

George,

Excellent work on this paper. I really appreciate all the effort you put into it. Your paper actually affected me and made me think. It is sophisticated, precise, and elegant in its reasoning. Well done!

This essay would have been stronger if some of the minor typos had been caught and if there wasn't such a long direct quote towards the end of the paper. I also don't think the bit about Einstein is necessary.

I would like to use this essay as a positive example for future classes. If you agree to allow me to do this, please email me a corrected copy of the paper at your earliest convenience.

Let me know if you have any questions.

Description of Text/Monster	10 of 10	
Analysis of Monster	25 of 25	
Utilization of Monster Theory	15 of 15	
Supporting Evidence/Citations	10 of 10	
Structure/Organization	15 of 15	
Grammar/Style/Formatting	14 of 15	
Improvement	10 of 10	
Final Grade	99 of 100	A

Keep up the hard work!


Dan

George Pappas
ENG. 102.030
Inst. Dan Portincaso
Monster Theory Essay – Final Draft
2/15/17

Time Is Relevant

Time is the monster in *Interstellar*. A monster that cannot be stopped nor destroyed. Time existed long before humanity was created and it will continue to exist long after humanity is destroyed. *Interstellar* is a movie where earth will soon be unlivable because of either what the people living there have done to it or because the planet is just simply giving up. With that said, Cooper and his team of astronauts set out to find a planet that can support human life. One of the most apparent constraints that the team is faced with is time. As Cooper and his team travel through space, they realize what time relativity can actually mean for Humanity. And with that reveals the ugly monster that surrounds the audience every minute of every day, time.

All human beings have a so-called time limit to their lives. Humans cannot live forever; human bodies become weakened with age and ultimately, in the end, the body gives up. In *Interstellar* the characters, in a sense, are able to escape time. This can be compared to Cohen's second thesis. By traveling to another planet that has a much more intense gravitational field, their time progression is dramatically different compared to the time progression outside of the planet and on earth. In a sense, they are escaping time. According to *Interstellar*, one hour on that planet is seven years back on earth. If compared to the people on earth, the people on that planet would outlive multiple generations. This is scientifically proven by Einstein's theory of relativity. "As a result, he found that space and time were interwoven into a single continuum known as space-time. Events that occur at the same time for one observer could occur at different times for another" (Redd). Cooper and the astronauts that traveled to the planet with him were able to escape time.



Escaping time is also a desire for the audience; connecting this to thesis six in Cohen's seven monster theses. Typically, getting older means that the person is getting closer to the end of his or her life. In today's culture, people only live to be about 75-85 years old (Life Expectancy at Birth, Total (Years)). However, in *Interstellar*, Cooper ends up being 124 years old when he gets found floating in space. As time continued on, Cooper did not age; he managed to prolong his existence on earth and escape the effects of time. A world with no death is something to be desired by many people; there would be no end and always time to do anything and everything. 6

Unfortunately, the audience does have a limit to their life so they need to make good use of the time they have. Cohen's fifth thesis states that the monster is a warning to society. The monster is time and the warning is that the audience's time is much more valuable than they may think. Cooper, the main protagonist in *Interstellar*, was never able to fully demonstrate his skill of being a pilot for NASA. His time in college and his time training to go into outer space were ~~wasted~~ because he was forced to become a farmer (*Interstellar*). When he has a chance to fulfill what he trained for, he does it not out of self-interest but out of the interest of saving every human on earth including his children, his son Tom being 15 and his daughter Murph being 10 when he left. As he goes through his journey time changes drastically for him at certain points. The next time Cooper sees his daughter is when she is on her death bed. The underlining warning is that the viewers should not take time for granted. 5

Cohen's third thesis states that the monster threatens a sense of order. As *Interstellar* comes to end, the audience sees the tolls that time has caused to Cooper and his (now very old) daughter, Murph. As he still looks young and healthy due to being preserved in another dimension, Murph looks very old and is laying on her deathbed. It disrupts the audience's sense 3

of order because the daughter is physically older than the father which, without the means of time travel, is impossible to happen. As the scene continues, the audience learns she will die very soon as Murph says to her father, “No parent should have to watch their own child die” (*Interstellar*). As it is sometimes possible to happen in today’s modern-day culture, normally the children outlive their parents. When this does not end up happening, the viewers feel an overwhelming sense of sorrow as it threatens their sense of order.

From the moment that Cooper ejected out of his space ship (better known as Ranger Two) and got sucked into a black hole they called “Gargantua,” he was most likely presumed dead. After years went by with no sign of him living, the odds that anyone believing he was still alive was little to none. However, when they just found him floating around in space, people were shocked to see that he was still alive. As if, Cooper came back from the dead. This is absolutely not accepted in society. Humans do not come back from the dead. This of course corresponds with Cohen’s fourth thesis, the monster represents a value that is not accepted in society. It is not in human nature to come back to life after dying. In the case of Cooper, he is presumed dead and then, without any warning or previous sign of him living, is found alive. Cooper being alive is a shock to everyone, including his own daughter, because after someone dies they are not to be seen again.

Time does not change the audience’s perceptions in any positive way. After watching *Interstellar*, the audience fears time more than they previously did before watching the movie. This is a result of the destruction that time does to Cooper, his family, and his team of astronauts. Cohen’s seventh thesis might suggest the monster becomes more understood however, in the case of *Interstellar*, time is even less understood. When dealing with time, one little mistake can lead to years of consequences. The audience realizes this in *Interstellar* when Cooper visits a

4

interesting

7

plant where one hour on that planet was seven years on earth; he entered unknown territory and remained trapped there for three hours (about 23 years on earth). They will never be able to regain the time they lost, once they made the mistake there was no turning back. As stated in *Interstellar* "Time is relative, it can stretch and it can squeeze but it can't run backwards." Just as humans only get one life and it only takes one big mistake to change that life forever. Cooper's situation should not only be a warning for humanity living today but also in the future where distant space travel might be a possibility.

As a culture, humans are intrigued by the unknown, they search and seek out the unknown and try to make it known because humans are a curious species. One of the most unknown things to humans is outer space. This is why scientists sent Apollo 11 to the moon in 1969 (Dunbar). This generation is currently in the process of figuring out how they can send men and women to colonize Mars. "NASA Administrator Charles Bolden, a former space shuttle commander, said he envisioned becoming the first person to explore Mars when he checked in for astronaut training at Houston's Johnson Space Center in 1980. Back then, a ~~crewed~~ ^{oh my} Red Planet mission was believed to be 30 years away, Bolden said. That proved to be an overly optimistic assessment, of course. But NASA's current goal of getting astronauts to Mars in the 2030s is eminently achievable, Bolden added" (Wall). This of course is a big risk and by traveling further and further away from the gravity of the sun, time will be affected. Today's culture can only hope the monster of time does not make a relevant appearance in their modern and scientific culture.

Works Cited

- Dunbar, Brian. "The First Person on the Moon." *NASA*, 9 Apr. 2009, www.nasa.gov/audience/forstudents/k-4/stories/first-person-on-moon.html. Accessed 29 January 2017.
- Interstellar*. Directed by Christopher Nolan, Paramount Pictures, 2014.
- "Life Expectancy at Birth, Total (Years)." *The World Bank*, 6 Feb. 2017, data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.LE00.IN. Accessed 16 February 2017.
- Redd, Nola Taylor. "Einstein's Theory of General Relativity." *Space.com*, 12 July 2016, www.space.com/17661-theory-general-relativity.html. Accessed 15 February 2017.
- Wall, Mike. "A Manned Mission to Mars Is Closer to Reality Than Ever: NASA Chief." *Space.com*, 18 Sept. 2015, www.space.com/30580-nasa-manned-mars-mission-reality.html. Accessed 29 January 2017.
-