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TECHNOPHOBIA AND COLORBLINDNESS IN CINEMATIC SCIENCE FICTION

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by

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ABSTRACT

TECHNOPHOBIA AND COLORBLINDNESS

IN CINEMATIC SCIENCE FICTION

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Despite a long history of racism in the United States, many contemporary Americans believe racially-discriminatory attitudes and practices against minorities no longer exist and that we live in a post-racial era in which skin color does not determine an individual's prosperity or social mobility. Indeed, today many white Americans do reject overtly racist behavior. However, although racism no longer presents itself in ways as obvious as during slavery or Jim Crow, racially-discriminatory attitudes and practices are still engrained in American society, but present themselves in new, obscure, and sophisticated ways. This tendency for racism to morph can be seen in popular art forms as well, especially in science fiction, the genre my research focuses on. Audiences tend to overlook issues of race in science fiction cinema and television because the genre is not set in the ordinary world we live in. But the abundance of new races and ethnicities presented

in many storylines in science fiction cinema and television provides an opportunity for scholars interested in the way sci-fi comments on contemporary society. By viewing and analyzing a variety of contemporary science fiction films and television series depicting the intersection of humanity and posthuman technologies (e.g., robots, A.I., androids, and cyborgs) in futuristic, seemingly post-racial societies, I reveal analogous racial attitudes and behaviors between the science fictional world and the real world. My study charts how the racist mindsets towards posthuman technologies seen in the science fictional world parallel racially-discriminatory attitudes and practices plaguing minorities in "colorblind" contemporary American society.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

For the past few months, Jordan Peele's 2017 American debut film *Get Out* has sparked much controversy and acclaim because of its social commentary regarding post-racial America. Film critic David Ehrlich of *Indiewire* appraises Peele's debut film to be "the boldest—and most important—studio genre release of the year." *Get Out* essentially serves as a satirical horror film, revealing that America's historical assumptions regarding race and blackness still exist, despite those who claim racism is a "thing of the past." Peele intricately illuminates contemporary, everyday micro-aggressions and racial assumptions many African Americans experience today in a society that openly rejects overt forms of racism. Audiences widely believe the cultural work *Get Out* accomplishes is completely innovative. However, other film genres, such as science fiction, have been providing social and cultural commentary regarding racial stigmas for a while, only in more sophisticated ways.

Within the realm of American science fiction cinema and television, directors and screenwriters often depict futuristic societies as post-racial, or "colorblind"—worlds where the black/white binary appears to have been transcended due to a plethora of new races and ethnicities, including technological ethnicities such as artificial intelligence (AI), robots, cyborgs, and androids. However, James Cameron's first two installments of *The Terminator* film series; Alex Proyas' *I, Robot*; Sam Vincent and Jonathan Brackley's *Humans* dismantle the appearance of a futuristic, post-racial through their representation

of technological ethnicities as the new racial "other." I contend these films and television shows reveal racially-tinged conflicts likely to arise when humanity and posthuman technology intersect, and that these conflicts are analogous to historical and contemporary issues of race in American society.

In my thesis, I will reveal racially-discriminatory stigmas prevalent during the slavery and Jim Crow eras shown through several relationships between human and posthuman technological characters in each work. These relationships present an embedded allegorical master-slave dynamic between humanity and posthuman technology, but also exhibit technophobic, racial prejudices and stereotypes forced upon posthuman technological ethnicities by human society. The embedded racial allegories emerge as a result of humanity's anxiety surrounding the technological singularity, a term originally coined by computer scientist John von Neumann in the 1950s, hypothesizing the incomprehensible changes that will occur within human civilization at the point in time when advanced, super-intelligent technology experiences uncontrollable technological growth. Humanity's anxiety surrounding the technological singularity directly correlates to its fear of posthuman technology gaining consciousness and endangering its role as the dominant race in society; I will emphasize how these fears and anxieties connect with historical and current racial issues concerning white supremacy and disempowerment. Lastly, I will focus on the representation of blackness through the characters in these works, including humans and posthuman technologies, by exhibiting how they are portrayed as over-emotional, aggressive, and immoral in comparison to white characters. Charting these racial allegories will connect futuristic, seemingly post-racial science fictional societies with the real world "colorblind" era American society claims to currently exist in.

1.1 Unpacking the Myth of Colorblindness

It is a common belief that after color-conscious policies brought on by legislation such as the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and affirmative action, which were implemented as a result of the Civil Rights Movement, racial discrimination has dissipated, and we now exist in a society where skin color does not matter. Today, many Americans have an extreme distaste for overt racially discriminatory attitudes and practices from earlier periods such as slavery and Jim Crow. Most Americans believe, by and large, that racism manifests through individual intentions, and although some people may still hold racist attitudes, the majority of American society has moved past these attitudes and does not see color. A study conducted in 2016 found that 88% of black Americans currently believe more changes still need to be made for blacks to have equal rights with white Americans, while only 53% of whites feel the same way (Stepler). However, racism does not reproduce itself on scarce, individual motivations, but rather through a series of social and economic practices that elevate white Americans by socially immobilizing American minorities, more specifically black Americans. Therefore, although blatant forms of racial discrimination and inequality, such as legal segregation, are commonly discredited, racial attitudes and practices still present themselves throughout society in obscure—but significant—ways.

In addition to the common belief that the Civil Rights Movement put an end to racism, a large portion of white Americans also argue that if traces of racial inequality still exist, it is because black Americans have not taken advantage of new anti-discrimination legislation created for minorities after the Civil Rights Movement. In fact, in his book *Whitewashing Race*, political scholar Michael K. Brown claims many white Americans

believe if black Americans are less successful than whites, it is not because America is still a racist society, but because black Americans do not try hard enough to succeed. Furthermore, proponents who believe the United States is quickly transforming into a colorblind society are also starting to believe there is no longer any valid justification for color-conscious and anti-discriminatory policies. Brown contends this claim is often substantiated by the ideals of Civil Rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr., by embracing his vision of a colorblind America and looking forward to the day individuals will be evaluated by the content of one's character, not the color of their skin (2). Supporters of colorblindness use King's words to mesh with their agendas, which is a bit ironic, considering King was not colorblind and advocated for affirmative action. Brown further explores the ideas of multiple conservative scholars who focus on American race relations, but specifically Abigail and Stephen Thernstrom. The Thernstroms claim that contemporary racial allegations by minorities are simply an excuse to blame whites for black failure, self-doubt, and lack of effort (Brown 7). As a result, when skeptics raise critical questions about America's perceived era of colorblindness, colorblind Americans retort that focusing on race as a social marker induces unnecessary racial consciousness, and if racial agitators were not to focus on race, racial tensions would disappear. However, by pretending not to see color, colorblind Americans only end up minimizing existing racially-discriminatory behaviors and practices.

Colorblind notions concerning race can be pretty convincing and enticing. They appeal to a variety of ideals associated with Americanism and the American Dream, including equal opportunity for success, prosperity, and upward social mobility regardless of social class: if an individual of any race uses his natural-born abilities to work hard, he

will succeed in society. However, these beliefs and ideals are only based on the experiences of many white Americans because their skin color provides them with the luxury of being optimistic about racial matters. Ta-Nehisi Coates, acclaimed author and journalist for *The Atlantic*, exposes the truth about the American Dream in his memoir *Between the World and Me*. Coates believes "the Dream" is only attainable for people who "have been brought up hopelessly, tragically, deceitfully, to believe that they are white" (7). Moreover, he does not believe the American Dream is even an option for black Americans because, throughout history, the ideals associated with it have been formed by their oppression and social demobilization. Some critics, such as op-ed columnist David Brooks of the *New York Times*, criticize Coates' rejection of the American Dream and his acknowledgement of racial privileges white Americans receive in society. Brooks argues Coates' critique of the American Dream "[dissolves] the dream under the acid of an excessive realism" by "[trapping] generations in the past and destroy[ing] the guiding star that points to a better future." However, Brooks and other critics who share his view do not even attempt to acknowledge that being white in a society where whiteness is normalized ultimately makes one's race invisible in comparison to minority races, offering racial privileges that go unnoticed by the white Americans who receive them. Therefore, when people of color blame racial inequality for hindering their social mobility or the reason for mistreatment within society, white Americans interpret this as minorities "playing the race card" in order to obtain special privileges. By accusing minority Americans of "playing the race card," or simply making excuses for their current social standing, white Americans are actually minimizing racism and its discriminatory effects.

I believe this common, self-described "colorblind" perception of minorities victimizing themselves to obtain special treatment prevents white Americans from confronting ongoing racial discrimination. It also provides an excuse for individuals who refuse to believe the color of their skin contributes to their social elevation and success in America. If white Americans refuse to hear the viewpoints and understand the experiences of minority races, they will never become aware of their privileged racial status. Not only does this distort their understanding about racism functioning on a systemic level instead of an individual one, it also allows them to continue viewing their own American experience as the standard. Sociologist and race scholar Eduardo Bonilla-Silva labels this new racial ideology adopted by white Americans as "colorblind racism." He claims white Americans have created justifications to exonerate themselves from any responsibility for the status of black Americans, and these justifications emanate from colorblind racism. Bonilla-Silva argues color-blind racism is different from Jim Crow racism, for example, because it does not explain black Americans' social status as a result of their biological and moral inferiority, but rather rationalizes their contemporary status as "the product of market dynamics, naturally occurring phenomena, and blacks' imputed cultural limitations" (2). Unlike Jim Crow racism, color-blind racism suggests black and other minority Americans' social struggle is the result of a lack of effort and a lazy work ethic. Bonilla-Silva further claims colorblind racism "serves today as the ideological armor for a covert and institutionalized system in the post-Civil Rights era" while aiding and maintaining white privilege in American society (3). Today, white Americans rely on the cultural circumstances of black Americans rather than biological characteristics to explain their lower social status in society.

The widespread belief that anyone with proper discipline and determination, despite their racial ethnicity, can socially elevate themselves in the United States allows racial discrimination in large institutions to remain unnoticed. For example, one of the primary cultural impediments hindering African-American social mobility is the criminal justice system. According to Michelle Alexander, a prominent American legal scholar, the United States' criminal justice system serves as a gateway into a larger system of racial stigmatization and permanent marginalization for many minority Americans in society. Alexander notes that despite the universal trend of drug use in the United States amongst all races, our criminal justice system imprisons more racial minorities for drug crimes than any other country in the world, but, more specifically, it imprisons a larger percentage of its African-American population (6). She refers to this trend as "mass incarceration," which is similar to Jim Crow and slavery in that it works as an intricate design of laws, policies, and customs formed to ensure the racial subordination of black Americans. Once an individual is charged with a felony, he is permanently demoted to a second-class status in American society, despite the amount of prison time served. Even after an individual is released from prison, he is still labeled as a felon throughout and faces legal discrimination in voting, employment, housing, education, welfare, and jury service (17). The legally-authorized discrimination, criminalization, and demonization of black males have prevented many black communities from flourishing through social mobilization because of the numerous family units that have been destroyed, along with increasing crime and poverty rates. In recent years, mass incarceration has gained substantial attention within the American pop culture, for example in, Ava DuVernay's 2016 documentary *13th*. However, many Americans still remain unaware of the detrimental, long-term effects the

"prison label" has had on African-American and even Latino-American lives and communities. Ultimately, racial privilege allows white Americans to view American society as a meritocracy, and as a result, color-blind racism flourishes throughout American institutions, unnoticed by the majority of Americans.

1.2 Relevant Background Information and Scholarship on Science Fiction

Considering the genre of science fiction is quite broad and possesses the advantage of functioning out of unrestricted imagination compared to more realistic fictional genres, understanding its framework allows its audiences to better relate and critique its embedded implications of race to real world racial issues. Isiah Lavender III, a well-known Cultural Studies and science fiction scholar, distinguishes between "normal" fictional genres and science fiction. Lavender contends that "mainstream" fiction operates through a recognizable framework of naturalism or realism that provides an accurate representation of humanity and culture. Unlike science fiction, mainstream fictional texts represent the ordinary world we live in, but science fiction functions through estrangement, depicting familiar subjects in strange ways, making its subject matter unfamiliar to the audience. Ultimately, the estrangement in science fiction "separates the known from the unknown, creating a sense of the alien about a familiar object or concept" (28). The real world is defamiliarized, creating new ideas and causing the audience to change their perspective when interpreting the world.

Science fiction gained widespread popularity and readership in the twentieth century. According to scholar Adam Roberts, the 1930s and 1940s ushered in science fiction's "Golden Age" (56). While science fiction vastly expanded as a literary genre during the twentieth century, it also became one of the most popular genres in American

cinema and television. Moreover, as a result of its increased popularity, toward the end of the century science fiction gained substantial critical attention in academia. African-American studies scholar and film expert Adilifu Nama notes that the fantastical plots, far-off worlds, special effects, and striking portrayals of the future in science fiction have allowed it to gain popularity and achieve great box office success as a film genre, and to receive plenty of extensive critical analysis in and outside of academia. Nama claims science fiction films have a creative mandate to present any kind of character, while imagining any type of social system within their narratives. He points out that science fiction films have often engaged in contemporary social issues, offering their audience the opportunity to experience a world vicariously, without many of the challenges a society currently faces. This ultimately allows audiences to contemplate consequences of urgent social problems, presenting hypothetical outcomes and solutions (2-3). Science fiction cinema has made it feasible for audiences to explore and confront contemporary American social issues, particularly race, without consciously noticing the overlapping racial stigmas between fantastical societies and the real world. Nama states, "Because SF cinema reflects the values of a society and often presents cautionary tales and social parables, many of its narratives are fertile sites of ideological meaning as they relate to popular discourses surrounding race" (8). Since science fiction cinema develops out of the fantastical, its inherent political nature often goes unnoticed, causing racial discourses presented in science fiction films to remain unapparent; viewers may not seek further critical analysis outside of a particular film's intended meaning or message.

Nama's notions concerning science fiction's socio-cultural density will help showcase the racial implications of the interaction between humanity and posthuman

technology throughout my study. Cinematic science fiction holds the potential to act as a medium for audiences to familiarize itself with historical and contemporary real world racial stigmas between racial ethnicities in American society. However due to the genre's fantastical nature, most audiences will not connect the storyline's messages to real world racial issues. More specifically, recognizing how posthuman technology is represented in science fiction can offer insight on race.

Across the broad scope of science fiction, including literature, film, and television genres, technology is often portrayed in a negative light. In these instances, technologized beings and creations are depicted as monsters whose single purpose is to terrorize, dominate, enslave, or destroy humanity. In fact, award-winning filmmaker and scholar Daniel Dinello claims science fiction shows the transformation into a posthuman era as the "horrific harbinger of the long twilight and decline of the human species" (2). He further contends science fiction's obsession with portraying advanced technology such as robots, androids, A.I, and cyborgs as evil and malicious expresses humanity's technophobic fear of losing its identity, freedom, emotions, values, and existence in a posthuman era (2). As human society becomes more technologically advanced, science fiction explores the problematic repercussions brought about by new technologies by delving into the political, social, and existential issues that may occur. In his particular study, Dinello does not explore how humanity's technophobic fears in science fiction correlates to racial anxieties and prejudices seen throughout the real world, which is the area I plan to explain in greater depth.

CHAPTER 2

WHAT IS POSTHUMAN TECHNOLOGY?

For the purpose of this study, I will be focusing on three main groups of posthuman technologies: AI, robots, androids, and cyborgs. AI is a computer program designed with the ability to replicate human behavior. More importantly, AI has the capability to reflect and show self-awareness because it is able to learn from and solve difficult problems or situations. Robots, in contrast, are purely mechanical. According to Dinello, their parts consist of mostly metal and other electronic parts, and they can be designed to resemble humans or animals, but usually their external layer is just used as a disguise; once removed, they are only mechanical. An android, on the other hand, is an artificial person genetically engineered out of synthetic material but is assumed to have no emotions, even through it is designed to resemble a human. Finally, a cyborg is a mechanically-enhanced creature, most of the time a human being, in which biological parts are fused with mechanical parts, creating a sort of hybrid being made of biological tissue and machine. Robots, AI, and androids, are designed to abide by science fiction writer Isaac Asimov's three Laws of Robotics. In his 1942 story "Runaround," Asimov first articulated the three laws that have become "the holy commandments of the religion of technology" (Dinello 64). Asimov's three laws are as follows: 1. a robot may not injure a human being or allow a human being to come to harm; 2. a robot must obey orders given to it by human beings except if the orders conflict with the First Law; 3. a robot must protect its own existence as long as the protection of itself does not conflict with the First or Second Law. These laws established

a premise for succeeding science fiction writers to base their posthuman narratives. Essentially, since posthuman technology is specifically designed to abide by Asimov's three Laws of Robotics, it should not have the capability of harming humanity. Despite this, a vast majority of science fictional storylines depicting the intersection of posthuman technologies and humanity often act as technophobic cautionary tales about these technologies rising up against the human race, ultimately making humanity the inferior race and moving society into a posthuman era.

Science fiction film and television, specifically the works being focused on in this study, commonly emphasize the otherness of A.I., robots, androids, and cyborgs existing in futuristic, human societies. These "technicities," a term used by Lavender to describe technologically-derived ethnicities, provide a way to analyze race and ethnicity in seemingly post-racial, futuristic societies commonly shown in the genre. I agree with Lavender's notion that technicity acknowledges the historical, political, and cultural construction of an ethnicity that inevitably will weaken as society's technological future unfolds, while undermining recognized categories of racial difference.

CHAPTER 3

RACE IN CINEMATIC SCIENCE FICTION

3.1 Killer Cyborgs in James Cameron's *Terminator*

Over the past three decades, James Cameron's sci-fi *Terminator* film franchise accumulated over four billion dollars in box office sales and has become one of the most successful and well-known sci-fi film franchises. The first two installments of the film series, *The Terminator* (1984*)* and *The Terminator 2: Judgment Day* (1991), are the only *Terminator* films James Cameron actually wrote and directed himself before his decision to sell the production rights in the 1980s. But it was James Cameron's installments that gained the film series popularity, making *The Terminator* one of the most iconic technological dystopian narratives of the sci-fi genre.

The Terminator opens in a futuristic, post-apocalyptic version of Los Angeles during the year 2029, depicting large tank-like machines rolling over the remains of human bodies. Skynet, an artificial intelligence U.S. defense network created by Cyberdyne Systems, has turned against humanity, waging a nuclear war and enslaving most human survivors. In this future, a group of survivors called the Human Resistance has managed to destroy Skynet's defense grid system under the command of John Connor, giving humanity a fighting chance against the machines. Skynet retaliates by sending a cyborg called a "Terminator" (Arnold Schwarzenegger) back to the year 1984 kill Sarah Connor (Linda Hamilton), John Connor's mother, before she can give birth to John, who will eventually find a way to defeat the machines. In response, the Human Resistance sends a

soldier named Kyle Reese (Michael Biehn) to 1984 to help ensure Sarah Connor's survival and secure the future of humanity. By the end of the film, Sarah and Reese destroy the Terminator.

The second film, *Terminator 2: Judgment Day*, takes place around the year 1997 and presents an adolescent John Connor (Edward Furlong) living in Los Angeles with his foster parents. Sarah Connor, his mother, is imprisoned at Pescadero State Hospital after attempting to bomb a computer factory. In a second attempt to prevent John Connor from leading the Human Resistance in the future, Skynet sends another Terminator (Robert Patrick) to 1997 to kill him. This Terminator, a T-1000 model (Robert Patrick), is far more advanced than the T-800 model from the first movie (Arnold Schwarzenegger) because it is made of liquid metal and can change form into any equally-sized object it comes into contact with, including human beings. In the future, John Connor reprograms and sends back the T-800 from the first film to help ensure young John's survival, and as a result Schwarzenegger's character is portrayed as a hero throughout the film. Later, the film introduces the future creator of Skynet, Miles Dyson, who is an engineer for Cyberdyne Systems. Using the remnants of the destroyed T-800 model sent to kill Sarah Connor in 1984, Dyson focuses all of his research around its parts, inadvertently becoming the creator of the super-intelligence system that will eventually destroy humanity. However, Sarah, John, and the T-800 are able to stop Dyson by explaining the detrimental effects of his research and helping him destroy his work at Cyberdyne Systems.

The Terminator's narrative is undoubtedly anti-technological because it confirms humanity's technophobic fears of technology rising up and threatening humanity's dominance. The film's technological singularity theme can be linked to historical

implications of race such as white supremacy, stemming from a desire to keep the white race dominant in American society. *Terminator 2: Judgment Day* initially presents the same anti-technological narrative through the highly advanced liquid metal T-1000 cyborg, but eventually depicts a completely different narrative because of the presence of white and black characters. In the first film, the killer T-800 cyborg is an obvious threat to Sarah Connor and the future of humanity, creating a binary of good versus evil with the T-800 as the evil, technologized "other," further confirming and substantiating humanity's fear of the technological singularity. However, in the second film, although Schwarzenegger's T-800 character is still marginalized because he is not human, he is portrayed more human-like and compliant in comparison to Robert Patrick's sinister T-1000 character. Schwarzenegger's portrayed complicity is confirmed by the established master-slave relationship with John Connor. While the first film essentially emphasizes a good-versus-evil binary between humanity and the T-800 terminator, the second film depicts this binary as well, but more through Sarah Connor and Miles Dyson, the creator of Skynet, who is black. Therefore, by juxtaposing whiteness and blackness as "good versus evil," the second film portrays black masculinity as a threat to white womanhood and the future of white supremacy.

The overall narrative of *The Terminator* essentially serves as a technophobic, cautionary tale about a human-hating form of A.I. gaining consciousness, eventually seeking to exterminate humanity by creating killer cyborgs destined to eradicate all humans. The aspect of time travel helps the film affirm its portrayal of a technophobic cautionary tale by showing how posthuman technology is a threat in the present or future. *The Terminator* is unique in that it takes place in present-day society and not a distant,

futuristic one, so the possibility of the technological singularity seems more tangible and real, making audiences fearful of technological advancement. In the film, after Sarah encounters the T-800 for the first time in a bar, Reese comes to her rescue shortly after. A car chase ensues between Sarah, Reese, and the T-800, and afterward, as they are hiding, Reese finally explains to Sarah the T-800 wants to kill her because her unborn son will lead a human rebellion in the future. Reese also explains to Sarah why a war breaks out between the humans and machines (Skynet), saying, "It was the machines . . . Defense network computer. New. Powerful. Hooked into everything. Trusted to run it all. They say it got smart . . . a new order of intelligence. Then it saw all people as a threat, not just the ones on the other side. Decided our fate in a microsecond—extermination."

The rhetoric Reese uses to explain how Skynet gained consciousness is shockingly similar to the historical fears and anxieties Southern whites held during the slavery era concerning the potential of slave insurrections to threaten white dominance. During slavery, black slaves were forbidden by their masters from receiving, possessing, or transmitting any literature because of the possibility of them gaining knowledge, or consciousness, and assembling an insurrection (Franklin 141). In the film, Skynet is designed to serve as a weapon for the U.S. military against foreign adversaries, but when it gains consciousness it decides to kill *all* humans. This concept is analogous to many slave insurrections that took place during the nineteenth century, such as the Nat Turner slave insurrection of 1831, which resulted in the death of over sixty whites in Southampton County, Virginia. During their revolt, Nat Turner and his followers did not kill on the basis of innocence; they killed white men, women, and children. In this case, Turner's justification for leading a rebellion stemmed from his belief he had been chosen by divine

power to free his people from slavery (Franklin 164). In the film, Skynet ultimately turns against humanity after operators become fearful of its rapid advancement and attempt to deactivate it; Skynet sees humanity's fear of the technological singularity as a threat to its existence and does not distinguish between its destroyers and innocent humans when deciding to retaliate.

In the second film, the T-800 is reprogrammed in the future and sent back to 1997 to protect John Connor from the liquid metal T-1000 terminator. The sole purpose of the T-800 is to protect John at any cost, even if it means killing humans who are posing a threat to John or even sacrificing itself for him. According to David Dinello, Schwarzenegger's character indoctrinates audiences with the illusion of "technological compliance" by giving his character more human-like characteristics, such as vulnerability (130). In comparison to the T-1000 liquid metal terminator, the T-800 is far less technologically advanced; the T-1000 can change into any equal-sized object, can create highly advanced weapons using its own limbs, and does not have organic flesh. The first film dehumanizes Schwarzenegger's character by giving him minimal lines and making him appear pale and ghostly, ultimately giving audiences a feeling of eeriness. In the second film, he appears completely human, clean cut, and even shows facial expressions. Although the T-800 does not have human emotion, its complicity allows it to establish a master-slave relationship with John. The T-800 must obey all of John's commands and possesses the capability to learn humanistic traits, giving Schwarzenegger's character the illusion of being morally conscious. Throughout the film John teaches the T-800 humanistic qualities in order to develop a more intimate relationship with it. For example, John tells the T-800 to stop killing and even starts teaching him trendy words and phrases like one of the most

memorable quotes from the film, “Hasta la vista, baby.” After the T-800 and John rescue Sarah from the hospital, she even notices the relationship John has established with the T-800, saying, “Watching John with the machine, it was suddenly so clear. The terminator would never stop. It would never leave him, and it would never hurt him . . . and would die to protect him.” Therefore, not only does the T-800 become John’s obedient servant, it also becomes a surrogate father to John and eventually sacrifices itself at the end of the film to put a complete end to Skynet.

The master-slave dynamic of John’s relationship with the T-800 emulates the relationship black house slaves often established with their white masters during the slavery era. In his famous speech “Message to the Grassroots,” Malcolm X explains the undying servitude house slaves held toward their masters, saying, “They loved their master more than the master loved himself. They would give their life to save the master’s house more than the master would . . . He identified himself with his master more than his master identified with himself.” There is a pre-established hierarchy between John and the T-800; the T-800 is programmed to protect John, and therefore recognizes its own inferiority. The T-800 bases all its decisions on the well being of John, nothing else. Not only does it care about John’s survival more than John does—it cares about John’s survival more than its own.

The less pronounced good-versus-evil binary in *Terminator 2* exists between Sarah Connor and Miles Dyson, in comparison the film’s more obvious binary between the T-800 and the T-1000. The first film demonstrates how humanity’s fear of the technological singularity jeopardizing its role as the dominant species is analogous to many of the fears of insurrections white southerners held during slavery. When the second film reveals Miles

Dyson is a black man, the narrative of the film turns into a racial cautionary tale of black masculinity posing a threat to white womanhood, ultimately putting white supremacy at stake. Under this notion, Sarah Connor is a white woman who must survive at all costs to preserve humanity, an allegory for whiteness, because her unborn son will lead a revolution against the technologized "other" that was created by a black man. Dyson is responsible for the creation of the posthuman technology that will eventually bring about the technological singularity, and as a result, puts Sarah and unborn John Connor in mortal danger in the first film.

Dyson's threatening presence in the film actually links to common malignant assumptions and stereotypes of black masculinity throughout America's history. During the nineteenth century, white supremacist groups like the Ku Klux Klan justified the lynching and castration of black men by claiming they wanted to preserve white womanhood. Of course, their main agenda was maintaining white dominance throughout America, primarily the South, after the Civil War; they wanted to regain political and social power and believed African Americans would prevent their social mobility (Franklin). Harkening back to the nadir of American race relations at the turn of the twentieth century, the film portrays Dyson as this kind of stereotypical "black predator," even though he does not intentionally create Skynet to destroy humanity. According to race scholar Carol Mason, *Terminator 2* displaces the historical reality of white male slaveholders victimizing black women onto a false narrative of black men victimizing white women (231). When Sarah Connor tracks down Dyson to kill him, she demonizes him for ushering in "Judgment Day," telling him, "all you know how to create is death and destruction." Dyson realizes the detrimental effects Skynet will have on the future of humanity and decides to redeem

himself by destroying all of his work. However, Dyson ends up being shot and murdered in his attempt, which solidifies the film's "lynch culture" narrative: he is being punished for the potential of humanity's genocide, and as long as he is alive, there is still a chance Skynet can be created.

James Cameron's first installment of *The Terminator* helps audiences reconsider technology's rapid advancement throughout society by giving them a glimpse of a potential future where humanity becomes completely powerless before its own technological creations. At first glance, *The Terminator's* narrative is seemingly post-racial, until the second film reveals a good-versus-evil binary between white and black characters. Not only do these film installments of *The Terminator* make viewers reconsider existing opinions about technological advancement, the films also reflect contemporary racial ideologies in society.

3.2 Racializing Robots in Alex Proyas' *I, Robot*

Alex Proyas' *I, Robot* (2004) works as a pseudo-noir sci-fi dystopian narrative inspired by Isaac Asimov's 1950's collection of nine sci-fi short stories called *I, Robot*. American screenplay writer Jeff Vintar actually wrote the screenplay for *I, Robot* in 1995, originally calling it *Hardwired.* He sold the script to Walt Disney Pictures, and several years later, Twentieth Century Fox acquired the rights, making Alex Proyas the director. While *I, Robot's* narrative contains a plethora of social and cultural allegories, the film has not been widely acclaimed as one of Will Smith's best films and was ranked fairly high on *The Rolling Stone's* "Will Smith's Movies, Ranked Worst to Best" article in 2015 (Elbri).

In the year 2035, humanity has become tremendously dependent on robots, called "NS-5s," in their everyday lives. Robots have rapidly become more advanced and exist to

serve humanity. Humans are protected from the robots by Asimov's "Three Laws of Robotics," which prevents the robots from causing harm to humans or putting them in danger. Del Spooner (Will Smith) is a Chicago police detective who is investigating the alleged suicide of Dr. Alfred Lanning (James Cromwell), the co-founder and head robotics engineer of U.S. Robotics (USR). USR functions from an A.I. supercomputer named VIKI, short for Visual Interactive Kinesthetic Interface; VIKI serves as USR's operating core. Del Spooner is extremely prejudiced and hateful towards all robots, and ultimately does not trust them. A robot named Sonny, one of Dr. Lanning's robotic creations, is the main suspect in Spooner's investigation of Dr. Lanning's death. Unlike all the other NS-5s, Sonny possesses consciousness, which allows him to feel emotions, dream, and have free will.

Alex Proyas' *I, Robot* serves as a technophobic, cautionary tale depicting a version of the technological singularity in which posthuman technology gains consciousness, rejects the Asimov's Three Laws of Robotics, and ultimately uses them as justification to enslave humanity. However, *I, Robot* is different from most sci-fi technological singularity narratives, such as *The Terminator,* because it juxtaposes whiteness and blackness in an unconventional way by displacing whiteness, which can be seen through Del Spooner, the superior, black protagonist, and the inferior, white NS-5s. The film's juxtaposition of whiteness and blackness allegorically illuminates commonly held white American anxieties regarding their potential disempowerment after the Civil Rights Movement. In this light, the NS-5s can be viewed as the white conservatives who felt socioeconomic disempowerment after the Civil Rights Movement, while Spooner (who is the face of humanity) can be compared to the African Americans and minorities who became targets

of white conservatives' "law and order" agenda immediately following the Civil Rights Movement. I support my notion by exploring how Spooner is represented throughout the film as being over-emotional and paranoid, as opposed to the NS-5s, who are portrayed as compliant and logical until Spooner's technological fears are reaffirmed at the end of the film. Moreover, Sonny's ability to show human emotion solidifies his representation as the "white liberal," and as a result demonstrates a sense of racial tokenism that causes Spooner to stop vilifying robots (whiteness).

In the film, Del Spooner displays extreme prejudice and hatred toward the NS-5s. He views the NS-5s as being murderous, heartless, and untrustworthy, ultimately avoiding all interactions with them in his everyday life. Despite this, the rest of the human population has seemed to assimilate to the NS-5s' presence in society because of the hierarchal structure implemented by Asimov's Three Laws of Robotics. First, robots are not allowed to injure humans or allow them to be harmed. Second, a robot must obey orders given to it by human beings except if the orders conflict with the First Law. And third, a robot must protect its own existence as long as the protection of itself does not conflict with the First or Second Law. The film portrays most of the human population feeling safeguarded by these laws because they reinforce the master-slave relationship seen between humans and robots throughout society. Even though the NS-5s are completely compliant and subservient, Spooner still hates them, and as a result is chastised throughout society for being a "robophobic." Throughout the film Spooner constantly refers to the NS-5s as "canners," a derogatory term for a robot, and even attacks one when he wrongly assumes it has stolen a woman's purse. Spooner's overtly discriminatory attitude toward the NS-5s can obviously be historically linked to the racist attitudes and beliefs white Americans had

toward black Americans during Jim Crow, believing them to be untrustworthy and morally inferior. However, it is essential to understand how displaced whiteness and blackness are juxtaposed throughout the film because of the unique racial narrative it conveys.

Del Spooner, the film's protagonist, is a black man who feels threatened by the whiteness the NS-5s embody, further emphasizing the black fear toward whiteness (both historically and contemporarily) in American society. Historically, whiteness has been linked to terror in terms of black enslavement, lynch culture, and disenfranchisement. Sean Brayton, a Cultural Studies and race scholar, claims that, contrary to its chivalrous portrayal throughout U.S. history, whiteness can be considered a threatening and colonizing presence, especially in the consciousness of blacks. He contends that *I, Robot* explores whiteness through tropes of inhumanity and terror as a way of critiquing oppressive white identities (75). In the film, the presence of whiteness definitely terrorizes the black male protagonist. Del Spooner is overtly suspicious of the NS-5s, and they are constantly presented as relentless characters that try to stop Spooner's investigation of Dr. Lanning's death. At one point in the film, while Spooner is driving, the NS-5s attack him in mob-like fashion when his findings about Lanning's death threaten USR's future. This image mirrors the contemporary "driving while black" stigma of racial profiling many African Americans face through their driving experiences when coming into contact with white police officers. At the end of the film, Spooner's distrust and suspicion of the NS-5s are authenticated when they eventually disobey the three laws, under the command of VIKI, and attempt to imprison and enslave humanity.

Throughout the film the NS-5s are consistently shown occupying servile labor jobs such as maidservants, mail carriers, and janitors despite their high-tech anatomy, giving

them superior strength and agility compared to humans. The unskilled labor that is forced upon the NS-5s by society confirms their position as disenfranchised subjects in society. Moreover, the NS-5s have menial jobs and are often shown as servants, specifically to women and African Americans such as Spooner's grandmother, Gigi. In the film, the NS-5s easily serve as an allegory for the disempowered poor and middle-class white American conservatives during the post- Civil Rights era, who felt socioeconomically cheated after color-conscious policies and affirmative action began to be implemented throughout American society. According to Michelle Alexander, after the Civil Rights Movement, conservative white politicians who supported segregation distanced themselves from an explicitly racist agenda by adopting a "racially sanitized" rhetoric about "cracking down on crime," which is still used freely by conservative politicians today such as Donald Trump (43). Moreover, instead of implementing overtly racially-biased laws to reduce crime in America, conservative politicians merely used the laws already in place to target poor, black communities as a way of proving they wanted to "help" black Americans. However, by targeting black communities for conservatives' "law and order" agenda, millions of black Americans were imprisoned for drug and crime violations, contributing to America's current problem of mass incarceration. Similarly, when VIKI orders the white NS-5s to enslave and imprison humanity, they technically do not disobey the three robotic laws, but merely use the laws already implemented to imprison the human population. When the NS-5s turn on humanity, VIKI justifies their actions, saying, "You charge us with your safekeeping . . . To protect humanity… Some freedoms must be surrendered. We robots will ensure mankind's continued existence. You are so like children. We must save you from yourselves." VIKI ultimately justifies humanity's imprisonment and enslavement

by telling Spooner it is abiding the three laws and using them to protect humanity from itself, even if it means they will be incarcerated. The overlapping "law and order" rhetoric between VIKI and white conservatives during the post-civil rights era solidifies the NS-5s metaphorical position as the poor and middle-class conservative white Americans who supported and still do support America's "law and order" agenda.

The film depicts Spooner, who represents humanity, as being overly aggressive, rebellious, and paranoid, while the NS-5s are presented as logical and compliant, which further substantiates VIKI's determination to enslave humanity. Moreover, the film embraces the classic racially-stereotypical trope that attributes high-strung emotions to blackness and calm, level-headedness to whiteness. Sonny's character plays a vital role in the metaphorical representation of whiteness as well. Sonny can be seen as the "white liberal," which establishes his position as a racial token. Since Sonny posses human-like emotions, he is destined to prove to Spooner that not all robots are heartless and immoral so he can gain acceptance from him. This element reflects the contemporary white liberal desire to disconnect from the terrorizing historical implications whiteness has engrained in the consciousness of black Americans; they are ultimately determined to show and prove not all white Americans are the same. In the end of the film, Spooner comes to be less threatened by the NS-5s because of Sonny's attempts, while he becomes the leader in the NS-5s emancipation, further confirming Sonny has accomplished his "white liberal" agenda.

Aside from *I, Robot's* overtly technophobic cautionary tale of robots taking over humanity, the film pushes audiences to consider the multiplicity amongst human and posthuman technological beings. However, the film inadvertently accomplishes a

significant amount of cultural work involving race by displacing whiteness seen through the NS5s, letting audiences imagine a society where whiteness is not normalized, which helps unearth racial commentary about contemporary American society.

3.3 Almost Human: Androids in Sam Vincent and Jonathan Brackley's *Humans*

Sam Vincent and Jonathan Brackley's British-American sci-fi television series *Humans* (2015) serves as a not-too-distant future narrative, in which humanity has developed a wide distribution of highly advanced androids called "Synths," specifically designed to serve the human population. The series is jointly produced by AMC in the U.S, along with Channel 4 and Kudos in Britain. Loosely based on the Swedish sci-fi drama *Real Humans*, *Humans* has received an overall rating of 88% on *Rotten Tomatoes* because of its thought-provoking social and cultural messages regarding technological advancement in society. *Humans* has aired a total of two seasons, but I will only be focusing on one in my analysis. In an interview with *TV Guide News* in 2015, Jonathan Brackley stated his and Vincent's purpose in creating the series, saying, "We don't want to show this world as a dystopia or a utopia . . . But we are trying to say something about the nature of technology and our relationship to technology and what it's doing to us in both good ways and bad ways" (Bryant). Instead of depicting the effects of humanity and posthuman technology intersecting in a distant, far-off futuristic society, *Humans* somewhat works out of a "parallel-present," making the social and cultural messages more apparent for audiences. Although the series intentionally comments on humanity's relationship with advanced technology, I believe it unintentionally brings aspects of race and ethnicity into question, further illuminating historical and contemporary racial allegories seen in American society.

Humans depicts a semi-futuristic society in which humanity has become dependent on Synth labor. Synths are slowly starting to be used for human-like occupations such as caregivers, custodians, secretaries, and even prostitutes. The Synths are highly skilled and essentially able to perform any task that is asked of them by humans. Synths are designed to be emotionless, and they must abide by the Three Laws of Robotics. The narrative is centered on the Hawkins family, which acquires a new Synth named Anita (Gemma Chan), and slowly starts to realize there is something "odd" about her. Later, the series reveals that Anita is different because she's one of a group of Synths designed by David Elster, the creator of *all* Synths, to have emotion and free will, meaning they have the capability of breaking the three robotic laws.

Humans works as a semi-cautionary technological singularity narrative exploring humanity's anxieties and fears of all androids gaining consciousness, realizing their enslavement, and eventually making humanity inferior to machines. Humanity's anxiety toward conscious Synths can be analyzed through Professor Edward Hobb, who is hunting for the group of conscious Synths because he views them as a threat to humanity. Moreover, the group of conscious, "runaway" Synths serves as a historical allegory for black runaway slaves, seen as a threat to the institution of slavery. *Humans* reveals a racially stereotypical representation of black characters being unable to control their emotions in its narrative through the conscious Synth characters Fred and Max, who are both unable to stay hidden from Dr. Hobbs because they cannot hide their emotions. I consider *Humans'* narrative as "semi-cautionary" because it provides a more contemporary racial commentary in comparison to *The Terminator* and *I, Robot*. Despite the majority of the Synth population's compliance to humanity, many human characters throughout the

series show obvious anxiety and bitterness toward Synth labor in the workforce; they are fearful of Synths taking control of the workforce, eventually making human labor unnecessary. This aspect of humanity's resentment of Synth labor can serve as a contemporary allegory for white Americans who feel socioeconomically disempowered in society because of minority competition. Furthermore, the master-slave relationship established through Laura Hawkins (Katherine Parkinson) and Anita is particularly interesting because it alludes to an allegorical relationship commonly established between the wife of a slaveholder and black female domestic slaves.

The series presents a group conscious Synths who are in hiding because they are being hunted by Dr. Hobbs. Likewise, groups called "Junkers," who abduct rogue Synths and resell them on the market, also pose a threat to the conscious Synths. Leo Elster, the cyborg son of David Elster, is the leader of the conscious Synth group including Max, Fred, Mia (later renamed as Anita), and Niska. In the first episode, the group is working hard to cover their tracks when suddenly Junkers abduct Mia, Fred, and Niska. At this point, the group is separated and Mia, Fred, and Niska are resold into the Synth market, causing Leo and Max to start searching for them. The trials the group of conscious runway Synths experience is analogous to the runaway slave culture during the slavery era. During slavery, one of the main forms of resistance was running away. Black slaves would run away by themselves, in pairs, but especially in groups. The practice of running away became so widespread to the point that many Southern states started issuing patrols, but this did not prevent slaves from attempting escape (Franklin 161). Ultimately, slaveholders viewed running away as a method of resistance that could encourage revolt among other slaves. In

this light, the Junkers who capture Fred, Mia, and Niska are very similar to the patrols that looked for runaway slaves.

In the first episode, Fred is the first and only Synth to be captured by Dr. Hobbs. Dr. Hobbs finds Fred working at Leithridge Farm Foods Limited, where he attempts to hide his conscious Synth identity by responding to Hobbs' interrogating questions very carefully. However, Fred is essentially unable to hide his fear when Hobbs tells him he knows he is not a "normal" Synth. Aside from Max, Fred is the only Synth who is unable to keep his emotions hidden, which eventually causes him to be captured and studied by Hobbs. After Fred is captured, Hobbs explains to a colleague why conscious Synths are so dangerous, saying, "These Synths are physically no different to any others, and yet Elster gave them consciousness. If it could be done for the few, it can be done for the more. And then what? Do you think they would still want to be slaves?" Hobbs recognizes the possibility of the conscious Synths giving other Synths consciousness as well, which correlates to the idea of slaveholders' fear of runaway slaves eventually encouraging revolts. Fred, who is unable to remain hidden because of his "open" emotions, can hardly be considered as emotional as his white Synth counterpart, Niska. Niska appears as a white woman and is the most emotional of all the runaway Synths; she has even killed and injured humans out of anger. However, Niska is never caught by Hobbs and remains free throughout the whole series. Max, the other black Synth, stays with Leo through most of the series and never ventures off by himself because according to Leo "he can't hide what he really is." The narrative emphasizes a binary between white and black Synths; blackness is linked to being untactful and over-emotional, while whiteness embodies discretion and even-temperedness. At the end of the seventh episode, Leo and Max are running from

Hobbs and the police. With a low battery, Max knows he will not be able to escape Hobbs and decides to commit suicide despite Leo's protests. Ultimately, Max commits suicide because he knows if he is caught, he will never have a free life. Max's suicide analogous to black slaves who committed suicide to escape re-enslavement after running away from his or her master, even as it reinforces the series' portrayal of black Synths being untactful and impulsive.

Despite the overall compliance of the Synths throughout the series, several human characters are openly discriminatory toward them because they feel disempowered in the workforce as a result of Synth labor. One of the main characters who feels a sense of disempowerment is Mattie (Lucy Carless), the oldest daughter in the Hawkins household. Mattie is a teenage girl in high school and is extremely intelligent. However, she feels disillusioned about her future because she believes Synth labor will have completely taken over the workforce by the time she is old enough to start a career. This is apparent in the very first episode of the series, when Mattie's grade drops from an A to a D in her computer class. Her parents confront her about it, telling her if she applies herself she can be anything she wants, to which she replies, "Yeah, I could be anything I want, right? What about a doctor? That'll take me seven years. But by then you'll be able to turn any old Synth into a brain surgeon in seven seconds . . . My best isn't worth anything." Mattie recognizes the rapid advancement of the Synths and fears by time she is an adult, there will be no place for her in the workforce.

Similarly, an organization called "We Are People" (WAP) emerges by episode five of the series. This group is based on the disempowered humans' hate of Synth labor, who feel as though Synths are starting overpower humanity. When D.S. Pete Drummond (Neil

Maskell), a Special Technologies Task Force officer, attends a WAP rally, the main speaker talks about the socioeconomic disempowerment humanity is starting to feel. He says, "We're giving ourselves away, piece by piece. We're handing over the things that make us who we are, or maybe who we were. Our responsibilities, our dignity." The socioeconomic disempowerment humanity is starting to feel in *Humans* is shockingly similar to the disempowerment many white Americans feel in contemporary society toward minorities, which became especially obvious during Donald Trump's election campaign. According to Nicholas Connfessore of the *New York Times*, Trump's political rhetoric has voiced the bewilderment and anger of whites who do not feel powerful or privileged in American society. Connfessore claims, "In making the explicit assertion of white identity and grievance more widespread, Mr. Trump has galvanized the otherwise marginal world of avowed white nationalists." In *Humans,* as in the United States of 2017, the disempowerment humanity is feeling stems from their displaced identity; they do not know where they stand in society, so they feel they do not have a purpose.

Within the Hawkins family, Anita establishes a master-slave relationship with each of its older members and must abide by their commands. However, the master-slave relationship she develops with Laura Hawkins is particularly significant because of the ways it parallels aspects of the relationships the wives of slaveholders used to share with their black, female domestic slaves during the slavery era. The first episode of the series depicts Laura Hawkins being extremely disconnected from her family. Joe Hawkins (Tom Goodman-Hill), Laura's husband, feels completely overwhelmed with raising their children, so he buys Anita to help around the house without Laura's permission. From the beginning, it is definitely clear Laura is uncomfortable with Anita's presence in the

household, but over the course of the first two episodes, her resentment of Anita grows. In the first episode, Laura tells Anita to stop checking in on her youngest daughter, Sophie, telling Anita, "That's my job." When she confronts Joe about her feelings, she apologizes for working so much asking him, "Is that why you want to replace me with that thing?" Laura harbors resentment toward Anita, even though she has simply been compliant to all the members of the family. Of course, Laura is one of the first members of the family to recognize something peculiar about Anita, being that she is actually Mia reprogrammed, and begins to focus on every action Anita makes because she is suspicious of her. For example, in episode two, Laura catches Anita staring at an object in her hands, becomes suspicious, and goes to see what it is. It turns out to be a spider. Laura loses her temper because she is afraid of them and accuses Anita of purposely showing her the spider because she "knows" she is afraid of them. There is no way Anita could have possibly known this, but because of the jealousy and resentment Laura feels toward her, she assumes Anita has bad intentions.

During slavery, the wives of slaveholders often exhibited the same resentment and jealously toward their black, female house slaves because they often served as sexual objects for their husbands and sometimes even mothered his illegitimate children. This dynamic is present in Harriet Jacobs' narrative *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* between Jacobs and her white mistress, Mrs. Flint. She speaks about the resentment Mrs. Flint held toward her saying, "I had entered my sixteenth year. . . it became more apparent that my presence was intolerable to Mrs. Flint. . . she was never satisfied. . . in her angry moods, no terms were too vile for her to bestow upon me. . . whom she detested so bitterly" (51). Mrs. Flint is jealous of Jacobs because she suspects she is having sexual relations with her

husband, but she has no substantial proof, so she assumes Jacobs to have malignant intentions. Later in the series, this allegorical "mistress-slave" dynamic is affirmed when Joe actually does have sex with Anita by switching her into adult mode. After this happens, Laura's previous behavior toward Anita is substantiated and even more paralleled with aspects of the relationships the wives of slaveholders used to share with their black, female house slaves.

Humans attempts to create social and cultural commentary about humanity's dependence on advanced technology, making audiences consider the negative and positive implications of contemporary society moving into a posthuman era. However, in doing this, the series inadvertently incorporates contemporary and historical implications of race when showing the intersection of Synths and humanity. Therefore, the socio-cultural message *Humans* possesses has the potential to prevent society from carrying over racially-discriminatory attitudes and behaviors into a posthuman era, or the complete opposite, by substantiating currently existing racially-discriminatory attitudes in contemporary society.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

Science fiction cinema and television depicting futuristic societies as post-racial, or "colorblind," where racial issues are seemingly irrelevant due to a plethora of new races and ethnicities commonly presented, offer an opportunity for audiences to draw conclusions about the way the genre comments on implications of race in contemporary society. Today, many Americans believe racism no longer exists because overt forms of racism are publically condemned and most white Americans generally claim not to be aware of race. I believe the humanistic technophobic fears and anxieties associated with advanced technology seen within science fiction are analogous to many historical and current ideas concerning race and ethnicity in American society. However, in order to draw connections between humanity's technophobic relationship with posthuman technology to American racial stigmas, a general comprehension of the intricacies of humanity's relationship to technology is necessary. One of the most prominent issues to arise from humanity's relationship with technology is its fear of losing control of it, ultimately making it difficult for humanity to define its role in society.

Isiah Lavender claims that understanding the human relationship with technology is extremely important because technology has the power to uplift the human species or destroy it completely. Furthermore, the more dependency humanity places on technology in everyday life in an extremely technologically progressive society, the more susceptible it becomes to technology's potentially dangerous side. Lavender describes technology as

"a symbol of humanity's pride" (189) in its perceived control of the natural world's resources, and through its constant desire for more technology, may cause humanity to become oblivious to the fact it is becoming too dependent on technological labor, ultimately risking its own disempowerment or even extinction. I believe science fiction cinema uses humanity's dependence on technology as a way of critiquing human specificity, opening new ways of analyzing race in contemporary society.

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