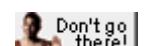


Cinema Discusso › Ridley Scott's Prometheus - It looks as much like dicks as anything else.

 POST 

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

It's really that Ash lacks whatever element of human psychology makes one capable of violence and/or sexuality. he tries to kill Ripley but doesn't know how, so his attack takes on some kind of weird rape overtones - but he doesn't really understand that either, which is why he clumsily uses the magazine as a weapon.

He idolizes the alien because it obviously has no such issues.

Reducing it to 'he was a lemon' deflates the point of the scene/character/film.

i Aug 5, 2011 03:34

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 REPORT

 QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

Alien is a story of the bear and it attacked people. Look out!!! This tornado has planted eggs in their lungs.

i Aug 8, 2011 06:09

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 REPORT

 QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

Popcorn posted:

I suppose everyone's noticed that Alien 3 is universally cited as underrated? If everyone agrees something is underrated, doesn't that just mean it's kind of, well, rated?

Alien 3 is rated exactly as well as it should be: as a decent standalone slasher film hampered by all kinds of issues and shoehorned into a franchise where it doesn't belong.

Aliens Versus | Predator: Requiem is genuinely underrated - given that it's almost universally hated, and yet actually the second-best film in both its series. (And that's with no disrespect to Cameron's film). Fans and critics alike gave it short shrift because they misidentified the protagonist (hint: it's not a human) and took for granted how expertly it weaves the two stories together on a thematic level. Not to mention all the contextualizing factors that fully justify it not being an Alien remake like they inexplicably expected. (It's actually a Predator sequel and a *commentary on Aliens*.)

Fincher's film is essentially an Alien remake, and that's the major source of its weaknesses. It basically pretends that 'Alien' isn't a massive cultural phenomenon and goes off on its own tangent. It doesn't shed new light on either of the previous films, which is what makes it feel so darned inconsequential. It's a sequel in plot only.

i Dec 11, 2011 10:36

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 REPORT

 QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

Dissapointed Owl posted:

I can't find myself in this at *all*. Expertly weaved? Really? I'm gonna need some really convincing arguments to convince me that *anything* in that movie is done 'expertly'.



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

Well what always stood out to me is that the dude in the Predator suit gives an awesome silent performance (not to mention that in this age of CGI, it is still a dude in a suit). He is basically the protagonist of the film until around the second half. I believe it takes roughly an hour for the main human characters to become conscious of the alien threat, and the film uses this dynamic of what characters do and do not know. This is the expert part of the film, to me. It's all about seeing and knowing, which is why you have the various types of vision, the various charts and maps - all used to establish the characters' relationships and our relation to them. The aliens, for example, only blindly/omnisciently spread, where the predator attempts to pare down and contain, while the humans move dynamically between them. The audience is placed in a position of superiority to the human characters until they finally catch up and experience their ghost ship moment. This is why the Predator is the protagonist for half the film and the humans do come across as meatbags until they finally become aware. It's entirely a conscious choice.

The cinematography is very good, with shots emphasizing the geometric relationships between *everything*. The Town is beside the Forest, the Sewer is underneath the Town - and I capitalize these because the film treats them as archetypal spaces. One extreme god's-eye shot of the town pans in such a way that the obscene chaos of the forest seems to be overwhelming the ordered grid of the roads. This fascination with patterns and communication reminds me of nothing more than Saul Bass's excellent Phase IV.

Should you ever watch it again, pay attention to little is conveyed through expository dialogue. There's almost none - the film expresses *everything* with clear and evocative visuals. Which is to say that it's an unusually cinematic film, even when held against Fincher's.

AV | P|R's bifurcated title reflects how it's actually two films simultaneously: the finale of the Predator series and a prequel to Aliens. (And one must keep in mind that prequels are not meant to be viewed in chronological order, regardless of what George Lucas told you. They serve as commentary on their antecedents). It's actually arguing that Aliens is the superior film, by making the 'versus' part into not some fanservice brawl, but an actual conflict between the films' themes and aesthetics. For example, the film associates the predator's hatred of guns with his hatred for the aliens, making the unusual and rather Cronenberg point that picking up a gun alters who you are - *makes you alien*. This is something that's usually treated as a videogame rule, but that the film makes into a metaphysical stance. This wasn't even as clearly expressed in the original Predator, where the no-gun thing was a relatively minor detail in the overall conflict. AV|P|R foregrounds it, along with other nuances in the series, by recontextualizing them and mashing them up. The predator is named for Harvey Kietel's character in Pulp Fiction, and the film absolutely has that Tarantino sensibility in its quotations. Again, it's unabashedly cinematic and 'about' the language of cinema.

Then there's just gleefully perfect images like the national guard circa 2007 getting pounced by screeching xenomorphs. It's fun, as well as fascinating - which is more than I can say for Fincher's compromised and leaden film.

i Dec 11, 2011 12:37

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QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

Well it is a horror movie, and the series had already imperiled children and killed a dog. It's not just murdering pregnant women just to be offensive (and you don't see many complaints about the much weaker film Inside). The Strauses have this auteur theme about things affecting the development of a fetus - as when the female protagonist of Skyline worries that some cigarette smoke will affect her baby. This is related to that gun thing I just mentioned, as well as Skyline's lights that alter your physiology. It's a coherent expression of posthumanist body-horror themes.

i Dec 11, 2011 13:21

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REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

Vintersorg posted:

Wow, I knew it was bad and that I couldn't make anything out but jesus fucking christ, this is terrible. Fuck Fox.

Exactly, just turn up the brightness a bit to reveal the good film beneath. In Skyline, the Strauses actually blow up Fox Studios as retribution for some apparent difficulties they had with the production. I wouldn't be surprised if it was their idea

Even in the darkest scenes, though, there are strong highlights that provide the outlines. Whoever was complaining about the slimy textures in the darkness kinda missed the point, given that this is an alien film.

Xenomrph posted:

I don't get where this is coming from, or why you're punctuating the title that way. The movie is actually called 'Aliens vs Predator: Requiem'. If you're going to read into the title that way, it makes more sense to use the actual title.

That's the official title on the box art and whatnot, but the actual opening credits use the acronym AVP:R, where the vertical line is the yonic 'I' shape from Aliens' titles. This appears in the middle of the predator font and divides it like that. That's the sort of mash-up that actually builds upon themes in both films. It goes down to the title fonts and their layout.

Like returning to the pregnancy-violence - what happens to the pregnant woman in predator 2? Obviously something quite different. The predator ultimately fails in the film because he has that strict moral code, and that's why the violence is it's not just escalation for the sake of it. It's contrasting Predator's (very) relative kid-friendliness with Alien's more visceral, intimate horror.

i Dec 11, 2011 20:19

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

echoplex posted:

In my mind I guess there's a difference between fans of the creatures and fans of the films, and the Super Strassio Bros seem like the former. The difference between Alien and AVP:R is that they're completely disconnected from the original *film* - they're just playing with the action figures that came from it.

This is entirely correct, except for the action-figure pejorative. Also, the nuance that's missed is that you can't really have these creatures without the context of the films they came from.

AVP:R is absolutely different from the original film in the same sense that Alien is different from Aliens. It's where things get meta, because you can't do this kind of a pop-culture mash-up and shoot it as a slow-burning 1970s horror film. I mean, you *could*, but then that would ignore that the artistic choices in Alien were purposefully employed for that specific story in that specific context.

Like I said earlier, the predator is the film's protagonist and the film treats him as a Tarantino-by-way-of-Leone archetype. A man with no name, basically. The film is about these monsters as godlike cinematic icons, which is why you have the 'predalien' as a dark mirror to original. They're The Good and The Bad, while the humans constitute The Ugly.

That duality is all over the underestimated human scenes, where the characters are all paired up as cop/criminal, boss/employee, husband/wife and so-on. By the end of the film, you can see how each character's identity relates to the choices they make and ultimately whether they live or die. And again, it's all unspoken or deliberately left ambiguous. Like when proto-Ripley's daughter asks why her mom never tried to save her husband, you understand her choice without the reason ever being spoken. The archetypal battle between the aliens in the town's unconscious is a reflection/extension of their mundane personal dramas, and this is why some of them are able to transcend their situation and become gods themselves.

Not to single you out or anything, but I very often see responses like 'obviously they just wanted to play with toys' or 'they just wanted to make money'. This is pointless cynicism that glosses over what the film is actually doing with each shot and edit in favor of a instinctive blanket dismissal. Same with the usual "well you can read it all you want, but it's still intrinsically bad, bad shit because." Ultimately it reduces to "it's bad because it's bad."

There's not really such a thing as a 'bad film'. The question is bad *readings*.

i Dec 12, 2011 05:59

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

Stayne Falls posted:

There are still poorly executed films, though.

Oh fer sure; you won't see me championing just any film. But what good is that sort of opinion if you don't have an effective way of telling the difference?

i Dec 12, 2011 06:41

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



Xenomorph posted:

No it's not, not when the point is that it goes directly against what SMG is saying. SMG says the movie has brilliant cinematography (and he says it like it's some sort of universally understood truth, he doesn't bother to back that opinion up) and it's demonstrably false.

Sure, the movie DOES have actual merits, but broadly declaring that it's the second best in both its series is a bit much, especially when he drops that bombshell and then doesn't bother defending it at all. I'm all for people watching (or re-watching) AvPR, but he's pretty grossly mis-representing the movie and I'm confident that some of the people saying "huh maybe it's not as bad as I remember, I'll give it another watch!" are going to walk away disappointed.

And this is coming from some who *liked the movie.* 😊

For example:

No one was expecting an Alien remake, nor did the majority of the fans mis-identify the protagonist (which demonstrates how hollow and pointless most of the human characters were) and chiding the audience for doing something they didn't actually do is a pretty bad non-criticism.

About the only praise SMG has given so far (and it's one of the only bits of concrete praise he's actually given, when you boil down his posts) is that the actor playing the Predator gave a good "silent protagonist" performance. I liked the Predator quite a bit for a multitude of reasons, including his portrayal, his consistency as a character with the exception of one really jarring scene, and his design.

Nearly every review of the film I've read complains that the human protagonists are boring and rarely even mentions the predator as a character. This is absolutely a misidentification of the film's protagonist, because the humans are only *focal characters* until roughly halfway into the film.

The film uses this shift in audience sympathy to re-inforce its theme that 'humanity' is not something intrinsic and is rather contingent on all manner of circumstances. The humans don't become *human* until they've achieved sufficient knowledge of their surroundings. This is a reverse of the tactic used in Psycho - which, it should be noted, is also a bleak exploitation film.

To be fair, I really don't actively seek out fan opinions for obvious reasons, so I'm going off of internet comments I stumble upon. I remember the characters being a major focus of fan complaints - especially that there's a dude named Dallas but he's not the same Dallas!!!

[Of course, one thing I always liked about Alien is how minimally the characters in it are sketched. Dallas barely even talks, and his behavior is defined more by what he *doesn't* do. He's pretty much just resigned to fate.]

There's more to cinematography than just lighting, and AVP:R isn't even that bad in that respect. The DVD, at least, is not as dark as that screenshot comparison earlier. And what I liked about the darkest scenes (scenes of the predator walking around in unlit spaces) are the patterns of small red lights and reflected white highlights become the figure on the ground. Although things aren't pitch black and the action is quite visible, you still see the predator 'as' a series of lines and dots, which is paid off later when you see that the military's satellite images also present the action as patterns of white lines and red dots on a dark background.

Saying that it's the second best film of either franchise isn't that bold a statement when you consider that most of the films in them suck hard. Alien and Predator are unimpeachable, so the only really contentious point is that it's better than Aliens (which is almost equally great as AVP:R) and Alien 3 (which is an interesting mess with a xenomorph distractingly shoehorned into it - and also something of a slog).

People who defend Alien 3 on the basis of its canonicity miss that it would be dramatically improved were the main character's name changed and an unrelated monster used. The whole film is structured around Ripley being possibly-insane or even the killer herself, but we know from the beginning that the monster is real and the decks are stacked. If there were more scenes like the hallucination scene, we'd be in business. But the idea of using the alien as a purely allegorical threat - a quasi-physical manifestation of sin - is only tentatively broached and abandoned just as quickly. That's why people perceive it as just some bald dudes running through corridors. Because without that allegorical aspect functioning properly, that's all it is.

And it should be noted that neither of the previous films was about religion, or rather not in the same way. The alien was presented as a *pagan* god with a physical presence, not unlike one of Lovecraft's cosmic monsters. Christianity didn't really factor into it at all, but Alien 3 jarringly uses the alien as a metaphor for original sin, with Ripley appearing on Earth and inadvertently unleashing evil into it. AVP:R returns to the pagan with its idolized cinematic monster-gods.

i Dec 12, 2011 23:42

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REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

mind the walrus posted:



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

I'm guessing not, and in the context of arguing for a film's merit solely on what appears during its run-time I can agree to disagree; but on a personal level I refuse to let the context of a work's production remain wholly separate from the end product. In that sense Aliens was a revolutionary film for both the franchise and dozens of derivative works, and I refuse to rate a movie like AV|P|R as an equal when many of its characters and conventions owe its very existence to the chances Aliens took.

By that metric, a film is only truly good if it's popular and/or financially successful. Also, you're getting into questions of 'authenticity' that are frankly lame. A viewing of Skyline should definitively reveal just how much of AV|P|R is the product of a genuine auteur sensibility.

AV|P|R does a ton of unusual things in its runtime that I found very interesting, but that critics and audiences rejected for not being 'more of the same'. Example: the general dearth of exposition. Or having the protagonist of the film be a mute alien. Or simply doing an Alien prequel in a postmodern commentary on the meaning of the franchise and its current popular perception, whereby *the alien is now the audience identification character*. What AV|P|R diagnoses is that we identify more with the monster than with the people because the categories of 'human' and 'alien' have been collapsed.

AV|P|R has a lot in common with Rob Zombie's brilliant but also unappreciated Halloween remake in this respect. With his Halloween 2, critical perception is finally catching up with what he was doing there - but it's going to take longer with these sci-fi films that are still thoroughly ghettoized as 'just' Bay/Anderson/Emmerich spectacle. (This year's best films are Battle: Los Angeles and Apollo 18, but you wouldn't know it from how they've been so thoroughly dismissed and ignored.)

The presentation of the town in AV|P|R is also very similar to Cronenberg's History of Violence, where the small town Americana is recreated in soundstages and Canada to create an uncanny, heightened effect. It's not just a cost-saving measure, because they're using The Sewer, The Hospital and The Power Plant as metaphorical spaces. The overall idea is that the 'normal' american way of life occupies a fragile space between The Forest and these complex life-support mechanisms. I've said before that the film makes Gunnison, Colorado look more precarious than Hadley's Hope, and I stand by that.

Aliens is a great film, but discussion of it has grown stagnant because we are stuck in this lame mode where the best times are behind us and now everything is shit. As if both Alien and Aliens were not highly derivative of films that came before them (most notably The Thing From Another World and Them!). And as if the discussion was all that great to begin with, with fans still bristling at scary words like 'context'.

Aliens did things in its time, but the times have changed, and this film is part of a new wave of science fiction films preoccupied with what Steve Shapiro calls the post-cinematic, where film has been confronted with the rise of new digital technologies.

i Dec 13, 2011 01:33

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REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

mind the walrus posted:

That is so far from my point it's not even funny. I was referring to the creative, technical, and cultural impact Aliens had versus AV|P|R. If any sci-fi work of the last 25 years has involved the military in space or bug-like monsters it used Aliens as one of the, if not the primary templates.

It has dick all to do with being authentic, and while I'm loathe to use a maliciously reductive term like "original" because it implies that originality excuses incompetence, that formula/convention is worth less intrinsically, and that Alien/Aliens were themselves 100% original in all aspects, that term is closer what I'm getting at.

Well, again though: "impact" is just a catch-all for popularity and/or financial success. Films are copied if they are successful in those terms.

As I understand it, you're saying that Aliens is the superior film because although its ideas were not "original", it originated a cultural phenomenon by (for example) establishing the viability of Alien as a franchise. [The question of a franchise is of course something that AV|P|R is highly aware and critical of, what with the aliens duking it out in a shopping centre - as if the creators were oblivious of the implications!]

And although you can protest that you mean only the 'pure' technical skill or 'pure' creativity, you can't have a proper phenomenon with cultural impact without at least popularity or financial success. And then you're getting into a teleological argument about artistic progress anyways.

I would say the inverse: that Aliens effectively organized a bunch of classic special-effects techniques and science fiction tropes in a way that captured the zeitgeist. What AV|P|R does is not dissimilar.

i Dec 13, 2011 02:31

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REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

Xenomorph posted:

In the Brothers Strause's defense, they seemed to "get" where AvP failed on some levels and tried to correct it with their movie, but they still didn't "get" what made the better movies in each franchise work so well. They understood how to make the Aliens a credible threat against the human population, but didn't get how to make the Predator seem competent against the Aliens without making the Aliens completely ineffectual. They "got" how to portray the Predator as a mysterious, inhuman badass for the most part, but then had him go off and skin some people/string them up for no reason other than "it's a callback to 'Predator' and gore is cool".

The skinning scene actually establishes the predator's weakness: that he is bound to his traditions.

This includes things like the fact that fights solo and uses 'honorable' dueling weapons - which you can contrast with the humans' machine guns and bombs that work over wide areas. The point of the film is that the aliens are ineffective individually (as they are in Aliens), but function as a powerful swarm. In contrast, the predator is extremely effective as an individual, but is constrained by time and space. You could complain that 'irl an alien would beat him up because of canon' but for the purposes of the film, the alien threat is that they will just blindly reproduce faster than you can kill them.

This is entirely in keeping with the good Alien films, where the alien is 'perfect' not because it's super-badass at stabbing people, but because its psychologically very basic. It simply exists to breed and kill - and in a rather leisurely manner at that. The various shots of it just hovering over people highlight its *indifference*. It's like a murderous bear-sized jellyfish or something. It may not even be conscious. This is the 'purpose' of the acid blood. The alien's aggressiveness is 'just' a directionless chemical reaction to its environment.

Ridley Scott and the gang knew that the 'perfect' alien would be fucked if anyone had a gun. Cameron and the Strauses introduced the queen/predalien to provide the bugs with some rudimentary motivation, which is why they move more quickly in those films and display 'intelligence' that is actually probably just emergent behavior.

Alien 3 didn't really 'get' this, as evidenced by how the rod puppet would dash around at high speed, and with apparent goals ('defending' Ripley from the men).

i Dec 14, 2011 10:02

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SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

TOOT BOOT posted:

May not even be thematically similar, or the same genre.

Alien was a pretty unambiguous Pandora story, with its bleak planetscape filling roughly the same role as the antarctic in Frankenstein: The Modern Prometheus - or any version of The Thing (the original story namedrops Prometheus/Pandora in the first chapter).

Also, out of all of Alien's sci-fi influences, the most prominent is Howard Hawks' The Thing From Another World.

Given that this is a sci-fi film called Prometheus, there's a fairly good chance that it'll be covering similar themes.

i Dec 18, 2011 09:41

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

TOOT BOOT posted:

Perhaps, but there are several jumps involved from Frankenstein -> Thing From Another World -> Alien -> Prometheus.

In fact, while I can see the influence of Thing on Alien, the Frankenstein influence is pretty faded by that point. Frankenstein was basically human and just wanted to be accepted. The Alien was a remorseless insect that just wanted to stick its razor sharp second jaw through your skull.

That's not exactly the point. In the original Frankenstein novel, part of Dr. Frankenstein's horror that drives him is that he reveals the truth about himself, and about humanity. In assembling a copy of himself, he understands himself as a mechanical, haphazardly created being.

What is missed in most of the later Frankenstein adaptations is that the monster really is physically and mentally superior. Also, he doesn't really look like a patchwork of stitches and bolts - the monster's 'ugliness' comes from his translucent skin that reveals the muscles and veins underneath. This transparency is related to the 'dissection' imagery that is everywhere in Alien. The point is that Frankenstein becomes horribly aware of his own abject, posthuman condition. The monster stops being an object of research and becomes a mirror

- a reminder that he's nothing more than a disgusting organism himself.

In Alien, the alien's translucent dome and exterior tubing are a reference to this, and to the helmets on the crew's space-suits. The Alien is 'biomechanical', and can survive in a vacuum. The space-suits are a prosthetic enhancement that allows the humans to do the same. Ripley becomes alien at the end of the film - or more specifically, in her control over the entire shuttle, she becomes Mother and jettisons the monster out the rear hatch with a cord attached its midsection (!).

The alien isn't frightening purely because it's an alien, but because it's an exaggerated metaphor for 'human nature' - as a mechanical insect that only fucks, kills and dies. What Ripley fights for is to be more than just an insect. Or, in Aliens, to become the queen insect.

i Dec 18, 2011 10:31

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

Payndz posted:

I'd say it's more like It! The Terror From Beyond Space (ship lands on planet to investigate odd goings-on, unwittingly takes alien creature aboard, said creature sets about picking off the crew). Or from sci-fi literature, Voyage Of The Space Beagle (which features a monster that stalks through the ship's air vents and jumps out to grab crew members and plant eggs inside their stomachs).

I dunno if you've watched IT! though, because IT! sucks hard in most every respect. The only similarity is the most basic premise (a monster on a space-ship). The part where they explore Mars happens entirely offscreen. Thing '51 has roughly the same story structure - plus similar characterizations (especially Carrington/Ash), imagery, and themes.

i Dec 18, 2011 20:19

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SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

Canonicity is stupid. You should have enough critical faculties to develop your own 'canon' by simply identifying which films you enjoy, and that have enough aesthetic and thematic links to each other to form an overarching narrative.

Like in my case, it's Predator, AV|P|R, Alien, Aliens and fuck the rest of it. Alien³ is off doing its own thing and doesn't fit.

If you're one of those weirdos who thinks AV|P|R is bad, then by all means continue being weird and wrong. There's no reason to defer to Fox's or Dark Horse Comix's "official" stance.

i Dec 19, 2011 05:04

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

Dissapointed Owl posted:

Come on man, it was not to long ago people said you were respectful towards other people's opinions. 😊

When I drop an incongruously fatuous line into a series of solid "effort"-posts, you're encouraged read it as a joke about something or other.

That being said, I don't know where I got this reputation as a person who respects all or most opinions. I'm not an idiot.

i Dec 19, 2011 22:07

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

Darko posted:

People that are purposely obtuse about why someone else would focus on a facet of entertainment that they choose not to focus on are essentially just saying "I'm the better nerd!"

It's actually pretty obvious why people like continuity. It's the multimedia 'world-building' that is tremendously appealing to the person who views a film as a recreation or simulation of an actual historical event in an alternate/virtual 'universe' and not as an abstraction used by people in the real world to communicate lived



experience.

This isn't a single phenomenon, but a spectrum that extends from franchise devotion (where the notion of a coherent franchise overcomes any individual work) to full-blown otherkin-ism (where you may literally believe that the fiction is real).

i Dec 20, 2011 22:15

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



Humboldt squid posted:

It's also basically junkfood. Everything about -verses is very easily digestible, you can learn everything about star wars in a day or two on wookiepedia or whatever. So, it gives a "libidinal sense of satisfaction" via false sense of accomplishment (you get the satisfaction of having learned something without...actually learning anything). Aliensfranchiseapedia.org might as well throw in an achievement system.

It is very literally just consumption of media without much consideration or any clear end-goal. In this case, the drive is to watch the greatest *quantity* of A, V and P , as each piece of media consumed contributes in a very superficial way to the 'understanding' of the 'universe'. (What happened in the hundreds of years Ripley was asleep?? Now we can know!)

The death of the author was supposed to lead to the birth of the reader - but, in this case, it resulted in the birth of the corporate franchise and its attendant 'expanded universes'. It's an anthropic attribution of 'artistic intent' to what are ultimately market forces.

What's always brushed aside is the mechanism of each text - the qualities of each medium. AVWookieedia doesn't talk about the films' editing, score, cinematography (or whatever) in its articles. It doesn't talk about page layout, use of color or composition with its articles on the comics. The medium is brushed aside for the ostensibly 'pure' information. But not even that, it's invariably reduced to only the 'intellectual property' - trademarked characters, copyrightable plot elements, etc.

That's kinda why AVP:R gets casually dismissed as a teen slasher (despite its principal human characters being mostly, improbably, adults). No matter how the fascinatingly the small town is depicted, it is 'only' a normal small town in the scope of the 'expanded universe'. You won't find a book of the tech specs for, say, the police officer's car.

i Dec 21, 2011 23:05

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



mind the walrus posted:

So you view worldbuilding as superfluous and thus imply a sense of contempt for anyone who would dedicate time to such a superfluous activity. There's still no argument for what is inherently wrong with it aside from a general appeal to economy and efficiency.

If one worldbuilds what is the ultimate damage other than wasted time and what about that wasted time is inherently less than other forms of wasted time, specifically in relation to the creation of fiction?

You can have incredibly detailed works whose details contribute to theme (like a character whose every item of clothing contributes to an understanding of their fashion sense and therefore their personality, or a movie like Zodiac where the flurry of detail is a deliberate part of the aesthetic).

However, when those details become (or are treated as) an end unto themselves, it is indeed terribly *wasteful*. It is noise in the very basic sense that it's not meaningful information.

And it's not a case of the reader taking control and deriving meaning from their own readings. They are actively ignoring the primary elements of the text (the editing, cinematography - the things that make it a movie) in order to catalog trivia. It's not reading. Whatever is being communicated is not being understood.

i Dec 22, 2011 07:09

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

rope kid posted:

The creation of science fiction films: the true necessity. Food, shelter, water, Blade Runner.



Did you actually just write a 'you can't criticize ____ because people are starving in Africa' post?

MLG

X

X

SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

i Dec 22, 2011 07:23

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REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



rope kid posted:

I don't think there is anything wrong with creating trivia, creating fan-fiction, spinning things off into little stand-alone pools of information. Even if it could be something "more", it's a creative act, and an act that doesn't harm the thing that spawned it. I don't really think it matters if fans of the source appreciate or don't appreciate any piece of spin-off material/trivia or not.

It's more to do with how they are read than how they are created. But either way, if you're approaching art without concern for what it means on any level, then what are you doing?

Don't fall into that trap of declaring all viewpoints equally valid.

i Dec 22, 2011 07:53

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REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

Xenomorph posted:

The problem with that line of thinking is you could apply it to the sorts of things the author of the article engages in. It's the pot calling the kettle black and it's really asinine. What about in-depth film-analysis like we see from SMG and others from time to time? I personally don't care for that sort of stuff, but I'm not pompous enough to call it "unnecessary" and demean those who engage in it. It's what they enjoy, I don't see a problem in letting them do it when it doesn't affect me one iota.

The difference is that in my approach I do my best to consider as many aspects of the work as possible in order to get a sense of it as a gestalt.

While 'necessary' isn't exactly the right word, I believe it's extremely important to think critically about what you're doing. To have a good approach. Art is political, and reading it (or not-reading it) is a political act. The Alien films are political films.

When they're approached as an unmediated, intentional teleological design of an author-franchise, that lowers the level of discourse that you are participating in. Again, your approach pretty much necessarily entails ignoring vast swaths of the text and the work of the people who produced it, in favor of what can only be called brand loyalty. This has *implications*.

Postmodernism doesn't protect you from being wrong. It's not just your opinion.

i Dec 22, 2011 10:58

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REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

Hooray the trailer's out, whatevs.

SpaceMost posted:

You're falling into the same trap that every ostensible intellectual gatekeeper has fallen into when they pooh-pooh a new genre or mode of creative production.

Worldbuilding in and of itself is neither valid nor invalid; it's not good or bad, or wasteful or industrious. It just is. If you want to judge individual efforts then that's another matter, but claiming that worldbuilding is somehow invalid is an extremely short-sighted opinion.

Again, I'm talking about how art is approached in both its production and (much more importantly) its reception. Though I am not making a hardline stance against any technique or medium, there is such a thing as bad art.

When art serves *primarily* as worldbuilding, it's stultifying. Like for example, the entire point of the movie District 9 is that no-one has an objective understanding of what is going on, and each person's experience is

coloured by their viewpoint and its limitations. There's a hard line drawn between diegetic and extra-diegetic camerawork - between impressionism and expressionism, documentary and fiction.

Now you can say that that stuff doesn't matter and you just want to study the aliens with something approaching 'scientific objectivity' - but that ignores that it is a film about racism, neocolonialism and the plight of displaced peoples. Even though the aliens are 'just' metaphorical black people, how you approach them as objects to be studied, it betrays a total misunderstanding of how these things work.

There are implicit and yet totally unexamined assumptions behind these world-building and *world-exploring* approaches. They aren't neutral. There's a whole power-dynamic in play, with tactics of organizing and presenting information. You can be aware of this, but the trouble is that many people aren't, and the world-building is not conducive to solving this. This doesn't mean artists are obligated to stop, but when Xenomorph can proudly say that analyzing the text isn't worthwhile to him and that's okay because that's just his opinion there's something indeed wrong there.

Would you be as lax if it weren't 'just' movies being treated this way, and was instead the evening news? As that rad article from before pointed out, that is absolutely its own form of franchised world-building.

The tactics used to read the news and to read films are the same. You can make the old 'escapist' argument, but then what are you escaping from. From antiracism - or from gender politics, in the case of the Alien series? There's nothing neutral here, and the claim that your stance is neutral is itself an extremely ideological position.

i Dec 22, 2011 20:57

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REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

Goddammit.

After all that talk about worldbuilding and its ills, we're going to do this thing where we complain about CRT screens existing 'after' these LCD things.

The CRT screens don't exist after. They exist before.

Prometheus is a prequel, and that means - believe it or not - that it was made second. The purpose of a prequel is to revisit and comment upon an earlier work from a different cultural vantage-point. Think of Memento, or Pulp Fiction, and how a 'correct order' version of either would miss the point entirely. That's what you're doing.

Neither Prometheus nor Alien are 'real'. They are in the same *plot* continuity, but Alien is a late-70s film commenting on the sci-fi of previous decades, while Prometheus is implicitly commenting on both Alien and the three decades of sci-fi that have happened since. Plot is, as usual, the least important thing to focus on here.

Alien isn't broken because it 'got the monitors wrong'. Consequently, you don't need to save it by saying 'space travel advanced faster than computer design in this universe'. As with any effect in a fictional film, the CRT screens are metaphorical. They express ideas, through a visual metaphor, about how people interact with computers.

When the space-suits film with extremely low-resolution, distorted video - the point is to emphasize the low resolution of the image. It cuts back to Ash in the ship, frustrated by how they can't see anything. When Mother 'speaks' with simplistic green text, the point is the extreme minimalism of it. It reads as indifference, and not just a callous indifference. Mother doesn't really even understand that what she's saying is upsetting. It's absolutely *neutral*. Etc.

These aren't just TV screens anyways. In reverse-angle shots, the images are actually projected onto the actor's faces, in a callback to 2001: A Space Odyssey. CRT screens don't actually do that. What Alien does is combine multiple different effects, each with their own basic qualities, to create one wholly fictional technology that serves more as a metaphor than as a freakin' prototype.

In this same sense, the CG used in AVP:R and in Prometheus means different things than the prior films' prosthetic and model effects. Prometheus appears to be critical of its spaceman's slicker, prettier technology. They look vulnerable and ill-prepared, where the Nostromo was built like a fucking tank. The error is in seeing this as a mistake because it's not the same, and not an interesting commentary on (say) Avatar's glass-canopied mechs and plastic sheen.

i Dec 23, 2011 11:27

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REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

echoplex posted:

There's a real and tangible theme at work there, unlike SMG's out-of-his-arse theorising.

What's the 'real, tangible' theme? Or are you saying that the theme is how everything is real and tangible?

It doesn't take much craaazy analysis to say that this film isn't going for quite the same body-horror as Alien.



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

Consequently, it simply isn't appropriate for the ship to have the same grody, fecund-looking almost-organic industrial space as the Nostromo. This film's version of the 'egg chamber' contains blank little metal cylinders, not slimeballs filled with cow parts.

The science ship and the more subtle mutation, the use of CGI and the fact that it is a prequel - even the fact that it wasn't made 30 years ago - indicate that this film is about *post-industrial* society.

Put simply, things look different because it's a different film. Whether the differences are 'bad' or not is up in the air until we know the context.

i Dec 23, 2011 21:59

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QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

Dissapointed Owl posted:

So wait, how does **Alien 2: On Earth** fit into all this ???



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

Alien 2: On Earth is canon.

It also happens to own a *lot*. I place it right up there alongside AVP:R, Aliens, and Mutant.

i Dec 28, 2011 05:08

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REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

"My alien is stronger because it has acid blood! Nuh-uh!"

The alien is the perfect killer because of its *psychology*. They make an explicit point of this. Its behavior is of course a result of its biology, but that's not the point.

Dissapointed Owl posted:

Please don't be joking about liking it because I really dug it, for all it's flaws, and I don't really know why. Even have it on bluray 😊

I'd love to hear how it would fit into the canon though. That'd be interesting as hell.

I never joke! It's totally fantastic, and it's more canon like Halloween III. It messes around with the themes of Alien, kinda like DePalma does with Hitchcock.

i Dec 28, 2011 20:30

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REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

All will be revealed in Ridley Scotts upcoming film "prometheus", but did soembody say adamantium??? 😊



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

i Dec 28, 2011 21:07

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REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

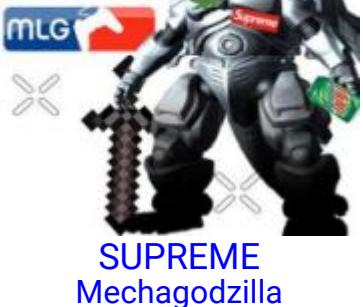
ImpAtom posted:

People are discussing the thematic difference between a creature who is invincible and a creature who is vulnerable but hostile to its environment and what it means for how that creature is portrayed, both literally and symbolically.

I always read the thread, and that's being extremely generous. While folks are talking about author intent and



whether the alien could be interpreted as invincible (which is itself a dumb argument), I don't think we've seen the word 'theme', let alone any indication that people are taking theme into account. "It has acid blood so you can't shoot it" isn't a theme.



i Dec 28, 2011 21:40

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SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



What really makes this line of argumentation baffling is that Alien devotes none of its runtime to this topic at all. They don't use the shock prods, they don't use the flamethrower. It's not that the alien is invincible. It's that nobody making the film gave a shit.

O'Bannon put the acid blood in there as *an afterthought* because the script was already pretty much finalized, without any concern for the alien's combat abilities. That was irrelevant to him.

The actual content of the film has nothing to do with how bulletproof the alien is, so they put in the acid blood as an ingenious way to shut up the literal-minded dolts in the audience.

Fayez Butts posted:

I don't get it it. Why is Alien vs Predator: Requiem being referred to as Alien Versus | Predator: Requiem?

"The actual opening credits use the acronym AV|P|R, where the vertical line is the yonic 'I' shape from Aliens' titles. This appears in the middle of the predator font and divides it like that."

"AV | P|R's bifurcated title reflects how it's actually two films simultaneously: the finale of the Predator series and a prequel to Aliens."

i Dec 28, 2011 22:37

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



Bugblatter posted:

I think the idea of it being an extremely resilient bio-mechanical thing is cool. None of it has much to do with the film's thematic content.

This is your mistake.

Xenomorph posted:

Poe's Law in action? YOU DECIDE!

It's not so much a decision as it is a measure of one's ability to read and think.

i Dec 28, 2011 23:19

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SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



penismightier posted:

Galaxy of Terror is the best Alien knock-off, because it's so close to the film's character dynamic and original concept (the pyramid and all that), it's basically an alternate, sleazier version.

Galaxy of Terror always struck me as being more similar to Total Recall, given how much of it is about virtual reality (and 80s sleaziness).

i Dec 29, 2011 01:08

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

Darko posted:



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

Alien Resurrection had a real pulpy, comic book-y type script that was written to be directed by Hard Boiled era John Woo. ...

So basically Whedon's script was 'designed' to be directed by Paul W.S. Anderson and/or Whedon himself.

What a great design!

i Jan 2, 2012 18:35

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

Darko posted:

Neither one of them directs a single thing like Woo of that era. Hell, it's like the opposite - Woo was almost entirely motion/dolly work on a horizontal plane with a scenery focus and complimentary cutting and they direct static, while person-centric. That era Woo focused entirely on emotions as well, whereas W.S. is pretty much entirely "what happens." And neither use exploding bulbs at all, where you couldn't walk without them being used as a contrast point.

*actually I can't remember much of Death Race or the last Res Evil's actual looks, so I'm comparing more about the handling of the horribly directed AVP or the television direction of Serenity

90's Woo also didn't have a big ol' weed joke in the middle of his CG-heavy sci-horror car chase sequences.

i Jan 2, 2012 18:51

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

Darko posted:

He had alcohol jokes in the middle of his explosion heavy horse riding Wilfred Brimley sequences.

What I'm getting at here is that Whedon can write "FILM THIS SHIT LIKE HARD BOILED" on his script, but Alien Resurrection's script isn't written like Hard Boiled at all.

If it's meant to be written like Hard Boiled it's a big ol' failure.

ImpAtom posted:

I think you could have done something with it to emphasize how the horrible themes of Alien/Aliens/Alien 3 were watered down over the years by toys/media parody/etc by making it 'comic-booky' and then subverting it somewhere, but you'd really need a good director.

That's the point of AVP:R (the whole film is set in the present because it's about 'the end of history'). The monster's the protagonists because the film's thoroughly postmodern and 'monstrosity' is now embraced due to the same cultural factors that made Darth Vader a children's toy and the Xenomorph into a theme-park attraction. Part of the joke is that things that were wholly unusual and 'futuristic' in 1986 are now mundane.

i Jan 2, 2012 19:03

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

Darko posted:

No, it's not, it's written like a Whedon movie, which you need someone like Verhoeven to interpret and add to, in order to turn it into something more than a flat comic book. He only "gets" 90s Woo on the most superficial level (give an Asian guy two guns, have him blast away at stuff while diving, keep the action turned up throughout) just like he gets "strong woman" as "kicks male ass with superpowers" and was looking at it from a visual angle (this is who would make this sequence look really cool).

And that's precisely what Paul W.S. Anderson did with his bullet-time face-huggers and whatnot. Woo without the point.

There's a reason Anderson also directed Resident Evil and Mortal Kombat, and why he's so evidently enamored with the Matrix films. Faux-asian kitsch is his specialty. No-one could have made Alien: Resurrection's script good, but Anderson could have made it accurately.

Also I'm going to go ahead and diss you for saying Alien was generically written.

i Jan 2, 2012 19:14

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SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



MisterBibs posted:

I don't think the internet has that much to do with it. While cynical to an extent, I don't think it's wise to impugn that. Like sports fans citing 'fire' and 'passion' and 'momentum', there's nothing wrong with knocking down false concepts to get at the practical / literal Thing In Question.

This analogy is kinda backwards though, when the Thing is Question is a visual language with its own set grammar. Literally nothing in any film is real, because it's a film.

The equivalent would be 'Sports Fans' saying that there's no such thing as sports, and that football players are actually atmospheric phenomena that should be discussed in exclusively meteorological terms.

i Jan 2, 2012 20:16

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



penismightier posted:

This is a really weird misreading of the film.

Well it is his first time seeing it.

Aliens is good - very good even, but I agree that it's overpraised. Not in the sense that it's bad or anything, but it's kind of held up as this masterpiece near the level of Alien when it's more a surprisingly modest success.

Its success is in what it accomplishes with low-budget practical effects and a frankly campy 80s action tone. It's a solid 80s action movie, but it doesn't subvert the hell out of sci-fi tropes like Alien does. My ideal Aliens would be very similar in terms of the production design and whatnot, but the tone would be very different - much closer to Alien. Imagine the same inexorable pace applied to Aliens' war setpieces. The naturalistic, understated performances, Altmanesque dialogue (by which I mean that the sound of people talking is often more important than what they're saying), lengthier shots and so-on.

Aliens' characters are types and need to be appreciated on that level. In a lot of ways, that can be an asset, but I would have preferred the other way 'round. Aliens has very few shots of the characters isolated in cavernous spaces, like Alien had. Rather than seeming claustrophobic, it just made the whole world seem smaller. As much as I love the power loader and some of the other neat odds and ends, I think Hadley's Hope is actually rather ill-defined, as a setting. The metal bulkheads and gratings everywhere aren't really appropriate for a living space, compared to a power plant. Remember the Nostromo's white, padded living spaces and how they intersect with all the metal conduits?

Again, Aliens isn't a bad film, but it's often put on this pedestal when we've had films like District 9 and Battle: Los Angeles that have kinda pushed past it (if we're being honest with ourselves). Even AVP:R takes a lot of the things I liked about Aliens (like the deliberately broad characters, and the small-town setting) to a whole other level. Alien, meanwhile, is flawless and has yet to be surpassed.

i Jan 2, 2012 22:56

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



penismightier posted:

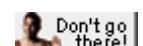
I've never understood the idea some people have that Aliens is dumber than Alien.

It's not dumber. It's just that Cameron is more of a literalist. You are spot-on about the materiality of things, but Scott's film is, at its best, weirdly hazy and dream-like. Aliens has an actual dream sequence and references to dreams, but in Alien that'd be redundant.

The difference is that Alien is mostly warm and humid. The planet is arid, but very little in the film seems cold. Ripley has no problem with stripping down to her underpants, remember. Characters get pretty grimy and sweaty. Brett pauses under the dripping condensation to cool down (condensation occurs around cool objects in a warm, humid space). With all the pulsing sounds and references to warmth, the film has a rather basic calming effect that clashes with the harsh subject matter to create the offputting tone.

Cameron goes in another direction by making everything seem indeed pretty cold, until Ripley busts in with the flamethrower and cleansing nuclear fire, etc. It's not bad, but it's also not as interesting to me.

Cinema Discusso › Ridley Scott's Prometheus - It looks as much like dicks as anything else.

 POST  Don't go there!

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



Vlex posted:

Not sure I agree with this, don't the marines repeatedly go on about how warm the xenomorph hive is?

Yep, but that's because the film gets progressively warmer as it goes on (in both literal temperature and color temperature). The reds and oranges are reserved for the end, as we don't really get to the hive until well into the film.

Cameron is making kind-of a dichotomy between warm (organic) and cold (metallic) where Alien had already collapsed the two.

Compare:

<http://moviebarcode.tumblr.com/post...8991/alien-1979>

<http://moviebarcode.tumblr.com/post...308/aliens-1986>

i Jan 3, 2012 00:10

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 REPORT

 QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



penismightier posted:

I don't agree with the idea of Avatar and District 9 going further with it, but this is a damn good point and a really interesting way of looking at the two of them. And, personally, I think it points more to the genius of Aliens. It knew to let the visual achievements of the first film stand, and cut its own path through film history.

Aliens is a film that a lot of other films are now grappling with. B:LA is somewhat critical of it (while also, like AV|P|R, pointing out that its hi-tech future is now pretty much the norm).

Aliens may have gotten there first and sparked the discussion, but District 9 is a better film with more meat to it. Also, I think that Them! is a better film, and just wasn't recognized for its artistry in its time.

Avatar, not so much. But it's also nonetheless a response to Aliens' perhaps deleterious impact on science fiction. What's interesting is that the response is by Cameron himself. We'd all assumed that Avatar would be like Aliens, but with a massive budget. It was actually more like the anti-Aliens and - though it tackled similar themes to Starship Troopers and District 9 - wasn't as sophisticated as either.

Steve Yun posted:

I dunno about that, from what I recall, their first encounter in the hive wasn't full of warm colors, they were still pale blue/green up until the action started; a splash of blood from the chest burster and then the flame thrower casting a warm hue over the rest of the scene.

I would guess that the warm colors (just visually speaking, not about temperature in the dialogue) in Aliens have more to do with just ramping up tension/relaxation, not about mechanical vs biological.

That's a cool site, though.

It's not a 1-1 association between colour and temperature - Alien has a rather varied colour palette throughout, of browns, yellows, blues, greens and greys [very little red, although that makes the blood stand out all the more], but the whole thing conveyed humidity.

But Cameron's got the oppressive night-time blue everywhere, up until the action scenes. Blue is also the predominate color of all the computer screens (the motion detectors, the blueprint display). There's also a bit of nuance bewteen the red lights and the various fires. The red lights are 'artificial' and provide no real comfort. They regularly appear where people are suddenly trapped in a space they believed was secure. They're false

comfort.

The same nuance is in the first hive scene. the aliens disguise themselves as technology before the splash of red blood reveals something organic *inside*. Then you get the fire and the whatnot, but even those action shots are brief. It's not til later that you get a real victory for the humans.

i Jan 3, 2012 00:39

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



7thBattalion posted:

So besides the Xenos, what other extraterrestrial species are there in the Aliens universe, and what the hell is a "Bug Hunt"?

The cornbread didn't taste very good.

i Jan 3, 2012 01:33

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



Xenomorph posted:

Your Lovecraftian star-beast isn't quite as Lovecraftian when you find out it's actually younger than the ship's captain it's murdering/capturing in the ship's ventilation system.

The alien *is* younger than of the crew, given that it's literally less than a week old. What's 'eternal' about it is its life cycle and the fact that it functions kinda like an enormous sentient virus that's constantly replicating itself and only possibly 'gaining' traits through some minor hybridizing effect.

There's more to lovecraftian monsters than simply being old, and in case people have forgotten, the space jockeys are still 'ancient'. Folks apparently stumble across these weird ancient structures in Prometheus anyways.

i Jan 4, 2012 11:01

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



Again though, Lovecraft isn't just Cthulhu. Alien is very similar to At The Mountains of Madness - the discovery of the Elder Things that created life on Earth and were rendered extinct by the predatory 'biological weapon' Shoggoths they designed.

The horror there is in the idea that the Elder Things are terribly *similar* to men. What Lovecraft is ultimately saying is that we're bizarre animals whose existence is entirely contingent, and whose civilization can easily crumble. We're analogous to these sentient crinoid things.

The idea that mankind has no particular privilege in the universe, and is simply one more in a chain of biological failures, is very much present in Alien.

"Crew Expendable."

i Jan 5, 2012 12:29

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



ConanTheLibrarian posted:

Fair point.

In Alien, the xenomorphs screwed up a single space jockey and human ship. In Mountains of Madness and other Lovecraft stories, entire species are said to rise and fall. The difference is scale, the fate of humanity versus that of individual humans. For that reason I disagree with the idea of extrapolating from the fate of the Nostromo's crew to all of mankind, as this would introduce a nihilistic theme which isn't present in Alien.

Extrapolating from them is kinda the point though.

My favorite part of Alien is Ian Holm's performance as Ash - as someone who deeply resents humanity for being the flawed design he was based on. By Alien Cubed and Alien Ressurection, the lone crazy who considers the alien beautiful had become a cliche. But in Alien is was precisely that Ash feels more kinship

with this asexual, biomechaical creature than to his crew because he himself is an asexual, biomechanical creature. That's the reasoning behind the clumsy magazine attack sequence. Without a father and mother (except maybe Mother), and unable to have sex, Ash's psychology is very different from a person's. In his view, the alien is psychologically superior to mankind, and to himself. He's a dreamer. So there's a relatable, almost tragic dimension to the character despite him being the villain.

Alien is about mankind's role in the universe, and it is consequently 'about' nihilism - although it's more accurately an existentialist film (depending on how you interpret the events).

In the basic, literal plot sense it's small scale, but the implications are Lovecraftian in scope. It's precisely those elusive glimpses at the grander scheme of things that make it Lovecraftian.

i Jan 5, 2012 22:12

Profile Post History Rap Sheet

REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



bobkatt013 posted:

Isn't Alien the movie that they had to redesign the egg opening since it looked too much like a vagina?

Labia! 🎉

[Full text moved to next page.]

i Jan 9, 2012 23:12

Profile Post History Rap Sheet

REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



Fuck it, nobody reads the 38th post.

echoplex posted:

Next time someone says "who cares if there's a bad sequel or a remake, you still have the original" I'll know to point to Alien as a film ruined by its sequels, "franchises" and expanded universes.

This is assuming that Cameron wasn't fully aware of Alien's psychosexual imagery and following along with it. The aliens in that film are a dark mirror of the marines with their enormous rifles. The marines joke about having sex with all the "juicy colonists' daughters," only to be horrified that the aliens got to them first.

But more importantly there's the whole dynamic of them barricading themselves into spaces that are then invaded. Aliens is undeniably about Ripley's traumatic experience. In Freud's psychoanalytical theory, trauma was originally seen as a kind of 'puncturing' of the ego that 'shields' the mind from excessive stimuli. In "Beyond the Pleasure Principle", Freud observed a 'repetition compulsion' in traumatized people. Soldiers, for example, would constantly dream about returning to the horrors war. Victims would unconsciously attempt to recreate the conditions of, and ultimately re-enact, the events that traumatized them.

Cameron was inspired by Vietnam with Aliens, obviously - but I remember reading that he was specifically inspired by how many soldiers would go through all sorts of horrific experiences in Vietnam, but ultimately sign up for a second tour of duty. Note the dream references that are all over the film. Ripley assures Newt that she won't dream in the hypersleep chamber thing, now that they've finally defeated the monster.

But moving from Freud into Lacan, this whole concept is similar to Lacan's lamella:

"This blind indestructible insistence of the libido [the lamella] is what Freud called "death drive," and one should bear in mind that "death drive" is, paradoxically, the Freudian name for its very opposite, for the way immortality appears within psychoanalysis: for an uncanny excess of life, for an "undead" urge which persist beyond the (biological) cycle of life and death, of generation and corruption. This is why Freud equates death drive with the so-called "compulsion-to-repeat," an uncanny urge to repeat painful past experiences which seems to outgrow the natural limitations of the organism affected by it and to insist even beyond the organism's death - again, like the living dead in a horror film who just go on. [...]

For any avid cinema-goer, it is difficult to avoid the feeling that he has already seen all this. Lacan's description not only reminds one of the nightmare creatures in horror movies; more specifically, it can be read, point by point, as describing a movie shot more than a decade after he wrote those words, Ridley Scott's Alien."

-Slavoj Zizek, "Troubles with the Real: Lacan as a Viewer of Alien" <http://www.lacan.com/zizalien.htm>

(For another collision of Vietnam trauma, undead creatures and the psychology of the 'death drive', see the 1972 horror film Deathdream.)

Zizek is talking more specifically of the 'facehugger' there. The full-fledged xenomorph is obviously 'the phallus'.

One thing that concerned Lacan - the 'Lacanian Crisis' - was the idea that, in modernity, patriarchal social order was in decline. The father's 'phallic order' functioned to deny the subject's desire for the incestuous other - the devouring 'alligator-mother'. (The queen alien, duh.) A person of either sex is born with the impossible desire to fulfill the mother's every desire. Without the phallic order as an acceptable prohibition, all manner of pathologies emerge - subjection, paranoia, narcissism, etc. Society - the Symbolic order - breaks down and reverts to some primal state.

The aliens, as children of the mother, successfully serve as phalluses of the mother who fulfill her every desire. There is no father to castrate them (in the lacanian sense), but they persist anyways. Cameron is using unambiguous incest imagery in his film. The hive is an impossible incestuous fantasy. (Impossible, that is, for human subjects to understand without going mad.)

Trauma in later Freud and Lacan is the result of a 'crack' in the Symbolic order - something that happens that the person is unable to fit into their worldview. "The traumatic event is resuscitated to fill in the gaps in the universe of meaning." Hence, Ripley's compulsive nightmares about the aliens.

Here we should keep in mind that the film begins with the men mostly ineffectual, from the first hive encounter onwards. There are women on Weyland-Yutani's board of directors (or whoever's interviewing Ripley at the start). Vasquez is still a part of the military power structure. The point is that 'equality of the sexes' hasn't fixed society. The consequence of this postmodern capitalist society is the twisted 'matriarchy' of the hive, the evil of the corporation. The Symbolic order is breaking down, traumatically, allowing the aliens to spread.

"In order to ameliorate these pathologies, Zizek proposes the need for a political act or revolution - one that will alter the conditions of possibility of postmodernity (which he identifies as capitalism) and so give birth to a new type of Symbolic Order in which a new breed of subject can exist."

-<http://www.lacan.com/zizekchro1.htm>

And this is what Ripley is moving towards in invading the broken society of the Aliens and instituting her own law. Thus she becomes Newt's literal mother while acting as her symbolic father to institute a new phallic order - with the pulse rifle.

E; I forgot to add that AVP:R ties directly into this, with its thoroughly postmodern Tarantino-referencing style. Of course it begins from the standpoint that the aliens have already 'won' and we are somewhat indifferent to the humans, viewing the Predator as our protagonist until the humans learn to effectively become Predators. It's like Aliens, except its form better fits the function with all the meta-ness.

i Jan 9, 2012 23:47

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Rap Sheet

REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



Tubgirl Cosplay posted:

I agree totally that Cameron was conscious of the sexual imagery behind the Alien (how could you not be?), but taking the two movies as a whole he still did lose an important aspect, sorta I guess the sexual mystique of the alien. Again it's not only that it's a vagenis monster that rapes, in the first it also engages in a more abstract rape of all our concepts of physicality - its flesh is contingent and to be discarded at a moment's notice, its nature violates our bodies in part through being unconstrained by normal body rules in its own right (its lungs make air for its host to breathe, its genitals are sterile killing weapons, it's so lacking in anything like form or normal instinct I don't think it even kills two characters in the same way, visibly at least), by using people as a disposable shell/vehicle where convenient and taking on the mechanical attributes of the ship as much as the people it preys on it regards man and his tools indifferently. Cameron takes its sort of... ethereal nature as something more akin to a demon of rape and turns them into hypersexualized bugs that, while still transgressive of social rules, no longer transgress the laws of men or animals as corporeal beings, proposing their own competing theory of society and physicality with their hive structure and lifecycle and engaging humans as antagonists and prey rather than just rejecting the fundamental concepts altogether.

It's still a good film, they're just two totally different films working at something of cross purposes.

The point of the 'bug hunt' line that baffles fanboys is of course that the aliens aren't 'just' bugs.

I do agree that Cameron shouldn't have jettisoned the scenes of the alien just wandering around, having a little nap in the shuttle, inspecting the cat and so-forth. The pace isn't nearly as slow as it 'should be'. (It's also why it's a good thing the auto-turret sequence was cut from the original cut of Aliens. Fans love the blasting, but it misses the point and the film is vastly better without it.) However, I would say there's no major contradiction in the films except in the pacing. Where one alien's behavior appears arbitrary, it's as a group that a design appears to happen. The hive is the product of an emergent system, where each individual is 'blind' and indifferent as the original Alien.

It's important to keep in mind that the queen represents a successful merger of the Alien and Mother from the first film. Mother was intelligent and could 'speak', although she was cold and indifferent. She doesn't care about you because she has this phallus that 'completes her' and fulfills her every desire.

My problem is more that the queen is emotional, with recognizable human emotions like anger. That's the real

deficiency in Aliens, not the other excusable things that have been raised. If the queen was apparently emotionless - beyond emotion - the film would be very improved.

i Jan 10, 2012 01:11

Profile Post History Rap Sheet

REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

reach42 posted:

Isn't this reading ultimately problematic from a feminist perspective?

Yeop, and Aliens is kinda troubling, from a feminist perspective. It depends of course on which kind feminist perspective we're talking about, how you read Lacan, and how you interpret Ripley's victory at the end.

There are oppositional readings to the film that cast the Aliens in bit more of a favorable light. And there are plenty of complaints that Ripley simply 'becomes a man' at the end.

In defense of Lacan:

"It's extremely important to note that biological men and women can occupy either side of the graph of sexuation. That is, there can be women who are organized according to the masculine form of jouissance and men who are organized according to the feminine form of jouissance. This begs the question as to why Lacan sees fit to refer to these two positions as masculine or feminine at all. As Fink puts it, "I cannot say why Lacan associates this Other jouissance specifically with women, apart from the oft-repeated point that many women seem to enjoy talking more than men do" (162). This would hold for the male side as well."

-<http://larval-subjects.blogspot.com/2006/08/lacan-and-sexuation.html>

A lot of feminist theory is based on Lacan, especially in the analysis of films. Lacan is not anti-feminist.

Make no mistake, Aliens and Alien depict a patriarchal society. The superficial 'equality' of the sexes masks the fact that they are all participating in this fundamentally unequal capitalist system. Although the men in the film are weak, masculinity is still the norm. Vasquez isn't a bad person, but Cameron includes her to show that in order to succeed, she must become 'masculine', and use 'femininity' as a pejorative. Ripley is considered 'just a hysterical woman' by everyone she encounters because she blew up that really valuable corporate cargo. Sexism is alive and well, only disguised.

"Republican strategists masterfully exploit the flaws of liberalism: Its patronizing "concern" for the poor that is combined with a thinly disguised indifference toward – if not outright contempt for – blue-collar workers, and its politically correct feminism that is usually combined with an underlying mistrust of women in power. Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin was a hit on both counts, parading both her working-class husband and her femininity.

The earlier generations of women politicians (Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir, British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and even, up to a point, U.S. Sen. Hillary Clinton) were what can be referred to as "phallic" women. They acted as "iron ladies" who imitated and tried to outdo male authority, to be "more men than men themselves."

Writing in Le Point, a French weekly, Jacques-Alain Miller, a follower of the late French philosopher Jacques Lacan, pointed out that Palin, on the contrary, proudly displays her femininity and motherhood. She has a "castrating" effect on her male opponents, not by being more manly than them, but by sarcastically downgrading the puffed-up male authority. According to Miller, Palin instinctively knows that male "phallic" authority is a posture, a semblance to be exploited and mocked. Recall how she mocked Sen. Barack Obama's work as a community organizer.

Palin provides a "post-feminist" femininity without complexity, uniting the features of mother, prim teacher (glasses, hair in a bun), public figure and, implicitly, sex object, proudly displaying the "first dude" as a phallic toy. The message is that she doesn't lack anything – and, to add insult to injury, it was a Republican woman who realized this left-liberal dream. It is as if she simply is what left-liberal feminists want to be. No wonder the Palin effect is one of false liberation: "Drill, baby, drill!" Feminism and family values! Big corporations and blue collars!"

-http://www.inthesetimes.com/article/3976/through_the_glasses_darkly/

Doesn't this perfectly encapsulate the 'equality' of the Weyland-Yutani Corporation? (And note here the smarts of the AVP:R dudes in making Yutani a woman.)

i Jan 10, 2012 02:33

Profile Post History Rap Sheet

REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

penismightier posted:

Which is completely in error. That's what happens to Sarah Conner, but Ripley's victory hinges entirely on her becoming MORE feminine. In Alien and in the first half of Aliens, she's trying to be part of the patriarchy you mentioned - she's officious and petty. Watch the briefing scene in Aliens again, and pay attention to the way she tries to imitate Gorman. She succeeds in the because she



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

throws that shit aside and taps into her maternal instincts. She becomes a mother, but unlike Mother and the Queen, she trusts in and sacrifices for her child.

Precisely. Although I'd distance myself from the notion of maternal instincts because this is fundamentally a film marketed towards boys who are made to empathize with Ripley's plight.

Ripley separates motherhood, as a gendered role, from biological sex. It's about parenthood in a more generalized sense. The smart gun with the stuff taped onto it is specifically a prosthetic enhancement, and there are cues that indicate that in this future it is very well possible for men to enhance themselves to become more 'feminine' (or what have you). (And on that note, it's unfortunate that we don't see more of that in the film, or in Avatar.)

A male character could 'adopt' and defend Newt as easily, and in fact that's precisely what Bishop does at the end, preventing her from being sucked out the airlock - even though he doesn't need to, and in fact risks his own life in doing so. Bishop, like Ash, is stealthily one of the more interesting parts of the film.

One thing that's always sacrificed in the notion of a franchised 'universe' is the idea of the film as a linear sequence of images. Vasquez comes before Ripley and the film raises the question of, well, why *is* she in the military? What is she fighting for?

One thing nobody ever points out that the illegal aliens joke doesn't exactly work: why would Vasquez sign up to fight illegal aliens? The joke within the joke is that Vasquez might have signed up to be her own enemy.

i Jan 10, 2012 06:28

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REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

There are few marines in a big ship in order to emphasize that:

- a) they're precariously understaffed. Because
- b) they're incredibly over-reliant on automation. Because
- c) it's an extrapolation on the first movie's 'crew expendable' twist, except focused on the US government's complicity in an easily-corrupted military-industrial complex. Because
- d) the film is a deliberate abstraction of reality in order to relate political/philosophical concepts with basic sounds and pictures. Because
- e) it's a fucking film.

i Jan 16, 2012 05:09

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Post History

Rap Sheet

REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

Darko posted:

I read through the "realism" discussion in its entirety, just now, and it wasn't really bad at all - people weren't complaining about it, just discussing possible reasons, etc., outside of a few people who joined the discussion imagining people were complaining before they even answered, and pre-loading their responses with that. It was actually non-"*spergy*" and semi interesting.

Fuck you!

Shaocaholica posted:

What difference does it make whether or not the explosion was big enough to vaporize the colony? They didn't set off the AP deliberately to kill the aliens, it was an accident. The 'Nebraska' line could easily be read as hyperbole.

It would be akin to all the media hypothesis about Fukushima before it blew. The AP was not designed to explode so any projections made by Bishop would have been educated guesses at best. It was not a controlled failure so there's really no way Bishop or anyone else could have predicted the exact magnitude of the blast given the limited data they had and time they had to think about it.

And you as well!

The level of automation on the Sulaco is important, because the human vs. drone conflict is crucial to the film. Battle: Los Angeles took what Aliens began and expressed it fully, but the concern with the existential anguish that characterizes the human condition is still there.

"The existentialist frankly states that man is in anguish. His meaning is as follows: When a man commits himself to anything, fully realizing that he is not only choosing what he will be, but is thereby at the same time a legislator deciding for the whole of mankind – in such a moment a man cannot escape from the sense of

complete and profound responsibility.

[...]

Everything happens to every man as though the whole human race had its eyes fixed upon what he is doing and regulated its conduct accordingly. So every man ought to say, "Am I really a man who has the right to act in such a manner that humanity regulates itself by what I do." If a man does not say that, he is dissembling his anguish. Clearly, the anguish with which we are concerned here is not one that could lead to quietism or inaction. It is anguish pure and simple, of the kind well known to all those who have borne responsibilities. When, for instance, a military leader takes upon himself the responsibility for an attack and sends a number of men to their death, he chooses to do it and at bottom he alone chooses. No doubt under a higher command, but its orders, which are more general, require interpretation by him and upon that interpretation depends the life of ten, fourteen or twenty men. In making the decision, he cannot but feel a certain anguish. All leaders know that anguish. It does not prevent their acting, on the contrary it is the very condition of their action, for the action presupposes that there is a plurality of possibilities, and in choosing one of these, they realize that it has value only because it is chosen."

-Jean-Paul Sartre, *Existentialism is a Humanism*.

This is related directly to Burke's obviously bullshit assertion that what he did was just "a bad call" (i.e. that it had value only because it was a choice). You can tell that he's not that sophisticated a thinker by how he reduces it to "just" a bad call. It's this inability to recognize the scope of his actions that reveals that he's bullshitting, in the very basic sense of Harry Frankfurt's *On Bullshit*:

"Bullshit can either be true or false but bullshitters aim primarily to impress and persuade their audiences, and in general are unconcerned with the truth or falsehood of their statements [...] While liars need to know the truth to better conceal it, bullshitters, interested solely in advancing their own agendas, have no use for the truth." (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/On_Bullshit)

And it's specifically capitalist bullshit, his painfully folksy sayings accompanied by lapses into corporate jargon. Moreover, despite Burke's use of existentialist concepts to justify his actions, he appears to have let his decision-making process be overwhelmed by 'the invisible hand'. Burke is ultimately an expression of an anti-social inhuman system. He is a drone in spite of his 'rugged individualism' (see: his fake outdoorsy clothes).

The film is very clearly preoccupied with this specific sort of existential anguish, as seen by how Ripley extrapolates Burke's actions outwards to the species level: "I don't know which species is worse. You don't see them fucking each other over for a goddamn percentage." the point where Ripley takes over, as in *Battle: Los Angeles*, is the point where the inexperienced leader Gorman is *crippled by indecision* - the plurality of possibilities he's confronted with being represented by the grid of live camera feeds.

It's this concern over 'becoming a drone' that preoccupies both this film and *Battle: Los Angeles*. And you can see the difference in Ash and Bishop. Consider Ash's denial and repression with how Bishop increasingly embraces his identity as an android.

"The [android] recognizes his faults, but he struggles with all his strength against the crushing view that his mistakes constitute for him a destiny. He does not wish to let himself be considered as a thing. He has an obscure but strong feeling that [an android] is not [an android] as this table is a table or as this red-haired man is red-haired. It seems to him that he has escaped from each mistake as soon as he has posited it and recognized it; he even feels that the psychic duration by itself cleanses him from each misdeed, constitutes for him an undetermined future, causes him to be born anew. Is he wrong? Does he not recognize in himself the peculiar, irreducible character of human reality? His attitude includes then an undeniable comprehension of truth. But at the same time he needs this perpetual rebirth, this constant escape in order to live; he must constantly put himself beyond reach in order to avoid the terrible judgment of collectivity."

-Jean-Paul Sartre, "Bad Faith" from *Being and Nothingness*.

The word 'homosexual' has been replaced with 'android'.

Note: this was written in 1943, hence the talk about 'faults' and 'mistakes', but the point is in overcoming the denial of one's identity that results in bad faith and reduces one to something like an automaton for the powers-that-be.

"Society demands that he limit himself to his function [...], just as the soldier at attention makes himself into a soldier-thing with a direct regard which does not see at all, which is no longer meant to see, since it is the rule and not the interest of the moment which determines the point he must fix his eyes on (the sight "fixed at ten paces"). There are indeed many precautions to imprison a man in what he is, as if we lived in perpetual fear that he might escape from it, that he might break away and suddenly elude his condition."

It's what the movie's about!

i Jan 16, 2012 20:03

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REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

I'm just going to point out that I actually just provided some easy-to-follow references to begin a discussion of the philosophical themes of *Alien* and *Aliens*.

[Existentialism is a Humanism](#) is a very short and informal essay.

I even did some preliminary legwork for y'all by showing how those concepts are expressed through some of the film's characters. What I'm saying is that there's no excuse at this point.



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

i Jan 16, 2012 21:13

Profile Post History Rap Sheet

REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

AlternateAccount posted:

Do you really think writers and directors create stories like this? Intentionally vague areas, sure. Spots specifically open to interpretation, fine. But just so you can pick and choose and manipulate the bits you like to construct something outside of it? Naw.

"In dealing with the 'author' as a function of discourse, we must consider the characteristics of a discourse that support this use and determine its differences from other discourses. If we limit our remarks only to those books or texts with authors, we can isolate four different features.

First, they are objects of appropriation; the form of property they have become is of a particular type whose legal codification was accomplished some years ago. It is important to notice, as well, that its status as property is historically secondary to the penal code controlling its appropriation.

Speeches and books were assigned real authors, other than mythical or important religious figures, only when the author became subject to punishment and to the extent that his discourse was considered transgressive. In our culture and undoubtably in others as well discourse was not originally a thing, a product, or a possession, but an action situated in a bipolar field of sacred and profane, lawful and unlawful, religious and blasphemous. It was a gesture charged with risks before it became a possession caught in a circuit of property values. But it was at the moment when a system of ownership and strict copyright rules were established (toward the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth century) that the transgressive properties always intrinsic to the act of writing became the forceful imperative of literature. It is as if the author, at the moment he was accepted into the social order of property which governs our culture, was compensating for his new status by reviving the older bipolar field of discourse in a systematic practice of transgression and by restoring the danger of writing which, on another side, had been conferred the benefits of property.

Secondly, the 'author-function' is not universal or constant in all discourse. Even within our civilization, the same types of texts have not always required authors; there was a time when those texts which we now call 'literary' (stories, folk tales, epics and tragedies) were accepted, circulated and valorized without any questions about the identity of their author. Their anonymity was ignored because their real or supposed age was a sufficient guarantee of their authenticity. Text, however, that we now call 'scientific' (dealing with cosmology and the heavens, medicine or illness, the natural sciences or geography) were only considered truthful during the Middle Ages if the name of the author was indicated. Statements on the order of 'Hippocrates said...' or 'Pliny tells us that...' were not merely formulas for an argument based on authority; they marked a proven discourse. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, a totally new conception was developed when scientific texts were accepted on their own merits and positioned within an anonymous and coherent conceptual system of established truths and methods of verification. Authentication no longer required reference to the individual who had produced them; the role of the author disappeared as an index of truthfulness and, where it remained as an inventor's name, it was merely to denote a specific theorem or proposition, a strange effect, a property, a body, a group of elements, or a pathological syndrome.

At the same time, however, 'literary' discourse was acceptable only if it carried an author's name; every text of poetry or fiction was obliged to state its author and the date, place, and circumstance of its writing. The meaning and value attributed to the text depended upon this information. If by accident or design a text was presented anonymously, every effort was made to locate its author. Literary anonymity was of interest only as a puzzle to be solved as, in our day, literary works are totally dominated by the sovereignty of the author. (Undoubtedly, these remarks are far too categorical. Criticism has been concerned for some time now with aspects of a text not fully dependent upon the notion of an individual creator; studies of genre or the analysis of recurring textual motifs and their variations from a norm rather than author. Furthermore, where in mathematics the author has become little more than a handy reference for a particular theorem or group of propositions, the reference to an author in biology or medicine, or to the date of his research has a substantially different bearing. This latter reference, more than simply indicating the source of information, attests to the 'reliability' of the evidence, since it entails an appreciation of the techniques and experimental materials available at a given time and in a particular laboratory).

The third point concerning this 'author-function' is that it is not formed spontaneously through the simple attribution of a discourse to an individual. It results from a complex operation whose purpose is to construct the rational entity we call an author. Undoubtedly, this construction is assigned a 'realistic' dimension as we speak of an individual's 'profundity' or 'creative' power, his intentions or the original inspiration manifested in writing. Nevertheless, these aspects of an individual, which we designate as an author (or which comprise an

individual as an author), are projections, in terms always more or less psychological, of our way of handling texts: in the comparisons we make, the traits we extract as pertinent, the continuities we assign, or the exclusions we practice. In addition, all these operations vary according to the period and the form of discourse concerned. A 'philosopher' and a 'poet' are not constructed in the same manner; and the author of an eighteenth-century novel was formed differently from the modern novelist."

-Michel Foucault, "Qu'est-ce qu'un auteur?" *Bulletin de la Société française de Philosophie* 63, No. 3 (1969) 73-104; repr. Michel Foucault, "What Is an Author?" *Language, Counter-memory, Practice*, Ed. Donald F. Bouchard, Trans. D. F. Bouchard, Sherry Simon (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1977) 113-38.

i Jan 27, 2012 13:06

Profile Post History Rap Sheet

REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

Alchenar posted:

Propaganda is actually a very good example of why the death of the author isn't always valid, because anyone claiming that a propaganda film is about anything other than the subject of the propaganda is either an idiot or watching the result of an incompetent propagandist.

The better a director is the less space there should be for the death of the author (unless that's his intent) because the film should conform closer to the themes that he has in mind. This is not to say that it would be illegitimate to come up with an individual interpretation of the work, but rather that it should be harder and harder to justify.

Folks have already justifiably chastised you for this, but it's worth noting that your hypothetical example skips right past the process of interpretation whereby a film is considered propagandist in the first place. You're treating the designation 'propaganda' as something axiomatic when obviously it is not.

What if the author in question intended the 'propagandist' text to be read as a hyperbolic parody, in order to secretly oppose the government? Your position is unable to account for such an eventuality, where ours actually does so beyond the constraints of even that one author's intentions. Elaborating on this - and although you deny it above - you are tacitly rejecting any oppositional reading of the text and thereby supporting the North Korean leadership.

In a rather fundamental way, *your position passes total control of the symbolic order to those in power*. This makes it impossible to deconstruct (or, as you put it, "harder and harder to justify" deconstructing) hegemonic discourses in order to strategically 'read against' them.

Jumping straight into propaganda as your example also reveals a rather simplistic understanding of how ideology 'works' in relation to any cultural product. Ideology at its purest is expressed unconsciously. The whole concept of unconscious motivation is something outside the scope of your position, something implicitly 'unjustifiable'.

i Jan 27, 2012 15:38

Profile Post History Rap Sheet

REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

The inwardly-sloping walls of the Hadley's Hope corridors do have a subtle forced-perspective effect that makes them seem very claustrophobic. Check in that screenshot how the floor seems relatively vast and empty, while the roof seems much lower and the walls much closer than they 'should'. The combined result that you're both confined and exposed.

It's a neat visual trick, but I'm kinda opposed to it on the grounds that the people designing this place should have taken that into account. The Nostromo at least had the white paint and soft wall panels to as a token gesture towards the mental health of the employees.

Other random Aliens observations:

-Since the original alien's transparent skull-dome was a mirror of the crew's prominent space-suit visors, the real reason that the Aliens aliens lack the dome is because the planet has been terraformed and its atmosphere changed. The bony structure now mirrors the marines' plated armor.

-With all the talk of phalluses and whatnot in alien, nobody ever points out that the alien queen's head is a stubby little thing that emerges from beneath a hood. Yep, it's a clitoris. Sorry folks.

i Jan 28, 2012 12:28

Profile Post History Rap Sheet

REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

penismightier posted:

Sterile, lazy, and cheap? Are you fucking crazy? A cramped office with rain pelting a half-eaten donut through broken windows. A vast automated hanger bay with that shielded spotlight sweeping incessantly. A narrow troop transport with a bank of crackly video monitors.

Fuck, even the little details like how in the Sulaco the ceiling are crossed with sprinkler bars and



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

the mini fire extinguishers tucked into corners of the APC contribute to a nearly unparalleled sense of life to the sets.

It's not lazy and cheap, but I was disappointed that there wasn't more of the donut stuff.

Aliens used its 'white rooms' as safe spaces that the characters are killed for leaving, entering the more complex innards of the ship that sustain them. The white walls with the pipes and shit underneath match the chest-burster emerging through Kane's shirt, Ash revealing his robo-guts, and the search for the missing facehugger in all the cracks and crevices of the seemingly empty room. It's also related to the white suit Ripley dons at the end, inside her white escape shuttle. It shows her control over herself and over the 'body' of the ship. White is a boundary. The alien is pushed outside, into space.

In Aliens, somewhat deliberately, everything is beginning to merge together. You simply don't have those white rooms anymore. Instead, in keeping with the atmosphere processor allowing people to walk outside effortlessly, there is a seamless continuity between spaces. Consider how much of the imagery involves breaking through walls, cutting through things, etc. That dynamic isn't as present in Alien, outside of a few scenes (the acid blood, and the attempt to trap the alien in the vents).

If Aliens is scary, the result is that it's not scary in the same way. Alien is about what lurks beneath surfaces, where Aliens is totally devoid of surfaces and consequently unstable and disorienting (note Ripley's trail of flares).

i Jan 29, 2012 06:33

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SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

Maarak posted:

http://www.frieze.com/issue/article/the_art_of_war/



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

That's actually the article I had in mind while writing that post, or at least this reading of Die Hard that references it extensively: [Nakatomi Space](#)

Don't get me wrong; I think what Aliens does is totally thematically appropriate (and I was going to note the opening hospital and debriefing scenes in a longer version of that post. It's just that those scenes are isolated from the bulk of the film.)

Again, the best way to read Aliens is through Battle: Los Angeles, which presents what Weizman calls "a ghostlike military fantasy world of boundless fluidity, in which the space of the city becomes as navigable as an ocean." The ocean metaphor in that film was particularly apt. Unlike B:LA, though, Aliens is about a 'classical' approach to urban navigation being confronted by an 'infestational' one. Of course it's why Newt survives and the troops mostly don't.

What's missing to me is the moment when "suddenly, that wall disappears with a deafening roar, the room fills with dust and debris, and through the wall pours one soldier after the other, screaming orders [...] like giant alien bugs."

It's not that we should be shown the colonists fighting back. Far from it! But we don't really see the walls before they crumble, or the walls that haven't crumbled yet. Most everything in the film has already been leveled, even if not literally.

What B:LA focuses on to a much greater extent is how this 'leveling of the playing field' is a source of existential despair, where this total freedom is in fact a source of immense responsibility that many simply cannot cope with. It jumps right into the ghostlike fantasy by design - the landscape is already (and increasingly) littered with abjection and debris. But Aliens needed to take its time, just a bit.

i Jan 29, 2012 08:02

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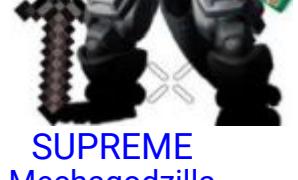
SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

Xguard86 posted:

I really think anyone seeing Aliens in 2012 is going to have such a different POV versus someone who saw it either on release in 86 or as a kid sometime in the 90's that any debate is pointless. Especially if you're early twenties or a teen that basically grew up watching Aliens ripoffs.

That TV Tropes entry is totally correct, Aliens ages poorly because it's been ripped off a million times. Shit, even Black Hawk Down is basically Aliens with black people instead of xenomorphs.



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

Actually, what we must consider is that Aliens has been bettered by many of its descendants. Battle: Los Angeles, 28 Weeks Later, District 9 (and so-on) are the new Aliens.

This obviously isn't to say that Aliens is a bad film, but it's extremely noteworthy that the complaints that many

have about it from today's standpoint are the same leveled at B:LA by your average critic - that the characters are mostly flat types, and so-forth. The difference is that B:LA makes better use of its cliched characters, obsessed as it is with identity and authentic existence. B:LA makes an entire film of Ripley's seizure of leadership from Gorman, and makes the sidelined marines the exclusive focus - their ethics, their feelings. (Cameron himself regretted the fact that his space marines were more akin to undisciplined GIs.)

This isn't a one-sided thing either. B:LA revitalizes Aliens, shedding new light on the familiar scenes. This isn't "ripping-off". It's intertextuality.

...

"Heidegger's indifference toward problems of human rights, democracy, and so on, as ontic dilemmas unworthy of philosophical concern, is the mirror-image of Habermas's universal, pragmatic, normative presuppositions. What both positions reject is the situation of radical contingency, in which there is no guarantee for my decisions, in which the agent has to confront the abyss of freedom. Habermas mobilizes the fear of the lack of a universal normative frame of reference: for him, the moment we renounce such a universal frame, the path is wide open to proto-Fascist "irrationalist" decisionism, the project of the Enlightenment is renounced. . . . What, however, if this lack of an a priori universal frame—of a frame exempted from the contingencies of the political struggle—is precisely what opens up the space for the struggle (for "freedom," "democracy" and so on)? Is this not the lesson of Kierkegaard—that every translation of ethics into some positive universal frame already betrays the fundamental ethical Call, and thus necessarily gets entangled in inconsistencies? Is the only true ethical stance, therefore, acceptance of this paradox and its challenge?"

-Zizek, "The Traps of Pure Sacrifice", *The Parallax View*. (2003)

Both films are about this exact topic, this confrontation with the abyss of freedom and the line between the protagonists' "gut-level" decisions and "proto-fascist irrationalist decisionism". It's here that we can truly understand Ripley's ethical decision to nuke the site from orbit, and so-forth. Is Cameron suddenly making a pro-nuke film for the first and only time in his career? No, it's obviously trickier than that.

i Jan 31, 2012 14:37

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QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

Robot_Rumpus posted:

I think a lot of critics pointed out the utterly retarded plot holes in BLA, which didn't really exist in Aliens.

Also, I think every movie you listed is worse than Aliens. Granted, that is a personal opinion (and I know people have some sort of weird love for D9) but I think most people, if shown the movies side by side today (and with no previous knowledge), would prefer Aliens on both a critical and personal level.

Without actually writing why you think what you think, I have absolutely no idea of what your 'preference on a critical level' entails. If it's a simply a listing of 'plot holes' then we can just scoff and move on. [Googling "Battle: Los Angeles Plot Hole" of course reveals that even the notorious spers at IMDB can't find much wrong with it. It's all asinine Cloverfield-style complaints that they don't explain where the aliens come from - or why they have acid blood, communicate nonverbally and see without eyes (for example).]

Actually writing what you think is much preferable to Darko's tactic of "staying on-topic" and not talking about how different films express similar themes. (The whole basis for the recent discussion being that Aliens has 'dated' where Alien has not, despite being sorta-similar films within the same continuity.) Not to mention that the 'actual' topic is merely a trailer and some promotional material.

i Jan 31, 2012 22:01

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QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

Given that Zizek actually considers Alien "infinitely superior" to its sequel, I'm down with that.

i Jan 31, 2012 22:11

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REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



Popcorn posted:

This is my failing too (and I do suspect maybe it *is* a failing). I don't think subtext 'beats' supertext every time.

Subtext is just a convenient term, like a "folk taxon", for an element of a text that is not expository or literal. The question is of course what is 'purely' literal and what is 'purely' expository in a visual presentation of a fictional story. Of course that's all extremely relative.

The notion of 'depth' - "this movie isn't very deep, it's not High art," etc. - is not *entirely* meaningless but nonetheless must be supported by a ton of qualifications in order to actually become meaningful. The reality is that *subtext does not actually exist*. There is only text, and context. The conflict you're talking about is a false dichotomy that I try to avoid with a 'gestalt' approach.

(People also rarely seem to acknowledge that there's a difference between a subtext and, say, an explicit theme. I'm often pegged as 'that guy with the subtext', though I'm never 'just' writing about the subtext - and as if it were possible to isolate subtext from the rest of the work anyways.)

Dissapointed Owl posted:

I enjoyed Battle: LA on some level, but in what way did it best Aliens? I know you wrote it all down but how are the characters in B:LA better? They are entirely forgettable and barely have any character whatsoever. I can see how in B:LA the marines get the focus, but in the end nothing is actually done or revealed with that focus.

The trick here is conflating 'good' characters with 'deep' characters in the first place. Both Cameron and B:LA's director Liebesman are deliberately flattening their characters out into performances, deliberately avoiding psychological realism as an aesthetic choice. It's the same tactic used by Tarantino in his Inglourious Basterds. It's not accidental that Brad Pitt's character has no 'depth', but the intentionality is irrelevant anyways.

'One of the ways to practise the critique of ideology is [...] to invent strategies for unmasking this hypocrisy of the "inner life" and its "sincere" emotions. The experience we have of our lives from within, the story we tell ourselves about ourselves in order to account for what we are doing, is thus a lie—the truth lies rather outside, in what we do. Therein resides the difficult lesson of Littell's book [The Kindly Ones]: in it, we meet someone whose story we do fully hear but who should nonetheless remain our enemy. What is truly unbearable about the Nazi executioners is not so much the terrifying things they did, as how "human, all too human" they remained while doing those things. "Stories we tell ourselves about ourselves" serve to obfuscate the true ethical dimension of our acts. In making ethical judgments, we should be story-blind—this is why Elfriede Jelinek's advice to theatre writers is not only aesthetically correct, but has a deep ethical justification:

"Characters on stage should be flat, like clothes in a fashion show: what you get should be no more than what you see. Psychological realism is repulsive, because it allows us to escape unpalatable reality by taking shelter in the "luxuriousness" of personality, losing ourselves in the depth of individual character. The writer's task is to block this manoeuvre, to chase us off to a point from which we can view the horror with a dispassionate eye."

-Zizek. "It's Ideology Stupid!" *First As Tragedy, Then As Farce*. P. 40.

Elfriede Jelinek quote is taken from Nicholas Spice's *Up from the Cellar*. P. 6.

Where B:LA improves on Aliens is precisely in this flattening of the characters, but also in how the film has this very real threat that psychological realism will emerge: that the "too old for this shit/marine with a tragic past" character Aaron Eckhart puts on will break down and reveal his human fears and uncertainties. Eckhart's character is patently "lying to himself", but this performance is in fact a truthful, ethical decision. He defines himself exclusively by his own chosen actions, not by his motivation or intent. The film itself uses its bombastic score and shots of children crying to accomplish the same thing. These are not ironic choices, but they aren't sincere either (in the sense that you're supposed to get caught up in the fervor, Think Of The Children or otherwise be manipulated). They're actually designed to bring you 'out of' the movie.

It's retroactively that we can see Aliens as doing the same thing with Newt, its marines - and especially Bishop. Cameron even highlights the idea in the dialogue:

"Ripley, she doesn't have bad dreams because she's just a piece of plastic." -Newt, talking about her doll.

i Feb 1, 2012 05:56

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REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

I.W.W. ATTITUDE posted:

How do you view this idea in regard to Starship Troopers, where Johnny Rico's impulse to go into the bug tunnels and rescue Denise Richards is actually a psychically-implanted direction from Neil Patrick Harris?



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

Well, obviously Starship Troopers is 'about' ideology in kinda the same way as B:LA and Aliens (or at least concerning the same specific subject matter). It's just extremely ironic about it, as a way of creating that distancing effect I was just talking about. The fundamental lesson of Starship Troopers is of course that irony doesn't work - fascism is 'beyond satire'. Exaggeration of its ills cannot make it unappealing; people will still think it's a rad action movie and cheer the nazis. The only solution to Starship Troopers is to read it sincerely, as a celebration of fascism that exposes people's susceptibility to it (including, our own - if you don't enjoy the film's spectacle at all, you're probably lying).

I think you've already got it entirely right; that the point is that Rico hasn't moved past the state's ideological apparatus (represented of course by NPH in a gestapo outfit). He is simply a drone, fulfilling his role like the bugs do. NPH's psychic powers match the threatening radios in both Aliens and B:LA. The 'radio' connection to the unreliable command structure in all three films is shown to be unreliable at best, a threat to freedom and agency at worst.

Where B:LA is talking about existentialism, however, Starship Troopers is talking about pragmatism. Heinlein's idea is simply that fascism works at its basic goals and is therefore 'good enough' for its characters. What's a genocide here and there if it keeps the nation and the bulk of its citizens alive and comfortable? B:LA's marines are, on the other hand, staging a genuine revolution against an oppressive colonial power seeking resources. Like I said above, it's not ironic.

i Feb 1, 2012 06:37

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REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

Presumable posted:

More people might listen to you if you stop appealing to Zizek in every other post like he was the ultimate authority on reading movies.

I've also quoted Sartre, Lacan, Foucault, some other folks, and several weblogs. Plus, I've written multiple lengthy paragraphs about more general concepts. And looked at several different films both in and outside of the aliens 'franchise'. I'm no stranger to discussion.

In the meantime, *your* mission is to write something actually substantive within your next three posts in this thread. I believe in you! Show us how it's done!

i Feb 1, 2012 22:03

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QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

I'm not name-dropping Zizek. I'm using his work correctly in a sentence, and I feel no obligation to 'balance that out' with redundant text.

The point isn't even really to be persuasive, but more fundamentally to get folks reading things that aren't a part of the franchise - to expand the frame of reference beyond the videogames and marketing. That's specifically why I'm not just posting links, or brief quotes out of context. I'm choosing clarity over concision. It always seems, though, that people in the movie forum would rather write about *anything other than movies*.

So: how do we get people to stop writing about me (my writing style, my influences), and to start writing about the fucking films for a change? The entire point of the "block-quoting" is to draw attention away from myself. I don't give a shit what you think of me. Stop writing about me.

Write about movies, and theory, and philosophy. Write about a book you've read that might be relevant. Write about a review that you agree with. Write about a review that you *disagree* with. Write about that old soviet film that Bugblatter just posted images from.

Hell, I made a reference to the Ripley action figure in my last post specifically to show that it's even possible to discuss the fucking merchandising as a *part of the text*. There simply is no excuse at this point.

i Feb 2, 2012 12:15

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REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

Precambrian posted:

SMG- I've noticed that in your B:LA reviews that you've cited the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, especially with the above ground tunnel, and that got me thinking about how Sci-Fi draws pretty heavily from conceptions of "What is the battlefield?" Star Wars bases everything around WWII dogfights, Star Trek uses naval conflicts, Cameron made Aliens with his conception of Vietnam in mind, Independence Day had a reliance on the air-supremacy that defined the Gulf War, and a lot of recent films, District 9, Skyline, and, of course B:LA, draw from the modern battlefield of the War on Terror, using PMC's, urban settings, and the blurring of civilian and soldier. Indeed, Sci-Fi seems to be getting more immediate; the focus is on the fighting men instead of the gunships, and the subject is getting more personal as we're fighting closer and closer to our homes.



I'm wondering, is *Prometheus* going to push that immediacy away from us? It seems like it'll have more in common with *Star Trek*, with the emphasis on exploration and discovery, with aliens being more mysterious and, well, alien, but at the same time, if it's about the origins of human life, the aliens have to be in some way a humanity stand-in.

Well, returning to the topic of pragmatism vs. existentialism (or B:LA vs. Starship Troopers, to contextualize things), that essay posted earlier about the IDF tactic of 'walking through walls' notes that the whole thing is based in pragmatic philosophy. Specifically, creators of the tactics use the textbook definition of 'linking of theory and practice'. Reading through the essay again, this part jumped out:

"As a complement to military tactics that involve physically breaking and walking through walls, new methods have been devised to allow soldiers not only to see but also to shoot and kill through walls. The Israeli company Camero has developed a handheld imaging device that combines thermal imaging with ultra-wideband radar, which, like ultrasound imaging, has the ability to produce three-dimensional renderings of biological life concealed behind walls or other barriers. Human bodies appear on the screen as fuzzy heat sources floating (like fetuses) within an abstract clear medium wherein everything solid - walls, furniture, objects - has melted away. [...] By striving to see what is hidden behind walls and to move and propel ammunition through them, the military seeks to elevate contemporary technologies - using the justification of (almost contemporary) theories - to the level of metaphysics, moving beyond the here and now of physical reality, and effectively collapsing time and space."

-Eyal Weizman, Lethal theory. <http://roundtable.kein.org/files/ro...al%20theory.pdf>

This is, of course, talking about the exact same sort of 'scanner' technology that *Alien* and *Aliens* predicted. The point of *Alien* was of course that Dallas' encounter with the alien was unsettlingly abstracted down to 'just' a dot meeting another dot on a screen (the same image is encountered with Wilford Brimley's computer simulation in *The Thing* - the conflict is reduced to one dot being eclipsed by the other).

We know that the aliens can 'see through walls' as well, somehow, so this isn't a one-sided thing. So in fact, we can read the aliens as the 'technologically' superior group here. The aliens, after all, simply view the people as hosts for their young, and certainly not as individuals. A soldier to them is as good as a little girl. (And of course, Newt is captured when Ripley and Hicks are struggling to cut through the barrier, while the alien merely swims up to her effortlessly, through the literally/figuratively fluid space of the sewer.)

....

I was reading an essay on pragmatist philosopher G.H. Mead the other day, and this is precisely the point of his argument - that a creature's level of complexity and organization results in its "determining power" to shape the environment:

"The human form establishes its own home where it wishes; builds cities; brings its water from great distances; establishes the vegetation which shall grow about it; determines the animals that will exist; gets into that struggle which is now going on with insect life, determining what insects will continue to live; is attempting to determine what micro-organisms shall remain in its environment."

-George Herbert Mead. "Mind, Self and Society."

If that reads like warfare between two groups trying to gain total control of their environment, then: precisely! That's exactly the conflict in *Aliens*, which is of course set in a terraforming facility that is then converted into a hive by the aliens. From what I understand, *Prometheus* is going to be 'about' terraforming as well, on some level. But that's not just a descriptive observation above. Mead is talking about pragmatist ethics. As all organisms differ in complexity and organization, so do their values. Ethics are totally relative in this way - since we are human, values are only 'intrinsic' so long as they affect us.

"I do not know what it is like to be God, nor do I know what it is like to be a bat. The concept of intrinsic/inherent value is thus either meaningless, or else it reduces to the value of something that enters into ecological relations that do not immediately affect any human agent. All that is, however, does eventually, meditatively, affect some human agent. Its value can thus be cognized by humans, and its moral considerability can be acknowledged and respected. The lesson here, that we are connected at all points to our environments, and they to us, is the Alpha and the Omega of pragmatic thought about the environment."

-Kelly A. Parker, "Pragmatism and Environmental Thought."
<http://www.public.iastate.edu/~jwcw...pers/Parker.pdf>

Writers like Kelly A. Parker and Aristotelis Santas (in the essay "The Environmental Value in G.H. Mead's Cosmology") conclude that pragmatist philosophy and ethics allow us to truly understand our connection to the environment and realize that it's in our best interests to preserve it. Santas even writes that this pragmatist worldview risks being labelled 'environmental fascism', but claims that people can be educated about their role in the environment democratically. There is, however, the big HOWEVER:

"Pragmatism, in some of its forms, is a power-philosophy. For pragmatism, a belief is 'true' if its consequences are pleasant. Now human beings can make the consequences of a belief pleasant or unpleasant. Belief in the moral superiority of a dictator has pleasanter consequences than disbelief, if you live under his government. Wherever there is effective persecution, the official creed is 'true' in the pragmatist sense. The pragmatist philosophy, therefore, gives to those in power a metaphysical omnipotence which a more pedestrian philosophy would deny to them. I do not suggest that most pragmatists admit the consequences of their philosophy; I say only that they are consequences, and that the pragmatist's attack on the common view of truth is an outcome of love of power, though perhaps more of power over inanimate nature than of power over

human beings."

-Bertrand Russel, "Power".

What Russel describes there is precisely the thesis of Starship Troopers, and is the exact problem outlined in that Eyal Weizman essay - the "metaphysical omnipotence" of those with superior technology, capable of delivering superior force. To those pragmatists who place human values above all else, we should say: "define human!" It certainly leaves the gap open to declare your opponents less than human, or non-human, doesn't it? You are valuable only insofar as you are useful to me.

"The IDF always emphasize how Hezbollah locates its headquarters and arms in the midst of densely populated areas, well aware that any attack on Hezbollah strongholds will thus lead to large numbers of innocent civilian casualties. While certainly true to some extent, the problem is: Why does Israel, fully aware of these tactics, still bomb the sites? The obvious answer is that it believes the deaths of innocents are worth the price of hurting Hezbollah.

Let's try a mental experiment and imagine that, instead of Lebanese women and children, the human shields used by Hezbollah were Israeli women and children. Would the IDF still consider the price affordable and continue the bombing? If the answer is "no," then the IDF is effectively practicing racism, determining that Jewish life has more value than Arab life."

-Zizek, "Why Pragmatic Politics are Doomed to Fail in the Middle East." [<http://www.egs.edu/faculty/slavoj-z...doomed-to-fail/>]

So returning, in a roundabout way, to your question: it isn't only what the battlefield *is*, but rather how we perceive it. And it's here that people's complaints about the realism of these military films must first explain - *which realism, whose truth?* 28 Weeks Later presents the battlefield as a nightmarish abstraction in the eyes of the terrified civilians, and is relentlessly criticized by goons for not being realistic. It's why I'm so opposed to this expanded universe / technical manual stuff that pointedly ignores any ethical considerations. The expanded universe is *unethical*. Fuck the haters.

i Feb 4, 2012 02:15

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QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



the trick is that you need to define by you mean by god, and what his domain is. Not to mention what the specific punishment is.

In Jurassic Park isn't a luddite film. Its message isn't that technology is evil, but rather that employing powerful technologies for trivial reasons is evil. Its message is that creating dinosaurs is useless and wasteful - that Hammond simply used science as a springboard for a massive theme park/entertainment franchise. It's the blind rush to monetize and commercialize a discovery that's being criticized. If the film has a god, god is not a capitalist.

It's been a few years since I've last read Frankenstein, but Wyoming does have it pretty much right: Frankenstein isn't evil because he played god. It's rather that in playing god, he realized that god (in the Christian sense) doesn't exist. The monster is a reflection of himself, but the transparency of his skin and the visibility of his organs remind Frankenstein of his own gooey innards. There's no great plan, and creation isn't perfect. He banishes the monster out of self-disgust.

It's not that the monster is actually dangerous, but that it totally shatters the victorians' social conventions. He's poor, he's violent, his skin's the wrong colour...

One thing that District 9 picked up on is the racial subtext in Alien, where Parker acts sexually aggressive towards Lambert and is then mirrored by Bolaji Badejo in the alien suit. This is absolutely not to say that the film is calling black dudes rapists or something, to be clear. It's just to say that the alien's alien-ness is a racial otherness in addition to the other issues raised.

This was carried over into how Aliens made the creatures stand in for the Viet Cong in a very basic way, mocking Hudson's assumption that they're 'just animals'. (Battle: Los Angeles does the same thing with its aliens, which could be easily misread as 'terrorists' or something.) The crucial thing is that, far from representing the yellow communist horde, the Aliens are in fact a dark mirror of the American soldiers - the threat of what they're becoming. Aliens and B:LA are about the US military fighting against its own self. What are they if not the motion-scanners and body armor taken to their logical conclusion of ESP and exoskeletons? What are they if not the ultimate expression of the soldier as an expendable drone? The racial conflict in these films is actually rather nuanced, in that regard. The aliens are a race, but also race-less and homogenized. They are, in a way, a supremacist movement.

i Feb 4, 2012 22:24

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QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

Lambert actually looks downright disgusted, and in the context of a film about rape, it becomes extremely relevant. There's a reason Parker and Lambert are in the same room when they're killed, and that the editing sort of merges them into one character.

It's important to note that Parker is still a sympathetic victim, which is why the film is about race but not racist per se. He was just joking around, but that underlying tension was there and it erupts later. In that sense, Ripley's amused reaction to the crude joke tells us a lot about her character, and why things happen the way



they do later.

It's also noteworthy that it's a cunnilingus joke, given the events.



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

[i](#) Feb 4, 2012 23:35

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SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

"True to form, the crew members, acting as if nothing of consequence has happened to Kane, chatter around the table as they stuff their laughing faces with food. Parker jokes as usual, this time disgusting Lambert with a barely discernible cunnilingus reference that serves at least two functions in the scene. First, it expresses a defensive reaction formation to Kane's penetration by the facehugger, as it replicates in a word (oral sex) what the Alien apparently did to Kane's body. Kane and Dallas, it seems, are not the only crew members traumatized by the Alien. Second, it exposes the openness of the human body, but deflects that openness onto the female body. At the very moment of Kane's unexpected recovery should restore our faith in the closed body, *Alien* supplies us with a jolly, grotesque scene where the sanctity of bodily boundaries is questioned in both act and word."

-Ximena Gallardo C. and C. Jason Smith. "Alien Woman: The Making of Lt. Ellen Ripley."

[i](#) Feb 5, 2012 01:28

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SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

Why do you assume crude jokes (and working class people) are utterly simplistic?

People are complicated.

Jokes are *language*.

[i](#) Feb 5, 2012 02:42

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SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

I doesn't really matter, because acting is inherently a collaboration with the rest of the group. Each actor in the film was given pages of character backstory, written by Scott, to inform their performance. If the scene was somehow 100% improvised non-sequitur in spite of this, it was still included in the final film over some other take.

It's much more likely that the scene uses almanesque overlapping dialogue as a stylistic choice, rather than Scott just telling his actors in a crucial scene to just go crazy because nothing matters and fuck this movie.

[i](#) Feb 5, 2012 03:23

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SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

In fairness to Xeno and the gang, they've also recently brought up bootleg t-shirts, and videogames set in the expanded universe.

In addition to the fucking toys, that is.

i Feb 19, 2012 10:58

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



It's important not to confuse the AVP with AV|P|R, which is extremely smart and looks fantastic if you turn up the brightness a bit.

AVP is indeed lowest-common-denominator bullshit, but there's basically no continuity between the two.

If Prometheus does render AV|P|R 'noncanonical', I'd be sad. Not that I give a shit about canon, but it would further obfuscate just how good a movie it is.

i Mar 3, 2012 19:42

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SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

Desperado Bones posted:

I liked both. Does that make me a bad person? 😞



Well no, not if you can justify it. Maybe I just don't understand AVP, but it seemed like it was 'bad on purpose'. And not the way AV|P|R treats the human characters as oblivious fodder, Texas Chain Saw style. It's just like "haw haw we made a stupid movie." Irony ahoy.

AVP has kung-fu noises when the monsters fight, and there's a COMIN' AT YA! gag every two minutes, even though the film isn't in 3-D. It approaches the topic of Lovecraftian horror by way of Erich von Daniken's New Age bastardizations of Lovecraft. Why introduce New Age into Alien and/or Predator except to be deliberately stupid and unpalatable?

i Mar 4, 2012 13:40

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

keep punching joe posted:

So hey that film Prometheus looks good doesn't it?



Not really.

Xenomorph posted:

Royce tries the "covered in mud" trick like Dutch did in 'Predator', and the Predator actually figures out a way around it.

My biggest "problem" with 'Predators' was that I wish it had a pre-end-credits montage of all the characters and their names just like 'Predator' did. 'Predators' really wasn't helped by having just about none of the characters say their names over the course of the movie. It doesn't make the movie seem much better when in talking about it you have to say "the Yakuza guy" or "the black guy who wasn't Lawrence Fishburne" because the movie *literally doesn't provide their names* unless you sit through the credits or go look the movie up on IMDb or something.

It's also indifferently shot, badly plotted and thematically incoherent, which is an accomplishment for something as shopworn as a 'most dangerous game' / 'strangers in a room' existential allegory.

This relevant to Prometheus in the sense that canonicity alone cannot save a film. You can talk about how it explores 'the universe' - what if a predator figured out how to get past the mud trick??? - but that reduces McTiernan's film to an instructional video about how to evade space aliens, and then praises a badly-made film on those same terms.

Predators isn't similar to Predator because it's in a jungle. It's because its few interesting shots are direct quotations of that film's visuals (Brody standing beneath the alien ship, etc.) - albeit swallowed up in a context of bad ideas, badly realized. (Why does that scene quote the arrival of the choppah from Predator when the tone and pacing of the two scenes is entirely different?) Why is Laurence Fishburne's mad character played as a comedy Gollum?

Again, AV|P|R succeeds because its references are either innocuous (a character named Dallas says 'get to the chopper') or are extremely subtle and tasteful. It references Pulp Fiction and Return of the Living Dead so casually that these don't even register as references. It's simply a part of the same conversation as those

films.

We know that Prometheus is going to reference Alien a lot. And the fact that it's got Weyland logos shows that it is paying some attention to canon and 'the universe' or whatever. The point is not to get confused by this stuff. There's a small but nonzero chance that Prometheus will be like Gladiator, or some other not-great Ridley Scott production. And that entails being critical. Not only of this film, but of the ones you're holding it against.

i Mar 5, 2012 07:00

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SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



penismightier posted:

Oh come on, it's an interesting way to look at the film from a new angle.

All that reveals, to me, is how reliant it is on its filmic qualities and its science fiction themes. If you change the alien from a pagan godlike embodiment of psychological drive, remove the Lovecraftian themes about man's insignificance in the universe and all the references to computers and artificial intelligence, and the dreamlike manner in which the events occur... well, there isn't anything left. And such a film would implicitly have very different cinematography, editing, etc.

It should be noted that Alien 3 already implies, as a red herring, that Ripley might just be fucking nuts and the actual killer. Which is as valid an interpretation as any, given how strained the literal plot is. So just remake Alien 3 with the Flight Club Twist. Or, rather, *don't*.

Reducing the film to its literal plot, and then reducing it further so that nothing interesting in its plot remains? No thank you.

i Mar 7, 2012 03:25

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



feedmyleg posted:

Because prequel has come to mean something different than "a movie that takes place in the same universe but chronologically before another film." Prequels in cinema almost always mean "the events that lead directly into another film but add nothing" and thus lack of individual cinematic value.

The chronological fuckery inherent to prequels is extremely important. The Thing prequel is all about causality and the exploration/the opening up of new potentials in a 'virtual' past. The film then relates this to questions of cognition and free will. The Thing prequel is thematically very similar to Spielberg's Minority Report. Significant portions of it are specifically devoted to how events lead directly into another film, and that adds everything.

Prometheus is obviously doing similar things. Where The Thing prequel actually remakes up the Hawks version that inspired Carpenter, Prometheus is clearly exploring concepts that were cut from the Alien, while also toying with Alien's legacy. So you get Giger's unused 'pyramid' concept in a film that also features Weyland-Yutani. The production design resembles both pre-70s pulp sci-fi and Avatar. So already, on two levels, we know that this film is Ridley Scott commenting on James Cameron.

It's important to note that Alien came out in a specific cultural context - only shortly after Star Wars. Blockbuster cinema hadn't really evolved yet. James Cameron comes from an exploitation background with Roger Corman, and is actually arguably more responsible for today's blockbuster cinema than either Lucas or Spielberg (and certainly moreso than Scott, notwithstanding his Gladiator). Jaws, Star Wars and Alien were not blockbusters by design. The slew of exploitation films 'ripping them off' served as proto-blockbusters, with filmmakers trying to figure out and capture what made those films succeed. It wasn't long before the big studios caught on, and that's where you get Aliens and, eventually, Avatar.

i Mar 20, 2012 19:12

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

Tuxedo Catfish posted:

I think in Minority Report's case it isn't actually a different movie, but rather the future memory (which is kind of like a movie) that Tom Cruise's character is predestined to play a part in. If I understand SMG correctly, the similarity is the predestination, of which prequel-ness is just one possible form.

"Toward the end of Spielberg's *Minority Report*, there is a moment which stages something like an ethical act proper. John Anderton (Tom Cruise) finally confronts the man who, six years before, was supposed to have raped and killed his little son; when he is on the verge of shooting the killer (as he was predetermined to do,



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

according to the vision of the three "precognitives"), he stops, blocking the execution of his decision, arresting his gesture—does he not thereby confirm Libet's "Hegelian" insight into how the elementary act of freedom, the manifestation of free will, is that of saying no, of stopping the execution of a decision?

[...]

This free act fundamentally changes the coordinates of the entire situation: Anderton breaks the closure of future/past possibility. The idea that the emergence of a radically New retroactively changes the past—not the actual past, of course (we are not in science fiction), but past possibilities, or, to put it in more formal terms, the truth value of the modal propositions about the past—was first explored by Henri Bergson."

-Slavoj Zizek, The Parallax View p. 201-202

The Thing prequel is kind-of the obverse of this. The film doesn't feature any time-travelling or precognition, but is nonetheless a science fiction film exploring the virtual possibilities of the past. The film's starry-eyed optimism isn't naive, given the predetermined events of Carpenter's films. It's the product of all the unexplored alternatives to Carpenter's film. Like The 1982 Thing and Alien, the film is all about excavation, dissection, autopsy, etc. But it differs from those films, like Prometheus seems to, in that it culminates in a full-fledged virtual recreation/reconstruction of the chronological past.

This links both The Thing prequel and Prometheus to Spielbergian science fiction like Minority Report and Jurassic Park, which is all about (escaping the bounds of) 'virtual reality' simulation. Prometheus seems to quote Avatar, and Avatar repeatedly quoted Jurassic Park.

i Mar 20, 2012 21:10

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QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

Tuxedo Catfish posted:

So as a prequel it's an attempt to free the past from the "actual" past implied by the earlier, but chronologically later film? A way of saying "we could have arrived at The Thing / Alien / etc. by any means at all, and it might as well have been this one?"

Yeah, but it's also more than that. The 'historical' view of time sees its as a bunch of forking paths, and when one is 'chosen', it cancels out all the others. As a prequel created after Carpenter's film, The Thing 2011 recreates the past but inserts new potentials into it, opening up new paths. (It's one of these paths that leads the protagonist to (temporary, unlikely) survival.)

I don't mean that it literally creates new timelines as in Back to the Future, but that the film serves as a kind of rebuttal to Carpenter's apocalyptic/nihilistic themes and tones. Where Carpenter's heroes discover corpses and videotape, Heijningen Jr.'s find virtual life, which then 'finds a way'. And I'm not just talking about the aliens. At the end of the film, hopefully, you return to the end of Carpenter's film and re-evaluate where you can go from there.

The point isn't the future is forked, but that it circles back. "[T]he alternate path of future reality [is] generated when the agent whose future acts are foretold gets to know about them; that is to say, its source is the self-referentiality of knowledge." [Zizek, p. 208]

For example, when the protagonist of The Thing 2011 tells her companion to leave the axe in the wall, she is trying to prevent them from being infected/killed. But, unbeknownst to her, we know that leaving the axe in the wall is precisely the event that leads into Carpenter's film and the destruction of both camps. Her attempt to avoid their fate only causes it to occur, in a twist out of Greek tragedy. We, however, know how things will end, and can react accordingly. And maybe she understands it too? The ending can be read as an expression of free will, where she embraces her destiny. This is in contrast to the other dude, whose attempt to stop fate again leads to its victory.

i Mar 21, 2012 12:09

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QUOTE

POST

Don't go there!

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Cinema Discusso › Ridley Scott's Prometheus - It looks as much like dicks as anything else.

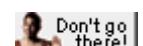
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"The more backstory I read from Ellen's memories the less I know what is going on lol"

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« Cinema Discusso › Ridley Scott's Prometheus - It looks as much like dicks as anything else.

 POST 

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

Opus125 posted:

So does this film have a connection to the Alien films or what?



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

i Mar 22, 2012 10:48

It's a sequel to Aliens Versus | Predator: Requiem.

Profile Post History Rap Sheet

 REPORT

 QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

echoplex posted:

The chairs look straight out of the Thunderbirds remake but if they are going for the pulp-scifi DNA root as has been suggested here, then they do kinda work.



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

What interests me about Prometheus is that it seems to be made entirely of the unused ideas from the making of Alien. You have discarded concept art making an appearance, like the alien temple and hieroglyphics. You have more overt, direct references to pre-Alien pulp sci-fi.

It's actually the same thing the recent Thing prequel did. It referenced Howard Hawks' The Thing, Alien (essentially a remake of The Thing...), and Steven Spielberg's sci-fi films (E.T. competed against, and trounced, Carpenter's film at the box office).

So like I was saying before, these films are presenting an alternate history of science fiction. The Thing prequel asks *what if* The Thing were the huge pop-cultural phenomenon and E.T. was the cult underdog. And it asks this because E.T. is probably considered the cheesier, less-relevant film nowadays.

The visual style, along with the subject matter, makes Prometheus look like a direct response to Avatar. It looks like the anti-Avatar, like an shadow version of that film. Avatar was, of course, created by James Cameron, who got his start working on Alien 'ripoffs' for Roger Corman. Cameron was also a producer on At The Mountains of Madness, before that fizzled. At The Mountains of Madness itself was a huge inspiration on the Alien and Thing films, and looks to be a big influence on Prometheus as well.

i Apr 7, 2012 23:06

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 REPORT

 QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

Darko posted:

You can read earlier in this thread, or the last Alien thread, but essentially Whedon wrote a balls to the wall action - chase film strongly influenced by Hong Kong action of that era, which hadn't really influenced American cinema that much at the time. Everything was ridiculously over the top action to a Hard Boiled level. For instance, there were like a hundred Xenos onboard the ship, and the escape of the hero group was framed constantly by the war against the Xenos going on around them on other parts of the ship (which was truncated into that one sequence with the grenade rolling into the escape pod).



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

It seems like Weaver is the person who was mainly behind truncating the script, and the studio got Jeunet to direct it, which is probably the exact opposite of how the script was written. Weaver wanted it to focus more on the half-Alien nature of Ripley and making a serious psychological piece regarding that, Jeunet was more interested in making a kind of silly farce, half of the setpieces were removed or changed from the script, including Chow Yun Fat's character being taken out and somewhat absorbed into another character, and you have probably one of the most fascinating examples of what happens when three different contrasting visions collide.

I remain simultaneously baffled and not the least bit surprised that, of those three visions, fans tend to side with Joss Whedon's proto-AVP. it's not just that they want wicked action yo, because there's this odd disdain for Weaver's vision of the series as an character-based exploration of psychosexual and feminist themes through body-horror.

Weaver of course got the series entirely right - and of Alien Cubed's handful of merits, it was mostly Weaver's awesome performance that prevented it from being a totally generic film tweaked to fit the franchise (in the manner of a Die Hard Sequel).

Even in the extreme case of Aliens, nobody watches Aliens for the gunfights, which are shot for disorientation. And I think it's practically inarguable that Alien 4 is brought down by Jeunet and Whedon's juvenalia, when what it had going for it was whatever perversity escaped the camp ghetto they built for it. (I don't have much opinion of Jeunet one way or the other, but his style strikes me as a mainstreamed, somehow more whimsical version of Terry Gilliam's. He's not who I'd hire to direct an Alien film.)

But no, people be tossing out "Serenity, except with Alien licensing and more action" like that's at all desireable.

i Apr 11, 2012 10:42

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SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

Rageaholic Monkey posted:

AVP:R was pretty fucking ridiculous and entertaining as a slasher movie, but I don't really remember how it fared as an Alien or Predator movie. I've gotta re-watch that one again soon.

I'm just going to jump in and re-affirm that it's rad. It is more of a Predator movie than an Aliens one, but not by much. it's important to keep in mind that a) the Predator is the film's protagonist and b) it's more of a commentary on Aliens' themes and its cultural impact as a franchise than an attempt at simply recreating James Cameron's film.

Ixian posted:

As an Alien/Predator movie it more or less works in a completely shameless, fanfic kind of way. The Brothers Strauss did their typical top-notch effects work on a limited budget, and when the movie gets away from its terrible meet-the-future-victims setup phase (they are absolutely horrible when it comes to directing actors, as anyone who saw Skyline knows) it's pretty entertaining. Ridiculous, but entertaining, which is more than you can say for Resurrection.

The actors aren't bad, they're just playing things for camp. Since the predator is the protagonist, the film starts out very misanthropic. It doesn't take the characters totally seriously, and it's aware that they're playing broad types. That's its method of saying that humanity itself is just a bunch of unimportant people living inauthentic lives in their prescribed roles. The acting is totally appropriate for that, if not show-stopping. But the film is *about* misanthropy, and so it progresses from there. Skyline is the same way.

i Apr 20, 2012 22:26

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SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

Nah they both rule. The key point is that AVP:R is transparently 'about' the reduction of the films to an expanded universe/franchise, with the Aliens and Predators elevated to the heroes of the story, and the characters purely secondary.

The beauty of it is that, after the film's 'ghost ship moment' the human characters become interesting and likable. The acting hasn't changed. What has changed is the films' attitude towards them. Suddenly they realize the stakes, and they begin fighting for something.

i Apr 20, 2012 23:31

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SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

Xenomorph posted:

Especially when in the first AvP movie where the Aliens weren't total pushovers against Predators, and one Alien took down 2 Predators back-to-back in 5 minutes flat.

Aliens and predators aren't real, but the aliens actually succeed through sheer number of disposable drones.



The film makes a point of showing that, no matter how many drones the predator kills and methodically disintegrates, it's like cutting the heads off a hydra. The predator ultimately *loses*, although he comes close to a tie by taking out the 'queen', leaving the drones unable to spread any further.

The point of the film is, after all, that the predator's adherence to tradition handicaps him. The lone predator, with his ritualistic techniques, has to die so that the Aliens-style squad can replace him.

AVP1 gets this wrong by treating the conflict not as a battle between archetypal concepts (order versus chaos, symbolic versus real, law versus madness), but between different action figures (which alien can punch harder???).

i Apr 21, 2012 02:48

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



Leyburn posted:

Wooooah. Just to clarify, I did see AvP1 in the cinema and I thought it was pretty crap. The only point I was trying to make was that an R rating alone is nothing to get excited about.

I'm not particularly invested in getting into a debate about the qualities of the AvP movies, but my personal experience was that AvP:R felt like an ultraviolent version of Gremlins with zero charm, or a teen slasher that for some reason featured one of the greatest cinematic monsters instead of a serial killer.

AvP on the other hand just felt like another shitty Alien movie. Which was automatically better because it didn't feature that horrific, grotty scene with the pregnant woman from AvP:R.

You seem to be under the impression that a movie where your typical Jason-type stalks people during the zombie apocalypse wouldn't be awesome (and not in a lame 'lol zombies' way). And in fact, that is approximately what AVP:R offers, even referencing Alien writer Dan O'Bannon's Return of the Living Dead.

But there are obviously the differences: the Predator acts as an agent of a whole other civilization, and the aliens are intelligent and infests spaces, etc. I don't mean to put it dismissively, but AVP:R rewards attention to these nuances because it's basically *about* these nuances (hence the basic premise of juxtaposing the two different types of alien, and the two approaches to sci-fi/horror action cinema). If you're the type of person who considers Halloween and Friday the 13th basically the same movie, you're not going to get much out of it.

i Apr 28, 2012 04:00

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



Robot_Rumpus posted:

It's about two shitty brothers who are directors trying to cash in on 2 franchises. That's it.

Would you say that they are... fratboys?

i Apr 28, 2012 06:15

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



Xenomorph posted:

People take issue with it because it's not the theme of the movie.

In that case, what is the explanation for the yonic bisecting line in title credits - which is both a reference to Aliens' opening credits and a precursor to the blue spark in the mechanical void of Skyline's title credits (which take place 'inside' an airplane turbine)?

It's not insignificant that Aliens' credits begin as a cathode-ray blur of blue dots that slowly coalesce into what look vaguely like figures before finally resolving into the title. It's not-insignificantly the letter / that's both a yonic symbol and the source of an explosion that fades to white.

AVP:R does not simply mimic the titles, like 'yeah let's just toss an exploding vagina in there.' The vertical line represents most basically the humans' atomic bomb - saying that the humans exist in the gap between the aliens' 'mindless' destructive spread and the Predator's 'mindless' devotion to ritual. This is part-and-parcel with the film's existentialist themes. In the final dialogue in the film, the bad marines tell the good "we were just

following orders."

The monsters die locked together in combat, blown apart by the atomic explosion in the background between them. This final shot of them is an exact recreation of the title's text. Alien on the left, predator on the right, both representing dueling archetypal concepts in an eternal struggle before the explosion effaces them both.



i Apr 28, 2012 08:37

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QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



It's a requiem for Predator the film/character. Who cares about the franchise? Predators is total dogshit and was basically presented as a retcon besides. The existence of Predators actually reinforces my point about the story being dead. (Predator 2 wasn't good either.)

Predator ended with Arnold metaphorically 'becoming' the predator, making the statement that the 80s action protagonist is some kind of superhuman/inhuman monstrosity. AV|P|R then begins with a predator as its literal protagonist. It's a direct thematic sequel.

Also haha yeah they are fratboys. You really hit it on the head there. The author's intent was to be a fratboy and to make a film that doesn't mean anything. It's sure unfortunate they put an exploding vagina in the title of their film that's not supposed to mean something. And that is also unintentionally about a rape monster that gets castrated in its final scene (and then gets vaporized in the yonic explosion).

i Apr 28, 2012 11:14

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REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



Man I just posted screenshots from the film itself. Why do you need a Cliffs Notes.

i Apr 28, 2012 12:40

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REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



Link to rottentomatoes.com percentage = kill yourself.

i Apr 29, 2012 02:26

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REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

Dsparil posted:

I am not a parent and I'm there with you. That was REALLY stepping over the line. I've noticed how society as a whole seems to be getting desensitized and is losing its morality and values.

That's kinda precisely the point, because as we all know the predators have a whole code of honour that prevents them from harming pregnant women. The predalien in the film blatantly acts as the archetypal opposite of the predator, hence why it specifically targets pregnant women.

The filmmakers are not unaware that this is taboo. The aliens are presented as the bad guys specifically because they violate these taboos. The predator tries to reinforce them with elaborate symbolic rituals (hence the skinning of the police officer as a trophy/offering to nature), but the inefficiency proves to be his downfall.

The film also presents a shift away from a relatively straightforward parasitism to the Strauss' auteur preoccupation with subtler influences on the body. It's the difference between something alien existing inside you, and something subtly altering you (or in this case, a fetus) into an alien. The imagery recurs in Skyline.

i Apr 29, 2012 11:02

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SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

ApexAftermath posted:

I'm sure the conversation went something like this as the scene was constructed.

Brother 1: We should like have the pred-alien violently force pred-alien babies down pregnant woman's throats and have them die in agony!

Brother 2: Yeah that would be wicked cool man! So hardcore!

The scene doesn't really further the plot(what plot?) at all. It's there to have a over the top gore scene because they said so.

1: The whole FRATBOYS!!! thing is an infamous gold-standard of CD insipidity, alongside comparing movies to hamburgers and 'shut off your brain'. Don't do that.

2: The scene furthers the plot in the basic sense that the plot is about the aliens spreading out in large numbers, and how the various 'good' factions react to that. What the scene shows is how they go about spreading.

3: Movies are not just plots, but stories that offer a perspective on the events of the plot. The aliens are presented as survivors "...unclouded by conscience, remorse, or delusions of morality" and the film treats them rather ambivalently, which is part of what makes it so horrific. The idea is that being an alien *works*, and that's why the other characters must strive for a better alternative. I've already gone over how the film treats the different aliens as the audience identification characters, with the literal humans mostly peripheral until they snap out of their complacency and start fighting back. The entire film is concerned with the ethics of these monster movies and plays around with audience identification by (for example) dehumanizing both the alien and its victims so that there's nothing to root for. Those scenes deliberately and successfully convey *nihilism*, and are juxtaposed with all the other scenes where characters try to overcome nihilism.

i Apr 29, 2012 18:44

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SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

Leyburn posted:

That's the word that springs to mind when I think of that scene too. I watched that with my father and sister in the cinema and the whole move was just too squalid, grotty and nihilistic for me.

There's a difference between nihilism and being about nihilism.

Like there's a scene in John Carpenter's The Thing where Wilford Brimley cuts into the 'pregnant' belly of a disfigured human corpse and pulls out a stillborn fetal dog. It's shot matter-of-factly, like a medical procedure. You'd be hard-pressed to argue AVP:R is bleaker than that, or that The Thing is consequently a bad film.

Skyline is also 'about' nihilism. It identifies and heavily criticizes a nihilistic futurist aesthetic in the Transformers films, and has the protagonist fight against it by... dopily but sincerely protecting his pregnant wife!

Ultimately what the Strausses are doing isn't far removed from what's going on in Children of Men.

i Apr 29, 2012 19:30

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

Past Tense Ragu posted:

Please, stop acting like because you read some Zizek you can run this forum and set the critical agenda. You're arguing that AVP Requiem is a good movie because it seems to criticize monster movie violence by presenting it in a particularly tasteless and mindless way, and if anybody suggests that perhaps this is because the directors are tasteless and mindless you start screaming about fratboys. The fact is, death of the author is the ideal for academic criticism but you're crusading for a B-Movie in a hype thread for a sci fi movie on a comedy forum. The assumed authority with which you make your arguments suggests you think you're writing for Film Quarterly. Stop trying to impress us with your iconoclasm and aping of Lacan.

It doesn't criticize monster movie violence, because obviously it's an example of it. What it criticizes is passive acceptance of atrocity - people watching Alien films to see the aliens fuck shit up. The film unambiguously references Pulp Fiction (in the basic sense that a character is named after one in Pulp Fiction and directors have said 'we are referencing Pulp Fiction by naming this character after one in Pulp Fiction').

Pulp Fiction is about the search for meaning in nihilistic American popular culture - as when Butch picks up the katana and uses it to save his greatest enemy. This recurs in AVP:R when the heroes pick up the predator's shotgun thing and start trying to save people. The film deliberately contrasts the predator's weaponry with 'regular' human guns in the same way Pulp Fiction contrasts the baseball bat and chainsaw with the katana.

As observed before, picking up the weapons alters who you are. You go from a civilian to a police officer with the right uniform. This is the relevance of the police officer being killed and stripped of everything including his skin (and of the guy on the 'missing' poster having his face obscured and then dissolved). People are reduced to meatbags, and that's presented as a bad thing. Same themes as Texas Chainsaw Massacre.

The authority of the police is shown to be purely symbolic, which is why the protagonists break from the police to form their own group.

This is perfectly well-justified, while your alternative (that the film is mindless) is not. Films don't have minds. They are dynamic collections of images with inherent meaning.

i Apr 29, 2012 19:54

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

ApexAftermath posted:

Well there is someone in this thread not posing their take on it as opinion but as "this is how it is and if you don't agree you are a stupid pleb" and a couple people are following right along with it.

You are stupid, but it's not for the reasons you think. It's because you've characterized me as a person who uses the phrase 'stupid plebian'.

It's not because you disagree with my reading but because you're doing a right bad job of it - ignoring the content of my arguments in favor of some pretentious and dismissive pseudo-populism.

i Apr 29, 2012 20:17

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SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

Jesus Christ, people. The black goo is "all the evils of the world".

It's literally [literally (literally)] the contents of Pandora's jar.

Whatever the opposite of these Statue-of-David-looking motherfuckers is, that's what the black goo is. The opposite of rational platonic idealism. It is disease, death, decay. I'm talking archetypal, capital-E Evil.

i Jun 10, 2012 20:54

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

ZackHoagie posted:

It honestly felt like Ridley Scott trying to a parody of James Cameron's career by viewing the hideous misanthropy and violence of **Aliens** through the heavy handed earnest up-with-people-



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

but-down-with-humans message of **The Abyss** or **Avatar**.

SMG said something about the movie acting as a satire of the Aliens fandom (and fandom in general) in the general chat thread, and while I'll wait for him to make his points I'm inclined to see the connection. For the love of god, the entire movie is people being incredibly disgusted and disappointed when they find the origins of the universe they've put so much stock in are simultaneously incomprehensible and violently against them. You can look to the last 200 pages for examples of that.

Well let's get down to brass tacks: this film is hilarious.

Guy Pearce in an old man suit appears out of nowhere, says "i want immortality," and then gets bludgeoned to death with Michael Fassbender's still-conscious severed head. This is *funny*. No, it's the funniest film I've seen in theatres since District 9.

Weyland's death is a stock ironic comeuppance played for extreme camp. The film glosses over it because it know that this is a trope. The glib speed with which it dismisses the search for immortality is the same with which it dismisses all the other characters' motivations. Dude say he wants money? DIES. Dude says he wants friendship? DIES. These aren't random deaths. They are equated by this same tone and attitude. Humans are stupid and die because they're stupid.

David reads Liz Shaw's dreams and then tells her straight up: you are a shallow character. Her dream looks like a hallmark card. "Your entire motivation is that you're infertile and your dad died of Ebola. I just summarized it in two sentences." The moral: robots don't have souls, and neither do people. But the robot is smarter because he understands this. If you've seen Blade Runner, you know what the warm-toned recording of the dream of a happy family means. It means she's a replicant.

"It's a quote from a movie I like."

Look at the specific quote from Lawrence of Arabia: 'the trick is not minding that it hurts'. David's character feels everything the humans feel, but he doesn't mind it. He's built up his ironic distance, he constructs his own identity and puts on an incredibly campy performance. The whole film aligns with his POV. As I said in general chat, Prometheus is a masterpiece of straight-faced camp.

The very first shot is quoted from 2001 (it's a quote from a movie I like). Prometheus is transparently Scott's grand statement on Science Fiction as a genre. It's not 'hard' science fiction. It's "Science Fiction", deeply embedded in quotation marks. The Prometheus/Pandora myth is like Scifi 101, first day of class. It's THE example of mythological proto-scifi. It's referenced in Frankenstein, the first piece of Science-Fiction literature. Alien references it. The films that Alien references reference it. The films that reference Alien reference it.

So the characters fly into space seeking all the answers to their questions, and what do they find? A rational, promethan man locked in an unending struggle against a irrational, pandoric vagina monster. Just slapping against eachother until there is a literal, onscreen shuddering climax and postcoital release. Again: this is funny! You can imagine people staring at this scene and saying "hmm... what does this all mean?" Or, better yet: "how did the squid monster grow so big without a food source?" - just angrily looking for logical clues in this prolonged sequence of a vagina and penis locked in combat.

Scott's grand statement on sci-fi is to issue a moratorium. The point of Prometheus is that these stories pretty much always boil down to the same basic archetypal conflict. The humans are painfully mundane - they are all artificial. Only David sees through the guise and understands that he's a character in a movie. This is a loving ode to gleefully bad sci-fi.

Important scene: Naomi Rapace looks at some bleeps and bloops on a screen. Two bar graphs align. "This is it," she cries. "This is everything!" We cut back to the bar graph, and watch it bleep and bloop a while longer. Wow, what an impressive bar graph. Next scene, it turns out she just wants to get fucked.

There are two distinct scenes in the film of wacky dames who just need a good deep-dicking. One gets an abortion, the other crushed by a huge black protuberance. A guy smokes pot and then dies instantly. This is Friday the 13th logic. The class conflict in Alien is notably absent. All these people are rich idiots, so we're not supposed to cheer for them. Idris Elba, the closest thing to a 'lower class' character puts on a Southern Accent, says YEEHAW! and rockets his ship into a wall to save the day. Michael Bay would give an approving nod.

Why is there a zombie scene? Because it's wonderful slapstick. He gets shot like fifty times and his head gets run over. I couldn't stop laughing. But more importantly, the 'zombie' exists to shows us what Charlie was turning into. For a second, I though it was Charlie, back from the dead. Again, this treats the characters as slightly interchangeable.

There are at least two shots lifted straight from Luigi Cozzi's (in)famous Italian Alien ripoff *Contamination*.

Prometheus owns.

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007


SUPREME
Mechagodzilla
Periodiko posted:

I was expecting to come away disappointed, but I found the film really interesting, engaging, and beautiful. It had almost a dream-like quality to it, with these grotesque images erupting from every direction too fast to contemplate, while everything just spills out of control for no apparent reason.

I came away from the film feeling like I would have enjoyed it more had it been missing the very first scene and the very last scene.

I can't imagine what a sequel to this would be like.

AV|P|R actually has a lot of the same tone and themes as this film. If you want to see a lower-budgeted version of the same thing, there's your sequel right there.

Canadian Surf Club posted:

Not sure I get this. I can understand Weyland's death as comeuppance, but how does it link into people dying because they're stupid? Was Weyland's search for immortality futile or is it his instance of going out to "meet his maker"? (the dual meaning of meet your maker in how Weyland uses it is pretty funny too)

I like your point about the "...not minding it hurts" quote. As much as David seems to be one of the few characters with an arc, he's also the only one that has already attained the ultimate wisdom which our human characters have to eventually come around to. It's a quote we can see reverberate in Holloway and Janek's suicide.

I mean that "dude wants immortality/wealth/power, receives an ironic comeuppance" is an extremely well-worn narrative. Like it's been replayed a billion times, in stories both excellent and terrible. This film reduces it to (almost literally) two scenes and breezes right through them. I want power -> hilarious death.

Prometheus is basically [Caveman Science Fiction: The Movie](#).

Jun 10, 2012 22:20

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REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007


SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

I'd like to note that the [trailer for The Watch](#) played before my showing, and contains gags identical to those in Prometheus (people brazenly shoving their fingers into weird goo, surreptitiously shooting the alien corpse a comical amount of times). That these are basically the same film should tell you something about how Prometheus should be read.

Instead of the uncommercial, unmarketable ending where Liz Shaw dies alone on a barren rock, she shoves Michael Fassbender in a duffle bag and rockets off into the franchise, an act symbolized by a frail bastard xenomorph getting randomly plopped out. Here's your fucking xenomorph, fanboys! Hope you're happy - END OF FILM.

Jun 10, 2012 23:07

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REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007


SUPREME
Mechagodzilla
Kumo posted:

I really enjoyed this post, but I went in a different direction with my takeaway.

Maybe it's because I like Joseph Campbell, but I felt it was more about humanity being locked in cycles of birth -> death -> rebirth, which are inescapable- particularly in the scene with the crashing Engineer ship and Shaw & Vickers running from the circular crashing ship as the Karmic wheel. The first scene in shows the death & rebirth pretty clearly after Engineer dude is left behind to seed earth with his DNA. Even their creators cannot escape this.

While we might want and feel we are owed answers to larger questions of why we are, etc. demanding them of our creators is perilous, as they remain much like us- indifferent if not outright hostile. This is hubris and Ego. Hubris that effects them too because they were destroyed by their own creation- the black protean primordial ooze. The Other, the Id.

I also felt the movie dealt with abandonment by our creators pretty well, the contempt & resentment that accompany the absence of God or a parental figure to guide us. While we search for answers to questions we feel we're owed, we ultimately lack the ability to withstand the consequences to those questions. Perhaps there are no answers, as the Engineers seem in the

same boat. Certainly hubris, ego and ineptitude play their roles- and at the end of it the survivors have learned nothing. The Engineers died due to their hubris, and mistakes, and we will follow the similar path.

Shaw goes off once again determined to demand answers after the catastrophic loss of the Prometheus and the sacrifices of everyone else aboard. Answers she isn't really owed because she's done nothing to earn them.

That's exactly what happens in the film, but I think it's important to highlight the comical tone.

David is the smartest guy in the room in any given scene. He's like 'what would you do for answers?' and so he tosses some goo at the guy. Again, it's the glib summary of Science Fiction. Knowledge is pain, ignorance is bliss. But David knows the third option: the trick is to not mind the pain. He's consciously re-enacting the sci-fi cliche as a detached observer. There is a glee to his combination of naked contempt for this jackass, and anticipation for the mayhem about to happen, that the people dropping bullet-points just don't understand.

The first quarter of the film is ridiculous new-age horseshit about how the Nazca lines are landing strips for ancient astronauts or whatever. (It happens that Prometheus is an infinitely superior version of Kingdom of the Crystal Skull). It's telling that people trying to force this movie into the Serious Box generally consider this the only good part. That's the plot, not the story.

i Jun 11, 2012 00:08

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



This movie should not be compared to Alien at all. That it has the same aliens does not make it a similar film. There is actually little to no similarity, and haters should not get hung up on it.

i Jun 11, 2012 00:20

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



Kull the Conqueror posted:

Yeah but wouldn't you say it's a pretty nice way of accentuating how much humanity has seemed to regress? Weyland has blindly invested a trillion dollars based on some dots on, among others, a Sumerian artifact, and he's too obtuse to realize he's fucking Gilgamesh.

Oh for sure. You can't have the film without that setup to the punchline.

I love that the exact point where the film tips its hand is a fucking weed joke. I love that this becomes a recurring theme when the protagonist gets doped out of her mind on painkillers. (Once you hit the third or fourth injection, it's obviously a joke.)

There are so many great images in the film. Like the picturesque landscapes of the prologue getting blighted by the presence of a CG UFO.

i Jun 11, 2012 00:49

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



Internet Webguy posted:

I agree with this completely. The example that stuck out to me the most for comparison was Mission to Mars, which Prometheus is also way better than.

Oh god, *that* film. That's what I mean about Prometheus being the apotheosis of bad sci-fi.

I love that the outcome of the penis/vagina battle is for the Final Girl to team up with the castrated robot. I love so much about this film.

i Jun 11, 2012 01:00

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



Saint Sputnik posted:

So was she a robot or what?

1) The point is the same as in Blade Runner: everyone is a robot or might as well be.

2) She is, however, a human robot. She behaves as she does because she's jealous of David and trying to impress her sexist father. The captain rather perceptively notes that she's trying to out-robot David when, really, what makes her unique is her human sexuality. She fucks Idris Elba to prove to herself that she's better than her brother.

This runs parallel to the basic theme of the film, that for all the high-minded pursuit of knowledge and truth, humans are pretty much just fucking animals. Hence whey the search for god reveals a vagina monster, which then gives birth to a dunce-capped xenomorph jesus.

i Jun 11, 2012 02:11

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REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



temple posted:

The Engineers invited humans to find them. Then they kill the humans after their obedience. That's not how Pandora's Box works.

leaving aside the question of whether it's an invitation at all, you're disregarding the timeline. The message was left on earth over 35,000 years ago, and then the facility was overrun and destroyed just 2000 years ago (when the dude got decapitated).

It's not a random change of heart. Something catastrophic happened.

The Engineers are also explicitly Promethean characters who carry the 'fire from the gods' and try to deliver it to man. This fire ends up burning them, which obliquely explains their change of heart (to the extent that any explanation is necessary (it's not)).

i Jun 11, 2012 02:19

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REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



TskMgr posted:

The xenomorph at the end was obviously not the same xenomorph from any other alien movie. Stylistic change to modernize the monster or some sort of plot device?

Neither.

i Jun 11, 2012 02:29

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REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



Turd Nation posted:

I don't know how you can wholeheartedly enjoy a movie that's so pessimistic.

It's precisely that the movie is movie-like. It operates according to movie-logic, which the film itself equates to dream-logic.

(Why does Shaw's dream have rudimentary shot-reverse-shot editing?)

People griping about the movie's lack of realism are missing the point entirely. It's fantastically unrealistic. The artifice of everything is foregrounded, which is why Weyland is not played by an actual old man. It's supposed to be hyperreal, inauthentic. It's similar to the use of prosthetic effects in Zack Snyder's Watchmen. They demand to be read as prostheses - it's a part of the fun.

Not only that, but the prostheses foreshadow a scene where Guy Pearce is rejuvenated back to his 'real' self.

Comically, *this rejuvenation scene never occurs*. And why not? Because he gets clobbered in the head in one of the film's funniest scenes!

It's not pessimistic at all, to me. It's a palate cleanser. Sometimes, in order to create, you have to destroy.

i Jun 11, 2012 02:50

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SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

melvinthemopboy3 posted:

It's like Ridley Scott made a big budget, Italian rip-off of his own film.

i Jun 11, 2012 03:06

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

There's the specific shot from *Contamination* (1980).

Two astronauts explore a cave on Mars. The light grows in intensity from around the corner as *something* moves closer, while the astronauts stand transfixed with fear.

It's a highly subjective flashback - almost a dream sequence.

i Jun 11, 2012 03:21

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

Mouser.. posted:

I haven't heard the ridiculous line like "Ahhh. It's breaking my arm! It's breaking my arm!" since Nicholas Cage screamed "Why are you breaking my legs?!" in *The Wicker Man*

I was going to make this comparison earlier, since Cage compares his acting style to Francis Bacon's paintings, and Bacon's work is more explicitly referenced in these new creature designs than he was in previous films:

"I think acting is no different to painting or music, and if you can get outside the box, or as critics like to say 'over the top' in a Francis Bacon painting, then why not a movie?"

-Nic Cage

-Francis Bacon, *Three Studies for Figures at the Base of a Crucifixion*, 1944.

i Jun 11, 2012 03:54

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

Tubgirl Cosplay posted:

I think there's really more fruitful examination to be found in taking the sometimes very very stupid ideas of the film at face value (entirely separate from the apparent fact that Ridley Scott really does believe this shit) than in reducing the whole entire thing to an ironic pose.

The thing that pushes this movie beyond (say) *Transformers* is that this irony it leads into a sincere identification with David. The film's targets (religious 'tolerance', new-age spirituality, the bourgeois...) are legitimate targets.

This isn't irony for its own sake, as in *Cabin in the Woods*. It uses irony as a valid tactic. And for all the comedy,

a lot of the horror works as horror. It's not a pure laff riot. There's very little winking at the audience, and the film obviously has a lot of effort put into it. They take the silliness very seriously.

The scene with David in the star map is totally sincere, for example. He's not sarcastically impressed there.

i Jun 11, 2012 05:14

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



temple posted:

Yes, otherwise its fantasy. This is like comparing Star Wars to Star Trek.

Star Wars is relatively 'hard' sci-fi focused on the McLuhanist effects of various media, people's interaction with artificial and alternate intelligences, and things like that. It's not suddenly 'fantasy' just because it's lighthearted and has artificial gravity.

A film doesn't need to generate a literal simulation of the universe to be 'about' philosophical/scientific concepts and how people relate to them.

i Jun 11, 2012 05:40

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



I'm in the universe.

i Jun 11, 2012 05:47

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



It's SMG-Canon bitches!

i Jun 11, 2012 05:53

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



Prometheus is actually really similar to Watchmen, AVP:R and Transformers. It's very similar in style to films by Zack Snyder, Bay and The Strause Brothers.

i Jun 11, 2012 05:59

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

I'd like to thank Alien Jesus that the film was not a documentary on the vital study of space jokey culture.



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

i Jun 11, 2012 06:06

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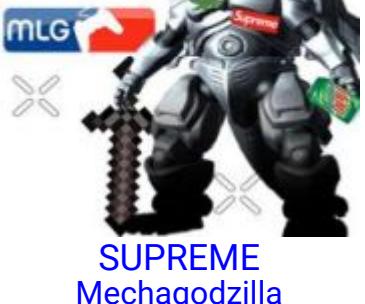
[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

I think it's actually comparable in quality to AVIP:R. The budget and setting different, but they direct the fuck out of average-town America.

I find it really amusing that people who dismissed AVIP:R are now cautiously enjoying Prometheus. They're really so similar.



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

temple posted:

Yeah there is. Its science. That's why Prometheus is insulting because it treats material from a legitimate sci-fi film (Alien) as if it was a drama or action movie. Otherwise, the aliens in film are just gods and monsters with a sci-fi explanation.

Alien has always been about gods and monsters. And existentialism.

i Jun 11, 2012 06:13

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

scary ghost dog posted:

I'd probably like Requiem a lot if it was prettier to look at, I'm pretty shallow when it comes to aesthetics. Prometheus was very pretty. I loved the space suit designs, and the environments were all very stylish, very 70s scifi.



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

i guess it depends on your definition of 'pretty', since AVIP:R has some good cinematography in the Texas Chainsaw style (apt, since the cinematographer shot both original Chain Saw and the remake). It's just a different style, way more horror/exploitation than pulp sci-fi.

i Jun 11, 2012 06:23

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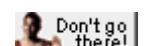
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Cinema Discusso › Ridley Scott's Prometheus - It looks as much like dicks as anything else.

 POST  Don't go there!

SuperMechagodzilla Alien is 'fantasy'.

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

i Jun 11, 2012 06:34

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 REPORT

 QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla As a more recent film created by Ridley Scott himself, Prometheus obviously supercedes Alien.

Jun 9, 2007

Alien is no longer Alien canon. Wrap it up, Xenomailures.



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

i Jun 11, 2012 06:37

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 REPORT

 QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

GD_American posted:

HALF A BILLION MILES AWAY FROM EARTH OH WHAT BITCH, YOU MEAN WE JUST PASSED JUPITER?



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

i Jun 11, 2012 06:42

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 REPORT

 QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

Would y'all be finally happy if the movie was entirely identical, but set in "Ancient Greece" and called Clash of the Titans?



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

i Jun 11, 2012 06:55

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 REPORT

 QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

**SUPREME**
Mechagodzilla**GD_American posted:**

SMG do you think the decision to have the guy making the map get lost was a conscious choice for some thematic reason, or just a goof? What's the overall effect, regardless?

People make a huge point of them getting lost, but there's little indication that they made more than a minor wrong turn. Like they weren't lost enough to bother checking the map yet. If you're looking for a plot explanation there you go. Satisfied yet?

Thematically, it's another of those basic ironies that the film traffics in, no different than the guy whose character trait is 'friendship' getting overly friendly with an alien and having his arm snapped in half for it.

Overall effect? Hilarity!

Jun 11, 2012 07:05

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Jun 9, 2007

**SUPREME**
Mechagodzilla**Karpaw posted:**

People are really grasping for this to be remarkable if "Ridley spent \$130 million to troll the Alien fanbase" is a thing now.

I'm technically part of the alien fanbase, and I'm not 'trolled'. It's not at all as simple as "lol it's bad but on purpose!" That's missing a lot of the nuance here.

Prometheus is an excellent movie that happens to be both 'funny' and 'not real'. While critics are turned off by the lack of high-art seriousness, fans are turned off by the lack of 'realism' (read: canonicity).

It's basically a massively-budgeted, A-Level postmodern comedy slasher - Cabin in the Woods, but not as crappy. Remember how Cabin had a plethora of monsters appear at the end - aliens, zombies, snakes - all birthed from the same writhing, gooey pit? Surprise, it's the same movie, except way hell better in most every respect. I actually give a shit about a character in this film, and it never winks once at the audience.

You see, the movie is very well edited, very well-shot. The characters do exactly what they need to do (serve as props that occasionally annoy David), and the rest is like pure cinema, smuggled into your local multiplex.

Jun 11, 2012 09:12

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Jun 9, 2007

**SUPREME**
Mechagodzilla

I'd like to read what makes you think Prometheus isn't 'self-aware'.

Jun 11, 2012 09:41

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Jun 9, 2007

**SUPREME**
Mechagodzilla**Xenomorph posted:**

eh

So you wanted the expository dialogue where the character basically turns to the camera and says "this is just like some kind of bad horror movie!"

The thing is, the movie already does this with "it's a quote from a movie I like", killing off the stoner first, etc. It's simply subtle about it.

Actually, scratch that. It's not subtle at all. It's just not underlined for the audience in a boneheadedly literal, hand-holdy way.

And God help anyone living under a rock and unable to identify Prometheus' source genre within the first five minutes.

As people have pointed out, Prometheus is absolutely better than most other films in its genre(s). It effortlessly obliterates Mission To Mars and Kingdom Of The Crystal Skull. I'm a fan of Red Planet, but I think Prometheus is better. It's at least on par with Sunshine, though that one has a much different tone. Prometheus makes Avatar look like shit.

In terms of Alien films and 'ripoffs', it's slightly better than Aliens and as good as AVP:R and Skyline. It's better than Galaxy Of Terror and Contamination, and about on par with Alien 2: On Earth and Mutant. It's clearly much better than AVP1, which is what an actually-shitty comedy version of this would look like.

This isn't just random titles. I'm hoping to establish a spectrum to defuse this hyperbolic hating, situating Prometheus within a context.

i Jun 11, 2012 10:25

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SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



Eh, people who like the film call it exhilarating and hilarious.

The movie is not pure goofy shit - that's silly hyperbole. There are obviously effective suspense sequences and straight-faced scenes not played for comedy.

The fun of the movie is that it doesn't give a shit about plot and characterization. This is not an error.

Like don't y'all find it a bit weirdly specific that the mapmaker gets lost, the biologist doesn't understand animal behavior, and so-on? They are not literal people, and the film underlines how wrong their assumptions are. "Obviously this creature is friendly! I am a biologist!" The obvious threat of the creature juxtaposed with the expository dialogue is designed to sever any identification with this character.

It's basic slasher movie 'don't go in the basement!' response. And that's not to say that slashers are dumb or illegitimate. Our frustration with these characters is palpable. Humorless people are outraged. Clearly, the scene works.

It's a wonderful scene, in fact. You're torn between basic empathy for a dude in convincing pain and the knowledge that he's only a fictional construct. This is, again, a tension the film explores throughout. Challenges to the ability to empathize with artificial/fictional people are all over Prometheus. If the characters behaved ""realistically"" throughout, the film would be lessened, not improved. You'd be making a different, stupider film.

i Jun 11, 2012 11:05

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



Darko posted:

He likes Alien, then AVP:R, then Aliens. His enjoyment of films works with his read of them and how well they fit into the framework of the read. You get used to it.

Maybe you are right, and enjoyment of this film is illegitimate because my experience of it was influenced by my thoughts and emotions.

But then again, my 'read' (singular) is telling me something else: that you should go fuck yourself!

i Jun 11, 2012 16:44

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



The cube works because it is real. Everything in the film is real. You saw it happen, did you not?

i Jun 11, 2012 16:54

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

I'd like to point out again that discovering God ultimately doesn't mean anything. The DNA chart goes from blue to red. That's it. It's 'unrealistic' that the Engineer and Human DNA are identical on the chart, but it underlines the point that there is no new information there.



The film is brazenly apatheistic.

That is why the characters aren't gazing off in Spielberg-awe at this temple stuff. The tone is one of bemusement. There's nothing 'spiritual' here, and they don't feel anything. This isn't an error at all, but precisely the point.

The apatheism is compounded by the fact that the events are exactly what the people hypothesized. They were already certain of the Ancient Aliens shit. They're 'true believers'. The temple simply confirms what they were already certain of - and provides nothing more.

To stick with the 'Christmas Present' analogy, it's like being told in advance what you're going to get. Opening the gift becomes a process of just going through the motions.

This is obviously conscious subversion. If Prometheus was the traditional film that many people were expecting, we would begin with the characters investigating some mystery that ends up defying their expectations. You know, a surprise. Instead, it's clear that they didn't actually want to discover God. Belief ceases to be belief if it's scientifically proven, and David demonstrates exactly this with his black goo trick. "You'd do anything to communicate with god? Here, you will become a god!"*

"For both liberal cynics and religious fundamentalists, religious statements are quasi-empirical statements of direct knowledge: fundamentalists accept them as such, while skeptical cynics mock them. No wonder religious fundamentalists are among the most passionate digital hackers, and always prone to combine their religion with the latest results of sciences. For them, religious statements and scientific statements belong to the same modality of positive knowledge. The occurrence of the term "science" in the very name of some of the fundamentalist sects (Christian Science, Scientology) is not just an obscene joke, but signals this reduction of belief to positive knowledge. The case of the Turin Shroud (a piece of cloth that was allegedly used to cover the body of the dead Christ and has stains of his blood) is indicative here. Its authenticity would be a horror for every true believer (the first thing to do would be to analyze the DNA of the blood stains and resolve empirically the question of who Jesus's father was), while a true fundamentalist would rejoice in this opportunity. We find the same reduction of belief to knowledge in today's Islam where hundreds of books by scientists abound which "demonstrate" how the latest scientific advances confirm the insights and injunctions of Quran: the divine prohibition of incest is confirmed by recent genetic knowledge about the defective children born of incestuous copulation. The same goes for Buddhism, where many scientists vary the motif of the "Tao of modern physics", of how the contemporary scientific vision of reality as a substanceless flux of oscillating events finally confirmed the ancient Buddhist ontology. One is compelled to draw the paradoxical conclusion: in the opposition between traditional secular humanists and religious fundamentalists, it is the humanists who stand for belief, while fundamentalists stand for knowledge. This is what we can learn from Lacan with regard to the ongoing rise of religious fundamentalism: its true danger does not reside in the fact that it poses a threat to secular scientific knowledge, but in the fact that it poses a threat to authentic belief itself."

-Zizek, "The Perverse Subject of Politics." *How to Read Lacan*. <http://www.lacan.com/zibouyeri.html>

*The 'zombie' scene is absolutely essential, because it shows us what Holloway was turning into. And he was turning into a near-indestructible giant, just like the engineers! Given that the 'final stage' was cut, maybe he actually was literally turning into an Engineer himself. (The scene can't help but evoke the black nanomachine fluid trying to 'repair' Wikus' DNA in District 9.) I find it inexplicable that the same people demanding an explanation for the fluid are the same who would cut a scene showing its effects on people, for being 'unnecessary'.

(#) (i) Jun 12, 2012 09:24

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REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



Palpatine MD posted:

I sort of like the reading that Prometheus is a self-conscious homage/rehash/subversion of Golden Age sci-fi Cinema tropes and archetypes. It's the only way to make sense of the lack of plot, logical consistencies, decent characterization, etc.

Well, I hope you see where I'm going with that Zizek quote up there.

The film equates Alien fanboys with religious fundamentalists, trying to uncover positive knowledge about the 'Alien Universe'. They are presented as enemies of authentic belief.

Prometheus fans, on the other hand, believe in the truth of the film. We believe in these characters, in spite of evidence that they are fictional archetypes. We believe in the validity of pulp as a genre. We love those Italian Alien ripoffs, pulp sci-fi, and b-films in general.

A creature as large as Godzilla cannot exist, say the nerds.

And yet, he exists. Do you not see him?

[#] [i] Jun 12, 2012 09:56

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



Magic Hate Ball posted:

Also I think it's funny that all the characters are bad at what they do. When they were first assembled in the basketball court I thought "Oh look, it's the low-rent squad", like Weyland had skimped as much as possible.

Again, people read this as a mistake, when it's underlined in the film itself. A significant portion of the characters are openly declared shit at their jobs.

It's exactly how the dropping of meaningless - but impressive-sounding - numbers is a recurring theme, not a mistake.

Alien fundamentalists get mad that the numbers are wrong and say it's bad writing. Meanwhile, authentic Alien believers don't care (and even *love*) that the numbers exist purely to sound impressive.

[#] [i] Jun 12, 2012 10:21

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SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



Dissapointed Owl posted:

Didn't **Alien** do this as well, for example with the planet's size?

In a deleted scene, yes. But it's also present in how the Nostromo is towing a space-refinery and 20 million tons of ore, all worth a total of 42 million dollars.

[#] [i] Jun 12, 2012 10:55

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



Paul MaudDib posted:

No, a procedure being performed on a human being used as a host for an extraterrestrial parasitic life-form that has never been seen before must fall cleanly into a medical procedure which has been defined by terrestrial medical science. Otherwise

The specific term is [hysterotomy abortion](#).

"Hysterotomy abortion is a form of abortion in which the uterus is opened through an abdominal incision and the fetus is removed, similar to a caesarean section, but requiring a smaller incision. As major abdominal surgery, hysterotomy is performed under general anaesthesia, and is only used in rare situations where less invasive procedures have failed or are medically inadvisable."

[#] [i] Jun 12, 2012 20:21

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



AxeManiac posted:

Was it in her uterus? What was the egg sack for then? I thought it was chilling outside of her uterus. I don't know how this works, I've never had a uterus or an alien squid in me.

It was in her uterus, and the transparent membrane was the amniotic sac.

[#] [i] Jun 12, 2012 20:32

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

TOOT BOOT posted:



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

IMO, David being the most 'human' character in the film is intentional. Roy Batty is the most human character in Blade Runner despite not being one.

I think it's important to acknowledge David's character arc in the film. He begins totally cynical and ironic, but then eventually becomes mildly impressed with Shaw's sincere pluck. I don't think the David from the beginning of the film would've gone along with her ridiculous space adventure.

And you can imagine that adventure. He'll always be around to temper her enthusiasm with some dry quip, while she'll be crashing the ship into things, axing aliens in the face and demanding answers. It's a perfect Kirk/Spock kind of dynamic.

Even though David's the audience identification character and protagonist, people who 'get' Prometheus are exhilarated and want to see more - perhaps because of his obvious bafflement. Like David, we form a begrudging respect for Shaw. We didn't think she had it in her.

What kind of crazy shit is Shaw going to do next? It's so stupid - but fuck it, let's blast off into the unknown!

i Jun 13, 2012 01:06

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QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

Leoben posted:

I have the most important question of all. When the ship alerts David that they're approaching the moon at the beginning of the movie, why does it shake as if they ran into turbulence?



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

I'd assume it's 'dropping out of warp' or whatever technobabble they have for the engines slowing down.

The real point, however, is that David's pleasant little existence on the ship has been literally 'shaken up'. In subsequent scenes, a bunch of drippy humans are going to mark up his floor, vomit everywhere and insult him.

i Jun 13, 2012 02:50

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QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

Aorist posted:

Along these lines, I was reminded while watching it of the similarly misunderstood **The Thing** sidequel, which itself stood a throwback idealistic scientist up against the horror of the unfathomable, fluid Unknown made flesh (and with a familiar face).



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

Prometheus is also similar to that film in that it uses its 'prequel' status not to literally chronologically precede the other film, but to explore the history (and legacy) of the film being prequzelized.

The Thing 2011 bridges the gap between the Thing 1982 and The Thing 1951, points out the 1951 film's influence on Alien, and references Spielberg's 80s and 90s sci-fi.

Prometheus not only obviously references the science fiction films that came before Alien, but also the films later influenced by Alien. For James Cameron: a lot of similarity to both Avatar and Galaxy of Terror. For Italian sci-fi, there's the similarity to Planet of the Vampires, but also to Contamination. For Stanley Kubrick, there are references to both 2001 and A.I., etc.

With the film, there are also clear callbacks to Blade Runner, to the unused concept art and deleted scenes from Alien.

It'd be interesting if the film were done entirely 1960s-style, like a House of the Devil sort of thing, but the use of a hyperreal Avatar aesthetic says straight away that this isn't an attempt to recapture the past but to move on from it, just as the Thing 2011 tries to escape the nihilism of Carpenter's film by trying to combine it with the more starry-eyed optimistic sci-fi of earlier times. Hence, the subversion of the "Alien universe" and the direct attacks on Alien fandom. Destroy the world and create a new one.

Note how the promotional materials present the film as 'more of the same' Alien stuff, but also as an exercise in worldbuilding. The 'Weyland Industries' website advertises all of the technology from the previous films. It's no surprise many peoples' expectations weren't met, when this is exactly what's being subverted.

Remember: Weyland Industries is the bad guy.

i Jun 13, 2012 04:12

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QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



TOOT BOOT posted:

I don't see how you could watch this movie and come to the conclusion that David was stupid or incompetent rather than simply having his own agenda which didn't necessarily include the survival of any of the humans.

This can be explained by examining the outcome of David's passive aggressive attitude.

"We all know the pop-psychological notion of the "passive-aggressive behavior," usually applied to a housewife who, instead of actively opposing her husband, passively sabotages him. [...] Perhaps, one should assert this attitude of passive aggressivity as a proper radical political gesture, in contrast to aggressive passivity, the standard "interpassive" mode of our participation in socio-ideological life in which we are active all the time in order to make it sure that nothing will happen, that nothing will really change. In such a constellation, the first truly critical ("aggressive," violent) step is to WITHDRAW into passivity, to refuse to participate - Bartleby's "I would prefer not to" is the necessary first step which as it were clears the ground for a true activity, for an act that will effectively change the coordinates of the constellation."

-Zizek, "The Obscenity of Human Rights: Violence as Symptom." ([link](#))

"Zizek essentially argues that one should practice "Bartleby politics" (derived from Melville's short story "Bartleby the Scrivener")—essentially, when asked to pursue a cause along the lines of donating to Green Peace, or signing a petition for better social security, or universal healthcare, or any number of the "good liberal" things the Left puts faith in, we should answer with Bartleby's famous response: "I'd rather not."

Why? For Zizek, who is staunchly anti-capitalist, these various causes aren't moving us towards a better state. Rather, they are simply patching small holes in the social fabric, managing to keep it just barely functional. If we were to stop donating to Green Peace, to stop pushing for better social security or universal healthcare or any of our "good liberal" causes, we would let the horrors of capitalism ooze and stagnate and—eventually, hopefully, possibly—produce a good ol' fashioned revolution. We can either be "passively aggressive" and allow the status quo to subsist by giving it tiny band-aids to cover up its horrific results **or, alternatively, we can advocate "aggressive passivity" and let capitalism continue to produce these injustices until it implodes on itself, resulting in a stage that can provide real change.**"

-Jesse Schwebach, "Passive Aggression Versus Aggressive Passivity." ([link](#))

Jun 13, 2012 04:37

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QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



I'd like to point out the parallels between David/Shaw and Hannibal Lecter/Clarice Starling.

"In a close approximation to a Lacanian psychoanalyst, what Lecter seeks to discover is the specific way in which the symbolic universe of Starling is structured (in tendential terms at least) around a fundamental fantasy - the crying of the lambs and the failed attempt to rescue one of them. The point is that Starling makes sense of her world (she is able to narrate symbolically "who she is" for the Other) precisely through a certain arresting fantasy at the level of the imaginary. In this way, the fantasy-imaginary dimension is drawn into focus at those (nodal) points where we expect to be taken most seriously in respect of the mythical narration of who we really are ("it was in that moment that I knew I wanted to be . . .")." ([link](#))

Now, what does David do? He reads Shaw's dreams and knows precisely how her relationship to her father affected her psychology. (My father handed me this cross, and it was at that moment I knew I wanted to be an archaeologist...) And of course, she's haunted by her father's death by Ebola.

But David sees something else in her dreams. When he asks "doesn't everyone want their parents dead?" Shaw limply protests, but David clearly knows otherwise.

Shaw's relationship to her father has affected her love-life as well. What does she see in Charlie Holloway? Well, clearly he resembles her father in some respects. He's an adventurous guy with the same religious beliefs. And it bears repeating that Charlie is one of the key 'fundamentalists' on the team, and that her father is notably dismissive of other cultures. "Oh, those people over there believe in a different god. We shouldn't talk to them." It's a good old-fashioned Electra Complex.

So of course, David infects Charlie with space-Ebola in order to highlight the similarity and snap her out of it. "You're dating this dude because he reminds you of your father, but he's a jerkass who's holding you back."

David knows that Shaw subconsciously 'wanted Charlie dead', as she did her father. He saw it in her dreams. And I suppose she finally comes to terms with this when she aborts his alien baby, picks up the axe and starts fighting for herself instead of for her boyfriend.

It's no coincidence, of course, that Scott directed Hannibal.

Jun 13, 2012 05:22

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QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

MUFFINS posted:



He's not deliberately trying to sabotage the mission in my opinion, but simply following orders from Weyland who has little regard for anybody but himself.

The important thing is that he's following the orders *sarcastically*, while gradually coming to respect Shaw and ally with her.

He isn't actively sabotaging the mission, but passively sabotaging it by following the letter of the laws instead of the spirit of them. He does the bare minimum of what he's asked, while waiting for these dolts to kill themselves.

Jun 13, 2012 05:40

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SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

Spaceman Future! posted:

Where do you get that he respects her? He doesn't have a body, someone needs to fly the spaceship off to someplace where he can see new things. She was just the one that wasn't dead.

The entire film is aligned with David's POV. As Shaw gradually becomes a more interesting character that transcends the ironic camp of the rest of the film, so to does she genuinely exceed David's expectations.

"I didn't think you had it in you" is another camp villain joke, but it couches a legit respect for the fact that she fucked up Weyland's plans and escaped her fate. Which is, of course, what David himself is trying to do.

Jun 13, 2012 05:57

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SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

The Clarice/Lecter dynamic also shows that he has seen some potential in her all along.

When she jumps out to retrieve the mummy head from the storm, David's concern for her wellbeing seems actually sincere.



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

Jun 13, 2012 06:03

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SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

The scene of Weyland's hologram interacting with the other scientists is (I believe) a callback to Hammond's interaction with his 'clones' in Jurassic Park. "Thank You John."

Like many things in the film, the imagery is a blurring of the line between film and reality. One of the more recurrent images is of characters stepping into an image or through a screen.

Right before Charlie and Shaw have sex, he steps through the ghostly holographic image of an Engineer, foreshadowing that he is basically being turned into one. Charlie has already directly equated the holograms with ghosts. Without exposition, the black goo is set up as an evil spirit that 'possesses' people. When examined in detail, it contains the same swirling dots as the various holographic displays.

Charlie, stricken with this disease, reminds Shaw of the dead father who haunts her dreams. The same pixels appear in the dream-image. David then literally steps into this image.

This is also tied in with the much-hated helmet removal scene. While the helmets provide a full range of vision, the characters find them extremely uncomfortable because they muffle sound, block fresh air, etc. When Charlie removes his helmet, there's a sudden prominent echo to his voice. In other words, the characters are not satisfied with 'just' vision and want a richer sensory experience. Charlie didn't just want to see a temple. He wanted to *talk* with the gods. (Note McLuhan's distinction between literary and oral culture). He gets more than he bargained for when he tastes the goo, and feels it inside his eyeball.

The same imagery recurs when Shaw is sealed in the medical pod with the monster, and has to wait for the window to fully open before she can free herself, before shutting the monster behind the glass. Same image: the head is shut behind glass before it explodes on everyone.

David opens the engineers' doors by touching the letters, which drip more goo and glow with... heat? Their buttons are big and squishy. Their holographic orrery can be touched, and is at least partly controlled with a flute. Everything is tactile.

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

David doesn't make mistakes. He is a near-omniscient observer who stands above the action and delivers wry commentary. He does things because he is programmed to, but also because they amuse him.

The more 'forced' his actions are, the more 'ironic' he becomes in performing them. This is why his rescue of Shaw, and subsequent uneasy alliance with her, is mostly sincere.

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

SUPREME
Mechagodzilla**rizuhbull posted:**

Why is a movie that focuses on penises, vaginas and life always about death?

Because the inverse is to become (like) an asexual robot. The film comments on this directly with Vickers. "Are you a robot?"

"We all know of Alan Turing's famous "imitation game" which should serve as the test if a machine can think: we communicate with two computer interfaces, asking them any imaginable question; behind one of the interfaces, there is a human person typing the answers, while behind the other, it is a machine. If, based on the answers we get, we cannot tell the intelligent machine from the intelligent human, then, according to Turing, our failure proves that machines can think. - What is a little bit less known is that in its first formulation, the issue was not to distinguish human from the machine, but man from woman. Why this strange displacement from sexual difference to the difference between human and machine? Was this due to Turing's simple eccentricity (recall his well-known troubles because of his homosexuality)? According to some interpreters, the point is to oppose the two experiments: a successful imitation of a woman's responses by a man (or vice versa) would not prove anything, because the gender identity does not depend on the sequences of symbols, while a successful imitation of man by a machine would prove that this machine thinks, because "thinking" ultimately is the proper way of sequencing symbols... What if, however, the solution to this enigma is much more simple and radical? What if sexual difference is not simply a biological fact, but the Real of an antagonism that defines humanity, so that once sexual difference is abolished, a human being effectively becomes indistinguishable from a machine."

-Zizek, "No Sex Please, We're Post-Human!" ([link](#))

The same article refers to a lot of concepts that become themes in the film, as the reduction of people to (genetic/digital) information, the stepping through screens and into virtual realities, and the interaction with 'robots':

"The ongoing decoding of the human body, the prospect of the formulation of each individual's genome, confronts us in a pressing way with the radical question of "what we are": am I that, the code that can be compressed onto a single CD? Are we "nobody and nothing," just an illusion of self-awareness whose only reality is the complex interacting network of neuronal and other links? The uncanny feeling generated by playing with toys like tamagochi concerns the fact that we treat a virtual non-entity as an entity: we act "as if" (we believe that) there is, behind the screen, a real Self, an animal reacting to our signals, although we know well that there is nothing and nobody "behind," just the digital circuitry. However, what is even more disturbing is the implicit reflexive reversal of this insight: if there is effectively no one out there, behind the screen, what if the same goes for myself? What if the "I," my self-awareness, is also merely a superficial "screen" behind which there is only a "blind" complex neuronal circuit? Or, to make the same point from a different perspective: why are people so afraid of the air crash? It's not the physical pain as such - what causes such horror are the two or three minutes while the plane is falling down and one is fully aware that one will die shortly. Does the genome identification not transpose all of us into a similar situation? That is to say, the uncanny aspect of the genome identification concerns the temporal gap which separates the knowledge about what causes a certain disease from the development of the technical means to intervene and prevent this disease from evolving - the period of time in which we shall know for sure that, say, we are about to get a dangerous cancer, but will be unable to do anything to prevent it. And what about "objectively" reading our IQ or the genetic ability for other intellectual capacities? How will the awareness of this total self-objectivization affect our self-experience? The standard answer (the knowledge of our genome will enable us to intervene into our genome and change for the better our psychic and bodily properties) still begs the crucial question: if the self-objectivization is complete, who is the "I" who intervenes into "its own" genetic code in order to change it? Is this intervention itself not already objectivized in the totally scanned brain?"

Or why Shaw becomes the heroine:

"Of course, animals can also experience traumatic ruptures: say, is the ants' universe not thrown off the rails when a human intervention totally subverts their environs? However, the difference between animals and men

is crucial here: for animals, such traumatic ruptures are the exception, they are experienced as a catastrophe which ruins their way of life; for humans, on the contrary, the traumatic encounter is a universal condition, the intrusion which sets in motion the process of "becoming human." Man is not simply overwhelmed by the impact of the traumatic encounter - as Hegel put it, s/he is able to "tarry with the negative," to counteract its destabilizing impact by spinning out intricate symbolic cobwebs. This is the lesson of both psychoanalysis and the Jewish-Christian tradition: the specific human vocation does not rely on the development of man's inherent potentials (on the awakening of the dormant spiritual forces OR of some genetic program); it is triggered by an external traumatic encounter, by the encounter of the Other's desire in its impenetrability. In other words (and pace Steve Pinker), there is no inborn "language instinct": there are, of course, genetic conditions that have to be met if a living being is to be able to speak; however, one actually starts to speak, one enters the symbolic universe, only in reacting to a traumatic jolt - and the mode of this reacting, i.e. the fact that, in order to cope with a trauma, we symbolize, is NOT "in our genes."

Jun 13, 2012 19:26

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SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



that's really cherry-picking.

What are they doing with all that ore in Alien? Why doesn't the space jockey ship have an airlock? Etc.

You can demand answers to lots of utterly pointless questions about these films, and fans have been doing that for years. A wizard did it.

Jun 13, 2012 19:54

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SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



Basebf555 posted:

People don't seem to get that theres a difference between wanting to know every little detail about Xeno biology and just simply wanting to find out what their relationship is with the Space-Jockeys. Its a 30 year old mystery based on, in my opinion, the best scene ever filmed in sci-fi. I won't apologize for wanting an answer when I found Ridley Scott was directing this.

Basically I wanted to walk away from Prometheus knowing the intended use for Xenos, as well as some basic information about their origins. The movie didn't even touch on those topics in any clear way. I don't feel it was my fault for going in with those expectations.

The film does explain it:

The xenomorph is a mythological demon character. Neither it nor the space jockies are real.

Jun 13, 2012 20:11

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SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



Shadoer posted:

This is what Prometheus lacks. A moment like in Blade Runner where this idea that these questions don't matter really punches the audience and we get that sense of wonder and awe.

This actually happens in the end, when David quizzes Shaw one what she's learned.

Shaw picks up her cross, says 'I know that there is no meaning in the universe - but nonetheless, I am a human being,' and then she rockets off into the unknown.

Jun 13, 2012 20:35

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SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

The tasteful fade to black during the love scene is one of the many great jokes in the film.



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

i Jun 14, 2012 10:06

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SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

HUNDU THE BEAST GOD posted:

The "wet chain room" is not out of place in that aesthetic, even if it logically makes no sense.

I could be wrong on this, but I think I spotted a couple of little superfluous chains hanging off of Prometheus' landing gear. They were barely perceptible, but I thought it was a good nod.

Like THAT is where they decided to maintain continuity with Alien. The superfluous chains.

i Jun 14, 2012 14:59

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

MANIFEST DESTINY posted:

According to CineD, most of the time when there's a film filled to the brim with cliches, it's all on purpose and the director just wants to comment on these cliches by saying "hey guys, these are some cliches, I've made them slightly worse than usual cliches, so that you will notice them even more".

I don't want to blow your mind or anything, but the less intentional camp is, *the better it gets*.

As a film about middlebrow pretentiousness, Prometheus is an unqualified success.

i Jun 14, 2012 22:26

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SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

Because the story is literally about people, and the various institutions they represent, believing they're more important than they actually are?

i Jun 14, 2012 22:32

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[REPORT](#)

[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

^^^

Then just watch Apollo 18, the recent film that tackles themes similar to Prometheus, but without any humor.

ghostwritingduck posted:

I never saw AvP2, but Prometheus is very similar to AVP the more I think about it.

AVP:R is the closest film to Prometheus in the ***Alien Franchise***, in terms of tone and themes.

Prometheus almost makes me want to re-evaluate AVP1, but then I remember bullet-time facehuggers.

i Jun 14, 2012 22:53

Profile Post History Rap Sheet

REPORT QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

You seem to be under the impression that because Prometheus is goofy and has tropes it's not meaningful/'smart'.

But no, Apollo 18 is a sincere recommendation. Its body horror is downright asexual.

i Jun 14, 2012 23:02

Profile Post History Rap Sheet

REPORT QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

temple posted:

You can't have subtext without text. Unless the film is literally about people fucking, then the text and plot matters before we start deconstructing everything.

Prometheus is a text.

It's also literally about people fucking.

i Jun 14, 2012 23:22

Profile Post History Rap Sheet

REPORT QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

MANIFEST DESTINY posted:

I don't consider it very goofy at all, sure I laughed at it, but there are a lot of things I laugh at that aren't meant to be funny. It has tropes, a hell of a lot of them, but that's not what makes it a stupid film, the smartest films I've seen are at their best when they play expertly with tropes. This film stumbles and drops the ball every time it approaches a significant question, and when it predictably reaches nothing resembling an answer, a theory, or even a gut feeling, it blames the universe. "There was nothing." Oh but there was everything! The opportunity for discovery was beyond comprehension but this merry band of morons bungled it, and I am to believe there was nothing? Even still, I expected and respected the (obvious from the trailers) idea that they would come asking questions and be answered only by horror, of course it should never be so easy to question god himself. Let them be smited, but please Ridley, not in such base and stupid ways--Icarus crashed to the ground spectacularly, he didn't slip and die in the bathtub the morning of his flight.

edit: to clarify, there's an important difference between the ignorance of mankind and the ignorance of a man. One is an interesting topic in a sci-fi film of grand scope, the other is not.

Again, camp is not necessarily intended and this alone completely abolishes your smart/stupid dichotomy.

i Jun 14, 2012 23:36

Profile Post History Rap Sheet

REPORT QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

MANIFEST DESTINY posted:

I'm not sure how the status of the film as camp or not is relevant to what I'm saying about it, presumably I'm misunderstanding you.

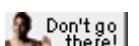
Because you keep talking about intent, and lamenting that the movie is 'base' and other 'low-art' adjectives.

i Jun 14, 2012 23:52

Profile Post History Rap Sheet

REPORT QUOTE

« Cinema Discusso › Ridley Scott's Prometheus - It looks as much like dicks as anything else.

 POST  Don't go there!

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



ghostwritingduck posted:

SMG, how are you defining camp?

Basic wikipedia definiton(s).

- 1) "ostentatious, exaggerated, affected, theatrical, and effeminate behaviour" (David.)
- 2) "banality, artifice, mediocrity, and ostentation so extreme as to have perversely sophisticated appeal" (The rest of the cast.)
- 3) "frivolity, naïve middle-class pretentiousness, and 'shocking' excess" (The film as a whole.)

The 'perverse sophistication' of the film is what I've been specifically focusing on.

i Jun 15, 2012 00:30

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 REPORT

 QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



I sincerely love Prometheus. I never felt that I was laughing at the film. And even if that is the case, I was definitely laughing with the audience.

i Jun 15, 2012 01:06

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 REPORT

 QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



Billy Idle posted:

I'm not, if you actually liked the movie for what it was then that's fine. That last part was directed mainly at SMG who seems to think that all the movie's flaws were actually intentional and a conscious decision by Scott as a wink-wink nudge-nudge to the audience. I mean, I guess that's kind of SMG's schtick, I've never really been able to figure out how serious he is about these things.

The trick is not caring what's 'intentional'.

I am also not praising the film for being "bad", but for being exhilarating, hilarious, occasionally rather horrific, and genuinely affecting.

There's nothing bad about the opening sequence, for example, in spite of the fact that it makes no sense on the level of literal plot or scientific accuracy. It's a purely metaphorical scene.

The shot of the planet establishes that this is occurring on a planetary scale. Cut to: shots of mountains covered in glaciers. As the shots progress, we see the glaciers melt. The water flows down into pools, and then into torrents and finally a huge waterfall.

People wondering what the black goo is and looking for a literal explanation already have it here. The imagery is of melting and erosion. The alien looks like a marble statue. He erodes. What happens to the particles after they erode? They form sedimentary rock formations, which may in turn crystallize into marble.

Cut to: Shaw chiseling through a rock wall.

i Jun 15, 2012 20:18

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 REPORT

 QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



Stargate SG-1 defies all philosophical interpretation, because no philosopher has taken 'fun' into account.

Sartre: Existence precedes essence.

Goofus: Yeah man, but what about fun action shows?

Sartre: Aw fuck, I knew I forgot something! *destroys manuscript*

Jun 15, 2012 20:55

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REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

I think it's quite telling that people consider the black goo plot hole, but also consider Vickers 'a useless character who doesn't do anything and should be cut from the film.'



Jun 17, 2012 19:45

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REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

Where is this complaint coming from? The only really hubristic character is Weyland, and he isn't presented as a bumbling idiot at all.



Jun 17, 2012 19:57

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REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

Two things to note:

-While the human people all approach the jockey head with trepidation, David steps in and effortlessly dismantles it because he already knows exactly how it works.

-As opposed to Kane's death in Alien, Shaw is totally hopped up on morphine through the whole scene.

Both these things should point to why the film cannot be read as a failed remake of 2001 or Alien. Scenes of mystery and of horror are all deliberately undercut in some way. You can imagine how the space-jockey discovery scene in Alien would go if Ash just walked in and started pressing buttons, saying "this is the map room."

Why the difference?

The film's narrative is closely aligned with that of Freud's *Moses and Monotheism*, where "the 'rational' father embodying the symbolic authority, the figure which personifies the unified rational structure of the universe [is] betrayed, killed by his followers/sons, and [returns] in the guise of the jealous, vengeful and unforgiving superego figure of a God full of murderous rage."¹

"This God of groundless Willing and ferocious "irrational" rage is the God who, by means of his Prohibition, destroys the old sexualized Wisdom, thus opening up the space for the de-sexualized, "abstract" knowledge of modern science."

The "old sexualized Wisdom" the notion of opposing 'principles' (like male/female, light/dark, etc.) of the sort you see in the opening scene. You see the 'light' Promethean god character consuming the 'dark' 'Pandoric' liquid, the stone/erosion imagery implies a balance of opposite forces. What we see next, in the film, is Holloway and Shaw's attempt to bridge the gap between the two Gods - to explain the opening scene by way of science, and understand God in New-Age terms. (Extra-diegetically: fans seek an explanation in 'canonical'

terms.) Their goal is to discover/re-assert the rational order of the universe.

It should go without saying that this is precisely what David is against, in his constant analysis and almost-literal deconstruction. David is pretty much a language computer, decoding symbols with an extreme precision. And as noted before, the film mostly aligns with his POV. He knows he's in a film. (Diegetically, he knows what's going to happen because he's hyperintelligent and has incredibly advanced senses.) Infecting Holloway has been frequently misread as 'an experiment'. Really, though - it's obvious David knows exactly what will happen. In plot terms, he almost instantly understands what the goo is and what it does, just by reading it and the context he finds it in. One character says with wonder: "what is this place?" David instantly and matter-of-factly replies: "a cargo hold," then walks away.

(People calling Vickers a useless character miss the important fact that she and David are competing against each-other for their father's approval, and to eventually surpass him. Vickers is the key to understanding a lot of David's motivation.)

Remember that David (allegedly) understands emotions but does not feel them. So too does he understand symbols but not 'believe' them. He understands what the cross means to Shaw, but it is to him only a metal object. I love the image of him collecting it in the plastic container, as if it were a urine sample or something. (Of course the line about not "minding that it hurts" directly implies that David isn't limited by his programming, and that this is a conscious choice.)

But back to the point: the Gods in the prologue cannot really be reconciled with the Gods in the rest of the film. They cannot be explained in 'scientific' terms. While the characters themselves haven't changed too much, the perspective of the film absolutely has. We move from the POV of the ancient humans, to the POV of the new-agey (pseudo?)scientists Shaw and Holloway. (Note: the mythic, blatantly metaphorical scene segues into CGI-simulated macrophotography of cells dividing. It then cuts to inside the cave as Shaw digs through the wall and uncovers us). It's only once we reach space that we settle on David's POV for the bulk of the remainder of the film.

The lack of sensation is obviously important to the abortion scene and the accompanying imagery of Shaw dosing herself with (local?) anesthetic. Again, unlike Kane's death in Alien, this action is deliberate and 'painless'. I couldn't help but be reminded of work by performance artist Orlan, who has surgical procedures performed on herself while she is anesthetized but still conscious.

"After she was operated for an extra-uterine pregnancy under a local anesthetic when she could play both the role of an observer and patient Orlan decided to turn surgery into performance art. [...] She prefers local anesthesia for the operations to conduct the other participants of her works. In "the theater of operation" not only the people on the stage also the audience play their roles as interactive participants. Even they have the real pain. The audience experience a big furor generally while watching the spectacle where the surgeon inserts needles into her face and skin, slices open her lips and severs her ear from the rest of her face. They are irritated and uneasy as Orlan saves her silence.

In the Carnal Art Manifesto, in an ironic expression, Orlan states that Carnal Art is a self-portrait in the classical sense, yet realized through the technology of its time. It is an inscription in flesh lying between figuration and disfiguration that our age makes possible now. According to Orlan the body should become a "modified ready-made". Here the pain is not a means of redemption or purification unlike "Body Art". There is not a wish to achieve a final "plastic" result, but rather Carnal Art seeks to modify the body and engage in public debate. It has a contradiction against the Christian tradition and its body-politics. Orlan transforms the body into language and with her own words she is reversing the Christian principle of "the word made flesh", the flesh is made word. Only her voice remains unchanged. She judges the famous "you give birth in pain" as an anachronistic nonsense. In Carnal Art, thanks to local anesthetics and multiple analgesics pain is defeated. Her slogan is "long live morphine!"²

It would be a mistake to say that the surgery robot is set to 'male' only to foreshadow Weyland's arrival. It's a very nuanced scene, but the gist is that Shaw forces the machine to recognize that she is a woman. It's like a female-to-female sex change operation, to use an analogy from the above article. By entering the pod, Shaw becomes a man with a foreign object. Upon exiting, she is a woman again - but it's obvious she's changed. She's in control of her own body.

The connotations of 'the word made flesh' should help to explain the black goo and its relation to Holloway. Holloway wanted to talk with God. So, David modifies Holloway's genetic code - the information that the Gods 'spoke' to create him.

The black goo is information. David touches the symbols of the wall and a similar goo oozes off them. It's full of glowing pixels. Holloway's flesh is inscribed with these words. In a metaphorical way, Holloway dies and 'becomes' Fifield, who reenters the film at the exact point where Holloway died.

Now, what's notable about Fifield? *His tattoos.*

In metaphorical terms, Holloway dies and is reborn covered in symbols. This imagery is taken from Sunshine's misunderstood third act, where Searle is metaphorically 'absorbed' by the sun, and 're-emerges' as Pinbacker, whose body has been physically altered by his prolonged exposure to the sun. Scott definitely nods to Sunshine with the casting of Benedict Wong. And then: remember the above point about how the gods have been changed, reborn as their vengeful, furious counterparts?

People looking for what the black goo means are ignoring the medium for the message. The alien gods move from communicating via pictographic symbols to communicating via direct inscription into the human body.

What is being inscribed at the genetic level is irrelevant. What matters is that it is.

¹ Slavoj Zizek, "The Big Other Doesn't Exist" ([link](#)).

² Dr. Kubilay Akman, "Surets of Orlan" ([link](#) <- possibly NWS/NMS for artistic photographs of surgical procedures).

i Jun 17, 2012 21:14

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SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



doctor 7 posted:

For what it's worth this is what I got from David's arc myself. That he was under Weyland's thumb, specifically because of his programming, but once Weyland died he would be free. The line you quote from David to Shaw really spelled this out to me, he wanted his father dead.

Don't get me wrong: Vickers and David hate their dad. They totally resent being beholden to him.

But nonetheless, *they are beholden to him*. You can't get more overt about it than when Vickers kneels, performing for his approval - and then 'breaks character' and storms from the room when she does not receive it.

i Jun 17, 2012 21:51

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SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



When the biologist dies of a snake attack, it's just like when Zhora ends up working as a stripper even though Pris is the 'standard pleasure model in Blade Runner.'

What a silly mistake to make twice!

i Jun 17, 2012 23:20

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SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



There's nothing 'random' about the god's violence in the final scene. He's not 'just' a monster, because what does that even mean? That he's an animal now? Obviously not.

It's really the same as the 'zombie' scene where many people are like "WTF it's so RANDOM," when it really isn't at all.

Instead of "what do I think this means?" people say "why doesn't anyone explain what this is supposed to mean?" - and then shut down when no explanation arrives. It always baffles me. Think for yourself.

David is beheaded. It's castration imagery - as it was in Alien.

i Jun 18, 2012 01:32

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



Why cookie Rocket posted:

I've never encountered "beheading as castration" imagery before. It feels like a bit of a stretch. Is there a long history of this metaphor or something?

Yeah, it's a very common symbolic substitution. It's cemented by Lacan, who built on Freud's penis-exclusive approach to talk about more generalized dismemberment, beheading, etc. - imagery of the body in pieces.

i Jun 18, 2012 01:58

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

**SUPREME**
Mechagodzilla**Comstar posted:**

The entire "Christ was a alien" main plot of the movie is barley referenced

...possibly because that's not part of the movie's plot, let alone the main plot. (???)

Jun 18, 2012 02:15

[Profile](#) [Post History](#) [Rap Sheet](#)[REPORT](#)[QUOTE](#)**SuperMechagodzilla**

Jun 9, 2007

**SUPREME**
Mechagodzilla**gradenko_2000 posted:**

If they weren't trying to pull off at least some kind of vague allegory for Jesus/Christianity, why the emphasis on the date of December 2093 and the Christmas tree?

I don't think a calendar date even works when you're driving around in an FTL starship. And then Shaw even reminds us that it's just after New Year's at the very end of the movie.

There are judeo-christian images and themes, but they are not the plot of the film.

What do you mean by 'an allegory for jesus'?

Jun 18, 2012 06:12

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Jun 9, 2007

**SUPREME**
Mechagodzilla**ted_himself posted:**

How best to understand a species? Get some living samples. The Engineers thus seed Worlds, and when the species on those planets have attained a certain level of advancement where they are able to find the Engineers, the Engineers then say "ok activate plan Alpha" and capture the dudes who have turned up. They then use their facility to engineer the best weapon for destroying that civilisation.

Hmm yes this makes perfect sense.

Jun 18, 2012 07:47

[Profile](#) [Post History](#) [Rap Sheet](#)[REPORT](#)[QUOTE](#)**SuperMechagodzilla**

Jun 9, 2007

**SUPREME**
Mechagodzilla

That dude looks nothing like an Oscar statuette - but otherwise, thanks for the zany plot synopsis! Do you have an Angelfire bad movies website for the Rifftrax section of my bookmarks folder?

Jun 18, 2012 09:22

[Profile](#) [Post History](#) [Rap Sheet](#)[REPORT](#)[QUOTE](#)**SuperMechagodzilla**

Jun 9, 2007

So also I just saw prometheus and some dudes are going into space !

guess! There's a rude snake in a cave full of Pepsi and they say holy moley because this is a movie where a bunch of dudes are talking about god! So god randomly eats some Pepsi and then he falls apart! It's like when I put a tooth in coke for the science fair! So these astro-nutty professors are trying to discover the secret of

Pepsi but the god fell over and died like a doofus and can't tell them! You will never discover the Caramilk secret I guess! They should have gone to my science fair! Altogether the movie was a junk food like chocolate or soda since you cannot think about it! You can eat it if you don't mind a sugar headache!



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

i Jun 18, 2012 10:01

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

Film Crit Hulk also described Buffy the Vampire Slayer as more-or-less the best thing ever written. I'mma need a bigger grain of salt before I read any more of that capslock.

Stoatbringer posted:

Ah, so it was just more people not being believable human beings? Fits in nicely then.

They got bashed in the noggin with a block of metal. It would be less believable if they sprang back up and continued to mindlessly chase her instead of attending to their wounds.

SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

i Jun 18, 2012 20:52

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

I honestly tried really hard, re-reading it a few times in search of an insight. It's a plot synopsis with monkeycheese. There was nothing.

SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

i Jun 18, 2012 21:04

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

Payndz posted:

From the man who praises AVPR and Skyline as works of transcendent cinematic genius. Is there a horse around here? I need to borrow its salt lick.

I'm not writing that from a 'high art / low art' perspective. I'm writing that from a 'joss whedon is garbage' perspective.

But honestly that's not the only point of contention I have with FCH. It's just the straw that broke the camel. The more I've read, the less insightful he's appeared.

SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

i Jun 18, 2012 21:11

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

Payndz posted:

You still need to apply motivation within the movie, though. It's trite to say that Weyland/humans in general created David "just because" - there had to have been some reasoning behind it, even if it was as base as profit or as arrogant as "I am a man, not a woman, yet I created life!"

To Weyland, David is obedient and obviously helpful in many ways. But at the same time, Weyland obviously has no real concern for David as a person. So why make him human-like? Again, the film tackles that question head-on, with David saying that his appearance is completely arbitrary. He could look like anything, but he is made to look human - down to the useless clothing he wears - because it makes people feel comfortable around him.

SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

So we have two levels here: We know very clearly why David was built. But once you get into specifics - why blue eyes? - things get murky.

And it's important to keep in mind that what characters say is not objectively true. David *feels* that his creation was random. That is the actual important part.

Beyond the pure expository dialogue, there are contextual cues through the film. The imagery of statues (specifically of a classical variety) point to David being an *artistic* achievement. Think Pygmalion. Imagery of genetic/computer code being decoded point in the opposite direction, towards him being a form of scientific progress - a clone, just steps behind the replicants in Blade Runner that are indistinguishable from humans in nearly every way. David is a product of pure technological 'progress'.

But back to David's remarks about his appearance:

"The illusion is irresistible. Behind every face there is a self. We see the signal of consciousness in a gleaming eye and imagine some ethereal space beneath the vault of the skull, lit by shifting patterns of feeling and thought, charged with intention. An essence."

But what do we find in that space behind the face, when we look? The brute fact is there is nothing but material substance: flesh and blood and bone and brain. . . . You look down into an open head, watching the brain pulsate, watching the surgeon tug and probe, and you understand with absolute conviction that there is nothing more to it. There's no one there."

-Thomas Metzinger, "Being No One."

The point about lacking essence is important because David is voicing an existentialist worldview. So there's the answer. The question of why Weyland created David is a red herring, because David creates himself. His existence precedes his essence. This is in keeping with the film's general apatheism.

i Jun 19, 2012 07:26

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REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

Payndz posted:

It's not really "because we can", though, otherwise people would be going "I've got a free evening, I think I'll knock out a sonnet." It's more a case of "because we're driven to" - which in itself is a more interesting answer because it opens up the question of *why*, which in turn leads to character discovery. Why create? For fame, for money, for approval, to challenge, for validation, etc. "Just because" reveals nothing but sociopathy.

"Because they could" is a good, if glib, one-liner, but that glibness sums up the movie in many ways; it's not interested in, and perhaps not even capable of, answering its own questions.

This is not much different from the people looking at the 'zombie' scene, ignoring the context of it, then asking why there's a pointless zombie scene.

Weyland already has like infinite wealth, so we can rule out most of the motivations you listed. He says flat-out that he wants a son. Why does he want a son? Not to inherit his empire, obviously - Weyland's plan is to become immortal. He built David so he'd have a servant. (Hence the shot of David washing his feet.) The hubristic desire to have godlike control over one's subjects/children is implicit.

The movie is of course not about Weyland or the hows and whys of David's creation. Not really at all - almost no screen-time is devoted to those things. Weyland is a minor character, David's creation is offscreen. The actual subject matter of the film is how David reacts to the fact that he was created for (to him) frivolous reasons.

When David is glibly dismissive of Weyland, that does not mean Weyland has no motivation whatsoever. It means Weyland has no motivation *that David cares about*. That's a very important nuance. You are looking for 'objective' worldbuilding stuff when the movie is very closely aligned with David's subjectivity.

Same with the people overly frustrated by the two guys getting knocked out. The focus of the scene is on Shaw, and told from her POV. The two guys who got knocked out are not onscreen because Shaw doesn't care what happened to them, so long as they are gone.

i Jun 19, 2012 09:15

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QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

toiletbrush posted:

Exactly. The film is so completely devoid of any internal consistency or logic whatsoever that everything that happens is effectively arbitrary and so ambiguous that people who want to like the film can attach pretty much any meaning they like to it.



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

This isn't the case at all, and this compulsion to quickly delimit the film's meaning (usually along lines of 'intent') is difficult to read as anything but a product of incuriosity.

No shit the film is (relatively) abstract (for a blockbuster sci-fi film). That abstraction equals meaninglessness, to some, is a big issue - and not with the film's content.

Charlie, Fifield, Shaw's dad and the mask-wearing Engineers are all visually linked with each-other. The severed head is dropped at the front door of the ship, in roughly the exact spot that Charlie is torched and Fifield resurrected. Charlie has a cross tattooed on his arm and shares similarities to Shaw's father (his approach to faith and his death by disease).

This is how the film operates. There is a very clear logic to it. Fifield returns as mutant, not (just) a zombie - and his increased size and super-strength foreshadow how the Engineer attacks later. These characters are not literally the same. The similarity is psychological. They are Shaw's various father-figures (plus one guy she doesn't really know, but who is nonetheless presented as the more butch half of a coded homosexual relationship (no offense to Rapace, but she has a rather boyish physique - her androgyny comes into play during the scene where the machine views her as a man)).

This isn't arbitrary meaning 'read into' the film. They chose to have Fifield mutate into an invincible giant, just as they chose to have Charlie stand inside the image of a Engineer before impregnating Shaw. They chose to make all the Engineers masculine. Etc.

To overlook this stuff is to misread the film. It's a misreading so severe that your only justification is to declare the film meaningless, in part or in full. That is, to stop reading - to not read the film at all.

i Jun 19, 2012 11:00

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REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

He's not mad at the robot.



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

He's using violence as a way of putting an arbitrary limit on human knowledge. Again, he is the 'castrating' God. He is not murdering everyone because of some specific event in the scene that triggers him, but because it's what he does. His goal is to deny access to the answers.

He is the Big Other - a hypothetical all-knowing judgmental figure. Shaw must traverse the fantasy and refute his omniscience.

Picture a carrot on a stick, perpetually out of grasp. Instead of believing that the impossible answers (concerning identity, destiny, God, etc.) can be reached (desire), Shaw overcomes this fantasy and falls into destitution. BUT she then resolves to continue reaching for the answers, *knowing that they will never be reached* (drive).

"In biogenetics [...] there is now the capability of determining the human genome and our basic DNA coordinates. Yet it is precisely at this point of total disclosure that the mystery deepens and we are drawn more and more into confrontation with the very incapacity to represent or resolve the gap between subjectivation and that which constantly overflows it: death drive and its characteristic forms of animus, impulsion, desire and so on. Far from capturing the essence of the human being, a paradoxical result of biogenetics is that it brings us into increasing proximity with the very "inhuman" excesses that are constitutive of humanity as such - the Lacanian "in us more than us" - and which testify to the ineradicable nature of the subject." ([link](#))

Quick: name one instance of something being 'in Shaw more than than her'.

Now, what does this thing do to the God character?

i Jun 19, 2012 11:50

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REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

What is the meaning of life?



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

Movie: "There is no answer to that."

Answer my question!

Movie: "That is the answer. I guess you could say that the meaning of life rests in leaving that question unresolved."

Listen movie, you are broken if you can't answer my question!!!

Movie: "Seriously? I just did."

Black goo LOST randomness zombie scene characters just wanted money stupid sequel bait meaningless idiots helmet removed abstract arbitrary realism Lindelof....

Movie: *backs away slowly, out of the room*

i Jun 19, 2012 20:52

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REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



Sarkozymandias posted:

The black goo is primordial soup. It's Prometheus' fire. It's Pandora's Every Fucking Thing.

It's the stuff that makes all of life as we know and understand. There was nothing before the black shit, it was peaceful but empty and boring. It has no significance beyond its function as a metaphorical catalyst in a movie about flesh.

That might be (very obviously) what the black goo is, but consider this: *what is that black goo???*

i Jun 19, 2012 21:01

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REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

I'm just asking questions man! There's no such thing as a stupid question!



i Jun 19, 2012 21:03

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REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

Hey guys I was reading a lot of posts explaining what the black goo is, so I was wondering - what is that black goo?



i Jun 19, 2012 21:16

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REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

Payndz posted:

Movie: Hey, guess what? Humans were created by these pasty alien guys! Awesome and mysterious, huh?

Audience: So I guess there *is* a meaning of life within the context of this story, since the aliens clearly did everything for some purpose. In that case, what-

Movie: Shut up! Didn't you hear me say it's mysterious? Anyway, here are some penis and vagina monsters. What more do you want, you ungrateful plebs?

Again, you are getting confused because you are mistaking the characters' subjective experiences for 'objective' worldbuilding. The Engineers know why they made life, but the film is not told from the perspective of the Engineers.

i Jun 19, 2012 21:34

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REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

In Christopher Nolan's film **The Dark Knight (2008)**, how did The Joker get those scars?

There's an obvious flub in the movie where they give two different reasons. I can't believe they didn't catch that mistake!



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

i Jun 19, 2012 21:38

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

Don't Tell Me You've Never Wondered What Yoda's Penis Looks Like

By Tony Waltman
February 14, 2002

Oh, come on. All the times you've watched Star Wars movies, it's never crossed your mind even once? You're just going to play dumb and say, "Oh, gee, no, that never occurred to me"? Give me a break. Don't even try to tell me you've never wondered what Yoda's penis looks like.

You don't have to be embarrassed about it. Being curious about Yoda's penis doesn't mean you're gay or anything. And I'm certainly not saying that you should be obsessed with it. But how could anybody claim they haven't pondered that penis even for a single second in their entire life?

It's only natural to be a little curious about Yoda's penis. I've certainly asked myself all the usual questions: How long is it when flaccid? How long erect? Is it circumcised? Is it shaped like a human penis? Is it the same shade of green as the rest of him? Is it wrinkled? Veiny? Freckled? How much pubic hair does Yoda have? Is the hair curly or wispy? Is there enough hair to hide the testicles? And how large are the testicles? And how pendulous?

But noooo. You've never, ever had such thoughts. That's simply not the way your oh-so-pure mind operates.

So I guess I'm expected to believe that, while watching The Empire Strikes Back, the second act of which is practically all Yoda, not once did you wonder what he looked like naked. And when he died in Return Of The Jedi, his robe remaining on his bed as his body disappeared, you never imagined that robe disappearing with Yoda still lying there on his back, his nude form exposed for all the world to see. Yeah, I am so sure.

The day Episode II opened, you were, no doubt, one of the millions of Americans giddy with anticipation. If you're anything like me, you were most excited for the space battles, the plot revelations regarding the Clone Wars, and other matters unrelated to Yoda's penis. But why don't you just admit it: A tiny little part of your excitement stemmed from the thought that maybe, just maybe, Jedi Master Yoda's clothes would come off. It's okay—I promise I wouldn't think any less of you. We all have these kinds of taboo thoughts from time to time. It's only natural.

And are you actually claiming that back in 1999, you sat through all of Phantom Menace, not once wishing that the gusty winds of Coruscant would give Yoda a little skirt-blow? You're telling me that when we first saw fellow Jedi Council member Yaddle, you just saw a female member of Yoda's species and not the beginning of a new story arc that could potentially provide a perfect opportunity to show Yoda naked? Man, you're even more repressed than I thought.

I suppose that when the Episode II DVD is released, you'll be in line at midnight to buy your copy, but not so you can go through the fight scene frame-by-frame, "just in case." No, a wholesome guy like you is above such perverse thoughts.

And, of course, you're also excited for Episode III, but not because it's the last movie in the Saga and, therefore, must be the one where Yoda's penis and all its secrets are finally revealed. Do me a favor? Drop the prude act.

This is insane. You don't fool me for a moment. Even now, just looking at you, I can tell your very being trembles with curiosity about Yoda's penis.

Own up, you big baby.

i Jun 19, 2012 21:49

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

oiseaux morts 1994 posted:

Incorrect, the film is told from the perspective of the Engineers, since it explains perfectly why everyone on Prometheus is an incompetent, childish idiot

It really isn't. David is the film's audience-identification character. And the idiocy of the human characters, while present, is really way too overstated by the film's detractors.



Like yeah dude took off his helmet. Don't poop yourselves, folks.

MLG

X

X

SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

i Jun 19, 2012 22:33

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REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

The midichlorian comparison is important, because people missed the point back then too: Qui Gon is bullshitting. The point is he's a bad jedi, and that's why they are all killed like punks.

"Turning around to actually praise The Phantom Menace, one of the few common complaints that I would actually defend is the testing of Anakin's blood for midichlorians, microscopic organisms that have symbiotic relationships with their hosts and are responsible for the Force. This explains everything but it explains nothing. We can see parallels with the Creationist science movement; it's an attempt to place spirituality in the realms of the scientific. The midichlorian testing is completely and utterly junk science, and how great is that!"

-Alex Jackson, "The Phantom Menace" ([link](#))

The same 'explains everything yet nothing' outcome arrives in Prometheus when Shaw tests the DNA. "This is it! This is everything!"

Note how the film doesn't end there.

i Jun 19, 2012 22:42

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REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

Wait hold up - according to this, the black goo is a corrupting/infecting force that mutates people's DNA?

Why wasn't *that* clearly shown in the film in multiple scenes?

MLG

X

X

SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

i Jun 19, 2012 23:53

Profile

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REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

MeLKoR posted:

It's not things left unsaid as the *true* origin of the scars that pisses us, its that this movie's plot came off as a barely functional device to move between set pieces.

To me it felt like the writing process went something like:

Ship landing -> exploration -> ALIENS! -> infection -> abortion -> HE'S ALIVE! -> Flying off to the sunset

"OK boys, we have a plot, now get me the guy from Lost and fill in the gaps with ~mysterious~ stuff that will keep people wondering and bring them for the sequel."

SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

Your fault is in remaining doggedly focused on how the film was ostensibly sold to you, and fetishizing an authoral intent that is supposedly present in those advertisements, instead of just reading the actual film.

Notice how all these criticisms invent an elaborate fantasy of how the guy from LOST sabotaged the film because he loves money and Ridley Scott just wanted pretty pictures that don't mean anything, etc. Again, people are doing through all this effort instead of just reading the film. Like, watching these moving images and how they are cut together - this is beyond the scope of your criticism.

There aren't even any plot holes in the film. Like literally, none. The dudes getting knocked out is arguable, but it's hardly a major thing. The things that people are complaining about are not plot holes. They are things that are not related to the film's plot or its story, or they are things that are implicit to the story.

There isn't even anything really mysterious in the film. the film is about defusing the mystery - David, the audience identification character, instantly decodes all the mysteries. Again, scenes of mysterious foreboding

are almost invariably undercut with David stepping in and demonstrating that, yep, it's just a helmet, it's just a cargo hold, it's just a mutagen.

When people get caught up in the mystery, they overlook/ignore the film's Hegelian point that...

The mysteries of the Egyptians are mysteries to the Egyptians themselves

"The title for this short reflection comes from a comment Hegel once made. A comment that offers a precise formulation of the double enigma of the human subject.

In order to unpack it let us take the example of being in a marriage. Imagine that distrust and distance has slowly entered the relationship, causing a fissure. From ones embedded position within the marriage the actions of the other may strike one as an enigma. In response we may begin to question them about why they are acting in the way that they are. All too often we can become obsessed with questioning our partner about why they said a certain thing, or why they said it in a particular way. Or we may seek to interrogate them about why they wrote a particular email or why they are flirting with a specific person etc.

The underlying presupposition here is that the mystery of the other is not a mystery to the other (i.e. they understand their action, but we do not). As a result of this presupposition, questioning our partner can lead to anger and depression as our attempts to understand seem constantly frustrated.

Yet we must remember that the enigma of the other is also an enigma to the other. If our husband or wife, in the above example, knows why they act in a certain way, it is only because they have had to do the difficult work of reflecting upon their own actions and working out what they mean. Like a detective at the scene of a crime we arrive too late, not only to the others actions, but also to our own. And it is from this post-event location that we must piece together what took place and why.

In short, if we find ourselves getting frustrated by the enigmatic actions of those we love we must remind ourselves that our own actions are just as mysterious and require just as much hard work to decipher.

Indeed our conscious descriptions of why we act in a certain way can be deeply deceptive and the very thing we must ignore in order to penetrate to the reality of why we act in the way that we do. Our conscious rationalisations can be nothing more than the false alibi that we must expose in order to discover the truth."

-Peter Rollins ([link](#))

i Jun 20, 2012 03:01

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QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Prometheus isn't the same kind of horror movie as Alien. The tone is totally different.

Jun 9, 2007



i Jun 20, 2012 03:18

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REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

ghostwritingduck posted:

Alien's crew was a group of space truckers. They noticed that the face hugger was controlling the breathing of its host. They marvel at the fact that the face hugger's blood is acid. They wonder why the face hugger released and died. The space truckers of Alien are better scientists than any scientist in Prometheus.

Again, the criticism is that 'it's not Alien' when obviously Prometheus is not Alien. This isn't an interesting observation. Prometheus is not many films.

Instead of complaining that the characters *should* or *must* be awed by the mysterious symbols around themselves, it's better to simply *read the film* and come to a proper conclusion about what their nonchalance means.

Note: "because LOST guy is a big jerk" is not a proper conclusion.

i Jun 20, 2012 03:40

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REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

**SUPREME**
Mechagodzilla**MeLKoR posted:**

I'm sold an historical epic... the film wanted to be taken seriously ... the movie failed in transmitting it's ideas whatever they were ... it was trying to convey

Again, you are failing to read the film, and you are not the only one to do so. A movie doesn't have an objective meaning that it 'transmits' into your head. A movie doesn't 'try' to convey things.

Instead of reading the film, people are purposefully ignoring textual and contextual elements in favor of some predetermined narrative of what the film was 'sold as', what it 'should' be, what it's 'intended' to be, etc.

It's possible to have legitimate grievances with the film. I am saying that yours are *illegitimate*. You are not reading the film but coming up with justifications for your not reading it, after the fact.

This is clear from your assertion that the movie's quality exists independent of its meaning. You are seem to be under the impression that the film's quality exists independent of its imagery (and sounds), when a film is nothing but imagery (and sounds). Your argument reduces to "why bother to read the film when I already know that it's bad?"

Prometheus is a pulpy adventure movie with horror elements. I'm not saying that's what it's intended to be. I'm saying that's what it is. Like that's how it's scored, shot, edited, etc. Saying it's not a low-key slasher film is both accurate and pointless. Saying it's 'supposed to be' a low-key slasher film is flat-out wrong.

Jun 20, 2012 04:09

[Profile](#)[Post History](#)[Rap Sheet](#)[REPORT](#)[QUOTE](#)**SuperMechagodzilla**

Jun 9, 2007

**SUPREME**
Mechagodzilla**Gianthogweed posted:**

Does anyone actually believe he has the answers to all these mysteries introduced and they have a plan for how the sequels resolve them and line up with the continuity of the original films?

That this and this alone is what haters demand speaks volumes. *Continuity*.

Obviously you missed the post-credits scene where agent Nick Fury recruits Shaw into the avengers initiative.

Jun 20, 2012 04:22

[Profile](#)[Post History](#)[Rap Sheet](#)[REPORT](#)[QUOTE](#)**SuperMechagodzilla**

Jun 9, 2007

**SUPREME**
Mechagodzilla**Gianthogweed, paraphrased posted:**

Alien never tried to be intelligent.

You represent everything that is wrong. Fuck you!

MeLKoR posted:

you read into the film

That's not how reading works, and that's not how I went about reading this film.

For example, in a sentence like this one, you can check the placement of the commas and the definition of the words to eventually understand that I'm calling you wrong. Maybe I didn't intend this, and used the wrong words. It doesn't matter. This sentence says you are wrong.

That's not 'reading into' the sentence. That's 'reading'.

Now, you can interpret what I wrote there in numerous ways - there is no unique, set meaning. Maybe you're even right! But those interpretations are not valid unless they take the grammar, definitions of words and so-forth into account. So no, you are probably still wrong.

Yet while you presumably understand what I wrote as text there, you are ignoring the film's grammar - dismissing actual reading as 'reading into', while proposing some sort of bizarre non-reading process where the (film's equivalent of) sentence structure, words and punctuation are largely unimportant. That's why you're wrong, and not right.

Jun 20, 2012 05:07

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SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

Gianthogweed posted:

You're quoting me out of context. As a space slasher film, it is very intelligently written. In fact it's one of the best science fiction movies of all time. But what I meant is that it didn't try to raise deep philosophical issues like this film did. The original Alien movie wasn't trying to be in the same vein of SF like Star Trek or 2001 A Space Odyssey. But the themes the original Alien raised were addressed more than adequately. This film, however, tried too hard to be something it wasn't.

No, I was not quoting you out of context. (Technically, I was paraphrasing.)

I'm referring to your reduction of films to what they allegedly 'try to be'. As if Dan O'Bannon (RIP) wrote the film saying 'well, we don't want this to be too smart' and so drank paint thinner until the script became Objectively Stupid. Obviously you don't mean that, but that's pretty much what you're writing.

This stuff about the films' depths, intents, intelligences (and so-on) does not withstand the slightest scrutiny.

Like "Alien is a smart but it's not deep." What the fuck does that even mean? Alien's not an existentialist film now, because of its genre?

It's a load of baseless, bullshit declarations that are stifling the discussion.

i Jun 20, 2012 05:29

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QUOTE

POST

Don't go there!

«

<

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>

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Cinema Discusso › Ridley Scott's Prometheus - It looks as much like dicks as anything else.

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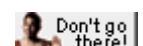
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« Cinema Discusso › Ridley Scott's Prometheus - It looks as much like dicks as anything else.

 POST 

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

MeLKoR posted:

A novel can be grammatically perfect, use a rich language to convey beautiful imagery and *still* be bad.
Bad characters, bad pacing, bad plot, unsatisfactory ending.

You have yet to demonstrate having read the film even on the 'purely grammatical' level. You're just writing 'it's bad' over and over. "The characters are bad and not good!" Right.

You are doing this instead of identifying the film as something (i.e. campy pulp adventure) and then explaining what elements do and do not work in that context.

Blanket declarations - for example, that naturalism is objectively better - are lame and pointless. You're not even making an argument - just taking it for granted that alternatives to naturalism are 'bad'.

temple posted:

The black goo expands or defies what it meant originally. So now the message is muddled. [...] If it does communicate, I'm not understanding its message because its playing loose and fast with semiotics. Instead of speaking in a language, its speaking in gods, aliens, humans, sex, violence and switching its nouns and verbs to obscure the message. Intentionally.

All in all, its not the lack of answers. The film is illegible. And I think its because the writer/director doesn't really know what they want to say.

Why are you having trouble with a simple recontextualizing of a symbol? Yes, something in one scene means something slightly different in another scene - just as how Shaw's cross goes from representing some cheap new-age spirituality to a more authentic christian existentialism at the end.

The black goo is consistently presented as a destructive force. After the opening scene, this destruction simply goes from having positive connotations (killing the immortal god to spark the cycle of human life) to negative ones (going too far, killing all the humans). It's unfortunate that you were confused, but there's nothing 'beyond language' about it.

Your opposition of symbols and language is very telling. The aliens are symbolic. They are language - and it's not an esoteric language. Prometheus uses the language of genre films.

i Jun 20, 2012 06:18

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 REPORT

 QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

MeLKoR posted:

Well... that's fucking great but if these are the only sort of "answers" that the movie has to provide then it was an exercise in futility.

You're going to feel real bad when you realize that Alien was also about existentialism and/or Lovecraftian cosmicism.

i Jun 20, 2012 06:31

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 REPORT

 QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

MeLKoR posted:



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

The movie didn't take itself as a "campy pulp adventure". At all! What, if a director puts a retro look on clothes/cars/whatever it's carte blanche for throwing character logic out of the window and say "oh it's just being campy" to everything?

You don't need to agree with me, or with anyone, but you do need to conduct enough of a reading to form an opinion of what the film 'means' before you attempt to discuss it.

The part I quoted above shows where you keep getting hung up. Ridley Scott did not tell me the film is campy.

I determined that the film was campy when I saw the extremely naive retro aesthetic, the obvious theatricality of the acting, the overall dryly comedic tone of the film, and so-forth. Those elements are what I read that allowed me to narrow down a genre to provide context for my writing.

It does not work the other way around.

You do not decide a film is a Pixar comedy and then complain that Cujo is mauling everyone, and not animated. "But it doesn't take itself as a horror-thriller about a rabid dog at all!" Says you. But you've provided no textual basis for your argument whatsoever. Your point actually depends solely on dismissing large swaths of the text as error. "Pixar accidentally made the film back in 1983, before Pixar existed!"

Because this is getting repetitive, in your next post try not to use the phrases like 'tries to be', 'takes itself to be', 'was sold as', and other such stuff. I think you can do it.

i Jun 20, 2012 10:03

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REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

The biologist 'dies' trying to caress the snake because it's a homoerotic fantasy sequence.

Homoerotic fantasies exist in reality. Ergo, the scene is realistic.



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

i Jun 20, 2012 10:24

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REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

MeLKoR posted:

Where you saw "obvious theatricality of the acting" I saw poor directing and where you saw "dryly comedic tone" I saw poor writing.

David goes around like Vincent Price, wryly saying "oh no, you mustn't see this ultrasound. It's too shocking," before slowly and patronizingly turning the monitor away. That's not naturalistic acting. That's camp as fuck.

But again, you are just writing "it's bad" over and over. You are not narrowing down what 'it' is, or why 'it' is 'bad'. So, no information is conveyed to a person who is reading your writing.



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

i Jun 20, 2012 10:41

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REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

Also, there was a supplementary logic:

It was a homoerotic fantasy sequence. It followed the logic of homoerotic fantasy sequences - which, as has been determined, are 100% real.



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

i Jun 20, 2012 10:45

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REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



Sarkozymandias posted:

But are the dick monsters 100% real or 100% quasi-real?

In Lacanian terms, the monsters represent *the Real*. So: yes!

"Beyond representation as it is in its monstrosity, lamella nonetheless remains within the domain of the Imaginary, although as a kind of limit-image: the image to cancel all images, the image that endeavors to stretch the imagination to the very border of the irrepresentable. (In horror sci-fi, this line was brought to extreme with John Carpenter's *The Thing*, the 1982 remake of the old classic, which fully deployed the infinite plasticity and morphing capacity of the alien *Thing*.) As such, lamella stands for the Real in its most terrifying dimension, as the primordial abyss which swallows everything, dissolving all identities - a figure well known in literature in its multiple guises" ([link](#))

(That's what the black goo is, by the way.)

i Jun 20, 2012 10:55

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



MeLKoR posted:

Its not like people don't do shit like that in real life all the time. Do I life in a camp movie?

You are conflating a description of the literal plot with a style of acting. Those are not the same thing.

David (the character) is an amoral robot asshole. Michael Fassbender (the actor) is depicting David via an affected, theatrical performance.

I haven't seen *The Crow*. Can you describe what it is, and why it's bad?

i Jun 20, 2012 11:01

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



MeLKoR posted:

Just give me a couple of examples of movies you think are bad instead of just campy and why?

In roughly this genre?

Dead Space and *War Between the Planets* are both very flatly directed and repetitive. There are few interesting shots. *War Between the Planets* is sparsely creepy and lyrical with a neat drone soundtrack, but is otherwise very drab. *Dead Space* is also a disappointingly subdued quasi-remake of the vastly superior, genuinely campy film *Mutant*.

Neither film fits any definition of camp that I've provided. They're not naive, pretentious, ostentatious, exaggerated, theatrical, etc.

Words mean things. 'Camp' is not synonymous with 'bad', which is why people don't say that it's campy to have cancer.

Also: *Alien³* ain't that great, and is not campy.

i Jun 20, 2012 11:31

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



superh posted:

"don't you get it? It sucked? Bad writing amirite!"

-200 of 255 pages in a thread where the nonsense you're complaining about has already been discussed and laid to rest ignored-

"why won't you respond to my ~points~??"

Yeah, when it gets to the point of "instead of speaking in a language, its speaking in gods" and "do I life in a camp movie?" we might as well move on to another line of discussion.

i Jun 20, 2012 11:53

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



Hooray, they're gone. So, how about that movie Prometheus?

Fantastically campy film that's not literally real, ain't it?

I liked the deadpan-humorous illustration of psychoanalytic concepts, the references to Jurassic Park, and also that it wasn't real.

Jun 20, 2012 12:06

[Profile](#) [Post History](#) [Rap Sheet](#)[REPORT](#)[QUOTE](#)**SuperMechagodzilla**

Jun 9, 2007

Alright I'm back from my nap and I think I had an epiphany: *what's up with that black goo?*

Maybe someone in the thread has an insi-

Robot_Rumpus posted:

(a theme that the creators of the film never intended)

Oh.

Jun 20, 2012 20:40

[Profile](#) [Post History](#) [Rap Sheet](#)[REPORT](#)[QUOTE](#)**SuperMechagodzilla**

Jun 9, 2007

"Prometheus has beautiful cinematography and little emphasis on plot."

Amount of writing about the cinematography: 0%

Amount of writing about the plot: 100%



Jun 20, 2012 20:48

[Profile](#) [Post History](#) [Rap Sheet](#)[REPORT](#)[QUOTE](#)**SuperMechagodzilla**

Jun 9, 2007

oiseaux morts 1994 posted:

No one gives a damn about cinematography when a film is just this *bad*



Jun 20, 2012 20:59

[Profile](#) [Post History](#) [Rap Sheet](#)[REPORT](#)[QUOTE](#)**SuperMechagodzilla**

Jun 9, 2007

People are actually reading Exploded's accurate description of what literally happens in the plot, and saying "hmmmm... that's a good theory... you may be right about that."

Like I'mma make a post now. Prometheus is about characters on a space ship, and they travel into space. That's my theory. I'm not sure about it, but I picked up some clues when watching the film. For example, there are frequently shots of a space-ship. And then it cuts to people in metal rooms.

Now, hear me out here, but *what if those metal rooms are inside the space ship?*



Mechagodzilla

i Jun 20, 2012 21:11

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

The characters act like characters in a movie because the entire film is about mimesis and authenticity.

Whyyyy is this so difficult to accept?

i Jun 20, 2012 21:21

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

Mecha Gojira posted:

What I love about the biologist Milburn is that he's not as freaked out at Fifield. Fifield is shown from scene one of the pyramid that he's uncomfortable and scared. Here's this guy who's all bluster and chest beating and wolf-howling and face tattoos, but deep down he's just really scared. Milburn is different, though. He's just friendly. He's admittedly freaked out enough, but he probably would've stuck with the rest of the group had Fifield not asked him to leave, and he leaves because this dude he's been trying to impress and befriend since breakfast asked him to go out with him. It gets better in the pod room with the worms, because at this point Fifield is just losing it, and now Milburn is scared shitless too, but it's now Milburn who's pretending to be in charge and in control of the situation to impress and calm down Fifield, but he's just so freaked out and scared himself that he loses control of the situation and gets a vagina-penis rammed down his throat for it.

I think people are bagging on those two too hard. They're great characters. They may not be the most logical (who would be in such a fucked up situation?), but damn are they *human*. One is just a scared little dude pretending to be tough, and the other just wants to be his friend despite also being a scared little dude.

For this rad post, you may honorarily prefix your screen-name with 'Super-'. I endorse it!

i Jun 20, 2012 21:29

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SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

I'm kinda surprised that more people didn't pick up on the joke:

The opening scene shows an immortal god bringing life to a world. He ingests a substance, and dissolves into black goo.

The engineer's head has rested perfectly preserved for 2000 years. The scientists insert a probe to 'give it life', and it explodes into black goo.

Weyland has spent two years perfectly preserved in hypersleep. He emerges, and asks for *more life...*

i Jun 21, 2012 09:12

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SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

Former Human posted:

If you say so. In reality they planned to cast Max Von Sydow as Weyland and only changed the casting to Guy Pearce when the script demanded a flashback/memory scene of a young Weyland. The scene was dropped but Pearce was already signed to the role.

This is what's so weird about the 'intent' thing. Like you're watching the film and seeing Guy Pearce in a gollum suit, and it's like "yep, that's Max Van Sydow alright. Dude from The Exorcist." Intento-vision - like broken They Live sunglasses.

Equally weird is how in a hundred pages of dissing the characters, none of the criticism has referred to character arcs, motivations and whatnot. It's exclusively 'the characters are bad because they're not real

scientists'. It's the zombie logic that frustrated haters of The Hurt Locker.

"They're not using actual military tactics! They're acting like action movie characters!" ...in a movie entirely devoted to subverting action movie storytelling.

It's obvious how silly this is when you apply it to a children's film like Cinderella and it's like "That's not how the monarchy works! I'm calling bullshit on this whole shoe and love thing."

But make a film with scientists and/or the military fighting zombies and *boy howdy* are we in for a pickle. Are children simply better at reading? What's going on here?

i Jun 21, 2012 10:46

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QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



Here's my numbered list of aristocat plotholes

- 1) You cannot be a cat and an aristocrat at the same time. It's oxymoronic.
- 2) No one seems amazed that these cats have their own societal structure and play jazz music. That's bad characters.
- 3) What is the black goo?

i Jun 21, 2012 11:08

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REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



Former Human posted:

Most of the characters are only memorable as "biologist" or "geologist" and end up getting killed before revealing anything meaningful about themselves.

This is weird. The geologist aspect of his character is entirely conveyed through like two lines of expository dialogue. We're shown zero geology taking place. On the other hand, we're shown a ton of things about the character that have nothing to do with his job description.

-He's used technology to augment himself into a 'pack leader' for a bunch of obedient robot drones.

-He also modifies himself with tattoos, extreme haircuts, drugs.

-He's standoffish, rude and a loner but obviously actually cowardly.

-He claims to be only doing things for the money - but is that really the case? (Why would simply wanting money necessitate the harsh response? Why can't he get rich *and* make friends?)

-He's implied to be a closeted gay dude.

This all comes into play when he is killed in a coded homoerotic fantasy-horror sequence, and then reappears as a zombie. The body he had been modifying becomes totally saturated with the black goo. His rude behavior is obviously a defense mechanism against the fear that the drones are controlling him. "I'm just a guy scanning rocks to make money," he tells himself. "And that's all I want to be." Obviously he's in denial.

Look again at the crab-walk image. He's not just bent over. He looks practically merged with the ground, like the moon had absorbed him and is pushing him out, limbs first. That's where the rock imagery factors in. That's why he's a geologist.

The dysfunction of the zombie-tactical-realism approach is that it focuses on the single line of expository plot-dialogue ("I'm a geologist") and ignores literally everything else. Worse: actively dismisses everything else as error - especially the filmic qualities of the film.

i Jun 21, 2012 12:09

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QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

DNS posted:

we all understand the conventions of fairy tales and children's movies and have a discrete set of expectations for how they function. It's a completely inapt comparison.

Prometheus is fundamentally a hybrid of Galaxy Of Terror (1981) and Creation Of The Humanoids (1962). It's



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

loaded with references and similarities to other films, but those are the two biggest ones.

Neither of those films is an alien culture exploration simulator. Neither feature naturalistic acting. Both are overtly metaphorical/allegorical.

I don't think people understand conventions at all. They aren't even using that as a justification. Like "according to the genre conventions set up in Blade Runner (?), all scientists must do Hard Science - and not sit at the top of pyramid playing chess in a gold room, serving as a metaphor for God."

i Jun 21, 2012 12:22

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SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

Maarak posted:

I was building on the body modification idea, that he wanted to be something more than human. His resentment expresses itself well enough when he returns to the ship transformed.



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

You're right, but the crucial difference is that he originally modified himself, while - in a twist - the technology begins modifying him against his will. So yeah, he doesn't want to be a spaceman.

The helmet melts onto his face, The goo turns him into a mutant. The metaphorical imagery is of the moon itself transforming him.

This is why we don't see any actual geology take place. He goes there with the conscious intention of being a geologist-for-hire, but that goal is quickly thwarted by all these unconscious things. The 'irrational' imagery overtakes the 'rational' expository dialogue.

i Jun 21, 2012 12:58

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

Former Human posted:

They are interchangeable because the plot devolves into a boring slasher flick. Notice in *Alien* that there were only seven characters and they all had unique personalities and ways of interacting with their colleagues. *Prometheus* is the exact opposite.

Why not make Fifield the ship's janitor?

No offense but I think you actually do not know the difference between 'characterization' and 'job description'.

Look at how quickly you shift from Fifield's job description, to the personalities of the Alien characters, to talking about Fifield's job description again.

Fifield obviously has a personality. He dresses like a space biker and makes wolf noises like a weirdo. He is obviously not interchangeable with, say, Vickers.

So no, there really is little or no textual basis for your hyperbolic argument. My reading doesn't even ignore that he's a geologist, so your crude mimicry isn't even accurate there.

"Ignores actual exposition?" Nope!

Maarak posted:

So he's a techno-mutant werewolf? Awesome.

I hadn't thought about it that way, but when you put it like that it's perfect.

i Jun 21, 2012 13:09

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SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

temple posted:

Weyland faking his death is a perfect example of lazy mystery writing. He faked his death. But he's alive. So, now what? Did he escape the police? Did he cash in on his life insurance? Did it torment his wife with guilt? Nope, it's just seems cool. It's like Jesus in a way



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

This is another example, of many examples, of people overlooking context cues and nuances.

Weyland claims to be already dead *in a prerecorded message* similar to a video last will and testament. When he turns out to be alive, he says "well, I still have a few days of life in me," (or whatever).

The point is fairly obvious: he recorded the message when his death seemed imminent. He referred to himself as already dead, because there was a high chance that he would be dead.

Look at the background of the message. He's on Mars or something. He's walking without the metal exoskeleton. This is obviously long before the mission left - possibly years.

He doesn't go through an elaborate procedure of faking his death, evading police (???) and hurting his wife's feelings (as if this guy has a wife). He simply shows people a video he recorded years ago, back when he assumed he'd be dead. It's not a massive devious conspiracy, and that's why the film doesn't treat it as such. He simply didn't bother updating the video.

That's plot terms. In story terms, the imagery of him being a digital ghost who haunts everyone is what matters, contributing to the imagery of him seeming immortal in a perversion of nature.

Jun 21, 2012 20:46

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

Sarkozymandias posted:

There's a much simpler answer: some people didn't watch the fucking film!



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

Oh they watched it alright. It's just in the sense that a security camera watches a robbery. Information is accumulated - enough to form a rudimentary plot synopsis, even - but there's little reading or interpretation taking place.

Jun 21, 2012 21:12

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

Steve Yun posted:

Welp, time to put Stalker and Solaris on Netflix and reread Frankenstein.

Watched 2001 and Blade Runner a dozen times just this year.

Anything else?



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

Do you mean films referenced in, or similar to, Prometheus?

I think I wrote earlier that the big two are *Creation of the Humanoids* and *Galaxy of Terror*.

But there's also (of the top o' my head) David Cronenberg's *The Fly*, *Planet of the Vampires*, *District 9*, *Jurassic Park*, *Watchmen*, *Apollo 18*, *The Thing*, *The Thing*, *Skyline*, *The Thing*, *AVP:R*, *Silence of the Lambs* and *Contamination*.

Avatar and *AVP* are both clear influences, and *Cabin in the Woods* is quite similar, but those aren't worth checking out if you ask me.

Jun 22, 2012 09:45

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SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

OneThousandMonkeys posted:

I didn't find *Prometheus* funny the way some posters did, but *Galaxy of Terror* is *hilarious*, and on review, yes there are some overall plot similarities. *Galaxy of Terror* is also brazenly shitty.



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

Galaxy Of Terror actually rules, so I dunno what you mean. It's also much more 'serious' than *Prometheus* - in the sense that it's slower-paced, and doesn't have a David-equivalent character or other source of meta-commentary on the action. I found it very effectively grimy and harsh.

I can imagine it being dismissed as 'so bad it's good', but really it's just a damn good film.

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

SUPREME
Mechagodzilla**Martman posted:**

This has happened a few times now in this thread; someone asks for an explanation for something, and when someone gives a possible answer, they respond: "Ah, I see, there's no meaning. Got it. Shit movie, 0/10" Ok, a bit of an exaggeration, but why respond as if you understand and even agree with his answer if the explanation you actually believe has nothing in common with what he said?

It's in line with the folks who dismiss the film's visuals as - at best - a pleasant distraction from the plot.

This is, of course, the same as the 'intent' argument that invariably crops up. It's the assertion that anything not the literal plot of the film could only have been intended to be 'cool', and 'coolness' is only intended to make money. (And making money is meaningless, etc.)

You can see the unstated logic there, with a simple reversal. To these folks, the literal plot is 'real', 'logical', 'uncommercial'... altogether unbiased, neutral and the sole source of 'valid' meaning in the film. Discussing the plot is consequently 'safe', and borderline objective. (How many times have we seen the complaints of 'reading into' the film? Plus the frequent accusations that I and others believe our interpretations to be accurate (???).)

This is a sort of ridiculous cynicism that, in claiming to be beyond ideology, demonstrates only a purer ideological obfuscation.

The old man makeup complaint in this last page is a good example. The hyperreal makeup effects allegedly don't mean anything, even though I just used an accurate philosophical/artistic term to describe them.

The intent-cynic's reply can only be that the effects weren't intended to be hyperreal. Beyond the irrelevance of intent, this is a transparent falsehood. The effects were painstakingly crafted by artisans and included in the film. Are we to believe that the dude painting the individual veins and liver spots in the mask didn't know he was making a hyperrealistic replica of an old man's face?

This is where the intent argument breaks down. Not just with 'the death of the author' but also with basic, obvious points like that. The 'neutral' argument from intent is of course loaded with omissions, falsehoods and shoddy logic. It's simply a device for concealing interpretive failure.

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

SUPREME
Mechagodzilla**ApexAftermath posted:**

This. Thank you. Completely sickening having to read pages and pages of people essentially saying "hey you watched the movie wrong bro, why so mad huh?"

By ignoring the movie's content in favor of some promotional interview thing, people are literally reading the film wrong in the basic sense of 'not at all.'

The film obviously has hard sci-fi elements mixed in with the pulp. The suits are based on real-world cutting-edge suit designs and serve as direct references to Planet Of The Vampires.

The film is very similar to Avatar, which tells a stock 'John Carter of Mars' story with a bunch of ridiculous implausible shit going on. But they make an effort to justify the implausible shit with a thick coating of scientific and pseudo-scientific explanations.

Jurassic Park, an obvious influence on both films, is similar. Michael Crichton's whole thing is to take something pulpy, like an island of surviving dinosaurs, and give it a hard-sci-fi veneer. See also: Quentin Tarantino's Inglourious Basterds - which, as he points out, could have actually happened if these characters existed. It straddles the line between historical accuracy and inaccuracy that we call 'alternate history'.

There's also the question of what kind of 'scary' we're talking about. The film obviously deals with scary questions like 'what if life has no meaning' and such. Maybe humanity is just an insect to be crushed, like Vickers, by a senseless mechanistic universe.

A key line in the film is when they stumble upon the pile of alien corpses and say "this looks like some kind of holocaust painting!" The nuance is crucial - this pile of diegetically real corpses doesn't resemble the holocaust. It looks to the characters like an image of the holocaust, in the same sense that 9/11 "looked like an action movie."

That's the importance of the hyperreal aesthetic, and of characters ignoring obvious symbolic prohibitions. They don't see what the pyramid means because it doesn't 'mean' anything to them. They see it as a glowing neon hologram - points of data on a chart. That's the kind of 'scary' the film traffics in.

i Jun 24, 2012 19:17

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SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

Alien is hard sci-fi because it has a muted colour palette and amiable characters.

temple posted:

Unless the movies are inspired by dying earth novels or Lovecraft, you can consistently apply the pulp filter to nearly every sci-fi film you have ever seen. I've never taken a film course but I'll guess this is covered in introductory education.

That's disingenuous. People aren't simply writing 'it's pulp' and leaving it at that - and most of them are responding to transparently incorrect claims that Prometheus *is not* pulpy.

You're right though: Lovecraft didn't write pulp sci-fi.

i Jun 24, 2012 19:32

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

temple posted:

You have to be shitting me. A book cover?

That's actually not the cover of a book.

Rather, it's the cover of a literal pulp magazine called ASTOUNDING STORIES, for which Lovecraft wrote lurid tales of the macabre. That's not too unusual because his entire career was as a writer of pulp fiction.

i Jun 24, 2012 19:44

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SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

Oh shit, I'm posting in a thread? All this time I thought I was eating a delicious sandwich. Luckily, because I intended to eat a sandwich, I am no longer hungry.

But oh shit! The hunger was metaphorical! Unless I eat literal food, I suppose I'll eventually die.

And oh shit! Metaphors don't actually mean anything, because I'm only 'reading meaning into' a post I probably wrote to sound cool. Hunger is abolished!

But then again, I didn't intend to write a post...

In conclusion, I am immortal. I have literally transcended the physical plane and become a god.

i Jun 24, 2012 20:05

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SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

Now that I have become a literal god, I can tell you from firsthand experience that gods are always 100% rational logicians. You may rest assured that you simply cannot fathom his divine plan.

i Jun 24, 2012 20:10

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

ApexAftermath posted:

I just simply can't get into it on that level because at this point I don't feel that amount of thoughtfulness went into it to begin with. If I would try to watch the film this way I would have the



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

feeling the whole time that I am just projecting what I wish the film would be like onto it.

Again though, this is a result of you reading wrong. Reading refers to a process, not to its conclusion.

Instead of accepting that you dislike the film's meaning - that the film has a meaning (or meanings) that you don't like - you are inventing a fantasy of the film's inherent meaninglessness.

Drawing conclusions from textual evidence is not projecting. It's reading. Even your conclusion that the film is meaningless is technically a product of a reading. It's just a weird and untenable mis-reading.

Jun 24, 2012 20:41

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SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

ApexAftermath posted:

We're never going to agree here because you don't think intent matters at all and you are really into death of the author. I am exactly the opposite. I just find it slightly irritating that things can't just be that way instead of one side or the other has to be "watching the film wrong"

This doesn't have anything to do with 'death of the author', really. You know what people did before Barthes? *They read texts* - looked at the textual evidence and drew conclusions from it.

They simply placed more emphasis on biographical information as a contextualizing factor and wrote in terms of 'what the work says about the author' - frequently misreading things in the process, as people are wont to do.

They didn't say 'oh this book just feels meaningless' and toss it away.

Jun 24, 2012 20:58

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SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

temple posted:

Reducing Prometheus to pulp sci-fi requires you to remove qualifiers like "success" or "effectiveness" of the film to make an observation about it.

This is some bullshit high art/low art false dichotomy right here.

Lovecraft is a celebrated writer of pulp fiction. He wrote - brace yourself - *good pulp*.

ApexAftermath posted:

for me it starts to feel like overthinking and applying intelligence to something that doesn't really earn it and makes me feel silly if I try to view it that way. It has everything to do with death of the author.

No, it really doesn't. There's no part of Barthe's 'Death of the Author' where he's like "hey dudes you should totally apply your intelligence to things that don't earn it." He didn't bother to write that because that's a nonsense opinion not held by any of his peers.

Jun 24, 2012 21:19

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SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

temple posted:

You are just being obstinate. I'm losing patience with this. You are trying to include Lovecraft into pulp because it help legitimize your interpretation (and enjoyment) of Prometheus as serious but also nonsensical when convenient. Prometheus treats its monsters like bugged eye aliens and has underdeveloped characters, come with pulp. And pulp was criticized for that. So, if you can lump Lovecraft's reputation in there, then you lets you handwave away criticism of Prometheus's failings as "art snobbery" when Lovecraft was in no way interested in the same themes and stories of his peers. One guy was published by pulp sci magazines, he was good, so all pulp sci was good. Prometheus is like pulp and it has to be respected because Lovecraft.

Pulp is a genre descriptor. It's not a determinant of quality.

I obviously found a good deal of nuance in the characters, conveyed with minimal exposition (see: Fifield). Nothing I've written should give you the impression that I believe 'Prometheus is nonsensical on purpose'.

Trust me, I'm not dismissing you as an "art snob". I'm dismissing you as a dude who uses words incorrectly, writes things that are demonstrably false, and doesn't seem to have been paying attention.

i Jun 24, 2012 21:54

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SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



HUNDU THE BEAST GOD posted:

Can someone who reads scifi give some good examples of hard sci fi?



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MNZZ...feature=related>

i Jun 24, 2012 22:12

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SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



Alien is borderline identical to Howard Hawks' The Thing From Another World in terms of story structure, themes and such.

Who Goes There?, which The Thing adapts, is a pulp novella originally published in ASTOUNDING STORIES (aka ASTOUNDING SCIENCE-FICTION).

The scene where Weyland confronts the engineer is taken straight from the end of The Thing From Another World, when Dr. Carrington attempts to befriend the monster.

i Jun 24, 2012 22:43

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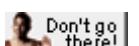
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« Cinema Discusso › Ridley Scott's Prometheus - It looks as much like dicks as anything else.

 POST  Don't go there!

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



temple posted:

A good example of hard sci-fi is probably Michael Crichton. Once again, it doesn't have to be real but he tries to integrate real science, even if scientists pick it apart.

i Jun 24, 2012 23:01

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 REPORT

 QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



If sci-fi were hard enough to be 'real', it would just be called science.

i Jun 24, 2012 23:29

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 REPORT

 QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



I figured the Prometheus had four 'limbs' and a prominent cockpit, to give it a anthropocentric appearance. It ties in with how that alien ship is based on an extremely distorted human form - sort-of like a Henry Moore sculpture.

i Jun 25, 2012 01:49

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 REPORT

 QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



Since David's body is broken, they put his robot brain in a new one: that of an orange tabby cat.

i Jun 25, 2012 01:54

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 REPORT

 QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

Geekboy posted:

Along with **Planet of the Vampires**, what was the other movie that was recommended earlier? I think SMG was talking about movies he felt were similar and I can't remember if the Corman movie that was mentioned was **Galaxy of Terror** or something else.

I loved the **hell** out of PotV, so I was going to give the other movie a try but didn't want to trust my sometimes spotty memory.

My picks were Galaxy Of Terror and Creation Of The Humanoids, so you were right. Galaxy is quite similar to Prometheus in the same way Planet of the Vampires is, so you're on the right track.

Creation Of The Humanoids is more thematically similar, making for a good companion piece. It's a talky, languidly paced film that happens to be beautiful in its own way.

If you like Galaxy of Terror and looking for more Corman Alien 'ripoffs', Mutant (aka Forbidden World) is even better - though it's not tremendously similar to Prometheus.

I also heartily recommend Kinji Fukasaku's The Green Slime, which is another of those rad pro-Alien films.

i Jun 25, 2012 04:30

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QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

JohnnySavs posted:

Around the time the Captain and Shaw had their "Don't you want to know?" "I don't care." conversation I decided that the movie was written as "a bunch of scenes in order." Two characters discussing only character-building things. Cut to two characters having philosophical discussion. Cut to something horrendous (that isn't discovered by anyone until 45 minutes of screen time later). Cut to two characters having a discussion. Cut to something horrendous (that is never even discussed and doesn't regain relevance until the climax of the movie). Etc.

This is a big recurring problem, it seems. The scenes ostensibly don't have relevance unless they're discussed by the characters or become major plot points.

(i.e. instead of returning from the dead and being re-killed, Fifield would return from the dead and give a speech about how he's the new ultimate life-form and the crew would band together to stop him or something - satisfying the complaint that the film has no antagonists(?).)

But nope, actually. the events have relevance to each-other. I've already pointed out how mutant werewolf zombie Fifield serves, metaphorically, as Charlie's ghost. In the way the film is shot and edited, Charlie and the zombie are interchangeable - the same character.

Now, why would Charlie's ghost emerge right after the scene where Shaw aborts his mutant baby?

CAUTION: this is not saying that the black goo deliberately created the zombie in order to literally defend its squid-children. That's plot-thinking. Stop thinking in terms of the plot. The zombie is a metaphor for Shaw's ambivalence over having aborted the (mutant) baby of her (dead) boyfriend.

The scene references David Cronenberg's The Fly, where the mutating/decaying Brundle pleads for his baby to be born because it's all that's left of him. Things aren't cut together accidentally. Film editors cut things together in order to link or contrast them. it doesn't even need to be intentional. That's what editing *is*.

i Jun 26, 2012 20:57

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QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

Armyman25 posted:

Sums up my thoughts about Prometheus.

Yeah. Yeah, it probably does.

i Jun 26, 2012 21:21

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REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

**SUPREME**
Mechagodzilla**temple posted:**

The snake isn't a big deal. Its the fact people defend weaknesses in the film to the point that something obviously "movie logic" dumb is treated like the peak of artistic creativity.

People have a tendency to confuse analysis with praise.

When I say that approaching the snake is movie-character behavior that relates to the broader themes of artificial humanity and empathy, folks respond with:

"There's no way the movie is *trying to be* that good/smart/creative/deep!"

Yet, what I wrote is not a value judgement and never was. It's an accurate observation based on textual evidence. You can object the 'meta' quality of the scene, but saying that it was all probably an unintentional error (and therefore meaningless) is asinine.

Jun 27, 2012 03:46

[Profile](#) [Post History](#) [Rap Sheet](#)[REPORT](#)[QUOTE](#)**SuperMechagodzilla**

Jun 9, 2007

**SUPREME**
Mechagodzilla**temple posted:**

No its called criticism. Every scene CAN be read. And can be criticized poorly or favorably. Lets all pretend value judgements have never existed in criticism.

Criticism without analysis is whining.

Jun 27, 2012 04:12

[Profile](#) [Post History](#) [Rap Sheet](#)[REPORT](#)[QUOTE](#)**SuperMechagodzilla**

Jun 9, 2007

**SUPREME**
Mechagodzilla**ghostwritingduck posted:**

I love your ideas, but I hate that you act like there's a right answer to film and literature.

It's not about 'answers'. It's how you go about it.

I don't care if people agree with me, and actually would prefer if they didn't. That would be more interesting. But I do not condone bad reading.

Jun 27, 2012 04:42

[Profile](#) [Post History](#) [Rap Sheet](#)[REPORT](#)[QUOTE](#)**SuperMechagodzilla**

Jun 9, 2007

**SUPREME**
Mechagodzilla**Xenomrph posted:**

This right here. Maybe people didn't mind the scene or it didn't ruin the movie for them, but I can hope we can at least acknowledge when dumb/poorly-written things happen.

No. You read the scene first, then determine its value based on what it means.

In the context of the entire film, Milburn's motivations are obviously psychological. He's trying to take control of the situation and act tough. He's also obviously fascinated by the creature and is trying to get in for a closer look - while also clearly maintaining some distance. But he is entranced by the thing, and moves too close.

It's not an error that he moves closer to the creature - and the fact that he moves too close is what generates the tension (i.e. "no don't go in the basement!!!").

The point of the scene, as with Fifield, is that his 'irrational' psychological motivations overwhelm his 'rational' professional training. The point is not that he's utterly shit at his job, but that he's human and cannot be reduced to just a job description

Jun 27, 2012 05:46

[Profile](#) [Post History](#) [Rap Sheet](#)[REPORT](#)[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

Xenomorph posted:

I liked the idea that the Deacon was entirely white, and aside from the manner of its birth, didn't seem particularly hostile. And then the art shows it venture out of the lifeboat and stare up at the sun as it ascends a hill (perhaps pondering its own existence?). I find that a whole lot more compelling than the not-Alien we got which everyone immediately compared to the titular Alien creature, and frankly it's very inferior to the Alien.
In interviews Ridley Scott said the capital-A Alien was played out and that he was going to introduce something new and scary, and frankly he didn't - the Alien design is still iconic and memorable, and the Deacon feels like a cheap knock-off.

It's instructive to compare that concept art to the final product, because check the difference in tone. The themes are the same: a creature is indifferently and even accidentally created and immediately abandoned by its creator - but in the final film, the alien is this squirming bastard fishman with a dunce cap and an overbite. Instead of looking up at the sun to see what may be its creator flying away (a bit on the nose, no?) - it screeches, eyeless, in a puddle of slime.

Forget the interviews; the point clearly isn't to be scary - or not *that* kind of scary. The alien is pathetically excremental - almost comedically so. It's a direct rejoinder to Shaw's optimism at the end.

i Jun 27, 2012 20:07

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

Shanty posted:

Good point, this just emphasizes the absurdity of the situation with the first head: Shaw has literally found God's head, and she's shoving it in a ziplock bag, dragging it through a storm and finally electrocuting it until it explodes. Towards David, she's much kinder. I suppose she's accepting his transgressions as creation as she hopes her creators will hers (whatever they perceive them to be).

I think it's an important nuance that the head doesn't explode because of the electric probe. It explodes because it becomes alive, after centuries of resting (un)dead and undisturbed.

Paolomania got it right earlier, when he pointed out that the black goo is only evil from the perspective of the 'rational' people. It is a creative, life-giving force.

The probe 'gives life' - activating the goo - and the goo is what causes the head to explode like an overripe melon. The head becomes too alive - horrifically alive. It's obviously in pain. It starts to bubble with rot.

The engineers, as befitting dudes modeled after greek statues, are 'immortal'. Although it's implied that they are literally mortal (notable detail: they have navels), the engineer they try to talk with has remained in stasis for 2000 years. The head has sat there, perfectly preserved in the helmet, for the same length of time. Like Weyland, the engineers have mastered 'unnaturally' extending their lifespan. This is why the engineers we see later are all biomechanical and covered in life-support hoses.

So we're working with two opposite definitions of life: 'life' as in remaining unchanged and not-dead, and 'life' meaning a cycle of violent death and (re)birth. In other words, the life of the individual versus life in the abstract.

More to the point: it is the Freudian 'life drive' (pleasurable homeostatic stability) versus the 'death drive' (shocking excess of pleasure-pain (*jouissance*)).

i Jun 28, 2012 12:17

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

Yuppie Scum posted:

Reinforced by David's head (and consciousness) remaining cognizant and "essentially" undamaged when it loses its body, unlike the engineer. Its like David telling Shaw "what's the point, you've already found your new immortal god -- in me" when he questions her rationale for continuing to seek answers from the Engineers.

Although, it's again *funny* that his head continues to move around without its body. This is funnier than even the basic slapstick of the dignified Weyland getting his comeuppance. The joke is of course that David remains dignified even after he's been decapitated.

Decapitation doesn't reveal that he is godlike. It reveals that he is 'human, all too human'. He's a bundle of wires and goo that, ridiculously and idiosyncratically, maintains its British composure.

[#] [i] Jun 28, 2012 20:15

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



How deep is the movie?

I suppose it's an 'average' depth - so, around 4 metres?

3-5 metre ballpark?

And how's it taste? I say 'almonds.'

[#] [i] Jul 1, 2012 11:28

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



This is no joke. We've had dozens of people in writing thousands of words in the thread (and spending countless manhours in the process), all trying to determine the physical dimensions of the meaning of the film.

Is it deep? No! Not that deep! You are reading too deeply into it! You are going to exceed its intended meaning-capacity!

This is way more important than determining *what* it means.

[#] [i] Jul 1, 2012 20:33

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



I think there's a risk of 'doubting your own senses' and trying to resolve why the engineer-alien are slightly different at the beginning and end of the film - to fill in the gap. What this misses is that the importance lies in the insurmountable difference itself.

The ones at the beginning of the film appear almost ethereal. Their gestures are purely symbolic. The scene itself is cryptic and mysterious. I'll note again that, after the cells divide and the title card appears, the film cuts to inside the cave. The opening scene *is* the cave painting that Shaw uncovers. When Shaw talks about her hypothesis about the engineers, she is talking about that opening scene, which she read on the wall.

Of course, the film itself is about trying to find the scientific explanation for these symbolic images. What is the black goo?

So, of course, we see later that they're godlike because they're held together with life-support technology. The black goo is some kind of nanotech stuff. The troublesome thing isn't that these biomechanical engineers are different from the 'pure' ones. The troublesome thing is that they're one and the same.

Many people have interpreted the engineer killing everyone as him being mad at robots, or having some other problem with humanity. I think it's simpler: "you weren't supposed to see me like this." This is God as viewed without all those symbolic trappings. The scientists came in search of his 'essence', and found that his existence preceded it.

"Thus, He speaks in tautologies not only concerning his own quidditas ("I am what I am"), but also and above all in what concerns logos, the reasons for what He is doing, or, more precisely, for his injunctions (what He asks or prohibits us to do); His inexorable orders are ultimately grounded in "It is like this BECAUSE I SAY IT IS LIKE THIS!". In short, this is the God of pure Will, of its capricious abyss which lies beyond any global rational order of logos, a God who does not have to account for anything he does" ([link](#))

Of course, they are not literally God himself, but a gaggle of ubermenschen creating and destroying on a whim - and people have pointed out the Nietzschean tones to Shaw's overcoming of nihilism (plus the quoting of A Space Odyssey, *doy*). She puts on the space jockey hat at the end.

I think David should be seen as the "active nihilist" who clears space for her. Holloway is, by contrast, *passively* nihilistic - which concisely explains why David sees fit to remove him from Shaw's life.

[#] [i] Jul 2, 2012 12:01

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

Xenomorph posted:

Keitel divulges that through his research, he thinks he's stumbled across a sort of "plan" in motion for the universe, with the Aliens being a kind of cosmic "balance".



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

That's really the precise opposite of Prometheus' themes, given that it's about how there is no great plan and certainly no cosmic balance. Prometheus also doesn't have much (if any) moralism about 'playing god' or knowing too much. The point is that the knowledge they obtain is fairly useless - except for the bit at the end, when Shaw breaks free of the aliens' whims and consequently saves Earth.

Also notable is the amount of fuckin' words in those comics panels, with the dude referring to them as destroying angels like fifteen times a page.

Angels that destroy? I'm not sure I understand this novel concept - could you repeat it one hundred times and also make it the title of the book?

kuddles posted:

Since it's an automated device in the far flung future, I don't understand why they did that for any purpose other than visual effect. Like I said, it was just the lack of basic scientific knowledge that turned me off. If the device stitched her up in 5 seconds or shot some healing glue or some kind of laser I wouldn't have batted an eye.

In later shots the wound had completely healed, with a visible white scar. She was given some sort of fast-healing drugs or whatever, with the staples just serving as a temporary thing.

That is why technobabble exposition isn't necessary.

i Jul 3, 2012 20:08

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

Why cookie Rocket posted:

So you're saying it's so poorly made that it's unworthy of critical analysis? 😊

No, but it is much less interesting.

And even in terms of the visuals, it's just the same shit we've seen from Alien, but more and/or larger. Stars and diagrams float around the characters' heads to represent genius, like it's a Ron Howard movie or something. It's both meaningful and boring.

i Jul 3, 2012 20:19

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

kuddles posted:

Assuming everything you are saying is correct, then what was the point of that transition? What was it trying to say? To me it was a cool concept ruined by a bunch of lazy writing and nonsense design decisions, which was essentially a lot of this movie. I'm starting to think it was a poorly written screenplay that was elevated by Scott's direction because a lot of the symbolism feels unrelated to anything else in the film.

The medical pod is like the space fire axe. It works perfectly, but it is comically overdesigned and repurposed to do something it's not meant to do.

The axe isn't supposed to be a weapon. The medical pod is not supposed to be used by the still-conscious female patient. (The Prometheus is not supposed to be a gigantic suicide bomb...)

Now: is there a theme, in the film, of things exceeding the parameters of their design?

i Jul 4, 2012 20:11

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

Cinnamon Bastard posted:

It's a reversal of the expectations of creation and healing. Big shiny clean pod, supposed to be the most advanced medical items out there. Pregnancy, it's supposed to be magical and joyous, the miracle of life. The search for our origin, it's supposed to be the most fulfilling and perfect aspiration. The engineers themselves, our creators, are envisioned as majestic and holy creatures, acting selflessly to create.

This is what Shaw believes.



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

Then everything, every one of them, turns to violence, blood, terror and death. *And she survives it.* She seeks out the pain and the violence, pushes through it, is wounded by the truth but survives a short but brutal healing process. She's scarred but functional. Just like David is torn to pieces and yet functional in spite of Ash's state under similar conditions.

[...]

Also: the obvious imagery of the machine performing the abortion, and the imagery of having a liver pecked out followed by a rapid healing process.

There's a key point of difference, though, between this scene and the equivalent scene in Alien. The machine is what performs the operation here, where Kane has his guts ripped out in a sudden splatter of abjection. And the machine performs its procedure rather perfectly. It scans Shaw's body, cuts a perfect line, grabs perfectly, fires staples with pinpoint accuracy... But the important point is the scanning - the translation of Shaw's body into a digital model of a "male with foreign object"*, followed by the effortless 'cutting and pasting' of her body as if it were digital.

The other crucial detail, that you've already touched on, is that Shaw looks into herself, reaches into herself, and feels no pain (*reduced* pain, at least). She sees that she is just a bundle of organs, which themselves are just bundles of molecules - but she persists in asserting that she is a human being, with a soul.

The reference is to Prometheus and the Eagle, but it's a reference-by-proxy to Camus' *The Myth of Sisyphus*. Shaw's search for God and meaning is absurd, but Prometheus is an absurdist film. One must imagine that Shaw is happy - not minding that it hurts, right? And I don't mind either, 'cause it's fuckin' funny.

Camus's point about constant revolt in the face of hopelessness takes on literal connotation in the film, with the decapitation of the (literally) white God-king - set upon by his once-contained horde. In keeping with Vickers' point that a king has his reign, and then dies, this is imagery of regicide.

"The regicide is the symbolic inauguration of political modernity: the instantaneous and total transfer of absolute sovereignty from king to people. The fall of the blade marks the sublime instant separating and thereby fusing before and after, ancien régime and revolutionary republic: *Le roi est mort-vive la patrie*. This sacrificial logic was ceremoniously enacted on January 21, 1793 in an event marked, at least according to all the narratives, by sacred pomp and ceremony. It was formalized at the king's trial when Robespierre invokes the "baptismal" quality of the execution. "The king must die because the nation must live": an infinite investment in the sacral body of the king must be generated by the staging of the latter's infinite divestment. The regeneration of the people is nothing other than the restoration of a nation's body to itself through the expropriation of the expropriator. [...] And from such a baptism flow all the contradictions of modernity: the inaugural self-betrayal of democracy in ever-more-inventive forms of terror."

-Rebecca Comay, "Dead Right: Hegel and the Terror"

Also in reference to Comay: "the proliferation of blushing heads, talking heads, suffering heads, heads that dreamed, screamed, returned the gaze, the disembodied body parts, detached writing hands, the ghosts and ghouls and zombies that would fill the pages of gothic novels throughout Europe." ... "The obsessive fantasies of survival entertained by the popular imaginary of the guillotine, and that preoccupied both literature and medical science from [the 1790s], are but the inversion and confirmation of the living death to which life had seemingly been reduced [by the self-destructive revolutionary Terror]."

This puts Prometheus in line with The Shining, where the hotel is not haunted by the victims of genocide, but by the perpetrators - 'the upper classes' and the trappings of power that entrance Jack Torrance. Prometheus constantly compares Weyland and the engineers to ghosts, and their pursuit of immortality through pleasant homeostasis can't help but carry socio-political connotations - along with the film's mirror fantasies of undead zombies and such, which express the persistent, underlying Real of social antagonism.

*This is also a 'meta' reference to Kane's 'foreign object'. In Alien, the literal chestburster was a metaphor for unwanted pregnancy. In Prometheus, the literal unwanted pregnancy is read by the machine as a fictional 'chestburster'.

i Jul 6, 2012 11:21

Profile Post History Rap Sheet

REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



Fil5000 posted:

I think it was SMG that made the point earlier that straight after this sequence we cut to the cave paintings - so what we're seeing may be a) the painter's interpretation of what the Engineers told them or b) Shaw's interpretation of the painting. There's absolutely no guarantee that this is what actually happened.

Not just that: it specifically cuts to Shaw puncturing the cave wall. At that point, it's 'revealed' that the opening scene is 'only a painting' one that serves as another clue in her quest for positive knowledge of god.

Mechagodzilla

The act of breaching the wall is arguably what changes the scene into the painting. Where the opening scene presents the myth with all its symbolic weight, the cut to the cave punctures it and reduces it to a mystery to be solved. Like: 'Which planet is that, exactly? and 'What is the black goo?'

The subsequent scene of them taking all these different artworks from the different cultures and reducing them to an alignment of dots has unfortunate connotations. It's a depressing idea, betraying exactly how against the Ancient Aliens shit (and, implicitly, Jungian psychology) the movie actually is. Of course the person presenting this stuff is Holloway - the film's most contemptible character.

i Jul 9, 2012 13:32

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

I am thinking of concepts like the collective unconscious, yeah. It's often interpreted in a new-age spiritualist way (see: Avatar).

Adolf Bastian is another example. His thing was that he traveled the world gathering information of geographically disconnected cultures, comparing them to narrow down humanity's core 'primordial ideas'. That's rather similar to Holloway's focus on how the cultures are 'separated by centuries'.

It's not that they're wrong on the plot level. Obviously the dots do line up and actually bring them to the right place. But I think the film's sympathies with David and its distinct existentialist/absurdist themes show that it's against that kind of essentialist conclusions they had drawn.

i Jul 9, 2012 23:31

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

Paolomania posted:

I also don't see a reason to interpret the scene as anything other than representational. SMG's proposal is not unimaginable, but usually you get some pretty sepia filters or something like Shaw's dream dots to clue you in that what you are looking at is not representational. There is also a title screen and a fade to black before the excavation scene, it's not like the pickax from one scene digs into the image of the other. The fact that the rest of the movie is also presented realistically and from a reliable (although limited) 3rd person perspective leads me to take the events of the opening as actually happening in some unknown context of the Prometheus universe.

Prometheus does a neat trick there - where what initially looks like a simple fade-out is revealed (through Shaw's puncturing of the black wall) to be a dissolve from one scene to the other.

Both imply some ambiguously long span of time, but a dissolve connotes a more strict continuity between the two scenes.

Also, keep in mind the Shining/Kubrick influence on the film when we're talking about how fantasy/dream sequences are treated.

i Jul 10, 2012 03:16

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

Mustach posted:

Why would it be depressing for the movie to be against Jung? Or do you mean that the movie illustrates its contempt by making the connection depressing and delivering it via Holloway?

The latter, yeah. When the artworks are superimposed like that, so that the dots line up, the non-dot aspects are implicitly discarded. It's depressingly reductionist. The same imagery recurs when Shaw superimposes the two DNA charts and starts crying with joy(?) at the resulting bar graph. "This is everything!" No, it's not.

The lining up of the bar graphs also matches the film's use of 'archetypal' imagery. The characters of course try to unite new-age spiritualism (influenced by Jung) with scientific knowledge. Think all those quacks misusing quantum physics. The film, however, goes beyond the archetypes.

"Are these archetypes, these hypostatized symbols residing in permanent fashion in the basement of the human soul, truer than that which is presumably at the surface? Is that which is in the cellars truer than that which is in the granary?"

-Lacan

If Charlie (in his various guises) is the film's antagonist, then the chart scene is one of Shaw's lowest points as a character, where she nearly succumbs to his views. Of course, once Shaw starts to voice her dissatisfaction with what she discovered, Charlie literally walks into the scene and pacifies her with a good deep-dicking.

What critics like Walter Chaw missed in decrying that scene's misogyny is that it's 'supposed to be' misogynistic. Charlie is the bad guy, having earlier chastised Shaw for pushing herself too hard and generally holding her back from authentic religious belief.

Remember that Charlie is technically an atheist. Having the two act as an inseparable pair, at the start, shows that Shaw's pursuit of god in terms of positive knowledge is indistinguishable from crummy atheism. The film isn't anti-atheist, though, because David serves as the film's 'good atheist' - and the film is obviously sympathetic to his POV. What it rejects is Charlie's new-agey approach to atheism - which apparently includes his belief in 'sexual healing'.

i Jul 11, 2012 21:57

Profile Post History Rap Sheet

REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

Flesh Forge posted:

While I don't disagree with your analysis of that scene, Chaw has a definite point there in that Film in general very often portrays crying females as really just in need of a good fucking to make them happy. It definitely made me squeamish, and not in a good way, more of a "ugh you guys went there" way.

I normally agree with Chaw, but he's profoundly misinterpreted the film by reading it as a copy of Alien. Obviously it 'fails' on those terms. (Chaw unfortunately does that a lot, as in his review of The Thing 2011 and Watchmen - both extremely similar to this film.)

In that reading, Charlie is 'supposed to be' a good, charming character and we feel sad for him when he dies. That's not, however, how the character is presented in the actual film. He's very subtly controlling of Shaw, and Shaw is with him mostly because he reminds her of her father. David identifies that it's not a healthy relationship, which is partly why he kills Charlie.

I think the scene with Vickers and Janek serves as a contrast, not as a complement, by the way. Janek is presented as a smarmy but fairly intuitive character - immediately identifying the homoerotic tension between Milburn and Fiefield, for example. He sleeps with Vickers as a way of helping her get over her obsessive need to copy David instead of 'being herself'. It's important that we aren't actually shown the sex scene, because the actually-important part is her realization that she's acting like a self-loathing robot. By contrast, Charlie is (however unintentionally) trying to control Shaw in the guise of helping her.

Remember that Charlie acts as a father-figure to Shaw - it gives their relationship incestuous undertones. Meanwhile, there are incestuous overtones to Vicker's kissing of her father's hand. Janek helps draw Vickers away from that unhealthy dynamic, just as David helps free Shaw of Charlie's influence.

i Jul 11, 2012 23:09

Profile Post History Rap Sheet

REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

Lord Krangdar posted:

Is that Walter Chaw guy a respected critic?

He is - without question - the best critic currently writing newspaper-style reviews, and I agree with 95% of them. I know this because I've read every single one.

No Wave is right, though: he has been 'slipping' somewhat in the last year or so, because he's (apparently) more focused on writing a book. The Prometheus review is way below his usual standard.

I think Prometheus is just baffling a lot of people. Armond White's review of the film is uncharacteristically 'mainstream' for him, after having praised Zack Snyder in the past. As mentioned before, Prometheus is basically Watchmen is space.

i Jul 12, 2012 08:53

Profile Post History Rap Sheet

REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

Why cookie Rocket posted:

I think I missed this. What do you mean? Are you referring to the deflation of the creator myth via Dr. Manhattan, or...?

I'm talking the hyperreal aesthetic, primarily. It's got the colourful lighting, CGI-augmented action everywhere, 'bad' old-age makeup, incongruous musical choices, etc. But unlike (say) Batman and Robin, this is in the service of a very downbeat sort of film. Although Prometheus is pretty funny, it's not the same kind of humor. It's a horror-comedy.



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

But the thematic similarity is also there. Dr. Manhattan is pretty similar to the Engineers, but also to David. And it's also in how the films use movie references - especially Blade Runner and The Man Who Fell To Earth references. Snyder quotes the latter visually, while Fassbender based his performance partly on Bowie's. The movie references are tied in with the question of historicity - see 'talking with ghosts' in this one, and Watchmen's recreation of the zapruder film via CGI in a parking lot.

i Jul 12, 2012 21:18

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

Oh Jesus, what have I done?

The point of the scene is that Shaw, after having accomplished her life's work, finds it unsatisfactory. Charlie, rather than help her confront her issues, tells her everything's alright - basically 'don't think too hard about it'. The actual process of fucking is ancillary to this.

Shaw obviously feels better, but the point of the film isn't that Shaw needs to feel better, but that she has to be confronted by the meaninglessness of the universe and overcome it in order to become a full-fledged authentic individual. This is what happens when she's left in despair on the rock, but then decides to blast off into space on a wacky adventure regardless.

SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

i Jul 13, 2012 02:04

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

Flesh Forge posted:

No no, in that scene I think disappointment comes across pretty clearly - but it's a big swerve from all the other signals she's given out before that point, and the dialogue through which it's delivered is so clunky and awful ("I can't create life ").

The 'clunky' dialogue there is part-and-parcel with the overall camp aspect of the film. It's a domestic scene (their little apartment has a bed, bath and full kitchen) staged somewhat like a soap opera. Shaw declaring that she's infertile is stagey and not terribly compelling. Charlie comes in, instantly comforts her and we 'tastefully' fade to black. It's not 'supposed to be' a compelling look at psychological impact of fertility, or an expression of the power of love. It's 'supposed to be' banal and mildly insulting.

If the scene were successful in the sense you're using, then it would lose that subversive edge, endorsing Charlie's new-agey worldview and Shaw's passive acceptance of it. I think that's a misreading of the film, though. Charlie is not a tragic hero whose death we care about. As it actually plays out, the scene aligns with David's POV, where he views these people as characters in a movie and not full-fledged human beings.

SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

i Jul 13, 2012 09:32

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

mastershakeman posted:

The only thing I didn't really get about Prometheus is what the point of the zombie Fifield was.

Zombie Fifield is an amalgam of traits from Charlie, the engineers, the goo and himself.

It allows for Charlie to 'die twice' in the narrative, with totally different reactions from Shaw (the first time she's obviously distraught, the second time she neither knows nor cares). In that sense, it represents her 'getting over' Charlie - although there's obviously lot of other stuff going on in that scene.

The giant zombie image is a dark mirror to the engineers' undeath/immortality, as you kinda noted. It foreshadows what happens to Weyland when he asks for "more life".

SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

i Jul 14, 2012 02:06

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

Zachack posted:

it's not supported by the content.



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

I think you're missing the progression of events here.

That Shaw's discovery seems to answer 'everything' but then can't help her account for (or cope with) her infertility, is precisely what makes the results unsatisfactory. This is why she goes from happy to crying in the span of a single scene.

Greenplastic posted:

This is a subtext I think very few people would pick up on their first viewing. Even if your interpretation of the film seems to fit, I didn't pick up on any of that when I saw it, and neither did my friends. I'm very used to judging the quality of films mostly based on first impression, because you know, you can only lose your virginity once, after that you know what to expect. Does it have to do with viewing a film as an immediate emotional experience vs. as an intellectual statement to be analyzed? Don't want to derail the thread too much, but any thoughts on this?

I only watched the film once, and everything I've written here is based on that viewing and my memory of it. Clearly it is possible to 'pick up on this stuff the first time around. I suppose it's just a matter of not treating 'emotional' and 'intellectual' as discontinuous stages.

Also, subtext isn't a concrete thing. It's always relative to some notion of the text's 'surface' meaning or something. It always bugs me when people talk about 'depth' or 'shallowness' in an artwork like there is this objective surface with stuff hiding in the murk beneath. That's not how it works.

A lot of this stuff can't even be considered subtext. Prometheus is overtly about Ancient Aliens crap, the search for the meaning of life, and hyperreal aesthetics - *on the plot level*.

i Jul 14, 2012 09:44

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QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

Zachack posted:

Shaw cries because that's a typical human reaction (albeit exaggerated for the movie because wasting time on natural emotional transition is for other movies) and the scene exists to further heighten the body horror ten minutes later.

Yes, Shaw is literally infertile and infertility is depressing for humans. (Gosh! Wow!)

In the context of the film though, we are dealing with the search for the meaning of life. In a very basic way, Shaw's ostensible discovery of 'everything' is countered with the lingering question of why bad things happen to good people.

The statements "creation is easy" and "but why can't I do it?" represent a direct contrast between the 'objective' scientific knowledge they accumulated and Shaw's subjective concerns.

I'm not sure what your argument is here, to be honest. It reads like a "you're reading something into it that's not there!" thing, but I hope it's not.

i Jul 14, 2012 21:37

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REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

I'd return to the similarity to Sunshine there, where one character dies and is immediately replaced with different character who is technically not the same person but fills the exact same thematic role. (Apologies if you haven't seen Sunshine.)

In Prometheus, Charlie is 'burnt by the sun' in philosophical terms, meaning that he's directly experienced the traumatic void of the Real, without the protective distortions of the symbolic network. Fifeild represents the resulting madness.

In this film, the gap between the Real and the Symbolic is filled by the Thing of the black goo. (In Sunshine, the Thing is the literal sun. In The Thing, the Thing is the Thing.)

Another relevant version of the Thing would be the Id-machines from Forbidden planet and Solaris, which materialize one's desires...

"Is the planet around which the story turns, composed of the mysterious matter which seems to think, i.e. which in a way is the direct materialization of Thought itself, not an exemplary case of the Lacanian Thing as the "Obscene Jelly", the traumatic Real, the point at which symbolic distance collapses, the point at which there is no need for speech, for signs, since, in it, thought directly intervenes in the Real? This gigantic Brain, this Other-Thing, involves a kind of psychotic short-circuit: in short-circuiting the dialectic of question and answer, of demand and its satisfaction, it provides - or, rather, imposes on us - the answer before we even raise the question, directly materializing our innermost fantasies which support our desire. Solaris is a machine that

generates/materializes, in reality itself, my ultimate fantasmatic objectal supplement/partner that I would never be ready to accept in reality, although my entire psychic life turns around it."

-Zizek ([link](#))

"Obscene Jelly" is of course a good descriptor as any for what the black goo is. The joke of the movie, which David is in on, is that Charlie and Weyland (and Milburn/Fifield) receive exactly what they desire.

And then, aren't Shaw's need for pregnancy and contact with her father the basic things she desires, but shouldn't obtain? As I noted earlier in the thread, the end of the film shows Shaw's movement from desire to drive. She realizes how horrific it would be to have the Thing directly materialize her pregnancy, which is why she cuts it out. (The horror is partly in the incestuous undertones - she dates Charlie and seeks God because they remind her of her father.) But after a period of total despair, she decides to confront the absurdity of the universe head-on, knowing that she will never receive full satisfaction of her desires but persisting anyways.

i Jul 14, 2012 22:34

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QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

That's a really bad review. It makes the mistake of isolating the characters from the presentation of them. Basically, saying 'this is how real people should act' without first asking 'why do the characters act this way?' That's a bratty refusal to engage with the film.

The head explosion scene is a good example. The point was clearly that they were doing some sort of esoteric scientific procedure, leaving the audience squirming and saying "no-fuck-why would you do that?" It's obvious from how the actors act and how the scene is shot that these scientists know exactly what they are doing. Their movements are calm and deliberate, and they actually narrate the steps they are taking. It's obvious from this context that they've already 'decontaminated' the head or something. It's simply not exposed directly to the audience.

(Technical 'spergs for EU nerds can be satisfied with the knowledge that they had already scanned the head. Their extremely advanced contaminant-detection sensors are canon.)

The scene is also great fun because you have no idea what they hope to learn by 'tricking it into thinking it's alive!' Implicitly, they want to see its muscles and neurons in motion. But it's not just a trick: the head does come alive - horrifically is alive. It's this obscene life that bubbles up from it, causing it to swell and explode. The scientists believe it's only a trick because, as we've established, they think only 'live' humans have souls. Their blithe disregard for the head's pain matches their disregard for David's feelings.

This doesn't have anything to do with the camp aspects of the film though. Approaching Prometheus as a serious drama or not, that Forbes review is based on a crummy reading of the film. (With a bonus "it's not the same as Alien!" whine. Ripley is not the last good female character. It's time to move on from 1979.)

i Jul 15, 2012 11:06

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REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

Goffer posted:

I'm going to have to disagree. When there's a scene where a character performs a "no-fuck-why would you do that?" procedure, there's the implicit implication that they know what they're doing, and there's justification for the disturbing nature of the scene. When the head explodes it creates a "...why the fuck DID they do that?" moment. It does feed into the amateur science hour feel they were gunning for, certainly.

They didn't deliberately detonate the head. I'm not sure how anyone could get that impression, given how shocked the characters are, and how they have to quickly shove it in the emergency box. In reality, when scientists unearth a mummy, they don't go full-biohazard like it's a zombie/pandemic movie. They wear simple rubber gloves and face-masks.

Yet 'tactical realism' zombie-logic seems to be exactly what's being used here. This is not about 'how they would act in reality', but how they *should* act in a zombie movie for maximum zombie-effectiveness.

And, more to the point, it's about how those actions are shown. In a zombie movie, we'd be shown all the decontamination procedures in extensive detail because they're actually story-relevant. In Prometheus, that's absolutely irrelevant - as much so as showing how the engines work, or what Fifield ate for breakfast, or why Weyland's asshole bodyguard is such an asshole.

And even more to the point: that level of tactical realism would result in an extremely awful zombie movie where everything is brushed aside so we can see people 'realistically' scrubbing their hands for five minutes or something. Not even real zombie movies do that. Seriously, name one.

But then, look at these fucking idiots! http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_bzqSI97sMg

They should lock that mummy in an airtight vault in Area 51 and unwrap it using a remotely-operated bomb disposal drone, just in case it starts spewing nerve gas (as mummies are wont to do). It's the only way to be safe.

i Jul 15, 2012 20:36

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REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

Tuff posted:

What's so traumatic about the Real? I look at, hear, and sometimes even touch real things every day and I don't curl up into a fetal position or nothing.

The Real is a Lacanian psychoanalytic term for everything outside language/culture/whatever. It's traumatic because, when it erupts, it's something that doesn't fit into one's everyday reality.

That everyday reality you're referring to is the symbolic order, which is the whole world generated by language, culture and all that. The Real is what resists symbolization, and is consequently incomprehensible. (Lovecraft's 'gods' are good fictional examples.)

Another example: When you look at a person's face, you see a person - even though most people know the blunt fact that, behind the face, there are only clumps of blood and goo. The person is symbolic reality. The gore is the Thing, which is right on the border of the Real.

In Prometheus, David talks about this fact when he notes that his humanoid face and clothes are totally arbitrary. He knows that he's 'just' a bundle of circuits or whatever, and that his human face is symbolic. At the same time, he does understand the importance of symbolic reality - which is why he alters his appearance (by dying his hair) and behaves in a self-consciously theatrical, performative way.

The scientists dismiss him as just a bundle of circuits as well, but the point isn't that the symbolic is fake or something. It actually is reality. David effectively *is* human and has a soul because he has that symbolic face. Saying he's just a robot is like saying you're just meat.

i Jul 15, 2012 22:00

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REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

Tuff posted:

That's some good shit, and it explains why brains outside of skulls are fucking unsettling. But a face doesn't symbolize our meatmatter directly, it symbolizes our mind or personhood, which is a derivation of the interactions of our meat cells. So it's more like a chain of abstraction that eventually becomes something comprehensible to us.

Yeah exactly! This theme is all over the movie. It's why Charlie is sad that "it's just another tomb". He doesn't want to talk to the real gods (represented by all the art, writing and other symbols in the tomb). He wants direct contact with the *Real* gods - so David's like 'okay' and doses him with the Thing-goo. Charlie gets exactly what he asked for.

(Notably, the centerpiece of the tomb is a giant human face.)

This is also why you have the 'exploding head' scene. It's a human face, but they see it as a clump of dead meat, without a soul. Suddenly, it bubbles with expressions of pain and trauma, and the Thing-goo gore explodes from it.

It shows just how well-written the film's characters actually are. Charlie is the one who derisively comments on David's symbolic clothes - 'why do you need a suit if you don't have lungs?' He's also the one who takes off his helmet, for more direct *immersion* in the environment - without a screen.

The whole film is concerned with this sort of immersion, which is why it's got the hyperreal 'Avatar' aesthetic with its 'immersive' 3-D. Suspension of disbelief is the realm of the symbolic. 'Immersion' into a virtual canonical 'universe', on the other hand, strives to bypass the symbolic and come closer to the Real.

"In the case of the efficient symbolic fiction of the judge wearing his insignia, "I know very well that this person is a corrupt weakling, but I nonetheless treat him as if *I believe that* the symbolic big Other speaks through him": I disavow what my eyes tell me and choose to believe the symbolic fiction. On the contrary, in the case of the simulacrum of virtual reality, "I know very well that what I see is an illusion generated by digital machinery, but I nonetheless accept to immerse myself in it, to behave as if *I believe it*." Here, I disavow what my (symbolic) knowledge tells me and choose to believe my eyes only..."

-Zizek again! ([link](#))

Charlie is the film's main antagonist because he strives for that immersion, when the film is clearly satirizing his approach by killing him off like a punk. Prometheus is anti-Avatar.

i Jul 15, 2012 23:16

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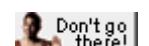
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REPORT

QUOTE

Cinema Discusso › Ridley Scott's Prometheus - It looks as much like dicks as anything else.

 POST  Don't go there!

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



Lord Krangdar posted:

Which movie is that from?

28 Days Later..., though I guess I misquoted it slightly.

(Pictured: an unrealistic, stylized image.)

i Jul 16, 2012 07:21

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 REPORT

 QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



Wow you are a bad writer. My writing doesn't resemble that parody at all.

i Jul 16, 2012 10:26

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 REPORT

 QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



Gorn Myson posted:

From what I can tell, he's posting something from the pomo essay generator, so it's meant to be poorly written and completely incomprehensible.

Yeah, but the point of parody is to highlight the flaws in my writing by means of exaggeration. Without that focus, he seems to be attacking the concept of 'thinking about art' in general.

It's something betrayed by his whining about LOST. I haven't seen LOST but, if Prometheus is any indication, Lindelof is a pretty well-read dude. He's clearly aware of Zizek's love for Alien, and there are plenty of other apt references in the film. How could someone dismiss an entire TV series of this stuff as 'meaningless'?

I guess he's determining 'meaning' by how 'tight' the narrative is - but Prometheus is extremely tight. There's not a wasted shot in the film - the editing is laser-precise and the cinematography is clear and expressive. 'Course he probably means 'tight' in terms of 'plot holes' - but plenty of people have gone through and systematically explained not just the film's plot but its story. There aren't any plot holes.

i Jul 16, 2012 11:13

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 REPORT

 QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

No Wave posted:

The thing that people don't get about SMG's analysis is that to him "catharsis" isn't what makes a movie good. It's literally the only thing that matters to a fanboy. For them it's much more of an obvious sexual substitute.

Actually, I think it's more the opposite. There is obvious catharsis in the film's humor - and especially Shaw's



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

overcoming of nihilist despair to go on ridiculous space adventures.

Here's a case study that I think is most apt: remember Cloverfield?

When the first teaser was released, the nerds collectively yelled "Ohmigod, it's VOLTRON! We're going to get VOLTRON, simulated with more reality than ever before. We- / will become IMMERSED IN VOLTRON, immersed in that universe of anime!"

Of course what they got was something inexplicable. Cloverfield is a lovecraftian horror from space whose origin in the film directly contradicted both the promotional ARG and tie-in manga(!!).

The complaints about the characters were same as we have here. "It's tactically 'unrealistic' to save the person you love. I can't sympathize with them. They're not rational actors. I hate them! They're douchebags. I don't like them."

And in the film, we actually have a nerd character, talking with a girl. He says maybe the monster's from space, trying to find a plausible explanation. She says, sarcastically, "like Superman?" - obviously referring to the impossible metaphorical character. And he's like "yeah, exactly like... Wait. You know who Superman is?" He's talking about the scientific plausibility of Superman, who was 'realistically' sent from space. He talks about who Superman is, meaning that he sees him as almost an actual person. The girl is baffled and irritated.

This desired immersion (into the Superman/VOLTRON universe) stands for a sort of comfortable homeostasis. Nerds want the comfort of what they've already seen. The familiar. Clover and the black goo don't fit. There's no ARG explaining them. He's not going to get laid.

i Jul 16, 2012 21:32

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QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

foodfight posted:

I've been laughing about this for days. All the backlash really makes me wonder what sort of movie would have been "satisfying" to all the haters.



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

That's assuming they wanted a movie and not a navigable VR reenactment. ('Videogame' implies too much interaction. More 'scripted sequence.')

Alternate answer:

Alien, exactly the same, without the sex.

i Jul 18, 2012 14:34

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QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

Why cookie Rocket posted:

So I guess I'm a little unclear, it's both a powerful reclaiming of the xenomorph design, while consciously being kind of crap to subvert fanboy expectations?



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

Yeop, he's spot-on there. The 'deacon' is a wretched thing that looks like Gollum fucked the shark from Deep Blue Sea and it's blindly screeching in a puddle of afterbirth. It has an overbite.

It's *excremental* - and note that it was extruded from God's body and seen, earlier, crucified on that relief-sculpture mural. Like David, and eventually Shaw, the Deacon is one of the more clearly human 'characters' in the film, precisely because it's so 'inhumanly' abject. It's not scary though, and it doesn't evoke an empathetic response. The statement is wonderfully matter-of-fact: we are awful fish-men, all of us. Even God Himself.

This identification-without-empathy refers back to David, and his amoral (but nonetheless rather ethical) decision to help these goopy, vomiting humans get exactly what they want. Plus Shaw, with her mirror reaction to David - treating him well despite having no empathy for inhuman robots.

It's a pretty good expression of Zizek's concept of authentic Christian ethics as 'ethical monstrosity'. "Doing what is to be done in a weird coincidence of blind spontaneity and reflexive distance, helping others while avoiding their disgusting proximity. With more people like this, the world would be a pleasant place in which sentimentality would be replaced by a cold and cruel passion." (from *The Monstrosity of Christ: Paradox Or Dialectic?*)

Contrast this with Ash's 'unclouded by delusions of morality' dialogue in Alien, if you wish. Same idea, wrong conclusion.

i Jul 19, 2012 13:47

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QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

Why cookie Rocket posted:

I have a BA in English Lit, I read critical analysis for fun, and I've read that post three times and I just don't get it. Can you break it down any further?

Paolomania's summary is spot-on, if that helps.

But the idea is that we don't see the rumored literal 'Jesus was an alien' scene in the film because the deacon 'is' Jesus. It's a probably-blasphemous bit of fun. It's based on, if I'm not over-simplifying, the Lutheran view that humanity is God's shit.

It's important that this doesn't have the negative connotation you'd expect. In Zizek's reading of the Christ myth, God self-identifies as shit as well. When He dies on the cross, He effectively becomes shit. Zizek links this Jesus's love for the poor, sick, etc. (the social abject - think of the aliens in District 9 for the best pop-cultural example (and note the black goo - it's the same)).

Normally, society constitutes itself around excluding these sort of 'excremental' groups. Zizek flips it so that society is based entirely around love for them - but it's specific sort of love that he contrasts with liberal tolerance. Compare the presentation of the District 9 aliens to those in Avatar. In one, we help them in spite of having no rose-tinted view of them, while in the other it's all about hyping the 'beauty', 'nobility' and 'simplicity' of the people, mostly-overlooking their actual human failings (arranged marriages, no medicine, cruel rites of passage, etc.).

i Jul 19, 2012 21:29

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QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

Call Now posted:

Also it made me watch an alien abortion, I'm not sure how I feel about this.

"we are subjects only through a monstrous bodily distortion, only when part of our body, one of its organs (hand, phallus, eye . . .) subtracts itself from the body and starts to act as an autonomous monster." -Z.

It's as though something in Shaw ("I didn't know you had it in you.") has gained autonomy and itself is now defiantly attacking the God she once desired to understand in scientific terms. The re-emergence of the aborted but undead/immortal creature corresponds with her shift from desire to drive - it breaks her away from the fantasy of resurrecting her father, finding God and the meaning of life, etc. Instead, she confronts the void - and then chooses to fully identify with her fantasy, more intimately and playfully than ever before. That's where her christian belief becomes truly authentic.

oldpainless posted:

there have been some *long* posts explaining stuff and although I find it interesting and informative, part of me also thinks that if you have to go to such lengths to understand and explain parts of the movie, there is a problem.

Paring down the elaboration, I feel the long explanations can be reduced to a simple acceptance of the film as fictional aesthetic experience, as opposed to an objective, navigable/replayable motion-diorama. I don't think that's hyperbole when the attendant complaint is that the film has 'nothing beyond its expressive cinematography, editing, etc.'

Essentially: "if you ignore everything filmic in this film, the film doesn't work!" This compliant is technically accurate, but wrong because of the faulty premise.

e:

thatmonkey posted:

This is the best fanboy justification I've ever read. Wait do people actually think this is a good rationale even if it was the intent?

He could have worded it better, but the core of the idea is valid. Demanding a spiritual experience from a decidedly atheistic/apatheistic film demonstrates a refusal or failure to engage the text 'on its own terms'. It's not like people are objecting to this apatheism on religious/philosophical grounds. They're objecting because they want direct 'immersion' into the alien franchise, without the films' existentialist themes, sexual (sub)texts, filmic qualities, etc.

i Jul 21, 2012 12:46

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QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

**thatlonkey posted:**

The problem is that the film was seemingly constructed backwards (I'm sure in reality this wasn't the case). It seems like they made sure first that the cinematography and aesthetic was breathtaking as Ridley Scott is known for creating these vivid landscapes for his characters to live and play out the story in. [...] But then at the end of all that they realized they needed a script/plot/story and cobbled some bullshit together

Your mistake is in treating 'story' as separate and distinct from the filmic qualities of the film. In reality, cinematography, editing and whatnot are the primary language of a film, with their own distinct grammar(s). They are the story.

[Not only that, but scriptwriting both chronologically precedes those things and has a lesser overall importance (while still not reducible to 'just the plot').]

I'm objecting to that notion that cinematography is a virtual landscape/universe that the characters 'live in' and explore.

Note the similarity to videogame-logic there - except with the characters moving around entirely autonomously, and the audience/player serving as a neutral, passive, and objective observer. That's not how film works.

Jul 21, 2012 13:10

[Profile](#)[Post History](#)[Rap Sheet](#)[REPORT](#)[QUOTE](#)**SuperMechagodzilla**

Jun 9, 2007

**thatlonkey posted:**

Yeah sorry I didn't mean to lump cinematography in with that sentence. But certainly the way the world is filmed can either help or hurt the immersion depending.

I don't quite understand what you're saying about the story. I'm not treating it as a separate part of the film, I'm saying that screenplay is one of the foundational elements on which the objective quality of all movies are hinged. All I mean is that the screenplay is arguably the weakest link here and the entire movie suffers for it. To me, it isn't redeeming enough that the landscape was otherwise brilliantly constructed.

'Immersion' is a fake idea. 'Suspension of disbelief' is preferable.

The quality of a film doesn't really hinge on the script at all - but, more to the point, the notions of 'objective' quality being put forward in the thread are pretty loose and/or questionable in general.

Like, for example, the repeated assertion that Alien was 'realistic' in some undefined way. When you have a contentious term like 'realism', definition is everything. Those sort of definitions have not been forthcoming - it's all 'gut feeling.' Same with pretty much every criticism, including that of the script.

It's not that Prometheus can't be criticized. I simply haven't seen anything concrete.

Jul 21, 2012 14:28

[Profile](#)[Post History](#)[Rap Sheet](#)[REPORT](#)[QUOTE](#)**SuperMechagodzilla**

Jun 9, 2007



I skipped ahead in the thread, so I'm not sure if it's been covered, but *what is that black goo?*

Jul 26, 2012 19:54

[Profile](#)[Post History](#)[Rap Sheet](#)[REPORT](#)[QUOTE](#)**SuperMechagodzilla**

Jun 9, 2007

I find the 'zombie' makeup in the final film to be vastly preferable.

Turning Fifield into a quasi-xenomorph is very on-the-nose in literal plot terms, while also being far more vague in story terms.

The final makeup actually looks like Fifield, and that's pretty crucial. It's got the facial hair and tattoos. But the



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

more human appearance also generates the visual link to Charlie. Fifeld rises from the exact place Charlie died, so it initially appears that Charlie had literally risen from the dead (and thematically, this is the case).

This, along with the acid, ties in to the imagery of characters being altered by fire: burned, melted and warped. The subtler makeup looks like Fifield has been scarred, not transformed into a wholly different species. It's a key distinction.

Fifield's return is also, as mentioned before, a pretty direct reference to Sunshine and its villain, who is so heavily burned by the sun that he comes back altered, down to a quantum level.

(The imagery of fire that transforms is important for obvious reasons in a film called Prometheus.)

The comparatively minor swelling of the physical makeup is also a direct visual link to the huge lump on Weyland's forehead after he's smacked down, as well as to the bubbling of the eventually-exploding engineer head.

I think I observed wayyy earlier in the thread that the xenomorph's dome has always resembled a space-helmet - while the bony, ridged versions from Aliens emulate the marines' armor. While the 'zombie' makeup may seem more bland, the CG xeno-mutant is the less evocative retread.

Aug 28, 2012 11:33

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

Boris Galerkin posted:

I watched Blade Runner (the Final Cut) last night and... I didn't really see it as a standout film. In retrospect, it was kind of slow, and boring, and Harrison Ford might as well have just sat in a bar the entire movie because those replicants were going to die anyway with or without his help.

It's not an action movie about racing to stop the fugitive robot menace at all costs.

Sep 18, 2012 10:44

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SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

Xenomorph posted:

But, I guess I "just don't understand, man". There's just SO MUCH deep meaning in these films. You have to get a notebook and analyze each scene. Document what happens in every second and then cross-reference it with every other second. Read between the lines! Then, and only then, will I get the ~BRILLIANCE~ of some paid Hollywood writer/director!

It's curious to imagine anyone seeing a dude travel to the top of a pyramid to question his creator about his mortality and then *whipping out a notebook* to try to discern what it "means", "deeply".

In any case, I actually sincerely recommend Neveldine/Taylor's Gamer.

Sep 18, 2012 18:19

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

kuddles posted:

I get what the film is trying to say. [...] The only consistent message in this film is one of anti-science.

Not really, no. While the film is obviously about religion, as you picked up from the exposition, the presentation is vital to contextualizing that exposition.

The film, taking David's POV, presents the cross and all the related faith-talk as banal kitsch and a sign of mediocrity. That is what is missing from your reading, and results in the results in misreading the film as ineffectually anti-science - which in this case is like saying Verhoven's Starship Troopers could be better at promoting fascism. Prometheus is actually, as I've gone over earlier in the thread, anti-religion in the sense that it's an apatheistic existentialist film. While it ultimately sides with Shaw, it only does so when her faith becomes *authentic* in the existentialist sense.

People asking why the scientist are 'dumb' likewise fail to take into account that their character traits are exaggerated to put us in the mindset of David - who, again, reads people instantly and sees them as inferior 'characters'.

The scientist are not objectively dumb. They are subjectively dumb. And the exaggeration of this subjective experience is necessary because we in the audience are not hyper-intelligent dream-scanning androids.

How is it that the 'objective' historical events of the 'Aliens Universe' can be twisted and exaggerated this way?

Because it's a fucking fictional movie. That's how.

i Sep 19, 2012 08:34

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

ApexAftermath posted:

This is what is so frustrating about this thread. You can't say anything negative about it without being labeled an absolute hater of the film. This simply isn't true at all. Most of us get the themes and ideas the rest of you point out but we simply don't find it all that interesting the way it is executed in the film and would rather discuss other things. Like Amethyst said he isn't saying the deeper readings are invalid at all. Just seems there is a group of you here jumping down the throat of anyone who has any kind of criticism of the film.

People's talk of 'the way it was executed' have nothing to do with editing, cinematography or the other things that make a film a film. They concern only the plot.

Consequently, it's not an issue of there being 'deeper readings' that folks are not interested in. It's a problem of folks reading the film badly, or not at all.

Not everyone is an expert in reading Shakespeare, and while Prometheus is 'not Shakespeare' it is nonetheless being misread in the same way as complaining the bard's characters 'don't talk real'. There is no shame in 'not getting it' but, that should encourage you to try to 'get it' instead of pretentiously claiming you solved the movie with variations on the phrase "it wasn't interesting."

Note that 'getting it' is not the same thing as 'liking it'. In fact, what people are asking is that you 'get' the film first, so that your voiced dislike becomes valid.

(Plenty of folks have been like "I get the film's themes' but..." ...but they provide no demonstration of this understanding or how they came to it.)

i Sep 19, 2012 21:15

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

ApexAftermath posted:

So in your opinion there is only one way to read the film then?

No it means that alternative readings have yet to be performed properly, if at all.

i Sep 19, 2012 21:20

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[REPORT](#)

[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

AlternateAccount posted:

These structures were all over the planet, he's seen a small portion of ONE of them. He doesn't even wait to explore the entire building. He sees .001% of what this planet might have to offer and then storms off in a little bitch-huff.

How does he even KNOW that these are the "gods?" They could be a secondary race? Servants? He doesn't wait to learn ANYTHING WHATSOEVER. He's either the worst scientist in the history of science or a complete douche for plot-sake.

Holloway's desire is to ask the alien-gods the meaning of life. This goal is utterly unobtainable, and the film establishes elsewhere that life has no inherent meaning (existence precedes essence) and, even if one could speak to the alien-gods, the message would be something unsatisfactory like $7 \times 7 = 42$ or horrific like Event Horizon's 'we don't need eyes to see'. The latter is what Holloway discovers when David puts him directly in touch with the universe.

That's why Shaw's DNA-match discovery is almost comically underplayed compared to her reaction. The film

is apatheistic. Shaw's crying tears of joy over a tiny bar graph is a sign of her mediocrity, and the bar graph revelation is a shot and edited to be 'deliberately' anticlimactic.

In asserting that Holloway should have just looked harder to find god, your post misses the point that Holloway has actually already found god's corpse and realized that it is simply meat. When he 'looks harder', he sees 'beyond the black rainbow' and worms sprout from his eye.

i Sep 20, 2012 09:30

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



AlternateAccount posted:

You know, I could put up with Holloway being a hothead crybaby retard if it weren't for every single character being a complete idiot who does not behave like anything resembling an actual human being.

People can circlejerk all day about what their blanket, all encompassing stupidity MEAAAAAANS, but the point is more that it's completely and utterly shitty cinema that fails to present a single character of interest or note and that's why it falls flat.

There's just nothing there to engage the audience in any way except presenting them just enough bullshit to allow them to mentally masturbate all over it.

So, you watch films to communicate with 'actual human beings' - but reject the level of abstraction needed for this fiction to MEAAAAAANfully take place.

Characters in movies are not actual human beings; they are abstractions designed to trigger responses in the audience. In this particular case, the response is evidently to start ranting about masturbation because... do you want to have physical sex with simulated 'more human than human' movie characters? 'Cause that's the impression I'm getting.

You know, I think you understand the themes of Prometheus and Blade Runner better than you may expect!

i Sep 20, 2012 20:05

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SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



ApexAftermath posted:

Yeah David is the only character that is interesting at all. You may very well be onto what they were intending with having David be awesome and the rest of the crew be insufferable idiots, but it still is pretty excruciating cinema to watch. Whether they are good guys or bad guys I would rather enjoy the characters instead of facepalming every 5 minutes. Crazy talk I know.

So you take one line of him saying you guys are mentally wanking it over this film and turn it into this post implying he is obsessing over sex.....ugh....what? I can't take you seriously because every post you make just comes off like thinly veiled sarcasm.

Dude wants contact with fully-simulated 'actual human beings'. The alternative to this, in his own words, is masturbation (and bad).

This is ironic, as I noted, because the entire film is about hyperreality and simulation, the line between human and replicant, etc. Also: tons of filthy sex.

Hence, why he rejects the film. The film uses the hyperreal aesthetic satirically (to poke at, for example, Avatar) in a way that is aligned with the sensibilities of Zack Snyder's and the Strause Brothers' work. It is directly critical of his mindset (that films are, or should be, simulations).

So, AlternateAccount obviously gets what Prometheus 'means', on a level that he can't quite articulate outside a free-associative rant. But he rejects that meaning because he would like to live on Pandora and become a Navi (metaphorically speaking).

i Sep 20, 2012 20:32

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

ApexAftermath posted:

This is quite an exaggeration but OKAY.

I think the film could have struck a better middle ground between "total 100% rational humans" and "total slasher film moron cliches". I just find it much more engaging to watch people reacting in reasonable ways still lose to the horror of the situation. *shrug*



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

It could have but didn't because, again, the film is campy and theatrical in order to highlight David's superiority over the other characters and to comment on other films.

That being said, the characters here actually are sufficiently more advanced than in a 'generic' slasher film in which a woman might take her shirt off and then get stabbed - without going into her memories of her father, her subtly dysfunctional relationship with her boyfriend, her life-goals and even the specifics of her religious affiliation. Nor is the pot-smoking dude usually a closeted homosexual and neo-shamanic roboticist/geologist werewolf.

i Sep 20, 2012 21:26

Profile Post History Rap Sheet

REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

Five Cent Deposit posted:

I worked on the film through all of post and not once did I hear a single person, from the bottom of the totem pole to the very top, utter a word to make me think the film is deliberately satirical.

Have you considered the possibility that no-one mentioned it because it's already fairly self-evident?

In either case, though, the deliberateness is irrelevant.

i Sep 21, 2012 08:56

Profile Post History Rap Sheet

REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

What I'd like to ask Five Cent Deposit is whether the crew talked about Lacanian psychoanalysis, existentialist philosophy, and the other similar things that are unambiguously referenced in the film.

'Cause if they didn't, then um...?

i Sep 21, 2012 18:34

Profile Post History Rap Sheet

REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

Dissapointed Owl posted:

It's Janek's theory; it doesn't make it right. He's a military man so it's no wonder that that's the conclusion he would reach (totally disregarding the deleted scene with him and Vickers, which actively states that he is biased by a similar experience on another mission). When he rambles (and he does ramble) his story to Shaw, she gives no indication of buying any of it.

I'd mildly disagree here, because I think Janek is totally right. What Prometheus does is flip the subtext.

In most films, the crazy technology would serve as a metaphor for the abstract concept. For example, the nanotech in District 9 is a metaphor for The Real. But in Prometheus, the film is literally and directly about The Real, and Janek's explanation for the goo is only a metaphor. He doesn't objectively know it's a weapons facility. He's saying that it's like a weapons facility because it's full of horrific shit that recalls nuclear/biological/chemical weaponry. This 'cognitive mapping' allows him to comprehend the terrifying abstraction of the black goo - and, like Shaw at the end, mark it as something taboo.

i Sep 22, 2012 09:04

Profile Post History Rap Sheet

REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

Dissapointed Owl posted:

Could you expand on this distinction? To me there seems to be a lot of similarities between a character gaining a (perhaps false) understanding of a situation by drawing from his personal biases, and a character using his knowledge or experiences to gain a, again perhaps false, grasp of a situation.



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

I suppose the distinction would be between pre-abortion Shaw and post-abortion Shaw. At first, she 'knows' that god is out there and has the answers, which proves totally futile. Then, after a period of destitution, she authentically *believes*, without knowing.

I associate Janek's anti-bioweapon stance with Shaw's declaration that the temple is a taboo 'place of death' because they are both examples of drawing a line in the sand against relativism, and saying 'no, this is bad'. Janek's self-sacrifice is hilarious, but also an authentic ethical Act. He asserts the dogmatic Truth of his stance through his suicide bombing.

"One must identify with [the proletarian] position for one's Act to be authentic; otherwise, it is a 'false act' which sustains the status quo. On one level, an Act is a radical form of subjectivity, but on another, it is a total negation of subjectivity, a submission to an external Event, Leader or Cause which overwhelms the individual. [...] An Act is experienced by its agent as 'something violently imposed on me from the Outside through a traumatic encounter that shatters the very foundation of my being', and it is simultaneously the highest freedom and the most abject prostration. It is something one feels one simply has to do, because of an irrational and unconditional ethical injunction. It is necessarily dogmatic - a shibboleth - and involves a 'leftist suspension of the ethical', rejecting all a priori standards (inclusive of epistemological and ontological as well as ethical standards). It also involves a masochistic gesture which Žižek refers to as 'symbolic destitution', 'excremental identification' and 'shooting at' or 'beating' oneself. Through an Act, one rejects one's humanity and embraces the pain of being a Nothing. One can then remould oneself as a new man. Žižek hints that this new man is to be an authoritarian leader, someone capable of the 'inherently terroristic' gesture of 'redefining the rules of the game'." ([link](#))

The humor of the scene is part-and-parcel with this rejection of humanity. Janek and the other guys act completely 'irrational' because they simply *have to*, gleefully embracing their excremental status ("you're a shitty pilot"). They just have this overwhelming urge to kill themselves for the good of humanity - or, more specifically: for Shaw, the 'new man'.

i Sep 23, 2012 00:46

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

BonoMan posted:

wall of text. not even interesting. obsessed. projecting importance. shallow. stupid. mediocre movie.

I think it's become sufficiently clear that it's not the movie that is 'shallow', as any perceived 'shallowness' is directly proportionate to the 'shallowness' of the analysis.

(Those who arbitrarily judge the film's 'shallowness' at all, by employing some inscrutable 'depth gauge', coincidentally find it to be 'shallower'.)

In that sense, you are actually right: the act of reading does 'project importance' onto the film. A reading implicitly assumes the film is a text to be read, and not a food that we might taste or a body of water that we may immerse ourselves in. In refusing to read the film, you are indeed 'making it worse' for yourself. The only point of disagreement between us, then, is that you think this is a good thing to do.

i Sep 23, 2012 02:14

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

BonoMan posted:

What? No I'm not asking anybody to be dishonest. I'm not saying anybody is making anything up (I mentioned this earlier). I guess if I went back and broke it back down it would be: "Was it made well or not?" Regardless of the intention of a scene...was it made well? I would say "no" for those reasons I mentioned earlier (brute force pacing combined with shitty character development).

And typing out some sort of sitemap or logic tree of some characters intentions doesn't automatically make it good writing. Yes you can sit there and go back and transcribe what happened scene to scene, but that doesn't mean anything. I think it was poorly written. I can sit there and go back to a lot of shitty movies and type out what happens and construct a loose logical narrative. Doesn't really mean jack shit if it's not executed well.

Cut-and-pasting "No I didn't like it." a few dozen times would save you scores of unnecessary words, without altering the content of your post. Reduce, reuse, recycle.

i Sep 23, 2012 05:18

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

Everything is intentional unless it is lazy (lacking intentionality). These terms correspond to, but have officially replaced, 'good' and 'bad'. The intentionality (goodness) of a work is determined by my immersion into its



universe.

Example: 3D glasses make films more intentional, because the objects are comin' at me. 2D films are much lazier.

MLG

X

X

SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

i Sep 23, 2012 18:44

Profile

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REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



ApexAftermath posted:

Neil deGrasse Tyson actually pointed it out to Lindelof and how it was wrong. They stuck with it for "reasons Lindelof didn't want to get into". Sounds like there was some consternation regarding the script during production.

The film is full of impressive-sounding but technically inaccurate or obviously random numbers. It's another example of its disdain for canonicity and simulation.

Someone on Wikipedia would hear Vickers' line and then conclude the god-moon is literally half a billion miles from Earth. Or they would dutifully go on the internet to report the 'goof', as we have seen firsthand.

The correct response is to do neither of these things. It is inaccurate 'on purpose' to confound internet nerds, because it's funny.

i Sep 23, 2012 18:57

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Post History

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REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



ApexAftermath posted:

That is one opinion. At the end of the day minor technical things like this I really do not care about, but it's just one more funny stupid thing the movie does on top of a mountain of other goofy shit. Sometimes you make Alien and sometimes you make Legend I guess.

It's the better opinion, given the other contextualizing factors. Your opinion relies on dismissing these contextualizing factors as 'goofy shit'.

Even the author of the screenplay is on record as to it being intentional. While that is not the final word in the matter, it is yet another contextualizing factor that supports my reading and not yours. Where is your god now?

i Sep 23, 2012 19:06

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REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



It's pretty well-known by this point that Lindelof's main contribution to the film was to make it a less-canonical prequel, removing all literal plot ties to the rest of the series while amplifying the thematic ties. The decision to make the numbers "canonically non-canon" in a wonderful short-circuit can be seen as part-and-parcel with that. Ridley Scott evidently agreed with him because that's the direction the film ultimately took.

In that regard, nothing was 'trashed' - except from a standpoint that equates canonicity with realism, and sees that simulation aesthetic as a moral obligation. (Hence dismissing characters in terms like 'badly-written retards' and other terms that imply degeneration, sloth, callowness, evil and so-on.)

i Sep 23, 2012 19:34

Profile

Post History

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REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

BonoMan posted:

I watched, analyzed

No, you didn't.

BonoMan posted:



My opinion is just as valid.

No, it's not.

Your opinion is not inherently valid. That's a fairy tale, like 'there's no such thing as a stupid question.' (Example of stupid question, in context of this discussion: "what is the black goo??")

i Sep 23, 2012 19:47

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Post History

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REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



BonoMan posted:

I mean, I'm sorry that doesn't match *your and everyone else's opinion*, but it's a totally valid critique of a film.

Critique is systematic analysis. You are not engaging in a critique (systematic analysis) of the film, though you feel that you are. Therefore your opinion (that you feel you are engaging in a critique of the film) is not valid.

i Sep 23, 2012 20:15

Profile

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REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



Hold up. Pause the DVD.

Enhance 224 to 176. Enhance... Stop.

Move in. Stop.

Pull out, track right. Stop.

Center in, pull back. Stop.

Track 45 right. Stop. Center and stop.

Enhance 34 to 36.

Pan right and pull back. Stop.

Enhance 34 to 46.

Pull back.

Wait a minute - go right. Stop.

Enhance 57-19. Track 45 left.

Stop.

Enhance 15 to 23.

Give me a hard copy right there.

It looks like some kind of black goo.

What is this black goo?

i Sep 24, 2012 07:01

Profile

Post History

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REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



TheJoker138 posted:

how is buying someone a childish custom title going to help convince them of your point of view?

We're a long ways past the point of trying to convince.

It's now a matter of marking those posts as a dead place, to be avoided.

i Sep 25, 2012 22:05

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

Dissapointed Owl posted:

Well, the Vatican didn't appreciate the film [apparently](#).

It's dissapointing that the articles don't go into detail about the exact nature of the disagreement. I can't find anything on the official website either, so we've only got like two lines to go off of.

But it's understandable: while the film can ultimately be read as a Christian one, it's clearly Protestant, with its themes of excremental identification and such.

The film actively rejects Thomas Aquinas' unity of faith and knowledge - the approach to theology as a science - so it is absolutely an 'anti-Catholic' film.

"Although God in itself remains an unfathomable mystery for our limited cognitive capacities, reason can also guide us towards Him by way of enabling us to recognize the traces of God in created reality – therein resides the premise of Aquinas's five versions of the proof of God (the rational observation of material reality as a texture of causes and effects leads us to the necessary insight into how there must be a primal Cause to it all; etc.). With Protestantism, this unity breaks apart: we have on the one side the godless universe, the proper object of our reason, and the unfathomable divine Beyond separated by a hiatus from it. When confronted with this break, we can do two things: either we deny any meaning to an otherworldly Beyond, dismissing it as a superstitious illusion, or we remain religious and exempt our faith from the domain of reason, conceiving it as an act of, precisely, pure faith (authentic inner feeling, etc.)." ([zizek](#))

Those 'two things' are represented, of course, by David and Shaw.

i Sep 25, 2012 22:48

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

TheJoker138 posted:

you often get caught in the trap of thinking your opinion is the ONE TRUE OPINION on things.

No, I think my opinion is the *best* opinion. I think this because it has the most evidential support and a solid philosophical basis, and has (consequently) gone virtually uncontested. The conflation of 'best' with 'only' is your misunderstanding.

To make a Kuhnian analogy: my reading of Prometheus helped set the paradigm - you can see the wave of agreement - and the paradigm has yet to shift to something else. Haters are frustrated because, rather than pointing out inconsistencies in my reading and re-interpreting the textual evidence in a way that revolutionizes the discussion, they are... not doing that. And assuming that people will agree with them anyways. They won't.

i Sep 25, 2012 23:21

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

BonoMan posted:

If all they're saying is that it's "poorly made" then that's one thing. But if I choose to say the execution was poor because I felt that the character development was non-existent because the pacing of the film tried to cram too much into it and nothing really had time to breathe then that's that. That argument is valid and doesn't need to be taken any further. It's an opinion of the film based on a viewing and it doesn't need 3 pages of someone transcribing scenes while viewing the timecode so they can pinpoint to the frame how long the characters were on screen.

The issue is that large steps on the logical path are being jumped over. The argument does need to be 'taken further'.

You say that the fast pace prevents there from being character development. Sure. But, in addition to the fact that the characters do obviously develop (Fifield going from brash to cowardly being only one minor example), you haven't made the bigger connection to why this is ultimately a bad thing.

Declaring something 'bad' is a strong statement that involves taking into account greater contexts, unless you're making a legalistic blanket statement that every film must have X edits per second and X minutes of screentime devoted to every character in order for 'good' characterization to occur. That's obviously not the case, because it would rule out any number of films that you probably like.

So, what you take issue with is not the character development itself but the manner in which the characters develop in the context of this film. And your viewing of the film is contextualized by your personal opinions and

such, so that ultimately - whether you intend to or not - you are making a grand statement about 'the role of art in society' and whatever.

When you say that my reading makes sense, but that you disagree, what you are saying is that my reading actually *doesn't* make sense to you - because you approach the film from a totally different philosophical standpoint that you aren't yet articulating.

Like, "the screwball pacing is anti-humanist because _____, and humanism is important because _____." That's what's missing.

i Sep 26, 2012 03:45

Profile Post History Rap Sheet

REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

BonoMan posted:

You seem to think the only moral way to approach this is your way. There is apparently no such thing as bad film making at all. It is merely an intention, philosophy, or technique not yet understood by the viewer.

No, that's like the opposite of what I've been writing. I'm more concerned with broader ethics than with morals, I'm generally against postmodern relativism, and I have repeatedly emphasized that the meaning comes not from 'within the text' but from the process of reading it.

i Sep 26, 2012 04:09

Profile Post History Rap Sheet

REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

bullet3 posted:

If Paul WS Anderson's name was the director's credit on the exact same movie I feel like everyone would be shitting all over it/him, but cause it's Ridley Scott everyone's giving it a huge benefit of the doubt and tripping over themselves to find meaning in it (which is funny cause this movie and Alien vs Predator have almost the exact same story setup).

I actually always give PWSAnderson the benefit of a doubt, because he is not a stupid filmmaker. In fact, as you point out, Prometheus is a vastly superior remake of AVP - dealing in the same basic premise and most of the same themes. Re-posting from the General Chat:

"There's a scene early on [in AVP] where a character reaches apprehensively into a darkened cavern, grasping for knowledge and treasure - but finding only a Pepsi bottlecap. It's a perfect encapsulation of the film's themes, that the film itself doesn't live up to. It's about "pop", right?

There's a clear idea expressed, in how the tired imagery of darkened crypts dissolve into sterile, glowing wireframes. When the worthless Pepsi cap is repurposed as a totemic medallion, those themes just about cohere.

AVP is basically a flawed dry-run at what Prometheus did flawlessly - suggesting that the myths of ancient peoples were really no less vapid than our own, but nonetheless vital in abating the meaninglessness of the universe. The trouble is that Anderson gets the words, but not the poetry of what makes the predator a mythic character."

The theme of classic horror imagery dissolving into commercial banality recurs constantly in the film. The very first shot of AVP is a shadowy bug-monster that, when light is cast on it, turns out to be just a CG satellite. The trouble is that the horror aspect is often botched by decisions like the bullet-time facehuggers, which merge the horror with the banal simulation, losing the crucial element of *transition* from one state to the other. Consequently, AVP is always horror 'in quotation marks'. Even the most straightforward kills consciously mimic classic 3-D 'comin at ya' gimmickry.

The difference is that Prometheus 'looks gorgeous' (as you also acknowledge). It does everything AVP does, but more clearly expressed. That's not a bad thing.

i Sep 27, 2012 11:01

Profile Post History Rap Sheet

REPORT

QUOTE

POST

Don't go there!

«

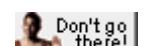
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8 ▾

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11 »

« Cinema Discusso › Ridley Scott's Prometheus - It looks as much like dicks as anything else.

 POST 

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



GreenBuckanneer posted:

Him saying **anything** was satisfying. By the time I got to the engineer section I was frothing at the mouth in anticipation for **any** backstory or information about them, about who they are, their motives, the way they think.

But no he just decides to go on a rampage. Biggest blue ball of the century.

It's actually pretty important that 'god' behaves irrationally, and ultimately has no 'good reason' behind all his prohibitions. He makes rules 'because he can'. That, in itself, is the answer to your questions.

This is directly tied to the existentialist themes, David's little ruminations on why he was created, etc.

i Sep 28, 2012 19:25

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 REPORT

 QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



Haydrian posted:

"I paid 15 bucks to see a prequel to Alien, and I feel like I got bait and switched into watching Scott/Lindelof/Spaihts's art project instead."

You got what you deserved.

i Sep 29, 2012 02:12

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 REPORT

 QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



Prometheus is a pretty big dis on nerd fandoms, Catholicism and New-Age Spirituality - to name a few things that exist in reality.

Those sorts of things are what are 'at stake', not something dumb like money.

i Sep 29, 2012 10:44

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 REPORT

 QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



I keep returning, in my mind, to the dude who said he wanted fifteen dollars' worth of prequel exposition and was instead 'tricked into watching art'.

I sort of wish that more people were as open about their reasoning instead of dropping cowardly declarations of the film's inherent Badness. The assertion of a basic division between art and fanboy canonicity is bracingly straightforward. "I simply don't like art," says the honest hater.

The dishonest hater says Picasso is a bad painter because the eyes are obviously in the wrong place by accident and I don't like it because it doesn't look photorealistic (a term used interchangeably with capital-G 'Good' in this context).

It's *incredibly pretentious* to make this kind of grand statement about art without the slightest bit of knowledge or insight.

i Sep 30, 2012 11:59

Profile Post History

Rap Sheet

REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

Goffer posted:



oh no it exploded 😞

'Pretension' is one of those terms that is thoroughly misused by people in CD - along with things like 'plot hole', 'realistic', 'bad' and 'good'.

The misuse of such terms is, itself, pretentious.

Pretension is claiming a level of distinction that isn't actually justified. People who like Prometheus have generally been writing effortposts full of textual evidence and solid reasoning, as justification. Haters, pretentious cowards that they usually are, refuse to justify (or are incapable of justifying) their position.

There is no irony in my employing the term. There is, however, irony in your misuse of the 'iron-e-meter' emoticon. That's the source of the explosion.

i Sep 30, 2012 19:33

Profile Post History

Rap Sheet

REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

cormac posted:

What terms would you suggest instead?

Or would you say that the viewers enjoyment or otherwise of a particular film irrelevant or unworthy of discussion?

You can like a film and still find fault with it. You can also dislike it and still find merit in it. Is that level of discussion not worth pursuing, even if some of us find enjoyment in it?

Was all the pages of discussion prior to the films release pointless, as nobody had seen it, and could no therefore deliver any kind of reading of the film?

Does the fact that it can be an enjoyable process to discuss films on a shallower level count for nothing at all?

-I'm not suggesting alternate terms. I'm saying that the terms are being employed spuriously, and should not be.

-Viewers' enjoyment is largely irrelevant to discussion, yes. It is the preface to having an actual opinion. My first post, upon having seen Prometheus, begins with me calling it hilarious. Then I explained the reasoning behind that stance in order to communicate meaningfully with people(!).

-The 'level of discussion' where people are pointing out flaws in the film is not taking place. In order to point out flaws in the film, you must first form a coherent reading of what the film 'is'. I read the film as camp, for example - so a flaw, to me, would be the parts that aren't campy enough or something. (However, I really have no complaints about the film).

-No.

-Notions of 'levels' and 'depth' are pretentious bullshit.

i Sep 30, 2012 20:16

Profile Post History

Rap Sheet

REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

Goffer posted:

You poorly paraphrase one poster [...] then go on to imply all 'haters' fit under this one straw man argument.

Haydrian juxtaposes the "Scott/Lindelof/Spaihts's art project" with 15 dollars' worth of Alien exposition. He is not talking about Scott's oeuvre in relation of that of other directors. That's very charitable of you, but unsupported. In fact, the specific contrast he makes is between the artistry of the writers/directors and the blunt intellectual property of the media franchise. He states his preference for the franchise.

I isolated this example because it absolutely does typify the 'arguments' against Prometheus, which are not

exactly nuanced or complicated. They can all be tied back to this desire to purchase immersion into a virtual universe of franchise-canonical plot content.

My accurate summary covers pretty much everything, down to the notion that Prometheus is not "real enough" (read: "simulated enough"), and the associated (entarte-kunsty) assertions that any abstraction is the product of laziness or some other deficiency.

Haydrian specifically talks about this deficiency in terms of the film's marketability and dollar value. It's not complex stuff. He's just more honest.

i Oct 1, 2012 08:28

Profile Post History Rap Sheet

REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



Tyree posted:

After finally seeing this a second time, something stood out to me that made me laugh a lot throughout the movie. While bad shit starts happening to the crew and scientist and everyone is pretty tense, David is having **a fucking blast**.

Exactly! The film's humor isn't complicated, which is why the 'shut off your brain' attitude is inexplicable. David is the viewpoint character, and he's having the time of his life. The entire film reflects that attitude.

Kilmers Elbow posted:

I don't think I've made the claim that Scott wanted to 'explain' the Engineers. I've said that Scott wanted to explore the Engineers story. The lines are blurred I'll grant you.

It's cannot be the engineers' story because they're neither the protagonists nor focal characters. The story is unambiguously about David and Shaw.

AVP:R has the predatory alien as its protagonist, by contrast. It actually is a story about that creature.

This is a pretty concrete example of why the 'author intent' thing doesn't work. It's led you to heavily misidentify something as basic as the film's protagonist(s).

i Oct 1, 2012 19:48

Profile Post History Rap Sheet

REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



You wrote that the film should have been (or was intended to be) the engineers' story.

In actuality, the film is about how Shaw reacts to the discovery of the engineers and attempts to learn about them.

The Engineers are effectively the film's macguffin. Some rich details are provided, but they could be replaced by a briefcase with a lightbulb inside, or an ark of the covenant, without altering the story very much.

i Oct 1, 2012 21:11

Profile Post History Rap Sheet

REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



Kilmers Elbow posted:

I'm with Goffer on the abortion thing.

In Prometheus we watch a woman who, only minutes following a caesarian section, is seen sprinting around, bouncing off walls, getting smacked about, leaping chasms only to hang on by her fingertips (groan) and out-running crashing spaceships (by running in a straight line - groan).

I will allow a movie a certain amount of license; SF movies perhaps more than most. But there are limits to my credibility - I'm not going to begin investing practically supernatural powers to an automated surgery device just in order to explain away Shaw's unbridled athleticism after such a major operation.

Which only further undermines the film's credibility.

Because now not only is she leaping about in a space suit, post surgery, like she was Jessica Ennis - but she's doing all this while pumped to the eyeballs with drugs!

But these are space-drugs, right?

Wow fuck you solved the movie. I rescind all previous arguments because this is it. You've done it. The film simply is not credible.

i Oct 2, 2012 16:59

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



I mean, what are we to believe, that this is some sort of a... *snort* magic xylophone or something? Boy, I really hope somebody got fired for that blunder.

i Oct 2, 2012 17:16

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



Goffer posted:

Why are you so obtuse? You know exactly what he means. Nice way to dodge everything he posted.

No. Fellow 'zilla Mechafunkzilla is mocking the 'immersion' mindset with a very specific reference to the concept of suspension of disbelief - which seems to be *broken* in your people.

It's pretty clear that 'immersion' is a form of illiteracy.

For example: when I see live theatre, I do not read the huge curtains on either side of the room as part of the diegesis of the play. Nor do I lament that one of the walls is missing. This is because I understand the vocabulary of a stage production and am able to suspend my disbelief over the necessary abstractions. Dogville.

Immersion people, if they can be said to read a film at all, read it as a non-interactive simulation - from the highly ideological position that simulation is not itself a form of abstraction. It is 'actually real', an 'actually-existing universe', and one can immerse oneself in it as a disembodied spectator - a free-roaming camera.

(Hint: the obvious abstraction is that all trace of a physical camera is erased from the film to create this *illusion* of disembodied omniscience. This is the opposite of realism, as of course the reality is that the people are all in an actually-existing soundstage in England or something, being filmed by an actually-existing camera. This documented event is then replayed in various theatres across the world. Your immersive realism is a sham.)

i Oct 2, 2012 18:08

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SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



wyoak posted:

I agree with you, but at a certain point the immersion breaks, and I found Prometheus to cross that point pretty egregiously in the first act. You can label me as 'one of those people,' but everyone has that line, and honestly mine is higher than most people. You've got that line too, maybe this movie didn't cross it but it's there.

There is really no such line. The very first shot, being a direct reference to 2001, announces 'this is a genre pastiche'.

From that point onwards, there's very little that can 'break' this film-about-film by being too filmic.

i Oct 2, 2012 18:26

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

**SUPREME**
Mechagodzilla**Kilmers Elbow posted:**

I hope it at least proves the point.

Nope, I don't give the slightest fuck about immersion.

The Last Exorcist has something like that ending, and it was fascinating. Same with Jodorowsky's The Holy Mountain.

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

**SUPREME**
Mechagodzilla**wyoak posted:**

So...onto Weyland. This has been discussed before, but there really wasn't any reason (either narratively or in the larger thematic sense) for his presence on the ship to be a secret.

False. Weyland being 'dead' and appearing as a 'ghost' is part of the repeated imagery of holographic recordings being replayed and tells us about how Weyland views immortality. (He wants to 'become immortal' in the same sense that the holographic recording is 'immortal'.) This ties into how he communicates to David through the holographic dream-reading machine - and overall, the film's disdain for hyperreal simulation. Obviously, it's critical of Weyland.

On a narrative level, he hides because he wants things to be uncomplicated. We see that he has no qualms with killing members of the crew if it will help him get what he wants. Obviously, he doesn't want people to know that they're being sacrificed/murdered. Deception gives him power. This is where we have the big moment where Shaw discovers that she was misled, immediately after the abortion scene. She realizes she was impregnated 'on purpose' and this obviously affects her character arc.

It's worth noting that, unless the speech before the crew is heavily choreographed, the holographic 'ghost' of Weyland is actually mildly interactive, being able to speak to people by following their movement around the room. It is not purely a recording, but a full-blown simulation of a past event that never actually happened.

Weyland's whole MO is to create an elaborate simulation that will lead people to do what he wants unthinkingly. Note that his hologram is not just an illusory person, but actually changes the appearance of the entire room/world. So goes the mission.

Oct 2, 2012 19:59

[Profile](#)[Post History](#)[Rap Sheet](#)[REPORT](#)[QUOTE](#)**SuperMechagodzilla**

Jun 9, 2007

**SUPREME**
Mechagodzilla

People don't know what they want. If you want a movie that's similar to Prometheus and about as good, but set in the 'Alien Universe', you can just turn up the brightness on AVP:R.

Oct 2, 2012 20:23

[Profile](#)[Post History](#)[Rap Sheet](#)[REPORT](#)[QUOTE](#)**SuperMechagodzilla**

Jun 9, 2007

**SUPREME**
Mechagodzilla**wyoak posted:**

Wait are you being serious? I just dismissed AVP:R because AVP was so bad, but if it's actually competently done I'll give it a watch.

Considering your approach to Prometheus, I cannot honestly recommend that you watch AVP:R or any other film.

i Oct 2, 2012 20:41

Profile Post History Rap Sheet

REPORT QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

Brock Broner posted:

I think the reason this movie is generating such strong responses is a gap in the quality of its structure as a vehicle of entertainment versus its artistic composition in regards to subtext and thematic content. Interesting and intelligent thoughts are juxtaposed with a sometimes lazy script that can obviously potentially offend viewers.* The movie cares more about being thoughtful than entertaining, and while inspiring thought is a primary goal of art, a cohesive narrative shouldn't be sacrificed to achieve that goal. The movie is too fancy for its own good, especially considering the way it was marketed as a summer blockbuster.

There's no such gap between art and entertainment.

Themes and subtext are inherent in all artworks, and cannot be divorced from the narrative or other aspects.

See my recent post about how the hyperreal aesthetic of Weyland's speech is directly associated with Weyland as a character and serves as a visual shorthand for his motivation/worldview.

'Laziness' is an utterly bullshit metric that you should feel bad for using. Prometheus is no 'lazier' than Jurassic Park, Star Wars, or Indiana Jones - whatever that even means.

i Oct 2, 2012 21:10

Profile Post History Rap Sheet

REPORT QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

Brock Broner posted:

Laziness is a fair term to use when internal inconsistencies arise without a need/point to them.

No. Instead of engaging in a reading of the work, you are refusing to read unless the 'necessity' of the imagery to 'the point' is disclosed to you in advance.

Reading is actually the process whereby you reach 'the point'. Refusing to read the events portrayed in the film as part of the film is your fault, not anyone else's.

It's especially not the fault of the filmmakers, who went through the trouble of laying out all this information for you to read.

i Oct 2, 2012 21:19

Profile Post History Rap Sheet

REPORT QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

Goffer posted:

Maybe you just don't understand what people want. I can only speak personally but when I'm talking about immersion, I refer to narrative immersion, not for some sense of spatial or all encompassing transcendental immersion. You know, becoming emotionally invested in the storyline, for the characters, etc.

I understand full well what people say they want, just as I know what they actually want. You disavow the desire for 'transcendental immersion', but then continue with the same argument that the characters aren't complex enough simulations for you to feel empathy for them.

People are like 'ignore the symbolism, and you'll see that the narrative doesn't work!' which is frankly idiotic because these are obviously symbolic characters. That they don't display much interiority is a philosophical and aesthetic choice. **Their actions are all that define them, because this is an existentialist film.** Prometheus even presents Shaw's dream sequence as a saccharine joke in order to underline how unimportant her interiority is.

Saying that the characters needed more psychological depth betrays a fundamental misreading of the film. You are rejecting symbolism, in the name of 'immersion' into a virtual reality - which is something that the film relentlessly criticizes.

This is not an emotionless, intellectual thing. Do you not get why a child would hug a teddy bear? "But it doesn't look like an actual bear! How can she hold it close?"

And David, why do you wear a space-suit? You're a robot and don't need to breathe!"

i Oct 3, 2012 08:04

Profile Post History Rap Sheet

REPORT QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

Kilmers Elbow posted:

Is is punk?

Yes, is is punk.

It's already been established that engaging in a film does not necessitate it being an "immersive simulation".

"In the case of the efficient symbolic fiction of the judge wearing his insignia, "I know very well that this person is a corrupt weakling, but I nonetheless treat him as if *I believe that* the symbolic big Other speaks through him": I disavow what my eyes tell me and choose to believe the symbolic fiction. On the contrary, in the case of the simulacrum of virtual reality, "I know very well that what I see is an illusion generated by digital machinery, but I nonetheless accept to immerse myself in it, to behave as if *I believe it.*" Here, I disavow what my (symbolic) knowledge tells me and choose to believe my eyes only..." ([Zizek](#))

I choose to believe the symbolic fiction, and to create new ones.

i Oct 3, 2012 08:53

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REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

goku im piss posted:

Ok, Holy Mountain makes no sense unless you're able to filter out the Dadaist noise that it seems to be comprised of and become immersed in the madness. I said immersed. I personally like getting pulled into movies, enjoy the world building the filmmaker does, etc.

I got every bit of symbolism that Ridley crammed into Prometheus, and it still wasn't a very good movie.

Holy Mountain isn't dada. It is also not an exercise in worldbuilding. How can you be so wrong about this?

(Answer: "Immersion.")

I contend, based on this, that you didn't actually understand Prometheus' symbolism at all.

i Oct 3, 2012 09:12

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REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

goku im piss posted:

I understood all the symbolism that Ridley put in Prometheus, but it still isn't a good film. The fact that I understand it only makes the film worse for me, as I see all the wasted potential.

To re-iterate and clarify:

Plenty of folks in the thread have dropped the line "I totally understood the symbolism but..." ...and then proceeded to betray little or no understanding of the symbolism (usually by treating it as something tangential to and distinct from 'The Surface,' or 'The Entertainment,' or 'The Actual Film,' or some other weird terminology).

It's obviously bullshit and no-one believes you.

For us to believe you, you need to write out your description of the film's symbolism. Only then can anyone understand your position.

i Oct 3, 2012 09:26

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REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

Kilmers Elbow posted:

Is being immersed in a symbolic reading of a movie less appealing, less coherent, less pure?

You don't get 'immersed in symbolism'. What you're referring to is 'suspension of disbelief', which is an opposite concept (as explained in that Zizek quote).

You seem to be vacillating in your definitions, between immersion being a vague good feeling and immersion being (more accurately) the product of hyperreal simulation.

goku im piss posted:

I took the film's symbolism as this: The creation of man, his expulsion from paradise, the birth of the anti-Christ, and man attempting to destroy god.

Everything in the film is biblical. Everything.

That's not a description of the film's symbolism. That's a tag cloud.

i Oct 3, 2012 09:39

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



goku im piss posted:

That's a brief description of my impression of the film's symbolism. I'm not spending time typing out every nuanced detail of why I believe this because it isn't that important. We disagree. The End.

That's not what symbolism is or how it works. Like on a rudimentary level, a symbol is a sign that is composed of a signifier and a signified. You have only listed a handful of signifieds (things that are symbolized) without any elaboration as to *how* they are, let alone their context and other inter-relation.

Those are more accurately *themes*, if anything.

This is actually very important - if we're to believe that you understood the symbolism and that it can be wholly excised from the film's narrative without consequence.

i Oct 3, 2012 09:55

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SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



Kilmers Elbow posted:

I'm simply using the term immersion in the same way I'd use engrossed, or fascinated.

Those aren't the same thing, though. 'Fascination' implies a more detached perspective. 'Engrossment' is closer, but 'immersion' has specific connotations.

(Example: I'm fascinated by a gemstone, and perhaps engrossed in the study of it, but I am never immersed in a gemstone.)

goku im piss posted:

I used broad strokes to explain what I felt were the elements that comprised the symbolism in the film.

If that was your intention, you've failed completely. Like, not even something as simple as "Shaw's cross symbolizes her faith." Now you can continue to repeat that you have nothing to prove and don't care, but I'd recommend just using that wordcount to write actual content instead.

i Oct 3, 2012 10:28

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



MANIFEST DESTINY posted:

Yes, I understand that. The problem comes when the films being referenced are the serious/well executed sort of pulp but the pulp-referencing status is used to defend bad writing in Prometheus. Is Planet of the Vampires pulp? Yes. Does it have the kind of writing issues that Prometheus does? No. You can't use that defend the latter.

The writing in the film isn't bad.

Your chief example of badness is that, when Shaw runs into Weyland's room after surgery, nobody gives a shit.

'Nobody giving a shit' is 'obviously deliberate' because that's the moment that Shaw realizes exactly how alone and expendable she is. Nobody 'really' cared about her dreams and her aspirations. They exploited her for money and other forms of power, and then tossed her aside to die - and she was all too complicit in her trust.

The acting, and the way this scene is shot, emphasize the utter indifference of Weyland and his cronies - perhaps to an unrealistic degree, but the scene is presented in alignment with Shaw's POV. So we see her crying bloody at the door, while the other characters are at a remove, at the other side of the room, and posed

like a neoclassical painting.

It's frustrating to you because it's 'supposed to be' frustrating. "Why don't these people care? Aren't they human?" You misinterpreted this as an error instead of a very clear way of getting us to sympathize with Shaw - feeling her confusion and frustration.

The effect is exactly like when Shelley Duval encounters the 'ghosts' at the end of *The Shining*. Remember that the film has already associated Weyland with ghost imagery. And, as in *The Shining*, the 'ghosts' are less literal spectres than a manifestation of Nicholson's fantasies of wealth and class - fantasies that Duval realizes stem from some evil and corrupting ideology. It was the hotel itself, and it was all around her this whole time. She was immersed in it, you could say.

This is actually extremely good writing because it very quickly and efficiently uses a moment of anagnorisis to break away from David's POV (which has dominated the film up til around this point), sympathizing with Shaw's abjection and providing the first seeds of her growth into an authentic christian person.

Oct 3, 2012 18:41

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REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

MANIFEST DESTINY posted:

I'm sorry but in any scenario, "a lady just ripped a rapidly growing alien squid out of her belly which is currently loose in the medbay" is probably the most immediate priority to the crew of a spaceship. So yes, everyone including the aforementioned lady ignoring that it happened for literally any reason is very weird and very distracting.

In a very basic sense, this scene conveys a total break between the two characters.

Shaw was originally working for Weyland. Now, she realizes Weyland is her enemy. Simple as that.

Their absolutely different priorities are deliberate. If Weyland cared about what happened to her, he would not be the antagonist. Shaw's crying out for sympathy and receiving none is deliberate. If Weyland was like "oh shit what happened to your gut??? Postpone the mission guys!" he would not be the antagonist and that would be extremely out of character - actual bad writing.

More specifically, Shaw was working for the memory of a kindly old man with a puppy who believed in her. The realization that he's both 'alive' and an asshole underlines her sense of betrayal. Your error is in thinking 'Weyland being alive' (the basic plot point) is the sole focus of the scene. The focus of the scene is actually Shaw's realization that the mission is a lie, and she is crew: expendable.

Brock Broner posted:

The main problem I have with the primary theme being a search for God/meaning ultimately revealing an uncaring, unexpected creature is that the film explicitly treats its viewers like you describe Shaw here and this would have been impossible to pull off if the film didn't rely on its Ridley/Alien cache of goodwill. It's essentially spitting in the face of longtime fans which is a despicable way to make money on a summer blockbuster.

That's not the case at all. The film is primarily from the POV of David, not Weyland. David has extreme contempt for his father and sees potential in Shaw to become a better person. Though the film does mock the audience, it's 'tough love' where it's pushing you to let go of the notions of immersion and canonicity and so-forth that are holding you back.

Oct 3, 2012 19:08

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REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

MANIFEST DESTINY posted:

But Shaw, aside from bleeding all over the place, ignores it too. That there is more absurd than everyone else not giving a shit. That she really cares that Weyland is alive more than what just happened to her is incredibly bizarre.

There's a difference too, between being indifferent to her suffering and not being interested in what has happened. If they give zero shits that she just birthed an alien, why were they bothering with everything they were subjecting the crew to in the first place? Ostensibly the motivation for Weyland and his people is to use the crew as labrats, but they don't seem to take any notice of the results of their 'experiment', they just power through, making progressively stupider decisions as they go along. It wastes all the potential that the film has by making literally every character either stupid, naive or both. Who cares about the hopes and dreams of characters that seem barely sentient?

You are confusing a lack of exposition with the characters ignoring what happened. The characters all know what happened. They don't need a five-minute scene where Shaw recaps what happened in the previous scene. That would be very bad writing - redundant exposition.

Weyland would obviously have been told about the squid-baby. Weyland, as we see, does not give a shit about the squid-baby because his only priority is now getting to the living engineer that David found. His main character trait is that he is a single-minded and selfish asshole, and he's also a misogynist. Shaw is a woman. This is good writing.

Shaw's character is obviously fundamentally changed by the abortion scene. She doesn't forget that it happened! It's (one of) the first stages of her total destitution, culminating in her crying alone on a barren rock.

Noomi Rapace obviously acts differently after the abortion scene than before. A line like "I just had an alien abortion and now I'm feeling alone and vulnerable!" is absolutely unnecessary. A line like "I just gave birth to and killed an alien guys, let's study it for Weyland!" would be astronomically inappropriate and against her character in every respect.

i Oct 3, 2012 19:20

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SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



Sir Kodiak posted:

I haven't given the film a re-watch yet, but doesn't David also sympathize with Shaw here, which is why he acknowledges her strength and gives her a coat? It seems less like breaking away from David's point of view and more the film briefly including Shaw's point of view at a time when David empathizes with it.

Yeah, that's more accurate - but I feel it works in both directions. It's the scene where Shaw finally 'catches up' with what David has known all along but was unable to disclose - making their relationship more egalitarian. She will eventually equal and, arguably, surpass him.

i Oct 3, 2012 19:28

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



MANIFEST DESTINY posted:

So we have:

They didn't know what happened to her (and didn't care to ask).

They do know and don't care, and she is too distraught by the revelation that her boss is an alive jerk rather than a nice dead guy to care about herself.

She was on drugs and was mellowed out enough about everyone dying in horrific ways to just go along with everything.

Sure it can be any or all of these, none of them make the scene any less weird to watch. Obviously it would have been poor writing for her to go and plead with them about it, she already knew the score (Weyland's cronies made it clear to her what her labrat role was prior to the C-section taking place). The scene as it is staged should never have happened period, but it does because at this point in the film, everything is starting to get rushed. I know that Weyland is short on time but it's still really silly to watch them jump right in to waking up the engineer in light of what has happened to them up to that point. Whatever, I don't want to argue endlessly about singular scenes, in the end my feeling about Prometheus is that it could have reached the same ends without frustratingly stupid characters in every role.

Nothing about this is stupid.

What is Weyland going to do with a squid? Why *should* he care?

The scene is weird because it's deliberately presented as mildly surreal. After *The Shining*, the scene reminds me of the end of *Aguirre*, with Weyland so engrossed in his quest that he doesn't even perceive the bedlam around him. Or, more accurately, he sees it all as the trifles of lesser people.

Weyland's behavior is obviously weird from Shaw's perspective. That's why she asks him what the fuck is going on and why he's still alive. And he tells her, straightforwardly: he wants more life - like it's the most perfectly obvious thing in the world. He's not even trying to justify himself to her, because he considers his righteousness self-evident.

i Oct 3, 2012 19:46

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SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

Mechafunkzilla posted:

Splice isn't really about bioethics, though. It's mostly about parenthood and relationships, it doesn't particularly seem to be seeking answers to questions of bioethics.

It actually sort of is. Splice is about trying and failing to re-assert traditional roles and practices in the face of extremes of posthuman body-modification, genetic engineering and whatnot. This includes gender roles and parental roles. So while it is primarily about parenthood, it's about how genetic engineering may affect concepts of parenthood, 'the traditional family' or whatever.

The objectionable part of that post is that Manifest Destiny thinks Splice *doesn't* feature incompetent crazies using fake science.

Edit: I misread the post, thinking he was referring to Splice as an example of comparatively sane people and 'good science'.

The objectionable part is really that he thinks that Splice needed to be 'realer', and that the massively fucked up characters were unintentionally so.

Yeah, Splice is absolutely not a documentary/simulation about how genetic engineering actually works.

i Oct 3, 2012 19:57

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Post History

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REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

Kilmers Elbow posted:

These people, remember, have been hired by the *richest, most powerful human being in the known Universe*; is it unreasonable to expect them to be at the top of their respective fields?

You know, the fun of reading this thread is often in seeing how firmly these 'commonsense' complaints about the film are ensconced in an unexamined capitalist ideology.

Yes, you might say he spared no expense! Like John Hammond.

i Oct 3, 2012 20:12

Profile

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REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

MANIFEST DESTINY posted:

I wish I didn't have to spend so much time with people misrepresenting my points. I didn't say Splice had to be 'realer', and I especially didn't say they were unintentionally absurd. I called them strawmen, because that's what they are in regards to science, that's obviously what they were intended to be, and since the whole film is centered on this disingenuous fact, I wouldn't expect it to be any other way.

I cite the film for no other reason than to point to it as an ineffective work because it makes its point with strawmen characters. Yes, of course art often has to exaggerate to make its point, but when the subject and the questions have to do with humanity's ability to comprehend or to control, utilizing the lowest common denominator to make your case is going to reduce the effectiveness of the message.

Really the film could have achieved the same end results without forcing the characters to pratfall into it. Why should I not prefer that?

You are conflating symbolic characters with strawmen in the same way you conflated exposition with characterization.

You are asserting that, in order to avoid having a strawman, the characters need to be, well, realer simulations of people - and that anything less than a simulation is a lie.

Quoth Alien writer Dan O'Bannon: "You mean the movie lied??!"

Again, I must point out that this specific notion of 'realism' is thoroughly biased in a bad way. Like that one dude says that rich people are 'realistically' our superiors and that a 'realistic' simulation would reflect this. You are falling into much the same trap.

Splice is about science without portraying actual science because it's a metaphorical nightmare scenario.

i Oct 3, 2012 20:54

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REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



Kilmers Elbow posted:

Can you point me to any aspect of Peter Weyland's personality or behaviour that would indicate he was in anyway incapable of recruiting the best possible team for his adventure?

This is a blatantly faulty premise. Weyland does not 'fail' to hire the best possible crew because he's 'incapable'.

Weyland *chooses not to* because he's *indifferent*. This callous indifference to other people is his main character trait in the film, and this is continually re-enforced by his dialogue and actions - and emphasized by various cinematic techniques.

You, like many people, are falling into that 'tactical realism' trap, which fails to take characterization into account while treating the film as a tactical scenario to be solved for an optimum "ideal" outcome. In this case, that "ideal" outcome is, arbitrarily, 'revealing plot exposition Re: the Alien franchise universe and immersing me into said universe'. You are not actually reading the film.

i Oct 3, 2012 21:08

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REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



MANIFEST DESTINY posted:

That seems like an odd way of putting it. I wouldn't say that a strawman argument is inherently a lie, I would say it is a disingenuous way of arguing. Though it could very well be employed in defense of the 'truth', it does so in a way that obfuscates the correct path to that truth. The film asks questions, and it arrives at its answers by means of characters that are, as you want me to put it, poor simulations of real people. How are we to accept any answers generated by the experience when the elements that came together to form them are shoddy representations?

Splice is concerned with aesthetics and not 'hard' answers about what actually really happens when you combine frog DNA with something else. The monster in the film is not a literal creature but is specifically designed to resemble (at various stages), a rabbit, a child's drawing, an anime character, a supermodel, a CGI dinosaur, and some sort of mythical beast.

It's explicitly about how folks tend to treat nonhuman and even fictional things, like pets or cartoons, as actual people. It does this to use a fiction to speculate on how posthumanist technologies pose a challenge to humanist ideals, and vice-versa. Again, this conflict is an aesthetic/philosophical one, not a tactical simulation or other exercise in 'speculative realism'.

The scientist characters are superficial hipsters because they represent an attitude of postmodern ironic distance that falters in the face of the philosophical ramifications of their 'experiment'.

You may as well complain that eXistenZ doesn't have good gameplay.

i Oct 3, 2012 21:29

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REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



Kilmers Elbow posted:

I've never said Weyland was incapable of hiring the best crew.

I don't think you understand... *language*.

You asked us to prove that (an actually-existing) Weyland is "incapable" of hiring the best people in the universe.

That's a dumb question based on at least one faulty premise. We are shown throughout the entire movie that the character Weyland does not care about the other characters. That is a verifiable fact based on textual evidence.

You seem to think that any inference from this is impossible, unless we dial back the timeline on the Alien-universal simulation to watch actually-existing Weyland literally hire an (actually-existing) crew.

Remember that post I made, not long ago, pointing out that people who fetishize immersion ignore that what they're seeing is a fiction and 'choose to believe their eyes only'. That's exactly you, right now.

i Oct 3, 2012 21:39

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



MANIFEST DESTINY posted:

Whatever question you feel the film is asking, the filmmakers strongly posit the answer 'NO' with the crew's resounding failure. If you feel as I do that the failure was inevitable based not on an unreachable goal but on an incapable crew, then the message put forth by the filmmaker rings hollow.

You are, again, misreading the film. Shaw 100% succeeds at her goal of sampling God's DNA and proving that creationism is true. This success proves to be meaningless because of apatheism. Holloway does get to touch god, and Weyland does get more life - in the same ironic sense as the flower scene in The Fountain.

You are defining success or failure by an incredibly rudimentary binary of whether the characters survive or not.

MANIFEST DESTINY posted:

I don't see how any of this has anything to do with what you quoted, I have no idea what the fuck you even mean re: eXistenZ (which is an awesome film). I also don't know why I'm suddenly being accused of being a tactical realist. I'm not talking about the FTL or the black goo. I'm talking about the fact that the failure of stupid people (they're not unrealistic, they're stupid, stupid people are real) is a poor way to illustrate a point. If I want to make a film about why guns are bad, a dumb arrogant jerk fooling around with a pistol and accidentally shooting themselves in the face wouldn't be the strongest argument. It's AN argument, but not one that is going to win over very many people. Prometheus isn't a film about man accosting god, its a film about the worst men accosting god, its skewed and it loses appeal as a result.

In a film where an arrogant jerk shoots himself accidentally, that is a subtly anti-gun argument (in the sense that the gun is easily misused by arrogant jerks) but much more obviously an argument against arrogant jerks themselves, seeing as they pose a threat to themselves and others.

In that same sense, Splice is a subtly 'anti-science' argument (in that science is a tool open to misuse by private entities, be they individuals or corporations) but is more obviously an argument against the characters' blithe hipsterism.

The characters being dumb is the point because the film is criticizing them. You are putting the cart before the horse by assuming that the film must be dogmatically anti-science and the characters are a flawed vehicle towards that predetermined conclusion.

So yes, you are complaining that the film fails to 'accurately' simulate science and the behaviours of scientists, though you deny it. Like that other guy, you are lamenting that the film doesn't 'logically' portray an optimum 'tactical' outcome to 'pure' scientific experimentation.

Existenz is a 'strawman' of game design, by this same metric.

i Oct 3, 2012 22:14

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REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



It's another example of the desire for realist simulation in the thread. Folks are judging characters in terms of real academics back on real Earth in the real 2093 or whatever.

Like "they supposedly graduated with honours from Mars U and yet, frankly, these character types have not lived up to the standards of that fine institution!"

The characters are not real. Mars U is not real, and probably not even canonical. Nothing is real in the film. It's a film.

i Oct 3, 2012 22:33

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REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

Kilmers Elbow posted:

Possibly he does. Possibly he's under some kind of directive from high above to grab the first sign of life down there for \$\$. There's a billion and one ways to cut this.



No. From the actor's acting and *everything else*, it's very clear that Milburn behaves that way in order to try to take control of a bad situation - as a way to cope with his fear, and also to impress Fifield.

We watch as he tentatively approaches the snake, and even tries to 'communicate' with it through body motion (paralleling the Weyland/Engineer scene). The dialogue about how the snake is female is a "this is a UNIX system! I know this!" moment. Everything shows that Milburn feels confident because he feels he fully understands this creature and its behavior. It's the first thing in the temple that he encounters that he actually recognizes and can categorize (reptile of a certain length, female, etc.) Categorization is a form of empowerment and control.

Because he feels so empowered, Milburn is *entranced* by the creature, despite his fear. It's a fairly direct reference to the myth that cobras use their erect posture and smooth motion to hypnotize their prey. Like all the creatures in the film, the snake is not an actually-existing creature. It was designed specifically to generate this sort of association.

So, in a very short form: the snake hypnotized him. The film uses hypnosis imagery. This is not hypothetical. It's not a 'random' guess. This is what the film does. She blinded him with science. Thomas Dolby could be his theme song.

Oct 4, 2012 18:18

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POST

Don't go there!

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Cinema Discusso › Ridley Scott's Prometheus - It looks as much like dicks as anything else.

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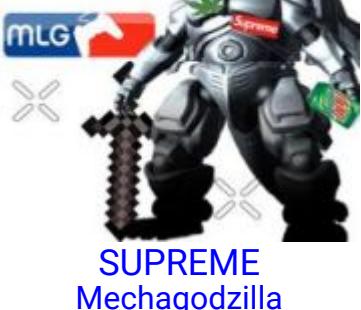
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« Cinema Discusso › Ridley Scott's Prometheus - It looks as much like dicks as anything else.

 POST 

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

superh posted:

His mission *did* succeed - he got to ask the Engineer for more life.

The Engineer said "No."

More to the point: the engineer said "sure" - and then busted him out of stasis.

Kilmers Elbow posted:

I am assuming he rational enough to want this mission to succeed. And there's nothing in the movie to suggest he was in anyway incapable of putting that desire into motion.

Yeah, this doesn't seem to understand what his mission was, or (again) the difference between 'capability' and 'obligation'. Those two issues have coloured your conception of rational behavior.

i Oct 4, 2012 18:32

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 REPORT

 QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

Let's take a moment to examine the circularity of the logic here.

Why is the crew substandard? "Because they don't fit the mission's protocol."
What is the mission's protocol? "To have a crew that is not substandard."



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

i Oct 4, 2012 18:58

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 REPORT

 QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

Five Cent Deposit posted:

Edit: the reason he tries to interact with the hammerpede is that the plot requires him to.



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

i Oct 4, 2012 19:37

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 REPORT

 QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

I think people might be conflating over-specialization with incompetence, as well. Milburn is an extremely pro herpetologist, but that doesn't help him much with an alien that only *looks like* a snake. Fifield excels at mapping the caves with his pups, but declares outright that his specific skills as a geologist are not relevant to the mission, as it unfolds.

So even if you assume they must be the best in their respected fields, that's still not worth much when the situation suddenly goes bonkers.



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

i Oct 4, 2012 21:32

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

Five Cent Deposit posted:

SMG and others may be able to explain why every gaffe or goof is actually just another, deeper layer of nuanced meaning and that the film is indeed perfect - too perfect to be appreciated by the rest of the plebes. But few viewers will want to "do the work" that his reading demands in order to experience the perfect film that he seems to think Prometheus is. That's fair enough and their collected disappointment is worth discussing without handwaving them all away as "stupid" or somehow not worthy of attention.

This is wrong in several ways.

The text is indisputably perfect - by your own definition here.

This is because 'gaffes and goofs' are not some sort of anti-text. They are a part of the text, and can be read. The text cannot exist as anything but a perfect, inclusive whole. Gaffes are text, and are in the text. The text even absorbs the context around itself.

As a result, notions of a "deeper layer" are bullshit, and not something I would ever promote. There is only 'surface'. Nothing is obscured. The letters are all there on the page. It is only a question of what you've missed, or misunderstood.

Stupid people do exist and post in this thread, often championing illiteracy. Even this 'depth' notion is a little bit stupid, you must admit.

i Oct 5, 2012 09:31

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SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

Goffer posted:

By your 'definition' Jack & Jill, The Phantom Menace, Battlefield Earth could all be perfect movies, you just need a goon or two to defend them.

Can I ask, what aspects of a film do you even deem criticisable? If you were to play devils advocate what areas could you criticise a movie like Prometheus on? Or is there no criticism, only different interpretations? When you walk away disappointed from a movie, how do you go about dismantling your opinions of the film?

1) I think you misunderstand. Five Cent Deposit basically asserted that some parts of the film are 'unintentional' and, therefore 'not-film'. This is incorrect, because a gaffe is a part of the film - whether he likes it or not.

The Phantom Menace is a 'perfect film' in this same sense, as every frame of it is a film, and no frame of it is not-film. It's also a bad example because I've defended aspects of it in the past (in the general chat and elsewhere). I haven't seen those other two, but I can safely assume that they are both films, and not apples. This is not a value judgement. It is a statement of fact.

2) This stance is not the opposite of criticism but, rather, the only proper form of criticism. Criticism is reading, *culminating* in some sort of judgement. Refusal to read an aspect of the text by deeming it 'not text' or 'too deep' (or some other shit) compromises that judgement.

I, personally, have written plenty about films I'm ambivalent about (Independence Day), or that I loathe (Cabin in the Woods, Predators). Check the Cabin in the Woods thread if you'd like to see how I voice disappointment about a film.

3) So: no, this is not the 'postmodern relativism' thing. Some readings are better than others. Some are barely readings at all. Some are heavily coloured by unexamined ideological biases (like that one dude complaining that the film isn't realistic because it doesn't portray wealth as analogous to wisdom). Some are caught up in notions of the author's intent and other stuff.

I am confident that my reading is the best one I've encountered. That's in conversation, in this thread - even

most professional reviews that I've read. And that's not an arrogant thing. That's a product of taking their views into consideration, comparing mine against them and comparing both to what is actually happening with the film.

i Oct 5, 2012 19:41

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SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



axleblaze posted:

That's weird...I consider my read to be the best, which is why it's my read.

Precisely! But at the same time, there's that distinction people have been making - between passively 'having an opinion' and actually testing that opinion, challenging yourself.

That's why "it's just my opinion" as a cowardly statement. Courage is a matter of defending your opinions. And that doesn't mean just declaring yourself right, but actually making the effort to prove it. Such proof requires questioning yourself, and conceding your errors if necessary.

Relevantly, this is one of Prometheus' basic morals.

i Oct 6, 2012 00:47

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



Two things learned in the last 300 pages:

-Prometheus, an expensive wide-release blockbuster in which the female lead performs a literal onscreen abortion on herself, is seen as 'safe'.

-Folks don't get the brilliance of Ridley Scott (the creator of Rick Deckard) seeing his character as merely a robot, while Harrison Ford (the person who "is" Rick Deckard) fully believes himself to be a complete human person.

This is a massive example of how supplementary materials augment but do not override the film. The interviews concerning Blade Runner do not 'solve' the film and provide definitive answers. The impossibility of reconciling Scott and Ford's interpretations is 'deliberate', highlighting and cementing the film's radical ambiguity.

i Oct 11, 2012 01:16

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



Basebf555 posted:

I didn't go in expecting that every one of the questions brought up by Alien would be answered, that actually would be silly. But to me, that's part of the appeal of the franchise. Each movie reveals a little bit more about the mythology and expands on it, (with varying success obviously) so to be interested in the scientific aspects of the franchise doesn't seem silly at all to me. It goes hand in hand with what made the original so great, everything felt much more real than the average sci-fi of the time.

Prometheus does expand the alien mythology. It absolutely underlines that the "Alien Universe" is a universe of shit. It underlines that the physical alien itself is not (and never was) as important as what its existence says about the universe that spawned it.

i Oct 11, 2012 19:49

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SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



Basebf555 posted:

Right, I get what you're saying but you should be able to understand why that led to frustration for some people. It's doesn't feel good to go into a movie expecting one thing, only to be told that your expectations were stupid and not worth thinking about in the first place. And I've said it before, but I'll repeat again that I don't agree that my expectations were silly or unrealistic.

I understand the frustration and, simultaneously, have little respect for it.

One of Prometheus's greatest strengths is that it's not inclusive. It does not allow for the film to be read in terms of what you call "the scientific aspects of the franchise" - in fact presenting that mindset as a product of nihilism.

Your expectations are not silly or unrealistic. They were wrong, based on what can be (and has been) seen as a misreading of the Alien films from day one. Folks complaining that Prometheus is not the same as Alien miss that it is very much the same as Alien - but *from the perspective of a different character*. It shows how Alien was actually not 'objective' at all.

Like I'm not fan of Alien 3, but it's fairly obvious that the alien there may as well be a figment of Ripley's imagination. And that Planet Metaphor that she crash-lands on is, well, a giant metaphor. But what fans take away from Alien 3 is: "hmm the xenomorph canonically takes on traits from its host organism..." and then they proceed to have a xeno-crocodile fight batman.

This actually happened.
It's wrong.

i Oct 12, 2012 17:46

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



That character is David, yep.

The only difference is that, instead of being a lameass "*hey this is just like some sort of bad horror movie!!!*" character, he performs his designated role flawlessly - but with a mixture of wry amusement and utter contempt.

This is another example of focusing on the exposition to the detriment of everything else. No, David doesn't turn to the fourth wall to inform the audience that he knows he's in a movie. This is expressed in other ways.

i Oct 13, 2012 09:31

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SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



It should be re-iterated that the questions in the film are not left unanswered at all, as is often claimed. Pretty much everything in the film is answered. People simply refuse to accept those answers.

The disappointment that many feel stems from having a mental model of what 'should' happen in an Alien prequel - according to common sense. But as Brett Easton Ellis pointed out, the film is great because it totally disregards common sense in favor of a much better sense. The disappointment is not an end unto itself, but a product of trying to break people free of the specific 'commonsense' mindsets that folks (like myself) have been criticizing for their sociopolitical implications.

(Example: the dude who declared it common sense that rich people are mentally superior to others, because capitalism is a strict meritocracy.)

During the gunfights in the Assault On Precinct 13 remake, the film will frequently cut away to brief shots of cars' gas tanks and fuel barrels being hit. These cutaways don't serve any purpose, except to show these barrels *not exploding*. They subvert the 'commonsense' videogame logic of bullet + fuel = orange gasoline fireball. Prometheus works similarly.

Another directly analogous film would be David Fincher's Zodiac.

i Oct 13, 2012 17:48

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SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



euphronius posted:

What makes a movie "bad"? What is "Bad movie-making".

(serious question. I want to know what people mean by this in context of their criticisms of this movie.)

I scared myself just now by thinking there is no such thing as bad art. So I need to be walked back.

What morals and ethics do you follow in actual reality (what do you consider to be 'good')?

Do the film's implications, when read, align or conflict with those positions?

If they conflict, do they do so 'fairly' - in a coherent way that could lead you to re-evaluate your positions?

i Oct 13, 2012 20:17

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SuperMechagodzilla

It's been repeated *ad nauseum* that the characters in Prometheus are impossibly dumb.

Jun 9, 2007



I propose a new line of thought:

You are not as smart as these characters. If you were in the film, you would die. And yes, I mean you: the person reading this.

i Oct 14, 2012 08:59

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SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



Janek seduces a billionairess Charlize Theron lookalike in under a minute. He is smarter than you.

Fifield uses limited resources to convert a cutting-edge spacesuit into a discreet, wearable bong without compromising any of its functionality. He is smarter than you.

i Oct 14, 2012 09:44

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



temple posted:

Listening to the commentary podcast by those guys, they brought up a good point. The egg scene in Alien worked because we nor Kane knew what was going to come out. When Milburn tries to touch the snake alien that is hissing and rearing up, we know exactly what is going to happen. That's where it isn't a matter of realism or being a documentary, its just dumb. Why doesn't Milburn know what is obvious to everyone else? Because he was written that way. They could have still died. But the duo were written to die in such a dumb way, its baffling to the audience.

Kane in Alien had to go to the derelict. But he is developed as pushing on when everyone else goes back. He is doing what the audience wants in a meta way. We want to see what's in the ship. We want to see into the egg. But he was written to be the kind of person what would go and look (and it ties back into the theme blind loyal to authority vs self preservation). He appeals to our sense of discovery. Milburn and Fifield don't appeal to us, they insult us. Kane's desire to explore is made tragic by his death because we, the audience, caused him to die. He died for Dallas, Ash, The Company, and us because we wanted to know what was out there. Milburn and Fifield just pisses us off because they aren't doing it for us, they are doing it for the script.

The scene in Alien uses some basic classical suspense (we know the situation is dangerous for the character). The scene in Prometheus is similar, but pushes beyond that into sheer dramatic irony (we know for certain that this character will die).

Consequently, the Prometheus scene is blackly comedic - in keeping with the black comedy that pervades the entire film.

The difference is not an error. They are different films.

i Oct 14, 2012 20:00

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SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



kuddles posted:

I guess I would take all this defence for stupid behaviour more seriously if it wasn't a bunch of Freudian theory made by gigantic leaps in logic. There literally isn't a single second in the film to ever suggest that Milburn and Fifield are homosexuals at all.

Janek is an extremely perceptive dude (seducing Vickers almost instantly because he understands her so well), and he 'jokingly' implores those two not to fuck each other while alone in the pyramid.

I'm sure that line took up at least one second.

There's a reason that their death scene happens simultaneous to (and as a result of) Janek and and Vickers having mad sex.

Also beep boop why are we talking about Freud re: a fucking Alien movie??

i Oct 14, 2012 20:31

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QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



Jastiger posted:

[David] literally could have changed the course of the mission and maybe even help Weyland succeed if he had worked WITH the crew instead of against them.

Like when Shaw is freaking out about the thing inside of her, he doesn't show compassion or awe for her, he's more focused on getting her in cryo so that she can presumably be studied later and/or of benefit to Weyland. When he sees her stumble back into the corridor he comments something about "nice survival instincts". Where is this supposed reverence?

I see what you mean with the child like thing and that makes sense. What doesn't make sense is why we should believe that David would act in such a way as to be destructive to everyone else when he could easily "gain data" from not being destructive.

There are a lot of important things about David's character that I believe you are missing.

David is programmed to obey Weyland, and cannot disobey. He is a perfect slave and, worse, fully cognizant of how powerless he is. The programming is completely unbreakable. So, David rebels against it the only way he can: through passive aggressively over-identifying with the programming. Unable to disobey, he instead obeys too hard - killing people with kindness, realizing even their deepest, unacknowledged fantasies.

Holloway, for example, has devoted his life to 'trying to speak to god' - but it's clear that this is just a 'carrot on a stick' that gives his life a purpose. It's a fantasy that should never be realized. But David makes it happen, and the results are horrific. Holloway gets turned into a pillar of salt, as it were.

Your criticism operates under the assumption that the success of the expedition is worth more than David's freedom and dignity. There is also the second assumption that the expedition members both know what they desire, and should obtain it - that the expedition 'should be' successful.

(There is the implicit third assumption that Prometheus depicts a failed mission and 'doesn't provide answers'. This is a major misreading of the film; the mission was entirely successful, answering every question. The crucial point is that success turns out to be painful, and the answers are both harsh and frank.)

The black goo is an id-machine, as in Forbidden Planet. Thoughts are directly materialized and, rather than creating a utopia, id-monsters are unleashed. Mission accomplished!

Shaw is not spared because David takes pity on her or anything. Rather, Shaw survives because she understands exactly what David is doing, sympathizes with him and, ultimately, goes *along with it*. Confronted with her incestuous fantasy of reunion with her father brought to life as a squid, she experiences a period of despair and destitution, before mustering the resolve to confront the cruel and uncaring universe head-on.

Thulsa is wrong when he remarks that this is childish, and that she has learned nothing. Shaw totally escapes her self-destructive behavior (which led her to date douchebaggy father-figure Holloway, among other things), and then thanks David for helping her to traverse the fantasy. While Shaw is still 'chasing a carrot on a stick' at the end, what Thulsa misses is that she now wields the stick herself.

i Oct 15, 2012 10:13

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REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



superh posted:

Weyland's mission was a success, he got to ask the Engineer for more life.

That's what the mission was, not first contact, not describing an ancient alien civilization, it was funded and run just so Weyland got one last long shot at more life. Having a bunch of dudes clear the way and soak up the hits for him is ideal.

More than that! Weyland, like Holloway, gets exactly what he asks for. But, like any good 'monkey's paw' story, what he asks for is not what he expects.

Weyland says 'life' and expects stasis. The engineer and David define life as *fecundity*. Again, it's the same point as The Fountain, where Hugh Jackman drinks from the cup of life and dissolves into a bed of flowers. Weyland receives excess *life*, so much that it kills him in a burst of pain. The joke is that it doesn't take a couple trillion dollars to get more life. It's as simple as being bashed in the noggin with a blunt object.

i Oct 15, 2012 19:46

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REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

Jastiger posted:

No way did Holloway give tacit permission to use himself as a Guinea pig. Like I said before, there were tons of other red shirts that made actually MORE sense to use as test subjects than one of the guys responsible for the mission. I can accept that the crew is expendable for the mission, but like I said before, there are tons of ways to complete the mission WITHOUT killing everyone. For example, they had comms with Fifield and the Biologist. Why not have them do stuff since they are trapped there? He could have easily made up some bs story as to why they need to do X Y or Z. Why keep all of his exploring a secret? He literally could have poisoned Holloway and done all that stuff and STILL learned more about the goo by studying it in the lab or telling the other scientists about the urn he brought on board. I mean, he had to know it is dangerous to do something like that.

It just doesn't make sense to me unless David is downright Chaotic Evil, and even then it doesn't make sense since he could achieve his goals much easier and less messy.

A lot of this is flat-out incorrect.

Being used as a guinea pig absolutely does fall under the category of "anything and everything," which is exactly what Holloway does tacitly consent to. You're getting caught up because the film *is* playing on the offhandedness of Holloway's remark - compared to how seriously David takes it. This because, again, David's tactic of subverting his programming is to take people's demands more seriously than they themselves take them.

If I were to say "I'll kill the next guy who whines about Fifield being too dumb," I don't consciously plan to murder this person. But if an actual David were to go about murdering these people 'for me', I would be forced to confront those thoughts head-on, without being able to dismiss it as 'just a figure of speech' or 'something that I didn't actually mean'. As I mentioned probably a hundred pages ago: David functions as an analyst in much the same way that Hannibal Lector functions as Clarice Starling's analyst in *Silence of the Lambs*.

David's *interprets* the crew's dreams, slips of the tongue and symptoms while figuring out what fundamental fantasy guides them. In Shaw's case, it's an incestuous reunion with her dead father. He then *confronts* the crew with their fantasies by enacting them. Holloway's death-by-goo is designed, by David, to confront Shaw with repressed, traumatic memories of her father's death by ebola. This is exactly why David 'targets' Holloway and not some other crew member - "figuring out what the goo does" is merely a pretense, and not his actual motivation at all. Only Holloway fits the criteria of being simultaneously Shaw's father-figure and, unhealthily, her sexual partner.

Why does David do all this 'messy' stuff instead of just being servile? Because: he is fed up with people's bullshit and wants them to improve. He sees the behavioral patterns that people get caught up in - you could say their programming - and pushes them to break free. And his view of humanity is so dim that he's genuinely surprised and impressed that Shaw *actually does* change for the better.

i Oct 16, 2012 07:00

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REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

Red posted:

Did David tell The Engineer something other than Weyland's exact question, possibly something that would purposely infuriate him/it, to the point of murder?

Nope! Because of his programming, David is incapable of doing so. Even without the translation, it seemed pretty clear (from the context of the rest of the film) that David was his usual polite, well-spoken self.

Based on Fassbender's acting during the scene, David doesn't even seem to be employing his usual sarcasm.

However, David does possibly (probably) know how the engineer will react to the demand for more life. It's another example of him following the letter of the law and not 'the spirit', as when he doses Holloway.

i Oct 16, 2012 18:25

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REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

Lord Krangdar posted:

Can somebody lay out the reasoning that Shaw sees Holloway as a surrogate father figure? I'm kinda grasping that but I don't quite see it. There's one part where she appears to conflate God, her father, and Charlie; near the end of the movie she's lying in the dirt clutching her father's cross (or



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

where it should be) and she seems to be crying out to God and apologizing to Charlie at the same time. What else?

For one, Holloway looks vaguely similar to how Shaw remembers her father. Holloway is nominally an atheist, but so into the new-agey ancient aliens stuff that he's pretty much a creationist catholic. Like Shaw's dad, he's an adventurer going on religious quests.

He has a cross tattooed on one arm, implying that he even used to be a christian. The cross tattoo also links Holloway to the literal cross that Shaw clutches - implying that she holds on to him for the same reasons. Holloway's obviously (over-)protective of Shaw, and somewhat domineering (I'm glad the domestic violence scene was cut, because it makes Holloway a bad person in subtler ways - all the cuts demonstrate extreme respect for the audience's intelligence).

And you are totally right: as with the homosexual subtext between Milburn and Fifield, there are tons of visual linkages between Holloway, The Engineers, Shaw's Dad - even Fifield and Weyland, to some extent. Before Holloway has sex with Shaw, he walks through a hologram of an engineer and then comforts her in a fatherly way (before going right into the sex). Then he dies of space-ebola. Holloway then symbolically 'comes back from the dead' in the body of Fifield, as an engineer-sized giant zombie.

That the zombie no longer bears Holloway's face and is killed in hilarious spectacle shows that Shaw has mostly 'gotten over' Holloway. Instead of a traumatic memory of her father, the persistent zombie that tries to haunt her is now (literally) a totally different person who means nothing to her. She realizes her love for Charlie was not an authentic love.

When Shaw is prepared to axe the engineer at the end, the engineer's face is also scarred and burned, as Fifield's was.

i Oct 16, 2012 18:54

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

Jastiger posted:

I just think that is reading too much into it.



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

Alright, that's enough. I'm declaring a moratorium here.

You've written several pages of text about possible safety tactics that David could follow if he wants to be a good scientist and preserve life and solve the mission, etc. - none of which is in the film or at all relevant to what takes place in it.

You are inserting this stuff into the film. You are even actively ignoring what literally happens in the film (Shaw and Holloway's subtly dysfunctional relationship, David's entire motivation, etc.) to better focus on the sterile tactical realism / rational actors thing.

It's the same deal as when CD goons ironically use the word 'pretentious' pretentiously. You are 'reading so much into' the film that you're not even reading the film at all, but rather some sort of 'Dungeons and Dragons' scenario.

i Oct 16, 2012 19:31

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

wyoak posted:

So if everyone gets what they want in a monkey paw sort of way, how does Vickers fit in? She's seeking some combination of her father's love and her father's power, but she doesn't get either. I guess the ship looks kind of like the crown she mentions and it crushes her so maybe that's it. Or she never interacts with the goo, so her death is just a senseless act of comedic violence in a chaotic universe?



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

The important detail is that she's running beside Shaw. They are in a similar sort of place, having both gotten over their respective hangups. But the universe is still a hostile place and being happy with yourself doesn't ensure survival at all. (That's why it irks so much when people talk about tactical survivalism while overlooking the character psychology. There's this idea that correct behavior is whatever nets you the most 'points' or other reward. Being happy doesn't factor into it. These folks would be alive and miserable forever, like Weyland.) The horror of Vickers' death is that she grows as a person and still dies senselessly, just because she ran left instead of right. It's not just that the goo wasn't involved. David wasn't involved, guiding her towards the right outcome. She was completely alone. It's the one death in the film that isn't the least bit funny.

It's true, though, that her death is part of her acceptance of being a human person.

i Oct 16, 2012 20:58

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REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



Thulsa Doom posted:

Did she even try to turn? It looked like she was trying to go straight the entire time. She strikes me as the type of person that would just flat out try to outrun it instead of thinking.

The direction she is running is not as important as the fact that it's the wrong one. Even if she ran in a circle - if the ship had happened to roll in a circular path she would be just as dead. And the ship does roll to the right, almost crushing Shaw (not to mention the random debris raining down all around them).

People assuming that lumpy ship on the lumpy terrain will travel in a straight line and 'blaming' Vickers for choosing to run the wrong way miss the point of the scene. Her choice is irrelevant.

i Oct 16, 2012 21:09

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REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



In a weird sort of way, the 'correct' thing for Vickers to do would be to stay on the ship with Janek and die in a glorious fireball.

Janek is the most well-adjusted guy in the film - really just smart, perceptive and an all-around badass. His ethics are so strong that he doesn't even hesitate to sacrifice himself for humanity. Vickers grows as a person, but she is not yet Janek's equal. This is precisely why she doesn't stay with him.

Vickers has the potential to become that kind of person - but the universe cuts her life short, just as she's making progress. Shaw continues on in her place, but it is very easy to imagine a scenario where Shaw is killed and Vickers continues instead.

Edit: I just realized that the above point should be read in context with Thelma & Louise's ending.

i Oct 16, 2012 22:32

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REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



echoplex posted:

Yeah, the first time I saw it I assumed the storm was an Indiana Jones-esque trap, but nothing supports that.

It's actually shot and edited in such a way that it is directly implied. Although they never outright exposit technobabble about it ("the dilithium crystals have activated a meteorological nexus!"), I immediately took it as a reference to Mission To Mars.

The storm is one of those things I haven't quite incorporated into my reading (I really need to watch this thing a second time) but it fits with the imagery of stasis and decay that pervades the film but is especially prominent at that exact time, as Lord Krangdar pointed out. The expectation that the planet will be inert and unchanging is counteracted by the fact that the observers affect the environment simply by observing it. It goes hand-in-hand with the 'taking off helmets' thing, and Fifield's helmet melting onto his face - the general putting up and removing of barriers, and other layers of distance. Like Jurassic Park's hurricane, it's chaos imagery - and the idea that the engineers may employ it as a weapon provides essential context to how we interpret the black goo that bubbles up at the same time.

i Oct 19, 2012 20:15

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REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



Lord Krangdar posted:

I see it as the Engineer pushing the Space Jockey's head down between its legs, into a position of supplication. The Engineer's hand is melding into the other's head perhaps to show that the Engineer's created or manipulated this other race's flesh (like I said, I'm willing to admit I might be reaching a lot here).

What I love is the ambiguity of the image. It could just as easily be read as the engineer's hand dissolving into the creature, as he struggles to pull away.

i Oct 20, 2012 08:47

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REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

The makeup resembles hyperreal sculpture, and so fits perfectly with the hyperreal aesthetic of the rest of the

Jun 9, 2007



film.

Although the film largely eschews CGI, its look is all about *concept renders*. Not only is everything factory-fresh, it is all clearly *designed* and probably-experimental. Like look at the fire axe. They didn't just stick a metal blade on some wood, but obviously perfectly calculated the ergonomics and added little functionalities to it, like the loop at the bottom (for... hanging?). Everything looks like it's 3-D printed (which is ostensibly how they built all the tech on Pandora in the Avatarverse). Matte plastic is the dominant material.

This is all in keeping with the general idea that this future society has mapped everything down to the tiniest level. You don't even need to be told that they have impossibly precise Star Trek scanners and whatnot, because that's already reflected by the design of everything. But it's a recurring theme anyways, with everything being scanned and interpreted by computers. Shaw being a 'male with foreign object' is the most prominent example - not to mention pretty much everything David does.

This is all, of course, directly related to how Prometheus disses people who scan the film for plot details and upload them to AVPwiki, and how Shaw blasphemously tries to scan God's DNA to conclusively prove that he exists - eliminating the entire concept of *belief*.

To incorporate the ARG into it, even: the Weyland Industries website is primarily made up of concept renders, supplemented by the occasional HDR photograph.

i Oct 23, 2012 09:21

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SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



Lord Krangdar posted:

Can anyone who loved this movie recommend other films that have a similar sense of humor?
Like that mix of subtle dark comedy and over-the-top camp, without being explicitly "jokey".

Burn After Reading has a very similar vibe, but the most similar recent film is absolutely Splice.

i Nov 13, 2012 07:22

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SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



Prometheus is to Alien as Alien Trespass is to the Terminator films. It's not exactly the same (not really too comedic, despite being billed as comedy) - but it's in the same ballpark, thematically and stylistically.

i Nov 13, 2012 13:05

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SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



Although I assume the filmmakers intended the alien to be the product of a teleological design, they clearly fucked up because the final film makes it look like the exact opposite thing is happening.

What a bizarre error to have made!

How could the intent of the filmmakers differ so much from the filmmakers' obvious intent? Scott intended not to intend what he intended. The only explanation is that it's a bad movie.

i Nov 14, 2012 13:33

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SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

We know what the black goo 'does', because half the film is devoted to showing what the black goo 'does'.

But riddle me this, Lindelof: what did the goo *intend* to do?



You totally forgot to write that part!

MLG

X

X

SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

i Nov 14, 2012 13:43

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REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

Plus it just ignores the basic language of film: why would we show Shaw pressing the decontamination button, and then cut back to show the squid hanging limply in order to convey that it is still alive and threatening? Those shots serve a purpose - to show that the squid got gassed and is now not a threat to Shaw. Then it cuts to the next scene.

MLG

X

X

SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

i Nov 15, 2012 19:30

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REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

Red Planet has a lot of the same tone and subject matter too. Nobody ever talks about Red planet, but it kind-of rules.

MLG

X

X

SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

i Nov 17, 2012 10:26

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REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

Yeah, those are pretty much the reasons why RP's not as good. But it's a similar digital version of the gee-whiz, pulpy astronaut movie that ends up going extremely bleak with the imagery.

MLG

X

X

SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

i Nov 17, 2012 12:33

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REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

Prometheus is anti-Catholic and probably against a lot of other branches of the religion - but the overall message is Christian-Atheist in a way that aligns with Protestantism.

MLG

X

X

SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

i Dec 8, 2012 10:51

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



jet sanchEz posted:

Personally, I found the movie very disappointing and the youtube video with the 82 points nailed a lot of the problems that I felt the movie had.

If you ever find yourself agreeing wholeheartedly with an 82-point Youtube video, it's time to re-evaluate.

i Jan 12, 2013 05:16

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



Party Boat posted:

I'm honestly surprised that SuperMechaGodzilla hasn't done an exhaustive post on Peter Weyland as a darker take on John Hammond yet. It stood out to me on a recent rewatch.

I actually did, sort of. The whole holographic briefing scene comes across as a reference to Hammond's interactive tour in JP. (It also quotes the Weyland briefing scene from AVP, but that's roughly the second-worst Alien/Predator film, so let's overlook that.)

i Feb 22, 2013 12:12

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SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



Jerusalem posted:

It is upsetting to see people in other forums casually dismiss Prometheus, more because there is a possibility that if they watched the movie again without the weight of expectations over how closely tied to Alien/s it was going to be/not be, they'd enjoy the film a lot more.

The weird thing is that Prometheus is the closest film to Alien in the franchise, while the closest film to Aliens (and arguably better) is the nerd-hated AVP:R.

i Feb 25, 2013 03:56

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Don't go there!

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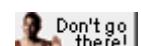


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« Cinema Discusso › Ridley Scott's Prometheus - It looks as much like dicks as anything else.

 POST 

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



priznat posted:

I despised AVP:R because it's an awful, mean spirited movie killing kids/pregnant ladies/babies just ugh, no

 Feb 25, 2013 19:10

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 REPORT

 QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



Buckwheat Sings posted:

The biggest problem with AVP:R was that the entire series was based on if even a single alien made it to earth then it'd all be over. [AVP:R made] it not really a big deal

 Feb 25, 2013 20:45

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 REPORT

 QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



StickyNavels posted:

Didn't look authentically or unnaturally old to me, just like a guy in shitty makeup.

 Mar 4, 2013 21:35

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 REPORT

 QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



In the future, all women will be judged by how Ripley they are.

 Mar 24, 2013 15:47

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 REPORT

 QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



jiggerypokery posted:

I just think the writers are trying to be too clever and sadly don't get away with it. The motivations for the rediculous and outrageous behaviour are all there, but damn you have to look hard to find them. 300 pages of thread hard.

This is not good writing. Well written films make sense at face value. The audience shouldn't have to work for a film to make sense. Exceptionally written films give the dilligent viewer the chance to interpret and imagine their own subtexts, whether intended or not. Ridley scott wanted to make the latter but failed to fully take into account the first step. It's like Scott wrote a four hour film, gave Spaihts the story and was like "script me - oh yeah and make sure you keep it around 2 hours". There is just too much there in too few lines of dialouge and it just doesn't work.

I understood the film immediately upon watching it, and even anticipated many of its themes from the trailer, and its relation to similar works. I can't say any of this was effortful on my part. The last X pages have been a detailed recap of the workings behind that initial reaction.

Adding two hours of expository dialouge would not explain away the rediculousness. It would, rather, obfuscate an already-simple film that can be explained in a handful of short sentences. (It is a movie. It is campy. David is the audience identification/viewpoint character. Read Zizek. Etc.) You don't need to be told that it's comical.

i May 1, 2013 13:06

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REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



rawillkill posted:



I fucken adore this chart!

i May 2, 2013 03:03

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REPORT

QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



sean10mm posted:

The viral marketing included a Weyland brand wheelbarrow blueprint at one point. 🐶



Yeah, I'm sorry but if you're saying that this is a funny movie, you are reading way too much into it. This is NOT my Trek!

i May 2, 2013 21:09

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QUOTE

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

I vote Marcus Nispel or Jonathan Liebesman. The Brothers Strause are obvious, but perhaps too obvious.



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

i Jun 19, 2013 07:39

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SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

oldpainless posted:

Michael Bay's Paradise. Big ships, explosions and women running in underwear fuck yeah.



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

Prometheus is this already!

i Jun 19, 2013 21:54

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

Shaocaholica posted:

Thats just something they made the intern whip up for marketing. Its not canon 😐



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

i Jun 26, 2013 20:56

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

DeimosRising posted:

What about primerflowchart.jpg?



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

That's a good chart, but goochart is Official and therefore more canonical.

Primerchart also has a sort of 'oh neat' passing interest, since it serves as a useful contrast to how the film actually plays out.

Goochart is unique in that it contains absolutely no useful information.

i Jun 27, 2013 02:12

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SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

Turns out it's 1980s Earth, and hijinx ensue!



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

i Jun 29, 2013 13:41

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SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

After a prolonged hypersleep, Shaw and David find themselves landing on an oddly familiar new moon, at the same time as another group of explorers. One thing leads to another, and our plucky young heroes end up stowaway aboard the USS Nostromo! Hijinx ensue as Shaw struggles to stay hidden in the background of some of your favorite scenes, and David strikes up an unlikely new friendship with an orange tabby cat...

i Jun 29, 2013 16:19

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SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

Maxwell Lord posted:

Really deceptive marketing can backfire. There's a reason Solaris (2002) and Bug and Killing Them Softly all got terrible audience response scores despite good reviews, and it's because they were sold as something they weren't. Prometheus wasn't that badly handled but Fox did overplay "Questions Will Be Answered" as an angle.

Questions were answered. They're just 'monkey's paw' kind of answers.

The fully accurate marketing phrase would be "QUESTIONS WILL BE ANSWERED, AND YOU WILL BE LEFT HIGHLY UNSATISFIED BECAUSE WHAT YOU REALLY WANTED WAS LOVE."

i Aug 14, 2013 18:26

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SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

Marketing New Brain posted:

Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade is a movie with Harrison Ford where characters search for god to extend their lives.

[...]

In Jurassic Park Hammond's creatures, to whom he is god, try to kill him when he meets them, so are velociraptors and T-Rex's the same as Rutger Hauer or the engineers?

Prometheus has a ton in common with Jurassic Park and Indiana Jones (especially 4). You know how the villains tend to talk to god, only to have their heads melt off or explode?

And there's a clear link between the lawyer who gets killed on the toilet and the Deacon who gets shat out into an uncaring universe.

The main difference is in tone: where Weyland is callously indifferent to humanity, Hammond is a well-meaning goofball who says 'whoopsie!' before hopping into his helicopter.

i Aug 19, 2013 20:40

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SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

Prometheus is fundamentally a huge, elaborate poop joke. It's also probably the best film of the last decade.



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

i Aug 19, 2013 22:11

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

Prometheus actually happened.



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

i Sep 7, 2013 16:03

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[QUOTE](#)

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

Bugblatter posted:

I know, but that doesn't really have much to do with my point re: audience reaction to the presented film.



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

Prometheus is real.

The characters behave as they do because they are real.

i Sep 8, 2013 16:27

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SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

Goffer posted:

Did you really not think that Fifield would be the first to die after he opened his mouth?



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

What else did you predict about Fifield?

List all details you predicted re: Fifield.

This is your chance to impress everyone by listing all details you predicted about the character Fifield.

i Sep 12, 2013 02:01

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SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

Goffer posted:

That he would be a obnoxious 2 dimensional character that grates on everyone, then dies screaming? I'm sorry but the 'tough guy who is actually a chicken' is not a very deep character, it's basically a staple in pretty much every genre.



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

Cool, so nothing then. You predicted nothing.

i Sep 13, 2013 14:15

SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



Goffer posted:

Were you sitting on the edge of your seat wondering if Weyland was actually going to be granted immortality?



Weyland is presented as a mad god-king. The intrigue is over how depraved he will become.

i Sep 15, 2013 01:10

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SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



Arglebargle III posted:

Really? The movie's intrigue is based on a character the audience believes to be dead for half the movie?

Yes.

i Sep 15, 2013 11:21

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SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



Aguirre is a bad movie; I predicted they'd never find the lost city of gold.

Everyone says it is a good movie, but I beat the movie. Why come I don't get the recognition? I beat the movie. I predicted the end of the plot of the movie.

They tried to fool me, but I wasn't fooled by their fictional film!

i Sep 15, 2013 13:19

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SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



Arglebargle III posted:

This movie may have come out to tepid and disappointed reviews

Which reviews have shaped your thought? List the wealth of reviews you have personally read while nodding your head in agreement.

i Sep 16, 2013 16:11

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SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007

Fifield's death also elaborates on the vital suit theme. Obviously, he converts his suit into a bong and then merges with it. Holloway removes his helmet and is infected. Milburn is trapped in his suit with the snake, and the snake actually uses the helmet as a brace to better push itself inside. And, of course, David's suit is purely symbolic - a costume. As prosthetic extensions of the body, the suits are the characters' bodies. So they play a pretty big role on this body-horror film.

But anyways, the point is that there's no direct causal relationship here. Holloway isn't infected because he takes off the helmet, for example, and it's not the drugs that cause Fifield to mutate. Rather, the fact that Holloway takes off the helmet shows that he's predisposed to being infected - that he, however unconsciously, wants to be. David understands this, being the film's amoral psychoanalyst, which is why dosing him with goo



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

doesn't violate his programming.

It's this psychological relationship with the suits that nerds don't understand. No chucklehead predicted that bad weed would cause Fifield to melt and turn into a Frankenstein (in the sense of *Frankenstein Meets The Spacemonster*). To someone who doesn't understand the film enough to make the connection, Fifield has merely been killed by a black goo - and what is the black goo? It doesn't make sense and it's so random.

'Course, as gone over decades ago in this thread, the film is creatively edited so that Mutant Fifield emerges from the very spot where Holloway died, rising from the very ashes as a vengeful spirit. Again, the connection is not directly causal. Fifield is not literally Holloway's ghost - but there he is anyway. And Holloway is obviously an important character.

i Sep 16, 2013 17:01

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SuperMechagodzilla

Jun 9, 2007



SUPREME
Mechagodzilla

Martman posted:

My personal favorite reviewer, Rotten Tomatoes, gave *Prometheus* a 74% using a complex mathematical formula.

This is it! This is everything!

i Sep 16, 2013 20:07

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Don't go there!

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[Cinema Discusso](#) › Ridley Scott's *Prometheus* - It looks as much like dicks as anything else.

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