

## Editor's Introduction

Volume 21 begins with an article by Alessandro Giovannelli on *A.I. Artificial Intelligence*. Its thesis is that the film has been unfairly criticized by some as being overly sentimental, which the author suspects has resulted from preconceived attitudes that director Steven Spielberg would dilute the more pessimistic vision that Stanley Kubrick had for the piece. Giovannelli shows how closely Spielberg hewed to Kubrick's original intentions, and argues convincingly that the film's ending is much more pessimistic than it initially appears.

Co-authors Shai Biderman and Ido Lewit offer an interesting take on the TV series *Fargo*, contending that the world view there is more optimistic than in the *oeuvre* of the Coen Brothers in general, and in the film version of *Fargo* in particular. Unlike most of the Coen Brothers' films, there is genuine character development in the course of the series, which concludes (Spoiler Alert!) with formerly timid protagonist Gus Grimly gunning down sociopathic antagonist Lorne Malvo.

Next up, Jonathan Kwan proposes the intriguing thesis that films can be more philosophical by being more ambiguous. Contrasting the final cut of *Blade Runner* with the original theatrical release, Kwan argues for the superiority of the former by condemning the latter for making it too clear that the replicants should be considered human. The added voice over narration by Decker (which director Ridley Scott always condemned) in the theatrical release provides an unsatisfying closure to this central issue, while the final cut, which removed the narration, restores the openness of the text.

Returning author Richard Nunan takes up his ongoing dialogue with Thomas Wartenberg about how films can do philosophy. In this installment, Nunan takes issue with Wartenberg's contention that philosophical interpretations of films do not impose such meanings artificially if, and only if, they are grounded in authorial intentions. Nunan examines the labyrinthine production history of the third installment of the *Alien* series to argue that films can sometimes have philosophical content

in the absence of their creators being intentionally responsible for that content.

Enrico Terrone next discusses a favorite among film-philosophers, *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*, examining the readings of Christopher Grau and Thomas Wartenberg, who see the film as a thought experiment that demonstrates the limitations of utilitarianism. Terrone argues that seeing the film as a modern example of Stanley Cavell's Comedies of Remarriage rules it out as an argument against utilitarianism, at least as construed by Grau and Wartenberg. He then proposes an alternative interpretation of how the film might function as a critique of Mill's philosophy.

Amresh Sinha likens the inception of ideas in the unconscious of the target in *Inception* to the way capitalist ideology creates false consciousness in our next article. Drawing on Louis Althusser's highly influential symptomatic critique of ideology, Sinha highlights striking parallels between the way the dream team in *Inception* seeks to plant the critical idea in their victim to the ways in which capitalist societies incept the crucial elements of ideology in their citizens. These parallels help us achieve a deeper understanding of both the film and Althusser's ideological critique.

Terrence Malick's *The Tree of Life* has been much puzzled over by critics and philosophers alike. David H. Calhoun argues that one way to understand this epic work is to compare and contrast it with a highly influential precursor, Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey*. Calhoun points out that the films have a similar structure, depicting both the microcosm of a particular human situation and the macrocosm of the universe as a whole. He examines the imagined cosmologies of both works, contrasting the glory and transcendence of Malick's vision with Kubrick's depiction of a godless cosmos where superior aliens intervene in the evolution of the human species.

In "The Duties of an Artist", Iskra Fileva examines a current controversy in the film world, stereotyped casting of characters based on appearance. She asks the intriguing question of whether cinematic

creators have a duty to shatter such stereotypes, and, if so, the extent of such duties. This leads into the larger issue about the relationship between ethics and aesthetics. Stereotypical casting choices have not been examined much by philosophers of Film, and Fileva offers some intriguing suggestions for initiating such a discussion.

Anchoring the volume is an article by frequent contributor Joseph Kupfer, who discusses what the Movies can teach us about teaching. His piece examines four cinematic teachers, two remarkable exemplars and two maleficent educators, trying to identify the virtues of a good teacher, and the vices of a bad one, as depicted in mainstream cinema. His essay provides a fitting coda to a distinguished collection of essays that have been a pleasure to compile and edit.

**Dan Shaw**