TECHNOLOGY, BODY AND GENDER: THE REPRESENTATIONS OF NEW REPRODUCTIVE TECHNOLOGIES IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY INDEPENDENT SCIENCE FICTION CINEMA

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“I, ÖzümÜnal, confirm that the work presented in this dissertation is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the dissertation.”

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ÖZÜM ÜNAL

ABSTRACT

TECHNOLOGY, BODY AND GENDER: THE REPRESENTATIONS OF NEW REPRODUCTIVE TECHNOLOGIES IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY INDEPENDENT SCIENCE FICTION CINEMA

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Doctor of Philosophy in American Culture and Literature

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In this dissertation the themes of technology, body and gender relations in the context of the new technologies have been pursued to create a mutimediated or hybrid theory that involves the discussion of different critical and theoretical approaches to female bodies with particular emphasis on the maternal bodies, and accordingly, involves the analysis by taking into account the 21st century independent science fiction films.

This study explores the representations of the new reproductive technologies by examining: first, a theoretical framework for the new reproductive technologies that merge both feminist criticism, body theories and, as well as, posthuman methodologies in a theoretical hybrid (building mainly on the works of theorist Julie Kristeva, Judith Butler, Mary Anne Doane, Anne Balsamo, Donna Haraway); second, the ways in which the new reproductive technologies have been deployed in techno-scientifically oriented cultural settings of the 21st century independent science fiction cinema; and finally, three independent science fiction films from the first decade of the 21st century that each considers the role of new reproductive technologies and fecundity as a central part of its narrative and are studied through

the actions of the main mothering/maternal characters. Because the purpose of this study is to examine the new reproductive technologies in posthuman world, claiming that the maternal bodies bring the issues of representation, the constructions of cultural meaning and the analysis of power relations foreground, consequently, science fiction cinema is taken into account since it is considerably concerned with female body, particularly with the "body of the mother" and the implications technology has for reproduction than with its ability to produce new forms (androids/ cyborgs). These works include Michael Winterbottom's *Code 46* (2003), Alfonso Cuarón's *Children of Men* (2006), and Vincenzo Natali's *Splice* (2009).

Keywords: Body, Gender, Abject, Fecundity, the 21st Century Independent Science Fiction Cinema

ÖZET

TEKNOLOJİ, BEDEN VE TOPLUMSAL CİNSİYET: YENİ DOĞUM TEKNOLOJİLERİNİN 21. YÜZYIL BAĞIMSIZ BİLİMKURGU SİNEMASINDA TEMSİLLERİ

Özüm Ünal

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Mayıs, 2013

Bu araştırma son yıllarda hayatlarımıza giren yeni teknolojilerdeki hızlı değişim ışığında teknoloji, beden ve toplumsal cinsiyet konuları üzerine disiplinlerarası eleştirel ve kuramsal bir söylem oluşturmayı hedeflemektedir.

Bu bağlamda, bu araştırma kadın bedeni yaklaşımlarını (feminist eleştiri, teknoloji çalışmaları ve posthuman yöntemleri) baz alarak, yeni doğum teknolojilerinin hamilelik ve hamile kadın bedeni söylemi üzerindeki etkilerini yeni bir kuramsal karma teori üretimi üzerinden tartışmaktadır.

Sinemada hamilelik,vücut temsilleri, kültürel anlamların kurgulanması ve arka plandaki güç ilişkilerinin incelenmesi açısından geniş kaynak sunan bir alandır. Özellikle, Hollywood sinemasında benzer temalar pek çok kez işlenmiş akademik alanda yankı bulmuş ve referans kitaplarıyla desteklenmiştir. Bağımsız sinemanın bir çok yönde alışılagelmiş sinema anlatısına yeni anlamlar kattığı düşünüldüğü ve yeni ideolojiler sunabildiğine inanıldığından bu çalışmada hamilelik konusuyla ilgili de yenilikçi olup olmadığına yer verilmiştir. Yeni doğum teknlojileri insanoğlunun geleceği ile birebir ilgili olduğu için ortaya çıkan temsilleri

çözümlemek için 21. yüzyıl bağımsız bilimkurgu sinemasından örnekler seçilmiştir. Tahlil edilen filmler Michael Winterbottom'un yönettiği *Code 46* (2003), Alfonso Cuarón'un yönettiği *Children of Men* (2006) ve Vincenzo Natali'nin yönetmeliğini üstlendiği *Splice* (2009) dir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Beden, Toplumsal Cinsiyet, Abject, Hamilelik, 21. yy. Bağımsız Bilimkurgu Sineması

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1. Introduction

> Modernity is inherently globalizing. (Anthony Giddens)
>
> What if human beings, in humanism's sense, were in the process of, and constrained into becoming in human . . . what if what is 'proper' to humankind were to be inhabited by the inhuman? (Jean-François Lyotard)

An increasingly relevant element of "late" globalization in the 21st century is its being driven by technology of which is both cause and effect, that is to say, the implication of "millennial capitalism" is defined by the commoditization of biotechnologies; thus, it is getting harder to clarify the distinction between what is nature and what is machine, where the body ends and technology begins. The necessity to imagine alternative visions for the future of humanity is what feminist theorist Rosi Braidotti promotes when she writes: "What counts as human in this posthuman world?" (Braidotti 1994: 179) Given this context, how can one understand what body is, what a man or a woman is? In fact, for the purposes of this dissertation, Braidotti's question motivates my research for the necessity of acknowledging her question could provide a unique way of comprehending the role of reproduction within the inevitable manifestation of the techno-scientifically oriented cultures.

Throughout this research, I will explore the representations of the new reproductive technologies by examining: first, a theoretical framework for the new reproductive technologies that merge both feminist criticism, body theories and, as well as, posthuman methodologies in a theoretical hybrid (building mainly on the works of

theorist Julie Kristeva, Judith Butler, Mary Anne Doane, Anne Balsamo, Donna Haraway); second, the ways in which the new reproductive technologies have been deployed in techno-scientifically oriented cultural settings of the 21st century independent science fiction cinema; and finally, three independent science fiction films from the first decade of the 21st century that each considers the role of new reproductive technologies and fecundity as a central part of its narrative and are studied through the actions of the main mothering/maternal characters. These works include Michael Winterbottom's *Code 46* (2003), Alfonso Cuarón's *Children of Men* (2006), and Vincenzo Natali's *Splice* (2009). They collectively provide a direct challenge to the representational projects that techno-scientifically oriented cultures and the new reproductive technologies embody, since Winterbottom, Cuarón, and Natali each, in their own ways, unmask the identities that develop within these representations and to responses to hopes or anxieties these representations encapsulate.

Central to Haraway's study of cyborg is the conceptualization of the economic, political, and social role of science and technology that she calls "techno-science." Even though the contradictions of technology as simultaneously a threat and promise has been recognized within feminist studies of techno-science, the productive possibilities of such ambiguities for new reproduction technologies have remained slightly under theorized. My chief argument in this dissertation is that we need to pay greater attention to visions of new reproductive technologies within techno-scientifically oriented cultural spheres of the 21st century independent science fiction films, proposing research questions, such as, "does the emergence of the new

reproductive technologies within the context of independent science fiction films from the first decade of the 21st century create new ways of thinking about the nature of posthuman reproduction?" and "do they influence the spectator to ground how they think about using technology to create posthuman?"

Although each chapter stands alone in this dissertation, the first chapter builds the theoretical background via a newly generated "multimediated theory of technology," (Balsamo 1999: 97) body and gender informing much of the discussion that follows. Similarly, the definition of this theory by Ann Balsamo that "is being constructed necessarily take[s] inspiration and guiding questions various disciplines and intellectual methodologies" (Balsamo 1999: 96) is evident in establishing a theoretical background in this study. Still, this theory will be built across disciplinary traditions and through the application of different methods of analysis, on the other hand, "the political horizon remains consistent with feminist work more broadly." (Balsamo 1999: 97) This introductory theory chapter critically reviews the literature available in relation to the perceptions of female "body" in critical theory, feminist studies of techno-science and posthuman embodiment. In other words, the "multimediated theory of technology" (Balsamo 1999: 97) body and gender is promoted in this dissertation relate to concerns of the issue of techno-science that increasingly affect women's lives. Namely, its main concern is the contested boundaries and definitions of bodies. As a matter of fact, the "multimediated theory of technology" (Balsamo 1999: 97) body and gender forms the basis of this dissertation demonstrating various tropes by which the new reproduction technologies challenge signification, therefore, enhance the "possibilities

transformation and reformation now and in the future" (Balsamo 1999: 97). Hence, the theoretical assumptions underlying this study are on the feminist studies of techno-science in general, but the focus will be on the recognition of posthumanism, which in many ways an extension of the question of man's relationship to technology -and accordingly, the status of the human-, referring mainly to new reproduction technologies within techno-scientifically oriented cultures in independent science fiction films of the first decade of the 21st century, which rely on the range of technological and bio-political spheres that shape the concerns about the future of humanity. For this study, both feminist theory, which has primarily been shaped and influenced by Deconstruction, Semiotics, Marxism, and Psychoanalysis, and feminist film theory, which values film as a meaningful cultural text with ideological impact in compliance with posthuman methodology have guided and influenced this research providing a complementary framework to analyze the films of the first decade of the 21st century independent science fiction cinema. Thus, this study will generate a multimediated theory of posthuman studies, feminist studies and body studies in a climate that fosters critical inquiry to illuminate the broader cultural implications and trends in cinematic representations of maternity and the new reproductive technologies. Examples of these representations are discussed through the 21st century independent science fiction films that are created by male filmmakers but narrated through mainly female characters' perspective. Therefore, in addition to feminist and posthuman perspectives, some of the basic tenets of feminist film theory are reflected in this analysis.

When analyzing film, there are five main components that may be evaluated, which are narrative design, production design, cinematography, editing, and sound design. Although all five elements contribute to the film's meaning, for the purpose of this study, I will be analyzing the narrative design in each film. Harry M. Benshoff and Sean Griffin explain in *America on Film: Representing Race, Class, Gender and Sexuality at the Movies*, "the [narrative] design includes the story, the setting, the action, the characters, the characters' names, the dialog, the film's title, and any deeper subtexts or thematic meanings" (2011: 4). As I analyze the narrative design of each film, I will observe common themes expressed in the content and the form of the films. Furthermore, feminism paired with posthuman studies' perspective offer a complimentary framework to identify the production of meaning in the films. In order to identify how discourses of the techno-scientifically oriented cultures and techno-scientific reproduction are encoded in the film narratives, I will also employ Deconstruction as a method of analysis. In that, I will be examining the suggested subtext regarding posthuman reproduction, questioning the underlying meaning of the new reproductive technologies and representation as displayed the techno-scientifically oriented cultural spheres. The application of the deconstruction in this study will address the research question, "how do members of posthuman world in selected films make sense of motherhood ideologies and how are those translated in the public discourse that they are creating?" Furthermore, utilizing a deconstructive framework, I attempt to expose hegemonic underpinnings in the narratives to discuss the past and the present of "the reasonable sense-making practices of cultures" (McKee 2003: 19). Various critics, as I will discuss, including Rosi Braidotti, Mary Ann Doane, Barbara Creed, Elizabeth Grosz, Anne Balsamo, Susan Bordo, Kathy Davis, and Judith

Butler point to the invasion of the female body and its social environment by gendered discourses. Most of them are, particularly, indebted to French feminist thinker Julia Kristeva's works, in particular, *Powers of Horror: an Essay on Abjection* to describe how representation and matter provide a context in which to analyze the maternal body in that the logic of signification operates, but works with the bodily drives to explore representation. Subsequently, drawing on the works of Kristeva (1980, 1982) in which "*the status of the subject* – the relation to the body, to others, and to objects" (McAfee 2004: 38) is altered due to the refraction of discourse revealing linguistic changes as tactically useful to a feminist analysis of the constitution of woman as the other of the male subject makes woman subject negated or lack, insisting that "what a woman *represents* is more important than what she *is*, what she herself experiences" (Walters, 2005: 98). Others, such as, Barbara Creed emphasizes the patriarchal oppression in *The Monstrous-Feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis*, by noting that, "woman is not, by her very nature, an abject being" (Creed 1993: 83); rather, patriarchal ideology constructs her as such. For these reasons, this study will rely on feminist interpretations of Kristeva to explore the reproductive functions of the female body, which is constructed as abject in patriarchal cultures.

There are of course, many other media that may serve as provisional frameworks for revising the representations of maternity, such as art, literature, theatre. Film, nevertheless, remains an important medium as it determines how men and women are seen and how these representations are based on constructed images. Building upon Lacanian framework of mirror stage, psychoanalytic film theorists Christian Metz and Jean-Louis Baudry argue that film screen serves as a mirror through which

the spectator can identify himself or herself as a coherent and omnipotent ego. Moreover, Mark. T. Newman, author of *A Rhetorical Analysis of Popular American Film* took this notion of identification as his point of departure and suggests “mass-mediated communication generally, and film specifically, acts as a mirror, reflecting society's values and beliefs, hopes and aspirations” (1993: x). Indeed, it can be argued that the 21st century independent science fiction cinema also serves to point out mass mediated messages rhetorically to construct meaning for those who engage it. As Laura mulvey points out in "Virtual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema", film is an advanced representation system, that by using both sound and visual imagery, masquerades as reality- “cinematic codes create a gaze, a world, an object, thereby producing an illusion cut to the measure of desire” (Mulvey 2000: 46). In its mainstream form, film “reflects, reveals and even plays on straight socially established interpretation of sexual difference which controls images, erotic ways of looking and spectacle” (Mulvey 2000: 34). Furthermore, Mulvey links the spectator's sense of power to masculine sense of power, consequently; she contends that the spectator is gendered male by noting that “the determining male gaze projects its fantasy onto female figure, which is styled accordingly” (Mulvey 2000: 39). Her analysis of cinema shows that on the screen, the male character is the site of identification that drives the movement of the film's narrative and is the male character whose movement the camera follows. On the other hand, the female character’s role is to serve as a spectacle for both the spectator and, the male character on the screen, to look at. This process, which Mulvey describes it as the “gaze,” that excludes the subjectivity of the female subject by reducing her to a “to-be-looked-at-ness.” This process, according to Mulvey, provides pleasure for the

male spectator. She argues that "in a world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive female" (Mulvey 2000: 39). She observes that "the male protagonist is free to command the stage, a stage of spatial illusion in which he articulates the look and creates the action" (Mulvey 2000: 41). I think that it is important to raise this question here as, to this point, "is Mulvey's argument that is mainly on the mainstream cinema also applicable to the 21st century independent science fiction films that are selected for inclusion?"

What is significant about independent science fiction films from the 21st century for my purposes, though, is their distinctive approach to the new reproductive technologies and gender issues. Namely, my analyses of the maternal bodies proceed from the fact that in the mainstream theories "the female body is persistently coded as the cultural sign of the "natural," the "sexual," and the "reproductive"" (Balsamo 1996: 9). As Anne Balsamo points out, fecundity becomes a biological and eroticized spectacle in films in which the "womb serves as a metonym for the entire family body," (1996: 80) a concept that endorses the use of reproductive technologies as "means for exercising power relations on the flesh of the female body" (1996: 82). Drawing on Donna Haraway's formulation of the nature of women as "odd techno-organic, humanoid hybrids", I take as my point of departure from Mary Ann Doane's definition of the female body in "Technophilia: Technology, Representation and the Feminine" as a direct outcome of the advance of science drawing attention to "the issues of the maternal, reproduction, representation and history" (Balsamo 1996: 9). So, this research examines the representations of these concepts in selected independent science fiction films to discuss whether they

tend to “signify female gender in a way that reinforces an essentialist identity for the female body as the maternal body” (Balsamo 1996: 9) like their Hollywood counterparts.

In this regard, Patricia Melzer’s definition of science fiction in *Alien Constructions Science Fiction and Feminist Thought* is especially relevant to my analysis. In her account, she emphasizes the fact that “a genre defined by its relationship to technology and, as well as, by its futuristic framework, science fiction [cinema] is understood as a cultural arena that explores the anxieties” (Melzer 2006: 4) of the human/machine interface. Because the purpose of this study is to examine the new reproductive technologies in posthuman world, claiming that the maternal bodies bring the issues of representation, the constructions of cultural meaning and the analysis of power relations foreground, consequently, science fiction cinema is taken into account since it is considerably concerned with female body, particularly with the “body of the mother” and the implications technology has for reproduction than with its ability to produce new forms (androids/ cyborgs). The ambivalent portrayals of reproduction and motherhood within science fiction films point to the contradictory effects regarding the invasion of the female body and its social environment by technology and to the continual necessity to explore the conflicting positions what Anne Balsamo terms “technologies of the gendered body”, within this debate. Additionally, “the representations of displaced cultural anxieties and hopes around the relationship of the gendered body to technology” (Melzer 2006: 12) that are offered in science fiction cinema speak to my research on new ways of thinking about the nature of posthuman reproduction in techno-scientifically oriented cultures that grow out of this relationship.

Although there is a healthy amount of literature devoted to analyses of maternity and reproduction in mainstream science fiction cinema, there is a lack of scholarly attention devoted to depictions of new reproduction technologies in the 21st century independent science fiction cinema. For this reason, this research could provide a possible site for deviation from a mainstream perspective. What do the independent science fiction films released in the first decade of the 21st century say to society, patriarchy, and feminism in regard to the issues of techno-scientifically constructed reproduction forming techno-scientifically oriented cultures?

From chapter two onwards, this study is devoted to analyzing particular examples of the new reproduction technologies in the 21st century independent science fiction films including Michael Winterbottom's *Code 46* (2003), Alfonso Cuarón's *Children of Men* (2006) and Vincenzo Natali's *Splice* (2009). The research question applied to these films is "do they resist, maintain, or transform the visions of the new reproduction technologies in techno-scientifically oriented cultural settings?"

The common denominators of the films I have selected for inclusion for the research are the representations of the cultural anxieties and hopes around the new reproductive technologies and the techno-scientifically oriented culture that grow out of this analogy. Aside from their being independent films, these films are connected in other ways despite the differences in their physical and temporal settings. Not only were they released in consecutive years, but they were also directed by male filmmakers. Their content would seem to have set them up as being "melodrama," anyhow; they all managed to gain international success in various film festivals. The most major connection, however, is the fact that all three films include female

character's point of view, in other words, they are shown through the actions of the main mothering or maternal characters.

I selected the three films based on four criteria. First, for this study, it is important to analyze trends in portrayals of the new reproduction technologies that are current. As such, each of the films fulfills this criterion by having been made within the ten years of the inception of this dissertation. Second, the focus of this study is on the new reproduction technologies in the 21st century independent science fiction cinema. Consequently, each of the films considers the role of posthuman maternity and/or new reproductive technologies as a central part of its narrative. Third, investigating the construction of the new reproduction technologies in techno-scientifically oriented cultural settings in independent science fiction films that are narrated or shown through maternal characters is an underexplored area of scholarly research. For this study, the films meet the third criterion as they are shown through the actions of the main mothering or maternal characters.

Part of the motivation for this dissertation lies in the assertion that the mainstream Hollywood cinema is bound up by the gendered discourses and the operation of masculine power. Finally, independent films providing some critical acclaim may offer more potential for ideological impact. From this perspective, this study takes into consideration whether the 21st century independent science fiction cinema be a site of alteration to a Hollywood-influenced, patriarchal depiction of gender? For this reason, the spotlight will be solely on the independent science fiction films. Scholarly attention has been directed at the portrayals of fecundity and the new

reproduction technologies in Hollywood science fiction films fails to address the similar concepts in the 21st century independent science fiction films. As such, contemporary debates, in relation to the new reproduction technologies and fecundity that are shown through female visions in the imagined futures make independent science fiction cinema a meaningful area that has not been explored. However, E. Ann Kaplan claims in *Motherhood and Representation: The Mother in Popular Culture and Melodrama* that "twentieth-century mother-representations in films are made (largely) by men" (1992: 11), for the purposes of the analysis of the 21st century independent science fiction films in this study the research questions, such as, "do these films represent an exploration of a world where a woman's identity is depicted beyond the discourse of male?" or "do their vision provide an alternative to conventional patriarchy?" will be addressed.

In addition to meeting the criteria established for my method, these three films are united by themes that sustain the individuality of the mother characters as presented in the major plot line. Themes such as anxiety, racism, adultery, hope and single motherhood are not only prevalent through each of the films but are also central to the identification of the mothers. These themes provide a unifying framework to introduce each film under investigation in this study.

In chapter two I turn my attention to Michael Winterbottom's *Code 46* (2003) —the first of three representations of the new reproductive technologies in this study—to apply my thinking about the new reproductive technologies as transformational to feminist debates on gender, technology and the body.

Chapter three examines the idea that whether a global infertility can erase social and biological borders through Alfonso Cuarón's *Children of Men* (2006) presenting a treatment of an anxiety and fear in a future society, and considers the implications of this for understanding gender difference. Consequently, "the conjunction of technology and the feminine [in SF] is the object of fascination and desire but also of anxiety" (Janes 2000: 95) is relevant to the discussion in these analyses, while concentrating on the theme of humanity's complicated relationship with technology.

Having discussed how a global infertility transforms our perceptions of the self, human and the other, chapter four examines the inverse: "What happens when the boundaries between the body and technology collapse inward?" (Toffoletti 2007: 8) How "feminism has often been critical of biotechnologies such as cloning and genetic engineering" (Toffoletti 2007: 8) will be examined in the chapter one, to form a base for this chapter. In this chaper, I analyze these debates to pose another way of approaching posthuman representations of the biotechnological future, drawing on mother humanoid/hybrid relationship in Vincenzo Natali's *Splice* (2009) to develop my argument. *Splice* speaks of the possibility of a world in the not-too-distant future where human DNA might be patented; hence, a natural body seems to be rapidly transforming. I situate DREN as posthuman precursor; "a type of transformer who embodies the potential for identity to be mutable and unfixed" (Toffoletti 2007: 7).

2. Methodology and Basic Assumptions in Body Studies

2.1 Background: Generating a Multimediated Theory in relation to Body, Technology and Gender Studies

> O my body, make of me always a man who questions!
> (Frantz Fanon)
>
> For surely bodies live and die; eat and sleep; feel pain, pleasure; endure illness and violence; and these "facts," one might skeptically pro-claim, cannot be dismissed as mere construction. (Judith Butler)
>
> The body becomes the highly polished machine that the ambiguous concept of behavior [comportement] nearly made us forget. (Merleau-Ponty)

Within divisions of cultural theory since 1980s, there have been calls to retrieve the prominence of the body by providing altered approaches and definitions. This, in turn, draws attention to the fact that feminism, has expressed a particular politics of the body focusing on the "subordination, marginalization and oppression" (Blackman 2008: 73) of female bodies through sites such as (reproductive) medicine (Martin 1987; Young 1990), pornography (Cornell 2000), advertizing (Gill 2006), popular culture (McRobbie 2005; Walkerdine 1997), cosmetic surgery (Balsamo 1996; Bordo 1993; Davis 1997), cyberspace (Braidotti 1996; Haraway 1991; Kember 2003) and the life and biological sciences (Hayles 1999; Haraway 1996; Kember 2003) (Blackman 2008: 73). In fact, there has been, as Rosi Braidotti highlights, "a return of the body" (Braidotti, 2003: 207).

In the introduction of *Body and Society* sociologist Bryan Turner asserts that being involved in the study of body, he has become "less sure of what body is" (Ross 2006: 378). Chris Shilling's account of body resonates with Turner's; however, his vision of the body focuses more on the results rather than the definitions:

> The body was annexed as a 'blank screen' on which the effects of culture were 'written', as a constructor of identities, as a marker of irreducible difference, as a receptor of governmental micro-powers, as a vehicle through which the mind/body, culture/nature and other 'binary oppositions', which characterized traditional social thought could be overcome, and as the physical seat of all experience. (Shilling 2004: 8)

One important point should be added here that Bryan Turner supposes the materiality of the body as "the most elusive, illusory … metaphorical … and ever distant" (1984: 8), while Judith Butler considering the same concept, claims that she "could not *fix* bodies as simple objects of thought" (1993: ix emphasis in original) and "kept losing track of the subject" (1993: ix quoted in Shilling 2012: 42). In this respect, Ruth Holliday and John Hassard in the *Contested Bodies* noting that it is the core of the argument that "the body is contested" (Holliday; Hassard 2001: 1) give reference to Julia Cream's similarly expressed ambivalence about the lacking of "consensus on what the body is and what constitutes it" (Cream 1994: 32 quoted in the Holliday; Hassard 2001: 1).

Interestingly, alongside the belief that different perspectives lead us to new approaches and definitions in various ways, "to achieve an adequate analysis of the body" one should recognize the importance of the necessity to modify the assumption about the "body as substance, as special kind of a *thing* or entity" (Blackman 2008: 5) regarding it "as a material, physical and biological phenomenon

"which is irreducible to immediate social processes or classifications" (Shilling 1993: 10 quoted in Blackman 2008: 5) to conceive "bodies as sites of potentiality, process and practice" (Shilling 1993: 10 quoted in Blackman 2008: 5). Whilst this quote captures the tone of the call from many disciplines to re-embody the theory, accordingly, this part of the study is designed to explore the complex nature of the body in more detail and outline a framework which adopts "'a' body *not* as a singular, bounded entity or substance" but rather what Dutch sociologist Anne Marie Mol (2002) terms the "body multiple" (Blackman 2008: 125) stating that the skin is not border or "a kind of container for the self" (Blackman 2008: 1), but rather a medium which "extends and connects to other bodies, human and non-human, to practices, techniques, technologies and objects which produce different kinds of bodies and different ways, arguably, of enacting what it means to be human" (Blackman 2008: 1). Rather, Australian feminist Elizabeth Grosz is concerned about the visibility of the bodies when she observes

> Bodies speak, without necessarily talking, because they become coded with and as signs. They speak social codes. They become intextuated, narrativized; simultaneously, social codes, laws, norms and ideals become incarnated. (Grosz 1995: 35)

Bringing together different methodologies, the formation of a multimediated theory part of this study sets out to answer the empirical questions such as "what is the connection between the concepts of body in varying disciplines?"; "while the body is everywhere in its various enactments as bodies" (Turner 1984: 7 quoted in Ross 2006: 378), who are involved with "the authority to speak about the body, and represent your bodies and ours?" (Holliday; Hassard 2001: 2) Elizabeth Grosz explores in detail the process why dualistic thinking of the body should be

transcending in order to remind us the "the problem of cultural inscription or materiality" which denies in Grozs' term the "lived" body. Thus, for Grosz, reconfiguration of the body is an asset,

> If we are to understand how cultural, social and historical forces work to transform it.… We have already observed that dualistic thinking tends to work in binaries – mind–body, reason/passion, for example – in which one pole of the binary takes up a negative and inferior status at which actual subjects, such as the working classes, people with different sexualities, colonial subjects and women, are usually positioned. (1994: 10) (Blackman 2008: 77)

My point is that the current notions of the meaning of "human" have been forged through technology, rather than biology, that "reproduces gender and thereby challenges conceptions of what is to be human, gendered, stable subject." (Janes 2000: 93) As a result of developments in techno-scientific spheres such as biological reproduction, genetic engineering, cosmetic surgery, the concept of the "body is becoming increasingly a phenomenon of options and choices" (Shilling 2003: 3). Thus, these developments have stimulated and maintained the rise of interest many people have to control their own bodies, and to have them controlled by others. As Halberstam observes, "the potentiality of the body to morph, shift, change and become fluid is a powerful fantasy" (Halberstam 2005: 76) in contemporary cinema. Further, it can be argued that "the body in transition indelibly make the late-twentieth century and early twenty-first century visual fantasy" (Halberstam 2005: 76). When discussing the "body," I refer to these current attitudes towards what it means to be human that the 21st century independent science fiction cinematic narratives under discussion mirrors and/or distorts. My concern has been to bring forth the problem of control and power that draws attention to debates and studies, which follow, by examining "what bodies can do, what bodies could become, what

practices coordinate the doing of particular kinds of bodies" (Blackman 2008: 1), and the material outcomes of the body which are associated with the humanness, culture, power, technology and representational subjectivities.

In relation to the concept of body, I will consider five main areas of interest: The Spoken Bodies will place the conventional logic of the Western mind-body dualism within the context of the fixed self offered to women who "had been used as a means of justifying women's subordination for feminists" (Shilling 2005: 5); The Objectified Bodies will bring forth the problem of control and power that draws attention to how bodies have become "the target of governmental discourses, [the] object of discourse, and, as well as, the scope of discourse" (Shilling 2005: 3). The Commoditized Bodies will examine how the body that is being shaped to conformity to external rules and regimes becomes a marker of commercial value within consumer culture.; The Abject[ed] Bodies will discuss the boundaries and borders of the material body and embodiment, in relation to, how "the abjected body, actually, is the product of "the power of spiritual and/or psychological systems to make and unmake the corporeal world" (Cregan, 2006: 11); finally, The Disappearing Bodies will take into consideration of how bodies have been transformed into an "uncertain and even a rapidly disappearing remnant of pre-technological culture for those interested in the meeting of meat and machines, which had occurred with the development of cyborgs" (Shilling 2005: 5).

Taking as my point of departure from the idea of Cartesian mind-body duality; I would like to open up a discussion on the Objectified, the Abject[ed], the

Commoditized and the Disappearing bodies to delve into the assumption that bodies "can be re-imagined beyond the limitations of physical embodiment: part corporeal matter, part techno-machine" (Cregan 2006: 5) to establish a base for exploring the meanings focusing on bodily dislocations in wider concept of contemporary maternity. This multimediated analysis of the body theories in five parts will help to show "there are many ways, just as there are many sites, where gender, power and the body intersect and interact" (Williams; Bendelow 1998: 20).

2.2 The Spoken Bodies

> I cannot apprehend my body as an object but only as a body-for-itself, I apprehend the body of the other as an object about which I take a point of view and realize that my body as an object is the body-for-others. I do not perceive, however, the other's body as mere flesh, but always in a specific and concrete situation which I interpret as meaningful. The other is perceived not as a cadaver, but as a being-in-body with intentions whose actions or gestures are goal-directed and purposeful – such as striking a match to light a fire in order to eat. (Sartre)

> The human body may be considered as a machine. (Descartes)

Beginning with a consideration of the relationship between the mind and the body, I revisit the enduring influence of the dualism concerning the writings of the seventeenth-century philosopher, René Descartes since there is an important connection to be made the remaining definitions of the body, which mainly have regulated the Western discourse. For Descartes, the key determinant of human existence is the pure mind, not the body:

> The mind, by which I am what I am, is entirely distinct from the body even if the body were to cease, it [the mind] would not cease to be all that it is. (Descartes 1968: 54 quoted in Holliday; Hassard 2001: 4)

As heavily influenced from Descartes, the conventional logic of the Western mind-body dualism, foregrounds "'mind' over body, 'self' over other, where the normative self defined as masculine (and Western, middle-class, heterosexual)," (Meskimmon 2002: 389) therefore, "the body becomes constituted as '"alien," as "the not-self, the not-me" (Bordo 1993: 144 quoted in Blackman 2008: 75). The connection between mind "equated with the rational [and] sovereign individuals" emerges as the condition of all others who are defined as irrational "are products of their bodies" (Holliday; Hassard 2001: 4). As Derrida (1967) has pointed out, within dualist ideologies one term is always privileged over the "other." Indeed Susan Bordo notes in relation to the conventions of the Western dualism that it "is not just a philosophical argument but a "practical metaphysics that has been deployed and socially embodied in medicine, law, literary and artistic representations, the popular construction of self, interpersonal relationships, popular culture and adverts" (Bordo 1993: 144:13 quoted in Blackman 2008: 75).

Furthermore, the body within Cartesianism is depicted as "a constraining force that ideally should be brought under the control of the mind" (Blackman 2008: 21) thus, "technological changes to the body are not viewed as significant for human culture or human identity" (Vint 2007: 9). The dualisms that have been central to Western thinking about the question of what makes us human, "based on the interlocked representations, classifies men as 'all mind' and women as 'all body'" (Holliday; Hassard 2001: 4) which makes it difficult to speak through the differences about the body. Within Cartesian legacy, the culture and nature dichotomy is another

distinction prevalent in the West "with 'culture' being the way that human beings have civilized their world with their learned ways (minds) and 'nature' being the world in its raw state, the province of human beings in their animality (bodies)" (McAfee 2004: 39). Therefore, the Western dualistic thinking defines "the hierarchical relations within the world" (Smith; Wilde 2008: 389) by providing different pairs of opposing, "such as active/passive, reason/passion, masculine/feminine, etc" (McAfee 2004: 39).

In relation to the debate of the Cartesian subject and intersubjectivity I focus on here, perception takes for granted the underlying hierarchy within Cartesian dualities. Accordingly, perception defined by Cartesianism as "an inner representation of an outer world of given objects" (Bendelow: Williams 1998: 52). Furthermore, Cartesian perception of women as "*more* biological, *more* corporeal and *more* natural than men," (Grosz 1994: 14) and as being tied to their bodies makes them, "more suited to the world of private than public existence" (Grosz 1994: 4) and makes transcendent visions impossible, as a result, brings forth "the subject/object dualism and all the problems this involves" (Bendelow; Williams 1998: 52). Commenting on the Cartesien logic that supposes the pure mind which makes someone visible, not the body, Gill Kirkup has written,

> For Descartes, animals were a kind of machine by God, with small parts. Human beings were not machines/ automata like animals because of the power of the rational thought and consciousness. When women are put closer to animals they are also placed closer to machines. At this very core, then the discourse of the discipline which in the twentieth century becomes biology, in its taxonomy of what it is to be human constructs gendered inequality. (2000: 6)

Thereto, Cartesianism providing "instructions, rules, or models of how to gain control over the body," has treated the body "as something which might be erased or altered," (Holliday; Hassard 2001: 3) furthermore, it has had an influence on the definition of "the 'normal' body – of learning to live without it" (Bordo, 145 quoted in Cregan 2006: 172). However, there is a concerning stance that is often present within Cartesian dualist legacies that might be characterized as a general lap that it "leaves unresolved the question of how precisely mind engages with body and world during the act of perception itself" (Crossley, 1995a quoted in Bendelow; Williams 1998: 51). This quote brings us to the problem of intersubjectivity, arising from Descartes' *cogito* that can be overturned through "an approach which stresses the intercorporeal nature and carnal roots of our being-in-the-world" (Crossley 1995a quoted in Bendelow; Williams 1998: 53). This view stresses the idea that "perception is an *active* process, one involving –namely, Merleau-Ponty's term in replace of Cognito "a sentient body-subject," pointing "outwards and is directed towards a common world of learned practical skills and existential understandings" (Crossley 1995a quoted in Bendelow; Williams 1998: 53). From this viewpoint, "perception of an 'outer' (public) world", should be seen as "an 'openness' to being' that occurs in-the-world rather than some 'inner' representation" or embodied experience (Crossley 1995a quoted in Bendelow; Williams 1998: 51). Maurice Merleau-Ponty also makes the point in describing her approach to 'incarnate body':

> we are in the world through our body, and…we perceive that world within our body…by thus remaking contact with the body and with the world, we…also…rediscover ourself, since, perceiving as we do with our body, the body is a natural self and, as it were, the subject of perception. (Merleau-Ponty 1962: 206 quoted in Bendelow; Williams 1998: 53)

Taking as my point of departure from the idea of Cartesian mind-body duality, an important point to note about, however, this view has many associations for how we conceive the human, with regard to non-human, and as well as, the body and embodiment, consequently, "the mind/body dualism is at the heart of women's subjugation to men", Elizabeth Grosz (1994) argues (Brandt 2006: 144). Kate Cregan argues that "embodiment – the physical and mental experience of existence-" is "the condition of a possibility for our relating to other people and to the world" (Cregan 2006: 3). It should also be stressed that, in thinking the challenge with regards to the experience of embodiment, Cregan considers that it includes

> an intensification of the extension, abstraction and reconstitution of the individual's body via technological and bio-technological means. Not only has the turning to the body as an object of theoretical reflection marked the moments of intensification, but it has also participated in and shaped that intensification. (Cregan 2006: 5)

Thus far, I have located some of the dualisms that have been central to Western thinking about the question of what makes us human. More recently, the deconstruction of the mind/body duality has been particularly essential, whilst, not only does it "allow for a rethinking embodiment and its relationship to subjectivity, but of women's subjectivity as well" (Brandt 2006: 144). Conceptualizing the problem, Turner's suggestion is to

> overthrow a 'number of perennial contrasts' between, for example, structure and agency, mind and body, nature and will and the individual and society and offer solutions that are neither deterministic nor view the body as somehow existing prior to social and cultural processes. (Turner, 1984: 248 quoted in Blackman 2008: 75)

From these offerings, it is now useful to examine their philosophical underpinnings in the next section which moves from the depiction of the body within Cartesian dualism to further analysis of a series of political and cultural shifts on embodiment.

The question of where the one's body ends, and the other's begins is currently much less certain and clear-cut. Indeed, as Alison Stone puts it "[n]o matter how virtual the subject may become, there is always a body attached" (1991: 111 quoted in Burkitt 1999: 135). She continues,

> It may be off somewhere else - and that "somewhere else" may be a privileged point of view - but consciousness remains firmly rooted in the physical. Historically, body technology, and community constitute each other. (1991: 111 quoted in Burkitt 1999: 135)

The following, sums up the orientation of Elizabeth Grosz's contribution to body studies:

> the body as a discontinuous, non-totalizable series of processes, flows, energies, speeds and durations, may be of great value to feminisms attempt to re-conceive bodies outside the binary oppositions imposed on the body by the mind/body, nature/culture, subject/object and interior/exterior oppositions (1994: 164). (Blackman 2008: 77)

As mentioned before, Williams and Bendelow also make the point in arguing that "there are many ways, just as there are many sites, where gender, power and the body intersect and interact" (1998: 20).

2.3 The Objectified Bodies

> Our society is not one of spectacle, but of surveillance…We are neither in the amphitheatre, nor on the stage, but in the panoptic machine. (Foucault 1979: 217 quoted in Synott 2002: 217)

The persistency of the heritage of Descartes' ideas-- the privileging of the mind over the body-- in the modern period as Alan Peterson (2007) in T*he Body in Question a Socio-Cultural Approach* points out, may be explained by "their congruence with a

broader view on the separation of mind and body within modern, capitalist society, characterized by class and gender exploitation and a sharp division between mental and physical labor" (Petersen 2007: 108).

There is a long history of the discourses of 'body', in which, one way or another, the nature of the body has been constituted "the unconscious and conscious mind and the emotional life of the subjects" (Weedon, 108) to be governed. Social control which can be exerted various forms is problematic, so long as human physicality is highlighted as a "social object." For Foucault, society is characterized by "customary, spatial and institutional controls" (Cregan 2006: 10) that are based on the reconstitution of the meaning of embodiment.

> The historical moment of the disciplines was the moment when the art of the human body was born…What was then being formed was a policy of coercions that act upon the body, a calculated manipulation of its elements, its gestures, its behavior. The human body was entering a machinery of power that explores it, breaks it down and rearranges it. A 'political anatomy', which was also a 'mechanics of power', was being born…Thus discipline produces subjected and practiced bodies, 'docile' bodies. (Foucault, 1979:137–8 quoted in Synnott, 2002: 232) (Synnott 2002: 232)

To put it another way, I will return to Foucault's notion of 'bio-power' in some detail later with emphasis on the assumption that it can be related to the recent techno-scientific concepts of "designer babies" and "wombs for sale," but for the moment it is worth quoting Foucault by a way of a foreground. In *The History of Sexuality: an Introduction Vol.1*, Foucault asserts that bio-power which is the "power over life, evolved in two basic forms" (Foucault 1978: 135):

> These two forms were not antithetical, however; they constituted rather two poles of development linked together by a whole intermediary cluster of relations. One of these poles - the first to be formed, it seems - centered on the body as a machine: its disciplining, the optimization of its capabilities, the extortion of its forces, the

> parallel increase of its usefulness and its docility, its integration into systems of efficient and economic controls, all this was ensured by the procedures of power that characterized the disciplines: an anatomo-politics of the human body. The second, formed somewhat later, focused on the species body, the body imbued with the mechanics of life and serving as the basis of the biological processes: propagation, births and mortality, the level of health, life expectancy and longevity, with all the conditions that can cause these to vary. Their supervision was effected through an entire series of interventions and regulatory controls: a bio-politics of the population. (Foucault 1978: 135)

In modern societies, according to Foucault, power especially focuses on the body. As he points out,

> The body as an object of power is produced in order to be controlled, identified and reproduced. Power over the materiality of the body can be divided into two separate but related issues – 'the disciplines of the body and the regulations of the population.' (Foucault, 1981: 139 quoted in Turner, 2008: 36) (Turner 2008: 36)

Turner, picking up on Foucault's arguments in the body being a "direct locus of social control" extends those terms: "the disciplines of the body" relates to singular bodies and is referred to as an 'anatomo-politics' which "centered on the body as a machine: its disciplining, the optimization of its capabilities, the extortion of its forces, the parallel increase of its usefulness and docility," (Turner 2008: 36) while the regulations of the population embraces the species' body and involves a "'bio-politics' of populations, which are birth-and death-rates, morbidity, health, longevity, fertility, birth control and demographic power politics." (Foucault 1980: 139) Moreover, building upon Foucault's work, Sue Short (2005) in *Cyborg Cinema and Contemporary Subjectivity* outlines the impact of docile bodies as instructive in "how people have been monitored and controlled by differing institutions over the last century, diagnosed and treated according to perceived maladies such as mental illness, aberrant sexuality and criminal activity" (Short, 42). In the following passage, Short's position is made quite clear:

> Foucault has shown how a process of discipline and containment has been used to uphold social order. The body is again perceived as a problem to be solved, observed and assessed according to particular norms, and punished where deviations are apparent. According to Foucault, modernity is characterized by 'an explosion of numerous and diverse techniques for achieving the subjugation of bodies and the control of populations, marking the beginning of an era of 'bio-power." (Foucault 24 quoted in Short 2005: 42)

Turner's 'somatic society' can also be employed to describe how body in modern social systems has become "the principal field of political and cultural activity", whilst, he implies that "the body is merely flesh to be inscribed by cultural and social meanings" (Turner, 1992a: 12, 162 quoted in Shilling 2003: 1).

Just as Foucault's notion of discipline and punishment gives us insights into the bio-power, so too does his thinking about surveillance. As Foucault (1977) has indicated in his well-known book *Discipline and Punish,* with reference to the Panopticon, surveillance technologies focus on securing "self-regulation, the monitoring of one's own thoughts and behavior" (Petersen 2007: 103). Foucault encounters direct consideration of power that is closely connected to both the control of the body and the mind. In this sense, the panoptical vision, Foucault argues, articulates "the penetration of regulation into even the smallest details of everyday life through the mediation of the complete hierarchy that assured the capillary functioning of power" (1979, 198 quoted in Leatherman 2008: 69).

For all his concern to elaborate the sites of power - one can argue that male-centered discourses- situated within different inscriptions to bodies, echoing the eighteenth-century philosopher Jeremy Bentham, Foucault describes the Panopticon in the

following way in an interview entitled “The Eye of Power”. Namely, The Panopticon is “a perimeter building in the form of a ring” (Foucault 1980: 147).

> At the center of this a tower, pierced by large windows opening on to the inner face of the ring. The outer building is divided into cells each of which traverses the whole thickness of the building. These cells have two windows, one opening onto the inside, facing the windows of the central tower, the other, outer one allowing daylight to pass through the whole cell. All that is then needed is to put an overseer in the tower and place in each of the cells a lunatic, a patient, a convict, a worker or a schoolboy. The back lighting enables one to pick out from the central tower the little captive silhouettes in the ring of cells. In short the principle of the dungeon is reversed; daylight and the overseer’s gaze captures the inmate more effectively than darkness, which afforded after all a sort of protection. (Foucault 1980: 147)

Maclahan’s reading of Foucault reveals that “this sort of ‘disciplinary surveillance’ is not, however, restricted to prisons, Foucault argues: the ‘warder’ can easily be replaced by the doctor, nurse, teacher, foreman or whatever authority figures preside over whatever institution (Foucault 1990)” (MacLachlan 2004: 7). Central to Foucault’s work is the assertion that a new form of internalized disciplinary practice takes place since “surveillance is permanent in its effects” (Foucault 1977: 201) in which one is constrained to act as if one is continually being watched even when one is not, and order is guaranteed by this invisibility (Foucault 1977: 200). Foucault’s work is especially apt for challenging the way how power and its operation is traditionally comprehended. It would seem from his argument that power in panopticism

> focuse[s] on one individual is in fact "distributed" throughout the structure, so that every individual is at the same time both "object" and "subject" of this power : the prisoner is "watched", but is being trained to watch himself, to be his own inspector. The inspector is by definition the "watcher ", and yet he, too, is the object of a gaze: his performance as watcher is ever under scrutiny. (Taylor 2011: 58)

Jane M. Ussher's reading of Michel Foucault reveals that self-surveillance can be seen "as the modern replacement for external, authoritarian, methods of surveillance and social control" (Ussher 2006: 4). Colin Gordon's analysis broadens Foucault's notion of surveillance to include "the gaze" as well and emphasizes the willingness and desire in the process:

> There is no need for arms, physical violence, material constraints. Just a gaze. An inspecting gaze, a gaze which each individual under its weight will end by interiorizing to the point that he is his own overseer, each individual thus exercising this surveillance over, and against, himself. (p. 18 in quoted in Ussher 2006: 4)

This quote brings us to the issue that arises from the contention that the controlling process -governmentality in Foucault's term- depends on the ways "in which bodies are produced, cultivated and disciplined" (Turner 2008: 3), in other words, on shaping and regulating the "bodily motion or habits" (Cregan, 2006: 10). Ussher also makes the point in arguing that "identifying and naming specific forms of self-surveillance and self-policing is the first step in exposing and challenging the regulatory practices that can act to subjugate women—the first step in facilitating resistance" (Ussher 2006: 4). And yet, we can read in both Susan Bordo's (1995) and Sandra Bartky's (1998) analyses a contention of "the processes of surveillance and self-surveillance are deeply implicated in constituting a set of normativities towards which bodies intend" (Price and Shildrick 1999: 8 quoted in Jeffries 2007: 21). In Sandra Bartky's account, she emphasizes the fact that "the witnesses for whom the feminine body is constructed as spectacle are external as well as internal: we are under surveillance from without as well as within" (1998: 21 quoted in Ussher 2006: 4). Taking as my point of departure from the forms of self-surveillance, an important point to note about, however, is that "the fecund female body thus stands

at the center of surveillance and policing of femininity —both externally, and from within" (Ussher 2006: 4). The following, makes it quite clear:

> The external gaze which pervades cultural discourse and institutional practices, and is taken up by significant others in our lives, can thus act to position us as mad, bad or dangerous because of inhabiting a fecund body -- a positioning which many women take up, and reinforce as truth through this process, even if this is unintentional. (Ussher, 2006: 5)

It should also be stressed that, in thinking "the dynamics of power as it operates on women's bodies and lives" (Peterson 2008: 8), Foucault's ideas can be considered to be applied to the politics of reproduction. Central to Jana Sawicki's book, *Disciplining Foucault: Feminism, Power and the Body,* is the assertion that the new reproductive technologies have control over the bodies.

> Jana Sawicki, for instance, has examined the positive and productive power of new reproductive technologies, showing how they serve as disciplining devices and create new categories of human subject and new experiences; for example the infertile, genetically impaired mothers, mothers whose bodies are not fit for pregnancy, mothers who are psychologically unfit for fertility treatments, and so on (1991: 83–85). As this work emphasizes, the way in which categories are constructed profoundly affects the possibilities for personhood. There is a mutual relationship between how we distinguish between people (and, one might add, between people and other animals or the physical or natural environment) and how individuals think and act, whether as a 'homosexual'/'gay' person, a woman or man,a disabled person, a person of a certain 'race' or ethnicity, and so on (see Hacking 1986). (Petersen 2007: 8)

In this view, the examples of social controls that the fecund body subjected to are "customary controls, the regulation of social habits, socially acceptable behaviors" (Cregan 2006: 10). Furthermore, at this point, Thornam observes:

> The woman's body becomes, then, both container and screen, a membrane to be penetrated by the camera which goes behind the screen and into the void, and the site of projection of the foetal images. As many critics have pointed out, techniques of foetal imaging become a form of disciplinary surveillance of the pregnant body, what Rosalind Petchesky calls a `panoptics of the womb' (2000: 180, original emphasis), positioning the woman within a regime of professional investigation and

> `care', and making her always secondary to the `star of the show', the fetus. But, as her body becomes a `window on the womb', it is also robbed of its materiality. The troubling embodied nature of sexual difference can be set aside; the reality, however virtual, is what is on the screen. (Thornam 2007: 134-135)

In a similar vein, J. P. Telotte argues that "the "medicinal" camera is just one of a series of monitoring devices that are everywhere and that render this world a kind of Foucaultian Panopticon, that is, a realm much like the nineteenth-century French prison Michel Foucault describes wherein prisoners were always under surveillance as a way of enforcing social discipline" (Telotte 2004: 134). This, in turn, draws attention to the fact "self-surveillance is not the only mode through which the fecund body is judged" (Ussher 2006: 4). Moreover, these notions triggered the practices of beauty ideals, diet, keep-fit, fertility control, fashion, health care procedures - "a fixed self" that is determined by the patriarchy. To return, then, to the status of the female body, Bordo in *Unbearable Weight Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body* identifies the contemporary Western "constructions of beauty [that] are dominant, strongly "normalizing" (racial and gendered) forms to contend with" (Bordo 1995: 29). She continues:

> To struggle effectively against the coerciveness of those forms it is first necessary to recognize that they *have* dominance, and not to efface such recognition through a facile and abstract celebration of "heterogeneity," "difference," "subversive reading," and so forth. (Bordo 1995: 29)

In this sense, surveillance or Panopticon, can be seen as "a universal, disembodied gaze," (Hayles 1999; 194) following Foucault's notion, that operates through schema of "power through transparency" (Foucault 1980; 154 qtd in Leatherman 2008: 99), nevertheless, it functions as a type of social control that produces docile, obedient,

and easily manipulated individuals. In keeping with Foucault's line of emphasis on surveillance, Janie Leatherman in *Discipline and Punishment in Global Politics Illusions of Control* suggests that in the twenty-first century an example of Panoptical vision might be the use of "new technologies of surveillance, including remote sensing satellites that have image resolution down to three inches, or with infrared capability, raise the specter of anyone at any time being watched from space" (Leatherman 2008: 69). Furthermore, at this point, Leatherman implies that since surveillance instruments are "remote" they are "not just removed from the everyday lives of citizens, but more disconcertingly, in the hands of private corporations removed from the reach of a democratic populace" (Leatherman 2008: 71).

Addressing "the presuppositions of the panoptic society," Katherine N. Hayles in *How We Became Posthuman Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics* has shared the notion of "the Panoptic move of disembodiment" (Hayles 1999: 194) like Foucault, but with a major dissimilarity, instead of "positing a body constituted through discursive formations and material practices that erase the contextual enactments embodiment always entails" (Hayles 1999: 194), she is more interested in the assumption that "the Panopticon abstracts power out of the bodies of disciplinarians into a universal, disembodied gaze" (Hayles 1999: 194). Even so, referring to the abstraction of the Panopticon, she argues "[I]t is precisely this move that gives the Panopticon its force, for when the bodies of the disciplinarians seem to disappear into the technology, the limitations of corporeality are hidden" (Hayles 1999: 194). Furthermore, at this point, Hayles observes

> Although the bodies of the disciplined do not disappear in Foucault's account, the specificities of their corporeality fade into the technology as well, becoming a universalized body worked upon in a uniform way by surveillance techniques and practices. When actual situations involving embodied agents are considered, limits appear that are obscured when the Panopticon is considered only as an abstract mechanism. Failing to recognize these limits, Foucault's analysis reinscribes as well as challenges the presuppositions of the panoptic society. (Hayles 1999: 194)

Given this context, the remaining "status of body" in social theory as "an objectified entity" is not surprising. Hayles' analysis broadens Foucault's notion of embodiment by suggesting that "it requires understanding how embodiment moves in conjunction with inscription, technology, and ideology," (Hayles 1999: 105) and as well as, an examination of "how embodied humans interact with the material conditions in which they are placed" (Hayles 1999: 105).

Nevertheless, as mentioned earlier, Cartesian duality represents a prominent stage in Western thought, in this sense, in thinking the challenge with regards to the experience of embodiment, Foucault considers the body as the focus of modern discourse, in contrast to the centrality to subjectivity in terms of the Cartesian subject. And yet, before moving into the next section one important point should be added here that Foucault's theory of abstract power - albeit the phrase 'discipline and punish'- is not gender-neutral. Foucault (1977) in *Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison* puts it,

> By contrast, the disciplinary power that is increasingly charged with the production of a properly embodied feminity is dispersed and anonymous; there are no individuals formally empowered to yield it; it is as we have seen, invested in everyone and in no one in particular. This disciplinary power is peculiarly modern: it does not rely upon violent or public sanctions, nor does it seek to restrain the freedom of the female body to move from place to place. For all that, its invasion of the body is wellnigh total: the female body enters a machinery of power that explores it, breaks it down and rearranges it. (Foucault, 138)

Furthermore, power linked to institutions such as the clinic, the school and the prison (Foucault 1977) residing outside of the body in patriarchal society, the discipline and the gaze remain male. Consequently, it can be claimed that "the term 'bio-politics' conceals the reality of male power over female bodies, and particularly over female sexuality" (Synott 1993: 235) gives central role to body which is "objectified as a statistic, a problem, or a target of control" (Shilling 2005: 4).

Even so, it is also on this point, as I will try to bring about later, Donna Haraway's comment about Foucault's bio-politics in "Cyborg Manifesto" that it "is a flaccid premonition of cyborg politics, a very open field" (Haraway, 1991: 150). Foucault states:

> …power is exercised rather than possessed; it is not the 'privilege', acquired or preserved, of the dominant class, but the overall effect of its strategic positions—an effect that is manifested and sometimes extended by the position of those who are dominated. (Foucault 1977: 26–7 quoted in Toffoletti 2007: 78)

2.4 The Commoditized Bodies

> At the turn of the twenty-first century, the self seems above all a commoditized self; the person is equated with their bodily form, and in control of their appearance via the body *project* (Turner, 1984; Featherstone, 1991; Shilling 1993) with attention to this project geared to produce preferred and fashionably desirable versions of outward forms. (Coupland; Gwyn 2003: 4)

Although the technologies of body modification and management have evolved and grown rapidly since the nineteenth century, "the assumption that there is a clear line between the normal and the abnormal and a belief in the ideal of 'the perfect body'" (Petersen 2007: 133) has been transforming, indeed, it has been widely recognized that "the drive to establish a normative standard of beauty and health, against which

deviations are then measured, assessed and controlled has a long history in the West" (Petersen 2007: 67). In this sense, the preoccupation with the normal vs. abnormal bodies (ideal vs. deviant) has further links with "the constitutive of the power relations operating within the community" (Jaworski 2003: 153) since "our bodies serve as the 'ultimate metaphor' reflecting the general mood and cultural contradictions of late capitalist society" (Williams; Bendelow 1998: 75). In addition to the fact that the body is a complex system of both material and representation, Marsha Meskimmon further comments on the body "as a site 'between the personal and political, the interior psychology of an individual and the social demarcations of the [body politic]" (Meskimmon, 388). It can be further argued that "this can explain our fear of, and at the same time fascination with, 'freaks', 'monsters', 'cyborgs', 'aliens', and so on" (Eubanks 1996 quoted in Coupland; Gwyn 2003: 153).
As indicated, being sensitive to the social and class relations, bodies form 'material outcomes' that cannot be demoted to the body itself (Holliday; Hassard 2001: 3). Discussing the discourse of the body the debt to Foucault in contemporary social sciences cannot be understated. So, Foucault's major contribution to this line of thought that is relevant to embodiment is the insight that "there is not on the one side a discourse of power and opposite it another discourse that runs counter to it" (Jones; Porter 1994: 9).

Ann Balsamo, referring the possibility of examining cosmetic surgery and other forms of body modification as a site, notes that these, therefore, can be "for both the technological reproduction of the gendered body and a means by which women use their bodies as 'a vehicle for staging cultural identities'" (Balsamo 1996: 78). And

further, she asserts that the "meaningfulness of gender identity is *reproduced* in the application of new technologies" (Balsamo 1996: 160) in that "a binary code of [it] is only one of the semiotic systems that influence the practice of surgical procedures" (Balsamo 1996: 160). She continues by noting that "codes of racial identity also structure the meaning of technological operations" (Balsamo 1996: 160). In this sense, the cult of fashion, strict dietary regimes, and wrinkle free faces can be employed to explain the recent way of subject formation in regard to "the power of normalization", involving as Foucault puts it in *Discipline and Punish* (1977) "imposes homogeneity, but it [also] individualizes" (Foucault, 184 quoted in Genz; Brabon 2009: 151). As Heyes points out "normalization is obscured... by avidly proffered alternative narratives that stress identity over beauty and taking one's life into one's hands to become a better person" (Heyes, 23 quoted in Genz; Brabon 2009: 151). Karen Throsby's analysis of cosmetic surgery outlines her concerns in relation to the assumption of body as a project.

> In the context of cosmetic surgery, Kathy Davis argues that under going surgery should be treated 'as a dilemma rather than a form of self-inflicted subordination', since this offers a route to understanding 'what makes it both desirable *and* problematic for so many women' (Davis 1995: 180) … Even though surgeons themselves might be working from 'an unshakeable belief in a Westernised notion of "natural" beauty' (Balsamo 1999: 78), this is not necessarily the way in which surgery is being used by the women who undergo it, and Davis reports her respondents as seeking 'normal', not beautiful, bodies, for example. Similarly, drawing on ethnographic fieldwork in a hair salon, aerobics classes, a cosmetic surgery clinic and a fat acceptance organisation, Debra Gimlin argues that these activities should be conceptualised as forms of 'body work' (Gimlin 2002). Rather than aiming towards 'beauty' *per se*, she argues that by engaging in body work, women are negotiating 'the differences between their own bodies and ideal female beauty' (ibid: 7). (Throsby 2004: 43-44)

There is a problem, however, in that, if the question is "how we string together a sense of self, 'under the fictional unity of an I'" (Braidotti, 2002: 22 quoted in

Blackman 2008: 78). In the face of “power, struggles and contradictions,” (ibid: 25 quoted in Blackman 2008: 78) Braidotti (2002) underlies the risks of focusing on normalization may neglect “the contradictory, contested and multilayered ways in which bodies are inscribed” (Blackman 2008: 77).

Addressing “the question of the place of the body in the cultural inscription of difference,” Judith Butler has shared the notion of turning to psychoanalysis to theorize the becoming subject like her contemporaries, Braidotti and Grosz, but with a major dissimilarity, instead of “differences”, she is “more interested in normalization: how subjects are produced as sexed subjects in such a way that they experience gendered distinctions as natural, normal and inevitable” (Blackman 2008, 77).

Regarding the reasons why more and more women undertake cosmetic surgeries, Imogen Ashby underlines the fact that “cosmetic surgeries are the attempt to re-work the external physical body so that it mirrors the internal self” (Ashby 2000: 47). It can be further suggested that they are the quest for the ‘normal’ bodies which are defined by the patriarchal society. In this sense, while, cosmetic surgery is argued to be “a strategy adopted by women for reclaiming control over their lives in a context offering restricted opportunities for self-fulfillment,” (e.g. Davis 1995) (Petersen 2007: 72) it may, also argued to be a control apparatus that engenders “passive and idealized bodies, even though women might think themselves to be active and knowing subjects” (Toffoletti 2007; 76). To talk of body modification and management concerning “the burgeoning of the so-called beauty industry” (Petersen

2007: 68), Susan Bordo employs a speculative notion in which it is adopted as the "symptomatic of the postmodern tendency toward homogenization and normalization" (Toffoletti 2007: 76). In keeping with Foucault's line of emphasis on "the body as produced through power effects", however, Bordo claims that "postmodern theory erases the 'disciplinary reality' of the normalization of the subject/body through the rhetoric of free choice" (Bordo 1991: 112–3 cited in Toffoletti 2007: 77). Not only, does subject's relationship to power reveals "double bind" but also a "paradox of choice," which Rosemary Gillespie voices her concern that there is a precarious stance that is often present within the mechanism, noting that "the decision whether or not to undergo cosmetic surgery clearly involves individual choice, yet the concept of choice is itself enmeshed in social and cultural norms" (Gillespie, 79 quoted in Genz; Brabon 2009: 151).

Emphasizing the technological nature of the "plastic body," like her contemporary Rosi Braidotti, Anne Balsamo argues that "the technological gaze has transformed the body into a site where the physical transformation of the material body (cosmetic surgery) becomes a sign of culture (the cultural ideas of Western beauty)" (Balsamo 1996: 56–79 quoted in Toffoletti 2007: 77). Particularly, echoing Foucault, Balsamo pursues the notion of bio-power in analyzing cosmetic surgeries when argues that "the viewing technologies used in medical and scientific discourse exercise control upon the female body" (Balsamo 1996: 56-79 quoted in Toffoletti 2007: 77). Thus, in accordance with other feminist theorists, referring to the body in consumer culture, which can be conceived by the recent increases in instances of cosmetic surgery, Toffoletti notes that "the body' has become a major 'item' for exchange-

value and exploitation within late capitalist, consumer-oriented societies" (Peterson 2007: 133). In Balsamo's account, referring the purpose of "the technological gaze", which tends to refashion the material body to be reconstructed "in keeping with culturally determined ideals of Western feminine beauty," (Balsamo 1996: 58) she writes that this therefore, can be proposed as "assembly-line beauty: "difference" is made over into sameness" (Balsamo 1996: 58). Moreover, the concept of the beauty industry "as a modifiable, perfectible entity" (Peterson 2007: 133) can be employed to explain the commoditized "nature of the body in consumer culture," (Bendelow; Williams 1998: 67) within this context, to indicate "the extreme lengths to which individuals will go in order to mould and shape their bodies in line with prevailing cultural mandates of youth and beauty" (Bendelow; Williams 1998: 74). Herein lies the paradoxical notion of cosmetic surgery, which can be seen, both as a "symptom and a solution", as "liberation and oppression," and arguably, "enables women to feel 'embodied subjects' rather than 'objectified bodies'" (Davis 1994: 161 quoted in Bendelow; Williams 1998: 74). Bendelow and Williams outlines the status of the body within the consumer culture. They observe:

> The closer the body approximates to these idealized images, the higher its 'exchange-value' (Featherstone 1991:177).4 This, together with the 'sexualization of wants and desires' (Seidman 1991, 1989), means that the body itself becomes something of a 'fetishized' commodity, one that has to be attractively 'packaged', 'marketed' and 'sold'. Indeed, it would not be too much of an exaggeration to say that the balance within consumer culture has tilted from bodies producing commodities (i.e. 'externalizing objects of labor'), to commodities producing bodies (i.e. 'internalizing objects of consumption') (Faurschou 1988). Despite these commodifying pressures, the body and self are clearly not passive entities. Rather, as we have seen, the relationship between the body and self-identity becomes increasingly dynamic as a consequence of the growth of social reflexivity and the salience of risk. (1998, 73)

Given this context, the remaining "status of body" in social theory as "an objectified entity" is not surprising (Cregan 2006: 10). Since the body remains relevant to critical theories and "real' life, "because 'real' people continue to suffer or prosper in their material bodies, and because the discourses that structure these material bodies continue to construct and constrain our possible selves" (Vint 2007: 9).

2.5 The Abject[ed] Bodies

> "I" am not a subject, as psychoanalysis continues to assert, attempting the rescue – indeed the salvation – of subjectivity; "I" am not a transcendental subject either, as classical philosophy would have it. Instead, "I" am, quite simply, the owner of my genetic or organo-physiological patrimony; "I" possess my organs, and that only in the best-case scenario, for there are countries where organs are stolen in order to be sold. The whole question is whether my patrimony should be remunerated or free: whether "I" can enrich myself or, as an altruist, forgo payment in the name of humanity or whether "I," as a victim, am dispossessed of it. (Kristeva 2000:6 quoted in McAfee 2004: 111)

> The abject has only one quality of the object – that of being opposed to *I* (Kristeva 1982: 1)

Just as the Objectified bodies and the Commoditized Bodies refer to the notion of the body that is being resurfaced in social theory through a reevaluation of "Descartes' 'machine'," the Abject[ed] bodies talks about, in a sense, how it is to be broken out from "the point of view of the individual 'ghost': the Cogito's perceptions and conformations of the body through concerted attempts to control its excrescences, patrol its boundaries or refigure it entirely" (Cregan 2006: 11). As I believe the concept of the abject in various forms is useful for the analysis of particular independent science fiction films selected for inclusion to this study, since I make no pretense at giving anything like a complete picture of the theory, I have turned in this

chapter to Kristeva and have at least provided a snapshot with reference to a few other well-known practitioners.

I choose to focus on Kristeva in this connection not just because her well-known theory of "abject" but also because her works gather of terms around questions, such as, why is the maternal body positioned as site of danger and disease, and accordingly, women positioned as monstrous-feminine?" (Ussher 2006: 7), is similar to what can be seen in the independent science fiction films selected for inclusion. Even more important, perhaps – at least for the topic at hand- is that Julia Kristeva identifies two kinds of bodies: "the symbolic and the imaginary or abject body," (Grosz; Probyn 1995: 87) which she argues to be associated with the female body because of its "procreative functions" (ibid: 87). Following the insight of Kristeva, Barbara Creed comments on the identification:

> Unlike the male body, the proper female body is penetrable, changes shape, swells, gives birth, contracts, lactates, and bleeds. Woman's body reminds man of his 'debt to nature' and as such threatens to collapse the boundary between human and animal, civilized and uncivilized (Kristeva 1982: 102). (Creed 1995: 87)

Before proceeding, it is important to review, the definitions of abject and abjected bodies, nevertheless, "the unity of the self" is argued to be a project in the well-known works of Lacan, Derrida, and Kristeva, which is sometimes "enacted by a moving and often contradictory subjectivity," (Young 2005: 47), additionally, in that light, I would like to suggest this project of self forms, at least, a background for "abjection" -one of the fundamental processes of "subject in process," (McAfee 2004: 57) which intimidates the unity of the subject/self. Relevant to my general discussion, I will return to the "*the status of the subject* indebted to the works of

Kristeva (1980, 1982) in which in relation to "the body, to others, and to objects" (Kristeva 1982: 14) with emphasis on the assumption that it is altered due to the refraction of discourse revealing linguistic changes; but for the moment it is worth quoting Elizabeth Grosz by a way of a foreground because, in contrast to the psychoanalytic models of subjectivity, codified by Oedipal scenario and castration, which led to "absence as non-subject," I would like to argue that subjectivity continuously transforms. In *Sexual Subversions* Grosz notes,

> If, as Lacan claims, the ego and the object are correlated, supporting and providing each other with stability, the abject is neither the subject nor the object. It is recognition of the impossible, untenable identity the subject projects onto and derives from the other. If the object is the external support of the subject, the abject is more the fading, instability or even the disappearance of the subject, its precarious, imaginary hold on the object. The abject is that part of the subject it attempts to expel, but, which is refused the status of object. It is the symptom of the object's failure to fill and define the subject. (Grosz 1989: 72)

To be more precise, subject/self thanks to, "abjection" remains in a constant "process" trying to construct itself despite the fact that "its' limits are 'unflaggingly, like an inescapable boomerang, a vortex of summons and repulsion" (Kristeva 1982: 1) challenged. Kristeva's work, besides, defines this as a phenomenon "that never entirely recedes, abjection also haunts subjectivity, threatening to unravel what has been constructed; one's own sense of self is never settled and unshaken. To keep hold of "oneself," a subject has to remain vigilant against what may undermine its borders" (McAfee 2004: 57). Furthermore, at this point, Laura Mulvey in *Fetishism and Curiosity Perspectives* summarizes Kristeva's argument by noting that:

> For Kristeva, the ego defines itself by a demarcation of its limits through mastering its waste and separating itself from those of the mother. It establishes itself as an individual, in its oneness. This concept of individualism is, it has been extensively argued, a crucial basis for the ideology of entrepreneurial capitalism. And, as has

> also been extensively argued, the residue of disgust, bodily waste, is the matter of ritual. (Mulvey 1996: 142)

Kristeva's theory includes varieties of the *abject*, the ones that are relevant to my account shall be abstracted, and thus, the emphasis will be on the abject that is within the body and the abject that is outside it: "Excrement and its equivalents (decay, infection, disease, corpse etc) stand for the danger to identity that comes from without: the ego threatened by the non-ego, society threatened by its outside, life by death" (Kristeva 1982: 71).

Before moving into the part of my argument, which takes into consideration the question why are threats to individual subjectivity represented by woman, in particular, maternity? however, I want to expand on the use of the word *abject* because there are various, in fact, sustaining definitions here: Julia Kristeva, Judith Butler, Elizabeth Grosz, Barbara Creed, Mary Ann Doane all set out from the same starting point that anchors our ethical response to the notion of abject: namely, how our shared embodiment, view of normality vs. deviance and "acts which cross the boundary between civilized and uncivilized" make us construct "the abject in relation to sex" (Creed 2004: 9).

Whilst, my concern here will be to compose a kind of theoretical spectrum that moves from the work of psychoanalytic theorist Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* (1982) to cyber-feminist thinkers Mary Ann Doane, Anne Balsamo and Donna Haraway for thinking about the status of the abjected bodies, particularly, the maternal bodies, and our relations to them, which stems in part of

my argument that “the abjected body, actually, is the product of “the power of spiritual and/or psychological systems to make and unmake the corporeal world.” (Cregan 2006: 11)

Abjection for Kristeva is a crucial tool diagnosing the dynamics of oppression. It is existent in the self, perpetually challenging personal “borders of selfhood. It remains as both an unconscious and a conscious threat to one’s own clean and proper self” (McAfee 2004: 46). Subject is “beseeched” and “pulverized” by the abject that does not have any boundaries (McAfee 2004: 46). Julia Kristeva’s statement in Powers *of Horror*, which is worth quoting at length, reveals her assumption that the abjected body is both shaped by and is active in the creation and maintenance of “boundaries that are central to the definition of what it means to be civilized and human” (Kristeva 1982 quoted in Creed 2004: 9).

> We may call it a border; abjection is above all ambiguity. Because, while releasing a hold, it does not radically cut off the subject from what threatens [sic] it- on the contrary, abjection acknowledges it to be in perpetual danger. But also, abjection itself is a compromise of judgment and affect, of condemnation and yearning, of signs and drives. Abjection preserves what existed in the archaism of pre- objectal relationship, in the immemorial violence with which the body becomes separated from another body in order to be-maintaining that night in which the outline of the signified thing vanishes and where only the imponderable affect is carried out. (Kristeva 1982: 9-10)

Kristeva’s contemporary, Judith Butler, for example, in *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of “Sex”* notes that the word abject refers to “cast off, away, or out and, hence, presupposes and produces a domain of *agency* from which it is differentiated” (Butler 1993: 243). The principles informing Butler’s approach are “more sociopolitical than corporeal or psychosexual: ethically and analytically”, (Thomas 2008: 13) than Kristeva’s, whose approach is more autonomous or less

detached, which offers that “abject, has only one quality of the object-that of being opposed to I” (Kristeva 1982: 7). Indeed, the abject is for Kristeva and to some extent for Butler, bears upon matters that challenge the body’s boundaries that “always relate to corporeal orifices as to so many landmarks parceling- constituting the body’s territory” (Kristeva 1982: 42).

Kristva’s notion of the abject remains engaged with the material body that is associated with “a condition that is prior to being, and hence prior to differentiation and individuation; a condition that reminds the individual that its existence is under perpetual threat” (Kristeva 1982: 9), but works with the bodily drives -“the general realm of bodily production, expulsion, leakage, and defilement”- to explore representation (Thomas 2008: 13), on the contrary, Butler’s argument that “the notion of *abjection* designates a degraded or cast out status within the terms of sociality” (Butler, 243 quoted in Thomas 2008: 13) operates at the level of “patriarchal-heteronormative” social order, which maintains itself by “constituting zones of uninhabitability” (Butler, 243 quoted in Thomas 2008: 13). Mary Anne Doane (1987) in *The Desire to Desire: The Woman’s Film of the 40s* summarizes Kristeva’s argument by noting that: “The abject, that is anterior to the opposition between subject and object, is the "not yet object"; it is the non-object of the search for “something to be scared of” (Kristeva, 48 quoted in Doane 1987: 141). As Kristeva characterizes it in *Powers of Horror,* Doane continues by quoting further

> If the object, however, through its opposition, settles me within the fragile texture of a desire for meaning, which, as a matter of fact, makes me ceaselessly and infinitely homologous to it, what is *abject*, on the contrary, the *jettisoned* object, is radically excluded and draws me toward the place where meaning collapses. (Kristeva, 49 quoted in Doane 1987: 141)

Doane's reading of Kristeva in relation to the question of the "place where meaning collapses" refers to "the place allotted to a femininity which is excluded from language and the symbolic order" that "elsewhere Kristeva refers to the abject as "the horrible and fascinating abdomination which is connoted in all cultures by the feminine" (Kristeva, 50 quoted in Doane 1987: 141). Similarly, another definition of abject, under the influence of Kristeva, suggested by Jane M. Ussher (2006) in *Managing the Monstrous Feminine Regulating the Reproductive Body Women and Psychology* that abject "represents the hidden, unacknowledged, and feared parts of identity and society, that which 'disturbs identity, system, order'" (Kristeva, 1982: 4 quoted in Ussher 2006: 7), the 'other' against which normality is defined" (Ussher 2006: 7). For Kristeva bodily fluids and emissions—sweat, pus, excreta, breast milk, semen, blood—can be recognized as signifiers of the abject, "of the body without boundaries, which threatens the illusion of the contained, controlled, rational subject, and as such, threatens stability and social unity" (Ussher 2006: 7). In Elizabeth Grosz as in Kristeva, abjection "testifies to the precarious grasp of the subject on its own identity, an assertion that the subject may slide back into the impure chaos out of which it was formed" (Grosz, 90 quoted in Ussher 2006: 7).

Just as Kristeva, who claims that the abject body by expelling what is deemed "other" to "oneself," is a means for defining the borders of subjectivity." (McAfee, 2004: 57), Grosz (1989) in *Sexual Subversions* puts on display it as "a sickness at one's own body, at the body beyond that "clean and proper" thing, the body of the subject" (Grosz, 77 quoted in Covino 2004: 17). This is clearest, perhaps, in Grosz' reading of Kristeva and her concept of 'clean and proper' body, a concept that "the

delimitation of which is a condition of the subject's constitution as a speaking subject" (Grosz 1989: 71). Assuming Julia Kristeva's emphasis on corporeality of the abject body, Deborah Caslav Covino (2004) asserts that, the abject body disregards its personal borders continuously, "and disrupts the wish for physical self-control and social propriety" (Covino 2004: 17). Covino continues,

> We disavow our excretory bodies because they are signs of disorder, reminders of the body's ambiguous limits (its leaking from multiple orifices), and of its ultimate death: 'Such wastes drop so that I might live, until, from loss to loss, nothing remains in me and my entire body falls beyond the limit—*cadere*, cadaver' (Kristeva, 1982: 3 quoted in Covino 2004: 17)

Moreover, abject is in the category of "corporeal rubbish" that is to be evacuated from the body in the Western cultures, and the reminder of not only the maternity but also the "materiality of the body, its limits and cycles, mortality, disease, corporal fluids, excrement, and menstrual blood" (Grozs quoted in Ross 2006: 391). In this light, it is worth recalling Rosi Braidotti's suggestion that the monstrosity or deviance is also an example of abjection to such an extent "it trespasses and transgresses the barriers between recognizable norms or definitions" (Braidotti 1994: 94). Moreover, it is also worth remembering Kristeva's emphasis on the maternal site as both "life- and death-giver, as object of worship and of terror" (Braidotti 1994: 94). This dual function generates the notion of the sacred that seems "to contain with in itself a constitutive ambivalence by blend of fascination and horror, which prompts an intense play of the imaginary, of fantasies and often nightmares about the ever-shifting boundaries between life and death, night and day, masculine and feminine, active and passive, and so forth" are regulated (Braidotti 1994: 94).

As one of the central figures associated with abject, Barbara Creed in *The Monstrous Feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis*, with the influence of Kristeva's concept of the abject, makes clear the direct connection between the monstrosity and women and, claiming that, "all human societies have a conception of the monstrous-feminine, of what it is about woman that is shocking, terrifying, horrific, abject" (Creed 2012: 1). Jane Ussher tends towards a sense of abject that "it has important implications for women's lived experience" (Ussher 2006: 7). Even though Creed discusses the depictions of monstrous-feminine in horror films, her argument is also applicable to the monstrosity in independent science fiction cinema, because, the representations of monstrous-feminine, like Braidotti emphasizes, illustrate the ways how femininity is feared and abjected in contemporary societies. The centrality of mothering and reproductive functions in woman's monstrosity is conceptualized in Creed's usage of the term monstrous-feminine

> as the term 'female monster' implies a simple reversal of 'male monster'… As with all other stereotypes of the feminine, from virgin to whore, she is defined in terms of her sexuality. The monstrous-feminine emphasizes the importance of gender in the construction of her monstrosity. (Creed 2012: 3)

Before proceeding to the discussion of the connection between the abject and the monstrous-feminine, and how these concepts can be related to the independent science fiction films, I would like to elaborate on the maternity and the mother relationship to the abject in relation to Kristeva. As mentioned before, the abject that is within the body and the abject that is outside it are central to my discussion, in this respect, I would like to explore both here with the eventual aim of showing how the maternal body, "reveals a paradigm of bodily experience in which the transparent unity of self dissolves and the body attends positively to itself, at the same time that,

it enacts its projects" (Young 2005: 47). More precisely, "the feminine body is felt to be abject on at least two grounds" (Goodnow 2010: 57):

> One is the presence of menstrual blood, suggesting the presence of some internal damage or wounding. The other is its capacity to remind the viewer of loss, separation, lack. In classic psychoanalytic terms, the feminine body has no penis and is a reminder that the body's hold on its parts - for males, the penis especially - is fragile or vulnerable. (Goodnow 2010: 57)

In this respect, I would like to emphasize once again a point I have made earlier, about the transdisciplinary nature of body theories. Thus, in this part of my survey in relation to the maternity associated with abject which "is probably the most central and sustained object of Kristeva's investigations," I take her remarks about fecundity as a starting point. For Kristeva in *Motherhood according to Giovanni Bellini*, maternity is a process "alone of mother's sex, in its internalization of heterogeneity, an otherness within the self" which "deconstructs certain conceptual boundaries" (Doane 1987: 83).

> The childbearing woman … cathect[s], immediately and unwittingly, the physiological operations and instinctual drives dividing and multiplying her, first, in a biological, and finally, a social teleology. The maternal body slips away from the discursive hold and immediately conceals a ciphering of the species, however, this pre- and trans-symbolic memory... make[s] of the maternal body the stakes of a natural and 'objective' control... it inscribes both biological operations and their instinctual echoes into this necessary and hazardous program constituting every species. The maternal body is the module of a biosocial program. (Lacan, 1980: 241 quoted in Grosz 1989: 81)

In Kristeva's analysis, the maternal body - "the unspoken underside of all discourse"- (Grosz 1989: 231) ….may be more abject and hence more provocative of horror and more subject to oppression, than women in general…. It needs to be tightly controlled - ideally by repression and sublimation - in order that unity, stability and

identity are possible" (Grosz 1989: 81). From this perspective, I want to underscore what is a major point of emphasis in this study by quoting Adrienne Rich. As she puts it,

> Two ideas flow side by side: one, that the female body is impure, corrupt, the site of discharges, bleedings, dangerous to masculinity, a source of moral and physical contaminations, 'the devil's gateway'. On the other hand, as mother, the woman is beneficent, sacred, pure, asexual, nourishing; and the physical potential for motherhood—that same body with its bleedings and mysteries—is her single destiny and justification in life. (Ussher 1989:15)

In this respect, Doane summarizes Luce Irigaray's analysis that of Julia Kristeva in *Powers of Horror* by noting that "Kristeva associates the maternal with the abject — i.e., that which is the focus of a combined horror and fascination, hence subject to a range of taboos designed to control the culturally marginal" (Kristeva quoted in Doane 1987: 83). Doane continues,

> In this analysis, the function of nostalgia for the mother-origin is that of a veil, a veil which conceals the terror attached to non-differentiation. The threat of the maternal space "a place both double and foreign" is that of the collapse of any distinction whatsoever between subject and object. Within the Freudian schema, incorporation is the model for processes of identification (between "subject" and "object," mother and child) which have the potential to destroy the very notion of identity. (Doane 1987: 83)

I would like to further comment about the pregnancy as it serves my discussion, referring to the assumption that Iris Marion Young suggests; "pregnancy does not belong to the woman herself" (Young 2005: 46). According to Young, pregnancy is "a state of the developing fetus, for which the woman is a container; or it is an objective, observable process coming under scientific scrutiny" (Young 2005: 46). In this context, Kristeva's study builds on the notion of maternal body as –"a process without a subject"- on the basis of both "a space and a series of functions" (Grosz

1989: 79). Elizabeth Grosz in *Sexual Subversions* posits Kristeva's argument by noting that "the process of 'becoming-mother' is distanced from subjectivity and identity. Pregnancy occurs at the level of a fusion and movement of the organism (not the subject)" (Grosz 1989: 79). It is important to note that Kristeva emphasizes a particularly important aspect of maternal through the contention, "In a body there is grafted, unmasterable, another" (Kristeva quoted in Doane 1987: 83). Yet, subjectivity has a special relation to maternal body that "experiences her body as herself and not herself" (Young 2005: 49).

> Its inner movements belong to another being, yet they are not other, because her body boundaries shift and because her bodily self-location is focused on her trunk in addition to her head. This split subject appears in the eroticism of pregnancy, in which the woman can experience an innocent narcissism fed by recollection of her repressed experience of her own mother's body. (Young 2005: 49)

Grosz's argument that maternity is "a series of (largely biological) processes a woman undergoes", then, is similar to that of Kristeva, noted earlier. Elizabeth Grosz also claims that lack of involvement of the act of an agent does not "entail refusing women the status of agents in nurturance and socialization practices" (Grosz 1989: 81). Citing Kristeva, Grosz comments that "nurturing occurs at the level of the subject" (Grosz 1989: 79).

> Cells fuse, split, and proliferate; volumes grow, tissues stretch, and body fluids change rhythm, speeding up or slowing down. Within the body, growing as a graft, indomitable, there is an other. And no one is present. Within that simultaneously dual and alien space, to signify what is going on. 'It happens, but I'm not there.' 'I cannot realize it, but it goes on.' Motherhood's impossible syllogism. (Kristeva 1980: 237 quoted in Grosz 1989: 79)

Similarly, Luce Irigaray puts forth the pre-given roles to the maternity, even though, how oppressed they are maternal femininity provides “a desire of which she is not aware, moreover, at least not explicitly.... [is] one whose force and continuity are capable of nurturing repeatedly and at length all the masquerades of femininity that are expected of her” (Irigaray 1985: 27 quoted in Weedon 2003: 122). It would seem from her argument that mother-child dynamics acquire the traditional representations of the maternity and women's oppression, since, the “recognition of want for the maternal body on which being, meaning, language and desire are founded” revolves around abject (Barrett 2011: 98). To elaborate further on this, Anneke Smelik (1998) in *And the mirror cracked: feminist cinema and film theory* has made comments on Kristeva, claims associated with the reasons of how somebody engages in a state of abjection, “however”, abject is “not only incestuous desire for and painful separation from the mother” (Smelik 1998: 157). And further,

> Kristeva claims that it is mainly brought about by a failure of the paternal metaphor. When the paternal function is absent, weak or otherwise lacking, it produces in Kristeva's words 'this strange configuration' of the abject; that state of someone who cannot establish a relation between subject and object (40). When the Oedipal triangle somehow fails, the subject is prevented from finding her or his place; nor can s/he find an object for her or his drives. For Kristeva any warped relationship to the law can only lead to psychosis. Thus, the margins within the symbolic, such as configurations of the abject, are not exactly empowering: the subject who is besieged by abjection, is 'no subject, no object' (47) but merely 'an empty castle … "powerless" outside, "impossible" inside' (49). (Smelik 1998: 157)

Even so, it is also on this point, as I will try to bring about later, Katherine J. Goodnow (2010) in *Kristeva in Focus: from Theory to Film Analysis* underscores the reasons, which is worth quoting in length:

> One reason for this is that birth is often associated with expelled bodily waste. A second reason is that the mother differs from the feminine in her possession of authority. This authority stems from two sources. One is the mother's power to reproduce: a constant threat to conventional order and control. As Kristeva notes,

> "fear of the archaic mother is essentially fear of her generative power" (1982, 77). The other is the authority the mother held before 'the law of the father' took hold. This is an authority that does not always coexist comfortably with conventional/patriarchal law and order. (Goodnow 2010: 43)

Under the influence of Freudian psychoanalysis, Kristeva argues that the "process of becoming a subject" (Kristeva 1982: 13) essentially requires separation from the mother that "is often 'a violent, clumsy breaking away, with the constant risk of falling back tinder the sway of a power as securing as it is stifling" (Kristeva 1982: 13) and "a threat to the borders of identity" (Goodnow 2010: 57). Kristeva's work is especially apt for conceptualizing a continuous challenge for identity and selfhood by the abject, which is "a psychic configuration that is related to the figure of the mother" (Smelik 1998: 157), she claims that "it should be understood as repressed material dating back to the pre-objectal relationship, to the symbiosis between mother and child" (Smelik 1998: 157). She observes:

> It is directly linked to the 'immemorial violence with which a body becomes separated from another body in order to be' (10). The abject can thus be found at the limit of primal repression: the repression, and abjection, of the maternal body. Psychic processes of abjection are, then, to repel, to reject, to separate; in other words to abject. The abject is 'the violence of mourning for an 'object' that has always already been lost', that is, the maternal body (15). According to Kristeva the struggle for autonomy can only be successful through 'the symbolic light' of the third party, the father. (Smelik 1998: 157)

As Grosz argues, however, considering that the boundaries are blurred in the mother-child dynamic, "the symbolic must territorialize this space in order to reproduce itself" (Grosz 1989: 78). Kristeva's theorizations around pollution and taboo which are argued to be variations of Freud's theorizations (1930) in *Totem and Taboo,* "where he claims that civilization itself is founded on the expulsion of 'impure' incestual attachments" (Grosz 1989: 71), turns abject into "a social danger against

which taboos, forms of social rejection, inoculation and marginalization are erected" Grosz 1989: 78). She indicates:

> The abject is the space of struggle against the mother, 'the earliest attempts to release the hold of maternal entity, even before existing outside of her...' (1982: 13). At the same time it is a desperate attempt to be her, to blur the divisions between the child's identity and the mother's. (Grosz 1989: 78)

Given this context, Laura Mulvey in *Fetishism and Curiosity Perspectives,* pointing out Freud's contention of mother's body as "the site of castration anxiety," derives from Kristeva's argument that "the mother's body is the site of abjection" (Mulvey 1996: 142), Mulvey argues that "the child's relation to its mother" acquires no boundaries and neither the body nor "its fluids are a source of disgust" (Mulvey 1996: 142).

Kristeva's emphasis on the maternal function transforms Lacanian theory of language and the unconscious. As Kristeva turns to psychoanalysis to define subject, I will use Lacan's work as a framework to apprehend how Kristeva's work challenged the idea of fixed identity. Working from Kristeva's thoughts about the abject, Grosz has argued that being stronger than the *uncanny* the abject is converged on "the model of Lacan's notion of the *Objet petit a*, the object of the drives (Lacan, 1977b). The *Object petit a* is a part of the subject which the subject considers detachable. It confronts the subject as alien and external" (Grosz 1989, 72). Lacan in "Of the Gaze as Object Petite a" defines *object a* as "the interest the subject takes in his own split is bound up with that which determines it- namely, a priviliged object, which emerges from some primal separation, from some self mutilation induced by the very approach of the real" (Lacan 2000: 522). Furthermore, Lacan has argued

that subjectivity arises when an infant at some point between six and eighteen months of age looks at himself in a mirror and supposes that image to be himself. In Lacanian model, this identification of oneself with an image is false, because the self and the image are not one and the same. However, through this identification the infant develops a sense of unity in him. Through a series of experiences and sensations, the self becomes a unitary being, a subject separate from others. From Kristeva's perspective "signifying process that encompasses the body, the material referent," makes a speaking subject not fixed but a "subject in process" (Kristeva 1984: 14-22).

Kristeva reworking the Semiotic theory "introduced the category of the subject into semiosis," (Godard 2002: 1) and transforms traditional notions of analytic practice. Giving emphasis to the dynamism of the texts, she re-systemized the relation between "the 'semiotic' (the energy of the unconscious drive functions)" and "the 'symbolic' (the rational structuring force)" (Kristeva, 1984 quoted in Godard 2002: 1). Bodily drive engaged with signification is the semiotic element. Morever, the semiotic element is both related to the rhythms, tones and maternal body where all semiotic elements reside, whereas, the grammar and the structure of signification are the symbolic elements. "In gendering the 'semiotic' feminine and the 'symbolic' masculine," (Godard 2002: 2) Kristeva claims that there should be a balance of both 'symbolic' which gives referential meaning, and 'semiotic' which gives the non-referential meaning to form signification. As a matter of fact, the bodily drives engaged in signification already operating within the materiality of the body. Grosz, in discussing Kristeva's work on maternity, claims:

> Concepts like the semiotic, the *chora* and the abject are linked to the pre-imaginary symbiotic in distinction between mother and child. The mother's body, her desire, and her status, meaning and power within culture are of central importance to any discussion of the socio-symbolic, signifying order. (Grosz 1994: 78 emphasis in original)

Here, however, it is useful to recall Kaja Silverman's suggestion that even though "functioning at times as a synonym for "semiotic disposition," "*significance*," and "geno-text," and at other times as a signifier for a moment prior to the mirror stage and the symbolic" (Silverman 1988: 102) in Kristeva's works, *chora*, in Platonian sense, is "an unnameable, improbable, hybrid [receptacle], anterior to naming, to the One, to the father, and consequently, maternally connoted" (Silverman 1988: 102) Indeed Silverman notes in relation to the Kristeva's conceptualization of chora that,

> Kristeva associates it both with the mother and with the prehistory of the subject, referring it simultaneously to the primordial role played by the mother's voice, face, and breast, and to the psychic and libidinal conditions of early infantile life. As she explains it, the *chora* refers equally to mother and infant because it is put in place through a creative collaboration, a collaboration which is synonymous with anaclisis: the infant invokes the mother as a source of warmth, nourishment, and bodily care by means of various vocal and muscular spasms, and the mother's answering sounds and gestures weave a provisional enclosure around the child. That enclosure provides the child with its first, inchoate impressions of space, and with its initial glimmerings of otherness, thereby paving the way for the mirror stage and the entry into language. However, the *chora* is more an image of unity than one of archaic differentiation; prior to absence and an economy of the object, it figures the oneness of mother and child. (Silverman 1988: 102 emphasis in original)

Kristeva argues that even before the mirror stage "the infant begins to separate itself from others in order to develop borders between "I" and "other"" (McAfee 2004: 46). What Kristeva calls abjection, then, is that the process the infant gathers "what seems to be part of oneself" (McAfee 2004: 46). Indeed, *chora* serves to my argument in the next chapters examining the independent science fiction films

selected for inclusion when drawing attention to the unity of the self vs. separation, in my account, the decentering of the maternal body by its absorbing in biomedical, cultural and techno-scientific networks. From this point of view it is precisely the oppressiveness what is meant by boundaries, to take the example at hand, Kristeva's theory of the maternal why "the female body is a favored trope in discourses of sacrifice that create and secure the social order" is evident (Reineke 1997: 102 quoted in Schott 2010: 39-40). In this light what becomes clear is that invigoration of the theory of maternity may provide different perspectives, for the issues such as, the contemporary notion of bio-power in posthuman studies and the shift in women's control over their bodies, and their fecundity that I will return in the next chapter. Those who argue that abject is intimately related to maternal body point out that the effects of this are profound. For them, abject is "the potential source for resistance and change" (Weedon 2003: 122). Within the concept of the monstrous-feminine and abjection themes such as mothering, birth, death, mortality, corpses, humanity, animality can be linked to science fiction films. Before proceeding, it is important to review, the Kristeva's theory categorizes maternal body.

> For Kristeva, the pregnant woman—as opposed to the figure of immaculate conception, the erasure of women's sex—is a figure of the doubling of self into other, and the eventual splitting of the self into the other, a figure that bespeaks both the identification of the self with the other, and the negation of self in the other that makes the recognition of the other possible. (Covino 2004: 22)

I think that it is important to make this assumption here as, to this point, Kristeva's discussion of the abjected body makes no reference to the attribution of "*any* female identity to maternity, instead, she is willing to "describe maternity in biological and physiological terms" (Grosz 1989: 81). Therefore, Kristeva's silence on this point is

indicative of a larger problem which is on the question of sexual difference. As a matter of fact, she covers over the disorientation of identities, which "threaten to collapse a signifying system based on the paternal law of differentiation" (Doane 1987: 83). This can lead, in writing about maternity, to confusion that about the extent to which the formation of posthuman can be conflated.

Indeed, the discussion of the abject theory seemingly revolves around Semiotic theory and Psychoanalytic framework, which arguably ignores the questions of sexual difference. The foregoing discussion suggests that "because of the associations between the feminine and the body, the abject has been used by many feminists to revalue and re-empower the female subject, and especially the maternal body and the birth process" (Creed 1993, O'Connell 2005, Shildrick 2000 quoted in Toffoletti 2007: 96). At this juncture, however, and it is marked by Kristeva's contention that "there is a kind of power in abjection, that disturbs the secure boundaries of the body" (Toffoletti 2007: 96), "the self," and "the boundaries between self and other" (Doane 1987: 83). It would seem that patriarchal cultures "invest so heavily in the construction and maintenance of motherhood as an identity with very precise functions— comforting, nurturing, protecting" (Doane 1987: 83); that is to say, women have been reduced to the function of reproduction. Kristeva claims that "women's oppression can be partially attributed to Western discourses on motherhood and misplaced abjection" (Oliver 1993: 10). Kristeva suggests that discourses on maternity within Western culture, are often imbued with "the condition of continuity—continuity with the body, continuity with non-language—despite the fact that women's own identity during pregnancy and in motherhood is

split and multiple," (Schott 2010: 39) which intends to reveal the representation of women that arises from the marking the threshold between nothingness and being (Kristeva 1980: 238). And further,

> This representation is ambivalent. On the one hand, the mother represents the threat of the return to a nondifferentiated state, to a state of existence that precedes entry into the symbolic order of language. On the other hand, the mother represents a protection or barrier against this threat. Since the boundaries that emerge in the struggle for subjectivity and differentiation are fragile, the emergence of subjectivity is always haunted by the possibility of failure. Hence, any threat to subjectivity is marked by both sensory and psychic experience as a threat by the maternal to the order and structure of subjectivity. (Schott 2010: 39-40)

Such maternal bodies are frequently represented as both a threat and a promise, calling into question their identities that develop within these representations and to responses to hopes or anxieties these representations encapsulate. The examples abound on this topic, including Michael Winterbottom's *Code 46* (2003), Alfonso Cuarón's *Children of Men* (2006), and more recently Vincenzo Natali's *Splice* (2009). Within each of these examples in a recurring narrative of how maternity creates a different perspective in relation to control over bodies and objectification of them. These narratives of maternity which "becomes objectified by the woman herself as a process" (Young 2005: 46) in which she must "take care of herself" (Young 2005: 46) pose the same question: what are the new ways of thinking about the nature of posthuman maternity, which will be construed as integral part of my argument later, in techno-scientifically oriented cultures that grow out of the representation mentioned above?

As a base of Kristeva's notion of representation and matter, Beauvoir (1972) in *Second Sex* makes a point when she argued that the constitution of women "as the

other of the male subject" makes women subject negated or lack insisting that what a woman *represents* is more important than what she *is*, what she herself experiences (Walters, 98). "The logic of the same" (Meskimmon, 389) revealed in the "patriarchal unconscious," referring to Freud and Lacan, women symbolize castration and nothing else, and thus functions "as bearer of meaning, not maker of meaning" (Mulvey 1975: 6). At this juncture, it is worth recalling Adrianne Rich's assumption that she proclaims "I know of no woman… for whom her body is not a fundamental problem" (Rich 1976: 284). Furthermore, the following passage summarizes her suggestion that women should reconsider their relationship to their bodies.

> In arguing that we have by no means yet explored or understood our biological grounding, the miracle and paradox of the female body and its spiritual and political meanings, I am really asking whether women cannot begin, at last, to *think through the body*, to connect what has been so cruelly disorganised—our great mental capacities, hardly used; our highly developed tactile sense; our genius for close observation; our complicated, pain-enduring, multi-pleasured physicality. (Rich 1976:284) (Williams; Bendelow 1998: 116)

2.6 The Disappearing Bodies

> The body is, however, more than a rich source of metaphor. It is constitutive of our being-in-the-world, but in contemporary societies the dominance of bio-technology has brought about an erosion of any sense of our common ontology. (Turner, 2008:16)

> My body is an electronic virgin. I incorporate no silicon chips, no retinal or cochlear implants, no pacemaker. I do not even wear glasses (though I do wear clothes), but I am slowly becoming more and more a cyborg. So are you. (Clark, 2004: 3)

Starting from the consideration of the relationship between the mind and the body, the enduring influence of Cartesian dualism, I have located different methodologies in the previous sections, such as "the notion of the body that is being resurfaced in social theory through a reevaluation of "Descartes' 'machine' in Objectified Body

and the Commoditized Body, and how “the body through concerted attempts to control its excrescences, patrol its boundaries or refigure it entirely” (Cregan 2006: 11) in the Abjected Body; therefore, this chapter concerns the methodology of science technology studies (STS) into the discourses of body, gender and posthuman to show “their interconnectedness, and the shared concern between earlier and most recent ‘techno-feminist’ theories to interrogate the gender power relations of the material world” (Wajcman 2004 quoted in Wajcman 2009: 1). However, in the climate of new bio-technologies, such as In Vitro Fertilization (IVF), genetic engineering, cosmetic surgery and so on, our conception of the body, namely, as indicated in the previous chapters, rather than being recognized “as determined by nature, is increasingly coming to be regarded as a social and cultural construct, capable of radical transformation” (Negrin 2008: 83). Thus, given this context, it is not a surprise that the new bio-technologies have become central in the control over bodies; however, they weaken the boundaries between bodies and machines since our knowledge of what the embodied body has been transformed into posthuman entities. Before proceeding to the concept of posthuman and its effects on maternal bodies, I would like to elaborate a little about the widely held conviction that technologies are masculine relate to the concerns of the issue of techno-science that increasingly affect women’s lives and contested boundaries within definitions of motherhood because this approach will help make my point allows the recognition of multiple meanings of gender and technology relations without assuming a fixed doctrine which might undermine “the way that people and artifacts co-evolve” and reminds the diversity of feminist theories sharing the same concern have come along a long way over the last two decades. From this perspective, I want to underscore

what is a major point of emphasis in this section by quoting Judy Wajcman, who is one of the central figures associated with feminist technology studies, as she puts it,

> Technologies are not the inevitable results of the application of scientific and technological knowledge" should be the key to the understanding of identities, needs and priorities of women is "integral to this socio-technical process" despite "gender is embedded in techno-science." (Wajcman 2009: 8)

To put it another way, relevant to my general discussion, it should be stressed the significance of the implication of technologies in women's oppression or, alongside the belief that technology is masculine –namely, the seemingly paradoxical appreciation in women's liberation. This analysis lends support to the claim that both sides of the debate have been valuable and illuminating, because the theoretical understanding of gender calls for a framework that technology involves new possibilities, preceding need and functioning beyond the encroachment of technology. Haraway tends to oppose the ideologically troubling Western dualisms such as "self/other, mind/body, culture/nature, male/female, civilized/primitive, reality/appearance, whole/part, agent/resource, maker/ made, active/passive, right/wrong, truth/illusion, total/partial, and God/man" (Haraway 1991: 177) that have been "systemic to the logics and practices of domination of women, people of color, nature, workers and animals" (1991, 177), nevertheless, she emphasizes women's embracing new technologies and learning to use them for their own ends help them evade the tendency, which resulted from deployment of a notion of patriarchy entirely to explain the relation of power within social world, to employ a theory that is inhibited in effect. From this perspective, I want to underscore a major point in analysis of women and technology by quoting Judy Wajcman. As she puts it, "the very language of technology, its symbolism, is masculine. It is not simply

acquiring skills, because these skills are embedded in a culture of masculinity that is largely coterminous with culture of technology" (1991: 19 quoted in Wolmark 2003: 217).

So, a number of critical points in relation to the discourse will be raised, before going on to examine some of the tensions and dilemmas raised by the feminist perspectives and posthuman methodology to provide a general overview of the critical and theoretical environment within which they emerged and in which they have continued to flourish. The issues raised have significance far beyond considerations of gender and technology; at the core are assumptions about "how pre-existed social relations of patriarchy express and shape technology" (Ormrod, 31 quoted in Gill; Grint 1995: 22) and about how the social body "is constructed in and through discourse, meaning and representation" in patriarchy (Ormrod, 31 quoted in Gill; Grint 1995: 22). Thence, women are no longer altogether "oppressed by forces and practices of representation imposed upon them from outside" (Ormrod, 31 quoted in Gill; Grint 1995: 22), instead, they are careful "in positioning themselves within discourses and in investing a commitment to subject positions.... which may be enrolled or 'translated' in the creation of technologies" (Ormrod, 31 quoted in Gill; Grint 1995: 22). It should also be stressed that, in thinking the challenge with regards to the gender and technology, there are also tensions and/or dilemmas about the usage of the technology. Alan Peterson argues that "widespread concerns about the dangers of the efforts of science to control 'nature'" (Petersen 2007: 14) should also be acknowledged. He observes,

> These include increased surveillance and control over people's bodies and lives, the commoditization of life, 'playing God', the intrusion on people's 'right not to know'

> and loss of genetic privacy, the potential for discrimination on the basis of genetic difference, and growing economic and social inequalities arising from unequal access to the benefits of resulting technologies. In the field of genetics, for example, some writers see the potential for the emergence of a 'genetic underclass' comprising those who have unequal access to new genetic tests, treatments and enhancement technologies (Kelly 2005: 137). Feminist scholars point out that new genetics-based reproductive technologies are far from neutral in that they have different impacts on women's and men's bodies and lives (e.g. Ettorre 2002; Steinberg 1997). (Petersen 2007: 14)

Whilst, my first concern here will be to compose a theoretical overview that moves from the work of feminist theorist Teresa De Lauretis, *Technologies of Gender: Essays on Theory, Film, and Fiction* in which the notion of 'technologies of gender' has been emphasized, to works of Susan Bordo and Anne Balsamo for thinking about the construction of gender difference by regulatory discourses of techno-social and biomedical technologies (De Lauretis 1987) which stems in part of my argument that "the role of technology in reproducing patriarchy" (Wajcman 2010: 2) has further links with the definitions of motherhood and maternity "in offering possibilities for conventional gender differences" (Wajcman 2010: 2). Before proceeding, it is important to review, the definitions of gender, which is regarded as "a property of individuals, social structures and symbolic systems" (Harding quoted in Balsamo 1996: 3), in this regard, to be more precise, "science is one of the most important symbolic systems in Western culture and it has been clear to feminist critics of science, technology and, in its more radical formulation, "techno-science", that gender is very clearly a product of this system" (Bleier, 1984 quoted in Balsamo 1996: 3).

In this light, it is worth recalling Judith Butler's suggestion that "there is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender; that identity is performatively constituted by the very "expressions" that are said to be its results" (Butler 1999, 25). Building upon Butler's work, Stephanie Genz and Benjamin A. Brabon (2009) in *Postfeminism Cultural Texts and Theories* outline Butler's definition of gender as "an identity tenuously constituted in time' and 'instituted through the stylization of the body" (Butler, 402 quoted in Genz; Brabon, 125).

> The gendered body is performative in the sense that it has 'no ontological status apart from the various acts which constitute its reality', and thus, gender 'can be neither true nor false, neither real nor apparent, neither original nor derived' (*Gender Trouble* 136, 141). Instead, 'gender is always a doing', a 'performance that relies on a certain practice of repetition' that retroactively produces the effect of identity and the illusion that there is an inner gender core (*Gender Trouble* 25; 'Lana's "Imitation"' 2). (Genz; Brabon, 125)

I would like to further comment about gendered body as it serves my discussion, referring to the assumption that Anthony Synnott (2002) in *The Body Social* suggests "gender, therefore, is not simply a matter of biology, but is entangled with notions of cosmology, number, unity, direction, mobility, state, color, morality and shape" (Synott 2002: 41). Given this context, what becomes clear is that "gender connects to everything, and everything is gendered" (Synott 2002: 41). Furthermore, it would seem that, "all gendering is a kind of impersonation and approximation', an 'imitation for which there is no original' but rather the idea of an imaginary or fantasized origin," (Butler, 'Imitation and Gender Insubordination' 31 quoted in Genz; Brabon 2009: 126) therefore, "a struggle for power" (Synott 2002: 71). Butler's notion of gender gives us insights about assumption that gender is a struggle of power, so too does her thinking about the materiality of the sexed bodies which

she describes as “a return to the notion of matter, not as site or surface, but as *a process of materialization that stabilizes over time to produce the effect of boundary, fixity, and surface we call matter”* (Butler 1993: 9 emphasis in original).

Thus, in accordance with other gender theorists, referring particularly to Butler’s claim that femininity is “not the product of a choice, but the forcible citation of a norm, one whose complex historicity is in dissociable from relations of discipline, regulation, punishment,” (Butler 1993: 232) Stephanie Genz and Benjamin A. Brabon note that “gender is an involuntary and imposed production within a culturally restricted space, and it is always put on under constraint as a compulsory performance that is in line with heterosexual conventions” (Genz; Brabon 2009: 126). Even more important, perhaps – at least for the topic at hand, although, “ideologies of difference” -Edward Said’s well-known phrase in his pioneering book, *Orientalism*-, namely, binary system of gender, as well as, race and other forms of bodily difference inscribed on the body of the other, is “reified as discrete gender identities,” (Balsamo 1996: 159) on the other hand, Anne Balsamo (1996) argues in *Technologies of the Gendered Body: Reading Cyborg Women,* the “meaningfulness of gender identity is *reproduced* in the application of new technologies” to the body (Balsamo, 160). In this regard, Balsamo’s assertion that gender is a “determining cultural condition and a social consequence of technological deployment” (Balsamo 1996: 9) is especially relevant, not only as a counter-weight to Theresa De Lauretis’ emphasis upon gender as *“both the product and the process of its representation*” (De Lauretis 1987: 5 emphasis in original), but also, in terms of, what it has to say about our being associated with a number of

technologies and discourses that shape our understanding of ourselves as gendered subjects. From these offerings, it is now useful to examine the ideological underpinnings of nature/culture duality which serves to establish the core of "hierarchy functions to reassure a technologically overstimulated imagination that culture/man will prevail in his encounters with nature" (Balsamo 1996: 11). The following, sums up the importance of the gendered body in nature/ culture dichotomy.

> [I]t serves as the site where anxieties about the "proper order of things" erupt and are eventually managed ideologically. Investigating the interaction between material bodies and new technologies are invested with cultural significance in ways the augment dominant cultural narratives. (Balsamo 1996:11)

Before moving into the part of my argument, which takes into consideration the concerns about techno-science that increasingly affect women's lives and contested boundaries within definitions of motherhood, however, I want to expand on the use of the word *posthuman* because there are various, in fact, sustaining interpretations here: Donna J. Haraway, N. Katherine Hayles, Neil Badmington, R. L. Rutsky and Elaine L. Graham all set out from the same starting point that anchors our ethical response to the notion of posthuman: namely, that is "an extension of the human, that is to move beyond the dialectic of control and lack of control" and makes us construct a sense of posthuman, "which can never be entirely reduced to patterns or standards, codes or information" (Rutsky, "Mutation," 111 quoted in Toffoletti 2007: 11). It should also be stressed here as a starting remark that more than three decades ago, Ihab Hassan (1977) in "Prometheus as Performer: Towards a Posthumanist Culture?" looked ahead to posthumanism in the following way:

> We need to first understand that the human form—including human desire and all its external representations—may be changing radically, and thus must be re-visioned. We need to understand that five hundred years of humanism may be coming to an end, as humanism transforms itself into something that we must helplessly call posthumanism (Hassan 1977: 212 quoted in Toffoletti 2007: 11)

N. Katherine Hayles' (1999) view of the posthuman in *How We Became Posthuman Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics*, which is worth quoting at length, reveals her assumption that the posthuman should be considered as "a technical-cultural concept" (Hayles, 22) and "the prospect of becoming [one] both evokes terror and excites pleasure" (Hayles 1999: 283) She outlines posthuman view as follows:

> First, the posthuman view privileges informational pattern over material instantiation, so that embodiment in a biological substrate is seen as an accident of history rather than an inevitability of life. Second, the posthuman view considers consciousness, regarded as the seat of human identity in the Western tradition long before Descartes thought he was a mind thinking, as an epiphenomenon, as an evolutionary upstart trying to claim that it is the whole show when in actuality it is only a minor sideshow. Third, the posthuman view thinks of the body as the original prosthesis we all learn to manipulate, so that extending or replacing the body with other prostheses becomes a continuation of a process that began before we were born. Fourth, and most important, by these and other means, the posthuman view configures human being so that it can be seamlessly articulated with intelligent machines. In the posthuman, there are no essential differences or absolute demarcations between bodily existence and computer simulation, cybernetic mechanism and biological organism, robot teleology and human goals (Hayles 1999: 2-3)

What Hayles draws our attention to, by addressing four key areas mentioned above, is that the body in "a humanist narrative that traditionally separates man from woman, mind from matter and technology from the body" (Hayles 1999: 5) should be revaluated. This project Hayles suggests which is associated with the question of posthuman existence in contemporary society exposes "a posthuman existence [that] can be advantageous for women" (Hayles 1999: 5). Hayles's use of the term, in other

words, tends to bring attention to “the interplay of discursive formulations of embodied subjecthood and the cybernetic desire for disembodiment” (Toffoletti 2007: 14) because, Hayles, suggests that “it is this parallel tension between abstraction and embodiment that produces the posthuman subject” (Toffoletti 2007: 14). From this vantage point, Hayles’ work with regards to feminist studies of technology, cyberspace and embodiment, in a way, measures the posthuman as an embodied being, in so doing, brings back the value of the body in theory (Toffoletti 2007: 14).

Indeed, the posthuman bodies for other critics, such as Judith M. Halberstam and Ira Livingston, and to some extent for Hayles, “are the causes and effects of postmodern relations of power and pleasure, virtuality and reality, sex and its consequences” (1995, 3). Furthermore, Halberstam and Livingstone in *Posthuman Bodies* (1995) underscore that, “the posthuman does not necessitate the obsolescence of the human; it does not represent an evolution or devolution of the human. Rather it participates in re-distributions of difference and identity” (Halberstam; Livingstone: 10). Further they observe:

> The posthuman body is a technology, a screen, a projected image; it is a body under the sign of AIDS, a contaminated body, a deadly body, a techno-body: it is... queer body. The human body itself is no longer part of "the family of man" but of a zoo of posthumanities. (Halberstam: Livingston, 1995: 3 quoted in Graham 2002: 36)

Similarly, Neil Badmington’s view of posthuman in *Alien Chic Posthumanism and the Other Within*, lends support to Derrida’s well-known term ‘differance’, which shatters the cult of identity and the dominance of self over other. As Badmington (2004) has pointed out by quoting R. L. Rutsky’s suggestion that “[a] posthuman

subject position would…. acknowledge the otherness that is part of us" (Badmington 2004: 155) is the focal point of Badmington's work. Indeed, Badmington broadens the notion of otherness by emphasizing that it "has always been part of 'us', parting 'us' from 'ourselves'" (Badmington 2004: 155). Furthermore, he points toward an interpretation of posthumanim that "is the acknowledgement and activation of the trace of the inhuman within the human." (Badmington 2004: 155) From this viewpoint, it should also be stressed here that, his work weaves together two different senses of posthumanism. In this sense, the preoccupation with the real potency of posthumanism has further links with "absolute difference [that] is abducted by differance (with an 'a'). In the end, 'Man' secretes the other within. In the end, close encounters are constitutive, and invasion is inescapable. In the end, humanism finds itself a little alien" (Badmington 2004: 155). In the conclusion, Neil Badmington argues that "the human forever differs from itself, finds its moment of plenitude and perfect presence deferred by the trace that nonetheless calls it into being" (Badmington 2004: 155).

Kim Toffoletti's reading of Halberstam's and Livingstone's and Hayles' analyses of posthuman reveals that their examining the view of embodied difference, which has been a central question for feminism (Toffoletti 2007: 14) indicates how "a posthuman existence can be advantageous for studies of women's relationships to technology" (Toffoletti 2007: 15). Traditional ways of identity construction that functions to "essentialize and exclude women" have been deconstructed (Toffoletti 2007: 15), so that "a more complex range of subject positions" can be arranged (Toffoletti 2007: 15). What this means is that when we talk about posthumanism, we

are not just talking about the "culture or age that comes 'after' the human" (R.L Rutsky quoted in Wolfe 2009: xvii); rather, as Toffoletti puts it, we are also talking about a sense of posthumanism that "operates as a site of ambiguity, as a transitional space where old ways of thinking about the self and the Other, the body and technology, reality and illusion, cannot be sustained" (Toffoletti, 2007: 14). A similar logic of posthuman is at work in Catherine Waldby (2000b: 48) who "suggests that the best way to view the posthuman is as a 'particular kind of critical moment'" (Waldby 2000b: 49 quoted in Bell 2001: 147). Waldby further claims, "the possibility of the posthuman is not to do with the transcendence of the human, its replacement, but rather with the recognition and exposure of the networks of production which constitute human techno-genesis" (Waldby 2000b: 49 quoted in Bell 2001: 147).

In this respect, I would like to emphasize once again a point I have made earlier, about the transdisciplinary nature of posthumanist theories that brings together feminist studies of technology and theories of the body. I would like to further comment about the future of the posthuman embodiment, which involves bio-technologies, body/machine interface, the commodification of desire, as it serves my discussion, referring to the assumption that Hayles suggests "the question is not whether we will become posthuman, for posthumanity is already here. Rather, the question is what kind of posthumans we will be" (Hayles 1999: 246).

From this standpoint I am inclined to assume the human, particularly, women as part of my argument, and technology in a state of continuous tension. It is precisely at

this point, I would like to argue that if technology and human are the indicatives of the posthuman then the tension between them disrupts the thematic of "selfhood, identity, the body and reality" (Toffoletti 2007: 4). Furthermore, as already noted technology is not only gender-biased but also is a product of the cultural imagination and unconscious. Acknowledging the importance of the traditional gendered patterns of power and authority in relation to the fact that "the means of production of technology is rarely beneficial for women" (Flanagan and Booth, 11 cited in Melzer 2006: 24). Wajcman demonstrates in *Feminism Confronts Technology*, "technology is more than a set of physical objects or artifacts. It also fundamentally embodies a culture or social relations made up of certain sorts of knowledge, beliefs, desires and practices" (Wajcman quoted in Balsamo 1996: 10). Furthermore, particularly echoing De Lauretis, Braidotti asserts that "woman as the 'other of the same' is in fact the primary artifact, produced through a whole social interaction that is both constructed by and is the expression of the various 'technologies of gender' that are currently operational (de Lauretis 1987)" (Braidotti 2003: 209-210).

It would seem that underpinning this assumption is a shift in the sources of power altered by engagements with communication sciences and bio-technologies, and hence, when the limits of existing categories of power called into question by an acceleration of those technologies that turns "the world into code – machine code, genetic code – producing 'fresh sources of power,'" (Bell 2001:104) where does the female body, which is, presumably, at stake in relation to technology and the power discourses reside? Furthermore, French thinker Foucault's notion of bio-power, "which shapes and marks bodies" (Melzer 2006: 25), which is overviewed in detail in previous chapters, is also

applicable to the “fresh sources of analysis and political action” when accounting for the age of cyborg, since it is proposed to be “an empowering political identity” (Melzer 2006: 25) by contemporary feminist thinkers, such as Ann M. Balsamo, N. Katherine Hayles and Donna Haraway, who are in favor of the reconstruction of feminism. For example, Ann Balsamo’s study of the body in *Technologies of the Gendered Body* (1996) provides a context in which to analyze the importance of the materiality in understanding the body as a product of new technologies at the point of where the “postmodern reconstruction of bodies often reproduces notions and structures of sexual difference” (Melzer 2006: 25). Picking up on Balsamo’s argument in regards to the body’s relationship to technology, N. Katherine Hayles, in *How We Became Posthuman* (1999), extends it by exploring the potentials and limitations of the “body’s dual reality of material experience and disembodied existence in cyberspace” (Melzer 2006: 25). Moreover, the problematic relationship between women and technology is emphasized by Sadie Plant, who argues that “it is sedimented in patriarchal myth: machines were female because they were mere things on which men worked” (1993:13 cited in Wolmark 2000: 226). In this light, it is worth recalling Donna Haraway’s suggestion that “developments such as telephone technology, computer design, molecular genetics, ecology, socio-biological evolutionary theory, and immuno-biology all translate information and organism into universal codes for producing simulacra, artificial counterpart organs or artificial reproduction, resulting in the reconfiguration of sex, the body, and social relations” (Haraway 1991: 164).

Consequently, my concern in this part of the study will be to analyze the cyborg, “cybernetic organism,” which has become an influential theoretical concept recently,

in accordance with other posthuman concepts that are already noted. This analysis moves from the work of cyber-feminist theorist Donna Haraway (1991), "A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century" to other cyber-feminist thinkers Mary Ann Doane, Anne Balsamo, Jenny Woolmark and so on, for thinking about how, in a way, cyborg concept has challenged the "certain sorts of knowledge, beliefs, desires and practices" (Wajcman cited in Balsamo 1996: 10) in theorizing identity and difference. Hence, the tendency towards a notion of patriarchy to explain the relation of power within social and cultural categories might be evaded, only if women embrace new technologies and learn to use them for their own ends and here is where the cyborg can help women:

> Cyborg imagery can suggest a way out of the maze of dualisms in which we have explained our bodies and our tools to ourselves. This is a dream not of a common language, but of a powerful infidel heteroglossia. It is an imagination of a feminist speaking in tongues to strike fear into the circuits of the super-savers of the new right. It means both building and destroying machines, identities, categories, relationships, space stories. Though both are bound in the spiral dance, I would rather be a cyborg than a goddess. (Haraway 1991: 181)

It would seem from Haraway's argument the cyborg concept might also be used "to free women from the negative effects of gender-conditioning by abolishing gender altogether" (Creed 2004: 127). Here, however, it is useful to recall Balsamo's suggestion that "the cyborg provides a framework for studying gender identity as it is technologically crafted simultaneously from the matter of material bodies and cultural fictions" (Balsamo 1996: 11). In this regard, what is implicit in cyber-feminist thinkers' treatise on cyborg is that cyborg is "a feminist tool of resistance" (Melzer 2006: 25), which not only "addresses the pressing questions of agency and posthuman subjectivity" (Melzer 2006: 23) but also, "foregrounds representation

and the constructions of cultural meaning, drawing both science and economic theories and their representations into the analysis of power relations" (Melzer 2006: 23). Furthermore, Scott Bukatman's analysis of Haraway's call for "cyborg politics" draws our attention to "the possibility of technological symbiosis as a progressive alternative, rather than a simple masculine fantasy of natural mastery and domination" (Bukatman 1993: 21).

What needs to be stressed at this point is that the "cyborg body is definitionally transgressive of a dominant culture order, not so much because of its "constructed nature but rather because of the indeterminacy of its' hybrid design," (Balsamo 1996: 11) thus, it can further be argued that it "represents a radical version of what it means to be human in the Western world in the late 20th century" (Tomas 1995: 21). These assumptions attack the very foundation of Western thought, which provides the boundaries of dichotomized conceptions. In particular, Haraway theorizes the cyborg as rebellious that not only questions the traditional Western dichotomies with regards to our definition of "the (female) body and its relationship to technology" (Genz; Brabon 2009: 147) but also collapses the boundary distinctions. Haraway asserts in an interview that her concept of cyborg is female. In her own words:

> [The cyborg] is a polychromatic girl … the cyborg is a bad girl, she is really not a boy. Maybe she is not so much bad as she is a shape-changer, whose dislocations are never free. She is a girl who is trying not to become Woman, but remain responsible to women of many colors and positions, and who has not really figured out a politics that makes the necessary articulations with the boys who are your allies. It is undone work. (Penley and Ross 1991: 20 cited in Bell 2001: 108)

In fact, in concordance with Haraway's assumption that cyborg is female, Balsamo indicates "if the cyborg appears as the embodied image of both an ideological

(human) identity and material (technological) reality, then woman's identity as much socially and psychologically constructed as it is physiologically and biologically determined, reveals her cyborg likeness" (Balsamo 2000: 153). Sadie Plant (1997 [1993]) also makes the point in "Beyond the Screens: Film, Cyberpunk and Cyberfeminism" arguing that "if the male human is the only human, the female cyborg is the only cyborg" (Tsaliky 2006: 73). In Allucquere Rosanne Stone's account, she emphasizes the fact that "to become a cyborg…is to put on the female" (Tsaliky 2006: 73). These reinforce the suggestion that the cyborg being a feminist project constitutes a claim about overcoming, which is located "in the tradition of the appropriation of nature as resource for the productions of culture [and] the tradition of reproduction of the self from the reflections of the other" (Haraway 1991: 150). In this sense, the cyborg is a "troubling figure, whose ironic nature grows from the contradictions of exploitation and agency," (Melzer 2006: 24) namely, it "is not afraid of joint kinship with animals and machines.... of permanently partial identities and contradictory standpoints" (Haraway 1991: 154). Haraway, further, claims that Cyborg's notion of a pure and authentic origin is problematic because cyborg has no "origin story in the 'Western', humanist sense" that "depends on the myth of original unity, fullness, bliss and terror, represented by the phallic mother from whom all humans must separate, the task of individual development and of history" (Haraway 1991: 151); therefore, it does not desire "its father to save it through a restoration of the garden", does not "recognize the Garden of Eden", does not "dream of community on the model of the organic family", and is thus without an "Oedipal project" (Haraway 1991: 151). Considering that the cyborg has no biological father, and no "lived social and bodily realities" (Haraway 1991: 154) about kinship and

"organic family," the Oedipus complex or the religious salvation and purification of Christianity are out of the question. In this light what becomes clear is that the cyborg as described by Haraway, as an "illegitimate offspring" that carries an anti-historical, anti-psychoanalytic, and anti-religious politics has the power to challenge the Western dualist and patriarchal system (Haraway 1991: 151). It should also be stressed that, in commenting on the cyborg Haraway considers that "by the late twentieth century, our time, a mythic time, we are all chimeras, theorized and fabricated hybrids of machine and organism; in short, we are cyborgs. The cyborg is our ontology; it gives us our politics" (Haraway 1991: 150).

It follows, then, that throughout "A Manifesto for Cyborgs," Haraway's notion of the cyborg remains engaged with the problem of the distinction between unity and diversity arguing that cyborg which acknowledges "both social power and politics of representation" (Melzer 2006: 24) should provide a framework for a feminist cyborg politics in "the struggle for language and the struggle against perfect communication" (Haraway 1991: 176) by rejecting "the central dogma of phallogocentrism" (Haraway 1991: 176). In keeping with Haraway's line of emphasis on the issue of difference, postcolonial feminist theorist Irene Geldalof (2000) in "Identity in Transit: Nomads, Cyborgs and Women" notes that "what needs 'recoding' is not just the binary logic that locates 'Woman' and 'women' as object, ground or resource, but also the conceptualization of that ground as inert" (2000: 349 cited in Pilcher; Whelehan 2004: 22). Since Geldalof is concerned about the ways in which "women are symbolically and strategically positioned within discourses and conflicts that produce national, ethnic and racialized community

identities" (Pilcher; Whelehan 2004: 21), what is central to her work is the assertion that cyborg "is a model that refuses the binary separation into object and subject" (2000: 349 cited in Pilcher; Whelehan 2004: 22) and further, the cyborg, accordingly, first, focuses on the ways that Woman/women can be positioned within a location where gendered, raced, and national identities are constructed in a different manner; and secondly, it challenges, questions, and reconstructs "those identities, as a place of resistance and a source of instabilities within existing power relations" (Pilcher; Whelehan 2004: 22).

Arguably, Cyborg emerges within the context of interrogation of what it means to be human in relation to posthuman existence (defined through humans' relationship to technologies) and in the context of (science) fiction, feminist science fiction literature in particular. Furthermore, at this point, similar to Haraway, Teresa De Lauretis has implied "SF is perhaps the most innovative fictional mode of our historical creativity…. in tracing cognitive paths through the physical and material reality of the contemporary technological landscape and designing new maps of social reality" (1980: 169 cited in Wolmark 2003: 220). Indeed, Haraway' view of the cyborg has been shaped by the works of writers such as "Joanna Russ, Samuel R. Delany, John Varley, James Tiptree, Jr, Octavia Butler, Monique Wittig, and Vonda McIntyre" (Haraway 1991: 173). She overtly emphasizes that she is indebted to these "story-tellers exploring what it means to be embodied in high-tech worlds" whom she acknowledges them to be the "theorists for cyborgs" (Haraway 1991: 173). Furthermore, she highlights "contemporary science fiction is full of cyborgs - creatures simultaneously animal and machine, who populate worlds ambiguously

natural and crafted" (Haraway 1991: 149). That she acknowledges "science fiction [as] political theory" (Haraway, 120 quoted in Melzer 2006: 23) in her theory, she further comments, "the cyborg is a matter of fiction and lived experience that changes what counts as women's experience in the late twentieth century….This experience is a fiction and fact of the most crucial, political kind" (Haraway 1991: 149). Michael Winterbottom's *Code 46* (2003), Alfonso Cuarón's *Children of Men* (2006), Vincenzo Natali's *Splice* (2009) share the assumption that the blurring of the boundaries between human and machine or human and non-human is likely to result in the the dominant system's taking control over the bodies that is constructed in and by the techno-scientifically oriented cultures. The bodies in these films, namely, one way or another, are similar to what Haraway has theorized as "natural technical entities -human, technological, and organic-with problematic selfhood boundaries" (Haraway 1997: 71 cited in Toffoletti 2007: 156). However, cyborg a hybrid, or a body-machine, or "a connection making entity" (Braidotti 2003: 209), then, not only challenges Western ideologies embedded in assumptions such as the notion that technology forms society and technological rationality determines human subjectivity, but also adopts the ideas of difference, heterogeneity, and embodiment which have all characterized and been used to oppress women. In Haraway's words:

> A cyborg is a cybernetic organism, a hybrid of machine and organism, a creature of social reality as well as a creature of fiction. Social reality is lived social relations, our most important political construction, a world-changing fiction…. Liberation rests on the construction of the consciousness, the imaginative apprehension, of oppression, and so of possibility. This is a struggle over life and death. (Haraway 1991: 149)

Haraways's assertion that "the boundary between science fiction and social reality is an optical illusion," (Haraway 1991: 149) significantly, takes into account the "the

ideological opposition of human/machine, claiming a kinship that undermines Western dualistic power relations" (Melzer 2006: 24). It also touches upon the very notion of cyborg's depending on "social-political circumstances and [being] manifested as a metaphor within science fiction" (Melzer 2006: 24) narratives. Anthropologist David Tomas' interpretation of the technophilic body bears close resemblance to the cyborg body, accordingly, they are both a product of "various degrees of aesthetic and functional transformations directed to the human bodies surface and functional organic structure", including, not only "cosmetically redesigned faces, muscle grafts and animal and/or human transplants" but also the "functional alterations to the human body's organic architecture" (Tomas 2000: 176). Indeed a further characteristic of the cyborg that produces "rewritings of the body's social and cultural form" (Tomas 2000: 177) appears to be a rich aspect of discussion in relation to the "reconstruction of social identities" (Tomas 2000: 177). In this respect, among the other contemporaries of Haraway, Scott Bukatman's vision of cyborg in *Terminal Identity* is also interesting because he refers to cyborg as "terminal identity," which can be defined as "form of speech, as an essential cyborg formation, and a potentially subversive reconception of the subject that situates the human and the technological as coextensive, codependent, and mutually defining" (Bukatman 1993: 22). Having approached this issue from a variety of perspectives throughout his book, in the final chapter, "Terminal Resistance/ Cyborg Acceptance", Bukatman taps into "the fantasies of technological symbiosis" that science fiction presents that he asserts "the subject's control is actually enhanced by its disappearance into the imploded spaces of electronic technology" (Bukatman, 1993: 21). Bukatman implies that "Haraway's vision of cyborg acknowledges

technology as holding possibility for liberation within a new epoch, a new 'posthuman' and 'postgendered' era" (Bukatman 1993: 324). In order to address what Bukatman refers to as "a new posthuman" enabled to appear by "cyborg fusions and science fiction technologies," (Milburn 2004: 114) N. Katherine Hayles clarifies the posthuman subject as "an amalgam, a collection of heterogeneous components, a material informational entity whose boundaries undergo continuous construction and reconstruction" (Hayles 1999: 3).

Haraways's theory of cyborg has engaged with posthuman theories in a specific way, namely, in the face of rapid change in new information and bio-technologies, the boundary between human and machine/non-human, self and the other has become uncertain is the prime argument of Haraway's pioneering academic article, "A Cyborg Manifesto". Unlike the gender theorists whose argument stems from the historical and/or cultural origins of gender inequality and some holistic unity, Haraway's argument involves no such basic organizational construct of culture. The cyborg does not pursue "organic wholeness through a final appropriation of all the powers of the parts into a higher unity" (Haraway 1991: 150). Furthermore, at this point, Haraway implies "the cyborg skips the step of original unity of identification with nature in the Western sense" (Haraway 1991: 151) which has resulted in an emphasis on multiplicity and diversity that calls into question "ideologically troubling Western dualisms such as self/other, mind/body, culture/nature, male/female, civilized/primitive, reality/appearance, whole/part, truth/illusion, and God/man" (Haraway 1991: 177). The debate of the Western mind/body dualism, however, is explored in a more speculative way in "Feminist Philosophies" through

the depiction of cyborg as a “post-metaphysical construct” that Braidotti put forwards and that she claims “the figuration of the cyborg reminds us that metaphysics is not an abstract construction but, rather, a political ontology” (Braidotti 2003: 209). In the following passage, Braidotti’s interpretation of the Western dualism is made quite clear:

> The classical dualism body–soul is not simply a gesture of separation and of hierarchical coding; it is also a theory about their interaction, about how they hang together. It suggests how we should go about rethinking the unity of the human being. (Braidotti 2003: 209-210)

In line with Braidotti, Balsamo’s reading of Haraway reveals that she finds a potentiality in the destruction of the Western dualisms which have been “systemic to the logics and practices of domination of women, people of color, nature, workers and animals” (Haraway 1991: 177) and connects this with reconstruction of the definition of the body.

> Cyborgs are hybrid entities that are neither wholly technological nor completely organic, which means that the cyborg has the potential not only to disrupt persistent dualisms that set the natural body in opposition to the technologically recrafted body, but also to refashion our thinking about the theoretical construction of the body as both a material and a discursive process. (Balsamo 1996: 11)

Yet, this premise assumes that collapse of the imposition of boundaries and definitions on the female body by patriarchy constitutes a change, because “[t]here is nothing about being 'female' that naturally binds women. There is not even such a state as 'being' female, itself a highly· complex category constructed in contested sexual scientific discourses and other social practices” (Haraway 1991: 155).

Stephanie Genz, Benjamin A. Brabon (2009) in *Postfeminism Cultural Texts and Theories*, in their measured account of gender in Haraway's studies, state that

> In accordance with other postmodern theories, Haraway dismantles the gendered category of 'female', illuminating its constructedness and the lack of 'essential' unity between feminists and women in general. Identifying the conflicting/conflicted power of patriarchy, colonialism and capitalism as the forces that have worked to fragment and divide women's/feminism's political identity, she argues that 'white women, including socialist feminists, [have] discovered... the non-innocence of the category of "woman"'. (Haraway, 157) Here 'woman' is a loaded term, saturated with numerous ideologies that have served both to homogenize and to fragment a collective sense of womanhood. (Genz; Brabon 2009: 147)

In this sense, Toffoletti's suggestion of the cyborg as a "feminist boundary rider" (Toffoletti 2007: 21) lends support to Stacy Gillis' claim that the cyborg "provides a useful way of critiquing Enlightenment ideas, and offers an opportunity to think about the body without the boundaries of gender" ('Cyberspace, Feminism and Technology' 208 cited in Genz; Brabon 2009: 147). Further, Susan Gubar's interpretation (2000) of Haraway in *Critical Condition, Feminism at the Turn of the Century* in relation to the collapse of the boundaries between "organism and machine, animal and human, male and female" suggest that it can also enable the possibility of "Cyborgian consciousness" to reject "the need for unity as the totalitarianism of totalizing" (Gubar 2000: 128), in order to transform the traditional perception of women just as their unique reproductive biology, which is "served historically as a powerful explanation or even an influential justification for debilitating gender roles" (Gubar 2000: 128). Indeed, the majority of recent publications on the notion of cyborg have dealt with, one way or another, its applicability to gender issues, including Springer's *Electronic Eros* (1996), Balsamo's *Technologies of the Gendered Body* (1996), and several collections of

articles linking the cyborg with feminist concerns, such as *Cybersexualities: A Reader on Feminist Theory, Cyborgs and Cyberspace* (ed. Jenny Wolmark, 1999) and *The Gendered Cyborg* (ed. Gill Kirkup *et al*., 1999) and so on. So, the origins of this derives from the discursive works of both Haraway and Butler through which they orient toward strategies that the body may be productively debiologized in order to be freed from the gender roles based on the system of domination.

To put it another way, what makes cyborg approach valuable for my analysis is its recognition of "a world 'beyond gender" (Braidotti 2000: 109), in Haraway's term "a post-gender world" where "is no truck with…pre-oedipal symbiosis, unalienated labor, or other seductions to organic wholeness through a final appropriation of all the powers of the parts into a higher unity" (Haraway 1991: 150). Thus far, I have located various articulations of the body "not as a singular, bounded entity or substance" (Blackman 2008: 1) but rather "body multiple" (Blackman 2008: 1) within various lived embodiments whose interpretations range from objectification to abjectification, and to commodification. What joints all of these articulations is the vision of the cyborg that breaches the boundaries between the organic and the inorganic or female bodies as mechanically engineered allows me to explore how "technology, rather than biology… reproduces gender and thereby challenges conceptions of what it is to be human, gendered, a stable subject," (Janes 2000: 93) and this in turn, leads to an examination of the posthuman reproduction's potential to generate new bodily imaginings.

For, however, it would appear that there is little doubt about Haraway's work that it does not intend to emphasize the forthcoming prospects of posthuman enhancements in our perceptions of technology, reproduction and women, because Haraway uses the technologically manipulated body to rewrite an identity construction by annihilating the Western ideologies embedded in what it means to be human and its' social and political entitlements rather than enhancing human. From this offering, it is now useful to recall Claudia Springer's concern that, "the Cartesian mind/body duality is ultimately eclipsed by the concept of the cyborg rather than accomplish an ideal Enlightenment universe where human reason takes center stage the cyborg undermines the very concept of "human"" (Murri 2007: 5). To put it in other way, what Haraway's work promises is that a way of rethinking similarities and differences in social relations, drawing our attention to "specific historical positionings and permanent partialities without abandoning the search for potent connections" (Haraway 1991: 1). To this extent, Haraway's perspective of bio-politics can be construed as a forerunner of posthuman, as her thesis on bodies' losing their boundaries is implied by various critics in the last 20 years. Indeed, Haraway emphasizes that her work must be read, first as "a rhetorical strategy and a political method… within socialist-feminism" (Haraway 1991: 149). Even though she argues that cyborg is "the self feminists must code", since she associates it "with the 'hyphenated identities' of postcolonial women, whose identities cannot be fixed within straight- forward binaries of gender, race, nation or class", the cyborg identity she employs in her study is "always multiple and partial" (Thornham 2007: 140). In this context, Haraway's study that is built on a liberatory 'myth of political identity' which is both feminist and post-gender in which "the cyborg is a kind of

disassembled and reassembled, postmodern collective and personal self" (Haraway 1991: 163) is limited. Sue Thornham (2007) in *Women, Feminism and the Media Topics* underscores the reasons, which is worth quoting in length:

> Once the body is no longer lived but 'disassembled and reassembled', the concept of an embodied subjectivity becomes impossible to maintain. A body which is multiple and fragmented, transgressive and shifting, subject to neither pain nor ageing, is, suggests Susan Bordo, 'no body at all' (1990: 145). Neither suggests Rosi Braidotti, can we be quite sure that it is 'sexed' (2002: 243). (2007: 140)

So, Haraway's major contribution to this line of thought that is relevant to body and technology studies is the insight that "the cyborg is like a symptom- it represents that which cannot be represented" (Gonzales 2000: 59). From this perspective, which cyborg is the evidence of "multiple fears and desires of a culture caught in the process of transformation," (Gonzales 2000: 58) the cyborg body seems to be the marker of the boundaries "which is the underlying but unrecognized structure of [any] historical consciousness" (Gonzales 2000: 65). This, in turn, draws our attention to the hybridity of the cyborg which "stirs the fiercest racial anxiety (amongst European-derived cultures at least) as an image of decline, uncertainty and the immeasurable" (Thornham 2007: 161). And further, "our anxiety about technology feeds on our anxiety about racial mixing, that Haraway's self-conscious politics cleverly inverts" (Thornham 2007: 161). However, cyborg's being beyond gender seems also to be biased, because as mentioned earlier, in an interview Haraway declares her cyborg is "a girl who is trying not to become woman." (Penley and Ross 1991: 20 cited in Bell 2001: 108) In this regard, her notion of cyborg is not "subversive" but rather "hegemonic" (Davis; Dumit 1998: 278). The discourses of technology depend on dichotomized concepts of gender identity within the cultural

frameworks; therefore, contemporary culture in which the technologically enhanced body is actually produced and imagined can be a good example for application of the cyborg. Nevertheless, Haraway's version of -mythical, symbolic or metaphorical- cyborg in "Cyborg Manifesto" is a bit distanced from the realities of actual 'cyborgification,' because she is more focused on "the question of how feminists might reconcile the radical historical specificity of women with the insistence on constructing new values that can benefit humanity as a whole. Moreover, the body in the cyborg model is neither physical nor mechanical – nor is it only textual" (Braidotti 2003: 209-210). In "Envisioning Cyborg Bodies: Notes from Current Research" Jennifer Gonzales discusses the cyborg body in terms of being "cyberspatial" site of possible being, which as she notes, "is already inhabited and through which the interface to a contemporary world is already made. Visual representations of cyborgs are thus not only utopian or dystopian prophesies, but are rather reflections of a contemporary site of being" (Gonzales 2000: 58). In this context, Balsamo's reading of Haraway reveals that forasmuch as, Haraway "fails to consider how the cyborg has already been fashioned in our cultural imagination… cyborg images reproduce limiting, not liberating, gender stereotypes" (Balsamo 2000: 155). Furthermore, at this point, Balsamo implies that "focusing on the cyborg image in hopes of unearthing an icon of utopian thought does a great disservice to feminism. Feminism does not need another utopian vision" (Balsamo 2000: 156).

What is missing in Haraway's cyborg figure is that while she is more concerned about the mythical, symbolic and metaphysical interpretations, she is less concerned about its' social reality in relation to technology, body and embodiment in

contemporary Western contexts. Nevertheless, in spite of the entire possibilities cyborg figures offer, "they will not resolve debates of social and cultural power, nor, do they –as yet, function as radical alternatives" (Gonzales 2000: 71). Whether as a source of inspiration or as a target of criticism Haraway's concept of the cyborg has become influential "within a range of debates, centring around the impact of scientific, technological developments for our understandings of ourselves, our bodies and our relations with organic and inorganic others" (Pilcher; Whelehan 2004: 23). As a result, the debt to Haraway in almost any enterprise concerned with the Cyborg in contemporary Posthuman studies cannot be understated.

Considering that Balsamo reminds us both woman and cyborg are "simultaneously symbolically and biologically produced and reproduced through social interactions" (Balsamo, 2000: 153); therefore, the cyborg concept can be employed to survey the ways through which techno-scientifically oriented cultures contribute to the "fashioning of selves" (Downey and Dumit 1997 cited in Pilcher; Whelehan 2004: 22). Being a "potent cultural icon of the late twentieth century," (Clark, 2003: 5) the figures of the cyborg have come to a stance that they represent "all forms of imagined posthuman self-hood," (Thornham 2007: 137) accordingly; they "are everywhere and multiplying" (Gray; Mentor and Figueroa-Sarriera 1995: 2 cited in Thornham 2007: 137). But what is needed here Gonzales rightly points out, is the recognition of "the question over which so much debate arises": are there important differences between people (and cyborgs), or are people (and cyborgs) in some necessary way the same?" (Gonzales, 2000: 71) To begin answering this question, I turn to Andy Clark's (2003) proposal *in Natural-Born Cyborgs: Minds,*

Technologies and the Future of Human Intelligence that "we are already natural-born cyborgs: "*creatures whose minds are special precisely because they are tailor-made for multiple mergers and coalition*" (2003: 7 emphasis in original). Throughout the book he tends to emphasize the importance of understanding mind-body "*scaffolding"*, "the looping interactions between material brains, material bodies, and complex cultural and technological environments" (Clark 2003: 11) that point towards self transformations. In other words, "the line between biological self and technological world was, in fact, never very firm" (Clark 2003: 8). As David Tomas has pointed out "when one is presented with a culture governed by cosmetic and functional alterations to the form and organic structure of the human body, it is not hard to imagine an emerging cyborg species that will evolve according to a different evolutionary logic" (Tomas 2000: 178). Moreover, it is also worth remembering Chris Gray's concern about the cyborg's potential to be better than human and that can result in a loss of our identity –"if we become too much the cyborg, will we no longer be human?" (Haney 2006: 58) I want to return to a consideration of Hayles' essay, "The Life Cycle of Cyborgs: Writing the Posthuman" in which she argues that cyborgs do exist in real life. In her words:

> About 10 percent of the current U.S. populations are estimated to be cyborgs in the technical sense, including people with electronic peacemakers, artificial joints, drug plant systems, implanted corneal lenses, and artificial skin. (Hayles 1999: 159)

Conveniently, the examples of the cyborgization in material life allow posthumanists to propose the "variety of motives and, as well as, the "diversity of 'types'" (Bell 2001: 149).

> Cyborg technologies can be *restorative*, in that they restore lost functions and replace lost organs and limbs; they can be *normalizing*, in that they restore some

> creature to indistinguishable normality; they can be ambiguously *reconfiguring*, creating posthuman creatures equal to but different from humans, like what one is now when interacting with other creatures in cyberspace or, in the future, the type of modifications proto-humans will undergo to live in space or under the sea having given up the comforts of terrestrial existence; and they can be *enhancing*, the aim of most military and industrial research, and what those with cyborg envy or even cyborg-philia fantasize. (Gray et al. 1995: 3 cited in Bell 2001: 149 emphasis in original)

Yet, in Hayles' account, she emphasizes clearly that "the construction of the posthuman does not require the subject to be a literal cyborg" (Hayles 1999: 4) rather, "constitutes a prevalent concept of subjectivity" (Kember 2003: 143). Even more important, perhaps – at least for the topic at hand- is that whether or not we realize that "we are cyborgs, or understand ourselves as cyborgs" (Bell 2001: 150) affect "the assumed naturelness" of [our] bodies and their "function[s] as a marker of difference" (Balsamo 2000: 154). To answer that question, we need to understand that "humans, by nature, [are] products of a complex and heterogeneous developmental matrix in which culture, technology, and biology are pretty well inextricably intermingled" (Clark 2003: 86). On this point, Francis Fukuyama in *Our Posthuman Future Consequences of the Biotechnology Revolution* has shared his concerns about the risks of bio-technology, which "mixes obvious benefits with subtle harms in one seamless package" (Fukuyama 2002: 7) related to the collapse of human nature, similar to Clark, who argues that "it is a mistake to posit a biologically fixed "human nature" with a simple wrap-around of tools and culture; the tools and culture are indeed as much determiners of our nature as products of it" (Clark 2003: 86). I suggest that posthuman studies are biomodal in relation to bio-technologies: one side is associated with the risks of the new technologies, especially, bio-technologies, (Fukuyama, 2002; Clark, 2003); and the other with the

possibilities (Hayles, 1999; Wolfe, 2009). Relevant to my general discussion, however, the idea of posthuman, in particular the cyborg, "in the context of reproductive technologies is important because it offers a most explicit merging of techno-science and the material body and has enormous potential for the transgression of boundaries – boundaries between women and men and across time and generation" (Woodward 2000: 169).

To return, then, to the definition of posthuman, including the cyborg, seemingly, "is not limited to any specific technology, as it encompasses bio-technologies… such innovations as artificial intelligence, life extension, and genetic or nano-technological engineering" (Miah 2008: 83). In this sense, Chris Gray in *Cyborg Citizen* asserts that "more than other cyborg techno-science, genetics foregrounds the issue of human versus posthuman" (Gray, 20 quoted in Dinello 2005: 15). Rather than enhancing the body by replacing flesh with machine, bio-technology underpins the interrelations between human reproduction and medico-technological developments. Not only does the advance in genetics diminish diseases, but also it "offers the most likely and most effective way of using artificial evolution to produce intelligent non-human creatures" (Gray, 20 cited in Dinello 2005: 15). Daniel Dinello (2005) in *Technophobia! Science Fiction Visions of Posthuman Technology* takes into consideration of the debates resulting from this concern. As he puts it,

> Should children be genetically engineered for intelligence, good looks, athletic ability, musical inclination, or any other traits? Will only a rich elite benefit from this technology, thus producing an enhanced superhuman class or species? Does that matter? Should corporations be allowed to own and profit from human genetic

> information? How can we anticipate and avert dangerous consequences? Should we regulate any aspect of the technology and, if so, how? (Dinello, 15)

Once these questions are posed it becomes clear that genetics and reproductive technologies derive from "social, cultural, ethical… as well as biological and scientific discourses" (Woodward 2000: 162).

Since the birth of the genetic revolution in the 1970s and later the 1996 cloning of the sheep Dolly and the 1999 completion of the Human Genome Project, "naturalness" or "purity" of the human has become a major concern. To put it another way, relevant to my general discussion, I think that it is important to raise questions first here as "who owns the technology?" in particular, "who benefits and/or controls?" (Davis; Dumit 1998: 273) En route to answering these questions, "the forces of cyborgification" (Davis; Dumit 1998: 273) in relation to the ways in which the regulatory discourses of biomedical and reproductive technologies can speak of Theresa De Lauretis' influential notion of 'technologies of gender' (De Lauretis, 1987). In other words, argument goes that "the new reproductive technologies are implicated in the reproduction of ideologies of gendered, race-marked, and class-positioned bodies" (Balsamo 1999; 93). Discussing modern innovations in reproductive technologies and attitudes, Robert H. Blank remarks in "Regulating Reproduction" that beginning in 1960s with the development of contraceptives that gave power to women to have control over their bodies has resulted in a revolutionary change in the understanding of reproduction. The second revolutionary change is that the birth of the first successful 'test-tube baby' through In Vitro Fertilization (IVF) in 1978. Before proceeding, it is important to review, the

definition of the new reproduction technologies which, "came into use during the 1980s amongst social researchers (especially feminists) studying developments in the field of reproductive science and medicine" (McNeil 2007: 73).

> These have been defined as 'all forms of biomedical intervention and "help" a woman may encounter when she considers having – or not having – a child' (Arditti et al. 1984: 1) or, more simply, as 'those technologies which facilitate, manage or prevent reproduction' (Throsby 2004: 9)…. The term does not, in itself, specify the orientation of the technology and thus it encompasses contraceptive, as well as prenatal conceptive and birthing technologies. Generally, NRTs emerged as a collective designator of the range of reproductive technologies that became available from the 1960s onwards and it became strongly associated with the rapid development of the field of reproductive medicine in the last decades of the twentieth century…. Indeed, the term 'assisted reproduction' has become common currency and some researchers prefer this more specific term to the broader rubric of NRTs. (McNeil 2007: 73-74)

Although this is a field where there are constant changes, I would like to offer brief list of the developments. The list of the new reproduction technologies could include:

> Donor insemination, in vitro fertilization (IVF), amniocentesis, embryo transfer and freezing, ultrasonography, sex pre-selection, gamete intrafallopian transfer (GIFT), chorionic villus sampling, laparoscopy, zygote intrafallopian transfer (ZIFT), tubal embryo transfer (TET), intracytoplasmic sperm injection (ICSI), ooplasm transfer and pre-implantation genetic diagnosis (PGD). (McNeil 2007: 76)

As Balsamo has observed, "with the deployment of the new reproductive technologies come the cultural construction of a new set of possibilities and a new set of social agents – the fetus, the surrogate parent, the egg/sperm donor - each of whom can now stake a claim on the outcome of the reproductive encounter. Thus are born new ethical, social and political dilemmas" (Balsamo 2000: 160). Williams and Bendelow's approach is similar to Balsamo's, they voice their concern about the new reproductive technologies by noting that:

> For some, the creation of NRTs is seen as the end-stage of men's desire to control women and appropriate reproductive power. From this perspective the danger lurks that biological mothers will eventually be reduced to 'mother machines' (Corea 1985, Corea *et al.* 1985) or 'living laboratories' (Rowland 1992, 1985). Steinberg (1990), for example, argues that these procedures, notwithstanding their potentially harmful side-effects, involve the erosion of women's bodily and metaphysical privacy. Physiologically, women's bodies are 'opened, scrutinised, manipulated, parts extracted and then reintroduced'. This enables practitioners to unselfconsciously '*speak* of disembodied parts of women—"the ovaries", "ripe eggs", and of "recovering" these parts even as they *materially,* scrutinise, alter or remove these parts of women's bodies' (Steinberg 1990:86). As a consequence, women not only become erased but also alienated and depersonalised in the process. (Bendelow; Williams 1998: 84)

Although, Shulamith Firestone argued that it was "woman's reproductive biology that accounted for her original and continued oppression," (Firestone [1970] 1979: 74 quoted in McNeil, 2007: 85) she made a major prediction in her pioneering book *The Dialectic of Sex: The Case for the Feminist Revolution* at the end of 70s regardless of, the proper definition of new reproduction technologies: "Soon we shall have a complete understanding of the entire reproductive process in all its complexity'; and more prophetically: Artificial insemination and artificial inovulation are already a reality. Choice of sex of the fetus, test-tube fertilization.... [is] just around the corner" (Firestone 1979: 187 quoted in McNeil 2007: 85). Nevertheless, her predictions have become a constitutive of a new chapter in women's history however her portrayal of our understanding of "the entire reproductive process in all its complexity" has not been valued by feminists. On this point, Braidotti argues that "the bio-technological appropriation of the maternal occurs precisely at the time in history when women have explicitly demanded the political control over their bodies and their reproductive capacity" (Braidotti 1994: 122). Although gender neutrality is one of the main promises of the new technologies, including the reproductive technologies, Balsamo claims "the

structured relations of power" (Balsamo 2000: 161) and control serve to guard the ideologically shaped gender boundaries. Furthermore, Jane Pilcher and Imelda Whelehan's reading of Balsamo in relation to the discourses of the new technologies refer to the contention that they "continue to rely on a logic of binary gender-identity as a underlying organizational framework, and so the revisionary potential of cyborg technologies are significantly limited" (1996: 9–10 quoted in Pilcher; Whelehan 2004: 23). In Wajcman's account, she emphasizes the downsides of gender technology relationship. In her words:

> Nowhere is the relationship between gender and technology more vigorously contested than in the sphere of human reproduction. Women are the bearers, and in most societies the primary nurturers of the children. This means that reproductive technologies are of particular significance to them. Birth control has been a major issue for all movements of women's equality and much feminist scholarship has been devoted to uncovering women's struggle throughout history against the appropriation of medical knowledge and practice by men. (Wajcman, 1991; 54 cited in Woodward 2000; 163)

New reproductive technologies offer a denunciation that they involve deeply structured cultural assumptions about "gender roles, the sexual division of labor, parenthood and technological and scientific progress," (Woodward 2000: 161) in relation to, the "purity" or "naturalness". In this light, it is worth recalling the argument that Fukuyama also proposed: "Our posthuman future would involve the commercialization of bio-technological" (Miah 2008; 71) developments "from the mainstreaming of cosmetic surgery to genetic engineering and nanotechnology" that could lead to a contemplation that the next generation may well be the last of 'pure' humans" (Featherstone and Burrows 1995:11–12; Deitch 1992 quoted in Williams; Bendelow 1998: 80)

In their emphasis on the gendered patterns of power and authority that are previously explored in the Objectified Bodies section, the new reproductive technologies can be both liberatory and oppressive.

> In a backlash against Shulamith Firestone's suggestion that women's liberation would be achieved when they were freed from the reproductive burden though technological advances (Firestone 1970), a number of feminists have been largely critical of the effects of reproductive technologies on women's social power and status. One feminist position sees the control of human life and creation accorded to the male scientist, hence positioning woman as the passive, exploited subject of a masculinist medical and scientific establishment (Arditti, Klein and Minden 1984, Corea 1985, Spallone and Steinberg 1987). Such arguments have been complicated and extended to explore how technology displaces the symbolic power of the maternal (Braidotti 1994a, Sofia 1992). (Toffoletti, 2007: 96)

Thus, when Foucault characterizes the concept of bio-power, he beckons the "numerous and diverse techniques for achieving the subjugation of bodies and the control of populations" (Foucault 1978: 140). This reinforces the suggestion that power is "everywhere; not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere, (Foucault 1978: 93) and is not exercised as overt violence, but emerges through disciplinary practices over individual bodies, and regulatory practices over populations" (Foucault 1978: 140 quoted in Throsby 2004: 43). Perhaps the new reproduction technologies are then, as Jana Sawicki (1991) claims in *Disciplining Foucault: Feminism, Power and the Body*, the "disciplinary techniques which work not through violent imposition," (Sawicki 1991: 68 quoted in Throsby 2004: 43) but by "creating desires, attaching individuals to specific identities, and establishing norms against which individuals and their behaviors and bodies are judged and against which they police themselves" (ibid: 43). Karen Throsby's reading of Sawicki broadens the notion of biopower in new reproductive technologies. In her own words:

> In looking for a means of understanding the NRTs as something other than a violent exercise of male power over women, Jana Sawicki (1991) employs Foucault's concept of biopower. For Foucault, biopower is reflected in the 'numerous and diverse techniques for achieving the subjugation of bodies and the control of populations' (Foucault 1978: 140). Power, in this context, is 'everywhere; not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere' (ibid.: 93), and is not exercised as overt violence, but emerges through disciplinary practices over individual bodies, and regulatory practices over populations (ibid.: 140). It is the former aspect of biopower that is of particular interest here, and Sawicki argues that the NRTs should be seen as a series of disciplinary techniques which work not through violent imposition, but by 'creating desires, attaching individuals to specific identities, and establishing norms against which individuals and their behaviors and bodies are judged and against which they police themselves' (Sawicki 1991: 68). (Throsby 2004: 43)

Furthermore, Sawicki's observation indicates that characterizing new reproductive technologies, particularly IVF, draws attention to the fact that they can be apprehended not simply as "repressing women, but as producing new objects and subjects of knowledge, by inciting and channeling desires, generating and focusing individual and group energies, and establishing bodily norms and techniques for observing, monitoring, and controlling bodily movements, processes and capacities" (Sawicki 1991: 83 quoted in Throsby 2004: 47). The following sums how IVF can be conceptualized as a medium of bio-power.

> In the engagement with IVF, women's bodies become the intense focus of medical surveillance, which is matched by women's rigorous policing of their own bodies. However, this watchful docility can also be perceived as empowering by those seeking treatment, since it marks the fact that they are taking action they perceive as positive and as bringing them closer to the desired identity of biological parent. Women engaging with IVF are never entirely without power, although they will always be individually located more or less favorably to it. Therefore, while always constrained, the possibility of resistance, if only at the micro-level, is always present. (Throsby 2004: 47)

It would seem from this argument that new reproductive technologies have become mediums which treats women's bodies more of an object by which fetuses can be monitored. Here, however, it is useful to recall Davis-Dumit's (1998) contention that the new reproductive technologies, in their own interpretation "the forces of

cyborgification' are powerfully aligned with already dominant, hegemonic cultural forces" (Pilcher; Whelehan 2004: 23). Speaking of the dominant cultural forces, this quote brings us to Braidotti's suggestion that anchors the notion of reproduction. In her own words:

> We come thus back to the question of chronos; if we follow the logic of bio-power, women will be forcefully removed from the traditional forms of motherhood, based on the heterosexual patriarchal family, to equally masculine high-tech reproduction. From feudalism to postindustrialism in one clean sweep, skipping the most important stage- the process of becoming a subject at all- by bringing about a woman based redefinition of female subjectivity. (Braidotti 1994: 134)

My prime interest in the new reproductive technologies is, as a matter of fact, in their social and political significance to elaborate on issues that of addressing power, ownership and control in the era of bio-technological change. In this sense, in the following passage, my position, in relation to, the new reproductive technologies is made quite clear:

> [They] are strongly associated in social and cultural discourse with the commodification of life, and the risk of rogue scientists realizing 'master race' ambitions (Hirsch 1999). These fears find expression, for example, in repeated media references to the misnomer, 'test-tube babes', provocatively suggestive of the dystopian ectogenetic reproductive production lines imagined in Aldous Huxley's 1932 novel, *Brave New World*, or in the agitated responses to developments in genetic testing or, every tabloid's favorite, cloning. (Throsby 2004: 54)

Furthermore, at this point, Dion Farquhar in "(M)other Discourses" implies that "reproductive technologies have stimulated alternative modes of representing the female body, at the same time, they struggle to recuperate its "natural" fertility" (Farquhar, 2000; 212). This seems out-of-the-box in a way because as Emily Martin demonstrates, nowadays, "the great majority of the time most women are not intending to get pregnant" (Martin 1992: 112 quoted in McNeil 2007: 88). Like Martin, Balsamo

indicates concerning the contemporary condition of women "even when not pregnant, the female body is also evaluated in terms of its physiological and moral status as a potential container for the embryo or fetus" (Balsamo 1999: 90). In this light what becomes clear is that as Maureen McNeil (2007) argues in *Feminist Cultural Studies of Science and Technology Transformations Thinking through Feminism* new reproduction technologies have not fulfilled the feminist agenda, since they do not free "women from the constraints of biological reproduction as Firestone dreamed, but rather intensify [their] hold[s]" (McNeil 2007: 88). In addition, the examples abound on this topic are Michael Winterbottom's *Code 46* (2003), Alfonso Cuarón's *Children of Men* (2006) and Vincenzo Natali's *Splice* (2009) which "create an image of women that is far different from either Firestone's or Martin's vision of women's reproductive freedom" (McNeil 2007: 88). Even more important, perhaps – at least for the topic at hand- is that the narrative of the films "are vehicles for airing, mediating and containing anxieties about reproduction in the contemporary West" (McNeil 2007: 104). Particularly, Cuaron's *Children of Men* posits the contemporary debate in a near future dystopian setting that "is the panic about fertility amongst mainly white, middle-class North Americans and some Europeans" (McNeil 2007: 93). *Children of Men* revolves not only around the panic and despair that derive from global infertility, but also around the very essence of the debate by referencing the crisis may also be "about social and political, as well as biological, reproduction – about hegemony" (McNeal 2007: 93). Before proceeding, it is important to review, the definition of infertility,

> The term 'infertility' itself is a slippery term and, as Karen Throsby (2004: 13) has suggested, self-help and guide books often do not define it. The term is often linked to the specification of a time period of 'regular unprotected intercourse' which does not result in pregnancy. It is virtually impossible to assess levels of infertility,

> particularly when even this rather imprecise designation of infertility has changed noticeably in recent years. Susan Faludi explained that, while from the early 1990s a couple would be labeled as infertile in the United States if the female partner fails to conceive after one year of 'regular unprotected intercourse' (Faludi 1992: 47), this label was formerly applied only after five years. (McNeil 2007: 92)

Long before the Cyborg metaphor, "in the development of Western thought and medicine, the body came to be regarded as a machine" (Martin 2001: 54). The following, sums up Emily Martin's argument in *The Woman in the Body: A Cultural Analysis of Reproduction:*

> This mechanical metaphor got its start in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century French hospitals where the womb and uterus were spoken of "as though they formed a mechanical pump that in particular instances was more or less adequate to expel the fetus." (Wertz and Wertz 1977:32)… [It] is often claimed that the metaphor of the body as a machine continues to dominate medical practice in the twentieth century and both underlies and accounts for our willingness to apply technology to birth and to intervene in the process. The woman's body is the machine and the doctor is the mechanic or technician who "fixes" it. (Martin 2001: 54).

This quote brings us to the philosophical speculation of Descartes' notion that animals are machines -the automata. He, further, considers that the main difference between humans and animals is that "humans have free will or the ability to determine actions" (Miah 2008: 84). To be more precise, this contradiction is derived from the assumption that both machines and animals are "unable to reason, an inability also ascribed to women", (Melzer 2006: 24) I think that it is important to raise this question here as, "what is the definition of women?" In *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory* (1994), Braidotti gives an answer to this question by constructing a link between monsters, mothers and machines in new reproductive technology, which she claims "displace women by making procreation a high-tech affair" (Braidotti 1994: 79).

Relevant to my general discussion, I will return to the assumption that reproduction is a key site where women, technology and monstrosity are aligned with emphasis on the assumption that "the application of reproductive technologies can be seen as making possible monstrosity and new "monster mothers" including "designer babies", "virgin mother" and "selfish older mothers" (Woodward 2000: 163); but for the moment it is worth quoting Robyn Ferrell by a way of reminding contemporary feminists' analyses of the 20th century version of "mother machines" that is the implementation of IVF as a part of the ongoing argument.

> The woman herself and her motherhood [are] becoming tools of a medical technological development and a material acted on in the process of fertilizing her (Corea 1995). Even those feminist theorists who are positive about the prospects for the assisted reproductive technologies warn against this tendency to reduce women and their fertility to "mother machines" (Hubbard 1990). (Ferrell 2006: 39)

If everything has gone well with Firestone's prediction as indicated previously, the "mother machines" would be interpreted as "the mother of the machines", who is freed from the oppression of it, and thus, who "owns" it. Nevertheless, the new reproductive technologies have tendency to "reproduce the process of biological reproduction as a commodity that can be institutionally regulated just as are commodities" (Balsamo 1999: 94). This assertion echoes an observation made by Juliet Michell (1971) in *Woman's Estate* that reproduction is a "sad mimicry of production, " considering "how parenthood can be seen as an imitation of work: the child is seen as an object created by the mother, in the same way as a commodity is created by a worker" (Mitchell quoted in Martin, 2001: 67). Taking into consideration of the issue of subjectivity, Susan Bordo (1995) in *Unbearable Weight*

Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body, claims that the status of the new reproduction technologies is confusing. As she puts it:

> On the one hand, women now have a booming technology seemingly focused on fulfilling their desires: to conceive, to prevent miscarriage, to deliver a healthy baby at term. On the other hand, proponents and practitioners continually encourage women to treat their bodies as passive instruments of those goals, ready and willing, "if they want a child badly enough," to endure however complicated and invasive a regime of diagnostic testing, daily monitoring, injections, and operative procedures may be required. Thus, one element of women's subjectivity is indeed nurtured, while all other elements (investment in career, other emotional needs, importance of other personal relationships, etc.) are minimized, marginalized, and (when they refuse to be repressed) made an occasion for guilt and self questioning. (Bordo 1995: 86)

If we return to the metaphor of the "mother machines", it can be further argued that "the doctor is a supervisor; the woman might be [then] a "laborer" whose "machine" (uterus) produces the "product," babies" (Martin 2001: 57). She adds,

> Broadening the scope of the inquiry about metaphors from the narrow-mechanic as doctor, machine as patient-also allows us to consider whether similar relationships of power and control operate in both realms of "production."(57) … In sum, …. [this metaphor] juxtaposes two pictures: the uterus as a machine that produces the baby and the woman as laborer who produces the baby. Perhaps at times the two come together in a consistent form as the woman-laborer whose uterus-machine produces the baby. (Martin 2001: 57)

Susan Bordo's analysis also criticizes the notion of mother as machine or the ideology of the woman-as-fetal-incubator, as well and emphasizes the fact that this affects women's experience of pregnancy:

> Pregnant women are neither subjects nor treated as such, while their fetuses become 'super subjects' (i.e. more important than pregnant women 'subjects'). This representation of women as objects of mechanical surveillance rather than active recipients of prenatal care is an obvious message of pictures displaying the first ultrasound device used in Glasgow, Scotland, as Oakley (1984: 159) demonstrates. But, many prenatal technologies objectify women and uphold this ideology of woman-as-foetal-incubator. (Ettorre 2002: 20)

Gayatri Spivak (1987) in *Other Worlds* broadens the scope of this metaphor by calling biological reproduction "a uterine social organization, 'the arrangement of

the world in terms of the reproduction of future generations, where the uterus is the chief agent and means of production'" (Spivak 1987: 152 quoted in Eagleton 2003: 106). In a similar vein, Karen Throsby questions the corporeality of the body by noting that:

> The reproductive body also marks the curious positioning of the corporeality of the female body as existing alongside the absence of any real personal presence (Shildrick 1997: 25). The materiality of the female body is diagrammatically represented in the form of disembodied body parts – 'organs without bodies', in Rosi Braidotti's terms (Braidotti 1994: Ch. 1) – surrounded by empty spaces, or even constituted of empty space, as in the case of diagrammatic representations of the uterus; an empty space, waiting for a baby (Birke 1999: 69). The body becomes a foetal container of highly developed foetuses, distinct from the mother – an image that has its echoes in contemporary ultrasound images of the foetus, surrounded by 'space and silence' (Shildrick 1997: 38–41). (Throsby 2004: 29)

Like Spivak and Throsby, Braidotti criticizes new reproductive technologies in which "women's bodies are construed as vessels of reproduction" (Woodward; Woodward 2009: 72).

> According to the instrumental logic of bio-power, provided that the continuity of a vital function is guaranteed and that basic compatibility is assured between the organ and the host organism, all organs are equal in helping achieving the aim. Thus, in the New Reproductive Technology, the uterus of one woman is worth that of the other, of any other. A uterus is a uterus is a uterus is. .. . In that case: why not have a mother carry the babies that her daughter managed to conceive? And by extension, hole for hole, why not think that the abdomen of the one, the other, may well be worth the uterus of the other, the one? Male pregnancies. Female mother-machines. (Braidotti 1994; 53)

In keeping with Marx's line of emphasis on socialism, Donna Haraway's notion of cyborg suggests a new route to create new social means of technoscience, in other words, "new ways in which we organize our lives" (Kierans 2010: 24). What is the key here is that our way of acknowledging embodiment has further links with social-technological relations. As Ciara Kierans discussing the boundaries of self through organ transplantation contends that "in health and medical arenas, cyborgs emerge as the

result of wide range of interventions from prosteheses, sensory technologies and implantable devices alongside technologically aided ways of seeing, scanning, screening, testing, researching, and so on (Casper 1995, Davis-Floyd 1994, Ihde 1990, 2007)" (Kierans, 2010: 24-25). Taken together these assumptions are to explain why Harraway insistently view her cyborg as female.

> To see what the elements of the metaphor are, it is necessary to look closely at the organization of factory production in our society to better understand whether processes occurring there might be said to occur in the realm of reproduction. (O'Brien 1981:14) Serving as both enhancers and mutilators of what went before, cyborgs—and especially cyborg modes of reproduction—represent, in another of Haraway's potent phrases, a "promise of monsters." (2002: 90). (Haney 2006: 57-58)

3. Representations of the New Reproduction Technologies in the 21st Century Independent Science Fiction Cinema

3.1. Science Fiction Cinema and Women

Thus far I have been concerned with the overview of the female body relating to ideology, patriarchy, posthuman studies and the new reproductive technologies and the effects of those technologies on the future of humanity that I have traced. As Elain L. Graham (2002) in *Representations of the Post/human: Monsters, Aliens and Others in Popular Culture* refers to "technologization of nature; blurring of species boundaries; technologization of human bodies and minds; tools, bodies and environments" discussing the question of "what it means to be human" (Graham, 2). I have already discussed the debates that can be engaged in relation to "the spectrum of diverse responses to new technologies, ranging between the digital and biotechnological as one of enslavement or liberation or advanced technologies as threats to human integrity or means of facilitating its further evolution" (Graham 2002: 11). Like Graham in previous parts I maintain the research on the body and its relationships that has evoked the '"stories we live by" [that] can be important critical tools in the task of articulating what it means to be human in a digital and bio technological age" (Graham 2002: 17). Next chapters examine the representations of these concepts in selected the 21st century independent science fiction films to discuss whether they tend to "signify female gender in a way that reinforces an essentialist identity for the female body as the maternal body" like their Hollywood counterparts (Balsamo 1996: 9). The

selected films abound on this topic, including Michael Winterbottom's *Code 46* (2003), Alfonso Cuarón's *Children of Men* (2006), and more recently Vincenzo Natali's *Splice* (2009) Within each of these examples in a recurring narrative of how maternity creates a different perspective in relation to control over bodies and their objectifications. In this regard, Patricia Meltzer's definition of science fiction in *Alien Constructions Science Fiction and Feminist Thought* is especially relevant to my analysis. In her account, she emphasizes the fact that "a genre defined by its relationship to technology and, as well as, by its futuristic framework, science fiction [cinema] is understood as a cultural arena that explores the anxieties" of the human/machine interface (Melzer 2006: 4). Moreover, it is also worth remembering Constance Penley's observation about science fiction in *Close Encounters: Film, Feminism and Science Fiction* since this research involves the issue of constructed "otherness" as well. She employs an important assumption that "science fiction provides an ideal form" for the contemporary context that is composed of "the exploration of ... confuence of ideas and technological development" (Janes 2000: 93). As she notes,

> science fiction... is more hyperbolically concerned than ever with the question of *difference*, typically posed as that of the difference between human and non-human. Although science fiction has traditionally been concerned with this question, new pressures from feminism, the politics of race and sexual orientation, and the dramatic changes in the structure of the family and the workforce seem to have intensified the symptomatic whish to pose and repose the question of difference in a fictional form that could accomodate such an investigation. Other challenges to being able to "tell the difference" have come not only from post-structuralist criticism, with its highly constructed and unstable subject, but also from advances in genetic engineering, bioengineering and cybernetics. Such a confluence of pressures on subjectivity and difference perhaps explains what for many has been rhetorical force of Donna Haraway's metaphor of the cyborg feminist, which manages to give both a utopian and dystopian spin to our new gendered technological bodies, and at very least, provide a suggestive metaphor for further thinking about the breakdown and reconstruction of what is going to count as "human" in the era that we

> optimistically refer to as late capitalism. (Penley et al., 1991: vii quoted in Janes 2000: 92-93 emphasis in original)

Because the purpose of this study is to examine the new reproductive technologies in posthuman world, claiming that maternal "bodies foreground issues of representation, the constructions of cultural meaning and the analysis of power relations" (Melzer 2006:13) science fiction cinema is taken into account since it is considerably concerned with female body, particularly with the "body of the mother" and the implications technology has for reproduction than with its' ability to produce new forms (androids/ cyborgs). Indeed, science fiction films are the perfect match for this study, as Anette Kuhn indicates, "since [SF] films themselves are often about new or imagined future technologies, this must be perfect example of the medium fitting, if not exactly being, the message" (Kuhn 1990: 7 quoted in Janes, 2000:93). Similarly, Linda Janes observes, "given their shared representations of creatures of constructed gendered "otherness" and with questions of reproductions and the maternal, [science fiction films] are certainly productive for analysis focusing on the articulation of technoscience and gender" (Janes 2000: 94). The ambivalent portrayals of reproduction and motherhood within science fiction films point to the contradictory effects regarding the invasion of the female body and its social environment by technology and to the continual necessity to explore the conflicting positions what Anne Balsamo terms "technologies of the gendered body", within this debate. At this juncture, Mary Annne Doane in "Technophilia: Technology, Representation, and Feminine" observes,

> cinema has frequently, been thought as a prosthetic device, as a technological extension of the human body, particularly the senses of perception. Christian Metz, for instance, refers to the play "of that other mirror, the cinema screen, in this respect avertiable psychical substitute, a prosthesis for our primally dislocated limbs"(Metz, 1975: 15) From this point of view it is not surprising that the articulation of the three terms-

> "woman,"machine," cinema," - and the corresponding fantasy of the artificial woman recur as the privilliged content of a wide variety of cinematic narratives. (Doane 2000: 113)

It can be fther argued that Mary Ann Doane and Barbara Creed's analyses of the representation of women in science fiction films reveal that "the image of the dangerous woman–machine gives way to a more nuanced inscription of the feminine threat, which often takes the form of monstrous and unnatural reproductive technologies (Creed 1993, Doane 1990)" (Toffoletti 2007: 24). Additionally, "the representations of displaced cultural anxieties and hopes around the relationship of the gendered body to technology" (Melzer 2006: 12) that are offered in science fiction cinema speak to my research on new ways of thinking about the nature of the new reproductive technologies in techno-scientifically oriented cultures that grow out of this relationship. At this point of the argument the transformative potential science fiction films resides, and where I situate my analysis. At the heart of this analysis is the representation of technology, body and gender within the problematic agenda of sexual difference. As Mary Anne Doane asserts, "science fiction, a genre specific to the era of rapid technological development, frequently envisages a new, revised body as a direct outcome of the advance of science. And when technology intersects with the body in the realm of representation, the question of sexual difference is inevitably involved" (Doane 2000: 110). Doane's argument recognizes "the cultural context of science fiction" that engages in "the troubled nature of gender dynamics within contemporary culture" (Telotte 2001: 51). J.P. Telotte in *Science Fiction Cinema* examines Doane's concerns about "feminine presentation -- and misinterpretation—" (Telotte 2001: 51) by noting that,

> Working from that primary focus on sexual difference, Doane discerns throughout the

> genre a fascination with key feminist concerns, "with the issues of the maternal, reproduction, representation, and history"; and in our science fiction films' depiction of the "revised body" – the robot, cyborg, prosthetically altered human – she reads a primary story of cultural repression, a chronicling of the dominant culture's efforts "to control, supervise, regulate the maternal – to put *limits* upon it. (Telotte 2001: 50)

For these puposes, it is useful to explore science fiction cinema in relation to feminist approaches to technology as a way of understanding the female body and maternity. What follows will explore how maternal women are depicted in relation to technology, in particular, new reproductive technologies in the context of the 21st century science fiction film. In this respect, Natali's *Splice*, Cuaron's *Children of Men* and Winterbottom's *Code 46* operate as contested sites that Doane's assumption that "technology makes possible the destabilization of sexual identity as a category, there has also been … [an] insistent history of representations of technology that work to fortify—sometimes desperately conventional understandings of the feminine" are called into question (Doane 1990: 163). Furthermore, in making this examination, Constance Penley's argument that " in [SF films] the question of sexual difference—a question whose answer is no longer 'self-evident'—is displaced onto the more remarkable difference between the human and the other" (Penley, 72 quoted in Melzer 2006: 118) will also be traced. One of the most obvious questions to ask about these films is: "How are they different to other maternal bodies that are respresented in mainstream Hollywood films?" Do they have common attributes or approaches typify women's relationship to new reproductive technologies?

3.2 The Human Made Border*: Code 46*

> There's always going to be restrictions and laws placed on human behavior, in an attempt to control the chaotic nature of human nature.
> — Tim Robbins, "Obtaining Cover: Inside Code 46"

> My father used to tell me stories as I fell asleep: stories about Jebel Ali and the Arabian Sea; stories of magic and adventure. He used to live there and believed that if we could return, everything would be alright; everything would be like it used to be, before we were exiled. And in my dreams, I was there. –Maria Gonzales (Winterbottom, 2003)

Directed by Michael Winterbottom and written by Frank Cottrell Boyce, *Code 46* (2003) sets in a not-distant future where genetic cloning and IVF are rigorously policed to such an extent that couples must be screened prior to determining whether or not they are allowed to reproduce. Haraway indicates that a "higher order structure, in particular, the genome is a figure of the "already written" future" (Haraway 1997: 100 quoted in Toffoletti 2007: 158). Following is an example of how State genetic counselor in the film uses genome as a form of social control.

> I am pleased to tell you. I have screened thirty sets of genes and there is no Code of 46 issues. It is perfectly safe for you to marry. In fact I would recommend it. You both have the code for high intelligence. (Winterbottom, 2003)

As Balsamo has observed, "with the deployment of the new reproductive technologies come the cultural construction of a new set of possibilities and a new set of social agents – the fetus, the surrogate parent, the egg/sperm donor - each of whom can now stake a claim on the outcome of the reproductive encounter. Thus, are born new ethical, social and political dilemmas" (Balsamo 1996: 160). The following is the definition of 'Code 46' and its various articles as the opening card relates:

> Any human being who shares the same nuclear gene set as another human being is deemed to be genetically identical. Due to IVF, DI embryo splitting and cloning techniques it is necessary to prevent any accidental or deliberate genetically incestuous reproduction. Therefore: i. all prospective parents should be genetically screened before conception if they have 100%, 50% or 25% genetic identity, they are not permitted to conceive; ii. if the pregnancy is unplanned, the fetus must be screened any pregnancy resulting from 100%, 50% or 25% genetically related parents must be terminated immediately; iii. if the parents were ignorant of their genetic relationship then medical intervention is authorized to prevent any further breach of Code 46; iv. if the parents knew they were genetically related prior to conception it is a criminal breach of Code 46. (Winterbottom, 2003)

Namely, Michael Winterbottom's *Code 46* posits a near future that the world's population lives in a technotratic state, in which all realations are intimately monitored, primarily, to eliminate the "incest anxiety" that "one may not know who one's relatives are" (Goss 2007: 6) by a legal law, "Code 46."

> The late-20th- and early-21st-century 'natural parent' – who embodies the genetic and social kin credentials – may be dispersed either by fertilization outside the body (in vitro fertilization) or by the use of donated third-party gametes (eggs or sperm). For some people – including the creators of ethical and legal codes – contemporary biomedical science creates a new dilemma for modern kinship: 'How to make sense of new forms of assisted conception which create more flexible and uncertain relations' (Franklin, 1997). In contemporary technologically 'advanced' societies, therefore, the relationships between the 'natural' facts of procreation and the social arrangements of relatedness have become increasingly problematic (and analytically interesting). (Featherstone 2006: 4)

"The problem of making identity legible, by making visible the hidden genetic truths of kinship, involves a whole set of questions of sameness and difference" (Stacey 2010: 149) but what is clear in the film is that the relatedness and kinship cannot be "read off the surface of the body", at the hand of the new reproduction technologies, particularly IVF and cloning, rather, they can be investigated in "the hidden depths of genetic sequencing", that is what people have much to fear in Code 46 (ibid: 149) Consequently, the order of self policing is the quick result of the well-established

practice of reproductive technologies, therefore, “power is exercised at the most local, and supposedly the most conclusive, level: that of the gene” (Stacey 2010: 156). In other words, “a microcosmic articulation of regulation, the gene becomes the cellular information which is subject to surveillance” (Stacey 2010: 156). From this perspective, I want to underscore what is a major point of emphasis in the definition of Code 46 by quoting Jackie Stacey (2010). As she puts it,

> Code 46 blends all three meanings of the word: "code" refers to the legal foundation of the inner zone, to a healthy kinship system of exogamy (conforming to the prohibition of incest), and to the genetic information contained in DNA. In this world of fetal cloning, Code 46 is implemented by corporations that govern by reading people's genetic codes as the new passwords for the regulation of kinship, sexuality and reproduction. (Stacey 2010: 155)

According to M. Brian Goss –a reference to leftist theory-, “the private sector is presented as having been completely collapsed into the State under the rubric of a transnational authority called the Sphinx” (Goss 2007: 6) whose motto is “the Sphinx knows best” (Winterbottom, 2003). It should also be stressed that “nature is not just interpreted through the cultural lens of patriarchy, but that physical bodies are actually in part shaped by culture” (Hubbard, 1990 quoted in Asberg 2009: 27). In a similar vein to Ruth Hubbard’s argument that “women’s bodies, more than men’s, are socially constructed in biological discourse, for the politically motivated reasons of endorsing domination”, the Sphinx, seemingly, “the cultural lens of patriarchy” holds the power to terminate the pregnancy when a “Code 46” is committed (Hubbard, 1990 quoted in Asberg 2009: 27). Jackie Stacey (2010) has observed in *The Cinematic Life of Gene* how the film points out the societal concerns about genetic and racial purity and how these anxieties are mapped out cinematically. She notes, “the genetically engineered humans inhabit and embody

the architectures of surveillance in a global city where speed and mobility are in tension with restrictions and corporate state control through a panoptic technologized vision of the inside, as well as the outside of the body" (Stacey 2010: 140).

The concept of panoptic control is evident from the very beginning of the film, when narrator Maria Gonzales (Samantha Morton) imagines the activities of Seattle-based insurance investigator William Geld (Tim Robbins).

> I think about the day we met. I suppose you would have arrived *par avion.* Maybe you were the first to get to security. You did not intend to stay. You only had twenty-four hour cover. So, luggage a *mano.* And they probably had a driver waiting. So you did not need to find *un coche*. … It was all new to you. (Winterbottom, 2003)

As William enters the airport, she narrates her dream about him, "You have never been to Shanghai before", she narrates the story as if she was in the taxi with him passing through the desert to the city's heavily guarded gates; buying candies from a seller, among a crowd of unfortunates seeking the attentions of approved travelers, even as his driver warns, "I do not think it is a good idea to encourage them" (Winterbottom, 2003). Allusions to an abstract image of a dream Maria has every year on her birthday are prevalent throughout the film. Through voiceover she describes, William, detailing her ride on a subway that takes her one stop further each year, all the way until this year, which appears to be the "last stop." That is to say, she believes William is her fate, which she has been seeking all her life. Maria works for the insurance company issuing "papeles," in other words "cover" papers that allow bearers to travel different parts of the world. It is implied over and over again in the film that those who are denied covers are denied for a reason, **"**You

know what they say, “the Sphinx knows best” (Winterbottom, 2003). William is a psychic investigator “with heightened powers by a designer virus that enables a degree of mind reading” that conducts “an investigation of “papeles” fraud” (Goss, 2007: 7). “Appearing at first intuitive, but then revealed as genetically engineered viral implant,” (Stacey 2010: 146) William is only able to do his investigations with the help of the “empathy virus.” He starts each interview by saying, “Tell me something about yourself!” (Winterbottom, 2003) Avoiding one of the signature elements of dystopian genre which is fetishizing the technology, *Code 46* “emphasizes people -- their perceptions, motives and conflicts” (Goss 2007: 7). The technology that appears in *Code 46* deepens the primordial human experiences; in fact, “viruses that enable empathy or learning new languages” boost capacities that are already in the DNA of the species (Goss 2007: 7). It also means that William’s work is a function of genetic bodily manipulations, and “as amplified bioemphaty, which is just another aspect of genetic regulation, William's virus represents the ultimate fantasy of transparency through immediacy -a rebiologization affect through genetic engineering” (Stacey 2010: 146). At the end of each interview he wants their fingerprints. The fingerprints, “the physiological equivalent of an ID card, such a means of human bar-coding arouses age-old fears of surveillance and subordination, of losing control, and of relying on technology to the degree that it is literally under our skin” (Short 2005: 4). Following the interviews, William identifies one of Maria’s coworkers as the offender, thereafter; he follows Maria to the subway. Despite knowing that she is the person he is looking for, he does not turn her in to the authorities; instead, they have drinks in a bar and she shows him how she delivers the illegal “papelles”, passing a set on to a friend. It is implied throughout

the film that Maria and Willliam's sudden relationship may derive from the side effects of William's empathy virus because, he "loses the co-ordinates of his desire—he is no longer sure of himself or of his actions, instead he finds himself drawn to her almost hypnotically" (Gorton 2008: 32). It is also evident when he reports to his manager in Seattle that he has experienced some issues with his implant, the answer he gets is a bit ironic, **"**we all have problems, William. How we deal with them is a measure of our worth" (Winterbottom, 2003). Being the side effect of the emphaty virus would be a short cut explanation of why William risks losing everything (family, job, reputation) in order to have a sexual relationship with his mother's genetic clone.

When he returns home to his wife Sylvie (Jeanne Balibar) and young son, who await him passionately, he is also depicted as not in his conscious mind; he daydreams being greeted by Maria instead of Sylvie, who remains in the kitchen, as he enters his home in Seattle. Shortly thereafter, when Damian Alekan (David Fahm), to whom Maria sold a cover, in the presence of William dies after traveling on a 'false cover' to Delhi because of a bleeding disorder, William is reluctantly sent back to Shanghai to re-investigate the fraud. Upon going to the insurance company, he finds out Maria has been dismissed for "body issues". The supervisor emphasizing it is an order from authorities indicates, "I was told she had a body issue. It was all official" (Winterbottom, 2003). Further, William discovers that Maria has been sent to Main Lin clinic, the 'outside' where he learns from the doctor in charge because of their brief interlude Maria has violated 'Code 46'. The doctor explains the treatment the Sphinx has given to her as follows:

> She violated Code 46. We have terminated the pregnancy and taken out the memory cluster immediately around it. (Winterbottom, 2003)

The medical treatment that is applied to 'Code 46' violators includes not only the immediate termination of genetically incestuous pregnancies, but also the erasure of its memory traces. Deeply troubled upon learning "the baby was terminated" William reacts and the doctor gives an abrupt explanation "there was no baby just a pregnancy which is now terminated and the memory is removed….The memory was very local. It is just the man, sex act and pregnancy" (Winterbottom, 2003).

Although he knows it is dangerous, William busts Maria out of the institution where she has housed because of their interlude. He remains in Shanghai despite knowing that his cover papelle expires and shares with Maria memories of their -erased- acquaintance. Furthermore, Williams consults a DNA expert who confirms he and Maria indeed share a genetic history. Specifically, Maria is fifty-percent genetically related to him, a "biological clone" of his own mother, who was one of a "set of twenty-four in-vitro fertilized clones" (Winterbottom, 2003). Namely, legally, they cannot "liaise." This conversation indicates that "anything is possible with vitriol" (Winterbottom, 2003). Moreover, it is also important that the genetic counselor – employee of the State- is the character who claims "diet, climate, environment, accident, surgery, the stars, god" and other interventions mold genes' behavior. She further adds, "We are not prisoners of our genes" (Winterbottom, 2003). Although this comment lends itself to many interpretations on a futuristic society in *Code 46*, I would like to draw attention to the way Lynda Birke, a biologist, epitomizes a familiar debate as indicated previous chapters "women have long been defined by

[their] biology" (Birke 2000: 1 quoted in Asberg 2009: 27). The other State DNA tester's remark while confirming the couple's reproductive activity, "you both have the code for high intelligence" can be taken as a comment upon to "anatomy is destiny, our hormones make us mad or bad, genes determine who we are" (Birke 2000: 1 quoted in Asberg 2009: 27). Furthermore, at this point, Elain L. Graham observes:

> The gene is potent object of desire, and carries multiple associations. It serves a convenient and tangible element that comes to stand vicariously for the complex mixture of environment, sociability, natural selection and biology which separates 'almost-human'. The gene, and by association the Human Genome Project, thereby comes to represent what it means to be human; as in this report, where it is a tiny configuration of genetic material, DNA, that plays the decisive role in negotiating the mixture of curiosity and anxiety engendered by a blurring of the boundaries between "us" and "them". (Graham 2002: 24)

Taking my point of departure from the multimediated body theory that is taken into consideration throughout the previous chapters, an important point to note about, however, is that "there is no universal female body, only bodies whose material specificities directly impact upon the body that is produced in the interaction with culture" (Grosz 1994: 191).

Karen Throsby (2004) argues in *When IVF Fails Feminism, Infertility and the Negotiation of Normality* that "the engagement with IVF is never without consequence, and that the material-discursive body will always be modified and marked by it" (Throsby, 21). In this light, it is worth recalling Farquhar's claim that "the reproductive technologies are a site of profound ethical, legal and political debate, generating 'ubiquitous public fascination and horror'" (Farquhar 1996: 14 quoted in Throsby 2004: 21). Namely,

> New reproductive technologies have tended to *weaken* the relationships between the biological 'facts' of conception and the social categories of kinship. The complex possibilities created by the technologies of IVF, surrogate motherhood, reproductive cloning and the like all displace kinship. Family relations are supplemented by a variety of novel and alternative modes of creating persons and creating relations between persons. In sharp contrast, the new genetics tend, if anything, to *strengthen* the conventional categories of reproduction and biological relatedness. The biology of genetics reinforces the significance of traditional kinship categories, in reaffirming the biological relatedness of kindred. (Heatherstone 2006: 6)

Dion Farqhuar (2000) contends in "(M)other Discourses" that the new reproductive technologies and IVF separate the sexual intercourse from reproduction, therefore, they "break the naturalized assumption that reproduction is heterosexual and heterosocial" (Farquhar 2000: 211). Consequently, such deconstruction constitutes an important step because "a disproportionate number of ART clients are those whose subjectivities are "other"—older women and men, unpartnered heterosexual women, single and partnered lesbians, single heterosexual and gay men, gay couples etc" (Farquhar 2000: 212). From this perspective, I want to underscore what is a major point of emphasis in the foregoing argument by quoting Dion Farqhuar again. As she indicates, "increasing alternative subjectivities' use of technologies that separate reproduction into genetic, biological and social aspects, confront the former givenness of reproduction and performatively declare its unnaturalness" (Farquhar 2000: 212).

I think that it is important to suggest here as to this point, it becomes apparent that Winterbottom's *Code 46* makes no reference to the discourse of homosexuality. "In *Code 46*, fetal cloning interferes with the universal laws of nature (the incest taboo)" (Stacey 2010: 148) that the "reproductive normality is situated firmly in a hetero-

normative context" (Throsby 2004: 28). In Code 46 the reproductive normality depends upon "cultural regulation through legal codification, stretching the temporal associations of the past and future of technical innovation simultaneously" (Stacey 2010: 148). Winterbottom attempts not to deepen the "the paradoxical promise of genetic engineering and screening technologies; because it is already speaks of how genetically engineered bodies appear easier to regulate (tracking through DNA screening)" (Stacey 2010: 147). Since "the lesbian mother is depicted as 'a monstrous hybrid creature which threatens the ideological basis upon which society is structured'" (Sourbut 1996: 228; Allison 1998 quoted in Throsby 2004: 28), the legibility of geneticized bodies may cause "new problems for global corporate control of Western worlds and the Sphinx" (Stacey 2010: 147). Rather, *Code 46* adheres to the "hegemonic hold of ….nature, reproduction, and maternity" (Farquhar 2000: 212). Consequently, the Sphinx fetishizes the assumption that the reproductive technologies are "designed for natural species drive to have a child, the naturalness of biogenetic parenting, the normalcy of women's desire to mother etc" (Farquhar 2000: 215). *Code 46* focusing on the technocratic state that is designed for "sufficient genetic mixing (exogamy) to achieve the desirable reproductive purity (a healthy population)" (Stacey 2010: 161) clearly demonstrates the manipulated, fragmented and assembly-lined bodies of a possible future. The fierce portrayal of "the prohibition of incestuous sexuality and reproduction" with a code, the film demonstrates the staying power of the essentialist view of "nature and culture, biology and the law" (Stacey 2010: 161). An example of the fierce regulations to prohibit incestuous sexuality arrives via the virus that is implanted to Maria in the clinic which makes her body physically repulse at any sexual contact with incestuous

relation. Forasmuch as, emotions are used as a form of social control, William describes the virus as something natural like adrenalin; he adds, “When you are scared of something, your body gets ready to run away” (Winterbottom, 2003). In a previous sequence when they are heading to Maria’s house before they have attempted to run away to *la fuera* (the outside) to the free port of Jebel Ali where “the possibilities of escaping the genetic surveillance built on into the urban architecture seem briefly to offer the promise of fulfillment of their romantic destiny” (Stacey 2010: 140), Maria describes her feelings as if she was forecasting what is going to happen in voiceover.

> If we are frightened we run, it is our instinct. Adrenaline pumps round the body, the muscles contract, our heart beat faster and we run. We run for our lives, we run for safety, for our home, our families, our loved ones. (Winterbottom, 2003)

Moreover, the couple knowingly violates the Code 46 in a hostel in Jebel Ali. The love act scene is a bit disturbing for female spectator s because Maria literally develops a resistance, namely, William ties her to the bed, and the sequence includes S&M images and graphical genital nudity. In *Desire to Desire The Woman’s Film of 1940s*, Mary Anne Doane touches upon how Michel Foucault's notion of power and knowledge operates on the female spectator “through the masochistic fantasies of Freud's female Oedipal trajectory toward a passive heterosexual femininity” (McCabe 2004: 89).

> In particular [Doane] makes an important connection with what Foucault referred to as “the fantasy link between knowledge and pain” and the “association, within patriarchal configurations, of femininity with the pathological” (1987: 38). She exposes “the all too familiar icons and gestures of femininity” (1987: 37) as being about how the woman's film *produces* discourses of female subjectivity. From the pathological body, suffering either from psychosis or disease, and the desiring women fated to die for love, to the pathos found in the situation where a mother's love for her child reveals the impossibility of female desire, “we are being subjected to a discourse of femininity” (1987:181 quoted in McCabe 2004: 89).

This knowingly violation of Code 46 scene appears to invest great belief in the pleasure and pain generated from fantasies and emotions that are “deeply rooted in cultural preoccupations with gender identities and power relations” (McCabe, 2004 98) to overcome the interventions of the authorities, whilst, the spectator is invited to identify with multiple subject positions of Maria on screen. Furthermore, in relation to the spectator’s identification, Linda Williams argues that it “has physical effects on the body of the spectator linked to original fantasies - seduction and pornography, castration and horror, primal scene and melodrama” (McCabe 2004: 98). It should also be stressed that, in thinking concept of ‘original fantasy’ with regards to “the mythic function of fantasies,” Cregan considers that they “offer repetitions of and ‘solutions’ to major enigmas confronting the child (Freud, 1915)” (Thornham 1999: 278). And further,

> These enigmas are located in three areas: the enigma of the origin of sexual desire, an enigma that is 'solved,' so to speak, by the fantasy of seduction; the enigma of sexual difference, 'solved' by the fantasy of castration; and finally the enigma of the origin of self, 'solved' by the fantasy of family romance or return to origins (Laplanche and Pontalis, 1968, 11). (Thornham 1999: 278)

Maria’s ambivalence, in fact, her mastery over her infected body is viscerally mediated by the close ups. Kristeva argues that “pleasure and pain are the facets of taboo” (Kristeva 1980: 62). So, Maria alienates the “somatopsychic” pain which is infused by the prevention implant, as well as, she wards off what pertains to the passive mood, “where [she], fluctuating between inside and outside, pleasure and pain, word and deed, would find death, along with nirvana” (Kristeva 1980: 63). Her mastery over her socially coded body makes her “less detached and autonomous” for

a moment, as well as, the abject -- a term borrowed from Julia Kristeva meaning "which does not respect borders, positions, rules and which disturbs identity, system, order" (Kristeva 1980: 4).

That is, as Maria says in voiceover, "You must have known the way the virus works. Was there nothing you could do to stop me?" (Winterbottom, 2003) As the quote suggests, under the influence of the virus Maria calls the authorities to report the Code 46 violation. The origins of the taboo that Winterbottom depicts are profound. Julia Kristeva comments on the beginning of the taboo by citing Freud:

> Freud had strongly emphasized, at the outset of *Totem and Taboo,* "man's deep aversion to his former incest wishes" (p. 24). He had reminded us of the properties of the taboo: it is "sacred, consecrated; but on the other hand it means uncanny, dangerous, forbidden and unclean" (p. 26); as to the object of taboos, "The prohibition mostly concerns matters that are capable of enjoyment" *[Genussgefiihig]* (p. 3I), they include the "unclean" (p. 32). (Kristeva 1980: 59)

Furthermore, Lacan's reading of the Oedipus complex reveals that "the taboo of incest is transformed a function of language: the father says 'no' to the child's incestuous desire for the mother. Lacan calls this 'the Name of the Father', identifying the father with the law. The Name-of-the-Father positions the infant as a subject in the Symbolic Order, the realm of language and social codes, characterized by absence and desire (activated by loss)" (Chaudhuri 2006: 47). The plot mainly revolves around Maria and William's charged interactions, and the world around them. Related to all this, the film takes up the haunting question whether human judgments can be equated or described in terms of fate and desire as voiced by Maria, "If we had enough information, we could predict the consequences of our actions. Would you want to know? If you kissed that girl, if you talked to that man,

if you take that job, or marry that woman, or steal that papelle? If we knew what would happen in the end, would we ever be able to take the first step, to make the first move?" (Winterbottom, 2003) It is important to note that fate is a considerable theme in *Code 46*. The transnational panoptic corporation called *the Sphinx* is reflected as the divine fate. Furthermore, Maria's voiceovers and dream sequences both recruit the spectator with her thoughts and experiences and abide on fate and destiny. She imagines what he might have been thinking as he approached her to indicate suppositions as well as events, memories as well as fantasies. "The thing I cannot imagine," Maria says, "is that we had not met" (Winterbottom, 2003).

The screenwriter Frank Cottrell Boyce states in the DVD's "Obtaining Cover: Inside *Code 4*6" that the initial idea has to do with a "version of Oedipus," focusing on "the inescapability of fate." To this end, the film takes up a narrative concerning exemplification of the male gaze, an Oedipal narrative trajectory, and the fetishization /punishment of a rampant heroine. As Theresa De Lauretis puts it:

> Thus, if Oedipus has become a paradigm of human life and error, narrative temporality and dramatic structure, one may be entitled to wonder whether that is purely due to the artistry of Sophocles or the widespread influence of Freud's theory of human psychic development in our culture; or whether it might not also be due to the fact that, like the best of stories and better than most, the story of Oedipus weaves the inscription of violence (and family violence, at that) into the representation of gender. (De Lauretis 1987: 44)

She further indicates in *Technologies of Gender* that the dominant tendency has been the Oedipal scenario that is central to the films' narrative trajectory.

> So many films follow an Oedipal trajectory, usually figuring a male hero-individual, who embarks upon a journey that will involve him crossing a boundary and penetrating 'the other space' (de Lauretis 1984: 119). This hero is 'the active principle of culture'. Woman is depicted as the object of his desire or the obstacle to

> be traversed, culturally coded as 'an element of plot-space, a topos, a resistance, matrix and matter' (de Lauretis 1984: 119). (Chaudhuri 2006: 71)

So similar to the argument above, in *Code 46* William's Oedipal trajectory as a character begins when he is emotionally attached to Maria, who turns out to be a genetic duplicate of his own mother, however, this choice results in his transformation from being "the all-knowing, all-seeing hero to criminal fugitive on the run emasculated by love" (Stacey 2010: 160); therefore, his journey ends when his memory erased by the Sphinx which can be associated with the symbolic castration in Lacan's term, 'the Name of the Father' that identifies the father with the law. It is, in the end, Maria's story, as she is expelled from the Inside and sent "to slow death from material want in the shantytown on the Outside" (Goss 2007: 15) when William's "days of wild" are edited and he is "re-inserted into his normal life" under the Sphinx's control (Goss 2007: 14). The following quote explains the role of the woman in the hero's adventurous journey.

> … Woman is positioned as the space at the end of the hero's journey where, like Sleeping Beauty in the fairytale, she awaits him; he settles down with her and lives 'happily ever after' (de Lauretis 1984: 133). That the female subject is the figure of narrative closure confirms the male Oedipal trajectory of such narratives: the Oedipus complex concludes for the little boy when he accepts the father's authority with the promise that he will one day assume his father's place with someone just like his mother. The Oedipal contract, therefore, lays the foundations for (patriarchal) social stability by urging the boy to identify with the father and objectify the mother. (Chaudhuri 2006: 71)

This is explained in *Code 46* as due to Sylvie's acceptance of William's affair in order to live 'happily ever after' together. Sylvie is the one who is literally mother in the film. According to E. Ann Kaplan's classification of the type of mothers, Sylvie is represented in the film as "the Good Mother, who is all nurturing and self-

abnegating—the ‘Angel in the House’. Totally invested in husband and children, she lives only through them” (Kaplan 2000: 469). The spectator learns from a dialog between Maria and William that when William first met Sylvia, she was working for the same company, however, after her fecundity she quit her job to take care of their son. It can be argued here, however, that Maria is not as lucky as William because she “embodies [all] temporal disturbances” (Stacey 2010: 164). Furthermore, “it is her body which eventually bears the violence of its impossible resolution” that is being banished with the burden of the memories (Stacey 2010: 164). In contrast to Williams, Maria does not get a memory “edit” as a part of her punishment. By the end of the film, Maria’s awareness is acute referring to her own memory loss she asks: “Can you miss someone you do not remember? Can one moment or experience ever disappear completely, or does it always exist somewhere, waiting to be discovered?” (Winterbottom, 2003) Her strength that she gains from the memories underscores William’s fragility and further, the weakness of the society of rules and restrictions and fears that he represents, even if she does not know what happens to him. William’s fate is despairing because he remains a subject of “normal” life. Moreover “William’s ‘full’ recovery is made evident in a final scene where he is making passionate love to his wife—we, as viewers, are convinced that he no longer has any memory of Maria—he has been blinded to his desire for her” (Gorton 2008: 36).

I would like to draw attention to the way in which Winterbottom presents a version of the Greek tragedy by Sophocles, *Oedipus Rex*, which is about the Oedipus’ unknowingly murdering his father and marrying his mother. Laura Mulvey (1996) in

Fetishism and Curiosity Perspectives indicates that the hero's transformation in Oedipus' story captures a wider, historical transition. As she puts it,

> While the old folk-tale pattern is determined by a system of inheritance based on marriage, from father-in-law to son-in-law, the Oedipus story records the traumatic transition to a system of inheritance based on birth, from father directly to son. Oedipus seems, on the face of it, to follow the folk-tale pattern, leaving home, embarking on a journey, conquering a monster, the Sphinx, and being rewarded by the hand of the queen in marriage and the kingdom of Thebes. He has, in fact, returned to the place of his birth, from which he was banished as an infant, and has actually inherited his own father's kingdom, in direct patrilineal descent. And he has, of course, killed his father to make way for this perverse aberration of the folk-tale pattern, which places parricide and maternal incest at the very moment at which patrilineal inheritance is instigated. Jean-Joseph Goux, in his book *Oedipus, Philosopher*, draws attention to the Oedipus story as version of an initiation rite, analyzing its structural similarity to, in his terms, the 'monomyth' of the hero's rite of passage to royal investiture. He considers the Oedipus story to be aberrant in the hero/villain relation. The Sphinx, structurally situated as the creature that must be defeated for the tale to reach its appropriate conclusion, is a female monster and is thus related to the other monsters of Greek legend, the Gorgon and the Chimera who are also defeated by heroes on their way to kingship, Perseus and Bellerophon. Goux argues that the female monsters stand in for a 'monstrous maternal', whose murder is essential for the rite of passage to take place. Thus the heroes' victory represents an act of matricide that necessarily precedes their ascension to kingship and marriage. The male initiate celebrates his separation from the archaic and overpowering mother. The monstrous mother is archaic in that she belongs to an earlier epoch, both in terms of the psychological development of child/subject and the social development of patriarchy. (Mulvey 1996: 140)

Before discussing the similarities, there are two fundamental differences to be considered in the resolutions of the main characters in both *Oedipus Rex* and *Code 46*: "the mother, Jocasta, in Sophocles' myth kills herself, whereas Morton's character is left in the marginal space of the undesirables. Oedipus blinds himself, whereas William is 'restored' to his original life. However it could be argued that he is now blinded to the truth of his past and of his desires" (Gorton 2008: 34). In both narratives a man unknowingly emasculated by love with his own mother, however, the mother happens to be a genetic duplicate of his own mother in *Code 46* that leads to personal disaster and destruction. *Oedipus Rex* speaks of the conundrum of fate

versus free will. As mentioned before William is involved in an unacceptable form of relationship by legal, societal standards (as was the case with the King of Thebes), but in his case, the laws of the state actually seem to compel this behavior, at least to a certain extent. I think that it is important to raise this question here as, to this point "if the much proclaimed visibility of sexual difference and the socially desirable non-Oedipal structure of genetic engineering and fetal cloning, how is [William] to recognize the differences that matter in that determining moment of desire?" (Stacey 2010: 149) Yet, importantly, William is in no position to deny his Oedipal feelings. In this context it can be argued that the "empathy virus" may augment his feelings for others, thereby, Maria asks **"**Does an empathy virus work long distance?" (Winterbottom, 2003)

In both *Oedipus Rex* and *Code 46***,** the man who has broken the law -- William or the King -- must pay for their crimes. Oedipus blinds himself and becomes a wandering wretch in the work of Sophocles. Whereas, William's "days of wild" are edited and he is "re-inserted into his normal life" (Goss 2007: 14) under the control of the Sphinx's. Interestingly, the definition of Geld -William's surname- in Merriam-Webster Dictionary is to "castrate", and here, William Geld is emotionally castrated; denied the knowledge of what he once felt and he is subjected to live a "normal", that is to say, castrated, to remain under the control of the father, the Sphinx.

The Oedipus complex, that is named after the tragic hero, *Oedipus*, is a male child's unconscious desire for the (sexual) love of his mother. Furthermore,

> The Oedipus complex, in Freud's theory, is also a narrative of a rite of passage. It marks the transition from infancy to childhood, from a boundariless attachment to

> the mother in which her body and the infant's are inextricably intertwined in a complementary duality to the child's assertion of autonomy from the mother achievement of a sense of self, and an understanding of his/her place in the cultural order of the family. For Freud, this transition was achieved only through a painful and never-to-be erased threat of castration, which emanates from the father. Lacan theorized the castration complex in the Oedipal trajectory more specifically as a traumatic, but necessary, passage on the way to an initiation into the Symbolic order of culture, through acquisition of language and understanding of the Name of the Father as the signifier of Law. In the process, the infant abandons his desiring and deeply erotic feeling for his mother, murderous jealousy of the father, identifying with the 'promise' that he will grow up to take his father's place within the Symbolic order. (Mulvey 1996: 141)

In *Oedipus Rex*, Oedipus must solve the riddle of the Sphinx, a query which has perpetually vexed travelers outside Thebes. From the opening moments of the film, William solves riddles such as person's *pasapalabra* (password).

> The Sphinx is placed in the narrative to mark the defeat of the villain by the hero and his reward with the hand of the princess (Queen Jocasta) and the kingdom (Thebes). But placed immediately before this motif of victory/defeat is another which the Proppian narrative cannot acknowledge in its true transformative sense. Oedipus has been confronted, just previously, at the fork in the road, by a terrifying old man who threatened to run him down and kill him. Oedipus, acting as he later claimed in self-defense, kills him instead. Laius and the Sphinx are doubled in the narrative structure. The Sphinx is present as a remnant of an archaic world and belief system. Laius introduces a new psychic element, inaugurating, perhaps, a new personification of villainy that would survive beyond the villain functions of dragons, witches, giants and so on. Thus, the function 'villain', once the maternal as static, archaic monster, is transposed onto a monstrous paternal, human in shape and, rather than static, in competition with the young man for space on the road. It is, in fact, by eliminating the old king that Oedipus is able to marry Jocasta and inherit Thebes, on a level that the story understands only in retrospect. (Mulvey 1996: 140)

Referring to Freud Barbara Creed's version of the riddle of the Sphinx is different. In line with Freud, she defines the Riddle of the Sphinx as "the distorted version of the great riddle that faces all children – where do babies come from? An extreme form of the primal fantasy is that "of observing parental intercourse while one is still an

unborn baby in the womb" (Freud, 417 quoted in Creed 2000: 122). Although William solves the riddles of the passwords in different places in *Code 46*, his empathy virus does not work in the Main Lin Clinic that can be argued to be the representation of the primal scene (monstrous act) where pregnancies are aborted. The lady at the reception desk explains why his empathy virus does not work, "We use antiviral bacteria, we are infested with streptococci" (Winterbottom, 2003).

The Sphinx in *Code 46*, is the Shanghai based insurance company, in a similar vein to *Oedipus Rex* permits and denies travelers' ingress-egress for reasons all its own. Repeatedly in the film "the Sphinx knows the best" is reminded, but it is also implied that the Sphinx' decision-making process remains completely hidden from the actual travelers. Although the travelers are "managed by a network of "corporations with souls", genetic codes become the passwords through which mobility is regulated" (Stacey 2010: 156), the travelers are not aware of the reasons of their rejections that is why the attempt to gain false covers to travel at the first place. The Sphinx has a global power, for instance "William's movements are tracked as he moves across the globe: as screens appear and disappear, technologies mutate, and information flows through the invisible architectures of genomic surveillance" (Stacey 2010: 156).

William's knowingly permits Maria to notify the authorities can be a connection to Oedipus as well. When Oedipus realizes what he has done he gouges out his own eyes and made himself an outcast. William watches Maria make the telephone call, and does nothing to prevent her or stop her. In contrast to Oedipus' response towards the situation, it can be argued that William's is a passive, a coward one. It can be

argued here, however, that the burden of pain falls not on William (as it did on Oedipus) but on Maria instead because she "embodies [all] temporal disturbances." (Stacey 2010: 164) Furthermore, "it is [Maria's] body which eventually bears the violence of its impossible resolution" (ibid) and thereupon, is banished with the burden of the memories. In contrast to William, Maria does not get a memory "edit" as a part of her punishment. Another interesting point to consider is William never explicitly tells Maria of "their genetic similarity and thus of their incestuous transgression of Code 46" (Stacey 2010: 141), it is Maria's dreams that she describes early in the film she experiences every year on her birthday makes her think William is her destiny.

> It is my birthday which I hate. Every year on my birthday, I have a dream, always the same dream. I go down into the subway. I wait for the train. I am worried I am going to be late. The train leaves the station. I feel like going to sleep, but there is someone I have to find and I have to find him before the train stops. The train goes through one station. There are nineteen more to go. I have to find him. And then I wake up. The next year I had exactly the same dream only this time I went past two stations. Do not ask me how I knew I just knew that there were eighteen stations to go. The next year seventeen, the next year sixteen. Every birthday, one less. Today is my birthday. Today I am down to the last one. If I fall asleep, I will get to my destination. If I want to, I can discover my fate tonight. (Winterbottom, 2003)

Thereafter, she decides not to fall sleep because, as she reasons in the voice over, "Who wants to discover their fate? Who will to take a chance like that?" (Winterbottom, 2003) The day she is due to have her final dream is the day she comes across William—on the subway. This piece of memory is the remnant that is inerasable. That is, Maria asks in voice over: "Can you miss someone you do not remember? Can one moment or experience ever disappear completely? Or does it always exist somewhere, waiting to be discovered?" (Winterbottom, 2003)

In *Code 46*, the Oedipal narrative of human and clone love story embodies "anxieties about the legibility of authentic identity, kinship, and relatedness in a world of fetal cloning with contemporary fears concerning geographical security, border control, and the mobility of migrant populations" (Stacey 2010: 156). *Code 46* demonstrates "a vision of multiculturalism that is haunted by both legacies of a colonial past and the potential threat of fluidity in a globalized future" (ibid) exemplifying the concept of alteration, while simultaneously calling into question the theoretical validity of a concept like "humanness." Furthermore, it also presents the instability of a world organized primarily on the basis of genetic apartheid, dealing with "the genetically perfected bodies on the inside of the city in this film haunted by the less desirable bodies on the outside-- that is, how is the mobile subject of global flow connected to those marked bodies restricted to the margins?" Maria represents the Heroic mother in E. Ann Kaplan's classification of mothering paradigms. As Kaplan puts it,

> The Heroic mother, who suffers and endures for the sake of husband and children. A development of the Good Mother, she shares her saintly qualities, but is more central to the action. Yet, unlike the Bad Mother, she acts not to satisfy herself but for the good of the family (Kaplan 2000: 468)

That is, as Maria says in voiceover," I was exiled because I tried to cheat the Sphinx. They left me my memories. They do not think what you think if you are *afuera* (outside).Why bother. To them, it is as though we do not exist" (Winterbottom, 2003). Nonetheless, *Code 46* presents "a decidedly dystopic world into which State/corporate elites have steered humanity" (Goss 2007: 19). Refracted in the near future, *Code 46* is a commentary on the present which involves the values of memory, the hierarchies of knowledge, and the loss of self. In other words, it is also

a commentary on the fact that “genealogical relations are not simply biological or genetic connections, but are derived from social systems that in turn include beliefs and practices concerning how biological relations come about” (Featherstone 2006: 7).

3.3 What if?... Alfonso Cuarón's *Children of Men*

> Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past. (Marx, 2000: 329)
>
> The uterine norm of womanhood supports the phallic norm of capitalism (Spivak, 1987: 153).
>
> The only authentic image of the future is, in the end, failure of the present. (Terry Eagleton)

Alfonso Cuarón's *Children of Men (2006)* that is set in a dystopian 2027 England, represents the results of an unspecified environmental catastrophe and the global fertility crisis that struck in 2009. Doane observes “reproduction is the guarantee of a history - both human biological reproduction (through the succession of generations) and mechanical reproduction (through the succession of memories)” (Doane 2000: 118). The quote below explains the role of the children in our lives in an ironic way:

> Monsters are our children. They can be pushed to the farthest margins of geography and discourse, hidden away at the edges of the world and in the forbidden recess of our mind, but they always return. And when they come back, they bring not just a fuller knowledge of our place in history and the history of knowing our place, but they bear self-knowledge, human knowledge- and a discourse all the more sacred as it arises from the outside. These monsters ask us how we perceive the world, and how we misrepresented what we have attempted to place. They ask us to re-evaluate our cultural assumptions about race, gender, sexuality, our perceptions of difference, our tolerance towards its expression. They ask us why we have created them. (Cohen, 1996b: 12 quoted in Graham 2002: 54-55)

Consequently, the human race is dying out slowly as the planet falls into political chaos. Furthermore, *Children of Men*'s story embodies a classic form of salvation narrative: in the face of approaching extinction, Theo Faron (Clive Owen), a white, middle-aged office-worker, takes a major part in the dangerous journey with Kee (Claire-Hope Ashitey), a black, inexplicably pregnant refugee from London to the Bexhill refugee camp and to their last destination, the *Tomorrow*, a ship belonging to the Human Project that is implied to be the human race's last hope. Miriam, the midwife, later in the film indicates "the Tomorrow is a hospital ship disguised as a fishing boat. They'll take us to the Human Project…. Did you know that the Human Project is supposed to have a community on the Azores? It's a sanctuary" (Cuaron, 2006).

Moreover, it would be claimed here that the Human Project is the deus ex machina. The deus ex machina can be explained as "an ironic way of ending a play [in this case a film] without any illusion about verisimilitude or logical necessity, It becomes a way of questioning the effectiveness of divine or political solutions" (Pavis 1998: 9). Thus the arrival of the Tomorrow in the *Children of Men* demonstrates a conclusion without a closure in the narrative since the film ends with various questions such as "Is Kee's Baby, Dylan, going to survive? Will the baby help the humanity to regain its dignity? Who are the men on the ship? Will hope triumph over calamity?"

Before moving into the part of my argument, which takes into consideration the themes of the film that revolves around the biopolitics, immigration, and reproduction, however, I would like to expand on the dystopian film narratives. Dystopian films offer a critical framework in the imagined future settings that the present state of society is magnified to the point of calamity. R. Barton Palmer observes, the "imagined worlds hold an

immense usefulness for a symptomatic analysis of the present" (Palmer 2008: 175). By demonstrating the narrative figurations of desire and/or fear, they provide "a startling alterity and an impetus to further reflection" (Sanders 2008: 13). This, however, has more to do with our handling of past than with future per se. And further,

> Dystopian [film] presents us with futures that conform to our deepest terrors—and wishes. An important point is that we owe to the Enlightenment concept of progress, confirmed by much of the experience of the twentieth century, an acceptance of this kind of future. Enlightenment optimism about the inevitable malleability of nature and human nature provokes the expectation of a succession of states of affairs strikingly, substantially, and unpredictably distinct from the present. (Palmer quoted in Sanders 2008: 172)

In an interview with Timothy Leary in a 1989 issue of *Mondo 2000,* describing his approach to dystopian setting of the world in *Neuromancer,* William Gibson states, "what's most important to me is that it's about the present. It's not really about an imagined future. It's a way of trying to come to terms with the awe and terror inspired me by the world which we live in" (Gibson 1989: 58). In a similar vein, Alfonso Cuarón indicates in interview that he does not "want imagination, [he] wants references and [to know] why that reference [reflects] today's human perception of reality." (Guerassio, 2006) Moreover, Donna Haraway in "A Manifesto for Cyborgs: Science, Technology and Socialist Feminism in the 1980s", asserts that "the boundary between science fiction and social reality is an optical illusion" (Harraway 1991: 149). This statement reminds us that we currently live an age that can be related to Baudrilllard's dystopian idea, as he observes, "this is our destiny the end of the end. We are in a transfinite universe" (Baudrillard 1990: 70 quoted in Clarke 1997: 6). From this viewpoint, it can also be argued that we are living in a dystopian like world that "a crisis of historical ideals facing up to impossibility of their realization" (Baudrillard, 1988: 77 quoted in Clarke

1997: 6). In his commentary on *Children of Men*, Slavoj Zizek addresses the representation of contemporary realities:

> The film is a model of how you can take a reactionary text, change some details here and there and you get a totally, a totally different story. I would say that it's a realist film, but in what sense? Hegel in his esthetics says that a good portrayal looks more like the person who is portrayed than the person itself. A good portrayal is more you than you are yourself. And I think this is what the film does with our reality. The changes that the film introduces do not point toward alternate reality, they simply make reality more what it already is. I think this is the true vocation of science fiction. Science fiction realism introduces a change that makes us see better. The nightmare that we are expecting is here. (Zizek, 2006)

According to Elaine L. Graham one element of a dystopian narrative is a "confusion of reality and illusion" (Graham 2002: 195). Considering the dystopian narrative's unalterably and inextricably link to the current point in time, I would claim here that dystopian narratives' purpose is to "map, warn and hope" (Moylan 2000: 196). This brings forth another element of dystopian narratives that they delve into the "ways in which those marginalized by the corrupt or totalitarian regime can fight and change the system and perhaps move forward, thus offering a sense of hope as well as a vision of hopelessness" (Geraghty 2009: 52). This can be associated with the call for the "Uprising" by the military group, the Fishes in the film. Morever, according to Baccolini and Moylan "the typical narrative structure of the dystopia (with its presentation of an alienated character's refusal) facilitates this politically and formally flexible stance" (Baccolini and Moylan 2003: 6 quoted in Geraghty 2009: 52). This statement is applicable to Theo, and his reluctance to take the mission and later his becoming the major part of it. What creates resistor in *Children of Men* is that Theo's anger against the Fishes who killed his ex-wife. This, in turn, results in hope for a future as he takes the responsibility of Kee and the baby. Furthermore, Theo's awareness and responsibility

demonstrate “a culture of memory -one that moves from the individual to the collective- is part of a social project of hope” (Baccolini 2004: 521).

According to Graham in dystopian narratives a superior class or “panoptic corporate power” (Graham 2002: 194) manipulates and dominates over the other(s) by accessing “to all the fruits of technology” to meet their own needs (Graham 2002: 194). Reorganizing classes using technology, which is under the supervision of the state or economic monopolies, “on a capitalist basis”, social theorist Oskar Negt, observes “panoptic corporate powers” attempt to withhold the dominated class’ “subjective means of expression” by reducing their communication useful only for leisure lacking of “emancipatory usage”, that is to say, lacking of any sort of political voice (Negt 1980: 75). From this point of view, it is apparent that technology is essential in dystopian exercises of power. Interestingly, rather than making technology a direct part of the narrative, the film neglects the focus on technological advances. In the interview with the filmmaker magazine in 2003, Cuarón points out that he “…did not want to be distracted by the future… [and that he]…did not want to transport the audience into another reality.” In his review of the film, *Timeout* magazine journalist Dave Calhoun makes reference to film’s realistic approach by stating “[it is the film’s] creepy familiarity, not any wild vision on the future… [that makes]… it so involving” (Calhoun, 2006).

Indeed, the “impersonal capitalism” using its own superiority to dominate masses leads to “an erosion and colonization of human freedom” (Graham 2002: 195). *Children of Men* foregrounds early on in the film that “the world has collapsed, and only Britain soldiers on” (Cuarón, 2006). The voice-over of the news-reporters state: “Day 1000 of

the siege of Seattle. The Muslim community demands an end to the army's occupation of mosques. The homeland security bill is ratified. After 8 years, Britain's borders will remain closed. The deportation of illegal immigrants will continue" (Cuarón, 2006). It takes very little effort to notice that the world in 2027 that is depicted in C*hildren of Men* is dominated by an ideology of fear because there is severe competition over resources because of the environmental catastrophes; class and race became major issues which increased militarization.

In *Children of Men* everyday media is used as propaganda medium under the control of authoritarian governance. Media screens, loudspeakers, and billboards constantly declare the presence of the military control such as, "Is your neighbor a terrorist? Report all suspicious activity"; "Avoiding fertility tests is a crime!"; "Last one to die please turn out the light" (Cuarón, 2006). Noam Chomsky in *Media Control: The Spectacular Achievements of Propaganda* draws attention to the role of the media in contemporary politics emphasizing that media "forces us to ask what kind of a world and what kind of a society we want to live in, and in particular in what sense of democracy do we want this to be a democratic society?" (Chomsky 1997: 3) Mikel Parent in "*Children of Men*, or, A Brief Guide to "Embedded" Cinema and the Remapping of Global Dispossion" argues that the world represented in *Children of Men* evolves to a Foucaltian society" in which "apparatuses of subtler control devoted to producing docile subjects through the manufacturing of consent work in concert with overt military force and state violence" (Parent, 2008: 502). Zizek's reading of the film reveals that *Children of Men* gives "the best diagnosis of the ideological despair of late capitalism. Of a society without history, or to use another political term, biopolitics.… The basic problem in this society as

depicted in the film is literally biopolitics: how to generate, regulate life.**"** (Zizek, 2006) Although the setting of the film is England, Naomi Klein's explanation in relation to disaster-capitalism-culture industry in "Disaster Capitalism: The New Economy of Catastrophe" appears to be applicable to *Children of Men'*s narrative. In her words:

> The homeland-security sector is also becoming increasingly integrated with media corporations, a development that has Orwellian implications….The creeping expansion of the disaster-capitalism complex into the media may prove to be a new kind of corporate synergy, one building on the vertical integration that became so popular in the Nineties. It certainly makes sound business sense. The more panicked our societies become, convinced that there are terrorists lurking in every mosque, the higher the news ratings soar, the more biometric IDs and liquid-explosive-detection devices the complex sells, and the more high-tech fences it builds. If the dream of the open, borderless 'small planet' was the ticket to profits during the Clinton years, the nightmare of the menacing, fortressed Western continents, under siege from jihadists and illegal immigrants, plays the same role in the new millennium. (Klein 2007: 58)

As with dystopian narratives, however, there must be exhaustion of ideologies and humans inability to escape from the calamities, namely, the global infertility functions as a catalyst in the film that cuts a society loose from its principles and dignity. Even though the reason of the global fertility crisis is unspecified in the film, since it represents the fears of the contemporary society, Maureen McNeil asserts that "this apparent crisis around infertility in many Western countries may …be about social and political, as well as biological, reproduction – about hegemony" (McNeil 2007: 93). A contemporary research shows that infertility is "a common occurrence".

> Differences in definitions, measurement criteria and healthcare systems between countries make global estimates of the prevalence of infertility difficult. However, a recent and comprehensive review of 25 population surveys of infertility concluded that overall around 9 percent of women aged 20–44 experience infertility, which equates to 72.4 million women worldwide (Boivin et al, 2007). (Culley; Hudson and Van Rooij 2009: 1)

Even more important, perhaps – at least for the topic at hand- is that the narrative of the film is the vehicle "for airing, mediating and containing anxieties about reproduction in the contemporary West" (McNeil 2007: 104). Particularly, Cuaron's *Children of Men* posits the contemporary debate in a near future dystopian setting that "is the panic about fertility amongst mainly white, middle-class North Americans and some Europeans" (McNeil 2007: 93). *Children of Men* revolves not only around the panic and despair that derive from global infertility, but also around the very essence of the debate by referencing the crisis may also be "about social and political, as well as biological, reproduction – about hegemony" (McNeil 2007, 93). This is clearest, perhaps, in Patrick J. Buchanan's assumption in *The Death of the West*. He articulates, "The West is dying. Its nations have ceased to reproduce, and their populations have stopped growing and begun to shrink. Not since the Black Death carried off a third of Europe in the fourteenth century has there been a graver threat to the survival of Western civilization" (Buchanan quoted in Dubow 2010: 157). This quote brings us to the issue that arises from the film's basic premise that "women across the globe have become infertile, for reasons that science cannot explain" (Chaudhary 2009: 74). It should also be stressed here that , however, *Children of Men* is an adaptation of English author P. D. James's 1992 novel, it "alters the book's central reproductive premise, as in James's novel the world is sterile because all sperm suddenly loses its potency, but in the film all women mysteriously stop being able to stay pregnant" (Lattimer 2011: 52). Infertility as a form of "reproduction gone awry" (Jenkins and Inhorn, 2003 quoted in Culley; Hudson; Van Rooij 2009: 2) has long been a taboo subject, because, "when couples remain childless, issues of sexual "failure" come to the fore; particularly for men, infertility raises the specter of impotency and other emasculating disruptions of male virility (Inhorn, 2002)"

(Inhorn; Van Balen 2002: 4). And further, Inhorn and Van Balen indicates that "…women worldwide appear to bear the major burden of infertility, in terms of blame for the reproductive failing; personal anxiety, frustration, grief, and fear; marital duress, dissolution, and abandonment; social stigma and community ostracism; and, in some cases, life-threatening medical interventions" (Inhorn; Van Balen 2002: 7). In a very poignant scene, Miriam (Pam Ferris) describes how, as a midwife, she suddenly realized that pregnant women were disappearing in her area - and then others as well:

> I was 31. Midwife at the John Radcliffe. I was doing a stint in the antenatal clinic. Three of my patients miscarried in one week. Others were in their fifth and sixth month. We managed to save two of the poor babies. Next week, five more miscarried. Then the miscarriages started happening earlier. I remember booking a woman in for her next appointment and noticing that the page seven months ahead was completely blank. Not a single name. I rang a friend who was working at Queen Charlotte's, and she had no new pregnancies, either. She then rang her sister in Sydney. And it was the same thing there. …As the sound of the playgrounds faded, the despair set in. Very odd what happens in a world without children's voices. I was there at the end. (Cuaron, 2006)

Miriam's story may be employed to explain Lee Edelman's argument that "child has come to embody for us the telos of the social order and come to be seen as the one for whom that order is held in perpetual trust" (Edelman 2004: 11). I would like to further claim here that Miriam's story may imply a critique of the contemporary reproductive technologies, referring to the assumption of Jane M. Ussher suggests:

> [I]n the West, science has now taken over, medicalising pregnancy and positioning the unruly body as object of expert containment and control. Long gone are the days of wise women and midwives holding jurisdiction over fecundity, when pregnancy, labour and childbirth were positioned as a 'natural' process [9]. Described as a 'normal illness' [10, p. 480] that is 'inherently hazardous' [11, p. 228], pregnancy is now signposted by medical checks and controls, women being presented with strict guidelines as to how they should prepare for conception, how they should 'manage' pregnancy and childbirth. In this, women are positioned as mere vessels which bear healthy babies, their subjectivity absent from the frame, with dire warnings of danger meted out to those who might resist submitting the passive and docile pregnant body to the all-controlling medical gaze. (Ussher 2006: 82)

Moreover, Heather Latimer in "Bio-Reproductive Futurism *Bare Life* and the Pregnant Refugee in Alfonso Cuarón's *Children of Men"* relates the notion of family values and pro-life movements.

> This correlation not only eerily evokes political talk about the sacredness of family values in connection to the war on terrorism, but perhaps more disturbingly it also plays off some of the strongest contentions of America's evangelical pro-life movement: the ideas that abortion could bring on the apocalypse, that infertility is a punishment, that if women were to somehow stop having children the result would be worldwide destruction and dehumanization and that protecting the fetus, or the future child, from women's reproductive choices, their whims and desires, is the only way to protect the future, the nation, and the family. (Latimer 2011: 59-60)

What is left to believe in when all hope has gone? Though the film can be read and interpreted in various ways, Freudian psychoanalytic lens will be provided to articulate the pertinent motivations of Kee and Theo. Ultimately, the film arouses the Freudian concept of the death instinct within the main character Theo and the concept of life instinct within the other main character, Kee. Freud's vision, from "Beyond the Pleasure Principle" offers the theory of the life instinct and the death instinct. He asserts that "if we are to take it as a truth that knows no exception that everything living dies for internal reasons- becomes inorganic once again- then we shall be compelled to say that "the aim of all life is death" and, looking backwards, that "inanimate things existed before living ones'" (Freud 1990: 32). Elsewhere, Freud summarizes the death and life instincts by noting in the following way:

> Starting from speculations on the beginning of life and from biological parallels, I drew the conclusion that, besides the instinct to preserve living substance and to join it into ever larger units, there must exist another, contrary instinct seeking to dissolve those units and to bring them back to their primeval, inorganic state. That is to say, as well as Eros there was an instinct of death. The phenomena of life could be explained from the concurrent or mutually opposing action of these two instincts. It was not easy, however, to demonstrate the activities of this supposed death instinct. The manifestations of Eros were conspicuous and noisy enough. It might be assumed that the death instinct operated silently within the organism towards its dissolution, but that, of course, was no proof. A

> more fruitful idea was that a portion of the instinct is diverted towards the external world and comes to light as an instinct of aggressiveness and destructiveness. In this way the instinct itself could be pressed into the service of Eros, in that the organism was destroying some other thing, whether animate or inanimate, instead of destroying its own self. (Freud, 1930a, pp. 118–119 quoted in Akhtar; ONeil 2011: 207)

What is there to strive for when there is no future ahead? Being the youngest person in the planet, the death of a single 18-year-old is depicted as the most devastating news in the world. Although he is 18 years old, Diego Ricardo is known as "baby Diego".

> Diego Ricardo, the youngest person on the planet was 18 years, 4 months, 20 days, 16 hours and 8 minutes old. Throughout his life, Diego Ricardo was a tragic reminder of the 18 years of infertility that humanity has endured and its effect upon the world we now live in. It seems that the mantle of the world's youngest human has passed to a woman. She is 18 years, 5 months and 11 days old. (Cuaron, 2006)

The society in *Children of Men* plagued with utter hopelessness - the city streets are filled with wailing, drunkenness, depression, explosions, gunfire, theft, and hatred. Already in 1908, Freud in "'Civilized' Sexual Morality and Modem Nervous Illness" relates the themes of loss, death and destructiveness to his analysis of culture. As he puts it "a restriction of sexual activity in a community is quite generally accompanied by an increase of anxiety about life and of fear of death which interferes with the individual's capacity for enjoyment and does away with his readiness to face death for any purpose" (Freud, 1908 quoted in Drassinower 2003: 15). Lee Edelman (2004) in *No Future Queer Theory and the Death Drive* relates death drives to what he calls "reproductive futurism". Heather Latimer's reading of Edelman reveals that "reproductive futurism is connected to the death drive in two ways:

> first, in how the image of the Child enacts a logic of repetition that helps fix our identities as we identify with the future of the social order; and second, in how the image

> of the queer (which can be any number of queer figures for Edelman, including gay men and women, feminists, and those in favor of abortion) "comes to embody that order's traumatic encounter with its own failure, its encounter with the illusion of the future as suture to bind the constitutive wound of the subject's subjection to the signifier, which divides it, paradoxically, both from and into itself. (Latimer 2011: 65)

The film illustrates how people easily shift into "us and them" thinking dehumanizing and demonizing people regardless of their origin, color, language, appearance or beliefs, which is a reminder of Karl Marx's figuration from the first epigraph. In his reading of this film, Slavoj Žižek argues that "the true focus . . . is there in the background and it's crucial to leave it as a background. It's the paradox of anamorphosis — if you look at the thing too directly, the oppressive social dimension, you don't see it. You can see it in an oblique way only if it remains in the background" (Zizek 2006). *Children of Men* represents a possible future world that human values and will to survive are at stake. Central to Freud's theory is the assertion that there is **"**a paradoxical terrain in which wish and prohibition, pain and pleasure, life and death are ceaselessly interwoven" (Drassinower 2003: 14). Issues of immigration, racism, terrorism, the environment and nationalism all come into play.

Theo Faron (Clive Owen) is filled with despair, particularly due to the fact he lost his son Dylan to a flu pandemic and that he lost the love of Julian (Julianne Moore), the mother of his child. Moreover, the death instinct and its associated repetitive misery are central to the development of Theo who is a tortured figure who cannot escape the traumatic memories within his mind. When asked what he did on his birthday by his friend Jasper, Theo replies, "Woke up, felt like shit. Went to work, felt like shit." When told, "That's called a hangover, amigo" Theo replies, "At least with a hangover I feel

something" (Cuaron, 2006). Given this context, Freud argues that "our views have from the very first been dualistic and to-day they are even more definitely dualistic than before now that we describe the opposition as being, not between ego instincts and sexual instincts but between life instincts and death instincts" (Freud 1990: 47). In his interview, Clive Owen makes reference to this by stating, '[he] isn't your big Hollywood obvious hero… [he's]…a flawed character" (Cuaron, 2006). It would seem that Theo was an anti-hero because the protagonist would not alienate the audience from the future dystopian setting in *Children of Men*. Owen supports this notion by further adding, "He is an ordinary guy in an extraordinary situation" (Cuaron, 2006). 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" (Cuaron, 2006). Theo's hopelessness and despair is prevalent when he demonstrates: "Even if [the Human Project] discovered the cure for infertility, it doesn't matter. Too late. The world went to shit. You know what? It was too late before the infertility thing happened, for fuck's sake" (Cuaron, 2006). Theo is an anti hero who was implied as a former political activist now an alcoholic, whose enthusiasm has long gone towards his profession and life, but his perspective on life alters when he meets Kee (Claire-Hope Ashitey), a pregnant young woman.

That the climate of fear and hopelessness make the society (and individuals) erects walls for protection, and, as wells as, make them sacrifice freedom for security has further links with Freud's death drive. The film gives many references to present traumas, such as, immigration crises, mad cow, 9/11, terrorism, the holocaust, post traumatic stress disorder, torture, pollution, propaganda, pandemics, Abu Ghraib, and Homeland Security. As mentioned before, the death drive is not limited to the characters, however,

the government sponsored, heavily advertised solution, the “suicide kit” “Quietus” is for the ones "who just can't take it anymore" can be offered as another example of death drive. This drug can be seen as “a compensatory sense of triumph over reality by taking their own life, thus demonstrating to themselves and to the world that they are not afraid of pain and death. On the contrary: death emerges as an even elegant abandonment of a depreciated, worthless world (Kernberg, 2007)” (Akhtar; ONeil 201: 183). Through Quietus, an officially sanctioned suicide pill, the government sponsors mass suicide, in a less visible way. In a scene, the news program cuts to a commercial of “Quietus”. In the commercial soothing music is playing and a smiling older couple is walking through a field of daises: “Quietus. It's your choice. It's your decision. It's your final destination” (Cuaron, 2006). Even the pregnant character Kee’s quick response to her being pregnant was a wish to annihilate everything by using Quietus. She says,

> You know, when I started puking, I thought I catch the pest. But then my belly started getting big. Nobody ever told me these things. I never seen a pregnant woman before. But I knew. I felt like a freak. I didn't tell nobody. I thought about the Quietus thing. Supposed to be suave. Pretty music and all that. Then the baby kicked. I feel it. Little bastard was alive. And I feel it. And me, too. I am alive. (Cuaron, 2006)

At this juncture, it is also worth remembering Freud’s emphasis on the life instinct: “We might suppose that the life instincts or sexual instincts which are active in each cell take the other cells as their object that they partly neutralize the death instincts (that is, the processes set up by them) in those cells and thus preserve their life” (Freud 1990: 44).

Kee is illustrated as what Barbara Creed calls “archaic mother” that is the origin and destination for the entire human race. It can also be argued that she is not only the “Earth Mother but also the new Eve” (Chaudhary 2009: 96). Jasper (Michael Caine) who is a

retired political cartoonist, proclaims, “Kee, your baby is the miracle the whole world’s been waiting for. Shanti, Shanti, Shanti” (Cuaron, 2006). Building upon Creed’s work, Shohini Chaudhuri outlines the definition of the archaic mother:

> The archaic mother… is another aspect of the maternal figure, whose existence has been repressed in patriarchal ideology. She is the primeval mother of everything– a parthenogenetic mother, creating all by herself, without the need for a father; she is a pre-phallic mother, existing prior to knowledge of the phallus. (‘Parthenogenetic’ – deriving from the Greek, meaning ‘virgin birth’ – refers to the common mythological trope of procreating by oneself; other examples include Zeus, who gave birth to the goddess Athena from his ear, and the Virgin Mary’s ‘immaculate conception’.) (Chaudhuri 2006: 95)

However, as the film progresses it reveals that Kee’s baby’s father is anonymous. However, the revelation scene ironizes the religious allegorical reading of Kee as the Virgin Mary.

> Theo: Who’s the father?
> Kee: Whiffet. I’m a virgin.
> Theo: …Sorry?
> Kee: Cha, be wicked, eh?
> Theo: Yeah, it would.
> Kee: Fuck knows. I don’t know most of the wankers’ names. (Cuaron, 2006)

However, Heather Latimer in “Bio-Reproductive Futurism *Bare Life* and the Pregnant Refugee in Alfonso Cuarón’s *Children of Men*” argues that “the way [Kee’s] character is *scripted*, and her pregnant body is fetishized, she often comes close to a stereotypical Virgin Mary, full of milk and honey but lacking agency and voice, and this undermines her subversive potential” (Latimer 2011: 62 emphasis in original). The revelation sequence involves Kee’s taking her clothes off and revealing herself in a way that fetishizes her body for both Theo and the viewer. Kee says “I'm scared. Please help me” (Cuaron, 2006). The revelation of Kee’s pregnancy occurs in the barn. It is so ironic that human technology destroys, in a way, cows’ natural body by offering milking machines that work with four tits. It is so absurd that the tits of the cows are to be cut so that they

can fit in the machine, rather than making a machine to fit cow's body. With a naive gesture, Kee remarks, "You know what they do to these cows? They cut off their tits. They do. Gone. Bye. Only leave four. Four tits fit the machine. It's wacko. Why not make machines that suck eight titties?" (Cuaron, 2006) Sayantani DasGupta's notion of the revelation scene in "(Re)Conceiving the Surrogate: Maternity, Race, and Reproductive Technologies in Alfonso Cuarón's *Children of Men*" remains engaged with the assumption that Kee is reduced to her pregnant body without subjectivity. Camera pans through Kee's body as if to emphasize her body's sheer materiality. Heather Lattimer posits DasGupta's argument by noting that "the film's splitting of James's character Julian into two separate protagonists enacts "a separation of female sexual and maternal desires" that leaves Kee with little agency" (Latimer, 2011: 63). She further comments by citing DasGupta:

> Kee's lack of sexual appeal or desire, her missing back story, family, friends, and history, and the way she is infantilized by parental figures in the film contribute to this lack of subjectivity. As DasGupta argues, "Kee, whose name itself suggests an object status (a key) rather than subject hood," is without "context or history." In contrast to the active role given to the pregnant Julian by James, for example, the film reduces Kee "almost entirely to her reproductive and symbolic role: she does not act but is acted upon." She therefore fulfills a reproductive role in the film that DasGupta argues "enacts the same sort of discursive violence against Third World women that [the film] critiques on a wider scale" through her characterization as a vulnerable and often mute black woman in need of parenting and protection by Theo and Julian, a white couple. (Latimer 2011: 63)

Similar with the controlling class (the government), the rebels – the Fishes- view Kee's baby as a vital tool for exercising power. Furthermore, Julian is the character whose true allegiance as a "mirror" is to the Human Project, and the rest of the Fishes, whose prime motive is the suicidal Uprising. As Luke, who becomes the leader of the Fishes after killing Julian, remarks, "I was carrying the baby up the stairs. I started crying. I'd

forgotten what they looked like. They're so beautiful. They're so tiny. Julian was wrong! She thought it could be peaceful! But how can it be peaceful when they try to take away your dignity?" (Cuaron, 2006) The following argument of Heather Latimer sums up how Kee's pregnant body becomes the battleground.

> Consider that neither Kee nor any of the other characters is concerned about what might happen to her and her body once she makes it to the Human Project, although she will undoubtedly undergo a huge array of medical tests, including the potential harvesting of her eggs. Or that the Fishes, the very group who is supposed to shelter Kee, view her only as a container or a vessel, easily disposable once they get their hands on her child, which is in turn referred to as "the flag that could unite us all" and seen as a potential weapon against the state. As Edelman argues, the Child who does not yet exist represents *the* one figure that is always worth fighting for politically and worth protecting legally, and this is why the focus on Kee's future child over her own well-being makes narrative sense. Kee's reproductive function in the film is to facilitate futurity; it therefore matters little what she thinks or has to say, or what happens to her, as the focus is her future child and futurity itself. (Latimer 2011: 66)

As mentioned before, Kee is reduced to her reproductive function in Children of Men. In this light what becomes clear is that "the fetus is sometimes a window into anxieties about race, gender, and motherhood; sometimes a projection of our beliefs about the relative authority of religion, science, or personal experience; and sometimes a proxy for seemingly unrelated issues like immigration, the Cold War, feminism, or liberalism" (Dubow, 2010: 9). Kee's fetus has been given a messianic role that embraces the whole world, as well as, to give an end to terrorism, racism and so on. According to Gayatri C. Spivak the biological reproduction is "a uterine social organization, which can be explained as the arrangement of the world in terms of the reproduction of future generations, where the uterus is the chief agent and means of production" (Spivak 1987: 152 quoted in Chow 2003: 106). One has to ask: whose baby, whose life, whose birth, whose timing, and who has the power to decide? Moreover, as Latimer indicates "Kee's reproductive rights are framed within the film by way of mostly mute complacency"

(Latimer, 65). Not knowing anyone who has been pregnant or given birth before, Kee is terrified, yet is dedicated to save her baby no matter what, so she wants Theo's help.

> You know, when I started puking, I thought I catch the pest. But then my belly started getting big. Nobody ever told me these things. I never seen a pregnant woman before. But I knew. I felt like a freak. I didn't tell nobody….Then the baby kicked. I feel it. Little bastard was alive. And I feel it. And me, too. I am alive. (Cuaron, 2006)

Here, however, it is useful to recall Gayle Peterson's suggestion that "Birth is a journey ... The view of pregnancy and birth as a journey inward has begun at the end of the first trimester. Birth becomes an opportunity for psychological growth and an event to which a laboring woman relates intimately and uniquely, weaving a learning experience all her own" (Martin 2001: 158). Despite Miriam's assertion "it is her choice" whether or not to reveal Theo her pregnancy "the film makes it clear that the only right choice for Kee is for her to be happy about her pregnancy" (Latimer 2011: 64). It can be argued here that Kee's weakness is linked to her fears of the unknown and to the abject. In this respect, it is worth recalling Mary Anne Doane's analysis of abject. She argues that "Kristeva associates the maternal with the abject —i.e., that which is the focus of a combined horror and fascination, hence subject to a range of taboos designed to control the culturally marginal" (Kristeva quoted in Doane 1987: 83). Doane continues,

> In this analysis, the function of nostalgia for the mother-origin is that of a veil, a veil which conceals the terror attached to non-differentiation. The threat of the maternal space "a place both double and foreign" is that of the collapse of any distinction whatsoever between subject and object. Within the Freudian schema, incorporation is the model for processes of identification (between "subject" and "object," mother and child) which have the potential to destroy the very notion of identity. (Doane 1987: 83)

I would like to further comment about the Kee's lack of subjectivity as it serves my discussion referring to the assumption that Iris Marion Young suggests; "pregnancy

does not belong to the woman herself" (Young 2005: 46). According to Young, pregnancy is "a state of the developing fetus, for which the woman is a container; or it is an objective, observable process coming under scientific scrutiny" (Young 2005: 46). In this context, Kee's maternity is depicted in the film as –"a process without a subject"- on the basis of both "a space and a series of functions" (Grosz 1989: 79). Kee's transformation in the film involves her journey of becoming a mother. Elizabeth Grosz in *Sexual Subversions* underscores that "the process of 'becoming-mother' is distanced from subjectivity and identity. Pregnancy occurs at the level of a fusion and movement of the organism (not the subject)" (Grosz 1989: 79). It is important to note that Kristeva emphasizes a particularly important aspect of maternal through the contention, "In a body there is grafted, unmasterable, another" (Kristeva quoted in Doane 1987: 83). Yet, subjectivity has a special relation to maternal body that "experiences her body as herself and not herself" (Young 2005: 49).

Although the title of the film seems to refer to the patriarchal cultures that dominates over motherhood, which is argued to be "the dark continent par excellence [which] remains in the shadows of our culture; it is its night and its hell" (Irigaray, 1991, 35 quoted in Woodward 2000: 163), namely, it is not the child of a man; the child is born to a woman regardless of the idea that the identity of the father is even relevant. This transforms the assertion Irigaray that "all of Western culture rests on the murder of the mother" (Irigaray, 1981: 81 quoted in Woodward 2000: 163), because a new generation in the film is possible thanks to the mother. In fact, this illustrates the fact that if there hadn't been a baby born on earth for an entire generation, the domination of the paternity

would no longer be endured. Chaudhary comments that film both alters racial and gender representations in Western system:

> However, the dangerous journey from the earlier triad of white man–white woman–white child to white man–black woman– black child highlights racial difference as one of the film's primary objects of focus. What is reconstituted here is not a domestic nuclear family but a vision of a future as the end of white maleness. Theo dies before *Tomorrow* arrives, and Kee, the new African Eve, is the last hope for humanity. The supposedly universal subject of history in the West — the generic concept of "man" that always concealed a particular white male subject — dies, but humanity lives on. The supreme sign of racial alterity in the film is figured as racialized gender, in the marked body of Kee. Kee's baby, moreover, is a girl, another shift from the original triad that included a baby boy. Theo "lives on" in the black female baby whom he has not fathered, but whose name derives from his own dead son. Paternal futurity comes to an end in a future in which women will have to forge ahead and remake the world. (Chaudhary 2009: 74-75)

Children of Men invests belief in the idea of female bonding, demonstrating that those who are helpful to Kee and her daughter are mostly women such as Julian, Miriam and Marichka. Theo is the representation of the ideal man who is respectful of women's contributions. As Chaudhary observes, "earlier in the film Theo rides past an official billboard that reads "AVOIDING FERTILITY TESTS IS A CRIME." Since the film situates women's bodies as the site of infertility, these billboards are presumably targeting women, whose bodies have come under closer regulation under the modern biopolitical order" (Chaudhary 2009: 94). All the rest, who are engaged in patriarchal warfare, lay claims to have a right on the bodies of children born of women to be used for their own purposes. Latimer points out, "how it is possible to be politically protected but not yet physically alive through its focus on the status of the unborn child" (Latimer 2011: 53). And further she argues that,

> Kee's body becomes the battleground for these two opposing forces as the film offers a critique of the politics of migration at the same time as it fetishizes the future child. In this fetishization, the film supports what Lauren Berlant terms "fetal citizenship" and what Lee Edelman describes as "reproductive futurism," a process in which the image of

> the future child comes to stand in for the very idea of the future itself. (Latimer 2011: 53)

It is also important to stress here that all the characters in the film assume, including Kee herself, that the baby must be a boy. Emily Martin argues that "the view of birth as concentrated life force allows the mother to be either a passive vessel through which the force flows or an active participant "riding" the energy, other views place the woman in an unambiguously active role" (Martin 2001: 158). In this regard, even Kee's pre-conceived notion of birth makes her to see herself as a mere vessel. In my opinion, the baby is a girl since the infertility is on the side of women, and furthermore, she would be the second fertile woman on earth with her mother. Discussing the fact that Kee's body is reduced to uterus, Heather Latimer's reading of Edelman's notion of reproductive futurism reveals

> [It] is the process by which the image of the Child (which he always capitalizes to distinguish from the experience of an actual child) comes to represent the very notion or idea of the future itself. Reproductive futurism relies on the fantasy that we may somehow return to our own innocence or childhood, to a time-that-never-quite-was, through constant attempts to protect our future world and our future children. Edelman is working within a Lacanian framework by claiming that the image of the Child functions as a necessary part of the symbolic because it works as a political fantasy by screening out the temporality of our own lives and the fragility of our own egos; it screens out the death drive…. As Edelman explains, this leads to a situation in which the "figural Child alone embodies the citizen as ideal, entitled to claim full rights to its future share in the nation's good, though always at the cost of limiting the rights 'real' citizens are allowed." (Latimer 2011: 65-66)

Building upon Lacanian framework Lee Edelman (2004) in *No Future Queer Theory and the Death Drive* analyzes the formation of the subjects within society:

> Politics names the social enactment of the subject's attempt to establish the conditions for this impossible consolidation by identifying something outside itself in order to enter the presence, deferred perpetually, of itself. Politics, that is, names the struggle to effect a fantasmic order of reality in which the subject's alienation would vanished into

> seamlessness of identity at the endpoint of the endless chain of signifiers lived as history. (Edelman 2004: 8)

The film repeatedly highlights the immigration issue through very poignant scenes that flashes around how migrants have been “hunted down like cockroaches” and arrested makes apparent the concept of “abjection” in social and political terms. Indeed, Judith Butler’s argument in *Bodies That Matter on the Discursive Limits of Sex* which is worth quoting at length reveals her assumption about the abject:

> The abject designates here precisely those "unlivable" and "uninhabitable" zones of social life which are nevertheless densely populated by those who do not enjoy the status of the subject, but whose living under the sign of the "unlivable" is required to circumscribe the domain of the subject This zone of uninhabitability will constitute the defining limit of the subject's domain; it will constitute that site of dreaded identification against which—and by virtue of which—the domain of the subject will circumscribe its own claim to autonomy and to life. In this sense, then, the subject is constituted through the force of exclusion and abjection, one which produces a constitutive outside to the subject, an abjected outside, which is, after all, "inside" the subject as its own founding repudiation. (Butler 1993: 3)

In this sense, this can be acknowledged “as a metaphor for forms of Otherness within society or between societies and in this way [it] can engage with the fears and anxiety surrounding a given society’s Others” (Cornea 2007: 176). An ad on the bus plays over and over, “to hire, feed or shelter illegal immigrants is a crime. Protect Britain. Report all illegal immigrants” (Cuarón, 2006). As Jasper remarks, “after escaping the worst atrocities and finally making it to England, our government hunts them down like cockroaches” (Cuaron, 2006). *Children of Men* focuses on those ‘abject’ figures in the background, and the prevailing atmosphere that systematic dehumanization occurs. Furthermore, the refugees, throughout the film, regardless of the country of their origins, they are faceless, nameless, powerless, and voiceless. Consequently, this film is not only

about biological infertility but also is about social infertility. Zizek in the Commentary part of the *Children of Men* DVD argues that **"**the true infertility is the very lack of meaningful historical experience. It's a society of pure meaningless historical experience" (Cuaron, 2006).

Mikel Parents indicates that "the film begins as a dystopia where there is no longer a future –future becomes history-, but ends in a foggy atmosphere where a mysterious boat, "Tomorrow", offers the possibility of something new: a negotiation with the alternate reality" (Parent 2008: 503). In his commentary on *Children of Men*, Slavoj Zizek comments on the symbolism of the boat in the film's final scene: "What I like is that the solution is the boat. It doesn't have roots. It's rootless. It floats around. This is, for me, the meaning of this wonderful metaphor, boat. The condition of the renewal means you cut your roots. That's the solution" (Zizek, 2006). Furthermore, at this point, Chaudhary indicates that, "the final sequence signals a future without white maleness because Theo's death anticipates a post white future in which whiteness will transcend its cultural and political binds that are the result of its epistemic privilege" (Chaudhary 2009: 78).

As indicated, *Children of Men* addresses a near future defined by the fear of the state, the fear of the loss of individual singularity and autonomy, the fear of human limitation, and most significantly, the fear of the *other*. As Latimer, observes, "the film therefore offers a striking example of how reproductive futurism…, the fetus and the refugee, relate to conversations about reproductive politics and citizenship rights by highlighting the paradoxes of a political climate focused on the regulation of who or what is

considered “alive” by simultaneously deeming others politically dead” (Latimer 2011: 68). The citizens in *Children of Men* are not only socialized to fear the ethnic/economic/racial other that exists outside their homogenized populations, but they are also taught to fear the *spatial* other, the actual location inhabited by the previously defined other.

Tthis chapter is devoted to the *Children of Men*’s treatment of the culture of fear, including its origins as well as its effects on society and on the fecundity. The end of the film is claimed to be an open ending. It ends with questions rather than answers. As it is represented in the film that various environmental, economic, and psychological processes result in a culture of fear in which the dominant ideology is one founded upon a general feeling of unease; so the question is “Will the children of women raised to be terrified of the world outside their compounds, the fictional equivalents of contemporary gated-communities?”

3.4 Splicing the Boundaries in Vincenzo Natali’s *Splice*

> Every story that begins with original innocence and privileges the return to wholeness imagines the drama of life to be individuation, separation, the birth of the self, the tragedy of autonomy, the fall into writing alienation; that is, war, tempered by imaginary respite in the bosom of the Other.
> —Donna Haraway, ‘‘A Cyborg Manifesto’’
>
> What’s the worst that could happen?
> --Elsa, Splice

Vincenzo Natali’s *Splice* (2009) posits the possibility of a world in the not-too-distant future where human DNA might be patented; hence, a natural body seems to be rapidly eroding. The Guardian writer Peter Bradshaw describes *Splice* “a bizarre

horror, a cross-breed mutant Frankenfilm with bits of Ridley Scott's *Alien* (1979), David Cronenberg's *The Fly* (1986) and David Lynch's *Eraserhead* (1977)" (Bradshaw, 2010 URL). In this context, *Splice* depicts the debate that the 'Frankensteinian nightmare' of 'science run wild' when "scientists start manipulating the very foundations of life itself, as well as potential problems across the life course" (Stanworth 1987:1 quoted in Bendelow: Williams, 1998: 84). According to *New York Times* writer Manohla Dargis, Clive and Elsa might be a reference to Elsa Lanchester, who played Frankenstein's bride and Colin Clive, who played Dr. Frankenstein in James Whale's *The Bride of Frankenstein* (1935) (Darghis, 2010, URL). Sue Short (2005) indicates in *Cyborg Cinema* that Mary Shelly's *Frankenstein* (1818) was associated with "Galvani's experiments in electrically induced spasms, as well as the philosophical debates of the period" (Short 2005: 39). Furthermore, Judith Halberstam's notion of artificially created monsters in *Skin Shows: Gothic Horror and the Technology of Monsters* gives us insights into the offerings of *Frankenstein*: "The production of the monster by *Frankenstein* throws humanness into relief because it emphasizes the constructedness of all identity. While superficially this novel seems to be about the making of a monster, it is really about the making of a human" (1995, 38: Short 2005: 39). It can also be argued here that "the presence of active female monsters in SF films challenges patriarchal views that women are basically passive victims" (Chaudhari 2006: 104). It should also be stressed that, in thinking the representation of monsters, Haraway considers "Monsters have always defined the limits of community in Western imagination" (Haraway 1991: 180). In Shildrick's account of the notion of monsters, he indicates that they are

> the excluded bodies that fail to conform to any corporeal norm, may sometimes turn up in our own self-perceptions. Instead of remaining at the outer regions of our embodied selves, they may at times reflect aspects of our own subjectivities, creating uncertainties and anxieties of our self-perception and self-identification. (Coupland; Gwyn 2003: 153)

As Elain Graham has claimed, "authoritative notions of normative, exemplary, desirable in the twenty first century" will be defined by the "implications of digital, genetic, cybernetic and biomedical technologies" (Vint 2007: 7). Moreover, Jennifer Gonzales in "Envisioning Cyborg Bodies: Notes from Current Research" points out the link between genetic engineering and cyborg bodies that runs as a thread throughout the varied a historical accounts and explanations. She argues that they generate "similar fears about loss of human control - if there was such a thing- over the products of human creation" (Gonzales 2000: 67). Like the figure of the monster, "hybrid" is particularly rich in meaning. Thus, Gonzales explains "hybrid" when constituting her work on cyborg bodies. As she puts it,

> The term appears to have evolved out of an early seventeenth –century Latin usage of *hybridia* - a crossbred animal. Now the word has several meanings, among them: a person or group of persons reflecting the interactions of two unlike cultures, traditions, etc.; anything derived from heterogeneous sources or composed of elements of different or incongruous kinds; bred from two distinct races, breeds, varieties, species, or genera…. What makes the term controversial… is that it appears to assume by definition the existence of a non-hybrid state – a pure state, a pure species, a pure race- with which it is contrasted. (Gonzales 2000: 67)

Here I would like to associate hybrid with monster because both "perform as a representation of boundary phenomena interdisciplinary between the cultural and natural sciences" (Lykke 2000: 75). Subjects or objects of boundary zones, such as, hybrids, monsters or cyborgs "which cannot be defined as either human or non-human" (Lykke 2000: 75) constitute a major challenge to "the borders between sciences" (Lykke 2000: 75). In Graham's account, she observes that they "serve both to mark the fault-lines but

also, subversively, to signal the fragility of such boundaries" (Graham 2002: 12). And further she observes:

> Monstrosity indicates the end of clear delineations, a chaotic mixing and miscegenation of categories that is in the process of confusion indicates their ordering is far from inevitable. It is clear that the monster is not sufficient in itself but is a spectacle, pointing to, congenitally a hybrid, or liminal being, and thus with no secure or stable identity beyond its opposition to a pre-eminent *alter-ego*. (Graham 2002: 54 emphasis in original)

Furthermore, they "serve as metaphors for another border: that between "the artifactual" and "the natural", which traditionally divides non-human phenomena into two separate compartments" (Lykke 2000: 75). In the case of the blurring species' boundaries I have been examining, it should also include the boundary creatures that provide platforms for the airing of the definitions of human nature. Graham observes:

> Western Culture may be confronting a technologically mediated 'crisis' of human uniqueness, but a more satisfactory way of framing the situation might be in terms of the blurring boundaries, a dissolution of the "ontological hygene" by which for the past three years Western culture has drawn the fault lines that separate human, nature and machines. Definitive accounts of human nature may be better arrived at not through a description of essences, but via the delineation of boundaries. (Graham 2002: 11)

Natali's *Splice* is the tale of a mutant creation/female hybrid composed of human, animal, insect, fish, and bird genes (played by Abigail Chu as a child and Delphine Chaneac as an adult) the prideful achievement of biochemists – Clive (Adrien Brody) and Elsa (Sarah Polley) - who 'splice' DNA from different animals to create hybrid creatures and proteins of interest for a pharmaceutical company which wants to move to the next level with the current research. Natali's monster appears as" an "Animal Plus" (to adapt the transhumanist term "Human Plus")" (Marsen 2010: 65)

because she is situated on the borderline between human and non human. Her monstrosity derives from the mixture of human and non-human dimensions.

> She is also a mythical construct, and every part of her constitution has symbolic value. Her facial characteristics are mainly humanoid, which allows for expression, and invites the viewer to identify with her and attempt to understand her emotions. Although she is a biped, she has the hind legs of a quadruped, evoking the numerous human-animal hybrids that exist in world mythology, such as centaurs, fauns... She also has the symbol of animality *par excellence*, a tail, which is equipped with an additional marker of non-human power – a poisonous sting. Finally her wings, besides giving her ornamental and aesthetic appeal, signal the archetypal image of the angel. (Marsen 2010: 65)

The monster is what "crosses or threatens to cross the "border," for example, the border between human and non-human; natural and supernatural; normal and abnormal gender behaviour and sexual desire; the clean, proper, well formed, and the dirty or deformed body" (Creed, 2001: 11). According to Toffoletti, "Haraway interprets the insertion of genes from one species into another as a transgressive border crossing that transforms nature into culture by the process of human intervention (Haraway 1997: 60)" (Toffoletti 2007: 136). The following is the description of the achievements of the biochemists, Elsa and Clive before they secretly create the mutant creature, H 50 (Dren). As they put it while power point presentation flashes images of Ginger and Fred, graphics, statistics, etc. in the background:

> Elsa - Over the course of the last three years, our lab has combined the DNA from a variety of species to create completely new life form.
> Clive - And, as you know Ginger has exceeded all expectations in her ability to produce medicinal proteins for livestock
> Elsa - What you do not know is that, since the birth of Fred we have an upgraded splicing technique which can be applied to the most sophisticated of the organisms, namely, human beings. (When she says "human beings," the images on the PowerPoint screen transits from Ginger and Fred to an image of Da Vinci's Vitruvian Man).
> Clive - By incorporating human DNA into a hybrid template we can begin to address any number of genetically-influenced diseases.
> Elsa - Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, diabetes even some forms of cancer. (Natali, 2009)

Natali's working on the idea of *Splice* for long years has given him immense time to consider the important scientific developments in genetic research that have taken place since the late 1990s. The presentation of Elsa and Clive is the predicament of the issues which themselves are the key into broader developments and debates in recent years surrounding the notion of "reproductive genetics" (Ettore, 1999). Bill Clinton (2001) in his Dimbleby lecture comments "the sequencing of the human genome, in his time of the office, was "thrilling" (William 2003: 165). In his own words:

> ... We've already identified the major genetic variances that predict breast cancer, we're close on Alzheimer's and AIDS and Parkinson's. "There is no question", he proceeded to state, that "pretty soon... women... in their childbearing years will be able to bring children home from hospital with little gene cards and life expectancies in excess of ninety years" (William 2003: 165)

Claiming that boundaries are extremely transcend in the twenty-first century, Vint writes: the philosophical speculation of Descartes' "notion that animals are machines" could be understandable, "based more on his own projections than on animals qualities. Now we have produced animals as machines in a very literal sense" (Vint 2007: 59). While Clive and Elsa go beyond the limitations of human body through technology or genetic redesign, I would argue here that their biggest mistake is that they do not "return to a notion of embodied subjectivity in order to articulate the ethical implications of technologies of bodily modification" (Vint, 2007: 8). As Elsa points out "scientists push boundaries. At least the important ones do" whereas Clive highlights "what is the point if you cannot publish? ... This is not so simple. There are moral considerations" (Natali, 2009). Thereafter, referring to the H50 experiment Elsa argues that "Human cloning is illegal. This will not be human, not entirely" (Natali, 2009). President Bush's 28 January 2003 State of the Union Address observes:

> By caring for children who need mentors, and for addicted men and women who need treatment, we are building a more welcoming society – a culture that values every life. And in this work we must not overlook the weakest among us. I ask you to protect infants at the very hour of their birth and end the practice of partial-birth abortion. [Applause.] And because no human life should be started or ended as the object of an experiment, I ask you to set a high standard for humanity, and pass a law against all human cloning. [Applause.] (Bush 2003) (Goggin and Orth 2003: 88)

An important point to be considered here is that besides being research collaborators, their being a married couple "allow[s] for themes of sexuality and procreation to be crafted into the narrative" (Marsen 2010: 63). In this context, the insistence of Elsa's "generating a sustainable embryo" can be read both as a scientific curiosity and as an emotional hijacking to his husband, Clive.

Mary Ann Doane argues that the look of intellectual woman, the scientist woman in this case, "poses a threat to an entire system of representation" (Doane 2000: 428). In *Splice*, the female protagonist's (Elsa's) excessive ambitious and manipulating characteristics are signaled from the very beginning of the film, for example, in a *Wired* magazine interview in the film she asserts "If God did not want us to explore his domain, why would he give us the map?" (Natali, 2009) Although, she later says it is "bumper-sticker wisdom," in the director's cut version the *Wired* magazine interview with reporter Melinda Finch scene is a clearer representation of Elsa's position:

> MELINDA. Your critics say, by combining such disparate animals, you are violating the natural order of things.
> ELSA. There was a time when it was considered *"unnatural"* to perform surgery.
> MELINDA. Still, it is quite a leap to go from mending bodies to redesigning them. Do you really think the world's ready for Ginger and Fred?
> ELSA Why not? Chimeras have been with us for thousands of years. Since the earliest myths, I see them as signposts for the future for our evolution.
> MELINDA. That sounds almost... spiritual.
> ELSA. You could say it is our religion. (Natali, 2009)

Regardless of "the symbolic representation of technology that reproduces the stereotype of women as technologically ignorant" (Gamble 2001: 65), Natali's perspective in *Splice* represent a sophisticated attempt to criticize gender-technology relations in that the major characters who are in control of technologies are women: such as the CEO of the Newstead Pharmaceuticals, Joan, and the biochemist, Elsa. Namely, Wendy Faulkner and Erik Arnold's argument give voice to the common argument that "technology is powerful, remote, incomprehensible, inhuman, scientific, expensive and -above all- male" (Faulkner and Arnold: 1985, 1 quoted in Gill; Grint 1995: 3). Interestingly enough, this perspective lies at the heart of the film, and has it origin in the film's representation of women, to be more precise, however, except the scenes of Joan, Elsa and the shareholders meeting scene, there is no trace of another women in the company, laboratory etc. The critique of the representation of woman's absence from the technological domain in *Splice* could be understood by reference to the idea that "technology is more than a set of physical objects or artifacts. It also fundamentally embodies a culture or social relations made up of certain sorts of knowledge, beliefs, desires and practices" (Wajcman cited in Balsamo 1996: 10). From this perspective, I want to underscore a major point in analysis of women and technology by quoting Judy Wajcman. As she puts it, "the very language of technology, its symbolism, is masculine. It is not a simply a, because these skills are embedded in a culture of masculinity that is largely coterminous with culture of technology" (1991: 19 cited in Wolmark, 217).

Interestingly, Newstead Pharmaceuticals is not portrayed as an evil corporation; instead, Sarah and Clive, the biochemists, are the ones who want to open the Pandora's

Box by introducing human DNA into to the splicing program, but the company forbids it, whereupon they continue the experiment secretly. The company's insistence of the product stage reminds us the similar theme that "technology's intersection with humanity but its specific uses under Capitalism" (Short 2005: ix). The head of the board, Joan, puts it,

> I cannot tell you how excited we are.The entire board is thrilled with the progress you have made which is why we are so anxious to move on to phase two... The product stage. We need to isolate the gene in Ginger and Fred that produces your magic protein. We are shutting down the splicing facilities retooling your labs for intensive chemical analysis... You put a viable livestock product on the shelves then we will talk about a 20-year-plan to save the world. Right now, we need to start phase two and you are the only ones who can do it. (Natali, 2009)

The experiment conducted under the supervision of the company, questions the ethical consequences of bio-tech research and re-examine "the question of what it means to be human, suggesting that it is made up of both positive and negative traits" (Short 2005: 130). Clive and Elsa's designed hybrid creatures, in particular, the female hybrid Dren, confute the assumption that 'biology is destiny.' Throughout the film Elsa, "places great emphasis on personal attributes and aspirations, on upbringing and environment, and on having the right input," (Short 2005: 131) in relation to Dren's growing up. Sue Short argues in *Cyborg Cinema* that "hybridity occupies the middle ground between humanity and its presumed Other, with technology serving as a means by which to question the veracity of natural distinctions and reconsider relations of power" (Short, 131). Namely, Sherryl Vint (2007) in *Bodies of Tomorrow: Technology, Subjectivity, Science Fiction* underlines that biopower is not only "the site of ideology's acting upon the body's subject" but also "a potential site for resistance" (Vint 2004: 18).

To be more precise, what exactly Clive and Elsa did for the company was intersplicing the DNA of a number of animals, so that "they can create a brand new trademarked gene-creature, whose cells can be replicated to create a hugely cost-effective new strain of livestock feed" (Bradshaw, 2010 URL). It would be claimed that Elsa and Clive's encouraging new male and female creatures that they name Fred and Ginger, "to perform a mating ritual-dance known as imprinting" (Bradshaw, 2010 URL) at the shareholders' presentation contributes to the argument that there is, "a relation among the desire for mastery, an objectivist account of science, and the imperialist project of subduing nature" (Hayles, 2009: 288). This is also evident when Elsa argues "Nobody is going to care about a few rules after they see what we have made.… Once they see Ginger and Fred, the world will want to know what is next. Do you think they could really look at this face (referring to Dren) and see anything less than a miracle?" (Natali, 2009) The Newstead Pharmaceuticals in the shareholders' meeting introduces multispecies morphogens Fred and Ginger as "a completely unique (couple) that is more than just fate… more than just luck. It is by design" (Natali, 2009). This scene is the representation of the widespread concerns about the dangers of the efforts of science to control 'nature' besides having considerable beneficial powers. In this scene, the mating ceremony turns out to be a slaughter because Ginger has undergone some hormonal changes and turns out to be a male. Then the holistic couple transforms into deadly enemies in the same cage. In fact, as Judy Wajcman argues in *Feminism Confronts Technology* (1991), "the designers and promoters of a technology can never completely predict or control its final uses. Technology may well lead a "double life"" (Tsaliki 2001: 65).

From this viewpoint, Monica Casper (1995) argues that a range of contemporary technologies in science and medicine in particular in reproductive technologies "have made possible the emergence of what she terms 'fetal cyborgs' and 'techno' mothers" (Bendelow; Williams: 218). Casper also makes the point in arguing that developments in reproductive technologies transform mothers and fetuses from "natural, organic entities into a very different site within medical practice" (Kierans 2010: 25). She points out six ways in which "cyborg theory can be used to critically examine the current developments in medical practice and reproductive technologies" and as well as, "the ways in which pregnant women come to be redrawn into these hybrid technologies" (Kierans 2010: 25).

> (1) technologies of vision, such as ultrasound, which enable a fetus in utero to be seen by those outside; (2) technologies of diagnosis, such as amniocentesis, which transforms the fetus into clinical data, and reconfigures when pregnancy might be considered to start or end; (3) technologies of life, through postmortem maternal ventilation, altering our understanding of motherhood from a natural embodied state: (4) technologies of death, for example abortion, and the ways in which fetus cyborgs acquire new uses for research and therapy; (5) technologies of pain, such as fetal wound healing and in vitro simulations (6) technologies of healing. Incorporated here are the numerous examples of standardized technological interventions in the course of prenatal care which lead to the construction of medical cyborgs, such as, the pharmacological agents, nutritional supplements for fetal development, fetal blood sampling and so on and the prospective inclusion of gene therapy, fetus-to-fetus transplantation and experimental fetus surgery. (Kierans 2010: 25)

These technological complexes change what it means to be a mother and help us to recognize that mothers are not everywhere the same. Mary Anne Doane in "Technophilia: Technology, Representation and the Feminine" outlines the impact of motherhood as "a limit to the conceptualization of femininity as a scientific construction of mechanical and electrical parts. And it is also that which infuses the machine with the breath of a human spirit. The maternal and the mechanical/synthetic

coexist in a relation that is curious imbrications of dependence and antagonism" (Doane 2000: 112).

In *Splice* the fetus' performances are appraised over time through a technological device known as BETI (Biomedical Extrutero Thermal Incubator). Barbara Katz Rohman makes a point in arguing that "the fetus in utero has become a metaphor for 'man' in space, floating free, attached only by the umbilical cord to the spaceship. But where is the mother in that metaphor? She has become empty space" (Rohman, 1986: 114 quoted in Petchesky 2000: 174). Dren is the hybrid born form techno-science; there is no mythical and miraculous delivery from a real mother. Barbara Creed considers how horror films imagine the fantasies of birth and death.

> [The mother] is there in the text's scenarios of the primal scene of birth and death; she is there in her many guises as the treacherous mother, the oral sadistic mother, the mother as the primordial abyss; and she is there in the film's images of blood, of the all-devouring vagina, the toothed vagina, the vagina of Pandora's box; and finally she is there in the chameleon figure of the alien, the monster as fetish-object of and for the mother. But it is the archaic mother, the reproductive/generative mother, who haunts the *mise-en-scène.* (Creed 2000: 122)

From this perspective, there are two figures of mother in *Splice*, the biological mother, Elsa, who puts her DNA into the hybrid experiment and BETI (the incubator machine) that provides fetus' progress. In this interpretation "the father is completely absent; …the mother is sole parent, and sole life support" (Creed 1993: 18). The birth scene *mise-en-scene* can be defined as abject. As Barbara Creed puts it,

> In these texts, the setting or sequence of images in which the subject is caught up, denotes a desire to encounter the unthinkable, the abject, the other. It is a *mise-en-scene* of desire - in which desire is for the abject' (1993: 154). Moreover the abject - a term borrowed from Julia Kristeva meaning that which does not 'respect borders, positions, rules' and which 'disturbs identity, system, order' (Kristeva 1982: 4) – is more often than not represented by 'the monstrous feminine in one of her guises - witch, vampire,

> creature, abject mother, castrator, psychotic' (Creed 1993:154-5). Gender power relations lie at the core of this cultural fantasy, for the monstrous-feminine 'speaks to us more about male fears than about female desire or feminine subjectivity' (1993: 7). (McAbe 2004: 98)

The birth scene occurs in *Splice* when BETI, the artificial womb, belches and groans, fluid freely gushes from its chrome hull. Soon after, the fluid subsides and the machine's orifice expands. This can be represented as BETI's womb has become hostile and is ready to kill the fetus via pressuring too much.

> CLIVE- What is going on?
> ELSA- It is coming out.
> CLIVE- What? It cannot do that. It is not due for months.
> ELSA- Well, tell that to the fetus. (Natali, 2009)

Furthermore, there is a huge amount of blood, many kinds of fluid, trauma and terror, consequently, the birth scene in *Splice* interprets birth as uncontrolled, dirty and painful affair, regardless of, its' being artificial. The birth scene can be read in relation to Kristeva's concept of the abject. In her words:

> The body's inside… shows up in order to compensate for the collapse of the border between inside and outside. It is as if the skin, a fragile container, no longer guaranteed the integrity of one's "own and clean self" but, scraped or transparent, invisible or taut, gave way before the dejection of its contents. Urine, blood, sperm, excrement then show up in order to reassure a subject that is lacking its "own and clean self." The abjection of those flows from within suddenly become the sole "object" of sexual desire-a true "ab-ject" where man, frightened, crosses over the horrors of maternal bowels and, in an immersion that enables him to avoid coming face' to face with an other, spares himself the risk of castration. (Kristeva 1993: 53)

The biological mother, Elsa wedges her arm inside of the artificial womb of BETI, which can also be represented as "the vagina of Pandora's box". In so doing, she becomes literally the part of the laboring process, thereafter, the womb appears to be the "the toothed vagina" and stings her. The birth scene evolves into a horrid abortion scene.

Clive opens the entire chassis of BETI, releasing a torrent of viscous fluid, and further cuts the umbilical cord so that he can save Elsa. Status of both BETI and Elsa can be read as a reference to Barbara Creed's assumption of the versions of the birth scenes in *Alien* series. As she points out "the mother's body explodes at the moment of giving birth" (Creed 2000: 126). Elsa loses control of her motor functions -her mouth contorts strangely and her eyes roll- because she has been stung repeatedly by the monster they have created. In a very dramatic scene Elsa asks: "What was that?" (Natali, 2009) Clive's answer refers to the rules they have broken so far, "A mistake" (Natali, 2009).

Furthermore, the film does not narrate "the typical family with the perfect father, mother, and child, each in his/her correct place" (Kaplan 1990: 55). E. Ann. Kaplan (*1990)* in *Women and Film Both Sides of the Camera* underscores the typical conception in Von Sternberg's *Blonde Venus* by noting that

> In this conception, the mother is made into icon, the perfect, all-giving presence at the service of, and under the domination of, the father. She is object-for-the-other, rather than subject-in-herself; an empty signifier as subject, she embodies meaning for the Other as sign of safety, security, haven from the public sphere. Since the mother is seen only in relation to her husband and child, this symbolic patriarchal conception of Motherhood actually represses mothering as it relates to mother–child bonding and (particularly) as it relates to woman–woman bonding. (Kaplan 1990: 55)

Natali emphasizes how Clive and Elsa have their own issues as regards children. Clive "wants children, and yearns for a bigger house in which they can start a family; on the contrary Elsa has absolutely zero interest in children" (Bradshaw, 2010 URL) that she indicates, "I do not want to bend my life to suit some third party that does not even exist yet" (Natali, 2009), and "this is partly due to the way that her own mother treated her on the creepy farmstead" (Bradshaw, 2010 URL); Natali forces the spectator to

struggle for the memories of her past allowing evidence to emerge only gradually throughout the film. Elsa's resistance to the idea of a child comes partly from her rejection of her mother, in turn for being emotionally rejected, but is compounded by her fear of having children because of the fact that she is afraid of losing control of her life. She says: "How about after we crack male pregnancy?" (Natali, 2009) Elsa's problematic relationship with her mother is implied in the film as reflected through her fear of becoming her mother. Nancy Chodorow's statement in *The Reproduction of Mothering*, which is worth quoting at length, reveals her assumption that is "the reproduction of mothering" is a process. As she puts it

> I argue that the contemporary reproduction of mothering occurs through social structurally induced psychological processes. It is neither the product of biology nor of intentional role-training. I draw on the psychological account of female and male personality development to demonstrate that women's mothering reproduces itself cyclically. Woman as mothers produce daughters with mothering capacities and the desire to mother. (Chodorow 1978: 7)

At the heart of *Splice*'s narrative lie the paradoxical notions of the contemporary reproduction which can be seen both as Elsa's "matrophobia" and her unconscious needs of being a mother (It is prevalent when she puts her own DNA into the experiment). "Matrophobia" is "not of one's mother or of motherhood but of *becoming one's own mother*," (Rich 1995: 235 emphasis in original) which Adrienne Rich, following Lynne Sukenick (1974) has termed in *Of Woman Born Motherhood as Experience and Institution*. As Rich puts it, "daughters see their mothers as having taught a compromise and self-hatred they are struggling to win free of, the one through whom the restrictions and degradations of a female existence were perforce transmitted. Easier by far to hate and reject a mother outright than to see beyond her to the forces acting upon her" (Rich 1995: 235). When Clive learns that Elsa has a farm,

which reveals her tragic past, their conversation indicates how deep Elsa's hatred towards her mother is.

> CLIVE- You know, you can talk to me about your mother.
> ELSA- I do not even want to think about her.
> CLIVE- I just want to understand.
> ELSA- If you could understand crazy, it would not be crazy. (Natali, 2009)

In Elsa's account her hatred towards her mother derives not from just a lack of affection or unmet needs but from her mother's craziness. In a scene when they take Dren to the family farm where Elsa grows up, the camera pans the old bedroom which is devoid of any furnishings or decor. A single twin mattress sits alone in the middle of the floor with a bucket. It is given through a quick conversation between Elsa and Clive that it is her bedroom where she was kept like a pet.

> CLIVE. I thought you said your mother kept your room exactly like it was.
> ELSA. She did. (Natali, 2009)

Elsa's mother's version of gender-appropriate treatment can be argued to be a transmission of a message that a reminder of her own unmet needs. Luise Eichenbaum and Susie Orbach argue that the mother transmits a message unconsciously via her treatment the daughter.

> Do not be emotionally dependent; do not expect the emotional care and attention you want; learn to stand on your own two feet emotionally. Do not expect too much independence; do not expect too much from a man; do not be too wild; do not expect a life too different from mine; learn to accommodate. (Eichenbaum and Orbach, 1982: 33 quoted in Lawler 2000: 21)

By linking her adult problems with her mother's behavior during her childhood, Elsa's transformation of becoming her mother indicates that she uses the experiment to resolve the "why" of her problems. Her mother is a "psychopath who is notorious for her serious

disregard for and tendency to violate such rights of [Elsa's] as rights to life, liberty, and happiness" (Kantor 2006: 34). From all of these, Elsa is implied as desperately needing her mother's love and approval, but, unable to obtain it, she becomes what she most hates. Thus, using psychoanalytic terms, Elsa becomes a psychopath in her treatment of Dren like both a pet and a daughter. Dr John B. Watson, the founder of Behaviorism, gave similar example of maltreatment of a child in his 1928 volume, *Psychological Care of Infant and Child:*

> …Won't you then remember when you are tempted to pet your child that mother love is a dangerous instrument? An instrument which may inflict a never healing wound, a wound which may make infancy unhappy, adolescence a nightmare, an instrument which may wreck your adult son or daughter's vocational future and their chances for vocational happiness. (1972: 87 quoted in Synott 2002: 160)

Anna Motz (2008) in *The Psychology of Female Violence Crimes Against the Body* argues that "mothers who were themselves neglected or abused in childhood can re-enact destructive patterns with their own children" (Motz 2008: 52). As Clive puts it, "you never wanted a normal child because you were afraid of losing control. But an experiment that is something else" (Natali, 2009). In this light, it is worth recalling Luce Irigaray's suggestion in *Thinking the Difference* that subjective identity of woman is different than men.

> Woman is not at all in the same type of subjective identity as man. In fact, she does not have to distance herself from her mother as he does: through a *yes* and above all a *no*, a *near* or *far* . . . She finds herself faced with a wholly other problem. . . . She must be or become a woman like her mother and, at the same time, be capable of differentiating herself from her. But her mother is the same as she. . . . She cannot reduce her mother to an object without thereby reducing herself, since they are of the same *genre*. (Irigaray, 1993b: 18/36 quoted in Stone 2006: 134)

Yet, as Barbara Creed emphasizes in "Horror and the Monstrous Feminine: An Imaginary Abjection", that "woman is not, by her very nature, an abject being; rather,

patriarchal ideology constructs her as such" (Creed 1996: 60). Elsa is the one who insists on keeping the baby Dren alive, against Clive's misgivings, and treats the hybrid creature as a baby daughter. In spite of Clive's rejections, Clive also reluctantly takes the role of father; however, "Dren is not treated either as an experiment – objectively following a transparent procedure – or as a fellow sentient being, empathically. Instead, she is used as a canvas that reflects whatever human insecurities and prejudices are projected on it" (Marsen 2010: 63).

> In fact, the film focuses on the role of assumptions in our interactions with the world, and shows how assumptions can mislead, often dangerously. Much of the conflict between Dren and her creators lies in the latter's fixed ideas about how things work – ideas that Dren repeatedly challenges. For instance, the scientists initially believe that the creature will require specific nutritional components, only to find that she actually has a sweet tooth. Later, when she has a choking attack they think she is suffocating, but it turns out that she has amphibian lungs and needs water. Later still, when she seemingly lies dying, they sit by her bedside and grieve, but soon discover that she is a sequential hermaphrodite and is actually changing sex. (Marsen 2010: 64)

At one poignant moment, Elsa gives Dren a box full of old toys (full of melancholia) and stuff when for the first and last time in the film, spectator sees Elsa's mother's picture. It's a picture of a little Elsa and her mother standing by the family farm. In the picture, she is portrayed as a stern woman with an arm protectively wrapped around her daughter. This box is a part of reinforcement that "she has been such a good girl lately" (Natali, 2009). Among the other toys, Elsa picks the Barbie and says:

> Hi. I'm Jenny. I like cute guys, fast cars, and funny little creatures like you. She was my secret friend. I was not allowed to have her, so I had to keep her hidden, just like you. (Natali, 2009)

On one hand Barbie represents Elsa's unfulfilled girl-time fantasies, on the other hand, in feminists' account, "Barbie is said to embody the idea that women in capitalist

culture are themselves commodities to be purchased, consumed and manipulated" (Toffoletti 2007: 60). Furthermore,

> Interpreted in this framework, Barbie signifies fixed gender roles, heterosexual norms and consumerist values to which women must strive. Barbie is said to teach girls the codes of femininity through standards of dress, bodily ideas and modes of behavior. She is rigid and slender, always smiling and immaculately groomed and attired, mostly in pink. By playing with Barbie dolls girls learn that in order to be successful and popular women, just like Barbie, they must look good. Importantly, this fashioning of the self relies on buying clothes, make-up, and material luxuries. (Toffoletti 2007: 60)

As the film develops, the Barbie doll is repeated at specific moments; it appears that Barbie symbolizes a means of expression between Elsa and Dren. Barbie is the last remaining connection for Elsa with a world she has given up on. In another scene, Dren compares Barbie doll to her own reflection in the mirror. Contrary to Barbie's beautiful posture, Dren's body is composed of strange protrusions along her back and arms, as well as, alien-looking legs and an undeveloped chest. Furthermore, she is bald by birth. The obvious contrast to Barbie hurts her. Helga Dittmar (2007) in *Consumer Culture, Identity and Well-Being: the Search for the "Good Life" and the"Body Perfect"* points out young girls identify themselves with dolls. Further she argues,

> Dolls like Barbie can serve as an imaginary point of view from which young girls can see their own bodily self, where they come to understand the meaning of beauty and perfection through pretending to be their dolls. If dolls signify a socio-cultural ideal of the female body that equates beauty and thinness, such as Barbie, then the thin beauty ideal is gradually internalized through fantasy and play. (Dittmar 2007: 19)

Dren (Delphine Chanéac) is, in her own way, "a passionate individual with her own sexual needs, and becomes infatuated with her pseudo-dad Clive, who is aware that work and stress have meant he has not had sex for a long time" (Bradshaw, 2010 URL). This encounter illustrates how easily we can construct the other within our own

fantasy. Elizabeth Grosz's notion of abject can be applied to Dren's development, because she transforms into and adolescent similar to fairy tale in which the ugly duckling transforms to a young swan. As Grosz puts it,

> The abject is thus a pre-signifying psycho-visceral response and an occasional accompaniment of an oedipalized consciousness. It is an effect of the paradoxical nature of the ego and its self-deluding conception of its own capacities and identity. Although the ego is formed through recognition of its body in the mirror phase, it recoils from the idea of being tied to or limited by the body's form. The body's parts, its energies and flows structure the ego's boundaries. (Grosz 1989: 78)

In earlier sequences of the film, Dren watches Elsa and Clive in the act of sexual intercourse.

> According to Freud, when a child first witnesses his/her parents' sexual intercourse, the sight is terrifying and probably traumatic. The child interprets the scene as one of violence, even sadism, in which the father, the stronger partner, carries out a brutal attack on the mother, the weaker. The mother, who is also, of course, the child's own love object, needs to be rescued. (Mulvey 1996: 141)

Within the perspective of the primal scene, Dren personifies the vulnerability of Elsa. According to Kristeva, the female body, especially the mother's body, is aligned with the abject because it does not hide its debt to nature. Dren's intense relationship with her mother, Elsa, turns her to see her pseudo-father, Clive as a symbol of freedom that can help her to create space between herself and mother. C. G Jung writes about the relationship between father and daughter. He argues that

> The [oedipal] conflict takes on a more masculine and therefore more typical form in a son, whereas daughter develops a specific liking for the father, with a correspondingly jealous attitude towards her mother. We would call this the Electra complex. As everyone knows, Electra took vengeance on her mother Clytemnestra for murdering her husband Agamemnon and thus robbing her-Electra-of her beloved father. (Jung and Kerenyi 1961, 154 quoted in Scott 2005: 8)

Jung suggests that what happens in Oedipus comlex is “true also of the Electra complex” (Jung and Kerenyi 1961, 154 quoted in Scott 2005: 8). In Freud’s argument Electra complex stands for female Oedipus complex.

> At its most basic level, Electra complex refers to the phenomenon of the little girl's attraction to the father and hostility toward her mother, who she sees now as her rival. The girl's desire to possess her father is linked to her desire the penis, and the Electra complex is often described as penis envy. The threat of punishment from the mother results, according to Freud in the repression of these id impulses. Freud even speculates that girls, because they must shift their object choice, have a less fully developed superego, which regulates values and morality. (1931, 230 quoted in Scott 2005: 8)

Kaja Silverman’s reading of Freud in *The Acoustic Mirror: The Female Voice in Psychoanalysis and Cinema Theories of Representation and Difference* reveals that “within the normative version of the female Oedipus complex, Freud observes, desire for the father has as its logical correlative identification with the mother (or, to be more precise, with the *place* of the mother), but in the earlier formation the mother functions as both love-object and point of identification” (Silverman, 1988: 152). She goes on her argument by further quoting Freud,

> A woman's identification with her mother allows us to distinguish two strata: the pre-Oedipus one which rests on her affectionate attachment to her mother and takes her as a model, and the later one from the Oedipus complex which seeks to get rid of her mother and take her place with her father. (P. 134) (Silverman 1988: 152)

Mother-daughter relationship in pre-oedipal phase is a part of identification, individuation and dependence process. Luce Irigaray in *Speculum* has shared the notion of the “Oedipus complex” like Silverman, however, she is more interested in the assumption that “both the girl's love for and her identification with the mother, and

in such a way as to indicate that this libidinal configuration constitutes the temporal equivalent of the boy's positive Oedipus complex" (Silverman 1988: 155).

> Unlike the boy—"who exhibits, therefore, two psychologically distinct ties: a straightforward [?] sexual object-cathexis towards his mother and an identification with his father which takes him as his model"—the little girl takes her mother as her first object of love and also as her privileged identificatory reference point for her "ego" as well as for her sex. In point of fact, if all the implications of Freud's discourse were followed through, after the little girl discovers her own castration and that of her mother —her "object," the narcissistic representative of all her instincts—she would have no recourse other than melancholia. (P. 66 quoted in Silverman 1988: 155)

Mother-daughter relationship in pre-oedipal phase is a part of identification, individuation and dependence process. The narcissistically defined self according to Chodorow says "I am you and you are me" (Chodorow 1978: 100); like Elsa in the film says "I am inside you. You are part of me" (Natali, 2009). Kristeva claims that mother daughter relationship is full of conflicts; the continuous struggle of the child's breaking away from the mother and mother's unwillingness to release it. Indebted to Lacan's semiotic theory, she also argues that even before the mirror stage "the infant begins to separate itself from others in order to develop borders between "I" and "other"" (McAfee 2004: 46). Building upon Lacan's work Ann Kaplan (1990) in *Women and Film Both Sides of the Camera* outlines Lacan's concept of imaginary

> [It] corresponds (roughly) to Freud's pre-Oedipal phase, although the child is already a signifier, already inserted in a linguistic system. But the world of the imaginary is nevertheless for the child a prelinguistic moment, a moment of illusory unity with the Mother, whom he does not know as Other. The Lacanian child is forced to move on from the world of the imaginary, not because of the literal threat of castration but because he acquires language, which is based on the concept of "lack". He enters the world of the symbolic governed by the Law of the Father and revolving around the phallus as signifier. Here, in language, he discovers that he is an object in a realm of signifiers that circulate around the Father (= phallus). He learns discourse and the different "I" and "You" positions. The illusory unity with the Mother is broken partly by the mirror phase, with the child's recognition of the Mother as a separate image/entity, and of himself as an image (ego-ideal), creating the structure of the divided subject; and

> partly by introduction of the Father as a linguistic Third Term, breaking the mother-child dyad. (Bill Nichols, op. cit., pp. 30–4. cited in Kaplan 1990: 20)

In a very moving sequence, in the middle of the film, Dren becomes aware of her body when she looks in the mirror with the make-up Elsa did. Elsa tells Dren her own story about her adolescence:

> My mother would not let me wear makeup. She said that it debased women. But who does not want to be debased every once in a while? Look. You see how pretty you've become? You are going to have to learn how to be a grownup. I remember how I felt at your age. It is an exciting time. I never thought it... Maybe we could use some more eyeliner, hmm? Let's try some more eyeliner. (Natali, 2009)

Laura Mulvey's reading of Lacan's theory of the mirror phase reveals that "it is an image that constitutes the matrix of the imaginary, of recognition/misrecognition and identification, and hence of the first articulation of the I, of subjectivity" (Kaplan 1983: 63). Barbara Creed remarks one of the key figures of abjection "is the mother who becomes an abject at that moment when the child rejects her for her father who represents the symbolic order" (Creed 2002: 68). Furthermore, highlighting the falsity of "Freud's idea that woman only horrifies because she is assumed to be castrated" (Chaudhari 2006: 104), Creed contests "the notion that the father is the sole representative of the Law and the Symbolic Order, suggesting that fears of the castrating mother play a crucial cultural role" (Chaudhari 2006: 104). When Elsa finds some drawings that Dren has done, there was no picture of hers, just Clive's. Elsa, out of jealousy, gets mad and harshly punishes Dren by taking her beloved cat from her. Anne Motz argues that "The mother's strong identification with her child, and the failure of psychic differentiation between them, play a major role in the genesis of her

own violence, as does her identification with her own ‘terrifying parent’ whom she then becomes. That is, she sees herself in the crying, helpless child, cannot bear to be reminded of earlier pain, and then seeks refuge in an alternative identification, this time with her own aggressive/abusive parent” (Motz 2008: 54). Elsa says “Can't always get what you want. That's a part of growing up too” (Natali, 2009). When Dren shows signs of rebellion, Elsa hardens back into the experimental scientist, echoing the cold treatment that her own mother gave her. She chains her up and maims her.

> Physically, H-50 has evolved well. However... ...recent violent behavior suggests dangerous psychological developments. Erratic behavior may be caused by disproportionate species identification. Cosmetically human affectation should be eliminated wherever possible. Due to her unstable condition, it has become necessary to remove her zootoxin glands and stinger. (Natali, 2009)

Kristeva claims that the ‘authority’ that the child learns first is “through interaction with the mother, about its’ body” (Creed 1996: 51). As Foucault indicates, “Where there is power, there is resistance” (Foucault 1998: 95 quoted in Chaudhari 2006: 65). No matter where power comes from, -“from below” and “from innumerable points” (1998: 94 quoted in Chaudhari 2006: 65) - resistance exist. As Stephaine Lawler (2000) in *Mothering the Self Mothers, Daughters, Subjects Transformations* puts it,

> In other words, is power at its most powerful when it is least apparent, when it is working through our desires, when, as Rose puts it, it is “governing through the freedom and aspirations of liberal subjects rather than in spite of them” (Rose, 1992b: 147)? As Michel Foucault, from whose work this concept of power derives, puts it, ‘if power were never anything but repressive, if it never did anything but to say no, do you really think one would be brought to obey it?’ (Foucault, 1980: 119) (Lawler 2000: 21)

What Kristeva calls abjection is that the process the infant gathers “what seems to be part of one self” (McAfee 2004: 46). From this perspective, Kristeva’s view of “what is abjected” speaks of radically exclusion but never banishing altogether (McAfee

2004: 46). In another sequence, Dren is taught about dancing by her pseudo-father Clive, who to Dren's great surprise holds her like he holds Elsa. In return for this openness, Dren, after a while, seduces Clive. The scene ends with Elsa's appearance at the door. Natali further associates the perversion of innocence with Clive's fatedness to Dren's body and its consequences –as if sexual maturation and spiritual purity appear mutually exclusive from the perspective of childhood. In a dramatic confrontation scene Clive puts the blame on the experiment: "We changed the rules…We crossed a line and things got confused… Right and wrong" (Natali, 2009). After the confrontation scene they decide to end the experiment. I would like to comment here that, they lose their own humanity in their traumatic behavior towards the hybrid they have made.

> The incest taboo, the fundamental law of our social system, builds on the mixture of fascination and horror that characterizes the feminine/maternal object of abjection. As the site of primary repression, and therefore that which escapes from representation, the mother's body becomes a turbulent area of psychic life. (Braidotti 1994: 82)

Dren completely fulfils the purpose for which she was designed, at least in the first part of the film. Here she acts as the perfect companion who yearns for love and affection from Elsa. It is as if, from Dren's perspective Natali invites the spectator to inhabit, selfishness appear as a perversion of virtues by experience and culture. Dren also fulfils her scientific purpose, namely, Elsa synthesizes the protein that the company wants for the production stage. In her own words: "[Dren] has a derivative. It's more stable than CD356. It's 10 times higher than the level Ginger and Fred ever had" (Natali, 2009).

However, the film is the story of Dren's emancipation from Elsa, about her unfolding as a subject in her own right in her capacity as a self-aware, thinking, feeling being. Dren's emancipation process starts when she becomes a seductress and ends when he becomes a killer. Abjection for Kristeva is a crucial tool diagnosing the dynamics of oppression. It is existent in the self, "constantly challenging one's own tenuous borders of selfhood. It remains as both an unconscious and a conscious threat to one's own clean and proper self. Subject is "beseeched" and "pulverized" by the abject that does not have any boundaries" (McAfee 2004: 46). Dren's transformation into a male hybrid can be read as a representation of an anxiety of a disordered future. Robyn Ferrell (2006) in *Copula: Sexual Technologies, Reproductive* powers gives voice to the anxieties of a possible future in which gender is disordered:

> …in the case of the hermaphrodite, a future is depicted in which gender is disordered; in the case of the child born of the unborn or of many parents, a disordered genealogy. The hermaphrodite is assumed to horrify, since it crosses the distinction between the sexes on the body itself. This body is abjected by an anxiety related to that which urgently attributes a gender to babies born with expressed ambiguity. But the hermaphrodite is not merely deformed, in the way that other kinds of malformation of the body provoke our narcissistic anxiety. The hermaphrodite *deforms* sexual difference, and is thereby uncanny, too. Of course, transgendering is already a cultural reality without the science fiction of the "born" hermaphrodite. The "sex reassignment" already accomplishes the transition from one sex to another through the technologies of surgery and hormone therapy. Would the production of this "hermaphrodite" by genetic means render the category of "trannie" more natural—or more technological? Would it create the freedom for some to celebrate their ambivalence, or would it put up another obstacle to the expression of others' experience of sexuality, as for example the feeling of "wanting to *be* a woman"? (Ferrell 2006: 22)

Elsa's rape is an extremely important event in the film, one whose repercussions resonate at the last sequence. From the human point of view, she has been forced to engage an intimate contact against her will, an act of violation of herself. The rape is a deeply traumatic experience to Elsa, but I would also argue that the human need to

create a distance between self and the other and a hierarchy between male and female, underlies the severity of her response. Given her construction of herself as the owner this half-human entity, Dren, Elsa tries to construct power hierarchies, but Dren while raping her expresses his desire for “inside”. He just says, “inside of you” (Natali, 2009). The metaphor of rape expresses the struggle over imposing one’s ideology, power on the other.

What matters at the end of the film is how she responds to that traumatic experience. In the end, however, that achievement is taken its toll; the reality she must confront in is one in which Clive is dead and she is host to a hybrid fetus in which the briefly glimpsed truth about human sexuality has been obliterated. As the CEO of the Newstead Pharmaceuticals, Joan Charcot, puts it

> Your Dren turned out to be a cauldron of unimaginable chemical mysteries. Aside from the intense concentration of CD356 in her system she was filled with a variety of completely unique compounds. We'll be filing patents for years. Of course, we are extremely excited that you're willing to take us to the next stage especially in light of the personal risk. We think the figure we've come up with is very generous. You can never speak of this to anyone ever. Nobody would blame you if you didn't do this. You could just put an end to it and walk away. (Natali, 2009)

As Elsa indicates, “what is the worst that could happen?” She is driven to enact the one deed whose nature to be a mother, be literally and as well as metaphorically creative and hence is capable of consciously acting so as to achieve what she desires: she is not a victim any more. In a way Elsa turns her circumstances to good count. And this indeed, is what she does; a mother inside a scientist outside. As I mentioned earlier, “abjection” is one of the fundamental processes of “subject in process,” (McAfee 2004: 45) that intimidates the unity of the subject. Throughout the film Elsa

represents the Bad Mother in E. Ann Kaplan's classification of mother paradigms in cinema; however, hosting an alien baby at the end of the film gives her another chance to become a good one. Kaplan's definition of Bad Mother:

> The Bad Mother [is] sadistic, hurtful and jealous; she refuses the self-abnegating role, demanding her own life. Because of her evil behavior, this Mother takes control of the narrative, but she is punished for her violation of the desired patriarchal ideal, the Good Mother. (Kaplan 2000: 468)

Pertinent to my argument, Dren becomes a product of Elsa and Clive's cultural fears and desires to run deep within their psychic unconscious. "'Culture' being the way that human beings have civilized their world with their learned ways (minds) and 'nature' being the world in its raw state, the province of human beings in their animality (bodies)" (McAfee 2004: 39). Dren's function in the film is to "represent unfamiliar 'otherness'", one which challenges the connotative stability of human identity" (Balsamo 2000: 149). To sum up, the notion of 'monstrous-feminine' in Natali's *Splice* (2009) is "tied to the reproductive functions of the female body, which is constructed as abject in patriarchal cultures" (Chaudhari, 2006: 104) proceeding from Kristeva's argument of the abject, defined as which "disturbs identity, system, order' and 'does not respect borders, positions, rules" (Harrington 1998: 150).

4 Conclusion

Throughout this study, the themes of technology, body and gender relations in the context of the new technologies have been pursued to create a mutimediated or hybrid theory that involves the discussion of different critical and theoretical approaches to female bodies with particular emphasis on the maternal bodies, and accordingly, involves the analysis by taking into account the 21st century independent science fiction films.

The first chapter has employed a broad survey of the various writers and thinkers on body studies in a way of broadening cultural implications and trends and responding such questions: what are the limitations of body, gender and technology? Who has the authority to talk about them? Are there alternative models of the women/ technology relationship? Does the emergence of the new reproductive technologies within the context of the 21st century create new ways of thinking about the nature of posthuman reproduction? It becomes apparent in this study that the new reproductive technologies and biotechnologies change the surface or internal functions of the body, accordingly, the new technologies have an impact on humans both physically and psychologically. As indicated, biotechnology can affect the construction of memory, aging, sex and reproduction often seen as the essences of humanity. Consequently, controlled by technology, the hand of nature is no longer dominant.

What emerges from the multimediated theory is a need to think about what constitutes perceptions of female "body" in critical theory, feminist studies of techno-science and posthuman embodiment. The body theories are still evolving, as Balsamo indicates, they are "built across disciplinary traditions and through the application of different methods of analysis" (Balsamo 1999: 97).

I have constructed a hybrid theorization of the body, together with feminist theory and a feminist-psychoanalytic approach and posthuman theory to examine cinematic representations of the new reproduction technologies in relation to the body, gender, and identity. Whilst I have planned to come to a conclusion that the 21st century independent science fiction films could deconstruct patriarchal gender and dualist ideologies and provide a post-gender world where women can challenge social conformity, and gain empowerment in a male-dominated society, the cultural manifestations of the new reproduction technologies in the selected films I have discussed present very different scenarios.

In chapter two I have turned my attention to Michael Winterbottom's *Code 46* (2003) to apply my thinking about the new reproductive technologies as transformational to feminist debates on gender, technology and the body. In *Code 46*, the oedipal narrative of human and clone love story embodies the concept of alteration, while simultaneously calling into question the theoretical validity of a concept like "humanness." This chapter has investigated the instability of a world organized primarily on the basis of genetic apartheid, dealing with the perfection of the human kind.

Chapter three has examined the idea that whether a global infertility can erase social and biological borders through Alfonso Cuarón's *Children of Men* (2006) presenting a treatment of an anxiety and fear in a future society, and considers the implications of this for understanding gender difference. Moreover, Donna Haraway in in her well known article "A Manifesto for Cyborgs: Science, Technology and Socialist Feminism in the 1980s", asserts that "the boundary between science fiction and social reality is an optical illusion" (Harraway 1991: 149). This statement reminds us that we currently live an age that can be related to Baudrilllard's dystopian idea, as he observes, "this is our destiny the end of the end. We are in a transfinite universe" (Baudrillard 1990: 70 quoted in Clarke 1997: 6). Consequently, "the conjunction of technology and the feminine [in SF] is the object of fascination and desire but also of anxiety" (Janes 2000: 95) is relevant to my discussion in this study, while concentrating on the theme of humanity's complicated relationship with technology.

Having discussed how a global infertility transforms our perceptions of the self, human and the other, chapter four examines the inverse: "What happens when the boundaries between the body and technology collapse inward?" (Toffoletti 2007: 8) How "feminism has often been critical of biotechnologies such as cloning and genetic engineering" (Toffoletti 2007: 8) has been examined in the theory chapter to form a base for the analysis of Vincenzo Natali's *Splice* (2009). In this chapter, I have analyzed the debates I have discussed previously to pose another way of approaching posthuman representations of the biotechnological future, drawing on mother humanoid/hybrid relationship in Vincenzo Natali's *Splice* (2009) to develop my argument. *Splice* speaks of the possibility of a world in the not-too-distant future

where human DNA might be patented; hence, a natural body seems to be rapidly transforming. I have situated DREN as posthuman precursor; "a type of transformer who embodies the potential for identity to be mutable and unfixed" (Toffoletti 2007: 7). In this regard, Dren, a hermaphrodite, "acts as a 'bridging' figure between debates surrounding gender and representation and posthuman and post-gender" (Toffoletti 2007: 7) along with the patriarchal family norms. In acknowledging that "the posthuman acts as an unstable form" (Toffoletti 2007: 8), this chapter has underscored the similarities between the posthuman and other figures like the monster and cyborg, as well as explaining "how the posthuman is different to these other non-human entities" (Toffoletti 2007: 8).

Using selective of the 21st century independent science fiction films, this study has explored the ways that these films do not encourage new imaginings for maternal bodies. Particularly, these maternal characters are products of patriarchy's fantasy and anxieties, rather than functioning to challenge gender and other oppressions. Representations of the maternal figures in the 21st century independent science fiction films are not only constructed in specific historical, social, economic, and political contexts, but also tend to replay patriarchal gender ideologies and the Oedipal drama, as well as patriarchal religious discourses. However, these films have been useful to depict the ambiguities and contradictions of maternal existence as it is represented in mainstream Hollywood films. Furthermore, this study shows that none of these films represent an exploration of a world where a woman's identity is depicted beyond the discourse of male. Although they are rooted in deep cultural meanings, these films tend to "signify female gender in a way that reinforces an essentialist identity for the female

body as the maternal body" like their Hollywood counterparts (Balsamo 1996: 9). Moreover, en route to answering whether their visions provide an alternative to conventional patriarchy, I have reviewed the themes of the films regarding the relationship between women and technology. It has been my contention that even though, they depict distinctive approach to the new reproductive technologies and gender issues, they do not go beyond the mainstream theories that "the female body is persistently coded as the cultural sign of the "natural," the "sexual," and the "reproductive"" (Balsamo 1996: 9). Therefore, the analytical survey of the 21st century science fiction films that are selected for inclusion by various directors from different countries suggests that neither the general survey of maternal representation nor the approaches are used seek to access new imaginings of maternal bodies in the 21st century independent science fiction cinema.

The central debates of this study have evolved focusing on how technology affects the body and social representations. This analysis tends to focus on the complex relationship between technology and the female body by assuming that technology is the 'force' that decays the 'natural' and 'docile' body. Even though how hybrid the theory is constructed, this study presupposes the concepts of technology and the body to operate in a certain dichotomized and unequal position. In a similar vein to Jacques Ellul's argument in *The Technological Society* (1965) that changes in technology spontaneously cause social changes, this study has discussed the technological determinists' analysis of technology's decisive effects on society by overviewing the achievements in the new reproductive technologies.

I have argued that the meanings of the maternal bodies displayed, paraded, and commodified in the 21st century independent science fiction are complex. An articulation of "body multiplied" has been raised at several points throughout this study, particularly when I have sought to emphasize the ambiguity of images. Judith Butler has argued that the body "is not a 'being,' but a variable boundary, a surface whose permeability is politically regulated, a signifying practice within a cultural field of gender hierarchy and compulsory heterosexuality" (Butler 1999: 177).

Additionally, this study shows that in attempting to make sense of gender-technology relation, one must necessarily engage with whole series of questions which lie at the heart of contemporary debates right across the social sciences. But whilst these questions- in their broader sense, questions about the future of the humanity, as Butler observes, "if there are norms of recognition by which the 'human' is constituted, and these norms encode operations of power, then it follows that the contest over the future of the 'human' will be a contest over the power that works in and through such norms" (Butler 2004: 13). Inquiries into the complexities of body rather than the assumption of any naturalised coherence, are now firmly on the agenda. It has been my contention that both independent science fiction cinema and social theories are produced within a particular historical and cultural context and those they might (differently) address a similar terrain.

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