

Sympathy for the Clone: (Post)Human Identities Enhanced by the 'Evil Science' Construct and its Commodifying Practices in Contemporary Clone Fiction

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Involving in and Depicting Science: SF's Ambivalent Effect

Science fiction (SF), in any of its artistic representations, serves as an excellent platform to make science more appealing and accessible to the general public. It can be a very valuable didactic tool, but it also often foresees many scientific developments that eventually become part of our everyday lives. This visionary quality has also led to new disciplines within the scientific professions, such as SF Prototyping (SFP), applied to envision future development possibilities for engineering, medical or business technologies. But perhaps the most outstanding contribution of the genre is its ability to arouse critical thinking about our own nature and the way we relate to the issues that most dramatically shape human experience, which often include scientific discourse and practice. This is a double-edged sword, since the messages conveyed through fiction can sometimes result in popular misconceptions which in turn may affect scientific research and performance and, consequently, society. In our days, biomedical science is probably the most fertile ground to explore this ambivalent mechanism, both for its abundance in fiction and for the crucial ethical debates it ignites in our society, an obviously interrelated binomial. A

decade ago Joan Slonezewski and Michael Levy (2003: 175) already acknowledged «Genetic engineering» and «Sexuality and reproduction» as two of the five most enduring themes in 20thC SF. The dangers of genetic manipulation seem to have, in fact, displaced those of nuclear power in the shaping of a common suspicion of science which reached its zenith after the Second World War. Two illustrative examples of this shift, as Craig Cormick (2006: 182) has pointed out, are the remakes of *Spiderman* (Dir. Sam Raimi, USA, 2002) and *Hulk* (Dir. Ang Lee, USA, 2003): in both cases the superheroes' powers, hitherto derived from nuclear radiation, now come as the consequence of genetic alteration.

A popular character in SF narrative is "the mad scientist"- driven by blind ambition for knowledge and accomplishment to a god-like level-, a figure that particularly stands out in the biomedical subgenre. But this stereotype, built upon a long tradition of literary and cinematographic icons (*e. g.* Dr. Faustus, Victor Frankenstein or C. A. Rotwang) is not the only agent to blame for science's depiction as perverse: corporate greed and governmental control also take part in such portrayal. All of these powers are the ones actually operating behind the misuse of science; a misuse which, ironically, is not perceived as such. Blame falls on the tool, not the user. This blurring of responsibilities contributes to an established paradigm: that science is uncontrollable *per se*. People cannot have control over science or scientists; they escape law and ethics and might even be unable to predict or repair the catastrophic consequences of their acts. Altering the natural order of things is unavoidably and intrinsically wrong, a discourse that prevailed in the depiction of nuclear power and that has now, as we have mentioned, naturally been assimilated by biomedical praxis.

Narratives that have genetic engineering or cloning as a structural axis usually follow a more or less typified pattern: the aforementioned techniques favour some members of the community and displace others who are left out to different degrees. This is generally accomplished through the fabrication of a lie or an alternate reality in

which information is deliberately kept from the beneficiaries, the victims, or both. The "less-than-human" status conferred to the clones or the genetically inferior reflects the *inhumanity* of the scientific agent that has brought them to this alienation and abuse. It is these victimised characters who denounce the illegal/immoral practice to their society and/or to the audience. Although the main question in these works of fiction is precisely what it means to be human and who can be catalogued as such, this is often accompanied by the sometimes hidden message that cloning and genetic engineering can only result in disastrous and immoral situations. Science, having enabled these practices, is "evil", and everything scientific is contaminated by this evilness.

But one undeniable advantage of SF, regardless of the negative connotations, is that it forces us to reflect upon what hasn't yet happened. More than that just a warning, this has a preventive quality, sparking essential debates in anticipation of the problems that can create them. Thus, an evil depiction of the consequence does not necessarily result in a bad reputation for the praxis. In fact, research concludes that, contrary to a common belief and concern among both SF advocates and detractors, fictional representations do not particularly shape *bad* perceptions of science itself. For example, Jenny Kitzinger's questioning of what she has coined the "sci-fi alibi" found that when people were invited to explain their concerns about stem cells research, GM crops and nanotechnology, they would often avoid fictional references or just use them metaphorically and instead preferred to base their worries on historical precedents such as nuclear disasters, Mad Cow or BSE crises, or scandals over weapons of mass destruction (Kitzinger 2010: 75). Among other interesting conclusions drawn from a previous study by Kitzinger, Henderson and Smart (2002), indeed quite positive claims for SF, were that, as opposed to news and media, fiction «is more likely to represent people as citizens and activists, and to introduce characters with marginalised voices»; that it «is more likely to explore ambivalence of opinion» as well as emphasizing science's *unpredictability* (Kitzinger 2010: 83).

Because the realm of the human gene, particularly cloning, strikes to the core of human identity both with regards to the individual as well as to the species, negotiations between fiction, potential risks, uncontrolled science and *inhumane* consequences of its development are of paramount interest in contemporary epistemology. In this article I submit that *humanity* in artificially created beings is particularly enhanced by diegesis that include the "evil science" construct; that which is abstract and anonymous, often bordering science and fiction and acquiring a halo of fantasy due to its intangibility. This depiction of science as ungoverned always has to make use of the humanization of its "products" to the point where these can't be governed either; when they try to control their own destiny. In the case of cloning, as we will see, this thematic field has become so much richer in recent years that the rearrangement of power within those narrative frameworks that seemed standardised, has likewise matured, introducing characters whose (post)humanity (Haraway 1991; Hayles 1999) draws our own into a new era for our species. This article, therefore, will be devoted to analysing contemporary works of fiction dealing with human cloning in literary and cinematographic discourses, paying close attention to the construction of science as evil and to the new semiotics of the human identity they display. With this aim, although other works will be cross-referenced, the main corpus will include the novel *Never Let Me Go* (Kazuo Ishiguro, 2005), the motion pictures *The Island* (Dir. Michael Bay, USA, 2005) and *Moon* (Dir. Duncan Jones, UK, 2009), as well as the TV series *Orphan Black* (created by Graeme Manson & John Fawcett, Canada, 2013–). Such an eclectic sampling should provide an outline for distinctive typified patterns while allowing room for their transgressions, as a sign of the times and of genre.



Image 1. Clones being harvested in *The Island*.

Narrative Considerations on the Clone

Technology as a tool is rarely a problem. It becomes a problem when we can no longer *use* it as such because it acquires a certain, variable degree of autonomy and agency. This is particularly relevant in fictions related to the biomedical sciences; those that deal with human physiognomy or mind. Although human *impersonation* as a source of identity conflict tends to be accompanied by the misused science element, clones and genetically engineered characters discursively differ from other human-resembling artificial creations. They defy our capability of determining what *human* means or what a *person* is, even more than replicant/AI/cyborg narratives do. In this regard, the clone stands as a perfect discursive and biological exponent of the concept of alterity: a clone is an identical individual, one hundred percent human, who is nevertheless viewed as a subversion of the self. It is precisely the lack of difference here which constitutes the maximum threat to the cohesion of identity and ontology.

When exploring the narrative foundation of the clone we inevitably have to consider the abundance of replicas of the self, present in literature and cinema. As Hillel Schwartz highlights in *The Culture of the Copy: Striking Likenesses, Unreasonable Facsimiles* (1996), our society has always been fascinated by this concept. Two major realizations of the human copy can be found in doubles¹ and clones. Both share many characteristics; the most significant being this quality of imitating an original to the extent of becoming physically indistinguishable from him or her. In most double narratives -mainly folkloric ones - the double is unreal, a ghostly representation of the original as a sort of *Doppelgänger* nonexistent outside the original's

1 An exhaustive analysis on the uncanny value of the double can be found in Otto Rank's study *Der Doppelgänger: Eine Psychoanalytische Studie* (Vienna/Leipzig/Zurich: Internationaler Psychoanalytischer Verlag, 1925; English translation and edition by Harry Tucker Jr.: *The Double: a Psychoanalytic Study*. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1971).

mind; however, others do display a true double representation of their referent. In the 1970's, this inspired some terror and socially critical SF like the iconic film *The Stepford Wives* (Dir. Bryan Forbes, USA, 1975) based on the 1972 novel by Ira Levin. Still in these cases, as in clone narrative, even if attention is not drawn to the enabling technology, the scepticism of an "obscure", dangerous science, typical of the (post)Romantic period and of the second half of the twentieth century, is blatant. Both types of narratives also pose the fundamental question of identity: where is the boundary between the self and the other. For postmodern western culture, obsessed with the concept of subjectivity, both the copy and the clone threaten the individual and yet, their discursive positioning is quite different.

In his article "Telling the Difference: Clones, Doubles and What's in Between" (2011/2012) Amit Marcus concludes that while narratives of doubles often end in the death of the original, clone narratives provide a way to extend life or even gain immortality. The double threatens the physical, mental and spiritual survival of the original, whereas the clone doesn't. In spite of one's initial rejection of the figure of the clone as an impostor, in most clone narratives there is no tension or rivalry between the original and the clone(s): they either don't co-exist or are simply unaware of each other's existence (e.g. *Never Let Me Go*). However, when they do, conflictive dialectics arise, although in these scenarios the tension is focused on the figure of the cloner, it being a single person, an institution or a corporation. The cloner is the "evil science" agent, never performing its duty for the benefit of the clone and very rarely for the original.

The Settings: the Evil Science Construct and its Agents

In the Hollywood SF pastiche *The Island*, biomedical science is portrayed as evil in its goal and its means. The clones are subjected to unnecessary suffering and cruelty in their deaths and some of the

people who work at "the compound", the fake sheltering community in which clones are harvested, perform their duties in a rather sadistic way. The company also operates secretly and illegally, hiding the truth from society and its own clients. Since the entire medical personnel collaborate, the evil is not restricted to Dr. Merrick who fully embodies all the "mad scientist" stereotypes («I give life! »). The "outcasts", the ones who are not scientists or have no scientific knowledge, are the morally righteous characters even if they are killers or collaborate with the clone factory. The dangerous message that knowledge, particularly scientific, equals evilness is made blatant in this film.

Duncan Jones' opera prima *Moon* is a far more exquisite and evolved treatment of the theme. In this film, clones are stored and progressively awakened to substitute the previous solitary worker at a mine on the Moon. The prosthetic memory of the original worker, who lives happily on Earth, is implanted into each new clone. This provides him with *identity* and the technical knowledge his original had, thus sparing the company time and training expenses running the complex. The original does not gain benefit from the harm of cloning; in fact the film suggests that he is not even aware of the situation, but he is also a victim who has had his identity stolen. The "evil science" shows here its full multidisciplinary potential: telecommunications, energy industry, cloning, computational neuroscience, etc.: are all devoted to immoral behaviour, illegality and abominations. Nevertheless, in the end, redemption comes by way of Gerty, the AI unit whose command is to «help Sam». The outstanding singularity of Gerty completely breaks with all previous AI paradigms; while the embodiment of scientific development, "he" displays a much higher degree of humanity than the scientists themselves. With its unique approach to clone fiction, this masterpiece has undoubtedly become a reference for the subgenre.

The evilness of the scientific element in *Orphan Black*, though quite conservative in its characterization, is highly problematized by the plot itself. To start with, there isn't just one source of evil, since there are various enemies on the malevolent side. Secondly, evilness is attributed in equal parts to science and to its antitheses. Sarah and her "siblings"

are chased by several antagonistic groups ranging from religious extremism (the pseudo neo-luddite brotherhood of the Proletheans) to unscrupulous experimentation (Dyad biotech corporation). Some evil characters even agglutinate both extremes simultaneously like the “New Age” Prolethean Hank, or the Neolutionist Dr. Leekie. One of the “good clones”, Cosima, is not only a highly qualified scientist but also «*the science*» (2x9; my emphasis) as she refers to herself in allusion to the study being carried out within her in which she participates actively. Finally, the clones’ genetic design seems to have provided considerable biological advantages for Sarah’s child, Kira, who survives a car accident completely uninjured. Although the clones are instrumentalized and suffer the consequences of their “artificial” nature, the engineering that has produced them itself is not so categorically tainted with evilness. As Sarah wisely clarifies to Cosima, she (Sarah) is «worried about scientists more than science» (1x8). Science is obscure because it remains mysterious and untameable but it is also tantalising thanks to Cosima, Kira and several other “good” characters related to science. This duality is represented cinematographically too, with the juxtaposition of light and dark in the laboratory scenes, musical arrangements and DNA’s double helix used as a motif for both the clones and their enemies.

In Ishiguro’s *Never Let Me Go*, exceptionality resides mainly in the conformism of the victims, but the contextual assembly also differs significantly from any other clone narrative. Science and public authorities together have integrated the cloning of humans in order to supply for a donations programme that, although never specified in the novel, seems to be part of the British health care system making society as a whole guilty of the misuse. The novel does not take pleasure in biomedical details but, in the end, both cloning and transplantation are inevitably perceived as evil practices. Real science is completely absent, both in the plausibility of the plot and in its textual presence. Instead, a murkier science is suggested: not only is its abuse legal and public, but it is also portrayed as unthinking, irrational

and, to a certain extent, naïve in its incapacity to foresee the obvious ethical conflict into which the practice would lead:

[b]y the time they came to consider just how you were reared, whether you should have been brought into existence at all, well by then it was too late. (...) How can you ask a world that has come to regard cancer as curable, how can you ask such a world to put away that cure, to go back to the dark days?' (Ishiguro 2005: 257)

One persistent *motto* in fictions about clones is that the real control of science, the top, cutting-edge science is always clandestine; it does not serve the state, middle, or low-class civilians. That is one of the reasons why Ishiguro's proposal becomes so unbearable; for that and, of course, for the implausible and despairing resilience with which the clones face a destiny of agony and death.

Biopolitics, Mercantile Purposes and Identity Crises

Clones are products of consumption in one way or another and this is precisely what raises the debate over their human status, otherwise indisputable in biological terms. Whether the purpose of their creation and existence is for organ transplantation as in *The Island* and *Never Let Me Go*, labour force as in *Moon*, or experimentation as in *Orphan Black*, their bodies –and with them, their literal and holistic *integrity*- are appropriated by others and disposed of at will, which poses obvious political considerations. Surprisingly, none of these fictions renders the reproductive usage of cloning, allegedly one of the most controversial bioethical concerns the practice has traditionally aroused. In 1997 Leon Kass objected to this application in his outraged “The Wisdom of Repugnance: Why We Should Ban the Cloning of Humans” as interfering with what he referred to as the «soul-elevating power of sexuality» (Kass 1997: 692). One reproductive drive for cloning that has haunted fiction has been that of copying prominent

figures to secure their survival, as in Ira Levin's *The Boys from Brazil* (1976), which nevertheless also objectifies the cloned subject as a constituent for a greater plan. Still, the actual perpetuation of the self – an identical self- in a parental sense does not seem to be as much of a desirable fantasy as Kass feared. The originals in *The Island* cloned themselves to have spare components for their own bodies, which is quite far from the instinct of progeny. The disturbance that the idea of a self clone causes might not only be due to the dangers it can imply in terms of identity theft. Our genome holds our biological heritage so its control, threatened by this technique, is an innate worry, the engine of evolutionary processes. We are vehicles and, to a great extent, as Richard Dawkins would claim (1976), subjects of our genes and, to this date, cloning doesn't seem to be a successful procedure to ensure their conservation. Perhaps underlying the atavistic rejection to our own clone is a survival mechanism for our genes.

By the end of *Orphan Black's* first season a mystery that had been haunting Cosima since she'd started analysing her genome, is solved. When she finally is able to decipher what looked like a bar code, a text unveils that reads «THIS ORGANISM AND DERIVATIVE GENETIC MATERIAL IS RESTRICTED INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY». Encrypted in the clones' DNA is the copyright of that same genetic sequence, leaving no doubt as to the ownership of these women. Cosima, astonished by the realization of this new level of their commodified existence, reminds Sarah of the implications this might also have with regards to her precious and clones-wise unique, daughter: «Our bodies, our biology, everything we are, everything we become belongs to them. Sarah, they could claim Kira» (1x10). Before this, the women had to confront the reality that they were «clones, experiments». Now they know that they are not only being serialized, but that they are also patented. As subjects, they don't possess themselves in any sense, not only because of their *duplication*, which already contradicts the individual, but because the most genuinely personal asset of themselves bears a legal bond to somebody else; they are property.



Image 2. Clones' DNA copyright in *Orphan Black*.

It's interesting to note here how the copyright, one of the fiercest emblems of capitalism, refers to the property itself almost euphemistically -while maintaining its legal accuracy- as an "organism" depriving it of any human recognition. Also worth noting is the extension of that ownership towards future offspring, derogatorily referred to as "derivative material", a far more nefarious sense of ownership. Since the original genome is synthetic, it is treated as *intellectual* property. The allusion here to Foucault's concept of biopower (1977-1978) seems inevitable, with the aforementioned commercial binding standing out as a particularly perverse and literal mechanism « [t]hrough which the basic biological features of the human species became the object of a political strategy, of a general strategy of power» (Foucault 1977-1978: 1).

Never Let Me Go does not show more indulgence with the clones. As school children they are already told about their future prospect by one of their teachers, who can no longer stand the students' fantasies of adult freewill:

Your lives are set out for you. You'll become adults, then before you're old, before you're even middle-aged, you'll start to donate your vital organs. That's what each of you was *created to do*. (...) You were brought into this world for a *purpose*, and your futures, all of them, have been decided. (Ishiguro 2005: 80, my emphasis)

This unofficial pronouncement stems from the profound discomfort all the other humans in the novel experience when witnessing the clash between the very humane hopes of the clones with their inhumane fate and *purpose*. Thus, the non-human quality serves once again to energise an ontological problem as, *a priori*, humanity is taken for granted in those who show their lack of it and *vice versa*. Gabriele Griffin commented on the effect of the clones' acceptance of their fate and the lack of redemption in the novel as calling for «[t]he 'innocent bystander' position, the observer function that has so haunted twentieth-century critiques of human relations at intimate and global levels» (Griffin 2009: 658). This 'innocent bystander' position may indeed haunt the reading of *Never Let Me Go*, but the spectators' experience when witnessing clones on screen, regardless of their instrumentalization by fellow humans and their own reaction to it, implies a much more specific positioning to the (sub)genre. We are alien to this in Ishiguro's fiction because, in its narrative rareness, we never get to meet any other copies of the characters we are introduced to. We know they are clones but we don't have the originals or other reproductions. The representation and discourse of the clones through visual text usually differs considerably in this regard, since they strongly engage in the multiplicity of the character(s), something which, according to anthropologist Debora Battaglia, poses «[a] problem of identification for the grammar of the film» (Battaglia 2001: 511). Leaning on L. Mulvey's (1975) spectatorship theory of identification with the hero, Battaglia highlights that «Because heroes here are multiple, not the autonomous egos of Freudian theory, we are *with* the owner and the owned at once, if we are with anyone; our subject-position identifies with a *relation*» (*ibid.*).

This relation is further complicated if the original from which the clone has been copied takes part in the equation. In *The Island*, for instance this spectatorship placement and the anti-science message are so heavily stereotyped that identification with the hero and heroine does not allow for the coexistence of original and clone; since clones are the main characters towards whom all our empathy must be projected, originals are -whether evil or not- condemned to death: Lincoln's sponsor, Tom, gets killed and Jordan's is left to die without the required transplantation.



Image 3. Original will get killed after trying to kill his clone in *The Island*.

The search for “the original” is a common drive in most clone narratives. But in addition to the search for paternal figures in the maker that all artificially created beings go through - e.g. the “creature” in *Frankenstein*; or, *The Modern Prometheus* (Mary Shelley, 1818) or the replicants in *Blade Runner* (Dir. Ridley Scott, USA, 1982)-, we must add the desperate search for the original self, the ultimate vessel of identity.

Obviously, as *bystanders* –using Griffin’s terminology- the less we get to know about the originals, the better our identification with the clone will be and the fewer his or her chances are of losing the heroic trait for the spectator. Getting to know the original is a different aim from that of learning the reasons why they were created. In some cases, as in *Never Let Me Go*, this goal is presented as potentially enabling to explain their existential profile. Unfortunately for Ishiguro’s clones, more than a source of answers the figure of the original ends up being perceived almost like a chimera, having inspired all sorts of speculation and hypothesis within the group of friends who never get to know who they have been cloned *from*. Griffin notes here that the clones’ obsessive search for their biological origin in *Never Let Me Go*, «[h]umanizes them, rendering them a companion species, in Donna Haraway’s terms, rather than an other on a different, hierarchized scale» (Griffin 2009: 657). Of course the quest for the original presupposes knowledge of its existence and therefore, self-awareness of being a clone. Another frequent obsession in these fictions, whenever two or more copies confront each other, is determining who the original is. The first reaction to an identical copy of oneself is that of incredulity and rejection. In *Moon*, Sam2 and Sam3 engage in a heated argument soon after meeting each other, each claiming to be *the* original («I am Sam Bell! »). Admitting that the other is the original would imply that the self is a copy. To their great despair all the Sams finally learn the truth and have to resign to the fact that they all are just that, clones.

Image 4. Sams playing ping pong in *Moon*.



The Several Within One: Human Personhood and its “Holy” Attributes

Because identity can only be defined in terms of opposition, through difference, clone characters by lacking that input when facing fellow clones, are condemned to an endless identity crisis. Acceptance of this similarity develops powerful bonds between the subjects who then take advantage of the knowledge about the other through the self. This interesting alliance opens then an entire array of family-related emotional practices, for once the barrier of rejection has been crossed, understanding and reliance on one another naturalise the clone relation as a perfectly normative fraternal one. After all, as Dawkins once stated, «clones are simply identical twins»². Although both *Moon* and *Orphan Black* portray this same progress among the clones sooner or later after the realization of the others' existence, the manner between them differs widely due to the fact that, unlike *Orphan Blacks'*, clones in *Moon* share the same prosthetic memory and, therefore, the same mind. The nature vs nurture distinction thus produces very different types of clone characters too: those who have been raised in totally different environments (*Orphan Black*) and those who share not only the same genome but also the exact same history (*Moon*). In the TV series, this disparity confronts Sarah with what at first is her total nemesis, Helena, ironically her true mirror twin sister, who eventually becomes part of “the clone club”. The behavioural footprint is highly emphasized in the show providing the audience with “products” of different upbringing: the street-smart, passionate Sarah, the orderly but mentally unstable Alison, the self-assured, socially detached Rachel, the pragmatic Cosima and the disturbed Helena, amongst others. The range of identity features thus allows room for conservatism, homosexuality –sexual taste and performance indeed plays a key role in depicting the women’s personalities-, religious fanaticism and utter *scientificness* within the same identical genome.

² “Nothing wrong with clones says Dawkins”, *BBC News*, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/sci/tech/265878.stm>, web (last accessed 05/8/2014).



Image 5. Same genome, different personalities (*Orphan Black*).

The characters' heterogeneity, masterly portrayed by Tatiana Maslany's acting in *Orphan Black*, also constitutes yet another inspiring analytical layer in Moon's proposal. Although in this case the clones are serialized bodies of the same age, kept in suspended animation, the time lapse between their awakening and the present action dramatically determines their character as well as their physical and mental health. This setting serves as a perfect context to explore that natural multiplicity of the self: the different *selves*, -tendencies, moods, etc. - one bears within translate very adequately to a set of clones with the same personal background. This phenomenon also offers the most comical instances in the film, through their perception of one another, recognised as a self, and the opportunity this provides for self-knowledge:

«He's got a problem. He scares me, Gerty»

«What is it about Sam that scares you? »

«He flies off the handle. I see it now. I see what Tess was talking about»

In the dialogue above, one of the Sams is sharing with Gerty his concern about the other Sam's aggressiveness. In seeing his clone's behaviour he now identifies with the claims his wife would make to him. This mechanism functions in the opposite direction too, as each clone is certain of, for example, the other's moral values in spite of having just met: «You can't kill anybody. You can't. I know you can't because I can't».

In spite of their complex and troubled identities, clones' categorization as *human*, as we have mentioned, is often put into question. At times that category depends upon the labelling the "human" characters in the story may choose; in *Never Let Me Go*, for instance, clones are never allowed full humanity: « [p]eople did their best not to think about you. And if they did, they tried to convince themselves you weren't *really* like us. That you were *less than human*, so it didn't matter» (Ishiguro 2005: 258, my emphasis). To be labelled "less than human" implies the possession of certain *humanness*, yet, insufficient to enjoy the privileges "human" denotes. Although a tacit controversy always underlies the human category, because the biology is human, reference to this nature is often avoided in clone narratives in favour of a sort of metonymic relation with that of *person*. Since the scope of their identities can never be constrained, these remain open and undetermined. Because they are copies, what is questioned is their *subjectivity*.

While subjectivity is indeed denied in the copy, such impediment clashes with the hero/heroine constituency itself. If, as Battaglia argues, we identify with a relationship not with a subject, it seems improbable that we could experience any empathy with a clone character. Yet their discursive construction, at least in the works we are discussing here, seems indisputably *personified*. Clone characters draw the audience into a three- stage process of identification: they first have to be textually recognised as human –or almost human-, then their artificiality has to be stressed and finally, from that objectified position they reclaim their personhood thus gaining subjectivity. Battaglia extends the main turn-of-the century anthropological concerns to

science culture, as recognizing « [h]uman personhood and “technologies of the self” as social from the start» (Battaglia 2001: 495). This acknowledgement helps to understand *Moon*'s complex case. In spite of the fact that all the Sams share one personal memory and therefore lack the socialization that could provide them with the aforementioned *personhood*, the moment they begin to interact with one another they automatically position themselves as subjects, regardless of the artificiality of their previous self. Furthermore, interaction with Gerty already allows a socializing network that can enable their subjectivity. In this regard, Gerty's own progressive ascription to a subject paradigm is worth noting because, even if on a different level, it runs parallel to that of the clones. When finalising the plan for escaping from the lunar station, Sam can't help to correct his robotic friend when “it” mentions the next clone's *programming*: «We're not programmed; we're people». In this utterance, subjectivity is emphasised over the dissolution of identity that cloning theoretically implies. The use of the pronoun “we” here, however, renders an interesting ambiguity: it could refer to all the Sams but, by the deliberate avoidance of the adjective “human” it could also be including Gerty within the category. This choice of “people” as Robin Stoate notes, « [i]s much more inclusive a term than ‘human’, and is in the spirit of companionship that Haraway's thinking requires» (Stoate 2012: 209).



Image 6. Sam talking to happy Gerty in *Moon*.

The lyrical indicator of humanity or, more appropriately, human personhood *par excellence* is the soul. Although in principle the concept of soul should be separated from the scientific dialectics, allusion to it is recurrent in biomedical fictions. Interestingly, among all the acceptations the word has had throughout history –originally designating the quality of animated beings- the most reductive, Semitic one prevails in these narratives, often raised by the scientists themselves, as something exclusive to and distinctive of the human. In the orthodox “mad scientist” sermon with which *The Island’s* Dr Merrill replies to the mercenary’s accusation of killing of the clones for business, the doctor clarifies that they are «[s]imply tools, instruments; they have no souls». Because they have no souls their killing does not terminate with anything *animated*. “Agnates” (the clones) can barely be considered to possess the qualities required to be *alive* as opposed to he, who, in evident contrast, is capable of even *giving* life. A similar use of the soul as a human person referent is made in *Never Let Me Go*, where clones’ artistic expression is intended to raise public awareness of their spirituality, as Miss Emily eventually confesses to Katherine: «‘We took away your art because we thought it could reveal your souls. Or, to put it more finely, to prove that you had souls at all’» (Ishiguro 2005: 255). In *Orphan Black*, Tomas asserts that “abominations have no souls” (2x2) whereas his fellow Prolethean Hank, sees clone Helena as a blessed creature from God.

The protagonism of the soul in clone narratives, nevertheless, might not only obey the characteristic personhood vindication of artificially created beings. In this case, as intangible as the concept of soul might be, the connection with humanity is much more empiric from a purely taxonomic perspective. Clone and genetic engineering fictions tend to suggest that there is something *spiritual* about our genome. A very human characteristic of our genes, that which must distinguish us, not from other animals – a segregation understood to be made in mere evolutionary terms- but from machines or the artificial, is

to include *imperfection*. This is a message conveyed in all narratives dealing with eugenics and inferred in those that specifically involve cloning too, for the process rarely goes without some genetic amendment. It seems trying to improve our genome can only lead to disastrous social and biological consequences for the species. The natural, original, DNA is to be preserved and treasured as it is. As David A. Kirby states in reference to cinema dealing with eugenics themes, «[b]ecause these films attribute spiritual significance to the human genome as well as position it as the locus of personal identity, they condemn any belief that our genome should be modified» (Kirby 2007: 84). The same science that profanes the "holy" gene by altering it is the one to garnish it with such a numinous aura concurrently exposing the paradox of the scientist-god. The genome is the essence of the self and as such becomes mystified; it is the soul, in the language of science.

Conclusions

The fears embedded in the prospect of human cloning may indeed project the ancestral survival programming of our own genes. Clone fiction accepts the possibility of serializing humans, of producing the same individual *ad infinitum*, but individuality requires uniqueness, a clashing feature that has always stood as the basis of our subjectivity. In its attempt to govern human nature, cloning cuts to the core of our unpredictability through massive the reproduction of *the self*. The only means to undertake such control being scientific, their characterization plays a crucial role in articulating (post)humanity through fiction. The agents and technologies holding this power have traditionally been portrayed as pernicious to humankind because they endanger its purity, and evil, because they desecrate the gene. Although the positioning of science within its fault or misuse is not as dichotomised in recent narratives, the sacredness attributed to the genome remains. In *Orphan Black* both Sarah and her twin Helena are able to bear

children in spite of having been designed not to. The Prolethean leader perceives this as “a miracle” (2x9) because it exposes the irrepressible power of human nature as a divine design, which strives to make its way through scientific constraints. To Kass’s delight, sexual reproduction wins over both processes of cloning and genetic manipulation.

The main focus of clone narrative -shared by any concerning artificially created beings- resides, nevertheless, in the objectification of the subject. Gabriele Griffin (2009) has noted that these fictions also shift the controversy over how humans might be conceived -the biotechnological-, to how humans might be raised and treated -the social-. Undoubtedly, this is one valuable asset of the works here analysed, but clone narratives engage us in a far more intricate reflection upon ourselves which encompasses many more layers. As happens in narratives about doubles, with clone fiction we are forced to reconsider the traditional assumption of identity as something unified and coherent. Whilst the double might interfere with this unity, the clone simply exposes its fragility by confronting the individual with *the other* in the same space. Thus, in a way, the figure of the clone dissolves the concept of alterity by proposing alternative models of individuality. The underlying semiotic value of the clone for examining human subjectivity is further reinforced on the screen. As an additional layer of complexity, the standard duplicity of the self when put into image, multiplies in clone discourse where the self can be endlessly reproduced. Contemporary narratives expand the process of identification to a new level of sympathy for these characters. The clone projects our conflicts with our *cyborgization* (Hables 2011) in progress, with the technologically dominated self and with our fledgling posthuman identity, while enhancing the serendipity of our nature: one which transcends biological and environmental constructions and allows subjectivity beyond singularity.

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Filmography

- Never let me go* (Dir. Mark Romanek, UK, 2010)
- The Island* (Dir. Michael Bay, USA, 2005)
- Moon* (Dir. Duncan Jones, UK, 2009)
- The Stepford Wives* (Dir. Bryan Forbes, USA, 1975)
- The Boys from Brazil* (Dir. Franklin J. Schaffner, USA / UK, 1978)
- Blade Runner* (Dir. Ridley Scott, USA, 1982)
- Orphan Black* (created by Graeme Manson & John Fawcett, Canada, 2013–)

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