**CHILDREN OF MEN**

"IS CHILDREN OF MEN (ALFONSO CUARON, 2006) A TYPICAL SCIENCE FICTION FILM?"

**THURSDAY, 1 MAY 2008**

**[The Excellent Final Draft - B.W.S Reppin](http://childrenofmenstudy.blogspot.co.nz/2008/05/excellent-final-draft-bws-reppin.html)**

“Cuarón has created the thinking person's action movie.”[[1]](http://www.blogger.com/post-create.g?blogID=2352042809736615452" \l "_ftn1" \o ")  
Is Children Of Men a typical science-fiction film?  
  
According to Neale’s work, the word ‘typical’ in this instance represents the ‘repertoire of elements’[[2]](http://www.blogger.com/post-create.g?blogID=2352042809736615452" \l "_ftn2" \o "), recurring themes which can be found in an individual genre. Since the early 1900’s at the dawn of cinema, genres have continuously borrowed elements from one another, something which has now come to be defined as ‘hybridity’. Maltby suggests, ‘genres are flexible…[and]…subject to a constant process of change and adaptation.’[[3]](http://www.blogger.com/post-create.g?blogID=2352042809736615452" \l "_ftn3" \o "), and in doing so provides an explanation to the consistent variation in their ‘syntactic cores’[[4]](http://www.blogger.com/post-create.g?blogID=2352042809736615452" \l "_ftn4" \o "). This suggests genre is not fixed; rather it is a reflection of external factors such as the zeitgeist. In turn, looking at the typicality of Children Of Men (Alfonso Cuarón, 2006, USA) as a science-fiction film becomes far more complex and requires an analysis of genre as a concept first.  
  
Regardless of their professions and personal views, theorists, critics and film scholars alike all seem to agree on one thing: genre is not fixed. Neale highlights ‘difference is absolutely essential to the economy of genre’[[5]](http://www.blogger.com/post-create.g?blogID=2352042809736615452" \l "_ftn5" \o "). Variation, as is consistently evident in the ‘syntax’ of different genres, is needed to continue attracting audiences. This is an aspect of Altman’s ‘before and after’[[6]](http://www.blogger.com/post-create.g?blogID=2352042809736615452" \l "_ftn6" \o ") view of categorising films in which he suggests a process involving producers identifying what from the repertoire of elements to repeat and what to differentiate. By doing this, excessive repetition is avoided whilst audiences are still able to categorise films under an individual genre.  
  
Audiences are likely to identify a genre through what Neale defines as ‘the semantic and syntactic cores’[[7]](http://www.blogger.com/post-create.g?blogID=2352042809736615452" \l "_ftn7" \o ") of different genres. The semantic elements represent distinct features of certain media language, more notably in the forms of settings, props and even actors. The syntax represents certain ideologies and narratives. In a ‘Western’ for example, the semantics would include guns, horses, deserts and cowboys whilst the syntax will usually involve a Levi Strauss type binary opposition conflict between cowboys and ‘Red Indians’.  
  
Altman’s theory of the ‘before and after’ combined with the ever changing syntax provides reasons for the ‘hybridity’ genre has arguably always experienced. Altman highlights this by stating ‘semantics simply hijack an existing syntactic framework from another genre.’[[8]](http://www.blogger.com/post-create.g?blogID=2352042809736615452" \l "_ftn8" \o ") Since as early as 1910, science-fiction films (with Children Of Men being no different) have been a prime example of this and are regularly used as case studies by theorists and critics to prove genre indeed is not fixed.  
  
Defining science-fiction is as complex as defining genre and to date there is no universally accepted definition. Hodgens suggests ‘science fiction involves extrapolated or fictitious science, or fictitious use of scientific possibilities, or…[simply]…fiction that takes place in the future or introduces some radical assumption about the present or past.’[[9]](http://www.blogger.com/post-create.g?blogID=2352042809736615452" \l "_ftn9" \o ") Here Hodgens highlights the conventional themes audiences use to categorise a film under science-fiction, ignoring the fact that other genres incorporate these features too.  
  
Jules Verne and H.G Wells are authors considered by many to have pioneered the science-fiction genre during the 19th century, although the term did not become fully established until the late 1920s. Their vogue ‘coincided with a second industrial revolution, a new machine age…a cult of and for scientific invention…an acceleration of colonial expansion…[that]…had already fuelled stories of territorial conquest…[and finally]…the invention of film.’[[10]](http://www.blogger.com/post-create.g?blogID=2352042809736615452" \l "_ftn10" \o ") The bond between ‘science fiction, special effects technology and set design’[[11]](http://www.blogger.com/post-create.g?blogID=2352042809736615452" \l "_ftn11" \o ") which exists to this date in sci-fi films was first established through films such as The X-Ray Mirror (1899) and Méliès’s Le Voyage dans la Lune (1902), both of which were based on novels by Verne and H.G Wells respectively.  
  
The notion of hybridity arguably first came to rise in Frankenstein (1910), a film which merged the science-fiction genre with horror. Different decades seemed to have adopted different inter-generic influences, with sci-fi going on to merge with ‘action and adventure, Terror Island (1920); noir, Blade Runner (1981) and countless others.’[[12]](http://www.blogger.com/post-create.g?blogID=2352042809736615452" \l "_ftn12" \o ") This again would suggest genre, or in this instance science-fiction is indeed a reflection of the zeitgeist as its syntax seemingly continues to evolve to both satisfy the audience and correspond with the societal issues of the time. Regardless of the constant variation in its syntax, the semantic elements of the genre had been well established as early as 1920. Pringle divided these semantics into ‘templates’ of which only ‘future cities…[and]…disasters’[[13]](http://www.blogger.com/post-create.g?blogID=2352042809736615452" \l "_ftn13" \o ") are relevant to the text being studied.  
  
Telotte describes contemporary science-fiction as going through a trend of ‘[rendering] the artificial as ever more human.’[[14]](http://www.blogger.com/post-create.g?blogID=2352042809736615452" \l "_ftn14" \o ") The critical and commercial success of Steven Spielberg’s A.I Artificial Intelligence (2001) and I, Robot (2004) amongst other titles certainly warrants the comment as accurate. Children Of Men, however, very much takes on a different approach. Set in a future dystopian 2027 England, the film neglects to focus on technological advances or as Pringle would better describe it, ‘alien intrusions’[[15]](http://www.blogger.com/post-create.g?blogID=2352042809736615452" \l "_ftn15" \o "). Cuarón states that he ‘…didn’t want to be distracted by the future…[and that he]…didn’t want to transport the audience into another reality.’[[16]](http://www.blogger.com/post-create.g?blogID=2352042809736615452" \l "_ftn16" \o ") In his review of the film, Calhoun makes reference to this strikingly realistic setting by stating ‘[it is the film’s] creepy familiarity, not any wild vision on the future…[that makes]…it so involving.’[[17]](http://www.blogger.com/post-create.g?blogID=2352042809736615452" \l "_ftn17" \o ")  
  
‘Many critics argue science fiction…uses its tales of alien invasion, science and technology gone wrong, and visions of the future worlds to explore the issues of contemporary significance.’[[18]](http://www.blogger.com/post-create.g?blogID=2352042809736615452" \l "_ftn18" \o ") This notion first came to light during the 1950s, a decade described as the ‘golden age’ of science-fiction by many film scholars. Films such as The Thing (1951) and Invasion of the Body Snatchers (1956) were read as a reflection of the fear generated by the Cold War which American people had at the time, indirectly playing on the fear of communism. Similarly, Children Of Men ‘[focuses] on migrancy…[in Britain]… and terrorism…[internationally]…’[[19]](http://www.blogger.com/post-create.g?blogID=2352042809736615452" \l "_ftn19" \o "), two contemporary issues that have been highly publicised in the media globally and have given much cause for thought to the public, often evolving into fear. Film critic Guerrasio describes this focus as ‘a complex meditation on the politics of today.’[[20]](http://www.blogger.com/post-create.g?blogID=2352042809736615452" \l "_ftn20" \o ") It is perhaps these features of the film that provoked Bradshaw to label the film as ‘a thinking person’s action movie’. It is important to remember, however, that the main theme of the film, infertility, is being ignored here, although perhaps this functions as the ‘Macguffin’ (a recurring feature of Alfred Hitchcock’s directorial career), that which drives the plot forward but which ultimately is of no consequence.  
  
Cuarón makes it clear early on in the film that governments across the world have collapsed – with only Britain ‘soldiering’ on. To a British audience, this would seem vaguely representative of the days when the British Empire was at its peak. Due to its survival, England has become a target for many refugees fleeing from other disaster-stricken countries. The audience is shown the extent of the immigration issue through the various refugee camps where migrants have been ‘hunted down like cockroaches’[[21]](http://www.blogger.com/post-create.g?blogID=2352042809736615452" \l "_ftn21" \o ") and detained. Cuarón uses this to make contemporary references. The camps in the film ‘intentionally evoke the Abu Ghraib prison, Guantanamo Bay detainment camp and The Maze’[[22]](http://www.blogger.com/post-create.g?blogID=2352042809736615452" \l "_ftn22" \o ") whilst critic Chris Smith observes ‘symbolic overtones and images of the Holocaust’[[23]](http://www.blogger.com/post-create.g?blogID=2352042809736615452" \l "_ftn23" \o ")through the manner in which the refugees are treated. Most scenes where such interpretations can be made are filmed in a way in which the audience are positioned to see things from a point of view shot, often sitting in a vehicle as they pass the mayhem by. By only showing glimpses, Cuarón does enough to provoke the audience into realising that even a democratic country with liberal values can easily employ fascist-like ideologies and policies in the face of an issue growing out of control. In his political review, Blake makes reference to this by stating, ‘it shows what people can become when the government orchestrates their fears for its own advantage.’[[24]](http://www.blogger.com/post-create.g?blogID=2352042809736615452" \l "_ftn24" \o ")  
  
When looked at in more detail, the film’s focus on politics becomes far deeper and more obvious to the evidence. Speaking about the breakdown of democracy in the film, Fabrizio Eva controversially suggests that ‘inequality brings richness’[[25]](http://www.blogger.com/post-create.g?blogID=2352042809736615452" \l "_ftn25" \o "). When put into context, it becomes evident that Cuarón’s cinematography is filmed in a way that places emphasis on this concept of inequality. The long shots used when concentrating on the different settings are regularly juxtaposed with close up shots of the refugees who are presented as strikingly poor through their costumes. In his interview, Eva attempts to provide a reason for why these groups of people are treated in such a harsh manner, stating; ‘in the capitalist system, inequality is acceptable…it’s the engine of production.’[[26]](http://www.blogger.com/post-create.g?blogID=2352042809736615452" \l "_ftn26" \o ") If the economy is healthy and production is steady, it would seem that the condition of the people is of no interest to the government, and Cuarón seems to highlight this in its extremist form through the chaotic manner in how places such as the suburbs are presented.  
  
Like many other successful science-fiction films, ethical questions are inevitably raised. Here, Cuarón challenges the audience to question the morals behind the acts of terrorism which take place in the film. The first encounter with a terrorist attack comes during the beginning of the film as a café Theo was in is bombed immediately after he leaves. The unexpected timing and shock reflects both the September 11th attacks in America and the July 7th bombings in London. In his review of the film, Bradshaw describes the scene as ‘a punch in the solar plexus’[[27]](http://www.blogger.com/post-create.g?blogID=2352042809736615452" \l "_ftn27" \o "), reinforcing the element of surprise. However, as the film progresses the audience learn that the terrorist group behind the various attacks are known as the ‘Fishes’, a group in reality fighting for immigrant rights. Here, Cuarón places the audience in a position where they must decide whether the acts of terrorism are warranted. He further adds to this moral question when Luke, leader of the group, accuses the government of orchestrating some of the bombings. Ridley Scott’s cult classic, Blade Runner (1982), uses a similar technique in which the audience are first put in a position where they view conscious androids as villains, yet as the plot unfolds are forced to question whether they deserve to die or not as ‘their…[only]… crime…[is]…wanting to be human.’[[28]](http://www.blogger.com/post-create.g?blogID=2352042809736615452" \l "_ftn28" \o ")  
  
Cuarón intelligently uses the issue of terrorism to incorporate elements from another genre into the film, in turn giving rise to its hybrid nature. In contemporary society, the media has closely linked terrorism with Iraq. The coverage we see on television is regularly filmed in a documentary-style manner, more commonly known as ‘cinèma vèritè’. Perhaps the most memorable scene in the film comes at the end, a six minute-long single shot sequence in which Theo, the protagonist of the film, struggles through a gun battle between the ‘Fishes’ and the British Army. Cuarón intentionally shoots the scene in a cinèma vèritè style. The camera follows Theo in a way reminiscent of a tracking shot and as a result the audience are put in a position where they feel they are part of the action on screen. Calhoun supports this, stating ‘it’s the film’s nervous and energetic vèritè style…that makes it so involving.’[[29]](http://www.blogger.com/post-create.g?blogID=2352042809736615452" \l "_ftn29" \o ") The camera’s movement throughout this scene reflects that of a handheld one, in turn encouraging the audience to view the action as if they were watching a documentary. Cuarón suggests that ‘without the human connection (Theo and Julian)…[the film]…would be a documentary.’[[30]](http://www.blogger.com/post-create.g?blogID=2352042809736615452" \l "_ftn30" \o ") It is through these aspects of the film that comparisons can be drawn between the coverage of gun battles in Iraq and the action on screen. The documentary feel to the film undoubtedly represents art-house elements, and in turn arguably provides reasons as to why advancements in technology were rejected so vigorously in this futuristic dystopian world.  
  
Close attention is given to the dystopian element of the film as the 2027 London setting proceeds to challenge Susan Sontag’s classic view that ‘science fiction films invite a dispassionate, aesthetic view of destruction and violence-a technological view.’[[31]](http://www.blogger.com/post-create.g?blogID=2352042809736615452" \l "_ftn31" \o ") The lengthy single shot sequences combined with ‘the detailed mise-en-scenè to rival the vivid, lived in quality of Blade Runner’ [[32]](http://www.blogger.com/post-create.g?blogID=2352042809736615452" \l "_ftn32" \o ") engage the audience dramatically as they are able to identify the futuristic setting which appears near identical to the landscapes of today. Furthermore, the dystopian London appears strikingly similar to the one portrayed in the cult-classic, A Clockwork Orange (1971). In his interview, Zizek accurately states that ‘the true focus of the film is in the background.’[[33]](http://www.blogger.com/post-create.g?blogID=2352042809736615452" \l "_ftn33" \o ") Cuarón uses various long shots of London throughout the film to emphasise the condition it is in. He further manipulates the manner in how the audience respond to these images by using low key lighting whenever possible in an attempt to create the grimmest setting possible, although not to the extent of Blade Runner (1982) (where the film succeeds in creating a neo-noir effect). Regardless, such techniques are reminiscent of those used in Steven Spielberg’s remake of War Of The Worlds (2005) where contemporary settings are destroyed to generate a dramatic dystopian effect.  
  
Blade Runner (1982) used a futuristic setting with various technological advances – flying cars amongst other things. George Lucas also portrayed an unrecognisable setting in his sci-fi epic Star Wars (1981) where humanity had expanded across the universe. Despite being set in the year 2027, Cuarón portrays a London as it would look today if it was repeatedly bombed and law and order was defeated. Colin Covert of the Star Tribune points out that ‘in most sci-fi epics, special effects substitute for story…[yet]…here they seamlessly advance it.’[[34]](http://www.blogger.com/post-create.g?blogID=2352042809736615452" \l "_ftn34" \o ") With audience theory in mind, it can be suggested from this that Children Of Men is likely to attract an active audience rather than a passive audience as the focus of the film is on the themes which play on the fears people have in contemporary society. Cuarón’s decision to portray a futuristic London in an alarmingly realistic way perhaps explains why he has put so much emphasis into the storyline and the themes associated with it. The grim setting adds to the shock the audience experience in retaliation to the themes raised in the film. Bradshaw suggests ‘the cinema screen…is like an opened window on to a world of Arctic fear and despair.’[[35]](http://www.blogger.com/post-create.g?blogID=2352042809736615452" \l "_ftn35" \o ")  
  
The cinèma vèritè style cinematography and lengthy single shot sequences (otherwise referred to as a hybrid aspect of the film) are both products of the auteur. Until the mid 1970’s, film ‘authorship’ (otherwise known as the ‘auteur theory’) was the primary critical tool used by film scholars when studying genre. ‘They identified auteurs within the commercial film industry and noted that many of these [individuals] tended to work within one or two specific genres.’[[36]](http://www.blogger.com/post-create.g?blogID=2352042809736615452" \l "_ftn36" \o ")An example of this is Martin Scorsese, a director renowned for working in the ‘gangster’ genre with classic titles such as Goodfellas (1990) and Casino (1995). Cuarón first established himself as a rising director with the art-house film Y tu mama también (2001). He then went on to direct Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban (2004). Whilst both these films are of a completely different style and genre, they both provided him with the opportunity to express his own distinct style of directing, another feature of the auteur theory. The art-house elements of Y tu mama and the emphasis on setting in Harry Potter are two techniques which Cuarón uses throughout Children Of Men.  
  
However, it is the use of an anti-hero that draws the most attention to Cuarón’s distinct directorial style. Clive Owen portrays Theo, the protagonist who was a former political activist but who has now become an alcoholic who lacks enthusiasm towards his profession and life in general. In his interview, Owen makes reference to this by stating, ‘[he] isn’t your big Hollywood obvious hero…[he’s]…a flawed character.’[[37]](http://www.blogger.com/post-create.g?blogID=2352042809736615452" \l "_ftn37" \o ") It would seem Cuarón’s motive behind using an anti-hero was to coincide with his aim to not alienate his audience from the future dystopian setting. Owen supports this notion by further adding, ‘he’s an ordinary guy in an extraordinary situation.’[[38]](http://www.blogger.com/post-create.g?blogID=2352042809736615452" \l "_ftn38" \o ") This is a refreshing contrast to the typical masculine, all-action male hero sci-fi audiences have become accustomed to over the years (e.g. Luke Skywalker from the Star Wars trilogy and Deckard from Blade Runner). Owen acknowledges that ‘the last part of the movie is…a sort of action movie and Theo is the most unlikely guy taking you through it.’[[39]](http://www.blogger.com/post-create.g?blogID=2352042809736615452" \l "_ftn39" \o ") By this point, the audience has been placed in a position where they identify with Theo as an everyday middle class individual, so by following him through the gun battle, the documentary feel to the film is stronger and more obvious. Furthermore, Cuarón rejects the use of low angle shots when filming Theo and this significantly contributes to his ‘everyday’ persona that is gradually created throughout the course of the film.  
  
As Pringle would suggest, Children Of Men incorporates two templates of the many others which are used by an audience to categorise the film under the science-fiction genre. Science-fiction has thrived on its semantic elements, yet Cuarón rejects the conventionally recognised ones; both the scientific proposals of a futuristic setting, commonly in the form of artificial intelligence, and a dystopian society as a result of an ‘alien intrusion’. Regardless, like many other science-fiction films, contemporary issues and their consequences are explored. It would seem that Children Of Men would have been the ideal film for Neale to use as evidence when he stated, ‘it is more productive to think of genres as difference in repetition; films repeat themselves in different ways.’[[40]](http://www.blogger.com/post-create.g?blogID=2352042809736615452" \l "_ftn40" \o ") Regardless, with Altman in mind, the repertoire of elements needed for an audience to identify the science-fiction elements are kept, and the film does enough in terms of incorporating elements from other genres to keep the audience interested and engaged.  
  
Word Count: 2,924  
  
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[[2]](http://www.blogger.com/post-create.g?blogID=2352042809736615452" \l "_ftnref2" \o ") Neale, Steve (2002), Genre and Contemporary Hollywood  
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[[26]](http://www.blogger.com/post-create.g?blogID=2352042809736615452" \l "_ftnref26" \o ") Official Fabrizio Eva interview in Children Of Men DVD  
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[[38]](http://www.blogger.com/post-create.g?blogID=2352042809736615452" \l "_ftnref38" \o ") Official Clive Owen interview in Children Of Men DVD  
[[39]](http://www.blogger.com/post-create.g?blogID=2352042809736615452" \l "_ftnref39" \o ") Official Clive Owen interview in Children Of Men DVD  
[[40]](http://www.blogger.com/post-create.g?blogID=2352042809736615452" \l "_ftnref40" \o ") Neale, Steve (1980), London: BFI

POSTED BY [AMAN-JATT](http://www.blogger.com/profile/14331092195769285961)AT [08:20](http://childrenofmenstudy.blogspot.co.nz/2008/05/excellent-final-draft-bws-reppin.html) [NO COMMENTS:](http://www.blogger.com/comment.g?blogID=2352042809736615452&postID=3159642893760460458)

Word Count: 2,018

**THURSDAY, 24 JANUARY 2008**

**[Task 15: First Paragraph](http://childrenofmenstudy.blogspot.co.nz/2008/01/task-15-first-paragraph.html)**

According to Neale’s work, the word ‘typical’ in this instance represents the ‘repertoire of elements’, recurring themes which can be found in an individual genre. Since the early 1900’s, genres have continuously borrowed elements from one another, something which has now come to be defined as ‘hybridity’. Neale suggests, ‘difference is absolutely essential to the economy of genre’, and in doing so provides an explanation to the consistent variation in their ‘syntactic cores’. This suggests genre is not fixed, rather it is a reflection of the zeitgeist. In turn, looking at the typicality of 'Children Of Men' as a science-fiction film becomes far more complex and requires a detailed analysis of genre first.

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**SUNDAY, 6 JANUARY 2008**

**[Task 14: Starting The Essay](http://childrenofmenstudy.blogspot.co.nz/2008/01/task-14-starting-essay.html)**

"We didn't want to be distracted by the future. We didn't want to transport the audience into another reality."  
  
Is *Children Of Men* a typical science-fiction film?  
  
**Opening Paragraph**  
  
To understand what a typical science fiction film is, one must first define science-fiction as a film genre and subsequently clarify what are believed to be its typical themes and features.

POSTED BY [AMAN-JATT](http://www.blogger.com/profile/14331092195769285961)AT [18:22](http://childrenofmenstudy.blogspot.co.nz/2008/01/task-14-starting-essay.html) [NO COMMENTS:](http://www.blogger.com/comment.g?blogID=2352042809736615452&postID=6314484213127246215)

**[Task 13: Essay Plan](http://childrenofmenstudy.blogspot.co.nz/2008/01/task-13-essay-plan.html)**

Is *Children Of Men* a typical science-fiction film?  
  
**Media Language**

* *Mise-en-scene*: Grim settings, aided by low-key lighting, are repeatedly used throughout the film to re-inforce the theme of a dystopian society. Cuaron pays close attention to the costumes worn by actors as they are an essential tool in portraying the 2027 setting without alienating the film's audience [Cuaron stated the film was very much "anti-*Blade Runner"*].
* *Single Shot Sequences*: Several lengthy single shot sequences are filmed in a tracking shot/cinema verite style. The audience are made to feel as if they are watching a documentary, and this in turn provides the film with a sense of hybridity when looking at genre.
* *Auteur Theory*: Cuaron's input is clearly visible to the audience, especially during the single shot sequences. His contribution provides reasons for the film's hybrid nature and decision to downplay the possible science-fiction elements of a 2027 setting.

**Ideology**

* *Patriarchy*: Despite his ruggid appearance and average profession, Theo [Clive Owen] is assigned the role of protecting a young female. This demonstrates the female reliance on a man for her own safety in a time of crisis.
* *Anti-Government*: The situation of the 2027 setting is built around what seems to be the government's failiure to deal with contemporary issues such as immigration, pollution and terrorism. Whilst Cuaron may not be anti-government at all, he provides a horrific vision of the possible consequences which may arrise if these issues are not dealt with.

**Genre**

* *Science-Fiction*: Children Of Men incorporates two of arguably the most distinct and common elements of the genre; A futuristic setting and a dystopian society. Other recurring themes are discussed in detail by Neale and Altman.
* *Hybrid-genre*: Cuaron rejects many other common elements of science-fiction such as artificial intelligence and advancements in technology. As Covert states; 'In most sci-fi epics, special effects substitute for the story. Here they seamlessly advance it'. Cuaron instead concentrates more on the cinematography, this in his attempt to create a cinema verite style feel to the film.
* *Robert Stam*: His theory of the four key problems with generic labels can be applied to many sci-fi epics, but his theory can only partially be applied to Children Of Men due to it's hybrid nature and neglectance of themes such as alien invasions and artifical intelligence.

**Representation**

* *Men*: Continue to be the dominant figures in society, but to an extent. Theo represents masculinity, bravery and courage. Soldiers and terrorists all seem to be male, a stereotype dating back to the early 20th century. By having this, it can be argued Cuaron is perhaps suggesting the urge for violence in males is what is preventing a seizure to many conflicts across the world.
* *Women*: Whilst all the government representatives in a positition of power seem to be male, it is interesting to note that females are not portrayed as sex objects. Thus, it is not a necessity to apply Mulvey's theory to the film. Another significant feature is the role of Julian. She represents the modern women; intelligent and independent.
* *Refugee Camps*: Cuaron seems to draw references between the refugee camps in the film to ones such as the Guantanamo Bay detainment camp, illustrating the harsh nature in how immigrants and captives are treated.

**Audience**

* It is hard to establish a primary audience for the film. It's fast pace combined with the action and the fact that it's set in the future suggests an audience of young adults is being targeted. However, Cuaron's emphasis on comtemporary issues such as immigration and terrorism can also suggest an older target audience is being targeted as it is fast becoming a stereotype that today's younger generation do not follow politics.

**Institution**

* The film is distributed by Universal Pictures, a global company in the field of Hollywood cinema. However, it is interesting they chose to appoint Cuaron to direct the project for two reasons: he is a relative newcomer to the industry and art-house audiences will be familiar with his work.

**Narrative**

* *Levi Strauss*: His theory of good vs. evil [a plot commonly used in many sci-fi films concerned with the theme of dystopian societies] becomes far more complex when looking at Children Of Men. The begninning of the film sees the audience put in a position where they identify with the government, and in turn see the terrorists as evil. However, as the film progresses and the plot unfolds, the audience learn the terrorists in the film are actually fighting for a good cause, and in turn the audience's morals are challenged as they are faced with the decision of deciding whether to identify with the government or the terrorists.
* *Anti-Hero*: Theo's ruggid appearance, lack of motivation, history as a protestor and shortage of money very much make him an anti-hero. Science-fiction films concerning dystopian societies commonly use confident and well-skilled heroes.

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**[Task 12: Historical Text - A Clockwork Orange (1971)](http://childrenofmenstudy.blogspot.co.nz/2008/01/task-12-historical-text-clockwork.html)**

**The facts:**

* 'A Clockwork Orange' is a 1971 film directed by Stanley Kubrick.
* It features '*disturbing, violent imagery to facilitate social commentary on psychiatry, youth gangs, and other topics in afuture dystopian society'.*
* At the time of its release, the film recieved mix reviews. Whilst it was nominated for numerous awards, it was the subject of great *controversy*due to the film's *explicit sexual and violent content.*
* The film was released as a *rated X*in America. In Britain, the film was withrawn from UK distribution. Regardless, 'A Clockwork Orange' had firmly established itself as a *'cult classic'* by the time of it's re-release in 2000.

**What's it got to do with my independent study?**

* The film's status as a 'science fiction' film is disputed. The 'Internet Movie Database' has it tagged under genres such as 'crime' and 'drama'. As *'Sight and Sound'* [a magazine focused on the science fiction genre] argues; *the film is set in the future, portrays a dystopian society and provides social commentary on what current issues can evolve into in the future*[identical to what 'Children Of Men'], surely these are characteristics necessary for a film to be classed as science fiction?
* 'The science fiction film genre has long served as a useful vehicle for "safely" discussing controversial current issues and often providing thoughtful social commentary on potential unforeseen future issues'.
* A major factor behind why the film packed so much individuality at the time of it's release was that unlike sci-fi films during the 70s, 'A Clockwork Orange' *neglected placing significant emphasis on advanced technology and completely ignored themes of 'artificial intelligence' and 'alien/robot invasions'*. The film instead focused on comtemporary issues at the time such as youth culture and psychological conditioning, using them to create a future dystopian society by presenting them in the horrific and shocking manner. 'Children Of Men' does the same thing, focusing instead on immigration and terrorism issues.

**Other historical texts equally as important:**

* Blade Runner (1982, Ridley Scott)
* 2001: A Space Odyssey (1968, Stanley Kubrick)
* Metropolis (1927, Fritz Lang)
* The War Of The Worlds (1953, Byron Haskin)
* Frankenstein (1910, J.Searle Dawley)

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**SUNDAY, 16 DECEMBER 2007**

**[Summary of Mulvey's Theory](http://childrenofmenstudy.blogspot.co.nz/2007/12/summary-of-mulveys-theory.html)**

Mulvey's essay **'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema'** uses ideas from **Freud's psychoanalytic theory** and it's revised version by**Jacques Lacan** to argue Classic Hollywood Cinema puts the spectator in a masculine subject position (**audience positioning/spectatorship**), with the figure of the woman on screen as the object of desire (**objectification**).  
  
Expanding on the idea of **objectification**, Mulvey suggested there were two distinct modes of the **male gaze**, **voyuerism** (woman viewed as beautiful) and **fetishistic** (woman are viewed sexually). This relates to the concept of **scopophilia**, a term used to describe the pleasure of watching. Mulvey goes on to say by having women in passive roles, the media creates **misogyny**. Most films use male protagonists, reinforcing **patriarchy**.

POSTED BY [AMAN-JATT](http://www.blogger.com/profile/14331092195769285961)AT [11:37](http://childrenofmenstudy.blogspot.co.nz/2007/12/summary-of-mulveys-theory.html) [NO COMMENTS:](http://www.blogger.com/comment.g?blogID=2352042809736615452&postID=5354841070352820369)

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