

Thesis Title

**Joseph Conrad, Ridley Scott, and the changed face of the dystopian
oppressor in fiction and film**

Patrick Pearson

Student Number 43180590

April 2015

Department of English, Faculty of Arts, Macquarie University

This thesis is presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Research at Macquarie University. I certify that this thesis is entirely my own work and that I have given fully documented reference to the work of others. The thesis has not previously, in part or in whole, been submitted for assessment in any formal course of study.

Signed:

Table of Contents

Title	4
Abstract	4
Introduction	5
<i>The new face of the Oppressor</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Scott's lasting impact on film and culture</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>No such thing as a literary vacuum – the Old Mole</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Critical frameworks, methodological approaches, and disciplinary significance.....</i>	<i>12</i>
Chapter One: The Conrad-Scott connection	14
<i>Scott's familiarity with Conrad's work.....</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Considering circumstantial evidence of Conradian influence on Scott.....</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>Conradian idiosyncrasies mirrored in Scott's cinematic texts.....</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>Analogous layering of visual and auditory density.....</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>Shared ironic dualities of motif.....</i>	<i>19</i>
<i>The motif of paired opposition.....</i>	<i>23</i>
<i>Ill-considered action as Conradian motif appropriated by Scott.....</i>	<i>24</i>
Chapter Two: Capitalism will spawn a neo-imperialist oligarchy	26
<i>The rise of the oligarchic corporate empire.....</i>	<i>26</i>
<i>The corrupt leadership of the dark new emperors of Capital</i>	<i>27</i>
<i>Capitalist imperialism will lead to the worship of profit alone.....</i>	<i>29</i>
<i>The oligarchs at the imperial centre grow richer on exploited wealth.....</i>	<i>30</i>
<i>The new oligarchs will wield imperial power.....</i>	<i>32</i>
<i>Conrad and Scott both hint that empires will fall and be replaced</i>	<i>33</i>
<i>Neo-imperial power leads to brutal inhumanity</i>	<i>33</i>
<i>Social hierarchy and class-conflict in Conrad and Scott.....</i>	<i>34</i>
Chapter Three: Oligarchic corporations will commercialise, commoditise and dehumanise life	38
<i>Corporations treat workers as possessions and commodities.....</i>	<i>38</i>
<i>The commercialisation of life dehumanises both bosses and workers.....</i>	<i>40</i>
<i>Exploitative commercialisation withers human compassion.....</i>	<i>42</i>
<i>Scott and Conrad's vision of morality in a commoditised world.....</i>	<i>44</i>
<i>Mutual motifs of the betrayal of trust in the pursuit of 'treasure'.....</i>	<i>46</i>
Chapter Four: Corporations will ruin the environment and destroy beauty – and possibly cause mankind's extinction	49
<i>Capital, technology and biblical allusions of environmental apocalypse.....</i>	<i>49</i>
<i>The urban devastation wrought by corporate greed.....</i>	<i>51</i>
<i>The usurping and replacement of one 'people' by another</i>	<i>53</i>
<i>The 'Flood' wipes Man from Earth and heralds a superior species.....</i>	<i>55</i>
<i>Women and morality in Conrad, Scott and Dick.....</i>	<i>58</i>
<i>Echoes of Christ in the deaths of Nostromo, Decoud and Roy Batty.....</i>	<i>59</i>

Chapter Five: Corporations will marginalise freedom and globalise tyranny	60
<i>The 'laws' of Capitalism are inhuman and based on expediency.....</i>	<i>60</i>
<i>When corporations are all-powerful, individual freedoms suffer.....</i>	<i>62</i>
<i>Big Corporations are watching you.....</i>	<i>62</i>
<i>Tyranny results when the Corporation becomes more powerful than the State.....</i>	<i>65</i>
Conclusion	69
<i>He may be hidden, but he's there all right</i>	<i>69</i>
<i>What has been demonstrated conclusively?</i>	<i>71</i>
<i>Possible paths for future investigations.....</i>	<i>72</i>
<i>Last word from the Old Mole.....</i>	<i>73</i>
Works Cited	75
Other References	83

Title

Joseph Conrad, Ridley Scott, and the changed face of the dystopian oppressor in fiction and film

Abstract

Dystopian fiction and film over the past fifty years have seen a shift in the way the oppressor in dystopian scenarios is represented. The revised depiction of the agency of repression has moved from the State as dystopian tormentor to the Corporation as the new subjugator, and envisages capitalism run rampant and the Corporation grown all-powerful, corrupt and tyrannical. This thesis examines the genesis of two filmic texts of the late twentieth century, *Alien* and *Blade Runner*, both directed by Ridley Scott, which have been influential in framing the modern cultural metanarrative around fears that globalised capitalism may have catastrophic consequences for future society. Arguing that Joseph Conrad has been a strong stylistic and thematic influence upon Scott's early work, and through Scott upon subsequent dystopian texts, I first investigate Scott's familiarity with Conrad's writing, then closely analyse Conrad's 1904 novel *Nostromo* and the two seminal Scott films. I suggest that Conrad's fiction anticipates the four fears underlying Scott's films: that runaway capitalism will spawn neo-imperialist corporate oligarchies; that these will commercialise and commoditise life; that they will ruin the environment; and that they will globalise tyranny. Conceptualised through the critical lenses of Postcolonial and Globalisation Studies, and employing a New Formalist approach to textual analysis, the study concludes that Conrad has been integral to the change of identity of the oppressor in late twentieth-century and early twenty-first century dystopian texts.

Introduction

The new face of the Oppressor

The depiction of the dystopian oppressor – by which term I mean the despotic agency that tyrannises over the populace in dystopian fiction – has changed. During the first half of the twentieth century, iconic texts such as Zamyatin's *We* (1924), Huxley's *Brave New World* (1934) and Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty Four* (1949) clearly identify the agency of oppression as the State. In the majority of dystopian texts over the past fifty years, however, in both fiction and film, the agency of oppression seems to have shifted from the State to the Corporation. Darko Suvin agrees: 'the State Leviathan . . . has mutated from State to (mainly) corporate dictatorship' (406). The revised dystopian vision for the future resurrects the cautionary note sounded originally by Raphael Hythloday, in More's *Utopia*, against 'greedy landowners' and envisages a nightmarish age where capitalism and corporations run universally rampant and unchecked. Suvin has even suggested that the earlier texts by Zamyatin, Huxley and Orwell could be seen as 'anti-Utopias' – satirising, parodying or cautioning against a belief in salvation through the State – as against the more recent 'simple dystopia' which has a subtext of radical anti-capitalism, exemplary of which Suvin identifies Ridley Scott's 1982 film *Blade Runner*, with its powerful, ubiquitous and morally abhorrent Tyrell Corporation (385).

This thesis seeks the source of the 'mutation' of oppressor from State to Corporation, and *Blade Runner* seems integral to its identification. *Blade Runner* has had extensive impact upon subsequent dystopian representations, especially of a 'globalised' future – critics have noted that the film seems to have become 'entrenched as the definitive screen depiction of the nightmare future city' (Rowley 203) so that 'cities of the postmodern future are placed in Asia

or in an orientalized America' (Yu 46). Both *Blade Runner* and Scott's previous film, *Alien* (1979), each with a subtext of corporate secrecy and oppression, have been identified as significant influences upon the greater cultural narrative of the late twentieth century and early twenty-first century. Linda Williams suggests a possible cultural impetus behind their lasting impact – the rise of multi-national companies during and since the 1980s: '*Blade Runner* and *Alien* have plots that unfold in the shadow of all-powerful corporations . . . the common perception of the anonymity of corporate culture is perhaps a factor in the enduring status of both films' (199).

The subtext of corporate oppression in these two Scott films was both novel and timely in cinematic representation. It came as the immense and rising power of multi-national corporations began to inspire a widespread fear that their growth would portend the demise of certain cherished social values – a fear that has fuelled an interest in the study of globalisation and its cultural and environmental consequences.¹ As multi-nationals have become globalised corporations seemingly subject to neither national nor international governance, they have increasingly been portrayed in both dystopian fiction and academic circles as 'cosmic' capital behemoths with neo-colonial, neo-imperial agendas. Globalisation, 'neo-imperialism' and 'the anonymity of corporate culture' feature strongly as themes in *Alien* and *Blade Runner*, and there is little doubt that Scott's films have been both innovative and influential in reframing corporate capitalism as the new Oppressor to fear in future dystopian scenarios.

The themes we find underpinning *Alien* and *Blade Runner*, so wary of the stated benevolence of global corporations and so condemnatory of their rapacity and greed, were new to film but not fiction, and this thesis argues that they have their genesis in the writing and influence of Joseph Conrad. Concerns about the rise to absolute power of the Corporation

¹ Sankaran Krishna writes that many postcolonial and globalisation commentators suggest that the vocation of postcolonial studies in the post-9/11 world 'should be that of resisting neoliberal globalization or . . . "contemporary neo-imperialism" under U.S. auspices' (120).

have become so common as drivers of plots in dystopian film and fiction subsequent to Scott's *Alien* and *Blade Runner* that they are now part of our wider cultural narrative. They can be grouped under four main concerns: there is the fear that unfettered capitalism will create a small band of immeasurably-wealthy oligarchs who control huge swathes of global society as if they were their own personal empires; there is the concern that unrestrained Corporations owned by these few oligarchs will commercialise and commoditise life, and in doing so will not only dehumanise their owners but will debase all of society; there is the anxiety that these immense Corporations will irresponsibly despoil the environment and destroy that which is beautiful – possibly even causing the extinction of humankind itself in their pursuit of profit; and there is the great suspicion that rather than being agents for individual empowerment and social democracy, as their media arms would have us believe, all-powerful Corporations will instead marginalise freedom, crush dissent and initiate a globalised tyranny. Ridley Scott's first film, *The Duellists*, is a clue to the provenance of these themes. His film is an adaptation of Joseph Conrad's short story 'The Duel' – and it is Conrad's influence upon Scott that I believe to have changed the way the dystopian Oppressor is now represented and perceived.

Scott's lasting impact on film and culture

In exploring the changed representation of dystopian oppression noted by Suvin, I examine Ridley Scott's *Alien* and *Blade Runner* to see how Scott depicts the oppressor in a future world. As indicated above, I argue that he envisages the future oppressor to be the Corporation rather than the State; I consider how this differs from previous dystopian film; and, further, I examine what particular threats this new oppressor is seen to pose to humanity and society. I analyse interviews with Scott or with people involved in the making of his first films to clarify influences upon his filmic work, because Scott has been particularly

innovative.

One innovation was his intensely visual approach to directing, creating film sets so convincingly realistic that the audience would immediately become immersed in the fictional setting. According to Ivor Powell, one of the associate producers of *Alien*: ‘One hadn’t seen sets like [the ones Scott wanted for *Alien*] since Kubrick and *2001*’ (*Alien* 2003 commentary). Nor had cinematic audiences seen corporations portrayed so relentlessly as malevolent influences upon society.² Scott’s multi-layered and extraordinarily visual approach to filmmaking begins with his storyboarding an entire film before making even the first set or filming the first scene. This allows him to influence very strongly the eventual atmosphere, texture and sense of realism of the film – sometimes shockingly so. At the first screenings of *Alien*, members of the audience were so deeply engaged in its reality that some would vomit with sheer terror. This intensely visual realism quickly became Scott’s point of difference from previous directors, and especially from directors of science fiction or dystopian films. Sigourney Weaver, speaking of *Alien*, says ‘It was the first time we’d shown space to be a real place – you know, filthy, greasy, grimy, with real people in it’ (*Alien* 2003 commentary). John Hurt, who plays the unfortunate Kane in the film, says that ‘Ridley’s *Alien* is actually a different genre from the other ‘*Aliens*’ . . . a sort of realistic approach, a logical approach using a thriller format’ (*Alien* 2003 commentary). That realistic, gritty, believable approach to each scene was very novel in 1979.

Scott followed this same technique in *Blade Runner*: David Peoples, one of *Blade Runner*’s scriptwriters, speaks of how realistic the *Blade Runner* sets were. Of the set for the Deckard apartment, he says ‘I swear to God I was in a place that people lived – I mean that place was so alive and so real it felt nothing like any set I’d ever been on’ (*Dangerous Days*).

² The Kane Trust in *Citizen Kane* by Orson Welles is secretive and corrupt, but Welles focuses upon the psychological and moral dissolution of Kane himself rather than on the social consequences of Kane’s business and newspaper empire. Welles’ own indebtedness to Conrad in *Citizen Kane* is beyond the scope of this particular examination.

Scott's realistic grittiness and anti-capitalistic subtexts, and the ironic disjunctions between appearance and reality that are layered into *Alien* and *Blade Runner*'s plots, gradually made their way into other cinematic visions of the future (such as in *The Matrix*, *The Terminator*, *The Fifth Element*, *Minority Report* or even *Batman Begins*). The American Film Institute has voted both *Alien* and *Blade Runner* into its list of the top ten science-fiction films of all time (AFI), and Aaron Barlow writes that of the science fiction movies rated the top ten of the 1990s, 'at least six owe a debt to . . . *Blade Runner*' (43). Critics have noted *Blade Runner*'s contribution to the darkening of our cultural narrative around a posthuman future. Dominic Alessio, for one, suggests that in the films influenced by *Blade Runner*, 'humankind is far less humane than its artificial equivalent' (Alessio ctd. in Brooker 3).

Scott's viewpoint and cinematic techniques began to shape subsequent film and video: 'the videos were getting darker, it was always raining, the streets were always shining, and there was smoke coming off them . . . I was watching *Blade Runner*'s influence appear' (Weitzman 192). *Blade Runner* had represented an environmentally ruined world, a future cityscape and landscape destroyed by corporate greed, and the influence of Scott's dark vision of environmental ruin remains current in fiction and film. Yvonne Hammer noted in 2010 that the first decade of the twenty-first century 'has seen an increase in postdisaster survival stories which focus upon futuristic representations of environmental disaster' (35) and critics credit Scott's *Alien* and especially his *Blade Runner* for this increase.

Recent critically-acclaimed dystopian novels frequently use plots involving the toxic combination of giant corporations, ruined environments and oppressed society: Paolo Bacigalupi's *The Windup Girl* (2009), Cormac McCarthy's *The Road* (2006), Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* (2005), David Mitchell's *Cloud Atlas* (2004), and Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake* (2003) come to mind immediately, among many employing similar motifs.

Twenty-first century audiences now expect duplicitous oppression, tyranny and environmental ruination from powerful Corporations, and it is highly probable that Scott's *Alien* and *Blade Runner*, as forerunners, are responsible for initiating or at least heightening this expectation. In *Alien*, Scott re-imagines the future capitalist empire as a secretive, paranoid and ruthlessly commercial Japanese-American enterprise. Ordinary Americans and Europeans have become expendable workers, like the crew on board the space-tug *Nostramo*, while the owners of 'the Company'³ remain hidden and focus solely on profit. In *Blade Runner*, Scott ensures that his audience understands that the oppression of the majority of humanity, as well as the creation and enslavement of the 'replicants', are the result of an increasingly globalised economy where the Corporation, greedily corrupt, has become more powerful than any individual State.

The Corporation has become the new oppressor of – and in good part creator of – dystopian scenarios, and Scott's *Alien* and *Blade Runner*, so revolutionary in cinematic technique and their strong identification of the dystopian oppressor as 'the Company', seem to have contributed greatly to this. What this study wishes to uncover is the extent of thematic and stylistic similarity between Ridley Scott and Joseph Conrad, which seems to indicate a strong influence upon Scott by that novelist.

No such thing as a literary vacuum – the Old Mole

Joseph Conrad's fiction, radically experimental and immensely influential, appears to be strongly reflected and reprised in Scott's themes, motifs, style and techniques. Scott's gritty depiction of the dystopian future corresponds greatly to Conrad's description of the horrors and realities associated with the workings of the colonial world. Conrad's *Nostramo*

³ 'The Company' of *Alien* evolves over the course of the *Alien* franchise into the Weyland-Yutani Corporation.

(1904), as a modernist novel of psychological exploration in the guise of a nineteenth-century adventure yarn, changed future fiction novels and in this way is paralleled by Scott's films, which injected a new thematic depth and realism into science fiction and dystopian cinematic texts. Scott says of *Alien*: 'It was really a B-movie – what we all did elevated it' (*Alien* 2003 commentary). Scott's only feature film before *Alien* and *Blade Runner* was, as I have mentioned above, his film adaptation of Joseph Conrad's story 'The Duel'. Therefore, as part of investigating the origin of the changed depiction of the dystopian Oppressor in fiction and film, which seems to owe so much to Scott's early work, I explore possible Conradian influence in the techniques, motifs and style Scott develops for *The Duellists*.

Sensing greater Conradian influence upon Scott than has been acknowledged hitherto in academic criticism, I analyse closely Conrad's novel *Nostramo* alongside Scott's films for evidence of this. I choose particularly *Nostramo* because it is perhaps 'the most radically experimental English novel of the early Modernist period' (Knowles 1) and because it is 'Conrad's *summa*, almost an anthology of his typical narrative techniques, his favourite themes and motifs, as well as the epitome of his political concerns' (Najder *Conradiana* 233), and therefore highly representative of Conrad's work.

The thesis explores whether Joseph Conrad can credibly be seen as the origin of the themes and distinctive style which have found their way into Scott's films and from there into the modern cultural metanarrative. I argue that what will become discernible in a comparative textual study is that Scott's style will closely reflect Conrad's own, and will raise similar concerns about the social and psychological effects of colonial, capitalist and imperialist expansion. Whether from the early influence of adapting 'The Duel' into film, or from his reading prior to this of Conrad's works to find a plot available within the public domain, which he did do, to limit costs (Chase 4), Scott's first films appear to reveal the hidden hand of Conrad behind their direction. This should come as no great surprise: Conrad has long been

the ‘old Mole’ below stage whose voice is detectable in twentieth-century writers such as London, Hemingway, Fitzgerald, Maugham, Garcia Marquez, Greene, Le Carré, to name but a few (Moore 234).

Critical frameworks, methodological approaches, and disciplinary significance

In this exploration I combine two theoretical approaches: the close-reading of New Formalism as a way to identify distinguishing and detailed correlations between Conrad and Scott in their literary or filmic artistic techniques; and the critical framework of Postcolonial Studies, or rather its younger offshoot Globalisation Studies, as a thematic conceptual frame for the socio-historical context of the ‘self-regulating global system that no individual or national agency can constrain’ (Collits 148), and which has become the new dystopian Oppressor. Although this is primarily a literary study, it also has relevance for film studies, in that it investigates the cultural and artistic implications of Conrad in Scott’s films, as well as in subsequent cinematic narratives of the dark side of capitalism. The thesis examines Conrad’s possible influence on only two major films, but they are films that were and are seminal in their impact upon subsequent cinematic texts. I also discuss the primary source of the *Blade Runner* plot, Philip K. Dick’s 1968 novel *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*, principally concerning differences between Dick’s novel and Scott’s film which reveal Conradian influence upon Scott.

The close textual analysis in this project will be arranged thematically – I examine *Alien* and *Blade Runner* alongside Conrad’s *Nostromo* to see how the writer and the director approach and portray each of the four main concerns or fears identified as current dystopian metanarrative. During the investigation into each theme, I seek to uncover distinct patterns or similarities and correlations in style, in motif, in language, in aesthetic concerns, and in content between Conrad’s and Scott’s works, which is why a New Formalist approach has

been chosen even though the arrangement of the study is thematic and has sociopolitical scope. Conrad has been the focus of sustained critical enquiry, and extensive comment has been made also on Scott's cinematic work, yet there are few studies into whether Conrad's writings might be significant influences upon Scott's early development as a director and thus also upon succeeding dystopian visions between 1979 and the present. Two commentators thus far, who have claimed that Scott's adaptation of Conrad had lasting impact upon the director's later films, are Richard Collins (as early as 2000), who proposes that 'dueling – and duality – has been a central motif in each of Scott's subsequent films' (1) and Flavio Gregori in 2010, who contends that the techniques Scott developed to adapt Conrad's story have impacted his later work (125). Neither critic, however, has taken a thematic approach encompassing Conrad's influence, via Scott, upon the current metanarrative driving dystopian fiction and film.

The thesis consequently explores closely how Conrad's *Nostromo* anticipates the style, the motifs and the thematic concerns raised by the Ridley Scott films, which now underpin so many recent dystopian texts. In what follows I shall suggest that the Conrad novel is demonstrably a prescient forerunner of Scott's films, and hence this study will quite possibly have found the point of genesis of those tropes and themes now so inextricably embedded into popular culture that readers and audiences of dystopian fiction and film take them as given.

Chapter One: The Conrad-Scott connection

As a first step in pursuing the argument outlined above, definite evidence of Conrad-Scott connections needs to be identified, and whether Scott acknowledges being familiar with Conrad's body of work. Secondly, tangential evidence suggestive of Scott's appropriation of Conradian elements should be assessed. Thirdly, Scott's films need to be analysed for motifs and stylistic preferences which closely parallel Conrad's own, or are so similar that coincidence is less likely than conscious or unconscious borrowing.

Scott's familiarity with Conrad's work

Ridley Scott was certainly familiar with Conrad's story 'The Duel', because he had adapted that into his 1977 *The Duellists*. He had also read other Conrad texts: in a 1978 interview Scott relates that he had been reading Conrad to find possible script sources because Conrad's works had come into the public domain in 1975. He says 'To be truthful, I'm not an admirer of Conrad. I find him heavy going, because I think that generally he has a low level of humour' (Chase 6). Even if Scott finds Conrad 'heavy going', making this judgement and including the word 'generally' does verify that he has read a spectrum of Conrad's work. Scott helped shape the eventual script of *The Duellists* written by his associate Gerald Vaughan-Hughes, and he confirms that 'he contributed suggestions about the scenario, the characters, and the general tone of the material' (Chase 7). Scott has a narrator deliver 'Conrad's original lines' (Raw 185), evidence that he was, as co-writer of the script, indeed familiar with the original Conrad text.

Considering circumstantial evidence of Conradian influence on Scott

When we assess tangential evidence that Scott may have been influenced by Conrad's writings, we can consider that his second film, *Alien*, tacitly acknowledges two Conrad novels: *Nostromo* and *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*. Laurence Raw believes that naming the spaceship the *Nostromo* was a 'conscious borrowing from Joseph Conrad's novel that reminds us of Scott's interest in his work' (3); James Edwin Mahon suggests too that naming the towing vessel the *Nostromo* was a conscious referral by Scott to the conflict between capital and workers in Conrad's novel and in *Alien*, and also that calling the escape pod the *Narcissus* was a nod to Conrad's *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*, 'about a ship's crewman who becomes infected with a deadly disease' (Mahon quoted in Barkman, Barkman and Kang 58) which parallels *Alien*'s plot.

Yet neither the 'conscious borrowing' nor the 'conscious referral' conclusively proves direct influence by Conrad's *Nostromo* and *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'* upon Scott. Walter Hill, one of the producers of *Alien*, worked extensively upon the original Dan O'Bannon - Ron Shusett script, together with fellow producer David Giler. Hill says in an interview with *Film International* in 2004 that it was he who renamed the spaceship, which O'Bannon had called the *Snark*: 'I called the ship *Nostromo* (from Joseph Conrad, no particular metaphoric idea, I just thought it sounded good.)' (McGilligan 21) – so Conrad's influence in this instance may be via Hill. Giler and Hill had, however, just watched Scott's adaptation of 'The Duel' into *The Duellists*, and had been impressed at how well the adaptation had been done, so Conrad would have been at the forefront of their minds because of Scott's film. There is also to be considered that Scott had already been engaged to direct *Alien*, and that he becomes deeply involved in the scriptwriting.⁴ Hill adds that 'David [Giler] and I then did what seemed like an endless series of polishes' (McGilligan 23) and we can surmise that Scott became

⁴ We know this from the work he did with Vaughan-Hughes for *The Duellists*.

heavily involved in these ‘polishes’.

We can make this assumption precisely because Ridley Scott is adamant about being in total control of the look and feel of his films – ‘I prepare detailed storyboard for all my films. It’s a way of maintaining visual control, so that there’s no dispute over any point’ (Knapp and Kulas xi). That desire to maintain control includes redrafting the script. In an interview a decade and a half after *Blade Runner*, Scott speaks of how much work was needed to modify the original Hampton Fancher adaptation of *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* (titled by Fancher *Dangerous Days*): ‘We actually spent months . . . slogging through the *Dangerous Days* script’ (Sammon 94). Scott Bukatman, an authority on *Blade Runner*, notes that Ridley Scott was integral to the changes being made to the script: ‘But before principal photography could begin, the script needed to be reworked. Repeatedly. Fancher ultimately produced eight separate drafts, closely supervised by the director’ (16).

Scott’s involvement in script rewrites is typically intense and exhaustive. Michael Deeley, a *Blade Runner* producer, says that even after the eight drafts of supervised scriptwriting by Hampton Fancher, ‘it still didn’t have what Ridley finally felt he would only get from David Peoples – which was a much harder edge’ (*Dangerous Days*). Scott’s ideas were vital to changes Peoples made to Fancher’s script. Peoples relates that after he had read Fancher’s eventual – eighth – script, Scott and Deeley asked him what he thought, to which he replied that he loved it and wouldn’t be able to improve it: ‘they both sort of chuckled, right, and I realised years later what a naive answer that was, because who gives a shit what the writer thinks – it wasn’t the writer who was going to make it better, it was Ridley who was going to make it better and I was going to do his bidding’ (*Dangerous Days*).⁵ In each of Scott’s first three films, therefore, much of what we hear or see comes directly from him or

⁵ Ivor Powell confirms that Peoples ‘just did what Ridley asked’ (*Dangerous Days*). Peoples even says that ‘sometimes Ridley’d already had a new idea so my pages were totally outdated before they ever read them’ (*Dangerous Days*).

has his absolute approval – meaning we can reasonably assume that Conradian elements present in these films are either authored or encouraged by Scott.

Conradian idiosyncrasies mirrored in Scott's cinematic texts

We come now to the third sort of evidence of Conradian influence upon Scott's first films. We can start by identifying Conrad's stylistic particularities, go on to investigate distinctive motifs common in his writing, including his constant ironies, and finally cover the way he approaches themes concerning the impact of corporate capitalism, or what he termed 'material interests'. In each case we can then assess the extent to which these are paralleled in Scott's films.

Analogous layering of visual and auditory density

The most immediate and striking similarity between Conrad's and Scott's work is their almost identical visual styles. Scott's indubitable control of his sets and scene layouts suggests that strong correlations between the representation of scene in *Alien* and *Blade Runner* and scenes in Conrad's *Nostromo* are attributable to Scott rather than to his art departments. Tom Southwell, a production illustrator on *Blade Runner*, says that 'Ridley looked at absolutely everything that I drew, everything that I was proposing, and would say yes or no to it' (*Dangerous Days*).⁶

Scott has described himself 'as a visualist who uses *mise-en-scène* with the facility of a portrait painter' and as someone who tends 'to think pictorially' (Knapp and Kulas viii). Scott's first three films are highly evocative visually, with a 'still' from any part of each film seeming like a carefully composed photograph or painting. Edward Said, by his own

⁶ Deeley in the *Dangerous Days* documentary verifies that Scott 'micromanaged' the art department.

admission fascinated by Conrad's fiction, often attempted to stress Conrad's 'obsession with *mise en scène*' (Said ctd. in Alam 102), so Scott and Conrad share a meticulousness in visual arrangement of scene. Richard Holmes says, in his introduction to the 1984 Folio edition of *Nostromo*, that Conrad's prose style is 'almost cinematic . . . His locations are established with minute, photographic care' (Holmes in Conrad 15). Gregori suggests that the photographic technique Scott developed to successfully adapt 'The Duel' is again embraced in 'successive works such as *Alien*, *Blade Runner* and *Black Rain*' (125). Scott and Conrad therefore present scenes in a strikingly similar cinematic or photographic style.

Scott's fascination with *mise-en-scène* is not common to all directors – critics who comment on Scott emphasise that he is unusually visual. Bukatman notes that the 'brilliance of *Blade Runner*, like *Alien* before it, is located in its visual density, which is Scott's hallmark' (14), and he also mentions that 'Scott's "layering" effect produces an inexhaustible complexity, an infinity of surfaces to be encountered and explored' (8). So Conrad's 'minute, photographic care', his characteristic of 'layering', is mirrored completely in Scott's 'visual density' and own 'layering'. Ivor Powell agrees that Scott is 'very visually orientated' (*Alien Legacy* 1999 commentary); so does Jerry Goldsmith, musical composer for *Alien*: 'Ridley . . . is a brilliant visualist' (*Alien Legacy* 1999 commentary).

We can observe Scott's 'minute' care for layering both visual and auditory detail, so similar to Conrad's, and accommodating multiple levels of meaning, in the *Blade Runner* scene where J. F. Sebastian says to Pris and Roy, 'There's some of me in you!' – Scott has the sound of a cuckoo clock striking in the background, with the implication not only of the obvious passage of time (a central concern for the replicants who are working 'against the clock' to find their creator) but also the association of cuckoos' using a host's nest to incubate their eggs and raise offspring which supplant the host's own chicks. Scott implies – in one 'minute' item of auditory aside – the replacement of a species by a physically superior

interloper. This dense auditory layering allows Scott to create atmosphere complementary to his *mise-en-scène* visuals, even when using very quiet and subtle background sounds. Again in *Blade Runner*, when Roy Batty is hunting Deckard, Scott layers into the background soundtrack (just audible above the rain) the buzzing sound of blowflies. The sound conveys a subliminal but strong association with carrion and death.

We can compare this with Conrad's orchestration in *Nostromo* of the complete absence of sound on the Great Isabel that drives Decoud to suicide. When Nostromo realises that Decoud must certainly be dead Conrad conveys the atmosphere of isolation and silence that unhinged Decoud by evoking an onomatopoeic expectation of sound and voice which is ironically unfulfilled: 'He was sure that Decoud was dead. The island seemed full of that whisper. Dead? Gone! And he caught himself listening for the swish of bushes and the splash of footfalls in the bed of the brook. Dead! The talker, the *novio* of Doña Antonia!' (344). Conrad and Scott both make superb and almost identical use of density and psychology of scene and sound, employing the immediate environment to deepen character or plot.

Shared ironic dualities of motif

In addition, we find that Conrad and Scott share distinctive motifs, which again suggests Conradian influence upon the director – or, at the very least, affinities with Conrad which seem unlikely to be coincidental. We can explore perhaps Conrad's favourite motif, the motif of betrayal versus duty that permeates all of *Nostromo*. Conrad's comprehensive biographer, Zdzislaw Najder, confirms that the 'treacherous failure in the performance of one's duties' (*Life* 239) is his most frequent motif. Najder writes that 'Fidelity and honour were for [Conrad] unquestionable ideals' (*Conradiana* 241). Of *Nostromo* Najder says that 'Conrad's characteristic motifs of fidelity and treason, individualism and the role of reputation, honour and duty, loneliness and commitment to community, patriotism and exile are amply evident',

and that the novel is ‘permeated with Conradian irony’ (*Conradiana* 234). All of these ‘characteristic motifs’ are present in *Alien* and *Blade Runner*, but especially the motif of betrayal and treachery versus duty and honour, and they are accompanied by that same ‘Conradian irony’.⁷

Comparing how Conrad and Scott each cover the motif of ‘duty’, we can begin in *Nostromo* where there is an exchange between old Giorgio Viola and his wife Teresa, and where the title character Nostromo’s reputation is inextricably associated with duty. Conrad frequently explores hidden dualities, so ‘honour and duty’ are in this case oppositional and antagonistic. Although all in Sulaco associate Nostromo with duty, Teresa Viola questions whether his duty and his loyalty are honourable; whether they are compatible. She condemns his unfailing duty and loyalty to the O.S.N. Company – because she believes they are at the expense of his honourable responsibility to the family who have taken him in as one of their own (Conrad 34). But Conrad imbues the motif of ‘honour and duty’ with irony upon irony – Nostromo is in truth unfailingly loyal only to his reputation, and when his honour is thoroughly compromised by his pretence of fidelity to the Company, it is then he calls himself ‘Captain Fidanza’ (358).

In *Alien*, we find the ironic duality of duty versus honour treated synonymously by Scott: is Ripley honourable or dutiful in upholding the Company’s regulations at the possible cost of the life of a colleague? There are multiple parallels between Nostromo in *Nostromo* and Ripley (on board the *Nostromo*) in *Alien*, just as there are between Conrad’s Nostromo and Scott’s Deckard in *Blade Runner*. When Ripley refuses to admit the injured Kane to the ship, it seems initially that she is, like Nostromo, placing her duty to Company regulations above the welfare of her colleagues, and that the science officer Ash has a greater sense of honour than she does. Ash breaks regulations to let them all aboard – but in ironic fact it is

⁷ Raw also sees ‘Conradian echoes’ in *Alien*’s ‘focus on duty and responsibility’ (3).

Ash who is following a cold and clinical (and robotic) duty to his employers. It is Ripley who has the safety of the crew in mind, because she rightly suspects that Kane may be ‘cursed’ with some sort of infection that he could pass on to the crew. Ash is being dishonourable towards the crew; Ripley honourable. Ripley becomes the inverse of Nostromo: in Conrad’s novel, Nostromo dies after he loses his honour in subterfuge and hollowness, whereas in Scott’s film, Ripley lives when she remains honourable by not allowing her ‘duty’ to the Company to overwhelm principle.

In their use of dramatic irony, we see similarities between Conrad and Scott: when Conrad has Decoud say of Nostromo that he is ‘the next great man of Sulaco after Don Carlos Gould’ (143) we understand Conrad’s irony. Charles Gould is not great at all; he is a husk of his former idealistic self, reviling the levels of corruption to which he has had to stoop in order to revive and run the mine. There is Captain Mitchell’s perfect assurance that he knows all, understands all of what transpired at the time of the battles and the siege (335), when the reader is aware that so much is hidden from Mitchell or incorrectly perceived by him.

We can compare these to similar ironies in *Blade Runner*, where Scott has Gaff say to Deckard near the end of the film ‘You’ve done a man’s job, sir’. The comment has, like the Conrad example, both irony and dramatic irony: the audience knows that Deckard did not kill Batty, but was saved by Batty. And of the four replicants he was tasked to kill, the first is killed by Rachael, saving Deckard from ignominious death; the second and third are unarmed women, one of whom Deckard shoots in the back; and the fourth dies just after saving Deckard’s life. Considering the number of ironies already in the film, we are becoming aware that the ‘man’s job’ may not have been done by a man, either, as Deckard – the Tyrell Corporation’s own Nostromo or ‘our man’ – may yet prove to be another replicant. Far from doing ‘a man’s job’, Deckard has failed to do it, and may fail also to be a man – of which

Gaff *is* probably aware,⁸ making his comment both ironic in the first instance and mocking in the second. Conrad's novel ends similarly on a superbly ironic note in its very final paragraph, in Doctor Monygham's thinking that 'the genius of the magnificent Capataz de Cargadores dominated the dark gulf containing his conquests of treasure and love' (384) when the reader knows that Nostromo, far from conquering the treasure, has succumbed to its slow corruption.

Conrad and Scott make similar use of names as an ironic device. Conrad has Teresa Viola scathingly make us aware of how 'Nostromo' is not a real name or even a real word at all – it is a bastardised version of Nostro Uomo or 'Our Man' given Nostromo by the Company for which he works. Gooch argues that the 'different meanings of Nostromo's name turn it into a portmanteau that traces his fall' (274) – and we noted earlier that he begins to call himself Captain Fidanza only when he has forsworn fidelity. Conrad names the American financier Holroyd – which we perceive phonetically, even if subliminally, as 'hollow king'; Giselle, whose name signifies 'pledge' and whom Nostromo wishes to marry, is supplanted by old Giorgio's mistakenly pledging Nostromo to the other daughter Linda. Similarly, Scott has Kane (with its phonetic reminder of Cain) bring a curse on board the spaceship; and he has the name Ash for an android reminding the viewer that Ash is not flesh; and he changes Philip K. Dick's Eldon Rosen into Eldon Tyrell instead, using the two syllables of Tyrell to conjure 'tyrant' or even 'tycoon' and then 'hell' – appropriate for a tyrannical oligarch presiding over the fiery Hades of 2019 Los Angeles. And then there is Deckard, a name Scott uses unchanged from the source novel *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* but which under Scott's direction asserts its Cartesian undertones.⁹ So although Deckard may think and

⁸ This certainly seems likely, considering the origami unicorn that Gaff leaves for Deckard, which suggests that Gaff is aware of the content of Deckard's dreams.

⁹ Scott has Pris say to Sebastian that the replicants are 'not computers': 'I think, Sebastian, therefore I am!' Pris's appropriation of Descartes' phrase asserting human existence is fiendishly ironic: she is a 'replicant' who can be legally murdered because she supposedly has no right to exist except as a possession of the Corporation.

may dream, as he does of the unicorn, he may yet not 'exist' as a human.

The motif of paired opposition

Conrad's fascination with duality and paired oppositions is an inextricable part of his aesthetic sensibility: he sees 'political problems in terms of a continuous struggle between law and violence, anarchy and order, freedom and autocracy, material interests and the noble idealism of individuals' (Najder *Life* 352). This constant awareness of binary oppositions, dualities and ironies in the very nature of the world, underpins all his work and likewise makes its way into Scott's first three films. Scott turns Conrad's five duels in 'The Duel' into a more symmetrical six, or rather, three pairs of similar duels, in *The Duellists*; there are also six confrontations between crew members and the alien in *Alien*, and there are six 'duels' in *Blade Runner* (Collins 5).

Paired opposition is certainly present in the relations between characters in *Nostromo*: each character has a foil, or a partner in either psychological or physical opposition. The major characters in *Nostromo* are simultaneously all paired in an antagonistic duality against silver throughout the novel, with each of them being undone psychologically, morally or physically in the 'contest' against the weight of the silver.

This paired opposition occurs as constantly in Scott's films as it does in Conrad's writing: in *Alien*, the alien spacecraft sculpted by H. R. Giger is immediately given an organic, fleshlike sense of 'Otherness' wholly opposed to the technological sterility of the *Nostromo*. And the alien, like the spaceship it has been upon as an egg, is an ironic opposite not only of the technological and mechanical *Nostromo*, but even more so as a visceral, animal opposite of its protector, Ash the robot.

Ill-considered action as Conradian motif appropriated by Scott

Another and important Conradian motif is that of ill-considered action. ‘The Duel’ is about this, and Scott emphasises it in *The Duellists*. In *Nostromo* Conrad meditates on action: ‘Action is consolatory. It is the enemy of thought and the friend of flattering illusions. Only in the conduct of our action can we find the sense of mastery over the Fates’ (66). Action gives, in typical Conradian irony, only a ‘sense of mastery’ – Scott shows Kane horribly mastered by Fate in *Alien*, and in *Blade Runner* Deckard is aware when he is taking action to escape with Rachael that he cannot master Fate. His decision is heroic in Conradian terms though, because his flight with Rachael is principled and his action considered.

Conrad writes that Nostromo was the ‘victim of the disenchanted vanity which is the reward of audacious action’ (343) – contrasting ‘audacious action’ with considered contemplation and thought. *Alien* again comes to mind, and specifically the most overtly masculine of the crew, Kane: it is Kane’s Nostromo-like need to feed his reputation that has him volunteer immediately to investigate the alien spacecraft. It is his ill-considered ‘audacious action’ in poking the alien egg-sac that leads to his ignominious death and the cursed ‘birth’ of his alien ‘son of Kane’. Kane has his bravado mocked by the alien egg’s speed and ease of conquest, first in the rape by the ‘face-hugger’ and then by its explosive discarding of his used body. A frequent Conradian motif – ‘the enemy within’ – is taken literally in *Alien* in the quest for maximum audience shock, where the alien incubates within Kane’s still-living body. But Scott also has the android Ash as ‘an enemy within’, plus ‘Mother’ and ‘the Company’ are likewise enemies within; in *Blade Runner* we have several examples of this selfsame motif, but in this case with more Conradian sophistication, where the enemy within is moral corruption through unprincipled behaviour.

Having identified what I suggest is Scott’s Conradian inheritance, we can begin our

thematically based investigation into the anti-Corporation concerns so omnipresent in recent dystopian texts. The following chapters focus on *Nostramo* and 'The Duel' and then Scott's films, in order to explore how Ridley Scott has appropriated, consciously or perhaps unconsciously, Conradian warnings against what omnipotent corporate capitalism, or the rise and rise of 'material interests', may portend for a future world.

Chapter Two: Capitalism will spawn a neo-imperialist oligarchy

The metanarrative of so many dystopian texts in current fiction and film embodies the fear that capitalism, unfettered and unrestrained, will engender a small elite of wealthy oligarchs who control vast commercial empires and operate above the law while the broad mass of society is reduced to servitude or even slavery. Conrad's writing around the turn of the twentieth century was prescient in this regard, and his *Nostromo* especially so: it describes imperial colonisation and expansion not in terms of the State becoming an empire, but rather oligarchic financiers using their capital to influence State apparatuses to do their bidding – to help them secure new territory for their own corporations and their personal financial advantage.

The rise of the oligarchic corporate empire

Conrad shows the old imperial powers on the wane, and the rising power of America being strategically hijacked by oligarchic corporations to expand their commercial reach. *Nostromo* reveals very clearly the manner in which the imperial colonisation of the nineteenth century becomes a neo-imperialism in the twentieth century, predicated on spreading democracy and stability, but funded by corporate capital and creating conditions similar to those which have characterised all empires of the past: immense wealth for few, poverty for many, and slavery for the most unfortunate. Conrad's extrapolative warning of the imperialist threat inherent in 'material interests' – his term for corporate capitalism – has gradually made its way into the metanarrative of recent dystopian fiction and film where the State as enemy has become the Corporation as enemy.

The corrupt leadership of the dark new emperors of Capital

Conrad's 'The Duel' is clear that emperors are not all-wise: D'Hubert realises that an emperor is but a man and as such may allow countless men and animals to be slaughtered for his ambition. *Nostramo* revisits this theme, but the 'emperor' is the financier Holroyd. His empire is based on the capital over which he holds sway, and his viceroys are those who run commercial enterprises owing allegiance to him – such as Charles Gould, 'the king of Sulaco'. Conrad makes it clear that Holroyd is the true head of State – he governs by the wealth extracted from the mine on the San Tomé mountain. Conrad confers upon Holroyd almost godlike status by his mention of Olympus with 'the Ceres was to carry them off into the Olympus of plutocrats' (68), but Conrad's usage of 'plutocrats' associates the financier with the god of the underworld. The fate of the miners is implicitly that of shades, spirits in the psychological darkness of Holroyd's corporate-capitalist empire.

Conrad's view of the Holroyds of the coming neo-colonial, neo-imperial empires based on money is conveyed in Decoud's cynicism regarding Holroyd's avowed Christian goals: 'And as long as the treasure flowed north, without a break, that utter sentimentalist, Holroyd, would not drop his idea of introducing, not only justice, industry, peace, to the benighted continents, but also that pet dream of his of a purer form of Christianity' (177). As long as there is still a stream of profit being generated, so long will the interest of the plutocrat remain. Conrad is similarly clear that the wealth being hacked out of Costaguana will not remain there, and nor will it make its way into the hands of those who toil in the mine to find it: Decoud talks of the 'National' Central Railway as 'that great Costaguana undertaking which is to put money into the pockets of Englishmen, Frenchmen, Americans, Germans, and God knows who else' (172).

Before we move on to other instances of Conrad's theme that a new capital-based

empire will rise to replace the fading British empire, which itself has replaced previous empires, it is worth looking at Scott's *Alien* and his *Blade Runner* for views which are similar to those of Conrad. In *Alien*, there are moments when Ripley parallels D'Hubert's realisation that leadership may be flawed, first, when Dallas insists on bringing Kane aboard even though regulations and common-sense dictate against it, and then, on a far greater scale, when Ridley realises the extent to which 'the Company' has betrayed the crew, and she shouts out 'Mother, you bitch!' to the spaceship's computer. Scott's *Alien* does therefore parallel the Conradian theme of flawed leadership and hidden betrayals by plutocratic oligarchs.

Are there Conradian echoes in *Blade Runner* of the San Tomé mountain with its treasure of silver? The stepped, square pyramid that is Scott's Tyrell Corporation headquarters closely resembles Conrad's description of 'the San Tomé mountain (which is square like a blockhouse)' (91) which Holroyd and his two fellow-plutocrats enter. In *Alien*, we realise that the wealth of 'the Company' is based on mining, as is the wealth that Holroyd uses to create his new fiefdom of Sulaco. *Alien*'s spaceship *Nostromo* is a tug, towing a refinery ship filled with refined ore, and we remember the comment by Dallas that 'The money's safe' as they prepare to disengage from the refinery and descend to the site of the alien signal. *Alien*'s script is filled with ironies, just as Conrad's writing is, and the money's not safe. The quest for ever-greater profit by 'the Company' means the crew is not safe either. Decoud in *Nostromo* says that 'Nostromo's mission is to save the silver' (181), and for Conrad silver symbolises capital and material gain. Whether Walter Hill knew it or not – though presumably Scott did – calling the spaceship in *Alien* the *Nostromo* was inspired in its reprisal of the role played by Conrad's character Nostromo. In *Alien* it is the spaceship *Nostromo* itself, via its computer-brain 'Mother', which has the mission to save the treasure of 'silver' – the potential profit to be made from weapons-manufacturing if the alien can be returned to Earth.

It is clear that Scott was deliberately portraying ‘the Company’ as a ruthless and neo-imperial entity, and that he, like Conrad before him, was passing social comment on the development of huge corporations.¹⁰

Capitalist imperialism will lead to the worship of profit alone

There are other indications in Conrad’s *Nostromo* that one of his major concerns is that unrestrained capitalism would create a new oligarchic imperialism, a resurgent colonialism, with consequent debilitation of morality. The association with darkness of the ‘plutocrats’ entering their Olympus of the San Tomé mountain and mine is picked up as a thread by Conrad: Conrad has Charles Gould look down at Don José ‘stretched out, hardly breathing . . . vanquished in a life-long struggle with the powers of moral darkness’ at the precise moment that Gould has realised that he and the bandit Hernandez ‘were equals before the lawlessness of the land’ (255) and that he has become corrupted in his obsession to resuscitate and hold the mine. The pursuit of silver has vanquished Gould and placed him outside of the law and of moral ‘light’. In *Nostromo*, capitalism, imperialism, nationalism and greed in its various forms all work together to create the narrative tension. Charles Gould is both colonist and conqueror – and he puts the capitalist interests of foreigners like Holroyd above the good of the country.

We find this same thread of moral darkness in Ridley Scott’s *Alien* – where the vacuum and blackness of space reflect the absence of moral compass of the owners of the *Nostromo*. It is their moral hollowness, and their greed for profit, which almost literally breed the monstrous alien. Likewise, the motif of darkness in *Nostromo* finds its way into Scott’s *Blade*

¹⁰ Asked about the social background to *Alien*, Scott says he was thinking of the Corporation as ‘a lifeless mega-structure and its attitude toward human employees, who are considered expendable . . . the machinery, information data, and cargo are of more importance to corporations than the individuals on their ships’ (Peary 45).

Runner, where the constant darkness and smoke mirror the moral void which allows the commercial production of what are essentially human beings, their use as slaves, and then their 'planned obsolescence' after four years of servitude. The fire and flames reflected in the eye at the very beginning of *Blade Runner* remind us of the Hades implied in Conrad's 'Olympus of plutocrats' in *Nostromo*. The immorality of all imperialism is a clear theme of *Nostromo*, where Conrad repeatedly compares the mining setup of Gould's to the slave-driven mines of the Spanish conquerors.¹¹

Conrad shows that the new oligarchy will abandon their morality to the worship of moneymaking. Capitalism will supplant old religions as well as old empires, and the worship of 'silver' will become the religion of the new capitalist empire. The explorer of the capitalist syndicate is a shrill, 'frail, hairy Frenchman' who says, 'Ten million dollars' worth of copper [is] practically in sight'. Martin Decoud says ironically to the priest Corbelán: 'Those gentlemen talk about their gods' (152). Holroyd is, in Charles' words, 'at the head of immense silver and iron interests' and the riposte from Emilia is 'Ah, yes! The religion of silver and iron' (70) – moneymaking and the machinery of wealth-creation are the gods that Holroyd and Charles Gould now follow. Najder suggests that 'Capitalism as shown at work in *Nostromo* is stripped to the very bone: it is reduced to profit-seeking' (*Conradiana* 237).

The oligarchs at the imperial centre grow richer on exploited wealth

Implicit in the concept of colonisation and imperialism is that the imperial centre or the colonial centre, with its oligarchs and financial hub, is at a distance from the colonies and outposts of empire. Conrad conveys this neatly in *Nostromo* when he relates Holroyd's dispassionate, clinical view of how he intends to achieve his ends: 'He was not running a

¹¹ Collits writes that one of the most important insights of Conrad's novels is that 'the highest point of Europe's imperial success might also be its lowest in terms of moral authority' (13).

great enterprise there; no mere railway board or industrial corporation. He was running a man!’ (76). What Charles Gould cannot and does not realise is that he is going to be remade as ‘the company man’ that Holroyd is ‘running’. It is another of Conrad’s ironies that Gould is merely another ‘Nostro Uomo’ for the great men of silver and iron. The ‘king of Sulaco’ is in truth a pawn, a ‘slave to the silver’ in a colonial outpost, whose role is to make money for the oligarchs of the imperial centre. In *Blade Runner*, Scott ensures that we realise that the buildings above the smog-line house the oligarchic elite. When we first encounter the interior of the Tyrell Corporation pyramid we realise that Scott has made it resemble a palace, a seat of power from which the rich rule the ruined earth. Scott was absolutely particular about his vision for the pyramid interior, and even delayed the filming for a day when he decided the columns were not as he had visualised them.¹²

Scott’s imagery of empire and colonisation in *Alien* and *Blade Runner* parallels much of what we find in Conrad. In *Alien*, ‘the Company’ is an interstellar mining company – running mining colonies – and is purely profit-driven, like Holroyd’s financial syndicate that reaps the wealth of the mine. In *Blade Runner*, Scott alerts us early in the film to the ‘off-world colonies’. We realise that in his vision of the twenty-first century the process of colonisation has begun afresh – in space perhaps, but with the same goal as highlighted in Conrad’s work, as Tyrell tells us: ‘Commerce is our goal’. And like Holroyd’s ‘running a man’ in Charles Gould, Scott in *Alien* has ‘the Company’ running their own ‘man’, Ash, their Nostromo on the *Nostromo*. Similarly, in *Blade Runner*, Tyrell Corporation is ‘running a man’ in Rick Deckard. Deckard may be in the employ of the police department, but Scott makes it clear that the police department works at the behest of the Tyrell Corporation.

¹² Lawrence Paul says that when he showed Scott the interior of the Tyrell Corporation pyramid, just as shooting was about to begin, Scott replied that the only thing he’d ‘like to do is turn the columns upside-down’ (*Dangerous Days*).

The new oligarchs will wield imperial power

The theme of capitalism's having given rise to a neo-imperialist oligarchy assumes that the apparatus of the State is subject to the needs or whims of the imperial authority. The 'emperor' of the Tyrell Corporation in *Blade Runner*, Eldon Tyrell, is Scott's version of Conrad's Holroyd. Conrad's description of Holroyd is illuminating: 'His hair was iron-grey, his eyebrows still black, and his massive profile was the profile of a Caesar's head on an old Roman coin' (73). Visualising Holroyd as Caesar implies empire, conquest and blood, and Conrad confirms this two lines later: 'an insatiable imagination of conquest' (73). Considering Conrad's disgust with empire, this is a powerful condemnation. And in *Blade Runner* Scott paints a similar picture of Tyrell as a Caesar, or Fuehrer, with the gold eagle in his bedchamber reminiscent of both Rome and Nazi Germany. Holroyd's assessment of what the United States – to Holroyd 'the greatest country in the whole of God's Universe' – will become is similarly imperial: it will take whatever it wants, wherever it wants 'if anything worth taking hold of turns up . . . we shall run the world's business whether the world likes it or not' (73). The United States to Conrad is a nascent twentieth-century empire founded on silver and iron – capital and blood.

This thematic concern of Conrad's, echoed by Scott, has entered into current cultural narrative beyond that of dystopian fiction and film – it is a central theme of Postcolonial Studies, and even more so, of Globalisation Studies. Fakrul Alam, discussing Edward Said's comments on Conrad, says that 'Said is emphatic that the issues raised by *Nostromo* are by no means out of date, as the United States, while putting on a show of benevolence, continues to strive to dominate the politics of these countries for its own interests' (97). Andrew Milner says that Raymond Williams believed Orwell made a crucial mistake in believing capitalism beaten. For Williams, 'the real "question" would be that of a resurgent capitalism, re-legitimised by post-war affluence and radically oligarchic' (Williams and Milner 178).

Conrad and Scott both hint that empires will fall and be replaced

Conrad in both *Nostromo* and 'The Duel' intimates that the oligarchic new empire will eventually fall. Most of the dockworkers and railway workers in Sulaco are Italians – an underclass who once were Roman overlords. Scott's films also have constant reminders that the old empires will fall and be replaced, and Scott follows Conrad's lead in showing that the new empire is the oligarchic Corporation, rather than an empire of the State. In *Blade Runner*, the step-pyramid of the Tyrell Corporation is reminiscent of Sumerian, Babylonian, Egyptian, Aztec and Olmec empires, but this is an empire risen through corporate wealth. It is no accident that when we see Tyrell in his bedchamber, he is buying and selling shares and stocks. Scott's films mirror Conrad's theme that capitalism will in time become a new imperialism, with profit as sole motive for its mega-corporations. Conrad has English and American material interests merge in the San Tomé mine; Scott has American and Japanese commercial empires merge in the Weyland-Yutani Corporation of *Alien*.¹³

Neo-imperial power leads to brutal inhumanity

Ridley Scott magnifies the darkness associated with Eldon Tyrell beyond that which Conrad associates with the financier Holroyd. Tyrell's trading shares in his bedchamber shows that the bedroom for him is not a place for sleep, nor for love – Tyrell's fetish is commerce and further profit. There is an obvious connection here between Conrad's *Nostromo* and Scott's film: Richardson claims that in *Nostromo* 'silver acts as a fetish and takes the place of sexual love' (302). Scott shows in *Blade Runner* how the oligarch Tyrell's love of silver and gold and the power they bring as grand capital erodes not only sexuality,

¹³ Delson writes that Scott confirmed in an interview that the 'owners of the *Nostromo* are Japanese' (16).

but also love and compassion. The visual details Scott brings to this scene add subliminally to a view of Tyrell as evil incarnate – the gold sculpture of an eagle is not only an imperial symbol, but a reminder of Nazi eugenics and experimentation on human subjects, which the background soundtrack in *Blade Runner*'s early scenes has already alerted us to – 'custom-tailored genetic engineering'. Like Conrad's reminders to his reader in *Nostromo* of previous empires, Scott's invocation of the Third Reich inside Tyrell's palace calls to mind the inhumanity inherent to imperial expansion, and it is deliberate by the director. Scott says the 'replicants that Tyrell designed were the first of his "master race"' (Peary 53).

Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and his *Nostromo* are both indictments against colonisation and imperialism. Scott, speaking of the brutality of colonisation, suggests that 'we do not see much evidence of us having learned anything by our present performance, either last century or this one. If anything, it seems to be getting worse' (Bahiana 85). In the adaptation of Philip K. Dick's *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* Scott has simplified much of Dick's plot, but retains the idea that the 'organic android' has become the 'mobile donkey engine of the colonization program' (Dick 15). Nevertheless, clearly there is far more Joseph Conrad in *Blade Runner* than there is Philip K. Dick. Playing in the background soundtrack, even in the early scenes, we make out that 'A new life awaits you in the Off-World Colonies . . . the chance to begin again in a golden world . . . let's go to the Colonies' – Scott gives very strong reminders that his Los Angeles of 2019 envisages a new colonial system, and therefore a new empire. In this commercial empire, though, State authority is subject to the oligarchs of the Corporation.

Social hierarchy and class-conflict in Conrad and Scott

Conrad emphasises the hierarchical nature of colonial society – in Costaguana one is either born into the landowning classes of European gentry or descendants of European

colonisers, or one is relegated to being a second-class citizen, like the Italian dockworkers and railway builders. The *indios* are completely marginalised. Conrad is clear that the hierarchical divide is unbridgeable – even Nostromo, referred to always as ‘the incorruptible’ or ‘the excellent’, remains a ‘fellow’ when the aristocrats or bosses speak amongst themselves. The first two references to Nostromo are parenthetical asides by Captain Mitchell – ‘invaluable fellow’ and ‘a fellow in a thousand’ (31). Conrad ensures that his reader picks up the undertone of condescension by Mitchell and others: when the narrator relates ‘[Captain Mitchell’s] natural anxiety lest “his fellow” in charge of the lighter should make some mistake’ (231) we take note that Conrad has his narrator parenthesise ‘his fellow’ within the narration. Nostromo can do nothing to make the wealthier inhabitants of Sulaco see him as their equal, even while they praise his capabilities.

The hierarchical dynamics aboard the spaceship *Nostromo* in Scott’s *Alien* are therefore immediately reminiscent of the tensions of Conrad’s novel. The first real conversation or statement in the film concerns a typical Conradian concern: the grumbling of a social underclass who feel exploited. Parker is the black engineer, and Brett his engineering technician ‘sidekick’. Parker and Brett are the ship’s ‘rude mechanicals’ – Ridley Scott calls them ‘oily rags’ – whose complaints provide Shakespearean-like comedy in the early narrative development of the film. Yet their concerns about pay inequality are serious and valid – and Dallas’s rough rejoinder as captain of the craft that ‘You get what you contracted to’ underlines the hierarchical nature of their commercial contracts. That the ‘oily rags’ of the engine-room initially accepted they would receive less pay than the rest of the crew alerts the viewer to the conscious and unconscious social engineering that has brought this about.

The conflicts of class in *Alien* are complex, just as they are in Conrad’s *Nostromo*: Nostromo, who is condescended to as ‘fellow’ in turn disdains the people over whom he presides – the dockworkers and their families – but he also despises individuals of the upper

class, to whom he feels superior in ability. This too makes its way into *Alien*, and we see Parker express to Brett his bitterness and anger towards Ripley, his superior on board who is female. Because a woman presumes to trespass upon Parker's engine-room territory, Brett and Parker are outraged, and we are reminded in Scott's film of the Conradian complexity of prejudice.

Ridley Scott deepens the idea of class conflict and class struggle in *Blade Runner*, where 'power has been given to uncaring, ruthless *upper-class* technocrats, such as Tyrell; [and] Judas-like *blue-collar* workers, such as Deckard, Batty and the "band" of Replicants, have turned on their Masters/Creators' (Redmond 175). In *Blade Runner*, the divide is very apparent between the oligarchy (in palaces), their police hirelings (allowed the use of cars and flying cars), and then the broad mass of trodden-upon underlings, Bryant's 'little people' (confined to the rain-sodden streets).

The 'little people' in Joseph Conrad's *Nostromo* include the *indios*, the indigenous people of Costaguana, dispossessed by successive colonisation – to whom Conrad does not give 'speaking parts' in his novel. I disagree with those critics who maintain that Conrad has European characters speak for the indigenous workers because of his Eurocentric view (Wang 21). The 'haunting' of the story by the *indios*, the constant sense of their dispossession by the colonisers and by the new aristocracy of Sulaco, is made more poignant by their complete absence of voice.¹⁴ Scott's workers in *Blade Runner* are denied even the agency of independent thought: when they reach the street, they are ordered by the automated traffic lights to 'Cross now. Cross now. Cross now. Don't walk. Don't walk. Don't walk'. Wang is correct, though, that what 'haunts Sulaco politically and economically, in the final analysis' is the spectre of 'global capitalism' (23) – something Ridley Scott reprises in both *Alien* and *Blade Runner*.

¹⁴ It is interesting to see that in Scott's *Alien* the alien also does not speak, but like the *indios* it haunts the margins.

Scott's concerns about corporate capitalism are very akin to Conrad's about 'material interests'. When we register the similarity of their accompanying symbolic motifs and imagery, I suggest we are seeing multiple influences upon Scott by Conrad. Conrad's theme of 1904, revitalised by Scott in the late twentieth century, has become a prevailing thematic motif of current dystopian film and fiction.

Chapter Three: Oligarchic corporations will commercialise, commoditise and dehumanise life

One of the four themes within the current metanarrative of dystopian fiction and film is that unrestrained Corporations in the control of oligarchs will commercialise and commoditise all of life, and in doing so will dehumanise their owners and debase the society they have betrayed.

Corporations treat workers as possessions and commodities

Conrad's *Nostromo* is one of the first novels of the twentieth century to suggest that powerful corporations view their employees as commercial possessions or commodities – almost slaves.¹⁵ The railway project's engineer-in-chief, in conversation with Sir John, the railway chairman, talks of Nostromo as a 'most useful fellow, lent me by Captain Mitchell' (51) – he sees Nostromo as a commodity to be lent out by his owner, and this is confirmed when Conrad tells us that Nostromo 'was one of those invaluable subordinates whom to possess is a legitimate cause of boasting' (58). The oligarchs and bosses of the corporations view employment as ownership. Captain Mitchell calls Nostromo 'that fellow of mine' (231).

General Barrios goes further: he tells Nostromo 'you belong to me' (337) when Nostromo wishes to rescue the 'cockle-shell' boat that he had left with Decoud. And when Nostromo – the hero of Sulaco who has ridden non-stop to fetch Barrios to the town's rescue

¹⁵ Conrad, in October of 1903, the year in which he was writing *Nostromo*, also writes an opinion about the inhuman treatment of native peoples in the Belgian-controlled Congo Free State, of which he says 'It is an extraordinary thing that the conscience of Europe which seventy years ago has put down the slave trade on humanitarian grounds tolerates the Congo State today. It is as if the moral clock had been put back many hours' (Najder *Life* 337).

– does dive overboard for the boat, Barrios comments ‘impertinent fellow . . . Let him drown’ (337). The wording and sense of this incident are duplicated almost exactly by Scott in *The Duellists*. The old colonel who is rejoining the army of the escaped Napoleon Bonaparte says to D’Hubert, to encourage him to fight for Napoleon again, ‘We belong to him’ – only to have the rejoinder from D’Hubert that ‘I have entertained the notion that I belong to myself.’ This little interlude and these words are part of the script for *The Duellists* – but they are not found in Conrad’s ‘The Duel’. The notion of one’s being a ‘possession’ of one’s superiors is far more developed in *Nostromo* than in ‘The Duel’, which strengthens the idea that Scott and Vaughan-Hughes had read *Nostromo* prior to writing *The Duellists*.

Alam notes that Said detected in Conrad an understanding of the ‘commodity fetishism’ (99) of imperial adventurers. The output of colonial mines was a commodity, but so too were the slave-workers who did the mining, and their exploitation and ill-treatment were viewed in purely economic terms.¹⁶ *Nostromo* shows that the obsession with commercialising all of life inevitably dehumanises both exploiter and exploited. Paul Sheehan writes in 2013 that ‘Conrad demonstrates ironic reversal – how the high (civilisation) is compliant with the low (savagery); how idealistic principles (enlightenment, progress, reason) take shape as base deeds (brutality, greed, moral corruption)’ (165). Sheehan is writing about *Heart of Darkness*, but his insight applies equally well to *Nostromo*, and indeed to *Alien* and *Blade Runner* also.

The theme of possession, commoditisation and exploitation underpins Scott’s *Alien* and *Blade Runner*. In *Alien*, Scott reveals how ‘the Company’ intends to ‘acquire’ the alien as a profitable commodity – and the *Nostromo* crewmembers are expendable corporate possessions in this goal. In *Blade Runner* Tyrell considers the replicants as commodities, which partly accounts for his extraordinary lack of compassion. The replicants are to be

¹⁶ Darko Suvin argues that this commoditised world-view of globalised corporations persists today: ‘The economists and sociologists I trust call it *Post-Fordism* and global commodity market – unregulated for higher profit of capital, very regulated for higher exploitation of workers’ (389).

manufactured, sold, and then when used, disposed of. And in their disposal or ‘retirement’ Tyrell sees the instruments of their disposal, the blade-runners and police, likewise as possessions. The theme of unlimited corporate ownership is introduced early in the opening scenes of *Blade Runner*, where we see the words ‘Tyrell Corp’ stamped onto the chairs – overt corporate possessions. But the viewer soon learns that the replicant Leon is also a ‘commodity’ possessed by the Tyrell ‘Corp’, and Holden is similarly a ‘possession’ or a lackey of the Corporation. Scott is clear that the Tyrell Corporation controls the apparatus of the State and operates above the laws that apply to the rest of society. In Scott’s portrait of Tyrell, we are made to see how the obsession with commerce and profit dehumanises the oligarch. The clinical cruelty of Tyrell’s reply to Deckard’s question about Rachael’s lack of awareness that she is a replicant is horrifying: ‘Commerce – is our goal here at Tyrell. More human than human is our motto. Rachael is an experiment, nothing more.’ The inhumanity in saying this about someone who believes she is his niece is shocking.

The commercialisation of life dehumanises both bosses and workers

This sense of dehumanisation of the oligarchs who run globalised Corporations is clear in Conrad’s *Nostromo*, where the overlords seem unaware of what their industrialisation of society is doing to the broad mass of people. Conrad writes of ‘the San Tomé mine, which appeared to [Nostromo] hateful and immense, lording it by its vast wealth over the valour, the toil, the fidelity of the poor, over war and peace . . .’ (344). The San Tomé mine in *Nostromo* is reprised almost identically by Scott in *Blade Runner* as the Tyrell Corporation pyramid: both are the representative engines of capitalism, the incarnated force of ‘material interests’. To Conrad and to Scott, the engine of the Corporation is hateful because it mechanically, automatically, dehumanises all who come into contact with it.

Nostromo can be read as a tragedy of psychological dehumanisation. Goldman in 2013

disagrees with critics who have focused on Conrad's 'historical themes in the novel, seeing them as being of greater interest than its characters' (Goldman 175), and I too believe that *Nostromo* is far more a study of personal tragedies than a yarn of historically significant (though fictional) events. Conrad uses phrases and scenes reminiscent of Shakespearean tragedy as reminders of the disintegration of character – and shows that the main agency of the betrayals of self is the iron grip of 'material interests'. *Nostromo* takes its title in Shakespearean manner, from the name of the flawed and tragic hero upon whom the plot depends. There are many scenes depicting the loss of self in *Nostromo*, such as the *Macbeth*-like scene between Charles and Emilia Gould before Charles goes to his mine at midnight. Emilia knows that the intimacy between herself and her 'partner in greatness' is dead – she 'looked at her husband's face, from which all sign of sympathy or any other feeling had disappeared' (157). Pertinent to our study, however, is comparing Conrad's *mise-en-scène* surrounding this encounter to a scene in *Blade Runner* to see how similarly Conrad and Scott convey multiple layers of association and significance. Earlier in *Nostromo* the reader has been alerted to the emptiness of Emilia's relationship and how she increasingly realises she has been an amusement, an adornment, rather than a partner. Emilia's parrot in the Gould household is described – 'A big green parrot, brilliant like an emerald in a cage that flashed like gold, screamed out ferociously, "Viva Costaguana!" then called twice mellifluously, "Leonarda! Leonarda!" in imitation of Mrs Gould's voice, and suddenly took refuge in immobility and silence' (68). Conrad layers in so much: the parrot represents Emilia (it uses her voice to call for 'Leonarda'), caged too – and it is a trinket, an amusement, which Emilia eventually realises she has become – whereupon there is silence between her and Charles. Scott bands similar multiple associations into his *Blade Runner* scenes, in a manner we do not find in Dick's novel. When Pris enters J. F. Sebastian's apartment, we encounter the brilliance of the 'friends' he has made; their brightness of colour recalls the brilliance of the trinket

parrot in Conrad, and leads us to reflect that the ‘friends’ are entertainments and amusements the geneticist has made and ‘caged’ like the parrot and Emilia. We then realise that they are living and sentient, at least to a degree. The way Scott shoots the scenes as we enter Sebastian’s apartment, and the way the ‘friends’ dress, behave and call out for attention, are intensely reminiscent of Conrad’s writing here, but not of Dick’s. The theme of the commoditisation and dehumanisation of life by Capital that underlies *Nostromo* finds its way into *Blade Runner* in Sebastian’s apartment, and goes some way to explaining why Batty kills Sebastian as well as Tyrell. He apologises to Sebastian, but kills him nonetheless, reminding us that Sebastian is complicit in the making of the replicants and the semi-alive ‘friends’ with which he fills his apartment. Sebastian has granted those ‘friends’ a very limited life – very much as Tyrell has done with the replicant Nexus-6s.

If Conrad’s *Nostromo* is a tragedy, then Scott’s renaming Dick’s philosophically-titled *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* as *Blade Runner* indicates that Deckard is its tragic and cynical central figure. Deckard’s dehumanisation is halted and redeemed only when he discovers compassion and then falls in love – just as we begin to suspect that he may not be human. When Deckard says to Rachael on meeting her for the first time at the Tyrell Corporation that ‘Replicants are like any other machine – they’re either a benefit or a hazard’ he is quite wrong, and this one of many ironies underpinning the film. The replicants are certainly not machines, and part of the fascination of *Blade Runner* is the way the humans – certainly the humans who own the world and treat everything and everyone as commodities – are more machine-like, more soulless, than the replicants they have created.

Exploitative commercialisation withers human compassion

Conrad in *Nostromo* charts how the Sulaco mine withers the soul of Charles Gould, and enmeshes the entire populace in a vast, mechanical, exploitative dominance. Conrad’s theme

that the colonial and capitalist exploitation of the poor (in *Nostramo* the *indios*) hurts also the colonisers and capitalists, by withering their humanity, resurfaces in Scott's films. It is echoed to a certain extent in *Alien*, but it is in emphasis a more existential than inner threat. The object of 'the Company', above mineral wealth, is the alien that threatens all humankind. In *Blade Runner*, Conrad's theme of the psychological damage of exploitation to the exploiter is very evident: the creation of a slave class of replicants undermines the very humanity of the humans they are created to serve – and the manufacture, commoditisation, ownership and legalised murder of beings almost indistinguishable from 'natural' humans underscores how the capitalist obsession with 'commerce' has eradicated compassion from the emotional register of humans. Scott uses 'ambient' commercial messages to highlight the penetration of society by commerce and commoditisation: in his novel Dick has absolute silence in J. R. Isidore's apartment after Isidore switches off the TV (18), whereas Scott mirrors more closely Conrad's constant 'roaring' of the San Tomé mine. When J. F.'s 'friends' are not moving, whirring, bumping about or calling out, we are able to hear ongoing commercial advertising appeals from outside.

In *Nostramo*, when a character loses the ability to love in the pursuit of commerce or 'treasure', as does Charles, he is painted by Conrad as mechanistic, a mere automaton associated wholly with the machine that is the mine. He has lost his humanity. In Scott's *Alien*, Ripley's concern for Jones the cat is a confirmation of her compassion, and overpowers the technological sterility of the Company's white uniform that she puts on in the *Narcissus* – and she is able to outwit the alien because Jones alerts her to its presence. If we look at a character's humaneness as an indicator of whether they are truly human, then in *Blade Runner* Rachael and even Batty are human, but Deckard is not until he falls in love with Rachael – and Tyrell is as inhuman as the Eichmann he resembles. The theme that one's humanity is measured by one's capacity for compassion and love is typically Conradian, and strongly

represented in Scott's films. In *Blade Runner*, Tyrell, the 'Father' of Roy Batty and the literal uncle of the source of Rachael's memories, is so obsessed with 'Commerce' and with perfecting his creations that he becomes conveniently oblivious to the suffering that his Corporation inflicts upon beings who are 'more human than human', capable of feeling love or hate, and certainly of understanding the pain of betrayal. Roy's blinding of his creator is all the more powerful in that it is the literal manifestation of a figurative insight. It is in keeping with the symbolic motif of the eye in *Blade Runner* that Tyrell, the Frankenstein figure blind to his own inhumanity, has his eyes gouged out before being killed: the rebel slave Roy has rendered Tyrell's metaphorical blindness literal before ending his rule.

Scott and Conrad's vision of morality in a commoditised world

Scott's vision of the future is grittier than Dick's, and he emphasises society's increasing commoditisation – in Dick's novel, Luba Luft's refinement as an opera singer goes some way towards Rick's realisation that 'at least specific, certain androids' (122) could inspire empathy in him, whereas in Scott's film the refined Luba Luft is replaced by Zhora, who as a topless exotic dancer is twice commoditised. She is both replicant manufactured and sold by the Tyrell Corporation, and exotic dancer to make money for the owner of the strip club. Scott employs Bryant's character to foreground the dehumanisation of the police, who have assimilated the Tyrell Corporation's view of the replicants as commercial products – Bryant's lack of compassion is chilling when he tells Deckard 'That skinjob you V-K'ed at Tyrell Corporation – disappeared. Vanished. Didn't even know she was a replicant.'

Although *Blade Runner* deals with the question of the survival of humans under the threat of their creations, there is an accompanying questioning of the morality of human survival in a world where 'material interests' have commercialised every aspect of life. Whereas Dick wishes to show that the created beings are artificial and without the humane

compassion that true humans have, Scott engineers the scriptwriters Fancher and Peoples to reveal replicants as more sensitive to the world and each other than the blade-runners who hunt them or the unfeeling genius who designed them. In *Blade Runner*, the replicants *are* ‘more human than human’ in a way that Tyrell does not anticipate. They are more humane than the humans rendered soulless by commoditisation.

The difference between Dick’s vision and Scott’s may owe something to Conrad’s ‘The Duel’, which ends with the nobler D’Hubert choosing honourably to spare the life of his implacable foe Feraud, which Scott replicated faithfully in *The Duellists*. Scott alters the way Dick’s Roy Baty dies. In Dick’s novel he is shot by Rick; in *Blade Runner*, Roy saves Deckard’s life and then runs out of lifespan. The ‘slave’ replicant, in characteristic Conradian duality and ambiguity, turns out to be nobler than the instrument of the state and of the oligarch Tyrell. Dick’s description of the death of Roy Baty – ‘He shot Roy Baty; the big man’s corpse lashed about, toppled like an overstacked collection of separate, brittle entities . . . it had died’ (191) – has nothing of the otherworldly nobility of Scott’s Batty, nor of the strange relationship which develops between Batty and Deckard in *Blade Runner*. Scott’s scene is strongly resonant of Conrad’s story, where D’Hubert ‘felt an irrational tenderness towards his old adversary and appreciated emotionally the murderous absurdity their encounter had introduced into his life’. Scott gives Roy Batty the noble D’Hubert’s role and Deckard the earthier Feraud’s, imparting to this encounter Conradian depth of irony and atmosphere absent from Dick’s source novel.

Conrad’s *Nostromo* tracks the loss of one’s soul in an obsession with the pursuit of ‘treasure’, and Scott has commented that what he was trying to portray in *Blade Runner* was ‘an almost soulless man’ who has ‘begun to act with a certain amount of remorse’ (Sammon 101). The most soulless character in Scott’s two seminal films is Tyrell, however, whose response to Roy’s ‘I have done questionable things’ shows absolutely no sense of moral

responsibility or culpability for the ‘things’ that he has initiated.

Mutual motifs of the betrayal of trust in the pursuit of ‘treasure’

One of Conrad’s most central motifs is the betrayal of trust, and he employs it frequently in *Nostromo*. He shows how misplaced trust in an uncaring Corporation with ‘material interests’ as its sole aim can lead to the betrayal of those for whom one loves or cares. Signora Teresa, ‘beside herself with terror’ calls Nostromo ‘the traitor! the traitor!’ because he seems to have abandoned her family to ‘run at the heels of his English’ (36). One of Conrad’s subtexts is that if the owners of the Corporation are obsessed with ‘silver’ or the acquisition of capital, then following their instructions will inevitably lead to betraying those one should love, because the employers will prove false. Conrad is clear that one nevertheless must follow a moral principle, a moral compass, even if giant companies treacherously seek only to commoditise life. Conrad has Nostromo say ‘I die betrayed – betrayed by –’ and later ‘The silver has killed me’ (379), but it is his betrayal of principle to acquire wealth – wealth made on the back of injustice – that has killed him. Conrad shows that the ‘silver’ kills at greater range than merely those who are complicit in corruption themselves, and he has old Giorgio, the most faithful of all in *Nostromo* to the principle of loyalty, die betrayed by Nostromo’s deceit.¹⁷

The four ingots of silver instrumental in Martin Decoud’s suicide also contribute to the tragedy of Nostromo. Nostromo’s own obsession with his reputation means that he dares not return the shipment of silver without the four ingots Decoud has used to drag his body to the bottom of the *Golfo Placido*. Silver in *Nostromo* represents Capital and Commerce, but is simultaneously symbolic of betrayal – the thirty pieces of silver of Judas Iscariot become the

¹⁷ Conrad recalls Shakespeare when writing of betrayal: Martin Decoud’s ‘Let it come down, then’ (164), said three times, is reminiscent of the murderers’ words when Banquo is betrayed and killed.

four ingots in Decoud's pockets – and its effect is to wither the souls of those who covet it.

Conrad describes the furtive Nostromo as 'The man whose soul was dead within him, creeping out of the ravine, weighted with silver . . . the slave of the San Tomé silver' (370). Loss of soul is clear in Emilia Gould's insight into what the San Tomé mine (symbolic of the Corporation) has become – 'feared, hated, wealthy; more soulless than any tyrant, more pitiless and autocratic than the worst Government; ready to crush innumerable lives in the expansion of its greatness' (356). Conrad's huge mistrust of the soullessness of capitalism as epitomised by the Corporation is very plain in this excerpt. We see another example of Conrad's fear of what an obsession with wealth-creation does to individuals, when Emilia is thinking of what the San Tomé mine has done to her relationship with Charles: 'It had been an idea. She had watched it with misgivings turn into a fetish, and now the fetish had grown into a monstrous and crushing weight. It was as if the inspiration of their early years had left her heart to turn into a wall of silver-bricks' (166).

If we extrapolate that concern into *Alien* and *Blade Runner*, we realise how for the owners of 'the Company' or for Tyrell, their original inspiration would have been an idea, then a fetish, and then an obsession – like Tyrell's crushing obsession with 'Commerce'.

Conrad is passionate in his disgust at betrayal: he once said that man derives meaning from the expression of faith in the principle of fidelity (Najder *Life* 578).¹⁸ *Nostromo* concerns constant betrayals – political, economic, psychological, frequently ironic – and betrayal and irony likewise run as constant undercurrents in Scott's films. In *Alien*, Ripley knows the crew have been betrayed – and shows it in the way she finally shuts up Ash's still-speaking head, and then in her outburst at 'Mother'. In *Blade Runner*, Conrad's theme of betrayal of fidelity is made symbolically clear when Roy Batty kisses his 'Father' Tyrell – so reminiscent of

¹⁸ Conrad's motif of betrayal repeatedly invokes *Macbeth*, and Nostromo, like Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, suffers increasing psychological torment after betraying a moral principle: 'Sometimes, after putting away a couple of [the silver ingots] in his cabin . . . he would look fixedly at his fingers, as if surprised they had left no stain on his skin' (357).

Judas's kissing of Christ for thirty pieces of silver, but inverted and ironic because it is Tyrell who has betrayed his creations for the 'silver' of commerce. Batty, Pris, Zhora and Leon have been betrayed from inception by their very maker, their 'God' – which is why Roy's comment 'Nothing the god of biomechanics wouldn't let you into Heaven for' to Tyrell when he kills him is doubly ironic. He is assuming that Tyrell isn't going to either Heaven or Hell, because for Tyrell, everything to do with life is merely a question of biomechanics or commerce. *Blade Runner's* theme of betrayal is deep and incisive because it concerns Tyrell's denial of the obvious humanness of the replicants he has created to be slaves, possessions and chattels for the expansion to the 'outer colonies' by wealthy and genetically fortunate humans. *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* doesn't have this same incisive sense that the replicants – the andys – have been betrayed, nor does it contain such a clear sense that the corporate oligarchs have betrayed the better side of their own human natures.

Chapter Four: Corporations will ruin the environment and destroy beauty – and possibly cause mankind's extinction

I have already noted that much recent dystopian fiction and film suggests that greedy Corporations, employing scientists and technicians bent on greater efficiencies of production but blind to both ethics and wisdom in their work, may end up causing widespread environmental destruction. This is an idea rendered explicit in *Blade Runner*, and implicit in *Alien* – if ‘the Company’ has resorted to mining in space, it means that the required ores are exhausted upon Earth. It is also a theme of Conrad’s *Nostromo*.

Capital, technology and biblical allusions of environmental apocalypse

Conrad is not the first writer to link technological ‘progress’ with environmental ruin.¹⁹ Conrad is novel, however, in that he transports his readers to the outposts of empire, to the colonies themselves, to the mines and plantations that have created imperial wealth – and reveals there the horrors of squalor and corruption endemic to the imperial and colonial system. His biographer, Najder, notes that as a young sailor Conrad met on board ship ‘the type of people described in later African novels: *nouveaux riches*, shady speculators, and businessmen without scruples’ (*Life* 148) – it is some of these we find in *Nostromo*. Conrad in *Nostromo* describes how the San Tomé valley changes from the ‘Paradise of snakes’, the Eden that the Goulds find on arrival in Costaguana, into the fiery hell of mechanised, obsessional, profit-driven sterility that is the eventual landscape of the mine.

¹⁹ Blake, Emily Bronte, Mrs Gaskell, Dickens and even Conrad’s contemporary D. H. Lawrence also alert their readers to the environmental as well as psychological damage that Capital is able to inflict.

Conrad makes it evident that the wealth generated by imperial and commercial interests flows away from the site of mining towards the capital of the colonial power – leaving devastation of the environment and the destruction of morality in the community in which the ores are mined.²⁰

It is what that pursuit of treasure causes in terms of environmental despoliation with which so much contemporary dystopian fiction and film is concerned, and in *Nostromo* it is manifested by the environmental ruin caused by the San Tomé mine. Conrad's description of the mine bears more than a passing resemblance to Hades, and in fact in several instances recalls the biblical Fall and Man's expulsion from Eden, even if those allusions are treated with typical Conradian irony. We are told by Conrad that the Eden of the San Tomé valley before the reopening of the Gould Concession – the 'paradise of snakes' – is reduced to a roaring, fire-breathing machine, and the snakes, symbols of an unspoiled natural world, are driven out. It is an ironic inversion of the *Genesis* story: Charles Gould says to Emilia that the San Tomé valley 'is no longer a Paradise of snakes. We have brought mankind into it' (158) – but Charles' view is typically incomplete. Charles and Emilia may have played the role of God by reopening the mine – but rather than the bringing of mankind into the valley it is the investment of the 'plutocrats' engineered by Charles that ensures the destruction of the Eden: 'The waterfall existed no longer. The tree-ferns that had luxuriated in its spray had dried around the dried-up pool, and the high ravine was only a big trench half filled up with the refuse of excavations and tailings' (91). For Conrad it is the serpents that represent innocent Nature, and greed that initiates the destruction of Paradise.

Distinct examples of Conradian symbolism regarding environmental destruction by Capital find their way almost intact into Scott's films. Scott doesn't take us to the mines in his dystopian visions of the future under giant Corporations, but Conrad's San Tomé mine lives

²⁰ MacDuffie in 2009 sees Conrad's *Nostromo* as showing the imperial capital city as 'a parasite upon' the greater natural and economic world (76).

on in the background of *Alien*, where the main action takes place upon a commercial mining-tug towing an ore refinery. Part of the terror of *Alien* is that the alien 'Other' is to be brought to Earth, into humans' own 'Paradise of Snakes' by the immense greed of 'the Company'. When we see technological mankind, in the form of the astronauts Dallas, Lambert and Kane being introduced into the alien spaceship (which looks like a natural, living being in comparison with the mechanical human spacecraft), it is another version of bringing mankind into the paradise of snakes, and the secular Fall of the entire human race is set in motion. Conrad writes in *Nostromo* – regarding Charles Gould's obsession with his mine – that a 'man haunted by a fixed idea is insane. He is dangerous' (266). Scott's *Alien*, with its android Ash, shows that a robot programmed by a fixed order is equally dangerous. Ash will protect the alien and ensure its safe passage to Earth, even if that means the death of the crew and the extinction of humankind.

The urban devastation wrought by corporate greed

Conrad's depiction of the commercial nature of Charles Gould's mine lives on in *Blade Runner* too, where the replicants are needed as slave workers to facilitate the colonising, warfare and mining on the space colonies.²¹ Roy Batty hints of conditions 'Off-World' and to the fear that is felt by the 'slaves' owned by the Tyrell Corporation, but Scott's main cinematic triumph is to show the degradation and corruption perpetrated on home territory – urban America – by corporations who harness technology for profit without regard for its environmental consequences.

We see parallels with Conrad's roaring, fire-breathing San Tomé mine in the erupting flames reflected in the eye on screen in the opening scenes of *Blade Runner*. The 'Olympus of

²¹ That the colonising of space is a corporate affair is made clear by the advertising mantra of the Shimago-Dominguez Corporation – 'helping move people to the Off-World Colonies'.

plutocrats' in *Nostramo* has become the Tyrell pyramid in the Hades that is Los Angeles 2019. Scott implies that the hellish environment is a result of corporate greed, rather than Philip K. Dick's 'World War Terminus'. He changes the name of the Rosen Association in Dick's novel to the Tyrell Corporation, making it clear that the dominant form of capital, the Corporation, is to blame for the ruined state of the world.

Conrad's biblical allusions to *Genesis* and *Exodus* are replicated by Scott in an ironic combination: those humans with sufficient wealth and with the requisite genetic superiority have been enticed out of the ruined Eden, to which the replicants are returning; and when the replicants do find their place of genesis, where they wish to meet their Creator-Father, they find their Eden has been transformed by him into Hades.²²

Judith Kerman corroborates that '*Blade Runner* is notable for a variety of Biblical images, many of them derived from *Genesis* and *Exodus*' (34) – but does not investigate possible Conradian influence upon Scott. A reading of *Nostramo* together with an analysis of Scott's film, however, soon reveals that Conrad's work anticipates Scott's in showing the Fall implicit in the Creation: the 'Paradise of snakes' loses the qualities which make it an Eden as soon as the mine of 'material interests' is restarted. In *Blade Runner*, the city of the angels becomes a Hades because of oligarchic greed, and the only 'angels' present are the fallen replicants, 'fallen' from the outer colonies and the stars back to Earth. The ubiquitous clamour and advertising of the neon signs and the gaseous, smoke-filled air add layers of symbolism to the return of the replicants to their place of origin, which is not a natural Eden but rather a man-made, capitalist and tyrannical Hell.

In the same way that *Nostramo* enlightens the reader to the environmental cost of colonialism in the colonies themselves, *Blade Runner* prepares the viewer for the ruination of the urban landscape by the new imperial elite of the Corporation. Sean Redmond confirms

²² It is commonly known that the crew of *Blade Runner* used to refer to the set as the 'Hades' set.

that the ‘city has been poisoned: turned over to a ruling class that has no concern for the welfare of the masses’ (179). It is not merely the city that has been ruined: Scott told the executives at Tandem, who wanted an upbeat note on which to end the film – perhaps a shot of Deckard and Rachael ‘driving off together into the countryside’ – that ‘there is no countryside! It’s all either industrial wasteland or factory farms!’ (Sammon 108).²³

The usurping and replacement of one ‘people’ by another

In Conrad’s *Nostramo* the indigenous *indios* in Costaguana are usurped by successive imperial waves of colonisers. They are supplanted by the Spanish; the British replace the Spanish hegemony; and during the trajectory of *Nostramo* we see Italian labourers migrate to Costaguana to work on the docks and on the railway. By the end of the novel there are rumblings that the *indios* and the dockworkers are uniting to form a new type of Sulaco inhabitant: the class-aware worker, rallied by Marxist activists to overthrow the ruling classes and take their place. In like manner, in Scott’s *Blade Runner* the barrage of Asian faces and voices seems to indicate that a great demographic change has swept over the ‘old empire’ of the United States.

Nostramo shows how the ruthlessness of ‘material interests’ gradually dehumanises those corrupted by their obsessions – especially the soulless obsession with profit – and how the unwise wielding of a mechanical technology devastates a previously beautiful environment. Scott’s films go beyond the idea of dehumanised servants of empire and inhuman financiers of the new Capitalist order, and even beyond the visualisation of a ruined Earth – to the replacement of mankind itself by a posthuman successor species. Scott emphasises that this replacement is made possible by the irresponsibility of immensely

²³ The unlikely (and quintessentially American) fantasy insisted on by the studio for the ‘theatrical cut’ released to cinemas, where Deckard and Rachael escape into unspoilt wilderness, was excised from the ‘director’s cut’ of 2003 and also from the ‘final cut’ of 2007.

powerful corporations in their pursuit of ever-greater profits.

Conrad's colonial novels represent, at the height of imperialism, 'the most significant encounter recorded in canonical literature between Europe and Europe's Other' (Collits 3). Scott's science fiction films contemplate what might transpire in an age of neo-imperialism, if capitalism were able to facilitate contact between Mankind and Mankind's Other – and *Alien* suggests that the meeting may result in the extinction of humankind by a parasitical species which sees humans as prey.

In *Nostromo*, when Decoud commits suicide on the 'glittering surface' of the *Golfo Placido*, Conrad writes that 'the brilliant Don Martin Decoud, weighted by the bars of San Tomé silver, disappeared without a trace, swallowed up in the immense indifference of things' (343). We get the feeling in Scott's *Alien* that the universe is similarly indifferent to the fate of *homo sapiens*.

Blade Runner, where 'human existence is threatened by a technology it cannot control' (Belton 294), is a deeper and more insightful encounter with a possible posthuman future than Scott's *Alien*. *Blade Runner* is an exploration of what it means to be human and what may transpire should neo-imperial corporations, beyond the control of governments, harness the technology of genetics to create a new slave 'species'. *Blade Runner* and *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* depict the creation of a posthuman species not as an attempt to make a utopian society as in *Brave New World*, nor as an unintended consequence, as in John Wyndham's *The Chrysalids* – but as a deliberate commercial commodity. What Scott intimates (which Dick does not really do) is that the corporate preoccupation with profit above all other considerations could herald the extinction of the human race, not only because of the vast contamination of the Earth by industry, but by the creation of a genetically-superior being which supplants humanity. The successful creation by the Tyrell Corporation of a 'replicant' being which is 'more human than human' inevitably presages humanity's

replacement.

The 'Flood' wipes Man from Earth and heralds a superior species

Nostromo the novel is permeated throughout by a sense of endings. Conrad's description of the Avellanos' house is that it is 'grey, marked with decay, and with iron bars like a prison' (40) and we sense that the time of the educated, aristocratic gentry is coming to a close. In *Blade Runner* Scott reprises this sense of ending also, and increases its apocalyptic foreboding – it is not only the lives of the replicants that are winding down, but the entire Earth that is tired and destroyed. Conrad and Scott share the idea that capitalism will irrevocably ravage societies. Scott's film takes Conrad's concern into the twenty-first century, and imbues it with the fear that has become rife in dystopian texts – that globalised commercialisation could conceivably extinguish the human race as an unintended apocalyptic outcome of its quest for profit.

Scott's portrayal of constant rain in 2019 Los Angeles recalls to us the biblical Flood – God's attempt to eradicate mankind from the face of the Earth – but this particular watery apocalypse has been wrought by mankind's hubris and technological irresponsibility. When Leon is being questioned, in the Tyrell Corporation pyramid, Holden mentions the name of Leon's hotel: Unterwasser. Los Angeles 2019 is a secularisation of the biblical drowned world, and Scott implies that mankind may yet be swept away by Tyrell's creations, confirming the great fear of posthumanism that human existence will be threatened by our not-quite-human creations. *Blade Runner*'s lasting appeal, however, may have something to do with Scott's implication that the replicants may be preferable to a cowed and soulless mankind.

Throughout the film, Scott hints that the humans have become so dehumanised by the Corporation that they lack depth of feeling. This is a development of Conrad's own theme

that the pursuit of ‘material interests’ diminishes all of society spiritually or psychologically. Scott’s replicants, ironically identifiable by inconsistent responses in the ‘empathy tests’ administered to them, are shown to be superior to the broad mass of humanity in 2019. There are many hints that the Nexus-6 type replicants outshine normal humans: Scott casts an intensely Aryan-looking actor to play the ‘rebel slave’ of Batty’s character, suggesting that the replicants may be the ‘master race’ that supplants *homo sapiens*. In Scott’s adaptation of Dick’s novel, it seems inevitable that the neo-Nazi Tyrell will be supplanted by his own Aryan supermen.

When we believe Deckard is human, we are horrified by his lack of humanity. Deckard’s gradual awakening of feeling for the plight of the replicants, his realisation of Tyrell’s immorality, and his growing love for Rachael are accompanied by clues from the director that the blade-runner may be a replicant. *Blade Runner* focuses strongly on what the essence of humanness is, and explores what defines the line between ‘natural’ human and genetically-developed ‘replicant’ human – noting that they are both alive, both sentient, and both capable of attachment and emotion. The logical result of Tyrell’s commercial application of genetic technology is that the ‘replicants’ will become a new species capable of outstripping present humans in every way imaginable, so that they replace us. Dick’s novel doesn’t show the Nexus-6 androids as superior to humans. Scott’s Nexus-6 replicants, however, are capable of genius, and Scott has Roy Batty beat Tyrell in a game of chess. Batty also shows a level of understanding of genetics and of replicant biomechanics that may equal Tyrell’s own – after a life of only four years. The intimation is that given time and opportunity, the replicants will solve their problem of foreshortened mortality and supersede humanity as the dominant species on Earth.²⁴

²⁴ In Dick’s novel, Rachael tells Rick that the four-year limitation on the lifespan of androids is accidental: ‘They never could solve that problem. I mean cell replacement’ (168). Again, Scott is

Scott's film explores a world where the alliance between science and commerce has brought about what is effectively a being superior to *homo sapiens* – yet we don't find this in Dick's novel. *Blade Runner*'s Rachael is meant to epitomise what humanity should be, but is no longer. Scott says that he wanted for the character of Rachael someone with beauty, a quirkiness and an intelligence, like Vivien Leigh, and he found her in M. Sean Young (*Dangerous Days*) – Scott sees the replicants as capable of being highly intelligent, physically beautiful, with individuality and a deep, essential humanness. While Dick's Rachael is a devious and debauched *femme fatale* (163), Scott's Rachael is vulnerable, morally upright, seduced rather than seducer and deceived rather than deceiving. She seems, in fact, to owe more to Conrad's portrayal of sensitive Emilia Gould in *Nostromo* than to the spiteful and vindictive android portrayed in Dick's novel.

Scott's film is clear that the replicants are capable of greater nobility than their human counterparts. When Deckard notices how Rachael is trembling after she has shot Leon to save Deckard's life, and he says 'Shakes? Me too. I get 'em bad . . . Part of the business', we realise how devastating is Rachael's acceptance of her replicant status: 'I'm not *in* the business . . . I *am* the business.' There is nobility and a deeply affecting vulnerability in her knowing she will be added to Deckard's list of replicants to be killed, but saving him anyway.²⁵ That Scott intends us to see Rachael as the epitome of refined sensitivity and human femininity is shown when she sits down at the piano and lets her hair down – her features become softer and even more compellingly attractive and vulnerable than earlier, when she was still under the delusion of being Tyrell's niece. And there is implicit in this scene a devastating condemnation of Tyrell's inhumanity by the absence of bitterness in her

more cynical than Dick of the inhumanity of the Corporation – *Blade Runner* tells us that the four-year limit of lifespan is deliberate.

²⁵ Rachael's question to Deckard, 'You know that Voight-Kampff test of yours . . . you ever take that test yourself?' is a serious and considered question, not a cynical comment on his apparent lack of humanity.

voice when Rachael says to Deckard's waking observation 'I dreamt music' that 'I didn't know if I could play. I remember lessons . . . I don't know if it was me or Tyrell's niece.' Scott's Rachael – with her dark eyes, large irises, obvious intelligence and red lips – resembles Conrad's description of the faithful Linda who loves Nostromo: 'red lips, which were almost too red . . . admirable eyes, brown, with a sparkle of gold in the irises, full of intelligence and meaning, and so clear' (41).

Women and morality in Conrad, Scott and Dick

Conrad's *Nostromo* and Scott's *Blade Runner* both explore the lack of intimacy commensurate with dehumanisation. Emilia's relationship with Charles becomes a mere husk; and although Monygham loves her, he is unable to confess his love. Deckard and Rachael's relationship begins without intimacy, but acquires it as Deckard begins to recover – or gain, perhaps – his humanity. Deborah Jermyn's view is that 'it is Rachael who we might place at *Blade Runner*'s core for crystallising both the film's troubled sexual politics and its angst around the collapse of the markers of humanity' (171).

What is interesting is that Conrad and Scott each have women represent the moral core of their texts. Emilia is the soft heart of *Nostromo*, aware of what has gone so badly wrong not only in her relationship with her husband, but in all of Sulaco; Rachael is at the heart of *Blade Runner* and epitomises a redemptive morality and compassion; and Ripley is the not-so-soft, but equally principled heart of *Alien*. In each case a woman is the most morally sound character of the text, and again, this is something Scott shares with Conrad rather than with Dick. Both depict the Corporation as male-dominated, with a masculine focus on technology and force. Conrad tells us that it is Doña Emilia's 'intelligence being feminine' and her 'integrity, tolerance, and compassion' which led to her achieving 'the conquest of Sulaco' (67), and we find from Ripley in *Alien* and Rachael in *Blade Runner* that resistance to the

Corporation may require a 'feminine' intelligence and empathy rather than masculine force and aggression.

Echoes of Christ in the deaths of Nostromo, Decoud and Roy Batty

We have noted *Nostromo*'s biblical allusions.²⁶ Scott's own use of biblical imagery suggests what Dick's novel denies: that the replicants are godlike in their superiority to their human counterparts. Batty throughout the film uses allusions to fallen angels, and near the end of the film is strongly associated with Christ, when he plunges a nail through his own palm to revitalise his nervous system. Scott presents here an audacious comparison between the persecuted replicant and 'prodigal son' of the Creator-Father Tyrell and the persecuted Christ, son of God.

Scott's silhouetting of Batty against the giant turbines on the Bradbury Building roof conveys that the replicant is godlike, a *deus ex machina* made flesh. The analogy with Christ is further expanded when Batty releases the white dove, associated with the Christian soul and also with the Holy Spirit. His words 'Time to die' recollect Christ's last words 'It is finished'.²⁷ When Scott has Batty die, after his memories of seeing 'things you people wouldn't believe' have been given over to Deckard, the cameras keep rolling and remain fully focused on his body being washed clean of blood by the incessant rain. The rising dove implies powerfully that the replicants are, at the very least, as fully human as any 'true' human of the Hades-like world of 2019, when commerce and control have consumed the humanity of people such as Tyrell.

²⁶ Richardson claims that *Nostromo*'s 'Gian Battista' has parallels with the life 'of Jesus, not John the Baptist' (304), and that Conrad was the first to make secular parallels with Christ in a novel (305).

²⁷ They also echo, of course, the phrases from two scenes in Conrad's *Nostromo*, where Nostromo hears the owl say 'It is finished' and where Martin Decoud says 'It is done' after he shoots himself.

Chapter Five: Corporations will marginalise freedom and globalise tyranny

One of the prevailing themes of dystopian fiction and film at present is that the rise of the Corporation will curtail individual freedoms and either crush or silence dissent – whichever is most expedient. The fear is that globalised mega-corporations will ensure that nowhere in the world is free from the reach of tyrannical and inhuman corporate practices.

The ‘laws’ of Capitalism are inhuman and based on expediency

That Conrad feared something along these lines is clear from *Nostromo*, where he has Doctor Monygham give Emilia Gould his view that capitalism ‘is founded in expediency, and is inhuman; it is without rectitude, without the continuity and the force that can be found only in a moral principle’ (349). This exact view underpins Ridley Scott’s *Alien* and *Blade Runner*. There is in Scott’s films an implicit condemnation of the ‘inhuman’ expediency that marks all dealings made by the human overlords of the Corporation, whether that is the Weyland-Yutani Corporation in *Alien* or the Tyrell Corporation in *Blade Runner*.

Conrad makes it clear that expediency is inherent to ‘material interests’, no matter how idealistic the original premise for beginning an enterprise. Charles Gould intends to run a civilised mining operation, far removed from what had been the case under Spanish imperial rule in the past. Conrad tells us that Mrs Gould knew the origins of the San Tomé mine: ‘Worked in the early days mostly by means of lashes on the backs of slaves, its yield had been paid for in its own weight of human bones. Whole tribes of Indians had perished in the exploitation’ (58). Conrad soon shows his reader that the companies of Sulaco use force when

it is expedient, and that this will be only one way in which capitalism corrupts those who expand corporate interests.

Stephen Donovan in 2013 mentions that ‘much of [Conrad’s] oeuvre can be read as a document of the psychological ramifications of global trade’ (2) – on those who benefit financially from expanding trade, and on their corporate officers who enforce upon their workers the restrictions of freedom necessary to ensure profits for the company. Conrad shows us the brutal force used by the O.S.N. Company’s ‘our man’ Nostromo on his dockworker subordinates: because the ‘Cargadores of that port formed, indeed, an unruly brotherhood of all sorts of scum’ (85), Nostromo rounds them up after each fiesta day with unsheathed revolver and frequent blows about their heads – reminding us that the dockworkers are little better than slave-labour. Scott’s crew of the *Nostramo* in *Alien* and his replicants in *Blade Runner* likewise depict workers whose liberty is limited and proscribed – as is confirmed by Dallas’s harsh reply to Parker and Brett when they complain about the terms of their contracts, and by his insisting that Lambert goes along on the exploration of the alien craft when she expresses her reluctance. We see the psychological effects of being mediators between the Corporation’s owners and its body of workers. Conrad’s Nostromo becomes progressively less whole as a person until he feels he has become a wraith. In a way he is like Ash in *Alien*, and like Deckard in *Blade Runner* – all three are not fully ‘human’ in their dealings with others.

Conrad’s concern regarding tyranny and slavery as being inherent in the hegemony of ‘material interests’ finds its way into Scott’s *Alien*, where the viewer cannot but wonder who or what has mined the ore on the refinery that the *Nostramo* is towing. Refined ore has to be mined by someone, and because mining has long been associated with coercion and the restriction of freedom, we wonder again about Conrad’s ‘lashes on the backs of slaves’.

When corporations are all-powerful, individual freedoms suffer

Ridley Scott confirms his belief – so similar to Conrad’s – that allowing the Corporation unlimited power will lead to the proscription of individual freedom. Interviewed about *Blade Runner*, Scott says that he wished to present a future world close to being a totalitarian society. ‘It is 1984 in the sense that the world is controlled by perhaps only four major corporations, of which the Tyrell Corporation is one . . . It’s a world where the poor get poorer and the wealthy get wealthier’ (Peary 49). In Orwell’s vision, the State rules absolutely; in Conrad’s, it is ‘material interests’ which take and hold power – and Scott portrays in his films Conrad’s concern taken to its totalitarian extreme.

Scott’s replicants in *Blade Runner* have fewer freedoms than the indigenous people of Conrad’s *Nostromo*, ‘only caught the other day’ and conscripted into the army of General Barrios (132). The *indios* are made to fight and perhaps die for the ‘material interests’ of the colonisers, from which they are to derive no benefit whatsoever; Scott’s replicants include ‘combat-model’ replicants like Roy Batty, literally created to wage war on behalf of humans who deny them a lifespan longer than four years.

Scott’s personal view, interestingly, mirrors the social narrative we have identified. He believes that although his film *Blade Runner* is science fiction, the concept of a powerful Corporation really developing something like the slave-class replicants is inevitable. In an interview, Scott states that ‘Tyrell represents the ultimate in science and industry or scientific-industrial development . . . It’s bound to happen, and yes, it is scary’ (Peary 49).

Big Corporations are watching you

The loss of freedoms to corporate control implies surveillance by the agents of the Corporation, and Scott confirms that the giant eye at the start of *Blade Runner* is the eye of

corporate surveillance: 'I think I was intuitively going along with the root of an Orwellian idea. That the world is more of a controlled place now' (Sammon 98). So much is implied by the eye in the opening frame: freedom is certainly being restricted under a tyranny of surveillance, but the reflected flames belching out of the degraded cityscape also make us wonder whether their source is industrial – refineries or power-stations – or instead evidence of rebellious sabotage against the ruling Corporations. The eye becomes the eye of a vengeful God or triumphant Satan in a nightmarish world of commercial and industrial tyranny (and recalls, of course, the now-tired notion of the panopticon as a secular eye of God).²⁸ It also recalls an early passage in Conrad's *Nostromo*, where we are told about the darkness that overtakes the *Golfo Placido* when it is under cloud at night, and which becomes so central to the plot of the novel. 'The eye of God himself – [the seamen] add with grim profanity – could not find out what work a man's hand is doing in there' (27). Yet again Scott has reprised a Conradian image.

Conrad has Charles Gould say, as a spokesman for the idealistic belief that capitalism may instil justice and stability in those countries emerging from under colonial rule, 'I pin my faith to material interests. Only let the material interests once get a firm footing, and they are bound to impose the conditions on which alone they can continue to exist' (77). Charles also suggests that a 'better justice will come afterwards' (78), but Conrad shows in *Nostromo* that 'a better justice' does not come; once a Corporation becomes established its firm grasp transforms into a stranglehold of tyrannical repression. Najder writes that Conrad saw at first hand what Leopold of Belgium's 'civilising' commercial mission meant in practice in Africa (*Life* 164).²⁹ He could see the fiction in the empire's being a 'civilising' influence, and of

²⁸ Blake is both invoked by Scott and deliberately misquoted in the film by Roy Batty, who changes Blake's 'the angels rose' to 'the angels fell' in order to imply, Collins suggests, 'that the rising aspirations of the American revolution to which Blake was referring had become the postmodern nightmare of American corporate and technological tyranny' (1).

²⁹ Najder mentions how the euphemism of 'maintaining order' encompassed hunting for labourers, bloody pacifications, atrocious punishments for minor offences, the destruction of

trade being mutually beneficial. What he saw instead was the exploitation of the colonised and the corruption and dissipation of the coloniser. *Nostromo* is clear that capitalism's dominance over Sulaco society inflicts a cycle of turmoil and upheaval – with the only sure and certain result being loss: the loss of beauty in the San Tomé valley, the loss of intimacy and humaneness for Charles Gould, the loss of freedoms for the indigenous people of the plains, and the loss of moral principle from everyday interaction.

It is that repressive stranglehold over society that Scott depicts so well in *Blade Runner*. The watchful eye becomes a central motif throughout the film. The scene where we glimpse a red flash within the eye of the replicant owl at the Tyrell Corporation headquarters implies technological surveillance of society, especially in the way the owl's head swivels, as if its eye is being used as a camera to monitor the Tyrell environment. Surveillance is accompanied with tyrannical practices, so that we suspect there is no representative government in Los Angeles in 2019. The police seem subject to Tyrell's control, and the populace appears absolutely cowed – subjects rather than citizens, and possibly even objects rather than subjects.

There is an irony in the way that the teeming population of the future Los Angeles seems invisible even while being obviously watched – reminiscent of the *indios* who 'haunt the margins' of the Conrad novel. The workers are there, obviously in the majority, but they are easily controlled and subdued, as we see in the scene where Deckard has just shot Zhora in the back as she runs through the crowded streets, wearing her plastic and see-through macintosh over her naked torso. She plunges through layer after layer of glass windows and ends up lying dead and bloodied in a heap of plastic shop dummies. Her eyes are open, her 'windows to the soul' useless in death, and bringing to mind that she is in a way also a dummy, a simulacrum – but bleeding real blood and seeming, just moments before, far more

crops and burning of entire villages to force the native people into labour, 'and how in every case the main motive of action was the desire for a quick gain' (*Life* 164).

alive than the mass of eerily-silent onlookers and the unseen policeman whose disembodied and electronic voice from the police flyer orders the crowd to ‘Move on. Move on. Move on’.

Tyranny results when the Corporation becomes more powerful than the State

Scott extrapolates into science fiction of the twenty-first century what was originally Conrad’s concern at the dawn of the twentieth century, and we see how it has become almost a cultural narrative by the nineteen-eighties. Interviewed about *Blade Runner*, Scott says that he wished to postulate ‘what if large combines in the next few decades became almost as powerful as the government? Which is possible. They’d move into all sorts of industries – arms, chemicals, aerospace – and eventually they’d go into genetics’ (Kennedy 37). Then he expounds further: ‘And I think the police force will become a kind of paramilitary, which they nearly are now. We’re just one step away’ (Kennedy 39). Scott’s vision of the near future is a bleak view anticipating further and further repression by the paramilitaries of those ‘large combines’, and like Conrad’s *Nostromo*, *Blade Runner* explores the individual tragedies that occur within historical events when the fundamental order of the world changes.

Conrad’s novel concerns individual tragedy as European colonialism is being overtaken by American corporate imperialism, while Scott’s films concern the place of the individual in society when governments lose power to the behemoth that is the globalised Corporation. That corporate control will become paranoid totalitarian tyranny is clear in Scott’s *Alien* and *Blade Runner* – so much so that one’s very identity will always be subject to doubt and scrutiny. This explains the fascination with displaying or retaining photographic images in *Blade Runner* – Deckard’s piano, for example, is littered with sepia photographs. When we discover that the photographs, like memories, can also be faked – as is the photograph of Rachael and her mother – we realise that even memories and photographs have become instruments of control. Tyrell tells us that the photos, implanted memories and invented pasts

are merely tools in the Tyrell Corporation's dealings with its replicants: 'we can control them better'. This very distinctive motif in Scott's film, the obsession with remembering or creating a past, is also to be found in *Nostromo* – Mallios notes Edward Said's comment that in *Nostromo* each of the characters has 'an extraordinary preoccupation with the past' (218). Ridley Scott brings that preoccupation with the past into the realm of future corporate tyranny.

Already in *Nostromo* Conrad anticipates that the Corporation will require – and receive – military backing and State collusion if there are fortunes to be made, so that the boundary between State and Corporation is blurred. The U.S. sends its warship to enforce the victory of the oligarchs who are seceding from Costaguana – probably because of the influence of Holroyd. Wang in 2012 argues that Captain Mitchell alludes to 'the new power structure—U.S. finance capital and U.S. military might—that stands behind the newly independent Sulaco' (1).

Scott may have picked up another insight from Conrad when adapting his 'The Duel', regarding societies that have long been at war but now head into periods of 'peacetime' with only skirmishes breaking the peace. In 'The Duel' D'Hubert is worried that in a 'world at peace' it is often men without any sense of honour or decency (like the Minister of Police, 'the Jacobin Fouché') who become petty tyrants of their realms; in *Blade Runner*, Scott portrays Bryant as one of these.³⁰ Part of the tyranny of a neo-imperialist capitalism is that officialdom is in league with the big companies, so that it serves capital and commerce rather than justice for the citizens of its domain. *Blade Runner* is very clearly this type of society, but here too Conrad anticipates Scott: in *Nostromo* Emilia meets with many landowners in her two months of travel around Costaguana on first arrival, 'And on all the lips she found a weary desire for peace, the dread of officialdom with its nightmarish parody of administration

³⁰ Bryant reminds Deckard that he is either police of 'little people' – and that the little people get trampled.

without law, without security, and without justice' (80). It could be a description of *Blade Runner*'s Los Angeles in 2019.

Conrad's *Nostramo* explores how torture is used on Hirsch to establish the whereabouts of the lighter filled with silver ingots – indicative of a society fast heading into a state of tyranny, or in Costaguana's case returning to a state of tyranny (to which Monygham's difficulty with walking attests). Conrad's description of the torture is apposite to our comparison with Scott's films: 'Hirsch went on screaming . . . while the sunshine, reflected from the water of the harbour, made an ever-running ripple of light high up on the wall' (309). We associate Holden's interrogation of Leon in the Tyrell pyramid in *Blade Runner* with torture (interrogation and torture are after all close cousins), and this impression is reinforced when Deckard and the viewer experience the 'ever-running ripple of light' playing on the walls and floor of the interior of Tyrell's palace – which of course precedes yet another Voight-Kampff 'interrogation', this time of Rachael. The unusual juxtaposition of rippling natural light from outside with the darkness of interrogation and torture by man within is a motif common to both Conrad and Scott, and continues the Conradian idea that Nature is indifferent to man's existence and petty concerns.

Conrad shows in *Nostramo* that the tyrant – whether financial mogul like Holroyd or military dictator like Bento Guzman or even the petty Colonel Sotillo – inevitably appears puny and almost pitiable once removed from power, or when the apparatchiks of enforcement are not at his side. Scott in *Blade Runner* replicates this idea when Roy Batty says to the tyrant, Eldon Tyrell, as he enters Tyrell's rooms, 'It's not an easy thing, to meet your maker'. Tyrell's seeming joy at Roy's arrival is simulated – his fear is almost palpable, as he discerns the threat implicit in Roy's choice of phrase. In the verbal sparring between Roy and Tyrell, it is Roy who is masterful, almost regal; and we sense the weakness and obfuscation in Tyrell's suggestion to Roy that the vastly reduced lifespan of the replicants is merely a product of 'the

light that burns twice as bright'. Roy's intelligence outshines Tyrell's own, and his revenge upon Tyrell is the revenge of a superior slave upon a tyrannical but inferior master.

Conclusion

Stephen Donovan has pointed out how Conrad's work is 'embedded within dense and only partially visible networks of transnational relations' (2), and what we find by comparing Scott's filmic texts to Conrad's *Nostromo* and 'The Duel' is that Scott appears to have 'embedded' partially-visible Conradian motifs, style, ironies and themes in his films *Alien* and *Blade Runner*. They may be subtle, and they may be hidden, but when laid alongside a close reading of Conrad they are unmistakeable.

He may be hidden, but he's there all right

There is in *Blade Runner* an early and iconic scene where Rick Deckard sits at the noodle bar and attempts – unsuccessfully – to convey the correct order to the proprietor. Behind him is a neon sign in Japanese – a hieroglyphic kanji. Its meaning is hidden from the English-speaking viewer, but would be apparent immediately to a Japanese audience. And what does it say? 'Origin' is what it says, according to Tom Southwell, the production illustrator of *Blade Runner (Dangerous Days)*. Southwell says that 'it's kind of a hidden little secret' which won't distract English-speaking viewers but will add in another important layer of meaning to the film – and dazzle with its beauty (*Dangerous Days*).

Layered into Scott's films are countless 'kanji' of Joseph Conrad's writing that remind one of the true origin, the source of genesis, of the themes and memes we see in current dystopian fiction and film. Suvin is correct that dystopian scenarios have charted the rise of a new Oppressor, and that the State has been relegated in this changed vision to the position of collusive lackey to the totalitarian globalised Corporation. Those critics who have pointed out

the pivotal role of Scott's *Alien* and *Blade Runner* in cementing this change of Oppressor into our cultural narrative are correct also. Scott's films consistently document the four fears of globalised capitalism: that unrestrained capitalism will spawn giant Corporations, run imperially by corporate oligarchs who seek to create fiefdoms and 'colonise' ever more territory as extensions of their power; that these oligarchical Corporations will commercialise and commoditise life, treating employees and even wider society as possessions; that the technology and industrial machinery unleashed by the Corporations will recklessly ruin the environment and possibly even cause the extinction of humankind; and that their immense corporate power will inevitably expand into a globalised tyranny where individual freedoms are a distant memory.

A structured investigation into correspondences of artistic technique between Conrad's writing and Scott's films, such as has been done in this study, reveals the extent to which Joseph Conrad has influenced Scott's early films, something that so far does not seem to have attracted much critical attention. Conrad was the courageous voice warning of the dark side of colonial and imperial practices at the turn of the twentieth century, and this investigation indicates that he can legitimately be seen as the progenitor of the themes that Scott has incorporated into his early films.

When we look at the most strikingly analogous elements in the films of Scott and the fiction of Conrad, the identification of the new Oppressor as corporate capitalism seems clearly to be a Conradian idea. The thesis has already noted Scott's lasting influence on subsequent film and cultural narratives of dystopia, so we must conclude that Conrad's literature, so significant in shaping Scott's filmic themes and style of directing, has therefore played a compelling role in changing the metanarrative of dystopian texts into the twenty-first century.

What has been demonstrated conclusively?

The study has shown that Scott is indeed familiar with Conrad's work, and that they share idiosyncrasies of style and motif – especially the almost indistinguishable way author and auteur use such dense layering of both visual and auditory elements in their photographic *mise-en-scène* approach. A further similarity that this study has found rather conclusive in its hypothesis that Conrad has influenced Scott's work, is the manner in which and the frequency with which both Conrad and Scott employ ironic dualities, or ironically paired oppositions, in their texts.

In their treatment of the themes that have become the dystopian metanarrative, too, there are particular aspects where Conrad and Scott resemble each other so closely that mere coincidence is unlikely. They are almost identical in their motifs used in the condemnation of the inhumanity of oligarchs and the Corporation, or what Conrad calls 'material interests'; they concur that empires will fall, no matter how powerful or how evil; they both suggest that companies will increasingly see workers and even society as possessions or commodities to facilitate greater corporate profit; they both point out the dehumanising effects of such commercialisation; and they are surprisingly alike in their portrayals and approval of feminine morality and sensibility over 'masculine' aggression as the proper response and opposition to the Corporation.

Conrad's novel decries the environmental ruin caused by corporate greed, and Scott extends Conrad's concern into the realm of genetics and the possibility of the posthuman. Scott reprises Conrad's environmental ruin with fidelity, using imagery virtually indistinguishable from Conrad's own. Both Conrad and Scott emphasise that when any Corporation becomes too powerful, tyranny results – and that the State will collude with, and defer to, big business.

Any artist is inevitably aware of the social and historical milieu in which he or she

works, and writers or directors who borrow content from an artist of a previous generation or society have to adapt those appropriations to the concerns of contemporary culture. This is what Ridley Scott has done and done admirably, and there are several new generations of readers or film audiences who have been alerted to Conrad's great fears of 'material interests' because Scott updated and extended them in order to encompass the cultural concerns of the late twentieth century. How much of Scott's appropriation of Conrad has been conscious and how much unconscious is impossible to say. It seems reasonably certain to assume, though, that Scott is indeed artistically indebted to the genius and legacy of a writer who lived a hundred years before him. A few areas of similarity only might suggest that Scott was perhaps familiar with Conrad, but the sheer extent of thematic and stylistic correspondences seems to indicate that Conrad has been a greater influence upon Scott than has so far received critical attention.

Possible paths for future investigations

If I were to suggest fruitful paths for future directions of research on this topic, I would advocate looking further into possible Conradian themes and motifs in the early work of Orson Welles, as well Conrad's influence upon the most recent writers and directors of dystopian fiction and film. Also, because historical events and art reflect each other, future research into dystopian thematic concerns could usefully be conducted into how current commercial applications of scientific advances in human genetics are impacting posthuman themes in dystopian texts in the second decade of the twenty-first century.

There are three further areas that this investigation into Conrad's and Scott's impact upon dystopian texts would suggest as fertile areas of study. The logical extreme of untrammelled corporate capitalism would be fascism, therefore research into new dystopian works with backdrops of fascism could be productive; and, just as Conrad's work reflected

his concern at the dark side of colonialism and Scott's films grapple with the all-powerful Corporation, so future dystopian texts may reflect the current historical fears regarding extremist fundamentalism. There is no reason to believe that future dystopian texts will not reflect the fears most at the heart of contemporary culture, so the third area which may see tremendous growth will probably be dystopian depictions of apocalyptic scenarios.³¹

At a tangent from Conrad but with an eye on research into Philip K. Dick's writing, another productive direction for future research in film and literary studies, using a similar New Formalist and Globalisation studies framework for the exploration, could look at what influences apart from the original Dick text have shaped other Philip K. Dick adaptations into film.

Last word from the Old Mole

I feel it may be fitting to conclude this study by musing upon the final alliterative lines of Conrad's *Nostromo*, and the last words we hear in Scott's *Blade Runner*.³² Conrad in the final paragraph of his novel has Dr Monygham wrongly infer that 'the genius of the magnificent Capataz de Cargadores dominated the dark gulf containing his conquests of treasure and love' (384); Scott has Deckard pause for a moment to inspect the silver-paper origami unicorn which Gaff has left behind in his apartment, and, as if heard in Deckard's memory, the final words left for the audience to contemplate are Gaff's 'Too bad she won't live: but then again, who does?'

This investigation into Conrad's role in Scott's seminal films, and Scott's subsequent impact upon the metanarrative of current dystopian texts, tells us that Conrad *does* live; he

³¹ Earlier we pointed out that Yvonne Hammer flagged this trend in 2010.

³² In the 'Director's cut' version and also the 'Final cut' version – not, of course, in the theatrical version originally released into cinemas, which at the producers' insistence concludes with the quintessential American fantasy of Deckard and Rachael escaping into pristine wilderness.

lives on in Scott's early work, which means that his magnificent contribution to literature a century ago still dominates 'the dark gulf' – the sombre world that is dystopian speculation.

Works Cited

Alam, Fakrul. "Elective Affinities: Edward Said, Joseph Conrad, and the Global Intellectual." *Studia Neophilologica* 85.sup1 (2013): 95-105. Print.

Alessio, Dominic. "Redemption, 'Race', Religion, Reality and the Far-Right: Science Fiction Film Adaptations of Philip K. Dick." *The Blade Runner Experience: The Legacy of a Science Fiction Classic*. Ed. Will Brooker. New York: Wallflower Press. 2006. 59-78. Print.

Alien. "Theatrical Version." Dir. Ridley Scott. Twentieth Century Fox, 1979. DVD.

Alien. "The Director's Cut, Special Edition." Dir. Ridley Scott. Twentieth Century Fox, 2003. DVD.

The Alien Legacy. Sharpline Arts. 20th Century Fox, 1999. DVD.

AFI. American Film Institute's 10 Top 10.

<<http://www.afi.com/10top10/category.aspx?cat=7>>

Atwood, Margaret. *Oryx and Crake*. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 2003. Print.

Bacigalupi, Paolo. *The Windup Girl*. San Francisco: Night Shade Books, 2010. Print.

Bahiana, Ana Maria. "1492: Conquest of Paradise." *Ridley Scott: Interviews*. Eds.

Laurence F. Knapp and Andrea F. Kulas. Jackson, Miss.: University Press of Mississippi. 2005. 81-88. Print.

Barkman, Adam, Ashley Barkman, and Nancy Kang (eds). *The Culture and*

Philosophy of Ridley Scott. Plymouth, UK: Lexington Books, 2013. Print.

Barlow, Aaron. "Reel Toads and Imaginary Cities: Philip K. Dick, *Blade Runner* and

the Contemporary Science Fiction Movie." *The Blade Runner Experience: The Legacy of a Science Fiction Classic*. Ed. Will Brooker. New York: Wallflower Press. 2006. 43-58. Print.

Belton, John. *American Cinema/American Culture*. 4th ed. Boston: McGraw Hill, 2013. Print.

Blade Runner. "The Director's Cut." Dir. Ridley Scott. Warner Bros, 2003. DVD.

Blade Runner. "The Final Cut." Dir. Ridley Scott. Warner Bros, 2007. DVD.

Brooker, Will (editor). *The Blade Runner Experience: The Legacy of a Science Fiction Classic*. London and New York: Wallflower, 2005. Print.

Bukatman, Scott. *Blade Runner*. London: British Film Institute, 1997. Print.

Chase, Donald. "Ridley Scott directs *The Duellists*." *Ridley Scott Interviews*. Eds.

Laurence F. Knapp and Andrea F. Kulas. Jackson, Miss.: University Press of Mississippi. 2005. 3-10. Print.

Collins, Richard. "Truth in adversaries: Ridley Scott's *The Duellists* and Joseph

Conrad's 'The Duel'." *Studies in the Humanities*. 27.1 (June 2000): 1+.

Expanded Academic ASAP. Web. 10 Mar. 2015.

Collits, Terry. *Postcolonial Conrad: Paradoxes of Empire*. Postcolonial Literatures,

Routledge Research in Postcolonial Literatures; 12. Vol. 12. London:

Routledge, 2005. Print.

Conrad, Joseph. *Nostromo: A Tale of the Seaboard*. London: Folio Society, 1984

[1904]. Print.

Conrad, Joseph. "The Duel" in *A Set of Six*. Garden City: Doubleday, Page, 1924.

Dangerous Days: Making Blade Runner. The Blade Runner Partnership. Warner

Bros, 2007. DVD.

Delson, James. "*Alien* from the Inside Out: Part II." *Ridley Scott: Interviews*. Eds.

Laurence F. Knapp and Andrea F. Kulas. Jackson, Miss.: University Press of

Mississippi. 2005. 11-31. Print.

Dick, Philip K. *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*. London: Millennium, 1999
[1968]. Print.

Donovan, Stephen. "Introduction: Conrad under the Sign of the Transnational." *Studia Neophilologica* 85.sup1 (2013): 1-4. Print.

The Duellists. Dir. Ridley Scott. Paramount, 1977. VHS Recording.

Goldman, Alan H. "*Nostromo* and the Fragility of the Self." *Oxford Scholarship Online*
(2013): 1-21. Print.

Gooch, Joshua. "'The Shape of Credit': Imagination, Speculation, and Language in
Nostromo." *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 52.3 (2010): 266-97.
Print.

Gregori, Flavio. "Youthful Resentment, Bourgeois (Anti-) Heroism and Sublime
Unrest: Conrad's 'The Duel' and Ridley Scott's *The Duellists*." *South Atlantic
Review* (2010): 109-29. Print.

Hammer, Yvonne. "A Parable for Our Times: Activism and Terrorism in Anne Fine's
Survival Quest, *The Road of Bones*." *International Research in Children's
Literature* 4.2 (2011): 208-22. Print.

Hayles, N. Katherine. *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics*. Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1999. Print.

Hurley, Karen. "Is That a Future We Want?: An Ecofeminist Exploration of Images of the Future in Contemporary Film." *Futures* 40.4 (2008): 346-59. Print.

Huxley, Aldous, and Aldous Huxley. *Brave New World: And, Brave New World Revisited*. New York: Harper Perennial Modern Classics, 2009. Print.

Ishiguro, Kazuo. *Never Let Me Go*. London: Folio Society, 2012. Print.

Jermyn, Deborah. "The Rachel Papers: In Search of *Blade Runner*'s Femme Fatale." *The Blade Runner Experience: The Legacy of a Science Fiction Classic*. Ed. Will Brooker. New York: Wallflower Press. 2006. 159-172. Print.

Kennedy, Harlan. "Twenty-First Century Nervous Breakdown." *Ridley Scott: Interviews*. Eds. Laurence F. Knapp and Andrea F. Kulas. Jackson, Miss.: University Press of Mississippi. 2005. 32-41. Print.

Kerman, Judith B. "Post-Millennium *Blade Runner*." *The Blade Runner Experience: The Legacy of a Science Fiction Classic*. Ed. Will Brooker. New York: Wallflower Press. 2006. 31-42. Print.

- Knapp, Laurence F. and Andrea F. Kulas (eds). *Ridley Scott Interviews*. Jackson, Miss.: University Press of Mississippi, 2005. Print.
- Knowles, Owen. "Conrad's Life." *The Cambridge Companion to Joseph Conrad*. Ed. J. H. Stape. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996. 1-24. Print.
- Krishna, Sankaran. *Globalization and Postcolonialism: Hegemony and Resistance in the Twenty-First Century*. Rowman & Littlefield, 2009. Print.
- Levinson, Marjorie. "What Is New Formalism?" *PLMA* 122.2 (2007): 558-69. Print.
- MacDuffie, Allen. "Joseph Conrad's Geographies of Energy." *Elh* 76.1 (2009): 75-98. Print.
- Mallios, Peter Lancelot. "Introduction: Untimely *Nostromo*." *Conradiana* 40.3 (2008): 213-32. Print.
- McGilligan, Patrick. "Walter Hill: Last Man Standing." *Film International* 2.6 (2004). 13-25. Print.
- Mitchell, David. *Cloud Atlas*. London: Sceptre, 2004. Print.
- Moore, Gene M. "Conrad's Influence." *The Cambridge Companion to Joseph Conrad*.

Ed. J. H. Stape. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996. 223-241.
Print.

More, Thomas, and Paul Turner. *Utopia*. London: Penguin Books, 1965. Print.

Najder, Zdzislaw. *Joseph Conrad: A Life*. Trans. Halina Najder. Rochester, New York: Camden House, 2007. Print.

Najder, Zdzislaw. "A Century of *Nostromo*." *Conradiana* 40.3 (2008): 233-46. Print.

Norris, Andrew. "How Can It Not Know What It Is?': Self and Other in Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner*." *Film-Philosophy* 17.1 (2013): 19-51. Print.

Orwell, George. *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. London: Penguin Books, 2013. Print.

Peary, Danny. "Directing *Alien* and *Blade Runner*: An Interview with Ridley Scott." *Ridley Scott: Interviews*. Eds. Laurence F. Knapp and Andrea F. Kulas. Jackson, Miss.: University Press of Mississippi. 2005. 42-55. Print.

Raw, Laurence. *The Ridley Scott Encyclopedia*. Plymouth, UK: Scarecrow Press, 2009. Print.

Redmond, Sean. "Purge! Class Pathology in *Blade Runner*." *The Blade Runner Experience: The Legacy of a Science Fiction Classic*. Ed. Will Brooker. New

York: Wallflower Press. 2006. 173-189. Print.

Richardson, Brian. "Sex, Silver, and Biblical Analogues: Thematic and Intertextual Resolutions at the End of *Nostromo*." *Conradiana* 40.3 (2008): 7. Print.

Rowley, Stephen. "False LA: *Blade Runner* and the Nightmare City." *The Blade Runner Experience: The Legacy of a Science Fiction Classic*. Ed. Will Brooker. New York: Wallflower Press. 2006. 203-212. Print.

Sammon, Paul M. "Interview with Ridley Scott." *Ridley Scott: Interviews*. Eds. Laurence F. Knapp and Andrea F. Kulas. Jackson, Miss.: University Press of Mississippi. 2005. 89-115. Print.

Sheehan, Paul. *Modernism and the Aesthetics of Violence*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013. Print.

Stape, J. H. (ed.). *The Cambridge Companion to Joseph Conrad*. Cambridge Companions Complete Collection. Cambridge, UK and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996. Print.

Suin, Darko. *Defined by a Hollow: Essays on Utopia, Science Fiction and Political Epistemology*. Oxford; New York: Peter Lang, 2010. Print.

Wang, Huei-Ju. "Haunting and the Other Story in Joseph Conrad's *Nostromo*: Global

Capital and Indigenous Labor.” *Conradiana* 44.1 (2012): 1-28. Print.

Weitzman, Elizabeth. “Great Scott: an interview with director/adventurer Ridley Scott.” *Ridley Scott Interviews*. Eds. Laurence F. Knapp and Andrea F. Kulas. Jackson, Miss.: University Press of Mississippi. 2005. Print.

Williams, Linda. “Shadows of the Holocene: Transfigurations of the Non-Human World in Science Fiction Film.” *Arena journal*. 35/36 (2011): 196-216. Print.

Williams, Raymond and Andrew Milner. *Tenses of Imagination: Raymond Williams on Science Fiction, Utopia and Dystopia. Ralahine utopian studies*. Oxford and Bern: Peter Lang. 2010. Print.

Yu, Timothy. “Oriental Cities, Postmodern Futures: *Naked Lunch*, *Blade Runner*, and *Neuromancer*.” *Melus* 33.4 (2008): 45 - 71. Print.

Zamyatin, Evgeny, and Mirra Ginsburg. *We*. New York: Harper Voyager, 2012. Print.

Other References

diPiero, Thomas. “The Form Of Formlessness.” *Philological Quarterly* 86.3 (2007): 205-225. Academic Search Premier. Web. 21 Mar. 2015.

Dyer, Richard. "Introduction." *Film Studies: Critical Approaches*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000. 1-8. Print.

Hansen, Jim. "Formalism and its Malcontents: Benjamin and De Man on the Function of Allegory." *New Literary History* 35.4 (2004): 663-683. Print.

Joo, Hee-Jung Serenity. "Flexible Chaos: Globalization And Race In Los Angeles Disaster Film And Fiction." *LIT: Literature Interpretation Theory* 23.3 (2012): 246-266. Academic Search Premier. Web. 21 Mar. 2015.

Levine, Caroline. "Strategic Formalism: Toward A New Method In Cultural Studies." *Victorian Studies* 48.4 (2006): 625-657. Academic Search Premier. Web. 21 Mar. 2015.

Lipietz, Alain. "The Post Fordist World: Labour Relations, International Hierarchy and Global Ecology." *Review of International Political Economy* 4.1 (1997): 1-41. Print.

Luckhurst, Roger. *Alien*. London: British Film Institute, 2014. Print.

Pope, Richard. "Affects of the Gaze: Post-oedipal Desire and the Traversal of Fantasy in *Blade Runner*." *Camera Obscura* 1 (2010): 69-95. Print.

Reid, Michelle. "Rachel Writes Back: Racialised Androids and Replicant Texts."

Extrapolation: A Journal of Science Fiction and Fantasy 3 (2008): 353-67.

Print.

Renault, Emmanuel. "From Fordism To Post-Fordism: Beyond Or Back To Alienation?" *Critical Horizons* 8.2 (2007): 205-220. Academic Search Premier. Web. 21 Mar. 2015.

Shanahan, Timothy. *Philosophy and Blade Runner*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014. Print.

Villarejo, Amy. *Film Studies: the Basics*. London: Routledge, 2007. Print.