Experiencing the Posthuman: The Cinematic Clone in the 21st Century

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Abstract: The clone, especially in its audiovisual version, has often been treated as a marginalized being and its body understood as a repository of violence and pain, especially since its mere existence has traditionally been subjected to maintaining the integrity of the 'original' human body. This is visible in films in which we observe the figure of the clone treated in ways contrary to the critical posthumanism postulated by Braidotti, Ferrando or Vint, among others. *The Island* (2005), *Never Let me Go* (2010) or the animated series *World of Tomorrow* (2015, 2017, 2020) make us reflect on our responsibility toward the consequences of certain uses of biomechanical technology. A process of social denunciation is carried out through the emphasis that these films give to posthuman subjectivity, and thus these clones show their concerns and make viewers participants in their marginalized experience. Viewers see life from their perspective, we share their biological consciousness and their very existence leads us to reflection and denunciation.

Keywords: cloning, posthuman, film, animated TV series, *The Island* (2005), *Never Let me Go* (2010), *World of Tomorrow* (2015, 2017, 2020)

1. Introduction

This contribution concerns the posthuman subject as enacted by the figure of the disposable clone in contemporary cinema, and the spectators' engagement with this marginalized experience. The clone characters presented here revolve around the embodied presence of screened posthuman beings. It is my intention, then, to contribute to the understanding of posthuman subjectivities and their representation in contemporary cinema. As argued here, in the last few years, the cinematic figuration of the disposable clone has offered spectators the possibility of positioning on the side of the other, contributing to grasp difference and activate critical mechanisms to denounce certain discriminatory practices at work in our contemporary societies.

In our posthuman times, it is of paramount importance to find new

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strategies with which to assess our world, our bodies and ourselves. Critical posthumanism—advocated by Rosi Braidotti, Sherryl Vint or Francesca Ferrando, among others—has offered engaging tools for the understanding of the challenging times humanity faces in the age of the Anthropocene, defined by Paul Crutzen as our current geological era dominated by human action through technological mediation (2002: 23). By proposing an embodied subjectivity, theorists on the posthuman put forward a hybrid, fluid and complex body. Critical thinkers offer a vitalist approach to the posthuman subject, that is defined as "a relational subject constituted in and by multiplicity" (Braidotti, 2002: 49). In the same line of thought, Ferrando argues that "posthumanism offers an invitation to think inclusively, a relocation of humanity within multiversality, it opens to alterity and extensions of diversity, and reflects on alternative human embodiments" (2016: 220). The dilemma with the posthuman body, Ferrando notes, is that the concept "body" is a "shifting etiquette which has been historically ascribed within the frame of specism, racism, sexism, heterosexism, ethnocentrism, classicism, ageism and ableism, among other-isms" (Ferrando: 222-3).

Braidotti (2013), Herbrechter (2013), and Vint (2008) insist on a serious concern for the posthuman body, and warn us about the temptations of radical dematerialization, disembodiment and dehumanization. It is precisely this emphasis on embodiment what differentiates critical posthumanism from transhumanism—advocated by Nick Bostrom, Hans Moravec, Max Moore or Vernor Vinge, also referred to as utopian posthumanism—a movement linked to the enhancement of the body and to ideas of immortality. Transhumanist thinkers defend the idea that human beings will become posthuman in the future as a result of using technology and science to enhance their bodies and minds. Bostrom considers humanity as a work in progress (2005: 4). In broad terms, transhumanism encourages the evolution of the human into something superior to our critical condition. Thus, the notion of the posthuman coined by transhumanism still adheres to the idea of an unfinished humanist being seeking perfection and is rather different from that of critical posthumanism.

Science fiction has long speculated on the posthuman, becoming a medium of reflection, as well as of denunciation. As Vint argues, "science fiction is particularly suited to exploring the question of the posthuman because it is a discourse that allows us to concretely imagine bodies and selves otherwise" (2017: 19). In the introduction of their edited volume *The Palgrave Handbook of Posthumanism in Film and Television* (2015), Hauskeller, Philberck, and Carbonell argue that posthumanism as a discipline acts upon the premise that technoscience provides a material means to challenge social categories (3). In this sense, science-fiction films offer posthuman scenarios, sometimes used as powerful metaphors of the vitalist and affirmative idea of the posthuman subject advocated by critical posthumanism, sometimes as a means for the exploration of the limitations of the version of the posthuman evoked by transhumanist thinkers.

This article deals with the disposable cinematic clone, understood here as a genetically created being whose only purpose for existing is to endure

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humankind and avoid its physical pain, disease, suffering, ageing or death. Movies like *The Island* (2005), *Never Let Me Go* (2010), or the animated series *World of Tomorrow* (2015, 2017, 2020) portray clones that are meant to provide privileged humans with replacement organs—or bodies—in order to prolong their biological lives. The starting point of criticism for this analysis is Braidotti's affirmation that we "all have bodies, but not all bodies are equal: some matter more than others; some are, quite frankly, disposable" (1996: 136). In *The Posthuman* (2013), Braidotti further develops this idea, arguing that advanced capitalism blurs the boundaries between humans, other species, and the Earth in an "*all-consuming commodification of life"* (2013: 57, added emphasis). Through scientific and economic control, advanced capitalism both invests in and profits from biogenetic structure, producing a "paradoxical and rather opportunistic form of post-anthropocentrism on the part of the market forces which happily trade on life itself" (2013: 59). It is precisely the unethical and opportunistic use of technological and scientific advances what these films aim at denouncing. In doing so, they reverse the optimistic version of the posthuman advocated by transhumanism.

In these films, spectators are expected to align with the clone by means of different strategies. Such siding with the alien inevitably leads to critiques of the consequences of certain transhumanist practices such as longevity or life extension when they imply social inequality. In relation to the ethics of transhumanism, Bostrom contends that "through applied reason, especially by developing and making widely available technologies", one can eliminate aging and enhance "human intellectual, physical and psychological capacities" (2005: 4). This idea of "widely available technology" does not apply equally and the clones present in these movies are projects to change and improve privileged humans. They function as disposable commodities that serve the purpose of keeping the integrity of the original and organic human. The consequences of the unethical uses of the biomedical sciences are partly suggested in these texts by providing audiences with human-like vulnerable clones possessors of feelings, anxieties, fears and consciousness. According to some transhumanist thinkers, the ethical use of technology should enable everyone to enjoy better minds and better bodies. Yet, and as these films show, these 'improvements' are not equally distributed but create instead serious injustices leading to exploitation and enslavement. These fictional narratives manage to denounce said practices of bodily replication, while urging for a "real" post-anthropocentric view whereby non-human sentient beings can find a proper place in the world they have been forced to live.

2. Experiencing the posthuman through the clone

In order to carry out the analysis of the disposable clone from a critical posthumanist perspective, we need to depart from the premise that posthuman bodies on the screen are not frequently depicted as the polymorphic, processual, embedded and fluid beings proposed by critical posthumanist thinkers. Instead, the cinematic posthuman character is frequently aligned with notions of marginality, vulnerability and alienness.

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In this sense, the idea that different is positive, a tenet of feminist posthumanism, is not articulated in this cinematic version of the posthuman analyzed here: the disposable clone. Moreover, science-fiction films are normally imbued with a dark tone and privilege humanist values over posthuman scenarios and bodies. Hence, despite proposing rich posthuman possibilities, scenarios and bodies, many texts frequently end up maintaining 'safe' anthropocentric values, suggesting, on many occasions, that a humanist perspective is needed or advisable for our survival in the world. In this regard, and from the feminist posthumanist perspective of Braidotti and Ferrando, popular films need to erase traditional borders between the one and the other and focus the discussion instead on a non-hierarchical connection between humanity, technology, science and environment.

In spite of these limitations (imposed mainly but not exclusively by filmic conventions), there are films that offer a valuable approach to posthuman subjectivity. Some posthuman characters appearing in contemporary science fiction do offer alternative ways of understanding the world that they and we inhabit and open other possibilities of living in it. Moreover, they manage to develop feelings, worries and memories, possess consciousness and propose a new (troubled) relationship between humanity, science and technology. They offer a serious concern for the posthuman subject that help spectators make sense of contemporary global culture, something in tune with critical posthumanist claims. Their inner anxieties are sometimes shown to audiences, who actively take part in their in /post/ transhuman experience. Their bodies are reflections of their (and our) complex and ambiguous relationship with the world they live in, hence triggering ethical debates. The very idea of audiences identifying (at least momentarily) with these characters allows for the adoption of a certain subject position toward certain concerns. These fictional proposals of the posthuman somehow reshape our subjectivities.

2.1. The disposable clone

As suggested above, the representation of the clone as waste enables viewers to develop strategies for questioning hegemonic discourses, by enacting a posthuman experience. This unique experience offers spectators the understanding of difference through the engagement with the other, which is partly achieved by strategies such as identification, sympathy for the character of the clone, or a *mise-en-scène* that defies conventional ways of seeing the world. The result is, then, an approach to difference that leads to the reconsideration of certain humanist assumptions. Ultimately, and by experiencing the posthuman, spectators may reflect upon our intricate relationship with science and technology and activate strategies to condemn certain practices such as the commodification of the other. As spectators become involved with the fictional clone character, they enact their present and past experiences and relate them to new ways of understanding the body, the planet, and our selves.

This section deals with the way the disposable clone is represented as nonhuman and marginal in the films *The*

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Island (*TI*), *Never Let Me Go* (*NLMG*), or *World of Tomorrow* (*WT*). In them, clones are depicted as the films' main (almost exclusively) characters of the compelling stories that are told. In spite of their alien nature, they are familiar to us because they have human looks. In the three films, the clones need to cope with the oppressing settings they live in, while their original 'consumers' (wealthy and powerful people who purchase them) are made imperious to pain, damage, ageing, disease and death. Yet, and probably due to the time span that separates them (2005-2015) and to genre conventions, these movies adopt a different perspective toward the depiction of the posthuman subject.

TI, set in the year 2019, shows Lincoln Six Echo (Ewan McGregor) struggling to understand his existence within the highly structured world he lives in. After he learns that he and the people who live with him are not survivors of an ecological disaster as they have been told, but clones that are used for organ harvesting and surrogate motherhood in a capitalist society, he decides to escape together with Jordan Two Delta (Scarlett Johansson). From this moment onwards, both characters start a naïve and dangerous journey towards the 'real' world with the aim of denouncing their inhuman situation, only to find theirs are disposable bodies. Similar concerns are shown in *NLMG,* a film based on the homonymous novel by Ishiguro, in which the 28-year-old main protagonist, Kathy H. (Carey Mulligan), narrates the story of her life before turning into a "donor". We discover how she, like all the other children she met at what seemed an orphanage have been bred and groomed to give up body organs to sick and dying humans. The film centers on the intimate relationship she has with two other "students"—Tommy (Andrew Garfield) and Ruth (Keira Knightley)—throughout their pre-ordered lives at different institutions (Hailsham School, the so-called Cottages and the Recovery Centers). In *WT*, an animated short movie, Emily Prime (Winona Mae), a toddler from our near future, meets a third-generation clone of herself (Julia Pot) that travels from the future back to Emily's times to tell her about her life in the Outernet in 200 years' time, and how cloning will soon become a generalized practice whereby humans upload their memories into disposable bodies in an attempt to live forever.

In one way or another, the clones' nonhuman status is used by the people in control as the main argument for their manipulation, marginalization and exploitation. Their bodies are considered as disposable objects that were created for the sole purpose of organ/body replacement, or as a mind 'container', becoming hence mere repositories of pain and suffering. Although the context is fairly similar in the three texts—humans make use of clones to provide replacement organs or bodies in case they suffer from an illness or disease, or just to avoid ageing, and, ultimately, death—the relationship between humans and clones is treated in completely different ways in each text. In *TI* there is a clear opposition and confrontation between humans, regarded as cruel and impassive beings, and clones, vulnerable beings that desperately fight for changing their fatal destiny. Hence, the movie shows how doctors and surgeons, just because they are clones, subject them to unnecessary brutalities. The two main protagonists live a story of emancipation. This idea of rebellion against humanity is not shown

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in any of the other films, in which clones simply accept their destiny. In *NLMG*, the human/nonhuman hierarchy is never truly contested by the clones.

Clones struggle to live through their instrumentalized bodies, yet it is not a narrative of fight, since clones never aim at rebelling against their creators. Characters presume their mission is to sacrifice their organs until they can no longer survive and "terminate". They do not question the *status quo*. In relation to Ishiguro's novel, Mark Jerng argues that the author "upsets expectations by giving us a cloning story in which the clones do not fight or struggle to be recognized as human" (2008: 382). In this sense, the story becomes disturbing because it frustrates the reader's desire for emancipation: the clones do not rebel and thus "become human". Rather, they learn to make sense of their lives as clones. The role of the 'visible' human beings, mainly guardians and teachers at Hailsham, is, as Miss Lucy (Sally Hawkins) tells them at the very end of the film, to provide "students" with an education and knowledge of the outside world (Geography, History, Literature, and so on) which will be beneficial for them, a veiled attempt to free themselves from guilt and feel at ease with themselves. Likewise, the clone in *WT* accepts her marginal condition, as it becomes evident when she sadly warns Emily: "we are all doomed, Emily Prime". Moreover, there is only one representation of humans in the story: an innocent and sweet 3-year-old girl. The visit of Emily's clone is not aimed at encouraging the girl to be rebellious, but only at showing her how her future will be and recuperate an important memory from her.

This different treatment of the relationship between humans and nonhumans is also influenced by the different filmic genre in which these films are inscribed. *TI* is a hybrid action/science-fiction movie, and as such, we expect confrontation, chase scenes and, of course, an enemy or villain. On the other hand, *NLMG* is a hybrid love story drama and science fiction, and its tone is much more intimate, melodramatic and nostalgic, focused on the love triangle among the three clone characters. A similar nostalgic and sad tone is found in *WT*, an avant-garde film in which a third-generation clone talks about her sad and long life. Also, the timeframe in which the films were released (2005, 2010 and 2015) show the different debates on the issue of cloning along those years.

Another aspect that positions the clones as vulnerable beings is the lack of control over their own bodies and lives in general. This is especially evident in *TI* and *NLTM,* as the clone characters are kept confined to indoor communities and their bodies are constantly observed and controlled. This lack of autonomy recalls Michel Foucault's idea of the disciplined body. In *Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison* (1975), he argues that discipline creates "docile bodies", ideal for the new economics, politics and warfare of the modern industrial age: bodies that function in factories, ordered military regiments, and school classrooms. The body becomes thus involved in the political field, and power relations have an immediate hold upon it: "they invest it, mark it, train it, torture it, force it to carry out tasks, to perform ceremonies, to emit signs" (1990: 25). In *TI*, clones are made to follow strict dietary restrictions and to have daily medical checkouts; they should avoid proximity (and of course intimate relationships) and must exercise

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according to a personalized plan. Even their dreams and thoughts need to be accessible and open to "the people in control". Their bodies, then, are regulated by the external medical institution, recalling Foucault's idea of the Panopticon, which he took from Bentham as a way to illustrate how disciplinary societies subjugate their citizens. Clones are also controlled in *NLMG* from their childhood in the different institutions where they are placed, yet in a more veiled way.

Girls and boys are told what to eat, what to play, which movies to watch and even their 'creativity' is controlled by their teachers and guardians. Power is not unidirectional but a field of play, exerted in what Foucault calls "observing hierarchy" (1990: 184). Like the prisoner of Foucault's Panopticon, the clones receive asymmetrical surveillance throughout their whole life. Although the life of Emily's clone in *WT* is also determined and doomed, the film does not focus on the human control of it, but on her own perspective of the world. Life is described by Emily's clone as a "beautiful visit, and then we share the same fate as the rest of the human race: dying horribly". The clone explains to Emily how the whole humanity became obsessed with life extension and how this led to discrimination. As happens in the other texts under discussion, the world depicted in it distinguishes between rich and poor people, and the latter do not have the chance of possessing clones, but have their memories transferred to little boxes. This, once again, recalls the idea that some bodies "matter" more than others, or that some lives are 'grievable', if we use Butler's words: "the differential allocation of grievability that decides what kind of subject is and must be grieved, and which kind of subject must not, operates to produce and maintain certain exclusionary conceptions of who is normatively human: what counts as a livable life and a grievable death?" (Butler 2004, xiv-xv). In this sense, the film's final message is to live the moment because the future is uncertain and cruel.

The disposable clone has been constructed, then, as marginal and subordinated by humans. The films mentioned here question traditional limits of the so-called 'natural' body, inviting a debate concerning the ethics of cloning for certain purposes and the social consequences of transhumanist practices such as life extension. Apart from this criticism, these films provide us, albeit in quite different ways, with instances of posthuman subjectivities as articulated by the disposable clone, as I will attempt to illustrate in the next section.

2.2 Becoming other

This section deals with the mechanisms the films under discussion use in order to evoke the posthuman experience on the spectators once the clone subjects have been positioned as nonhuman and marginal. Social criticism is displayed before the spectators' eyes when they see life through the alien's perspective, and ultimately sympathize with this cinematic figure. It is then that we can talk of an alien experience, or of the idea of "becoming other", as postulated by Braidotti in *The Posthuman*. According to *The Deleuze Dictionary* (2010) edited by Adrian Parr, becoming is the very dynamism of change, tending toward no particular goal or end-state. The concept "becoming other" will be used here to refer to the moments in which spectators

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are exposed to a posthuman experience. As I see it, this transitory deconstruction of the self/other binary should be taken as an opportunity to transcend humanist conceptions and adopt more inclusive insights.

This emphasis on the figure of the posthuman is mainly achieved by means of strategies that favor the viewer's personal engagement with the world of the story. In this sense, and in spite of their alien condition, the clone characters remain familiar to viewers because of their anthropomorphisation, or the attribution of human qualities onto nonhuman entities. The movies denounce how genetic engineering may negatively affect the viewers' reality by presenting dystopian scenarios in which suffering clones with human attributes become victims of greedy societies. Science fiction in general plays an important role in the proposal of 'what if' scenarios that are based on contemporary concerns toward technological and scientific developments. Hauskeller, Philbeck, and Carbonell (2015) argue that screened science fiction allows us to play with our possible selves, demanding, at the same time, a serious response, because the changes proposed affect what we are, how we think of ourselves and how we look at each possible self. The figure of the disposable clone in these movies becomes, then, a metaphor of the commodification of the human body, which further handles ethical dilemmas regarding transhumanism.

This familiarity with the disposable clone further activates strategies such as empathy, identification or subjectivity, which enable viewers to position on the side of the nonhuman character and understand his or her fears, desires and non-humanist behavior and ethics. In the three movies under analysis, the clones' feelings and personal stories are available to spectators either because we get first person-narrations, or because we become emotionally involved in their heartbreaking stories. It is at those moments that one can talk about "becoming other" in the sense that spectators experience the nonhuman. When dealing with the representation of the nonhuman in literature and art, Karkulehto *et al* affirm that "this experiential dimension is where empathy and other types of personal engagements take place, whereby increasing our understanding of nonhuman creatures, especially on this level, is likely to have notable epistemological and ethical repercussions" (2020: 4-5). This valuable strategy contributes to the visibility of the nonhuman and the possibility of adopting other perspectives for understanding the world outside the self/other logic.

TI evokes the posthuman experience by means of the spectator's engagement and identification with the main clone characters of Lincoln Six Echo and Jordan Two Delta. Precisely because of the clones' vulnerable position, the audience sympathizes with them since they look human and their feelings, thoughts and uncertainties are accessible. From the opening sequences, Lincoln is considered as an authentic human who questions his existence. The very first scenes of the film are subjective shots in which we have access to Lincoln's recurrent nightmare—which includes instances of agony, death and uncertainty. These subjective shots, that we get regularly, allow us to share his vision of the world, producing a simulated experience of his life as a clone. As suggested above, the other is constructed as familiar and spectators align with the clones in ways that evoke

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our sympathy for the marginal. Clones are victims of a cruel society that trades with their bodies and lives, and viewers see life from their marginal perspective, placing us on their side. Indeed, we get to know Lincoln's dreams from the very beginning of the film, and spectators share his concerns and worries.

Our emotional engagement with him grows the moment we discover the horrible treatment these subjects receive from humans. They are at all times considered products and even their names suggest artificiality. The moment Lincoln finds out why he is considered "special" by the doctors, we are already engaged with his oppressing vision of the world. Once the whole truth is revealed, he claims for inclusion and social justice for him and for his clone companions. In this sense, he becomes an alternative model of subjectivity within marginality and otherness, who desires autonomy and freedom. Our sympathy for him enables us to question certain issues and "become other".

In *NLMG*, instances of identification go even further. The film opens with Kathy's voice-over narration, who introduces herself as a machine: "I am Kathy H. I am 28. I've been a carer for 9 years. […] It is sad we are all machines". Later, she starts her narration, and we are set in her past (in 1978). Viewers see life through her lens, sharing Kathy's perspective throughout the whole movie. The melancholy that surrounds many of the sequences that illustrate her pre-ordered life and that of her life-long friends—Ruth and Tommy—make spectators consider, apart from the ethics of cloning, the need to change the current order of things and find new ways of approaching our mediated bodies. Indeed, most of the characters in the movie are clones who establish human-like relationships among them based on love, friendship, dislike, and companionship, and we get to know their feelings, fears and anxieties, while they seek answers to questions about their present, past and future. This humanization of the clone also favors our identification with them, as the gap human-nonhuman becomes even narrower. While in *TI* the clones are meant to have no souls, in *NLMG* the issue of the soul is a latent topic. The guardians keep the students' best drawings and poetry to prove the rest of the world that they do have souls, which problematizes even more their condition as mere clones or "donors" and fosters our sympathy toward them.

Empathy becomes, then, more evident when we see the clones as vulnerable people that could be us. The sequences set at the Recovery Centers where they are meant to donate their organs are especially moving for viewers. The last act focuses on the deterioration of the physical body after the donations, and how this affects the characters' subjectivities, and ours by extension. Ruth, who has been characterized as manipulative and rather selfish throughout the first two acts of the movie, is seen in these last sequences as physically and emotionally affected by her eminent "termination", which leads her to carry out a last act of repentance for having kept Tommy and Kathy apart from each other for many years. The spectators maintain the identification with Kathy until the end of the film, reflecting on the dangers of the biopolitical instrumentalization of life itself. While empathy has been criticized by some posthumanist critics for its reliance on the idea of sameness, I also consider that this identification with the

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other in science fiction films may be also taken as a valuable opportunity for understanding difference.

The strategy used by *WT* to engage the spectators with the posthuman experience is rather different due to the film's very nature. The film takes viewers on an interesting and personal journey to a dystopian future. Thanks to its visuals, it evokes in the viewer a series of contradictory feelings that result in a posthuman experience. There are hilarious moments propelled by the little girl's naïve vision of the world; there is sadness and emotion implied in the narration of Emily's clone, despite her monotonous diction; Emily's clone seems resigned to her predestined life, yet we enjoy its devastating, colorful beauty; there is crudeness but there are also charming moments in the narration; there is melancholy because of the fate of the clones, yet there seems to be also optimism and the hope of making the world a better place; the future is depicted as uncertain, yet "it is a beautiful day" today. Emily's narration is, then, contradictory, complex, full of memories and feelings in what seems to be a clone with no feelings. This mixture of feelings, evoked by simple stick characters and geometrical figures, is both visually appealing and strange for us. The movie is an introspective journey into our pasts, and a reflection of our futures, which evokes feelings of worry about certain transhumanist practices. Moreover, the idea that we may sympathize with the clone also comes from the fact that, in spite of their animated form, the characters manage to evoke the human.

These films' representations of posthuman subjectivities are found to be quite convincing by an audience that is aware of the dangers of maintaining a rigid hierarchy in which the human being occupies a privileged position. Hence, films that focus on the figure of the suffering clone seek to emotionally engage viewers in the fictions that are told and ultimately raise consciousness. The clones become, then, metaphors of the commodification of the human body in advanced capitalist societies. According to Sarah Kozloff, the "cinema of engagement" makes use of seven strategies in order to engage spectators in the films and ultimately inspire action, which are: revealing systemic power relationship; focus on the less privileged; alignment with factual events; emotional connection; close-ups and performance; empathetic music and inspiring action (18-25). The three texts under discussion make use of most of these techniques in order to move spectators to empathy. As I have argued in this section, the films reveal systemic power relationships that situate the clones as waste material but that, nevertheless, get our sympathy because they have human looks and attributes. The films' alignment with *quasi* factual events, reinforced by first person clone-narrators who share their dreams and fantasies with audiences, results in a strong emotional connection of the viewers with the clones, moving us to an empathetic anger, as I will discuss in the next section.

3. Posthuman watching

This last section argues for the possibility of producing a posthuman reading of these texts, once the disposable clones have been positioned as other, and spectators have identified with them and shared their alien experience. As I see it, these narratives serve as instruments of change whereby audiences construct

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ethical relationships with nonhumans and are encouraged to find more inclusive societies. This idea of posthuman watching coalesces with "transformative empathy", a term coined by Rodino-Colocino when dealing with the *Me Too* Movement to refer to an active empathy that requires self-reflexibility and potential transformation of one's own assumptions (97).[2] Likewise, these films seek action through empathy.

The films depict clones with feelings, memories and consciousness, which talk about the opportunistic use of biomedical sciences by global capitalist markets. In the age of genetic engineering, boundaries are fluid, and we have already created animals to serve as organ donors and even begotten human children just so they could transplant their bone marrow and save a sibling, we have been embarked in the Human Genome Project, we have manipulated food, we have undergone genetic interventions, and so on. The consequences of these practices may be destructive as well as beneficial, and their regulation is a controversial issue, as it entails many ethical and political debates. Bio-ethical discourses warn us about these dangers, urging for more regulation. Fukuyama argues that the posthuman world is likely to be worse than we expect, "full of social conflict" (2002: 218). Indeed, in relation to science fiction and its depiction of the posthuman, Vint argues that "the most prevalent and realistic fear associated with the possibilities presented by genetic engineering and genetic testing is that this data will be used to create discriminatory social categories" (2017: 62).

The stories presented in the films under discussion can be taken as warnings of what might happen in the future. The injustices presented in them work as metaphors of the illegal trading with certain bodies in present times. This is precisely what provokes anger and inspire our wish for action and fight, once we have sympathized with the marginal, as argued in the last section. According to Braidotti, contemporary capitalism aims at controlling and exploiting the generative powers of women, animals, plants, genes and cells. The commodification of life by biogenetic advanced capitalism is a complex affair, which makes us ask what happens to subjectivity in this field of data flows (2013: 61). In this sense, these films propose instances of what posthuman subjectivities might be like, taking into account how clones are conscious of their marginal position as commodities for trade and profit. In this sense, the disposable clone serves as a metaphor of the inconsistencies of post-anthropocentric practices in contemporary societies.

It has been popularly agreed that the science-fiction film is a genre that extrapolates new imaginaries from the future and/or present of the human being. In relation to this issue, Herbrechter contends that science fiction is becoming "science faction", a kind of "new hybrid media genre" (2013: 113). The traditional 'what if' scenario performed by science fiction reflects many concerns regarding our times: "Since science fiction is such an integral part of the contemporary human

[2] Rodino-Colocino argues that the *Me Too* movement challenges the very systems of power that underlie harassment, discrimination and assault by promoting "transformative empathy", which involves listening rather than distancing or looking at speakers as others (97).

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imagination; technological and scientific developments are increasingly being 'explained to', or are being made explicit for, the public through analogies with well-known science fiction scenarios or topoi" (Herbrechter: 113). In this sense, science fiction has speculated on the posthuman condition, proposing rich genealogies of biological, technological, or scientific extrapolation. Filmed representations of posthuman bodies can be taken, then, as provocative divergences from the norms of human biology, or the conventions of our known human society. Herbrechter has argued that the interpretation of film, media and culture has gained so much importance that we can speak of contemporary posthumanist culture as "mediaculture" and "filmculture": "the technologization and mediatization go hand in hand in the process of social posthumanization" (115).

TI, NLMG and *WT* question certain transhumanist premises such as life extension and the inconsistences of a 'false' post-anthropocentrism by encouraging spectators to 'feel' the posthuman and react accordingly. Science-fiction films are one of the most important sources for analyzing the symptoms that are at work within the contemporary cultural imaginary, and, as Herbrechter contends, "contemporary cultural criticism is advised to take science fiction seriously, because of its cultural influence" (2013: 117). However, this scholar also admits the difficulties of a critical posthumanist reading of popular science-fiction films, as it would mean the deconstruction of certain humanist values that are inevitably at work in them despite the "posthumanizing potential portrayed" (118). Herbrechter contends, then, that a posthuman reading is only possible if spectators consider the 'what if' scenario not as a detached and fictional space but as something real that can affect their lives (130). This can only be achieved if we push the narrative a little to arrive at a meta-fictional level, that is, to ask: "what if the 'what if' was not just fiction? (Herbrechter: 130).

Hence, films that portray the disposable clone manage to evoke unexpected feelings on spectators by means of certain strategies such as first-person narrations, a technique that may produce, among other results, identification. The cinematic posthuman body depicted in these texts has the potential to make us leave the 'comfort' of the fictional framework we are situated when we watch a film and feel touched and upset by the presence of the other. By frustrating audiences, and by promoting a transformative empathy, these movies ultimately encourage for ethical responses and accountabilities, allowing, then, for "a posthuman watching".

4. Conclusions

As I have attempted to illustrate in this article, the disposable clone characters that appear as protagonists in *TI*, *NLMG* and *WT* offer the audience the opportunity to transcend humanist boundaries and understand the nonhuman. By means of showing the injustices inflicted by humans on the human-like clones, the films put them in vulnerable positions and activate in viewers strategies for identification with the other. The idea that the clones look and/or sound human, even in their animated form, favors our sympathy for them. These cinematic approaches to the posthuman have, then, much to contribute to the ongoing debates over

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cloning, biological enhancement or gene mutation and are, therefore, key for understanding our convulsed and contradictory times.

At another level, these films inspire action, denouncing social and bodily forms of violence. Viewers actively engage, then, in current ethical and political issues, positioning on the side of the clones. Spectators share the posthuman experience, which enables us to grasp the difference and see life outside humanistic logics. This unique perspective of "becoming other" ultimately activates strategies to find more inclusive spaces in our globalized times. The cinematic disposable clone becomes, within its marginality and otherness, an iconic figure of transgression in the sense that this character illustrates Braidotti's suggestion that some bodies matter more than others (2013: 15), opening debates about the extent to which nature and technology should be altered, modified and/or transformed and the social stratification that some transhumanist practices entail.

Thus, the cinematic posthuman clone opens a space for reflection and deconstruction of certain humanist values in the search for alternative modes of living and understanding our bodies and our planet. These films ultimately engage viewers in a fight against social injustices, showing how advances in biology and technology create new forms of injustice, discrimination and exploitation.

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