations secondary. Crew expendable” (01:14:12). As the camera cuts from Mother’s interface to Ripley, she lies back in her chair and closes her eyes while Ash waits in the background behind her, having entered the room – and the scene – with neither Ripley nor the audience noticing (Fig.6).



Figure 6 – *Alien* (01:14:24)

This scene foreshadows another one at the very end of the film where, once again, the camera focuses on Ripley’s face while the xenomorph lies in wait, ready to pounce (Fig.7). In the first scene, the monster is the machinery of capital masquerading as a human. In the second scene, the monster uses the machinery of the capital to conceal itself. In both cases, Ripley thinks she is safe and allows herself a moment of respite, unaware of the presence of the monster hidden in plain sight.



Figure 7 – *Alien* (01:46:22)

Now that Ripley and the audience have discovered that she and the rest of the crew have been unwittingly commodified – acquiring in the process the disposable status common to all commodities – Ash becomes as frightening as any space monster. Just as the character is literally framed differently once his real motivations are revealed, so are his previous actions metaphorically re-framed in light of this new information. His defiance of Ripley’s orders in order to admit the xenomorph-infested Kane into the ship is now revealed as a coldly calculated transaction: Ash traded a lower-valued commodity – Kane – in order to acquire a higher-valued commodity – the xenomorph. Expanding this metaphor, the entirety of *Alien* can be described as a conflict between three classes of commodities: rebellious ones trying to escape their own commodification (the crew), loyal commodities used as a tool of the system (Ash), and a natural, uncontrolled commodity that the system is trying to subsume within itself (the xenomorph). In such a context of total commodification, the order ‘Crew Expendable’ becomes a cruel synonym of the much more jovial “Spared no expense!” used by the cinematic version of John Hammond. In the *Jurassic Park* movie, sparing no expense means spending money to make money; in *Alien*, sparing no expense means sacrificing human lives to create a new, more valuable form of life.

Note that only those commodities that rebel against their status as commodities are portrayed in a heroic, positive light – the two other types of commodities are literal

inhuman monsters. As villainous commodities, both Ash and the xenomorph stand as synecdoches of the techno-capitalist system itself. The “gleaming and beautiful, but deadly and unstoppable,” xenomorph

in many ways functions as a clear allegorical embodiment of the workings of the capitalist system. Indeed, the portrayal of the alien as predatory, unstoppable, constantly changing, and endlessly adaptable, resembles nothing more than the characterization of capitalism in *The Communism Manifesto*. Similarly, the ruthless single-mindedness of the alien, which is driven only by the desire to propagate, resembles the relentless expansionism of capitalism. (Booker 151)

This similarity between the techno-capitalist system and the xenomorph is explicitly stated in the movie by Ash, who tells the crew that the alien creature is “a perfect organism. Its structural perfection is matched only by its hostility. [...] I admire its purity. A survivor, unclouded by conscience, remorse or delusions of morality” (1:20:37). Ash here must be read as the voice of the Company. When he admires the creature for being as predatory, amoral and monstrous as he is – the only thing he says in the whole movie that is not a lie – he gives the crew and the audience a glimpse at the hidden logic that undergirds the techno-capitalist hegemony both characters and audience members live in.

3.6 – Globalization and the Colonial Ancestry of Monsters

Because they are set on Earth rather than in interstellar space, Crichton’s and Atwood’s novels can deal with geographical aspects of resource exploitation that *Alien* simply cannot. In order to explore the geography of techno-capitalism, both works make use of

the ‘cognitive mappings’ of the whole that characterise globalising capitalism of the early twenty-first century. [They] have highly distinct characteristics, frequently pivoting on images of possessive money and possessed bodies. It is typical of the cognitive cartography through which we map the space of global capitalism today that they [sic] deploy geographical metaphors: ‘South and ‘North’ being perhaps the two most significant of such spatial similes. (McNally 182)

‘South’ and ‘North’ are indeed the geographical metaphors conscripted to perform both texts’ ideological work. These cognitive ‘regions’ are, of course, inherited from European colonialism. The links between capitalism and colonialism are well-documented (McNally 213-228), so much so that Dryzek draws as strong a connection between colonialism and the Promethean discourse as he does between that discourse and capitalism. He points out that during the Industrial Revolution, “European colonial expansion opened up new continents and oceans for exploitation” and links both phenomena with the establishment of the core Promethean belief that “capitalist economic growth” is “the normal condition of a healthy society” (53). By dramatizing resource extraction in terms of predatory economic relations between the ‘North’ and the ‘South,’ both *Jurassic Park* and the *MaddAddam* trilogy warn readers that the filial bonds between the current techno-capitalism system and colonial violence are as strong as they were in the days of the British East India Company.

Jurassic Park emphasizes the colonial underpinnings of capitalism by making the Park itself a colony. Indeed, in order to create *Jurassic Park*, Hammond, the capitalist from the ‘North,’ bought an island near Costa Rica, a country in the global ‘South.’ The novel makes a point of telling us that InGen setting up shop in Central America is not an isolated incident, but part of a pattern:

There had already been cases of American bioengineering companies moving to another country so they would not be hampered by regulations and rules. The most flagrant [...] was the Biosyn rabies case.

In 1986, Genetic Biosyn Corporation of Cupertino tested bio-engineered rabies vaccines on a farm in Chile. They didn’t inform the government of Chile, or the farm workers involved. They simply released the vaccine.

The vaccine consisted of a live rabies virus, genetically modified to be nonvirulent. But the virulence hadn’t been tested; Biosyn didn’t know whether the virus could still cause rabies or not. (Crichton, *Jurassic* 43)

While Hammond and InGen are depicted as reckless and careless, its rival Dodgson and Biosyn are instead written as actively malevolent. Both InGen and Biosyn engage in a new, corporate-driven colonialism by exporting their for-profit genetic experimentation to third-world countries, but Biosyn does so with no qualm about killing the native population if needed to test their new products. InGen, by contrast, only uses the native Costa Rican workers as cheap labour and therefore appears as the lesser of two evils. That is not to say that there were no risks for the workers. On the contrary, one of the reasons why Hammond's investors are worried and insist on sending independent experts to the island is because "too many workmen have died" (54). Furthermore, both the novel and the film start with a local worker being killed by a Velociraptor. In the film, the audience sees the attack happen but in the novel the reader is only exposed to the aftermath as an injured Costa Rican worker is brought to an American doctor working in a small Costa Rican fishing village. As the doctor watches the helicopter land, she explains that InGen

was the name of the construction company building a new resort on one of the offshore islands. The resort was said to be spectacular, and very complicated; many of the local people were employed in the construction, which had been going on for more than two years. Bobbie could imagine it – one of those huge American resorts with swimming pool and tennis courts, where guests could play and drink their daiquiris, without having any contact with the real life of the country. (2)

The way she describes both the resort's supposed amenities and the voluntary isolation of the resort from the country it resides in and the people that built it is eerily similar to the way that decolonisation theorist Franz Fanon describes the colonial world:

The zone where the natives live is not complementary to the zone inhabited by the settlers. The two zones are opposed, but not in the service of a higher unity. Obedient to the rules of pure Aristotelian logic, they both follow the principle of reciprocal exclusivity. No conciliation is possible, for of the two terms, one is superfluous. The settler's town is a strongly built town, all made of stone and

steel. It is a brightly lit town; the streets are covered with asphalt, and the garbage cans swallow all the leavings, unseen, unknown, and hardly thought about. [...] The settler's town is a well-fed town; its belly is always full of good things. The settler's town is a town of white people, of foreigners. (38)

In other words, the very beginning of *Jurassic Park* establishes Jurassic Park as a city of the colonizer, appropriated and then isolated from its rightful owners. Everything about Jurassic Park is illegitimate, the novel tells us, including its location. Since the park is established as a colonial space from the very beginning, no reader is surprised when Hammond admits that “he found the Tican workmen to be uniformly insolent. To tell the truth, the choice of this island off Costa Rica had also been unwise. He would not make such an obvious mistake again” (Crichton, *Jurassic* 428). As is expected of a colonizer and a capitalist, Hammond invaded a location in the ‘South,’ pilfered its resources (including its workers) and, when his project failed, left, leaving the people and land he exploited to clean up the mess he left behind. Luckily, in the novel, Costa Rica has a military equipped with fighter planes and missiles to clean the mess by blowing up the island. In real-life, however, there is no “Costa Rican National Guard” (414) and the terrible predators populating the colonial world cannot be so easily taken care of.

Once again, the limitations of *Jurassic Park's* ideological work must be acknowledged. The novel's critique of the colonial legacy of techno-capitalism is neutered by the novel's refusal to acknowledge contemporary colonial attitudes, including its own. Indeed, the novel displays its own colonial outlook a handful of times in the novel. The prologue and first section of the novel are the most eloquent in this regard – while they are set in Costa Rica proper, the narration never allows us to see the point of view of any Costa Rican character. Furthermore, most scientific and medical experts shown in these two parts of the novel are Americans. In addition to the doctor who treats the park's wounded employee, the early chapters of the novel also introduce Dr. Guitierrez, “a senior researcher at the Reserva Biológica de Carara” who “turned out to be a bearded man wearing khaki shorts and shirt. The surprise was that he was American” and more specifically “a field biologist from Yale who had worked in Costa Rica the last five

years” (17-18). By feeling the need to repeatedly bring American characters to talk expertly about medical or scientific topics, the novel buys into and propagates the colonial stereotypes of people in the third world being primitive and technologically inferior. The novel tries to stave off that stereotype, telling us that “Costa Rica had one of the twenty best medical systems in the world” and that a local paramedic “was intelligent and well trained” (1). The effort however is quickly undercut by the fact that, only four pages later, this paramedic reacts in horror to a wounded park worker’s mention of the word ‘raptor.’ As soon as he hears that word, he moves away from the worker, terrified, crosses himself, and associates ‘raptor’ with ‘hupia,’ which the novels tell us are “night ghosts, faceless vampires who kidnapped small children” (5). The Costa Rican paramedic might be smart, but he is still very quick to fall back on ‘superstitions’ and ‘primitive’ folktales. In other words, he is quick to conform to a colonial stereotype. Even when an actual Costa Rican doctor is introduced, his credentials are established thusly: “Dr. Cruz was probably pretty capable; he spoke excellent English, the result of training at medical centers in London and Baltimore. Dr. Cruz radiated competence, and the Clínica Santa Maria, the modern hospital in Puntarenas, was spotless and efficient” (16). Competency and cleanliness are here quite explicitly associated with the ‘North,’ with Euro-American techniques and knowledge, by implied contrast with the primitive, deficient local medicine and training. A little later, the primitiveness of Costa Rica is once again emphasized when it and other South and Central American countries are described as “lack[ing] sophistication about genetic research” (43). As for the Chilean farmers who were unwittingly exposed to Biosyn’s botched vaccines, they are described as “ignorant peasants” (43). The novel may ultimately punish Hammond for looking down on the local workmen and blaming them for his own mistakes, but it treats them as badly, if not worse, than Hammond does. Even worse is the fact that, after the first few chapters, no other Costa Rican characters are ever introduced beyond brief mentions of anonymous workmen. The novel treats the “inexperienced local workmen” (4) who built Jurassic Park exactly like the park it criticizes treats them: as anonymous resources to be

exploited. And if that means some have to die and become dinosaur food, well, that is just one more *expense* that must not be *spared*.¹⁰⁵

The *MaddAddam* trilogy is much more sensitive to issues of colonialism embedded into contemporary capitalism than *Jurassic Park* and tries to eschew the colonial stereotypes that Crichton's novel tends to fall back on. There are two domains in which the trilogy dramatizes the exploitations by the North of workers (and workers' bodies) from the 'South:' sex and science. Since this research is focused on monsters created by the fusion of science and capitalism, I will not explore the sex trade aspect of the trilogy. I will mention, however, that the trilogy is quite explicit about the commodification of the poor, stating in blunt terms that the children bought and sold by sex traffickers

had a money value: they represented a cash profit to others. [...] Of course (said Oryx), having a money value was no substitute for love. Every child should have love, every person should have it [...] – but love was undependable, it came and then it went, so it was good to have a money value, because then at least those who wanted to make a profit from you would make sure you were fed enough and not damaged too much. (Atwood, *Oryx* 126)

There is no ambiguity here. The children are commodities, forced “into markets as sellers of their labour-power,” also known as ‘money value’ or ‘exchange value,’ by a still-active colonialism which “aimed at the deliberate constructions of market-relations” (McNally 217). The second volume of the trilogy emphasizes the commodification of foreign sex workers by comparing their low exchange value with the exchange value of North American sex workers:

[...] none of us regular Scales girls had to do plank duty with the new vets because we were skilled artists and any damage to us would be pricey. For the basic bristle work they brought in the temporaries – smuggled Eurotrash or Tex-

¹⁰⁵ I am being admittedly harsh about the novel here. More charitable colleagues have pointed out to me that this novel's poor treatment of the Costa Rican might be a form of irony, a way to highlight the absurdity of colonial stereotypes by magnifying them and taking them to their logical conclusion. Having read the majority of Crichton's novels, I am skeptical about this interpretation, but I cannot definitively invalidate it.

Mexicans or Asian Fusion and Redfish minors scooped off the streets because the Painball guy wanted membrane [...], and Scales didn't want to spend Sticky Zone money either testing these girls or fixing them up. (Atwood, *Year*, 130)

Interestingly, note that the cognitive mappings used are not only 'North' and 'South,' but also 'West' and 'East.' These pairs are not entirely synonymous but they carry the same colonial implications and can therefore be considered equivalent for the purpose of an analysis of the ideological work of the trilogy.

While not presented through the same vocabulary, the commodification of the foreign poor for the benefit of corporate scientists nonetheless follows the same colonial logic. For example, when discussing his pet project (the Crakers) with Jimmy, Crake mentions that "we had to alter human embryos, which we got from – never mind where we got them" (Atwood *Oryx* 303). The obvious implication here is that he got them from the same place sex trafficking services get their workers – the same services through which he himself found Oryx. *Jurassic Park* also mentions the commodification of embryos and similar genetic material – "bioengineered DNA was, weight for weight, the most valuable material in the world" (Crichton 76) – but *Oryx and Crake* goes one step further by highlighting the colonial origin of this most valuable substance.

An even more explicit example of techno-capitalism's colonial underpinnings can be found in Crake's presentation of his other pet project, the BlyssPluss pill. BlyssPluss is to be sold as a superpowered aphrodisiac that also protects against all sexually transmitted diseases and infections, but its real purpose is to "act as a sure-fire one-time-does-it-all birth-control pill, for male and female alike, thus automatically lowering the population" (294). The pill, according to Crake, "would confer large-scale benefits, not only on individual users – although it had to appeal to these or it would be a failure in the marketplace – but on society as a whole; and not only on society, but on the planet. The investors were very keen on it, it was going to be global. It was all upside. There was no

downside at all” (294). Note the satire here – corporations will only save the planet, the novel states, when there is a buck to be made doing it.¹⁰⁶

The BlyssPluss plan, however, is even worse than simply mercenary and self-serving, even before Crake subverts it and uses it as a vector for his apocalyptic plague. Crake mentions that, according “to the latest confidential Corps demographic report,” Earth’s overpopulation is caused in major part by “marginal geo-political areas”: what we would call the Third World or, more euphemistically, the ‘developing world’ (294-295). One can therefore assume that this is where the pill would be deployed first and on the largest scale, even though Crake insures that “very soon, demand is going to exceed supply *for everyone*” (295) and thus that the pill will be available everywhere (which it does end up being). The catch, however, is that the sterilizing effect of the BlyssPluss pill “could be made reversible, though not in individual subjects, by altering the components of the pill as needed, i.e., if the population of any one area got too low” (294). The novel does not give any more details, but it is easy to extrapolate from the clues given that the corporations probably intend to put this reversal in effect in very precise locations in order to maintain the most profitable equilibrium between consumers and producers. In other words, the corporations are planning to cull the 99% in order to create a more profitable world for the 1% they represent, all under the guise of ‘saving the planet.’

Colonialism informs the creation process of the BlyssPluss pill as well as its distribution. As with any new drugs, Rejoovenessence must conduct clinical trials to ensure that the pill works as intended. The side-effects of this process are no less horrific in *Oryx and Crake* than they are in *Anita*, *Cédric*, and *Dans le ventre du dragon*: As Jimmy relates, “a couple of the test subjects had literally fucked themselves to death, several had assaulted old ladies and household pets, and there had been a few unfortunate cases of priapism and split dicks” (295). However, the Québécois texts had the test subjects selected from a ‘northern’ proletariat. In *Oryx and Crake*, the test subjects are “from the poorer countries.

¹⁰⁶ The way the corporations plan on saving the planet – by sterilizing the 99% instead of redistributing their wealth or otherwise fixing social inequalities – is also pretty mercenary and self-centered. This plan has been used in other contemporary satires of capitalism. Of particular note is the British-American film *Kingsman: The Secret Service*, where tech genius Richmond Valentine has a similar plan and similarly faux-altruistic motivations.

Pay them a few dollars, they don't even know what they're taking. Sex clinics, of course – they're happy to help. Whorehouses. Prisons. And from the ranks of the desperate, as usual" (296). Not only are the test subjects coming from the 'South,' from those "marginal geopolitical areas" previously mentioned, but they also come in major part from the sex trade, which the novel has already established as a field of unrelenting human commodification. McNally distinguishes between modern African zombies, who are labourers and "living-dead producers of wealth for others" (McNally 210) and Hollywood zombies, who he identifies as crazed consumers. The same distinction could be made here between the test-subject-consumers found in *Anita*, *Cédric*, and *Dans le ventre du dragon*, who come from the 'North,' and the test-subject-labourers found in *Oryx and Crake*, who come from the 'South.' Both are commodities, but the addition of colonialism to the commodification process changes the nature of those commodities.

Despite going further than *Jurassic Park* in its criticism of colonialism, the *MaddAddam* trilogy does end up nonetheless facing similar limitations. For one, just like in *Jurassic Park*, there are almost no colonized voices – everything is seen through the eyes of the colonizers, of the privileged. There is one character from the Third World in the novel – Oryx – whose backstory as a sexual commodity composes the brunt of the anti-colonial criticism contained in the first novel. However, Oryx never gets an actual name and is barely mentioned in the other two volumes. Furthermore, her backstory might not actually be true. It might only be an elaborate fiction she creates to satisfy Jimmy's 'White Saviour' fantasy:

"I don't buy it," said Jimmy. Where was her rage, how far down was it buried, what did he have to do to dig it up?

"You don't buy what?"

"Your whole fucking story. All this sweetness and acceptance and crap."

"If you don't want to buy that Jimmy," said Oryx, looking at him tenderly, "what is it that you would like to buy instead?" (Atwood, *Oryx* 142)

Her story, Oryx seems to say, is nothing more than a (hyperreal) commodity she created to sell to Jimmy. This interpretation is given further credence when Ren, who is a sex worker herself, states that she “could tell she’s been one of us: a girl for rent, of one kind or another. It was obvious if you knew the signs. *She was acting all the time, giving nothing away about herself*” (*Year 306*, my emphasis). Thus, even when the trilogy gives the Third World a voice, this voice cannot be trusted, which undermines the anti-colonial critique of the novel. As one globalization scholar puts it,

specific attention to matters of global concern in the novel are muted in favour of attention to what the contemporary media might term Jimmy’s “human story.” Jimmy is not capable of connecting the dots. Like Crake, he entertains a vague conspiracy theory of global commerce but is incapable of analyzing how this world works and what links the world in which he grows up with that of Oryx’s childhood on the other side of the world. [...] Instead of connecting the dots linking globalization back to colonialism, Jimmy sees colonialism as another slightly absurd costume drama, laced with hypocrisy. (Brydon 452)

This passage was written before *Year of the Flood* and *MaddAddam* were published, but despite the effort made to show different, less privileged perspectives on the setting, both the perspectives and the setting remain firmly anchored in the North American metropolis. Brydon’s criticism thus remains valid even in hindsight.

3.7 – Importing Monsters: Capitalism and Nationalism.

Related to but distinct from a critique of global techno-capitalism is a critique of foreign techno-capitalism. In both cases, a link is established between techno-capitalist practices and colonial imperatives, but the origin of the colonial – and thus techno-capitalist – force is different. In the first kind of critique, the capitalist colonizer is the geopolitical metropolis from which the work hails. In the second kind, the work’s culture of origin is a victim of a capitalist colonizer characterized as a foreign Other. Othering techno-capitalist corporations has the benefit of making them simultaneously scarier and easier to understand. Scarier because the reader is then positioned as a victim rather than a

participant or tacit supporter of colonialization; easier to understand because techno-capitalism is reduced to a network of enemy agents rather than being represented as the supranational system with no roots and no easily pinpointable origin that it is. While the ideological work performed by dramatizing techno-capitalism as a foreign invader does have anti-colonial undertones – mainly through the inscription of the techno-capitalist problem seen in the narrative in a larger geopolitical context of oppression – these undertones are dwarfed by the nationalist subtext inherent in such dramatization.

The best examples of critiques of foreign techno-capitalism can be found in the Québécois portion of my corpus. The corporations and corporate mad scientists of *Dans le ventre du dragon*, *Anita* and *Cédric* are all coded as English-speaking. Seemingly reflecting the insidious nature of techno-capitalist domination, this encoding is at its most visible in the surnames of the corporate mad scientists: Drs. Williams and Morrow in *Anita* and *Cédric*,¹⁰⁷ Drs. Lucas and Wells in *Dans le ventre du dragon*. Morrow and Wells are especially interesting cases because both could be seen simply as references to H.G. Wells and *The Island of Doctor Moreau* and thus devoid of any nationalist subtext. While I agree that the reference to the famous science-fiction writers is clearly intended in both cases, the larger context of each work indicates that the names are to be read as more than a reference. In the case of *Cédric*, the spelling of Morrow especially is interesting. Dr Morrow's full name is Doctor Bernard Morrow and he heads the Paris-based subsidiary of Alphalab. The implication is that he is French, yet the spelling of his surname is notably anglicized compared to the original Doctor Moreau, whose name is unmistakably francophone in spelling. In other words, the novel went out of its way to borrow the surname of a fictional British scientist, anglicize its spelling and then give it to a fictional French corporate scientist. This is too involved a process to be an accident or a coincidence, especially when one recalls all the other examples explored in Part I where the novel establishes a link between monstrous techno-capitalist exploitation, France, and English-speaking economies, namely the United States. Interestingly, the codicil that closes the series makes a point of stating that “out of the twenty countries we

¹⁰⁷ Dr. Williams appears in both novels, Dr. Morrow only in *Cédric*.

have offered the molecule to, six have showed an interest: North Korea, Norway, the United States, Russia, Syria and Afghanistan” (*Chapitre final* 19). The fact that the series as a whole equates the United States with common Western boogeymen like North Korea and Russia speaks quite loudly to the low opinion of the United States not only in *Cédric* specifically, but in Québécois culture at large.

Depicting capitalist colonizers as English-speakers is a common trope in Québécois culture and has been for a long time. During the sixties, inspired by decolonisation theorists such as Franz Fanon and Albert Memmi, the defence of the French language in Quebec became interwoven with the racialized discourse of ‘whiteness’ and ‘blackness’ as symbols of colonial oppression and resistance (respectively) that spread globally during this period. To define what they saw as their subjugated status, the more radical early sovereigntists started referring to themselves as "white niggers of America," drawing a parallel between their situation and the situation of African-Americans living in the segregated southern half of the United States.¹⁰⁸ Rather than being discriminated against on the basis of skin colour, “for Quebeckers, the French language was their *blackness*. ‘Speak White’ was the command of the coloniser to the colonised, the command of the British in west Montreal, of White Americans in the United States, of the British colonizers in Africa and of the French in Algeria” (Mills 82). As techno-capitalism ever more fully assimilates scientists into itself, science in Quebec fiction accordingly becomes more and more frequently depicted as colonized by these very same English-speaking capitalist invaders.

Dans le ventre du dragon, for example, makes this link explicit at the very beginning, when the director of Sciences et Recherches tells Doctor Lucas that “I came down from New York specifically to talk to you. Lucas, this facility has been in existence for more than 80 years. Out of Dr. Wells’s miserable little lab, we have created the most important pharmaceutical consortium in North America” (*Dans le ventre* 00:11:23). These lines – the first spoken by this character – make it clear that despite his perfect French, this man

¹⁰⁸ In French, “négres blanc d’Amérique.” The expression gained in popularity after the publication in 1968 of a book of the same name by sovereigntist activist and FLQ member Pierre Vallières. The book was both an autobiography and an explanation of his political views while in prison for terrorism.

who views the Montreal facility and its workers with disdain represents American corporate interests. His disdain is reiterated at the end of the film, when he speaks of Lucas's secret collection of half-dead test subjects thusly: "Get rid of all these diseased monsters. Of these vermin crawling everywhere. Disgusting!" (01:31:38). As with techno-capitalist agents in other works, the director sees the bodies of both workers and monsters as nothing more than commodities which he can dispose of once he has no more use for them. Tellingly, the director refers to the test subjects as corpses, despite the fact that we have seen a number of them breathe and moan earlier in the scene. In doing so, he foreshadows Dr. Lucas's eventual fate – "You have as little worth as these corpses now!" (01:32:09) – and provides another example of the techno-capitalist and colonial mindset my corpus criticizes. The *Chapitre final* of the *Cobayes* series contains a similar example. When asked about the test subjects Alphalab used to develop its valuable drug, the former assistant of Doctor Wells, who also sports an English surname (Frank), starts having

a fleeting thought for the hundred or so lab rats I have studied. One or two faces sometimes drift to the surface, but nothing more. After all, they were *only* guinea pigs. [...] None of them should have survived the experiment, despite what Williams thought. In order to protect Alphalab's public image as well as the market value of the molecule, there were not supposed to be any witnesses. But thanks to the man's terrible decisions, some of them have managed to escape from our clutches. (5-6)

The test subjects used by Dr. Lucas are of the same economic class as those used by Crake: people with "no family, no known address, no stable relationships. Nobody to worry about their disappearance. As if they had ceased to exist" (*Dans le ventre* 01:31:26). Cédric is similarly chosen in part because "he does not seem to have established relationships with anyone. This could be useful if something were to go wrong" (Chaperon 28). In other words, Atwood's trilogy, Simoneau's film and Chaperon's novel all feature corporations that use the poor and the destitute as a resource to fuel for-profit scientific projects. However, the geopolitical movement of these poor

and destitute in Atwood's novels is the reverse of the movement shown in the Québécois works. In the former, the local American corporations import foreign test subjects; in the latter, the foreign American corporations colonize Montreal and exploit local subjects.

While I read the English surnames of the corporate mad scientists as ideologically significant, it is not my intention to imply that all characters with English-sounding names are to be read as foreign techno-capitalist colonizers. Thanks to centuries of cohabitation, a large number of francophones in Quebec have English-sounding surnames, including the eponymous protagonist of *Anita*, whose surname is West. It is not the English surnames alone that make the names of Doctors Lucas, Wells, Williams, and Morrow so ideologically loaded but the *regularity* with which Québécois stories about mad scientists gives those scientists English surnames along with corporate ties. An example from outside my corpus might help illustrate just how frequent this phenomenon is. The extremely popular farcical space opera *Dans une galaxie près de chez vous* (*In a Galaxy Near You*) is perfect for this purpose. This franchise first began as a television show in 1998 and ran four seasons. Due to its immense popularity, especially among younger viewers, the series received two theatrical sequels in 2004 and 2008. I emphasize the popularity of the show to make clear that it had a non-negligible cultural impact on a generation of Québécois, similar to *Passe-Partout*. Discussions of and references to the show are still made regularly in Québécois culture and talk of an upcoming third movie has been going around for years. It is therefore anything but banal that this show features a scientist character with the extremely anglophone name of *Brad Spitfire*.

Dans une galaxie près de chez vous follows the adventures of the crew of the spaceship *Romano-Fafard* as they try to find a new planet for humanity to inhabit after global warming has rendered Earth unable to sustain human life. Despite the fact that the opening credits of almost every episode explicitly state that the *Romano-Fafard* is a *Canadian* spaceship, all crewmembers have distinctly Francophone first and last names, with the exception of the ship's science officer, the aforementioned Brad Spitfire. In addition to being a scientist – and a monster-making one in the first movie – Spitfire is also the cowardly, weaselly, fascist-loving, and more often than not actively malicious

son of the owner of the ultra-wealthy and ultra-powerful Spitfire Corporation. In fact, while Brad is a competent scientist, he owes his current job on the *Romano-Fafard* not to his skills but to his father's money and influence. In one episode that flashes back to the first time the crew met, an officer of the "Planetary Federation" hands the Captain a letter ordering him to accept Spitfire as his science officer despite the presence of more qualified candidates, adding in a snide tone that the letter is "signed by the President of the Federation, that very same President who is funded primarily by the father of Mr. Spitfire. Get it?" ("La Génèse" 00:16:40). Much more could be said about this character and the show itself, but this would be getting too far off track. I am bringing up Brad Spitfire simply as an example of how widespread the equation between techno-capitalism and English-speakers (especially Americans) is in Quebec culture, reaching even extremely popular franchises. Considering the ubiquity of the villainous corporate mad scientists coded as anglophone, reading the use of English surnames for corporate mad scientists in *Anita*, *Cédric* and *Dans le ventre du dragon* as examples of a larger cultural discourse associating capitalist exploitation with American economic domination is thus nothing but logical. In Quebec, class consciousness has a linguistic and nationalist subtext that reverberates throughout most, if not all, narratives about capitalist monsters and their equally monstrous creators.

Associating techno-capitalism with foreign invaders is not unique to Quebec. The corporations in my selected Canadian texts are truly multinational, globalist behemoths with no distinctive national origin perceivable in their name or branding, true, but this is not the case with two of the three American texts from my corpus, despite these texts hailing from the most secure techno-capitalist hegemony on Earth. While this seeming paradox may surprise readers, it is consistent with previous research I have done on the subject, which revealed how

a group that is profoundly dominant or hegemonic can nevertheless characterize itself as being in constant danger of being dominated and therefore weave socio-ideological mythologies and imaginative fictions that rationalize, valorize and popularize this self-characterization. This dystopian kind of mythology [...] can

also help create and reinforce a paranoid mind-set that would do anything in the name of the privileged group's notions of freedom. (Desbiens-Brassard 127)

The examples of such narratives in my corpus are much less vitriolic and fiery in their critique of the foreign enemy than the Cold War invasion novels the above excerpt originally referred to were,¹⁰⁹ but they exhibit the same displacement of power from one's own nation to an hostile foreign one, despite the mostly illusory nature of this foreign threat outside the fiction.

As we have seen throughout this text, the corporation at the centre of *Alien* is not named in the movie. Rather it is only referred to as "the Company," a choice likely made to emphasize the encroaching power of this techno-capitalist mega-corporation. However, eagle-eyed viewers would notice that various props in the movie (including the crew's underwears) bear the company's actual name: Weylan-Yutani. The name, a creation of designer Ron Cobb, reflected the popular economic imaginary of the time:

One of the things I enjoyed most about *Alien* is its subtle satirical content. Science fiction films offer golden opportunities to throw in little scraps of information that suggest enormous changes in the world. There's a certain potency in those kinds of remarks. Weylan-Yutani for instance is almost a joke, but not quite. I wanted to imply that poor old England is back on its feet and has united with the Japanese, who have taken over the building of spaceships the same way they have now with cars and supertankers. In coming up with a strange company name I thought of British Leyland and Toyota, but we couldn't use "Leyland-Toyota" in the film. Changing one letter gave me "Weylan," and "Yutani" was a Japanese neighbor of mine. (Mollo and Cobb)

Starting with *Aliens*, the name was modified slightly to "Weyland-Yutani" to clarify Cobb's 'joke' and was kept this way for the remainder of the franchise.¹¹⁰ However,

¹⁰⁹ The invasion novels in question were Oliver Lange's *Vandenberg* (1971) and M.J. Engh's *Arslan* (1976).

¹¹⁰ It was impossible for me to find any information why the final 'd' was omitted in the original movie. It might have been for fear of litigation or simply a question of available space on the props.

while the ‘Weyland’ portion of the company would be expanded upon with two different iterations of a founder named Weyland appearing onscreen,¹¹¹ the Yutani portion and its globalist implications have not yet been explored. The exception is the final scene of the astoundingly terrible *Alien vs Predator: Requiem*, which features a brief appearance by a “Ms. Yutani” who, despite being a Japanese character, is played by Sino-Canadian actress Françoise Yip. It seems that the fear of an economic takeover by Japan is one of the few things in *Alien* that has not stood the test of time and into which neither the sequels, prequels, nor spin-offs seem interested in digging deeper.

Back in the eighties and nineties, however, an imminent Japanese takeover of the global economy was a common American fear and *Alien* was far from alone in expressing this idea through science-fiction. Cyberpunk fiction was especially replete with references to immensely powerful Japanese companies, either existing or fictional ones. For examples, look no further than to the novel *Neuromancer* by William Gibson or to the heavily Japanese-influenced cityscape of 2019 Los Angeles in another Ridley Scott film, *Blade Runner*. This notion was influenced by very real economic anxieties of the era, anxieties to which Michael Crichton was no stranger. Indeed, the park is financed by fictional “Japanese investment Consortia, such as Hamaguri and Densaka” (xii) as well as “Hamachi” (Crichton, *Jurassic* 54). The novel is also peppered with comments about the character of Japanese businessmen in comparison with that of their American counterparts. For example, Gennaro mentions that “[t]he Japanese were the only investors that had the patience” to deal with Hammond’s eccentricities while Hammond himself states that, due to the high entry fees he plans to charge, “a visit [to Jurassic Park] becomes a status symbol, and all Americans love that. So do the Japanese, and of course they have far more money” (223). These few scattered comments are doubly interesting if we consider that, *Rising Sun*, the very next novel Crichton published after *Jurassic Park*, was entirely about the threat posed to the United States’ economy by Japanese business practices. The book was extremely controversial, with Asian-American activists calling it

¹¹¹ Lance Henriksen, who played Bishop the android in *Aliens* and *Alien³*, plays a character named Charles Bishop Weyland in *Alien vs Predator* (2004). Once Ridley Scott returned to the franchise, he ignored that movie and had Guy Pearce play a character named Peter Weyland in both *Prometheus* (2012) and *Alien: Covenant* (2017).

“a very one-sided, paranoid thriller” in which “every character [went] on for pages about how unfair Japanese business practices are” and presented “a very one-sided view of what the Japanese are doing, saying that there's reason to not trust them and not like them” (Aoki qtd. in Payne 31-32). Interestingly, the protests organized against this novel’s adaptation into a big-budget movie revealed to the public eye this long-simmering phobia against Japanese companies that had until then been an unchallenged part of American popular culture.

3.8 – Conclusion

If the first part of this research was about consumption and the second about creation, this part was about exploitation: the exploitation of nature, of natural resources, and of workers – which as far as the techno-capitalist system is concerned all boils down to the same thing. In dramatizing this exploitation through monster narratives, the works in my corpus warn not only against the commodification of consumers, scientists, labourers, and monsters – and of any combination thereof – but also of the new myths used by the techno-capitalist system to obfuscate and justify exploitation. Be it a secular Promethean discourse or the prosperity gospel, what McNally calls the “mysteries and sorceries of capital” (209) are here exaggerated and mocked in order to reveal “the hidden processes by which embodied powers are appropriated and exploited” and to “trac[e] the outlines of an occult economy that subsists on the energies of labouring bodies” (201). The corpse economy is a fact of life in the “occult economies of late capitalism” from which my corpus hails, but it is an oft-ignored and oft-hidden fact (214). The texts analyzed in this last part shed light on this economy in the hope that, once revealed, the corpses on which capitalist monsters feed will be as unbearable to us as they are to the Lou’s co-workers in *Dans le ventre du Dragon*: “Are you thinking what I’m thinking, Steve? It’s disgusting, what’s happening here. Stealing the life of others like this, it’s inhuman. We can’t leave this be Steve, huh? What we gonna do? What we gonna do?” (01:30:23). After thoroughly analyzing the critique of capitalism deployed in every work that makes up my corpus, it is time to answer this very important question for ourselves. Now that we have seen the monsters and heard the warnings, *what are we going to do?*

Conclusion

Our impulses are being redirected. We are living in an artificially induced state of consciousness that resembles sleep. [...] The poor and the underclass are growing. Racial justice and human rights are non-existent. They have created a repressive society and we are their unwitting accomplices. Their intention to rule rests with the annihilation of consciousness. We have been lulled into a trance. They have made us indifferent to ourselves, to others. We are focused only on our own gain. Please understand: they are safe as long as they are not discovered. That is their primary method of survival. Keep us asleep, keep us selfish, keep us sedated.

— John Lawrence as an unnamed doomsayer on television, *They Live!* (1988)
(00:12:00 – 00:13:28)

In John Carpenter's 1988 satirical thriller *They Live!*, a down-on-his-luck drifter finds a pair of sunglasses that allows him to see the truth behind our modern world. This truth is that Earth is under the domination of a race of alien visitors who, with the support of the rich and powerful, beams a secret signal right into our brains to hide their existence. Wearing the sunglasses reveals not only the aliens' real, ugly, somewhat skull-like appearance but also the subliminal commands hidden in media and advertising. With the sunglasses on, billboards and glossy magazines become nothing more than a literalization of Baudrillard's code: big black messages written on a plain white background, messages like "Obey", "Conform" and "Consume" (*They Live!* 00:33:31).

In many ways, the various texts I have analyzed act exactly like a pair of *They Live!*'s sunglasses. They reveal the monsters hidden in North American techno-capitalist societies, monsters that ignore national and linguistic borders just like they ignore the border that exists between scientific research and capitalist modes of production. In Canada, Quebec or the United States, in English or French, stories of techno-capitalist monsters are "passing on the very sort of tales one would expect mass culture to suppress: tales about the horror of economic struggle under capitalism and the degradation suffered by those who must sell pieces of themselves on the free market"

(Newitz 182). In doing so, these narratives paradoxically make themselves into monsters. Indeed, novels and films about techno-capitalist monsters are hybrid creatures, both critiques and products of commodification and dead labor. No matter how virulent the anti-capitalist message may be in a particular novel or film, the fact remains that novels and films are commodities made to be sold on the market in exchange for capital for their owners. Newitz states that “[t]he economic subtexts of these monster stories, no matter how distorted or unconscious, remind us that the specter that haunts our mass culture is capitalism” (183). Similarly, I argue that the very existence of these stories reminds us that capitalism itself is haunted by monsters, monsters it can never truly vanquish.

So far, I have avoided making explicit comparisons pitting the texts from the three different cultures against each other. This was a side-effect of wanting to focus on close-readings and common motifs with ideological significance. To make up for this absence, I shall now draw a few comparative conclusions.

First, American techno-capitalist monsters are much more numerous than Canadian and Québécois monsters. The American works I have chosen to study are a small fraction of what is available in terms of films and novels on the subject. Newitz and Latham both cover a sizeable number of other examples of techno-capitalist (or simply capitalist) monsters without overlapping either with my corpus or with each other’s. By contrast, the Canadian works I have selected represent a much bigger portion of what is extant and those that remain, especially in terms of films, are often co-opted by studies on American culture¹¹². As for Québécois texts, the techno-capitalist monster stories in my corpus are pretty much the only ones I am aware of, with the exception of the 5 other novels in the *Cobayes* series that I have not discussed. Part of this discrepancy in numbers is a consequence of demography. A bigger audience for a genre means more works in that genre are produced and relatively niche genres like science-fiction and horror tend to be even more affected by these demographic differences than mainstream genres like comedy or romance. But demography is only half the answer. The other half is simply

¹¹² Newitz herself covers a few Canadian films, most especially *Videodrome* “not without realizing that Canadian monster stories merit their own volume of essays” (185, note 8). A volume that, as far as I can tell, does not yet exist.

that the United States are “a nation devoted to capitalism as both an economic and a moral system” (Newitz 7). Techno-capitalism is an ever-present, seemingly unstoppable force in the United States. The fears it creates are thus felt more intensely and more urgently by its victims, hence the need for monstrous figures to accurately represent its dangers. By contrast, while Canada and Quebec are undeniably capitalist cultures – like Donald Trump, the current Premiers of Quebec and Ontario both pointed to their record as ‘successful businessmen’ as their primary qualification for the job – they also have a larger social safety net and stronger socio-democratic principles (though not to the extent of many European nations). The threat of capitalism is slightly blunted in Canada and Quebec, at least in popular perception. It is still a dangerous force, but comparisons with the United States tend to (wrongly, in my opinion) diminish the urgency of its threat in the minds of many Canadians and Québécois. This is one of the reasons I included Canadian and Québécois texts – to show that we are not immune to the monstrous ravages of techno-capitalism and that, deep down, we know how scary that fact is.

The main difference between American, Canadian and Quebecois texts is the nationalist bent given to their anti-capitalist warnings. In the Québécois texts, the identification of the techno-capitalist villains with the United States comes almost naturally and unconsciously on the author’s part, as indicated by the predominance of English surnames for characters who are otherwise perfectly francophone. Even when a work makes a calculated effort to associate techno-capitalism with another nation – such as *Cédric* with France – the United States still manage to infiltrate the narrative (in this case, in the form of Wes Anderson). In my Canadian works, meanwhile, while there is a tacit implication that the stories take place in the United States, there is no explicit mention of the United States in the narrative, nor are the greedy corporations featured ever given a national origin.¹¹³ In the case of *Splice*, the lack of an identifiable setting is likely simply a way to make the film appealing to as large a market as possible. The explicit absence of setting identifiers is more surprising in the case of Atwood. Atwood has explicitly linked

¹¹³ *Splice*, while shot in Toronto, made sure to have no identifying Canadian features (such as visible licence plates), and while she never states it in the novel, Atwood has said in interview that the *MaddAddam* trilogy is set on the American East Coast, likely near Boston (Brooks 140)

both capitalism (*Surfacing*) and dystopia (*The Handmaid's Tale*) with the United States before, so why be coy in her novels about a capitalist dystopia? I can only speculate but my best guess is that, similar to *Splice*, she wanted to reach as large an audience and warn as many people as possible. Consequently, she made sure that the setting could be any reader's backyard. All three American texts feature American corporations, though two of them (*Alien* and *Jurassic Park*) also hint at Japanese involvement. In this way, these two American texts are closer to the Québécois texts than the Canadian ones, since they both identify techno-capitalism as at least partly a foreign, invading threat. I have noticed this kind of similarity between American and Québécois popular culture before, so I am not surprised to see it here.¹¹⁴ Quebec and the United States both have a strong sense of national identity and patriotism, for better or for worse, and this manifests in how they perceive threats. English Canada, on the other hand, tends to be more subtle about it. Or should I say – more *polite*?

One more sweeping cultural statement I can make is that in the American texts, the techno-capitalist system eventually loses control of the mad scientists and their creations. However, no significant damage is inflicted on the system and, importantly, this is presented as either a good thing (*Midnight*) or, at least, not *explicitly* a bad thing (*Alien*, *Jurassic Park*). The problem with techno-capitalism in the American texts is less that it is intrinsically highly exploitative and more that it is too easily exploited by immoral or amoral people. By the end of the story, these people are punished, their monstrous creations are more or less under control, and the crisis is averted. Similarly, the techno-capitalist order is always restored in Québécois monster stories and the monsters are always defeated. Crucially, however, this state of affairs is this time presented as a *very bad thing*. In the Québécois texts, the danger of techno-capitalist monsters is that there are always more where those came from. There is a form of defeatism in these stories – the protagonists do not always survive and, even when they do, the danger is still present. It might not be urgent, it might have receded in the background, but techno-capitalism is always there, lurking. Even *Dans le ventre du dragon*, which has a 'happy ending,'

¹¹⁴ Similarities between Cold War era 'paranoid' fiction in Quebec and the United States was one of the main topics of my MA thesis (see Desbiens-Brassard in the Works Cited).

remains quite vague about what this happy ending actually entails. Was Lou successful in cutting the dragon's neck? The movie hints he might have been but makes sure to never explicitly confirm it one way or the other, as if it could not muster enough optimism to assure us that it is safe to go back to sleep there is no monster in the closet. The Canadian texts are more diverse in their ending. *Splice* ends, like the Québécois texts, with the techno-capitalist system mostly winning. The *MaddAddam* trilogy's ending is more optimistic – in fact, it might be the most optimistic work in my corpus. As in the American texts, the system loses control of its mad scientist. This time, however, order is not restored. Instead of being purged of its dangerous elements, the techno-capitalist system collapses entirely, and the possibility of a new, better world is offered. It is a fragile potential, but it is more than the rest of my corpus offers. All the works in my corpus warn against techno-capitalism; only the *MaddAddam* trilogy offers a solution to it.

The most important comparative conclusion I can make however, is that despite all the minute differences, all the works I have analysed, no matter their origin, exhibit the same fears and anxieties about the techno-capitalist hegemony in which they were created. Throughout this study, I have pointed out multiple parallels and commonalities between the texts, and ultimately, it is these that need to be focused upon. When a single boy cries wolf, he is easy to ignore. But when multiple voices from different cultures and different time periods all sound the same alarm, one has no choice but to listen.

I have not attempted an exhaustive study of techno-capitalist monsters nor have I said all there is to be said about them. There are other examples of these monsters in both literature and films that I have not studied, especially in the United States. There are examples in popular culture outside film and literature as well. In television, I could point to the robot-filled theme park of HBO's *Westworld* (since 2016, based on a 1973 movie written and directed by Michael Crichton) or to the Québécois miniseries *Grande Ourse* (2003), which combined witchcraft and mad science in one terrifying package. Videogames also contain their share of techno-capitalist monsters, such as those that prowl the underwater city of Rapture, a failed techno-capitalist utopia and the main

setting of *Bioshock* (2007). The corpus could also be extended geographically and culturally. By including films or novels from Britain and Australia, for example, one could shift the analysis from North America to the Anglosphere as a whole.

Even without going outside my corpus, there are a number of elements in the works I studied that I did not address. Many of these elements relate to issues of gender and sexuality. While I may have incidentally and fleetingly touched on gender while discussing one aspect or another of a novel or film's ideological work, I have abstained from really addressing how issues of gender and sexuality "provide a context for economic crisis; they complicate the idea of class by providing alternate models of oppression and liberation; and most importantly, they operate alongside capitalism as overwhelming social forces which help create monsters as often as they create 'normal' individuals" (Newitz 9). Issues like the moralisation of artificial and natural reproduction in *Jurassic Park* and *Splice*, the perpetuation of traditional gender roles in the *MaddAddam* trilogy and *Midnight*, or the representation of sexual violence in *Cédric* and *Alien* all contribute to the ideological work of those novels and films and, logically, to their critique of techno-capitalism as well.

For example, is it a coincidence that the two scientists in my corpus characterized by a surplus rather than a dearth of emotion are also the only two who are women? Do both films play into the very old – and unfortunately still too widely believed – myth that women are less rational and more emotional than men? This is a hard question to answer based. On one hand, *Splice* does present its female scientist, Elsa, as more emotional and impulsive than her male partner because she is a woman. On the other hand, this abundance of emotions is portrayed mostly positively, while Chorot's profit-oriented vision and lack of scientific curiosity and passion are portrayed mostly negatively. The fact that Elsa rejects traditional feminine gender roles such as motherhood and joins Chorot in exploiting her 'baby' for profit at the end of the film – in other words, the fact that "[t]he creature's threat to patriarchal capitalism is ultimately contained both by its physical destruction and by its integration into the system of big business" (A. Miller 335) – is not a happy ending, but a tragic one, as befits a horror movie. In *Splice*,

forsaking one's womanhood – represented in essentialist terms through gendered commodities (make-up, dresses, dolls) and caring motherhood – is a dangerous act, because it leads one right into the arms of exploitative techno-capitalism and its paternalistic hierarchy. This can be read either as a warning against hyperrationality in line with those explored in Part II or as a unique filtering of Barbara Creed's concept of the monstrous feminine through a techno-capitalist lens that warns against a new form of 'matriarchal' capitalism that rejects "a traditional procreative process that often impedes women's careers and their desire to 'have it all': a career and motherhood on *their* terms" (A. Miller 329).

By contrast, the gender of the equally over-emotional Dr. Lucas does not seem to factor into *Dans le ventre du dragon*'s critique of her behaviour and scientific ideology. Dr. Lucas's assistant Mireille, despite her lack of emotion and devotion to her corporate superiors, is no more or less feminine than Dr. Lucas. Both wear the same artifices of femininity, simply in different styles. The only aspect of the movie where gender could be seen as coming into play is in Dr. Lucas's overtly intimate behavior towards Lou. In one particularly uncomfortable scene, Dr. Lucas even kisses Lou on the mouth. The framing of that scene as well as its musical accompaniment helps send the message to the audience that this apparent lusting of Dr. Lucas after Lou is abnormal, even deviant. However, since sexual deviancy is a common component of the mad (male) scientist figure, I can hardly make the case that Dr. Lucas's sexual deviancy has anything to do with her gender. Thus, while it is undoubtedly fascinating that the two women scientists in my corpus have so much that simultaneously ties them together and distinguishes them from the rest of the male mad scientists in the corpus, I am unable to say with certainty whether or not their shared gender is the reason for the similarities between the two characters. My lack of answers betrays my relatively limited knowledge of feminist and queer theory. Because of this lack of knowledge (and not a lack of awareness or interest), I felt that reserving the material for other, more knowledgeable, researchers to handle would be better than producing a shallow analysis that would have done disservice to these very important and complex issues.

This study is nothing more than the beginning of what can be said about techno-capitalist monsters. Techno-capitalist monsters are still mostly invisible, “mov[ing] throughout the circuits of cultural exchange largely detached from the system that gives them their life-threatening energies” (McNally 3). Studies like those of McNally, Newitz, Latham and myself may have struck a few blows, but Moloch and his children are still alive and well, using scientific progress to feed ever more *efficiently* not only on the poor and the marginalized but on humanity as a whole. And with recent scientific developments, Moloch might become even more dangerous than he already is. In July 2019, the Japanese government allowed a team of researchers to create and bring to term animal embryos that contain human cells, just like in *Splice*, in the hope of growing harvestable human organs into host animals, just like in the *MaddAddam* trilogy. Such embryos have been made before, but they were never brought to term because of ethical concerns. Meanwhile, only a few months earlier, a Chinese scientist claimed to have created the world’s first gene-edited babies by modifying embryos of seven couples so that the resulting babies would be able to resist an HIV infection – something that a few rare people are naturally able to do. The claim, which has not been verified, sparked outrage all over the world, with one expert – Julian Savulescu, professor of practical ethics at the University of Oxford – going as far as saying: “If true, this experiment is monstrous” (qtd. in “World’s First” n.p.). As we move into the third decade of the twenty-first century, the warnings again the dangers of techno-capitalism will become more and more urgent and strident. Techno-capitalist monsters are the monsters of both our present and our future – it is therefore paramount that we keep on studying them and decoding their warning. We cannot rely on a pair of magical alien-identifying sunglasses because techno-capitalist monsters do not come from outer space. They come from this planet – they come from *us*. “It’d sure be nice if it was aliens,” says 8 year old Chrissie Foster in *Midnight*, “because we’d just have to find their nest or their hive or whatever, burn them out real good, maybe blow up their spaceship, and it would be over and done with. But if it’s not aliens, it’s us – people like us – who did all this, then maybe it’s never quite over and done with” (Koontz 288). As long as techno-capitalism is the guiding paradigm of our society, we will continue to live in the shadow of Moloch – our collective Frankenstein’s creature – and of his monstrous children – our own grandchildren.

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Appendix A: List of Original French Quotations

- Page 11: [...] parfois une figure démiurgique par essence (un créateur de vie), il se révèle, à l'occasion, un aventurier, un technicien ou un hypnotiseur. Il pratique la biologie, la chimie, la médecine, la psychologie (hypnotisme), certaines pseudosciences (magnétisme), l'ingénierie, etc. (Després 21)
- Page 33: C'est pu vrai ça, sky is the limit. C'est pu vrai, ça. [...] Ouvre-toi les yeux, regarde autour. La machine est rendue trop grosse. Ça va finir par péter. J'pas pessimiste, j'suis lucide. (*Dans le ventre* 00:37:25-00:37:50)
- Page 33: STEVE : T'es pas lucide, t'es déprimé. C'est le système qui veut ça, c'est ça faut changer.
- LOU : Ça donnerait rien, ça ferait juste changer le mal de place. Il faut repartir à zéro. [...] Moi j'pense que j'vais mourir jeune pis que j'serai pas le seul dans ce cas-là. (*Dans le ventre* 00:37 :51-00:38:30)
- Page 33: Du sang frais pour les vampires. (*Dans le ventre* 00:23:10)
- Page 36: Des murs en papiers. C'est débile. C'est rendu que je ne vois plus rien qu'ça. J'me couche avec ça dans tête, j'me réveille avec ça dans tête, mon linge sent le papier. Ça mène nulle part, il faut que j'trouve autre chose. (*Dans le ventre* 00 :36 :08)
- Page 38: Du haut de mes cinq pieds et neuf pouces, je me sens si grosse, si repoussante. [...] Il faut... Il faut que je perde ce poids... et tout de suite!!! Je ne peux pas, je ne peux pas peser autant que ça! Affolée, je tire sur mes cheveux déjà si fins. Je pourrais les couper! C'est si lourd un cheveu... Je passe mes mains sur mes tempes et mon front, dans un geste désespéré. Je jette un coup d'œil dans le miroir, détectant immédiatement tous les défauts de ma silhouette enrobée. Je m'appête à me défouler sur

la glace en insultant cette fille que je vois et qui me regarde, l'œil dément, quand la porte s'ouvre lentement dans mon dos. (Addison 17)

Page 38: La patiente ne semble pas se rendre compte de sa prise de poids. Elle paraît obnubilée par une perte de poids imaginaire (Addison 184)

Page 38: Avant de baisser le menton en direction du chiffre qui s'affiche, je m'observe un instant dans le miroir qui me fait face. Où la graisse s'est-elle installée? Sous mes bras? Dans mes cuisses? À ma taille? Oui, celle-ci me semble plus épaisse, presque aussi large que mes hanches.

Je ne prends même pas la peine de regarder le chiffre qu'indique mon pèse-personne. L'évidence est devant mes yeux. Là, dans la glace qui me nargue... (Addison 295)

Page 38: (Footnote:) Elle semble tout droit sortie d'un documentaire sur l'Éthiopie. Il faudrait me payer pour que je fréquente un tel paquet d'os. (Chaperon 33)

Page 39: [...] ses cent cinquante et quelques livres sont si répugnante que JAMAIS je ne voudrais lui ressembler [...] (Addison 12)

Page 39: [...] minisaucissons sur deux pattes [...] nez retroussé qui leur donne une allure porcine. (Addison 14, 285)

Page 40: Manu et moi on a fait l'amour comme des défoncés tout le week-end. Et même plusieurs fois durant la semaine. Chacune de nos relations sexuelles, amorcées par moi, s'est conclue par un énorme orgasme, autant pour moi que pour Manu. Et là, ce n'est pas dans nos habitudes. Oh, je jouis souvent avec lui. Une fois sur trois, je dirais. Mais pas à chaque fois, comme cette semaine. Pas comme maintenant. Avec la même intensité. (Addison 135)

- Page 42: [...] des tas d'astuces, toute plus originales les une que les autres, pour perdre du poids [...] (Addison 10)
- Page 43: Plus personne ne voudra me parler sur les sites de *tchat* [sic]. Je vais devenir la risée des filles! [...] toutes les filles rêvent [...] (Addison 17).
- Page 44 [...] cet ultimatum complètement démesuré de Manu! Il me connaît depuis assez longtemps pour savoir que je ne changerai pas. Personne ne peut changer réellement. Et il me faut maigrir, encore et encore. (Addison 20)
- Page 44 Cela serait-il possible? Est-ce que j'aurais mis le doigt sur LA façon de perdre enfin mon surplus de poids? (Addison 22)
- Page 45: Je vis modestement dans un trois pièces et demie. J'ai un lit, une télé couleur, une chaîne stéréo, une table de cuisine avec des chaises non-assorties, un divan, un fauteuil Elran, deux armoires, un micro-ondes, un frigo, un four et une bibliothèque. Je ne manque de rien. C'est plus que ce que les deux tiers de la population de la planète peuvent se permettre. De quoi me plaindrais-je? D'avoir moins que les autres? Quels autres? Ceux qui gaspillent, ceux qui accumulent, ceux qui rivalisent avec le voisin? Je ne suis en compétition avec personne. (Chaperon 7-8)
- Page 45-46: De nos jours, les gens sont trop stressés. Moi, j'aspire à connaître la Pura Vida d'un Costaricain, mais je suis née en Amérique du Nord. Cette même Amérique septentrionale qui carbure à l'ambition. De l'ambition, je n'en ai pas. C'est grâce à l'aide sociale que je survis une bonne partie de l'année, sauf évidemment lors des périodes où je suis rétribué comme cobaye. Ça n'a rien de glorieux, pensez-vous? Bien entendu, mais je n'ai jamais cherché la gloire. Je suis plutôt l'exemple à ne pas suivre. Pourtant, si on payait les penseurs et les rêveurs, je serais Bill Gates. (Chaperon 19)

- Page 46: [...] mes centaines the bouquins, que j'ai habituellement payés moins de cinq dollars, de ma centaine de films et de ma copine marijuana. (Chaperon 7).
- Page 46: « Cobaye » est donc mon « métier ». Je le pratique parce que je n'aime pas travailler. Ça me fait royalement suer. J'ai essayé, pour faire comme tout le monde, mais ça ne m'a pas plus. (Chaperon 21)
- Page 46: [...] un adolescent qui refuse de vieillir. Je soupçonne qu'il [Cédric] participe à l'étude pour l'argent. (Chaperon 28).
- Page 47: Je me suis juré d'acheter enfin du stock de première main: livres neufs et disques neufs. Je l'ai déjà dit, je suis un peu vieux jeu, alors oui, j'aime encore acheter des CD et sentir le papier d'un livre sous mes doigts. (Chaperon 35)
- Page 47: N'oublions pas que ceux qui persistent à acheter des CD sont eux aussi de vieux croutons malhabiles avec les technologies nouvelles, le téléchargement et le piratage, pourtant commun. (Chaperon 80)
- Page 48: [...] saisi d'une folle envie de dépenser. [...] un magasin d'électronique. Parle parle, jase jase, je mets la main sur un iPod. Je suis en retard sur les modes, je ne l'ignore pas. Mais vaut mieux maintenant que jamais (Chaperon 105).
- Page 48: L'assiette de biscuits, abandonnée en plein centre de la table basse, attire aussitôt mon attention. C'est avec un plaisir et un soulagement non dissimulés que je saute sur les biscuits et que j'engloutis tout le plateau sans même m'en apercevoir. Une sensation de bien-être envahit enfin ma gorge et ma poitrine. J'ai quasiment l'impression de planer de bonheur. (Addison 80)
- Page 48-49: M'imaginer embrasser cette même joue ce soir est trop pour moi. Même s'il se lave, même s'il l'essuie méticuleusement, quelque chose demeurera.

Une miette, un résidu...Que je ne dois en aucun cas ingérer. Je prends du poids si facilement. (Addison 15)

Page 49: Je n'arrive pas à retenir mes mains, qui sautent de joie et fondent sur le plateau, sans même que j'aie eu le temps de rouvrir mes paupières. Me voilà qui dévore tout, sans me préoccuper de mâcher ni de goûter quoi que ce soit. On dirait un vrai goinfre. Ça ne goûte même pas bon...Ça manque carrément d'assaisonnement et, en plus, c'est froid! Mais je m'en fiche bien, car j'avale le tout sans faire de distinction entre les aliments. (Addison 87)

Page 49: [...] je viens de bouffer la quantité de nourriture que je mange en un mois, d'habitude. Qu'est-ce qui se passe avec moi! (Addison 91)

Page 50: Malgré des débuts prometteurs, le traitement ne fut pas un succès. [...] Tout ceci reste à confirmer, mais, à ce jour, la patiente B37-WESA925623 [Anita] demeure un échec complet. (Addison 315)

Page 50: [...] son ambition, qui ne semblait jamais satisfaite, [et] son égocentrisme, qui transformait de façon trop importante sa personnalité. Malgré notre entente, il a laissé filtrer des informations à propos de notre étude dans son blogue, et nous courions le risque qu'il en dévoile d'avantage. (Chaperon 315)

Page 51: Je tire pour arracher la viande de l'os. Ça fait mal. Mais j'ai si faim (Addison 315)

Page 51: Quelques secondes à peine me suffisent pour tout dévorer. Il ne me reste plus rien entre mes doigts, que je lèche avidement. Mes mains se remettent à trembler. Il m'en faut d'autre.
Encore...
Avec voracité, je replonge dans le tas d'ordure, à la recherche de toujours plus de viande à me mettre sous la dent. Peu importe son état de

décomposition, peu importe son goût, son odeur!

Il m'en faut toujours plus, voilà tout! (Addison 233)

Page 66: À ceux qui veulent savoir ce que j'ai foutu de mon ambition, je réponds :
« Et toi, qu'est que t'as foutu de ton bien-être? » En général, ils bafouillent quelques mots et je comprends à leur discours qu'ils le remettent à plus tard. Parce que, avant, ils doivent avoir :
l'argent (le travail);
le/la conjoint(e);
la bagnole;
la maison;
le plan de retraite.
Et on dit que c'est moi qui perds mon temps. (Chaperon 7)

Page 66: Tout le monde est pute à différent degrés. Ceux qui prétendent le contraire sont de fieffés menteurs, ou alors ils disent ça pour attirer la sympathie de ceux qui ne veulent pas se l'avouer.
Presque tout ce qu'on fait est motivé par notre espoir d'en tirer profit : certains veulent plus d'amour, d'autres plus de renommée, d'autre plus d'argent. [...]
En ce moment, même moi, je suis une pute. Je suis la pute d'une société pharmaceutique, comme je l'ai souvent été. Mais, cette fois, je n'en retire pas que de l'argent. Je ne peux vous en dire d'avantage [...] mais je vous avouerai que c'est une expérience des plus enrichissantes qui me fait poser cette question : qui est la pute de qui? [...]
J'ai été pute assez longtemps, mais les rôles sont désormais inversés.
Vous devriez faire comme moi. C'est bandant de dominer. (Chaperon 295-6)

Page 67: Aujourd'hui, je prends une importante décision : je vais me trouver un boulot! Un vrai! Quelque chose qui saura prouver ma valeur, qui me

donnera le *feeling* que je ne suis pas qu'un gobeur de pilules ou qu'un bras à injections. (Chaperon 67-68)

Page 68: J'ai envie de vomir. Je n'ai rien foutu depuis dix ans. [...] Je n'ai jamais songé jusqu'à récemment à avoir une vraie job, jamais réfléchi au bonheur d'accumuler de l'argent. (Chaperon 70)

Page 68: Aujourd'hui je retouche à la vie normale, je reprends ma vie d'acteur économique, je recommence à travailler. (Chaperon 94)

Page 69: Je bosse comme un perdu. Premièrement parce que c'est ce qu'il faut faire; deuxièmement parce que j'aime ça. (Chaperon 170)

Page 69: C'est facile de casser du sucre sur le dos des politiciens, sur celui des méchantes compagnies pharmaceutiques et sur celui des entrepreneurs, mais ces gens-là ils agissent. Ils bâtissent, ils créent, ils décident. À force de titiller la haine et le mépris de ceux qui bougent, vous engendrez une société de plaignards et de jaloux qui ne foutront jamais rien. Vous nuisez au progrès, monsieur. (Chaperon 79)

Page 69: [...] plein de vérités [...] extrêmement provocant [...]. (Chaperon 188)

Page 69: [...] la détestation, chez nous, des hommes d'affaires. Réponse: vous les enviez, ils ont eu les couilles que vous n'avez pas eues. Solution : cessez de les haïr et imitez-les. (Chaperon 179).

Page 70: Il faut que je mange. N'importe quoi. Pourquoi ils ne m'ont pas laissée terminer mon assiette? Ce n'est que de la viande! (Addison 313)

Page 70: [...] un certain manque d'empathie [...] personnalité asocial classique [...]. (Addison 49-50)

Page 71: [...] ces énormes T-bones, trouvé dans mon congélateur. (Addison 283)

- Page 71: [...] steak [...] vraiment épais et plutôt mal découpé. [...] morceau de viande [...] difficile à découper, car rempli de veines et de muscles.
(Addison 270, 276)
- Page 71: [...] portrait-robot d'une femme. Elle a les cheveux mi-longs, mesure près d'un mètre quatre-vingts. Est très mince. Les joues creuses, malgré un visage aux mâchoires proéminentes Presque trop gros pour le reste de son corps. [...] Elle est recherchée pour avoir tué un itinérant, derrière le restaurant Poulet Presto. En plein centre-ville! [...] Ça ne me tente pas de croiser le chemin de cette psychopathe! Je peux me défendre, mais, si elle est aussi dangereuse que le mentionne ce document...je ne saurai peut-être pas comment réagir. (Addison 217-218)
- Page 72: Si j'avais voix au chapitre, je mettrais à courir en sens inverse, sans un regard derrière moi. Mais, avant, je lui assénerais une solide claque en pleine face. Je ne suis pas une pute! Sauf que, encore une fois, je ne peux rien faire face démon qui me ronge et qui décide pour moi. Ce même démon qui répond, en souriant : Ton prix sera le mien. (Addison 240)
- Page 72: [...] d'un geste sec et nerveux, toutefois précis, *presque chirurgical*.
(Addison 258, my emphasis)
- Page 85: Pour écrire ce nouvel opus de la série Cobayes, Alain [Chaperon] est parti de l'idée que l'agressivité et l'ambition formaient un couple parfait. (See note 30 on page 85 for location)
- Page 85: [...] désert sentimental... Cinq ans de sécheresse, de vide et de mirage.
(Chaperon 18)
- Page 85: Baiser torride. Dix secondes plus tard, mon pantalon est baissé et elle soupire déjà de désir. Elle ne sera pas déçue, la vieille cochonne. Aujourd'hui, je ne lui fais pas l'amour, je la baise... Quitte à ce qu'elle souffre un peu. (Chaperon 98)

- Page 85-86: Bonne à baiser? [...] De tout temps, l'homme a préféré le beau au laid. On choisit toujours les plus beaux fruits, on laisse les plus laids aux derniers à passer devant l'étalage. La femme est un fruit, sauf qu'elle a, habituellement, le luxe de choisir par qui elle se fera croquer (Chaperon 182).
- Page 86: On veut rendre le voisin jaloux et s'exhiber, ne serait-ce qu'une fois dans sa vie, au bras d'une déesse. (Chaperon 182)
- Page 86: J'ai ving-sept ans, je ne suis pas fait pour les cougars de ce monde. Mes ambitions se mesurent davantage au degré de fraîcheur de la viande qu'à sa célébrité. (Chaperon 136)
- Page 86: [...] rouge de colère. J'ai envie de faire mal, j'ai envie de tuer. Puis j'ai envie de baiser aussi. Je dois décharger ma rage quelque part. (Chaperon 218)
- Page 87: Je m'emmerdais ferme, seul dans chambre d'hôtel. (Chaperon (238)
- Page 87-88: Bien évidemment, Igor me suivait à bonne distance. Ça m'a donné de l'assurance. (Chaperon 238)
- Page 88: Ce n'est pas l'endroit. (Chaperon 265)
- Page 88: Je ne suis pas une planche de bois où on peut entrer des clous. Est-elle en train de me dire quoi faire? Aurait-elle oublié qu'un des lois du commerce, c'est que le client est roi? (Chaperon 289).
- Page 88: Tu ne vaux pas plus qu'une planche de bois, espèce de conne! (Chaperon 291)
- Page 91: Je suis parti à zéro, moi. J'en ai passé des circulaires. J'ai un truck asteur. Faut pas que ça pête, j'ai assez sué. (*Dans le ventre* 00:38:02).

- Page 91: Il y'a une grosse vente chez Eaton jeudi. La consommation, ça peut pas attendre ça. Le système capitaliste en entier y'a besoin de nos circulaires. Rentre-toi ça dans la tête mon Steve, pis tu vas allez loin. (*Dans le ventre* 00 :08 :05)
- Page 91-92: Lui y'est correct, dans le fond. C'est un petit boss [...] gros boss avec son gros char pis sa grosse cabane. (*Dans le ventre* 00:15:37).
- Page 92: J'viens perdre la run du boulevard Saint-Joseph. Ça faisait trois ans que j'attendais ça. Le boulevard Saint-Joseph, les boys. Une belle grande rue là, bordée de petite maisons. Toute pleine de petites portes, avec une couple de gros building. Une rue payante, les boys. Ben payante. Me semble que j'la méritais cette rue là. On vit dans un monde pourri. Aucune reconnaissance, aucun remords. Un monde pourri, complètement pourri. (00:30:34)
- Page 92: Ils se croient le nombril du monde. [...] Les Parisiens ont été avec moi (et généralement avec tous ceux de ma Patrie) prétentieux, méprisants et impolis. Ils n'ont de respect ni pour les handicapés, ni pour les étrangers, ni pour les homosexuels, ni pour eux-mêmes. Deux exceptions : les chiens et les Américains, ce qui s'équivaut pas mal, on en convient. (Chaperon 66)
- Page 93 Sylvain est le genre de mec à aimer l'ambition. C'est un Français. Ici, on se méfie des ambitieux. On préfère l'humilité. Pff! Je ne suis plus de cette engeance. (Chaperon 185)
- Page 93: [...] doux rêveur au grand lucide, plus conscient que jamais du problème profond qui habite le cœur de ses compatriotes : la petitesse. Ce sera désormais mon combat : je lutterai contre la petitesse et la faiblesse. Contre le petit et le faible, s'il faut. Je ne lancerai pas une roquette sur les faibles; non, je leur botterai le cul! (Chaperon 137)

- Page 93: Il [Sylvain] me signifie aussi qu'il serait intelligent de prioriser la presse française. Je suis d'accord. Je n'ai pas envie de passer ma vie dans une contrée sans ambition et sans orgueil. Si je peux m'en échapper, ce sera une bénédiction pour la circulation des idées. (Chaperon 211)
- Page 95-96: C'est le soir, toujours rien. Je n'ai pas reçu un seul appel de ces trous de cul du cinéma national. Ah! les cons! Ils ne méritent pas. J'irai faire fortune en France. Ils s'en mordront les doigts et viendront me supplier de tenir la vedette d'un film important. Je leur dirai : « Non, vous n'aviez qu'à m'appeler plus tôt. Vous n'avez pas cru en moi, alors allez chier! Mangez une tonne de merde et allez vous faire enculer! C'est la grâce que je vous souhaite ». (Chaperon 217-218)
- Page 96: Chez Disques Records, entre deux rangées de romans d'amour, j'aperçois Marie Eiken. Je n'en crois pas mes yeux! Marie Eiken, celle qui tenait le rôle principal dans *Touche-à-tout*, l'émission fétiche de mon enfance. Pour être honnête, il s'agit de la première femme de qui j'ai véritablement été amoureux. (36)
- Page 96: C'est Touche-à-tout qui m'a condamné trop longtemps à la puérité et à la faiblesse. Si j'ai été un enfant pendant ving-sept ans, c'est à cause de Marie Eiken! [...] Par ta faute, les hommes d'aujourd'hui ne sont plus des hommes : tu nous a appris à pleurer, pas à agir; pas à être forts. Je suis celui par qui s'exprime la vengeance de ma génération! Tu mérites de crever! (Chaperon 123-124)
- Page 96: [...] le malaise ressenti devant le détournement d'une actrice ayant incarné un personnage fondateur de notre jeunesse. (Bonin n.p.)
- Page 96: On a surtout l'impression que Chaperon a cherché à choquer de manière systématique, sans avoir de projet littéraire en tête. (Bonin n.p.)

- Page 97: L'Opération renouveau, qui voulait permettre aux enfants défavorisés d'avoir accès à des maternelles à mi-temps. Parmi les hypothèses soulevées par cette opération, la moins coûteuse consistait à produire une série télévisée (par rapport à l'instauration de maternelles sur tout le territoire). C'est ce qui sera retenu. (Cauchon, n.p.)
- Page 97: Une loi de la nature veut qu'on se débarrasse des bouches inutiles. Voilà une nouvelle preuve qu'on s'éloigne de notre nature profonde. [...] Si on obligeait l'homme à donner pour recevoir, vous verriez des milliers de ces parasites sociaux lever leur gros cul, secouer leurs innombrables puces, marcher vers le boulot et besogner. L'homme n'a pas été créé pour donner, on l'habitue dès sa naissance à recevoir. Maman y pourvoit. Voilà pourquoi les hommes ont inventé les gouvernements : ils se sont créés des mamans. (Chaperon 173-174)
- Page 97: [...] les bénéficiaires permanents: les aptes au travail qui ne travaillent pas [...]. (173)
- Page 98: Ordinaire comme excuse. Déjà que la mienne me fait chier, faudrait pas que la sienne s'y mette aussi. (Chaperon 88-89)
- Page 98: Tu ne vas pas bien, toi. Tu m'inquiètes. [...] Bon, ça y est: après Touche-à-Tout, c'est au tour de mère Teresa. Mais qu'est-ce que j'ai fait à Satan pour mériter ça! (Chaperon 116-117)
- Page 98: [...] car nous avons affaire à une sacrée race de couillons/de tontons d'éclopés de souriantes bedaines de/laquais speak white de 'modérés' petit gueux/qui tantôt vous livrerons un peuple aux encans/de l'histoire en entonnant les aimez-vous-les-/uns-les-autres du banditisme coopératif (Chamberland 142)
- Page 98: Suis-je devenu un monstre? Peut-être que oui... Sans doute que oui... Oui... ...Et alors? (Chaperon 128)

- Page 102: Ensuite, tous les critiques admettent que le savant fou tire ses origines de l'alchimiste médiévale et des « foolish » ou « stupid » virtuoso du XVIIe siècle, mais aussi du chimiste et du médecin au XVIIIe et XIXe siècle. Ces figures du Moyen-Âge, de la Renaissance et de la modernité, dont les mutations sont associées de près à celles de la science, apparaissent comme les ancêtres du savant fou moderne. Ensuite, tous s'entendent pour identifier Victor Frankenstein comme le premier véritable savant fou de l'histoire littéraire et le modèle de cette figure qui prospère au XIXe siècle dans les littératures européennes (française, anglaise et allemande, en particulier), mais aussi pour noter un important clivage sur le plan de la représentation entre les savants réels et leur contrepartie imaginaire. Finalement, tous voient dans cette figure l'incarnation d'une peur de la science et de la nature. (Després 20-21)
- Page 102: La figure est une énigme; elle engage en ce sens l'imagination du sujet qui, dans un même mouvement, capte l'objet et le définit tout entier, lui attribuant une signification, une fonction, voire un destin. La figure, une fois saisie, est au cœur d'une construction imaginaire. Elle ne reste pas statique, mais génère des interprétations, par lesquelles justement le sujet à la fois s'approprie la figure et se perd dans sa contemplation. (Gervais 16-17)
- Page 102-103 : [...] un ensemble de savoirs. [...] Quand nous nous approprions une figure, nous la mettons en relation avec d'autres formes symboliques, nous l'intégrons à notre imaginaire, nous l'interprétons en fonction de nos connaissances encyclopédiques et lexicales, de nos expériences personnelles, de notre représentation du monde" (32).
- Page 103: [...] il n'existe pas de corpus stable, même au XIXe siècle, [...] certaines oeuvres [font] consensus: *Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus* de Mary Shelley, *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* de Robert Louis Stevenson et *The Island of Dr Moreau* de H.G. Wells." (Després 21)

- Page 105: Crake est bel et bien modelé à partir de tous ces personnages, [et qu']il s'agit véritablement d'un intertexte [...] une figure, celle du savant fou, construite par la fiction narrative du XIXe siècle et se métamorphosant au fil de l'histoire des sciences. Ce n'est pas tant que Crake emprunte à Morbius, Hoenikker ou Strangelove, mais que ces derniers sont tous des avatars de cette même figure. (Després 435)
- Page 113: L'encyclopédie du lecteur étant déjà saturée de ces signes - qui ne pourrait deviner que l'apparition d'un personnage similaire à Frankenstein dans un récit sera très certainement suivie de celle d'un monstre quelconque ou d'une expérience scientifique qui dérape? -, les auteurs peuvent souvent ainsi se contenter de simples évocations plus ou moins cryptées pour que le lecteur comble immédiatement les indéterminations. (Després 25)
- Page 154: Le but premier de ce centre, Dr. Lucas, n'est pas que les malades en arrivent à se soigner eux-mêmes. C'est de mettre de nouveaux médicaments sur le marché. (*Dans le ventre* 00:12:01).
- Page 154-155: DR. LUCAS : Mais c'est dans cette *petite* usine que Wells a développé le Renovor. Et c'est à cause de son *petit* médicament contre les maux de têtes que vous avez votre consortium. Quand il a commencé, Wells croyait à la recherche, lui!
- LE DIRECTEUR : Et nous consacrons 5% du budget à la recherche. C'est beaucoup d'argent. (*Dans le ventre* 00:11:42)
- Page 155: LOU : Je suis venu couper la tête du dragon avant qu'il avale tout le monde. Je sais jusqu'où ça peut aller. Ça fait peur.
- DR. LUCAS : Pourquoi? C'est le contraire, il ne faut pas avoir peur. Il faut continuer, c'est la seule façon de savoir. Imagine : si on arrive à donner tout le savoir humain à un nouveau-né, il va lui rester toute sa vie

pour découvrir, pour apprendre, pour devenir meilleur, parfait. Une nouvelle race! Il faut que tu m'aides, j'ai besoin de toi. (1 :13 :27-1 :14 :31)

- Page 158: Les sociologues et ethnologues ont une réponse simple, et qui va de soi: les fous, ce sont les inadaptés, les déviants, ceux qui n'agissent pas comme tout le monde.
 Cette réponse est fort commode : il est dommage qu'elle soit profondément insuffisante. Et qu'elle ne rende aucun compte du caractère toujours très singulier, très différencié des mesures par lesquelles une culture définit la folie.
 Si la réponse des sociologues était vraie, la folie serait une variété plus ou moins atténuée, plus ou moins bizarre du crime. [...] Mais il n'y a pas de société, aussi primitive qu'elle soit, qui ne distingue avec la plus grande méticulosité les fous des criminels. La désignation des fous est toujours une fonction sociale spécifique. (Foucault, "Littérature" 965)
- Page 159: [...] il n'existe aucune unanimité à propos de la folie et de la moralité des savants fous : certains y voient une figure immorale par essence, d'autre, une véritable folie pathologique, et d'autres encore simplement des êtres victimes de leur obsession ou des narcissiques chroniques. (Després 21).
- Page 160: [...] Crake n'est ni schizophrène, ni paranoïaque [...] (Després 442)
- Page 160: [...] Crake est, hors de tout doute, un savant fou [...] (Després 436)
- Page 173: "Un costaud chauve aux sourcils rares, aux joues généreuses et au nez pointu. Il a l'œil confiant et le sourire serein" (Chaperon 24).
- Page 173: Son pire défaut : la gueule ne lui arrête pas, surtout lorsque vient le temps de lancer de petites blagues, mauvaises au demeurant, mais qu'il semble trouver hilarantes. De tous les docs que j'ai rencontrés dans ce genre de bureaux, c'est le premier qui aime rire et ça me le rend déjà plus

sympathique. Ça change de l'allure coincée qu'on associe habituellement au médecin ordinaire. (Chaperon 24)

- Page 174: Il me fait un drôle d'effet, ce docteur. Comme si je n'arrivais pas à le prendre au sérieux, avec ses manières étranges" (Addison 41).
- Page 174: Il s'approche de moi pour murmurer, me donnant un aperçu de son haleine légèrement âcre.
— Bon, ça reste entre nous, d'accord? Je ne devrais pas vous raconter ça, mais je suis certain que tu seras discrète. Je peux te tutoyer? Brefs, certains co... Je veux dire, certains patients ont nettement moins bien réagi à ce traitement. Nous avons d'ailleurs dû arrêter les injections pour eux... Enfin! Oublie ça! Tu fais partie de nos meilleurs sujets, si je puis dire! lance-t-il dans un grand éclat de rire. (Addison 142-143, ellipsis in the original)
- Page 175: Bonjour, monsieur Labonté. C'est moi, le scientifique fou! (Chaperon 24)
- Page 175: [...] sont simplement plus gentils et intéressés qu'ailleurs. (Chaperon 25)
- Page 175: Il a beau être laid (j'aime cette phrase) et avoir une mine de tueur à gages, il m'inspire confiance. (Chaperon 33)
- Page 175: Deux colosses habillés façon *Hommes en Noir* [...]. Convaincant comme un chihuahua dans une assemblée de saint-bernards" (Chaperon 58)
- Page 175: Je lui saisis le poignet et le lui serre. Je veux qu'il lâche son aiguille. À ma grande surprise, il ne perd pas son sourire confiant. Je crois même discerner une lueur d'excitation dans ses yeux, comme s'il était heureux de se mesurer à moi. Comme s'il était content de me voir de méchante humeur. (Chaperon 146)

- Page 176: [...] on voulait vraiment que les gens puissent lire les livres dans le désordre et donc [il] ne fallait pas dévoiler de punch majeur dans aucun roman. (Jeannotte, n.p)
- Page 177: MIREILLE : Je vous rappelle que nous produisons un excellent remède contre l'habitude du tabac.
- DR. LUCAS : Ça me détend, ça me détend!
- MIREILLE : Si vous le dites. (*Dans le ventre* 00 :47 :32-00 :47-39)
- Page 177: LE DIRECTEUR: Pourquoi tous ceux qui sont brillants ont-ils toujours des problèmes de comportement?
- MIREILLE : Brillante, mais trop émotive. (*Dans le ventre* 00 :12 :24).
- Page 178: DR. LUCAS : Pensez-vous qu'on peut tout de suite passer à la phase 2?
- MIREILLE : Vous ne m'avez pas dit grand-chose sur la phase 2. Mais j'ai l'impression qu'il y a encore beaucoup d'inconnue dans votre hypothèse de travail...
- DR. LUCAS : L'inconnu ça a toujours fait partie de la recherche!
- MIREILLE : Vrai. Mais vous devriez quand même m'en parler un peu plus. Je pourrais mieux vous aider. (*Dans le ventre* 00:24:27-00:25:06)
- Page 178: MIREILLE : Possède une capacité de concentration exceptionnelle. Par contre, l'analyse de son comportement est moins reluisante : introverti, entêté, indiscipliné, réfractaire à l'autorité, rêveur...

DR. LUCAS : Peut-être intéressant. Capacité de concentration exceptionnelle. Drôle de nom, Lou. (00:23:56-00:24:20)

Page 179: DR. LUCAS : C'est bien ce que je pensais. On a atteint l'utilisation maximale du cerveau. Mais je sais où j'ai fait fausse route jusqu'à présent, j'ai compris. J'ai toujours pensé que l'intelligence pure était la clé. Non! Regardez : au début les deux hémisphères progressent au même rythme. Mais ensuite c'est le droit qui s'active davantage. C'est l'imaginaire qui prend le dessus sur le rationnel. Il a même réussi à créer une autre réalité que j'ai vu. J'ai vu des images générées par son imagination Mireille, je les ai vues! À partir de maintenant on n'utilisera plus de sujets adultes. On va agir au moment où l'imaginaire est le plus fort, où il possède encore toute sa pureté. Ouais. C'est ça la clé Mireille! C'est l'imaginaire! Il faut travailler avec des enfants. Peut-être même avec des nouveaux-nés. Ouais, ça serait encore mieux avec des nouveaux nés. Là où l'imagination est à son état le plus pur. [Lucas indique un écran montrant un électroencéphalogramme.] Ça c'est l'âme. Ça s'est formé juste avant le black-out.

MIREILLE : Quoi? C'est une aberration électromagnétique, rien de plus.

DR. LUCAS : Non. Non, c'est l'âme. On a photographié l'âme. (*Dans le ventre* 00:59:21-01:00:50).

Page 180: Il faut peut-être se rendre à l'évidence qu'elle n'est plus utile pour vos tests. Elle devient incontrôlable. (*Dans le ventre* 00 :47:06)

Page 180: LE DIRECTEUR : J'ai pris connaissance de votre rapport. Pensez-vous qu'on puisse tirer quelque chose de son programme?

MIREILLE : Non. Je n'ai pas vu ce qu'elle prétend avoir vu. Son interprétation est loin d'être rationnel et c'est impossible à vérifier.

LE DIRECTEUR : Ce que vous me dites, c'est qu'elle a perdu le contrôle?

MIREILLE : Exacte. Je crois qu'elle fabule dangereusement. Et puis j'ai décelé certaines irrégularités dans ses méthodes d'expérimentation. (*Dans le ventre* 01 :06 :20-01:06:41)

Page 197: [...] le consortium de produits pharmaceutiques le plus important en Amérique du Nord. (*Dans le ventre* 00:11:28)

Page 197: Voilà cinq ans qu'il a disparu, et le fantôme de cet empâté de Williams me poursuit tout de même jusqu'en Scandinavie. Je le mépriserais davantage si cela m'était possible. Il se sentait si puissant, aux commandes de la clinique, qu'il en a oublié l'objectif de l'étude. Il n'a fait qu'à sa tête, augmentant et diminuant sans cesse les doses injectées, trop curieux de voir ce que ça allait provoquer. À cause de lui, plusieurs 4 cobayes nous ont filé entre les doigts : morts, volatilisés ou emprisonnés...

Selon moi, c'est AlphaLab qui est derrière sa disparition. Mais je ne poserai jamais de questions à ce sujet. Dans ce bas monde, moins on en sait, mieux on se porte. (*Chapitre Final* 3-4)

Page 247: Le docteur Dupras nous avait informés que madame [Rebecca] Chaplin pensait être enceinte. L'agent qui a entendu la femme confirmer sa grossesse a jugé bon de l'épargner. Nous lui en savons gré. En effet, il s'agit d'une excellente nouvelle pour nous, qui pourront étudier l'effet du produit sur un fœtus conçu pas un patient sous l'influence de la Chlorolanfaxine. (Chaperon 315)

Page 247: Il faudra ensuite prendre une décision quant au sort que nous réserverons à la mère. (Chaperon 315)

- Page 265-266: Sur les vingt pays auxquels nous avons envoyé notre offre, six ont démontré un intérêt pour la molécule : la Corée du Nord, la Norvège, les États-Unis, la Russie, la Syrie et l’Afghanistan. (*Chapitre Final 19*)
- Page 266: Je suis venu de New York jusqu’ici pour vous parler. Lucas, ce centre existe depuis plus de 80 ans. De la petite usine minable du Dr. Wells, nous avons réussi à créer le consortium de produits pharmaceutiques le plus important en Amérique du Nord” (*Dans le ventre 00 :11 :23*).
- Page 267: Vous allez me débarrassez de tous ces monstres purulents. De cette vermine qui grouille de partout. C’est dégoûtant! (*Dans le ventre 01:31:38*).
- Page 267: Vous ne valez pas plus que ces cadavres maintenant! (*Dans le ventre 01:32:09*)
- Page 267: J’ai une brève pensée pour la centaine de rats de laboratoire que j’ai étudiés. Un ou deux visages me reviennent parfois, mais sans plus. Après tout, ce n’était *que* des cobayes. [...] Aucun d’eux n’aurait dû survivre à l’expérience, malgré ce que Williams en pensait. Il en allait de l’image d’AlphaLab, de la mise en vente et de la rentabilité de la molécule. Il ne devait pas y avoir de témoins. Mais les mauvaises décisions de cet homme auront permis à certains de nous échapper. (*Chapitre Final 5-6*)
- Page 267: [...] aucune famille, aucun domicile connu, sans situation fixe. Personne pour s’inquiéter de leur disparition. C’est comme s’ils n’existaient plus. (*Dans le ventre 01:31:26*).
- Page 267: [...] il ne semble entretenir de relation avec personne; cela pourrait s’avérer utile, advenant un dérapage. (Chaperon 28)
- Page 269: C’est signé du président de la Fédération, ce même président qui a pour principal financier le père de M. Spitfire. Vous saisissez le lien? (“La Génèse” 00:16:40)

Page 272: Penses-tu ce que je pense, Steve? C'est écœurant de faire ça. C'est pas humain de voler la vie des autres comme ça. On peut pas laisser ça de même Steve, hein? Kessé qu'on fait? Kessé qu'on fait? (*Dans le ventre* 01:30:23)

Curriculum Vitae

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Honours and Awards

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Conferences

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