BIOPOLITICS IN SCIENCE FICTION FILMS
AN EXPLORATION OF THE REPRESENTATION OF THE CONTEMPORARY POLITICIZATION OF HUMAN BIOLOGICAL LIFE IN CINEMA

VICHITRA K.S. GODAMUNNE
(BA (Hons), London Metropolitan University, UK)

A THESIS SUBMITTED
FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATIONS AND NEW MEDIA
NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SINGAPORE

2011
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my gratitude to my supervisor, Denisa Kera, who encouraged and supported me throughout the thesis research and writing processes.

I am grateful to the Communications and New Media Department at the National University of Singapore for awarding me a research scholarship.

Finally, I would like to say a very big thank you to my family and friends for their enthusiasm and humour.

Vichitra Godamunne
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 1</td>
<td>Biopolitics and Science Fiction Cinema</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 2</td>
<td>The Commodification and Docility of the Human Biological Body in <em>The Island</em></td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 3</td>
<td>The Biological Management of Populations in <em>V for Vendetta</em></td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 4</td>
<td>Protecting the Biological Body of the Nation in <em>Children of Men</em></td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 5</td>
<td>The Discipline and Regulation of the Biological Body by Disease Management Practices in <em>28 Weeks Later</em></td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 6</td>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td></td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix A</td>
<td></td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix B</td>
<td></td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix C</td>
<td></td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix D</td>
<td></td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SUMMARY

This thesis explores the ways in which contemporary science fiction cinema represent the politicization of human biological life. The philosophical concept which discusses this issue is known as biopolitics and it underpins the theoretical framework of my thesis. The simplest definition of biopolitics is that authorities in power treat individuals and populations as biological entities in order to control, protect and regulate them. Biopolitics is an important concept because many contemporary global issues such as security, migration, health and biotechnology are biopolitical in nature. Three influential contemporary philosophers who have explored this concept are Michel Foucault, Giorgio Agamben and Roberto Esposito. Relevant sections of the writings of these philosophers are interpreted in Chapter 1. In this thesis, I analyze four important blockbuster science fiction films: *The Island*, *V for Vendetta*, *Children of Men* and *28 Weeks Later* using the arguments of these philosophers. The above mentioned films are selected because they each highlight a specific biopolitical issue: biotechnology (*The Island*), security and terrorism (*V for Vendetta*), migration and asylum seeking (*Children of Men*) and responses to pandemics (*28 Weeks Later*). The main argument of my thesis is centred on the questions of resistance raised by both the philosophers and the films. As I have explained in detail in the thesis, Foucault, Agamben and Esposito feel that biopolitics has become too pervasive in contemporary society and they question (to varying degrees) whether any form of active resistance is if at all possible. Foucault
suggests that perhaps we have to promote new forms of subjectivity and based on my understanding of his arguments, this is the closest he reaches to raising the idea of the possibility of resistance. Agamben and Esposito claim that any active form of resistance to biopolitics should take into account the indistinguishable characteristic of biology and politics and must therefore question the biologization of politics as a starting point. However, the films represent resistance in different ways. In these films, resistance takes the form of overthrowing a regime, or an institution or the form of a scientific solution. The films do not take into account the pervasive nature of biopolitics as explained by the philosophers convey the idea that resistance is simple and will always be possible. Although these films identify with contemporary biopolitics and raise ethical questions about some of these practices, I feel that it is in their representations of resistance that the films fail in influencing audiences to realize the inherence of biopolitics in the contemporary world and how difficult it is to actually resist this form of power. These films do not question, unlike the philosophers, whether any active form of resistance to biopolitics lies in resisting the reduction of individuals to biological entities which are then politically managed. They also do not show how difficult it is to really resist biopolitics. Through this process, these films ultimately pacify audiences and function as a form of biopolitics themselves. These points will be illustrated in detail through the analyses of the four films in Chapter 2 (The Island), Chapter 3 (V for Vendetta), Chapter 4 (Children of Men) and Chapter 5 (28 Weeks Later).
This thesis explores how the portrayal of biopolitics in popular science fiction films leads audiences to passively absorb the pervasiveness of this form of power in the contemporary world and prevents us from realizing how difficult it would be to resist biopolitics. Biopolitics refers to the politicization, economic exploitation and regulation of human biological bodies in order to manage populations and certain philosophical arguments on biopolitics are used to analyze four blockbuster science fiction films in this thesis. Michel Foucault, Giorgio Agamben and Roberto Esposito are three influential philosophers whose works have contributed substantially to the philosophical understanding of biopolitics and it is their arguments which form the theoretical framework of this thesis. Science fiction films show dystopian outcomes of contemporary political and social issues to mass audiences. These films inspired me to explore the connection between film and the philosophy of biopolitics, as well as to question if there are any differences between the cinematic representation of biopolitics and the philosophical arguments. I feel that the possibility of resistance which is shown in these films is very different to the philosophical arguments. Based on my summary of certain sections of each philosopher’s writing on biopolitics relevant to science fiction films, Foucault states that biopolitics has become too pervasive in modern societies and perhaps any form of active resistance should
critique the subjectivity that has currently been imposed upon us and promote new forms of subjectivity.¹ Compared to Foucault, Agamben and Esposito offer slightly more room for questioning the possibility of active resistance to biopolitics. Agamben argues that since all of today’s politics has become biopolitics, any new form of politics (or resistance) must address the “zones of indistinction” between biology and politics in order to reorganize this form of power.² For Esposito, modern biopolitics which is supposedly obsessed with preserving human biological life has been transformed into a politics of death; because the preservation of a certain group of people only occurs through the elimination of certain other individuals who are regarded as a threat to the preservation of biological life.³ Thus, he argues that the only way to resist biopolitics is to ensure that a politics aimed at protecting life does not resort to a politics of death.⁴

While these philosophers contemplate whether resistance (or even true liberation) will only be possible by questioning the reduction of human life into a biological entity, the films embrace a simpler (or perhaps even a weaker) idea of resistance. In these films, resistance never seeks to end the biologization of politics and instead focuses on merely overthrowing repressive governments, organizations or even finding scientific solutions to end the scenarios depicted in the narratives. As a result, these films convey the idea that people will be rescued from any grim

¹. Foucault, 791.
². Agamben, 187.
³. Esposito, 110.
⁴. Ibid., 184. This argument is explained in more detail in Chapter 1.
scenario either by an individual, a new technology or a new regime. Why do these films not target the most fundamental feature of biopolitics – that of reducing individuals and populations to biological entities that are politically managed? My thesis is that these films function as a form of biopolitics themselves because their ideas of resistance are also steeped in a biopolitical context and they appear to be limited in reflecting on the possibility of active resistance unlike the philosophers. Films function as an example of Walter Benjamin’s concept of how mechanically reproduced art can be used to reinforce dominant ideologies amongst mass audiences.\(^5\) The dominant ideology that science fiction films reinforce today is the idea that biopolitics is only dangerous if it is practiced by totalitarian or repressive regimes but the biologization of politics itself is not the key issue which can create the dystopian scenarios depicted in the films. These films adopt a complacent attitude to biopolitics and in a certain sense make biopolitics more acceptable by creating the illusion that resistance will always be possible. What the movies ultimately convey is that an alternative to biopolitics cannot be imagined and prevent audiences from questioning or dissenting against the core of this form of power. I believe my work will provide critical readers of films with a new framework for analyzing films and even provide people interested in the science fiction films with a new way of understanding this genre.

In this thesis, I analyze four important blockbuster films: *The Island* (Michael Bay; US; 2005), *V for Vendetta* (James McTeigue; UK/US/Germany; 2005),

---

\(^5\) Benjamin, 692.
Children of Men (Alfonso Cuaron; UK; 2006) and 28 Weeks Later (Juan Carlos Fresnadillo; UK; 2007). Their narratives are based on significant biopolitical issues in contemporary society\(^6\): human cloning, totalitarianism, immigration, asylum seeking and global epidemics. These films highlight Foucault’s concepts of biopower, governmentality and pastoral power; Agamben’s ideas regarding the state of exception and physical spaces functioning as concentration camps; and the concept of dehumanization of certain individuals as explained by Esposito. I focus on science fiction blockbusters because it is the genre which deals with the dystopian perspectives of political, social and economic issues in the world related to emergent technologies; and it is also the genre which imagines possible futuristic scenarios that are presented to mass audiences.\(^7\) In each of the film analysis, I will demonstrate the paradoxical nature of blockbuster science fiction films. Despite showing the dangers which could result from biopolitical practices, these films seek to reinforce biopolitics itself by not portraying that resisting the most fundamental feature of this form of power – the reduction of individuals to biological entities - is perhaps the only way of truly overcoming biopolitics as questioned by the philosophers.

---

\(^6\). In this thesis, the term “society” is not a concrete political/ historical entity but a more generalized idea of a global society which has been affected by certain trends and technologies such as human cloning, immigration, asylum seeking, pandemics and totalitarian/ repressive governments. I use a generalized idea of a global society as such because the films, too, refer to a collective global society which has been affected by the above mentioned issues, despite having narratives set in the United States or Britain.

\(^7\). Bainbridge, 204.
CHAPTER 1
BIOPOLITICS AND SCIENCE FICTION CINEMA

Cinema, Philosophy and Ideology

Film scholars have proposed two ways of understanding the relationship between cinema and philosophy. The first approach is concerned with how films reflect about the world and what parallels we can see with philosophical arguments in order to explore how cinema understands (and interprets) social and political issues. The second approach questions whether films themselves can function as forms of philosophical questioning and whether they contribute (if at all) to existing philosophical arguments. In this thesis, I am concerned with the first approach i.e. how popular science fiction films represent and contemplate on the ways in which human biological bodies are managed by political powers as also explored by Michel Foucault, Giorgio Agamben and Roberto Esposito. Issues of security, terrorism, commodification of the human body and pandemics are all examples of the biologization of politics and draw parallels with certain concepts of these three philosophers. Like historical science fiction films, contemporary ones also depict dystopian worlds where the biological bodies of human beings exist at the mercy of authorities in power; and science and technology can be used by these authorities to take any action against the biological bodies of populations. The political rhetoric of security and preservation of populations is used to justify these actions, regardless of how brutal they are at times. Each of

---

8. Smith and Wartenberg, 1.
the films that I have chosen for analysis in this thesis highlights particular issues in contemporary society and politics. *The Island* shows a community of clones that is under intense biological scrutiny. The film represents how modern day scientific advancements and medical science have commodified the human biological body. The film is also an allegory of the ways in which human biological bodies are heavily monitored and subject to intense surveillance (i.e. the idea of Quantified Selves). *V for Vendetta* is concerned with the political rhetoric of the war against terror and the ways in which authorities in power utilize this rhetoric of protecting populations to become totalitarian regimes. *Children of Men* is concerned with the ways in which contemporary political practices have framed issues of immigration and asylum seeking within the context of national (and global) security. This film shows how refugees and immigrants (regardless of whether they are legal or illegal) tend to be criminalized in modern society by political rhetoric. *28 Weeks Later* deals with the recurring fear of deadly pandemics and the reactions to such events by the authorities in power. It also highlights the ways in which medicine, human biology and political power are closely interwoven with one another in biopolitical practices. All of these narratives are concerned with global issues which have shaped contemporary times and this is why I use this many examples. For example, the present day ideas of security, both from terrorism and viral epidemics, are our reality. The political rhetoric of national security has created the impression that the public is constantly surrounded by fear and anxiety, enabling this rhetoric to

---

thrive on this climate of paranoia. In the face of such dangers, people are made to entrust their everyday safety solely to their governments. They are made to believe that the state will take care of their safety, happiness and health, as long as they follow the guidelines and obey the law. We are also encouraged to be observant of our fellow citizens and report any signs of suspicious activities to a range of police hotlines. Furthermore, individuals themselves have an altered understanding of their biological bodies due to medical and scientific advancements. Nowadays, the technology exists to replace organs, change our physical appearances, alter our genders and to enhance our bodies by various means. This has given rise to the idea that our bodies can be transformed or optimized and moreover, it is now regarded as the citizens’ right to do so. As a result, immense hope has been invested in procedures such as in vitro fertilization, cosmetic surgery, organ transplants and gender reassignment operations. Thus, human biological life has become a part of the political economy, giving rise to the bioeconomy. In order to capitalize on the bioeconomy, many governments have made investments (in terms of fostering research, building laboratories and increasing the workforce) to expand this sector.\footnote{Rose, 35.} The discipline, regulation and economic exploitation of biological bodies of both individuals and populations by political powers as such are also the main concerns of the philosophy of biopolitics.

Apart from highlighting specific issues, these films convey different forms of resistances. In \textit{The Island}, resistance focuses on overthrowing the biotechnology
institute which creates the clones; in *V for Vendetta*, resistance takes the form of overthrowing the totalitarian regime, in *Children of Men*, resistance focuses on a scientific solution and in *28 Weeks Later*, the cure to the rage virus is conveyed as a means of resistance. Yet, none of these films question whether any active form of resistance lies in resisting the biologization of politics and I believe this is what links these films together. In addition, the films had immense public appeal and made enormous profits at the box office. *The Island* made a total of US$172,949,164\(^{11}\) worldwide. *V for Vendetta* earned a total of US$132,511,035\(^{12}\) by December 2006. *Children of Men* made a total of US$69,612,678\(^{13}\) worldwide by February 2006. *28 Weeks Later* made a total of US$64.2 million to date.\(^{14}\) Even though *Children of Men* and *28 Weeks Later* did not make the amount of money that the other two films made, they were nevertheless popular in different ways. *Children of Men* was voted as one of the most successful films of 2006\(^{15}\) whereas *28 Weeks Later* exceeded expectations at the box office that a sequel (*28 Months Later*) has been scheduled to be released in 2013.\(^{16}\) For me, it is this public appeal factor which becomes of particular interest when exploring how ideology is disseminated in popular films because it is these films which would


have the most influence over large numbers of people. What interests me is the image of biopolitics which is disseminated amongst mass audiences. Like I mentioned earlier, my thesis is that these films do not inspire people to question whether the reduction of individuals and populations to biological entities is the real starting point for resisting oppressive political practices. I am interested in how blockbuster science fiction films themselves function as a form of biopolitics because (as I mentioned in the abstract), these films also make audiences docile to biopolitics, making it impossible to imagine alternatives to this form of power. It is here that I see a similarity with biopolitics, because this form of power also seeks to make individuals and populations submissive and accepting of biopolitics. This is also the reason I chose to focus specifically on blockbuster science fiction films in this thesis. Blockbusters are the most popular films, have the highest circulation rates amongst audiences and are the best tools to disseminate a particular ideology. For audiences of blockbusters, “there is no difference between the ideology they meet everyday and the ideology on the screen.”¹⁷ In this sense, they possess what Walter Benjamin describes as the “submissive” and “distracting” qualities of mechanically reproduced art including cinema.¹⁸ He describes cinema (or mechanically reproduced art) as such because like political powers, cinema also spreads a particular ideology to make mass audiences docile and accept this ideology passively. Through this process, cinema actually manipulates audience responses to certain issues.¹⁹ With regards to blockbuster science fiction films, while it is true that they illustrate the darker

¹⁸. Benjamin, 692.
¹⁹. Ibid., 692.
side of our society, they eventually complement biopolitics because their representation of resistance is markedly different from the philosophers’ arguments regarding the possibility of resistance. Foucault, Agamben and Esposito question whether any active form of resistance to biopolitics should take into account that the biologization of human life (and its pervasiveness) is the fundamental feature of biopolitics. Yet, the films appear to be limited in questioning the reduction of people to biological entities as a first step to overcoming biopolitical practices.

Science Fiction Cinema and Reflections of Biopolitics

Science fiction is one of the most popular cinema genres, and although these films are either set in outer space or in the future, they mirror the contemporary issues plaguing the world:

In some respects, the genre that seems the most distant from the contemporary world is one of the most free to execute accurate descriptions of its operations. Fantasies of the future may simply be ways of putting quotation marks around the present.20

As mentioned in the above quote, this genre which is characterized by aliens, androids and space travel metaphorically refer to society’s anxieties of being overpowered by technology, loss of human identity and the unknown dangers created by scientific developments. Despite being set in a faraway or futuristic world, this genre is much closer than we think to the real world which we inhabit. These films show extreme conditions at play, often underpinned by ethical

---

concerns with regards to scientific and technological progress. Like any other film genre, science fiction cinema is influenced by the social and political landscape of any society at any given time. In certain respects, this appears to be the safest platform to explore pressing, and often controversial, issues that our world is preoccupied with. In order to do this, science fiction cinema has to distance itself from the present day world.

Since the advent of cinema coincided with the dawn of mechanization in the early 20th century, the very first science fiction films dealt with the dangers of this process. Classic early films like *Metropolis* (Fritz Lang; Germany; 1927) showcased this mistrust in technology. The subsequent two world wars and the use of the atomic bomb added to this mistrust, for they demonstrated the devastating outcomes of science used in warfare. In the middle of the last century, at the height of the Cold War, Hollywood science fiction cinema used the theme of alien invasion to portray their paranoia about Soviet invasion and domination. Early films such as *The Day the Earth Stood Still* (Robert Wise; US, 1951) illustrated the disastrous effects of atomic energy following the events of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Well known films dealing with the paranoia of Soviet invasion are *The Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (Don Siegel; US; 1956), *The Thing from another World* (Christain Nyby; US; 1951), *The War of the Worlds* (Byron Haskin; US; 1953) and *Star Wars Episode IV: A New Hope* (George Lucas; US; 1977). From the late 1970s onwards and throughout the 1980s, genetic manipulation and AIDS began to become a common theme in science
fiction films. Films such as *The Clonus Horror* (Robert S. Fiveson; US; 1979) and *Blade Runner* (Ridley Scott; US; 1982) dealt with the fear over cyborgs and human cloning. One of the first films to deal with AIDS is *The Thing* (John Carpenter; US; 1982). The 1990s, too, saw this anxiety with genetic manipulation continue. Well known films from this decade dealing with eugenics and genetic engineering were *Jurassic Park* (Steven Spielberg; US; 1993), *The Island of Dr. Moreau* (John Frankenheimer; US; 1996) and *Gattaca* (Andrew Niccol; US; 1997). The fear and mistrust of technology and the possibility of technology overpowering mankind have continued to be represented in the science fiction genre with one of the most popular films being *The Matrix* (Andy Wachowski and Larry Wachowski; US/ Australia; 1999).

The beginning of the new millennium has seen a new preoccupation in all cinematic genres. One of the most defining events of the 21st century, September 11 and its aftermath provided fresh inspiration for the media. The resulting political climate shifted the boundaries governing issues of privacy, surveillance and security. It is well known that after September 11 actions such as interrogation involving torture, increased surveillance (including biometric) and detention of terror suspects with neither viable charges nor trial became more commonplace. National security, immigration and population control have become the important topics of the governments in both developed and developing countries. Although not all governments appear to be openly totalitarian, there is a form of subtle totalitarianism, where political ideologies
have infiltrated all aspects of our lives and guide our actions. The protection of lives (of both individuals and populations) while eliminating threats by political powers and the growing scientific obsessions with altering the human body (as demonstrated by the expanding biotechnology and biomedical sectors) highlight the prevalence of biopolitics in contemporary society; and science fiction films also explore these issues.

**Theoretical Frameworks: What is Biopolitics?**

As a starting point of exploring the parallels between the representation of contemporary social and political issues in science fiction cinema and the philosophical arguments regarding biopolitics, I will include my interpretations of certain philosophical concepts of Foucault, Agamben and Esposito based on my understanding of these concepts. I do not provide a full account of their concepts, but only concentrate on the aspects which I believe are relevant to my thesis. These include biopower, governmentality, pastoral power, *homo sacer*, bare life, the camp, the state of exception and the animal man.

**Biopower**

The term biopower was introduced in Foucault’s book titled *The History of Sexuality (Volume 1)*, published in 1976. Biopower describes the ways in which human beings exist in society and politics not only as citizens but also as
biological entities which are of value to political power. This process of connecting the political with the biological occurs both at the level of the individual and that of populations. The form of biopower which is applied individually is the “anatomo-politics of the human body.”  

This form of biopower disciplines, optimizes and extorts the human body, taking into account factors such as efficiency and economic control. The second form of biopower which is practiced at the level of the population is a “biopolitics of the population.”

This form of biopower seeks to manage population while eliminating the individuals and factors which could jeopardize this. Issues such as reproductivity, health, mortality and well being of the masses are controlled by political powers by the second form of biopower.

For example, state racism is a form of biopower. Foucault writes that racism is not merely a political issue, but it is also a biological one; and this biological understanding of racism is manipulated by political rhetoric in order to control populations. Racism divides the population and creates caesuras i.e. the biological bodies of the population are divided into supposed superior and supposed inferior races; the latter being regarded as less than human entities. State racism is based on the idea that the death (or destruction) of the inferior race will make life of the superior one healthier and purer. As such, killing (or extermination) of the inferior race becomes more acceptable as it is only carried out to preserve the rest of the population. Thus, a biopolitical state believes that

---

21. Foucault, 139.
22. Ibid., 139.
conflict is necessary in order to protect the biological life of a certain group of
people. Biopower also relies on the security apparatus and a form of soft power
(i.e. pastoral power) to discipline and regulate populations. These concepts are
interpreted in the following sections.

**Governmentality and Pastoral Power**

Governmentality is the term Foucault uses to describe the situation where the
population becomes the target of power and is controlled/managed through the
apparatuses of security. Governmentality and pastoral power are useful for
understanding how biopolitical states subtly regulate and discipline their
populations in order to control them. Foucault traces the origins and development
of the modern form of governmentality to the Christian pastorate. Originating in
the pre-Christian east, pastoral power is a form of soft power which has its origins
in the idea that God is the shepherd or pastor of men (or the flock):

> Pastorship is a fundamental type of relationship between God and men and
> the king participates, as it were, in this pastoral structure of the
> relationship between God and men.\(^{23}\)

The original concept of pastoral power is based on the understanding that the
shepherd ensures the salvation of the flock,\(^{24}\) ensures its well being\(^{25}\) and that it
is an “individualizing power,” i.e. the shepherd looks after the whole flock and

---

23. Foucault, 123.
24. Foucault, 125. In the lecture given on 8 February 1978, in his book titled *Security, Territory, Population*, Foucault writes that “The shepherd’s power is not exercised over a territory but, by
definition, over a flock, and more exactly, over the flock in its movement from one place to
another. The shepherd’s power is essentially exercised over a multiplicity in movement.”
25. Ibid., 127.
each sheep individually. The shepherd is prepared to sacrifice himself for the flock, and more importantly, to sacrifice the whole flock to save one sheep.\textsuperscript{26} The concept of pastoral power was introduced into the Western world by the Christian church, which institutionalized this power and its original meaning was altered.\textsuperscript{27} One of the most important aspects of this transformation of pastoral power is that the Christian pastorate became concerned with controlling, monitoring and guiding men; both collectively and individually.\textsuperscript{28} The Christian pastorate interpreted the three important aspects of the original pastorate (salvation, the law and the truth) differently. Thus, salvation of the flock became an “economy of faults and merits,”\textsuperscript{29} both the shepherd and the flock are bound together by responsibility. In terms of the law, an individual must subordinate him/ herself to another who has more authority; obedience is required to be absolute and associated with humility.\textsuperscript{30} Finally, in terms of the truth, the pastor teaches his flock about spirituality, and proper spiritual guidance. This guidance is thought to be obligatory, permanent and strengthens one’s subordination.\textsuperscript{31} Foucault writes that it is this Christian pastorate which has given rise to governmentality. He emphasizes the pastorate heavily because in his opinion, the relationship between politics and religion (in the West) is not between the Church and the state, but it concerns the pastorate and government of populations. Thus, Foucault states that

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{26} Foucault, 128.  \\
\textsuperscript{27} Foucault, 164. In the lecture given on 22 February 1978, in his book titled Security, Territory, Population, Foucault says, “So, the pastorate in Christianity gave rise to a dense, complicated, and closely woven institutional network that claimed to be, and was in fact, coextensive with the entire Church, and so with Christianity, with the entire Christian community.”  \\
\textsuperscript{29} Ibid., 165.  \\
\textsuperscript{30} Ibid., 173.  \\
\textsuperscript{31} Ibid., 177.  \\
\textsuperscript{31} Ibid., 181.
\end{flushleft}
nowadays biopolitical states incorporate a newer understanding of pastoral power in order to regulate and manage populations.\textsuperscript{32} The new pastoral power has a specific set of concerns which are quite different to the original Christian pastorate. Salvation in the modern sense refers to security, health, standards of living and quality of life. Secondly, there are many institutions which deploy this pastoral power: the state, the police, the military, welfare societies, corporate initiatives, and philanthropic projects. The modern day shepherds are governments, the military, the police force, medical and health professionals. Finally, the new pastoral power is practiced on two levels: at the level of the population and at the level of the individual.\textsuperscript{33} In addition to this new pastoral power, the functioning of governmentality requires the security apparatus. In the following section, I will interpret Foucault’s ideas on security and how this has become incorporated into the functioning of the modern state.

**Security and Populations**

In the first three and final lectures in *Security, Territory, Population*, Foucault explains how the current notion of population as a natural entity emerged and the ways in which the concept of security is applied to the population. The current idea of population originated in the 8\textsuperscript{th} century, where the economists of the time conceptualized population as a natural process.\textsuperscript{34} It was believed that the population is subject to certain variables: climate, commerce, culture, customs,
religion, ideas of morality, etc. Rather than attempting to control the population directly, a biopolitical state believes that these variables must be allowed to function in a way which will benefit the population as a whole. As such, nowadays, states take into account issues such as the economy, population management, the law, respect for certain freedoms and the police, military and diplomatic missions in the management of populations. The biological preservation of the population becomes of paramount importance in political rhetoric and states incorporate the security apparatus in order to manage the population:

The fundamental objective of governmentality will be mechanisms of security, or, let’s say, it will be state intervention with the essential function of ensuring the security of the natural phenomena of economic processes or processes intrinsic to population.

In order to preserve the population as such, anything (or anyone) which hinders the natural functioning of the populations is identified as a threat by the authorities in power. Thus, terror suspects, individuals who are infected or risk being infected by epidemic diseases as well as outsiders to any society (immigrants and asylum seekers) are identified by the respective authorities in power as the potential threats. In this sense, governments, the police and the military function as the contemporary shepherds who, similar to the ancient Christian pastorate, guides, monitors and watches over the flock – the population. Political power takes measures to regulate and, at times, eliminate the individuals identified as threats. As such, terror suspects are imprisoned or deported, asylum

---

35 Foucault, 71.
36 Ibid., 72-3.
37 Ibid., 353.
seekers placed in detention facilities and immigrants either not fully integrated or discriminated against. In this thesis, biopolitical responses (as conceptualized by Foucault) to issues such as the security from terrorism is explored in Chapter 3 (*V for Vendetta*), immigrants and asylum seekers in Chapter 4 (*Children of Men*) and the threat of pandemics in Chapter 5 (*28 Weeks Later*). The contemporary commodification of the human biological body by scientific advancements and the political economy is an example of the anatamo-politics of the body. The resulting regulation, monitoring and optimization of biological bodies have provided the means to commodify the human body in new ways (for the human body has been regarded as a commodity throughout history through practices such as slavery and human sacrifice). These concepts are further discussed in Chapter 2 (*The Island*).

As these interpretations highlight, Foucault’s explanation of biopower explores the genealogical development of this form of power. He does not focus on how biological bodies of individuals exist in relation to physical spaces, an issue which becomes important in analyzing science fiction films (as I will demonstrate later in each of the film analysis). This is why I am interested in interpreting the work of Giorgio Agamben, with regards to biopolitics, as he describes the fusion of biology, politics and physical spaces in his discussion of biopolitics. Agamben is also interested in how contemporary biopolitics descend into totalitarianism and the treatment of certain biological bodies as less than human entities. The latter is a concept which Foucault briefly introduces in his explanation of state racism but
does not expand, and this is another reason as to why I focus on the writing of Agamben.

**Homo Sacer and Bare Life**

Agamben began to use the term biopolitics specifically (and not biopower) and in his book *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*; he also began to introduce the concepts of bare life and the division of human biological life into what deserves to be preserved and what is to be exterminated. A central theme in Agamben’s explanation of biopolitics is that of bare life, which refers to the biological life of human beings which becomes an object of political decisions.

Bare life (or naked life) is a political status:

> Bare life is not simple natural life but rather natural life endowed with a peculiar status that is achieved by the subjection of an individual life to sovereign power, albeit in the form of an exclusion from the protection otherwise afforded by the sovereign.38

Agamben states that bare life exists in a paradoxical form and to explain the peculiar characteristics of this political status, he uses the obscure political status of an individual who is thought to have existed in ancient Roman times: *homo sacer* (or the sacred man). In an ancient Roman text titled *On the Significance of Words* by a grammarian at the time named Pompeius Festus, *homo sacer* is described as follows:

> The sacred man is the one whom the people have judged on account of a crime. It is not permitted to sacrifice this man, yet he who kills him will not be condemned for homicide; in the first tribunitian law, in fact, it is noted that ‘if someone kills the one who is sacred according to the

---

plebiscite, it will not be considered homicide.’ This is why it is customary for a bad or impure man to be called sacred.\textsuperscript{39}

This very contradictory definition points to a man who is sacred in a negative sense; he is not sacrificed on a religious alter and his killing is unpunished, for it is not regarded as homicide. Thus, \textit{homo sacer} is defined by this “double exclusion,”\textsuperscript{40} i.e. he may be killed, but not be sacrificed. As a result, a new sovereign sphere comes into existence, which Agamben claims is a zone of indistinction between sacrifice and homicide:

The sovereign sphere is the sphere in which it is permitted to kill without committing homicide and without celebrating a sacrifice, and sacred life – that is, life that may be killed but not sacrificed – is the life that has been captured in this sphere.\textsuperscript{41}

For Agamben, the paradoxical nature of bare life lies in the fact that, similar to the \textit{homo sacer}, the killing (or destruction) of bare life does not count as homicide because it, too, is sacred in a negative sense and caught in a sovereign sphere. Agamben writes that both the sovereign and the \textit{homo sacer} are “symmetrical figures” for “the sovereign is the one with respect to whom all men are potentially \textit{hominis sacri}, and \textit{homo sacer} is the one with respect to whom all men act as sovereigns.”\textsuperscript{42} In Agamben’s conceptualization of biopolitics, bare life, biology and politics become undistinguished from one another when all individuals become reduced to bare life:

\begin{quote}
Once their fundamental referent becomes bare life, traditional political distinctions (such as those between Right and Left, liberalism and
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{39} Agamben, 71. Agamben had retrieved this definition of sacred life from an ancient Roman text titled \textit{On the Significance of Words}, written by Pompeius Festus, a grammarian at the time.
\textsuperscript{40} Ibid., 82.
\textsuperscript{41} Ibid., 83.
\textsuperscript{42} Ibid., 84.
totalitarianism, private and public) lose their clarity and intelligibility and enter into a zone of indistinction.\textsuperscript{43}

Citing the example of Nazism, Agamben states that it is this inclusion and inseparability of bare biological life from political power which has given rise to totalitarianism. As explained by the above quote, political distinctions become blurred when bare life becomes the focus of politics.

**The Camp and the State of Exception**

When biological life cannot be separated from political power, what is opened up is a physical space which Agamben has named as the camp. According to him, the idea of the camp is central to the modern practices of biopolitics because it is “the most biopolitical space ever to be have been realized, in which power confronts nothing but pure life, without any mediation.”\textsuperscript{44} As mentioned earlier, when authorities in power function in the name of national (or public) security, anything which threatens this security is removed. The condition which enables the expulsion of threats is what Agamben describes as the “state of exception.”\textsuperscript{45}

In the space identified as the camp, the state of exception is the norm; it is what justifies any action, regardless of its brutality. Citizens are stripped of their rights, and every inhumane action is made possible in the camp. For Agamben, the term camp does not only refer to the concentration camps of World War 2. Every time a situation arises where the state of exception is the norm and any action can be

\textsuperscript{43} Agamben, 122.
\textsuperscript{44} Ibid., 171.
\textsuperscript{45} Ibid., 168.
taken against the biological bodies of human beings within a particular physical space, a camp is created. Thus, in modern political practices prisons (whether they contain those accused of crime or terrorism), detention facilities, refugee camps, quarantine zones and the severely economically underprivileged places where individuals who provide the biological spare parts for industries which deal with human bodies reside become the modern day camps. These camps, as explained by Agamben, are the zones between life and death. The authorities in power can intervene to do anything with the biological lives of the individuals within these camps to fulfill political purposes. They become the less valued biological lives that do not possess the same rights to protection and preservation by the state compared to those biological bodies which are protected by the state.

The ideas of the camp and devaluing of human biological life are discussed in Chapters 2 and 4 which are analyses of *The Island* and *Children of Men* respectively.

The above mentioned devaluing of human biological life is explored by Agamben using the concepts of *Versuchspersonen* (VP or human guinea pigs)46 and “life which does not deserve to be lived.”47 I believe it is important to use these two concepts because science fiction films explicitly portray the devaluing of human life in order to torture people, use their bodies for medical experimentation or exterminate certain groups of individuals. Originally, the term VP was used by the National Socialist regime to describe individuals who were held in prisons and

46. Agamben., 154.
47. Ibid., 136.
concentration camps. In his explanation of biopolitics, Agamben applies the term VP in a general sense to highlight the political status of all individuals whose lives become enclosed within a camp. When the National Socialist regime conducted fatal experiments on the individuals in the concentration camps, the ethical issues regarding those actions were never taken into consideration. Agamben writes that such brutality was only possible because these VPs are “situated in a limit zone between life and death, inside and outside, in which they are no longer anything but bare life.” As such, VPs lack the rights attributed to other human beings, and they exist in this zone of indistinction where they are reduced to mere biological entities. According to Agamben, the biological bodies of these VPs are “abandoned, in a state of exception, to the most extreme misfortunes.” Therefore, once these biological bodies begin to exist in a state of exception (a zone between life and death); these bodies become identified as “life unworthy of being lived.” These biological bodies labeled as “life that does not deserve to live” or “life unworthy of being lived” is the political concept on which modern sovereign power has been founded. In Agamben’s explanation of biopolitics, both the camp and the state of exception are features of everyday life and politics. Every time a threatening situation arises, when authorities in power are concerned with ensuring the security of individuals, a state of exception emerges. In this state of exception, all life is reduced to its biological form and begins to exist in a zone between life and death where the authorities in power are able to take any action against these bodies. The biological bodies which come to be regarded as a

48. Agamben, 159.
49. Ibid., 159.
50. Ibid., 142.
threat are designated as “life which does not deserve to live” and removed from a particular society. Thus, what Agamben has introduced through these ideas is that not only are human beings reduced to biological entities; these entities are further divided into what will be preserved and what will be eliminated.

The final interpretation of biopolitics which I include is one concept of Roberto Esposito’s. I use his writings on this philosophy because unlike Foucault and Agamben, he emphasizes the politics of death (thanatopolitics) in his explanation of biopolitics. Although Esposito also discusses the devaluing of human biological life, it follows a different framework to Agamben’s. While Agamben explains the process of devaluing life in a spatial and metaphorical sense, for Esposito, this process occurs at the level of the species. By the level of the species, what he means is that human beings whose lives are devalued are neither treated as human beings nor animals – but as a separate species, the “animal man.”51 Thus, for him, devaluing of human life is the dehumanizing of individuals. I find the dehumanizing of human life as such particularly interesting in analyzing science fiction films as their narratives are replete with representations of animal men.

The Animal Man and Dehumanizing of Human Biological Life

In his book titled *Bios: Biopolitics and Philosophy* first published in 2008, Esposito introduces the concepts of the politicization of medicine and the animal

51. Esposito, 130.
man. According to Esposito, the most extreme example of biopolitics is Nazism where the division between politics and biology disappeared:

What before had always been a vitalistic metaphor becomes a reality in Nazism, not in the sense that political power passes directly into the hands of biologists, but in the sense that politicians use biological processes as criteria with which to guide their own actions.\(^{52}\)

Esposito writes that the distinguishing feature of Nazi biopolitics was the inclusion of medicine. Every homicide programme had to undergo medical authorization and doctors were given the power to choose who would live and who would die. For Esposito, this is the origins of the politicization of medicine. He writes that with the incorporation of medicine into the deployment of biopolitics, the relationship between the patient, doctor and the state has been transformed. The relationship between the latter two is strengthened, whereas the earlier relationship is weakened. The cure is no longer a private issue – it is a public function and the doctor’s responsibility is not to the patient, but to the state.\(^ {53}\)

Esposito also claims that the inclusion of medicine by the National Socialist regime altered the meaning of genocide. Scholars have claimed that genocide must fulfill the following minimum conditions: firstly, the state has declared its intentions to kill a homogenous group of people. Secondly, this killing will involve all of the people in this particular group and finally, the group in question is killed for purely biological reasons (not for political or economic).\(^ {54}\)

However, with the incorporation of medicine, genocide began to have a

\(^{52}\) Esposito, 112-3.

\(^{53}\) Ibid., 139.

\(^{54}\) Ibid., 136.
“therapeutic purpose.” Finally, the extermination of certain people also requires an additional condition – that of dehumanizing their lives, they have to be branded (or identified) as animal men. Esposito describes animal men as follows:

He who was the object of persecution and extreme violence wasn’t simply an animal (which indeed was respected and protected as such by one of the most advanced pieces of legislation of the entire world), but was an animal-man: man in the animal and the animal man.

Many of inhumane crimes have been justified by the use of dehumanizing rhetoric. For example in 1936, the German Supreme Court issued a statement which dehumanized Jews: “The Reichsgericht itself refused to recognize Jews...as ‘persons’ in the legal sense.” In another example, the Soviet Union identified the enemies of the nation as “unpersons who had never existed.” This eventually paved the way for the notorious labour camps (or the Gulags) of the Soviet era. Even today, the rhetoric of animal men becomes apparent whenever we witness genocides, torture and physical abuse of human beings. The millions of people who are being killed or have been killed and abused in the most violent ways imaginable in the conflicts in Bosnia, Rwanda, Congo, Sri Lanka, Cambodia, Afghanistan, Iraq (to name a few countries) have shown us that the dehumanizing of human life persists in the contemporary world. Ethnic cleansing, violent crackdowns on insurgencies and brutal treatments in internment and prison camps can only occur when the victims of these incidents have been dehumanized by the perpetrators of such crimes. The concept of dehumanizing

55. Esposito, 136.
56. Ibid., 130.
57. Brennan, 7.
58. Ibid., 7.
human life is used in Chapters 3 and 5 to analyze how this is represented by science fiction films.

The Possibility of Resisting Biopolitics

Based on these interpretations, it makes me question whether there is any way of resisting biopolitics when it has become so pervasive in today’s society. From what I understand of Foucault’s essay titled *The Subject and Power*, Foucault states that all power relations are about transforming people into subjects. He believes that we cannot escape subjectivity and perhaps whether it is possible to resist the individualizing and collective subjectivity which has been imposed upon us by the authorities in power and instead promote a different form of subjectivity:

The conclusion would be that the political, ethical, social, philosophical problem of our days is not to try to liberate the individual from the state and from the type of individualization which is linked to the state. We have to promote new forms of subjectivity through the refusal of this kind of individuality which has been imposed on us for several centuries.

I believe it is this Foucauldian argument which provides a possibility (or even a framework) for thinking of a way of resisting biopolitical practices. Agamben, too, has raised questions regarding resistance to biopolitics and discusses this idea more explicitly than Foucault. Agamben states that the physical spaces which function as camps and the states of exception which allows political powers to take any action against the bare life which exists within such spaces have become

---

59. Foucault, 791.
60. Ibid., 785.
permanent fixtures of the contemporary world.\footnote{Agamben, 188.} Any form of resistance should take into account this indistinct quality between biology and politics which has created the above mentioned conditions:

It is on the basis of these uncertain and nameless terrains, these difficult zones of indistinction, that the ways and the forms of a new politics must be thought.\footnote{Ibid., 187.}

Similarly, Esposito also states that biopolitics is everywhere in the modern world:

From the growing prominence of ethnicity in relations between peoples and state, to the centrality of the question of health care as a privileged index of the functioning of the economic system, to the priority that all political parties give in their platforms to public order – what we find in every area is a tendency to flatten the political into the purely biological (if not to the body itself) of those who are at the same time subjects and objects.\footnote{Esposito, 188.}

According to Esposito, the irony of biopolitics lies in the fact that a form of politics which is supposedly concerned about the preservation of biological life relies on the elimination (or extermination) of life to function, even when it comes to thinking of ways to liberate people or change political systems. Biopolitics is about life and death decisions which have become central to all political systems.\footnote{Ibid., 188.} He questions whether true emancipation lies in the prevention of the politics of life (biopolitics) becoming a politics of death (thanatopolitics); whether the only way to avoid biopolitics becoming thanatopolitics lies in practicing “affirmative biopolitics.”\footnote{Ibid., 191.} By affirmative biopolitics, Esposito means that a politics of life that seeks to preserve life should perhaps attempt to understand life in a different way; and not in purely biological terms which can lead to reducing

\footnotesize{\bibliographystyle{chicago}
\bibliography{mybib}}
certain individuals to animal men.\textsuperscript{66} Based on my interpretations of these concepts, all three philosophers have critical ideas regarding the biologization of politics and they believe the only way of finding an alternative to biopolitics is to resist the reduction of human life into its mere biological characteristics or as in the case of Foucault, promote another form of subjectivity. They believe this can be achieved by analyzing how the biologization of politics occurs in contemporary societies and although perhaps we cannot be truly liberated from this process; we can at least actively question this fundamental feature of biopolitics as a possible means of resistance. However, as I have mentioned earlier in the abstract as well as in this chapter, science fiction films express the possibilities of resisting biopolitics very differently from these philosophers; this will be illustrated further in the film analyses in the following chapters and I will also raise the questions as to why this is so.

\textsuperscript{66} Esposito, 194.
CHAPTER 2
THE COMMODIFICATION AND DOCILITY OF THE HUMAN BIOLOGICAL BODY IN *THE ISLAND*

Introduction

Biopolitical practices define the human body as a commodity which is subject to processes such as medical research, clinical trials, organ transplants and surrogate motherhood. What interests me about the portrayal of human commodification in blockbuster science fiction films is that while they raise ethical questions regarding these practices, the solutions nevertheless fail to comprehend the pervasiveness of biopolitics and this is the reason that I chose *The Island* for analysis. In the film, a biotechnology company (Merrick Institute) has manufactured a new biological underclass (human clones) to provide organs for certain privileged people who have the money to pay for the creation and sustenance of these clones. *The Island* conveys the message that such technologies must be resisted or otherwise they can become oppressive as portrayed in its narrative. In the end of the film, Merrick Institute is destroyed, the clones manage to escape this facility and there is a feeling that the whole human cloning project has ended because Dr. Merrick has been killed. Yet, does destroying an oppressive institution mean an end to biopolitics itself? Hasn’t the commodification and docility of the human body become an intrinsic part of today’s society? Isn’t this why people fall prey to organ trafficking gangs and cash-strapped people voluntarily become organ donors and surrogate mothers to survive financially? If we are to ever actively resist such practices, should we
resist just the technologies, the institutions that utilize these technologies and profits from them? Or should we perhaps resist the fundamental feature of biopolitics— that of reducing individuals and groups to mere biological entities which are then manipulated by politics and the economy? My argument is that this is where *The Island* fails because the film does not enquire whether resisting the biologization of politics and the economy which drives such biopolitical practices is perhaps a starting point for reflecting about any active form resistance to biopolitics. By failing to do so, *The Island* is complacent about the pervasiveness of this form of power and functions as a form of biopolitics itself; because it prevents audiences from questioning this fundamental feature of biopolitics. Eventually, the film makes audiences docile to the political and economic conditions which make the scenario depicted in *The Island* possible.

In order to analyze how *The Island* explores and critiques the commodification of the human body, I will use the Foucauldian theories of the docile body and pastoral power for a number of particular reasons. Practices such as medical research, clinical trials, organ transplants and surrogate motherhood constitute the new bioeconomy or the political economy of biological life,\(^{67}\) which makes the body “docile” (i.e. it is disciplined, regulated and even standardized)\(^ {68}\) in order to ensure that these industries function and profit from the body. In this sense, these

\(^{67}\) Rose, 32.

\(^{68}\) Foucault, 135. The docile body refers to the discipline and regulation of the human body. This concept draws on the first strand of biopower – the anatomo politics of the human body. I do not include the theory of the docile body in Chapter 1 because it is only used in this particular film analysis. This theory is only used in this chapter/analysis because I feel *The Island* highlights the concept explicitly compared to the other films.
industries function as the modern day shepherds, monitoring and guiding the public (or the flock) to adopt healthier lifestyles by various health initiatives and programmes. *The Island*’s critique of the contemporary bioeconomy shows how this industry always benefits only certain privileged group of people, whereas the less advantaged individuals exist as spare parts providers. The film also shows that those who benefit the most from the human cloning industry (the wealthy people and Merrick Institute) participate in this system without questioning the ethics behind manufacturing human beings only to make use of their body parts and discard them when their use has expired. Thus, *The Island* mirrors not only the present situation of organ donation/trafficking businesses but also possible future scenarios of human cloning in which human clones might be produced solely to provide organs for the rich and powerful individuals and to function as guinea pigs in medical experiments which will subsequently benefit the biomedical industry and the governments which invest in this industry.\(^{69}\) These points are explored in detail in the following sections.

**Commodification and Docility of the Biological Body**

The donation of any body part (whether it is an organ, blood, cells, sperm, or eggs), clinical trials, cosmetic surgery and surrogate motherhood are disguised under the medical and scientific rhetoric of either lifesaving or an individual’s right to his/her body.\(^{70}\) The fact that the human body is actually treated as a

\(^{69}\) Roy, 61.

\(^{70}\) Scheper-Hughes, 4.
product by these processes is never highlighted by this form of rhetoric. *The Island* challenges this rhetoric as it explicitly portrays the commodification of the human body. The clones are never referred to as human by Merrick Institute and wider society in the film. Instead, they are called “products,” “agnates,” “not-real-people” and “insurance policies” by these people.71 Ironically, even the “amniotic sacs” which contain the fetal clones have the word “Merrick” stamped on them as a justification of the fact that the clones cannot claim the rights to own their own bodies – for they are the property of Merrick Institute. By explicitly portraying the commodification of the human body, the film shows the resulting brutality of such practices. This is particularly obvious in the scene where the clone named Lima One Alpha who has been chosen to be a breeder i.e. she will carry and give birth to the child of her sponsor. As soon as she gives birth, she is euthanized and the film juxtaposes shots of a dead Lima with those of a nurse giving the child she has just given birth to, to the sponsors. Through these particular scenes, the film shows that technologies such as human cloning always benefits the individuals who have made financial investments in these kinds of technologies, while the less privileged individuals (such as the clones) are sacrificed in the process.

In order to supply a good quality of clones (and body parts), Merrick Institute also intensely disciplines and regulates the clones. The relation between discipline and regulation of the human body is discussed in the Foucauldian theory of “docile


Through this theory, Foucault seeks to explore a way of conceptualizing the body which is subject to being controlled and monitored by either the state or an institution. Foucault describes the docile body as follows: “A body is docile that may be subjected, used, transformed and improved.”72 The docile body is a biological body that is controlled and placed under great scrutiny, in order to ensure that it functions efficiently and supports the institution which disciplines the body. Discipline is concerned with controlling the ways in which the body functions and ensuring the body is both docile and utilized to its best ability. The more docile a body is made, the more useful it becomes73 because it can be controlled and made to operate according to the wishes of the authorities in power, who will also decide the body’s levels of efficiency.74 Foucault explains that institutions like schools, the military and prisons seek to make the bodies of both individuals and groups of people docile in order to control and regulate them. In *The Island,* Merrick Institute seeks to make the biological bodies of the clones docile in order to make them completely obedient to Dr. Merrick and to ensure that the entire human cloning project functions efficiently and smoothly. In the case of the clones, everything from the functioning of their brains to that of their kidneys is known to Merrick Institute. There are 24 hour surveillance cameras observing the behavior of the clones, each clone is fitted with an identity tag on his/ her left wrist at the time of manufacture and this tag is used to monitor the clone’s movements around the institute. Furthermore, the clones’ bodies are

72. Foucault, 136.
73. Ibid., 137.
74. Ibid., 138.
refrained from coming into direct contact with one another in order to ensure that no pathogens spread from one body to another and even their dreams are monitored in order to make them completely subordinate to the institute. This intense monitoring of the clones’ bodies has a real life parallel with the contemporary initiative known as the Quantified Selves. 75 This is a movement where individuals voluntarily track the functions of their bodies and their habits, after which they record their results over a period of time. Such ways of monitoring and regulating the human body have become prevalent in the contemporary medical (and biomedical) industries which aim to preserve the well being of individuals and populations, by making their bodies docile, similar to the ways in which Merrick Institute seeks to make the bodies of the clones docile. It is in this way that these industries practice a form of contemporary pastoral power over individuals and populations.

Pastoral Power as represented in The Island

In the film, the three ideas that the pastorate is concerned with – salvation, the law and truth 76 – are applied to the clones both individually and collectively. For the clones, salvation is the health of their biological bodies and ensuring their organs are maintained in pristine conditions. It is in order to achieve this salvation that Merrick Institute controls the clones’ nutrition, monitors their bodies and executes a rigorous exercise routine. Furthermore, the clones are constantly reminded to

76. Foucault, 125.
remain healthy: there are constant intercom announcements which claim that, “Remember, a healthy person is a happy person,” every morning.\textsuperscript{77} Since the law is concerned with complete obedience and servitude,\textsuperscript{78} the clones are expected to completely subordinate to authority as well as the rest of society: it is not only the institute which wields power over the clones, but also the wider society which has paid for and benefits from the clones’ biological bodies. As such, not a single clone is expected to defy this authority. When Lincoln begins to question the purpose of Merrick Institute, Dr. Merrick decides to perform a synaptic brain scan on him in order to guarantee that he does not pose a threat to the human cloning operation. Thus, as mentioned earlier, this pastoral power functions at the level of the individual, thereby ensuring that no clone strays from authority and the social order.

In terms of the truth, this idea functions in a perverse way in \textit{The Island}. Apart from the monitoring of biological activities, the other method through which the clones are controlled is the myth of the “island” and global contamination. The “island” is portrayed to the clones as a modern day Eden. The clones are made to believe that they are special because they survived a global contamination. In order to populate the “island” – which is the earth’s last pathogen free zone – the clones are told they are to remain as healthy as possible. Thus, this myth of the “island” is the control mechanism through which Merrick Institute guides the clones’ behaviour and thoughts. For the clones, the “island” is the truth in which

\textsuperscript{77} \textit{The Island}, prod. Heidi Fugeman Lindelof, Kenny Bates and Michael Bay, dir. Michael Bay, 136 mins., Warner Brothers/ DreamWorks, 2005, DVD.

\textsuperscript{78} Foucault, 177.
they must unquestioningly believe in. Yet, this truth masks the real purpose of both the institute and the clones themselves – for ultimately, clones do not inhabit any island, they are killed. In my opinion, through the portrayal of a brutalized purpose of pastoral power as such, *The Island* shows the darker side of a form of soft power which is supposedly aimed at looking after the wellbeing of the population. The film conveys the idea that rather than benefiting the people that the authorities in power seek to preserve through the practice of pastoral power, sometimes it is the authorities in power themselves which ultimately benefit the most from such a form of power. For in *The Island*, the scrupulous care and wellbeing of the clones’ bodies do not benefit the clones themselves; it is Merrick Institute which reaps the biggest rewards from the clones’ bodies because they are cared for and valued so long as they bring in enormous financial profits to this institute.

**Resisting Biopolitics?**

By portraying a dystopian outcome of the human commodification made possible by certain medical technologies and health rhetoric, *The Island* is critical of biopolitical practices which has lead to this commodification and highlights the oppressive nature of the new bioeconomy. The film conveys the idea that such biopolitical practices can be opposed by a simple act of individual bravery and resistance takes the form of overthrowing Merrick Institute (or the authority in power) in order to liberate the clones. Yet, is overthrowing the authority of
power, like Merrick Institute, ever enough to actively resist biopolitics when practices such as the commodification of human life has become such an intrinsic part of contemporary society? For example, with regards to human cloning, although several countries such as Germany, Britain, France, as well as the European Parliament and the World Health Organization have banned human cloning, it has the potential to become an accepted part of society/life.\(^{79}\) Much of this acceptance has occurred because proponents of cloning have stated that cloning can help serve personal agendas\(^ {80}\) such as cloning deceased children or relatives, the possibility of creating children with the characteristics desired by parents, and it functions as a reproductive right i.e. couples who cannot have children naturally can opt for cloning.\(^ {81}\) With regards to organ donation and organ trafficking, they have become widespread practices in today’s world. For example, women living in the slums of Chennai, India sell a kidney for $1,200 in order to pay off debts and support their children, and they think it is normal to do so.\(^ {82}\) Kidney theft occurs in both developed and developing countries where some patients, who undergo surgery in other body parts, emerge from the operating theatre minus a kidney.\(^ {83}\) Even though the media and human rights groups condemn such incidences of organ theft and organ donation, such incidences occur frequently. Shouldn’t we perhaps find a way to resist the biologization of politics which has lead to the treatment of the human body as a product and its prevalence in society (as demonstrated by the above examples) as

\(^{79}\) Caplan, 85.
\(^{80}\) Ibid., 84.
\(^{81}\) Roy, 53.
\(^{82}\) Scheper-Hughes, 37.
\(^{83}\) Ibid., 37.
a starting point for actively resisting biopolitics? I feel this is where *The Island* fails, because in spite of demonstrating the potential to criticize the consequences of commodifying the human body and the resulting oppression, the film nevertheless gives the impression that if the authorities in power are resisted, we can end the biologization of politics; while ignoring the network of economical, technological and scientific interests which underpin biopolitical practices. This contradicts the philosophical questions raised with regards to resistance by Foucault, Agamben and Esposito who feel that any form of active resistance will be impossible unless perhaps we begin to think of opposing the biologization of politics as a starting point. By not raising similar questions to those of these philosophers, *The Island* is actually supportive of the fundamental feature of biopolitics because it conveys the message that any oppressive biopolitical practice will be taken care of as long as the authorities in power which carries out such practices are overthrown. As a result, the film fails to inspire audiences themselves to question if there are any alternatives to technologies, political and economic systems which have commodified the human body and makes us accept our present condition. This is why *The Island* itself functions as a form of biopolitics, because like this form of power, the film also makes us docile to the biologization of politics and its inherence in today’s world. I feel that this film is important in the sense that it shows the dangers which could result from commodifying the human body, but I do not think it influences audiences to realize how embedded such practices are and how difficult it is to actively resist biopolitics unlike the philosophical arguments.
CHAPTER 3
THE BIOLOGICAL MANAGEMENT OF POPULATIONS IN
V FOR VENDETTA

Introduction

The constant hunt for terror suspects, threat of biological attacks (as in the anthrax scare), religious fundamentalism and the prevalence of surveillance are allegorized in V for Vendetta, which is a caricature of present day security from terrorism politics. The film is set in a futuristic Britain where the Fascist Norsefire party wields totalitarian power over the population. Despite being critical of contemporary biopolitics, the film’s answer to the dystopian scenario represented in the film is a romanticized revolution which aims to overthrow Norsefire, its brutal practices and provide freedom for all. It is a romanticized notion of revolution because it is just one character which topples Norsefire whereas history has shown us that any kind of liberation struggle is a collective one which evolves over a long period of time as in the Russian, Chinese, Cuban and Iranian revolutions, as well as the Indian independence movement to name a few examples.\textsuperscript{84} V for Vendetta even uses the phrase “Freedom! Forever!” as its tagline and this phrase appears in most of the promotional posters.\textsuperscript{85} Yet, can a revolution such as the one in the film function as a form of liberation from biopolitics? Why does the film represent revolution as the overthrowing of an oppressive government but does not address the issue of reducing individuals to

\textsuperscript{84} Turok, 12.
biological entities which are then manipulated by this government? I feel this is because the film functions as a form of biopolitics itself because it fails to grasp the fundamental characteristic of biopolitics and its pervasiveness in contemporary society. As such, the film embraces a weaker idea of resistance compared to the arguments of Michel Foucault, Giorgio Agamben and Roberto Esposito regarding the possibilities (if at all) of resisting biopolitical practices.

*V for Vendetta* highlights several concepts of both Esposito and Foucault; and it is these which are used in this analysis. For one, in the film, any individual who challenges the Christian, white British, heterosexual ideology promoted by Norsefire is immediately branded as a terrorist or terrorist sympathizer, tortured and imprisoned or murdered. As such, all immigrants and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (hereafter referred to as LGBT) individuals in Britain are rounded up by the secret police, imprisoned in the Larkhill Detention Facility and eventually murdered because they are thought to pose a threat to the security of Britain. Esposito’s concept of the animal man is explored through the portrayal of the LGBT individuals in the film. The arrest and near extermination of these individuals by Norsefire in the film’s narrative is made possible because Norsefire brands them as a species which is neither human nor animal making them susceptible to any form of brutality. Secondly, the intense monitoring of people’s activities and surveillance as represented in *V for Vendetta* is very much influenced by the heightened levels of surveillance which exist in present day society. Biometric passports and fingerprinting of people for identification
purposes are the new forms of bio-surveillance which together with security cameras contribute to the new panopticon\textsuperscript{86} culture. According to Foucault, panopticism is the situation which arises when individuals are under constant surveillance and most of the time they are aware of it, leading to self-censorship.\textsuperscript{87} In the film, London functions as a model panopticon and I will use Foucault’s theory on this subject to analyze this particular issue as it is represented in the film. Finally, Norsefire also conducts medical experiments on the biological bodies of the inmates at Larkhill in order to find both a deadly virus and a cure. The virus is then released into three places by Norsefire – a school, an underground train station and a water treatment plant, resulting in the deaths of nearly 100,000 people. The fear and paranoia created by the deaths are manipulated by Norsefire to gain hegemonic power and win the national election. Afterwards, it releases the cure and utilizes this cure to permanently maintain its newfound power. Norsefire also uses fundamental religious rhetoric to constantly remind the people of Britain that it was Norsefire that saved them from the viral outbreak and they should entrust their safety and well being to the government. Through this particular storyline, the film openly criticizes the current politics regarding security from terrorism and conveys the message that totalitarian governments are no different from the terrorists they claim to fight. However, despite all its criticism, \textit{V for Vendetta} merely pacifies audiences by creating the impression that even if governments resort to the worst possible biopolitical

\textsuperscript{86} Foucault, 202. Michel Foucault’s theory of the “Panopticon” is not included in Chapter 1 because it is only used in this chapter, reason being I believe \textit{V for Vendetta} highlights this concept explicitly compared to the other films.

\textsuperscript{87} Ibid., 202.
scenarios, there will always be a way of overthrowing such regimes and someone (whether it is a revolutionary individuals or a new regime) will look after the population.

The Extermination of Degenerates

Used in a biopolitical context, Esposito describes degeneration as “the animal element that reemerges in man in the form of an existence that isn’t properly animal or human, but exactly at their point of intersection.” A degenerate is an individual that is treated as neither human nor animal i.e. an animal man. According to Esposito, it is the threat (or fear) of degeneration which leads to the extermination of the groups of people identified as degenerates from society by the state. Degeneration is viewed as a contaminant which needs to be purged from a particular society and this has even been reflected in political rhetoric. The concept of degeneration as explained by Esposito is present in the film where Norsefire brands immigrants and all LGBT individuals, (the latter groups regardless of ethnicity), as the degenerates. These people are sent to detention facilities and their bodies subject to torture and humiliation before they are eventually killed. In V for Vendetta, it is the LGBT individuals who become the animal men lacking any form of rights and they are treated as the pests that trouble the nation. In addition to these groups of people, political activists who oppose Norsefire are also imprisoned. However, amongst these activists, those who adhere to the racial and sexual norms are only held in high security prisons.

88. Esposito, 119.
They are not sent to detention facilities because they are not identified as the animal men by Norsefire. For example, the character named Evey’s parents (who are activists) – being a white British heterosexual couple – are imprisoned in Belmarsh and not sent to Larkhill Detention Facility like the characters named V and Valerie (the latter a white British lesbian actress who dies at Larkhill). In Larkhill, the immigrants and LGBT individuals are kept alive merely because their biological bodies are of particular use to Norsefire. For the bodies of these individuals which function as the guinea pigs in a medical project initiated by Norsefire to find both a lethal virus and a cure for this virus. Eventually, it is this cure which Norsefire uses to justify its totalitarian politics. Government officials mention the viral attacks and the number of people that died repeatedly to maintain a continuous climate of fear amongst the British population. As I mentioned in the introduction section of this essay, it is through this storyline which the film reverses the political rhetoric of present day and portrays the governments themselves as terrorists which populations have to be wary of in order to criticize hard line modern day security politics. *V for Vendetta* also portrays Norsefire party members themselves as being the religious fundamentalists (rather than the terrorists they claim to fight) and covering up the crimes against their own population by using religious rhetoric to subdue the people of Britain. For example, the opening scenes of the film show juxtaposed shots of protagonists V and Evey getting dressed, with the television playing in the background. The television broadcasts a programme called the “Voice of London” hosted by a character named Prothero. “Voice of London” is concerned
with conveying to the people of London that their destiny is in the hands of Norsefire. In the episode featured in the film’s beginning, Prothero asks the viewers:

You think He’s not up there? You think He’s not watching over this country? How else could you explain it? War, terror, disease. We did what we had to do. And in the end He came through.\(^8^9\)

As illustrated by these words, in its rhetoric, Norsefire models itself as the channel through which divine authority operates in Britain. This mixture of perpetual fear and religion is also used by Norsefire to justify the constant presence of the secret police (the “fi ngermen”) and the intense video and audio surveillance of the residents in London – creating a panopticon.

**London as a Panopticon**

Foucault uses the term panopticon as an allegory to describe the present day state surveillance mechanisms which have been applied on the biological bodies of individuals. The term panopticon is derived from the architectural plan devised by well known social reformer and jurist, Jeremy Bentham, in 1785 for a prison in which the inmates could be observed without them being able to see who was observing them. This prison, designed as such, was the original panopticon. In Foucault’s words, the inmate in a panopticon is “seen, but he does not see; he is the object of information, never a subject in communication.”\(^9^0\) In contemporary times phenomenon such as surveillance cameras, fingerprinting and biometric

---

\(^9^0\). Foucault, 200.
passports have all turned the general public into sources of information as described by Foucault. Similar to the inmates of the original panopticon, the biological bodies of the residents in London are confined within a space, where their every action is monitored. In this climate of intense surveillance, the citizens of Britain have their conversations monitored and their movements restricted. Audio surveillance is carried out on a daily basis, curfews have been imposed from late night till early morning and ironically, the first shots of London uncannily resemble a prison. In addition, the residents of London are not allowed to travel to other parts of Britain freely. After the death of 100,000 people from the deadly viral attack, Norsefire has demarcated several areas as quarantine zones and no one is allowed to venture out of these zones. According to Foucault, the danger of panopticism lies in the fact that it leads to self-censorship once individuals become aware that they are being watched.91 This is evident throughout the film, especially in the scene where Evey tells V, “I must be out of my mind,” and V responds by asking her, “Is that what you think, or is that what they would want you to think?”92 There is a climate of submission present throughout the film since Norsefire has created an environment where people are unable to question their government. Not only are the individuals biological bodies controlled, their thoughts too are heavily manipulated and restricted by political rhetoric and propaganda. The BTN, the broadcasting company owned by the government, transmits all of Norsefire’s propaganda. As the character named Dascombe says, “Our job is to broadcast the news, not fabricate it. That’s the

91. Foucault, 202.
government’s job.” The heavily constructed news articles constantly remind the British population that their biological bodies are in danger of various lethal pathogens (the news is replete with stories of Avian flu and people dying once they venture out of quarantine zones); the rest of the war is crippled by war, but Britain is safe since Norsefire is in charge of its citizens. The people are forced to unquestioningly believe that the government is their sole protector and must never be challenged, for they would otherwise be killed.

Resisting Biopolitics?

*V for Vendetta* concludes with the main protagonist (the character named V) staging a revolution that overthrows Norsefire and the British population is liberated. In this sense, the film’s solution to a dystopian biopolitical outcome is similar to that in *The Island*. In the latter film, too, resistance is represented as the overthrowing of the authority in power. Yet, can a revolution or rebellion such as this truly function as of resistance to biopolitics? Can a revolution end the biologization of politics? Even if Norsefire is replaced by another regime, wouldn’t it still practice a form of biopolitics as it has become the norm in contemporary society? Is resistance this simple when Foucault, Agamben and Esposito have stated that biopolitics has become such an inherent part of society and perhaps even thinking about resistance is difficult unless we address the biological nature of political deployment (in the case of Agamben and Esposito)

---

and in the case of Foucault, perhaps we have to promote a different form of
subjectivity? Even though it is possible to locate the concepts of the animal man
and the panopticon in the film, what it eventually fails to do is to explore how and
why people become reduced to biological entities unlike these philosophers. This
sensationalized idea of revolution contributes to the “distracting” quality of
cinema which Walter Benjamin wrote about. It lacks the pessimism that the
philosophers demonstrate with regards to the possibilities of resisting biopolitics. 
*V for Vendetta* fails to probe whether the reduction of individuals and populations
into animal men is what paves the way for a totalitarian regime like Norsefire to
exterminate them. Similarly, it fails to question whether it is the biological
management of populations which has led to the fingerprinting and retinal
identification of all of the citizens in London, creating the panopticon. The
revolution in the film’s ending diverts the audiences’ attention away from this
fundamental feature of biopolitical practices. In doing so, it makes biopolitics
itself more acceptable – because the film does not highlight the inherently
biopolitical nature of the dystopian scenarios portrayed in its narrative. I think
this film is important to analyze in the sense that it does highlight the darker side
of contemporary security from terrorism politics and the growing role of
surveillance in today’s society; yet, its ending does not ask the most important
questions of all – isn’t there an alternative to the biologization of politics, or is
there another way of resisting biopolitics?
CHAPTER 4
PROTECTING THE BIOLOGICAL BODY OF THE NATION IN
CHILDREN OF MEN

Introduction

In the biopolitical management of populations, issues such as asylum seeking, immigration and even fertility are framed within the contexts of security and economic stability. These play a central role in Children of Men, which is why it was chosen for analysis. The film is set in 2027, where political conflicts have led to the collapse of much of the world, with the exception of Britain. Refugees in their thousands have fled to Britain seeking asylum. However, the British government treats these individuals as a threat to national security and deems their residence status in Britain as illegal. The world is also stricken by an infertility disease, the last human child having been born 18 years previously. In the search for both the causes and a cure for the disease, the government has made fertility tests compulsory. While looking for ways to make the population fertile again, the government also promotes a suicide campaign. Suicide kits, known as “Quietus,” are promoted requesting individuals who feel lonely and depressed to take their lives. The film’s idea of resisting such biopolitical practices takes the form of a scientific project – the Human Project. In the narrative, a group of scientists have founded the Human Project – as suggested by the name, this is an initiative which aims to find a cure for human infertility. In Children of Men, the Human Project, the fertility cure and the birth of a child is represented as the ultimate solutions to ending the grim world depicted. While such a cure would
end the fertility disease, can it actually function as a possible form of resistance to the biopolitical management of populations which has become a fixed feature in the contemporary world? In my opinion, both the Human Project and the fertility cure themselves function as forms of biopolitics, because as I will explain later in this chapter, they can also become platforms for politicizing human biological life. In this sense, Children of Men is complacent about the intrinsic nature of biopolitics in today’s society and it does not influence audiences themselves to realize the inherence of these practices. It ignores the politicized nature of human life, birth and death which allows even an initiative like the Human Project to be utilized by political powers to manage populations. Eventually, it fails to question whether it is at all possible to truly liberate or resist biopolitical practices unlike the philosophical writings.

The philosophical arguments which I will use to analyze this film are Giorgio Agamben’s idea that contemporary biopolitics has turned birth and death into political concepts; and the idea of the “biological body of the nation”\(^\text{94}\) which takes into account the biological efficiency and wellbeing of a particular nation or population. Individuals who jeopardize this efficient biological functioning of the nation are eliminated. Immigrants, asylum seekers and people who are depressed are not considered as biologically valuable, and they would not make contribute to the efficient functioning of the biological body of Britain. As a result, immigrants and asylum seekers are sent to refugee camps and removed from mainstream society whereas the depressed people are urged to commit suicide.

\(^{94}\) Agamben, 147.
Similarly, the well being of the biological body of the nation depends on the individuals’ ability to reproduce. Fertility tests become crucial to this process and therefore, the authorities in power make these tests compulsory. The extreme discrimination against immigrants and asylum seekers also highlight Foucault’s concept of state racism as a biological problem which he discussed under the concept of biopower. By showing dystopian outcomes of all of these concerns, *Children of Men* explicitly highlights the underlying xenophobia which exists behind the criminalization of asylum seekers and immigrants; as well as the paradoxical nature behind the preservation of populations by the authorities in power i.e. only the people who are valuable biologically and economically are subject to preservation. Yet, as I will elaborate in the following sections, what *Children of Men* fails to do is to enquire whether a scientific solution is enough to truly resist biopolitical management of populations.

**The Criminalization of Immigrants and Asylum Seekers**

Foucault writes “racism is bound up with the workings of a state that is obliged to use race, the elimination of races and the purification of the race to exercise its sovereign power.”\(^{95}\) According to him, racism is one of the most fundamental aspects of the biopolitical state, for it is through racism that political power is executed. As I mentioned earlier, in *Children of Men*, the biological bodies of the entire population are divided into those who are rightful British citizens and those who are not. The slogan of a government campaign – “Protect Britain. Report

\(^{95}\) Foucault, 258.
All Illegal Immigrants” – is a common sight in the film.\textsuperscript{96} This extreme form of xenophobia draws parallels with many real life situations. Apart from the obvious example of the treatment of the Jews and Roma by the Nazis in World War 2, the film has analogies with the contemporary plight of the Roma population in Europe. Over the years, the Roma have become the target for violent attacks (for example, fire bombs in Italy and Slovakia; and pogroms in Belfast) throughout many European countries. Most recently, many Roma settlers in France were expelled.\textsuperscript{97} The French government justifies this eviction by claiming that the Roma were residing in the country illegally – which completely ignores the fact these individuals hold EU citizenship and are within legal rights to reside in France. Similarly, in 2007, the Italian government introduced a security package which permitted the fingerprinting of Roma, allowed Roma settlements to be demolished and made illegal immigration a criminal offense.\textsuperscript{98} The Italian government justified the fingerprinting of Roma by claiming that it was done for the purposes of social integration and government of the population.\textsuperscript{99} In this sense, we are already living in the scenario portrayed in \textit{Children of Men}. It is this combination of xenophobia and criminalization of foreigners which allows the authorities in power to hunt all immigrants, brand their residency status as illegal and eventually deport or expel them. In \textit{Children of Men}, this deportation takes an extreme form – for the immigrants are not only hunted down, they are


\textsuperscript{97} “Europe’s Roma: Hard Travelling,” The Economist, \url{http://www.economist.com/node/16943841/print}

\textsuperscript{98} Aradau, 2.

\textsuperscript{99} Ibid., 4.
also rounded up into cages and ultimately deported to the Bexhill Refugee Camp. These actions are justified by the use of the security rhetoric by the state; immigrants are a threat to the protection of the population and have to be eliminated as such.

Elimination of Threats to the Biological Body of the Nation

The concept of the biological body of the nation was first introduced by National Socialism and took into account the well being and prosperity of the nation in terms of human biology. According to Agamben, Nazism was concerned with fighting the enemies to this biological body as well as improving the life of this body. In the biopolitical practices of this regime, improving the life of the body coincided with fighting the enemy. In order to protect the biological body of the German nation, laws were passed which stripped Jews of their citizenship. These laws also made citizenship a status which had to be proven to the authorities, regardless of whether people were Jewish or not. Furthermore, all individuals were X-rayed for signs of disease and those who were found to be suffering from hereditary and respiratory diseases were prevented from having children. Apart from individuals suffering from incurable diseases, those who were suffering from mental illnesses were also barred from having children. Similarly, the government depicted in *Children of Men* takes into account the preservation of the biological body of Britain. Although the depressed individuals

---

100. Agamben, 147.
101. Ibid., 149.
102. Ibid., 150.
are subject to a form of subtle discrimination (i.e. they are brainwashed through government campaigns to commit suicide as they are not considered to be making any contribution to the nation), the immigrants and asylum seekers are subject to explicit discrimination. Like the Jewish population in Europe during World War 2, these people are also stripped of their lawful permits to reside in Britain and they are reduced to entities which have to be disposed of. Citizenship has become a status which has to be proven. For example, in the scene where the character named Theo is driving Kay to the refugee camp, the first thing that all of the characters in the car do when ambushed by the police is to take out their passports to prove that they are citizens and as such, should be protected by the government. As illustrated by this scene, simply being born British does not guarantee safety. British citizens who sympathize or collaborate with the immigrants are also stripped of their nationality. These individuals are also regarded as biological bodies which are a threat to the rest of the nation and placed in refugee camps with the rest of the immigrants. Yet, the branding of certain individuals as biological threats to the nation alone does not justify their elimination – their biological lives are also devalued. These individuals are reduced to what Agamben calls “life that does not deserve to live.”103 Agamben writes that in the modern day practices of biopolitics:

Sovereign is he who decides on the value or the nonvalue of life as such. Life – which, with the declaration of rights, had as such been invested with the principle of sovereignty – now itself becomes the place of a sovereign decision.104

103. Agamben, 136.
104. Ibid., 142.
In *Children of Men*, the authorities in power devalue the biological life of the immigrants and asylum seekers. Thus, not only are they regarded as a threat to the governing and preservation of the population, they are also reduced to “life devoid of value” or “life unworthy of being lived” by the state.\(^{105}\)

**Resisting Biopolitics?**

Through the portrayal of dystopian outcomes of the above mentioned criminalization of asylum seekers/immigration and the politics behind the preservation of the biological body of the nation, *Children of Men* critiques contemporary biopolitical management of populations. However, the solution suggested by the film to both resist and prevent such dystopian outcomes is the Human Project. The final scene of the film shows Kee sighting the ship named “Tomorrow,” which in turn will take her to the Human Project. The film ends on the idea that perhaps a cure may be found for global infertility, now that one child has been born. Yet, as I mentioned earlier in the introduction section of this chapter, aren’t the Human Project and the fertility cure forms of biopolitics? In *Children of Men*, the birth of a child is a tool that both the government and the activists aim to use in order to gain power. The anti-government group, Fishers, claims to fight for immigrants’ rights. However, when they discover that Kee is pregnant with the first baby in eighteen years, they decide to take the child and use it to gain political advantage. Similarly, should the government discover that an immigrant is pregnant, they will take control of Kee’s biological body and the

\(^{105}\) Agamben, 139.
birth of the child will be used for political purposes i.e. to gain hegemonic control of Britain. Even if the scientists working on this project do manage to find a cure for human infertility, like the birth of Kee’s baby, both the government and activist groups will attempt to manipulate this cure to suit their respective political agendas. Thus, both the Human Project and fertility cure will lead any political group (whether it is the state or activists who oppose the state) to continue managing human biological life; and in this sense, the project and the fertility cure are forms of biopolitics. By offering a solution (and a way of resistance) which is itself embedded within biopolitics as such, the film fails to grasp the pervasiveness and complexity of biopolitics. Biological management populations, whether it is fertility or immigration, is a fixed feature of the contemporary world. Political decisions aimed at better management of immigrants and asylum seekers have surfaced repeatedly in recent times. For example, on 29 July 2010, the controversial Arizona state bill 1070 was passed, allowing migrants not carrying registration documents to be criminalized. The bill also targets those who help and house these migrants. Very recently, as a result of the political crisis in North Africa, an increased number of refugees and migrants have arrived in Italy (nearly 20,000 by April 2011). These arrivals have triggered unease across the Schengen borderless travel area and identity checks have become more frequent in an attempt to prevent these newly arrived individuals from travelling to other European countries. With regards to fertility rates, the processes of “global

106. “Arizona, rouge state,” The Economist, [link]
“Greying”\textsuperscript{108} has generated the fear that future generations will face problems such as the rationing of health care and older generations having to live in poverty. Some demographers have urged governments to act fast on this issue before the above mentioned gloomy outlook can become a reality.\textsuperscript{109} Even though the film does portray a dystopian future of these current political/social issues, through its portrayal of the Human Project, it creates the impression that resistance will always be possible and it will be simple if only the scientific solution to the world’s problems exist. This is very different to the relevant writings of Foucault, Agamben and Esposito as they question if there are any alternatives or any true means of liberation from biopolitics at all when it has become such an intrinsic part of society. Ultimately, the film acts as a form of biopolitics itself because it does not inspire audiences to realize the pervasiveness of biopolitics and demonstrate how difficult it is to truly resist this form of power. \textit{Children of Men} makes audiences docile and accepting of biopolitics as a result.

\begin{footnotes}
\footnoterule
\footnote{108}{“Greying Globe,” \textit{The Economist}, \url{http://www.economist.com/node/12847201/print}}
\footnote{109}{Ibid.}
\end{footnotes}
CHAPTER 5
THE DISCIPLINE AND REGULATION OF THE BIOLOGICAL BODY
BY DISEASE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES IN 28 WEEKS LATER

Introduction

The political and economic security of a country is related to the health of its population\textsuperscript{110} and as such, political responses to global epidemics are focused on monitoring people, imposing travel restrictions and quarantining those who are believed to be at risk of contracting the disease in order to curtail the spread of the epidemic and minimize the subsequent economic damage. The narrative of 28 Weeks Later is based on this scenario where Britain is affected by the rage virus, identified as a threat to global security by other countries and quarantined from the rest of the world. After the people infected with the rage virus have starved themselves to death, a NATO force is deployed to Britain to care for the survivors and prevent the disease from spreading out of Britain. The most grotesque part of the narrative occurs when the troops decide to shoot everyone (irrespective of whether they are healthy or infected) as the situation becomes uncontrollable. The only means of resisting this biopolitical nightmare is thought to be a cure and the possibility of finding one resurfaces repeatedly throughout the narrative. Even if a cure would end the rage virus crisis, can it be used as a means of resistance against the politicization of disease management practices? Isn’t the cure, too, a form of biopolitics in itself (as I will elaborate later in this chapter)? It is this paradoxical nature of 28 Weeks Later that I find the most compelling and this is

\textsuperscript{110} Nadesan, 93.
why I chose this film for analysis. *28 Weeks Later* fails to take into account the biopolitical nature of the cure and this is where it fails in its critique of biopolitics. The philosophical concepts used in the analysis of *28 Weeks Later* are Michel Foucault’s theory of pastoral power, Roberto Esposito’s explanation of the animal man and Giorgio Agamben’s theory of the emergence of modern day concentration camps. The NATO force is similar to modern health care systems because they are both examples of contemporary deployment of pastoral power in societies. In health care systems, governments, the medical industry and NGOs practice a form of pastoral power and as such, they educate the public about diseases, monitor their health and guide their actions to adopt healthier lifestyles in order to promote and maintain good health among populations. Similarly, in order to ensure the well being of the survivors and prevent another outbreak of the rage virus, the NATO force carries out bio-surveillance on the survivors, educates them about safety precautions and restricts their travel. The film uses the extermination of people by the troops to show how the population has been segregated into two groups, where one group is eventually killed by the troops. One group includes the healthy individuals and the second contains people who are at risk of contracting a particular disease and those who are already infected. As demonstrated in the film, the healthy people possess biological life worthy of being lived while the other individuals are thought to possess life which is less than human and are therefore disposed of when the virus becomes unmanageable. In this sense, the latter group is branded as the animal-men and London functions as a contemporary concentration camp where the state of exception emerges,
allowing the troops to dispose of certain individuals. The decision taken by the military to kill certain people in order to protect the rest of the population in *28 Weeks Later* is a grotesque elaboration of a situation which has already become intrinsic in modern societies because, as Foucault explains, elimination or exclusion of elements (whether they are people, microbes or environmental conditions) which threaten the management of populations by the state has become the norm in modern practices of biopower or biopolitics.\footnote{Foucault, 139.} Using this grotesque narrative to foreground the inhumanity which could result from segregating the population into healthy/ safe and unhealthy/ unsafe groups, the film raises ethical questions regarding the politics of disease management. However, as I have mentioned earlier, despite showing the dangers of intrinsic biopolitical practices, *28 Weeks Later* eventually fails to understand the difficulty of truly resisting such practice, unlike Foucault, Agamben and Esposito. These concepts are explored in the following sections.

**Policing the Health of Populations and Security**

The film begins after the rage virus has spread amongst the whole of Britain – as shown in its prequel *28 Days Later* (Danny Boyle; UK; 2006) – with the following credits:

- 15 days later : Mainland Britain is quarantined.
- 28 days later : Mainland Britain has been destroyed by the rage virus.
- 5 weeks later : The infected have died of starvation.
- 11 weeks later : An American-led NATO force enters London.
- 18 weeks later : Mainland Britain is declared free of infection.

\footnote{111. Foucault, 139.}
28 weeks later: Reconstruction begins.\textsuperscript{112}

As shown by these words, the epidemic is treated as a security or disaster management issue. According to Foucault, the management of populations under governmentality involves the policing of individuals by the state, the police force or the military. Policing is carried out by the regulation and discipline of the population by the authorities in power.\textsuperscript{113} As such, as mentioned earlier, in contemporary societies, governments, the medical industry and health care officials function as the modern day shepherds which assume the responsibility of protecting the global population from epidemic diseases. An example of this is the political response to HIV/AIDS. At the United Nations Security Council meeting in January 2000, then president of the World Bank, James Wolfensohn, stated the following in his speech about HIV/AIDS:

\begin{quote}
Many of us used to think of AIDS as a health issue. We were wrong. We face a major development crisis, and more than that, a security crisis.\textsuperscript{114}
\end{quote}

Since HIV/AIDS has been identified as a security issue, the biological bodies of individuals are subject to regulation and discipline by the state. As a result, routine blood tests, immigration restrictions on individuals tested as HIV positive and campaigns to educate the public about this disease have become common. Similarly, the regulation and discipline of populations occur in the film when the NATO troops subject the survivors under intense surveillance and restrict their movements. Upon their arrival in Britain, the newcomers are processed i.e. they have to undergo thorough medical tests. These survivors are housed in an area

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{112} 28 Weeks Later, prod. by Enrique Lopez-Lavigne, Andrew Macdonald and Allon Reich, dir. by Juan Carlos Fresnadillo, 100 mins., 20\textsuperscript{th} Century Fox, 2007, DVD.
\textsuperscript{113} Foucault, 70-73.
\textsuperscript{114} James Wolfensohn quoted in Elbe, 6.
\end{footnotes}
designated as District One, which is the only infection-free section of the city and are not permitted to leave this area. Any individual who has been in contact with an infected is immediately identified as threat to the maintenance of health among the survivors, is kept in complete isolation and tested for any signs of the virus. For example, when characters named Tammy and Andy are taken back to London after their brief escape, they are prohibited from entering the zones which are designated as safe by the troops. When the regulation and discipline of the survivors as such fails, the troops resort to their last attempt at containing the rage virus – which is to kill everyone in London.

Exterminating the Animal Men and London as a Camp

When it becomes apparent that the character named Don has been infected with the virus and is targeting all individuals in District One, the military decides to begin operation Code Red. The stages of the operation are as follows:

   Step 1: Kill the infected.
   Step 2: Containment. If step 2 fails, then the final solution is extermination.\textsuperscript{115}

The conditions behind the extermination of survivors can be analyzed using both Esposito’s and Agamben’s respective concepts. Esposito writes that in the National Socialist regime, healing and killing were not polar opposites, rather, one was essential for the functioning of the other. The regime believed that the only

\textsuperscript{115} 28 Weeks Later, prod. by Enrique Lopez-Lavigne, Andrew Macdonald and Allon Reich, dir. by Juan Carlos Fresnadillo, 100 mins., 20\textsuperscript{th} Century Fox, 2007, DVD.
way to heal the German race was to kill all of the contaminants.\textsuperscript{116} As such, the ethics behind the extermination of Jews, gypsies, mentally handicapped and crippled people by the National Socialist regime were not questioned because it was steeped in a medicinal context where it is believed the elimination of certain biological bodies would make both the society and biological bodies which were chosen to be preserved healthier. As mentioned in Chapter 1, according to Esposito extermination has a “therapeutic purpose”\textsuperscript{117} when its end result is the preservation of a certain group of people by killing another group. Similarly, the operation Code Red justifies the mass murder of thousands of people by foregrounding the therapeutic premise. The ethics behind this extermination is not questioned by the authorities in power, because the end result is the protection of the global population and the preservation of their health. The second condition which paves the way for this extermination is the dehumanizing of the survivors. The military regards the survivors as less than human entities: they become the animal men, who can be eliminated when the situation becomes uncontrollable for these individuals possess neither the right to live nor are they biologically valuable to the state or the military anymore. In terms of the spatial explanation of biopolitics, the harsh treatment of the survivors also becomes possible because London functions as a physical space which becomes a modern day concentration camp as argued by Agamben. The survivors possess bare life and exist within the state of exception which is the norm in the camp. The rule of law is suspended and therefore, the military can take any action against these

\textsuperscript{116} Esposito, 116.
\textsuperscript{117} Ibid., 136.
individuals within the camp. However, not all survivors are regarded as disposable because two characters become very valuable to the military – Tammy and Andy. They are saved from the carnage by an army medical officer because she suspects that either one or both of them may carry a defective gene which could provide immunity against the rage virus. The medical officer decides to save them so that she can run tests on them and hopefully find a vaccine or cure for the virus. The entire narrative of 28 Weeks Later is obsessed with the possibility of finding a cure for the rage virus, which is conveyed to the audience as the only end to the biopolitical nightmare depicted in the film. Yet, can a cure function as a form of resistance to biopolitics when even the cure is steeped in biopolitics?

Resisting Biopolitics?

According to Esposito, modern biopolitics has transformed the relationship between medicine and the state and as a result, the cure is no longer a private issue and becomes the responsibility of the state. Thus, both the cure and its distribution is governed (or even manipulated) by political and economic concerns. Current health policies treat immunization as a development strategy; the latter is often associated with stability and good governance. For example, the Global Immunization and Vaccination Strategy developed by WHO and UNICEF in 2006, is concerned with the ways in which governments, NGOs and health

118. Agamben, 166.
119. Refer to pages 28 & 29 in Chapter 1.
professionals can cooperate to provide immunity for all people. In this instance, the cure (in the form of vaccines) is part of political and financial strategies, as well as being part of development programmes as a whole. It is always politics (and economics) which will ultimately decide which individuals will receive, and have access to, the various medicines and vaccinations. Furthermore, the combination of biology, politics and economic ventures has made the human biological body vulnerable to “technical innovation, economic exploitation and for highly competitive forms of bioeconomics” and this is particularly highlighted in the film’s storyline where Tammy and Andy are kept alive because their bodies can be utilized for a cure. Yet, 28 Weeks Later ignores these wider political and economical conditions behind disease management practices and ironically suggests a form of biopolitics itself as a possible form of resistance. This is in contrast to the philosophical arguments of Foucault, Agamben and Esposito who all explain how difficult it would be to truly resist biopolitics when it has become so pervasive in today’s society. Why does the film not grasp the inherence of biopolitics in the contemporary world and fail to take into account the complexity of truly resisting biopolitics? I believe this shows the limits of the film to contemplate on the complexities of the biologization of politics. The film appears to be supportive of biopolitics by making biopolitics more acceptable to the mass audiences through its portrayal of a form of resistance steeped in biopolitics to combat the dystopian scenario presented in the film. I believe it is important to analyze this film because it does

---

121. Rose, 11.
raise ethical questions about disease management practices – as in the segregation of people into the healthy vs. infected and the choice of the military to protect only the healthy - but it ultimately fails to comprehend the political and economic conditions which underpin these practices.
CHAPTER 6
CONCLUSION

I believe the analysis of popular science fiction films using the philosophy of biopolitics is important because it provides an insight as to how popular culture attempts to understand the current political and economic relation to the human biological body. In my opinion, the most interesting characteristic of blockbuster science fiction cinema is its paradoxical nature: they show dystopian futures of contemporary biopolitical practices but are unable to suggest alternatives. Instead, their solutions to all the future nightmares they portray are also steeped in biopolitics and this is the similarity which links all these films. I hope I was successfully able to demonstrate that contemporary blockbuster science fiction cinema is a form of biopolitics itself. As I have explored in each of the film analysis, The Island conveys the idea that the commodification of the human body can be prevented if we can overthrow any biotechnological corporation which carries out unethical practices; V for Vendetta’s response to current security politics is a sensational revolution; Children of Men portrays a cure for human fertility will solve the population and asylum seeker crisis; and 28 Weeks Later also carries the message that a cure for the rage virus would solve a pandemic. In terms of the respective philosophical concepts, some narratives highlight certain arguments more clearly (or explicitly) than others. Explored in detail in each film analysis, The Island highlights the concepts of the docile body, pastoral power and the camp. Panopticism and the animal man are located in V for Vendetta. Children of Men also highlights the camp, as well as the biological body of the
nation and governmentality. The animal man, the camp and governmentality are again located in 28 Weeks Later. Yet none of them questions the biologization of politics and its pervasiveness as a possible way of perhaps starting a form of resistance against this form of power. As I mentioned in Chapter 1, Michel Foucault, Giorgio Agamben and Roberto Esposito believe that biopolitics has become too pervasive in society and questions whether it is at all possible to resist this form of power. From what I understand of certain sections of these philosophers’ writing, Foucault suggests if perhaps we should promote new forms of subjectivity, Agamben thinks that we have to take the indistinguishable nature between biology and politics as a starting point to even thinking about any form of resistance and Esposito believes that life should not be purely understood in the biological sense. I raised the question as to why popular science fiction films do not suggest something similar to the philosophical arguments regarding even a possibility of resistance. Blockbuster science fiction films appear to be complacent about biopolitics because they function as a political tool to disseminate dominant ideology as stated by Walter Benjamin. Ultimately, these films prevent audiences from realizing how difficult it would be to truly resist biopolitics. I hope my thesis provided a new framework for critically analyzing the science fiction genre as much of the literature on science fiction cinema does not use a biopolitical approach to analyze this genre. While I concentrated on the approach which uses philosophical concepts to analyze films to understand if the questions raised by cinema have parallels with these concepts, there has also been increasing interest amongst film critics in the recent years as to whether films can
themselves function as a philosophy.\textsuperscript{122} Therefore, it should be insightful to extend this area of research further to explore whether art house science fiction films (being fundamentally different from blockbuster ones) can make significant contributions to the philosophical arguments of biopolitics, whereas the latter only seems to act as a form of biopolitics.

\textsuperscript{122} Smith and Wartenberg, 19.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


“Global Immunization Vision and Strategy,” in World Health Organization.  


*The Island*. Produced by Heidi Fugeman Lindelof, Kenny Bates and Michael Bay. Directed by Michael Bay. 136 mins., Warner Brothers/ DreamWorks, 2005, DVD.

“The Island (2005 film)” in Wikipedia,  


78


28 Weeks Later. Produced by Enrique Lopez-Lavigne, Andrew Macdonald and Allon Reich. Directed by Juan Carlos Fresnadillo. 100 mins., 20th Century Fox, 2007, DVD.


*V for Vendetta.* Produced by Grant Hill, Joel Silver, Andy Wachowski and Lana Wachowski. Directed by James McTeigue. 132 mins., Warner Brothers, 2006, DVD.


APPENDIX A

SYNOPSIS OF THE ISLAND

Set in 2019, the film portrays a world where the clones of rich and powerful people form the new underclass. They are housed in an exclusive facility named Merrick Institute, which is hidden from the rest of the world. The biological bodies of these clones are the ultimate insurance policies in this world. The clones are made to believe that they are the sole survivors of a global contamination which wiped out the entire population of human beings. They are constantly told that they lead a purposeful life and their sole function is to populate a mythical place called the “island” which is the earth’s last pathogen-free zone. The clones are allowed to travel to the “island” only when they win the lottery, which takes place regularly. However, in truth, the clones are merely the suppliers of body parts to the individuals who sponsored them. The “island” is only the operating table, and winning the lottery means that it is the clone’s turn to die.

Lincoln Six Echo, the only clone who questions the operations of the institute and is suspicious of it, realizes the true purpose of the clones. When his close friend, Jordan Two Delta, is selected to visit “the island,” he escapes the facility together with Jordan. Their flight sparks a massive, but secret, search. The director of the institute, Dr. Merrick, calls in private security personnel headed by Albert Laurent to look for Jordan and Lincoln. The whole operation is kept secret because each clones costs approximately USD 5 billion and the institute would cease to operate
if the sponsors find out their insurance policies have escaped. There is also another reason for this secrecy: the clients are made to believe that their insurance policies are kept in a vegetative state, devoid of emotions. However, clones are fully developed human beings and the institute does not want their clients to have any moral dilemmas over their insurance policies.

Out in the real world, Lincoln seeks out a man named McCord, a technical supervisor at the institute whom he had befriended. McCord tells the truth to Lincoln and Jordan and also reveals the names and locations of their sponsors. Lincoln’s is yacht builder Tom Lincoln who lives in LA and Jordan’s is actress Sarah Jordan who resides in New York. The clones decide to find their sponsors and tell the whole world the truth about the facility. However, in the process of helping them escape, McCord is killed by Laurent’s men. Lincoln and Jordan find Tom Lincoln, who agrees to help them go public about Merrick Institute. However, his true motive is to hand his clone back to the institute while keeping Jordan, whom he is attracted to, with him. This plan backfires when Laurent tracks them down: Lincoln Six Echo pretends to be his sponsor and Tom Lincoln is shot by Laurent.

Meanwhile, at the institute, the medical staff discovers that certain clones have developed advanced human thinking capabilities. Since this would prove to be a danger to a facility, Dr. Merrick orders the mass extermination of all the clones who exhibit this trait. Yet, this does not take place since Lincoln and Jordan return to the institute and rescue the clone population. Dr. Merrick is killed in the process and the film ends with the clones running out of the institute.
SYNOPSIS OF V FOR VENDETTA

V for Vendetta is set in futuristic, totalitarian Britain. The country is ruled by the fascist Norsefire party, with Adam Sutler as the High Chancellor. Norsefire comprises of The Finger (the dreaded secret police headed by Creedy); BTN (the government media propaganda branch headed by Dascombe); The Ear (the audio surveillance department); the visual surveillance branch and the ordinary police force (headed by Inspector Finch and his deputy Dominic).

It is the 5th of November and Evey Hammond is captured by Fingermen (secret police officers) as she is caught walking around during curfew hours. She is saved from physical abuse from the Fingermen by a mysterious character named V. The latter is clad in black clothing and a Guy Fawkes mask and possesses superhuman strength. After rescuing Evey, V then proceeds to demolish the Old Bailey. Following which Sutler orders each department to trace V and Evey, whom they believe is an accomplice even though she is innocent.

The day after the demolition of the Old Bailey, V enters the BTN where he broadcasts a message to the population of Britain. In the message, he identifies himself as the person responsible for blowing up the Old Bailey, accuses Norsefire of terrorism and urges the people to revolt against the government by joining him in one year’s time when he plans to demolish the Houses of Parliament. As Finch and his men attempt to capture V, he is rescued by Evey (who works at the BTN) and she is knocked unconscious in the process.
In order to protect Evey, V takes her to his underground home named the Shadow Gallery and tells her that she must live there until the next 5th of November. Once her initial anger at this suggestion has died down, Evey offers to help V should he ever need her assistance. Meanwhile, V murders Prothero (a former army commander, now a prominent TV host and the owner of Viadoxic Pharmaceuticals). At the murder scene, V leaves a red rose. Once a horrified Evey learns that V has killed someone, she devices a plan to escape. V’s next victim is Bishop Lilliman who is a pedophile. In order to trap the Bishop, Evey dresses as a child so that V can kill him. In the process, Evey escapes. V kills the Bishop and leaves a red rose at this site also.

Finch and Dominic, who investigate the murders, learn that both Prothero and Lilliman were associated with a certain detention centre named Larkhill. Fearing V is planning to kill everyone who worked at Larkhill, they decide to locate everyone who worked at Larkhill. Finch tells the coroner, Delia Surridge who has also trained as a botanist to identify the red rose; it is revealed to be a Scarlet Carson. When Finch gets back to the office, Dominic tells him that a certain Dr. Diana Staunton once worked now, and after the project ended, she changed her name to Delia Surridge. Fearing her safety, both of them rush to Diana’s residence. However, V beats them to it. Before she dies, Diana apologizes to V for what happened at Larkhill and tells him that she regrets what she had to do. As proof of her feelings, she asks V to read her journal. V then proceeds to kill Diana, but he does not take the journal, in the hope that Finch will read it.
On reading the journal, Finch learns that Norsefire performed medical experiments on the inmates at Larkhill on the pretext of finding a deadly virus and a cure for this. Nearly everyone died from these experiments, except the man in room no. 5. This man developed advanced capabilities, set fire to Larkhill before escaping to become V. Meanwhile, Evey searches refuge with Gordon Dietrich, a popular TV show host at BTN. While staying with him, she learns of his homosexuality, which he has kept hidden since Norsefire eliminates homosexuals. Once Dietrich broadcasts a programme making fun of Sutler, he is arrested by Creedy, to be tortured and killed. As Evey attempts to escape, she is captured and taken to prison.

In prison, Evey is asked to reveal the whereabouts of V. Upon refusing to do so, she is tortured and interrogated. The inmate in the next cell slips notes to Evey, writing about her life. The inmate is Valerie Page, who writes about her trouble coming out as a lesbian, her acting career, the day Norsefire arrested her partner and finally came for her. Evey’s asked to reveal any information about V one last time. She refuses and an order is given to shoot her. Evey says that she does not fear death. Surprisingly, once she says this, her guard tells her that she is free. A bemused Evey walks down the prison corridor to find herself in Shadow Gallery. V reveals to her that he caught her while her she was leaving Dietrich’s place, before the Fingermen came for her. He “imprisoned” and tortured her, because he wanted her to brave.

Meanwhile, V disguised as a man named Rookwood contacts Finch to tell him that Norsefire killed nearly 100,000 people to gain total power. Following a plan
devised by Creedy, Norsefire developed a deadly virus and released it on the British population. Using the resulting fear and chaos, Norsefire came to power. Soon after, they released a cure, thereby legitimizing their rule.

In the end of the film, Sutler, Creedy and V are killed. V relegates the task of blowing up the Houses of Parliament to Evey. Norsefire’s rule collapses and everyone joyfully witnesses the Houses of Parliament exploding.
APPENDIX C

SYNOPSIS OF CHILDREN OF MEN

*Children of Men* is set in the Britain of 2027. The whole world has collapsed due to political struggles with Britain being the only stable society. As a result, refugees in their thousands have fled to Britain. However, they do not receive humanitarian assistance and the government treats them as a burden. As such, their residency status has been branded as illegal, and the military hunts down all immigrants and dispatches them to various refugee camps around the country. Many are killed or brutally abused in the process. Apart from the political turmoil, the world has been struck by an infertility disease with the last child being born 18 years previously. Due to this disease, the British government forces all its citizens to undergo fertility tests. A scientific project, named the Human Project, has been created to discover a cure for human fertility and this project is located outside of Britain. The government also promotes a suicide kit named “Quietus” aimed at individuals who feel sick and depressed.

The main protagonist, Theo Faron, is asked by his ex-wife, Julian, to help a young immigrant woman named Kee. Julian is a member of the Fishes, an anti-government activist group which fights for immigrants’ rights. She asks Theo to take Kee to Dover where a boat named “Tomorrow” will take Kee to the Human Project. As Theo, Julian and Kee take her to Dover along with some other members of the Fishes, the car they are travelling in is attacked. Julian dies in the process. The rest manage to escape and travel to the farmhouse which serves as
the Fishes’ headquarters. There Kee reveals to Theo that she is pregnant and this is the reason for her to reach the Human Project urgently. Otherwise, the government might get hold of the baby and use it for political purposes. The same night, Theo overhears some Fishes members talking. He discovers that it was the Fishes themselves, disguised as police personnel, who killed Julian. Reason being Fishes aim to use Kee’s baby to revolt against the government and Julian opposed the idea strongly. Realizing that Kee and her unborn baby are in danger, Theo flees the farmhouse taking Kee with him. He takes her to the house of his friend, Jasper Palmer, who is a hippie living in a secluded home in the country. But Theo discovers that the Fishes are lurking around, planning to capture them. As he decides to escape, Jasper asks him to contact Syd, a security guard at the Bexhill Refugee Camp. When the Fishes track down Jasper’s house, he is killed by them as he refuses to reveal the whereabouts of Kee and Theo.

Theo finds Syd, who smuggles them into the refugee camp as immigrants. He also gives them a contact in the camp, named Marischka, who finds them food and shelter. There, Kee begins her contractions and gives birth. They try to hide the baby, but Syd nevertheless discovers the baby and decides to hand in Kee and Theo to the authorities, in order to be rewarded. As Syd turns violent, he is killed by Marishka who offers to take Theo and Kee to a boat which will allow them to leave the camp. While they locate the boat, a revolt breaks out between the immigrants in the camp, the Fishes and the military. Theo is injured and as he and Kee sails away on the boat, he dies. The film ends with Kee and her baby along in the boat, and she sights the vessel named “Tomorrow.”
The film begins in an isolated cottage, where several people not infected by the rage virus are hiding from the infected. Amongst these people are Don and Alice, whose children are on holiday in Spain. However, when Alice opens the cottage door to allow an uninfected boy to enter, an infected person breaks in. Everyone, with the exception of Don, becomes infected with the rage virus. As Alice is battling with several infected people in one room, Don abandons her.

Several weeks later, a NATO force led by US troops arrive in Britain in order to rebuild the country. Those who survived the rage virus now live in a secluded area in London, known as the “Safe Zone.” Amongst the survivors are Don and his two children – Tammy and Andy - who return from Spain. When his children ask Don what happened to their mother, Don tells them that Alice got infected and died as a result.

The survivors are under constant medical surveillance, and the military medical team is headed by Major Scarlet Ross. In addition to medical surveillance, there are troops stationed everywhere, and the survivors’ actions are closely watched. Another main protagonist, Sergeant Doyle, is a sniper whose responsibility is to keep watch over the survivors.

Tammy and Andy decide to go back to their old home in order to gather some treasured personal belongings. In order to do so, they must secretly escape the “Safe Zone.” Doyle spots them, and immediately, a squad goes in search of them.
When Tammy and Andy reach their home, Andy comes into contact with Alice – who, although infected, is still alive. The troops find them and all three are taken back to London.

Tammy and Andy are quarantined, while Alice is forced to undergo a thorough medical examination. Scarlet discovers that Alice has a genetic abnormality which acts as natural immunity against the rage virus. Although Alice can infect others, she herself is not affected by the virus. Scarlet alerts Brigadier General Stone, who is in charge of the troops, and asks for his permission to keep Alice alive in order to run tests on her. If successful, Scarlet claims that Alice’s blood will provide a possibility of a cure or vaccine. However, dismisses her plea and orders Scarlet to euthanize Alice.

Meanwhile, Don attempts to visit Alice, who infects him in revenge for abandoning him. Don goes on an infecting rampage. At first, Stone asks the troops to only shoot the infected. However, once they lose control, Stone orders the extermination of all the survivors. Once shooting proves ineffective, the military resorts to firebombing London and using chemical weapons against the few people who survived. Scarlett, Doyle, Tammy and Andy escape at first, but in the process of protecting the children, Scarlett and Doyle are later killed.

Tammy and Andy are taken across the Channel to France by Doyle’s friend Flint, who’s an army pilot. The film ends with Flint’s abandoned helicopter and scenes of people infected with the rage virus creating chaos in Paris.